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NEARBY



Head constable succumbs to injuries

NEW DELHI
A 44-year-old Delhi Police head constable who was hit by an unidentified vehicle on Barapullah elevated road while chasing a criminal last week succumbed to his injuries on January 19, the police said on Sunday. Rajpal Kasana, who was deployed with the Special Cell, died at 5 p.m. at AIIMS trauma centre.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

Leopard rescued from Greater Noida village

NOIDA
A leopard which had entered Greater Noida's Sadullapur village on Sunday was rescued by Forest Department officials and specialists from Meerut and Delhi zoo. The police said they received a call at 10 a.m., following which a team rushed to the spot.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

Manu Sharma moves HC for premature release

NEW DELHI
Convict in the Jessica Lal murder case Siddhartha Vashishta alias Manu Sharma has moved the Delhi High Court seeking premature release. The plea came in the wake of the HC's December 2018 decision to release former Youth Congress leader Sushil Kumar Sharma, who had served over 23 years in prison for the murder of his wife Naina Sahni in 1995.

NATION ▶ PAGE 7

EDGE ▶ 4 PAGES
DELHI METRO ▶ 4 PAGES

CIC selection arbitrary, say RTI activists

I was approached later on, says former Law Secretary Suresh Chandra

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI
RTI activists have termed the appointment of former Law Secretary Suresh Chandra as a Central Information Commissioner on January 1 an "arbitrary process" as he had not applied for the position.

According to files recently made public by the Department of Personnel and Training, he was not on the list of 280 applicants. But he was among the 14 short-listed,

'9/11 derailed Army plan to capture Pakistani posts along LoC'

New book quotes former commanders on 'Operation Kabaddi' aimed at preventing cross-border infiltration, in the post-Kargil scenario

SUHASINI HAIDAR
DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Had it not been for the 9/11 terror attacks, the Indian Army may have carried out its largest operation to end infiltration by capturing at least 25 selected Pakistani posts along the Line of Control (LoC) in September 2001, two former senior commanders have revealed in a new book.

The operation, dubbed 'Operation Kabaddi,' would have been on a scale far larger than the "land-grab" attempted by Pakistan, which led to the Kargil war in 1999, as well as the surgical strikes launched by India in 2016, says the book, *Line on Fire: Ceasefire Violations and India-Pakistan Escalation Dynamics*.

"The objective [of Operation Kabaddi] was to change the geography of the LoC with access to tactical points there, which would then help them [the Army] tackle the infiltration of militants by the Pakistani side," the author of the book and Jawa-



Happymon Jacob, author of the book. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

haral Nehru University Professor Happymon Jacob told *The Hindu*.

Meeting with COAS

Quoting two officers involved in the planning of the operation – Lt. Gen. Rustam K. Nanavatty, (Northern Army Commander, 2001-2003), and Lt. Gen. H.S. Panag, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC in C) of the Army's Northern Command and Central Command 2006-2008) – the

book says operational details were discussed at a June 2001 meeting held at the office of the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) in New Delhi.

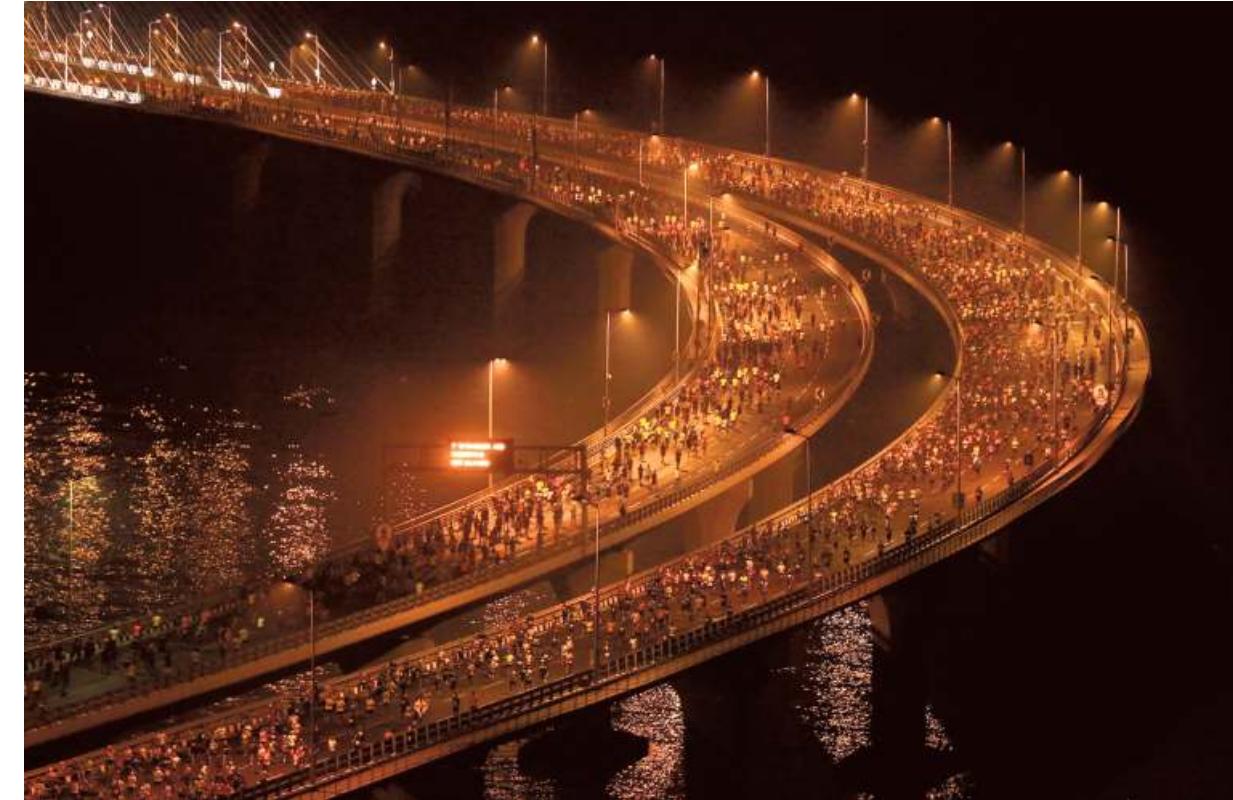
The meeting was chaired by the then Army chief Gen. Sundararajan Padmanabhan. (*The Hindu* contacted him, but he declined comment. In the book, too, he has declined comment, citing a poor memory of the period.)

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10



Tactical change: The aim was to change the geography of the LoC so that the Army could tackle infiltration from Pakistan.

Across the sea



The long run: Participants in the \$405,000 Tata Mumbai Marathon pass over the Bandra-Worli sea link on Sunday. Cosmas Lagat of Kenya and Worknesh Alemu of Ethiopia won the men's and women's crowns. ■ PRASHANT WAYDANE (REPORT ON PAGE 17)

Karnataka Congress MLAs brawl at resort

Legislator hospitalised after colleague attacks him

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU
In an embarrassing turn of events for the Congress in Karnataka, two MLAs from Ballari district were involved in an alleged brawl early on Sunday at a resort on the city outskirts.

The party, jittery about the alleged poaching moves of the BJP, is keeping its flock together there. The brawl left Vijayanagar MLA B.S. Anand Singh injured and he was admitted to a private hospital in Bengaluru.

Mr. Singh and Kampli MLA J.N. Ganesh, who attended the legislature party meeting late on Saturday, were having a chat, along with a few other legislators.

The dinner party, which went on till about 1 a.m. on



B.S. Anand Singh and J.N. Ganesh argued about issues relating to their constituencies when the fight broke out.

Sunday, came to a halt when the brawl broke out between Mr. Singh and Mr. Ganesh, party sources said.

Congress legislators have been at the resort near Bidadi since Friday after the legislature party decided to keep them sequestered to prevent any attempt by the

BJP to poach them.

Mr. Ganesh allegedly hit Mr. Singh with a bottle, taking the others by surprise.

Hagaribommanahalli MLA Bhima Naik intervened and separated the two.

BRAWLING MLAS WERE SEEN IN REBEL CAMP ▶ PAGE 10

A DAUNTING TASK ▶ PAGE 5

Mayawati gulped insults, says BJP MLA

She is a blot on womankind: Sadhna Singh; BSP files police complaint

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

A BJP MLA in Uttar Pradesh has sparked a controversy with derogatory remarks about Bhujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati, saying she has "lost everything" for power and comfort, and was a "blot on womankind".

In a video that has gone viral on social media, MLA Sadhna Singh, speaking at a public meeting in her constituency Mughalsarai in

Chandauli district on Saturday, said that while Draupadi (in the epic *Mahabharata*) had vowed to seek revenge for her molestation, Ms. Mayawati, who "lost everything" for power and comfort.

"She is a blot on woman-kind," she added.

Terming the remarks an insult not just to Ms. Mayawati but to all Dalit women, the BSP's zonal in-charge Ram Chandra Gautam filed

a police complaint against Ms. Singh on Sunday, demanding that the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act be invoked against her.

Ms. Singh was apparently referring to the 1995 VVIP guesthouse incident in Lucknow when Ms. Mayawati was allegedly assaulted by Samajwadi Party (SP) leaders, leading to long-standing bitterness between her and Mulayam Singh, founder of the SP.

While formalising her al-

liance with current SP chief Akhilesh Yadav on January 12, Ms. Mayawati said she had risen above that incident and decided to ally with the party keeping in mind public interest and political climate.

NCW to send notice

The National Commission for Women (NCW) questioned Ms. Singh's statement and will issue a notice seeking an explanation.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Flamingo fete a huge draw at Pulicat lake

Over 90,000 avian visitors provide a visual treat to domestic and foreign tourists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NELLORE

The Flamingo Festival had a flying start on Sunday with tourists, both domestic and foreign, making a beeline for the picturesque Pulicat lake, a safe haven for migratory birds. It was a virtual treat for bird watchers as over 90,000 birds have come from far away places to the lake this year, though belated in view of the late arrival of the northeast monsoon and the failure of the southwest monsoon. The lake is the second largest brackish water ecosystem in the country after the Chilika lake in



Global journey: An array of migratory birds providing a picturesqure sight at the Pulicat lake. ■ KOMMURI SRINIVAS

Odisha.

It was a memorable experience for the bird lovers who thronged the place as a large number of birds dotted the barringtonia trees, where they have built nests to raise their offspring. The

birds return to their homeland once the offspring gain the capacity to withstand the long journey.

Eco-tourist hub
Launching the State festival, Agriculture

Minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy said Sullurpetta would be developed into an eco-tourist hub with better infrastructure to woo tourists in a big way.

He outlined the efforts being made by the State government year after year to augment the tourist facilities not only at Sullurpetta but also in Nelapattu, Atakanithippa and Bhimunivarpalem for the benefit of visitors to enjoy the flight of, among other birds, flamingos, pelicans and storks in their natural environment.

He commended the role of the local fishermen in

protecting the ecosystem, even while eking out their livelihood.

Sand art was created by artist M. Sanath Kumar to mark the event on the theme of mother nature taking care of the migratory birds at Atakanithippa.

Twelve tonnes of sand was used to make images of migratory birds in about 10 hours, he said. Another piece of art work was created using 18 tonnes of sand at Nelapattu, also in 10 hours. It underscored the need to eliminate plastics which harmed the natural environment of birds and other beings.

The workers told the police that they had been hired by a contractor, identified as Anil, at ₹400 per day and had not been provided safety gear.

Contractual sanitation worker dies inside Wazirabad drain

spot and also alerted the fire department. When fire department personnel failed to trace the missing worker, the NDRF and the NDMA were called in.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Nupur Prasad said the worker, identified as Krishan, was a resident of Sri Ram slum cluster. "We will register an FIR under relevant sections of the IPC at the Wazirabad police station. We are trying to trace the contractor," she said.

The workers told the police that they had been hired by a contractor, identified as Anil, at ₹400 per day and had not been provided safety gear.

The cleaning work started

around 9 a.m. with two workers entering the drain at a time. "Around 1.45 p.m. Krishan and I entered the drain and on the way back I found that he was missing. I tried to locate him but could not. I immediately informed the other workers and the contractor," said Manoj, adding: "When we failed to trace him, we informed the police. But by the time the police reached the site, the contractor had fled."

"The drain is full of toxic gases, our oxygen cylinder ran out in just two hours. How could the workers clean the drain without any safety gear?" asked a NDRF man, who wished not to be named.

The cleaning work started

M ND-NDE

DELHI Timings	
MONDAY, JAN. 21	
RISE 07:14 SET 17:51	
RISE 18:07 SET 07:10	
TUESDAY, JAN. 22	
RISE 07:14 SET 17:52	
RISE 19:17 SET 08:06	
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 23	
RISE 07:14 SET 17:53	
RISE 20:25 SET 08:56	

Delhi Weather	max min
Delhi City	29 07
Safdarjung	29 07
Palam	29 08

Delhi Pilm Today
22°C Clouds will be increasing. Severe pollution level. Rain/thundershower with strong winds are likely.

Delhi Pilm Tomorrow
19°C Pollution levels will improve. Rain/thundershower will occur during morning. Day will be pleasant.

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Blame game over Rohingya refugees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AGARTALA

Thirty-one Rohingya Muslims are literally in no-man's land, holed up behind the barbed wire fencing along the Bangladesh border in Tripura since Friday, while a blame-game is on between the border guards of the two countries over their refuge.

The Border Security Force officials said six men, nine women and 16 children were detained by the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) and are behind the fencing at Raymura in West Tripura district, about 15 km from here.

While the BGB asserted that the Rohingya came from India, the BSF denied the claim. Both the sides have met twice since Saturday but failed to make any headway.

Crisis in Odisha Cong. deepens

Three expulsions for 'anti-party activities', former Union Minister among them

PRAFULLA DAS
BHUBANESWAR

The ongoing crisis in the Odisha Congress that erupted with the resignation of one of its working president Nabu Kishore Das a few days ago has further deepened with the expulsion of former Union Minister Srikant Jena and former legislator Krushna Chandra Sagarla from the primary membership of the party late on Saturday night.

Sundargarh legislator Jogen Singh had resigned from the Congress on Friday, following his suspension from the party for alleged anti-party activities on Thursday.

Mr. Singh's suspension came just two days after the working president quit the party stating that the people of Jharsuguda constituency wanted him to contest the coming polls as a nominee of the ruling Biju Janata Dal for the development of their



Expelled: Former Union Minister Srikant Jena. ■

area.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jena and Mr. Sagarla, who were expelled for their alleged anti-party activities, reacted to their expulsion in different ways on Sunday.

While Mr. Jena strongly questioned his expulsion, Mr. Sagarla said the Congress had been unfair to him as he was never involved in anti-party activities.

The aggrieved former Union Minister went on to allege that there is Mahagathbandhan between Congress president Rahul Gandhi and Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik.

He announced that he will campaign in the State to justify his allegations and "expose their secrets". He said that he will reveal more facts on January 25 which could prove to be embarrassing for the Congress leadership. Mr. Gandhi is scheduled to visit Bhubaneswar on the same day.

Mr. Jena further alleged that Mr. Gandhi wants that "Odisha should continue to be ruled by the Patnaiks". He was referring to Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjan Patnaik, whose younger brother Soumya Ranjan Patnaik is a Rajya Sabha Member of the BJD.

Reacting to Mr. Jena's

statements, the OPCC president said that there was no place for indisciplined members in their party. No prominent leader in the State Congress, however, came out to criticise Mr. Jena's expulsion.

Allegation justified?

On the other hand, the BJP Justified Mr. Jena's allegations saying both Congress and BJD were hand in glove with the mining mafia. Since it emerged as the number two party in the panchayat elections in the State in early 2017, the BJP has been striving hard to perform better than the Congress in the coming simultaneous Assembly and Lok Sabha elections.

According to analysts, the Congress is still struggling to put house in order as there is rumour of more of its leaders quitting the party in the run up to the polls.

Navy abandons efforts to pull out Meghalaya miner's body

'Disintegration of the body with every pull of machine'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SHILLONG

The Navy abandoned efforts on Sunday to pull out the decomposed body of a miner that it spotted four days ago inside a coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills District, officials said.

The Navy divers had spotted the decomposed body of a trapped miner on Wednesday, using an unmanned, remotely-operated vehicle (ROV) at a depth of around 160 feet inside the mine's main shaft.

At least 15 miners are trapped inside the mine since December 13 last year after one of them accidentally punctured the wall of the mine, leading to its flooding.

"The Navy today suspended the pulling of the remains, which they had been trying since yesterday even-

ing, as too much disintegration (of the body) took place with every pull by the ROV," operation spokesman R. Susngi said.

The families of four of the 15 miners had on Saturday urged the rescuers to retrieve the decomposed body from the nearby mines and the Coal India continued de-watering in the two nearby abandoned shafts by running their pumps for 23 hours since Saturday evening, Mr. Susngi said.

The Navy divers were awaiting further instructions from the government, Mr. Susngi said.

The family members of the victims from Garo Hills have also been summoned

to the site to help identify the body from the video shot underwater by the ROV earlier this week.

An ROV operator from Chennai went on with a search operation in the nearby mines and the Coal India continued de-watering in the two nearby abandoned shafts by running their pumps for 23 hours since Saturday evening, Mr. Susngi said.

Meanwhile, the Meghalaya government was likely to apprise the Supreme Court of the problems in continuing with the search-and-rescue operations, an official said.

(See also page 7)

Kisan Mazdoor Sabha seeks enhanced social security pension

To launch stir in Odisha in support of the demand

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha (AIKMS) has demanded that the Odisha government enhance social security pension under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY) to a minimum of ₹3,000 per month.

AIKMS has decided to build up a mass movement in the State for the demand. It has started a signature campaign which will continue till February 15. It will also hold block-level demonstrations and gherao the

Assembly, said national secretary of AIKMS, Bhala Chandra Sarangi.

The organisation expressed its dissatisfaction over announcement by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to hike social security pension under MPY to ₹200 per month. According to State government, around 48 lakh elderly, disabled, widows and destitute women will benefit by this enhancement of the social security pension.

Mr. Sarangi said that in this time of high prices, ₹500 or 700 is too small an amount to provide a respectable life.

As per the enhanced pension, elderly persons aged

over 60 years will get a revised old age pension of ₹500 per month as against ₹300 and those who are more than 80 years old, the pension will be ₹700 per month instead of ₹500 per month. Odisha government had launched the MPY on January 1, 2008, by merging two pension schemes, Old Age Pension and Odisha Disability Pension schemes.

Mr. Sarangi said that in this time of high prices, ₹500 or 700 is too small an amount to provide a respectable life.

Rehab scheme for sex workers loses steam

Only 75 beneficiaries in two years

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

In September 2015, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had announced a scheme for rehabilitation of sex workers named Mukti Alo with much fanfare. But details of the functioning of the scheme, sought under a Right to Information Act query, revealed only 75 beneficiaries since the launch of the scheme.

Highest trafficking

The training provided to the beneficiaries were hand block printing, cutting and tailoring, spice grinding, recycled tyre making and management of cafeteria. According to Mr. Kumar, the reply shows that the much-touted scheme has not taken off in West Bengal, which has the highest recorded case of trafficking in the country.

The NRCB data for 2016 shows that of the 8,132 cases of human trafficking recorded in the country, 3,579 cases (around 44%) were from West Bengal.

THE HINDU
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THE HINDU

Dolphin census concludes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KENDRAPARA

The annual headcount exercise of Irrawaddy dolphins inhabiting in the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary and Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary has come to an end, officials said on Saturday.

Last year the census teams had sighted 250 dolphins in the sea and deltaic zones.

The census data for this year will be shortly released after conclusion of the compilation process, said Bimal Prasanna Acharya, Divisional Forest Officer, Rajnagar Forest Division.



Firemen trying to douse flames at the Traders Assembly building in Gariahat where a fire broke out on Sunday. ■ ASHOK NATH ROY

Fire engulfs south Kolkata building

Families evacuated, nobody hurt; goods worth lakhs destroyed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

A major fire broke out early on Sunday at a five-storey building in southern Kolkata, gutting goods worth lakhs and destroying multiple shops next to the building, a senior fire department official said.

Families evacuated

All families have been evacuated from the building and no one was injured in the fire, the official said, adding that some people had to be taken to hospital after they complained of breathing problems.

"The building does not have an elevator and people had to climb down stairs to escape the fire," the official said.

rarely restricted in the area.

Earlier, a fire department official had said that a blast in a transformer could have started the fire.

Minister visits site

State Fire Minister Sujit Bose visited the site earlier in the day.

A team of forensic experts and senior officials of the Kolkata Police Disaster Management Group have also reached the site to collect samples for investigation into the incident.

ASI finds 2,300-year-old artefacts in Odisha

Excavation at the Asurgarh Fort in Kalahandi points to an advanced civilisation

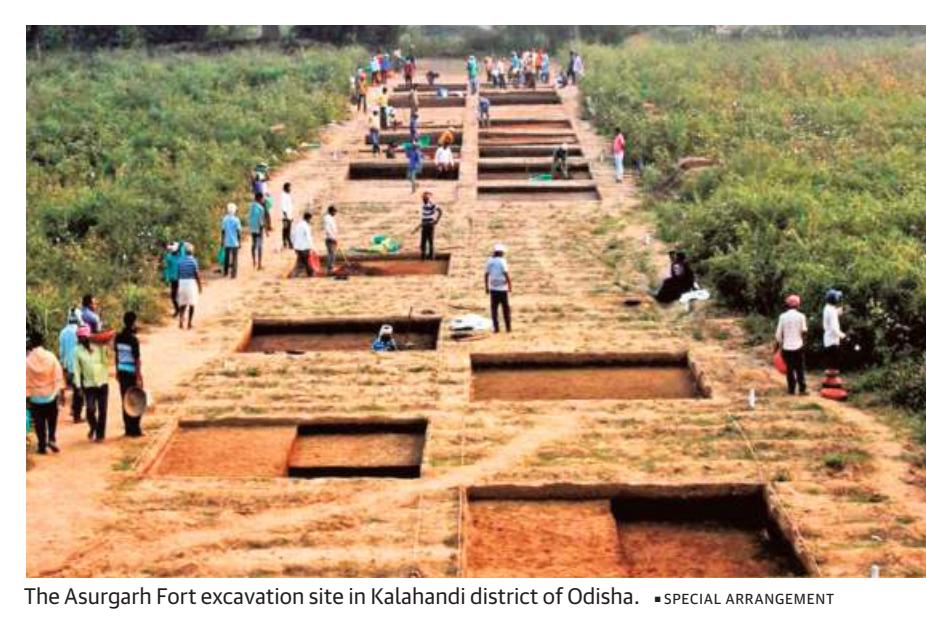
SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

Archaeologists have unearthed artefacts believed to be 2,300-year-old while carrying out excavation at the Asurgarh Fort in Odisha's Kalahandi district.

A nine member team of Archaeological Survey of India led by Dibishada B. Garnayak, Superintending Archaeologist, Excavation Branch-IV, Bhubaneswar, excavated the items dating from Mauryan to Kushan period.

"The present archaeological work reveals a number of brick structures. Wedge shaped bricks are also noticed in the circular structures. Most of the structures have terracotta tiles with grooves and hole for socketing," said Mr. Garnayak.

"The Asurgarh people during that time probably used stone rubble and tile fragments for flooring their houses and the streets. Besides, silver punch marked coins, silver and copper toe ring and ear rings, beads of carnelian, jasper, beryl, garnet, agate and coral have



The Asurgarh Fort excavation site in Kalahandi district of Odisha. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

been found," he said, adding that some of the artefacts were as old as 2,300 year.

Glass bangles

Other discovered artefacts include, glass bangle pieces of different designs and colours, sling balls, pestle, iron equipment like small wheel, ring, and arrow head.

"The findings of coral beads and imperial variety

of silver punch mark coins strongly indicates about long distant trade and association of hinterland people with seafaring people," pointed out Mr. Garnayak.

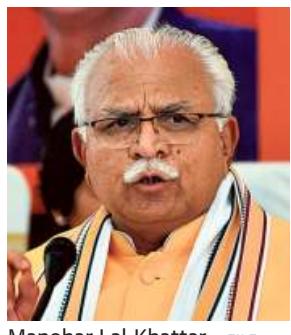
It is believed that the fort is surrounded by moat on its northern, eastern and southern sides. "Close to the western rampart, the river Sandal flows to the north thereby forming a natural moat on the western side of the fort. On the eastern side of the fort there is an extensive lake. The fort had four wide gates in four cardinal directions and at each gate was installed one guardian deity. These guardian deities are named as Ganga at the eastern gate, Kalapat at the western, Vaishnavi at the northern and Dokri at the southern gate," he said.

Farmers ask Khattar to fulfil demands or face protests

BKU plans to participate in 'Kisan Mazdoor Raj Rally' on February 3

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Farmer outfit Bharatiya Kisan Union has written to Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, asking for immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission report and fulfil other demands or else be ready to face protests.



Manohar Lal Khattar ■ FILE PHOTO

in their election manifesto during 2014 parliamentary polls but had taken a U-turn.

MSP required urgently
"Implementation of MSP on the basis of the Swaminathan Commission is required urgently because lower prices of agricultural produce disproportionate to the prices of farm inputs have made farmers land into debt trap," said Mr. Chaduni.

Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, who headed the National Commission on Farmers, had in his report recommended fixation of MSP for agriculture crops on the basis of actual cost of production plus 50% profit. The Commission had also recommended several measures to prevent farmers' suicides

and achieve faster and inclusive growth.

Mr. Chaduni added that complete farm debt waiver should also be immediately announced to address their financial distress. Besides, fixation of minimum income for farmers, the MSP for milk and vegetables are the other demands that the government should fulfil soon.

BKU leader and spokesperson Rakesh Bains said that while the sufferings of farmers increase, the BJP governments at the Centre and in Haryana continue to adopt an indifferent attitude towards their redressal.

"If by February 1 the State government does not invite us for talks, we will be compelled to intensify our agitation," he said.

tation against the State government.

BKU (Haryana) State president Gurnam Singh Chaduni, in a letter addressed to the Chief Minister, pointed out that the BJP had promised to implement the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission

Genuine demands
The BKU has said that farmers from across the State would participate in the 'Kisan Mazdoor Raj Rally' on February 3 in Kutukshetra's Pipli and, if before the rally, the State government does not pay any heed to the genuine demands of the farmers, then the union will not be averse to intensify its agitation.

AAP plans to contest all 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab

Will bring Delhi model of governance in the State: Kejriwal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Aam Aadmi Party convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that the party will contest all the 13 parliamentary seats in Punjab in the polls due this year.

"We will contest all the seats in Punjab in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. The AAP will bring the Delhi model of good governance in Punjab," he told reporters in Sangrur.

Addressing a rally at Barnala, Mr. Kejriwal said that there have been attempts to break the party but it was strong and united.



AAP convener and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, his deputy Manish Sisodia and party MP Bhagwant Mann at a rally in Barnala on Sunday. ■ PTI

'Dalits betrayed'
Hitting out at the ruling Congress government in the State, Mr. Kejriwal said that Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has betrayed the Dalits and backward classes besides farmers and the unemployed youth.

"Not just the Congress

party but the previous Parkash Singh Badal-led Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP government also never cared and suppressed the rights of the Dalits, backward classes and poor people," he alleged.

Mr. Kejriwal also accused the Congress government of failing to keep its promises made during the Assembly

elections in 2017. "Not even a single promise made by Capt. Amarinder has been fulfilled. Be it complete farm loan waiver or employment for the youth. Neither people are getting employment nor any one had got the smart phone as promised during the Assembly poll campaign."

He said all work related to the planned development of pilgrimage sites and providing facilities to pilgrims would be completed on a priority basis.

Mr. Sharma was speaking to media persons over the weekend at the first meeting of the newly constituted Department of Spirituality at the Mantralaya.

The Ministry has issued necessary instructions to install indicators along with

An Act will be brought in to make the rivers of the State a living unit, said Mr. Sharma.

Pilgrimage sites

He said all work related to the planned development of pilgrimage sites and providing facilities to pilgrims would be completed on a priority basis.

In its manifesto in Madhya Pradesh, the Congress had promised to set up gau shalas (cowsheds) in every gram panchayat, build new Adhyatmik Vibhag (Department of Spirituality) and open new Sanskrit schools across the State.

Besides, it had also promised to develop the 'Ram Path' - a mythical route taken by Lord Ram during his 14 years of exile.

Citizens and industries also joined hands at the launch of the programme here over the week-end, saying they would spread awareness about the need to end the "despicable practice". The governments of Rajasthan and Bihar will take joint action to stop trafficking of children from various towns of Bihar to the workshops and home-based production units in Jaipur.

Besides, partners of the initiative in Bihar will work for recovery of victims, their rehabilitation, access to compensation, enrolment in schools and regular follow-

up visits to prevent re-trafficking.

About 80% of children employed in the workshops in Shastri Nagar, Ramganj, Chandpole and Brahmapuri localities of Jaipur are trafficked from Bihar. Over half of them are in the age group of 10 to 14 years and they end up working in harsh conditions for 15 hours a day, for which they receive a meagre payment of ₹800 to ₹2,000 per month.

Additional Labour Commissioner C.B.S. Rathore flagged off a mobile van which will reach out to citizens and ask them to take a strong stand against child labour. Mr. Rathore said the initiative was a platform for scaling up the Labour De-

partment's efforts, which would ensure that "no child is robbed of his or her childhood".

Jaipur Collector Jagroop Singh Yadav said all partners of the initiative would identify the root cause and extent of child labour in the State capital and make suitable interventions for its eradication.

"A comprehensive rehabilitation of victims will ensure that our children grow up to become responsible citizens," he said.

The child labour-free goods production will be taken up through partnership with leading business champions with the goal of making Jaipur the safest place for international retailers and ethical Indian companies to do business. The initiative will also engage local communities to build resistance and raise awareness through hoardings, bus shelters, street performances and school presentations, requesting the public to call the helpline for children.

With her landlord coming under pressure from the police, Shabana, mother of

Resolve to stop trafficking and rehabilitate rescued children

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

A multi-stakeholder initiative, launched here for eradicating child labour, has taken a resolve to rehabilitate the rescued children and undertake collective action to promote child labour-free goods and stop trafficking of children. The governments of two States and civil society groups have come together to support the initiative.

Citizens and industries also joined hands at the launch of the programme here over the week-end, saying they would spread awareness about the need to end the "despicable practice". The governments of Rajasthan and Bihar will take joint action to stop trafficking of children from various towns of Bihar to the workshops and home-based production units in Jaipur.

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under pressure from the police, Shabana, mother of

Priest held for 'abetting' girl's suicide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JHABUA (M.P.)

A Catholic priest has been arrested in Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh for allegedly abetting the suicide of a 17-year-old girl, the police said on Sunday. The accused was identified as Father Prakash Damor (33).

The suicide note of the

girl, who allegedly hanged herself at her house on January 4, stated that Damor was pressuring her to marry him, said Inspector Kailash Chauhan of Ranapur police station. "We arrested him under IPC section 306 (abetment to suicide) and also under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences

Act on January 15," Mr. Chauhan said.

The accused had first met the girl at a missionary school where she was studying in Class XI, the police officer said.

Damor was produced before a court the same day and was remanded in judicial custody.

Ice lollies



Boys watch icicles formed by water from a leaking pipeline in Pahalgam in south Kashmir on Sunday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Madhya Pradesh govt. treads soft Hindutva path

To hike priests' honorarium 5 times

ANUP DUTTA
BHOPAL

Making the party's soft Hindutva line more starkly visible, the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh has decided to increase the honorarium of priests by five times and bring in an Act to make rivers of the State a living unit.

The State Government is committed to the welfare of every section of society, said Religious Trust and Endowments Minister P.C. Sharma, adding that "a proposal will be presented in the Cabinet meeting to hike the honorarium of temple priests, math mahants, narrators and mujavirs".

An Act will be brought in to make the rivers of the State a living unit, said Mr. Sharma.

Pilgrimage sites
He said all work related to the planned development of pilgrimage sites and providing facilities to pilgrims would be completed on a priority basis.

Mr. Sharma was speaking to media persons over the weekend at the first meeting of the newly constituted Department of Spirituality at the Mantralaya.

The Ministry has issued necessary instructions to install indicators along with



P.C. Sharma ■ FILE PHOTO

marking for the Narmada Parikrama Path besides development of Omkareshwar Parikrama Path and the Ram Van Path Ga man, said an official here on Sunday.

Ahead of the November-December 2018 Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, the Congress had adopted a soft Hindutva policy to counter the ruling BJP in these three States.

In its manifesto in Madhya Pradesh, the Congress had promised to set up gau shalas (cowsheds) in every gram panchayat, build new Adhyatmik Vibhag (Department of Spirituality) and open new Sanskrit schools across the State.

Besides, it had also promised to develop the 'Ram Path' - a mythical route taken by Lord Ram during his 14 years of exile.

The Ministry has issued necessary instructions to install indicators along with

1.40 lakh new voters added to Gurugram electoral rolls

Maximum number added to Badshapur constituency

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

Around 1.40 lakh new electors have been added to the Gurugram district rolls since the previous Lok Sabha elections in May 2014, registering an increase of over 15%. The final electoral rolls for the current year ahead of the upcoming elections is likely to be published by the month-end.

Similarly, a maximum of 1,334 names were deleted in Sohna Assembly constituency followed by Badshapur (924), Gurgaon (730) and Pataudi (191) on account of death or shifting of the electors.

According to the district administration, the total number of electors for Gurugram district stood at 10,64,351 as on September 1, 2018. However, 24,465 new electors were added and 3,179 names deleted during the revision of the electoral rolls from September 1, 2018, to January 8, 2019, with qualifying date being January 1, 2019.

Election Tehsildar Sant Lal said that the total number of electors as per the final electoral rolls for 2019 would be 10,85,637 against 9,43,110 for 2014 registering an increase of 1,42,527.

The maximum number of 15,356 electors were added to the Badshapur Assembly constituency followed by Gurgaon (641) and Sohna (60). However, only six such requests were received for Pataudi, a Scheduled Caste reserved Assembly constituency.

"The requests received for fresh voter identity cards after the completion of the revision process will be taken

1,73,000 entries with similar names, father's name physically verified by the BLOs

VINAY PRATAP SINGH
Deputy Commissioner

up after the publication of the final electoral rolls. The process of continuous updation of the electoral rolls will continue till the day of filing of nominations for Lok Sabha elections," said Mr. Lal.

Deputy Commissioner Vinay Pratap Singh told *The Hindu* that around 1,73,000 entries with similar names and father's name were physically verified by the Block Level Officers during the revision, but none was found to be duplicate.

Similarly, 11,387 "identical entries" were weeded out by the software for uncanny visual resemblance and were being physically verified. A single line voter helpline number – 1950 – is operational from Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the mini-secretariat to seek any information related to the voter identity cards.

Mr. Singh said an awareness campaign would also be kicked off on January 25, the National Voters' Day, to educate the electorate about the use of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail in the EVMs. "This time VVPAT would be used in all the 90 Assembly constituencies during Lok Sabha election."

Kin of U.P. encounter victims cry foul

SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

Family members of those killed in alleged 'encounter killings' in Uttar Pradesh claimed they were being harassed by police after a petition on extra judicial killings in the State was filed in the Supreme Court by the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL).

Brother of Sumit Gujjar, killed in an encounter in 2017, said up to eight cases under different sections such as dacoity, loot and others had been falsely slapped on him since the death of his brother and the same inspector involved in his brother's case had been harassing him.

The PUCL petition has called for a CBI probe into over 1,100 encounters which have taken place under the Yogi Adityanath government. In these 49 people had been killed and 370 injured.

The court has fixed February 12 as the next date of hearing.

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4 WEST

State armed with triple-drug therapy to fight elephantiasis

Pilot project rolled out in Nagpur; actor Swapnil Joshi is brand ambassador

JYOTI SHELAR

MUMBAI

Maharashtra is all set to roll out the World Health Organization (WHO)-recommended triple-drug therapy for lymphatic filariasis to speed up elimination of the disease. A pilot project was rolled out in Nagpur on Sunday. While Nagpur is one of the six high-prevalence areas, the therapy may be rolled out in other areas in future.

Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, is a neglected tropical disease. According to the WHO, infection occurs when filarial parasites are transmitted to humans through mosquitoes. The infection is usually acquired in childhood, causing hidden damage to the lymphatic system.

Dr. Mahendra Jagtap, the State's entomologist, said



Prevention better than cure: Drugs are distributed in endemic areas through a mass drug administration exercise. ■ FILE PHOTO

the prevalence is down to six districts, Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Nagpur, Bhandara, and Thane, from 17 a few years earlier. "We inaugurated the initiative on Friday. The three-drug combination will make a lot of difference," said Dr. Jagtap. Marathi actor Swapnil Joshi will be the brand ambassador.

The State currently has a two-drug regimen consisting

of diethylcarbamazine citrate and albendazole. The drugs are distributed in endemic areas through a Mass Drug Administration (MDA) exercise carried out once a year. In the triple-drug regimen, a drug called ivermectin will be added.

During the MDA in Nagpur on Sunday, people were administered the three-drug combination while other

areas got the two drugs. "We managed to cover nearly 85% population in the endemic areas. If people have these drugs, the disease can be prevented," said Dr. Jagtap. However, he said, it is a challenge to convince people to take them because very few understand the concept of prevention. Everyone except for pregnant women, children below one year and chronically ill patients were given the drugs.

Experts say the MDAs are better for prevention as those living in filariasis-endemic areas may be carrying the infection without symptoms. The drugs, which are safe to be taken for a non-infected person as well, kill the microfilariae (minute larvae) and clear intestinal worms.

"We are trying to create awareness," said Dr. Jagtap.

Ahmednagar a conundrum for both Congress and BJP

Conflict within party, wrangle with ally yet to be resolved

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

The Ahmednagar south Lok Sabha constituency poses challenges for the Congress and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

While the seat has traditionally been a Congress bastion, the party is riven by bickering between the factions of its two leaders in the district – Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, presently the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly and former State Minister and milk cooperative baron, Balasaheb Thorat.

With the wrangle between the Congress and its ally, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) over the seat yet to be resolved, Sujay Vikhe-Patil, Mr. Radhakrishna's elder son, has said he will fight as an Independent if the Congress did not

grant him a ticket.

"Three generations of my family has been rendering exemplary service to the people of Ahmednagar. I am going to ask for a ticket on the strength of this social service," said Mr. Sujay, addressing a youth meet on Saturday.

According to a political observer, Mr. Sujay has been actively gearing for the contest for the past couple of years, steadily expanding his support base with social activities like medical services for those on the social margins.

On Sunday, Maharashtra Congress chief Ashok Chavan said, "We have an alliance with the NCP and we will firmly abide by coalition dharma (rules). While I sympathise with Mr. Sujay's sentiments, the question of which party gets to contest

it and which candidate will get a ticket will only be taken after due consultation with our allies."

If the Congress persuades the NCP into letting them have the Ahmednagar seat, the latter's support will play a key role in determining the Congress' fortunes here.

Meanwhile, the BJP faces a leadership crisis in the district as sections within the party are unhappy with the performance of its top gun in the district – three-time MP Dilip Gandhi.

According to the grapevine, the party top brass isn't keen on giving Mr. Gandhi a ticket for the upcoming general election.

In the recently concluded poll to the Ahmednagar civic body, Mr. Gandhi's son and daughter-in-law both suffered setbacks.

Locals to go to court against public hearing for jetty near nuclear plant

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

As the district administration went ahead with the public hearing for building a jetty next to the proposed Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant (JNPP) despite instructions against it from the State Environment minister and adverse reports from research institutes, locals have decided to approach the court and the Centre.

Log Ports Private Limited has proposed developing a jetty at Nave village in Ratnagiri. *The Hindu* on Saturday reported that the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) in its letter to the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board pointed out that proposed jetty violates conditions stipulated in the clearance for the JNPP. Shiv Sena leader and Environment minister Ramdas Kadam also wrote a letter to Ratnagiri collector Sunil Chavan to not conduct the public hearing.

On Saturday, the hearing was conducted amid opposition from locals. District authorities said, they were asked to register objections but no one came forward.

Sajayit Chavan, convenor, Konkan Vinashkari Prakalp Virodi Samiti, said the hearing was unconstitutional. "The hearing shouldn't have been held as there are legitimate questions against the environment impact assessment report," he said. There was no question of submitting objection in an illegally-held public hearing. "It was done at the behest of a private company."

Bare necessities



Making a statement: A semi-nude march started by farmers from Khandala, Kesundi, Dhangarwadi, Shivajinagar, Morve and 10 other villages reached Navi Mumbai on Sunday. The rally, which will end in Mantralaya, is to protest an MIDC project. ■ P. SRUSHI

NCP wants expressway named after Shivaji's mother

Shiv Sena contends for Bal Thackeray while BJP insists on Atal Bihari Vajpayee

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

The dispute over whether the Mumbai-Nagpur super expressway will be named after former Prime Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader late Atal Bihari Vajpayee or Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray, has a new entrant.

Even before starting the construction for the super expressway, the argument has already begun, with Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Sunday announcing that it will name the road after Chhatrapati Shivaji

Maharaj's mother Jijau.

"The Mumbai-Nagpur road will be passing through 11 districts, including the birthplace of *rajmata* Jijau (the king's mother Jijau) in Buldhana. Naming this road after her would be the fitting tribute to Shivaji Maharaj and his mother. This government must do it and if it does not, we will do it after coming to power," said former deputy Chief Minister and senior NCP leader Ajit Pawar. He was addressing a party rally in Buldhana as part of NCP's statewide Parivartan yatra.

However, the ruling BJP and the Sena have already made demands. The Sena, in November 2018, submitted a letter to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis demanding that the proposed road be named after its founder, Bal Thackeray. Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation Minister Eknath Shinde in the letter had said that all Sena MLAs and MPs feel naming the road after Bal Thackeray was a way to honour him.

The BJP, on the other hand, has been planning to name the road after Atal Bi-

hari Vajpayee, claiming he brought in a revolution in the country by speeding up highway construction and launching several road projects to connect different cities.

The 700-km e-way will be connected to 24 nodes, which will be developed as smart cities. It will pass through 10 districts and lead to development in 14 others, the government said. According to the State officials, 90% of the land acquisition is over. The State recently approved the cost escalation of ₹6,000 crore, taking the total cost of the project to ₹55,335 crore.

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IN BRIEF



Vehicle for Naidu's campaign ready

GUNTUR
With a few months to go for election, a refurbished campaign vehicle is ready for A.P. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. The van comes with a 10,000-watt sound output, a huge LED screen and a pedestal to address the public.

'Need to integrate AI into military systems'

HYDERABAD
The Chief of Army Staff, General Bipin Rawat, on Sunday made a strong case for integrating technology such as artificial intelligence into military systems and emphasised the need for "looking inwards" and indigenising production in the defence sector. He was speaking at a two-day national conference on 'Self Reliance in Defence Manufacturing 2.0'.

Daunting task for Congress to protect its flock in Karnataka

Party keeping legislators in a resort on the outskirts of Bengaluru since Friday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Congress – which is facing a sort of internal rebellion, with two of its legislators defying the party whip – faces the daunting task of chalking out strategies to keep its flock together.

Under pressure for keeping its legislators in a resort on the outskirts of Bengaluru since Friday, the Congress is expected to let legislators walk free soon even as the party remains anxious about the move of some of its disgruntled legislators.

Public opinion is also building up against the 'resort politics' as most taluks in the State have been declared drought-hit.

The Congress moved its legislators to the resort days after the BJP kept its legisla-



tors in a hotel near Delhi. The Congress is confident of Ramesh Jarkiholi remaining in the party. ■ K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

While Ministers are likely to be tasked with keeping in constant touch with the disgruntled and "vulnerable" legislators numbering around half a dozen, senior leaders have held talks with such MLAs, trying to impress upon them the importance of staying in the party and retaining their public image

by doing good work. They have also been promised funds for development of their constituencies, which, in turn, will help them build an image for themselves. In rotation, they have also been promised ministerial berths," Congress sources said.

The party, according to sources, is confident of not losing any original Congressmen, and the former Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi and Chincholi legislator Umesh Jadhav, who have so far defied party leadership, remaining in the party. "The Congress could keep a watch on legislators who came to the party fold in the recent times from other parties."

However, sources said what has been a fear among the leaders is the constant pressure from BJP leaders on these vulnerable legislators to switch sides.

Constant pressure'
"If it is done once, one can let it go. In the current case, they are being pressured by businessmen and politicians from neighbouring States where many have business interests directly or in partnership. This constant pressure is a big worry," sources said.

Meanwhile, the Congress is also keeping its channels open with some BJP first-time legislators, who crossed over to the saffron party before the Assembly election. "In case the BJP succeeds in poaching our legislators, the Congress may also resort to the same tactics," sources said.

Fire breaks out on Bengaluru's Varthur lake

Fire services unable to reach site of blaze at centre of lake; pollution likely cause, say activists

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

A huge plume of smoke was spotted emanating from the middle of Varthur lake on Sunday, raising the spectre of severe pollution having set off the spontaneous combustion.

While Bellandur lake upstream has recorded multiple fires caused by chemicals and trapped hydrocarbons in its severely-polluted waters, this is the first time the 450-acre Varthur lake has caught fire.

Residents reported a large plume of smoke around 2.30 p.m. from the centre of the lake where a thick blanket of



Trouble rises: Smoke emanating from the Varthur lake in Bengaluru on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

weeds covers the surface.

"The fire broke out some 200 feet from the bank in Thubarahalli. While garbage burning happens close by, in this case, it really is not accessible. The fire emanated

smoke until 6 p.m., after which it died out slowly naturally," a resident of an apartment adjacent to the lake said.

Jagadish Reddy from the civil society group Varthur

Rising believes the same phenomenon that caused fires in the Bellandur lake in 2017 could have caused the blaze in Varthur. "Even fire officials could not douse the blaze. They were just not prepared for it. Over 20 acres has been charred and it does cause immense damage to the eco-system," he said.

'Fire not accessible'

Fire officials sent three fire tenders from Whitefield, Mahadevapura and Sarjapur. "The fire was not accessible for our tenders, and we had to wait for a boat to arrive from Mahadevapura. By

then, the fire started to reduce naturally," said an official.

While the official said it was too early to ascertain the cause of the fire, the inaccessibility of the location points would rule out a deliberate incident. "If we can't reach it, I'm not sure how anyone else could... It could be chemicals in the lake that caught fire," said the official.

Two years ago the Bellandur lake caught fire. Trapped gases and chemicals in the lake, which receives over 480 million litres of raw sewage from the city daily, were believed to have caused the blaze.

Kerala to revise list of women who prayed at Sabarimala

Prompted by widespread criticism of errors in the list

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Stung by widespread criticism over the numerous errors in the list of women who prayed at the Sabarimala temple, the Kerala government has decided to revise the list.

A counsel of the State government had presented the list in the Supreme Court on Friday, but it reportedly had discrepancies in the age and names of women. The list was taken from the records of the online system, through which pilgrims register for having "darshan".

The row erupted over flaws in the actual age of some of the 51 women, whom the counsel had referred to in the list as "banned", on account of their being of the menstrual age group of 10-50 years.

State police chief Loknath Behera on Saturday asked senior officials to revise the list, which even included the names of some men, besides of several women above the age of 50.

State Devaswom Minister Kadakkampally Surendran told media that his Department had no role in the preparation of the list.

The president of the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) and custodian of the temple A. Padmakumar also said the TDB was not responsible for the list as it did not prepare statistics related to pilgrims.

Kanaka Durga and Bindu Ammini, both in the "banned" age group of 10-50 years, prayed at the Sabarimala temple. They had approached the Supreme Court seeking security and the court directed the State government to arrange it for them. The list of 51 women



A file photo of Bindu Ammini and Kanaka Durga who were among those who visited the Sabarimala temple. ■ REUTERS

CM blames supremacists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday squarely blamed "proponents of caste supremacy" in Kerala for having used the issue of entry of women of reproductive age to Sabarimala as a pretext to reverse the singular social gains of the renaissance movement.

The RSS and the BJP had joined the agitation belatedly and as a political afterthought, he said at a seminar on "Ultra-conservative drift in Kerala society".

'Controversy unfortunate'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Mata Amritanandamayi on Sunday termed the controversy surrounding the issue of women's entry to the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple "unfortunate" and attributed it to ignorance about temple custom and concepts.

She was speaking after inaugurating the 'Ayappa Bhakta Sangamam' organised by the Sabarimala Karma Samithi at the Putharkandam Maidan. Ayyappa devotees pledged to protect the traditions and custom at the Sabarimala temple.

sident of Tiruvannamalai, said her name was wrongly included in the list of women below 50 years of age. She said her year of birth was mentioned as 1970 in her Aadhaar card by mistake, apparently indicating that this may have been the reason for the inclusion of her name in the list.

(With inputs from PTI)

+ Different shades



An aerial view of fields being prepared for the next crop in Araku Valley in Visakhapatnam district. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

Talakona picnic spot awaits much-needed makeover

Hopes pinned on adventure tourism project

STAFF REPORTER
CHITTOOR

Tucked into the lush green jungles of the Seshachalam biosphere reserve near the Chittoor-Kadapa border is Talakona, a well-known destination for picnickers who want to get away from the grind of daily urban life. Famous for its tranquil, unspoiled environs, there is a lot of untapped potential at Talakona, which the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Department is now trying to leverage.

Plans for revival
In recent months, the Department has mooted an adventure tourism project worth ₹2 crore at Talakona.



Potential galore: The entrance to the picturesque Talakona waterfalls in Chittoor district.

any kind of facilities or guidance to tourists coming to Talakona. Though there have been proposals earlier to take up our activities there, they did not materialise," he said.

The tourism officer said the project report had been prepared after a meticulous study of the potential for adventure sports in the region.

"So far, the Tourism Department has no say in offer-

est Department, making it difficult for tourists to receive any guidance when they visit. Although the Forest Department had put in place some tourist-friendly amenities, there was no significant rise in footfalls as several facilities had gone defunct.

Shelved proposals

Though there were a number of proposals to develop Talakona as a vibrant tourism destination in the district, most of the plans were shelved. Till the 1990s, Talakona was known only for its temple of Lord Shiva and used to see multitudes of devotees mainly during Maha Shivaratri festivities, besides catering to the requirements of film projects.

In spite of the presence of a few huts and a modest accommodation block run by the Tirumala Tirupati Devas-

thanams (TTD), Talakona continues to remain a picnic spot, best visited during the day with very few preferring to spend the night here. Most of the tourists limit their visits to the temple of Lord Shiva at the foothills of Talakona, while some enthusiastic visitors venture inside the forest up to the perennial waterfall.

Faltering growth

The presence of Maoists till two decades ago prevented any growth in tourism activity in the region. Movement of elephants in the area also hindered efforts to boost tourism activities. However, with Maoist activities being rooted out and elephant movement being controlled to a large extent, there is a steady rise in devotees and tourists arriving at Talakona.

The region is also a favourite haunt for bird watchers.

Drive against ganja cultivation continues in A.P. amid resistance

Plantations in 54 acres destroyed in 2 months, say officials

HARISH GILAI
VISAKHAPATNAM

The excise and prohibition officials are going ahead with the special drive to destroy the ganja plantations in the Agency areas Visakhapatnam district, despite the stiff resistance from the tribal people.

The drive was launched about two months ago with the aim of curbing ganja smuggling in the Agency and its surrounding areas and, according to officials, ganja plantations in 54 acres were destroyed by the second week of January.

"Raids are on with the support of the teams of officials of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency, forest, revenue, police depart-



Around 16,000 kg of ganja was seized in Visakhapatnam district last year.

ments. Daily wagers have been hired to destroy the plantations," a senior official of Excise and Prohibition Department said.

Tough task at hand
According to sources, the special teams are facing a

tough time to carry out the operations owing to a stiff resistance from tribal people. However, the officials are tight-lipped about the details of the operations, keeping the information confidential.

According to a senior excise official in Visakhapatnam, drones are being used to identify ganja plantations in the hilly terrain, apart from satellite imagery and drives are being conducted accordingly.

Last year, 152 ganja smuggling cases were booked when compared to the 212 in 2017. About 16,000 kg of ganja was seized last year as against the 31,648 kg in the previous year, the official added.

IN BRIEF



Vice-principal's post in all H.P. senior schools soon

SHIMLA
Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Sunday said vice-principal's post would be created in all senior secondary schools and the nomenclature of post-graduate teachers posted in schools will be changed to lecturers. He was speaking at the fourth regional seminar of Himachal Pradesh Teachers' Union (Shikshak Manasangh) at Gondpur, Banhera in Una district. PTI

Cop arrested by Punjab Vigilance Bureau

CHANDIGARH
A head constable of the Punjab Police was arrested for allegedly accepting a bribe of ₹50,000, an official spokesperson said on Sunday. The bureau spokesperson said H.C. Raja Singh, posted at the Kapurthala police station, was caught red-handed on the complaint of Baljit Singh, reader to Judicial Magistrate, Ludhiana. PTI

Two killed as car rams tree in U.P.

MUZAFFARNAGAR
Two people were killed and one person was critically injured when their car rammed a roadside tree on the Delhi-Pauri highway, the police said on Sunday. The accident took place near Ramraj village here on Saturday. PTI

Man dies of suffocation after fire in house

JAIPUR
A 45-year-old man died of suffocation after a fire broke out in his house in the Ambabari area of the city on Sunday, officials said. The incident occurred early in the morning when the fire broke out on the first floor of the two-storey building. PTI

INTERVIEW | KULDEEP SINGH RATHORE

'Cong. will win all four LS seats in Himachal'

Factionalism in the party will end soon; State party set-up will be revamped'

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Kuldeep Singh Rathore, the new president of the Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee, says the party's organisational structure in the State would be revamped soon to ensure its win in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. Optimistic about a Congress win in all the four parliamentary seats in the State, Mr. Rathore in an exclusive interview to *The Hindu* said people are disillusioned with the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre and are waiting to throw the BJP out of power.

Parliamentary elections are due in the next few months, do you think you have enough time to implement your plans and make organisational changes?

■ Yes, we have little time left before the 2019 parliamentary elections. In certain districts and blocks of the State, where the office-bearers are inactive, I will have to change them. Changes in the organisational structure will be done soon so that the party can be strengthened at the grassroots level ahead of the elections.

What would be your priorities?

■ I took charge of the HPCC on January 17, and the public

meeting held in Shimla, in which all senior leaders participated, sent a strong message to the people that the Congress is united and ready to take on the ruling BJP.

The 2019 parliamentary polls are very crucial for us and we will put up a strong fight against the BJP. This is going to be my prime task. We will be planning more rallies in the days to come which will be attended by senior leaders, including former CM Virbhadra Singh and former Union Minister and Rajya Sabha member Anand Sharma.

The Congress in Himachal Pradesh is facing factionalism. How will you get rid of it and discipline partymen?

■ I am quite optimistic that factionalism within the party would come to an end soon. My appointment has been through consensus. All seniors leaders have supported my candidature that makes it evident that factionalism will end. I'll talk to all senior party leaders and if there are any differences, I'll try to sort them out. I am an organisational man and have clear instruction from AICC president Rahul Gandhi that no indiscipline should be tolerated in the party. Ensuring discipline among party ranks would be my key priority.

By when will the Congress candidates for the four Lok Sabha seats be finalised?

■ The process for candidate selection for the four seats – Shimla, Kangra, Hamirpur and Mandi – has already started. The final decision is the prerogative of the Congress chief. Let me assure you that the party will put strongest candidates in the fray. We will also conduct a survey about finding suitable candidates. I am hopeful that



C Ensuring discipline among party ranks would be my key priority.
New HPCC chief

by January 30 a report on names of probable candidates would be submitted to the party high command.

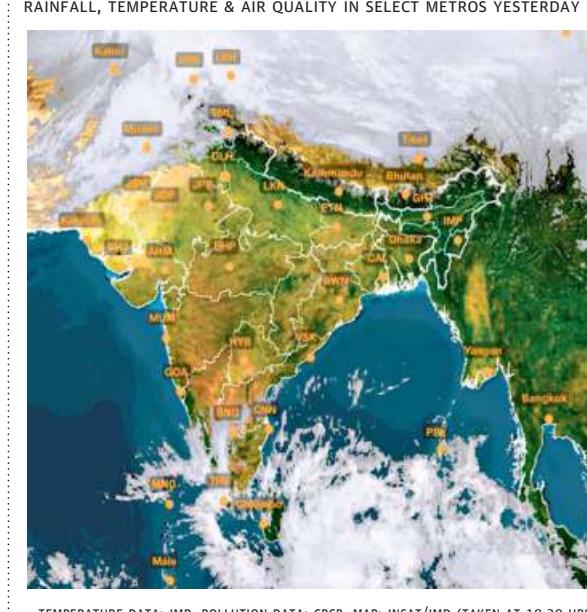
How do you rate the work of the ruling BJP in the State and at the Centre?

■ The BJP regime has been a complete failure, both at the

Centre and in the State. There is strong anti-incumbency against the BJP. People are disillusioned with the Narendra Modi government at the Centre and are waiting to throw the BJP out of power. Corruption in defence deals, rising prices, unemployment and the divisive policies of the BJP have left them exposed. The BJP's recent attempt to woo voters with 10% reservation in education and government jobs for the economically weak people across castes and religions in the general category is also nothing beyond a hollow promise. Where were they doing for the last four years. Suddenly in the election year they have come up with this reservation decision. It's only vote-bank politics. You will see the Congress will win all the four parliamentary seats in H.P. People are fed of the Jai Ram Thakur-led BJP government in Himachal. The government has been spending lavishly on vehicles and perks for ministers instead of public welfare.

The State government has failed to meet the aspiration of the people.

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.30 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy rain/snow at a few places likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 26.0	11.6	...	Kozhikode	... 31.3	22.2	...
Ahmedabad	... 33.3	13.8	...	Kurnool	... 33.5	18.2	...
Aizawl	... 28.0	Lucknow	... 26.7	8.3	...
Allahabad	... 28.8	7.4	...	Madurai	... 31.6	19.5	...
Bengaluru	... 28.6	13.7	...	Mangaluru	... 33.0	18.4	...
Bhopal	... 31.5	10.6	...	Mumbai	... 34.6	17.9	...
Bhubaneswar	... 26.9	15.4	...	Mysuru	... 29.6	12.8	...
Chandigarh	... 22.0	10.6	...	New Delhi	... 28.7	7.0	...
Chennai	... 29.0	20.0	...	Patna	... 24.2	9.6	...
Coimbatore	... 30.1	17.8	...	Port Blair	... 0.6	29.5	24.8
Dehradun	... 25.4	9.6	...	Puducherry	... 29.4	19.0	...
Gangtok	... 15.4	6.5	...	Pune	... 31.1	12.1	...
Goa	... 35.0	19.8	...	Raipur	... 30.8	12.7	...
Guwahati	... 26.9	10.2	...	Ranchi	... 25.2	8.0	...
Hubballi	... 30.0	17.0	...	Shillong	... 0.1	16.4	5.5
Hyderabad	... 31.2	13.3	...	Shimla	... 14.5	7.5	...
Imphal	... 23.5	4.5	...	Srinagar	... 5.6	0.3	...
Jaipur	... 26.0	11.1	...	Trivandrum	... 31.5	20.7	...
Kochi	... 32.0	21.0	...	Tiruchi	... 30.1	19.4	...
Kohima	... 19.0	6.2	...	Vijayawada	... 30.1	19.6	...
Kolkata	... 26.3	13.0	...	Visakhapatnam	... 29.0	19.8	...

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	88	115	.25	174	... 101	...
Bengaluru	10	... 54	... 92	... 101
Chennai	18	.17	.53	... 87
Delhi	... 112	.60	.462	... 390
Hyderabad	34	.88	.36	152	.137	...
Kolkata	29	.69	.18	.436	.381	...
Lucknow	17	.92	.66	... 343
Mumbai	44	.39	110	.211	.250	...
Pune	32	.6	.5	.201	.143	...
Visakhapatnam	26	107	.29	.263	.232	...

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall Air Quality Index (AQI) score of 441 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Amritsar, Punjab recorded a healthy AQI score of 45

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.

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

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

E TENDER NOTICE NO. SG-664-24-SIG-2018-19-Dhanbad, dt-15.01.2019
E TENDER IS INVITED ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA FOR THE UNDER MENTIONED WORK.
SI.No. - (1) Name of the work: Barkana-Garhwa Road-Chopan High Availability Single Section Digital Axle Counter. (20 set in jurisdiction of ASTE/CPU). (2) Appox. Cost of the work: ₹ 1,08,63,182.96 (Approx) (3) Earnest Money : ₹ 2,04,300.00 (4) Date & time for closing of tender: 05.02.2019 at 16.00 hrs. 5. Any E-Tenders which is sent by Post / Courier /FAX or self, Manual proposals although the letter is on firms letter pad or received in time will not be accepted. The above E-Tenders, E-Tendering document along with full information is available on website i.e., <http://www.ireps.gov.in> Note : Tenderers are requested to visit the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> atleast 10days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum / corrections etc. in response to this E-tender.
Sr. Divl. Sig. & Telecom Engineer, Dhanbad PR/1478/DHN/S&T/T/18-19/40

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LEGAL NOTICE

In the Court of Vikrant, Civil Judge Junior Division-Cum-JMC, Panipat M/s Grover International through Partner Vinod Kumar Grover Versus The Carpet Collective through Prop. M.J Ansari NACT No. 223/2017 CRR No. HRPP03-0102-2018 Date: 20.02.2019
In above titled case, the accused M.J Ansari, Auth Sign/ Prop. The Carpet Collective 167A, First Floor Vill. Khirki Malviya Nagar, New Delhi has been served. It is ordered that accused appear in person or through counsel on 20.02.2019 at 10am.
For details log on to <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/>?rs=distri Civil Judge Junior Division, Cum-JMC, Panipat

NOTICE REGARDING LOST CERTIFICATES (S) OF TAMILNADU PETROPRODUCTS LIMITED

Regd Office : Manali Express Highway, Manali, Chennai-600068 I, Thresikuttu Antony residing at 163-B, GTB Endave, Picket F, MTG Flats, Delhi-110093 the registered holder(s) of the under mentioned shares held in the above said company, hereby give notice that the share certificate(s) in respect of the said shares have been lost and I have applied to the Company for issue of duplicate certificate(s). Any person having claim in respect of the said shares should lodge such claims with the Company at its above referred address within 15 days from this date, else the Company will proceed to issue duplicate certificate(s) and no further claim will be entertained by the Company thereafter.
Folio No. 0043342 Certificate No. 447532 Distinctive Nos. 80279988-80279987 No. of Shares 100.

Folio No. 00263270 Certificate No. 447532 Distinctive Nos. 90279988-90280087 No. of Shares 100

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IN BRIEF



Petrol, diesel see big price hikes on Sunday

NEW DELHI
Transport fuel rates were hiked sharply on Sunday. Petrol was hiked by 23 paise a litre while diesel went up by 29-31 paise a litre in the four metros. Petrol in Delhi cost ₹70.95 per litre on Sunday while diesel cost ₹65.45 a litre. IANS

No liquor sale in Rajasthan after 8 p.m.

JAIPUR
Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday issued a strict order to the officials to stop the sale of liquor after 8 p.m at all shops in the State. "Those caught selling liquor after 8 p.m will be penalised; their shops should be sealed and licence should be cancelled," he ordered the excise officials. IANS

Mild tremors jolt Gujarat, parts of Maharashtra

AHMEDABAD
Four minor earthquakes within seven hours hit the Saurashtra and Kutch regions of Gujarat on Sunday but there were no reports of casualties. In neighbouring Maharashtra, mild tremors were reported from parts of Palghar district. The Institute of Seismological Research in Gujarat said the tremors were felt in a span of seven and a half hours with the maximum magnitude reaching 4.1. IANS

Three college students die while taking selfie

Bhubaneswar
Three engineering students lost their lives while taking a selfie in the waters of the Bay of Bengal near Jahania, a seashore picnic spot. The deceased were identified as Amit Mohanty, Abinash Pradhan and Subha Shoumya Senapati, all students of a Bhubaneswar-based private engineering college.

Local BJP leader found dead; party cries foul
BARWANI (M.P.)
A BJP leader was found dead in Barwani district of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday morning, with the police suspecting that he was murdered. Manoj Thakre's death came to light three days after another BJP leader was shot dead in Mandsaur, prompting the party to claim that its leaders were being targeted. PTI

Man mauled to death by lions at zoo

CHANDIGARH
A man was mauled to death by lions on Sunday at the Chhatbir Zoo in Zirakpur, 20 km from Chandigarh. Zoo officials said the man entered the enclosure by scaling a 25-feet wall. He was attacked by two lions as soon as he crossed over. PTI

Jessica Lal's killer seeks early release

Cites remission in tandoor murder case



Jessica Lal.

The Board's view. Sharma, son of former Union minister Venod Sharma, was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Delhi High Court in December, 2006 for killing Lal.

The trial court had acquitted Sharma, but the Delhi High Court reversed the order and the Supreme Court upheld his life sentence in April, 2010.

Jessica Lal was shot dead by Sharma after she refused to serve him liquor at the Tamarind Court restaurant owned by socialite Bina Ramani at the Qutub Colonnade in south Delhi's Mehrauli on April 30, 1999.

SRB rejection
Sharma has sought setting aside of the October 4, 2018, Sentence Review Board recommendation rejecting his plea, as well as the December 7, 2018, order of the Delhi government, upholding

Meghalaya's coal mines are used for disposing bodies too

The dark depths of the mines, where few would dare to search, were turned into graves by criminals, says activist

RAHUL KARMAKAR

GUWAHATI
All bodies in Meghalaya's killer coalmines do not belong to miners, activists in the hill State said.

Thousands of active and abandoned rat-hole mines have for years been used by murderers to dump the body of their victims. Many across Meghalaya's coal belts have accidentally fallen to their deaths too.

Most of the bodies deep inside the pits have been forgotten, buried under coal and rocks or - like the one detected by an underwater Navy robot in an illegal mine at Ksan since December 13. High-power pumps used by several agencies have not succeeded in draining out the water for 38 days now.

Only a few bodies of non-miners, activists said, have been recovered. They include that of 20-year-old Daphishisha Kharasati, who was murdered by her husband Kheinlang Dkhar in January 1, 2014.

Her decomposed body was exhumed almost three months later from an abandoned coalmine at Umtah near Jayliah village in EJH district.

Two years later, the district police arrested Michael Dkhar for raping and murdering a three-year-old girl.



Sitting ducks: Labourers at a coal mine in East Jaintia Hills district, Meghalaya. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

Her body too was dumped in an abandoned coalmine, as was that of another of his victims - an 11-year-old girl - in a mine elsewhere in the district.

"The coal boom in the

1980s and 1990s led to a spurt in crimes of all hues. The dark depths of the mines, where few would dare to search, were turned into graves by criminals. Many of the victims were wo-

men and children because of human trafficking for mining as well as sex trade," Hasina Kharbhih of the Shillong-based Impulse NGO Network told *The Hindu*.

Impulse's 2010 investiga-

tive report on child labourers employed in Meghalaya's "hazardous" mines was one of the documents on the basis of which the National Green Tribunal banned rat-hole mining in the State on April 17, 2014.

Data with the Meghalaya Police reveal the crime rate has been higher in the State's eight (out of 11) mining districts. EJH, for instance, accounted for almost 14% of the 166 murders across the State in 2013, and almost 12% of the 159 mur-

ders the following year.

Saheb Ali, one of the five survivors of the December 13 disaster, reaffirmed on Sunday that 17 miners have been trapped in the Ksan mine, 160 ft below. "We are waiting for further instruction while efforts are on to locate items such as rings, amulets and pieces of clothes for relatives to identify the bodies, if and when they are located," he said.

Sea of devotees



Devotion and prayer: The procession organised in connection with the feast of St. Sebastian (Arthunkal Perunnal) at St. Andrew's Basilica, Arthunkal, in Kerala on Sunday.

Farmers group, Anna Hazare plan joint stir

Seek farm loan waiver, MSP for vegetables, fruits and milk, among others

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Farmers group Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh (RKM) plans to join hands with anti-corruption activist Anna Hazare for a joint nationwide agitation from January 30. Farmer leaders and Mr. Hazare are expected to formally announce their plans in Delhi on Monday.

"We have five demands:

the establishment of a Lokpal and Lokayuktas; full implementation of the MS Swaminathan commission's recommendations; complete farm loan waiver; minimum support prices for vegetables, fruits and milk; and a pension of ₹5000 per month for farmers," said RKM spokesperson Abhimanyu Kohar.

The RKM is led by Shiv Ku-

mar Sharma, the activist better known as Kakkaji, who was a key player behind recent farmer strikes and the wave of protests in Madhya Pradesh's Mandsaur district, where six farmers were killed in police firing in June 2017. He founded the platform of 182 farmer groups after he was sacked from the RSS-backed Bhartiya Kisan Sangh.

Mr. Hazare, a social activi-

st best known for the mass

protests against corruption in 2011, recently announced his plans to fast from Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary, as the Centre had failed to implement the Lok Pal and Lok Ayuktas Act, 2013.

He said he wrote 32 letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi but had not got any reply so far.

'Kumbh will generate ₹1.2 lakh crore revenue'

Pilgrimage flush with funds; will create short-term jobs: CII

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ALLAHABAD

The mega Kumbh Mela, which began on January 15 and will continue till March 4, is expected to generate a revenue of ₹1.2 lakh crore for Uttar Pradesh, according to apex industry body Confederation of Indian Industry.

Although the Kumbh Mela is spiritual and religious in nature, the economic activities associated with it generate employment for over six lakh workers across various sectors, the CII said in a report.

The Uttar Pradesh government has allocated ₹4,200 crore for the 50-day Kumbh Mela this year, which is over thrice the budget of the Maha Kumbh in 2013, making the mega pilgrimage perhaps the costliest ever.

Around 12 crore people are expected to visit the Kumbh between now and March 4, when the Mela will come to a close on Maha Shivratri day.

The hospitality sector aims at employing 2,50,000 people, airlines and airports around 1,50,000 and tour operators around 45,000. The employment numbers in eco-tourism and medical tourism are being estimated at 85,000, said a CII study.

Apart from this, there will be around 55,000 new jobs in the unorganised sector, comprising tour guides, taxi drivers, interpreters and vo-



Holy dip: Ascetics at the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad. ■ AFP

Devotees throng Kumbh; security stepped up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ALLAHABAD

A day before 'Paush Purnima', the second auspicious bathing day during the Kumbh, all roads

leading to the bath on Monday, marking the beginning of 'Kalpavas', a period of austerity.

lunteers. This will lead to an increase in income levels for government agencies and individual traders.

Global festival

Attracting a massive number of tourists from various countries like Australia, the U.K., Canada, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, New Zealand, Mauritius, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, the Kumbh is a festival of the

world. "The 'mela' is expected to generate a revenue of ₹1,200 billion for Uttar Pradesh, the State where it is being held, while neighbouring States like Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh will also benefit from the enhanced revenue generation, with a large number of national and foreign tourists expected to explore other destinations," the study said.

RailTel is turning railway stations into digital hubs

'Phenomenal response' to what is now one of the world's largest public WiFi networks



Seamless connectivity: A passenger at the Chennai Central logging in to the free WiFi network. ■ K. PICHUMANI

Cites remission in tandoor murder case

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Convicted in the Jessica Lal murder case, Siddhartha Vashishta alias Manu Sharma, has moved the Delhi High Court seeking premature release.

The plea came in the wake of the High Court's December 2018 decision to release former Youth Congress leader Sushil Kumar Sharma, who had served over 23 years in prison for the murder of his wife Naina Sahni in 1995, the incident coming to be known as the 'tandoor murder' case.

Manu Sharma said in his petition that he had served 15 years in jail without remission, and over 20 years with remission, and therefore, he was eligible for grant of premature release.

SRB rejection
Sharma has sought setting aside of the October 4, 2018, Sentence Review Board recommendation rejecting his plea, as well as the December 7, 2018, order of the Delhi government, upholding

the Board's view. Sharma, son of former Union minister Venod Sharma, was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Delhi High Court in December, 2006 for killing Lal.

The trial court had acquitted Sharma, but the Delhi High Court reversed the order and the Supreme Court upheld his life sentence in April, 2010.

Jessica Lal was shot dead by Sharma after she refused to serve him liquor at the Tamarind Court restaurant owned by socialite Bina Ramani at the Qutub Colonnade in south Delhi's Mehrauli on April 30, 1999.

SRB rejection
Sharma has sought setting aside of the October 4, 2018, Sentence Review Board recommendation rejecting his plea, as well as the December 7, 2018, order of the Delhi government, upholding

menal," sources in RailTel told *The Hindu*. Bona fide passengers are using this WiFi facility for streaming high definition (HD) videos, and downloading movies, songs and games, and engaging with their office work online, says RailTel.

For a modern handset, the speed can go as high as 40 Mbps for the initial 30 minutes of unhindered open access, which is unmatched on any other network.

The backbone capacity of each of these railway stations is 1 Gbps.

Free WiFi services to com-

mutes are being provided under 'RailWire', RailTel's retail Broadband initiative. Of the 74 railway stations, RailTel has provided high speed WiFi at 414 A, A1 and C category railway stations across the country, in association with Google as the technology partner.

Currently, 21 railway stations in Kerala have free WiFi, and a project to provide free WiFi to 100 more stations this fiscal as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility initiative of a Mumbai-based trust through RailTel is on the anvil, officials said.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, ANANDAPUR BARRAGE PROJECT, SALAPADA (E-mail Id:- cceabp-eicwr.od@nic.in/ loabp-eicwr.od@nic.in)										
e-Procurement Notice No. CCEABP-15 of 2018-19										
Tender Inviting Authority	Name of Work	Bid Id No.	Value of the Work in Lakhs (Approx)	Bid Security in Rs. (Online)	Cost of Bid Document (Rs.) (Online)	Class of Bidder	Period of Completion	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding	From	To
Chief Construction Engineer, A.B.Project, Salapada	Excavation and CC Lining of Baitarani Right Bank Canal (BRBC) from RD 00 Km to 1.50 Km Including Construction of Structure and Service Road.	ABP-ACD-04/1 of 2018-19	677.07	6,78,000/-	10,000/-	SpI & Super	06 (Six) Calendar months	25.01.19 11.30 AM	15.02.19 5.00 PM	16.02.19 11.30 AM
	Excavation and CC Lining of Baitarani Right Bank Canal (BRBC) from RD 1.50 Km to 2.68 Km Including Construction of Structure and Service Road.	ABP-ACD-04/2 of 2018-19	673.27	6,74,000/-						

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website : www.tendersorissa.gov.in / www.dowrodisha.gov.in. Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation if any required will be published in Govt. website only.

Chief Construction Engineer, Anandapur Barrage Project, Salapada.



Clear the air

The fog of doubt over the Rafale deal can be lifted only with greater transparency

That troubling questions about the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets will persist despite a clean chit of sorts from the Supreme Court, was demonstrated compellingly last week following *The Hindu's* detailed investigation into the deal. It showed that in comparison to the bid under the UPA there was an overall escalation in the price of each jet in the 2016 deal struck by the Modi government, because the price of 13 India Specific Enhancements (ISEs), essentially upgrades that were sought on the bare-bones aircraft, was spread over 36 jets as opposed to the original 126. Significantly, as *The Hindu's* investigation revealed, three Defence Ministry officials in the seven-member Indian Negotiating Team objected to the €1.3 billion assigned to ISEs; it was eventually approved by a narrow 4-3 majority on the ground that ISEs are a non-recurring cost. But this raises an obvious and perplexing question: since they are a non-recurring cost, why did the government drop, or fail to secure, the follow-on provision, which would have given India the option to purchase more Rafales, and reduce the per-aircraft price by spreading the design and development costs involved in the upgrades? After all, the follow-on clause was a part of the deal under negotiation under the UPA government. The import of the question assumes an altogether different dimension given that the Air Force, with an old and depleting fleet, has required – and for some two decades now – far greater numbers of Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) like the Rafale. Last year, the government issued a Request for Information for 110 fighters, of which about 15% will be acquired in a flyaway condition and the remainder manufactured under the strategic partnership route. With the same manufacturers back in the bidding fray, we are in a way back to where we were – in other words, to a place that casts doubts on the vigour of India's long-term planning when it comes to defence preparedness.

Owing to a mix of investigation, statements and government leaks, much of the information about the pricing, the acquisition process and the ISEs are already in the public domain. It is nobody's case that information that could impact the aircraft's operational capability or jeopardise national security should be shared, but the government has been less than willing to come forward to address the issue of pricing. Instead it has been taking cover, unconvincingly, under the secrecy clause in the general security agreement signed between India and France in 2008. Given the fog of doubt over a number of issues, it is unclear why it doesn't adopt a more accommodating posture by arranging private briefings for Opposition leaders and permitting a JPC to examine the deal. Without this, the general presumption will be that it has something to hide.

Unity and strength

Opposition parties need a cohesive framework to be a viable alternative to the BJP. It is always easier to agree on the ends than on the means. Opposition parties that came together at the Kolkata rally hosted by Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee had a commonality of purpose – defeating the Bharatiya Janata Party. But little else. To share a dais and hold hands is one thing; to share seats and work in tandem is quite another. Even so, for over 20 parties, big and small, some with overlapping support bases, to come together on one platform is in itself remarkable. It is the dominance of the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi beginning with the 2014 Lok Sabha election that has forced these parties to yoke themselves together. Alliances that had seemed impossible just a year ago, such as those between the SP and the BSP in Uttar Pradesh, the TDP and the Congress in Andhra Pradesh, and the Congress and the JD(S) in Karnataka now have a settled look. The Trinamool and Ms. Banerjee have also shifted positions to move toward the formation of a national-level alternative to the BJP, giving up the idea of a federal front of regional parties opposed to both the Congress and the BJP. The federal front was essentially the brainchild of the TRS founder K. Chandrasekhar Rao, who could not countenance being part of a front that included his principal rival, the Congress. Ms. Banerjee, who seemed warm to the idea initially, was quick to realise such a formation would be unable to mount a serious challenge to the BJP. In terms of optics, the Kolkata rally was a show of strength for Ms. Banerjee. At the same time, it seems to have imparted a fresh impulse to the efforts to put together a viable, if not entirely cohesive, alternative to the BJP.

However, though all these parties are agreed on flushing out the BJP, there is still the issue of reaching agreements at the State level, and arriving at a consensus on a common manifesto of policies and programmes. The SP and the BSP have agreed on seat-sharing but have not accommodated the Congress; also, negotiations with another ally, the RLD, are yet to conclude. The Congress and the JD(S) are partners in government, but their vote banks overlap geographically. Seat-sharing is likely to be akin to navigating a minefield. There is also no telling how an alliance between the Congress and the TDP, bitter rivals hitherto, will work on the ground. Besides, the support bases of these parties are varied socio-economically, and without a shared agenda for governance the political unity at the leadership level might be difficult to sustain. Therefore, it was perhaps no surprise that the rally avoided the contentious issue of naming a prime ministerial candidate, leaving the issue to be decided after the election. The Opposition parties may have made a good start, but there is much they need to settle among themselves to mount a serious challenge in 2019.

Steel frame or steel cage?

Shah Faesal's resignation tells us about the receding powers of the civil service to make a difference to society



KRISHNA KUMAR

In his letter of resignation from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in early January, Shah Faesal cites a number of reasons. He became an icon and a celebrity when he topped the IAS examination, in 2010. He was the first Kashmiri to do so. Now, after his resignation, he is sure to acquire greater glow, especially if he joins politics as he has indicated. His letter of resignation demonstrates his anguish over the pain Kashmir has experienced over the recent past. Apparently, he feels that as a civil servant, he feels constrained to express his views. The letter also suggests that he feels sorry for not being able to do much to alleviate the sufferings of his people. His hope that he will be able to do this by joining politics permits us to look at a problem we face in our quest of modernity.

Respect through merit

Before Independence, and for a while after it, competing for entry into the IAS was motivated by the urge to seek status in society. An open contest based on success in an academic examination presented the attraction of gaining social respect through merit. The status that accrued to an officer was associated with the authority he had to exercise state power. In those

days, official power had few political constraints, especially at the local level. A district collector was seen as a meritorious monarch. He was the custodian of law and order. That was a key role in the colonial order. Its cultural residues have persisted to the present times, and the status of the district collector – in some States, the district magistrate or DM – comes largely from his or her responsibility to maintain law and order.

Following Independence, the IAS acquired a nation-building tinge in its earlier colonial role (as the Indian Civil Service as it was then called). From the local to the national levels, the IAS was seen as providing the firm and stable frame that India needed to overcome what were often described as 'fissiparous' tendencies in society. The addition of a nationalist lustre to an otherwise unchanged status gathered yet another layer when nation-building extended to a 'development' agenda. As a learned decision-maker, the civil servant was supposed to lend objectivity to the elected politician's agenda and wishes. This function made an impact on the lure of the civil service as a career. Success in the IAS examination was now seen as bringing the power to 'do something' for the larger good, and not merely as a conduit of personal security and comfortable lifestyle.

Marker of change

Mr. Faesal's decision to resign from the IAS after a short stint in it marks yet another stage in the



change of perceptions. He is not the first to mark this change. Young entrants to the IAS have been known to resign early for social causes or academic careers. In each case, early abandonment continues to signify an act of renunciation for the pursuit of an ideal. Such examples have indicated the rising perception that the IAS officer's power is much too constrained, especially by those wielding political power. Mr. Shah Faesal's resignation tells us how the power to 'do something' now belongs exclusively to the politician.

This trajectory has a considera-

ble lesson to offer. To begin with, it shows how modernity in India has not brought an adequate appreciation of the different roles a society needs to run itself well. Children and adults share the feeling that one or two roles are more important than all others. From childhood onwards, one learns this lesson both directly, from parents and teachers, and also indirectly, from socialisation. The chief guest culture, widely prevalent in schools, reinforces the significance of becoming an important person. The person invited as chief guest is often either a civil servant or a politician.

A 'syndrome'

Not only schools, even community functions organised on religious festivals are similarly adorned. If the organisers cannot get hold of someone in service or politics at present, they go for someone retired. By the time they are in secondary grades, children absorb the message that a worthwhile life can only be led by gaining public importance. Many children begin to feel that their best chance to make their parents happy is by doing things that bring fame and importance. For doing this, there are more choices today, but the range continues to be narrow and the preferred ones are those with the biggest crowd at the entry. The lure of competitive tests like the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) throws light on this cultural phenomenon.

The civil services remain a big

draw as the vast clientele of commercial coaching demonstrates. Probability of success is understandably low, and that is precisely what drives the coaching industry to ever increasing rates of growth and fee. It is only after failing to make it into the highest civil services that students look towards other avenues. The same is true of tests in engineering and medicine. It is only after failing to get into these professions that the young consider pursuing a career in other areas. The experience of failure leaves its psychological scab on many young minds. They continue to feel, for a long time, that they could have 'become' someone important. A touching story in this genre is of a schoolteacher who never went back to meet his favourite teacher. He said, 'How could I tell my teacher that I could only become a teacher?'

As a society, we obviously pay a high price for maintaining this syndrome. If only an IAS or a political leader is perceived as having the capacity to 'do something', the rest can only carry out inconsequential routines. And what is that 'something'? It is a socially shared mystery. In the case of Mr. Shah Faesal, it seems to be somewhat clear. His letter of resignation from the IAS can be read as an expression of his urge to alleviate the pain of Kashmir. He feels he can do it by joining politics. Let us hope he succeeds.

Krishna Kumar is a former director of the NCERT and the author of 'Education, Conflict and Peace'

Fabrication and falsification

Data manipulation in the MGNREGA is leading to gross violations in its implementation



RAJENDRAN NARAYANAN

Chunni Devi (name changed), an Adivasi woman in her late 20s, lives with her three under-nourished children in Mahuaudan, Jharkhand. Her husband died more than a year ago due to the cold conditions in the area. She is yet to get a widow's pension and ration under the Antyodaya category. She is sceptical of working under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) because of delays in payment and the lack of support facilities for her children at worksites. She earns just ₹20 a day, and which happens only when some cleaning work is available in her neighbourhood.

Chunni Devi is one among crores of people in India struggling to navigate a host of vulnerabilities to eke out a living. A lack of dignified employment, non-payment of adequate wages on time and insufficient food mean that the family of four is in a dicey situation and staring at starvation.

A curation of data

In recent years, there have been at least 74 reported starvation deaths, with 60 cases having occurred in the last two years across parts of India; a lot of them have been in Jharkhand. Based on a directive by the Union Ministry of Rural Development, the Jhark-

hand government issued a report on 18 deaths. Hastily produced and in insensitive language, the report concludes that none of these deaths was due to starvation or connected to MGNREGA – a lazy, convenient denial of any correlation. If implemented the proper way, MGNREGA, among other measures, can go a long way in improving the life and the livelihoods of Chunni Devi and others like her. Not only is the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government in the State and Centre demonstrating alarming indifference in this matter but is also covering up realities by curating information to suit its false narrative. Such curation starts from suppressing information at the source, to deliberately manipulating and obfuscating data to perpetrate falsehoods.

Here are some examples to illustrate how the manipulation of information is leading to ethical and legal violations.

The MGNREGA is a demand-driven programme, i.e., work must be provided within 15 days of demanding work failing which the Centre must pay an unemployment allowance (UA). A UA report is generated but rarely implemented. Numerous ground reports across the country suggest that because of a funds crunch, field functionaries do not even enter the work demanded by labourers in the MGNREGA Management Information System (MIS). This is information suppression at the source. Lack of offline alternatives to capture work demand from labourers means that data on the MIS are being treated as the gospel truth. Be that as it may, even this under-re-

vision, 16 States still show a negative balance which shows the continued lack of funds. Further, the Centre's oft-repeated claims of the "highest ever allocation" are dubious and meaningless because if the allocation does not honour work demand, as is the case here, it is a violation of the Act.

Chunni Devi's cynicism is a case of corroboration at the implementation level of who the victims of the government's manipulation eventually are. Contrary to the Central government's claims of there being more than 90% payments on time, we found in a recent study of more than 9 million transactions that only 21% payments were made on time in 2016-17. The trend continued in 2017-18. Further, the Central government alone was causing an average delay of over 50 days in the disbursement of wages to labourers. The mandate is to pay wages within 15 days else workers are entitled to a delay compensation. While this delay by the Central government (called stage 2 delays) is captured in the system, it is intentionally suppressed to avoid paying delay compensation – another violation of the Act.

Key findings

To estimate the extent of under-provision, we have analysed (in an ongoing study), work demand and employment generated for over 5,700 panchayats across 20 States (for 2017-18 and the first three quarters of 2018-19). We found that this year, the employment generated was about 33% lower than the registered work demand, and last year, about 30% lower. If this large-sample trend holds true for the country, then a conservative minimal allocation required this year is about ₹85,000 crore. After 99% of the original allocation got exhausted earlier this month, 250 Members of Parliament and citizens wrote to the Prime Minister, following which the Centre's revised allocation now stands at a paltry ₹61,084 crore. Despite this

revision, 16 States still show a negative balance which shows the continued lack of funds. Further, the Centre's oft-repeated claims of the "highest ever allocation" are dubious and meaningless because if the allocation does not honour work demand, as is the case here, it is a violation of the Act.

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A case of insensitivity

In an internal memorandum dated August 21, 2017, the Union Ministry of Finance acknowledged the accuracy of the study's findings and stated that delays in payments were directly linked to lack of "[un]availability of funds". This glaring lacuna was argued in the Supreme Court in a recent PIL (*Swaraj Abhiyan vs. Union of India*) where the judgement categorically

stated: "The wages due to the worker in terms of Stage 2 above must be transferred immediately and the payment made to the worker forthwith failing which the prescribed compensation would have to be paid. The Central Government cannot be seen to shy away from its responsibility... The State Governments and Union Territory Administrations may be at fault, but that does not absolve the Central Government of its duty". +

In court, the Central government, agreed to calculate Stage 2 delays, and pay compensation, but the judgement (dated May 18, 2018) has still not been implemented. This not only reflects contempt of court by the Central government but is also an insensitive assault on people and a deliberate hiding of the truth. In the process, countless lives are getting silently buried in fabricated statistics.

Such falsification and a manipulation of information by the BJP government reminds one of Václav Havel's essay "The Power of the Powerless". Written in protest against the repressive regime of erstwhile Czechoslovakia, it says: "Because the regime is captive to its own lies, it must falsify everything. It falsifies the past. It falsifies the future. It falsifies statistics." The crisis that Chunni Devi and others are in becomes entangled in a web of technicalities and a din of dry numbers. While the government is busy falsifying realities, starvation and agrarian distress, the slow death of the MGNREGA continues.

Rajendran Narayanan teaches at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru

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.

At Kolkata

There can be no second opinion that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, by getting most of the leaders in the Opposition to converge in Kolkata and actively participate in her rally, has proved that she can be a great organiser (Page 1, "Opposition flexes its muscle in Kolkata", January 20). Now that the ball to remove the BJP has started rolling, it is paramount that the Opposition remains united and chalks out ways and means to achieve this without leaving room for complacency, egos or animosity till the goal is achieved.

ANNA MARY YVONNE,
Chennai

■ One more Gatbandhan and anti-Modi gathering arranged by Ms. Banerjee is over. The Opposition has only one agenda – to dethrone Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is

unfortunate that even after more than seven decades of independence, most of our politicians are not mature enough to think of the larger picture. Lakhs of people still lack basic facilities and infrastructure, but some in the political class have a different agenda. Every leader is a prime ministerial aspirant. In such a situation, we can expect a stable government and an able leader?

M.R.G. MURTHY,
Mysuru

■ One feels that the massive show of Opposition unity was just a 'photo-op'. The gathering lacks a common ideology other than a key motive to dethrone Mr. Modi. It seems that the leaders are joining hands to further their own political gains. If at all the Opposition manages to win, who will become the Prime Minister? With many contenders there is bound to be trouble. One also wonders

why the Congress president didn't attend this "historic rally".

VIDHYA B. RAGUNATH,
Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu

■ Although Ms. Banerjee has made it a point to clarify that the "PM candidate is not a priority", it is clear that she has used the occasion to pitch herself as a potential candidate for the country's top job. While chemistry remains Mr. Modi's best asset, arithmetic is the Opposition's weapon, especially if a one-on-one contest materialises. It will be interesting to see if the show of strength at the Brigade Parade Grounds remains one till poll time. As for the Congress, it faces the challenge of making sure that its party president is not pitched into a direct fight with Mr. Modi while also ensuring that his political standing is not diminished.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

Fighter deal

The exclusive report in *The Hindu* by N. Ram on the Rafale fighter aircraft deal makes a few things clear – there were two groups in the negotiating team; one determined to see that Dassault did not get the order and the other, equally determined, to see that it was not cancelled (Page 1, "Exclusive", "Modi's decision to buy 36 Rafales shot the price of each jet up by 4%", January 18). For a layman it is difficult to make a judgment on the quality of the jets and the advantages and disadvantages of the various "technical extras" that come with the planes. In all the din, an important piece of information missing is about which bidder offered better and more advanced technology to the Indian Air Force. Politicians and their followers in the media can go on arguing till the cows come home but the fact is it is they who will not face the bullets

on the war front. With no evidence of any money trail, it is better if those who are levelling allegations provide concrete proof of wrongdoing if they have any. Else they should drop the subject once and for all.

T. SUDHAKAR BHAT,
Sullia, Karnataka

■ On the war front. With no evidence of any money trail, it is better if those who are levelling allegations provide concrete proof of wrongdoing if they have any. Else they should drop the subject once and for all.

T. SUDHAKAR BHAT,
Sullia, Karnataka

■ Against robots

The report, "Why do people lash out at humanoids" (Life page, January 20) left one incredulous. Why people have started attacking humanoids is quite incomprehensible. If this is a development in technologically advanced

countries, where is the rest of the world headed to? Robots are just technological inventions, which some appear to be forgetting.

R

This is not the future we want

NITI Aayog's strategy for 2022 is replete with environmental and livelihood related contradictions



Ashish Kothari



"While there is great focus on forest conservation, there is an urgent need to conserve non-forest ecosystems such as grasslands, wetlands, mountains, and deserts." Egrets in wetlands near Bantala, East Kolkata. • BRETT COLE

In what appears to be draft zero of the BJP's election manifesto, NITI Aayog released the 'Strategy for New India @ 75' document in 2018. This high-sounding and aspirational strategy aims to achieve a 'New India' by 2022, when the country celebrates its 75th year of Independence.

The strategy has many progressive objectives. It follows the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Inclusion, sustainability, participation, gender equality and other buzzwords find mention. A cursory reading would evoke widespread appreciation.

But these documents can't be read cursorily. We need to unearth what's hidden in their depths. Is there a consistent and well-thought-out strategy to meet the objectives? Are there contradictory elements that could defeat the objectives? Are there hidden motivations, not so benign? On one such reading of India @ 75, focusing on ecological and related livelihood concerns, there is serious doubt as to whether the 'New India' this strategy envisages will be any different from the crisis-ridden society we are today.

There are positive directions vis-à-vis the environment, such as a major focus on renewable energy, organic farming (with the zero budget natural farming model developed by Maharashtrian farmer Subhash Palekar being singled out for national application), increasing forest cover, and reducing pollution and waste. A chapter titled 'Sustainable environment' states: "The objective is to maintain a clean, green and healthy environment with peoples' participation to support higher and inclusive economic growth through sustainable utilization of available natural resources." It focuses on air pollution, solid waste management, water pollution, and forestry.

Many missing issues
It is puzzling why these four are singled out here, from amongst the much larger number of environmental issues India faces. Some other issues do find mention elsewhere,

such as arresting land degradation and soil erosion, and water conservation. But many are missing, such as the urgent need to conserve a range of non-forest ecosystems. (Since colonial times, forests have remained predominant in the minds of decision-makers, as indicated by the fact that India still has only a Forest Department and no dedicated entity for grassland, marine and coastal, wetland, mountain, and desert conservation.) The increasing presence of toxic chemicals around us finds no mention. Most importantly, the absence of an integrated, comprehensive view on how ecological issues can be integrated into all sectors indicates that this is still not core to the mindset of our planners.

A reading of the rest of the document strengthens this conclusion. There is total absence of an understanding that the current form and goal of economic growth is inherently unsustainable. For more than three decades, governments have been promising that with environmental safeguards, growth can be made sustainable. There is no indication that this is anywhere near achievable, much less achieved. In 2008, the Confederation of Indian Industry indicated that India was already using twice of what its natural resources could sustain, and that more than half its biocapacity had already been eroded. Things are likely only worse now. No party in power has shown what magic wand it can use to suddenly make growth sustainable. Indeed, no country in the

world has been able to do this. So it is alarming that the most important "driver" for the lofty goals of the strategy is economic growth.

Alarming features

Some readers may find this objection somewhat abstract. So here are other, more earthy examples of the internal contradictions in this document. One of the biggest ecological and social disasters in India is mining, especially the large-scale open-cast type. NITI Aayog ignores this when it proposes a doubling of the extent of mining. The only concession is the suggestion to bring in "cutting-edge" technology to "limit environmental damage", as if that will solve the fundamental need to deforest areas. Another major sector with horrendous environmental impacts is tourism (never mind the 'eco' tag it comes with), as witnessed by virtually all our groaning hill stations and the ruin that areas like Ladakh, Kutch and the island regions are facing. Yet, NITI Aayog recommends doubling the number of domestic tourist visits to over 3,200 million from 1,614 million in 2016. It also urges prompt completion of a host of mega river valley projects that have proved to be ecological nightmares, including Pancheshwar in the fragile Himalaya, the Ken-Betwa link in Madhya Pradesh, and dozens in the Northeast that are going to choke up rivers and are being pushed ahead despite strong local opposition.

Nor, for all the mention of organic farming, is there a clear direction to

phase out chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The agriculture chapters are in fact full of such fault lines. For instance, the objective of sustainable farming is undermined by the following: "Phase out old varieties of seeds and replace them with hybrid and improved seeds". This is the kind of Green Revolution approach that has caused huge loss of agricultural biodiversity and resilience amongst small farmers. There is also no focus on dryland farming though most farmers are engaged in this. There is positive mention of organic farming models for replication, but nothing on the amazing work of dryland farmers (such as the Dalit women of the Deccan Development Society in Telangana) showing productive, sustainable, biodiverse agriculture with millets and women as the fulcrum.

One of the most alarming features of the document is its stress on rapid, single-window clearance of infrastructure and other projects. Any decent ecological assessment of a project needs a year of study (over all seasons), so the 180 days limit it suggests will mean short-cuts. This rush also means compromising on crucial processes of social assessment, public hearings, and participatory decision-making, as already seen in the last few years. There is nothing on the need to seek consent from local communities, though this is mandated under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.

Governments in the last few years have a dismal record of safeguarding the environment and the livelihoods of Adivasis and other communities. They have found ways to bypass constitutional and policy safeguards these vulnerable sections are supposed to enjoy. Without a strong, unambiguous commitment to uphold these protections, and putting communities at the centre of decision-making, India @ 75 is going to be an even more unequal, unjust, and conflict-ridden society than India @ 50. Is this the future we want? Or can we learn from the many alternative initiatives for food, water, energy, housing, education and health existing across India, which show the way to more just and sustainable livelihoods and ways of living?

Ashish Kothari is with Kalpvriksh and Vikalp Sangam, Pune

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

The story behind a story

Till the election is over, this column will explain every month at least one political story published in this newspaper



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

In 2008, when journalist Aidan White wrote *To Tell You the Truth: The Ethical Journalism Initiative*, there was no social media. At the time, the first step towards building public trust in journalism was by developing and implementing ethical standards. "When media act ethically and have systems in place for monitoring their journalism, admitting their mistakes and explaining themselves to the public they create loyalty and attachment," he wrote.

However, now, with the spread of social media and the growth of a new information disorder, journalists need to do this and much more to explain their craft and role. When I read some of the criticisms on social media against major American newspapers such as *The New York Times* and



The Washington Post, I realise that Indian mainstream print media, including *The Hindu*, is facing a similar assault.

Some of the charges are that the coverage is too biased, that the media is too liberal, that it is too critical of the ruling dispensation, that it suffers from internal censorship, and that it spreads negativity. The principles of journalism inform the process of including or rejecting stories in a newspaper. Short-lived WhatsApp forwards and social media rants do not decide the content of political coverage. The *New York Times* Politics Editor, Patrick Healy, has come up with an idea to address some of these concerns. In a personal Twitter project, he tries to explain his newspaper's decision-making process for its readers.

Explaining the context and the intent
Last week, Mr. Healy told the Neiman Lab's Laura Hazard Owen that he wanted "to start engaging with readers about our intentions behind our stories," in the hope that more transparency – about why stories are chosen, why they're framed a certain way, and what kinds of conversations go on between reporters and editors behind the scenes – can shore up trust in the *Times*. He does a Twitter thread for any major political story that he thinks would benefit by having its

context and clarity about intent explained, "and also when I think I can provide some behind-the-scenes insight or illumination that readers might like." He ends each one with his email address, asking readers to write to him with comments and feedback.

The thread that got the most engagement was about Iowa Congressman Steve King's influence over President Donald Trump. In it, Mr. Healy explained why the *Times* was giving a racist a platform. He tweeted: "We just published a story looking at Congressman Steve King and his influence on Trump and the border wall debate. King is a sitting member of Congress who has used racist language and been denounced as a white supremacism by his own party.

Sunlight is the best disinfectant for views like King's. We examined King's comments – he promotes neo-Nazis on Twitter, he has spoken to far-right publications about migration and the 'Great Replacement' conspiracy theory, he has demeaned and vilified immigrants and Latinos." Though the Congressman

denied that he is a racist, the *Times* story had an impact: Mr. King lost his committee seats, the House overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning white supremacy, and multiple Iowa newspapers called for his resignation.

The importance of media literacy

I often come across wild speculations about *The Hindu*'s political coverage. In the run-up to the general election, the polarised environment should not undermine the space for independent news and analysis. One part of the Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor talks about the need "to strengthen bonds between the newspaper and its millions of print platform and online readers". Scholars have pointed out the reinforcing nature of online networks and echo chambers. At a fundamental level, media literacy makes the reader a participant in the world of information rather than being a passive recipient.

In this context, this column will explain at least one political story a month, till the general election is over, about how *The Hindu* covered it. It will have inputs both from our reporters and editors and explain the factors that compelled the newspaper to take up the story and follow it up.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

SINGLE FILE

The missing women

The number of young women who are not in education, employment and training in India is very high

ANJALI BANSAL & PRATAP C. MOHANTY

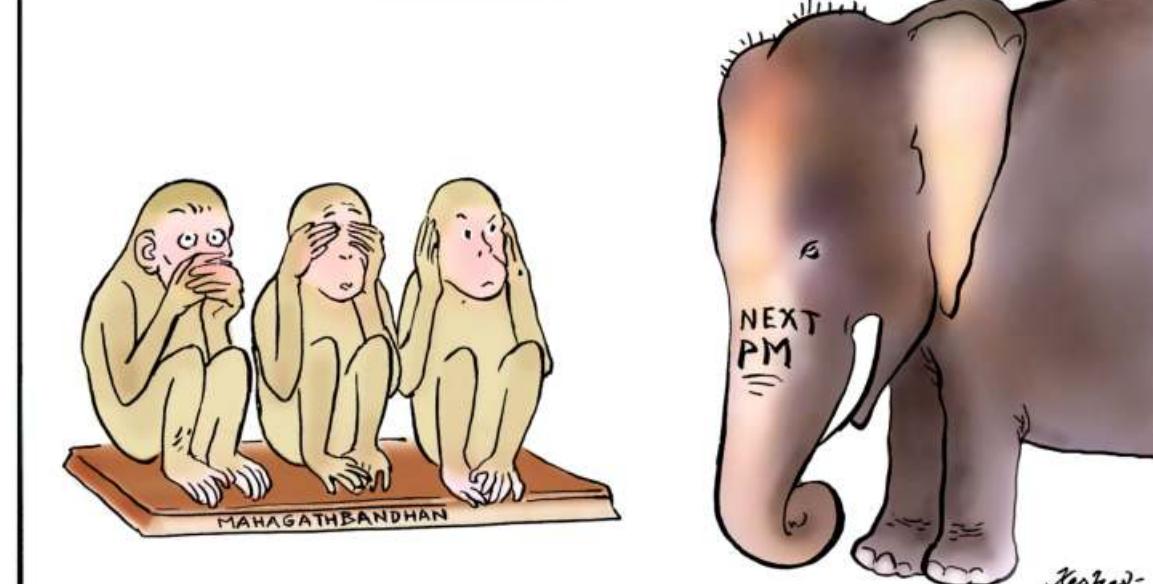

India's employment generation in the last five years has remained weak. According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index Baseline Report by NITI Aayog, 64 per 1,000 persons appear to be unemployed in the working age group of 15-59. The problem of unemployment has become more acute for youth and women. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) report of 2016, youth are three times as likely as adults to be unemployed.

Yet, unemployment rate does not sufficiently measure labour market inefficiencies, as it does not consider those who are not in the labour force. Sustainable Development Goal 8 speaks of full and productive employment and economic growth; target 8.6 mentions that by 2020 there should be a substantial reduction in the proportion of youth in the category of Not in Education, Employment and Training. As per ILO estimates, 27.5% in India are in this category, of which 8% are men and 49.3% are women.

The narratives on the missing half of the female population vary. One is that the majority of women work under the category of "housewives". Unfortunately, in India's economy, neither their contribution nor their presence gets counted in the GDP. Another is that women have a low enrolment rate in secondary and higher education. Those not in education, employment and training in the age groups 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29 comprise 13.48%, 31.80% and 35.33%, respectively. If we look at the figures gender-wise, the age group 15-19 consists of 5.37% men and 23.04% women, the age group 20-24 consists of 8.32% men and 56.13% women, and the age group 25-29 consists of 7.13% men and 64% women in this category. The percentage of men not in education, employment and training in all three age groups does not vary much.

To date, most discussions on this subject get stuck on questions of unemployment and labour force participation. Only if the causes and consequences of not being in education, employment and training are understood will affirmative actions follow. For example, to promote girls' education, the major schemes which function at the pan-India level are Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao and Sankalp Samridhi Yojana. While the efficacy of these schemes is a matter of debate, it is the focus on recognising the contributions of the youth, particularly the younger cohort of women, that matters from a policy perspective. If the problem is thus analysed correctly and appropriate policy actions are taken, this could pave the way for genuine progress towards Sustainable Development Goals. That matters considerably because, after all, today's youth will be the adults of tomorrow.

The writers are, respectively, Research Scholar (Economics) and Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, at the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee



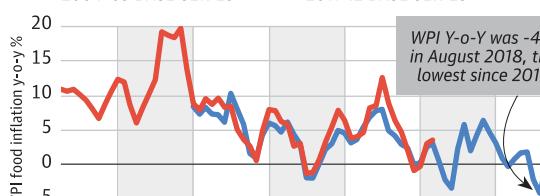
DATA POINT

Getting a raw deal

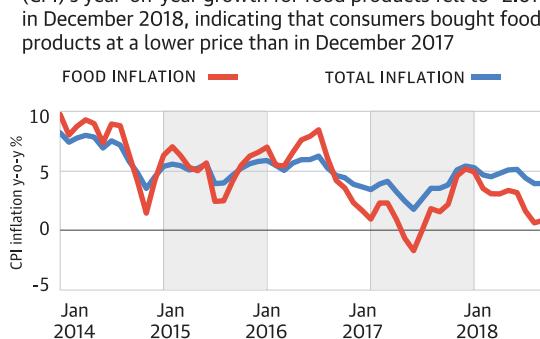
Farmers sold most of their produce in the last six months of 2018 at a price lower than in the corresponding period in 2017. Most non-farm products were not sold at similar low prices. The dip in price came at a time when production of foodgrains was at a record high.

By Vignesh Radhakrishnan

Food price dips | The WPI's year-on-year growth for primary food products* was negative in the second half of 2018. This indicates that farmers sold their produce at a lower rate in these months than in the same period in 2017

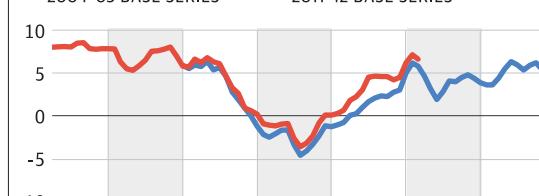


Consumer's delight | The Consumer Price Inflation (CPI)'s year-on-year growth for food products fell to -2.61% in December 2018, indicating that consumers bought food products at a lower price than in December 2017

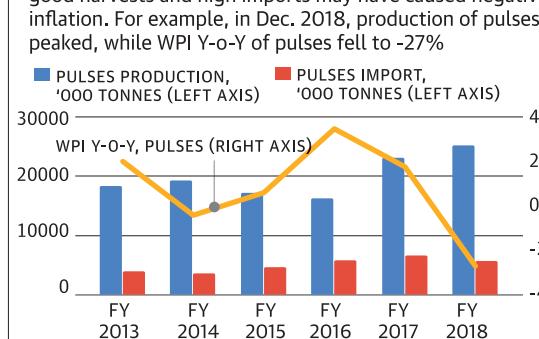


*Includes food grains, vegetables, fruits, condiments, eggs, meat and fish. WPI indicates the price change at the wholesale level – for instance, between traders. CPI indicates price change at the retail level.

Rest holds good | The combined WPI's Y-o-Y growth, which includes all articles in the market, has not seen a dip since March 2016, indicating that most products other than food articles were sold at a higher price than in 2017



Supply glut | A sharp increase in supply following good harvests and high imports may have caused negative inflation. For example, in Dec. 2018, production of pulses peaked, while WPI Y-o-Y of pulses fell to -27%



FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 21, 1969

Nixon installed President

Mr. Richard Nixon was sworn in as the 37th President of the United States to-day [Jan. 20] and the inaugural ceremony held on the cold, damp steps of the Capitol marked the return of the Republicans to Washington after waiting in the wings for the last eight years. Unlike the Democrats who have held office for all but eight of the last 36 years and whose administrations were ushered in under the banner of such slogans as the New Deal, the Fair Deal, the New Frontier and the Great Society, Mr. Nixon's ascendancy to office was not advertised with any catchy phrases. Instead in his inaugural speech Mr. Nixon promised to work for reconciliation of the races and peoples at home, reconstruction of the cities and a re-dedication of the country's resources to abolishing economic inequities rather than the destruction of war. Abroad he promised to build bridges to other nations looking hopefully forward towards an era of negotiation rather confrontation. Mr. Nixon's speech did not contain any hard outlines of any specified policies and actions but rather the general assumptions which will be the guidelines of his Administration. Similarly to the nations of the world, Mr. Nixon said that "during this Administration, our lines of communication will be open. We seek an open world."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 21, 1919

Indian Science Congress

The final session of the Indian Science Congress was held at the Institute of Science, Bombay, on Saturday [January 18]. Not much business remained. The remaining presidential address that was not delivered on the previous day in the geology section was delivered by the President of the section, Dr. L.L. Former, his subject being "Some Problems of India." Some half a dozen papers were read in connection with medical research including a paper on hookworm disease and one on the relationship between malaria in Amritsar and the previous weather. In the afternoon meetings of general and executive committees were held.

CONCEPTUAL

Implicit leverage

FINANCE

This refers to the various liabilities of an organisation that are not explicitly mentioned in its balance sheet. Different accounting tricks may be employed by corporations as well as governments to hide the true nature of their financial risks. A business corporation, for instance, might classify a long-term lease as an operating lease in order to avoid showing additional liabilities on its balance sheet. Since balance sheet figures can often be misleading to

FROM PAGE ONE

'9/11 derailed Army plan to capture Pak. posts'

The plan involved capturing 25 to 30 Pakistani army posts from the Batalik sector in the Ladakh region of J&K right down to Chamb-Jaurian in the Jammu sector, with around one or two posts assigned for capture per brigade.

Within fixed time

The posts were to be overrun in a surprise operation in "multiple phases", the book reveals, but the operation was to be completed in a limited time, so as not to lead to a full-scale war.

Explaining the significance of the planned operation, Prof. Jacob said, "When compared to what the Pakistanis did in Kargil, that was an opportunistic take-over of land, and winter-vacated posts, where Gen. Musharraf tried to take advantage of an opportunity: but at most it was a small tactical operation that went out of control."

"Surgical strikes as they were carried out in 2016 involved no casualties of Pakistani military personnel, and involved no land grab. That is business as usual on the LoC and happens all the time," he added.

Eventually, the units were prepared for Op Kabaddi on September 1, 2001, but the order to proceed was never issued, given the changed geopolitical situation after the 9/11 attacks as it would have been considered "taking advantage of a tragedy" and "viewed unfavourably by the international community", Prof. Jacob writes.

It is significant that a few months later in December 2001, after the Parliament attack, the Army mobilised for the more conventional Operation Parakram, and a standoff with the Pakistani army that lasted for months.

A senior officer who was then posted along the Line

of Control said a "major operation" was planned and Lt. Gen. Nanavatty had come down and briefed them on one occasion.

"We did not know the name of the operation as we were not in the planning but it was known. Every battalion was planning something," the officer said on condition of anonymity.

However, the Army did not respond to questions from *The Hindu* about Operation Kabaddi.

Former Northern Army Commander Lt Gen D.S. Hooda stated that local actions keep happening at the LoC but the Army cannot do an operation of this magnitude on its own.

"I am not aware of the specifics of the operation. But an operation of this magnitude across the entire LoC, from Kargil to Aksnoor, cannot be done without the clearance from the political establishment."

Key political figures of the time – Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and NSA Brajesh Mishra – have since passed away, while former Defence Ministers Jaswant Singh and George Fernandes are now indisposed.

Growing risk-taking

According to Prof. Jacob, the book reveals such details that remain sensitive 18 years later to show the extent of "risk-taking" by the armies on both sides of the LoC under "the nuclear umbrella". This should be highlighted to enforce a bilateral mechanism that would bring down tensions between India and Pakistan, he said.

"Given the frightening rise in incidents, and the chance of escalating firing sparking off something bigger, it is necessary that the ceasefire be formalised," Prof. Jacob said.

CIC selection arbitrary, say RTI activists

Ms. Bhardwaj plans to bring the "arbitrary" appointment process followed by the Centre to the notice of the court before its next hearing on Tuesday.

She also complained that while the SC had directed

the DoPT on December 13 to make public the files on the shortlist and search committee meetings, the department only complied on January 18, well after the entire process was completed, and appointments had been made.

Mayawati gulped insults, says BJP MLA

Ms. Singh's remarks were condemned across parties. BSP general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra said the remarks showed BJP's "frustration" at the SP and BSP alliance. Mr. Akhilesh Yadav tweeted: "This is a sign of the BJP's moral bankrupt-

cy." SP workers burned the MLA's effigy in Lucknow.

A police spokesperson said a probe was on but no FIR had been registered yet.

Ms. Singh later issued a clarification saying she did not intend to insult Ms. Mayawati.

Two gored to death, 43 injured at jallikattu

Event held with 1,353 bulls by Health Minister to set 'record'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PUDUKKOTTAI

Two persons were gored to death and 43 others injured in a mega jallikattu, which was organised by Health Minister C. Vijaya Baskar in a bid to create a "record" and flagged off by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami at Viralimalai in Pudukkottai on Sunday. This is the first casualty at a jallikattu event this year.

Police said 1,353 bulls were released from the 'vaadivasaal' during the course of the event in Mr. Vijay Baskar's native district that lasted nine hours. Around 500 tamers took part in shifts.

A Ramu, 32, a spectator from Soriyampatti in Pudukkottai district, and G. Sathish, 35, of Allur in Tiruchi,

believed to be a bull owner, succumbed to injuries near the collection point. Ramu succumbed midway after sustaining an abdominal injury while being taken to the Mahatma Gandhi Government Hospital in Tiruchi.

The police said Sathish was trying to catch his bull after the event when he was gored by another animal from behind leading to his death at the Government Hospital in Manapparai. The 43 persons injured, 13 were referred to hospitals.

B. S. Anand Singh representing Vijayanagar is a three-time MLA, while J.N. Ganesh is a first-timer from Kampli constituency. Sources in the Congress

said the two were involved in casual conversation before the fight. "Most people had left the place when the alteration broke out."

According to sources, the conversation between the two legislators turned agitated over differences that they had in some constituency-related work. "Mr. Ganesh had resented the alleged interference by Mr. Singh's family members in Kampli," sources said.

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IN BRIEF



Citizenship Bill: Manipur to seek protection clause

IMPHAL Manipur Chief Minister and BJP leader N. Biren Singh on Sunday assured the representatives of the North East Students Organisation (NESO) that unless a clause was inserted in the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, on the protection of the indigenous peoples, his government would object to the proposed legislation.

Gujars, Bakerwals being targeted in Jammu: PDP

Srinagar Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti alleged on Sunday that the Gujjars and Bakerwals communities were being "selectively targeted" in the Jammu region of Jammu & Kashmir and warned that if the issue was not addressed by the Governor S.P. Malik-led administration, the consequences would be "dangerous". "Unfortunately, under the Governor's nose, there is selective targeting of Gujjars and Bakerwals in Jammu and the Governor's administration is not taking note of it," she said. PTI

Sonia, Rahul to visit their constituencies

Raebareli Congress president Rahul Gandhi and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi are likely to visit their respective parliamentary constituencies Amethi and Raebareli in Uttar Pradesh on January 23 and 24, a party leader said on Sunday. The Congress chief is expected to take part in several party programmes and a meeting of the district vigilance and monitoring committee. United Progressive Alliance chairperson Sonia Gandhi is also expected to attend the district vigilance and monitoring committee meeting in Rae Bareli. PTI

Figures for long-term visas to minorities don't add up

Centre has given different numbers on various occasions

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Only 230 Hindus from Pakistan and four Sikhs from Afghanistan had been given long-term visas (LTVs) till September 2018, the Union Home Ministry has said in response to a Right to Information (RTI) request filed by *The Hindu*.

However, Union Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju told the Rajya Sabha on August 8 last year that 9,152 such visas were granted from 2016 to 2018 and 13,262 Pakistani nationals had applied for them during the period.

After hundreds of Hindus and Sikhs came to India alleging persecution in Pakistan, the then UPA government decided to give them long-term visas. Most of them had come on pilgrim visa, which expired. According to a Home Ministry official, the LTVs granted to Pakistani Hindus from 2011 to 2014 stood at 14,726.

In response to an RTI query on the "number of long-term visas given to Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh from January 1, 1990 to September 6, 2018", the Home Ministry said, "As per the available information no. of certificates issued to Pakistani Hindus are 230, and Afghanistani Sikhs are 4. No other information is availa-

ble to the undersigned CPIO (Central Public Information Officer)."

The Home Ministry did not furnish any reply on the number of Bangladeshi Hindus who have availed the facility.

NUMBER GAME

The various replies provided by the government on long-term visas (LTV) issued to Hindus from Pakistan suggest a mismatch



■ MHA in an RTI reply

LTVs granted till September 2018: 230

■ Minister Kiren Rijiju's reply in Rajya Sabha on August 8, 2018

Visas given to Pakistani nationals between 2016 and 2018: 9,152

■ According to an MHA official, the number of visas granted between 2011 and 2014: 14,726

■ Submissions before JPC

LTVs granted to Hindus from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh so far: 25,447

the contentious Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019, that proposes to grant citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who came to India before December 31, 2014. The Bill, passed by the Lok Sabha on January 8, is pending in the Rajya Sabha.

Collectors empowered

In 2015, the Home Ministry had empowered the District Collectors in Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi to grant citizenship and naturalisation certificates to the non-Muslim migrants from the three neighbouring countries under Section 5 and 6 of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Under the Citizenship Act, 1955, one of the grounds to acquire citizenship by naturalisation is that the applicant must have resided in India during the past 12 months and for 11 out of 14 years in India. The Bill proposes to relax the duration from 11 to seven years, only for persons belonging to the six religions from the three countries. It will help such people who do not have any document by not treating them as "illegal migrants".

A government official said the citizenship requests of such applicants would be scrutinised minutely. The Bill faces resistance in Assam as it would negate the Assam Accord of 1985 paving the way for giving citizenship, mostly to illegal Hindu migrants from Bangladesh.

Delhi beat



Finishing touches: Preparations on in full swing at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi on Sunday for the Beating Retreat ceremony, which marks the end of the Republic Day celebrations. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Bill may not help many Bangladeshi nationals

Fewer than 200 have availed long-term visas, says official

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Only a small number Bangladeshi nationals are likely to benefit from the Citizenship Amendment Bill, as fewer than 200 people from the neighbouring country have so far availed the long-term visas (LTVs), a senior Home Ministry official said.

The number of LTVs issued by the Union Home Ministry to Bangladeshi nationals from 2011 to January 8, 2019, is just 187, the official told PTI.

"There cannot be too many Bangladeshi applying for the Indian nationality under the proposed new law. Otherwise, they would have already taken the LTVs for



The Citizenship Bill has run into protests in Assam.

which criteria are the same," the official said.

Of the 187 LTVs granted to Bangladeshi nationals, only two were given in 2018, three in 2017, 50 LTVs in 2016, 26 in 2015, 74 in 2014,

27 in 2012 and four in 2011. No LTV was issued to any Bangladeshi national in 2013.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh had already said the Bill would apply to all the States and the Union Territories and the beneficiaries could reside anywhere in the country.

"The burden of these persecuted migrants will be shared by the whole country. Assam alone would not have to bear the entire burden," he had said. Home Ministry sources said the Ministry was considering a proposal to provide incentives to those people who want to settle in places other than the northeast.

Sitharaman's remarks prove graft: Cong.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Launching a fresh attack over the Rafale issue, the Congress on Sunday alleged that Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's remarks about "corporate warfare" proved that the Modi government had given preference to corporate interests over national interest.

Congress spokesperson Priyanka Chaturvedi, at a press conference here, said, "By bringing this argument about 'corporate warfare', the defenceless Defence Minister seals and stamps the Congress party's charge that the ₹30,000 crore offset contract and ₹1 lakh crore life cycle cost contract in the Rafale deal was given to a crony friend's company which had zero experience and was brazen 'cronyism' at its best."

Ms. Sitharaman had on Saturday wondered whether parties were becoming pawns in corporate rivalry and whether the procurement of 36 fighter jets was being "sabotaged".

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)

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GLOBAL TENDER NOTICE

Online Tenders are invited through E-Procurement Mode for the following items from reputed Manufacturers directly or through their accredited agents in India, Item SLN.: 1 is required for NMDC Ltd, BIMC of Kirandul Complex, Dantewada (Dist), Chhattisgarh (State) and Item SLN.: 2 for Denmalai Complex, Bellary (Dist), Karnataka (State)-India.

Sl. No.	Tender No. & Date	Description of Equipment	Qty (No.)	Display & Sale of Tender Documents Period	Last date & Time for submission of offer	Tender fee in ₹	Entered Money Deposit in ₹/ USD
1	HOMM/1016-18/05X023/315 dt: 18.01.2019	Supply, Supervision of Assembling and Commissioning of Telehandler with Tyre Handler	01	18.01.2019 TO 20.02.2019	20.02.2019 by 2:30 PM (IST)	5900/- (inclusive of GST)/ USD 100/-	2,00,000/- USD 3000/-
2	HOMM/3020-18/00AN83/269 dt: 18.01.2019	Supply, Assembling & commissioning of Recon Engine Assembly suitable for BEML Make, BH-100 S Model, 100 Ton Dumper on Recon unit	02	18.01.2019 TO 04.02.2019	04.02.2019 by 2:30 PM (IST)	5900/- (inclusive of GST)/ USD 100/-	2,00,000/- USD 3500/-

Complete Tender document is available in website www.nmdc.co.in under E-Procurement section; www.msteccommerce.com/eprocurement; CPP Portal <http://eprocure.gov.in>

Any corrigendum to the above tender will be uploaded only on our website www.nmdc.co.in and will not be published. Prospective bidders should visit the above NMDC Limited website from time to time to take note of corrigendum, if any.

For further details logon to Tender Section of our website: www.nmdc.co.in under E-procurement section.

Executive Director (Materials)

+ KARNATAKA CO-OPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' FEDERATION LIMITED

KMF Complex, Dr. M.H. Marigowda Road, Bangalore- 560 029

Tel: 080-25536567 / 26096832 / 829 Fax: 080-25536105 E-mail: purchase@kmf.coop

IIFT No. KMF/PUR/E-proc/Tender-205/2018-19 Date: 19-01-2019

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through e-Procurement Portal only)

The Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd., Bangalore invites tenders from eligible tenderers for the supply of the item(s)/ goods as listed below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Items	Qty	EMD Amount (Rs.)
I Marketing - Indent			
01	Hydraulic Hand Pallet Truck	20 Nos.	13,000/-
02	Injection Moulded Pallet	600 Nos.	65,000/-
03	Insulated Boxes (100 Ltr.)	150 Nos.	25,000/-
II Quality Assurance - Indent			
01	Automated Raw Milk Testing Machine	01 No.	12,500/-
02	Hiring of Laboratory Services for Testing of Milk, Milk Products & other Raw Materials through the NABL Accredited / Certified Laboratory Services	Mentioned in Tender Document	1,33,000/-
03	Supply, Installation and commissioning of Atomic Absorption Spectroscope	01 No.	60,000/-

Tender documents may be downloaded from e-procurement website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> and also contact Help line No: 080-23010900, 080-23010901

Date of commencement of Tender From 21.01.2019

Pre-bid meeting 06.02.2019 at 11.00 AM

Last date for uploading of Tender on or before 21.02.2019 upto 3.00 PM

Date of opening of Technical Tender On 23.02.2019 at 3.05 PM

Date of opening of Commercial Bid Will be intimated

Further details may be obtained from KMF website: www.kmfandini.coop For Karnataka Co-Operative Milk Federation Ltd., Sd/- Director (Purchase)

Many names do the rounds for CBI chief

Among the probables is Rina Mitra, who, if appointed, will become the first woman head of the agency



On the way out: Amid high drama, Alok Verma was removed as CBI Director. ■ PTI

January 31, 2019, is Director-General, State Vigilance Bureau, which makes him eligible, the officials said.

Rina Mitra, Special Secretary (Internal Security), Home Ministry, of the 1983 batch, is another contender. She has served in the CBI for

five years and had a long tenure in the Madhya Pradesh vigilance where she handled serious corruption cases. If chosen, she would be the first woman chief of the CBI.

Next to Mr. Ahmed in terms of experience is O.P. Galhotra, former Rajasthan Director-General of Police, who has served in the agency for 11 years – as an SP from 1996 to 2000 and as a Joint Director from 2008 to 2015, the officials said.

Director-General, National Investigation Agency, Y.C. Modi, a 1984-batch IPS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre, is seen as a favourite in the race to the top post.

Mr. Modi was a member of the Supreme Court-appointed SIT probing the 2002 Gujarat riots from 2010 to 2012.

The SIT had cleared Narendra Modi who was then the Chief Minister. He was also part of the CBI team investigating the murder of former Gujarat Home Minister Harish Patel and arrested 12 accused.

But the evidence was rejected by the Gujarat High Court which acquitted all, officials said.

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Democrats dismiss Trump's immigration deal offer

Senator Schumer says President's promise of temporary protection amounts to more 'hostage-taking'

How does a shutdown begin?

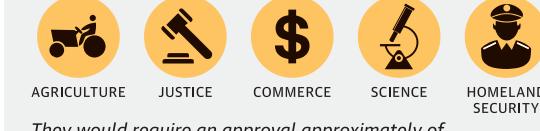
The federal government's Appropriations Bills require congressional approval on a yearly basis, followed by the President's assent. For this fiscal year, which began on October 1, 2018, only five of the 12

Appropriations Bills have been enacted

Many of the programmes and agencies covered under the other seven Bills were momentarily closed on December 22 for want of further approval, both from the Congress and the President

Which are the Departments affected?

The five Bills that have already been passed and approved provide for approximately 75% of the discretionary government spending. Hence, key departments like Defense, Veterans' Affairs and Energy are completely provided for this fiscal year. Some of the Departments that have been affected include:



They would require an approval approximately of \$325 billion over the fiscal year

How many employees have been affected?

3,80,000
employees have been furloughed

4,20,000
have been asked to report for work without pay

38% of the federal government's non-postal employee strength of 2.1 million affected

Burning bridges for a wall

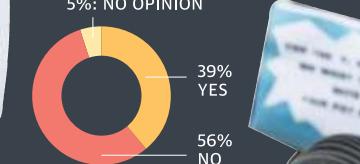
President Donald Trump's demand for funding to fence the southern border has kept the government closed for 29 days



Who is to blame? According to an ABC/Washington Post survey, 55% of the respondents think that Trump should assume the main responsibility



Do you approve of Trump's border wall?



Illegal border crossings at the southern border have come down from 1.6 million in 2000 to under 4,00,000 last year

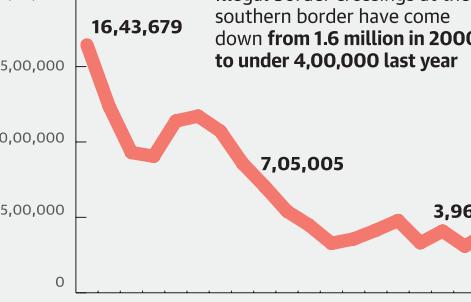
How many times has the government shut down?

There was no federal government shutdown prior to 1980. Since 1981, there have only been four real shutdowns, the present one included, where government operations were affected for more than three days

1995-1996: President Bill Clinton and the Republican Congress were unable to agree on spending levels and shut down the government twice, for a total of 28 days

2013: The House and Senate disagreed on funding the Affordable Care Act, resulting in a 16-day shutdown

Border realities



What does the President want?

\$5.7 billion to build a wall along the 3,200 km-long U.S.-Mexico border, at least a third of which is already fenced under the George W. Bush-era Secure Fences Act. Democrats are offering \$1.3 billion in border security, which can comprise fencing and technology, but not a wall

What is Trump offering now? In an offer rejected by Democrats, he offered three years of legal protections for the "Dreamers," a group of about 7,000,000 immigrants who entered the country illegally as children

His proposal is a compilation of previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives

- NANCY PELOSI, Speaker, House of Representatives

GRAPHIC: KARTHIK S.T.

SOURCE: COMMITTEE FOR A RESPONSIBLE FEDERAL BUDGET, REUTERS, U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

REUTERS LONDON

May seeking bilateral treaty with Ireland: report

PM is to present her 'Plan B' on Monday

REUTERS LONDON

British Prime Minister Theresa May plans to seek a bilateral treaty with the Irish government as a way to remove the contentious backstop arrangement from Britain's divorce deal with the European Union (EU), a newspaper reported.

The Sunday Times said aides to Ms. May thought a deal with Ireland would remove the opposition to her Brexit plan from the Democratic Unionist Party that supports Ms. May's minority government and from pro-Brexit rebels in her Conservative Party.

However the Irish edition of the same newspaper quoted a senior Irish government source as saying the bilateral treaty proposal was "not something we would entertain" and a second senior political source as saying it would not work with the European Commission.

Ms. May is due to announce on Monday how she plans to proceed.

Earlier on Saturday, Ireland's Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said Dublin's commitment to the Brexit divorce deal struck with the British government was "absolute," including the border backstop arrangement.

The scale of the catastrophe became clear after three survivors, two Sudanese and one Gambian, who were rescued by the Italian Navy and brought to shore in the southern Italian island of Lampedusa, told the aid workers that 117 migrants had died.

"Survivors told us that they had about 10 women on board, and one of them was

pregnant," Flavio Di Giacomo, a spokesman for the International Organisation for Migration, said in a phone interview. The migrants were believed to have been from countries in West Africa and Sudan.

In the early hours of Sunday, the Constitutional Court ruled that a legal challenge to the result filed by Mr. Fayulu was inadmissible. "Felix Tshisekedi will become the fifth President of the republic," government spokesman Lambert Mende said. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), a bloc which includes South Africa and Angola, congratulated Mr. Tshisekedi and called for a peaceful transfer of power.

As Mr. Tshisekedi's supporters celebrated the ruling in the streets of Democratic Republic of Congo's capital, runner-up Martin Fayulu said the decision had opened the way to a "constitutional coup d'état," raising fears of more violence.

Following the court decision, the African Union postponed a visit by a high-level delegation to Kinshasa that had been scheduled for Monday to discuss the crisis. It had previously expressed "serious concerns" about the vote and called for the results to be delayed.

Last month's election was meant to mark the first democratic transfer of power in the vast Central African country, where conflicts have regularly destabilised the region. But monitors pointed to major flaws in the poll. Unrest over the vote has already killed 34 people,

wounded 59 and led to 241 "arbitrary arrests" in the past week, according to the UN human rights office.

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Expanding support

Mr. Ghani, an ethnic Pashtun, needs to expand his support beyond Afghanistan's largest ethnic group and build alliances with other ethnicities.

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IN BRIEF



Vodafone Idea seeks time to pay for spectrum

NEW DELHI
Telecom operator Vodafone Idea has sought two-years moratorium on annual spectrum payment of about ₹10,000 crore, citing high debt levels and stress on the balance sheet. "The Department of Telecom has received representation from Vodafone Idea for two years additional moratorium on spectrum payment that they procured in auction. The request is being examined," a government official said. PTI

Infosys hires over 7,600 employees in the U.S.

NEW DELHI
Software major Infosys has hired over 7,600 staff in the U.S. – more than three-fourth of its target of recruiting 10,000 American workers – and said it was making recruitment from local schools a "sustained effort" in its largest market. "... we have pretty much done 7,600-plus. We have opened five hubs now and have hired 2,000-plus school graduates - campus hires," president and deputy COO Rav Kumar said. PTI

Reliance seeks partner Niko's exit from KG-D6

NEW DELHI
Reliance Industries has asked its partner Niko Resources to withdraw from eastern offshore KG-D6 gas block over default in payments for field development cost, but Niko has sought to stall the move by invoking arbitration, the firms said. Niko could not find a buyer for its 10% stake in the KG-D6 block or secure financing for its share of the \$5-6 billion R-Cluster, Satellite Cluster and MJ development projects in the block. PTI

Traders to mobilise and vote as one: CAIT

Officials to visit 100 cities to convince traders, employees to vote according to the confederation's whip

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The trading community has decided to make its presence felt as a single consolidated vote bank for the upcoming general elections.

The Confederation of All-India Traders (CAIT) said on Sunday that from February 1, its officials would travel to nearly 100 cities to convince traders and their staff to vote according to their whip.

The aim is to directly or indirectly reach all the seven crore small businesses that employ 45 crore people, CAIT said. The body has been in the news protesting the alleged lobbying carried out by big e-commerce firms to dilute or postpone the recent changes to FDI rules governing the sector. The traders' body had written to the



Vox populi: There are seven crore small businesses that employ 45 crore people, says CAIT. ■ P.V. SIVAKUMAR

Commerce Ministry voicing its demands. Further, CAIT had been protesting last year's Walmart-Flipkart deal citing it as being detrimental to small traders' prospects.

Last month, CAIT also made a demand for loan waivers for traders similar to

those given to farmers by some States. CAIT national president B.C. Bhartia and secretary general Praveen Khandelwal said the national campaign from February 1 would be with a slogan of 'One Nation-One Trader-Ten Votes.' In a statement, CAIT

said, "The campaign will be launched simultaneously in 100 cities on February 1 wherein special teams of local trade associations, in each city, affiliated to CAIT, will contact traders and make them aware of the importance of traders in the national economy and urge them to cast their vote on the whip of CAIT and that of the local trade association."

'Whisper campaign'

"The CAIT has planned to launch a 'whisper campaign' whereby traders will be guided to communicate to their customers and others by word-of-mouth the good or bad about any government or political party as per the decision to be taken by the local trade association affiliated to CAIT." According to

CAIT, each small business can influence about 50 voters, including the family that runs the business and their customers.

"Traders have the advantage of influencing close relatives and customers as well. An average shop in a city has about 20 customers in a day and as per an estimate, everyday nearly 30% are repeat customers whereas 70% are new customers."

"There are about seven crore small businesses providing livelihood and employment to about 45 crore people generating annual business of about ₹42 lakh crore," the statement added. "There are more than 40,000 trade federations and associations across the country working for the trading community."

involving ₹15,278.18 crore in the April-December period.

The e-way bill system was rolled out on April 1, 2018, for moving goods worth over ₹50,000 from one State to another. The system for within the State movement was rolled out in a phased manner from April 15.

Transporters of goods worth over ₹50,000 would be required to present e-way bills during transit to a GST inspector, if asked.

Officials feel that to shore up revenue and raise compliance, strict anti-evasion measures must be adopted. The revenue department is working towards integrating the e-way bill system with NHAI's FASTag mechanism beginning April to help track movement of goods.

Rationalise new norms for external borrowing: NSEFI

Include repayment of rupee loans from ECB proceeds'

PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI

National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI), a non-profit organisation, has written to the Prime Minister's Office requesting to direct the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to rationalise the new ECB framework suitably, excluding repayment of rupee loans from the negative list.

"NSEFI apprises you that till date, RBI allowed the external borrowing in the form of security bond/loan in U.S. dollars to replace the Indian rupee loans having tenure of 10 years or more given by domestic banks/financing institutions. As per this notification, erstwhile tracks I and II are merged as foreign currency denominated ECB's

and track III and rupee denominated bonds framework are combined as 'rupee denominated ECB' to replace the current four-tiered structure.

"However, the existing permissible end use of repayment/refinancing of rupee loan availed under track-II of ECB has not been considered in the merged foreign currency ECB framework in any form," NSEFI chairman Pranav Mehta wrote in the letter, adding that therefore, the repayment of rupee loan to domestic lenders by solar/wind project developers of their rupee loans to domestic lenders from ECB proceeds," Mr. Mehta added.

Otherwise, such a new framework would jeopardise the large-scale development of wind and solar power projects in India, he wrote

NSEFI was founded in 2013 by solar energy industry leaders with a vision to promote solar energy.

the matter and provide suitable direction/advice to the Reserve Bank of India to carve out a special category like erstwhile track-II with ECB having minimum average maturity period of five years and above within the new merged foreign currency ECB category to permit solar/wind project developers for repayment of their rupee loans to domestic lenders from ECB proceeds," Mr. Mehta added.

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Brokers want SEBI to roll back new risk management framework for F&O

Proposed margin structure will increase cost of derivatives trading, they say

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR
MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India's (SEBI) recent move to revise the risk management framework by tweaking the margin requirements for equity derivatives segment is facing resistance with broker associations demanding a roll back or at least an indefinite postponement of the new norms that will come into effect from Monday.

Brokers say that the proposed margining structure will only increase manifold the cost of trading in equity derivatives – also known as F&O, or futures and options, in industry parlance – without any real benefit in terms of reducing risk, which is the



that many components of margin levied/proposed to be increased are unwarranted, excessive, bear zero-to-very-low correlation to risk, and therefore will result in unprecedented damage to the functioning and growth of the equity derivatives market," stated an ANMI submission to SEBI.

"ANMI believes that applicable margin should correlate highly with risk and not exposure/open interest... Therefore, SEBI moves on margins, has less to do with risk management and more to do with controlling open interest and volumes in the F&O markets," it added.

The matter goes back to December 17, 2018, when the SEBI issued a circular pro-

posing revised margins based on the recommendations of the Risk Management Review Committee.

Among other things, the regulator increased the so-called Margin Period of Risk (MPOR) to two days from the current one day to ascertain the total margin. Further, exchanges were directed to calculate the MPOR for each equity derivative product based on liquidity and scale up the initial margins and exposure margins accordingly.

In a letter written to the SEBI, ANMI has stated that the proposed margins are "unscientific and excessive" and that it would "practically shut down" all hedging and proprietary trading in the market.

INTERVIEW | R. BASKAR BABU

We will go for an IPO by mid-2020: Suryoday SFB's MD

'We will have 100 branches by the end of the year'

MANOJ SAHA

also a challenge.

How much of the loan book is MFI loans?

■ Right now, MFI loans are 90% of the loan book. By March 2020, it should be 75.25. [25% non-MFI loans]. The ideal ratio is 50:50.

What is your strategy for deposit mobilisation?

■ After seeing all these crisis, we do not want to build the liability book only with deposits. It will be deposits, refinance limits and capital. Our focus had to build

around one million customers. And, each customer has the potential to save in the savings account. We have to do banking with them when we are fully geared. For that, we have to do doorstep banking. Right now, CASA ratio is 10%. We are planning to have 20% CASA by end of FY2020.

How has profitability been?

■ From a profitability point of view, we have had a very good six months. We ended with a profit of ₹37 crore [FY19]. We are likely to have around ₹90 crore PAT this year.

Since the net worth has crossed ₹500 crore, the bank has to go for an IPO ...

■ Our net worth is currently at ₹614 crore. Net worth crossed ₹500 crore last year. So by March 31, 2021, we have to be listed. Which is exactly two years from now. But we are not going to wait till the end. We would do it by mid 2020, or maximum, by end 2020. We have to start the process six months from now.

What is your branch expansion plan?

■ We have 30 bank branches and 220 microfinance branches which we are converting into bank branches. So, by the end of the year, we will have 100 branches.

Do you plan to raise funds?

■ We are raising around ₹175 crore in equity and ₹125 crore by tier-II bonds in this quarter. Equity capital will be raised from existing as well as a couple of new investors. We want to maintain capital adequacy ratio (CAR) closer to 25% for the next two years though regulatory requirement is 15%. Right now, CAR is at 27%.

What about low cost, current and savings account (CASA) deposits?

■ We are now starting to focus on getting current and savings account deposits. We wanted to make

sure that we had a good customer base before we start doing that. Now, we have a base of

Some banks may soon exit PCA: Kumar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Some of the public sector banks are likely to come out of the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework in the next few months on the back of improvement in various parameters, Financial Services Secretary Rajiv Kumar said.

"Some of the banks, out of the 11, have shown better performance... If some banks are performing well and they are adequately capitalised as per Basel norms. Hence, capitalisation will facilitate them coming out of PCA. RBI is seized of the matter," Mr. Kumar said.

There is a strong case on the basis of performance of some banks to be removed from the PCA list if not all, he added.

In 2019, India to beat U.K. in economy size'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India is likely to surpass the United Kingdom in the world's largest economy rankings in 2019, according to a report by global consultancy firm PwC.

As per the report, while the U.K. and France have regularly switched places owing to similar levels of development and roughly equal populations, India's climb up the rankings is likely to be permanent.

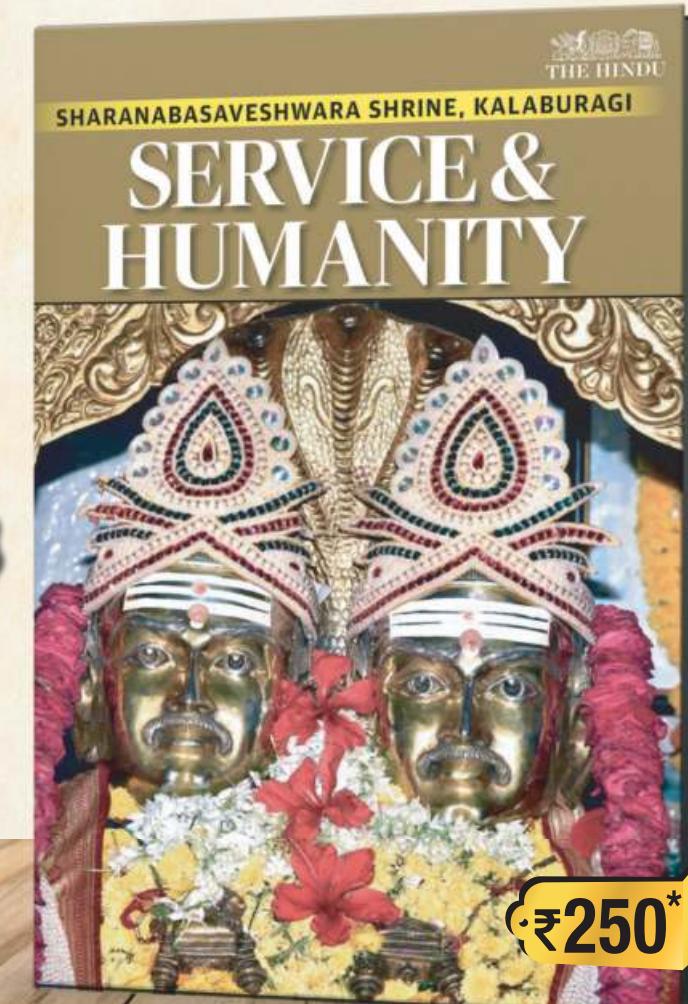
PwC's Global Economy Watch report projects real GDP growth of 1.6% for the U.K., 1.7% for France and 7.6% for India in 2019.

"India and France are likely to surpass the U.K. in world's largest economy rankings in 2019, knocking it from the fifth to seventh place," the report said.

SHARANABASAVESHWARA SHRINE, KALABURAGI

KALABURAGI

The Sharanabasaveshwara shrine in Kalaburagi, Karnataka, which marks the samadhi of the 18th century A.D. saint Sri Sharana Basaveshwar, is an epitome of the pro-poor way of life called dasoba and a symbol of communal amity, for which service is the guiding force. A volume with a collection of articles and pictures that profile the institution and its work that the world needs to be aware of.



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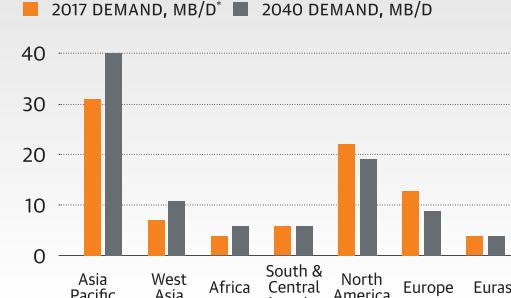
14 BUSINESS REVIEW

Hungry for energy

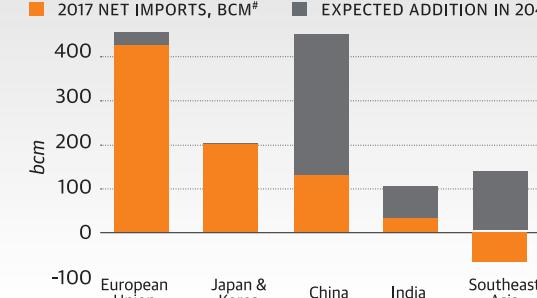
The World Energy Outlook 2018 shows that by 2040, demand for renewables will rise across regions, as will oil consumption in developing economies. Varun B. Krishnan takes a look at the trends modeled by the International Energy Agency on a 'New Policies Scenario', which takes into account governments' current and planned energy policies

**OIL TIDE AND EBB**

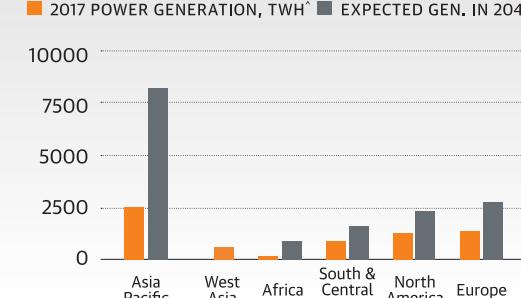
Oil demand will continue to rise in Asia Pacific but will fall in North America and Europe by 2040. The West will see rising fuel efficiencies even as it moves towards alternative sources

**MORE GAS IN THE PIPELINE**

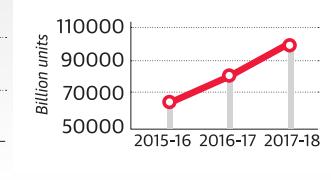
While the EU is the biggest net importer of natural gas, China is on track to become the country with the highest net imports. Southeast Asia will become a net importer

**RAMPING UP RENEWABLES**

Renewables are expected to play a big role going forward, especially in the Asia Pacific region. All regions are expected to scale up production of renewables by 2040

**ON THE RISE**

India's production of renewable energy saw a 54% surge in 2017-18 compared to 2015-16



RBI: on the horns of a dilemma

Must the central bank cut interest rates or only change its stance in the February policy review?

MANOJIT SAHA

After changing the stance of the monetary policy in the October review meeting to 'calibrated tightening' from 'neutral', the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under Shaktikanta Das may choose to change the stance back to 'neutral' again in the February review meeting, after retail inflation grew at the slowest pace in 18 months. December retail inflation came in at 2.19% on the back of softening food and fuel prices.

The monetary policy committee (MPC) of the RBI decided to keep the key interest rate unchanged at 6.5% in the policy review meeting in December. Amid slowing retail inflation and sluggish economic growth, the clamour for a rate cut has gained momentum with the industry bodies, which met Mr. Das last week, suggesting a 50 basis point (bps) interest rate cut along with similar reduction in the cash reserve ratio requirements of banks. (100 basis points = 1 percentage point).

"We continue to expect the bps on February 7 (and 25-50 bps in 2019) with December inflation coming in at a low 2.2%, atop November's 2.3%," Bank of America Merrill Lynch (BofAML) said in a note to its clients.

If the RBI decides to lower the interest rate, a change in stance to 'neutral' will only be natural. A neutral stance would mean there is a scope



Wait and watch: What adds to the complexity is the upcoming Budget on February 1. RBI may need to monitor implications on inflation as well as on fiscal deficit. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

for interest rates to move either way, as opposed to calibrated tightening which means rates can only go up.

Inflation assessment
Even if the RBI is guided by headline inflation numbers for policy-making purposes, the divergence in major components of inflation creates the dilemma of whether to lower the rate or not.

In a speech on Friday at the Vibrant Gujarat Summit, the RBI Governor acknowledged that the divergences and volatility among the components becomes a challenge for assessment of inflation. Some of the major components like inflation in food, fuel, and inflation excluding food and fuel, have shown wide divergences.

This apart, though food inflation has turned negative since October 2018 and fuel

inflation has been highly volatile, inflation, excluding food and fuel, remains sticky at close to 6%.

"A change in stance is more likely now and a rate cut may have to wait for couple of months," Soumya Kantu Ghosh, group chief economic adviser, State Bank of India told *The Hindu*. "RBI has said they focus on headline inflation numbers but core inflation has stayed elevated," added Mr. Ghosh, who thinks there is only an outside chance of a rate cut.

BofAML, however, said even if core inflation hardened to 5.4% from 4.9% last month, it should reverse with oil and commodity prices coming off. "We track January inflation at 2.7% with food deflation persisting," the report said.

What adds to the dilemma is the upcoming Budget on

February 1. Traditionally, election years have seen only a vote-on-account in which no major announcements are made. However, this year could be an exception as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley indicated at a recent event.

"The convention has always been that the election year budget normally is an interim budget and ordinarily there should be no reason why we should move away from that convention. But then, the larger interest of the economy always dictates what goes into the interim budget and that's something which cannot be discussed or disclosed at this stage," Mr. Jaitley said at the CNBC-TV18 India Business Leader Awards on Thursday.

There is the expectation of a major announcement from the government for the rural economy due to the

stress faced by the farm sector. If that happens, then RBI would like to watch for implications on inflation as well as on fiscal deficit.

There has already been a debate as to whether the government should stick to the fiscal deficit target of 3.3% of GDP when the economy actually needs a stimulus to boost growth.

Expansionary policy

BJP's economic affairs spokesman, Gopal Krishna Agarwal, told *The Hindu* there is scope for expansionary policy when inflation is low. "Over the years, we have brought the fiscal deficit down and the fiscal prudence was very good. Inflation, which was in double digits, has been reduced to 2.2% and [is] under control.

"But there are some distressed sectors like agriculture, SMEs which are in need of desperate support from the government. The current situation specifically says liquidity is required in the economy, distress sectors need to be taken care of, banks need to expand credit, and there is a resource constraint from the government side. So, I think there is a scope for expansionary policy when inflation is under control," Mr. Agarwal said.

Interestingly, Mr. Das, who spoke on a wide range of issues at the Vibrant Gujarat Summit, avoided making any observations on fiscal deficit. Probably, he will also wait for the budget to make up his mind.

As you reap, so shall you add value to farm produce

Processing fruits, vegetables boosts farmers' incomes

S. ANNAMALAI
TIRUNELVELI

A fusion of traditional practices, management expertise and technology has taken agriculture to a higher level at a farm located in Udayamalai Village of Tirunelveli district. Jaycee Agro Farms has emerged as a model in which the farmer is in control of the food chain – from production to marketing.

The farm, spread over 200 acres (and an additional 250 acre of leased land), adopts a biodiversified cropping pattern (paddy, fruits and vegetables) and is home to about 51,000 trees, all belonging to native species. It has an interconnected drip irrigation network with six percolation ponds, six open wells and 28 borewells, in addition to rainwater harvesting infrastructure.

The water grid, which can be operated with an Android phone, ensures uninterrupted supply. The organic, bio and biodynamic manure and pesticides produced at the farm are tested in an in-house laboratory. The dairy unit provides the ingredients for manure production. Units are being set up to process fruits, vegetables; produce herbal powders and cold-pressed oils.

Interestingly, Mr. Das, who spoke on a wide range of issues at the Vibrant Gujarat Summit, avoided making any observations on fiscal deficit. Probably, he will also wait for the budget to make up his mind.

GREEN SHOOTS

It is networking with nearby villages to improve productivity and income of small and marginal farmers. The farm is also used to provide training in organic and biodynamic farming in association with government agencies and promote agro-tourism. Work has begun to

make it a biodynamic farming education centre of the Biodynamic Association of India. "We want to make farming a cooperative movement that functions on good corporate principles," said Mr. Jayachandran.

Biodynamic agriculture, a new method of farming, which evolved from the lectures of Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner in 1924, incorporates principles of oriental philosophy and astronomy.

Almost all of the produce leave the farm with value addition. About 70% of the harvest goes to the export market. It has received certificates from Demeter International, LACON Germany and Halal India. "At present, farmers suffer about 35% post-harvest loss. This can be considerably brought down by processing and value addition," said R. Chandrasekaran, the other promoter.

GST: construction equipment gets a boost

But niggles persist, such as tax on parts being higher than that on end-products

ANAND SUNDARESAN

GST implementation was indeed a long-awaited, welcome decision by the government which has helped construction equipment industry to align tax rates at a single point.

It has helped the industry by relieving them from various procedural restrictions which existed while goods were under transit, like waybills, transit passes and its connected returns and assessments.

Removal of checkposts has resulted in significant reduction of transit time.

Withdrawal of various forms existing under VAT regime like Form C, H, F etc., has helped the industry to concentrate on their core business, resulted in reduction in manpower and/or channelising such resources to other core areas and also mitigated the risk associated with non-receipt of these forms.

Unlimited availability of input credit, by change in the definition of input credit, for all transactions, is one more significant advantage.

This enabled flow of credit directly into the system with verification facility, resulting in more input compared to VAT and service tax.



Constructive task: Cross reconciliation of input tax credit should be deferred to the annual return. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

ally, all tax on interstate purchase was not available as input credit under VAT regime whereas now it is available.

Elimination of virtual branches established only for the purpose of documentation and taking credit has been eliminated completely.

Time limit allowed for passing credit notes for longer period compared to VAT is one more welcome step. Such a large migration can never happen without the entailing blues during implementation. There persist some variances which, if addressed, will benefit the industry in a big way.

There are some parts that go into the manufacture of the end-use equipment, which carry a higher rate of GST than the end use equipment itself. It is advisable to stabilise the rates of end-use equipment, which are predominantly machinery, under 18% category, including the components that go into the manufacturer.

Until recently, GST rate for special purpose vehicles (SPVs), was 28%. In the GST Council meeting held in July 2018, the rates were reduced to 18%.

However, these SPVs still continue to be under HSN code starting with 87. In line with motor graders, truck-mounted cranes, wheel loaders etc., which are also similar to SPVs, but classified under HSN code beginning with 84, the subjects of latest amendment of rates should also be classified under the codes starting with 84, to avoid inconsistencies in future.

With the current challenges in web-based reconciliation, assesses are finding it difficult to file GSTR-1 by the 10th of the subsequent calendar month. Many customers' GST numbers are changed which need to be corrected after following up with the customers, which takes time. GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B should be allowed

to be filed together. The classification of goods with reference to HSN Codes should be made uniform across all dealers without restricting to 2, 4 and 8 digits for various categories based on scale of operation.

Allowing ITC based on the original invoice of the supplier without depending on GSTR-2A will be a welcome step. Cross reconciliation of ITC should be deferred to the annual return.

For capital equipment manufacturers, warranty issues are invariably a commitment given to customers across all industries. Warranty supplies are usually committed under very limited deadlines since the equipment would have stopped working causing huge loss to the customer. Hence, issuing of material free-of-cost during the warranty period should be allowed from the nearest spares stock point which may not be the State from where the original supplier was.

The data of IGST paid while importing an item is available with ICEGATE. The GST website should be automated for taking this data from ICEGATE. This will immensely simplify reconciliation.

If these aspects are addressed appropriately, it will help the construction equipment industry in a big way and heighten the ease of doing business in India.

(The writer is member, CII Southern Regional Council and vice chairman and MD, Schwing Stetter India)

BORN IN THE QUEST FOR 'VEGETARIAN' OMEGA-3

Born in the quest for 'vegetarian' Omega-3, this firm now has 1,500 nutraceuticals

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR

Omega-3 is an important fatty acid with immense health benefits for the body and brain. It is found in abundance in fish oil and many pharmaceutical companies extract the oil to develop it into a pill for daily dosage.

While the health benefits of Omega-3 cannot be disputed, many – especially vegetarians in India – have reservations having it due to the source of the oil.

Bioscientist Minto Gupta was well aware of this, having worked in the pharmaceutical sector for decades. He decided to develop a solution sourced from plants instead of fish, and his specialisation in the nutraceutical segment only helped him further in his endeavour.

"It took me 10 years of research to come out with an Omega-3 product that was extracted purely from plants," said Mr. Gupta, chairman and managing director, Deccan Healthcare.

"It is found in high concentration in apricot, walnut, almonds and flax seeds. We launched the product in 2006 and in two years, it became quite popular," he said.

The company works on the concept of Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) that lays down the quantum of nutrients that a human body needs through food intake. Due to various reasons, however, the body does not get the required dosage leading to sickness or ailments.

"There are many factors like lifestyle or dietary habits due to which we do not get the required nutrients. To address that gap, we have

developed pills. It is like 'pill a day will keep the doctor away,'" said Mr. Gupta, who has a degree in biochemistry having studied in prestigious institutes such as Banaras Hindu University and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR).

Before starting Deccan Healthcare, Mr. Gupta worked with Ranbaxy and the Tata Group, where he researched health supplements for 12 years.

SME MART

Starting his own venture was not easy for Mr. Gupta, who came from a salaried background. For the first few years, he traded in over the counter pharmaceutical products to fund his company.

After his first product – Omega-3 – became popular, he followed it up with Omega-7, which was in a way an advanced version of the first product.

"Everyone loves skin that

babies have, for its softness. Research has shown that baby skin has a high composition of Omega-7 and since everyone loves to have soft

Tsitsipas packs off his idol Federer; Kerber too shown the door

Nadal sails smoothly into the quarterfinals even as Cilic and Sharapova also make their exit



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Defending champion Roger Federer was stunned by fiery Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas who ended his bid for a record seventh Australian Open on Sunday on a day of upsets that also saw women's second seed Angelique Kerber crash out.

The Swiss master caved in under the energy and pressure of a man 17 years his junior to tumble out 6-7(1), 7-6 (3), 7-5, 7-6(5) in the last 16 on Rod Laver Arena.

Kerber was also sensationaly bundled out by a woman playing the event for the first time, with American Danielle Collins humiliating the Wimbledon champion 6-0, 6-2 in under an hour.

The man Federer beat in last year's final, sixth seed Marin Cilic, was sent packing by Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut, who now plays Tsitsipas in the quarterfinals.

Stephens crashes out
Five-time Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova and fifth seed Sloane Stephens were others to fall, but there was



Incredible: In a match pitting the oldest and youngest players left in the men's singles draw, Stefanos Tsitsipas' composure and brilliance carried the day for the Greek against six-time champion Roger Federer. ■ AP

no such drama for a rampant Rafael Nadal who powered into the last eight with a straight-set win over Tomas Berdych.

Federer was gunning for a 21st Grand Slam title but had

a battle on his hands from off against the 20-year-old, touted among the new generation of young stars as a future champion.

"I'm the happiest man on Earth right now, I cannot de-

scribe it," said the 14th seed, who is the first Greek in history to reach the quarterfinals of a Slam.

"I've been idolising him (Federer) since the age of six. It was a dream come true for

me just being on Rod Laver facing him. Winning at the end, I can't describe it."

Outplayed

The 2016 champion Kerber, the bookies' favourite along

Not the beginning of the end

Federer to play at Roland Garros for first time since 2015

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Roger Federer denied his defeat to Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas signalled a changing of the guard as he announced he will play the French Open.

The defending champion played down suggestions it was the beginning of the end for a man who has dominated the sport for so long. "I've

heard that story the last 10 years. From that standpoint, nothing new there," he said.

And in a signal that he is hungry for more, the 37-year-old said he planned to play on clay again this year for the first time since 2015.

"It's a bit of a desire. I'm in a phase where I want to have fun and I've missed not doing it."

He missed Roland Garros in 2016 with an injury and skipped the clay season the last two years.

"I don't feel it is necessary to have a big break again," he added.

Federer saw similarities to himself in the long-haired Greek.

"He has a one-handed backhand and I used to have long hair, too," said the World No.3

for an 18th Grand Slam title.

"I always say the same when I am back for injury," said the Spaniard. "I don't expect negative or positive things. I just try to do my work every day and just be with (the) right attitude every single day."

Hometown hero Ashleigh Barty also made the last eight after muscling past Sharapova.

The 30th seed won the first set but then fell to pieces, eventually succumbing

4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Men's second seed Nadal, returning from foot surgery, barrelled past former World No. 4 Tomas Berdych 6-0, 6-1, 7-6(4) as he stays on track

Next up for the diminutive 22-year-old Barty is Petra Kvitova (Cze) bt 3-Roger Federer (Sui) 6-7(11), 7-6(3), 7-5, 7-6(5).

Women: 8-Petra Kvitova (Cze) bt Amanda Anisimova (USA) 6-2, 6-1; 15-Ashleigh Barty (Aus) bt 30-Maria Sharapova (Rus) 4-6, 6-1, 6-4; Danielle Collins (USA) bt 2-Angelique Kerber (Ger) 6-0, 6-2; Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (Rus) bt 5-Sloane Stephens (USA) 6-7(3), 6-3, 6-3.

Concern over falling reputation of the game

Former players want the BCCI to play a proactive role

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

The Hardik Pandya-K.L. Rahul episode, followed by the incident involving an under-16 cricketer from Mumbai indulging in an obscene act in the dressing room has shown Indian cricket in poor light.

Some former cricketers, appalled at the degeneration of the public image of the game in India, want the administrators to step in and arrest the falling reputation of the Board.

Educate and mentor

Soon after his retirement, former India captain Anil Kumble had submitted a proposal to the Board to "educate and mentor" young cricketers. He had observed from close the need to "guide" the young genera-

tion exposed to fame and money at a very impressionable age.

Kumble's proposal comprised a comprehensive document on teaching the under-16 batch at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) life skills.

The legendary leg-spinner wanted the Board to undertake the responsibility to fund the education of the players given their exposure to a world they would not have been familiar with.

Veteran Board official Prof. Ratnakar Shetty confirmed Kumble's proposal.

Kumble's presentation was in keeping with the times. Unfortunately we have not done any serious work on this front.

"The Board should have a psychiatrist to speak to young cricketers at the NCA. It has become imperative

"Sudden success can also mislead. But look at M.S. Dhoni. He came from a small town but see how gracefully he has conducted himself in public," said Shetty.

Former India opener Virender Sehwag observed it was high time the Board took over the responsibility of mentoring the youngsters.

"I was taught at home to respect seniors. I was lucky I got to learn from players like Kumble, Sachin, Laxman, Ganguly.

"I feel it is the responsibility of the international players to set an example. Why can't we have regular visits by former stars and legends to lecture the trainees at the NCA.

"The Board should have a psychiatrist to speak to young cricketers at the NCA. It has become imperative

now," said Sehwag.

Social issue

For Mohinder Amarnath the issue was social. "When you gain fame, after coming from humble surroundings, small towns, you tend to make mistakes. They should know that off the field behaviour is as important as on it. They can't be bigger than the game. They should also remember that women should always be respected."

V.V.S. Laxman advocated "No IPL until a player turns 22. It's important for BCCI to see that aspects like handling sudden prosperity, fame, media, fans become part of the cricketing curriculum at the NCA. Upbringing of a cricketer should be BCCI's responsibility especially with the explosion of the social media now."

"To me, Virat Kohli is the greatest batsman to have ever played one-day cricket. I have no doubts after seeing what he has achieved for India," Clarke, himself a former World Cup-winning captain, told PTI in an interview.

Kohli has already scored 10,385 runs in 219 ODIs at an astounding average of 59 plus, including 39 hundreds.

Kohli greatest ODI batsman ever: Clarke

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

That Virat Kohli is destined to be among the pantheons of all-time greats is an oft-repeated assertion, but for former Australia captain Michael Clarke, the India skipper is already the "greatest ODI batsman to have ever played the game".

Kohli's India was the first team ever not to lose any series down under and along the way, he continued to add to his rapidly-rising count of international hundreds.

"To me, Virat Kohli is the greatest batsman to have ever played one-day cricket. I have no doubts after seeing what he has achieved for India," Clarke, himself a former World Cup-winning captain, told PTI in an interview.

An unabashed Kohli fan, Clarke said the 30-year-old Indian's passion is unmatchable. "You have to respect Virat's passion to win games for his country. Yes, he has aggression but no one can question his commitment, how much he has achieved," Clarke said.

While Kohli's craft continues to evoke awe, his predecessor Mahendra Singh Dhoni's current form has the cricketing world divided.

Dhoni's style of batsmanship in ODIs, no longer as aggressive as it used to be, has

been a matter of concern, but for Clarke, the 37-year-old former India captain should be left alone to play his game.

"MS knows how to react to any given situation. He has played 300 plus ODIs, so he knows how to go about his job," Clarke said.

But would Dhoni have been as effective as he was in the third ODI against Australia if the target had been 330 instead of 230?

Strategy

"I think he would have played differently. It was 230 and he had a particular strategy and it would have been different if the target had been bigger," he said.

On Dhoni's batting position in the World Cup, Clarke said, "Any position – 4, 5 or 6. He is good enough to bat at any position and I believe Virat will use him accordingly."

Board President's XI canters home

Jaswal, Saini scalp four each to send England Lions tumbling

A. VINOD
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

England Lions' quest to win a match, prior to the five-day One-Day Internationals against India-A starting on Wednesday, came to nought as Board President's XI won the second warm-up game at the St. Xavier's Stadium, Thumba, on Sunday.

Having won the first game by four wickets, the home side once again dominated the 50-over game.

The visitors, asked to bat, were bowled out for 104 in 22.3 overs and Board President's XI cruised home in 21.2 overs.

It was P.P. Jaswal's incisive spell that proved to be the doom for the young Lions as the medium-pacer ran through the rival top order to return four for 16 in six overs.

Having won the first game by four wickets, the home side once again dominated the 50-over game.

P.P. Jaswal ran through the Lions' top order to return four for 16 in six overs

ers. He was well supported by Navdeep Saini, who too finished with four wickets (for 32 runs) in eight overs. Lions skipper Sam Billings stood among the ruins, with a quicksilver half-century (52, 66) even as the Indian duo ran through the rest of the batting.

In reply, the Indians faced a few hiccups early on as James Porter proved to be a thorn with his quick dismissals of openers Rajat Patidar and Rituraj Gaekwad and one-drop Ricky Bhui.

Board President's XI was reduced to 36 for three before skipper Ishan Kishan and Deepak Hooda joined to put up a 52-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

However, when the home team seemed to be going great, Porter returned to dismiss Ishan and Himmat Singh off successive balls (in the 18th over) and get to what was a well-deserving five wicket haul in a nine-over spell. But, Hooda hardly gave anything away thereafter and he pushed his side past the winning line in the company of Jayant Yadav.

The scores: England Lions 104 in 22.3 overs (Sam Billings 52, P.P. Jaswal four for 16, Navdeep Saini four for 32) lost to Board President's XI 105 for five in 21.2 overs (Deepak Hooda 36 n.o., Ishan Kishan 34, James Porter five for 36).

Board President's XI was reduced to 36 for three before skipper Ishan Kishan and Deepak Hooda joined to put up a 52-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

However, when the home team seemed to be going great, Porter returned to dismiss Ishan and Himmat Singh off successive balls (in the 18th over) and get to what was a well-deserving five wicket haul in a nine-over spell. But, Hooda hardly gave anything away thereafter and he pushed his side past the winning line in the company of Jayant Yadav.

This was by no means City's most outstanding display of the season but, ultimately, goals from Danilo, Raheem Sterling and Leroy Sane ensured it did not trip up in the latest leg of its quest to keep the title-race alive.

The embarrassment of riches available to City manager Guardiola meant Gabriel Jesus, who had scored seven goals in three matches, dropped to the bench alongside David Silva while Kevin De Bruyne and Sergio Aguero returned to his starting line-up.

That depth of quality would be difficult for any side to counter, especially a team struggling as much as Huddersfield are at present.

Earlier on Saturday, Arsenal blew the race for a top-four Premier League finish wide open as first-half goals from Alexandre Lacazette and Laurent Koscielny saw the Gunners beat Chelsea 2-0 at the Emirates Stadium.

Chelsea remains in pole position for a return to Champions League football next season in fourth, but is now just three points ahead of Arsenal and a surging Manchester United.

Maurizio Sarri's men risk being caught after a fourth defeat in 11 league matches that underlined the need for a striker, as the club closes in on signing Gonzalo Higuain on loan from Juventus.

Sarri again opted to start without a recognised centre-forward, with a largely anonymous Eden Hazard preferred in middle of a front three against an Arsenal defence that had kept just one clean sheet

since September.

Emery vindicated

By contrast Arsenal boss Unai Emery's selection was vindicated, with Mesut Ozil on the bench for the whole match and a switch to a 4-4-2 that allowed Lacazette and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang to form a potent partnership up front.

The results:

Premier League: Fulham 1 (Llorente 17th) lost to Tottenham 2 (Ali 51, Winks 90+3); Huddersfield 0 lost to Manchester City 3 (Danilo 18, Sterling 54, Sane 56).

On Saturday: Arsenal 2 (Lacazette 14, Koscielny 39) bt Chelsea 0.

Serie A: Frosinone 0 lost to Atalanta 5 (Mancini 11, Zapata 44, 47, 64, 73); SPAL 1 (Kurtic 63) drew with Bologna 1 (Palacio 24); Fiorentina 3 (Muriel 34, 70, Pezzella 90+3) drew with Sampdoria 3 (Ramirez 44, Quagliarella 81^{pen}, 85). **On Saturday:** Udinese 1 (Okaka 50) lost to Parma 2 (Inglese 11^{pen}, Gervinho 68); Inter Milan 0 drew with Sassuolo 0.

Bundesliga: Nuremberg 1 (Behrens 42) lost to Hertha Berlin 3 (Ibisevic 15, Duda 50, 70). **On Saturday:** RB Leipzig 0 lost to Borussia Dortmund 1 (Witsel 19).

La Liga: Villarreal 1 (Tokio Ekambi 71) drew with Athletic Bilbao 1 (Jaume 19th); Real Betis 3 (Tello 12, Moron 54, Canales 90+4^{pen}) bt Girona 2 (Serrano 36, Doumbia 44). **On Saturday:** Real Madrid 2 (Casemiro 78, Modric 90+2) bt Sevilla 0; Huesca 0 lost to Atletico Madrid 3 (Hernandez 31, Arias 52, Koke 71); Celta Vigo 1 (Araujo 40) lost to Valencia 2 (Torres 71, Rodrigo 84).

Eight round results: Viswanathan Anand (5.5) bt Shakhiyar M

TV PICKS

Australian Open: Sony Ten 2 & Six, 5.30 a.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. & 11 p.m.
AFC Asian Cup: Star Sports 3, 4.30 p.m.
Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.
PWL: Sony Ten 3 & Six (SD & HD), 7 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Rockets rally to down Lakers in overtime

LOS ANGELES
James Harden scored 48 points as Houston Rockets rallied from a 21-point deficit to down Los Angeles Lakers 138-134 in overtime on a drama-filled NBA on Saturday.

The results: Denver Nuggets 124 bt Cleveland Cavaliers 102; Houston Rockets 138 bt LA Lakers 134; Atlanta Hawks 105 lost to Boston Celtics 113; Toronto Raptors 119 bt Memphis Grizzlies 90; Chicago Bulls 103 lost to Miami Heat 117; Detroit Pistons 101 bt Sacramento Spurs 103; Indiana Pacers 111 bt Dallas Mavericks 99; Orlando Magic 108 lost to Milwaukee Bucks 118; Charlotte Hornets 135 bt Phoenix Suns 115; Philadelphia 76ers 115 lost to Oklahoma City Thunder 117.



Pacquiao batters Broner, keeps welterweight title

LAS VEGAS
Manny Pacquiao put on a master class in elite boxing on Saturday with a 12-round demolition of Adrien Broner, defending his welterweight title in his first fight on US soil in two years – and his first as a 40-year-old. Pacquiao easily won with a unanimous decision victory over the American. AFP

Undefeated Oubaali claims vacant WBC crown

LAS VEGAS
Nordin Oubaali earned his first world title on Saturday beating Rau'shee Warren by unanimous decision to claim the vacant World Boxing Council bantamweight belt. The 32-year-old Frenchman remained undefeated in his first fight on US soil, which came on the undercard of the Manny Pacquiao-Adrien Broner fight. Oubaali captured the title that became available after Luis Nery failed to make weight for a fight last year. AFP

India finishes runner-up

PATTAYA
Pakistan beat India 2-0 to win the boys' title in the Asian junior team squash championships on Sunday.

The result: Pakistan bt India 2-0 (Abbas Zeb bt Utkarsh Baheti 11-4, 11-2, 11-6;

Muhammad Farhan Hashmi bt Veer Chotran 2-11, 11-9, 11-7, 5-11, 11-9).

Lalita and Sanyal win doubles title

NEW DELHI
Lalita Dahiya partnered Sanyal Seshadri to win the doubles title with a 21-12, 21-15 victory over Sheetal Kargeti and S. Rachita in the Inter-Ministry badminton tournament on Sunday.

Lalita had earlier won the singles title, beating Sheetal Kargeti. The men's final has been rescheduled for next week, on the request of the two finalists, Sachin Rawat and Himanshu Saroha.

The results (Men's doubles): Himanshu Saroha & Tushar Sharma bt Amit Sharma & Abhinav Prakash 21-15, 21-18.

Women's doubles: Lalita Dahiya & Sanyal Seshadri bt Sheetal Kargeti & S. Rachita 21-12, 21-15.

Mixed doubles: Tushar Sharma & Sheetal Kargeti bt Suvam Adhirai & S. Rachita 21-15, 21-17.

Veterans: men: Rajeev Sharma bt Vijay Sharma 21-6, 21-17; **doubles:** Rajeev Sharma & Sunil Yadav bt AK Jain & NK Gupta 21-18, 21-17.

Veterans women: Priya Nalgunwar bt Madhu Gyanchandani 21-15, 21-17.

Veterans mixed doubles: Rajeev Sharma & N Priya bt Sunil Yadav & Sarita Kumar 21-15, 21-17.

Seamer Hasan Ali and leg-

Cosmas Lagat is the runaway winner

Worknesh Alemu finds no competition, wins on first appearance

MUMBAI MARATHON

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI

Kenya's Cosmas Lagat took charge of the elite men's marathon, after realising that pre-race favourite Abera Kuma was nowhere in sight, switched gear at the 32-km mark and strode majestically to victory in two hours, nine minutes, 15 seconds in the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2019.

Aychew Bante struggled to take second place (2:10:05), one of four Ethiopians in the first five finishers. Shumet Akalnew (2:10:14) was a close third.

Similar situation

Ethiopian Worknesh Alemu, facing a similar situation in elite women's with Amane Gobena expected to lead the way, kept waiting for the latter to emerge in front.

Hesitant to break away, the champion held herself back till realisation dawned that she was alone, and dis-



Easily done: Cosmas Lagat from Kenya strode majestically to victory. ■ PRASHANT NAKWE

played a strong finish in hot and humid conditions for winning time of 2:25:45, Amane a distant second (2:26:09), Birke Debele third (2:26:39).

Africans ran the marathon show, Ethiopians dominated in women and men category,

the exception being bold Cosmas, winning on debut in Mumbai. "I want to be known as a finisher," remarked the Kenyan, once a pacemaker for elite athletes at the 2016 London Marathon.

"It was a one-off decision,

London Marathon is a big race and it helped get used to the weather. I like to win races." The two champions earned \$45,000 each.

Amene Gobena was such a big name in the elite women's entry list, that fellow Ethiopian Worknesh felt: "I

to continue that form this summer.

"Whenever you are playing a series, you want to win regardless of who the opponent is and the history. This series is no different and especially playing at home, we would love to play well in front of our home crowds.

"We will have a few days of preparation as a team before our first game on the 24th, which will be a great opportunity to finalise our plans before we take on India," she said.

The Kiwi skipper, who has played against Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur in the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL), considers the limited-over series a

good opportunity" to come up against them.

With some quality bowlers, who possess different variety of skills in the squad, Satterthwaite believes "it is nice to have different options to use in different situations and against different players."

White Ferns, as the New Zealand women's team is called, have a good range of skill sets that balance the team well.

The bowling attack primarily consists Leigh Kasperek, Le Tuohu, Amelia Kerr and Sophie Devine, who can all produce match winning spells, Satterthwaite concluded.

The results: Men: Son Wan-ho (Kor) bt Chen Long (Chn) 21-17, 21-19.

Women: Ratchanok Intanon (Tha) bt Carolina Marin (Esp) 21-9, 22-20.

waited for her to hit the front at some point in the race, so played safe and followed the pacemaker.

"At 34kms, I was feeling fresh and since she was not speeding up, I decided to try and finish." It was a win on first appearance, second career win after Morocco.

The 2:16 and 2:37 qualification timings decided by IAAF for the Doha World Athletics Championships ap-

plied to these Africans also.

Competition in Kenya and Ethiopia is so intense, that winning bigger races is on their mind.

Both enjoyed the Mumbai experience on debut, especially the women's winner.

The results: Men: 1. Cosmas Lagat (Ken) 2:09:15, 2. Aychew Bante (Eth) 2:10:05, 3. Shumet Akanew (Eth) 2:10:14, 4. Daniel (Eth) 2:10:55, 5. Aychew Meekuont (Eth) 2:11:16.

Women: 1. Worknesh Alemu (Eth) 2:25:45, 2. Amene Gobena (Eth) 2:26:09, 3. Birke Debele (Eth) 2:26:39, 4. Mergertu Alemu (Eth) 2:31:00, 5. Almaz Negeda (Eth) 2:31:45.



Sudha. ■ PRASHANT NAKWE

taking part in tougher competitions. Running against a quality field, I can try to get closer to 2:30."

Sudha Singh, running alongside a personal pacemaker Vicky Tomar, clocked a personal best of two hours, 34 minutes, 55 seconds in women's category at the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2019.

The effort improved the chances of the 3000m steeplechase specialist figuring among Indian marathon entries at the IAAF World Athletics Championship this year in Doha, after coming under the 2:37:00 qualifying standard.

She finished strongly to improve upon her personal best (2:35:35, World Athletics 2015 at Beijing) and also lowered the course record for Indian women (held by O P Jaisha 2:37:29). The steeplechase-cum-marathoner earned a ₹2,00,000 incentive for establishing a new high among Indian finishers, in addition to the overall prize money for the eighth position in elite category.

Sudha, delighted at outcome months prior to Indian entries for the Doha Worlds will be decided, said: "I am looking at reducing my marathon timing by

15 seconds. And training partner, Thonakal Gopi, were left to pace themselves after designated pace-makers, boosting the elite male athletes, were too far ahead. "I tried for the Indian course record but missed it narrowly."

The results (Indians): Women: 1. Sudha Singh (2:34:55), 2. Jyoti Gawte (2:45:48), 3. Jigmet Dolma (3:10:42). Half-marathon: 1. Meenu (1:18:05), 2. Sangeeta Naik (1:19:01), 3. Manju Yadav (1:25:11).

Men: 1. Nitendra Rawat (2:15:52), 2. Thonakal Gopi (2:17:03), 3. Karan Singh (2:20:10). Half-marathon: 1. Sriku Bhagath (1:05:49), 2. Shankar Man Thapa (1:06:07), 3. Kalidas Hirave (1:06:38).

Son and Intanon are champions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KUALA LUMPUR

South Korea's Son Wan-ho put on masterful display of badminton to easily beat China's Chen Long 21-17, 21-19 and clinch the Malaysia Masters title on Sunday. In the women's singles, Ratchanok Intanon successfully defended her title with a 21-9, 22-20 triumph over Spain's Carolina Marin.

The results: Men: Son Wan-ho (kor) bt Chen Long (chn) 21-17, 21-19.

Women: Ratchanok Intanon (tha) bt Carolina Marin (esp) 21-9, 22-20.

Sudha, Nitendra go under Doha Worlds qualifying time

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

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Nitendra Singh Rawat.
■ PRASHANT NAKWE

A taste of Kiwi awaits Indian women

ANI
NEW DELHI

The teams last clashed in the 2018 World Cup T20 in the Caribbean, where Harmanpreet Kaur's historic century guided India to a convincing 34-run win.

Ready for the challenge

"We have not played India in a series since 2015. They have a few new faces as well as their experienced campaigners."

"We know that we will have to be consistent across all three disciplines against a quality Indian side, but it is a challenge we are ready for," the top-order batter said.

Satterthwaite said her team had enjoyed lot of success playing at home in the last few years and will be looking

to continue that form this summer.

"Whenever you are playing a series, you want to win regardless of who the opponent is and the history. This series is no different and especially playing at home, we would love to play well in front of our home crowds."

"We will have a few days of preparation as a team before our first game on the 24th, which will be a great opportunity to finalise our plans before we take on India," she said.

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Imam, Hafeez take Pakistan to victory

Amla's unbeaten century goes in vain for South Africa

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PORT ELIZABETH



Giving it the treatment: Mohammad Hafeez lofts one over the boundary during his match-winning knock. ■ AFP

spinner Shadab Khan were the best Pakistani bowlers and the only two who bowled their full quota of 10 overs, taking one for 42 and one for 41 respectively.

Pakistan looked to be cruising to an easy win until Imam was dismissed in the 37th over when he stepped out and sliced an attempted drive to deep cover.

Two more wickets fell cheaply before Hafeez

IN BRIEF



World's oldest man, 113, dies at his home in Japan

TOKYO

The world's oldest man died on Sunday at the age of 113. Masazo Nonaka, who was born in July 1905, died in the early hours of Sunday while sleeping at home in Ashoro, Japan. The supercentenarian, whose family has been running a hot springs inn for four generations, was certified by Guinness World Records in April 2018 as the world's oldest living man. AP



Prince Philip warned for not wearing seat belt

LONDON

Queen Elizabeth's 97-year-old husband Prince Philip received a warning from the police after he was photographed driving without a seat belt, just two days after he was involved in a crash. "Suitable words of advice have been given to the driver and this is in line with our standard response," police spokesman said. REUTERS



Want to pray with the Pope? Use this app

VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis on Sunday launched an app that allows the faithful to pray with him. The app, called Click to Pray, will inform users what the Pope is praying for, like world peace or people hit by a natural disaster, so they can join him. REUTERS

#10YearChallenge: viral trend or a boon to giant tech firms?

It calls for posting two photos of yourself — one from today and one from a decade ago

JACEY FORTIN



Get spotted: A demonstration using AI and facial recognition tools on people at the CES 2019 in Las Vegas. • AFP

The #10YearChallenge was all fun and memes until last week after a tweet moved thousands of people to worry: are we unknowingly helping giant corporations to improve their algorithms for biometric identification and age progression?

The #10YearChallenge gained widespread traction on social media this month. It calls for posting two photos of yourself side by side — one from today and one from a decade ago — to show how you've changed.

Some made jokes, paid tribute to old hairstyles or drew attention to issues like global warming. Celebrities posted glamour shots that showed negligible changes.

Where data ends up

But one post went viral without featuring any side-by-side photos at all. It was written by Kate O'Neill, author of the book *Tech Humanist: How You Can Make Technol-*

ogy Better for Business and Better for Humans.

"Me 10 years ago: probably would have played along with the profile picture aging meme going around on Facebook and Instagram," she wrote in a tweet last week. "Me now: ponders how all this data could be mined to train facial recognition algorithms on age progression and age recognition."

Her words hit a nerve. People responded with concerns. Ms. O'Neill's post got more than 10,000 ret-

weets and more than 20,000 likes.

In an article in *Wired*, she wrote, "I wondered about why this particular thought, in this particular moment, generated so much traction," Ms. O'Neill said, adding that she was not trying to stoke any panic.

"We have an awful lot of data that we're sharing all the time, and companies are collecting it and using it in various ways," Ms. O'Neill said.

Supporters of facial recognition technologies said they

can be indispensable for catching criminals or finding missing people. But critics warned they can enable mass surveillance.

Lauren A. Rhue, an assistant professor of information systems and analytics at the Wake Forest School of Business, said people should be wary of any company being in possession of such a large trove of biometric data.

Facebook announced it

was using facial recognition technology in 2010. When people upload photos of their friends, Facebook can use the technology to suggest the names of people in the picture. It can also alert users if they are in a photo posted by a friend.

The company had earlier said that it does not intend to help strangers identify you, and has repeatedly pointed out that users can disable face recognition in their personal settings.

As for the 10-year challenge, Facebook said it's just a fun trend. NY TIMES

Cutest dog dies from 'broken heart'

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL

WASHINGTON

The world's cutest dog Boo has died of a "broken heart".

Boo, a Pomeranian and his companion Buddy, who died last year, had become internet sensations when their owners started sharing their pictures online.

Boo's death was confirmed in a post made by his owners on social media, reported CNN.

Taking to Facebook, Boo's owners posted, "With deepest sadness I wanted to share that Boo passed away in his



With Buddy! Boo at its home. • WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BOO/

sleep early this morning and has left us to join his best friend, Buddy."

"We think his heart literal-

ly broke when Buddy left us," the owners posted. Since being uploaded, the post was shared over 78,000

times and received over 49,000 comments.

The news was met with shock from Boo's fans.

One user posted, "Boo's little face gave me so many happy moments even when I was sad..." While another wrote, "I'm heartbroken.

The joy you and Buddy gave freely will be missed. I know you are with your Buddy and that gives me comfort." Boo had 16 million followers on Facebook, made appearances on TV. He appeared in a book *Boo: the life of the world's cutest dog*.

The current boom has two decades of Harry Potter mania to thank.



Abracadabra! Students of the Magic Academy in Pullach near Munich, southern Germany, in this file photo. • AFP

Magic is the joy that comes from the special delight in being fooled

HAROLD VOIT

Magic Academy in Pullach

on a recent night in the classroom was entrepreneur Marco Hafenrichter, 46, who runs a successful construction business.

Sense of wonder

As he practised a classic trick involving the seamless coupling and uncoupling of ropes, he said that learning how to trigger a sense of wonder in an audience had attracted him to magic school.

"At the moment my biggest fan is still my son but by the end of the course, I'd like to have six or seven routines down that I can always perform."

IT industry manager Marianne Hofmann, 67, said magic had given her a touch of star power and not just with her eight grandchildren. "I head up a choir and everything I learn about human psychology here I can use there, especially how you command the attention of an audience," she said.

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DELHIMETRO



'Sweetening the pill'

The ban on online sale of drugs does not seem to have created much impact among Delhites [Page 2](#)



Carjackers in cop net

Police bust a gang of dancers-turned-carjacker with the arrest of three persons [Page 3](#)



Off the mat

It is an important time for yoga when the heir of one of its most prominent schools writes a book [Page 4](#)



Brass bands and baraats

American band Lucky Chops on what its music has in common with Indian wedding tunes [Page 4](#)

IN BRIEF



Man held for trafficking Nepalese girls

A man, carrying a cash reward of ₹1 lakh on his head, was arrested for allegedly trafficking girls from Nepal to the Gulf countries on the pretext of giving them jobs, the police said Sunday. Lopsang Lama (33) is from Nepal's Okhal Doonga, they added.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 3](#)

Rape accused at large in murder case

GURUGRAM A rape accused who shot dead the complainant at Khusboo Chowk on January 18 is still at large, the police said on Sunday. Sandeep worked at a bar in Gurugram, they said. "Four teams have been constituted to work out the case," said Gurugram Police spokesperson.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 3](#)

Air quality of Delhi-NCR		
Delhi 404	Gurugram 284	
Ghaziabad 441	Faridabad 427	
Noida 433	Greater Noida 383	
Good 0-50	Satisfactory 51-100	Moderate 101-200
Poor 201-300	Very poor 301-400	Severe >401
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M., YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB		

City likely to get rain today

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Capital is likely to receive light rain or thunderstorms/hailstorms with gusty winds in the evening or at night on Monday, the Meteorological Department said.

It will be under the influence of a western disturbance and other weather systems.

It was a warm, cloudy day on Sunday, with the maximum temperature settling at 28.7 degrees Celsius, which was seven degrees above normal for the season. The minimum at seven degrees was normal.

The Met Department stated that the maximum temperature recorded was the warmest this decade.

The last time the mercury touched 28 degrees Celsius in the season was on January 30, 2010.

However, the maximum temperature is expected to drop to 25 degrees Celsius on Monday under the influence of the western disturbance. The minimum is likely to rise to around 10 degrees Celsius.



Guard of honour being given to head constable Rajpal Kasana (below) in Ghaziabad on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



ing the vehicle. They reached the loop near the sundial on Barapullah elevated road and were trying to maintain a discreet distance from the suspect's car when another rammed their two-wheeler, the police said.

Rajpal fell from the mo-

torcycle and sustained head injuries.

Both policemen were rushed to AIIMS Trauma Centre, the police said.

"Rajpal, who belonged to Ghaziabad, had joined Delhi Police in 1998. He was in Special Cell for the past 12 years. He got out-of-turn promotion as a head constable in 2013 for exemplary work in various encounters. He was an asset to the police force," said Mr. Kushwah.

He is survived by his wife and two sons.

No CCTVs

The police said a case has been registered and they are on the lookout for the driver of the vehicle that hit the bike. "No CCTV cameras

were found installed on the stretch," said an officer.

A car had hit a bike on Barapullah elevated road on January 6, the police said.

The woman who riding pillion on the bike fell into the drain below the flyover. She later succumbed to her injuries. Her husband is undergoing treatment, they added.

Meanwhile, motorists complained of the absence of speed traps on the road.

"I have hardly seen traffic police on the 9-km stretch. There are No CCTV cameras installed here either. Authorities should ensure safety measures on the road as drivers often get involved in rash driving on this stretch," said Vimal Kaushik, a motorist.

Leopard rescued from Greater Noida village; to be released soon

Third such incident reported in past 3 months in Greater Noida

STAFF REPORTER

NOIDA

A leopard was rescued from Greater Noida's Sadullapur village on Sunday, the police said. The animal was rescued by Forest Department officials and specialists from Meerut and Delhi zoo.

The police said the Station House Officer at Ecotech 3 received a call at 10 a.m., following which a team rushed to the spot.

Pappu Pradhan, the former chairman of a village near Sadullapur, said a group of men had come to his house after spotting the animal. "They asked me to call the police. They looked petrified," he said.

Ecotech 3 police station SHO Anita Chauhan said a similar incident was reported two days ago in Bisrakh and another one last November.

"I immediately reached the spot with a team and saw over 200 people standing in front of a field, where the leopard was allegedly sighted. Eyewitnesses told us that it went into a farmhouse, which is located around 500 metres away from the spot," said Ms. Chauhan.

She added one Fauzi had a narrow escape when the animal ran past him. "The leopard came out again after 20 minutes. By that time, the District Forest Officer [DFO] and other forest officials had reached the spot."

DFO P. K. Shrivastava said they saw the leopard as it



The leopard was rescued by Forest Department officials, and specialists from Meerut and Delhi zoo. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The leopard has

rescue operation. The rescue operation began at 4.15 p.m., with five trained specialists from Delhi zoo and Wildlife SOS Meerut. At 5.30 p.m., the big cat was successfully caged by the rescuers.

The DFO said the leopard has been taken to a forest base camp in Surajpur and will be released in the Shivalik forest near Saharanpur early on Monday. They often get lost after following a prey for long.

P. K. SHRIVASTAVA
District Forest Officer

came out of the farmhouse. "After a while, it went back. I called the Chief Forest Conservator, who reached the spot with other officials," said Mr. Shrivastava.

He added that it took him almost four hours to arrange equipment like a cage, safety net, forest vehicle, tranquiliser gun, etc., to begin the

rescue operation.

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"The leopard is presumably 7 to 8 years old and is a male. It lives in Greater Noida's Ganga Khadar region in Baghpat Hastinapur and Bulandshahr," said Mr. Shrivastava.

To a question on how the animal had reached Greater Noida, he said leopards often get lost after following a prey for long.

Hit by car, head constable succumbs to injuries a week later; probe on

Incident happened when he was chasing a criminal; colleague undergoing treatment

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 44-year-old Delhi Police head constable who was hit by an unidentified vehicle on Barapullah elevated road while chasing a criminal last week succumbed to his injuries on January 19, the police said on Sunday.

Rajpal Kasana, who was deployed to the Special Cell, died at 5 p.m. at AIIMS Trauma Centre.

Rajpal and his colleague, head constable Mohit Panwar, were reportedly injured on January 14 after they were hit by an unidentified vehicle on Barapullah elevated road.

Mr. Panwar is stable and undergoing treatment, the police said.

Tip-off

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Kushwah said the police had received information at 3 p.m. on January 14 that an arms smuggler from Western Uttar Pradesh will come from Ghazipur border and go to R.K. Puram via ISBT Sarai Kale Khan and Barapullah elevated road.

A team was constituted, including Rajpal and Mr. Panwar, to nab the accused.

Rajpal was riding pillion with Mr. Panwar on a motorcycle when they spotted the suspect in a car near Sarai Kale Khan and started chasing

the vehicle. They reached the loop near the sundial on Barapullah elevated road and were trying to maintain a discreet distance from the suspect's car when another rammed their two-wheeler, the police said.

Rajpal fell from the mo-

torcycle and sustained head injuries.

Both policemen were rushed to AIIMS Trauma Centre, the police said.

"Rajpal, who belonged to Ghaziabad, had joined Delhi Police in 1998. He was in Special Cell for the past 12 years. He got out-of-turn promotion as a head constable in 2013 for exemplary work in various encounters. He was an asset to the police force," said Mr. Kushwah.

He is survived by his wife and two sons.

No CCTVs

The police said a case has been registered and they are on the lookout for the driver of the vehicle that hit the bike.

"No CCTV cameras

High Court sets aside arbitral award imposed on DMRC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has partly set aside an arbitration award directing Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to pay over ₹2,700 crore to a consortium headed by Reliance Infrastructure Ltd for breach of an agreement between them.

A Bench of Justice Sanjiv Khanna (now a Supreme Court judge) and Justice Chander Shekhar had "set aside the award except to the extent we have upheld the conclusion of the Arbitral Tribunal on the question of waiver".

The consortium was a successful bidder in the international competitive bidding process for construction, operation and maintenance of the Delhi Airport Metro Ex-

press Line based on PPP model for providing high-speed metro connectivity between New Delhi railway station and IGIA Terminal 3 with further line till Sector 21 in Dwarka.

Reliance Infrastructure subsidiary, the Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Limited (DAMEPL), had later pulled out from running the Airport Express Line with effect from July 2012 in view of cracks and defects in the girders, bearings, etc.

Subsequently, the matter was referred to arbitration. An Arbitral Tribunal had in its May 2017 award accepted DAMEPL's claim that running of operations on the line was not viable due to structural defects. The tribunal had held that the DMRC was liable to pay over ₹2,700 crore

The court gave liberty to both the DMRC and DAMEPL to invoke an arbitration clause for fresh adjudication.

The court gave liberty to both the DMRC and DAMEPL to invoke an arbitration clause for fresh adjudication.

Ready for shipping



A stable relationship: A man walks past a mule and a horse in Delhi's Daryaganj on Sunday. The animals are used for transporting construction materials and goods. ■ PRADEEP KUMAR

State Congress to launch door-to-door campaign

To inform people about the failures of AAP and BJP

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress said it will start a door-to-door campaign on Monday to "make people aware of false promises, propaganda, corruption and the irresponsible statements of the Aam Aadmi Party".

The Jan Jagran Abhiyan in each district will be addressed by DPCC president Sheila Dikshit ahead of which all the district and block Congress committee presidents are the backbones of the party and only these bodies can take the policies and programmes of the party to the people in an effective manner," Ms. Dikshit said in a meeting on January 19.

importance of grass-root level working of the party to win all the seven seats in Parliament in Delhi. "The district and block Congress committee presidents are the backbones of the party and only these bodies can take the policies and programmes of the party to the people in an effective manner," Ms. Dikshit stressed the

Two students killed on Noida Expressway

Bus driver absconding; no case yet

STAFF REPORTER
GREATER NOIDA

Two students were killed after their scooter rammed a bus near Chapravali turn in Sector 168 on Noida-Greater Noida Expressway on Sunday, the police said.

The deceased – Allahabad resident Utkarsh Singh (21) and Vaishnavi Gupta (20) from Varanasi – were students of IIMT College at Knowledge Park in Greater Noida for the past three years.

"On reaching the spot, we rushed both the victims to a hospital where they were declared brought dead. Following this, we informed their parents about the incident," said Station House Officer at Expressway police station Hansraj Badouria.

Vaishnavi's uncle Virender Gupta said that the students were living in Greater Noida for the past three years. "It was the negligence of the bus driver," he said.

Bus seized

The SHO added that the driver of the roadways bus had fled the spot but the bus has been seized.

A case is yet to be registered,

the police said, adding that manhunt is on for the accused driver.

Delhi HC provides protection to Jammu and Kashmir rape victim, husband

Relocated to the Capital as they fear threat to their lives

Online pharmacies sweeten the pill

The ban on online sale of drugs doesn't seem to have created much impact among Delhiites as discounts and convenience trump over laws and guidelines. **Bindu Shajan Perappadan** deep dives into the intricacies of the online drug trade and gives a clear picture of what is luring the customers

Customers do not care for laws or guidelines on online pharmacies. And clearly, the recent Delhi High Court ban on sale of drugs and prescribed medicines by e-pharmacies does not seem to have deterred them either.

The discounts, doorstep delivery, accountability in case of delay in services or non-availability of a particular brand or combination of drugs and the fact that all this is available at the click of a button clinch the deal, say loyal e-pharmacy customers.

Online sale of drugs in India is valued at approximately ₹2,000 crore. Figures released by the Union Health Ministry show that this is less than 0.5% of the current retail pharmacy landscape.

"Delhi accounts for 10%-15% of the e-pharma business in India, which is growing at the rate of over 100%," noted the Ministry.

Ban not a solution

"You cannot ban convenience just because there are no rules in place to prevent misuse. The government has to have its finger on the pulse of emerging markets and act fast to bring in regulations to benefit both businessmen and customers. Imposing a ban is not the solution," said R.N. Dhinagra, a businessman who has been suffering from diabetes for 15

For mothers, who have small children and are constantly in short supply of medicines, online pharmacies are a boon when it comes to time and sleep. My friends and colleagues also use e-pharma sites extensively because of discounts and ease of doing business

ANJU KUMAR
Public relations officer who is currently on maternity leave

years, and regularly buys medicines and other medical supplies from online pharmacies.

Mr. Dhinagra added, "It is difficult for me to take time out from my busy schedule to buy medicines and other supplies. The Internet allows me to compare and select my medicines, etc., as per my convenience. Sometimes, the delivery happens on the same day itself. Nothing beats that."

Safety at risk

According to a plea in the Delhi High Court, "Online pharmacies are operating without a drug licence and cannot be regulated in the current regime. Unregulated and unlicensed sale of medicines will increase the risk of spurious, misbranded and sub-standard drugs being sold."

The plea claimed that several online pharmacies were selling prescription drugs in large numbers without valid prescriptions, which can put the safety and health of consumers at risk. Further, the plea urged the authorities to take action against any online pharmacies distributing, selling or exhibiting drugs on the Internet.

New draft rules

A recent order by the Ministry noted that online pharmacies will need to register with the Centre to sell medicines through the Internet. The new draft rules require online pharmacies to register with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and obtain a trade licence – applicable across India – from any State government.

As per draft rules, e-pharmacies have to register with the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for a licence which will be valid for three years. Neither do the draft rules permit e-pharmacies to sell narcotic drugs, tranquilliser and Schedule X drugs, nor are they allowed to advertise.

The Ministry has also decided to make amendments to the Drugs and Cosmetic Rules, 1945, to include e-pharmacies which

are becoming popular across the country thanks to e-commerce.

A few offer support

Thirty-year-old Anju Kumar, a public relations officer who is currently on maternity leave, said: "I only buy from established e-pharmacy sites. For mothers who have small children and are constantly in short supply of medicines, online pharmacies are a boon when it comes to time and sleep. My friends and colleagues also use e-pharma sites extensively because of discounts and ease of doing business."

"Local pharmacies have pulled up their socks since the arrival of e-pharmacies, with many offering discounts to regular customers, buy-back policies and even delivering medicines, etc., at home," said Manu Arya from East Nizamuddin.

She has been buying medicines online for her mother, who is a diabetic and suffers from hypertension.

"You cannot ignore convenience and the very reasonable rates offered by online pharmacies," she added.

However, doctors have adopted a more cautious approach.

Former Indian Medical Association (IMA) president K.K. Aggarwal said, "The rules are clear – e-pharma sites cannot offer consultation nor can we regulate the chances of misuse of drugs."

Challenge to chemists

Meanwhile, local chemists said any regulations favouring e-pharmacies will severely impact the livelihood of nearly a million chemists, distributors and their employees.

However, some like Simranjit Singh Gandhi, CEO of a Delhi-based IT company Aprazer InfoTech, who started his career by operating a small retail pharmacy in central Delhi's Old Rajendra Nagar, was quick to realise the challenges in store for local chemists with emergence of e-pharmacies.

"It became apparent that apart

from losing their business to e-pharmacies, chemists will also lose touch with their customers due to lack of a digital interface," Mr. Gandhi said.

Digital platform

To address the concerns of local pharmacies, Aprazer InfoTech developed a digital platform called AapKa Chemist. The platform empowers local chemists to receive online enquiries from customers, provide higher discounts and offer superfast delivery of medicines.

Customers will be able to raise queries with nearby chemists and get discounts on drugs via the website or app. The digital platform allows customers to opt for self-pickup of medicines from a nearby chemist store. Local pharmacies can also coordinate directly with customers and ensure that medicines are dispensed as per the prescription and guidelines under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

"Almost all thriving businesses today exist in the digital space. A majority of consumers today prefer to shop online and readily adopt online concepts in the blink of an eye. Buying medicines involves a human touch between a chemist and the customer, which no technology can replace," said Mr. Gandhi, adding that his company believes that e-pharmacies will never replace the experience and significance of local pharmacies in the healthcare ecosystem.

"Online pharmacies do not deliver medicines to remote areas. Medicines usually get delivered within 12-72 hours after placing the order, which is an unrealistic timeline. Acknowledging nearby chemists only in case of emergencies is unfair. Given the right support, local chemists are capable of offering higher discounts and delivering superior services to their customers more efficiently. AapKa Chemist will provide a level playing field and give a definite edge to local pharmacies over e-pharmacies," he said.



INTERVIEW | PRASHANT TANDON

'Delhi accounts for 10-15% of trade'

Sector employs over 15,000 and serves nearly 50 lakh patients a month

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Prashant Tandon, founder and CEO of Img, an online pharmacy that offers prescription and over-the-counter medicines, talks about the e-pharma sector in India, how it operates and why it has an edge over the conventional one.

What is the immediate fallout of the Delhi High Court ban?

■ At Img, all sales are done by licensed retailers, who operate with full compliance with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. As a platform, we receive patient requests and prescriptions. These are then forwarded to a pharmacy partner for dispensation.

Hence, our model operates with full compliance and no sale takes from non-licensed players. The Delhi High Court ban is on sale through non-licensed pharmacies. Our model ensures that 100% of dispensing pharmacies have valid licences.

How big is the online pharma business in India and in Delhi?

■ Which State has the maximum sale? Which are the fast-moving categories of drugs?

■ The online e-pharma business will be approximately ₹2,000-₹2,500 crore across India. We believe that Delhi represents between 10% and 15% of the national market. Customers from across the country buy medicines via e-pharmacies and we cover more

than 1,000 cities. A majority of sales are for patients on chronic therapies like diabetes and hypertension, who need their medication regularly.

How does the ban affect the customers and the industry?

■ In general, licensed players can continue operations. Thus, the industry and customers are not affected currently. However, this sector employs over 15,000 people and serves nearly 50 lakh patients every month, who will be concerned if there is a disruption in the access.

Who are your primary customers?

■ Patients from across India on chronic therapy seek convenient access to authentic medicines. These include a fair number of elderly patients, and people who are unwell and need medicines at home.

How is an online pharmacy better than a conventional one?

■ It is not a question of better or worse; it is more a question of a model that is suitable to serve a certain set of patients better. Four specific points here: first, the online model allows the sick, the recovering and the elderly get access to medicines as per their convenience and without having to find and get medicines by leaving home.

Second, the entire supply chain is digital, which means

there is strict quality control and the authenticity is maintained by an organised e-pharmacy player.

Third, we provide access to over one lakh stock keeping units by aggregating inventory of pharmacies across the country. This means that in case a specific brand is unavailable in one place, but is there in another place or even if one city is facing shortage while other cities have availability, we are able to match and balance the demand and supply. Fourth, given that we do not need to store inventory or have expensive real estate costs, we have an efficient model and are able to share some of the cost savings with the consumer. This year, consumers would have saved almost ₹500 crore on medicines by purchasing through e-pharmacy platforms like Img.

medical practitioner. The online aggregators stated that the online system itself was designed in such a manner that a request for prescription drugs would be rejected unless a valid prescription is uploaded by the customer with such an order.

It stated that it only provides a technology platform to connect consumers to the brick and mortar third-party licensed pharmacies, and the sale of medicines itself is concluded directly between the third-party licensed pharmacies and the customers.

Benefits for elderly
It listed various benefits for senior citizens and said that online vending provides convenience for the elderly; for those who have mobility issues, the online delivery medium is crucial.

Later, on January 2, this year, a Division Bench of the Madras High Court had noted that it may not be possible for all consumers to go to medical shops and buy medicines.

"Online sale is going on for quite some time. If all of a sudden it is stopped till the amendments are notified, it would definitely create grave hardship, inconvenience and health issues to the patients/persons concerned, who order medicines through online platforms," the Bench noted.

Two High Courts, two different views on online drugs sale

While the Delhi High Court has imposed a ban on online sale of drugs, its counterpart in Chennai said the facility cannot be stopped all of a sudden

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Rarely do courts give completely different opinions on a single issue. However, the Delhi High Court and the Madras High Court recently took different views on whether sale of online medicines should be permitted in the absence of a definitive law regulating it.

In an interim order, the Delhi High Court has imposed a ban on the sale of drugs online. This was followed by an order of the Madras High Court saying that it cannot be stopped "all of a sudden".

Laws yet to be framed
Online sale of prescription medicines is a relatively recent phenomenon in India and laws are yet to be framed to regulate the industry.

With exponential growth of Internet users in India, there has been a corresponding growth in online sale of consumer goods. Several Internet platforms have opened up websites where consumers can buy medicines without having to visit brick-and-mortar stores. While this makes the process more convenient for consumers, there are opposite views on banning online sale of medicines till regulations kick in.

In September 2016, a report by the sub-committee constituted by the Drugs

Consultative Committee had stated that e-pharmacy although in its nascent stage could account for 5%-15% of total pharma sales in India.

The report said the Indian pharmaceutical industry is the third largest in the world by volume and tenth in value. Its total size is about ₹2 lakh crore, of which exports account for nearly 55%. India meets its own 95% domestic demand through indigenous production. There are around 8.5 lakh licensed drug sale premises in the country at present.

Panel findings
The sub-committee was of the view that any ill-effects of online sale of medicine will be irreversible. Hence, it recommended that until systems and specific provisions are in place, e-pharmacy may not be allowed.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has said that "sale of such drugs other than from a licensed premise is not in conformity with these rules [Drugs and Cosmetics Rules]."

Sale of medicine in the country is regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics (D&C) Act. Several specified drugs cannot be sold except on and in accordance with a prescription by a registered medical practitioner from licensed premises.

The sub-committee had noted that there are some



CThe risk involved in selling prescription drugs without having a valid prescription is extremely grave...The sale of prescription drugs is regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, and the rules framed thereunder. Detailed regulations are required for allowing online sale of drugs as someone's life is involved...There seems to be some confusion over the two different opinions by the High Courts on the issue but the orders will apply in their respective jurisdictions.

NIDHESH GUPTA,
Senior advocate

and increase the number of drug addicts, especially youth.

Delhi HC's stand

The sub-committee had said that sale of psychotropic drugs, which can be easily abused, will increase. So will diet pills, libido enhancers and cosmetic fillers. Even minors will be able to order controlled medication and consume it without supervision of parents or guardians.

On December 12 last year, the Delhi High Court had banned online sale of medi-

cines without licence. The order came on a petition filed in public interest by a senior dermatologist claiming that drugs are highly potent and their misuse or abuse can have serious consequences on human health.

Dermatologist Zaheer Ahmed had contended that online pharmacies operate without a drug licence.

Dr. Ahmed said he was shocked to learn that one of his patients was able to get from an online site a prescription drug, which cannot be sold without a valid prescription, despite not submitting any proof or prescription.

Madras HC's view

His plea before the Delhi High Court also pointed out that it was easy for anyone to get a fake prescription and order the drugs online.

The Tamil Nadu Chemists and Druggists Association

had moved the Madras High Court seeking to block links to all websites doing online sale of Schedule H, HI and X medicines in India.

The association had contended that online sale of medicines was being done through more than 3,500 websites, which were distributing drugs all over the country.

A single-judge Bench of the Madras High Court had on December 17 last year told traders not to proceed with their online business in drugs till the rules are notified by the Central government.

"Unless the legislation keeps pace with technology, commerce based on technology has to lag behind," Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana had observed.

Justice Sathyanarayana also directed the Centre to notify the proposed Drugs and Cosmetics Amendment Rules, 2018, in the Gazette before January 31. This was challenged by various online vendors before a larger Bench of the Madras High Court.

Some of the online pharmacies had contended that their business model only sought to facilitate sale and purchase of medicines through their site. Any patient intending to purchase prescription drugs is required to upload a valid pre-

scription.

"Online sale is going on for quite some time. If all of a sudden it is stopped till the amendments are notified, it would definitely create grave hardship, inconvenience and health issues to the patients/persons concerned, who order medicines through online platforms," the Bench noted.

THE HINDU DELHI
MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 2019

CITY 3

IN BRIEF



Sino-Indian war hero film released after HC's nod

A film based on the life of a 1962 Sino-Indian war hero was released on January 18 after the Delhi HC gave its nod saying that the man's family members could not claim breach of their privacy as they had consented to making of the film in 2015. Justice Vibhu Bakhu said there were "no reasons to interdict the release" of the film *72 Hours – Martyr Who Never Died* based on the life of rifleman Jaswant Singh Rawat.

66 illegal factories sealed in EDMC drive

NEW DELHI The East Delhi Municipal Corporation sealed up to 66 factories for illegally operating in non-conforming areas last week. With this, a total of 92 units, including factories and warehouses, have been sealed as part of the corporation's latest drive, a spokesperson said. The properties sealed are part of the list of 51,873 factories identified by the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation and sent to the three corporations earlier. STAFF REPORTER

DELHI TODAY

Talk: "The Monastic Art of Sirpur," an illustrated lecture by Dr. P.K. Misra, Director, World Heritage, Archaeological Survey of India at India International Centre (IIC), 6 p.m.

Talk: Lecture on "Can Digital India get past the real India? India's prospects in the New World Order" by Prof. Bhaskar Chakravorti, Dean of Global Business at The Fletcher School at Tufts University at IIC, 6 p.m.

Talk: "Civil Society Challenges: The Road ahead" by Dr. Reena Ramachandran, Member, Foundation for Restoration of National Values. Chair: Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia, Chairperson, Board of Governors, ICRIER, at India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Dance: "Yatra" – a solo Odissi performance by Sanchita Roy based on Rabindranath Tagore's dance drama "Bhanusimha Padabali" in Brajapuri at IHC, 7 p.m.

Exhibition: Divinity with Eternity – solo painting exhibition by Alka Senigar at IHC, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. (Mail your listings for this column at cityeditordelhi@thehindu.co.in)

Dancers-turned-carjackers held

2 more arrested; accused had opened dance academy; 23 stolen vehicles recovered

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A group of dancers-turned-carjackers was arrested, and 23 stolen motorcycles and scooters recovered from their possession, the police said on Sunday.

They said the gang was involved in theft of over 100 motorcycles in south-east and south Delhi areas.

The accused have been identified as Shubham, a 22-year-old resident of Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh; Suraj alias Yuvi, a 20-year-old resident of Kannauj in UP; and Deepak Kashyap alias Bunty, a 26-year-old from Meerut, the police added.

Acting on a tip-off, the police laid a trap on January 15 on M.B. Road in Puli Praladpur. Shubham and Suraj were apprehended at 5.15 p.m. after they reached the



The accused and the recovered vehicles in police custody on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

spot on a motorcycle, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) Chinmoy Biswal.

During interrogation, the accused confessed that they stole motorcycles from south-east and south Delhi. At their instance, Deepak was arrested from Ghaziabad, Mr. Biswal said.

Shubham met Deepak, who was earlier arrested in

Shubham was the mastermind of the gang. He came to Delhi to learn dancing nearly four years ago and opened his own academy in Puli Praladpur about a year ago, Mr. Biswal added. Shubham is a Class XI dropout, the senior officer said.

Suraj was Shubham's student. Since he was unable to pay his fees due to financial issues, he joined Shubham's gang, Mr. Biswal added.

Shubham was the mastermind of the gang. He came to Delhi to learn dancing nearly four years ago and opened his own academy in Puli Praladpur about a year ago, Mr. Biswal added.

Shubham was the mastermind of the gang. He came to Delhi to learn dancing nearly four years ago and opened his own academy about a year ago

CHINMOY BISWAL
Deputy Commissioner of Police
(South-East)

JNU begins admission process for MBA course

Selection will be based on CAT scores

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal Nehru University on Sunday started taking admission into its newly established 'Atal Bihari Vajpayee School of Management and Entrepreneurship' for 2019-20.

CAT scores

The school will offer a two-year MBA programme and admission will be done based on scores of the Common Admission Test (CAT) conducted in 2018 by IIMs. Students will have to apply online on the JNU website and then submit their CAT registration number.

"JNU will use CAT scores for shortlisting/ selecting candidates for the MBA programme. IIMs have no role either in the selection process or in conducting of the

programme. The aspirants who qualify based on their CAT score will be shortlisted and then called for an interview," said the university.

There will be 50 seats on offer in the first batch. The weightage on CAT scores and marks obtained in the interviews will be 70% and 30% respectively. The university will follow the reservation policy as per the Central government rules.

"Since MBA is a professional course, no additional deprivation points [as it may be the case in some other JNU courses] will be taken into consideration for admission," said the university.

Online application will close on March 1 and dates for MBA viva/ interview of shortlisted candidates will be held on April 15, 16 and 18. Final results will be declared on April 26.

Man held for abducting, molesting minor

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old man was arrested for allegedly abducting and molesting a 10-year-old girl in Rangpuri Pahari of south-west Delhi, the police said on Sunday.

The police said the victim, who lives with her parents, was playing outside her home with friends on January 20 when a neighbour tried to lure her with chocolates around 7 p.m.

However, the girl refused to go accompany him and continued playing with her friends. Her parents were at their respective workplaces when the incident was reported.

Kept an eye on girl
"The accused kept an eye on the girl. As soon as her friends left for their homes, the accused abducted her and rushed towards an isolated place. She tried to raise an alarm but he

gagged her. The girl bit his hand and cried for help," added a police officer said.

Hearing the girl's cries for help, the locals rushed in her direction.

The accused tried to flee but was chased and caught by the locals.

A policeman on patrol duty also reached the spot after hearing the commotion. The accused was taken then to the police station for further investigation.

"A case under IPC Sections of 363 [kidnapping] and 354 [molestation], and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences [POCSO] Act has been registered at Vasant Kunj [South] police station. Medical examination of the victim was also conducted," said a police officer.

The accused was in an inebriated condition at the time of arrest.

The police said he is unemployed.

Rape accused still at large after shooting victim in Gurugram

He murdered the woman on January 18; police form teams

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

More than 48 hours after a bouncer accused of rape shot dead the complainant at Khusboo Chowk here on January 18, after she refused to withdraw the case against him, the police are yet to arrest him.

"Accused Sandeep, who belongs to Tigaon in Faridabad, worked in a Gurugram bar. Based on this information, raids are being conducted at his possible hideouts. Four teams, including a Crime Branch team, have been constituted to solve the rape case," said Gurugram police spokesperson Subhash Boken.

The police are yet to iden-

tify Sandeep's friend, who was with him at the time of the shooting.

"Only after Sandeep is arrested, the name and role of his friend will be ascertained. It is unclear whether the friend just happened to be present at the crime spot or was involved in it," said Mr. Boken.

Live-in relationship

The 23-year-old woman, who worked at a bar in Delhi's Hauz Khas, was shot five times around 6.30 a.m. after she refused to withdraw the rape case against Sandeep. Her teenage friend, who works in the same bar, is an eyewitness in the case.

The victim, who belonged

to Karnal, became friends with Sandeep four years ago and the two fell for each other.

After being in a live-in relationship for more than two years, the woman learnt that Sandeep was already married and registered a rape case against him in November 2017.

Sandeep was arrested and let off on bail in June last year. A month later, they became friends once again and started living together. The couple also has a child from the relationship.

Sandeep had called the woman around 2 a.m. on January 18 and asked her to come to meet him in Gurugram. He shot her later.

Oppn will ruin country's future: Shivraj

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The 22 Opposition parties that have come to fight the party would ruin the future of the country, said BJP national vice-president Shivraj Singh Chouhan at Yuva Vijay Sankalp rally on Sunday.

The rally was organised by Delhi BJP Yuva Morcha.

"Everybody knows about the national leader of BJP but no one knows who will be the national leader of these Opposition parties. All the schemes of PM Narendra Modi are aimed at developing the country and India is safe under his leadership," Mr. Chouhan said.

He said the youth under Mr. Modi's tenure show that India has improved a lot at the international level.

He asked the youth of Delhi to pledge to make BJP victorious in all the seven Lok Sabha seats of Delhi.

Man held for trafficking girls from Nepal

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI



Lopsang Lama
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A 33-year-old man carrying a bounty of ₹1 lakh on his head was arrested on January 19 for his alleged involvement in trafficking girls from Nepal to Gulf countries on the pretext of jobs, the police said on Sunday.

Accused Lopsang Lama, who lives in Wazirabad, hails from Okhaldhunga district in east Nepal, the police said.

They were planning to send the girls to Gulf countries through illegal means on the pretext of jobs offers.

Lama had confiscated their passports and other documents to ensure they had no choice but to stay in the house, Mr. Yadav said.

The victims told the police that Lama had trafficked five girls from Nepal to Kuwait and two to Iraq, he said.

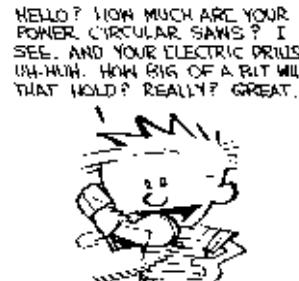
Investigation revealed that the girls had been confined in the rented house by Lama and his accomplices for nearly 20 days, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav.

The officer added that Lama was arrested following a tip-off regarding his arrival to meet an accomplice near ISBT Kashmere Gate.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



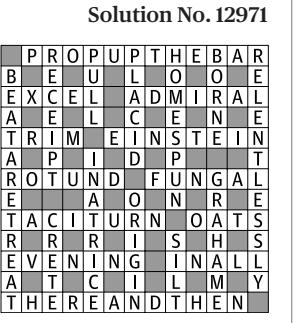
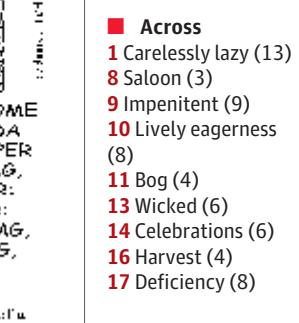
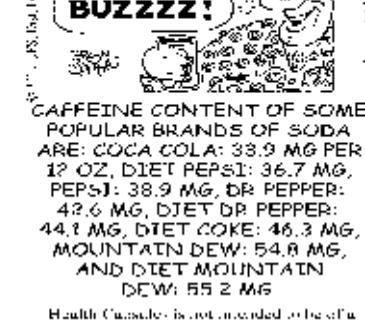
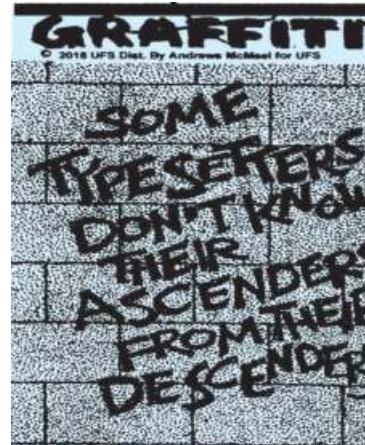
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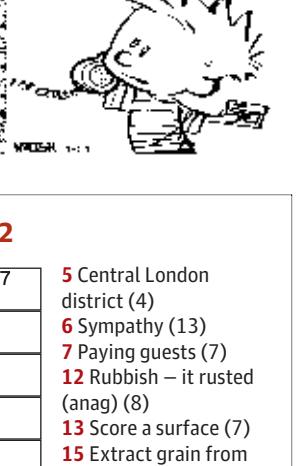
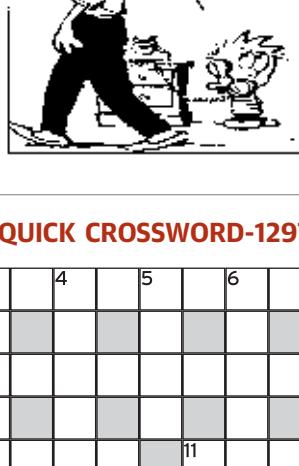
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19 Narrow road (4)

Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated January 22, 2019.

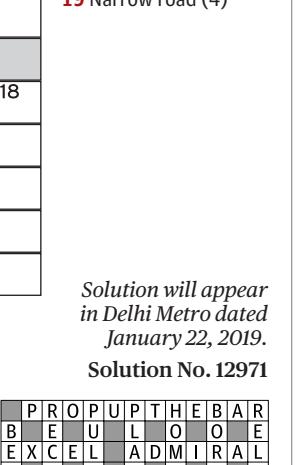
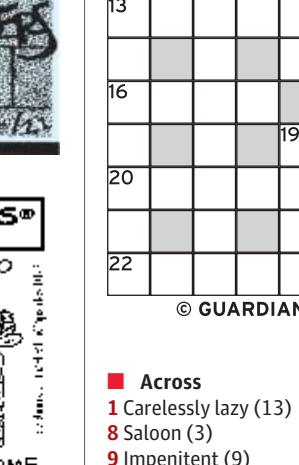
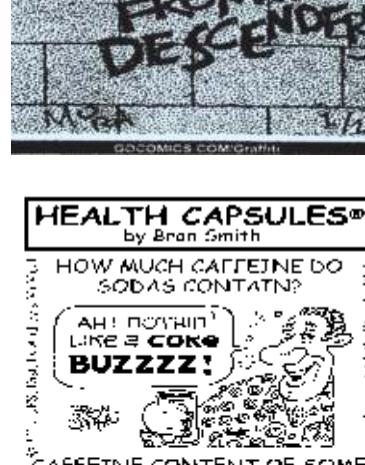
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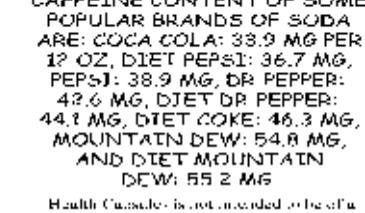
TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



4 SHOWCASE

VASUDHA RAI

Ageless: A Yogi's Secrets to a Long and Healthy Life by Sharath Jois and journalist Isha Singh Sawhney is a guide (for both seasoned yogis and non-practitioners) on what it means to be on the yogic path. For the practitioners of the *ashtanga* school, Sharath Jois is the ultimate teacher, having taken over the K Pattabhi Jois *Ashtanga Yoga Institute* from his maternal grandfather Sri Pattabhi Jois. His mother Saraswati also teaches at the iconic studio in Mysuru, but it is Sharath who guides the more advanced practitioners and makes decisions on changes to the revered *ashtanga* sequences.

For the uninitiated, this form of yoga is perhaps the most challenging – just the first, primary sequence comprises 41 *asanas* that must be practised by synchronising your breath with every movement. So much emphasis is laid on just *asanas* in *ashtanga* yoga that it's a relief when Jois talks more about the yogic lifestyle than the poses in his book. Even though *Ageless* is aimed at just about anyone in India, hardcore *ashtangis* would do well to read it and remind themselves that ultimately yoga is what you do off your mat, not on it.

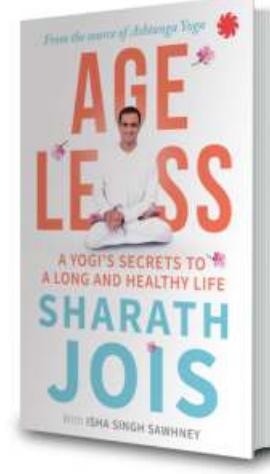
The book itself is quite an easy, enjoyable read, with Jois' personal journey and his recipes, including his protein shake made with *moong dal*. There are many 'aha' moments too; for instance, did you know that tamarind binds itself to fluoride and pulls it out of the body? So the traditional practice of using tamarind paste in our curries (as compared to tomatoes, which were brought in by the Portuguese) is actually better for us.

It is to be expected that Jois' knowledge goes beyond the common parameters of yoga, and in that sense, *Ageless* does not disappoint. Still, the book leaves much to be desired – the writing is clunky, and at times one wonders if the book has been edited at all. While it's great for a one-time read, it doesn't completely match Jois' status as the contemporary *ashtanga* guru or his depth of knowledge, as I discovered from a telephonic conversation with him.

What are your earliest



Legacy: Sharath Jois explains how his grandfather Sri Pattabhi Jois initiated him into yoga SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



OFF THE MAT

It's an important time for yoga when the heir of one of its most prominent schools pens down a book



memories of yoga?

• Yoga has always been in my family, but as a child, I preferred playing cricket on the street. My grandfather asked me to practise with other children, but I wasn't so serious. I finally got into it with my whole heart when I was 19 and started assisting him.

What was your motive in writing this book?

• We had one book – *Yoga Mala* – written by my grandfather. I wrote another book that is a practice manual (*Astanga Yoga Anushtana*) that mostly talks about *asanas*, which is available in the *shala* in Mysuru. I used to give

lectures on the various aspects of yoga, and then students said, 'Why don't you write a book?' Most of the time our practice is all about the postures. But *asana* is just one limb of *ashtanga* yoga; the other aspect is how we should lead our lives. We wanted to do this so that even non-yogis can

understand the yogic lifestyle. *Asana* itself is not the final stage of yoga. Many people have bendy bodies but they are not following *yama* and *niyamas* (rules such as truthfulness, cleanliness, non-violence) so they are not yogis.

What is more important: *asana*, *pranayama* or *dhyana*?

• It all goes together. *Asana* is done to bring stability to the body and the mind. Without a stable body we cannot sit still in *pranayama*. *Dhyana* happens when you have control of the breath; it should happen automatically. There's also a lot of confusion between *dhyana* (withdrawal of the sense) and meditation, which cannot be called *dhyana*. Meditation is when you're trying to focus your mind in a different place. When you have control of mind, body and thoughts, that's when meditation begins.

What do you think of the yoga that happens on social media?

• Horrible; it's not spiritual. It's an acrobatic, circus practice. I tell people not to put their poses on social media. It's totally non-yogic. You must learn yoga from a guru; the Internet cannot give you the same energy.

There has been talk that your institute favours foreign students over Indians. Any comments?

• It's a baseless allegation. We have for years tried to encourage Indian students. We also have scholarships for Indian students. It's only now when the Westerners have started coming that Indians have followed. I'll tell you an incident. One of my neighbours skipped class one day and I asked him why he didn't come to the *shala*. He replied saying that it was because it was raining. But when I reached the *shala* that day there were many foreign students wearing raincoats waiting for us to open. My grandfather, in his time, would go to all the hostels and ask students to come and practise yoga. Only three or four people would show up. Ironically, for us Indians, it is very easy to understand yoga, because we come from this culture. Sometimes, we get lost when we become older.



KonMarie is the new Bhogi



went to Dastkaar and found object after object that did just that. Luckily, the prices were prohibitive.

We had our traditional ways of getting rid of the old, burning it in an ashes-to-ashes-dust-to-dust sort of way, around festivals. That's not possible any more with electronics and plastic. So like most things traditional, we only hold on to the nonsensical (elaborate gifting), and forego the practical (decluttering), making us hoarders of the highest order.

With both the KonMarie and the Bhogi method, we're still fostering a use-and-throw culture? We're cluttering up the planet even as we clean out our own house (the Western version of dumping the junk in your neighbour's). We're not tackling the problem at its source; why do we have so much stuff to begin with? A (perceived) high disposable income, online shopping, self-indulgence, gifting, sales. How do I prevent myself from buying that sequinned jacket I'm never going to wear? And when I do realise that 10 years later, what is a responsible way of getting rid of it? By passing it on to another person who will also be lured by its shininess and then put it at the back of the closet for years? Or giving it to the househelp – our fallback for both waste disposal and the feeling of doing good?

She starts the process of decluttering a house by sitting in *vajrasana* for a couple of minutes, to connect with it, before smiling serenely through the clutter. Her method sounds simple: You pile things up (clothes or books, for instance), pick up each item, ask yourself if it sparks joy and either keep or discard. (Aside: I am told by a young colleague that this has turned into a drinking game. Each time Marie says 'sparks joy' you can toss back 30ml.) What you keep (of clothes/books, not the booze), you 'file' away in boxes with the particular folding technique she teaches. Her message: Tidying up connects at a deeper level, helping you navigate a clutter-free future, both in physical and mental space. I tried it; it works. The problem with MK is that as Indians, where minimalism isn't part of who we are, we're likely to fill up our homes with new objects that, say it with me, spark joy. So after I threw out half my belongings, I

need a system of labelling, where each garment comes with a tag telling us of what went into making it: the cost, both human and planetary, so that we become more conscious shoppers. (Obviously, our meditation apps are not working.) If we can only remember this: dumping out mental and physical rubbish somewhere else does burden people and the planet, while only increasing profit.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

New look to the Moonlight Street

As the redevelopment plan of Chandni Chowk gets under way, let's rekindle memories of its glorious past

R. V. SMITH

The Delhi Government plan to give a new look to Chandni Chowk (from Lal Mandir to Fatehpuri Masjid) is a laudable venture. Implementation would take public views into consideration. Traders, general merchants and residents of the Walled City have all been invited to send their suggestions on how the Moonlight Street should look like after the redevelopment of what has over the centuries become a rabbit warren.

The redevelopment plan, says Pradeep Sachdeva, noted architect and designer working on it, proposes ample walking space for the pedestrians, with six-metre-wide footpaths, multilevel parking for vehicles in Parade Ground is a good part of the plan. Once parades were held there when there was no Delhi beyond the city walls. Before that this place was occupied by the houses of Mughal noblemen attached to the Red Fort. Their havelis were demolished after the First War of Independence in 1857 and the resultant space used by the British to exercise their troops.

Pedestrian-friendly

The pedestrian walks and one-way traffic, with light vehicles would be introduced in the area to change the chaotic look. Replanting of trees to give shade and lend beauty to the environment are also a part of the plan. The artist's impression of how Chandni Chowk will look like after the scheme is implemented gives an idea that it will



Way to go! Redevelopment work in progress at Chandni Chowk; (below) a sketch showing Chandni Chowk in olden days from publisher Pramod Kapoor's collection • SANDEEP SAXENA, ROLI BOOKS

look almost like the Mughal promenade it once was, when a canal flowed in the centre, with gravel roads on either side and huge peepul, neem and tamarind trees providing the much-needed shade (the trees now to be planted will be the lighter ones). Bhisht sprinkled water on the roads every day. The canal, which was part of Nehar Sadaat Khan, one stream of which flowed into the Red Fort and the other passed through Daryaganj before joining the Yamuna, was closed after 1857 as it had begun to stink – both because of the stagnant water and also because the corpses of those killed as rebels and traitors by the East India Company's troops were left rotting in it.

Another reason for the closure of the canal was that the civic adminis-

tration had decided to merge the pathways into just one road after the setting up of the Northbrook Fountain. If a pool is built in front of Town Hall, it will reflect the moonlight. Then perhaps one might get to see how Moonlight Street looked like in the olden days. But as of now the pool is just an idea.

Presently, the shops look shabby without any uniformity and all sorts of signboards cluttering up their entrances. Also the overhead wires spoil the look of the place as they are just a jumbled-up mess whose intricacies are only known to the BSES staff. And sometimes they too find these wires a jigsaw puzzle that cannot be easily solved. Under the plan, there would be no overhead wires. They are all being put underground in specially built ducts. To make Chandni Chowk look like the one conceived of by Shah Jahan's daughter Jahanara Begum, there should be horse-driven carriages to recreate the old ambience but the plan is only for rickshaws which can even venture into the narrow katas. In its heyday, Chandni Chowk was supposed to be the magical street where jewellers, food sellers, fruit sellers, cloth sellers and flower sellers made the whole place come alive, especially in the evenings when begums from the fort came for shopping.

Some say they came gliding down in boats over the central canal. But this sounds a bit far-fetched as the canal was not wide enough for boats to ply on it.

Venice of the East

According to the Italian traveller Manucci, Chandni Chowk in those days was the Venice of the East where one could buy anything from a hairpin to an elephant. There were jewels which any king would have envied and there were dolls with turquoise eyes and females like ariiffs (nymphs) who lent grace to the evening air. When the moon was full, the moonlight was reflected in the canal and made one feel as though one was in an enchanted land where fairies roamed amid mortal men. Making room for exaggeration, one cannot deny that Chandni Chowk was truly the showpiece of Shahjahanabad, which was planned as an improvement on the old capital, Agra, so that royal provisions with their elephants, camels and horses could pass through without let or hindrance. Pradeep Sachdeva, actively working on the redevelopment plan, says some of that ambience is proposed to be restored if things go as planned.

At the side, in the place where now stands the Town Hall was a sari or inn which was so beautiful that the words "If there is a Paradise on earth, it is here, it is here" were inscribed on its gate. The sari was meant for travellers from the Middle East-merchants, soldiers, statesmen – with a garden round it where peacocks flaunted their feathers. It was the Begum Bagh of Jahanara, renamed Queen's garden after 1857 in honour of Queen Victoria and now known as Gandhi Park. May be the redevelopment plan for Chandni Chowk will be able to recreate some of this magic, though Sachdeva says the planners were not thinking on such ambitious lines but concentrating on the practical aspects which were easier to achieve than romantic ideas.

THE AUTHOR IS A VETERAN CHRONICLER OF DELHI



Brass bands and baraats

American band Lucky Chops on what its high-energy instrumental music has in common with Indian wedding tunes

ANURAG TAGAT

Lucky Chops, the five-member brass funk and party-starter band, has been in India for just a few days, but unsurprisingly, the members (trombonist Josh Holcomb, saxophonist Daro Behrooz, trumpet player Joshua Gawel, drummer Charles Sams IV and sousaphone player Raphael Buyo) are already scoping out public spots to perform their raucous yet smooth jams. "So far in Mumbai I've seen plenty of spaces that would be perfect to play in," shares Holcomb.

After all, the New York-based band has earned viral video fame and acclaim alike for its performances at NYC subway stations, and for releasing several albums of high-energy instrumental music. And this month, the 12-year-old troupe is adding India to its tour map. The band opened yesterday in Pune, and will perform today in Kolkata before heading to Hyderabad tomorrow as part of Johnnie Walker The Journey, a music, cinema and performing arts showcase.

Inevitably Indian

Holcomb says an India tour was inevitable. "We actually used to play in Indian weddings in NYC," he laughs. While here, the members plan on meeting local brass brands, including *baraat*.

troupes. "No matter where we go, it's incredible to see how universal brass music is." Over the course of playing public and private gigs, he says Lucky Chops learned the power of reaching "the hearts of everyday people just going about their lives". It is one of the reasons the troupe still goes back between tours to play inside subway stations, now gaining instant recognition and a ready audience. "It also helps you become a better performer and overall entertainer, since there is a lot of competition," he says. At a time when venues in India still struggle with local enforcement, civic authorities and resident associations for noise levels, Holcomb says displaying your art in public spaces "is an invaluable experience for a performing musician". He does, however, add a word of advice for musicians trying their hand



More than just luck: Members of the band

at busking or performing in public: "Always be respectful of the authorities, you don't want to get on their bad side!"

Playing to a crowd

Of course, once a band like Lucky Chops gets started, there is so much funky groove in the house that there is little doubt anyone would stand still. Even then, Holcomb admits that audience responses have been varied. "Every region is different and that's part of the fun."

Up next for the band is an album – the follow-up to the 2018 release *Virtue and Vice Sessions Vol 1*, slated for release in April. "We stretched even further to fuse multiple styles and try very creative production techniques for the first time," concludes the trombonist.

Tickets, starting at ₹499, are available on submerge.in





EDGE

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DELHI
MONDAY • JANUARY 21, 2019

GLOBAL ED



On the rise

According to the journal *Learned Publishing*, American scientists published 4,09,000 science, technology and medical papers in 2017, while those in China published 4,26,000. It noted that "the number of science and engineering articles in all fields from China increased nearly five-fold from 2003 to 2016".



Enhancing partnerships

Several universities in Africa were recently invited to attend a World Bank forum – 'Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) and Partnerships of Japanese and African Universities' – in Tokyo, Japan. According to the World Bank invitation, participants would be "learning from Japan's experiences in promoting academic-private sector partnerships and pursuing discussions with Japanese organisations for possible collaboration in joint research and training of young researchers".



Student satisfaction

The Center for Higher Education in Germany presented survey results showing that despite general structural changes being required, students are mostly satisfied with their degree courses. With growing student numbers, the teacher-student ratio is below average for many departments. However, students reported good student-teacher contact, implying that despite the constraints, teaching staff and departments were generally doing a good job.

Compiled by Indira Tirumala

LIFFY THOMAS

'Mocks make perfect'

Chhavi Gupta has rephrased the saying "practice makes perfect" as "mocks make perfect". She scored a perfect 100 in the Common Admission Test (CAT) by chipping away at her weaknesses through a sustained effort lasting four months. In sections that were slowing her down, she was taking up more mocks than was considered necessary.

She was taking more than five minutes to solve a problem in the verbal ability section, and so, she took up more problems to solve. She often found herself flummoxed by the section relating to logical reasoning and data interpretation.

"On the big day, I was extremely comfortable taking this section, thanks to the number of mocks I had taken during my preparation, to become proficient in it," says Chhavi, an alumnus of IIT Delhi.

About mistakes that students commonly make, Chhavi says aspiring management students should not wait to finish their course before attempting mocks. "An aptitude test has unlimited syllabus and for the CAT, it is always better to know where you stand and customise your preparation accordingly," she says.

'Newspapers made me a speed-reader'

Harrshit M. Kansal appeared for Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), CAT, Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT) and National Management Aptitude Test (NMAT) by Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), cleared all of them, but chose to take up management at IIFT Delhi where he scored 99.6 %.

All these exams come with unique challenges and so, he worked out a fresh strategy for each. Though they presented fewer questions than IIFT, both CAT and XAT took longer to complete.

"I found questions of NMAT to be easier than those of the other exams, but then, it was al-

K. RAMESH BABU

so about maintaining high speed," says Harrshit, who graduated from BITS Pilani.

While IIFT does not impose any sectional time limits on the candidate, XAT, CAT and NMAT do. "IIFT also had a separate section on general knowledge, which was not present in the other three exams," he says, adding that IIFT tests a candidate on speed and accuracy.

He started preparing for management exams from early 2017, selecting topics/sections common to all of them. "Two weeks before a particular exam, I would give it my undivided attention," he adds.

How did he strike a balance? "Early on, I found out that I was strong in quantitative and so, I devoted more time to the other areas. GK section was only present in IIFT, so I made myself up-to-date with current affairs. I regularly read *The Economic Times*. For verbal ability and reading comprehension, I practised eclectic reading," he explains.

"During my undergrad, I had developed the habit of reading newspapers and this helped me speed-read. For static general knowledge, I attribute my success to the various electives I opted for at BITS Pilani, such as public administration, sociology, micro-economics, development economics, philosophy, psychology and other courses in social studies," he says.

G. RAMAKRISHNA



NIMISHA, II, M.A. ENGLISH, JNU, DELHI

The recent slashing of library funds is among a series of rapid attacks that the university has launched against its students and against the possibility of a quality education in the relatively short time that I have been here.

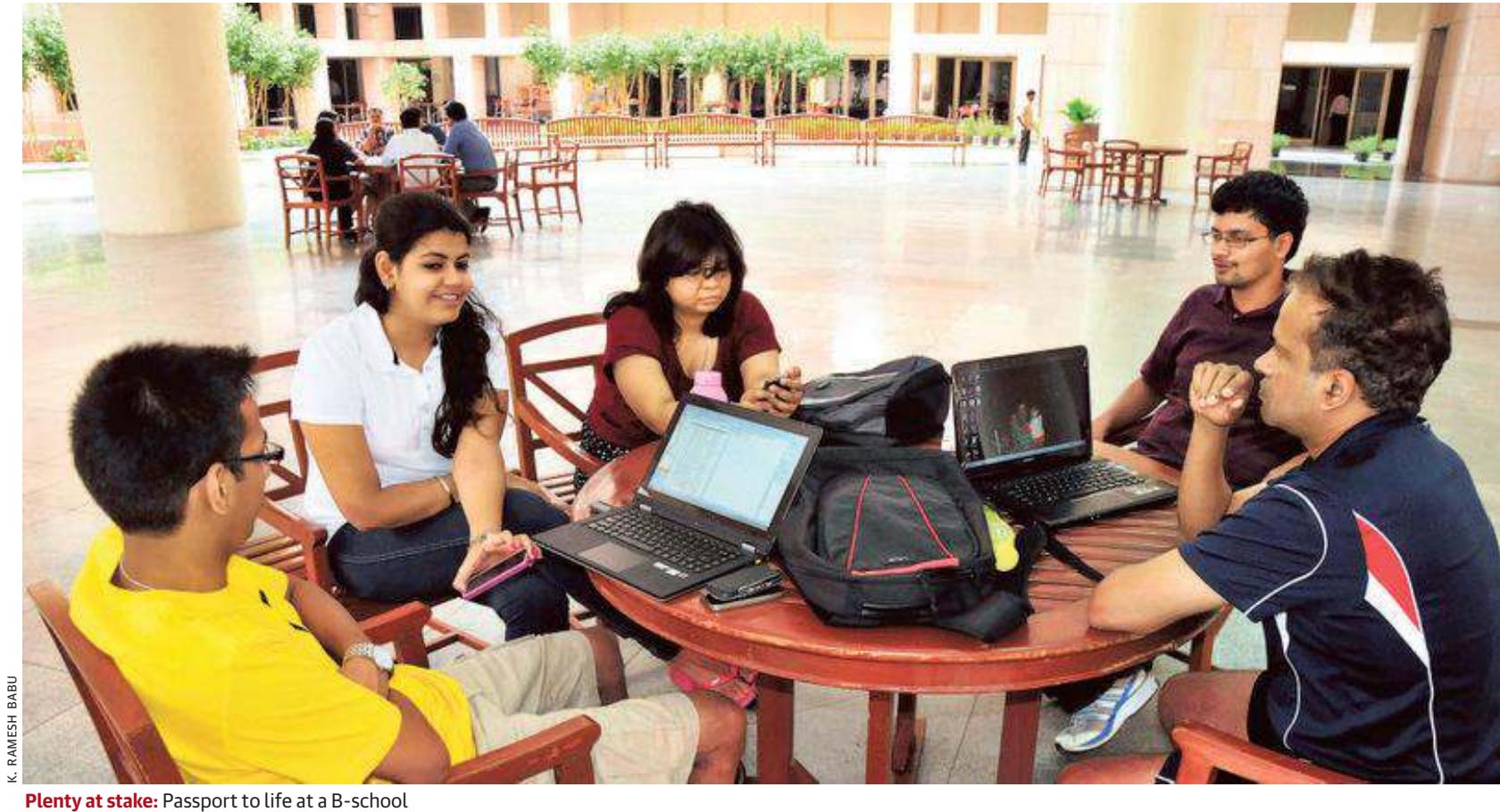
Now, previously available resources for research can only be accessed through stories of a happier past, privatisation is creeping in, and it is impossible to talk about the problems that surround us without exposing ourselves to abuse against JNU.

The future looks exclusionary, and completely on the mercy of private capital.

Cutting off library funding, other than being an obviously ridiculous decision, questions the importance of humanities in academia and the authorities' views on its future.

ANJALI NOTANDAS

CM YK



Plenty at stake: Passport to life at a B-school

Mocks, marks and management

CAT, XAT, NMAT, IIFT and SNAP are the buzzwords of the season. We talk to a cross-section of candidates who have aced these exams

'Set small targets and work on them'

Vaibhav Awasthi cleared Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT) the second time around by setting small targets and working on his strengths. The software professional spent his weekends by enrolling himself with a coaching class. "Two months of solid preparation was enough for me as I took mocks religiously to work on my strengths and weakness," says Vaibhav.

For him, XAT preparation was different from other competitive examinations as English is considered tough. "Decision-making section is also an addition in XAT," he says, while describing how his three-year work experience helped him.

He recommends RC99, a book on reading comprehension, to those wanting to improve their English skills. "I started with the middle level and slowly built it up. This also helped improve my reading speed," says Vaibhav, who scored 97 % in English.



'Solving mathematical puzzles helped me'

By topping the Symbiosis National Aptitude Test (SNAP), Madhur Mehta has sent out a message: That math or engineering need not be the core subjects to ace management exams.

The math syllabus for the aptitude examination mainly focuses on school-level math. "I wasn't strong in math as I my connection with it was severed after school, but I was good at logical reasoning," says Madhur, a graduate in pharmacy.



Madhur loves solving riddles and puzzles. Along with his mother, he would solve math problems and this helped him in the aptitude section and also improved his speed, essential to scoring high in SNAP.

"CAT has always been about optimising the time taken to solve the questions that you know you can solve. CAT lies between SNAP and XAT in terms of difficulty," says Madhur, who started serious preparation for SNAP six months before the examination.

His advice for those planning to attempt SNAP: "Take as many mocks as possible to ensure consistent improvement. Many students don't appear for mocks saying that the portion isn't complete yet or they are not prepared. Attempt what has been covered," he says.

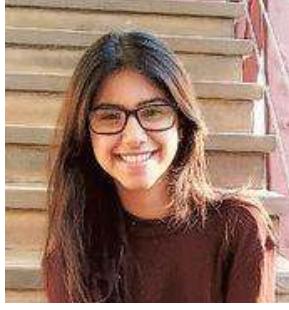
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VOICES

No open access to knowledge

The JNU VC administered fund cut to library has not been completely justified by the authorities. What does this say about the future of academia, especially in the country?

NEHA RUPEJA



AYUSHI AGARWAL, FINAL YEAR, MBA, BML MUNJAL UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI

It is not an easy task to bring down the allocated funds. It is done by reducing the facilities such as cancelling e-subscriptions of journals and not issuing books. Students not getting enough subscriptions and journals will affect the quality of the study material they go through.

The student, instead of focusing on studies, will now be worried about the library charges, the opening and closing of the library, reduced accessibility, increase in hostel charges and so on. These problems and increased expenses will affect majorly to the economically challenged students.

The future looks exclusionary, and completely on the mercy of private capital.

Cutting off library funding, other than being an obviously ridiculous decision, questions the importance of humanities in academia and the authorities' views on its future.

ANJALI NOTANDAS

CM YK

UPSC

Gear up for the prelims

With the first of the IAS exams fast approaching, it is time to focus on mastering the mock tests

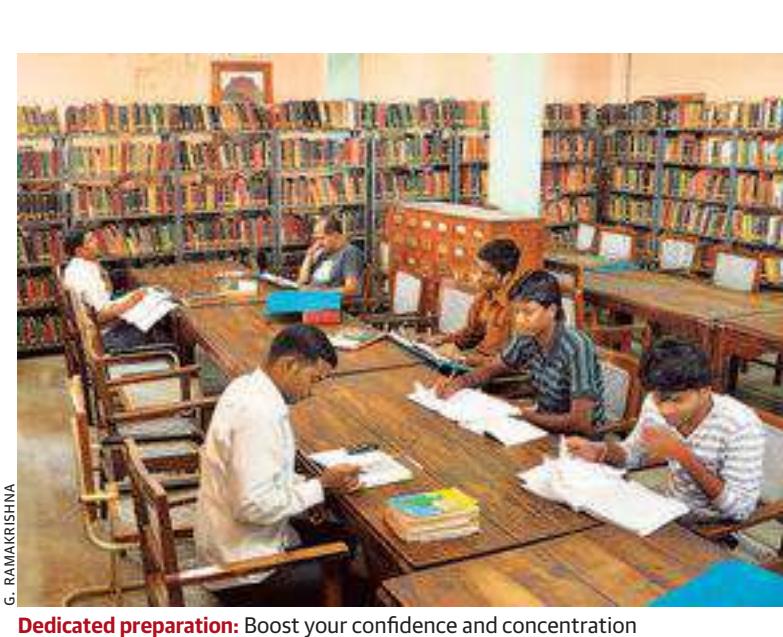
AK MISHRA

The Civil Services are the coveted career choice in most Indian families. When it comes to preparation, aspirants are always giving their best shot to learning and understanding the syllabus and its in-depth explanation. But this alone is not adequate for those who want to excel. There is always a solution to master your preparation for the exam, and mock tests are the key, for they are a window into actual exams, which must not be avoided in any case. With the UPSC prelims coming up, it is crucial to understand why should you attempt prelims mock tests.

Understand the exam pattern: As it is one of the most competitive examinations, it comes with a round of speculations revolving around the exam pattern, difficulty level of the questions, and so on. And being the most unpredictable exam, you must solve as many Test series as possible, to cover almost every probable question which can be asked by the UPSC.

Boost confidence levels: Solving a good number of mock tests help you not only cover the entire syllabus and important topics efficiently while understanding the pattern, but also boosts confidence levels for the final quest, as the test series are always designed in strict regard to that of the UPSC civil service exam.

Practise your way to perfection: If you look at the trends for the past 10 years, competition has increased way beyond expectations and is thus affecting the success rate even for serious candidates. Now, when you don't have an assurance of success, it is obvious that mastering the syllabus to the needful depths is the only way out. Practising this knowledge is of utmost importance,



G. RAMAKRISHNA

Dedicated preparation: Boost your confidence and concentration

and to synchronise your preparation with the expectations of your examiner. A series of right mock tests and regularly solving them will help you master this knowledge, resulting in an improved performance.

Mocks, the ultimate confidence booster: Trust and confidence in one's dedication and efforts are certain elements that always compliment the preparation for such exams. And what will increase your confidence more than perfecting the preparation in the right way, are mock tests, as solving them will also help you enhance your concentration.

The writer is founder and director, Chanakya IAS Academy

ANUDEEP



WIDE ANGLE

ALBERT P'RAYAN

"Dear _____,
Our organisation _____ is an NGO of repute... You will be pleased to know that our organisation honours some successful Indian personalities with the most prestigious '_____ award every year. The past recipients include... (a list of big names). We are pleased to inform you that your name is under consideration for the award. We are proud of your meritorious services and achievements as an educationist. Kindly fill in the form attached and send it along with your curriculum vitae..."

How will teachers react when they receive a message similar to this? Some may be excited and apply for such awards without knowing a hidden agenda behind the message. Almost every month I receive emails of this sort. How have I reacted? I have never been excited but rather irritated when I receive such emails. I either send the emails to the spam folder or become inquisitive and try to know more about the award-giving organisation or group. Why? The intention of the senders is commercialisation and not service, that is, to sell awards to the award-hungry. It is a scam that has been going on for many years. Having known the potential of the market for the award-selling business and having witnessed the hunger of those award maniacs in the field of education, a growing number of organisations/groups are sending emails to teachers and educational institutions now and then to lure them. Some academics and educational institutions fall prey to the influence of the award-sellers and many consider this as an opportunity to adorn their CVs and shell out a huge amount of money to

The award sellers

'Bad' awards glorify corrupt teachers and educational institutions as achievers, while those who really deserve accolades are belittled

ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

"buy" their awards.

An award is a prize or recognition given to someone in honour of an achievement. It implies that awards should be earned and not bought. Awards are not to be sold. Awards are to be given to those who really deserve them. Alas! The number of awards-selling shops in India is growing these days. Any organisation or group that organises an award-giving ceremony for commercial purposes promotes malpractices and corruption. Both award-buyers and award-sellers are corrupt. They vitiate the quality of education.

Unhealthy trend

Award maniacs are people who have an abnormal obsession with receiving/buying awards. It has become a trend among second-class

institutions and individuals to compete in the race to buy such awards. Why do they do so? Teachers who are recipients of various awards are given rewards in the form of increment and promotion. Some educational institutions do not even check the merits of some awards and shower their praise on the faculty who manage to get different awards. In some cases, teachers are pressured to buy such awards when institutions have an eye on accreditation. When educational institutions and teachers receive awards in crooked ways, they do great damage to education.

Some organisations expecting favours from educational institutions come forward to honour them with certain awards. It is an open secret that strings are attached to these awards. These

strings-attached awards are given with the you-scratch-my-back-and-I-scratch-yours motive. A month ago, when I congratulated the principal of a school on her bagging an award, she said, "I am not at all excited about this award. When I asked the organiser of the award function why and how I was selected, I was told that it was in recognition of my service to society as an educationist." When I told the principal that she must be very happy for such a public recognition, she replied, "Only after reaching the venue, I realised there were scores of principals who had also been selected for the awards. Surprisingly, none of the awardees knew which of their achievements were recognised. Everyone was given the 'Best Principal Award'. It is a publicity



stunt."

Good academics and reputed educational institutions should say "no" to bad awards. What impact do "bad awards" have on education? The best teachers do not win "Best Teacher" awards and the best educational institutions do not bag "Institute of Eminence" awards. Corrupt teachers and educational institutions are glorified as achievers and those who really deserve awards are belittled. This has direct impact on the quality of education.

Gloryfiness

While disapproving of award-mania, I would like to highlight the need for instituting excellence in teaching awards to celebrate good teaching and great teachers. Recently, I watched the 13th edition of Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards which are given for both print and broadcast journalism. The awards recognise the courage and commitment of outstanding journalists from across the country. While watching the awards ceremony online I came to know about the awardees' contributions to journalism and their achievements. The fact that the winners earned the awards made me admire them. Good teachers wait for good awards. Who will give them? Some well-established reputed educational institutions should institute excellence in teaching awards.

In this context, it is good to remember what actor Paul Newman, who was nominated six times for acting and finally got a win for "The Colour of Money" in 1987, told an Associated Press journalist. When asked why he did not attend the award ceremony, Paul Newman said "It's like chasing a beautiful woman for 80 years. Finally, she relents, and you say, 'I'm terribly sorry. I'm tired.'

The author is an academic, columnist and freelance writer. Email: rayanal@yahoo.co.uk T: @albertprayan

Q1 Born to a peasant family in the Siberian village of Pokrovskoye, this Russian mystic and self-proclaimed holy man befriended the family of Tsar Nicholas II (pictured), and gained considerable influence in late Imperial Russia. He acted as a healer for the Tsar and his son. He was a rather divisive figure in the court, and was later assassinated by a few noblemen who disliked his influence.

Who is this historical figure, who was dubbed 'Russia's greatest love machine'?

Q2 Scientists at Emory University have discovered that deleting a certain gene from the DNA of mice can unlock portions of their brains that could improve their memory and some forms of learning, and make them smarter. They named the gene after a TV character who is known for his antics and keeps getting into trouble because of his low intellect. The character is the patriarch of the family the show is named after. The show is also the longest running show of all time. Who?

Q3 Nicknamed as the Flying Kangaroo, this airline company is based out of Australia. It sponsors the Australian Formula One Grand Prix, the national soccer team 'The Socceroos' (pictured), and has signed a four-year deal to be the official carrier of the Australian National Cricket Team. It also has a practice of naming its aircrafts after Greek gods, celebrities, Australian cities, and birds.

Identify the airline, which was first established 'Queensland And Northern Territory Aerial Services'.

Q4 Common Goal is a pledge-based charitable movement that encourages professional football players and coaches to pledge at least one percent of their salaries to a collective fund that supports football charities around the world. EA Sports, through their game FIFA 19, have also made an effort to spread awareness about the charity by featuring their character Alex Hunter as a donor to the cause.

This was started in August 2017 by Jürgen Griesbeck and which popular Spanish, Manchester United player, who is often called 'the nicest man in football'?

Q5 The Government of India had launched a scheme to connect regional cities via air in 2017. Recently, an auction took place among airlines to bid for routes across various destinations.

What is the scheme called, an acronym, that is also the Hindi word for 'flight'?

Q6 Mary Anning was the first female palaeontologist and fossil collector who lived in Great Britain in the early 19th century. She grew famous for her discoveries of Jurassic-era fossils along the English Channel, a body of water that separates England from France.

Which 'phrase' is her story supposed to have inspired?

COURTESY: WALNUT KNOWLEDGE SOLUTIONS

A1. Gisiger Resputin
A2. Homer Simpson
A3. OANTAS
A4. Juan Mata
A5. UDAAN
A6. She sells seashells on the seashore

Answers



Success vs. significance

Do you know exactly what you want? It is time to ponder then and get into a purposeful mind-set.



P'S & Q'S

ANUPAMA RAJU

As I start writing this column, I first grapple with the blank moments of a white, empty, page. I have no subject to write about. I struggle for a few minutes. Especially given that this is my first column of the New Year, I am certain I have to write something meaningful. Then, slowly, the words come, following the idea. Maybe because I'm focused on my goal, the page finally fills up.

So, can I deem this effort successful? Or do I call it significant? What is the difference between success and significance?

We all go through life, pursuing success. We set goals and work towards them. When we achieve them, we say we are successful. Our family and friends call us successful. Quite often, the world 'measures' our success using material indicators. Does she own a home? Tick. Does she own a car? Tick. Does she own a luxury car? Double tick.

Does she own a lot of jewellery? The list goes on. While some of these material indicators may be necessary, they may not always make us happy. Then, the question becomes what makes us happy.

It could be argued that while accomplishing our goals makes us successful, when those goals have an impact on others, or when they are driven by a purpose higher than ourselves, that success can make us happy. Because it is no longer just success, it is beyond that. It is significance.

So, goals and purpose are not exactly the same. If, say, your goal is to start a company of your own, and you do accomplish it, you're successful. But if your purpose is to start that company so that you can bring affordable healthcare to all, then, you're significant.

Mark of significance This journey from success to significance can take some time and is not to be rushed. Like many milestones in our life, this may take some years. However, it is important to realise the difference between success and significance and seek the reasons that drive your goals. The key is to keep asking, 'why' when we

pursue certain goals and if we are keen on going beyond success, then we may have to let go of those which do not seem to help others or do not have any impact on the community around us.

We are increasingly moving towards a future when technology will be all-pervasive, omnipotent and, perhaps, even omniscient. A purposeful-life that is of use to others becomes all the more relevant in such times.

So, if you have not yet set goals for this year, now is the time to do it. And as you do, ask yourselves what purpose drives each of those. And then see if they are likely to have a positive impact on those around you. If your answer satisfies you, you are on your way to significance. Be prepared for your growth. Get into the purposeful mind-set and let that purpose take you forward.

While I conclude this piece, I sincerely hope it has made at least one of you think. I hope it helps at least one of my readers. If I have, I am on my way beyond success. Happy 2019 to all.

The author is a writer and literary journalist. She also heads Corporate Communications at UST Global. Twitter: @anupamaraju

any required book. The aim of book bank is to "support the students who can't afford books because of its high cost". The book bank is started with the collection of approximately 5000 books with the motto of spreading awareness

among youth about books. Those who are preparing for competitive exams can also take books from the book bank. Students from government schools can also exchange their books from IMS Noida campus.

Exchange For Free

IMS Noida has started a new campaign "exchange for free" by opening its first ever book bank in Noida campus. The book bank is open for the outsider as well, where you can exchange your old book with

A windbag bores



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

S. UPENDRAN

"I ran into one of your old teachers at the supermarket. Can you guess who?"

"Just tell me who it was. It's too early in the morning to play guessing games."

"You seem to be in a bad mood. It was your maths teacher, Mr. Das."

"Ah, Das! Terrible teacher. He was a real stick-in-the-mud. He couldn't..."

"Did you say that he was stuck in the mud? When did he get..."

"I said 'stick-in-the-mud'. When you say that someone is a stick-in-the-mud, what you're suggesting is that the person is rather old fashioned. He's very resistant to change."

"In other words, the person is rather narrow minded. He is very set in his ways."

"He is very stuck in his ways, I'd say. He's like a person whose feet are stuck in mud..."

"And is therefore unable to move. Can't make any progress."

"That's right! The expression also carries with it the sense that the individual is rather dull or slow. He's someone who doesn't know how to enjoy himself."

"He probably doesn't let others enjoy themselves, either. I guess the expression is mostly used to show disapproval."

"Very good! My father's uncle was a real stick-in-the-mud."

"I don't think I'll ever be a stick-in-the-mud."

"You never know! The students came up with interesting ideas for the annual event. Unfortunately, the stick-in-the-mud Principal shot them all down."

"There must have been over a thousand people at the annual event. It's a ballpark figure."

"Money is like the sixth sense – and you can't make use of the other five without it. Somerset Maugham

"Windbag? Does it mean the same thing as 'gasbag'? Someone who..."

"That's exactly what it means! When you refer to so-

meone as a 'windbag', what you're suggesting is that he talks a lot. Unfortunately, there's very little substance in what he says. Usually, a windbag bores people."

"In other words, he's like a politician. He talks a lot, but has nothing interesting to say."

"I guess you could say that. Some of the people in my office are boring windbags."

"Our college annual day was ruined because the Master of Ceremonies was a windbag. His so-called jokes fell flat."

"I'm sorry to hear that. I have a nice group of friends. None of them is a gasbag."

"Lucky you! We have quite a few windbags in my family."

"Every family has one or two gasbags, I guess. So, you changed your mind about going to the annual day event, did you?"

"I wasn't planning to go, but my friends insisted that I go with them."

An estimate will do

"Was there a big crowd? How many people turned up? Any idea?"

"I really don't know. I don't know the exact number."

"Oh, I don't need the exact number. Just give me a ballpark figure."

"Ballpark figure? Does it mean to give a rough estimate?"

"That's right! The expression is mostly used in informal contexts in American English. The word 'ballpark' is frequently used to refer to a stadium."

"And since it's difficult to figure out the exact number of people present in a stadium..."

"The expressions 'ballpark figure' and 'ballpark estimate' are used to mean 'an approximate figure'. For example, the flat will cost you ₹60 lakhs. It's a ballpark estimate."

"There must have been over a thousand people at the annual event. It's a ballpark figure."

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"Windbag? Does it mean the same thing as 'gasbag'? Someone who..."

"That's exactly what it means! When you refer to so-

VIDEO CAFE

RAAGHAVI SRINIVASAN

Talking in English is every Indian kid's ordeal. Many of them fear communicating in the language, simply because they dread being insulted and judged. The inability to speak English is considered as a failure, that most of them forget English is simply a language and not an identity. This pressure has led to the exclusion of many young adults from common gatherings and a decrease in self-confidence. The speaker, Esha Manwani, narrates a personal story of how until she was 15 years old, she could not talk fluent English and also had a lisp. She says, as a young girl, her constant feeling of being a misfit pushed her to learn the language. She shares her experiences and techniques through which she mastered a language she was bad at and today, she stands confidently thinking, writing and communicating in it. Esha urges everyone to self-reflect because she believes that it isn't important to be the best, but to be the best version of yourself.

Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqqJzCPUCgs>

EAR SHOT

ASOK RAJAGOPALAN



Newton's Third Law of Exam Preparation

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any required book. The aim of book bank is to "support the students who can't afford books because of its high cost"

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4 EDGE



OFFBEAT....BIOENGINEERING

Multidisciplinary, with MULTIPLE OPTIONS

Bioengineering is exciting and challenging, with a cornucopia of opportunities for those with a passion for it

■ NICOLA GREEN

On an average morning, I wake up and put on my contact lenses so that I can check my fitness monitor to assess the impact of yesterday's gym session. Later, perhaps, I will visit my friend who has type I diabetes and needs insulin injections to manage his/her condition. All this will sound commonplace to many people around the world, but everything from the contact lenses, needles, to the synthetic insulin generated in the

lab, have been developed, thanks to bioengineering.

Multidisciplinary

There is also the potential for development in bioengineering to have a massive impact on the future health and well-being of people, globally. So, to reconsider those earlier examples, contact lenses are being modified to allow rapid assessment of the cause of eye infections and reduce unnecessary antibiotic use; wearable monitors are being developed for a range of medical purposes; implantable

devices to monitor blood sugar levels now exist, and research is ongoing to produce an artificial pancreas. As these examples perfectly demonstrate that bioengineering is a multidisciplinary subject, sitting at the interface between engineering, medicine and biology, and requiring experts trained in the application of a broad range of engineering techniques, to medical and biological problems.

Range of courses

Students interested in enter-

ing this field can choose from a variety of courses. Although some are aimed at postgraduate students, there is a burgeoning number at the undergraduate level. These undergraduate courses may target a specific theme within bioengineering, such as medical engineering which focuses upon using mechanical engineering in a medical environment, or they may cover the bioengineering field more broadly, allowing students to tailor their studies to particular areas of interest as their knowledge of the field develops.

The broad degrees are particularly helpful for people who have never encountered bioengineering before and do not yet have sufficient knowledge or experience to determine which area best fits their skills and aspirations. It also facilitates improved career flexibility, better suiting the modern world where few people remain in the same in-

dstry for the whole of their career. The multidisciplinary nature of the subject appeals to students with strong mathematical capabilities, who also have an interest in the sciences. Applicants generally possess A levels, or equivalents, in mathematics and at least one science. However, universities recognise that most students will not study all three sciences and math at a high level; bioengineering courses attract students from across the scientific disciplines, and for many undergraduate courses, no single science is preferred over the other two.

Once the degree is completed, bioengineers may go on to further study, with a broad range of PhDs available to a graduate from such a multidisciplinary subject. In addition, bioengineers can pursue careers in industries as diverse as pharmaceuticals, medical devices, medical imaging, clinical science, sustainable agriculture or green manufacturing, as well as the computing and financial careers open to all engineering graduates.

Bioengineering is an expanding, exciting and challenging field of study which has the opportunity to improve the quality of peoples' lives, together with the future health of the planet.

The writer is research fellow, lecturer in bioengineering, The University of Sheffield, the U.K.

IN BRIEF



Colouring lives

AzkoNobel, a global paints and coatings company, and SOS Children's Villages recently announced a partnership to uplift the lives of youngsters and positively impact youth unemployment in India. This collaboration will be run through AzkoNobel's 'Let's Colour' programme under their Flagship Dulux brand. In line with the Skill India Mission, the initiative intends to focus on providing vulnerable youth with training and language skills, to improve their employability.



Educationist of the year

Jitendra Das, director, FORE School of Management, New Delhi, was recently conferred the 'Educationist of the Year in Asia' by the Asia Pacific Education and Technology Awards Summit, 2019. Das is a professor of marketing, and was the founding dean of IIM Lucknow's Noida campus. He is also a former consultant to the World Bank, IDRC Canada, and various government ministries besides. The summit was organised by ASSOCHAM and The Education Post.



AR/VR-enabled textbook

MBD Group, recently launched an AR/VR-enabled textbook on physics – Modern's abc+ of physics for classes XI and XII, at the New Delhi World Book Fair 2019. The text has been authored by Shri Uttam Narayan Tripathi and is useful for students preparing for the CBSE board exams as well as the entrance exams after. It draws on NCERT syllabi and structure, and also features problems from CBSE, IIT JEE/JEE Advanced and various other board exams from previous years.

Compiled by: Indira Thirumala

INNOVATION

Learning grounds of the future

Future classrooms must be radically different in order to become relevant for new age-education for, technology will be at the centre of this metamorphosis

■ SARVESH SHRAVASTAVA

When our parents recall their school days, they make no big deal about a makeshift class under a tree. They were used to jotting down notes from the blackboard on which teachers would write, using dusty chalk. With time, chalk and duster were replaced with touchscreens, audio visual facilities, and, the era of digital learning started. However, the journey will be much more exciting in the next decade. Here are five things that will be drastically different, in future classrooms:

Question papers and answer sheets: We have already seen some tests being conducted online. However, as technology becomes more accessible and affordable, it will largely replace pen-and-paper-based tests. The rational is simple – online tests need lesser logistical arrangements, can be customised for different batches, and evaluated quickly and accurately using artificial intelligence and algorithms. Imagine the time saved by future high school and class XII aspirants when they receive their board exam results within a week, thanks to online exams. Students can plan the course of their career and do not have to spend months in speculation.

Computer labs: Once upon a time, computers were a rarity for Indian students. The weekly computer lab class was their chance to touch, feel, and see this magical box. However, this is no more the case. With digital revolution, most middle-class families can afford a personal computer. Moreover, about 337 million smartphones make India, the



Centres of learning: Radically different.

world's second largest smartphone-equipped population. Over the next five years, smartphones and tablets will completely transform the look and feel of computer labs in schools. These labs will follow the bring-your-own-device and do-it-yourself approach. Meanwhile, teachers can take on the role of mentors.

There will be many innovations that trigger self-learning in computer labs. For example, Cubetto is a friendly wooden robot that can teach early learners the basics of computer programming, through adventure and hands-on play. The Cubetto Playset consists of a friendly robot made of hard-wearing wood, a physical programming board, and a set of colourful coding blocks that make up a programming language you can touch.

Textbooks: Typically, textbooks are written under the assumption that 'one-

size-fits-all'. The need of the hour is to customise the learning journey for every student based on speed, understanding, and interests. E-books can fill this much needed gap. Powered by virtual learning, artificial intelligence, and machine learning, e-books are well suited for supplementing conventional textbooks. Students also appreciate the interactive nature of E-books. Having said that, textbooks are and will remain an important part of the education system, but there will be an amalgamation of both textbooks and e-books.

Benches and desks: The neat rows of benches are meant to seat students in a way that they focus on the teacher delivering a lecture and demonstrating concepts, on the board. But this approach will soon become obsolete. Future classrooms will have flexible seating arrangement suited for the task that students are working on. The design will also consider students' comfort. Standing desks for those who find it hard to focus while sitting, accommodation for the physically-challenged, collaborative stations for group activities, and moving walls to make the space more adaptable, are some classroom design innovations that will become the new normal.

The writer is co-founder and managing director, Eupheus Learning

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SCHOLARSHIPS

MPOWER Global Citizen Scholarship Programme

MPOWER Financing has proposed this scholarship opportunity to students looking forward to studying in any of the listed 200+ partner universities of MPOWER in the U.S. or Canada to support their career aspirations.

ELIGIBILITY: Applicants must be 18 years or older, who has been accepted or enrolled for a full-time programme at a U.S. or Canada-based partnered college or university. Short essay response of 1,000 words is expected from the applying candidates on "What impact do you want to make in the world with your U.S. or Canadian education?" and "If you could improve integration between international students and domestic students (from the U.S./Canada) on your campus, how would you do so?"

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Scholarship worth \$5,000 per annum is offered to the selected scholars.

DEADLINE: April 15

APPLICATION: Online

<http://www.b4s.in/EDGE/MGC1>

Sarla Devi Scholarship for Students in Crisis

Students undergoing personal crisis, hindering higher education can apply.

ELIGIBILITY: Applicants who are orphans, physically-challenged, cancer patients, or have a single parent or have any chronic illness can send their entries. The applicant's highest family income should be ₹4.5 lakh per annum, and can be pursuing any stream of study.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: 100 students will be awarded ₹10,000.

DEADLINE: March 31

APPLICATION: Online

<http://www.b4s.in/EDGE/SDS6>

Courtesy: www.buddy4study.com

learning online platform, says that the focus on skill development in the Indian workforce has been encouraged by the government through initiatives such as NITI Aayog and Skill India. However, there is much work required in the field in order to meet the declining rate of labour participation from our country. "This gap can be easily bridged if skills are acquired by the majority of the population. E-learning platforms remove the barriers of cost, infrastructure and place, as they ensure quality education at the click of a button," he explains.

"Last year, the budget had suggested incorporating a national apprenticeship scheme to offer training to five million youth by 2020 and a proposal to set up 306 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras for imparting skill training. Looking at the scale of demand, which is only going to grow in the future, the budget should focus on creating a co-existing public and private learning environment," says Ishan Gupta.

"In this case, any impetus given to technology and digitally led learning platforms can play an important role in it. I hope this budget focuses on building an infrastructure for providing democratic access to learning opportunities," he adds.

Important skills
Kamal Dutta, MD, Skillsoft, a corporate

E-LEARNING

Feeding two sides with one byte

With functional literacy affecting students, English speaking programmes aim at boosting confidence with their network of accessible online teachers

■ SANJAY GUPTA

Each year, over 12 million Indian youth enter the workforce. It would be good news if they were in Japan – a country with an ageing population and not enough youngsters to take on the jobs. In India, this massive inflow of working age people is fast becoming a huge problem. The agricultural sector is already overburdened with the challenge of too many depending on too little. In manufacturing, growth is not yielding expected levels of employment opportunity – automation is quickly eliminating jobs hitherto performed by humans. While the service sector provides a sliver of a silver lining, it appears most young people in India will need to find ways to self-employ themselves!

Practical obstacles

The challenges do not end there. There is the problem of the quality of education the young are receiving in school. Over the years, many good things have happened with K12 education – you can find a school walking distance from every village. There has been a significant uplift in primary school attendance. Unfortunately, the good story stops there – abysmal levels of functional literacy adversely impacts the numbers of young people headed for higher education. This is easier said than done. English is complex – for those who do not experience the language in their everyday environment English phonics, which are often arbitrary, is a mountain almost impossible to climb. Formal training avenues are available, too expensive or just not good. This is a terrific case to evaluate the possibility of technology enabled solutions. A plethora of English apps are now available on the cloud. A smartphone, an internet connection and a quick download later (often free); a person can dive into learning to speak English. However, often, this does not solve the problem. There are many reasons – self-learning has sharp drop off rates; it is difficult to stay motivated enough to stick to the disciplined course required. In addition, while self-learning can help with building skill, speaking English requires confidence. It is still difficult to acquire adequate self-belief by just practising with a machine. Programmes like EnglishBolo™ seem to have cracked the proverbial code. They have recognised the power and role of the teacher in learning a language. It offers learners access to online teachers to supplement the self-learning undertaken. It is amazing how innovation feeds off success. Once, the team



Got internet connection? You're good to go.

Just anybody who can speak English reasonably, write an email on a PC and demonstrates an empathetic attitude can become a teacher.

realised their programme was making an impact, they focused on the next set of items that would make a difference to learners. Short modules of 15 minutes only serve the new generation who will not keep their phone blocked from friends and messages for too long. Total flexibility for booking teacher classes is a welcome convenience. Finally, a price that barely pinches makes the programme accessible to all. That is not the end of the story. Their teachers come from all walks of life – home makers looking for a few hours of employment, senior citizens who want to stay busy or give back, teachers supplementing income after school hours, professionals seeking to develop new skills. Just anybody who can speak English reasonably, write an email on a PC and demonstrates an empathetic attitude can become a teacher. This makes it possible to create a massive teacher network that can support the needs of the huge number of youth aspiring to speak English.

The author is a teacher and coach. He is guest faculty at Duke University's Executive Education Programme.