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NEARBY



JKLF's shutdown call
hits life in Valley

Srinagar
Authorities snapped the mobile Internet link in the Kashmir Valley on Sunday, as life was affected by the shutdown called by the banned Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front and the Hurriyat to mark the seventh anniversary of the execution of Parliament attack case convict Afzal Guru.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 12

First meeting of Ram temple trust on Feb. 19

NEW DELHI
The Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust, established for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya, is likely to have its first meeting on February 19. Sources said the agenda might include announcement of a date for the start of construction.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 12

GEOGRAPHY MAPPING COURSE BY AMIT GARG
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Anti-CAA protesters back at Gate No. 7 of JMI NEW DELHI
Two days after shifting their anti-CAA protest site from Gate No. 7 of Jamia Millia Islamia to Gate No. 4 in light of the Delhi Assembly elections, the protesters returned to the original site on Sunday. The number of people who turned up at the protest was less than on previous weekends.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Bus touches power cable in Odisha, 10 killed

BERHAMPUR
Ten persons, including five women, were electrocuted and more than 25 injured when the bus they were travelling in came in contact with a low-hanging 11 kV power transmission cable at Mendarajpur under the Golanthara police station area of Odisha's Ganjam district on Sunday.

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGES 16 & 17

J&K administration offers investors 'uninterrupted' Internet, WiFi access

IT policy document highlights low crime, clean air in Union Territory

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) administration is highlighting good quality air and low crime rate in the newly created Union Territory to attract investors.

As per the J&K Information Technology (IT) Policy 2020, the administration is offering an incentive to IT companies to operate in three-shifts and to facilitate women working during the night by providing transportation and security.

At least 15% of "plug and play" premises in designated IT parks will be reserved for women entrepreneurs, the policy says. The policy document says that J&K contributes only 0.1% of the total cognisable crimes under the Indian Penal Code.

Internet has been snapped in the Union Territory since August 5 last year after Home Minister Amit Shah moved two Bills in the Rajya Sabha to revoke the special status under Article 370.

Following the Supreme Court's directions, 2G mo-

bile connectivity was restored last month with access only to 301 government-approved websites.

The policy says that "as a special dispensation for IT units, the land allotment would be decided on top priority" and the government would encourage priv-

ate sector participants to become Internet service providers to enable high-speed connectivity in all panchayats of J&K.

The Real Estate Policy states that a vast land bank owned by the government would be disbursed to "private developers" through a



Link failure: The sprawling IT hub at Rangreth on the outskirts of Srinagar wears a deserted look, in this photo of September 19, 2019. • VIJAYA SINGH

be taken away". Participating in the debate in the Rajya Sabha on August 5, Mr. Shah said no industry could be set up and tourism could not develop in J&K because of restrictions on land purchase due to Articles 370 and 35A. The two revoked provisions of the Constitution let the J&K legislature decide the "permanent residents" of the State, prohibiting a non-J&K resident from buying property in the State and ensuring job reservation for residents.

Local concerns
Several groups in Jammu have demanded domicile rights, amid fears of losing land and jobs to outsiders.

The policy says that the government will persuade the National Housing Bank, HUDCO, financial institutions, commercial banks and the insurance sector to extend operations in J&K to provide affordable housing credit to people.

quisition will either partner with private players on equity basis or facilitate land assembly by acquisition or pooling through private players as done by development authorities in other States," the policy says.

The developers will have to reserve 20% dwelling units in group housing projects for the economically weaker sections and the lower income groups. The UT of J&K is offering 100% exemption on stamp duty, land use charge, permission, construction and processing fee for the housing for the economically weaker sections and LIG groups.

The policy says that the government will persuade the National Housing Bank, HUDCO, financial institutions, commercial banks and the insurance sector to extend operations in J&K to provide affordable housing credit to people.

nCoV toll hits 811 as China gears up to reopen offices, schools

Fatalities cross 2002 SARS epidemic; white-collar employees to work from home

REUTERS

SHANGHAI/BEIJING

The death toll from the novel coronavirus (nCoV) outbreak in China rose to 811 on Sunday, as authorities geared up for millions of people returning to work after the extended Lunar New Year break.

Many cities have almost become ghost towns over the past two weeks as Beijing ordered virtual lockdowns, cancelled flights, closed factories and shut schools. On Monday, several workplaces and schools will remain closed and many white-collar employees will work from home. The State Council's special coronavirus group said workers should return in "batches" to reduce infection risks.

"At this moment, it is very difficult to predict when we are going to have an inflection point," China's Ambassador to Britain Liu Xiaoming told the BBC. "We certainly hope it will come soon, but the isolation and



Away from the epicentre: Spectators watching dancers dressed in dragon costumes during the Chinese New Year parade in San Francisco. • AP

quarantine measures have been very effective."

China's National Health Commission recorded 89 deaths on Saturday, pushing the total well above the 774 killed by SARS in 2002/2003. The confirmed coronavirus cases in China stood at 37,198, the Commission's data showed.

"In a letter written to Chinese President Xi Jinping, Prime Minister Modi offered India's assistance to face the

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGE 14

Modi offers help to Xi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India has offered assistance to China to deal with the coronavirus outbreak, sources said on Sunday.

"In a letter written to Chinese President Xi Jinping, Prime Minister Modi offered India's assistance to face the

challenge. PM offered condolences at the unfortunate loss of lives," said a source confirming that Mr. Modi also conveyed appreciation for China's support in the evacuation of Indian nationals from Wuhan.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

'No delay in Delhi poll turnout data'

62.59% of voters exercised their franchise, says CEO

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Denying allegations that the release of the final voter turnout data had been delayed, Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Ranbir Singh on Sunday announced that 62.59% of the enrolled voters had cast their ballot in the polling for the Delhi Assembly elections on Saturday.

"Whenever data from the 13,780 polling stations come in at night, each [data point] is added and then an exact number is given, which can be shared," Deputy Election



Ranbir Singh
Commissioner Sandeep Saxena said. "Each piece of data and each voter has been accounted for. This takes time... There is no question of delay. It is a process. And when it is com-

pleted, it is shared."

Mr. Singh said polling went on well past 6 p.m. at several booths in the city.

Thereafter, EVMs were deposited in strong rooms and scrutiny of data began, starting 11 p.m. in some constituencies. "Our returning officers were busy through the night and then with scrutiny.... We have to appreciate that... we have to ensure accuracy. And I think it has been done in good time," he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12
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* Former Chief Secretary Govt. of Haryana
* Former Director of IIPA

Ranjiv Singh Dalal (Retd. IPS)

* Former Director General of Police, Haryana

Shri Anil K. Sinha (Retd. IAS)

* Executive Director National Institute of Disaster Management Govt. of India

Shri Skand Ranjan Tayal (Retd. IFS)

Former Ambassador to South Korea, Uzbekistan

Shri A.K. Upadhyay (Retd. IPS)

Former Ambassador to Vietnam, Ireland

Shri Saurabh Kumar (Retd. IFS)

(Former Ambassador to Vietnam, Ireland)

Shri M. Ramachandran (Retd. IAS)

* Former Secretary Govt. of India
* Former Chief Secretary Govt. of U.P.

Shri R. Srinivasan IES (Retd.)

(Retd. Advisor to the Govt. of India)

Dr. G.C. Srivastava (Retd. IAS)

* Ex-member Secretary 12th Finance Commission
* Vice Chairman Central Administrative Tribunal

Shri B.B. Srivastava (Retd. IAS)

Former Secretary to the Govt. of India Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)

Prof. Rajveer Sharma

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Punjab village fights drugs with youth power

Bhai Desa in Mansa district promotes community service to raise awareness

VIKAS VASUDEVA

BHAI DESA

Punjab's youth have opened a new front in the battle against drug addiction. Mansa district in the State is deploying youth energy to prevent idle time and potential addiction. They run campaigns on single-use plastics, stubble burning, tree planting, road safety, and against drugs. The motto: 'mera pind-mera maan' (my village, my pride).

About 10 km from the headquarters, in Bhai Desa village (population 1,700), the streets are clean and green, and the walls shout out positive messages – the work of youth volunteers.

Anti-plastic drive

At Bhai Desa, youngsters persuade a shopowner to discard plastic bags, to meet



Doing their bit: Youngsters taking part in community work at Bhai Desa village in Punjab. •

Anti-CAA protesters back at Gate No. 7 of Jamia

JMI had used elections as an excuse to remove protesters'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two days after protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), held in front of Jamia Millia Islamia here, were shifted owing to the Delhi Assembly elections, demonstrators returned to Gate number 7 on Sunday.

Following directions from the police, the university had asked those protesting under the banner of the Jamia Coordination Committee (JCC) to clear the area in view of the elections and to "avoid any untoward situation". While agreeing to the demands of the authorities, the JCC, in a statement, condemned the university administration for "using the elections" as an excuse to have the protesters removed from the site. It, however, stated that they "recognise that the electoral process is an essential element of the democratic functioning of the state" and that they would "cooperate fully in the free and fair conduct of the elections".

Barricades which had blocked the road in front of the university since the beginning of December 2019



Protesters outside the university in New Delhi on Sunday.

• BIBI CHETTRI

were removed, allowing free passage to vehicles and people. As a temporary arrangement, the protest was moved to Gate number 4 of the university, without occupying the road.

After the elections were held on Saturday, barricades and tents were put up at the site once more in the evening following dialogue with authorities, Armaz, a JCC volunteer, said.

While hundreds of people arrived at the site and scores of women from surrounding areas gathered near the stage, the number of people here on Sunday afternoon were fewer than on previous weekends.

Speakers appealed to the protesters that they must

continue to take to the streets and register their protest until the CAA was removed, even if they had doubts about how long the demonstrations would go on.

Some also arrived from Gujarat to stand in support of the movement.

Following the firing incident at the university, members of the JCC have now started frisking everyone before letting them go near the stage at the protest site. Apart from this, various art installations, such as a "detention centre", a model of India Gate, various poster exhibitions, sections for reading books and newspapers have remained part of the demonstration.

Jointly organised by Mewat Vikas Sabha and Mewat RTI March, the dharna began on January 30, coinciding with the Martyrs' Day, and entered its 11th day on Sunday, defying the prohibitory orders in the district under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Manch's convenor Rajad

Meo, a former journalist,

said the administration had made all-out efforts to force them to give up their protest, including lodging FIRs against the organisers. "The administration uprooted the tent on January 30 night and poured water at the protest site the next day to force us to leave. But we were not deterred. If that was not enough, the police registered four FIRs, booking 43 people under different sections of the IPC and slapped notices under Section 107 and 151 of the CrPC against many of us," said Mr. Rajad.

Prominent among those booked include Mewat Vikas Sabha president Salamudeen Meo, eminent lawyer Ramzan Chaudhary, historian Siddique Ahmad and Urdu journalist Sabir Kasmi.

Mr. Salamudeen said that

Mewat had a long history of peace and communal harmony and no violent incidents were reported in the region even in the wake of demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 and recent Supreme Court verdict on Ram Janambhoomi title suit, but the local administration, acting under the directions from Haryana government, wanted to prevent holding of peaceful protests against the CAA and NRC and suppress our voice. "We assured that the protest would be completely peaceful, but they did not grant the permission. The administration is yet to reply to our application filed on January 28 seeking permission for the protest," said Mr. Salamudeen.

Though the local BJP leaders from the Muslim com-

munity have preferred to stay away from it, all three local Congress MLAs have visited the site and lent support to the agitation. Nuh MLA and Deputy Leader of Opposition Aftab Ahmed, who visited the site on February 4, said that the CAA was against the spirit of the Constitution.

"I met Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and the Home Secretary in connection with the prohibitory orders following which they provided some relaxation, but still protests are not allowed in city areas and within 3km of Gurgaon-Alwar Highway passing through Nuh," said Mr. Ahmed.

The agitation, being held under the open sky from early morning till late in the evening, has been attracting crowd from across the district, including students, daily-wagers, religious leaders and even women. Sitting among the handful of women protesters, Neha Khan, a trainee journalist, said she had been a regular at the site from the Day One. "The aim of the CAA is to break the unity of the country and discriminate against the Muslim community. The government would do good to take it back or include all religious communities in it," said Ms. Khan (21) who had her firmly covered. She said

that 40-50 women were turning up at the site every day for the past couple of days. School students present poems and enact plays at the site to create awareness on the issue.

Pursuing doctorate from Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi, Irfan, who hails from Shikra-wa village, said he along with his two friends had come to lend support to the movement and create awareness on the twin issues of the CAA and the NRC. "We have the right to protest peacefully against any law made by Parliament. It is sad that the present regime refrains from talking about the real issues such as unemployment, economy and the Gross Domestic Product. They are targeting the Muslims," said Mr. Irfan (25). He said that people from all religions and communities were against the law. Another protester, Nasir (26), a fleet manager at a travel agency, said people from all religions would be impacted if the NRC was implemented. "It is because of widespread protests that the government has clarified in the Parliament that they have no immediate plans to implement the NRC. The government will be forced to rethink on the issues if the protests continue," said Mr. Nasir.

'Twitter account suspension between Hegde and site'

Did not order suspension: Centre

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Centre has told the Delhi High Court that the issue of suspension of Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde's Twitter account was between him and the micro-blogging site.

In an affidavit, the Centre also clarified that had not directed the suspension of Mr. Hegde's Twitter account.

The Centre said it was "neither a necessary nor a proper party to this proceeding".

The response of the Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology came on a petition filed by Mr. Hegde to frame guidelines for censorship on social media strictly in accordance with the provision of the Constitution.

Previously, the High Court had issued notices to the Ministry and Twitter on a plea by the senior advocate, whose account was permanently suspended on November 5 last year. The High Court has posted the case for further hearing on February 11.

Twitter had, in October last year, suspended the senior advocate's account over the use of an image of August Landmesser on his page referring to it as "hateful imagery" and violation of the company's rules.

Mr. Hegde had said it violated his rights under Article 19 of the Constitution, including his right to free speech and expression.

AAP questions EC delay in releasing voter turnout figures

'EC not ready to announce percentage first time in 70 years'

C It has been 24 hours since the voting of the Delhi Assembly completed, but the Election Commission is not ready to announce the voting percentage. This is pointing towards a deep conspiracy," Mr. Singh said. The EC should explain the delay.

"This is the first time in the history of 70 years, the Election Commission is not ready to announce the voting percentage," Mr. Singh also alleged.

"Any election, be it Lok Sabha or Vidhan Sabha, the EC used to announce the voting percentage on the same day. I remember that when the elections were held by the ballot papers, the Commission used to announce the voting percentage even at such times. But for the first time in the history of 70 years, such a strange thing happened," Mr. Singh tweeted.

media in the afternoon, said the party feared a deep conspiracy. "Till now, whenever the elections were held, the Election Commission has declared the percentage of the voting almost immediately. It has been 24 hours since the voting of the Delhi Assembly completed, but the Elec-

Nuh defies prohibitory orders to hold protest

Support pours in from students, daily-wagers, religious leaders among others as dharna enters Day 11

ASHOK KUMAR
NUH

Deen Mohammad (55), a tailor, makes it a point to visit every day the ongoing indefinite sit-in agitation against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) at Badkali Chowk here. Inspite of staying in Nuh for generations, he has no documents to prove the same. He fears that he might be deprived of India's citizenship if the CAA and the NRC are implemented.

"I have no documents to prove that I belong to India. I come to this protest every day in the hope that the government will roll back its decision on CAA and not bring the NRC. There can be a delay, but I am sure the government will do no injustice to the poor and the illiterate," said Mr. Mohammad who was present at the protest site on Sunday afternoon as well.

Jointly organised by Mewat Vikas Sabha and Mewat RTI March, the dharna began on January 30, coinciding with the Martyrs' Day, and entered its 11th day on Sunday, defying the prohibitory orders in the district under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Manch's convenor Rajad



Nuh MLA and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Haryana Assembly Aftab Ahmed addressing protesters at Badkali Chowk. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday hit out at the Election Commission for not announcing the final polling percentage even 24 hours after the polling was over. The Chief Electoral Officer announced the figure at a press conference at 7 p.m.

The Chief Electoral Officer said the total turnout took long to collect and calculate and hence took time to be shared.

"Absolutely shocking. What is EC doing? Why are they not releasing poll turnout figures, several hours after polling?" AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal said on Twitter commenting on the delay.

Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh, addressing the

"Arvind Kejriwal ji knows he is losing his election that is why he has started preparing the ground to blame EVMs on the 11th," Mr. Yadav said in another tweet.

This, even as Sunil Yadav, the candidate fielded by it against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal from New Delhi constituency, declared he would not contest another election if he lost.

"Gratitude to Mr. Narendra Modi, Mr. Amit Shah, Mr. J.P. Nadda and the entire organization for reposing their faith in me. Mr. Kejriwal will lose New Delhi, that is for sure. If this does not work out, I will never contest another election and will associate myself only with organisational matter for life [sic]," Mr. Yadav tweeted.

BJP leaders sought to challenge exit poll results on news channels aired immediately after voting ended on Saturday which forecast a comfortable victory for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), on the basis of their timing and related

technicalities.

Voting, they argued, had continued for two hours beyond the stipulated time till 6 p.m., while the exit poll results started being aired just after this time and even as polling was under way at an estimated 100 booth across the nation capital.

"We are confident of the figures not being run by television channels which are clearly half-baked but on the basis of information and inputs generated by our cadre from the very ground," said a BJP leader. "Senior leaders, including Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari have already said the party will secure over 40 seats. In the worst-case scenario, the party expects to bag at least 32 seats," another leader claimed.

He says Kejriwal has started preparing ground to blame EVMs

technicalities.

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DU students allege they were groped and harassed at fest

Videos from the day show hundreds of men gatecrashing event

SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

Scores of women of Delhi University's Gargi College alleged that they were sexually harassed, groped and even stalked during the college's annual festival 'Reverie' on Friday, the last day of the three-day event.

Around 4.30 p.m., hundreds of men allegedly barged into the college campus without valid ID or passes issued by the festival organising committee, students alleged. Videos from the day show scores of people pushing their way into the university and some even jumping the gates despite deployment of bouncers and security personnel.

Multiple students whom *The Hindu* spoke to, requesting anonymity, alleged that they were groped by men, catcalled and even stalked.

Chilling accounts

One student said that she complained about a group of men following her friend, but no serious action was taken following which they stalked her. The victim said that the men followed her to the metro station and got off at the same station along with her, but she managed to slip away. "The metro station is a place I go every day. It's so scary,"



A videograb of the event. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and not sure what to do," the student said, adding that she hadn't decided whether to lodge a complaint or not.

Others told *The Hindu* that on the pretence that there were too many people and no space, men placed their hands on them, pushed and groped them. In a chilling account, shared via social media, a student alleged that men groped her and masturbated on her.

Students also said that they complained to principal Promila Kumar around the time hundreds of men made their way into the campus. Ms. Kumar said that she sent additional security to check on the situation but found that there was no issue.

Ms. Kumar said that she received no other complaint apart from two students who came to her in the afternoon. She said that she would speak to the students to understand

what the problem was and wanted to assure them that their safety is her top priority. "We did our best to provide full security and were there throughout the day. We left only late at night," Ms. Kumar said.

This is not the first time that such an incident had taken place, students said. Last year also similar incident took place and a complaint was filed with the Internal Complaints Committee with nearly 100 women alleging to have faced harassment, a student informed.

Keeping in view the issues faced last year, a separate barricade was set up this year to keep the crowd away, Ms. Kumar said.

'No complaint received'
However, police said that no PCR call was made and they haven't received any complaint regarding the incident.

Country's first 'darknet' narcotics operative held

Accused shipped psychotropic drug parcels in the garb of sex stimulation medicines, say NCB sleuths

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Sunday said it has arrested the country's first 'darknet' narcotics operative, who allegedly shipped hundreds of psychotropic drug parcels abroad in the garb of sex stimulation medicines.

Dipu Singh, 21, son of a retired Army officer, was arrested by the sleuths of the Delhi zonal unit of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) from Lucknow recently.

Darknet refers to the deep hidden internet platform that is used for narcotics sale, exchange of pornographic content and other illegal activities by using the secret alleys of the onion router (Tor) to stay away from the surveillance of law enforcement agencies. Owing to its end-to-end encryption, darknet is considered very tough to crack when it comes to investigating criminal activities being rendered over it, said



Dipu Singh. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The payment gateways of cryptocurrencies were used by the operators to conceal the transactions from regulatory agencies

RAJESH NANDAN SRIVASTAVA
NCB Deputy Director General

gin in the illegal trade, the NCB added.

A Bachelor in Hotel Management from Amity University in Lucknow, Singh had "mastered the technique to disguise identity while making a shipment," the NCB said in a statement.

Singh initially began with shipping medicines related to erectile dysfunction and fitness supplements to overseas locations using the dark internet facility, but later shifted to transacting in psychotropic drugs seeing the profit mar-

were seized from his residence, the NCB alleged that Singh is the "mastermind" of hundreds of drug parcels clandestinely couriered to countries like the U.S., U.K., Romania, Spain and some European nations using the dark web.

55,000 tablets seized
A total of 55,000 psychotropic tablets that includes tramadol, zolpidem and alprazolam have been seized as part of the two-month-long operation that was conducted with the co-operation of international agencies, NCB Delhi zonal director K.P.S. Malhotra said.

"The payment gateways of cryptocurrencies like Bitco

in the illegal trade, the NCB added.

"The payment gateways of cryptocurrencies like Bitco

in the illegal trade, the NCB added.

The orders were procured from darknet and routed through various wicker identities, WhatsApp and some business-to-business platforms. The investigation in the case is on as the NCB is looking into the links of Singh and others associated with him, Mr. Malhotra said.

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CONCEPT

IN BRIEF

BJP leader shot dead by husband in Gurugram

GURUGRAM
A woman BJP leader from Gurugram was shot dead allegedly by her husband who suspected her of having an illicit relationship, a police official said on Sunday. The woman, state secretary of the BJP Kisan Morcha, was speaking over phone on Saturday evening when the incident happened. PTI

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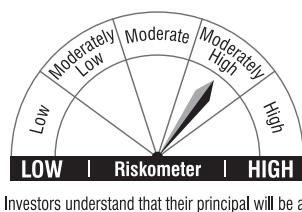
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Under-construction projects: The four-lane underground U-turn near Ambience Mall; a flyover at Atul Kataria Chowk on Old Delhi Road, connecting Kapashera to Mahavir Chowk; six-laning of Sohna Road and elevated road. ■ MANOJ KUMAR

On road to relief from traffic nightmare

A host of infrastructure projects in Gurugram are nearing completion; they are expected to cut down travel time as well as reduce traffic jams

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

Several ongoing infrastructure projects of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), including three underpasses, two flyovers, an elevated road, and an elevated U-turn, across the Millennium City are expected to be completed within two years. Once completed, the projects will improve vehicular movement at important intersections, reduce travel time and offer respite to commuters from frequent jams.

Among the projects, the four-lane underground U-turn near Ambience Mall and the elevated U-turn near Shankar Chowk, both NHAI projects, are likely to be completely first.

Construction ban
“Both the projects are running ahead of schedule. We hope to complete the underground U-turn by May 31 and the elevated U-turn by April. Both these projects as well as widening of Sohna Road, and an elevated five-km road project were delayed by over two months due to ban on construction activities for almost 45 days in November last

year due to high levels of pollution,” said project director of NHAI (Gurugram) Ashok Kumar Sharma.

Motorists coming from the direction of Jaipur and going towards Ambience Mall and DLF Cyber Hub are forced to travel to Rajokri flyover in Delhi to take a U-turn. The 377-metre underground U-turn will help cut travel time and reduce traffic congestion at the Rajokri flyover. The NHAI has footed 50% cost of the ₹102.94-crore project, the rest has been equally shared by DLF and the owners of Ambience Mall.

Similarly, the elevated U-turn will reduce traffic on National Highway 48 as vehicles coming from the direction of DLF Cyber Hub and taking a U-turn towards Delhi will no longer have to use the highway. The 455-metre elevated U-turn is being built at a cost of ₹58.96 crore with the NHAI contributing 75% of the funds. The remaining cost will be borne by the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram. As per the contract, the two projects are to be completed before September this year.

For the six-laning and strengthening of a 22-km-long stretch of National Highway-248A, locally known as Sohna Road,

Paving the way

Details of ongoing road projects in Millennium City

Name of project	Estimated cost	Estimated date of completion
1 Underground U-turn near Ambience Mall	₹102.94 crore	May 31, 2020
2 Elevated U-turn near Shankar Chowk	₹58.96 crore	April 30, 2020
3 Six-laning of Sohna Road and elevated road	₹1,730.51 crore	July, 2021
4 Flyover and underpass at HUDA City Centre intersection	₹72.61 crore	August, 2020
5 Flyover and underpass at Atul Kataria Chowk	₹58.50 crore	December, 2020
6 Road widening from Umang Bhardwaj Chowk to Dwarka Expressway	₹110.99 crore	December, 2020

SOURCE: NHAI AND GMDA

The four-lane underground U-turn near Ambience Mall and the elevated U-turn near Shankar Chowk, both NHAI projects, are running ahead of schedule... they were delayed by over two months because of a ban on construction activities for almost 45 days in November last year due to high levels of pollution

ASHOK KUMAR SHARMA, project director of NHAI (Gurugram)

starting from Rajiv Chowk, the NHAI has awarded two separate tenders. The first tender pertains to six-laning and strengthening of the road from 0.340 km to 9.28 km, starting

from Rajiv Chowk and also includes a 4.75-km elevated road. The deadline is July 31, 2021. The second part of the project, which has a deadline of July 29, 2021, covers the remaining dis-

tance. A three-lane service road will also be constructed on both sides of the stretch.

Removing encroachments

“Both the packages of the project were delayed due to large-scale encroachment along the road. But the first package, measuring around 10 km, was the worst hit. Of the 404 structures required to be demolished, only 104 are left. Most of these structures are in the first package. As many as 11 cases are pending in the Punjab and Haryana High Court,” said Mr. Sharma.

The total cost of the project is around ₹1,700 crore.

He, however, added that both packages would be finished before the completion date, though the second package could be completed earlier than the first.

Thanks to unprecedented real estate development, including shopping malls, residential group housing societies and office space, Sohna Road has become one of the busiest stretches in Millennium City.

The Vatika Chowk, an intersection point of Sohna Road, Golf Course Extension Road and the Southern Peripheral Road, and the stretch passing

through Badshahpur village, witness frequent jams and long traffic snarls. The five-km elevated road from Vatika Road till Badshahpur village is expected to bring a huge respite to the commuters.

The construction of flyovers and underpasses at the busy HUDA City Centre metro station intersection and Atul Kataria Chowk in Old Gurugram are two other important projects – both are being carried out by the GMDA.

The 246-metre flyover and 710-metre underpass at the HUDA City Centre intersection, being constructed at an estimated cost of ₹70 crore, are expected

to provide a respite from the round-the-clock traffic congestion. A GMDA official, on condition of anonymity, said both projects would be completed by August.

“The work for the flyover is almost complete. Since the underpass was passing below the metro line, we had applied for a No Objection Certificate from the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation to avoid any harm to the metro structure. We received it two days back. We will work in close coordination with DMRC authorities regarding a 20-metre stretch of the underpass

that is passing below the metro line,” said the official.

He added that the work for the flyover and underpass at Atul Kataria Chowk may be completed by the end of the year. “It is not the execution of the work but the shifting of the utilities that is the major challenge in any infrastructure work in Old Gurugram. But we hope to complete the project by the end of the year,” said the official. The ₹50-crore project comprises a flyover on Old Delhi Road connecting Kapashera to Mahavir Chowk and the underpass on Signature Tower Road to Mata Sheetla Road.

Widening road

The six-laning of a three-km stretch of arterial road from Umang Bhardwaj Chowk to Dwarka Expressway will also be completed by the end of the year. It is being built at an estimated cost of ₹110 crore.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal, in a meeting on April 15, 2017, had directed the widening of 5.6-km stretch from Hero Honda Chowk to Dwarka Expressway.

A 2.6-km stretch on this road will be widened by the NHAI i.e. the first 2,200 metres and the last 400 metres.

Two M.P. men arrested for supplying illegal weapons

11 semi-automatic pistols and 10 single shot pistols recovered

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Special Cell of Delhi Police arrested two persons for allegedly supplying illegal weapons to criminals based in Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR), police said on Sunday.

The accused have been identified as Santoshi (50) and Pritam Singh (20), both residents of Madhya Pradesh's Morena district. They were arrested on Friday, they said. Eleven semi-automatic pistols and 10 single shot pistols with 50 live cartridges were recovered from the accused, the police said, adding that these were brought to the national capital to be supplied to criminals in Delhi and NCR.

Santoshi and Pritam were apprehended from near Dilshad Garden Metro Station



The accused in police custody. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

on Friday after a police team received information that two men were coming to deliver a consignment to criminals,” Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) P.S. Kushwah said.

A few years ago, Santoshi was arrested after he got into a scuffle with someone and was lodged in Morena jail. In the prison, he came in contact with Santoshi three months ago. He has been working with Santoshi to earn quick money, he said.

tact with illegal firearms suppliers. Later, he started procuring illegal arms from them for supplying to criminals, the DCP said.

The accused would primarily source weapons from Aligarh. He used to buy .32 bore pistols for ₹7,000- ₹8,000 each and single shot pistols for ₹2,000- ₹3,000. He would sell the .32 bore and single shot pistols for ₹20,000- ₹25,000 and ₹4,000- ₹5,000, respectively, he added.

Santoshi has been supplying arms and ammunition to criminals for the last four years. Previously, he was arrested in three cases under the Arms Act, Mr. Kushwah said. Pritam came in contact with Santoshi three months ago. He has been working with Santoshi to earn quick money, he said.

Judges move HC against ‘discriminatory’ pension scheme

Judicial officers seek restoration of old pension scheme or an option to choose between the two schemes

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

In a rare instance, the judges of Delhi’s district courts have knocked on the doors of the High Court against the current pension regime, which they said is lacking in providing financial stability to judges post-retirement.

The judges represented by the Delhi Judicial Services Association (DJSAs) said they wanted to be placed under an old pension scheme, which was in vogue till December 31, 2003, that gave better retirement benefits to judges post-retirement.

A Bench of Justice A.K. Chawla has issued notice to the Centre and Delhi government on the petition before posting the case for further hearing on August 7.

DJSAs, a registered association of judicial officers of Delhi, in its plea sought direction to the government



for restoration of old pension scheme as was applicable prior to January 1, 2004 to all judicial officers of Delhi Judicial Services or an option to choose between the two schemes.

Senior advocate Dayan Krishnan appeared with advocate Sachin Jain for the judges’ association before the High Court.

Root of the case
On December 22, 2003, the Centre introduced ‘New re-

structured Defined Contributory Pension Scheme’ for new entrants to the Central government service appointed on or after January 1, 2004.

Three years later, the Delhi government issued a notification on July 19, 2006 stating that the employees working with the Delhi government are also governed by the condition of service applicable to the Central government employees.

The new pension scheme applies retrospectively to all the judicial officers who have been appointed on or after 2004. It also treats the judicial officers at par with civil servants of the State, a condition which the association said was against the 2003 judgment of the Supreme Court in All India Judges’ Association case.

The top court verdict had guaranteed a minimum of 50% of last pay drawn to

judicial officers as pension, the plea argued. Additionally, it said the notification “erroneously” equates the services of the judicial officers of Delhi with that of civil servants of Delhi.

The scheme
The judges said the new pension scheme was “discriminatory, arbitrary, inconsistent with recommendations of the Justice Shetty Commission and Justice Padmanabhan Committee” and also in violation of various orders passed by the top court.

“The new pension scheme put draconian restriction on withdrawals from pension fund as it does not allow the judicial officers to withdraw complete pension fund even in times of dire need,” the plea stated.

They said the new pension scheme does not take

into account their peculiar job conditions.

“The aloofness and the sacrifices of a judicial officer to maintain the independence of judiciary and to uphold the Constitution of India should be borne in mind while determining the financial benefits to such officers, especially post-retirement,” the plea said.

Representation unheard
The association said the Central government failed to consider its written representation in November 2018 seeking continuation of the old pension scheme.

The implementation of the new pension scheme to the judicial officers of Delhi has “grossly encroached upon their fundamental rights,” the petition said, adding it “would deprive them from the legitimate benefits to live their retired life with dignity”.

Three die after being hit by car in Ghaziabad

Owner of vehicle traced; 1 arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GHAZIABAD

Three men died after they were hit by a car near Hindon canal here, police said on Sunday.

The accident took place on Saturday night when the car which was on its way to Vaishali hit a scooter coming from the opposite direction, injuring Sonu and Ashok, Deputy Superintendent of Police Anshu Jain said.

Passer-by died on spot
As the driver lost control over the vehicle, the car also hit a passer-by, killing him on the spot, he said.

The passer-by’s body was

found lying in a pool of blood near the road divider, the DSP said, adding that the man was identified as Rohit.

Sonu (26) and Ashok (25) were rushed to a nearby hospital, where the two were declared brought dead by doctors.

Number plate found
Police found the car’s number plate from the spot and traced its owner.

A woman was arrested and a case was registered against her under Section 304 A (causing death by negligence) of the IPC, the DSP added.

No note has been recovered from him or from his house. However, police said that the deceased was in depression after his

Man ends life at Haiderpur Badli metro station after killing children

Deceased was in depression after his factory was shut: police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

After killing his daughter and son, a 44-year-old man allegedly ended his life by jumping in front of a metro train at Haiderpur Badli station on Sunday, police said.

The man used to stay with his wife and his 14-year-old daughter and six-year-old son at a rented house in north-west Delhi’s Shalimar Bagh, they said.

Police suspect that the man allegedly killed both his children by strangulating them. Post-mortem reports are awaited to ascertain the exact cause of death.

During investigation, wife of the deceased told the police that she had left home to visit a nearby market around

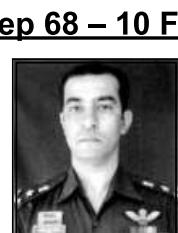
3 p.m. while her children were with her husband at home. On reaching home, she found the bodies of the children and her husband was missing, the officer added.

A case has been registered and investigation is on, said DCP (North-west) Vijayanta Arya.

Meanwhile, metro services were briefly delayed on the yellow line due to the incident.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, OII-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

Lt Colonel Paras Mehra
(17 Sep 68 – 10 Feb 07)



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DELHI

MONDAY, FEB. 10	RISE 07:04 SET 18:07
TUESDAY, FEB. 11	RISE 19:23 SET 07:57
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 12	RISE 07:04 SET 18:08
	RISE 20:31 SET 08:39
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 12	RISE 07:03 SET 18:09
	RISE 21:38 SET 09:20

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 23 07

Safdarjung 23 07

Palam 21 07

Delhi Palam Today

22°C Shallow fog and mist is

likely to prevail in the morning.

A warm afternoon lies ahead.

A sunny sky will prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

23°C Shallow fog is likely to

continue in pockets. A warm

day lies ahead. A mostly

sunny sky lies ahead.

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THE HINDU

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Cracker blast toll goes up to 3 in Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH

The death toll in a fire-cracker explosion during a religious procession in Punjab's Tarn Taran district has climbed to three as a 17-year-old boy succumbed to injuries on Sunday.

Firecrackers, being carried in a tractor trolley, exploded during the 'nagar kirtan' (religious procession) near Pahu village in Tarn Taran on Saturday.

"One more youth, identified as Gurkirat Singh, aged around 17 years, passed away in a hospital at Tarn Taran on Sunday," Acting Deputy Superintendent of Police of Tarn Taran city, Parbesh Chopra, said.

He said the condition of another injured boy was serious and he was admitted to the hospital's intensive care unit.

Agro units of cooperative sector to come up in all Rajasthan districts

Fund of ₹500 crore had been created for the purpose

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

At least one agro-processing unit of cooperative sector will come up in each district of Rajasthan this year with the emphasis on agricultural marketing. The State government's plan of action, along with the decision to sanction 25% higher crop loans during the kharif season, is expected to promote cooperative sector's assistance to farmers.

Registrar of Cooperative Societies Neeraj K. Pawan

BJP-JJP regime clueless about its agenda of governance: Hooda

'Haryana govt's 100-day progress report card nothing but a pack of lies'

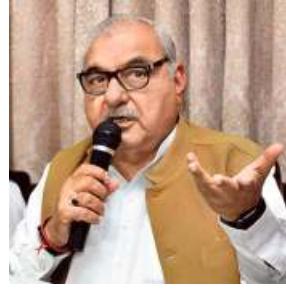
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Former Haryana Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Sunday hit out at ruling BJP-JJP government in the State, accusing it of being clueless about its agenda of governance even after three months in power.

Mr. Hooda said the government should not only give an account of what it has achieved in the first 100 days of its second term but also list its failures for all the 1,925 days that it has held office.

"The State government is clueless about what needs to be done. They are busy with settling the internal contradictions of their alliance and the party. They took almost 20 days to distribute portfolios and then they started fighting over who controls CID. Now they have started



State was growing by nearly 10% during Cong rule but this has come down to 4.5%. Unemployment rate has gone up to 28%

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA

Former Haryana CM

carrying out pre-budget discussions while the economic survey itself has not been released. The government has done nothing and this is why its 100-day progress report is nothing but a pack of lies," said Mr. Hooda.

The former Chief Minister said not only does the government not want to work, it was also not allowing the 90 Haryana MLAs to work. "The MLAs are given a grant of ₹5 crore per year but they have not been able to spend the money because the go-

vernment has not issued any guidelines for this expenditure and people of the State continue to suffer," he alleged.

"The State was growing by nearly 10% during the Congress rule but this has come down to 4.5%. Unemployment rate in the State was 2.8% during the Congress government which has now gone up by more than 10 times to 28%," he said.

Calling the government move to secure 75% of unskilled jobs for locals a politi-

cal posturing, the former Chief Minister said this was just an extension of existing government policies and this alone was not acceptable to the State. "Our educated young women and men are only getting class IV jobs and those who deserve to be placed as teachers are being appointed as peons, which is gross injustice to their ability and academic records," Mr. Hooda said.

Scam alleged

The former Chief Minister alleged scam by the government in the procurement of paddy. "The government's own investigations have identified a scam of ₹90 crore but Ministers are claiming that there has been no scam. We want the CBI or a sitting judge to probe this so that the scale of the scam and those responsible are exposed," he added.



Anti-CAA-NRC protesters in Deoband. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"But, we don't allow men on stage during the protest because we follow purdah system. We take their message in writing and one of us read it out to the audience," says Ms. Usmani.

Maulana Abul Qasim Nomani had advised the women to give up their protest for the time being during a meeting with the district administration.

"We came out only when the clergy and the political parties failed us. We respect the Mohatamim but we didn't take Darul Uloom's permission to start the sit-in protest. Why would we take it back on their advice," asks Fouzia, one of the five women, who formed the Murta-hida Khawatin Committee that is guiding the protest. Such was the impact that the seminary had to issue a clarification within 24 hours that it was not against the protest.

"It took us 20 days to convince women around us to come out in protest of this kala kanoun (black law) that threatens our existence in the country which our forefathers chose to live and die for," says the postgraduate in Political Science. "Agar aaj ghar se nahin nikalenge, toh kal desh se nikal diye jayenge (If we don't come out of homes today, tomorrow we would be thrown out of the country)," she says.

'Beginning of a new era'
Young Faizy Usmani, whose aunt and cousins are protesting, says it is the beginning of a "new era". "Many men are discovering the latent talent of their women during these protests as many of us never thought they could hold stage so convincingly," he says.

The male family members don't join the protest but they keep an eye on the protesters. They often don't allow media persons to talk to women as they feel they might say something that is against the movement.

Iram Usmani, who runs a primary school, says they were getting complete support from family members.

In this part of the world, there is a common tendency among men to describe a group of women discussing something as "chen chen kar rahin hain". "It could be loosely translated as making

noise. But with the anti-CAA-NRC protest, it has become a voice," says Ayesha Munira, professor of English at Aligarh Muslim University.

Prof. Munira, who specializes in gender studies, feels the protests are "life-changing" and "empowering" for many Muslim women, particularly from weaker sections.

"They have come out on their own. Once the protest ends, patriarchy will try to take over again but I don't think women will be easily relegated to the four walls. They know their voices are being heard by the country and they are leading a movement."

This, she says, could have made many maulanas "insecure". "The right-wingers on both sides share common traits. They feel women have no agency. Women are resisting both, as it is a matter of survival for their families," she says.

Feeling the heat

The district authorities in these cities are also feeling the heat because they don't know how to engage with the women in burqa. Talking to senior police officers in Saharanpur and Aligarh reveal involving clergy in negotiating with women was not as effective as it was with men during the December 20 protests.

"The clergy had a role in instant triple talaq, but it was ignored. In CAA-NRC, where they have no role, they are being pressurised to issue appeals. Those in power in Delhi and U.P. don't have to negotiate with women in their family life. How will they negotiate with us? Still, we are waiting," says a protester in Aligarh.

Stripes on stroll



A tigress enjoying the sun at the Van Vihar National Park in Bhopal on Sunday. ■ A.M.FARUQUI

loans would be enhanced by 25% from April 1 to cover the kharif season.

New facilities, such as online registration of loan applications and solar power connections at the cooperative banks and societies, will facilitate fast disbursement of loans. Mr. Pawan said the institutions of farmers and rural entrepreneurs depicting innovations in their work would be felicitated in the upcoming cooperative fair in Jaipur.

Mr. Pawan said crop loans worth ₹8,244 crore had been disbursed across the State so far during the current financial year, while the amount of

BSP will rename Bhadohi as Sant Ravidas Nagar'

Samajwadi Party government had changed the name due to its casteist mentality, says Mayawati

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo Mayawati on Sunday said if voted to power in Uttar Pradesh, her party will rename Bhadohi as Sant Ravidas Nagar.

In a statement issued in New Delhi, she said, "As soon as the BSP comes to power (in Uttar Pradesh), it will rename Bhadohi as Sant Ravidas Nagar. The previous Samajwadi Party government had changed its name due to its casteist mentality."

Ms. Mayawati accused the Congress and the Bharatiya

Janata Party of never honouring saint-poet Ravidas during their tenures and indulging in "theatrics" now by visiting temples.

List of work'

Listing the work done by the BSP to keep the memory of Ravidas alive, she said, "Sant Ravidas Park and Ghat were made in Varanasi, his place of birth, his statue was installed in Varanasi and the Ravidas Samman Puraskar constituted. The Sangturu Ravidas Rajkiya Mahavidyalaya was established in Faizabad. Apart from this, Sant



BSP chief Mayawati

Ravidas Polytechnic was established in Chandauli. A bridge on river Ganga was named after the saint. Assistance was given for Sant Ravidas Dhamashala in Ba-

dauan."

The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's assertion to rename Bhadohi as Sant Ravidas Nagar came close on the heels of a proposal to change the name of Basti, a district located in the eastern parts of the State, after Maharsi Vashishtha.

The District Magistrate of Basti, Ashutosh Nirjanjan, had said the proposal to change the district's name was sent to the revenue board and the expenditure for it was pegged at around ₹1 crore.

The Yogi Adityanath go-

vernment in Uttar Pradesh has changed the name of Allahabad to Prayagraj and that of Faizabad to Ayodhya.

It has also renamed the Mughalsarai railway station after Deen Dayal Upadhyay.

CM's announcement

According to officials, about a year ago during the Basti Mahotsav, Chief Minister Adityanath had announced that the Basti Medical College will be named after Maharsi Vashishtha, who, according to Hindu mythology, was the guru of Lord Ram and his brother Lord Lakshman.

Jharkhand infant dies after vaccination

Probe ordered by health department

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

RAMGARH

An infant has died after he was administered a vaccine at a government health centre in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district, Health officials said here on Sunday.

A probe has been ordered into the incident, they said.

Ramgarh Civil Surgeon Dr. Neelam Chaudhary said that three-month-old male child died on February 6 after being administered Pentax-2 vaccine to protect from multi-diseases.

The Civil Surgeon said that a probe has been ordered by the health department after the incident came to light, adding that

Manali and Kufri in the grip of severe cold

Keylong remains the coldest place in Himachal at minus 12.5 degrees

Sena has left neither its saffron flag nor Hindutva, says Uddhav

Party leaders see BJP hand in MNS rally, say change in Raj's ideology raises doubts

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said some people are saying the Shiv Sena has left Hindutva after going with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party, but the Sena has left neither its saffron flag nor Hindutva. His remarks came in the backdrop of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray holding a rally in support of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

The CM chaired a meeting of party legislators and district chiefs at the State guest house, Sahyadri, to discuss organisation building, and to help them understand the CAA. Last month, on Bal Thackeray's birth anniversary when the MNS chief had held a day-long convention and launched son Amit Thackeray, the CM had taken a dig at him on similar lines.

Sena spokesperson Manisha Kayande came down heavily on the MNS and said this march does not affect the Sena in any way. "Everyone knows that opposition to Bangladeshi infiltrators was originally Balasaheb's ideology. Why did the MNS remember this now, 14 years after it was formed? They have the Navi Mumbai, Sambhajinagar elections in mind. A BJP hand is clearly seen here. The MNS had completely opposed the BJP in the past and even said that Modi-Shah needed to be removed from the political scene."



Leading the show: MNS chief Raj Thackeray at a rally from Marine Drive to Azad Maidan in Mumbai on Sunday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

When asked about speculation of the MNS being the BJP's 'B team', Ms. Kayande told reporters that the BJP always needed someone.

"First it was the Sena. Now that the Sena has moved away, the BJP needs someone because it knows it cannot do anything by itself any more."

She also said the BJP even experimented with the VBA and now here (MNS). "BJP leader Ashish Shelar used to go to Krishnankunj (Raj Thackeray's residence) only after this morcha was planned. The Marathi card was never theirs (MNS), and

they were never consistent with it. The MNS chief even went to a convention of north Indians."

So far, Ms. Kayande said, people had listened to Raj, but they are now doubting the repeated change in his ideology. "Is someone behind this? Is someone feeding this ideology? There is a complete chance that the BJP is supporting this march. Hindutva was never an MNS plank, but now it is. But merely changing the flag is not enough. Ideology has to be in the heart and blood; we wish them luck. People have faith in this government," she said.

Senior Sena leader Deepak Kesarkar said, "Uddhav has always been consistent on his stand. There are those who try to divide Marathi votes but Marathi *manoos* should decide while keeping this in mind."

Another Sena leader and minister Uday Samant said there have been so many such sabhas, but a party's identity is clear only by electoral success. "So their success will only be clear after elections. Many tried to challenge the Sena but there is a Sena CM in Maharashtra now. This march will not affect the Sena in any way."

nCoV scare: Goa tourism industry puts Chinese team's visit on hold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

A Chinese delegation's visit to Goa has been put on hold by tourism industry stakeholders in view of the novel coronavirus (nCoV) outbreak in the neighbouring country, an official said on Sunday.

The delegation, comprising photographers, models, online and offline booking experts, and marketing strategists from China, was supposed to arrive on Sunday, Travel and Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG) president Savio Messias told PTI.

"But their visit has been now put on hold in view of the present situation following the outbreak of the nCoV in China. The delegation was part of a marketing strategy planned by Goa tourism industry stakeholders to attract visitors from China," he said.

• The delegation was part of a marketing strategy of Goa tourism industry stakeholders to attract visitors from China

SAVIO MESSIAS
TTAG president

Chinese markets to salvage its sagging international tourism industry.

A delegation from the coastal State participated in a travel mart last month in China's Chengdu city.

There were also plans to market Goa as a tourist destination in China's prominent cities like Chengdu, Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou, Mr. Messias said. "But the plans have now been put on hold till the nCoV scare is over. Once it is over, we will resume our promotions in China," he said.

Former TTAG president Ralf D'Souza, who also runs

a chain of hotels in Goa, claimed that highest footfalls in any tourist destination across the world are from India and China.

"Goa's tourism industry also sees a huge potential from China, but due to the coronavirus scare, we have to keep our promotional activities in the neighbouring country on hold," he said.

Goa attracts nearly four lakh foreign visitors annually, including from destinations like the U.K. and the U.S.. The death toll in China's coronavirus outbreak rose to 811 on Sunday, while over 37,000 people have been confirmed as infected with the deadly virus.

The virus – which first emerged in Wuhan city in China's central Hubei province – has spread to 25 countries, including India (three confirmed cases have been reported from Kerala), the U.S., and the U.K..

Lost in the glut



Against the odds: A daily wage labour sorting oranges at the wholesale fruit market at Kalambra in Nagpur. Despite unseasonal rains, farmers have yielded a bumper harvest this year, resulting in 30-40% drop in the wholesale prices. The fruit is now being sold at ₹10,000 to ₹25,000 per tonne. ■ S. SUDARSHAN

Goa Archbishop urges Centre to revoke citizenship law

The very fact that it uses religion goes against the secular fabric of the country, says church

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

Archbishop of Goa and Daman, Rev Filipe Neri Ferrao, has urged the Central government to "immediately and unconditionally revoke the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)" and stop quashing the right to dissent". He also appealed to the government not to implement the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR).

However, Goa Bharatiya Janata Party's general secretary Narendra Sawaikar asked why the Archbishop was opposing the CAA when "crores of people including Goans" were supporting it.

Diocesan Centre for Social Communications Media, a wing of the Goa Church, in a statement on Saturday, said, "The Archbishop and the Catholic community of Goa would like to appeal to the government to listen to the voice of millions in India, to stop quashing the right to dissent and, above all, to immediately and unconditionally



Joining hands: Sanvidhan Bachao Samiti and residents of Malwani form a human chain to protest the CAA, the NRC, and the NPR in Mumbai on Sunday. ■ AADESH CHOUDHARI

ally revoke the CAA and desist from implementing the NRC and the NPR."

The laws are "divisive and discriminatory" and will certainly have a "negative and damaging effect" on a multicultural democracy like ours, the church said.

There is serious concern

that the NRC and the NPR will result in "direct victimisation of the underprivileged classes, particularly Dalits, adivasis, migrant labourers, nomadic communities and the countless undocumented people who, after having been recognised as voters for more than 70 years, will sud-

denly run the risk of becoming stateless and candidates for detention camps," it said.

There has been widespread discontent and open protests throughout the country and even abroad against the CAA, NRC and NPR, which are "forecasting a systematic erosion of va-

Speculation rife as MNS workers from Pune travel in bus owned by BJP MLA

Mahesh Landge says they may have hired a vehicle belonging to his transport firm

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS)'s mega rally in Mumbai on Sunday to drive out 'infiltrators' from Bangladesh and Pakistan has reinforced speculation of covert support from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after MNS workers from Pune were seen travelling in a vehicle which bore the name of a BJP legislator from Pimpri-Chinchwad.

Droves of MNS activists from Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad participated in the rally called by party head Raj Thackeray in Mumbai. Some who claimed to be BJP workers and were seen travelling in buses from Pune along with MNS activists said they were taking part of their own accord.

One of the buses had the name of BJP's Bhosari MLA Mahesh Landge. Mr. Landge, however, denied that the BJP was providing vehicles for ferrying MNS activists and clarified that it was plausible that some activists may have hired a bus belonging to his personal transport firm.

"I own a transport business which provides buses and vehicles to other firms. It is quite likely that these [MNS] workers may have hired one such bus. Let me make it clear that this vehicle is not the BJP's but owned by my transport company," he said.

On BJP workers from Pune allegedly joining the MNS rally, Mr. Landge said



Flagbearers: MNS supporters assembling at Hindu Gymkhana in Mumbai for the rally on Sunday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

he personally was not aware of any of his party activists participating in the event. At the same time, he said, "But if indeed some BJP workers are participating in the MNS rally, it is for a good cause as our party has been fighting to bring about the Citizenship Amendment Act and implement the National Register of Citizens."

While top MNS leaders like Bala Nandaonkar vehemently denied that the BJP was sponsoring their party's rally, he said the MNS had not 'invited' any political party or outfit to join in the agitation. "If members of other outfits and political parties are joining us in this rally, they are doing so because they know this cause taken by Mr. [Raj] Thackeray is a patriotic one."

After spiritedly campaigning against the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections last year, the

MNS' change of ideological direction, symbolised by its recent adoption of a saffron flag incorporating Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's royal seal or 'Rajmudra', has sparked talk of Mr. Thackeray's party inching closer to the BJP.

Hindutva space

Mr. Thackeray's hobnobbing with BJP leaders such as Ashish Shelar is seen as an attempt on part of the MNS to seize the vacant Hindutva space following the ideologically opposed alliance of Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress to keep the BJP out of power in Maharashtra.

The mega rally is being seen as another attempt by Mr. Thackeray to rebuild his party's sagging fortunes in the State, which has been on the wane since 2012.

Despite notching impressive performances in the 2012 polls to the Pune and Nashik civic bodies (being once the dominant power in the Nashik Municipal Corporation), internal bickering and haphazard campaigning has caused the party to implode with many among its top brass defecting to the ruling BJP or the Sharad Pawar-led NCP.

While MNS activists congregated in Mumbai from all parts of the State, the largest droves of party workers came from Nashik and Pune.

Twin debacles

Mr. Thackeray's fall commenced with the MNS' twin debacles in the 2014 parliamentary and Assembly elections which left the party in utter disarray. Its woes were compounded following its total rout in the civic polls held in February 2017, causing many to write off Mr. Thackeray – and the MNS – as a major political force.

While his party did not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Mr. Thackeray's campaign for the Congress and the NCP had come a cropper, with the BJP-Sena candidates winning with huge margins in the very constituencies where the MNS chief had held his rallies.

In the State Assembly polls in October last year, Mr. Thackeray finally entered the poll arena and contested 100 seats, winning only one (Kalyan Rural).

Tourist dies in Goa after somersault goes wrong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

A 40-year-old tourist from Maharashtra died at Baga beach in Goa after falling on his head while attempting a somersault on Sunday, the police said.

The victim, Balu Shinde, was playing on the beach with his colleagues in the morning when the incident occurred. "He fell on his head while performing a somersault and suffered critical injuries to his neck and spine. He fell unconscious after that. Lifeguards tried to provide medical aid, but it failed," an official from Calangute police station said.

Shinde was then rushed to the State-run Atillo Hospital in Mapusa, where he was declared brought dead," he said.

One application on MahaDBT portal to help farmers: Bhuse

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Farmers in Maharashtra can avail benefits of various State government schemes by accessing a single application on the MahaDBT portal, Agriculture Minister Dadaji Bhuse said on Sunday.

Mr. Bhuse said the facility will be available from the forthcoming kharif season and farmers will not have to fill separate forms for various schemes. "Farmers won't have to visit agriculture department offices re-

peatedly. Since this new system will reduce human intervention at every step, schemes will be more transparent."

Mr. Bhuse is on a tour of Vidarbha, and reviewed the work of his department in meetings with officials from Akola, Amravati and Nagpur.

He said work on linking MahaDBT and Mahabulekh portals is under way and once completed, farmers won't have to submit 7/12 and 8A (land) documents with their applications.

5 injured in hyena attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AURANGABAD

Five people were injured in Jala after a hyena went on an attacking spree in several villages on Saturday morning, a forest department official said.

"From the footprints, we have confirmed it was a hyena that caused the injuries. The animal has now moved into the jungle nearby and forest teams have been activated to ensure it is trapped if it ventures into residential areas again," Mr. Itlod said.



Joining hands: Sanvidhan Bachao Samiti and residents of Malwani form a human chain to protest the CAA, the NRC, and the NPR in Mumbai on Sunday. ■ AADESH CHOUDHARI

ally revoke the CAA and desist from implementing the NRC and the NPR."

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There is serious concern

that the NRC and the NPR will result in "direct victimisation of the underprivileged classes, particularly Dalits, adivasis, migrant labourers, nomadic communities and the countless undocumented people who, after having been recognised as voters for more than 70 years, will sud-

denly run the risk of becoming stateless and candidates for detention camps," it said.

There has been widespread discontent and open protests throughout the country and even abroad against the CAA, NRC and NPR, which are "forecasting a systematic erosion of va-

lues, principles and rights" that have been guaranteed to all citizens in the Constitution, the release said. Eminent citizens, including top intellectuals and legal luminaries, have taken a studied and unequivocal stand against the laws, it noted.

"We have always taken great pride that our beloved country is a secular, sovereign, socialist, pluralistic and democratic republic," the church said. The very fact that the CAA uses religion goes against the secular fabric of the country, it said.

"It goes against the spirit and heritage of our land which, since time immemorial, has been a welcoming home to all, founded on the belief that the whole world is one big family," it said.

However, Mr. Sawaikar questioned the Archbishop's reasons for opposing the Act and tweeted, "Archbishop says that #CAA should be withdrawn as it is being opposed. My question is Why? When Crores of people are supporting #CAA, including Goans. (sic)"

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IN BRIEF



'Film fraternity not part of capital decision'

VIJAYAWADA

Former president of the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce Daggubati Suresh Babu said the decision of the Andhra Pradesh government to shift the capital to Visakhapatnam is a political one. "The Telugu film industry has not taken part in a political decision," he said.

Adivasi JAC to organise public meet on Feb. 12

VISAKHAPATNAM

The Adivasi Joint Action Committee (JAC) will be organising a public meet — 'Adivasi Aathmagourava Sabha' — at the Government Junior College Grounds in Paderu, Andhra Pradesh, on February 12, for the proper implementation of rights and Acts safeguarding tribals, said district convenor of JAC Ramarao Dora.

Bond rule in Bengaluru draws fire

Police say it is meant to make the organisers of protests more responsible

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU

Several organisations, which are up in arms against the Bengaluru police's decision to have them sign indemnity bonds of up to ₹10 lakh as a precondition for permission to stage protests, are planning to challenge this in court. The move has been criticised as a "clampdown on the fundamental right of legitimate and peaceful assembly and dissent".



Raising their voice: Various organisations holding a protest at the Town Hall in January. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

The police have issued notices to organisers of protests seeking bonds under Section 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. This gives powers to the magistrates to seek a bond from a person they have information that will likely commit a breach of peace.

Earlier, the police used to seek a bond of up to ₹10,000 and only in special cases. But four months ago, when a rally caused large-scale damage

to public property, the order was amended to allow for a bond up to ₹10 lakh.

"The practice instituted by the city police also violates the law," claimed Mai-treyi Krishnan, an advocate with Manthan Law and an activist taking part in several anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests adding that it violates Section 107 of the CrPC.

"The law clearly states that the magistrate must

have got information that the person will likely commit an offence, and the magistrate before asking for such a bond must have sufficient grounds to proceed. But the police have made signing these bonds a pre-requisite for permission to protest in an arbitrary fashion."

Protesters allege that the police have not given copies of these bonds to even the signatories, and an RTI application demanding the

same has gone unanswered. "The action by the police creates a dangerous false equivalence between holding a democratic protest to breach of peace and committing an offence," said activist Vinay Sreenivasa, who recently signed two bonds of ₹10 lakh seeking permission to organise anti-CAA protests.

"Several students are organising protests, many for the first time in their lives. Obviously, they fear signing such bonds. Several of them have taken a step back from organising protests because of this," he said.

Defended their decision, DCP (Central) Chetan Singh Rathore said the bond is only an undertaking and neither involves paying up any money nor giving any guarantee. "It dissolves itself if there is no violence or damage to public property by the protesters," he said.

Temple singer alleges caste bias

Devaswom Board seeks report even as he moves court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

An alleged incident of caste discrimination against a So-panam singer at Sree Karthyayani Bhagavathy Temple, Cheranalloor, is snowballing into a rift between the temple advisory committee and the Cochin Devaswom Board, which manages the temple.



Vinil Das

so faced similar discrimination from the advisory committee members.

However, O. Chandrasekharan, the former president of the advisory committee, denied any instance of caste discrimination against the artist.

Meanwhile, board president A.M. Mohanan conceded that there existed some conflicts between the artiste and the committee. A report had been sought on the issue, he said.

Economic, caste quota in temple board

K.S. SUDHI

Opening the doors of the Guruvayur Devaswom for Dalits, Other Backward Community members, and economically backward Hindus, caste and economic reservations will be introduced in the recruitment to the temple board.

The Kerala Devaswom Recruitment Board has invited applications to fill 14 posts. Reservation principles would be applied in the selection process. However, the posts of temple priests will remain out of bounds for the recruitment board. This is the first time that reservation is being introduced in the recruitment to the Devaswom.

RSS ideologue passes away

Parameswaran promoted ideology of integral humanism

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOZHIKODE

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideologue P. Parameswaran, who breathed his last at Ottappalam in Palakkad early on Sunday, had set in motion the ideology of integral humanism in the 1950s when the intellectual and political space in Kerala was dominated by the Communist Party of India and the Congress.

The 93-year-old was widely influenced by the political philosophy propounded by Deendayal Upadhyaya of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), the forerunner of the BJP.

Often referred to as 'Parameswarji' even by his detractors, Mr. Parameswaran



People paying homage to RSS ideologue P. Parameswaran in Kochi.

him. But his charisma cut across all political barriers.

Mr. Parameswaran was honoured with Padma Vibhushan, the country's second highest civilian award, in 2018 and Padma Shri in 2004. He was a writer, poet, researcher, orator and debater. He wrote with confidence and eagerness of a pundit taking on the likes of EMS Namboodiripad, M.N. Govindan Nair and N.E. Balaram.

His ideas were based on cultural nationalism and spiritualism that knowingly or unknowingly touched the conservative psyche of Keralites even as his adversaries accused him of fostering the Hindutva element.

Superintendent of Police (Internal Security), Kalaburagi, Arun Rangarajan began the protest around 5.30 p.m. Mr. Rangarajan told reporters that he was separated from his wife, also an IPS officer, and insisted he would continue the protest till he could meet his children. His dharna was continuing till the time of going to press.

SP protests outside wife's house

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

An IPS officer staged a sit-in outside his wife's house on Mount Carmel Road in Vasantha, Bengaluru, on Sunday evening, accusing her of not allowing him to meet their children.

The barge was carrying the rice to a vessel and the loss was estimated to be about ₹1 crore.

East Godavari SP Adnan Nayem Asmi said no casualties were reported.

18 rescued as barge sinks at Kakinada port

Accident occurred due to rough weather, police officer says, quoting the crew



Lost at sea: An image of the iron barge that sank at the Kakinada port early on Sunday. ■ S. RAMBABU

the accident due to rough weather. "The sarung [boatswain] and all other workers were rescued and brought to the shore," Mr. Rao said.

Salvage the barge

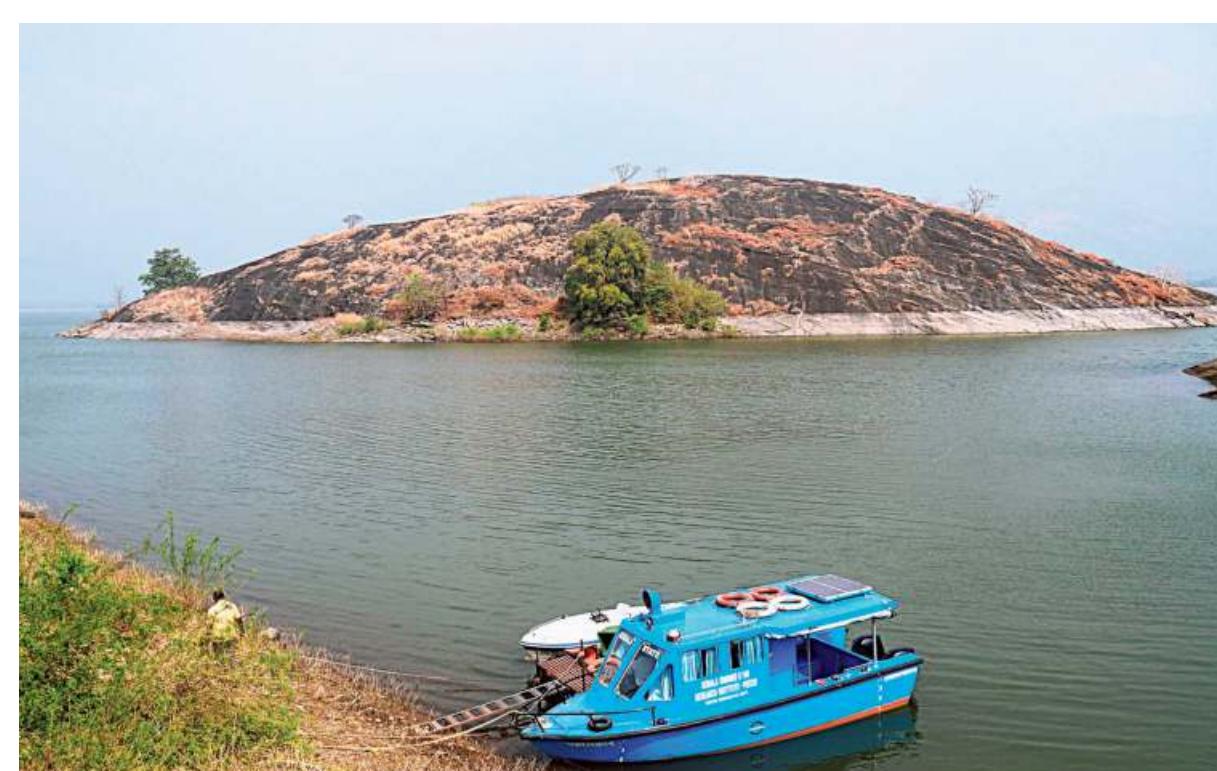
Steps are being taken to salvage the barge, the in-charge port officer added.

More than 80 barges were operating to shift goods to the vessels from the Kakinada port.

The barge owner lodged a complaint with the Kakinada Port police on Sunday evening, said Circle Inspector P. Srinivas Rao.

The police registered a case under Section 280 IPC (Rash Navigation of Vessel) and took up an investigation.

Golden opportunity



Twin benefit: A view of the Malampuzha dam catchment area at Palakkad. A Kerala Engineering research Institute study said around 30 million cubic metres of sediment is needed to be removed from the dam. It estimated that 8 million cubic metres of sand could be extracted, which would allow the government to earn ₹800 crore from the sale of river sand. ■ K.K. MUSTAFAH

TDP creating confusion over KIA issue: Gorantla

'Potential to damage State's image'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ANANTAPUR

"The TDP has misled Parliament on the KIA Motors issue. Through its media, the party has created an unwarranted doubt over the company's operations in Andhra Pradesh," Hindupur MP Gorantla Madhav has alleged.

Coming down on TDP national president N. Chandrababu Naidu, the YSRCP MP accused him of getting a negative report written in a new agency against the KIA Motors. Mr. Madhav also lashed out at Mr. Naidu for frequently changing his stance on the Legislative Council issue.

Addressing the media on Sunday, Mr. Madhav played a few video clippings to show how TDP MP K. Rammohan Naidu spoke in the Lok Sabha without properly reading the KIA Motors reaction put out by the

news agency on February 5 that clearly stated that it was not moving out of Andhra Pradesh.

"Without reading the report, the TDP tried to mislead the entire country. At a time when the TDP was supposed to protect the interests of the State, it was making baseless allegations damaging the image of the State," Mr. Madhav alleged.

Questioning them' About his interaction with the KIA officials, Mr. Madhav said he was only questioning the officials about jobs for locals, and added that he would continue to take up the cause of the local youth.

Responding to the criticism on his behaviour in the Lok Sabha, the MP said he had every right to stop anyone who tried to spread misinformation.

DRDO chief bats for indigenous tech

Space scientist launches electric scooter by start-up incubated at IIT-Hyderabad

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SANGAREDDY

The government wants to increase indigenous production in the defence sector up to 70% and reduce imports, said Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chairman G. Sathesh Reddy.

He, along with NITI Aayog member V.K. Saraswat, launched the EPluto 7G vehicle by Pure EV in the premises of the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IIT-H), on Sunday.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Reddy said they are looking for innovations in defence technology and are ready to support them.

Many start-ups have emerged in the past four years, he said while recalling



IIT-H Director B.S. Murty, NITI Aayog member V.K. Saraswat, DRDO chief G. Sathesh and Pure EV founder Nishant Dongari.

the instance of a young entrepreneur's material technologies idea.

The DRDO chief also mentioned that a proposal for 1,000 e-buses manufacturing plant near Hyderabad is under consideration.

Mr. Saraswat said during 2020-2021, five to six 2 GWh battery manufacturing

join hands with the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI).

Pure EV CEO Rohit Vadhera said EPluto 7G has a range of 116 km per full charge and runs with a maximum speed of 60 kmph. Battery warranty is for 40,000 km.

He said the company presently has 50 outlets and they are going to increase it to 200 by the end of this year. The vehicle has been designed to suit Indian terrain and weather conditions.

Nishant Dongari, IIT-H associate professor and founder of Pure EV, said the battery technology was patented and they have state-of-the-art facilities for the assembly and testing of the lithium battery packs. He also advised Pure EV to

Kerala mulls Vigilance cell for Health

Wing will monitor private practice by doctors and crack down on quackery

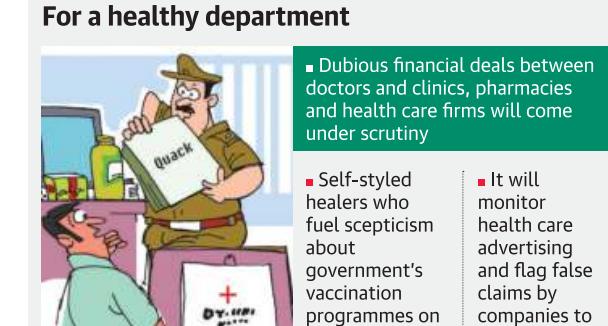
KERALA BUREAU

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government is reportedly mulling over a proposal to set up a Vigilance wing in the Health Department. By some official accounts, a police officer is likely to head the unit.

Optimally, the Vigilance wing will detect private practice by medical education service doctors, crack down on quackery and unearth ethically dubious financial relationships, if any, between State doctors and diagnostic clinics, pharmacies and health care firms in the private sector. It will also monitor health care advertising and flag false claims by health care companies to mass-market drugs without a doctor's prescription.

For a healthy department



■ Many doctors object to the 'government singling out doctors for intrusive vigilance inspections.'

departments, like the KSEB or the LSGD, have Vigilance cells to look into complaints. The medical community is a very sensitive one. However, still, there are occasions when more than an internal inquiry might be called for," he said.

He said there were complaints against doctors regarding the violation of private practice ban and matters involving medico-legal issues. The proposed Vigilance cell would be under the Home Department and headed by a police officer, Mr. Khobragade said.

But, the proposal appears not to have gone down well with the medical community. Many have objected to the government singling out doctors for intrusive vigilance inspections.

IN BRIEF

**Gandhi's statue desecrated in Jharkhand**

A statue of Mahatma Gandhi, erected here in 1948, has been desecrated by miscreants, officials said on Sunday. The statue was built at the Gandhi Ghat by the bank of the Konar river where ashes of Gandhiji were immersed. "The statue at Kumhartoli locality has been damaged in the night of February 8. A new statue will be erected there soon," Hazaribag Deputy Commissioner Bhuvanesh Pratap Singh said. PTI

Ahmedabad factory fire toll rises to 7, say police

The death toll in the Saturday's cloth factory fire here in Gujarat mounted to seven on Sunday with the recovery of two more charred bodies, police said. The police also booked six officials of the factory, under the Section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and other sections of the IPC, and arrested three of them on Sunday. A huge fire erupted at the Nadan denim factory in Naron on Saturday. PTI

M.P. villagers set ablaze bus involved in accident

Villagers in Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday set ablaze a bus after it hit a motorcycle killing two people and injuring one, the police said. The incident took place near Dodwala village on Khandwa-Indore Road, said sub-divisional officer of police K.P. David. Mayabi and her nephew Shiram were killed, while her husband Akhilesh was injured when the bus hit their vehicle from the rear. PTI

A record in West Bengal madrasah exam

Close to 18% of the 70,000 students expected to take the school-leaving exam are Hindus

SUVOJIT BAGCHI

KOLKATA

A record number of Hindu students are among the nearly 70,000 expected to sit for the school-leaving examination of the West Bengal Madrasah Board from Monday.

Nearly 18% of the students registered for the High Madrasah examination, or Standard X examination, are Hindus. In 2019, 12.77% of the students who appeared for the examination were non-Muslim, said Abu Taher Kamruddin, president of the West Bengal Madrasah Education Board.

"In the past couple of years, we are witnessing a 2%-3% rise in the number of students appearing for the examination," he said. But the figure usually comes

**More takers:** The Madrasah education follows the Secondary Education Board's syllabus almost entirely. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

down "a little" because not all the registered students will sit for the examination, he told *The Hindu*.

"Even then, the final figure is expected to be 2-3%

more than last year's," he added.

A large number of students have enrolled themselves in madrasahs up to Class X, challenging the mis-

conception that only Muslim students study in these institutions.

"In Purulia, Birbhum and Bankura districts, we have four big madrasahs, where non-Muslim students outnumber the Muslim students," Mr. Kamruddin said.

The madrasahs follow the Secondary Education Board's syllabus "almost entirely".

Streams of education

The school education under the Madrasah Board has two streams: the High Madrasah, where Arabic is optional, and Senior Madrasah, which teaches theology.

"The non-Muslims mainly enrol themselves in High Madrasah as it follows the Secondary Board's syllabus,"

Mr. Kamruddin said.

An observer of primary education said the number of students under the Secondary Board is huge, a reason enough for parents to admit their children to schools under the Madrasah Board, especially in rural areas.

There are over 600 government-funded Madrasahs in the State. They were studied in the past by experts from across the world for their unique characteristics. One of them is to admit girls.

"Last year, a little less than 60% students, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who appeared for the examination, were girls," Mr. Kamruddin said.

Experts say the drop-out rate among the boys, however, remains very high.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 1800 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Cold wave conditions very likely in isolated places over Jharkhand, Odisha.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	-	27.7	16.4	Kozhikode	-	35.4	22.8
Bhubaneshwar	-	26.8	12.4	Kurnool	-	32.7	22.8
Aizawl	-	18.6	8.1	Lucknow	-	24.2	8.6
Allahabad	-	25.4	7.8	Madurai	-	34.2	22.6
Bengaluru	-	00.0	0.0	Mangalore	-	32.9	19.6
Bhopal	-	31.6	18.2	Mumbai	-	32.4	18.4
Bhubaneswar	04.4	20.6	15.0	Mysuru	-	21.4	7.4
Chandigarh	-	19.8	0.6	Patna	-	23.3	8.4
Chennai	-	31.5	23.2	Port Blair	-	30.6	22.9
Coimbatore	-	32.6	21.8	Puducherry	-	31.4	23.2
Dehradun	-	23.0	0.4	Pune	-	28.2	16.6
Gangtok	-	13.2	0.4	Raipur	00.6	23.6	13.5
Goa	-	30.4	18.1	Ranchi	-	23.2	0.7
Guwahati	-	27.8	13.0	Shillong	-	14.7	6.6
Hubballi	-	31.0	14.0	Shimla	-	15.2	0.1
Hyderabad	04.1	23.4	9.0	Srinagar	-	00.0	0.0
Imphal	-	16.0	11.6	Tiruchi	-	33.7	21.9
Jaipur	-	22.0	0.7	Vijayawada	00.1	27.8	22.4
Kochi	-	32.8	24.4	Visakhapatnam	00.4	28.0	21.0
Kolkata	00.1	26.3	15.6				

(Rainfall in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	42	.52	29	-	-	114
Bengaluru	-	.45	99	.176	.192	■■■
Chennai	27	.18	65	.46	.18	■■■■■
Delhi	05	.34	30	.361	.251	■■■■■
Hyderabad	02	.59	43	.113	.95	■■■■■
Kolkata	17	.43	20	.292	.194	■■■■■
Lucknow	07	.64	48	.316	-	■■■■■
Mumbai	16	.84	22	.76	.158	■■■■■
Pune	72	.21	70	.90	.87	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	10	.23	42	.48	.52	■■■■■

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 306 indicating a hazardous level of pollution. In contrast, Visakhapatnam recorded a healthy AQI score of 34.

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.

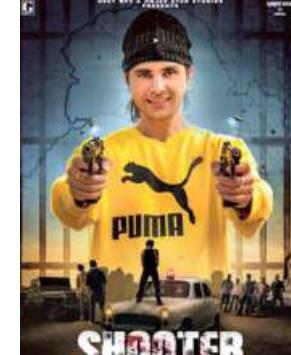
PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Punjab bans *Shooter* for 'promoting violence'

Film based on life of gangster Kahlwan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH



The movie's trailer was released on January 18.

radical.

The DGP had been asked to look into the role of the promoters, directors and actors.

GRP constable carries man to ambulance on shoulder

Policeman realises stretcher would take time to arrive



bearers were around and he was in too much pain. I picked him up on my shoulders and took him to the ambulance, which was standing outside the railway station. He was rushed to Rajawadi Hospital," Mr. Gawli said.

Mr. Gachhe was admitted to the medical intensive care unit, where doctors said he would be kept under observation for a few days.

"When Mr. Gachhe was brought in, his blood pressure was normal and no untoward symptoms were seen. The patient is stable," a doctor said.

Mumbai exhibition to trace history of Air India

Photographs of the national carrier through the years will be on display from February 13 to 16

JHELUM BHATTACHARYA

MUMBAI

Air India might be on the block, but the rich history it carries will be the focus of *Maharaja of the Skies – An Indian Heritage*, a pictorial exhibition on the journey of India's national carrier.

Organised by the Society for Culture and Environment, the three-day exhibition will be held at the Nehru Centre in Worli between February 13 and 16. The event will be inaugurated by Air India Chairman and Managing Director Ashwani Lohani.

Meera Das, secretary of the Society for Culture and Environment, who has curated the exhibition, said there

**Glimpse of the past:** There will be 125 panels displaying Air India's archived photographs. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

would be 2,200 photographs and eight posters on display. These include the Air India calendar being created.

The exhibition will have 10 sections, namely The Beginning, JRD, Art Collection, Fleet and Engineering, Service Mission, Maharajah, Booking Offices, Advertising and Promotion, Inflight Services, and Cargo. There will be 125 panels displaying Air India archived photographs.

Among the photographs on display will be those from a wedding that took place on an aircraft.

In-flight wedding

"Visuals from an in-flight wedding arranged by jeweller Laxman Popley in 1994 as a gift to his son and daughter-in-law will be on display. The aircraft was beautifully decorated and the guests were given specially-designed tickets and boarding passes. All this will be there for visitors to see," said Utta Parikh, a former management trainee who went on to retire as deputy commercial director of advertising and promotions and product de-

velopment, Air India. Ms. Parikh is helping in bringing out the national carrier's history through this exhibition.

Post the wedding, the airline presented free tickets to the newly-weds to Switzerland. Also on display will be photos of dresses designed by the late Roshan Kalapse, who designed crew outfits with a pink theme to represent Jaipur. For her work, Kalapse was gifted a ticket to London and back. Ms. Parikh said artist B. Prabha had done a series of paintings on Indian Women as a theme in 1956. The airline bought these paintings for ₹87.50 with an idea to promote them on the menu cards.

Bareilly gets back its 'jhumka' at last

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BAREILLY

Jhumka and Bareilly became synonymous after a 1966 chart-buster on the jewellery in which actor Sadhana gave a feisty dance performance. The city has finally got a fanciful 14-ft 'jhumka', embellished with colourful stones and the city's famous 'zari' embroidery, installed and is expected to be a major attraction for visitors.

The Asha Bhosle song *Jhumka gira re, Bareilly ki bazaar mein* immortalised the connection between the city and the piece of je-



A view of the 14ft high 'jhumka', 'Bareilly ka Jhumka.'

CM YK

niche, prompting the Bareilly Development Authority to conceive the project.

Unveiling the structure, Union Minister and Bareilly MP Santosh Gangwar said visitors would be able to associate the landmark 'jhumka' in the city with the evergreen song.

"I had never been here in the past. But I have definitely heard *Jhumka gira re*," he said. He recalled another Bhoj



Searching for a solution

While the new accord empowers Bodos, questions about an enduring peace remain

New Delhi's third attempt at conflict resolution with Assam's Bodos came out of the blue. The State had been more in the news for the sustained protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, one that pre-dates the pan-India ferment after the Bill's passage in Parliament. The signing of the peace accord on January 27 shifted attention after the Prime Minister had to abort two planned trips to Guwahati for a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on December 15 and the inauguration of the Khelo India Games on January 10. The new deal offers more hope than the 1993 and 2003 accords; some of the most potent factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland that had stayed away from earlier agreements are now on board. More significantly, the stakeholders have agreed that the updated political arrangements would remain confined to the realm of wider autonomy within the State of Assam, giving statehood and Union Territory demands a final burial. The generous terms promise an expanded area to be renamed as Bodoland Territorial Region, a ₹1,500-crore development package, and greater contiguity of Bodo-populated areas. There is also an offer of general amnesty for militants, with heinous crimes likely to be benignly reviewed, and ₹5 lakh each to the families of those killed during the Bodo movement – it claimed nearly 4,000 lives. On a success scale, the agreement falls somewhere between the Naga framework agreement of August 2015, shrouded in secrecy, and the January 16 Bru settlement to permanently settle around 34,000 people displaced from Mizoram in 1997 in Tripura. While it empowers Bodos, the question of an enduring peace remains moot.

With newer claimants to a share of spoils, the current bonhomie could be severely tested when the expanded Bodoland Territorial Council goes to the polls soon. It has been dominated since inception in 2003 by the Bodoland Peoples Front, comprising former Bodo Liberation Tigers cadre, but the new batches of surrendered militants as well as the All Bodo Students' Union intend to enter the fray. Of greater concern are inter-tribal and community ties. The Bodos comprise not more than 30% of the population in the BTR region, and the central munificence has deepened the insecurity among Koch Rajbongshis, Adivasis and Muslims. The politics of deferring to such identity-based movements is part of an old playbook of internal security in the Northeast – the Bru solution betrays shades of it, and one can trace it back to the Mizo insurgency and Laldenga becoming the Chief Minister of Mizoram. The Kokrajhar MP, a non-Bodo, has appealed to the government to ensure that a Bodo solution does not engender a non-Bodo problem. The accord's success will lie in the stakeholders working out a power-sharing arrangement in the proposed BTR that privileges equity over hegemony.

Cat conundrum

India misses its cheetahs, but the priority must be to preserve the existing species

The Supreme Court's order enabling the introduction of exotic cheetahs to an Indian habitat on an experimental basis has naturally led to renewed enthusiasm among wildlife lovers, who see in it a potential bulwark against creeping pressures on habitats. As a graceful animal that was hunted and extirpated in the country in the 20th century, the cat has periodically inspired campaigns for a fresh introduction mainly inspired by the nationalistic sense of loss. Remarkably, the antiquity of the high-speed hunter that formed part of Mughal hunting groups has been a matter of scientific debate, with much literature tracing the origins of the Asiatic cheetah to about 200,000 years ago, and one recent hypothesis arguing, in contrast, that it appears to be a relatively modern alien import to India. With a group surviving in Iran, there is growing interest in preserving the Asian population. Whatever its origins, it is illogical to expect that a new population, whether from Africa or Iran, will fare better today than in the past. It is worth recalling that the same court observed in its 2013 order restraining the Environment Ministry from importing African cheetahs into Kuno, Madhya Pradesh, that there are many seriously threatened Indian species such as the lion, the Great Indian Bustard, Bengal florican, the dugong, and Manipur brow-antlered deer which deserve immediate conservation action.

Any move to rewild India's threatened natural spaces with cheetahs, which require large grassland ranges, should consider the viability of such a programme. Man-animal conflicts is an area of concern, as a growing human population lives cheek by jowl with tigers, leopards and long-ranging creatures such as elephants. While the Court has appointed an expert committee to guide and direct the experiment proposed by the National Tiger Conservation Authority, it needs a broader scientific inquiry into the added pressures that a small group of introduced predators will impose on an ecosystem, crucially on the prey base that currently sustains tigers and leopards. Any attempt at expensive rewilding will be negated by parallel efforts to liberalise environmental clearances for extractive industries in and around forests. Material extraction including minerals is going on close to protected areas, and fresh roads are sought to be built through even tiger territory, making pristine rewilding an incongruous concept. Moreover, cheetahs are genetically fragile and lose cubs in a litter prematurely, affecting the establishment of a viable population. Restoring ecology and diverse species cannot be a serious goal in the absence of iron-clad protections to existing parks, sanctuaries, migratory corridors, and buffer areas. Preserving wild spaces with surviving species should be the first order priority.

A nation for the persecuted

India's dismal treatment of the Rohingya must lead to a movement for an inclusive state, with an acceptable refugee law



HARSH MANDER

In his historic address to the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893, Swami Vivekananda declared, "I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth." It is ironical that a political party which conspicuously proclaims its allegiance to Swami Vivekananda has restricted by law, about 127 years later, citizenship to people on the grounds of both religion and nation.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019, or CAA, 2019, passionately contested by people across the country, by placing these filters of religion and nation, reminds us urgently of the moral imperative of an expansive and humane refugee law. This must conform to what is finest in India's civilisational ethos, and to the morality of India's Constitution. This urgency is underlined further by the decision, in October 2018, of the Indian executive to send back seven Rohingya men – the Supreme Court of India refused to stop their deportation – who had been detained in Assam since 2012, to Myanmar.

Looking back, it is pertinent to ask why Jawaharlal Nehru, an international statesperson and a leading moral voice in the community of nations, refused to sign the 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Scholars suggest that whereas he was committed to the principles enshrined in the Convention, he was unwilling to legally bind the country to its obligations.

The Convention first defines refugees as persons fleeing persecu-

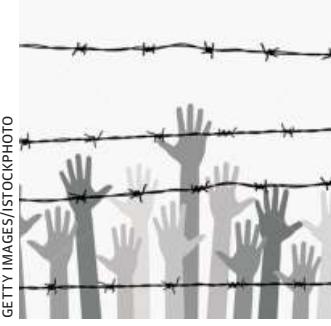
tion on grounds of race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion. Refugees get legal rights, most important of which are "non-refoulement", which prevents states from sending back refugees to persecution in their home countries. They also get secondary rights, such as to education, work and property.

Policy and discrimination

India has long argued that even without signing the Convention, in practice it is one of the leading refugee-receiving countries. Refugees include Sri Lankan Tamils, Tibetans from China, Chin minorities from Burma/Myanmar, and Hindus from Bangladesh and Pakistan. It may be legitimately asked that if in practice India has been hospitable to refugees, why does it need a refugee law which conforms to the Refugee Convention?

The answer lies in discrimination in the recognition of refugees and the award of citizenship, embedded sometimes in laws and rules, and at other times in official practice. These include the morally indefensible, indeed shameful decision of the Indian government to send back Rohingyas to conditions which the International Court of Justice has recently deemed to be genocidal, and changes in passport rules even prior to the passage of the CAA which in effect discriminated between people on the basis of their religion.

There are many problems with Indian law relating to refugees. The first of these is that our law does not distinguish between "foreigners" and "refugees". This means that refugees depend on state discretion, indeed "benevolence" rather than inherent rights. The second is that these assume that the executive will act on principles of humanism and non-discrimination. This may have been true of an India led by Nehru. Go-



vernments which followed him have had mixed records. It is certainly not true of a government as we have today which is driven by right-wing ideology, which is hostile to Muslims, and which believes that India should be the natural home of persecuted Hindus, but not Muslims.

The Rohingya case

In the absence of explicit recognition in Indian law of the category of refugees, or of their legally binding rights, even the guarantees of fundamental rights to equality and non-discrimination and humanitarian obligations did not prevent India from violating the core principle of non-refoulement, of not sending back a person to situations of persecution, such as those faced by Rohingyas. Let us rewind to the litigation in India's Supreme Court, challenging the government's proposed deportation of seven Rohingya in 2018. When seven repatriated Rohingya men were only hours away from the border with Myanmar, rights activists who had just come to know of this, made a dramatic urgent intervention in the Court, pleading that their being thrown mercilessly into a genocidal situation be stopped immediately.

The Supreme Court bench, which included the then Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi, refused to stay their deportation, basing its ruling primarily on a brief Union government affidavit which claimed that Myanmar had

accepted the refugees as "citizens" and the men had orally agreed to be repatriated. The Court unconscionably refused to stop the deportation despite the transparent unreliability of these claims, since the men did not have access to legal counsel nor to the UNHCR to determine whether their consent was freely expressed. Also, that they may have chosen the risks only because the only option they were given to deportation was to indefinitely remain in detention. The media later reported that these men had been detained in Myanmar for "illegal entry" and had been given the controversial National Verification Cards (that does not recognise their religion or ethnicity), not citizenship. We do not know what happened to them since.

Message from the ICJ verdict

The moral culpability of these decisions, both of the Union government and the top court, are further illuminated by the recent unanimous judgment of the International Court of Justice on January 23 that concludes that the Rohingya face genocidal intent. The case against Myanmar was brought to the international court by a small west African Muslim nation, The Gambia. It rejected Myanmar's civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi's testimony on behalf of her government, where she described the allegations brought by The Gambia as "an incomplete and misleading factual picture" of the prevailing conditions in Rakhine State.

The world court warned the Myanmar military against any conspiracy to commit genocide, and directed Myanmar authorities to take steps to protect its minority Rohingya population from genocide.

For the Indian government and the Supreme Court, this judgment should be a moment for both introspection and atonement. But

this it will not be. The government has never referred to the Rohingya as refugees but as illegal immigrants, security threats and potential terror threats. They have not been included as eligible for citizenship under the 2019 amendment, because of their religion and country of origin. Instead, they are often the subject of communally charged political stigmatization by the ruling party, amid calls for the expulsion from India of the desperately impoverished tiny population of around 40,000 Rohingyas; they are subsisting by picking rags and lowest-end labour in dismal shanties unsupported by the Indian state.

For a framework

India's treatment of the Rohingya, and the discriminatory CAA must compel Indians committed to India as a humane inclusive country to fight not just for the abrogation of the CAA-NRIC-NPR trinity – CAA-National Register of Indian Citizens-National Population Register – but also for India to bring in a refugee law which conforms to international conventions. This would, first, recognise eligible undocumented immigrants as refugees, based on evidence determined by due process of their persecution in their home countries. This would also assure them a set of binding rights. The most important of these is the guarantee that they would not be forced to return to the conditions of persecution, threatening their lives and liberty, which they escaped. The second is that they would be assured lives of dignity within India, with education, health care and livelihoods. Only then would India become the country which Swami Vivekananda was so proud of: a haven to the persecuted of the world, untainted by discrimination based on religion or nation.

Harsh Mander is a human rights worker, writer and teacher

Victim justice is two steps forward, one step back

Victim participation needs to be strengthened by providing private counsels with a greater say in the trial conduct



G.S. BAJPAI & ANKIT KAUSHIK

The recent judgment in *Rekha Murarka vs The State Of West Bengal* (November 2019) has held that the victims' private counsel cannot orally examine or cross-examine the witnesses. A deeper examination of the Court's reasoning shows that the judgment is bound to have serious consequences for the victims' right to participation. It is a setback to the developing jurisprudence on victim justice.

Under our criminal justice system, victims find themselves removed from the proceedings. Their identities are reduced to being mere witnesses. The harm they suffer is reduced to being aggravating or mitigating factors at the time of sentencing. With the state appropriating their victimisation, the actual victims become mere stage props in a larger scheme.

In 1996, the 154th Law Commission Report suggested a paradigm shift in India's criminal justice system towards a victim-centric notion of justice. The Code of Criminal Procedure(Amendment) Act, 2009 partially accepted this suggestion and granted some rights to the victims of crime. The Act introduced victims' right to a private counsel under Section 24(8). The Code of Criminal Procedure already allowed for pleaders engaged

by private persons to submit written arguments with the permission of the court under Sections 301(2) and 302 allowed a person to conduct the prosecution with permission of the court. These sections were read together to partially secure the victims' right to participation.

Some hits but more misses

A slow but steady progress has been made towards securing justice for victims in this country. In the case of *Delhi Domestic Working Women's Forum v. Union of India* (1994), the SC called for the extension of the right to legal assistance to victims of sexual assault at the pre-trial stages. In *Malikarjun Kodagali (Dead) ... vs The State Of Karnataka* (2018), the

Court accepted that under the criminal justice system, the rights of the accused far outweigh the rights of the victim. The Supreme Court not only called for the introduction of a victim impact statement in order to guarantee participation of the victim in the trial proceedings, but also reinstated the victims' right to appeal against an adverse order.

Despite these advances, the scheme of victim participation remains far removed from the ideals embedded in the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power; India is a signatory. The Declaration requires that the views and concerns of victims should be allowed and considered at all appropriate stages without prejudice to the accused. Presently, the victims' advocate has an extremely limited role to play wherein he "as-

sists" the prosecutor rather than represent the interests of the victim before the court. This is manifest from Section 301(2) under which the advocate can only air his views and concerns, not to the court, but to the prosecutor and must act under his directions thereafter.

The only substantial opportunity provided to a private counsel is after the closing of evidence when written arguments may be submitted to the court only after seeking the permission of the court. This stage, after the closing of evidence therefore, is the only stage legislatively recognised as "appropriate". In contrast, the proceedings under the International Criminal Court (ICC) provides for victim participation at the stage of first, a challenge to the jurisdiction of the ICC; second, framing of charges; third, opening and closing statements; fourth, making a written submission wherever the personal interests of the victims are affected; and finally, for presenting witnesses to give evidence on issues relating to the personal interests of the victims.

A lost chance

Effective and meaningful participation still eludes victims of crime. The Supreme Court in *Rekha*



Murarka has missed the opportunity to forward the jurisprudence on victim justice and rectify the lacunae in our laws. Instead, the judgment goes against the jurisprudential current specified above.

Indeed, the victim's right to participation cannot be secured by restricting the rights of the accused. The right to participation, however, can be realised at appropriate stages without any such pre-judice. Instead of exploring such a normative balance between the rights of the accused and victim, the judgment limits the rights of the victim by proceeding on a flawed understanding of the role and responsibilities of the victim's advocate. According to the judgment, a victim's advocate cannot be allowed the right to participate because, first, insistence by the victim's counsel to examine a witness deliberately left out by the prosecution may weaken the prosecution's case; second, the trial will derivate into a "vindictive battle" between the victim's counsel and the accused; and third, a lack of experience on the part of the victim's counsel may lead to lapses.

The success of prosecution is dependent largely upon the victim's participation in the trial. The primary role and responsibility of the victim's advocate therefore, is to represent the personal interests of the victim by cooperating with the prosecution.

Instead, the court assumes that unless the victim's advocate is subservient to the prosecutor, either the prosecutor will be rendered ineffective or the victim's advocate

will take over the role of the prosecutor.

The judgment further assumes that prosecutions effectively take the victim's needs into account and ignores the fact that the need for a private counsel arises precisely because intentional or unintentional prosecutorial lapses directly lead to injustice to the victims. The press is replete with instances of "failure of prosecution" leading to dismissal of the case or acquittals. Ingeniously, the court expects the victim's counsel to make the prosecutor aware of any aspects that have not been addressed in the examination of witnesses or the arguments advanced by the public prosecutor. In the process, it assumes that the prosecutor will address such lapses.

In any event, under the role currently envisaged in our criminal justice system, the public prosecutor cannot sufficiently take into account the interests, needs and requirements of the victims. The need instead, is to strengthen victim participation by providing private counsels with a greater say in the conduct of the trial without prejudicing the interests of the accused. The cause of victim justice would be greatly served, if the Supreme Court decide to revisit its reasoning and assumptions to appropriately amend this provision in light of the above.

G.S. Bajpai is Professor and Chairperson of the Centre for Criminology and Victimology at the National Law University (NLU), Delhi. Ankit Kaushik is a Research Associate at the NLU. The views expressed are personal.

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.

AAP again?

This refers to the report, "Exit polls predict AAP's return in Delhi" (Feb. 9). If this turns out to be true, it will be a massive blow to the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah duo's arrogance and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Delhi campaign.

After realising that the Modi wave didn't work in the earlier Assembly polls, the BJP went back to its tried and trusted formula of aggressive polarisation, in a bid to win the Delhi election. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, on the other hand, kept the focus of his campaign on

his incumbent government's welfare model. The Delhi voters seem to have preferred water, power and jobs to citizenship based on religion. The BJP's carpet-bombing efforts may have proved unsuccessful.

S.S. PAUL,
Chakdaha, Nadia, West Bengal

J&K leaders' detention
The decision of the Central government to detain two former Chief Ministers of Jammu and Kashmir, Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah under the draconian Public Safety Act (PSA) is clearly a retrograde

step that will only aggravate the already volatile situation in the Valley that is already reeling under a clampdown imposed in the wake of the dilution of Article 370 (Editorial, "Extended folly," Feb. 8). The move clearly signals that the government has no intention of bringing even a shred of normalcy to the Valley. The detention of popular leaders, which is now into its seventh month, and the uncertainty about their future does not augur well for the erstwhile State's future.

C.V. ARAVIND,
Bengaluru

Selling stakes in LIC
Given the fact that LIC pays 5% of its surplus to the government every year, the Centre's move to list the company on the stock exchange is akin to slaying the goose that lays golden eggs (FAQ, "LIC stake sale," Feb. 9). Contrary to other public sector undertakings like BSNL and Air India, which have fallen on hard times, LIC is among the trusted brands in India. Whether the company would be allowed to rescue companies like ONGC in the future after its stakes go into private hands is anybody's guess. Hitherto,

LIC invested hugely on welfare projects linked to the fields of electricity, water, roads and housing. Post IPO, the company may not follow its motto of 'people's money for people's welfare'. The proposal to sell the family silver is bound to do more harm than good.

SYED SULTAN MOHIDDIN,
Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh

Impeachment process
The real objective of the Democrats in launching impeachment proceedings against U.S. President Donald Trump was to bring the fact of his abuse of

power to the notice of the American public (Editorial, "Trump moves on," Feb. 8). But, it seems they have failed in their endeavour, as evidenced by the findings of the pollsters that Mr. Trump's approval rating has actually gone up by a few points. This only shows that the American society is deeply divided along the party lines. Any Democratic candidate will now face an uphill task in the upcoming presidential election in November.

KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI,
Hyderabad

power to the notice of the American public (Editorial, "Trump moves on," Feb. 8). But, it seems they have failed in their endeavour, as evidenced by

Seeking a more progressive abortion law

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill doesn't do enough to secure women's choices and interests



AYUSHI AGARWAL

Recent reports have shown that more than 10 women die everyday due to unsafe abortions in India, and backward abortion laws only contribute to women seeking illegal and unsafe options. The Cabinet has recently approved the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 (MTP Bill, 2020) which will soon be tabled in Parliament. It seeks to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 (MTP Act) and follows the MTP Bills of 2014, 2017 and 2018, all of which previously lapsed in Parliament.

The MTP Act divides its regulatory framework for allowing abortions into categories, according to the gestational age of the foetus. Under Section 3, for foetuses that are aged up to 12 weeks, only one medical practitioner's opinion is required to the effect that the continuance of the pregnancy would pose a risk to the life of the mother or cause grave injury to her physical or mental health; or there is a substantial risk that if the child is born, it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped. But if the foetus is aged between 12 weeks and 20 weeks, at least two medical practitioners' opinions conforming to either of the two conditions are required.

The MTP Act also specifies that 'grave injury' may be explained as the anguish caused by a pregnancy arising out of rape, or the anguish caused by an unwanted pregnancy arising out of the failure of a contraceptive used by a married woman or her husband. Beyond 20 weeks, termination may be carried out where it is necessary to save the life of the pregnant woman.

Issues with the current law

Several issues arise from the current framework under the MTP Act. First, at all stages of the pregnancy, the healthcare providers, rather than the women seeking abortion, have the final say on whether the abortion can be carried out. This is unlike the



An official explaining the process of abortion using the manual vacuum aspirator at a hospital in Muzaffarpur, Bihar. ■ GETTY IMAGES

abortion laws in 67 countries, including Iceland, France, Canada, South Africa and Uruguay, where a woman can get an abortion 'on request' with or without a specific gestational limit (which is usually 12 weeks).

It is true that factors such as failure of contraceptives or grave injury are not required to be proved under the MTP Act. However, to get a pregnancy terminated solely based on her will, the woman may be compelled to lie or plead with the doctor. Thus, at present, pregnant women lack autonomy in making the decision to terminate their pregnancy, and have to bear additional mental stress, as well as the financial burden of getting a doctor's approval.

Restrictive interpretation

Second, the MTP Act embodies a clear prejudice against unmarried women. According to 'Explanation 2' provided under Section 3(2) of the Act, where a pregnancy occurs due to failure of any birth control device or method used by any "married woman or her husband", the anguish caused is presumed to constitute a "grave injury" to the mental health of the pregnant woman. While the applicability of this provision to unmar-

ried women is contested, there is always the danger of a more restrictive interpretation, especially when the final decision rests with the doctor and not the woman herself.

Third, due to advancements in science, foetal abnormalities can now be detected even after 20 weeks. However, the MTP Act presently allows abortion post 20 weeks only where it is necessary to save the life of the mother. This means that even if a substantial foetal abnormality is detected and the mother doesn't want to bear life-long care-giving responsibilities and the mental agony associated with it, the law gives her no recourse unless there is a prospect of her death.

In 2008, the Bombay High Court was petitioned by Hareesh and Niketa Mehta to allow them to abort their foetus that had been diagnosed with a heart defect in its 22nd week. While the case got nationwide attention, the Mehtas' plea was turned down, and Niketa Mehta eventually suffered a miscarriage in the 27th week of her pregnancy.

Several cases have followed since. Only in some of them has the Supreme Court allowed the termination of a pregnancy beyond 20

weeks, based on the advice by the Medical Board regarding the threat to the mother's life.

While the MTP Bill, 2020, is a step in the right direction, it still fails to address most of the problems with the MTP Act. First, it doesn't allow abortion on request at any point after the pregnancy. Second, it doesn't take a step towards removing the prejudice against unmarried women by amending the relevant provision. And finally, it enhances the gestational limit for legal abortion from 20 to 24 weeks only for specific categories of women such as survivors of rape, victims of incest, and minors. This means that a woman who does not fall into these categories would not be able to seek an abortion beyond 20 weeks, even if she suffers from grave physical or mental injury due to the pregnancy.

In case of foetal abnormality

However, the Bill does make the upper gestational limit irrelevant in procuring an abortion if there are substantial foetal abnormalities diagnosed by the Medical Board. This means that even if there is no threat to the mother's life, she would be able to procure an abortion as soon as a substantial foetal abnormality comes to light. While this is an important step and would have in the past helped many women who fought long battles in Court without recourse, it is crucial that it is accompanied by appropriate rules for the Medical Boards that guard against unnecessary delays, which only increase the risks associated with a late abortion.

The Supreme Court has recognised women's right to make reproductive choices and their decision to abort as a dimension of their personal liberty (*Mrs. X v. Union of India*, 2017) and as falling within the realm of the fundamental right to privacy (*K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, 2017). Yet, current abortion laws fail to allow the exercise of this right. While it is hoped that MTP Bill, 2020 will not lapse in Parliament like its predecessors, it is evident that it does not do enough to secure women's interests, and there is still a long road ahead for progressive abortion laws.

Ayushi Agarwal teaches at Jindal Global Law School

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Journalism in the time of an epidemic

Journalists should inform readers, not create panic



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

The web edition of this newspaper had an erroneous headline linking the novel coronavirus to a study on bats and bat-hunters in Nagaland.

The headline of the story in the print edition was: "Study on bats and bat-hunters of Nagaland comes under scanner" (February 3). Before the correction was made, the headline in the online version read, "Coronavirus: Wuhan institute's study on bats and bat-hunters in Nagaland to be probed". The report had nothing to do either with the novel coronavirus or with the research collaboration between India and China. Further, the headline was in antithesis to all the rules of reporting an epidemic. During an epidemic journalists should inform readers, not create unnecessary panic. Their work should not be the basis for wild conspiracy theories.

Problem with headline, infographic

Unfortunately the wrong headline in the web edition, along with an unrelated reference to coronavirus in the story, deflected attention from the epidemic. It also shifted focus from the issues that led to the probe on the team that studied the bats and bat-hunters in Nagaland. To make matters worse, the infographic alluded to secrecy, while the study itself is available as an open access article. The web edition was corrected with a disclaimer: "An earlier version of the headline of this article had mentioned coronavirus which is not directly linked to the story and also focused on Wuhan Institute, which is only one of the participants in the story. The headline has been suitably revised."

While readers can criticise the report for its shortcomings in the headline and the infographic, it is important to point out that *The Hindu* did try to contact the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS). As the report mentions, NCBS authorities were not available for an immediate response. On February 5, the newspaper carried a follow-up report that clarified the NCBS's position. It explained the relationship between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the study: "They were listed co-authors only because they supplied reagents. This is a standard practice for scientific authorship."

When the report on the study by the Tata

Institute of Fundamental Research, the NCBS and a few other foreign universities on the filovirus appeared, many readers raised pertinent questions. The guiding principle for a news ombudsman is to start from a position that all complaints are made in good faith and, equally, that no journalist comes to work to mislead readers. It means that journalists can err due to many reasons and it is the duty of the news organisations to effect visible mending when an error happens.

In the last four decades, journalists learned to distinguish between science communication and science journalism. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Dan Fagin has spoken about this crucial difference. "It's really any kind of communicating of science, and that can have all sorts of agendas. It can encourage people to become scientists, or encourage a particular policy, or advance the interests of whichever group is paying for the communication," he observed. Brooke Borel, an Adjunct Faculty of The Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at New York University, spelled out the difference clearly. She wrote: "Science journalists may write about science, but it's also our job to look beyond wonders, hypotheses and data. It is to look at the people doing the science and whether they have conflicts of interest, or trace where their money is coming from."

Role of the science editor

Reporters and sub-editors sometimes invoke these issues to justify references to unrelated subjects, which are topical at a given moment, in the name of providing context. The role of the science editor does not end with assigning stories to reporters. Some stories may lie in the intersection of science, technology and policy. Apart from checking the story for its facts and authenticity, the science editor must clear the headline, the second deck that summarises the story, and the accompanying infographic. The task cannot be left to the desk, which may not have the necessary domain expertise. This requirement is non-negotiable, irrespective of the platform in which the story appears.

On February 9, *The Hindu* carried a detailed explainer, "A window into novel coronavirus transmission", and an in-depth look at "How bats harbour several harmful viruses without falling sick". These reports worked because there were no unrelated references. Journalism at the time of an epidemic needs additional caution.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

Malawi at the crossroads

The Nairobi and Lilongwe rulings inspire optimism about the continent's democratic future

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAN

The annulment of last May's presidential elections by Malawi's constitutional court could have far-reaching consequences for the continent's democratic process, often marred by controversy over the political longevity of several leaders. Lilongwe's unanimous verdict has imposed a return to the status quo prior to the polls and a re-run of the vote within 150 days. The decision also means that President Peter Mutharika's former vice-president Saulos Chilima is to be reinstated in that position. Mr. Chilima finished a distant third in the May contest, heading the United Transformation Movement. The sensational ruling in the southern African state comes less than three years since the top court in Nairobi invalidated the re-election of President Uhuru Kenyatta and ordered a repoll within 60 days.

Many irregularities

Mr. Mutharika's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has been found complicit in widespread and systemic irregularities, which the Justices have opined compromised the integrity of the polls. Directly implicating the electoral commission, they noted that three-fourths of the tally sheets were not audited and correction fluid had been used extensively to tinker with the ballot, dubbed the Tipp-Ex election. Curiously, results were declared last May despite more than a hundred complaints of poll fraud registered with the Malawian electoral commission. The legal reversal is equally an embarrassment for international poll monitors who gave a clean chit to the authorities.

The court's other recommendation that parliament replace the electoral commission also has a ring of familiarity with the Kenyan situation following the 2017 polls. On that occasion, the opposition boycotted the October re-run, objecting to the absence of meaningful reforms to the electoral body that left President Kenyatta's ruling party to claim victory without a serious challenge.

The Lilongwe court was evidently troubled by the meagre proportion of the vote secured by Mr. Mutharika. Under the current first-past-the-post

system, Mr. Mutharika was declared winner, with just over 38% of the vote, against 35% for his rival Lazarus Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party. The court has therefore proposed a radical reform, requiring the nation's president to be elected in a runoff, if the winning candidate fails to garner more than 50% of the popular vote in the first instance. Such an alteration could potentially render Malawi's multi-party system far more credible and genuinely competitive.

The President's narrow margin of victory in a multi-cornered race, as well as the ruling party's poor showing in the National Assembly, winning just 63 out of the 193 seats, encouraged Mr. Chakwera and Mr. Chilima to challenge the results. Mr. Mutharika's 2014 first term election was similarly disputed by his predecessor Joyce Banda, but eventually resolved in his favour. The 79-year-old President's second-term bid last year was also resisted by sections within the DPP, including the widow of former President Bingu wa Mutharika, the incumbent's brother.

A crucial test

The recent legal setback is therefore likely to invigorate the President's detractors. Meanwhile, Mr. Mutharika, a former professor of law, has said that he will appeal the verdict, describing it as "a serious miscarriage of justice". The judgment also seems to have prompted calls for the courts to revisit the results of the National Assembly polls. The coming few weeks will thus prove to be a crucial test of judicial independence and legislative authority over the political executive in Malawi.

In the tense atmosphere following the historic 2017 verdict, an official in Kenya's electoral body fled the country, expressing doubts about a free and fair poll. Malawians would be wise to exercise caution and restraint in the circumstances. It is easy to exaggerate the importance of the recent legal landmark, given the widespread prevalence of one-party dominance in Africa. But the Nairobi and Lilongwe rulings inspire optimism about the continent's democratic future.

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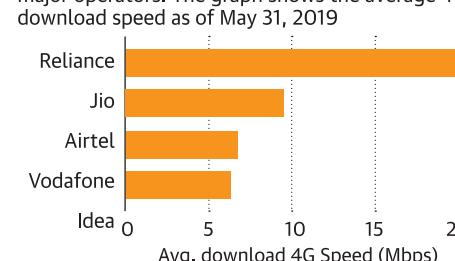
DATA POINT

Need for speed

As of December 2019, India ranked 128 among 140 countries in terms of average mobile Internet download speed. South Korea topped the index with an average download speed of 103.18 Mbps. In 27 of the 28 telecom circles in India, not even one operator offered a download speed of more than the global average (32.01 Mbps). Among the major telecom operators, Reliance Jio's 4G download speed was relatively the fastest. By *The Hindu Data Team*

Rank	Country	Speed (Mbps)
1	South Korea	103.18
2	UAE	86.77
3	Qatar	79.21
5	China	67.71
60	South Africa	31.36
78	Brazil	24.79
96	Russia	20.58
128	India	11.46
138	Algeria	7.88
139	Afghanistan	6.82
140	Palestine	6.17

Among operators | On an average, Jio's 4G download speed of 20.46 Mbps was the fastest among the four major operators. The graph shows the average 4G download speed as of May 31, 2019



Circles	Airtel	Idea	Jio	Vodafone
Andhra Pradesh	13.5	3.4	23.1	-
Assam	13	19.1	5.5	7.3
Bihar	7.1	6.6	34.4	-
Chennai	9.8	10	17.3	11.6
Delhi	11	-	13.8	7.2
Gujarat	6.6	9.4	22.8	8
Haryana	13.1	5.9	20.2	5.8
Himachal Pradesh	-	4.5	16.6	-
Jammu & Kashmir	12.7	7.1	9.3	-
Karnataka	8.3	4.9	18.5	4.4
Kerala	11.3	5.5	13.7	7.1
Kolkata	9.8	-	21.3	8.4
Madhya Pradesh	11.6	7.4	23.9	-
Maharashtra	11.2	5.8	19.8	6.5
Mumbai	9.6	5.2	12.7	7.4
Northeast	8.1	3	5.4	5.4
Odisha	11.6	7	22.7	13.7
Punjab	11.4	7	23.1	5.1
Rajasthan	9.3	5.4	25.7	5.6
Tamil Nadu	9.3	6	12.7	9.3
U.P. East	6.3	3.8	19.5	4
U.P. West	5.3	5.7	21.6	3.7
West Bengal	6.6	8	19.3	7.1

Source: speedtest

FROM PAGE ONE

Modi offers help to Xi to deal with virus outbreak

India has evacuated 645 citizens from Wuhan so far. All of them have tested negative for coronavirus.

The official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs had earlier said India was closely following the Chinese efforts to contain the outbreak.

"If required, we will be willing to extend all possible assistance to China," the spokesperson had said.

Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong on Wednesday said China was ready to work with India to strengthen communication and coordination, and to safeguard the health and safety of Indian citizens in China.

India's gesture came two days after Chinese President Xi Jinping held a telephone conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump about



A Chinese woman has her temperature checked in Beijing. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Beijing's preparedness to deal with the spread of the virus.

Mr. Trump had offered to assist China in dealing with the crisis. However, Mr. Xi said Beijing had mobilised nationwide resources and was committed to safeguarding the lives of the Chinese citizens as well as of nationals from other countries.

(With PTI inputs)

No delay in Delhi poll turnout data, says CEO

Mr. Singh said the data for each constituency had already been shared with candidates through their polling agents, as a consequence of which they "cannot be manipulated".

However, the officials could not reveal the number of votes cast after 6 p.m. or

the number of booths where polling went on after the deadline. They said data were being "culled out" and would be shared later.

Overall, the lowest turnout was in Delhi Cantonment, with 45.4%. The highest was in Balimaran, with 71.6%.

Cauvery delta to be declared a protected agriculture zone

VIGNESH VIJAYAKUMAR
SALEM

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Sunday announced that the Cauvery delta region would be declared a Protected Special Agriculture Zone as a step towards ensuring food security of the State.

The announcement was widely hailed by political parties and farmers' organisations, while the DMK termed it a "diversionary tactic".

At an official function at Thalaivasal in his native Salem district, Mr. Palaniswami said the State government would never give its approval for projects such as hydrocarbon exploration in the delta region.

"I am a farmer and the State government would never give permission for any project that would affect the livelihood of farmers... At Neduvusal, whatever project the Centre may introduce, it cannot be implemented without NOC from the State government," he announced.

Mr. Palaniswami said the State government would hold consultations with legal experts, and steps would be taken to enact special legislation.



Edappadi K. Palaniswami

gion. To ensure that agriculture is not affected, the Cauvery delta regions in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukkottai, Cuddalore, Ariyalur, Karur and Tiruchirappalli will be converted into a Protected Special Agriculture Zone," he implored.

He alleged that DMK leader T.R. Baalu, who had served as the Union Minister of State for Petroleum in 1996, when methane gas was found in the Rajasthan desert, chose to get the project implemented in Tamil Nadu in 2010.

The DMK government in January 2018 signed a memorandum of understanding with the Great Eastern Energy Corporation to dig borewells and conduct explorations for four years in the region, he charged.

Four-fold jump in Li-ion batteries imports since 2016, govt. tells LS

India lacks manufacturing capacity and is the world's largest importer

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

India has quadrupled its imports of lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries and more than tripled its import bill on the product, vital for powering a range of devices from cell-phones to electric vehicles, from 2016-2018, the Union Science Ministry said in the Lok Sabha last Friday.

Responding to a query, the Ministry said 175 million such batteries were imported in 2016, 313 million in 2017, 712 million in 2018 and

450 million from January 1, 2019, till November 30 of that year. The cost of these imports rose from \$383 million (₹2,600 crore approximately) in 2016 to \$727.24 million (₹5,000 crore) in 2017, \$1254.94 million (₹8,700 crore) in 2018 and \$929 million (₹6,500 crore) in 2019.

Indian manufacturers source Li-ion batteries from China, Japan and South Korea and the country is among the largest importers in the world.

Stone for stone, sword for sword: Raj Thackeray

At the end of rally, MNS chief declares support to CAA and NRC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Announcing his support to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Raj Thackeray on Sunday threatened those opposing these measures with retaliation through stones and swords.

"Today's march is an answer to those who have been organising protests against the CAA and the NRC. You will get a march as an answer to your march. But let me warn you, stones will be answered with stones and swords will be answered with swords," he said in an address to party workers at the Azad Maidan at the end of a march.

MNS leader Sandip Deshpande said workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) had also participated in the march.

"I have never understood the reason for Muslims prot-



Show of strength: MNS workers taking out a rally in Mumbai on Sunday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGIN

Sporting the party's new saffron flag on his right hand, Mr. Thackeray said that accepting non-Muslims from Pakistan and Bangladesh was nothing wrong, while supporting the CAA. "I have

criticised the BJP government for wrong deeds, but at the same time I have applauded its steps like scrapping of Article 370. The CAA is limited to giving citizenship to non-Muslims from

neighbouring countries, and there is nothing wrong in it," he said.

But he said the country could not sustain if illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries continued to re-

side here, hence a pan-India NRC must be implemented. "I will support it if you want to implement it here. The government is now saying it has not decided on the NRC. But if you want to do it, do it sternly," he said. India could not be seen as "dharma-shala", especially when many western countries were sending out illegal immigrants.

He called Pakistan a terror hub and pointed to the Mumbai blasts to drive home his support for the NRC.

Mr. Thackeray's rhetoric is similar to his 2008 speech which kicked off the party's violent attacks against north Indians in Mumbai and surrounding areas. It led to his arrest and filing of several cases against him. But the legal action helped his party in the 2009 Maharashtra Assembly election. The MNS won 13 seats in its debut, affecting the Shiv Sena's prospects in several urban seats.

India-Bangladesh rail link to be ready by 2021

Agartala-Akhaura line work under way

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The landmark rail line to connect the northeastern region with Bangladesh will be ready by the end of 2021, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Sunday.

Mr. Singh said the completion of the line between Agartala in Tripura and Akhaura in Bangladesh would pave the way for the first train to run from the northeastern region to Bangladesh on the eve of the 75th anniversary of India's independence in 2022.

The line between Agartala and Akhaura would be completed before the end of next year, he said.

Briefing journalists about some of the upcoming projects in the region, Mr. Singh, Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), said his Ministry would bear the cost of the 5.46-km track on the Indian side, and the cost of the 10.6-km track on the Bangladesh side was being borne by the Ministry of External Affairs.

The train to Bangladesh will be one of the most glorious achievements of recent years, he said.



The link will connect Gangasagar in Bangladesh to Nischintapur in India and from there to Agartala.

Land handed over

Mr. Singh said land had been bought and handed over to the executing agencies in both countries, and ₹580 crore had been sanctioned for the work on the Indian side. The soil condition on the Indian side is soft, therefore the latest technology was being used. Around 600 skilled workers were working round the clock to complete the work.

The train to Bangladesh will be one of the most glorious achievements of recent years, he said.

The court in its February 6 order, however, granted the petitioner liberty "to work out her remedy in accordance with law, including by making representation before the authorities concerned."

The Delhi High Court had

dismissed the plea in July 2019, saying the petitioner was effectively seeking the creation of a new offence under the head of 'retaliation', something which the Act has not provided.

'Plea misconceived'
The High Court had reasoned that courts cannot legislate. It had concluded that Ms. Thawani's plea was "fundamentally misconceived."

"Retaliation or victimisation are only the provocation for an act of assault. If an act of assault amounts to sexual harassment, it would anyway be punishable under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013. If it does not, it cannot be punishable under the Act, as it deals with only offences of a sexual nature," the High Court had reasoned.

JKLF's shutdown call hits life in Valley

Mobile Internet snapped; 2 journalists quizzed for publishing group's statement

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The authorities snapped the mobile Internet link in the Kashmir Valley on Sunday, as life was affected by the shutdown called by the banned Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and the Hurriyat to mark the seventh anniversary of the execution of Parliament attack case convict Afzal Guru.

The police have registered a First Information Report (FIR) against the JKLF for calling the shutdown and circulating a statement on it.

Two journalists were also questioned for around five hours on Saturday for publishing the statement three days ago.

It's the first time since militancy broke out in the 1990s



Strict vigil: A CRPF soldier stops people near a temporary barricade in Srinagar on Sunday. ■ NISSAR AHMED

that journalists have been questioned for reporting the statements of banned separatist outfits.

"The JKLF is a banned organisation, and publishing its statement is a crime and would warrant action from

now. JKLF statements are aimed at creating a law and order situation, and threaten the peaceful atmosphere," said Vijay Kumar, Inspector-General of Police, Kashmir.

Mr. Vijay Kumar said the journalists were "questioned

as required in the case registered against the JKLF under Sections 10, 11 and 13 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Details sought

"The investigators sought details of our family, relatives and friends, besides information on how we received the statement," said a journalist who was questioned.

The statement was circulated from the outfit's official email account.

A police officer said the 2G Internet service was stopped "as a precaution". The shutdown affected life in the Valley, where most markets remained closed and traffic thinned out. But no violence was reported from any area.

Send Rahul to political playschool, says Naqvi

'He should learn language etiquette'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Sunday that Congress president Sonia Gandhi should send her son Rahul Gandhi to a "political playschool" so that he could learn "decency and language etiquette".

Mr. Naqvi was replying to a question from reporters here about Mr. Gandhi's recent remark that in the next six months, the youth would hit Prime Minister Narendra Modi with sticks if he did not address the issue of unemployment.

"The Congress leaders walk around with an axe in their hands and hit their own foot with it every time they get a chance. I want to give a piece of advice to Congress leaders, specially Sonia Gandhi, to send her 'pappu' to a political playschool so that he can learn the ABCD of politics, dignity, decency and language etiquette," he said.

To a question, Mr. Naqvi said protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act at Shaheen Bagh in Delhi did not impact the electoral landscape of the capital.



Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

"No one with the right mental balance would talk about hitting a Prime Minister, who is elected by the public, with sticks," he said.

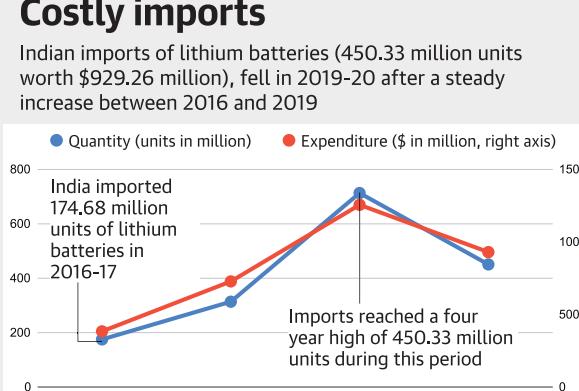
'Let's wait for results'

Asked about the exit polls predicting a comfortable victory for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Delhi Assembly election, Mr. Naqvi said, "What should we comment on exit polls? Let the results come out."

To a question, Mr. Naqvi said protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act at Shaheen Bagh in Delhi did not impact the electoral landscape of the capital.

Costly imports

Indian imports of lithium batteries (450.33 million units worth \$929.26 million), fell in 2019-20 after a steady increase between 2016 and 2018.



The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) manufactures such batteries

but volumes are limited, and they are restricted for use in space applications.

In June 2018, the Central Electro Chemical Research Institute (CECRI) in Tamil Nadu's Karaikudi, under the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), and RAASI Solar Power Pvt. Ltd. signed a Memorandum of Agreement for transfer of technology for India's first lithium-ion (Li-ion) battery project.

NITI initiative

To promote indigenous development of such batteries, the Union Cabinet in 2019 approved a programme, called a National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage, under the

NITI Aayog to "drive clean, connected, shared, sustainable and holistic mobility initiatives."

China dominates the Li-ion battery market.

Electric vehicles are expected to account for a significant share in the growth of the Li-ion battery demand in India, though reports say this is unlikely at least until 2025 because electric cars are still significantly costlier than their combustion-engine counterparts. The government has announced investments worth \$1.4 billion to make India one of the largest manufacturing hubs for electric vehicles by 2040.

APPEAL

4 years old Mohammed Sahal is diagnosed with Relapsed B Cell acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and he urgently requires Rs. 20,000/- towards Haemopoietic Bone Marrow Transplantation at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. Please help his family by sending donations through Chid.D.N.E.F.T Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No.6018201006310, IFSC No. SYNB000018) or through e-wallets like Paytm, PhonePe, GooglePay, etc. The donations sent through Chid.D.N.E.F.T Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No.6018201006310, IFSC No. SYNB000018) or through e-wallets like Paytm, PhonePe, GooglePay, etc. The donations sent through Chid.D.N.E.F.T Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No.6018201006310, IFSC No. SYNB000018) or through e-wallets like Paytm, PhonePe, GooglePay, etc. The donations sent through Chid.D.N.E.F.T Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No.6018201006310, IFSC

INTERVIEW | DR. LOTAY TSHERING

'People may criticise us, but environment is top priority for Bhutan'

Prime Minister Lotay Tshering says Thimpu's commitment to sustainability justifies the decision to levy a tourism fee and stay out of regional transport pact

SUHASINI HAIDAR

Though Bhutan joined a meeting of the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement as an observer, Prime Minister Lotay Tshering said the decision to stay out of the transport treaty and introduce a levy on Indian tourists is based on the country's environmental carrying capacity.

Does the new fee mean that you want to discourage too many visitors from coming?

■ Absolutely not. Actually we are trying to encourage tourists. Our policy of "high value, low volume" comes from our leaders, is because we have a limited size and our carrying capacity for visitors is limited, our road sur-

face area is limited, and we have 72% of our land under forest cover. We are trying to enhance that.

With time, we have no doubt that we will have many more tourists from India and regional countries. In the last few years, their numbers have grown from a few thousand to a few hundred thousand each year. In order to

provide the value for the money they spend, we needed a better system in place. We also want to redistribute the tourists amongst destinations. Which is why the Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) will not be charged to those travelling to 11 out of the 20 districts in Central and Eastern Bhutan, while we will charge for those travelling to the Western tourist destinations.

Nevertheless, are you worried at all that the decision to levy a fee on Indians, who have always enjoyed free entry to

Bhutan, will impact bilateral ties?

■ The worry is whether we can cater to hundreds of thousands of visitors with our carrying capacity. The bigger worry is about motor vehicle accidents involving regional tourists. In the long run, I think we will only value-add to the good relations between our two neighbours. I don't think this ₹1,200 is a problem, given the paying capacity of most Indian tourists.

Do you think Bhutan will reconsider its decision not



■ Vehicles are biggest emitters of greenhouse gases.. hence we can't have too many visitors

tude does not have the capacity to allow all the truck traffic to travel through Bhutan. If our infrastructure improves, our economy improves, trade improves at some point, we would definitely want to be a part of the [BBIN-MVA], but currently given our current infrastructure we cannot even cater properly to our own local needs. As a result, we cannot

consider this plan despite its economic potential for Bhutan.

As you know, we are a carbon negative country, and today motor vehicles are the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases. This is the reason we can't have too many visitors, and we can't be a part of BBIN-MVA. This is the essence of Gross National Happiness (GNH), not to measure what you have in monetary terms alone.

How do you answer critics who say Bhutan's policies on transit and tourism are elitist?

■ It all depends on how you look at it. Our main objective for tourism is not to make money, but to use it as a way to build Bhutan's brand and have visitors who wish to visit again and again. Our mountains, our forest cover, clean rivers, being a deeply spiritual country, simple and accommodative people...these are all what make us unique. Bhutan may be economically under-developed, but we give our environment the top priority. We take pride in these. People may criticise us for this, but we are committed to our policies to the next generation.

No tally of govt. buildings to be made accessible

Gehlot's review meeting flags slow progress by Ministries

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

Four years after the Accessible India Campaign was launched to make public offices, transport and websites accessible to persons with disabilities (PwD), officials said at a recent review meeting that the number of buildings of the Central Public Works Department across the country, and websites of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) were not known.

During the review by Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot on December 19, 2019, a Department of Empowerment of PWD official said the "total buildings either under maintenance or owned by CPWD are not known", minutes of the meeting recorded. All these buildings, along with other projects being implemented by other Ministries, are supposed to be made accessible by March 2020.

An official of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, under which the CPWD



A passenger being carried up the stairs at a railway station. ■ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

Gehlot directed the MeitY to find out the total number of the Central and State government websites.

Status of airports

With regard to transportation, the Minister noted that while there had been progress on making airports accessible, all aspects of air travel, including aircraft and buses used to ferry passengers from terminals, need to be compatible.

An official of the Civil Aviation Ministry said all 35 international airports and 55 domestic airports under the Airports Authority of India had been made accessible by providing ramps, and had accessible toilets and provision for audio and Braille commands in lifts. A Railways official said 7,000 wheelchairs had been provided at major stations and 22 stations had online booking of wheelchair facility.

The Minister expressed concern after the Ministry of Road Transport told him that only 3.6% of buses had been made fully accessible.

operates, said 787 out of 889 buildings had been made accessible so far, while approval for 13 buildings had been received from various Ministries and work would be started. "For the remaining 89 buildings, approval of respective Ministries is still awaited," the minutes said.

On government websites, Mr. Gehlot reiterated the target to make at least 50% of the sites accessible. "However, the quantum of websites i.e. total no. of government websites is not known," the minutes said, adding that Mr.

Start new businesses with e-forms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Continuing efforts to improve the ease of doing business, the government will introduce an integrated electronic form for incorporating new companies from February 15, wherein the EPFO and ESIC registration numbers will also be allotted at the same time.

The Corporate Affairs Ministry would introduce the form – SPICe+ – to offer 10 services.

Currently, the Ministry has the electronic form SPICe (Simplified Proforma for Incorporating Company Electronically) and that would be replaced with SPICe+.

The 10 services offered through the new form would help in "saving as many procedures, time and cost for starting a business in India," the Ministry said in a public notice.

The incorporation of companies are made through the Corporate Affairs Ministry's portal MCA21. The new form would be available on this portal.

Govt. raps U.S. agency for Nipah work

CDC funded training at Manipal laboratory without Health Ministry clearance

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The Indian government has sharply censured the U.S. government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for funding an "unapproved" Indian laboratory in Manipal, and not securing the necessary permissions for undertaking training in India for work on Nipah virus, considered a potential bio-weapon.

A Union Health Ministry communication to CDC said the work was undertaken despite knowing that high risk pathogens can be tested only in BSL4 lab. As the highest level of biological safety, a BSL4 lab consists of work with highly dangerous and exotic microbes. Infections caused by these microbes, including Ebola and Marburg viruses, are frequently fatal.

The Ministry said it is taking a "very serious view" of all such contraventions of virus research guidelines that bypass the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)/Health Ministry Screening Committee (HMSC) for permissions.

When asked by *The Hin-*

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The Atlanta-based CDC said adequate biosafety precautions had been taken.

through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) and was aimed at strengthening laboratory systems in India which allowed for detection of Nipah virus.

"All trainings followed appropriate biosafety precautions and procedures as per international standards and were attended by government of India laboratories," the Atlanta-based CDC, said.

According to the CDC, after "realising" the need for further permissions, it had subsequently applied for clearances with the Health Ministry, but those were denied.

"When the clearance was not obtained, the project was closed and no further funding was released to Arunkumar added.

(with inputs from

Suhasini Haidar in Delhi and R. Prasad in Chennai)

No more export ban on masks, gloves

Odisha plans projects in Naxal stronghold

Swabhiman Anchal has remained backward owing to poor connectivity, hilly terrain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The government has removed surgical masks and gloves from the list of banned export items, according to a notification.

Last month, the government put a ban on exports of all kinds of personal protection equipment, including clothing and masks, used to protect people from airborne particles amidst the outbreak of novel coronavirus in China.

In its latest notification, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has said: "... items such as surgical masks/disposable masks and all gloves except NBR gloves are allowed freely for export."

However, it said that export of all other personal protection equipment, including N-95 and other equipment accompanying masks and gloves, should remain prohibited for exports.

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

After the security forces made their presence felt in Swabhiman Anchal, a stronghold of the CPI (Maoist), in Odisha's Malkangiri district, the State government has lined up development projects, including livelihood programmes and irrigation facilities, besides critical road networks for the region.

Swabhiman Anchal remained outside the ambit of development for years due to its remoteness, poor connectivity, hilly and inhospitable terrain and above all the presence of outlawed left wing extremists.

Integrated farming

The administration has decided to promote turmeric cultivation by replacing prohibited cannabis cultivation, while all nine gram panchayats will be covered under integrated farming.

Avoiding top-down approach in development, the government has taken a decision to listen to locals who understand the ground situation better than

Civilian shot dead by militants in Pulwama

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR

Militants on Sunday shot dead a civilian in the Tral area of Pulwama district in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

Ghulam Nabi Mir, 55, a contractor, was shot at by militants outside his house at Tral Payeen around 7.30 p.m., the officials said. Mir was rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival, they said. No militant outfit has so far claimed responsibility for the killing.

Meanwhile, the Balakot and Mendhar sectors along the Line of Control in Poonch district saw firing by the Pakistan Army for the second day on Sunday, a defence spokesperson said. No casualty was reported, he said.

CM YK



Striking at the root: Marijuana plants seen near the Balimela reservoir in Odisha's Malkangiri district. The government is planning to promote turmeric cultivation in such areas. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

others. A five-day workshop has been proposed at the Gopabandhu Academy of Administration at Bhubaneswar.

According to the proceedings of a meeting held recently under the chairmanship of the State Development Commissioner, implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) will be given priority before taking up projects. Approval and sanction of community forest rights (CFR) and individual forest

rights (IFR) under the FRA will be taken up in the mission mode. Prompt sanction of titles under the FRA is seen as a confidence building measure in Swabhiman Anchal.

The government will emulate the model of Maharashtra where CFR has been granted in an expeditious manner for making tribal partners in development. People of Swabhiman Anchal are likely to be taken to Maharashtra for a field visit.

The administration is contemplating to take up millet cultivation in the region in a big way and procure the surplus produce from villages.

For the overall development, a plan has been mooted to install lift irrigation points alongside the Balimela reservoir basin. The administration proposed to provide an 11-kv power line exclusively for irrigation projects.

The Odisha police claims to have established their domination in 70% of Swabhiman Anchal, which was considered a liberated zone by the Left ultras. Along with the Odisha police and their counterparts in Andhra Pradesh, paramilitary forces such as the BSF and the CRPF are deployed in the cut-off area consisting of 151 villages, surrounded by a water channel on three sides.

One-and-a-half years ago, the Odisha government managed to construct a bridge over the Gurupriya River despite stiff resistance from the extremists, ending its decades-old remoteness.

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In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar-751 001
Tel.: (0674) 2380660 ; Website: www.osmcl.nic.in ; Email: logistics.osmclod@nic.in
Assuring Quality, Saving Lives

Bid Ref. No.: OSMCL/2019-20/DRUGS-DPH/10 Date: 07 /02 /2020

Online Bids through e-Tender portal (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>) are invited from eligible bidders for supply of PPE (Personnel Protection Equipment) & N 95 Disposable Particulate respirator as per the particulars mentioned below :

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date and time
1.	Date & time of release of bid	10/02/2020, 3 PM
2.	Date & time of Pre-bid meeting	12/02/2020, 11 AM Venue : Conference Hall, Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd., In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar
3.	Date & time of Online bid submission	Start Date & Time End Date & Time 13/02/2020, 3 PM 19/02/2020, 6 PM
4.	Date and time for submission of Tender Document Cost and EMD Amount as per Section-IV	20/02/2020 25/02/2020, till 11 AM
5.	Date & time of sample submission as per section-IV of tender documents	25/02/2020, 5 PM
6.	Date & time of online Technical Bid Opening	25/02/2020, 11:30 AM
7.	Date of opening of Price Bid	To be informed to the qualified bidders

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, EMDs, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: www.osmcl.nic.in and <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> . The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
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Thousands on cruise ship disembark after tests

3,600 were quarantined onboard in Hong Kong for five days over fears that some staff could have contracted the virus

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Thousands of people stranded aboard a cruise ship in Hong Kong for five days were allowed to disembark on Sunday after its 1,800 crew tested negative for the deadly new coronavirus.

Health authorities in the financial hub said the crew and a similar number of passengers had been released from a quarantine imposed because of fears some staff could have contracted the deadly virus on a previous voyage and passed it on.

The World Dream carried three Chinese passengers to Vietnam between January 19 and 24. They were later found to be infected with the SARS-like coronavirus, which has killed more than 800 people in China since it emerged in December.

The government grounded the ship on its arrival in Hong Kong on Wednesday while tests were carried out on the crew, but said the passengers need not undergo examination as they had no contact with the three sick holidaymakers on the January trip.

First found in the city of Wuhan in central China last



Safe exit: Passengers disembarking from the World Dream at Kai Tak Terminal, Hong Kong, on Sunday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

December, the virus has infected more than 37,200 people on the Chinese mainland and at least 36 in Hong Kong.

The passengers and crew isolated on the vessel had been expecting to stay aboard until Tuesday after Hong Kong authorities said testing would take at least four days.

No self-quarantine

But chief port health officer Leung Yiu-hong said on Sunday "all tests have results this afternoon and are all negative".

He added that passenger testing was deemed unnecessary because they were at relatively low risk. All 3,600 onboard will not be required to self-quarantine after leaving.

As he left the ship, passenger Rocky Chan said quarantine conditions had been "okay", though his time on board had caused him a few problems.

Vice-president of marketing at Dream Cruises, Phoebe Yip Ching-man said the company arranged for dozens of coaches to take passengers into the city, while free hotel rooms were booked for the more than 100 foreign passport holders who needed them.

Officials finally began to seal the borders on January 23. But it was too late. Speaking to reporters a few days after the city was put under quarantine, the Mayor estimated that 5 million people had already left.

Travel patterns

An Associated Press analysis of domestic travel patterns using map location data from Chinese tech giant Baidu shows that in the two weeks before Wuhan's lockdown, nearly 70% of trips out of the central Chinese city were within Hubei province.

vince. Baidu has a map app that is similar to Google Maps, which is blocked in China.

Another 14% of the trips went to the neighboring provinces of Henan, Hunan, Anhui and Jiangxi. Nearly 2% slipped down to Guangdong province, the coastal manufacturing powerhouse across from Hong Kong, and the rest fanned out across China. The cities outside Hubei province that were top destinations for trips from Wuhan between January 10 and January 24 were Chongqing, a municipality next to Hubei province, Beijing and Shanghai.

The travel patterns broadly track with the early spread of the virus. The majority of confirmed cases and deaths have occurred in China, within Hubei province, followed by high numbers of cases in central China, with pockets of infections in Chongqing, Shanghai and Beijing as well.

"It's definitely too late," said Jin Dong-Yan, a molecular virologist at Hong Kong

University's School of Biomedical Sciences. "Five million out. That's a big challenge. Many of them may not come back to Wuhan but hang around somewhere else. To control this outbreak, we have to deal with this. On one hand, we need to identify them. On the other hand, we need to address the issue of stigma and discrimination."

Public health officials and academics have been using this kind of mapping data for years to track the potential spread of disease.

The last trains left Wuhan the morning of January 23, cutting off a surge of outbound travel that had begun three days earlier, Baidu data shows. Nearby cities rushed to impose travel restrictions of their own.

Researchers note that travel patterns after restrictions started rolling out on January 23 will not match historical norms and that the cities they identified are initial ports of landing; travelers could have subsequently moved elsewhere.

earlier said it was not immediately clear if the incident was a deliberate act by an "infiltrator" or an accident.

"It was not a clash between the forces. We are investigating," Mr. Meyakil said.

Motive not known

Mr. Leggett also stressed the cause or motive behind the attack were not immediately known.

In a tweet, the U.S. Army's 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) said "several" of its soldiers had been killed or injured during combat operations in Afghanistan.

Current reports indicate

an individual in an Afghan uniform opened fire on the combined U.S. and Afghan force with a machine gun," U.S. Forces-Afghanistan spokesman Sonny Leggett said in a statement on Sunday.

The Defence Ministry

said one Afghan soldier was

killed and three local security

forces injured during the

shooting, and added that an

investigation had been

launched while vowing to

continue fighting "terro-

rism" with the U.S.

"Incidents such as this

fail to have negative effects

on the friendship and spirit

of cooperation and between

the ANSF and U.S. military

forces," the Ministry said in a statement.

Hours after the mall siege

began, Facebook said it had

removed the suspect's

account.

Provincial governor Shah

Mahmood

Meyakil had

Afghan soldier kills 2 Americans at Army base

Six others wounded in the incident



On vigil: An Afghan soldier patrolling in Nangarhar. ■ REUTERS

14

WORLD

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ASK US

N. SREEKANTH

Q. A friend of mine, who is a professional, with his mother's permission demolished her old house and constructed a new house and building with savings and borrowings from a financial institution. He wants to claim deduction u/s 24 for payment of interest to the financial institution and principal u/s 80C paid through EMI. The land belongs to his mother. Please advise.

R. VENKATARAMANI

A. Under the Income Tax Act, charging section under income from house property is triggered only when the assessee is the owner of the property consisting of any building or land appurtenant thereto. In your case, though the building was built by you using your funds and borrowed funds, you are not the owner of the house property and section 24 on "interest deductions" shall not be triggered. Therefore, interest and principal cannot be claimed unless you are the owner of the property at the time of construction.

Q. I am investing ₹60,000 a year under NPS voluntarily. Can I claim this amount under Sec. 80 CCD (1B) for tax relief? I have exhausted 80C benefit of ₹1.5 lakh through other means (PF, PPF, home loan principal).

J. SREE HARSHA

A. Under 80CCD(1B) of the Income Tax Act, any individual making a voluntary contribution to the prescribed pension fund scheme shall be allowed deduction up to ₹50,000; this is in addition to the deduction the assessee can claim through the contribution made by the employer towards NPS under Section 80CCD(2). This deduction is available up to 10% of the salary; in your case, additional deduction of up to ₹50,000 over and above ₹1,50,000 under 80C can be availed.

Q. I am a senior citizen having a combined medical insurance policy with my wife. She is 58 years old. My auditor says I am eligible for a deduction of ₹25,000 only as my wife is not a senior citizen. He explains if both are senior citizens, only I am eligible for ₹50,000. (My wife is also an assessee but not claiming any deduction under Sec. 80 D)

R. DEVARAJU

Q. I am a senior citizen, 75 years old. I have taken medical policies for myself, my wife and also for my daughter. Both my daughter and my wife are with me and are dependent on me. The total annual premium I pay is about ₹50,000. Can I claim the maximum amount u/s 80D of ₹50,000?

A. KRIPIANIDHI

(Reply to the above 2 queries)

A. Under section 80D of the Income Tax Act, for senior citizens, in respect of amounts paid towards medical insurance, an amount of up to ₹50,000 can be availed as deduction for self and family. Family includes non-senior citizens also.

Q. My wife and I are senior citizens and our son is in the U.S. Here go my details: (1) I sold my residential property in Chennai last year. I have not invested anything in bonds within the prescribed period of six months. (b) Not planning to buy a new flat due to our age. I request you to let me know whether any safe scheme is available now for investment

A. In order to reduce any long-term capital gains tax arising from sale of house property, the proceeds from such sale must be invested in any/all avenues as mentioned below

1. Investment in prescribed bonds to be done within six months, of up to ₹50 lakh (not eligible in your case).

2. Investment in any other house property with certain conditions. (however you are not keen on the same)

3. The other option is investment in a newly-incorporated company with several conditions (this also may not be suitable to you as the return of the investment is dependent on various uncontrollable factors).

Apart from the above mentioned modes, there are no exemptions under income tax to reduce capital gains tax.

(The author is partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai. The above queries were answered before presentation of the Union Budget on February 1)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

When the tax needle moves

Shifting the onus of paying tax on dividends from the company to the investors may not be that taxing after all

JOYDEEP SEN

Ever since the Finance Minister presented the Union Budget proposals, there has been a lot of heartburn about dividends becoming taxable. Sit back and relax, nobody has moved your cheese. Let's get the perspective on what is happening, and where you need to set the temperature to suit the new climate.

We will start with dividends from equity shares, then discuss dividends from Mutual Funds (MFs). The company paying dividends on its shares has to pay a dividend distribution tax (DDT) after which the dividends are tax-free in your hands. What the Union Budget has proposed is that the DDT be done away with. Rather, the dividend becomes taxable in your hands, at your rate.

Hence if you are in the 30% tax slab, you will now have to pay 30% tax on the dividends you receive. There are two issues in this. One, the numbers. The DDT paid by the company, to quote a round figure (giving up some decimals of correctness), is 20%. When DDT is no longer applicable, the company may bump up the dividend to that extent and pay a higher dividend as there is a relatively higher quantum at disposal. If you pay income tax at 30%, or higher including surcharge and cess, your net receipt is lower to the extent your taxation rate is higher than 20%. The other issue is psychological; something that is tax-free currently, becoming taxable.

Dividend yield

Let us now turn this issue on its head. There is a concept called dividend yield, which is the dividend received as a percentage of market price.

As an illustration, a company issues shares at a price of ₹10, which is the face value. Subse-

quently, the price goes up to ₹100 in the market, when you purchase it. The company earns a profit and declares a dividend of 15%. Now, this 15 is a percentage of the face value, hence you get a dividend of ₹1.5 per share.

However, as a percentage of the price you have paid for it, your yield is only 1.5%. In the new scenario, the company may pay a little higher than ₹1.5, as DDT would no longer be applicable. On the amount received, you will have to pay tax at 30%, depending on your income bracket. The crux of the matter is, most of the returns on equities come from price appreciation.

The dividend yield moving from 1.5% to say 1.4% does not make a material difference any way.

In the equity market, this can be made up quickly from favourable price movement. As a reference point, the dividend

yield on Nifty 50 stocks is only 1.3%. To be noted, (a) if you are in a lower tax bracket than 20%, you are better off in the new scheme of things (b) 30% is the marginal slab rate; your average tax rate is lower by virtue of the lower tax slabs (which are at less than ₹10 lakh as per current slabs) and (c) if you are holding significant equity and earn dividend of more than ₹10 lakh per year, you are anyway paying a tax of 10% on that.

Mutual funds

After dividend from equity stocks, comes the case of dividends from MFs. The Union Budget proposal is that DDT be

done away with, and MF dividend becomes taxable in your hands at your rate. The difference with equity shares discussed above is that in MFs, there will be a TDS (tax deducted at source) of 10% in the dividend option.

What will change? Currently, in equity-oriented MF schemes, there is a DDT of 10% plus surcharge and cess. When this becomes taxable at your slab rate of say 30%, you pay 20% higher tax, or a little more than 20% if you are in a higher surcharge bracket. We said earlier, you have to re-set the temperature to suit the new climate.

In MF schemes, there are two options, dividend and growth. In the dividend option, the MF periodically declares dividend. In the growth option, there is no pay-out as such; the gains or accretions remain in the NAV, which you take home when you redeem.

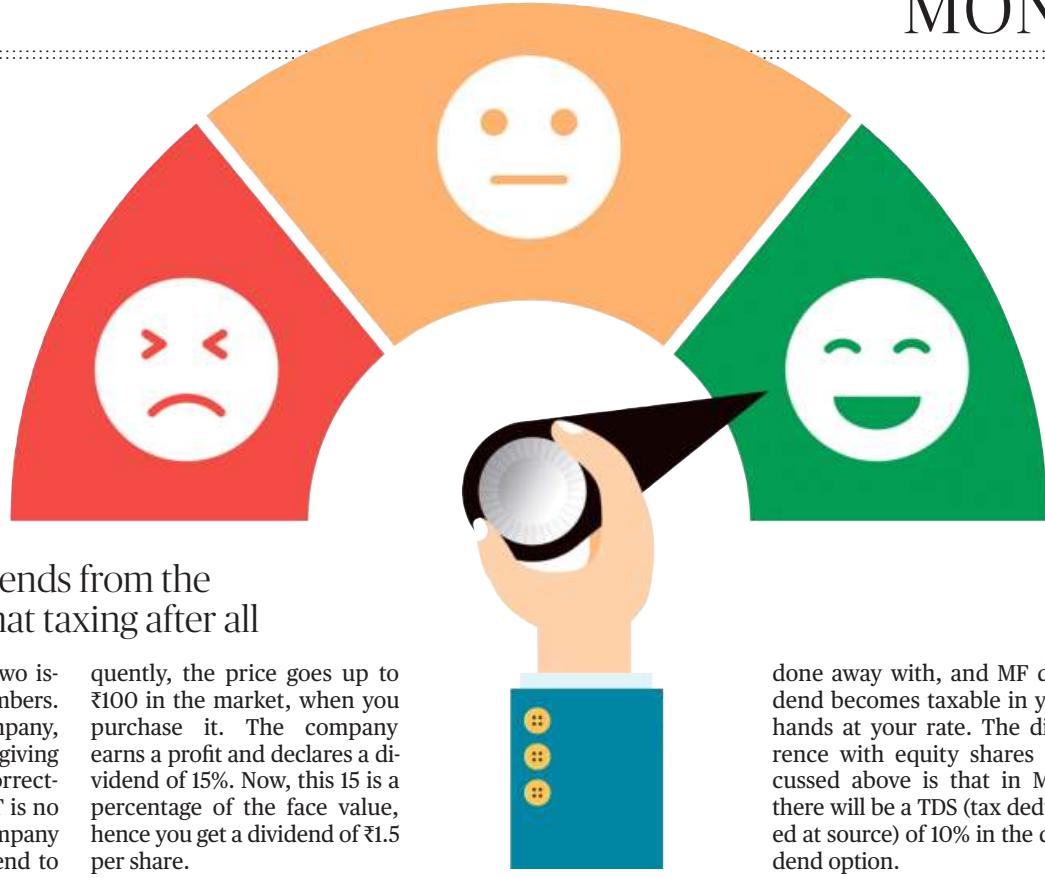
In the growth option, it be-

comes long term if you hold for one year. After that, the gains from equity funds are taxable at 10% plus surcharge and cess. This does not change after the Union Budget. Moreover, up to ₹1 lakh of long-term capital gains per financial year is free from tax. Hence, you have to shift your investments off equity-oriented MF Schemes from dividend option to growth option and enjoy same / lower taxation.

There is a psychological aspect here as well. A dividend seems like an additional or bonus return. That is not the case. In the growth option, you have earned as much: it is there in the NAV. Rather, you earn a little higher in the growth option, as that component remains in the fund and continues to earn from the market for a longer period of time and gets the benefit of compounding.

For investors requiring regular cash flows, e.g. retired senior citizens, who are currently invested in the dividend option, they should switch to the growth option and take a Systematic Withdrawal Plan (SWP). In the dividend option, the quantum of dividend is decided by the AMC whereas in an SWP, you decide the quantum to be withdrawn regularly. Preferably, for tax efficiency, the SWP in the growth option should start after one year of investment for equity funds and three years for debt funds, for it to become long term from the tax perspective and enjoy a lower rate.

(The author is founder, wi-seinvestor.in)



As new tax regime beckons, should you switch?

If you currently use all exemptions and deductions, you may be better off with the existing regime

ADITYA MODANI

The new personal income tax regime ("PIT") has become the talk of town. Taxpayers have started reviewing compensation structures and exemptions/deductions being availed to evaluate whether they should opt for the new PIT regime or stay in the existing one.

One such discussion took place in the Sharma household. The Sharma household consists of Mr. Raj (son, a software engineer), Ms. Sneha (daughter, recently graduated and working in a BPO in Hyderabad), Ms. Leena (mother, housewife) and Mr. Sharma, a retired bank officer. Mr. Sharma was elated that the Finance Minister had proposed the new PIT regime, wherein lower tax rates are prescribed. He showed his family, the income tax slab and rates applicable (Table 1)

Hearing this, Mr. Raj sought to check how much tax he would save, if he opted for the new PIT regime. Mr. Raj earns a gross salary of ₹55 lakh per annum and also claims several exemptions/deductions.

Mr. Sharma said in order to opt for the new PIT regime, Mr. Raj has to forego the following exemptions/ deductions and make a choice at the time of filing returns, viz. house rent allowance, leave travel concession, standard deduction of ₹50,000 and professional tax paid; allowances under section 10 (14), any allowance granted to meet the cost of travel on tour or on transfer; and per-diem ₹1,500

TABLE 1

Taxable Income Slab (₹)	Existing Tax Rate	New Tax Rate
Upto 2.5 lakh*	NIL	NIL
2.5 – 5 lakh	5%	5%
5 – 7.5 lakh	20%	10%
7.5 – 10 lakh	20%	15%
10 – 12.5 lakh	30%	20%
12.5 – 15 lakh	30%	25%
15 lakh and above	30%	30%

*Tax exemption limit up to ₹3 lakh for senior citizen in the old regime

per minor child; interest paid on loan taken for self-occupied house property or vacant property; chapter VIA deductions that includes Section 80C (investments in LIC, ULIP, ELSS, tuition fee, provident fund, public provident fund, sukanya samridhi yojana, tax-saving term deposit, national savings certificate, principal repayment of home loan); contribution to national pension scheme, except for employer contribution; medical insurance premium or medical expenditure or preventive health check-up expenditure paid for self and family; medical expenditure / insurance on a dependent who is a person with disability or for specified disease; contribution to national pension scheme; interest on educational loan; donations; interest on affordable home loan; interest on savings account/ term deposit; rent paid, where housing allowance is not provided by employer; free food and beverage provided

ed by employer through vouchers.

Mr. Sharma further indicated that while the above exemptions were being taken away, the following exemptions continued – terminal benefits like provident fund, national pension scheme withdrawal; voluntary retirement compensation; Retrenchment compensation; gratuity; leave encashment, etc.

Ms. Sneha said she had not availed most of the above ex-

emptions and deductions and hence the new regime may be beneficial to her. Ms. Leena said,

"Let's make a comparison of the tax payable under the old and new regimes to determine whether the same is beneficial or not." (Table 2)

Tax savings

In the table, Mr. Sharma and Ms. Sneha were glad to see tax savings of ₹28,600 and ₹14,196 respectively. Mr. Raj found he

would pay additional tax of ₹2,60,365 if he opted for the new regime, primarily due to lack of exemptions / deductions and levy of surcharge (10%).

Mr. Sharma was also happy to know that he did not have to invest in tax-saving instruments, which means higher cash is available for spending, in addition to the tax saved! Ms. Sneha was also happy that she did not have to provide details of exemptions and deductions.

So, the option is a mixed bag. Taxpayers who do not plan or do not exhaust all avenues to plan taxes, may benefit from the new regime. Those who avail all exemptions and deductions stand to lose if they opt to switch over.

(The author is Tax Director - People Advisory Services, EY India. With inputs from Abhishek Daga, senior tax professional, EY India. Views are personal)

Bank fixed deposit rates

Bank Name

Highest Slab

1-year tenure

3-year tenure

5-year tenure

Bank Name

Interest Rates (%)

Highest Slab

1-year tenure

3-year tenure

5-year tenure

SMALL FINANCE BANKS

Suryoday Small Finance Bank	9.00	8.25	8.50	9.00
Fincare Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.75	9.00	8.35
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.20	8.00	8.35
Jamia Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.00	8.40	8.25
North East Small Finance Bank	8.50	7.25	7.50	6.75
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.00	7.80	7.00
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.10	8.00	7.50	7.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.00	8.00	7.30	7.30
AU Small Finance Bank	7.77	7.00	7.77	7.50
Capital Small Finance Bank	7.30	6.90	6.90	6.80

PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

United Bank of India	6.50	6.50	6.25	6.00
Punjab & Sind Bank	6.45	6.45	6.45	6.45
Union Bank of India	6.45	6.30	6.30	6.30
Allahabad Bank	6.45	6.45	6.25	6.25
IDBI Bank	6.45	6.40	6.25	6.25
Indian Bank	6.40	6.40	6.25	6.25
Bank of India	6.40	6.40	6.25	6.

EDUCATION PLUS

GET THE EDGE

■ ARAVIND CHINCHURE

Startups are one of the strongest engines for wealth creation, employment and economic growth. India is aspiring to be a \$5 trillion economy in the next five years. There is also a need to create 300 million jobs by 2040, which is roughly 10 million jobs a year. These aspirations and needs of India cannot just be fulfilled by the existing large enterprises alone. Startups can act as a vehicle to achieve the next level of economic growth and social development.

India has begun its journey to becoming one of the fastest growing startup hubs in the world, and today, it is the third largest in technology-driven product startups, after the U.S. and the U.K. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor estimates some 20% of Indians (aged between 18 and 64 years) intend to start a business in the next three years, while more than 11% are nascent entrepreneurs.

As entrepreneurs, innovators, academicians, and mentors to startups, in this third wave, Indians have an opportunity to rapidly prosper and put India on the path to becoming a developed nation. For this, we must explore new areas of entrepreneurial opportunities, develop new approaches, acquire relevant skills and mindset, and offer complete ecosystem support to successfully build deep-tech, IP-driven innovative platforms, products and solutions from India, for the world.

Industry 4.0

The new technology of microprocessors and integrated chips opened opportunities for nations in creating a

Entrepreneurship should begin in school

Encouraging students to question and not be afraid to take risks is one of the many factors that India needs to establish a healthy startup ecosystem

ISTOCKPHOTO/GETTYIMAGES

new industry. The Indian IT industry leveraged these technological developments and made a significant contribution to make India a global economic power. Today, India is the world's largest sourcing destination for the IT industry, which employs about 10 million professionals.

Now, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) is well underway. The manufacturing industry is undergoing a major technological revolution in the way products are designed, manufactured and distributed. This rapid, end-to-end digitiza-

sation of all physical assets and their integration into digital ecosystems is a part of Industry 4.0. It promises a new frontier in the manufacturing and other sectors, with enhanced value creation through higher productivity and efficiency throughout the value chain. The technologies that enable Industry 4.0 include smart sensors, automation devices, advanced robots, Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing, location detection technologies, human-machine interfaces, augmented reality, 3D printing, Artificial Intelligence (AI), big data ana-

lytics, and mobile devices, among others. India has achieved strong leadership in IT.

Entrepreneurial education

The preparation for the third wave of the entrepreneurial journey should begin at schools and universities in India. Unlike in the U.S., universities in India are not at the epicentre of the entrepreneurship ecosystem. They need to build a strong foundation of innovation and entrepreneurship to empower aspiring entrepreneurs to successfully incu-

bate high-impact ventures. Educational institutions must create entrepreneurial culture where students are...

- Explicitly encouraged to question, experiment, observe, and network to generate novel ideas where they are not afraid to take chances and fail. They must show tolerance to failure, as failure is a natural part of innovating.
- Challenged through structured ideation efforts around specific topics, themes, or problems, and rewarded for taking smart risks in their pursuit of innovation.
- Provided opportunities to

discover new solutions, experiment, refine and validate solutions, and empower to present their ideas and utilise the collective wisdom to validate and refine ideas.

- Given opportunities for hands-on experiential learning to build innovation capabilities and skills, which might include simulated exercises or real projects. Students get access to successful innovators, creative people, and entrepreneurs as mentors.
- Given access to platforms and facilities through which ideas can be submitted, shared, developed, proto-



typed and piloted.

Supportive ecosystem

The Indian government has funded several organisations to establish incubation centres while major corporates have established startup accelerators. One of the challenges of deep tech entrepreneurs is access to advanced technological laboratories and experts. In the third wave of entrepreneurship, India needs to establish global Centres of Excellence (GCoEs) in exponential and Industry 4.0 technologies, in partnership with academia and industry from around the world. These centres should support entrepreneurs in (a) evaluation and implementation of state-of-the-art technologies; (b) development of products, prototypes and patentable solutions; and (c) developing industry acceptable platforms, products and solutions. GCoEs can also provide practical use cases, make concrete recommendations, and provide a test bed for startups and the industry.

trepreneurs/founders of high-impact startups. The guidance from leading business experts from multiple domains offers a synergistic view of developing a business model and the challenges of developing and launching new products.

Global immersion

Aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators need to have access to global and local immersions to gain deeper insights, newer perspectives and global connects for successfully building products and solutions for India and the world. These immersions not only provide experience entrepreneurial ecosystem, but will offer inspiration to connect ideas that lead to disruptive and breakthrough products and solutions. It also provides an opportunity to collaborate and partner with individuals, institutions and create global teams.

India's opportunity to rapidly progress in this decade is built on the ecosystem that is developed to promote high-impact entrepreneurship. Using this opportunity will require us to develop an education system that is focused on entrepreneurial culture and establish the pillars that allow Indian entrepreneurs access to advanced technology laboratories and experts to accelerate product and venture development.

Through this, India can create a new generation of high-impact entrepreneurs and ventures based on IP-driven, deep-tech, and innovative platforms, products and solutions for its progressive future.

The writer is Founder and CEO, QLeap Academy and Chair Mentor, FLAME University

SCHOLARSHIPS

■ Breakthrough Generation Fellowship

The Breakthrough Institute, California, has announced this award from recent graduates and postgraduates from around the world, and offers financial awards. This fellowship aims to support the development of a new generation of thinkers and writers.

ELIGIBILITY: Final-year undergraduates, college graduates, and postgraduates from around the world, who are interested in any of the three research areas – energy, cities, or food and farming.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Selected students will get \$600 per week for 10 months, and additional travel and housing assistance stipends..

DEADLINE: February 11

APPLICATION: Offline
<http://www.b4s.in/edge/BGF2>

■ Trent University Entrance Scholarships

Trent University, Canada, has announced this scholarship for those who are eligible for enrolling in an undergraduate course at the university.

ELIGIBILITY: Students who have proof of English proficiency (or conditional admission through Trent ESL: English for University), and meet minimum grades requirement as outlined in country-specific admissions requirements, can apply.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Those selected will get financial awards up to CAD 3,000.

DEADLINE: February 15

APPLICATION: Online
<http://www.b4s.in/edge/TUE1>

■ All India Scholarship Test Exam (AISTE)

Ctoan Consultancy Pvt. Ltd, India has announced this scholarship to offer financial support to students for their welfare and education. Selected students will receive a scholarship and other benefits.

ELIGIBILITY: Indian student of Classes IV to XII.

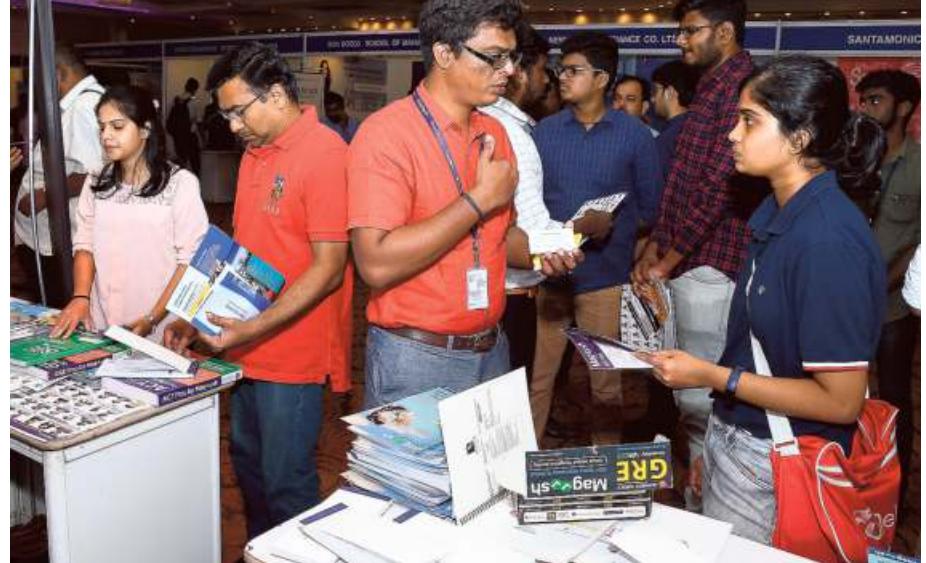
PRIZES AND REWARDS: Three national-level awards and two state-level awards will be offered. The award amount is up to ₹90,000, and 1,000 students will get participation certificates.

DEADLINE: February 20

APPLICATION: Online
<http://www.b4s.in/edge/AISI>

Courtesy: www.buddy4study.com

STUDY ABROAD



K.V. SRINIVASAN

Sea of opportunities

Foreign universities, consultancy firms, and coaching institutes provided fresh insights to visitors at the *The Hindu* International Education Fair 2020 in Chennai

■ DEEKSHA TERI

The two-day International Education Fair (IEF) 2020 by *The Hindu* Chennai edition, began with the inaugural keynote by Robert G Burgess, US Consul General. The opening witnessed a number of college and high school students.

The event was power-packed with seminars, ranging from Rhea Cheryl Shivan's session (Manager, Campus France, Embassy of France, Chennai) where she talked about study options in France, to Sudha Sudeep, Managing Director (Marketing and Communications), Beyon Education, who talked about how the Netherlands as the upcoming study destination, among many others. The seminars provided insights into how to make the right choice about courses, colleges, and most importantly, the right country.

"I always tell students to choose the university, and not the country. The university and quality of education matters. Do not jump to PR (permanent residency). First study and gain experience," said Sudeep.

The stalls saw an atten-



IEF 2020

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WIDE ANGLE
ALBERT P'RAYAN

Thousands of students across India have been on the streets, protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) ever since the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) was passed in both houses of Parliament and enacted into an act. There have been protests on campuses in several higher education institutions including the IITs and IIMs. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students were on strike protesting fee hike for over a month, and the protest attracted the attention of national and international media. The incidents of student protests and activism in several parts of the country have sparked a wave of fierce debate on whether students taking part in protests can be justified. Is 'student activism' (SA) a dirty word? What form of SA should be encouraged? What is the purpose of education?

It is unfortunate many educated people equate 'student activism' with protests, violence, damage, and unruly behaviour. What is SA? It is vigorous action of students as a body in support of or opposition to any issue that leads to reforms or brings about some change in the system. Students boycotting classes to protest against anything that they feel is unjust, issuing a statement in support of or opposition to some controversial issues, campaigning for or against something, staging demonstrations demanding a rollback of fee hike, raising slogans condemning police violence, and so on, are examples of student activism. It is always for a good cause.

Stay motivated



OFF THE EDGE

NANDINI RAMAN

I am a first year history Hons student from Delhi University and wish to become an IPS officer. But, being an average student, I worry that if I am not able to clear the exams, I will be left without a secondary plan. My family cannot financially support me for long. What should I do to ensure I get a job, without letting go of my dream? - Himanshu

Dear Himanshu,

Eight lakh students appeared for the UPSC last year, out of which, 759 made it to the IAS and IPS services.

This statistic is not to demotivate you. You could be one amongst the 759, but what if you don't make it? It is imperative that you start consciously thinking of a plan B and C to fall back on. See what else comes closest to the IPS for you.

You must toil for the next two years now and pass the written tests and subsequent interviews. This, of course, requires self-discipline, patience, punctuality, commitment, self-confidence and above all, a fire to really make it happen. Work hard and smart, build your physique and body and work on your stamina as well. Keep a healthy mind and stay time conscious and away from naysayers. Sky is the limit. Good luck.

I am a second year B.com student. My parents want me to prepare for the CAT. How do I prepare for it and score well? - Naga Chaitanya Sai

Dear Chaitanya,

What do you want to do with your life?

First things first – Know the CAT exam pattern and syllabus in detail. Ensure that you get the right study material. Sign up to physical or online coaching classes if possible. Take online mock tests. Find like-minded friends and create a study group. Stay determined, confident and motivated. Good luck.

Disclaimer: This column is not a substitute for long-term therapy. It is merely a guiding voice. Some issues may need medical intervention.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. She will answer questions sent to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com. The subject line should be: 'Off the edge'

Student activism is not a dirty word

Every student has the moral responsibility to be an engaged citizen, express views on social issues, and work towards the betterment of society



For or against?

Recently, when I initiated a discussion on the topic whether student activism can be justified, Francis Sebastian, an educator who is actively involved in youth formation, commented, "Activism is always good and it depends on how we understand it. Every human being should be an activist and work for change and development of their society. Young people should be activists for the development of

the nation. Nation means people and their rights and development...". Yes, it is every student's moral responsibility to be an engaged citizen, express his/her views on social issues, and work towards the betterment of society.

Student activism is not new in India. The All India Student Federation (AISF) that was founded on August 12, 1936 was involved in the Indian freedom struggle.

Initially, AISF had this slogan: "Freedom, Peace and Progress" and in

1958, it came up with the slogan "Study & Struggle". In the past, the country has witnessed some remarkable student protests including Nav Nirman Andolan Reconstruction protests (1974), Anti-Sri Lanka protests (2013), and protests over Suicide of Dalit Scholar Rohit Vemula (2016).

In January 2017, students across Tamil Nadu boycotted classes and took part in pro-jallikattu protests in a peaceful manner and succeeded in making the state government

pass a bill exempting jallikattu from the prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, thus legalising the bull-taming sport. The pro-jallikattu student protests proved to the world that students can bring about social change.

Informed choices

A few months ago, inspired by 16-year-old Swedish student activist Greta Thunberg, young students in several countries boycotted their classes and took part in Global Climate strike. They expressed their protest against governments' callous attitude and inaction against climate change.

The purpose of education is to help students become informed and engaged citizens who are aware of what is happening in their society and respond responsibly to the challenges they face. Student should be trained to look at issues critically and encouraged to take an active role in creating a better society. They should be educated to dissent in a reasoned manner and fight for a right cause. Student activism should be in line with the purpose of education. Peaceful protests and non-violent campaigns are an effective way to achieve social change. Student activism is a beautiful word and responsible citizens should make it more beautiful by understanding students, helping them channelise their energy in the right direction and sustain their interest in the society and humanity.

The writer is an academic, columnist and freelance writer. rayanal@yahoo.co.uk

Out of gas



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

S. UPENDRAN

What is the meaning of 'running on fumes'? (KV Satish, Madurai)

When this rather informal expression is used with a person, what it suggests is that the individual is continuing to work even though he has little or no energy left; he is exhausted, and as a result, is working without any enthusiasm. He is like a vehicle that has more or less run out of petrol. When you say that an organisation is running on fumes, what you mean is that it has used up most its resources; it has very little money left to continue to operate. It is likely to close down soon.

It was obvious to everyone that Federer was running on fumes in the last set.

The company that Sunitha works for has been running on fumes the past six months.

What is the difference between 'council' and 'counsel'? (B. MUKUND, Nellore)

As far as the pronunciation is concerned, there is no difference; both words have the stress on the first syllable. In terms of meaning, both words refer to the act of giving advice. 'Council' is mostly used nowadays as a noun to refer to an appointed group of people who meet, discuss and offer advice on a matter – it could be to an individual or an organisation.

According to most residents, sound pollution has become a major problem.

In the opinion of most residents, sound pollution has become a major problem.

Lawyers are like rhinoceros: thick skinned, short sighted and always ready to charge. David Mellor

The writer teaches at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. upendrankye@gmail.com

ADMISSIONS

BSc (Hons) Economics and Finance

Admissions are open for Indian School of Business and Finance (ISBF), New Delhi for five undergraduate programmes: BSc (Hons) Economics, BSc (Hons) Economics and Finance, BSc (Hons) Economics and Management, BSc (Hons) Business and Management, and BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance. All undergraduate programmes are taught with academic direction from London School of Economics (LSE), and the degree is awarded by the University of London.

ELIGIBILITY: All candidates who have completed Class XII, or will be com-

pleting it this year, are eligible to apply, irrespective of their stream, or combination of subjects in school, provided that they had Mathematics up to Class X. Additionally, applicants to the BSc (Hons) Economics and BSc (Hons) Economics and Finance programmes must have Mathematics in Class XII.

DEADLINE: April 6
<https://www.applytoisbf.com/HomePage/ug/ApplyUG.aspx>

MSc Biomedical Engineering

The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow is inviting applications for MSc in Biomedical Engineering course starting in September 2020. As part of the course, students

will go on visits to local clinical centres and attend lectures from industrialists and visiting experts from the UK and overseas. Students will also have the opportunity to meet many industrial and clinical partners to help advise and further their career. Scholarship of up to £3,000 for eligible students is available for this programme.

ELIGIBILITY: First or second-class Honours degree, or equivalent, in engineering, physical science, life science, medicine, or a profession allied to medicine.

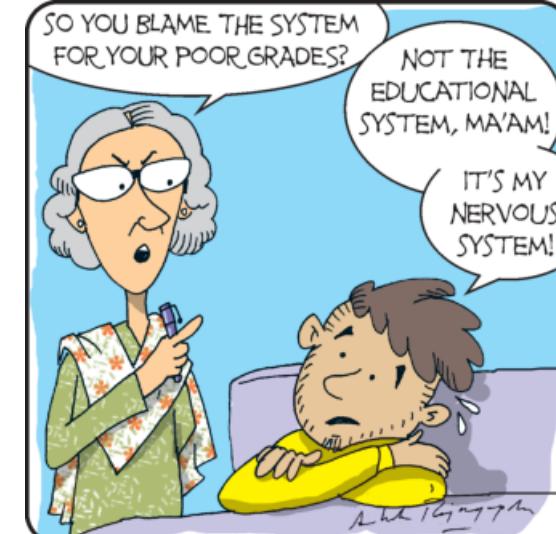
DURATION: One year

FEE: £21,500

<https://www.strath.ac.uk/k/courses/postgraduate/taught/biomedical-engineering/#whythis-course,eng-admissions11@strath.ac.uk>

EAR SHOT

ASHOK RAJAGOPALAN



DYSXA app

To help children with dyslexia, Souradeep Sarkar, an eight-year-old from Burdwan, has created the DYSXA app, which is a learning aid app for dyslexic kids. This app enables them to learn alphabet and numbers. Once logged in, it aids users in learning, forming words, has animation for words such as birds, pictures of objects, and pronounces the word to help kids learn the pronunciation of the word fed in the app. It also has a separate colour and sound for every letter, and quizzes to help kids practice and identify the correct words or spellings.

KNOWLEDGE

Q1

This form of technology uses conductive and resistive layers which are connected to a circuit. The electricity always passes through the conductive layer.

But, when pressure is applied on the resistive layer, the circuit breaks and the function corresponding to the area of pressure is carried out.

What form of technology is this, that is used in most phones?



Q2

In January 2020, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, decided to step down from their royal duties.

They stated that they intend to become financially independent and pursue charitable causes.



Hence, which American fast-food chain, that has a royal connotation, jokingly offered Prince Harry a part-time job on Twitter?

Q3

The World Health Organization convenes emergency meetings to assess whether the outbreak of a virus constitutes an international emergency.

Previously, it had declared 2019 Ebola outbreak Congo, 2016 Zika virus, the 2009 H1N1 swine flu and the 2014 polio and Ebola outbreaks as global health emergencies.



World Health Organization

In January 2020, they gathered to evaluate the outbreak of a virus in the Wuhan province of China, that shares its name with the outermost part of the sun's atmosphere. Name the virus.

COURTESY: WALNUT KNOWLEDGE SOLUTIONS

B.Tech programmes

Manipal Institute of Technology is offering BTech programmes in Data Science and Engineering. The key highlights of the course will be core competency in data science, computational math and statistics, minor specialisation in finance, business, health care, and multi-campus model with mandatory student mobility in one semester, industry collaboration for the teaching-learning process, option of semester abroad and option of integrated master's programme with foreign universities. Students can also opt for custom-designed programme electives in subjects such as data engineering, quantum computing, data forensics, data privacy, and security. For more information datascience@manipal.edu

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CM YK

MADHUR TANKHA

Five years ago, filmmaker Benoy K. Behl almost went blind. "It happened quite suddenly in the winter of 2015 when I was at home (in Delhi). By the time the swelling in my eyes had subsided, the damage to my optic nerve was already done," says Behl.

At All India Institute of Medical Sciences, doctors found that the internal eye pressure was extremely high, and the optic nerve was badly damaged. It led to 90% blindness. As he underwent treatment, doctors suggested he see a yoga instructor, who could help him cope with his new reality.

"I was completely shattered," says Benoy, who travels around the globe to give lectures on Indian mythology and Buddhism. To help him cope, Dr. Tanuj Dada, professor of ophthalmology and senior doctor at RP Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences at AIIMS, sent

A new lease of life

Post his new documentary on yoga, visually-challenged filmmaker Benoy K. Behl on how the practice helped him cope with his reality

him to the yoga department. "Yoga gave me inner strength and the ability to fight negativity," says the filmmaker, who wasn't unfamiliar with the practice, having already made two documentaries on it, *Yoga: An Ancient Vision of Life* and *Sivananda Yoga: Health Educator Training*.

Taking a cue from his personal experience, the 63-year-old, now a regular yoga practitioner, travelled to 10 countries spanning four continents to make *Yoga for Health & Global Harmony*. It was first shown at the Guadalajara International Book Fair in Mexi-



co last December.

The film shows people from around the globe performing various asanas, talking about how it has benefited them, interspersed with the expert view. For instance, Anu Ramaswamy at Sivananda Yoga Farm, in the U.S., talks about the neuromuscular restless leg syndrome, and how meditation and *pranayama* helps her. Maria Adelaida Lopez, working with an NGO in Bogota, reveals that Colombia has about seven million victims of armed conflict. She feels yoga is a useful tool to help those affected by it.

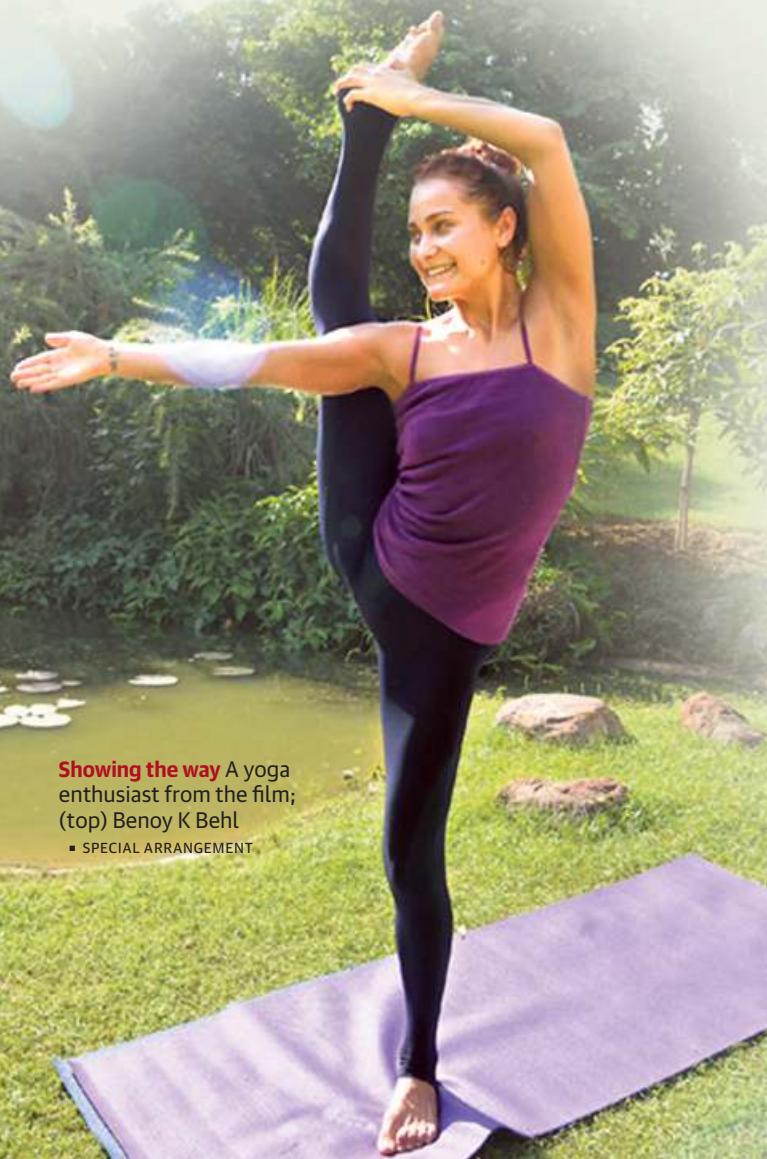
Ananda Balayogi, a medical doctor and yoga teacher from Puducherry, Dr. Sat Bir Khalsa who is a yoga researcher at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Dr. BN Gangadhar, Director at NIMHANS, Bengaluru, are some of the experts quoted. Edited excerpts from a conversation.

What propelled you to direct another film on yoga?

● Yoga is India's greatest gift to the world. It cuts across all political boundaries and is enormously beneficial to human beings everywhere. As stress-related health problems have been growing around the globe, people are turning more and more to yoga. I wanted to make a film which showed the universal acceptance of yoga.

Was there a period when you just couldn't work?

● Not really. However, the winter of 2015 was extremely challenging, and sometimes I felt quite lost. When I first sat down to write a script in early 2016, I was dismayed, as I could not even see two words on the



Showing the way A yoga enthusiast from the film; (top) Benoy K Behl ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

page in front of me. However, I took a second breath and concentrated, while I constantly kept moving my eyes left and right, to be able to see more words. The first time I had to go out to give an illustrated talk, in the winter of 2016, I was disheartened, because I could not see most of what was on the screen. However, I have slowly got used to managing the eyesight which I have. When I look at your left eye, I cannot see your forehead, your right eye or your lips. It is through concentration and through the grace of nature, that all is well and I am continuing my humble service to propagate the fine values of Indian philosophy and culture.

How do you manage your eyesight?

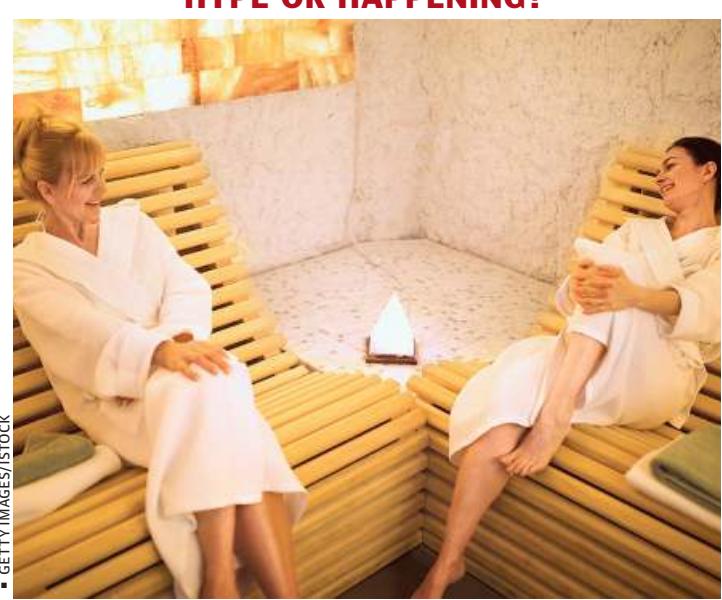
● The treatment is still going on in three departments: under the departments of Glaucoma, Neurology, and Yoga Therapy. The attempt is to preserve the remaining 10%. They say that no restoration is possible. I am taking Omega 3 in natural state, like walnuts, flax seeds, chia seeds, fish like salmon and tuna. Eye drops are administered thrice a day. The doctor changes my eye drops every month. There are two types of eye drops: the first drains out excess fluid in the eye, the second retards development of excess fluid.

What sort of asanas has the yoga therapist prescribed?

● Our focus is on meditation. Asanas are a step to meditation. But in my case, doctors asked me to go straight to meditation. My *pranayama* and meditation are now for longer periods and are deeper, for 45 minutes each, which I do at home. I have been practising Karma yoga, selfless action, where you lose your ego, for a number of years. It helps to give peace and depth to my existence.

What does yoga give the world?

● Yoga reduces the confusion and false perceptions of practitioners. It helps them to have a clearer understanding of themselves, their own emotions and thoughts. Therefore, a better perspective and understanding of the world around them. The film highlights how yoga practitioners have become kinder, generous and compassionate. This transformation means better behaviour, a better mental attitude and a better perspective on life. It means less violence, less crime, less war. So as a consequence, when you change the individual, you change society.



Dry salt therapy

PRABALIKA BORAH

Is salt therapy truly next-level steam inhalation? The claim is that dry salt therapy, or halotherapy, a drug-free, natural therapy that uses micro-particles of salt, promotes better breathing, healthier skin, improved sleep, physical fitness, endurance, and overall wellness. There are also claims that it helps in respiratory illnesses (asthma, bronchitis) and in skin infections (psoriasis, eczema).

Mitali Sanghi, at Hyderabad's recently-opened Salt World, explains that salt therapy uses "pharmaceutical-grade dry salt in a comfortable, controlled environment." Within the 'cave', a device called a halogenator disperses microscopic salt particles into the room. During the process, tiny particles go deep into the airways and lungs and will also land on the skin.

"Natural salt dispersed through micronised inhalers makes the sputum thin and less viscous (sticky)," says Dr Mallikarjun Rao S, Hyderabad-based senior consultant pulmonologist. However, he adds that it should be limited to once a week for six-eight weeks, alongside regular medication. "I would suggest caution in high blood pressure patients, and for people to consult their pulmonologist/physician before going for a session."

HYPE

"Halotherapy is a blend of western medicine with naturopathy practices used as a cosmetic treatment for the skin. It nourishes the skin and has an effect in treating the symptoms of eczema and rosacea, besides ageing changes. It has a natural anti-inflammatory property, which can help control psoriasis and other skin conditions, plus it can make skin texture younger-looking and brighter," says Dr G Manmohan, Hyderabad-based consultant dermatologist.

But, he adds, it could be the result of a placebo effect. There are many ways of delivering the salt into the body for therapeutic purposes, such as saline solution inhalation, dry salt aerosol inhalation, irrigation, saline lavage and brine baths (creno therapy), he says.

In fact, a literature review of 151 studies published in the *International Journal of COPD* said, "From this review, recommendations for inclusion of halotherapy as a therapy for COPD cannot be made at this point, and there is a need for high quality studies to determine the effectiveness of this therapy."

In Dr Manmohan's words, "Publicity cannot be taken as proof for treatment purposes."

In this column, we decode health trends and decide if it's all just 'hype' or actually 'happening'

POOCH CAFE



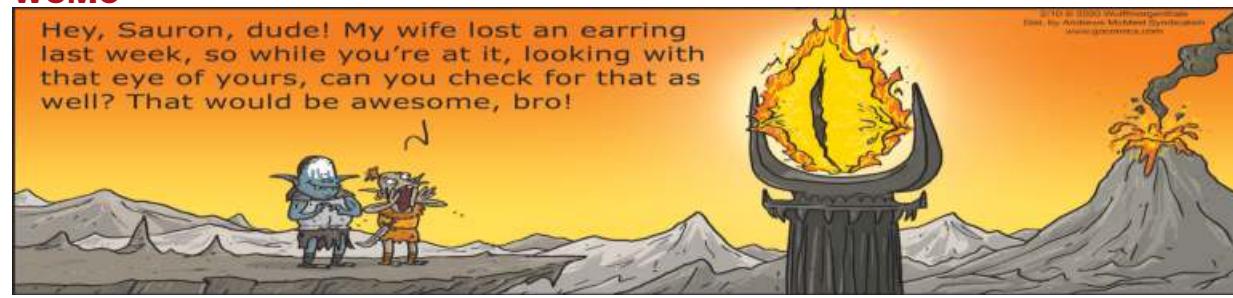
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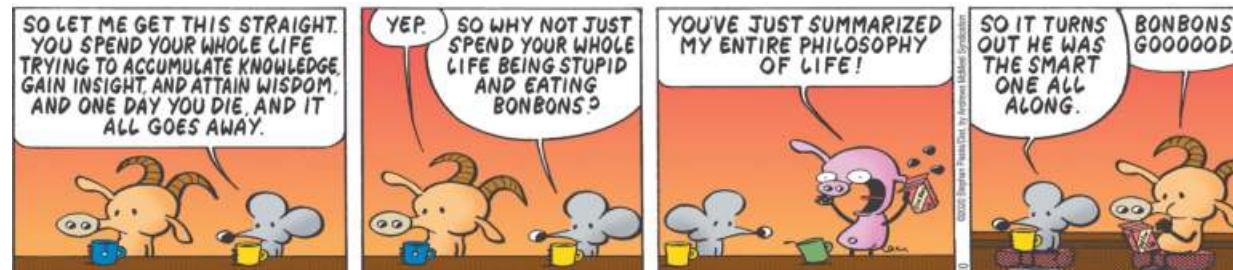
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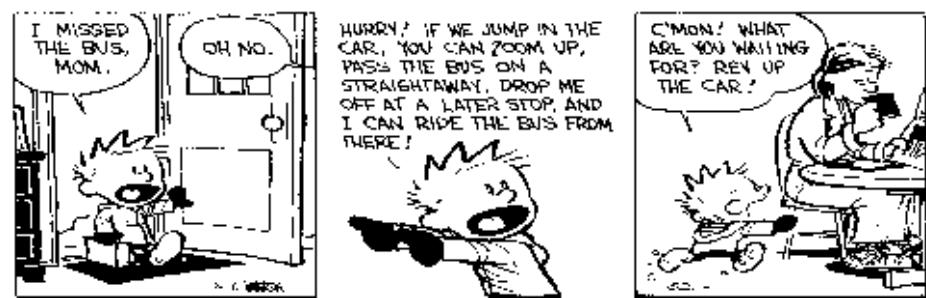
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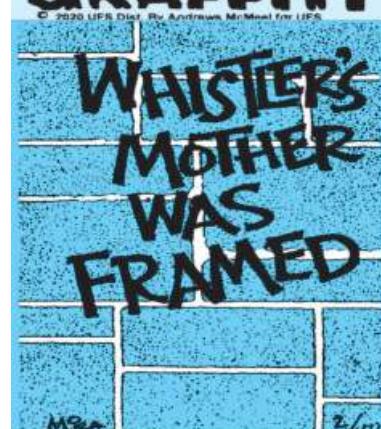
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



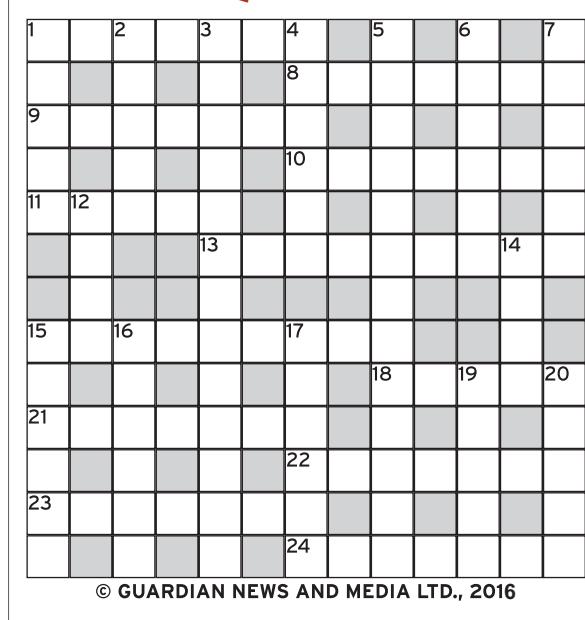
GRAFFITI



HEALTH CAPSULES



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13298



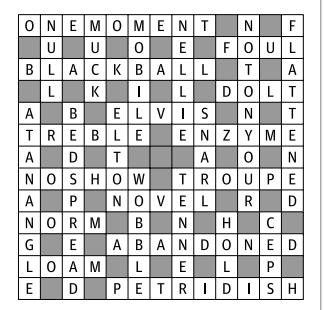
To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

- 12 Make audible sounds (4)
- 14 Compass point (4)
- 15 Ill-tempered (informal) (6)
- 16 Pay back money received (6)
- 17 Plants with slender stems and large trumpet-shaped flowers (6)
- 19 Tendon, for example (5)
- 20 Each one without exception (5)

The solution will appear on February 11, 2020.

Solution No. 13297

- Across
- 1 Exclamation of surprise (7)
- 8 Place for planes (7)
- 9 Crucially important (7)
- 10 Afternoon food? (7)
- 11 Of the kidneys (5)
- 13 Put by for later (9)
- 15 Throttled (9)
- 18 Fritter away (5)
- 21 A heathen (7)
- 22 Strongly felt (7)
- 23 Shaven part of a monk's head (7)
- 24 Unhealthily thin (7)
- Down
- 1 Delightful (5)
- 2 Large crow (5)
- 3 Material once used for building walls – adult BA wanted (anag) (6,3,4)
- 4 Rope for leading a horse (6)
- 5 A punishment diet? (5,3,5)
- 6 Return (2,4)
- 7 Pay heed (6)



CM YK

Sensational Tiger Cubs conquer the world

Dethrone India in a thrilling final as Akbar guides the team home; Jaiswal and Bishnoi's efforts go in vain

U-19 WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
POTCHEFSTROOM

A sprightly bunch of Bangladesh boys created history by winning the country's first global title, shocking defending champion India by three wickets in the summit clash of the ICC U-19 World Cup here on Sunday.

In a low-scoring final, Bangladesh restricted India to 177 in 47.2 overs and did well to score the revised target of 170 in 42.1 overs under the DLS method.

Once play resumed after a rain break, the target was revised to 170 and with seven runs to get and three wickets in hand, it became a cakewalk for the Tiger Cubs as they scripted a golden chapter in their country's cricket history.

Calm and collected

Credit should go to Bangladesh's 18-year-old captain Akbar Ali, who showed nerves of steel while making a patient unbeaten 43 off 77 balls. His effort outshone Yashasvi Jaiswal's 88 off 121 balls for India.

Akbar's cool quotient was there for everyone to see as he marshalled his resources brilliantly and then batted responsibly, seeing out India's threats from leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi and fast bowler Kartik Tyagi.

There were two things that cost India dear. While batting, it lost its last seven wicks-

ets for 23. Once Jaiswal was out, the lack of match-time for the other Indian batsmen was evident. While defending a sub-par total, the number of extras (33) mattered a lot in the final context of the game.

Bangladesh's chase started in earnest with Parvez Hosain Emon (47 off 79 balls) and Tanzid Hasan (17) adding 50 in quick time.

However, things changed once leg-spinner Bishnoi (4/30 in 10 overs) came into the attack, bamboozling the batsmen with his googlies. But Emon, who came back to the crease after retiring with a hamstring injury, and Akbar took the team closer to the target before the latter finished things in style.

Earlier, India's batting wilted under pressure against a superb Bangladesh attack. Jaiswal (88 off 121 balls) was once again the standout performer even as the new ball bowlers Shoriful Islam (2/31 in 10 overs) and Tanzim Hasan Shakib (2/28 in 8.2 overs) stifled the batsmen. Seamer Avishek Das (3/40 in 9 overs) was the most successful bowler, but it was Shoriful's opening burst that put the Indians on the backfoot at the outset. That proved vital in the end.

■ India lost its last seven wickets for 23 runs
■ Defending a sub-par total, the team gave away 33 extras



The dazzlers: Bangladesh won its maiden U-19 World Cup, overcoming the odds and favourite India. ■ PTI

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Yashasvi Jaiswal c Tanzid b Shoriful 88 (121b, 8x4, 1x6), Divyaansh Saxena c Mahmudul b Avishek 2 (77b), Tilak Varma c Shoriful b Tanzim 38 (65b, 3x4), Priyam Garg c Tanzid b Rakibul 7 (9b), Dhruti Jurel run out 22 (38b, 1x4), Siddhesh Veer lbw b Shoriful 0 (1b), Atharva Ankolekar b Avishek 3 (7b), Ravi Bishnoi run out 2 (6b), Sushant Mishra c Shoriful b Tanzim 3 (8b), Kartik Tyagi c Akbar b Avishek 0 (5b), Akash Singh (not out) 1 (7b); Extras (lb-1, w-10); 11; Total (in 47.2 overs):

177.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-9 (Divyaansh, 6.4 overs), 2-103 (Tilak, 28.6), 3-114 (Garg, 31.3), 4-156 (Jaiswal, 39.5), 5-156 (Veer, 39.6), 6-168 (Jurel, 42.2), 7-170 (Bishnoi, 43.5), 8-170 (Atharva, 44.1), 9-172 (Tyagi, 44.6).

BANGLADESH BOWLING

Shoriful 10-1-31-2, Tanzim 8.2-2-28, Avishek 9-0-40-3, Shamim 6-0-36-0, Rakibul 10-1-29-1, Hridoy 4-0-12-0.

BANGLADESH

Parvez Hossain c Akash b Jaiswal 47 (79b, 7x4), Tanzid

Hasan c Tyagi b Bishnoi 17 (25b, 2x4, 1x6), Mahmudul Hasan Joy b Bishnoi 8 (12b, 2x4), Towhid Hridoy lbw b Bishnoi 0 (2b), Shahadat Hossain st Jurel b Bishnoi 1 (10b), Akbar Ali (not out) 43 (77b, 4x4, 1x6), Shamim Hossain c Jaiswal b Shoriful 7 (18b), Avishek Das c Tyagi b Sushant 5 (7b, 1x4), Rakibul Hasan (not out) 9 (25b, 1x4).

Toss: Bangladesh.
Man-of-the-Match: Akbar Ali.
Man-of-the-Series: Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Revised target: 170 in 46 overs
FALL OF WICKETS
1-50 (Tanzid, 8.5 ov), 2-62 (Mahmudul, 12.5), 3-62 (Hridoy, 14.1), 4-65 (Shahadat, 16.1), 5-85 (Shamim, 20.1), 6-102 (Avishek, 22.6), 7-143 (Parvez, 31.6).

INDIA BOWLING

Tyagi 10-2-33-0, Sushant 7-0-25-2, Akash 8-1-33-0, Bishnoi 10-3-30-4, Ankolekar 4-1-0-22-0, Jaiswal 3-0-15-1.

Extras (b-8, lb-4, nb-2, w-19); 33; Total (for seven wkts. in 42.1 overs): 170.

Revised target: 170 in 46 overs
FALL OF WICKETS
1-50 (Tanzid, 8.5 ov), 2-62 (Mahmudul, 12.5), 3-62 (Hridoy, 14.1), 4-65 (Shahadat, 16.1), 5-85 (Shamim, 20.1), 6-102 (Avishek, 22.6), 7-143 (Parvez, 31.6).

Akbar Ali regrets needless aggression

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
POTCHEFSTROOM

batsmen after almost every delivery.

As Bangladesh approached the finish line, Shoriful was caught on camera, swearing multiple times.

Pumped up

"Some of our bowlers were emotional and pumped up. What happened after the game was unfortunate. I would like to congratulate India," said skipper Akbar after the post-match conference.

As soon as the match ended, the Bangladesh players rushed to the ground, most of them still showing their aggressive side.

One Indian player rushed to confront and even pushed a Bangladesh player who had allegedly said some uncharitable things, and it was left to coach Paras Mhambre to calm down his boys.



Mixed feelings: Though Yashasvi Jaiswal bagged the Player-of-the-Series award, the defeat in the final will rankle. ■ COURTESY ICC

Gill hits unbeaten century

INDIA-A IN NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LINCOLN (NEW ZEALAND)

Shubman Gill struck an unbeaten 107 as India-A made 234 for one in reply to New Zealand-A's 386 for nine declared on the third day of their four-day 'Test' here on Sunday.

Opening the batting alongside skipper Hanuma Vihari (59), Gill scored his runs off 153 balls with the help of thirteen 4s and one 6. Middle-or-

der mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara was with Gill at the crease on 52 off 99 balls at draw of stumps.

Earlier, New Zealand declared at 386 for nine in 131.5 overs after the second day's play was washed out on Saturday. Daryl Mitchell remained unbeaten on 103 off 222 balls during which he struck ten 4s and a 6.

Besides, Glenn Phillips made 65, while wicketkeeper Dane Cleaver scored 53.

For India, Sandeep War-

rier (2/50), Mohammed Siraj (2/75), Avesh Khan (2/82) and veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (2/98) shared eight wickets.

India-A now trails by 152 runs with just a day's play remaining.

The scores: New Zealand-A 386/9 decl. in 131.5 overs (Hamish Rutherford 40, Glenn Phillips 65, Tim Seifert 30, Dane Cleaver 53, Daryl Mitchell 103) vs India-A 234/1 in 53 overs (Shubman Gill 107 batting, Cheteshwar Pujara 52 batting).



Hitting back: Shubman Gill had an answer to everything New Zealand-A threw at him. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Vesely outlasts Gerasimov, ends drought

The Czech's previous title had come at Auckland in 2015



Cry of delight: Jiri Vesely gives vent to his emotions after winning the title. ■ R. RAGU

TATA OPEN

N. SUDARSHAN
PUNE

Jiri Vesely ended a five-year ATP Tour title-drought after beating Egor Gerasimov 7-6 (2), 5-7, 6-3 in the final of the Tata Open Maharashtra on Sunday.

The Czech, who last won a title at Auckland in early 2015, is the first player outside the top-100 to win India's only ATP Tour event in its 25-year history. Come Monday, he is set to gain more than 30 places and find a position in the high 70s.

"A week ago I would not have thought of this," the 26-year-old said after the triumph. "It's only February and having a title already feels great. In every single year I had big successes, highlights, like playing the fourth round at Wimbledon in 2016 and 2018. But I was never able to push on. So now I need to stay focused in

the next tournaments."

For the 27-year-old Gerasimov, who played his first final, the week gone by was like an audition and at the end of it there was no doubt in his talent. Against Vesely, he looked a tad subdued compared to his earlier matches. But he made Vesely play his best match of the tournament.

Vesely started the evening with two crunching forehand winners – a significant improvement from his last two matches – and broke Gerasimov in the very first game. Even as the Belarusian restored parity immediately, Vesely kept up the pressure.

In the third and the ninth games, he had Gerasimov at 0-30 but the latter held on admirably. In the tie-break, though, from 3-2, Vesely reeled off four straight points to take a one-set lead.

"I was not really happy with the first set," Gerasimov said. "I didn't push in the beginning. Tie-break is a lot-

tery. There wasn't a big difference between us. Just up and down and I had to execute at the right moment."

Levelling it
That moment arrived in the 11th game of the second set when he stretched Vesely on the forehand side way beyond the tramlines. One of two errors Vesely made thus was on breakpoint and Gerasimov duly served out the set on his first opportunity.

The third was perhaps Vesely's best set all week, making 75% of first serves against 63% the whole match and winning 83% of those. He broke to 2-0 after Gerasimov had gone 30-0 up by displaying the kind of staying power in long rallies that had deserted him earlier in the competition. Up 4-2, he finished on the right side of a nearly 20-shot rally that seemed to suck out every last ounce of energy left in Gerasimov. Serving at 5-3, he held to love to seal the contest.

"I have to be realistic," Vesely said. "I had a lot of luck during the week, saving so many match points, especially in the quarters and semis."

"It's something that happens maybe once in a lifetime. I had to stay calm in important moments and I am really happy about that."

Rungkat's distinction
Earlier in the evening, Christopher Rungkat became the first Indonesian to win a Tour event when he clinched the doubles title in the company of Swede Andre Goransson, defeating Jonathan Erlich and Andrei Vasilevski 6-2, 3-6, [10-8].

The results: Finals: Singles: Jiri Vesely (Cze) bt Egor Gerasimov (Blr) 7-6(2), 5-7, 6-3.

Doubles: Andre Goransson (Swe) & Christopher Rungkat (Ind) bt Jonathan Erlich (Isr) & Andrei Vasilevski (Blr) 6-2, 3-6, [10-8].

"I was not really happy with the first set," Gerasimov said. "I didn't push in the beginning. Tie-break is a lot-

Rapors keep title with top show

Chan-Won duo clinches it against North-Eastern Warriors

PBL

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

Bengaluru Raptors became the first team in the Premier Badminton League championship to win back-to-back titles when it scored a 4-2 win over first-time finalist North-Eastern Warriors in the fifth edition at the Gachibowli Indoor Stadium here on Sunday.

And, this time, the mixed doubles pair of Chan Peng Soon and Eom Hye Won, playing the Trump match for Raptors, lived up to the expectations of their team and the lustily cheering fans to outslug G. Krishna Prasad and Kim Ha Na and clinch

the trophy for their team.

Strong comeback

Earlier, in the first singles match, Sai Praneeth, World championship bronze medallist and captain of Raptors, came back strongly after losing the first game to outplay World No. 18 Lee Cheuk Yiu.

It was a performance which should have pleased even World No. 2 and Sai's teammate Tai Tzu Ying.

Though he was erratic in the first game, the crowd favourite stepped into a different zone in the next two games, especially after winning the 39-stroke rally point at the start of second game.

Best foot forward

Then, in the men's doubles, Warriors' pair of Bodin Isara and Lee Yong Dae (T) 11-15, 15-13, 14-15; Tai Tzu Ying bt Michelle Li 15-9, 15-12; Chan Peng Soon & Eom Hye Won (T) bt G. Krishna Prasad & Kim Ha Na 15-14, 14-15, 15-12.



Basking in the limelight: The jubilant Bengaluru Raptors team which retained the Premier Badminton League title. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

England beats SA in final ODI

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JOHANNESBURG

England beat South Africa by two wickets in the third and final ODI on Sunday.

England leg-spinner Adil Rashid took three wickets in his 100th ODI as South Africa was restricted to 256 for seven.

The visitors' chase was orchestrated by Jonny Bairstow (43) and Joe Root (49) and Joe Denly (66).

The scores: South Africa 256/7 in 50 overs (Quinton de Kock 69, David Miller 69 n.o., Adil Rashid 3/51) lost to England 257/8 in 43.2 overs (Jonny Bairstow 43, Joe Root 49, Joe Denly 66, Lungi Ngidi 3/63, Beuran Hendricks 3/59). **Three-match series shared 1-1.**

Leon Bailey torments Dortmund

TV PICKS

ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.15 p.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 a.m.
Pakistan vs Bangladesh: 1st Test, day 4, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 10.30 a.m.

IN BRIEF



Duplantis breaks World pole vault record

PARIS Armand Duplantis of Sweden set a World pole vault record of 6.17m at an indoor meeting in Torun, Poland. Duplantis, the US-born 20-year-old who won silver at last year's World championships in Doha, cleared the bar on Saturday on his second attempt to break French vaulter Renaud Lavillenie's record of 6.16m set in February, 2014. **AFP**

VanVleet shines as Raptors pip Nets

LOS ANGELES Fred VanVleet scored 10 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter as Toronto Raptors extended its franchise-best winning streak to 14 games with a 119-118 victory over Brooklyn Nets on Saturday. **The results:** Indiana Pacers 117 lost to New Orleans Pelicans 124; Toronto Raptors 119 bt Brooklyn Nets 118; Sacramento Kings 122 bt San Antonio Spurs 102; Phoenix Suns 108 lost to Denver Nuggets 117; Minnesota Timberwolves 142 bt LA Clippers 115; Charlotte Hornets 100 lost to Dallas Mavericks 116; Detroit Pistons 92 lost to New York Knicks 95; Golden State Warriors 120 lost to LA Lakers 125; Orlando Magic 95 lost to Milwaukee Bucks 111. **AFP**

Humpy loses to Muzychuk

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ST. LOUIS (USA) India's Koneru Humpy lost to Mariya Muzychuk in the second round of the Cairns Cup chess tournament while compatriot Dronavalli Harika drew with Nana Dzagnidze.

Second round results: K. Humpy lost to Mariya Muzychuk; D. Harika drew with Nana Dzagnidze.

Katerina Lagon bt Carissa Yip; Alexandra Kosteniuk bt Valentina Gunina; Ju Wenjun drew with Irina Krush.

Riya loses to Perez

SPORTS BUREAU HUA HIN Riya Bhatia was outplayed 6-0, 6-1 by fifth seed Ellen Perez of Australia in the \$275,000 WTA Thailand Open tennis tournament on Sunday.

Ankita Raina was a direct entrant in the main draw and will play Katarzyna Kawa of Poland in the first round.

The result: \$275,000 WTA, Hua Hin: Qualifying singles (second and final round): Ellen Perez (Aus) bt Riya Bhatia 6-0, 6-1.

Fateh Singh makes it to main draw

SPORTS BUREAU BURUGRAM Second seed Fateh Singh fought his way past Namish Sharma 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 in the second and final qualifying round of the Asian under-14 tennis tournament at the Yellow Balls Tennis Academy in Baliawas on Sunday.

The results: Boys qualifying singles (second and final round): Jason David bt Pratyaksh 6-1, 6-1; Fateh Singh bt Namish Sharma 6-4, 4-6, 6-4; Pranay Vadhera bt Akshath Jenish 6-4, 6-1; Jash Shah bt Smit Nilesbhai Patel 7-6(3), 6-1; K. Mahalingam bt Riddhiman Ojha 6-0, 6-2; Manav Sival bt Himank Singh 6-1, 6-3; Dhruv Sachdeva bt Suhas Soma 6-1, 6-4; Mayank Sharma bt Ekamjeet Singh Cheema 6-4, 6-3.

Harmanpreet's error costs India dear

Loses to Belgium in the second match after winning the first

FIH PRO LEAGUE

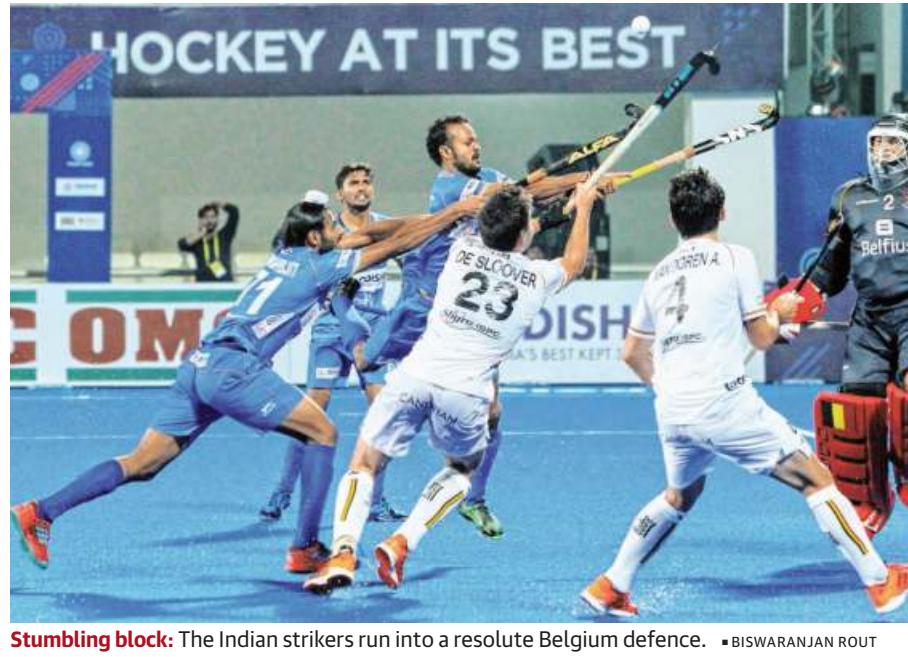
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BHUBANESWAR

India fought hard but a defensive lapse from Harmanpreet Singh cost it dear as it slumped to its first defeat in the second edition of the FIH Hockey Pro League, losing 2-3 to World champion Belgium here on Sunday.

After defeating World No. 3 the Netherlands in its opening two matches, India beat the top-ranked Belgium in a thrilling match on Saturday to continue its unbeaten run which lifted it to No. 4 in the World rankings.

But the Manpreet Singh-led side could not repeat Saturday's performance and went down fighting in the second match.

Alexander Hendrickx scored off a penalty corner in the third minute for Belgium, but it was Maxime Plen-



Stumbling block: The Indian strikers run into a resolute Belgium defence. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

neaux's two field goals (17th, 26th) that ensured a win for the visitors.

India's goals through Vi-

vek Sagar Prasad (15th) and Amit Rohidas (17th).

The win enabled Belgium

keep its top spot with 14

points from six games. India

is placed second with eight

points from four matches.

The Red Lions took the

lead as early as the third minute when Hendrickx found the target off a penalty corner after the efforts of Sébastien Dockier and Thomas Briels were saved by India custodian P.R. Sreejesh.

India drew level eight seconds before the end of the first quarter when Vivek tapped home after Surender Kumar's fine work from the right flank.

Belgium restored its lead two minutes into the second quarter through Plennevaux, who deflected home a pass from Simon Gougnard.

But it took India just 30 seconds to level the scores when Rohidas scored off a rebound from a penalty corner.

The result: Belgium 3 (Alexander Hendrickx 3-PC, Maxime Plennevaux 17, 26) bt India 2 (Vivek Sagar Prasad 15, Amit Rohidas 17).

Next assignment: Feb. 21 & 22: India vs Australia.

Naseem youngest to perform the 'trick'

CRICKET

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE RAWALPINDI

Pakistan's teenage fast bowler sensation Naseem Shah on Sunday became the youngest player to claim a hat-trick in Test history when he produced a stunning spell to leave Bangladesh on the brink of a huge defeat on the third day of the first Test.



Naseem... dream day. ■ AP

Bangladesh, trailing by 212 in the first innings after bowling out Pakistan for 445, was rocked by Naseem in the 41st over of its second innings when he dismissed Najmul Hossain Shanto (38), Tajul Islam (0) and Mahmudullah (0) off successive deliveries.

The 16-year-old youngster trapped Shanto and Islam leg before with fast inswinging deliveries and had the experienced Mahmudul-

Bagan gets the better of Punjab FC

I-LEAGUE

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA KALYANI

Mohun Bagan cruised to its fourth consecutive win, downing Punjab FC by a solitary goal in the I-League at its home in Kalyani Stadium here on Sunday.

The win helped Mohun Bagan consolidate its position on top of the table, opening up a nine-point lead over its closest challenger – Punjab FC.

Senegalese striker Baba-

Diawara found the only goal of the encounter late in the first half to see the 2015 champion collect the full quota of points and extend its unbeaten run to nine matches. Bagan now tallies 26 points from 11 matches.

The host went for the kill early and opened up the flanks in an effort to feed the Senegalese forward in the box, but the Punjab defence held strong. V.P. Suhair, partnering Diawara, came close to finishing first but saw his header, on a Joseba Beitia corner, going over in the 20th minute.

The Punjab defence finally succumbed to the relentless Bagan efforts in the 42nd minute when Diawara reached a long throw from Dhanchandra Singh and nodded home.

Bagan almost found the target again in the 39th minute when Punjab's Nepalese goalkeeper Kiran Limbu fumbled while trying to clear a cross from Ashutosh Mehra. Suhair tried a snap header on goal as the ball rebounded off the keeper.

But doughty Brazilian midfielder Danilo Augusto cut it off from the line.

The Punjab defence finally succumbed to the relentless Bagan efforts in the 42nd minute when Diawara reached a long throw from Dhanchandra Singh and nodded home.

The result:

Mohun Bagan 1 (Babacar Diawara 42) bt Punjab FC 0.



Ideally positioned: Babacar Diawara nods home the match-winner for Bagan. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

Smashing Blue wins feature

HYDERABAD: Mr. P. Prabhakar Reddy & Dr. Peddy Reddy Prabhakar Reddy's Smashing Blue (David Allan) won the Darley Arabian Million, the chief event of the races held here on Sunday (Feb. 9).

R.H. Sequeira trains the winner. Jockey Ashhad Asbar and trainer M. Srinivas Reddy scored a treble each.

1 KASU BRAHMANANDA REDDY MEMORIAL TROPHY (Div. II), (1,400m), (Cat. II). (Terms): ASHWA BRAVO (Suraj Narredu) 1, Amyra (Ajit Kumar) 2, N.R.I Touch (David Allan) 3 and Khinalas (I. Chisty) 4. 5-3/4, 5 and 1/2. Im, 25.64s. (7w), 6, 20 and 6 (p), SHP: 58; FP: 93, Q: 79, Tla: 282. Favourite: Ashwa Bravo. Owner: Mr. Ravinder Pal Singh Chauhan. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

2 POCHAMPALLY CUP (Div. II), (1,400m), 5-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): SIYABONGA (Ashad Asbar) 2, R. I Vision (David Allan) 2, Shiloh (Afroz Khan) 3 and Dunkirk (Mukesh Kumar) 4. 1-1/2, 2 and 1/2, Im, 26.22s. (8w, 8, 8 and 16 (p), SHP: 19, FP: 57; Q: 32, Tla: 503. Favourite: N.R.I Vision. Owners: M/s. Five Stars Shipping Co. Pvt. Ltd. rep. by Mr. K.N. Dhuñjhbjoy & Mr. Z.K. Dhuñjhbjoy. Trainer: Laxman Singh.

3 HYDERABAD CITY POLICE 3 COMMISSIONER'S TROPHY (Div. II), (1,800m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): MA-

HASHAKTI (Ashhad Asbar) 1, Ice Warrior (B.R. Kumar) 2, Glendale (I. Chisty) 3 and Minnelli (Suraj Narredu) 4. 1, ns and shd. Im, 53.90s. (23 (w), 9, 13 and 7 (p), SHP: 48; FP: 325, Q: 187, Tla: 1,636. Favourite: Minnelli. Owners: M/s. Rakesh R. Jhunjhunwala, Berjis Minoo Desai & Ashok Kumar Gupta. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy. Trainer: L.D.Silva.

4 KASU BRAHMANANDA REDDY MEMORIAL TROPHY (Div. II), (1,400m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II). (Terms): BISATE (Ashhad Asbar) 1, Mark My Day (Aneel) 2, Quan Daenrys (Suraj Narredu) 3 and Royal Pal (B.R. Kumar) 4. NS. 4 and 4-1/2, 1, 27.48s. (27 (w), 9, 18 and 6 (p), SHP: 60, FP: 71, Q: 31, Tla: 2,010. Favourite: Advance Guard. Owners: M/s. Five Stars Shipping Co. Pvt. Ltd. rep. by Mr. K.N. Dhuñjhbjoy & Z.K. Dhuñjhbjoy. Trainer: Laxman Singh.

5 DARLEY ARABIAN MILLION (1,200m), 3-y-o only (Terms): SMASHING BLUE (David Allan) 1, Bedford (Suraj Narredu) 2, Exponent (B.R. Kumar) 3 and La Lady (Naran) 4. 2-1/2, 2 and 1-1/4, Im, 13.66s. (5w), 5 and 7 (p), SHP: 7; FP: 7, Q: 6. Favourite: Smashing Blue. Owners: Mr. P. Prabhakar Reddy & Dr. Peddy Reddy Prabhakar Reddy. Trainer: Robin Reddy.

6 HYDERABAD CITY POLICE 6 COMMISSIONER'S TROPHY (Div. I), (1,800m), 4-y-o & over,

rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): SOMERSET (G. Naresh) 1, Ajmal Briju (Gopal Singh) 2, Dinesis (I. Chisty) 3 and Rutilans (Suraj Narredu) 4. Not run: Free Way, 2-1/4, 1 and 1. Im, 55.07s. (107 (w), 16, 11 and 16 (p), SHP: 31, FP: 1,490, Q: 612, Tla: 7,590. Favourite: Mind Reader. Owner: Mr. M. Rama Krishna Reddy. Trainer: L.D.Silva.

7 POCHAMPALLY CUP (Div. I), (1,400m), 5-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): DANDY MAN (Suraj Narredu) 1, Destined Dynamite (Srinath) 2, Balus (Ashhad Asbar) 3 and Top Contender (Abhay Singh) 4. Hd, shd and 1/2. Im, 26.63s. (12 (w), 8, 12 and 8 (p), SHP: 32, FP: 98, Q: 43, Tla: 272. Favourite: Dandy Man. Owner: M/s. Tekulu Chandra Reddy & Raft Hussain. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy. Trainer: Laxman Singh.

8 HIMALAYA PLATE (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): EXCLUSIVE ART (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Blazing Speed (Srinath) 2, Original Temptress (Koushik) 3 and Patron Saint (Jitendra Singh) 4. 4, 1/2 and 4-1/2, Im, 13.17s. (12 (w), 7, 12 and 14 (p), SHP: 36, FP: 81, Q: 59, Tla: 1,051. Favourite: Exclusive Art. Owner: Mr. G. Narasa Reddy. Trainer: Robin Reddy.

9 HYDRA 265 (13 tkt). Runner-up: 7,115 (19 tkt), Mini-Jkt: 1,288 (20 tkt), Tr (i): 99 (321 tkt), (ii): 221 (46 tkt), (iii): 2,715 (41 tkt).

It's King Maker vs. Trump Girl

HYDERABAD: King Maker and Trump Girl may fight out the finish in the first division of the Lingapur Cup (1,200m), the main event of the races to be held here on Monday (Feb. 10).

1 ROCK OF GIBRALTAR PLATE (2,000m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 1-40 p.m.: 1. Wings of Eagles (5) Ajeeth Kumar 60, 2. Symbol Of Star (2) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Vijays Maestro (6) Santosh Raj 59, 4. Brave Syera (1) Afroz Kumar 58, 5. Honourable Guest (8) Mukesh Kumar 56.5, 6. Light Music (4) C.P. Bopanna 55.5, 7. Recumbentibus (7) Srinath 55.5 and 8. Ultimate Risk (3) Jitendra Singh 55.5.

1. ONE ONE ONE, 2. SPORTING SMILE, 3. CITY OF BLOSSOM

4 R.M. REDDY MEMORIAL PLATE (1,600m), 4-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3-15: 1. The Great Gatsby (2) Santosh Raj 60, 2. Mr. Baahubali (2) Srinath 58, 3. Starlight (4) Mukesh Kumar 57.5, 4. Magical Skill (2) Jitendra Singh 56.5, 5. Warrior Supreme (7) Kiran Naidu 55.5, 6. Honest Hunter (8) B.R. Kumar 55, 7. N.R.I Power (6) Suraj Narredu 55, 8. Asteria (10) I. Chisty 54.5, 9. That's My Magic (3) Md. Ismail 54.5, 10. Miss Lily (11) Surya Prakash 54 and 11. Ashka Asika (4) Abhay Singh 51.

1. ONE R I POWER, 2. SUPER DART, 3. WARRIOR SUPREME

5 LINGAPUR CUP (Div. I), (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 3-45: 1. Ashwa Bahula (1) Ajeeth Kumar 60, 2. Super Dart (5) Gopal Singh 58, 3. Starlight (5) Mukesh Kumar 57.5, 4. Magical Skill (2) Jitendra Singh 56.5, 5. Warrior Supreme (7) Kiran Naidu 55.5, 6. Honest Hunter (8) B.R. Kumar 55, 7. N.R.I Power (6) Suraj Narredu 55, 8. Asteria (10) I. Chisty 54.5, 9. That's My Magic (3) Md. Ismail 54.5, 10. Miss Lily (11) Surya Prakash 54 and 11. Ashka Asika (4) Abhay Singh 51.

Cricket royalty comes together to raise money for bushfire relief

A \$7.7 million collected to support impacted communities and families; Lara shines as Ponting XI beats Gilchrist XI by one run



For a good cause: Players pose for a photo op after the celebrity match. • AFP



Imperious, as ever! Brian Lara made it appear he had never been away from the game. • AFP

BIG APPEAL

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

MELBOURNE

Brian Lara showed he still has what it takes with a stylish 30 not out as cricketing royalty helped raise money

to aid Australian bushfire relief in a charity match here on Sunday.

The West Indian legend stroked a series of lofted cover drives and straight drives, including two sixes,

before retiring to give another batsman a chance in a star-studded Bushfire Bash at Melbourne's Junction Oval.

His captain Ricky Ponting, coming in after Justin Langer was out, hit 26 as his team made 104 for five from its 10 overs.

Adam Gilchrist smacked a six off the first ball in the run chase before being knocked over, then Shane Watson slammed 30 from nine balls, with Wasim Akram being punished.

But despite a valiant effort from Gilchrist XI, Ponting's side won by one run.

Players have a ball

"The players had a ball. They are all saying why couldn't we play more," said

Ponting.

"Well done to everyone involved. Sharing a dressing room with guys I spent 25 years with."

After the game, Cricket Australia tweeted "thanks to the incredible generosity

from Australia and around the globe, we've raised over A\$7.7 million to support communities and families impacted by the recent bushfires".

Fund-raising has been ongoing since the blazes began in September. They left at least 30 people dead and thousands of homes destroyed, with many of the fires only brought under control in recent days after torrential rain swept across eastern Australia.

A special five minutes for adoring 'Little Master' fans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MELBOURNE

Never was an innings break so anticipated in a game of cricket.

It lasted for about five minutes, but for Sachin Tendulkar devotees even that was good enough if their 'God' was out there on the 22 yards.

And those five minutes of just putting bat to ball for raising funds for Bushfire charity will be archived with as much care as his hundred international hundreds.

With a dodgy shoulder, Tendulkar didn't take part in the charity game but played an over from Australia's superstar woman cricketer El-

lyse Perry during the break.

Perry had challenged Tendulkar to face her for an over in a video message on social media which the Indian legend had accepted.

Used to seeing him either in spotless whites or the light blue (once navy blue) India colours, the fans at the Junction Oval ground in Melbourne must have been chuffed watching him come out in Australian yellow.

The first delivery by Perry was tucked off his hips and the fielder at short fine-leg let it go much to her embarrassment and the crowd was happy. He repeated the shot towards deep square-leg and got a couple.

"It's an incredible feeling to bowl to Tendulkar and watch Brian Lara bat," said Australia's double international Perry. Perry has also represented Australia in football.

A couple of deliveries were bowled by Annabel Sutherland, daughter of CA chief executive James. But the 46-year-old Tendulkar charitably pushed it towards the fielders. Fans wouldn't have minded a booming cover drive but even the lazy pat to the fielder was vociferously acknowledged. It was over in five minutes but it ended was 'Yesterday Once More'.



Yesterday once more! Sachin Tendulkar revives memories of his halcyon days. • AFP



In exalted company: The Australian women's T20 squad makes the most of some time with Sachin Tendulkar. • AFP



Still breathing fire: West Indian star Courtney Walsh.

MARUTI SUZUKI

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