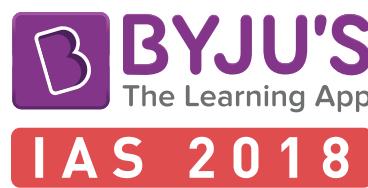


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NEARBY



Elderly couple found dead in S.Delhi home

NEW DELHI
 A missed birthday call led to the discovery of the semi-decomposed bodies of a couple in their 70s inside their ninth-floor flat in south Delhi on January 26, the police said on Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Virender Kumar Khaneja, 78, who retired as a senior manager with a multinational company, and his wife Sarla Khaneja, 72.

DELI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

City shivers as mercury dips to 5 degrees

NEW DELHI
 Cold wave conditions are likely to prevail in the Capital in the coming week, with the Met Department forecasting a fall in the minimum temperature by 2-3 degrees. On Sunday, the minimum temperature settled at 5.2 degrees Celsius, three notches below average.

DELI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

29 girls go missing from Odisha residential school

BERHAMPUR
 Twenty-nine students of a residential high school for girls at Antaria in Odisha's Gajapati district left their hostel on Saturday night and are missing since.

NATION ▶ PAGE 6

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EDGE ▶ 4 PAGES
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In seventh heaven

1 Djokovic is the first player to clinch seven Australian Open crowns, going past Roger Federer and Roy Emerson, who have won six titles

15 The Serb's collection of Majors, putting him third on the all-time list. Only Federer (20) and Nadal (17) are ahead

52 Of the 63 Grand Slams since the 2003 French Open, 52 have been won by the big three - Federer, Nadal and Djokovic

It's one of the best, if not the best, matches I've played in a Grand Slam final... to win three out of [the last] four Slams is amazing NOVAK DJOKOVIC



Dominant display: Novak Djokovic celebrates after demolishing Rafael Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 in the final to claim a record seventh Australian Open in Melbourne on Sunday. This is the first time the Spaniard had lost a Slam final in straight sets. ■ AP

REPORT ON PAGE 15

CBI transfers officer for delay in ICICI Bank loan case probe

Internal inquiry into role of SP Sudhanshu Dhar Mishra

DEVESHK PANDAY

NEW DELHI

The CBI is conducting an internal inquiry into the suspected role of Superintendent of Police Sudhanshu Dhar Mishra in the alleged delay in probing the ICICI Bank loan fraud case.

Mr. Mishra, the supervisory officer, was transferred from the Bank Security and Fraud Cell (Delhi) to the Economic Offences Wing in Jharkhand's Ranchi just a day after the FIR in the case was filed on January 22.

Mr. Mishra is an Indian Revenue Service official on deputation to the CBI.

"A discreet inquiry was

carried out. There was a strong suspicion that he might leak information about the ensuing searches. Therefore, he was transferred..." an official said.

Supervisory officer

The official said Superintendent of Police Mohit Gupta, under whom the searches were conducted on the premises of the accused and the companies on January 24, is now the supervisory officer.

In March last year, the agency instituted a preliminary enquiry into the allegations of irregularities in the credit extended to Videocon Group companies by the ICI-

CI Bank when Chanda Kochhar was its managing director and chief executive officer. "After a review of the progress, it was decided to speed up the preliminary inquiry," the official said.

On January 22, the agency converted the preliminary enquiry into an FIR against Ms. Kochhar, her husband Deepak Kochhar, Videocon Group head Venugopal Dhoot and others for sanction of credit between 2009 and 2012 in alleged violation of rules, causing a loss of ₹1,730 crore to the bank.

Among the companies arraigned are Mr. Kochhar's Nu-power Renewables Limited.

Phone of slain U.P. inspector recovered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MEERUT

The official mobile phone of an inspector, killed in violence last December in Bulandshahar district of Uttar Pradesh, has been recovered from the house of the man who allegedly shot him, officials said on Sunday.

The recovery comes nearly two months after the incident at Syana where, on December 3, a mob fought pitched battles with the police, apparently after right-wing activists were angered by carcasses of cows found strewn outside a village.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

SC: respond to plea against wire-tapping

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
 The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to respond to a petition challenging laws that allow the government to conduct electronic surveillance of private individuals.

The petition, filed by

PUCL, represented by advocate Sanjay Paeikh, has sought urgent safeguards and judicial oversight of government surveillance. It has challenged Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, read with Rule 419-A of the Indian Telegraph Rules,

1951, as well as Section 69 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, together with the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rules, 2009.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

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Small films brought in big money in 2018

Silver screens shine

The domestic box office collections of Bollywood movies has shown a rising trend

2011	1,719*
2012	2,332
2013	2,718
2014	2,745
2015	2,727
2016	2,780
2017	3,035
2018	3,485

(*Amounts in ₹crore)

Source: Ormax Media

NAMRATA JOSHI
MUMBAI

It was a feel good year for Indian cinema, as people flocked to theatres and kept the money flowing in through 2018. Hindi films and Hollywood led the record growth.

Bollywood has reason to celebrate as the good showing comes six years after earnings lost their lustre in 2013, says Ormax Media's annual box office report. During this time, there was just a small blip in 2017 from the dubbed version of *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion* in Hindi. But domestic net theatrical collections acquired a heft of 15% over the ₹3,035 crore it made in 2017, to touch ₹3,485 crore. Footfalls grew from 30.1 crore moviegoers in 2017 to 31.6 crore last year. The marques were bright although the three Khans – Salman, Aamir and Shahrukh – delivered low performers such as *Race 3*, *Thugs of Hindostan* and *Zero* respectively.

The Bollywood box office regained its health from the second line, featuring a freshness of subjects in *Stree*, *Raazi*, *Andhadhun*, *Badhaai Ho*, and *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety*. "There was the odd biggie like *Sanju* and *Padmavat*, but 2018 was the year when the small film became big. Earning ₹80-130 crore each, small films would have clocked in ₹1,000 crore," says Shailesh Kapoor, founder and CEO of Ormax Media.

Bollywood broke away from its dependence on big stars too, finding succour in Alia Bhatt, Ayushmann Khurana and Rajkummar Rao.

It also escaped the stranglehold of the opening weekend. *Andhadhun*, *Badhaai Ho* and *Stree* proved long distance runners.

Hollywood, with all dubbed versions, made an all time high collection in 2018, just ₹35 crore short of ₹1,000 crore.

PUCL, represented by advocate Sanjay Paeikh, has sought urgent safeguards and judicial oversight of government surveillance. It has challenged Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, read with Rule 419-A of the Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951, as well as Section 69 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, together with the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rules, 2009.

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* Two mock interviews and one personal sitting with our mock interview experts.

* Each mock interview will be video recorded and the same will be made available to the candidate for self analysis.

In T.N., Modi hits out at critics of 10% quota

Self-centred forces trying to create suspicion, says PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 CHENNAI

Strongly defending the recent constitutional amendment to create 10% reservation in jobs and education for economically weaker sections (EWS), Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday alleged that certain self-centred forces in Tamil Nadu were trying to create an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust among people on the new quota.

The Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu have strongly opposed the measure, with the DMK and the Dravidar Kazhagam challenging it in the Madras High Court.

Pitching for change: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is welcomed by BJP leaders at the meeting. ■ G. MOORTHY

CAREER CONCLAVE 2019

State Level Career Conclave for the students of Class XII of Government schools of Delhi being organized by The Directorate of Education, GNCT, Delhi

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Manish Sisodia
Dy. Chief Minister, Delhi

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DELHI Timings

MONDAY, JAN. 28
● RISE 07:12 SET 17:57
● RISE 00:37 SET 12:16
TUESDAY, JAN. 29
● RISE 07:11 SET 17:58
● RISE 01:36 SET 12:54
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 30
● RISE 07:11 SET 17:59
● RISE 02:33 SET 13:36

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	19	05
Safdarjung	19	05
Palam	17	05

Delhi Palam Today

18°C Dry weather with shallow fog is likely. A mainly clear sky will persist. Night temperatures will fall. Pollution level will be moderate.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

19°C Cold Wave conditions may occur in pockets of Delhi-NCR. Moderate fog will prevail. Day will be pleasant with 'moderate' pollution level.

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AMARNATH TEWARY

PATNA

Two home guards were found murdered and another seriously injured inside the Valmikinagar Tiger Reserve in West Champaran district of Bihar on Sunday. Police said a group of home guards had gone inside the reserve under the

Muzaffarnagar riots: U.P. govt. to withdraw 18 cases

Accused BJP leaders, State Minister not in the list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUZAFFARNAGAR

The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to withdraw 18 cases related to the Muzaffarnagar riots and asked the district authorities to approach the court, sources said on Sunday.

U.P.'s Special Secretary of Law J.J. Singh has directed Muzaffarnagar District Magistrate Rajeev Sharma to withdraw the cases, they said.

Court permission

On the directive from Lucknow, the district authorities have started preparing to approach the court for permission to withdraw the cases.

The cases were filed under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code including 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon) and 397 (attempt to cause death), the sources said.

Details sought

The directive came after the State government sought details of 125 cases filed in relation to the Muzaffarnagar riots. However, the cases asked to be withdrawn do not include the names of these BJP leaders.

Additional District Magistrate Amit Kumar said that the State government had sought the details to review the possibility of withdrawing the 125 cases pending in courts.

Several leaders of the rul-

ing BJP, including MPs Sanjeev Ranjan and Bharatendra Singh, MLAs Sangeet Som and Umesh Malik, have been named in these 125 cases.

Sadhwiv Prachi

Minister in the State government Suresh Rana and Hindutva leader Sadhwiv Prachi are also accused in cases related to the Muzaffarnagar riots. However, the cases asked to be withdrawn do not include the names of these BJP leaders.

Communal clashes in Muzaffarnagar and adjoining areas in August and September 2013 had claimed 60 lives and displaced over 40,000 people.

Two home guards killed by wood smugglers

Incident took place inside the Valmikinagar Tiger Reserve in Bihar

Gobarhiyadon

police station

launched in the area to nab the killers," said district police superintendent Arvind Kumar Gupta.

The smugglers, said to be

25 to 30 in number, suddenly attacked them and slit the throats of two. "One guard was seriously injured in the attack and has been admitted to a hospital...combing operation has been

been deputed at the Valmiki-nagar Tiger Reserve area without arms...we carry just a lathi to defend ourselves...how can we fight armed smugglers or even dangerous animals with just a lathi?...we demand compensation for those killed and injured," said a home guard there.

Unique variety of pumpkin developed

VIKAS VASUDEVA CHANDIGARH

The Ludhiana-based Punjab Agricultural University has developed a unique pumpkin variety that does not have a hard seed coat.

"Plants of cucurbit family have a thick and leathery seed coat. Decorticated seeds of muskmelon, watermelon, longmelon and cucumber are commonly used for confectionery and home preparations in India. We have now developed a unique pumpkin variety that does not have the hard seed coat and can be used as it is. The Research Evaluation Committee and the State Varietal Approval Committee has approved this variety for cultivation in Punjab," said Ajmer Singh Dhatt, Head of Department of Vegetable Science at PAU.

Mr. Dhatt said it is the first variety of 'soft' seeded pumpkin in India and its cultivation at commercial level will meet the domestic requirement of snack seed and bakery industry as well as offer opportunities for exports.

"Raw or roasted pumpkin seeds are used as snack food in many parts of the world. It is also used for cooking, baking, nutrient supplement and functional agent. Oil of pumpkin seeds is used in cooking and salad dressing, particularly in Europe and America," he said, adding that export possibilities of this seed could help farmers in boosting their income.

Boy falls into borewell, rescued

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EMPLOYMENT NOTICE FOR THE POSTS OF PROCESS SERVER AND PEON

Applications for three posts of Process Server in the pay scale of Rs. 4400-7440+1650 G.P. (DL) and seven posts of Peon in the pay scale of Rs. 4400-7440 + 1300 Grade Pay (DL), purely on temporary basis for Ambala Sessions Division are hereby invited from the general public. The essential qualification for the aforesaid posts shall be as follows:-

PROCESS SERVER

Appointment to the post of Process Server shall be made from candidates who have passed matriculation examination with knowledge of Hindi or Punjabi.

PEON

Appointment to the posts of Peon shall be made from the candidates who have passed middle standard examination and possess knowledge of Hindi or Punjabi.

AGE

The minimum age limit of candidate for appointment to the posts of Process Server and Peon shall be 18 years and the upper age limit shall be 42 years as on 1.1.2019 in accordance with the latest instructions of the Haryana Government in this regard.

In case of candidates belonging to Scheduled Caste and Backward Class-A, the upper age limit shall be such, as has been fixed by the Haryana Government.

RESERVATION

PROCESS SERVER - General-3

PEON General-5; SC-1; BC-A-1

Reservation of Posts for members of Schedule Caste and Backward Class-A shall be as per Haryana Government instructions/policy.

LAST DATE

Last date for receipt of the applications shall be **11.02.2019 till 05.00 P.M.**

DATE & TIME OF INTERVIEW

Interviews for the posts of Process Server and Peon shall be held as per alphabetical orders of the names of the candidates as per the schedule given below:-

FOR THE POST OF PROCESS SERVER

5.3.2019 A,B,C,D,E,F

6.3.2019 G,H,I,J,K,L

7.3.2019 M,N,O,P,Q

8.3.2019 R,T,U,V

11.3.2019 S,W,X,Y,Z

12.3.2019 Candidates sponsored by employment exchange.

FOR THE POST OF PEON

13.3.2019 A,B,C,D,E,F

14.3.2019 G,H,I,J,K,L

15.3.2019 M,N,O,P,Q

16.3.2019 R,T,U,V

18.3.2019 S,W,X,Y,Z

19.3.2019 Candidates sponsored by employment exchange.

Candidates are directed to report on the concerned dates at 11:00 A.M. In Judicial Court Complex, Ambala City and the interview shall begin at 1.30 P.M.

NOTE:-

(i) Applications on plain paper affixed with recent passport size photograph of candidate giving details viz. Name, Father's/ Husband's name, Date of Birth, Sex, Educational Qualification, Category, Present/Permanent address and Experience if any, alongwith attested copy of Date of Birth proof and other relevant documents should reach either by registered post or by hand well before the closing date at the following address:-

*The Superintendent,
Office of District and Sessions Judge,
Judicial Court Complex,
Ambala City, Haryana*

(ii) Incomplete applications and those filled without photographs and attested copies of Date of Birth, educational qualification and other relevant certificates shall be straightway rejected without any information to the candidate.

(iii) No correspondence whatsoever, shall be entertained in respect of incomplete applications or those which are received in this office after last date of submission of application.

(iv) This office will not be responsible for any postal delay.

(v) The candidate must mention on the head of application the post for which he/she is applying. In case, an applicant wants to apply for the post of Process Server as well as Peon, he/she is required to submit separate applications for both the posts.

(vi) The candidates shall also bring their original documents on the date of interview.

(vii) No TA/DA shall be paid.

(viii) The number of vacancies may increase or decrease.

District & Sessions Judge, Ambala

Odisha govt. transfers funds to sharecroppers under new scheme

Farmers will get cash assistance during the six crop seasons over three years: Naveen

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Sunday transferred funds to 57,614 sharecroppers under the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme at a rally held at Rangeilunda in his home district Ganjam.

The benefits of the scheme was extended to sharecroppers selected in the first phase. Earlier at a rally attended by Mr. Patnaik in Puri on January 25, the State government had credited ₹5,000 each to the bank accounts of 12.45 lakh farmers across Odisha under the scheme.

The highest number of sharecroppers to benefit from the scheme on Sunday were from Ganjam district. According to Ganjam District



CM Naveen Patnaik at the KALIA disbursement function at Rangeilunda near Berhampur on Sunday. • LINGARAJ PANDA

Collector Vijay Amrutha Kullange, 14,531 sharecroppers of the district received the benefits. Fourteen of these beneficiaries shared the dais with the Chief Minister. Some of them also addressed the gathering.

The beneficiaries will get ₹5,000 rupees under the scheme for purchase of seeds, fertilizers and insecticides twice a year, once on Akshaya Tritiya for kharif season and on Nuakhai day for rabi season.

According to the Chief Minister, farmers will get the cash assistance during the six crop seasons over a period of three years. An amount of ₹10,180 crore will be spent under KALIA.

Under the scheme, crop loans up to ₹50,000 will be interest-free.

Around 10 lakh landless families will be supported with ₹12,500 to take up agricultural activities like small goat-rearing units, mini layer units, duck units, fishery kits for fishermen and women, mushroom cultivation and bee keeping.

NRC a 'waste paper', should have been linked to voter list: Gogoi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

Former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi on Sunday described the National Register of Citizens (NRC) a "waste paper" and said it should have been linked to the voters' list.

"The whole exercise by spending crores of rupees to update the NRC for detecting illegal foreigners have been wasted. The process was started in 2013 and in five years they (the BJP government) could not publish a correct NRC," the senior Congress leader said.

The NRC is a "waste paper and has become valueless now", Mr. Gogoi told a press conference here.

It should have been linked to the voters' list till January 2019. Those over 40 lakh people left out of the complete draft of the NRC are still in the voters' list and they will cast their vote, he said.

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in the august presence of
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11 Sectional Tests | 5 Current Affairs Tests | 15 Mock Tests

Starts **10 FEB**

BATCH: 6 ► MOCK TEST SERIES

TOTAL 20 TESTS
15 Mock Tests | 5 Current Affairs Tests

Starts **3 MARCH**

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5. Bhubaneswar	10. Lucknow	15. North Mumbai	20. Indore

Mock Test-1: PAPER - 1 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM PAPER - 2 12:00 Noon - 2:00 PM **24 MARCH**

Mock Test-2: PAPER - 1 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM PAPER - 2 12:00 Noon - 2:00 PM **7 APRIL**

Mock Test-3: PAPER - 1 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM PAPER - 2 12:00 Noon - 2:00 PM **28 APRIL**

Mock Test-4: PAPER - 1 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM PAPER - 2 12:00 Noon - 2:00 PM **12 MAY**

Mock Test-5: PAPER - 1 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM PAPER - 2 12:00 Noon - 2:00 PM **19 MAY**

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4 WEST

On R-Day, 'cartoon war' escalates

Sketch by MNS chief shows Modi, Amit Shah hanging Mother India; provokes one depicting Raj instead

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

A cartoon made by Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray on Republic Day, showing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah hanging a woman named 'republic' from a fort, is an addition to the 'cartoon war' between the parties.

As Mr. Thackeray shared the cartoon with the caption 'Swatantrate na baghavate' (can't see her independent) on his official Facebook page on Saturday, the parties' social media war escalated with certain pro-BJP groups sharing the same cartoon, but replacing the woman with Mr. Thackeray himself. They changed the caption to 'Acche din na baghavate' (can't see good days) and la-

beled the rope 'demonetisation'. This was shared on Facebook by many groups supporting the BJP and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

"Mr. Thackeray's (cartoons) are leading the attack against the BJP and Mr. Modi creatively. These are liked not only by his supporters, but even by those who usually never agree with him such as Ambedkarites, socialists, Congress supporters. This is a real problem for the BJP and their online teams are trying to make fun of Mr. Thackeray to counter him," Kirtikumar Shinde, author of the book *Dagalbaj Raj*, who defends the MNS chief's politics on social media, said.

Mr. Shinde claimed that Mr. Thackeray's cartoons are visually so appealing to the masses that the BJP is left with no option but to ridicule

him through paid trolls and paid posts. "How can anyone show a person hanging just because they do not agree with his creative opinion?" asked Mr. Shinde. BJP office bearers claimed that the cartoon showing Mr. Thackeray hanging has nothing to do with their party and is possibly a creation of the internet.

Mr. Thackeray's cartoon is inspired by his uncle Shiv Sena founder late Bal Thackeray's old sketch in which *Bharat Mata* (Mother India) is being strangled by hands captioned 'pre-planned riots' and 'problems in the north-eastern States'.

Previously, the MNS chief's cartoon over killing of tigress Avni too had irked the BJP, which responded with a political taunt, mocking him over his alleged neglecting of politics for love for cartoons.



Art attack: Raj Thackeray shared the cartoon on his official Facebook page on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Govind Gaude calls himself 'tiger', alliance partners 'dogs'

Replies to MGP's demand to have him sacked in 4 days

PRAKASH KAMAT
PANAJI

The rift between two ministers in the Manohar Parrikar-led government grew wider on Sunday. Art and Culture Minister Govind Gaude, an Independent, used veiled invectives while referring to ruling alliance party Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP) members, and likened himself to a "tiger who does not bother about shooting dogs".

Mr. Gaude, who belongs to the Scheduled Tribe, also said that the MGP, especially its top leaders, including his Cabinet colleague and Public Works Minister Sudin



Govind Gaude

Dhavalikar, would lead the people of Goa to "hell".

"All these dogs are barking behind my back. But I challenge them to do it in front of me. I am a tiger and so they bark from a distance," he said on the MGP's demand that Mr. Parrikar

should drop him from the Cabinet for verbally abusing Mr. Dhavalikar at a Cabinet meeting on January 17. The exchange in the Chief Minister's presence attracted wider attention, with eyewitnesses claiming that the ministers almost came to blows.

While the MGP gave a four-day ultimatum to Mr. Parrikar to drop Mr. Gaude, he claimed that the MGP was exaggerating and that he did not abuse Mr. Dhavalikar. Mr. Gaude said he is being targeted because he won from the Assembly constituency of Priol in 2017, which was formerly represented by the MGP.

Twilight march



Fitting end: People enjoy a ride on a horse chariot at Kelwa beach in Palghar, 100 km from Mumbai, as the long weekend comes to an end. ■ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

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Sambhaji Brigade objects to Padma Vibhushan awarded to Purandare

Members say right-wing scholar falsified Shivaji's history

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The pro-Maratha Sambhaji Brigade has taken objection to the Centre's announcement to honour right-wing history scholar Babasaheb Purandare with the Padma Vibhushan.

The Brigade, along with Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Jitendra Awhad, has strongly condemned the Narendra Modi government, alleging that the 96-year-old had falsified the history of the Maratha King Shivaji with malafide intent.

They said the work of Mr. Purandare, who is called *Shiv Sahir* (Shivaji's poet), are often given a casteist and communal spin. He intentionally distorted facts about Shivaji's life by glorifying the achievements of his

Brahmin guardian and mentor Dadaji Konddev and insinuating that Shivaji, his mother Jijabai and Konddev were of the same lineage. The outfit has consistently demanded the deletion of the allegedly defamatory paragraphs from *Raja Shivchhatrapati*, Mr. Purandare's popular two-part magnum opus on Shivaji.

"Going by the list of awardees, it is evident that those who have done the RSS' bidding have been rewarded. We will be holding Shiv Saman Jaagar Parishes at the taluk and district-level to expose Mr. Purandare," Mr. Shinde said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Awhad said that the BJP had deliberately rubbed salt on the wounds of Shivaji's ardent followers "[We] will set Maharashtra on fire...this honour given to a falsifier is a shameful blot on the history of Shivaji's life," he tweeted on Friday.

Ward boy arrested for filming woman patient

Clip showed her undressing for MRI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE

A ward boy of a reputed hospital in Pune was arrested for allegedly filming a woman changing her clothes for an magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) procedure, the police said on Sunday.

The police said Lakesh Lahlu Uttekar (25) was caught after the woman found a mobile phone in the changing room and a clip of her undressing, on Saturday night.

Different room

"The woman was admitted on Wednesday for abdominal pain and she was advised to undergo an MRI scan on Saturday. The ward boy asked her to change in a

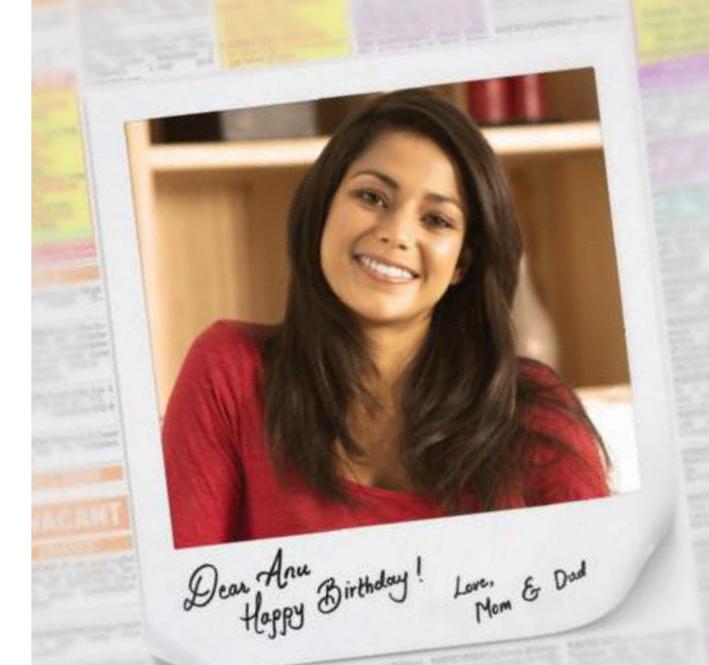
room other than the one designated for the purpose," a Koregaon Park police station official said.

The woman found a phone in the room and alerted her husband, and on checking the device the couple found the clip, the official said.

A complaint was filed at Koregaon Park police station and Mr. Uttekar was held after he gave vague answers during the probe.

He has been charged under Section 354 (watching or capturing the image of a woman engaging in a private act in circumstances where she would usually have the expectation of not being observed) of the Indian Penal Code.

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IN BRIEF



NTR's son-in-law to join YSRCP soon

HYDERABAD
Former Minister and TDP founder N.T. Rama Rao's son-in-Law Daggubati Venkateswara Rao on Sunday announced his decision to join the YSR Congress Party soon. Mr. Rao and his son Hitesh called on YSRCP president and Leader of the Opposition in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy here. Mr. Rao is the husband of former Union Minister D. Purandeswari, who is at present in the BJP's manifesto committee.

Support for demand against transfer of nuns

KOCHI
Leading lights of cultural and media world, including poet Satchidanandan and novelist Anand, have come out in support of an appeal by the Save Our Sisters Action Forum to the Kerala government and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan that the five nuns, who participated in a public protest in Kochi demanding the arrest of Bishop Franco Mulakkal of Jalandhar, should not be transferred out of Kerala. Bishop Mulakkal was arrested on a complaint of rape by a Catholic nun and was released on bail later.

Yeddyurappa's remark draws criticism

BENGALURU
BJP Karnataka president B.S. Yeddyurappa's outburst at the alleged official apathy in handling drought in Chitradurga on Sunday attracted criticism from senior Congress leader M. Mallikarjun Kharge, who asked the former Chief Minister to advise officials instead of scolding them. Mr. Yeddyurappa, who is on a drought study tour in the district, allegedly asked the officials whether they had been "grazing donkeys".

Prime Minister says cultural ethos of Kerala is under threat

Says the Congress and the CPI(M) have no concern for women's empowerment

STAFF REPORTER

THRISSUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the cultural ethos of Kerala is under attack and "unfortunately it is led by the party that is governing the State."

Addressing a public meeting in connection with the State conference of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha here on Sunday, the Prime Minister said the Sabarimala issue had received the attention of the entire country. People were watching the manner in which the Left Democratic Front government was showing disrespect to all aspects of Kerala's culture, he said.

"I fail to understand why the CPI(M) is undermining our culture and civilisation. The UDF too is like the CPI



Scoring points: Prime Minister Narendra Modi being garlanded at a BJYM meet in Thrissur on Sunday. ■ K.K. NAJEEB

(M). They show double standards. They speak one thing in Delhi and another in Kerala," he said.

The Congress and the CPI (M) had no concern for women's empowerment. If they were concerned, they would not have opposed the triple talaq Bill brought by the NDA

government. "India has had many women Chief Ministers. But is there any communist leader among them?" Mr. Modi asked.

'Opposition bankrupt'
He alleged that the Opposition was bankrupt in any positive and constructive

agenda of development. "All they have is hatred for Modi," he said.

"I want to tell the Opposition ... abuse me as much as you want, but don't mislead the farmers or stand in the way of creating job opportunities for the youth. Don't harm the poor or put barriers on India's development," he said.

The Prime Minister said that the Opposition had no regard for any constitutional institution.

"A hard working ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan was implicated in a false spy case. The NDA government got the opportunity to honour him with the Padma Award. We value each person who works for the country's development," Mr. Modi said.

Fulfilled a childhood dream via LPG scheme: Modi

PM inaugurates BPCL's Integrated Refinery Expansion Complex in Kochi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI



PM Narendra Modi with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan at a function at the BPCL Kochi Refinery on Sunday. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

The Ujjwala scheme of providing LPG connections to the poor was the realisation of the childhood dream of providing healthy kitchens to mothers and sisters of India, who were struggling with firewood stoves in kitchens, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Dedicating the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd.'s Integrated Refinery Expansion Complex to the nation here on Sunday, Mr. Modi said nearly 6 crore such connections were provided to the poor since May 2016 under the scheme. The Kochi Refinery was making great

contribution towards Ujjwala scheme by doubling the LPG production, he said.

More than 23 crore LPG consumers had joined the Pahal scheme that had helped identify ghost, multiple, and inactive accounts.

The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stones of the petrochemical complex in Kochi and the second

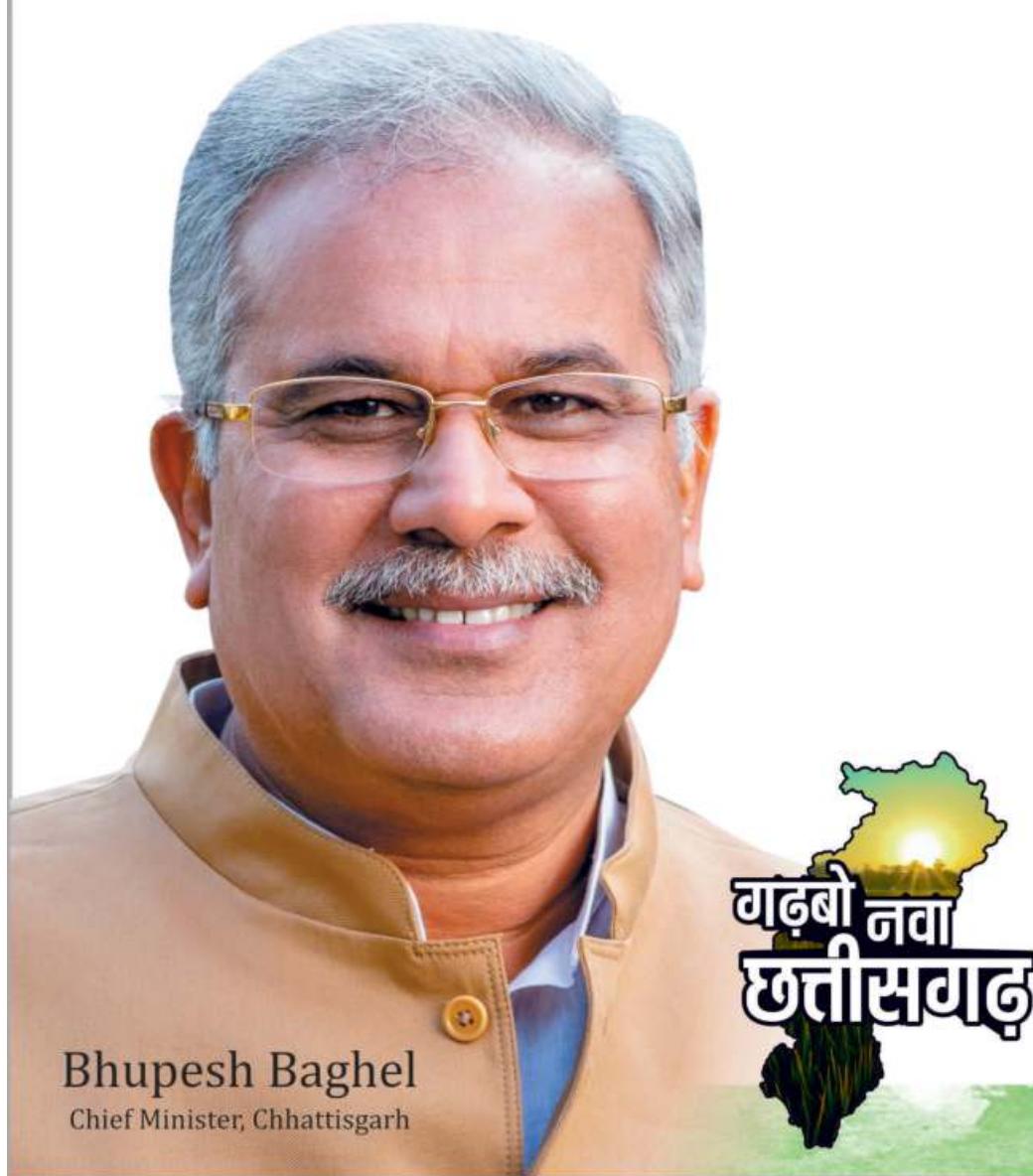
campus of the Skill Development Institute at Ettumanoor. He also opened the LPG storage facility of the Indian Oil Corporation at its Kochi bottling plant.

In his address, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the State government had been supporting the projects of all Central Public Sector companies as part of its policy to strengthen the public sector units. The State government had provided tax relaxations to Integrated Refinery Expansion Project and made land available to other projects. The State would invest ₹1,427 crore for the petrochemical park project, he said.

The corporations would help inculcate leadership qualities among the BCs and help the government identify and address their problems, he said.

Delivering justice can also create history and change the fate of the people

The new government in chhattisgarh has demonstrated its commitment to this belief and its decisions getting resolute by the day.



Bhupesh Baghel

Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh

A NEW CHHATTISGARH "OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE"IN IT'S TRUE SENSE

Decisions that were undertaken in a matter of few days

Farmers

- ◆ Within 2 hours of swearing in- Rs. 6100 Cr. Loans of more than 16.65 lac farmers have been waived off
- ◆ The rate of paddy procurement for farmers is now Rs. 2500 per quintal - the highest in the country
- ◆ Irrigation tax Rs. 207 Cr. waived off for 15 lac farmers.

Tribals

- ◆ 1764 Ha. agricultural land returned to the tribals of Lohardiguda, Bastar where TATA couldn't start their plant after its acquisition
- ◆ The rate of Tendupatta collection raised by Rs. 1500 per sack to Rs. 4000 for the economic empowerment of the tribals
- ◆ Bastar and Sarguja Development Authorities have been announced that would be led by the local MLAs

Villages

- ◆ Inclusive growth of villages under the scheme- Narwa, Garuwa, Ghurwa, Bari (Rivulets, Livestock, Domestic Dump, Farms)- where in the villages will be made self-sufficient.

Land Rights

- ◆ Land Right Pattas of the tribals that were cancelled arbitrarily under the forest Rights Act, Shall be reviewed

12-year-old A.P. girl set ablaze by man

Accused was harassing her for a while

STAFF REPORTER

KURNIOOL



Chandrababu Naidu addressing a meeting in Rajamahendravaram on Sunday. ■ S. RAMBABU

Naidu showers sops on BCs

K.N. MURALI SANKAR
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

Showering benefits worth ₹3,000 crore on the Backward Classes, including upgradation of federations to corporations and setting up new corporations for castes that come under the BC category, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday urged the BCs to continue their support by casting their vote to the TDP in the ensuing election.

"Don't fall prey to the YSR Congress Party and the BJP that are trying to deceive the BCs for their political benefits. As an elder member of your family, I am going to support and uplift you. In return hoist the TDP flag on your houses," he said addressing the 'Jaiho BC' public meeting organised by the TDP here.

Mr. Naidu said the TDP was the only party working for the welfare of the BCs.

"The late N.T. Rama Rao drew inspiration from Mahatma Phule and gave political life to several youth from the BCs and I am continuing the legacy," he said.

The corporations would help inculcate leadership qualities among the BCs and help the government identify and address their problems, he said.

din. On Saturday, he poured petrol on her and set her on fire.

Third degree burns

Adoni Circle Inspector M. Murali said that the accused was a married man with four children. An FIR has been registered in the Kothalam police station under Section 307 (attempted murder), the Nirbhaya Act and the SC/ST Act.

Kurnool government general hospital officials told *The Hindu* that the girl had suffered third degree burns.

Expired ingredients used in 'prasadam': police

Case booked against two women

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU

Investigations into the temple 'prasadam' case in Chintamani town in Karnataka's Chickballapur district, in which two women died, continued to question them on Sunday. The police said that are investigating further to rule out any foul play.

The police are now waiting for the Forensic Science Laboratory, post-mortem and culture reports to ascertain the exact reason for the deaths.

Sixteen people were hospitalised after they allegedly consumed 'kesari bath' distributed as 'prasadam' at the Ganga Bhavani temple on Friday. Two of them died on Saturday.

This is the second such incident after the Chamarajanagar episode, where consumption of temple offerings led to 17 deaths in December last year.

The police, who have ta-

ken up a case of death due to negligence against Lakshmi and her associate Amravathy, who had prepared and distributed the 'kesari bath' at the temple, continued to question them on Sunday. The police said that are investigating further to rule out any foul play.

Meanwhile, all the victims are responding well to treatment, said Chickballapur District Health Officer (DHO) Ravishankar.

CM visits victims

Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy visited the victims on Sunday.

He was briefed about the investigations by Deputy Commissioner of Chickballapur Anirudh Sravan P.

He also instructed Mr. Sravan to ensure the necessary treatment was given to the victims and the needs of the family of the deceased were met.

IN BRIEF



90% people getting rice at ₹2 per kg: Mamata

KOLKATA
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday said that at least 90% of people in the State were getting rice at ₹2 per kg. She said her government has been providing special assistance to those in Jangalmahal and the Aila-hit areas, farmers, tea garden workers and Toto tribals. PTI

Three killed in Assam road accident

RANGIA
Three persons were killed when a motorcycle collided with a four-wheeler in Kamrup district of Lower Assam, a police officer said on Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Chhinnay Rabha, Bikash Rabha and Themma Marak, officer in-charge Jogendra Barman said. PTI

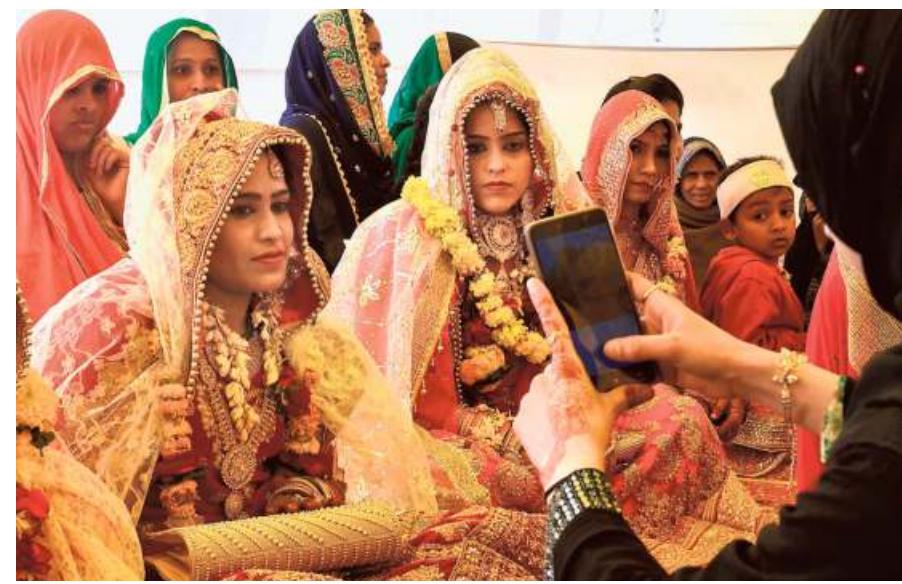
7-year-old boy dies as fire engulfs houses

BALLIA
A seven-year-old boy died after fire engulfed a few houses in Khadipur. Malahichak village here on Saturday, the police said on Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Ankush Sahni. Nearly six houses were gutted in the fire. PTI

Cold wave continues in Himachal Pradesh

HIMACHAL
Cold wave conditions continued in Himachal Pradesh on Sunday with prominent tourist destinations shivering below freezing temperatures, the met department said. The minimum temperature in Manali was minus 5 degrees Celsius, followed by minus 4.2 in Kufri, minus 1.5 in Dalhousie and minus 0.2 deg C in Shimla. PTI

A new beginning



Muslim brides during a mass marriage programme under the Mukhyamantri Kanyadan Yojna in Bhopal on Sunday. ■ A.M. FARUQUI

Jumbos to patrol Odisha's Satkosia Tiger Reserve

Two pachyderms being brought from Similipal reserve

STAFF REPORTER

BHUBANESWAR

Patrolling in the Satkosia Tiger Reserve is set to be strengthened as two trained elephants would be deployed there shortly.

Trained elephants will help ground-level forest guards patrol deep in the forest where jeeps cannot go.

The two elephants are being brought from the Similipal Tiger Reserve. ■ FILE PHOTO



Trained elephants of the Similipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha. ■ FILE PHOTO

into rough weather following the death of India's first inter-State translocated tiger last year.

The Odisha government had planned to bring six tigers (three male and three female) from Madhya Pradesh to increase the feline population in Satkosia. Last year, one pair of big cats was brought to Satkosia.

However, the programme did not go as per plan. While the tiger TI reportedly died after falling into a poaching trap, there was huge discontent among villagers residing in the buffer areas over the frequent straying of the tigress into human habitation.

As the situation went out of control following a human kill, the tigress was captured. Subsequently, the programme was put on hold.

29 girls go missing from Odisha residential school

Leave a note mentioning the reasons

STAFF REPORTER

BERHAMPUR

Twenty-nine students of a residential high school for girls at Antarba in Odisha's Gajapati district left their hostel on Saturday night and are missing since.

Despite efforts of the school authorities as well as the administration, the girls had not been traced till Sunday evening. They have not even returned to their homes. Most of the girls are from Class IX.

It is suspected that they escaped from the hostel to complain to the District Collector about the state of af-

fairs in the hostel.

Gajapati District Welfare Officer Santosh Kumar Rath is monitoring the search operation. According to Mr. Rath, the girls have left behind a handwritten letter mentioning some reasons for leaving the hostel.

Speaking to newsmen, school headmaster Manoj Rath accepted that the girls had earlier expressed their resentment over some issue with their teachers. As per the headmaster, the issue had been resolved. He felt the same reason may have prompted them to leave the hostel.

Moga ex-SSP arrested in Behbal Kalan firing case

Two youths were killed in 2015

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH

SIT on January 29, "but when we got the input that he was trying to flee, we carried out his arrest. Had we not arrested him in the morning, he would have fled by evening".

"We are conducting investigations and taking action as per law. During this period, Charanjit Singh Sharma and some others had filed a writ before the Punjab and Haryana High Court, on which the court gave its verdict recently," he said.

Confirming Sharma's arrest from his residence in Hoshiarpur, Inspector General of Police Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh said they had specific inputs that the accused was trying to flee to some undisclosed location.

Former Senior Superintendent of Police Charanjit Singh Sharma was arrested from his residence in Hoshiarpur on October 14, 2015. His arrest, first in the case after the SIT was formed last year, comes two days after the HC dismissed the petitions seeking a CBI probe into the incidents and challenging the findings of the Ranjit Singh Commission.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Monday: No weather warning

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

Agartala	29.6	15.9	Kozhikode	34.5	22.9
Ahmedabad	24.1	9.1	Kurnool	27.5	22.7
Aizawl	28.2	—	Lucknow	21.3	12.6
Allahabad	0.2	22.2	12.1	Madurai	34.7	24.1
Bengaluru	30.0	19.0	Mangaluru	32.6	20.0
Bhopal	19.2	7.5	Mumbai	30.6	18.6
Bhubaneswar	25.6	17.1	Mysuru	30.7	17.8
Chandigarh	18.0	5.6	New Delhi	18.8	5.2
Chennai	30.1	23.2	Patna	24.0	13.8
Coimbatore	32.0	23.5	Port Blair	29.6	25.6
Dehradun	18.2	5.5	Puducherry	30.7	22.9
Gangtok	14.6	7.8	Pune	26.6	8.3
Goa	31.0	18.0	Raipur	24.0	15.3
Guwahati	29.8	16.4	Ranchi	21.5	11.5
Hubballi	28.0	16.0	Shillong	17.8	9.6
Hyderabad	10.1	21.2	18.4	Shimla	6.8	—0.2
Imphal	25.9	7.2	Srinagar	7.2	—1.4
Jaipur	18.6	5.8	Trivandrum	33.0	23.6
Kochi	31.0	23.6	Tiruchi	33.8	23.4
Kohima	20.5	7.4	Vijayawada	29.0	18.5
Kolkata	27.9	18.6	Visakhapatnam	28.0	22.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	44	69	24	95	—	—
Bengaluru	5	52	46	78	112	—
Chennai	.8	12	48	19	—	—
Delhi	27	76	82	319	231	—
Hyderabad	2	82	42	108	.81	—
Kolkata	19	85	14	309	.175	—
Lucknow	10	20	55	192	—	—
Mumbai	14	85	89	61	.109	—
Pune	18	3	11	122	.100	—
Visakhapatnam	—	—	—	—	—	—

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Fatehabad, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 254 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution.

NO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

125th ANNIVERSARY28th January, 2019

OF PATHARUGHAT UPRISING



On this hallowed day, the forever grateful Assamese people respectfully remember the brave martyrs who fought against British imperialism on 28th January 1894 at the historic war of Patharughat, laying down their lives for the nation and the society, and upholding the rights of the farmer.

Their supreme sacrifice at Patharughat, not only gave a new direction to India's freedom struggle, but also stands as a golden chapter of courage and patriotism in Indian history.



Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma

Finance Minister of Assam

Government of Assam's "CREDIT LINKED SUBSIDY SCHEMES FOR FARMERS"

As a homage to the martyrs for their supreme sacrifice, the Government of Assam launches many revolutionary schemes for the benefit of our farmers for a progressive and developed Assam.

Assam Farmers' Credit Subsidy Scheme (AFCSS), 2018

- The Scheme covers all short-term crop loans availed from Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks & the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank.
- Under the Scheme, the Government of Assam will deposit 25% of the total amount repaid by the farmers for the loans availed between April 01, 2018 and March 31, 2019 subject to a maximum limit of Rs. 25000 per individual account.
- Farmer's who have availed loans prior to 1st April, 2018 will also be entitled to the benefit of 25% of the outstanding amount or Rs. 25000 whichever is less, per such account, provided the farmer clears the remaining outstanding dues during the current financial year.
- The Scheme also covers all outstanding dues of overdue or NPA accounts provided the farmer clears the outstanding amount within 31.03.2019 subject to a ceiling of 25% of the overdue amount or Rs 25000 whichever is less.

Assam Farmers' Interest Relief Scheme (AFIRS), 2018

- The Scheme will ensure that all prompt paying farmers get short term crop loans upto Rs. 2 Lakh at 0% rate of interest in the state of Assam.

Assam Farmers' Incentives Scheme (AFIS), 2018

- The Scheme will provide a one-time cash incentive of up to Rs. 10000/- per account for activating the Overdue and NPA KCC account provided the account will turn into Standard Account by the incentive provided by the Govt. of Assam.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

Janasanyog/DF/4556/18

Partnered by:
NABARD

SLBC

IN BRIEF

Train 18 named
Vande Bharat Express

NEW DELHI
The Indian Railways has named the indigenously manufactured superfast Train 18 as 'Vande Bharat Express', which will ply from the national capital to Varanasi, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

Teen held for raping,
killing minor girl

KORBA
A seven-year-old girl was allegedly raped and killed by a teenage boy in Chhattisgarh's Balrampur district, police said. The accused was taken into police custody on Sunday. The accused has confessed to have committed the crime. A case has been registered. PTI

Most wanted ultra
surrenders in Odisha

BERHAMPUR
Andhra Kanhar, 24, a much sought after Maoist having ₹1 lakh reward on him surrendered in Odisha's Kandhamal district on Sunday. He hailed from Phirangia block of Kandhamal district and was working for the CPI (Maoist) since November 2014. He was involved in several cases of violence and arson.

Boy found dead after
sexual harassment

SHAHJAHANPUR
A five-year-old boy died after he was allegedly sexually assaulted by his neighbour in U.P.'s Shahjahanpur district, police said on Sunday. The boy was playing outside his house when his neighbour lured him and took him to his house, police said. PTI

6 arrested for claiming
insurance with fake papers

THANE
Six persons, including two doctors and a civic-run crematorium employee, were arrested in Thane in Maharashtra for allegedly creating fake death certificates to claim insurance, police said. PTI

Eight killed, 10 injured
as car falls into gorge

DEHRADUN
Eight persons died and ten were injured when the car they were travelling in fell into a gorge in Lohaghat area of Champawat district on Sunday. The vehicle was on its way to a cremation ground in the Ghat area when it fell into a 300-metre deep gorge killing the six persons instantly, Champawat SP Dhirendra Gunjyal said. Two more succumbed later. PTI

Two women killed as bus
overturns in Jammu

JAMMU
Two women died and 25 persons were injured on Sunday when a bus carrying pilgrims from Gujarat to Vaishno Devi overturned along the Jammu-Patankot highway in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. The condition of some of the injured is "serious," a police officer said. PTI

Birdwatchers flock to Chilika lake

A record one million migratory birds arrive for annual visit in Odisha

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR
Ornithologists, bird lovers and photographers from all over the country assembled at the scenic Mangalajodi, on the banks of Chilika Lake in Odisha, on Sunday to celebrate the annual congregation of migratory birds.

Bird lovers went by boats in the sprawling waters of Chilika and watched birds that had migrated to the famous wintering ground after flying thousands of miles.

TWO-DAY FESTE
Photo exhibitions and seminars on birds are the main feature of the two-day National Chilika Bird Festival inaugurated by the State Tourism Minister Ashok Panda on Sunday. Participants are scheduled to visit the Nalbari Bird Sanctuary on Monday.

"We are extremely happy to have participants from all

Seven northeastern States lag behind in toilets for schoolgirls

Only one-third of schools had usable washrooms in 2018, says ASER report

RAHUL KARMAKAR

GUWAHATI
An average of 34.96% schools in the eight north-eastern States had usable toilets for girls in 2018 compared to 36.66% in 2016, data analysed from the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2018 report revealed.

With 75.7% schools - a marginal increase from 75% in 2016 - having usable toilets for girls, Sikkim performed better than the national average of 66.4% last year. But the State's show was overshadowed by the less-than-satisfactory performance by seven other States in the region.

Nagaland was the next best State with 47%, an increase from 40.9% in 2016, followed by Mizoram with the highest percentile increase from 25.3% to 34.9% in these two years.



Nationally, about 66.4% schools provide girls with toilets.

The other five states performed poorly, the steepest drop for Assam being 38.3% from 54.2% in 2016. Manipur had 9.1% schools having fewer usable toilets for girls, followed by Meghalaya (8.6%), Arunachal Pradesh (7.6%) and Tripura (7.3%).

J&K suffers too

The national averages hide major variations across the states, with deficiencies par-

ticularly marked in Jammu and Kashmir apart from most of the north-eastern states, the ASER report, prepared by NGO Pratham, said. In Jammu and Kashmir, 48.2% schools had toilets for girls last year, up from 46.7% in 2014 (data for JK for 2016 was not available). The State provided drinking water in 54.6% schools in 2018, better than the average 44.4% schools in the north-eastern

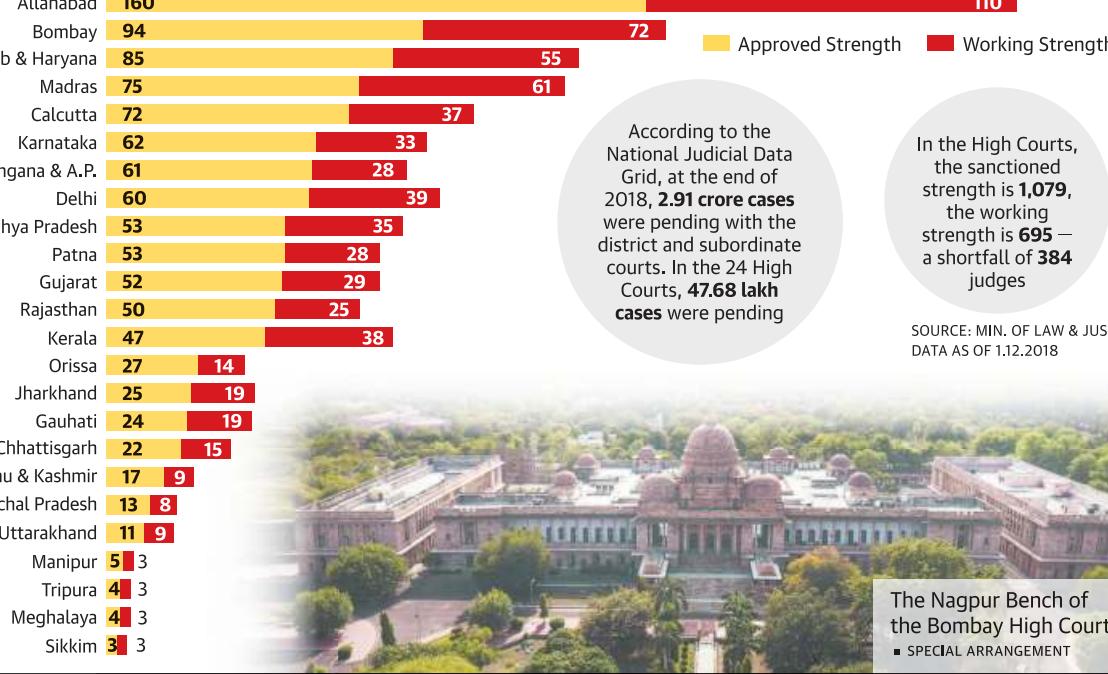
states. The average for the Northeast last year was poorer than the 44.99% in 2016. Sikkim, Assam and Mizoram had an average 68.53% schools that had drinking water facilities in schools. The national average was 74.8%.

According to the report, 2018 completed eight years of compulsory schooling for the first cohort of students to benefit from Right to Education Act 2010.

National picture

"Nationally, substantial improvements are visible over this eight-year period in the availability of many school facilities mandated by RTE. The fraction of schools with usable girls' toilets doubled, reaching 66.4% in 2018. The percentage of schools with books, other than textbooks, available rose from 62.6% to 74.2% between 2016-18.

Wanted, more judges Each High Court judge has around 4,500 pending cases. The vacancies of judges across HCs:



BusinessLine completes 25 years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

BusinessLine, the business daily from the 140-year-old The Hindu Group, completed 25 years on Sunday. With 18 editions across the country, **BusinessLine** is today the second most widely read business and financial daily, with a total all-India readership of 7.75 lakh, according to the Indian Readership Survey, 2017.

BusinessLine's growth has corresponded with some of the most dramatic changes that have taken place in the Indian economy since Independence.

"Our birth coincides with the onset of economic reforms in India. We were the first to take the India Growth Story to a global audience, with the launch of our web-

site in 1996, the first business daily from India to do so.

"We remain committed to bringing our readers credible information and informed analysis," said Raghavan Srinivasan, Editor, **BusinessLine**.

Over these 25 years, **BusinessLine** has earned a well-

deserved reputation for independence, fairness, credibility, and the comprehensive manner in which it covers business news.

The paper offers its readers feature pages and supplements catering to varying interests – from automobiles and personal tech to avia-

Investment section

BusinessLine's acclaimed investment section, put together by the BL Research Bureau, provides investment recommendations backed by first grade in-house research, uniquely among media entities in India. More recently, **BusinessLine** has begun offering a star rating of mutual funds.

The CDA also released its book *Fish and Shellfish Diversity and its Sustainable Management in Chilika Lake*. Around 145 bird watchers from all over India are in attendance for the event.

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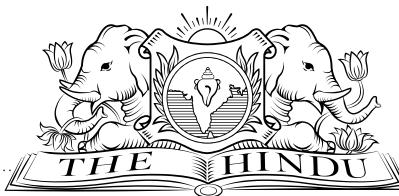
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For honour's sake

In an ideal world, the Bharat Ratna awards would be free from political considerations

It is in the nature of our polity to use any opportunity possible for political signalling, and the Bharat Ratna, the nation's highest civilian honour, has not been spared from this propensity. Over the years, ideological considerations have influenced the choices. While the Narendra Modi government's decision to confer the Bharat Ratna on the late Assamese singer Bhupen Hazarika (who contested on the BJP ticket in the 2004 Lok Sabha election) and the late Nanaji Deshmukh (a Bharatiya Jan Sangh leader and social activist) evoked little surprise, the choice of former President Pranab Mukherjee seemed to have caught everyone off guard and triggered fevered speculation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi described him as "an outstanding statesman of our times". While Mr. Mukherjee's seniority and contribution to the polity are not in doubt, the fact that he agreed to speak at an RSS event last year to the bemused disapproval of the Congress party was held out as a reason. And more unsympathetically, could the award have been a part of the BJP's strategy of embracing old Congress leaders such as Vallabhbhai Patel to highlight that its real opposition is to the Nehru-Gandhi family? It is no secret that Mr. Mukherjee's political ambitions were thwarted at one point by his inability to break the hold of dynastic politics in the Congress.

Whether or not someone deserves a particular honour is not an easy question to resolve. Idolised leaders are integral to the imagination of a community, and arguably, for nation-building. Such secular rites of veneration set an ideal that the community celebrates and strives for. This is of course different from the pursuit of partisan political interests. Unfortunately, competitive politics has overshadowed the majesty of the Bharat Ratna. The honour to M.G. Ramachandran in 1988 was widely seen as a cynical political move ahead of an election in Tamil Nadu. A promise to confer the Bharat Ratna to Madan Mohan Malaviya was made by Mr. Modi during the 2014 campaign, and he fulfilled it soon after coming to power. Claims and counterclaims for the honour have become part of assertions of power by various groups. The emergence of new political elites is often accompanied by a clamour for greater acceptance for their leaders in the national roll of honour. A democratic, plural community must resolve these demands with respect and sensitivity. But this must not lead to a devaluation of the honour. Transparency is not easy to achieve, and fairness is difficult to establish, given the contradictory demands of representation and majesty. But a good place to start is to discontinue posthumous awards. It is a slippery slope of arbitrariness. Idols and ideals unite diversities in a community, and Bharat Ratnas must be selected with this in mind. On this count at least, the Modi government's list will be contested.

Shutdown surrender

Donald Trump is forced to retreat by accepting a temporary end to the shutdown

The partial shutdown of the U.S. government was the first major showdown between President Donald Trump and the Democrats after the latter took control of the House of Representatives in the mid-term Congressional elections in November 2018. Mr. Trump had threatened to keep the government shut down indefinitely unless Congress authorised \$5.7 billion to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, one of his key campaign promises. He finally agreed to reopen the federal departments, on the 35th day, without getting anything in return. The Democrats, on their part, had insisted from the beginning that they first wanted the shutdown to end before discussing border security. The President had stormed out of a meeting with the Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that was called to discuss the shutdown. But now he has agreed to hold talks, after reopening the government. There were a host of factors that influenced the turnaround. If the Trump team had hoped a prolonged government shutdown would break the Democratic Party's rank and file, it didn't happen. Instead, the longest government shutdown in America's history created fissures within Congressional Republicans. The FBI Director, a Trump appointee, was among the senior functionaries who derided the governmental dysfunction. The President's approval ratings fell and polls suggested that most Americans held him responsible for the crisis.

For Speaker Pelosi, who stuck to her demand despite the administration's posturing, it was a victory of sorts in the game of chicken played between Mr. Trump and her. But the key issue remains unaddressed. For now, the spending bills will allow the government to run till February 15. President Trump has said he would not back off from his demand for funding for the wall, which he believes is necessary to stop illegal immigration and cut crime – a claim that is contested widely as border-crossing apprehensions hit a 46-year low in 2017. But Mr. Trump has threatened to shut down the government again in February unless the Democrats agree to fund the wall, or he would declare a national emergency using his executive powers and redirect public funds to build the barrier. Neither option will be easy. The shutdown tactic has failed. Pushing the U.S. into another government closure would be catastrophic for millions of Americans. The national emergency idea lacks support even among the Republicans. Mr. Trump will be better off if he realises that holding the government to ransom to extract compromises from Congress is not a sound tactic for a President. He could adopt a less confrontational approach towards Democrats and hold talks with them with an open mind on immigration and border security. He may just get a deal.

Removing the roots of farmers' distress

Steps like limited procurement, boosting productivity and consolidating land holdings can help reduce agrarian distress



C. RANGARAJAN &
S. MAHENDRA DEV

Recently, there has been active discussion on the strategies addressing farm distress. There are media reports that the 'interim Budget' may focus on the farm sector among other things. Agrarian distress, in the present context, is mainly in terms of low agricultural prices and, consequently, poor farm incomes. Low productivity in agriculture and related supply side factors are equally important. An issue that is connected is the declining average size of farm holdings and the viability of this size for raising farm incomes. Here are possible solutions.

Prices and incomes

Prices play a key role in affecting the incomes of farmers. Even during the Green Revolution, along with technology and associated packages, price factor was considered important. In the last two years, inflation in agriculture was much lower than overall inflation. The implicit price deflator for Gross Value Added (GVA) in agriculture was 1.1% while it was 3.2% for total GVA in 2017-18. The advance estimates for 2018-19 show that the implicit deflator for GVA in agriculture is 0%, and 4.8% for total GVA. In fact, agriculture GVA growth was at 3.8% for both nominal prices and constant prices in 2018-19, giving the price deflator of 0%. The consumer price index (CPI) also shows that the rise in prices for agriculture was much lower than general inflation in recent years. Market prices for several agricultural commodities have been lower than those of mini-

mum support prices (MSP). All these trends show that the terms of trade to be moving against agriculture in the last two years.

When output increases well beyond the market demand at a price remunerative to producers, market prices decline. And in the absence of an effective price support policy, farmers are faced with a loss in income, depending on how much the price decline is. The farm distress' in recent years has been partly on account of this situation, as the loss of income is beyond the ability, particularly of small farmers, to absorb. In a strange way, it is the success in increasing production that has resulted in this adverse consequence.

A few schemes have been suggested to address the problem of managing declining output prices when output increases significantly. The scheme of 'price deficiency compensation' is one such mechanism which amounts to paying the difference between market price and the MSP. At the other extreme is the 'open procurement system' that has been in vogue quite effectively in the case of rice and wheat, where procurement is open ended at the MSP. Is there a middle way that may be effective in some crops? One of us had suggested the option of limited procurement for price stabilisation. A 'price deficiency' scheme may compensate farmers when prices decrease below a certain specified level. However, market prices may continue to fall as supply exceeds 'normal demand'. An alternative is the limited procurement scheme. Under this scheme, the government will procure the 'excess', leaving the normal production level to clear the market at a remunerative price. Thus, procurement will continue until the market price rises to touch the MSP. The suggested 'limited procurement system' will not work if the MSP is fixed at a level to which the market



RAJEEV BHATT
price will never rise. There are costs involved which will go up as production increases above the average level. The government can sell the procured grain in later years or use them in welfare programmes.

Some States have introduced farm support schemes, examples being the Rythu Bandhu Scheme (Telangana) and the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme (Odisha). One problem with the Telangana model is that it does not cover tenants, who are the actual cultivators. Basically, these schemes are income support schemes which will be in operation year after year.

Thus, raising the MSP, price deficiency payments or income support schemes can only be a partial solution to the problem of providing remunerative returns to farmers. A sustainable solution is market reforms to enable better price discovery combined with long-term trade policies favourable to exports. The creation of a competitive, stable and unified national market is needed for farmers to get better prices. Agricultural markets have witnessed only limited reforms. They are characterised by inefficient physical operations, excessive crowding of intermediaries, and fragmented market chains. Due to this, farmers are deprived of a fair share of the price paid by final consumers. States have also not shown any urgency in reforming agricultural markets. For better price for farmers, agriculture has to go beyond farming

and develop a value chain comprising farming, wholesaling, warehousing, logistics, processing and retailing.

Low productivity

The next issue is the low productivity of Indian agriculture. Basics such as seeds, fertilizers, credit, land and water management and technology are important and should not be forgotten. Similarly,

investment in infrastructure and research and development are needed. Water is the leading input in agriculture. More than 60% of irrigation water is consumed by two crops: rice and sugar cane. Basically, it is not investment alone but efficiency in water management in both canal and groundwater that is important. India uses upto three times the water used to produce one tonne of grain in countries such as Brazil, China and the U.S. This implies that water-use efficiency can be improved significantly with better use of technologies that include drip irrigation. Yields of several crops are lower in India when compared to several other countries. Technology can help to reduce 'yield gaps' and thus improve productivity. Government policies have been biased towards cereals particularly rice and wheat. There is a need to make a shift from rice and wheat-centric policies to millets, pulses, fruits, vegetables, livestock and fish.

Many small farmers cannot leave agriculture because of a lack of opportunities in the non-farm sector. They can get only partial income from the non-farm sector. In this context, a consolidation of land holdings becomes important to raise farmer incomes. There was a lot of discussion on this topic in the 1960s and 1970s. In the context of rural poverty, B.S. Minhas had argued even in the 1970s that compulsory consolidation of land holdings alongside land development activities could enhance the incomes/livelihoods of the poor in rural areas. Unfortunately, there is little discussion now on land fragmentation and consolidation of farm holdings. We need to have policies for land consolidation along with land development activities in order to tackle the challenge of the low average size of holdings. Farmers can voluntarily come together and pool land to gain the benefits of size. Through consolidation, farmers can reap the economies of scale both in input procurement and output marketing.

To conclude, farmers' distress is due to low prices and low productivity. The suggestions we have made, such as limited procurement, measures to improve low productivity, and consolidation of land holdings to gain the benefits of size, can help in reducing agrarian distress. We need a long-term policy to tackle the situation.

C. Rangarajan is former Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and former Governor, Reserve Bank of India. S. Mahendra Dev is Director and Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai

The essence of the next mandate

It must deepen the foundations of a deliberative democracy and ensure that a suppressed nation's soul finds utterance



ASHWANI KUMAR

The forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, widely seen as a watershed event in our contemporary history, are expected to redraw the nation's political landscape with implications for the future of Indian democracy.

The coming together of political leaders at Trinamool Congress leader and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's rally in Kolkata on January 19, representing a wide political spectrum opposed to the politics of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to be noted. It signalled a common resolve to oust his government despite challenges inherent in such a coalescence. This coalition would not have been possible without massive disenchantment with the Prime Minister's leadership, confirmed by an unravelling of the National Democratic Alliance, setting the stage for a transformative political change in the months ahead.

A sense of betrayal

The dominant mood of the nation barely 100 days before the general election, reflects a sense of betrayal by its political chief executive who has failed to deliver on the promises made in 2014. Rising

unemployment, acute agrarian distress, corruption in high places, rising social disparities, continuing marginalisation of Dalits and Adivasis, insensitivity to the plight of vulnerable sections and glaring inequities of wealth et al have decisively demolished the Prime Minister's claim to good governance. Misgovernance and the accentuated social, political and economic inequities interrogate the government's claim of 'Sushashan' and 'Sabka Vikas'.

But this election is not only about failed promises and governance deficit. It is about foundational principles of the republic centered around the idea of India crystallised in United Progressive Alliance Chairperson Sonia Gandhi's message for the Kolkata rally. In her message, she lamented that the nation's "pluralist fabric stands vitiated" and declared that "this will be an election to restore the nation's faith in democracy, defend our secular ethos and our heritage, and defeat forces that are trying to sabotage the Constitution of India". Mrs. Gandhi's exhortation together with statements to similar effect by Congress President Rahul Gandhi, Ms. Banerjee and others should leave none in doubt that as far as the Opposition is concerned, this election is about the defence of democracy from the "tyrannies of power". Viewed thus, the 'mahagathbandhan' is not a 'summit of contradictions' but a loud affirmation of collective political will to rise in defence of freedom, inclusion, equality, jus-



ticity and dignity of citizens.

Indeed, this election is about the ends of power, the legitimacy of its exercise and means of its pursuit. It is about a proclaimed preference of politics "grounded in humanism than in force". It should be about the end objectives of the state as much as about addressing challenges of an impoverished politics and debilitated institutions of democracy. The election must also be about restoring ideology and reason at the centre of politics and a reclaiming of the constitutional centre founded on our liberal, secular, progressive and dignified heritage.

This election is about a contest of ideas, about the meaning of democracy and for galvanising maximum support for the dignitarian values that gave birth to the nation. It is about the rejection of "convenient moralities" in favour of allegiance to an ideal of a just, inclusive and compassionate society. It is about a campaign that must yield politics elevated beyond the assertion of sub-identities towards a deepening of de-

mocracy that holds hope for all our people.

Those who suggest that the campaign against the BJP should focus essentially on issues related to "roti, kapda aur makaan" underestimate the nation's passion for freedom and liberty. How else can we explain the crushing defeat of the Congress in 1977 under one of its tallest leaders? Freedom, national security and patriotism are not mutually incompatible. No reason, tactical or otherwise, can justify less than a frontal, sustained and vigorous censure of the ruling party's divisive, sectarian, exclusionary, anti-libertarian and anti-dignity agenda of governance. It is imperative, however, to ensure an appropriate idiom to communicate a powerful appeal built around the assertion of the republic's core values. The politics of a free people wedded to the idea of accountable and restrained power must, forever lean on the side of freedom because "the battle of freedom is never done, and the field never quiet".

In a nutshell

Hopefully, the electoral mandate of 2019 will serve to strengthen the foundations of deliberative democracy and repel onslaughts on our liberties in the name of invented insecurities. The mandate must also serve to restore the credibility of political parties as protagonists of constitutional goals, and integral to the democratic process. We are entitled to expect that the outcome of the general election will

vindicate national conscience so that freedom prevails over fear, inclusion over exclusion and secularism over communalism. We know that the triumph of democracy is anchored in the equality of citizens and is sustained through freedom and assertion. The French philosopher, Alexis De Tocqueville, reminded us years ago that "a liberal, wise and energetic government" cannot "spring from the suffrage of a subservient people" and that "no citizen is so obscure that it is not dangerous to allow him to be oppressed, no private rights are so unimportant that they can be surrendered with impunity to the caprices of a government".

The dismal track record of the BJP's rule, irretrievably diminished by suppression of free thought, persecution and intimidation of political opponents, citizens and students, will hopefully carry the burden of argument against the party's continuation in office. Finally, we cannot forget that the pledge in defence of liberty and dignity of our people that we took as a nation on the midnight of freedom is a continuing one since we are once again called upon to ensure "that the soul of a suppressed nation finds utterance". Therein lies the extraordinary significance of the electoral outcome this year.

Ashwani Kumar is Senior Advocate, Supreme Court and a former Union Minister for Law and Justice. 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.

Losing its lustre?

That the Bharatiya Janata Party will go to any extent to appease voters to be in power is evident from the government's decision to confer the Bharat Ratna, the nation's highest civilian award, on former President Pranab Mukherjee, musician Bhupen Hazarika (posthumous) and social activist Nanaji Deshmukh (posthumous). It reflects a deference to the dictates of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and probably a way to appease the electorate in the Northeast and even West Bengal. After blatantly interfering in a number of constitutional bodies and even the judiciary to

achieve its ends, it is unfortunate that the BJP government is now using the highest civilian award to try and influence some sections of voters, especially as the countdown to the general election has begun.

THARCUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

Texts and science

The article, "Are we undermining our scientific temper?" (OpEd page, 'Yes, No, It's Complicated', January 25), left one rather dissatisfied. While two writers (for 'Yes' and 'No') were in agreement on information in the Puranas being left there instead of being used in discussion in

august conferences, the last writer ('It's Complicated') appeared to give the impression that he had misunderstood the meaning of 'temper' in the term 'scientific temper'. For us lay people, the word 'science' has a clear association with empirical experience, which means that it should be possible for the proposition to be repeatedly subjected to trial and that this should give the same result. Using this point, I would suggest that our ministers, vice-chancellors and other great people who keep harping on the validity of Pushpaka Vimanas, Brahmastra and evidence of plastic surgery in fixing a elephant's head

K. KRISHNAN,
Bengaluru

on a child's shoulders be given a tidy sum of money to delve into ancient texts, and using the information therein, to produce working laboratory models of such things. It is only then that they should come forward with their proposals to introduce their ideas – either in the field of education or in industry – and produce eyeball-grabbing scientific information as workable science and technology.

O. LAKSHMANAN,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

Osaka's win

Japan's Naomi Osaka, the new Australian Open champion, has underlined that her win in the U.S. was relatively injury-free. A new star has arrived and, hopefully, be in the limelight for a long time.

V. LAKSHMANAN,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

■ Before the U.S. Open, Ms. Osaka was an unknown. But her rise in women's tennis has been spectacular. One looks forward to her going full steam ahead.

SHANMUGAM MUDALIAR,
Pune

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:
www.thehindu.com/opinion/letters/

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: "The lowdown on zearalenone in cereals" (Who.What.Why.Where page, Jan. 27, 2019) talked about a 1974 hepatitis outbreak in Rajasthan and Gujarat that was linked to aflatoxin in wheat. It was actually linked to aflatoxin in maize.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

Dancing around the Supreme Court

The dance bar case yields insights on the institutional interaction between governments and the courts



CHINTAN CHANDRACHUD

On January 17, the Supreme Court struck down several statutory provisions and rules governing Maharashtra's dance bars. This decision forms part of an iterative game that has evolved over 14 years between the Maharashtra government and the courts.

Prolonged interactions

In 2005, the Maharashtra government imposed a ban on dance performances in bars, with the exception of hotels rated three stars and above. The public rationale offered was that these performances were obscene, morally corrupt, and promoted prostitution. Dance performance licenses were cancelled with immediate effect, prompting affected parties to file petitions in the Bombay High Court. The High Court held against the government, resulting in an appeal to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court affirmed the High Court's decision in July 2013, pursuing two lines of reasoning. One, the government could not discriminate between luxury hotels and other establishments seeking licenses for dance performances. Two, the ban had proven to be counterproductive, resulting in the unemployment of over 75,000 women, many of whom were forced by circumstances to engage in prostitution.

Rather than implementing the Supreme Court's decision, the government swiftly devised a strategy to sidestep it, imposing an outright ban on all dance performances, whether in street bars or upmarket hotels. Although the government's response addressed the court's first concern, it failed to address the second. This led to fresh proceedings in the Supreme Court. While the court saw through the government's attempt to circumvent its decision, it left room for the government to prohibit obscene dances with a view to protecting the dignity of the dancers.

Once again, the government responded in a matter of months. This time, the government's response was more sophisticated and took cues from the Supreme Court's decision.



The SC's decision is part of a long iterative game between the Maharashtra government and the courts. A dance bar in Mumbai. ■ ARUANANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

Rather than seeking to impose a ban on dance performances altogether, it only did so to the extent that these performances were obscene or overtly sexual. However, it imposed a number of other conditions on establishments seeking a license for such performances. Applicants were required to "possess a good character" with no criminal antecedents. The establishment could not be within one kilometre of an educational or religious institution. A CCTV camera would need to be fitted at the entrance. Customers could not be permitted to throw coins or currency notes on the dancers, but could add tips to the bill. The permit room (where alcohol was served) and the dance room would need to be separated by a partition. The stage could not be smaller than a prescribed size.

Some of these conditions were challenged in the Supreme Court on the basis that they were far too onerous.

On January 17, the court upheld a few of these conditions, but struck down others. For example, it noted that the CCTV requirement violated the right to privacy of the dancers and the patrons, the "good character" requirement was vague, the partition between the permit room and the dance room was unjustified, and the one kilometre distance requirement was impractical.

However, what the court found especially revealing was that amongst the dozens of applications filed since the new rules were put in place, not a single one had been approved by the government. The court therefore saw the government's most recent response as a ban on dance bars mas-

Reasons for disparity

A number of structural reasons may account for this disparity. Despite heavy caseloads, courts must provide an opportunity for a fair hearing, deliberate, and set out reasons for their decisions. Courts will also typically not consider cases unilaterally, but are dependent on parties to bring proceedings in search of a remedy. Separately, the ban on dance bars has also received a disconcerting level of cross-party political support in Maharashtra, despite the regime changes since 2005. This has meant that legislation has often been enacted unopposed, without any meaningful discussion on the floor of

Chintan Chandrachud is an Associate at Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP, London. Views are personal

the House. The amendments of 2014, for example, were approved by the Maharashtra Cabinet on a Thursday, and sailed through the Vidhan Sabha and Vidhan Parishad within minutes on the following day.

The practical implication of the government being more nimble than the courts is that even when government responses are imperfect, the court produces significant delays. This case outlines the vulnerability of what is otherwise seen as an all-powerful Supreme Court, especially when it depends on the government to comply with its decisions in some positive way, such as by issuing dance bar licenses. Even when the courts exercise the putatively "negative" function of striking down legislation or rules, the level of compliance with their decisions often lies in the hands of the executive.

These developments should also lead courts to introspect about the existing remedial landscape in cases where legislation is challenged. The Supreme Court often deploys the writ of continuing mandamus (issuing a series of interim orders over a period of time to monitor compliance with its decisions) in public interest litigation cases that test the limits of its jurisdiction. It has chosen not to adopt that enforcement strategy in this case, which falls squarely within the four corners of its jurisdiction. While the court cannot direct the enactment of legislation, it can monitor compliance with an order to issue licenses to qualified applicants.

A further response from the Maharashtra government now seems almost inevitable. The court struck down the one kilometre distance requirement, but did not say that any distance requirement would be invalid. While unconstitutional in its present form, it noted that the "good character" requirement could be defined more precisely. These are only two among the many options that are now available to the government in responding to the court's decision.

The court concluded its judgment with the "hope" that applications for licenses would "now be considered more objectively and with [an] open mind". Similar hopes have been expressed earlier. It is hard to believe that this time will be any different.

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FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Making the significant interesting

The reason behind explaining one political story a month



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

As the Readers' Editor (RE), I recognise the crucial distinction between reasonable scepticism and total cynicism. My offer to explain once a month at least one political story published in this newspaper generated not only

speak about how they do their job, their commitment to accuracy, their motivations to dig deep and present a fairly comprehensive picture. It helps journalists and news organisations anticipate and address criticism in a proactive manner. It wants those in the media to engage with the people when they have questions. Trusting News points out that this effort does not involve a huge technological intervention; it shows a willingness to engage and be transparent. It shows that earning trust is the job of journalists.

Nothing gives a newspaper more pleasure than the fact that its readers retain confidence in its editorial decisions, its journalistic values, and its ethical practices in the newsroom. Every news ombudsman has his or her personal approach to effectively build trust. In its May 2000 issue, *Granta* magazine carried an extract of Diana Athill's excellent memoir

Stet, titled *Editing Vidia*, which, in a way, helped me learn not only about the craft of editing but also about life. Athill said about good editing: "It was like removing layers of crumpled brown paper from an awkwardly shaped parcel, and revealing the attractive present which it contained." She has written extensively about things which life teaches us. Her two valuable lessons – "avoid romanticism and abhor possessiveness" – are also lessons for me as an ombudsman.

Why political stories?

I do not romanticise journalists, though my romance for journalism is deep. I maintain a certain critical distance from the way words are produced in this newspaper. The exercise to talk about one political story a month is not a one-way communication to extol the virtues of journalism. It is a conscious effort to listen and share. I invite readers to suggest the story about which they want to know more. The idea of examining political stories in the run-up to the election is simple: It is these stories that are subjected to misinterpretation the most on social media. Tweaking stories through algorithms, using key words in those stories to misunderstand them, and converting the public space into ideological silos are some of the reasons behind this initiative. It is often said that journalism strives to make the significant interesting in an ethical and accountable manner. Talking about the process of reporting is part of this imagination.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

SINGLE FILE

Model for malaria control

Through its DAMAN initiative, Odisha has emerged as an inspiration in the global fight against malaria

PRAMOD KUMAR MEHERDA

The World Health Organisation's World Malaria Report of 2018 turned the spotlight on India's recent strides against malaria. India is the only country among the 11 highest-burden countries that saw substantial progress in reducing disease burden: it saw a 24% decrease in 2017 compared to 2016. This shows that India has assumed a leadership role in advancing global efforts to end malaria. The country's success provides hope to the other highest-burden countries to tackle malaria head-on.

India's progress in fighting malaria is an outcome of concerted efforts to ensure that its malaria programme is country-owned and country-led, even as it is in alignment with globally accepted strategies. The turning point in India's fight against malaria came at the East Asia Summit in 2015, when it pledged to eliminate the disease by 2030. Following this public declaration, India launched the five-year National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination. This marked a shift in focus from malaria "control" to "elimination". The plan provides a roadmap to achieve the target of ending malaria in 571 districts out of India's 678 districts by 2022.

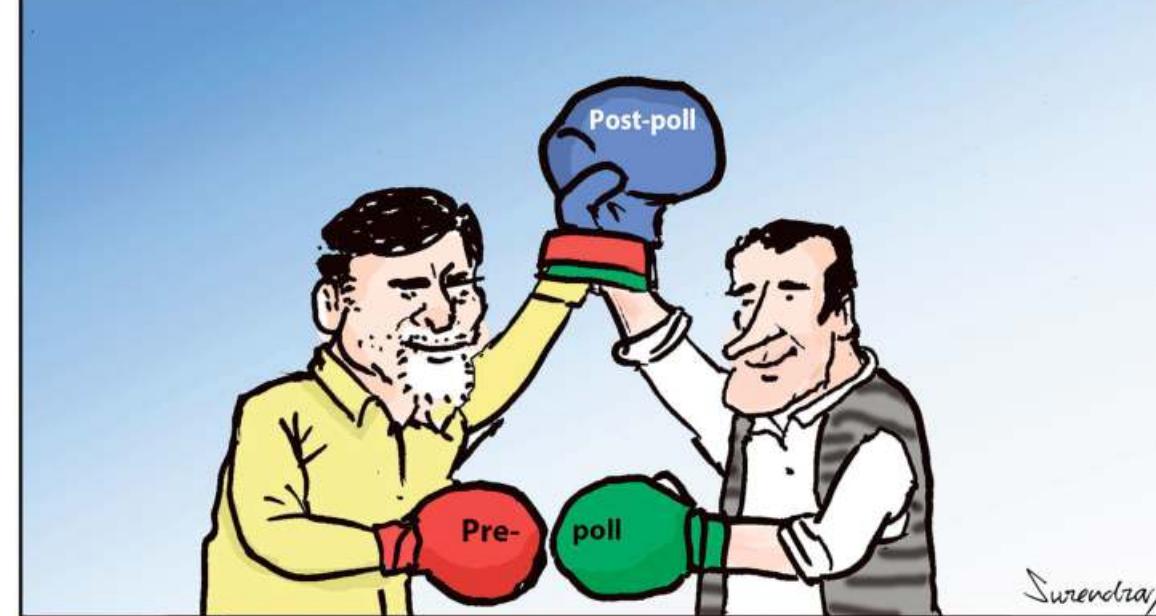
The plan requires more than ₹10,000 crore. Adequate investment combined with coordinated action between governments, civil society and philanthropic donors is imperative to achieve this goal. Since health is a State subject, State governments across the country shoulder a special responsibility in tackling the disease.

Among the States, Odisha has emerged as an inspiration in the fight against malaria. In recent years it has dramatically scaled-up efforts to prevent, diagnose and treat malaria through its Durgama Anchalare Malaria Nirakaran (DAMAN) initiative, which has produced impressive results in a short span of time. In 2017, accredited social health activists (ASH-As) helped distribute approximately 11 million bed nets, which was enough to protect all the residents in areas that were at highest risk. This included residential hostels in schools. As a result of its sustained efforts, Odisha recorded a 80% decline in malaria cases and deaths in 2017. DAMAN aims to deliver services to the most inaccessible and hardest hit people of the State. The initiative has in-built innovative strategies to combat asymptomatic malaria. DAMAN has been accorded priority in the State's health agenda. There is financial commitment for a five-year period to sustain and build on the impact created by the initiative.

The new country-driven 'high burden to high impact' plan to reduce disease burden in the 11 countries reflects the global sentiment that business as usual is no longer an option when it comes to fighting the disease. By prioritising malaria elimination, India, and especially Odisha, is showing the world the way.

The writer is the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Odisha

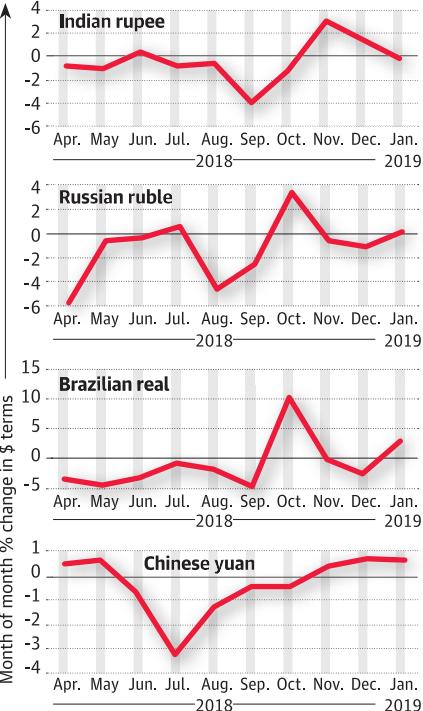
SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



DATA POINT

Rupee rebounds

\$ vs others | Values of all BRICS currencies showed sharp dips in the first half of 2018, with the Ruble registering the biggest fall among them in April. India registered its biggest month-on-month fall in value in September



FROM PAGE ONE

Respond to plea against wire-tapping, says SC

The PIL petition was filed in the background of the controversy over the government's December 2018 notification authorising 10 agencies to initiate electronic surveillance.

9,000 orders

The PUCL highlighted the data, obtained under the Right to Information Act, that showed 7,500-9,000 orders for interception of phone calls and up to 500 orders for interception of emails were passed every month, in an indiscriminate use of surveillance powers.

The petition pointed out that there have been several changes in the constitutional landscape, the PUCL said.

Phone of slain Inspector found in accused's home

Inspector Subodh Kumar's phone with a closed user group (CUG) number was recovered, along with five more phones on Saturday, from the house of the key accused Prashant Natt, a senior police officer said. The phones have been sent to a forensic laboratory for extracting details like call records.

Natt was arrested on December 18 from Sikandrabad and is in jail.

"We had got information from sources that Subodh Kumar's mobile phone could have been kept hidden at Natt's house and we procured a search warrant from the court to check his house," Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Atul Kumar Shrivastava told reporters. However, the pistol that was used to fire at the Inspector is still missing, and a search is on.

Natt, 26, a resident of Chingawathi, was working part-time as a driver in Delhi and nearby areas and then locally as a labourer, the police said. During the violence, Sumit Kumar, 20, of Chingawathi, was also killed.

An FIR was filed at the Syana police station against 80 people on the charges of murder, attempt to murder, rioting, sedition and damage to public property. Twenty-seven were named. So far, 38 accused have been arrested, Syana Circle Officer Raghvendra Mishra told PTI on Sunday.

Those arrested include Bajrang Dal's Bulandshahr unit convener Yogesh Raj, Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha's head Shikhar Agarwal, Army jawan Jeetender Mallik, and Kalua, who first attacked the Inspector, surrounded by five to six men.

A separate FIR for cow slaughter was filed on December 3, and six accused have been arrested.

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One proposal under consideration is waiver of interest on crop loans.

has recommended several options to provide both short and long-term solutions to address agrarian distress. However, a final call

will be taken at the Cabinet meeting as a huge cost is involved, they said.

One option proposed is waiving interest on crop loans for farmers who pay on time, which will cost an additional ₹15,000 crore to the exchequer.

There is also a proposal to completely waive premium for insurance on food crops.

The Centre is also evaluating the scheme followed by the Telangana and Odisha governments wherein a fixed amount is transferred directly into the bank account of farmers, the sources said.

Twenty-one candidates are in the fray in the high-stakes byelection being held just months before the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha polls due later this year.

The votes will be counted on January 31.

Nearly 3,000 police personnel and 500 Home Guards have been deployed in the district, besides a company each of the Central Reserve Police Force and the Rapid Action Force.

Jind police spokesperson Pawan Kapoor said adequate forces were deployed at all the 174 polling booths, and additional forces were sent to sensitive and hyper-sensitive booths. He said vehicles

and people from outside would not be allowed on the voting day and 51 checkposts were set up across the district.

Triangular fight

The Jind seat fell vacant following the death of Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) legislator Hari Chand Middha.

Though not holding much significance for the electoral strength of various political

parties in the Vidhan Sabha, the byelection turned into one of the most keenly fought elections in the State in the recent years after the Congress decided to field its Kaithal MLA and party's communications chief Randeep Singh Surjewala, making it a triangular fight involving BJP's Krishan Middha and newly-formed Janayak Janata Party's (JJP) Digvijay Singh Chautala.

The government must first acknowledge that this is a serious issue; only then can they take action. Instead, they are trying to hide the unemployment da-

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He was instrumental in creating the YHB coalition in the wake of widespread protests against the Staff Selection Commission examination paper leak in March 2018. "If the parties in power at the Centre and in the States do not act on our demands...the youth will campaign against such parties."

At a youth summit in the capital, several hundred young men, along with a handful of women, repeated the movement's slogan, *Job chahiye, jumla nahin*.

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IN BRIEF



Anant Kumar Hegde courts fresh controversy

KODAGU Union Minister of State Anant Kumar Hegde on Sunday courted fresh controversy. Addressing a gathering here, he said: "We have to rethink about priorities of our society. We shouldn't think of caste. If a Hindu girl is touched by a hand, then that hand should not exist." Mr. Hegde had recently stoked a controversy with his "daylight rape" comment, which he had made in the context of violence in Kerala following the Supreme Court ruling in the Sabarimala case. ANI

Reshuffle in Rajasthan bureaucracy

JAIPUR The Rajasthan government has transferred one IAS, 45 Indian Forest Service and 26 Rajasthan Administrative Service officers on Sunday. Deepak Nandi, Director, Rajasthan State Agricultural Marketing Board, was shifted to the Tribal Area Development Department as a joint secretary. Naresh Pal Gangwar, Principal Secretary, Energy Department, was given additional charge of MD of Rajasthan Energy Development Corporation. PTI

Diesel price up by 10 paise, petrol unchanged

NEW DELHI There was a marginal increase in the diesel price on Sunday, while the petrol price remained unchanged in the national capital and Mumbai. In Delhi, diesel costs ₹66 a litre now and petrol ₹71.27. In Mumbai, people will have to shell out ₹76.90 a litre for petrol and ₹69.11 for diesel. In October, petrol prices had touched a record ₹84 a litre in Delhi and ₹91.34 in Mumbai. Diesel went up to ₹75.45 a litre in October in the national capital and ₹80.10 in Mumbai. ANI

Akhilesh too takes a dip in Kumbh's political currents

SP chief makes surprise visit, ahead of Priyanka's trip

OMAR RASHID LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday sprung a surprise with a visit to the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad and a dip at the Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati.

Interacting with reporters, he hinted that there was little space for compromise with the Congress even after the hype generated by the entry of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as general secretary in charge of party affairs in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

'Alliance of the people' The alliance of the SP and the BSP is "an alliance of the people", Mr. Yadav said, adding that he had "full faith that



On the Kumbh bandwagon: SP chief Akhilesh Yadav returns after taking a dip in the Ganga. • PTI

the people will support this alliance".

While his ally, BSP chief Mayawati, is yet to comment on Ms. Vadra's political elevation, the party's State president, R.S. Kushwaha, said

the decision would help the SP-BSP alliance.

"If she contests strongly, we will gain. Whatever votes she cuts will be those of the BJP," Mr. Kushwaha said in Deoria.

Mr. Yadav also paid obeisance at the famous Bade Hanuman Mandir near the Sangam, known for its reclining idol.

His visit deepened the political focus on the Kumbh

U.P. Cabinet meeting to be held at Kumbh tomorrow

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW

In a first, the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet will hold a meeting at Allahabad during the ongoing Kumbh in the city on January 29.

After the meeting, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other Ministers are likely to take a dip in the Sangam, an official said on Sunday. "On January 29, the U.P. Cabinet will be holding its meeting at the integrated command and control centre in the Kumbh mela



Yogi Adityanath

area. The meeting is likely to commence at 10.30 a.m." Additional Chief Secretary Awanish Awasthi said. Mr. Adityanath and Ministers will also visit Akshayavat and Saraswati Koop.

Mr. Yadav said the decision to hold a Cabinet meeting on the banks of the Sangam or to change the name of Ardh Kumbh to Kumbh

would be "incomplete" if farmers did not prosper and

the youth did not get jobs.

Mr. Yadav also met the president of the Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad, the body of 13 major Hindu sects in the country. Targeting Mr. Adityanath for his comments that the Ayodhya dispute could be solved within 24 hours if handed over by the Supreme Court "to us", Mr. Yadav advised him to instead focus on solving the issue of stray cattle in U.P. in the upcoming 90 days.

Bull menace

"Saando se khet bachalo (save the fields from the bulls)," Mr. Yadav advised the Chief Minister, while saying that the apex court would handle the Ayodhya case.

Mr. Yadav said if voted to power, the SP would make public the caste-wise census to prevent communities from "spreading hatred" against each other. His is seen as a response to allegations that the SP worked only for the Yadavs.

Under the hammer

Physical auction at National Gallery of Modern Art, Delhi, on January 27 and 28 e-auction at pmementos.gov.in from Jan. 29-31

Base price range: ₹100 - ₹30,000

More than 1,800 gifts received nationally and internationally by Prime Minister Narendra Modi are being auctioned

Costliest item

• 2.22 kg silver plate received from former MP C.Narasimhan: ₹30,000

• 4.76 kg gold-plated Radha Krishna idol received from Mandvi Nagar Palika in Surat: ₹20,000



Some other items

- Memento titled Mandela Capture Site received from the Mayor of Durban, South Africa, through Protocol: ₹2,000
- Woven portrait of Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with the Indian flag: ₹15,000
- Ship shaped memento, received from the Maritime India Summit, Mumbai, 2016: ₹3,000
- Wooden Bhawada mask received from Silvassa: ₹1,500
- Replica of Golden Temple, Amritsar, received from president, SGPC, Amritsar: ₹10,000

Amount raised will go to the government's flagship project 'Namami Gange'

Now, Cong. mocks CBI's 'adventurism'

Officers targeted, says Chidambaram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Sunday attacked the CBI for "indiscriminately targeting" some of the bankers, and pointed out that the agency received the "ultimate certificate" from Union Minister Arun Jaitley, who termed it "investigative adventurism".

In a series of tweets, the Congress leader said he was glad that Mr. Jaitley's conscience and legal acumen finally stirred him to condemn the "indiscriminate targeting of eminent bankers" in cases involving thousands of crores.

"The CBI has received the ultimate certificate from the one who has the best ringside seat, the Finance Minister (on leave): 'Adventurism and megalomania have overtaken investigators!'" he tweeted.

He accused the government of being in slumber when there was "indiscriminate targeting" of distinguished IAS officers and others in cases where the allegations were about small sums of money.

Though he did not specify, it could be a reference to the Aircel-Maxis case, in which several IAS officers



The CBI has received the ultimate certificate from Arun Jaitley

P. CHIDAMBARAM

Congress leader

have been named in the chargesheet. Mr. Chidambaram has also been named as an accused in the case.

"What cause are we serving or actually hurting?" asks the FM. He knows the answer. The cause of justice," he said.

Former Law Minister Salman Khurshid also attacked the CBI. "FM Jaitley is perturbed by the CBI's adventurism but is that not their standard procedure?" Mr. Khurshid tweeted.

Criticising the CBI for its action in the case against former ICICI CEO Chanda Kochhar, Mr. Jaitley, in a Facebook post, said, "There is a fundamental difference between investigative adventurism and professional investigation."

Another arrest in case of IS conspiracy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

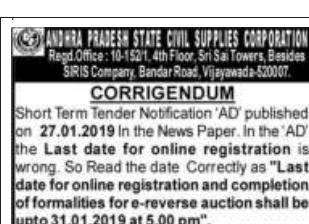
MUMBAI

In a fresh arrest over a suspected IS plot to attack mass events using poisonous chemicals, the Maharashtra anti-terrorism squad has picked up a 34-year-old man from Mumbai in Thane district, taking the number of people in custody so far to 10.

Talha Podrik was arrested on Saturday, a squad official said on Sunday. A laptop, a tablet computer, a hard disk, pen drives, a router, mobile phones and diaries were seized from the residence of Podrik, he said.

The agency had earlier arrested eight people, and detained a minor boy, from Aurangabad and Thane after several teams carried out searches through January 21 and 22.

They were charged under Section 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code and relevant provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Bombay Police Act.



CORRIDUM

Short Term Tender Notification AD published on 27.01.2019 in the New Paper. In the AD, the Last date for online registration is wrong. So Read the Date Correctly as "Last date for online registration and completion of formalities for e-reverse auction shall be upto 31.01.2019 at 5.00 pm".

Sd/-VC & Managing Director

No process to handle plaints against CVC: govt.

Process to frame new guidelines has been initiated, Union Personnel Ministry tells RTI activist

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The government cannot act on two complaints received by it over a year ago against Chief Vigilance Commissioner K.V. Chowdary as there is no guideline to handle such grievances, according to the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

The Ministry said a process to frame such guidelines has been initiated by the government.

The assertion assumes significance as the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led panel had, on January 10, removed CBI Director Alok Verma following a probe report by the Central Vigilance Commission among other facts.

It is informed that presently no guidelines to handle complaints against Chief Vigilance Commissioner/Vi-

and other misconduct against Chief Vigilance Commissioners are in place," the Personnel Ministry said in response to an RTI query filed by whistle-blower Indian Forest Service officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi.

A process for framing guidelines to handle grievances/complaints against Chief Vigilance Commissioner/Vigilance Commissioners has been initiated by the Department of Personnel and Training, it said.

Mr. Chaturvedi had in 2017 written to the President asking him to take action against Mr. Chowdary for recommending closure of probe in alleged corruption cases at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here.



K.V. Chowdary

2 IAS officers seek action against Mizo protesters

Stopped from attending R-Day function

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

Two IAS officers of the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre have sought action against protesters who prevented government servants from attending the Republic Day celebrations in Mizoram's capital Aizawl on Saturday.

The officers are Krishna Mohan Uppu, Director of Transport and Additional Chief Electoral Officer, and Bhupesh Chaudhary, Registrar of Cooperative Societies.

The Joint NGO Coordination Committee, an umbrella organisation of five civil society and students' groups, boycotted the R-Day functions throughout the State as a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016. The boycott saw Mizoram Governor Kummanam Rajasekharan ground a near-empty ground.

In his letter to six officers in the Union Home Ministry and the Mizoram government, including the Chief Secretary, Mr. Uppu said he had reached the venue, Aizawl's Assam Rifles ground, an hour before the start of the function with his fellow officers. "To our utter sur-

prise, the representatives of the NGO had been standing guard along with the police at the entrance of the venue and stopped us from entering

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE NEW DELHI Despite the coming general election, India should take serious note of the implications of the latest round of the Taliban-U.S. talks that ended on Sunday, experts said here.

The talks are expected to resume in February, but former diplomats said India should watch out of the proxy masters of the Taliban in the Pakistani military establishment.

Future of fighters A major issue in the talks is the future of the Taliban fighters at present held in the government prisons in Afghanistan.

"The Government of Afghanistan should be consulted before critical decisions are taken that could alter the power equation inside Afghanistan. Taliban captives are in custody of the Afghan government so it is fair to hear what the government has to say regarding this," said Satinder K. Lambah, former Special Envoy of the Prime Minister.

India is yet to respond to the latest dialogue that re-

portedly led to broad agreement on the principles of resolution of the conflict and withdrawal of the U.S. forces.

Pointing at the 18-month timeline during which the U.S. is expected to move toward withdrawing, former foreign secretary Shyam Saran said the "endgame" has begun in Afghanistan.

"Frankly, if the U.S. troops withdraw from Afghanistan, then the promise of good behaviour from the Taliban is really of no consequence. India is against placing military boots on the ground, so we have to see how we can support the Af-

ghan government," Mr. Saran said.

He pointed out that a political solution was necessary to solve the crisis.

Entry into govt.

However, the current dialogue would allow the Taliban to join the Afghan government. This, Mr. Saran said was a gain for the outfit. The discussion between the Taliban and the U.S. however, fell short of a ceasefire promise from the Taliban, which has maintained that it will agree to a ceasefire only after being assured of a full withdrawal of U.S. forces in a time-bound manner.



Afghan National Army soldiers standing guard at a checkpoint in Kabul, Afghanistan, in this file photo. • AP

Watch out for Pak. proxies directing the militant outfit'

App launched with R-Day highlights

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

People can watch the highlights of this year's Republic Day parade at the Rajpath on a mobile application launched by the Defence Ministry.

The 'RDP INDIA 2019' app was launched on Saturday on the 70th Republic Day.

"It was extremely informative to the spectators witnessing the parade and was widely appreciated," the Ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

The app also had the provision for live streaming of the parade and contains information about it, including the order of the march, details of the tableaux presented by different States and Ministries, cultural performances by children, fly past and names of recipients of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar, 2019, the statement said.

According to the statement, this new initiative is in sync with the Digital India campaign of the government.

The Ministry said the app would help people who desire to know the theme and ideas depicted in the tableaux.

Lanka IOC PLC

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Tender no.: LIOC/ENG/EOL/01/2018-19

Lanka IOC PLC invites sealed tenders(EOL) in prescribed tender form under two bid system from bonafide contractors as per following details

Maduro rejects Europe's call to hold fresh election

No one can give us an ultimatum, says Venezuelan President; U.S. asks other nations to 'pick a side'

Chávismo betrayed?

In 2013, when the charismatic President Hugo Chávez passed away, Venezuela was still considered a model for an alternative discourse to the free market-oriented Western model. So what changed in the five years since? Graphic looks at the key factors that have shaped the country's politics and economy

A paper published by the nonpartisan Council on Foreign Relations says that Venezuela presents a classic example of a petro-state

It postulates what Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson theorised through their 2012 book *Why Nations Fail* – a country's prosperity premised on a huge reserve of natural resources needs to be accompanied by a deepening of political and economic institutions

The paper says that in Venezuela, high economic growth fuelled by oil revenues did not run parallel to the development of strong institutions

Key inflection points

- Discovery of oil in 1922
- Nationalisation:** In 1976, President Carlos Andrés Pérez created the state-owned Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA)

Rise of Chávez, weakening of institutions

President Chávez:

- Fired many PDVSA workers, depriving the company of technical expertise, and replaced them with political appointees
- Ended term limits to presidency in 2009
- Appointed loyalists to the Supreme Court
- Nationalised private businesses

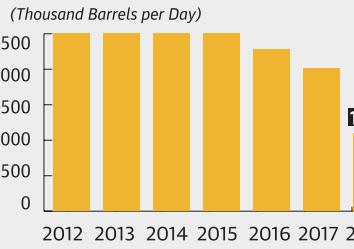
From where do you get the power to issue deadlines or ultimatums to a sovereign people? From where do you come up with such interventionist and childish action?

JORGE ARREAZA, Foreign Minister, speaking at the UN

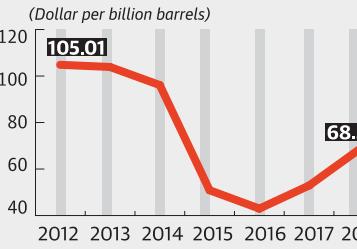
Hugo Chávez's death in 2013 was followed by a gradual fall in GDP growth, pushing more households into poverty

Year	Poverty rate (%)	GDP growth (%)	Unemployment (%)	Government debt (% of GDP)
2012	21.1	5.6 %	7.8 %	58.1 %
2013	27.3	1.3 %	7.5 %	72.3 %
2014	48.4	-3.9 %	6.7 %	63.5 %
2015	73	-6.2 %	7.4 %	31.9 %
2016	81.8	-16.5 %	20.6 %	31.3 %
2017	87	-14.0 %	27.1 %	34.9 %
2018	-	-15.0 %	33.4 %	162.0 %

Reduced production | The quantity of oil produced plateaued before falling, reaching a record low in 2018



Fall in prices | Crude oil prices saw a precipitous fall during Maduro's six-year term, hitting the welfare spending



Descent into disorder under Nicolás Maduro

A fall in oil prices exposed the weaknesses of the economy, resulting in the following:

- Rise in public debt:** As exports fell, the money available to finance foreign debt also reduced
- Hyperinflation:** The indicators were ripe for inflation to rise to astronomical levels, similar to that seen in Zimbabwe in the 2000s



A demonstrator with a Venezuelan flag in Caracas on Saturday. ■ NYT

REUTERS
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISTANBUL

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro rejected an international ultimatum to call elections within eight days and said Opposition leader Juan Guaidó had violated the Constitution by declaring himself the interim leader.

Israel on Sunday joined a growing list of countries led by the United States that back Mr. Guaidó's claim to the presidency on the basis that Mr. Maduro's second-term election victory was fraudulent.

Mr. Maduro, in an interview with CNN Turk aired on Sunday, also said he was open to dialogue and that meeting U.S. President Donald Trump was improbable but not impossible.

The broadcaster dubbed the interview from Spanish into Turkish. "It's not impossible but it's not likely. I sent many messages to Donald Trump."

'Complete insolence'

"They should withdraw this ultimatum. No one can give us an ultimatum," Mr. Maduro said. "Venezuela is not tied to Europe. This is complete insolence," he added, as he described the European countries' actions as a "mistake".

"All that is happening is linked to America. They are attacking us and they think Venezuela is their back garden," Mr. Maduro told the interviewer.

Washington on Saturday urged the world to "pick a side" on Venezuela and financially disconnect from

Mr. Maduro's government. While Mr. Maduro's government looks increasingly isolated internationally, it retains the support of China and Russia.

Venezuela has sunk into turmoil under Mr. Maduro with food shortages and protests amid an economic and political crisis that has sparked mass emigration and inflation that is seen rising to 10 million per cent this year.

Britain, Germany, France and Spain all said they would recognise Mr. Guaidó if Mr. Maduro failed to call fresh elections within eight days, an ultimatum Russia said was "absurd" and the Venezuelan Foreign Minister called "childlike".

'A fraudulent win'

Washington, Canada, most Latin American nations and many European states have labelled Mr. Maduro's second-term election win last May as fraudulent. The successor to late President Hugo Chávez cruised to victory after blocking the main Opposition candidates from running. Turnout was low.

"Israel joins the United States, Canada, most of the countries of Latin America and countries in Europe in recognising the new leadership in Venezuela," said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a statement.

Mr. Maduro retains the loyalty of the armed forces, though Venezuela's top military envoy to the U.S. on Saturday defected to Mr. Guaidó. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had voiced his support for Mr. Maduro in a phone call on Thursday.

Malaysia stripped of right to host sports event

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Malaysia has been stripped of the right to host the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships for threatening to refuse to allow Israeli athletes to take part, the International Paralympic Committee said.

The decision was taken "after the Home Ministry of Malaysia failed to provide the necessary guarantees that Israeli Para swimmers could participate, free from discrimination, and safely in the Championships," the IPC said.

Looking for alternative
IPC president Andrew Parsons said: "When a host country excludes athletes from a particular nation, for political reasons, then we have absolutely no alternative but to look for a new Championships host.

The championships, a qualifying event for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, were due to take place in Kuching on July 29-August 4. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon called it a "victory of values over hatred and bigotry".

Malaysia's Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman said if hosting an international sports event was more important than the country's support for the Palestinian cause, "(it) means Malaysia has truly lost its moral compass".

Trudeau fires envoy in Huawei row

McCallum had made remarks on executive's extradition

REUTERS

Ottawa
In an unprecedented move, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Saturday said he had fired his Ambassador to China, who prompted a political furore with comments about Huawei's extradition case.

John McCallum had embarrassed Mr. Trudeau's Liberal government by saying that Huawei Technologies Co Ltd Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou could make a strong argument against being sent to the U.S.

Opposition legislators and former Ambassadors accused Mr. McCallum of unacceptable political interference in an affair which has badly damaged relations between Canada and China.

Ms. Meng, the daughter of Huawei's founder, was arrested last month over alleged violations of U.S. sanctions on Iran.

"Last night I asked for and accepted John McCallum's resignation as Canada's Ambassador to China," Mr. Trudeau said in a statement that did not explain his reasons.

ELSEWHERE



Salvini threatens to sue rescue ship crew

Rome
Italy's Interior Minister Matteo Salvini said on Sunday that he was gathering legal evidence against the crew of a Dutch-flagged rescue ship as calls grew for 47 migrants to be allowed to land. "The Interior Minister is gathering elements to evaluate whether to press charges against the entire Sea Watch crew for favouring illegal immigration," the Ministry said. ■ AFP

68 killed in Indonesia floods, landslips

JAKARTA
At least 68 people have been killed and nearly 7,000 forced to take refuge in emergency shelters after floods, landslips and a tornado battered Sulawesi in the past week, authorities said. More than 5,000 homes had been submerged, bridges and schools damaged and thousands of acres of rice paddies destroyed, said a spokesman for the disaster mitigation agency. ■ REUTERS

BuzzFeed, HuffPost lay off employees

NEW YORK
The U.S.'s free online news heavyweights, BuzzFeed and HuffPost, last week were rocked by a new wave of layoffs. In an internal announcement, BuzzFeed said that 200 jobs were to be shed. Over at HuffPost, about 10% of journalists left editorial staff, or about 20 people in total. ■ AFP

Pak. closes consulate in Balkh after attack attempt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Sunday closed its Consulate in Afghanistan's Mazar-e-Sharif city after a woman tried to enter the building with a hand grenade hidden in her bag, the Foreign Office said. Mazar-e-Sharif is the capital of Balkh province. Pakistan

said the woman was arrested by the police and investigations are on to find the perpetrators.

The Embassy of Pakistan in Kabul urged the Afghan Foreign Office to provide foolproof security and to share the findings of its investigation at the earliest.

Brazil dam collapse toll rises to 34

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRUMADINHO

An alarm warning of an imminent mining dam rupture went up early on Sunday in Brumadinho, the same Brazilian community where a dam collapsed killing 34 with hundreds more feared dead, the mining company said.

An alarm warning of dangerously high water levels at a dam that is part of the Corrego do Feijão mining complex in southeastern Brazil went off at 5:30 a.m. (0730 GMT), a statement by the mining company Vale said. A dam at the same mining site burst on Friday, spewing millions of tons of treacherous sludge and engulfing buildings, vehicles and roads.

Among the more than 170 survivors rescued from the disaster, 23 were hospitalised with injuries. The ruptured dam, 42 years old and 86 m high, had been in the process of being decommissioned. Vale said it had recently passed structural safety tests.

Sikh separatists protest in front of Indian Embassy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

"flop show" by Indian government sources.

The demonstration by Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) outside the Indian Embassy in Washington during which they reportedly tried to burn the tricolour on the Republic Day, a move slammed by the local Sikh community and termed as a

Foreign troops could quit Afghanistan in 18 months

Draft peace pact signed following six days of Taliban-U.S. talks provides details



Taking charge: An Afghan National Army taking part in a training exercise in Kabul on Sunday. ■ REUTERS

ing signed. While no joint statement was issued, Mr. Khalilzad tweeted later that the talks had made "significant progress" and would

resume shortly, adding that he planned to travel to Afghanistan to meet government officials.

A Taliban statement is

sued later also noted progress on troop withdrawal and other issues but said more negotiations and internal consultations were required.

More talks in February
It was not clear whether the draft described by the Taliban sources was acceptable to both sides or when it could be completed and signed.

More talks on the draft are expected in February, again in the Qatari capital Doha, the Taliban sources said.

18 killed in two bomb attacks on Philippine church

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JOLO

At least 18 people were killed on Sunday when a double explosion outside a Catholic church on a southern Philippine island that is a stronghold of Islamist militants, the military said.

A powerful first blast shattered pews and left bodies

strewn inside the cathedral in the nation's restive south. Just moments later, a second explosion outside killed troops who were rushing to help the wounded in the damaged church on Jolo. This came less than a week after voters' approval of a plan to give Muslims in the south more control.

Deprivation played a key role in the Brexit referendum'

Academic Anand Menon says the vote against the EU was a vote against the establishment – in London and Brussels

VIDYA RAM
LONDON

Last week, Anand Menon, a professor of politics at King's College London, won plaudits on social media for his no-nonsense performance on Question Time, a popular BBC political show, and his blunt explanation of what a no-deal Brexit entails.

"It means that all the laws governing our interaction with the EU – whether you can fly, whether you can shop, whether you can trade, whether you can travel – cease to exist," he said. swiftly dismissing a suggestion by one panellist, who equated it with walking away from a deal to buy a car that you weren't convinced by.

He was equally candid in his assessment of the second referendum. "Whatever you think of [the referendum] it was a remarkable moment in democratic history that people

that hadn't voted ever for a very long time did so and they would, with some reason, feel hacked off."

Giving factual grounding
Questions and facts around Brexit are something Mr. Menon deals with on a daily basis as the director of U.K. in a Changing Europe – teams of researchers carrying out Brexit-related research up and down the country, in an attempt to give factual grounding to an emotional debate.

Funded by Britain's Social Research Council, it is based on a similar project that had been set up ahead of the Scottish referendum. It has grown from a part-time one-person role for Mr. Menon to 25 teams across the country researching to provide the public with factual analysis.

"We report what the re-

IN BRIEF



Will recover attached Mindtree shares: CDE

NEW DELHI Coffee Day Enterprises (CDE) would take required action to get IT firm Mindtree shares – owned by the firm and promoter V.G. Siddhartha – released by the Income Tax Department. The department had attached a portion of the shares held by Mr. Siddhartha and CDE in the IT firm over a potential tax demand. CDE said it had already discharged its tax liability along with filing the revised returns. PTI

RBI okays Federal Bank chairman appointment

MUMBAI The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of Dilip Sadarangani as part-time chairman of Federal Bank. He has been on the bank's board since 2013. "Dilip Sadarangani is a renowned banker with experience in various facets of banking in different countries. He has played key roles in setting up of IT infrastructure in different banks in India, Australia and Kuwait," the bank said in a statement.

FPI outflows at almost ₹6,000 crore in January

NEW DELHI Foreign investors have pulled out close to ₹6,000 crore so far from the Indian stock markets in January and experts believe this trend will continue in the coming months as well. This comes following a collective net inflow of ₹8,584 crore in the equity markets by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) during November and December 2017. Prior to that, they had pulled out a massive ₹28,900 crore in October. PTI

'SFIO probed Essel Group for demo links'

Promoters, lenders arrive at an understanding on not declaring a default if share prices fall sharply

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Essel Group has admitted that the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) has asked the group for information regarding certain transactions and that documents were provided.

At the same time, the group's promoters met lenders – with whom shares were pledged – and arrived at an understanding that a default won't be declared due to sharp fall in share prices. "I am pleased to share that we have achieved an understanding with the lenders," said Subhash Chandra, chairman, Essel Group.

"We have always valued their immense trust and faith shown in us and the positive and progressive outcome of the meeting is a true



Testing times: Subhash Chandra admitted to the group facing financial problems. ■ AKHILESH KUMAR

example of the same. I am very positive that we will continue to take such positive steps in rising up from the current challenging times, with support of all stakeholders," he added.

"There will not be any event of default declared due to the steep fall in price," Essel Group said in a separate statement on Sunday.

"Information/documents relating to certain transactions were sought by SFIO in July/August 2018 from cer-

tain Essel Group entities and requisite information/documents were provided," Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) – the group's flagship firm – said in response to a clarification sought by the stock exchanges after a news website reported that some companies probed by the agency for suspect demonetisation deposits had links with the Essel Group.

"Since all information sought by SFIO has been provided by Essel Group entities and no further information has been subsequently sought, the matter stands closed for Essel Group entities," ZEEL informed the exchanges. The group said the firms named in the website as being probed by the SFIO 'do not belong to the Essel Group.' In a statement, ZEEL was completed.

said it had 'no connection, whatsoever, with any alleged transaction(s), contained in the article published by a media platform.'

Legal action

"Essel Group has also filed a legal case against the media platform which has maliciously attempted to establish a linkage between the SFIO's investigation and ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd's promoters," the statement said. On Friday, Essel Group firms' shares fell, wiping off ₹4,000 crore worth investors' wealth prompting Mr. Chandra to issue a statement admitting to financial issues being faced by the group, but seeking lenders' patience till the sale of promoter stake in ZEEL was completed.



Steady rise: Tata has climbed from the 104th position to 86 this year and is the only Indian brand in the top 100. ■ AFP

Tata among 100 most valuable global brands

TCS, other arms spur value to \$19.5 bn

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

'Tata' has entered the list of top 100 most valuable brands, according to the Brand Finance Global 500 2019 report released at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

"Climbing [up] from the 104th position to 86 this year, the Tata brand is the only Indian brand in the top 100," said Tata Sons in a statement, adding that the total value of brand 'Tata' increased 37% to \$19.5 billion in 2019 from \$14.2 billion a year ago.

Improved performance

According to Brand Finance, a leading brand valuation and strategy consultancy, the increase in the group's brand value has largely been driven by an outstanding year for Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) which improved in its brand strength and for the first time, rated a AAA brand.

Tata's brand value of \$19.5 billion represents 17.6% of Tata Group's total revenues of \$110.7 billion.

N. Chandrasekaran, chairman, Tata Sons, said: "Tata has always been synonymous with trust and leadership and these brand at-

tributes are even more important to all our stakeholders today. This recognition of the strength of our brand will encourage us to drive our businesses in a socially responsible manner globally while continuing to strive for excellence through innovation and entrepreneurship."

Inclusion of a wider number of Tata entities for a more segmented and complete view of the Tata Group Brand Value and increase in the Tata group's overall brand strength had aided the improved rankings.

David Haigh, CEO, Brand Finance, said: "Tata Group has seen an impressive increase in Brand Value in 2019. This solid increase in group's brand value has largely been driven by an outstanding year for Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) which improved in its brand strength and for the first time, rated a AAA brand."

Founded by Jamsetji Tata in 1868, the Tata Group is a global enterprise comprising 30 firms across 10 verticals in more than 100 countries across six continents, collectively employing more than seven lakh people.

High use of input credit under taxman's scanner

GST shortfall prompts Centre to act

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Concerned over a decline in GST revenues, tax officials are likely to examine the high usage of input tax credit (ITC) to set off tax liability by businesses, sources said.

The issue of high ITC was flagged at the meeting of the Group of Ministers (GoM) which was set up by the GST Council to look into the reasons for revenue shortfall being faced by a large number of States.

'Misuse' of provision According to sources, availing ITC ideally should not result in loss of revenue but there could be possibility of misuse of the provision by unscrupulous businesses by

As much as 80% of the total GST liability is being settled by ITC

generating fake invoices just to claim tax credit.

During the meeting of the GoM, it was pointed out that as much as 80% of the total GST liability is being settled by ITC and only 20% deposited as cash.

GST revenue has averaged around ₹96,000 crore per month so far this fiscal and this reflects the cash component being deposited by businesses.

Under the present dispensation, there is no provision for real-time matching of ITC claims with the taxes already paid by suppliers of inputs.

FM Goyal to meet heads of PSBs today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Piyush Goyal will meet the CEOs of public sector banks (PSBs) on Monday to take stock of the banking sector, and discuss ways to improve their financial health, sources said.

The meeting comes three days ahead of the Budget 2019-20, the last from this government before the general elections expected to be held in April-May. However, according to the Ministry it would be a routine meeting where the financial health of the banks and the NPA situation would be reviewed, apart from exploring ways to boost credit to the MSME sector.

(With PTI inputs)

Kelkar moots setting up of 'NITI Aayog 2.0'

'Allow it to handle structural issues'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Former Finance Commission Chairman Vijay Kelkar has pitched for setting up of a 'new NITI Aayog' and giving it the responsibility for allocating capital and revenue grants to the States.

Mr. Kelkar, in a paper titled 'Towards India's new fiscal federalism,' said it was desirable that a functionally-distinct entity such as the new NITI Aayog be put to use to do the job at hand related to the structural issues, including removal of regional imbalances in the economy.

The eminent economist, however, added that he was not suggesting for a moment that the new NITI Aayog should take the form of the

erstwhile Planning Commission.

Mr. Kelkar argued that replacing the Planning Commission, which was promoting regionally-balanced growth in India, with the NITI Aayog, a think tank, has replaced the government's policy reach.

Allowing it to handle structural issues "...would mean that the new NITI Aayog or NITI Aayog 2.0 will be responsible for allocating development or transformational capital or revenue grants to States," he said.

He also suggested that to make the Aayog more effective, "the vice-chairman of the new NITI Aayog will need to be a permanent invitee of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.

+ Future will see man-machine managers'

In Cognizant's 25th year, R. Chandrasekaran also dwells on what went right

K. BHARAT KUMAR

When a company celebrates its 25th year, one question you'd like to ask is what it would do differently if it had a chance to rewind. That poser looks a bit out of place with Cognizant when it says that many of its choices in this past quarter century have been different from its peers'.

According to R. Chandrasekaran, executive vice-chairman, Cognizant India, from the way it reported margins to its choice of geography and vertical to focus on, to building tier 2 bases early on, to building a consulting business, have all blazed new trails.

Cognizant chose to restrict its margins to 19-20% at a time when its Indian competitors wore high margins as a badge of honour. Says Mr. Chandrasekaran, "When we went public [in 1998], most of our offshore peers reported operating margins of 28-30%. Consulting firms like Accenture reported in the range of 11-12%.

"We thought 28-30% may not be sustainable and 11-12% may not be competitive." So Cognizant told its investors it would plough back excess profits of about 7-8% in the business and drive growth.

"Investing in consulting, expanding our geographical footprint... there were many avenues for investment. If we had not had that leverage, our growth rates would have been different. In hindsight, we feel somewhat vindicated."

In time, Cognizant, which began life a decade or more after its large Indian competitors, was able to get past Wipro, and later Infosys, in revenues.

The next 25

What bets is the company making for the next 25 years? Mr. R. Ramkumar, executive

director, Cognizant India says, "On the business front, in the medium term, we will grow 6-9% organic in constant currency and 7-9% including inorganic options."

In the early 2000s, Indian firms took away business from U.S. majors with offshoring and cost arbitrage. Aren't small firms focused on advanced technologies now pulling the rug from under Indian IT firms' feet?

He says, "If someone can do something that you do, better and cheaper, you will cease to exist. You may as well cannibalise your own revenue. Very soon, many value-added services of today will start vanishing. In parallel, we need to start building other capabilities and being an integral part of customer's business."

To the business itself, he says, "We don't really set long-term revenue targets. It is on a yearly basis and in a measured way. It does not have to be a lofty goal like I want to be a \$50 billion company in another 10 years. So, in the early stages, we were looking at incrementally where we need to be as an organisation. Initially, we were competing against the likes of IMR Global, CBSI, Silvérline, etc.

"Then we started competing with bigger players not with a view to surpass them, but in terms of capabilities to do better and better." Mr. Ramkumar points out, "If you look at the firms we competed with in 1998 when we went public – 80% of those firms don't exist today."

In its early days, Cogni-

zant also chose to put its eggs in only a few baskets – the U.S., and the banking and financial services vertical. Says Mr. Chandrasekaran, "We ask people to focus on a limited set of things but do a very good job. There may be thousands of opportunities to pursue, but do we have the bandwidth to do everything?"

"BFSI happened because initially we had a foothold in some of the large financial services clients outside of D&B. The second is North America where most of our clients were and we set up operations there. We could have always expanded to other territories, but it might have diluted our focus."

Crash, an opportunity But when the U.S. financial crisis happened in 2008, it was a sort of double whammy for Cognizant. For, at the time, about 80% of its revenues came from North America and approximately 50% from financial services. But the IT services major saw this as an opportunity.

A client had signed up just before the 2008 collapse. When its business started unraveling, the client asked to meet the Cognizant sales team. The sales folks trooped in only to find the client with lawyers, ready to negotiate. The IT vendor assured the client that no negotiations were needed and that it would revoke the agreement and wait for the client to come back!

Says Mr. Chandrasekaran, "We increased our investments, when competition was trying to pull back on investments. Talent acquisition was one such area. The crisis made available a number of people who were not earlier available to us. In that period, we hired some of the best talent from the market."

(Visit bit.ly/CogIndInt for more)

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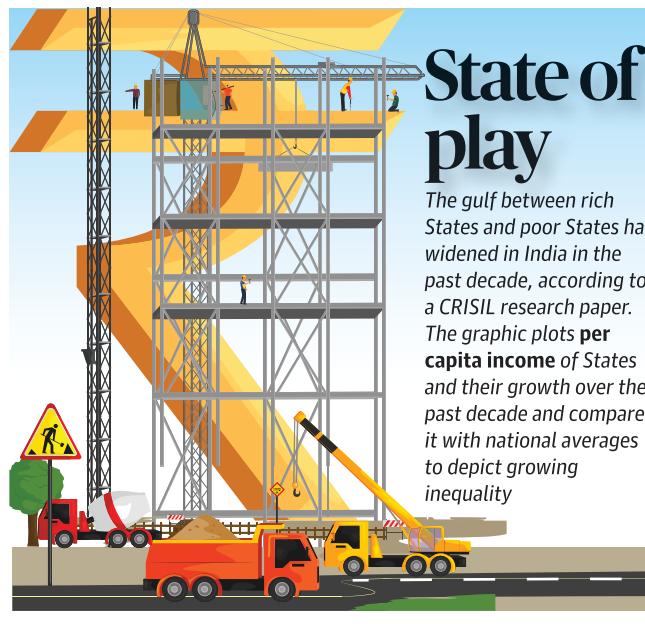
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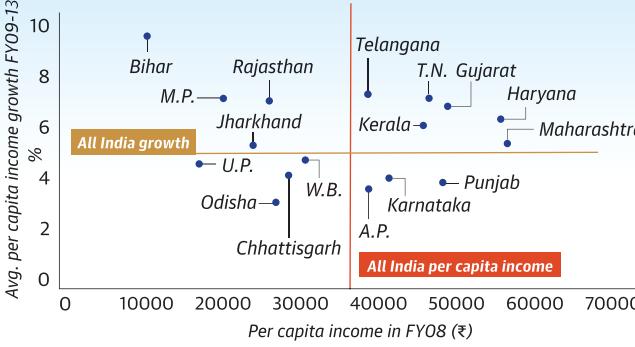
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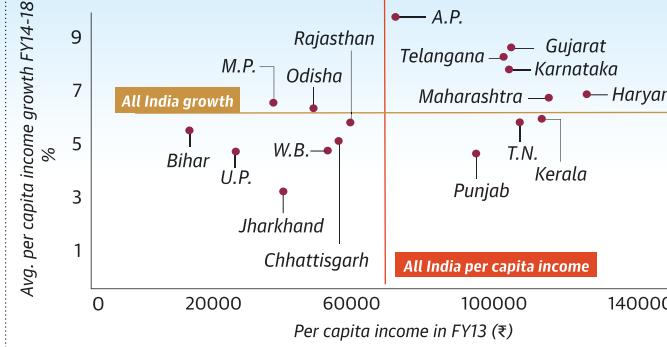
State of play

The gulf between rich States and poor States has widened in India in the past decade, according to a CRISIL research paper. The graphic plots per capita income of States and their growth over the past decade and compares it with national averages to depict growing inequality

FIRST FIVE YEARS... In FY08, eight of 17 States had per capita incomes (PCI) lower than the national average. Of these, only four (Bihar, Rajasthan, M.P. and Jharkhand) grew faster than the all-India rate in the next five years. On the other hand, among the nine high-income States, which had higher per capita income than the national average in FY08, six recorded faster growth in the following five years



...NEXT FIVE YEARS | None of the low-income States in FY08 went on to become high-income States by 2013. Of the eight low-income States in FY13, only two (M.P. and Odisha) recorded marginally faster growth than the all-India rate in the following five years. In contrast, six out of the nine high-income States recorded faster growth. Thus the gap between high-income and low-income States widened further between fiscal years 2013 and 2018



YAWNING GAP
Table shows the difference of a State's PCI with national average. States which started off in red (less PCI than nation's) in FY08 remained so in FY18. Also, the PCI of low-income States fell further below all-India averages, and it was vice versa for high-income States, indicating an increasing gulf between States

State	FY08	FY18
U.P.	-18040	-57496
Bihar	-24774	-73975
Chhatt.	-6440	-20800
Gujarat	14191	52657
Haryana	21092	76304
Jhark.*	-11036	-49081
Karn.	6594	68953
Kerala	11040	59605
M.P.	-14890	-32928
Maha.	21935	67761
Odisha	-7197	-31844
T.N.	11781	54099

Data and text sourced from "States of growth 2.0, January 2019" by CRISIL. * Chhatt. - Chhattisgarh, Jhark. - Jharkhand, Karn. - Karnataka, Maha. - Maharashtra

Budget wand may grant farm and tax sops

Income support for farmers to the tune of ₹1.5 lakh crore expected; salaried class may get a breather

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN

The Vote-on-Account on February 1 will very likely contain an income support package for farmers in the range of ₹1.5 lakh crore, and also some income tax benefits for the salaried class in the form of increased exemption limits, or reduced tax rates, according to economists and experts alike. One other concrete proposal before the Finance Ministry is for the pension for the elderly poor to be hiked.

While conventionally the Vote-on-Account does not contain any major changes to the Finance Act or the Income Tax Act, there is no rule that prevents this, according to legal experts, and so the government is well within its rights to change tax rates and tax exemption limits. "Our guess is that since tax collections have been good, with the increase in the range of 16-18%, this definitely leaves room for them to do something that will benefit the salaried taxpayers," Archit Gupta, founder and CEO of ClearTax told *The Hindu*.



Future pain: If a farm package impacts fiscal deficit, the next government will face the problem, says Pronab Sen. • G.N. RAO

duction limit."

Another option, he said, could be for the government to announce an increase in the tax exemption limit under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act. The limit is currently ₹1.5 lakh a year. The government also has the option of reducing personal income tax rates. They already did so last year, in the Budget, when they reduced the tax on the 10% slab to 5%.

"They have also announced some benefit to NPS, where they said that 60% of the withdrawal will be exempt from tax," he explained. "But nobody knows how that is going to work. Is it only for central government employees? There is no reason for it to be only for them. So, they will clarify on this in the Budget."

The government also an-

cording to the FRBM targets of reaching 3% by FY20 will be achieved or not," D.K. Srivastava, chief policy advisor at EY India said, adding that he thought the government would be able to achieve its target.

"The second question is, if they come up with an agricultural package, what would be the size and how would it be financed, while meeting the fiscal consolidation targets," he added. "The way the package may be administered will likely be an income support scheme of some kind."

"In the speech, something on agriculture is certainly expected," former Chief Statistician of India Pronab Sen said. "They have already tried hiking the MSP, which had no effect. Loan waivers have already been taken away by the Congress, which has done it in the States. Now, they will have to look at some form of income support."

Fiscal consolidation

"At the moment, the fiscal space to do it will become a problem that will confront them only if they win the general elections," Mr. Sen added. "It is something the next government has to deal with."

Experts said the income support scheme could be either in the form of a Centrally Sponsored Scheme or be administered through a Special Purpose Vehicle. In the former case, the government needs to only budget

for a fraction of the amount, with the remaining amount coming from the States. In the case of an SPV, the remaining amount can come through various off-budgetary sources.

Package anticipated

"On the issue of the agricultural package, there is a lot of talk around the figure of ₹1.5 lakh crore, which translates to 0.7% of GDP at current market prices for FY20," Mr. Srivastava explained.

"Now, 0.7% may be difficult for the central government to accommodate given the budgetary arithmetic. So, I think a fraction of this, about 0.3% of GDP will be provided for in the Budget and the rest will be either from the State governments or off-budgetary resources."

Mr. Sen also added that the Budget will almost cer-

tainly contain some sort of support for the MSME sector,

which is currently in a bad

state. While an income sup-

port scheme for the farmers

could help the MSME sector

in turn, more needs to be

done, he said.

"They have made a lot of announcements for the sector, but none have amounted to much," Mr. Sen said. "The fact is the MSME sector is hurting badly. The bulk of the problem lies in lack of liquidity and lack of credit available. You have to get the liquidity moving, and income support to the farmers will get liquidity moving for MSMEs. But the sector needs more."

Though the Commerce Ministry had imposed a minimum import price (MIP) of ₹500 per kg on pepper last year to protect domestic pepper farmers, it is yet to make any positive impact," Kishore Shamji, coordinator, Cochin chapter of the Indian Pepper and Spice Traders, Farmers, Producers and Planters Consortium (IPSTPC), told *The Hindu*.

The pepper imported

from Sri Lanka by Nepal and Bhutan through the Kolkata sea port also flows into the Indian market by road, Mr. Shamji added. More than 20,000 tons of smuggled pepper reached the country from January 2018 to October 2018, he added.

"Smuggled pepper from Vietnam and Sri Lanka is available in consuming centres across the country at ₹325 a kg," he said.

GREEN SHOOTS

"Rising imports and illegal entry of the produce had taken their toll on the average pepper price, which dropped from a high of ₹720 a kg to ₹325 a kg over the last 19 months," he said.

Domestic production is likely to drop below 50,000 tonnes against a consumption of 65,000 tonnes.

"This mismatch has been taken advantage of by Sri Lankan exporters by import-

ing Vietnam pepper with certificate of origin from Sri Lanka, thus snatching away the benefit of Indian pepper farmers," Mr. Shamji said.

Ministry action urged

The IPSTPC had urged the Commerce Ministry several times to remove black pepper from the SAFTA and ISFTA import lists in order to aid domestic growers, but it was yet to be considered, he said.

Torrential rain a few months ago in pepper-growing areas of Kerala and Karnataka caused a sharp decline in crop production.

"High moisture content owing to the rains has triggered fungal diseases like quick wilt and soft wilt. The diseases massively destroyed the vines in our area," Muthanna, a farmer at Kutta in Coorg district of Karnataka said. Hence the production may fall 45-50% this season, he added.

K. S. Narayanan: man with mettle

The entrepreneur would have turned 100 on January 30

K.T. JAGANNATHAN

"These could be in several forms," he added. "One is by increasing the standard deduction limit. They announced it at ₹40,000 last year but it took away medical reimbursement and travel allowance, so there has been a lot of talk that the net impact has been only ₹5,800 or so. So, there could be some increase in the standard de-

out of trouble was well-known. Little known, however, was his rescue act for The Music Academy, which is considered the Mecca of Carnatic music. When the academy ran into financial trouble in the late '60s, there was this suggestion to turn the Academy into a cinema hall at least for a part of the year! At the prodding of Late T.T. Krishnamachari, Narayanan successfully negotiated with the Indian Bank an easy repayment scheme for the institution. That saw him nominated as a patron of the academy.

In the post-IPL (Indian Premier League) era, cricket has become a religion for every countryman and corporates vie with one another to get a piece of the cricketing action. In former times, however, only a few like Narayanan suo motu nurtured cricketers and cricket. There was no quid pro quo. The Chemplast-sponsored Jolly

Rovers even today remains an iconic name in the cricketing map of the city of Chennai. It requires a law to enforce CSR (corporate social responsibility)

India today is a fast innovator, it takes the risks, says the chairman emeritus of Cisco

LALATENDU MISHRA

Born a dyslexic child in West Virginia, John Chambers, chairman emeritus, Cisco, transformed himself into one of the world's best business leaders. A Silicon Valley visionary, he is credited with turning around Cisco, from a simple router company into a global technology giant with revenue of \$49.3 billion in 2018. This past week, he was named for the Padma Bhushan award by the Government of India. Excerpts from an interview:

What is the state of the global economy?

If you look at the global economy, let me start with the best country that is India. It has the strongest economic growth and is actually accelerating. India's GDP is growing four quarter more faster than China and it will grow in the next decade. The U.S. is not doing that great so you see the stock market slightly skittish.

As he elucidated in his book, his managerial skills were acquired in the 'school of experience.' To put it in the words of a Sammar insider, "He (Narayanan) was a management guru with dozens of management textbook rolled into one." The HR (human relationship) skills assiduously built and practised by him, perhaps, were primarily the reason for the Sanmar Group to successfully carry forward many a joint venture in a marriage of happy co-existence. Even as the Sanmar fraternity celebrates the birth centenary of Narayanan on January 30, the way the group suo motu undertook to pay up every depositor of Overseas Sanmar many summers ago when the industry was going through trying times, showed the ethical standards set by him.

In 2000, you had predicted a global recession. Today, the Japanese yen is appreciating fast and when it does, global recession follows. Are you seeing anything like that now?

Great question. In 2000 I was the first one to see that recession was going to be much more severe than the

run, never ever worked and [is] not good for the economy. The leadership must rise on their approach and interdependency between countries is very important.

The most strategic relation with India and the U.S. is the India-U.S. strategic partnership.

We should be the most strategic partners in the world, both economically and in job creation, innovation and I, as the chairman, want that kind of partnership.

We are headed for general elections...

If you look at the economy over the last four and half years, if you look at the tough decisions that the Modi government had made and if you look at the business results that they got, they are really good. This is better than any other country.

At the present time, I do not see the same warning signals. There are challenges all around because of government inaction, non-constructive action. Inspite of what is going on around you, India is solid. There is slow growth scenario reflecting in the markets but I do not see the same types of warning signals. At least, this time, we perhaps are solid than earlier.

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The population in India must understand that more jobs will be created in the future. Overall, the government has done a very good job and I will be very surprised if NDA changes.

You have got the best economy in the world, you are creating jobs in general, you are making changes that many counties are not willing to change.

They should continue to do what they are doing well. Five to six years ago, India was viewed as not so innovative, very bureaucratic, very rigid and very diffi-

do and I will give pretty high marks.

When did you start JC2 Ventures?

One thing I do pretty well is that I never undo moves on chess boards, I play all the way up to the end. And that is the way I tend to approach business.

So, when I left Cisco, the board asked me what I would do next and I said let me experiment with startups and make investments and inspire them. Formally, JC2 was started two years ago. It has been exciting so far and out of my 18 startups, 60% are going to do well. They have problems every week and that is what start-ups are all about.

What should India do to be the next Silicon Valley?

Many things that India is doing is absolutely okay. When you get a problem to this government, they try their best to change.

They should continue to do what they are doing well. Five to six years ago, India was viewed as not so innovative, very bureaucratic, very rigid and very diffi-

cult to work with.

India today is a fast innovator, it takes the risks.

So, [for] the first 10 years, continue to do what you are doing. The angel tax, which makes no sense, must go. Here it is not easy for a startup to do an IPO. There are multiple areas you need to improve.

You have 18 start-ups. What else do you do?

Business-wise, being the chairman of U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum, I play a small role in helping to change the country and doing things in an inclusive basis. I am also giving back through her.

In personal life I have a son and daughter. My son John handles JC2 Ventures. My daughter who builds houses has her own start-ups.

Djokovic makes it seven with a magnificent display

The World No.1 outclasses Rafael Nadal in straight sets with an exhibition of fast-paced and flawless tennis



Super Serb: Novak Djokovic's love affair with the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup continued. ■ REUTERS



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

An imperious Novak Djokovic won a record magnificent seventh Australian Open title by routing Rafael Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 on Sunday with a display of flawless tennis.

The Serbian World No.1 dominated the Spanish se-

cond seed to win his 15th Grand Slam title in just 2 hours, four minutes at the Rod Laver Arena.

It put Djokovic, 31, out on his own ahead of Roger Federer and Roy Emerson, who both won six Australian Open men's singles titles. Djokovic dropped to his knees and kissed the ground after vanquishing his greatest rival.

"I'm just trying to contemplate on the journey in the last 12 months," said an emotional Djokovic, pausing for

breath to compose himself and not become tearful.

The pair's only previous final in Australia, in 2012, developed into a record-breaking 5hr, 53min slugfest – the longest in Grand Slam history.

A repeat of that epic never materialised with Nadal uncharacteristically nervous at the start and Djokovic taking an immediate advantage that he would never relinquish.

"I have been going through tough moments in the last year. I was not able to

play until the first round here. Even if tonight was not my night it's so important for me to be where I am coming back from injury," said Nadal.

Djokovic noted that the duo had both endured injury-ravaged 2018 campaigns. "Obviously a tough match tonight, but ... you came back from an injury that took you out from the tour since September last year," Djokovic said of Nadal.

"You're showing to me and to all your other col-

Stat attack

■ Djokovic is the first men's player to clinch three successive Slams thrice (2018 Wimbledon and US Open, and 2019 Australian Open; 2015 Wimbledon and US Open, and 2016 Australian Open; 2011 Wimbledon and US Open, and 2012 Australian Open)

■ Nadal, who hadn't dropped a set en route to the final, did not win a set against Djokovic. The Spaniard had never lost a Slam final in straight sets before

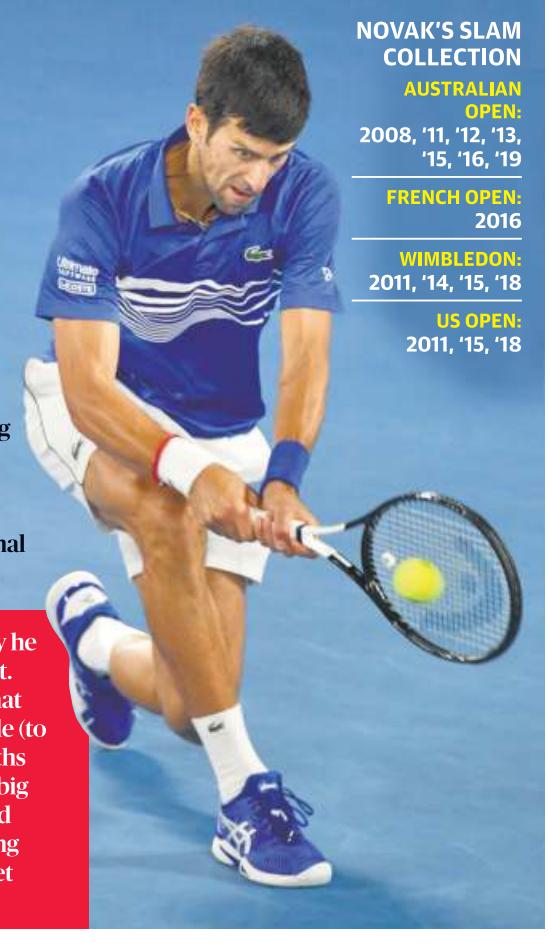
Djokovic	MATCH STATS	Nadal
8	Aces	3
0	Double faults	2
72	1st serve (%)	64
5/8	Break points	0/1
16/18	Net points won	7/14
34	Winners	21
9	Unforced errors	28
89	Total points	53
197	Fastest serve kmph	205

It's quite unreal we are still playing at this level and still competing for the biggest titles. Under the circumstances, maybe this is the best quality tennis I have played against Rafa in a final

■ DJOKOVIC

It was unbelievable the way he played, no doubt about that. But, at the same time, it is true that probably physically I was not able (to compete at that level). Five months without competing, having that big challenge in front of me, I needed something else. That something else I probably don't have it yet

■ NADAL



NOVAK'S SLAM COLLECTION
AUSTRALIAN OPEN:
2008, '11, '12, '13,
'15, '16, '19
FRENCH OPEN:
2016
WIMBLEDON:
2011, '14, '16, '18
US OPEN:
2011, '15, '18

Men in Blue will look to ride the success wave

Focus on Hardik Pandya's inclusion as he comes back from provisional suspension

INDIA IN NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MOUNT MAUNGANUI

India captain Virat Kohli will be aiming to seal the five-match series when his team squares off against a confused New Zealand in the third ODI here Monday.

Kohli has been given a break as part of BCCI's workload management programme and he would like to finish his assignment down under on a high after the maiden Test and ODI victories in Australia.

An unassailable 3-0 lead would be a fitting revenge to India's abject 0-4 humiliation during the 2014 limited-over series.

One of the primary focus of Monday's encounter could be inclusion of Hardik Pandya who is coming back from provisional suspension for his loose talk on a TV chat show.

Hardik's presence would lend solidity and balance to the side and he could replace Vijay Shankar.

New Zealand, on the other hand, has looked clueless against India's wrist-spin

duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal who accounted for 12 of the 20 wickets in the last two ODIs.

Seamers Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Mohammed Shami also have done their job well, getting crucial breakthroughs.

India's batting too has complemented the bowlers, looking rock solid in both the games with Shikhar Dhawan's return to form lending the team the much-needed fillip at the top.

Vice-captain Rohit Sharma, who had flopped in the first ODI, too entertained the spectators here with a strokeful 87 en route to his 14th century stand with opening partner Dhawan.

In good nick

Skipper Kohli also looked in good nick in both the matches, while Ambati Rayudu seemed to have found his mojo back with a 49-ball 47 on Saturday.

M.S. Dhoni too continued his rampaging run with an unbeaten 33-ball 48 to take India across the 300-mark, while Kedar Jadhav has also grabbed the role of a finisher

with both hands.

For Black Caps, captain Kane Williamson, who had top-scored in the first ODI, looked good during his short stay in the second ODI, while all-rounder Doug Bracewell tried to take the game to the wires with a 46-ball 57 but none of the other batters could convert their starts.

"There's two games in a row now where we've not had control at any stage, but we need to take small steps," Williamson said.

The teams (from):

India: Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, M.S. Dhoni (wk), Kedar Jadhav, Dinesh Karthik, Vijay Shankar, Shubman Gill, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Siraj, Khaleel Ahmed, Ravindra Jadeja and Hardik Pandya.

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (Capt.), Ross Taylor, Tom Latham, Martin Guptill, Colin de Grandhomme, Trent Boult, Henry Nicholls, Doug Bracewell, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Colin Munro, Ish Sodhi, Mitchell Santner and Tim Southee.

Match starts at 7.30 a.m. (IST).



Back in the swing: Hardik Pandya's presence will lend solidity and balance to the Indian side. ■ GARETH COPEL/GETTY IMAGES

Saina ends two-year BWF title drought

Marin concedes final after leg injury

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAKARTA

Ace shuttler Saina Nehwal claimed her first BWF title in two years after three-time World champion Carolina Marin of Spain limped out of the Indonesia Masters final due to a leg injury, here on Sunday.

The London Olympics bronze medallist was trailing 4-10 in the opening game when Marin decided to withdraw from the contest.

"It is important year for all of us. It was not good to see at all. It is painful. I have been getting injured a lot in the last few years and to see something like this on court is really painful," said Saina, who had suffered a career-threatening knee injury at

the 2016 Rio Olympics.

"Carolina had the upper hand and I wanted to fight and see how the match goes but it was unfortunate what happened," added the 28-year-old from Hyderabad, who last won a BWF title in 2017 in Malaysia.

"I just came out of injury. I played this events to see how good this is. and I'm happy I could play the semifinals at Malaysia and final here. Looking forward to get back to shape and play next tournament."

Next would be All England Championship, a title Saina has not been able to win yet. "It is still one more month, so let's see how it goes. It will be different slow conditions."



Painful: Saina Nehwal consoles Carolina Marin after the latter had to quit in the final following a leg injury. ■ AFP

To play my bit in Saina's success is a huge plus'

A tribute to her courage, conviction and ability: husband-cum-coach Kashyap

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

pier. For, we are glad (about) the way she played in the Malaysian Open (semis) and here in Indonesia. It is a tribute to her courage, conviction and ability to execute any suggestion regarding change of strategy on a given day very quickly," said Kashyap.

Kashyap, who was seen along with the other coach Md. Siyadatullah when Saina was facing reigning Olympic champion Carolina Marin in the Indonesian Open final on Sunday, informed *The Hindu* from Indonesia that given the backdrop of the break and the kind of tough phase Saina has gone through in the recent past, it has been a very impressive start to 2019.

"Even if Saina were to end up as the runner-up, we would have been still hap-



P. Kashyap. ■ FILE PHOTO

pass a judgement on Saina's game in the final.

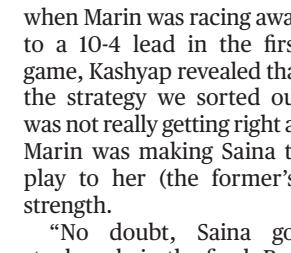
"It could have still gone either way but it was obvious Marin was off to great start," he explained.

Sincere prayer

"Well, frankly, we both were disappointed that Marin had to walk off the court with an injury. We don't wish it to happen to any player. Saina is known to win the games the hard way."

"We sincerely pray that Marin recovers quickly and is back in the circuit," Kashyap said.

"We just hope to have a great year as our next big event will be the Senior Nationals in Guwahati and then the All England championship though I am planning to play in Spain," said Kashyap.



when Marin was racing away to a 10-4 lead in the first game, Kashyap revealed that the strategy we sorted out was not really getting right as Marin was making Saina to play to her (the former's) strength.

"But, again having known Saina and her game for so long, it is a huge plus as a coach for me to play my bit in her success," he added.

On what was the mood

Karnataka runs into Pujara, Saurashtra smells win

The India No. 3's solid 201-run unbeaten stand with Jackson takes the visitors to 55 shy of the target

RANJI SEMIFINAL

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA
BENGALURU

Slowly and inevitably, Cheteshwar Pujara wore Karnataka down and steered his side to the brink of the Ranji Trophy final.

Pujara's 49th First Class hundred, and his resolute, unbroken partnership of 201 with Sheldon Jackson, took Saurashtra to within 55 runs of victory at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday.

The target of 279 had seemed an imposing one when Saurashtra was 23 for three, but Pujara and Jackson would not be separated and, at stumps, the fielding side looked understandably deflated. Barings a dramatic collapse on the fifth and final day, the visitor should complete a fine semifinal win.

Reprise
Karnataka will be aggrieved with the umpiring, though. Pujara was on 34 when, in the second over after lunch, R. Vinay Kumar was convinced the batsman had edged behind. On air, the commentary team was sure



Familiar sight: Cheteshwar Pujara came to Saurashtra's rescue yet again. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

there had been a noise as ball passed bat, but the umpire did not agree. Vinay looked distraught and let the umpires know how he felt.

Both sides understood that a great deal hinged on Pujara's wicket; sadly for Karnataka, he would offer no further chances. Saurashtra was 68 for three then and the game may quite easily have taken a different turn.

Vinay and Ronit More,

who had collectively given away only 12 runs in 10 sharp overs after lunch, soon had to take a break. Pujara simply waited till the gale had blown over and carried on gathering his runs, feeding on anything bowled on his pads. He remained unbeaten on 108 at the close of play, having spent nearly six hours at the crease.

With its spinners ineffective, Karnataka struggled to

maintain pressure from both ends once the quicks had run out of steam. There were plenty of short, wide deliveries and both batsmen cashed in.

Jackson, who on three had been fortunate to survive an appeal for leg-before from More, raised his fifty shortly after tea. He remained not out on 90 at stumps. As he and Pujara walked off, Vinay offered them a gracious

handshake.

Quick end

In the morning, Saurashtra needed all of eight minutes to dismiss the two remaining batsmen.

When Karnataka took the field, Vinay was in searing form with the new ball, packing off Snell Patel in his first over. In his next, Vishvaraj Jadeja was trapped leg-before for nought.

Saurashtra bowling: Unadkat 15-3-35-3, Sakariya 11-0-38-0, Mankad 10-0-27-2, Dharmendrasinh 28-3-78-5, Makwana 16-1-52-0.

Saurashtra — 2nd innings: Harvik Desai c Siddharth b Mithun 9, Snell Patel c Sharath b Vinay 0, Vishvaraj Jadeja lbw b Vinay 0, Cheteshwar Pujara (batting) 108, Sheldon Jackson (batting) 90; Extras (b-9, lb-5, nb-1, w-2); Total (for three wkts. in 74 overs): 224.

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-26, 3-52, 4-89, 5-108, 6-129, 7-155, 8-176, 9-239.

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Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-3, 3-23.

Karnataka bowling: Vinay 18-1-48-2, Mithun 13-3-35-1, More 18-6-44-0, Siddharth 2-1-1-0, Gowtham 14-2-44-0, Shreyas 6-0-29-0, Samarth 3-0-9-0.

When a diving K.V. Siddharth caught Harvil Desai expertly in the gully, Saurashtra was three down inside six overs. Karnataka was cock-a-hoop but there would be little else to celebrate.

The scores:

Karnataka — 1st innings: 275.

Saurashtra — 1st innings: 236.

Karnataka — 2nd innings: R. Samarth b Unadkat 5, Mayank Agarwal b Dharmendrasinh 46, K.V. Siddharth b Mankad 8, Karun Nair lbw b Mankad 15, Manish Pandey lbw b Dharmendrasinh 26, Shreyas Gopal c Vasavada b Dharmendrasinh 61, Sharath Srivivas lbw b Unadkat 7, R. Vinay Kumar b Unadkat 12, K. Gowtham b Dharmendrasinh 11, A. Mithun (not out) 37, Ronit More lbw b Dharmendrasinh 0; Extras (b-5, lb-4, nb-1, w-1); Total (in 80 overs): 239.

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'Special ground' anymore?

Home fans have a go at Pujara

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

replied by the officials in the second as well, the home fans made their displeasure known.

As Pujara walked back to the dressing room at the tea break, the crowd broke into chants of 'cheater, cheater'. The feeling, presumably, was that Pujara ought to have walked. But there can be no blame attached to the batsman for any incorrect umpiring decision. Pujara was unperturbed as he went about his job methodically.

Afterwards, Saurashtra's Dharmendrasinh Jadeja had no complaints about the crowd's chanting. "It was normal," he said.

Pujara had benefited from anumping error in the first innings, and when he was seemingly



Good hand: Sheldon Jackson is just 10 runs short of a well-deserved century. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

Pakistan draws level

Machado's cool finish stuns BFC

The victory helps the Mumbai side take over at the top



Catching the attention: Paulo Machado, who was in the thick of things for Mumbai, slotted home the winner. ■ AP

ISL

SPORTS BUREAU
MUMBAI

Paulo Machado's 29th-minute strike enabled Mumbai City FC to hand Bengaluru FC its first defeat in 12 matches in this edition of the Indian Super League here on Sunday. The result lifted the home side to the top spot from second place.

The visitors fielded almost a full-strength side, missing only striker Miku due to injury, but ended up on the losing side against a determined home team, led by Machado from the front. Both sides are level with 27 points, but Mumbai has scored more goals – 21 – compared to BFC's 18.

The match-winner came after a lightning counter-attack by the Blues. Arnold Isoko halted a move with a header, the switch to offence happening even before the BFC defenders could regroup. Rafael Bastos threaded a pass to the Mumbai captain who read it perfectly and finished with a flourish.

Gurpreet, charging forward to cut down the angle with his huge frame, was beaten by Machado's body feint and blocked the shot at full stretch.

BFC brought in substitutes Chencho Gyalshen and Boithang Haokip in the

Mumbai goal, tipped over a mistimed attempt by Xisco Hernandez from close, the ball bouncing on the turf and taking off. The goalkeeper escaped once later when Juanan's header, after leaping and twisting his body to connect, flew wide.

Clever burst

Modou Sougou got an opportunity to increase the lead when he beat the off-side trap with a clever burst down the left and faced a one-to-one situation with Gurpreet. However, the goalkeeper read the Senegal striker's mind and blocked the shot at full stretch.

BFC brought in substitutes Chencho Gyalshen and Boithang Haokip in the

frontline, taking out Xisco and Udanta Singh. The change in personnel increased the pace in offence, the new faces presenting a fresh challenge to the Mumbai defenders. The back four were tireless in their work, marshalled by Lucian Golan with support from Subashish Bose, Anwar Ali, and Sauvik Chakravarti.

As expected, BFC went in with three players from the Indian team who figured in the AFC Asian Cup – goalkeeper Gurpreet, winger Udanta and spearhead Sunil Chhetri.

The results: **Sunday:** Mumbai City FC 1 (Paulo Machado 29) bt Bengaluru FC 0.

Saturday: NEUFC 1 (Ogbeche) bt Chennaiyin FC 0.

England falls to Chase

Off-spinner takes eight as WI posts its third biggest win

ENGLAND IN WI

BRIDGETOWN

Part-time off-spinner Roston Chase took eight wickets as West Indies recorded its third biggest-ever win by runs, a crushing 381-run defeat of England in the first Test here on Saturday.

Chase, given the chance to shine in the absence of a specialist spinner in the line-up, seized the opportunity with a career-best haul of eight for 60 at the Kensington Oval.

West Indies, rank underdogs in the three-match series, bowled out England for 246 in the second innings after dismissing it for 77 in the first.

Shambolic display

The host won with more than a day to spare in what can only be termed a shambolic display by the visitors, who were coming off a summer series win over No. 1 ranked India. The England top-order all got starts in the second innings but only opener Rory Burns (84) turned it into a big score.

"It's difficult to explain and hard to take. We didn't underestimate them. It just showed how difficult it is to win away from home," said England skipper Joe Root.

Statisticians reached for the record books to put the result into historic perspective, revealing only two occasions when the Windies won by bigger margins by



Demolition men: Roston Chase, left, and skipper Jason Holder celebrate after West Indies' thumping win. • AFP

C It's difficult to explain and hard to take. We didn't underestimate them. It just showed how difficult it is to win away from home.

— JOE ROOT

match with a profligate Test bowling average of over 40, fledged the ball well but was also aided by some poor shots by the batsmen.

Holder thrilled

Despite Chase's heroics, West Indies captain Jason Holder was named man-of-the-match after his unbeaten second innings knock of 202.

"Really good test match for me personally. To come back the way I've come back I'm really pleased," said Holder, who missed the recent tour of Bangladesh due to a shoulder injury. The second Test starts on Thursday.

Chase, who came into the

runs. They defeated England by 425 runs in Manchester in 1976 and dusted Australia by 408 runs in Adelaide in 1980.

Chase's extraordinary figures were achieved even though he did not exact prodigious turn. He got just enough, however, to keep the batsmen on edge.

Chase, who came into the

team with a 425-run total in 2017, had 10 wickets in the first Test and 18 in the second.

"It's difficult to explain and hard to take. We didn't underestimate them. It just showed how difficult it is to win away from home," said England skipper Joe Root.

Statisticians reached for the record books to put the result into historic perspective, revealing only two occasions when the Windies won by bigger margins by

four sixes.

Man-of-the-match: Jason Holder.

West Indies won by 381 runs to lead three-Test series 1-0.

Fall of wickets: 1-85, 2-134, 3-143, 4-167, 5-215, 6-217, 7-218,

bell b Chase 26, Moeen Ali c Holder b Chase 0, B. Foakes c Hetmyer b Chase 5, S. Curran st. Hope b Chase 17, A. Rashid c Brathwaite b Chase 1, J. Anderson (not out) 4; Extras (b-4, nb-2, w-3); Total (in 80.4 overs): 246.

Fall of wickets: 1-85, 2-134, 3-143, 4-167, 5-215, 6-217, 7-218,

8-228, 9-234.

West Indies bowling: Roach 14-38-0, Gabriel 14-5-2-51, Holder 12-6-24-0, Chase 21-4-2-60-8, Joseph 12-4-35-1, Campbell 4-10-0-0.

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IN BRIEF



Prince Philip apologises to injured woman

LONDON
Britain's Prince Philip has said he is "deeply sorry" about the injury suffered by a woman in a car crash he was involved in over a week ago, according to a report in the *Sunday Mirror*. The newspaper published a copy of a letter written by the 97-year-old royal to Emma Fairweather, who broke her wrist when the Kia she was in collided with the prince's Land Rover. AFP



Banksy work stolen from Paris terror attack venue

PARIS
A painting in homage to terror victims by street artist Banksy has been stolen from the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, where 90 people were killed in 2015 terror attack. The white stencilled oeuvre showing a sad-faced girl on one of the emergency doors of venue was taken away. PTI



'Germany should phase out coal use by 2038'

BERLIN
Germany should stop using coal for electricity production by 2038, a government-appointed commission has said, earmarking €80 billion for the purpose. Half of the amount will go to the regions shuttering plants, while the other half will be spent on preventing electricity prices from rising. AFP

+ Microplastic fibres found in groundwater system: study

Samples show presence of medicines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

In a first, scientists have detected the presence of microplastics in groundwater in the U.S.

Microplastics are already known to contaminate the world's surface waters, yet scientists have only just begun to explore their presence in groundwater systems.

Fractured limestone aquifers are a groundwater source that accounts for 25% of the global drinking water supply.

The study, published in the journal *Groundwater*, identified microplastic fibres, along with a variety of medicines and household contaminants, in two aquifer systems in the U.S.

"Plastic in the environment breaks down into microscopic particles that can

New hope for sickle-cell patients

In clinical trials, a handful of enrolled patients no longer show signs of the disease

GINA KOLATA

Scientists have long known what causes sickle-cell disease and its devastating effects: a single mutation in one errant gene. But for decades, there has been only modest progress against an inherited condition that mainly afflicts people of African descent.

With advances in gene therapy, that is quickly changing – so much so that scientists have begun to talk of a cure.

In a half-dozen clinical trials planned or under way, researchers are testing strategies for correcting the problem at the genetic level. Already a handful of the enrolled patients, who have endured an illness that causes excruciating bouts of pain, strokes and early death, no longer show signs of the disease.

Among them is Brandon Williams, 21, who lives with his mother in Chicago. Because of his sickle-cell disease, he had suffered four strokes by age 18. The damage makes it hard for him to speak. His older sister died of the disease.

Following an experimental gene therapy, his symptoms have vanished. Life has taken a sharp turn for the better: no more transfusions, no more pain, no



Gene corrections: About 300,000 infants are born annually with sickle-cell disease worldwide. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

more fear.

"He said, 'Mom, I think I want to get me a job,'" said his mother, Leuteressa Roberts.

It is still early in the course of these experimental treatments, and it is likely to be at least three years before one is approved. "We are in uncharted territory," said Dr. David A. Williams, chief scientific officer at Boston Children's Hospital.

At the moment, the only remedy for sickle-cell disease is a dangerous and expensive bone marrow transplant, an option rarely used. An effective gene therapy would not be simple or inexpensive, but it could change the lives of tens of thousands of people.

"This would be the first genetic cure of a common genetic disease," said Dr. Edward Benz, professor of

medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Turning point

It also would mark a turning point for a large community of underserved patients. Most of them have African ancestry, but Hispanics and those with southern European, Middle Eastern or Asian backgrounds are also affected.

Experts have long maintained that advances in treatment have been limited partly because sickle-cell disease is concentrated in less affluent minority communities.

"Having tried for a number of years to raise philanthropic money, I can tell you it's really hard," said David Williams.

Worldwide, about 300,000 infants are born with the condition each

year, a figure projected to grow to more than 400,000 by 2050. The disorder is most common in sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 70% of children with it die before adulthood.

In sickle-cell disease, blood cells stuffed with haemoglobin are distorted into sickle shapes. The misshapen cells get stuck in blood vessels, causing strokes, organ damage and episodes of agonizing pain – called crises – as muscles are starved of oxygen. Children usually return to normal between crises, but teenagers and adults may suffer chronic pain.

The misshapen cells don't survive long in the blood – 10 to 20 days, compared to the usual 120 days. Patients may be severely anaemic and prone to infections.

Daily life can be a challenge. Many adults with sickle-cell disease have no health insurance.

In the new trials, subjects must have immature blood cells – stem cells – removed from their bone marrow. The stem cells are genetically modified, and then infused back into the patient's bloodstream. The goal is for the modified cells to take up residence in the bone marrow and form healthy red blood cells. ■ NY TIMES

'Reboot' programmes for children addicted to internet

They undergo diagnostic tests and learn to moderate use

REUTERS
CINCINNATI

When Danny Reagan was 13, he began exhibiting signs of what doctors usually associate with drug addiction. He became agitated, secretive and withdrew from friends. He had quit baseball and Boy Scouts, and he stopped doing homework and showering.

But he was not using drugs. He was hooked on YouTube and video games, to the point where he could do nothing else. As doctors would confirm, he was addicted to his electronics.

"After I got my console, I kind of fell in love with it," Danny, now 16 and a junior in a Cincinnati high school, said. "I liked being able to kind of shut everything out and just relax."

Danny was different from typical plugged-in American teenagers. Psychiatrists say internet addiction, characterised by a loss of control over internet use and disregard for the consequences of it, affects up to 8% of Americans and is becoming more common around the world.

'Reboot' programme

At first, Danny's parents took him to doctors and made him sign contracts pledging to limit his internet use. Nothing worked, he joined the "Reboot Programme" a pioneering residential therapy centre in Ohio.

"Reboot" patients spend 28 days at a suburban facility equipped with 16 bedrooms, classrooms, a gym and a dining hall. They undergo diagnostic tests, psychotherapy, and learn to moderate their internet use.

"We're all mildly addicted. I think that's obvious to



Healing touch: Danny Reagan sitting in a common room at the "reboot" centre in Mason, Ohio. ■ REUTERS

see in our behaviour," said psychiatrist Kimberly Young, who has led the field of research since founding the Center for Internet Addiction in 1995. "It becomes a public health concern obviously as health is influenced by the behaviour."

Some skeptics view internet addiction as a false condition, contrived by teenagers who refuse to put away their smartphones, and the Reagans say they have had trouble explaining it to extended family.

The "Reboot" programme at the Lindner Center for Hope offers inpatient treatment for 11 to 17-year-olds who, like Danny, have addictions including online gaming, gambling, social media, pornography and sexting, often to escape from symptoms of mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety.

Danny was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder at age 5 and Anxiety Disorder at 6, and doctors said he developed an internet addiction to cope with those disorders.

The internet, while not officially recognised as an addictive substance, similarly

Night shifts may cause DNA damage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING

Working night shifts can damage a person's DNA, increasing the risk of cancer as well as cardiovascular, metabolic, and neurodegenerative diseases, a study has found.

For the study published in the journal *Anaesthesia*, researchers analysed blood

samples of 49 healthy full-time doctors taken at different times.

Researchers found that on-call doctors who were required to work overnight on-site had lower DNA repair gene expression and more DNA breaks than those who did not work overnight.

In these overnight on-site call doctors, DNA repair gene expression decreased

and DNA breaks increased after sleep deprivation. Damaged DNA increased after only one night of sleep deprivation.

This DNA damage may help explain the increased risk for cancer and cardiovascular, metabolic, and neurodegenerative diseases associated with sleep deprivation, researchers said.

Samples show presence of medicines

end up in the guts and gills of marine life, exposing the animals to chemicals in the plastic," said John Scott, a researcher at the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center.

"As the plastics break down, they act like sponges that soak up contaminants and microbes and can ultimately work their way into our food supply," said Mr. Scott.

Groundwater flows through the cracks and voids in limestone, sometimes carrying sewage and runoff from roads, landfills and agricultural areas into the aquifers below, he said.

The researchers collected 17 groundwater samples from wells and springs near the St Louis metropolitan area. All but one of the 17 samples contained microplastic particles, they said.

"Plastic in the environment breaks down into microscopic particles that can



Team spirit: A musher competing at the 36th Aviemore Sled Dog Rally 2019 in Aviemore, Scotland. The annual two-day event attracts mushers and their teams from across the U.K. to race on forest trails around Loch Morlich. ■ AFP



Big catch: Anglers take part in the 16th World Ice Fishing Championship in Bulgaria. ■ AFP

After a week of training sessions at nearby dams and lakes, the 150 competitors have been stepping out onto the ice in their rubber boots for the two-day

championship.

Seventy-five anglers dug holes in the ice with hand augers, remaining bent over them for hours fishing with their small palm rods.

The aim is to catch as many fish as possible – mainly tiny perch and roaches.

"Wiser than fish"

In the five areas on the lake

set aside for the competition, teammates and captains gather around to cheer the anglers on, alongside the referees and spectators eager to see the pros in action. "The idea is to have more fish than anyone else as a team and be a world champion. To find out if you are wiser than the fish," Finland's team captain Elisa Saarela said.

The competitors may have been mostly catching fish that could fit in their palms, but Ms. Saarela says the smaller the fish, the bigger the achievement.

"When the fish is smaller, it's much harder to get it. A bigger fish is much more easily to catch. If you catch a big amount of small fish, you are very professional," Ms. Saarela explained.

Championship.

Seventy-five anglers dug holes in the ice with hand augers, remaining bent over them for hours fishing with their small palm rods.

The aim is to catch as many fish as possible – mainly tiny perch and roaches.

"Wiser than fish"

In the five areas on the lake

Swimmers are welcome at Palau's jellyfish lake



Unique attraction: Tourists swimming at the 'jellyfish lake' on the Rock Islands in Palau. ■ AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PALAU

Swimming with the famous golden jellyfish in Palau can be put back on the bucket list following a two-year ban, but bathers may be stung with a hefty price increase for the pleasure.

The government ordered the famed Ongeim'l Tketau Jellyfish Lake closed to

swimmers in 2016 because of dwindling numbers of the unique creature – blamed on warming waters although with some suspicion sunscreen on bathers may also have contributed.

Authorities in Koror State, which owns the resource, say stocks are now recovering and tourists are again welcome at the lake.

The festival will be held first in Kolkata from February 1 to 3.

Sur Jahan festival in Goa from Feb. 6

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PANAJI

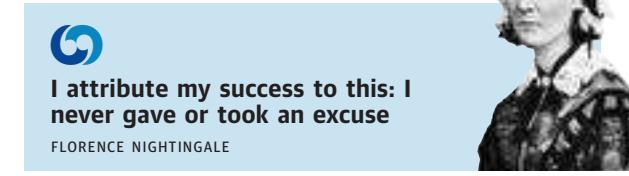
The three-day music festival Sur Jahan, previously known as Sufi Sutra, will be held in Goa from February 6 to 8.

Based on the theme "Music for all, music for peace", the festival is likely to draw musical talents from around the world and India.

The World Peace Music Festival was developed by banglanatak.com, a Kolkata-based social enterprise.

Each year, five to six international bands participate in the festival, which include cultural exchange workshops and evening concerts.

The festival will be held first in Kolkata from February 1 to 3.



■ C. SYLENDRA BABU

are: 'I want to serve the nation', 'It gives me status', 'my childhood dream', or still worse 'the dream of my parents'. These are too naive and vague, if not outright arrogance. Instead, the candidate may say that he/she was attracted by the challenges of government service and the unlimited opportunities for public service as well as self-development.

Do your homework

Without adequate preparation, candidates have often faltered. A candidate had failed to mention his/her name and native place while introducing himself/herself. The ideal answer can be, "Sir, I am Sneka, I hail from Chennai. I am a postgraduate in English literature. My father is a teacher, and mother is a home-maker. I have a younger brother who is studying. I have a particular interest in government service."

The candidate should do a little research on his background, like his native district, his educational institution, his previous employment, and his hobbies. The hobbies as mentioned in the DAF (Detailed Application Form) need a revisit. His/her own name is significant. Bheema Rao was asked about the significance of the name, but he couldn't think of any. That was indeed the name of the father of Dr.B.R. Ambedkar.

The questions could revolve around the current happenings, the Supreme Court verdict on adultery or Sabarimala, for example. But the subsequent questions may be based on the answer the candidate gives. It is often

Be yourself at the test

The IAS interview is a test of one's personality; prepare adequately, listen intently and answer relevantly



said that the interview is actually conducted by the candidate, not by the members of the board. Therefore, the candidate should be cautious about the words he/she blurts out.

Difficulty of expression in the English language isn't a serious impediment to score well in the interview, provided the candidate has a persuasive body language and has his/her information accurate. Candidates who have opted for the interview in Indian language can impress

the board by answering in English, if they are reasonably comfortable with it.

Be yourself

I would encourage candidates to listen intently and to understand the question before proceeding to answer it. If he/she does not know the answer, it is wiser to admit it rather than giving an embarrassingly wrong answer. It is a question of intellectual integrity of the candidate, and the candidate who is found to be bluffing will create a poor

impression. Talking irrelevantly and beating around the bush are vices in an interview. However, the fatal mistakes are being rude, rigid, offensive, argumentative, and quarrelsome.

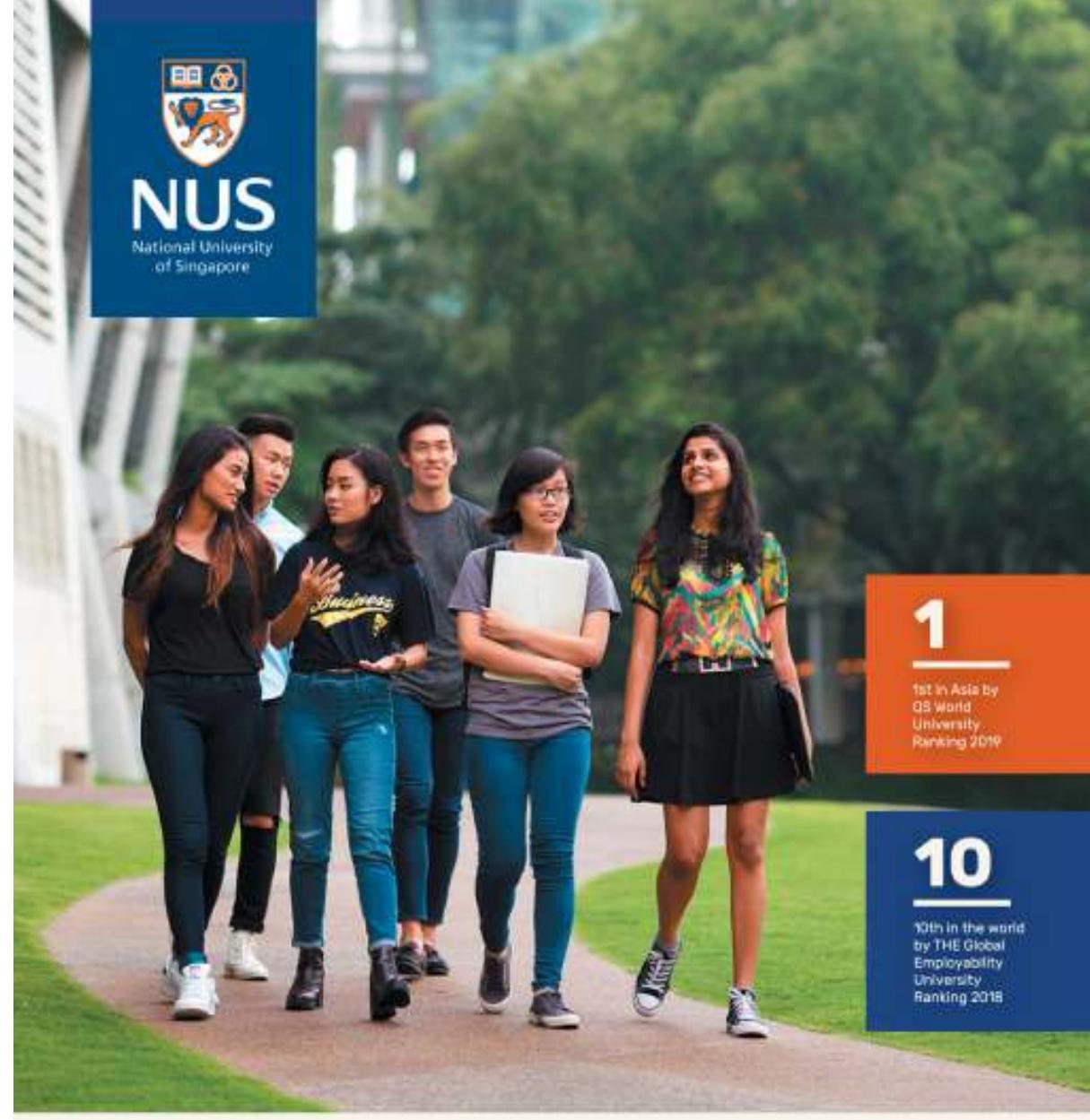
Being oneself and not pretending to be someone else is the most desirable trait in interview. Even when the candidate hasn't answered most of the questions, he/she need not get upset and exacerbate his nervousness. He/she could still score decent marks if he/she can maintain his

cool and wind up the interview on a cheerful note.

Anxiety would be a natural companion, but extreme anxiety can be fatal. The candidate might forget to wish the board chairman or may say a 'good evening' in the morning session. Controlling emotions will be easier for candidates who have undergone many mock interviews.

The writer is Additional Director General of Police, Railways, Tamil Nadu.
www.sylendrababu.com

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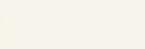
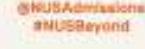
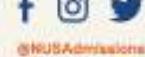
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What's the problem?

One of the driving forces of growth is the identification of problems and the search for solutions



BACKPACKER'S GUIDE

USHA RAMAN

Anyone remember Y2K? That bug that was supposed to turn our lives – meaning, our computers – upside down, wreaking havoc in the markets, on calendars, in services of various kinds? The upside, for the Indian tech industry, was a huge growth in software jobs, with armies of programmers enlisted to desperately debug the millions of lines of code that might create confusion, the moment the clock struck midnight and entered the year 2000.

You can look it all up on the Internet, but to make a longish story short, the “millennium bug” was discerned as a possible flaw in computer programmes that used a two-digit reference to the year – so 1999 would be entered as 99. So, when the year 2000 rolled around, the computer would move to 00. Should that be read as 1900, or 2000? You can imagine the kind of head-scratching and hand-wringing that might ensue in the world of insurance policies, banking, transportation and time-defined contracts of every kind.

As it happened, the scare was bigger than the problem and everything settled down quite quickly. Yes, a lot of money was spent, a few million young programmers got jobs, and we all found that computers and their networks had become even more central to our lives. The big success of the Y2K bug, it seemed, was the defining – and selling – of a problem for which re-programming was the solution.



majority of our world), however, the move to year zero was seen as their chance to witness something historic – a literally, once-in-a-millennium experience. What could be a problem with that, really?

Which brings me to the point (yes, there is one). Identify gaps No matter which field you

are in, or hope to be, one of the driving forces of growth is the identification of problems and the search for solutions to those problems. Many of us are good at working out solutions, once we are given a problem, but what about the necessary first step, that of actually figuring out what the problem is? In science and in all academic disciplines, knowledge grows because we see gaps in understanding that we seek to fill. Seeing the gap, therefore, becomes an important initiator of this process. And then we need to understand the nature of this gap – what exactly is its shape and size? What are its consequences? In the case of Y2K, the genius of those who saw the problem, a relatively simple thing, was their ability to project what it might do to systems of dif-

ferent kinds. And then they convincingly presented it to the world, arguing that it required a solution, and one that required resources.

The ability to see a gap, to describe it in a way that allows us not only to imagine what it looks like but what it means, and then to articulate a way to fill it – or to conceive a way of solving it – is a skill that is worth cultivating. Creative teachers help us do this in every field, giving us the tools to perceive not only the things that we understand, and that are working well, but also helping us notice the things that need to be understood, or made to work better.

The author teaches at the University of Hyderabad and edits Teacher Plus.usha.bpgll@gmail.com

A series of illustrations shows a man stroking a cute little creature. As he holds it to his chest and takes care of it the “creature” warms to him and he to it. Very slowly it expands, opens its eyes and looks steadily at him. There is a



ETHICS AND YOU

MINI KRISHNAN

Most of the conflicts in life arise from the belief that one is always right, and this strong belief is rooted in opinions which may not always be true

When new year resolutions are exchanged one of the things we might reconsider is the list of some of our long held notions about life and people. “Art is useless in a starving world.” “Never trust a foreigner.” Opinions we hold are strengthened when we are around others who hold similar views. “Women should not join the army.” Or “Climate change will not happen.”

What is the value of an opinion? From Sanskrit comes a saying that one should never accept or reject an idea merely because it is ancient or traditional nor accept or reject something merely because it is new. One should think for oneself. Is your opinion (of something or someone) a position of yours or that of an influential and powerful personality? Does your opinion define you? Most discussions will have someone saying “Well this is my opinion and I am entitled to it.” Yes indeed one is entitled but what is worth remembering is that an opinion is not always a fact. Nor should your rights and opinions impinge on someone else’s freedom. From diets to politics, from religion to money matters and ways of raising children, there are as many opinions as there are people.

A series of illustrations shows a man stroking a cute little creature. As he holds it to his chest and takes care of it the “creature” warms to him and he to it. Very slowly it expands, opens its eyes and looks steadily at him. There is a



Does your opinion define you?

growing confidence in its expression. It shows its teeth. Now its “owner” has new responsibilities. He brings a big bag of food for the creature which is now an impressive size. Its expression has changed from cute to determined. In the next frame the creature has to be taken for a walk. It looks surly. Other people back off from the pair. Then the creature begins to roar. It has grown to mountainous proportions and pounces on its caretaker.

This “creature” is the man’s opinion and devours him but not before it has broken his life and severed relationships of many years.

Conflict of opinion

An opinion is an expression of a person’s feelings or thoughts based on emotional history and values. But what if the truth is that people do not really believe every position they express in public? Let’s remember that someone who is strongly committed to an opinion and unwilling to consider other opinions is very likely to impose her view on a second party (you?). And you might be

uncertain about which route to walk. In other words a flexible person very often ends up losing to an inflexible friend.

Most of the conflicts in life arise from the belief that one is always right, and this strong belief is rooted in opinions which may not always be true. We incorrectly believe that we are correct. The need to feel superior to everybody else in one’s circle is a weakness many people have but do not realise at all.

The economist Timur Kuran developed a concept called ‘preference falsification’ in order to understand social behaviour – that is, people conform because it can be uncomfortable to disagree with others. This is very common in group discussions. Quite often one person forcefully puts forward his or her opinion and because the others are silent and do not have any other suggestions to offer it begins to look like everybody has agreed with the one who spoke up confidently.

What is your opinion of this article?

The author is Series Editor, Living in Harmony (Oxford University Press).

Solve this puzzle

Still figuring out what you want to do after Class X? Choose your subjects based on your likes and performance, and your choice of career



CAREER CUES

RICHA DWIVEDI SAKLANI

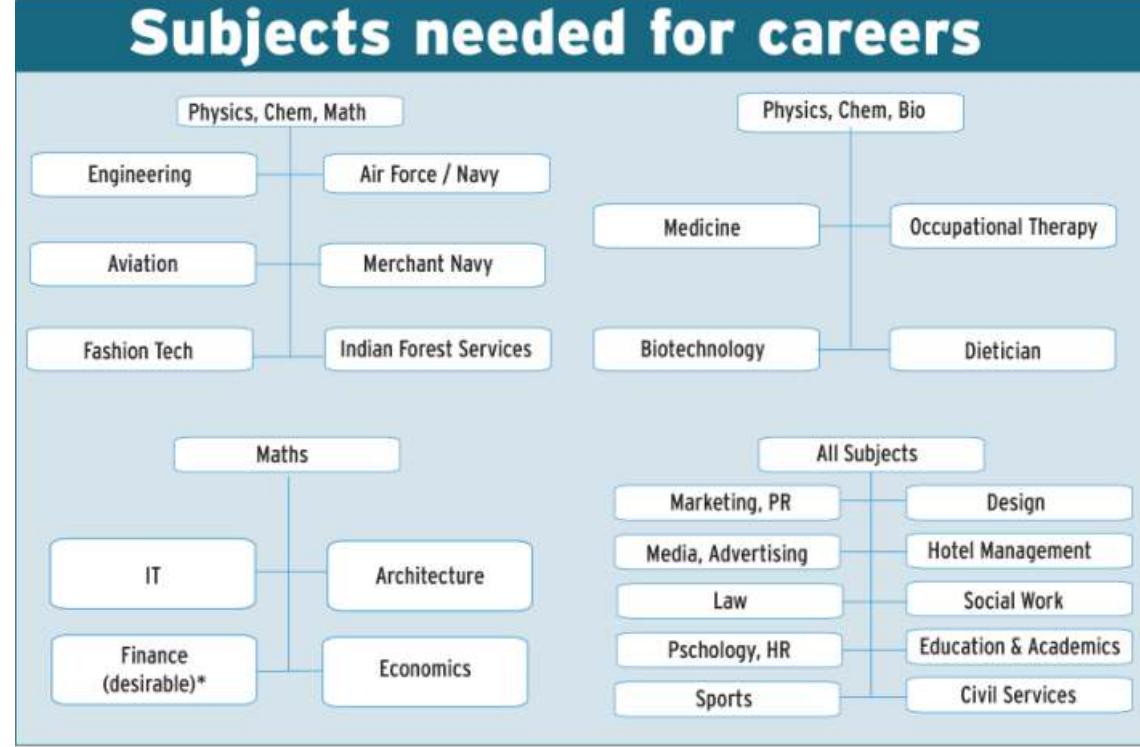
Class X is truly a growing up year. Your child-like world is suddenly full of important questions and decisions, some very big dreams and of course – board exams! As you fill your life with schedules and goals, here is some guidance on subject choices to make that part of the puzzle a bit simpler!

A three-way approach
The simplest approach is to just pick up subjects you like. Shouldn’t it work like that? But consider the following scenario: I like economics, geography, history and math! That’s great! But later I discover that I would love to be a pilot after school, and that needs me to have studied physics till Class XII! Choosing the subjects I enjoy studying the most right now can be myopic.

Choosing subjects based on career goals alone may also be limiting. You may think engineering is your goal but if physics has been a challenge till Class X, it is likely to become even tougher in Classes XI and XII and may make it tough to get through good colleges and even later, to do well in that career.

A holistic way to think about it is to see
1 What subjects I like
2 What subjects I perform well in
3 What subjects are needed for the careers I may explore after school

You may want to fill in your answers in the figure below and see what comes up. Were you lucky enough to find subjects that fit all three criteria?



VALUE ADD



POSTCARD FROM...SHEFFIELD

Whiz kid in England

A perfect mix of ideal study spaces, cafes and food joints, the University of Sheffield offers the best of both worlds



NAME:
Aditya Singhal
COLLEGE:
The University of Sheffield, the U.K.
COURSE:
B.Eng in computer systems engineering, with a year in industry

BE POSITIVE

The Saksham Values Lab is a specially designed, in-school space dedicated to inculcation of values and character building for students.

■ SHWETA SHARAN

The Sarvodaya National Public School in Bengaluru has just opened the world's first value lab, designed to instil positive values in school children.

Every week, students from the school step into the Saksham Values Lab and enter an alternative world of self-reflection and collaborative learning. Saksham is designed as a colourful, fun, interactive and visually stimulating space that challenges its students to explore positive attitudes, mindsets and choices. Students are also given projects and tasks that will help them take transformative action outside of school, and even in their own homes.

The lab has many excit-

ing design elements. The Core Values Wheel, for instance, encourages students to use values such as empathy, respect and honesty as tools for daily success. The Interactive Wall is a space where children have to write their concerns, questions, confessions, apologies or feedback, either anonymously or otherwise.

There is also a design wall called Whispering Pipes, a series of colour-coordinated pipes that can be used by the educator to give individual and confidential feedback to children, who derive great excitement from using the pipes as communication devices. Other elements in the lab include the Values Meter, a snapshot of each grade in the school

and the values they have put into practice, including integrity, empathy, and courage.

The Lotus Blackboard is an excellent mind-mapping device and reflects the school's focus on spirituality. In contrast, the walls have designs of cities from around the world, encouraging the children to have strong roots but to look at possibilities beyond their ambit.

Outcome

"We have noticed that the school's value education translates directly to the children's behaviour at home and at school, with parents and teachers reporting significantly less agitation and increased cooperation among classmates,"

says the school's principal, Harini Ariga.

The lab also has a storytelling corner designed in the form of a large open book. The values educator, Deepthi Shiva, sparks many discussions around stories, and students can add different elements to the stories, including drawing, role playing and puppetry.

"There is a lot of movement, freedom and conversation," says Deepthi. "Children make some wonderful discoveries, including how to deal with peer pressure and to develop the courage to make the right choice, even if it means standing alone."

The Values Lab can also be used for personal counselling, brainstorming and teacher training sessions.

The lab is the brainchild of Val-Ed Initiatives, a youth-led educational venture that delivers value-based learning programmes to children across schools. "Our next plan is to make Saksham a tech-enabled lab, so that students can access value labs in other schools," said Mayank Solanki, Founder of Val-Ed.

The lab underpins what Harvard Graduate School of Education professor David Deming says will be a crucial future skill – empathy. Even Google's internal research envisions leaders of the future as people who can empower teams and bring about inclusion.

The author is a freelance writer.

INNOVATION

■ R. SUJATHA

When Sumedha Mutika, a Ph D chemical engineering student from the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, decided to buy a new laptop she was looking for speed, ease of use, large storage space, long battery life, lightweight and compact, and low price. "My eight-year-old branded laptop was slow from the beginning as my brother used it to play video games before I could get possession of it. Back then I was only reading PDF files. But the processor was slow and frequently gave trouble. At IIT, I was using the system allotted to me," she recalls.

She needed a device on which she could access data from her computer in her department. "I wanted a laptop that would play short videos and download data from a website quickly," she says. Around the same time Kannan Moudgalay, principal investigator of Low-Cost Devices (LCD) Project at IIT Bombay, was assessing the market for a device developed by his team.

His experience with the Aakash tablet had convinced him that those who had never owned a laptop would need LCDs. "Students from small towns have no access to the Internet, let alone laptops. They are overwhelmed by technology and the cost of the device," he points out, adding, "Students may suddenly find solutions to a problem they have been working on the entire semester. With a laptop, they could simply log in from their room and work any time they want."



Redefining LCD: These low-cost devices have helped many.

Game Changer

IIT Bombay's low-cost device has helped hundreds own a tablet and be connected with the world, thanks to its affordability

sues. That became cumbersome. I had to make sure that my family could use it when I got the laptop," she says.

By October-end, 1,800 LCDs were distributed across the country to several universities and colleges. Anil Sahasrabudhe, AICTE Chairman: "This will be a game changer. Every student can have an affordable laptop, having features comparable to the best in the market. Several software pre-loaded, what an empowerment it would be, there can be learning for anyone anywhere...innovation will start at grass roots."

Dedicated team

Project co-ordinator Mohamed Kasim Khan organises training sessions. "Several rounds of training programmes were organised in the institutions that bought the laptops. They were asked to identify a person to be trained on resolving issues. The gadget includes a training video on using the LCD besides the Spoken Tutorial programmes," he says. The Pro-Vice Chancellor Joseph Nellatt of Don Bosco University in Assam, an early convert, ordered 442 laptops, majority of which was for the LCDs.

In Thiagarajar College the 100 LCDs are for faculty training. Thassim Beevi has installed them in its computer lab. Gandhi Gram Institute's Vice Chancellor S. Natarajan gave a subsidy of ₹1,000 for each LCD and 124 students bought them.

In Don Bosco School in Sashipur in Baksa district of Assam, 25 teachers and 85 students from classes VIII to X

bought the LCDs. The built-in tutorials for students of Classes X, XI, and XII propelled the Principal M.C. George to buy them. "We are based in the poorest district of Assam but we offer computer classes from Class II. We gave the students the option of paying in instalments.

The software bundle was designed to address students' long term career prospects, says Mr. Kasim. "An IIT B professor customised the operating system. A laptop heats up when other applications are simultaneously running. We have eliminated that problem," he says.

In Tamil Nadu, four institutions have together bought around 700 laptops. The Gandhi Gram Rural Institute of Virudhunagar; Lady Doak College and Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Madurai and Thassim Beevi Abdul Khader College for Women, Kizhakkarai, have procured the LCDs.

In Thiagarajar College the 100 LCDs are for faculty training. Thassim Beevi has installed them in its computer lab. Gandhi Gram Institute's Vice Chancellor S. Natarajan gave a subsidy of ₹1,000 for each LCD and 124 students bought them.

Thassim Beevi College Principal Sumayya Dawood says: "We have bought 100 LCDs and created a laboratory for MOOCs (Massive Online

Open Courses) to facilitate student self-learning concept. More than 122 software are available in the laptop and students use it during their free time. Many students who don't have internet access come to us for learning through online. The aim is to take the laptops to students in neighbouring government schools. Almost all the spoken tutorials that we are offering is available on the laptop".

Easy to use

Deepak Gupta, a PhD student in chemical engineering at IIT-Bombay, bats for the device: "Its booting time is very less making the machine fast. The RAM 4 GB allows for speed and smoothness while running multiple applications. It works flawlessly with Word file, PDF, PPT, excel, photos, videos, browser, and basic drawing," he says.

He recommends using an external mouse as the touch pad function is not smooth. As for Linux, he says: "One can get used to it within a week."

According to him "it is just a change of interface like switching from Windows to Mac. Initially you need to search for the dedicated buttons but you will get used to it once to practice it regularly, and it becomes handy within a week."

S. Lakshmanan and his brother S. Thulasi Manikanthan, both students of Computer Science at the Gandhi Gram Rural Institute got their first device under State government's free laptop scheme in 2012. Now in 3rd year Ph D, Mr. Lakshmanan wanted to replace his old laptop as the hard disk was giving trouble.

When the Institute offered the LCD at a subsidised cost of ₹8,999, the brothers bought them.

"My laptop's hard disk was giving trouble. I have used the new device for over a month now. Earlier, I had to purchase the software. When I could not afford it, I used the facility in the Institute. On the new laptop I am using the open source Octave. I am comfortable with Linux but my brother has installed Windows," he says.

"Recently I had to make a presentation in an international conference during my internship in Noida. I used Skype on this LCD and the quality of audio and drive were super," he adds.

VOICES

New rules, newer problems

According to the new rules of Anna University, students cannot appear for arrears in the next semester itself, but will have to wait one year. Some reactions

■ INDIRA TIRUMALA



SHARAN VISHAKH, IV, B.ARCH, CRESCENT SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, CHENNAI

While I am not studying in an Anna University affiliated college, based on my discussions with my friends from Anna University and its affiliated colleges, many students to whom this regulation applies will certainly face a delay in their graduation. People who are planning to go abroad for further studies will have problems in their admission, and definitely feel the pinch of this new rule. By comparison, even Class XII students who fail in the board exams, have their respective supplementary exams before June or July so that they can join college by August or September. Why wouldn't Anna University have such a rule, since it is more student-friendly?

It is a misfortune for the student to have to wait for a year, and may even cost them lucrative employment. Though this amendment aims for a good performance by students, it will affect students whose failure could be due to understandable reasons. So, it does not appear to be an entirely student-friendly decision.

VERONICA. P., I, MA ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

This amendment by Anna University, based on CBCS, NICTE, may lead to added pressure on students who have arrears, since they will also have a backlog in the following year. The limitation of 36 credit points for a semester will not allow the student to appear for more than three papers.

Another problem is the inconsistency of corrections, which results in many random arrears that clear when we apply for re-evaluation.

The University should make unbiased and proper correction its priority, and then implement such regulations.

GANAPATHI RAMANATHAN, IV, BE (ECE), SSN

The issue isn't with the new regulation, and most colleges have similar regulations in place. The issue, however, lies with the examination pattern and the correction. The question paper pattern doesn't support critical thinking, or problems where we apply the principles we are taught.

The effectiveness of this policy in improving the quality of Anna University can only be gauged with time but on the face of it, the rule seems to be a good method to induce students to clear papers in the first attempt.

KRITAJNYA RAGHUNATHAN, I, LLB(HONS), SCHOOL OF LAW, SRM UNIVERSITY

While the arrear rule is not student-friendly, similar rules exist in many other universities including Madras University.

The effectiveness of this policy in improving the quality of Anna University can only be gauged with time but on the face of it, the rule seems to be a good method to induce students to clear papers in the first attempt.

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4 EDGE

FAST FORWARD

Break the silence

Education needs reforms and intellectual courage to break away from the outdated system

■ DR ALBERT P'RAYAN

The term "fast-forwarding education" is a rather confusing collocation. When I was told that "Fast-forwarding Education: Making It Happen" is the topic for the panel discussion, four questions cropped up. The first question: Do we have a common definition of the words: "fast-forward" and "education"? The second question: What is our concept of education? The third question: Is it a good idea to fast-forward education? The fourth question: Should we make it happen?

If we want to have a meaningful discussion on the topic "Fast-forwarding Education: Making It Happen", we should first know what we understand by the terms "fast-forwarding" and "education".

I have been in the field of education as a teacher, teacher trainer and education columnist for over a quarter century. I must say I have been obsessed with education and have been constantly asking myself what education is all about.

Defining education

The term 'education' is defined by different people in different ways for different reasons on different occasions. Each person defines it the way the definition suits their interests. For some people, education means gaining knowledge and acquiring skills. For some, education means accumulating degrees and qualifications. For some others, it means spending a few years in educational institutions, being certified that they have completed a particular program successfully and adding a few letters after their names. Some equate education with its synonyms: teaching, coaching, schooling, pedagogy, training, indoctrination, enlightenment, edification, and so on.

In my view, education and qualifications are two different things. Education enables us to love human beings unconditionally and look at things critically but qualifications enable us to get a job and earn money. It is possible that highly qualified people may remain highly un-



Coached: Catching them young.

educated. In a way it includes enlightenment and edification.

The word "fast-forward" refers to the function of advancing or winding a video or tape without playing it. It is the process of skipping a part of something. It is the opposite of 'rewinding' or going back. Metaphorically, it refers to accelerating or forwarding (advancing or promoting) something. What is the need for fast-forwarding education? Is it possible to accelerate the way we learn things? Do we have the capacity to learn things faster?

Very recently, while discussing the topic with a colleague, a student approached me with a question on the essay he had prepared on APJ Abdul Kalam. "If Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam had studied in a top international school in India, would he have become a humane person as he was known to the world?" The eleventh President of India was called "People's President" as he had many beautiful qualities. The education he had received in ordinary educational institutions moulded him and helped him acquire knowledge, learn skills, imbibe values and gain wisdom. Dr Kalam and many others could experience "fast-forwarded education" even though such terms did not exist in the lexicon decades ago. Can so-called elite educational institutions really help students experience such "fast-forwarded education"?

Today, some educational institu-

many private educational institutions, knowledgeable and talented teachers are employed on a meagre salary. As years pass, they get frustrated. Expecting such 'frustrated' teachers to do wonders is a sin.

Our education system does not promote critical thinking. It kills students' creativity. In engineering colleges, campus recruitment has become synonymous with "visits of IT companies". Should institutions of higher education prepare students only for IT-related jobs? It shows that educational institutions do not have broader visions.

Academics lack intellectual courage. They feel insecure and are scared of questioning the system. They allow things to happen. As Paolo Freire, a globally well-known Brazilian educationist, said, we have submerged in culture of silence, teachers too have submerged in culture of silence. As long as we allow things to happen, no change will take place. What is needed is movement that fights for these reforms in education. Education is a real complex process and it cannot be fast forwarded. To make positive things happen in the education sector, we need to be reform-oriented. Only those who have intellectual courage can break culture of silence and initiate reforms.

The author is an academic, columnist and freelance writer. Email: ryanal@yahoo.co.uk



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

STUDY ABROAD

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Studying at St. George's University, Grenada, gives you an opportunity to get out of your comfort zone

■ NEHA RUPEJA

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"St. George's University School of Medicine has developed long-standing relationships with many hospital and clinical centre partners in the U.S., the U.K., and Canada. These trusted connections allow our students to gain a breadth of knowledge with different patient populations in a variety of environments and gain valuable international experience," says Calum Macpherson, PhD, Vice Provost for International Programme Development, St. George's University.

"All the programmes are accredited and approved by governing authorities, and SGU is affiliated with educational institutions worldwide, including in the U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, and Ireland."

Inviting Indian students, he said, "Indian students interested in MD or DVM degrees and studying at Class 10+2*, A-Levels or IB generally can apply for the five-year Doctor of Medicine programme or five-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine programme at SGU."

"MD students can elect to begin their studies in Grenada or in the U.K. at Northumbria University in Newcastle, providing international students the opportunity to complete up to 50% of their degree in the U.K."

Bursaries

Macperson said, "For non-U.S. students, SGU offers the International Peace Bursary. Partial bursary is awarded to non-U.S. citizens or permanent residents who demonstrate financial need and can fund the balance of their education beyond the bursary award."

"Other scholarships are Keith B. Taylor Bursary which is a partial bursary awarded to non-U.S. citizens or permanent residents entering the Keith B. Taylor Global Scholars Programme (KBTGSP). It is awarded to international students who exhibit academic excellence, demonstrate financial need, and will return to their home countries as physicians dedicated to the enhancement of medical care systems. These awards are grants-in-aid and do not have to be repaid," he added.

According to him, Indian students can assimilate in the university with the help of the Indian Cultural Student Association (ICSA), a popular student organisation that endeavours to share the Indian culture with the entire university and country of Grenada, including hosting various cultural events.

Commenting on the vision for India he said, "St. George's University provides Indian students with the opportunity to pursue their first year in M.S Ramaiah College, Bengaluru, before moving on to completing their MD degree internationally, either in Grenada or in the U.K." Besides, SGU also has affiliations with Mahidol University in Thailand.

For specific admission requirements, visit: <https://www.sgu.edu/admission/>

At a crossroads



OFF THE EDGE

NANDINI RAMAN

I have finished my B.Com and am currently working in a Big Four firm. However, my interests lie in sports management and allied areas. Can you guide me as to which are good institutes overseas where I can pursue courses in this field, preferably as a postgraduate degree. Also, what are the prerequisites for applying? - S. Sharath

Dear Sharath,
Seems like you are trapped in a desk-job strategising and number crunching whilst you seem to enjoy action, the outdoors perhaps and massive adrenaline rushes. There are many reputed courses available overseas as a masters programme in this field. To mention a few - AISTS Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Sports Administration, Switzerland; MS Management des Organisations de Sport (MOS), France; MBA Media, Entertainment and Sports Management, University of Virginia, USA; MBA Sport Marketing, U.K.; MA Physical Education and Recreation, Canada; M.Sc Sports Industry Management, France; Master Sports Science, Malaysia; Executive Master in Marketing and Sports Management, Portugal; Master in Economics and Business Administration – Sports and Event Management, Denmark and so on. You will need to shortlist the course of your choice and passion, and then research the universities that offer it, world over. Write in to their admission officer (email links will available on the universities website) and seek their advice on course fee, application criteria and process.

I am 25 years old and from a rural background. I worked in a government bank for three years and later quit, as I wanted to prepare for my UPSC. I am not worried about success or failure. But, the problem I am facing is that I failed to develop my communication, presentation and vocabulary skills. And comparatively, I have less courage because of my rural background and family set up. I feel that these are basic skills without which one cannot prosper even in other fields. How do I nurture these skills and be more courageous? - Pio Jeyaraj

Dear Pio,
you but they certainly do not limit you. Many extraordinary, super achievers and great men and women from our history, had very humble beginnings and yet, made their lives a testimony for us. Breathe easy in your own skin and do not let anyone intimidate you and make you feel any less. Yes, it is all about packaging today – communication, presentation, vocabulary all are very essential and rightly put by you, they are 'skill sets' that can be learnt and picked up to enhance your overall personality, at any time. Please find some schools or centres of repute to brush up on these skills and prepare hard. Believe and trust in yourself.

I have completed my B.Tech in Information Technology and have a one year experience in the IT sector and three years experience in the banking sector. I am 27 and want to change my job role. Which would be better – doing an executive MBA or a regular MBA? Please help. - Divyah Shruthi

Dear Divyah,
What do you enjoy is something that you haven't mentioned. What would you want to change your current role to? With your work experience, you are certainly better suited for an executive MBA. The basic difference between this and a traditional MBA (full-time, part-time, one or two year programme) is that of job status and programme structure. Identify the details of that once you shortlist your choice of institute. An EMBA has a very intensive course schedule making it rather tough for the student to maintain a job. Meet up and speak with some of the Alma mater to get a realistic perspective of what to expect once you make it through the entrance.

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

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

Postcard

The Hindu EDGE invites Indian students in foreign universities to share their experiences about the campus, course, quality of education, city life and adapting to changes abroad. The article should be not more than 500 words. Send photos of yourself on campus (minimum 2MB size, JPG/JPEG format) to goalpost@thehindu.co.in.

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**Interpreters without borders**

Afghan medical interpreters have become a huge part of the growing healthcare tourism business **Page 2**

**In search of home**

As Chef Gaggan Anand prepares to move to Japan, he recreates his signature dishes to say goodbye **Page 4**

**'My medium is life'**

Multi-faceted artist Mithu Sen on the contours of performance art and her practice **Page 5**

**Food for beginners**

Rujuta Diwekar tells us what to cook and how to encourage children to eat healthy food **Page 6**

IN BRIEF**'Develop 36 stations as model railway stations'**

NEW DELHI
The National Green Tribunal has directed the Ministry of Railways to identify and develop "at least 36 stations as eco-smart stations" within two weeks after a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India said that there was unsatisfactory handling of waste at railway stations.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

NSA slapped on youth accused of molestation

NEW DELHI
A youth accused of molesting a girl has been booked under the National Security Act after his family members created a ruckus at the police station and forcibly released him from there on December 3 last year. An FIR was registered against 12 people for attacking policemen and damaging public property.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	262	Gurugram	202
Ghaziabad	249	Faridabad	-
Noida	220	Greater Noida	247
Good 0-50	Satisfactory 51-100	Moderate 101-200	-
Poor 201-300	Very poor 301-400	Severe >401	-
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) [SOURCE: CPCB]			

Road restrictions today for Beating Retreat drill

NEW DELHI
Delhiites travelling through the central part of the city on Monday should brace for detours and diversions as traffic restrictions will be imposed due to rehearsals of the Beating Retreat ceremony, the police said. Vijay Chowk will remain closed for general traffic from 3.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. on Monday, Alok Kumar, Joint CP (Traffic), said. Movement of vehicles on parts of Rafi Marg, Raisina Road, Krishna Menon Marg, 'C' Hexagon and Dara Shikoh Road will also be restricted, Mr. Kumar also said. PTI

Glitch in issue of metro cards hits Aqua Line commuters**STAFF REPORTER**
NEW DELHI

With passenger operations on the Noida-Greater Noida metro corridor starting on January 26, the first day saw a ridership of over 11,000.

However, on Sunday, commuters complained of issues pertaining to issue of metro cards.

A Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) official said, "There were temporary issues with the SBI system and hence issuing of cards was kept on hold for some time. However, it was resolved soon and issuing of cards resumed by 1 p.m."

While ridership at Pari Chowk and Delta stations at Greater Noida saw the highest ridership on the first day, Noida Sectors 146,147 and 144 metro stations recorded the lowest figured.

Day One haul

The NMRC generated a revenue of ₹3.6 lakh on the first day.

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had inaugurated the Aqua Line on January 25. Passenger operations on the corridor started from 10 a.m. on January 26.

Elderly couple found dead in south Delhi

Woman's hands were tied; post-mortem to be done after son arrives; bodies were semi-decomposed

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

A missed birthday call led to the discovery of semi-decomposed bodies of a couple in their 70s inside their ninth-floor flat in south Delhi on January 26, the police said on Sunday.

The deceased have been identified as 78-year-old Virender Kumar Khaneja, who retired as a senior manager with a multinational consumer goods company, and his 72-year-old wife Sarla Khaneja.

Murder case filed

Though the cause of death is yet to be ascertained, the police have registered a murder case under Section 302 of IPC based on circumstantial evidence.

DCP (South-East) Chinmoy Biswal said they have informed Amit Khaneja, the couple's elder son who lives in the United States, about the incident. Stating that the son is expected to reach Del-



The flat where the bodies were found. ■ SAURABH TRIVEDI

hi in a couple of days, Mr. Biswal said the post-mortem will only be conducted after he son reaches the city.

Around 10.30 a.m. on January 26, the police were informed that a couple living in flat number 349 at Mount Kailash Apartments in East of Kailash had gone missing. The Gurugram-based caller claimed he was a distant relative. A team from Amar Co-

lony police station was sent to the address.

"Mr. Khaneja did not receive the customary call from his parents on his birthday [January 24]. He called them but did not receive any response. He asked his relative to check on his parents," a police officer said.

The police team found the front and back doors of the flat locked from inside. They

used a neighbour's apartment to access the balcony in the couple's flat and broke open the back door.

The neighbours learnt about the couple's death only after the police recovered their bodies. One of them even claimed that no foul had emanated from the flat.

The neighbours told the police they had last seen the couple on January 19. Footage from a CCTV camera installed inside the society showed the couple entering the premises.

The police said the bodies were found in the same room but Sarla's hands had been tied with a piece of cloth. The couple was registered with the Delhi Police's Senior Citizen Cell. On January 17, a policeman had met the couple for some household work.

"We have not ruled out any possibility yet. The case is under investigation. An FSL team visited the flat and collected some samples,"

said a senior police officer.

"There was no note left behind by the deceased in the flat. There were no signs of forced entry either," said Mr. Biswal.

The police also said some mothballs were found near the bodies. "It is too early to arrive at any conclusion. We are talking to neighbours and also questioning the maid who came to work in the house daily," Mr. Biswal added.

Virender was a cheerful person. I met him during my evening walks. However, his wife had been stressed since their younger son Sumit died in 2017 after prolonged illness.

After his death, they went to stay with their elder son in the US and returned after six months. Their elder son did not come for his brother's funeral," a neighbour said. The neighbour said the couple had a part-time domestic help who cooked for them and did other household chores.

la's elder son Amit, who lives in the United States, had not come to India for his brother's funeral and had later asked his parents to stay with him in the US for six months.

A police officer said the couple's elder son is a New York-based doctor and has been informed about their death. However, the officer said that he told them he is "stuck in Florida due to a snowstorm".

"We have requested him to come to Delhi at the earliest since he has to take care of many legal formalities. The bodies will be kept in the mortuary till he arrives," said a police officer.

Unitech told to refund ₹1.13 cr for delaying possession of plot

NCDRC also asks developer to pay ₹25,000 compensation

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has directed Unitech Ltd to compensate a plot buyer by paying over ₹1.13 crore after the developer failed to deliver possession of the plot within the stipulated time.

The complainants had alleged that despite paying a booking amount of over ₹1.13 crore for a residential villa, which Unitech was supposed to develop in Gurugram, the possession had not been handed over.

The consumer panel noted that according to the agreement dated April 2011, "possession ought to have been delivered by April 2013," that was within 24 months of the agreement.

The grievance of the complainants is that the possession has not even been offered and the construction is not complete till date despite payment of ₹1,13,92,615 [to Unitech].

The complainants are, therefore, before this commission seeking possession of the villa along with compensation," the consumer panel observed.



Unitech shall refund the entire principal amount to the complainants along with compensation in the form of simple interest at 10% per annum...

NATIONAL CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL COMMISSION

Further, the apex consumer disputes redressal forum observed, "The documents filed by the complainants prove the allotment as well as the payment made. [Unitech] having not offered possession of the villa within two years of the agreement, and even thereafter, the complainants are entitled to either possession of the said villa or to refund the amount paid for the purchase of the said villa."

The NCDRC further directed the developer to pay an additional sum of ₹25,000 to the complainants as compensation.

[Unitech] shall refund the entire principal amount to the complainants along with compensation in the form of simple interest at 10% per annum from the date of each payment till the date of refund of the full amount with compensation," the consumer forum added.

On Sunday, the minimum

refund of the amount paid... considering that [Unitech] did not offer possession of the allotted villa to the complainant even during pendency of the complainant, which came to be instituted more than two years ago."

The NCDRC further directed the developer to pay an additional sum of ₹25,000 to the complainants as compensation.

[Unitech] shall refund the entire principal amount to the complainants along with compensation in the form of simple interest at 10% per annum from the date of each payment till the date of refund of the full amount with compensation," the consumer forum added.

On Sunday, the minimum



Street dogs sleep inside an abandoned car on a cold winter afternoon at Daryaganj in Old Delhi on Sunday. ■ PRADEEP KUMAR

City shivers as mercury dips to 5 degrees

Met Department says cold wave conditions likely to prevail in the coming week

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Temperature settled at 5.2 degrees Celsius, three notches below average.

This was a dip from the minimum of 10 degrees Celsius that was recorded the previous night. The maximum temperature was 18.8 degrees Celsius which was four degrees below the

normal.

Rain likely this week

The forecast for Monday reads, "Clear sky with strong surface winds during the day and cold wave conditions are likely to prevail at isolated pockets. The maximum and minimum temperatures are

likely to settle around 19 and 4 degrees Celsius respectively."

The extended forecast shows that there will be a possibility of very light rain/thundershower towards evening/night on Wednesday and a generally cloudy sky with rain/thunderstorm on Thursday.

Airlines, government blame each other for delay in services at Hisar airport

Airlines allege Ministry of Civil Aviation is yet to clear the Delhi airport slot for Hisar-Delhi-Hisar route, causing the said delay

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

The Haryana government's plan to start air services from the State's first civil airport in Hisar, the first phase of which was inaugurated by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on August 15 last year, seems to have hit turbulence with accusations flying thick and fast between airlines, and the State and Central governments over the delay.

Notice to airlines Though Mr. Khattar had then expressed hope that M/s Pinnacleair Private Limited would commence operations by mid-October last year, the Airports Authority of India has now issued a notice to airlines over prolonged delay in starting services and directed it to do so at the earliest.



cently after the Haryana government had in a letter dated December 24, 2018, to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) said that all facilities for starting scheduled operations were in place at the Hisar civil airport and a licence from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation was also

obtained on September 27, 2018, but there was no progress from airlines regarding initiation of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) flights on allotted routes despite persistent follow-up.

Alleging that the attitude and policies of the two governments were not "encouraging for civil aviation", the official said they had written to the Haryana government "tens of emails" seeking ticketing counter, and maintenance and parking areas at Hisar airport as prerequisite for starting the services but there was "no response".

When contacted, a senior Pinnacleair official told *The Hindu* that the MoCA was yet to clear the Delhi airport slot to them for the Hisar-Delhi-Hisar route, leading to the delay.

"We were allotted the Hisar-Chandigarh-Hisar and Hisar-Delhi-Hisar routes. However, the MoCA has not cleared the Delhi airport slot till date, which makes the entire project financially unviable for us," said the official.

However, Haryana Civil Aviation Department Addi-

tional Chief Secretary Deveneer Singh denied the allegations saying that the ticket counter was duly allotted and placed in the passenger terminal. He said the airlines were yet to obtain a scheduled operators licence.

"The requirement for a 6,000-foot runway is absurd. The MoCA has verified in writing that the runway length is sufficient," said Mr. Singh.

Next phases

The State government plans to develop a cargo terminal, aerospace, defence university, defence MRO and an aviation university in the second phase of the project. In the third phase of the project, it has plans to develop the airport at Hisar as an international airport owing to increasing pressure on the international airport in New Delhi.

Interpreters without borders

Afghan medical interpreters living in the city have become a huge part of the growing healthcare tourism business in Delhi, finds **Bindu Shajan Perappadan**

"They will be lost without us. Everything is new to them – the language, the people and even the food. We also help people who run out of money or have no place to stay. Without our help, a lot of people would find getting treatment here and returning home very tough," says Dawood, who came to Delhi from Kabul in 2009 as a refugee.

Having made the city his home for nearly a decade now, he has learnt Hindi and picked up bits of English.

Dawood, who lives in Lajpat Nagar with his family and works as an assistant at a pharmacy, often doubles as medical interpreter when he has the time for his Pashto-speaking family, relatives and friends from Afghanistan who come to Delhi.

Increasing numbers

Thanks to easy connectivity and affordable health care, the number of patients from countries including Iraq, Uzbekistan, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Sudan coming to Delhi for diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation has increased.

While the exact number of medical tourists coming to Delhi is unavailable, India saw the arrival of 4.95 lakh patients in 2017; 2.34 lakh in



Nearly five lakh medical tourists came to India in 2017. ■ FILE PHOTO

2015; and 4.27 lakh in 2016.

Most medical tourists in India come from Bangladesh and Afghanistan. In 2017, approximately 2.21 lakh tourists from Bangladesh came here for treatment, compared to 1.20 lakh in 2015 and 2.10 lakh in 2016.

Likewise, the number of medical tourists from Afghanistan stood at 27,505 in 2015 and 61,231 in 2016 but declined to 55,681 in 2017. India also gets patients from Iraq, Oman, Maldives, Yemen, Uzbekistan and Sudan.

This influx has given birth to a niche population associated with the medical tourism business in the city – the foreign medical interpreters.

Beyond interpreting

He explained that a medical interpreter's responsibilities include assisting people with identifying the best treatment or rehabilitation facility for them, helping with the nitty-gritty details of inter-country paperwork, hospital admission, and testing and continued medical care

while acting as a bridge between the hospital and the patients.

Sikander, who stays with his family in Old Delhi, claimed his grandfather would come to India from Afghanistan with fruits and dried fruits, a trade his father continued.

Satisfying job'

"I was born here and later decided to stay back in India. My job as a medical interpreter keeps me connected with my roots and allows me to help others from Afghanistan. Besides my regular work with patients, there have been days when they crave for something as simple as a home-cooked meal. I ensure they get it. It is a very satisfying job that way," he added.

Abdul, who came to Delhi nearly a decade ago in search of a better life, lives in Bhogal with his wife and three schoolgoing children. He too helps friends and relatives access medical treatment in Delhi.

"This work is not a steady source of income and hospitals do not pay me anything. Whatever little I earn is from the people I help. I consider it my duty to help my brothers from Afghanistan," he said, adding that living in Delhi and working as a medi-



Abdul, who works as a medical interpreter, came to Delhi from Afghanistan nearly a decade ago. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

team are also well-versed in some foreign languages. Many a times, we seek help from Embassies when it comes to interpreters."

Private hospitals in the city are encouraging this inflow of foreign patients by providing complete and seamless assistance.

"Our hospitals now offer single-window clearance and assistance based on requests from international patients and their families. We also offer a team that provides personalised attention to each international patient," he added.

cal interpreter here gives him a sense of security and purpose. "After living in Kabul, where we did not know if we would be alive the next day or not, this is bliss."

Right at home

Stating that Bhogal reminds him of home, he said, "Many shops here sell Afghan food and items. Also, I do not feel lonely anymore as there are so many of us here now. Delhi, as a city, is also a welcoming place. My children were born here and are doing very well in their studies. I cannot ask for more."

Lajpat Nagar resident Dawood seems agrees with Abdul. "I came to Delhi in 2009. I make decent money and live amid a thriving Afghan community here. My children are in school and are doing well."

Lajpat Nagar too boasts many Afghan restaurants which he says "help a lot when we crave for home food. Of course, we love the north Indian cuisine too".

As part of their treatment package for foreign patients, most private hospitals in the city offer a host of services, including assistance with

medical visa, accommodation, pick up from airport, provision of ambulance / ICU ambulance or a private vehicle based on a patient's medical condition, insurance, Embassy, legal, ward, local SIM card, Foreign exchange and travel.

Pramod Alaghari, CEO, Manipal Hospital Dwarka Private Limited, said: "Foreign interpreters are the ones who help patients and their families communicate better with doctors and their teams. We have round-the-clock language interpreters. In fact, our staff and nursing

Airport Line case: AAP welcomes HC judgment, seeks probe

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP launches voter outreach programme

Comes up with slogan: 'Kejriwal Bhagao Delhi Bachao'



Union Minister Vijay Goel (right) and Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari (left) during the launch of the campaign on Sunday. Rebel Aam Aadmi Party MLA Kapil Mishra (centre) was also at the event. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Welcoming the recent Delhi High Court judgment, which partly set aside an arbitration award directing the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to pay compensation to the Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Ltd. (DAMEPL) for breach of contract, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday questioned the Centre's refusal to accept the Delhi government's recommendation of a CBI probe into the matter.

'Firm cheated Delhi' "The court has rightly prevented wrong payment to a company, which cheated Delhi. It has correctly prevented the defaulting company [Anil Ambani-owned DAMEPL] from wrongly getting ₹4,500 crore of taxpayers' money for making profit and running away from its responsibility of operating this critical metro line," AAP said in a statement.

The statement read: "It is extremely surprising as to why the Modi government at the Centre did not accept the Delhi government's recommendation for a CBI probe into this highly suspect and dubious deal. The agreement between the DMRC and this private company was illegally modified and wilfully manipulated to give an unfair advantage at the expense of the public exchequer."

'Cause for suspicion' "What raises further suspicion is that why is the Modi government protecting the suspect deal of the previous Congress government?" the statement added.

AAP demanded an inquiry by a "high-level team of experts" to ascertain the reason behind the defects found in the civil construction and alleged negligence in the project.

The Delhi High Court on January 15 had partly set aside arbitration award directing the DMRC to pay a consortium headed by Reliance Infrastructure Ltd for breach of an agreement between them.

Peddling information as knowledge

Invoking the multiple choice question format on grounds of objectivity and precision of knowledge misses out on a very important purpose of higher education: it must help one understand the unresolved issues around us

COMMENT

ANAMITA ROYCHOWDHURY

Recently, under the directive of the Delhi High Court, teachers of Jawaharlal Nehru University submitted the entrance examination question papers in multiple choice question (MCQ) format, "under protest". Why are a large number of teachers protesting against MCQs? Are there fundamental contradictions between the purposes of higher education and MCQs?

Courage to question

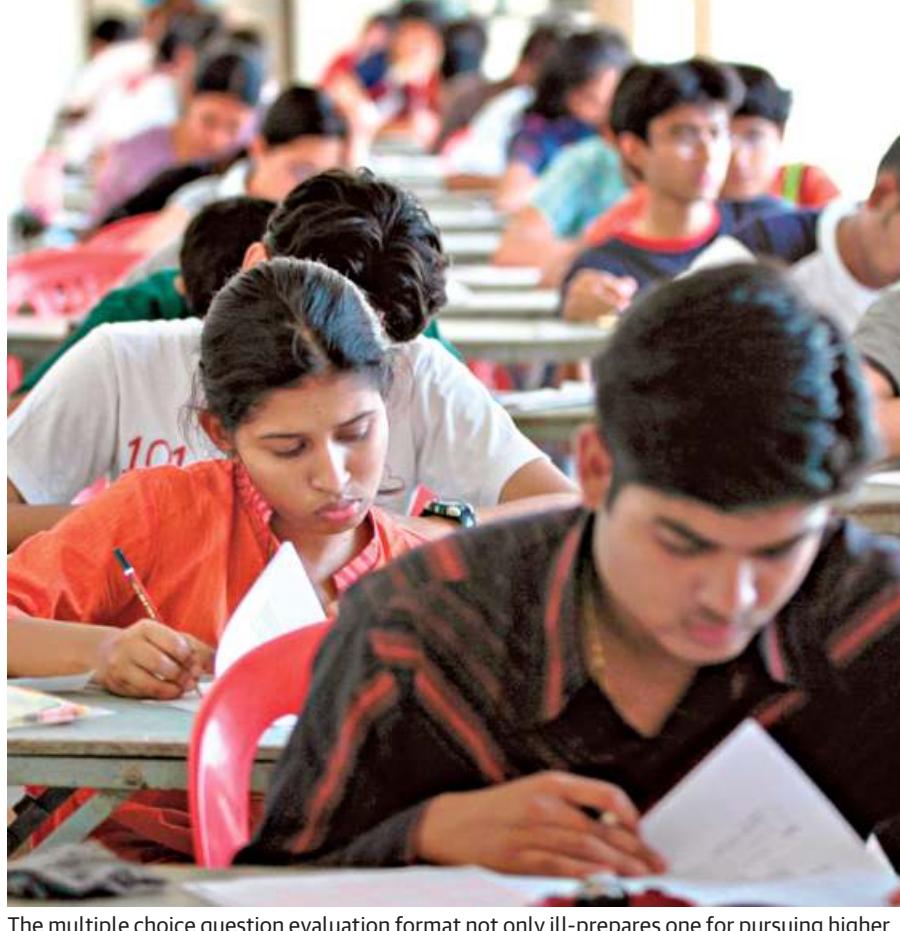
It will perhaps be readily accepted that the purpose of higher education is not to merely reproduce the existing stock of knowledge for ready consumption of students as information, but generation of knowledge. Progress of any society critically depends upon its ability to generate knowledge. And ability to say something new starts from the courage of questioning the limits (sometimes challenging the very foundation) of existing knowledge.

This is equally true for both natural and social sciences. For example, when Albert Einstein challenged the Newtonian theory of gravity held by physicists for more than 200 years with his general theory of relativity, he first had to raise doubts about Isaac Newton's treatment of the space as fixed.

This example underscores the importance of independent thinking and its sustenance. This is the function higher education is supposed to perform in the society.

How MCQs are limiting Does the MCQ format encourage independent thinking? It is plain to understand that the scope for raising doubts in the MCQ format is simply non-existent, since the "correct" answer is to be searched from within the limits of the given structure. Thus, MCQ confines knowledge by making it closed-ended, static and unambiguous, forcing students to conform to the dominant views of the time.

Knowledge, thus, ceases to be liberating and a battleground of ideas; instead, it trains the mind to accept the ruling ideas unquestionably. In short, MCQ promotes



The multiple choice question evaluation format not only ill-prepares one for pursuing higher education, but is ultimately antithetical to it. ■ FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

mere gathering of information without subjecting them to further evaluation and this becomes the sole purpose of higher education.

Herein lies the paradox of using MCQs for selecting students at higher education level (even more so at MPhil/PhD level), who are expected to contribute to knowledge. Put simply, least questioning minds, accustomed to rote learning presumably doing best in the MCQ format, are selected for courses requiring continuous questioning.

At this stage, one can argue that although questioning the existing stock of knowledge is an integral part of education at the masters and research level, nonetheless, MCQ is a perfect tool for selection purposes at these levels - since one is only testing candidates' stock of knowledge. This, however, is an erroneous argument because it assumes that the learning process is dichotomous. Up to a certain level, students acquire knowledge without questioning and after that they start thinking critically. The vacuity of this argument is self-evident and one need not labour the point, except perhaps pointing out that learning is a con-

tinuous process and one cannot suddenly switch from accepting everything to a questioning mind.

Individual biases

But in spite of this lacuna, it may be argued, MCQ promotes value-free knowledge independent of individual biases. This, in fact, is the strongest pedagogic argument in favour of MCQs.

However, it comes at a cost. This first occurred to me while preparing this year's entrance paper in the MCQ format.

I witnessed a debate between two of my colleagues over the "correct" alternative in an MCQ. Each one had their own justification over their "correct" answer - leading to the deletion of the question altogether.

An example should clarify the point. Suppose one is interested in testing the students on the impact of demonetisation on the economy. The MCQ evaluation format not only ill-prepares one for pursuing higher education - leading to adverse selection of students, it is ultimately antithetical to the very idea of higher education. With the aim of peddling information as knowledge, MCQs actually seek to bring about closure of knowledge.

(The author teaches economics at JNU)

cally deny this and argue the very opposite.

Thus, although one can ask questions about merits and demerits of demonetisation in a non-MCQ format, but an MCQ enquiring about the impact of demonetisation on the informal sector is simply not possible.

It follows that invoking the MCQ format on grounds of objectivity and exactitude of knowledge misses out on a very important purpose of higher education. Higher education, above all, must contribute to enhance our understanding on the unresolved issues around us. But MCQs, by design, simply preclude this possibility by not allowing these issues from even being raised, as the former is not amenable to unsettled issues.

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(The author teaches economics at JNU)

Remember work done by Cong govt'

Sheila Dikshit appeals to Delhiites at party workers' meet

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI



Delhi Congress chief Sheila Dikshit flanked by working presidents Haroon Yusuf (right) and Rajesh Lilothe during the workers' meet in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

layment and people are now seeing for themselves what happens when the Congress is not in power.

"Whenever the Congress comes to power, the benefit largely goes to farmers, labourers, the poor and the common man. When the BJP comes to power, it helps only its rich industrialist friends and those close to them. Whether the Congress is in power or out of power, its motto is always to serve the people," she said.

Ms. Dikshit was addressing a convention of Congress workers, organised by the Chandni Chowk District Congress Committee.

The former CM said that when the Congress was in power, the country witnessed tremendous deve-

lution and people are now seeing for themselves what happens when the Congress is not in power.

"During the Congress regime, metro fares were hiked only twice, whereas the Arvind Kejriwal-led government had raised metro fares heavily twice in one year.

She added that when the Congress was in power, the benefit largely goes to farmers, labourers, the poor and the common man. When the BJP comes to power, it helps only its rich industrialist friends and those close to them. Whether the Congress is in power or out of power, its motto is always to serve the people," she said.

Speaking about the state of the transport system in the city, Ms. Dikshit said that

the Congress regime, metro fares were hiked only twice, whereas the Arvind Kejriwal-led government had raised metro fares heavily twice in one year.

The Delhi High Court on January 15 had partly set aside arbitration award directing the DMRC to pay a consortium headed by Reliance Infrastructure Ltd for breach of an agreement between them.

■ BND-NDE

IN BRIEF



Sisodia inaugurates work on water supply project

NEW DELHI Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Sunday inaugurated the construction work of an underground reservoir with a capacity of 110 lakh litres, booster pumping station and peripheral mains. It is expected to benefit over one lakh residents of Patparganj. The project is expected to cost approximately ₹30.34 crore. STAFF REPORTER

Gurugram building collapse: owner held

GURUGRAM The owner of the building that collapsed here on January 24 in which seven people were killed has been arrested, the police said on Sunday. Dayaram (50), a resident of Ullawas village, was booked under Sections 288, 304 and 34 of the IPC. The police said he was produced in court and remanded to 14 days' judicial custody. IANS

Water supply to be available at low pressure

NEW DELHI The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on Sunday said that water supply will be only available at low pressure in central Delhi, north Delhi, parts of south Delhi and west Delhi, and in the whole New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) area due to discharge of industrial waste and high level of pollutants from Haryana into the Yamuna. The DJB has requested citizens to make judicious use of water. STAFF REPORTER

UPPCB told to submit action taken report

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea alleging environmental damage resulting from unauthorised use of marriage halls, hospitals and clinics in Uttar Pradesh, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the State Pollution Control Board to submit an action taken report within a month.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "Let the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) look into the matter in the first instance in exercise of its statutory powers and take appropriate action as may be found necessary in accordance with law and furnish a factual and action taken report to this tribunal."

Further the Bench added, "The Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board may examine the issues of disposal of municipal solid waste, plastic waste, sewage, biomedical waste, norms of noise pollution and extraction of groundwater."

The directions came while the green panel was hearing a plea that alleged that nursing homes, clinics, commercial complexes and establishments in Banda, Mahoba and Chitrakoot districts were operating without the requisite approvals and were in violation of norms, leading to adverse effect on the environment.

DELHI TODAY

Concert: Kathak recital by Aditi Thapliyal from Lucknow, disciple of Dr. Kumkum Dhar followed by Odissi recital by Madhyama Segal from Delhi at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), 6 p.m.

Exhibition: "Old Delhi Urbanism: Reflections from an Artist's Lens" - an exhibition of photographs by Sanjeev Kumar at Delhi 'i' Delhi Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: 17th All India Water Colour, 15th All India Art and 10th All India Portrait Exhibition at All India Fine Arts & Craft Society (AIFACS), 1 Rafi Marg, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditordelhi@thehindu.co.in)

Identify and develop 36 stations as model stations, Railway Ministry told

NGT direction comes after CAG report pointed out unsatisfactory handling of waste

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Ministry of Railways to identify and develop "at least 36 stations as eco-smart stations" within two weeks after a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) said there was unsatisfactory handling of waste at railway stations.

The CAG report, called "Environment Management in Indian Railways", was based on a study of major railway stations in the country.

It said there was "unsatisfactory handling of waste generated and dumped on rail tracks, and open defecation on tracks leading to unhygienic conditions and health hazards".

Model stations

Taking note of the report, a Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "The Railways should have the target of achieving environment standard '14001' laid down by BIS for selected stations...this may be achieved within three months in at least 5% of the major stations, that is 36 stations."

The Bench added, "The said 36 stations may be developed as model stations which can be replicated in phases and maybe called 'eco-smart stations' or by some other name as the rail-



A CAG report said there was unsatisfactory handling of waste generated and dumped on rail tracks. ■ FILE PHOTO: ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

way administration decides."

Polluter pays

Additionally, the green panel has directed the Railways to invoke the "polluter pays" principle to ensure compliance of relevant solid waste management rules.

"The notified authorities of the railways are free to recover the cost of restoration of the damage to the environment from the identified polluters in accordance with the law," the Bench said.

Further, the Bench said that the administration can

coordinate with urban local bodies and consider putting a ban on the use of plastic at railway stations.

Takes note of study

"After 36 major railway stations are identified, the action plan may be prepared within one month and the same be furnished to the tribunal," the Bench said.

The directions came while the green panel was hearing a plea moved by lawyers Saloni Singh and Arush Pathania, which sought steps to check pollution at railway stations.

The Bench also took note of a study conducted by the Central Pollution Control Board at 14 major railway stations.

"...There are no systems for monitoring waste water. There was non-compliance with requirement of effluent treatment plants [ETPs] and effluents were being discharged into water bodies. Measures are required to conserve flora and fauna. There was no satisfactory collection and segregation of plastic waste," the Bench observed while noting the CPCB report.

Schoolteacher cannot be given duties outside purview of RTE Act, says HC

Notification asked them to conduct surveys, do other work

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has said that principals and teachers cannot be asked by municipal corporations to perform duties outside the purview of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act and rules under it.

Justice C. Hari Shankar set aside several notifications issued by the corporations requiring the principals and teachers to conduct household survey and participate in preparation of the ward education register.

Calls it impermissible "This court is constrained to take judicial notice of the fact that there is a prevalent practice, in recent times, of schools assigning to teachers duties and tasks not remote-

It is no less than an affront, therefore, to belabour teachers with tasks which deflect, detract and distract, from the noble task of imparting education

DELHI HIGH COURT



The High Court was hearing a petition challenging duties assigned to teachers that are not linked to education, including opening of bank accounts of children and linking the accounts with Aadhaar. ■ FILE PHOTO

ly connected to imparting of education. This, in the opinion of this court, is impermissible and unconscionable in equal measure," the court said.

It added, "Education is a serious affair and teachers are justifiably regarded as discharging divine duties, nourishing and nurturing the minds of tomorrow. Single-minded devotion and blind pursuit of excellence must guide every educator. It is no less than an affront, therefore, to belabour teach-

ers with tasks which deflect, detract and distract, from the noble task of imparting education."

The court was hearing a petition filed by Akhil Delhi Prathmik Shikshak Sangh, a society comprising of teachers of schools run by municipal corporations, espousing their cause. It challenged the duties assigned to teachers which are not linked to education, including opening of bank accounts of children and linking the accounts with Aadhaar.

Ex-cop bats for Right to Employment

Urges Centre to bring in legislation during Lok Sabha session

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Former Haryana Director General of Police Sheel Madhur has urged the Central government to bring in a legislation during the Lok Sabha session beginning Thursday to provide the Right to Employment to all the citizens.

He was addressing a meeting on constitutional right to ensure each and every citizen is employed under the 'Unemployment Free India Campaign', launched by Saadar India Manch at Goshala Ground in Gurugram on Sunday.

He said under Article 21 of the Constitution, all citizens have the right to live a life with dignity and employment is essential to lead a respectable life. He suggested that Right to Employment could be brought in by ad-



Aspirants filling forms during a job fair. ■ FILE PHOTO

ding Article 21-B of the Constitution and it can play a significant role in fulfilling the dream of unemployment-free India.

Mr. Madhur pointed out that in many places the employees are being kept on contract basis on very low remuneration and they feel insecure. He also stressed on the need for regular appointments in the Central and State govern-

ment departments in the country, instead of contract basis under the outsourcing policy.

On this occasion, Honda Motors director Harbhajan Singh said employment is a major problem across the country for which youth must be educated with emphasis on skill development. He said youth should also do their duty honestly and with dedication.

There is no dispute regarding the facts that the Delhi Vidyut Board was insured for theft or loss of cash during transit and that a theft of ₹27 lakh took place during transit, when the cash van was parked, to unload the cash...

NCDRC Dismissing an appeal moved by the New India Assurance insurance company, the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) upheld a State commission order directing the insurance company to cover the claim put forth by the Delhi Power Company, for theft of over ₹27 lakh.

There is no dispute regarding the facts that the Delhi Vidyut Board was insured for theft or loss of cash during transit and that a theft of ₹27 lakh took place during transit, when the cash van was parked, to unload the cash...

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4 SHOWCASE

DELI THE HINDU
MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2019

In search of HOME

As Chef Gaggan Anand prepares to close his restaurant and move to Japan, he recreates his signature dishes in a 15-course menu in four Indian cities to say goodbye



SHONALI MUTHALALY

Endings involve drama. And Gaggan knows drama is good for business.

Enfant terrible of the culinary world, the Kolkata-born, Bangkok-based chef unexpectedly declared he would close his multiple-award-winning eponymous restaurant at the zenith of its popularity. As the closing date – 2020 – draws nearer, the chef is hosting what is being billed as the 'Last experience of Gaggan': a pop-up in four cities, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai and Delhi for one day each, dinner only.

In Chennai, Gaggan is slouched on a chair, taking a breather in the private dining area of glittering Avartana at ITC Grand Chola. He's here with his team, and they have a hectic schedule and 220 kilograms of excess baggage in the form of plates, ingredients and equipment. Given how technically demanding the menu is, there is no room for mistakes.

"I won't cook outside my kitchen again," he states with finality. In the background, the Avartana kitchen is steamy with dinner

prep, led by his trusted head chef, Indonesian Rydo Anton. "People come to Gaggan to see me cook. After this, till it closes down, I will stay in my own kitchen."

Hence the 'finality' of this dinner, priced at ₹25,000 per plate, for 15 courses paired with wine. Given that the Gaggan Experience at his Bangkok restaurant is listed at 6,500 baht (roughly ₹4,600) for 25 courses, it's a testament to his success, and savvy marketing skills, that the dinner is sold out in all four cities.

A triumphant return to India? He bristles at the question, "I have been triumphant many times." Then pauses and adds, "It started here. It will end here. Yes. I am sentimental about India."

Born to Punjabi parents in Kolkata, the chef studied Hotel Management in Thiruvananthapuram, before working with the Taj Group of hotels, then branching out on his own. At 29, disillusioned by a failing marriage, he fled to

Bangkok, where he quickly realised that he was happiest working for himself.

Astute, driven and ambitious, Gaggan earned a place in Ferran Adrià's legendary El Bulli kitchen in Spain, which left a lasting impact on his style. Hence, his cleverly eccentric menu: a visceral union of desi comfort food and molecular gastrono-

my. Of memories and technique. Welding together a yearning for home and burning ambition to get away: all on a plate.

He used to call his cooking 'Progressive Indian'. Now, after a rash of press and awards, he calls it 'progressive Gaggan'. Never one to be coy about success, Gaggan seems more pleased with himself than usual, as he prepares to end this chapter.

"When people go out, they usually eat a cuisine. At Gaggan, you eat the chef's journey. The chef's personality. That is why I am wearing out... I don't know if everyone can have the same vision. Everyone can't be Michael Jackson. Or Charlie Chaplin," he says. Then adds

matter of factly, "You have to burn out or walk out. El Bulli taught me that. It's every chef's nightmare – burning out. So this is how I'm controlling my fizz." He laughs, "I'm controlling my agarbathi."

The next step: Gaggan will pass on the torch to head chef Rydo Anton, who shares his food philosophy

■ R RAVINDRAN AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The next phase will involve more cooking, but in a very different style. Gaggan plans to open what will possibly be the world's most inaccessible restaurant with his friend Chef Takeshi 'Goh' Fukuyama in Fukuoka, Japan. 'Goh-Gan' is likely to open in 2021.

"It's like fashion: two brands merging. Like Kanye West with Adidas. But with food. This won't be a collaboration, or fusion. It will be a mash-up. We will have 16 seats and be open only three times a week, on alternate months. People can book only once a year, or better still, once in a lifetime," says Gaggan.

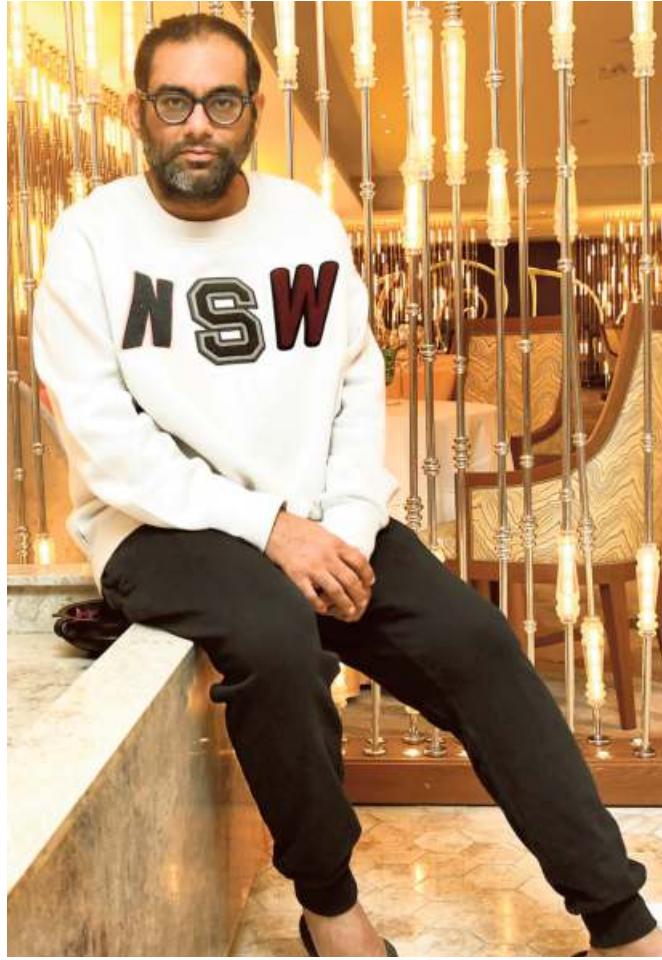
He adds that guests will have to check in for two nights. "On the first night, we will chill, drink, maybe have barbecue. The next day do Onsen, use the spa... So at 6 pm, they don't come stressed for dinner. You need to prepare your body for a fancy meal. Now, at Gaggan, we have people dying of jet lag at our tables!"

Meanwhile, the chef is making savvy investments to secure his financial future before setting off on his Japanese adventure. He's now got stakes in a clutch of successful restaurants in Bangkok, whose chefs he's mentored. Gaa by Garima Arora, which just got a Michelin, is probably the best known right now. Then there's Suhring by talented twin chefs Mathias and Thomas Suhring and Mihsara Tofuten, a fine dining tofu-focussed restaurant. And finally Meatlicious, which cooks meat on wood and coal. In a month or so, Gaggan will also open a wine bar called Wet with his sommelier Vladimir Kojic.

As for Gaggan the restaurant? It goes to head chef Rydo Anton, who will relaunch it, with a new name, look and menu, by 2021.

"Rydo. He is my legacy," says Gaggan. "Our thoughts on cooking are the same. He has been with me from 2012. Now, he is turning 29 and at 30 he will have his own restaurant. That's the same journey I did. Rydo is the heir to my throne."

Last Experience of Gaggan's Delhi pop-up takes place this Tuesday, January 29 at 6.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. at ITC Maurya, Sardar Patel Marg, Diplomatic Enclave, Chanakyapuri. Call 011-66325007 (limited tables) for reservations.



SHORT TAKES



Photograph to release on March 8

Directed by Ritesh Batra, it stars Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Sanya Malhotra. Filmmaker Ritesh Batra's upcoming film Photograph is slated to hit the silver screen on March 8. Batra took to Twitter to announce the release date of the film, revolving around a struggling street photographer who is pressured by his grandmother to marry. He convinces a shy stranger to pose as his fiancée.

Photograph stars Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Sanya Malhotra. It also features Farrukh Jaffar, Geetanjali Kulkarni, Vijay Raaz, Jim Sarbh and Akash Sinha.

Photograph will be screened at the 69th Berlin International Film Festival next month.



Honoured to be part of 'Slumdog Millionaire'

As the Oscar-winning *Slumdog Millionaire* completed a decade since its release in 2009, actor Anil Kapoor said he feels honoured to be a part of the film. "It feels like only yesterday that we were shooting for *Slumdog Millionaire*, and what a journey it has been since then," Anil said in a statement.

British filmmaker Danny Boyle's film recounts the travails of an 18-year-old orphan from the slums of Mumbai who wins a staggering ₹20 million on India's *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* game show. Anil played show host Prem Kumar to Dev Patel's protagonist.

The film won eight Oscars at the 81st Academy Awards.

IANS



Welcoming Chinese New Year

The People's Republic of China organised "Chinese New Year Celebration" at Siri Fort Auditorium in Delhi recently.

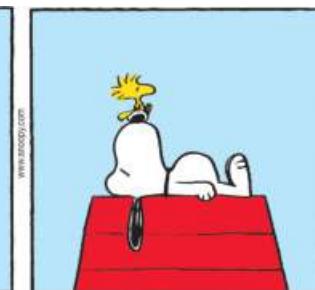
On the occasion, the cultural programme showcased the best of Chinese music and dance. The splendid art and culture of China was the main attraction. Acrobatic troupe of Inner Mongolia Bureau of

National Art Troupe presented amazing acrobatics performances. The performance of Chinese artists caught the attention of the audience.

POOCH CAFE



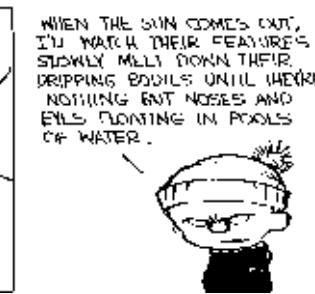
PEANUTS



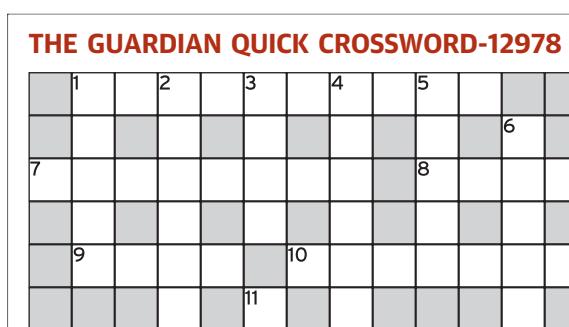
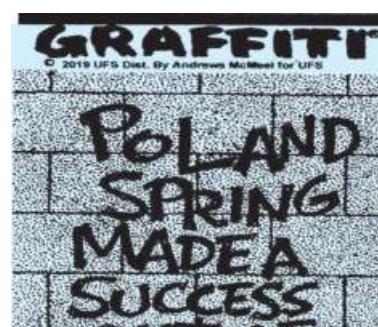
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBES

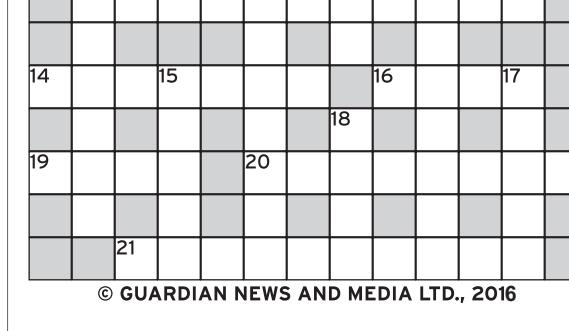


TIGER



- 11 War memorial (8)
- 12 Eased (6)
- 13 Arousing intense feeling (7)
- 15 Sing like Bing (5)
- 17 Lifting tackle (5)
- 18 Narrow wooded valley (4)

WUMO



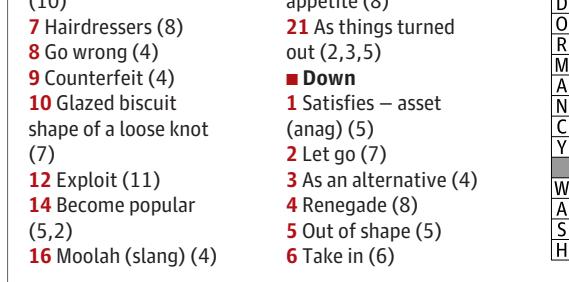
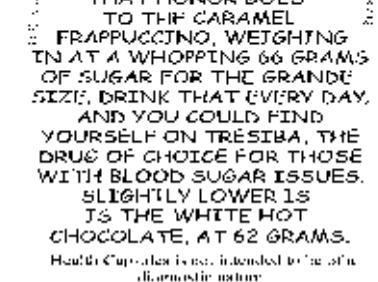
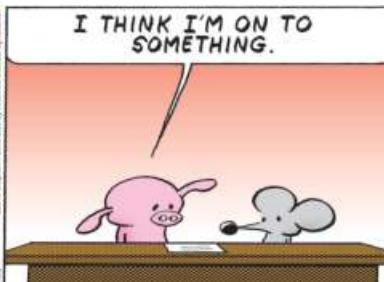
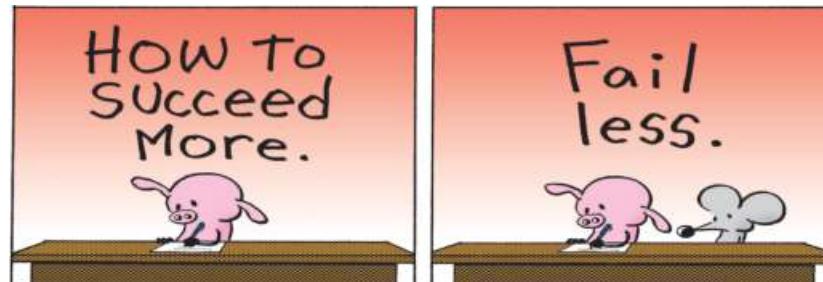
- 19 Forbid outright (4)
- 20 Drink to whet the appetite (8)
- 21 As things turned out (2,3,5)
- 22 Down
- 1 Satisfies – asset (anag.) (5)
- 2 Let go (7)
- 3 As an alternative (4)
- 4 Renegade (8)
- 5 Out of shape (5)
- 6 Take in (6)

D	E	F	T	B	L	A	C	K	R	O	D
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Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated January 29, 2019.

Solution No. 12977

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



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CM YK

ANUJ KUMAR

Over the years, one has realised it is easier to experience Mithu Sen's art than drawing meanings. The contemporary artist relentlessly challenges the obvious. Her artworks appeal to the senses and once you comprehend them, you don't need crutches of catalogue. She often cuts through outer layers to find a common meeting ground for stark metaphor and poetic reality. It could be a skeleton or a denture, which seem provocative at first sight, but the cartilage of her art remains compassion. Market and mediums don't limit her. Mithu writes poetry in Bengali but in her performances, she often talks gibberish or as she would say she un-languages herself. The audience look frustrated but once the preconceived structures and institutions melt, the edifice of a two-way conversation with *the other* is laid. Once during a residency, she opened the doors of her apartment to strangers. The ensuing interactions and leftovers resulted in pieces of art and the connoisseurs got a taste of Mithu's radical hospitality. That was in New York. Perhaps, we are in for a similar surprise this Wednesday in Delhi as Mithu is preparing for a performative intervention for the Shalini Passi Foundation ahead of the upcoming India Art Fair.

Edited excerpts:

Give us a sense of your upcoming performative intervention, "Lunch is Cancelled". How is it going to be different from your previous pieces like the path-breaking "Aphasia"?

"Aphasia" was to challenge the given conduct of things that conveniently pass as normal. I used the invite-guideline (social conducts/constructs) as a metaphor for a larger framework of society. A crucial element of "Aphasia", as

the title itself suggests, was a critique of the institutionalised and communicative function of language, by using what could be received as an absurd or nonsensical form of verbal expression.

The purpose of such an intervention, in the fashion of what I call "*lingual anarchy*", is to expose and destabilise how language (often the colonial remnant of English language) functions as a hierarchical institution, in its mediation between (and within) different linguistic communities. I delivered my entire presentation in non-language, a language that empowers the speaker and disempowers the listeners. Non/un-language in my practice has evolved as a tool to resist the hierarchy of an institutional etiquette; distorting and (un)making contexts, a force to change my relationship with the others and render a space empty from the elements of oppression, humiliation and violation.

I put my audience in a situation of being humiliated, as they would be frustrated by their inability to understand and respond to my language. Pushed to the extremes, they will meet the limits of their liberal and conventional notions of hospitality, entering a zone of what I call "radical hospitality". In this zone, one is forced to find new ways to be with the other who is absolutely alien and undomesticated.

The performance "*Lunch is Cancelled*" further elaborates upon these themes. The title is a pun on the event of my performance, my artistic intervention in a highly prestigious and exclusive banquet organised by the Shalini Passi Art Foundation. Scheduled

'My medium is life'

Multi-faceted artist Mithu Sen on the contours of performance art and how her practice emerges from in-between spaces of human experience

Pushing the envelope: Mithu Sen; in performance at Tate Modern in London ■ THE HINDU, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

radical hospitality between hospitality and tolerance, patronage and avant-garde subversion.

You are conversant with different media. What pulled you to performance art and where do you place it in your oeuvre?

My medium is life - human experiences. In my practice, the cognitive and sensory projections in the form of life and human experiences are the actual material that produces my art. The output in the format of drawing, poetry, sculpture, installation, and performance is what I call by-products of art making. I use the word by-product to term the tactile manifestations of my art. The intention is to relocate the focus on the conceptual - the mind, emotions, and senses, that produce the art practice, and the by-products are just a remnant of this process.

I see all other questions - be it about political power or individual freedom - as consequences of grappling with this fundamental and common question of life. It is for this reason that whenever media I have used, the main trope

and object of my artistic investigation has always been the meaning and power of life in its utmost intimate and conceptual sense. This also means that I have always seen my art, be it drawing, poetry, sculpture or video installation, as "performance". Hence what I do now as a "performance artist" according to the categorisation of art institutions is only a logical and natural outcome of what I have always been doing. To me, performing within a fine art context, (interdisciplinary, scripted, unscripted, spontaneous, random or carefully orchestrated) with or without audience participation is most challenging and risk-taking.

In performance, it is my life which is the medium of expression as well as the object of investigation, and for this reason, I have always been a "performer".

Give us an insight into the performance art scene in India and how important it is given the social and political environment we inhabit.

I see all art as a form of "happening" art, an experience in a situation meant to be considered as

art. A painter exhibiting his painting in a gallery is *performing* a specific social role to be recognised as a painter. From this perspective, one can see that the art always "act" in a performative platform like any other, and the recent hype around "performance art" only helps us to distract ourselves from the real questions pertaining to art.

At the same time, an opposite observation is also equally possible. Keeping today's hostile and volatile political situation in mind, one may argue that artists are becoming increasingly reluctant to do performance art, given the risk of direct bodily exposure inherent in the act. As a result, many contemporary performance artworks are presented in the most exclusive and restricted gallery spaces, staged in front of a highly selective and chosen art world audience, betraying the very historical meaning and actual potentials of performance art.

The real challenge in front of me is to grapple with this paradox of performance art and push it further for making creative results. In doing so, my attempt is

turning the exclusive spaces of art inside out, through self-critique and creative acts of subversion.

It seems impossible for a poet to shed the baggage of language. But you have managed to do that...

Just like the way I see myself as a performer, I also see myself as a poet, as someone who tries to poetically express the predicaments and pleasures of life.

My mother is a poet and I dreamt to be a poet since my early age... I started writing in Bengali but slowly moved away from the idea of one singular language, rather choose a path of "un-languaging" (un-mything) my practice; Language imposes a strange and alien logic that tells us not to smell poetry, hear shadows or taste lights. Escaping this rigid framework, this project sought to not only locate communication outside the narrow alleys of comprehension but also tried to envisage dialogue in a way that cannot be read, heard or understood. I like to write and speak in a language not to be documented in a way that could be codified. I started writing in computer glitches instead, in voids... I often break up words, challenge the aspiration and ambiguity within the vernacular language or a complete non-language...

So this is how I continue my writing. Poetry is a medium where you have a license - where you have my freedom - so I will always tell myself I am a poet. But what I call "lingual anarchy" is not about the rejection of language, but a poetic attempt to communicate what language is all about, free from every function, expectation, prejudice and, most importantly, hierarchy.

However, my interest in the non-hierarchical or anarchic use of language, which is often seen as the source of poetic creativity, is slightly complex because of a parallel interest I have in something radically opposite yet complementary. What I have in mind here is the phrase "poetic license". An artist may take poetic license to be anarchic, to disrupt the order. But the very presence of the word "license" introduces a re-

Keeping today's hostile and volatile political situation in mind, one may argue that artists are becoming increasingly reluctant to do performance art...

gime of legality, without which artistic anarchy cannot articulate itself. It is, for this reason, my ongoing performative act to extend my primary art practice is on creating legal, semi-legal artist-contracts, agreements and certifications, and presenting my artworks as mere by-products of those legal and semi-legal agreements.

Your art provokes and teases the audience. What pushes you to bring out the in-betweenness of everything in this world?

My practice emerges from those in-between spaces of human experience, which most of us overlook because of our conditioned preference for binary oppositions and easy categorisations. For example, my artworks, giving voice to all those moments that exist but are not realised or lived that amuses, entertains, yet subverts larger structures, when necessary, dedicated to the idea of radical hospitality are not about the simple equations or differentiations between the self and the other. Rather, it tries to delve into those dark recesses where every possible relationship between the self and the other is suspended, which can only be addressed through an absolute and unconditional openness towards whatever there is to come. Such a radical refashioning of ourselves is important because only thus one can look for new and unforeseen possibilities beyond the ready-made binaries that shape social reality.

Tell us about "Conundrums", the video art that you are showcasing at the India Art Fair.

It is an allegory of allegory. Depicting the sorrowful death of an embryonic bird, Conundrums allegories the tragic myth of Icarus, the young boy who died in his attempt to fly by gluing feathers to his arms. In the video, an additional layer meaning is provided by the army of ants gathered around the dead bird, desperately attempting to lift its body. In the process, the ants make the unformed wings of the bird move in a mock flap. As the image merges the beauty of nature's life with the horror of its decay, Conundrums allegories the futility of dreams and inevitability of death. With these mythical allusions, the bird becomes a martyr of his dreams, at the hands of fate and misfortune.



DOWN MEMORY LANE

Throne that inspired Milton

The Takht-e-Taoos, which contained the finest jewels of the Mughal empire, surpassed even the fabled throne of Solomon the Magnificent

R.V. SMITH

The Red Fort is in the news from time to time. Now primarily because of the annual Independence Day function and the effect of time and pollution on its red sandstone and marble edifices. In the days of the Mughals, however, it was the hub and centre of all State activity. But even after 1862, when Bahadur Shah Zafar was sent into exile in Rangoon, it continued to occupy pride of place. When the Prince of Wales, the heir apparent of Queen Victoria, who later ascended the throne as Edward VII, visited India in 1875, the fort was among the prized historical sights he was keen on seeing after reading about the Throne of God as described by Milton. As a young man he had heard a lot about it, especially during the revolt of 1857 when for some months it had become the real capital again and to recapture which had become the main objective of the British forces.

Spanner in spectacle

In 1877, Lord Lytton held the first Delhi Durbar, the second one was held in 1903, when Lord Curzon replaced the stone elephants in front of Delhi Gate of the fort to make amends for Aurangzeb's iconoclastic zeal. In 1911, during the Coronation Durbar of George V and Queen Mary, the focus was again on the fort because it was from a balcony built on the central side of the Musamman Burj by Akbar II that the



Seat of power: Diwan-a-khas at the Red Fort; (below) Adlai Stevenson, former U.S. Ambassador to the UN, on the marble platform where once stood the fabulous peacock throne ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

royal couple greeted the people of Delhi. In the Mughal days, the emperor appeared before his subjects every morning at the Burj to assure them that he was all right and all was well with the kingdom.

When the British capital was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi, Lord Hardinge was to ceremoniously enter the Red Fort, but the procession was attacked with a bomb by the revolutionaries in Chandni Chowk. The Viceroy was injured and the mahout of his elephant killed, thus disrupting what was supposed to be a grand spectacle. Atmospheric pollution, vandalism and the decay wrought by time have combined to pose a threat to the Red Fort. There were reports earlier, that the walls of the fort had developed cracks because of constant watering to maintain the green patch on the ramparts from where the I-Day speech is delivered. Those reports were denied. But now a daily has highlighted a story saying that the Dewan-e-Khas has developed cracks and the Moti Masjid is in bad shape.

What the paper actually meant was not the Dewan-e-Khas but the Khas Mahal. A three-room set consisting of the Tasbih Khana or the rosary chamber. The Khwabgah or emperor's sleeping quarters and the Toshha Khana or robe chamber, facing the Dewan-e-Khas. The building was constructed by Shah Jahan in 1648 and it took nine years for it to be completed. Below the Khas Mahal, animal fights were organised, and the most ferocious of

the encounters used to be between lions and elephants. Talking of the Dewan-e-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, one cannot overemphasise its importance during the Mughal days when it had two enclosures, one for the high-ranking nobles (Lal Pardari who could go behind the red royal curtain) and the other for those of lesser rank. The enclosures were done away with by the British after 1857. It was in the middle of the Dewan-e-Khas, built of marble, that the famous Takht-e-Taoos or Peacock Throne was installed by Shah Jahan. The marble korsi or seat on which it rested is still there but the throne was carried away to Persia by the invader Nadir Shah in 1739.

The Takht-e-Taoos, which cost a fortune and besides gold and silver, contained the finest jewels of the Mughal empire, surpassed even the fabled throne of Solomon the Magnificent. In fact, the French traveller Tavernier went into raptures describing the throne glittering with rubies and diamonds, "its pearl fringed canopy supported by golden pillars". Some say it inspired Milton to describe the throne of God in "Paradise Lost". But Tavernier, his supposed informant, saw the Peacock Throne only in 1665, two years after the publication of the epic. Even so, the wealth of the fabulous land of Ind does find mention in Milton's work, for the poet was as overawed by it as he was by ancient Greece, and the treasures of the court of the Great Mughal were inspiration enough for him to soar on the wings of poesy, to the seat of the Almighty, and in the process symbolically lose his eyesight because of its sheer magnificence (more dazzling than a throne of fiery flames with wheels of burning fire). All this should make it all the more imperative for those concerned to ensure the preservation of the Qila-e-Maulla or Red Fort for posterity.

THE WRITER IS A VETERAN CHRONICLER OF DELHI

Direct to smartphone

Kanu Behl on taking his short film, made for the smartphone audience, to the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival

NIKHIL VENKATESA

The award-winning short films produced by Terribly Tiny Talkies usually feature light-hearted tales centered around family, friendship, and romance. Kanu Behl's *Binnu Ka Sapna* takes things in a much darker direction, told through the point of view of a violent perpetrator. The 32-minute film, which premieres at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film on February 1, centres around Delhi boy Binnu. It takes viewers through his transition from college to adulthood, and how his outlook becomes increasingly hateful and misogynistic.

Binnu's worldview informs the film's bold aesthetic style; it features a 1:1 aspect ratio (compressing the cinematic rectangle into a boxed square), extended freeze frames, and abstract visual intercuts. "The early discussions that Siddharth [Diwan, Behl's go-to director of photography] and I were having were, how do we visually express the emotion that this guy is feeling best?" says Behl. "The answer that we came up with is that it's a myopic point of view, about a guy who doesn't see life in all its complexity, and has a boxed-in



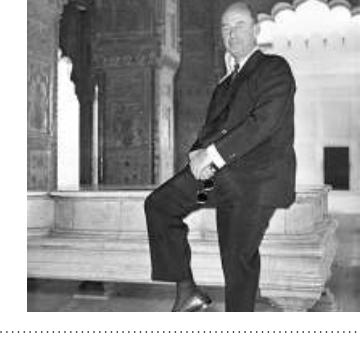
Talk about perspective: Stills from the film; Kanu Behl

square perspective of people." What also contributed to Behl's decision was the film's planned distribution online. "It was probably going to come out on YouTube, on our cellphones, which is anyway a square frame these days, so it just felt really correct."



Balancing the film's weighty subject matter and its extremely subjective point of view was a challenge. "I was so anxious, wondering, will people misunderstand what we were trying to do? Because the idea was not to justify what he [Binnu] does at the end," says Behl. The film's voice-over device emerged out of that, so that the audience could understand Binnu's situation and empathise with him simultaneously.

I ask Behl if he plans to travel with the film for a while before it makes its way online; *Title* premiered at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival and was screened at over 22 film festivals worldwide. "I would have liked the opportunity for more people across the world to see it," he admits. But Binnu had a long gestation period – it was shot in 2017 – as Behl spent four months finding its unique rhythm in the editing room. "I really want the film to be seen by people in India now," he says. "We're in conversation with a couple of other platforms where it could get an outlet, but if that doesn't happen, I would see it coming out on the TTT platform sometime really soon."



■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

SWETA AKUNDI

About one month ago, the headlines flashed, 'Gujarat doctor makes history', crediting cardiac surgeon Dr Tejas Patel with conducting the world's first tele-robotic surgery on a patient in Ahmedabad. Sitting 32 kilometres away from his patient, a middle-aged woman with a blocked artery at Apex Hospital, Dr Patel guided the robotic arms through a joystick to perform the coronary intervention. The surgery sounded rumblings of a shift in healthcare. Is robotics the way to go?

The 'what' of it

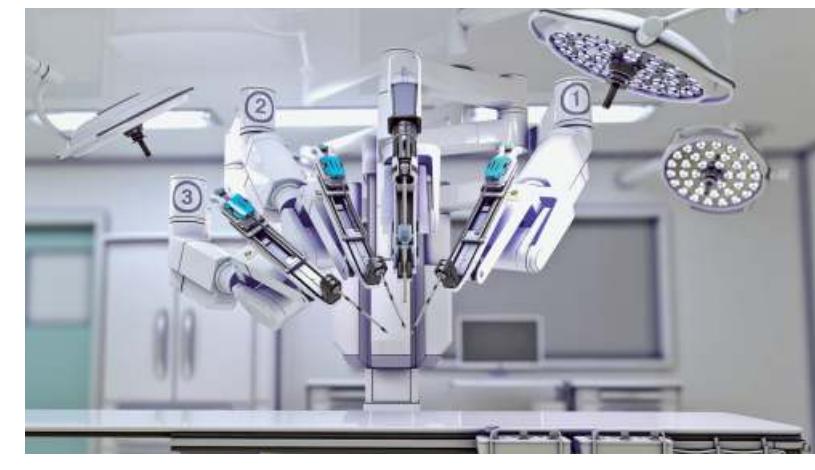
When the trauma caused by incisions in traditional open surgeries started becoming a point of concern, laparoscopic surgeries started becoming popular, in the '90s. "Even though the surgeries would be successful, the recovery time would be longer, and the scars would add trauma," says Detroit-based Dr Mahendra Bhandari, Director, Robotic Surgery Research and Education, Vattikuti Urology Institute, Henry Ford Hospital.

A laparoscopic surgery, on the other hand, was minimally invasive: instead of a single major incision, it created multiple micro incisions, one of which was for a camera, through which the surgeon could see what he was doing.

Think of robotic surgeries as one step further. Instead of operating on the body himself, the surgeon can guide the robot to do so through a controller in a master-slave system: whatever the surgeon motions, the robot mimics. "Currently, in the Indian market, robotic surgeries are not technically done by robots," says Dr Bhandari. A robot, by definition, replicates human tasks on its own (autonomous). Right now, they are 'dumb'.

This, then, is a robot-assisted laparoscopy, that can be used in different fields of surgery such as urology, oncology, gynaecology, gastroenterology, bariatric, thyroid, colon, and rectal. All major hospitals, such as AIIMS, Apollo, Fortis, Medanta and more have this facility. However, urology and cancer surgeries are the ones that most see robotic assistance, due to their cost-effectiveness. Cardiac surgery hasn't found much use, given the likely complications.

Robot hands can move 360 degrees, and provide better dexterity and precision

**The 'why' of it**

"In surgeries at critical locations, there's something called the fulcrum effect," explains Dr Srivatsan

Gurumurthy, consultant surgical gastroenterologist, GEM Hospital, Coimbatore. Given the limited area of access, the human hand finds it difficult to manoeuvre tools.

When working in difficult areas, especially in the abdomen and pelvic regions, "the robot hand can move 360 degrees, and provide better dexterity and precision," he says.

"Moreover, it minimises fatigue: the surgeon need not stand for hours for one surgery."

The camera, moreover, provides a 3D magnified real-time visualisation of what the surgeon is operating on. Adds Dr Bhandari,

"The camera makes visible the smallest structures and blood vessels that our naked eyes can't see." Easier access, and less tissue damage also helps reduce blood loss and the need for transfusion, and correspondingly, the chances of infection: all in all, making recovery quicker.

The only disadvantage? A surgical robot such as da Vinci Xi (the most prevalent in India) costs upward of ₹14 lakh – something that will undoubtedly translate into costlier surgeries for patients.

A complex robotic surgery is likely to be nearly ₹2 lakh costlier than a laparoscopic one.

My robot SURGEON

As robots used for surgeries become increasingly common, we trace the journey in India

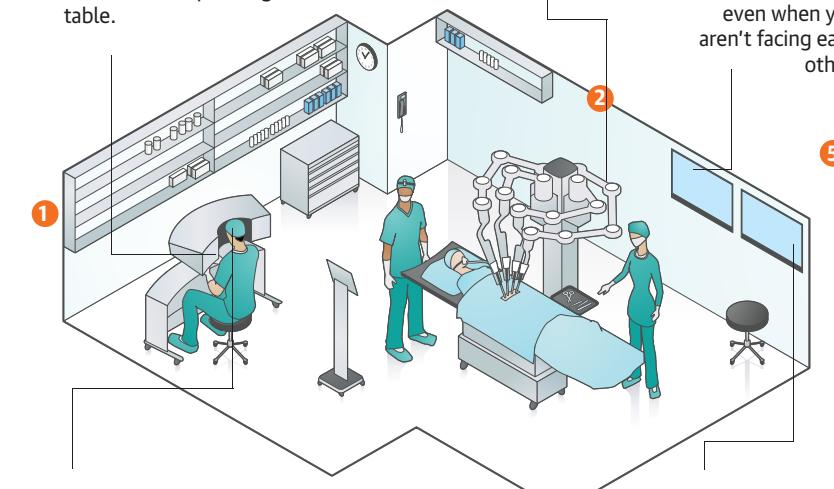


Smarter now: Surgical robots are being used majorly in urology and oncology surgeries • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

HOW IT WORKS

Picture a video game, where you are holding a joystick.

Every move made on the controller is replicated by the robot hands on the operating table.



The latest da Vinci Xi robot, for instance, has four arms: three used to perform the surgery and the fourth one, a camera.

A microphone and speaker system ensures there is effective communication even when you aren't facing each other.

From the past...

The Vattikuti Foundation, set up in 1997 by Raj and Padma Vattikuti in Detroit, Michigan, has trained over 300 surgeons in robotics, and helped set up approximately 70 robots from California, US to India.

"When we came to India in 2009, there were six robots in the whole country," recalls Dr Bhandari, the CEO of the foundation. Their challenges were two-fold: doctors didn't believe that robotic surgeries would be cost-effective, and the young tech-friendly ones did not handle enough patient volumes to support a robotic programme.

"We handpicked four centres that we financed robots for: Medanta, Gurugram; KIMS, Hyderabad; Manipal Hospital, Bengaluru; and Asian Heart Institute, Mumbai," he says. The foundation would bring experts to train young surgeons and facilitate training for surgeons. The ones who showed potential were trained as trainers, and the local community of skill-sharing grew.

The foundation has also established the Robotics Surgeons Council of India, and organises two meetings every year for knowledge-sharing and skill-enhancement.

To the future...

T Jayakrishnan has been working at his prototype, the Crano Bot. The founder of ASIMOV, a Kochi-based robotics company that focuses on healthcare solutions, has invented this bot to assist in surgeries to correct craniostenosis (a birth defect in which the baby's skull stops growing before the brain is fully formed. As the brain continues to grow, the head develops a misshapen appearance). He has received a grant under BIRAC, by the Department of Biotechnology, under the Government of India for this. However, for the product to come out of its prototype stage, and be commercialised, it will take seven more years.

One of the problems causing the delay is getting the patent. His technique clashes with global leader

Intuitive Surgical's. For a long time now, Intuitive has had the monopoly over the market.

Under the US Patent system, the patent owner has the right to exclude competition for a limited period of time for the invention covered by the patent, generally 20 years since filing. However, most of Intuitive Surgical's patents are likely to end by 2022.

Dr Deepak Subramanian, laparoscopic and bariatric surgeon, Fortis Malar, Chennai, is excited about what the future holds. "When I was in the US, I tried out a robot by TransEnterix. Everyone's trying to break into the market once the patents are over. The future is robotic surgery!" he exclaims. Even Alphabet (Google) and J&J are joining hands to create robots with their platform, Verb Surgical.

Will India have space in this new world too? Says Jayakrishnan, "We need to create an environment conducive for research, where experts from engineering, and the medical world work together."

Food for beginners



Like parent, like child: Rujuta explains that children follow their parents' eating habits

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Rujuta Diwekar tells us what to cook and how to encourage eating food (not junk) for our children

SUNALINI MATHEW



In the age of celebrity dieticians, where one is never sure whether the dietician herself is a celebrity or she caters only to celebrities, Rujuta Diwekar is approachable, both in person, in the way she writes, and in what she suggests we eat.

Much like Michael Pollan, who boils it down to: 'Eat food, not too much, mostly plants', making it both commonsense and easy, Rujuta's approach to food is simple: eat what your grandmother cooked. Unfortunately in both cases, we've lost touch with what food is (chips?), how *paati* cooked (cake?), and how much we should eat.

Forgotten art

We're so disconnected from our bodies that other than knowing that a *laddoo* is a traditional food that *paati* probably made, we simply don't know when she made it (every day or only on festivals?), how often to eat it (once

that explains the context of food. She frequently references the EU's I.Family project, an eating-centric study to help European citizens understand how nutrition-related diseases (obesity and other non-communicable diseases) were impacting health in the long-term.

Simple messages

Rujuta is fairly cut and dry in her message to parents: we are supposed to 'lead and guide', which pretty much means we have to be role models, and also uncomplicate. So it's down to cooking fresh food and enjoying a family meal together, which will see the child through life.

This doesn't make it solely the parents' responsibility, because you may lead well, but if your child steps out and only finds chips when he's hungry, or goes to the market and only finds quinoa, it's really about government intervention, rather than individual choices.

Also, she talks of exercise, one of the basic rights of childhood, in what a generation ago we called play.

Her message, put down in 'four food fundas' and 'three misconceptions' for parents (summarised nicely with illustrations), are easy to follow and understand, and simplify complex concepts like nutritionism and

the nutrition transition, for lay readers. It also addresses daily worries at home (food fights, TV dinners, for instance) and gives out little tips and reassurances (such as, kids resist *dal* for a reason; all you need to do is soak it a while before cooking; *dal* is not the be-all of veg protein). There's also a chapter for kids to read, if your child is inclined.

Practically speaking

The second part of the book gives an age-wise break-up of what to put on your child's plate, though it would have been enriched had there been sections for 'special cases' – like sportspersons and those on the spectrum. It's slightly skewed to a vegetarian audience, never acknowledging that there are communities in India that do eat fish or meat daily, and it is Hindiised, but if you're a young parent, the meal plans, notes on what to offer on special occasions, even the odd recipe, are helpful.

Mostly though, it's a good book to help us remember that food goes beyond 'fuelling' your body with carbs-fat-proteins.

It is about the simple acknowledgement and gratefulness of every hand that goes into getting that one *roti* on your plate. Then, we'll return to eating intuitively.

THE CREAKING TREE**Tidiness – The Piling Method**

SHOVON CHOWDHURY

When I was young, my mother tidied everything, including the deepest recesses of my underwear drawer. I never lifted a finger, and she learnt all my secrets, so it was a win-win. As a result, I have no sense of personal space and very limited tidying skills.

When it comes to storage, I have always taken the simple approach. I make piles. During the two years of college that I spent in a hostel, I would drop my clothes in the cupboard after use, and pick up fresh ones from the upper shelf the next morning. Over time, the stack of fresh clothes would shrink, while the pile at the bottom of the cupboard grew.

After a few weeks, I would run out of fresh clothes, so I'd do what anyone in my situation would: go home and get some more; my home was actually half an hour from the hostel.

I would return from my trip with fresh clothes, but soon enough, they would join the pile. After about a month, I would start picking up clothes from the pile. I had a system. In the evening, I would take off my clothes and shove them into the bottom of the pile, so that the next day, I picked up something relatively fresh.

Once the cupboard was overflowing, I created a second, smaller pile in the corner of the room, away from the other corner, which contained the disassembled fragments of my music system. It was in bits and pieces because

late one night I had asked two of my friends, graduates of IIT KGP, to look into the funny noise it was making. They agreed happily. In hindsight, I realise that they were a bit too happy. I passed out peacefully, confident that the matter was now in safe hands. A few hours later, I woke up to find my system spread over my table, while they were standing there looking at it, giggling, clutching each other so that they wouldn't fall down. They had taken it apart with gusto, but they had no idea how to put it back together. I put the fragments in a corner, where they stayed for the rest of my post-graduation.

The condition of my room did not go unnoticed. Our college band, the Joka Bandstand, named after a local mini bus route, had been worrying about where to store their instruments, and soon I was joined in my room by a full drum set, several guitars and two amplifiers. Seeing this, our cat got ideas. She lived with us on our floor. Her name was Stone. She was a lovely creature, and by far the most dignified person in the wing. She gave birth to her kittens in my pile. They were instantly christened the Pebbles. Subsequently, my pile was a mixture of clothing and kittens. The kittens enjoyed their stay. I would often wake up in the morning with a Pebble on my face, sometimes clutching a sock.

On the whole, my system has worked quite well. I still keep my clothing in piles, although I no longer recycle. My wife is very wonderful, and puts up with a lot, but she has very fixed ideas about hygiene.

In Shovon Chowdhury's most recent novel, *Murder With Bengali Characteristics*, a robot does *Poltu-da's laundry*