



Talks at Science Congress need to be vetted, says Venki Ramakrishnan

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PM Modi ignored farmers for five years: Rahul

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U.S. President insists on steel wall with Mexico in prime-time speech

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Harendra Singh removed as men's hockey team coach

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NEARBY



Capital witnessed 6% rise in crime in 2018

NEW DELHI
The Capital witnessed a 6.01% increase in crime last year compared with 2017. However, cases of crime against women saw a marginal decrease, data shared by the Delhi Police on Wednesday revealed. Heinous crimes such as murder, rape, robbery, and attempt to murder also showed a downward trend in 2018.

DELI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

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DIARY OF EVENTS 2018
'Diary of Events 2018', a special annual supplement listing important regional, national, international and sports field news developments during the year, is being published and distributed with The Hindu today.

DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES

Parliament passes Bill to provide 10% quota for poor

Rajya Sabha clears proposed law after nine-hour-long heated debate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Parliament on Wednesday cleared the Constitutional Amendment Bill guaranteeing 10% quota in education and employment to economically weaker sections in the general category, following an approval by the Rajya Sabha.

The Upper House nod came following an over nine-hour-long heated debate, during which the Opposition accused the government of bringing the Bill in haste with an eye on the coming Lok Sabha election.

Walkout by AIADMK
The AIADMK staged a walkout vehemently opposing the move, while some other political parties, including the DMK, the Left and the AAP demanded that the Bill be sent to a Select Committee.

DMK's Kanimozhhi, supported by several members, sought a division of vote on her motion for referring the Bill to a Select Committee. However, it was defeated with just 18 votes in favour. Then the CPI and the AAP members walked out in protest.

The Bill was passed with a majority of 165 against seven

Dissenting voices



The first PM Jawaharlal Nehru brought in the first Amendment... he expressly excluded the word "economic"... What data does the government have to justify this 10%?

KANIMOZHI, DMK

Is the new poverty line ₹2,100 per day... since the Bill says ₹8 lakh will be the slab.

This scheme is to cheat India

DEREK O'BRIEN, Trinamool Congress

The way this Bill is brought must concern every citizen of the country. The attitude of the govt. is to undermine the Constitution, and Parliament

D. RAJA, CPI

This govt. brought several Money Bills to bypass the Rajya Sabha. You could have brought even this as a 'Money Bill'

RAMGOPAL YADAV, SP

KAPIL SIBAL, Congress

votes. It will be now sent for Presidential assent.

The Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill was introduced by Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot, who later in his reply said that the existing reservation to the SCs, STs and OBCs would not be touched by the amendment.

Clarifying the Bill's provisions, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the reservation would be applicable to jobs in both Central

and State governments, adding that the legislation gave powers to States to determine the economic criteria for identification of beneficiaries. He responded to the Opposition's charge of political intent by terming the government move a "slog-over six", with many more to come.

Earlier, during the debate, Congress leader Anand Sharma said provisions under Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution were for the backward and weaker communities. In

the past, attempts were made twice to extend reservation beyond their scope, but the Supreme Court struck them down. The same happened in several States.

Stating that it took the BJP-led government over four years to bring the Bill in the last session, Mr. Sharma questioned the circumstances in which it was taken up – pointing out that the party had lost recent Assembly polls in five States.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

SC orders Bedi report to be given to petitioners

Panel had investigated 21 encounter killings in Gujarat

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered that a confidential report filed by the Justice H.S. Bedi (retired) Monitoring Committee into 21 police encounters in Gujarat, which had occurred during the time Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the State's Chief Minister, be shared with petitioners, lyricist Javed Akhtar and those representing the late journalist B.G. Verghese.

The decision of the Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, was a setback for the Gujarat government, which urged the court to keep the final report filed by the Supreme Court-appointed committee under wraps.

The court also did not accept the State's plea to bar the petitioners from sharing the report with the media. The Gujarat government will also get a copy.

Filed in 2018

The final and 11th report of the committee was filed in the Supreme Court in February last year and has been kept in a sealed cover with the Supreme Court Registry since then.

"This will prejudice the case of the accused as well as

The petitioners

The Supreme Court's order came on a PIL filed by poet-lyricist Javed Akhtar and veteran journalist B.G. Verghese. The duo had sought a direction for a probe by an independent agency

B.G. VERGHESE

* In his petition, the late journalist had produced on record before the court the very list that the Gujarat government had furnished to the State Legislative Assembly on the details of the encounters.

JAVED AKHTAR

* The poet-lyricist had highlighted a case involving the killing of Sameer Khan and alleged that in all these cases the police version was invariably that the victims were terrorists from Jaish-e-Mohammed on a mission to assassinate the then Chief Minister of Gujarat

the victims," Gujarat counsel Rajat Nair, who was standing in for Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, protested.

Seeks adjournment

Mr. Nair initially asked for an adjournment as the Solicitor General was occupied in another court. But the court refused, following which he argued the case.

Responding to Mr. Nair, the CJI asked him for the record: "Who are you?"

To this, Mr. Nair replied, "State of Gujarat."

"Then look after your

own interests," Justice Gogoi said. The court clarified that it was not "accepting" the conclusions arrived at by Justice Bedi, a retired Supreme Court judge, about the police encounters that had happened during the period between 2003-2006.

"We are not accepting the report. We are only saying it should be shared," Justice Gogoi said.

"It [Justice Bedi's report] is a 225-page report. We do not know what it says."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Will act against Zakir Naik if proof is given

Malaysia tough on terrorism: Ibrahim

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Malaysia will act on "incontrovertible evidence" against Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, said Malaysian leader of the ruling alliance Anwar Ibrahim, but added that no formal evidence had been proffered by India so far. He was speaking to *The Hindu* in an exclusive interview ahead of his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday.

Mr. Ibrahim was released from prison last year after the election of the Pakatan Harapan alliance, led by 93-year-old Mahathir Mohammad and is expected to take over as Prime Minister of Malaysia when Dr. Mohammad steps down.

"[The Naik case] has not been raised with me personally. We do not subscribe

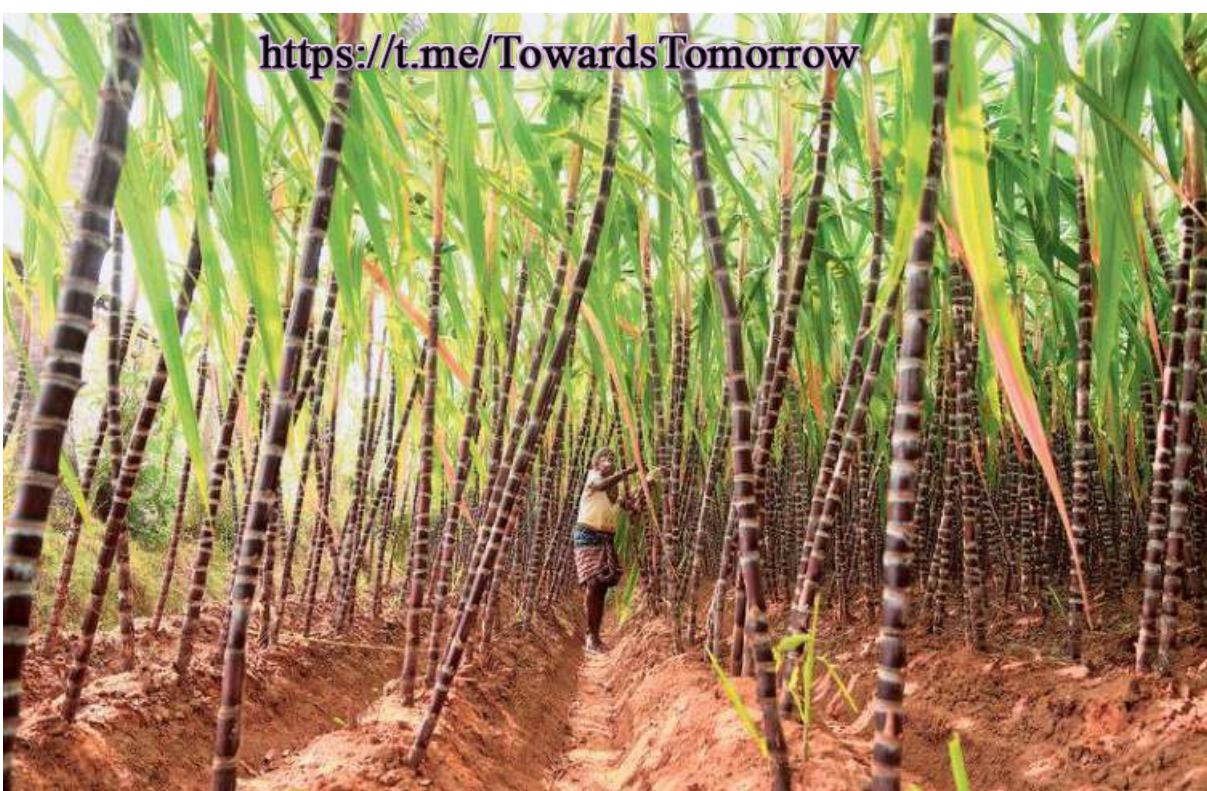
to all allegations unless we are furnished with the details. We would need some evidence. Malaysia has been tough on terrorism and if we are given incontrovertible evidence that someone has been involved we would not tolerate it," Mr. Ibrahim said, adding that the government would not act "purely on a request."

NIA case

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had first registered a case against Mr. Naik under anti-terror laws in 2016 for allegedly promoting enmity between different religious groups, but he had moved to Malaysia by then, and subsequently received Permanent Residency there.

INTERVIEW ▶ PAGE 11

Festival treat



<https://t.me/TowardsTomorrow>

Ready for harvest: A farmer surveying his sugarcane crop near Sivaganga in Tamil Nadu, ahead of harvest and despatch to markets in time for the Pongal and Makar Sankranti celebrations. ■ L. BALACHANDAR

J&K IAS topper quits in protest against killings

No sincere outreach from Centre: Shah Faesal

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Shah Faesal, the Jammu & Kashmir resident who topped the Indian Administrative Service examination in 2010, resigned from service on Wednesday, citing the "marginalisation" of Muslims and the continued killings in the State as reason.

"To protest against the unabated killings in Kashmir, and lack of any sincere reach out from the Union Government; the marginalisation and invisibilisation of around 200 million Indian Muslims at the hands of Hindutva forces reducing them to second-class citizens; insidious attacks on the special identity of the J&K State and growing culture of intolerance and hate in the mainland In-



Shah Faesal

stopped.
I wish to reiterate that voices of reason in this country cannot be muzzled for long and the environment of siege will need to end if we wish to usher in true democracy," he added.

Former Chief Minister and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah welcomed Mr. Faesal's move. "The bureaucracy's loss is politics' gain. Welcome to the fold," tweeted Mr. Abdullah.

Sources said Mr. Faesal is likely to join the NC and may be fielded by the party as a Lok Sabha candidate from north Kashmir.

Mr. Faesal became a poster boy in 2010 when he became the first ever candidate from J&K to top the prestigious examination.

Google Assistant breaks language barriers

Tech giant unveils 'interpreter mode' that can translate between two people in real time

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Dumb charades in hotel lobbies between a concierge and tourists who don't speak the local language may soon be a thing of the past. At the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2019 currently on in Las Vegas, Google has unveiled a new feature: the 'interpreter mode' in Google Assistant, its voice-based Artificial Intelligence (AI). This would enable Google's virtual assistant to serve as a real-time language translator between two people.

With this feature, which will be rolled out over the next few weeks on Google Home devices and Smart Displays, one can just tell the Google Assistant "Hey Google, be my Japanese interpreter", and it would

function as one. Currently, this feature supports 27 languages, including English, Hindi, Polish, Indonesian, Swedish, Thai, German and Korean.

Trial this week
For starters, the company is piloting the Interpreter Mode this week at the concierge desk in Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco, and Dream Downtown hotel in New York City.

"By bringing the best of Google services and AI to the Assistant, we're focussed on building the most helpful digital assistant when you're at home, in your car, or on the go," said the company in its blog.

Google, which has to contend with Amazon's



Help is at hand: Delegates trying out the new Google Assistant feature at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. ■ AP

Alexa as it strives to position Google Assistant as the consumer's preferred voice-based assistant, also unveiled Google Assistant Connect, a platform that will allow users to control their favourite music, podcasts, and radio stations from anywhere in their home without ever picking up the phone. Later in 2019, the

way." The company also confirmed that it is bringing Google Assistant to the Sonos One and Sonos Beam speakers, which will allow users to control their favourite music, podcasts, and radio stations from anywhere in their home without ever picking up the phone. Later in 2019, the

Assistant will be coming to more popular media and entertainment devices, including television sets from Samsung. "You'll be able to use your voice to turn on the TV, change volume and channels, and switch between inputs."

Even at this year's CES, some of the company's partners, including Sony, Hisense, Philips, TCL, Skyworth, Xiaomi and Haier, are showcasing Android TV devices that come with Google Assistant. Google pointed out that its Assistant works with over 1,600 home automation brands and over 10,000 devices. Interestingly, Amazon announced around 70 products at its 'Alexa event' held at its headquarters in Seattle in September last year.

AN-NDE

SC appoints former S-G as *amicus curiae* in Puri temple case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday appointed senior advocate and former Solicitor-General Ranjit Kumar as *amicus curiae* to assist it in a

matter related to the administration of Jagannath Temple in Puri.

The apex court had on November 30 last had accepted the request of senior advocate Gopal Subramanium to

relieve him of the post in the matter.

During the hearing on Wednesday, the issue of appointing a new *amicus* in the case arose before a Bench headed by Justice A.K. Sikri.

The Bench asked Mr. Kumar, who was present in the court, whether he would assist it, to which he agreed.

The Bench has posted the matter for hearing on February 5.

An advocate, who had filed an application in the court seeking intervention in the case, told the Bench that a person having knowledge about the temple should be appointed as an *amicus*.

Going back to the roots

While much of the world is embracing advancements in medical technology and research, Dr. Hari Nath Kasiganesan is travelling back to the time of folklore, indigenous plants and herbs.

He has published multiple papers and has many patents on drugs he has discovered for cardiac ailments. His focus turned to indigenous

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He says, "Our everyday food plate should definitely contain four parts - raw vegetables, cooked vegetables, raw fruits and whole grain or millets."

Hari Nath strives towards bringing two separate disciplines of Agriculture and



medicine when his mother suffered with pain from arthritis and spondylitis. He came across an article on the benefits of Moringa oleifera (drumstick leaves) and suggested his mother to start drinking boiled Moringa juice; this worked miracles. With the spark having begun here, the juice has since been developed into a powder, an improved poly-herbal concoction and helps many through the name 'Moringa Buller' today. "It isn't just restricted to those with arthritis, anyone can use it," says Dr. Hari Nath.

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RISE 07:15 SET 17:44
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Delhi Palam Tomorrow

22°C Night temperatures may rise. Sky may become partly cloudy. Further deterioration in pollution is likely.

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Meghalaya ally to take call on alliance with BJP

Most regional allies oppose Citizenship (Amendment) Bill

Prohibitory orders in Tripura area

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AGARTALA

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Wednesday said that the constituent parties of his coalition government would be meeting to decide whether or not to break off the alliance with the BJP.

The National People's Party, which Mr. Sangma heads, is opposed to the Narendra Modi government's bid to have the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, passed in the Parliament for legalising the stay of non-Muslims from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who came to India till December 31, 2014, allegedly because of religious persecution.

"We were the first to pass a Cabinet resolution against the Bill last year. There are small-small parties in our coalition government, and we will take their opinions before deciding on the future of the alliance," Mr. Sangma said on the sidelines of a function at Umiam Lake,

Sub-Divisional Police Officer Prankrishna Das said the police launched a search operation at Madhabbari and Dasharambari in Jirania police station of West Tripura district during which one country-made gun and a machete were recovered. "The situation is completely under control now," Mr. Das said.

along with the BJP and other parties, has asked the Centre to review the Bill because of fears that it could pave the way for foreigners to eventually become masters in the region.

The Mizo National Front won the Mizoram Assembly election in December last year, has opposed the Bill too. Though the MNF declined to be the BJP's alliance partner, it remains a member of the North East Democratic Progressive Party, which rules Nagaland

Naveen says Centre neglected Odisha

Submits demands to 15th Finance Commission



Naveen Patnaik. • FILE PHOTO

Submits demands to 15th Finance Commission

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BHUABANESWAR

Alleging that successive governments at the Centre have neglected Odisha in various fields, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday raised a series of demands before the 15th Finance Commission here on Wednesday.

"Our pace of transformation has been remarkable and our growth has been inclusive. Unfortunately, successive Central governments have ensured that Odisha remains at the bottom in teledensity, railway network, banking, highways compounded by neglect in industrial corridor, coal royalty, drinking water and irrigation and cutting off funds for scheduled areas and KBK," said Mr. Patnaik.

Natural calamities

Added to this is the fact that Odisha faces natural calamities every alternate year, said Mr. Patnaik while addressing a meeting of the Fi-

nance Commission here. "It is in this premise of historic Central neglect and frequent natural calamities that my government has been demanding special category status for Odisha, which will supplement our efforts in transforming the State," added Mr. Patnaik.

The Chief Minister made a special request for a package of at least ₹1,500 crore to build more cyclone shelters and improve the warning systems. He also demanded increasing tax devolution from 42% to 50%, and making cess and surcharges as part of the divisible pool. He suggested the use of 1971 population and devolution criteria, and extension of GST compensation for another 10 years.

Firhad Hakim elected as KMC councillor

Defeats BJP rival by approximately 14,000 votes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA

West Bengal Minister and city Mayor Firhad Hakim on Wednesday registered a resounding victory in the bypoll to a Kolkata Municipal Corporation ward by defeating his nearest BJP rival by a margin of 13,987 votes.

The result also witnessed a significant drop in the vote share of the BJP when compared to the 2015 election.

Mr. Hakim, the TMC candidate for ward 82 of the KMC, secured 16,564 votes whereas the BJP's Jibon Sen bagged 2,577 votes. Sisir Dutta from the CPI got 1,735 votes, while the Congress candidate Animesh Bhattacharya received 537 votes.

"This is a victory of the people. I want to thank the masses. The TMC-run KMC would work for the development of people," Mr. Hakim, the first Muslim Mayor of Kolkata since Independence, said after the announcement of the results.

Taking a dig at the BJP for

drop in its vote share, Mr. Hakim said the saffron party will be wiped out of the State after the 2019 Lok Sabha poll. In 2015, the BJP had secured 4,900 votes in the ward.

"After the CPI(M), it's time for the BJP to vanish from Bengal. One day, all votes cast in Bengal will go to the Trinamool Congress," he said.

Mr. Hakim, the State's Urban Development and Municipal Affairs Minister, was elected as the Mayor of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation on December 3. As he was not a councillor, he had to contest polls from a ward to continue on the post, as mandated by the KMC (Second Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Modi ignored farmers for five years: Rahul

Promises loan waiver to all States if elected to power

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of ignoring farmers and youths during the last five years and said that the farmers, who were the "assets of the country", had shown their strength by defeating the BJP in the recent Assembly elections in three Hindi heartland States, including Rajasthan.

Addressing a huge farmers' rally at Vidyadhar Nagar stadium here, at which he kick-started the Lok Sabha election campaign of the Congress in the State, Mr. Gandhi said his party's governments in the three States had announced farm loan waivers to fulfil the promise made by him. "What Mr. Modi could not do in four and a half years, we did in two days," he said.

'PM plays on back foot'

Mr. Gandhi said the Congress would waive farmers' debts in all States if elected to power in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. Accusing Mr. Modi of not doing enough for the farmers, he said while the Prime Minister "plays on the back foot, the youths of the country should play on front foot and hit a sixer."

The farmers' rally was the first public meeting of the Congress after coming to power in Rajasthan, ostensibly aimed at cultivating the agrarian community as voters for the Lok Sabha election. Mr. Gandhi said though the farm loan waiver would provide relief to farmers, a new Green Revolution was needed in the country to address the issue of agrarian distress.

The Congress president



Congress chief Rahul Gandhi with Rajasthan Deputy CM Sachin Pilot in Jaipur on Wednesday. • ROHIT JAIN PARAS

continued his attack on the NDA government and Mr. Modi over the Rafale jet deal, alleging that the "chowkidar (watchman) ran away" from the debate on the issue in the Lok Sabha. Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman spoke [in the House] for two and a half hours, but we exposed each and every lie of the government."

Mr. Gandhi said the Congress' stand on an inquiry and a Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Rafale deal had been vindicated after the reinstatement of Central Bureau of Investigation Director Alok Verma, who was removed at midnight.

'Stole nation's money'
Raising the issues of demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax, Mr. Gandhi said the NDA government had destroyed small and medium businesses through these decisions. "Mr. Modi stole the nation's money and gave it to [industrialist] Anil Ambani. How much money did he give to the youths, farmers and small shopkeepers?" he asked.

The rally, attended by farmers and Congress workers from Jaipur and Ajmer divisions and other districts, was utilised for announcement of second round of sops for farmers. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announced that his government would not increase electricity tariff for farmers during the next five years and promised to release one lakh agricultural power connections by June this year.

Farmers' Commission
Mr. Gehlot also announced the appointment of Farmers' Commission and said the State government would help set up food processing units on agricultural land in villages without the need for land conversion for plots measuring up to 10 hectares and provide loans for these units.

He also assured the farmers that they would get minimum support prices for mustard and gram.

Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot and AICC general secretary Avinash Pande also addressed the rally.

'Sacrilege, firing cases not properly probed by SAD govt.'

Says Justice Zora Singh who recently joined the AAP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Former Justice Zora Singh, who recently joined the Aam Aadmi Party, alleged on Wednesday that the then Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP government in Punjab did not investigate the incident of desecration of Guru Granth Sahib in Faridkot in 2015 in a "proper manner".

The previous SAD-BJP government had in 2015 under Mr. Singh set up a one-man commission to investigate the incidents of sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib and other religious texts. In 2017, when the Congress government came to power, it rejected the findings of the Zora Singh Commission, saying its findings had been



Justice (retd) Zora Singh.

"inconclusive".

"On the basis of the evidences collected through intensive investigation of persons who appeared before the Commission, six suspects were identified. The names of the suspects were already in the police domain but they did not seem to be in a hurry to investigate the case," alleged Mr. Singh.

"Also the investigating officers, including a Senior Superintendent of Police and a Deputy Superintendent of Police-rank officer, deposed before the Commission that the investigation into the Bargari and Behbal Kalan police firing cases was not done as per the merit of the incidents," said Mr. Singh.

'CM failed to act'

Mr. Singh said it was unfortunate that Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, who had publicly taken a solemn vow invoking 'Sri Guru ka Sahib' to punish those responsible for the desecration of Guru Granth Sahib and the Bargari firing, has failed to act swiftly against them since coming to power.

Cong. names Surjewala for Jind Assembly bypoll

BJP nominee is Krishan Middha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

The Congress on Wednesday announced that its chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala will be the party's candidate for the by-election in Haryana's Jind Assembly constituency on January 28. He is a sitting MLA from Kaithal.

The BJP's nominee for the seat is Krishan Middha, the son of late Hari Chand Middha.

Election Committee has decided that Krishan Middha, the son of late Hari Chand Middha, will be the party's candidate for the by-election in Haryana's Jind Assembly constituency on January 28.

The Election Commission had on December 31 announced that the bypoll to the Jind Assembly seat would be held on January 28 and the result will be out on January 31.

The filing of nominations began on January 3 and January 10 is the last date to file papers by the candidates for the bypoll. The BJP became the first among prominent parties to announce the name of its candidate.

"After discussion and taking various factors into account, the BJP's Central

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IN BRIEF



Jagan ends yatra in A.P., promises sops to farmers

ICHCHAPURAM

Leader of the Opposition in the A.P. Assembly Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday promised to increase the number of districts from 13 to 25, if he came to power. He also promised more than 15 sops to farmers at the public meeting he addressed here after completing his Praja Sankalpa Yatra.

CISF seizes ₹1.2 crore at Hyderabad airport

HYDERABAD

The Central Industrial Security Force on Wednesday apprehended a passenger at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport and seized over ₹1.2 crore in foreign currencies from him. Md. Parvez, who was scheduled to fly on an Emirates flight to Dubai, was questioned and his luggage was screened at random. He was carrying foreign currencies but was unable to provide documents for them.

Naidu puts Prakasam district on growth path

Pact to set up single largest pulp and paper unit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
ONGOLE

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday gave a fillip to the growth of the backward Prakasam district by roping in paper major Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) for the world's largest paper plant and committing to simultaneously develop a port at Ramayapatnam.

After exchanging an MoU with APP, the world's largest manufacturer of pulp and

Ayyappa devotees to get better facilities during Makaravilakku

Resting places, refreshments, more water taps being readied for the Jan. 14 fest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATHANAMTHITTA

The Travancore Devaswom Board is making elaborate arrangements for pilgrims to have darshan of the Makarajyoti and Makaravilakku deeparadhana from the holy hillock of Sabarimala and surrounding areas.

The Makaravilakku festival falls on January 14 and the TDB will provide resting facility for the pilgrims at nine places at Sabarimala Sannidhanam, according to Devaswom Executive Officer D. Sudheeshkumar.

He said the pilgrims waiting inside the barricades for the holy darshan will be supplied with drinking water, glucose powder, and biscuits.

As many as 400 volunteers of the Akhila Bharatha Ayyappa Seva Sanghom and the TDB have been deployed



Peak of pilgrimage season: A view of the Sabarimala Sannidhanam on Wednesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

to serve them, he said.

Moreover, 50 additional water taps have been installed at various halting places to help pilgrims gathering for the Makaravilakku deeparadhana, he said.

Sanitation facilities

Mr. Sudheeshkumar said the TDB workers would complete the sanitation activities at various Makaravilakku

view points at Sannidhanam in the next two days.

TDB member N. Vijayakumar said that work to create sanitation infrastructure at Paandithavalom, where a large number of pilgrims congregate to view the deeparadhana, was progressing fast.

Barricades had been erected to ensure the safety of pilgrims at Sabarimala

Pilgrim trampled to death by wild jumbo

KOTTAYAM

A 35-year-old Sabarimala pilgrim from Tamil Nadu, who went to the Ayyappa temple through the forest route from Erumely, was trampled to death by a wild elephant near Mukkuzy on Tuesday. The Peruvananadan police identified the deceased as Paramasivam, a native of Salem district in Tamil Nadu.

and Paandithavalom.

The Health Department opened an emergency healthcare centre at Paandithavalom.

The TDB has kept a buffer stock of 12 lakh cans of arava

vana and 1.5 lakh packets of appam,

the major 'prasadam', in view of the heavy

rush anticipated during the Makaravilakku festival this year, he said.

Through a Facebook post in the group 'Navodhana Keralam Sabarimalayileku', she claimed she trekked to Sabarimala and had darshan at 7.30 a.m.



The Facebook post showing 35-year-old Manju, right, disguised as an elderly woman. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Woman in 'disguise' enters Sabarimala

35-year-old Manju uploads video clips

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATHANAMTHITTA

A 35-year-old woman, Manju, from Chathannur in Kollam, has claimed that she visited the Sabarimala Devi Temple at the Sannidhanam. The videos show her disguised as an elderly woman with grey hair.

However, neither the Travancore Devaswom Board gave any confirmation with regard to the woman's claim. Three video clips have al-

so been uploaded along with the FB post showing Ms. Manju with the 'irumudikettu' on her head standing on the flyover leading to the Malikappuram Devi Temple at the Sannidhanam. The videos show her disguised as an elderly woman with grey hair.

But challenges are too many for Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac who is presenting the first budget post-floods.

Kerala budget to focus on post-flood rebuilding

N.J.NAIR
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala budget for 2019-20 will be a blueprint for post-flood rebuilding and providing concrete solutions to the challenges in resource mobilisation to complete the process in a time-bound manner.

The government rests its hopes on the Goods and Services Tax Council meeting on Thursday. The meeting will take up the State's proposal to levy 1% calamity cess on value of products and services either on selected commodities or across the board for two years.

The Group of Ministers on GST had already cleared the proposal and hence the Council too is expected to ratify it without much discussion, sources said.

But challenges are too many for Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac who is presenting the first budget post-floods.

Daunting task

The government faces the daunting task of mobilising ₹30,000 crore but is now compelled to start with spartan resources at its command.

The curbs imposed on the State in availing itself of overseas assistance is a major impediment in mopping up resources. The State had to reluctantly relinquish offers of financial assistance from abroad in the face of stiff resistance from the Centre.

The State's demand to raise the borrowing limit from 3.5% of GDP to 4.5% is one of the issues it has to grapple with. The Centre has not so far heeded positively to Kerala's demand to raise the limit, the sources said.

ED attaches former Kerala PWD Secretary's properties

Action after Vigilance Bureau chargesheeted him in DA case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday attached properties worth about ₹8.80 crore of T.O. Sooraj, former Secretary of the Kerala Public Works Department, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

The Central agency's action came after the State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (VACB) chargesheeted him in a disproportionate



assets case. Officials said the assets attached included 13 immovable properties, four vehicles, and ₹23 lakh in

cash. The investigation found that Mr. Sooraj had properties in Edappally, Edakochi, Vazhakkala, Elamkulam, Aluva, and Peerumedu.

The officials also attached the cash deposited in his bank account. The vehicles attached were found registered in the name of Mr. Sooraj and his relatives. The VACB had referred the case to the ED after Mr. Sooraj retired from service.

Creating a world record with 10,105 sanitary pads

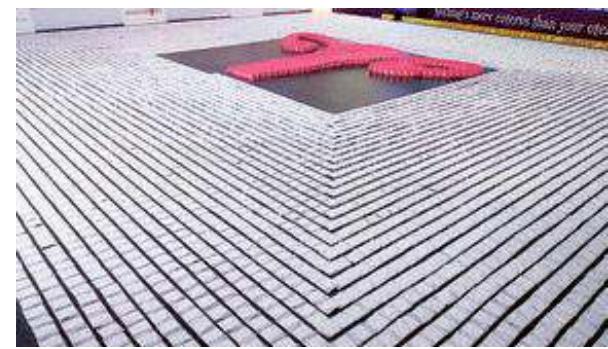
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In a bid to promote menstrual hygiene, especially among adolescents, gynaecologists attempted a Guinness world record by creating the 'longest line of sanitary pads' at the 62nd All India Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (AI-COG) that began in the city on Wednesday.

Over 1,500 gynaecologists, led by the organising chairperson Hema Divakar, created a line of 1,078 metres using 10,105 sanitary pads.

Depicting women's health, the sanitary pads were designed in the shape of a uterus.

The Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI), which is organising AI-COG 2019, collaborated with a pharma company for the at-



tempt. The Guinness record certificate will be presented to the organising chairperson of AI-COG 2019 on Thursday.

According to the organisers, the pads will be donated to four city-based schools – Indira Priyadarshini Girls High School; RSPAVK High School, Jayanagar; Gokul Vi-

Clean drive



Responsible tourism: French tourists, who had come to visit the Fort Kochi beach, cleaning up garbage piled up near the popular tourist spot on Wednesday. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

Siddaramaiah's convoy meets with accident, none hurt

Major mishap averted as all vehicles were fitted with ABS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MANDYA

Former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had a narrow escape after his convoy was involved in a serial accident on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway on Wednesday.

The incident took place near Gowdahalli Gate on the outskirts of Srirangapatna.

The former Chief Minister was on his way to Mysuru from Bengaluru. A goods carrier was parked on the roadside following a breakdown and the driver of one of the convoy vehicles applied sudden brakes, which led to the serial accident. At least six vehicles suffered minor damages.

Mr. Siddaramaiah escaped unhurt as his driver managed to apply brakes in time, a senior police officer said.

The vehicles were travell-



Narrow escape: The damaged convoy vehicle on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway on Wednesday.

ing at a speed of 110 km per hour when the accident occurred. A major mishap was averted as all the vehicles were fitted with ABS, the officer said.

The vehicles were travell-

Python slithers to health after rare surgery

Done by Kerala veterinary varsity, the procedure has been lauded as a landmark

MINI MURINGATHERI
THRISUR

A rare surgery on a critically injured Indian rock python has brought laurels to a Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (KVASU) scientist and his team.

The surgery was done by Dr. C.B. Devanand, Professor and Head of the Department of Veterinary Surgery and Radiology, College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Mannuthy. He was assisted by Dr. Sudheesh S. Nair, Dr. Soumya Ramakutty, and Dr. S. Anoop, assistant professors and also PG students of the department.

"The surgery on the snake was done with inhalation anaesthesia for the first time in the country. The gas used was Sevoflurane, a volatile, potent, safe and fast-acting anaesthetic drug. Though



First time: The injured rock python undergoing the surgical process. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the drug is very costly, its effect and recovery are very fast," said Dr. Devanand.

A five-and-a-half-feet-long Indian Rock Python (Python molurus), weighing 10.5 kg, was rescued by forest labourers of the Ponganamkudu range in Thrissur district and brought to the veterinary surgery department of the college on November 17, 2018.

"On examination, a lacerated wound was seen at the dorsum and involved rupture of skin and lumbar musculature. The terminal co-

lomic cavity had minor trauma with visceral organs intact."

Considering the reptile's critical condition, surgery was planned after anaesthetising it. The recovery of the python from anaesthesia was instantaneous and uneventful. It was later handed over to the forest authorities. By the fifth post-operative day, the reptile showed remarkable improvement and was released into the forest.

The success story led to Dr. Devanand being invited to present a paper on the treatment of the python at the 42nd annual congress of the Indian Society for Veterinary Surgery, held at Navsari Agricultural University in Gujarat recently. He and his team won the gold medal for the Best Paper.

IN BRIEF



Farmers to get interest-free loans soon: Rawat

DEHRADUN
Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said on Wednesday that farmers in the State will be given interest-free loans soon as the BJP believes in doing something real for them. The farm loan waivers offered by Congress are just an eyewash, he alleged. PTI

Woman arrested for killing mother

MUZAFFARNAGAR
A woman and her paramour were arrested on Wednesday for allegedly killing her 40-year-old mother here, the police said. The woman was killed when her husband had gone out of the house, SSP Sudhir Kumar said. PTI

Rally to create awareness on skin disorders

JODHPUR
A group of 18 people, including four women, on bicycles rode through Rajasthan, declaring "war" on fungal infections. Some Pune-based doctors also participated in the rally with the theme 'Fungal pe Dangal'. PTI

Man shot dead, assailants caught

MATHURA
A 20-year-old man was shot dead by three bike-borne assailants near Jhansi village here, the police said on Wednesday. The assailants were caught by villagers and beaten up, they added. PTI

Fire breaks out at eatery in Shimla, one dead

SHIMLA
A Nepalese man was charred to death after a fire broke out at a roadside eatery here on Wednesday, a police official said. PTI

More the merrier



Women and children taking a horse cart ride in a busy Muzaffarnagar market on Wednesday. ■ R. V. MOORTHY

BJP to contest M.P. Deputy Speaker's post

Malhargarh legislator Jagdish Devda files papers

ANUP DUTTA
Bhopal

A day after losing the post of Speaker to the Congress, the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party in Madhya Pradesh has decided to contest the election for the post of Deputy Speaker.

"The party has shown faith in me. Today I filed my nomination papers for the Deputy Speaker's post in the Assembly," said BJP MLA Jagdish Devda, who represents the Malhargarh Assembly seat in Mandsaur district, on Wednesday.

Speaker's election
In the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, election to the Speaker's post is traditionally conducted unopposed and the post of Deputy

The Congress has fielded Hina Kawre, daughter of Likharam Kawre, former Transport Minister in Digvijaya Singh's Cabinet, who was killed by Naxals in the late 1990s.

Speaker is given to the Opposition.

This time, the BJP decided to contest the election for the post of Speaker. However, the party staged a walkout from the Assembly on Tuesday, alleging that pro-tem Speaker Deepak Saxena had refused to allow them to propose the name of party nominee Vijay Shah to contest for the Speaker's post.

In the absence of the Opposition, Mr. Saxena announced that N.P. Prajapati had been elected Speaker. Mr. Prajapati was first elected MLA in 1985 from the Golegaon constituency in Nar singhpur district.

Speaker is given to the Opposition.

"I have complete faith in my party members and I am expected to get the support of other party legislators and Independents. In all likelihood, I will emerge the winner in tomorrow's (Thursday) contest," Ms. Kawre told media persons.

"Pro-tem Speaker should have allowed voting," Leader of Opposition Gopal Bhargava said.

To consult legal experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Bhopal

The BJP Legislative Party said on Wednesday that it would consult legal experts on the issue of the Speaker's election, as pro-tem Speaker Deepak Saxena did not allow it to propose the name of its nominee.

"Pro-tem Speaker should have allowed voting," Leader of Opposition Gopal Bhargava said.

HC-monitored probe into Bulandshahr incident sought

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A deliberate and motivated effort is being made by the Uttar Pradesh government to concentrate attention on the "cow killing" in Bulandshahr, a delegation of CPI (M) Polit Bureau, comprising Brinda Karat and Subhashini Ali, noted in its report after a visit to the area, a month after the incident. The delegation has demanded a high court-monitored probe into the matter.

"The SIT is working under pressure of the State Government and cannot be expected to have any impartial probe," it has noted. It said the second round of arrests for so-called cow slaughter is as deeply flawed as the first round of arrests in which all those named by the key conspirator, Yogesh Raj, were arrested and within a fortnight had to be released after being found innocent.

The evidence to link many people who have been arrested for the crime is suspect, the delegation said. Like Arvind Sharma, son of Hemchand Sharma, president of the Brahmin Samaj. "His only crime is that his best friend is a Muslim, Mehboob, a well-known social worker of the area. Everyone we met in the area was astonished by these arrests," the delegation said.

Muslims with licensed guns are being targeted. Nadeem, a national rifle shooter who has a licensed gun, has also been arrested, it found.

The delegation has demanded that for an impartial probe it is essential that it should be judicially monitored.

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 Thursday: Cold wave conditions likely at isolated pockets over Vidarbha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	26.5	10.4	Kozhikode	—	34.0	22.2
Ahmedabad	—	26.6	10.1	Kurnool	—	32.0	16.6
Aizawl	—	26.9	—	Lucknow	—	22.4	8.3
Allahabad	—	23.3	7.8	Madurai	—	33.5	20.1
Bengaluru	—	30.4	13.2	Mangalore	—	37.1	19.4
Bhopal	—	22.3	7.6	Mumbai	—	29.8	13.8
Bhubaneswar	—	28.3	12.4	Mysuru	—	30.1	10.0
Chandigarh	—	19.7	7.2	New Delhi	—	20.5	8.0
Chennai	—	30.5	19.9	Patna	—	23.0	10.2
Coimbatore	—	31.9	17.7	Port Blair	—	30.6	24.7
Dehradun	—	23.1	5.6	Puducherry	—	30.0	15.8
Gangtok	—	11.8	5.8	Pune	—	31.3	8.0
Goa	—	33.3	19.0	Raipur	—	26.1	11.4
Guwahati	—	25.5	10.5	Ranchi	—	23.6	8.0
Hubballi	—	30.0	16.0	Shillong	—	17.2	6.0
Hyderabad	—	29.8	10.9	Shimla	—	13.0	3.4
Imphal	—	24.3	3.6	Srinagar	—	6.0	3.0
Jaipur	—	21.5	7.5	Trivandrum	—	33.7	20.6
Kochi	—	31.6	21.4	Tiruchirappalli	—	31.4	24.2
Kohima	—	18.8	3.4	Vijayawada	—	30.4	15.5
Kolkata	—	25.0	14.1	Visakhapatnam	—	27.2	18.0

(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	74	109	24	179	—	—
Bengaluru	.6	44	21	164	—	■
Chennai	26	15	63	314	—	■
Delhi	24	79	73	351	277	■
Hyderabad	27	122	31	149	147	■
Kolkata	22	44	12	361	276	—
Lucknow	13	55	72	309	—	—
Mumbai	29	61	89	122	156	■
Pune	93	20	56	224	184	■
Vishakhapatnam	—	—	34	—	—	—

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Gaya, Bihar recorded overall air quality index (AQI) score of 360 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Rohtak, Haryana recorded a healthy AQI score of 48

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

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

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

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

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

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Corrigendum No-07 to E-Tender Enquiry No-14/TS/FBD/2018-19						
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Shakti Bhawan, Panchkula						
Corrigendum No.: U40101HR1997SGC033683						
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Detail NIT and tender document is available at website https://haryanaeprocurement.org.in, https://www.hvnpn.org.in						
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IN BRIEF



Fire in under-construction hospital in Nagpur

NAGPUR
A major fire occurred on Wednesday in an under-construction hospital located in a residential area close to the Nagpur railway station, officials said. No casualties were reported but one person was admitted to a hospital after inhaling smoke. Labourers rushed out using the staircases immediately after the blaze began.

'Restrict ₹1,000 Pongal gift to poor, middle class'

CHENNAI
The Madras High Court on Wednesday questioned the rationale behind universal distribution of the Pongal cash gift of ₹1,000 to all ration cardholders in the State, irrespective of their economic status. It further ordered that the money should be paid only to those on or below the poverty line, and the middle class.

Pak. seizes fishermen, boats off Gujarat

AHMEDABAD
The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSSA) has seized three fishing boats with 15 fishermen near the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) off the Gujarat coast. Two boats were from Porbandar and one was from Okha in the Saurashtra region. A boat with five fishermen on board was seized by the neighbouring country's maritime agency last week also.

Hearing of appeal in Herald case put off

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday deferred the hearing on the appeal of Associated Journals Ltd, publisher of the *National Herald* newspaper, challenging a High Court order asking it to vacate the Herald House here, for January 16 due to non-availability of advocates.

CPI (M) for HC-monitored probe in Bulandshahr riots
NEW DELHI
A deliberate effort is being made by the Uttar Pradesh government to focus on the "cow killing" in Bulandshahr, a CPI(M) delegation noted in its report after a visit to the area, a month after the riots. It sought a High Court-monitored probe. An inspector Subodh Kumar Singh and a 21-year-old Bharatiya Janata Party activist, Sumit, were killed in the violence.

INTERVIEW | VENKATRAMAN RAMAKRISHNAN

'Talks at ISC need to be vetted by serious committees'

The meeting needs to become smaller in order to be better organised; eminent scientists who come should be required to stay the whole time

R. PRASAD

Nobel Laureate Prof. Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, who attended the Indian Science Congress held in Mumbai in 2015 and called it a "circus" as very little science was discussed, is annoyed at the outrageous statements made by a few speakers at this year's Congress. In an e-mail interview, he talks about the steps needed to restore respectability to the ISC.

Responding to a question from an Indian journalist, you had commented that the Indian Science Congress was a "circus". What made you say that?

The Indian Science Congress is too large and unwieldy, and the result is a slightly chaotic atmosphere. It is far too big for younger unknown scientists, let alone students and research fellows, to get to know senior scientists or

even each other.

One thing I particularly disliked was that they fly top international scientists business class and put them up in 5-star hotels with a car and chauffeur at great expense, but then shepherd them away in VIP tents where their interactions with young scientists are limited. The large size also means the quality of the talks is extremely uneven. This is not even counting those few talks

that are simply outrageous, pseudoscientific nonsense.

Do you think the idea of the Congress catering to a wide audience (school students to scientists) is the basic problem?

In principle it is not a bad idea to have a broad meeting. However, its size needs to be restricted and interactions across disciplines and generations maximised.

Are you aware of any national science meeting that is inaugurated by a politician or where the main focus is on this event?

This may well be unique to

It is also not clear that there is sufficient two-way conversation between the Prime Minister and the scientific community or whether something actually emerges from the Prime Minister's visit that affects the course of science



nister's visit that affects the course of science.

Do you see a sharp decline in the level of discourse since 2015 as pseudoscience gets discussed?

I have not done a comparison. However, why doesn't the Prime Minister or other high officials speak out against this?

If there are a few things that can be changed to make the Indian Science Congress respectable, what would you say are the most important ones?

The meeting needs to become smaller in order to be

better organised. I think eminent scientists who come should be required to stay the whole time, and give at least two-three talks, including one to the Children's Science Congress, which I found to be the best part of the Science Congress.

The meeting needs to be smaller and depoliticised. They should abolish people sitting on the platform for the Prime Minister's speech – this is a particular Indian disease. The talks need to be vetted by serious committees with the appropriate expertise. If despite the careful vetting, someone begins to spout nonsense, they should be ejected by the chair of the session.

General strike hits PSU banks, transport services for 2nd day

Trade unions claim that over 20 crore people participated in the protest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Central trade unions have claimed that more than 20 crore people participated in a two-day nationwide general strike called to protest the Centre's "anti-worker, anti-national" policies.

A few incidents of violence marred the second day of the strike, which affected transport, banking and postal services as well as industrial activity in several parts of the country.

"Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Puducherry, Kerala were reported to be completely shut down on both the days. Bihar and Goa were on industrial strike on 8th January, but have been totally shut down on Wednesday," said a statement issued by leaders of the 10 central unions.

The only major central union which did not participate in the strike call was the RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh.

Large parts of Kerala were crippled by the shutdown, which was mostly peaceful but for an attack by strike supporters on a branch of the State Bank of India near the Secretariat. Attackers threatened office staff and damaged office equipment.

The CPI(M) and the Joint Action Council of Trade



Desolate stretches: Empty roads near Howrah Bridge in Kolkata on Wednesday, the second day of the nationwide general strike called by the central trade unions. ■ PTI

Unions condemned the attack.

Public transport including buses, taxis and autos remained off the roads, while strike supporters blocked trains at several places, leading to delays.

BEST stir hits people

In Mumbai, an indefinite strike observed by 32,000 employees of BEST, the city's public bus service affected lakhs of commuters.

Both city and interstate bus services were disrupted in Karnataka, while PTI reported that trains were halted and delayed by blockades in the Eastern Railway Zone.

Banking services were partially affected for the second straight day, with the All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA) and Bank Employees' Federation of India supporting the strike.

Cash transactions, remittances, forex transactions and cheque clearances to the tune of ₹20,000 crore were affected, according to the AIBEA.

Electricity generation and distribution, coal extraction and movement, non-coal mining, iron ore mining and steel production got affected," said the unions' statement.

"Oil extraction, refining

and marketing, along with LPG supply in the entire eastern and northern sector was completely disrupted. Even supply of aviation fuel was affected, resulting in cancellation of many flights."

Rallies and demonstrations were held across the country, with participation from formal and unorganized sector workers, as well as support from farmers in rural areas.

According to the All India Kisan Sabha, around one lakh persons were detained and arrested for participating in road blockade in around 500 places in Tamil Nadu alone.

J&J implant victims make case to panel

Reiterate need for adequate compensation

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Victims of Johnson & Johnson's faulty ASR hip implants on Wednesday met the central expert committee set up by the Union Health Ministry and shared their reservations about the proposed compensation formula and the process.

Several affected patients from the Hip Implant Patients Support Group (HIPS), who participated in the meeting said they had presented their concerns and reiterated their demands for "swift and adequate compensation."

Almost 40 victims and family members met with the panel.

"We are glad that the government and the committee finally called us... though the limited duration of the meeting meant we could place our concerns and cases before the committee only in a limited way," said Renu Seth of Delhi.

In August 2018, the government-appointed Agarwal Committee's report, which recommended compensation for the implant victims, was released.

A Central Expert Committee headed by Dr. R.K. Arya was convened in October to start the compensation process. The compensation formula, recently approved by the government, encountered serious reservations from patients as it had many deficiencies, exclusions and lacunae.

Cobalt toxicity
The patients shared their views regarding the compensation



Victims speaking about compensation in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ PRADEEP KUMAR

formula, the process and related issues at the meeting with the expert panel.

"For my husband and me, it came as a great shock when our doctors told us to stop planning a family due to the levels of cobalt and chromium in my body and the negative impact that that could have on pregnancy and on any baby we would conceive," said Jyoti Rani, who suffered a miscarriage years after the recall of the device and was unaware of toxicity associated with the implant until 2016.

"I hope the government and central expert committee realize that physical disability is only one of the serious problems faced by us; the impact on our families and our personal lives, the mental agony that we have suffered must be recognised," the Visakhapatnam resident added.

"I am very pleased that I managed to travel to Delhi for this meeting," said Manoj Kumar Sangabattula, who was the youngest recipient of an ASR implant in the group when he was 20 years.

N. Ram is chief of media body

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

N. Ram, chairman, THG Publishing Private Limited, has been appointed president of the Alliance for Media Freedom (AMF), a cross-media advocacy and action group of media organisations, promoters and journalists.

While appointing him as president of the AMF, his role in thwarting the efforts of governments and authoritarian elements to impede the independent functioning of the media was commended, a press release said.

The AFMF, in a meeting attended by 16 editors, media promoters and journalists on January 7, also welcomed the judgment of the Madras High Court upholding the order passed by the Chennai Metropolitan Magistrate refusing to remand Nakeeran Gopal in a case booked under Section 124 of the Indian Penal Code.

The Alliance, which is dedicated to work for the cause of media freedom, media independence and the safety of the last journalist, adopted a charter that underlines the importance of creating enabling conditions to safeguard free speech guaranteed by the Indian Constitution.

The Alliance which has been functioning informally for the last seven months in the cause of media freedom and independence, resolved to take steps to formalise and institutionalise its existence.

SC recalls judgment, lists case for fresh hearing

It erroneously held that a teacher is not an 'employee' under the Payment of Gratuity Act

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In a rare move, the Supreme Court on Wednesday called back its own judgment *suo motu* and listed it for fresh hearing.

A Bench of Justices A.M. Sapre and R. Subhash Reddy froze the implementation of the court's January 7 verdict which erroneously held that a teacher is not an

'employee' under the Payment of Gratuity Act.

The judgment was delivered by a Bench of Justices Sapre and Indu Malhotra after relying on a 2005 judgment of the Supreme Court.

Amended law

The Sapre/Malhotra Bench was not apprised of the later development of Parlia-

ment amending the law in 2009 to effectively include teachers within the ambit of 'employee' under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972. The amendment had a retrospective effect dating back to 1997.

Subsequent High Court judgments had also interpreted the 2009 amendment to include teachers within the definition of 'em-

"The judgment dated January 7, 2019 shall not be given effect to till the matter is reheard finally by the appropriate Bench... The Registry is directed to list this matter for rehearing before the appropriate Bench of Justices Abhay Manohar Sapre and Indu Malhotra as early as possible," the Supreme Court ordered.

Nirmala meets top brass of HAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday met the top brass of the aerospace major HAL and assured them of all required assistance to help the firm come out of the current financial crisis, official sources said.

PARADIP PORT TRUST
e-TENDER NOTICE
An-e-Tender Notice invites for 'Appointment of Project Management Consultant (PMC) for preparation of detailed Master Plan which includes Architectural Design, Site Planning etc. for 1,000 various types of Quarters with allied amenities for New Township and Detailed Engineering, Tendering and Construction Supervision of 350 Quarters in the New Township under Smart Industrial Port City (SIPC) Plan at Paradip'. The date of availability of documents in website is from 05.01.2019 to 12.02.2019. For details, please log on to the website: <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app/>
By: Secretary
Dt: 01/01/2019
PPT/PRF/580/18-19

Government of India
Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)
UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA (UIDAI)
Technology Centre, Bengaluru
TC/UID/Admin/Deputation-TC & DC/10/Vol-IV/2017-18 Dated: 31.12.2018
VACANCY CIRCULAR FOR THE POST OF SECTION OFFICER (ADMINISTRATION) IN UIDAI TECHNOLOGY CENTRE, BENGALURU.
Unique Identification Authority of India invites applications in the prescribed form for the post of Section Officer on deputation basis for UIDAI Technology Centre located at Bengaluru.
Sl. No. Name of the Post Scale of Pay & Grade Pay (As per VI to CPC) New Scale of Pay (Pay Matrix) Number of posts vacant
1 Section Officer Rs. 9300 - 34800 plus Grade Pay of Rs. 4800/- Level - 8 01
For application form, eligibility criteria, desirable qualification / experience and related details, please visit: www.uidai.gov.in. Application completed in all respect along with the APARs, Vigilance clearance etc. should be sent through proper channel to ADG (In charge), UIDAI Tech Centre, Bengaluru or on before 08.02.2019. Sd/- Deputy Director

ANDHRA PRADESH CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Lenin Centre, Governorpet, Vijayawada - 520 002 (A.P.)
Box Tender Notice
NIT No. 85/Proc/CRDA/PMC/INFRA/SA/B,C,D: Dated: 08.01.2019
The APCRDA invites the bids both from (empowered and others) for 'RFI for Engagement of Project Management Consultant (PMC) for Investigation, Design and Construction of Roads, Bridges, Storm water Drains, Water Supply, Sewerage, STP, Utility Ducts for Power & ICT, Reuse waterline & Avenue Plantation, Compartible with Trunk Infrastructure in Layouts for Land Pooling Schemes for Abbajapalem, Borupadu, Dondapadu, Thuluru (Part), Ananthavaram (Part), Pichukulapalem (Part), and Rayapudi (Part) villages in ZONE- 5 area (Package 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D) in Amaravati Capital City, Andhra Pradesh, which can be downloaded on APCRDA Website as per the scheduled dates stated below for the following NITs.
The bid can be downloaded from 09.01.2019 to 29.01.2019 up to 14.00 hrs. Due date for submission of Bid 29.01.2019 up to 15.00 hrs. Financial bid opening 29.01.2019 @ 16.00 Hrs. Financial bid opening 31.01.2019. For further details Please refer to www.crdap.vizag.ap.gov.in. Sd/- Commissioner, APCRDA, Vijayawada.

Department of Industries
Udyog Bhawan, Bemle, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh-171001
Tel. No. 0177-2813414, Fax No. 0177-2650657
E-mail: dirindus-hp@nic.in
Website <http://emerginghimachal.hp.gov.in>
No. Ind/Dev/F(19)IPC/2018-19 Dated: 09-01-2019
Request for Proposal
Proposals are invited from reputed/ experienced firms/ companies/ agencies for the purpose of Selection of Media Partner for HP Global Investors Meet 2019.
Details can be obtained from our website <http://emerginghimachal.hp.gov.in>. RFP Document is available on above site - 01-01-2019.
Last date for submission of completed applications is 31.01.2019 (upto 03:00PM).
Further communication, corrigendum, and amendments if any, will be hosted in Bank's website only.
Bangalore Date:10.01.2019 Sd/- Deputy General Manager
Director Industries, Himachal Pradesh

Train 18 to have more space for food storage, catering

ICF is in the process of modifying rakes

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

The indigenously built 'Train 18' will soon undergo slight modifications to include adequate space for storage of food and catering services, a senior official said on Wednesday.

The decision was taken after the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation, the railways' catering arm, raised the issue at a recent meeting, stating that the space on the current rake was not enough to service passengers.

"In Train 18, there was no space to keep the food. The space available was one-third of the space available for us in Sha-



Mass messaging

The BJP is recklessly reinforcing ethnic and religious fault lines in the Northeast

Protests in the Northeast, especially in Assam and Tripura, over the Centre's move to push through the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Parliament highlight the dangerous pre-election adventurism of the BJP. The Bill seeks to confer Indian citizenship to persecuted migrants from the Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Parsi, Christian and Buddhist communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who came to India before 2014. The Bill, contentious in itself for its exclusion of Muslims, is seen by many as a ploy to legitimise the presence of Hindu Bengalis who had reached the Northeast in the aftermath of the birth of Bangladesh in 1971. The BJP's ally in the Assam government, the Asom Gana Parishad, an ethnic party at its core, called it quits on Monday when the Union Cabinet cleared the redrafted Bill for introduction in the Lok Sabha. It was passed on Tuesday. While the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in Assam have often given the assurance that the extra burden of people is not solely the State's, the Rajendra Agrawal-led Joint Parliamentary Committee's report is categorical: "The Assam Government should help settle migrants especially in places which are not densely populated, thus, causing lesser impact on the demographic changes and providing succour to the indigenous Assamese people." Thus, an alliance with the BJP became politically impossible for the nativist AGP.

The blowback from the Bill in the Brahmaputra valley is not lost on the BJP either. It has tried to offset the impact with two decisions aimed at appealing to the Assamese electorate. These, the constitution of a committee to resurrect and operationalise the crucial Clause 6 of the 1985 Assam Accord stipulating "constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards for the Assamese people", and the proposal to accord Scheduled Tribe status to six major communities that are currently classified as OBCs, are of a piece. They are intended to assuage and assure Assamese speakers that the party can merge Hindutva obligations with local interests. The ST status could turn Assam, which has a 34% Muslim population, into a tribal State with majority of seats reserved. The panel could recommend reservation of seats in the Assembly and local bodies and in jobs for the indigenous populace. The point, however, is that for now the measures count as messaging. The Citizenship Bill and the ST Bill have yet to be passed in the Rajya Sabha. And the panel on Clause 6 has until July 6 to submit its report. The BJP knows that with reverses expected in the rest of the country in the Lok Sabha elections, it needs to retain, if not augment, its seats from Assam to come anywhere close to its 2014 haul. It is doing all it can ensure that, but with little thought to the ethnic and communal fault lines it is aiding.

Korean consensus?

Kim Jong-un's visit to China is likely to force next steps after the Singapore summit

The visit to China of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, at the invitation of President Xi Jinping, is significant for two distinct reasons. It is evidence of the continuing calm in the Korean peninsula for nearly a year since the thaw between Pyongyang and Washington that culminated in the Singapore summit in June 2018. The meeting also coincides with the resumption of trade negotiations this week between U.S. and Chinese delegations in Beijing. Expectations are that the dialogue between the regional neighbours could impact the trade dispute between the world's two largest economies. Whereas Mr. Xi is keen on securing sanctions relief for Mr. Kim, U.S. President Donald Trump will be equally eager that his peace deal continues to resonate in the region and beyond, notwithstanding the practical hurdles it has encountered. The Xi-Kim meeting cannot have overlooked the stalled progress on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula that Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump agreed on in Singapore. The American and North Korean leaders have in recent days reiterated their willingness to schedule another bilateral summit, a hope they have held out for months. But unlike the ambiguous promises issued in the Singapore declaration, Mr. Kim now wants to talk specifics. This could raise the stakes beyond diplomatic niceties and sound bites. In his New Year address, he emphasised the easing of economic sanctions as a priority, on which Beijing's diplomatic clout could prove critical despite the lack of movement on the nuclear question. In that speech, Mr. Kim also insisted on a permanent end to the annual joint military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea. Another demand was for multilateral negotiations to declare a formal end to the Korean war in place of the truce that has obtained since 1953. The latter issues have acquired greater weight in view of the ongoing rapprochement between Seoul and Pyongyang. This is exemplified by their decision to convert the Demilitarised Zone that separates the two countries into a peace park, and to disarm the joint security area.

Formal negotiations between North Korea and the U.S. have made little headway since the Singapore summit. Access to North Korea's nuclear installations has proved elusive to U.S. officials. The sudden cancellation of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to Pyongyang last August was an indication of the stalemate. A North Korean test of a new tactical weapon in November was seen as a way to pressure Washington for concessions, if not a return to the hostile posturing of previous years. The uneasy calm that has been sustained on the peninsula for over a year now is no doubt a respite from Pyongyang's successive nuclear tests to rattle the U.S. mainland. But Washington is impatient for information on the North Korean weapons stockpile. Pyongyang is anxious about sanctions relief. Something has to give.

Judicial evasion and the status quo

In high stakes cases, the Supreme Court must ensure that judgments are timely and clear



GAUTAM BHATIA

On October 26, 2018, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by the Chief Justice of India, was confronted with a straightforward legal question: whether the decision taken by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and the Central government to divest Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director Alok Verma of his powers and functions was legally valid. The question was a straightforward one, because it required the court to interpret three legal instruments: the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act (that brought the CBI into existence), the CVC Act, and the Supreme Court's own prior judgment in *Vineet Narain*.

The counsel for Mr. Verma argued that the DSPE Act made it clear that the CBI Director had a guaranteed, two-year tenure, and could not be transferred without the consent of a high-powered committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India. This interpretation of the Act was buttressed by the Supreme Court's exhortation, in *Vineet Narain*, that the Director must be protected from political influence. The Attorney-General, on the other hand, argued that the committee's role was purely recommendatory, that the power vested with the Central government, and that in any event Mr. Verma had not been "transferred".

As the Supreme Court itself acknowledged, what was at stake was a "pure question of law". Yet this

pure question of law took six hearings and more than two-and-a-half months to resolve, and yielded an unclear decision where the court agreed with the principal legal contentions of Mr. Verma, but passed a judgment whose ambit left everyone scratching their heads.

Judicial evasion

The Alok Verma Case – or "CBI vs CBI", as it has come to be popularly known – reveals some of the pathologies that have plagued the Supreme Court's conduct in recent high-profile cases. As indicated above, when Mr. Verma approached the court, the legal question was straightforward: were the CVC and the Central government authorised to divest him of his functions as CBI Director? It was a question that, when the court finally got around to it, took it no more than eight pages to answer.

Why then did the case take six hearings and two-and-a-half months? A perusal of the Court's orders reveals the following: on August 26, the court directed that the CVC finish its pending investigation against Mr. Verma, under the supervision of a retired Supreme Court judge. On November 16, the court received the CVC report in a "sealed cover", and allowed Mr. Verma to respond (also through a sealed cover). On November 20, the court passed a cryptic order stating that "for reasons that need not be recorded, we are not inclined to afford the parties a hearing today", and adjourned the case to November 29. It was reported that the Chief Justice was "annoyed" that some of the contents of the "sealed cover" had been leaked. On November 29, the case was listed for hearing final arguments, which then took place on December 5 and 6. The



court reserved its judgment on December 6, and finally delivered it January 8.

It should be clear from the record that there were two parallel proceedings taking place in the Supreme Court. The first was Mr. Verma's original challenge to the process of his divestment – that came up before the court in October, and was heard in December. The second – which occupied the court through the month of November, and through the now familiar, depressing cycle of "sealed covers" – was the substance of the allegations against Mr. Verma, that the CVC and the government were claiming justified his divestment. However, if Mr. Verma was correct in his claim – and the Supreme Court finally held that he was – then the substance of the allegations against him was irrelevant to his legal challenge against his removal.

Effectively, therefore, by mixing up the two questions, the Supreme Court dragged on for months a case that could have been decided within days. And this was of crucial significance: Mr. Verma retires at the end of January. It is questionable what, precisely, does it really mean for the Supreme Court to "reinstate" him midway through January.

This is not the first time that an important, time-sensitive case has been dragged on in a manner that materially affects the situation of

the parties. In the Aadhaar challenge, for example, the case was finally heard six years after it was filed, effectively allowing the government to present a fait accompli to the court. This is "judicial evasion": the court avoids deciding a thorny and time-sensitive question, but its very refusal to decide is, effectively, a decision in favour of the government, because it is the government that benefits from the status quo being maintained.

Strange fitters

In the Alok Verma case, the Supreme Court finally returned a clear finding that the CVC and the Central government had acted outside their jurisdiction in divesting Mr. Verma. However, the court then went on to also hold that the correct authority – the high-powered committee – would have to consider the allegations against him, and decide on the case within a week. In the meantime, Mr. Verma was restrained from taking "any major policy decisions".

As a matter of law, this is strange. Mr. Verma's challenge, to recall, was that his divestment was procedurally flawed. The Supreme Court's limited remit was to decide that question. It was not for the court to then direct the committee to consider the case against Mr. Verma. Still less was it for the court, after holding that Mr. Verma's divestment was invalid in law, to place fetters on his powers as the Director, thus presumptively placing him under a cloud of suspicion. All this suggests an attempt to chalk out "middle ground", which would be appropriate for a durable engagement in informal dispute resolution. It is not appropriate, however, for a Constitutional Court that is tasked with providing clear answers to the legal questions before it.

In any event, what exactly is a "major policy decision"? What did the court mean when it said that Mr. Verma's role would be "confined only to the exercise of the ongoing routine functions without any fresh initiative"? None of these is a legal term, and the lack of clarity only raises the spectre of fresh litigation, thus further hamstringing Mr. Verma for the remainder of his tenure.

This, once again, is familiar: in the Supreme Court's Aadhaar judgment, although private parties were banned from accessing the Aadhaar database, the ambiguity in the court's holding meant that different parties interpreted the judgment differently – leading to an amendment to the Aadhaar Act that attempts to circumvent the judgment by letting in private parties through the backdoor. This is, once again, a reminder that – much like judicial evasion – ambiguity is not neutral: it primarily benefits the party that has the power to exploit it, and that party is invariably the government.

Setting deadlines

During the Constituent Assembly debates, there was a proposal that all cases involving fundamental rights be decided within a month. The fear was that the more time the court took, the more the government would benefit from the status quo. Recent events have confirmed this fear. In high stakes cases, time-sensitive cases, the court must ensure two things: that the judgment is timely, and that the judgment is clear. The Alok Verma case demonstrates how, when the court fails to do so, it abdicates its role as the sentinel on the *qui vive*, and allows the government to get away with abuse of law.

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer

The Great Game is not a zero-sum deal

India and China can work together, bilaterally and in multilateral groupings, to build a secure Afghanistan



ANITA INDER SINGH

There is an air of uncertainty about the U.S.'s intentions in Afghanistan. The likelihood of an American pullout raises the spectre of instability in Afghanistan, South and Central Asia. If this happens, security could hinge on efforts made by regional powers to stabilise Afghanistan. Could China emerge as the power broker in Afghanistan? And could India help enhance Afghanistan's security?

Like India, China never had any intention of contributing troops to NATO's anti-Taliban campaign. But as Asia's strongest power and challenger to the U.S., China will shed no tears if the U.S. reduces its military strength or calls it a day after 18 years of a protracted and indecisive war in Afghanistan.

Vital to development

Sharing part of a border with Afghanistan, China has a great interest in its stability. China would be adversely affected by war and chaos, which could spill over into north-western China, Pakistan, and Central Asia. As all these areas are vital in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), peace in Afghanistan is

critical.

Over the last decade, China has gained considerable economic and diplomatic influence in Afghanistan. Unsurprisingly, Afghanistan's President, Ashraf Ghani, made China the destination of his first official trip abroad in October 2014. China then announced its intention to build regional consensus on Afghanistan's security.

It has joined the U.S. and Russia in several peace talks with the Taliban and is part of the four-nation Quadrilateral Coordination Group (with Afghanistan, Pakistan and the U.S.). It is giving military aid to Afghanistan, with the express intent of fighting terrorism and increasing security cooperation.

Despite the prevailing instability in Afghanistan, China has used diplomacy and finance to appear influential and generous. It has invested in projects such as mining, roads and railways, and health. A rail link, completed in 2016, and running from far eastern China via Uzbekistan to the river port of Hafizan in northern Afghanistan, could reduce the time taken to make shipments, from six months by road, to just two weeks. Infrastructure problems have halted work on the railway for a while, and the three countries are in talks to resume operations.

China's diplomacy has highlighted its contacts with all parties to the conflict and enhanced its status as a power broker. In 2012, it



brought Afghanistan into the regional diplomatic processes by giving it observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). At the 18th SCO summit at Qingdao, China, in 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared China's readiness to train 2,000 law enforcement officers 'for all parties' in the next three years. The initiative was welcomed by Central Asian countries. For example, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which share a border with northern Afghanistan, are concerned about the Taliban and other terrorist groups becoming powerful in Afghanistan, and posing a threat. The SCO's programme for 2019-21 also calls for combating terrorism, and generally enhancing security cooperation.

Dealing with Pakistan

If the U.S. withdrawal exacerbates conflict, southern Russia will also face the threat of an extremist spoiler. Therefore, Russia and its Central Asian 'near abroad' would be willing to expand their cooperation with China to curb insecurity.

How will China deal with Pakistan, its all-weather friend which trains and exports extremists across the Durand Line? Pakistan has become a crucial link in the BRI. And China has reportedly invested billions in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which cuts across disputed territory in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.

Since 2011, China has continually blamed Pakistan for exporting extremists to Uighur in Xinjiang, and for extremist attacks on Chinese workers in the CPEC area. But these incidents have not affected their friendship. Could China have some leverage over Pakistan? Pakistan remained the largest recipient of Chinese arms imports (2013-17). Would China's strategic and economic interests prompt it to press Pakistan to stop exporting terrorists across the Durand Line? These are the big questions.

India supports China's role in international negotiations on Afghanistan, the activation of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group and other mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation for restoration of peace and development in Afghanistan.

For its part, India has certainly contributed much 'soft power' ranging from telecommunications to education, Bollywood movies and pop music. The building for the National Assembly was built with Indian assistance to support Afghanistan's democracy. Indian

reconstruction largesse, amounting to some \$3 billion, has earned it goodwill and popularity.

Sitting across the table

India, which has been against holding talks with the Taliban for a long time, finally sent two retired diplomats, at the 'non-official level', to join them at the Moscow peace parleys in November last year. But India's lengthy absence from regional diplomacy has resulted in its limited contribution to the negotiations that are necessary to stabilise Afghanistan.

The Afghan government would like to see India-China economic cooperation in Afghanistan that could boost progress and enhance human security. Last October, in a first, India and China started a joint training project for Afghan diplomats. They could expand cooperation by facilitating Afghanistan's full membership of the SCO.

China's leadership role of the SCO and contacts with all parties (the U.S., the Taliban, the Afghan government, Pakistan, Russia and the five Central Asian states) could give it a vantage in crafting a regional solution on Afghanistan. That should not prevent India and China from working together, bilaterally and in the SCO, to build a secure Afghanistan.

Anita Inder Singh is a Founding Professor of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in New Delhi

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.

Citizenship Bill

Why is the government passing Bills that require extensive debate at the fag end of its tenure? The aim appears to be to capture a vote bank without pondering over the after effects on other Indian citizens (Page 1, "Lok Sabha passes Citizenship Bill amidst Congress walkout" and "Protests rock northeastern states", both January 9). The Bill appears to be only another form of selective immigrant appeasement.

GEORGI K. JEEMON,
Ernakulam, Kerala

The Bill falls short of the government's own laudable claims and objectives of providing shelter to the minorities in India's neighbourhood on at least two counts. One, it sets a cut-off date of December 31, 2014, which leaves in the

lurch those who may face persecution and seek shelter in India after this date. This is inhuman abandonment of the spirit of protecting the persecuted minorities.. Two, the Bill restricts its concerns to the minorities of three Muslim-majority countries in the neighbourhood, ignoring the fact of persecution in other countries bordering India. Indeed, people from a Hindu background have not only faced denial of rights and violence but have even been forced to flee at least two of India's neighbouring countries not mentioned in the Bill. Moreover, by not providing any shelter to those who face persecution for their dissent and human rights work or for their sectarian identity and contrarian views within Islam, the Bill takes a narrow conception of minority and persecution and thereby fails

India's constitutional spirit and tradition of humanity and large-heartedness.

FIROZ AHMAD
New Delhi

Gandhi symbols
The article, "The un-Gandian cane" (Editorial page, January 8), glows like a red beam in gathering clouds on the horizon in the form of the Reservation Quota and Citizenship Bills. The menacing symbol of the lathi, being wielded in the name of the people, evokes the image of not only a cowering community of artists and liberals but also of the coercive arm of the law over institutions. Sane voices are being outshouted in the mass hysteria being produced in the name of nation and identity while democratic processes are being subverted by divisive politics. Equality before the law, economic justice and

secularism are being whittled down one by one. What a tragic turn to the trust with destiny that the nation had once dreamt about.

A. KURIEN
Kozhikode, Kerala

This is not science
Our leaders and some academicians seem obsessed with our glorious past, which no one disputes or challenges (OpEd page, 'Single File' – "Regaining respect", January 9). Regrettably, what they do not seem to comprehend is that it is no answer to our present-day tribulations. Across the border, in China, there is an urge to become a technological master. There is deep understanding that science is the logical route to achieving technological dominance. We seem to be doing the opposite. According to 'scientists' in India, 'many of the modern

day discoveries and inventions were already known to our ancients'. If so, why is there a need for a Science Congress? If we persist in the pursuit of such esoteric beliefs it will spell doom for our science, welfare and growth.

H.N. RAMAKRISHNA,
Bengaluru

I am a researcher in one of India's prestigious institutions. Any scientific results need to be validated through rigorous experimentation, review and independent verification. Researchers often battle low

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

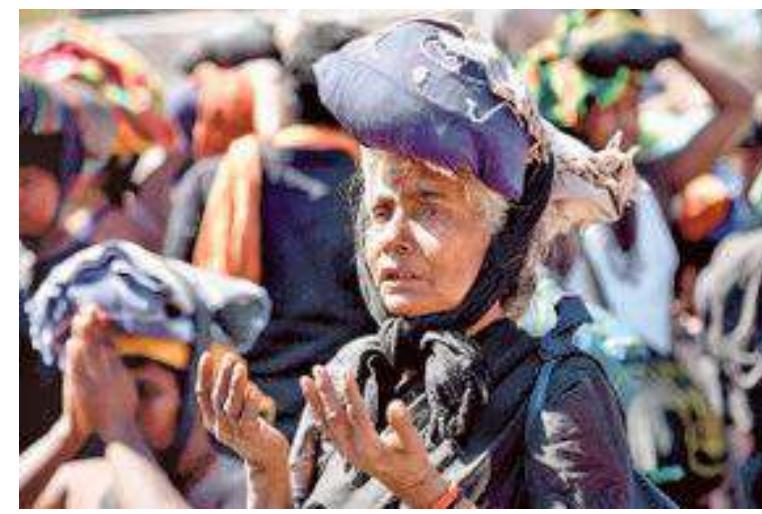
CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:
>>In the front-page story, "SC reinstates Alok Verma as CBI Director, but clips his wings" (Jan. 9, 2019), the opening paragraph and the accompanying graphic wrongly said that the Supreme Court ordered Mr. Alok Verma to "cease and desist" from taking any major policy decisions till a committee "decides" the question of Mr. Verma's divestment in a week. Actually, the committee will meet and "consider" his divestment in a week.

Sabarimala through the ages

The focus needs to shift from the entry of women to ecological destruction of the Western Ghats



RAJAN GURUKKAL



"The Travancore Devaswom Board, on the pretext of meeting the needs of the pilgrims, has been pushing for urban development in the core of the Periyar Tiger Reserve." A devotee in Sabarimala. ■ PTI

dwellers and tribals visited the spot with women and children.

The Pandalam royal house's ownership of the temple gets exposed if we look at historical records. According to a document called the Pandalam Ammanam, in 1794, the royal house legally alienated the entire forest, including the temple and other establishments, to the Travancore king, to clear the huge debt incurred to money lenders such as Thachil Mathu Tharkan and Muralikrishnadas. This is how the Travancore Royal Devaswom Commission (TRDC), constituted in 1810 by Rani Lakshmi Bai on Colonel Munro's advice, came to own the temple. In 1850, the TRDC was dissolved and the Travancore Devaswom Board was constituted. It became the sole custodian of the temple and its property and remains so till today.

Ever since the destruction of the temple by some people in 1950, and the construction of a new temple in the spot thereafter, there has been a steady rise in the number of pilgrims to Sabarimala. These pilgrims are largely from the lower middle class in the southern States. The number of pilgrims rose to more than a lakh by the nineties. Given this rise, the number of days of worship also increased. In the process, the temple, once the destination of tribals and lower castes, as well as the pilgrimage slowly came to be dominated by upper-caste beliefs, customs and practices. Pilgrim expansion turned Sabarimala into a veritable pool of

wealth. Sabarimala is not just a pilgrim spot today, but a massive business.

The ban on women

There was virtually no restriction on women's entry until the Kerala High Court upheld in 1991 the restriction of women aged between 10 and 50 into the temple. It said that this was in accordance with a usage from "time immemorial". The court observed that women would be unable to do penance for 41 days due to menstruation. The ban was also based on the belief that Lord Ayyappa, a celibate, would not approve of young women flocking to Sabarimala. There is neither ritual sanctity nor any scientific justification for this stipulation. For the tribal people, menstruation was considered a symbol of fertility. Women and children went to the temple till the sixties. Archival records also show that young, upper-caste women from the Travancore region entered the temple till the eighties. While it is true that they abstained from entering holy places during menstruation, it is equally true that most male pilgrims today are least aware of the tradition of observing penance for 41 days. Many hardly observe the restrictions on meat, alcohol and sex. So, why are traditional observances binding for women alone?

Caste prejudices (and now even gender prejudices) are evident in the purification rites and rituals followed in the temple. Nampoothiri tantris

considered Sabarimala, a temple in the forest with junior deities like Ayyan and Karuppa Sami, least amenable to purification through agamic rituals. They wondered whether any tantri who had knowledge of agamic rules would dare to undertake the responsibility of maintaining the purity of the Ayyappa temple with 18 hills as its boundary. This exposes the lack of textual tradition and professional legitimacy of Sabarimala's Thazhamon tantric family. Traditions change over time; they are reinterpreted and even invented. Sabarimala is no exception to this sociological phenomenon. Most legends and traditions about the Ayyappa temple are fabrications of recent times with stock motifs from the epics and the puran as.

Environmental concerns

Amidst debates on fundamental rights and the need to preserve tradition, what is being ignored is the important fact that Sabarimala falls in a fragile region of the Western Ghats. A portion of forest land in the Periyar Tiger Reserve, a hotspot of biodiversity, was allotted to the Travancore Devaswom Board in 2012 so that the Board could implement its Sabarimala development plan. The Board, on the pretext of meeting the needs of the pilgrims, has been pushing for urban development in the core of the tiger reserve, paying little attention to environmental regulations. Land has been auctioned to hotels, shops and guesthouses. This violates not only the Kerala Forest Act of 1961, the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, and the Forest Conservation Act of 1980, but also a series of verdicts, including by the Supreme Court.

Further, construction of permanent buildings in leased forestland violates the rules between the government and the Travancore Devaswom Board. Of the total land leased, 14.6% is privatised for the use of 9.5% of the total pilgrims, and 3.4% is extremely privatised for the use of only 0.1%. This is injustice. That the Travancore Devaswom Board is destroying the ecology of the Western Ghats under the pretext of pilgrim welfare is unfortunate and this issue is what awaits meaningful protests.

Rajan Gurukkal, a historian and social scientist, currently heads the Kerala State Higher Education Council

Why Adam Smith favoured public education

Contrary to popular opinion, he was not a free market apologist



ALEX M. THOMAS

assistance, and are likewise exposed to mutual injuries. Where the necessary assistance is reciprocally afforded from love, from gratitude, from friendship, and esteem, the society flourishes and is happy." Indeed, the *Wealth of Nations* and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* are complementary texts.

Education is not a commodity

Smith conceived of education in a broad manner. Education for him not only includes the "study of wisdom" but also the learning of good moral sentiments such as virtue, sympathy, gratitude and benevolence. Since Smith considered education as central to a flourishing society, he did not treat it as a commodity. He argued that the costs of education should be such that "even a common labourer may afford it". In the *Wealth of Nations*, he said: "For a very small expence the publick can facilitate, can encourage, and can even impose upon almost the whole body of the people, the necessity of acquiring those most essential parts of education." This dispels the myth of him being a champion of private education.

Almost all popular commentaries on Smith's economics highlight the role of division of labour or technological progress in the growth of an economy. The growth enhancing effects of division of labour via increasing labour productivity are an important part of Smith's growth account. But Smith understood the central consequence of division of labour on the workers: repetitive work numbs their minds and negatively influences their capacity to make prudent decisions. Therefore, the "education of the common people requires, perhaps, in a civilized and commercial society, the attention of the publick."

Smith advocated accessible education for the entire class of workers, which constitutes the majority of the population. In fact, he advocated compulsory education for them so that it offsets part of the debilitating effects from the division of labour. Smith also believed that education would empower the citizens to make wise decisions which contribute to the "safety of the government". Yet another reason is that education positively affects customary wages, which over time, would increase workers' real wages.

Modern appropriators of Smith also make abundant use of the "invisible hand" metaphor. But Smith used this metaphor only once in *Wealth of Nations*, and twice in his other writings in different contexts.

The

self-interested individual in the *Wealth of Nations* is embedded, as it were, in the society Smith described in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which is characterised by good moral sentiments: "All the members of human society stand in need of each other's

Alex M. Thomas teaches economics at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru

SINGLE FILE

The space race

China's recent achievement could trigger yet another rivalry with the U.S., this time in outer space

ATUL ANEJA



There are several reasons why China's achievement in landing a spacecraft on the far side of the moon could trigger a rivalry with the U.S. in outer space. For starters, China's January 3 landing on the mysterious "dark" side of the moon, the first by any country, gives Beijing a leg up on Washington over big ticket space exploration. Unlike the near side, the far side of the moon is shielded from radio transmissions from earth. The Chang'e-4 mission got around the problem of lack of communication with those on earth by using a relay satellite. The data that China obtains on the moon's craters could help it acquire an edge over other countries, including the U.S., in the highly competitive domain of space research.

The Chinese could also steal a march over the Americans by launching advanced rockets, which would explore new frontiers in space. Unlike earth, the moon has an abundance of helium-3. In the far future, this can serve as the ideal fuel to power a new generation of spaceships, with the moon as the launchpad, instead of earth.

The Chinese may have also taken the lead over peers in exploring the possibilities of human habitation on the moon. The Yutu-2, the rover of the ongoing Chang'e-4 mission, is programmed to explore the South Pole-Aitken Basin. This vast impact region, 13 km deep and 2,500 km wide, has copious reserves of ice. The promise of water has persuaded international space scientists to peg the site as suitable for a permanent lunar outpost, which is on China's radar.

The promise of the moon's natural resources can add another layer of rivalry between the Chinese and the Americans. Space exploration buffs have considered asteroids as lucrative sources of precious metals such as gold, platinum, silver and iridium in the future. But if the relatively more accessible surface of the moon could yield precious resources, the race for lunar colonisation would begin, providing China a substantial early-mover edge.

So far, NASA has congratulated its Chinese counterpart on the impressive success of the Chang'e-4 mission. But its graceful applause is unlikely to yield step two: an offer of active space collaboration between the two countries. The popular mood within Washington's political class has been soured by the sentiment to contain China's rise. In China, an intense techno-war, furthered by the U.S.-inspired arrest in Canada of the scion of the telecom giant, Huawei, has bruised the country's nationalistic psyche.

A new generation of Chinese and American peace advocates, global citizens and cyber-activists have their task cut out – to step up their game and prevent outer space from becoming another arena of a budding Cold War between Washington and Beijing.

The writer is the China correspondent of The Hindu



FAQ

A question of citizenship

Why the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is so contentious in the Northeast

RAHUL KARMAKAR

What is the Bill about?

More than 33 years after an anti-foreigners' agitation from 1979 to 1985, Assam is in turmoil again – this time because of the Modi government's bid to get the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 passed in Parliament. Assam and the rest of the Northeast shut down on Tuesday after the Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha.

Seeking to amend the Citizenship Act of 1955, the Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in 2016 for granting citizenship to minority Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians who came to India on or before December 31, 2014 due to religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. The Bill requires such immigrants to spend at least six years to be eligible for citizenship, instead of 12

years as is currently applicable.

Why is there opposition to the Bill in Assam?

The Assamese and other indigenous communities in Assam say that the Bill is against the spirit of the Assam Accord as well as the National Register of Citizens being updated. The Assam Accord, signed in August 1985, prescribed March 24, 1971 as the cut-off date for detecting and deporting illegal migrants irrespective of religion. The same date applies for NRC inclusion. Some locals argue that the Bill, if passed, will make those who entered India after March 1971 eligible for citizenship overnight. They say that Assam has been bearing the burden of migration even before 1971, and cannot accept any more people.

Who will benefit? The BJP has given the issue a communal edge by arguing that 17 Muslim-majority Assembly seats should not go "Jinnah's way". But it is not clear if this can be done by granting citizenship to a large number of Bengali Hindus among the 40.07 lakh people left out of the NRC. The BJP is clearly

divided on the basis of religion and the country has to create space for the non-Muslim victims of Partition facing religious persecution in the neighbourhood. Muslims comprise 34% of Assam's population. The BJP is believed to have gone ahead with the Bill despite opposition after "testing the waters" with the December panchayat polls, when it won an unprecedented 41% of the seats. This implied that the issue had little or no impact on the voters.

What may be the political fallout?

The Assam Gana Parishad has pulled out of the alliance with the BJP. Other regional allies of the BJP are unhappy with the Bill and could take a call with the Lok Sabha elections drawing near. But regional parties in the Northeast are usually dependent on the party or coalition in power at the Centre, and their decision may depend on the trend post-elections.

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 10, 1969

EMS challenges Centre to order inquiry

The Chief Minister, Mr. E.M.S. Nambugiripad today [January 9, Trivandrum] demanded the Union Government to conduct an enquiry into the sources responsible for making allegations against the Marxist Communist Party from 1962 onwards and also whether these sources had any connections with Pulpalli and Tellicherry incidents in Kerala. Mr. Nambugiripad said that the enquiry should cover the period beginning with the presentation of the White Paper in Parliament by the then Home Minister, Mr. G.L. Nanda, alleging Marxist guerrilla activities. He asked whether the Central Intelligence which was responsible for presenting such a report, had been able to find out what had happened in Kerala now. The Chief Minister, who was replying to the three-day debate on the Governor's address to the Assembly, was commenting on the demand for a judicial enquiry into the Tellicherry and Pulpalli incidents.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 10, 1919.

Leakage of Question Papers at Calcutta University.

The enquiry into the leakage of question papers in connection with the recent Calcutta University examinations by a Committee sitting under the Chairmanship of Sir Asutosh Mukerjee has resulted in an almost extraordinary situation being created. The majority of the committee signed a report to the effect that they have failed to make any discovery that throws light upon the leakage. A minority report makes diverse charges of negligence against the Registrar and of indifference against the majority of paper setters who appear to have refused to help in the enquiry. The result is that the fresh batch of controversial resolutions appear on the Senate's Agenda, one of which goes so far as to suggest that two of the majority have no power to sign the report while another moves that the note of dissent be expunged. Both majority and minority reports declare that the leakage was brought about by an organised body of persons anxious to bring discredit on the University.

CONCEPTUAL

Biological immortality

BIOLOGY

This refers to the biological state where certain organisms like the bristlecone pine and the jellyfish can live forever. These organisms can be killed by external causes like injuries caused by harmful predators, catastrophic changes in their environment and fatal diseases, but they do not get fatally affected by the ageing process like in the case of other organisms. They are considered to be biologically immortal as they can possibly live forever by endlessly replicating their dying cells. Some scientists, however, have argued that such resistance to ageing may decrease over time.

MORE ON THE WEB

Watch: Airline Cargolux will fly two beluga whales

<http://bit.ly/belugacargo>

FROM PAGE ONE

Parliament passes Bill for 10% quota for poor

Also questioning the economic criteria set for extending the quota, he said not many people would benefit from it especially when the government had failed to create enough jobs.

Mr. Sharma also asked the government to extend the parliamentary session further to bring in the Women's Reservation Bill for passage.

Kapil Sibal listed three hurdles that the law would have to cross. There was complete non-applicability of mind on the government's part, its constitutionality could come under judicial scrutiny and that the implementation part was not clear, he said.

Samajwadi Party's Ram Gopal Yadav demanded 54% quota for OBCs, as the government had now opened up the doors by breaching the 50% cap fixed by the Su-

preme Court. Although he supported the Bill, he said the Centre had failed to even provide proper reservation to the SCs, STs and OBCs. "When there are no jobs, what is the meaning of reservation?" he said.

Derek O'Brien of the TMC accused the government of cheating the poor and the youth.

Stating that the Bill had no empirical basis, AIADMK's Navaneethakrishnan quoted a Supreme Court order, stating: "A Backward Class cannot be determined only and exclusively with reference to economic criterion. It may be a consideration or basis along with and in addition to social backwardness but it can never be the sole criterion."

He said the Bill trampled upon the rights of people in Tamil Nadu, which already had 69% reservation.

SC orders Bedi report to be given to petitioners

"The stage of acceptance of the report will come later. The report was submitted to this court at our per orders. You [Gujarat] say whatever you have to say when the report is considered later," the Chief Justice orally addressed the Gujarat side.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, who said he was appearing for some of the "potential accused", then objected to the move to share the Bedi report.

Asserting that the PIL petitioners had no locus standi, Mr. Dwivedi said the case would be prematurely prejudiced against the accused if the Supreme Court puts its seal on the report. He said the report was based on the merits of the encounter cas-

es and a reflection on the alleged conduct and criminality of certain persons involved. He said only the trial court could take cognizance of the Justice Bedi report.

To this, Justice Gogoi retorted by asking Mr. Dwivedi whether he really wanted the apex court to send the report straightaway to the trial court for taking cognizance.

In the previous hearing, Gujarat had objected to the report itself. It alleged that Justice Bedi had prepared it without consulting the other members of the monitoring committee.

The court asked Justice Bedi to file a written response.

Justice Sikri to attend meet on Alok Verma

The committee would consider the material placed before it, including the CVC inquiry report on Mr. Verma based on a complaint filed by rival CBI officer R.K. Asthana, to decide whether Mr. Verma should be divested from office.

The decision taken in the committee meeting, when it happens, would not be ren-

dered invalid "merely by reason of any vacancy or absence of a member of the Committee." That means, the absence of either member – in this case, the CJI's nominee or the Opposition Leader – would not affect the decision.

Justice Sikri's decision on Mr. Verma's fate would prove decisive.

'RS session extended with consensus'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Cornered by the Opposition MPs for extending the session of the Rajya Sabha "without taking the sense of the House", Deputy Chairman Harivansh said the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), comprising members of all parties, had agreed to extend the session by a day.

Mr. Harivansh said that on January 8, the Chairman informed the BAC about extending the session.

"Request was received from the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs for extending the sitting of the Rajya Sabha by one day and accordingly scheduling a sitting on Wednesday, that is, 9th of January. It is clear that the decision was taken by the Chairman along with other members of the House," the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha said.

He said that while adjourning the House on January 8 he announced that it was being done so till 11 a.m. on January 9. "This implied that the House was being extended by a day. If you think this is a mistake, then it's my personal mistake," Mr. Harivansh said.

Verma revokes transfers ordered by interim chief SC had restored him as CBI head

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Resuming office after a 77-day forced leave, Central Bureau of Investigation Director Alok Verma on Wednesday reversed most of the transfers ordered by the interim agency chief, M. Nareshwar Rao.

A day after the Supreme Court order restoring his position, Mr. Verma reached the agency headquarters around 10.45 a.m. He was received at the entrance by Mr. Rao, who was appointed as the acting CBI Director after Mr. Verma was stripped of his powers in the intervening night of October 23 and 24.

Seven transfer orders Soon after Mr. Rao took over, he issued seven transfer orders, including those of the officials who were probing an alleged corruption case against the agency's Special Director Rakesh Asthana and others.

Among the officials were Deputy Superintendent of Police A. K. Bassi, Deputy Inspector-General M. K. Sinha and Joint Director A. K. Sharma. On January 3, Mr. Rao transferred two more officials of the Joint Director rank.

Citizenship Bill: BJP walks a tightrope in Assam

Protesters, supporters see it as a poll ploy

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

The Bharatiya Janata Party appears to be walking a tightrope in Assam by pushing for the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, that seeks to legalise the stay of non-Muslim refugees who allegedly fled religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan till December 31, 2014.

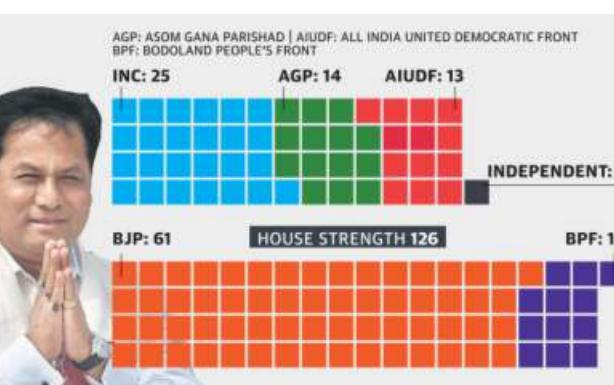
Implementing the Bill was the BJP's promise before the Assam Assembly election in 2016. Southern Assam's Bengali-dominated Barak Valley greeted the passage of the Bill in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, but the Assamese-dominated Brahmaputra Valley erupted in protest, with Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal being seen as having betrayed his own people. The other northeastern States, fearing that the Bill will let migrants outnumber them, joined the protest.

Share of migrants

The northeast, specifically Assam, believes it has already taken a huge load of migrants from present-day Bangladesh since India's Partition and cannot be made to take in more. Organisations and political parties catering to local sentiments

No threats

The AGP's divorce from the BJP will not impact the *Sarbananda Sonowal* government. The BJP, with 61 MLAs, still has the support of the BPF (12 seats). The government has 73 MLAs in a 126 member House



Rajnath seeks to allay fears

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday sought to allay the fears of people in the northeastern States over the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, stating that it was applicable to the entire country.

He assured the House that the government was committed to the preservation of northeast's identity and culture. The government, he said, had taken concrete measures to

implement the promises, including completion of the National Register of Citizens in Assam.

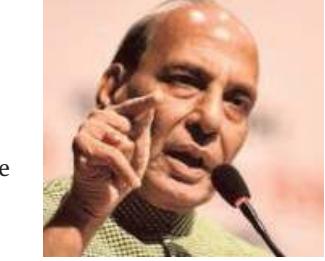
A high-level committee set up to implement Clause

6 of the Assam Accord was expected to give its recommendations within six months, after consulting the stakeholders.

Mr. Singh said a Home Ministry-appointed committee gave recommendations on December 29 on the grant of ST status to six communities in Assam: Tai Ahom, Koch Rajbongshi, Chutia, Tea Tribes, Moran and Matak. The government accepted them and the Tribal Affairs Ministry had placed it before Parliament.

But as the dust settled, people on both sides of the divide saw the "electoral calculation" behind the move. "The Bill will have no meaning if it does not become a law, and it depends on BJP returning to power four-five

months from now. This appears to be a poll strategy, but more for West Bengal which has 42 Lok Sabha seats compared with 14 of Assam," said Bidhayak Das Purkayastha, general secretary of the Citizens' Rights Pro-



Rajnath Singh

AGP Ministers quit Sonowal government

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

All three Ministers of Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) resigned on Wednesday, 48 hours after the party announced it was pulling out of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition to protest against the tabling of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 in the Lok Sabha.

Six MLAs, serving as heads of various corporations in Assam, submitted their resignation too.

"We will now fight alongside the people against any move that is against the interests of the indigenous people," said AGP president Atul Bora, who was the Agriculture Minister. The other two Ministers who resigned were Keshab Mahanta and Phani Bhushan Choudhury.

The move, however, would not impact the Sonowal government. The BJP, which has 61 MLAs, still has a regional ally in the 12-legislator Bodoland People's Front (BPF). Together they have 73 MLAs, nine more than the majority mark in the 126-member House. The AGP has 14 legislators.

Quota won't 'steal' from Dalits, OBCs: Modi

At Agra public meeting, Prime Minister defends 10% reservation for the poor among the general classes



Warm reception: U.P. Governor Ram Naik & CM Yogi Adityanath receiving the Prime Minister. • PTI

country, Mr. Modi reiterated his pitch for simultaneous Assembly and Lok Sabha polls.

Simultaneous poll

"Tell me, do six months pass in our country without any election being held somewhere? Had I brought it three months earlier, you would have said I am bringing it for the elections in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Telangana... Had I brought it before that, you would say it is for the Karnataka election..." said Mr. Modi at Agra's Kothi Meena Bazaar grounds. A reserved seat, Agra is known for its high population of Dalits.

Without naming any party or leader, Mr. Modi asked people to beware "those forces who are engaged in spreading rumours [afwa ka bazaar garam karne mein judh gaye hai] for their greed" on the issue.

Cong. toyed with country's security: PM

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The Congress had operated a remote-controlled government from New Delhi, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, accusing the opposition party of fostering a "climate of middlemen" and "toying with country's security."

He said it was only through the efforts of the BJP government that Christian Michel, the alleged middleman in the AgustaWestland chopper deal, was extradited to India.

"What is the connection between Michel and Rafale deal. Why wasn't the Rafale deal completed during the two terms of the Congress government? While agencies are probing these questions, even the public wants an answer to them," said Mr. Modi at a public meeting in Solapur.

Trinamool Congress expels two MPs, one joins BJP

Party claims the duo's exit won't affect its prospects



Former TMC MP Soumitra Khan with Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and other BJP leaders after joining the party, in New Delhi on Wednesday. • PTI

Lok Sabha polls, has triggered speculation in political circles on whether other MPs from the TMC too are going to defect.

Both are first-time MPs and are in their thirties. Mr. Khan, 38, started his career with the Congress and was elected in 2011 from the Katalpur Assembly constituency. He later defected to the TMC.

Considered close to former TMC heavyweight Mukul Roy, who has now joined the BJP, Mr. Khan was elected from the Bishnupur Lok Sabha seat in 2014.

Mr. Hazra, 236, professor of Bengali at Visva-Bharati University, has often made news for the wrong reasons, particularly his social media posts.

The development, which comes months ahead of the

TMC. "There is not a single instance in Bengal when any poll was conducted peacefully. Every time, the ruling party uses bombs and bullets," Mr. Khan said.

against the policies of the TMC. "There is not a single instance in Bengal when any poll was conducted peacefully. Every time, the ruling party uses bombs and bullets," Mr. Khan said.

Only a day ago, he had posted a video on social media alleging that a police officer in the district was trying to kidnap his personal assistant.

Prof. Hazra seemed a little surprised by the decision. "What is the definition of anti-party activity?" he asked, maintaining that he neither extorted any money nor ever featured in the list of accused persons in the chit fund scam.

Don't underestimate the Congress in U.P.

'We are trying to bring Oppn. together'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

To underestimate the Congress in Uttar Pradesh is a mistake, Congress president Rahul Gandhi said in an interview to *Gulf News*.

His comment comes at a time when the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party are planning to go ahead with an alliance without the Congress in the State for the 2019 general election.

"There are very interesting things that the Congress can do in Uttar Pradesh... the Congress idea is very powerful for Uttar Pradesh. So, we are very confident of our ability and we will surprise people," he said.

Calling the U.P. alliance a

"work in progress", Mr. Gandhi said his party was trying to bring the Opposition together. "I have heard some statements in the media but we are going to work together and make sure that we defeat Mr. Modi. But, I want to say again – to underestimate the Congress in U.P. is a mistake," he added.

Criticising the economic policy of the Modi government, Mr. Gandhi said that ad hoc, non-strategic knee-jerk manoeuvres do tremendous damage to the economy. "The common perception is that demonetisation was some sort of economic exercise. It wasn't, it was a scam and indicators that it was a scam are slowly coming out," he said.

APPEAL

11 years old Ms. Manava needs your support in bringing a lasting change and a new life. She suffers Severe Aplastic Anaemia and underwent Bone Marrow Transplantation at V.S. Hospital, Chennai. She urgently needs Rs.7,75,000/- for her post transplant supportive care. Donations sent by C.H.D.N.E.F.T Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c. No.60182010063310, IFSC No.SYNB000618) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under BOG IT (Please do not mention patient name on the cheque).

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Garden, Flat No.1, Cordel Apartments, O.No.13, Noida, Chennai - 600006, Ph: 044-42137401/2823524 E Mail ID: womenswelfare-syndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.

WWS

AN-NOE

Raisina Dialogue: of foreign policy challenges, opportunities

Terrorism a critical risk, says Sushma Swaraj

Minister flags proliferation of weapons, and climate change

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Terrorism, threat of proliferation of mass destruction and climate change are the critical challenges that confront us today, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said here on Wednesday.

"Today, no country, big or small, is immune from this existential threat; particularly, terrorism actively supported and sponsored by states. In this digital age, the challenge is even greater, with a greater vulnerability to radicalisation," Ms. Swaraj said at the Raisina Dialogue



Brainstorming meet: Narendra Modi, Norway PM Erna Solberg and Sushma Swaraj at the Raisina Dialogue. ■ AFP

jointly organised by the Observer Research Foundation and the External Affairs Ministry.

She said that as far back as 1996, India proposed a draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the UN, but it remained a draft because of a lack of consensus on a common definition.

Further drawing attention to the threat of climate change, Ms. Swaraj said, "Developing and under-developed nations are the worst victims of climate change, with neither the capacity nor the resources to meet the crisis."

"We have risen to meet the challenge," she said referring to the International

Solar Alliance India jointly launched with France last year with the participation of 120 countries. Talking of India's global engagement in the past four-and-a-half years, Ms. Swaraj highlighted five elements with the first being rebuilding bridges with India's immediate and extended neighbourhood.

Stating that India had devoted a much higher level of resources and attention to its neighbourhood, Ms. Swaraj added, "Our revitalised Act East and Think West paradigms have further broadened the reach of our strategic and economic 'neighbourhood'."

Rules-based order

"India therefore stands for a democratic and rules-based international order, in which all nations thrive as equals,"

she said. Another aspect she said was that India is building sustainable development partnerships that stretched from the Indian Ocean and Pacific Islands to the Caribbean, and from Africa to the Americas, and have expanded "both in geographical reach and sectoral coverage".

"Note that we refer to these as partnerships, and not assistance," she said.

Ms. Swaraj said global disruptions and ensuing complexities were ongoing phenomena and the crucial question is how do we respond to these transitions.

On this she stated that while the prosperity of Indians at home and abroad and their security are of paramount importance, Ms. Swaraj said, "Self-interest alone does not propel us."

Rawat for U.S.-Taliban talks

It is in our interest, region's interest and Pakistan's interest'

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

The Chief of the Army Staff, General Bipin Rawat, on Wednesday backed the U.S. talks with Taliban to bring stability in Afghanistan as long as there are no preconditions.

"Yes, there should be talks with Taliban so long as they do not come out with any preconditions and so long as they are looking at lasting peace in Afghanistan and bringing stability in that country. It is in our interest, in the region's interest and in Pakistan's interest. We all want stability," Gen. Rawat said during a discussion on countering terrorism at the Raisina Dialogue.

India had traditionally maintained that there could not be any talks with Taliban, but in an indication of a rethink, it sent two former diplomats to the regional forum on Afghanistan hosted by Russia last November.

Stressing that talks with terrorists or any organisation of that kind has to be without preconditions, Gen. Rawat said: "When you start attaching preconditions, it gives a sense of a notional victory that one or the other side is taking from a position of strength and victory."

Referring to Pakistan's role in Afghanistan, he said Pakistan always considered Afghanistan its backyard and so they always wanted a situation there [Afghanistan] which was more favourable to them. "So, even if it implies speaking to the devil, they will do it," he said.

Pakistani response

However, former Pakistan Ambassador Husain Haqqani expressed doubts on the negotiations which he said were efforts to meet half way.

To questions on radicalisation globally and the trend in India, Gen. Rawat said it has taken a different form in India.



Search for stability: Army chief Bipin Rawat says radicalisation is happening through the media. ■ PTI

'Why different standards?'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah on Wednesday urged the Centre to open a dialogue with separatists and Pakistan, while reacting to Army chief Gen. Bipin Rawat's call for talks with Taliban.

"If the Army chief can ad-

vocate for talks with Taliban then why different standards when it comes to our own people? Accept peace offer from Pakistan, initiate dialogue with Hurriyat and other stakeholders put an end to the vicious cycle of violence in J&K," Ms. Mufti tweeted. Mr. Abdullah also accused the Centre of applying different yardsticks in J&K.

"We see a different form of radicalisation in Jammu and Kashmir. Youth are being radicalised due to a lot of disinformation, misinformation and a lot of false information," he said.

Stating that radicalisation is happening through the media, Gen. Rawat added, "So long as media keeps giving coverage and focus to terrorist activities, it will stay." He said the ISIS had not been able to find its feet in India despite the large number of Muslims because I think we have rich family values".

Tehran proposes a new regional forum for West Asia

'It should render international boundaries inviolable'

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

In a diplomatic initiative to address the lingering conflicts and mistrust in the Gulf region, Iran on Wednesday proposed a new platform for regional peace building. Delivering a major speech at the Raisina Dialogue here, its Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said such a forum should offer membership to countries based on a set of general principles to address real issues that affect people of the region and the world.

"We can start with a Regional Dialogue Forum, particularly in the Persian Gulf region



Regional matters: Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the West is no longer in a dominant position. ■ AFP

for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the political independence of all states," said the visiting minister, suggesting that the forum should render international boundaries inviolable and use of force impermissible.

Laying out the agenda of the regional forum, Mr. Zarif said that it could connect people of various member countries cutting across all traditional boundaries. He also highlighted the effectiveness of such a forum in dealing with threats like terrorism and extremism that has left the countries of the region in a state of continuous state of insecurity.

"Admission to such a forum should be based on accepting generally-recognised principles and shared objectives, notably respect

nued erosion of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which in the recent years has been divided between the Iranian and the Saudi spheres. Mr. Zarif suggested that the new forum could focus on promotion of peace and prosperity in the region.

"Free and open Indo-Pacific is not a containment strategy for China... We are not asking people to choose between U.S. and China

Marise Payne plays with a straight bat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Amid the euphoria of the Indian cricket team's maiden Test series triumph in Australia, visiting Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne on Wednesday joked she had come here directly from the Sydney Test where it was suggested she should put the Border Gavaskar trophy in her hand luggage.

Beginning her address at

the Raisina Dialogue on a lighter note, Ms. Payne said: "I have come directly to New Delhi from the Sydney cricket Test. "There was a suggestion from the Indian cricket administration that I should put the Border Gavaskar trophy in my hand luggage and present it to the [Indian] government. I declined that honour, but congratulations to India for the historic win," she said.

Free Indo-Pacific not against China: U.S. Admiral

Quad countries evolving a common maritime awareness picture and improving interoperability

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Acknowledging the rapid expansion of the Chinese Navy in recent years, especially in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the four countries of the Quad on Wednesday stressed improving interoperability and evolving a "common maritime awareness picture" while not attributing any military angle to the grouping which is seen as a counter to China's expansion.

"Free and open Indo-Pacific is not a containment strategy for China... We are not

asking people to choose between U.S. and China," Admiral Philip Davidson, Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, said during a discussion at the Raisina Dialogue.

Navy Chiefs and top Navy officers of India, Australia, Japan and

the U.S. were present along with the Australian Army Chief.

Referring to the recent steps between India and the U.S. in expanding cooperation, including the signing of the second foundational agreement, Indian Navy

Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba said, "We have a common maritime awareness picture."

The Indian Navy recently inaugurated an Information Fusion Centre- Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) where friendly countries in the region will have liaison officers for information sharing. All Quad countries as well as France have expressed interest in posting a liaison officer.

The U.S. has been conducting Freedom of Navigation Operations in the South China Sea, most of which is claimed by China. "I welcome operations, exercises in the SCS and freedom of navigation operations from any other nation, welcome India," Admiral Davidson stated.

Admiral Davidson said that it was the responsibility of all our nations here to help the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) nations in their discussions for a Code of Conduct with China in the SCS.

The four quad countries represent the open inclusive rule-based order, Admiral Lanba said.

INTERVIEW | ANWAR IBRAHIM

I have been to hell and back and again, hell and back'

Malaysia's PM-in-Waiting looks back at the trials he faced in his political career and charting the course ahead, suggests India take a more positive leadership role

SUHASINI HAIDAR

Few politicians could have scripted a comeback of the kind Datuk Seri Anwar Bin Ibrahim has made. He has been elected back to Parliament 20 years after being imprisoned on charges of homosexuality and sodomy by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in 1998. Mr. Ibrahim, who was acquitted in the case and later received a full royal pardon, partnered Dr. Mohammad in elections as part of the Pakatan Harapan (Alliance for Hope) that came to power in May 2018, and has been named the successor to Dr. Mohammad, who says he will step down before May 2020. Mr. Ibrahim says ties with India are well below potential and must be strengthened.

You have visited India in the past, and now are here as part of the government headed by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. How do you see bilateral ties with India going forward?

■ I think Malaysia established strong ties under PMs [Atal Bihari] Vajpayee and Dr. Manmohan Singh to the present, but the progress in recent years under [former Malaysian PM] Najib has been small compared to what we hoped to achieve in terms of trade and investment, in comparison to the ties with China, for example. The potential for India is much more.

PM Modi was one of the first to travel to Kuala Lumpur after Dr. Mahathir was sworn in, and I met him for very good discussions.

During my visit here, I have met with [Congress president] Rahul Gandhi who

tough on terrorism, and if we are given incontrovertible evidence that someone has been involved, we would not tolerate it.

The government has sent an official request for Mr. Naik's deportation. Yet to the disappointment of many in Delhi, Dr. Mahathir even met him and then said publicly that he would not be deported. Surely, the Indian request could have been considered.

■ The meeting took place prior to that request. The authorities are yet to be given formal evidence. Yes, there is a request from India, but we don't act purely on a request unless there is also a strong compelling case. We do not condone any form of terror.

What are the other regional issues India and Malaysia can work on together?

■ Well, I feel India as a democracy in the region should take a more positive leadership role, and I have said that I am disappointed that India has taken a position on Myanmar for example that business first and human rights in the background, both when Aung San Suu Kyi, and now with the Rohingya, we hoped India would be the voice of reason and champion the cause of justice.

To come to government formation, most were surprised to see you and Dr. Mahathir, the man who imprisoned you, come together to fight elections. Have there been any regrets about the decision?

■ No, because we did succeed in toppling the corrupt regime and we now are dealing with the huge financial problems left behind. Also Dr. Mahathir has announced a major programme of agenda. Of course, there are concerns amongst our younger supporters, including my daughter [Nurul Izzah Anwar] who has now left party positions out of growing disenchantment, and we have to concede that people expect more from our government. The abdication of the King, although it is a separate issue, also came at a time which made it seem as if the government was in trouble. But to the credit of Tun Mahathir, he has given a clear direction to the government.

I am not overly concerned about the future... Que sera sera

You are now in a strange sort of limbo, as the Prime Minister-in-waiting. Yet no one really knows when the handover from PM Mahathir will be. Do you know?

port, not as a lameduck. We need to be united and focus on the serious economic problems.

■ I am not a hypocrite, and I will say that it was a difficult decision and equally painful to my wife and children who had suffered so much. I told them we have to look forward for the country's sake. Azizah [his wife] was committed, went ahead in the campaign. The problems faced by the country were more acute than the problems I faced. Being in jail, solitary confinement, the assault by the police chief, the humiliation of sexual and treason allegations were all very hard, but eventually we won. Despite all the money, judiciary, etc., stacked against us, one cannot stop the will of the masses.

Do you worry however, that you may never become PM?

■ I am 71 years old, and I have been to hell and back and hell and back again, so I am not overly concerned about the future. I know people think politicians don't mean that, but I do. Que Sera Sera (What will be, will be).

How will you embark on economic reforms given the massive \$250 billion debt that Malaysia has incurred?

■ The main issue is governance. With proper investment we can resolve our issues.

The debt may be huge but the fundamentals are strong for a trading nation, a net exporter of petroleum like Malaysia.

I hope we can work more aggressively with India on increasing trade and investment as well.

■ Yes, she has said she wants to step down when I assume office because she feels it will not be proper. She will continue to play her role, especially for health and culture and welfare.

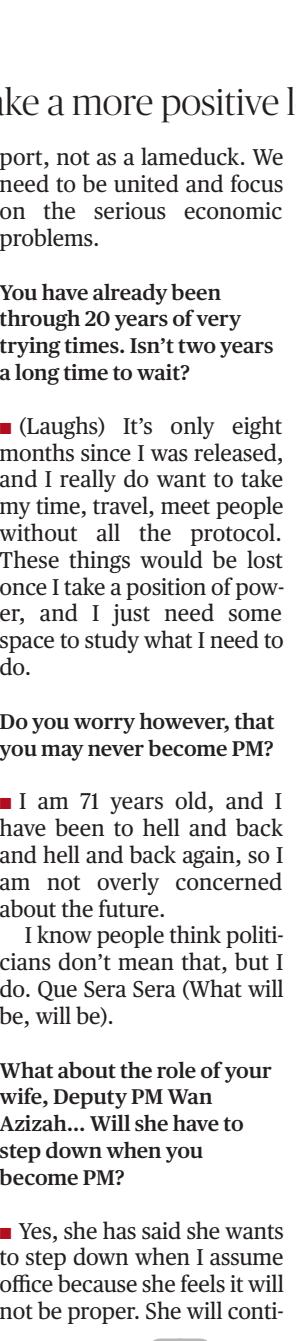
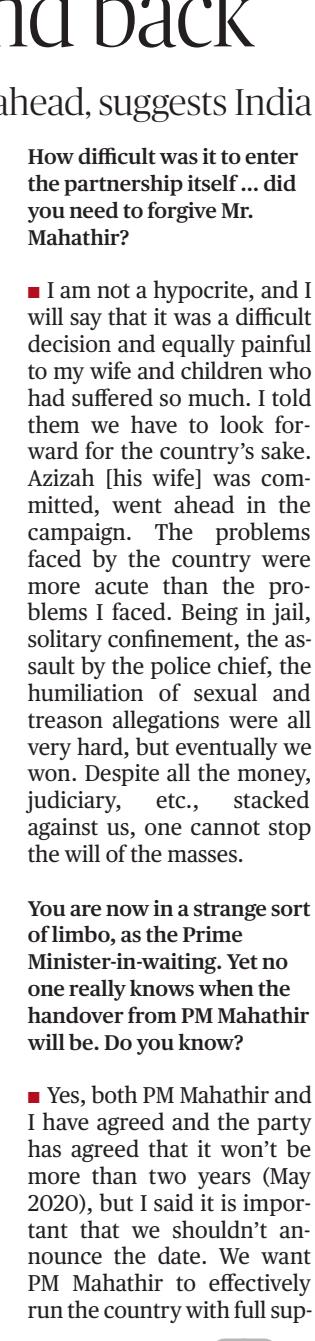
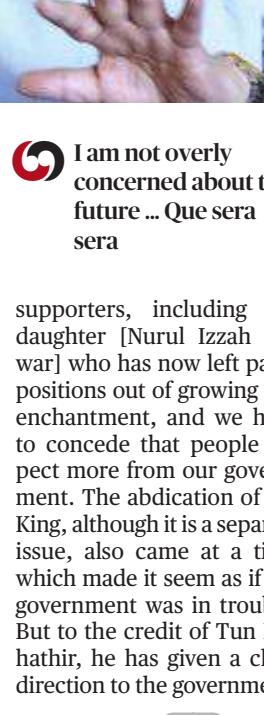
One of the first big decisions made by the Mahathir government was to cancel three major Chinese infrastructure projects that were part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Is the government considering withdrawing from the BRI as well?

■ No. I visited China after PM Mahathir's visit, and said we had issues with some of the projects that were exorbitant. Dr. Mahathir also said that we are not against China, we want Chinese investments, but the BRI projects we cancelled were not viable for us.

How will you embark on economic reforms given the massive \$250 billion debt that Malaysia has incurred?

The debt may be huge but the fundamentals are strong for a trading nation, a net exporter of petroleum like Malaysia.

I hope we can work more aggressively with India on increasing trade and investment as well.



ELSEWHERE



India-born Muslim leader in Texas faces ouster

Houston
Shahid Shafi, an India-born Republican leader in Texas, may be ousted as the party's vice-chairman for being a Muslim and allegedly preferring Islamic law over U.S. law, according to reports. A group of Tarrant County Republicans will vote on Thursday on whether to remove Mr. Shafi as vice-chairman of the party's county division after a small faction brought a motion.

Cambridge Analytica pleads guilty in FB case

LONDON
Cambridge Analytica, a U.K. consultancy that worked on U.S. Donald Trump's election campaign, pleaded guilty and was fined by a London court on Wednesday over its refusal to release personal data it secretly hoovered off Facebook. It was fined £15,000 (\$19,100) and required to pay around £6,000 in court costs.

U.K. to test immigration proposals in India

New plans aim to create a level playing field for EU and non-EU workers, basing opportunities on skills

VIDYA RAM

British officials are set to test India's reaction to proposals for a new post-Brexit immigration system unveiled in December. Home Office officials are set to meet with counterparts in India next week, as well as others, for discussions on the 'Immigration White Paper' unveiled by Home Secretary Sajid Javid last year, a senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) official has said.

The immigration plans aim to create a level playing field for EU and non-EU workers, basing immigration opportunities on skills levels rather than which part of the world workers have come from. "It is important to us as we finalise [immigration policy] to get a clear view from the Indian government, and Indian students and others," said the FCO official, adding that they believed the nature of the discussions

Trump insists on steel wall with Mexico

The barrier will stop the shedding of American blood by illegal immigrants, says U.S. President

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump used a prime-time address to the nation on Tuesday to insist on \$5.7 billion for a steel wall along the Mexican border that he said would stop the shedding of "American blood" by illegal immigrants.

The nine-minute speech from the storied Oval Office in the White House contained no concessions to Democrats refusing to fund construction of the wall – a project Mr. Trump has made his signature domestic policy idea.

The address also offered no hope for a quick end to a government partial shutdown triggered by the row that has left 8,000,000 federal employees without pay.

However, Mr. Trump did steer away from earlier predictions that he might announce a national emergency, which would have given him the power to authorise the wall project without congressional approval, likely

triggering an even deeper political crisis.

Mr. Trump spoke in an unusually measured voice, apparently hoping to claim the moral high ground, and said he wanted to bridge the political divide in what could be the defining power struggle of his turbulent presidency.

"I have invited congressional leadership to the White House tomorrow to get this done. Hopefully, we can rise above partisan politics in order to support national security," he said. "This situation could be solved in a 45-minute meeting."

Controversial message

Despite that softer tone, Mr. Trump also spent much of the speech doubling down on his controversial message – popular among his right-wing base – that illegal immigration at the U.S.-Mexican border is above all a threat to the lives of Americans.

He listed gruesome examples of crimes committed by



Call for wall: President Donald Trump delivering an address from the Oval Office of the White House on Tuesday. • AFP

illegal immigrants, including a "beheading and dismembering," and said he would "never forget the pain" of survivors he'd met.

"How much more American blood must we shed before Congress does its job? For those who refuse to compromise in the name of border security, I would ask to imagine if it was your child, your husband, or your wife whose life was so cruelly

shattered and totally broken," he said.

That, to opponents, is at best fearmongering for political purposes – or race-baiting at worst. Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi said in her instant rebuttal speech that the real problem was Mr. Trump's "cruel and counterproductive policies" making the border ever more dangerous for vulnerable migrants, including

young families. Fact-checking teams at U.S. media outlets quickly took issue with a number of Mr. Trump's assertions – for instance, his statement that every day U.S. agents at the border with Mexico "encounter thousands of illegal immigrants trying to enter our country."

Incorrect assertions

That number is vastly overstated, CNN and *The New York Times* said.

Also wrong are Mr. Trump's assertions that 90% of the heroin entering the U.S. crosses over from Mexico and that Mexico, indirectly, via a new trade agreement with the U.S. and Canada, would end up paying for a wall, the *Times* said.

The speech offered no hope of a resolution to the government shutdown that started 18 days ago as a negotiating tactic but has turned into a symbol of dysfunctional Washington politics – and increasingly a painful situation for unpaid workers.



Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. • REUTERS

Trump fired FBI chief James Comey. He has long overseen the investigation and has frequently drawn Mr. Trump's ire.

The Department official said there is no specific timetable for Mr. Rosenstein's departure and that he plans to leave sometime after Mr. Barr's confirmation in the Republican-led Senate. Mr. Rosenstein will stay on to ensure a smooth transition for Mr. Barr, the official said, adding that Mr. Rosenstein has viewed his current job as a two-year stint and is not being forced out.

Top official overseeing Russia probe to quit

Rosenstein assumed charge in 2017

REUTERS

WASHINGTON

Rod Rosenstein, the Justice Department official who is overseeing the probe into Russia's role in the 2016 U.S. election, is preparing to leave his job as soon as Mr. Trump's nominee for Attorney-General gets ready to take office, a Department official said on Wednesday.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, the new Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, told reporters that William Barr, Mr. Trump's nominee to serve as the top U.S. law enforcement official, told him that Special Counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation would continue if he is confirmed as Attorney-General.

Appointed by Trump

Mr. Rosenstein, appointed by Mr. Trump as Deputy-Attorney-General, named Mr. Mueller to head the Russia probe in 2017 after Mr.

Packages sent to missions in Australia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MELBOURNE

Suspicious packages were sent to more than a dozen foreign Embassies and consulates, including that of India, in major Australian cities on Wednesday.

Emergency services raced to a string of diplomatic facilities which had received packages containing suspected hazardous material. There was no obvious pattern to countries targeted, with consulates of the U.S., China, Italy, India, Japan and New Zealand suffering scares.

The packages were not believed to be dangerous, but police, fire crews and forensic teams were urged to use breathing apparatus as they documented and double-or triple-bagged the materials for further testing.

Most of the sites were evacuated as a precaution but later declared safe.

More setbacks for May ahead of Brexit vote

DUP rejects her new backstop proposal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON

British MPs on Wednesday began five days of debate ahead of a delayed vote on Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit deal, a day after giving her a stinging blow aimed at preventing the country from crashing out of the EU with no deal.

Ms. May's attempts to win over MPs from Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which props up her government in Parliament but is opposed to the Brexit deal, were also rebuffed on Wednesday.

Ms. May's attempts to win over MPs from Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which props up her government in Parliament but is opposed to the Brexit deal, were also rebuffed on Wednesday.

But DUP Brexit spokesman Sammy Wilson told Sky News that the proposals were "window dressing".

Window dressing'

The government said it would grant lawmakers in Northern Ireland greater powers to block legislation if their province ever found itself in a contentious "backstop" arrangement to avoid a hard border in Ireland.

But DUP Brexit spokesman Sammy Wilson told Sky News that the proposals were "window dressing".

Name of the Work:

Expression of Interest (PQ Tender) for "Design, Manufacture, Supply, and installation, Commissioning, Transfer to site of the Energy Efficient LED Street Lights, Along with maintenance and onsite warranty"

KEONICS invites expression of interest for Pre – qualification of business associates for e-bids from eligible bidders for: "Design, Manufacture, Supply, and installation, Commissioning, Transfer to site of the Energy Efficient LED Street Lights, Along with maintenance and onsite warranty" as specified during issue of LOA for qualified bidders, under Single Stage Bidding Process. Last Date for submitting tender is 19.01.2019, 17.00 hrs. Further for Details login: www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in or contact Helpdesk No.080-25501216/25501227

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DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)

KARNATAKA STATE ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD KEONICS
2nd Floor, A Block, BMTC Complex, Sharathnagar, KH Road, Bangalore- 560001, FAX:080-2223652, 080-2225645

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(through e-Procurement only)

No: KSEDCTTSUK/07/2018-19LED Lights Dated: 08.01.2019 - LED

Name of the Work: Expression of Interest (PQ Tender) for "Design, Manufacture, Supply, and installation, Commissioning, Transfer to site of the Energy Efficient LED Street Lights, Along with maintenance and onsite warranty"

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Sd/-
DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)

UN asks Australia to consider Saudi teen's case

Rahaf fled her family, sought asylum

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BANGKOK

The United Nations has said that Rahaf Mohammed al-Qunun, 18, who fled her family in Saudi Arabia, is a legitimate refugee and has asked Australia to resettle her. Canberra said on Wednesday.

Ms. Qunun was stopped by authorities at Bangkok's main airport as she arrived on a flight from Kuwait at the weekend after running away from her family, who she says subjected her to

physical and psychological abuse. "The UNHCR has referred Ms. Rahaf Mohammed Al-Qunun, 18, who fled her family in Saudi Arabia, to Australia for consideration for refugee resettlement," Australia's Department of Home Affairs confirmed in a statement.

The Department said it would "consider this referral in the usual way, as it does with all UNHCR referrals".

Australian officials have strongly hinted that Ms. Qunun's request will be accepted.

Some American officials are first-class idiots: Khamenei

Ridicules backers of 'regime change'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TEHRAN

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday dubbed some U.S. officials as "first-class idiots" as he ridiculed them for predicting the collapse of the Islamic Republic by the end of 2018. "Some U.S. officials pretend that they are mad. Of course I don't agree with that, but they are first-class idiots," he said in speech to the exiled People's Mujahedin of Iran group in 2017.

It was not clear to which official he was referring, but members of President Donald Trump's administration, including National Security Adviser John Bolton, have called for regime change. "Before 2019, we will celebrate in Tehran," Mr. Bolton told a meeting of the exiled People's Mujahedin of Iran group in 2017.

A while ago, a U.S. politi-

cian had said, among a gathering of terrorists and thugs, that he hopes to celebrate this Christmas in Tehran," he said.

It was not clear to which official he was referring, but members of President Donald Trump's administration, including National Security Adviser John Bolton, have called for regime change. "Before 2019, we will celebrate in Tehran," Mr. Bolton told a meeting of the exiled People's Mujahedin of Iran group in 2017.

The envoy, from Indonesia, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Kuwait and many other countries, visited local markets, educational institutions, mosques, factories, as well as vocational and training centres, said Xinhua.

Besides diplomats, the Chinese Foreign Ministry also took a small group of journalists. On Monday, Beijing said it would welcome UN officials to visit the province.

Envoys from 12 countries visit Xinjiang

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BEIJING

China took diplomats from 12 countries with a large Muslim population, including India and Pakistan, to its Xinjiang province where tens of thousands of Uighur Muslims have been interned in education camps.

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PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BEIJING

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The envoy, from Indonesia, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Kuwait and many other countries, visited local markets, educational institutions, mosques, factories, as well as vocational and training centres, said Xinhua.

Besides diplomats, the Chinese Foreign Ministry also took a small group of journalists. On Monday, Beijing said it would welcome UN officials to visit the province.

Envoys from 12 countries visit Xinjiang

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Envoys from 12 countries visit Xinjiang

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BEIJING

MARKET WATCH

	09-01-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,213	-0.64
US Dollar	70.46	-0.36
Gold	32,800	0.34
Brent oil	59.71	2.82

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	377.30	-1.45
Asian Paints	1402.00	-0.75
Axius Bank	670.10	19.20
Bajaj Auto	2696.90	2.05
Bajaj Finserv	6399.10	-43.95
Bajaj Finance	2524.35	-12.70
Bharti Airtel	334.50	5.25
BPCL	340.05	-11.90
Cipla	510.10	-3.55
Coal India	232.65	-0.65
Dr Reddy's Lab	2603.10	32.60
Eicher Motors	20291.05	246.40
GAIL (India)	341.35	-13.25
Grasim Ind	835.30	-1.30
HCL Tech.	938.40	-6.75
HDPC	1994.95	36.00
HFDC Bank	2116.80	13.80
Hero MotoCorp	2937.45	-32.85
Hindalco	205.70	-0.80
HPCL	239.00	-8.95
Hind Unilever	1785.00	14.15
Indiabulls HFL	821.75	9.20
ICICI Bank	382.25	2.10
IndusInd Bank	1601.75	24.00
Bharti Infralet	290.35	-7.60
Infosys	676.10	6.05
Indian Oil Corp	132.00	-2.00
ITC	290.40	6.15
JSW Steel	290.75	-3.15
Kotak Bank	1238.25	9.35
L&T	1386.05	3.85
M&M	726.30	2.90
Maurti Suzuki	7492.90	53.40
NTPC	146.55	-0.40
ONGC	145.30	-2.15
PowerGrid Corp	197.60	0.25
Reliance Ind	1110.75	6.10
State Bank	305.30	0.00
Sun Pharma	448.75	0.70
Tata Motors	183.05	3.10
Tata Steel	479.20	-12.15
TCS	1886.95	-6.60
Tech Mahindra	693.70	3.85
Titan	952.95	6.80
UltraTech Cement	3817.25	-99.05
UPL	764.80	12.60
Vedanta	194.75	-0.90
Wipro	329.00	3.45
YES Bank	186.45	-5.90
Zee Entertainment	451.25	-0.40

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.26	70.58
Euro	80.46	80.83
British Pound	89.45	89.87
Japanese Yen (100)	64.53	64.83
Chinese Yuan	10.28	10.33
Swiss Franc	71.61	71.94
Singapore Dollar	51.80	52.04
Canadian Dollar	53.05	53.30
Malaysian Ringgit	17.07	17.18

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI	
January 09 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses	
Retail Silver (1g).....42.5.....(42.1)	
22 ct gold (1 g).....3051.....(3037)	

Tax threshold among key GST meet agenda

Rate cut for under construction properties, composition scheme for small service providers on cards

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN

NEW DELHI

Some of the key issues likely to be discussed during the 32nd GST Council meeting on Thursday include increasing the ₹20-lakh threshold for GST eligibility, reducing tax rate on under-construction properties in a bid to boost the real estate sector, extension of the composition scheme to service providers, and approval of a possible disaster relief cess for Kerala, according to tax analysts following the matter.

The council, in its last meeting on December 22, had decided to form several committees to look into these issues.

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had said at that time that the recommendations of these committees



Trade imbalance: Small traders are allowed to pay GST at nominal rates, but can't deal in GST exempted items. ■ H. VIBHU

would be taken up in the subsequent meeting.

Currently, the Composition Scheme allows small manufacturers and traders, with an annual turnover of less than ₹1 crore, to file quarterly returns and pay GST at nominal rates. These traders, however, cannot

avail input tax credits or deal in items exempt from GST.

Tax analysts believe that the Composition Scheme for small service providers is likely to be decided upon in Thursday's meeting, along with a possible change in the return filing timelines for companies under the

scheme. "What we are expecting is that they will come up with a Composition Scheme for small service providers," Archit Gupta, founder and CEO of Clear-Tax told *The Hindu*. "They had set up a committee for that. That will be something different because so far service providers cannot opt for composition. That seems very likely to happen."

Annual returns filing

"What will be interesting is that (Bihar Deputy CM) Sushil Modi had recommended an annual returns filing for the Composition Scheme filers," Mr. Gupta added. "That could be taken up as well."

Mr. Modi is also the head of an inter-ministerial committee set up to look into the IT issues to do with GST. The

Council is also likely to deliberate upon raising the ₹20 lakh annual turnover threshold above which companies have to register in the GST system. Another issue likely to be discussed is the imposition of a cess to finance the disaster relief efforts in Kerala following the floods there.

"On the increase in the threshold limit, while it should bring quite a relief to the small players, the government should coherently evaluate the impact on revenue collections," Abhishek Jain, Tax Partner, EY said.

"While the levy of disaster cess should help in the hardships caused due to the Kerala floods, the government should in detail analyse the levy mechanism so that it is easy to implement by businesses."

RBI Governor meets NBFC representatives

'Liquidity issue discussed during meet'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Representatives of the troubled shadow banking sector met Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday and are understood to have discussed a host of issues surrounding liquidity, which they have been struggling with since the IL&FS crisis broke out late August last.

There has also been a suggestion to have a bi-annual meeting between the Governor and the representatives of the sector which is most likely to be implemented, sources said.

"We discussed our problems, starting with the liquidity issues. It is not as bad as November on liquidi-

ty right now, but the costs have gone up. We hope that the costs will come down soon," one of the attendees of the meeting told PTI.

Mr. Das, who has been meeting all the key stakeholders, including banks and MSME representatives, after taking charge last month, told the meeting that NBFCs played a significant role in ensuring credit flow to the economy, sources said.

He also sought suggestions on how to improve the credit flow, they said, adding no assurances were offered at the meeting.

Some NBFCs are said to have requested the RBI to allow them to access public deposits, which could give them access to funds.

India's GDP may grow at 7.3% in 2018-19, says World Bank

Upswing in consumption and investment to drive growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON

India's GDP is expected to grow at 7.3% in the fiscal year 2018-19, and 7.5% in the following two years, the World Bank has forecast, attributing it to an upswing in consumption and investment.

The bank said India will continue to be the fastest growing major economy in the world.

China to slow down
China's economic growth is projected to slow down to 6.2% each in 2019 and 2020 and 6% in 2021, according to the January 2019 Global Economic Prospects report re-

leased by the World Bank.

In 2018, the Chinese economy is estimated to have grown by 6.5% as against India's 7.3%. In 2017, China with 6.9% growth was marginally ahead of India's 6.7%, mainly because of the slow-

Yes Bank finalises names for Kapoor's successor

List to be sent to RBI for approval

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS), which has invited expression of interest (EOI) for sale of road projects, said it had received 30 proposals. The last date for submission of EOIs was Tuesday.

"More than 30 expressions of interest were received for acquiring IL&FS' interests in its domestic road vertical including its domestic EPC and O&M businesses," the company said on Wednesday. "Interest has been received from a mix of strategic and financial players. Qualifying interested bidders will then be invited to review information on the business that would be shared with them, so as to enable them to submit commercial bids," it added.

Potential candidates
"...the board of directors of the bank, at its meeting held on January 9, 2019 have finalised names of potential candidates for the position of MD and CEO...the bank's board will submit an application to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on January 10, 2019, seeking approval for the appointment of the new MD & CEO of Yes Bank," the

RBI makes changes in gold scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) made some changes in the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) by including charitable institutions and the Central government, among others.

Apart from individual and joint depositors, the scheme could now be availed by charitable institutions, the Central government, or any other entity owned by the Central government or the State government, the RBI said in a notification.

In 2015, the government launched the GMS to mobilise the gold held by households and institutions.

GMS allows bank customers to deposit idle gold holdings for a fixed period in return for interest.

Tokenisation may aid safe digital transactions

System will ensure reduction in chances for fraud, say industry players



create a code for a particular amount, say ₹500, through an app in the form of a number. That number will have the amount that can be spent, the merchant type where it can be spent as well as time within which the transaction needs to be completed. Then the number can be shared with the merchant who will enter it in the mobile, to get the payment for the items sold.

Advantage customer
"For the customers it is a situation to rejoice as all frauds go for a toss. Because I do not need to enter my card number, CVV, expiry date etc online, I can generate a token and make the payment. There is no risk at all for digital payments," said Anand Kumar Bajaj, MD & CEO, PayNearby – a technology provider for using Aadhaar-enabled payment ser-

vices. Commenting that tokenisation is central to Mastercard's goal of achieving secure and frictionless payment experience, the global payment gateway said, "Mastercard's tokenisation service, Mastercard Digital Enablement Service (MDES) has been live in more than 50 over countries with over 1,500 banks enabled for tokenisation."

MDES has been adopted in Asia Pacific region with more than 100 banks for various token requestors such as Samsung, Google, Apple, Fitbit, Garmin and several others.

"Mastercard is working with all stakeholders in the Indian payments ecosystem – banks, merchants, PSPs and acquirers – to make sure that every card is token-ready, and can be used at a vast variety of outlets, both online and in-store," it added.

TVS seeks EY help to monetise brand

Group known for its integrity, ethics

K.T. JAGANNATHAN

CHENNAI

The TVS Group, one of the iconic business groups in the south, has roped in a global consulting firm to advise it on the possibility of charging a fee on group firms which want to use the TVS brand name.

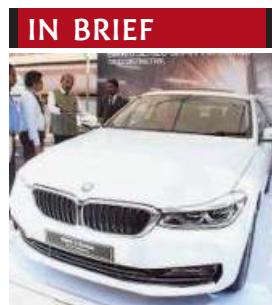
Sources have indicated that the TVS group has retained consulting firm E&Y to help it understand the feasibility of such an option and also suggest a mechanism to do it.

T V Sundram Iyengar & Sons, the holding company, was set up in 1911. The group is present across diverse fields ranging from automotive to finance and logistics.

The TVS group is reputed for being ethical and trustworthy in its business. The group has a turnover of close to \$7.5 billion. As of now, the group firms are allowed to use the TVS brand name if 25% or more of their equity is held by the group. In May last year, Suresh Krishna, chairman of TVS & Sons, told journalists in an informal chat that the group was considering royalty-type payment by group firms for using the TVS brand name. He, however, underlined that the thought process on this issue was only at a preliminary stage.

"All companies in the group follow highest ethical standards. Though different family members run their businesses differently, the core, which is ethics and trust, is followed very strictly," Mr. Krishna had said.

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**IN BRIEF****BMW Group India sales rises 13% in 2018**

CHENNAI BMW Group India has reported a 13% increase in car sales in 2018 at 11,105 cars (BMW + Mini) against 9,800 units sold in 2017. During the year under review, BMW India sold 10,405 cars, an increase of 11% over the corresponding year-earlier period. Mini India reported 66% growth at 700 units against 421 sold in 2017. BMW 5 and BMW 6 Series Gran Turismo have contributed strongly to the sales growth.

P&W engines: DGCA to issue additional protocol

NEW DELHI The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Wednesday said it will issue within a week an additional safety protocol directive to airlines facing issues in Pratt & Whitney-powered Airbus planes. The civil aviation ministry sat with senior executives of P&W, Airbus, Indigo and GoAir to review frequent on-ground and mid-air glitches that the P&W engines, powering certain Airbus planes, have been facing. PTI

Mercedes-Benz India sales increases by 1.4%

MUMBAI Mercedes-Benz India in 2018 continued its market leadership position in the luxury car segment for the fourth year in a row by selling 15,538 units compared with 15,330 units sold in 2017, up 1.4%. Growth was maintained despite strong macro-economic headwinds witnessed in the second half. Improvement was seen across segments from new generation cars to the AMG.

Private consumption, a \$6 tn opportunity'

However, India has to address critical societal challenges to take advantage, says a WEF study

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**MUMBAI**

Domestic private consumption, that accounts for a major portion of India's gross domestic product (GDP), is expected to develop into a \$6 trillion growth opportunity that would make India the world's third-largest economy by 2030, says a latest study by the World Economic Forum (WEF). Currently it is at \$1.5 trillion.

The potential, however, offers both challenges and opportunities as India would have to address critical societal issues, including skill development and employment of the future workforce, socio-economic inclusion of rural India and creating a healthy and sustainable future for its citizens, according to the international body

**Breaking shackles:** Growth of the middle class would lift almost 25 million households out of poverty. — AFP

that works towards enhancing public-private cooperation.

"With an annual GDP growth rate of 7.5%, India is currently the world's sixth-largest economy. By 2030, domestic private consumption, which accounts for 60%

of the country's GDP, is expected to develop into a \$6 trillion growth opportunity," said a report titled Future of Consumption in Fast-Growth Consumer Market - India by the WEF.

If realised, this would make India's consumer mar-

ket, the third-largest in the world, behind the U.S. and China," it added.

According to the WEF, the future of consumption in India in 2030 is anchored in rising incomes and a broad-based pattern of growth and benefit sharing.

It believes that the growth of the middle class would lift nearly 25 million households out of poverty and further, India would have 700 million millennials and Gen Z consumers, who have grown up in a more open and confident country.

Inclusive approach

The study, however, added that the potential would only materialise if business and policy-makers pursue an inclusive approach towards the economic and consump-

tion growth.

The study identified three critical societal challenges that need to be addressed.

According to the study, with nearly 10-12 million working-age people expected to emerge in India over the next decade, the country faces a huge challenge in providing the workforce with the right skills.

Second, India will have to manage socio-economic inclusion of rural India as, by 2030, 40% of Indians will be urban residents. Finally, business and policy-makers will have to take the initiative on improving health and liveability for India's citizens by providing them with access to affordable healthcare, promoting sustainable development, and seeking solutions to urban congestion.

Pfizer to shut Chennai, Aurangabad units

Firm cites loss of product demand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**MUMBAI**

U.S.-based pharma major Pfizer on Wednesday said it plans to shut down its manufacturing units in Chennai and Aurangabad in the current fiscal due to very significant long-term loss of product demand. The closure is expected to impact nearly 1,700 workers.

The company's Irungattukottai unit in Tamil Nadu currently employs approximately 1,000 workers and Maharashtra's Aurangabad site employs approximately 700. The exact timing of the exit of these sites is yet to be determined, the firm said.

The recommendation to exit both the sites are the result of significant loss of product demand, making ma-

nufacturing at these sites unviable, the company said.

Production unviable

"Pfizer has conducted a thorough evaluation of the IKKT (Irungattukottai) and Aurangabad sites and concluded that due to the very significant long-term loss of product demand, manufacturing at these sites is not viable."

As a result, both sites will immediately cease manufacturing with the intention to exit as soon as possible in 2019. The exact timing of the exit is to be determined," a Pfizer spokesperson said. Both plants are purely export-oriented sites and do not supply products for Pfizer's India commercial operations, it said.

Shell buys 26% stake in Hazira from Total

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**MUMBAI**

Shell Gas B.V., a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell Plc. (Shell), has completed the acquisition of 26% equity interest in the Hazira LNG and Port venture in India from Total Gaz Electricité Holdings France (Total).

This brings Shell's equity interest in the venture to 100%.

The move allows Shell to build an integrated gas value chain – supply from its global LNG portfolio, regasification at the Hazira facility and downstream customer sales.

It further enables Shell to contribute towards India's long-term need for more and cleaner energy solutions, the company said in a statement.

IndusInd Q3 profit rises 5.21%

Lender provides ₹255 crore towards IL&FS Group loans

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**MUMBAI**

IndusInd Bank on Wednesday posted a 5.21% increase in net profit to ₹985.03 crore for the quarter ended December 31. The slower pace of growth in net profit is mainly due to a provision of ₹255 crore made for its exposure to the troubled IL&FS Group.

Net interest income rose 21% to ₹2,288 crore for the period under review while fee income grew 24% to ₹1,469 crore.

The bank said while the asset classification to the IL&FS Group was standard, as a prudential measure it has made the provision.

"Advances granted to various companies and SPVs belonging to a group in the infrastructure sector against

end was at 1.13% as against 1.16% a year ago.

The overall provisions for the October-December period was ₹607 crore compared with ₹237 crore in the year-earlier period.

Operational profit

Romesh Sobti, MD & CEO, said apart from the IL&FS exposure, it was business as usual at the bank, while highlighting the 27% jump in operational profit to ₹2,117 crore during the quarter.

The lender said it is in line to achieve its credit costs guidance for the fiscal at 0.60%, excluding the provisions for IL&FS exposure.

The bank reported a 35% year-on-year growth in advances to ₹1.73 lakh crore. Deposits rose 20% to 1.76 lakh crore.

Ministry summons Usha Martin directors

Ex-chairman had filed complaints

INDRANI DUTTA**KOLKATA**

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has summoned the directors of Usha Martin Ltd. to appear personally before the MCA officials at the office of the Registrar of Companies (West Bengal) on Friday.

Non-compliance of the summons would lead to prosecution under relevant sections of the Companies Act 2013, the Ministry said in the notice.

While earlier it was said that all UML directors might have to appear, it was later clarified by the RoC that the summons were meant only for Rajeev Jhawar (managing director), Pravin Kumar Jain (managing director),

Indian Bank gets board nod to raise ₹7,000 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**CHENNAI**

Modifying its earlier resolutions, the board of directors of Indian Bank approved a proposal to raise ₹7,000 crore by issuing equity shares to employees and through AT1 bonds and Tier-2 bonds. The board decided to issue and allot four crore equity shares of ₹10 each up to ₹800 crore (including premium) to the permanent employees.

The shares are to be issued in one or more tranches with a maximum of 2,000 shares per employee, under the Indian Bank Employees Share Purchase Scheme, up to March 2021, said the bank.

They will now be required to substantiate their replies with documentary evidence with the minute books of board meetings for the last five years.

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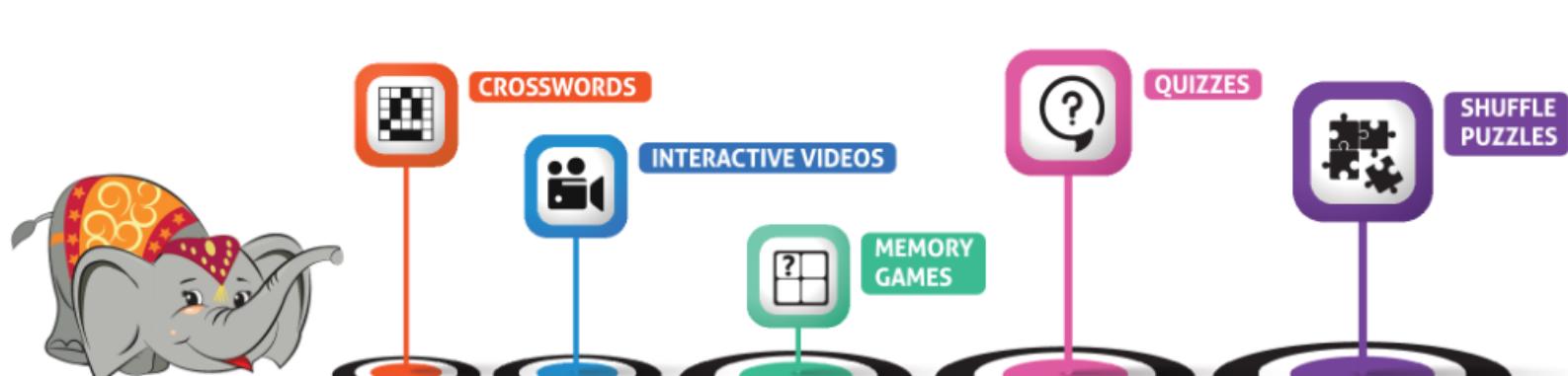
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Hardik, Rahul in trouble over TV show remarks

BCCI serves show-cause notice demanding an explanation from the two

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

Hardik Pandya and K.L. Rahul's comments on a TV show on Sunday have invited the displeasure of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). The players were slapped with a show-cause notice on Wednesday, which demanded an explanation from them.

The comments made on the talk show 'Koffee with Karan' received a lot of flak on social media for being sexist and misogynist and evoked an apology from Hardik.

The Board took strong exception to the conduct of the young cricketers. "They are considered role models and this is no way to behave. These two have tarnished the image of the BCCI and the team," a senior Board official said.

Not well received

The show-cause notice, sent by the two-member Committee of Administrators (CoA), comprising Vinod Rai and Diana Edulji, has conveyed to the two players that some of their comments were not well received within the Board.

"Being contracted players of the BCCI, they knew their responsibilities. Their actions have reflected poorly on the BCCI. They have been asked to explain their com-



No laughing matter: As it turned out, the Koffee eventually tasted bitter for Hardik Pandya and K.L. Rahul. ■ TWITTER

CI got a bit carried away with the nature of the show... I would like to apologise to everyone concerned who I may have hurt in any way

HARDIK PANDYA'S TWEET

ments and conduct on the show," said the official.

The two cricketers, currently on tour in Australia with the Indian team, were given 24 hours to reply to the notice. Hardik did not figure in the Test series against Australia but is a prominent member of the team for the ODI series, beginning in Sydney on January 12.

Shetty slams erring players

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Senior BCCI official Ratnakar Shetty was scathing in his comments on the way cricketers Hardik Pandya and K.L. Rahul conducted themselves on the 'Koffee with Karan' show hosted by Karan Johar.

"It is time the BCCI decides to take corrective steps for cricketers who talk rubbish on public

platforms. Hardik Pandya was a disgrace to the cricket community the way he spoke... he has insulted women and also made a racist remark," said Shetty, lashing out at the two players.

Activist Kavita Krishnan, too, viewed it seriously.

"The cricketers' comments were harmful to the dignity of women. There should be some

accountability. It's not just a joke," she noted.

"It is a serious matter. We teach young players various aspects of public conduct. The BCCI also teaches them how to handle finances and fame. We were guided by seniors like Gavaskar and Kapil [Dev]," said former India stumper Kiran More, who has monitored Hardik's progress since his junior days in Vadodara.

Hardik's response

Hardik Pandya, responding to the BCCI notice from Sydney, said, "As you are aware, I made an appearance on the chat show where I made certain statements without realising that these could be disrespectful and offend sensitivities of viewers for which I am sincerely regretful.

"I would like to assure you that there was no malice or any sort of ill-intent on my part to offend anyone, or portray any section of the society in bad light.

"I made these statements in the flow of the show and had not comprehended the extent to which my statements would be found offensive."

He added, "Rest assured, I hold the BCCI in highest regard and will exercise complete discretion and prudence to ensure that such incidents are never repeated in future."

Glad I could do my bit with bat and ball: Vihari

OZ CHALLENGE

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

To win the series – this has always been a one-point agenda for every member of the Indian team on the recent tour of Australia.

"There was a lot of positivity in the dressing room at every meeting. Everyone was clear about this. Honestly, I feel blessed to be part of that atmosphere for it is always said by seniors that playing Australia in Australia is the biggest challenge," the 25-year-old Vihari said in an exclusive chat with *The Hindu* on Wednesday.

"To be a member of the team which recorded a historic series win is a great feeling. It was a different kind of experience for me in Australia. When I made my Test debut in England, the series was already over.

"Here, I had a chance to contribute and I'm glad I could do my bit with bat and ball when there was no spin-



Hanuma Vihari. ■ AFP

Scoring that 76 was really good: Mayank

'Once I got a couple of shots going, I was in the zone'

SHREDDUTTA CHIDANANDA
VADODARA

Mayank Agarwal had to wait a while to earn his first India cap but when he got the chance he made it count. The opener made a fine 76 on Test debut at the MCG, showing he belonged at that level, before scoring an attacking 77 in the fourth Test as India completed a historic series victory. Agarwal spoke to *The Hindu* on his return home from Australia. Excerpts:

Debut at the MCG: I was a bit nervous. When I walked into the MCG and looked around at that packed Boxing Day crowd, I thought, 'Wow, I'm in the middle of something big.' Once I got a couple of shots going, I was in the zone. Scoring that 76 was really good. I felt nice, confident. It helped me get rid of all the nerves and reassured me that whatever I'd planned was working.

The day before: Ravi (Shastri) sir had told me that I'd be playing.

He told me, 'You've come



Soaking it in: Mayank Agarwal was not overawed by the experience of playing at the MCG. ■ QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

up the hard way. You've come up scoring a lot of runs. Do what you've been doing. This is no different.' There were also encouraging words from (assistant coach) Sanjay Bangar. When I got the cap, Virat Kohli said it was a fantastic venue to make a Test debut.

Bigger the occasion, bigger the opportunity to make a mark,' he said. Nice words

from all of them.

Talking to K.L. Rahul: KL was always there for me. We both went out for a coffee (on the eve of the third Test) and we discussed what was in store for me. He told me what the Australians will be looking to do to me. He told me a very important thing about how different things inside the ground are from what is spoken outside. So

he helped me be practical about the whole thing.

The Sydney innings: I am disappointed that I missed out on a big score – not just a hundred; it could have been more. My plan was to attack Nathan Lyon and it didn't work out. I've learnt a lesson and want to look ahead.

Making history with the Indian team: The feeling is just indescribable. We've always heard that Test cricket is the ultimate and read about it. But actually experiencing it was tremendous. For all of us, it is a big thing to have achieved a series win in Australia which had never happened before. We cherish and respect that.

The long wait for an India cap: You might get a few thoughts here and there but the good thing is there is so much cricket and you are focusing on that. Every individual's journey is different and I had faith that if I kept doing what I was doing, my time would come. And I'm grateful I got a chance to represent India.

bowlers in the last one year, Tendulkar pointed out that awareness of diet, training and the fitness level one has to maintain, and access to any information one wanted, were responsible for it.

"These factors have contributed a lot, not to forget the infrastructure, which is really good in India. Hope it continues to get better and better, the facilities for the players.

Responding to a specific question on what he would deem as the best performance in the series, Tendulkar said: "If I have to single out one major performance, Pujara stands out with the fast bowlers."

Sharing his views as brand ambassador of the IDBI Federal Life Insurance while launching the Keep-Moving moment on physical and financial fitness, Tendulkar said: "It (India's win) was a fantastic. I think the brand of cricket India was able to produce down under was magnificent."

On the improvement shown by the Indian fast bowlers.

"Bumrah, Shami, Ishant, Ashwin, Jadeja, Kuldeep and Umesh have chipped in at various times. It's not just the fast bowlers, but also the spinners. What you also want is the fast bowlers to bowl well, and this has happened frequently. It was pleasing to see pacers bowling consistently at above 140kmph."

Tendulkar said he would like to see more "difficult and challenging pitches" rolled out in domestic tournaments. "Prepare difficult and challenging wickets for the batters and automatically the standard of cricket will improve."



Speed thrills: Tendulkar said it was pleasing to see the Indian pacers consistently bowl around 140kmph. ■ SHASHI ASHWAL

Harendra shunted out from senior team

Hockey India recommends him for the junior side instead

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

Hockey India on Wednesday officially parted ways with Harendra Singh as the men's chief coach and recommended him for the junior side instead.

"Harendra Singh's abilities of grooming youngsters has been the key reasons for the think-tank at Hockey India to arrive at this recommendation" was the official communiqué, citing his 2016 Junior World Cup triumph. HI would also be inviting fresh applications for a foreign coach. But the decision has raised more questions with no answers and no one willing to explain.

Multiple sources in Hockey India have confirmed that India's failure to defend its Asian Games title and thereby qualify for the 2020 Olympics played a big role in the decision. The High Performance & Development Committee that decided this, met here on Monday and also made it the key issue. The next junior World Cup would be played in 2021.

"It was felt Harendra lacked the experience of coaching at the top level and was too emotional to control



Harendra Singh.
■ FILE PHOTO: BISWARANJAN ROUT

the boys or the game on the field. India lost to Malaysia, which was beaten by Japan in the final of the Asiad while we beat Japan 8-0. Not acceptable," a member of the committee revealed to *The Hindu*.

Outburst
Harendra's outburst against poor umpiring at the World Cup was also a reason. The Indian team also has a lean few months ahead – the Azlan Shah Cup is in April and the Hockey Series Finals, an Olympic qualifier event, in June.

But the coach himself is not willing to accept it. "I have neither met HI since the World Cup nor submitted

Up and down

December 2016: Won the Junior World Cup.

May 2017: Replaced as junior men's coach by Jude Felix. **Reason:** Declared not available.

September 2017: Appointed as national women's coach, won the Asia Cup and finished fourth at CWG. This followed Sjoerd Marijne's move from the women's to men's team to replace the sacked Roelant Oltmans.

May 2018: Appointed as

national men's coach, finished second at Champions Trophy, third at Asian Games, joint winner at Asian

Champions Trophy, sixth at World Cup. **Reason:**

Marijne moved back to women's team citing poor performance of the men's side.

January 2019: Removed as national men's coach, recommended for junior men's team. **Reason:**

Failure to defend Asian Games title.

May 2018: Appointed as

commended. Interestingly, it was SA's insistence on not inviting fresh applications that led to Harendra being given charge of the women's team in 2017 when he was a front-runner for the men's side instead.

The Indian men's team meanwhile would regroup for a camp in Bengaluru from February 14 under High Performance Director David John – who is himself under the scanner -- and Chris Ciello.

Buoyant Indians raring to go against UAE

ASIAN CUP

SHYAM VASUDEVAN
ABU DHABI

India got its AFC Asian Cup 2019 campaign off to a glorious start, hammering Thailand 4-1, and will look to continue in the same vein against host United Arab Emirates on Thursday. A win will all but guarantee the Indians a spot in the quarterfinals.

The odds, though, appear

to be stacked in UAE's favour as the Alberto Zaccheroni-coached side has better FIFA ranking of 79 – India's is 97 – has won eight of the 13 games between the two sides and will be spurred on by the home crowd. However, the Indians have the biggest advantage they need: three points to their name.

Stephen Constantine's men come into the tie on the back of a brilliant all-round performance that witnessed them taste their first win in

the AFC Asian Cup in 55 years. While the game against Thailand wasn't a tough one, India will face a much-stronger challenge from the Emiratis, as they will be raring to go after their 1-1 draw against Bahrain in the tournament opener.

The threat

Constantine is well aware of the UAE threat. "They didn't play to the best of their capabilities (against Bahrain). They'll be jacked up to play



High on morale: The stunning win over Thailand will provide plenty of inspiration for India. ■ AP

us tomorrow [Thursday] and will see this as an absolute must-win game. We came here to try and qualify from the group stage, and will give everything to try and do that. We're going for a win," he said.

The Englishman noted that the friendlies against Oman and Jordan were scheduled keeping in mind the two teams' similarities to UAE's style of play. "Oman are the Gulf Cup champions, so drawing with them was an encouraging result. We lost 2-1 in Oman with half a team and, obviously, China was a great thing.

"There are similarities between Jordan, Oman and UAE... these were important games, and that's why we set them up. We planned everything to the last detail.

We've taken the first step with the win against Thailand, and now have a tough game against UAE. But we will fight as we have done in the past few years. We will try to get the result we need," he said.

After Gurpreet Singh Sandhu was given the captain's armband for the opening tie, Constantine, sticking to his rotation policy, has named Sunil Chhetri as skipper for the UAE clash.

Taking guard



Gearing up: As the focus shifts to the ODIs, M.S. Dhoni worked at the indoor nets along with assistant coach Sanjay Bangar. ■ BCCI TWITTER PAGE

Sidhu helps Delhi avoid a follow-on

Tamil Nadu spinners fail to keep the pressure on

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

At 142 for six, Delhi was in serious trouble of being forced to follow on, trailing Tamil Nadu by 290 runs, with the home team snuffing a chance of pushing for an outright victory, to end its disappointing campaign on a high, on the third day at the M.A. Chidambaram stadium on Wednesday.

Instead, Delhi's u-23 captain Jonty Sidhu, playing in only his fourth Ranji Trophy game, produced a fine unbeaten ton (104 not out, 235, 11x4, 3x6) to bail his side out as the visitors ended the day on 268 for six with only 15 more needed to make TN bat again.

Good support

The 21-year-old was ably supported by Lalit Yadav (65 not out, 143b, 10x4, 1x6) at the other end, with the duo adding 126 runs so far for the seventh wicket.

Resuming on 35 for two, Delhi lost two quick wickets with left-arm spinner Mohan Prasath prising out Dhruv Shorey caught and bowled while skipper Nitish Rana hit M. Mohammed straight to B. Indrajith at mid-off.

Walking in at 49 for four, Sidhu's crucial 78-run stand with Himmat Singh for the fourth wicket took Delhi to lunch without any further setbacks.



Rescue act: Jonty Sidhu scored his maiden First Class century to bail out Delhi. ■ K. PICHUMANI

The young left-hander started off positively with three beautiful shots through the off-side arc, a cover drive, a straight drive and a backfoot punch to get going.

A feature of Sidhu's innings was he did not allow the spinners to settle and was brave enough to step down to the spinners early in his innings – picking two sixes off Sai Kishore and Aprajith as he moved to 33 in quick time.

Post lunch, even as TN struck back with two quick wickets after removing Him-

mat and Anuj Rawat, Sidhu shifted gears between caution and aggression with ease, getting to his half-century with a beautiful inside out cover drive off Aprajith. One more six off Aprajith and three more boundaries – the last one, a forceful punch off the backfoot through midwicket – helped Sidhu move from 72 to his maiden First Class century in style.

The Delhi under-23 skipper who made an impressive 85 in the last match against Bengal said, "this was a cru-

cial innings for me and has a come at a time when the team needed it the most. That's why this hundred will always be special."

TN left-arm spinner Sai Kishore admitted the spinners did not bowl well to Sidhu and Yadav, saying: "we did not find the right pace to bowl today and after bowling 100 overs, we can't be saying we couldn't find the right speed. When we did get it right in a few spells, we got wickets but I felt we could have been a bit slower."

Tamil Nadu – 1st innings: 432.
Delhi – 1st innings: Kunal Chanda 27, Shivam Sharma lbw 27, Dhruv Shorey c&b Mohan Prasath 8, Nitish Rana c Indrajith b Mohammed 6, Himmat Singh lbw 28, Anuj Rawat lbw Aprajith 6, Lalit Yadav batting 65, Extras (nb-2, b-4); 6; Total (for six wickets in 103 overs): 268.

Fall of wickets: 1-35, 2-35, 3-47, 4-49, 5-127, 6-142.

Tamil Nadu bowling: T. Natarajan 15-4-49-0, M. Mohammed 13-3-28-1, S. Sai Kishore 30-9-61-2, Mohan Prasath 21-5-51-1, Vijay Shankar 3-0-9-0, Aprajith 19-4-59-1, Pradush Ranjan 2-0-7-0.

RANJI TROPHY SCORES, DAY THREE

Elite Group A

At Mumbai: Chhattisgarh 129 & 149 lost to Mumbai 188 & 92 for one in 24.2 overs (Jay Bista 49 n.o.).

Points: Mumbai: 6(17), Chhattisgarh 0(6).

At Rajkot: Saurashtra 356 vs Vidarbha 280 for nine in 118 overs (Wasim Jaffer 98, Mohit Kale 66, Jaydev Unadkat six for 56).

Group B

At Indore: Andhra 132 & 301 in 101.1 overs (C.R. Gnaneshwar 43, D.B. Prashant Kumar 44, Karan Shinde 103 n.o.) bt Madhya Pradesh 91 & 35 in 16.5 overs (K.V. Sasikanth six for 18). **Andhra 6(17), MP 0(24).**

At Chennai: Tamil Nadu 432 vs Delhi 268 for six in 103 overs (Jonty Sidhu 104 batting, Lalit Yadav 65 batting).

At Cuttack: Odisha 352 & 151 in 43.4 overs (Krishna Das four for 57, Lakshay Garg five for 75) bt Goa 116 & 111 in 29.5 overs (Basant Mohanty four for 21, Rajesh Mohanty five for 49). **Odisha 6(26), Goa 0(6).**

At Kanpur: Assam 175 & 102 for no loss in 28 overs (Rahul Hazarika 56 batting) vs Uttar Pradesh 619 in 177.4 overs (Mohammad Saif 58, Akshdeep Nath 81, Priyam Garg 44, Rinku Singh 149, Upendra Yadav 138, Saurabh Kumar 59, Ranjeet Malai four for 127).

Plate:

At Goalpara: Arunachal Pradesh 169 & 109 in 45.3 overs (Ishwar Chaudhary seven for 51) lost to Sikkim 262 & 19 for no loss in 1.3 overs. **Sikkim 7(27), Arunachal Pradesh 0(3).**

At Patna: Manipur 156 & 238 in 70.4 overs (Yashpal Singh 105, K. Priyajit 64, Ashutosh Aman seven for 71, incl. a hat-trick) lost to Bihar 257 & 140 for seven in 25.1 overs (Mangal Mahroo 53). **Bihar 6(40), Manipur 0(18).**

At Kolkata: Bengal 187 & 218 for two in 58 overs (Abhimanyu Easwaran 100 batting, Manoj Tiwary 90 batting) vs Punjab 447 in 131.3 overs (Shubman Gill 91, Amolpreet Singh 126, Mandeep Singh 44, Gitansh Khera 42, Manpreet Kaur 69 n.o., Mukesh Kumar five for 114, Pradiptha Paramanik four for 108).

Group C

At Rohtak: Services 170 & 79 lost to Haryana 149 & 104 for four in 24 overs (Ankit Kumar 72 n.o.). **Haryana 6(22), Ser-**

vices 0(19).

At Jammu: Jammu & Kashmir 151 & 24 for no loss in eight overs vs Jharkhand 319 for nine in 91 overs (Kumar Deobrat 74, Saurabh Tiwary 134, Parvez Rasool four for 98).

At Cuttack: Odisha 352 & 151 in 43.4 overs (Krishna Das four for 57, Lakshay Garg five for 75) bt Goa 116 & 111 in 29.5 overs (Basant Mohanty four for 21, Rajesh Mohanty five for 49). **Odisha 6(26), Goa 0(6).**

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Group C

At Rohtak: Services 170 & 79 lost to Haryana 149 & 104 for four in 24 overs (Ankit Kumar 72 n.o.). **Haryana 6(22), Ser-**

At Dehradun: Uttarakhand 377 bt Mizoram 198 & 123 in 59 overs (Taruwar Kohli 68 n.o., Rajat Bhateria four for 17). **Uttarakhand 7(44), Mizoram 0(1).**

TIK TOK

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.

Ranji Trophy: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.

PL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.

AFC Asian Cup: India vs UAE, Star Sports 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.

Bagan downs Minerva

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
KOLKATA

Former champion Mohun Bagan returned to winning ways after the disappointment of successive losses when it beat holder Minerva Punjab FC 2-0 at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Wednesday.

The win, its fifth in 12 appearances, kept Mohun Bagan's title hopes alive as it started afresh under the stewardship of the new coach, Khalid Jamil.

Egyptian midfielder Omar Elhussieny found the lead from a first-half penalty before Cameroonian striker Aser Dipanda Dicka fetched the insurance goal midway through the second half.

Sacchitt advances

SPORTS BUREAU
CHANDIGARH

Top seed Sacchitt Sharma had to fight it out 6-3, 6-7 (3), 6-2 against qualifier Adit Sinha of the US in the pre-quarterfinals of the ITF grade-3 junior tennis here on Wednesday.

The results (pre-quarterfinals): **Boys:** Sacchitt Sharma bt Adit Sinha 6-3, 6-7 (3), 6-2; Michael Francis Eala (Phi) bt Krishan Hooda 6-1, 6-4; Madhwin Kamath bt Alexander Gaponenko (Isr) 6-4, 6-3; Dev Javia bt Ethan Kai Xin Lye (Sgp) 6-3, 7-6 (5).

Girls: Sandeepi Singh Rao bt Farhat Aleen Qamar 6-1, 6-1; Malaika Rapolu (USA) bt Kaavya Sawhney 6-0, 7-6 (5); Nikita Vishwase bt Tiirthi Di Girolami (Bel) 7-5, 6-2; Mai Napatti Nirundorn (Tha) bt Jagmeet Kaur Grewal 6-2, 6-2.

Tamil Nadu powers its way past Punjab

NATL. BASKETBALL

RAYAN ROZARIO
BHAVNAGAR

Defending champion Tamil Nadu played to a plan and outsmarted strong contender Punjab 80-59 in its final Group-A clash of the senior National basketball at the Sidsar Sports Complex courts here on Wednesday.

Rikin Pethani's presence did the team a world of good as Tamil Nadu managed to display its attacking and defensive skills to the fully-packed house. Rikin, who joined the team on Wednesday soon after his wedding, quickly got into his stride as it was a crucial match to decide the pool topper.

The defence was not only strengthened with him at the centre but he also stood strong in guarding Punjab's big fish Amritpal Singh. Actually, it was a tussle between the top two centres in the country.

The first quarter was closely contested with the lead changing hands but the last three belonged to Tamil Nadu, which had good forwards and an equally good bench-strength to replace them time and again.

R. Hariram was at his best and so was P. Jeevanantham. The duo attacked both flanks with aplomb and



Leading player: Hariram top-scored for Tamil Nadu with 19 points against Punjab ■ VIJAY SONEJI

scored baskets with ease. Akilan Pari and Justin Joseph came up with some sensible steals and feeds.

"Rikin is an intelligent player and now that he is back everything fell in place. Everybody started moving and connecting and whatever we planned worked well," said C.V. Sunny, the Tamil Nadu coach.

Rikin, thrilled to play in his hometown, said, "I played for Gujarat here ten years ago and today I am back here playing for Tamil Nadu. Obviously, it's a great feeling and I am happy that I was able to chip in."

The results: Men: **Group A:** Tamil Nadu 80 (R. Hariram 19, P. Jeevanantham 18, Rikin Pethani 11) bt Punjab 59 (Amritpal Singh 26, Jagdeep Singh 15).

Mumbai: The three-year-old filly Ms Boss, who ran second in her last start, should make amends in the Bahrain Trophy, the main event of Thursday's (Jan. 10) afternoon races here. Railts will be placed 3 metres wide from 1400m to 1200m and 9 metres wide from 800m upto the winning post.

1. FIDDLE FADDLE PLATE DIV. II (1,400m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30, 2.00 p.m.: 1. Samurais (4) Vishal 59, 2. Huzzah's Grace (12) R. Downey 57, 3. Alacs (5) Zeeshan 55.5, 4. Bourbon Legend (2) Aniket 55.5, 5. Olly Boy (4) Malami 53, 6. Hermosa (8) Peter 51.5, 7. Lovely Fairy (1) Nazil 51, 8. Vitesse (9) Nadeem 51, 9. Smoky Haze (6) Dashrath 50.5, 10. Forever Free (1) S. Amit 50, 11. Grapevine (13) A.Gaikwad 50, 12. Devoted (3) Altaf Sayeed 49, 13. Paradise (7) Kuldeep 49 and 14. Whoopisday (10) Merchant 49.

Women: **Group A:** Tamil Nadu 73 (Dharshini 17, S. Pushpa 13, S. Sathy 12, V. Srividhya 10) bt West Bengal 62 (Anjana Daisy 27, Kamalesh Jat 12).

Indian Railways 86 (Bhanda 16, Renjini Peter 14) bt Delhi 36 (Tavleen Kaur 10).

Group B: Chhattisgarh 75 (Poonam Chaturvedi 42) bt Telangana 60 (Monika Pasa 17, Hemalatha 14, Anjusree12).

Kerala 73 (P.J. Anjana 18, Stephy Nixon 15, K.S. Poomajal 12, Aswathy Jayasankar 10) bt Uttar Pradesh 48 (Preethikumari 15, Minu George 13).

DELHI INT'L. OPEN

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Much against the trend of results, Grandmaster and National junior champion Karthik Venkataraman and GM-elect Harsha Bharathakoti found the going tough as the Delhi International Open Grandmasters chess tournament threw up unexpected opening-round heroes on Wednesday.

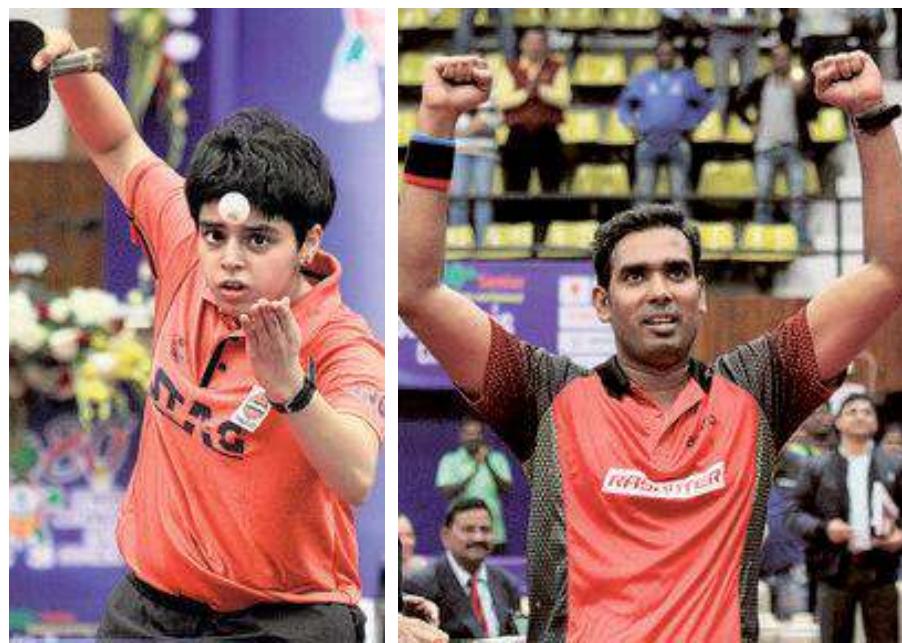
Though the top 19 seeds were among those with a point each, Karthik faced unexpected resistance from Air Force recruit K. Srikanth and eventually split the point after 72 moves.

If Karthik needed any consolation after dropping half a point, he had to only look at Harsha's plight.

Harsha, awaiting the confirmation of his Grandmaster title, ran into the reigning National under-9 champion A.R. Ilamparthy, rated 561

points below at 1920, crashed to a 43-move defeat.

On a day when almost every overseas GM won, Uzbek Marat Dzhumaev was held by Nitish Das. Samridhha Ghosh proved equal to International Master N.R. Vignesh in 41 moves following a



Scripting history: Archana Kamath became the second-youngest women's National champion, while Sharath Kamal overtook Kamlesh Mehta's record of eight. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

Sharath on cloud nine

Archana edges past Krittika for women's title

NATIONAL TT

AMOL KARHADKAR
CUTTACK

Veteran A. Sharath Kamal and youngster Archana Kamath scripted history, becoming the singles National champion in men's and women's events, respectively, on the concluding day of the 80th IISports National Table Tennis Championship in the grand finale at the J.N. Indoor Stadium arena.

While Sharath saved a match point before scraping past his Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) teammate G. Sathiyan for a record ninth National championship title, Archana became the second-youngest women's National champion after edging past West Bengal's Krittika Sinha Roy.

In the final, Archana started well, but with both tied at 1-1, Krittika surged ahead to a 9-4 lead. Archana then showed her all-round game to clinch seven points on the go to take the lead. In the fourth game as well Krittika

led 9-6, but the 18-year-old again came back with a four-point run to lead. Krittika returned well in the fifth game to close the margin but couldn't match Archana's speed in the sixth and ended up on the losing side in her second appearance in a National final.

Quality contest

The Sharath-Sathiyan affair then lived up to its reputation with the World No. 30 and 31 engaged in a fierce battle – both in terms of quality and tactics. Despite playing seven best-of-seven matches in 30 hours, both the paddlers gave it all they had.

At 10-8 in the fifth game, Sharath had the opportunity to take a 3-2 lead but Sathiyan came back to level scores and Sharath missed his serve to hand the game over to his Chennai junior.

In the decider, Sharath opened up a 5-2 lead but after change of sides, he missed a forehand and a backhand top-spin to give

Sathiyan a window who raced ahead 7-5. At 10-9, Sathiyan had a match point but netted a backhand topspin return.

Sharath then converted his third match point to overhaul Kamlesh Mehta's record of eight National titles and went down on the mat in disbelief.

The results: Men: Final: A. Sharath Kamal (PSPB) bt G. Sathiyan (PSPB) 11-13, 11-5, 11-6, 5-11, 10-12, 11-6, 14-12; Semifinals: Sharath bt Manav Thakkar (PSPB) 8-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-6; Sathiyan bt Ronit Bhanja (WB) 11-2, 11-3, 11-9, 11-7.

Doubles: Final: Arjun Ghosh & Ronit Bhanja (WB) bt Anirban Ghosh & Anirban Nandi (RSBP) 14-12, 8-11, 11-9, 12-10.

Women: Final: Archana Kamath (PSPB) bt Krittika Sinha Roy (WB) 12-10, 6-11, 11-9, 12-10, 7-11, 11-3; Semifinals: Archana bt Manika Batra (PSPB) 11-7, 11-7, 6-11, 11-8; Krittika bt Ahyika Mukherjee (WB) 11-6, 11-13, 15-13, 15-17, 11-8, 3-11, 11-7.

Doubles: Final: Nikhat Banu & Sreeja Akula (TS) bt Anannya Basak & Srushti Haleangadi (Mah) 11-2, 11-8, 8-11, 11-7.

Dashers gets the better of Hunters

Sindhu, however, wins for the latter

PBL

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

P.V. Sindhu's electric display was the bright spot in Hyderabad Hunters' otherwise lacklustre performance against Delhi Dashers in the Premier Badminton League (PBL) here on Wednesday.

Delhi won 4-3, but the outcome of the tie made little difference to the semifinal qualification prospects of both teams. Hunters (24 points) have already sealed a last-four berth, while Dashers (6) have no chance of making the cut.

The Sree Kanteerava Indoor Stadium crowd was thrilled to watch Sindhu, who posted a comfortable 15-11, 15-9 win over Evgeniya Kosetskaya.

The Russian attempted to draw Sindhu forward with drop shots, but the latter's fine court coverage nullified the efforts. Sindhu, the World No. 3, was clinical with her smashes as well. Evgeniya held her own, stretching points, but committed far too many unforced errors.

Sindhu's victory in the



Too good: P.V. Sindhu was in her element against Evgeniya Kosetskaya. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

trump match helped Hyderabad cut the lead to 3-2, but Dashers' Tommy Sugiarto then sealed the fate of the contest with a 15-6, 15-11 victory over Mark Caljouw.

In the second tie, Awadhe Warriors powered past North Eastern Warriors (25 points) 5-0 and moved to first on the points table. North Eastern's star player Saina Nehwal failed to impress in her trump match, going down to B. Zhang 11-15, 15-11, 15-7.

The results:

Delhi Dashers bt Hyderabad Hunters 4-3 (H.S. Prannoy bt Rahul Yadav 15-10, 9-15, 15-12; B. Chai & M. Jongit (T) bt Arun George & Bodin Isara 8-15, 15-9, 15-8; Evgeniya Kosetskaya lost to P.V. Sindhu (T) 11-15, 9-15; Tommy Sugiarto bt Mark Caljouw 15-6, 15-11; Hsin Lee & S. Wang lost to Rang Kim & Eom Won 7-15, 12-15).

Awadhe Warriors bt North Eastern Warriors 5-0 (Lee Dong Keun bt Tian Houwei 15-10, 15-13; Mathias Christensen & Ashwini Ponappa (T) bt Liao Min Chun & Kim Ha Na 15-7, 15-14; B. Zhang bt Saina Nehwal (T) 11-15, 15-11, 15-7; Ho Son lost to Tanongsalee Saensomboonsuk 8-15, 10-15; Yang Lee & M.R. Arjun bt Dhruv Kapila & Yeon Yoo 15-5, 15-12).

Rathore reiterated that 1000 athletes from the 10,000 participating in the Youth Games, featuring the under-17 and 21 competitions, would get five lakh for five years. The financial guarantee has brought many world-class athletes here to showcase their wares in front of high-definition cameras that would beam

Games off to a colourful start

Maharashtra govt. wants to liberate kids from 'cyber slavery'

KHELO INDIA

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
PUNE

Sheer energy marked the inauguration of the Khelo India Youth Games at the cosy indoor badminton hall of the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Balewadi on Wednesday.

While the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis, and the Union Sports Minister, Col. Rajayvardhan Singh Rathore, delivered inspiring speeches, the colourful and artistic presentation, beautifully spread out on the electronic canvas, took everyone's breath away.

While the motivation of the Maharashtra government in hosting the games was to liberate the kids from 'cyber slavery', how well modern technology can be utilised to give wings to imagination was on view. The hosts also gave pride of place on the stage for the prominent young sportspersons along with their parents.

Rathore reiterated that 1000 athletes from the 10,000 participating in the Youth Games, featuring the under-17 and 21 competitions, would get five lakh for five years. The financial guarantee has brought many world-class athletes here to showcase their wares in front of high-definition cameras that would beam



Let's play! Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis and Union Sports Minister Rajayvardhan Singh Rathore at the inauguration. ■ JIGNESH MISTRY



sports facilities across the State. The Maharashtra CM also announced that a Sports University was taking shape in Aurangabad.

The inauguration started with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message, read by the Sports Secretary Rahul Bhatnagar, emphasising the significance of sports in nation building.

Rathore thanked Maharashtra for taking up the task of hosting an event that had grown from being a platform for 3500 athletes to around 10,000 participants in its second edition.

Rathore also emphasised that the new mantra – playing is mandatory – underlined the point that a person becomes strong by playing, leading to a strong nation.

Rathore took the pledge on behalf of the athletes.

NADA awareness on dope-testing

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
PUNE

The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) is riding on the Khelo India Youth Games to create mass awareness programmes for competitors from across the nation on drug use and abuse.

The indoor stadium for wrestling saw announce-

ments blaring across the public address system, asking young grapplers to be ready for dope testing. They were warned that if they did not appear for tests after competition, they will be banned along with the respective State coach at the Games.

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation					
NIT No.	Name of the work	Est. Value	Start Date/Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids	Name & Address officer/Cell. No.	
Construction of 11 Foot Over Bridges and 01 Skyway at Charminar Zone (Package - II)		Rs.4680.00 Lakhs		Sri. E.R.Krishna, SE (P-C2), CallNo.9949930408	
Construction of 16 Foot Over Bridges and 04 Skyways at Kharibabud & Secunderabad Zone (Package - III)		Rs.7940.00 Lakhs		SE (P-C2), CallNo.9949930408	
Construction of 14 Foot Over Bridges and 02 Skyways at Kukatpally & Serilingampally Zone (Package - IV)		Rs.6555.00 Lakhs		Sri M.Verand Reddy, EE-T&T, CallNo.9999930194	
TOTAL		Rs. 19175.00 Lakhs		Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: 30.01.2019 04.00 PM	
Further details can be seen at e' Procurement @ www.tenderprocurement.gov.in . Or can be contact Office of the Superintending Engineer (P-C2), GHMC in office working hours.					

R.O.NO. 270/C/PRO/GHMC/2018-19 CALL: 040-21111111 FOR 24X7 GHMC SERVICES

INDORE SMART CITY DEVELOPMENT LIMITED, INDORE									
NIT No.: 68/ISCDL/18-19		NOTICE INVITING TENDER							
Date : 07.01.2019									
Indore Smart City Development Limited invites online percentage rate tenders from eligible contractors registered in M.P.P.W.D. and having relevant experience.									
S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost of Work	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money Deposit	Completion Period				
1	Place making & visual improvement of selected roads/junctions (Package-1)(Third Call)	₹ 5.00 Cr.	₹ 20,000/-	₹ 5.00 Lakh	6 Months				
2	Place making & visual improvement of selected roads/junctions and Khajrana Square Entry gate (Package-5)(Third Call)	₹ 5.00 Cr.	₹ 20,000/-	₹ 5.00 Lakh	6 Months				
Key Dates:									
S.No.	Description	Date and Time							
1.	Last date for Purchase of Tender (Online)	16.01.2019 till 1730 Hrs.							
2.	Last date for submission of tender (Online)	16.01.2019 till 1730 Hrs.							
3.	Technical bid opening (Online)	17.01.2019 at 1730 Hrs.							
4.	Last date for Submission of Hard Copy of Technical Bid (Envelope A and B)	21.01.2019 till 1730 Hrs.							
Note: 1. Tender Document and other details are available on website: www.mptenders.gov.in 2. Amendment to NIT, if any would be published on website only. 3. The EMD should be transferred/deposited through Debit Card/Credit Card/Net Banking or System generated challan in ISCDL bank account, details given in RFP-Bid Data sheet.									
Chief Executive Officer Indore Smart City Development Ltd., Indore									

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD					
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)					
# 49, East Wing , 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan Race Course Road Bangalore – 560 001. Phone No. 080 - 40931272 website : www.kiadbd.kar.nic.in e-mail: cdoe@kiabd.in					

IN BRIEF

**Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos set to divorce**

Amazon.com Inc chief executive Jeff Bezos and wife MacKenzie Bezos have decided to divorce after a long trial separation, Mr. Bezos said on Wednesday in a joint statement by the couple on Twitter. The Bezoses said they felt "incredibly lucky" for their 25 years together and would remain involved with each other as close friends and parents. **REUTERS**

**Margot Robbie to portray Barbie in live-action film**

Australian actor Margot Robbie will play the role of Mattel's iconic Barbie doll in the toy's first live-action film, Mattel and Warner Bros. have said. Barbie, who will celebrate her 60th birthday this year, has already been the subject of dozens of animated movies, though none were ever distributed in theatres. **AP**



The Favourite led the nominations for the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) awards on Wednesday, with 12 nods for the costume drama that has already won its leading actress Olivia Colman critical acclaim. The winners will be announced on February 10. **REUTERS**

Mona Lisa's eyes are not following you around the room, says study

2,000 assessments showed that her gaze is not straight but to the viewer's right

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

LONDON

German researchers say they have finally cracked the intriguing question of whether the *Mona Lisa*'s eyes follow viewers around the room. The answer is a disappointing 'no'.

In science, the "Mona Lisa Effect" refers to the impression that the eyes of the person portrayed in an image seem to follow viewers as they move. Researchers from the Bielefeld University have demonstrated that this effect does not occur with the *Mona Lisa* painting by Leonardo da Vinci.

"Curiously enough, we don't have to stand right in front of the image in order to have the impression of being looked at – even if the person portrayed in the image looks straight ahead," said researcher Sebastian Lotth. "This impression emerges if we stand to the left or right

**Enigmatic smile:** A view of the *Mona Lisa*. **AFP**

and at different distances from the image. The robust sensation of 'being looked at' is precisely the *Mona Lisa* effect. The effect itself is undeniable and demonstrable but with the *Mona Lisa*, of all paintings, we didn't get this impression."

For the study, published in the journal *i-Perception*, the team asked a small group of participants to look at the *Mona Lisa* on a computer screen and assess the direction of her gaze. A simple folding ruler was positioned between them and the

screen at several distances. The participants indicated where *Mona Lisa*'s gaze met the ruler.

Tracking perception

The team used 15 different sections from the portrait – starting with her entire head to only her eyes and nose to test whether individual features of *Mona Lisa*'s face influenced the viewers' perception of her gaze.

They gathered more than 2,000 assessments – and almost every single measurement indicated that the *Mona Lisa* gaze is not straight on but to the viewer's right.

"Thus, it is clear that the term 'Mona Lisa effect' is nothing but a misnomer. It illustrates the desire to be looked at and to be someone else's centre of attention – to be relevant to someone, even if you don't know the person at all," the researchers noted.

U.S. start-up offers a feast of 'Burger 2.0' at CES show

Plant proteins used to reduce dependence on livestock

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LAS VEGAS

Can a "high-tech" burger help save the planet?

In one sense, it's just a patty made from plant protein. But the founders of California-based Impossible Foods argue the product can have a big impact by reducing the amount of land needed for beef and other livestock production.

Impossible Foods, which began in 2011, chose the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas to launch its "next generation" burger – version 2.0 – which has no gluten, hormones or antibiotics and is kosher- and halal-certified.

With a handful of restaurateurs and chefs on hand, the company announced on Monday that it now has 5,000 restaurants serving its product as it prepares to begin selling in supermarkets.

Impossible Foods also brought a food truck to the large tech show to serve more than 12,000 samples of the burger to CES attendees.

**Meal deal:** The Impossible Burger 2.0 being introduced at the CES in Las Vegas. **AFP**

company but the soul of the company is really R&D (research and development) and technology," Mr. Brown said.

The company uses wheat protein, potato protein and coconut oil, and its "special ingredient" called haeme which has elements of the haemoglobin in animal protein but is developed in soy, Mr. Brown added.

Pak. Chief Justice says Indian TV content 'damages our culture'

SC hearing a plea for the lifting of a ban on foreign shows

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Chief Justice Saqib Nisar on Wednesday said that the country's Supreme Court would not allow Indian content to be shown on Pakistani TV channels as it "damages our culture".

Justice Nisar's remarks came as a three-member Bench heard an appeal filed by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA).

PEMRA's chairman Saleem Baig said that 65% of the content shown on Filma-

zia channel was foreign and that the figure at times went up to 80%.

No broadcast

At this, the Chief Justice remarked: "We will not allow Indian content to be aired on (Pakistani) channels."

On being told that *Filmazia* was not a news channel but was an entertainment channel and that it did not do any propaganda", the Chief Justice countered the PEMRA counsel, saying: "It is, however, damaging our culture."

The top judge adjourned the hearing in the case till the first week of February as the Pakistan Broadcasters Association's counsel Faisal Siddiqui was not in attendance.

In 2016, PEMRA had imposed a ban on airing Indian content on local television and FM channels.

In 2017, the Lahore High Court lifted the PEMRA-imposed ban saying the federal government had no objection. But, in October 2018, the Supreme Court reinstated the ban.

A 'bio-safe' way to fight mosquitoes

Tests found that the insects laid defective eggs when a protein was blocked

REUTERS

LONDON

Scientists in the United States said on Tuesday they had taken a major step toward developing a "mosquito birth control" drug to curb the spread of malaria and other killer diseases blamed for hundreds of thousands of deaths a year.

Researchers at the University of Arizona said they had discovered a protein unique to female mosquitoes which is critical for their young to hatch.

When the scientists blocked the protein, the females laid eggs with defective shells causing the embryos inside to die.



tive shells causing the embryos inside to die.

The team said developing drugs which targeted the protein could provide a way to reduce mosquito populations without harming beneficial insects such as bees.

"It's an important discovery," said Roger Miesfeld, head of the university's department of chemistry and

biochemistry. "We're certainly excited about it... This gets around mosquito resistance and also has a much better chance of being bio-safe [than other methods]."

Big threat

Mosquitoes are one of the world's deadliest insects, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) which has warned that global progress against malaria is stalled.

The disease infected around 216 million people in 2016, killing 445,000 of them, predominantly babies and young children in sub-

Saharan Africa. Other diseases spread by mosquitoes include Zika, chikungunya, yellow fever, West Nile virus and dengue, which has risen 30-fold in recent decades, according to the WHO.

"Once we knock down this protein, the mosquito no longer makes viable eggs even after multiple blood feedings so... birth control is a great way to describe it."

He said he hoped the discovery could lead to the development of a new generation of insecticides in five years.

These could then be applied onto bed nets.

Bangkok is fighting floods with 'thirsty landscaping'

Parks are designed as places that can retain run-off

REUTERS

BANGKOK

When Bangkok's oldest university called for ideas for a symbol to mark its centenary year, landscape architect Kotchakorn Voraakhom successfully pitched a design for a park.

It was intended not only as a welcome green space in the middle of the congested city of about 10 million people, but as a place that could also retain large amounts of water, reducing monsoon flooding around Chulalongkorn University.

Parks and "green roofs" planted with vegetation soak up rain during the annual monsoon and help dense urban centres like Bangkok adapt to climate change, Ms. Kotchakorn said.

"We need to be thinking

**Green space:** A view of the Chulalongkorn park.

about everything we build in the context of mitigating climate-change impact. It can't be just about aesthetics, but also about serving a purpose," she said.

The city, once a network of canals that earned it the moniker "Venice of the East", has filled in many of those water channels for

construction. A "metro forest" project in a Bangkok suburb has converted two acres of abandoned land into a local forest with native trees, to make a start on reversing urban sprawl.

"No water that falls into the Chulalongkorn park is wasted," said Ms. Kotchakorn.

Many in the crowd, which police said numbered more than a million, believe touching the Black Nazarene or being in its presence can heal the sick or grant good fortune.

The event will also show films portraying the stigma and inhumane treatment faced by homosexual and transgender people.

"When the youth pause and look [again] at all genders, they [will be] able to see how patriarchy is the common enemy of all and that we should be working collectively to address the challenges," said Mr. Sadani.

Dashing through the snow

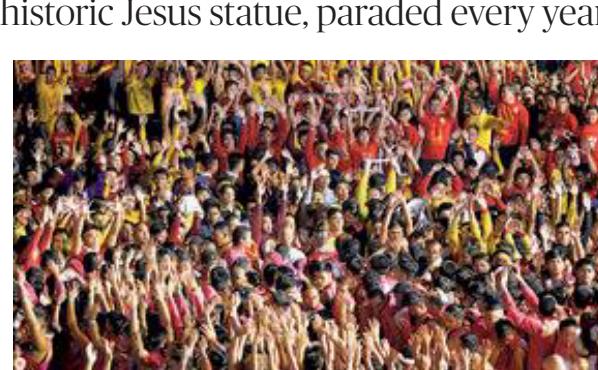
**Fun time:** Children enjoy a slide down a snow-covered slope by the Jhelum in Srinagar on Wednesday. **NISSAR AHMAD**

Annual show of zeal grips Manila

Many believe that a historic Jesus statue, paraded every year, brings good fortune

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MANILA

**Standing space:** Devotees raising their hands in prayer as the statue is readied for procession in Manila on Wednesday. **AP**

through Manila's streets. "I survived a stroke because of him (God). I will do this every year until I am a 100 years old," said Joaquin Bordado, 70. Around him people chanted *Viva Nazareno* (Long live Nazareno), cheered and jostled for a glimpse of, or selfie with, the cross-bearing statue, cloaked in a maroon robe and topped with a crown of thorns. Believers, barefoot as a sign of penitence, scramble over one another

to touch towels to the icon. It is believed to have survived a fire in the 17th century while en route to the Philippines, which became Asia's bastion of Catholicism under 400 years as a Spanish colony.

Vibrant expression

Critics say the procession is a result of superstition. But Church officials say the practice is a vibrant expression of faith.

"If you are an outsider, you will not hear, see or feel that faith. You will only see a very unruly or chaotic situation," said Father Danichi Hui, a priest at the procession's destination, Quiapo church. "But inside there is a rhythm of peace. There is a serenity," he said.

Why some snakes are deadlier than others

The environment holds the key: study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON

High-resolution satellite data can precisely assess the status of poverty at household level in rural areas of developing countries, according to a study.

If countries are to achieve the U.N. sustainable development goals, it is particularly important to track the living conditions in poor nations around the world where the future population growth is highest, according to a study published in the journal *PNAS*.

"Based on high-resolution satellite images, we can very precisely assess the status of poverty at household level in rural areas in developing countries," said Jens-Christian Svensson, a professor at the Aarhus University in Denmark.

the amount of venom a snake has depends on both its size and the environment it lives in.

"Like all substances venom is dosage-dependent," said Andrew Jackson, Associate Professor at Trinity College Dublin. "We found that big terrestrial species have the most venom, while smaller tree-dwelling or aquatic species had the least."



The research showed that

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A Special Issue

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OUR ACHIEVER'S SPEAK

I am very grateful to be a part of 'Kautilya Academy', the exquisite thrust it gave me to achieve my dream job in Civil Service. It was only possible due to extravagant & extraordinary support of well professional faculty team at Kautilya Academy. My quench of higher learning in well competitive environment fulfilled here. Thanks a lot to 'Kautilya Academy'.

Ashish Pandey
Deputy Collector
MPPSC

I joined Kautilya Academy for having a better understanding of the subjects, and to have indepth knowledge of whole syllabus. Believe me, it helped me a lot more than I had imagined. Being from a remote area, I could not join a good class near home. Later I found about Kautilya Academy and joined here, which certainly helped me to crack written exam. Thank You Kautilya

Surbhi Gautam
IAS 50 RANK
UPSC

12वीं के बाद कौटिल्य एकेडमी जॉइन करना मेरे लिए सबसे अच्छा निर्णय रहा। 3 वर्षों में मेरा आधार इतना मजबूत हो गया कि पहले प्रयास में ही मुझे सफलता मिल गयी। कौटिल्य एकेडमी की अंडर ग्रेजुएट बैच में विषय और उनके टॉपिक्स पर विस्तार से पढ़ाया जाता है। तैयारी के लिए पर्याप्त समय मिलता है और सिलेक्शन के आसान बढ़ जाते हैं।

Akshay Singh
Deputy Collector
in 21 years

मैं अपने अनुभव के आधार पर सभी छात्र-छात्राओं के कहना चाहता हूँ कि अगर आप PSC की तैयारी करना चाहते हो तो बिना समय गंवाए, 12वीं के बाद कौटिल्य एकेडमी जॉइन करें, सफलता निश्चित मिलेगी। कौटिल्य एकेडमी से अच्छा विकल्प कोई और नहीं। 12वीं के बाद मेरे समय का सही उपयोग हुआ और परीक्षा में मेरे अंक अच्छे बने।

Vayavya Choubey
521 RANK
UPSC

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HOD English Medium
Indian Constitution and Public Administration
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MPA NET-JRF (Pub. Ad.)
10 Years of teaching experience.



MR. SAMEER GANDHE
History
Appeared in UPSC Prelims,
Mains and Interview in very
first attempt



MR. SHANKY KOTHARI
Indian Economy
UPSC Interview-2015
Former Software Engineer at
Infosys Technologies



MR. DHARMENDRA TIWARI
Ethics
MBA from DAVV



MR. SAURABH YADAV
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Faced MPPSC Interview
Mechanical Engineer



MR. APOORV SHARMA
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Soumi Das

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Starts: 13 Dec | 5 PM

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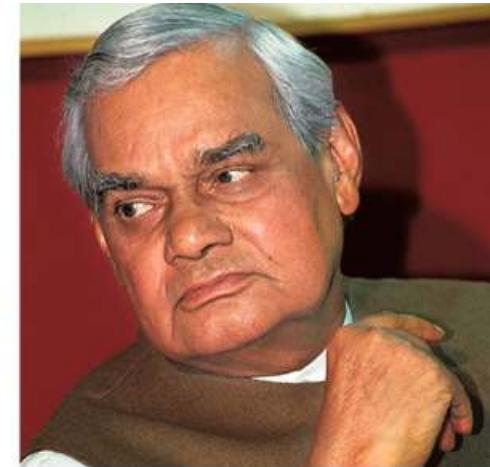


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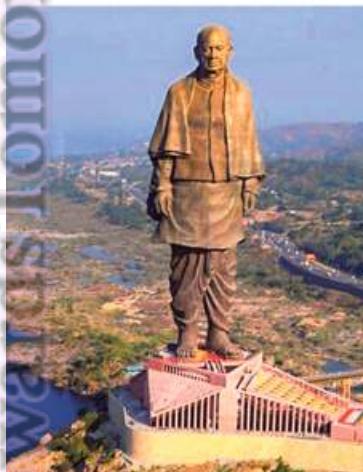
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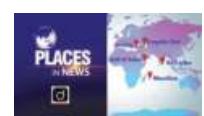


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Hindi English Total 16 tests

Starting from 11th January 2019



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NATIONAL

JANUARY

Jan. 1: A youth is killed and many injured in clashes after violence breaks out during the bicentenary celebrations of the 1818 Bhima-Koregaon battle at Koregaon in Pune, Maharashtra.

Tamil actor Rajinikanth launches a website and an app to enrol members for his party.

Jan. 3: Normal life is hit in several parts of Maharashtra following a bandh.

Jan. 4: A Delhi court declares businessman Vijay Mallya a proclaimed offender in a FERA violation case of 1995.

Transport corporation staff go on a flash strike across Tamil Nadu.

Jan. 6: RJD chief Lalu Prasad is awarded a three-and-a-half year jail term in a fodder scam case by the special CBI Court in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Jan. 7: Sahitya Akademi awardee Indira Parthasarathy is chosen for the Lifetime Achievement Award at the inaugural The Hindu Lit for Life-Tamil festival in Chennai. Writer Imayam bags the Jayakanthan prize for contemporary literature.

Saudi Arabia gives nod to India's plan to ferry devotees to Jeddah for Haj via the sea route.

Jan. 9: The Supreme Court makes it optional for cinema halls to play the national anthem before every show.

Jan. 10: The Centre allows overseas airlines to own up to 49% of Air India under the approval route and permits 100% FDI in single brand retail under the automatic route.

Jan. 11: The transport strike in Tamil Nadu comes to an end.

The Supreme Court appoints former Delhi High Court judge Justice S.N. Dhangra to head its SIT on the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Jan. 12: Four senior judges of the Supreme Court publicly accuse the CJI Dipak Misra of selectively assigning cases to judges of his choice, at a press conference in New Delhi.

ISRO workhorse PSLV-C40 puts in space the Cartosat 2 series satellite and 30 others from seven countries after lift-off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

Jan. 15: Deepak Unnikrishnan is presented The Hindu Prize, 2017 for his novel *Temporary People* by Brit-



Tear gas being fired to disperse a mob at Aurangabad, Maharashtra, that was protesting against the killing of a youth at Bhima-Koregaon near Pune.

ish novelist Sebastian Faulks. Tamil writer and playwright Indira Parthasarathy receives The Hindu Tamil Lifetime Achievement Award.

Jan. 16: The Centre announces the withdrawal of Haj subsidy.

Jan. 17: Sensex closes above the 35,000-mark for the first time ever spurred by surge in banking stocks.

Jan. 21: The Union Law Ministry appoints Om Prakash Rawat as Chief Election Commissioner. Former Finance Secretary, Ashok Lavasa, is named Election Commissioner.

Jan. 23: A candlelight march by Karni Sena activists in protest against *Padmaavat* release turns violent in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Three dozen vehicles are torched and theatres, multiplexes and two malls vandalised in Memnagar and on SG Highway.

Jan. 24: A special CBI Court in Ranchi awards a five-year jail term to RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav in the third fodder scam case.

The Multiplex Association of India decides not to screen *Padmaavat*.

Jan. 25: Music composer Ilaiyaraaja, Indian classical musician Ghulam Mustafa Khan and P. Parameswaran, a senior RSS ideologue from Kerala are chosen for Padma Vibhushan award.

Former Russian Ambassador Alexander Kadakin (posthumous), cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni, actor Manoj Joshi, billiards champion Pankaj Advani, U.S. academic Ved Prakash Nanda, historian R. Nagaswamy, painter Laxman Pai, among Padma Bhushan awardees.

Tennis player Somdev Devvarman, badminton player Kidambi Srikanth, yoga teacher V. Nanammal from Coimbatore, 'Plastic Man of India', R. Vasudevan, Romulus

Whitaker, founder of the Madras Snake Park, prominent among 73 Padma Shri awardees.

Jan. 26: The leaders of 10 ASEAN countries are hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as chief guests at the parade marking 25 years of the ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership, as India celebrates its 69th Republic Day in New Delhi.

Jan. 30: Veteran Bengali actor Soumitra Chatterjee is presented the Knight of the Legion of Honour, France's highest civilian award, at a function in Kolkata.

Jan. 31: Kerala youth Sreejith ends his 782-day stir in front of the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram after the CBI records his statement on the alleged custodial death of his brother Sreejeet on May 21, 2014.

People throng planetariums across the country to witness the rare phenomenon of a super moon, a blue moon and an eclipse.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 1: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, presents the 2018-19 Union Budget, the main features being Ayushman Bharat and a dedicated 'Affordable Housing Fund.' Reintroduces the long-term capital gains tax and standard deduction.

The Congress wins the bypolls to the Alwar and Ajmer Lok Sabha seats and Manddalgarh Assembly seat in Rajasthan. In West Bengal, Trinamool bags both the Uluberia Lok Sabha seat and Noapara Assembly seat.

Feb. 3: Veteran filmmaker Shyam Benegal is conferred with the V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award at the valedictory of the Mumbai International Film Festival 2018.

Feb. 7: The Supreme Court cancels 88 iron ore mining leases in Goa.

Feb. 8: The Competition Commission of India imposes a fine of ₹136 crore on Google for unfair trade practices.

Feb. 10: Two soldiers are killed and nine injured after a heavily armed group of fidayeen storms a camp housing families of the Army's 36 Brigade in Jammu's Sunjuwan area. Two militants die in the retaliatory fire.

Feb. 11: The death toll in the militant attack on the Sunjuwan camp goes up to six, with the recovery of the bodies of three soldiers and a civilian. A third militant is shot dead.

Feb. 12: A constable is killed and a policeman injured as paramilitary personnel foil a fidayeen attack on the CRPF's 23 Battalion headquarters in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir.

Feb. 14: The Punjab National Bank reports the unearthing of unauthorised transactions worth ₹11,500 crore in the Kala Ghoda branch in south Mumbai, in a regulatory filing to the stock exchanges. The CBI and the ED register cases against Mumbai-based billionaire diamond merchant Nirav Modi.

Feb. 16: A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court reduces Tamil Nadu's share of Cauvery water from 419 tmcft to 404.25 tmcft. Karnataka will now get 284.75 tmcft, against 270 tmcft earlier. Directs the government to create an implementation mechanism.

Feb. 18: Seventy-nine % voting is registered in Tripura Assembly polls.

Feb. 19: Flying Officer Avani Chaturvedi becomes the first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo, when she flew an MiG-21 Bison from IAF's Jamnagar base in Gujarat.

Feb. 20: The Government opens up commercial coal mining for Indian and foreign firms in the private sector.

Delhi Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash is allegedly assaulted by AAP MLAs at a meeting at the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence.

Feb. 21: Veteran Tamil actor Kamal Haasan launches his party, Makkal Needhi Maiam (People's Justice Centre), at a function in Madurai and unveils the flag.

Feb. 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches the Amma two-wheeler scheme meant for working women on the occasion of the former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's 75th birth anniversary celebrations in Chennai.

Feb. 27: Meghalaya and Nagaland register 85.7% and 75% polling respectively in the Assembly elections.

Feb. 28: The CBI arrests Karti Chidambaram at the Chennai Airport on charges that he took a bribe of \$1 million for scuttling a probe against INX Media for violation of FIPB conditions in 2007.

MARCH

March 3: The BJP wins the Tripura Assembly polls. Hung Assemblies in Meghalaya and Nagaland.

March 4: Manik Sarkar resigns

as Tripura Chief Minister.

The PNB scam is pegged at ₹13,578 crore, with the bank filing a supplementary complaint with the CBI against Mehul Choksi, his firms for an additional amount of ₹942.18 crore.

March 5: The Centre gives environment clearance for the Neutrino Observatory at Pottipuram village in Theni district, Tamil Nadu.

March 6: Conrad Kongkal Sangma, is sworn in as Meghalaya Chief Minister.

Nagaland Chief Minister T.R. Zeliang resigns.

March 7: A CBI special court in Thiruvananthapuram frees Fr. Jose Poothrukayil in the murder of Sister Abhaya at a convent in Kottayam in 1992. The other two accused, Fr. Thomas Kottoor and Sister Stephie are ordered to face trial.

The Union Cabinet approves easing the cap on spectrum holding by telcos.

Architect Balkrishna V. Doshi, a pioneer of low-cost housing design, becomes the first Indian to win the Pritzker Prize.

March 8: Union Civil Aviation Minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju and Minister of State for Science and Technology Y.S. Chowdary of the TDP resign.

The Supreme Court sets aside Kerala High Court order annulling the marriage of Hadiya to Shafin Jahan after her conversion to Islam.

Ottamuri Velicham, directed by Rahul Riji Nair is adjudged the best film at the Kerala State Film Awards for 2017. Lijo Jose Pellissery is named best director (*Ee. Ma. Yau*). Indrans bags best actor award (*Alorukam*) and Parvathy best female actor (*Take Off*).

Neiphiu Rio is sworn in as Nagaland Chief Minister.



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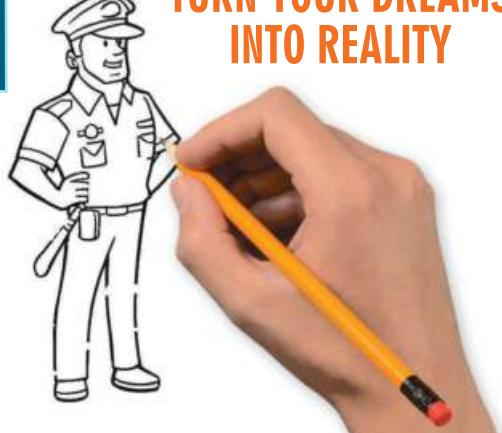
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March 9: A five judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court upholds passive euthanasia and the right to give advance medical directives or 'Living Wills' to smoothen the dying process.

Biplab Kumar Deb is sworn in as Tripura Chief Minister.

March 11: At least 20 trekkers are killed after falling down into a 70-foot gorge while trying to escape a forest fire in Kolukkumalai area close to Kurangani hill in the Bodhi hills of Theni district, Tamil Nadu.

March 13: Foreign law firms or foreign lawyers cannot practise law in the country either on the litigation or non-litigation side, rules the Supreme Court.

March 14: The Samajwadi Party wrests both the Gorakhpur and Phulpur Lok Sabha seats in U.P. from the BJP. In Bihar, the RJD retains the Araria Lok Sabha seat. The RJD and the BJP retain their seats in the Assembly by-elections in Jehanabad and Bhabua respectively.

Former Union Telecom Minister Dayanidhi Maran and his brother and Sun group chairman Kalanithi Maran are discharged by a Special CBI Court in Chennai from the illegal telephone exchange case.

March 15: Rebel AIADMK leader T.T.V. Dhinakaran floats a political party, Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam and unveils flag at a public meeting at Melur, Madurai.

March 16: The Telugu Desam Party moves a no-confidence motion against the government after quitting the NDA.

Social activists and researchers from Maharashtra, Dr. Abhay Bang and Dr. Rani Bang, are presented the first-ever BusinessLine Changemakers Awards, in New Delhi.

March 20: The Supreme Court expresses serious concern over the misuse of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and introduces the provision of anticipatory bail and rules against automatic arrest of anyone booked under the law.

March 22: Parliament passes the Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2017 paving the way for doubling the limit of tax-free gratuity to ₹20 lakh.

March 23: The Delhi High Court quashes a notification issued by President Ram Nath Kovind disqualifying 20 AAP MLAs for holding offices



Trekkers being rescued from a forest fire in the hills above Kurangani, a tourist spot in Theni district, Tamil Nadu.

of profit as parliamentary secretaries.

March 24: RJD chief Lalu Prasad is sentenced to 14 years in prison in the fourth fodder scam case, by a Special CBI Court in Ranchi.

March 27: "Honour killing guillotines individual liberty, freedom of choice and one's own perception of choice," says the Supreme Court and upholds choice of consenting adults to love and marry as part of their fundamental rights.

March 29: ISRO places GSAT-6A, a communication satellite in orbit after launch on board a GSLV F-08 rocket from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

APRIL

April 1: ISRO begins operations to correct glitch, after the GSAT-6A satellite goes silent on Day Two of the launch after the second firing of the on-board engine.

April 2: At least nine people are killed and hundreds injured in violence across several States in North India during a nationwide bandh called by Dalit groups against the alleged dilution of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

April 3: The ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu observes a State-wide fast demanding the constitution of the Cauvery Management Board.

April 5: Actor Salman Khan is sentenced to five years in jail by a court in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, for poaching two black buck on the night of October 1-2, 1998.

Normal life is partially hit in Tamil Nadu during the DMK-led Opposition-sponsored bandh demanding the setting up of the Cauvery Management Board.

April 6: Five YSRC MPs hand over resignations to Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan.

April 7: A sessions court in Jodhpur, Rajasthan grants bail to actor Salman Khan.

April 8: A minor girl from Unnao, along with her family members, threatens to commit suicide outside U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's residence over the police failure to act on her complaint against the BJP MLA from Bangermau, Kuldeep Singh Sengar, of gang-raping her on June 17, 2017.

April 9: The father of the girl from Unnao dies in judicial custody almost a week after he was thrashed by supporters of the BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar.

A person's right to choose a religion and marriage is an intrinsic part of her meaningful existence, holds the Supreme Court in its 61-page judgment in the Hadiya case.

An eight-year-old girl from the nomadic Bakherwal community, abducted on January 10 and allegedly raped by six men and killed later, was held captive in a temple in Rasana village, Kathua, reveals the chargesheet filed by the Jammu and Kashmir Police's Crime Branch in the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Jammu. The body was recovered on January 17.

April 10: The IPL match between CSK and KKR is held in a tense atmosphere in Chennai, with thousands of people blocking all roads leading to the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in protest against the delay in the formation of the Cauvery Management Board.

April 11: Owing to security concerns, the remaining six IPL matches are moved out of Chennai.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu launches the Bhuseva project in Vijayawada.

April 12: The 1,425kg navigation satellite IRNSS-II is launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

April 13: The CBI arrests BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar.

Actor Vinod Khanna is posthumously awarded the Dada Saheb Phalke Award at the 65th National Film Awards function in New Delhi.

Sridevi is posthumously honoured with the Best Actress Award for her role in the rape revenge drama *Mom*. Best Actor Award goes to

Riddhi Sen for role in Bengali film *Nagar Kirtan*. Rima Das' Assamese film *Village Rockstars* is adjudged Best Feature Film.

April 16: All the five accused in the May 18, 2007 blast at the Mecca Masjid in Hyderabad, including Nabu Kumar Sarkar alias Swami Aseemanand, are acquitted by a special NIA court in Hyderabad.

April 19: The Supreme Court concludes that there is no foul play in judge B.H. Loya's death on December 1, 2014 in Nagpur.

April 20: The Congress and six other Opposition parties in the Rajya Sabha move an impeachment motion against CJI Dipak Misra on grounds of "misbehaviour."

The Gujarat High Court acquits former Minister Dr. Maya Kodnani who was sentenced to 28 years in jail by a trial court in connection with the February 28, 2002 Naroda Patiya massacre case. Upholds the conviction of 12 persons, including Bajrang Dal leader Babu Bajrangi.

April 21: The Union Cabinet approves the promulgation of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance providing for death penalty for rapists of girls below 12 years.

Senior BJP leader Yashwant Sinha quits the party.

April 22: Sitaram Yechury is re-elected CPI(M) general secretary for a second term at the end of the five-day 22nd Party Congress in Hyderabad.

April 23: Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu rejects the impeachment motion against CJI Dipak Misra.

April 25: Self-styled godman Asaram Bapu is convicted of rape and sexual assault of a teenage girl at his ashram in Manai village near Jodhpur, Rajasthan on August 15, 2013 and sentenced to life imprisonment till death by a Special SC/ST Court.

April 27: The Madras High Court dismisses plea seeking disqualification of O. Panneerselvam and 10 other AIADMK MLAs for having voted against a no-confidence motion moved by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on February 18, 2017.

Indu Malhotra takes oath as Supreme Court judge, becoming the first woman to be appointed to the post directly from the Bar.

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal stays an order of

the CCI imposing a penalty of ₹136 crore on Google.

MAY

May 1: Maharashtra becomes the first state to provide digitally-signed land record receipts (also known as 7/12 receipts).

May 2: Gangster Chhota Rajan and eight others are sentenced to life imprisonment in the June 11, 2011 murder of journalist Jyotirmoy Dey in Mumbai by a special court. Journalist Jignesh Vora is acquitted.

May 9: U.S. retail giant Walmart agrees to pay \$16 billion for a 77% stake in Indian e-commerce startup Flipkart.

May 12: A record 72% voting registered in the Karnataka Assembly polls.

May 14: The Centre files the draft Cauvery water management scheme in the Supreme Court.

The CBI files the first chargesheet in the PNB scam before a Special CBI Court and names former CEO Usha Ananthasubramanian, Nirav Modi and 20 others.

At least 20 people are killed and hundreds injured during voting in the West Bengal panchayat polls.

May 17: BJP state president B.S. Yeddyurappa takes oath as the 29th Chief Minister of Karnataka. In a pre-dawn hearing, the Supreme Court refuses to stay the swearing-in.

The ruling Trinamool Congress sweeps the West Bengal panchayat polls.

May 19: B.S. Yeddyurappa resigns as Karnataka Chief Minister without facing the floor test.

May 20: Kerala Health Department confirms Nipah virus infection in the State with the blood samples of two people who had died in Kozhikode district a fortnight ago testing positive. Another of the family



Indu Malhotra

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from Sooppikkada village too had died.

May 21: The Nipah toll goes up to four with the death of Lini, a nurse attached to the Perambra taluk hospital in Kozhikode.

INSV Tarini becomes the first Indian vessel with an all-women crew to successfully circumnavigate the world and is received at the INS Mandovi jetty at Verem in north Goa.

May 22: At least 13 people, including Snowlin, a 17-year-old girl, are killed in police firing after a section of participants in a massive rally to the Collectorate seeking closure of the Sterlite Copper, a Vedanta group firm in Thoothukudi, resorts to violence.

May 23: H.D. Kumaraswamy is sworn in as the 30th Chief Minister of Karnataka, heading a JD(S)-Congress coalition government.

May 24: The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board orders closure of the Sterlite Copper unit and cuts power supply to the plant.

Nipah Virus claims one more life in Kerala's Kozhikode district, taking the death toll to 12.

May 25: Sterlite Copper, the Vedanta Group's Copper smelter plant in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu is sealed.

May 26: The chargesheet is filed in the journalist-activist Gauri Lankesh murder case by the Special Investigation Team and it names Naiven Kumar as the key accused.

May 27: A united Opposition wrests the Kairana and Bhandara-Gondiya Lok Sabha seats from the BJP, which manages to retain Palghar while its ally NDPP bags the lone Nagaland seat. The Opposition parties win 10 Assembly seats across the nation and the BJP only a single seat in Uttarakhand.

JUNE

June 1: All five accused in the July 7, 2013 Bodh Gaya serial bomb blasts case are awarded life sentence by a special NIA court in Patna, Bihar.

June 2: Kalpana Kumari from Sheohar in Bihar emerges all-India topper in the NEET securing 691 marks out of 720.

June 3: The Tamil Nadu government announces decision to ban plastic products except as packing material for milk, curd, oil and medical products from January 1, 2019.

June 4: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal ends nine-day sit-in at the Raj Niwas after bureaucrats attend meetings called by Ministers.

June 5: The Pune police arrests



Anti-Sterlite protesters taking out a march towards the Thoothukudi District Collectorate in Tamil Nadu.

takes charge in Jammu and Kashmir and places the Assembly under suspended animation.

Chief Economic Adviser Aravind Subramanian resigns.

June 21: Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, accepts the resignation of five YSR Congress MPs.

June 22: The Centre notifies the formation of the Cauvery Water Management Authority and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee.

June 23: Mumbai becomes the first major city to impose a tough plastic-free regime.

June 24: Heavy rain lashes Mumbai bringing life to a standstill. Santacruz records 231mm and Colaba 99mm rainfall. Malad West registers around 300mm.

June 25: The Tamil Nadu Assembly unanimously adopts a special resolution urging the Centre to keep the Dam Safety Bill, 2018, in abeyance.

June 26: The Centre decides to scrap the UGC and replace it with a Higher Education Commission of India.

June 27: The Lok Sabha passes the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017.

The Lok Sabha passes the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill.

June 28: Sterling Biotech Limited, a pharmaceutical company in the Nilgiris, is served with a closure notice by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board for flouting environmental norms.

July 1: Five persons are beaten to death by a mob which assaults a group of 78 people on suspicion of being child-lifters, by tribal villagers at Panjuri Kacharia-gaon in Karbi Anglong district.

July 2: The Lok Sabha passes the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017.

July 3: The Lok Sabha passes the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

July 4: The Lok Sabha passes the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018.

July 5: The Lok Sabha passes the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018.

July 6: The Lok Sabha passes the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

July 7: The Lok Sabha passes the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017.

July 8: The Lok Sabha passes the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

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July 20: The Lok Sabha passes the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Chennai youth Daswant imposed by a Mahila Court in Chengalpattu on February 19, 2018 for the rape and murder of a seven-year-old girl at an apartment in Mugalivakkam at an animation.

July 21: The Madras High Court sets aside an order, passed by a Special CBI Court in Chennai on March 14, discharging former Union Minister Dayanidhi Maran, his elder brother Kalanithi Maran, and five others from the BSNL illegal telephone exchange case.

July 22: The Centre notifies the formation of the Cauvery Water Management Authority and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee.

July 23: Mumbai becomes the first major city to impose a tough plastic-free regime.

July 24: The Lok Sabha passes the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

July 25: The Madras High Court sentences former Navy Officer, Captain (retd.) Salam Singh Rathore to seven years in jail in the 2005 Navy war room leak case. Commander (retd.) Jarlani Singh Kalra is acquitted.

July 26: The West Bengal Assembly passes a resolution to change the name of the State as Bengal in three languages - Bengali, English and Hindi.

July 27: The Lok Sabha passes the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018.

July 28: More than 40 lakh of the 3.29 crore applicants in Assam are left out of the complete draft National Register of Citizens published in Guwahati.

July 29: The Lok Sabha passes the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017.

July 30: The Lok Sabha passes the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

July 31: The Lok Sabha passes the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Aug. 1: The Lok Sabha passes the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

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Aug. 13: The Lok Sabha passes the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

Aug. 14: The Lok Sabha passes the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

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Aug. 17: The Lok Sabha passes the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

Aug. 18: The Lok Sabha passes the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

Aug. 19: The Lok Sabha passes the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Aug. 20: The Madras High Court sets aside an order, passed by a Special CBI Court in Chennai on March 14, discharging former Union Minister Dayanidhi Maran, his elder brother Kalanithi Maran, and five others from the BSNL illegal telephone exchange case.

Aug. 21: The Lok Sabha passes the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018.

Aug. 22: The Lok Sabha passes the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Aug. 23: The Lok Sabha passes the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018.

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Sept. 15: The Lok Sabha passes the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018.

Sept. 16: The Lok Sabha passes the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018.

Kauvery Hospital in Alwarpet, Chennai where he was being treated for 11 days. The State government announces seven-day mourning. The Centre announces a state funeral.

Aug. 8: Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi is buried on the Marina with full State honours. Both Houses of Parliament are adjourned for the day.

Aug. 9: National Democratic Alliance candidate and Janata Dal (United) MP Harivansh is elected Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman.

Aug. 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi signs a \$400-million contract for five S-400 'Triumf' air defence missile systems in New Delhi.

Sept. 21: The special investigation team of the Kerala police probing the alleged rape of a nun arrests Jalandhar Bishop Franco Mulakkal in Kochi.

Sept

nister Yogi Adityanath announces decision to rename Faizabad city as Ayodhya.

Nov. 9: The Madras High Court directs a special court for CBI cases to frame charges afresh against former Telecom Minister Dayanidhi Maran, his brother Kalanithi Maran and others in the illegal BSNL telephone exchange case.

Nov. 12: Over 76.42% polling is recorded in phase I of the Chhattisgarh Assembly polls.

Over 1,000 fireworks units in Sivakasi and other parts of the country announce an indefinite closure.

Nov. 13: The Supreme Court refuses to stay ruling allowing women of all age groups to offer worship at the Sabarimala temple.

Binny Bansal resigns as Flipkart CEO.

The government notifies the Tamil Nadu Lokayukta Rules, 2018.

The Centre rejects Karnataka's suggestion to grant minority religion status to Lingayats.

Nov. 14: ISRO successfully launches the 3,423 kg GSAT-29 communication satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

Nov. 15: Pune police file a chargesheet against lawyer Surendra Gainguli, Nagpur University professor Shoma Sen, activists Sudhir Dhawale, Mahesh Raut and Rona Wilson arrested on June 6 for their role in the Bhima-Koregaon clashes.

Nov. 16: At least 52 people are killed as Cyclone Gaja wreaks havoc in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Cuddalore, Ramanathapuram and Pudukkottai districts of Tamil Nadu.

John Allen Chau, an American missionary is killed allegedly by the reclusive Sentinelese tribespeople when he tries to enter the North Sentinel Island in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Nov. 17: Revolutionary writer Varavara Rao, under house arrest for 79 days at his Ashoknagar residence in Hyderabad, is taken into custody by the Pune police.

Nov. 19: Three AIADMK men, serving life terms for setting ablaze a bus in Dharmapuri on February 2, 2000, resulting in the death of three students of the TNAU, Coimbatore, are granted remission and set free from the Vellore Central Prison.

Nov. 20: Andhra Pradesh Chief



Coconut trees uprooted by Cyclone Gaja at Pattukkottai in Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu.

Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu launches 'Bhudhaar', an 11-digit unique code aimed at easy identification of land parcels, at a function at Undavalli, near Amaravati.

Over 71.93% voting in phase II of the Chhattisgarh Assembly polls.

Nov. 21: Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik dissolves the State Assembly.

Nov. 22: The Supreme Court sets aside a Madras High Court direction to the CBSE to grant grace marks for 49 questions to students who took the NEET 2018 in Tamil for faulty translation.

Nov. 26: Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu lays the foundation stone for the Kartarpur corridor between India and Pakistan in Gurdaspur, Punjab.

Nov. 28: Madhya Pradesh registers a record 74.61% turnout in the Assembly polls. Mizoram records 80% polling.

Ukrainian film *Donbass* directed by Sergei Loznitsa wins the Golden Peacock at the 49th International Film Festival Of India in Panaji, Goa.

Nov. 29: ISRO's PSLV C-43 rocket puts into orbit Hyper Spectral Imaging Satellite (HysIS), and 30 small commercial satellites after liftoff from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

The Maharashtra Assembly passes a Bill proposing 16% quota for Marathas.

Nov. 30: The Tamil Nadu government challenges the Central Water Commission order on the Mekedatu project in the Supreme Court.

DECEMBER

Dec. 1: Chief Election Commissioner O.P. Rawat demits office.

Dec. 2: Sunil Arora takes over as the new CEC.

Train 18, India's first engine-less

train, breaches the 180 kmph speed threshold during a test run in the Sawai Madhopur section in Rajasthan, becoming the nation's fastest train.

Dec. 3: An Uttar Pradesh police inspector and a youth are killed as a mob attacks an outpost at Chingravati in Syana tehsil, Bulanshahr district, following rumours of alleged cow slaughter at Mahav village.

The board of Hindustan Unilever Ltd. approves the merger of GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare India with the firm.

Dec. 4: British national Christian Michel James, wanted in the AgustaWestland VVIP helicopter deal bribery case, is brought to Delhi after being extradited by the UAE.

Dec. 5: The Witness Protection Scheme, 2018, is put in place by the Supreme Court.

Tamil writer S. Ramakrishnan bags the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2018 for his novel *Sancharam*.

The 5,854 kg communication satellite GSAT-11 is put into orbit after launch from the European Spaceport in Kourou, South America.

Dec. 6: A special session of the Tamil Nadu Assembly passes a resolution against permission to Karnataka to prepare a project report for a dam across the Cauvery at Mekedatu.

Dec. 7: Krishnamurthy Subramanian is appointed Chief Economic Adviser.

Rajasthan registers 74% turnout in the Assembly polls and Telangana 67%.

Dec. 10: RBI Governor Urjit Patel resigns.

Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development Upendra Kushwaha quits the Cabinet.

Dec. 11: The Congress wins the Assembly polls in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. The Telangana Rashtra Samithi retains power in Telangana. The Mizo National Front is back in power in Mizoram after 10 years.

Shaktikanta Das is appointed RBI Governor.

Dec. 12: The Congress wins the Madhya Pradesh Assembly polls after a see-saw battle with the BJP.

The Dam Safety Bill, 2018, is introduced in the Lok Sabha.

Dec. 13: The Madras High Court quashes GO on DVAC probe into 'irregularities' in the construction of the new Secretariat in Chennai.

K. Chandrasekhar Rao is sworn in

Telangana Chief Minister for a second term.

Dec. 14: The Supreme Court rejects pleas for probe into the Rafale jet deal.

Eminent novelist Amitav Ghosh is chosen for the 2018 Jnanpith Award.

Dec. 15: The NGT sets aside the Tamil Nadu government's order for the closure of Sterlite's copper smelter in Thoothukudi.

Mizo National Front president Zoramthanga is sworn in as the ninth Chief Minister of Mizoram.

Dec. 16: UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi unveils a statue of DMK leader M. Karunanidhi at the party headquarters in Chennai.

Dec. 17: The Delhi High Court sentences Congress leader Sajjan Kumar to life term for the murder of five Sikhs during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Kamal Nath takes office as Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister. Ashok Gehlot takes oath as Rajasthan Chief Minister and Bhupesh Baghel is sworn in as Chhattisgarh Chief Minister.

Dec. 18: Hamid Nehal Ansari, who had been missing in Pakistan since 2012, reunites with his family at the Attari-Wagah border crossing on repatriation after serving a three-year jail term.

In a first for India, all of Kerala's 519 captive elephants get unique DNA-based genetic IDs.

Dec. 19: The Lok Sabha passes a Bill banning commercial surrogacy.

GSAT7A, a 2,250 kg communications satellite to primarily cater to the IAF's needs, is launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

Dec. 20: The Lok Sabha passes the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018.

The government issues an order allowing 10 Central agencies to intercept and monitor information stored in any computer.

FinMin's Alternative Mechanism gives nod for Bank Of Baroda's merger with Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank.

Dec. 21: A special CBI court in Mumbai acquits all the 22 accused in the November 2005 Sohrabuddin Shaikh-Kausar Bi fake encounter case.

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court orders maintenance of status quo on the Sterlite plant reopening.

The Delhi High Court orders release of former Youth Congress leader Sushil Kumar Sharma, serving a life term for the murder of his live-in partner Naina Sahni in 1995.

Dec. 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the 4.9 km Bogibeel Bridge, India's longest rail-cum-road span, across the Brahmaputra in Dibrugarh district, Assam.

Dec. 26: The NIA arrests 10 'members' of an IS-inspired module and foils terror strikes in Delhi.

International golfer Jyoti Randhawa is arrested for 'poaching' in a forest range in Uttar Pradesh.

President Ram Nath Kovind orders separation of the 'common' Hyderabad High Court into the High Courts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

The government bars online retailers from selling products of firms in which they own a stake, effective February 1, 2019.

Dec. 27: Lok Sabha passes The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018.

Dec. 28: The Union Cabinet gives nod for changes to the POCSO Act, 2012, making assault on boys punishable by death. Nod for the Gaganyaan manned space mission.

Dec. 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi renames three Andaman islands after Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Dec. 31: Former Congress leader Sajjan Kumar surrenders in a Delhi court and is sent to jail.

A special court in Nashik acquits all seven persons, including prime accused Abdul Ladsab Telgi (now dead) in the fake stamp paper scam.

The Lok Sabha passes the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waving to people after inaugurating the Bogibeel Bridge across the Brahmaputra river, in Dibrugarh, Assam.

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INTERNATIONAL

JANUARY

Jan. 1: California legalises recreational marijuana.

Jan. 2: Israel's Parliament passes legislation requiring a super-majority to cede control over any part of Jerusalem.

Jan. 3: World stocks hit fresh highs and Asian markets scale new peaks.

Jan. 8: An Italian appeals court in Milan acquits Giuseppe Orsi, former president of Finmeccanica and Bruno Spagnolini, former CEO of the firm's helicopters subsidiary AgustaWestland of bribery charges in the ₹3,600-crore deal to sell 12 choppers to India.

Jan. 9: The body of Zainab Fatima Ameen, a six-year-old child kidnapped six days ago, is found in a garbage heap in Kasur in Pakistan's Punjab province bearing signs of sexual abuse, triggering massive protests.

Jan. 11: Ecuador grants citizenship to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, holed up in the country's London embassy for over five years.

Jan. 12: U.S. President Donald Trump gives the Iran nuclear deal a final reprieve.

Jan. 15: The Communist Party of China names President Xi Jinping as the *lingxiu*, a status bestowed only on iconic leaders Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping.

Jan. 16: Bangladesh and Myanmar sign a deal to repatriate 650,000 Rohingya refugees, in Naypyidaw.

Jan. 20: The U.S. Government shuts down after the impasse over immigration and border security stalls a funding Bill in the Senate, a day earlier.

Jan. 22: Congress votes to reopen the U.S. government as Democrats drop objections to a temporary funding bill.

Jan. 23: Pakistan arrests Imran Ali, a serial killer, and key suspect accused of raping and murdering Zainab Fatima Ameen in Kasur, Punjab.

Jan. 24: An appeals court unanimously upholds the corruption conviction of Brazil's former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, condemning him to 12 years in prison.

Jan. 27: At least 103 people are killed and 235 wounded after an explosives-packed ambulance is

blown up by Taliban-affiliated Haqqani Network in the Afghanistan capital Kabul.

Jan. 28: American singer-songwriter Bruno Mars, sweeps the 60th Annual Grammy Awards held at Madison Square Garden in New York City, winning six of them. Kendrick Lamar bags five awards, including the 'Best Rap Album' for *Damn*.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 1: Fidel Angel Castro Diaz-Balart, 68, the eldest son of the late Cuban President, Fidel Castro, and a nuclear physicist commits suicide, in Havana.

Feb. 2: The Maldives Supreme Court nullifies the convictions of exiled former President, Mohamed Nasheed and eight others. Orders reinstatement of 12 parliamentarians expelled for defection.

Feb. 3: The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency launches the world's smallest rocket from the Uchinoura Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture.

Feb. 5: Maldivian troops arrest the Chief Justice and a judge after storming the Supreme Court premises. Hours later, former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom is arrested.

Samsung Group heir Jay Y. Lee in detention since February 2017 is freed.

Wall Street's Dow Jones and S&P benchmarks slump by 4.6 and 4.1, their biggest drops since August 2011. More than \$1 trillion is wiped from U.S. equities.

Feb. 6: Poland's President Andrzej Duda signs into law a controversial Holocaust Bill.

The order to free nine political prisoners, including former Maldives President, Mohamed Nasheed is annulled by three of the five Supreme Court Justices.

SpaceX successfully test-launches Falcon Heavy, the world's most powerful commercial rocket from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, U.S.

Feb. 8: Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader and former Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia, is jailed for five years for graft by a Special Judge's Court in Dhaka.

Over 170 persons are killed in the past four days, as Syrian regime war planes rain bombs on the rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta, outside Damascus.

Feb. 9: U.S. Congress passes a



A student mourns the loss of her friend at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, U.S.

crucial federal spending Bill.

Scientists from Britain and the U.S. successfully grow human eggs to maturity outside the body, in a laboratory for the first time, and publish the results in the journal *Molecular Human Reproduction*.

Feb. 11: All 65 passengers and six crew members aboard a Russian passenger plane are killed as it crashes in Argunovo village in Ramensky district soon after takeoff from Moscow's Domodedovo airport.

Feb. 14: South African President Jacob Zuma is forced to resign.

At least 17 people are killed and 15 injured in a mass shooting by a former student, Nikolas Cruz, at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland near Miami, U.S.

Feb. 15: Cyril Ramaphosa is elected South African President by ANC legislators.

The U.S. Senate blocks several immigration proposals, leaving in limbo the fate of nearly two million migrants brought to the country illegally as children.

Feb. 16: Special Counsel Robert Mueller announces the indictments of 13 Russians and three firms for alleged interference with the 2016 U.S. presidential polls, handed up by a Washington grand jury.

Feb. 18: All 66 people on board an Iranian passenger plane are killed after it crashes into the Zagros mountains 45 minutes after takeoff from Tehran's Mehrabad airport.

Crime drama *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, bags five British Bafta film awards in London. Guillermo Del Toro gets best director award for *The Shape of Water*.

Feb. 21: Pakistan Supreme Court disqualifies former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from heading Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party.

Feb. 23: U.S. President Donald Trump imposes new sanctions on North Korea.

Feb. 24: At least 29 civilians are killed in air strikes in Eastern Ghouta, an enclave outside Damascus, Syria. Death toll touches 500.

Feb. 26: At least 55 people are killed and 500 wounded after a 7.5 magnitude earthquake strikes Papua New Guinea.

MARCH

March 2: World stocks plunge as U.S. President, Donald Trump's proposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, trigger fears of a global trade war.

March 4: Gullermo del Toro's fairy tale romance, *The Shape of Water*, wins top honours – best picture, best director statuettes for production design and test original score at the 90th Academy Awards at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California. Christopher Nolan's World War II thriller *Dunkirk* picks up three awards.

A former Russian double agent, Sergei Skripal, and his daughter Yulia are found unconscious on a bench outside a shopping centre in Salisbury, U.K. Nerve agent Novichok use suspected.

March 5: Italian electorate delivers hung Parliament.

March 6: The Japanese Navy appoints Ryoko Azuma its first woman commander of a unit that includes Izumo, the country's biggest warship.

Gary Cohen, top economic adviser to U.S. President Donald Trump, resigns.

March 8: The U.S. imposes a 25% import tariff on steel and 10% on aluminium.

March 11: China's National People's Congress votes to remove limits on presidential tenure, enabling Xi Jinping to serve as President indefinitely. 'Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era,' is included in the Constitution.

March 12: At least 49 passengers on board a US-Bangla Airlines flight are killed after it crashes while landing at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, Nepal, and skids into a nearby football field.

March 13: U.S. President Donald Trump sacks Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. CIA Director, Mike Pompeo to replace him.

March 14: British Prime Minis-

ter, Theresa May, announces in Parliament decision to suspend all high-level bilateral contacts with Russia over the poisoning of Sergei Skripal.

Angela Merkel is re-elected German Chancellor for a fourth term.

March 15: The U.S. slaps sanctions on 19 Russian individuals and five groups for meddling in the 2016 presidential polls and for malicious cyberattacks.

March 16: Facebook suspends the account of Cambridge Analytica, the data firm that helped U.S. President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, for failing to delete user data.

March 17: China's Parliament unanimously elects Xi Jinping as President for a second consecutive term.

March 18: Vladimir Putin wins a fourth term as Russian President.

March 20: "China's President Xi Jinping takes office for the second term.

March 22: U.S. President Donald Trump directs imposition of 25% tariffs on Chinese products worth \$60 billion.

March 23: U.S. President Donald Trump signs a \$1.3 trillion federal spending Bill, averts shutdown.

March 24: Nearly 8,00,000 people take out rallies across the U.S. seeking tougher gun laws.

March 25: At least 64 people, many of them children, are killed in a blaze at the Winter Cherry shopping centre in the city of Kemerovo in Siberia, Russia.

March 26: The U.S. expels 60 Russian officials and orders closure of the consulate in Seattle.

March 29: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is re-elected for a second term following a three-day polling.



Former Russian spy Sergei Skripal, the victim of a nerve agent attack.

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Britain starts the one-year countdown to Brexit.

Russia decides to expel 150 western diplomats, including 60 from the U.S., and close the U.S. consulate in St. Petersburg.

March 30: At least 18 Palestinians are killed and 400 injured as Israeli security forces fire on demonstrators, pressing for a right of return for refugees, along the Israel-Gaza border.

APRIL

April 2: Malaysian Parliament gives nod for a law that makes "fake news" punishable with a maximum six-year jail term.

April 6: The U.S. imposes sanctions on seven Russian oligarchs, 12 firms they own or control, 17 senior officials and a state-owned arms export company.

South Korea's former President Park Geun-hye, is jailed for 24 years for graft.

Israeli troops kill nine Palestinians and injure 491 people in the second mass protest in as many weeks along Gaza's volatile border.

April 8: Hungarian President Viktor Orban wins a fourth term in general elections.

April 11: All 257 people on board an Algerian military transport plane are killed after it crashes soon after take-off at Boufarik airbase, southwest of Algiers.

April 13: The Pakistan Supreme Court bans former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from contesting polls for life.

April 16: The 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service is bagged by the *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* magazine for their revelations of sexual harassment. The national reporting prize goes to *The Times* and *The Washington Post* for their coverage of U.S. President Donald Trump's possible ties to Russia.

April 19: Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez is sworn in as Cuba's President replacing Raul Castro.

April 22: At least 57 people are killed and 119 wounded following a suicide bomb attack by the IS outside a voter registration centre in the Afghan capital Kabul.

April 27: North Korean President Kim Jong-un and his South Korean counterpart, Moon Jae-in, pledge to work for complete denuclearisation after a historic summit in the peace village of Panmunjom.

China and India are both impor-

tant engines for global growth, says President Xi Jinping after talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Wuhan, China.

April 29: British Home Secretary Amber Rudd resigns. Sajid Javid, a South Asian, is appointed in her place.

April 30: At least 25 people, including 10 journalists are killed as two suicide blasts rip through Kabul, Afghanistan.

MAY

May 1: The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences expels U.S. actor Bill Cosby and film director, Roman Polanski in the light of sexual assault cases against them.

May 2: Cambridge Analytica announces it was "immediately ceasing all operations" and filing for insolvency in Britain and the U.S.

May 4: Nobel Literature Prize 2018 is put off to 2019, after the Swedish Academy fails to contain a crisis stemming from the #MeToo campaign.

May 6: Lebanese cast votes in the first parliamentary election in nine years.

May 7: Vladimir Putin is sworn in as Russia's President for a fourth term at a ceremony at the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow.

May 8: U.S. President Donald Trump announces decision to pull out of the landmark nuclear deal with Iran and reimpose sanctions.

May 10: Mahathir Mohamad is sworn in Malaysian Prime Minister.

David Goodall, 104, a British-born Australian biologist, dies after an assisted suicide in Liestal, a town outside the city of Basel, Switzerland.

May 12: Iraqis cast votes in parliamentary election.

May 13: At least 13 people are killed and dozens injured after a family of six, including two daughters aged nine and 12 stages suicide bombings at three churches in Surabaya, Indonesia.

May 14: At least 61 Palestinians are shot dead and 2,700 injured by Israeli troops on the Gaza border.

May 16: Jailed Malaysian leader Anwar Ibrahim is granted a full pardon and freed.

May 18: At least 110 passengers on board a Cuban State airways plane are killed after it crashes soon after take-off from Havana's Jose Marti airport.

At least 10 people, including eight students and two teachers are killed



A woman behind the wheels in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, following the lifting of the ban on driving.

and 10 injured after Dimitrios Pagourtzis, a student, opens fire at the Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe city in Texas, U.S.

May 19: Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr's Marching Towards Reform bloc wins 54 of the 329 seats in Iraq's Parliament in a major upset.

Britain's Prince Harry marries Meghan Markle, former American actor at St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle.

Hirokazu Kore-eda's *Shoplifters* bags the Palme d'Or at the 71st Annual Cannes Film Festival in France.

May 20: The U.S. and China agree to back off from imposing tariffs on each other.

Nicolas Maduro wins a new six-year term in the Venezuelan presidential polls.

May 22: Polish author Olga Tokarczuk wins the Man Booker International Prize for works of translated fiction for *Flights*, at a function in London.

May 24: Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri is given a third term by lawmakers.

May 26: Irish republic votes by a landslide to legalise abortion.

May 30: India and Indonesia elevate their bilateral ties to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joko Widodo in Jakarta.

The U.S. renames its Pacific Command as the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, at the change-of-command ceremony in Hawaii.

May 31: Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi resigns.

JUNE

June 1: Spain's Parliament ousts Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy in a no-confidence vote after his Popular Party is implicated in a corruption scandal.

Giuseppe Conte is sworn in Italian Prime Minister.

Nasir-ul-Mulk, is sworn in Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister hours after the President Mamnoon Hussain dissolves the Lower House of Parliament.

June 2: Pedro Sanchez is sworn in as Spain's Prime Minister by King Felipe VI in Madrid.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah-al-Sisi is sworn in for a second four-year term in Cairo.

June 5: Movie mogul Harvey Weinstein pleads not guilty to charges of rape and sexual assault at the Manhattan Supreme Court, after a grand jury indictment in two cases.

Kate Spade, 55, American fashion designer is found dead at her home on Park Avenue on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

June 8: Chinese President Xi Jinping presents the nation's first friendship medal to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin at a function at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Anthony Michael Bourdain, 61, American celebrity chef and author, is found dead in his room at a luxury hotel, the Chambard, in France.

June 12: U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un pledge to move towards complete denuclearisation at a historic summit at the Capella Hotel on Sentosa, a resort island.

June 13: A court in the Maldives sentences former President Maumoon Gayoom to 19 months in prison for obstructing a probe into an alleged plot to oust President Abdulla Yameen.

June 14: Argentina's lower house of Congress casts a historic vote to legalise abortion during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy.

Pakistani Taliban leader Mullah Fazhullah, responsible for the 2012 attack on Malala Yousafzai and the 2014 Peshawar school massacre, is killed in an air strike in Kunar province, Afghanistan.

June 15: U.S. President Donald Trump announces hefty tariffs on \$50 billion of Chinese imports.

A federal court in Washington jails Paul Manafort, President Donald Trump's campaign chairman in 2016, pending trial after being charged with witness tampering following a June 8 indictment.

June 19: U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley announces Washington's withdrawal from the UN Hu-

man Rights Council, accusing it of bias against Israel.

June 21: Iraq's Supreme Court orders a manual recount of the 11 million ballots cast in the May 12 legislative elections, after Parliament annuls the result.

June 24: Saudi Arabia lifts the ban on driving by women, in place since 1957.

June 25: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wins sweeping powers after his victory in landmark polls.

June 26: The U.S. Supreme Court upholds President Donald Trump's ban (imposed in September 2017) on travellers from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

The EU (Withdrawal) Bill, becomes law after Queen Elizabeth II gives her assent.

A U.S. judge in San Diego issues a nationwide injunction directing the administration to reunite children separated at the U.S.-Mexico border with parents within 30 days.

June 27: Apple Inc. and Samsung Electronics co. Ltd. settle a seven-year patent dispute.

June 28: Four journalists and a sales assistant of *The Capital* newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland, U.S. are shot dead at the office by a gunman Jarrod Ramos.

JULY

July 1: Leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador wins Mexican presidential polls.

Massive protests rock Russia over the government move to raise the pension age to 65 for men and 63 for women.

July 2: Twelve boys and their assistant football coach are found alive by rescuers in the Tham Luang Nang Non cave complex in Thai-



U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un taking a stroll during a break in talks at their historic summit, at the Capella Hotel on Sentosa island in Singapore.

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land's Chiang Rai province nine days after they went missing.

July 3: Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak is arrested for wrongdoing at state fund 1MDB.

July 6: An anti-corruption court in Islamabad sentences former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to 10 years in prison over the purchase of four flats in London. His daughter Maryam Nawaz gets eight years and his son-in-law Captain (retd.) Muhammad Safdar one year.

The U.S. and China launch tit-for-tat 25% tariffs on \$34 billion of each other's imports.

Japan executes Shoko Asahara, leader of the Aum Shinrikyo doomsday cult, and six of his followers at a Tokyo detention house, for the March 20, 1995 sarin nerve agent attack on the Tokyo subway.

Britain's Cabinet gives nod for Brexit plan following a summit at Chequers, the Prime Minister's country retreat.

July 8: Four of the 12 schoolboys stranded in the Tham Luang cave are rescued.

Canadian author Michael Ondaatje's novel, *The English Patient*, wins the Golden Booker Prize.

July 9: British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson resigns from the Theresa May Cabinet. Jeremy Hunt is appointed in his place.

Four more members of the "Wild Boys" football team are rescued.

July 10: All the remaining four members of the Thai football team and their coach are rescued.

July 13: Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam are arrested at the Lahore airport.

At least 149 people are killed and 150 others injured in a suicide bombing on an election rally in Matsung town, near the Balochistan capital Quetta in Pakistan.

Twelve Russian intelligence officers are indicted by a U.S. grand jury for interfering in the 2016 presidential election.

July 15: Maria Butina, a covert Russian agent is arrested by U.S. officials and charged with spying for Moscow.

July 16: U.S. President Donald Trump says he sees no reason to believe in Russian meddling in the 2016 polls after a historic summit with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, Finland.

Christian Michel, a key accused in the AgustaWestland chopper deal is held in Dubai.

July 18: The EU slaps Google with a record €4.34 billion (\$5 billion) antitrust fine.

July 20: Former South Korean President Park Geun-hye is sentenced to eight more years in jail.

July 25: Pakistanis cast votes in election to the National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies.

July 26: Japan executes six more Aum Shinrikyo members.

Facebook Inc. CEO Mark Zuckerberg loses \$16 billion as the market value of the social media giant goes down by more than \$100 billion in the biggest one-day wipeout in U.S. stock market history.

July 27: Cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf emerges as the single largest party with 117 seats, in the National Assembly.

AUGUST

Aug. 1: Indian-origin mathematician Akshay Venkatesh, Caucher Birkar, Alessio Figalli, and Peter Scholze are named 2018 Fields Medal winners at the International Congress of Mathematicians in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Aug. 3: Zimbabwe President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa narrowly wins the July 30 polls.

Aug. 4: At least 105 people are killed and thousands of buildings damaged after an earthquake rocks the Indonesian resort island of Lombok.

Aug. 6: Bangladesh Law and Justice Minister Anisul Huq announces the Cabinet decision to impose death penalty for deliberate road deaths, following students' protest.

Pepsico announces that CEO Indra Krishnamoorthy Nooyi is stepping down.

Aug. 7: The U.S. reimposes nuclear-related sanctions on Iran.

Aug. 8: Malaysia's former Prime Minister Najib Razak pleads not guilty to money laundering charges and is granted bail by court.

Aug. 9: Argentina's Senate votes against legalising abortion after a marathon session.

Aug. 12: NASA launches a \$1.5 million spacecraft, Parker Solar Probe, toward the Sun on a historic seven-year mission from Cape Canaveral, Florida, the U.S.

Aug. 13: At least 100 Afghan sol-



Volunteers rejoicing on hearing of the rescue of all the members of the football team from the Tham Luang cave, Thailand.

diers and 30 civilians are killed in four days of fighting in Ghazni.

The death toll in the earthquake on Lombok goes up to 436.

Aug. 18: Imran Khan is sworn in as Pakistan Prime Minister.

Aug. 19: Iraq's Supreme Court ratifies the May 12 parliamentary poll results.

Aug. 20: Greece emerges from the biggest bailout in economic history after nine years of creditor-managed austerity.

Aug. 24: Scott Morrison is sworn in as Australia's seventh Prime Minister in 11 years, after a party revolt unseats incumbent Malcolm Turnbull.

Aug. 26: Emmerson Mnangagwa is sworn in as Zimbabwe President.

Aug. 31: Two Indians, Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk, and four others are presented with the Ramon Magsaysay awards at a function in Manila, Philippines.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 2: A massive fire at Brazil's National Museum in Rio de Janeiro destroys much of its collection.

Sept. 3: A Myanmar court jails two Reuters journalists – Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo – for seven years after finding them guilty of breaching the Official Secrets Act.

Sept. 5: Britain charges in absentia two Russians with the attempted murder of a former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia.

At least 26 people, including two journalists from Tolo News are killed and 91 others injured following suicide attacks at the Maiwand sports club in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Sept. 7: Alfonso Cuaron's *Roma* wins the Golden Lion Award at the 75th Venice Film Festival in Italy.

Sept. 9: Arif Alvi is sworn in Pa-

kistan's 13th President at a ceremony in Islamabad.

Sept. 10: Swedish election results in a hung Assembly.

Jack Ma, Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba's co-founder and executive chairman retires.

Sept. 12: The European Parliament gives nod for a controversial EU copyright law that gives more powers to news and record firms against Internet giants like Google.

Sept. 14: U.S. President Donald Trump's former campaign manager Paul Manafort pleads guilty in a federal court in Washington to charges of conspiracy against the nation and obstruction of justice.

Sept. 15: Typhoon Mangkhut tears through Philippines.

Sept. 19: The Islamabad High Court suspends the jail sentences handed to the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, his daughter Maryam and son-in-law Captain (retd.) Muhammad Safdar.

Sept. 20: At least 207 people are killed after a ferry sinks in Lake Victoria, Tanzania.

Typhoon Mangkhut toll touches 95 in Philippines.

Sept. 23: Maldivians cast votes in presidential polls.

Sept. 24: A French shipping vessel *Osiris* rescues Indian Navy Commander Abhilash Tomy, stranded in the Southern Indian Ocean for the past three days after the mast of his boat *Thuriya* breaks while taking part in the Golden Globe Race, 2018.

The tit for tat tariffs by the U.S. and China take effect.

Sept. 25: Swedish Parliament ousts Prime Minister Stefan Lofven in a vote of no-confidence.

U.S. actor Bill Cosby is sentenced to between three and 10 years in jail by a judge in Pennsylvania for the 2004 sexual assault on Andrea Constand, a former Temple University administrator, in Philadelphia.

Sept. 26: Russian Parliament approves President Vladimir Putin's pension reform amendments.

Sept. 28: At least 832 people are killed and 534 injured after a powerful earthquake hits central Indonesia causing a tsunami that slams into Palu city on Sulawesi island.

Sept. 29: Tesla and its CEO Elon Musk agree to pay \$40 million to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission to settle a lawsuit that was triggered by a tweet on financing to

take Tesla private. To relinquish role as chairman.

Sept. 30: Former Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and his son Faris Maumoon are freed on bail.

Canada and the U.S. reach a deadline deal on a new free trade pact that will include Mexico.

OCTOBER

Oct. 1: Two immunologists, James Allison of the U.S. and Tasuku Honjo of Japan, are awarded the 2018 Nobel Medicine Prize.

A Swedish court hands down a two-year jail term for rape to Frenchman Jean-Claude Arnault, at the heart of a Nobel scandal, for a 2011 incident.

Oct. 2: Arthur Ashkin of the U.S., Gerard Mourou of France and Donna Strickland of Canada win the Nobel Physics Prize.

A Saudi Arabian dissident journalist and columnist for *The Washington Post*, Jamal Khashoggi, is killed at the Kingdom's consulate in the Turkish capital Istanbul.

Oct. 3: Two Americans, Frances H. Arnold and George P. Smith, and a Briton, Sir Gregory P. Winter, are awarded the 2018 Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

Oct. 5: Denis Mukwege, a Congolese doctor, and Nadia Murad of Iraq, a Yazidi rights activist, are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Former South Korean President Lee Myung-bak is jailed for 15 years for graft.

The Indonesian earthquake and tsunami toll touches 1,500.

Oct. 8: Americans William Nordhaus and Paul Romer are awarded the 2018 Nobel Economics Prize.

Oct. 9: Nikki Haley resigns as the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N.

Oct. 11: Malaysia decides to abolish the death penalty.

Asian indices Hang Seng and Nik-



Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.

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Date: 12th Jan., 2019 | Time: 2 pm

FREE DAF ANALYSIS	Most probable questions framed by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. K. Saxena (Ex-Jt. Secy., UPSC) • Amrit S. Chopra (Director, Unique Shiksha) • Unique Shiksha's academic team 	

Date: 16th Jan., 2019, onwards | OFFLINE & ONLINE

MOCK INTERVIEW	A. K. Saxena (Ex-Jt. Secy., UPSC)		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> OTHER MEMBERS </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> A. K. Ganeriwala (Ex-Jt. Secy., Ministry of Health, Govt. of India; Ex-Principal Secy., Govt. of Sikkim) G. S. Kapila (Ex-DIG, CBI) </td> </tr> </table>	OTHER MEMBERS	A. K. Ganeriwala (Ex-Jt. Secy., Ministry of Health, Govt. of India; Ex-Principal Secy., Govt. of Sikkim) G. S. Kapila (Ex-DIG, CBI)	
OTHER MEMBERS	A. K. Ganeriwala (Ex-Jt. Secy., Ministry of Health, Govt. of India; Ex-Principal Secy., Govt. of Sikkim) G. S. Kapila (Ex-DIG, CBI)		

Date: 16th Jan., 2019, onwards | OFFLINE & ONLINE

kei shed 900 points each following massive selling in the stock markets across the globe.

Oct. 12: Guadeloupean author Maryse Conde wins the New Academy Prize in Literature.

Oct. 16: Northern Irish novelist Anna Burns is presented the Man Booker Prize for fiction 2018 for *Milkman*, at a function in London.

Oct. 17: Canada becomes the first industrialised nation to legalise recreational marijuana.

Mohammad Imran, convicted of killing eight children, is executed at a Pakistani prison.

Oct. 18: Three top provincial officials are killed and four persons, including the Governor Zalmay Wesa, are injured after a gunman opens fire at a meeting inside the Governor's compound in southern Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Oct. 20: U.S. President Donald Trump announces that Washington is pulling out of the landmark Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty signed on December 8, 1987 with the Soviet Union.

Riyadh admits to the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in a fight at its Istanbul consulate. Eighteen Saudi nationals are arrested and five senior officials sacked.

Afghans cast votes in parliamentary polls amid violence that claims the lives of at least 36 people.

Oct. 21: Afghans cast votes for a second day, even as 11 people are killed in a roadside bomb blast in the Nangarhar province.

Oct. 24: The European Parliament votes for an EU-wide ban on single-use plastics.

Oct. 26: The first national unity government in Sri Lanka falls, as President Maithripala Sirisena pulls out his United People's Freedom Alliance faction. Sacks Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa is sworn in Prime Minister.

Oct. 27: Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena suspends Parliament.

At least 11 people are killed after a gunman, opens fire during Shabbat services at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, U.S.

Oct. 28: Former Army Captain Jair Bolsonaro is elected Brazilian President in the runoff election.

Oct. 29: All 189 people on board an Indonesian Lion Air jet are killed

after it crashes into the Java Sea soon after takeoff from Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta airport.

India and Japan sign a \$75 billion currency swap agreement in Tokyo.

Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Khalida Zia is sentenced to seven years in jail by a special court in Dhaka for misusing her power while in office to collect \$375,000 for the Zia Charitable Trust Fund.

Oct. 30: A Bangladesh court doubles the jail term of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia from five to 10 years for embezzling money meant for an orphanage.

The Maldives Supreme Court suspends former President Mohamed Nasheed's 13-year jail sentence handed down in 2015. It also overturns the disqualification of the remaining four of the 12 MPs.

Oct. 31: The Supreme Court of Pakistan acquits Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death in November 2010 for blasphemy.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 5: India, China, Japan among eight nations granted relief, as U.S. reimposes sanctions against Iran.

NASA's Voyager 2 probe launched in 1977 enters interstellar space.

Nov. 6: The Democrats manage to take the U.S. House of Representatives after eight years, winning 220 seats in the 435-member chamber, but the GOP retains its majority in the Senate bagging 51 seats in the mid-term polls.

Nov. 7: Twelve people are shot dead by Ian David Long, a former U.S. Marine, during 'college night' at the Borderline Bar & Grill in Thousand Oaks, Southern California.

Nov. 9: Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena dissolves Parliament and calls for snap polls.

Nov. 13: The U.K. and EU negotiators agree on the text of a draft withdrawal agreement in Brussels.

Nov. 14: A majority of MPs in the Sri Lankan Parliament votes against the Mahinda Rajapaksa government in a no-confidence motion.

Nov. 15: Britain's Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab, Works and Pension Secretary Esther McVey and four junior Ministers quit the May Cabinet following differences over the Brexit deal.

Saudi Arabia indicted 11 people accused of murdering journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The U.S. State Depart-



Debris being cleared after a tsunami hits Banten province, Indonesia.

ment sanctions 17 individuals.

Chaos in Sri Lankan Parliament as former President Mahinda Rajapaksa refuses to endorse the no-confidence motion on his address to Parliament and calls for snap polls.

Nov. 16: Former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa loses a trust vote for the third time.

In a historic vote, the kilogram gets a new definition at the General Conference on Weights and Measures held at Versailles, France.

Nov. 17: Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is sworn in Maldives President.

Nov. 19: Nissan Motor Co. Ltd. chairman Carlos Ghosn is detained in Tokyo after a probe reveals financial misconduct.

A federal judge in San Francisco issues a temporary restraining order on U.S. President Donald Trump's Nov. 9 proclamation denying asylum to those entering the nation illegally.

Nov. 22: Nissan Motor Co.'s board votes to oust Carlos Ghosn.

Nov. 25: Leaders of the 27 EU nations agree to the terms of the Brexit deal, at a summit in Brussels.

Russia seizes three Ukrainian naval vessels and 24 sailors off the coast of Crimea.

Nov. 26: The Maldives Supreme Court quashes former President Mohamed Nasheed's terrorism conviction in 2015 and overturns his 13-year jail sentence.

NASA's Mars rover InSight lands on the Red Planet.

Nov. 28: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan presides over the ground-breaking ceremony for the Kartarpur corridor in Narowal district, Punjab.

DECEMBER

Dec. 1: At least 412 people are ar-

rested as French police clash with "yellow vest" protesters around the Champs Elysses in Paris.

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador takes office as Mexican President.

Meng Wanzhou, CFO of Chinese tech giant Huawei Technologies, is arrested in Vancouver, Canada.

Dec 2: China and the U.S. agree to halt additional tariffs for 90 days.

Dec. 4: France suspends fuel tax rise for six months.

Dec. 8: China launches Chang'e-4 lunar probe mission to uncover moon's 'dark side' from the Xichang launch centre.

Vanessa Ponce de Leon, a Mexican model, is crowned Miss World 2018 at an event in China.

Dec. 10: The Westminster Magistrates' Court in London orders Vijay Mallya's extradition to India.

Congolese gynaecologist Denis Mukwege and Yazidi activist Nadia Murad are presented the Nobel Peace Prize at a function in Oslo.

Dec. 11: Jamal Khashoggi, two jailed Reuters reporters, Philippine writer Maria Ressa and *Capital Gazette* newspaper are chosen *Time's* Person of the Year 2018.

Meng Wanzhou, Huawei's chief financial officer is granted bail.

Dec. 12: British Prime Minister Theresa May wins a vote of confidence in her leadership of the Conservative Party by 200 to 117.

Michael Cohen, former personal lawyer of U.S. President Donald Trump, is jailed for 36 months for financial crimes and lying to Congress by a federal court in Manhattan.

Dec. 13: President Maithripala Sirisena's move to dissolve Parliament and call for snap polls illegal, rules the Sri Lankan Supreme Court.

The Senate votes to end U.S. support for the Saudi Arabia-led war in Yemen.

The Yemeni government and Houthi rebels agree on a ceasefire in Hodeida port at peace talks in Sweden.

Dec. 14: Obamacare unconstitutional, rules a federal judge in Texas.

Dec. 15: Mahinda Rajapaksa resigns as Sri Lankan Prime Minister.

Dec. 16: Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena reinstates Ranil Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister.

A 'rule book' is finalised at the climate talks in Katowice, Poland.

Dec. 17: Catriona Gray of the Philippines is crowned Miss Universe 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Dec. 19: The U.S. decides to pull out troops from Syria.

Dec. 20: U.S. Defence Secretary Jim Mattis quits.

Dec. 22: At least 430 people are killed and 1,495 injured in the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra following a tsunami triggered by the eruption of the Anak Krakatoa volcano in the Sunda Strait.

The U.S. government shuts down after Congress adjourns without passing a federal spending bill.

Dec. 24: Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is jailed for seven years in a graft case. Disqualified from holding any public office for 10 years.

U.S. stocks suffer their worst Christmas-eve loss in market history.

Dec. 26: Russia successfully tests the Avangard hypersonic missile.

U.S. adventurer Colin O'Brady becomes the first person to complete a solo unassisted trek across Antarctica.

Dec. 28: Russia arrests Paul Whelan, a former U.S. Marine in Moscow for 'spying.'

Dec. 29: Forty 'terrorists' are killed by the Egyptian police, after a blast in Giza kills three tourists and their guide a day earlier.

Dec. 30: The ruling coalition led by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League scores a landslide victory in the general election.

Dec. 31: Three people are injured in a stabbing attack at the Manchester Victoria railway station in the U.K.

At least 38 people are killed in a blast in an apartment in the Russian city of Magnitogorsk.

The U.S. and Israel officially quit UNESCO.



U.S. adventurer Colin O'Brady.

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OBITUARY

JANUARY

Jan. 2: Radha Viswanathan, 83, Carnatic singer and daughter of M.S. Subbulakshmi, in Bengaluru.

Jan. 5: John Young, 87, legendary U.S. astronaut, at his home in Houston, Texas, of pneumonia.

Jan. 15: Gnani, 64, journalist, theatre personality, in Chennai, following a cardiac arrest.

Dolores Mary Eileen O'Riordan, 46, Irish musician and Cranberries lead singer, in a London hotel.

Jan. 21: Khagen Das, 81, CPI(M) veteran and chairman of the Left Front Committee of Tripura, in Kolkata.

Jan. 23: Hugh Masekela, 78, "the father of South African jazz" and legendary trumpeter, in Johannesburg.

Jan. 27: Ingvar Kamprad, 91, founder of Swedish furniture major, Ikea, at his home in Smaland, Almhult, Sweden.

Jan. 29: Heinz Jakob "Coco" Schumann, 93, German jazz musician and Holocaust survivor, in Berlin.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 11: Asma Jilani Jahangir, 66, noted Pakistani lawyer and human rights activist, in Lahore.

Feb. 15: Morgan Richard Tsvangirai, 65, former Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, at a hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Feb. 19: M.S. Anantharaman, 94, noted violinist, in Chennai.

Feb. 21: William Franklin Graham Jr., 99, U.S. Christian evangelist, at his home in Montreal, North Carolina, U.S.

Feb. 24: Sridevi Kapoor Ayyappan, 54, multilingual actor, at a hotel in Dubai.

Feb. 28: Sri Jayendra Saraswathi, 83, 69th head of the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, at a hospital in Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu.

MARCH

March 4: Javed Abidi, 53, convenor of the Disabled Rights Group, of a chest infection, in New Delhi.

March 6: John Edward Sulston, 75, British scientist who helped decode the human genome, of stomach cancer, in Buckinghamshire, U.K.

March 10: Hubert James Marcel Taffin de Givenchy, 91, French fashion designer, at the Renaissance



Sridevi



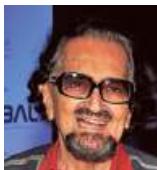
Stephen Hawking



Somnath Chatterjee V.S. Naipaul



V.S. Naipaul



Alyque Padamsee Ambareesh



des and Uttarakhand, at a hospital, in New Delhi.

Oct. 24: Na. Muthuswamy, 82, veteran theatre personality, in Chennai.

Oct. 27: Madan Lal Khurana, 83, former Delhi Chief Minister, at his home in west Delhi's Kirti Nagar.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 12: H.R. Ananth Kumar, 59, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, of lung cancer at a private hospital in Bengaluru.

Stan Lee, 95, American comic book writer and co-creator of Marvel's iconic superheroes, at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California, U.S.

Nov. 17: Alyque Padamsee, 90, ad guru and theatre doyen, at a hospital in Mumbai.

Nov. 24: M.H. Ambareesh, 66, noted Kannada actor and former Union Minister, at a hospital in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

Nov. 25: C.K. Jaffer Sharief, 85, veteran Congress leader and former Railway Minister, at a private hospital in Bengaluru, of a cardiac arrest.

Nov. 26: Iravatham Mahadevan, 88, noted epigraphist, in Chennai.

Bernardo Bertolucci, 77, renowned Italian director, at his home in Rome, of cancer.

Nov. 30: George H.W. Bush, 94, former U.S. President, at his home in Houston, Texas.

DECEMBER

Dec. 10: Mushirul Hasan, 71, eminent historian, in New Delhi.

Dec. 13: Nancy Wilson, 81, Jazz legend, at her home in Pioneertown in California, U.S.

Dec. 16: Geeta S. Iyengar, 74, daughter of B.K.S. Iyengar and noted yoga exponent, at her home in Pune.

Dec. 21: Prapanchan, 73, Tamil writer, in Puducherry.

Dec. 22: Paddy Ashdown, 77, former U.K. Liberal Democrats leader, of bladder cancer.

Dec. 24: Nirupam Sen, 72, veteran CPI(M) leader and former Industries Minister of West Bengal, at a hospital in Kolkata.

Dec. 28: Amos Oz, 79, Israeli writer, of cancer in Tel Aviv.

Dec. 30: Mrinal Sen, 95, iconic Indian filmmaker, at his south Kolkata residence.

Dec. 31: Loknath, 92, veteran Kannada actor, in Bengaluru.

Kader Khan, 81, Hindi screenwriter, actor, in Canada.



Aretha Franklin



George H.W. Bush



Kofi Annan



Mrinal Sen



Kuldip Nayar



H.R. Ananth Kumar

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DELHI METRO



Taking time to appoint

Parties in Delhi have been slow to appoint booth level agents to assist in revision of electoral rolls [Page 2](#)



JNU clean chit to prof

Advocate of alleged sexual harassment victim says she will challenge decision in High Court [Page 3](#)



Stories cities tell

Immersed in rich colours and cultures, for artist Vinita Karim, each painting is a grand adventure [Page 5](#)



Sweden's summer light

Almhult, in the Småland province, is the birthplace of modern taxonomy... and Ikea [Page 6](#)

IN BRIEF



Govt releases policy on animal welfare

NEW DELHI Birth control programme for monkeys, a revised regime for sterilisation of stray dogs, and electronic chips to identify owners of deserted pets and cattle are some of the measures the Delhi government's first policy on animal welfare recommends.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 2](#)

Vadra aide's bail plea: court seeks ED reply

NEW DELHI A Delhi court on Wednesday directed the Enforcement Directorate to file a reply to the anticipatory bail plea of Manoj Arora, the personal assistant of Robert Vadra, in a money laundering case.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 3](#)

Plea against release of controversial film

NEW DELHI A petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday against a Delhi High Court order declining to stay the release of the trailer of the film *The Accidental Prime Minister*.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 4](#)



Crime up by 6% in 2018, slight dip in crime against women

Heinous crimes such as murder also showed downward trend, police data reveal

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

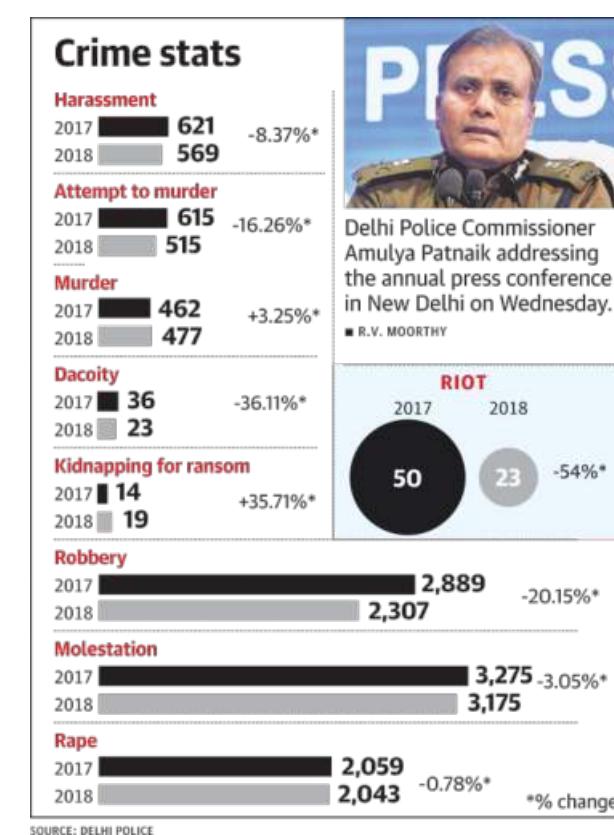
The Capital witnessed an increase of 6.01% in crime reported last year as compared to 2017, however, cases of crime against women saw a marginal decrease, revealed data shared by the Delhi Police on Wednesday.

Heinous crimes such as murder, rape, robbery, and attempt to murder also showed a downward trend in 2018.

The total number of criminal cases registered in 2018 stood at 2,36,476, as compared to 2,23,077 in 2017. Of the total cases reported last year, 477 were murder cases, 2,043 were rape cases, 2,307 were incidents of robbery and 6,642 were cases of snatching.

Reasons for crime rise

At the Delhi Police annual press conference here on Wednesday, Commissioner of Police Amulya Patnaik said that several reasons were identified behind the rise in crime rate in the Capital, including "influx of migrant population; porous borders allowing easy accessibility to criminal elements from neighbouring States; and street delinquency". "We are working on how to address these issues," said Mr. Patnaik.



According to the data, murder cases increased by 3.25% in 2018. On analysis of motives behind the murders, the police said that 38% of the cases involved personal enmity, 21% happened due to sudden provocation, and 11% was attributed to crime of passion.

The police said that 86.16% of murder cases



Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik addressing the annual press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday.

■ R.V. MOORTHY

RIOT

2017 50 2018 23 -54%

Source: Delhi Police

According to the data, murder cases increased by 3.25% in 2018. On analysis of motives behind the murders, the police said that 38% of the cases involved personal enmity, 21% happened due to sudden provocation, and 11% was attributed to crime of passion.

In a deeper study of murder cases, the police claimed to have found that the weapon used in commission of crime was mostly a sharp-edged weapon. In about 43% of murder cases, a sharp object was used to murder a person; followed by fire arms, blunt object, and strangulation.

stand solved in 2018. In a deeper study of murder cases, the police claimed to have found that the weapon used in commission of crime was mostly a sharp-edged weapon. The police said that 168 criminals, with a reward on their head, were arrested, including one with ₹15 lakh announced for his arrest.

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 3

Crime against women, which the Delhi Police has claimed is a priority area for the force, saw a marginal decrease in 2018.

A total of 2,043 rapes were reported in 2018 as compared to 2,059 cases in 2017; 3,175 cases of molestation were reported last year against 3,275 cases in 2017.

Cases regarding sexual remarks to women stood at 569 in 2018 in comparison to 621 in 2017. Of the total rape cases reported in 2018, over 94% cases were solved; 85% of molestation cases were solved and 84% cases of insult to modesty were solved, revealed the data.

"In 2019, focus on safety of women will be continued," Mr. Patnaik said.

In 2018, crime against people from the northeast decreased by 17.39% with 19 cases being registered as compared to 23 in 2017. Crime against senior citizens also saw a decline of 31.46% from 89 cases last year to 61 in 2017.

A total of 991 criminals were arrested last year as compared to 699 in 2017 – an increase of 41%. The police said that 168 criminals, with a reward on their head, were arrested, including one with ₹15 lakh announced for his arrest.

"We have intensified our efforts to seek more cooperation from people to get bet-

In 97.5% of rape cases last year, accused was known to victim

63% of accused were arrested within two weeks of crime

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

A total of 59 employers/co-workers were arrested for raping their female colleague in 2018, according to the data shared by Delhi Police on Wednesday.

Last year, a total of 2,043 rape cases were reported in the city. Out of this, 97.5% of the accused were either friends or family members of the victim. Only 51 rapes were committed by an unknown person/stranger.

By adopting a zero-tolerance policy for crimes against women, the police registered a high solving rate in rape cases – 94.76%.

At the Delhi Police annual press conference on Wednesday, Commissioner of Police Amulya Patnaik said that the force is committed to the safety of women and regularly holds community outreach programmes for women and girls.

Several initiatives

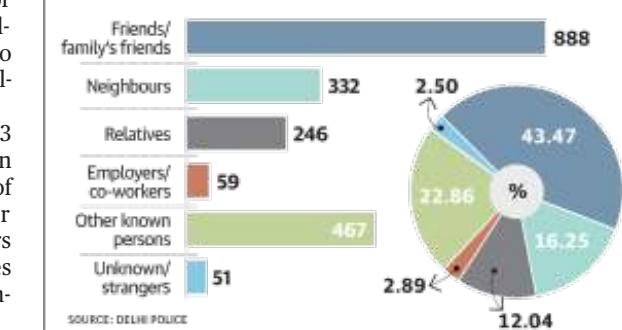
"We are holding initiatives like Sashakti, a self-defence programme for women/girls; operation Nirbhik, where woman police officers engage with girl students at schools; and 'police uncle', where personnel teach children to not fear the police," said Mr. Patnaik.

The force recently entered the 'Limca Book of Records' for training over 9,80,456 women in self-defence since 2002.

The police arrested 33,873 persons in 2018 for drinking in public places, which often acts as a precursor to crime against women.

Breach of trust

Relationship between the rape victim and the accused



Police teams organising Sashakti will also hold gender sensitisation programmes for boys in schools

AMULYA PATNAIK
Delhi Commissioner of Police

ter information and improve our services," he said.

The Commissioner of Police said that families need to inculcate respect for women among boys. "Police teams organising Sashakti will also hold gender sensitisation programmes for boys in schools," he added.

The force recently entered the 'Limca Book of Records' for training over 9,80,456 women in self-defence since 2002.

The police arrested 33,873 persons in 2018 for drinking in public places, which often acts as a precursor to crime against women.

Charges framed against ex-cop in Judge's son, wife murder case

Court to hear case on Feb 1; prosecution lists 81 witnesses



Mahipal

and sessions judge Krishan Kant and informed him that he had shot his wife and son. Mr. Kant is also a witness in the case. He is also a complainant.

Enough evidence?

The videos of the incident, shot by passers-by, ballistic reports and eye-witnesses accounts were among the important evidence in the case, said public prosecutor Anurag Hooda, adding that the prosecution had enough

evidence to prove its case. The court has fixed February 1 for next hearing in the case.

The police had on December 26 submitted a 300-odd page challan in the case.

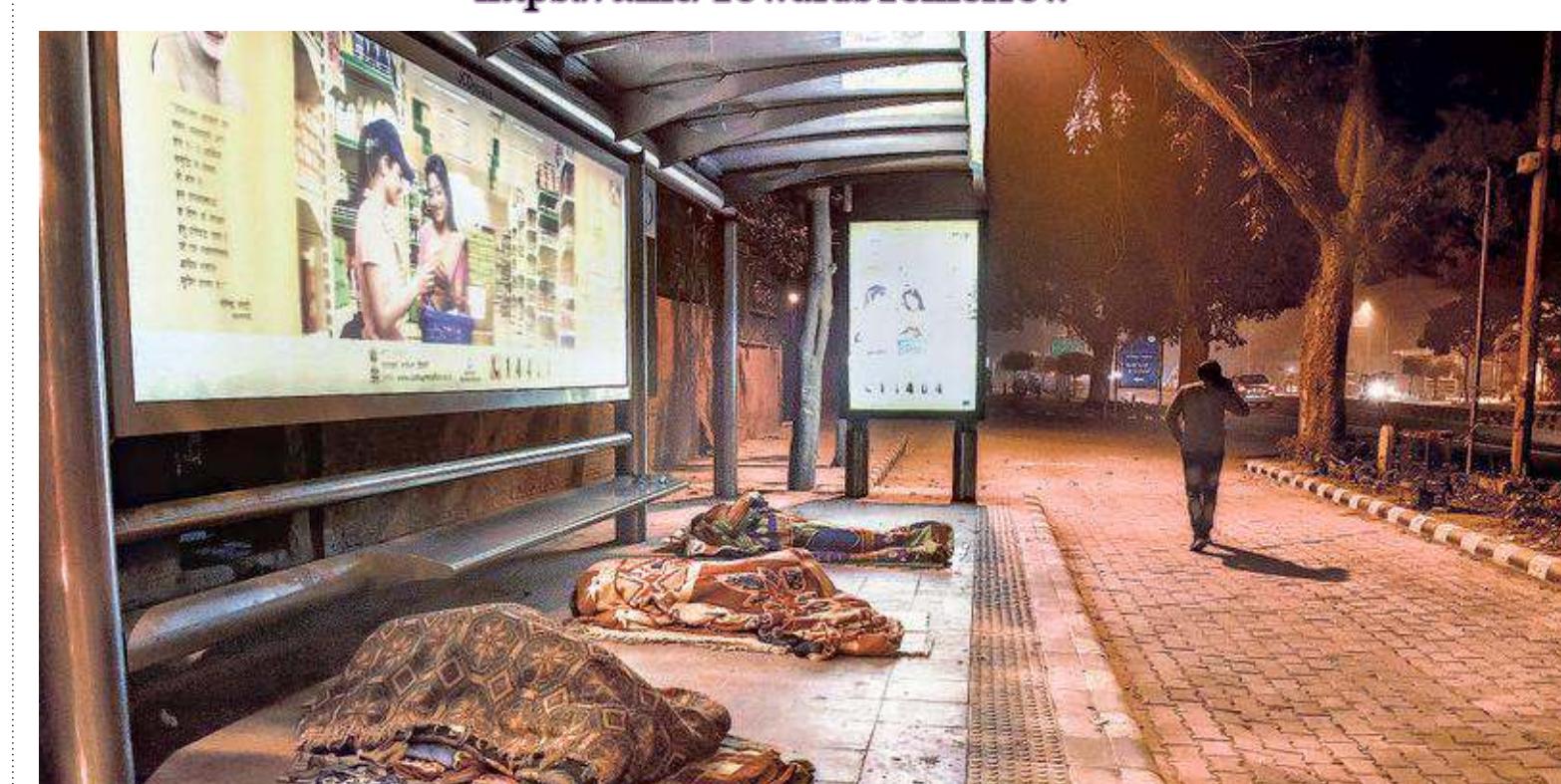
Mr. Kant's wife Ritu, 37, and teenage son Dhruv were getting into their car after shopping in the afternoon when constable Mahipal shot them point-blank. He was arrested two hours after the attack on Gurugram-Faridabad Road. Ms. Ritu, who was shot in the abdomen and chest, died a few hours after the attack. The boy was shot twice in the head and once near the shoulder. He succumbed to his injuries ten days after the incident.

The police had claimed that Mahipal shot the mother-son duo in a fit of rage after an altercation over keys to the car.

The prosecution has given a list of 81 witnesses in the high-profile case, including doctors, ballistic experts, recovery witnesses and a few eye-witnesses.

Soon after the commission of the crime, Mahipal had called additional district

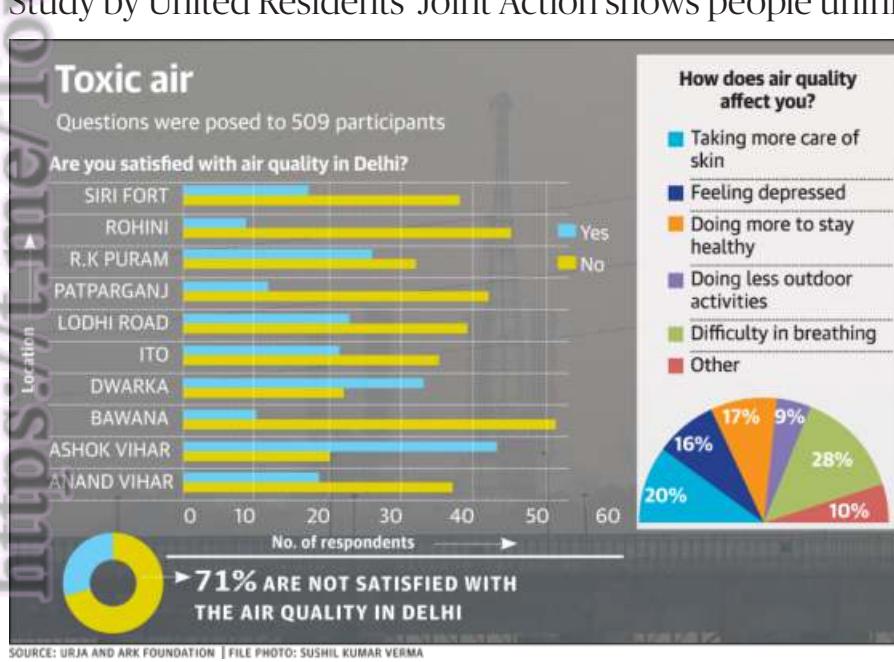
Out in the cold



People sleep at the Patel Chowk bus stop near Sanchar Bhawan on a chilly night. The minimum temperature on Wednesday was recorded at 8 degrees Celsius, a notch above average. The Meteorological Department has forecast partly cloudy skies for Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

93% of Delhiites do not understand what Air Quality Index means, shows survey

Study by United Residents' Joint Action shows people uninformed; RTI query by association reveals most agencies unaware of their duties in fight against pollution



JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

As many as 89% of Delhiites are unaware of pollution-monitoring devices in their neighbourhood and 93% do not understand the Air Quality Index (AQI) and cannot gauge from it whether the day's air was 'good', 'severe' or 'very poor', revealed a survey by United Residents' Joint Action (URJA), an association of residents' welfare associations.

The survey report was released on Wednesday. A total of 509 participants – 200 of whom were women – from 10 locations in Delhi were surveyed.

All the participants reportedly lived within 5 km

of a monitoring station set up by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The ten locations were: Rohini, Anand Vihar, ITO, Siri Fort, Bawana, R.K. Puram, Patparganj, Lodhi Road, Dwarakha and Ashok Vihar.

Fact check
The surveyors said that the exercise showed that while people were aware of the problem of air pollution they were not in complete possession of the facts.

"This shows public action needs a spurt, which can only happen when the public is fully aware of the facts," read a press statement accompanying the findings of the survey.

Delhi's Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) tasks the CPCB, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) with keeping tabs on air quality.

These agencies are supposed to process the data further and inform the Environment (Prevention and Control) Protection Agency of the air quality status.

The EPCA in turn formulates the possible line of measures and conveys them to the respective authorities.

The authorities are then expected to mobilise a range of actions in keeping with GRAP and air pollution

levels on respective days. When URJA, via the Right To Information Act, quizzed various Delhi bodies – the police, metro rail authorities, municipal bodies – on steps taken to curb pollution, it found that action taken was of variable quality.

Missing agencies
A query to the EPCA revealed that 18 meetings were conducted on GRAP and departments such as the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and Public Works Department were "missing" in the participants' list.

IN BRIEF



Delhi Metro opens account on Facebook

NEW DELHI Commuters can now connect with the Delhi Metro on Facebook too, as the DMRC on Wednesday opened its official account on the social networking site. The DMRC had launched an account on Twitter on December 20. It has nearly 4,300 followers since the launch of the handle. PTI

Smart meters installed in NDMC area

NEW DELHI Nearly 50,000 electricity meters in NDMC areas have been replaced with 'smart meters', the body said in a statement on Wednesday. The meters are linked with the 'NDMC 311' mobile app, which allow consumers to access details of power consumption. STAFF REPORTER

Single-point helpline for North body

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI A single-point helpline for the North Delhi Municipal Corporation was launched by Mayor Adesh Gupta on Wednesday.

Though multiple helpline and 'control room' numbers were launched prior to this, including a mobile application, all the complaints will now be routed to this 'single point short code' - 155304." Mr. Gupta said. Citizens can register complaints under 37 broad categories, which fall under the jurisdiction of the corporation using this number. A trial run of the single-point helpline, having started on November 22, 2018, has registered 1,697 complaints so far, Mr. Gupta added.

A statement by the corporation said complaints will be sorted according to the subject and area and subsequently forwarded to the authority concerned. Complainants will receive an SMS and they can also track the complaint status. The status will be colour coded. While those under process will be highlighted yellow, complaints that are over 48 hours will be highlighted red. Apart from this, general public can log into www.northmcdallcenter.com to register complaints, the statement added.

Parties slow to appoint booth level agents for revision of poll roll

Delhi CEO say parties have not appointed all BLAs who will help in giving information about voters who have shifted, passed away in their areas

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

All recognised political parties in Delhi, including the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) that has alleged a mass deletion of votes, have been slow to appoint booth level agents (BLAs) who are supposed to assist election officials in the revision of the electoral rolls, according to official data.

On Wednesday, the Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi, Ranbir Singh, when asked about the AAP's allegation of 30 lakh electors being struck off the rolls, said "political parties have not appointed all BLAs who will help in giving information about voters who have shifted or passed away in their areas".

He added that the parties had been asked many times to appoint the BLAs. He said the final electoral roll would be published on January 18, while the election process for the Lok Sabha polls could start by first half of March.

With 13,816 polling stations, the parties are supposed to appoint at least one BLA for each. A handbook issued by the Election Commission for booth level officers (BLOs) says BLAs are supposed "to interact

C The BLAs [booth level agents] will not receive claims and objection from public. They will only guide the public to file appropriate applications for inclusion, deletion, correction and transposition of entries in the roll.

HANDBOOK ISSUED BY THE ELECTION COMMISSION FOR BOOTH LEVEL OFFICERS (BLOS)

Lagging behind

Parties are supposed to appoint at least one BLA for each of the 13,816 polling stations

DISTRICT	BLAs APPOINTED*		
	AAP	BJP	Congress
North-West	0	261	404
North-East	0	210	0
South	0	0	0
Central	110	251	199
South-West	0	21	80
East	715	780	802
West	0	260	0
North	0	25	424
New Delhi	191	191	253
Shahdara	42	286	170
South-East	69	65	28
Total	1,127	2,350	2,360

*AS ON DECEMBER 17, 2018

regularly" with BLOs. If parties have not appointed BLAs, no other person will be handed over the draft electoral roll for that part, the guidelines say.

"The BLAs will not receive claims and objection from public. They will only guide the public to file appropriate applications for inclusion, deletion, correction and transposition of entries in the roll," the handbook reads.

According to data from the Office of the CEO, as of December 17, 2018, there were 6,830 BLAs appointed by seven recognised parties in Delhi. The Congress led the pack with 2,360, followed by the BJP with 2,350 and the AAP with 1,127.

AAP responds

When asked for comment, AAP leader and its South Delhi Lok Sabha in-charge Raghav Chadha said the party was in the process of appointing BLAs.

"BLAs are usually ap-

pointed closer to the elections. The process of the deletion of votes is a long-drawn one and is supposed to include surveys, issuing of notice and collection of proper evidence before striking a name off. We have demonstrated the fact that people of certain communities have been targeted and votes have been struck off incorrectly," said Mr. Chadha.

The AAP has alleged that Muslim, Poorvanchali and Baniya voters have been targeted as they may be inclined to vote for it, instead of the BJP.

Congress responds
Delhi Congress leader Chatdar Singh said the party had handed in a list of 9,000 BLAs to the CEO's office and these would be reflected in the list of appointed BLAs soon.

"Our BLAs on the ground have found that people whose names have been deleted have shifted their resi-

Revision of electoral roll to be completed soon

Publication of final electoral roll scheduled on January 18, 2019

Total electors as per draft roll published on September 1, 2018

1,36,15,776

Total electors as per draft roll published on October 23, 2017

1,37,57,542



SOURCE: OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER OF DELHI

Drive launched to show Delhiites how VVPAT works

'Democracy on wheels' vehicle flagged off by Delhi CEO

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Starting Wednesday, electronic voting machines (EVMs) along with voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines will be taken across the city so Delhiites can see how VVPAT, which is being used across the board for the first time, works, ahead of the Lok Sabha election.

Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Ranbir Singh flagged off a "democracy on wheels" vehicle that has an EVM and VVPAT machine and will visit all polling locations in the East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency.

One vehicle for each of Delhi's 70 Assembly constituencies will be deployed, the CEO said. Apart from the vehicles, election officials will showcase the machines at static locations across Delhi so voters can familiarise themselves with the process of using a VVPAT, he said.

The first of these demonstrations was carried out at a popular mall in South Delhi Lok Sabha constituency on Wednesday.

"We have launched a Delhi-wide awareness campaign so that voters know how to use a VVPAT machine. It will carry on till February-end as the election process is likely to begin in March..."

RANBIR SINGH
Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

narrow and congested bylanes. With 19.42 lakh voters in the East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency, the awareness drive will aim to cover all 324 polling locations, he said.

The public will be able to use the VVPAT attached with the EVM in the vehicle to see if their vote has been registered properly. After pressing the button for a particular candidate on the EVM, the user will be able to see a paper slip being generated in the VVPAT for seven seconds to verify the vote. The slip will show a serial number, and the name and symbol of the candidate selected, before falling into a bin.

After allegations from Opposition parties that EVMs had been tampered with and the ruling-BJP had been the beneficiary in State elections in 2017, the Election Commission of India had decided in 2018 to roll-out VVPAT in 100% of the polling stations for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, a first.

AAP and BJP continue to trade charges over 'voter deletion' in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party on Wednesday continued to trade charges over the ongoing revision of electoral rolls in Delhi, with the AAP accusing the BJP of targeted deletion of votes.

The BJP hit back, saying the AAP had misled Delhiites by claiming that 30 lakh votes had been cut.

On Tuesday, Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari had said that AAP workers were calling up people to say that



AAP leader Raghav Chadha and BJP leader Vijender Gupta.

He said the AAP had been raising the issue for a few months now and had organised

"The AAP is dedicatedly working towards mass voter registration, and to inform people that the BJP has targeted and deleted their names from the voter lists. Mr. Tiwari and his party stand totally exposed," said Mr. Chadha.

Telling lies'
Reacting to Mr. Chadha's statement, Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly and BJP leader Vijender Gupta alleged that the AAP was "telling lies upon lies" about the deletion of 30 lakh names from voters' list.

He added that Mr. Kejriwal or any other AAP leader had "so far not dared to reply" to the issues raised by the Election Commission in its letter to the Delhi government on December 14, 2018.

"The Commission had written a letter in response to the resolution adopted on November 27 by the Delhi Assembly regarding the alleged illegal deletion of names...it had taken cognizance of the fact that the Le-

gislative Assembly had directed the Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi to conduct a door-to-door survey of all the deletions along with representatives from all the recognised parties," Mr. Gupta said.

Alleging that the AAP was "hiding the period during which the said names have been deleted", Mr. Gupta argued that records of Election Commission showed that "only 3.05 lakh names have been deleted from the four year period from 2015 to 2018".

Hunger strike by ad hoc profs enters Day 6

Protesters bring to fore issues they are facing due to lack of permanent job in DU

SIDHARTH RAVI

NEW DELHI

The indefinite hunger strike by ad hoc teachers in front of the Arts Faculty gate of Delhi University demanding absorption as permanent staff entered the sixth day on Wednesday.

The teachers, who are fighting against the cause and are independent of any political organisation, also brought to light various issues they are facing due to lack of permanent employment.

Manoj Kumar, economics professor at Satyawati College, who has been petitioning the administration and the government since 2016 said that the exploitation of ad hoc professors like him was a violation of human rights. "We cannot take leave for our own marriages. The same is the case with women as they are not entitled to even maternity leave" said Prof. Kumar.

Maternity leave
Ashा Devi, a Hindi professor at Aditi Mahavidyalaya, has had a difficult experience with the university's ad hoc system over her 20 years of service. Since there was no provision for maternity leave, she was thrown out of her position at the college

when she had a baby in January 1996. After that, she shifted multiple colleges, taking up guest lecture positions till she got back to Aditi Mahavidyalaya in 2008, where she has been working as an ad-hoc since then.

Prof. Devi applied for the permanent staff position twice, in 2001 and 2004, but claimed that both times individuals with connections in the administration were given the positions. "It has taken me 10 years to learn about the politics of this place. Now, I don't have anything to lose, so I am here. If I had known this earlier, I might have done something else in my life," she lamented.

Apart from allegations of nepotism, the protesters also complained about a defunct system of hiring per-

manent staff.

Rohan Srivastava, an ad hoc history professor at Maitreyi College, said he had spent close to ₹1 lakh on applications for permanent positions but in vain. There are about 80 colleges in DU and each application costs about ₹500. A call for permanent staff had been made at least three times. But each time, the interview process got delayed for over a year after which the process lapsed. The administration doesn't give a reason for why it's doing this

ROHAN SRIVASTAVA
Ad hoc history professor at Maitreyi College

the last 20 years are not made permanent, what is the use? Why were they being employed in the first place then?" he asked.

Himanshu Singh, economics professor at Satyawati college, said while the protesters stood in support of Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) and its call for a two-day university shutdown, he felt that they have not given enough attention to the issue.

He, however, said that the call for absorption might be unfair to those who apply for the staff position for the first time.

"But if people who have been working as ad-hocs for

I have spent close to ₹1 lakh on applications for permanent positions but in vain. There are about 80 colleges in DU and each application costs about ₹500. A call for permanent staff had been made at least three times. But each time, the interview process got delayed for over a year after which the process lapsed. The administration doesn't give a reason for why it's doing this

DUTA protests at V-C's office

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

As part of a two-day shutdown, the Delhi University Teachers' Union (DUTA) on Wednesday protested outside the Vice-Chancellor's office at the university's north campus.

Raising concerns over various issues, including delay in promotions, implementation of regulations provided by the UGC and others, DUTA president Rajib Ray said, "The silence on the issue of reservation roster to ensure treating the university/college as a unit clearly reveals the government's intentions. The government must respond to the demand on regularisation and absorption of temporary and ad hoc teachers."

Academic Council meet
Richa Raj, a professor at Jesus and Mary College, said, "At the last academic council meeting, the V-C refused to table the report of the recommendation committee constituted to review the UGC gazette notification related to our service condition. Not tabling the report undermines the authority of a statutory body and obliterates the rights of the teaching community."

In a first, Delhi govt releases policy on animal welfare

Includes birth control programme for monkeys, tagging of pets

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Birth control programme for monkeys, a revised regime for sterilisation of stray dogs, and electronic chips to identify owners of deserted pets and cattle are some of the measures the Delhi government's first policy on animal welfare recommends.

The Animal Health and Welfare Policy, 2018, also proposes a cowshed at Ghumanhera, 'where cows will be kept along with the elderly in a unique coexistence', was Wednesday discussed at a meeting attended by Development Minister Gopal Rai.

"There was no such policy before to consider animal welfare in its entirety, covering issuing like the menace caused by monkeys and stray dogs. We aim to keep this policy open-ended so that it can be updated from time to time

der animal birth control (ABC) initiatives and observes that sterilisation of stray dogs under the ABC programme in Delhi through NGOs is not as per expectations.

"It should be further evaluated for its shortcomings and necessary measures should be taken to strengthen it," says the policy draft.

Strengthening infrastructure through a network of veterinary hospitals, polyclinics, avaries, helpline for distressed animal and birds, and ambulance services are other measures the policy recommends.

As per the policy, animal health and veterinary services will be strengthened through 24x7 operational polyclinics in all districts. The needs of birds will also be taken care at district-level avaries. A veterinary hospital

that will be operational round-the-clock will be inaugurated at Tis Hazari on January 16. It has been suggested that the Animal Husbandry unit of Development Department should be renamed the Animal Health and Welfare Department, Mr. Rai said, adding that efforts will also be made under the policy to make Delhi rabies-free through

IN BRIEF



'Kanhaiya, Umar to be charged in sedition case'

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police will soon file a chargesheet in the sedition case against former JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar and other activists, including Umar Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharya, Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik said on Wednesday. They were arrested in 2016 for allegedly organising an event on the JNU campus against the hanging of Parliament-attack mastermind Afzal Guru. PTI

Kidnap attempt by two foiled, student saved

NOIDA

Two men were roughed up by the public when they tried to kidnap a Class IX student here on Wednesday, the police said. The student was returning from school when the accused arrived in a car and waylaid her in Sector 45 here, they said. PTI

Film on surgical strike: copyright issue settled

NEW DELHI

Makers of upcoming Bollywood flick, *Uri: The Surgical Strike*, and the author of a book based on the incident buried the hatchet over alleged copyright violations in a Delhi court after the writer was paid a settlement amount, sources said on Wednesday. PTI

Woman's body found in suitcase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The body of an unidentified woman has been found stuffed inside a suitcase near Kondli canal in east Delhi's Ashok Nagar, the police said on Wednesday.

The trolley bag was found abandoned near the canal at Dharamshala Road.

The body had sharp injuries, Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Panjwak Singh said.

He said a tattoo reading 'Mohit' in Hindi was found on her right hand.

A case has been registered at New Ashok Nagar police station and the matter is being probed. Mr. Singh also said.

The body has not been identified yet, the police said, adding that they are also scanning the profiles of missing women registered at local police stations.

Since no CCTV cameras are installed at or near the spot, we could not find out who had dumped the bag, he said.

The body has been preserved in a mortuary and will be sent for a post-mortem examination, the police said, adding that an investigation is under way.

DELHI TODAY

Talk: 25th Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Lecture on "Safe Childhood, Safe India" by Nobel Peace Laureate, Kalaiash Satyarthi at National Museum Auditorium, Janpath, 5 p.m.

Talk: Panel discussion on "Mental Health Opportunities & Challenges: Initiatives that will make a Difference!". Panelists: Dr. Meetu Khosla, Associate Professor, Psychology, DRC, University of Delhi; Prof. Roy Moodley, Director, Centre for Diversity in Counselling & Psychotherapy, University of Toronto, Canada; Prof. David P. Smith, Clinical Psychologist, President Integrative Psychotherapy Services, USA; and Prof. Valley Chirkov, University of Saskatchewian, Canada. Chair: Prof. Abraham H. Khan, Director, Advanced Degree Studies, Trinity College, University of Toronto, Canada at Conference Room 1, India International Centre (IIC), 6 p.m.

Exhibition: "Silent Shades of Grey" black & white photographic works by Prarthana Modi at Art Junction, The Lalit, Barakhambha Avenue, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

Screening: "Novecento Atto 1", Italian film screening with English subtitles at Italian Embassy Cultural Centre, 50-E, Chandragupta Marg, 7 p.m.

Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@thehindu.co.in

Police data show motor vehicle theft the least-solved crime

44,158 cases of motor vehicle theft reported in 2018; only 19.6% cases solved

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Motor vehicle theft remained the least-solved crime in 2018 though the number of cases reported increased by 12.9% as compared to 2017, show data provided by the Delhi Police.

In 2018, the total number of motor vehicle theft cases reported stood at 44,158, as compared to 39,084 in 2017 - which accounted for about 19% of the total crimes reported. However, only 19.6% cases were solved, the police data also stated.

Commenting on the statistics, Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik told

It [motor vehicle theft] is one of the difficult crimes to investigate and is mostly solved when gangs of auto lifters are busted and then linked with their previous involvement

AMULYA PATNAIK
Delhi Police Commissioner

The Hindu that going by the trend of the last few years, it is a healthy detection rate under the crime head as it is not a crime that can be traced to the criminal. "It is one of the difficult crimes to investigate and is mostly solved when gangs of auto

lifters are busted and then linked with their previous involvement," he said.

Special Commissioner (Crime) Satish Golcha said that the police have identified this as critical focus area and are "stressing on improving the situation".

The police said that most of the cases of motor vehicle thefts include two-wheelers and the analysis of the crime shows that such vehicles are parked in unguarded and poorly-lit areas.

"Public also needs to take security measures to protect their vehicles by installing security and detection devices. The reason behind increase in motor vehicle theft

is inadequate neighbourhood security, 'the police-can-only-prevent' attitude, which needs to be addressed in the coming year," said a senior officer.

As preventive measures, the police are in the process of identifying theft-prone places and time zones to deploy officers accordingly. They have also requested manufacturers to install security devices in the vehicles.

In 2018, the police said, of the 44,158 stolen vehicles, 32,984 were two-wheelers and 8,036 were cars. However, only 10.46% vehicles were recovered, while 6,751 auto lifters were arrested.

19% hike in departmental enquiry against cops

433 officers placed under suspension; 61 dismissed from service in 2018

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

The figures shared by the Delhi Police shows that there is an increase of 19.2% in departmental enquiries opened against officers in the force as compared to 2017.

Figures show that while 433 officers were placed under suspension, 61 were dismissed from service.

In 2018, 793 departmental enquiries were initiated against officers while in 2017, the number of enquiries initiated stood at 665.

The police said that of the 793 enquiries in 2018, 1,008 police officers were found involved and action was taken against the offending offic-

ers. According to figures, 318 officers were awarded "major punishments" which include removal, demotion, withholding increment for more than two years; and 1,690 officers were awarded minor punishment of censure.

'Zero-tolerance policy'

Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik told *The Hindu*, "This only indicates that there is a zero-tolerance policy in the force and if any officer is found committing abrasion, strict action will be taken".

The 433 suspended officers include five Inspector-rank officers, 52 Sub-Inspectors (SI), 101 Assistant Sub-

Inspectors (ASI), 99 Head Constables (HC), and 176 Constables.

In 2017, 928 officers were found involved in 665 departmental enquiries. During the year, 585 officers were suspended including one Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), 11 Inspectors, 81 ASIs, 122 HCs, and 243 Constables.

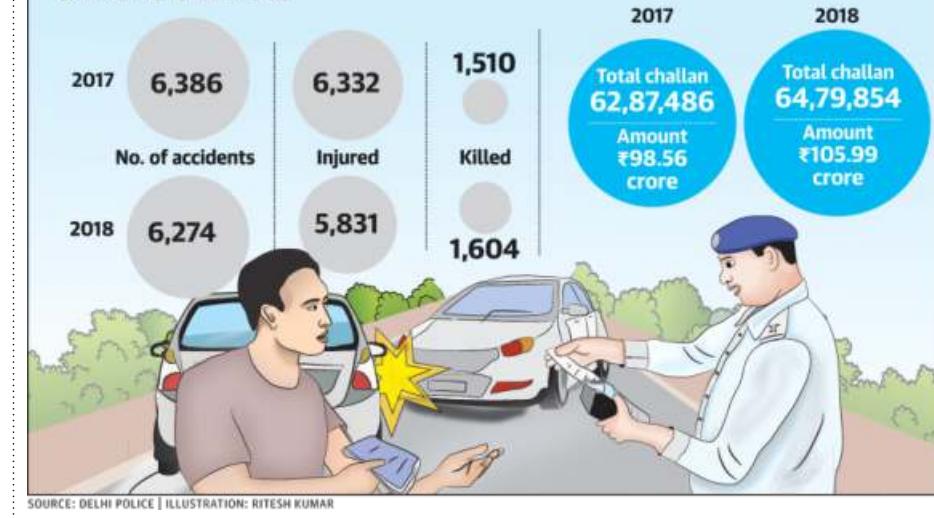
Vigilance enquiries also witnessed an increase of 28% - from 367 in 2017 to 472 in 2018. The police said that of the 472 enquiries, 107 were proved against 272 officers, including five ACPS, 62 Inspectors, 53 SIs, 53 ASIs, 45 HCs and 54 Constables, against whom disciplinary action was also initiated.

In December last, three officers posted at Ranholi police station were arrested for allegedly kidnapping a man, against whom a cheating case was registered in Chhattisgarh, and demanding ₹1.5 crore from his wife.

The Station House Officer (SHO) was then placed under suspension after it was established that the officer was aware of the illegal detention of the man.

In May 2018, six officers posted at Rani Bagh police station were suspended and the SHO was sent to district lines for their alleged involvement in thrashing two brothers inside the police station after impounding their vehicle.

On the streets



'2018 witnessed dip in road accidents, rise in challans'

Delhi Traffic Police all set to induct modern technologies

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

Implementation of new e-challan system is in the pipe line. It will have online facility for the Traffic Police to ascertain the history of traffic violators

AMULYA PATNAIK
Delhi Police Commissioner

3D radar-based red light violation detection camera system will be completed by Ju

ly. The system will send alerts to the violators through SMS. They will also be installing gantry-mounted radar-based overspeed detection system at 100 locations in the city to curb overspeeding.

"Implementation of new e-challan system is in the pipe line. It will have online facility for the Traffic Police to ascertain the history of traffic violators and bring more transparency in the system," said Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya

Patnaik.

The Delhi Police said that in the last 18 years, the city's population has increased by 48%, number of registered motor vehicles by 179%, but road length has been increased by just 15.7%. On an average, 2,000-2,100 motor vehicles are registered per day in the Capital.

In the study done by the Traffic Police to identify reasons that lead to traffic congestion, they found that a large number of vehicles come to Delhi each day from the neighbouring NCR towns.

Among other reasons are inadequate facilities for non-motorised vehicles and road space, pedestrian pathways occupied by hawkers/vendors, issues related to road engineering and infrastructure, including waterlogging during rains, freight management challenges, enforcement issues like inadequate fine, poor technology capacity.

Woman acquitted of charge of selling drugs

'Was not searched before Magistrate'

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has acquitted a woman of the charge of possessing 10.05 gm of smack to sell in a Taimur Nagar slum cluster in south Delhi in 2013 as the city police failed to make a personal search of her before a Magistrate or a gazetted officer.

"...The recovery of smack from the accused does not inspire confidence," he further said.

"In view of my aforesaid discussion, I have no hesitation to hold that the prosecution has failed to prove its case against the accused beyond shadow of reasonable doubt, so accused is acquitted of the offence under Section 21 of the NDPS Act. The personal bond is cancelled and surety bond stands discharged. The case property be destroyed after expiry of the period meant for appeal as the case may be," the judge added.

NDPS Act
"The provisions of Section 50 of the NDPS Act must be complied with. The entire evidence on the file shows that the accused was not produced before a gazetted officer or Magistrate. None of the police officials was a gazetted officer. They

were not empowered to make search and recovery of contraband from the accused as provided under Section 50 of the NDPS Act, except in the presence of gazetted officer or Magistrate," Additional Sessions Judge S.K. Gupta said while acquitting the accused Samiran.

"The New Friends Colony police arrested her and seized the drug from her possession after they had received a tip-off that the accused dealt in the business of selling smack in the jhuggi basti.

"In view of my aforesaid discussion, I have no hesitation to hold that the prosecution has failed to prove its case against the accused beyond shadow of reasonable doubt, so accused is acquitted of the offence under Section 21 of the NDPS Act. The personal bond is cancelled and surety bond stands discharged. The case property be destroyed after expiry of the period meant for appeal as the case may be," the judge added.

ED's reply on bail plea of Vadra's aide sought

Directorate asked to respond by Jan 11

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

Some ED officials visited the wife of petitioner and threatened her that unless her husband deposes to the desires of the officials, the officials would ensure that his and his family's future is doomed...

MANOJ ARORA IN HIS PLEA

IN BRIEF

**Puri slams AAP over Metro phase IV**

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has such a behavioural pattern that they always create "hurdles", Union Minister Hardeep Puri alleged on Wednesday, days after the AAP dispensation imposed a condition of 50:50 sharing in operational losses in the Metro phase IV. PTI

Suspected burglar falls to death from ninth floor

GAZIABAD

A suspected burglar died after he fell from the ninth floor of a building while trying to escape using a pipe, the police said on Wednesday. The incident happened on Tuesday night. The accused had allegedly stolen ornaments and cash from a flat in Indirapuram. PTI

'Resist culture of violence'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Close to 50 civil society groups and over 150 activists on Wednesday appealed to the nation to resist and confront the growing culture of violence facing the country through a national campaign, called 'India Unites for Non-Violence and Harmony', being organised on January 30 to coincide with Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary.

The collective has called upon citizens across the country to observe one-minute silence at 5.17 p.m. on January 30, the exact time when Gandhiji was assassinated, and take a pledge of non-violence and harmony. Various events like peace rallies, awareness programmes and public meetings will also be held in the run up to the national campaign.

Plea in SC against HC order on film trailer

The Accidental Prime Minister is scheduled to be released on January 11

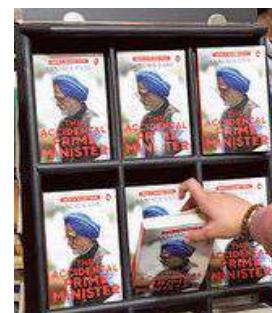
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday against a Delhi High Court order declining to stay the release of the trailer of the film *The Accidental Prime Minister*, based on a book about the tenure of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The film, an adaptation of the former PM's media adviser Sanjaya Baru's book, is scheduled to release on January 11.

The petitioner, Pooja Mahajan, has sought stay on exhibition of trailer of the film on YouTube, and to suspend the release and exhibition of the movie during pendency of the matter.

The plea, filed through advocate A. Maitri, has claimed that "at present if the film is allowed to be released then it will cause unaccountable damage to the name and fame of the office of Prime Minister of India".



The film is an adaptation of a book by Sanjaya Baru, the media adviser to former PM Manmohan Singh.

It alleged that the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) should not have given certification to the film as actors have performed the "character of public personalities" like Manmohan Singh, Congress president Rahul Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi, which constitutes impersonation.

"It is a known fact that film producers have not taken any consent/permission

from Dr. Singh, Ms. Gandhi and Mr. Gandhi to perform their characters or to perform their political life or to dress up in the same way as they had been doing in their normal life or to copy their voice in any manner," the plea said.

The plea also alleged that if the film will be released, friendly relations with the United States and other foreign states are likely to be affected. "The release of film is likely to cause unaccountable damage to high profile public personalities, i.e., Dr. Singh and Ms. Gandhi," it claimed, adding, "it seems that film has been produced in a selected manner and it clearly shows that it's a political propaganda with some other motives".

The petition has made the Centre, through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), Google (India) and YouTube

parties in the case.

Earlier in the day, the Delhi High Court dismissed the plea saying the petitioner, a Delhi-based fashion designer, has no locus to approach the court against the film through the public interest litigation (PIL) route.

She moved the Supreme Court later on Wednesday challenging the High Court order. The plea is likely to be heard on Thursday.

During the hearing before the High Court, the film's producers said they were not made party in the petition and the court should not pass any order without hearing them. A single judge had earlier this week refused to entertain the plea asking Dr. Mahajan to file it as a PIL.

According to the plea, the disclaimer in the trailer says it is based on a book written by Mr. Baru but the "real facts are totally different".

(With inputs from Staff Reporter)

Demanding justice

Trade union activists participate in a demonstration in New Delhi on Wednesday, Day Two of the nationwide general strike against the Centre's "anti-labour" policies. ■ PRATEEK KUMAR

CPCB told to take action against firm for flouting green norms

Determine environmental compensation to be levied: NGT

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Following a plea alleging illegal groundwater extraction, encroachment in parks and construction in green areas in Haryana, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to take action and determine the environmental compensation to be levied.

Taking note of a report submitted by a committee constituted by the green court, a Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "The factual conclusion shows violation of environmental norms by Ansal Properties and Infrastructure Ltd. The project has been constructed without taking consent to operate under [relevant Acts] and without requisite environmental clearance."

The report submitted by the committee had said the project was in violation to construction and demolition waste management, and did not have "consent to establish and operate".

Noting that the project proponent did not have a no objection certificate from the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) and no provision for rainwater harvesting systems, the Bench directed the CPCB to determine the amount of

environmental compensation to be levied.

"Sewage is meeting the storm water drain and maintenance is not up to the mark. We direct [the] CPCB to exercise its statutory power to determine and recover the damages, and issue appropriate further directions for closure of the project and initiating prosecution in accordance with [relevant Acts]," the Bench added.

Authorities slammed

Coming down heavily on State government authorities, the green panel added, "It is clear that despite serious violations, the Haryana State Pollution Control Board has failed to perform its duties in taking statutorily mandated coercive measures. The Town and Country Planning Department appears to have colluded."

NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL BENCH

rules pertaining to construction and demolition waste management, and did not have "consent to establish and operate".

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Finalise action plan on climate change: NGT

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF & CC) to finalise the climate change action plan within four weeks. The directions came after the Delhi government informed the tribunal about the submission of the State action plan on climate change.

Following the submission, Bench headed by NGT judicial member Justice Raghuvendra S. Rathore said, "The primary concern raised is in respect of the State action plan on climate change [SAPCC] ... we have been informed by the counsel for NCT of Delhi that the same has been prepared and submitted to MoEF & CC. Therefore, we direct the

MoEF & CC to finalise the action plan without a period of four weeks positively."

The directions came on Tuesday while the NGT was hearing a plea moved by scientist Mahendra Pandey seeking directions to draft, finalise and implement the SAPCC. While stating that the Capital was adversely affected by various environmental issues, the plea had sought directions to the state government to implement the action plan.

Taking note of the contentions in the plea, the NGT had earlier sought responses from the Centre and the Delhi government. Earlier, in 2015, the NGT had directed all States and Union Territories to "expeditiously" prepare action plans on climate change, in accordance with the cows stop producing milk.

Panels formed to curb stray cattle menace

STAFF REPORTER

NOIDA

To deal with the growing stray cattle menace, Gautam Budh Nagar administration on Wednesday formed three committees - at the district, tehsil and block level - to catch and put the cattle in temporary shelter homes.

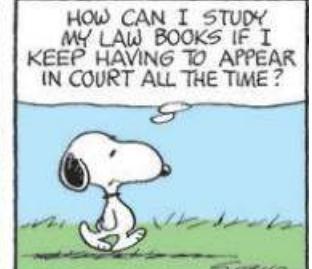
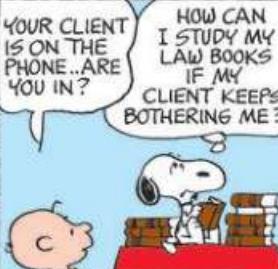
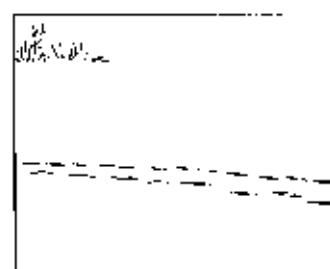
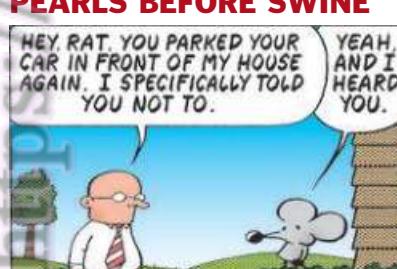
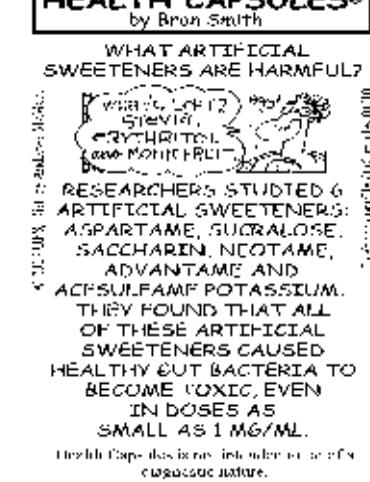
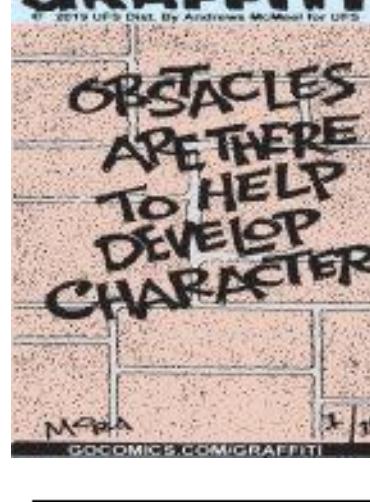
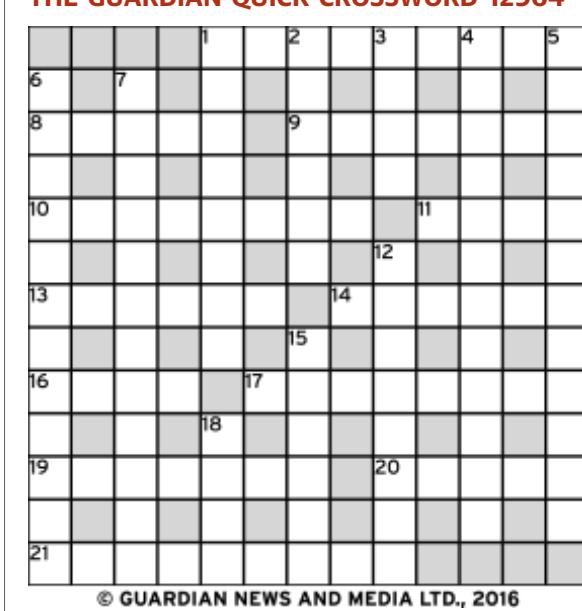
The administration will set up shelter homes with basic facilities like fodder and water and also hold weekly meeting for proper implementation of the programme. Vets will also be deployed for animal check-up at these shelters. The administration will also visit villages and urge farmers not to abandon their cattle.

The number of stray cattle has increased tremendously as dairy owners abandon them once the cows stop producing milk. The number of stray cattle has increased tremendously as dairy owners abandon them once the cows stop producing milk.

These cattle then roam around the city, leading to traffic issues as well as accidents. In Jewar village, a man died last week after a stray cow gored him.

Earlier, to deal with communal tension after recovery of cow carcasses, the GB Nagar district administration held meetings with the heads of several villages and asked them to help the officials in maintaining peace and harmony. In the meeting, the DM decided to ensure proper implementation of disposal of cow carcasses.

"In each village a committee was formed for disposal of carcasses. Animal owner, village head, village development officer, contractor for disposal of carcasses and police station in-charge will be part of the committee," a senior officer said.

POOCH CAFE**PEANUTS****HAGAR THE HORRIBLE****CALVIN AND HOBBES****TIGER****WUMO****PEARLS BEFORE SWINE****GRAFFITI****THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-12964**

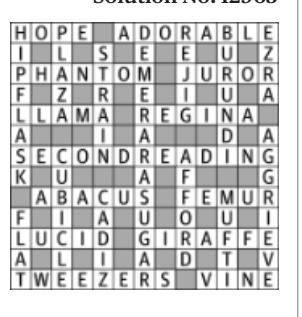
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3 Edible tubers from the tropics (4)
4 (Of pets) not making a mess indoors (5-7)
5 Handheld power tool – Greenland rig (anag.) (5,7)
6 22-yard strip between the wickets (7,5)
7 Before noon (4,8)
12 Nothing special (8)
15 Spain and Portugal (6)
18 Knock senseless (4)

Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated January 11, 2019.

Solution No. 12963

- Across
 - 1 Bright yellow flowering shrub (9)
 - 8 Ganglion (5)
 - 9 German state and largest port (7)
 - 10 Deep glacial crack (8)
 - 11 Mediterranean appetisers (4)
 - 13 XI (6)
 - 14 Mourner carrying the coffin at a funeral (6)
 - 16 Settled the bill (4)
 - 17 Total forgetfulness – limbo (8)
 - 19 Utter tremulous sounds (7)
 - 20 Crinkled fabric – thin pancake (5)
 - 21 Mankind (5,4)
- Down
 - 1 Sticky insect trap (8)
 - 2 Use again (changing little) (6)



IN BRIEF



On a trip

Immersed in rich colours and cultures, for artist Vinita Karim, each painting is a grand adventure

ANUJ KUMAR

Reaching out
In a bid to acknowledge the loyalty and faith reposed by its customers, Indian Oil celebrated Customer Day in Delhi on January 9. National level hockey players Bharat Chhikara, Vikas Sharma and Nitin Kumar also felicitated customers. Wrestlers Ravindra Singh Sangwan and Babita Nagar also visited the retail outlet and felicitated customers. Senior Officials from Indian Oil, Gurmeet Singh, Dir (Marketing), Ranjan Mohapatra, Dir (HR), SSV Ramkumar, Dir (R&D) interacted with customers. The campaign focused on assured courteous service by customer attendants.

Rare honour

Ridham Janve's debut feature film *The Gold Laden Sheep & The Sacred Mountain* will have its international premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam to be held from 23 January to 3 February. Announcing this information, National Film Development Corporation has stated that the film in rare Indian 'Gaddi' language is competing with 20 films from all over the world in Bright Future Competition Section, which highlights new talents and new approaches to cinema. Set among the pastoral Gaddi community in Himachal Pradesh, the film explores the adventures of elderly shepherd Arjun (Bhedral Arjun Pant) who sets out to find a pilot who crashed near the mountain.

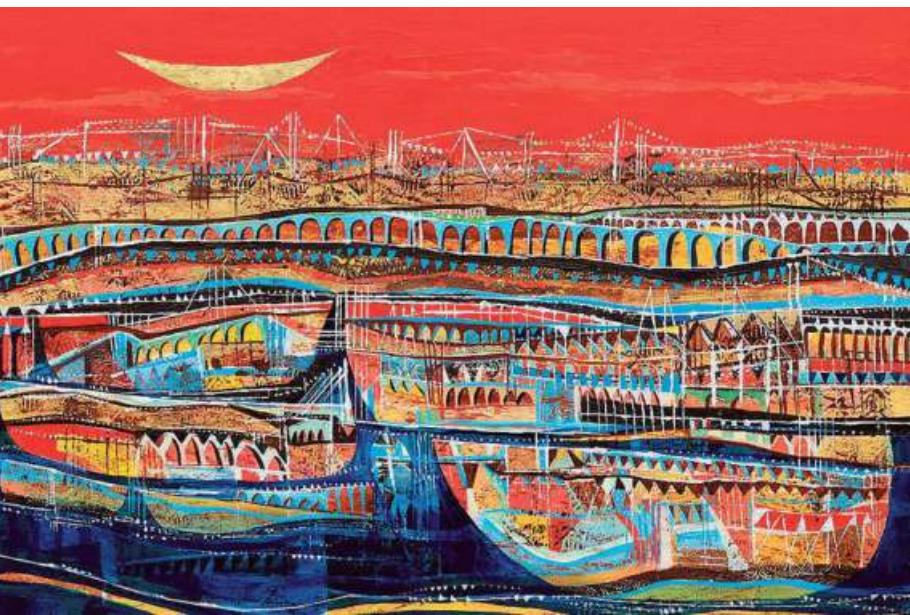
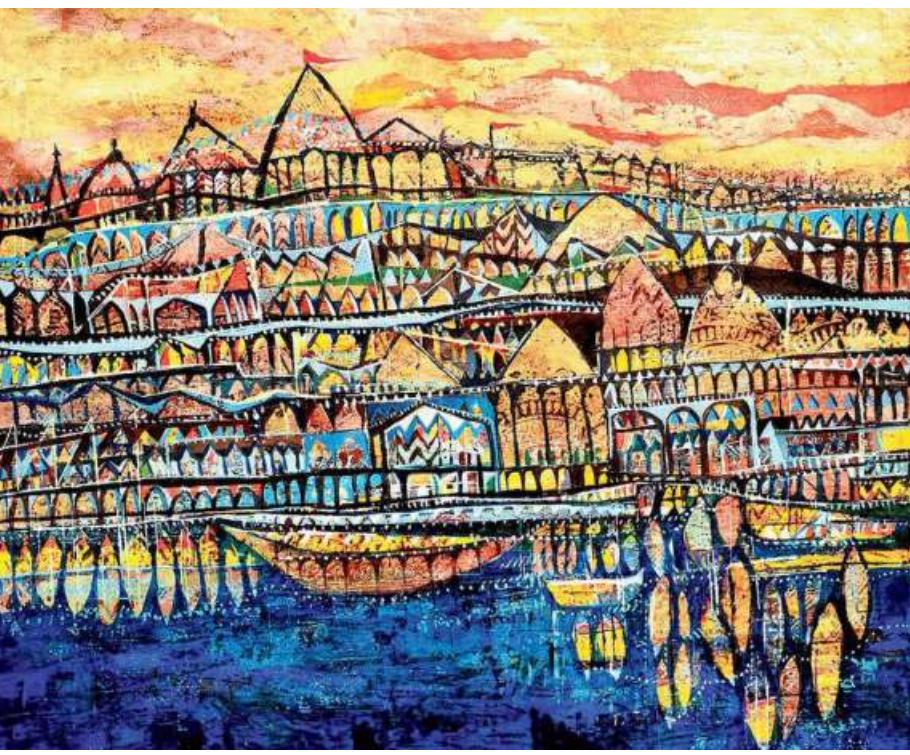
the painting. I also exhibited my signature egg sculptures which I started making in 2011. These eggs touch me very deeply, because they represent birth and creation. I started collecting ostrich eggs in Egypt in the nineties and since then, have used many materials to replicate this very symbolic ovoid shape. I have sculpted them in wood and the ones displayed at this exhibition are made out of fibreglass. I am also deeply interested in found objects, because they carry their own history as well as geography, which add yet more layers to the object itself and I found a pair of old wooden lions, about 50 years old, beautifully crafted in wood, in an old antique shop in Chandni Chowk which I layered with cities and town complete with houses and boats and brimming lives. Since all these forms, both 2D and 3D are expressions of my meandering mind, from where all the magic emerges, it seemed apt to title this exhibition, *Magical Musings*.

**Excerpts:
How did *Magical Musings* take shape?**

This is my 25th solo exhibition and I was very keen to share a wide range of my art work with Delhites, since my last exhibition here was in 2008. I am exhibiting paintings ranging from 2013 to 2018. I started collaborative work with artisans in Bangladesh who helped me to layer my paintings with a new element, embroidery, which is only visible when you come very close to painting. It was a challenge to incorporate it seamlessly with the rest of

The fact that I have lived in over 15 cities across continents is one of the primary reasons that my work has moved away from the figurative to the abstract into its own genre of abstract landscape.

Actually, I don't think one can put everything into a box into a certain "type" or "category". Specially, since the joy



Stories cities tell: Vinita Karim's "The Sacred City" and "The Blue Mirage" • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

that I find in art has a lot to do with exploration. At heart, I am a colourist, so if I were to describe my process, it begins with which colours my soul sings to on a particular day. As these different colours take on shapes, I build my fantasy ports and cities

and embed my sources and symbols into them. These cities emerge layer by layer relying on instinct and experience. When it comes to my art, I would almost classify myself as obsessive-compulsive, because of the level of detail as well as layers which

are embedded in my work. I am unabashedly in love with my materials, be it gold or silver leaf, or the silken threads which weave intricate tapestries into my work, often on a smooth Belgian linen. Besides this love of materials, another interesting

fact is that I do not sketch beforehand. Each painting is its own grand adventure with many trials and tribulations.

How do you stay away from making exact replicas of cities and yet make each work distinct?

I draw my inspiration from different cities, but I am not interested in replicating the images of any city. I think cameras are much better for that purpose. My work is built on imaginary cities, however you may see hints of many actual places in them: the blue of the Mediterranean Sea from Alexandria and Tripoli, the hulls of the boats from Padma river, Dhaka, the minarets of mosques from Istanbul, the flags flying on top of temples in Varanasi... These are the little details which emerge into my canvases like signifiers of experiences, sensations and memories making each artwork unique.

Is there space for humans in these cityscapes?

My cityscapes are often busy, bustling, full of activity, teeming with humanity. You do not see the humans but you know that they are there.

Tell us the story behind



C My life is about packing and unpacking my suitcases. I carry a canvas pad, my paints and brushes, a spatula knife wherever I go. This gives me the freedom to be ready to capture any new experiences wherever I go. Travel painting is fun.

However, on fundamental level, my art is informed by life in different countries and cultures. Due to my unique situation of being immersed in different cultures, I have been able to absorb and appropriate as well as filter out various socio and cultural influences. My ceaseless travelling and art-making across nations and cultures, have defined me as a cultural nomad.

(The exhibition is on at Gallerie Ganesha, New Delhi till January 15)

Kicks and glory (Top left)
Aditya Roy and (left) a class in progress • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

three sections. In the first 60 minutes, we are taught seven basic strikes that can be done with or without a weapon. We are given pens; the idea is to understand that anything can be used as an improvised weapon, using these same strikes. These strikes target what he refers to as 'soft targets': eyes, nose, ears, chin, throat and groin.

In the second hour, Aditya pairs us up and takes us through flow drills, making us practise each at least five times. And finally, we put together everything learnt and try out some scenario-based training.

"This section illustrates how the same principles can apply to multiple situations," he says.

Aditya feels that most self-defence workshops teach tricks to get out of a bad position. Often, these require many steps to pull it off successfully.

"No man is going to grab your hand and just stand there waiting for you to do that lock you learnt in a class you attended three months ago. Neither are you going to remember those steps in a high-pressure situation. Simple things, done simply at the right time win fights. Winning on the street is not beating up five guys. It is surviving, and going home to your family," he says.

The three-hour experience costs ₹1,200 per head. For details, log onto airbnb.co.in

(The writer was in Goa on invitation of Airbnb)

PUNCH TANTRA

+ Aditya Roy's urban survival workshop in Goa trains people in the Filipino martial art form of Pekiti Tirsia Kali

PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

Sunday mornings in Goa are synonymous with hangovers, sleeping in or perhaps lazing by the beach. Ours, however, is a little different. The alarm rings at 6 am. Listless, we drag ourselves out of bed, and after a hurried breakfast, head for our Airbnb Experience of the day – Urban Survival Workshop.

We navigate our way to Moira village, past lazy cows, playful puppies, slow-moving two-wheelers and joggers, till we are lost.

After a few phone calls, we find Light Haven, the martial arts school tucked away amidst greenery, far from the busy narrow streets. It's the last house on the left; beyond it lies a trail that leads to nowhere. And standing dramatically in the middle of that path is our trainer Aditya Roy.

He doesn't look like a typical martial arts teacher. Instead, he has the vibe of someone who might just break into a Bollywood song and dance.

Handing us each a wooden stick (designed to look like a blunt knife) and bottle of water, he



leads us to the practice area.

"This is a three-hour workshop. Keep sipping on water and stay awake," announces Aditya, seeing a few of us yawning.

"Pekiti Tirsia Kali is an indigenous Filipino martial art based on the use of the blade. It is the fight-

ing style of the Tortola family from the Philippines and its current guardian and head is Grand Tu-hon Leo T Gaje Jr," he explains.

The way you use the sword is the same way you use the hand, adds Aditya, who was always fascinated by the sword, especially

after reading about King Arthur and Excalibur.

He was introduced to the art form by Shifu Kanishka Sharma who had trained in the Philippines. "Pekiti Tirsia Kali was brought to India by Kanishka. Currently, he and I are the only



two instructors authorised to teach in this country," he adds. Aditya too trained in the Philippines and visits every year to learn new facets of this martial art. He believes it has given him more confidence.

"In Pekiti Tirsia we fight to test ourselves. There are no winners, no referees, no televised broadcast of our fights. We fight to test our knowledge and skills against an actively resisting opponent. But at the end of the fight, we are one big family. This has been great for me because it gives me the chance to test what I know and what I teach."

Danger zones

Thirty minutes into our class, we are wide awake, alert and throwing punches in between defending a few. "This is taught to elite law enforcement and military personnel across continents. It is instantly applicable and unapologetically effective. This is why it is one of the best choices for anyone seeking to learn how to defend themselves," says Aditya, who has been teaching this for the last four years.

The workshop is divided into

5 EVENTS WORTH-YOUR-WHILE



LITERATURE

Seminar

The Embassy of Mexico in India is organising a Mexican literary session at New Delhi World Book Fair venue. A seminar on "Paz, Poetry & Art" will discuss about the works by Octavio Paz, a Mexican poet and diplomat, by poet Subhro Bandopadhyay followed by a presentation by graphic designer Monika Khanna Gulati.

VENUE: Hall No. 7 ABC, Pragati Maidan

TIME: 4 - 5 p.m.



CONCERT

Music festival

Swami Haridas-Tansen Sangeet Nritya Mahotsav, a Hindustani classical music and dance event is a brainchild of Kathak danseuse, Uma Sharma. The first day of this four-day event commences this evening with the performances of Kathak recital by Uma Sharma, Hindustani vocal by Parveen Sultana and Hariprasad Chaurasia on flute.

VENUE: Modern School, Barakhamba Road

TIME: 6:30 p.m.



EXHIBITION

Art

"Rising Dawn", a group art show, displaying recent art works by four contemporary artists, Anil Thambai, Apurba Nandi, Joydip Acharyee and Somu Desai. This winsome quartet of artists present their own sensibility in the oscillations that appear between line and colour as well as in between drawing and painting.

VENUE: Palette Art Gallery, 14 Golf Links

TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



MUSIC

Jazz

The Piano Man Jazz club is all set to liven up your weekday "blues" by bringing to stage, Tarq Bowen. Tonight, Tarq Bowen's unique blend of Blues will enthrall the audience with his international Trio, Tarq Bowen (UK) on vocals and Guitars, Phil Wildenhues (NL) on drums and Marc Inti (BOL) on e-bass.

VENUE: Piano Man Jazz Club, Safdarjung Enclave

TIME: 9 p.m. - 11:55 p.m.



FILM

La Douleur

This French film screened with English subtitles is a story of Robert Antelme, a major figure of the Resistance, is arrested and deported. Desperate for news of her husband, his wife enters into a high-risk game of psychological cat and mouse with a Nazi collaborator.

VENUE: M.L. Bhartia Auditorium, Alliance Francaise De Delhi, 72, Lodhi Estate

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

The Sacred City

The Sacred City is based on my experience of Varanasi. I visited Varanasi a few years ago on a art residency and had the privilege to paint on a verandah overlooking the ghats. It was truly an im-memorial experience which has remained etched on my mind. Varanasi is an artist's inspiration, wherever you look, it touches your soul. It is a city of deep sacredness where you connect to greater forces and it is also a city where you say your good-byes to loved ones. It is this dichotomy which makes this place so powerful.

And your inspirations...

I came across the work of Austrian artist Hunderwasser in the nineties in Munich. I was mesmerised by his use of colour and detail. I learned not to be afraid of using colours in an unconventional way from him. I love Ram Kumar's mono-chromatic canvases which hint of places visited. His use of space is wonderful.

How does travel inform your art?

My life is about packing and unpacking my suitcases. I carry a canvas pad, my paints and brushes, a spatula knife wherever I go. This gives me the freedom to be ready to capture any new experiences wherever I go. Travel painting is fun.

However, on fundamental level, my art is informed by life in different countries and cultures. Due to my unique situation of being immersed in different cultures, I have been able to absorb and appropriate as well as filter out various socio and cultural influences. My ceaseless travelling and art-making across nations and cultures, have defined me as a cultural nomad.

(The exhibition is on at Gallerie Ganesha, New Delhi till January 15)

Kicks and glory (Top left)
Aditya Roy and (left) a class in progress • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

three sections. In the first 60 minutes, we are taught seven basic strikes that can be done with or without a weapon. We are given pens; the idea is to understand that anything can be used as an improvised weapon, using these same strikes. These strikes target what he refers to as 'soft targets': eyes, nose, ears, chin, throat and groin.

In the second hour, Aditya pairs us up and takes us through flow drills, making us practise each at least five times. And finally, we put together everything learnt and try out some scenario-based training.

"This section illustrates how the same principles can apply to multiple situations," he says.

Aditya feels that most self-defence workshops teach tricks to get out of a bad position. Often, these require many steps to pull it off successfully.

"No man is going to grab your hand and just stand there waiting for you to do that lock you learnt in a class you attended three months ago. Neither are you going to remember those steps in a high-pressure situation. Simple things, done simply at the right time win fights. Winning on the street is not beating up five guys. It is surviving, and going home to your family," he says.

The three-hour experience costs ₹1,200 per head. For details, log onto airbnb.co.in

(The writer was in Goa on invitation of Airbnb)

Walking through Sweden's summer light

Almhult, located in the beautiful Småland province, is the birthplace of modern taxonomy, and much later, Ikea

SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO

Almhult is snowbound for a good part of the year. But when the sun is out, the Swedes embrace the outdoors. They run, cycle around town, take a boat ride or invite friends for barbecue in their summer homes.

In the Almhult countryside, where the roads snake through tall pine trees and lead to Lake Möckeln, nothing breaks the silence on the path. Some homes proudly display their barbecue sets in the garden, with the firewood neatly tucked away in a corner.

The well-heeled in this Småland province in southern Sweden own summer homes in the lake's vicinity and spend their weekends here. A lucky few also own boats.

We took this little detour during 'home visits' to understand Scandinavian design and style, as part of Ikea Democratic Design Days in 2018. Now referred to as 'Ikea town', Almhult municipality has a population of nearly 17,000.

If you look up Almhult on any travel portal, you're likely to chance upon comments that there's nothing much to do here unless you're curious to see Ikea's birthplace and headquarters. The comment isn't way off the mark. This little town is marked by a clutch of Ikea offices, museum and the hotel – all down the railway track. A little further is the new Ikea store, an Ikea Fynd store where you'll find things for a steal, some charming Swedish residences, and a town centre with cafés, stores and other establishments.

Sunny days:
(Clockwise)
A Swedish summer home, Ikea Museum, and lake Möckeln
■ SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO



On a journey through Sweden and Denmark, it's worth stopping to understand how this erstwhile farming town turned into a place that gives wings to entrepreneurship.

Cultural reserve

Ingvar Kamprad founded Ikea in 1943 and opened the first store in 1958 in Almhult. Before that, the sleepy town was known as the home of Carolus or Carl Lin-

naeus, the father of modern taxonomy. Head North to Råshult to hike through the cultural reserve where the gardens are maintained in a 17th-Century aesthetic. There are a few other hikes in Almhult's vicinity, but the town remains a major draw for being the Ikea headquarters.

Where it all began

Outside the Ikea Museum, a sign reads 'It began here in

1958'. The building that housed the first store from 1958 to 2012, now functions as the museum.

Art, design and functionality go hand-in-hand in the museum's corridors. The exteriors of the building were designed in international modernism style by architect Claes Knutson. The museum's entrance is a shipping container. One of the walls bears artwork that resembles a stack of colourful containers. During lunch hours, this wall opens up to connect the museum to the sprawling Ikea restaurant.

The container doubles up as the museum's entrance for a reason – shipping containers have been a part of the company's success story. These containers are loaded on trucks, trains and boats, to transport products from Ikea factories to suppliers and stores across the world. A note at the entrance reveals that

a standard shipping container of 76 cubic-metre capacity can hold up to 778 flat-packed Billy bookcases!

Ikea Museum features a permanent exhibition that gives insights into Swedish history, culture, lifestyle, its agrarian challenges and how Kamprad established the business. A temporary exhibition that's updated twice a year comes alive with everyday objects used innovatively to arrive at contemporary art.

Rustic beginnings

The permanent exhibition is divided into three zones. 'Our Roots' gives a brief history of the lives of people in the Swedish countryside in the 18th to early 20th centuries. The exhibits include the lingonberry picker, wooden lunch boxes, baskets made from pest-resistant juniper.

er wood, and 'beech' wood barrels used to transport butter from Swedish dairies to England.

The 'Our Story' section establishes how Gustavian-style furniture, scientist Carl Linnaeus, artists Karin and Carl Larsson, and author Ellen Key have all inspired the product range. 'Your Stories' puts the spotlight on people who've shared their experiences.

The temporary exhibition on view is 'Ikea Hacked' (on till March 24, 2019), showcasing how 30 international designers, architects and artists are using Ikea products as raw material to arrive at new designs and functions through ingenious tweaks.

A tour through the museum typically takes two or three hours.

Getting by

Look out for bus timetables, or better still, hire bicycles for shorter distances. Almhult is where you can slow down, go on long walks or rides along the countryside. But make sure you don't wander too far without activating maps on your smartphone. Don't count on asking someone for directions, because, chances are that you may not spot a soul for a mile or so in certain parts of the town.

(The writer was in Sweden at the invitation of Ikea)



WHAT TO EXPECT

In colder months, Almhult resembles a winter wonderland where nearly everything is bathed in snow and the Möckeln lake is frozen. Try ice skating at the indoor rinks. The best time to visit Almhult is summer, from June to August.

GETTING THERE

The nearest international airport is Copenhagen, Denmark. From here, take a two-hour train ride to Almhult through the stunning Øresund Bridge, which is a 16-kilometre road and rail bridge between Sweden and Denmark.



In Dublin's fair city

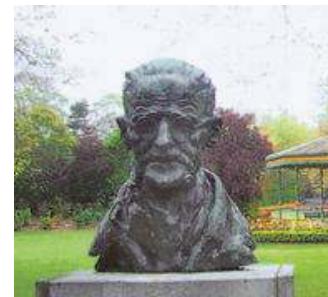
If you are visiting the capital of Ireland without reading the seminal works of James Joyce, chances are the novelist is watching you reproachfully

PANKAJA SRINIVASAN

I am on posh Grafton Street, kicking myself because I have not read James Joyce. He mentions this street in *Dubliners* as well as in *Ulysses*. Cafe Bewley's is located somewhere around what was his favourite hangout; Samuel Beckett's too. There is something thrilling about walking down streets that are described in novels.

This one goes back to 1708 and I spot a sign at a place where once the Whynes Academy stood. Its pupils included playwright Sheridan, the Duke of Wellington and poet Thomas Moore (who burned the memoirs of his dear departed friend Lord Byron in order to protect his reputation). George V is said to have strolled down the street named after the illegitimate son of Charles II. And Bono has sung on its cobbled streets many times.

There are a series of 90-minute walks that start from the James Joyce Centre and trace the writer's own journeys in the city and those of his characters in *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*.



Seek the Irish spirit: At Dublin

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

I am starry-eyed and wondering which way to head when a poster announcing 'The Lost Warhols by Karen Bystedt' draws me into a very fancy store called Brown Thomas (established in 1848). There are 30 Warhol photographs lining the stairway and landing. Karen was a student when she asked Warhol if he would allow her to take his pictures. To her astonishment, he said yes. That was in 1983, and now Karen has taken those photographs and turned them into a collaborative art project where she has invited artists to add to these photographs and make

The other museums in Dublin...

Book of Kells, Trinity College Dublin: This is an exquisitely illuminated manuscript containing the four gospels of the New Testament, created by Celtic monks around 800 AD. Visit the spectacular Long Room that holds the oldest books/manuscripts of the library of Trinity College (2,00,000 of them). Its alumni include Oscar Wilde, Oliver Goldsmith, Sheridan, Congreve, Beckett, Jonathan Swift and Synge.

National Gallery (1864) was built as a museum and is a treasure trove of art. It had a Caravaggio that hung in the dining room of a Jesuit who thought it was a copy. Art historians identified it to be the real thing. Among a host of benefactors is Bernard Shaw who bequeathed one-third of his royalties to the museum. There are 31 watercolours of JMW Turner donated by art collector Henry Vaughan on condition they be displayed only in January as there was less danger of them being affected by sunlight.

Epic Museum (2016) chronicles the migrations from Ireland since 500 AD and has extensive documentation on the notable Irishmen and women who made their fame in other parts of the world. This includes a rogues gallery as well as a section on Irish music and dance.

Guinness Storehouse You don't just get to drink Ireland's most famous beer here but also learn how it is made. The seven-storey building built in 1902 and the visitors' centre built in 2000 have huge barrels of barley and hops that go into the beer. Learn about the roasting and brewing process and get a swig or two of the beer on their rooftop Gravity Bar. In one of the other floors is a pub that offers food cooked with Guinness as well. It was Arthur Guinness who started it in 1759 when he signed a 9,000-year lease on a site and began brewing. His descendants continue to do that now.

turn. Read one of the greatest books about Dublin," urges the poster! I shamelessly go upstairs and what do I see there, but the first edition of *Ulysses*. It is open on the last page with a little sign "...so you can say that you have finished reading *Ulysses*. The other 699 pages can be summarised in 27 words: "While Dubliner Leopold Bloom/Sought solace from thoughts of the tomb/ In Daedalic mazes,/his Moll went to blazes/ And dreamed a great yes in her room."

Feeling better already, I wander around the jewel of a museum. One section has all about Ryanair. In that aviation room, I also learn that the airport was the hangout for the glamorous, and often the venue for dinner dances and wedding brunches.

You can do the museum on your own – it is not that big – but it is always nicer to wait for a guided tour. An air raid siren signals the start of the tour and the guide takes you along Dublin's history. Stephen's Green becomes a gorgeous parkland, accessible only to the rich and famous who lived in the Georgian mansions around it. And I have just stepped into one of those homes, Number 15, that has been standing right there since 1776.

There is no getting away from James Joyce. A big poster of Marilyn Monroe reading *Dubliners* welcomes visitors. "Now, it is your

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Cloud capers

Discover Araku from a hot air balloon in the second edition of the festival from January 18 to 20

NIVEDITA GANGULY

Fifteen hot air balloons from 20 countries around the globe will dot the pristine skies of Araku, a hill station near Visakhapatnam, from January 18 to 20 as part of the second edition of the Araku Hot Air Balloon festival, organised by AP Tourism in association with E-Factor. The balloons will sail over the picturesque valley with its tribal hamlets and agricultural fields.

The highlight of the festival will be specially-shaped balloons like Baby Car

pact of this has also been extremely positive since all the hotel inventories were sold out during the festival time. The same situation is envisaged this year as well," says Samit Garg, CEO and co-founder of E-Factor.

Joseph Llado, a veteran ballooning pilot from Barcelona with 38 years of experience, was floored by the undiscovered charm of Araku when he came for the first edition of the festival. "This is a gem of a place for hot air ballooning. Araku's beautiful, hilly terrain makes it a fascinating place to explore," he remarked.



Up and away A hot air balloon floating above the fields of Araku during the first edition of the festival ■ NIVEDITA GANGULY