



Nirbhaya case convict in SC seeking restoration of legal remedies
page 9



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to head panel to probe unruly incidents
page 12



At least 27 killed, 55 wounded in attack on political rally in Kabul
page 14



Hardik Pandya likely to return for ODI series against South Africa
page 19

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NEARBY



Delhi receives heavy rain, causes jams

NEW DELHI
Heavy rain lashed the national capital throughout Friday, affecting traffic movement as visibility dropped considerably in the afternoon due to dense clouds. Delhi recorded 20.4 mm of rainfall till 8.30 a.m. and 16.8 mm during the day. Light rain is expected today.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Tahir Hussain sent to 7-day police custody

NEW DELHI
A Delhi court on Friday sent suspended Aam Aadmi Party councillor Tahir Hussain to seven days in police custody in connection with the alleged killing of Intelligence Bureau staffer Ankit Sharma during the recent violence in north-east Delhi.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Pulwama attack case: NIA arrests two more

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR
The National Investigation Agency arrested two more persons for their alleged role in the 2019 Pulwama attack in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed. A total of five persons have been arrested in connection with the case so far. The suspects were identified as Waiz ul Islam, 19, a resident of Srinagar and Mohammad Abbas Rather, 32, a resident of Pulwama.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 13

As part of RBI bailout, SBI to pick up 49% in Yes Bank

Reconstruction scheme will protect jobs for a year; six-member board set up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday announced a draft reconstruction scheme for the beleaguered Yes Bank, aimed at protecting depositors' funds while bringing in the State Bank of India as an investor. For employees of the bank, service conditions, including remuneration, will remain the same, at least for one year. This does not, however, include key managerial personnel, on whom the board can take a call.

According to the draft plan, the authorised capital for the reconstructed bank will be ₹5,000 crore, with 2,400 crore equity shares of ₹2 each, aggregating to ₹4,800 crore.

The SBI, which had earlier said its board was exploring an investment in Yes Bank, will pick up a 49% stake, according to the scheme. The deal would be at a price not less than ₹10 per share with a face value of ₹2. The SBI cannot reduce its holding below 26% before completion of three years from the date of infusion of the capital, the RBI said. To pick up a 49% stake, the SBI will have to invest ₹2,450 crore, sources said.

On Thursday, the government had put a moratorium



Long wait: Customers waiting to withdraw money from a Yes Bank branch in Thane on Friday. ■ VIBHAV BIRWATKAR

on Yes Bank till April 3 following its deteriorating financial condition, and the banking regulator superseded the board and appointed an administrator.

The new board will have at least six members, an MD & CEO, a non-executive chairman and two non-executive directors, while the remaining two nominee directors would be appointed by the SBI. "The members of the board so appointed shall continue for a period of one year, or until an alternate board is constituted by Yes Bank Ltd., whichever is later," the RBI said.

The Central bank said all the deposits and liabilities of the bank would continue in the same manner in the reconstructed bank, unaffected by the scheme. "All the deposits with and liabilities of the reconstructed bank, except as provided in the scheme, and the rights, liabilities and obligations of its creditors, will continue in the same manner and with the same terms and conditions, completely unaffected by the scheme," it said.

However, additional tier 1 capital, which was issued by Yes Bank under the Basel III framework, "shall stand written down permanently, in full, with effect from the appointed date," according to the scheme.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12
LOAN SURGE ▶ PAGE 12
OUTER LIMIT ▶ PAGE 15
BANKING ON BAULOTS ▶ EDITORIAL

Committed to safeguarding depositors'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre has directed the RBI to look into the causes of the crisis at Yes Bank and pin responsibility on the individuals who failed to address the problems, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

"While our government is completely committed to ensure that the depositors' interest is completely safeguarded, equally I want the RBI to ensure that due process of law is set to roll with a sense of urgency, so that we should find out as to who led to this problem of this size and magnitude at Yes Bank," she said. She added that she had also asked the RBI to assess the adequacy of regulatory and supervisory norms.

Speaking to journalists, the Finance Minister expressed the confidence that the plan would be effective within 30 days, the moratorium period imposed by the RBI to limit withdrawals.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Supreme Court upholds 2018 order on land acquisition

Reiterates ruling under Section 24 (2) of 2013 law

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Friday held that land acquisition proceedings under the 1894 Act will not be deemed to have lapsed under Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, if the authorities have tendered the compensation by deposit in the Treasury.

A five-judge Bench, led by



The court said landowners cannot say the proceedings have lapsed.

Justice Arun Mishra, held that landowners, who had refused to accept compensation or who sought reference for higher compensa-

tion, cannot claim that the acquisition proceedings had lapsed under Section 24(2) of the 2013 Act.

With this, the Constitution Bench has affirmed the February 2018 ruling on Section 24 by a three-judge Bench, led by Justice Mishra himself, in the *Indore Development Authority* case. The Bench has overruled an earlier co-ordinate Bench ruling in the *Pune Municipal Corporation* case of 2014.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Number of COVID-19 cases mounts to 31

Another man tests positive in Delhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

After another man from Delhi with a travel history to Thailand and Malaysia tested positive for COVID-19, the total number of such cases in India has climbed to 31, the Union Health Ministry said on Friday.

"One suspected case has been confirmed as positive. He is stable and being monitored. The total number of confirmed cases stands at 31..." a Ministry official said.

According to the latest ad-

visory, besides initiating universal screening of all international passengers, it has been advised that mass gatherings be avoided or postponed till COVID-19 is contained.

All Ministries/Departments have been requested to exempt their employees from marking attendance in the Aadhaar-Based Biometric Attendance System till March 31.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12
ASSAM ON EDGE ▶ PAGE 9

State has failed to do its job: ex-SC judges

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

From the destruction witnessed after the Delhi riots, the rampage looked like the handiwork of "total professionals", said former Supreme Court judge, Justice A.K. Patnaik. Another retired Supreme Court judge, Justice Kurian Joseph, stated that the "burning smell" still hung over riot-hit areas.

The former judges were relating the impressions they gathered during their visit to the riot-hit areas.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 13

U.P. banners display photos, details of anti-CAA protesters

As many as 57 persons have been accused of violence

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The police have put up several hoardings across Lucknow identifying those accused of violence during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in December last, triggering fear among those named for their safety.

The names, photographs and residential addresses of the accused are listed in the hoardings. They have been asked to pay for the damage to public and private property within a stipulated time or have their property seized by the district administration. The total damage listed in the hoardings amount to ₹1.55 crore.

As many as 57 persons have been identified in hoardings that have come up in the Hazratganj, Thakurganj, Hasanganj and Qaisarbagh police station areas.

One of the banners, with 28 names, put up at the prominent Hazratganj intersec-



Graphic details: Lucknow hoardings show those who have to pay compensation. ■ PTI

tion, next to the statue of B.R. Ambedkar, asks them to pay up over ₹64 lakh. Those served notices in this hoarding include retired IPS officer S.R. Darapuri, lawyer and activist Mohammad Shoaib, Congress member Sadaf Jafar, teacher Robin Verma, cultural activist Deepak Kabir and Dalit activist Pawan Rao Ambedkar.

It is not clear why the Lucknow police and administration publicised the names as they had been issued notices by magistrates

and asked to pay the amount within 30 days or face confiscation of their property.

Many of the accused were granted bail by court. Ms. Jafar said her name came up on a day when she had got a stay on her property attachment notice. She is seeking legal help again. "We are exposed to mob lynching now," she said, expressing fears that the public display of her face and address could jeopardise the safety of her children and herself.

Police should also go after leaders spewing hate'

Mander's lawyer makes the plea in SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police should extend the same alacrity to act against leaders who spewed hate and led to 53 deaths in the Delhi riots as they are showing against activist Harsh Mander for his "contemptuous speech", senior advocate Dushyant Dave told the Supreme Court on Friday.

Mr. Dave was reacting to submissions made by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Delhi police, that an affidavit had been filed promptly detailing Mr. Mander's alleged transgressions.

"He [Mr. Mehta] should bring the same kind of affidavit against the leaders who indulged in hate speeches and led to the deaths of 53 people", Mr. Dave, appearing for Mr. Mander, said before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde.

On March 4, this Bench stopped Mr. Mander from participating in a hearing on a batch of petitions seeking

the immediate registration of FIRs against leaders who instigated communal violence in Delhi with their hate speeches.

Mr. Mander was, in turn, accused of making disparaging remarks about the Supreme Court in a public speech. Mr. Mehta had accused Mr. Mander of "instigating people". He said there was a video clip showing Mr. Mander goading people, saying "ultimate justice" has to be made available on the streets and cannot be got from either the Supreme Court or Parliament. The police promptly filed an affidavit against Mr. Mander.

'NO CONTEMPT' ▶ PAGE 12

Gamechangers



Sprinter honoured: Dutee Chand receiving the award from Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu at the third edition of The Hindu BusinessLine Changemaker Awards in New Delhi on Friday. ■ KAMAL NARANG (REPORT ON PAGE 9)

Centre cannot brand organisations 'political': SC

'They cannot be deprived of foreign funds for using legitimate forms of dissent'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Central government cannot brand an organisation 'political' and deprive it of its right to receive foreign funds for using "legitimate forms of dissent" like bandh, hartal, road roko or jail 'bharo' to aid a public cause, the Supreme Court held on Friday.

"Any organisation which supports the cause of a group of citizens agitating for their rights without a political goal or objective cannot be penalised by being declared as an organisation of a political nature," a Bench of Justices L. Nageswara Rao and Deepak Gupta observed in a 23-page judgment.

But the foreign funding pipeline could be cut if an organisation took recourse to these forms of protest to score a political goal, the court said.

It struck a similar balance in the cases of organisations of farmers, workers, students, youth based on caste, community, religion, language, etc. It said their foreign funding could continue as long as these organisations worked for the "social and political welfare of society" and not to further "political interests".

Political objectives
However, the court wholesomely agreed that organisations with "avowed political objectives" in its memoran-

dum of association or bye laws" cannot be permitted access to foreign funds.

Such organisations were clearly of a "political nature", it concluded.

The verdict came on a petition filed by Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF) challenging certain provisions of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010 and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules of 2011, both of which confer the Centre with "unguided and uncanalised power" to brand organisations 'political' and shut down their access to foreign funds.

The provisions under challenge before the court included Section 5 (1) of the FCRA.

This provision allowed the Centre a free hand to decide whether a seemingly non-political organisation was actually political in nature. INSAF argued that Section 5(1) was vague and thus unconstitutional. The Delhi High Court, which INSAF approached first, said the provision was "expansive" and not vague. The Supreme Court agreed with the High Court on Friday.

The next provision under the microscope was Section 5(4) of the FCRA.

INSAF said the provision did not exactly identify the authority before which an organisation could represent its grievance. But the apex court dismissed this contention.

Ashok Nagar locals recount the vandalism of February 25

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

"We ran barefoot leaving everything behind when we heard them," recounted Mohammad Ali, a construction worker by profession, who was inside Masjid Maula Baksh in Ashok Nagar that was vandalised by a mob on February 25.

With the Friday prayers not being conducted last week – a first in over 40 years – this week's Jumma gathering was the first since the violence and drew several people. Abdul Rahim, the mosque's imam,

and asked to pay the amount within 30 days or face confiscation of their property.

Many of the accused were granted bail by court. Ms. Jafar said her name came up on a day when she had got a stay on her property attachment notice. She is seeking legal help again. "We are exposed to mob lynching now," she said, expressing fears that the public display of her face and address could jeopardise the safety of her children and herself.

ter at a neighbour's house. Around 17 of us were evacuated from there hours later by the police. Even when we were in the bus that the police brought, the mob chased us," said Muzafer Khan.

Syed Zahir Hussain, who also attended the Friday prayers, said his family of four used to live on the first floor.

"My wife and I and our two children ran for our lives along with the others, leaving everything behind. Nothing is left, not even the jewellery that my wife had," he said.

Haji Raffiuddin, 84, claimed to have founded the mosque in 1974.

Videograph post-mortem of victims: HC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court directed all government hospitals to videograph the post-mortem of those killed during the communal violence in north-east Delhi last week.

A Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and I.S. Mehra asked authorities to collect and preserve DNA samples from all the bodies, and not to dispose of any unidentified body till March 11, the next date of hearing.

The High Court's directions came while hearing a habeas corpus petition by a man seeking details of his brother-in-law who went missing during the riots. Twenty-five-year-old Hamza went missing on February 26 evening.

During the hearing, the police informed the court that Hamza's body was recovered from a drain in Bhagirathi Vihar on March 2 and his autopsy would be conducted during the day at the RML Hospital. The court was also informed that after the autopsy, the body will be released to the family members.

Riot victims spent sleepless night at Mustafabad camp

They struggle to stay put as rains compounded their problems

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Victims of the communal violence staying at Idgah relief camp in Mustafabad had to spend the whole night awake as their mattresses became wet due to the rain.

Nafeesa, a resident of Shiv Vihar, said that though water didn't enter the tents, all their mattresses got wet as the tents were open. "All through the night, I, my daughters and many others stayed up or laid down on the centre where the mattresses were not extremely wet. It is becoming increasingly tough," she said, adding, "I don't know when we can go back to our houses. I am still scared."

Nafeesa, a widow, ensures that her two teenage daughters are by her side all the time to "ensure their safety".

A 20-year-old woman, who did not wish to be named, said that volunteers working at the camp helped them as much as they could. "They brought wooden planks and put them under the mattresses to raise it from the ground level. In the morning, when



A scene at the relief camp in Mustafabad on Friday.

• SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

sun came out, we left the mattresses out to dry and brought them back later in the day," she said.

Cleanliness factor

The streets leading to the Idgah are completely flooded and the sewage is getting mixed with rainwater, said Laik Ahmad from Doctors Unity Welfare Association.

Ahmad said the sanitation staff have been avoiding the area due to fear of violence. "Locals have been making efforts to clean the compound, mobile toilets and the trash but they are not professionals," he said.

While rain has compounded

their problems, at one corner of the room sat children surrounded by young volunteers. They were trying to bring the smiles back on the kids' faces. The Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights has organised a 'Reading Mela' where children are engaged in reading, writing, drawing and storytelling, to distract them.

Holding a notebook, Lucky (12), said that he enjoys the time at the 'mela' as he gets to spend hours drawing. "I drew three pictures yesterday [Thursday] but someone stole my drawing book," he complained.

(With PTI inputs)

Tahir Hussain sent to seven-day police custody

He was arrested on Thursday in connection with alleged killing of IB staffer

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday sent suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain to seven day police custody in connection with the alleged killing of Intelligence Bureau (IB) staffer Ankit Sharma during the recent violence in north-east Delhi.

Hussain was produced before the duty Magistrate Rakesh Kumar amid tight se-

curity. He was arrested on Thursday after a court here dismissed his plea seeking to surrender before it in connection with the case.

A police officer said that Hussain will be taken to the warehouse where chemical substance stored on cold drink bottles was recovered and stone-pelting happened.

"We will take him to the place where he had been after the violence. He claimed

to be in Chand Bagh area and was hiding at a house," said the officer.

During interrogation, Hussain was asked about his hideouts during the run.

Hussain claimed that he is innocent and have no idea

about the miscreants who pelted stones from his building at the crowd. He refused to identify Ankit.

"Two of his mobile phones are yet to be recovered. The last location of his mobile phones were at Zakir Nagar. He claimed that he had lost his phone during the violence," said the officer.

The officer added that around five people who were spotted on the terrace of Hussain have been identified from videos of the violence. Hussain's stepbrother, who was also seen on the terrace, is absconding.

New video of men firing from terrace surfaces

In another video which went viral, DCP and his team were seen being thrashed by a mob

SAURABH TRivedi
NEW DELHI

While relief measures are in full swing to bring back normalcy in north-east Delhi, a blame game is being played out on social media with the release of several videos recorded during the violence.

On Friday, a new video has surfaced where a group of men were seen firing from the terrace of a nursing home at the crowd below in Yamuna Vihar area.

In the video, a man in a black jacket and wearing a helmet is clearly seen firing at the crowd below while unmasked people standing next to him were pelting stones.

A video of the February 24 violence had gone viral on the social media on Thurs-

day in which Shahdara DCP Amit Sharma and other policemen were seen being thrashed by a mob that includes women on Wazirabad Road near Chand Bagh. It was at the same place where head constable Ratan Lal was killed.

In a two-minute video, a team of policemen, including Mr. Sharma, was seen at

tacked by a mob from left and right. The police team could not move back because of a five-feet high central verge and they got trapped in heavy stone-pelting.

"Four-five men pushed me down and removed my helmet and hit my head with rods. They only left me when I was unmovable, thinking that I was dead"

• A POLICEMAN

ple of the bodies have been preserved and it will be matched with the families of missing persons, said the police.

During riots, a total of 44 people were reported missing. Many of them came back or killed or were found injured in the hospital, they added.

683 FIRs registered

"We have registered a total of 683 FIRs in connection with the communal clash. Forty eight cases are under Arms Act and 1,983 people have been detained. In order to restore normalcy and peace, Delhi Police had conducted 251 Aman committee meetings with members from both the communities," said a police officer.

PCR line went down on Feb. 24 due to traffic

Control room received 4,500 calls on that day and 6,000 the next day: police officer

SAURABH TRivedi
NEW DELHI

There was panic in the Police Control Room (PCR) of north-east district after it went down for several hours due to high volume of distress calls on February 24, when riots broke out in several parts of the district, said a police officer.

The officer informed that on February 24, they received more than 4,500 PCR calls and the number of such calls was 6,000 on February 25. Most of the calls were from Bhajanpur area, he added.

When a call lands on the PCR, it gets transferred to the nearest PCR van and the district PCR. Both the teams reach to the person in distress. On any other day, a district PCR receives about 350 calls on an average but during the violence, there was a sudden increase in

police officers to control the situation. "We needed reinforcement to enter the area in order to respond to the callers," he added.

The calls were received from Bhajanpur, Dayalpur, Karawali Nagar, Khajuri Khas, Jaffrabad and Jyoti Nagar police stations of the north-east district.

In any district control room, usually a staff of around 12 people work in a shift. But whenever any important call (like riot, rape or murder) lands, it is also transferred to the senior police officers of the district concerned.

During riots, Delhi Fire Services (DFS) also refused to attend calls due to safety and security reasons. A fire engine was torched and a fire operator suffered injuries when a mob attacked a DFS team on the way to attend a fire call.

PCR calls, the officer said.

"On February 24 and 25, we had moved staff from other desks to the north-east desk to transfer calls immediately, but it was not working on the ground because policemen were unable to reach out to callers due to safety and security reasons," said the officer.

He added that most of the callers reported incidents of violence, arson, vandalism, firing, assault and stone-pelting.

violence, arson, vandalism, firing, assault and stone-pelting.

Call status

The status of most of the PCR calls remained pending because the PCR vans and staff from the local police station were unable to respond.

There was so much violence all over the place and it was impossible for a couple of

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Ashok Nagar residents wait for compensation to rebuild lives

They claim that no one checked on them and all they have done is fill up forms

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

In a narrow bylane behind the Masjid Maula Baksh in Ashok Nagar, four houses, now completely burnt and looted by rioters on February 25, remain hidden. The occupants of the houses have shifted elsewhere with their relatives and are waiting for adequate relief material and compensation before their lives are restored.

Brothers Shoaib and Feroze, who owned a shop a few metres from their house, said that the mob burnt the shop as well. The shop was adjacent to the mosque which was attacked, they said.

"Since the incident took place we have been staying with our relatives in Welcome. Government officials come here daily and make us fill forms. But what about the compensation? The documentation process itself is taking such a long time. Earlier we were told that no documents are required to make the claims but now officers are saying that it is mandatory."



Bilkis, a resident of Ashok Nagar, at her house which was torched by the mob. ■ AFP

If that is the case, by the time we get the documents redone, months will have passed. What do we do till then?" asked Shoaib.

No relief material has also reached the area, he said.

Where to go?

"It is only in other areas that the relief material are being sent. Nobody has even bothered to check on us. Soon our relatives will also ask us to leave. With large families and small houses how long can we possibly live with

them?" Shoaib, who has a family of 10, asked.

Feroze, his brother, added, "Our shop is also gone. How do we restart our lives again? All that we have done till now is filling of forms."

Unlocking a recently installed main door, Mohammad Sharib, a second year undergraduate student, walks into what was the family's kitchen till around a week ago, now reeking of the burnt belongings.

"We had gone to Meerut to attend a wedding. Then

on Tuesday we got a call saying that our house had been burnt. When we came back the next day, everything was gone," the student of Delhi University's School of Open Learning said.

Police inaction

Recounting of what took place when the mobs charged, Khurshid Alam, a battery rickshaw driver said: "Some of the people from the Masjid came to my house for shelter through the terrace when the attacks began. We kept calling the police but they were non-responsive. It was only after we contacted someone we knew in the police force that they came to rescue us. Later when we were at the police station, we got to know that our houses had been burnt."

"The people who are behind the violence are now sleeping peacefully and look at what we have been reduced to. Why can't the authorities come here, see the damage and give us the full compensation?" asked Shoaib.

2-day verification drive to release financial aid to begin on March 7

1,700 forms received till Friday afternoon, says Deputy CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Friday said that the Delhi government would launch a two-day verification drive to release monetary compensation to riot-affected families of north-east Delhi on March 7.

The government has received 1,700 compensation forms till Friday afternoon and teams would be formed to check the claims, he said, adding that six senior IAS officers will be heading the two-day verification drive.

"Restoration and rehabilitation work is going on at a very fast pace and SDMs have been deployed at different parts of the violence-hit region. Compensation forms are being given out to the grieving families and on the basis of these forms, the process of providing monetary compensation to the affected families has started," the Deputy CM said. He added that ₹25,000 has already been given out as an immediate relief and after verification of compensation forms, the entire amount would be given.

Mr. Sisodia said that the government is facing an issue of duplication of forms and therefore, the verification drive will be an important exercise. "Our effort is to give full monetary relief to the people as soon as possible so that they can get their lives



Charred remains of vehicles at Bhajanpura in violence-hit north-east Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

back on track," he added.

Compensation enhanced

The government has decided that each floor of a house will be treated as one residential unit and ₹5 lakh as relief money will be given to each unit, out of which ₹4 lakh is for restructuring of the house and ₹1 lakh for belongings if the entire house is charred or burnt, said Mr. Sisodia.

"In case of substantial damage to the house, ₹2.5 lakh will be provided out of which ₹2 lakh is for restructuring of the house and ₹50,000 for the belongings and the amount will be disbursed shortly," Mr. Rai said.

Mr. Gopal Rai said that it has come to his notice that many riot-affected people are finding it difficult to lodge an FIR with the police station concerned and he has spoken to the SHOs and DCPs to solve the problem and to accelerate the filing of FIR so that they can receive compensation at the earliest.

dents will be given a cash relief of ₹10 lakh, the government announced.

After visiting camps in Mustafabad, Cabinet Minister Gopal Rai said that people living in camps had to face difficulties because of the rain and that AAP volunteers had been working to provide comfort to those living there.

"Ninety per cent of the riot victims have filled up the compensation forms and the amount will be disbursed shortly," Mr. Rai said.

Mr. Gopal Rai said that it has come to his notice that many riot-affected people are finding it difficult to lodge an FIR with the police station concerned and he has spoken to the SHOs and DCPs to solve the problem and to accelerate the filing of FIR so that they can receive compensation at the earliest.

Monetary relief of ₹5 lakh will be provided to schools as well (with less than 1,000 students) if they suffered damage during the riots. Schools with more than 1,000 stu-

BJP delegation distributes relief material

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A BJP delegation on Friday distributed relief material and cash compensation to riot victims in Khajuri Khas here.

The members of the BJP's relief committee also met the family of slain Intelligence Bureau (IB) staffer Ankit Sharma and gave them interim financial assistance besides assuring them of cooperation in the future.

"It is impossible to compensate the damage to the life and property of the people, but in this hour of grief, BJP stands by every victim's family, and we will extend every possible help," Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari, who led the delegation, said.

"Rioters have not only caused damage to life and property but also shamed humanity and it will take time to heal...The way in which Ankit Sharma was murdered shows the barbarism and hatred of the rioters and their conspiracy to split the society," he said after meeting Sharma's family.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said that in this hour of crisis, the Delhi government, NGOs and political parties should forget their differences and work to heal the wounds of the victims.

DELHI TODAY

Dance: Tillai, (The Temple top "The Gopuram"), a Bharatanatyam presentation by Santanu Chakraborty and Group at Janpath Hall, IGNCA, 4 p.m.

Exhibition: A painting exhibition of Contemporary Golden Krishna by Krishn Kanhai at Nandjeet Khemka Art Gallery Natya Tarangini, Pushpa Vihar, Sector -6, Saket, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Exhibition: "Deceptive Rhapsody", a group show displaying exquisite and recent artworks of prominent and emerging contemporary artists at SAU Art Gallery, South Asian University, Satya Marg, Alkar Bhawan, Chanakyapuri, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Exhibition: "Living Between the times 2020", a solo painting exhibition by Milburn Cherian at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Exhibition: "Many Indias III", a rare collection of indigenous art curated by Tulika Kedia at Must Art Gallery, Panchsheel Park, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Exhibition: "Metamorphosis of Formations in Tar", a solo exhibition of Simran K Lumba at Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Exhibition: "Idioms and Images", a solo show by Ajit Seal at Art Konkult, 3-A, Ground Floor, Hauz Khas Village, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@thehindu.co.in)

Pistol recovered from Shahrukh's home

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Two days after the arrest of Shahrukh Pathan, who pointed a pistol at a police official during riots in north-east Delhi's Majupur, officers recovered the pistol from his house on Friday, said a police officer.

The officer said that Shahrukh disclosed that after he opened fire, he kept the pistol at his home and fled from the city. "We have recovered the pistol and three live cartridges from his house. The two cars he used after the incident were also recovered," said the officer.

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT

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IN BRIEF



Metro services to begin from 2.30 p.m. on Holi

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Friday said that metro services on the occasion of Holi on March 10 will begin from 2.30 p.m. "Metro services on all lines, including the Airport Express Line will not be available till 2.30 p.m. [on Holi]. Services will continue normally thereafter," the DMRC said. "In addition, metro feeder bus services will also not be available on March 10," the DMRC added.

High Court gives farewell to Justice Sistani

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Friday gave farewell to Justice G.S. Sistani, the second senior most judge, who helmed over significant public interest litigations, including women safety in the Capital, air pollution, water logging. Justice Sistani will retire on March 10.

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	64	Gurugram	70
Ghaziabad	50	Faridabad -	
Noida	73	Greater Noida	49
Good	51-100	Satisfactory	Moderate
Poor	201-300	Very Poor	Severe
	301-400	>400	
Air Quality Index at 4 p.m. yesterday (Average of past 24 hours) Source: CPCB			

Riot victims return to Shiv Vihar, find homes looted or in a shambles

Families start stepping out of shelters, relief camps to pick up the pieces

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Sanjeeda Begum (33) finally gathered the courage to step out of a relief camp and returned to her Shiv Vihar residence on Friday morning only to find it in a shambles. Her jewellery and television set had been looted.

Shabana (35), who was at Idgah ground relief camp, said she was still scared to return home. She lived in a rented accommodation. She said her husband told her that they could not return home as the "situation was still not normal".

RAF officials have been manning the streets leading to Shiv Vihar, one of the areas in north-east Delhi which witnessed the worst incidents of violence. While the streets were initially empty, one can now spot people slowly trying to rebuild houses they had left behind over 10 days ago.

However, there is still a sense of fear and insecurity among the residents.

Outside a temple near gali number 7, a group of young men were heard talking about the recent riots. "Hum kisi ko kuch nahi keh raha hai. Jisko aana hai aaye, jis-



Work to restore electric supply in progress at Shiv Vihar.
•SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ko nahi aana hai, na aaye. Lekin woh kuch kahenge toh fir pitenge [We are not saying anything to anyone. Whoever wants to come can come. Who doesn't want to come, should not come. But if they speak up, we will thrash them again]," said a man who appeared to be in his early 20s and said he lived inside the temple. "Unhe bhi to pa-laage ke Hindu bhi kuch hain [They should realise that the Hindus are powerful]," said another.

Sanjeeda, another resident of the area, said she had fled on February 25. Though the family had returned to the house, the members were not sure if they should stay there at night. "We came here at 7 a.m. and found that the mob which entered the house did not set it on fire, but stole the TV set, gold jewellery and other valuables. They even took the vegetables that we had stocked in the house before the riots," she said.

Ms. Sanjeeda said that her two brothers-in-law had come to check on their house a few days ago but one of them was caught by a mob and beaten up. "Initially, right after the riots, it was risky. But now the situation has improved. Our immediate neighbours are Hindus and they saved my brother-in-law from the mob," she said, adding that she could gather the courage to return because a lot of others were also coming back. "It rained last night. For how long could we have stayed in camps or at relatives' houses?"

Jamaluddin Mansuri was

spotted outside his burnt and looted residence in gali number 20 where BSES officials were working to restore electricity. Mr. Mansuri recalled how he and his three sons were attacked by a mob on February 27 when they had come to check on the house. "A group of 20-25 people caught hold of us and started thrashing us. They did not want us to return. They pushed a rod inside my son's foot. Eventually, a police van arrived and they fled," said Mr. Mansuri who also had a bandage on his left foot.

Yasmeen (50) has been staying at her house only during the day for the last three days. She does not feel safe at night and therefore leaves for her brother's house. "We built this three-storey house a year-and-a-half ago. I had taken loans from my siblings and I am still in debt," she said, standing outside the house which was reduced to ashes.

Other locals, including Raziya and Habib-Ur-Rehman, who live in rented accommodations and had come to check on their houses, said they would eventually return but were scared at the moment.

CM flags off 100 low-floor CNG buses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal flagged off 100 low-floor CNG buses from Rajghat Depot here on Friday.

The buses are equipped with ultra-modern facilities and state-of-the-art features, like fire detection systems, remote monitoring systems, GPS trackers, panic buttons, CCTV cameras, hydraulic lifts, wheelchair ramps for the convenience of the differently abled, the Delhi government said in a statement. These 37 seater buses have 14 panic buttons installed, it added.

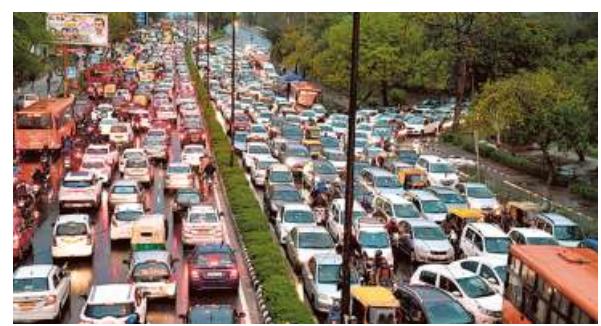
"I want to congratulate the people of Delhi. Hundreds of new buses were flagged-off in the last few months and I have been told that buses have been deployed on the roads of Delhi after a span of 10 years," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"The Delhi government is going to deploy 9,000 buses on the roads of the city within next year. We will turn the Transport sector in Delhi into a model and modern sector," the Chief Minister said.

The tender for electronic buses, he said, had also been passed and new electronic buses would be procured by the end of March.

Heavy rain lashes city, leads to traffic snarls

Showers are likely to abate by today



A massive traffic jam in New Delhi on Friday. •SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Heavy rain lashed the Capital on Friday with the Met department recording 20.4 mm of rainfall overnight and 16.8 mm during the day.

The rain was accompanied by strong winds and hailstorms in several parts of the city. It led to waterlog-

ging and traffic snarls in several areas.

The city recorded a minimum temperature of 14 degrees Celsius and the maximum settled at 22.4 degrees, which was six degrees below normal for this time of the season. The rain is likely to abate by Saturday.

Gurugram school murder: juvenile's bail plea rejected

He sought 45-day bail to take exams

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Friday turned down the interim bail plea for the juvenile delinquent accused in the case of murder of a student of a private school here. The juvenile, in an application through his father, had sought interim bail for 45 days to take Class XII exams through National Institute of Open Schooling.

Saying that the "present application was partly allowed", Judge Arvind Singh Sangwan ordered the Director (Evaluation), National Institute of Open Schooling, New Delhi, to change the centre of examination of the petitioner forthwith. He also ordered necessary arrangement to allow the petitioner to reach the exam centre one hour prior to the exam

and take him back to the observation home.

The juvenile had filed the application under Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code, read with Section 12 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, praying for grant of interim bail from March 10 to April 23 for taking practical and theory exams.

The petitioner had taken the plea that the decision with regard to a child/juvenile should be taken in their best interest and that his conduct during apprehension was satisfactory.

The juvenile was lodged at a shelter home in Faridabad after he was apprehended in 2017, but was later shifted to a special home in Karnal.

People with HIV plan to meet Prime Minister

They seek inclusion in Ayushman Bharat

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

People living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) from Global Alliance for Human Rights (GAHR), a non-profit organisation, on Friday said that they were planning to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to seek his help in protecting the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, improve their access to quality treatment, care and support services and demand their inclusion

Quoting the annual report data of National AIDS Control Organisation, Mr. Dubey said that there are approximately 68,000 AIDS-related deaths per year in India and emphasised on the necessity to pay immediate attention to the problem.

Rani, a transgender said, "If my community comes to know that I am HIV-positive they will not support me. Survival will be difficult. Thus we need to be included in the Ayushman Bharat Yojana."

Anil Gopalan, executive director of Naz Foundation, said that over 500 HIV-positive people were scheduled to travel to Delhi to meet the PM on International Women's Day on March 8 for submission of their plea, but the number has reduced to 50 owing to the fear of spread of COVID-19.

"Many are dying due to unaffordable treatment, especially during shortage of drugs. Often, doctors refuse to treat patients and do not conduct surgeries due to the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS or because PLHIVs cannot afford to pay," said Brijesh Dubey, chairman of GAHR.

GURU JAMBHESWAR UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, HISAR

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Sealed tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers and suppliers for the supply of Flash Chromatography System required in Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Central Instrumentation Laboratory. The tender document having detailed specification may be obtained either from the University website www.gjust.ac.in for which a demand draft of Rs. 300/- per tender document drawn in favour of the Registrar, GJUS&T and payable at Hisar is to be submitted with the technical bid itself. Technical and Financial bids should be submitted separately with full name of the equipment on the envelope. The tender complete in all respect must reach Director, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Central Instrumentation Laboratory (CIL), GJUS&T, Hisar on or before 17.03.2020 at 01:00 P.M. The tenders will be opened on 17.03.2020 at 4.00 P.M. The bidders/representative may remain present at the time of opening of tenders at their own cost.
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TENDER NOTICE

The last date for invited the tender to purchase the Ayurvedic and modern books for the development of library of Shri Krishna Govt. Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Kurukshetra under NAM scheme has been extended up to 16.03.2020. The DNT is available of the website of www.skau.in. The tender application will be reached to undersign office upto 16.03.2020 (10.00 AM). The tender will be opened on same date at 2.00 PM by the committee constituted by this office.

Note: The vendors who have already applied the tender, they can revised their Tender documents in this period. If they are unable to revise, then the present tender documents will be considered by the committee.

Contact No. 01744-220168

Principal
Shri Krishna Govt. Ayurvedic College Kurukshetra

DoE to schools: take steps to stop spread of COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Education (DoE) has directed schools to take a host of preventive measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 that included suspension of morning assembly, putting on display a list of do's and don'ts on the notice boards and other prominent places and appointing nodal officers at the school level for implementing the government's decision.

The DoE has also advised schools to withhold biometric attendance for staff till further orders.

TENDER NOTICE

SR. NO.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK/NOTICE/TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) in Rupees	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER
1	PWD B&R ROHTAK	CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY CENTRE (G+2 STOREY) IN PT. B.D SHARMA UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES, ROHTAK.	05.03.2020 25.03.2020	338.19 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01262-282871 pwd-eepd4-rohtak@hry.nic.in
2	PWD B&R HISAR	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT. VETERINARY DISPENSARY AT VILLAGE GHORAWANI IN DISTT. SIRSA (PDG. E.I INTERNAL ONLY) + 3 OTHER WORKS	06.03.2020 13.03.2020	7.22 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01662-225651 pwd-eepd-hisar@hry.nic.in
3	PWD B&R, AMBALA	SPECIAL REPAIR FOR RAJIV GANDHI GOVT. COLLEGE AT SAHA IN AMBALA DISTRICT	03.03.2020 17.03.2020	17.26 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0171-2631396 Pwd-eepd-ambal@hry.nic.in
4	PWD B&R, HANSI	SPECIAL REPAIR OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE AT THURANA IN HISAR DISTT	19.02.2020 17.03.2020	6.43 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01663-252888 pwd-eepd-hansi@hry.nic.in
5	PWD B&R FATEHABAD	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT. VETERINARY HOSPITAL AT SANJIANA IN FATEHABAD DISTT. (C.M ANNOUNCEMENT CODE NO. 2019 DATED 24.10.2017).	05.03.2020 19.03.2020	27.87 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	90531-14455,01667-220120 pwd-eepd-fatehabad@hry.nic.i
6	PWD B&R SONIPAT	PDG. AND LAYING KOTA STONE FLOORING AT THE EXISTING BOXING RING IN MNSS RAI IN SONIPAT DISTT RE-INVITE + 3 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 20.03.2020	211.36 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0130-2200575 pwd-eepd2-sonepat@hry.nic.in
7	PWD B&R FATEHABAD	PROVIDING ROAD SAFETY ITEMS ON BUDHLADA RATA FATEHABAD BHATTU BIHORA ROAD (SH-21) KM 32 TO 97.51 (ROAD ID 5467, 5546 & 5334) IN FATEHABAD DISTT. + 1 OTHER WORK	04.03.2020 18.03.2020	125.28 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	90531-14455,01667-220120 pwd-eepd-fatehabad@hry.nic.in
8	PWD B&R ROHTAK	UPGRADATION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE INTO HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTRE AT VILLAGE PAKASHMA IN ROHTAK DISTT. + 6 OTHER WORKS	04.03.2020 25.03.2020	53.95 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01262-251879 pwd-eepd2-rohtak@hry.nic.in
9	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING JHAJJAR	BERI TOWN – LAYING OF 200, 250, 400 & 500 MM DIA SEWER LINES 8650 MTR, CONSTRUCTION OF BRICK MASONRY MANHOLES AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO*	05.03.20			

Timings

DELHI

SATURDAY, MAR. 07

RISE 06:40 SET 18:25

RISE 15:49 SET 04:54

SUNDAY, MAR. 08

RISE 06:39 SET 18:26

RISE 16:58 SET 05:44

MONDAY, MAR. 09

RISE 06:38 SET 18:26

RISE 18:07 SET 06:29

Delhi Weather max min

Delhi City 22 14

Safdarjang 22 14

Palam 22 14

Delhi Pali Today

25°C A spell of rain is likely,

while comfortable day is likely

with few clouds. The night will

be cool.

Delhi Pali Tomorrow

27°C Mist/haze is likely during

morning. Comfortable and

sunny day with cool winds is

likely.

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IN BRIEF

Six dead as car

plunges into gorge

NEW TEHRI (UTTARAKHAND)

Six people, including three

women, were killed on Friday

after their car plunged into a

gorge in Tehri Garhwal

district, police said. PTI

CBI trying to subvert course of justice: CM

Review plea a dilatory tactic in Bargari sacrilege case'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Taking exception to the Central Bureau of Investigation's review petition on the Bargari sacrilege case of 2015, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday charged the central agency of trying to subvert the course of justice at the behest of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD).

The Chief Minister described the move as a delaying tactic, aimed at scuttling the probe into the Bargari case, which the State government had decided to hand over to the Special Investigative Team (SIT) of Punjab Police through a resolution in the Vidhan Sabha in August 2018.

Capt. Amarinder said the CBI has intimated the Special Judicial Magistrate at SAS Nagar (Mohali) of its intent to file a review petition in the Supreme Court for review of



CM Amarinder Singh

its order dated February 20, by which the apex court had dismissed the central agency's Special Leave Petitions on the ground of delay, while leaving open the question of law.

'Akalis involved'

"Not only is the CBI's decision to move a review petition a blatant attempt to delay the investigation further, it is a clear endorsement of the Akali involvement in the incident, which had shaken Punjab back in 2015," the

Chief Minister said. "With this action, the Akalis had clearly proved their involvement in the entire ugly affair," he added.

Pointing out that the then SAD-BJP government had entrusted the probe into three cases filed in the matter to the CBI in November 2015, Capt. Amarinder pointed out that the agency had failed to make any headway in its investigation all these years - a fact duly noted and recorded by the court during hearings in the matter.

"The entire drama of filing closure report, refusing to give copy of the same to the State government, then taking a U-turn on it after nearly two months, was enacted by the CBI on the directions of the Akalis, who did not want the truth in the matter to come out," said the Chief Minister.

Unprecedented rain: farmers fear damage to wheat crop

Another bout of western disturbance approaching on March 11, says Chandigarh Met office

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Widespread rain accompanied by strong winds during the past 24 hours in the key wheat growing States of Punjab and Haryana have left farmers and experts worried as they fear the inclement weather may damage the standing crop.

"Parts of Punjab and Haryana have experienced rain and gusty winds. While the current spell of western disturbance is expected to be over tonight, there's another western disturbance approaching on March 11 and 12. It would though may not be as strong as the current one," Suninder Pal, Director at the India Meteorological Department, Chandigarh, told *The Hindu*.

Wheat, the main rabi (winter) crop, which is sown between late October and December is now nearing



Flattened wheat crop near Amritsar on Friday. PTI

the ripening stage and harvesting of early sown varieties usually commence by end of March.

'Sunlight needed'

P.S. Rangi, an agriculture expert, said the wheat crop now needs bright sunshine as the crop is all set to be harvested in the next few

days. "Rain is fine, but with the winds accompanying it is not a good sign for the crop at this stage. Wherever the crop flattens it will be difficult to recover it," said Mr. Rangi.

Punjab is expecting a bumper wheat production that could cross 182 lakh tonnes this year.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Rain and hailstorm in western Uttar Pradesh have come as a dampener for farmers in the festive season.

Expecting a bumper crop of wheat, the region is seeing widespread damage to not only the wheat crop but also potato and rapeseed. High-speed winds have flattened the wheat crop in many areas.

Yogendra Singh, a farmer in the Shikarpur area of Bulandshahr, said 25-30% of his wheat crop was affected by the unseasonal rain. "It would affect both the quality and quantity of the crop. And, it seems, it is not yet as high-speed winds and rain continue to remain a threat."

Balbir Singh, a potato

farmer in the Igla area of Aligarh, also put his loss at around 25-30%. "It is a double blow to farmers. We could take the last week's rain in our stride, but this one, particularly the hail, was not expected," said Mr. Singh.

In places, where rain and hailstorm were accompanied with high-speed wind, the loss of crop could be up to 50%, said Parvez Rizvi, professor of Agriculture at Aligarh Muslim University.

"Wheat and mustard which are almost ready are the worst affected. The high amount of precipitation will lead to water stagnation which will lead to fungal infections. Water stagnation will also affect the potato crop that is lying in the field," said Prof. Rizvi.

Gorakhpur case: ex-principal reinstated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GORAKHPUR (U.P.)

Over two years after suspension from the BRD Medical College here following the death of children over alleged shortage of oxygen cylinders, the then principal and a professor joined duty

even as a department inquiry is pending against them.

Dr. Rajiv Mishra and Dr. Satish Kumar returned to work on Thursday after a government order revoked their suspension, the current college Principal Ganesh Kumar said on Friday.

Though they have joined the college, a departmental inquiry against them will continue, the principal said.

Govt. of Himachal Pradesh
Office of Pr. Resident Commissioner 27, Sikandra Road, New Delhi-110001
SHORT NOTICE FOR INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
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Sealed Tenders are invited for renting out of Convention Hall and Art Galleries- I & II in the premises of the Himachal Bhawan, 27 Sikandra Road, New Delhi-110001 on Annual Rent Basis for a period of 2 years (from the date of allotment).
The Tenders is required to be submitted through electronic tendering system at online tendering website www.hptenders.gov.in. The details and Terms and Conditions of the tender will also be available on the website www.hptdci.in. The bid should be submitted in online mode on or before 26.03.2020 till 11:00 AM
Contacts: 011-23716574, 011-23711964, 011-23716124-25-26,
Dy. Resident Commissioner,
Govt. of HP, Himachal Bhawan
27, Sikandra Road, New Delhi-110001.

Amendment Tender Notice No. 05 / 2019-20

The Tenders are invites online by Executive Engineer Panchayat (R&B) Division, Chhotaudepur. Pin code No. 391165 Phone No. (2669-23053) for the C.D.P-5, MMGSY, SR, SUVIDHAPATH (Total-56 Works) Which Estimated cost ranging from Rs. 32.00 Laces to Rs. 750.00 Laces by E-Tendering from the eligible and Approved Registered Contractor by Government of Gujarat. For Further particulars contact of above office. The website for tender document is <https://procure.gov.com> and seen also Mahiti Department website:- www.state tenders.com

: TIME SCHEDELE OF E-TENDERING :

Online down load Tender last date	Sr. No. 2 to 6 DL 11/03/2020 18:00 Hrs.
Submission of Tender Fee, EMD & other documents	Demand Draft for tender fee & E.M.D. & other documents shall be submitted in electronic format only through online & All the necessary documents shall be send to this office by R.P.A.D. from 7 days after opening
Online Opening Tender	Sr. No. 2 to 6 DL 12/03/2020 12:00 Hrs.
Place of Opening Tender	S.E. Pachayat (R&B) Circle Office at Vadodara Ph. No. 0265-2421092
Agency should write own Name, Address and name of work compulsary, when they submit physical document by post.	Executive Engineer Panchayat (R&B) Division Chhotaudepur (INF-VAD-1506-2019-20) (corri-1350)

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SEARCH FOR MISSING



Sweta

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this girl please inform undersigned.

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Ph. 011-24368638, 24368641

Fax : 011-24368639

SHO

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DP/1383/SHD/20

NOTICE FOR INVITING ART OBJECTS

Art objects namely Indian Miniature Paintings and Manuscripts are invited for selection by the Art Acquisition Committee for the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh on Saturday, the 21st of March, 2020. Persons desirous of offering such objects should bring them at the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Sector 10-C, Chandigarh on 21.03.2020 at 09:00 a.m. The objects should be accompanied with lists (in triplicate) duly signed giving brief description, name of exhibitor & contact numbers. The art objects which have been considered previously and rejected by the Committee should not be brought. The persons offering antiquities should indicate in the application that these have been registered under the Antiquities and Treasure Act, 1972. In the case of antiquities the Art Acquisition Committee may assess the prices and make suitable offers. The art objects which are not selected for purchase by the Committee will be returned to the parties concerned at their own cost and risk.

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Packed with new schemes

In maiden budget, MVA government unveils steps to boost employment, promote sports



BUDGET 2020-21

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in its maiden budget on Friday announced a new ₹450-crore Chief Minister's Water Conservation Scheme to replace the previous chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's pet project, Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyan.

The new scheme aims to rejuvenate 8,000 water conservation projects, create decentralised water reservoirs, increase ground water level and protect irrigation capacity.

While presenting the State budget for 2020-21, Finance Minister Ajit Pawar announced several new schemes to boost infrastructure, employment, transport and rural development. Some of the schemes were those promised in the MVA's common minimum programme. Mr. Pawar said the government has decided to establish a "chair" at London School of Economics to honour Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who studied at the institution from 1916 to 1922.

To resolve the problem of unemployment over the next five years, the budget has unveiled the ₹6,000-crore Maharashtra Apprenticeship Scheme "to provide employment and self-employment opportunities

and experience to all youths who have passed at least Class X."

The scheme, which will begin on August 15, encourages establishments to hire apprentices and aims to train 10 lakh educated, unemployed youth in the 21 to 28 age-group to work in new sectors. The government will pay an amount equivalent to 75% of the monthly stipend or ₹5,000, whichever is less, to the private establishment per month for a candidate. For government establishments, 100% stipend will be covered. The Chief Minister's Employment Generation Programme, which aims to promote employment and self-employment among the youth, was also announced in the budget. Under this ₹10-crore scheme, grants between 15% and 35% will be given to entrepreneurs for implementing self-employment projects. The government expects one lakh industries to be established over five years and generate up to two lakh jobs every year.

₹120-crore scholarship scheme The government also aims to implement a ₹120-crore scholarship scheme for the foreign education of students from the poorer sections of minority communities. To promote sports, the budget has introduced three new proposals. The grant to build sports complexes has been hiked from ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore at the taluka level, from ₹8 crore to ₹25 crore at the district level and from ₹24 crore to ₹50 crore at the divisional level. An international sports university will be set up at Balewadi and an Olympic Bhawan in Pune. The government will also organise a mini Olympic competition to promote sports, including for the disabled.

Debt continues to rise

State bearing liability of infrastructure projects

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

As per the 2020-21 budget estimates, the State is reeling under debt of ₹5,20,717 crore, rising from ₹4,64,020 crore the previous fiscal. The debt percentage to the Gross State Domestic Product stands at 16.2% compared to 16.1% the previous fiscal.

Finance Minister Ajit Pawar said, "During the last five years, the State has raised loans of ₹2,82,448 crore. The amount of guarantees given by the government was ₹7,709 crore at the end of 2014. It has now increased to ₹46,891 crore."

Meanwhile, infrastructure projects cost the government ₹2,78,271 crore. "The State government has to bear direct and indirect liability of these projects," he said. While the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party has claimed that the debt is within the limits prescribed by the 14th Finance Commission, leaders of the ruling coalition have said liabilities of infrastructure projects are also part of the total debt.

Mr. Pawar also pointed out the Centre's delay in releasing the State's

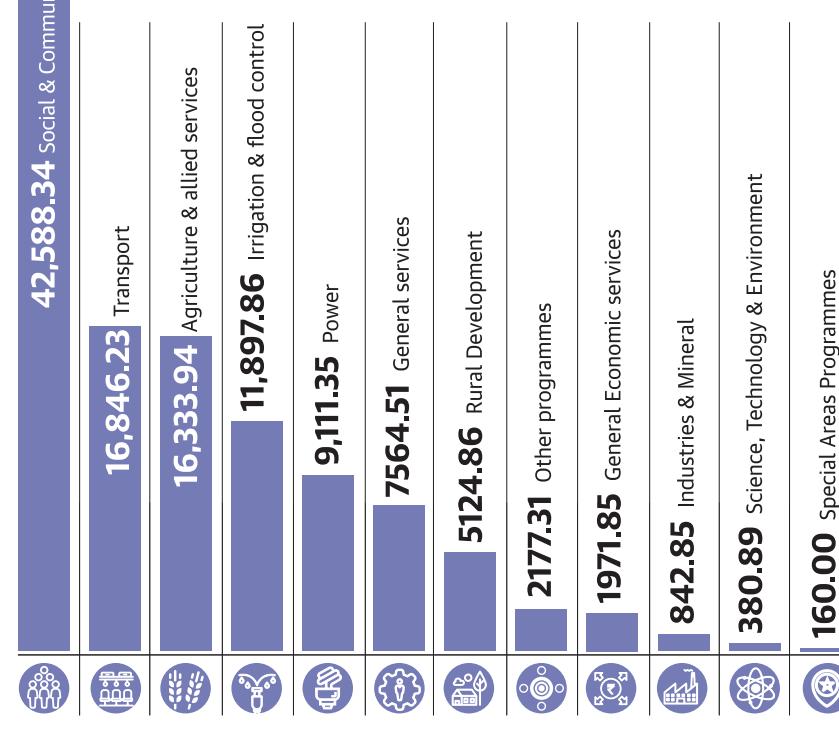
share of funds. He said, "The share in the Central taxes that Maharashtra is expected to get in accordance with the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission has come down from ₹44,672 crore to ₹36,220 crore in the revised estimates of 2019-20. There is also a delay in getting the Goods and Services Tax compensation from the Centre. As a result, funding the expenditure on development works is becoming difficult."

Finance Minister Ajit Pawar said,

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2020-21

(₹ in crore)

1,15,000 Total Annual Scheme (proposed fund)



HIGHLIGHTS

- One-time settlement scheme for farmers whose debt is more than ₹2 lakh
- MLA development fund increased from ₹2 crore to ₹3 crore
- ₹5 crore set aside to set up Transgender Rights Protection and Welfare Board
- All-women police station and office of State Women's Commission to be set up in every district
- Electricity duty on industrial use reduced from 9.3% to 7.5% of consumption charges
- Value-added tax on petrol and diesel increased by ₹1 per litre

For first time, a gender and child budget

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

With the Opposition trying to corner the Maha Vikas Aghadi government over rising crimes against women, Finance Minister Ajit Pawar introduced a gender and child budget for the first time on Friday.

While the Public Health and Medical Education Departments have been allotted ₹2,456 crore and ₹950 crore respectively, ₹2,110 crore has been proposed for the Women and Child Development Department. The budget has set aside ₹5 crore to set up a Transgender Rights Protection and Welfare Board to bring the community into the mainstream. A sum of ₹1,400 crore has been allocated to focus on health, education and employment generation, achieve the sustainable goals set by the United Nations and improve the State's human development index.

There is a shortfall of 11 district hospitals, 21 women's hospitals, 21 sub-district hospitals, 603 primary healthcare centres and 6,105 sub-centres. The government has decided to take up externally-aided projects worth ₹5,000 crore for primary health services and ₹2,500 crore for medical education. It will be tying up with a multi-national financial institution for a loan. The State has set aside ₹25 crore for purchasing 500 new ambulances and replace old ones. The government aims to set up 75 new dialysis centres so no patient has to travel over 50 km to seek treatment.

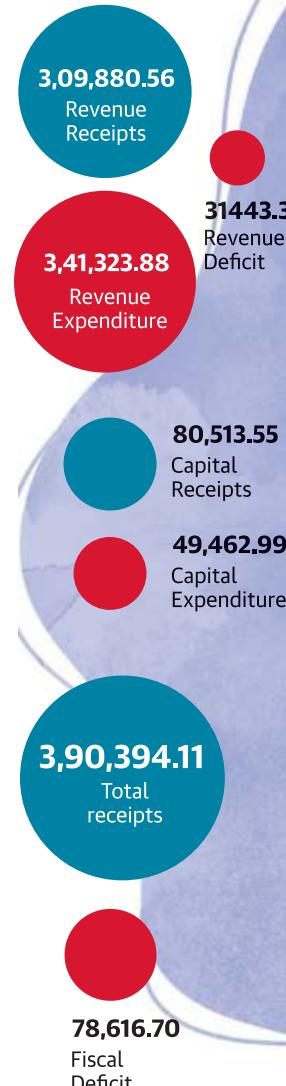
The budget also set aside ₹515 crore for the Mahatma Phule Jan Arogya Yojana, which covers 1,000 hospitals and offers 996 types of treatment. In a first, the government will be coming out with a palliative care policy by roping in NGOs and social service organisations. A new medical college will be started at Nandurbar this year and government medical colleges will be opened in Satara, Alibaug and Amravati next year.

A total of ₹64 crore has been set aside to make sanitary napkins available at zilla parishad schools and install incinerators.



AT A GLANCE

2019-20 (Revised Estimates)



2020-21 (Budget Estimates)



Major push for infrastructure

Govt. sets its agenda by making no mention of bullet train, hyperloop projects

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government spelt out its priorities with regard to the State's infrastructure projects by making no mention of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project and the much-hyped Mumbai-Pune hyperloop project in its maiden budget on Friday.

Finance Minister Ajit Pawar said an economic corridor of international standards would be developed in Satara district under the Bengaluru-Mumbai Economic Corridor project on the lines of the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor. "Along with Satara, the adjoining Sangli and Solapur districts will benefit from the economic corridor," he said, adding that the project's estimated cost is ₹4,000 crore.

Mr. Pawar also allocated ₹3,500 crore to complete the Konkan Marine Highway in three years. The highway, whose Revas-Reddy stretch is under construction, will be concreted and bridges



Booster shot: The budget has made available ₹1,657 crore to execute Metro projects in the State in 2020-21. ■ FILE PHOTO

built over creeks at Bankot, Kelshi, Dabol and Jaigad. He said, "Funds will be made available to complete the work through the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) in a time-bound manner."

Mr. Pawar announced the construction of a 170-km-long ring road to divert traffic to Pune from Nashik, Aurangabad, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Mumbai. Around ₹15,000 crore is likely to be spent on the project, includ-

ing land acquisition. MSRDC will start work on the project this year and complete it in four years. The government has earmarked ₹1,000 crore to implement a urban road scheme for upgrading, widening and beautifying main market streets in all cities under the jurisdiction of municipal corporations and panchayats.

Mr. Pawar said ₹6,657 crore will be made available for Metro projects for 2020-21. "In addition to the Maan-

ingewadi-Shivajinagar route under Pune Metro, two new lines – Shivajinagar-Shevalewadi and Maan-Pirangut – will also be started," Mr. Pawar said.

The new Pune Metro line from Vanaz to Ramwadi will be expanded from Vanaz to Chandani Chowk and Ramwadi to Wagholi.

The length of the Metro line from Pimpri-Chinchwad to Swargate will be extended from Swargate to Katraj and from Pimpri-Chinchwad to Nigdi. "More funds will be provided this year than the amount earmarked in the last five years for Pune Metro," Mr. Pawar said.

A sum of ₹1,501 crore has been proposed for a rural road development scheme, under which 40,000 km of roads will be constructed by 2025. Mr. Pawar said "in-principle" approval has been given for spending ₹86 crore to start passenger transport from Mira Bhayander to Dombivli on Vasai-Thane-Kalyan route under the national waterways scheme.

Better deal than previous budgets, say farmers' leaders

Effort made to be agrarian-centric, bring relief to rural areas'

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Farmers' leaders have largely lauded the budget, stating that it was "more constructive" and offered a better deal for farmers as opposed to the budgets of the erstwhile Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government.

Swabhimani Paksha chief Raju Shetti and Dr. Ajit Nawale, State general secretary of the CPI (M)-affiliated All India Kisan Sabha, have said the budget has made efforts to be agrarian-centric and bring some measure of relief to the rural hinterland. Mr. Shetti said, "This budget appears to have the farmer in its vision and is not a one-sided, corporate one as presented earlier. It certainly is better than the Devendra Fadnavis-led BJP government with Ajit Pawar announcing relief to



Raju Shetti

farmers with loans of over ₹2 lakh, while providing an incentive of ₹50,000 for those who took crop loans in 2018-19 and had repaid their dues."

However, Mr. Shetti said the State government ought to have increased the incentive amount for farmers repaying dues regularly from ₹25,000 to ₹75,000 instead of the ₹50,000 announced. He said the other notable aspect of the budget was the government's efforts

to resuscitate the powerloom industry, which has significant clusters in Malgaon, Solapur, Bhiwandi and Ichalkaranji.

Dr. Nawale welcomed Mr. Pawar's announcements of a subsidy scheme of 80% to small and marginal farmers and 75% to multiple land holders for extending the drip irrigation scheme for crops to cover the whole State instead of a few talukas. He said, "While the budget is somewhat of a mixed bag, there are several positive aspects and the government has at least made efforts to give justice to farmers, notably in relief to those having a loan of more than ₹2 lakh. Particularly laudable is Mr. Pawar's announcement of ₹10,035 crore for the Water Resources Department to increase the ground water level in the State."



C Farmers from all the regions will get one lakh solar pumps every year. Healthcare and education provisions cover entire Maharashtra. MLA funds are for representatives from all the regions. There is no discrimination. We thought of everyone. The opposition has no ground to criticise us hence they are trying to mislead people. There is no fault in our budget

SHARAD PAWAR
NCP chief



C Increase in VAT on fuel would harm the budget of common public. The government could not fulfill its promise of waiving off all the loans of farmers. Neither farmers nor women have got anything from this budget

CHANDRAKANT PATIL
BJP State president

C The budget does justice to farmers, labourers, women, youth, students, Dalits, tribals and minorities. It will help restore Maharashtra's glory in terms of development

C The budget does justice to farmers, labourers, women, youth, students, Dalits, tribals and minorities. It will help restore Maharashtra's glory in terms of development

BALASAHEB THORAT
Revenue Minister and Maharashtra Congress president

IN BRIEF

**Cancel Sanchita's appointment, says TDP**

VIZIANAGARAM
TDP leaders on Friday protested against the removal of P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju as chairman of the MANSAS Trust and appointment of Sanchita Gajapathi Raju, daughter of former MP Ananda Gajapathi Raju, in his place. Demanding that the appointment be cancelled, they accused the government of poking its nose into the trust's issues without regard to its bylaws.

Man drowns 3 daughters in Telangana village tank

KAMAREDDY
A man allegedly killed his three daughters by pushing them into an irrigation tank at Tadkol village in Telangana's Kamareddy district on Friday. The accused, Mohammed Fayaz, used to often quarrel with his wife for money to buy liquor, the police said. Convincing his four children that he was taking them for a function, Fayaz took them to a tank. Suspecting his father's behaviour, the son left the spot. Fayaz then allegedly drowned his daughters Afia, 10, Maheen, 9, and Joya, 7.

Release Revanth Reddy immediately, says Azad

HYDERABAD
The Congress mounted an attack on the Telangana government for arresting its Member of Parliament A. Revanth Reddy for "exposing the illegal constructions" of the members of the ruling party in violation of GO 111. Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said instead of taking action against the people involved in illegal constructions, it was deplorable that a MP was arrested. Mr. Azad deposed the high-handedness on part of the government and demanded Mr. Reddy's immediate release.

SC stays order on Kerala poll rolls

High Court wanted State election panel to use list that was prepared in 2019

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed a Kerala High Court order directing the State Election Commission (SEC) to conduct the local body elections on the basis of the electoral roll it had prepared for the Lok Sabha election of 2019.

A three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, froze the Kerala High Court order for a fortnight.

The High Court had also directed the SEC to update the list, incorporating names of qualified voters up to February 7, 2020, for the civic body elections based on the voters' list it had prepared for the 2015 civic body polls.

'Will hasten poll process'
The stay order is expected to clear the roadblocks for conducting the local body elections.

Local Self-Government Department sources told *The Hindu* that the State Delimitation Commission



The stay order is expected to clear the roadblocks for conducting local body polls.

would meet on March 11 and set the ball rolling.

Following the top court's order, the SEC may have to grant at least one more week for enrolment and complete the hearing of those who applied for the inclusion of their names on the electoral roll. Complaints of the SEC denying an opportunity to voters to enrol their names may not hold water since enrolment opportunity would be provided after completing the delimitation of wards and also before going to the polls.

Since the rolls prepared by the SEC in 2015 have ward specific details, using it would expedite the process of holding the elections.

The SEC's proposal to conduct the elections on a modest budget has come in for much praise as the State is facing a serious resource crunch. The government has decided to limit the expens-

es to the bare minimum and scale down the delimitation process.

Cutting costs

The SEC's proposal to avoid an additional expenditure of ₹10 crore by using the 2015 poll rolls is seen as a sagacious move to save expenditure and time.

While the State government has reiterated that it is amenable to any decision of the SEC, the United Democratic Front's bid to draw the election process into litigation has come in for criticism. This has been construed by many as an attempt to delay the polls.

But the latest decision of the Supreme Court would expedite the preparation of poll rolls and the delimitation of wards, leading to the elections to be conducted as scheduled, sources said.

(With inputs from Thiruvananthapuram)

HC upholds order on winding up of UBHL

'Vijay Mallya's settlement offer can't be said to have been made in good faith'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

Liquor baron Vijay Mallya's offer for settlement of debts of Kingfisher Airlines Ltd. (KFL) suffered a blow as the High Court of Karnataka on Friday dismissed an appeal by United Breweries (Holdings) Ltd. (UBHL) – the 102-year-old parent company of the UB Group – against the order for its winding up for failure to pay liabilities to creditors, including banks, as per the corporate guarantees extended to the KFL.

The court said the plea "cannot be said to be bona-fide and made in good faith".

A Division Bench, comprising Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Ravi V. Hosmani,

delivered the verdict while upholding the winding up order passed by a single judge on February 7, 2017.

"There is no serious challenge on behalf of the appellant [UBHL] to the single judge's order and only submission on merit with regard to the single judge's order that has been urged is that the assets of the company [UBHL] are more than the debts," the Bench said.

On the offer of settlement made by the UBHL by claiming that the market value of the company's assets is more than the debts, the Bench said many of the assets proposed by the UBHL in the settlement offer were attached either by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 or by the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) under the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993.

Citing Supreme Court judgments, the Bench said the High Court, under Section 483 of the Companies Act, 1956, cannot prohibit the statutory authorities, the ED and the DRT, from discharging their statutory functions. Therefore, the Bench said, the offer for settlement made on behalf of the UBHL cannot be accepted as the High Court cannot issue direction for sale of the assets attached by the ED or the DRT.

On a plea filed by Mr. Mallya offering settlement before the Division Bench in the course of hearing of the appeal, the Bench said he was not a party in the proceedings before the single judge.

In the wake of more COVID-19 cases reported from various parts of the country, Mata Amritanandamayi has stopped her daily darshan till further notice following instructions from the Health Department.

"We are sorry to inform you that due to the extremely heightened restrictions specified to the Mata Amritanandamayi Math by the Health Department, the ashram cannot allow anyone to enter Amritapuri Ashram. This includes Indian nationals as well as foreign passport-holders (including OCI-holders)," said a notice issued by the math.

"Encourage our people to no shake hands at the sign of peace," he wrote.



ment Directorate (ED) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 or by the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) under the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993.

Citing Supreme Court

HC reserves orders on pleas against Secretariat demolition

Decision taken without full information, says petitioner

**MARRI RAMU
HYDERABAD**

The Telangana High Court reserved orders on a batch of PIL petitions challenging the government's decision to demolish the Secretariat building, with the 'final hearing' held consecutively for the past four days coming to an end on Friday.

Presenting her contentions, counsel for one of the petitioners, B. Rachna Reddy, said the Telangana Cabinet did not have complete information on the condition of the Secretariat building when it decided on June 16, 2019 to demolish it. It was only after the decision was questioned that the Cabinet constituted a technical committee of four engineers-in-chief and cited reasons for arriving at the decision.



Telangana High Court in Hyderabad. ■ FILE PHOTO

the government has taken a decision without considering matters that lawfully must be considered.

Courts can also review if the government takes a decision after considering matters that are not relevant and if the decision was so unreasonable that no reasonable person would make it. The Cabinet decided to demolish the Secretariat building without considering issues like soundness and durability of the buildings. The Cabinet eventually backed its decision citing the technical committee's report which took into account irrelevant factors like parking space and wiring issues, she said. "Because of these two factors, naturally the decision becomes unreasonable and liable to be rejected by the court," the lawyer argued.

"This attracts the Wednesbury principle of unreasonableness. The Cabinet taking an important decision like demolition of Secretariat building without precise information or data is unreasonable, and the court can intervene," Ms. Rachna Reddy said. She told the Bench that the Wednesbury principle says that courts can intervene when

Pilgrims' progress



People on their way to Katchathee in Rameswaram for the two-day annual St. Antony's Church festival. ■ L. BALACHANDAR

'Kerala govt. eavesdropping on journalists'

It's targeting whistle-blowers who flagged graft in Police Department: Congress

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

The Opposition has accused the Kerala government of eavesdropping on the phones of mediapersons and leaders of the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) to get information on whistle-blowers who had flagged corruption in the Police Department.

The government on Wednesday constituted a three-member team of Home Department officials to investigate the "leakage of information and documents related to a report submitted by the Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) of India". Challenging the government to arrest him, the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly and Congress leader, Ramesh Chennithala,



on Friday released two Home Department documents which, he said, pointed to the "entrenched corruption in the police". The papers pertained to irregularities in the purchase of 145 patrol vehicles and a large number of multimedia projectors using Central funds for police modernisation. He said State police chief

Locnath Behera had sanctioned the pricey acquisitions by overlooking the store purchase manual rules and Central Vigilance Commission norms. The government glossed over the lapses by regularising the deal. It had let off Mr. Behera with the usual warning to follow norms in the future. Mr. Chennithala said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan appeared obliged to protect Mr. Behera.

'Quixotic project'
Mr. Chennithala said the CAG's report and processes that preceded it were open and transparent. The government had embarked upon a quixotic project by ordering an inquiry into "CAG leaks". By ordering the inquiry, Mr. Vijayan had

proven that his mindset was no different from that of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He termed the probe fascist and retributive. Instead, the government should probe CPI(M) workers in Kochi for siphoning off funds meant for flood relief.

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Muppally Ramachandran said the government was fearful of more instances of police corruption tumbling out and hence had ordered the probe to intimidate journalists and civic-minded persons. On March 10, Congress workers will lay siege to the Vizhinjam police station as part of a State-wide campaign to highlight the police corruption spotlighted by the CAG, the party said.

Telangana to focus on increasing revenue

Economic challenges faced by country impacted State too, says Governor

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD**

The Telangana government has decided to search for new avenues to better the revenue sources in the light of the severe economic challenges witnessed during the past several months.

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan said the economic challenges faced by the country did have an impact on the State, but it was able to withstand the situation due to strong administrative policies and fiscal discipline. "The blink in the blind is that while other States are showing negative economic growth, Telangana is able to stick its neck out," the Governor said.

The government had decided to pursue fiscal discipline due to the prevailing

COVID-19: Telangana sends team to learn from Kerala

It will take tips on how the State contained the disease

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

A 12-member team from Telangana's Health Department is in Kerala on Friday on a two-day visit to learn from the State's experience on the containment of COVID-19 and how the first three COVID-positive cases in the country were clinically managed by doctors here.

Kerala Health Minister K.K. Shylaja and officials with the delegation from Telangana. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tionalary measures adopted by Kerala to stop COVID-19.

The State had been successful in totally preventing secondary spread of the disease in hospitals and amongst the immediate families of the patients. Ms. Shylaja explained that the entire State government machinery had worked in

total harmony to ensure that the dreaded disease did not result in a nosocomial or community spread.

As the first State which diagnosed and managed to contain COVID successfully, Kerala had a lot to teach Telangana, the Additional Commissioner, Telangana GHMC, B. Santhosh, said.

The Cardinal, also the Archbishop of Bombay, asked the priests to discourage people from kissing the Cross on Good Friday at the Veneration of the Cross.

"The blessing with a raised Cross will be adequate. Those who desire, they could come in a queue, make reverence with a bow and go back," suggested the Cardinal in his letter.

Cardinal Oswald Gracias, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, has written to parish priests, priests-in-charge, and head of institutions in the Archdiocese of Bombay to follow these steps as coronavirus is rapidly spreading.

"Encourage our people to no shake hands at the sign of peace," he wrote.

Tirumala hundi receives ₹89 crore

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
TIRUMALA**

Hundi collections at the Lord Venkateswara temple in Tirumala touched ₹89 crore in February, as against ₹83.44 crore for the same period last year, officials of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) said.

The temple generally sees fewer footfalls in February as families avoid travelling in this period due to children's examinations.

However, in the past couple of years, the temple has registered a rise in footfalls in February with 21.68 lakh devotees visiting the temple last month as opposed to 19.93 lakh devotees in February 2019.

As many as 48.40 lakh devotees availed free food facility as against 43.94 lakh in February last year, the officials said.

launched during the last six years, ever since the TRS government took over the reins, in her address to the joint session of the legislature marking the commencement of the budget session.

During the close to 45-minute address, she said the State started its journey in 2014 with all sectors in dire straits due to the neglect meted out to it in the united State.

Power utilisation

There were problems in power supply situation and health and education sectors too collapsed. Farm sector in particular was in deep distress owing to various problems, including non-completion of pending irrigation projects and absence of

timely supply of inputs like fertilizers and seeds. The government prepared short, medium and long term plans for the all-round development of the State after taking into consideration its resources, facilities, needs, advantages, disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses for revitalization and rejuvenation of the State.

With a series of welfare programmes launched to provide minimum security of livelihood to the poor, the State stood first among all other States in the welfare sector, she said. Starting its journey with acute power shortages, Telangana registered spectacular and unprecedented accomplishments in power sector to become the State with highest per capita power utilisation.

COVID-19: Assam on edge over U.S. tourist

He spent 7 days in the State and tested positive after reaching Bhutan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A 76-year-old tourist from the United States tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) in Bhutan on Thursday night, triggering alarm in Assam where he spent a considerable time before visiting the Himalayan country.

The Bhutan government confirmed the COVID-19 case on Friday morning.

The Prime Minister's Office in capital Thimphu said the man and his 59-year-old partner reached the country after boarding a Drukair



Growing fears: Medics wearing masks at the Guwahati Medical College Hospital on Friday. ■ PTI

flight from Guwahati on March 2. Of the 10 passengers in the flight, eight were Indian nationals.

Thimphu also informed New Delhi that the U.S. tourist toured India from February 21 to March 1 after starting his travel from Washington DC on February 18.

"At the Paro International Airport, the patient's health declaration form was assessed. He had indicated 'negative' against all conditions," a statement issued by the Bhutan government said. The tourist, however,

Want N95 mask? Get doctor's prescription

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

In a new mandate to curb unnecessary demand, the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration on Friday said chemists cannot sell N95 masks without a doctor's prescription. The FDA also warned that serious action would be taken against those who are found selling masks at high prices or hoarding them.

"Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits and N95 masks are being sold at very high prices in medical shops. The State has received many complaints about the same. It has also been found that many are making bulk purchases and hoarding PPE kits and N95 masks," FDA commissioner Arun Unhale stated in his circular, adding that it is now compulsory to sell the kits and masks only on prescription.

Since the COVID-19 out-

break in China, shortage of PPE gear and masks has been reported from across the world.

While the Indian government has currently banned exports of N95 masks, the manufacturers are focussed on making other surgical masks to get good returns from exports.

Health officials have clarified that N95 masks should be worn by healthcare workers, infected persons and those taking care of infected persons.

Abhay Pandey of All Food and Drug Licence Holders Foundation said the prescription clause will lead to unnecessary rush for doctors' consultations.

"The government should instead mandate that each mask should be sold with a bill so that an FDA scrutiny can be done and action can be initiated against those who are hoarding or selling it at high prices," he said.

Exam fever



Safety measures: Students of the Bharatiya Vidyabhavan School in New Delhi wearing masks before appearing for the Class 12 CBSE board examinations on Friday. ■ BIBEK CHETTRI

Forces issue advisory for personnel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Following various advisories by the government on COVID-19, the Army Headquarters has issued detailed instructions on preparations and emergency response for tackling the virus.

The Navy and the Air Force have also issued safety guidelines to their per-

sonnel, defence sources said.

The advisory includes instructions for actions at various military stations, Army formations and Service hospitals. "Local military authorities will exercise suitable control to avoid/postpone all non-essential mass gatherings ...," the advisory says, adding: "All

non-essential foreign travel to be avoided."

Military hospitals have been asked to establish isolation wards and also have separate Out Patient Departments for screening of symptomatic cases. Personnel would be encouraged to use shopping complex facilities within the cantonments.

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Banking on bailouts

The prompt bailout proposal for Yes Bank, while commendable, raises several questions

Just one day after it placed the financially troubled Yes Bank under a moratorium, the Reserve Bank of India announced a draft 'Scheme of Reconstruction' that entails the State Bank of India (SBI) investing capital to acquire a 49% stake in the restructured private lender. The alacrity with which the bailout has been proposed is commendable, given that Yes Bank's stock tumbled 56% on the BSE on Friday, eroding shareholders' holdings and dragging the 10-bank S&P BSE Bankex down with it, an indicator of the contagion risk that a sudden bank resolution can pose to the financial system. However, the decision to suspend normal business operations raises several worrying questions, both about the health of the banking sector, and the adequacy of the oversight role that regulators essay. Yes Bank's troubles are not exactly new or unique and its problems with mounting bad and dodgy loans reflect the underlying woes in the borrower industries, ranging from real estate to power and non-banking financial companies. The continued inability of several corporates to repay their loans resulting in many landing up in insolvency proceedings has meant that lenders have been the hardest hit. Yes Bank, which is yet to report third-quarter financials, suffered a dramatic doubling in gross non-performing assets over the April-September six-month period to ₹17,134 crore, even as it scrambled to raise capital to shore up its balance sheet. With the economy in the throes of a persistent slowdown, the prospects of banks' burden of bad loans easing soon are limited.

The fact that the lender ended up at the resolution stage, without ever being placed under the central bank's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework, also raises a question mark over how and why Yes Bank eluded the specifically tailor-made solution to address weakness at banks. While some have pointed to the fact that the lender's stated operational metrics had not breached the pre-set thresholds for triggering the PCA action, the central bank had in recent years flagged several concerns, including a distinct divergence between the reported and RBI's own findings on the bank's financials. This could then be a good opportunity for the RBI to review its PCA guideposts and revise them to ensure that such a slipping under the radar does not recur. The choice of SBI as the investor to effect the bailout reflects the paucity of options the government has. With several other public sector banks currently engaged in merging with weaker peers as part of the Centre's plan, it has fallen on the country's largest bank to play the role of a white knight to a private rival. While Yes Bank's depositors are sure to heave a huge sigh of relief, India's banking sector is still far from out of the woods. Clearly, the RBI and Centre have their task cut out in ensuring that the need for such bailouts is obviated.

Double-edged sword

The SC ruling gives relief to cryptocurrency exchanges, but they still need to be regulated

That the Supreme Court struck down as "disproportionate" a 2018 circular by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) that directed entities not to provide services to those trading in "virtual currencies" (cryptocurrencies) is understandable. After all, despite ministerial committee recommendations, and warnings by institutions such as the RBI about the problematic nature of their payment and exchange methods, the use of virtual currencies over the Internet continues to remain legal in India. But the immediate effect of the RBI circular was to choke the agencies that sought to provide a platform to facilitate trading in cryptocurrencies by cutting them off from banks. This, the petitioners claimed, had a chilling effect on the fledgling cryptocurrency exchanges industry in India and went against their entrepreneurial right to operate a business enshrined in Article 19(0)(g). The Court conceded this limited point saying that the "RBI has not come out with a stand that any of the entities regulated by it... have suffered any loss... on account of [cryptocurrency] exchanges" and this provides relief to the firms providing the virtual exchanges.

After a decade or so of deployment and use, the pros and cons of cryptocurrencies are now well known. The primary misgiving with cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin has remained the highly speculative nature of assessing their value. From humble beginnings, the cryptocurrency traded at a peak of \$20,000 in mid-2018 before crashing to \$3,000 by the end of the year, signaling the volatility that came to be associated with this instrument. This limited its original purpose of becoming an alternative and stable currency that is not backed by any central institution but derives trust from its intricate blockchain ledger system. Moreover, reports suggest that bitcoins, with their assured anonymity, remain popular with currency speculators, and in use in illicit transactions over the "dark web". But their utility due to the robust nature of the blockchain algorithm is also not to be sneezed on. Cryptocurrencies have now been adopted by international trading firms for use in lending, raising funds for other cryptoprojects besides facilitating easier cross-border payments. It is for these utilities that the Indian government should err on the side of jurisdictions such as the European Union which have not outrightly banned the instrument and have sought to regulate its functioning. The 2019 Bill even proposed the creation of a "digital rupee" as official currency. It is now imperative on authorities to find the right "regulatory balance" on cryptocurrencies, a task that is easier thought than done, considering their ever-evolving nature due to technological innovation.

Making the environment conducive for justice

In riot situations requiring urgent action, proactive intervention by the judiciary can prevent a slide into chaos



MADAN B. LOKUR

Some of the areas affected by the recent riots in Delhi that I visited resemble a battlefield – burnt shops and buildings dot virtually every street in the area. It's terrible, but property can eventually be restored. Can life be restored? More than 50 people have died in the riots, virtually for no reason at all, except generated hate. Children have been traumatised for what their parents believe – right or wrong. Is this justice or injustice? Is monetary compensation good enough to alleviate the pain and suffering that many children and parents have gone through? Is that all that can be offered? These are questions that went through my mind when I saw the carnage in Shiv Vihar and a couple of other areas.

A visit to the Idgah presented a depressing picture. It had doubled up as a relief camp and I was told of the presence of about a thousand persons residing there. Well-intentioned groups and individuals had donated matting and blankets, food, medicines and provided comfort to many. A 'media section' had several individuals recording the statement of riot victims. Hopefully, these statements will be used by investigators as soon as the establishment gets its act together, if at all. Whatever little assistance could be given to victims by way of rehabilitation was being provided by NGOs and well-meaning individuals, little by a welfare state.

But, the blame game for the riots has already begun and will continue even after investigations are over or a commission of inquiry gives its report. One conclusion is inevitable – if someone in the executive had an idea of good governance and if the establishment had taken prompt action, many lives could have been saved and damage to property could have been avoided. The bureaucratic ineptitude of the authorities coupled with authoritarian ineptitude led to the bloodbath, which was not over in a day but went on for three days. It seems that the establishment consisting of the police and the Executive suffered a mild attack of 'Kumbhkarani', and at what cost. Whose job is it to wake up a sleeping guard?

No coherent response
As a lifelong student of law, I was appalled at the virtual absence of any coherent response from the justice system. The law entitles every victim of a mass disaster or ethnic violence to legal services for filing a case, such as one for compensation. Under a law enacted by Parliament, the Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DLSA) ought to have swung into action to assist the victims, but where was it? Access to justice is an objective and not a mere slogan. DLSA did set up five 'helpdesks' about a week after the mayhem, but the lawyers at two 'helpdesks' that I visited themselves needed help and had no clue about their active responsibilities. I do not wish to belittle the efforts of these well-meaning lawyers, but I am sure the Annual Report of DLSA will highlight what it believes was a tremendous effort put in for the benefit of riot victims. Let's be real.

However, the Delhi High Court



acted immediately when approached for relief. It held a late night hearing and provided the necessary relief to victims and asked accountability questions of the establishment. However, the next day – remember, tomorrow is another day – the sentinel on the *qui vive* found the environment not conducive to registration of a First Information Report (FIR) and adjourned the case hearing by six weeks. Imagine a victim of domestic violence or of sexual assault going to a police station to lodge an FIR and being told by the Station House Officer (SHO) that the environment is not conducive since the victim might again face domestic violence or sexual assault. Amazing, isn't it! It has taken the Supreme Court to request the Delhi High Court to show urgency in the hearing. How many can afford going to the Supreme Court?

The registration of an FIR results in investigations into the commission of an alleged offence. Conversely, if there is no FIR, there cannot be an investigation into anything. There are any number of decided cases where the courts have asked questions about the delay by the victim in lodging an FIR. In many cases, the delay has been adequately explained, but in many, it has not been, there-

by leading to an acquittal; such is the importance given to an FIR. Perhaps the most important feature of an investigation is the collection of evidence, and if it is more than likely to be tampered with or if the witnesses to a crime are sought to be influenced, an accused person may even be arrested by the investigating officer. Therefore, if consideration for registering an FIR is delayed by four weeks, as per the Delhi High Court, a smart accused can manoeuvre to have the delayed investigation scuttled through destruction of crucial evidence and witnesses compromised through inducements or threats, eventually leading to the police filing a no offence report and closing the sordid chapter. Would this be classified as justice or injustice?

Judiciary's moral authority

The role of the judiciary in riot situations is extremely important, in that it could prevent a slide into chaos. The judiciary does not wield a sword nor does it control the purse strings of the state. But it is possessed of a more powerful ally – moral authority, public trust and confidence. What the judiciary says or does has tremendous influence and it should never forget that, regardless of who wields the sword or controls the purse strings. Therefore, in such situations requiring urgent action, the judiciary cannot be expected to grant adjournments on the asking and for what it believes is an environment that is not conducive. Intervention by the court can, more often than not, make the environment conducive on occasions where all wings of the state, particularly the police, need whatever muscle is given to them in the Constitution and the law. The colonial

belief that courts should be reactive should be forgotten and substituted by the public interest belief that courts should be proactive. If that is not appreciated, the decision of the Supreme Court in *ADM Jabalpur* will resurface from ten fathoms deep and continue to haunt us.

Prosecutions form the last chapter of criminal justice. Recent events have clearly suggested that the police all over has completely mixed up and mangled freedom of speech and hate speech. Inflammatory statements and induced sloganeering by the powerful in Delhi, which may or may not be seditious but can certainly be categorised as 'hate speech', are left untouched. On the other hand, the weak are put behind bars for sedition for something that does not even cause a ripple, let alone 'bring or attempt to bring into hatred or contempt, or excite or attempt to excite disaffection towards the government established by law', proving Bruce Lee's famous "boards don't hit back" jibe at O'Hara. So the question, blame games apart, is, will those guilty for the Delhi riots ever be identified and booked and, if they are, will they ever be punished? It took our justice delivery system 35 years to find Sajjan Kumar guilty of offences in the 1984 riots in Delhi. When will the system find and punish the guilty for the recent riots but who cares, by the way?

Final thoughts – let's read the Preamble to our glorious Constitution and appreciate four crucial words – justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Are we making sense of all of them or some or none?

Justice (retd.) Madan B. Lokur is a former Supreme Court judge

Monetary policy can't combat the COVID-19 impact

A rate cut can help to boost sentiment but that will be transient as the market's reaction after the Fed rate cut proves



RAGHUVIR SRINIVASAN

The huge 50 basis points cut in rates by the U.S. Federal Reserve on Tuesday to lift economic sentiment hit by COVID-19 has disrupted central banking worldwide. Even as analysts debate whether a monetary policy response is the right strategy, central banks across the world are feeling the pressure to follow suit to the largest rate cut by the Fed since 2008.

Central banks of Australia and Malaysia have cut rates already while others such as the Bank of Japan, Bank of England and the European Central Bank are contemplating joining the caravan.

First line of defence

With monetary policy turning out to be the *de facto* first line of economic defence against the ill-effects of the virus, the focus in India has turned to the Reserve Bank of India's response. Yields on 10-year government securities fell by as much as 0.12% on Wednesday in the hope of a rate cut by the RBI and they stayed soft on Thursday.

But what are the central bank's options? Unlike other countries, the legal framework in India after the setting up of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is such that the RBI cannot unilaterally adjust rates. The MPC will have to meet and deliberate on the situation before the call to cut rates is taken and such a call will have to be based on an assessment of inflation in the economy. But is a rate cut the right response?

The first order impact on the global economy of the spreading virus is disruption to trade and to global supply chains. With China being the factory of the world, the clampdown in that country has already disrupted supplies of products ranging from cell phone components to bulk drugs and auto components. Factory lines across the world could freeze as supply chains get disrupted.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has estimated that global merchandise exports could shrink by \$50 billion due to the impact of the virus. Compared to the total world merchandise exports of \$19.48 trillion (2018) the shrinkage appears small but it could just be the beginning.

Monetary policy is excellent to address demand shocks but is a blunt tool when it comes to addressing supply-side issues. People may be encouraged to spend



more due to a rate cut but what will they spend on if products go scarce, travel convulses and public spaces such as movie theatres and malls become no-go areas?

Pressure on RBI

A rate cut can, at best, help to boost sentiment but that again will be transient as the market's reaction after the Fed rate cut proves. The Swedish central bank's deputy governor Anna Breman has rightly questioned the logic of a rate cut as a response to the coronavirus impact pointing out that an expansionary monetary policy cannot improve the situation.

Yet, sentiment being what it is, the RBI may find itself under increasing pressure to act. Given the MPC constraint, it may well choose to do what it did in the February monetary policy – unleash other weapons in its armoury to

give the same effect as a rate cut. Thus, we may well see the central bank announcing another tranche of long-term repo operation, akin to the ₹1 lakh crore that it announced in February. That will mean that banks will gain access to three-year funds at the repo rate of 5.15%, much lower than the market rate. And then, there's Operation Twist which the RBI employed to good effect in December, softening rates at the long end of the yield curve.

But it's doubtful if any of these measures can address the hit to economic growth. The virus has undoubtedly surfaced at a very wrong time for the Indian economy which is showing hesitant signs of a return to growth. The impact will be felt on more than one front. Industries such as pharmaceuticals, electronics and automobiles could be headed for trouble given their high dependence on Chinese inputs. While the government is said to be formulating a response, including the possibility of airlifting supplies, the practicality of this solution needs to be watched as also its impact on costs for the industries concerned.

Possible fall in exports

The bigger problem could be from a fall in exports, which accounts for 20% of the GDP. If the developed world tips into recession

due to the virus, exporters of products ranging from petroleum and textiles to leather and gems and jewellery will feel the heat.

The offsetting factor, of course, will be a lower oil import bill due to the sharp fall in oil prices. This may also have a benevolent effect on inflation. But there will be other headaches for the central bank if the developed world embarks on monetary expansion. The RBI will be faced with the challenge of staunching inflows of hot money coming in search of the higher returns available in India.

But as with every crisis, there's also opportunity here. Economic growth is bound to suffer in the short-term but there could be long-term spin-offs if domestic industry and government get their acts right. Supply chains can be localised through fresh investments and India can bid to be an alternative to China in the global value chain.

The COVID-19 crisis has only underlined in red the lesson that global corporations learnt when trade war broke out between the U.S. and China – the global supply chain needs alternative options to China. India is eminently qualified to assume that role. If only our policymakers and industrialists rise up to the challenge.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Democracy in crisis

It is true that the shocking incidents which fanned communal flames in our country in the recent days have put our democracy to shame. As someone who teaches at a foreign university, I can say that the pride and confidence with which we used to carry ourselves as Indians (a land of pluralism, tolerance and *dharma*) has been punctured, thanks to the forces that are out to destroy the values that define our democracy. The examples I used to give in my classes to teach about the values of linguistic plurality and cultural transformation, citing from Indian contexts, are turning out to be outmoded and questionable. Unless the trinity that Dr. Manmohan Singh mentioned in his article is tackled with immediate effect, the peril is ours (Editorial page, "An

unrest, a slowdown and a health epidemic, March 6). I can only quote what Jawaharlal Nehru said once: "Who lives if India dies, and who dies if India lives?" S.A. THAMEEMUL ANSARI, Kayalpatnam, Tamil Nadu

The police's masters

The police officers at the helm of affairs in a State, who are interested in career advancement and smooth professional sailing, are likely to abuse their powers to protect the interests of the ruling party at the cost of well-being of the people. This has been the phenomenon in all States since Independence, regardless of the political party in power (Editorial, "Read them the riot act," March 6). High handedness against anti-CAA protesters in Uttar Pradesh, deliberate inaction against perpetrators of violence at the Jawaharlal Nehru

University and shooting of the accused in the Telangana gang-rape case are some of the many instances of infractions on the part of police departments across the nation. Obviously, no political party wants the police force to be freed from political interference. More disturbingly, even Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, known much for his honesty and sincerity, has been found wanting in his words and actions while dealing with the recent communal riots in Delhi.

Efficient policing does not appear to be on the horizon in the foreseeable future. N. RAVEENDRA BABU, Hyderabad

Partisan stance

The Delhi police failed miserably to contain the riots, and even took a partisan stance by joining in stone-pelting by one

group. Just as their callous indifference to the violence in Jamia Millia Islamia, which happened in their presence, they did not respond to SOS calls made to them for help. Home Minister Amit Shah, to whom the Delhi police reports, did not have time either to visit the riot-affected areas or to convey condolences. Mr. Shah was busy in Ahmedabad for the Trump show, when riots were at their peak on Monday, which reminds one of Nero fiddling as Rome burnt. The most heartening thing was amongst all this chaos was the humane approach of some residents, belonging to all religions, of the violence-affected localities.

M. FAZAL,
Chennai

Yes Bank in crisis
The customers of Yes Bank are facing agonising

moments as they try to withdraw their own money ("Yes Bank placed under moratorium till April 3," March 6). The bank has reportedly showing distress signals for sometime, which eventually led to its inability to raise the needed capital to support the losses in the loan portfolio. It is really unpalatable as to how the deterioration in the bank's financial status could not be captured at the right time by the regulatory supervisory surveillance mechanisms.

New-age banks such as Yes Bank are expected to act as models in ensuring the delivery of modern services to customers across the spectrum. It is now important for the RBI to act and restore the dwindling confidence of the bank's customers. G. RAMASUBRAMANYAM, Vijayawada

Ace scribe in distress
The story on the distinguished football writer and a renowned sports commentator Novy Kapadia made for an uncomfortable reading. Strangely, Delhi University, where he served as a professor for decades, has reportedly been sitting over a bunch of files relating to his pension benefits. (Sport page, "Ailing Novy Kapadia awaits his long-delayed pension," March 6). It is lamentable that Mr.

Kapadia, whose services are unmatched in popularising football, is being treated so shabbily. Although the football fraternity has offered assistance, the Sports Ministry must bear Mr. Kapadia's entire medical expenses for him to get back to his old self. R. SIVAKUMAR, Chennai

When the Centre cannot hold

In the worst communal violence in recent times, mobs went on a rampage in north-east Delhi for two days, killing 53 people and destroying homes, schools and shops. **Bindu Shajan Perappadan** and **Anuradha Raman** report on the communal fault lines, state apathy, and the hope that lingers amidst the despair



A view of Medina Mosque in Shiv Vihar after the violence. (Below): Riot victims get relief kits in Mustafabad. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



On February 27 afternoon, a few days after deadly riots rocked north-east Delhi, the busy marketplace of Maupur is deserted. On the road lies a shoe and some charred clothes, reminders of the violence three days earlier. A tea shop, singled out and vandalised, is shut. "Ab yeh hain toh shanti hai" (now that they are here there is peace), says the owner, Wasim Khan, pointing to the men in varying shades of khaki and blue who are keeping vigil in the neighbourhood. Apart from the Delhi Police, personnel of the Rapid Action Force march in small batches in what is often referred to as an area domination exercise to secure peace. Khan is grateful that he is alive.

On February 24, an agitation against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) quickly spiralled out of control when both CAA supporters and protesters ran amok in the neighbouring colonies of Maupur, Jaffrabad, Shiv Vihar, Mustafabad, Chand Bagh, Brijpuri, Babarpur, Karawal Nagar, Khajoori Khas and Yamuna Vihar are all infamous – together these areas have lost 53 people to the violence; 250 are injured.

In the vast, squalid urban sprawl that is north-east Delhi, pockmarked with open drains, Swachh Bharat is a distant dream. The development plank of the re-elected Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) does not resonate here. There are no tarred roads, only *galis* (streets) with numbers. They are often referred to as '20 foota' and '25 foota', indicating the width of a particular lane. Migrants from the populous States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar live in these areas that are chock-a-block with houses and shops.

On February 24 and 25, as rioters from the Hindu and Muslim communities, armed with swords, guns, stones, rods and bricks, targeted shops, madrasas, masjids, schools, vehicles, and people, both the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government in Delhi and the Narendra Modi-led BJP government in the Centre simply watched.

Khan speaks softly. His lips quiver and his fingers shake as he talks of his shop being vandalised and his refrigerator being emptied out in the dark of the night. "I have no enemies," he says. His neighbours in the marketplace say Khan will sell his shop soon and move out of the area.

Further ahead is Gonda Chowk where the skeletons of buses and auto-rickshaws lie on the road. Suddenly, there is a huge explosion. A thick plume of smoke goes up in a house behind a departmental store. In moments, the wail of a fire engine pierces the day. The sound is enough for everyone to down the shutters. In a battery-operated auto-rickshaw, a man whispers as he shares with us an incendiary WhatsApp message: "Wait till Friday".

Friday, February 28, goes off peacefully. The faithful offer their prayers.

In several ways, that terrible week of February was a week of many firsts. For

had suffered assault and burns and 67 had been shot.

Salmani's brother was dragged out of his auto-rickshaw and chased down the lanes by men wielding iron rods. "We brought my injured brother out of Karawal Nagar on a push-cart because there was no vehicle in the neighbourhood. The police refused all our distress calls. It was neighbours who came to our aid," says Salmani. His brother battled for life for two days before passing away.

Two days is what it took Ram Kumar Paswan, a rickshaw-puller, to identify the body of his son in the mortuary. Nitin, 15, had stepped out to buy noodles on February 25. He never returned.

Harjit Singh Bhatti, ex-president, RDA, AIIMS, was part of the first team of doctors to reach the riot-hit areas as a volunteer. He says it took him 12 hours to reach patients with gunshot injuries and multiple fractures. He recalls a patient with a deep gunshot wound in the stomach who refused to leave Mustafabad. "After convincing him to leave, we put him in an ambulance and headed towards GTB Hospital. We were stopped four times by the police. They inspected the patient by opening his bandages. That was the level of inhumanity on display," says Bhatti.

Meanwhile, Al-Hind Hospital continues to receive patients who have gathered the courage to step out of their homes. Some have stab wounds and some have been hit with blunt objects.

Targeting schools

Shiv Vihar resembles a battlefield. Charred shops line the streets and burnt cars sit in a parking lot. On February 24 and February 25, two schools, Rajdhani Public School and DRP Public School,

We have only 15 beds and five staff members. But people kept coming, so we just spread out bedsheet on the floor to accommodate the victims. There was blood everywhere.

D.M.A. ANWAR
Al-Hind Hospital



were targeted and burnt. The owner of Rajdhani Public School, Faisal Farooq, is distraught as he speaks about the future of his 1,400 students. One hundred and thirty students were preparing to write the Class X Board examinations which began in the rest of the country on February 27. The examinations have been postponed, but Farooq doesn't know whether the students will be in the right frame of mind to take them. In a classroom, a clear message is written with chalk on the blackboards: 'No NRC (National Register of Citizens), no CAA'.

The clock ticks as Christ the Redeemer looks down from a poster on the wall. Both schools share a wall, but that is all. Rajdhani Public School faces the predominantly Hindu neighbourhood of Shiv Vihar and DRP Public School is where the large Muslim neighbourhood of Mustafabad begins.

By a stroke of luck, the students are safe as the riots took place after the school had closed for the day. While rioters set the reception area of Rajdhani Public School on fire, the neighbouring DRP Public School suffered a worse fate. Chairs lie around, upturned, broken, burnt. Twisted fans hang from the ceilings. "Mobs sealed down the common wall with ropes and set fire to this school," alleges DRP school owner Panjaj Sharma. He says his school was the best in the entire neighbourhood. It has students from all communities, he says, hinting that it was singled out by the attackers for its popularity. Both schools have filed an FIR against unnamed persons. However, the AAP MLA from Mustafabad, Haji Yunus, says the schools were targeted for a different reason. "I think the rioters thought that people of the other community would flock to the schools to seek refuge," he says. Some say that the owners of these schools had pledged their allegiance to the AAP and the BJP, and were therefore targeted.

Arun Public School in Brijpuri was also burnt down. So was a mosque nearby. The owner of the school, Abhishek Sharma, says: "This is predominantly a Hindu neighbourhood. Eighty students from Class XII and 100 students from

Class X were going to write their Board exams. I made 30 calls to the police and fire engines. No one answered."

Search for identity papers

In Phase 6 and 7 of Shiv Vihar, Muslim families who ran small businesses and bakeries have fled their homes and taken shelter in Champan Park in the homes of their friends. They find solace in numbers, they say. About 200 people have taken shelter here. In *gali* number 14, all the Muslim families have fled their homes. But it was not always like this, people insist. There was unity, says Harish Pal. "Every time, cries of *azadi* went up, our Muslim neighbours told us to take shelter, and every time cries of

Jai Shri Ram went up, we told our Muslim neighbours to take shelter. We tried to save each other as long as we could," says Pal. Pal works in a private automobile company which manufactures spare parts. His narrative offers a glimpse into how communities got deeply divided over the CAA. On the ground, those opposing the law were quickly painted as traitors and those who supported it as patriots.

It is dusk now and Muslim families with the help of the police have come to their homes to retrieve some of their clothes. Riyasat, who has taken refuge in a relief camp, has come to get his clothes and identity papers. He has not changed his clothes since February 24.

Young girls have taken shelter in old Mustafabad. In a tiny 100 sq ft room above a small bakery, more than a dozen families huddle together. Zainab, 19, who fled with her family as rioters closed in, is worried that her family's identity papers have been left behind. It is the fear that these papers have been lost or destroyed that has the Muslim community on edge.

The CAA has made it easier for non-Muslim migrants to become full-fledged Indian citizens. Muslims are worried that they may not be considered citizens if the CAA, together with the proposed NRC, is implemented. The BJP-led government's response to the CAA protests, which have been spearheaded by Muslims, has often been brutal. A majority of Muslims have opposed the Act and large sections of Hindus have supported it. But no one anticipated that the two communities would turn against each other.

Who attacked first?

People who fled their homes say they will return some day. However, a disturbing question remains unanswered: who attacked first? The answer depends on who is asked the question first.

The Medina masjid went up in smoke along with the house belonging to Naresh Chand. A wall separates the two. Chand, an insurance agent, says he doesn't know the attackers. "There were some slogans raised and I couldn't recognise anyone," he says. He then quickly adds that the crowds came from

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SALMANI

the Muslim quarters.

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After the destruction, people have barricaded neighbourhoods with motorcycles, tables and wooden planks. One side is referred to as Hindustan. "That side [Mustafabad] is Pakistan. We have lived here together for years. But things have changed now," says an old man, indicating that the divisions are here to stay. People have formed neighbourhood patrols. They say they haven't slept a wink since February 24.

Offering help

After schools, shops, homes and lives crumbled, hope still floats. In Shiv Vihar, in some areas, people saved lives. Some of these streets were left untouched by the rioters.

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FROM PAGE ONE

In RBI bailout, SBI to pick up 49% in Yes Bank

The central bank said all the deposits and liabilities of the bank will continue in the same manner in the reconstructed bank, unaffected by the scheme.

"All the deposits with and liabilities of the reconstructed bank, except as provided in the scheme, and the rights, liabilities and obligations of its creditors, will continue in the same manner and with the same terms and conditions, completely unaffected by the Scheme," it said.

However, Additional Tier 1 capital which was issued by the Yes Bank under Basel III framework, "shall stand written down permanently, in full, with effect from the Appointed date," the scheme said.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has said the resolution of Yes Bank would be done swiftly.

"The resolution (of Yes Bank) will be done very swiftly, it will be done very fast. The 30 days which we

have given, is the outer limit," Mr. Das said at the sidelines of an event.

The scheme has taken care of the employees as it mandates that they will continue to with same remuneration and service conditions at least for one year.

However, the board will have the freedom to discontinue the services of the Key Managerial Personnel (KMPs) at any point of time after following the due procedure. There will be no change in the offices or branch network of the reconstructed bank.

Comments have been invited for this draft scheme by Monday, March 9, after which RBI will take a final view.

Prashant Kumar, the RBI appointed administrator of Yes Bank assured that the lender is taking necessary steps to ensure seamless transactions for the customers and there is no reason for depositors to panic.

Committed to safeguard depositors, says Nirmala

While she acknowledged that there would be a "period of pain" for depositors, she insisted that all deposits and liabilities would be honoured and will continue unaffected as before, and assured Yes Bank's employees that their jobs and salaries were assured for at least one year.

Ms. Sitharaman rebuffed accusations that the government had failed to monitor the Bank's troubles. She claimed the RBI had been keeping tabs on the situation since 2017, and had taken steps to deal with the governance and leadership issues, culture of weak compliance, wrong asset classification and risky credit decisions. Central agencies had pushed for management changes, slapped fines, in-

vestigated irregularities and urged equity infusions in an effort to improve Yes Bank's health, she said.

Countering Opposition criticism, Ms. Sitharaman claimed that Yes Bank's exposure to stressed corporates such as the Anil Ambani group, Essel group, DHFL, IL&FS and Vodafone existed before 2014 during the UPA regime. She accused the "so-called, self-appointed competent doctors" of the Congress of having bungled the handling of three other banks in crisis – Global Trust Bank, United Western Bank and Ganesh Bank of Kurudher. "In all three, they just merged and washed their hands off. How many people did they take action against?" asked Ms. Sitharaman.

Number of COVID-19 cases mounts to 31

At a press conference, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri announced that the government was in an advanced stage of talks with the Iranian authorities to bring back Indians stranded there and send back the Iranian nationals here.

The first flight from Iran would bring around 300 swabs of Indians for testing. After this, those stranded would be allowed to come to India. The government had suspended flights to and from Iran in the wake of the outbreak. Three flights were operated by Iranian carriers each week to Delhi and Mumbai prior to the suspension.

"Korea, Iran, Italy are

Acquisition not to lapse if relief paid to Treasury: SC

The Supreme Court on Friday reaffirmed its February 2018 ruling on Section 24 on land acquisition compensation. The five-judge Constitution Bench was interpreting Section 24 (2) which concerns land acquisition compensation awards made five years "prior or more" to the coming of existence of the 2013 Act, which replaced the 1894 law.

The new Act, which came into existence on January 1, 2014 replaced the colonial 1894 law. The provision said that in such cases, if the physical possession has not been taken "or" the compensation is not paid, the acquisition proceeding is "deemed to have lapsed". The government, if so wishes, would have to initiate "fresh acquisition pro-

ceedings" under the new Act of 2013, which provides for "fair compensation".

The 319-page judgment authored by Justice Mishra, however, said compensation would be considered paid if the amount is put in the Treasury. There was no obligation that the amount should be deposited in the court in order to sustain the land acquisition proceedings under the 2013 Act.

Further, the court held that a land acquisition proceeding under Section 24(2) would only lapse if the authorities have neither taken physical possession nor paid the compensation due to the landowner for five or more years prior to January 1, 2014. For this, an "or" in the Section was "interpreted" as an "and".

A spokesperson of the

authorities of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) on Friday said the withdrawal of ₹1,300 crore from the crisis-hit Yes Bank late last year had nothing to do with the present crisis.

The TTD, which manages affairs of the Tirumala temple, said the money was withdrawn in October.

The clarification came following the moratorium imposed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on withdrawals from Yes Bank till April 3.

A spokesperson of the

TTD cash deposits in banks crossed ₹12,000 crore in April last year.

temple body clarified that the money was withdrawn on maturity of the deposit term in October.

The Board recently projected ₹706 crore income from interest on deposits for 2020-21.

He said the aim of such speeches was to "disrupt the institution".

Mr. Dave countered,

"We have officials who monitor deposits in banks and the maturity periods. It's not that we suddenly withdrew the amount," he said.

TTD officials said they act as per the decisions of the Board with regard to depositing money or gold in banks. They pointed out that in November 2019, the Board decided to deposit money only in nationalised banks.

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"We have officials who monitor deposits in banks and the maturity periods. It's not that we suddenly withdrew the amount," he said.

TTD officials said they act as per the decisions of the Board with regard to depositing money or gold in banks. They pointed out that in November 2019, the Board decided to deposit money only in nationalised banks.

TTD's cash deposits in banks crossed ₹12,000 crore in April last year.

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The Board recently projected

State has failed to do its job, say ex-SC judges

'Delhi riots were the handiwork of professionals'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

From the destruction witnessed after the Delhi riots, the rampage looked like the handiwork of "total professionals", said former Supreme Court judge, Justice A.K. Patnaik.

Another retired Supreme Court judge, Justice Kurian Joseph, stated that the "burning smell" still hung over the riot-hit areas where families had lost their homes, livelihood and loved ones to mobs wielding rocks, rods and guns between February 23 and 26.

Justices Kurian and Patnaik were on Friday relating to *The Hindu* the impressions they gathered during their visit to the riot-hit areas and a relief camp. They were accompanied by another former Supreme Court judge, Justice Vikramjit Sen.

Both Justice Kurian and Patnaik said the families in the relief camp yearned to go back home but were too scared. Justice Patnaik said the State and its forces had "totally failed" to guarantee their basic right to life.

Rebuild homes'
"The State has to pay compensation. But 'compensation' here does not mean some money. It means the State, having failed to protect their right to life, is now obliged to rebuild their homes destroyed in the riots and give them back the assets they lost in the violence. The State has to put their lives back on track," Justice Patnaik said.

The visit was not to find fault with the authorities or the law enforcement agencies but to understand the ground situation. They met



Providing succour: Locals queuing up for relief kits in the riot-hit Shiv Vihar area of New Delhi. Former judges said that lawyers' bodies should help victims procure identity documents that were lost during the violence. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Centre slaps 48-hour ban on 2 Malayalam news channels

Action taken over their coverage of riots

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry headed by Prakash Javadekar has imposed a 48-hour ban on two Malayalam news channels – Asianet News and Media One – for their coverage of the Delhi riots, which, the Ministry in its orders said, could "enhance communal disharmony".

The police have to work hard to regain the trust of the victims, Justice Patnaik added.

Justice Kurian said national and Delhi legal aid authorities should open a help desk to provide legal assistance to the victims.

Publish details of arrested people: HC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday issued notice to the Delhi government and the city police on a petition by CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat to make public the list of persons arrested in

not act to control the riots" and that "Central forces reached the riot-hit areas after long hours of the meeting of Union Minister Amit Shah."

In the case of Media One, the Ministry said: "The channel's reporting seems to be biased as it is deliberately focusing on the van-

connection with the Delhi violence. Ms. Karat urged the HC to direct the police to follow due process of listing of names of arrested persons outside the police control room or police station, and updated on a case-by-case basis.

dalism of CAA supporters. It also questions the RSS and alleges Delhi police inaction."

While Asianet has not yet reacted to the ban, C.L. Thomas, Editor-in-Chief of Media One TV, said the ban was a naked assault on media freedom and the channel would legally fight it.

DMK stalwart K. Anbazhagan passes away

An academic turned politician, he first became DMK general secretary in May 1977

B. KOLAPPAN
CHENNAI

K. Anbazhagan, DMK's general secretary for 43 years, four-time Minister and a close friend of former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, died in the early hours of Saturday. He was 97 and is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son born through his first wife. He had served as MLA for nine terms and as Lok Sabha MP for one term.

Anbazhagan, one of the stalwarts of the Dravidian movement, was admitted to the Apollo Hospitals in Chennai on February 24 following age-related health complica-

tions. His condition remained critical in view of his old age.

An academic turned politician, Anbazhagan first became the general secretary of the DMK in May 1977 after then incumbent V.R. Nedubezhian had parted ways to initially form his own party before eventually merging it with the AIADMK, founded by M.G. Ramachandran. He continued in the position till his death. He was also the first secretary of the DMK's trade union movement.

Perasiriyar (Professor), as he was known in Tamil Nadu, had joined as a lecturer of Tamil in the Pachaiyappas

College and served for 13 years, between 1944 and 1957.

Born Ramaiah in Kattur near Mayiladuthurai, he changed his name as Anbazhagan and studied Tamil in Annamalai University in Chidambaram. His father, M. Kalayanasundaram, was a Congressman and even ran a khadi store in Mayiladuthurai but quit the Congress along with Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, founder of the Dravida Kazhagam. He shifted his base to Chidambaram to facilitate good education for Anbazhagan and his brothers.

"I had read Kudiyarasu

run by Periyar and Navasakthi by ThiruVi.Ka even when I was 10 years old," Anbazhagan had once recalled.

He first met Mr. Karunanidhi in 1942 while accompanying C.N. Annadurai, who later founded the DMK, to Tiruvanamalai. "Anna wanted to see Kalaignar (Karunanidhi), who had penned the short story Ilamaipali for the Dravida Nadu magazine. He also advised him to concentrate on his studies," Anbazhagan had reminisced in an interview. In Annamalai University, he was the favourite student of Tamil scholar Ka.Su. Pillai and his classmate V.R. Nedunchezhan.

DIRECTORATE OF BASIC EDUCATION U.P.
Vidhya Bhawan, Nishatganj, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh–226007
Website: www.prernaup.in, www.basiceducationup.com, www.etender.up.nic.in

Notice Inviting E-Tender

Director Basic Education, Department of Basic Education, Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, Dated 06 March 2020, invites fresh proposals from reputed Service Providers of National and International repute, for supply, commissioning of Biometric Tablets and related services under PRERNA Digital System Project for Elementary Schools of Uttar Pradesh for the Tender ID# 2020_UPBED_432559_2. Earlier, Online bids were invited vide tender number 2020_upbed_432559_1 dated 7th February, 2020 for supply, commissioning of Biometric Tablets and related services under PRERNA Digital System Project for Elementary Schools of Uttar Pradesh.

If any bidder had already submitted his/her bid in the original tender id 2020_upbed_432559_1, then he/she is required to resubmit his/her bid afresh, taking into account all previous amendments/ Prebid Response / Corrigendum in this regard.

The RFP/Corrigendum document can be downloaded from the websites www.prernaup.in, www.basiceducationup.com, or e-procurement site www.etender.up.nic.in. Response to this Request for Proposal (RFP) shall be deemed to have been done after careful study and examination of this document with full understanding of its implications. This and subsequent sections provide general information about the Issuer, important dates for tender processing, addresses for communication and correspondence, and the overall eligibility, Technical evaluation criteria and related terms for the interested bidders.

Director of Basic Education

DEHLI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER(SOUTH)II
JAL SADAN: LAJPAT NAGAR: NEW DELHI
NIT NO. 60/S-II/2019-20

Press Tender

S. No.	Name of work	Reserve price	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date and time for download & RTGS through e-procurement solution
1	Shifting of damaged sewer line by P/L 630mm dia HDPE pipe at C.V.Raman Marg under EE(S) II (AC-51 Kalkaji) Re-invite	1,90,91,690/-	2019_DJB_189187_1 4.3.2020	24.3.2020 upto 2.00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in

ISSUED BY P.R.O.(WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V.897/2019-20

Executive Engineer(South)II



Semi-Electrode Reactor / Semi-Conductor Laboratory

अंतरिक्ष विभाग, भारत सरकार / Department of Space, Government of India,
सेक्टर-72, राजधानी (महानगर) – 160071, चंडीगढ़ (Punjab) India
फोन/फैक्स : +91-172-2236166/6171 फैक्स/ फोन : +91-172-2237410
ईमेल/Email: hpss@isro.gov.in kraj@scil.gov.in वेबसाइट: www.scil.gov.in

निविदा सुचना संख्या: एसएसीएल / पीटी/ 179 / TENDER NOTICE No. SCL/PT/179
दिनांक / Dated: 05.03.2020
निविदा, एसएसीएल के लिए एवं उनके आंश से संबंधित कार्यक्रम के प्रमुख क्रय एवं मार्ग, निविदा के लिए दो मार्ग में अन्तर्लाभ करते हैं। / For and on behalf of the Director, Head-Purchase & Stores, Semi-Conductor Laboratory (SCL) invites Online TWO part Tenders for the following:

क्र. सं./ Sl. No.	निविदा संख्या/ Tender Number	विवरण/Description	संख्या/ Quantity
1	एसएसीएल /पीटी/ 2020/0172501 SCL/PS/2020/0172501	शीघ्र सिपाइटेक्ट्र यांत्रिक इंजिनियरिंग ट्रॉल की आपूर्ति, यांत्रिक एवं कैमरिशियनिंग हेतु। Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Deep Reactive Ion Etching Tool	01 संख्या/No.

निविदा दस्तावेज डाउनलोड करने के लिए निम्न लिखित समय
Date & Time for download of Tender Form

निविदा प्रस्तुत करने की निम्न एवं समय
Date & Time of Submission of Tenders:

निविदा ओपनिंग की निम्न एवं समय
Date & Time of Opening of Tenders:

नोट/Note: निविदा दस्तावेज को e-tender portal <https://eprocure.isro.gov.in/> / एसएसीएल की वेबसाइट (www.scl.gov.in) /इसरो की वेबसाइट (www.isro.gov.in) से लेकर /डाउनलोड कर सकते हैं। / Tender Documents can be accessed/downloaded from e-tender portal <https://eprocure.isro.gov.in/> / SCL website (www.scl.gov.in) / ISRO website (www.isro.gov.in) / CPP Portal (<http://eprocure.gov.in>)

प्रमुख, क्रय एवं मार्ग विवरण/Head, Purchase & Stores Division



Mangled remains: According to the NIA, ammonium nitrate, nitro-glycerine and RDX were used in the blast. ■ FILE PHOTO

Pulwama attack case: NIA arrests two more

They had procured materials online

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR

Prasar Bharati CEO declines BBC invite

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati has turned down an invitation from the BBC to attend an awards function for Indian sportswomen, citing the British broadcaster's "one-sided" reporting on the Delhi violence. Mr. Vempati had been invited for the BBC's Indian Sportswoman of the Year awards due to be held in New Delhi on March 8. "I must respectfully decline the invitation in view of the recent coverage of the BBC of certain incidents of violence in Delhi," Mr. Vempati said in his letter to BBC Director General Tony Tony.

"As a fellow public broadcaster of global repute, it is dismaying that the BBC has filed such a singularly one-sided version of the incidents of violence in Delhi which rather than help break the cycle of violence has only contributed to further vitiating the atmosphere while insinuating the brave men and women in uniform who are charged with the onerous responsibility of maintaining law and order," he wrote in the letter dated March 4.

In the said report certain visuals have been shown of the Delhi Police without context to insinuate communal behaviour, he added. Unfortunately, nowhere in the entire report have the BBC journalists mentioned the murderous assault on the men in uniform by a mob, Mr. Vempati said.

explosives like RDX.

"Islam also personally delivered the items to the JeM terrorists after procuring the incriminating material online as a part of the conspiracy to carry out the Pulwama attack," the NIA asserted.

Provided shelter'

The other accused, Mr. Rather, was a known over-ground worker of the JeM, the NIA alleged. "He has disclosed that he gave shelter to another terrorist Mohd Umar (IED expert) when he came to Kashmir in April-May 2018. He also harboured JeM terrorists... Adil Ahmad Dar, Sameer Ahmed Dar and Kamran (Pakistani) at his house a number of times in the run up to the Pulwama attack," the NIA asserted.

The NIA asserted in a statement that Mr. Islam had disclosed that he had used his Amazon online shopping account to procure batteries, accessories and chemicals for making the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) used by the car borne suicide bomber Adil Ahmad Dar.

The NIA alleged that Mr. Islam had procured the items on the directions of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad operatives.

The NIA had earlier said in a statement that the explosives were "ammonium nitrate, nitro-glycerine and RDX".

A senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, had said many items used in the IED had been purchased online but did not specify the source of the high grade

NORTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
CIN No.: L41019TG2008GC034119
TENDER NOTICE

TSNPDCL is intends to Purchase the Materials through e-Procurement platform from the Manufacturers.

Specification No.: CGM/P/MM-051 to OT-56/2019-20

Name of the Material: Various Materials

Bid Security @ 2% on EX-Works. Downloading of Tenders through On-Line e-Procurement starts from 12.03.2020 to 11.00 AM. For further details visit www.tender.telangana.gov.in and www.tsnpdccl.in. For obtaining Digital Key visit www.tslts.gov.in

Ph. No. 0870-2461507
Mail Id: cpmprjnm@tsnpdccl.in

Sd/- Chief General Manager (P&MM)

NMDC Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)
NMDC Iron & Steel Plant, Post – Nagarmal (Bastar) C.G. Pin 494 001;
Email: remraj@nmdc.co.in, ltdclass@nmdc.co.in, Tel: 07782-265318,

CIN-011301G1956G001674; GSTN: 22AACN

Virus-hit Iran warns of using force to halt travel

The virus has killed 124 people and infected 4,747 in the Islamic Republic; Foreign Minister's adviser is among those dead

ASSOCIATED PRESS
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

Iran said on Friday that the COVID-19 epidemic has killed 124 people amid 4,747 confirmed cases as authorities warned they may use "force" to limit travel between cities.

The threat may be to stop people from using the closed schools and universities as an excuse to go to the Caspian Sea and other Iranian vacation spots. Semi-official news agencies in Iran posted images of long lines of traffic of people trying to reach the Caspian coast from Tehran on Friday despite the authorities earlier telling people to remain in their cities.

Iran on Thursday announced it would put checkpoints in place to limit travel between major cities, hoping to stem the spread of the virus.

Iran cancelled Friday

prayers across its major cities. Elsewhere in the region, Iraq cancelled Friday prayers in Karbala, where a weekly sermon is delivered on behalf of the country's top Shia cleric. Authorities in the United Arab Emirates, meanwhile, limited prayers to two verses of the Quran so they lasted no longer than 10 minutes, over concerns about the virus.

17 more deaths

On Friday, the Iran government announced 17 more deaths from the virus, as the overall number of cases soared. "We have confirmed 1,234 new cases, which is a record in the past few days," Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour told a news conference, raising the total number of infections to 4,747.

The new cases "are probably those who had been infected with the virus two



Germproof: Firefighters disinfecting a shopping centre to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, in northern Tehran on Friday. ■ AP

weeks ago and... just came to us with symptoms," he added.

Iran has been scrambling to contain the rapid spread of coronavirus, which has in-

fected people in all 31 of its provinces.

The official said Tehran has 1,413 confirmed cases so far, which is the highest among all provinces and

makes it an "epicentre" for the virus.

In Tehran, firefighters sprayed disinfectant on an 18-km length of famous Valiasr Avenue, some from fire-

Make containment highest priority: WHO

highest priority," he added. "In a globalised world, the only option is to stand together."

In fact, the tally of cases has already surpassed 1,00,000 – as the WHO's figures have generally slightly lagged behind others. As of Friday, more than 1,00,300 people had been infected globally, according to a Reuters tally based on statements from Health Ministries and government officials.

Ghebreyesus told a daily news briefing. "(The epidemic) is geographically expanding and deeply concerning."

"We are continuing to recommend that all countries make containment their

gan to do active disease surveillance. "It is much better that we understand the extent of the problem. So we command the move towards more aggressive, targeted surveillance."

Mr. Ryan, asked about the virus' behaviour in Europe's warm summer months, said: "We do not know yet what the behaviour of this virus will be in different climatic conditions. We have to assume that the virus will continue to have the capacity to spread."

He added: "It is a false hope to say yes it will just disappear in summertime, like influenza virus... There is no evidence right now to suggest that that will happen."



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, D-G, WHO

highest priority," he added. "In a globalised world, the only option is to stand together."

Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of WHO's emergencies programme, said when asked about Iran's mushrooming outbreak that it resembled China and South Korea, which quickly uncovered more cases as they be-

gan to do active disease surveillance. "It is much better that we understand the extent of the problem. So we command the move towards more aggressive, targeted surveillance."

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Trump approves \$8.3 bn to fight COVID-19 in U.S.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Friday signed an \$8.3 billion measure to help tackle the outbreak that has killed 12 people in the U.S. and infected more than 200.

The legislation provides federal public health agencies with money for vaccines, tests and potential treatments and helps state and local governments prepare and respond to the threat.

The rapid spread of the virus has rocked financial markets, interrupted travel and threatens to affect everyday life in the U.S.

Mr. Trump had planned

to sign the Bill during a visit to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. But he told reporters on Friday that concerns were raised about "one person who was potentially infected" who worked at the CDC.

He said the person had tested negative for the virus and that he still hopes to visit the agency again.

The Senate passed the measure to help tackle the outbreak in hopes of reassuring the public and accelerating the government's response to the virus. Its rapid spread is threatening to upend everyday life in the U.S. and across the globe.

Syria ceasefire takes hold, but residents are cynical

Deal seeks to end Moscow-backed offensive on Idlib

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
IDLIB

A new ceasefire brokered by Russia and Turkey took hold on Friday in northwestern Syria, but after years of failed truces some residents say they are not holding their breath.

The deal intends to stop a deadly Moscow-backed regime offensive since December against the country's last major rebel bastion of Idlib, which has displaced almost a million people from their homes and shelters.

"The regime and Russia always play this game," said 26-year-old Fadi, who has been displaced from second

city Aleppo and now lives in Idlib. "They gain control over new areas and then they agree on a truce, then months later they start a huge military operation all over again and take some more."

Damascus forces have clawed back a sizeable chunk of Idlib province from jihadists and allied rebels in the past years, in bursts of fighting punctuated by failed truces.

The government has retaken large swathes of Syria with help from its Russian ally since 2015, through a combination of deadly military assaults and Russian-bro-

kered surrender deals.

The Idlib bastion, one of the last regions to hold out on the Turkish border, is dominated by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate but Turkey-backed rebels are also present.

Many among the region's three million residents – half of whom fled from other parts of Syria – have little faith in promises made by Damascus or Moscow.

Abu Saeed, 24, his wife and little boy, came to live in Idlib after fleeing the Damascus suburbs in 2018. "I'm not optimistic about this deal, and I don't expect anything from it," he said.

Blast near U.S. Embassy in Tunisia

REUTERS
TUNIS

Two militants on a motorcycle blew themselves up outside the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia on Friday, killing a policeman and injuring several others in the country's most serious attack in months.

The explosion took place near the Embassy's main gate, where a Reuters journalist saw a scorched, damaged motorbike and a damaged police vehicle lying amid debris as police gathered around and a helicopter whirled overhead.

The Interior Ministry said two militants were killed carrying out the attack and five police officers were injured.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said Pakistan does not want any security role for India in Afghanistan nor wants the presence of militant organisations – al-Qaeda and the ISIS – in the landlocked country, *The Nation* reported.

27 dead in Kabul attack, IS claims responsibility

Abdullah Abdullah escapes unharmed



An injured man being carried in a stretcher after the attack in Kabul on Friday. ■ AP

REUTERS
KABUL

Gunmen attacked a ceremony in Kabul on Friday, killing at least 27 people in the first major attack on the Afghan capital since the U.S. reached an agreement with the Taliban to withdraw U.S. troops.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, the group's Amaq news agency reported on Friday on its telegram channel.

A top Afghan political leader, Abdullah Abdullah, was present at the event but escaped unharmed.

55 wounded

Fifty-five people were wounded, according to the Afghan Ministry of Health.

"The attack started with a boom, apparently a rocket landed in the area, Abdullah and some other politicians... escaped the attack unhurt," Mr. Abdullah's spokesman, Fraidoon Kwaizon, who was also present, told Reuters by telephone.

Broadcaster Tolo News showed live footage of people running for cover as gunfire was heard.

A Health Ministry spokesman said the casualty toll could rise. Dead and wounded were being ferried from the site by ambulance.

A NATO source said that

the death toll was slightly higher: more than 30 killed, with 42 wounded, 20 of whom were in a serious condition.

3 gunmen killed

Afghan defence forces continued to fight gunmen throughout the day, finally securing the area by killing about three gunmen in the late afternoon, according to Ministry of Interior spokesman Nasrat Rahimi.

The gathering had marked the anniversary of the death of Abdul Ali Mazari, an ethnic Hazara leader who was killed in 1995 after being taken prisoner by the Taliban. Several people were killed in a similar attack on the same commemoration last year, which Islamic State said was carried out by its militants.

President Ashraf Ghani tweeted that the attack was "a crime against humanity and against the national unity of Afghanistan".

Mr. Abdullah, who escaped, was runner-up in the last three Afghan presidential elections, each of which he disputed. He has served as Chief Executive of a coalition government since 2014 and is also a former foreign minister. The attack was one of the largest on civilians in Afghanistan in a year.

Pakistan against any security + role for India in Afghanistan

Foreign Minister says Delhi plays the role of a 'spoiler'



Shah Mahmood Qureshi

ghanistan, who want to get their own objectives," Mr. Qureshi said.

India has been a key stakeholder in Afghanistan as it has already spent around \$2 billion in reconstruction of the war-ravaged country.

Ahead of a peace deal between the U.S. and the Taliban, India conveyed to the U.S. that pressure on Pakistan to crack down on terror networks operating from its soil must be kept up though Islamabad's cooperation for peace in Afghanistan is crucial.

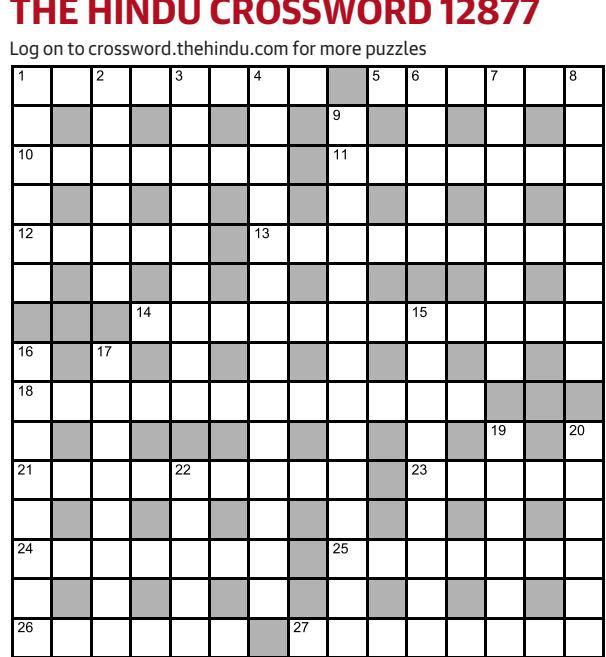
The Foreign Minister told the Upper House that India had always played the role of a spoiler, the report said.

"There were spoilers in the past and they are even today, within and outside Af-

ghanistan with Afghanistan bilaterally.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12877

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- 1 Cable in electric vehicle contains electronic part (8)
- 5 Practical union, long-lasting, needs time (6)
- 10 Prince involved in scrap with a model (7)
- 11 Rushed back with speed to report (7)

- 12 Money wasted! Experts in America making a bloomer (5)
- 13 Rise and unite to break barricade after force leaves (9)
- 14 Where money might be under one's control (2,4,6)
- 18 Essentially shady politician thrashed with fervour by soldiers in stadium (12)
- 21 Grave start to suspenseful novel! Hercule Poirot's debut (9)
- 23 Signal to the audience to stand in line (5)
- 24 I shout to rescue English female in steep part of glacier (7)
- 25 Simple man left grain for hermit (7)
- 26 Most artful fashion styles (6)
- 27 Retired groups tackling hunger pangs (8)

DOWN

- 1 Manage to protect husband in peril (6)
- 2 Slips in Singapore on vacation, overwhelmed by drinks (6)
- 3 Musical effects represented as sliding (9)
- 4 Online, a cheat slyly entraps man to get a hidden advantage (2,3,2,3,4)
- 6 Unhealthily thin person close to despair, overwhelmed by heroin (5)
- 7 Old nonconformists steal cocaine concealed in boxes (8)
- 8 Workforce involved in manufacture of steel components (8)
- 9 Where an attestor might sign showing restraint (14)
- 15 When asked for, ace accepts a little risky mission (2,7)
- 16 Complains about idiot's drunken revelries (8)
- 17 Boy about to explode violently at last in extreme anger (8)
- 19 Unknown man climbing to rescue fool in peak (6)
- 20 Start to joust with slippery characters stealing wife's pearls (6)
- 22 Lots of fellows drinking alcohol heartily (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12876

A	T	O	N	E	S	W	I	T	S	E	N	D
F	I	R	S	T	A	N	D	S	O	U	T	
A	T	I	A	C</								

ROSELLA STEPHEN

Bring your walking shoes, reads the invitation. For an evening stroll in the Qutub Minar Complex. But with Tarun Tahiliani zipping in and out of rooms and nimbly up the stairs at his Gurugram atelier, that should have been a requisite for the entire day. TT (as the Delhi-based fashion designer is known in the industry) runs us through the installations – of recent innovations with brocade (New Brocade, he calls it), Jamdani, key pieces from summer wedding collections, his enviable archive room and 25 signature garments reinterpreted for the 25th year of his eponymous brand. We spot garments and accessories worn by famous actors, royalty and Indian supermodels. He talks about modernising Indian couture by making it lightweight, and encourages closer inspection of a 'new brocade' pink lehenga – soft, weightless and well-suited to the drape he mastered decades ago. Stragglers among the fashion scribes and influencers, lingering over tables bearing embellished clutches (from his mother's collection) and embroidered jewellery, are gently herded on. It is only mid-day, but the rather ambitious itinerary hadn't accounted for Mahashivratri traffic between us in Gurugram and the flagship store in Mehrauli. It appears Tarun's plan to get us to see the different processes, the toiles (mock-ups), and the embroidery units, will have to wait.

Message from the HQ

Designed about 12 years ago, by French architect Stephane Paumier, this expansive studio with exposed brickwork and vaulted skylights is where Tarun spends much of his day, with his workforce of about 950. At the entrance, two T-shaped pillars mimic the logo of his brand, while the arches inspired by the Islamic monuments in the capital, point to his passion for architecture and the synthesis of different cultures. Tarun, 57, that rare breed of designer who can promise relevance and longevity with his garments, is typically forthright. The Wharton-educated son of an Indian Navy admiral wishes aloud that the fashion industry would work together than against each other. When someone in the group brings up the legacy of his brand, he says, "Legacy is too pretentious a word. We have understood construction and draping". He talks about a



One night at the Qutub

Infusing his brand with hope and resilience, the rightful king of India Modern, Tarun Tahiliani, makes his 25th anniversary extra special

time when specialists who draped (in India), never embroidered, when the tailoring was "so bad and the armholes so tight". He remembers how everyone wanted to design for "women in lyrca petticoats who ate three lettuces a

day". That said, his studio is extremely conscious about fit. The TT Bride – he has dressed about 15,000 – wants her lehenga to be light enough to dance in all night. "And while we are not principally bridal, there is a push for us to do



(From far left) Tahiliani with Jesia, a TT ensemble, and a dress inspired by the outfit of a sadhu he spotted in Varanasi



owns India Modern. I think that everyone has their own interpretation for lack of a better terminology, or for the fact that it is such a good term, everybody is free, and must engage to define what they think is India Modern. The more they do that the more vibrant our society will be. As long as it is done properly it is terrific!

You have often attempted a synthesis of cultures. The challenges doing this today?

- There is too much sensory overload and everybody is anyway in some bewildered mix... we have more urbanisation, single unit homes, single children and both parents working, there is very little time to transmit culture. Popular culture comes over phones, television and the internet and it is anyone's guess who is watching what. There is also no censorship which used to be there earlier, so peoples' minds are often unhinged. In this context, to keep harping on India may sound didactic, but it is what it is.

What went into creating the archive?

- We started organising [the archive] a few years back. We always stored swatches, sketches. It is an impressive body to look at. We have lost at least 15% of our very good quality swatches because embroiderers would take them and not return them. Now we do not allow anything out. It is also a great thing for an embroiderer or younger designers to look at. Like the brands abroad, if this brand has to survive, a strong archive is a necessity. There are [also] boxes of patterns and artworks, and we have not got to them.

Plans for Jamdani and New Brocade?

- We work with wonderful people in West Bengal who are doing [Jamdani]. They are simple designs, so that the motifs that are used in Chikankari are used in Jamdani. I am dying to see Jamdani with Chikankari. Also, finally I have that softness and the dullness I like in our brocades. I [hope] to see them in every possible form. Some of the brocades I have seen people wear in some of [these] weddings...OMG, I am shocked to see that people [would] like to wear something that garish.

If 2018 was a year of disquiet for you, what is 2020 shaping up as?

- Mad recession, crazy disquiet on internal dissent and now the virus. I just have to roll with the punches.

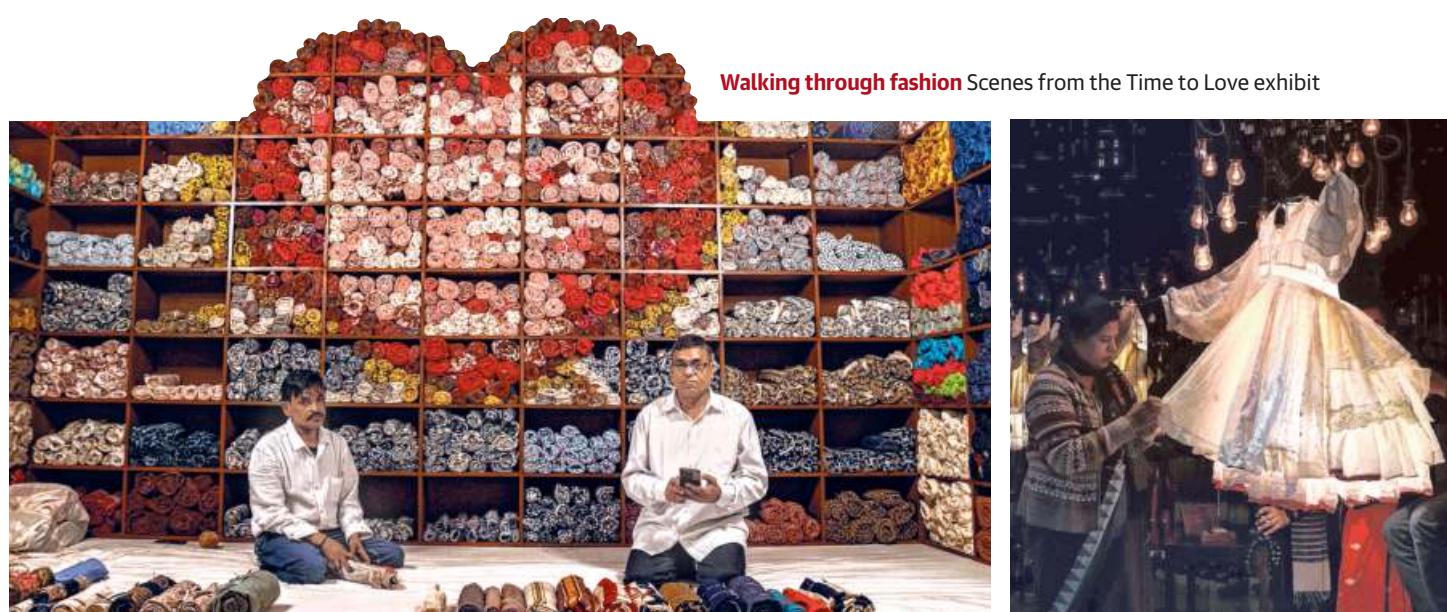
The writer was at TT's 25 at the invitation of Tarun Tahiliani

Love in Péro's LANE

In an ongoing exhibition, Aneeth Arora looks back at 10 years of Péro

SUNALINI MATHEW

"It is the building with red hearts," says a person from Aneeth Arora's team, directing me to a large bungalow on Barakhamba Road. There are different-sized hearts everywhere – in an installation out on the lawn, dangling in the porch, and painted on the building. 'Time to Love', Péro's 10th anniversary homage to people and processes, is about slowing down to appreciate the time it takes to create garments. "We are so caught up in this fashion cycle of doing one season and trying to be fresh every six months. We've lost the enjoyment of the process. The idea is



Walking through fashion Scenes from the Time to Love exhibit

invite people to come and view what goes behind [our world]," says Arora, as we sip *chai* and eat Parle-G biscuits from a *thelewala* within the courtyard of the house that was once an orphanage.

He is a live installation of sorts, capturing the slow life of sitting down on *moras* and watching saris waft in the breeze. The 50 pieces of fabric, from close to 20 regions of India, hung on bamboo poles, are part of another installation that represents the brand's ethos of creating their own textile. Each has a line embroidered on, about what the fabric is, where it is made, and how long it takes to make.

"We decided there has to be a

time aspect to everything we showcased," says Arora. When you walk in, there's a seamstress working on a garment. In front of her is a screen that shows a time lapse video of how it has been built over a number of days. "I told the women, 'Aaraam se karo' (work slowly), and the joy that they felt when I said that; you could see it in their work."

The garment is slated to be ready in time for a show planned on March 12. The SS 2020 collection, named Millefiori ('1,000 flowers' in Italian), revolves around a technique of the same name that was originally used to create mosaic beads in glass. Péro will use polymer clay for the first time, to fashion its buttons similarly.

The exhibition has a scarf room to show the different dimensions and kinds of edging done across the decade of Péro's being; a 'Matching Centre' where cloth is stacked, a heart at its centre; and a button room that shows more than 3,000 buttons done to date. One season, when the brand did polka dots (2013), they created 1,000 buttons. When Arora realised this, she says, "It is making me think whether my processes are right, because maybe I'm over-indulgent. Should I be the way I've been or should I start to become more practical in my processes?"

The room that's meant to induce goosebumps is the one with a white tent that looks into a pool of water, its reflection creating another perspective. Commissioned by the Devi Art Foundation in 2015, as a part of their show called Fracture, it is a 11 x 9 x 8 ft white crochet and lace creation that took 50 people 18,000 hours and three lakh metres of thread to create.

This element of the process being collective is what Arora has tried to establish, by refusing to put her face to the brand. Today, when people call the workshop, they'll ask if it's Péro speaking, and that makes her happy.

At 13, Barakhamba Road, Delhi, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., every day, till March 13

FILM REVIEWS

Tiger Shroff fights off the terrorists

The athletic actor beats down ISIS-like villains with choreographed grace in *Baaghi 3*, a woolly-headed adventure

NAMRATA JOSHI

Filmmaker Ahmed Khan seems to have a fetish for installation art, that too the kind that involves modes of transport. So you have one action sequence shot against the backdrop of several hundreds of colourful cars piled up over one another, in a circle. In the middle of this car *chakravyuh*, Tiger Shroff displays his chops. Homage to Rohit Shetty films? Not quite. Some hours into the film, and there is another automobilian sculpture – three helicopters, one over the other, with Tiger on top, burning bright, seemingly signalling to the baddies below: 'I am the cub (if not the tiger king) of the world.'

In the third instalment of the *Baaghi* franchisee, Shroff returns as Ronnie as does Shraddha Kapoor, as his ladylove Siya. Ronnie goes on a one-man mission to Syria to save his elder brother, cop Vikram (Riteish Deshmukh), who has been kidnapped by an Islamic terrorist organisation while on assignment there.

In keeping with the nationalistic fervour of the times, *Baaghi 2* had shown a lot of respect for the army; cops can be bad, army men can't, it had seemed to say. Now, with *Baaghi 3*, it's a cop who is eulogised for protecting innocent people and laying down his own life in riots. Given the current state of affairs it's not unusual then to wonder if the entire



Shredded The film is little more than Tiger Shroff voyeurism
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Baaghi 3

DIRECTOR: Ahmed Khan
CAST: Tiger Shroff, Riteish Deshmukh, Shraddha Kapoor, Jaideep Ahlawat, Vijay Varma, Jameel Khoury
RUN TIME: 143 minutes
STORYLINE: Ronnie (Tiger Shroff) goes on a one-man mission to Syria to save his elder brother, cop Vikram (Riteish Deshmukh) who has been kidnapped by an Islamic terrorist outfit while on an assignment

sequence was truly prescient, or whether it was prototyped into the script later, considering the police is otherwise not shown in a great light in the film. The nod to recent Bollywood police genre – *Dabangg*, *Singham* and the foreshadowing of *Sooryavanshi* – also seems intentional.

The rebel Ronnie who breaks bones, teeth and jaws of the street side *taporis* to begin with becomes "America, Russia, Mossad", all rolled into one, against the might of the dreaded Islamic terrorist Abu Jalal (Jameel Khoury). Bombs, explosions, landmines – nothing can stop him from wreaking vengeance that becomes laughably improbable and

inane in the climax. In the middle, many stereotypes get reinforced, visually and in the writing and dialogue. Asinine jokes about the tanners in the men's loo and about surnames like Kute abound in the name of humour.

Despite sporting an impulsive face, a perennially faraway look and moist eyes, Tiger has managed to forge his way ahead in Bollywood with some lithe, aesthetic stunts. He is agile and athletic, and poses and postures with choreographed grace and daintiness. An overmuscled, overbronzed body demands display. So, somewhere down the line, a rag of a shirt hung loosely on his body also gets conveniently ripped apart.

Beyond this Tiger voyeurism, there is little else to the film. Seasoned actors like Jaideep Ahlawat and Vijay Varma are made to ham, Shraddha is more of comic relief in the name of being the leading lady, and Deshmukh appears to keep eating fad for good luck.

There is a phrase in Hindi – *dimaag ka dahi* (curdling of the brain). And that's what the film does to your mind: it leaves you all woolly-headed.

A nostalgic trip carelessly executed

An ode to the side-actor of older Hindi films, *Kaamyaab* doesn't go beyond being a great idea

NAMRATA JOSHI

Birbal, Lilliput, Manmaui, Veeju Khote. All together at a bar, sharing a drink. That one shot is the entire raison d'être of *Kaamyaab* written all over it – not to talk of the sheer nostalgia that it is soaked in – in a casual, throwaway manner.

Hardik Mehta's ode to the side-actor of the '70s-'80s-'90s cinema, kicks off well. There's the nicely observed, cloyingly sweet TV interview of "Garhwali ki Prerna" (the inspiration of Garhwali), side-actor Sudheer (Sanjay Mishra), who has retired into anonymity, while people still remember him for his on-screen *takiya kalaam* (catchphrase): "Enjoying life. What's the option?"

Kaamyaab gives little nods to the tiny, barely re-

cognisable face on the corner of the poster, the quintessential *alo* (potato) that could adapt well with any vegetable. It is an ode to their versatility, as against the swagger of today's digital generation.

Stacked against the intimacy and grace in the relationship of old-timers is the rant of the newer lot – *purane chawal se risotto kaise banayein* (how can you cook risotto with rice that has aged well)?

Old-time Bollywood actor Sudheer decides to come out of retirement to do a role and hit the record figure of 500 films in his career. Will he, won't he?

There is something simple, sincere and well-intentioned at the heart of *Kaamyaab*, but it is also quick to get mired in similar pigeon-



An ode to yesteryear sidekicks A scene from the film

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

holes that the unheralded actors found themselves trapped in through their lives. There is a familiarity to the arc, predictability in the telling, and expectedness about the gags as well as the characters – whether it's the big hero with a huge ego, the sly casting director, the com-

Kaamyaab

DIRECTOR: Hardik Mehta
CAST: Sanjay Mishra, Deepak Dobriyal, Sarika Singh, Avtar Gill, Birbal, Lilliput, Manoj Bakshi, Veeju Khote, Guddi Maruti, Manmaui

RUNTIME: 109 minutes
STORYLINE: Old-time Bollywood actor Sudheer decides to come out of retirement to do a role to achieve the record figure of 500 films

The finale juxtaposes the idea of relatability of a small star as against the glamour of the bigger entity, the affection that the former elicits, as opposed to the huge fandom of the latter. It then meshes it all with the idea of "success", and how one dwarfs the other, and how both, perhaps, are as hollow. Unfortunately, you can only read between the lines; it refuses to fly on screen. *Kaamyaab* stays precariously hung between a great idea and lackadaisical execution.

The magic within us

Although witty and imaginative, *Onward* isn't a life-altering Pixar film

KENNETH ROSARIO

Pixar films can change the way you see the world. Whether it is the symbiosis of art and critique, the after-life and familial bonding, starting afresh in your twilight years, or the humanising of emotions – Pixar has a knack for dismantling perceptions. The imagination, at a conceptual and philosophical level, often transcends the audio-visual creativity we see on-screen.

Pixar's latest, *Onward*, has a similar goal – it wants you to re-imagine family, and advocates for everyday magic. But in this one, the audio-visual creativity on-screen supersedes the messaging, which is simple and personal, but hardly life-altering.

The film, which had its world premiere at the Berlinale 2020, begins in a time,



Too simple Laurel, voiced by Julia Louis-Dreyfus; Ian, by Tom Holland; and Barley, by Chris Pratt ■ DISNEY/PIXAR VIA AP

long, long ago, when there was magic in this world. All mythical creatures knew how to use magic, be free and explore. Over time, the magic started dying and civilisation, as we know it, tamed the creatures. This is the background of *Onward*, which follows the quest of two elf brothers, Ian and Barley Lightfoot, to find a jewel that can bring back their dead father.

The film functions on two levels. One is where the mythical creatures, living in a suburban area, learn to tap into the magic they forgot they had. The other is a more personal one – the pursuit of an absentee father. While the film earnestly and successfully builds up the emotional crescendo with the two brothers, the attempt to reinvigorate magic in a suburban life (allegori-

Onward

DIRECTOR: Dan Scanlon
CAST: Tom Holland, Chris Pratt, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Octavia Spencer
STORYLINE: Two elf brother set off on an adventure trip to bring back their deceased father for a day
RUNTIME: 102 minutes

cally, the world we inhabit today) remains a rather neglected plot.

Onward's philosophy remains on-the-surface, and even predictable, which is not quite the level of emotional intelligence we expect from Pixar. Once you make peace with the disappointment that this Pixar film doesn't possess the transcendence of *Ratatouille*, *Up* or *Inside Out*, you can enjoy the temporality of the film: the world-building and wit

There are imaginative booby traps, invisible trust bridges, amusing spells, and ample silly animation humour. An elf single mother dating a cop centaur, rough pixies riding bikes in groups, and a tame manticore running what should have been a dangerous tavern, all make for hilarious characters.

There's also a cyclops police officer, who is touted to be Disney's first-ever openly-lesbian cartoon character. She has one line that reveals her sexual orientation: "My girlfriend's daughter got me pulling my hair out."

Even though Russia reportedly has censored 'girlfriend' to 'partner', the one line isn't worthy of being glorified as representation in 2020. Its inadequacy and inconsequentiality make it seem more of a publicity bait than genuine inclusion.

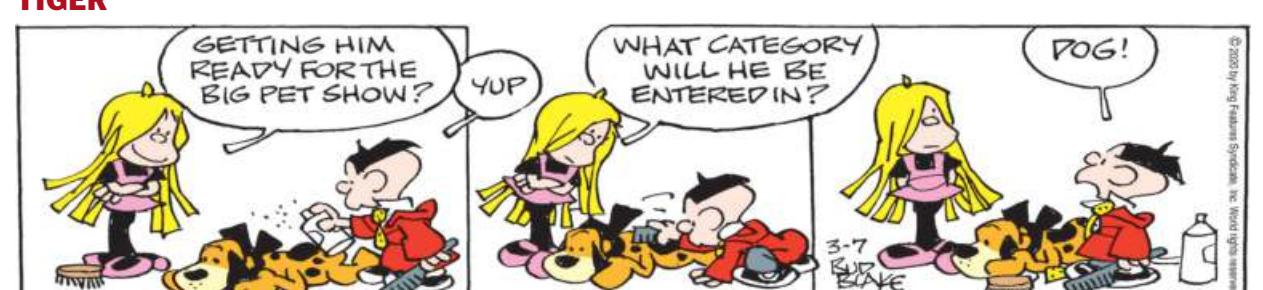
POOCH CAFE



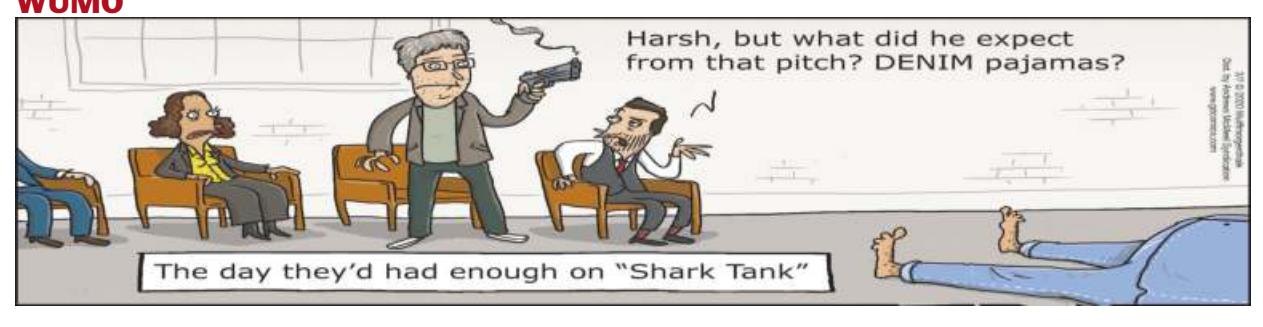
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



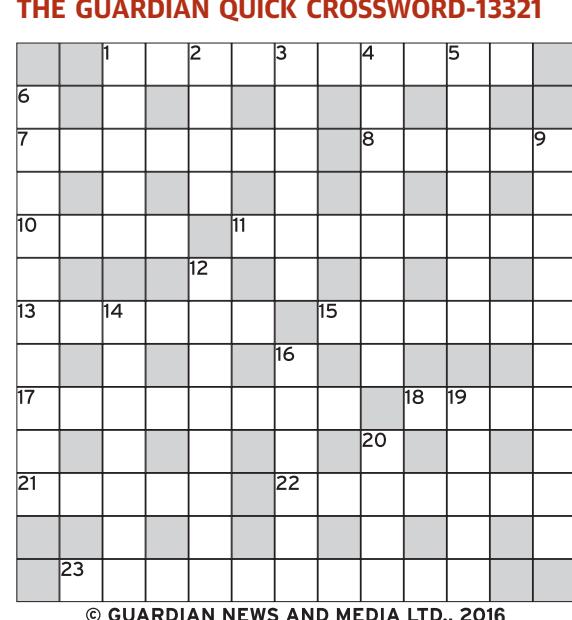
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13321



To play the Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

- and sinker? (7)
- 6 Made worse (10)
- 9 A very short time (10)
- 12 Family tree (8)
- 14 Compartment (7)
- 16 Most feared barbarian invader of the Roman Empire, d. 453 (6)
- 19 Previous (5)
- 20 Metrical units (4)

The solution will appear on March 9, 2020.

Solution No. 13320

B	A	C	I	K	P	A	C	K	E
R	A	U	O	N	P				
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A	T	A	T	E	S				
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S	K	I	D	S	P	E	C	I	O
R	A	A	T	F					
T	E	L	L	G					
E	O	F	F						

Across
1 Armed guard on a plane (3,7)
7 G in MGM (7)
8 One shunning animal products (5)
10 Decomposes (4)
11 Physical effort (8)
13 Unoccupied (6)
15 Phases (6)
17 Grotesque misrepresentation (8)
18 Long narrative poem (4)
Down
1 Croatian port (5)
2 Two-masted sailing boat (4)
3 Extension to a building (6)
4 Harshness (8)
5 Pursuit with hook, line

'We played our part in unearthing new talent and creating a solid bench'

Former chief selector M.S.K. Prasad looks back at an eventful tenure and sheds light on what the role entails

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Mayank Agarwal is one of Indian cricket's biggest success stories in recent years. This story might not have progressed beyond the first chapter if M.S.K. Prasad hadn't entered the plot.

An unbeaten triple hundred for Karnataka against Maharashtra in a Ranji Trophy match at Pune, in 2017-18, turned Agarwal's career around. The opener was on the brink of being dropped for that match, though. In this interview, former national selection committee chairman Prasad reveals – for the first time – why he wasn't.

The former India wicketkeeper from Andhra also speaks about keeping an eye on every cricketer who showed promise on the domestic circuit, enjoying the challenges of the job and dealing with the criticism that came his way during his tenure, which ended with India's recent tour of New Zealand. Excerpts:

You must be happy with the way Mayank Agarwal has become an integral part of the Test team in no time. I was told that you had requested the Karnataka team management not to drop him from the Ranji team during the 2017-18 season...

■ He was the Man-of-the-Series in the triangular 'A' series held in Chennai in 2015 [involving India, Australia and South Africa]. I had been following him since then. After coming into the selection committee, I found that he was not included for the India-A tour of Australia in 2016. After doing a bit of research, I realised that because of one poor domestic season he had been dropped.

I talked to the coaches and administrators of the Karnataka State Cricket Association and requested them to back Mayank because he had it in him to make it big. The following season he started off poorly. He failed in the first two Ranji games [including a 'pair' against Hyderabad]. I came to know that he was about to be dropped.

I intervened and requested the team management to give him one more opportunity. They heeded my request and played him. And he got a triple hundred; he followed it up with more big hundreds. He ended up scoring more than 1,000 runs in just five weeks. He hasn't looked back since.

How do you look back at your tenure as the chief selector of one of the world's most followed sports teams?

■ Cricket is a religion in our country. We live and breathe cricket here. Being associated with Indian cricket in any

form is a matter of pride. Being at the helm of affairs in the selection committee was a huge honour.

When you took over as chief selector, what were the things that you wanted to change and how much were you able to achieve?

■ When we took over, our team was going through a transition period. There was a change of guard in the Test captaincy, from M.S. Dhoni to Virat Kohli. In the following year, there was also a change of guard in the ODI captaincy. We have successfully overseen these transition phases.

We also wanted to develop good bench strength. Fortunately, with the cooperation of the team management of the senior team, headed by Ravi Shastri, Kohli and others, and the India-A team, headed by Rahul Dravid, we could design a wonderful programme. And that has really helped the young bunch and eased them into the senior team from India-A. The way Prithvi Shaw, Mayank, Shreyas Iyer, Hanuma Vihari, Navdeep Saini and Shivam Dube began to perform right from the start of their international careers speaks volumes about the system that was put in place.

What are the things you enjoyed about being chairman?

■ I really enjoyed watching domestic cricket because that is where the future of Indian cricket lies. We, the members of the selection panel, have travelled for around 1,000 days during the last four years, across the length and breadth of the country. We played our part in unearthing new talent that has helped create a solid bench in all departments of the game and



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

across all formats.

As a player, you did remarkably well to force your way into the Indian Test and ODI team despite playing for Andhra, not a traditional domestic powerhouse. How have things changed for cricketers from smaller centres?

■ During my [playing] days, the exposure for players coming from smaller states was relatively less compared to the bigger ones. But today, due to the robust domestic structure created by the BCCI and also due to the developments and emergence of modern communication systems, every performance across the country is recognis-

nised in no time. So there isn't much difference between teams big and small in domestic cricket.

Rajasthan, Railways, Gujarat and Vidarbha have shown the country that success in cricket is not limited to any particular state or city these days. When it comes to the national side, the representation is from across

INDIA'S RECORD DURING PRASAD'S TENURE AS CHIEF SELECTOR (SEPTEMBER 2016-FEBRUARY 2020)

TESTS

	Matches	Won	Lost	Tied	Drawn	Win-loss ratio	Ranking based on win-loss ratio
Overall	43	28	10	0	5	2.8	World No. 1
Home	24	19	1	0	4	19	World No. 1
Away	19	9	9	0	1	1	World No. 1

ODIs

	Matches	Won	Lost	Tied	No Result	Win-loss ratio	Ranking based on win-loss ratio
Overall	88	59	25	2	2	2.36	World No. 2
Home	35	22	12	1	0	1.83	World No. 4
Away	34	22	10	0	2	2.2	World No. 1
Neutral	19	15	3	1	0	5	World No. 2

T20Is

	Matches	Won	Lost	Tied	No Result	Win-loss ratio	Ranking based on win-loss ratio
Overall	56	37	15	2	2	2.47	World No. 3
Home	27	18	8	0	1	2.25	World No. 2
Away	24	14	7	2	1	2	World No. 2
Neutral	5	5	0	0	0	-	World No. 1

the country, and not limited to particular regions, which used to be the case earlier.

How tough is life as a wicketkeeper? Often keepers don't get the credit they deserve...

■ Wicketkeeping is a thankless job and one of the toughest disciplines in the game of cricket. Unless one enjoys this art, one cannot become a good wicketkeeper.

Talking of keeping, how do you view Rishabh Pant and the criticism that has come his way?

■ All of us know that Rishabh has abundant talent. He is a match-winner, and that is a rare quality. Having identified that immense potential in him, we decided to back him. I have no two views about his batting abilities. The only thing is that he needs to work on his wicketkeeping skills, which he really is concentrating on now. With time he will keep getting better. We need to have patience with him.

Which selections are you particularly happy about, besides that of Mayank?

■ Prithvi, Vihari, Rishabh, Shreyas and Navdeep.

How do you look back at episodes of non-selections of some established players (like

Ambati Rayudu for the World Cup in England last year)?

■ It's really hard to put into words certain non-selections at times, especially when it comes to a country like India that has so much of talent. You can only pick 15 members in a squad. We go by the best combinations in the best interest of the country with a belief that we can get the best possible results.

How did you feel when some former cricketers questioned your credentials?

■ When criticism is constructive, it can be well received. But if it is done with ulterior motives, it can be ignored. For instance, if someone asks why a particular player is not selected, then they should also specify in whose place the player they are proposing has to be accommodated. Only then will there be substance to their arguments.

How helpful has the IPL been for selecting the senior Indian team?

■ The IPL is a wonderful platform that throws up fresh talents every year. Since it has the best players from across the globe, the performances are duly recognised. Having said that, we consider a player's performance at the IPL for selection only to the T20 squad.

GAME THEORY

The bane of the Red Devils

Sergio Aguero's iconic, last-gasp goal against Queens Park Rangers on the final day of the 2011-12 season helped Manchester City win its first league title in 44 years, breaking the hearts of Manchester United supporters who thought they had the championship sewn up. The Argentine forward has caused United plenty of grief on other occasions as well, as his stats in the Manchester Derby show:

MOST GOALS IN THE MANCHESTER DERBY

Aguero has the opportunity to tie or pass Wayne Rooney's mark this weekend. He is the only player on this list still active in top-division football.

Wayne Rooney	Manchester United	11
Joe Hayes	Manchester City	10
Francis Lee	Manchester City	10
Sergio Aguero	Manchester City	9
Bobby Charlton	Manchester United	9

AGUERO VS. UNITED

The striker scored seven goals in his first seven Premier League games against the Red Devils, with City winning five of these contests. He has only scored once in the last five league games, but his overall rate of 0.81 goals every 90 minutes is still very impressive

Competition	Appearances	Goals	Mins	Goals per 90 min
Premier League	12	8	893	0.81
FA Cup	1	1	90	1.00
League Cup	2	0	109	0.00
All competitions	15	9	1092	0.74

MOST PREMIER LEAGUE GOALS

Aguero, who has won four titles in eight seasons at City, hasn't only tormented United. He is the only non-English player among the top five goal-scorers

Alan Shearer	(441 appearances)	260
Wayne Rooney	(491)	208
Andy Cole	(414)	187
Sergio Aguero	(260)	180
Frank Lampard	(609)	177



SOURCE:
TRANSFERMARKT,
PREMIER LEAGUE

STACKING UP

ATP Men's Top 15

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Novak Djokovic	32	10,220	18
2	Rafael Nadal	33	9,850	18
3	Dominic Thiem	26	7,045	21
4	Roger Federer	38	6,630	16
5	Daniil Medvedev	24	5,890	23
6	Stefanos Tsitsipas	21	4,745	26
7	Alexander Zverev	22	3,630	25
8	Matteo Berrettini	23	2,860	21
9	Gael Monfils	33	2,860	22
10	David Goffin	29	2,555	27
11	Fabio Fognini	32	2,400	24
12	Roberto Bautista Agut	31	2,360	23
13	Diego Schwartzman	27	2,265	23
14	Andrey Rublev	22	2,234	24
15	Karen Khachanov	23	2,120	27

Shafali – the Viru of women's cricket

I realised that this kid, not even 12, was something special: coach Ashwani

T20 WORLD CUP

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

Her bat-swing is the prominent feature of Shafali Verma's presence at the crease. Off the field, it is her attitude towards cricket. When she combines them, it becomes a lethal weapon. The bowlers suffer as this little dynamite wades into the attack, scattering the ball with a robust touch, peppering the stands with sixes.

In Rohtak, they come to watch her practise with the boys, leaving them stunned by her cricketing prowess. They call her the Viru (Sehaji) of women's cricket.

Shafali's coach, Ashwani Kumar, is a man of few words. He concentrates on giving his pupils the best of facilities at the Shri Ram Rain Cricket Coaching Centre with support from Neeraj Dahiya of the centre. "I remember Shafali as a puny kid coming with her father (Sanjeev) to learn cricket. There are no dedicated cricket academies for girls in Haryana and I agreed to take her in because she was so persis-



Teen prodigy: Shafali Verma with her first coach, Ashwani Kumar, left, and Neeraj Dahiya of SRNCC. Also seen is Shafali's younger sister Nancy. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tent," recalled Ashwani, a former First Class cricketer.

Besting the boys

Shafali batted for 10 days and made a huge impression with her timing and power. "I pushed her into the camps for 14-16 age group and she created space for herself. Later, at an off-season camp,

she joined boys in the 15-16 age group and I realised that this kid, not even 12, was something special. She was hitting the ball harder than some of the boys," said Ashwani.

In the 2018-19 season, Shafali participated in almost all the age group tournaments and scored consistently. A vi-

sit to the National Cricket Academy (NCA) last June propelled Shafali up. Former India wicketkeeper Ajay Ratra saw her batting and lost no time in informing Ashwani that she was an "exceptional" hitter of the ball.

Made for T20

"Her hitting ability was diffe-

rent. I could sense she has a future. Her style may look raw, fearless, but she is made for T20. It is good that she doesn't know the reputation of the opponents. Any ball in her range will be smashed," said Ratra, who also played for Haryana.

Ashwani next put Shafali in the practice session with the Haryana Ranji team. "She was quick to adapt," he remembered.

"I also kept her engaged as a wicketkeeper but it was her batting against the men that took the breath away.

Flamboyant

"She is flamboyant in her own way. Look at her cover-drive. It is from the book."

Roped in as brand ambassador by Pepsi, the 16-year-old Shafali holds the key to India's success in the ICC T20 World Cup where it is pitted against Australia in the final on Sunday.

"All I have told her is that she also needs to take ones and twos," said Ashwani. The team, however, loves Shafali as the dashing opener who compulsively looks to belt the ball.

Veda says it's meant to be India

First target of reaching final achieved, says 'finisher'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MELBOURNE

Senior India batter Veda Krishnamurti says her team seems destined to win the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in its maiden final appearance provided it keeps its nerve against four-time champion Australia here on Sunday.

Australia achieved the team's first target of reaching the final, Veda said the Indians need to hold their nerve and remain focused on the big day.

"We said the first aim was to get to the final and take it from there. We've crossed the first stage. We need to make sure we hold our nerve and we do what we have to do on the final day," she said.

against England was washed out on Thursday.

Veda, who was part of the Indian team that finished runner-up to England in the 2017 Women's ODI World Cup, understands the pain of missing out on a world title. "Being in the final is just reward for the way we played in the group stages," she said.

Having achieved the team's first target of reaching the final, Veda said the Indians need to hold their nerve and remain focused on the big day.

"We said the first aim was to get to the final and take it from there. We've crossed the first stage. We need to make sure we hold our nerve and we do what we have to do on the final day," she said.

India has a better recent record, with Harmanpreet's outfit chasing down 173 in the recent tri-series and beating Australia by 17 runs in the World Cup opener.

But all's not well for Veda on the personal front. She recovered from a series of single-digit scores in the tri-series.



Finding form: Veda put her indifferent form behind with a flourish at the finish against Bangladesh. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Starc to watch T20 World Cup final

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MELBOURNE

Pace spearhead Mitchell Starc was released from Australia's tour of South Africa on Friday so he can return home to watch his wife Alyssa Healy in the women's Twenty20 World Cup final.

The decision means Starc will miss the third

one-dayer against the Proteas in Potchefstroom, the last game of the series.

Once-in-a-lifetime chance

"It is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for Mitch to watch Alyssa in a home World Cup final," said coach Justin Langer.

"So we were happy to

allow him to return home to support his wife and be part of a fantastic occasion.

"We have plenty of fast bowling options with us here in South Africa.

Josh Hazlewood, Jhye Richardson and Kane Richardson all sitting out our previous match in Bloemfontein," he added.

+

IPL very much on schedule: Ganguly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KOLKATA

The IPL is "very much on schedule," said BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Friday, asserting that all measures will be in place to tackle the rapidly-spreading novel coronavirus that has wreaked havoc on sporting calendars globally.

The IPL gets underway on March 29 in Mumbai.

"IPL is very much on. Everywhere the tournaments are going on. England are already in Sri Lanka. South Africa are coming here. There are no issues," Ganguly asserted.

CSA dispels fears about ODI series

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

South Africa will travel to India for the three-match one-day series starting on March 12. Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Friday issued a statement to dispel fears that the series may be called off due to the threat from coronavirus.

The CSA stated, "None of the playing venues – Dharamshala, Lucknow and Kolkata – have recorded positive cases and travel between these cities will be via chartered flights reducing the risk even further."

Hardik, Bhuvi and Dhawan set for comeback

India's three-match home series against the Proteas begins on March 12

SOUTH AFRICA ODIS

AMOL KARHADKAR MUMBAI

Sunil Joshi's first meeting as the selection committee chairman is likely to be more of an injury update as the selectors will take a stock of three sidelined players who have made a strong comeback this week during an invitational T20 tournament in Navi Mumbai.

Hardik Pandya, Shikhar Dhawan and Bhuvneshwar Kumar have all represented Reliance 1 in the D.Y. Patil T20 tournament which has emerged as a star-studded

prelude to the IPL over the last decade.

With all three having recovered from their respective injuries, they are set to be recalled into India's ODI squad for the three-match series against South Africa, starting on March 12.

While Dhawan and Bhuvneshwar's return is all but inevitable with Rohit Sharma injured and Mohammed Shami set to be rested, Hardik Pandya's return will depend on the fitness update on his back. The rejigged selection panel is likely to test his fitness ahead of a rigorous IPL.

While Dhawan (shoulder

injury) and Bhuvneshwar (hernia surgery) have been steadily getting back into their strides, Hardik has had a remarkable comeback. After scoring a 39-ball 101 and picking up five wickets in a match earlier in the week, the swashbuckling all-rounder blasted a 58-ball 158 (6x4, 20x6) against Shreyas Iyer-led Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) on Friday.

The allrounder's return after a back operation last year had been prolonged, with Hardik being pulled out of India and India-A's recent tours to New Zealand.



Afghanistan beats Ireland

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE GREATER NOIDA

Afghanistan defeated Ireland by 11 runs in the first of three Twenty20s on Friday as Najibullah Zadran smashed an unbeaten 42 in a rain-affected fixture.

Ireland made 172 for six as Paul Stirling smashed a quickfire 60 and fellow opener Kevin O'Brien 35.

In reply, Afghanistan was 133 for five in 15 overs and was ruled winner by 11 runs via DLS method.

Russell on the rampage

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PALLEKELE

Andre Russell hit six sixes in a blistering 14-ball innings as West Indies smashed its way to a seven-wicket victory over Sri Lanka to seal the two-match Twenty20 series on Friday.

The West Indian bowlers limited Sri Lanka 155 for six and then Brandon King struck 43 (21b, 6x4, 2x6) and Russell made 40 (14b, 6x6) as West Indies raced to 158 for three in 17 overs.

The scores: Sri Lanka 155/6 in 20 overs (D. Shanaka 31 n.o., F. Allen 2/34) lost to West Indies 158/3 in 17 overs (Brandon King 43, S. Hetmyer 43, A. Russell 40 n.o.).

+

Liton and Tamim star for Bangladesh

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE SYLHET

Liton Das and Tamim Iqbal became the first Bangladesh opening pair to score a hundred each as Bangladesh posted 322 for two against Zimbabwe in the rain-hit third ODI on Friday.

In reply, the visitors were bowled out for 218 in the 38th over. Only Sikandar Razza (61) and Wesley Madhevere (42) offered some resistance. Mohammad Saifuddin took four for 41 for the hosts.

Liton hit 176 off 143 balls, the highest ever for Bangladesh, while Tamim stayed unbeaten on 128 off 109 balls as the duo put on 292

Rutuja continues fine form, wins opener

Ankita goes down to En Shuo Liang

FED CUP

SPORTS BUREAU DUBAI

It boiled down to doubles yet again as India battled Chinese Taipei in the Fed Cup Asia-Oceania group-1 women's tennis tournament here on Friday.

It was a challenge for the former World No. 1 Sania Mirza to keep the Indian hopes alive, of qualifying for the World Group playoff, as she partnered Ankita Raina for the doubles, playing against Latisha Chan and En Shuo Liang, at the time of Friday.

Earlier, Rutuja was at her fighting best, warding off three match-points from being down 1-4 and 4-5 in the decider, winning a battle of wits against 15-year-old left-hander Ya Yi Yang, in two hours and 44 minutes.

The 23-year-old Rutuja, a former Asian junior champion, converted her second match-point in the tie-break, for a 6-3, 3-6, 7-6(6) victory.

It was the third victory on the trot for the 433rd-ranked Rutuja, who had won her matches against Uzbekistan and Korea, after having put up a good show against world No. 35 Shuai Zhang in the first tie against top seed China.

The results (league): India 1 Chinese Taipei 1 (Rutuja Bholase bt Ya Yi Yang 6-3, 3-6, 7-6(6); Ankita Raina lost to En Shuo Liang 6-3, 2-6, 3-6).

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TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.**South Africa vs Australia:** 3rd ODI, Sony Six (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 p.m., 8.30 p.m. & 11 p.m.**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m., 10.30 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)**ISL:** Star Sports 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.**Davis Cup:** Croatia vs India, D Sport, 7.30 p.m.**Legends World Series T20:** India vs West Indies, Colors Cinemax & Colors Kannada Cinema (SD & HD), 7 p.m.**Bundesliga:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 8 p.m. & 10.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF

**Leonard sizzles in Rockets rout**

Reigning play-off MVP Kawhi Leonard scored a team-high 25 points as Los Angeles Clippers won its sixth straight game with a 120-105 rout of Houston Rockets on Thursday.

The results: Nuggets 114 bt Hornets 112; Clippers 120 bt Rockets 105; 76ers 125 bt Kings 108; Raptors 121 bt Warriors 113. AGENCE**Hazard undergoes successful surgery**

Real Madrid star and Belgian international Eden Hazard has undergone successful surgery on his broken right foot, the Spanish La Liga leader said on Thursday. "Eden Hazard has successfully undergone surgery today in Dallas on a fracture in the fibula of his right foot. The operation was supervised by Real Madrid Medical Services. Hazard will now remain under observation until he gets the all clear to begin his rehabilitation process," Real Madrid said in a statement. AFP

**Mane urges Liverpool to be fired up**

Sadio Mane has urged Liverpool to use the worst week of its season as fuel to power the Premier League leader a step closer to the title when it faces Bournemouth on Saturday. "We have another important game on Saturday and then on Wednesday, so we will be ready and we will be back again. We just have to keep working hard and keep going if we want to be great champions," he said. AFP

**Murray hopes to return in Miami Open**

Andy Murray hopes to make his latest comeback at this month's Miami Open as fuel to power the former World No. 1 battles to recover from his injury woes. "I'm training to try and get ready for Miami. I've done so much rehab these last few months that, in terms of my strength and everything, all of the muscles around the hip are working well, it's just I hadn't played tennis," Murray told Amazon Prime Video. AFP

Chennaiyin FC favourite to make the final

FC Goa has uphill task after big reverse in the first leg

ISL

K. KEERTHIVASAN
FATORDA

Under head coach Owen Coyle, Chennaiyin FC (CFC) has turned things around in a manner seldom witnessed in the short history of ISL.

From being ninth in the table after the first six matches, CFC has fought back in style and remained unbeaten in its last nine games – a club record.

With a 4-1 cushion over FC Goa from the semifinal first leg in Chennai, CFC is brimming with confidence and will be the favourite in the second leg at the Nehru Stadium here on Saturday. Goa now needs to win by a margin of more than three goals to make it to the summit

**Training hard:** Chennaiyin FC players are put through their paces during a practice session. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

clash. The 53-year-old Coyle sounded optimistic of the away team's chances of making it to the final.

"In the last eight games, we took more points than anybody."

"We know we have good

players, we have shown the desire and fire. We didn't lose in the last five away games where we have shown

different aspects to our play," he said. CFC forward Andre Schembri described the change in club's fortunes to

We are not short of talent: Atapattu

'Grooming and polishing the talent is something we haven't done properly'

SHAYAN ACHARYA
MUMBAI**Marvan Atapattu.****■ SHAYAN ACHARYA****C** It's a long process. Cricketers don't just sort of come from nowhere

But over the years, things have changed.

With some senior players retiring, Sri Lanka has been largely inconsistent. And Atapattu believes that there has to be proper planning, right from the grassroots level.

"Let's put it very simply – the term transition doesn't work with me. It's lack of planning. I think there are too many things, too many cooks."

"We are not short of talent, but then, grooming and polishing the talent is something that we haven't done properly," Atapattu told *Sportstar* on Friday.

In the city for the Unacademy Road Safety World Series, the former Sri Lanka captain was concerned about his team's recent performances on the big stage.

Long process

"We have not been good except in the last one-day series. Of course, in Tests, we aren't doing too badly. It's a long process. Cricketers don't just sort of come from nowhere. They need to be groomed, given a very strong foundation in terms of technique and personality."

"You do that and the sustainability of a cricketer last longer. And that is what Sri Lanka has to sort of think and do the right things from the grassroots level," the 49-year-old said.

With the T20 World Cup lined up this year, does he expect Lasith Malinga to lead Sri Lanka?

"I really don't know what the plans are. I am a believer that you should not question the selectors when they are in the job. But when they are out of the job, they can be questioned and they are answerable," he said.

"It's a learning curve for

Another win keeps Harika in joint lead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAUSANNE

Indian Grandmaster D. Harika posted a second straight win, beating Nana Dzagnidze in the fourth round to remain in joint lead at the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess tournament here.

Harika, the World no.9, has three points after four rounds and shares the lead with Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia, who beat Anto Stefanova (Bulgaria).

Harika outclassed her Georgian opponent late on Thursday in 27 moves in a queen pawn opening capitalising on an error in the 25th move. She faces the 21-year-old Goryachkina in the fifth round. In a surprise result,

Zhanasya Abdumalik of Kazakhstan (Elo 2471) defeated former world champion and higher-rated Alexandra Kosteniuk (Russia, Elo 2504) in 37 moves.

World champion Ju Wenjun of China was held to a draw by Anna Muzychuk (Ukraine) on Thursday. She is in 11th spot with 1.5 points.

The results: (Fourth round): D. Harika 3 bt Nana Dzagnidze (Geo); Ju Wenjun (Chn) 1.5 drew with Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 2.5; Marie Sebag (Fra) 1.5 drew with Mariya Muzychuk (Ukr); Alexandra Goryachkina (Rus) 3 bt Antoneta Stefanova (Bul) 1.5; Zhanasya Abdumalik (Kaz) 0.5; Alina Kashlinskaya (Rus) 2.5 drew with Pia Cramling (Swe) 2.

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For now, it's business as usual

COVID-19 effect — national team coaches adopt wait and watch policy

HOCKEY

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

The coronavirus outbreak, which has forced the cancellation of several sports events around the world, has affected the preparation plans of the Indian hockey teams in this crucial Olympic year.

The women's team tour to China, scheduled to be held from March 14 to 25, was cancelled due to concerns over the virus.

The women's Asian Champions Trophy to be held in South Korea in June could also be hit.

A tour of the Netherlands and Germany next month could be the only chance for the women to gain match-fit ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

The men's team, on the other hand, is set to play FIH Pro League matches in England, Spain, Argentina and Germany. It remains to be seen if these tours go on as per schedule.

Faced with circumstanc-



Ideal plan: Women's team coach Sjoerd Marijne would like to play many official matches before the Olympics.

■ BISWARANJAN ROUT



Coachspeak: Graham Reid says that the men's team is trying to stay on top of the situation and training normally.

■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

es beyond their control, the players have stuck to their training programmes to prepare as best they can.

"We would ideally like to play many official matches before the Olympics, but we can't do anything about the coronavirus problem."

"The tour to the Netherlands and Germany — we hope it happens. We will just keep training hard," India women's coach Sjoerd Marijne said here on Friday.

"The Asian Champions

Trophy is too far away to worry about now, but yes, we understand that it could be cancelled.

"For now, we will assume that it is on and carry on with our training. We have to adapt to the situation. There's no point in complaining," Marijne added.

The Indian men's team coach Graham Reid echoed Marijne's sentiments, stating that is business as usual. "We're trying to stay on top of what is happening. We're

training as though everything will go on as normal," Reid said.

Concerns

Asked if he had concerns about travelling abroad for the FIH Pro League, Reid said, "Unless the FIH, World Health Organisation or the Indian Government tells us otherwise, we will assume that our tours are on."

"We have to be guided by experts. That said, you

don't want to be caught in a situation where you cannot return to your own country. That is a concern," Reid said.

General health guidelines — avoiding handshakes, washing hands regularly and so on — are in place to keep the players free from illnesses.

"I don't shake hands anyway," Marijne said, before folding his hands to end the media interaction with a 'Namaste'.

ISSF alerts about uncertainty of Delhi World Cup

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) has alerted the member nations about the proposal from the organisers of the World Cup in Delhi, scheduled to be held from March 15, to postpone the event to May/June, so as to help them plan their travel.



Raninder Singh. ■ FILE PHOTO

from May 5 to 12, and the shotgun events from June 2 to 9.

Withdrawals

In a press release, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) president Raninder Singh stated that 23 nations, 240 shooters and 114 accompanying officials had withdrawn from the confirmed original list, owing to the situation caused by the virus that has spread to 93 countries.

The NRAI stressed that it was compelled to suggest the postponement, especially owing to the possibili-

ty of some of the visiting shooters being kept in quarantine.

The ISSF stated that it was waiting for the approval of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for the extension of the Olympic qualification period.

"In case of the IOC approval, the World Cups in Munich and Baku, can also influence the outcome of the Olympic qualification", said the ISSF statement, even as it reiterated that all Olympic quota places would be allocated by May 31.

Only the 12 quota places to be decided on world rankings and a possible small number of unused quota places would require reallocation after May.

The ISSF cautioned the members, about the need to be "very careful with air tickets bookings, hotel reservations and other travel expenses due to the uncertainty of the situation in order to avoid possible financial losses."

All Tokyo venues ready on schedule

But, dark shadow of the coronavirus outbreak looms

OLYMPICS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Construction of all new permanent venues for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics is now complete, organisers said on Friday, as preparations continue despite worries over the new coronavirus outbreak.

The announcement comes as the International Olympic Committee insisted this week that a potential cancellation or postponement of the Games due to the virus was "not mentioned" at a meeting of its executive board.

The last venue, the \$523-million Tokyo Aquatics Centre for swimming, diving and artistic swimming, was "completed on schedule by the end of February," the organisers said in a press release.

The four-storey Aquatics Centre will seat 15,000 fans for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The main pool features a movable wall



Ready and waiting: The Tokyo Aquatics Centre, the last of the venues to be completed.

■ GETTY IMAGES

allowing the 50m facility to be converted into two 25m pools.

The depth of the bottom can also be adjusted.

Other permanent venues include the main Olympic stadium, which was designed by renowned Japanese architect Kengo Kuma.

It heavily features the use of wood in a nod to traditional techniques, and is designed to counter Tokyo's fierce summer heat.

The Olympics takes place from July 24-August 9, but organisers have been battling to reassure athletes and would-be spectators that the

Games remain on track despite the spread of COVID-19.

Japanese sports events from sumo to football have been cancelled or moved behind closed doors as the outbreak grows, with 97,000 infections and more than 3,300 deaths in some 85 countries.

Manchester United enters last eight

Ighalo, Shaw score in the win against Rooney's Derby

FA CUP

AGENCIES
DERBY (ENGLAND)

Odion Ighalo scored twice as Manchester United beat second tier Derby County 3-0 on Thursday to reach the FA Cup quarterfinals and leave its all-time top scorer Wayne Rooney on the losing side.

United will travel to Norwich City in the last eight after the Premier League's bottom club beat Tottenham Hotspur on penalties on Wednesday.

Derby started well but Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men took control when defender Luke Shaw broke the deadlock in the 33rd minute with a shot that bounced off the turf and over goalkeeper Kelle Roos.

Shaw then provided the



On target: Odion Ighalo, right, celebrates Manchester United's third goal with Andreas Pereira. ■ GETTY IMAGES

AICF asked to deposit ₹58.5 lakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI

The court-appointed returning officer has ordered All India Chess Federation to deposit ₹58.5 lakh towards providing remuneration to himself and for other charges to begin the election process.

Justice Kallifulla listed various election procedures contained in the National Sports Code for holding the polls in Hyderabad — a venue decided by the Madras High Court. He further said the entire exercise would involve work for more than 10 days.

Reacting to the development, AICF secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan said he had written to all State associations on the issue and further steps would be taken after getting their views.

Nepal T20 league postponed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A Twenty20 league in Nepal, which was to feature West Indies swashbuckler Chris Gayle among others, has been postponed due to the coronavirus threat, the organisers of the event have said.

According to a report in *ESPNcricinfo*, the Everest Premier League (EPL), which was to start on March 14, would be rescheduled for "the closest possible time whenever the

favourable".

The tournament was to feature the likes of Gayle, home star Sandeep Lamichhane and Mohammad Shahzad among others.

"We are naturally all sad at today's announcement of having to temporarily postpone the 2020 EPL, but we simply have to put the health and wellbeing of all Nepalis and our overseas players before everything else," the competition's managing director Aamir Akhtar was quoted as saying.

All eyes on Mary Kom, Amit Panghal

BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AMMAN (JORDAN)

London Olympics bronze medallist Mary Kom (51kg) and World Championships silver medallist Amit Panghal (52kg) will begin their quest for a Tokyo Games berth when they enter the ring at the Asian Olympic Qualifiers here on Saturday.

Mary Kom's hunger at the age of 37 has been exemplary as she sets her sights on qualifying for the Olympics for a second time.

She has been putting in

the hard yards at training a few months after earning a bronze at the World Championships, that made her the first boxer — male or female — to win a staggering eight medals from the Worlds.

The six-time world champion has been seeded second in her category and she will face New Zealand's Tasmin Benny in the first round. Two wins will take her to Tokyo in what could realistically be her last appearance at the Games.

Mary knows that this is her last Olympics and wants to do her best to close her dream with a medal. She has worked hard, especially the

reactivity work on the legs as well and has been working hard to be in good shape," said foreign coach of Indian women's boxing Raffaele Bergamasco.

Purple patch

Panghal is currently enjoying a purple patch in his career. A gold at the Asian Games was the start of his dominant show.

He then bagged another gold at the Asian Championships before winning a historic silver at the World Championships.

He starts off his campaign against Mongolia's Enkhnamadakh Kharkhuu after a

first-round bye as the top seed in his category. He has a 1-1 record against his opponent.

Panghal is upbeat on avenging his defeat in his last meeting with Kharkuu and get his campaign off to a flying start.

"Amit boxed against him before in the Asian Games and beat him one-sided. And in the World Military Games, Amit lost 5:0 to the same guy. Our plan is to create surprises in every round and am sure Amit would like to even scores as he faces his opponent tomorrow," said C.A. Kuttappa, India's head boxing coach.

THE HINDU GROUP

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When Vartej villagers crowd television showrooms

Chetan Sakariya's father will be there to see him in action in the Ranji final



Ready to deliver: Chetan Sakariya is keen to come up with an impact performance in the Ranji final against Bengal next week. • FILE PHOTO: VIVEK BENDRE

CRICKET

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Whenever Saurashtra's Ranji Trophy match has been telecast over the last couple of years, TV showrooms in and around Bhavnagar – especially in Vartej, a village on the outskirts – are flooded with residents.

One of them who is eager to see the left-arm pacer from the locality is Kanjibhai Sakariya – who for a long time drove his tempo ferrying goods – now famous in Vartej as *Chetan na pita* (Chetan's father).

No TV at home

"The house is small, so we still don't have a TV at home," reveals Sakariya Jr. "Now he has retired and I am glad he can relax a little bit at home now."

Chetan Sakariya, a left-arm swing bowler, impressed during his debut season in 2018-19, picking up 29 wickets to help Saurashtra enter the the Ranji final.

A stress fracture pegged him back this season, but the 22-year-old made a vital contribution with the willow during last week's semifinal against Gujarat.

It was Sakariya's knock of 45 and his 90-run partnership with Man-of-the-Match Arpit Vasavada that pulled Saurashtra out of trouble af-

ter being reduced to 15/5 in the second innings.

Great feeling

"It was a surreal experience. Like everyone else, I wanted to bat before the coach at our academy in Bhavnagar made me a bowler. However, to contribute with the bat in a big match was indeed a great feeling," he said.

As much as Bhavnagar and Rajkot, the epicentre of Saurashtra cricket, Sakariya reeks about Chennai being his "second home. For three years, Sakariya has been honing his skills during the off-season at the MRF Pace Foundation.

Chetan's gurus

"Glenn sir (McGrath, director at the academy) and Senthil sir (M. Senthilnathan, chief coach) have taught me everything that I know about bowling," Sakariya said.

The left-arm bowler admits his returns with the ball this season – 11 wickets at 47.63 – are far from satisfactory. He hopes to make up for it with an impact performance" during next week's final against Bengal.

While he isn't sure if his family can travel to Rajkot and see him in action for the first time, he can rest assured that Kanjibhai would be sitting outside an electronic showroom and be proud of his eldest son.

Stimac sees champion material in Indian Arrows

'Youngsters as good as any foreign player'

FOOTBALL

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI

National football coach Igor Stimac has watched three back-to-back matches featuring Indian Arrows at the Cooperage ground. He is looking for players with potential to compete for places in the Indian probables. So every game in every competitive league is an opportunity not to be wasted.

"I follow the I-League as I am looking for players," says Stimac. He attends Arrows training sessions between league games, doing his part in player development. "I tried to help them understand certain moves and am happy to help when free."

The Arrows is made up of age-group players (u-22 this season) as part of talent de-

CI watched every match of Indian Arrows and can say that in a year they will win the I-League with Indian players only.

velopment by the All India Football Federation. Captained by Vikram Pratap Singh and coached by ex-internationals S. Venkatesh (head coach) and Mahesh Gawli (assistant coach), the teenagers lost two consecutive games to East Bengal and Chennai City FC.

It drew with Punjab FC and is at present at the bottom (11th place, two wins, three draws, 10 defeats). The wins came against Churchill Brothers (away) and East Bengal (away).

Stimac observed: "I

watched every match of Indian Arrows and can say that in a year they will win the I-League with Indian players only. These young lads will win the league with 12 months of proper work (on them)."

Trust

He questioned: "Why don't we trust our kids? What is wrong with us?" The Croatian, appointed India chief coach last year, felt that no foreign player in the I-League was superior to these U-22 local players.

The federation decided to enter Indian Arrows as a way to keep the India U-17 World Cuppers together and gain experience in a senior league when the FIFA event ended two years ago.

The ISL clubs started signing these youngsters on con-

tract, but could not guarantee them first-team places. Midfielder Amarjit Singh is ex-Arrows player among the India probables for the World Cup Qualifier camp against Qatar in Bhubaneswar.

Stimac explained the decision to include a 19-year-old in the senior camp. "Amarjit is aggressive and can handle physical play." The coach felt club managements should trust young Indians instead of banking on foreigners.

"The foreigners playing here are not Ronaldo or Messi. We have players who are between 36-38 years who are earning their last money here, some of them are really good. I have nothing against them, but most of them are not good enough. We need to find a way to change things."

'Need to groom capable strikers'

Restrict number of foreigners in top-tier, says India coach

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI

National men's football team coach Igor Stimac believes it is time AFC rules regarding player composition is followed in the top tier of Indian football – the Indian Super League (ISL).

He says India will struggle to develop international-quality strikers as long as club coaches keep banking on foreigners for goals.

AFC rule

The Croatian said: "My suggestion is follow the AFC rule of 3+1 in the top tier. It is the basic rule for number of foreign players (in the first XI)." Stimac said the most successful Asian countries follow this rule and hence had found quality strikers for their national teams."



Igor Stimac. • PRASHANT NAKWANI

Anand, Humpy to lead Indian challenge

The 44th edition of the tournament will be held from August 5 to 18

CHESS OLYMPIAD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI

Five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand will lead the Indian team in the 44th Chess Olympiad to be held in Moscow in August with the legendary Vladimir Kramnik set to train the men's squad.

World No. 2 Koneru Humpy will spearhead the Indian women in the biennial event that is likely to see the participation of around 180 countries, according to a press release from the All India Chess Federation (AICF). The 44th Chess Olympiad will be held from August 5 to 18.

Apart from the 50-year old Anand, Grandmasters P. Harikrishna and Vidit Gujrathi look to be certainties in the men's team. However, it could be a close race for the remaining spots in the five-member squad.

The I-League allows five foreign players. We don't have (Indian) strikers in the I-league, except at Indian Arrows. We have a big problem, nobody wants to consider that. We need to start changing things," he said.

Sunil Chhetri's place. "We will never find the replacement for him as long as this situation continues. I cannot take someone who has never played as a striker (at the top level) and put him in the national team as striker. From where am I going to find a striker?"

The ISL Season-six list of goal-scorers has foreigners in the first six positions. Bengaluru FC captain Chettri is the first Indian at number seven. No other Indian figures among the top 10 goal-scorers.

The Asian body rules restrict the number of foreigners in the playing squads at AFC competitions to four, of whom one must be from a member nation. ISL permits five foreigners on the pitch in the first XI.

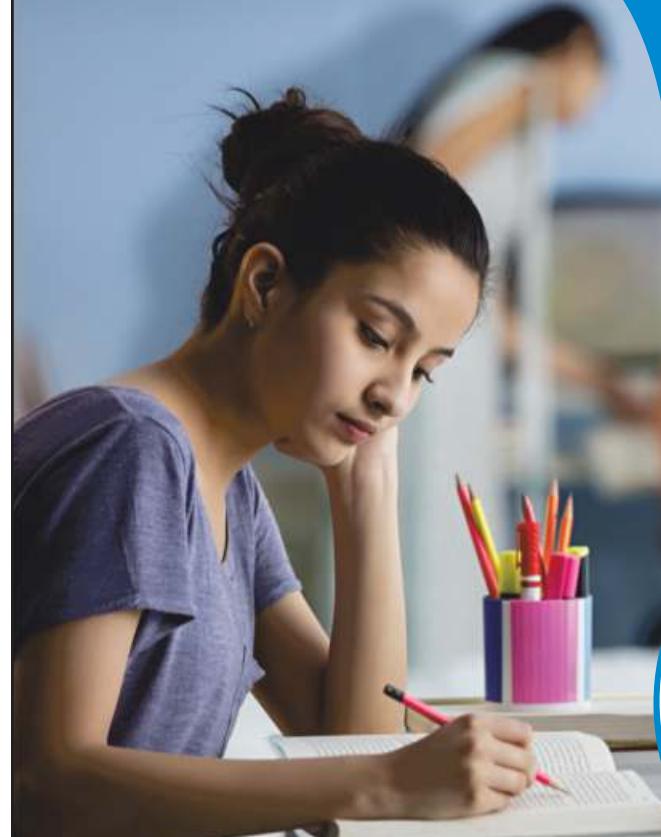
Stimac, at an interaction with the media, referred to the difficulty in developing quality goal-getters to take

a final decision on the team will be based on how the players perform in the coming months, the AICF release said. As per rules, the final decision on the composition of the team can be taken only on May 1.

The AICF also said it has plans to have former World champion Kramnik as the trainer for the men's team for at least two camps.

A decision on the coach for the women's team would also be taken soon.

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