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- Mock Interview by Eminent Civil Servants
- Discussion on Personal Profile and Detailed Application Form (DAF)
- One to One Discussion with the experts
- Video Recording of the Mock Interview

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## MOCK INTERVIEW PROGRAMME

January 17<sup>th</sup> Onwards

Office: Aspara Arcade, Nr. Karol Bagh Metro Station Gate #7  
 For Free Registration SMS or WhatsApp <Mock\_Name> to

9873643487

### NEARBY



'Kejriwal's daughter receives death threat'

NEW DELHI  
 Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's daughter has received a death threat via email, government sources said on Saturday. The email was received on the Chief Minister's official email address on January 9.

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## BSP-SP alliance ignores Cong.

Each party will contest 38 seats; Mayawati says the tie-up will be stable

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) will contest the 2019 Lok Sabha election as an alliance in Uttar Pradesh. Each party will field candidates in 38 of the 80 Lok Sabha constituencies, effectively leaving no space for the Congress.

Making the announcement here at a much-anticipated joint press conference with SP president Akhilesh Yadav, BSP chief Mayawati said their "historic" coming-together would "rob [Prime Minister] Narendra Modi and [BJP president] Amit Shah of their sleep." She described the alliance as a sig-



Historic coming-together: Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav at the press conference in Lucknow on Saturday. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

nal for a "new political revolution."

The alliance was capable of stopping the BJP from returning to power at the Centre, provided the party

did not "tamper with EVMs as it did earlier" or stoke the "religious sentiments of people in the name of Ram Mandir," she said.

Responding to questions

from reporters, Ms. Mayawati said the alliance was *sthathi* (permanent) and will "continue for long," including for the 2022 Assembly election in the State.

Asked whether he would support Ms. Mayawati for the post of Prime Minister, Mr. Yadav provided a diplomatic answer, saying, "U.P. has always given a PM, and I will be happy if the PM again comes from U.P."

While the two parties decided to exclude the Congress from the anti-BJP alliance, they will not field candidates in Amethi and Rae Bareli.

She eked out a living by binding books in a nearby town after her husband died in an accident. She had to move out with her three children because her in-laws had thrown her out and her father had vowed never to see her again.

March 24, 1971, is the cut-off date for detecting and deporting illegal immigrants in Assam, under an accord signed in 1985 to end a violent six-year agitation.

Life, despite the hardship, was fairly good for Deepika Devi until after July 30, 2018, when she found out that she and most members of her family – two sons, a daughter-in-law and two grandsons – had been excluded from the complete draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

#### ALLIANCE MEANT TO PROTECT OPPRESSED: MAYAWATI ▶ PAGE 10

### Recall Alok Verma: Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday demanded that former CBI chief Alok Verma be reinstated after Justice A.K. Patnaik, who had supervised the Central Vigilance Commission report against Mr. Verma, called his removal "very hasty."

"The committee must be reconvened immediately and Mr. Verma must be reappointed till the panel fully investigates and inquires into the allegations," Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said at a press conference.

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## 'Legacy person' clause hits those left out of NRC draft

31.2 lakh reapplied, but many fear being excluded again

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI



Ray of hope: The claims window was given to 40.07 lakh applicants left out of the draft, among 3.29 crore residents.

cluded from the complete NRC draft, to be on the list again after submission of relevant citizenship documents. About 31.2 lakh people reapplied, but there are fears many of them would be excluded again after scrutiny by June 30.

The 'extra' name, though, would not have been an issue for Deepika Devi had another family from southern Assam's Haikakandi not claimed and established a link to a "legacy person" whose name was the same as her father's. A legacy person is someone who figures in a set of pre-1971 documents such as the 1951 NRC and voters' lists up to 1971, who an applicant can trace his or her lineage to.

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 HEAD OF PANEL ON ASSAM  
 ACCORD QUILTS ▶ SECTION 2 PAGE 1

## Oppn. coalition wants weak govt. to carry on corruption: Modi

Prime Minister calls grand alliance a failed experiment

### Resolution draws battle lines

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday defined the contours of the BJP's campaign for the 2019 general election, calling it a face-off between a "ram-shackle" Opposition coalition that wanted to form a *majboor* (helpless) government that would allow it to continue its *dukandari* (transactional corruption), and the NDA that wanted a *mazboot* (strong) government.

"We want a strong govern-

courageous leader" and an "opportunistic alliance" of the Opposition parties whose leader was unknown. It urged workers to draw the "right lessons" from the loss in three States in the Assembly polls. ▶ PAGE 11

ment so that we can put an end to corruption. These days there is a failed experiment taking place in the country which is known as the grand alliance. They

don't want a strong government which will lead to shutting down of their shops," he said at the national council.

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DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 10

## 8th NES International Science & Technology Festival-2019

organised by

### NES International School Mumbai - IB World School & NES International School Dombivli - IB World School

along with their parent body

National Education Society(NES) and Saraswathi Vidya Bhavan(SVB)

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Dr. Arun Raaza  
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Founder-CEO, ARCOMM Tech Solutions



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Education Minister  
Govt. of Western Australia



Mr. Shahyaz Yezdi Mubaraki  
Australian Labor Party,  
Member of Parliament



Dr. S. M. Khened  
Director,  
Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai



Dr. A. P. Jayaraman  
Senior Nuclear Scientist,  
BARC



Dr. R. Varadarajan  
Secretary-General, SAIBSA



Mr. Kaisar Dopaishi  
President - SAIBSA



Dr. Rajesh Parikhad  
India Representative  
Ext. Relations Min. Royal Society of Chemistry



Mr. Peter Baldwin  
Commissioner, South Asia,  
Govt. of Western Australia.



Ms. Elizabeth Ann Carey  
Chief of Staff to Minister Ellery



Mr. Jamal Qureshi  
Director Education  
South Asia, Govt. of Western Australia

12th-17th January, 2019

213+ working models on display by 812 students

39 IB Schools participating from India and South Asian countries

1st Anniversary of NESISM STEAM Research Lab for young scientists to experiment & innovate

14 competitions for young scientists

12 distinguished guests from India and abroad gracing the occasion

For IB Educators : Best Paper Presentation on Unique Teaching Methods adopted in the classrooms

1st prize Trip to USA

Celebrating the Launch of 2019 International Year of the Periodic Table, as declared by UNO.

5000+ Visitors

Teachers' Seminar on : 2nd National STEM Story Festival

Edutainment : Use of Technology in Inquiry-Based Science Learning Dr. Tom Hsu Professor, MIT, Boston, USA

State-of-the-Art Robotics (Artificial Intelligence and Mechanotronics) Dr. Arun Raaza Swanson University, UK. Founder-CEO, ARCOMM Tech Solutions

Science Challenge - DIY & Science Magic Show - MPR

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CM YK

Day 1 Saturday, 12th Jan, 2019

Inauguration of 8th NES International Science & Technology Festival Competitions for IB Schools across the country and abroad (for students and educators )

Day 2 Sunday, 13th Jan, 2019

NES-SVB Group of 65 Institutions-Exhibition of the Scientific Working Models put up by professional colleges in Mumbai. Organised by our SVB's College of Pharmacy, Dombivli & NES Ratnam College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Bhandup.

Day 3 Monday, 14th Jan, 2019

8th NES International Science & Technology Festival -exclusively for NES International School Mumbai & NES International School Dombivli

Day 4 Thursday, 17th Jan., 2019

NESISM-EYP International Science and Technology Festival

## IN BRIEF



Uri, Accidental Prime Minister screening today

Two back-to-back screenings of either "controversial or pro-Prime Minister Narendra Modi" Bollywood films will be organised by "members of the general public" who happen to be close to the Delhi BJP unit here on Sunday. A show of *Uri: the Surgical Strike* will take place at 11.30 a.m., while one for *The Accidental Prime Minister* is scheduled at 7.30 p.m. at the same venue: the Delite Theatre near Delhi Gate. Members of the media were issued invites for both. According to one of the organisers, the screenings were being organised as a matter of course and not by the party's Delhi unit.

STAFF REPORTER

Air quality of Delhi-NCR	
Delhi	423
Ghaziabad	437
Noida	441
Good 0-50	51-100
Poor 201-300	301-400
Very poor 401->401	Severe
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) [SOURCE: CPCB]	

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) [SOURCE: CPCB]

NEW DELHI

City's AQI severe, rainfall may bring respite

Delhi's air quality was recorded in severe category Saturday due to reduced wind speed even as authorities have forecast rainfall in the next couple of days which they said might lower the pollution level. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, the overall air quality index (AQI) in the city was 423, which falls in the 'severe' category. PTI

# Kejriwal playing politics over cow shelters, says BJP leader

Problems related to *gaushalas* cannot be tackled by 'simply visiting' them: Gupta

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

"Strongly condemning" what it termed as "politics" being played by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on the issue of *gaushalas*, the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday argued that problems related to such facilities could not be tackled by "simply visiting" them.

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly Vijender Gupta argued that the responsibility of looking after *gaushalas* rested with the Delhi government and could not be "tackled by simply visiting a *gaushala*" as cows were "forced to roam and sit on roads causing accidents" due to paucity of space.

"I have raised the issue of increasing the capacity of the existing *gaushalas* and opening new ones in the Capital a number of times, but the Kejriwal government did not take any action in relation to the matter; the problem of cows occupying the roads, creating filth and accidents...persists and...the people of Delhi continue to suffer [in addition to cows],"

alleged Mr. Gupta. "I urged Mr. Kejriwal to visit various parts of the Capital to see the roads occupied by the cattle. Cows are forced to come onto the streets as there is no space available in cow shelters where civic agencies can send them," Mr. Gupta said.

He also appealed to the government to "rise above politics" and take steps for increasing the capacity of existing cow shelters and open new ones with proper arrangements to keep them and to provide proper fodder.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal offers prayers to a cow at a *gaushala* in Bawana. ■ FILE PHOTO

the purpose and on the other wanted to "avoid its own responsibility by passing on the blame" to the civic bodies.

## CM least aware

While Mr. Kejriwal spoke about visiting *gaushalas* in Haryana, Mr. Gupta alleged, the Chief Minister was "least aware of their bad condition in Delhi" which happened to be ruled by his own party.

"I urged Mr. Kejriwal to visit various parts of the Capital to see the roads occupied by the cattle. Cows are forced to come onto the streets as there is no space available in cow shelters where civic agencies can send them," Mr. Gupta said.

He also appealed to the government to "rise above politics" and take steps for increasing the capacity of existing cow shelters and open new ones with proper arrangements to keep them and to provide proper fodder.

## Kejriwal to visit three Haryana *gaushalas*

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

After visiting a cow shelter in Delhi's Bawana on Friday, Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal would be visiting three *gaushalas* in neighbouring Haryana in as many days, according to AAP sources.

Mr. Kejriwal is expected to visit a *gaushala* in Saidpur village in Sonipat on Sunday, followed by cow shelters in Mokhra village in Rohtak on January 14 and Hissar on January 15.

## Bawana visit

During his visit to the *gaushala* in Bawana, Mr. Kejriwal said he had been invited by people from Haryana to visit the cow shelters in their

State.

Referring to the delayed payment for fodder by the BJP-ruled municipal corporation to the Bawana cow shelter, Mr. Kejriwal had said "those who asked for votes in the name of cows did not even provide fodder".

## Fodder scam

AAP Haryana convener Naresh Jaihind said the Manohar Lal Khattar-led government would "get the curse of *gau mata*" as it had not fulfilled its promises.

Mr. Jaihind added that cows were roaming on the streets and were forced to eat garbage, while there was a "fodder scam" in the State that could challenge the one in Bihar.

# Rajnath to honour former AAP leader Phoolka, Shayara Bano

BJP insiders see it as sign of his 'growing closeness' to party

JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI

In what BJP insiders termed his "growing closeness to the party" senior advocate and former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab legislator H.S. Phoolka will be felicitated by senior BJP leaders, including Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, and veteran Delhi BJP leader Vijay Goel, on Sunday.



I suggest that too much not be read into this; it is a ceremony aimed at felicitating one by a friend...what reason is there for one not to honour such an invite? I have already said that I will not be contesting any election

H.S. PHOOLKA  
Senior advocate and former AAP Punjab legislator

ruption movement into a political party in 2012, Mr. Phoolka had said in reference to the transformation of the Team Anna movement into the AAP, "was wrong"; adding that he would float his own "non-political outfit" which will seek to battle the drug epidemic in Punjab in addition to "depoliticising" the SGPC.

When asked whether he agreed with the interpretation of sources from within his own party regarding Mr. Phoolka's "growing closeness" with him, Mr. Goel, who had in reference to his resignation from the AAP said "Better late than never" also chose to answer in the negative.

"All I can say is that Mr. Phoolka, who is an old friend, deserved to be felicitated for the lone, but successful, battle which he waged for the Sikhs and so does Ms. Bano," the Union Minister told *The Hindu*.

Sources from the BJP, however, continued to claim that the party's doors were open to the legal veteran and it was "up to him to announce whether or not he was in favour of, or had decided to, join the BJP."

## AAP highlights BJP, Cong's 'corruption, lies'

Party statement comes amidst talks of alliance with Congress in the LS poll

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Reminding party workers about their "dream of a corruption-free India", AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Friday evening that the "Congress started the train of corruption and Modiji is driving it now".

Mr. Kejriwal was speaking to AAP office-bearers and workers for the East Delhi constituency as a part of the AAP's Lok Sabha seat-wise meetings to discuss plans for the upcoming elections.

Started on Thursday with South Delhi, the meetings at Mr. Kejriwal's residence will go on till January 16.

On Saturday, Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai addressed the meeting for New Delhi constituency. Mr. Sisodia hit out against what he termed was the "politics of lies" of the BJP and the Congress.

The two AAP leaders statements come in the backdrop of talks between the AAP and the Congress for a potential alliance in the Lok Sabha

poll, according to several sources in the two parties.

According to an AAP statement on Saturday, Mr. Kejriwal had told the group of East Delhi workers that the "dream of a corruption-free India still remains unfulfilled". "The Congress started the train of corruption and Modiji is driving it now. The faces have changed but corruption remains. We all need to come together to free this country of the evils of corruption. We have done it before, when we overthrew the corrupt Congress regime

in the last general election," he said. He reiterated what he had told the South Delhi workers on Thursday, that AAP workers would have to explain to Delhiites that a vote for the Congress would only benefit the BJP as the votes between the Congress and the AAP would get split.

Speaking to workers, Mr. Sisodia said, "The BJP and the Congress are indulging in politics of lies". He told the workers that they would have to take the message of the Delhi government's work to the public.

## 'Striking teachers yet to hear from DU admin.'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi University's ad hoc teachers, who are on a hunger strike since January 4 demanding their immediate absorption and same benefits as given to permanent teachers, said on Saturday they were yet to hear from the varsity administration.

A group of 20 ad hoc teachers of the Delhi University began the hunger strike outside the Faculty of Arts. The teachers have also written to the HRD Ministry demanding its intervention in the matter, a professor said.

The teachers are demanding their absorption and benefits that are given to permanent employees like paid maternity leave, retirement benefits, etc. He said they have not heard anything from the administration which has been "apathetic" towards them.

The professor said they plan to intensify their stir in the coming days if the administration will not hear their plea. There are 4,600 ad hoc teachers working in the Delhi University. They have all the required qualifications prescribed by the University Grants Commission.

## FIITJEE to refund part of course fee to student

Candidates paid fees for course irrespective of whether they continued or not

We hold that the opposite party [FIITJEE] has committed unfair trade practice by collecting fees for two years in one go

DISTRICT CONSUMER DISPUTES  
REDSRESS FORUM

we partly allow the complaint and direct [FIITJEE] to refund the 10 months fees taken by them from the complainant...as the complainant left the institute after attending classes for more than a year."

The consumer panel also referred to a previous judgment passed by the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) which had said, "...an educational institution can only charge prescribed fee for one semester or year. If an institution feels that any par-

ticular student may leave in midstream [midway] then, at the highest, it may require that student to give a bond or bank guarantee..."

## Poor facilities

Complainant Gautam Saha had alleged he had enrolled his son at the institute after paying over ₹1.87 lakh for a two-year course.

However, due to poor facilities and "humiliation faced" by the complainant's son in the class, he had to discontinue the course, it was alleged.

refund a part of the fee submitted, the consumer panel said, "We hold that the opposite party [FIITJEE] has committed unfair trade practice by collecting fees for two years in one go. Accordingly,

the directions came following a complaint that alleged that students were made to pay fees for a two-year course irrespective of whether the student continued the course at the institute.

Directing the institute to

hold the fees for the remaining period, the panel said, "We hold that the opposite party [FIITJEE] has committed unfair trade practice by collecting fees for two years in one go."

FIITJEE has agreed to refund the fees for the remaining period.

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FIITJ

# Man mocked at, stabbed to death; one held

Victims ridiculed for sitting around bonfire 'like women'; manhunt for absconding accused on

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old man was stabbed to death and his friend sustained injuries allegedly after being "mocked" at in east Delhi's Trilokpuri on Thursday night, the police said on Saturday. The police have arrested one person in connection with the case.

A quarrel which broke out between two groups led to the murder.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Pankaj Singh said that the deceased has been identified as Ankit Kumar, who worked as a security



Deceased Ankit Kumar

guard with a private company, and the injured has been identified as Suresh. The accused, identified as Shubham, was arrest-

ed on Saturday while the police are currently looking for his accomplices who were also allegedly involved in the crime.

The police said that on Thursday night, Ankit and Suresh were sitting around a bonfire in Block 14, when their neighbours Shubham, Sachin, Vishal and Annu came and mocked them for "sitting around the bonfire like women". The victims took offence and an argument ensued between the two groups after which Ankit and Suresh allegedly slapped accused Shubham.

Shubham and his friends then allegedly assaulted the victims. Annu and Vishal held the two, while Sachin and Shubham stabbed them multiple times, the police said. The victims called for help, after which their families intervened. The police said that Shubham's father also sustained minor injuries in the incident.

Ankit and Suresh were rushed to Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital where Ankit succumbed to injuries on Saturday morning. Suresh is still undergoing treatment, the police also said.

Based on complaints from both sides, the police

## Kejriwal's daughter receives death threat'

'She has been provided PSO for now'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's daughter has received a death threat via email, government sources have claimed.

The message was received on the Chief Minister's official email address on January 9, the sources said.

"The Delhi government had forwarded the threat email to Delhi Police Commissioner three days ago. The government has not been given any information so far by the police," said the government spokesperson.

Government sources also said that the Chief Minister's Office was then told by the police that while his

daughter would be provided security from the security unit after the conclusion of an exercise to gauge the threat perception, the district police would provide a Personal Security Officer (PSO) in the meantime.

Police sources said that the matter is being looked into by Delhi Police's Special Cell and confirmed that they have received a complaint regarding the matter.

"We have received a complaint regarding a death threat to Mr. Kejriwal's daughter and we are working on it," said a senior police officer.

The assigned PSO accompanied Mr. Kejriwal's daughter to her place of employment in Gurugram on Friday, a police source said.

## Massive fire breaks out at Power Ministry office

No injury has been reported: officials

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A massive fire broke out at the office of Ministry of Power at CGO Complex in south Delhi's Pragati Vihar on Saturday morning. No injury has been reported.

A fire official said that they received a call regarding the fire around 9.30 a.m. "An employee from the complex made the call and 23 fire tenders were pressed into service. The fire broke out on the first floor of Block 14 at CGO Complex where there officers of the Power Ministry sit," said Chief Fire Officer Atul Garg.

The fire was doused by 10.30 p.m., but the cooling-off process took a few hours more. The building was



The fire broke out on the first floor. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

completely evacuated.

"Prime facie, it appears that a short circuit led to the fire. It started from the mess area," said a fire official.

## Cousins abducted, beaten up over debt

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old man and his 27-year-old cousin were allegedly abducted and beaten up by a few men for two days in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar over non-payment of debt, the police said on Saturday.

The police said they have registered a case and begun an investigation.

The victim, identified as Shahnaaz, a resident of Savitri Nagar and a driver by profession, alleged that he and cousin Saleem were picked up by five men on the evening of January 8 and forced into a car. He said the accused took the two to an accommodation in Sangam Vihar.

"Two of them were Deepak and Rinku from whom I had borrowed ₹30,000. They asked me to return the amount, but I told them I did have money at the time. They punched us and thrashed us with sticks and belt," Shahnaaz alleged.

The accused allegedly dropped the cousins back on the night of Thursday and victim Shahnaaz approached the police the following day.

The police said that an investigation is currently under way.

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\*Conditions apply

have registered cross first information reports under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code at Kalyanpuri police station.

Suresh's brother Durgesh, meanwhile, told the police that Sachin and his brother had a fight about six years ago after which the family had approached the police, but the matter reached a compromise and the complaint was withdrawn. The brother also alleged that Sachin is involved in cases of robberies. The police are verifying his claims and are looking for the absconding accused.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old youth has been arrested for allegedly robbing his neighbour's house in southeast Delhi, the police said on Saturday.

The complainant said he was in Bihar and when he

came back on January 3, he found that his house in Tughlakabad Extension was burgled. He said ₹1,20,000, a television, a tablet, a music system and a camera were stolen, DCP (Southeast) said Chinmoy Biswal.

During investigation, it was

found that neither any lock was broken, nor were there any sign of forced entry.

Later, it was noticed that a new glass pane had been installed in a window and pieces of glass were found strewn on the floor, Mr. Biswal also said.

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# Researchers at AIIMS demand hike in fellowship

'Scholars from other institutes to join protest on January 16'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Society of Young Scientists at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, claim that research scholars have been struggling with fellowship hike for the last four months.

"All research scholars from different institutions of India have agreed unanimously to hold a protest gathering on January 16 until the government accepts our demands," noted a released issued by the re-

**Why do research scholars need to knock on the government's door every four years to get their own rights? Our fellowship should be increased with effect from April 1, 2018 – as was the case in 2010, 2014**

RESEARCHERS



The Society of Young Scientists at AIIMS claimed that research scholars have been struggling with fellowship hike since the last four months. ■ FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

researchers' group. The group said that by considering previous increments and inflation rates, a minimum of 80% hike in fellowship should be done according to the annual increment.

#### 80% hike demanded

"If the government does not increase our fellowship by a minimum of 80% then scholars will feel cheated," said a release issued by the group.

Researchers also want

that fellowship hike should be done every four years automatically by the government.

"Why do research scholars need to knock on the government's door every four years to get their own rights?" they demanded to know.

"Our fellowship should be increased with effect from April 1, 2018 – as was the case in 2010, 2014," researchers at AIIMS further said.

Based on her statement, a case under IPC Sections 195A (threatening any person to give false evidence), 328 (causing hurt by means of poison), 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint) and 34 (common intention) was registered, the police said.

## DMRC staff body opposes privatisation

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Staff Council, following reports of privatisation of two corridors, has written to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) management stating that privatisation will "lead to corruption" and affect the non-executive staff engaged in train operation.

"Hiring private train operators from a private agency will lead to corruption. It is requested that you kindly take note of the concerns of the DMRC staff through the Staff Council as train operation is a core activity of the DMRC staff," the council urged.

Responding to the reports, DMRC Staff Council Secretary Anil Mahato said, "It looks as if the DMRC is treating the staff as a burden. This is not good."

## Woman ends life after being stalked; accused arrested

'Man had tried to force her into an extramarital affair'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old woman died by suicide at her residence in Shahdara on Thursday morning allegedly after being stalked by a man since the last two years, the police said on Saturday. They have recovered a note left behind by the deceased.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Meghna Yadav said that they have registered a case on charges of abetment to suicide and arrested the accused.

The police said that the husband of the woman, who used to run a boutique, found her hanging at their residence on Thursday morning.

In the two-page note left behind by the deceased, she

wrote that she was being harassed by the accused who was trying to force her into an extramarital affair with him.

#### Victim threatened

He was also allegedly threatening her to share some of the old photographs of both of them with her husband.

The family of the deceased told the police that the accused is the former business partner of the woman's husband and that he knew the couple before their marriage.

After their marriage, the family also said, the accused was not in touch with the husband but continued to talk to the woman.

The husband told the police that she looked worried

## Rape victim force-fed 'poison'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 17-year-old rape victim was allegedly force-fed a liquid, which she suspected was poisonous, by two men in Dwarka's Uttam Nagar on Thursday, the police said on Saturday.

The girl has alleged that the accused asked her to change her statement in the rape case reported last year.

#### Death threat

"The complainant was allegedly intercepted near a park on Hastings Road. They asked her not to give evidence in the court against the rape accused if she did not want to be killed. One of them held her hands and the other force-fed her the liquid," said a senior police officer.

Based on her statement, a case under IPC Sections 195A (threatening any person to give false evidence), 328 (causing hurt by means of poison), 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint) and 34 (common intention) was registered, the police said.

## Live-in partner held guilty for woman's death

The man was putting pressure on her to abort her pregnancy, notes Delhi court

NIRNIMESH KUMAR  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has held a man guilty of abetting his live-in partner to commit suicide by putting pressure on her to abort her pregnancy in east Delhi's Mandawali in last year.

The prosecution said that the victim had died by suicide in the balcony of their rented house late in night by hanging herself with her chunni. After her live-in partner found her dead, he burnt the chunni with a lighter before rushing her to a hospital where she was declared brought dead.

The police had registered a case on the statement of the brother of the victim. The father and sister of the woman gave their evidence

**C** ... it seems that when accused found the woman pregnant with his baby, in order to avoid responsibility, he backed out or refused to marry her. It also seems that in disappointment of love, the woman took this extreme step and this fact can be considered as abetment...

S.K. GAUTAM  
Additional Sessions Judge

sure on the deceased to abort the child and that she might have taken the extreme step under pressure.

The court rejected the defence arguments by the accused that the victim had died by suicide due to pressure from her parents who, he claimed, wanted to get their daughter married to another man.

"As mentioned above, it seems that when accused found the deceased pregnant from him, in order to avoid responsibility which is one of the main subjective factors of this relationship, backed out to continue the said relationship or refused to marry with the deceased. It also seems that as mentioned above, in disappointment of love, deceased took

this extreme step and this fact can be considered as abetment, as per definition of 'abet'." Additional Sessions Judge S.K. Gautam said in his judgment.

"Hence, in view of the overall facts and circumstances, court is of the view that prosecution has fully established its case that on the date, time and place of incident, deceased committed suicide on the abetment of the accused. Accordingly, accused is hereby held guilty and is convicted for the offence punishable under Section 306 [of] IPC," the judge said.

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

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DEATH

**M.R.S. SEETHARAMAN (84) ( Retd AGS Office )** passed away On January 11th,2019 in Chennai. Deeply mourned by Lalitha Seetharaman Chandar and Vidya Raghavan and Wendy Gayathri and Subramanian Nalin and Vaideyanathan. Ph: 044-24642129, 044-24612358

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'NPP to fight Arunachal Assembly polls alone'

ITANAGAR  
The National Peoples' Party, part of the BJP-led coalition North East Democratic Alliance, will contest the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly elections alone, NPP president and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma has said. "The NPP plans to contest as many Assembly seats as possible... while remaining a partner of the NEDA," he said. PTI

**Four discom employees arrested for stealing**

BALASORE (ODISHA)  
Four employees, including a former executive engineer, of power distribution company NESSCO have been arrested for allegedly stealing valuable electrical parts from a store in Balasore district, the police said on Saturday. The arrests were made following investigation into a complaint filed by the company in November last year. PTI

# ULFA faction threatens to pull out of peace talks

If Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is passed in Parliament

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

GUWAHATI

The pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Assam threatened to pull out of the ongoing peace parleys with the Centre on Saturday if the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was passed in Parliament.

It also claimed that a government lobby was backing certain people to fan communalism among the Assamese and Bengali-speaking people of Assam.

"The ongoing peace talks are likely to be discontinued if the Centre goes ahead with the Citizenship Bill, against which protests have erupted in Assam with all sections of the society participating in the agitation," prominent ULFA leader Mrinal Hazarika told reporters here.

The issue was raised on the organisation's platform



ULFA general secretary Anup Chetia at the Dispur police station on Saturday. PTI

that the talks would be redundant if the Bill was passed, he said.

**'Fresh lease of life'**

ULFA general secretary Anup Chetia said attempts to get the Bill passed in Parliament had induced youngsters in the State to go to the jungles for taking up arms.

Mr. Chetia and Mr. Hazarika were at the Dispur police station, responding to a sum-

mons on the charge of gheraoing a BJP office here on January 6.

Senior police officers of Assam, in November last year, had said a growing public sentiment against the Centre's move to amend the Citizenship Act had given a "fresh lease of life" to the ULFA, which had recruited eight youngsters in the previous two months.

Mr. Chetia alleged that BJP leaders like Pradip Dutta Roy were backed by a government lobby to fuel the "feelings of communalism" among the Assamese and Bengali-speaking people. Mr. Roy courted controversy on Friday by threatening Assamese-speaking students in the Bengali-dominated Barak valley that their admission in the Assam University would be barred if they protested against the Bill.

# Odisha govt. enhances monthly amount of anganwadi workers

Slew of sops ahead of Assembly and Lok Sabha elections

**STAFF REPORTER**

BHUBANESWAR

Continuing to dole out sops ahead of the forthcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the Odisha government on Saturday enhanced monthly honorarium of anganwadi workers and their associates.

"The Integrated Child Development Scheme plays an important role in women and child welfare. Anganwadi workers, mini-anganwadi workers and helpers form the backbone of the ICDS network. Keeping their welfare in view, the State government has decided to give a package that will come into effect retrospectively from October 1, 2018," said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

The anganwadi workers will now get ₹7,500 per month as against ₹6,000 per month currently. Mini-an-



Naveen Patnaik

tively," said Mr. Patnaik.

The workers are now also entitled for a vacation of 15 days annually during peak summer. "Henceforth, 50% posts of anganwadi supervisors will be filled up from the cadre of anganwadi workers," he said. The package will benefit 72,500 anganwadi workers and an equal number of helpers.

Earlier, the Odisha government had announced cash incentives for farmers to take up farming during kharif and rabi crop season.

On Friday, the government had launched an initiative to distribute free LED bulbs to families identified under the National Food Security Act. Moreover, annual financial assistance of ₹20,000 will be given to students belonging to underprivileged families for pursuing graduation and post-graduation programmes.

# Farmers under KALIA scheme to get money by January 26

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

BHUBANESWAR

Beneficiaries who have enrolled under the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme in the first phase will receive monetary assistance by January 26, Odisha's Cooperation Minister S.N. Patro said on Saturday.

Mr. Patro said that around 12.4 lakh small and marginal farmers will get ₹5,000 each for one crop as per the provisions of the scheme.

The Minister said the financial assistance will be directly deposited in the bank accounts of the beneficiary farmers.

Mr. Patro added that farmers applying for enrolment in the scheme during the extended deadline till January 15 will be verified before the money is disbursed.

**Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Lohardaga (Jharkhand) (District Planning)****Recruitment Notice for Medical Officer and Specialist Doctors**

To bridge the gap of availability of doctors in Lohardaga district, applications are invited to recruit Doctors for the following posts at Lohardaga:

Sl. No.	Post (Qualification)	Salary per Month	Duration of appointment	No. of Post
01	Medical Officers (MBBS)	63,000 <sup>#</sup>	Minimum 1 year <sup>1</sup>	04
02	General Surgeon (Degree/Diploma/DNB equiv)	1,20,000	Minimum 1 year <sup>1</sup>	01
03	Physician (Degree/Diploma/DNB equiv)	1,20,000	Minimum 1 year <sup>1</sup>	01
04	Anesthesiologist (Degree/Diploma/DNB equiv)	1,20,000	Minimum 1 year <sup>1</sup>	01
05	Pharmacologist (Degree/Diploma/DNB equiv)	1,20,000 <sup>#</sup>	Minimum 1 year <sup>1</sup>	01

\* Last date for application is 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2019 till 5 p.m.

\* Application has to be submitted in the prescribed format by email at cs.lohardaga@gmail.com or by speed post/registered post at the following address: Civil Surgeon, Lohardaga, Palmerganj Chowk, Sadar Hospital Campus, Lohardaga-835302

Note: For detailed information log on to www.lohardaga.nic.in

<sup>#</sup> Can be increased based on performance

<sup>1</sup> To be appointed under NHM.

<sup>1</sup> The District Administration, Lohardaga is in consultation with Public Health experts in designing one of its kind Mentorship Programme under Aspirational Districts Programme for the Young Medical Officers to ensure their personal and professional development.

P.R.199545 Lohardaga(18-19)-D बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ

**THE HINDU**

DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THE PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not wouch for the genuineness of the advertisements placed by the advertisers for the products or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

**WESTERN RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION WORKS**

Deputy Chief Engineer (Const) II, Western Railway, 8th floor, Station Building, Churchgate, Mumbai-400020, invites offer through e-tender portal [www.irops.gov.in](http://www.irops.gov.in) under two bid system i.e. (1) Technical bid with eligibility criteria, terms and conditions and (2) Price bid for the following tender: Tender No.: Dy.CE(C)II/CCG/317. Name of Work: Construction of Lower Parel Road Over Bridge (Delhi's Bridge) at KM 7/12 - 13 across running lines of Mumbai Division of Western Railway. NIT Cost: ₹ 83,66,32,901.03. EMD: ₹ 43,33,200/- Bidding Start Date: 17.01.2019. Bid submission closing on: 31.01.2019 at 11.00 hrs. Technical Bid opening on: 31.01.2019 at 11.30 hrs. The date of tender, terms & conditions and scope of work are uploaded and are available only in electronic format in our website [www.irops.gov.in](http://www.irops.gov.in)

DIPR/JK/6578

**HARYANA POWER GENERATION CORPORATION LIMITED**

Regd. Office: C-7, Urja Bhawan, Sector-6, Panchkula

Corporate Identity Number : U45207HR1997SGC033517

Website:- [www.hpgcl.org.in](http://www.hpgcl.org.in)**CORRIGENDUM**

Sr. No.	NIT Number	Event No	Brief scope of work/ purchase	Last date of submission of bids
1	3 <sup>rd</sup> Corrigendum PTP/POM-331781	100931	Multi Zone Door Frame Metal Detector	Extended till 16.01.2019 upto 13:00 Hrs.
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Corrigendum PTP/POM-331738	103956	Air Water Separator for 210 MW Unit-6	Extended till 16.01.2019 upto 13:00 Hrs.
3	4 <sup>th</sup> Corrigendum PTP/POM-331748	99890	DCS Temperature Input Card CTI-21 or Equivalent	Extended till 16.01.2019 upto 13:00 Hrs.
4	1 <sup>st</sup> Corrigendum PTP/POM-331753	105642	Supply of I/P Convertor for 250 MW Unit-7 & 8	Extended till 16.01.2019 upto 13:00 Hrs.
5	4 <sup>th</sup> Corrigendum PTP/POM-331758	100704	Thermocouples	Extended till 16.01.2019 upto 13:00 Hrs.

Note: The detail of the above NIT along with Tender Document can be seen & downloaded from the HPGCL website i.e. [www.hpgcl.org.in](http://www.hpgcl.org.in) and <https://haryanaepprocurement.gov.in>. Bidder can participate only through e-portal of Haryana Government i.e. <https://haryanaepprocurement.gov.in>

PRDH-74776

Chief Engineer/PTPS

**ON LINE TENDERING**  
**Road & Building Department**  
**Government of Gujarat.**

Short Period Tender Notice No. 28 of 2018-2019

In the name and on behalf of Governor of Gujarat State the Executive Engineer, Dist. (R&B) Division, "Suprabhat Bunglow", B/h. Hotel Welcome, Alkapuri, Vadodara-390007 Ph.No.2352099 invites on line tender from registered contractors for the work as under:

Sr. No.	Name of Work	1. Estimated Cost E.M.D. 2. Tender Fee
1.	Consultancy Services for Authority's Engineer for Supervision of Project of Construction of bridge across River Narmada from Dabhoi - Sinor-Malsar - Asa road (SH-161) Ta.Sinor, Dist. Vadodara on (EPC) contract mode in the State of Gujarat. (Third Time)	1. Rs. 38645000/- 2. Rs. 386500/- 3. Rs. 6000/-

The Bid document will be available on web site <https://rnb.nprocure.com> upto dt 25/01/2019 up to 12:00 pm & bid document shall be submitted on line up to dt 25/01/2019 up to 18:00 pm.

For further particulars please visit above website and website of Gujarat Govt. [www.statetenders.com](http://www.statetenders.com) or contact this office during office hours. Any changes / modifications will be seen online.

(INF-BRD-1394-2018-2019)

**Main Attractions**

- Exhibition of unique products of craftsmen & artisans from 22 States
- The Chef pavilions of traditional cuisines from 14 States
- Traditional & cultural programmes from different regions of the country (7:00 P.M. onwards)

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

[www.facebook.com/hunarhaat17](http://www.facebook.com/hunarhaat17)

“Madad Hamari, Manzil Aapki”

Development with Dignity

[www.minorityaffairs.gov.in](http://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in)

# Exhibition-cum-Sale of Artifacts by Craftsmen & Artisans from across the country

## Hunar Haat

Civil Surgeon  
Civil Surgeon Office, Jamtara

PR 199516 (Health Med Edu and Family Welfare) 18-19 (D)

Note:- If any of the cut-off date identified above happens to be holiday, the next working day shall be implied.

Detail bid document can be downloaded from [Jamtara.nic.in](http://Jamtara.nic.in)

Sd/-

Civil Surgeon

Civil Surgeon-cum-CMO

PAKUR

PR199533 Health Med Edu and Family Welfare(18-19)D

Note:- If any of the cut-off date identified above happens to be holiday, the next working day shall be implied.

The complete Bidding document is available on the website [www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in) The Tenders should be submitted through e-procurement system only except Tender Document Fee and EMD.

Civil Surgeon-cum-CMO

PAKUR

PR199533 Health Med Edu and Family Welfare(18-19)D

Note:- If any of the cut-off date identified above happens to be holiday, the next working day shall be implied.

The complete Bidding document is available on the website [www.jharkhand](http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in)

# NC to probe J&K civilian killings if voted to power

Hearts can be won if New Delhi accepts Kashmir as political issue, says Farooq

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SRINAGAR

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah said on Saturday that if his party is elected to power with a majority in the upcoming Assembly elections, it would establish a truth and reconciliation commission to probe killings in Jammu and Kashmir.

He also asserted that Kashmir is fundamentally a political problem and only reconciliation and dialogue within the State as well as with Pakistan can afford a way forward.

Mr Abdullah, an MP from Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency, was speaking to reporters at a party function in Anantnag district of south Kashmir. He said his son and NC vice-president Omar Abdullah had already spoken about the need to establish such a commission in the State.

"He (Omar) has already



Farooq Abdullah ■ FILE PHOTO

Mr. Abdullah also said that his party would not support 'Operation All-out' launched by the security forces against the militants.

"How can we support something where there is suppression? It is not a question of 'all out'. We don't want our people to suffer, that they will be beaten in their homes. It has never been part of the NC's policy," he said.

He said the party would not support any violence or violation of human rights.

"Everyone is free, we live in a free country. Therefore, we, as a government, will have to see that freedom of people (and) expression is not curbed," Mr. Abdullah said.

Earlier, addressing party workers and functionaries in Anantnag's Khanabal area, he said, "Hearts can only be won if New Delhi accepts Kashmir as a political issue and restarts a time-bound, result-oriented dialogue process with all stakeholders within and outside the State."

He expressed hope that a new government at the Centre would initiate dialogue with all stakeholders in J&K, but in the rest of the world," he said.

**CBI arrests another accused in Muzaffarpur shelter home case**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUZAFFARPUR

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Saturday arrested Vicky, a close relative of Madhu alias Shaista Parveen, a key associate of Brajesh Thakur, who is the prime accused in the shelter home sex scandal case, official sources said.

Madhu was on Friday remanded in police custody

for 48 hours by a Special POCSO court here.

With the arrest of Vicky, the agency has so far arrested 21 accused persons in the scandal, official sources said.

It is alleged that Vicky, who is a nephew of Madhu and used to stay with her, was tasked to drop and pick her up at the shelter home, officials said.

He would be produced before a Special POCSO court on Sunday.

## Sidhu targets ₹150 crore revenue from outdoor advertisement

'SAD-BJP regime indulged in theft, caused loss to State'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu on Saturday said his department has set a target of ₹150 crore annual revenue from outdoor advertisement in all urban local bodies.

He also lashed out at the previous SAD-BJP regime, accusing it of indulging in 'theft' and causing loss to the State exchequer.

"The target of the income through outdoor advertisement has been fixed at ₹150

crore in all the 167 urban local bodies," Mr. Sidhu said.

The Local Government Minister said his department has taken several steps in plugging leakage of revenue from advertisement which led to a significant jump in the income.

"In Ludhiana city alone, the tender for outdoor advertisement has gone for ₹28 crore, whereas during the Akali regime, the income from this city stood at a mere ₹7.5 crore," he said.

"The income of ₹28 crore

from Ludhiana is ₹10 crore more than what Punjab used to earn annually from all 167 ULBs through advertisement under the previous regime.

You can well imagine the magnitude of theft. The cartels were formed and money was going to personal pockets during the Akali regime," he alleged.

Mr. Sidhu said with fresh tender allotted in Ludhiana for advertisements, the revenue generation is expected to be to the tune of ₹289 crore in nine years.

**Virbhadrappa hits out at Sukhu for 'harming party'**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
HAMIRPUR (H.P.)

Welcoming the appointment of Kuldip Rathore as the new State Congress president, former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister and senior party leader Virbhadrappa Singh on Saturday said this step should have been taken much earlier.

Addressing a party rally organised by Sujanpur MLA Rajinder Rana at Gajoh village here, Mr. Singh alleged that former State Congress president Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had harmed the party during his six-year tenure.

He said Mr. Sukhu was to be blamed for the party's debacle in the last Vidhan Sabha elections. He said Mr. Sukhu had ignored the grassroots workers of the party.

Mr. Singh demanded that all district Congress committees and block Congress committees be revamped and new persons appointed.

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY**  
E-Auction Program for the Month of February-2019  
All prospective bidders are invited to participate in the On-line public auctions being conducted for sale of scrap material.

E-Auction Dates	Jurisdiction of Lots	Contact No.
8, 16 & 26 February 2019	Dy.CMM/GSD/Gorakhpur	0551-2283558
5, 15 & 23 February 2019	Dy.CMM/GSD/Izzatnagar	0581-2547173
1, 6, 11, 14, 20 & 25 February 2019	Sr.DMM/Lucknow	0522-2233113
5, 13 & 22 February 2019	Sr.DMM/Varanasi	0542-2224819
8, 19 & 27 February 2019	Sr.DMM/Izzatnagar	0581-2547327

Type of Material: Scrap Rail, Cast Iron, Melting, MS, condemned Rolling Stock (Coaches, Wagons and Locomotives), Turning & Boring, Non-Ferrous such as copper, Aluminium, Batteries etc.

\* In the event of Auction not being completed on the same day, Auction February be continued on the subsequent days also. \* Details of Auction Catalogue, Procedure and Conditions of Sale are available at [www.treps.gov.in](http://www.treps.gov.in)

\* This auction programme is also available on North Eastern Railway website [www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in)

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Gorakhpur CPRO/S-73 About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955 Never travel on roof and foot boards.

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

General public is here by informed that this women (depicted in the photo) namely: Simran @ Simreen W/o Parmod Kumar, R/o H. No. C-10/107, Khajuri Khas, Delhi, has been missing/ kidnapped from her house since 18.12.2018. In this regard DD No. 13-A, dated 21.12.2018 at PS Khajuri Khas, Delhi has been registered. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far.

Her physical description is as under:-

Sex: Female, Age : 27 years Height : 5'5" ft., Complexion: Fair Face: Round, Built: Strong, Wearing: Yellow Colour Suit-Salwar and Cream Colour Hawai Chappal in Feet.

Any person is having information or clue about this missing/ kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO Website:<http://cbi.nic.in>  
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in  
Fax No.: 011-24368639  
Tel. No.: 011-24368638/24368641

P.S. Khajuri Khas, Delhi Ph. No.-011-22962735,  
Mob. No. 8750870727 DP/6803/NE/18

## Yoga postures



Children participating in a 'Surya Namaskar' programme organised by the School Education Department in Bhopal on Saturday on Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary. ■ A.M. FARUQUI

## Gehlot seeks Centre's help in water-sharing issue

'Not getting water from Okhla, Tajewala'

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

After the signing of a pact for restarting the Renuka dam project, Rajasthan has sought the Centre's intervention in the matter of an inter-State agreement for distribution of Yamuna waters to ensure that Haryana releases the allocated share of water for the State from Tajewala headworks.

Rajasthan affirmed that it has not been getting its rightful share of water for the past 24 years.

The Centre on Friday signed an agreement with the Chief Ministers of five States – Rajasthan, U.P., Uttarakhand, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh – to restart construction of the Renuka multipurpose dam project in the Upper Yamuna Basin at a cost of ₹4,596.76 crore for supplying water to Delhi and other basin States.

Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot said at the ceremony for signing the MoU in Delhi that a huge population in Churu, Jhunjhunu and Sikar districts was not getting wa-

ter for drinking and irrigation because the Haryana government had been denying the State its share for 24 years. The State was also not getting its allocated share from Okhla headworks, he said.

Union Minister for Water Resources Nitin Gadkari was present on the occasion. Mr. Gehlot requested Mr. Gadkari to direct the Haryana government to sign an MoU with Rajasthan for the release of the latter's share from Tajewala as per the 1994 agreement. "Rajasthan has been trying to get the MoU signed since 2003 without success," he said.

Mr. Gehlot said that the objections raised by the M.P. government on the ambitious Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project were wrong. The project was proposed as per the agreements signed between the two States in 1999 and 2005. Besides providing drinking water, the project would make irrigation water available for 2 lakh hectare land in 13 districts of Rajasthan, he said.

## Key accused in Jharkhand ex-MLA's killing arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency on Saturday arrested a key suspect in connection with the killing of a former Janata Dal (United) legislator from Jharkhand over a decade ago, officials said.

The 48-year-old had been absconding for a long time

Bhajo Hari Singh Munda, accused of killing MLA Ramesh Munda, was arrested from Jojhatu village in the State's Khunti district by an NIA Raipur team, officials said.

and a non-bailable warrant had been issued against him. He was charged with the killing of Ramesh Munda was killed, allegedly by the Maoists, when he was delivering a speech at a function in Bundu town in his Tamar

Assembly constituency on July 9, 2008. His two bodyguards were also killed in the attack.

Last August, investigations revealed that the main accused, CPI(Maoist) leader Kundan Pahan, had received ₹3 crore as advance payment

from another accused, Raja Peter, for killing Ramesh Munda. Pahan allegedly gave over ₹2.7 crore to Singh, who was his associate then, officials said. The money was part of a ₹5-crore deal, which involved furthering Maoist activities in Jharkhand.

## EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

### OFFICE OF THE Ex. ENGINEER (ELECT)-I SHAHDARA (N) ZONE, Keshav Chowk, Delhi-110053

NIT NO. E.E.(Elect)-V-Shah.I/EDMC/2018-19/TC-22 Dated : 11.01.2019

#### PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

The Executive Engineer (E) on behalf of Commissioner, EDMC invites online tenders in two envelopes system i.e. Documents related to Eligibility criterion (Technical Bid) and Financial bid from Elect. Contractors registered in appropriate class in MES, MCD, PWD Delhi, CPWD, Delhi Jal Board, Railways, DDA or firms of repute dealing in the line as per schedule given below:

Last Date to Download Tender Document : 28.01.2019 upto 12:00 Noon

Last Date of Bid Preparation & Hash Submission : 29.01.2019 upto 12:00 Noon

Last Date of Technical and Financial Lock : 29.01.2019 upto 15:00 PM

Last Date of Re-Ecryption of online bid : 31.01.2019 upto 12:00 Noon

Last Date of Technical Bid (Envelop 1) : 31.01.2019 upto 17:00 PM

Last Date of Evaluation of Technical Bid : 05.02.2019 upto 12:00 Noon

Opening of Financial Bid (Tentative) : 05.02.2019 upto 17:00 PM

**S. No. 1. Name of work :** Provision of Machine Room Less (MRL) Lifts in Zonal Office Building at Keshav Chowk Under Shahdara (North) Zone.

**Tender amount :** 3300000, **Head of A/c :** 73-1083, **Earnest Money :** 66000, **Time of Completion :** 1 Year/Phase with Civil Work, **Tender Cost :** 1000, **Rates hold goods for:** 6M, **Online Tender No.:** 313071.

Tender form and specifications can be downloaded from the website of EDMC <http://mcdtenders.com>

**RO NO - 152/DPI/EAST/2018-19 Executive Engineer (E)-I Shd. (N)**

EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. 155303

**Estimated Cost (Rs. Lakh)**

**Total Cost (Rs. Lakh)**

**Period of Completion of construction (days)**

**Bid Security (Rs. Lakh)**

**Cost of Form (Non-Refundable) Rs.**

**S. No. District/ Division Package no. Name of the work**

**Con- struc- tion**

**Mainte- nance**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

1 Nahan HP10257 Construction of link road from Khajuria to Dhanwadi Km. 0/0 to 3/400 Under PMGSY Stage-II Package No HP-10-257

2 Nahan HP10258 Up gradation of link road from Rukhri to Gadda Km. 0/0 to 3/500 under PMGSY Package No. HP10258

3 Nahan HP10259 Up gradation of Saini wala Burma Papri road Km. 0/0 to 1/10 under PMGSY Package No. HP10259

4 Nahan HP10255 Link road from Kandoli Dugaria to Sarahi Partha road Km. 0/0 to 5/670 under PMGSY Stage-II Package No. HP10255

**Total- 1154.51 126.47 1276.98**

2. Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 14<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2019 at 10.30 AM

3. Cost of Bid Form: Cost of Bid form in shape of Demand Draft in favour of concerned Executive Engineers in respective Division

4. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website [www.pmgstenders.gov.in](http://www.pmgstenders.gov.in). The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in PMGSY may obtain the same from the website: [www.pmgstenders.gov.in](http://www.pmgstenders.gov.in)

Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the valid digital signature issued from authorized CA can use the same in this tender.

\* Non-registered bidders may submit bids; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

5

## IN BRIEF



## Historical monuments unearthed at Melkote

MANDYA

Some archaeologically significant structures, including a step pond (in picture) or Kalyani-like structure, were unearthed during cleaning works at the historical village of Melkote in Pandavapura here. Infosys Foundation has expressed willingness to clean and maintain the historical monuments in the village.

## Withdraw action against Sr. Lucy, says KCRM

KOCHI

Members of the Kerala Catholic Reform Movement staged a protest in front of the headquarters of the Catholic religious order Franciscan Clarist Congregation at Ashokapuram, near Aluva, on Saturday demanding that action against Sister Lucy Kalappura, a member of the congregation, be dropped.

## Mild tremors create panic in Guntur

GUNTUR

Mild tremors were reported from many parts in Palnadu creating panic among the people. Locals at Piduguralla said they had felt the tremors at 4 p.m. People ran out of their homes and there was a bit of commotion on roads. Tremors were reported at Gurazala too. Local revenue personnel attributed this to seismic activity.

## Muslim couple tie the knot after suicide bid

HYDERABAD

A Muslim couple – 21-year-old Nawaz and 18-year-old Reshma – in Vikarabad district of Telangana tied the knot in a hospital after their parents, who initially did not agree to their wedding, came around when they allegedly attempted suicide. PTI

## Sabarimala security affects pilgrim flow

Devotees apprehensive about chances of young women visiting the shrine in the last lap of the season

RADHAKRISHNAN KUTTOOR  
PATHANAMTHitta

With hardly 48 hours left for the 'Makaravilakku' festival, the holy hillock of Sabarimala and the foothills of Pampa witnessed a lean pilgrim inflow on Saturday, compared with the previous days.

Devotees are apprehensive about the chances of young women visiting the forest shrine in the last lap of the festival season, inviting protests. The strengthened security at the holy hillock and its base camps at Pampa and Nilakkal too appeared to have prompted many pilgrims to stay away from this year's Makaravilakku festival.

The digital head count carried out by the police at the checkpost at Pampa showed that only 44,100 persons had proceeded towards the Sannidhanam by 5 p.m. on Saturday. According to official sources, this is the lowest pilgrim count recorded at Pampa during the past one week.

Many parts of the Sannidhanam bore a deserted look on Saturday evening as many pilgrims, especially those from outside Kerala, preferred not to stay back at the holy hillock in view of the violent protests against the entry of women in the 10-50 age group to the Ayyappa temple during the past three months.

## Panel visits camp

Unlike in the past, only a few pilgrims were found camping at a Makarajyoti view-

point at Paandithavalom on Saturday.

Meanwhile, a three-member monitoring committee appointed by the Kerala High Court, comprising Justices P.R. Raman and S. Sirijagan, former High Court Judges, and A. Hemachandran, Additional Director General of Police, inspected the Nilakkal base camp, Pampa and the Sannidhanam on Friday and Saturday.

The panel said it had not-

iced marked improvement in facilities at Nilakkal, compared to the situation there during its previous visit.

## Veritable fortress

The Kerala police have turned Sabarimala into a veritable fortress as the forest shrine prepares to host an estimated 18 lakh devotees, if the 2018 figures are any indication, on 'Makaravilakku' day on Monday.

Additional Director Gen-

Pilgrims banned from taking forest route

KOTTAYAM

In view of a sudden rise in incidents of animal encounters on the Sabarimala route, the Forest Department has enforced a strict ban on trekking through the forest route from Erumely at night. Over the past five days, there were two major incidents of elephant attacks, which left one dead and several others injured. In both instances, the attack took place when the pilgrims ventured into the forest in violation of a directive of the Forest Department.



**For a glimpse:** The procession carrying the 'Thiruvabharanam' setting off to Sabarimala from Pandalam on Saturday. ■ LEJU KAMAL

## 'Monkey fever' cases hit 62 in Shivamogga

Six persons have died since December

VEERENDRA P.M.  
SHIVAMOGGA

from Aralagodu died during this period.

The prevalence of KFD is high every year from November to April during which dry spell prevails.

While four KFD deaths and 48 cases were reported during this period in 2017-18, the toll and cases have already crossed this number this year. The Department of Health and Family Welfare has stepped up the vaccination drive to tackle the outbreak.

Laying foundation for the

## Give land under pooling scheme, Naidu tells people



A.P. CM N. Chandrababu Naidu performing 'bhoomi puja' for the bridge at Ibrahimpatnam. ■ CH.VIJAYA BHASKAR

## Pile-up of vehicles on NH-44 disrupts traffic

STAFF REPORTER  
HYDERABAD

Vehicular traffic on the busy Hyderabad-Bengaluru National Highway 44 was disrupted for sometime after pile-up of vehicles due to poor visibility on Saturday morning.

The accidents, four in all, took between Shadnagar and Kothur towns, about 45 km from here. A total of 12 vehicles were damaged under Nandigama police station of Cyberabad. In the first incident, five cars rammed into each other causing extensive damage to the vehicles. The driver of one of the vehicles seems to have slowed down owing to poor visibility, resulting in the four cars following behind ramming into each other.

A little away on the same road, a lorry was hit by a minivan from behind causing injuries to the van driver. In

another accident, a bus belonging to a Hyderabad-based travel operator was damaged as it hit another vehicle in front of it. In the last accident, a speeding lorry rammed into another lorry from behind.

Vehicular traffic was disrupted till 10 a.m. as the police and the highway patrolling personnel tried to clear the road towards Hyderabad. It was immediately not known how many persons suffered injuries in the accident and no complaint was lodged, the police said.

There was heavy rush on the NH-44 towards Hyderabad as well as Bengaluru as people began to leave for their native places for Sankranti.

It took quite some time for the rush to clear as the toll plaza deployed additional staff to streamline traffic and ensure orderly movement of the vehicles.

## It's playtime



**Fly high:** Youth flying kites ahead of the Sankranti festival, as sun sets in Hyderabad on Saturday. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

## Jockeying to restore WW-II radios

City enthusiast working on making sets used by the Allied Forces active again

He then displays his HRO (Helluva Rush Order), a radio that was used in Allied Forces' aircraft. He removes the cover revealing its electrical viscera. Pointing to a set of removable coils, he says, "These coils serve as band changers. If the Allied Forces wanted to switch bands (frequencies), they would replace the coils with suitable ones. A lot of these came into India as war surplus." The HROS, he says, did not have circuit boards as seen in modern electrical equipment.

Mr. Farhan says his HRO was used in an aircraft. Even the place it was used can be verified by means of running a search using its serial number. The HROS, he says, were so efficient that even the Germans and

Russians started producing its versions.

Another radio set that was used by the U.S. Air Force is the BC 348N. Manufactured by Wells-Gardner & Co. in Chicago, Mr. Farhan has two of these. Sitting quietly in a corner is another veteran CRI 43044, Mr. Farhan informs, is a spy radio set.

"This one was manufactured for the United States Navy's Bureau of Ships. It was made by the Colonial Radio Corporation in New York," he says. The inscription validates his claim. At the top of CRI 43044 is a spiral bound 'cypher book' with pinkish pages. Apart from transmission codes, it contains transmitter recalibration procedures.



were invented that would make them powerful and made wireless transmission possible. So the constructed, wired use of radios as seen in the World War-I was a thing of the past," says Mr. Farhan.

**War connection**  
"The World War-II gave a big fillip to radios and war was fought using them. It was a time when valves for radios

## Mental health apps have gaps in information

Only a third encourage users to seek professional help, says NIMHANS study

TANU KULKARNI  
BENGALURU

Mental health and well-being, often the subject of self-help books, is now the focus of apps by entrepreneurs identifying a need for them among teenagers and young working professionals. Apps, some of them available for a subscription fee, promise to address mental health issues ranging from anxiety to depression. But how effective are they?

Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) reviewed 278 free apps for depression to find that only a little over a third included content aimed at encouraging users to seek professional help. This was one of the findings of the study published in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry.

Seema Mehrotra, Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, the corresponding author for the article, said, "Apps often fail to provide information when a higher level or intensity of intervention is needed. They are not focussed sufficiently on breaking mental barriers to seeking professional help nor offer ways to deal with psychological crises."

Many apps offer online consultation, a social network for dealing with stressful situations, screening tests, different forms of meditation, audio and visual aids, with a focus on meditation and relaxation. The two most popular types of apps provided information on coping with depression and framed standalone screening tools.

However, less than 10%

## 'Recall order on NIA probe into Jagan case'

A.P. Chief Minister writes to PM Modi

STAFF REPORTER  
VIJAYAWADA

NIA takes accused into custody from prison

VIJAYAWADA  
The NIA, which is probing the attack on YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, took the accused, J. Srinivas Rao, into custody from the Vijayawada jail on Saturday. Srinivas was taken to the Government General Hospital for medical examination. Later, the NIA took him to an unknown location for questioning. On Friday, the NIA court gave sleuths seven-day police custody of the accused.

He regretted that the Centre had entrusted the inquiry to NIA without considering the objections raised by the State government.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Mr. Naidu said the NIA was supposed to take up specific cases under specific Acts having inter-State and international linkages and possible connections with activities like smuggling of drugs and arms and pushing in and circulating fake currency and infiltration from across the borders, etc.

The police have stationed more armed companies as reserve forces in Pathanamthitta and Kollam.

the Section 3A of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation Act, 1982. Individual incidents of crime, as long as they do not suggest a threat to the safety of civil aviation at the airport, could not be perceived as scheduled offences attracting probe by the NIA, he added.

Mr. Reddy was attacked at Visakhapatnam airport on October 25.

## Farmers duped with fake fertilizer in Guntur

Adulterated salt sold as potash

STAFF REPORTER  
GUNTUR

racket to Karnataka though there have been no arrests so far. The Department of Agriculture has stepped in to ban the sale of potash in Guntur. After extensive searches in Macherla, Gurazala and Rentachintala mandals, a dealer from Tripathanthakam in Prakasam district was identified as the kingpin of the racket. Police have launched a manhunt to nab the absconding dealer.

Regional Vigilance and Enforcement Officer, Guntur, A. Sobha Manjari said raids were continuing in Narsaraopet, Macherla and Vinukonda, bordering Prakasam district.

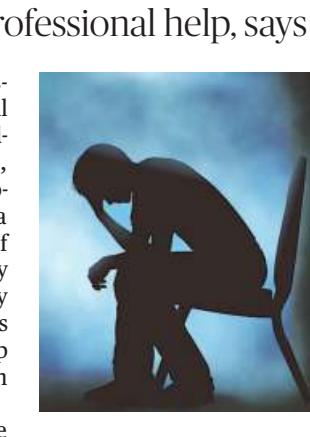
"We have unearthed nearly 100 tonnes of fake potassium and the Agriculture Department has issued orders banning sale of potassium in the market," said Ms. Sobha Manjari.

**Surprise raids**  
The racket came to light a week ago during surprise raids by Vigilance Department sleuths at Narsaraopet. The Vigilance Department has traced the origin of the massive fake fertilizer

psychological crises; and the range of therapeutic strategies incorporated.

The authors state in their review article, "Monitoring moods, thoughts and behaviours were the commonest therapeutic strategies incorporated in the apps, in addition to a wide range of other strategies, such as behavioural activation, identifying and correcting cognitive errors, mindfulness exercises, cultivation of gratitude, and medication management."

The researchers point out that a privacy statement, provided in only around 40% of the interactive apps reviewed, is essential – sensitive and confidential information may be given away by users who aren't fully aware of their potential implications or how the data can be misused.



the apps studied had incorporated explicit delineation of their scope, and only 12% of the reviewed apps guided users on managing a 'suicidal crisis'.

The study aimed to examine the apps on parameters such as advice to users on the choice of app, inclusion of elements that encourage professional help-seeking; guidance for managing

## IN BRIEF



## HC stays allotment of 10,000 petrol pumps

JODHPUR The Rajasthan High Court has stayed the allotment of 10,000 petrol pumps and issued notices to the Central and State governments, and three oil companies – Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum and Indian Oil Corporation – seeking their reply in four weeks. The court allowed a petition which pointed out lacunae in the process for allotment of petrol pumps in such a large number. PTI

## 16 students hurt in cylinder blast in van

BHADOHI (U.P.) At least 16 students of a private school and two women sustained burn injuries on Saturday when a gas cylinder of a school van exploded in Gyanpur town here. The children are from Class I to V and between 5-8 years of age, an official said, adding that they suffered 30% to 90% burns. He said the van driver was using a domestic gas cylinder as fuel for the vehicle. PTI

## Rajiv case convict seeks to address press meet

CHENNAI In an unusual plea, Robert Payas, one of the life convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, has written to the Tamil Nadu Prison Department, seeking permission to address a press meet. The Sri Lankan national, who has been in prison for about 28 years, had petitioned Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami in June 2017, seeking mercy killing.

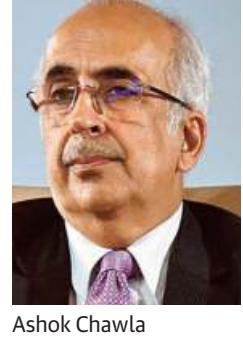
## Two Koreans held for smuggling 24 kg of gold

CHENNAI The Customs officials at the Chennai International airport on Saturday detained two Korean women for smuggling 24 kg of gold worth ₹8 crore. Hanbyoul Jung, 26, and Eunyoung Kim, 26, had arrived from Hong Kong on a Cathay Pacific flight.

## Ashok Chawla resigns as chairman of TERI

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI

Former Finance Secretary Ashok Chawla has resigned as chairman of The Energy Resources Institute (TERI).



TERI director general Ajay Mathur told *The Hindu* that Mr. Chawla had resigned on Friday night.

"Yes, he has resigned. We are now internally consulting with other council members on the steps ahead," he said in a phone conversation.

Earlier, Mr. Chawla had stepped down as chairman of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Friday after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) received the Finance Ministry's approval to prosecute him in the Aircel-Maxis bribery scandal.

## Flow of filth



A study of 92 towns along the Ganga shows that in several of them, drains flow directly into the river. Here are the key findings

**3/4th** of towns have old legacy dumpsites along the ghats

**72%** of towns have at least one drain flowing into the river

**1/3rd** of towns have solid waste floating on the river surface

**85%** of drains discharging into the Ganga did not have screens to stop garbage from entering the river

## ‘70% towns along Ganga let out garbage into the river’

85% have no screens to stop flow of trash, finds study

## PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI

Four-and-a-half years after the Centre launched its flagship Namami Gange programme to clean up the Ganga, a government-commissioned assessment has found that 66 towns and cities along the river still have *nullahs* or drains flowing directly into the Ganga. Almost 85% of these *nullahs* do not even have screens set up to stop garbage from entering the river.

Of the 92 towns surveyed, 72 still have old or legacy dump sites on the ghats. Only 19 towns have a municipal solid waste plant, according to an assessment done by the Quality Council of India (QCI).

three had no ghats along the river, while two were shut due to extreme weather conditions during the period of the survey.

## Bengal towns

Of the 242 *nullahs* that discharge directly into the Ganga, only 37 had installed screens, some of which are already choked with garbage. Of the 205 *nullahs* allowing solid waste to flow freely into the river without any screens, 100 are in the towns of West Bengal. In fact, only two *nullahs* in that State had any screens at all, the assessment found. Bihar also fared very poorly, with none of the 30 *nullahs* in the State having any screens.

While much of the focus of Namami Gange over the last four years has been on liquid waste management and sewage treatment plants, the Centre is now turning its focus to solid waste management as well, under the aegis of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).

However, a workshop held on the issue last week saw participation from less than half the towns along the Ganga. West Bengal –

where 39 of the towns are located – had the smallest presence, with less than five officials attending.

The QCI assessment graded the towns on four parameters: overall cleanliness, which involved the dump sites and garbage vulnerable points present near the ghats, as well as the presence of solid waste floating on the river's surface; the availability of a municipal solid waste plant; the installation and maintenance of screens placed over *nullahs*; and solid waste management services, such as sweeping and cleaning arrangements, litter bins and anti-littering signs and a trash cleaner to trap solid waste floating on the river.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, most of the 12 towns that achieved an 'A' grade had populations of less than 1 lakh people. Most were located in the upstream States of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. A notable exception was the West Bengal town of Maheshtala, with a population of 4.5 lakh. Large cities such as Kolkata, Varanasi, Kanpur and Patna all achieved low scores.

## Madras HC gives interim advance bail to Nalini Chidambaram

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court held a special sitting on Saturday and granted interim anticipatory bail of four weeks to former Union Minister P. Chidambaram's wife Nalini Chidambaram, 72, in the Saradha chit fund scam case.

Justice G.K. Ilanthiraiyan directed the petitioner, a designated senior counsel, to surrender before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at Egmore here within 15 days and execute a bond for ₹10,000, along with two surreties.

She was further directed to approach the competent court in West Bengal within



the stipulated period of four weeks and obtain appropriate relief in the case, since the crime had reportedly taken place there.

The judge entertained the interim advance bail plea here on the sole ground that the petitioner was a resident of Chennai and there was imminent threat of her ar-

rest following a supplementary chargesheet filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation on Friday.

He agreed with Senior Counsel A.R.L. Sundaresan, representing the petitioner, that inter-State anticipatory bail could be granted as an interim measure according to a judgment delivered by a Division Bench of the High Court in 1992.

In her petition, Ms. Chidambaram claimed that she had no connection whatsoever with the alleged chit fund scam but for having received legal fees of ₹1.4 crore for professional services rendered by her as a lawyer during 2010-12.

## Guns and roses at Jammu BSF camp

Interaction with actor Maniesh Paul reveals combat readiness and hidden talents of forces

## GAUTAM S. MENGLE

JAMMU

They fired rifles and monkeyed across ropes. Then they sang and danced as a packed auditorium resounded with applause. All the while, an overawed actor mingled with the soldiers, encouraging them to step up and display their hidden talents that few other than their colleagues know about.

Popular actor and TV host Maniesh Paul on Saturday visited the Border Security Force frontier base at Jammu to spend time with the personnel and entertain them.

## Nurturing skills

"It has always been a tradition among the BSF to encourage our personnel to pursue their talents. If we find out that a particular jawan or officer has a certain skill set, we do our



**Spreading cheer:** Actor Maniesh Paul interacting with BSF personnel in Jammu on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

best to give them every opportunity to nurture it," a BSF spokesperson told *The Hindu*.

Mr Paul, who was in Jammu to participate in a Spread The Cheer event organised by Comedy Central, reached the BSF base around 2 p.m. on Friday.

The BSF top brass then took him on a tour of the base, which serves as an administrative as well as

training facility for BSF jawans. Mr Paul visited several sections of the base, where personnel undergo rigorous training every day, including physical training, target practice and weapons training as well as combat manoeuvres. Mr Paul tried his hand at some of the exercises.

In one of the exercises, the personnel made their way across a horizontally

tied rope using their hands and legs.

Just when everyone thought they couldn't get any better, a jawan marched smartly up to the rope and stood still while his colleagues strapped four self-loading rifles (SLRs) around his back, each gun weighing close to five kilograms.

As the instructor issued the order, the soldier made his way up the rope, suspended himself from the horizontal part and made his way across at the same speed, the weight of the four rifles notwithstanding.

As the display of combat readiness wound down, a senior BSF official asked Mr Paul to spot a sniper hidden on the base. After looking everywhere, Mr Paul finally gave up. The smiling officer pointed to the tree under which

the actor stood. It still took several seconds to spot the well-camouflaged sniper.

"I was later told that the sniper can stay hidden without moving for three to four days at a stretch," Mr Paul said.

Moving to the auditorium Mr Paul was introduced by Sub Inspector Arnav Ghosh, a veteran of 14 years with the BSF and an experienced compere and singer.

"The life we lead in movies is a fake life, where we play characters. But the people gathered here today are the real heroes," Mr Paul told the audience.

"I will never forget what you people have done today," Mr Paul said. "You called me here to perform and instead left me with a huge inferiority complex."

*The writer was in Jammu at the invitation of Comedy Central*

## 'Lit fests are exception where you have freedom of speech'

Unprecedented attack on ideas or freedom and on institutions: Arun Shourie

STAFF REPORTER  
CHENNAI

"The number of persons who are now coming to the festival really shows that newspapers and television fellows who underrate the interest of persons... in wanting information, in wanting analysis and reading... they are completely misplaced," said well-known journalist and former Union Minister Arun Shourie at the inauguration of the three-day *The Hindu* Lit for Life 2019 on Saturday.

"There is a darkening cloud of intolerance. Persons have been killed, prosecuted and cases have been filed for what they have written or their views."

Speaking about violence against those who exercise freedom of speech and expression, Mr. Shourie said, "Never have we had as pervasive...as brazen...as systematic...and as prolonged an attack on ideas or freedom, and on institutions. It is centrally directed and it is implemented at all levels."

He added: "Lit fests are probably the exception where you would have freedom of speech. The business of speaking what you think is right today cannot be done by established institutions in India. It can only be discharged by writers – by definition, a lone wolf."

**Media compromised**

Mr. Shourie said that mainstream media was silent "be-



**The world of letters:** Former Union Minister Arun Shourie inaugurating *The Hindu* Lit for Life 2019 in Chennai on Saturday. N. Ram, Chairman, THG Publishing Private Limited; Nirmita Lakshman, curator of *The Hindu* Lit for Life and Director, *The Hindu* Group of Publications; and Mukund Padmanabhan, Editor, *The Hindu*, are also present. ■ RAVINDRAN

cause of greed". "The main-

I would like to dedicate the series of Lit for Life festival to the cause of free speech, independence of thought and independence of expression and the right to be free from all these intimidating forces."

Mukund Padmanabhan, Editor, *The Hindu*, said, "Literature festivals are no longer only about literature. They grapple with a whole gamut of issues which are of interest in the current context. Now more than ever, we need spaces that encourage diversity and dial down anger and a kind of self-righteousness that encourages people to listen to other. The *Hindu* Lit for Life offers many opportunities for this."

Speaking about the growth and evolution of The *Hindu* Lit for Life, its curator and Director, *The Hindu* Group of Publications, Nirmita Lakshman said: "Lit for Life has grown greatly over the last few years. It is very rewarding that the people of this city have so actively and interestedly supported Lit for Life upon year."

Announcing that The *Hindu* Prize for the best books of 2018 in fiction would be announced on Sunday afternoon, she added: "As in previous years, this year too, we have consciously crafted several sessions around important subjects like the movement calling out on assaults on women, the shrinking space for dissent, and worse, the physical attack on writers and the frequent threats to individual freedom."

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## Chennai firm to aid in search for Meghalaya miners

STAFF REPORTER  
CHENNAI

A remote operated vehicle (ROV), along with an operating crew, left the city for Meghalaya to join the operation to rescue 15 miners who have been trapped in a 370

feet deep illegal mine in the Lumthari village since December 13, 2018. A private company, Planys Technologies, is providing the men and the machinery.

The team, which left the Air Force Station at Tambaram on Saturday, is expected to join the rescue operations by Sunday morning. This will provide ROV operations of a minimal size, as sought by rescuers at the spot.

The ROV operations are aimed at identifying and en-

tering rat holes in the incident shaft, while simultaneously sanitising the adjacent shafts. Since the workers were trapped, rescuers have been struggling hard to pump water out from the inundated mine.

## CHENNAI PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED

(A group company of IndianOil)

Regd. Office: 536, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai 600 018.

Website: www.cpcd.co.in; Email: shankarp@cpcd.co.in / std@cpcd.co.in

Tel No: 044-24348807 / 24348807

CIN: LA0101TN1965G000389

## NOTICE

Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015, notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Monday, the 28th January 2019, inter alia to consider and approve Un-Audited Financial Results of the Company (Standalone and Consolidated) for the quarter and nine months ended 31st December 2018.

The said notice can be accessed on the Company's website at [www.cpcd.co.in](http://www.cpcd.co.in) and may also be accessed on the Stock Exchange websites at [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com) and [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com).

Further, it is notified that the window for trading in securities of the Company would remain closed from 14th January 2019 to 30th January 2019 (both days inclusive) for all connected persons as per the Insider Trading Code of the Company. The Insider Trading Code is hosted on Company's website [www.cpcd.co.in](http://www.cpcd.co.in).

Further, it is notified that the window for trading in securities of the Company would remain closed from 14

## FROM PAGE ONE

## 'Legacy person' clause hits those left out of NRC

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by the Centre during the claims and objections phase said anyone excluded from the NRC draft cannot change the legacy person.

"One of the reasons many genuine citizens were unable to file claims was because of the freezing of the legacy person for applicants. Poor, illiterate and semi-literate people depended on NSC centres or cyber cafes to download names of legacy persons, and many had no idea they were given the wrong legacy person with the same name. Denial of a chance to rectify a mistake not of their own volition was inhuman," A.B. Khandaker of the Association of Citizens' Rights told *The Hindu*.

Motaleb Mandal, a farmer in western Assam's Barpeta district, faced a similar issue: his grandfather was "taken away" by another person in central Assam's Morigaon district. "I could not reapply because I don't have any admissible document other than a land deed in the name of the grandfather who can no longer be my legacy person," he said.

Deepika Devi and Mandal are among 8,87 lakh people who could not apply either because of the freezing of legacy person or non-preservation of documents by elders in the family or their indifference to paperwork.

Take the case of Jatin Das, whose father began working in a plywood factory in eastern Assam's Mariani in 1966. "My father came as a refugee from Comilla (district of Bangladesh) in 1957, but he did not keep any document properly. The only pre-1971 document I had was a receipt of his ESI (Employees' States Insurance) deduction in 1970. It was not accepted," he said.

Monsur Ali Choudhury's ancestors didn't even come from Bangladesh to eastern Assam's Tinsukia. "My grandfather worked in a

land revenue office in Kolkata before coming to Assam in the 1940s to set up a business. Our papers verified from West Bengal were not accepted. We thought it was futile to reapply, as we have the option of returning to our roots," he said.

Kamal Chakrabarty of Unconditional Citizenship Demand Forum, a group based in southern Assam's Barak Valley, said the sudden change of rules during the claims phase and lack of adequate awareness and publicity could rob many in Barak Valley of their citizenship.

"Our organisation helped about 10,000 people reapply, but at least 80,000 people in Cachar district could not reapply because of whimsical, frequent change of rules. Most of them are lying low, afraid of being thrown into jail or out of the country," he said.

The sword of Damocles hangs over the heads of those who reapplied too, said Mr Khandaker.

"There is a design by the NRC and district authorities to make the re-applicants stateless. How then do you explain the filing of 268,400 objections on the last day of the claims and objections phase (December 31) when there were only about 700 till that day? How did those who filed objections get hold of so many ARN (application reference number)?"

he asked.

That most of the objections were filed in districts inhabited by Bengali Muslims and Hindus made things apparent, he said. For instance, there were 67,000 objections in Barpeta, 37,000 in Nagaon, and 34,000 in Morigaon district, he claimed. The objection option was for those who suspected the nationality of people included in the published NRC draft.

(Names of people, except leaders of two organisations, changed for protection of identity)

## Oppn. coalition wants a weak govt., says Modi

His remarks come as the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party announced their alliance in Lucknow.

Referring to repeated attacks on him with regard to the Rafale aircraft deal, Prime Minister Modi said, for the first time "a middleman in a defence deal had been brought to India to face justice" and that the "chowkidar (guard, referring to himself) will not leave anyone, will bring everyone to face justice."

With the party meet aimed at gearing up for the Lok Sabha polls, Prime Minister Modi also emphasised the principle of "collective leadership". "It feels good to hear that Modi will appear, do something that will help the party win, single-handedly move things, but that is not so. In our party, the principle of collective leadership put forth by Atalji and Advani still holds. We have a collective leadership and fight elections on the strength of the organisation and strengthen it from booth upwards," he said, in a strong pitch to party workers not to be complacent.

Mr. Modi also reminded party workers of the loss of the 2004 polls. "The years 2004-2014 were like a lost decade for the country. I have said earlier that if Saradar Patel had been our first prime minister, the country would have been different. Similarly if Atalji had not lost in 2004, then too, the picture would have been very different," he said.

Mr. Modi, currently under attack from the opposition for undermining institutions like the CBI and the RBI, slammed the governments of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh

for withdrawing general consent to the CBI in their respective States.

**'Questioned for hours'** Making a personal defence, Mr. Modi said "despite being harassed by the UPA government for years when I was Gujarat CM, we didn't ban entry of CBI."

"I was interrogated for nine hours by the SIT, and then Central ministers would hold public meetings in Gujarat saying that the CBI would throw me in jail soon. Amitbhai (BJP president Amit Shah) was in fact arrested. Yet I never undermined the CBI or any other agency or institution, because we as a party believe in the law," he said.

Mr. Modi took on the Congress on the issue of corruption and gave details of the quantum jump in loans to corporate entities between 2008-2014, through what he called the "Congress process" in contrast to the common process.

"The public sector banks, repositories of the tax payers' deposits were forced to extend loans to cronies of the Congress," he said. "We put an end to it through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and nearly ₹3 lakh crore has come back into banks," he added.

Referring to the 10% reservation in education and government jobs for the youth from economically weaker sections in the general category, Mr. Modi said it would enhance the confidence of 'New India' and asserted that the new arrangement will not encroach upon anyone's rights. He also announced that seats in educational institutions would be increased by 10% to accommodate the quota.

The route was scrapped in 2017 by the Home Ministry

but by the time 377 out of 4,000 total former militants along with 864 family members had returned via the Nepal route.

**Trained in PoK** The NIA filed a chargesheet in the terror attack case recently where it said that Qadri had left for Pakistan in 1990 and was associated with People's League (Rehmani) and Al Barq in Pakis-

tan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) till 1993. "He underwent arms and training physical training in the Al Barq terrorist camp in PoK. He returned to India via Nepal with his family in May 2011 in accordance with CM rehabilitation program. During his stay in Pakistan, he came in touch with Wasim, the operational and district commander of JeM. Wasim wanted to carry out fidayeen attack

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Under attack: Security personnel taking positions during a gun battle with militants at Nagrota in November 2016. ■PTI

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Under attack: Security personnel taking positions during a gun battle with militants at Nagrota in November

# Congress won, but we didn't lose: Shah

BJP president says the party held its ground in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

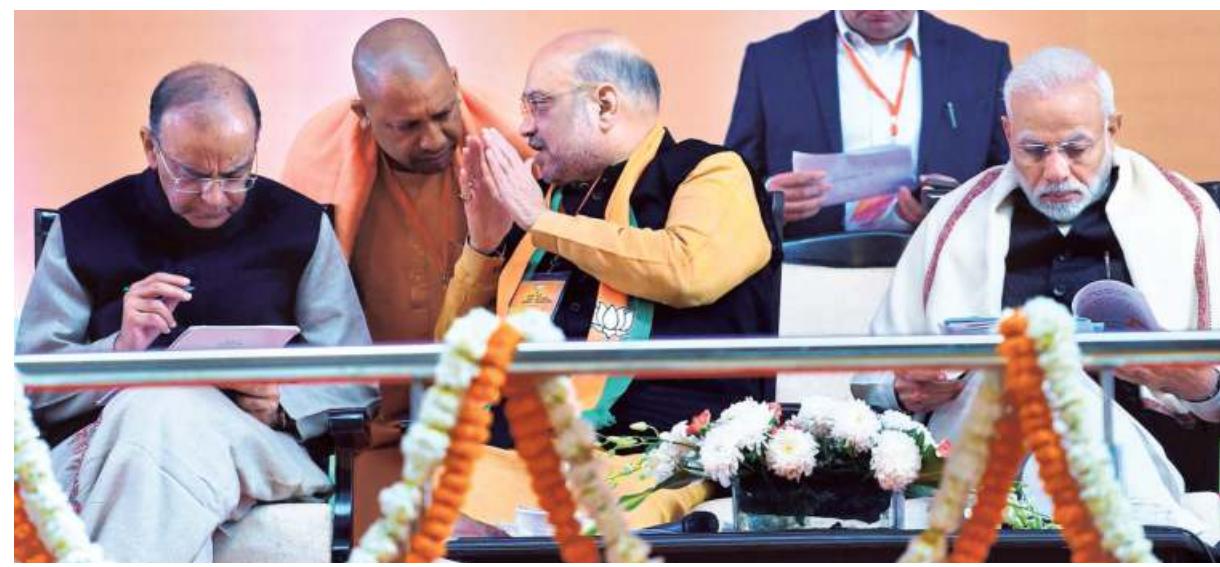
NEW DELHI

In his first public reaction to the BJP's defeat in the recent Assembly elections in three of the five States, party president Amit Shah urged workers not to lose heart, saying the Opposition parties might have won but it did not mean the BJP had lost.

He made the remarks on the concluding day of the BJP's national council meeting on Saturday.

### 'We still stand'

"We have seen what a loss means, and what happened in the three States is not close to that as our ground still stands. Losses are when you are trounced – the way the Congress was in 2017 in Uttar Pradesh, where it is difficult to find the party even if you go looking, or in Bihar and West Bengal, where it is difficult to find the remnants of the Congress," he said.



**Leading lights:** Narendra Modi, right, with Amit Shah, Yogi Adityanath and Arun Jaitley at the BJP convention. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

"In the elections in the three States [Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh], our opponents won but we were not defeated. The results were not good, but we have not lost our

ground. The party workers need not lose their morale."

"The Lok Sabha election is very important for us. If we get a massive victory, the BJP will rule the country from panchayats to Parlia-

ment for a long time," he told the 12,000 workers and leaders. Mr. Shah asked the workers to ensure that the votes of their family members and friends were cast by 10.30 a.m. on polling day.

"No alliance will defeat us as we go to the election with the blessings of the 22 crore beneficiaries of the various programmes run by the Narendra Modi government," he said.

# It will be dictatorship vs democracy: Cong.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Launching a counter offensive on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his remark that people have to choose between a 'majboor' (helpless) or a 'majboot' (strong) government in the upcoming general elections, the Congress on Saturday said the fight will be between "dictatorship and democracy".

Former Union Minister Manish Tewari made these

remarks at the party's official briefing in reaction to Mr. Modi's speech.

"2019 is not a battle between a 'majboor sarkar' and a 'majboot sarkar'. It is a fight between 'dictatorship and democracy'. It is a struggle between bhashan (speeches) and prashans (governance) and it is going to be a test between jumlas (empty promises) and an impeccable track record of service which the Congress has delivered over the years," Mr. Tewari



Manish Tewari  
told reporters. Mr. Tewari said that while the BJP and the Prime Minister levelled serious charges against the

Congress, "the government had nothing to offer except the analogy of an empty sack and a loaded sack" when it came to answering questions on the Rafale deal.

"Mr. Prime Minister, you think even a less educated person will understand your analogy. So, we want to ask you when a fully loaded sack, that is a Rafale aircraft under UPA on April 10, 2015 cost ₹526 crores, then how is it that the same fully loaded sack cost ₹1600 crores on

April 11, 2015 [under NDA]. Can you explain?" asked Mr. Tewari.

Highlighting GST and demonetisation as big failures, the Congress leader asked why "Mr. Modi didn't refer to the note ban even once in his 80-minute long speech".

"In the past 70 years, if any government has been able to abuse ₹24 crore together with one single decision, then it is note ban or demonetisation or whatever you call it," said Mr. Tewari.

The resolution exhorted party workers to draw the "right lessons" from the loss in three States in the recently held Assembly polls, and spoke in detail of the "instability" inherent in an Opposition alliance if it was elected to power. "Choice is between stability or instability, between an honest and courageous leader, and a leaderless opportunistic alliance, *majboot* (strong) government or a *majboor* (helpless) government," the party said in the document.

### Exemplary record

"All the BJP State governments have given an exemplary record of development and good governance. We shall surely draw the right lessons, but surely this will serve as an inspiration for the party workers and cadre to work with renewed vigour in the Lok Sabha election," the resolution said.

The resolution was introduced by Union minister Nitin Gadkari, with Finance

Minister Arun Jaitley, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath speaking in support of it. While Ms. Sitharaman spoke of the security scene in the country, which she said had vastly improved under the Modi government, with no serious terror attack in the four-and-a-half years, Mr. Jaitley told party workers to look at the upcoming contest on the issue of leadership, which, he said, was the major advantage of the BJP.

"The Opposition cannot

compete with the BJP on leadership, performance or ideology, so they say they will try to fight us through alliances. If each worker decides that the election would be fought on the issue of leadership, no force in the world can defeat us," Mr. Jaitley said.

"We have to control the narrative of the elections. We will set the agenda of the Lok Sabha polls. I urge you to proceed in that direction as there is not even a single mistake [of the government] that may force you to back down," he said.

# Intolerance reigns supreme: Rahul

Says it arises from the 'mentality of the people in power' in the past few years

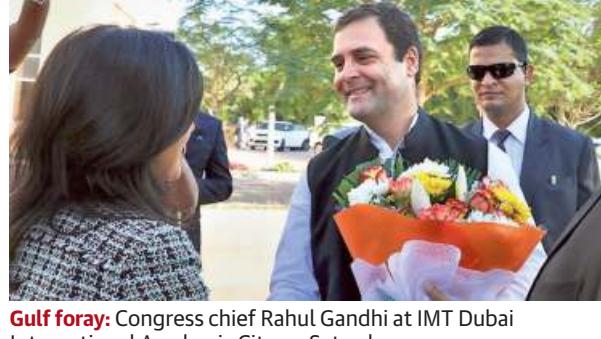
## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi said here on Saturday that India had witnessed a great deal of intolerance and anger in the past four-and-a-half years which stemmed from the "mentality of the people in power".

Mr. Gandhi, on the second day of his maiden trip to the UAE, said India could absorb multiple ideas and did not attempt to force one idea on the people.

"Ideas have come to India, they have been shaped by India and India has been shaped by them. Listening to other people is also an idea of India," he said in an inter-



**Gulf foray:** Congress chief Rahul Gandhi at IMT Dubai International Academic City on Saturday. ■ PTI

raction with students at IMT Dubai University as part of his global outreach programme ahead of the Lok Sabha election.

"Tolerance is embedded

in our culture and it is quite sad to see what has been going on back home in the past four-and-a-half years. We have seen a lot of intolerance, anger and division

between communities. It stems from the mentality of the people who are leading," he said.

Mr. Gandhi said if the leadership was tolerant, it would act in a tolerant way and spread that message. "India is generally tolerant, we want to listen and need to go back to that," he said.

Noting that India was more than a geography, Mr. Gandhi said it was a particular way of looking at the world. "I don't want to restrict India just to the boundaries of India," he said. "We don't like an India where journalists are shot, where people are beaten up for what they say," he said.

## Top honour



**Protect and serve:** President Ram Nath Kovind presenting the Honorary Rank of General of the Indian Army to Nepal Army chief General Purna Chandra Thapa on Saturday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

# Malik urges Faesal to reconsider move

Describes him as a dedicated officer

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik on Saturday urged Shah Faesal, who resigned from service as an IAS officer recently, to reconsider his decision to join politics.

"In case he would continue his services as an IAS officer, he could serve the people of society in a better way. As far as his feelings about Kashmiris are concerned, he could be posted in the region for extending his fullest support in ameliorating the poverty and creating job opportunities for the youth of the Valley so that people would be prosperous and would lead a better life," said Mr. Malik in a statement on Saturday evening.

He described Mr. Faesal as an efficient and dedicated officer, who rendered his services with great zeal and enthusiasm for the welfare of the State and its people, particularly those belonging to weaker sections of society.

"J&K's mainstream, which fails to represent people's sentiment, needs to reimagine itself and tell the truth. I have decided to go to the field and meet stakeholders, including youth, before I take a final call on the future course of action," Mr. Faesal had said.



**Faesal could deliver better as an officer rather than as a politician**

SATYA PAL MALIK

J&K Governor

wishes were always with him. I would love to meet him if he comes to me for redressal of problems of the youth," the Governor added.

Mr. Faesal, who topped the IAS examination in 2010, resigned from services earlier this week and decided to join politics.

"J&K's mainstream, which fails to represent people's sentiment, needs to reimagine itself and tell the truth. I have decided to go to the field and meet stakeholders, including youth, before I take a final call on the future course of action," Mr. Faesal had said.

# Quota Bill gets President's assent, becomes law

No need for ratification by States, says government

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday gave his assent to the Constitution amendment that provides 10% reservation to the economically backward section in the general category in government jobs and education.

With the Ministry for Law and Justice issuing a notification about the Constitution (103 Amendment) Act, 2019 receiving the Presidential assent, reservation for the economically weaker among general category is now law.

### Special provision

The Act amends Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution – ensuring Fundamental Rights to a citizen – by adding a clause that allows the State to make "special provision for the advancement of any economically weaker sections of citizens".

These provisions would relate to "their admission to educational institutions, including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions".

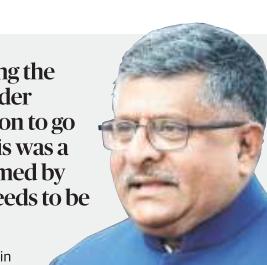
The Act makes it clear

that reservation would be "in addition to the existing reservations and subject to a maximum of 10% of the total seats in each category".

Amendment of Article 16 stated, "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any economically weaker sections of citizens other than the classes mentioned in clause (4), in addition to the existing reservation and subject to a maximum of 10% of the total posts in each category".

If the Parliament is amending the Fundamental Rights under Article 368, there is no obligation to go to the State Vidhan Sabhas. This was a part of the Constitution, as framed by them in 1949 and 1950. That needs to be appreciated

— RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD, Law Minister, in the Rajya Sabha



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— RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD, Law Minister, in the Rajya Sabha

Responding to a query by Rajya Sabha member M.K. Kanamozhi on exactly this point, Law Minister Ravishankar Prasad had, on the floor of the House, confirmed that there was no need for State governments to ratify the Bill.

If the Parliament is amending the Fundamental Rights under Article 368, there is no obligation to go to the State Vidhan Sabha. This was a part of the Constitution, as framed by them in 1949 and 1950. That needs to be appreciated," Mr. Prasad had responded to Ms. Kanamozhi's query during the Parliament discussions on January 18.

According to Gujarat Chief Secretary J.N. Singh, heads of State of Denmark, the Czech Republic, Uzbekistan, Rwanda and the Republic of Malta will be attending the summit. Mr. Modi will hold one-on-one meetings with the leaders on the sidelines of the event before hosting a dinner on January 18.

A day before the main event on January 18, Mr. Modi will open the 'Vibrant Gujarat' global trade show in which several hundred companies from across the country are participating.

# Modi to open 'Vibrant Gujarat' meet on Jan. 18

Heads of five countries to participate

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the ninth 'Vibrant Gujarat' global investors summit on January 18 in the presence of five heads of States and over 100 diplomats and captains of industry.

After inaugurating the main session, the Prime Minister will also participate in a round-table session with financial experts and sovereign funds' CEOs regarding investment opportunities in the country. Mr. Modi will be on a two-day visit to the State on January 17 and 18.

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As part of the summit, the Gujarat Government, in association with the Ministry of External Affairs is holding "Africa Day", in which over 100 diplomats and public figures from African nations will be present.

Both India and African nations have immense opportunities to grow by enhancing trade and business ties," said Gujarat's principal secretary S.J. Hyder, who is in charge of the Africa Day event.

**Focus on Africa**

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# BJP resolution draws battle lines for Lok Sabha polls

Party workers exhorted to draw the 'right lessons'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) political resolution, passed at the party's national council meeting here on Saturday, more or less hewed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech, casting the Lok Sabha election as a contest between an "honest and courageous leader" and an "opportunistic alliance" of Opposition parties whose leader was unknown.

The resolution exhorted party workers to draw the "right lessons" from the loss in three States in the recently held Assembly polls, and spoke in detail of the "instability" inherent in an Opposition alliance if it was elected to power.

"Choice is between stability or instability, between an honest and courageous leader, and a leaderless opportunistic alliance, *majboot* (strong) government or a *majboor* (helpless) government," the party said in the document.

## BJP's resolve

Here is the crux of the party's political resolution ahead of the Lok Sabha election:

**Party workers must draw the "right lessons" from the loss in three States**

**"Instability" is inherent in an Opposition alliance**

**Choice is between stability or instability, between an honest and courageous leader, and a leaderless opportunistic alliance, *majboot* (strong) government or a *majboor* (helpless) government**

Minister Arun Jaitley, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath speaking in support of it. While Ms. Sitharaman spoke of the security scene in the country, which she said had vastly improved under the Modi government, with no serious terror attack in the four-and-a-half years, Mr. Jaitley said.

"We have to control the narrative of the elections. We will set the agenda of the Lok Sabha polls. I urge you to proceed in that direction as there is not even a single mistake [of the government] that may force you to back down," he said.

## WHO

**Christian Michel, copter middleman**

Christian James Michel, a British businessman, was extradited to India from the United Arab Emirates on December 4. He is alleged to be the middleman in the ₹3,700 crore AgustaWestland helicopter deal bribery case. He is being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for bribing public servants so that the contract for supply of 12 helicopters went to the U.K.-based AgustaWestland, a unit of Italy's Finmeccanica (now Leonardo SpA). It is alleged that €42.27 million (about ₹295 crore) was paid by the Finmeccanica group to Mr. Michel's firms for the job.

**How is he connected?**

In 2006, the UPA government floated tenders to buy 12 VVIP helicopters. Six vendors participated in the process. In 2010, after clearances from the Finance Ministry, the ₹556.262 million contract was bagged by AgustaWestland. The CBI alleges that Mr. Michel entered into a criminal conspiracy with the co-ac-

cused and got the service ceiling of the helicopters reduced from 6,000 m to 4,500 m to ensure that Agusta could bid for the deal. In 2012, an initial probe by Italian authorities indicted Mr. Michel for international bribery. This was the first time reports of bribery in the deal surfaced. In February 2013, the Ministry of Defence asked the CBI to investigate the case after arrests and raids were carried out in Italy. In January 2014, months before the UPA went out of power, India terminated the contract and efforts were made to recover the money from Italy. The company delivered three helicopters, which are lying at the Palam airbase in Delhi.

**What went wrong?**

The scandal snowballed into a major fight between the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ahead of the 2014 general election. The BJP accused the Gandhi

family of receiving the kickbacks. According to the CBI, Mr. Michel had worked with Westland Helicopters (U.K.) since the 1980s. The agency said the middleman was a frequent visitor to

India and had undertaken 300 trips between 1997 and 2013. He flew back to Dubai a few days before the CBI filed an FIR on March 12, 2013.

**How was he apprehended?**

In September 2015, a CBI court issued an open-ended non-bailable arrest warrant against Mr. Michel. In December 2015 and January 2016, red corner notices were issued against Mr. Michel through the Interpol. In September 2017, the CBI filed a chargesheet against the accused. The agency alleged a loss of about ₹2,666 crore to the exchequer. The extradition request was forwarded to the UAE on March 19, 2017. The Court of Cassation in the UAE held extradition proceedings and on November 19 last year, upheld the lower court's decision on the possibility of extraditing him. He was handed over to Indian authorities on December 4. Several reports said his extradition was linked to India's efforts at repatriating Princess Latifa, daughter of Dubai ruler and UAE Prime Minister

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who had run away from home last year, accusing her father of illegal incarceration and torture. Indian Coast Guard commandos stormed a vessel, Nostromo, off Goa and took into custody Princess Latifa on March 4, 2018.

**Where is the case headed?**

Mr. Michel, who was interrogated by the CBI, has not been of much help in establishing the money trail. He has remained tight-lipped and given contradictory statements. The ED, which is pursuing the money-laundering angle on the basis of the CBI case, has over the past three years unearthed the transactions made through several conduits including "shell" firms. The ED informed the court that Mr. Michel was not cooperating and was taking a lot of time to write answers to its questions. His lawyers have said he suffers from dyslexia.

VIJAYA SINGH

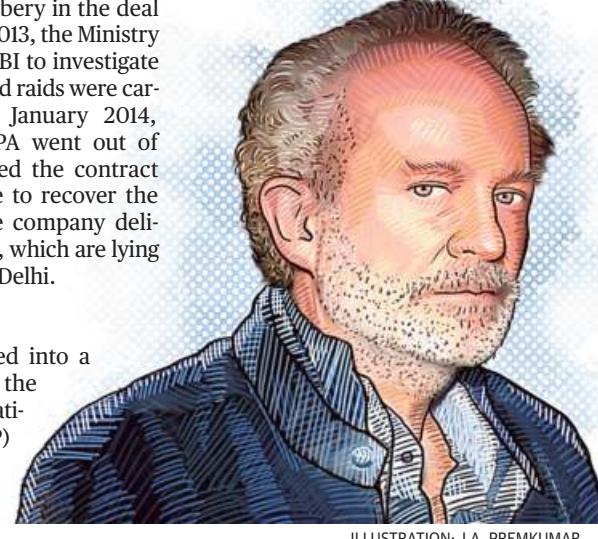


ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

## WHAT

**The lowdown on HAL's order book**

**WHAT IS IT?** The Defence Public Sector Undertaking and the country's only manufacturer of aircraft, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), has been caught in the political slugfest over the Rafale deal on the offset issue. But over the last couple of weeks, it has been in the news for its order book and financial situation. HAL makes a range of aircraft – including fighter jets and trainers – and helicopters, both indigenously developed and under licence from foreign original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). For the year ended March 2018, HAL posted a turnover of ₹18,284 crore. But HAL is facing a financial crunch owing to non-payment of dues and lack of new firm contracts. In fact, last week HAL said it had taken an overdraft of ₹962 crore for salaries and running costs. In Parliament last week, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said HAL had orders worth ₹1 lakh crore, later explaining that it includes deals worth ₹26,570.8 crore signed bet-

ween 2014 and 2018 and contracts worth ₹73,000 crore in the pipeline. Those in the pipeline include 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk-1A jets worth ₹50,000 crore, 200 helicopters under a joint venture with Russia worth ₹20,000 crore, and 15 indigenous Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) worth ₹3,000 crore.

**HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?** The current situation of HAL is due to a combination of factors – primarily the non-payment of dues by the Indian Air Force (IAF) for orders executed and under way, most of the existing orders coming to an end and a delay in finalisation of new contracts. HAL also has several development programmes which need funding till the services accept them and pitch in with their share. HAL Chairman R. Madhavan recently said the IAF owed HAL money for aircraft, helicopters and services that it had already delivered with

current dues pegged at ₹15,700 crore, which will rise to ₹20,000 crore by March 31. In addition, over the years HAL has paid large amounts to the government as part of equity buy-back and dividends which also depleted its coffers.

On the contrary, the IAF has been paying foreign OEMs for committed liabilities which otherwise attract penalties. For instance, it paid ₹20,000 crore to Dassault Aviation of France for the 36 Rafale jets contracted and to Boeing for Apache and Chinook helicopters, among others.

**WHY DOES IT MATTER?** The weak financial situation can affect future programmes and hamper regular maintenance activities that HAL undertakes for the IAF. The country's indigenous fighter programme LCA is at a critical stage with the final operational clearance nearing and the advanced variant Mk1A making

delayed progress. HAL is setting up another assembly line to ramp up LCA production and is developing the HTT-40 basic trainer and a Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) on its own, based on the demands of the services. The fund crunch affects salaries and running costs. Also as contracts come to an end, the work force will have to be benched. For instance, HAL's biggest contract, the licence manufacture of Su-30 jets from Russia, is nearing completion. Additionally, the delay in finalisation of new orders affects timely planning and supply chain management.

**WHAT LIES AHEAD?** After the recent developments, the Defence Ministry has made some moves to address the issue. Officials said the Ministry has sought funds from the Finance Ministry to help HAL. Earlier this week, HAL officials met Ms. Sitharaman and the three services chiefs. HAL has also stated that

with anticipated collections up to March, the cash position is expected to improve and in terms of future orders, final contracts for 83 LCA Mk1A and 15 LCH are in advanced stages. Nonetheless, the developments are a matter of serious concern for the country and warrant immediate government attention to set things in order.

DINAKAR PERI



## WHY

**is there a renewed quota debate?**

**Who is this reservation for?** ■ The constitutional amendment passed by Parliament last week seeks to expand the concept of reservation, a form of affirmative action, to favour the "economically weaker sections." Those who are covered by the existing reservation for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the 'socially and educationally backward classes,' a constitutional category known in popular parlance as Other Backward Class or OBC, are not eligible for the proposed new reservation of 10%. The amendment makes it clear that the new reservation in public sector jobs and education in both public and private sectors will be above the existing quotas. The Supreme Court had ruled earlier that the total quantum could not exceed 50%. Politically, the move by the Narendra Modi government aims to placate upper caste Hindus, though those not covered by any quota among the followers of other religions too are potential beneficiaries.

**What is the problem?** ■ The amendment raises questions about its compatibility with the basic structure of the Constitution, which the court has held cannot be altered even by Parliament. A petition has already been filed in the Supreme Court, alleging the amendment violates the basic structure doctrine. The idea of giving 10% reservation to the upper castes also raises other ethical and moral questions that may not be justiciable. Reservation is currently covered, primarily under clauses (4) and (5) of Article 15 and clause (4) of Article 16, which allows the State to make special provisions "for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes." The court has examined the concept of 'socially and educationally backward classes' and has ruled that caste can be a basis for inclusion in that category. In the Indra Sawhney vs Union of India, the court examined the decision of the government to implement the Mandal Commission report that stipulated 27% reservation for OBCs and ruled that economic criteria could not be the sole basis for reservation and the 50% ceiling ought not to be crossed. All these questions will be reopened in

the light of the new amendment.

**What is the government stand?**

■ The government invoked the Directive Principles of State policy contained in Article 46 to defend its proposal for reservation for the economically weaker sections. This could be questionable. Article 46 says "the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." The "economically weaker sections of citizens were not eligible for the benefit of reservation. With a view to fulfilling the mandate of Article 46, and to ensure that the economically weaker sections of citizens get a fair chance of receiving higher education and participation in employment in the services of the state, it has been decided to amend the Constitution of India," the amendment Bill stated.

**Will it benefit the poor?**

■ In the Indra Sawhney judgment, the court had said: "...the concept of 'weaker sections' under Article 46 is different from that of the 'backward class' of citizens in Article 16(4), but the purpose of the two is also different. One is for the limited purpose of reservation and hence suffers from limitations, while the other is for all purposes under Article 46... While those entitled to benefits under Article 16(4) may also be entitled to availing themselves of the measures taken under Article 46, the converse is not true. If this is borne in mind, the reasons why mere poverty or economic consideration cannot be a criterion for identifying backward classes of citizens under Article 16(4) would be more clear." Whether the economically weaker sections among the OBCs, the SCs or the STs could be excluded from reservation meant for the economically weaker sections is a contentious question.

VARGHESE K. GEORGE



## WHEN

**6 January 2019**

**'We are the champions'** At the Golden Globes, last Sunday, there were surprises galore with the Queen musical *Bohemian Rhapsody* taking home the Best Actor for an inspired outing by Rami Malek playing the legendary frontman Freddie Mercury and streaming service Netflix winning five top prizes. The Mexican film, directed by Alfonso Cuaron, is seen as an Oscar frontrunner in February. Presumed favourite, Bradley Cooper's *A Star is Born* was largely shut out, barring a Best Original Song trophy. Tears marked the winners podium as Glenn Close for *The Wife* beat Lady Gaga as Best Actress, and segregation-era dramedy *Green Book* triumphed over comedies like *Vice*. Picture shows Malek – he dedicated his win to Mercury, the British singer, who died of AIDS in 1991 – flanked by Brian May and Roger Taylor of Queen, and Cuaron directing Yalitza Aparicio on the sets of *Roma*. ■ AFP, AP

stopped by Lalu Prasad Yadav, the then Chief Minister of neighbouring Bihar. The proposed rath yatras were an attempt to increase the party's support base ahead of the Lok Sabha election. The BJP leadership had plans of three or four rath yatras across the State. These were strategically timed. After the 2016 Assembly election, which brought Mamata Banerjee to power for a second consecutive term, the support base of the Left parties and the Congress have slipped further, and the BJP has emerged as a contender.

The dispute landed in the Calcutta High Court and later in the Supreme Court, which will hear the matter on January 15. Why did the BJP plan this? BJP president Amit Shah was scheduled to flag off the yatras on December 7, 2018, as a pre-election exercise. Unlike several other parts of the country, the eastern State has not seen such raths in the past, which have more to do with politics than religion.

Even the rath yatra of Lal Krishna Advani in 1992 could not enter the Left Front-ruled West Bengal as it was

proposed and got the service ceiling of the helicopters reduced from 6,000 m to 4,500 m to ensure that Agusta could bid for the deal. In 2012, an initial probe by Italian authorities indicted Mr. Michel for international bribery. This was the first time reports of bribery in the deal surfaced. In February 2013, the Ministry of Defence asked the CBI to investigate the case after arrests and raids were carried out in Italy. In January 2014, months before the UPA went out of power, India terminated the contract and efforts were made to recover the money from Italy. The company delivered three helicopters, which are lying at the Palam airbase in Delhi.

**What is Trinamool's stand?** The Mamata Banerjee government's decision not to grant permission to the yatra did not come as a surprise. Ms. Banerjee's public statements calling them a means to whip up communal tensions made it clear that the State government would not give the go-ahead. Instead, the Trinamool Congress countered the BJP's move with a plan to hold a purification (*shuddhikaran*) yatra. On the

map, battlelines are drawn with supporters of both parties often engaging in violence.

On several occasions, the Opposition parties, including the BJP, have claimed that the Trinamool Congress government has denied them permission to hold political programmes under different pretexts. When the BJP ap-

proached the Calcutta High Court, the State government cited intelligence inputs on a possible communal flare-up.

Weeks of arguments and counter-arguments over the reasonable restrictions that a State can impose and the right of a political party to hold rallies and political events failed to resolve the dispute at the High Court.

**Is there a shift in the narrative?**

Whatever be the fate of the yatras, they are indicative of what political observers call a state of "competitive communalism" in West Bengal. While a decade ago, politics in the State hinged on long-drawn agitations against forcible land acquisition that sometimes led to violence that was witnessed, for instance, at Singur and Nandigram, the yatras are indicative of a changing narrative in the State.

A few months ago, the High Court was debating whether giving money to 28,000 Durga Puja committees was within the rights of the State. Those

against the move argued that handing out money for Durga Puja amounted to promoting one particular religion.

Prior to this, the issue of giving honorarium to imams and muezzins by the West Bengal government was challenged in court, as was the decision of not allowing immersion of idols on one particular day as it clashed with Muhamram.

West Bengal, which has a Muslim population of 27.01% according to the 2011 Census and which shares over a 2,000-km border with Bangladesh, is witnessing a polarised political discourse.

Over the past few years, the State has seen tensions and even riots during Ram Navami, Muharram and other festivals. According to the information tabled in Parliament by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the number of communal incidents in the State rose from 27 in 2015 to 58 in 2017.

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

## WHERE

**In West Bengal, row over rath yatras**

Christian James Michel, a British businessman, was extradited to India from the United Arab Emirates on December 4. He is alleged to be the middleman in the ₹3,700 crore AgustaWestland helicopter deal bribery case. He is being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for bribing public servants so that the contract for supply of 12 helicopters went to the U.K.-based AgustaWestland, a unit of Italy's Finmeccanica (now Leonardo SpA). It is alleged that €42.27 million (about ₹295 crore) was paid by the Finmeccanica group to Mr. Michel's firms for the job.

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# Always cool, always Hardik, always a dire embarrassment

As it looks to penalise Hardik Pandya and K.L. Rahul, the BCCI should consider initiating workshops for young cricketers to sensitise them to gender and race issues



## PASSING BITE

RUCHIR JOSHI  
is a writer, filmmaker and columnist

Watching the 'Koffee with Karan' episode with K.L. Rahul and Hardik Pandya is excruciating in many ways. The two young men prance in, trying to match Karan Johar's famously OTT couture, thread for shiny thread. It's as though they are entering a temple of bad taste to worship at the altar of wealth and glamour, with Johar as the head priest. Even in this fierce competition of loud and bad taste, Pandya stands out, garlanding and festooning himself in cliché and derivation.

### The Preening Flamingo Triangular

Young Pandya wastes no time in establishing himself as a guy with the brain and awareness of a *baanoed-thhaanoed* ostrich. He is clearly overawed by rap and gangsta culture and in perpetual envy of contemporary black male thea-

trics. All young Indian men are not sexist. Similarly, it's far from the truth that all young guys from small towns are idiots and all uneducated males are louts, but Pandya is the emperor of that section of the Venn diagram where the categories 'ant-visioned provincial', 'un-schooled knowing-nothing' and 'gross male pig' overlap. Like a clever medium-pacer, or a hungry shark, Johar quickly decides which batsman he wants for breakfast; it is – no surprises – the man who actually thinks it's clever to introduce himself to women as "Hardik – always". K.L. is quickly relegated to the role of *bhondu*, the sidekick supporting the actor; most of the show is about getting Mr. Always Peacock to take off his own shiny pants.

Across the programme there are several distressing things about both Pandya and K.L. Cricket-wise, no captain or manager would be happy about Pandya blithely admitting that he's been told off several times for not listening to instructions on the field and that this is likely to continue. No one who understands cricket would so easily pick Kohli over Tendulkar as the greater batsman, not yet and not with such alacrity, but both these clowns do just that. In terms of



awareness of the history they are part of, both these 'boys' score zero; there's even one moment, when asked to name India's ODI captains, K.L. juggles all sorts of names but misses out on the biggest of them, Kapil Dev. Then there are the constant references to scoring (with women), dating, affairs, "doing it", and fancying Bollywood women actors; there is the admission, mild compared to some of the other stuff, that both K.L. and Pandya have had sex in their hotel rooms while accommodating

colleague roomies have kept away; there is the barb from K.L. that Pandya has "done" all the IPL cheerleaders and thus does not get excited by them while playing; there is the business of friends coming on screen and revealing embarrassing details, including the "fact" that Pandya often forgets to flush his toilet (sharply denied by Mr. Always).

At times the programme felt like a slightly tarted up fly-on-the-wall shoot of a boys' locker room. Throughout its 47 minutes, the episode was deep fried

in the competing smugness of all three men, with K.L. occasionally showing some trace of class and coming out a bad third in the Preening Flamingo Triangular. But the worst bit came early, and out of the mouth of Pandya, when he said that while trying to pick up women, he likes to first watch them move, because it's an indicator of "how they will be later" and "because I'm a bit this only, and it's great, so I'm also like this, so cool I am, so Hardik."

There's a Gujarati epithet that fits

Pandya perfectly – *dafol*. It means duffer, except by itself the description is altogether too kind. Other words that would go appropriately with *dafol* cannot, alas, be printed here. Pandya is a perfect disaster: he seems proud of the fact that he didn't study beyond Class 9 and that too because of the largesse of his teachers who didn't want to fail him; he is amused by the fact that he can't even read (forget write) his own name in Gujarati or Hindi and barely manages English; he is obnoxiously cocky about how many women he has managed to "do"; he is proud of the fact that he behaves as he likes on the cricket field. All this is predicated on the undeniable fact that Pandya has achieved some initial success as a cricketer playing for India

in limited overs formats. None of this can excuse the fact that this tower of bling-laden self-regard is also casually racist and misogynist – without understanding a thing about Afro-Caribbean or Afro-American culture, he takes the worst stereotype of sexist black male behaviour and drapes it across his shoulders like a cape: black men are like this only, and it's great, so I'm also like this, so cool I am, so Hardik.

### Cultural boot camps?

What might be the solution? With the democratisation of team selection over the last three decades, all sorts of youngsters with incredible cricketing talent (like Pandya) are coming into the Indian team from different backgrounds. With the smallest of success comes the harsh exposure to the glitter of IPL, the TV shows, the parties, the international tours. Even as the BCCI looks to penalise Pandya and the far less culpable K.L., it should consider initiating workshops for young cricketers to sensitise them to gender issues, race politics, media traps, and give them a general boot-camp about the world they will enter, a world far from being just about cricket.

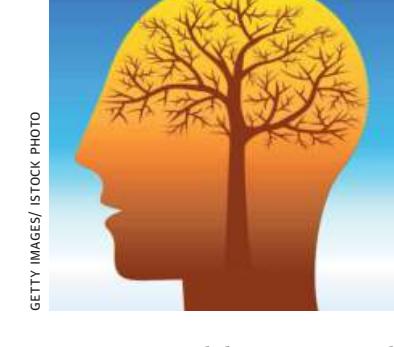
# The perception challenge

The challenge for the BJP is to change some perceptions and reinforce others



## ON THE OTHER HAND

R. SRIVIVASAN  
is Editor, *The Hindu BusinessLine*



Perceptions are problematic. For starters, they seldom match reality. But that hardly matters for most of us because what we perceive is the reality, as far as we are concerned. If we are having a good day, we think the world's a great place. If not, we think everything is going down the tubes.

**Taking advantage of perceptions**  
Marketers and advertisers know this well, but politicians understand this better than anyone else. They are masters at sensing public perception. When they sense the slightest change in the direction the wind is blowing, they change tack. That's why Donald Trump's 'Make America Great Again' resonated with so many voters and got him into the White House. The reality is that the U.S. is the world's only superpower, capable of destroying any nation which opposes it. The reality is that the U.S. is the world's biggest economy, and is likely to remain so for decades to come. The reality is that the U.S. continues to be the innovations leader in the world and is home to most of the world's biggest and most powerful corporates. The reality is that immigrants actually add value to the American economy. But most Americans believe otherwise on all these counts.

The same holds good for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He propelled the BJP to a historic win in 2014 with his promise of *ache din* (good days) and *sabka saath, sabka vikaas* (progress for everyone). He took advantage of certain popular perceptions of the time – that the government of the day was weak, that progress was prisoner

country."

Upper deck and non-representative they may be, but if this is what the educated, aware, online Indian thinks and feels about critical issues, it's little wonder that India is the fake news capital of the world or that politicians are having a field day. The findings also hint at why certain political tropes resonate with the voters and what may work and what may not when the general election takes place in six months.

Take the estimate of Muslims in India, for instance. Indians tend to highly overestimate the percentage of the Muslim population in India, according to the survey. The average guess is around 32%, but in reality, Muslims constitute only 14% of the population. So, a plank of reverse majority discrimination, where the minority is presented as a threat to the actual majority, can work when the majority overestimates the size of the problem to start with.

### A headache for the government

On the jobs front, though, there is a problem for the BJP. There is a widespread perception that there are not enough jobs in the country. Most Indians overestimate the number of those unemployed – out of every 100 people of working age in India, Indians think 44% are unemployed and looking for work. The reality is that the number stands at just 4%.

This creates a different kind of headache for Mr. Modi and the BJP's poll managers. One of Mr. Modi's key poll promises was to create two crore jobs. In reality, the number of jobs created may be even higher, but the perception is the reverse. This is reinforced by the perception Indians have about the economy – asked to guess India's economic ranking in the world, most guessed that it would rank around 50.

The reality is that India is already the seventh largest economy in the world.

The key challenge that Team Modi faces in 2019 is to figure out how to reinforce certain perceptions and change others.

Admittedly, the survey is not representative. As the footnotes explain: "Brazil, Colombia, China, Chile, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey produce a national sample that is more urban and educated, and with higher incomes than their fellow citizens. We refer to these respondents as 'Upper Deck Consumer Citizens'. They are not nationally representative of their

cal theatre has an element of the farcical. There is, however, one great miserable truth to be extracted.

### Universalism and the public good

It is that for fascism, there is little use for the pretence of camaraderie. Any social reality that may allow one to discover reasons for solidarity with the 'enemy' is irrelevant. In fascism, all political consciousness progressively substitutes its own critical faculties with a sublimation – an emotional surrender – unto the leader. The idiosyncrasies and prejudices of the leader is fascism's supreme political fact. In this sense, fascism's end is an emptying of all ideological consciousness itself. Auschwitz is fascism's apogee where no humanity remains.

In contrast, under communism – think of Joseph Stalin, Xi Jinping, or Kim Jong Un – the supreme leader finishes his speech, his body seeks to embody a theatrical gravitas. The leader stares into the crowds and his hands barely move as he soaks in the wave of applause. He never betrays the mask of virility that he carefully adorns.

In contrast, under communism – think of Joseph Stalin, Xi Jinping, or Kim Jong Un – the supreme leader joins in the bonhomie. His hands applaud freely and his body seeks to project conviviality to further the claim that he too is merely a fellow party worker, never hinting at the vast authoritarian powers he oversees. This comparison of politi-

cism. All make universalist claims, often in the name of public goods. All three ideological structures have little use for heterogeneous socio-cultural realities such as India's where mutually contradictory belief systems are held by different communities and where the same beliefs elicit a diversity of ritualist expressions.

When A.K. Ramanujan asked, "Is there an Indian way of thinking?" it was the fragmentary nature of Indian social reality that midwifed his answer. The liberal political order, which often prides itself as a system of pragmatic choices, drained of ideological excesses – except, perhaps, for the cult of individualism – nevertheless shares one crucial similarity with communism and fas-

# Must we finish books?

By not doing so, we often do ourselves and the writer a favour



## WORD COUNTS

MINI KAPOOR  
is Ideas Editor, *The Hindu*

We are so awash in advice on how to fit in more reading into our lives, on how to stop moaning about "so much to read and so little time" and get on with reading hacks that a colleague's dilemma took me by surprise. A voracious reader of fiction, of late she has started keeping aside some books half-read. These include the Man Booker Prize winner of 2018, *Milkman*, by Anna Burns. She says she is so engrossed in these books that she is assailed by the fear that she won't find another book that she likes as much. And so, she stops reading.

### The ways in which we read

My reading pace is qualitatively different. When I am enthralled, disturbed, intrigued, awed, riveted (as the case may be) while reading a book, I tend to hurry through it. I like to get to the end as soon as possible, so that I can quickly go back and reread long stretches. But her predicament – or lucky space, depending on how you see it – made me wonder if she would ever get around to finishing *Milkman*, whether she has absorbed enough of the story so far to make it a whole in her mind, whether a half-read novel is the best of all worlds for some readers. In other words, it begs the age-old question: Why finish books?

That is the name of an essay by Tim Parks, Italy-based novelist, translator, critic and football fan, in *Where I Am Reading From: The Changing World of Books*.

The query is easily settled for some books, he points out, quoting Schopenhauer about life being too short for a bad book. But what about good books? He writes: "Is a good book by definition one that we did fin-



ish? Or are there occasions when we might choose to leave off a book before the end, or even halfway through, and nevertheless feel that it was good, even excellent, that we were glad we read what we read, but don't feel the need to finish it?" Moreover, he asks us to consider whether this act of part-reading a book ethically allows us to recommend it to others.

Parks is liberal in answering these questions on behalf of the reader, but speaking as a writer is more complicated. He recalls being disappointed when a reader told him he had liked one of his books, though he hadn't read right to the end. Picking apart his hurt, however, Park reconsiders the issue: "Might it be that, in showing a willingness not to pursue even an excellent book to the death, you are actually doing the writer a favour, exonerating him or her from the near-impossible task of getting out of the plot gracefully?"

### Compulsive re-reader

For me, as a compulsive re-reader of literary fiction, the process is somewhat different, and perhaps it would startle writers like Parks yet more. I do tend to read through to the end of a book I value (enjoy would not be the right word, as the books we treasure often tend to be disorienting, calling us to reconsider what we had taken to be certitudes, and some, like Haruki

Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*, even throw us half a frame out of our normal existence for a few weeks). There is, of course, always the tension in the reading process when going through a thoroughly engrossing book, wondering how on earth the writer will pull all the threads together. Sometimes, the writer does it well enough, sometimes not – and being a re-reader, when the latter eventually obtains, I will keep going back to the book but not finishing it, so that over time the novel comes to be transformed in my mind to something it was not upon the first read. Even if the writer closes the book most satisfactorily, I will sometimes remember it in my mind variously – as I do with Carol Shields's *Unless*.

At other times, in a book I have inhabited so long that its landscape feels personally felt to me, I work out different narrative sequences, almost converting into a hypertext. I have done it often with Rabindranath Tagore's *The Home and the World*, going back and forth in different ways, so the story pivots at a new point. (It helps also that there are various translations, to aid this constant reassessment, not so much of the book, but my own understanding of the world around.)

### Filling the spaces

Then, there is a book like Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, epic in its narrative arc, but weighing in at only a little over 300 pages. This is the story of Laila, from her adolescent days in the 1930s in a conservative taluqdar household in Lucknow, through her awakening intellectually, politically and socially in pre-Independence India, and finally to her coming to some sort of terms with a country and family divided by Partition. Over the years, I have filled in spaces in this saga that at times I need to read just one passage to be lost in a story, dilemma, takeaway, consolation that were never there during previous readings of this classic.

So, here's my question: Why finish books when re-reading?

# Enlightenment and its discontents

In the Sabarimala agitations, the state is acting as an agent of Enlightenment and the protesters are enacting the Counter-Enlightenment critique



## SERENDIPITIES

KEERTHIK SASIDHARAN  
is a writer and lives in New York City

The Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek makes a striking observation about the difference between fascism and communism. In fascism – think of Adolf Hitler or Benito Mussolini – when the supreme leader finishes his speech, his body seeks to embody a theatrical gravitas. The leader stares into the crowds and his hands barely move as he soaks in the wave of applause. He never betrays the mask of virility that he carefully adorns.

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fail to be appropriately re-educated are deemed the 'enemy of the people', 'class traitors' and so on. Even the Stalinist show trials of the 1930s, which often ended in frostbitten deaths in Siberian gulags, were used for the aggrandisement of ideology.

The liberal political order, which often

prides itself as a system of pragmatic choices, drained of ideological excesses – except, perhaps, for the cult of individualism – nevertheless shares one crucial similarity with communism and fas-

cism. All make universalist claims, often in the name of public goods. All three ideological structures have little use for heterogeneous socio-cultural realities such as India's where mutually contradictory belief systems are held by different communities and where the same beliefs elicit a diversity of ritualist expressions.

When A.K. Ramanujan asked,

"Is there an Indian way of thinking?" it was the fragmentary nature of Indian social reality that midwifed his answer. The liberal political order, which often

prides itself as a system of pragmatic choices, drained of ideological excesses – except, perhaps, for the cult of individualism – nevertheless shares one crucial similarity with communism and fas-

cism. Such universalist tendencies have, however, also found oppositions in the form of what is sometimes called the 'Counter-Enlightenment'. The Enlightenment, to summarise, was a vast constellation of diverse efforts that sought to disenchant the world of its belief in a world of unreason that took many forms – witchcraft, soothsaying, divinity of royals, and ultimately religion. But this zeal towards Enlightenment doesn't come without exacting its own revenge.

In the 1940s, two great German Marxist thinkers, Theodor Adorno and his teacher Max Horkheimer, described how the Enlightenment project, through its relentless stress on utilitarian ideas and zeal to strip away human imperfections, is pregnant with a form of political myth-making through a process they called 'The Dialectic of Enlightenment'. These newfangled political myths are variations of totalitarianism.

As if intuiting this inevitability, the Counter-Enlightenment voices sought to deflate any claims of Cartesian omniscience made by Enlightenment figures. They argued, most persuasively in the voice of the early modern Italian thinker Giambattista Vico, that historical con-

sciousness and context-specific reading is key to distinguishing between self-understanding of a people and the mere administrative logic employed by the 'enlightened despotism' of the state.

**The debate today**

In his last book called *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*, Pankaj Mishra elegantly traced the modern origins of this schism – the universalist versus the particularist – to an old debate between two French philosophers, Rousseau and Voltaire, who disagreed on the fate of Poland. Voltaire argued that the Poles were a backward people ("One Pole is a charmer; two Poles – a brawl; three Poles – well, this is the Polish Question") who needed to be dragged by force into the modern age. Rousseau, in contrast, stressed that Poland should maintain its own traditions, even if it

## CAPSULE



## Angstrom capillary

People have long tried to make a membrane that allows only water to permeate. An article in *Science* describes how scientists made capillaries by removing one atomic plane from crystals. The resulting two-dimensional capillary sucked in water easily while blocking the smallest ions.



## Termite saviours

A study in *Science* of termites in a Bornean forest showed their activity and abundance increased during a drought. This resulted in quicker litter decomposition, more soil moisture and heterogeneity of soil nutrients, and higher seedling survival rates during the El Nino drought of 2015-2016.



**Influenza A tricks**  
A study published in *Cell* found that Influenza A virus could produce very variable virus particles unlike other human viruses whose morphology and composition are consistent. This allows the progeny to escape from drugs used for preventing infections. This differs from the usual trick of having variant strains.

## ODD &amp; END

## Jogging geomagnetism

The earth's magnetic north pole has been moving away from Canada into Siberia, causing geophysicists to reconsider the World Magnetic Model and update it on January 30, a report in *Nature* says. The last version of the Model came out in 2015 and was supposed to last until 2020 but due to the unexpected shifting, researchers decided to advance the update. This Model is used for all navigation purposes, in ships and even the ones used in smart phones. In pinpointing the reason for this, scientists were considering geomagnetic pulses like that observed in 2016, beneath South America and the high-speed jet of liquid iron beneath Canada, the report said.

## HEALTHLINE RITESH KUMAR



"Excessive social media use can aggravate bad decision-making." — *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*

## AROUND THE WORLD



## App to the rescue in drug overdose

Researchers in the U.S. have developed a cellphone app that uses sonar to monitor someone's breathing rate and sense when an opioid overdose has occurred. The app, called Second Chance, accurately detects overdose-related symptoms about 90% of the time and can track someone's breathing from up to 3 feet away, according to their study. Illegal injectable opioids are among the most common drugs involved in overdose-related deaths. During an overdose, a person breathes slower or stops breathing altogether. These symptoms are reversible with the drug naloxone if caught in time. But people who use opioids by themselves have no way of asking for help in the event of an overdose. With this app, the phone can potentially connect them to a friend or emergency services to provide naloxone. The app sends inaudible sound waves from the phone to people's chests and then monitors the way the sound waves return to the phone to look for specific breathing patterns. The findings appear in *Science Translational Medicine*.

## An insider attack on cancer



A new study in China says that a microparticle-based delivery system for chemotherapy safely killed tumour cells in patients with a form of advanced lung cancer. The pilot clinical trial demonstrated that the new delivery platform could potentially enhance the treatment of lung cancer while avoiding the off-target effects and health risks associated with standard drug delivery systems. Researchers have theorised that repurposing the body's own delivery systems to transport molecules could boost the delivery and efficiency of chemotherapeutic drugs. However, standard approaches provoke undesirable responses from the immune system and cause toxicity by accidentally targeting healthy tissue. Repurposing cellular microparticles — tiny structures that function as messengers between cells — derived from tumours (or T MPs) represents a promising alternative because the particles do not trigger immune responses and can be tweaked to target specific organs. The findings appear in *Science Translational Medicine*.

## Reorganising CRISPR for better drugs

Scientists in the U.S. have repurposed the gene-editing tool CRISPR to study which genes are targeted by particular antibiotics, providing clues on how to improve existing antibiotics or develop new ones. Resistance to current antibiotics by disease-causing pathogens is a global problem. The technique, known as Mobile-CRISPRi, allows scientists to screen for antibiotic function in a wide range of pathogenic bacteria. Using a form of bacterial sex, the researchers transferred Mobile-CRISPRi from common laboratory strains into diverse bacteria, even including a little-studied microbe making its home on cheese rinds. The system reduces the production of protein from targeted genes, allowing researchers to identify how antibiotics inhibit the growth of pathogens. That knowledge can help direct research to overcome resistance to existing drugs. The findings appear in the journal *Nature Microbiology*.

## Bullying as bad as diabetes



People who have suffered bullying or sexual abuse have a lower quality of life similar to those living with chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, depression or severe anxiety. They are also far more likely to display harmful behaviours such as smoking dependence and binge eating. The study, in Australia, investigated around 3,000 South Australians who took part in face-to-face interviews using self-labelling questions to measure the age of onset and duration of bullying and sexual assault and their outcomes during home interviews. While 60-70% of these forms of abuse occurred in childhood or adolescence, they were associated with worse outcomes later in life. If someone had two or more adverse outcomes (smoking dependence, binge eating, antidepressant use, and a lower quality of life) the probability they had suffered bullying and/or sexual abuse ranged between 60-85%. The findings appear in *BMC Public Health*.

## Childhood muscle mass predicts adult lung health

How well we breathe as adults may depend on the amount of fat mass and lean body mass, or muscle, we have as children. The study, coordinated in London, reports that boys and girls with more muscle mass in childhood and adolescence have higher lung function. The researchers also found that boys, but not girls, with more fat mass have lower lung function. Previous studies had looked at the association between overall body mass and lung function, but they found contradictory results. This could be attributed to the fact that overall body mass does not account for the different contribution of fat and muscle mass. In the current study, the authors combined body measurements and measurements produced using dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry to distinguish between muscle mass and fat mass. The findings appear online in *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*.

## DEMYSTIFYING SCIENCE

## What is a ketogenic diet?

A ketogenic diet, which is bandied as a weight-loss technique, is derived from coaxing the body to make small molecules called "ketones". This is an alternative fuel source for the body and used when blood sugar (glucose) is in short supply. Ketones are made when carbohydrates (that easily break into glucose) are removed and limited protein becomes the main constituent of diet. The liver produces ketones from fat. These ketones then serve as a fuel source throughout the body, especially for the brain. Proponents say the body on a ketogenic diet can be trained to survive on fat and that it not only helps lose weight but also curbs hunger pangs. However, it is a diet that needs to be properly managed.

## Tapping AI to spot AD

Haryana-based research team develops framework for Alzheimer's disease detection

JACOB KOSHY

**P**icture this about Alzheimer's disease. It is an affliction of progressive forgetfulness. Things get misplaced and one tends to locate them — for example, car keys being found in the washroom — in unusual places. It may even be hard to track a conversation.

Sorry, what are we talking about? By the time specialists advise a formal diagnosis, it is usually too late. And this is usually after a detailed examination by a medical expert complete with Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans and several tests for cognitive impairment.

For years now, researchers have been on the hunt for a way to detect Alzheimer's in its infancy. Some years ago, researchers started to intensely focus on the hippocampus, a region of the brain critical to forming memories.

In a study published in *Alzheimer's Research and Therapy*, in October 2015, researchers established a correlation between a rapid loss of tissue in the hippocampus and an early onset of the disease.

Says Dr. Aaron Bonner-Jackson, one of the researchers, "Overall, we found strong relationships between the memory measures and hippocampal volumes in the sam-



ple as a whole, suggesting that these measures may serve as effective indicators of hippocampal size. In particular, performance on the measure of non-verbal memory was most closely related to hippocampal size among the larger sample." Dr. Bonner-Jackson explained his team's findings in a blog on BioMed Central. He added, "When we looked at the sample of individuals with Mild Cognitive Impairment, a similar pattern emerged. Specifically, the non-verbal memory task showed much stronger associations with hippocampal volumes than a comparable verbal memory task."

But insights gleaned from testing hippocampal volumes, while useful, are still too late in the day. There is no effective treatment for the disease and the only hope is that if it is caught early enough, some medical intervention could be made.

## Tracking glutathione

In recent years scientists have been intrigued by a low-profile chemical called glutathione. Other than its key role in regulating the growth of cells, glutathione is also one of the body's core antioxidants. It scavenges on molecules that may undergo oxidation (which means an acceleration in cellular and DNA damage).

Therefore, many researchers argue, low glutathione levels in the

brain could mean that many molecules responsible for oxidation may be running amok and accelerating cell damage. This could mean they are eating away at the hippocampus and thereby accelerating Alzheimer's disease.

Tracking glutathione levels in the brain is an extremely involved process and requires MRI as well as specialist analysis. However, a team at the National Brain Research Centre (NBRC), Haryana, says that it has got a framework in place that correlates glutathione levels in the brain, pictures of the hippocampus (taken using MRI) and performance on certain standard cognitive tests (for example, memory and motor-coordination). This can then be used to develop an algorithm to calculate the odds of an early onset of Alzheimer's.

Says Prof. Pravat K. Mandal, lead researcher and senior professor at the NBRC, "What we're looking at is to be able to determine in half-hour maximum, via a diagnostic test, the patient's risk for Alzheimer's."

However, what Prof. Mandal currently lacks is the troves of data from patients that 'machine learning' systems need to draw correlations — and maybe reveal hidden relationships — on how early onset of Alzheimer's could be detected.

In a paper to be published in the *Frontiers in Neurology*, Prof. Man-

dal and his colleagues say, "Large-scale data analysis using brain imaging, metabolic and neuropsychological score provide information about disease progression and identify early diagnostic biomarker. Hence, conceptualisation of analytics is an important step and will help physicians, clinicians, engineers work hand-in-hand to help [develop] an effective tool for early diagnosis or prediction of AD [Alzheimer's disease]."

Other teams elsewhere are also tapping artificial intelligence (AI) to predict Alzheimer's. In November 2018, researchers reported in *Radiology* that a deep learning algorithm developed using imaging data from more than 1,000 Alzheimer's patients could, reportedly, accurately predict the presence of the disease more than six years before a doctor finalised the diagnosis. A study in 2018 by the Centre for Internet & Society India claimed that AI could help add \$95 billion to the Indian economy by 2035, highlighting its potential.

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## Game's over?



**Hold the fire:** Video games are compelling, but does playing them too much constitute a medical condition? The gaming industry is trying to avoid "gaming disorder" becoming a formally recognised ailment. The World Health Organisation (WHO), which has spent years looking into the addictive nature of video games, put "gaming disorder" on its list of health problems last year, a decision set to be endorsed by governments, with potential impacts on, for example, health-care policy and insurance. The U.S. gaming industry group discussed the issue with WHO officials in Geneva last month, both sides said. WHO defined the disorder as when gaming takes over people's lives for a year or more to the detriment of other activities and the "continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences". WHO member governments are expected to start reporting on "gaming disorder" from 2022 to allow WHO to track it in global health statistics. — Tom Miles/REUTERS • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

## Making seat belts matter

Pan-India survey shows most believe roads to be unsafe for children

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

**I**ndia has a law mandating the use of rear seatbelts in vehicles in India. However, a pan-India survey has found that 9 out of 10 (91.2%) neither use a rear seatbelt nor a child seat. This is worrying as studies show that in the case of children, seat belt use can reduce the risk of death by 25% and injury by 75% in car accidents. Seatbelts can also have a direct impact on the extent of the injury suffered by a passenger in the front seat.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018, road crashes are the leading cause of death among children in the age group of 5-14, and young adults from 15-29 years.

## India-based study

A new study, "Rear Seat-Belt Usage and Child Road Safety in India" by Nissan India and SaveLIFE Foundation, documents for the first time in India the state of child safety on Indian roads and public perception and expectations regarding the use of rear seatbelts.

The study also focused



on the safety of children while commuting and showed that two-thirds of respondents believe that Indian roads are unsafe for children. Despite 92.8% of the respondents reportedly being aware of the safety benefits of child helmets, only 20.1% of them owned one. This becomes all the more relevant as data by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways show that in 2017, 9,408 children lost their lives to road crashes. This translates to nearly 26 child deaths on Indian roads every day.

The study notes: "High road-crash fatality cannot be accepted as the norm. It is time that basic provisions such as child helmets, safety measures in school zones, child seats, special training for school bus and van drivers, and adult-accountability be made mandatory across the country."

The study covered 11 Indian cities and recorded responses through 6,306 face-to-face interviews, 100 in-depth expert interviews, two focus-group discussions and on-site observations to gauge compliance of Central Board of Secondary Education School Bus guidelines as well as use of rear seatbelts.

## Global context

Road traffic injuries claim more than 1.35 million lives each year globally. However, the burden of road crash deaths is disproportionately high among low and middle-income countries.

According to WHO, approximately 1.2 million people are killed each year in road crashes worldwide, with up to 50 million more injured. Over 95% of these deaths and injuries occur in the low- and middle-income countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe.

In Japan, road deaths fell by approximately 20% between 1980 and 2000. In contrast, over the same period, road deaths increased from 50-100% in low- and middle-income countries.

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## Inexplicable U-turn



NAMITHA KUMAR

**T**he suspension of the National Policy for Treatment of Rare Diseases (NPTRD) has come as a rude shock to families and patients affected by a rare disease (defined by the World Health Organisation as one that affects less than 1 in 1,000. Definitions vary nationally).

## A travesty

On November 30, 2018, the Centre filed an affidavit in the Delhi High Court stating that the current policy for rare diseases needed to be reframed due to challenges in implementation and costs. The Union Health Ministry termed the current policy "untenable" as the implementation of the policy was moved out of the Public Health Division to the National Health Mission (NHM). Since the ambit of the NHM is restricted to primary and secondary health care, rare diseases (which come under tertiary care) cannot be served. The Ministry is sure to have known beforehand that rare diseases cannot be treated under the NHM. A flimsy reason such as this reflects a lack of intent and a political unwillingness to ensure health justice.

The NPTRD was approved in May 2017 on the orders of the Delhi High Court. The Government of National Capital Territory, Delhi had also appointed an interdisciplinary committee to look into the challenges of rare diseases. The recommendations of the three major committees and sub-committees were used to formulate policy going beyond just treatment and suggesting measures towards awareness, prevention, research and development of therapies and orphan drugs and issues of health insurance. The policy set out a road map for the immediate treatment of affected patients along with concrete implementation mechanisms. It recommended the setting up of a technical-cum-administrative committee (at the Central and State levels), and an immediate corpus of funds (₹100 crore) for treatment. The policy also stated the role of the Union Health Ministry by suggesting that a rare disease cell should be set up within the Ministry and headed by a joint secretary. When the policy clearly outlined the Ministry's role, it is unclear why implementation was moved to the NHM. The affidavit filed by the Centre states that no corpus of funds was created under the NHM.

Instead of shifting implementation of the policy and the creation of the fund to the NHM, the Ministry should have followed the policy recommendations and created a national rare disease cell, similar to the blood cell. While the blood cell is a part of the NHM, a national rare disease cell should have been a part of the Ministry, as recommended. To coordinate policy implementation across all States, a State rare disease cell under the State Ministry of Health and Family Welfare could have been set up. Instead, there was no action ever since the current policy came into being in May 2017, in turn affecting patients and families. According to the Organisation for Rare Diseases India (ORDI), in Bengaluru, six patients have died waiting for their applications for treatment to be approved.

## Expensive treatment

An interim arrangement of one-time financial assistance for treatment of patients below poverty line is no solution. The exorbitant cost of treatment per patient, which ranges anywhere from ₹25 lakh and ₹4 crore per year, is out of reach even for middle-class families. In India, out-of-pocket health-care expense is a key driver of poverty, and more so in families with those affected by a rare disease, as they have to run from pillar to post for diagnosis and treatment. The government must understand the financial burden of rare diseases and extend help to all patients.

The Constitution of India has provisions guaranteeing the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The suspension of the current policy is a travesty of health justice. Since the Ministry has neither specified a deadline for a new policy nor made clarifications on the formation of the 10-member policy committee, it is a sign of the government's shaky commitment towards the plight of rare disease patients.

Dr. Namitha Kumar is Research Director, Centre for Health Ecologies and Technology, Bengaluru

## 16 NON-FICTION

THE HINDU  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2019

# The voice of the people

A well-known poet and feminist explains why art is a part of the struggle for social justice and equality

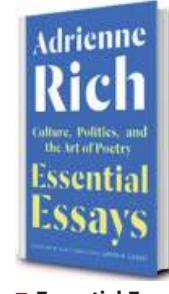
UMA MAHDEVAN-DASGUPTA

**A**nd what about art? Mis-trusted, adored, poetised, condemned, dismissed as entertainment, commodified, auctioned at Sotheby's, purchased by investment-seeking celebrities, it dies into the 'art object' of a thousand museum basements. It's also reborn hourly in prisons, women's shelters, small-town garages, community-college workshops, half-way houses, wherever someone picks up a pencil, a wood-burning tool, a copy of *The Tempest*, a tasseled camera, a whittling knife, a stick of charcoal, a pawnshop horn, a video of *Citizen Kane*, whatever lets you know again that this deeply instinctual yet self-conscious expressive language, this regenerative process, could help save your life." — Adrienne Rich.

*Essential Essays: Culture, Politics, and the Art of Poetry* brings together some of the most well-known essays of poet and feminist Adrienne Rich (1929 - 2012). The selection has been edited by the distinguished literary critic, academic and poet Sandra Gilbert, who, along with Susan Gubar, co-authored the critical work *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), a major text of second-wave feminism.

**Cultural voice**

As a public intellectual, says Gilbert, Rich was "responsible, self-questioning, and morally passionate." Ranging from the 1960s to 2006, these essays remind us that not only was Rich a major feminist and important cultural voice of



■ **Essential Essays: Culture, Politics, and the Art of Poetry**  
Adrienne Rich  
WW Norton  
₹1,686

her generation — but that she was above all a poet and artist who believed in a central role for art in society. There are no boundaries in her oeuvre between her poetry, essays and feminist work: together, they represent the integrity and truth of her long literary career.

"Her wounds came from the same source as her power," wrote Adrienne Rich about Marie Curie. Born to a mother who set aside her own musical ambitions to raise her children — homeschooling them till fourth grade — and an academic father who exhorted his daughter to read and write like the canonical male white poets, Rich began her intellectual life as a gifted young poet. W.H. Auden wrote famously (and patronisingly) about her first book that the poems were "neatly and modestly dressed, speak quietly but do not mumble, respect their elders but are not cowed by them." This was in 1951, when male poets presumably thought this was a nice, non-



Inspiring trio: Adrienne Rich (extreme right) with writers Audre Lorde and Meridel Le Sueur (middle) at a writing workshop in Austin, Texas, in 1980. ■ WIKI COMMONS

threatening way to praise the work of young women.

Rich went on to get married and have three children before she was 30. In the 1950s, marriage and motherhood filled her days. When she first wrote about her experience as a woman, "The poem was jotted in fragments during children's naps, brief hours in a library, or at 3 a.m., after rising with a wakeful child." For a decade, she published nothing. "For about ten years I was reading in fierce snatches, scribbling in notebooks, writing poetry in fragments."

**Wave of feminism**

Outside the home, it was a period of radical ferment: of sit-ins,

marches and the peace movements. Rich writes about being conflicted, and about her evolution as a poet, transforming herself with every new work, in *When We Dead Awaken* (1971): "I felt that I had either to consider myself a failed woman and a failed poet, or try to find some synthesis by which to understand what was happening to me."

Every wave of feminism leaves the cliffs of patriarchy a little diminished. But every successive generation of feminists must also engage with and critique those who came before. Rereading Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Rich notes that there are some women who aren't in the

room at all: "Women whom she left out of the picture altogether — women who are washing other people's dishes and caring for other people's children, not to mention women who went on the streets last night in order to feed their children."

**Becoming empowered**

Rich's generation of second-wave feminists has been critiqued at length by others. Nevertheless, it is worth reading her discussion of what feminism must stand for. In 'What Does a Woman Need to Know?' a commencement speech at Smith College in 1979, she reminds young women of their responsibility: "As more women are

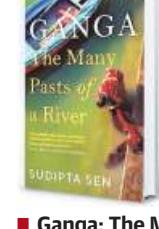
entering the professions (though still suffering sexual harassment in the workplace, though still, if they have children, carrying two full-time jobs, though still vastly outnumbered by men in upper-level and decision-making jobs), we need most profoundly to remember that early insight of the feminist movement as it evolved in the late 60s: *that no woman is liberated until we all are liberated.*"

Anticipating the inherent limitations of 'Lean-In' feminism, Rich notes that successful women have failed to build a more equal and compassionate world for the reason that they have made efforts to do so only on terms that men in powerful positions would find acceptable.

For Rich, just as feminism is part of an effort to build a more just and caring world, art is part of the struggle for social justice and equality.

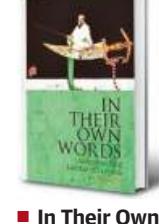
In her 1997 essay 'Why I Refused the National Medal for the Arts', written after she declined to accept the award offered by U.S. President Bill Clinton, Rich presents a vision of art as a voice of the people: "In the long run art needs to grow organically out of a social compost nourishing to everyone, a literate citizenry, a free, universal, public education complex with art as an integral element, a society honoring both human individuality and the search for a decent, sustainable common life. In such conditions, art would still be a voice of hunger, desire, discontent, passion, reminding us that the democratic project is never-ending."

## BOOKSHELF



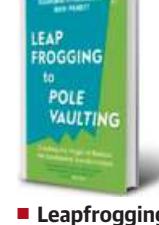
■ **Ganga: The Many Pasts of a River**  
Sudipta Sen  
Penguin Random House  
₹799

A historian tells the story of the world's third-largest river from prehistoric times to the present. Sen begins his chronicle with the river's first settlers, its myths of origin in Hinduism and its significance in Buddhism. He traces the communities that arose on its banks, the merchants that navigated its waters and the many empires.



■ **In Their Own Words: Understanding Lashkar-e-Tayyaba**  
C. Christine Fair  
Oxford University Press  
₹950

Mining the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba's array of publications produced by its publishing wing Dar-ul-Andlus and her own knowledge of its operations having followed them for years, Fair provides new insights into the terrorist organisation and the people it recruits. She also pays attention to the role LeT assigns to women.



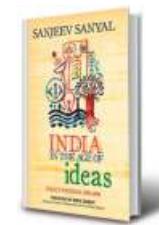
■ **Leapfrogging to Pole-Vaulting**  
Raghu Nath Mashelkar,  
Ravi Pandit  
Penguin/Viking  
₹599

These two writers see many opportunities for a fundamental shift in the way we live and 'develop'. Using the metaphor of pole-vaulting, they suggest ways to surmount problems like farm distress. Dotted with case studies, they argue that while environment, energy and employment pose stiff challenges, they also offer opportunities for change.



■ **Bridging East & West: Rabindranath Tagore and Romain Rolland Correspondence (1919-1940)**  
Edited by Chinmoy Guha  
Oxford University Press  
₹995

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and Romain Rolland (1866-1944) were two of the principal humanists of the 20th century who questioned the ideas of frontier and nationalism from their respective socio-political contexts. This volume is an attempt to see how they tried to bridge their milieus between the two World Wars.



■ **India in the Age of Ideas: Select Writings 2006-2018**  
Sanjeev Sanyal  
Westland Books  
₹699

This is a collection of articles and columns Sanyal wrote over the course of a dozen years, ranging from economics and urban design to history, culture and religion. Using analytical tools drawn from sources like the philosophical framework of Complex Adaptive Systems and Rig Veda, he challenges common assumptions about India.

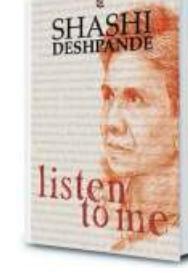
# A place of her own

Shashi Deshpande, who has broken many stereotypes, on the writing life and why women's stories flowed out of her

SUDIPTA DATTA



Literary riches: The author began her journey by writing about people who were not in the books she read. ■ BHAGYA PRAKASH K.



■ **Listen to Me**  
Shashi Deshpande  
Westland Books  
₹699

says was the 'first literary person to think my writing mattered'.

Indira Gandhi's Emergency and some 'political experiences' informed the first book, *Roots and Shadows*, but it became a narrative of power within a family. Though she calls it 'flawed', what it did was to convince her that the novel was the form which suited her, writing it 'could be full of surprises' but it brought 'immense satisfaction'. This is the most satisfying part of the autobiography too — where we read the stories behind the novels.

With *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), 'about marital rape, sibling envy, guilt and parental neglect,' Deshpande 'knew that there was no novel like it in English...' She takes us back to the lines of the epigraph, the words of the Dharmapada: 'You are your own refuge; there is no other refuge,' and says this is the philosophy 'that has connected all my novels: the essential loneliness of the human being.'

Most of her characters, think Sarita in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* or Jaya in *That Long Silence*, strive to

form relationships, hoping they will last, 'the ultimate human paradox.' In Jaya, she found 'a woman with a beating heart, a human being with talent, desires and aspirations.... A woman who realised her life mattered... and that she, only, she, was responsible for it.' With her fourth novel, *The Binding Vine*, which came out of the rape of a nurse at a Bombay hospital, she moved out of the 'intensely private into the public space.'

**New ground**

Readers found themselves in her books but critics often typecast her as a woman's writer. She is miffed about several things, not least at the question she was often asked: 'Why do you write in English?' She is upset that fellow writers V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie made disparaging remarks about women authors. Despite the success, a Sahitya Akademi Award and a Padma Shri, Deshpande has sometimes wondered where she stands in the Indian Writing in English firmament. Well, if an Arundhati Roy or an Anuradha Roy has dazzled IWE, it's because writers like Anita Desai and Deshpande articulated their thoughts and did away with stereotypes in the 1970s and 80s.

If you have read her, *Listen to Me* is a fascinating peek into the mind of a writer — and the wide-ranging influences from the Upanishads to Jane Austen. She always has a book to dip into, for instance, while working on one — *'The Golden Notebook'* once, Dickens' *'Bleak House'* another time. To the new reader, this is a wonderful way to discover the books of a much-loved author.

# In a minority

What an ancient community needs to do to survive

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE

**I**n the religion-charged atmosphere of contemporary Indian society, the enigma around the Jain population is a cause of comfort as well as curiosity. One of the oldest communities in the world, the Jains are known for wealth and philanthropy and a vegan lifestyle. That the Jains practise an ancient faith without drawing larger public interest is typical of what they stand for.

In this regard this book edited by sociologist and demographer Prakash C. Jain is a great attempt to explain the community that remains silent about its issues and concerns.

Prof. Jain makes it clear that the community is the least studied in the pantheon of religions in India.

The term micro-minority is taken by the Parsis for their numerical weakness, but they are lavishly documented in academia and sociology. Sadly, the same is not true for the Jains.

The volume indicates how the community survived more than 2,600 years in South Asia. Contributor Jagdish P. Sharma

points out that the attitude of the community towards authority and power — 'maybe-ism' is a unique attribute that is both a philosophical pillar as well as a source of its strength.

The entire Jain population of India can be accommodated in a small city. As per the census of 2001, this highly urbanised community can be found in some of the major commercial and urban centres of India.

This book also points out that the Jains are perhaps the only community who have never really been politically mobilised in the history of the sub-continent and can be described as the eternal minority of India.

This book argues for reform in the ancient community in the way Jews and Parsis have been clamouring for a change in ancient practices to survive.

# The Bard and Bollywood

How popular cinema deals with our multiple histories

DAKSHAYINI SURESH

**J**onathan Gil Harris' *Masala Shakespeare* is a collection of light critical musings on the relationship between Shakespeare and Bollywood cinema.

Deploying the idea of 'masala' in a somewhat sweeping way, Harris looks into some interesting commonalities between Shakespeare's drama and the concerns of mainstream Indian cinema, particularly Bollywood — the orientation to mass appeal, an affinity for trope-based characterisation (tragic heroes, or doomed romantic lovers, for instance), their natural emphasis on diversity, the tendency to simultaneously subvert and affirm dominant social values, and so on.

He argues that 'Shakespeare, like India, is not an individual but, rather, something fundamentally plural.' He sees Shakespeare as a 'collaborator' rather than a 'progenitor', to Indian cinema and emphasises the potential for reading Bollywood and the Bard together, using the inflections of one to interpret the other, allowing the stylistic reinventions of contemporary Indian spin-offs

chooses to round up all of these complex and separate issues under the 'masala' banner means, however, that he is unable to engage fully with any of them.

On the whole his arguments have a loose, slightly superficial quality to them.

Harris is intent on having fun with his subject matter. The essays are not the sort of densely argued, packed-with-references literature we associate with criticism. They're joyful, open, easy reading, sure to be of interest to the average Vishal Bhardwaj enthusiast, or anyone who's ever been made to read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in high school.

Writing on everything from *Angoor*, the Gulzar adaptation of *A Comedy of Errors*, to *Romeo and Juliet* stories including *Ishqzaade* and the Marathi hit *Sairat*, Harris highlights the ways in which popular cinema deals with India's multiple histories, cultures, and identities, and challenges more monolithic ideas of the nation. That he

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# Rohit blasts century, but India falters in the chase

Australia rides on fifties from Handscomb, Khawaja and Marsh; Richardson rocks the visitors, scalps four



**Blazing away:** Rohit Sharma kept India in the contest with some prodigious hitting, blasting six sixes and 10 fours. ■ MATT KING/GETTY IMAGES

## OZ CHALLENGE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SYDNEY

Australia fended off an explosive century from Rohit Sharma to post a morale-boosting 34-run victory over India in the first One-Day International here on Saturday.

Australia made 288 for five in its 50 overs after winning the toss and restricted India to 254 for nine.

Rohit blasted 133 off 129 balls in an effort to keep India in the contest, while Man-of-the-Match Jhye Richardson took four for 26.

The win comes as a tonic for the ailing Australians, coming off a home Test series defeat to Virat Kohli's India and after winning just three of their previous 24 ODIs.

Test discard Peter Handscomb top-scored with 73 off

61 balls for Australia with Usman Khawaja and Shaun Marsh also registered half-centuries.

Handscomb, passed over this week by selectors for this month's two Tests against Sri Lanka, led the way with six fours and two sixes. Fellow Test discard Marsh made 54 off 70 balls while Khawaja made 59 from 81.

India's Bhuvneshwar Kumar finished with two for 66 and wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav claimed two for 54.

"We thought 280 was chaseable, but losing three wickets in such a short span of time is never good," said Kohli.

### Disastrous start

India lurched to a disastrous start, losing three wickets in the first six overs, from which it failed to recover.

Shikhar Dhawan was out off the sixth ball of the in-

nings when he was leg before for a first-ball duck to ODI debutant Jason Behrendorff.

It got worse for India when Kohli was caught at square-leg off Richardson for three and two balls later Ambati Rayudu was trapped leg before by Richardson after a review for a two-ball duck, leaving India rocking at four for three.

Dhoni then joined Rohit and put on 137 runs for the fourth wicket to stabilise India before he was out leg before wicket to Ravindra Jadeja for 59 in the 29th over. Khawaja was struck on the front pad while attempting to sweep and sought a review but there was no 'hot spot' detected off the bat.

Marsh looked well set before he holed out to Mohammed Shami off Kuldeep at long-on, ending a 53-run stand with Handscomb, who later found Dhawan at extra cover off Bhuvneshwar.

Rohit kept India in the contest with some prodigious hitting, blasting six sixes and 10 fours.

But his knock came to an end when he skied Marcus

## Stat attack

■ Rohit notched up his 22nd century in 194 ODIs (188 innings). This is his fourth consecutive 50-plus score against Australia

■ He is the first Indian to slam five ODI hundreds in Australia (four vs Australia and one vs Bangladesh, World Cup 2015)

■ The India opener has seven hundreds (29 innings) against Australia, next only to Tendulkar's nine (70). West Indies' Desmond Haynes has six (64) and Kohli five (27)

■ Rohit has scored a ton in each of the last 10 ODI series he has played in

■ Of the 10 hundreds Rohit has scored in a chase, India has won eight and lost two (vs SA, Kanpur, 2015 & vs Aus, Sydney, 2019)

■ Dhoni, who became the fifth batsman to reach 10,000 ODI runs for India, has also aggregated 174 runs playing for Asia XI (2007)

■ This is Dhoni's second-slowest ODI half-century (93b) after the one against Windies (108b, North Sound, 2017), India lost both matches

■ This is the first time in nine years Dhoni has walked in to bat inside four overs of the innings. The previous instance was against Sri Lanka in Dhaka, 2010

■ It took 20.1 overs for the Indians to hit the first four of the innings. However, they hit four sixes (Rohit 3, Dhoni 1) within the first 20 overs

■ Kohli was dismissed for a single digit score for the first time in 22 ODI innings

■ Bhuvneshwar reached 100 wickets in his 96th ODI

■ The Sydney win was Australia's 100th International victory

■ Siddle made an ODI comeback after missing 169 games in eight years. The previous record was held by Brad Hogg (156 matches, six years)

■ This is the first time in nine years Dhoni has walked in to bat inside four overs of the innings. The previous instance was against Sri Lanka in Dhaka, 2010

## Another feather in Dhoni's cap

Becomes fifth player to score 10,000 ODI runs for India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SYDNEY

Mahendra Singh Dhoni became the fifth player to score 10,000 runs for India in One-day International cricket, adding another feather to his illustrious cap on Saturday.

Starting the innings at 9,998 runs, Dhoni took seven deliveries to reach the landmark on his way to a patient 51 in the first ODI of the three-match series against Australia.

While the right-handed Dhoni had crossed the 10,000-run mark in the format in 2017 during the England tour, 174 of them came while batting for Asia XI in three matches. On Saturday, he breached the mark for the country. Dhoni thus joined an

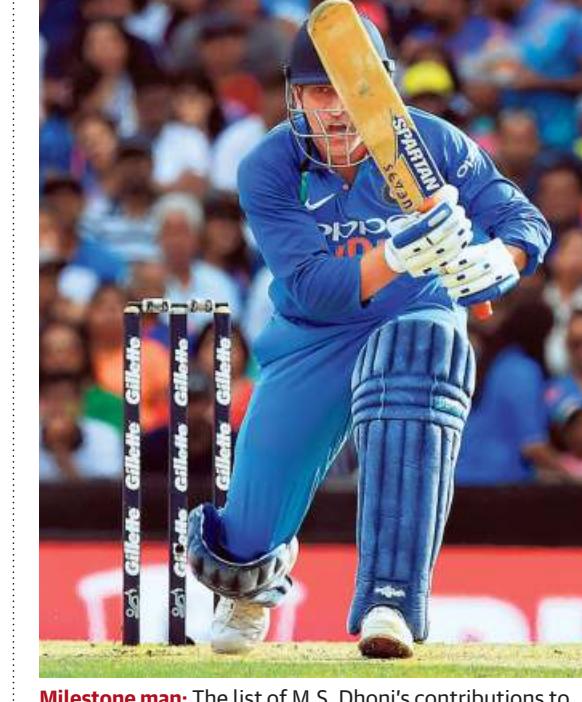
elite list of Indian cricketers who had previously achieved the feat, which include Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and Virat Kohli.

In 330 ODIs for India, the wicketkeeper-batsman has now over 10,050 runs at an average of 49.75, including nine centuries and 67 fifties.

Overall, Dhoni is the 13th player to score 10,000 ODI runs.

## India's 10,000-club in ODIs

Tendulkar	18,426
Ganguly	11,221
Dravid	10,768
Kohli	10,235
Dhoni	10,050



**Milestone man:** The list of M.S. Dhoni's contributions to India's cause just got bigger. ■ AFP

## SCOREBOARD AUSTRALIA VS INDIA, FIRST ODI

**Australia:** A. Carey c Rohit b Kuldeep 24 (31b, 5x4), A. Finch b Bhuvneshwar 6 (11b), U. Khawaja lbw b Jadeja 59 (81b, 6x4), S. Marsh c Shami b Kuldeep 54 (70b, 4x4), P. Handscomb c Dhawans b Bhuvneshwar 73 (61b, 6x4, 2x6), M. Stoinis (not out) 47 (43b, 2x4, 2x6), G. Maxwell (not out) 11 (5b, 1x4), Extras (b-4, lb-2, nb-2, w-6): 14; Total (for nine wkts. in 50 overs): 254.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-1 (Dhawan, 0.6 ov), 2-4 (Kohli, 3.3), 3-4 (Rayudu, 3.5), 4-141 (Dhoni, 32.2), 5-176 (Karthik, 39.2), 6-213 (Jadeja, 44.1), 7-221 (Rohit, 45.4), 8-247 (Kuldeep, 48.6), 9-254 (Shami, 49.6).

**India bowling:** Bhuvneshwar 10-0-66-2, Khele 8-0-55-0, Shami 10-0-46-0, Kuldeep 10-0-54-2, Jadeja 10-0-48-1, Rayudu 2-0-13-0.

**Toss:** Australia. **Man-of-the-Match:** Richardson.

Australia won by 34 runs to take 1-0 lead in 3-match series.

**Second ODI:** Jan. 15, Adelaide, 8.30 a.m. (IST).

# 'Dhoni ideal number four'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SYDNEY

Differing with skipper Virat Kohli's views, India's ODI vice-captain Rohit Sharma said on Saturday Mahendra Singh Dhoni was "ideal" for the number four slot, as the team works on getting the batting order right for the World Cup.

Rohit added it was his personal view and that the captain and the coach would have the final say.

Dhoni made 51 off 96 balls in India's 34-run defeat to Australia in the first ODI,

sparking another debate about his current form in a World Cup year.

"Personally, I feel Dhoni batting at number four will be ideal for the team, but we have Ambati Rayudu who has done really well at number four.

"It totally depends on what the captain and coach think."

**Preference** "Personally, I would be happy if Dhoni bats at four," Rohit said at the post-match conference.

"So we took a little bit of time and even I did not score as quickly as I normally do," Rohit said.

The wicket-keeper batsman added: "I am not worried about my form."

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## 18 SPORT

# Ritesh pips Ajay to 3000m victory

Saliha demolishes the field in the girls' under-17 high jump

## KHELO INDIA

NANDAKUMAR MARAR

PUNE  
Ritesh Ohire hit the tape at 8m 56.12s to win the 3000m gold at the Khelo India Youth Games athletics competition.

He was followed home by silver medalist Ajay (8.56.88) and bronze medalist Atul Gami (8.56.94) in the boys' under-17 event.

In a field of 12, the winner from Madhya Pradesh timed his kick to edge out his rivals from Haryana and Gujarat in a desperate run to a close finish.

There was little to separate the front-runner and rivals ready and willing to fight for the gold medal, and probable entry into the shortlist of talent spotters from Sports Authority of India watching track and field action.

## First attempt

Loose-limbed K.H. Saliha demolished the competition in the girls' under-17 high jump with her first attempt, clearing 1.68m for a career-best leap and the KIYC gold medal was in her backpack.

The Kerala athlete's earlier best was 1.66 at a meet in



**Pulls ahead:** Ritesh Ohire, right, establishes a handy lead on way to his gold. ■ JIGNESH MISTRY

New Delhi. Teammate Meera Biju finished joint third after a 1.60m leap (along with Haryana's Khushi). Tamil Nadu's K. Gobika (1.64) bagged the silver.

Ritesh's confidence came through in his finishing kick, Saliha just went out and enjoyed doing what she loves

the most. Long-distance runners striding neck and neck at the finish is thrilling, and a jumper producing a career high at the start is interesting.

## Total support

"I was asked to try out the high jump by my school

coach in seventh class and I enjoyed training and competing," said the Canco School student from Thrissur. "Total support from parents keeps me going."

These two under-17 winners stand a chance of getting government support for eight years, worth ₹5 lakh

annually, in case spotted by talent scouts for further training in an athletics academy shortlisted by SAI.

Saliha is not thinking too far ahead on the day of triumph; like other teenagers, she wants to enjoy the happy memory and leave career decision to parents.

## Saliha

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# Manavadiya traps gold in style

## SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN

PUNE

It was a fairy-tale finish for Manavadiya Rathore as he dealt with the climax in a robust fashion, clinching the men's under-21 trap gold in the Khelo India Youth Games at the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Balewadi, on Saturday.

On a spectacular day of shooting when two of the brightest young girls Mehuli Ghosh and Elavenil Valarivan, who shake the world with the air rifle, put up quality fare, Manavadiya pulled the spectators outdoor to warm and windy conditions with a brilliant show.

Qualifying in the third place with 116 out of 125, the 19-year-old Manavadiya kept getting better in the climax, after a shaky start, to win the gold 38-34 ahead of Bhowneesh Mendiratta.

Manavadiya credited his father Col. Rajivardhan Rathore, Olympic silver medalist and the Union Sports Minister, and mother Gayatri, for his tough competitive streak.

Manisha Keer did equally well to clinch the gold in women's trap, but was disappointed at missing the last bird when gold was a foregone conclusion, that she smacked the blank cartridge on the ground before breaking into a bright smile.

Elavenil felt that she had made some errors in the end.

## The results:

**Trap: Men under-21:** 1. Manavadiya Rathore 39 (116); 2. Bhowneesh Mendiratta 34 (114); 3. Shardul Vihan 26 (111).

**Women under-21:** 1. Manisha Keer 38 (117); 2. Kirti Gupta 35 (102); 3. Aadya Tripathi 25 (109).

**25m rapid fire pistol: Men under-21:** 1. Adarsh Singh 30 (570); 2. Ayush Sangwan 25 (576); 3. Harshvardhan Yadav 19 (568).

**Air rifle: Women under-21:** 1. Mehuli Ghosh 252.1 (629.4); 2. Elavenil Valarivan 248.8 (628.8); 3. Manini Kaushik 227.0 (618.9).

**Women under-17:** 1. Heena Gohei 247.5 (622.8); 2. Jasmeen Kaur 246.3 (616.5); 3. Yana Rathore 224.1 (623.8).



**Top three:** Manavadiya Rathore flanked by Bhowneesh Mendiratta, left, and Shardul Vihan. ■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

prowess in the new event for him, by bagging the bronze. "It was overall a good competition. I got my confidence and rhythm after a bad start. When the going gets tough, you can either give up or get back to fight. After so much of training, your conscience doesn't let you give up," said Manavadiya.

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## 20 SPORT

## TV PICKS

**NBA:** Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m.**South Africa vs Pakistan:**

3rd Test, day two, Sony ESPN (SD &amp; HD), 1.30 p.m.

**AFC Asian Cup:** Star Sports 3, 4.30 p.m., 7 p.m. & 9.30 p.m.**PBL (final):** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. & 9.45 p.m.**La Liga:** Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 8.45 p.m. & 11 p.m.**Australian Open:** Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. (Monday)

## IN BRIEF



## Nadal set to unleash remodelled serve

MELBOURNE

Rafael Nadal revealed on Saturday he was back to full fitness and had a brand new serve to unleash at the Australian Open. "I am happy with the motivation to do something new. If I am able to make that happen in a good way, I didn't compete with this new serve, so let's see how it works. I am confident it's going to work well," he told reporters here. AFP



## Svitolina targets maiden Slam, No. 1 ranking

MELBOURNE

Elina Svitolina is determined to break through and win her first Grand Slam this year with the World No. 1 ranking also in the sights of the confident Ukrainian. "I played great in the end of the season. But of course the main goal for me is to be number one and win a Grand Slam. But I try to not think so much about it and not have this pressure because, you know, everyone is fighting for the same thing. There is enough pressure that's put on us," she said. AFP



## Biggest goal is to be more mature: Osaka

MELBOURNE

US Open winner Naomi Osaka admitted on Saturday that she was naturally shy and said one of her key goals in the off-season had been to work on her confidence and become more mature. "For me one of my biggest goals is to be more mature, like to mature as a person. I feel like just levelling that out is one of my biggest goals I had during the off-season," she said ahead of her opening round clash against Poland's Magda Linette next week. AFP

## Punjab men have the last laugh

Railways sweats it out against Tamil Nadu before winning the women's title

## NATL. BASKETBALL

**RAYAN ROZARIO**  
BHAVNAGAR

After shocking holder Tamil Nadu the other day, Punjab came back fresh to defeat last year's runner-up Services 74-65 to emerge the men's champion of the 69th senior National basketball championship at the Sidhar Sports Complex courts here on Saturday.

Services was certainly a better side but Punjab outplayed it on height and some steady firing.

Arshpreet Singh Bhullar and Jagdeep Singh excelled both from the inside and outside.

They hardly missed anything while the towering Amritpal Singh made a huge difference. He guarded the ring



Happy times: The Indian Railways women celebrate after retaining the title. • VIJAY SONEJI

impeccably and Services found it hard to get past him. He even converted a few baskets with ease.

Punjab enjoyed an edge in the first three quarters but

Services fought back in the final quarter by taking a 62-60 lead. Its men were quick on their feet and attacked from both flanks as never before.

At this stage the pressure

was beginning to tell on Punjab but a quick time out call by coach Gurkirpal Dhillon changed the complexion of the game. Strategies were planned to apply the brakes on Services' forwards and they did exactly that to put the team back on the victory track. It was Punjab's seventh title. The last time it won was at Chennai in 2011.

## 29th title

Earlier, Indian Railways registered an 88-71 win over Tamil Nadu for the women's crown. It is its 29th title and came with a lot of sweat.

Tamil Nadu, with a bunch of young college girls, played freely from the start. They knew they were up against an experienced side but played without fear.

The first two quarters were evenly fought but the Railways women made best



Jubilant: The Punjab men's team after beating a strong Services side in the final. • VIJAY SONEJI

## Halep gearing up for Slam No. 2

Says she has learnt from the 2018 Australian Open final loss

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MELBOURNE

World No. 1 Simona Halep on Saturday admitted losing the 2018 Australian Open final was a painful moment, but it taught her how to handle pressure situations better, which she has since put to good use.

The Romanian was targeting a first ever Grand Slam title in that match against Caroline Wozniacki and looked on track to win before folding in the third set.

Halep had won her service game and then broke the Dane to get a 4-3 lead.

She served for what would have been a 5-3 advantage but Wozniacki broke then held serve for lead 5-4. The fired-up Dane went on to break again and win 7-6 (7/2), 3-6, 6-4, leaving Halep crushed.

"I didn't want to think that much about that match because it was really painful to lose it," she said at Melbourne Park when asked to reflect on what went wrong.

"But I learned some things from that match. That break (at 4-3) broke me a little bit in that moment."

"Now I know how to manage better if that happens again."

"She was better at that moment and maybe fresher than me because I played so many long matches before. She was actually less tired than me and deserved to win. She was stronger," she



Fit and ready to go: Simona Halep insists her six-week injury lay-off will not cost her. • AP

added. A gutsy Halep took what she learned into the next major of the year, the French Open, and made no similar mistakes, romping through the third set of the final 6-1 against Sloane Stephens to finally clinch her maiden Slam title.

**Big difference**  
"It made a big difference (because) I can say inside myself I did what I wanted to do."

"I won a Grand Slam final," said the 27-year-old.

"Now I can say I'm a real number one. Before I said without a Grand Slam, you are not a real number one."

"I'm happy. I'm enjoying the time. Everything I've done last year made me more relaxed," she added.

The stellar year saw Halep end 2018 as the World No. 1,

despite her season ending early in October when she suffered a herniated disc in her back.

She called the injury "very scary" and literally did nothing for six weeks to get over it.

But the lay-off means she will start her Australian Open campaign against Estonia's Kaia Kanepi with limited court time after crashing out of the warm-up Sydney International at the first hurdle.

Despite playing just one game since October, Halep insisted she was fit and ready to go. "I practised very well these past few days. I'm looking forward actually to the start. But I have three more days, so I will chill another day, then I will start to be focused for what I have to do

during the match," she said.

Along with the injury, another low point of 2018 was losing coach Darren Cahill, who left to spend more time with his family.

Halep said the team around her was close-knit and finding a suitable replacement was not easy.

But she suggested that could change soon.

"Every time you commit to someone in your team, you have to give 100 percent. So I was not ready in the off-season," she said of hiring a new coach.

"Now I'm feeling that I'm getting better. As I say always, at this level it is impossible without coach. So maybe in the close future I will have someone. But for the moment, I'm just by myself."

"Obviously he's one of the best guys on tour outside the court. He's always super nice to be around, super nice to kind of be in the locker room with," Zverev said.

"The media always kind of puts him as a boring guy who doesn't give interviews well or something like that. No, he's actually one of the funniest and coolest dudes out there."

"We as players, well, you can see how much we really like, really appreciate what he's done."

Zverev said despite his stellar 2018 season he had little expectation coming into the season's first Grand Slam, having only ever reached one quarterfinal in 14 previous appearances at the majors.

"I've never been past the third round (in Melbourne), so we'll see how it goes,"

## Mohun Bagan downs Neroca FC

Sony Norde scores the winner

## I-LEAGUE

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA  
KOLKATA

Sony Norde found the target late in the second half to help Mohun Bagan down Neroca FC 1-0 in the I-League at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Saturday.

Railways had a better bench as well and that helped the team last the whole distance. Coach Satyabrata Nayak agreed that it was experience that helped it sail through.

"The Tamil Nadu girls are very young and I was impressed with the way they played. It's a real good team," he said.

Tamil Nadu's coach Delhi-raj was pleased with the effort. "I am satisfied with their gritty performance and I cannot ask for anything more," he said.

Punjab's Amritpal Singh and Tamil Nadu's S. Pushpa got the Most Valuable Player award in their respective categories.

**The results:** Men: Final: Punjab 74 (Arshpreet Singh Bhullar 24, Amritpal Singh 15, Jagdeep Singh 19) bt Services 65 (Joginder Singh 26, Isaac Thomas 11).

**Third place:** Tamil Nadu 84 (Muin Bek 20, Justin 19, Hariram 17, Jeevanantham 10, Rikin Pethani 10) bt Karnataka 65 (Rahul Sarathy 16, Jitender 17, Shashi Kumar 12).

**Women: Final:** Indian Railways 88 (Raja Priyadarshini 23, Navaneetha 16, Ramya 13, Sitamani Tudu 11, Bandaviya 11) bt Tamil Nadu 71 (Satya 21, Dharsini 12, Pushpa 12, Nishanthi 10).

**Third place:** Kerala 79 (P.S. Jeeva 21, Poomajal 18, P.G. Anjana 13, Stephy Nixon 12, Kavitha Jose 11) bt Chhattisgarh 73 (Poonam Chaturvedi 41, Deepa 12, Seema Singh 12).

at the same venue, Bagan's new coach Khalid Jamil made minimal changes to the squad, bringing back Lalchhawlkima in place of Dalraj Singh to bolster the defence.

Neroca coach Manuel Fraile preferred to retain the team that downed Shillong Lajong in its previous match.

Emerging unscathed from the opening half, where Paul blocked some fine efforts from the likes of Subhash Singh and Malem Meete, Bagan showed more initiative after the change of ends. Bagan increased the men in attack, bringing in Henry Kisekka.

Norde broke the deadlock in the 78th minute tearing through the defensive array and firing home an angular drive that beat goalkeeper Lalit Thapa.

**The result:** Mohun Bagan 1 (Sony Norde 78) bt Neroca FC 0.

## Paes &amp; Reyes-Varela lose

SPORTS BUREAU  
DA NANG (VIETNAM)

The defeat notwithstanding, it was a good preparation for the Indo-Mexican pair for the Australian Open.

The two had lost a marathon super tie-break in the quarterfinals of the Pune ATP event in Pune earlier.

## Zverev sad at Murray quitting tennis

Says he is the 'coolest dude'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MELBOURNE

Brightest new kid on the block Alexander Zverev said on Saturday he was sad to hear "super nice" Andy Murray say the Australian Open could be his last tournament.

Murray on Friday shocked the tennis world by declaring that his chronic hip pain had not been eased by surgery a year ago and he could end his storied career in Melbourne next week. World No. 4 Zverev is the flag-bearer for the next generation of stars, having beaten Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic to win the biggest crown of his career at the ATP Finals last year.

And he said he would always appreciate what the 31-year-old three-time Grand Slam winner Murray had done for the sport and new players like himself as they emerge on tour.

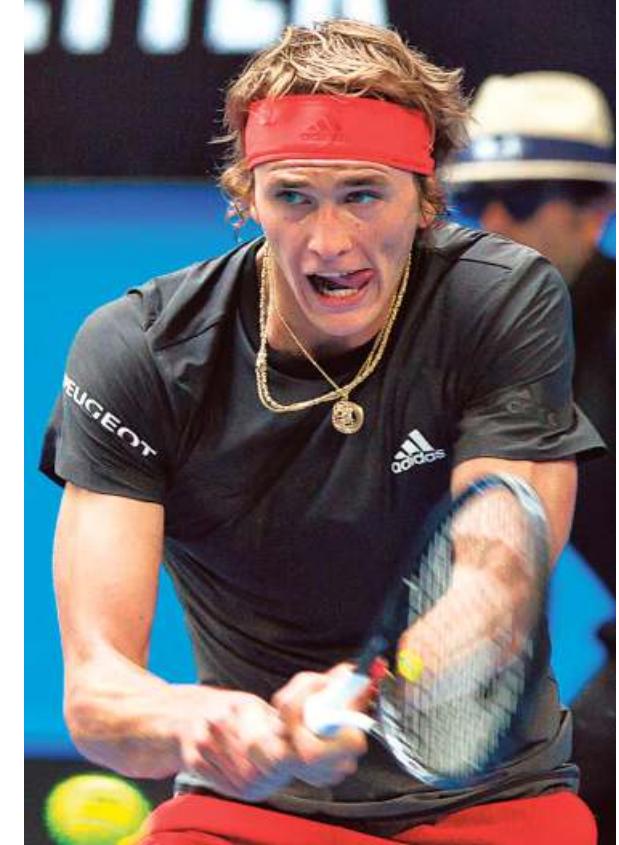
"Obviously he's one of the best guys on tour outside the court. He's always super nice to be around, super nice to kind of be in the locker room with," Zverev said.

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"I've never been past the third round (in Melbourne), so we'll see how it goes,"



Realistic: Alexander Zverev says he has little expectation coming into the season's first Grand Slam. • AFP

said the young star, who faces Slovenia's Aljaz Bedene in the first round.

"But I just want to enjoy being here. I just want to enjoy playing as much as I can. I just want to enjoy playing in the biggest stadiums, playing in the biggest matches."

Nadal, 32, gave a heartfelt tribute to his long-standing rival and recognised that with Federer now aged 37 and Djokovic 31, the era of the "big four" was drawing to a close.

"It will be a very important loss for us, for the world of tennis, for the tour, for the fans, even for the rivals that have been part of a great rivalry between the best players for a long time, and a great competitor. But that's life."

## Getting into the top 10 is the target: Kyrgios

But will have to get past Raonic first in his quest

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MELBOURNE

Australian Open home hope Nick Kyrgios declared on Saturday that he could break into the world's top 10 if he can get "right physically and mentally".

But first the world number 51 will need to get past the "unbelievably tough" Canadian 16th seed Milos Raonic in a blockbuster first-round encounter when the year's opening Grand Slam begins on Monday.

Kyrgios rose to a career-high 13th in 2016, but has steadily slipped down the pecking order since.

He cut short last season in October after an elbow inju-



Focused: Nick Kyrgios wants to put the struggles of last season behind him when he starts off in the Australian Open against Milos Raonic. • DARRIAN TRAYNOR/GETTY IMAGES

ry, admitted he was working on mental health issues and then suffered a spider bite over Christmas.

But he was in an upbeat



Nissan top executive  
Jose Munoz resigns as  
Ghosn probe widens  
page 8



Capital market only way  
to make household  
savings fruitful: Prabhu  
page 7



Goldman Sachs likely to  
start cash management  
in the first half of 2020  
page 8



'Powered' clothing and  
virtual reality to help  
seniors combat isolation  
page 10

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## IN BRIEF



**U.K. businesses plan for 'no deal Brexit'**

LONDON Britain remains politically paralysed before a vote in Parliament next week on a plan to withdraw from the European Union, or Brexit. But businesses are preparing for the possibility of the country quitting the bloc without an agreement at March-end. Honda, which makes about 150,000 cars a year in its factory in Swindon, said it would stop production for six days in April to assess its supply chain and possible disruptions from border delays after Brexit.

BUSINESS ABROAD ▶ PAGE 8

**Twitter concerned about data localisation plans**

NEW DELHI Colin Crowell, global vice-president for Public Policy at Twitter, voiced concern over more countries, including India, planning to make it mandatory for organisations to store certain user data locally. The company's decision on additional infrastructure would be driven by economic rationale, he said, pointing out there were other ways to resolve concerns over access to user information.

BUSINESS ▶ PAGE 7

**Two firefighters dead in Paris blast**

PARIS Two firefighters died and nearly 50 people were injured in a gas explosion that gutted the ground floor of a building in a central Paris shopping district on Saturday. The accident occurred when Paris was under security lockdown for the ninth consecutive Saturday of "yellow vest" protests. "As firemen were looking for a gas leak in the building, a dramatic explosion took place," Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said.

WORLD ▶ PAGE 3

## The taxman takes note of the prosperous Durga Puja

40 big-budget committees across Kolkata asked to explain their expenditure, while the Culture Ministry wants UNESCO status for the festival

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH**  
KOLKATA

It is usually after the monsoon that Durga Puja begins to dominate every kind of discourse in Kolkata. But it's just January and the focus is already on the week-long autumn festival.

Income Tax notices sent to about 40 big-budget Durga Pujas in the city have triggered a debate whether the thousands of puja held in the State should be brought under the ambit of taxation.

The development comes at a time when Tapati Guha Thakurta, a professor of history at the Centre for Study in Social Sciences (CSSS), is busy preparing a proposal for enlisting of Durga Puja in

the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Evolving over hundreds of years, the Durga Puja has now turned out to be one of biggest cultural extravaganzas in the country – even the world – with art installations adorning nearly every nook and cranny of Kolkata and adjoining areas.

### Dossier on uniqueness

Ms. Guha Thakurta, who is preparing a dossier for the Ministry of Culture, said that the festival should be part of the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage as its history and the scale at which it is organised is like no other festival in the world. In a meeting with dif-

ferent stakeholders in Kolkata on December 28 last year, she said that Durga Puja was not only a thriving festival, with a number of unique selling points, but also an inclusive festival, which sees the participation of all people.

And just at this time when people from different walks of life are coming together to seek international recogni-

### SUNDAY SPECIAL

tion for the festival, a number of big-budget Durga Puja committees in the city are busy explaining their accounts to IT officials. A notice was served to these committees under Section 133(6)

of the IT Act and committee members were urged to appear before the officials.

Partho Ghosh, president of the Forum for Durgotsav, which has over 300 mem-

Durga Pujas are not profit-seeking ventures. What we maintain is the record of income and expenses of the Pujas. Now what the income tax is suggesting that we deduct the TDS (tax deduction at source) for making big payments. This would put a lot of pressure on the organisers, who will have to hire professional accountants for the purpose," he said.

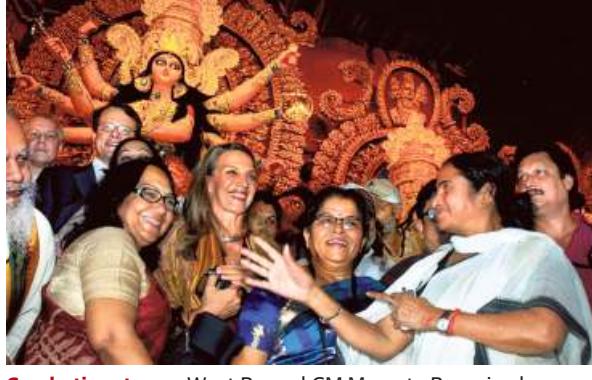
Mr. Ghosh, who met tax officials with a number of organisers on Friday, said that there were many smaller pujas in the city who are likely to shy away from holding community pujas if they are put under such scrutiny. Tax officials have suggested that the organisers get a PAN

(permanent account number) before the 2019 Durga Puja season.

There are about 28,000 community Pujas in the State, with Kolkata accounting for nearly 3,000 of them. More than 200 Pujas in the city have huge budgets, running into crores of rupees.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has urged the representatives of the Puja committees not to respond to the notices.

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**Combative stance:** West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee has urged the Puja committees not to respond to the notices.

bers, said that representatives of different pujas had told IT officials that they would submit all necessary documents from the 2019 Durga Puja festival season.

## Food security



**Golden harvest:** Tiwa tribal women carrying paddy bags from a field in Karbi Anglong district of Assam on Saturday. All members of the tribe join the post-harvest work to store the grain. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

## Head of Centre's panel on Assam Accord quits

Committee was to pilot implementation of Clause 6

**SANDEEP PHUKAN**  
NEW DELHI

Former Union Tourism Secretary M.P. Bezbarua, who was to head a high-level committee on how to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord, has withdrawn his consent to lead the panel.

Mr. Bezbarua confirmed to the *The Hindu* that he has written to the Union Home Ministry informing it of his decision.

At least three other members – former presidents of the Asom Sahitya Sabha Nagen Saikia and Rong Bong Terang and educationist Mukunda Rabongshi – have already declined to be part of the committee.

Members of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), one of the original signatories to the Assam Accord, too have refused.

**Position ' untenable'**  
Under these circumstances, Mr. Bezbarua told the Home Ministry that the high-level committee would be "defunct" and his position, as such, had become untenable.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Bezbarua said, "I had accepted the role because Clause 6 is an important part of the Assam Accord. I had also accepted because many respectable and prominent

people of Assam were part of the committee. When I found that they have refused to be on board, the Chairman's position is untenable."

The Home Ministry has not yet commented on the latest development. Home Minister Rajnath Singh, while moving the Citizenship Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha last Tuesday, had said the nine-member committee would look at ways of safeguarding the interests of ethnic Assamese.

Clause 6 of the Assam Accord, a tripartite agreement signed in 1985 between the Centre, the State government and AASU, had set March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date to grant citizenship to migrants. Under directions of the Supreme Court, the National Register of Citizenship (NRC) is being updated in Assam to identify people who have entered after the March 1971 cut-off date.

## Odisha govt. denies information on hockey event expenditure

Departments rejected RTI pleas saying that accounts had not been settled yet, say activists

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government is reluctant to share the financial transactions for organising the World Cup Hockey in the State last month, RTI activists said on Saturday.

"I, along with five more persons, submitted applica-

tions under the Right to Information Act, seeking information on mobilisation of funds for the event held in Bhubaneswar," Pradip Pradhan, an RTI activist, said at a press conference.

He said RTI applications were filed with the Departments of Sports and Youth

Affairs, General Administration, Finance and Housing and Urban Development and the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation.

"However, the replies provided to all the persons appeared to be identical. The government departments said that since the accounts

had not been settled, the information could not be shared," he said.

The activists apprehend that politicians and officials had embezzled a huge sum through unnecessary expenditure in the preparation for the event. "We suspect contracts were offered at inflated rates as was done during the Commonwealth Games. We wanted to know the funds received by different departments. But they did not give information under the pretext of non-settlement of accounts," said Pratap Mohanty, another applicant.

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rates as was done during the Commonwealth Games. We wanted to know the funds received by different departments. But they did not give information under the pretext of non-settlement of accounts," said Pratap Mohanty, another applicant.

With the onset of the Pongal *jallikattu* season in Tamil Nadu, 51-year-old Selvarani, one of few women bull breeders in the State, says her bull is ready to toss tamers to the ground and win prizes this year too.

Ms. Selvarani's two muscular bulls – Ramu and Thottuchi – track visitors from a distance and immediately make eye

contact with anyone who steps into their yard. "We do not allow guests to move in close as they might harm them. I have trained them that way," she says with a smile.

"My prized bull Ramu has competed in at least 50 tournaments since 2007. We have gone from Madurai to Theni and also covered

competitions in Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore and several other districts and consistently won. It is a matter of great pride for me and my family. Thottuchi is only three years old but already looks mighty. We cannot wait for him to grow up," she says.

Ms. Selvarani says she got into the world of rearing bulls at a young age, having seen her grandfather and father raise and wrestle

age of the Assamese people". Protests have erupted across Assam after Lok Sabha passed the Citizenship Amendment Bill seeking to grant citizenship to Hindus from Bangladesh, who have entered and settled in Assam by December 31, 2014.

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She will make a formal announcement next week



Tulsi Gabbard sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. ■ REUTERS

about and that I want to help solve," she said, citing health care access and climate change.

Ms. Gabbard sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where she is able to influence foreign policy. "There is one main issue

## Madurai's jallikattu amma and her magnificent bulls

Among the very few women breeders in the State, Selvarani is ready for the Pongal season

**SANJANA GANESH**  
MADRAS

K. Selvarani is a household name in the Sennagarampatti-Nadupatti region of Melur taluk in Madurai district. "That *jallikattu* amma's house is right around the corner. The bulls look excellent and are sure to win this time as well," say locals at a tea shop at the entrance to her village.

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(tank) and then trains them in *mannu kutthardhu*, where the bulls learn to fend off potential tamers by flicking sand off the ground with their horns.

A day's feed worth ₹500 for the animals includes cotton seed, husk of Bengal gram, wheat and green gram and broken pulses.

Despite her pride in the animals, Ms. Selvarani says she can barely make ends meet with her meagre earnings of ₹150 a day as a farm worker. She has taken a loan to tide over her difficulties and hopes the winnings in this season will turn the tide.

Ms. Selvarani and Ramu hope to reach Palamedu at 3 a.m. on January 16 and Alanganallur at 12 a.m. on January 17 to ensure the bull gets a fighting chance.

many bulls. "The first time I saw a *jallikattu* tournament, I was about 10 years old. The size of the animal never scared me because I grew up around them, feeding them and caring for them. The fact that it scared so many men, however, left me fascinated," she recalls.

Everyday, she spends at least three hours taking the bulls for a walk. Once a week, she takes them for a swim to the nearest *kanmooi*



**Up for a challenge:** Selvarani looking forward to competing in *jallikattu* this year. ■ G. MOORTHY

## IN BRIEF



Sikkim CM launches 'one family, one job' scheme

GANGTOK  
Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling on Saturday launched the 'one family, one job' scheme that assures a job to one member of every family. He handed over temporary appointment letters to one person from each of the 32 Assembly seats in the State at the Paljor stadium here. IANS

## 30 hand grenades found in Jharkhand forest

LATEHAR  
Security forces recovered 30 locally manufactured hand grenades and 9 kg of explosive substances from Kumandih forest in Latehar district of Jharkhand on Friday. A total of 140 partly-manufactured hand grenades and materials for making them were also recovered during a search, Latehar SP Prasant Anand said. PTI

## RJD MLA slaps man over land dispute

LAKHISARAI  
RJD MLA Prahlad Yadav allegedly slapped a man here on Friday over a land dispute. The incident happened in the Suryagarha region of the district. A video showed the Bihar legislator hurling abuses at an individual at a construction site, before slapping him on the face. On a complaint by the victim, police have filed a case. ANI

## Mild tremors jolt Himachal's Chamba

SHIMLA  
A low-intensity earthquake shook Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district on Saturday. Shimla Meteorological Centre director Mamohan Singh said: "An earthquake of 3.3 magnitude was recorded at 12.31 p.m. The epicentre was at a depth of 5 km northeast of Chamba. Mild tremors were felt in the adjoining areas." PTI



Barbie dolls in costumes made of gift paper, sequins and envelopes. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## All's cool for a Barbie fan

Singapore's Jian Yang turns stereotypes on their head

NAHLA NAINAR  
TIRUCHIRAPPALLI

Can a fashionista be dressed to the nines in toilet paper? Singapore national Jian Yang, reported to have one of the largest collections of Barbie dolls in Asia, surely thinks so. And he has Instagram pictures to prove it.

As the Barbie doll celebrates its 60th anniversary, fans like Jian Yang invent novel ways to display their passion for the iconic toy that has become a worldwide collectible.

Last year, Mr. Jian started off by making a toilet paper dress for a Barbie he had bought on a business trip to Sri Lanka. Using accessories from his toiletries case, he fashioned garments with elaborate pleats and bows for the doll, and started sharing them online.

"I posted the first picture on Instagram (@jianyang1979) and the response was pretty good. I randomly picked the hashtag #havetissuewilltravel, and because I travel a lot for business and leisure, I used only hotel toilet paper to create these dresses," he told *The Hindu* in an email interview.



The collection went viral and was featured on Bored Panda, Buzzfeed, and Vogue Italia.

Mr. Jian soon expanded into restaurant napkins (#havetissuewilleat), and since Chinese New Year is coming up on February 5, he used the traditional Chinese red packets to create Asian-inspired outfits at #angpowcouture.

With a custom-built storage-cum-showcase area in his town house in Singapore to display his assorted doll collection (of which Barbies alone number over 12,000), Mr. Jian, 39, who works as a business director at an international communications agency, says his hobby, which started in childhood, often spooks people. "I don't cross dress, I don't wear make-up, and I couldn't possibly walk around in heels. And that seems to be 'unusual' to people who have a preconceived idea of what a male doll collector should be," he says.

And quite unlike the stereotype of Singaporean ultra-rich spenders created by the movie *Crazy Rich Asians*, Mr. Jian says he isn't collecting Barbies because he is affluent, but because he loves the dolls. "I work hard for my money, and am very disciplined in how and where I spend it. On social media such things can get very ugly."

## Eternal value

While some designer versions of the doll are considered valuable as fine art pieces, Mr. Jian doesn't set much store by market trends. "I prefer to buy what I like. Then the 'value' is always there."

Reflecting on the growing allowance for diversity that Barbie has made in size, skin tone and ethnicity, Mr. Jian says, "She's no longer just the blonde, skinny girl with a big bosom that we knew. She's evolved, and is trying hard to remain relevant in a world of the unpredictable consumer."

He adds, "I don't cross dress, I don't wear make-up, and I couldn't possibly walk around in heels. And that seems to be 'unusual' to people who have a preconceived idea of what a male doll collector should be," he says.

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'Malaysian State has chosen the next King'

KUALA LUMPUR A Malaysian State announced that it had a new Sultan on Saturday, who is expected to be elected the next King when the Council of Rulers meet on January 24. Tengku Abdullah Shah has replaced his father, Sultan Ahmad Shah, as the ruler of Pahang State, the official Bernama agency said. AFP

**Indian-origin man gets 13 years for sexual assault**

SINGAPORE Udhayakumar Dhakshinamoorthy, 31, a minimart worker in Singapore, was sentenced to 13 years in jail and 12 strokes of the cane after he pleaded guilty to one charge of sexual assault of a 12-year-old girl and two charges of attempted statutory rape, according to a report. PTI

# FBI probed if Trump worked for Russia

Investigators considered whether President's actions constituted a possible threat to national security

ADAM GOLDMAN  
MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT  
WASHINGTON

**Closely watched:** President Donald Trump with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Helsinki in July 2018. ■NYT

In the days after U.S. President Donald Trump fired James Comey as FBI Director, law enforcement officials became so concerned by the President's behaviour that they began investigating whether he had been working on behalf of Russia against American interests, according to former law enforcement officials and others familiar with the investigation.

Counterintelligence investigators had to consider whether his own actions constituted a possible threat to national security. Agents also sought to determine whether Mr. Trump was knowingly working for Russia or had unwittingly fallen under Moscow's influence.

**Firing of Comey**  
The investigation the FBI opened into Mr. Trump also had a criminal aspect, which

has long been publicly known: whether his firing of Mr. Comey constituted obstruction of justice.

Agents and senior FBI officials had grown suspicious of Mr. Trump's ties to Russia during the 2016 campaign but held off on opening an investigation into him, the people said, in part because they were uncertain how to proceed with an inquiry of such sensitivity and magnitude. But the President's activities before and after Mr. Comey's firing in May 2017,

particularly two instances in which he lied the Comey dismissal to the Russia investigation, helped prompt the counterintelligence aspect of the inquiry, the people said.

The first was a letter Mr. Trump wanted to send to Mr. Comey about his firing, but never did, in which he mentioned the Russia investigation. In the letter, Mr. Trump thanked Mr. Comey for previously telling him he was not a subject of the FBI's Russia investigation.

The second event that

troubled investigators was an NBC interview two days after the firing in which Mr. Trump appeared to say that he had dismissed Mr. Comey because of the Russia inquiry. "I was going to fire Comey knowing there was no good time to do it," he said. "And in fact, when I decided to just do it, I said to myself – I said, you know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story. It's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should've won."

**Two types of inquiries**  
The FBI conducts two types of inquiries, criminal and counterintelligence investigations. Unlike criminal investigations, which are typically aimed at solving a crime and can result in arrests and convictions, counterintelligence inquiries are generally fact-finding missions to understand what a foreign power is doing.

Special Counsel Robert

Mueller took over the inquiry into Mr. Trump when he was appointed, days after FBI officials opened it. That inquiry is part of Mr. Mueller's broader examination of how Russian operatives interfered in the 2016 election and whether any Trump associates conspired with them. It is unclear whether Mr. Mueller is still pursuing the counterintelligence matter, and some former law enforcement officials outside the investigation have questioned whether agents overstepped in opening it.

The criminal and counterintelligence elements were coupled together into one probe, former law enforcement officials said, because if Mr. Trump had ousted the head of the FBI to impede or even end the Russia investigation, that was both a possible crime and a national security concern. The FBI's counterintelligence division handles national security matters. ■NYT

# Obama protégé Julian Castro to join the race

Aims to be the first Latino U.S. President

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SAN ANTONIO

Former Mayor of San Antonio, Texas and Barack Obama-era Cabinet member Julian Castro is set to launch his bid to become the nation's first Hispanic President.

Former U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro. ■AFP

help revive Democratic enthusiasm among Latino voters, who supported Hillary Clinton but at a lower rate than Mr. Obama.

His national profile took off in 2012 when he became the first Latino to give a keynote address at the Democratic National Convention. Four years later, he was a finalist to be Ms. Clinton's running mate. "I'll tell you and I'll tell the world what I'm going to do," Mr. Castro, a fierce Trump critic, said this week on MSNBC.

# Shutdown is now America's longest

Trump backs off on threat to declare 'national emergency'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The partial U.S. government shutdown entered a record 22nd day on Saturday, as President Donald Trump remains steadfast in his demand for \$5.7 billion to build a Mexico border wall and Democrats in Congress determined to refuse the funds.

The shutdown became the longest on record at midnight on Friday (0500 GMT Saturday), when it overtook the 21-day stretch in 1995-1996 under President Bill Clinton.

Mr. Trump on Friday, however, backed off on a series



A protester in Boston calling for an end to the shutdown on Friday. ■AFP

of previous threats to end the deadlock by declaring a national emergency and attempting to secure the

funds without congressional approval. "I am not going to do it so fast," he said at a White House meeting.

Mr. Trump described an emergency declaration as the "easy way out" and said Congress had to step up to the responsibility of approving the \$5.7 billion. Until now, Mr. Trump had suggested numerous times that he was getting closer to taking the decision.

Only minutes earlier, powerful Republican ally Senator Lindsey Graham tweeted after talks with Mr. Trump: "Mr. President, Declare a national emergency NOW."

# Many feared dead in Nigeria tanker blast

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
LAGOS

An overturned oil tanker exploded in Nigeria while dozens of people were scooping up the leaking fuel and many were killed, police and witnesses said on Saturday.

"We have recovered 12 corpses and taken 22 persons with serious burns to hospital," police spokesman Irene Ugho told. She said the blast occurred on Friday evening in Odukpani in Cross River State in the southeast.

But some residents put the death toll closer to 60.

# 2 killed. 50 injured in Paris gas explosion

Blast occurs when the city is seeing 'yellow vest' protests for a ninth weekend

REUTERS  
PARIS

Two firefighters died and nearly 50 people were injured in a gas explosion that gutted the ground floor of a building in a central Paris shopping district on Saturday, authorities said.

The accident occurred with Paris under security lockdown for a ninth consecutive Saturday of "yellow vest" protests, with large parts of the French capital blocked off by riot police.

**Leak in the building**  
As firemen were looking for a gas leak in the building, a dramatic explosion took



Amidst the lockdown: Firefighters at the explosion site in Rue de Trévise, central Paris, on Saturday. ■AFP

place," Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said, adding that one of the firemen had been buried under debris for several hours. Mr. Castaner said on Twitter

reporters that two civilians had also died.

Just hours after the blast, thousands of yellow vest protesters marched noisily but peacefully through the Grands Boulevards shopping district of northern Paris just a few hundred metres from the scene of the explosion.

"At this stage, we can say it (the gas blast) is clearly an accident," Paris prosecutor Remi Heitz told reporters.

A police source said that the explosion tore apart a bakery on the Rue de Trévise and witnesses said the force of the blast shattered storefronts and rocked buildings hundreds of metres away.

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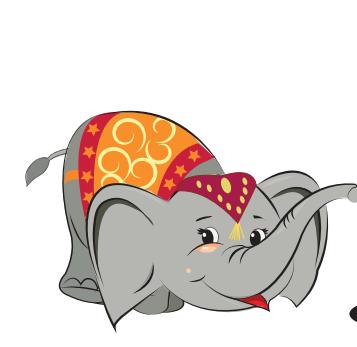
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**Stately despite the crumbling walls:** The Rosary Church of 1860s vintage out of the waters of the Hemavathi at Shettihalli village near Hassan in Karnataka. The church is submerged during the rains, a fate that befell it following the construction of a dam in the 1970s.



**Playing peekaboo:** Not for nothing is it called a floating church.



**Unfading charm:** The church is still part of life at Shettihalli, a reminder of the good old days.

## Gothic fantasy

Under water when it rains and out during summer – the majestic, 19th century church near Hassan in Karnataka has a legion of fans

TEXT AND IMAGES BY K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

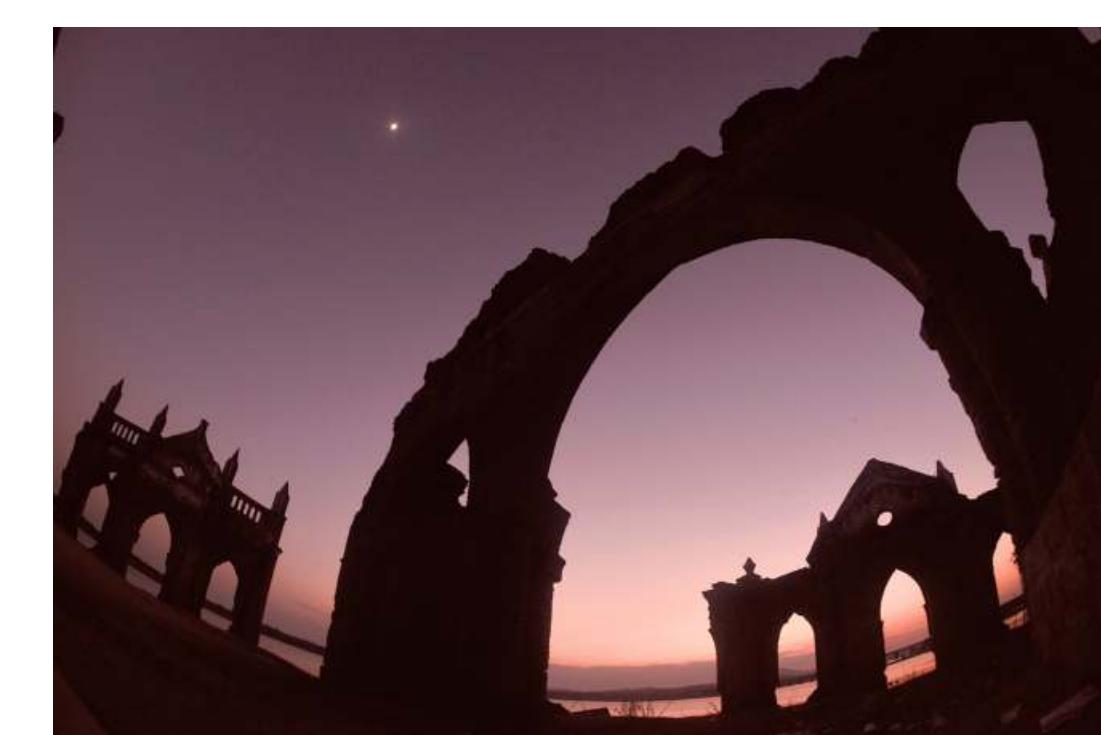
It is a surreal sight to behold. If tourists flock to the riverbank to see the half-visible structure during the rains, they wander through the crumbling, yet elegant church with its Gothic architecture during the dry months.

The French missionaries who built the Rosary Church on the banks of the Hemavathi at Shettihalli village near Hassan in Karnataka in the 1860s would not have had an inkling even in their wildest dreams that the river would, about a century later, engulf their place of worship. When a dam came up across the Hemavathi in the 1970s, people were relocated from Shettihalli, and the church went under water. Since then, the structure plays hide and seek – under water when it rains and out during summer – earning it the name “floating church”.

Films and television serials have been shot here and of late, it’s a popular backdrop for pre-wedding shoots. The people of the submerged village have not lost their ties with the church. In April, when the water level is low and the church is visible, they gather, gazing at the majestic remains that hark back to a time when the church bells called the faithful to prayer.



**Uncommon backdrop:** Light and shadow in the night.



**Heavenly interplay:** The receding sun bestows a halo to the graceful Gothic structure.



**A perennial favourite:** Tourists and photo enthusiasts soak in the views.



**Sow and reap:** With the church in the background, farmers plough the fields for raising a groundnut crop on the Hemavathi riverbed once the water level comes down post-monsoon.

## 6 DESPATCHES



DHAKA

## A new term for Hasina, with a younger Cabinet

 Two stunning developments greeted Bangladesh's political scene in a week: the ruling Awami League secured a landslide victory in the election and its chief, Sheikh Hasina, abandoned the old guard and packed her Cabinet with newcomers, bringing some of them from relative obscurity.

On January 6, the Hasina administration announced a 47-member Cabinet, allocating ministerial responsibilities to its members. It was for the first time in Bangladesh's history that the list of new Cabinet members was disclosed to the media, prior to the swearing-in ceremony closely watched by journalists.

Ms. Hasina formed the Cabinet, with 27 of the members new to the administration. As many as 34 old Cabinet members lost berths in the new Council of Ministers.

Tofail Ahmed, Amir Hossain Amu, Matia Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim and Shahjahan Khan were among the heavyweights who were left out of the new Cabinet. The new Council inducted two technocrats.

With Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, 84, retiring from active politics, Planning Minister A.H.M. Mustafa Kamal has been appointed as the Finance Minister – a post he had coveted for long. A.K. Abdul Momen, a younger sibling of Mr. Muhith, was assigned the Foreign Ministry. Dipu Moni rode back into the limelight: she was Bangladesh's first woman Foreign Mi-

+  Bangladesh's political scene saw two stunning developments in a week. Not only did Sheikh Hasina's Awami League win a landslide in the general election, her new Cabinet included 27 new members

nister, serving Ms. Hasina's Cabinet from 2009 to 2013. Now she is the first woman Education Minister. Amid discussions over veteran politicians getting ignored, Ms. Hasina said they had not failed but she had brought changes to train the younger leaders for the future. "I wanted something new after having the same Ministers for 10 years. I have a new set-up so that they can learn something."

On December 30, Ms. Hasina secured an unprecedented fourth term in the general election, expanding her rule as the country's longest serving Prime Minister.

### Allegations by Opposition

However, allegations of vote-rigging, intimidation and violence sullied the results. Citing "widespread vote-rigging" and violence, the Opposition demanded fresh polls under a neutral caretaker government. The Election Commission rejected the call, as expected, and Ms. Hasina was sworn in on January 7 as Prime Minister.

The dominance of Awami League in the country's Parliament suggests that the legislature's ability to effectively check and balance the executive is reduced to almost nil in Bangladesh. And while the country's politics theoretically operates under a multiparty system, the Awami League's 96% share of seats reinforces our view about Bangladesh's shift towards a one-party-dominant system," said Marthe Hinojales, an analyst at Verisk Maplecroft, a risk consultancy.

She added, "The crackdown on the Opposition – including reports of arbitrary arrest and detention of protesters and political Opposition figures – and the inability of institutions like the Election Commission to independently and fairly investigate voting anomalies suggest that any credible threat to Hasina and AL's rule is unlikely."

As the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) suffered a colossal election upset, the Jatiya Party emerged as the second-largest party in Parliament, securing 22 seats. The party's chief, H.M. Ershad, an 88-year-old former military ruler, chose to be the Leader of the Opposition. His wish was later blessed by Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury.

The Hasina administration is all set for the next five years with a new mandate. What remains to be seen is how the government will deliver on its anti-corruption pledge.



BEIJING

## The challenge to arrest the greying of China

 China's attempt to reverse its population decline, which rode more on hope rather than realism, has been rudely jolted. Independent demographers are concluding that instead of signs of a modest increase, Chinese population, actually declined last year. Yi Fuxian, a researcher at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, U.S., has concluded in a study that 2018 marked a "historic turning point for the Chinese population".

Mr. Yi's conclusions, based on an extensive churning of the number of births and deaths recorded in towns and villages across the country, reveal that the Chinese population actually dropped by 1.27 million last year. The inference of a net decline was drawn after it was factored in that in 2018, 11.58 million people had died in China. Mr. Yi's findings have so far not been corroborated by authorities in Beijing. But there are signals that his conclusions are likely on target.

Agency reports say that data revealed by the local authorities in Qingdao, the capital of the Shandong province, showed that there were only 81,000 births between January and November last year – a decrease of 21% over the previous year. Several factors may account for why a baby boom in China has proved elusive, despite the 2016 decision by Beijing allowing couples to have two children. High living costs, long working hours and hefty child-care expenses have apparently dissuaded couples from having more children.

**Demographic distortions**  
Besides, many employers have been ruthless in handing over severe disincentives to women who may have been considering an expansion of their family. Zhaopin.com, a job recruitment site, found that 33% of women suffered a pay cut after giving birth. Around 36% were demoted.

The greying of China is capping pre-existing demographic distortions. In 1949, the Chinese government began a massive "barefoot doctors" programme – a bold outreach project to provide rudimentary health care to the country's rural heartland. As people began to live longer, there was a significant increase in population, triggering concerns that China would run out of grain to feed so many

 **High living costs, long working hours and hefty child-care expenses have apparently dissuaded couples from having more children despite the onset of a two-child policy in 2016**

mouths. The resulting family planning programme peaked in 1979, when the one-child policy was announced. But during this single-child phase, tradition seeped in quietly to ravage the male-female sex ratio. With the option of having only one child, couples favouring boys over girls engaged in mass abortion of female foetuses. As a result, in some provinces, the male-female ratio stood at 120-to-100.

This imbalance had other consequences. Women of marriageable age began to demand a degree of affluence from their prospective grooms. Many single men, in turn, began to be called "bare branches" as they were unable to contribute to the flourishing of their family tree. The skewing of the sex ratio also had a criminal fall-out. Human traffickers got into the business of "selling" wives to Chinese men through cross-border rackets. Last year, a scandal broke out when Chinese authorities arrested 60 traffickers and rescued 17 Vietnamese women.

Mr. Yi said authorities will have to quickly think out of the box to arrest the greying of China. Policymakers must think of maternity incentives along with tax breaks for couples who expand their families, he said. Without a demographic dividend, China may be unable to bridge the power divide with the U.S., which has better demographics. "China's economic vitality will continue to decline, which will bring about a disastrous impact on the global economy," Mr. Yi warned.



LONDON

## Sajid Javid's battle against immigration

 In late December, Sajid Javid, the first British Asian to hold the position of Home Secretary in the U.K., cut short a family holiday to South Africa to "get a grip" on what the government described as a "deeply concerning" increase in the number of people attempting to cross the English Channel. He declared a "major incident" and swiftly ordered the redeployment of two border force boats to patrol the waters. Their concerns focussed on the attempt by about 400 people, most of them believed to be from Iran, in the past three months to cross from France by boat. The number of those attempting to do so itself is far from large: tens of thousands seek asylum in the U.K. each year, while net (legal) migration to the U.K. amounted to 2,73,000 in the year to last June.

However, in a country where the movement of people has gained particular focus ahead of Britain's impending exit from the European Union (EU), the issue has swiftly become a hotly debated and deeply political one. Some on the right have accused the government of being too lax and responding slowly to the issue, distracted by Brexit as well as the Windrush immigration scandal over the wrongful treatment of Commonwealth migrants to the country.

In the Commons, one Conservative urged the government to get tough on the issue. Mr.

 Home Secretary says the government's strategy involved protecting Britain's borders as well as the lives of those who are exploited by traffickers who placed them in danger for profit

Javid himself appeared willing to play to their tune. "If you are a genuine asylum seeker, why have you not sought asylum in the first safe country that you arrived in?" he asked in a recent TV interview – a sentiment which has triggered alarm from refugee groups.

They noted that it was disturbing that the person in charge of movement in and out of the U.K. needed reminding that asylum was a right and that the U.K. had an obligation to assess claims fairly and on their individual merits, no matter how the individuals reached the country.

One Green Party Member of the European Parliament also contrasted Britain's outcry with the reality in the rest of Europe – noting that the several hundreds who arrived in the U.K. in small boats in 2018 paled in comparison with the 1,16,295 who arrived by sea to Italy, Greece, Spain and Cyprus (excluding the over 2,000 who perished in the sea).

Mr. Javid has continued to defend his position, insisting that there was a "definite increasing trend" that needed to be dealt with before the situation got out of control. Britain's strategy involved protecting its borders as well as the lives of those who risked the journey, exploited by people traffickers and others who placed them in great danger for personal profit, he insisted.

**Wider controversy**  
The debate has also fed into a wider controversy in Europe about how to tackle the issue of those seeking asylum in a country other than the one they first arrived in. EU rules enabling countries to send back asylum seekers to the first countries of arrival has triggered tensions among neighbouring states, putting the onus on front-line countries such as Greece, Spain and Italy, as well as others such as France. Mr. Javid himself suggested that the failure of those coming to the U.K. to claim asylum in France could adversely impact their claim, also alarming campaigners.

To many, Mr. Javid's move speaks mostly of his own personal ambitions – he has been touted as a potential successor to Prime Minister Theresa May, who has pledged to step down before the next election. Recent polls have put him as the second- or third-most popular candidate among Conservative Party members, though he is likely to prove a less divisive figure among party MPs than Boris Johnson, who leads in most polls.



STUTTGART

## Life in the shadow of violence

 In Germany's North Rhine-Westphalia, the New Year's Eve ended with violence. Andreas N., a 50-year-old German, attacked Afghan and Syrian refugees with his car in the towns of Essen and Bottrop. Eight people – a Syrian family, an Afghan mother and her four-year-old son, another 10-year-old girl from Syria and a German man with Turkish roots – were hurt seriously. Shortly after his arrest, Andreas told police that he deliberately targeted foreigners.

According to different reports, Andreas has been unemployed for a long time and is mentally ill. Following the attack, a debate emerged in Germany questioning the terms that are being used for the crime. Some people believe that since the suspect is a White German male, many media outlets, politicians and authorities prefer to downplay it.

"By the way, if someone tries to kill a person because he is having black hair or brown skin, it's not 'hostility towards foreigners' (a non-native person can have black hair or brown skin too) but racism," said Hasnain Kazim, a journalist with German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, on his Facebook page. Mr. Kazim has Indian-Pakistani roots and regularly speaks up against racism and xenophobia.

### Anti-racist activists

Two days after the attack, more than 100 people demonstrated in Essen against right-wing violence. In recent years, Germany has seen a spike in attacks on refugees. In early 2016, a mob attacked Pakistanis in Cologne and Bautzen. In February 2018, a 70-year-old German, who wanted to send a signal "about the current refugee policy" of the government, knifed three migrants. Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has welcomed more than one million refugees in recent years, called these attacks "hate in the streets".

According to Gabriele Giesecke, a local politician with the left-wing party Die Linke, this year's attack had a political background. Reportedly, Andreas described his victims as "non-humans" and *kanaken*, a derogatory term for Turks and Arabs. He is also a believer in the far-right, racist narratives that "foreigners get everything without working for it".

In an interview with German TV channel WDR, one of the victims – an Afghan woman

 In recent years, Germany has seen a spike in attacks on refugees. Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has welcomed more than one million refugees, called these attacks "hate in the streets"

described what she witnessed during the attack. "I saw how the car drove in our direction, and then it hit my son. I didn't know what happened thereafter. I just started crying," she said.

"In one moment, I saw how my son was pushed away in the air. It was terrible," said the woman, who did not want to be named. "This man had a clear intention to kill foreigners," said Herbert Reul, the regional Interior Minister for North Rhine-Westphalia.

North Rhine-Westphalia has been a hotspot for migrants for decades. "I am living here with my family for years. But I cannot remember such a brutal attack. It is a shock. I grew up in this area and I also know that society in this part of Germany is less racist than in other regions," said Saber Amiri, 26, an Afghan student from the city of Bonn.

Many other people share this opinion. But they also believe that the German society has a problem with racism and how to describe hate crimes and right-wing violence. "Honestly, I am not surprised that nobody is calling the culprit a terrorist," said Demir Ulusoy, 36, a merchant with Turkish roots. "Explicit right-wing terrorism conducted by an extremist group such as the National Socialist Underground has not really been accounted for until today. Far-right elements are part of the German Army, as it has been revealed recently, but many media outlets didn't care. This is a huge problem," he added.

At the Mannar outlet, the women work from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. and pay LKR 200 as rent per day to the department (about ₹78). After retrieving the costs of the ingredients, they make about LKR 300-400 a day.

"If you ask me whether the profits could be higher, I'd say yes. But this is not just about the money. We come here leaving behind our worries at home. There is a sense of sisterhood and solidarity here," Ms. Jayakumari said. "It's very much like family, secure."



MANNAR

## Serving hearty meals, fostering sisterhood

 The top layer couldn't have been crispier or the core softer. Shining in its golden-brown, crumbly skin, the *keera vadai* – an everyday snack in Sri Lanka – acquired new respect at the Ammachi cafe in Mannar, in Sri Lanka's Northern Province.

"I don't add any *ajinomoto* salt or colouring agent. It's just *ulundu* [black gram], and simply ground like we do in our homes," said P. Jayakumari, a member of the women's crew running the eatery. "Homely" is precisely how meals served here taste. At a time when fried rice and noodles have become the most commonly available dishes in small eateries across the island, these cafes – set up in other northern districts too – have come as a boon for those looking for a tasty and healthy option.

Attired in a green apron and cap, Ms. Jayakumari, like her other colleagues at the cafe, serves with her hands covered in disposable, transparent gloves. A tasty, hearty meal here – be it breakfast, lunch, dinner or a snack – can be had for a couple of hundreds (LKR), a bill amount that is not common in Sri Lanka, where food is among the first essentials to reflect the ever-spiralling living costs. "Can I serve some more *sambhar*? Do you like it?" she asks each customer, ensuring swift refills as their plates get empty.

Nearly 10 women from the island's war-affected communities work full time at the cafe

 Each of the women working at Mannar's Ammachi (grandmother) cafe has a story to tell, of war-time displacement and of waging a subsequent battle to find work in order to survive

to support their families – in Ms. Jayakumari's case, her husband who has a disability and their three school-going children. Each of them has a story of war-time displacement and a subsequent battle to find work in order to survive.

Ms. Jayakumari was displaced to Mannar from Jaffna, while S. Jeevapushpam, who leads the group, moved to the north from the hill country, after the July 1983 anti-Tamil riots. Among the younger members, P. Ajanta, 34, has memories of life as a refugee in Mandapam, Rameswaram, and briefly in Kerala, as a little girl, before she returned home.

**Fresh, delectable meals**  
Their open kitchen, traditional recipes and strikingly fresh meals are steadily drawing more locals and tourists. "What we cook and eat in the mornings, we do not sell in the afternoons," Ms. Jeevapushpam explained.

On a given day, depending on the time, customers get to choose from a delightful Sri Lankan menu, including hot *idiyappam*, *appam*, *dosa*, *idli*, a wholesome rice and curry meal with *pappadam* and fried chillies, sweets such as *modakam* and tropical fruit juices. The Ammachi (grandmother) cafes, set up across the Northern Province in recent years, are modelled on the *Hela Bojun* (local food) stalls in the south, conceived by the Department of Agriculture to employ women.

"We started at a very small scale initially, setting up stalls and road-side eateries. Seeing the response, we scaled up the project in 2012. Today, it costs LKR 6 million to set up one cafe (roughly ₹24 lakh)," according to Disna Rathmasinghe, an Additional Director with the Department, and in-charge of agri-businesses. This includes infrastructure and training – currently, at least 1,000 women are employed in the cafes, including some set up by the provincial agriculture departments.

At the Mannar outlet, the women work from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. and pay LKR 200 as rent per day to the department (about ₹78). After retrieving the costs of the ingredients, they make about LKR 300-400 a day.

"If you ask me whether the profits could be higher, I'd say yes. But this is not just about the money. We come here leaving behind our worries at home. There is a sense of sisterhood and solidarity here," Ms. Jayakumari said. "It's very much like family, secure."



ARUN DEVNATH is a journalist based in Dhaka, Bangladesh



ATUL ANEJA works for The Hindu and is based in Beijing



VIDYA RAM works for The Hindu and is based in London



EMRAN FEROZ is a freelance journalist based in Stuttgart, Germany



MEERA SRINIVASAN works for The Hindu and is based in Colombo

## IN BRIEF



## AI passenger revenue grows 20% in Q3 FY19

NEW DELHI While Air India's (AI's) passenger count rose by only 4% in the December 2018 quarter, its revenue from passengers rose 20% on the back of better aircraft utilisation, a senior company official said. "Due to efficient utilisation of aircraft fleet, passenger revenue increased from ₹4,615 crore in third quarter of 2017-18 to ₹5,538 crore in the third quarter of 2018-19," he said. PTI

## Zydus gets final USFDA nod for skin ointment

NEW DELHI Zydus Cadila said it has received final approval from the U.S. health regulator to market Betamethasone Dipropionate Cream that is used to treat a variety of skin conditions. The group also received the final nod for Amlodipine and Atorvastatin tablets USP administered for heart and cholesterol-related cases. The group now has 245 approvals and filed over 330 abbreviated new drug applications since the commencement of the filing process in FY2003-04. PTI

## Auditor is govt. nominee for ICSI central council

CHENNAI: S. Santhanakrishnan, chartered accountant, has been appointed by the government as its nominee in the central council of The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI). He is the founder-partner of Chennai-based CA firm PKF Sridhar & Santhanam LLP. Mr. Santhanakrishnan is a former central council member of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and is a director on board of several firms, including Tata Global Beverages, Federal Bank and Catholic Syrian Bank.

## National Wildlife Board clears ONGC gas project

AGARTALA ONGC Tripura Asset would soon start extracting natural gas from Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary in Belonia subdivision of Gomati district following National Wildlife Board's clearance of its proposal, a top official said. "The board, following recommendations from the state wildlife board, had cleared the project on Thursday," Gautam Kumar Singha Roy, asset manager of ONGC Tripura Asset, told reporters here. PTI

## Major sea ports record 3.77% volume growth in first 9 months of FY19

Deendayal handles 84.91 MT cargo

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The major sea ports in India handled 518.6 million tonnes (MT) of cargo during the first nine months of the current year viz. from April to December 2018, marking a growth of 3.77% against 499.7 million tonnes handled during the corresponding year-earlier period.

During this period, nine ports – Kolkata (including Haldia), Paradip, Visakhapatnam, Kamarajar, Chennai, Cochin, New Mangalore, JNPT and Deendayal (Kandla) registered positive growth in cargo traffic, Shipping Ministry said in a statement.

Deendayal Port topped the list by handling the highest volume of 84.91 MT of cargo, followed by Paradip 80.43 MT, JNPT 52.53 MT, Visakhapatnam 49.28 MT and Kolkata 45.82 MT.

Together, these ports handled about 60% of the major port traffic.

## Container traffic

Kamarajar Port, which is being operated by Adani group, handled 413 con-

# Concerned about any data localisation proposal: Twitter

Micro blogging platform's decision on infra to be driven by economic rationale

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

NEW DELHI

Expressing concern over the increasing number of countries, including India, pitching to make it mandatory for organisations to store certain user data locally, Colin Crowell, global vice president for public policy at Twitter said the company's decision on additional infrastructure will be driven by economic rationale.

There are other ways to resolve concerns over access to user information by "appropriate authorities for appropriate reasons", he pointed out. The U.S.-based micro-blogging platform also believes that the new draft rules to check misinformation on social media should be "carefully calibrated" as there is a need to strike a balance between issues related to safety and security and important values such as free expression and individual civil liberties.

To a question on the proposed data localisation norms, Mr. Crowell said, "Twitter is perhaps different from some other media platforms that might be household names in the sense that although the brand is well known and easily recognised around the world from a corporate perspective, we are much smaller than what people perhaps appreciate."



**Tweeting locally:** New rules to check misinformation on social media must be carefully calibrated, says Colin Crowell. • AFP

He added that the Twitter global network is run out of two server facilities in the U.S. "A proliferation of countries asking us to put those types of infrastructure facilities, of course, will be a significant change for us and we like to make those decisions based on economic rationale," he said.

## User information

Mr. Crowell stated that one of the concerns driving data localisation is access to user information by "appropriate authorities for appropriate reasons" and Twitter believes there are other ways to achieve sensible goals in that area that don't require investments in infrastructure. "...Recently, in the United States, legislation called the CLOUD (Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data) Act [was passed] that essentially was a reform to which was

referred to as the MLAT process which is the way... again Twitter didn't invent this... Governments negotiate this as a treaty ... how does one country obtain information about citizens of another country perhaps and what are the norms for that? So, this is a larger conversation there. But, we would be concerned about any data localisation proposals," he said.

Talking about the recent suggestion to amend the Information Technology Act to make it mandatory for platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter to trace "originator" of "unlawful" information, while also removing such content within 24 hours after being notified, Mr. Crowell said, "...we are eager to engage with government authorities in a conversation about the development of any new rules or regulations in this area and

with civil society as part of the robust consultation process because these are issues which don't solely impact high tech companies.

On tracing the origin of a message, Mr. Crowell said while the company will need to look at the actual technical language of the rules, often time it might not be apparent to Twitter where the originator is. "We are not an infrastructure company, we are a web-based company and our traffic comes to us from variety of different sources and that traffic may come, for example, through VPNs and proxies. Sometimes that conversation is less with us and more with other participants in the telecommunications sector."

Asked about the government expressing dissatisfaction on Twitter's compliance on requests to remove objectionable content, he said, "We are a global platform and we get reports from variety of sources. Sometimes reports we get may not be validly or properly scoped legally. Sometimes there may be lack of clarity around what it is that they are actually seeking to address.

"We don't respond favourably to every request that we get for a variety of reasons. That is not unique to India. It's the same in U.S. where Twitter is headquartered."

# 'Capital market, only way to make household savings productive'

Govt to focus on districts to boost growth, says Prabhu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Capital market is the only way one can get household savings into productive assets and hence, public policy must include ways to make capital markets more efficient and transparent, said Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce and Industry.

"Capital market is the only way you can get household savings into the most productive sources and most productive sectors," Mr. Prabhu said, speaking at a gathering of stock brokers at an event organised by the Association of National Exchanges Members of India.

"The point is clearly established that we need most-efficient, well-entrenched and deep-pocketed capital markets for economy to grow and therefore we have to make sure any public policy must address this important issue of how to make capital markets efficient, transparent and forward-looking," Mr. Prabhu added.

The Minister, who also handles the Aviation Ministry, further said that while investment is necessary along with it, efficient use of capital is more important



**Aiming high:** India is now targeting annual FDI inflows of \$100 billion, according to Suresh Prabhu. • DEBASHIS BHADURI

and there is no other way but capital markets that would ensure growth.

On a different note, the Rajya Sabha member said that the government wanted to focus on the districts as part of a bottom-up approach for boosting economic growth and that it has identified such districts across the States of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand to begin with.

"We have focused on the macro and while that continues, now feel the need to also have the micro or the bottom," he said.

**\$10 trillion GDP**  
The Minister said it is now a certainty that the country's

\$2.6 trillion GDP will grow to \$5 trillion in seven to nine years, and to \$10 trillion by 2035.

The measures being undertaken to push growth at the district level are aimed at achieving the broader targets set earlier, he added while stressing that it is certain that the country's \$2.6 trillion GDP will grow to \$5 trillion in seven to nine years, and to \$10 trillion by 2035.

According to the Minister, India is now targeting annual FDI inflows of \$100 billion and the government had identified the sectors which can attract the investments and also prepared a list of 150 global companies with huge cash piles.

## Exim Bank clears dues of IL&FS Ethiopia staff

Indians being held captive there

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Exim Bank has cleared the four-month salary arrears of the staff of IL&FS Group's Ethiopian joint venture.

Four Indian staff members were being held hostage by the local community for non-payment of the dues as the infrastructure firm's account had been frozen.

"Exim Bank conveyed its decision to the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and the ITNL-Elsamex JV (IEJV), authorising release of payments from the project account, currently frozen, as a special case on humanitarian considerations," the lender said.

Exim Bank allowed withdrawal of Ethiopian Birr (ETB) 4.89 million towards payment of four months' net salary of lo-

cal workers and ETB 0.50 million towards day-to-day expenses, fuel, transport and legal and advocacy fees.

The bank said it took the decision after IEJV's 'assurance and concrete plan' for the release of the Indian workers who are held captive at the project site. IEJV is a joint venture between IL&FS Transport Networks Ltd. and Elsamex.

## Project-related dues

"IEJV was also instructed to clear all project related dues including the bank guarantee," it said.

The crisis at IL&FS erupted last year when the firm defaulted on payments leading the government to dismantle the board and reconstitute a new board under Kotak Mahindra Bank MD & CEO Uday Kotak's chairmanship.

## RBI approves Brahm Dutt as Yes Bank chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of Brahm Dutt as part-time, non-executive chairman of Yes Bank. Mr. Dutt has been on the Board of the bank since July 2013.

He has been appointed till July 4, 2020, that is, when he attains the age of 70.

Yes Bank board approved Mr. Dutt's appointment as chairman on 13 December.

The chairman's post in Yes Bank fell vacant after Ashok Chawla - a former bureaucrat resigned. Mr. Chawla was named in the chargesheet filed by CBI in the Aircel-Maxis case. During his career in the IAS for 37 years, Mr. Dutt held several posts in the State Government of Karnataka as well as in the Central Government and rose to the level of Secretary to Government of India.

## भारतीय विमानपत्रन प्राधिकरण

## AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA TENDER NOTICE

(E-Bid No.: 2019\_AA1\_20726\_1)

Airports Authority of India invites tenders through CPP e-Tendering Portal on behalf of the Chairman, AAII from the Eligible Original Manufacturers of LED Light fixtures for the work of "Modification of existing perimeter lighting system as per CACIS directive at Chennai Airport, SH. Supply of LED Light Fixtures" for an estimated cost of ₹ 18,94,900.00 (excluding GST) with period of completion 01 (One) Month. Last date and time of sale and submission of bid document is 21.01.2019 upto 1800 Hours. For detailed information, log on to CPP e-Procurement Portal reference https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app or www.aai.aero. Further clarification / corrigendum if any will be notified through e-procurement portal at https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app.

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>)

ISSUED BY P.R.O.(WATER)

Advt. No. J.S.V. 672/2018-19

Ex. Engineer(West)-III

DELHI JAL BOARD OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WEST-II NANGLOI PHII: NEAR BARAT GHAR: NEW DELHI-41 N.I.T. No. 41 WEST-III/(2018-19)

S. No. Description Amount put to tender Tender Fee Earnest Money Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution Last date/time for tender download through e-procurement solution

1 Replacement of old damaged water line in left out portion in Partap Garden U/A Colony in Ultam Nagar AC-32 under EE (West) III. Rs. 76,21,128/- Rs. 1000/- Rs. 1,53,000/- 10.01.2019 I.D. No. 2019\_DJB\_165628\_1 30.01.2019 at 3:00PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>)

ISSUED BY P.R.O.(WATER)

Advt. No. J.S.V. 672/2018-19

Ex. Engineer(West)-III

DELHI JAL BOARD OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WEST-II NANGLOI PHII: NEAR BARAT GHAR: NEW DELHI-41 N.I.T. No. 41 WEST-III/(2018-19)

S. No. Description Amount put to tender Tender Fee Earnest Money Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution Last date/time for tender download through e-procurement solution

1 Replacement of lattice Towers in Zone 'B' area by Highmast with LED light fixture. Rs. 87,17,100/-

2 Estimate Amount Rs. 17,000/- Payment in the form of RTGS/NEFT payable to V.O.Chidambaranar Port Trust, Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu state, India (Account details given in the section I invitation to tenders).

3 Earnest Money deposit EMID. 14/01/2019 to 30/01/2019 (up to 1500 Hrs.)

4 Downloading of Tender from VOCPT on line e-tendering web site. BEFORE 1500 Hrs on 30/01/2019

5 Last Date & Time for submission of Tenders on line. BEFORE 1500 Hrs on 30/01/2019

6 Submission of Hard copies of Technical Bid & tender document on line. At 1530 Hrs on 30/01/2019

7 Online Technical Bid opening date and time At 1530 Hrs on 30/01/2019

8 Validity of tender 120 days from the date of opening the technical bid

S/d - CHIEF MECHANICAL ENGINEER

ANDHRA PRADESH POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD D.No.33-26-14D/2, Near Sunrise Hospital, Chalamalavari Street, Kasturbaipet, Vijayawada - 520010 Website : [www.appcb.ap.nic.in](http://appcb.ap.nic.in) Phone : 0866-2463200

## Tender Notice

Supply of Real Time Air Quality Monitoring Data from Various Locations of Andhra Pradesh Advt. No. 25/APPCB/Comps/RTAQMP/2018

Date : 12/01/2019

APPCB invites bids for the Supply of Real Time Air Quality data from various locations (about 50) including District, Division, Mandal Headquarters in the State of Andhra Pradesh by establishing the compact air quality monitoring stations.

1 Period of Sale of Bidding Documents 12.01.2019 to 30.01.2019

2 Time and Date of Pre Bid Conference 22.01.2019 at 11.30 AM

3 Last Date and Time for Receipt of Bids 31.01.2019 at 4.00 PM

4 Time and Date for Opening of Technical Bids 31.01.2019 at 4.30 PM

5 Address for communication : Member Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board, Door No. 33-26-14D/2, Near Sunrise Hospital, Chalamal

# 8 BUSINESS ABROAD

## IN BRIEF



### 'Apple wanted \$1 bn for chance to win iPhone'

**SAN JOSE** Qualcomm sought to become the sole supplier of modem chips for Apple's iPhone to recoup a \$1-billion "incentive payment" that Apple insisted on, not to block rivals from the market, Qualcomm CEO Steve Mollenkopf said. The payment was meant to ease technical costs of swapping out iPhone's Infineon chip with Qualcomm's. **REUTERS**



### Musk's SpaceX to lay-off 10% of workforce

Elon Musk's rocket company SpaceX will reduce its workforce by about 10% of the company's more than 6,000 employees, it said. The company said it will "part ways" with some of its manpower, citing "extraordinarily difficult challenges ahead." In June, Mr. Musk had fired at least seven people in the senior management team. **REUTERS**



### Fox may not bid for Disney sports networks

Twenty-First-Century Fox said it does not plan to bid for regional sports networks that Walt Disney may need to sell to win U.S. Justice Department's approval for its purchase of Fox's film and TV assets. Fox chairman Lachlan Murdoch had said it was an "open question" whether it will buy back the networks it sold to Disney as part of the \$71 billion deal. **REUTERS**



### VW delivered 10.8 mn vehicles in 2018

**BERLIN** Volkswagen Group's deliveries rose 0.9% to a record 10.83 million last year, the German company said, putting it neck-and-neck with Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi in the race to be the world's biggest vehicle manufacturer. The Franco-Japanese alliance sold 10.6 million vehicles in 2017 and 5.54 million in first half of 2018. **REUTERS**

# U.K. businesses sound the alarm while planning for no deal Brexit

Lobbyists warn of supply-chain calamities; automakers make contingency plans

**AMIE TSANG**

LONDON

Some car manufacturers will idle their factories. Police are advising store owners to hire more security guards. Trucks have been sent to the coast to practice with artificial traffic jams. And exasperated business lobbyists are warning of supply-chain calamities.

Britain remains politically paralysed before a contentious vote in Parliament next week on a plan to withdraw from the European Union, or Brexit. But businesses are plowing ahead and preparing for the possibility that the country crashes out of the bloc without an agreement at the end of March — a no-deal Brexit.

Honda, the Japanese auto company, which produces about 150,000 cars a year in its factory in Swindon, in southwest England, said that it would stop production for six days in April to assess its supply chain and possible disruptions from border delays after Brexit. The company said its 4,000 employees would go to work, but they would be training or handling maintenance on those six days.

BMW has already said it would shut its Mini factory in Oxford for maintenance for a



**Charged up:** Britain remains politically paralysed ahead of a vote next week on a plan to leave the European Union. **NYT**

month beginning April 1, in case a no-deal outcome disrupts its production.

Honda was the most high-profile company to make its Brexit contingency plans known this week, and a diplomatic visit prompted the revelation. Shinzo Abe, Japan's prime minister, flew to London to meet with British Prime Minister Theresa May on Thursday and emphasized that he hoped a no-deal Brexit could be avoided. Other Japanese companies also are not waiting for re-assurance.

"We are having these conversations in order to minimize the demands on policing from any resulting large crowds or queues at shops and as part of our regular civil contingency engagement

relies on goods crossing the British border from France and arriving at factories within minutes of final assembly.

Retail businesses were also being advised to prepare for uncertain times. On Friday, Metropolitan Police said that they were advising stores to consider hiring extra security just in case shortages created by a no-deal exit prompt a rush of shoppers.

"We are having these conversations in order to minimize the demands on policing from any resulting large crowds or queues at shops and as part of our regular civil contingency engagement

with businesses and partners," police said in an emailed statement.

Although businesses have been wary of wading into the politics of Brexit, some are now more willing to declare that a no-deal Brexit would be disastrous.

The Confederation of British Industry warned that the government needed to be as specific as possible about how it would avoid a no-deal scenario.

"Make no mistake, no-deal cannot be 'managed,'" said Carolyn Fairbairn, the group's director-general, in a speech. "And it's certainly not desirable."

In what proved to be a less-than-convincing effort to ease public anxiety, the British government conducted an exercise to test how it would manage disruption at the border. It offered truck companies about \$700 a truck to gather vehicles at Marston Airport, 20 miles west of the port of Dover, so it could test how effectively traffic backups could be managed if vehicles coming off ferries from Europe had to stop for customs checks.

Only 89 trucks turned up, compared with the 150 expected, and the operation was widely mocked as "windown dressing." **NYT**

# Nissan top exec Munoz resigns amid broadened Ghosn probe

He was seen as 'person of interest' in internal investigation

**REUTERS**



Jose Munoz

One of Nissan Motor Co.'s top executives has resigned, further rattling the Japanese automaker's management team as it broadens an investigation into ousted Chairman Carlos Ghosn's alleged financial misconduct.

Mr. Munoz, widely considered as a close ally to Mr. Ghosn and a possible successor to lead the automaking partnership between Nissan and France's Renault SA, had been a "person of interest" in Nissan's widening internal investigation.

The 53-year-old, who was Nissan's chief performance officer and head of its China operations, made the announcement in a LinkedIn post on Friday. In a statement, Nissan said that Munoz had "elected to resign" from the company, effective immediately. It declined to offer details.

"Unfortunately, Nissan is currently involved in matters that have and will continue to divert its focus," Mr. Munoz said in his post.

"As I have repeatedly and recently made clear to the company, I look forward to continuing to assist Nissan in its investigations."

The scandal has sent shockwaves through the automotive industry and has escalated tensions between Nissan and Renault, where Mr. Ghosn remains CEO and chairman.

Mr. Munoz joined the automaker in 2004 in Europe and led its significant expansion in North America after the global financial crisis.

Since then, Nissan has succeeded in raising its market share in the U.S. and posted record sales. Earlier this year, Nissan tapped Mr. Munoz to oversee its operations in China where it plans to ramp up sales over the next few years.

Since then, the world's largest auto market has been showing signs of a slowdown.

A time when it is struggling to shore up profitability in the United States and expand aggressively in China.

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## KaBuLi, the library

J.V. YAKHMI

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Well, only a Superman like President Trump can tell whether it was the Parliament building in Kabul built by India, or a library, that he was referring to while mocking India's aid to war-ravaged Afghanistan.

But that reminds me of KaBuLi, a library that I started in 1980 for the children of Kamet, a 16-storey tower in Anushaktinagar, the residential complex of the Department of Atomic Energy in Mumbai. Giving me an advance of ₹50, the Residents' Association of Kamet asked me to set up this library, with two conditions. First, on payment of a monthly fee of 50 paisa, any child from the building would be entitled to become its member. Second, the library should be open on all Sundays between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., when children could borrow one book each, after returning a book loaned to them previously, if any.

I accepted, giving it the name KaBuLi, an acronym coined by borrowing the first two letters of the three words: Kamet Building Library. It was also a reminder of the famous story, *Kabuliwala*, written for children by Rabindranath Tagore. Twenty children in the age-group 6-15 years became members, soon after I announced it on the notice board of the building.

I had agreed to run the library because I had my own collection of about 60 children's books already, including several by Enid Blyton, and magazines such as Chandamama and cartoon volumes such as Tintin, Asterix and on the Indian epics published by Geeta Press, Gorakhpur, bought in the past for my son and daughter who were then seven and four respectively. But to ensure that each member-child got a fresh book every week, we needed many more books and magazines. Hence I started a monthly subscription of three or four children's magazines in English and Hindi with my newspaper vendor, though that wiped out the advance of Rs. 50 in less than six months.

But I could still run KaBuLi for three years by replenishing fresh stocks of books or magazines procured from pavement-sellers of old, second-hand books and magazines at Kings' Circle or at Flora Fountain areas in Mumbai, where I could buy them cheap.

Sunday mornings brought a festive atmosphere to my flat when young children gathered during the library hours, to the delight of my own kids. I would exhibit all the books/magazines, including the new additions, on the dining table in sets of categories, ready for issuing. I had given a library card to each member child, to keep a record of borrowing. Recently, one of them, now 46 and a non-resident Indian settled in the United States, reminisced about KaBuLi, when he met me! That was fair recompense.

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GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

## Pandemonium personified

Noise as the common denominator in both urban and rural India

THOMAS PAUL

It's a serene 5.30 a.m., till a blast of high decibels surgically strike through your window panes, startling you awake, and have you looking out for shattered glass. A loudspeaker has erupted outside your window. There's nothing to be done except wait out the hour-long commotion to end. The day has begun.

In our land, it is a truth universally acknowledged that the owner of a sound system will be in want of an audience – willing or otherwise. It's his entitlement to deliver turbulence over a radius of at least a kilometre from his equipment.

Noise is the common denominator of urban and rural India. Not only on the city streets, but also as you travel through small towns and one-bus-stop villages, the recurrent feature is the shriek of cone-shaped loud speakers, banned since 2005 but permanently fixed on rooftops, either in ignorance or in defiance.

Owners of these noise-delivery systems compete fiercely over whose loudspeaker can rupture your eardrums faster, the tinnitus hissing in your ear lifelong. During festival season, loudspeakers go insane every fifty yards, each one belting out a different number, the aim being area-domination rather than connoisseurship of music. Technically, these manically clashing sound-waves should result in noise-cancellation. Instead, due to some freaky physics, they pulsate with sonic booms that reverberate through your viscera. If



ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R KUMAR

you are passing through, you can escape by raising your car window and flooring your accelerator. Too bad, if you are on a slow bus, halting at all stops.

You can't escape,

though, if you are a wed-

ding guest and are auto-

matically the captive au-

dience of a wedding or-

chestra. Once the orches-

tra has been hired and has

pocketed the advance, it is

a law unto itself, and deliv-

ers a high noise-to-music

ratio, without interval.

While the musicians are in

the throes of drumbeats

and heavy metal, they in-

habit a parallel universe;

and your tearful request

asking them to shut up for

five minutes only confuses

them into greater frenzy.

Some say, all this noise li-

vens up the occasion. That

is a noble interpretation,

but not when you can't talk

normally to the people

around you – you have to

yell into their ears over the

sound of crashing music.

And if you try to amuse

them with your life story,

you have to repeat yourself.

several times, which de- feats the purpose. To be understood over the cacophony, it is better to keep your sentences short, accompanied by a lot of gesturing and body language.

If you're already suffer- ing tinnitus from earlier functions, then you dread the prospect of someone telling you a joke over the commotion of the orchestra, expecting you to laugh, when you can't hear a single word of what he is saying. From his expression and a bit of lip-reading, you guess his punch line has been uttered, and laugh uproariously. But he looks confused. Apparently he has asked you a question.

It's a stalemate, and your man edges away from you nervously, doubting your sanity. One reluctant conclusion emerges: wedding functions are not the place to conduct conversations.

The safe thing is to keep moving around, keeping a smile pasted, and waving across the hall to people who can only wave back.

Functions are an oppor-

sagitex@gmail.com

## IN BRIEF

**Kelly's attorney denies abuse allegations**

LOS ANGELES An attorney for R. Kelly on Friday called a new documentary series about the R&B singer a "for-profit hit piece," and said the latest accusations of abuse against the Grammy-winning musician were a "complete fabrication." **REUTERS**

**Billy Zane to play Marlon Brando in a new drama**

LOS ANGELES *Titanic* star Billy Zane will play the role of actor Marlon Brando in *Waltzing With Brando*. The film is based on the memoir *Waltzing With Brando: Planning a Paradise in Tahiti* by architect Bernard Judge. **PTI**

**California sea lions killed to protect migrating fish**

LOS ANGELES Authorities in the western U.S. state of Oregon have euthanised four sea lions in the last month as part of a programme to protect salmon runs and migrating steelhead trout that are at risk of going extinct. **PTI**

# A giant leap for seniors at tech show

At CES, companies showcase 'powered' clothing and virtual reality that helps in combating isolation

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LAS VEGAS

With artificial intelligence to detect falls, virtual reality to combat isolation and "powered" clothing to assist the incapacitated, the tech world is stepping up its effort to "disrupt" ageing.

At the Consumer Electronics Show this week in Las Vegas, exhibitors were showcasing new ways to help the elderly remain independent, mentally fit and connected.

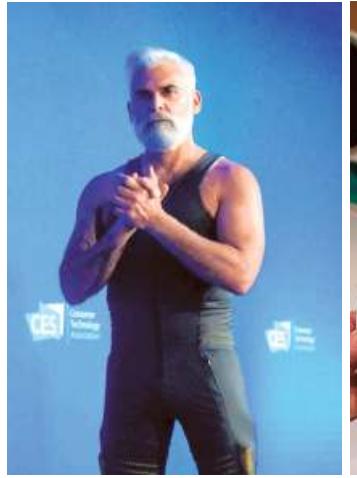
Some systems took a page from the gaming world of youngsters to help seniors "travel" to new places and connect with loved ones.

"Everyone knows seniors get lonely but that isolation can also lead to a lot of medical problems, including the acceleration of dementia," said Kyle Rand, founder and chief executive of Rendever, a startup which works with assisted living homes to give seniors a way to virtually visit remote locations.

"They can stand atop the Eiffel Tower, they can go on an African safari, or revisit their childhood home."

Rendever was launched in the Washington DC tech incubator created by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which in recent years has been funding efforts to develop new technologies for seniors.

In the consumer space from the AARP incubator, Alcove VR enables seniors to be part of a virtual world with loved ones who may be far away. "You can step into a virtual living room (with a

**Disrupting ageing:** A wearable body suit that augments muscles and helps them maintain posture; and right, Pillo, an all-in-one pill dispenser and personal digital assistant. **AFP**

**We can detect falls, but the predictive aspect of it is to monitor changes in behaviour so we can alert family**

OFER FAMILIER  
Vayyar

friend or family member and just hang out," said Cezara Windrem, the AARP product manager for Alcove.

The AARP exhibit also included VRHealth, which offers cognitive behavioural therapy using virtual reality, and Pillo, a device which serves as a personal assistant and medication dispenser focused on health for seniors.

**Virtual caregivers**

Other exhibitors showcased technology that could help seniors remain in their homes, and give family members peace of mind by monitoring their condition, in some cases using predictive analytics to determine if they are at risk.

Walabot, a wall-mounted monitoring system developed by the Israeli startup Vayyar, uses radio waves and three-dimensional imaging to keep tabs on seniors living alone. "You don't need to

identify if they are at risk of falls, depression, malnutrition or urinary tract infections," said CarePredict's Jerry Wilmink.

Tech firms see a promising market in these kinds of devices, with public attention focused on the Apple Watch's feature of fall detection.

According to research firm eMarketer, Americans of age 55 and older are the fastest-growing group of electronic wearable users in the U.S., largely due to the devices' enhanced health features.

## Artificial muscles

For those with mobility issues, Seismic unveiled its wearable tech body suit which can augment a user's muscles and help them maintain posture.

The "core wellness suit," which weighs under five pounds and can be worn under street clothes, has robotic components that provide up to 30 watts of power to each hip and the lower back to support sitting, standing, lifting, or carrying – similar to an exoskeleton but without the bulk.

Sarah Thomas, a Seismic vice president, said the new product is designed not only for the elderly but for factory workers to ease fatigue and anyone with mobility issues.

Another startup CarePredict exhibited its system based on a wearable band that helps monitor seniors in assisted living facilities.

"We can passively and unobtrusively monitor the daily activities of seniors, and our predictive tools can help

# Can insect pet food cut dogs' carbon pawprint?

British firm offers eco-friendly snack

REUTERS  
LONDON

Do you love your dog, but are worried about the environmental impact of their meat-heavy diet? Now a British company is offering a solution – feed your pooch insects instead.

It launched a dry dog food on Thursday made from black soldier fly larvae in a bid to tackle the "carbon pawprint" created by pets in the animal-loving nation.

"One of the very best things we can do for the environment is to reduce our meat consumption, but up until now there haven't been many options for our carnivorous four-legged friends," said Tom Neish, the brains behind Yora dog food.

There are nearly 9 million dogs in Britain where almost half of adults own a pet, according to the PDSA veterinary charity.

Studies suggest pets consume about a fifth of the world's meat and fish, and a dog's carbon footprint is more than twice that of a 4x4 car, according to Yora.

## Minimal land use

Compared to beef farming, it said the grubs need just 2% of the land and 4% of the water to produce each kilogram of protein, which means they generate 96% less greenhouse emissions.

The grubs are grown on vegetable waste at a Dutch farm and the leftover matter provides fertilizer for crops.

Mr. Neish said a teaspoon



Pets consume about a fifth of the world's meat and fish. **GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO**

of fly eggs could create 100 kg of high-protein larvae in 14 days.

"It's an amazing nutrient cycle that has been undervalued," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Insects have been part of the food cycle since the beginning of time, but we just haven't been tapping into it."

## Setting off a trend

Vet Rory Cowlam, who stars in the BBC TV show *The Pets Factor*, predicted other pet food companies would follow suit.

"Insect protein is a really sustainable way of producing protein," he added. "I think it's really exciting and I'm sure we're going to see a huge trend now."

Mr. Neish, who is developing a similar food for cats, admitted it could be a challenge to persuade the public to "get over the ick factor." "Once you overcome your preconceptions it's actually quite tasty," he added.

# Bird Box meme leads to car crash

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
LOS ANGELES

The Bird Box challenge, which has gone viral following the release of Netflix's movie of the same name, has prompted people to do silly and dangerous things, like what a U.S. teenager recently did. The 17-year-old driver caused an accident while attempting to drive with her eyes covered, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

On January 7, the teenager was driving a pickup truck in Utah when she allegedly pulled a beanie hat over her eyes. She veered into oncoming traffic and struck a passenger car. She also hit a light pole and a concrete barrier.

Luckily, no one was injured in the accident.

Layton Police Lt. Travis Lyman said: "Honestly, I'm almost embarrassed to have to say 'Don't drive with your eyes covered' but you know apparently we do have to say that."

He added: "It's just outrageous that somebody would think to do that. This one, luckily, didn't end in any injuries but easily could have. The stakes are just way too high to do something like that while you're driving."

# Quiet reflection

**Where the air is crisp:** Houseboats covered by snow are seen along the banks of Dal Lake after snowfall in Srinagar on Saturday. Air traffic was disrupted at the Srinagar airport while the Srinagar-Jammu Highway was closed to vehicles. **NISSAR AHMAD**

# A walk in the woods boosts your kids' mood

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
HONG KONG

Does your child often feel stressed and depressed? A walk in the woods is likely to improve his/her mood, researchers said.

The study, led by a team from the University of Hong

Kong, revealed that children who developed a closer connection with nature had less distress, less hyperactivity and had a healthy lifestyle with regard to active play and eating habits.

They also had fewer behavioural and emotional diffi-

culties, as well as improved pro-social behaviour.

However, despite the extensive, adjacent greenness, many families are not using these areas, the researchers ruled in the paper published in the journal *PLOS ONE* journal.

"We noticed a tendency where parents are avoiding nature. They perceive it as dirty and dangerous, and their children unfortunately pick up these attitudes," said Tanja Sobko from the University's School of Biological Sciences.

+ Noordin Kasoma says it's cheaper, strong and durable

REUTERS  
KAMPALA

At a workshop in Uganda's capital Kampala, Noordin Kasoma measured and cut a length of bamboo. Within a few days, the 24 inch piece of grass would be transformed into the frame of a bicycle.

In an industry dominated by steel and aluminium, the use of bamboo is not as bizarre as it might seem. Mr. Kasoma said his bikes are strong, light and durable. They are also comfortable, he said.

"Bamboo is flexible; due to that flexibility it gives that kind of shock absorbing property when you're riding especially off-road. The bamboo itself tries to absorb the shocks that you are passing through... (better) than steel or aluminium," he said.

**Ugandan twist**

Bamboo frames are relatively well-known in the cycling world, but Mr. Noordin's include a special Ugandan twist. The joints are reinforced with bark cloth, a traditional clothing material harvested from the inner bark of the Mutuba tree.

**Green track:** Noordin Kasoma putting bamboo frames together to make a bicycle. **REUTERS**

The spread of fashion trends on social media is encouraging men to embrace beauty products and visit salons

REUTERS  
JOHANNESBURG

Before male beauty parlours began popping up in South Africa a few years ago, image-conscious men like Gerhard Joubert felt awkward being pampered and preened in salons filled with women.

"It's a male environment. They give you a whisky if you want a whisky. In the old days we had to go to female hair salons," said Mr. Joubert, reclining in a luxury leather chair for a pedicure in Sorbet Man, a men-only parlour in Johannesburg.

"I think we need to look better after ourselves. I think it's often been ignored, particularly in South Africa."

Two decades ago, well-

**Shifting trends:** A beautician grooming a client at a barber shop in Sandton, South Africa. **REUTERS**

groomed celebrities such as David Beckham began to change traditional attitudes towards masculinity, encouraging swaths of men to take greater

care of their appearance and embrace the use of beauty products.

South Africa has been slow to catch the "metrosexual" wave,

but a growing middle class and the spread of fashion trends on social media has seen global companies such as Unilever, Procter & Gamble and L'Oréal target more products at African men.

Salon chains are opening men-only parlours to sell these products and to meet the demand for everything from manicures to eyebrow threading.

Sorbet Man was launched as a spinoff from a women's salon brand three years ago and now has 20 franchise stores. It expects turnover to rise 50% this year.

**Not a stigma anymore**

Rival male beauty shops are

springing up. "I think over the years the stigma about male grooming has really limited men from basically expressing themselves," said Dexter Pillay, co-owner of Bespoke Man, a salon in Johannesburg's business district.

"It's changed now so drastically where men are more metrosexual."

The global male grooming product market is expected to reach \$76 billion by 2023 from \$58 billion in 2017, according to industry research.

"Africa's youthful population is seen as a market opportunity as manufacturers look to target the young modern male who is becoming increasingly conscious about appearance," said Nicola Cooper, a trend analyst.

**THE HINDU**

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Conversations with Alexa at the Asia Pacific Triennial in Brisbane

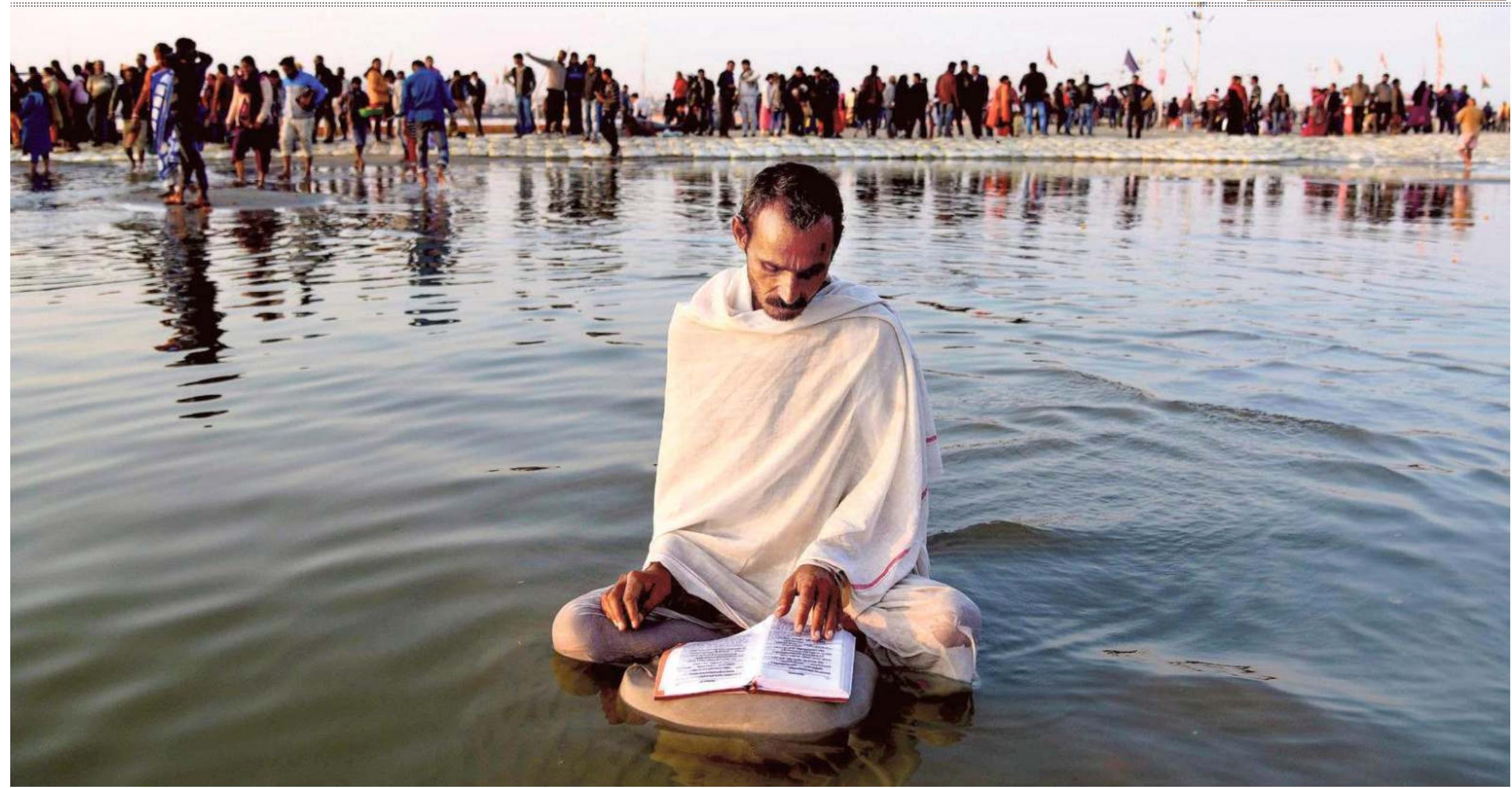
page 4

Sir/Madam, 100% Manisha Koirala coming for *Hindu* book festival or no?

page 8

The day I announced my retirement, I was very, very content: V.V.S. Laxman

page 2



### COVER STORY

# And quiet flows the GANGA

The fight to save the magnificent river is fierce, but are we any closer to a solution?

BY JACOB KOSHY

**F**ive years ago, Swami Atmabodhanand was a student of computer science at an engineering college in Kerala. That's about as much as he reveals about his 'past life'. He doesn't reveal the name of the college he studied in or the place in Kerala where he grew up. "A swami must forget his past," he says. But he's happy to discuss his fasts. It's the eighth one now, since he met Swami Shivanand, the founder of the Matri Sadan hermitage in Haridwar. Not eating for long stretches is an essential part of Atmabodhanand's routine as it trains him to discipline his body and focus his mind on salvation.

Frail and dishevelled, Atmabodhanand hasn't entirely given up nutrition. Three or four times a

day, he has a concoction of lemon, salt, honey and water. It gives his body the nutrition it needs to keep going. "Once the body adjusts to this, it can keep going. This is well-known and part of our traditional wisdom," he says. Far from being confined to a cot, Atmabodhanand is alert and mobile. He shuttles between the ashram's cottages, fielding calls, reading petitions, lawyer briefs and ap-

peals, and tending to the 30-odd cows and calves the ashram takes care of. And when doctors from the local medical college visit, he cogently describes his state of health and upon request routinely provides urine samples.

The doctor visits are a way for the state authorities and the police to spy on the ashram, he says. "I was once forcibly taken to the hospital and given an injection. I was told I had dengue and that my platelet count had dropped. When I was dropped back, I got sick... vomiting, dizzy spells. Another test by an independent doctor showed that the platelet count was normal. They are trying to kill us," he claims.

In keeping with what has become a pattern at the bucolic Matri Sadan, Atmabodhanand's fasts are less nirvana and more protest,

against what he and several other fellow-residents describe as the government's "wanton destruction" of the Ganga.

The hermitage, located on the banks of the Ganga, has already had its martyrs. Swami Nigamanand Saraswati succumbed after 115 days of fasting. He was protesting sand mining on the banks of the Ganga. With him began a pattern that repeats at Matri Sadan.

Hermits go on fasts, state authorities come calling, assess their health, spirit them away, put them on saline drips or medication, restore them to 'health', and drop them back. The government frequently enters into dialogue with the hermits.

Sometimes, the government passes an executive order prohibiting sand extraction or declares certain stretches in the river basin sacrosanct. This is usually a temporary truce and then a new fast begins. Facing the ashram temple is a great mound that serves as a memorial to Swami Saraswati.

#### The fast route

Saraswati's death invited both publicity and controversy. His grandfather alleged that he was forced into the fast, but other residents disagree. "Either the government must accede to demands or allow us to continue fasting. Please don't harass us by taking us to hospitals and killing us," says Swami Dayanand, who handles legal affairs at the ashram.

Of all his fasts, Atmabodhanand considers this the most important. He is taking on the mantle from Sant Gopaldas, a Haryana-based hermit who had been fasting from June 24 of last year, and then, according to Matri Sadan residents, was "forcibly" whisked away to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi. He was later admitted to Doon Hospital in Dehradun. There's been no news of him since December.

Gopaldas had himself taken the baton from Swami Sanand, formerly known as G.D. Agrawal, professor, environmentalist and Ganga crusader, who died last October after an 111-day fast at AIIMS, Rishikesh.

Previous fasts had catalysed governments into action. Sanand had written three letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with a list of demands. This included discontinuing all hydropower projects under construction on the six major tributaries that water the Ganga; cancelling proposed projects; legislating the 'Ganga Act' (a Bill that lays out a management plan for the river basin); and allowing Ganga Bhakti Parishad, a group dominated by environmentalists and hermits, to have the power to decide on river matters.

The letters were not answered. For one month, Sanand fasted, ac-

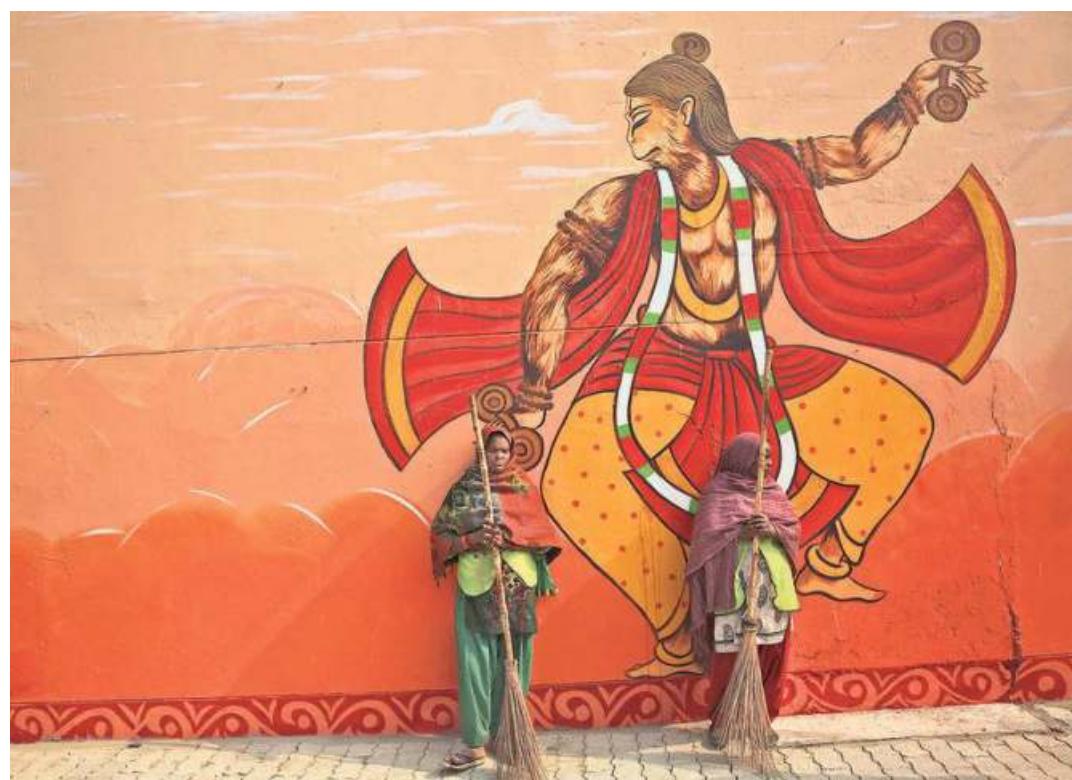
**C** *Regions in Uttarakhand that were naturally watered by the course of the river have run dry*

two great rivers, the Bhagirathi and the Alaknanda, which originate from Himalayan glaciers, travel about 580 kilometres and converge into the Ganga. From here the river flows to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. At Devprayag, it is impossible to imagine that the river has pollution woes. In winter, when snowmelt is the main source of water, the Alaknanda is turquoise, the Bhagirathi a deeper turquoise. On the banks of the river, carp and cuttlefish struggle against the force of the current.

"The Ganga cannot be polluted. It cleans itself," declares Kailash Pandey, a priest in one of the temples in Sangam Ghat, the precise confluence of the river. "The river has survived for aeons and will continue to do so. It understands our needs, provides for us. Drinking its water is the highest form of purification."

Because the Ganga is a melting pot of many rivers that originate in the snowy mountains and make their journey through forests (about 45% of the State is forest) it hosts a diverse microbial life.

*Continued on page 2*



**C** *Swami Saraswati died after 115 days of fasting. He was protesting sand mining on the river banks*

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60 MINUTES: WITH V.V.S. LAXMAN

# 'I gave the game my best'

The former cricketer says his autobiography is a true story of dealing with failure, rejection and more

BY PETER GRIFFIN

**T**here is a bounce in his step, despite back-to-back interviews before the launch of his autobiography. The eyes are bright, and the smile large. V.V.S. Laxman may be a kilo or two heavier than he was at his playing weight, but he looks lighter. Perhaps it is because for many of us, the go-to mental visual of the man is with the weight of India on his shoulders, in *that* innings, the one his book is named for: *281 And Beyond*. That innings at Eden Gardens, *that* partnership with Rahul Dravid, and *that* win, most cricket fans agree, marked the moment Indian cricket began to believe in itself, to believe that it could win against the best in the world.

That's the past. Now there's a book to promote. He takes guard. He has always been an avid reader, he says, even more so on tour. "It's very important for your mind to recover, not to think about the game, so that when you're put there for the next match, you're mentally fresh. Reading for me was that kind of distraction."

His favourite reading: autobiographies. "Some of the situations I was in – when you go and read the books of legends in various fields, you find that even though the situation or context is not the same, how they handle failures, bounce back, handle pressure – I was able to get some cues, derive solutions."

How about cricket books? "I really enjoyed listening to Richie Benaud and Bill Lawry, it was a special learning experience for me, especially during my early days. As far as writing is concerned, I'm still very old-fashioned; I still love what Neville Cardus wrote, I still enjoy reading some of the books which Benaud wrote, still have got a lot of them. Reading these books, you almost visualised what was happening on a cricket field. At that time, television

**Straight talk** Not once did I feel disappointed leaving the game: Laxman.  
VIVEK BENDRE

was not there. Growing up, I read them but since I started playing, I never read cricket books."

As to his own book, he has been wanting to write one since his playing days. This came from the belief that it would be useful to people who admired him, in much the same way that he had found inspiration in autobiographies he read. After he quit the game, though, other commitments got in the way.

But one of those post-retirement engagements gave him a nudge.

"I give a lot of corporate talks, keynotes, motivational talks. One-and-a-half years ago, there was an event in Goa, and one elderly person came forward and said that what he heard from me in that 45-minute session inspired him. He said [if I were to write a book], not only would it help him, but also his son and grandchildren. I started writing the book then."

#### Childhood love

Not quite typing it out himself: he would sit with sports journalist R. Kaushik, who has known him since he was 16 and whom he considers a good friend, and talk; Kaushik would go off and put together the narrative. "I am very happy with the way the book has come out. He

has penned it really well, in a very simple manner, which even a lay person would enjoy reading."

The structure is simple. After describing the all-important innings and series in the first chapter – "got that out of the way" – the rest is pretty much in chronological order: the childhood love for the game, a good academic record that left him in a dilemma about whether to choose cricket or medicine, growing as a young cricketer, living the dreams (and the challenges) of playing for India, right up to his retirement.

And it's less about the events – he's conscious that playing cricket for India, everything he did on the field is copiously documented – and more about what went on his head. "Everyone who has followed the game knows when I got a hundred, when I got a double-hundred, when I didn't score runs, when I was dropped. [The book is about] what was my mindset when I scored those runs, what were my thoughts when I didn't score, how did I feel when I was dropped from the World Cup – which was probably my toughest

moment, when I almost left the game – what got me back. I don't use the term depression, but how tough was it when I was lonely, when I was not performing, when the team was not performing. Everything is there in the book. It is a true story, about everything I went through, as a cricketer and before that."

#### Shelf life

What's it like stopping doing what you love at a relatively young age? "That's part and parcel of being a sportsperson: there is a shelf-life, because it's a physical activity. You may be fit, but you may not be explosive. It's not necessarily age: it's the amount of years you play the game, the wear-and-tear on the body. Whoever is willing to accept that and move on will be very happy and contented. I was fortunate I was able to play till nearly 38: a long career, 16 years for India. The day I announced my retirement, I was very, very content. I gave my best; I was very satisfied with the way my career had gone. Not once did I feel disappointed that I left the game." And what has life been like since

VVS LAXMAN

with R. Kaushik

281  
BEYOND

■ Born in Hyderabad, Telangana, Laxman is the great grand nephew of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

■ Received Arjuna Award in 2001 and Padma Shri in 2011

■ One among few to have played 100 Tests without ever playing in a World Cup

■ Shares record with Allan Border for most number of catches (12) by a non-wicketkeeper in a single ODI series

foundation. We're supporting 92 children in Class VII and above, and close to 40 IIT students, and the ultimate goal is to start a school for underprivileged children. It's important to find that passion, because it can stay with you until you go to your grave."

How is he hoping his book will be received? "It's all about sharing the knowledge. I'm very passionate about sharing and teaching, if I may say so. During my cricketing days, I never played to entertain the public, I played to score runs for my team. And while doing that, the spectators who were at the ground, the viewers on television, were entertained. Here, I've put across my views and put across my journey; now it's up to the people how they wish to receive it or perceive it. Some may learn from it, like some were learning from the way I was batting, trying to reproduce it in their own batting style, some enjoyed the joy of watching me bat, it totally depends on the people. I just hope they enjoy this. Whatever I've done in my life has been an honest effort, and this also has been an honest effort."

**C** During my cricketing days, I never played to entertain the public, I played to score runs for my team

**Ripple effect** The dramatic point where the Alaknanda and Mandakini meet at Rudraprayag; Swami Atmabodhanand on fast in Haridwar. AKHILESH KUMAR

to rotate a turbine and produce electricity. The project had its fair share of trouble for over a decade with locals protesting that they weren't adequately compensated for the loss of land and displacement from the river's altered course.

However, Bhopal Singh, a resident of Srinagar who led several *dharnas* against the project, was most perturbed because the project led to the submergence of the Dhara Devi temple.

"The idol was uprooted and placed at another temple site. This happened on June 16, 2013, and look what happened: nature's fury rained upon Uttarakhand," says Singh.

That year, from June 14 to 17, Uttarakhand received three times the normal rainfall, and as the Chorabari Glacier melted, was inundated by the heaviest floods in history.

Singh recalls the several days he spent in agitations and demonstrations. "We sat up nights protesting the destruction of the temple.... When the

**C** The Uttarakhand floods exposed the folly of not accounting for the environmental impact of construction

BJP government was in the opposition, they promised us that no hydropower projects would be built. Now that they are in power (both in Uttarakhand and the Centre), they have entirely flipped," he says.

#### Out of flow

As I walk along the GVK project site, I see vast stretches of the river bed exposed and the water level so low that at some places I can even walk across to the other bank. "The natural flow has been altered but during the monsoons the water flow is torrential and we have a system of checks and alerts to warn people of floods," a site engineer at the power plant tells me.

Upstream of the GVK project, near Rudraprayag, where the Alaknanda meets the Mandakini river, is the 99 MW Singoli-Bhatwari hydropower project, being built by Larsen and Toubro (L&T) India.

Like several projects in Uttarakhand, this too has been sputtering and stumbling towards completion. "We have a March 2019 deadline," says a senior site engineer, G.D. Thakur. "Hopefully it should be ready." To enable it to generate its rated power, the engineers have bored a tunnel through a hill that snakes 11 kilometres before it emerges at the power plant.

After the Uttarakhand floods destroyed the foundations of the dam, the company had to rebuild it, hiking up the cost, and even build an alternate tunnel source to prepare for a possible surge of silt in the future from floods. "We will learn as we go, but that's how such projects are. We are using the natural flow of the river and not stopping it, so where's the danger?" he asks.

The danger, according to Sushila Bhandari, an activist who lives in a settlement near the L&T project site, is already visible. The forests atop the hill through which the tunnel passes are drying up. Regions in Uttarakhand that were naturally watered by the

course of the river have run dry and there are perennial water shortages.

Ever since the Uttarakhand floods, there's been growing disquiet – even in the government – about hydropower projects. Several committees over the years have said that the Uttarakhand floods exposed weaknesses in the design and the folly of not accounting for the environmental impact of the construction.

More recently, with the sharp decline in cost of solar power, hydropower projects face even more disfavour. "We will not allow any new hydropower projects in Uttarakhand," Gadkari had stated when announcing the government order on minimum flows in the Ganga.

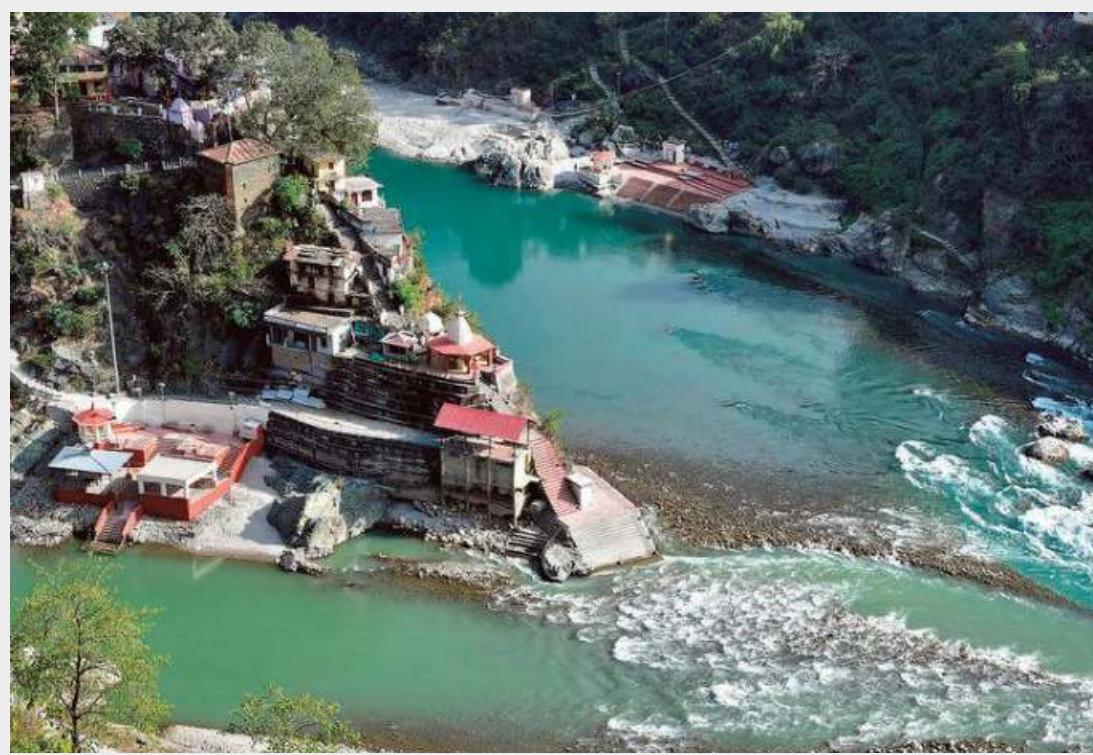
#### Techno babble

National Mission for a Clean Ganga (NMCG) is the nodal Central government authority that has been tasked with cleaning the river. Based in Delhi, it has at its disposal ₹20,000 crore to put in place a slew of measures to clean the river's most polluted stretches – installing and improving drainage networks and sewage treatment plants, building better facilities to create bodies, restoring the forest ecosystem and so on.

Being a body of technocrats, its efforts are managerial and focussed on funding and putting in place mechanisms to ensure that States coordinate in executing the cleaning projects. In the last four years, it has spent about ₹6,000 crore but, say environmentalists, it has become more of an administrator of municipal works rather than a body that holistically addresses the pollution issue.

Officials at NMCG say that demands to shut down all power projects and take away the management of the Ganga from the government are untenable because it violates principles of secularism and would, in its own way, invite public wrath.

Says a senior NMCG official: "Imagine if all hydropower projects were shut down... people would complain about electricity and economic hardships. Many demands – such as putting ecological principles at the heart of cleaning the Ganga – are genuine, but these can only be solved gradually and not through hunger strikes."



# And quiet flows the Ganga

Continued from page 1

This, believers swear and scientists confirm, gives it anti-bacterial characteristics. Several research papers, and a 2015 report by the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, attest to the presence of 'phages', organisms that feed on bacteria, keeping the river clean and conducive to sustaining a spectrum of life forms – fish, turtles and dolphin.

But several dams built over the decades, first on the Bhagirathi and now increasingly on the Alaknanda, obstruct the flow of water. This accelerates siltation, chokes the oxygen supply in the recesses of the river, and eventually harms aquatic life.

There is a ripple effect. The water loses its momentum lower down the course when the river extends beyond Haridwar, and from there it cannot deal with the immense volumes of sewage and industrial effluents released in Kanpur, Unnao and Allah-

bad. It leads to staggering levels of pollution, which extends all the way into Bihar and West Bengal.

**Power or river**

Therefore, say activists, environmentalists and hermits, the hydropower projects in the Bhagirathi and Alaknanda must be done away with. Hydropower is the main source of power in hilly Uttarakhand. There are 99 existing hydropower projects and 241 either under construction or in the planning stage by the government and private companies. These power projects are expected to generate about 27,000 MW of power, the vast majority of them from dams and barrages on the Alaknanda.

One of them is the 330 MW project in Srinagar in Uttarakhand. Nearly a decade in the making, the dam is a 'run of the river' project: meaning it doesn't entirely obstruct the course of the river but rather re-routes it to ensure that it gains enough momentum



FIELD NOTES

## Some purple tea perhaps?

Donyi Polo Tea Estate, located in a remote village in Arunachal Pradesh, has been smashing auction records with its Golden Needle and Purple teas

BY RANJU DODUM

The process is relatively simple for such an exotic tea: Bring the water to boil, pour the boiling water into a cup containing some tea leaves, wait for around two minutes before pouring it into another cup. Transferring the water from pot to cup to second cup reduces its temperature by some 25°C, and therein lies the trick that will bring out just the right flavour of Oolong.

This is what Manoj Kumar, senior manager of Arunachal Pradesh's Donyi Polo Tea Estate, told us. He should know: Donyi Polo produces six varieties of 'speciality teas' (of which Oolong is one) and was in the news last year when its Golden Needles tea sold for a whopping ₹40,000 a kilo, making it the most expensive tea sold at any auction in India till date.

## Made with care

Located in the hamlet of Oyan in East Siang district, Donyi Polo has been producing tea since the 80s, but has become famous lately because Golden Needles sold for a fortune at the Gauhati

Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) in Assam. And soon after, 1.2 kilos of its Purple Tea auctioned last October for ₹24,501 per kilo.

Kumar, who joined the estate as assistant manager in 1995, says that a speciality tea is "made with care," reaching its full potential only when "everything, including weather conditions, align". Which means that these teas – Oolong, Yellow, White, Silver Needles, Golden Needles, and Purple – cannot be produced throughout the year. Golden Needles requires dry and sunny weather, typical of higher altitudes, to grow. Donyi Polo, located in the foothills, does not enjoy that weather throughout the year, Kumar points out.

## Rare brew

In his bungalow on the estate grounds on a sun-dazzled morning, Kumar sounds like a museum curator talking about a prized painting when he says that while golden-tipped tea is grown and sold elsewhere in the country, the Donyi Polo estate is the only one that produces tea made from the distinctive needle-shaped, golden tea buds. The difference is fine but significant – the



variety grown in some other estates consists of buds with golden tips, but in Donyi Polo, the entire bud is golden.

"Outside China, Golden Needles is grown only here," Kumar says, adding that recent developments in the tea sector are encouraging tea-plantation owners in the Northeast, who are slowly growing in number now, especially in Arunachal Pradesh.

Assam tea is known worldwide but tea in Arunachal Pradesh is relatively

new, still considered a non-traditional growing area. In the past few years, the local market has been flooded with home-grown tea. The State's potential in terms of climate and its numerous Himalayan-fed rivers and streams is only just being tapped.

Many Arunachal Pradesh teas are marketed as organic. The importance of the organic tag is not lost on Donyi Polo, where efforts are underway to turn the entire estate organic. Around 100 hect-

**One of a kind** (Clockwise from left) Organic tea brewed at Donyi Polo; Manoj Kumar trying out samples in the tea testing room; workers sifting tea leaves. RITU RAJ KONWAR



tares of the 421.94 hectare gardens already have that distinction.

It is believed that Purple Tea originated in the Northeast, but was never widely cultivated. This strand of tea has been grown in Kenya for the past few years. Kumar thinks that the British took saplings from the Northeast for cultivation in Africa. "Negligence led to its discontinuation," Kumar says. The discovery of Purple Tea in Donyi Polo was accidental.

## Chance discovery

In 2014, while exploring the grounds, the estate's team chanced upon some leaves growing 'wild' – they turned out to be Purple Tea. Soon after, 500 plants were cultivated and around 6 kilos of tea produced by Donyi Polo.

After tasting and testing of the anthocyanin-rich antioxidant tea, it was auctioned at GTAC. The leaves, which produce an exotic purple-coloured tea, are said to be good for fighting cancer, building immunity, and helping with heart conditions.

The Donyi Polo batch will be presented to Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Vibrant Gujarat summit starting in Ahmedabad on January 18.

There are plans to expand the pro-

duction of Purple Tea but the attention to detail required to bring out to the correct flavour means that it is an uphill task. The tea sector is labour-intensive: Kumar says that even the high prices that Donyi Polo teas are fetching at auctions are still lower than what they deserve. Only the best quality of buds and leaves can go into the making of specialty teas. For Golden Needles, plucking just 100 grams of buds fit for sale can take around eight hours.

About 15 kilos of Purple Tea can be plucked at one time. In contrast, 25 kilos of any non-speciality tea such as CTC can be plucked during an eight-hour shift. Also, Golden Needles requires special treatment – only its buds are to be plucked, then hand-rolled to give them the needle-like shape. All this means that for specialty teas, the plantation cost alone can be ₹3-3.5 lakh per hectare.

The day I visit is a Sunday, and the estate is eerily quiet. Workers laze around, go cycling, some play football. Kumar tells me that specialty tea may have brought the spotlight on Donyi Polo, but it is the humble *kadak doodh chai* (the distinction is important in the Northeast where the preferred *chai* is without milk) that is still an integral part of life in the estate – for workers and managers alike.

After having been in the estate for almost 25 years and overseen some of the rarest of teas, Kumar still needs that one cup of *doodh chai* in the morning to keep him going through long days of inspections and tasting sessions.

The writer is an Itanagar-based journalist and blogger writing about the Northeast.

## FOCUS

## Edited by Manto

A rich trove of Urdu cinema magazines has been lost simply for want of patronage

BY YASIR ABBASI

Three years ago, when I decided to look for old Urdu film magazines to trace memoirs that I intended to translate into English, I had no clue what lay in store. Having seen them all through childhood, I was perplexed that no one seemed to know about them any more.

As it turned out, no one knew because these publications were nowhere to be found. In a very unfortunate turn of events, which directly reflects the marginalisation of Urdu in the country, almost the entire bunch of Urdu film journals has all but vanished. Popular within the country and beyond for a considerable period – some seven decades – what survive now are some sporadic fragments. Urdu film magazines were largely not archived institutionally and it is a monumental loss.

## Hazy origins

A relentless pursuit of two years did yield some results and from whatever little I could retrieve, it comes across as a heritage that should certainly have been conserved. The remarkably high quality of the content, including the priceless images, gives a clear indication that the pages contained valuable records that documented the evolution of Hindi cinema through the ages.

In the absence of any definitive study on the subject, the exact origins of Urdu film journalism are hazy. Available sources point to *Cinema*, published from Lahore in 1925 and edited by R.L. Seth and S.A. Rasheed, as the first Urdu magazine dedicated exclusively to films.

The 30s saw an abundance of Urdu film publications originating from all parts of the country. *Film Art* (Delhi), *Shabistaan* (La-



**Meena, maut mubarak ho! [Meena, congratulations on your death!]**

Nargis on Meena Kumari



**I was shooting for Aar Paar, an arrow went aar paar [across] my heart, and I began to wriggle like amurgh-e-bismil [slaughtered chicken]**

Johnny Walker



**As my professional image started taking a toll on my personal life, the conflict exacerbated. It was a very painful phase**

Dilip Kumar

hore) and *Film Stage* (Kolkata) were among the many visible ones in the fray. Then there was *Musavir* (Mumbai), guided to prominence by its editor Sa'adat Hasan Manto.

**The milestone mag**  
In his essay 'Urdu Sahaafat Aur Film' (*Aaj Kal*, November–December 1983), poet Manmohan Takhni recounts an interesting anecdote narrated by publicist-turned-film columnist K. Razdan: "I worked as a publicist for Guru Dutt Films. One day I was reading *Chitra* in my office when Guru Dutt walked into the room. He pointed to the magazine and asked, 'Do you have a complete collection of this?' When I told him that I didn't, he was very surprised, 'But why not? Each Tuesday I see it with every producer. Such an important paper! Make a file of this.'

Guru Dutt was talking about *Chitra*, an Urdu film magazine that began from Lahore in 1934 and gained wild fame in no time. Lahore had a thriving film industry in those days and the likes of Dalsukh Pancholi, A.R. Kardar and Roop K. Shourie were shaping the course of Indian cinema. Urdu was the dominant language of the region and the city quickly became a springboard for the launch of a host of film publications such as *Shabistaan*, *Filmkaar*, *Tasveer*, *Star* and, of course, *Chitra*.

However, it was Delhi that went on to produce the major film magazines in the later years, including the one that is unani-

mously acknowledged as a milestone. Yusuf Dehlvi launched *Shama* in 1939 and the monthly went on to rule the roost for the next six decades. Urdu film magazines had developed a unique structure that combined film and literary writing and this format reached the zenith of popularity with *Shama*.

Aarzoo

Lakhnavi

Firaq Gorakhpuri

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Chughtai

Krishan

Chander

and

many

others

– a list of its frequent contributors reads like a roll call of modern greats. Enjoying a virtually unchallenged stay at the top for its entire course of existence, *Shama* was a household name and much in demand among Urdu readers around the globe.

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## 4 ART &amp; CULTURE

## SPOTLIGHT

# The language of undoing

The 9th edition of the Asia Pacific Triennial in Brisbane continues its long relationship with Indian artists



BY BANSIE VASVANI

**S**ince its inception in 1993, the Asia Pacific Triennial (APT) held in Brisbane, Australia, has been a venue for collective identity and enabled artists from Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific regions to develop dialogically. Artists have pushed boundaries to challenge the status quo both externally and within the context of their own communities to constantly redefine what it means to be from a specific culture. In the 9th edition of the APT, on at the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) and Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) until April, artists chosen from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh subvert conventions and advance the limits of their own chosen forms.

**In between**

Take Mithu Sen's project 'UnMYthU: UN-KINDS' Alternatives,' 2018. Displayed in light boxes, Sen's five large-scale drawings on handmade Kozo paper resemble strange palimpsests. Images of skeletons, wings, bird's talons, a withered tree, refugees on a boat, futuristic gizmos, and an emaciated person bowed in prayer fill the drawings like coded symbols.

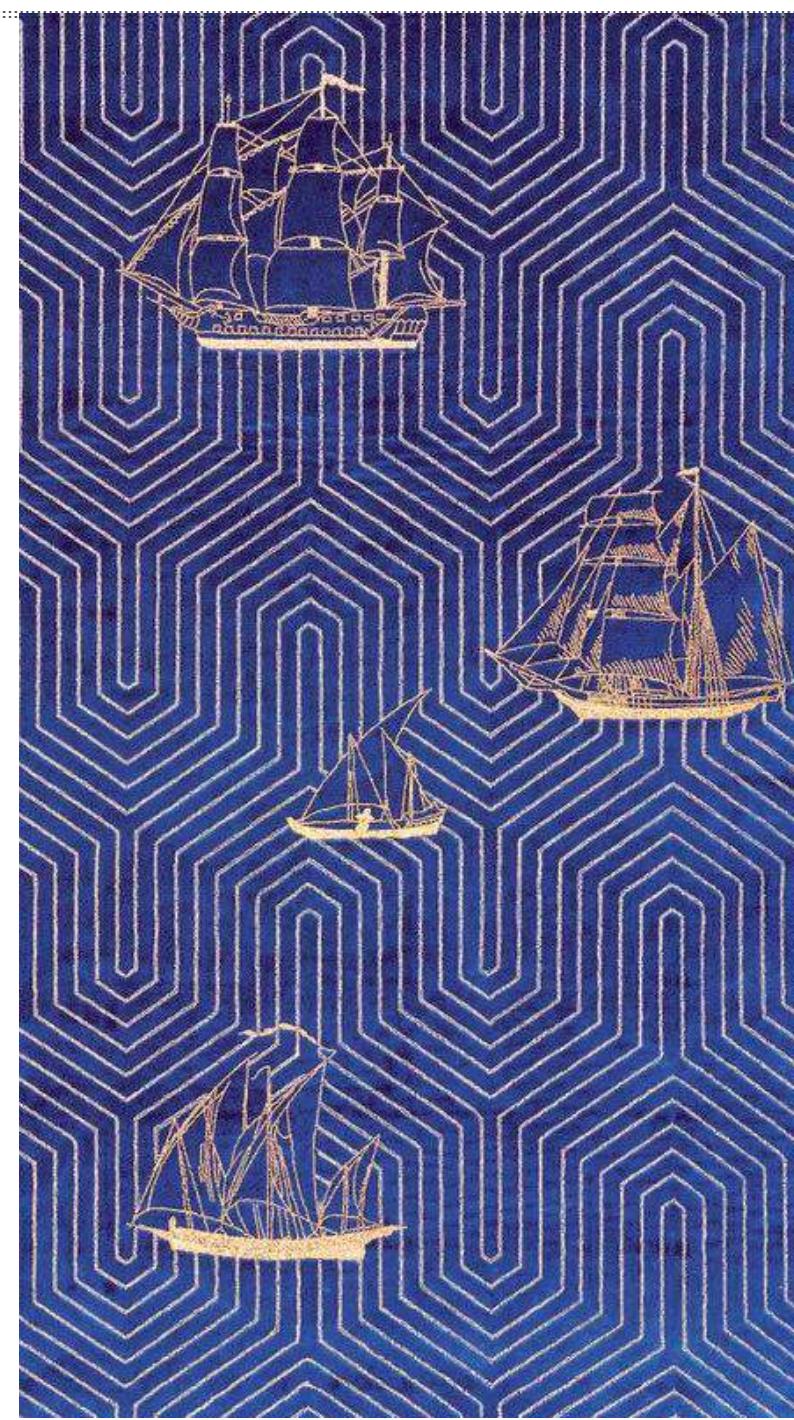
Red arrows point to words written around the painting like #xenophobic, #Dick-Tator, #re(ligionist, #unhuman-rights, #unlanguijst, or #unhome. Seen together, Sen's spare imagery, suggesting the depletion of life and return to the elements, combined with her vo-

vulary implying extreme political circumstances, set the stage for the audience to reexamine current global conditions.

Sen devices a new lingua franca of undoing in her art with an emphasis on rethinking and upending existing structures. This idea is demonstrated in her humorous but deeply pertinent performance at the APT. Accompanied by Alexa, Amazon's smart-home speaker, Sen's subversive act – comprising her stream of gibberish interspersed with Alexa's non-response to questions about whether she loves the artist and formal set responses when asked to explain meanings of words from the drawings – explores the shortcomings of language as a tool of expression.

The artist's pointed use of mumbo-jumbo and Alexa's inability to share feelings outside entrenched channels of communication further test the limits of language and the liminal spaces between communal interchange. By dislocating and discomforting her audience, Sen's quirky performance creates a space to reconsider existing precepts and hegemonies of world politics.

Discussing her practice in a previous interview, Sen had said, "I'm trying to undo myself." This intention is best explained by the description in the exhibition catalogue that states that she uses the prefix "Un," to "explore the voids and anomalies of the in-between." Sen's efforts to pave the way for what she describes as "lingual anarchy, counter capitalism, untaboo sexuality and un-



**C** Sen's subversive act, comprising her stream of gibberish interspersed with Alexa's non-responses, explores the shortcomings of language

monolith identity," propose a new world order of inverted hierarchies.

**Crucible for voices**

The notion of globalism also permeates Shilpa Gupta's immersive installation 'For, In Your Tongue, I Can Not Fit,' 2017-2018. Gupta brings alive the voices of 100 dissident poets, from the 8th century through the present, who were incarcerated for their views – 100 microphones are hung above 100 metal spikes, each piercing a page imprinted with portions of dissenting poetry.

The microphones, normally associated with the delivery of speeches by politicians, are transformed into cathartic instruments as they broadcast the poems in many languages including English, Hindi, Russian, Spanish, Azeri, and Arabic. Heard together, the voices

form a choral hum, and the dimly lit room becomes a crucible for suppressed voices the world over.

On encountering Mochu's psychedelic video 'Cool Memories of Remote Gods,' 2017, one's perception of reality is undermined by his mindboggling topsy-turvy world. In retracing the hippie countercultural trail from the 1960s in North India, Mochu reexamines Western conceptions of Eastern cultures. Bright psychedelic posters, cheap knockoffs of surreal paintings, and techno-fusion music highlight the degenerate remains of the once spiritual path to tranquillity. Inverted images such as lava rippling in the sky reverse prescribed notions of actuality such that it pushes us to investigate how we formulate our own ideas of verisimilitude.

Visual bewilderment is also at play in



**Inverting hierachies** (Clockwise from left) Mochu's 'Cool Memories of Remote Gods'; Aisha Khalid's 'Water Has Never Feared the Fire'; Shilpa Gupta's 'For, In Your Tongue, I Can Not Fit'; Khalid at work: 'Your Way Begins on the Other Side'. QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY | GALLERY OF MODERN ART

the superb ink and graphite drawings by Waqas Khan and Ayesha Sultana from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In 'The Absence of Paths,' 2017, Khan's large web-like structure made up of countless tiny marks resemble rows of intricately woven silken threads that unfold into a deeply meditative diaphanous form. Khan finds inspiration in the geometric structure of Islamic art. The apparent simplicity of shapes like the 'Inflections of Choral Red,' 2018, belie Khan's meticulous, repetitive, minimalist technique.

**Immaculate proficiency**

Minimalism's impact can be detected in Sultana's spare dynamic graphite configurations, which approximate sheets of dark corrugated metal. In works like 'Vortex,' 2018, her repetitive process of cutting and folding paper layered with graphite creates beautiful compositions in abstract geometric shapes. Sultana's three-dimensional forms evoke the tinned shelters that dot her native Dhaka.

Immaculate proficiency also marks Aisha Khalid's monumental textile carpet 'Water Has Never Feared the Fire,' 2018. Thousands of gold pins imitating the effect of gold embroidery threads create a rich tapestry of Mughal gardens and water channels from Pakistani lore. Much like the works of Khan and Sultana, Kha-

lid's ingenious technique dupes us into mistaking one material for another.

Magical transformation occurs as these artists employ optical sleights of hand that not only create enthralling visual experiences but also contain wide-ranging ideas.

The harmony and transcendence in the works inspired by Islamic art may seem to be in contrast to the works of Sen, Gupta or Mochu, where ideologies of power are challenged by aesthetics, but there is unity in their apparent difference. In the works of the latter, the mood is dark but also hopeful, as the artists look inwards towards the formation of the self and outwards to the individual's place in turbulent times.

This approach of the artists from the subcontinent is best exemplified by Munem Wasif's ethereal film *Kheyal*, 2015-18. Four ordinary citizens residing in the confined narrow alleys of Old Dhaka long for change. The magical intensity of life drives them on and they dare to hope even in difficult times.

**ON SHOW:** The 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art at GOMA & QAG, Brisbane, till April 28.

The New York-based writer reviews exhibitions based on Asia, Africa, and West Asia.

## SCANNER

## Zena Colaco's exhibition



A three-day solo art exhibition by Mangaluru-based artist Zena Colaco is being held at Preedvi Art Gallery in Bejai till January 13. There are panel drawings as well as standalone paintings. Colaco's previous exhibitions had created a buzz not only because of the quality of the paintings but also because of the odds she has overcome as a hearing-and-speech impaired person to become an artist.

## Sylvia Pankhurst at Tate



Four watercolours of working women by Sylvia Pankhurst have been acquired by Tate. The paintings depict women working in the cotton mills of Glasgow and the potteries of Staffordshire: they make up a series that Pankhurst painted as she toured the industrial areas in 1907. Tate plans to put them on display at Tate Britain in 2020.

## 'Starry Nights' in LED



Serbian artists Ivana Jelić and Pavle Petrović have recreated Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' as an LED installation over the canals of Amsterdam, to highlight the issue of light pollution in urban areas. A series of 1,400 acrylic rods illuminated by small LED lights have been used to create the effect of Van Gogh's brushstrokes. (Image by Janus van den Eijnden)



**AKASH KHURANA** is a theatre producer and director and hence often broke. To cope, he writes and directs films and web series and occasionally acts, albeit reluctantly

I begin 2019 with the same paragraph I ended 2017 with. Over the last few years it has become something of a tradition for me to conduct an informal year-end poll with regards to what plays people really liked in the year gone by. It started as a wide sample and slowly became a moderately sized sample of people from the theatre itself, because they tend to be the hardest to please. So, if they're vouching for something, it must be worth its salt.

The votes from 2018 came in, and the following are the results.

**Sounds authentic**

In my last year-ender, I had said that 2017 was the Year of the Woman. So it seems only fitting that the play leading the 2018 list (by neck and shoulders) has an all-woman cast and crew (yes, lights, sound, backstage, everything). The only man is the producer: me. Perhaps the results of last year inspired me to produce an all-woman play, and early in 2018, *Dekh Behen* was born.

Written by Dilshad Edibam and Tahira Nath, directed by Prerna Chawla and Shikha Talsania, the show has done 43 shows, 4 cities, 10 months, with 40 shows sold out in advance.

It remains one of our biggest hits of recent times, and shows no signs of slowing down. The play is set in one room, during a wedding *sangeet*, where five bridesmaids hang out and speak about everything under the sun, but mostly about their common dislike for the bride. I can be objective and say that, for a change, urban Indian women have been written about authentically and sound like real urban Indian women. This has clearly resonated with audiences.

Leading last year was Motley's *The Father*, featuring Naseeruddin Shah in the title role. It slipped this year to the second spot. Meanwhile D for Drama's *Dhumrapaan*, which held second place last year, slipped to third place, where it tied with another Motley production featuring Naseeruddin

## STAGE WHISPERS

## The year of the out-of-the-box

12 plays made the top 10 in 2018, proving that the theatre-going audience is all for varied content



**It's different** (From left) A scene from *Dekh Behen*; Jyoti Dogra in *Notes on Chai*; at the rehearsals for *Sing India Sing*. VIBHAV BIRWATKAR & A.M. FARUQUI

Shah – *The Truth* by Florian Zeller (the same playwright as *The Father*) – who co-directed the play with Ratna Pathak Shah.

Again, Motley did month-long runs of this play and played to packed houses. Radically different from *The Father*, which is a serious drama about mental illness, *The Truth* is actually a comedy about adultery. It was apparently a conscious choice to go with something significantly less intense, and audiences lapped it up.

*Dhumrapaan*, a dark comedy set in the corporate world, won the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Award for the Best Original Script in 2018, and has been chugging along nicely since, having now performed over 50 shows across seven cities. I believe that publication of the script and a Marathi adaptation are in the works.

Tied at No. 5

Tied in fifth place are two plays that really are at opposite ends of the spectrum. One is a one-woman, devised piece of theatre, while the other is a mammoth musical, full of razzmatazz

and technical wizardry. Jyoti Dogra's *Notes on Chai* is an experimental piece that juxtaposes everyday banal conversations centered on tea with sounds inspired from the chanting techniques of Tibetan monks and Western overtone singing techniques. It is a unique experience, but one which has left everyone who watches it greatly impressed with the concept and the physicality.

Sharing a spot with it is *Sing India Sing*, a massive production touted as India's first original musical. The brainchild of Bugs Bhargava Krishna and Rahul DaCunha, with music by Clinton Cerejo, the project was in the works for a while, finally opening with a bang, expertly directed by Nadir Khan.

Set inside a reality show, the play navigates through rivalry and politics and the contestants' backstories, stitched together by some spectacular singing, and ending with the audience voting live. I doubt there could be a more contrasting tie anywhere ever.

So those were the top six. I usually mention the next five as well, but

there's six there too, owing to more ties. From last year's line-up, Patchwork Ensemble's *Ila* finally dropped off the list after a couple of years, but its choreographer Amey Mehta went on to direct his first play, *One Night Only*, which made it into the next five of this list.

**Sing Sing**

Broadly it qualifies as a dance drama but it's actually a comedy which has dance, and deals with the transgender community and its fascinating connection with the *Mahabharata*.

Last year, Aadyam plays didn't quite make it to the list, but this time two have managed to climb in.

*Sing India Sing* made the top five, and Atul Kumar's *Detective Nau Do*

**C** *The play is set in one room, during a wedding sangeet, where five bridesmaids hang out*

Gyaarah made the next five. A comic thriller in the vein of the famous international production of Alfred Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*, this won over audiences with its energetic ensemble and ingenious craft.

Motley clearly had a fantastic year, because their production of *Aurat Aurat*, based on selections from Ismat Chughtai's autobiography, got enough votes to get them into this list thrice. Faezeh Jalali's *Shikhandi* slipped off the list, but her new play, *A Farming Story*, just about made it. And rounding the list off is another tie – *Gaa Re Maa* (produced by Ishita Arun, directed by Anahita Uberoi) with the Disney spectacle *Aladdin*.

Do catch these shows if they're happening around you and see if they deserve the love they got here. I really should sign off now. I have a feeling I have crossed my word limit, but I'm pushing my luck.

After all, 12 plays made the top 10, audiences flocked back to the theatre, and accepted very varied content. (And, ahem, I produced the play that got the maximum votes!)

CM YK

ND-X



BY NAMRATA JOSHI

A singular aspect of Kaifi Azmi, the doyen of Urdu poetry, was his indifference towards material things. "He was born in a zamindar family in Mijwan, Azamgarh, but considered himself a *kisan* (farmer)," recalls Shabana Azmi, his actor daughter, with a fond smile. "The only things he valued were his Communist party card and a collection of Montblanc fountain pens. He would take them out every now and then, clean them, look at them lovingly and even send them for maintenance and repair to a fountain pen hospital in New York."

Such was his "greed" for them that once, when Shabana's friend gifted her a pen, Kaifi happily pinched it and wrote her friend a beautiful letter explaining why the pen was in much better custody with him.

Only fitting then that a pen festival, conceptualised by fountain pen collector and Kaifi admirer, Vishal Singh, is among the various events lined up to celebrate the poet's birth centenary this year. "A hundred pens will be brought out in Kaifi's name," says Shabana of the festival which will be held in Mumbai's Nehru Centre next month.

**Tribute show**

The festivities kick off today with an evening of music and poetry, Raag Shayari, at NCPA. Conceived by Javed Akhtar, the programme will have Shankar Mahadevan singing Kaifi's work, Zakir Hussain interpreting it on the tabla, Akhtar reciting the poems, and Shabana reading the English translations. Theatre director and writer Feroz Abbas Khan directs the show while architect, filmmaker and founder of Mumbai's GS Foundation for Contemporary Culture, Anuradha Parikh, is the production designer.

Other events that are part of the year-long celebration, to be held across India, Pakistan, the U.S. and the U.K., are a documentary film, *Kaifinaama*; Shabana and Akhtar's play, *Kaifi Aur Mein*; mushairas, retrospec-

**BIG SCREEN**

# Remembering Kaifi saab

Shabana Azmi talks about the great Urdu poet-lyricist and the plans for his centenary this year



**From the album** (Clockwise from above) The Azmi family; father and daughter; Kaifi Azmi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tives and seminars; and a 300-seater auditorium to be inaugurated at Kaifi Azmi Kala Kendra in Lucknow.

It's difficult to contain the multifaceted man under one label. Kaifi was also a lyricist, an activist, and a member of the Progressive Writers' Movement. As a screenwriter, Kaifi had the unique distinction of penning Chetan Anand's *Heer Ranjha* (1970) entirely in verse. He also wrote the script, dialogue and lyrics of M.S. Sathyu's *Garm Hava* (1973), and played the key role of the ailing patriarch in Saeed Akhtar Mirza's *Naseem* (1995). The latter two are among the most significant explorations of the Muslim psyche in Indian cinema.

Kaifi was also a catalyst for change, and he went about it without much fuss or fanfare. He believed that if the country had to make real progress, it needed to turn towards its villages where 70% of the population lives.

In 1993, he set up Mijwan Welfare Society for the girl child and women in rural India,

**C** *The first time they met, Shaikat was fascinated with Kaifi's looks, his voice and the poem, 'Aurat', he recited*

and made education and skill training its fulcrum.

My meeting with Shabana becomes a nostalgic, languid recollection of several such memories of Kaifi, and of the times, the culture of those days, and of the artists who believed that art should be used as a tool for social change without getting propagandist.

**Like movie stars**

Then there are personal memories. His love for arhar dal, gosht (meat) and bathua; how he liked Shabana's voice and would have wanted her to become a singer; attending mushairas as a child, with him and her brother, cinematographer Baba Azmi. "We would go to sleep behind those bolsters at the mushairas," Shabana recalls. "The popular poets were kept for the end, so his [Kaifi's] turn never came before 2 a.m."

She recalls how poets like Kaifi, Jan Nissar Akhtar, Sahir Ludhianvi, Majrooh Sultanpuri and Ali Sardar Jafri were revered like film stars. Her mother, Shaikat, saw Kaifi for the first time at a mushairas in Hyderabad in 1947. She was fascinated with his looks, his voice and the beautiful poem 'Aurat' that he recited. "In those days, when it was considered a woman's lot to stay at home and raise children, and for the man to go out and struggle, Kaifi wrote 'Rise my love, you have to march shoulder to shoulder with me.'". After the mushairas got over, college girls surrounded him like flies. Shaikat looked at Kaifi and then mischievously turned towards Sardar Jafri for his autograph. When she eventually went to Kaifi, he returned the favour by writing some gibberish in her book instead of the expected *sher*. And thus a love story was born.

The Azmi home was a tiny cottage in Juhu's Janki Kutir, where poets like Josh Malihabadi, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Firaq Gorakhpuri and singer Begum Akhtar were frequent house guests. Later, Guru Dutt, S.D. Burman and Chetan Anand would visit often. The family celebrated all festivals. "The Kaifi centenary is a way of reminding ourselves of those people and those times. How important it is to reclaim it," Shabana says.

Kaifi had once told his son in passing that it would be nice if a film were made in his birthplace, Mijwan. This week, Baba begins shooting *Mee Ragsam (I Want To Dance)*, the story of a father and daughter, in the U.P. village. It stars Aditi Sharma, a 14-year-old Mijwan resident, in the lead and is expected to be ready for release by the year end, in a fitting finale to the Kaifi year.

**ART & CULTURE 5****ONE MOMENT PLEASE**

## That Setsuko smile

A hard-edged view of life, cushioned by grace and compassion



**JAI ARJUN SINGH**  
is a Delhi-based writer and film critic who finds it easier to concentrate on specific scenes than entire films as he grows older

I sn't life disappointing? 'Yes, it is.'

Merely set down on paper, this exchange can be interpreted in different ways. It could be a shallow, posturing, schoolboy-level show of 'cynicism'. It might be a sincere but reductive expression of feeling. Or it could be hard-earned wisdom about the incurable ugliness of the world, gained from looking long and deep into the abyss.

How do you respond, though, when this exchange plays out on screen in a gentle film, made by the gentlest of filmmakers – where the cutting line 'Yes it is' is accompanied by one of the kindest, most luminous smiles you'll see? One that carries within it an ocean of knowingness, but also manages somehow to not be smug or patronising.

Such is the effect of this unforgettable moment near the end of Yasujiro Ozu's 1952 classic *Tokyo Story*, where a young woman named Kyoko asks her sister-in-law Noriko the question – and the latter, played by the great Setsuko Hara, replies in a tone that suggests she is exchanging pleasantries with a neighbour (and with an enigmatic smile that could make Mona Lisa envious). Over the course of the film, we have seen Noriko's ageing parents-in-law being neglected by their too-busy children. The widowed Noriko is the most sympathetic member of the younger generation. But here she is now, admitting that she too might one day "become like that, in spite of myself."

**'Goodbye, then'**

And as if that weren't enough, the next line is Kyoko's conversation-ending response: "Well, I must get going." Followed by Noriko's "Goodbye, then." Again, viewed out of context, this seems to add a touch of absurdist comedy to the scene – something you may expect to find in a caustic satire by Luis Buñuel. But it is very much Ozu, clear-sighted about the unpalatable aspects of the human condition, yet also warm, accepting and willing to find solace in little acts of kindness that people direct at each other.



**Human condition** Noriko (Setsuko Hara, right) and Kyoko (Kyoko Kagawa) in *Tokyo Story* by Yasujiro Ozu.

When I watch this scene, a few other associations come to mind. Some film buffs think of *Tokyo Story* as the original cinematic representation of what would become a familiar trope about old parents and apathetic (or 'ungrateful') children; in India, we have had the 1958 *School Master*, the 1983 *Avtaar* and the 2003 *Baghban*, among others. But *Tokyo Story* itself was influenced by an older film, which is every bit as devastating: Leo McCarey's 1937 *Make Way for Tomorrow*, one of the most unusual Hollywood productions of its decade.

**Great canyon**

Among the many extraordinary things in this film (which opens with the title card 'There is no magic that will draw together in perfect understanding the aged and the young. There is a canyon between us') is a final act where the old couple at the centre of the story, Lucy and Barkley, step out on their own in the big city and briefly reclaim their lives before a final painful parting. This sequence, which includes a startling, Fourth Wall-breaking moment where Lucy looks back over her shoulder, straight at us, is a heart-breaking portrayal of vulnerability as well as a defiant smile in the face of a cruel world.

Watching these films, I also think of Philip Larkin's poem about "man handing on misery to man" (*Get out as early as you can/ and don't have any kids yourself*) and an echo of those wry lines in the writings of the anti-natalist philosopher David Benatar. Benatar advocates not having children, not because they might grow up and mistreat you, but because, in his view, life itself is a bad idea. This isn't cynicism for the sake of it: regardless of whether you agree with him, the publicity-shy Benatar is eloquent and serious-minded in his view that life, on balance, is guaranteed to cause more suffering than happiness (also, as he points out, the worst pain will always be more long-lasting and impactful than the greatest pleasure).

A comparable view simmers below the surface of films like *Tokyo Story* and *Make Way for Tomorrow*, but it's unlikely that the filmmakers themselves would put it in quite those terms (even as they tell stories about heartbreak and emotional betrayal in the parent-child relationship). To watch these films is to see how, in the hands of a humanist director, moments of grace can provide a counterpoint to a bleak larger picture. Noriko looks the camera in the eye, nods and affirms that life is disappointing. But at the very same time, the shot is reminding us that there are things which make life somewhat tolerable. Like a Setsuko Hara smile in an Ozu film.

**DOCU DRAMA**

# Screening resistance

The film festival that's trying to change the very idea of cinema

BY KALYANI S.

**A**s the credits started rolling after the première of *The Mountains Agonized* (*Ho Gayi Hai Pir Parvat Si*), an audience member sitting at the back of the dark room shouted, "Kisan mukti zindabad!"

Even as everyone in the room repeated the rallying cry of the farmers' struggle, a woman in the front raised a slogan for unity in the struggles of farmers, workers and women: "Kisan, majdoor, mahila ekta zindabad!"

As the room resounded with loud chants, the filmmaker, Subrat Kumar Sahu, stood up to applause that did not die down for the next few minutes.

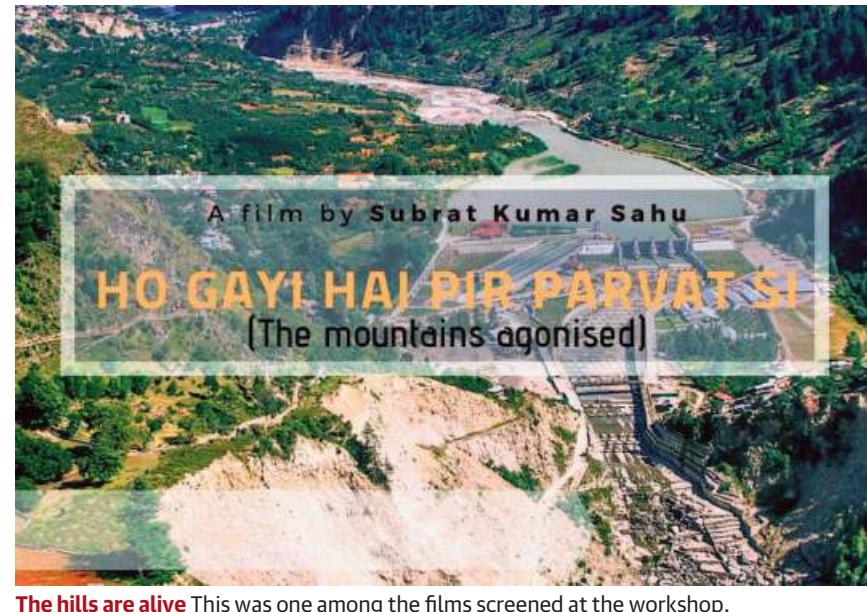
The film that took Sahu and team over eight years to complete depicts how farming communities of Himachal Pradesh have been impacted by the State's hydro-power projects along the Sutlej.

"We are pahaadis (people of the mountains). If you take away our mountains, what will remain of our being," asks one of the many villagers whose testimonies the director has documented.

**Non-mainstream**

*The Mountains...* was one among the films showcased at the Cinema of Resistance Documentary Workshop/ Film Festival held last month at Sambavaanaa Institute of Public Policy and Politics in Kandbari village, Himachal Pradesh.

With over 35 participants, including social activists, film enthusiasts and students, from across the country, the three-day workshop showcased documentaries on the marginalised sections and various people's movements.



**The hills are alive** This was one among the films screened at the workshop.

**C** *We are pahaadis (people of the mountains). If you take away our mountains, what will remain of our being*

way a film was screened was as important as its content.

*Gadi Lohardaga Mail* (2006), screened on the first day, documents the attachment the locals have to a passenger train, the Lohardaga Mail, whose services were stopped soon after the film was shot.

The Ranchi filmmakers, Biju Toppo and

Meghnath, document the significance of the train in the lives of the villagers. Here, the camera does not impose itself on the people; the adivasis are portrayed with respect, and not in flashes, says Joshi. "This is what happens when you take the camera away from the establishment."

**Wing and a prayer**

Two feature films – Ektara Collective's *Turup* (Checkmate) and Iranian filmmaker Marzieh Meshkini's *The Day I Became a Woman* – were also part of the line-up at the workshop. Also screened was the trailer of *Lynch Nation*, a film by Furqan Faridi, Ashfaque E.J., Shaheen Ahmed and Vishu Sejwal, documenting cases of mob violence in the country.

CoR works solely on members' contributions and donations from philanthropists, and has local chapters across North India. It has so far conducted film festivals in Nainital, Patna, Lucknow and Udaipur, among others.

During a screening in Barmer, Rajasthan, members of CoR had used sacks to cover windows to darken the only room available for screening in the village.

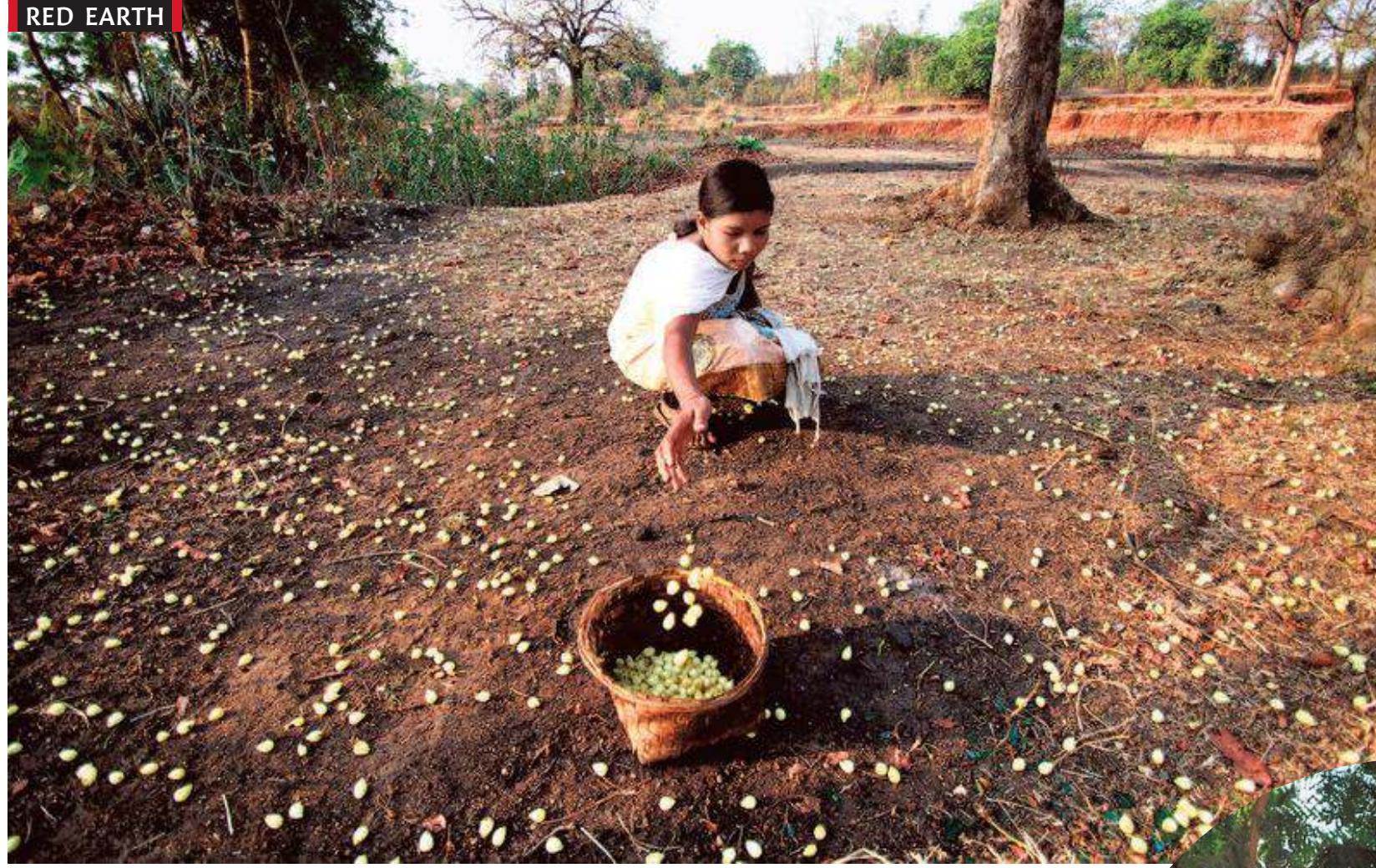
And in Bhilai, members wanted to bring the women sanitation workers from the area, mostly Dalits, for a screening of *Pee (Shit)*, 2003, a Tamil documentary directed by Amudhan R.P. In the film, the camera follows Mariammal, a Madurai municipality sanitation worker.

"The film was in Tamil and the subtitles were in English, and the women couldn't understand a word," recalls Joshi. So at the last minute, a member from CoR narrated the film in Hindi while it ran muted on screen. All 40 sanitation workers left only after watching the entire film.

**C** *Some think of Tokyo Story as the original cinematic representation of the old parents and apathetic children trope*

Like a Setsuko Hara smile in an Ozu film.

## RED EARTH



BY NEHA SINHA

**E**very summer and winter, members of the Korku tribe near Melghat, Maharashtra, don big cotton outfits covered in fine mesh and head out to the forests.

Their mission is complex: they must collect wild honey from the trees, but do so without killing the bees or destroying the hive. So they delve carefully into the hive's 'kitchen', extracting the honey without damaging the rest of the structure. "That's the only section that has honey. It is so unnecessary to break the entire hive," says Gajanan Kale, a conservationist who works with Korku tribals. This way, the bees can reuse the hive three times.

Sometimes wild resources can indeed be harvested sustainably. But sometimes, they are not. And as consumers who thrive both on *dadima's nuskha* (home remedy) and luxury ayurvedic brands, we don't know where our arjuna bark or forest honey come from, and how they are extracted.

## A wild idea

In truth, there are several aromatic, medicinal or rare biological resources used in industry, not all of which support sustainable pickings, or share profits with local communities, who are the

# Forests with benefits

A landmark judgment makes it compulsory for companies to pay local and forest communities for wild resources

true guardians of these resources. Now, a landmark judgment from the Uttarakhand High Court last month sets out to change that.

The judgment dismissed a case filed by yoga guru Baba Ramdev's Divya Pharmacy, which pleaded against sharing revenues from indigenous biological resources with local communities.

The court said Divya must pay the Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board as it uses biological resources for commercial purposes. This is crucial as several bio-

logical resources are rare, or grow only in the wild and cannot be cultivated.

Take, for instance, yarsa goomba, a fungus that grows on a caterpillar, found only in the Himalayas and used widely in Chinese medicine for its supposed aphrodisiac properties.

Or the mahua tree, which isn't rare, but its flowers – used for chutneys, pastes, and alcohol – are only collected from mature trees, many of which grow in forest land.

It is loved by both sloth bears and pe-



**C The Korku tribals delve carefully into the hive's 'kitchen', extracting honey without damaging the structure**

**Bounty** (Clockwise from left) Picking mahua flowers; bark of the Arjuna tree; and sustainably collecting wild honey. BISWARANJAN ROUT, WIKI COMMONS & G.N. RAO



ople, and plans are afoot to package and sell mahua liquor on a large scale.

How will this pan out? In Chhattisgarh, the government does buy the flower, but on a small scale. For most part, it is sold dirt cheap at *haats* (local bazaars) as seasonal produce. "On an

the indigenous communities in Uttarakhand, who reside in the high Himalayas and are mainly tribals, are the traditional 'pickers' of this biological resource. Through the ages, this knowledge is preserved and passed on to the next generation. The knowledge as to when, and in which season to find the herb, its character, the distinct qualities, the smell, the colour, are all part of this traditional knowledge. This knowledge, may not strictly qualify as an intellectual property right of these communities, but nevertheless is a 'property right', now recognised for the first time by the 2002 Act (India's Biological Diversity Act), as FEBS [Fair and Equitable Benefit Sharing]."

## Sharing access and benefits

India's Biological Diversity Act, 2002 is in line with India's international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity, which call for both the sustainable use of biological resources, and also for access and benefit sharing. The judgment indeed upholds the spirit of the Biological Diversity Act, although the modalities have not been worked out and dues remain unpaid by companies and industrial units.

"At the end of the day, the benefit-sharing system is truly sustainable, as

**Mahua, a flower loved by both sloth bears and people, is used to make an alcoholic brew**

the money will go to the Biodiversity Management Committees, who will then use it for activities that sustain the biological resource – such as maintaining a water source, creating basic facilities for drying and storing the resource, or capacity building of the collectors and growers," says Sargam Singh Rasaily, Member Secretary, Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board.

Under the biodiversity Act, benefit sharing does not cover 'normally traded commodities' such as wheat, rice and cotton. But it does cover other biological resources used commercially, and this should include Korku forest honey, especially as it is sustainably harvested.

The judgment could indeed be a positive development for the Korku tribe. "The rate for honey has been artificially brought down by middlemen who sell it to the companies. And many companies do not pay anything to the biodiversity board," says Kale. "It is only fair that large pharmaceutical companies pay up a fee that is then ploughed back to local or tribal communities."

The writer is with the Bombay Natural History Society. Views expressed are personal.



**Group action** People have to come together to forge meaningful solutions. SOUMYA SARKAR

environmental impacts of a consumption driven lifestyle.

Some experts argue that just changing our individual patterns of consumption will not save the environment. There has to be a collective mobilisation against this tide of unsustainable consumption.

## Straw in the wind

By resolving to stop using plastic straws and disposable bags, we will do little to stop their proliferation in our environment. People have to come together – within communities, and at the State and national levels – to make any action meaningful.

The waste we dump in our immediate environment is another case in point. Using tote bags, refusing to buy bottled water and shunning unnecessary packaging may help reduce your household waste and make you feel ethical and good.

But such action is inconsequential when we consider that household waste makes up less than 10% of the total waste our society generates.

Tackling the remaining 90% would mean changing the entire system of production, distribution and disposal, which can hardly be achieved through individual action alone. Working collectively for change is the only option in such a scenario.

## Hope in sight

Although the environmental situation that we have landed ourselves in is indeed dire, there is still reason for some hope that stopping runaway environmental degradation and irreversible climate change might still be possible.

In India, for instance, knowledge about the environment has entered the school curriculum. Entire generations of schoolchildren are now aware that sustainable use of our natural environment is an absolute necessity.

Many young people, in India and elsewhere, are becoming vocal against the wasteful lifestyle of their parents. And they are coming together in increasing numbers to voice their concern. These youthful protesters could be just the medicine that our environment so desperately needs.

# No plastic is good plastic

Using tote bags and shunning bottled water can make us feel ethical. But collective action is the only real solution

now well recognised that no plastic is good plastic, and that they are clogging our ecosystems and oceans to an extent that they are threatening the diversity of life on the planet.

## Two kinds of people

On the face of it, such resolutions represent an earnest desire to make ethical choices that makes for a more sustainable living. These a slew of individual choices articulated through resolutions derive from a popularly accepted maxim that there are two kinds of people, those who believe in personal responsibility – small actions leading to something great – and those who do not. This might not be entirely true.

**C Entire generations of schoolchildren are now aware that sustainable use of our natural environment is an absolute necessity**

**T**he New Year's upon us, and it's a good time to look at the resolutions of the environmentally conscious. A cursory scroll down social media sites tells me that eco-awareness and ethical choice are on a rapidly rising curve.

But there is a striking pattern: the good intentions of leading a greener life are all limited to individual action. People have, according to their particular inclinations, resolved to make lifestyle changes that are friendlier to the environment, but on an individual level. Some have said they will give up meat as there is increasing awareness, especially in the West, that raising livestock and then farming to feed the animals are responsible for dangerous levels of carbon emissions.

Others have resolved to minimise the use of plastics in their lives: it is

It appears that the popular perception on the importance of personal choice is overblown. If we were to save the environment from irreversible damage, individual and family decisions to lead a greener life may simply be not enough.

Buying green products or leading a more environmentally responsible life is a sign of our commitment to environmental values, and there's nothing wrong in that. Unfortunately, that by itself does not do enough to save our planet and could even lead to more irresponsible behaviour, consumer research has found.

People are likely to act less altruistically and are more likely to cheat and steal after purchasing green products, as opposed to conventional products, researchers have shown.

Be that as it may, it is becoming increasingly clear that individual choices are not adding up to make a difference to a system hostile to the environment. Sociologists call it the behaviour-impact gap, which suggests that individual pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours do not always reduce the

## FLASHPOINT



## Jellyfish invasion



An invasion of bluebottle jellyfish, washed up to the shore by strong winds recently, stung over 5,000 people on Queensland's Gold and Sunshine coasts. Several suffered anaphylactic shock. According to reports, 22,282 people have been treated for bluebottle stings between December 1 and January 7 in Queensland, more than three times the number compared to the same period last year. Australian Marine Stinger Advisory Service director Lisa-ann Gershwin described this event as "unusual."

## Bye, George



George, a snail that fed on tree fungus in Hawaii and the last member of the *Achatinella apexfulva* species dies at 14 on New Year's day. He was a mascot for the endangered snail species in the islands where biodiversity has been threatened by global warming and invasive species. David Sischo, the snail extinction prevention program coordinator for the Hawaii Invertebrate Program described George as a "bit of a hermit" but was visited by hundreds of school children at the lab he lived in.

## London does a Delhi



In a scenario eerily reminiscent of Delhi's apocalypses, toxic air from vehicular pollution in London has prompted authorities to install air purifiers in state-run nurseries. According to *The Guardian*, five nurseries have been selected for the purifiers in the first wave, and 20 nurseries are being audited to measure exposure. A report found that air pollution was worse inside schools than on the streets. The U.K. happens to have the highest levels of asthma in Europe.

# When I found myself crying

At Mystic Kalinga, the self was a bit ravaged, a little tattered, but it smelt real

BY JERRY PINTO

I am writing this from the edge of Chilika Lake which is a good place to be. There is water, an endless expanse of water, there are birds and there are friends.

Two days ago, I arrived in Bhurbaneswar for the Mystic Kalinga Festival, a celebration of bhakti in verse and song, dance and discussion. It was curated by Arundhati Subramaniam, a poet, a seeker and editor of *Eating God*.

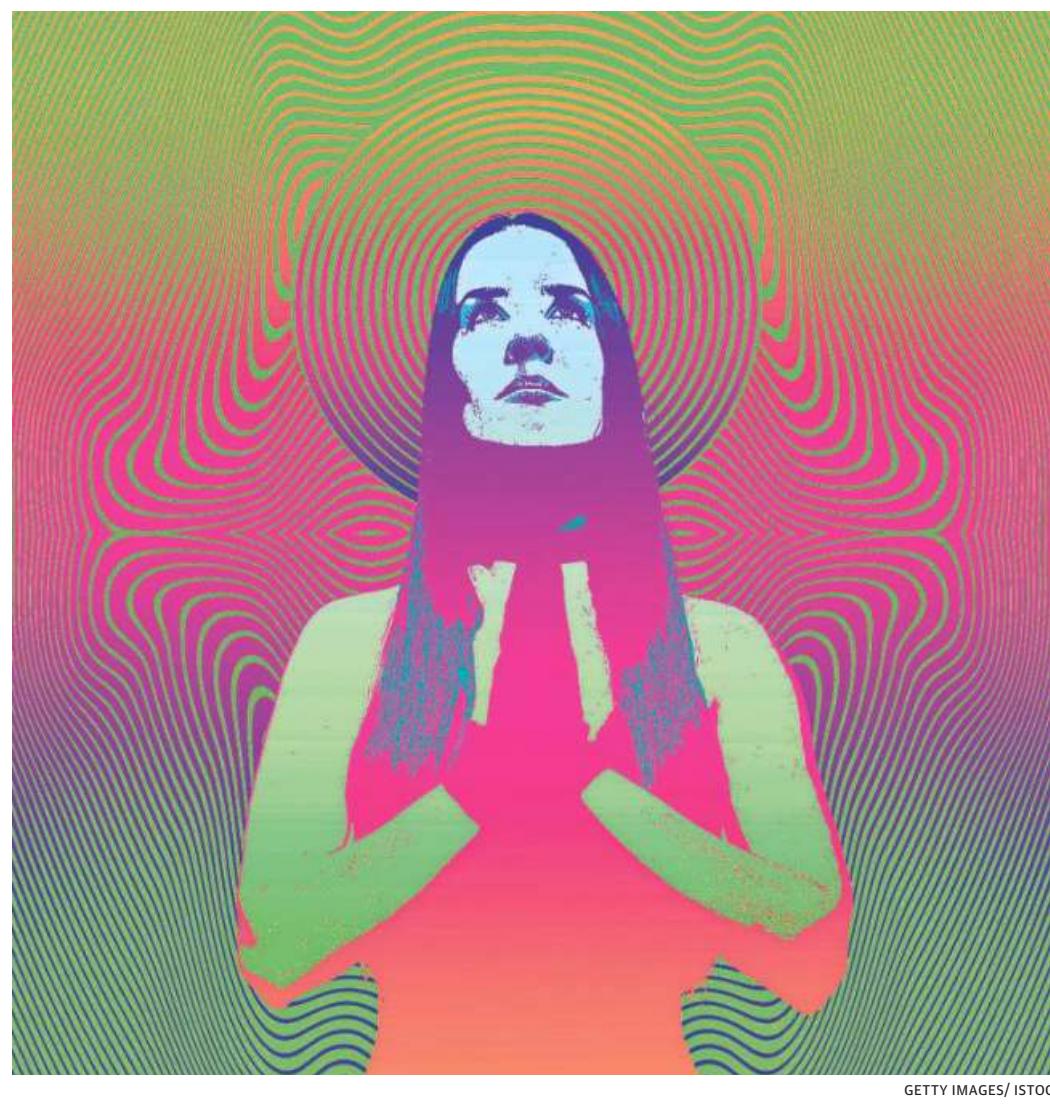
I knew why I had been invited. Over the past five years, Neela Bhagwat and I have worked on a series of translations of several of the Marathi women poet saints including Janabai, Soyarabai, Muktabai, Bahinabai, Kanhopatra, Nirmala, Rajai and Gonai. I did not know whether I would fit. Because I have never been at something like this before and because I am not a bhakta.

**Belief in something**  
But I should have known that belonging isn't really a problem with the bhakti marga. It seems to be an inside composed mainly of outsiders.

Among the women Bhagwat and I translated, Muktabai and Bahinabai were the only Brahmins and Muktabai bore the scars of being declared an outcaste. Kanhopatra was a sex worker; Soyabai was a Mahar, Janabai was a housemaid, in the service of a saint, but a housemaid nonetheless. All these women must have wondered: do I belong? You look at the surface of the poems and you can see assurance, certainty.

They have come back through the fire and brought this with them. You do not have to share the coordinates of their faith to know this; you do not even have to be a believer. (Although it is undeniably true, that everyone must believe, if not in god, if not in a supernatural power, if not in a divine force, a mystic other, then we must believe in science, in nature, in reason. We are all believers. Even those who don't believe.)

I have been to Orissa before, for Meljol; we had a project here with



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several village schools and I have been in and out of the State several times. I have been to Puri and to Gopalpur-on-Sea. I have been to the Lingaraja Temple and wondered at the Chausat Yagini Temple. I have been to Konark. So I did not feel that I had to do any of this. I could simply stand by and watch bhakti.

**Being moved**  
Unfortunately, there is no such thing as an innocent bystander. In session after session, I was shaken and stirred, I was moved and fascinated. Because this seemed to be about people much more than it seemed to be about theology. So for instance, I had read Indira Pe-

terson's translations of the Shai-vite poems many years ago; it was wonderful to meet her and to have her burst into song over dinner. I had read Lata Mani's *Inter-leaves*, which is the kind of book that shifts grounds and strategies so many times you can be...

"It's not the kind of book I

usually read," I said to her. "It's..." I could have used one of the standard adjectives that one uses to writers but somehow the *shayi bhava* here was that of seeking and I needed the correct word. It would not come.

"Startling?" Lata said gently.

That was it. Startling. I was startled by how much I saw in the strange and diverse worlds that were presented here. Danish Husain's magnificent qissebazi, for instance, the story of a Ram katha and a Ram bhajan that lived in a woman's stomach and wanted to get out; Parvati Baul's simple retelling of her story, her journey to becoming a baul, the first time she begged on a train,

the experience of receiving alms and understanding that "he was receiving and I was receiving, there was no giving"; Jheeni, a performance by Sanjukta Wagh and Shruthi Vishwanath with musicians Hitesh Dhutia and Vinayak Netke that started a conversation between Arundhati Subramaniam and Janabai, across centuries, across stations in life, across languages, across, across, across.

#### Designer self on display

On these pages, not so long ago, I wrote about how tired I was of being a panellist. I think I understand why. It is because one is being called upon there to give an account of the self. That account is tailored and it is manicured. It is the designer self on display and I suspect that the audience knows this as well.

At Mystic Kalinga the self was a bit ravaged, a little tattered, but it smelt real. Music, we are told, reaches the same place that love does and sex and sugar and other drugs. Dance, we are told, gets our mirror neurons firing. This is the science of it. This is what I said to myself when I found myself crying with Parvati Baul. This is what I said when I was in tears again when Sanjukta Wagh and Shruti Vishwanath burst into ecstatic dance.

Science comforts us because it can be reduced, it demands reduction. The rest? It can be reduced for a while, it can even be discussed, it can be translated and nuanced and footnoted but somewhere along the way, it will remind you. There's something large here, larger than the politics of the moment, larger than the religion you received as a legacy and then worked to make your own, larger. Larger and somewhat terrifying, full of passionate moments and long nights of desolation. That's why the friends were also important. And why it is good to be by a lake in the company of the birds.

The author tries to think and write and translate in the cacophony of Mumbai.

# Notes from Milan

BY VENKY VEMBU

The rooftop of Excelsior Hotel Gallia, the luxurious heritage hotel in Milan, affords a panoramic view of the city's Stazione Centrale, the majestic transportation hub, one of the busiest in Europe.

Inaugurated in 1931, it was intended by 'Il Duce' Benito Mussolini to symbolise fascist power, which it does spades. Fusing Art Deco and Art Nouveau architectural styles, the station has sculptures of winged horses, lions, bulls and eagles.

Its sheer expanse served to reinforce the perception that the fascists helped rejuvenate Italy's crumbling infrastructure, although the claim that trains ran on time during Mussolini's time was a carefully cultivated myth.

Mussolini was to have inaugurated the Central Station, but after the Archbishop of Milan declined an invitation to attend (in protest against fascism), Il Duce staged a tactical retreat. He was to suffer further ignominy in 1945: after his execution in a village up north, his corpse was strung up from meat hooks in a public square near the railway station.

#### SOS

The spiritual protector of Milan's destiny today, in the Catholic belief system, is its patron-saint Ambrose. When Ambrose was a bonny *bambino*, so legend has it, a swarm of bees settled on his face and left behind a drop of honey.

His father, a Roman official of some standing, interpreted this to mean that the boy would acquire great felicity of speech. Whether or not that was true, Ambrose went on to acquire much influence as an ecclesiastical figure, although under his spiritual guidance Roman emperors persecuted Pagans: the saintly Ambrose is often depicted wielding a scourge – a whip of sorts. In addition to being the ci-



**C** Frieda's comical protestations notwithstanding, love of money isn't considered the root of all evil – so long as you wear it with class

ty's protector, he is considered the patron-saint of bees (given his mystical childhood experience) and – somewhat inexplicably – of geese.

There are other equally quixotic patron-saints in the Catholic pantheon: St. Achatius, who is invoked for headaches, which is somewhat odd considering that he was himself beheaded; St. Blaise, whose intercession is sought for illnesses of the throat or when fish-bones get stuck therein; and St. Cyriacus, believed to guard against deathbed temptations!

#### Money, money, money

Four saintly figurines stand carved on the stately facade of the Banca d'Italia (Bank of Italy), the central bank building in Milan.

When I enquired of my guide Frieda – who had the amiable manner (and the high-pitched voice) of Bianca Castafiore, the 'Milanese Nightingale' – if they represented the patron-saints of money, she erupted in theatrical diva-esque exclamations. "Mamma mia!" she shuddered in mock horror, crossing herself. "We are Catholics, we aren't given to worship of money, I'll have you know!"

It may have been said half in jest, but even in Milan, which is far and away Italy's commercial capital and home to Europe's richest financial district, you get the sense that it isn't opulence that is prized, but elegance.

For the Milanese, Silvio Berlusconi may have been the brash local lad who made it good, even becoming Italy's longest-serving post-War Prime Minister before his past caught up with him, but in the Via Montenapoleone fashion district, it is Giorgio Armani's understated style that sways. And Frieda's comical protestations notwithstanding, love of money isn't considered the root of all evil – so long as you wear it with class.

#### Thank you for the music

Money and matrimonial matters were on my mind as I contemplated going to a wedding that had set off much chatter on the social circuit. Many stars were expected, and there was to be much singing and dancing.

But it's not what you think: I'm not talking of that wedding, the one back home that got much bad press for the tasteless parade of opulence, the off-key song renditions and the out-of-step dance moves. I'm talking instead of an aesthetically pleasing, small-town wedding, on a Grecian island, suffused with love and soulful nostalgia-inducing music and artfully choreographed dances.

*Mamma Mia!*, the musical based on the eponymous movie, was in town, so I hightailed it to the Teatro degli Arcimboldi one evening. The show and all of the songs were in Italian, but it mattered not one whit to us ABBAphiles of – ahem! – advanced age as we clapped, sang along and danced in the aisles to those timeless tunes.

In the fashion and design capital of the world, both locals and wanderers from faraway lands (such as I) came together for some happy moments in a shared joy of the elemental universality of music.



**Mysterious force** A still from and (below) a poster of *The Wild Pear Tree*.

# My best film of 2018

Watching a Ceylan movie is as demanding as reading James Joyce.  
*The Wild Pear Tree* isn't an exception

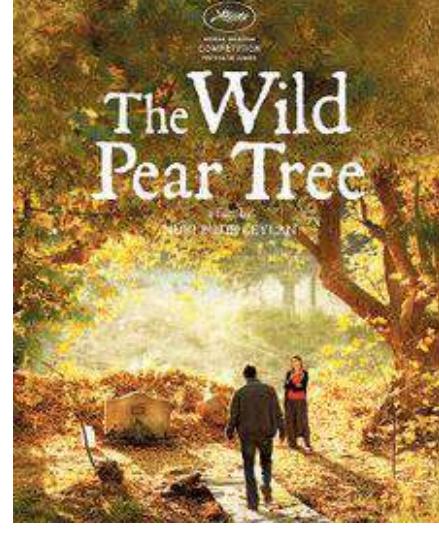
BY GOWRI RAMNARAYAN

Though we know they are ad hoc and subjective, we cannot but be riveted by Top Ten lists. So when Barack Obama's year-end lists were published to much attention, I too began to think of the books, plays, music and films I had most enjoyed in 2018.

Before I knew it, a single name jumped to the top of my head: *Ahlat Agaci* (*The Wild Pear Tree*, Chennai International Film Fest 2018), Turkish auteur Nuri Bilge Ceylan's new work. Three hours and 10 minutes didn't seem a second too long for this saga of a boring, bumptious youngster, ashamed of his parents, disillusioned by school friends, desperate to escape from his dreary village, contemptuous of authority, riled by commercial success, but dreaming of publishing his quirky, autobiographical meta-novel.

Jobless graduate Sinan returns to his village near Port Canakkale, the site of ancient Troy and the Gallipoli campaign in World War I, memorialised by a war museum, and the Trojan Horse from the Brad Pitt film.

His father is a teacher by profession, was-trel by choice, whose wife has to grab his salary the moment it is disbursed, to prevent it from being gambled, or frittered away in impractical schemes – like digging a well in a waterless patch. The mother ba-



mirage of soap operas to keep her going. Life is no better for grandma, while the grandfather, a retired imam, is exploited by the young priest who borrows from him and gets him to substitute for him in the mosque for free.

#### Interesting characters

Conversational encounters marked by wry humour advance the story, as Sinan tries to get his novel published with government subsidy and private sponsorship. The state can only support a book for tourists, the bu-

sinessman only when there is commercial benefit. Other characters add textures. Like senior writer Suleyman, accused of hypocrisy and compromises for easy popularity by Sinan, with all the arrogance of youth, not unmixed with envy. Schoolmate Hatice appears in the olive grove like an enchanting houri under gold light and green leaves, tantalising and irritating Sinan with her beauty and caustic tongue. Rustling leaves and soothng winds rise into a symphonic crescendo, as lights and shades crisscross with moods, climaxing in a slow-burn instant of flaming sensuality.

#### Force majeure

Here, as elsewhere in the film, indeed in Ceylan's visually-driven but also writerly oeuvre, there is no pathetic fallacy of nature reflecting human tragedies or global catastrophes. Nature exists as a mysterious force, paradoxical and parallel, independent and inexorable, heightening both our sense of beauty, and our fears of alienation. Winter mists and whirling snow, scorching sun and craggy rock, crashing waves and whispering trees, they all breathe secrets for intuitive – not reasoned – grasp. Even as weird images, like a sleeping baby covered by ants, intimate the untellable. And yes, Ceylan's trust in quietness makes him frugal with music.

No wonder then that watching a Ceylan movie is as demanding as reading James

Joyce, though critics often describe his oeuvre as Chekhovian. A string breaks – and this faint half-heard sound sends a whole world crashing into dissolution.

In *Distant* (2002) you feel it in the airport when the protagonist watches unseen his ex-wife leaving the country with her new husband. In *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* (2011) a little boy spontaneously kicks a ball that flies out of a playground as he walks on the street with his mother, carrying his dead father's belongings, unaware that his murdered father has been officially certified as having committed suicide. Smoky mist and flickering flames image the blurred vision of the lost and the lonely in *Winter Sleep* (2014).

Two images stand out in the *Wild Pear Tree*. The contrast of the heroic and the humdrum, ambition and disillusionment, as Sinan climbs into the Trojan Horse left behind by the Troy film crew in Port Canakkale, and is scared out of his daydream by thunderous knocks, and blinding light dispersing gauzy romance. Later, we see Sinan's dusty books stacked against the wall, proving that publishing cannot guarantee readers or sales. Neither mother nor friends have bothered to read his 'meta-fiction'.

However, returning after years of military service, Sinan finds his singular reader

**C** Nature exists as a mysterious force, paradoxical and parallel, independent and inexorable

in his profligate father, now living alone, continuing to dig a well in waterless land, decades of wasted labour notwithstanding. The ne'er-do-well, down-at-heel father remains a man of irresistible charm and unquenchable hope. Having experienced every page of his son's story, the father tells him one: the parable of the wild pear tree – ugly, misshapen, prickly, solitary, producing sweet fruit.

The film ends with the father waking up to find the son digging his well, joining those who dare to dream: misfits, magi, secret keepers of the mantra auguring survival. That is when, in the land of Troy, we remember that Homer was old, blind, probably ugly and misshapen to boot.

What about Nuri Bilge Ceylan with the lean and hungry look? Did he not say, "There's quite a distance between my films and the expectations of most spectators... Maybe that's better"?

The writer is a journalist by profession, musician by circumstance, playwright by obsession, quirky by temperament.

