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## NEARBY



**ED questions Vadra in money laundering case**

NEW DELHI  
Robert Vadra, husband of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi, appeared before the Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday for recording his statement in connection with a money laundering probe into some properties located in the U.K. After more than five hours of questioning, Mr. Vadra was asked to come again on Thursday.

**NEWS ▶ PAGE 10**

**JNU sedition case: court pulls up authorities**

NEW DELHI  
A Delhi court on Wednesday pulled up the authorities in question for sitting on a Delhi police request for prosecution sanction against former JNU Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar and others in a 2016 sedition case.

**DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1**

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**DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES**

## SC may curb advocates from speaking on cases

Freedom carries with it responsibility, says Bench

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to examine the possibility of imposing curbs on advocates airing their views in the media about pending cases and the judges handling them, during a hearing on contempt petitions filed by the government and the Attorney General of India against civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan.

A Bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Navin Sinha agreed that "though the flash of cameras and media attention may seem irresistible to some, a line needed to be firmly drawn."

The temptation to talk was hard to get over when cameras were trained on you, the Bench said.

Observing that "freedom carries with it a responsibility", it noted that some lawyers even used air time to attack judges, whose code of conduct did not allow them to go public. Only one version of the matter was thus heard.

"The judiciary should be protected," Justice Mishra said. "If the Bar is out to kill the judiciary, what can be done?"

The Bench also observed that some lawyers rushed to



### Defending the judiciary

*Contempt pleas seemed to be a sequel to a speech by Justice Arun Mishra last month:*

- In R. Muthukrishnan vs Madras HC, he had criticised lawyers attributing "political colour" to judges in important cases. He said this amounted to denigrating the judiciary
- Such acts amount to contempt of court but this power was a 'Brahmastra', only meant to be rarely used
- "It is the duty of the Bar to protect honest judges and not to ruin their reputation," the court had observed

the media as soon as their petition was filed. While the petition may contain all sorts of allegations and was even likely to be later withdrawn in court, the damage, however, would be done, it said.

"When a matter is sub judice, what is expected of lawyers? Should they go public and be part of media and TV debate?" it asked.

The court asked Mr. Bhushan, who was present in court, to file his reply.

### Scandalous tweets

Both the government and Attorney General K.K. Venugopal termed as "scandalous"

Mr. Bhushan's February 1 tweets alleging that the government – via the top law officer – misled the apex court about the appointment of M. Nageswara Rao

as interim CBI Director. Mr. Bhushan tweeted that the government, through Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, perhaps presented "fabricated" minutes of the high-power committee meeting of January 9-10.

The government contended that the tweets "wilfully and deliberately" made a false statement in a case pending in court.

"The attack on the Attorney General in such a brazen, wilful and malicious manner would tend to shake the very foundation of the justice delivery system," Mr. Venugopal contended.

While Mr. Venugopal said he did not want the court to impose any punishment on Mr. Bhushan, the government, represented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, was of the opposite opinion.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising, representing Bindu and Kanakadurga, who fought the odds to enter the temple premises, said it was the fundamental duty of citizens under Article 51A (h) of the Constitution to "develop scientific temper, humanism, spirit of enquiry and reform." That is what the Supreme Court judgment urges citizens to do.

"What about Article 51A (e)? It says promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood..." Justice Rohinton Nariman, on the Constitution Bench, responded.

"It hurts a woman very,

very deeply to say she is polluted because she menstruates. The hurt caused by such discrimination goes to the heart of the Constitution," Ms. Jaising submitted.

The majority judgment in September 2018 concluded that the exclusion of menstruating women was akin to treating them as the children of a "lesser God". It said that exclusion, especially based on a biological attribute, amounted to untouchability, which is abhorred social evil.

The Nair Service Society, represented by veteran lawyer K. Parasaran, sought a review of the verdict on the ground that the exclusion was not based on gender or sex, but on religious faith in and character of the deity.

"Tantri (priest) is the father of the deity. Every deity has a character. The Sabarimala deity, unlike in other Ayyappa temples, has the peculiar character of a Naishikta Brahmachari. The

Advocate V.K. Biju, for the Sabarimala Custom Protection Forum, argued that *Tantra Samuchayam* does not consider menstruation as impurity, and the court was misled.

**'Unique character'**

The temple's chief priest Rajaeevaru Karandaru, the main review petitioner, argued that "every devotee has a fundamental right to worship in a manner which is in sync with the characteristics of that manifestation to attain salvation."

"What is the effect of your Sabarimala judgment? It is a mandamus given to a particular religious community that you shall not hold this belief," said senior advocate Shekhar Naphade.

"Hinduism is the most diverse religion on planet Earth. And here, you want to allow only practices or customs which are 'universally ethical' to all Hindus? Is it possible? Surely, that's not the right approach to take in such a diverse religion," Mr. Singhvi said.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10**

**MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGE 5**

## Unregulated deposit schemes to be banned

Cabinet approves changes to Bill

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the official amendments to an Act that classifies any deposit scheme not registered with the government as an offence and bans it, the government announced.

"The Cabinet has given its approval to move official amendments to the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018, pursuant to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance," the government said in a release. "The amendments will further strengthen the Bill in its objective to effectively tackle the menace of

illicit deposit-taking activities, and prevent such schemes from duping poor and gullible people of their hard-earned savings."

Among the provisions is one that bans deposit-takers from promoting, issuing advertisements or accepting deposits in any unregulated scheme. "The principle is that the Bill would ban unregulated deposit-taking activities altogether, by making them an offence ex ante rather than the existing legislative-cum-regulatory framework that only comes into effect ex-post with considerable time lags," the government said.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10**

## Learning curve



**A record attempt:** People driving on test tracks at the Mega Permanent Driving Licence Mela at Uravakonda in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday. The Anantapur Road Transport Authority is attempting to create a record by granting licences to 10,038 persons at one go; as part of this, 400 persons are taking the test daily on adjacent tracks. ■ R.V.S PRASAD

## The air hostess who ended a fire

**She ran up nine floors and emptied nine extinguishers in the burning apartment before firemen arrived**

**ADITYA ANAND**  
MUMBAI

Flight attendants are trained to respond swiftly if an aircraft catches fire. Recently, this training proved its worth in an unexpected setting: a Mumbai high-rise.

On November 7, 2018, Radhika Ahire, a 25-year-old flight attendant with Jet Airways, put her safety training to perfect use when she noticed smoke coming out of an apartment on the ninth floor of Gokul Panchwati building in the suburb of Andheri. Ms. Ahire ran up the nine floors and broke into the locked apartment with a crash axe before emptying nine fire

extinguishers. She managed to successfully douse the fire before the firemen arrived.

Ms. Ahire was helped by her brother Rohit and a neighbour, Mahesh Belapurkar. The trio together carried all the fire extinguishers and the crash axe from their own building nearby, Deep Tower.

**Firecracker, the trigger**  
Recalling the incident, Ms. Ahire said that the fire was caused by a stray firecracker that had landed in the ninth floor apartment. "I was stepping out when my attention was drawn to some commotion outside. I noticed that some clothes that had been put out to dry



were burning. The fire soon spread into the apartment through an open window and the curtains started burning," she said.

Much to the surprise of

the crowd that had gathered to gawk at the fire, Ms. Ahire, Mr. Rohit and Mr. Belapurkar ran up the nine floors since taking the elevator was risky.

**Training to the rescue**  
When asked what she was thinking at that time, Ms. Ahire said that her only priority was to save lives. "Fortunately, the apartment was empty at that time. But until I broke open the main door and another one leading to the bedroom, I had assumed that people might be trapped inside," said the flight attendant, who has done her fire-fighting training at Jet Airways twice.

were burning. The fire soon spread into the apartment through an open window and the curtains started burning," she said.

"I had to cover my face with a piece of cloth as the fumes were irritating my eyes and nose," she recalled.

Ms. Ahire believes that it was the training that helped her to douse the fire. "At Jet Airways, the training was hands-on in a simulated scenario. This was, however, the first time that I faced a real-life scenario of fire-fighting. And if required to step up again, I will gladly do so," said the airhostess.

Ms. Ahire's heroics were almost forgotten until recently, when the residents of her building decided to felicitate her for her courage on Republic Day, turning her into a star in the eyes of the neighbourhood kids.

## Mayawati signs up on Twitter

For speedy interaction with media and masses, says party

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

LUCKNOW

After resisting it for long, Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati has finally made her debut on social media. She has joined Twitter formally and will tweet under the handle @SushriMayawati, the party announced on Wednesday. A website by her name is under construction.

A party statement said Ms. Mayawati decided to join the social media platform "for speedy interaction with media and masses, besides expressing her views on various important issues and national political developments".

Ms. Mayawati's entry into social media assumes significance ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in which she has partnered with the Samajwadi Party. SP president Akhilesh Yadav is proactive on social media and commands an impressive 8.9 million followers on Twitter.

The BSP chief's move was welcomed by many, with Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav even taking the credit. "Happy that you acknowledged and respect-



ed my request of joining Twitter during our meeting in Lucknow on 13th January," he tweeted.

Though the @Sushri Mayawati handle was registered in October 2018, the party made the official announcement only on Wednesday. She already has more than 38,000 followers.

The BSP chief's new openness to social media is in sharp contrast to her earlier position in which she dismissed the medium as being irrelevant to her cause. Last year, she even distanced herself from some accounts that were running in the name of the BSP informally, clarifying that the party had no official website, Facebook or Twitter accounts.

DELHI Timings	
THURSDAY, FEB. 07	
RISE 07:06 SET 18:05	
RISE 08:37 SET 20:15	
FRIDAY, FEB. 08	
RISE 07:05 SET 18:06	
RISE 09:11 SET 21:07	
SATURDAY, FEB. 09	
RISE 07:05 SET 18:06	
RISE 09:43 SET 22:00	

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	25	12
Safdarjung	25	12
Palam	25	14

**Delhi Palam Today**  
18°C Spells of rain with strong winds will improve the pollution level. Hailstrom is possible at isolated places.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
19°C Pollution level will be good. Spells of light rain may affect over few parts of the city.

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## Cong. ex-MLA joins BJD

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BHUBANESWAR

Former Odisha MLA Jogesh Singh formally joined the ruling Biju Janata Dal on Wednesday, three weeks after he resigned from the Congress.

Mr. Singh, who represented the Sundargarh Assembly seat, joined the BJD in the presence of Chief Minister and party president Naveen Patnaik.

Welcoming him, Mr. Patnaik said Mr. Singh's joining will strengthen the BJD in the tribal-dominated Sundargarh. Mr. Singh said he will work with dedication and commitment under the leadership of Mr. Patnaik for development of Sundargarh and welfare of its people.

He had on January 18 sent his resignation to the Mr. Gandhi after he was suspended on charge of making anti-party remarks.

# Gold for brides, corporation for Muslims in Assam budget

Free rice for tea garden workers, e-bikes for girls among the sops announced

### RAHUL KARMAKAR GUWAHATI

Gold for brides, a development corporation for indigenous Muslims and e-bikes for girls securing first division in higher secondary examinations were among a slew of sops in the ₹1,193.04-crore deficit budget presented in the Assam Assembly on Wednesday.

State Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced 'golden gift' for brides of all communities. The facility will be for the economically weaker sections with an annual income of below ₹5 lakh.

"I am happy to announce that we shall give one *tola* (11.34 gram) gold, costing around ₹38,000 today, to brides... The benefit can be availed upon formal registration of the marriages under the Special Marriage (Assam) Rules, 1954, and will reach the beneficiaries right in time for the social marriage," he said.

A sum of ₹300 crore has been allocated for the scheme named after Arundhati, the wife of sage Vashisht.

Mr. Sarma also announced a scheme to provide battery-operated e-bikes to all girl students who secure first division or above in their Class XII examinations for commuting to their places of higher studies. For parents whose annual income is below ₹2 lakh, the Finance Minister announced admission fee waiver and free textbooks up to degree level.

The scheme, called Gyan Deepika, currently covers Classes up to XII.

A section of the budget



Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma with Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in Guwahati on Wednesday. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

was devoted to religious places with ₹4.11 crore earmarked for 160 Hindu temples and monasteries across the State as total annual grant besides a one-time grant of ₹1 lakh each to install CCTV cameras.

### Grant for temples

The annual grant for 2019-20 is 45% more than the ₹91.03 lakh for the current fiscal.

A few mosques and dargahs are among more than 800 religious destinations to be provided ₹10 lakh each for infrastructure improvement. But the Finance Minister laid more stress on creating a development corporation for the indigenous or Assamese Muslims, who have been demanding a

council like some ethnic groups.

Such a development council "will take up various programmes aimed at their holistic development. Once the corporation is formed, ₹100 crore will immediately be sanctioned," Mr. Sarma said.

According to the 2011 Census, Assam has 1.18 crore Muslims, of which the indigenous or Assamese Muslims are estimated to be 72 lakh.

Before the 2016 Assembly elections, the BJP had promised to protect the identity of the indigenous Muslims against the Bengali-speaking migrant Muslims.

The budget also focuses attention on tea plantation

workers who account for 17% of Assam's population and are a major vote bank for the BJP.

"The government has decided to provide rice, which is presently provided at ₹ per kg, free of cost to 4 lakh families in the tea garden areas as well as 2 kg of sugar per month," Mr. Sarma said.

### Nutrition plan

Beyond the tea estates, 53 lakh households would be provided rice at ₹1 per kg under the Affordable Nutrition and Nourishment Assistance Yojana. The current rate is ₹3 per kg, he said.

"We will start the pilot implementation of this scheme from March, for which ₹377 crore has been allocated," Mr. Sarma said.

### Governor's Medal for 55 meritorious NCC cadets

KOLKATA  
West Bengal Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi on Wednesday awarded the Governor's Medal to 55 meritorious NCC cadets for their outstanding performance during the year 2018-2019. The awards were given at a ceremony held at Raj Bhawan here. PTI

# Gadkari launches highway, port projects in Odisha

'₹2.5 lakh cr. for infrastructure, but the State must cooperate'

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA DHENKANAL (ODISHA)

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday launched a slew of highway and port projects worth ₹6,000 crore in Odisha and said another ₹2.5 lakh crore would be pumped in to boost the infrastructure here but the State must cooperate by expediting land acquisition process.

The Road Transport and Highways, Shipping and Water Resources Minister laid foundation for three National Highway projects worth ₹2,345 crore at Kamakhyanagar in Dhenkanal district of Odisha. These projects include four-laning of the Talcher-Kamakhyanagar section of NH-200/23, Kamakhyanagar-Duburi section of NH-200 and Duburi-Chandikhole section of NH-200, the officials said.

He also inaugurated a port project worth ₹431 crore and laid foundation for six others costing ₹3,206 crore at a function at Paradip in Jagatsinghpur district.

Stating that the length of National Highways in Odisha has more than doubled in



Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari and Dharmendra Pradhan. ■ FILE PHOTO

the last four years from 4,632 km in 2014 to 9,426 km in 2018, Mr. Gadkari said the Centre was spending nearly ₹1 lakh crore on NH in the State. He added investments worth ₹2.5 lakh crore would be made soon to strengthen the State's transportation sector.

Speaking on port-led industrialisation projects which are stuck due to issues like land acquisition, forest and environmental clearances, the Union Minister said the State government should cooperate in addressing these issues.

Mr. Gadkari added that NH projects worth over ₹6,000 crore have been completed in the State. Several other projects worth

₹4,500 crore are scheduled for completion this year, he said.

The Minister announced that a 262 km-long waterway, combining Mahanadi and Brahmani rivers, will be developed from Kalinganagar to Dhamra via Paradip at a cost of ₹5,000 crore.

Speaking on the port-led industrialisation, Mr. Gadkari said 34 projects worth ₹20,000 crore have been identified for Odisha under Sagarmala. Among the projects launched was a multi-purpose berth for handling clean cargo for diversifying its freight profile. Its capacity is 5 MMTPA at an estimated cost of ₹430.78 crore, officials said.

## 1,490 detained in Assam in three years; 691 released later

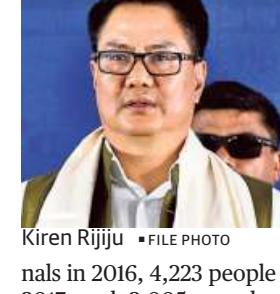
Union Minister Kiren Rijiju informs Rajya Sabha

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The Foreigners' Tribunals in Assam have in the last three years sent 1,490 people in detention centres in the State, out of nearly 8,992 cases they received to determine citizenship, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Wednesday.

Later on, 691 people were released from these centres after judicial process.

Union Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju said that according to the information made available by the State government, 2,764 people were referred to the tribu-



Kiren Rijiju ■ FILE PHOTO

nals in 2016, 4,223 people in 2017 and 2,005 people in 2018.

To ascertain citizenship These people were referred to the tribunals to ascertain whether they were Indians or foreigners in terms of the

provisions contained in the Foreigners' (Tribunal) Order, 1964, he said in a written reply to a question.

The Foreigners' Tribunals had decided to send 236 people to the detention centres in 2016, 826 people in 2017 and 428 people in 2018.

Mr. Rijiju said among the people who were ordered to be kept in detention centres in last three years, 111 people in 2016 were either released on the basis of the opinion given by the tribunals or by the higher courts or repatriated to their native country, 453 people in 2017 and 127 people in 2018.

## Tripura Forest Minister injured in road accident

Speeding bike collided with his car

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA AGARTALA

Tripura Tribal Welfare and Forest Minister Mevar Kumar Jamatia was injured in a road accident on Wednesday near the Civil Secretariat here, the police said.

Although Mr. Jamatia escaped with minor injuries, an Assam Rifles jawan was seriously injured.

"The accident occurred at 10.30 a.m. when Mr. Jamatia's official vehicle was entering the Secretariat complex. A speeding motorcycle coming from the opposite direction collided with car," New Capital Complex Police station in-charge Pranab Debnath said.

He said the Minister sus-

tained head injuries in the accident. The two-wheeler rider was identified as Anup Kaushik (42), an Assam Rifle jawan.

"Mr. Jamatia was taken to the ILS Hospital here, where he was examined and discharged. He is now staying at his official residence," Mr. Debnath said.

Mr. Kaushik was admitted to the Govind Ballabh Pant Hospital in a serious condition, Medical Superintendent Kingshuk Dutta said.

Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb visited the Minister.

Ironically, the Tripura government is observing Road Safety Week since February 4.

## Odisha lawyers to join two-day BCI strike

### CORRESPONDENT CUTTACK

Extending support to the strike called by the Bar Council of India, the Odisha State Bar Council on Wednesday urged the lawyers to join the February 11 and 12

agitation. The protest is against the "indifferent" attitude of various governments, including the Centre, towards lawyers, said Mr. Mohanty.

The demands include better infrastructural facilities for courts across the country and a budgetary allocation of ₹5,000 crore for financial protection, stipend and insurance cover for lawyers and their families.

ter Narendra Modi.

Mr. Mohanty added that Cuttack and Bhubaneswar lawyers would also submit the charter to the Governor on February 12.

The protest is against the "indifferent" attitude of various governments, including the Centre, towards lawyers, said Mr. Mohanty.

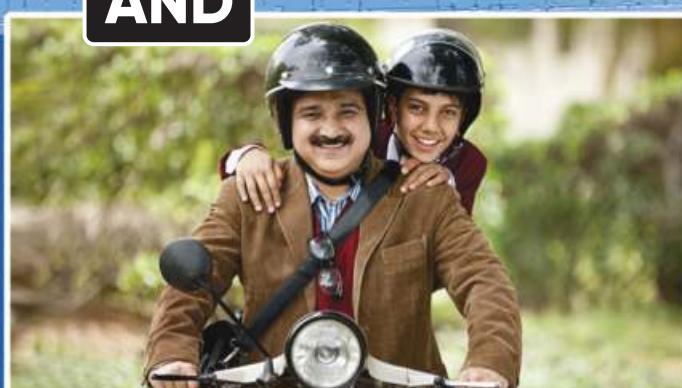
The demands include better infrastructural facilities for courts across the country and a budgetary allocation of ₹5,000 crore for financial protection, stipend and insurance cover for lawyers and their families.

### National Road Safety Week (4th to 10th Feb., 2019)



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I WILL HELP THE ONES IN NEED

V- Trust to further his social work and concentrate more on giving back to his society and inspiring people along the way to show their contribution to the society.

Addressing media persons here, the State Bar Council chairman Tahil Charan Mohanty said that the lawyers in Odisha would submit the BCI's five-point charter of demands to their respective District Collectors and tehsildars on February 11 and request them to forward it to Prime Minis-

## IN BRIEF

**Himachal CM flags off new express train**

**DHARAMSHALA**  
Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur flagged off the Paprola-Panthkot Express Train at Paprola Railway Station in Kangra district on Wednesday. Addressing a public gathering on the occasion, Mr. Thakur said the express service will help locals and tourists alike. PTI

**Fire breaks out at Army quarters in Yol Cantt.**

**SIMLA**  
A fire broke out at the Army's residential quarters in Yol Cantonment in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district on Wednesday afternoon, an official said. Prima facie, fire officials believe that short circuit may have caused the fire. PTI

**3 dead in SUV-bus collision in Rajasthan**

**JAIPUR**  
Three persons were killed and as many injured in a head-on collision between a SUV and a bus in Rajasthan's Nagaur district on Wednesday, police said. The incident occurred near Mahajpura village when the SUV carrying six persons was on its way to Nawa from Sikar district. PTI

**Woman, daughter killed in U.P. accident**

**JALAU**  
Two members of a family were killed and another injured when a scooter they were travelling on was hit by an unidentified vehicle here, police said on Wednesday. The incident occurred when Sudha (42) was returning home with her daughters - Priya (19) and Baby (16). PTI

**Class VIII student abducted, raped in U.P.**

**DEORIA**  
A Class VIII student was allegedly abducted and raped by three youths in Deoria district, police said on Wednesday. The minor was abducted from her home when she was sleeping with her siblings and taken to a nearby field and raped by the youths, police said. PTI

# Cong. seeks local flavour in LS probables

Pradesh Election Committee of Rajasthan unit will send list to AICC screening panel

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
JAIPUR

The Pradesh Election Committee of the ruling Congress in Rajasthan on Wednesday asked its members to form panels of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in the next three days, which will be sent to the AICC screening committee. The PEC left the final decision on candidates' selection to the party's high command.

**'Party ready for polls'**

At a meeting of PEC at the Pradesh Congress Committee headquarters here, PCC president and Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot said the party was ready for the Lok Sabha polls with the target to win all the 25 seats in the State. "All senior leaders will be in the field for the election campaign and a special camp will be organised in Jaipur on February 11 and 12



Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot. ■

for training of party workers," he said.

The PEC will filter and short-list the names of candidates on the basis of feedback received from the office-bearers at the block, district and State levels, besides considering the suggestions of Ministers in charge of various districts.

The political situation and strategy for elections will be discussed before sending pa-

nels of names to New Delhi. The AICC has retained the PEC constituted during the State Assembly election last year. The PEC, headed by Mr. Pilot, comprises 44 members.

**Highlight initiatives'**

The PEC members suggested that the local aspirants of the constituencies be given preference while finalising the candidates' names and the initiatives, such as farmers' loan waiver and unemployment allowance, taken up by the Congress government immediately after assuming office be widely publicised to claim credit during the election campaign.

Mr. Pilot said the training camps on the policies and programmes of Congress, along with booth management, would be organised in all districts between February 15 and 25.

## BJP launches 25 poll 'raths' in Rajasthan

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
JAIPUR

The BJP on Wednesday flagged off a fleet of 25 'raths' for its 'Bharat Ke Mann Ki Baat, Modi Ke Saath' campaign in Rajasthan to seek suggestions from the public for the party's Lok Sabha election manifesto.

However, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot termed the campaign as "politics of jumla".

The BJP 'raths' carrying suggestion boxes will travel across all the 25 Lok Sabha constituencies in the State.

Union MoS for Information and Broadcasting Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore launched the 25 specially designed vehicles.

"The raths will travel across all the Lok Sabha constituencies. The public will be able to drop their suggestions for the party manifesto in the boxes in the 'raths'. The suggestions will be forwarded to senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh in New Delhi for inclusion in the manifesto," Mr. Rathore said.

**Two-way contact'**

"India has a large young population and we are inviting the youth and every citizen of the country for giving their suggestions. The government has always maintained a two-way communication with the public, be it for policy-making or any other programme," he said.

# Road rage? 2 held for abusing woman official

Booked for uttering obscenities

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GURUGRAM

Two persons have been arrested on charges of uttering obscenities and rash driving after they allegedly hit the vehicle of a senior Punjab government woman official on Delhi-Chandigarh Road in Haryana's Panipat on Wednesday.

The official was on her way to Chandigarh from Delhi and was being escorted by security personnel in a separate vehicle.

Panipat Superintendent of Police Sumit Kumar said the accused were identified as Gurvinder and Lovepreet.

Mr. Kumar said that the official in her complaint said that the duo uttered obscenities and accordingly a relevant section was added to the FIR.

The FIR has been registered on charges of rash driving, obscene utterances, endangering personal safety and causing mischief.

# NGT raps U.P. govt. over incomplete data on hospitals

Directs it to furnish performance guarantee of ₹10 crore

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

**G** "You are not able to tell the total number of hospitals. What sort of functioning is (this)?"

JUSTICE RAGHUVENDRA S. RATHORE  
NGT judicial member

tribunal that the figure of 5,240 is incomplete and surveys are currently under way in several districts. Authorities further informed that the entire process will take two months to be completed.

**One month time**

"In order to ensure that all concerned officers could be serious about the issue and collect the data on hospitals, we grant one month time to do the needful, provided they execute a performance guarantee of ₹10 crore within a week," the bench said.

The plea had contended that indiscriminate disposal of biomedical waste was adversely affecting public health and environment.

Directing the State government to furnish a performance guarantee of ₹10 crore, the green panel directed the U.P. government to furnish a compliance report within one month.

A Bench headed by NGT judicial member Justice Raghuendra S. Rathore said, "You are not able to tell the total number of hospitals. What sort of functioning is (this)? We fail to understand... it reflects the flack

of seriousness and responsibility which the State of U.P. has towards the issue."

The observations came while the green panel was hearing a plea that sought directions to shut down hospitals, nursing homes and health centres in the State that are not complying with relevant biomedical waste rules.

During the hearing, the State's Directorate of Medical and Health informed the

**In choppy waters**

Bihar Pradesh Public Teachers' Union members stage a 'Jal Satyagraha' in support of their demands in Patna on Wednesday. ■ PTI

# No cloud hanging over INLD-BSP alliance'

We will jointly contest Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, says Abhay Chautala

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

CHANDIGARH

INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala has rejected reports that his party's alliance with the BSP was under strain after the drubbing it received in the Jind bypoll, asserting that the two parties will jointly contest the coming polls.

"Has anyone said that the INLD-BSP alliance ended? Our alliance stands. We entered into an alliance (last year) to fight (the upcoming) Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha polls together and we will jointly contest these polls," Mr. Chautala said.

"If there are any issues, we will sit together and discuss them," he said at a press conference after his party's executive committee meeting, which was chaired by In-



Senior INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala. ■

this alliance has ended?"

"(Bahujan Samaj Party supremo) Mayawati has said that the INLD, which has split, should unite which will strengthen the alliance. After the Jind bypoll, I spoke to her," he said.

Asked what transpired between the two leaders, Mr. Chautala said, "all things cannot be made public".

**Jind defeat**

The INLD failed to hold on to the Jind seat, which was represented by its senior leader Hari Chand Middha, whose death in August last year had necessitated the bypoll.

Middha's son Krishan Middha, a BJP candidate, registered an emphatic win. But Abhay Chautala's nephew Digvijay Chautala of

the Janayak Janata Party (JJP) finished at number two spot.

The INLD's Umed Singh Redhu lost his security deposit and finished a poor fifth.

The JJP was floated in December last year after feud in the Chautala family.

Ajay Singh Chautala is patron of the JJP while his two sons - Digvijay and Dushyant Chautala - are spearheading the party in the absence of Ajay Chautala, who is serving a jail term in connection with the teachers recruitment scam in Haryana.

At the humiliating defeat of INLD candidate Umed Singh Redhu in the Jind bypoll, Abhay Chautala said the Election Commission should order a probe into the alleged misuse of money power.

## Former Army chief joins SAD (Taksali)

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
AMRITSAR

Nearly two months after he resigned from the SAD, former Army chief General J.J. Singh on Wednesday joined the Shiromani Akali Dal (Taksali). He joined the recently floated outfit in the presence of SAD (Taksali) chief Ranjit Singh Brahmpura here.

General Singh, who also served as Governor of Arunachal Pradesh earlier, had joined the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) led by Sukhbir Singh Badal ahead of the 2017 Punjab Assembly polls.

He had unsuccessfully contested the Assembly polls against Congress' Amarinder Singh from the latter's stronghold, Patiala.

# Bond money for doctors cut by half

Resident doctors in Himachal had been protesting against it

Wednesday.

Resident doctors of State medical colleges had been protesting against the bank guarantee policy since long.

**Cabinet meeting**

Speaking in the State Assembly on the third day of

the ongoing budget session, Mr. Thakur said the Cabinet decided to reduce bank guarantee by half in its Tuesday meeting.

He was replying to a question asked by Asha Kumari of the Congress regarding chemotherapy facilities.

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First career portal for students launched in Rajasthan

Will address the needs of students for information on scholarships and career choices

**MOHAMMED IQBAL**

JAIPUR

India's first "career portal", addressing the needs of secondary and higher secondary students for information on scholarships and career choices, was launched with the support of United Nations Children's Fund here on Wednesday. The portal is expected to help the students take "informed decisions" about their academic and professional pursuits.

**To benefit lakhs**

Minister of State for Education Govind Singh Dotsara and UNICEF-Rajasthan chief Isabelle Bardem inaugurated the portal, set to benefit about 23 lakh students, at Dr. Radhakrishnan Shiksha Sansthan here in the presence of



Rajasthan Minister of State for Education Govind Dotsara and UNICEF Rajasthan chief Isabelle Bardem inaugurating the career portal in Jaipur on Wednesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

school principals, teachers and senior officials.

Mr. Dotsara said the portal would promote employment-oriented education in the State and provide information on 200 vocational and 237 professional careers, 455 employment ave-

nues, 960 scholarships, 955 competitive examinations and 10,000 institutions of higher education to the students from Classes IX to XII.</p

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NIT No:-JUIDCO/Tender/Smart City Project/Ranchi/1982/2018/191

Tender ID: 2019\_UDD\_35084\_1

PR No:-198870

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created for period of 5years, including DLP of 1 year". The last

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NOTE: CORRIGENDUM - 03 can be referred from the e-tender site

of Government of Jharkhand i.e. (<http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in>).

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Sd/- Project Director (Technical)

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## IN BRIEF

**Kerala Budget: Idukki gets ₹5,000 cr. package**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
Kerala Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac on Wednesday attempted to blunt the criticism that he had given the short shrift to Idukki district in the 2019-20 State Budget, by announcing a ₹5,000 crore special package for the development of the hilly region.

**Carcass of male leopard found in Wayanad**

KALPETA  
The carcass of a male leopard, aged about eight years, was found in a coffee plantation at Manhalamkolly, near Puthoorvayal, in Kerala's Wayanad district on Wednesday. It is suspected that the animal was killed when it was trapped in a snare made of iron cables laid near the fence to catch smaller mammals, the Forest Department sources said.

**A.P. govt. moves Bills for Kapu, other EWS quota**

AMARAVATI  
The Andhra Pradesh government on Wednesday introduced two Bills for 5% reservation each to the Kapu sub-castes and the other Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in the general category (upper castes) in the Assembly on Wednesday in the wake of the 103rd amendment to the Constitution.

**Man attacks 17-year-old with sickle in Hyderabad**

HYDERABAD  
A 17-year-old student was attacked by her neighbour Chitturi Bharath, 19, with a sickle, for allegedly turning down his proposal. The incident happened on Wednesday at Barkatpura in Hyderabad. The victim sustained injuries in the neck and abdomen and was rushed to hospital. Her condition was said to be critical.

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4. Design, S/I/TIC of MGPS at Labour Complex, B.RD, GKP 24.03 0.48 4 months 441-U/E/1/E-2/BRD/labour complex/PN/19, dt. 04.02.19  
5. Design, S/I/TIC of Fire Fighting System at Auditorium, B.RD, GKP 145.76 3.00 6 months 442-U/E/1/E-2/Auditorium/Fire/PN/19, dt. 04.02.19  
6. Design, S/I/TIC of External Electrification Work at Auditorium, GKP 355.00 7.10 6 months 443-U/E/1/E-2/Auditorium/External/PN/19, dt. 04.02.19

The last date of submission of bid: 3:00 PM on 6th March 2019. The bid forms and other details can be obtained/downloaded from the website: [https://etender.up.nic.in](http://etender.up.nic.in). The press notice is also available on Unit Incharge (Electrical Unit-2), Lucknow

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**A (1) Job No. 11/E-TENDER/SPO/2018-19, Name of Work - Supply of Printing & Stationary Items, NOIDA, Estimated Rs. 2150480.00.**

Which e-tender can be uploaded by date 14.02.2019 upto 5:00 PM. Prequalification shall be opened/downloaded on date 15.02.2019 at 11:00 AM.

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Calling of applications/ nominations for preparation of panel of names for consideration by the Selection Committee for appointment as Chairperson and Members of the Lokpal

Applications/nominations from/of eligible persons are invited for the purpose of recommending panel for consideration by the Selection Committee of the Lokpal for appointment to the positions of Chairperson and Members of the Lokpal.

The necessary details including statutory provisions which spell out the eligibility criteria and the application/nomination form can be accessed through the website of the Department of Personnel and Training viz.<https://dopt.gov.in> under the link "Lokpal".

The tenure of appointment, salary and allowances are in the terms of provisions of Section 6 and 7 respectively, of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.

The applications/nominations of eligible and interested candidates complete in all respects in the prescribed proforma should reach latest by 22nd February 2019-5.00 PM. The same may be addressed to the Chairperson, search Committee for appointment of Chairperson and Members of the Lokpal at post Box No.12, GPO, New Delhi-110001 or may be forwarded by e-mail at the following id "lokpal.searchcomm@gov.in" latest by 22nd February at 5.00 PM. The date/ time stamp of the application/nomination at the receiving end will be treated as final for the purpose.

**The applications/nominations received after the last date and stipulated time will not be entertained.**

[Justice Smt. Ranjana Prakash Desai]  
Chairman Search Committee for appointment  
of Chairperson and Members of the Lokpal

davp/32201/11/0012/18-19

# TDB changes stand, supports SC judgment on Sabarimala

Temple board now says the ruling meant equal entitlement for man and woman

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) on Wednesday did a U-turn, coming out in support of the Supreme Court's judgment that lifted the ban on women of menstruating age entering the Sabarimala temple.

The board had, prior to the September 28 judgment last year, strongly opposed the lifting of the ban.

The flip-flop caught the attention of Justice Indu Malhotra on the Bench. Justice Malhotra was part of the five-judge Bench and the lone judge to dissent with the majority opinion. She is also a member of the Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi reviewing the

Is there a change in the stand of the Travancore Devaswom Board? You had earlier argued in favour of the ban on women, and here you are now arguing in favour of the Sabarimala judgment

JUSTICE INDU MALHOTRA  
Supreme Court judge

Sabarimala judgment.

"Is there a change in the stand of the Travancore Devaswom Board? You had earlier argued in favour of the ban on women, and here you are now arguing in favour of the Sabarimala judgment," Justice Malhotra asked senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi appearing for the TDB,

"Yes. We have changed our view. An application was filed to that effect," Mr. Dwivedi replied.

Earlier, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi had appeared for the board, before the Supreme Court judgment. Mr. Singhvi is now appearing for the former TDB president, Prayar Gopalakrishnan, who continues to

fight the September 28 judgment even though the board has shifted its stand.

In its affidavit, the TDB, then represented by Mr. Singhvi, had described the deity as a 'Naishikta Brahmachari', who "possessed great powers derived specifically from his ascetic endeavours, in particular, from abstention from sexual activities."

On Wednesday, Mr. Dwivedi's submissions for the TDB were diametrically opposite. He submitted that the "spirit of the Sabarimala judgment is equal entitlement for man and woman in society. That is the core value of our society."

He said the texts and scriptures do not enable the exclusion of women.

**CASH & JEWELLERY STOLEN, COMPLAINS KANAKADURGA**

STAFF REPORTER  
MALAPPURAM

the just-concluded annual Mandalam-Makaravilakku season have announced their decision to visit Sabarimala in February.

The SKS, too, was set to continue its *namajapam* (prayer) protests to stop young women from undertaking the pilgrimage.

The government would have to tighten security and keep its options open on clamping prohibitory orders at Sabarimala and along the Pampa-Nilackal-Elavumkal stretch during the period.

Ayyappa devotees held

prayers at various temples on Wednesday, after the Supreme Court decided to hear the review petitions.

Ms. Kanakadurga complained that several household articles were missing from her house, apart from some gold bangles, a pair of earrings and ₹13,000 in cash. However, the police said they had not registered any complaint as Ms. Kanakadurga did not favour it.

Her return on Tuesday followed an order from the

Pulamanthol Gram Nyaya-laya (village court), directing her husband and relatives not to prevent her entry. She had approached the court when her husband Krishnanunni and mother-in-law refused to allow her to enter the house.

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S.N. : 1, Name of work with its location : Supply & installation of lifting barrier in c/w (I) upgradation from 'C' to 'SPL' class and provision of double lifting barrier at LC No. C-12 at Km 24-26 at NNO Yard (II) Replacement of double lifting barrier of L-xing no. 18(TM) SPL at Km 23/23 between GHE-BG2 station on DL-BTI section of LDII Division. App. Cost of the work (In Rs.) : Rs. 53,31,930/- only. Tender inviting Officer Address : Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer/C. Northern Railways, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055. Tender Document Fee (In Rs.) : Rs. 5,900/- only. Earnest Money to be deposited (In Rs.) : Rs. 1,06,640.00 only. Date & Time for Closed of tender : Tender uploaded date & time- 27.02.2019 up to 15.00 hrs. Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc. : See the N. Ry. website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) and Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd floor, DRM office, State entry road, New Delhi-110055. Tender No. 558-Sig/16/M/Tender/1263 Dated : 05.02.2019. 346/2019 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

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email: [mpiedayar@gmail.com](mailto:mpiedayar@gmail.com) / [mpisrotvm@gmail.com](mailto:mpisrotvm@gmail.com)

MPI/ER/2019/20 E-TENDER Dt.: 06.02.2019

E-Tenders are invited in two bid form from bidders for construction of Factory, Administrative Block, Erection of plant, Machinery and Equipment for establishment of a Value Added Processed Meat Production Plant at Vilakkupura, Eroor, Kollam Dist., Kerala

Tender No.	Est. Cost	EMD	Tender fee	Prequalification Interview	Tender Submission	Bid opening dates (11am both day)
MP/ER/ 02/2019 cr.	₹12 lakhs	₹5 lakhs	₹10000	11.02.2019	Start:12.21.29, 2pm	Technical 27.2.19
					Last:26.2.19, 2pm	Financial 28.2.19

Bidders willing to participate in the e-tender shall necessarily register themselves e-tender portal of Govt. of Kerala. Tender conditions forms etc available in [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in)

Sd/- Managing Director

**CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL R-IV DIVISION, TILAK LANE, NEW DELHI-110001****e-Procurement Tender Notice**

1. Tender ID No. 2019\_NDMC\_167520\_1

Subject- Improvement to drainage system in R-I Division area.

Sub Head- Improvement to drainage system Shershah Road.

Estt. Cost: Rs. 22,68,548/-

Date of release of tender through e-procurement solution : 04.02.2019

Last date/time for receipt of tenders through e-procurement solution : 15.02.2019 upto 4.00 PM.

Further details can be seen at <http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

Note:- To participate in e-tender in NDMC registration with e-tendering system, Government of NCT of Delhi is mandatory.

Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R-I)

To be The Global Benchmark for a Capital City

**HP HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY****(A State Government Undertaking)****\*NOTICE INVITING e-Tender\***

The Executive Engineer, HIMUDA, Electrical Division Shimla, H.P. on behalf of Chairman, HIMUDA invites online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in Two Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved Contractor enlisted with Departments Posts and Telecommunication/Railways/M.E.S./J.T.U. Administration /Chandigarh Housing Board /HUDA/PUDA State PWD's and State Electricity Board dealing with similar nature of work & having valid license from the Secretary Licensing –Cum-Chief Electrical Inspector to the Govt. of respective states.

Sr. No. Description E/ Cost E/Money Time Cost of Form

1. Providing WSS Nahan Town From Giri river at Dadhu in Tehsil Nahan District Sirmour (H.P.) SH- C/O sector storage tanks Tank to tank pipe lines Fire fighting system and staff quarters.

2. Tender documents and other instructions can be downloaded or viewed online from the portal <http://hp tenders.gov.in> by the firms/individual registered on the website which is free of cost.

3. As the bids are to be submitted online are required to be encrypted and digitally signed, the bidders are advised to obtain Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from suitable vendors or from any authorized agency at the earliest.

4. Key Dates will be as under:-

1. Date of online publication 01/02/2019 AT 5:00 PM

2. Downloading of e-tender Documents From 01/02/2019 AT 5:00 PM upto 9:00 AM on 15/02/2019/2018

3. Date of submission of e-tendering From 01/02/2019 AT 5:00 PM upto 11:00 AM on 15/02/2019/2018

4. Physical submission of earnest money deposit and cost of tender documents Up-to 11:00 AM on 15/02/2019

5. Date of opening of Cover-1 (Eligibility criteria) 15/02/2019 at 11:30 AM

6. Date of Opening of Financial Bids Cover-2 Shall be intimated separately.

The Terms and Conditions may be read online in E-Procurement site.

HP/4534/18/2019

HIMUDA Electrical Division, Shimla-171009.

Please visit our web site [www.himuda.com](http://www.himuda.com) to know further details & bid/tender submission procedure w.e.f 11.02.2019 17.00 Hrs. The bid documents will be published on website [https://hp tenders.gov.in](http://hp tenders.gov.in)

## IN BRIEF



Vietnam Ambassador meets Sonowal

**GUWAHATI**  
Vietnam Ambassador Pham San Chau on Wednesday called on Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal and discussed various issues of mutual interest. According to an official release, the CM proposed an exchange programme for farmers, start-up entrepreneurs, scientists and students of both countries so that people from both sides benefit from the expertise and knowhow in different fields. PTI

## Man electrocuted to death in Bundi district

**KOTA**  
A 25-year-old contractual employee of the Jaipur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited was electrocuted to death on Wednesday in Rajasthan's Bundi district, the police said. Sohanlal Meena, a resident of Mahapura village, was working on an electricity feeder near Daulatpura village when the incident occurred, the police said. PTI

## Two arrested for taking bribe of ₹ 8,000

**BIKANER**  
An information assistant of the Transport Department and a middleman were arrested in Rajasthan's Churu district on Wednesday for accepting a bribe of ₹ 8,000 for transfer of a vehicle, an Anti-Corruption Bureau official said. PTI

## Drug peddler arrested in J&amp;K's Ramban

**JAMMU**  
A suspected drug peddler was arrested in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district on Wednesday after around 250 gm of cannabis was found in his possession, the police said. The accused, Balveer Chand, was intercepted by a police party as he was found moving suspiciously, they said. PTI

# Jolt to Manjhi as Bihar HAM(S) chief, spokesperson resign

Some more leaders likely to quit, say sources; split in party appears imminent

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PATNA

A split appeared imminent in former Bihar Chief Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi-led Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, as State president Brishen Patel quit the party on Wednesday.

Party spokesperson Danish Rizwan too resigned on Wednesday, alleging "bungling" in party fund. The HAM(S) is a constituent of the Grand Alliance in Bihar.

Saying that all is not well in the party, Mr. Patel, however, clarified that he would remain with the Grand Alliance. "At a time when all Opposition parties supported West Bengal



Brishen Patel

Chief Minister and TMC leader Mamata Banerjee on her protest against the CBI, our party president stated that she should not have staged dharna (protest) against CBI... I think it was not the right statement," Mr. Patel said.

He also criticised Mr. Rizwan's displeasure over mismanagement at the recently held Congress rally in Patna. "It sounds ridiculous when the party president was present in the rally, the spokesperson was pointing fingers at it", Mr. Patel added. Mr. Rizwan had said that the "rally was organised like a novice...they should have invited alliance partners".

In a letter to the party president, Mr. Rizwan alleged that "some party leaders have been indulging in anti-party activities and also involved in financial mismanagement of party fund". "Being a true soldier of the party, I cannot be a mute spectator to all this, so

I'm resigning from the party post and the primary membership of the party," he added.

HAM(S) sources told *The Hindu* that a split is imminent in the party as several leaders are set to resign in days to come. The HAM (S) had formally joined the Grand Alliance in February 2018 after its exit from the National Democratic Alliance.

Mr. Manjhi, who has so far not commented on the latest developments inside his party, had expressed disapproval of the views expressed by Mr. Rizwan and similar comments by another party spokesman, Vijay Yadav.

## Pilot puts Gujar quota onus on Centre

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA JAIPUR

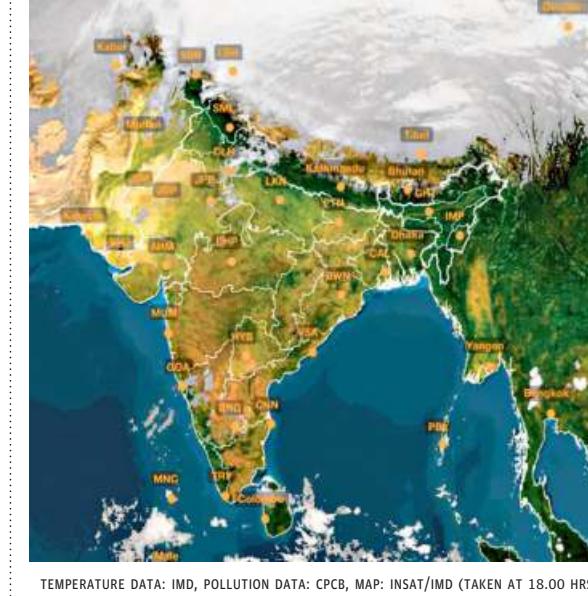
Seeking to shift the onus of granting 5% quota to Gujjars in State jobs and educational institutions, Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot on Wednesday said the Centre should remove the legal hurdles preventing it.

"The Centre has enacted the law for 10% quota for the economically weaker sections," he said, adding the Centre alone can resolve "the legal hurdles" in giving 5% quota to Gujjars and other communities.

Mr. Pilot made the statement in reply to a query on Gujar leader Kirori Singh Bainisa's threat to revive the quota stir from Friday, if the government fails to take a decision on the issue.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE &amp; AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Thursday:** Heavy/heavy rain/snow likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana and west Uttar Pradesh. Thunderstorm accompanied with hailstorms likely at isolated places over Delhi, Bihar, north Rajasthan and north Madhya Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	28.6	10.8	—	Kozhikode	—	36.2	26.6
Ahmedabad	29.7	14.3	—	Kurnool	—	34.4	20.6
Aizawl	29.5	—	—	Lucknow	0.9	22.0	12.3
Allahabad	26.8	12.5	—	Madurai	—	33.4	22.6
Bengaluru	31.1	17.8	—	Mangaluru	—	34.9	22.8
Bhopal	30.8	15.7	—	Mumbai	—	28.8	20.0
Bhubaneswar	34.8	13.1	—	Mysuru	—	32.2	19.8
Chandigarh	23.4	9.9	—	New Delhi	0.8	25.1	12.0
Chennai	31.1	22.6	—	Patna	—	26.2	10.9
Coimbatore	32.9	23.0	—	Port Blair	—	30.5	22.4
Dehradun	21.3	9.7	—	Puducherry	—	31.0	21.6
Gangtok	14.7	8.0	—	Pune	—	32.3	14.6
Goa	33.3	21.5	—	Raipur	—	31.6	16.4
Guwahati	28.2	12.3	—	Ranchi	—	28.7	12.3
Hubballi	32.0	19.0	—	Shillong	—	17.6	7.0
Hyderabad	32.0	17.3	—	Shimla	—	16.0	5.7
Imphal	24.0	2.5	—	Srinagar	19.7	3.0	1.0
Jaipur	27.4	14.3	—	Tiruvanamalai	0.6	34.2	24.4
Kochi	32.2	25.4	—	Tiruchi	—	33.8	23.0
Kohima	20.0	5.4	—	Vijayawada	—	31.1	20.5
Kolkata	28.6	15.1	—	Visakhapatnam	—	30.5	19.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

## Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	60	87	37	.82	—	■
Bengaluru	4.4	58	.68	.91	.114	■
Chennai	.8	15	.54	222	—	■
Delhi	26	128	.81	.41	.377	■
Hyderabad	.3	91	.31	.161	.125	■
Kolkata	22	105	.37	.382	.318	■
Lucknow	17	81	.42	.390	—	■
Mumbai	18	31	.80	.83	.141	■
Pune	46	24	.24	.152	.130	■
Visakhapatnam	33	107	.45	.245	.241	■

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 440 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Thiruvananthapuram recorded a healthy AQI score of 75

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

SO<sub>2</sub>: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.NO<sub>x</sub>: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

## Governor's 'don't take Mufti seriously' remark sparks row

She had sought his intervention in a case of thrashing of a civilian in Pulwama allegedly by an Army officer

## PEERZADA ASHIQ

SRINAGAR

J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik's remarks on Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti sparked a row on Wednesday, with all major regional parties accusing him of "crossing the line".

"Elections are round the corner (in J&K), her (Ms. Mufti's) party is breaking up. It's in a bad shape. She had come to power by stirring anti-India sentiments. Nobody should take her statements seriously," said Mr. Malik in Jammu.

The off-the-cuff remarks came after Ms. Mufti sought Mr. Malik's intervention in a case of thrashing of a civilian in Pulwama allegedly by an



Mehbooba Mufti

accused the Governor of "unreasonably interfering in politics". "He is influencing the elections and the electorate against the PDP. It speaks volumes about his integrity and the leftover sanctity of the office he holds. He must desist from exceeding his jurisdiction," said Mr. Mir.

Former Chief Minister and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah al-

so joined Ms. Mufti in criticising Mr. Malik. "Governor sahib, it's an unacceptable statement and an unnecessary interference in politics. At this rate it won't be long before people stop taking Raj Bhawan seriously, so please consider the office you occupy before you give statements," said Mr. Abdullah.

Ms. Mufti, who visited injured civilian Tawseef Wani in a Srinagar hospital on Tuesday evening, had said: "An Army Major has allegedly beaten him up so ruthlessly that he had to be hospitalised. The irony is that his brother serves in the Army."

She referred to the Army Major, who had killed Hizbul Mujahideen commander Samir Tiger last year after tak-

## Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Department

Office of the Executive Engineer, TLC-I, Ambedkar Chowk, Railway Road, Jammu-J&amp;K

Email:xentcd01@gmail.com

Tel No.-0191-2451732

## INVITATION FOR e-BIDS

For

E NIT Nos.:TLC-I/J/08 Dated : 02-02-2019

Executive Engineer: TLC-I, Jammu (Executive Engineer, TLC-I, Jammu, hereinafter referred to as "the Employer") for and on behalf of Governor of Jammu & Kashmir State, wishes to receive online e-bids for Turnkey Contract for creation of additional 33 KV bay including Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 33 KV equipments as well as civil works wherever required at 1X20 MVA, 132/33KV Grid Substation Chandak.

1. Bidders are advised to study the Bidding Document carefully submission of e-Bid against this standard Bidding Document (SBD) shall be deemed to have been done after careful study and examination of the procedures, terms and conditions of the Standard Bidding Document with full understanding of its implications.

2. The tender document is available at website <http://jkttenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may view, download the e-Bid Document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below:

Tender No.	Tender Estimated in Rs. Lacs	Earnest Money in Rs. Lacs	Cost of Tender document in Rs.
TLCD-I/J/05 dt. 02-02-2019	Rs. 63.28 (Rupees sixty Three Lacs Twenty Eight Thousand only)	Rs. 1.27 (Rupees one lac Twenty Seven Thousand only)	1000/- (Rs. one Thousand only)
A	Date & Time of downloading of Bidding Document	The Bidding document can be downloaded over <a href="https://jkttenders.gov.in">https://jkttenders.gov.in</a> from 04-02-2019 (1400 Hrs onwards)	
B	Start date for Receipt of Clarifications	06-02-2019 (1000 Hrs onwards)	
C	Last date for Receipt of Clarifications	13-02-2019 (1400 Hrs onwards)	
D	Replies to Clarifications	20-02-2019 (1400 Hrs onwards)	
E	Pre Bid Conference Date and Venue	on 05-02-2019 in the office Chamber of Executive Engineer, TLC-I, Ambedkar Chowk, Railway Road, Jammu at	

## IN BRIEF



## Varsity grants more time to clear past arrears

All undergraduate and postgraduate students (except MBBS course) of affiliated institutions of Pondicherry Central University have been granted two additional chances as a one-time opportunity to clear arrears from the 2003-04 academic year.

## Live mortar shell found in Rajasthan village

A live mortar shell was found in Bakarthal village of Rajasthan on Wednesday, following which the Army was alerted, police said. The shell was spotted in a field by locals, who alerted the police. The Army's bomb disposal squad was informed. PTI

## GoAir flight returns to Ahmedabad after glitch

MUMBAI An Airbus A320neo scheduled to operate a GoAir flight from Ahmedabad to Kolkata suffered a technical glitch soon after take-off on Wednesday, forcing it to return to Ahmedabad. GoAir clarified that all the passengers were accommodated in another aircraft.

## Rahul, Priyanka to address rallies in T.N.

CHENNAI Congress president Rahul Gandhi is likely to address two rallies in Tamil Nadu in February, while AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will take part in one of them, newly appointed TNCC president K.S. Alagiri said on Wednesday.

## Hiking MSPs distorts agri market: official

**+ Cash transfers are a better option'**

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A senior Finance Ministry official has slammed a key plank of the government's agriculture policy, saying that raising minimum support prices (MSP) for major crops causes distortions in the agriculture market. This leads to a vicious cycle of oversupply of such crops and a crash in market prices, said the official, adding that cash transfers are a better strategy than increased MSPs.

The Centre's 2018 decision to hike MSPs for all major crops to 50% more than the cost of production is a major element of the National Democratic Alliance government's strategy for the agriculture sector; it has also featured prominently in the BJP's political messaging to the farming community at a time of agricultural distress.

In the run-up to the last Lok Sabha elections in

## Network booster

India's latest communication satellite GSAT-31 was successfully put into orbit in the early hours of Wednesday by a European rocket from French Guiana, in a mission that is expected to enhance connectivity for ATMs and ensure uninterrupted DTH services

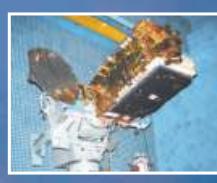
- GSAT-31 is India's 40th communication satellite. It is configured on ISRO's enhanced I-2K bus and will augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in the geostationary orbit

## GSAT-31 WILL SUPPORT

- VSAT networks
- Television uplinks
- DTH-television services
- Cellular connectivity
- ATMs

GSAT-31 being launched by Ariane 5 from French Guiana. ■ ISRO, ARIANESPACE

SALIENT FEATURES			
Lift-off mass:	2,535 kg	Spacecraft power:	4.7 kW
Mission life:	15 years	Payload:	Ku-band transponders
Coverage area:	Indian mainland and islands		



GSAT-31 has a unique configuration of providing flexible frequency segments and coverage  
DR. K. SIVAN, ISRO Chairman

- 2 Ku-band beacon downlink signals are transmitted by the satellite for ground tracking purpose

Source: ISRO, PTI

## No relief for Virbhadr Singh

HC says it won't interfere with trial court order to frame charges in assets case

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday declined to interfere with a trial court decision to frame charges against former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadr Singh in a disproportionate assets (DA) case.

Justice Sunil Gaur sought the CBI's response on Mr. Singh's plea challenging the trial court order. It then posted the case for further hearing on April 16.

The 82-year-old Congress leader and his wife have



ven others in the case lodged by the CBI.

"Let the charges be framed in the trial court. I am not going to pass any interim order," the judge said.

## Charges on Feb. 22

The High Court was informed by senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing Mr. Singh, that the matter is listed before the trial court on February 22 for formal framing of charges.

During the hearing, CBI special public prosecutor

Anil Grover told the court that the agency had already filed an appeal before the Supreme Court challenging a limited part of the High Court's March 31, 2017 order in which it had said that the consent issue will be adjudicated by the trial court and notice was earlier issued to Mr. Singh.

In the Supreme Court, the CBI has sought clarification on the nature of sanction needed from a government to probe any offence committed in the State.

(With PTI inputs)

## 2 senior officers shunted out of CBI

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD

Two Deputy Inspector Generals (DIG) Anish Prasad and Abhay Singh have been shunted out of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the first move by the newly appointed Director Rishi Kumar Shukla to put the country's premier investigation agency in order.

Mr. Prasad, a 2003 batch Tripura cadre IPS officer, has not only been removed from the CBI but also prematurely repatriated to his parent cadre, while Mr. Singh has been placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for his next posting.

The order came two days after Mr. Shukla took over as CBI Director on Monday.

Earlier, the government had, similarly, removed two senior officials Rajesh Asthana and A.K. Sharma from the agency following an bitter wrangle between former Director Alok Verma and Special Director Rakesh Asthana.

## TRAI claims DTH, cable bills will come down

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Wednesday claimed that customers' DTH and cable bills will come down following the new tariff norms for the broadcasting sector that came into effect on February 1. TRAI Chairman R.S. Sharma said the data sourced by the regulator from two operators shows that prices had come down

in Mumbai and Delhi under the new framework. "There is a reduction of 10-15% on average for most of the users in these regions."

The statement follows a recent Crisil report as per which the tariffs for TV users could go up by 25% due to the new framework.

"The objective of the new framework is not price. It is more important that consumers will get a choice," he said.

## 7 convicted in Muzaffarnagar riots case

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUZAFFARNAGAR

A local court on Wednesday held seven men guilty of killing two youths in Kawal village in an attack which is said to have triggered the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots that led to the killings of over 60 people.

Additional district and sessions judge Himashu Bhattacharya convicted Muzammil, Mujassim, Furkan, Nadeem, Janangir, Afzal and Ikbal for killing Gaurav and Sachin on August 27, 2013 and rioting, said district prosecution counsel Rajiv Sharma.

The sentences would be pronounced on Friday.

According to the First Information Report, the two youths of Kawal village under the Jansath police station area were battered to death by the five of these men. The court convicted the seven after examining 10 prosecution witnesses and six witnesses for the defence side.

## Hindu Mahasabha leader, husband held

They had re-enacted Mahatma Gandhi's assassination

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha (ABHM) secretary Puja Shakun Pandey and her husband Ashok Pandey, who were accused of re-enacting the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary in Aligarh last week, were arrested on Wednesday.

Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Aligarh Neeraj Jadaun said the two were intercepted at Tappal, near a road that cuts into the Yamuna Expressway near Aligarh. Both had submitted a surrender application in court.

An FIR had been lodged against ABHM's spokesperson Mr. Pandey, Ms. Pandey, and a dozen other members of the right-wing outfit for enacting the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in their private compound. They were charged with committing deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings, and



One voice: A file photo of Congress workers protesting in Mumbai against the Hindu Mahasabha. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

for promoting enmity between different groups, among other sections of the Indian Penal Code.

With the arrest of the Pandey couple, so far nine out of the 11 persons identified in the video related to the case have been arrested, Mr. Jadaun said.

While being taken to court, Ms. Pandey reiterated her stand, saying she had "no regrets" regarding her action.

While the incident took place within the private

compound of the ABHM, it came to light through a video shared online by the outfit itself. In the footage, Ms. Pandey, dressed in a sari, is seen firing shots at an effigy of Gandhi with an artificial pistol thrice. Fake blood oozes out of the effigy, which some participants termed as "dirty." The participants then hail Godse and raised slogans such as, "Mahatma Nathuram Godse amar rahi." The effigy is then set on fire and an image of Godse garlanded.

## HC grants relief to Nalini Chidambaram



Nalini Chidambaram, a Saturday. Ms. Chidambaram, a resident of Chennai, had feared that the Central Bureau of Investigation might arrest her any moment following the filing of a supplementary chargesheet in the case before a trial court in West Bengal on January 11.

Justice G.K. Ilanthyaran provided the clarification at the insistence of senior counsel A.R.L. Sundaresan, who said there was some delay on the part of his counterparts in West Bengal in applying for regular anticipatory bail before the jurisdictional court there.

+

Hence it was necessary to issue a clarification in view of the threat of arrest, he said.

The judge had granted the interim inter-State advance bail after holding a special sitting on January 12, when she could not move the jurisdictional court in Kolkata seeking regular bail, Justice Ilanthyaran had entertained her plea for interim anticipatory bail. However, he restricted the relief for a period of four weeks.

## SPECIAL REPORTER

CSIR-NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

इंटरस्कॉप एस्टेट डाक घर, पापनामो, तिरुवनंतपुरम्-695019

Industrial Estate P.O., Pappanamcode, Thiruvananthapuram-19

विभाग सं./Advt. No.: PA/01/2019

वाक-इन्टरव्यू / Walk-in-interview

निम्नलिखित पूर्णीय पदों को भरने के लिए यह संस्थान पात्र उम्मीदवारों को वाक-इन्टरव्यू के लिए अप्रतिलिपि करना है।/ This Institute invites eligible candidates for a Walk-in-interview for filling up the following purely temporary positions.

क्र. पद का सं. नाम	SI Name of Post	योग्यता Qualification	शैक्षणिक Stipend	आयु सीमा Max. Age Limit	वाक-इन्टरव्यू की तारीख Date of Walk-in-interview
1 PA-II	M.Sc. Chemistry with minimum 55% marks.	Rs.25,000/- + HRA		30 years	
2 RA-I	Ph.D. Chemistry. Desirable: Expertise in Synthetic Organic Chemistry.	Rs.36,000/- + HRA		35 years	15.02.2019
3 PA-II	M.Sc. Chemistry with minimum 55% marks.	Rs.16,000/- (Consolidated)		30 years	
4 PA-II	M.Sc. Inorganic Chemistry / Chemistry with minimum 55% marks.	Rs.25,000/- + HRA		30 years	
5 PA-II	M.Sc. Chemistry / Material Science with minimum 55% marks.	Rs.25,000/- + HRA		30 years	18.02.2019
6 PA-II	M.Sc. Chemistry / Material Science with minimum 55% marks. Desirable: Project work experience in processing of nanomaterials and fabrication of coatings.	Rs.25,000/- (Consolidated)		30 years	
7 PA-II	M.Sc. in Food Science & Technology OR B.Tech in Food Engineering/Technology with minimum 55% marks.	Rs.25,000/- + HRA		30 years	19.02.2019
8 PA-II	M.Sc. in Biochemistry/Medical Biochemistry with minimum 55% marks.	Rs.25,000/- + HRA		30 years	
9 PA-II	M.Sc. Biotechnology/Microbiology with minimum 55% marks. Preference to: RF/NET/GATE/ BET Qualified Candidates.	Rs.25,000/- + HRA		30 years	21.02.2019
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प्रशासन संचयक/ Controller of Administration

## Major runway repairs at Mumbai airport till March 30



## Tough-talking

India must ensure it's not cut out of the resolution process with the Taliban

The Taliban reconciliation process is moving at a faster pace than was anticipated. Talks facilitated by Russia in Moscow this week, with mainstream Afghan politicians sitting around the table with Taliban leaders, are similar in their approach to the recent U.S.-Taliban talks in Qatar, though the two are rival processes. The U.S. and Russia have accepted the idea that peace in Afghanistan is not possible without major concessions to the Taliban, including dialogue without insisting on a cessation of violence. In the duration of the Moscow conference alone, Taliban fighters killed 47 security forces personnel in attacks in Kunduz, Baghlan and Samangan provinces. The U.S. and Russia have, in separate processes, agreed to sidestep the Ashraf Ghani regime in Kabul, and accepted the Taliban's condition that it will not negotiate with the elected Afghan government at this stage. And both the Russian and U.S. processes are dependent on cooperation from Pakistan, which retains its influence over the Taliban leadership. Clearly, the current talks with the Taliban are not within the "red lines" agreed to by all stakeholders in the past: they are not Afghan-led, owned or controlled, and the Taliban has not abjured violence, or sworn allegiance to the Afghan constitution before joining talks.

However, despite the deep and obvious misgivings in New Delhi, it would be pointless to ignore or reject the outcomes of the talks, where some progress has been made. The U.S. has managed to bring senior Taliban leaders to the table, and is discussing the contours of its ultimate withdrawal from the Afghan war. The Taliban has unequivocally renounced ties with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, and committed to preventing Afghan soil from being used by foreign terrorists. For its part, Russia has hosted conferences where Taliban leaders sat down with members of the Afghan High Peace Council and senior Afghan politicians, including some contesting in this year's presidential elections. While India's principled position that it will not directly or publicly talk to the Taliban until it engages the Afghan government remains valid, it is necessary that India stays abreast of all negotiations and isn't cut out of the resolution process. It is hoped that a robust channel is open between Indian intelligence agencies and all important groups in Afghanistan, including the Taliban, in order to ensure that Indian interests, development projects and citizens are kept secure. New Delhi must intensify its dialogue with regional and global stakeholders, and impress upon them that any dialogue with the Taliban must not come at the cost of the hard-fought victories of the Afghan people in the past two decades: on establishing constitutional democracy and the rule of law, and securing the rights of women and minorities.

## Checks and balance

Seeking a count of 50% of VVPAT slips is too much; the focus should be on ending glitches

In a significant and welcome change from their earlier demand for a return to paper ballots, representatives of a large section of the mainstream Opposition parties met the Election Commission (ECI) to demand changes to the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail counting process during the general elections. Returning to paper ballots will be regressive. The Electronic Voting Machine process, despite the plethora of grievances about its functioning from the Opposition parties, is a major improvement over paper-based voting. There has been no evidence of EVM-tampering as claimed by some parties, and administrative and technical safeguards instituted by the ECI and EVM manufacturers have held steady since the introduction of the EVM. Despite this, the ECI had fast-tracked the implementation of the VVPAT, an adjunct to the EVM that allows for a paper trail for voting and later verification of the electronically registered mandate in the ballot unit of the EVM. VVPATs are now deployed in all Assembly and parliamentary elections with EVMs. This implementation has not been without some misgivings. The Opposition's demand for a count of 50% of the VVPAT slips, as opposed to the current system of counting VVPAT slips in one randomly selected booth of each constituency, is aimed at ensuring that EVMs have not been tampered with. ECI safeguards are robust enough to prevent this, but VVPAT recounts could eliminate any remaining doubt about possible "insider fraud" by errant officials or manufacturers.

While the demand to count half of all the slips is an over-reaction, as a scientifically and randomly chosen sample of booths is a reasonable enough verification for the process, there remains the question whether counting one booth per constituency is a statistically significant sample to rule out errors. A more robust sampling technique that factors in the average size of the electorate in any constituency for each State and voter turnout, involving the counting of more than a single booth in some States, may be a better method. The ECI's response that it is waiting for a report on this from the Indian Statistical Institute should be encouraging. The other issue with the VVPAT is more significant: machine glitches. During the parliamentary by-elections in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and Assembly elections in Karnataka in 2018, VVPAT glitches resulted in machine replacement rates rising to 20% and 4%, respectively. Glitches in the VVPAT machines were largely due to spooling issues in the print unit, which was sensitive to extreme weather. Some hardware-related changes were introduced, which improved its functioning in the recent elections in five States. Machine replacement rates due to VVPAT failures came down to 1.89% for Chhattisgarh. Deployment of improved machines should help curb glitches in the Lok Sabha elections.

# Ayodhya and the challenge to equality

The Ram temple issue remains a metaphor for Muslim disenfranchisement



SUKUMAR MURALIDHARAN

In elections to three State Assemblies of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh late last year, candidates of the Muslim faith won 11 of the 520 seats in play. That would seem a modest tally, by no means evidence of disproportionate political influence.

The myth of a pampered minority, though, refuses to die. On the campaign trail last November, Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the Congress party of pressuring Supreme Court judges, on pain of impeachment, to delay a final decision on the Ayodhya title suit. The charge stems from a lineage of propaganda invented by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which holds the Congress guilty of the cynical politics of Muslim appeasement.

Secularism in India has been variously characterised, though few of these have done justice to the vigour with which the issue was debated in the Constituent Assembly. In the aftermath of Partition, seen as the outcome of the community-based template of political competition introduced under British rule, secularism was an article of faith across the ideological spectrum, though only in a limited definition as a seamless sense of national identity.

### A superfluity

Minority representation was discussed at length and set aside as a superfluity. There was no case for assured representation on communal lines, since the guarantees of equality before the law and access to public services and employment would ensure fair out-

comes for all.

Ananthasayam Ayyangar put it thus, addressing an interlocutor from the minority community in the Constituent Assembly: "I am a Hindu and if you allow me to represent you, I will come to you at least every four (sic) years. Similarly a Muslim man can come to Hindus. Ultimately, we will all come together." For Sardar Patel, the possibility of both separate communal electorates and assured representation was unthinkable, no less than an incentive for certain citizens to "exclude" themselves and "remain perpetually in a minority".

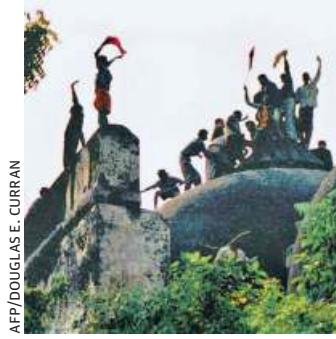
Equality embraced the right to be different, though not a difference in rights. Exceptions would be granted only where classes of citizens were known to have suffered a deficit of social and cultural capital on account of discrimination through history. The construct of a "minority" segued into a notion of social and educational backwardness, remediable over generations through procedures of affirmative action.

These were formulations steeped in unwitting upper caste privilege, a sense that the Constituent Assembly – elected on a very narrow franchise and voided of its more eloquent minority spokespersons by Partition – spoke for a true nationalism at risk of dilution by sectarian demands.

### A narrower identity

In the real world of dislocation and trauma, Partition witnessed a number of local vigilante efforts to inscribe a narrower identity on the incipient nation. The surreptitious introduction of idols into the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, where a dispute over building rights on an adjacent site had simmered since the late 19th century, was one such act, though by no means the only one.

It is on record that Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wrote insis-



tently to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh at the time, Govind Ballabh Pant, insisting that the idols smuggled into the Babri Masjid should be removed. Less known is his suggestion in a 1949 letter to the Minister, Mehr Chand Khanna, of a wider problem involving the expropriation of a number of Muslim places of worship.

Nehru's insistence on the reversal of these intrusions gradually receded from the attention span of governments at the State and local levels. Ayodhya, like numerous other incidents from the time, would have faded into the distant recesses of memory had not the politics of waning upper caste hegemony and the decline of the Congress provided occasion for it to spark back to life.

If equality was a constitutional promise impossible to reconcile with upper caste hegemony, identity was a serviceable alternative. From about the 1980s, the seamless spirit of the Indian nation that was so much a concern of the Constituent Assembly, gave way, at least in electoral competition, to the construct of a nation of multiple identities, contending for influence over the whole.

### The U.P. strategy

From its birth in the 1980s, the Ayodhya campaign has been a metaphor for a minority faith's disenfranchisement. And nowhere is this story told more eloquently than in India's largest State, Uttar

Pradesh, where Muslims constitute over 19% of the total population, and hold a mere 24 seats in a 403 member Legislative Assembly. This tally from the 2017 election is the lowest since 1991, when Muslim representation in a somewhat larger State Assembly, prior to the hill districts being hived off, stood at 21.

That year, when the BJP first won power in U.P., marked the prelude to the climactic act of destruction at Ayodhya. But political energies were spent once the offending 16th century monument was effaced. The BJP was unable to mobilise the same fervour in elections that followed, never gaining a majority of its own till the sweep of 2017.

Analysis by the Trivedi Centre for Political Data, at Sonipat's Ashoka University, shows that the BJP's electoral strategy in U.P. was built on a 60 versus 40 calculation. With Muslims and two other caste groupings – Yadavs and Jatavs – making up roughly 40% of the State's electorate, the BJP strategy targeted the remaining 60%. Key to the BJP's sweep of the U.P. elections was its success in drawing in a critical mass of votes from strata that had reason to feel aggrieved at their exclusion from the dominant coalitions shaping politics post-Ayodhya.

### To loose a standard

The endless turmoil caused by Ayodhya compels a reexamination of other fundamentals of the Constitution. Articles 27 and 28 have been read as reproducing, though in a weaker fashion, the guarantee of secular statecraft of the U.S. First Amendment, which prohibits the establishment of any religion by law.

Though the Indian state is enjoined to neutrality, religion is allowed an active role in the public sphere under Article 25, which assures every citizen the freedom to

"profess, practise and propagate" any faith.

By definition, every religion enters the fray with a claim to universality; no religion is willing to accept a domain of application limited in time and space. The unfettered exercise of Article 25 rights in this sense puts the general will at risk of being bent to a majoritarian assertion. The restraint of "public order" mandated by the Constitution is too loose a standard to prevent the intrusion into politics of religious majoritarianism.

In his recent book, *A People's Constitution*, Rohit De speaks of how in the early years of Indian independence, "electoral minorities", i.e., communities of caste and religion that were unlikely to "represent themselves through electoral democracy", were overrepresented in litigation invoking the writ jurisdiction of newly established constitutional courts. Clearly, the Ayodhya petition claiming the restitution of a monument commandeered in the name of another faith was one such instance.

With electoral compulsions now acquiring increasing urgency, the BJP government has demanded that the Supreme Court unfetter a large part of the land held in trust pending a final settlement of the case. Party spokesmen have also mused aloud about issuing an ordinance as an act of executive will to preempt an adverse judicial finding. This attempt to dismantle the last remaining restraint to the majoritarian will is sure to fuel a new fervour in the upcoming general election, putting further pressure on the institutions of governance and challenging their capacity to uphold constitutional integrity.

**Sukumar Muralidharan teaches at the school of journalism, O.P.Jindal Global University, Sonipat**

## Trump and his generals

For all their discord, no one appears to know how to manage chaos at a time of U.S. retreat



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN

Not even U.S. President Donald Trump's worst enemies would deny that he has fulfilled many election campaign foreign policy promises, including opting out of international agreements on climate change, the Iran nuclear accord and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, and pressuring allies to pay more for joint defence. A matter for surprise then, is that another Trump campaign pledge, to end the 'endless wars' and bring American troops abroad back home, specifically to withdraw U.S. forces from Syria and Afghanistan, is met with denunciation and open or indirect obstruction from both civilian and military circles.

### The opposition within

This opposition, marked by some high-level resignations such as Secretary of Defence James Mattis – which have been accorded martyr status by the media – has been provoked by Mr. Trump's decision to repatriate some 2,000 forces from Syria and around 7,000, which is around half the total number, from Afghanistan. Mr. Trump's moves are condemned as

isolationist and favouring the 'enemies' of the U.S., especially Russia and Iran. Regarding Afghanistan, his opposition was not astute enough to perceive that the drawdown was a necessary prelude to direct negotiations with the Taliban. The objectors also imply that Israel is exposed to greater danger, a cause certain to enjoy bi-partisan favour. General Mattis, in his resignation letter, wrote he was leaving "because you have the right to have a Secretary of Defense whose views are better aligned with yours." It is amazing that it took him two years to detect any misalignment.

No proposal to draw down the U.S. military presence abroad will be acceptable to Mr. Trump's critics, because the American military-industrial complex referenced by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1961 still holds the civilian authority in thrall, and since World War I, U.S. foreign policy has been totally militarised. To every international problem, Washington has only two responses: the application of sanctions, and the threat or use of force.

Mr. Trump is vilified as isolationist by the mainstream media, evidence that the neo-imperial spirit and god-given right to hold military hegemony is deeply internalised in the entire U.S. establishment. So also is the Francis Fukuyama prediction that "the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution [is] the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as



the final form of human government." Insinuations about a sell-out foreshadow whatever contact Mr. Trump wishes to make with the only world power that can incinerate the U.S., though every previous U.S. leader held talks with his Russian counterpart to make the world a safer place. This has less to do with Special Counsel Robert Mueller's interminable inquiry about Russian collusion, and more with the imagining of America's role in the world. The *New York Times* writes of a "world order that the U.S. has led for 73 years since the Second World War", accusing Mr. Trump of reducing that "global footprint needed to keep that order together".

The same theme is dutifully echoed by compliant European allies such as Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel, who in July 2018 bewailed that under Mr. Trump the U.S. could not be relied upon to "impose order". But whose order?

Mr. Trump is wrong in asserting that the U.S. destroyed the Islamic

State (IS) in Syria, not only because there are some remnants of it left, but because while U.S.-coalition aircraft have dropped ordnance from several thousand feet and killed innumerable civilians in the process, the actual fighting against the IS has been done by Kurds in northeast Syria, and the Assad government, Russians, Iranians and Hezbollah elsewhere. The small U.S. contingent of about 2,000 serves to train and supply the Kurds, constrain the Turks and obstruct progress towards a peace settlement. As elsewhere, the Americans are ready to fight till the last local soldier. Mr. Trump has the support of Congress, media and the military on a tough line on Iran – again, a campaign promise – but in West Asia, Mr. Trump outsources local action to allies such as Saudi Arabia, turning a blind eye to its criminal activities in Yemen and also the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

In the process of demonising Mr. Trump, accountability, responsibility and civilian oversight are discarded, while people in uniform and in the shadows – the ubiquitous U.S. intelligence services – are raised on lofty pedestals, encouraging dissidence. To no surprise, Mr. Trump's announcements have resulted in a flurry of alarmist reactions. As demanded by the media and Congress, the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration cancelled meetings with its Russian counterpart, and an end to U.S.-Russia col-

laboration in space appears probable. The Pentagon now reports that China seeks expansion by "military and non-military means" and military bases in Pakistan, Cambodia, and elsewhere that the American public has never heard of. The Pentagon concludes that China is "developing the capacity to dissuade, deter, and defeat a potential third-party [read, U.S.] intervention in regional conflicts". With a second summit between Mr. Trump and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un in the offing, the media is predictably cautioning against any reduction of U.S. forces in South Korea as a result of any U.S.-North Korean détente, with head of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford, weighing in to predict that China "probably poses the greatest threat to our nation by about 2025".

### Last word with Iran

The last word rests with Iran, regarded as an enemy by both Mr. Trump and his domestic adversaries. When U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed in January that "when America retreats, chaos often follows", Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif countered by tweeting, "Whenever and wherever US interferes, chaos, repression, and resentment follow." No one in the United States is listening.

**Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Implementing the NRC

The ground realities as far as implementation of the National Register of Citizens in Assam are concerned – and that have been pointed out in the article, "A national register of exclusion (Editorial page, February 6) – are alarming. As usual, this is yet another instance by those in charge implementing an important policy decision without adequate preparation. In a country where corruption is rampant and elementary government work goes un supervised, the sorry plight of those affected in Assam will only be prolonged unless the government quickly introduces a more refined and civilised way of compiling the NRC (Page 1,

"Home Ministry is trying to 'destroy' NRC process, says SC," February 6).

**SRUTHI BABU,  
Thiruvananthapuram**

■ Although the Supreme Court of India is supervising the NRC exercise, it does not appear that the issues of local identity and its authentication process are being addressed. A closer look at the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and the NRC exercise reveals the potential to take away the political rights of the Scheduled Tribes of Assam, which is guaranteed in the Sixth Schedule – in particular, land rights. Rather than implementing Clause 6 of the Assam Accord and the provisions of the Sixth Schedule in letter and

spirit, the ruling party, both at the State and Central levels, appears to be playing the card of identity and religious politics only to garner votes. The Central government must rectify procedural complexities through necessary institutional arrangements to enable a smooth NRC exercise that does not exclude the citizenship rights of local people.

**NAYAKARA VEERESA,  
Bengaluru**

**Bullet train route**  
It is sad to read about the clearance given to the 'bullet train' project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad which will lead to wildlife sanctuaries being affected (Page 1, "Bullet train gets green light via flamingo

haven, national park", February 6). Can development be at the cost of wildlife which is already suffering because of alarming human development? It is ironic that while we are well aware of the need for more power to be given to programmes such as "Save the Tiger" and other wildlife campaigns, we clear, without second thoughts, mega-projects that are detrimental to the eco-system. One only hopes that good sense prevails and alternative routes are found.

**VARGHESE GEORGE,  
Secunderabad**

■ Being a prestigious project that was initiated by none other than the Prime Minister, it is quite obvious that the ministries

concerned are on a fast-tracking approval spree just before the general election. One is not sure how far compensatory afforestation or site restoration proposals would prove effective in maintaining the ecological balance. Under the guise of development, India's forest lands are being encroached upon with impunity, leaving many species in distress. It is also disputable whether the bullet train project will be cost effective and completed in time, given the right of way issues that would surface from time to time.

**V. SUBRAMANIAN,  
Chennai**

**Team West Indies**  
There are several reasons behind the gradual decline of West Indies cricket ('Sport'

page, "When West Indies do well, the world rejoices", February 6). With the retirement of some of the greatest cricketers names in the early 1990s, countries in the West Indies opted for athletics as their chosen field. The subsequent years too were mired in issues regarding payment due to a paucity of funds with the cricket board. As pointed out, the disharmony and clash of egos have also exacerbated the decline. There has only been mediocrity in the available pool of cricketers. It is only natural that rebuilding the side has been

# We need a leap in healthcare spending

India needs to focus on long-term investment, not only episodes of care



T.S. RAVIKUMAR  
& GEORGI ABRAHAM

The Central and State governments have introduced several innovations in the healthcare sector in recent times, in line with India's relentless pursuit of reforms. However, while the government's goal is to increase public health spending to 2.5% of GDP, health spending is only 1.15-1.5% of GDP. To reach its target, the government should increase funding for health by 20-25% every year for the next five years or more.

While the Interim Budget is responsive to the needs of farmers and the middle class, it does not adequately respond to the needs of the health sector. The total allocation to healthcare is ₹61,398 crore. While this is an increase of ₹7,000 crore from the previous Budget, there is no net increase since the total amount is 2.2% of the Budget, the same as the previous Budget. The increase roughly equates the ₹6,400 crore allocated for implementation of the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY).

## Per capita spending on health

According to the National Health Profile of 2018, public per capita expenditure on health increased from ₹621 in 2009-10 to ₹1,112 in 2015-16. These are the latest official numbers available, although in 2018 the amount may have risen to about ₹1,500. This amounts to about \$20, or about \$100 when adjusted for purchasing power parity. Despite the doubling of per capita expenditure on health over six years, the figure is still abysmal.

To understand why, let's compare this with other countries. The U.S. spends \$10,224 per capita on healthcare per year (2017 data). A comparison between two large democracies is telling: the U.S.'s health expenditure is 18% of GDP, while India's is still under 1.5%. In Budget terms, of the U.S. Federal Budget of \$4.4 trillion, spending on Medicare and Medicaid amount to \$1.04 trillion, which is 23.5% of the Budget. Federal Budget spending per capita on health in



the U.S. is therefore \$3,150 (\$1.04 trillion / 330 million, the population).

In India, allocation for healthcare is merely 2.2% of the Budget. Per capita spending on health in the Budget in India is ₹458 (₹61,398 crore / 134 crore, which is the population). An estimated ₹250 crore has been allocated for setting up health and wellness centres under the National Urban Health Mission. Under the National Rural Health Mission, ₹1,350 crore has been allocated for the same. The non-communicable diseases programme of the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke has been allocated ₹175 crore, from ₹275 crore. Allocation to the National Tobacco Control Programme and Drug De-addiction Programme is only ₹65 crore, a decrease of ₹2 crore. The allocation for each of the wellness centres is less than ₹1 lakh per year. This is a meagre amount.

The ₹6,400 crore allocation to Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY in the Interim Budget will help reduce out-of-pocket expenditure on health, which is at a massive 67%. This notwithstanding, per capita Budget expenditure on health in India is among the lowest in the world. This requires immediate attention.

## Health and wellness centres

Last year, it was announced that nearly 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres would be set up under Ayushman Bharat. The mandate of these centres is preventive health, screening, and community-based management of basic health problems. The mandate should include health education and holistic well-

ness integrating modern medicine with traditional Indian medicine.

Both communicable disease containment as well as non-communicable disease programmes should be included. An estimated ₹250 crore has been allocated for setting up health and wellness centres under the National Urban Health Mission. Under the National Rural Health Mission, ₹1,350 crore has been allocated for the same. The non-communicable diseases programme of the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke has been allocated ₹175 crore, from ₹275 crore. Allocation to the National Tobacco Control Programme and Drug De-addiction Programme is only ₹65 crore, a decrease of ₹2 crore. The allocation for each of the wellness centres is less than ₹1 lakh per year. This is a meagre amount.

History shows that where there is long-term commitment and resource allocation, rich return on investment is possible. For instance, AIIMS, New Delhi is the premier health institute in India with a brand value because of resource allocation over decades. AIIMS Delhi alone has been allocated nearly ₹3,600 crore in the Interim Budget, which is a 20% increase from last year. Similar allocation over the long term is needed in priority areas.

**Prevention and its link to GDP**  
NITI Aayog has proposed higher taxes on tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy food in order to revamp the public and preventive health system. This has not found its way into the Interim Budget. A focused approach in ad-

ding tax on tobacco and alcohol, to fund non-communicable disease prevention strategies at health and wellness centres, should be considered. Cancer screening and prevention are not covered. There is no resource allocation for preventive oncology, diabetes and hypertension. Prevention of chronic kidney disease, which affects 15-17% of the population, is not appropriately addressed. The progressive nature of asymptomatic chronic kidney disease leads to enormous social and economic burden for the community at large, in terms of burgeoning dialysis and transplant costs which will only see an exponential rise in the next decade and will not be sustainable unless we reduce chronic kidney disease incidence and prevalence through screening and prevention.

Due to lack of focus in preventive oncology in India, over 70% of cancers are diagnosed in stages III or IV. The reverse is true in developed countries. Consequently, the cure rate is low, the death rate is high, and treatment of advanced cancer costs three-four times more than treatment of early cancer. The standard health insurance policies cover cancer but only part of the treatment cost. As a consequence, either out-of-pocket expenditure goes up or patients drop out of treatment.

Increase of GDP alone does not guarantee health, since there is no direct correlation between GDP and health outcomes. However, improvement in health does relate positively to GDP, since a healthy workforce contributes to productivity. We don't mean to say that funding must be redirected from current allocations to preventive care. The 1,354 packages for various procedures in PMJAY must be linked to quality. For various diseases, allocation should be realigned for disease management over a defined time period, not merely for episodes of care. Further, the health sector must be made a priority area, like defence. Since a major innovation in universal healthcare is being rolled out, it must be matched with a quantum leap in funding. Only if we invest more for the long-term health of the nation will there be a similar rise in GDP.

Dr. T.S. Ravikumar is Director of JIPMER, Puducherry, and Dr. Georgi Abraham is Professor of Medicine at Pondicherry Institute of Medical Sciences

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# At the cost of quality

The decision to provide financial rewards for publication in science journals and patents is fraught with problems



R. PRASAD

On January 30, a little more than four years after the last hike, the Ministry of Science and Technology increased the fellowship stipend for PhD students by nearly 25%. The government says the hike will be reviewed periodically. Since the increase is far less than the 80% hike that research fellows have been demanding for the last six months, they have decided to continue with their protests. The government is also planning to provide "financial and academic incentives to enhance and recognise the performance of research fellows", for which an Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee has been set up. Excerpts of the Committee's recommendations, tweeted by the Department of Science and Technology on February 2, provide a glimpse of the financial rewards to be given for publication and patents. While the modalities are yet to be worked out, offering financial rewards for publication is a bad idea.

## Cause for concern

Giving rewards based on papers published in journals, and determining the incentive based on whether the paper is published in an international or Indian journal, is fraught with problems. In China, for example, researchers were given about \$44,000 in 2016 for a single paper published in prestigious journals such as *Nature* and *Science*. The impact factor (a proxy for the relative importance of a journal) of journals was used to calculate the prize money for publication. This led to an unprecedented increase in unethical research practices and frauds committed by Chinese researchers. This could also happen in India, which already has an ignominious record in this area and has no nodal body to address scientific frauds and unethical practices.

In India, a one-time financial reward of ₹50,000 and ₹20,000 has been recommended for a paper published in an international and Indian journal, respectively. This is a "hare-brained scheme," says P. Balaraj, former director of the Indian Institute of Science and former editor of *Current Science*. "Whoever has come up with this is ignorant of the history of scientific publishing. They will destroy research (with this scheme)." It is worth remembering that though the University Grants Commission's

intent to introduce Academic Performance Indicators was good, APIs were largely responsible for the spike in predatory journals published from India. There is little guarantee that the reward system based on publication will not lead to further erosion in the quality of science research in India.

In addition, giving greater rewards for publication in international journals makes no sense as international journals are not uniformly superior in quality to Indian ones. While *Nature*, *Science*, *Cell* and *The Lancet* are prestigious, there are many journals which are of poor quality. Similarly, some Indian journals are better than international ones despite having a low impact factor.

"If average or below average papers are submitted to Indian journals, the overall quality of the journals will be low compared with international titles," says Professor Balaraj. By giving 60% lower stipend to students publishing in Indian journals, the government will unwittingly be widening the gap between Indian and international journals, which will be self-destructive in the long run.

Also, "Indian science suffers from deep-rooted, structural problems – fellowships get delayed and project funding is not released on time," says Gautam Menon, a computational biologist at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai. He argues that "the government should reward good research with generous funding and fewer constraints." With hundreds of papers being published each year, it is debatable whether the government will be able to provide incentives given that research labs have reportedly been facing a fund crunch of late.

## Reward for patents

The proposal to provide students an incentive of ₹10,000 on obtaining a patent (Indian or international) is a bigger recipe for disaster. While obtaining a patent is not difficult, it costs ₹10,000-₹30,000 to file a patent in India. Drafting the patent costs an additional ₹50,000 and there is also an annual renewal fee. Also, not all patents translate into products. The Science Ministry has not learnt from the mistakes of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). In late 2016, the CSIR instructed its 38 labs to stop indiscriminate filing of Indian and foreign patents. Then CSIR Director-General Girish Sahni had said that a "majority of patents are 'biodata' patents" and had been "filed for the sake of filing without any technological and legal evaluation". In such a scenario, a financial incentive for patent-filing will only exacerbate the problem.

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## SINGLE FILE

### A worrying approach

Will Ayushman Bharat hurt the spirit of cooperative federalism?

SUJATHA RAO

With West Bengal, Telangana, Delhi and Odisha not joining Ayushman Bharat, the question arises whether the scheme is hurting the idea of cooperative federalism. The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution makes States responsible for hospital services. The States have their own schemes to provide financial risk protection to those seeking medical relief. Based on the ongoing centrally sponsored scheme, the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, the Central government launched an improved version in 2018 called the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) for a sum assured of ₹5 lakh per family per year.

The insistence to prefix Ayushman Bharat to existing State names and the despatch of a personalised letter to 7.5 crore families with only the Prime Minister's photograph were seen as attempts to attribute the entire credit to the current administration, though State governments are equal partners – funding 40% of the scheme, bearing the responsibility of its implementation and covering double the number of beneficiaries.

Given that the Central government transfers funds to States through the Finance Commission, Central Sector Schemes and the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, it is expected of the National Health Agency (NHA) to build an institutional architecture, standardise procedures, costs and access all data for effective monitoring. This is important as it is accountable to Parliament and the Comptroller and Auditor General for the proper utilisation of allocated funds. But such standardisation can stifle innovation and entail costly structures that may not accommodate local conditions, preferences, and cost-effective solutions. Instead, when funds are provided, subject to achieving certain goals, States have scope to innovate, model the design to fit their context, resource base, epidemiological status, level of development, take total ownership and be accountable for outcomes.

The NHA's approach does not appear to be built on consensus. Its model consists of outsourcing the vital functions of pricing services, pre-authorisations, scrutiny of bills, grievance redressal, and fraud detection to private companies and third-party administrators. This may increase administrative costs from the current 6% to 30%, as seen in the Medicare scheme of the U.S.

Besides, the policy of providing fiscal incentives to the private sector to establish hospitals in deficit areas without insulating government-owned facilities or the small and marginal hospitals that together provide 95% of hospital care will tighten the grip of corporates on secondary and tertiary markets. This will result in cost escalations – more so because of the rapid consolidation and aggregation of tertiary hospitals by foreign financial conglomerates and private equity funding agencies, impacting prices, access to tertiary care and the very sustainability of the NHPS.

The writer is a former Union Secretary at the Ministry of Health, Government of India, and author of 'Do We Care? India's Health System'



## FAQ

### Pension for informal sector workers

The government has allocated only ₹500 crore for the scheme

T.C.A. SHARAD RAGHAVAN

#### What is the scheme?

A major announcement in the Interim Budget 2019-20 was the creation of the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan, a pension scheme for informal workers. Under this scheme, subscribers will receive an assured monthly pension of ₹3,000 per month from the age of 60 onwards. Towards this, they will have to contribute ₹55 a month (if they join at the age of 18 years), or ₹100 a month (if they join at the age of 29 years). The government will match these contributions. The government has reportedly set a cap on the age of joining at 40 years, but this is yet to be officially confirmed by the Labour Ministry.

#### Whom does it include?

In his Budget speech, Finance Minister Piyush Goyal said half of India's GDP comes from the work

done by 42 crore workers in the unorganised sector, such as street vendors, rickshaw pullers, construction workers, rag pickers, agricultural workers, beedi workers, those engaged in the handloom and leather industries, and domestic workers. He said the government must provide these workers with a "comprehensive social security coverage" in their old age. The Shram Yogi Mandhan scheme is aimed at achieving that, and therefore includes all informal sector workers with an income of less than ₹15,000 per month. According to the government, this works out to 10 crore people.

Finance Ministry officials have suggested that the pension payouts could be made directly in the workers' accounts, which would be Aadhaar-linked.

#### What will the government spend?

So far, the government has

allocated just ₹500 crore for the scheme, but this is likely to be increased in the full Budget that will be presented in July. An analysis of the Interim Budget documents shows that the allocation for the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan could possibly come at the expense of an existing pension scheme – the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) – announced last year to benefit more than three crore poor senior citizens, disabled people, and widows.

The NSAP had originally been allocated ₹9,975 crore in the 2018-19 Budget, which was reduced to ₹9,200 crore in the Interim Budget 2019-20, which is a drop of ₹775 crore.

**Will the scheme work?**  
Social sector workers have pointed out that creating a voluntary contributory pension scheme for informal sector workers is not feasible. Answers are awaited on all these questions.

ies are low. The argument is that they already pay large amounts as indirect taxes.

Further, for a salaried worker, the pension contribution can be cut from the salary. A daily wage earner or migrant labourer will, however, have to regularly deposit her income each month, which is an uncertain proposition.

#### What lies ahead?

The government is silent on what happens to the scheme if an informal sector worker misses a contribution. Does the worker become disqualified from the scheme? If so, what happens to the amount already contributed? Will the government refund the worker that amount, or will that amount be forfeited? Another matter to be considered is what happens to a worker who transitions to the formal workforce. Answers are awaited on all these questions.

## FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 7, 1969

130 million tonne food target for Fourth Plan

The Planning Commission has accepted a food production target of 130 to 132 million tonnes by the end of the Fourth Plan. This target has been projected on the basis of a 100-million tonne potential this year. The production targets suggested for the major cash crops along with their estimated base-level production this year are: Oilseeds 10.90 million tonnes (8.90), sugarcane (gur) 15 million tonnes (12.50), cotton 8 million bales (6), jute 7.40 million bales (6.20), and tobacco 445 million kg. (345). While an annual growth rate of five per cent has been postulated for agriculture as a whole, the growth rate for foodgrains works out to 5.7 per cent. This is proposed to be achieved by continuing the intensive agricultural strategy.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 7, 1919

Sir R. Tagore. Visit to Coimbatore.

Sir Rabindranath Tagore and Mr. C.F. Andrews arrived [in Coimbatore] by mail train from Ootacamund yesterday [February 5]. At the railway station a large gathering of Indian gentlemen of all shades of opinion and of standing assembled and accorded a fitting welcome. Rao Bahadur A.T. Tiruvelangadu Mudaliar, a much respected leader, as President, and Mr. K.S. Vaithianatha Aiyar, M.A., the Principal of the College and Secretary to the Reception Committee, received the world famous poet. Those prominent on the platform were Messrs. Sambanda Mudaliar, Municipal Chairman, C.S. Ratnabathy Mudaliar, non-official President, Taluk Board, Kolavelu Pillay, leader of the local Brahmo Samajam, Kirk Theosophical Education Trust, Miss Noble, Superintendent, Maranagandu Free Girls School, Rao Saheb Ramaswami Sivan, Secretary, National Indian Association, Rai Bahadur M. Rangachariar, Mr. K.V. Srinivasar and others.

## CONCEPTUAL Liquidity premium

FINANCE

Also known as the illiquidity premium, this refers to the additional return that an investor can earn from any investment that cannot be immediately liquidated for cash in the market. Risk-averse investors generally try to avoid investing in highly illiquid assets like real estate due to the time it takes to sell these assets. This causes successful investors in illiquid assets to earn a much higher return than other investors who prefer to invest only in highly liquid assets. By the same logic, since most investors would be willing to invest in highly liquid assets, the returns from such investments generally turn out to be lower than the returns from illiquid investments.

## MORE ON THE WEB

Music, a companion that knows how to soothe

<http://bit.ly/2DeOTNb>

FROM PAGE ONE

## Bench reserves orders on Sabarimala review pleas

But the Kerala government countered the review petition, saying courts can set aside religious practices which violated fundamental rights like dignity of women. "The touchstone of our Constitution is 'you will not discriminate or exclude'", senior advocate Jaideep Gupta submitted for the State.

The TDB supported the State, saying the spirit of the judgment is equal entitlement for man and woman in

society. But Ms. Jaising said her two clients have faced death threats and social exclusion for daring to worship at Sabarimala.

Lastly, advocate P.V. Dinesh for two other Kerala-based women who filed a contempt of court petition, asked the court: "If it is believed that a 10-year-old girl child can breach the naishika brahmacharyam of a God, then a child is being portrayed as a sexual object!"

## Unregulated deposit schemes to be banned

The Bill creates three different types of offences: (i) running of unregulated deposit schemes, (ii) fraudulent default in regulated deposit schemes, and (iii) wrongful inducement in relation to unregulated deposit schemes.

**Heavy penalty**  
The government said the Bill provides for "severe punishment and heavy pe-

cuniary fines" to act as a deterrent. Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said penalties could involve jail term as well as the sale of the offenders' assets to pay back the defrauded party within set timelines. "The Bill has adequate provisions for disgorgement or repayment of deposits in cases where such schemes nonetheless manage to raise deposits illegally," the release said.

## Panel defers resort project at Andamans

The new rules, in general, gave greater flexibility to development and infrastructure projects.

"...The committee observed that as the area where the premium resort is proposed seems to be in an ecologically very fragile and is biodiversity rich, a sub-committee shall undertake a site visit to assess the likely impact of tourism activities on the eco-system... the proposal in its present form is premature for its consideration for appraisal ... and therefore deferred," read the minutes of the meeting conducted on January 25.

**Waste management**  
The committee also expressed "concern" over the management of solid waste collection, treatment and disposal, and how these would be managed once the project was commissioned and handed over to the

managers of the resort. There were similar concerns with the proposal to set up luxury tents. "About 5.4 metric tons (MT)/month of solid waste would be generated during operation phase, out of which 3.2 MT would be biodegradable and 2.2 MT non-biodegradable," the minutes said.

The arrival of domestic tourists in A&N islands rose from over 2.02 lakh in 2011 to over 3.84 lakh in 2016. The inflow of foreign tourists was stagnant at around 15,000, according to the NITI Aayog in a presentation in August 2018.

When the latest CRZ rules were announced in December, environmentalists had raised concerns that the A&N islands – already vulnerable to soil erosion and threat of climate change – would be further susceptible to environmental challenges from infrastructure development.

## Minimum income akin to rural job guarantee: Rahul

'Will ensure it is credited to account of every poor person'



Poll promise: Rahul Gandhi at a public meeting in Bhawanipatna in Odisha on Wednesday. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

to the accounts of every poor person," he asserted. "The time for jokes and deceit is over."

Mr. Gandhi also repeated his poll promises of a crop loan waiver and the revision of minimum support price to ₹2,600 per quintal of paddy to win over voters in western Odisha.

The Congress leader also promised to make improvements to the land acquisition act that would ensure the return of the acquired land to the landowner if industry failed to use it in five years. He added that land belonging to the poor and the tribals would not be acquired without consulting them. Moreover, land would

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## BRIEFLY



## Kharola to head Civil Aviation Ministry

AHMEDABAD  
The Centre on Wednesday appointed Pradeep Singh Kharola, Chairman and Managing Director of Air India, Secretary of the Civil Aviation Ministry. Mr. Kharola, a 1985-batch Karnataka-cadre IAS officer, took the reins of the debt-ridden national carrier in January 2018. In the Ministry, he replaces Rajiv Nayan Choubey, who is now a UPSC Member.

## Bangladesh Foreign Minister arrives in India

NEW DELHI  
Bangladesh and India are set to sign five agreements during a meeting between their Foreign Ministers on Friday. Diplomatic sources said the agreements would be signed during the 5th Joint Commission Meeting on Friday between External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and her counterpart, A.K. Abdul Momen, who arrived in India on Wednesday. He is expected to meet former President Pranab Mukherjee.

## Yet to receive MHA notice on police chief: Mamata

KOLKATA  
West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said that the State government is yet to receive any notice from the Ministry of Home Affairs for taking disciplinary action against Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar for allegedly violating service conduct rules. The Chief Secretary or the Home Secretary will reply to the notice after it was received, she told reporters at the State secretariat. "I asked them whether they had received any such letter. They said no," Ms. Banerjee said. PTI

## Centre bans Kashmir outfit

Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen banned for 'terrorist attacks, besides subversive acts'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI / SRINAGAR

The Union Home Ministry has banned the Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for promoting terrorism and radicalising and recruiting youth for terrorist activities in India.

Set up in the 1990s, TuM claims to be fighting for the "liberation of Kashmir," the Ministry said in a notification announcing the ban.

"The TuM carried out a number of terrorist attacks besides subversive acts, namely grenade attacks, weapons snatching incidents, supporting other terrorist outfits such as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), etc. in terms of financial and logistic support in the recent past," the Ministry said.

Last year, eight TuM men

## Spreading terror

The govt. has banned the Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen for radicalising and recruiting youth for terrorist activities

- Mostly well-educated urban youth belonging to the outfit had carried out grenade attacks on checkpoints and snatched weapons from security forces in the past
- Last year, eight members of the group were killed
- TuM played a major role in the commission of terrorist acts and a number of its cadres have been arrested



were killed in various operations by security forces. Mostly, well-educated and belonging to urban settlements, the "gang" members had carried out grenade attacks on checkpoints and snatched weapons from security forces in the past. The TuM is headed by Jamil-

Rehman of Lajora in Pulwama. The Ministry said the Jammu and Kashmir Police had in the recent past registered a number of cases, in which it found that the TuM had played a major role in the commission of terrorist acts and a number of its cadres had been arrested.

"TuM is running terrorist training centres for Kashmiri youth and is likely to recruit more youth from Jammu and Kashmir; The members of TuM are getting financial and logistic support from their handlers based abroad," the Ministry said. "The Central government believes that TuM is involved in terrorism as it has committed and participated in various acts of terrorism in India," it added.

## TuM response

A TuM spokesman said the ban would be used as an "election plank" by the Modi government. He said the resolution of Kashmir issue was in India's interest. "It should resolve this issue in the light of UN resolutions. This way this country can get over poverty and hunger," the spokesperson said.

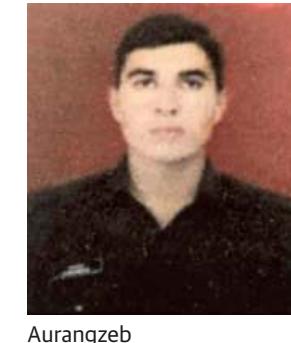
## Three soldiers under lens in killing of Aurangzeb

May have leaked information on colleague to militants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SRINAGAR

Three soldiers are being questioned over their possible involvement in leaking information about the movement of their colleague Aurangzeb, who was abducted and killed by militants in south Kashmir last year, Army sources said on Wednesday.

The three are suspected to have knowingly or unknowingly leaked information, the sources said.



Aurangzeb

providing all possible cooperation so that those involved in the killing are brought to justice, they said.

One of the soldiers under the scanner is the brother of Tauseef Wani, who was allegedly tortured by an Army officer in Shadimarg camp, where Aurangzeb was post-

ed, the sources said.

Wani is currently undergoing treatment at the SMHS hospital here.

## He was on leave

Aurangzeb, who was proceeding on leave for Id on June 14, 2018 was abducted and later shot in the head and neck.

The body was found by a team of police and Army officials at Gussu village, about 10 km from Kalampora, in Pulwama district, from where he was abducted.

Aurangzeb had hitched a ride from a private vehicle outside his camp in Shopian but was being tracked by militants, who stopped the car and abducted him a few kilometres away.

## BJP attacks Cong. on 'fake' report of 'attempted coup'

Demands emergency meet of Parliamentary Committee

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

G.V.L. Narasimha Rao

BJP spokesperson G.V.L. Narasimha Rao on Wednesday said that an emergency meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence would be convened after a news report in a weekly suggested that a few Cabinet Ministers in the previous United Progressive Alliance II government had "floated a fake and baseless" story of an attempted coup by the Army.

Mr. Rao, a member of the committee, asked if Con-

gress president Rahul Gandhi had any role in the matter. "It was not just a political conspiracy but an attempt to defame the Indian Army," he

alleged. "This was a drama, a conspiracy. Via this, a plot was hatched to defame the Army. The country's top intelligence officials, when they tell the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that it's a hoax, this matter should have ended there. What was the motive behind floating the fake and baseless story about the Army coup," Mr. Rao asked.

Asked about the media re-

port, former Defence Minister A.K. Antony said he had given detailed answers on this issue in Parliament.

## LeT militant killed, jawan injured

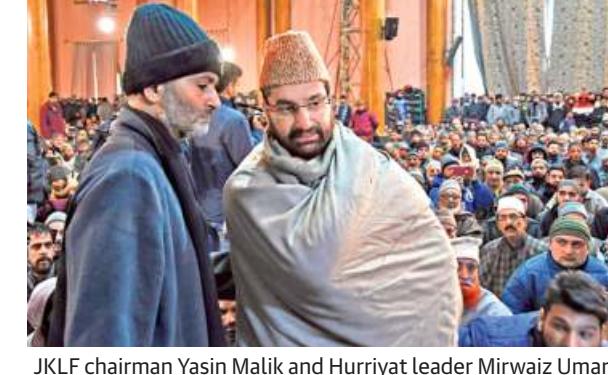
JKLF chief Yasin Malik detained while taking out a protest march in Srinagar

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

A Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militant was killed in an shoot-out and a jawan of the Central Reserve Police Force injured in a grenade blast in separate incidents in south Kashmir on Wednesday.

A Srinagar-based police spokesman said Irfan Ahmed Sheikh was killed when he and other militants fired at a joint patrolling party in his locality, Chakpora, in Pulwama.

"He was affiliated with the LeT and was known as a district commander. Sheikh has a long history of terror crime records, for which several



JKLF chairman Yasin Malik and Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. The former was arrested during a march. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

blast in Pulwama in January, died in a Srinagar hospital.

## JKLF chief held

The authorities on Wednesday detained JKLF chief Yasin Malik when he started a protest march to press for the release of "political prisoners", in the Lal Chowk area here. "Putting voices of dissent in jails and claiming democracy are two opposite things," Mr. Malik said.

A call for the rally was issued by the Joint Resistance Leadership, comprising Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Yasin Malik, to highlight the plight of Kashmiri inmates in jails.

## INTERVIEW | AMAR SINHA

## + India doesn't gain from talks with Taliban now'

Ex-Afghan envoy suggests SAARC route to engage Kabul

## SUHASINI HAIDAR

*India gains little by engaging the Taliban directly at this stage, says Amar Sinha, former Ambassador to Afghanistan and member of the National Security Advisory Board, countering Army chief General B.P. Rawat's call for India to 'join the bandwagon' in talks. On Wednesday, a two-day intra-Afghan dialogue of Afghan leaders and the Taliban, which did not include the Ghani government, ended in Moscow.*



Once the Taliban agrees to speak to other groups in Afghanistan, India should be willing to host a Jirga

they will support Chabahar and other Indian projects.

Even so, Army chief Bipin Rawat said that India must 'jump on the bandwagon' of talks with the Taliban....

I don't think the Army chief would suggest that in South Asia, where India should have a leadership role, we should jump on to anyone's bandwagon. We must engage Afghanistan through SAARC and evolve a policy for post-U.S. pullout.

You were a part of the Indian non-official delegation that travelled to Moscow to sit at the table along with the Taliban. How far will the Indian government go on this?

The general political leadership in Afghanistan now accepts that the Taliban are Afghans at the end of the day, and we should accept that. The issue is, what sort of a government they run, and how they enter it. India would want that the democratic process, which has evolved over these past 10 years, is not jettisoned. That is the only fair way in assessing what the people of Afghanistan want. The Taliban can always take power through a coup or Kalashnikovs, but that doesn't lead to stability.

India has taken a position on standing with the government in Kabul and not engaging the Taliban directly ... has it been left out of the Taliban process as a result? ■ I wouldn't say so. Our engaging the Taliban directly adds no value at this stage. Firstly, we lack access and equity with the Taliban. Secondly, the Taliban's policies are too heavily governed by Pakistan and until those ties are loosened, it will be pointless for India to make a move. It will also be pointless to go ahead of the government in Kabul or public opinion in Afghanistan, because our biggest asset is the goodwill India has in the Afghan mind. Even the Taliban recognises that, and said in its statement this week that

Is there any scope for India to take a leadership role in Afghan reconciliation?

■ My personal view is, yes. Once the Taliban agrees to speak to other groups in Afghanistan, India should be willing to host a Jirga

we are a safe country and a neutral country. We don't pose a threat to either the Taliban or the others, and we don't choose winners or losers. Plus we have a huge Afghan population living in India, especially the younger generation that want their voice heard.

Constituted on the directives of the Supreme Court, the SIT will submit its report to the State government in six months.

Based on a petition filed by Manjeet Singh and others, the apex court has asked the State government to form the SIT.

Competitors will begin with grievances, but that is the only way reconciliation can happen. Eventually, the real reconciliation will have to happen outside foreign offices.

How can India ensure that the situation doesn't return to 1996, when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan with Pakistan's help?

■ I don't think we have to do much to ensure that. The Afghans will ensure that, and even the Taliban will ensure it. It is time for Pakistan to recognise they must let go, and treat Afghanistan as a sovereign country.

It may be seen as a great strategic victory for Pakistan for a few years, but the fault-line between Taliban and Pakistan will emerge eventually. Afghanistan is a proud nation.

Sohab won't be overrun again as it was in 1996? ■ Well, one must qualify that. If it is just the Taliban versus the ANSF (Afghan National Security and Defence Forces), then I don't think they can beat the Afghans.

## SIT to probe 1984 riots in Kanpur

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has constituted a four-member Special Investigation Team to probe the 1984 Sikh riots in Kanpur, in the aftermath of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination, an official said on Wednesday.

The SIT headed by former Director General of Police Atul has been tasked with "threadbare investigation" of cases in which the accused have been let off after the initial probe and a final report has been filed by the police, according to informed sources.

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## KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED

Deputy Chief Engineer (Commercial & Planning) Thiruvananthapuram Phone: +91 471 2514473, 9446008581, E Mail: dce.p@kseb.in

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PR/PC 1/F 119/ 2019

KOHLAKATA PORT TRUST KOLKATA DOCK SYSTEM

KoPT invites tender no. KoPT/KDS/Mech/C/ADV/514 for engagement of Consultant for Project Management Consultancy for Renovation of Bascule Bridge at Kolkata Dock System, Kolkatta Port Trust. Estimated cost: Rs. 6,57,75,45/- plus GST. Last date of submission: 11.03.2019 by 14.00 hrs. For details, please visit: [www.kolkataporttrust.gov.in](http://www.kolkataporttrust.gov.in)

Tender ID: 2019\_KMML\_264668\_1 AGM(MS)

For The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

Central Coalfields Limited

A Miniratna Company (A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

(PBX) 2360605, 23360585, 2365998, CGM (MM) 2360716

Fax (91) 06512360198 Email: gmmncc@coalindia.in Website:

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Advertisement No.: CCL/MMD/SR.MGR(P)/ALLOY STEEL/(R)-08/19-20, Tender Desc : PROCUREMENT OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ALLOY STEEL, Estimated Value (Rs.) : 19470000, Last Date of Submission : 28-FEB-19, Tender Opening Date : 27-FEB-19, Tender documents can be downloaded and bids can be submitted online through website - <https://coalindiatenders.gov.in> Tender Type : DOMESTIC. By General Manager(IIMI), CCL, Darbhanga House, Ranchi for Procurement of following items from eligible Tenderers as mentioned in the tender document.

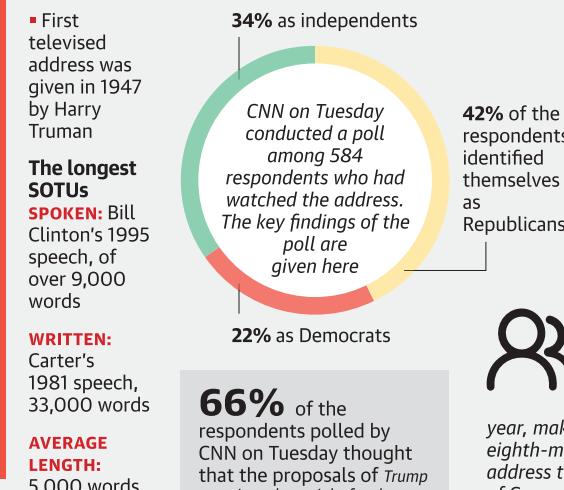
Tender Sl. No. : 084, Tender Ref. No. : CCL/MMD/SR.MGR(P)/ALLOY STEEL/(R)-08/19-20, Tender Desc : PROCUREMENT OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ALLOY STEEL, Estimated Value (Rs.) : 19470000, Last Date of Submission : 28-FEB-19, Tender Opening Date : 27-FEB-19, Tender documents can be downloaded and bids can be submitted online through website - <https://coalindiatenders.gov.in> and opened electronically on the due date mentioned above. No other form of tender submission will be accepted. For further details interested bidders may refer to NIT document available in word format in websites of [www.centralcoalfIELDS.in](http://www.centralcoalfIELDS.in), <a href="http://www.eprocure.gov.in

## Facing the nation

President Donald Trump delivered his second State of the Union (SOTU) speech on Tuesday night, one that has also been called the most partisan, with most of the viewers being ardent Trump supporters. Here are some key facts, figures and findings on the event and how Trump compares to other Presidents on SOTU

### Facts on SOTU

- The first SOTU was given by President George Washington in New York City in January 1790
- Not all Presidents have opted to give SOTU. And among those who have given it, not all have opted to give it in speech
- Since 1913, 19 SOTUs have been in written form, most recently by President Jimmy Carter in 1981



**66%** of the respondents polled by CNN on Tuesday thought that the proposals of Trump were just about right for the country, 7% felt that they were not conservative enough and 25% felt that they were too conservative

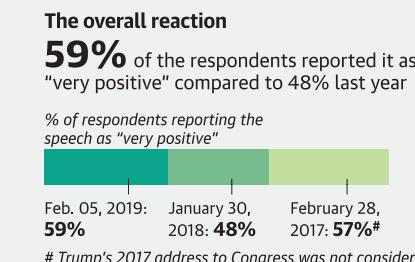
No opinion: 8%

Will succeed 39%

Will not succeed 53%



Nearly 46 million viewers tuned into Trump's speech last year, making it the eighth-most-watched address to a joint session of Congress. Bill Clinton's 1993 speech figures at the top in terms of viewership numbers, with about 67 million viewers, according to Nielsen



President	Year	Viewership*
Clinton	1993	66.9
Bush	2003	62.1
Clinton	1998	53.1
Obama	2009	52.4
Bush	2002	51.8
Obama	2010	48
Trump	2017	47.7
Clinton	1994	45.8
Trump	2018	45.6
Bush	2007	45.5



Word	2019	% *	2018	%
Tax	5	0.09%	16	0.26
Jobs	11	0.19%	13	0.12%
Border	16	0.28%	6	0.10%
Drugs	5	0.09%	10	0.17%
Immigration	7	0.12%	11	0.19%
Terrorism	2	0.01%	9	0.15%
Wall	13	2.03%	2	0.48%
Afghanistan	3	0.04%	2	0.03%
Korea	2	0.04%	8	0.07%
Iran	2	0.04%	3	0.05%

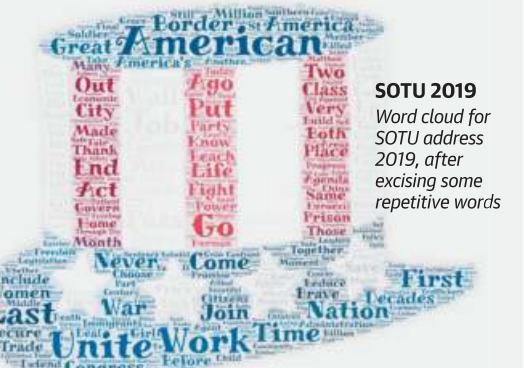
(\*% of speech)

**Immigration and national security are Trump's key priorities**

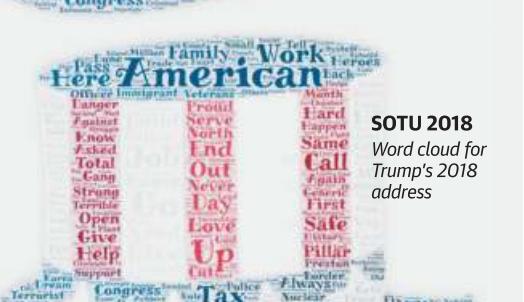
**The President is also serious about bringing troops back from Afghanistan and Syria**

**The shutdown was a stunt engineered by the president of the United States, one that defied every tenet of fairness and abandoned not just our people, but our values.**

— STACEY ABRAMS, DEMOCRATIC PARTY, ON SOTU



**SOTU 2019**  
Word cloud for SOTU address 2019, after excising some repetitive words



**SOTU 2018**  
Word cloud for Trump's 2018 address

SOURCE: MENTALFLOSS.COM, CNN, CNBC, BERKELEY.EDU, AP

# Trump calls for bipartisanship, but holds on to divisive themes

In the State of the Union address, President presses his hard line on immigration, says he will get the wall built

### SIRRAM LAKSHMAN

WASHINGTON Speaking words of bipartisanship, U.S. President Donald Trump delivered a State of the Union (SOTU) address that suggested he would continue to pursue policies that have most deeply divided the country.

Standing in front of Nancy Pelosi, the House Speaker, Mr. Trump delivered an hour-and-twenty-minute speech that exposed, in parts, a chasm between his words and the reality of his governance.

"Millions of our fellow citizens are watching us now, gathered in this great chamber, hoping that we will govern not as two parties but as one nation," he said, adding, "...we must reject the politics

of revenge, resistance and retribution – and embrace the boundless potential of cooperation, compromise, and the common good."

However, he quickly swivelled to the migrant caravan – a concept Mr. Trump has often used to fire up his voter base and back his claims for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"The lawless state of our southern border is a threat to the safety, security, and financial well-being of all America," Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Trump called on his audience to "defend our very dangerous southern border" and portrayed the issue in class terms. "No issue better illustrated the divide between America's working class and America's political

class than illegal immigration."

Among the guests at Tuesday's show were the family of a couple who had been killed allegedly by an "illegal alien".

Mr. Trump has frequently demonised illegal migrants to get support for his headline on illegal immigration and his demand for a border wall, this despite data showing that more crimes are committed by native-born citizens than by undocumented migrants in the U.S.

### Smart barrier

Of the border wall, Mr. Trump said: "I'll get it built". His demand for a wall and the Democrats' refusal to allow a physical structure across the 2,000-mile border

had shut the government down for a record 35 days over December and January. The President and Congressional Republicans – not all of whom support his wall idea – will have to come up with a deal by February 15 when key parts of the federal government will run out of budgetary authorisation again.

"This is a smart, strategic see-through steel barrier... deployed in the areas... having the greatest need," Mr. Trump said of his proposal, suggesting that there may be scope for an agreement with Democrats who have shown a willingness to consider a "smart wall" and increased money for border security.

In what appeared to be a thinly veiled threat to the ongoing Mueller investigation and Democrats who now chair powerful House over-

sight committees, Mr. Trump said: "An economic miracle is taking place in the United States – and the only thing that can stop it are foolish wars, politics or ridiculous partisan investigations."

"If there is going to be peace and legislation, there cannot be war and investigation," he added.

At least one part of Mr. Trump's speech had unintended consequences for him. Taking credit for the economy, the President said: "No one has benefited more from our thriving economy than women, who have filled 58% of the newly created jobs last year," a comment that resulted in a standing ovation, which was joined by Democratic women dressed in white for the evening to mark 100 years of the women's right to vote. They were elected to the House af-

and said he would increase funding for childhood cancer research.

The President also said he would ask Democrats and Republicans for more funding for the eradication of HIV in America within a decade.

millions of people killed," Mr. Trump said. On Afghanistan, Mr. Trump said of U.S. negotiations with stakeholders including the Taliban, "We do not know whether we will achieve an agreement...the hour has come to least least try for peace."

Mr. Trump's speech dwelt on military themes both at the start and as it wound down. He introduced among his guests, a former American soldier, Herman Zeitchik, who had helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp and sitting next to Mr. Zeitchik, Joshua Kaufman, who had been a child inmate of Dachau at the time of the liberation.

Talking of the sacrifices American's had made in this past, towards the end of his speech, Mr. Trump said, "I am asking you to choose greatness."

## Venezuela military blocks aid shipment

Maduro believes it will lead to invasion

### AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

CARACAS

Venezuelan military officers blocked a bridge on the border with Colombia ahead of an anticipated humanitarian aid shipment, as Opposition leader Juan Guaidó stepped up his challenge to President Nicolás Maduro's authority. Earlier on Tuesday, the Opposition-dominated National Assembly warned the armed forces, which make up Mr. Maduro's power base, not to cross a "red line" by blocking aid.

Mr. Guaidó claims that up to 3,00,000 people face death if the aid is not delivered. However, Mr. Maduro said humanitarian aid would be the forerunner of

a U.S.-led invasion, insisting that "no one will enter, not one invading soldier".

Venezuelan military officers used a tanker truck and huge shipping container to block access to the Tienditas bridge, which links Cucuta, Colombia to Urena, Venezuela.

## Stay out of politics, Pak. SC tells armed forces

Military's role in 2017 protests criticised

### AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Supreme Court rebuked the military and intelligence agencies on Wednesday, asking them to uphold free speech and stay out of politics in a country ruled by the Generals for nearly half its existence.

The unusually strong criticism was issued in a judgment released criticising the role of the intelligence agencies in anti-blasphemy protests which paralysed the capital Islamabad for several weeks in 2017.

"Any personnel of the Armed Forces indulges in any form of politicking or tries to manipulate the media, he undermines the integrity and professionalism of the Armed Forces," the judgment stated.

**It's unconstitutional** Pakistan's Constitution "emphatically prohibits" members of the armed forces from "engaging in any kind of political activity", it added, ordering the government and the Chiefs of the Army, Air Force and Navy to take action against anyone found violating their oaths to uphold the document.

Videos of the 2017 protests showing what appeared to be soldiers handing out cash to protesters helped fuel speculation that the demonstrators were backed by the military.

"If any personnel of the Armed Forces indulges in any form of politicking or tries to manipulate the media, he undermines the

integrity and professionalism of the Armed Forces," the judgment stated.

**Talking to militants:** Participants attending the opening of the two-day talks in Moscow on Tuesday. • AFP

agreed in Doha to withdraw half its ground troops by the end of April – and the process had begun. "The Americans agreed to withdraw half of their troops immediately. The withdrawal will start from February 1 and continue until end of April," said Abdul Salam Hanafi, deputy head of the Taliban's political office in Doha. But U.S. negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad has stressed that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. 'Everything' must include an intra-Afghan dialogue and comprehensive ceasefire".

The U.S. has issued no de-

fails on any potential withdrawal plan.

Mr. Ghani spoke with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo late on Tuesday, who had underscored the central importance of ensuring the centrality of the Afghan government in the peace process", the President said.

"The Moscow meeting is nothing more than a fantasy. No one can decide without the consent of the Afghan people," Mr. Ghani told TOLOnews. "Those who have gathered in Moscow have no executive authority. They can say what they want, but who are they representing?"

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## MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	36,975	0.98
US Dollar	71.56	0.01
Gold	34,450	-0.07
Brent oil	62.63	0.38

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	330.35	-9.45
Asian Paints	1469.40	19.05
Axis Bank	725.75	-3.75
Bajaj Auto	2770.15	59.50
Bajaj Finance	6208.65	191.55
Bharti Airtel	308.75	0.55
BPCL	339.30	1.35
Cipla	534.95	26.95
Coal India	219.95	3.55
Dr Reddy's Lab	2789.70	-31.75
Eicher Motors	21104.25	624.60
GAIL (India)	339.80	7.70
Grafix Ind	733.50	29.55
HCL Tech	1055.20	7.45
HDFC	1987.95	6.55
HDFC Bank	2122.65	8.60
Hero MotoCorp	2880.05	25.50
Hindalco	211.40	6.65
HPLC	233.90	8.75
Hind Unilever	1829.95	8.50
Indiabulls HFL	653.85	8.45
ICICI Bank	359.30	6.65
IndusInd Bank	1526.05	15.70
Bharti InfraNet	296.35	7.45
Infosys	763.30	8.45
Indian Oil Corp	137.85	4.10
ITC	277.70	3.55
JSW Steel	279.30	5.75
Kotak Bank	1279.50	0.35
L&T	1314.40	9.80
M&M	695.10	10.20
Maurit Suzuki	7183.40	89.80
NTPC	137.10	-0.95
ONGC	146.70	3.75
PowerGrid Corp	186.80	0.70
Reliance Ind	1310.25	18.40
State Bank	289.05	4.40
Sun Pharma	416.60	6.70
Tata Motors	178.50	2.70
Tata Steel	485.10	20.40
TCS	2074.80	30.25
Tech Mahindra	811.35	60.35
Titan	1059.05	-7.65
UltraTech Cement	3510.35	48.60
UPL	805.25	9.30
Vedanta	163.75	1.15
Wipro	372.20	3.75
YES Bank	176.45	0.35
Zee Entertainment	388.00	22.65

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on February 06		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	71.35	71.67
Euro	81.24	81.60
British Pound	92.41	92.83
Japanese Yen (100)	65.01	65.31
Chinese Yuan	10.57	10.63
Swiss Franc	71.30	71.63
Singapore Dollar	52.68	52.92
Canadian Dollar	54.03	54.27
Malaysian Ringgit	17.42	17.54

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI		
February 06 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses		
Retail Silver (1g)	43.6	(44)
22 ct gold (1g)	3182	(3181)

Source: Indian Bank

# Govt. diktat may cost privacy in WhatsApp

Firm says proposed changes 'overbroad', may require it to re-architect itself into a different product

**YUTHIKA BHARGAVA**  
NEW DELHI

The Indian government's proposal to make it mandatory for online platforms to trace the origin of unlawful messages is 'overbroad' and will require WhatsApp to re-architect the product into one without privacy, a spokesperson for the instant messaging app said on Wednesday.

The firm, however, did not elaborate on the plans for India, its largest market with over 200 million users, if the proposal is accepted.

"The proposed changes are overbroad and not consistent with the strong privacy protections that are important to people everywhere, not just in India but around the world," Carl Woog, head of communica-



**No snooping:** What is contemplated by the rules isn't possible, given the end-to-end encryption, WhatsApp says. ■ REUTERS

tions at WhatsApp, said in reply to a question.

He added, "What is contemplated by the rules is not possible today, given the end-to-end encryption that we provide and it will require us to re-architect What-

sapp, leading to a different product – one that will not be fundamentally private. Imagine if every message that you sent was kept with a record of the fact that you sent it and record of your phone number. And that

would not be a place for private communication."

The government and WhatsApp have been at loggerheads over the issue of tracing the origin of fake messages. The Facebook-owned instant messaging platform has said on multiple occasions that it would not comply with the government's demand as it would undermine the privacy of WhatsApp users.

The government, on the other hand, said that it did not want WhatsApp to decrypt and read messages, but insisted that it should be able to trace the origin of messages that lead to serious crimes. Mr. Woog stressed that WhatsApp 'cares deeply about creating a space for private conversations online' and that it was a private mes-

saging platform. Asked if the company would quit India if the proposed norms are adopted, Mr. Woog said the company would take one step at a time.

**Limits on group sizes**

Matt Jones, a software engineer at WhatsApp, stressed that the platform was built for private messaging. "We are not here to give people a microphone, we are here for private messaging... We place limits on group sizes and how users send messages," he said, elaborating that the platform used machine learning to crackdown on automated and bulk messaging.

WhatsApp, which has 1.5 billion monthly active users, bans about 2 million accounts every month.



helping leading banks see it see it through with Cognizant

**Calling it quits:** Cognizant has announced that Rajeev Mehta will step down as president, effective April 1, 2019. ■ REUTERS

## Cognizant picks an outsider for top job

Vodafone's Brian Humphries to be CEO

**SANGEETHA KANDAVEL**  
CHENNAI

For the first time, Cognizant has picked an outsider for the CEO's job.

Brian Humphries, currently the CEO of Vodafone Business, will take over the reins of the Nasdaq-listed IT firm from April 1.

We sought someone with a track record of success across multiple companies, industries, technologies, geographies, roles and organisational cultures. Brian fits that bill. I am fully committed to ensuring the success and Cognizant's continued growth in my current and future roles," he added.

Mr. D'Souza will serve as full-time executive vice-chairman to facilitate the transition through June 30, 2019. Thereafter, he will remain on the board as vice-chairman.

Cognizant has also announced that Rajeev Mehta will step down as president, effective April 1, 2019.

As CEO of Vodafone Business, Mr. Humphries has been responsible for its global enterprise business.

He has also held leadership positions at global technology leaders Dell and Hewlett-Packard. "I look forward to building on the great work and collaboration Cognizant has with clients, the development of innovative solutions and its operational execution and strength," a release quoted Mr. Humphries as saying.

"As a board, we embarked upon a methodical search for my successor to ensure a fully-thought through and orderly transition," Mr. D'Souza said during the earnings call.

"We sought someone with a track record of success across multiple companies, industries, technologies, geographies, roles and organisational cultures. Brian fits that bill. I am fully committed to ensuring the success and Cognizant's continued growth in my current and future roles," he added.

**Q4 revenue up 7.9%**

The New Jersey-headquartered firm saw its revenues for the fourth quarter go up 7.9% to \$4.13 billion from a year earlier. For the full year 2018, revenue increased to \$16.13 billion, up 8.9% (8.5% in constant currency) from 2017. Net profit stood at \$648 million for the quarter.

The firm also said it expects the first quarter 2019 revenue growth to be 7.5%-8.5% in constant currency and full-year revenue growth at 7.9%.

## 'Members' fiduciary responsibility with RBI'

Governor Shaktikanta Das' comments came at his predecessor's farewell

**MANOJIT SAHA**  
MUMBAI

The fiduciary responsibility of the RBI's board members lies with the central bank, its Governor Shaktikanta Das is learnt to have said.

Mr. Das, who took charge in December, had made the remark while interacting with other board members during the farewell of his predecessor Urjit Patel in a South Mumbai hotel a few weeks ago.

"Even if the government has nominated members to the board, the members' fiduciary responsibility lies with the Reserve Bank – that was his message to the board members," said a source.

The governor's comment at the farewell of his predecessor assumes significance as Dr. Patel resigned after re-



portedly having differences with the government over various issues.

At present, the central bank has 18 board members including the governor and the four deputy governors. There are 11 members, who are experts in their field, nominated by the government, besides two government officials – the Secret-

ary of Economic Affairs and Secretary of Financial Services. The RBI board is not involved in monetary policy making or any particular policy-related issues, but provides a broader vision to the central bank.

However, the board of the central bank had raised various policy related issues during the previous governor's tenure such as the issue of economic capital framework, governance of RBI, lifting prompt corrective action framework from several banks and a special package for the micro, medium and small enterprises.

**Heated board meeting**

The October 2018 board meeting became a heated one, going on for a marathon 10 hours, as the government-

## Nod for plan to continue coal exploration

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet on Wednesday approved the proposal to continue the Exploration of Coal and Lignite Scheme, which took effect in 2017-18 and will now go on till 2019-20, with an expenditure of ₹1,875 crore.

The new governor started off with an approach of consulting stakeholders, which his predecessor is said to have lacked.

"I will try and uphold the professionalism, the core values, the credibility and the autonomy of Reserve Bank," Mr. Das, a career bureaucrat who was also the finance secretary and was on the board of RBI, said after he took charge of the central bank on December 12, 2018.

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**  
Andhra Pradesh Township and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (APIDCO)  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**

EPC Tenders are invited under Tender Notice No.52/APIDCO/COT/STPs/2018-19 Dated 05.02.2019 (4th call) for construction of Sewerage Treatment Plants based on any appropriate Technology with post completion, Operation and Maintenance of entire STPs for 7 years including 2 year defect liability period under EPC/Turnkey System at Ananthapuram District. The details can be seen in Web site <http://tender.apidco.org.in>. The Principal Chief Technical Officer reserves the right to accept/reject/cancel/postpone any or all tenders without assigning any reasons thereof. Contact No. 9701671155.

DIPR 714PP/CL, Dt.05.02.2019 Sd/- 05.02.2019 PI. Chief Technical Officer, APIDCO, Vijayawada.

**OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**

**DEATH****OBITUARY**

**Mrs. Meera Harinath**  
passed away on the 6th of February 2019 at Chennai.  
**Deeply mourned by**  
Kantha Rao  
J.V. Harinath  
J.V. Sumanth  
Vaishali Chattopadhyay  
J.V. Sumedh  
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## IN BRIEF



## JFarm Services to help farmers via Uzhanv app

**CHENNAI**  
JFarm Services, an initiative of Tractors And Farm Equipment Ltd (TAFE), has been integrated with the Uzhanv app of the Tamil Nadu government to offer farmers information on tractor and farm machinery rental services. "The unique Farmer-2-Farmer feature allows farmers to rent their existing tractors and farm equipment to other farmers seeking to hire them," TAFE said in a release.

## RBI board meeting deferred to Feb. 18

**NEW DELHI**  
The meeting of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) central board, which was slated to take a call on interim dividend, has been deferred to February 18 from February 9, said sources. The board meeting, the first after the Interim Budget 2019-20, will also be addressed by the Finance Minister. The board will take a view based on the central bank's first six months of audited earnings and finalise the interim dividend transfer. PTI

## Dalmia-OCL buys GSB Group of Germany

**CHENNAI**  
Dalmia-OCL, a unit of Dalmia Bharat Group, has acquired German speciality refractory GSB Group GmbH for about ₹122 crore. Dalmia-OCL will now get access to customers in the steel and refractory making belt in Europe and technology to make cleaner steel. Sameer Nagpal, CEO, Dalmia-OCL said: "It will give us newer resources and talents in Europe to help strengthen our capability in India."

## Essar Oil UK acquires BP assets for ₹800 cr.

Deal includes 100% interest in Northampton terminal, equity stake in UKOP pipeline

**VIDYA RAM**  
**PIYUSH PANDEY**  
LONDON/MUMBAI

Essar Oil UK, part of the Essar Group, has acquired a number of U.K. assets from oil giant BP, as part of efforts to strengthen its distribution and logistics network, even as the company seeks to increase its presence across a number of markets here.

The assets include an equity stake in the UKOP north-to-south pipeline – a 200-km-long multi-product pipeline that connects the company's Stanlow refinery to the Kingsbury oil terminal. It has also acquired an equity stake in the joint venture that runs the terminal as well as a 100% stake in the Northampton fuel storage terminal. The value of these deals comes to about ₹800 crore, according to sources.

Essar Oil UK, through its



**Big-ticket buys:** Essar's total investments in U.K. now stand at \$1 bn since the firm bought the Stanlow refinery. ■ REUTERS

two wholly owned subsidiaries, namely Essar Midlands Limited and InfraNorth Limited, will acquire the BP Plc. assets. The UKOP pipeline is BP Plc.'s joint venture with Shell. The acquisitions are part of the company's efforts to strengthen its position in the U.K.'s highly competitive Midlands region and

to expand its footprint there. With these acquisitions, Essar's total investments in the U.K. now stands at \$1 billion since the company bought the Stanlow refinery in 2011.

"Essar continues to have great faith in the U.K. market, which represents an important part of the group's

**S. THANGAPANDIAN**  
Essar Oil UK chief executive

strategic business growth ambitions. The acquisition of these BP assets further demonstrates the company's ongoing commitment to investing in and growing their businesses within the United Kingdom," Essar Oil UK chief executive S. Thangapandian said. The company currently supplies 16% of the U.K.'s transport fuel demand and the acquisitions will enable it to further improve its competitiveness, he said.

He said that the company would continue to look for further acquisitions in the U.K. that met the requirements of adding long-term value and complementing

growth plans. The company is also expanding its presence in the U.K. fuel retail market, with plans to grow its network to 400 sites over the next five years.

## Retail expansion

There are already 67 Essar-branded U.K. retail sites across England and Wales – some of them supplied by the terminals that Essar has acquired stakes in. It has also been ramping up its presence in the supply of aviation fuel, both through wholesale supply to major U.K. airports, as well as direct supply to a number of airlines.

Essar will continue to look for opportunities to expand inorganically, provided the acquisitions are long term value-accretive and complements Essar Oil UK's growth plans, Essar said.



Srivats Ram

construction equipment and agricultural applications, to the U.S., Japan, Brazil, Korea, Europe and the U.K., Mr. Ram added.

In recent years, Wheels India had expanded its presence in the non-wheels segment.

The board declared an interim dividend of ₹3.25 per share.

## Strong export growth boosts Wheels India net

Firm's Q3 profit rises 18.3% to ₹15.27 cr.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI

Leading steel wheels manufacturer Wheels India Ltd. has posted an 18.28% rise in net profit for the third quarter ended December 2018 to ₹15.27 crore compared to ₹12.91 crore registered in the corresponding year-earlier period.

Revenues rose 32.77% to ₹786 crore, from ₹592 crore.

"There was a slowdown in the car and truck segments towards the latter part of the third quarter. However, the quarter saw strong growth in export markets," said Srivats Ram, managing director, Wheels India.

About 80% of the firm's business came from the domestic market, he said.

The company exported wheels, for off-road con-

## Dassault Systems opens 3D experience centre

To illustrate use of big data, analytics

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI

Dassault Systems opened its fifth global 3D experience executive centre in Chennai to showcase the real-life examples of digitalisation strategies adopted by firms across industries using 3D technology.

The centre will illustrate the usage of big data and analytics, including digital continuity in a global manufacturing company with advanced engineering capabilities from concept to sales and servicing to understand complexity, save time and reduce errors while making decision, said Samson Khaou, managing director

## Qatar Airways flyers can pay in instalments

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

Qatar Airways on Wednesday announced that flyers from India would now have a new payment option for bookings, in monthly instalments of 3, 6, 9 or 12 months respectively.

This would be available for customers with credit cards issued by Indian banks. "The service aims to ease and enhance passengers' travelling experience by making their booking transactions much more affordable and flexible. Only a minimum instalment fee needs to be paid to complete the purchase," an airline official said.

## Apex Labs eyes \$100 mn revenue

Firm aims to step up presence in overseas markets

**K.T. JAGANNATHAN**  
CHENNAI

Apex Laboratories Private Ltd., which makes zinc-based formulations, has drawn up a four-pronged strategy to drive its revenue to \$100 million by 2020 from the current \$75 million.

As part of this exercise, Apex will focus on stepping up its presence in overseas markets, including the regulated ones, and launching new products. Apex is hoping to leverage its manufacturing strength to achieve this. According to S.V. Vishagan, executive director (business development), innovation would form the fulcrum for the future growth of Apex.

A second generation en-

**C** Apex has developed and applied for patent for about 100 products

**S.V. VISHAGAN**  
Executive director, Apex Laboratories

trepreneur, Mr. Vishagan said product innovation could be the key for Apex to solidify its presence especially in the regulated markets such as Europe, the U.S. and the like. "My focus will be on how to sustain affordability of innovative medicament," he said. In this context, he said that efforts were under way for Apex to make a foray into the U.S. market.

Though the process was already on, it would take a while for Apex to enter the U.S. market, he added. To a

question, he said innovation could also mean "redesigning specific molecules for other indications".

Besides four manufacturing units in and around the city, Apex has a Department of Scientific and Industrial Research-approved R&D facility. Apex, he said, had developed and applied for patent in respect of close to 100 product brands.

The first product to come out of this facility was SOFINOX Cream in 2013 for the treatment of bacterial infections and wound care. The product has patent grant in about 22 countries. "Currently, the division is focussing on the development of dermatology products to cater to U.S. and E.U. markets."

Total income of the public sector lender was nearly flat at ₹4,756.88 crore for the December quarter of 2018-19, as against ₹4,755.33 crore in the same period of 2017-18, Allahabad Bank said in a regulatory filing.

## Allahabad Bank Q3 net loss narrows

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

State-owned Allahabad Bank on Wednesday reported narrowed net loss at ₹732.81 crore for the third-quarter ended December of the current financial year due to reduction in bad loan provisions.

The bank had posted a net loss of ₹1,263.79 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal.

Total income of the public sector lender was nearly flat at ₹4,756.88 crore for the December quarter of 2018-19, as against ₹4,755.33 crore in the same period of 2017-18, Allahabad Bank said in a regulatory filing.

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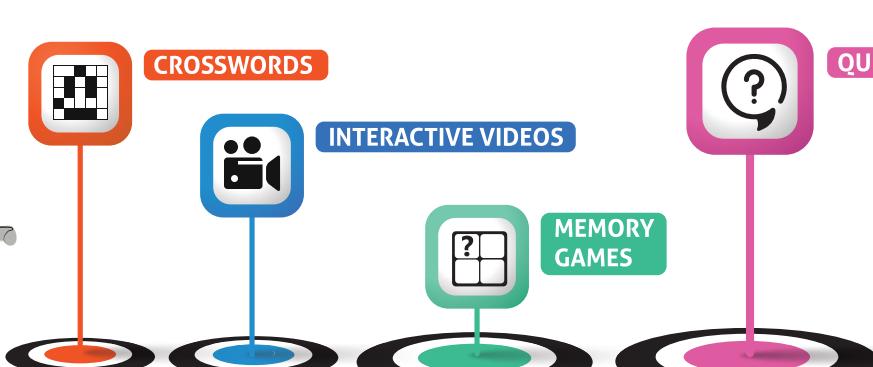
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# Seifert blitz blows away India in opener

New Zealand hands the Men in Blue their worst ever T20I defeat in terms of runs



**Scoring at will:** Tim Seifert did as he pleased while hammering 84 off just 43 balls. ■ AFP

## INDIA IN NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WELLINGTON

A below-par India slumped to its worst ever defeat in T20Is as New Zealand out-classed the visitors in all departments to win the first match of the series by a comprehensive 80-run margin here Wednesday.

Batting first, unheralded wicketkeeper-batsman Tim Seifert took the Indian bowling apart, blasting 84 off 43 balls, as New Zealand posted a commanding 219 for six.

With the opening pair of skipper Rohit Sharma (1) and Shikhar Dhawan (29) departing within the PowerPlay overs, the chase became a difficult one and India was all out for 139 in 19.2 overs.

M.S. Dhoni (39, 31b) did play his part but it was always an improbable chase

with wickets falling at regular intervals at the other end. India had never lost a T20I by 50 or more runs prior to this match. India's previous worst was a 49-run loss to Australia back in 2010.

The New Zealand bowlers, especially the two spinners – left-arm Mitchell Santner (two for 24) and leggie Ish Sodhi (two for 26) – kept the pressure on the Indian batsmen.

Tim Southee (three for 17) had the best figures among the bowlers and the best delivery of the match was bowled by Lockie Ferguson, who yorked Dhawan.

**On a leash**  
The Kiwi bowlers kept the batsmen under check and for someone like World Cup aspirant Rishabh Pant (4, 10b), it was a frustrating stay in the middle as he simply couldn't get going.

Vijay Shankar (27, 17b) impressed during his cameo but would need to do more in order to book a place in the World Cup-bound squad.

While Krunal (he also scored 20 off 18 balls) had an decent outing, Hardik would quickly like to forget the nightmare (two for 51 & 4 runs) before India plays the second match of the series in Auckland on Friday.

**Whirlwind start**  
Earlier, Seifert, whose previous best in T20Is was 14, was promoted to open alongside Colin Munro (34 off 20 balls). The two added 86 in only 8.2 overs.

Seifert's knock had seven fours and half a dozen sixes, setting the tone for a big total. He showed intent straight away, giving Bhuvneshwar Kumar the charge, picking the knuckle ball early and dispatching it over mid-

wicket for a six. He followed it by hammering a four past the bowler.

With Munro hitting Khaleel Ahmed (one for 48) for two successive sixes, New Zealand scored 44 off the first four overs.

Seifert was lucky to survive as Dhoni dropped a sharp chance after the batsman had edged one off Krunal Pandya. Hardik finally got a breakthrough when

## SCOREBOARD NEW ZEALAND VS INDIA, 1ST T20I

### NEW ZEALAND

Tim Seifert c Khaleel 84 (43b, 7x4, 6x6), Colin Munro c Vijay Shankar b Krunal 34 (20b, 2x4, 2x6), Kane Williamson c Hardik b Chahal 34 (22b, 3x6), Daryl Mitchell c Karthik b Hardik 8 (6b, 1x4), Ross Taylor c Khaleel b Bhuvneshwar 23 (14b, 2x6), Colin de Grandhomme c sub (Siraj) b Hardik 3 (4b), Mitchell Santner (not out) 7 (4b, 1x4), Scott Kuggeleijn (not out) 20 (7b, 3x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-1, w-5): 6; Total (for six wkts, in 20 overs): 219.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-86 (Munro, 8.2 overs), 2-134 (Seifert, 12.4), 3-164 (Mitchell, 14.6), 4-164 (Williamson, 15.1), 5-189 (de Grandhomme, 17.5), 6-



### Stat attack

- India had never lost a T20I by 50 runs or more. Its heaviest defeat prior to this was against Australia (49 runs, Bridgetown, 2010 World T20).

- This is the first time India conceded a 200-plus total in T20Is since August 2016 (245 vs WI, Lauderhill, USA).

- Seifert had managed an aggregate of only 42 in seven T20I innings before Wednesday's 84 off 43 balls.

- Hardik and Krunal Pandya became the second pair of brothers to feature in an India T20I XI after Irfan and Yusuf Pathan who played eight games.

first four overs.

Seifert was lucky to survive as Dhoni dropped a sharp chance after the batsman had edged one off Krunal Pandya. Hardik finally got a breakthrough when

Munro was caught in the deep by Vijay Shankar. But Seifert never let the momentum drop and hit two more sixes off Krunal, who just kept on pushing the ball through a flatter trajectory.

Chahal b Mitchell 1 (3b), Khaleel Ahmed (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-3, w-3, nb-1): 7; Total (in 19.2 overs): 139.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-18 (Rohit, 2.2), 2-51 (Dhawan, 5.3), 3-64 (Pant, 8.2), 4-65 (Vijay Shankar, 8.4), 5-72 (Karthik, 10.2), 6-77 (Hardik, 10.6), 7-129 (Krunal, 16.6), 8-132 (Bhuvneshwar, 17.5), 9-136 (Dhoni, 18.6).

### NEW ZEALAND BOWLING

Southee 4-0-17-3, Kuggeleijn 2-0-34-0, Ferguson 4-0-22-2, Santner 4-0-24-2, Mitchell 2.2-0-13-1, Sodhi 3-0-26-2.

### Toss:

**Man-of-the-Match:** Seifert.  
New Zealand won by 80 runs to lead three-match series 1-0.



R. Ashwin. ■ FILE PHOTO

cricket left in him and he has so much to offer for Indian cricket."

### Need to back Rahul

Prasad also backed top-order batsman K.L. Rahul. As if his poor run with the willow was not enough, Rahul was suspended and had to return from Australia midway through the ODI series for his derogatory comments on a television show. Prasad was confident that Rahul will regain his form soon.

"Everybody goes through those phases. Even the greatest of players have their ups and downs in their careers with regard to their form. We want KL to be among runs and that's why we have included him against England Lions and BP XI match," Prasad said.

"I think when a player who has done extremely well and is out of form, that's where we need to back him. I am sure KL will get back to form and get back into Indian team as well. He is too good a player not to be playing. We know the quality that he has. Someone who isn't exerting will not get injured. So, I have no doubt about his commitment. It's unfortunate, but he will come back strong. He has so much he will do so."

## + Women fare better but crash to 23-run defeat

Smriti's belligerent knock to no avail; Mithali dropped for first T20I

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Smriti Mandhana smashed a record half-century but the Indian women's team failed to make it count and went down by 23 runs in the opening T20I against New Zealand at the Westpac Stadium here on Wednesday.

Smriti bettered her own record for the fastest 50 by an Indian during her knock of 58. The Indian reached her 50 off 24 deliveries – beating her previous record by one delivery – and faced 34 balls in all. Her innings contained seven boundaries and three sixes.

New Zealand pacer Lea Tahuhu played a decisive role with three scalps off four overs to derail India's chase which was going smoothly till Smriti was at the crease. From 102 for one, India folded up for 136.

Smriti and Jemimah Rodrigues (39 off 33 balls) combined for a 98-run second-wicket stand. But India collapsed in the face of an

inspired performance by Lahuhi.

Earlier, opener Sophie Devine smashed a 48-ball 62 to take the White Ferns to 159 for four from 20 overs after being put in. Devine's aggressive innings was laced with six boundaries and two sixes.

With skipper Amy Satterthwaite (33 off 27 balls), she shared a 69-run stand for the third wicket and steered the hosts out of trouble after a stuttering start.

Spinners Radha Yadav and Poonam Yadav dismissed Suzie Bates (7) and Caitlin Gurney (15) cheaply to reduce the home side to 47 for two at the end of the seventh over. But the Indians failed to make a further dent as Devine and Satterthwaite denied them any success for the next 8.3 overs.

Devine and Satterthwaite fell in the space of six deliveries off the bowling of Arundhati Reddy and Deepthi Sharma in the 16th and 17th overs, but a late flourish saw New

Zealand add 38 from the final 3.3 overs. Wicketkeeper Katerina Martin remained not out on 27 from 14 balls as the

home team scored 16 off the final over.

**Rooting for youngsters**  
Mithali Raj wasn't included for the opener, with captain Harmanpreet Kaur explaining that the exclusion was due to giving more game-time to the younger players.

"We are looking to give the youngsters an opportunity," Harmanpreet said.



**Enterprising knock:** Sophie Devine's brisk start at the top helped New Zealand pile up a winning total.

■ HAGEN HOPKINS/GETTY IMAGES

## SCOREBOARD NEW ZEALAND VS INDIA, FIRST T20I

### NEW ZEALAND

Suzie Bates c Tanya b Radha 7 (6b, 1x4), Sophie Devine c Deepthi b Arundhati 62 (48b, 6x4, 2x6), Caitlin Gurney c Poonam 15 (16b, 3x4), Amy Satterthwaite c Jemimah 33 (27b, 4x4), Katerina Martin (not out) 27 (14b, 1x4, 2x6), Frances Mackay (not out) 10 (9b, 1x4); Extras (lb-1, w-4): 5; Total (for four wkts, in 20 overs): 159.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-11 (Bates, 1.3 overs), 2-47 (Gurney, 6.6), 3-116 (Devine, 15.3), 4-121 (Satterthwaite, 16.3).

### INDIA BOWLING

Arundhati 4-0-38-1, Radha 4-0-38-1, Deepthi 4-0-19-1, Anuja 4-0-33-0, Poonam 4-0-30-1.

### INDIA

Priya Punia c Katerina b Satterthwaite 4 (5b, 1x4), Smriti Mandhana c Radha 33 (34b, 7x4, 3x6), Jemimah Rodrigues c Martin b Tahuhu 39 (33b, 6x4), Dhemalatha c Katerina b Tahuhu 3 (6b), Harmanpreet Kaur st. Martin b Katerina 17 (15b,

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-4 (Priya, 0.5), 2-102 (Smriti, 11.3), 3-103 (Jemimah, 12.1), 4-111 (Tahuhu, 14.1), 5-111 (Anuja, 14.4), 6-117 (Arundhati, 16.3), 7-129 (Harmanpreet, 17.3), 8-132 (Tahuhu, 18.2), 9-136 (Radha, 18.6).

### NEW ZEALAND BOWLING

Mackay 0.3-0-4-0, Satterthwaite 1-0-3-0-1, Tahuhu 4-1-20-3, Katerina 3-0-25-2, Mairi 3-0-31-1, Devine 3.1-0-24-1, Katerina 4-0-28-2.

### Toss:

**Player-of-the-match:** Tahuhu.

New Zealand won by 23 runs to take a 1-0 lead in three-match series.

## Confident India-A takes on wounded Lions

Players will look for a maiden call-up — or return — to National squads

P.K. AJITH KUMAR  
KRISHNAGIRI (WAYANAD)

Green is the colour you notice most as you travel to Krishnagiri.

After driving up the hill – and past the nine hairpin bends – you are greeted by more greenery, in the shape of tea plantations, paddy fields and trees of various kinds on either side of the road.

The Wayanad Cricket Stadium looks very green too, with its lush outfield. The wicket, though, doesn't quite unlike it did during the last two matches here.

So the first 'Test' between India-A and England Lions, which starts on Thursday, is likely to last longer than the Ranji Trophy knock-out games last month.

Kerala had defeated Gujarat inside three days in the quarterfinals before crashing to an innings defeat within two days in the semifinals at Thiruvananthapuram, this would be another good opportunity to get back in form and to get over his difficult period.

Other batsmen in the squad, captain Priyank Panchal, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Ricky Bhui and Siddhesh Lad will be keen to showcase their ability to play long innings. As for bowling, the host has plenty of options in

spotlight as K.L. Rahul, the dashing opener who has had to return home from Australia in ignominy following a chat show he was part of. After playing in three one-day matches against the Lions at Thiruvananthapuram, this would be another good opportunity to get back in form and to get over his difficult period.

Other batsmen in the squad, captain Priyank Panchal, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Ricky Bhui and Siddhesh Lad will be keen to showcase their ability to play long innings. As for bowling, the host has plenty of options in

Ready, set:



Although India-A tamed the Lions in the one-day series, it will not take things lightly, with much on the line. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

seamers Varun Aaron, Avesh Khan, Shardul Thakur and Navdeep Saini, and spinners Shahbaz Nadeem, Mayank Markande and Jalaj Saxena.

Though the Lions were tamed with ease in the one-day series (1-4), they are capable of bouncing back. Captain Sam Billings, Ollie Pop, Ben Duckett and wicket-keeper Alex Davies are all fine batsmen. In pacers Jamie Overton, Zak Chappell and Jamie Porter and spinners Dominic Bess and Danny Briggs, the visiting side has a good attack, too.

So it could well be an interesting match for local fans, who will get a taste of international cricket after nearly four years.

### The teams (from):

**India-A:** Ankeet Bawane (Capt.), K.L. Rahul, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Priyank Panchal, Ricky Bhui, Siddhesh Lad, K.S. Bharat, Jalaj Saxena, Shahbaz Nadeem, Mayank Markande, Navdeep Saini, Shardul Thakur, Avesh Khan and Varun Aaron.

**England Lions:** Sam Billings (Capt.), Dominic Bess, Zak Chappell, Danny Briggs, Ben Duckett, Lewis Gregory, Sam Hain, Max Holden

## 16 SPORT

# Sarvate has Saurashtra on the mat

Pujara fails again; Dharmendrasinh's six-wicket haul had put Vidarbha in a bind earlier

## RANJI FINAL

AMOL KARHADKAR  
NAGPUR

Aditya Sarvate single-handedly put Vidarbha on the brink of defending its Ranji Trophy title. His rescue act with the willow (49 off 133b, 154m, 5x4) meant Vidarbha's lower-order staged its second fightback of the match to set Saurashtra target of 206 on a deteriorating VCA Stadium surface.

The spinner then followed it up by breaking the back of Saurashtra's batting with three wickets – including the prize scalp of Cheteshwar Pujara for a duck – as the visitors were reeling at 58 for five at close.

Had it not been for Sarvate's sensible batting, Vidarbha would have struggled to set a challenging target. Starting the day at 55 for two, with a lead of 60, overnight batsmen Wasim Jaffer and Ganesh Satish found it difficult to keep the scoreboard moving. And the run-scoring became increasingly difficult as the day progressed with the bowlers dominating almost the whole day.

Jaffer and Ganesh survived for a while but Vidarbha lost three wickets for two runs in 19 balls and slid to 73 for five. The in-form left-arm

spinner Dharmendrasinh Jajera forced Jaffer to chase one away from his body before inducing an inside-edge off Ganesh's willow to silly point (the umpire had initially adjudged him lbw).

In the next over, skipper Jaydev Unadkat bowled a full delivery that angled in and shaped away after pitching to uproot Akshay Wadkar's off-stump.

When Sarvate arrived at the crease minutes before lunch, after lefthander Akshay Karnewar's attempted drive off off-spinner Kamlesh Makwana was scooped up at slip, Vidarbha was 105 for six.

Sarvate batted with the tail and frustrated the Saurashtra bowlers before fall-



Big moment: Pujara's dismissal sparks a celebration in the Vidarbha camp. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

ing to Dharmendrasinh.

After tea, Sarvate was pressed into action straightforwardly, with the new ball. His three wickets in 11 deliveries took the fight out of Saurashtra's chase. He first forced Snell Patel to nick to Jaffer at slip in the seventh over. In the next, Harvik Desai's attempted drive against the turn resulted in an easy return catch.

## Turning point

Four balls later came the wicket of Pujara, who played for the turn but the ball held its line. The India No. 3 was plumb in front. At 22 for three, Saurashtra needed Arpit Vasavada to stabilise the innings, but Umesh Yadav's

fuller length saw the lefthander nick to keeper Wadkar.

Sheldon Jackson compounded Saurashtra's woes, attempting a reckless heave off Akshay Wakhare and getting bowled with less than four overs remaining.

## The scores:

**Vidarbha – 1st innings:** 312.

**Saurashtra – 1st innings:** 307.

**Vidarbha – 2nd innings:** Faiz Fazal b Dharmendrasinh 10, R. Sanjay st sub b Dharmendrasinh 16, Ganesh Satish c Vishvaraj b Dharmendrasinh 35, Wasim Jaffer c sub b Dharmendrasinh 11, Mohit Kale lbw b Makwana 38, Akshay Wadkar b Unadkat 0, Akshay Karnewar c Desai b Makwana 18, Aditya Sarvate lbw b Dharmendrasinh 49, Akshay Wakhare lbw b Dharmendrasinh 0, Arpit Vasavada c Wadkar b Umesh 5, Sheldon Jackson b Wakhare 7, Kamlesh Makwana (batting) 2; Extras (w-1): 1; Total (for five wkts. in 28 overs) 58.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-16, 2-45, 3-71, 4-72, 5-73, 6-105, 7-134, 8-147, 9-178.

**Saurashtra bowling:** Unadkat 18-5-30-1, Sakarya 13-4-19-1, Makwana 25-7-51-2, Dharmendrasinh 36.5-3-96-6.

**Saurashtra – 2nd innings:** Harvik Desai c & b Sarvate 8, Snell Patel c Jaffer b Sarvate 12, Vishvaraj Singh Jadeja (batting) 23, Cheteshwar Pujara lbw b Sarvate 0, Arpit Vasavada c Wadkar b Umesh 5, Sheldon Jackson b Wakhare 7, Kamlesh Makwana (batting) 2; Extras (w-1): 1; Total (for five wkts. in 28 overs) 58.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-19, 2-22, 3-22, 4-35, 5-55.

**Vidarbha bowling:** Sarvate 10-2-13, Umesh 6-0-27-1, Wakhare 10-3-18-1, Karnewar 2-2-0.

## BFC battles hard to draw with Blasters

The visitors' inspired show catches the table-toppers by surprise

## ISL

ASHWIN ACHAL  
BENGALURU

Football is a game of two halves. Underdog Kerala Blasters put on an inspired show and surprised many by taking a 2-0 lead in the first session, before Bengaluru FC (BFC) rose from the dead and salvaged a thrilling 2-2 draw.

Table-topper BFC started as clear favourite, but it was the visitor who came out all guns blazing. After a period of sustained aggression, a cross from Mohamad Rakip put BFC's Kean Lewis in a tight spot inside his box.

Lewis fluffed a wild clearance attempt, and the ball crashed into his outstretched hand.

The resulting penalty was converted by Slavisa Stojanovic. In the 40th minute, BFC was stunned by a terrific right-footed strike from Ghanaian Courage Pekuson, which nestled into the top corner of the goal.

**Missed opportunity**  
Matej Poplataik could have sealed the fate of the encounter at the stroke of half-



Sensational effort: BFC's Udanta Singh contorted his body to generate power on his header from an awkward angle and beat goalkeeper Dheeraj Singh. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

time, but his close-range effort was deflected expertly by BFC custodian, Gurpreet Singh. The horror first-half show jolted BFC out of a deep slumber.

The home team finally ran into some attacking rhythm, and managed to wrest back possession.

Chances were created almost immediately, with Xisco Hernandez and captain Sunil Chhetri in the thick of

things. Slowly but surely, BFC's confidence was on the rise. The breakthrough came when Chhetri's assist found Udanta Singh. Udanta contorted his body to generate power on his header from an awkward angle, and defeated goalkeeper Dheeraj Singh all ends up.

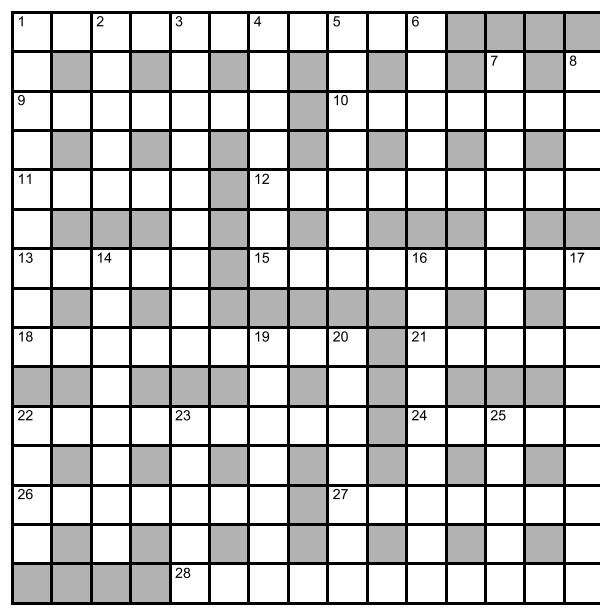
Five minutes before the final whistle, the roles changed, as this time, it was the skipper who scored off a

pass from Udanta.

The encounter did see some rough tackles and physical play, which led to a few scuffles on the pitch. The referee, Tejas Nagarkar, was keen to keep play going, which only encouraged the players to test the limits of his leniency.

**The result:** Bengaluru FC 2 (Udanta Singh 69, Sunil Chhetri 85) drew with Kerala Blasters 2 (Slavisa Stojanovic 16, Courage Pekuson 40).

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12543



## ■ ACROSS

- Cryptologist producing decoy (11)
- One making charges is apparently a bank client (7)
- Try to find one maiden – sweet! (7)
- Eminence is back for parts of statues (5)

- Old king not beginning to idolise guiding influence (9)
- Saucy dance? (5)
- Brainy parts of engineers in basement not fully taken (9)
- At 10, new call comes round: "Supply being limited" (9)
- A French child gets a French article from relative (5)
- Attack trembling Sheikh before child (no son) and get a lift (9)
- Where I led Hindu leader devoutly (5)
- Diligently and endlessly decorate British soldier of yore (7)
- Fugue passages produce titters inappropriately (7)
- Supports holding Indian woman model in areas of shady activities (11)
- Punitive person is more refined outside (9)
- Room style of French company registrar (5)
- Endless culinary action with fuss – it's torture (9)

(set by Gridman)

4 Having no regular course, the man goes round pest (7)

5 A couple of knights, in better shape, force out wool worker (7)

6 Complain not good, reader to pick (5)

7 Universal chat Clio prepared (8)

8 Composer out to wield an axe (4)

14 Saying no leader's giving room to manoeuvre (8)

16 Robber's not soft, big one making mistakes (9)

17 Indian couples follow last word in facilities (9)

19 Absurd, scholar being kept out of a kind of vocabulary (7)

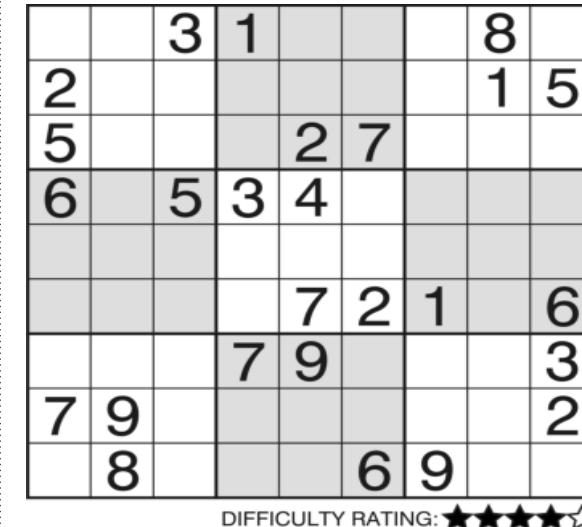
20 Surmises Indian mentor leaves Russia jumbles without head (7)

22 Star finds that woman objecting initially (4)

23 Some drab mob hawking retrograde weapon (1-4)

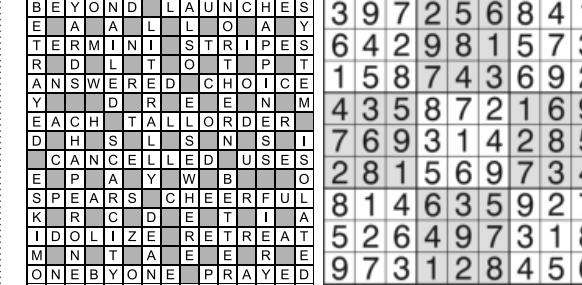
25 Not in the dark about metric measure (5)

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12542



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

No. SS2224 Distribution: www.hindufeatures.com

# Blue spikes past Defenders

The Kochi side registers its second straight win

## PRO VOLLEYBALL

STAN RAYAN  
KOCHI

Kochi Blue Spikers kept its cool under pressure and pulled off an exciting 3-2 victory over Ahmedabad Defenders in the RuPay Pro Volleyball League at the Rajiv Gandhi indoor stadium here on Wednesday. It was the Blue Spikers' second victory from as many matches.

The Defenders appeared well prepared for this match, looking much better than their opening encounter. And Gurinder Singh, the former India captain, helped the side race to a 4-0 lead in the opening set with a clever drop followed by a block that stopped Manu Joseph. This was followed by two strong spikes that left the home boys gasping.

The Lee influence  
But Spikers recovered in the next set, taking a 13-9 lead with American David Lee doing some solid work early on with two smashes. Manu Joseph made it a neat finish for the Blue Spikers with two spikes towards the end.

With Lee, pairing up with



Doing his bit: Novica Bjelica's efforts weren't enough for Ahmedabad Defenders. ■ H. VIBHU

Manu and then with S. Prabagaran, sorting out Gurinder with a two-man block, the Blue Spikers moved to a 6-3 lead. However, the Defenders pulled level at 11. At this stage, the Ahmedabad outfit won two super points – one after the home side's four-touch error and another after Manu was blocked – to take the third set.

The Defenders enjoyed an 8-4 lead in the fourth set shortly after Blue Spikers captain Ukkrapandian's normally dependable drop surprisingly failed to clear the net. Russian Victor Syssov sparked for a brief while with his smashes, but the home side levelled at eight with two super points. K.

**The Lee influence**  
But Spikers recovered in the next set, taking a 13-9 lead with American David Lee doing some solid work early on with two smashes. Manu Joseph made it a neat finish for the Blue Spikers with two spikes towards the end.

With Lee, pairing up with

**The result:** Kochi Blue Spikers bt Ahmedabad Defenders 10-15, 11-11, 15-12, 15-12.

**Thursday's match:** Chennai Spartans v Black Hawks Hyderabad, 7 p.m.

## CCFC in strategic tie-up with FC Basel

We are happy where we are: Chennai team co-owner Rohit

VIJAY LOKAPALLY  
NEW DELHI

Chennai City FC is not interested in being part of the Indian Super League (ISL) even though a few clubs from the I-League have been clamouring to be a part of it.

"Absolutely not," emphasised Rohit Ramesh, co-owner of Chennai City FC, when asked if his club would be making a bid for the ISL. "We are happy where we are. We are concentrating on our next six games," said Rohit on his team's current status which promises a first-place finish in the I-League.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has not been able to give final shape to the game's league structure in the country even though there are expectations of Mohun Bagan and East Bengal joining the ISL.

Rohit was in the capital to announce FC Basel of Switzerland as partner of CCFC.

"It is a first for foreign investment in an Indian club. Indian football stands to benefit from this move," he said.

According to CCFC co-owner R. Krishnakumar, the deal was based on "mutual cooperation and trust and keeps the original identity of CCFC and its fans paramount. Key parts of the deal entail transfer of knowledge in all departments, including sporting, infra and legal areas.

"What else would we want from a top European football club with such a rich, winning heritage and

record of producing world-class players! It is a belated New Year gift to our fans and our tremendously hard-working players, coaches and support staff."

## Historic moment

FC Basel president Bernhard Burgener said, "This is not only a historic moment for Indian football and CCFC, but also for us. We will become strategic, supportive and financially active for the first time in Asia."

"India has shown growing football interest in general; the [recent] Asian Cup showcased the immense football potential to be tapped and we want to be partners in helping them doing so. Partnering with Chennai City FC, whose tremendous, passionate and hard-working owners left us with no doubt that it is a step in that direction."

## FAITH

## Bhakti enlightens

When bhakti matures, the desire to be released from the cycle of birth takes root. Such a person is considered the best of bhaktas, who is also a jnani. Throughout the Gita, there are descriptions and references to the attributes and state of mind of a jnani who is firmly established and absorbed in Brahman, pointed out Srimati Rukmini Ramamurthy in a discourse.

Ajani knows for certain the Lord's unequalled swaroopa and that He is beyond form and all that is tangible in the manifest world; that the Lord is eternal and birthless; that He transcends Maya while having it under His control; that time and again, He descends to this earth in various forms to establish dharma and to destroy evil forces. Out of His Sankalpa He appears to be bound in human or other forms, while His unlimited prowess remains intact at all times.

Not all are able to recognise the truth in His incarnations, except realised souls who see beyond His human form. Duanyodhana for instance, in whom the ego sense and pride are dominant, does not recognise the Supreme Lord in Krishna and sees Him as merely the son of Vasudeva and Devaki, whereas He is the impersonal-personal Lord to the devout Kunti or Bhishma. Ignorance of one's true nature is the cause of delusion and it is difficult to rise above its sway. All beings who are caught in the grip of the pairs of opposites, like and dislike, joy and sorrow, etc, continue to remain in a state of confusion. Through bhakti and selfless devotion alone can one gain access to Him and understand His Transcendence, Nirgunatva, and His Immanence Saguna.

In the initial stages, bhakti strengthens the faith. The jnani, is awake to the all pervasive eternal and superior Brahman, remains enlightened even at the moment of death.

## TV PICKS

**NBA:** Sony TEN 1 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.  
**Ranji Trophy:** STAR Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.  
**Pro Volleyball League:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 7 p.m.  
**ISL:** STAR Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



Qadir compares captain Kohli with Imran

KARACHI  
Former Pakistan leg-spinner Abdul Qadir sees a lot of similarities between India skipper Virat Kohli and former Pakistan captain Imran Khan. "When I look at Virat as a batsman and captain, I feel he is similar to Imran as he looks by example and expects his teammates to follow suit," said Qadir. PTI

## Infantino set to continue as FIFA president

LAUSANNE  
FIFA president Gianni Infantino is set to serve a second term after world football's governing body said on Wednesday he would be the only candidate for June's vote. AFP

## NEUFC looks to consolidate against Delhi Dynamos

## ISL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GUWAHATI

NorthEast United FC will look to avoid any hiccups and strengthen its position in the top four when it hosts an unpredictable Delhi Dynamos FC in a Hero Indian Super League fixture here Thursday.

The Highlanders currently occupy the last play-off spot, having tallied 23 points from 14 games.

**Crunch time**  
With just four more games left to be played and Jamshedpur FC and ATK breathing down its neck, North-East United need to make the most of its home games.

Eelco Schattorie's side has won just two of the seven matches it has played at home. Dropping points at this juncture could poten-

## Real Kashmir posts win, moves to No. 1

Krizo settles the issue in his team's favour against Gokulam Kerala languishing at the bottom



Testing conditions: The match was played in chill weather. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

## I-LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SRINAGAR

Real Kashmir FC's fairytale run in the I-League continued as it defeated Gokulam Kerala FC by a solitary goal to go to the top of the points table here on Wednesday.

The match was played in chilling weather conditions amid a mix of rain and snowfall with none of the teams

willing to yield ground. Ivorian striker Gnohere Krizoo scored the all-important goal in the 51st minute to hand the host three points.

## To the top

The victory propelled the side to the top with 32 points, dislodging Chennai City FC (30) which, however, has two games in hand over Real Kashmir.

CCFC will play Indian Arrows on Friday while Real

Kashmir will meet East Bengal at home on Sunday.

It started snowing before the match and heavy rain lashed the ground later on.

The two sides played a goalless first half as controlling the ball became difficult due to waterlogging in many parts of the synthetic astro-turf pitch.

Krizo broke the deadlock after the break, pouncing on a rebound in front of the Gokulam goal in the 51st.

## I-league standings

Team	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Real Kashmir	16	9	5	2	11	32
Chennai City FC	14	9	3	2	13	30
Churchill Brothers	16	8	5	3	12	29
East Bengal	13	8	1	4	8	25
Neroca	15	7	4	4	5	25
Mohun Bagan	15	6	4	5	1	22
Indian Arrows	16	5	1	10	-9	16
Aizawl FC	15	3	5	7	-6	14
Minerva Punjab	16	3	5	8	-7	14
Gokulam Kerala	15	2	6	7	-6	12
Shillong Lajong	15	3	1	11	-22	10

This was the ninth clean sheet for Real Kashmir, which has the meanest defence in the league this year, having conceded only eight goals in 16 games so far.

## Great motivation

Coach Robertson said topping the table was a great motivation for his team but they have to focus on the remaining games.

"The boys showed some real character under difficult

conditions and I am really happy with the results.

"Topping the table is a great motivation for us, but we have to focus on the coming matches."

**The result:** Real Kashmir (Gnohere Krizoo 51) bt Gokulam Kerala 0.

time.

## Pavlenka emerges Bremen's hero

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BERLIN

Flu-fit Bundesliga leader Borussia Dortmund crashed out of the German Cup on Tuesday, losing a penalty shoot-out at home to Werder Bremen following a 3-3 draw after the extra

time. Goalkeeper Jiri Pavlenka emerged the hero in the shoot-out as he saved Dortmund's opening attempts from Paco Alcacer and Maximilian Philipp as Bremen won the last-16 tie 4-2 on penalties.

## Big boost for Arjun Maini

SPORTS REPORTER  
CHENNAI

Arjun Maini is all set to broaden his horizons as he joins RLR MSport for the 87th edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans on June 15 and 16 and a full season in the European Le Mans Series (ELMS).

Maini will share the RLR MSport-prepared ORECA with former Formula One star Bruno Senna and Canadian racer John Farano in the ELMS.

Maini will share the RLR MSport-prepared ORECA with former Formula One star Bruno Senna and Canadian racer John Farano in the ELMS.

Maini said: "I'm extremely excited to make my endurance racing debut this year. The highlight of the year will surely be the race at Le Mans and I'm hoping I can do my country proud."

## Bopanna-Divij in last eight

SPORTS BUREAU  
SOFIA

Third seeds Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan scored a 7-6(2), 6-2, 6-2 win over Mate Pavic and Nenad Zimonjic in the pre-quarterfinals of the €586,140 ATP tournament on Wednesday.

**The results:**  
€586,140 ATP, Sofia, Bulgaria: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan bt Mate Pavic (Cro) & Nenad Zimonjic (Srb) 7-6(2), 6-2.

\$15,000 ITF men, Sharjah, Egypt: First round: Patrik Rlik (Cze) bt Rishabh Agarwal 6-2, 0-6, 6-4; David Poljak (Cze) bt Aryan Goveas 6-3, 6-1.

\$15,000 ITF women, Antalya, Turkey: First round: Haruna Arakawa (Jpn) bt Bowanya Bavisetti 6-2, 4-1 retd.

\$15,000 ITF women, Sharjah, Egypt: First round: Simona Waltert (Sui) bt Zeel Desai 6-2, 6-1.

## Malik in lead

HYDERABAD: Two-time PGTI champion Amardip Malik of Noida's nine-under-62 put him in the lead in the first round of the PGTI Gold Coast Masters golf here on Wednesday.

## Llorente on song

NEW DELHI: Manuel Llorente struck seven goals to guide Garcha Group-Aravali Polo to a 8 1/2 goals to 6 victory over Rajnigandha Achievers in a league match of the Cavalry Gold Cup 10-goal polo tournament on Wednesday.

Matthew Philip Perry scored all the six goals for

the other team.

**The results (league):** Cavalry-ASC 8 (Ravi Rathore 5, Naveen Singh 2, Ravindra Mang) bt APRC 3 1/2 (Akhil Sirohi 2, handicap 1 1/2); Garcha Group-Aravali Polo 8 1/2 (Manuel Llorente 7, Angad Kalaan, handicap 1/2) bt Rajnigandha Achievers 6 (Matthew Philip Perry 6).

"We need to pick and choose tournaments. Be very keen in what we do, how we play, look at the mistakes we are doing and try to rectify them."

"From the top, all the 15 players are equal. It depends on how you play on the day. Each match is important," said Sindhu.

The reigning World Tour

finals champion said she is looking forward to the All England Open (March 6 to 10) and the World Championship (August 19 to 25 in

"She enjoys the game. She loves to be in the news and above all, she does not know how much she's being paid!" he said.

## PVL key for growth

A former National

volleyball player, who was

one of the bronze medal-

winning squad at the 1986

Asian Games, Ramana said

that the Pro Volleyball

League will be key for the

sport's growth in the country.

"This is a good opportunity for all volleyball players in the country. They can now try to enhance their performance so that they get to play in the PVL."

"The cash incentives in the PVL are unheard of and I hope this grows higher and higher," said Ramana.

championship I got silver. I want to win gold [this time]," she said.

When asked how it felt to be the one of the highest

## Indians take centre stage



Chugging along: Kadhe played aggressively to down Hernandez-Fernandez. ■ K.V. SRINIVASAN

## CHALLENGER

S. DIPAK RAGAV  
CHENNAI

Arjun Kadhe, Saketh Myneni and Prajneesh Gunnswaran took the stage on centre court with easy straight-set wins to enter the pre-quarterfinals of the ATP Chennai Open Challenger here on Wednesday. Pune's Kadhe squared up against Jose Hernandez-Fernandez and had a walk in the park with an easy 6-3, 6-2 win.

Kadhe played aggressively with some powerful ground-strokes, backed with solid serves that included seven aces. He was successful immediately, breaking in the opening game.

In the second set, Kadhe

looked even better and broke in the third to take a 2-1 lead after some brilliant groundstrokes that induced errors from the Dominican Republic player. Kadhe pounced on a second serve with a backhand winner at 15-40 to take the break. The Pune-based player then broke again with ease to go ahead 5-2 and closed out the match easily.

Prajneesh defeated German Daniel Altmaier 6-4, 6-4. The India No. 1 had to wait until the ninth game in which he produced two perfect block returns, with the first one just sailing over the net for a winner and another similar low return inducing an unfocussed error from Altmaier.

The German then missed

an overhead straight into the net before Prajneesh hit a forehand pass down the line to take the break and served out the set with an ace.

**The results (Indians unless specified): Second round:** Arjun Kadhe bt Jose Hernandez-Fernandez (Dom) 6-3, 6-2; Corrent Moutet (Fra) bt Luke Saville (Aus) 6-2, 6-7(1), 6-4; Gianluca Mager (Ita) bt Collin Altamirano (USA) 6-3, 6-1; Laurynas Grigelis (Lit) bt Nam Hoang Ly (Vie) 4-6, 6-2, 6-1; Saketh Myneni bt Vijay Sundar Prashanth 6-4, 6-3; James Duckworth (Aus) bt Ivan Gakhov (Rus) 7-6(2), 7-5; Soonwoo Kwon (Kor) bt Alexander Zhurbin (Rus) 6-1, 6-2; Gastao Elias (Por) bt Blake Ellis (Aus) 6-2, 7-6(4); Prajneesh Gunnswaran bt Daniel Altmaier (Ger) 6-4, 6-4; Brydan Klein (GBR) bt Maverick Barnes (Aus) 6-4, 6-1.

**S.No.: -1, Description:-** P/L Sewer Line in Bijwasan West, No. 2019\_DJB\_167502\_1, Amount put to tender:- Rs.5,61,96,057.00, Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution:- 04.02.2019 5.00 P.M. onward, Last date/time for tender download through e-procurement solution:- 19.02.2019 Upto 03:00 pm

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>).

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Head (F&E)

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C) DR-XIV

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E-Procurement Notice	
Dt. 06.02.2019	
1 Name of the work	Plantation and Photo Voltaic Fencing with four years of maintenance within Kodingamal Bauxite Mine of OMC Ltd. located in Koraput & Rayagada District.
2 Availability of bid document in Govt. portal	07.02.2019 to 26.02.2019
3 Last Date of online submission of tender in portal	26.02.2019 upto 05:00 PM
4 Submission of EMD	Rs.1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh) only through online as available in <a href="http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in">www.tendersodisha.gov.in</a> .
5 Date of opening of Techno-Commercial Bid	27.02.2019 at 11.00 AM

All other details can be seen from the tender document available at Govt. web site [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in) & in OMC website [www.omcltd.in](http://www.omcltd.in)

## IN BRIEF



Jennifer Lawrence engaged to art director LOS ANGELES Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence is engaged to Cooke Maroney, an art gallery director. Ms. Lawrence's representative confirmed the engagement to *People* magazine. The actor was recently spotted wearing a "massive ring" and enjoying what appeared to be a celebratory dinner with Mr. Maroney. **REUTERS**



Art exhibit shows Ivanka lookalike vacuuming

WASHINGTON An art exhibit at a museum in Washington shows a lookalike of Ivanka Trump, the U.S. President's daughter, pushing a vacuum cleaner and inviting spectators to toss crumbs for her to clean up. Ms. Trump and her brothers Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump said the exhibit was a sexist attempt to humiliate her. **AP**



Jail term for Briton who slapped Bali airport staff

DENPASAR An Indonesian court on Wednesday handed a jail sentence of six months to Aju-e Taqaddas, a 42-year-old British woman, for slapping an immigration officer at the Bali airport after an argument over a fine for staying on after her visa expired. The judge said the officer was carrying out his duty. **REUTERS**

# Football game binds Kashmir and Kerala

Real Kashmir topped I-League table amid snowfall as cheering spectators huddled under umbrellas

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Most news from Kashmir is about attacks, counter attacks and killings. But on Wednesday, there was a good game, a spirit of healthy competition, cheering, bonding and a happy ending.

Creating history, mountain-hardened-but-rookie Real Kashmir Football Club (RKFC) defeated sun-and-sea lovers Gokulam Kerala Football Club (GKFC) 1-0 to reach the top spot in the ongoing prestigious I-League football tournament, amid heavy snowfall and 0°C weather in Srinagar.

Resembling a European setting for a soccer game,



The I-League football match at Srinagar. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Srinagar's Tourism Reception Centre Ground witnessed a heavy snow spell with intermittent rains as the two teams hit the ground around 2 p.m. Both the

teams slugged it out in snow and rain, with snow-capped mountains surrounding the stadium and drenched spectators cheering.

It was RKFC's Ivorian

striker Gnohere Krizo who lifted a deflected ball to score a goal in the 51<sup>st</sup> minute.

"We dedicate this victory for our fans who came in numbers despite rain and snow. We are known as snow leopards and definitely today we had to win when our leopards were on the ground in snow and rain. It's a fantastic win," said RKFC's Sandeep Chattoo and Shamim Meraj, joint owners of the team.

RKFC is a four-year-old team and became the first ever football team from Kashmir to qualify for I-League in 2018. Since then the team has been winning hearts across the country.

By winning Wednesday's match, RKFC has replaced

champions Chennai City FC, with 30 points, at the top of the table. RKFC now has highest 32 points in the tournament, which will conclude in March.

"It's an unbelievable win," said Haseeb Drabu, former J&K Finance Minister.

GKFC players said it was "a rare experience for the Kerala team to play in snow because they love to play in sweat". Scores of spectators sat on cold benches and huddled under umbrellas to ward off the snow.

"We thank Gokulam Kerala FC for playing brilliantly in such a weather. Both teams today ensured that football wins," said Mr. Chattoo and Mr. Meraj.



December stepped down from hosting the Oscars after past homophobic tweets resurfaced. No replacement was announced but there had been no official statements on how the ceremony would proceed.

The Oscars ceremony has gone without a host only once before in its 91-year history, in 1989.

# Oscar ceremony to go without a host

REUTERS  
LOS ANGELES

This year's Oscar ceremony will go ahead without an official host for only the second time in its history, an ABC television executive said on Tuesday.

Speaking just three weeks before the highest honours in the movie industry are handed out, ABC entertainment president Karen Burke said the February 24 event would forgo a host and "just have presenters host the Oscars".

ABC, a unit of Walt Disney Co televisions the Oscars ceremony annually and is closely involved in planning the telecast.

Comedian Kevin Hart in

## Not plane sailing



Slow move: A self-propelled trailer is seen transporting a Boeing 747-400 plane through farmland on Wednesday, in a five-day journey in the Netherlands. The jumbo jet's final resting place is to be in the garden of a hotel for tourists to explore. ■ AP

# Kidneys grown in rats could pave way for human transplant

Scientists caution that it is only the first step in long process

AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE  
TOKYO

Scientists said on Wednesday that they have successfully used mice stem cells to grow kidneys in rat embryos, using a technique that could one day help grow human kidneys for transplant.



But the researchers cautioned that their success was only a first step and that "serious technical barriers and complex ethical issues" remain before the process could be used for human organs.

The technique has previously been used to grow mice-derived pancreases in rats, but the new study is the first evidence that it could one day provide a solution to the massive shortage of donor kidneys for people

planted into rat wombs so they could be carried to term. Pluripotent stem cells are a kind of "master" cells that can develop into any of the cells and tissue that make up the body.

The researchers found that the mice stem cells produced apparently functional kidneys in the rats.

But the same did not hold when rat stem cells were injected into similarly modified mice embryos.

The process of growing human organs in animals poses an ethical conundrum because human stem cells could develop into brain or reproductive organ cells in the host. In the short-term, additional research is likely to focus on ways to genetically modify host rats with

out lethal side effects.

## Activists pledge \$1mn to charity if Pope goes vegan for Lent

12-year-old campaigner writes a letter to the pontiff

AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE  
PARIS

A 12-year-old animal rights and climate campaigner made an offer on Wednesday Pope Francis may find hard to refuse: eat vegan during Lent and a million dollars will go to a charity of the Pontiff's choice.

"Your Holiness, we must act," Genesis Butler, already a veteran activist when she gave her first TedX talk at the age of 10, said in an open letter supported by former Beatle Paul McCartney, film legend Brigitte Bardot, and dozens of minor celebrities.

"Moving towards a plant-based diet will protect our land, trees, oceans and air, and help feed the world's most vulnerable."



Pope Francis

"Today, Pope Francis, I am asking you to join me in abstaining from all animal products throughout Lent," the 40 days of penance and fasting before Easter Sunday observed by Catholics, Anglicans and Orthodox Christians.

The Million Dollar Vegan campaign is being led by the U.S.-based Blue Horizon International Foundation, which pledged to put up the money if the pontiff says yes.

## N.Y. museum to undergo big renovation

AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE  
NEW YORK

Ms. Butler's letter reflects social movements that have converged into an increasingly insistent call to eat less or no meat.

**Healthy living** A major study last month calculated that only a stringent plant-based diet – with vastly reduced meat portions compared to current levels of consumption, especially in rich nations – can feed the 10 billion people projected to inhabit the planet in 2050 without wrecking the environment.

The Million Dollar Vegan campaign is being led by the U.S.-based Blue Horizon International Foundation, which pledged to put up the money if the pontiff says yes.

It has also planned a studio for live performances.

MoMA is one of the most prominent art museums in the United States and will reopen on October 21.

It will have one-third more exhibition space after the \$400-million project that aims to highlight "creative affinities and frictions" by displaying a range of media together – from painting to architecture, performance, or film, the museum said.

It has also planned a studio for live performances.



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The birds use leaves and plant parts to create the right hooks for hunting

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS

New Caledonian crows can identify the best plants for fashioning hunting hooks from among myriad shrubs in the forest undergrowth, researchers said on Wednesday. The birds use leaves and plant stems to create an array of tools they then wield to forage for bugs in the ground or prise prey out of deadwood.

**Knowing what they want** "If you imagine these birds live in dry forest, so there's a lot of paperbark trees, different shrubs and bushes," said Barbara Klump, research fellow at the Centre for Biological Diversity, University of St Andrews in Scotland. "The question is how do they recognise the right material? There are so many options in the forest

and they clearly have a specific idea of what they want."

Ms. Klump and the team from St. Andrews carried out a string of tests on the crows, using types of plant with near-identical leaves native to the Pacific archipelago.

Previous studies showed that the crafty crows prefer a particular species of flowering plant, which has a robust but malleable stem that they fashion into hooks.

In Ms. Klump's study, published in the journal *Royal Society Biology Letters*, crows were shown their preferred plant next to a similar-looking one in the lab. The birds knew the difference and frequently opted to approach their preferred material.

In a subsequent test, the leaves were removed from both plants and replaced with those of a third plant.



A Caledonian crow. ■ AP

But the crows weren't fooled, once again plumping for their favourite shrub.

**Quite picky**

"The general idea we had is that they would look for the leaves because they are more conspicuous and maybe then they would look

at the stems as a second step," said Ms. Klump. "They did recognise the leaves, but this really showed us that the stem is the main thing they focus on. They are very picky."

The crows of New Caledonia – a French territory around 1,500 km east of Australia – have impressed ornithologists for decades with their ingenious use of tools.

While debate persists over whether their skill-set is inherited or "learned" through social interaction, Ms. Klump said she had no qualms about labelling the birds smart.

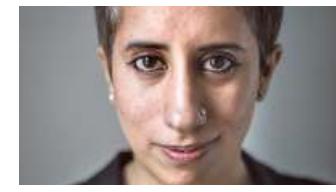
"They are really well adapted to their environment and they have clearly evolved traits of tool use and picking these specific plants – that tells us much about how they interact with their environment," she said.

**Spike in revenue**

Noida Metro Rail Corporation generates a daily average revenue of ₹3.6 lakh **Page 2**

**Auto driver murder**

Police suspect role of wife's boyfriend in the murder of an autorickshaw driver in Shahdara **Page 3**

**Monga has got it**

A story from a small town is taking the producer back to the Oscars. Monga talks red carpet plans **Page 5**

**Living on a wing**

Off limits for tourists, the Nalabana bird sanctuary in Odisha is now a paradise for migratory birds **Page 6**

**IN BRIEF****Fresh batch of constables recruited**

NEW DELHI

The new batch of Delhi Police Constables includes recruits with education backgrounds like BTech, MSc, LLB and MBA. The fresh batch of 3,657 constables who had joined Delhi Police will be posted at various police stations across the city and will be drawing a salary of ₹35,000 per month.

**CITY ▶ PAGE 3****Students, youth to rally against Centre today**

NEW DELHI

Students and youth from over 50 organisations from across the country are expected to participate in the Young India Adhikar March on Thursday. This comes after a month-long campaign across the country to protest the Central government's education policy and growing unemployment.

**CITY ▶ PAGE 2**

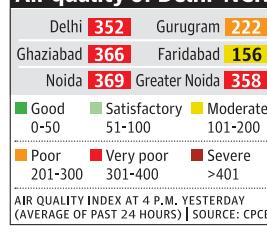
Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	352	Gurugram	222
Ghaziabad	366	Faridabad	156
Noida	369	Better Noida	358
Good	0-50	Satisfactory	51-100
Poor	101-200	Severe	201-300
Very poor	301-400	Extremely poor	>401

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

**Police slammed over poor law and order**

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Wednesday hit out at the police for the deteriorating law and order situation in the Capital, particularly crime against women and children.

**CITY ▶ PAGE 4****FIR lodged against Uphaar case convict, police tell High Court**

Ansal had not disclosed criminal cases pending against him while applying for passport in 2013

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The city police told the Delhi High Court on Wednesday that an FIR has been lodged against real estate baron Sushil Ansal, convicted in the 1997 Uphaar cinema fire incident, for not disclosing the criminal cases pending against him when he applied for passport in 2013.

The police said apart from Ansal, the other accused include the three pol-

icemen – two of whom re-

tired in 2014.

These cops in 2013 had given a favourable verification report, despite the pending criminal cases.

The High Court directed the police to file a status report within four weeks on its investigation in the latest FIR, which was registered on January 17.

The case has been listed for further hearing on March 5. Association of Victims of Uphaar Tragedy,

through its chairperson Neelam Krishnamoorthy, has moved the High Court seeking a CBI probe into the alleged criminal misconduct by passport and police officials in issuing the travel document to Ansal.

**'Would be warranted'**

Earlier, the High Court had said appropriate proceedings "would be warranted"

against Ansal for misleading the government and misrepresented on oath while ap-

plied for passport.

It also ordered lodging of an FIR against the police officers who in 2013 had given a favourable verification report to Ansal, despite his non-disclosure about his conviction in the Uphaar case, which led to issuance of the travel document to him.

Police said that in 2013, three criminal cases, including the Uphaar fire tragedy matter, were pending against Ansal. It additionally

said that as on date 11 criminal cases, majority of them of cheating, are pending investigation against the real estate baron.

It also said that another 163 general complaints and 21 complaints to a magistrate under section 156 (3) of the Criminal Procedure Code to register an FIR are also pending against him.

A fire at Uphaar cinema during the screening of Hindi film 'Border' on June 13, 1997, killed 59 people.

towards the government.

A person convicted of sedition could face punishment of up to three years imprisonment.

Section 196 of the Code of Criminal Procedure bars a court from taking cognizance of any offence against the State including those punishable under the sedition laws without express

sanction from the central government or of the state government.

**Consent to sanction**

The provision states that the Central or the State government may, before giving consent to sanction, order a preliminary investigation by a police officer not being below the rank of Inspector.

**11% drug samples from government hospitals failed quality test**

Samples collected from 2013-18, says RTI reply; 4% from retail, wholesale shops not of standard quality

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

NEW DELHI

Eleven per cent of drug samples collected from Delhi government hospitals and 4% from retail and wholesale shops were declared as not of standard quality, states an RTI reply from the Drug Control Department.

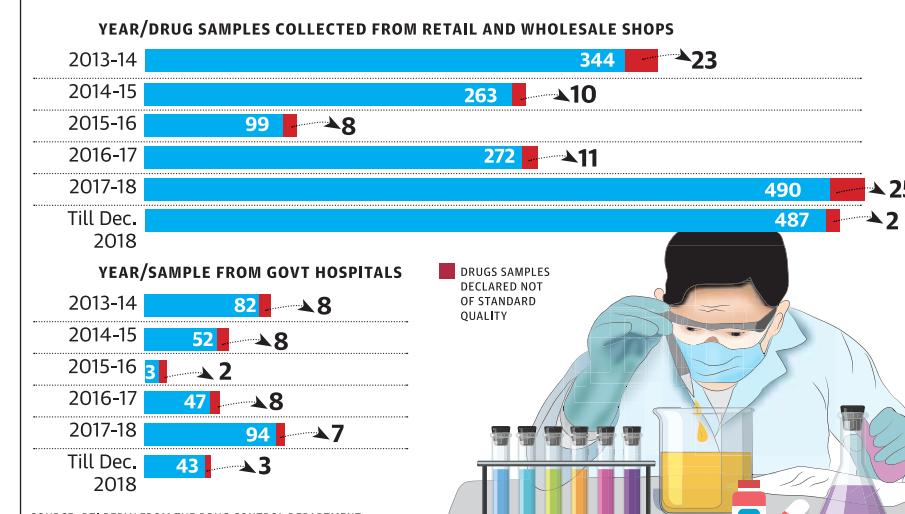
Of the total 2,276 samples collected from retail, wholesalers and government hospitals in the city, from 2013 to 2018 – 115 samples of drugs were "not of standard quality".

The Drug Control Department stated that it collected 1,955 drug samples from 2013 to March 2018 from retail and wholesale shops across Delhi, in which 79 drug samples (4%) were not of standard quality.

During the same period, 321 samples were collected from government hospitals of which 36 (11%) were not of standard quality.

**WHO says**

The World Health Organization (WHO) stated that sub-

**BITTER PILL**

cal products may cause harm to patients and fail to treat diseases.

**Falsified products**

Antimalarial and antibiotics are amongst the most commonly reported substandard and falsified medical products. An estimated 1 in 10 medical products in low

and middle-income countries is substandard or falsified.

These contribute to anti-microbial resistance and drug-resistant infections.

Delhi-based RTI activist R.H. Bansal, who sought this information, said drugs are randomly picked up by the Drug Control Department

and then tested for quality.

"It is surprising that this quality of medicine could enter the Capital. Also, these drugs are being distributed in government hospitals where the poor go for treatment," he said.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had announced a series

of measures to ensure the quality of drugs, including generic drugs manufactured and marketed in the country.

This included directing the States and Union Territories to set up Special Courts for trial of offences under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act for speedy disposal.

"Guidelines for taking action on samples of drugs declared spurious or not of standard quality in the light of enhanced penalties under the Drugs & Cosmetics (Amendment) Act, 2008, were forwarded to the State Drugs Controllers for uniform implementation and the number of sanctioned posts in the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization [CDSCO] has been increased from 111 in 2008 to 510 in 2018," said a senior official.

He added that the testing capacities of Central Drugs Testing Laboratories under CDSCO are being constantly strengthened to expedite testing of drug samples in the country.

communication said.

**Assured again and again**

A spokesperson for the Delhi government said it would ensure "the best possible course of action" in response to the demands made by Viswanathan.

"We had stayed extremely patient and supportive of the system in the face of changes in courts, judges and public prosecutors more than once. Though we know the verdict will not bring our daughter back, but it is time the system proves that it will not let us down," her parents said.

Viswanathan was shot dead on September 30, 2008, when she was returning home from work. The 25-year-old was employed at an English language television channel.

"We urge you to help us get the best possible prosecution talent appointed in this case. In case the current prosecutor is overloaded or unable to focus on this case for any reason, please appoint a special prosecutor to help move things along....Request the public prosecutor to be responsive to us, in providing periodic updates on the case, since we are no longer based full time in Delhi," the letter said.

"A recent change in the public prosecutor has raised our concerns as I was once again absent from the court on the date of the last

**After decade-long trial, Soumya's parents still waiting for justice**

Write to Chief Minister about slow progress in the case

JATIN ANAND

NEW DELHI

The "interest" of the State in getting them justice for their daughter, who was killed in 2008, has gone down along side its visibility in the media, wrote the parents of slain scribe Soumya Viswanathan to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday.

"It has been seemingly replaced by a meandering sense of apathy with which the proceedings related to the trial in the case were taking place," they said.

In its tenth year, after seeing the "slow progress" and the "quality of efforts" by the prosecution in the ongoing trial at Saket courts, her father M.K. Viswanathan in an email to Mr. Kejriwal and the Ministry of Home Affairs, said he hopes for a "concrete response" as it is a matter of "serious concern".

"We are seriously concerned about the pace at which the trial is moving and the quality of efforts being put in the proceedings by the prosecution. Hollow assurances from authorities have tired us out and we sincerely hope for a concrete response from you at the earliest," the parents said.

"Hollow assurances from authorities have tired us out and we sincerely hope for a concrete response from you at the earliest... it is time the system proves that it will not let us down



Soumya's parents – M.K. Viswanathan and Madhavi – at their residence in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

hearing [Feb 2]," said Mr. Viswanathan in his email.

He said unlike the first prosecutor in the case, the current and the previous public prosecutors had been "unresponsive" in giving any updates to his family on the progress and hence betraying what they termed "a meandering sense of apathy".

"The judge hearing the case had been considerate of the delay in this trial and has been kind enough to allot hearing dates at frequent intervals but these dates continue to get wasted because of no-show of either lawyers or witnesses or both," the email read.

"We urge you to help us get the best possible prosecution talent appointed in this case. In case the current prosecutor is overloaded or unable to focus on this case for any reason, please appoint a special prosecutor to help move things along....Request the public prosecutor to be responsive to us, in providing periodic updates on the case, since we are no longer based full time in Delhi," the letter said.

BN ND-NDE

## IN BRIEF



## DU to effect 10% increase in EWS seats

NEW DELHI The Delhi University will effect a 10% increase in seats for economically weaker sections from the coming academic session, officials said Wednesday. The Human Resource Development Ministry has said it will implement 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections from the general category from the 2019 academic session and has directed to increase around 25 per cent seats in higher educational institutions and universities across the country. PTI

## Red Line extension gets CMRS approval

NEW DELHI The Delhi Metro on Wednesday said that the Commissioner for Metro Rail Safety has approved the Dilshad Garden-New Bus Adda corridor of the Red Line. The 9.4-km long corridor, which is an extension of the existing Rithala-Dilshad Garden corridor will begin passenger operations soon, officials said. STAFF REPORTER

## Ramlila Maidan to hold Chandni Chowk fest free of cost

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI Ramlila Maidan will be offered free of charge to registered organisers of religious functions that traditionally take place at Chandni Chowk, North Delhi Mayor Adesh Gupta said on Wednesday.

The Mayor made the announcement while granting permission to organisers of Ravidas Jayanti to hold a religious meeting and celebrations at the Ramlila Maidan on 19 February.

The celebrations for the festival normally take place in Chandni Chowk but could not take place this year because of the beautification work being undertaken on the main road there.

The Mayor said that permission would be given to all such events till the work was completed.

# Students, youth to hold rally against Centre today

Young India Adhikar March to protest against govt's policies

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Students and youth from over 50 organisations from across the country are expected to participate in the Young India Adhikar March on Thursday. This comes after a month-long campaign across the country to protest the Central government's education policy and growing unemployment. The rally is scheduled to begin at Red Fort and culminate on Parliament Street.

Young India National Coordination Committee (YINCC) said that youth movements that have fought against unemployment, corruption and paper leak in the employment exams like the SSC movement, railway movement, para-teachers' movement and many more will participate in the march to convey to the people about what they have faced in last five years.

**Demands of protesters**  
The participants are asking the government to imme-

**C** The youth of this country has now resolved to fight back all divisive campaigns and set out its agenda for the LS elections

YOUNG INDIA NATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

dately fill all vacant government positions, increase the number of government jobs and end the regime of paper leaks and corruption in recruitment.

Their other demands include spending at least 10% of Gross Domestic Product on education, end gender discriminatory rules, stop fund cut, scuttling of reservation norms and ensure freedom of expression.

"We will hold the upcoming government accountable to the future of the youth in the coming days. The youth of this country has now resolved to fight back all divisive campaigns and set out its agenda for the LS elections," the YINCC said.

Those who have come from outside Delhi to participate in the rally are staying at gurdwaras in the city, at the Kashmere Gate community centre and at Haj Manzil in Old Delhi.

**Permission for rally**

Madhur Verma, DCP (New Delhi) said that they have refused to give permission to the protest march route proposed by the protesters.

"They wanted to start protest from Red Fort to Jantar Mantar but we will allow the march if it starts from Ramila Maidan to Jantar Mantar. We have called a meeting with the protest organiser to resolve the issue," Mr. Verma said.

The organisers said that Delhi Police were not giving them permission to hold the march and that they were still negotiating with them. "It is unfortunate that we have to seek permission from those we are protesting against to carry out a protest in the Capital," said one of the organisers.

## Illegal colonies: BJP accuses AAP of going back on poll promise

Manoj Tiwari slams CM, says he is playing vote-bank politics

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Terming the regularisation of unauthorised colonies "a serious issue" the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government of going back on its poll promise of regularising these units across the Capital.

On February 14, Mr. Kejriwal would complete four years in office but "not a single colony" had been regularised nor had development work at these been completed, argued Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari.

**Depriving these colonies**  
"Union Housing and Urban Development Minister Hardeep Puri said that Kejriwal is responsible for depriving these colonies of development. He also said that the Aam Aadmi Party government has requested for two more years time for regularising these colonies," Mr. Tiwari said at a press conference here.

## IN BRIEF



## Man hides gold in IGI toilet, arrested

NEW DELHI A man, who had concealed 2 kg gold valued at ₹66.45 lakh, in a toilet at the IGI Airport here, has been arrested by Customs officials for smuggling, an official statement issued on Wednesday said. The accused was intercepted after his arrival from Dubai on Monday. Detailed enquiry resulted in the recovery of two gold bars, which he had hidden inside the false wall behind the flush of the toilet, the Customs Department said in the statement. PTI

## Cop's stolen pistol found after 18 months, 2 held

NEW DELHI The police on Wednesday recovered a service pistol, which belonged to a Delhi Police Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), nearly 18 months after it was stolen. Two men have been arrested in connection with the case, they said. The accused, identified as Aarif (30) and Mohammad Sajid (36), were arrested on Tuesday. Aarif had stolen the pistol in June 2017 from the ASI who was busy helping accident victims at the time. PTI

## 2 more held for harassing tourist

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Two men were detained on Wednesday in connection with an incident where a Belgian national was forced to leave India within a day after being allegedly harassed in Delhi, the police said.

They accused identified as Bona alias Jitendra (47), a resident of Laxmi Nagar and Mohammad Ansar (42), a resident of Wazirabad village, they said.

"The accused are being questioned in connection with the incident," Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Madhur Verma said.

Imran Latha (30), a travel agent, was also arrested on Tuesday. Latha and his brother allegedly cheated the victim by selling a cheap hotel package after convincing her that her original booking had been cancelled due to protests near the hotel, the officer said.

The victim, who arrived in Delhi on December 6, was harassed by several people, including an autorickshaw driver.

She left India the following day, the police said.

The victim informed the Belgium Embassy about the incident.

The embassy then got in touch with the Ministry of External Affairs, the police also said.

## DELHI TODAY

**Talk:** Lecture on "Governance of Government Middle Schools in Beijing and Delhi: Supportive Accountability, Incentives and Capacity" by Yan Yifei, PhD Student, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at Seminar Room, Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), 8/17, Sri Ram Road, Civil Lines, 2:30 p.m.

**Talk:** Lecture by Dr. Ghulam Ali Hadad Ali, the former Speaker of Iranian parliament and the Chairman of Academy of Language and Literature of I.R.Iran on "Emerging Cultural Relations between India and Iran in the Present Scenario and Iranian Cultural Revivalism in the recent decades" at Conference Hall, Iran Culture House, Tilk Marg, 4 p.m.

**Music:** Concert in memory of Ustad Nasir Faizuddin Dagar, Rudra veena recital by Pandit Rajeshwar Vyas from Udaipur, followed by Dhrupad recital by Ustad Faizuddin Wasifuddin Dagar, accompanied by Pandit Mohan Shyam Sharma on pakhawaj at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), Civil Lines, 6:30 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Delhi's Colour", an exhibition of paintings by Swapnil Das at Delhi 'o' Delhi Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Kitaab", solo art show of three-dimensional installations by Sumit Mishra at All India Fine Arts & Craft Society (AIFACS), 1 Rafi Marg, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

## Man shot dead, police suspect role of wife's boyfriend

Suspect had threatened to kill victim if he did not divorce his wife, claims family

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old autorickshaw driver was shot dead by two bike-borne men in Shahdara's Krishna Nagar on Tuesday night, the police said on Wednesday. They have registered a case and begun a probe, but no arrest has been made so far.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Meghna Yadav said that the victim has been identified as Rohit Sachdeva, a resident of Old Geeta Colony.

Sachdeva was on his way home around 10 p.m. after dropping passengers at Krishna Nagar, when he was shot by the two accused. In the CCTV footage of the incident, the men can be seen waiting for the victim and as he crosses the street, the pilion rider gets off and shoots him.

A passer-by called the police who reached the spot and rushed Sachdeva to a nearby hospital where he was declared brought dead.

The victim's brother, Mohit, who is also an autorickshaw driver, said that the family was informed by the police about the incident. Mohit was in Daryaganj when he received a call from his sister who told him that Sachdeva had met with an accident. "It was when we reached the hospital that we were told that he had been shot," the brother said.



Relatives and neighbours outside the deceased's house. ■ HEMANI BHANDARI

The family said that they suspect the role of the boyfriend of the deceased's wife. The boyfriend resides in Sanganpur and had been allegedly threatening the victim and asking him to leave his wife.

"My brother got married in 2013. About a year and a half ago, my sister-in-law met a man on the social media and got into a relationship with him. My brother had caught the two together red-handed in the house for the first time about a year and a half ago," Mohit said.

Mohit said that his brother had a fight with the man and had asked him to back off. He had also asked his wife to stay away from the man.

In 2017, a molestation case was registered at Geeta Colony police station against the boyfriend, based on the complaint of the deceased's wife, after which he was arrested. The family, however, said that after his release,

the two were seen together a few more times in the house in Sachdeva's absence. Fights ensued between Sachdeva and his wife a number of times and even the police had to be called.

"In fact, around Diwali, the two fought over the same issue and she [the wife] left the house. Nearly a month later, she returned home on their four-year-old son's birthday. She was living with the child near Meerut," Mohit said.

Sachdeva, his wife and their son had shifted from their individual houses to the family residence only about two months ago.

The family has claimed that the man had threatened Sachdeva a few days ago over the phone saying that he would kill him if he did not divorce his wife.

Ms. Yadav said that the boyfriend in the case is the prime suspect so far and teams are looking for him while the deceased's wife is being questioned.

"A case under Section 302 [punishment for murder] of the Indian Penal Code and under the Arms Act has been registered. The suspect was not found at his Delhi residence," she also said.

## 'Victim did not divorce wife for the sake of child'

Friends hint at troubled relationship

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Victim Rohit Sachdeva and his wife had been in a troubled relationship for more than a year and a half after he had come to know about her alleged affair with a man. However, he did not want a divorce as he was worried about the prestige of his family and their son's future.

The family claimed that the wife had asked for a divorce a number of times, but at times she also said that she did not want one. "He [victim] often used to pick up fights with his wife and asked her to leave the man. She used to say that she would, but never did. He wanted to stay with her for the sake of the prestige of the family and for their four-year-old son," said Sachdeva, a family friend of the deceased.

The friend also claimed that their son mostly stayed with his grandmother and the deceased's sister. The neighbours remember Sachdeva as a man who "never abused, never indulged in bad habits or picked up a fight with anyone."



Rohit Sachdeva

Another auto driver, who was with the victim on Tuesday night, said that the two were in Chandni Chowk and had tea before they both got passengers for Krishna Nagar. "Within five minutes of our parting ways for different directions in Krishna Nagar, the incident happened," said Chander Jagga.

Another friend, who identified himself as Avtar Singh, said that Sachdeva had discussed his problems with him a few times and that he had advised the accused to keep the family together each time. "I wish I had not though. Had he let her [his wife] go with the man, he would have been alive today," he said.

Drunk woman creates ruckus, abuses policemen

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A drunk woman has created ruckus and abused traffic police personnel in south Delhi's Hauz Khas on Tuesday night. The incident came to light after a video of the same recently surfaced.

The woman, who claimed to be a media person, was stopped and challaned for alleged drunk driving, following which she started shouting at the officers.

"The woman was accompanied by a man. She was challaned and her vehicle was impounded, after which she started shouting and abusing the policemen. The man, who was with her, was trying to stop her," said a senior police officer.

In the incident, which has been caught on camera, the officers can be heard saying that the woman is misbehaving with them.

## Case being filed

The police said that they received a complaint from an Assistant Sub-Inspector-rank officer regarding the incident. They said a case under Section 186 and 353 of the Indian Penal Code is being registered at Safdarjung Enclave police station.

## Vehicle thefts: man, brother-in-law held

Three two-wheelers recovered: cops



Accused Shiv Kumar and Vipin in police custody. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old man and his brother-in-law have been arrested for alleged vehicle thefts in Dwarka, the police said on Wednesday.

The accused has been identified as Shiv Kumar (28) and Vipin (24), both residents of Najafgarh, they said.

He further said that all the three motorcycles have been recovered from the possession of the accused.

## Messing around



A child playing in a broken garbage bin at Yamuna Ghat in New Delhi. ■ PRADEEP KUMAR

## Man arrested for stealing woman's purse

Incident happened at a metro station

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 34-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly stealing the purse of a British national at a Delhi metro station, the police said on Wednesday.

The accused has been identified as Manish, a commerce graduate. He is a resident of Sarojini Nagar, they said.

In her complaint, the victim, identified as Marmar, said that she was at Rajouri Garden metro station, when the accused stole her purse containing three ATM cards, £3,900 and a driving licence

DINESH KUMAR GUPTA  
DCP (Metro)

after the police got a tip-off that the accused had some altercation with a shopkeeper over ₹500 and that he would come to a particular mall, Mr. Gupta further said.

The police have recovered ₹3,18,000, which he had exchanged with the stolen money, Mr. Gupta also said.

During interrogation, the accused revealed that on February 1, he was at Rajouri Garden metro station, when he noticed that the victim had left her purse in a bench where she was sitting.

The accused said that he immediately took the purse and got the money exchanged from a money changer at Janpath, the police added.

**Tip-off**

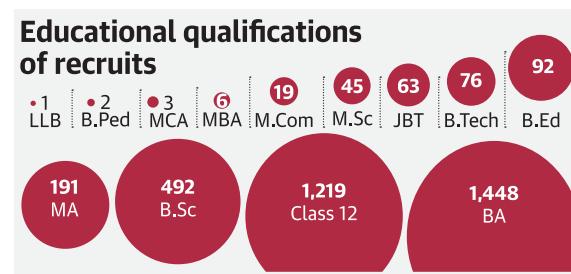
During investigation, the police analysed CCTV footage in which a person is seen stealing the victim's purse. The accused was then identified and pamphlets were pasted at various places to nab the accused, Mr. Gupta said. The arrest was made on Tuesday



The Passing out Parade of 112th (Male & Female) batch of Recruit Constables was held on Wednesday.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Educational qualifications of recruits



Joint CP (Training) K. Jegadesan said that the charm for government service is still prevalent in rural areas from where most of the recruits come. "The candidates have various reasons of preferring government jobs over white collar jobs. Apart from job security, it gives them opportunity to serve the people," he said.

During the training, in addition to the training course, they were also given inputs of police investigation work to learn skills required for

## Fresh batch of constables recruited

1,249 women among 3,655 candidates hired

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The new batch of Delhi Police constables includes recruits with education backgrounds like B.Tech, M.Sc, LLB and MBA. The fresh batch of 3,657 constables who had joined Delhi Police will be posted at various police stations across the city and will be drawing a salary of ₹35,000 per month.

On Wednesday, the Passing out Parade of 112th (Male & Female) batch of Recruit Constables was held at Police Training College in Jharkhand Kalan, Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, Minister of State, Home Affairs, took the salute of the marching contingents. The parade was attended by Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik and other senior officers of Delhi Police.

The batch of 3,655 constables include 1,249 women from different States – 1,235 from Haryana, 1,216 from Rajasthan, 736 from Uttar Pradesh, 440 from Delhi, six from Uttarakhand, six from Punjab, four from Madhya Pradesh, three from Dadra and Nagar Haveli, two from Maharashtra, two from Odisha, two from Bihar, one from Jharkhand and one from Kerala.

their profession. Experts were invited to educate them on gender sensitisation, yoga and stress management. A 30-day Commando Course was also conducted for the constables.

Mr. Patnaik congratulated the trainees on the completion of their training. He reiterated that the role of a constable in the police force is very important as they are in the highest proportion in the department and in direct contact with the public.

## 'Maintain strict vigil on Azadpur encroachments'

NGT tells North body to take cops' help

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

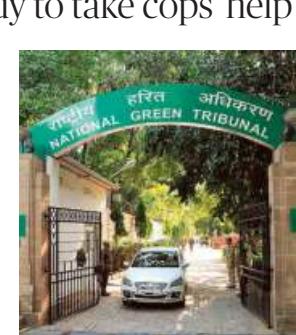
The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Wednesday directed the North Delhi Municipal Corporation to maintain a vigil on encroachments at Azadpur. Further, the north corporation has been directed to seek help from the Delhi Police to ensure removal of encroachments.

A Bench headed by NGT judicial member Raghuendra S. Rathore observed that the removal of encroachments from the area should be a continuous exercise and directed the police to provide assistance to the civic body when required.

**Air quality monitoring**  
The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by city residents Sushil Baheti and Ritesh Goel, who had sought installation of ambient air quality monitoring stations at Azadpur.

However, during the hearing, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) informed the tribunal that the air quality monitoring stations have been installed at the said location.

Additionally, the north



The direction was issued by the National Green Tribunal on Wednesday. ■

corporation submitted before the green tribunal that encroachments that were there earlier were removed.

## Disposes plea

Directing authorities to maintain a strict vigil at Azadpur, the tribunal disposed the plea.

In the petition it was alleged that the encroachments were leading to traffic congestion which caused air pollution. Further, it had said that the issue was dealt by the Public Grievances Commission of the Delhi government, which had directed Deputy Commissioner (Civil Lines Zone), north corporation to ensure removal of encroachments on a regular basis.



# Guneet Monga has got it

A big story from a small town is taking the producer back to the Oscars. Armed with enviable connections, Monga talks red carpet plans, new projects and a YouTube channel

NAMRATA JOSHI

On February 24, the 91st Academy Awards will roll out the red carpet and honour the best in cinema at Hollywood's Dolby Theatre. Back home in Mumbai, Guneet Monga, 35, is not only counting down the days, but also making her way through a large pile of Oscar-nominated films. It is the first time that she will be voting as an Academy member – joining the likes of cinematographer Anil Mehta and actor Naseeruddin Shah – and she is visibly excited. "There's a lot of viewing to do [referring to the stack of Blu-ray DVDs stacked on a shelf outside]. It's an honour to have this kind of access and it helps in knowing what the world is doing," she says.

But Monga won't be casting the ballot in one category – documentary (short subject) – in which Rayka Zehabchi and Melissa Berton's *Period. End of Sentence*, is among the five contenders. Her company, Sikhya Entertainment, is one of the film's producers.

Monga got the news of the film making it to the final five when she was buying paan in Indore, where she'd gone to attend the wedding of filmmaker Kanu Behl and music composer Sneha Khanwalkar. So the ensuing celebrations were more about distributing paan than uncorking the bubbly, she recalls, her big eyes twinkling, the mehndi from the wedding still adorning her hands. Life has been peripatetic, as is usual for her. She is just back in Mumbai after attending the Zee Jaipur Literature Festival, wearing an indigo kurta she picked up at the Pink City.

**Teenaged dream**

Tucked in a corner next to the Cat Café Studio in Aram Nagar, her small office has a huge dog sprawled on the porch. On my way back, I find a cat giving her company. Inside it's not as relaxed a world; there's work happening on the laptops in several young hands around me as I wait and stare at a wall adorned with framed posters of her films, and a picture of Guru Nanak placed in a corner.

Monga has a series of meetings lined up to figure, among many things, how to take two girls from Kathi Khera village in Hapur, who feature in the 26-minute documentary, to the Oscars. I catch her in between two such appointments.

"I have to tell you how I got involved with the film," she says, with her characteristic infectious exuberance. The documentary is about a low cost sanitary pad-making machine setting off a revolution of sorts in the UP village – where local women, deprived of affordable pads, now find steady income and empowerment by making their own brand called Fly.

Ten teenaged girls from Oakwood School, North Hollywood, had read



**Screenshot:** Guneet Monga ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

that girls in rural Indian schools drop out because of periods. They found out about a pad-making machine and raised \$3,000 to donate it, with the help of GLI (Girls Learn International), an NGO in Los Angeles, and Action India, Delhi. Later, they decided to make a short film to spread the message.

Cut to 2016 when Monga was in LA for the Oscar campaign for Vetrimalan's *Visaranai*. She got an email from the production head of USC, Rachel Ward, asking her if she could help with the film. Monga had worked on another USC diploma film, *Kavi*, which was a 2010 Oscar nominee in the live action short film category.

She also heard from her mentor Stacey Sher, producer of Quentin Tarantino and Steven Soderbergh films, who requested she help her daughter produce a film in India. Both turned out to be referring to the same project. "The backstory gives me goosebumps, it's truly a story of

the human spirit," she says.

**Finding her path**

For a fiction film producer – Sikhya Entertainment, the production house she set up in 2008, is behind films like Ritesh Batra's *The Lunchbox*, Anurag Kashyap's *Gangs of Wasseypur 1 & 2*, Neeraj Ghaywan's *Masaan* and Danis Tanovic's *Tigers*, among others – the world of documentaries has been an eye-opener.

"It's been about how they are structured, fund-raised. They have a long gestation period," she says.

Meanwhile, back in LA, the teens and their parents are busy doing an outreach programme for the film. For the short film category, Oscar strategy is not so much about the money spent as it is about sustained screenings and striking the right chord on the right issues. Lisa Taback, the guiding light for Netflix's Oscar campaign this year, and a well-known awards strategist – with La La Land, Moonlight, The Artist, Chic-

go, etc, behind her – is herself one of the parents and producers of *Period. End of Sentence* and has been championing it from the front.

When Monga talks about a Stacey Sher or a Lisa Taback, it isn't mere name-dropping. She could well be the most well-networked, globally speaking, amongst the independent film producers in India, with the most coveted phone directory on her mobile. She straddles both India and the West with ease; when it comes to people as well as processes.

However, when she started off it was an untrammeled path. "I had to always find a route and walk it," she recollects. She also started at a time when there were no global buyers like Netflix or Amazon. "Initially our journey starts with whatever opportunity we get. Slowly we are defined by the choices we make. I hope to stay relevant as long as one can," says Monga, who looks up to filmmakers like Ava DuVernay.

**Staying resourceful**

2010 was the crucial year when she first got exposed to the global business of filmmaking and began making the key "connections" – with Kavi on the Oscar red carpet and later travelling to her first international film festival, Venice, with *That Girl In Yellow Boots*. She thought a mere screening would get her buyers, it didn't. The then festival director Marco Mueller told her to give herself three years to understand the world. And she took off to London, Paris, NY, LA and met every big name in the business. Her films selected at the various festivals helped advance the conversation with the West. "You start picking up pace af-

ter 10 years. You can plug and play the right film with the right person. That's how your taste gets trusted," she sums up the journey.

Things might feel relatively easy now, but every new film is also about starting from scratch, hustling for funds. Releasing them is even harder. "India needs 50 more producers to do the kind of work I do, for a change to happen," she says.

In between there was a year-long phase of depression and disillusionment. "I was not able to enjoy the success of *The Lunchbox* because there were five other unreleased films," she looks back. People were not willing to sink money on a subject like *Tigers*. How did she deal with depression? "By doing more work. One day it all makes sense," she says.

For a rank newcomer in filmmaking, to reach this stage, has been all about resourcefulness. She tells me how she has already written to the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to raise money for the Oscar trip. Will the government help, I ask sceptically. For Kavi, Prithviraj Chauhan had helped, Air India had done their tickets, she reels off. She is sure to pull it off this time as well.

Meanwhile, Monga is busy finalising a bunch of new series and movies – women's stories, by women filmmakers. She is also setting up a YouTube channel, ReDo, that is by women, for women. And her first Tamil film, a co-production with Suriya's 2D entertainment, directed by Sudha Kongara, on the life of Captain Gopinath of Air Deccan, is set to start shooting in March. No wonder she calls this her 2.0 time.

**SHORT TAKES****Gym jam**

Bollywood's favourite Pilates trainer opens her centre in Delhi

Yasmin Karachiwala's Body Image, Mumbai's Pilates studio that sees the likes of Kareena Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Deepika Padukone, Sohail Khan, in now in Delhi's Greater Kailash II, M-Block Market. Spread across 3,600 square feet and two floors, the centre offers personal training, group sessions, as well as nutrition consultations. Karachiwala is a Master Instructor, Balanced Body, training trainers, as well as a set of clients she personally engages with. The Delhi centre is a franchise, and is the first in India, outside of Mumbai, though Dubai and Doha exist.

Karachiwala, who has been in the Pilates business for 25 years now, says her aim is to get people fit, which is why she reaches out to people on social media. "It doesn't matter whether you workout with me or in one of my studios. It's not just about exercise; it's about lifestyle, the way you eat." A workout plan at her studio is about exercise to nourish the body, rather than break it. Besides an exercise and health history record, the studio will plan workouts in tandem with what a client enjoys.

Her fitness studio started in her guest room. "My kids were two and four. I didn't want to venture out of the house leaving them behind, so I just started calling people home. I never envisioned it to become what has today."

Pilates is a form of exercise that is talks of a mind-body-spirit connection. Breathing and movement go hand in hand, and is tapping into under-utilised muscles, and building a strong core.

**Marionette mela**

The 17th edition of the nine-day Ishara International Puppet Festival is almost coming to an end. You can still catch the last four shows of the festival, from today through till its end on Saturday, 9 February. Remaining on the line-up are puppet shows by artists from Tunisia, Iran, and Afghanistan.

Tonight, Fan Art Production from Tunisia will present its musical, *Moon*. Directed by Nizar Saidi, this 35-minute show follows a young boy, who goes on an adventure through starry skies, with Mr. Moon. They meet an iron flower, a dancing old man, and a white rabbit. But how will he return home?

Can only make it on Saturday? Afghan Charlie Chaplin gets a job at the zoo and has quite a time, as will you.

**Suitable for all ages; 7:30 pm; Amphitheatre, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road. Tickets: ₹450; zoongo.com**



## Something old, something new

A new Gurugram restaurant steps out of the shadow of its famous, Capital-favourite sibling

GARIMA GUPTA

The China Kitchen at the Hyatt Regency in Bhikaji Cama Place is a decade-old New Delhi institution, consistently rated as one of the top Chinese restaurants in the capital. Hyatt has opened a new, easy-dining, standalone outpost in Gurugram's DLF Cyber Hub. Styled as 'TCK by The China Kitchen', the new restaurant brings the Hyatt's culinary expertise to a new audience, at an lower price point.

Step into the ground floor restaurant, and you'll be flanked by the bar and tea station on the left, and a vibrant dining space to your right. As you move further into this 80-seat space, you'll find cozy booths, a private dining room, and bigger tables

towards the back skirting a busy, glass-walled kitchen with steaming woks and grilling stations on display.

TCK retains some of its older sibling's signature décor cues: red upholstery and wooden screens, leavened by a lighter colour palette. The menu is curated from Beijing's street food. All the old favourites are here: mini pumpkin dumplings, Hunan sliced pork, the 'Chinese Harvest' Sichuan string beans and, the superstar, Peking duck.

We settled ourselves into a spacious booth and gave ourselves into the chef's hands. The Sichuan chicken salad (spicy, saucy, nutty) was accompanied by vegetarian mini pumpkin dumplings, with a thick glutinous wrapper and trompe l'oeil



**Chinatown:** Veggie Spring Roll, TCK by The China Kitchen ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



three Chinese tea leaves—oolong, jasmine pearl and chrysanthemum—with berries.

TCK's five-star lineage is obvious in its service style and plating. The not-to-be-missed roast duck ceremony seals this: Your

wait staff will assemble a small station next to your table where the Hyatt-trained Chinese chef will dress a steaming, juicy joint of roast duck. The skillful filleting of the crispy skin, then the belly meat and shanks in three

arrays is a masterclass in carving. The meat is succulent and finely seasoned, the crisp skin adding heft to each bite. Following our wait staff's recommendation, we sprinkled a bit of sugar on the crisped skin. This duped the tongue into ignoring the fat glaze, and let us enjoy the crunchiness to the full.

Then onto the main course: Sichuan fried rice honey, and glazed jumbo prawns with sesame and walnuts; wok-fried garden vegetables with garlic sauce (surprising us with its crunch and zest); and slow-cooked lamb shanks with mushrooms and cabbage in a five-spice broth served with steamed buns. The five-spice blend of cinnamon, cloves, fennel, star anise and Szechuan peppercorns in the

thick, meaty broth brings this dish squarely into a North Indian's culinary comfort zone. The steamed 'blossom buns' will be familiar to some as tingmo from Tibetan cuisine, and allowed us to abandon cutlery and sop up the meat and sauce.

The ceremonial plating continues onto the dessert course. A chocolate 'cigar' complete with a crimson tip and smidge of 'ash', peanut butter cake, and 'rocky road' ice cream with caramel popcorn were our favorites from the sampler. My parting impression was of a restaurant confident in the finesse of its food and service, not overwhelmed by its famous sibling's reputation.

**Meal for two: INR 1,900 + taxes, without alcohol; Open from noon to midnight**

**5 EVENTS WORTH-YOUR-WHILE****DANCE FESTIVAL**

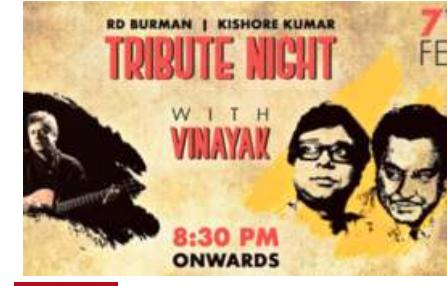
**Yuva Shastriya**  
The Raza Foundation is organising Yuva Shastriya, a two-day Indian classical music and dance festival to encourage young artistes. Today's event will feature Hindustani vocals by Bhuvanesh Komalka, a Kuchipudi dance by Ayana Mukherjee, and a Bharatanatyam performance by Himanshu Shrivastava.  
**VENUE:** Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House  
**TIME:** 5:30 p.m.

**EXHIBITION**

**Mixed media**  
Mohalla, Kavita Chopra Dikshit's first solo exhibition features a collection that explores the concept of the Indian Mohalla. It showcases a new series of artworks in oils, acrylic and mixed media. The pictures capture the vibrant, colourful, noisy rhythm of lives in a quintessential Indian gully.  
**VENUE:** Open Palm Court, India Habitat Centre  
**TIME:** 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

**FOOD**

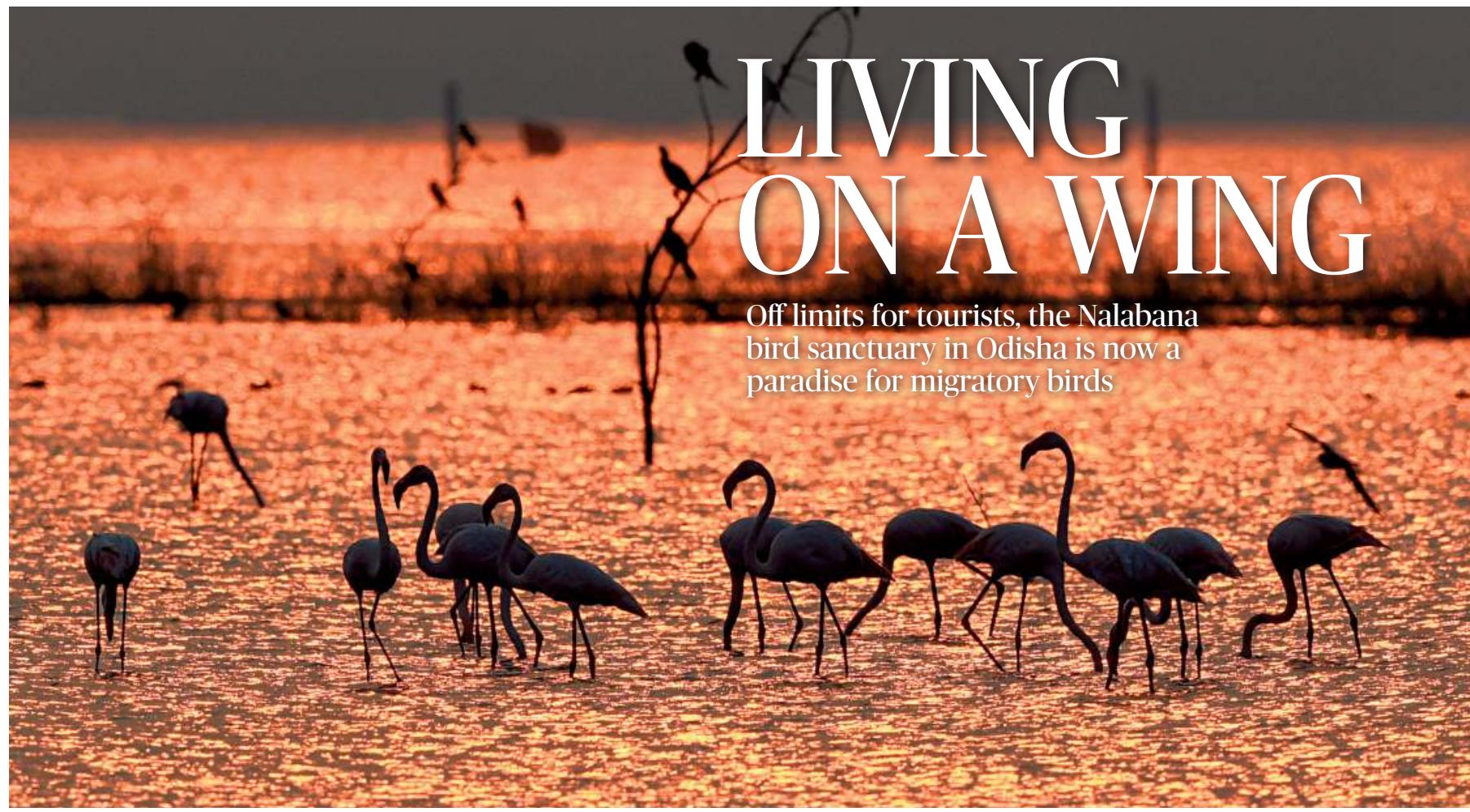
**Chinese New Year special**  
The Hong Kong Club at Andaz Delhi offers a special menu on the occasion of Chinese New Year, with good and cocktails inspired by the Pig zodiac. Guests can feast on Cantonese dishes like crispy taro, Cantonese tofu, leek and macadamia nut, crispy red snapper fish, and bok-choy braised shiitake mushroom.  
**VENUE:** The Hong Kong Club Entrance, Aerocity  
**TIME:** 6 p.m. - 4 a.m.

**CONCERT**

**Tribute**  
Saints N Sinners, Gurugram, presents an R D Burman & Kishore Kumar tribute night with Vinayak this evening. Vocalist, composer and keyboard player Vinayak Gupta, son of noted classical singer Vinita Gupta of the Rampur Sadarang tradition, will pay tribute to some evergreen musicians.  
**VENUE:** GF-21 Global Foyer, Sector 43  
**TIME:** 8:30 p.m. - 11 p.m.

**FILM**

**Le Salaire de la peur**  
A 1953 French-Italian film directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot, this is a story of four misfits in a Latin American country. They come together to undertake a risky adventure of transporting large quantities of nitroglycerine to earn airfare for a trip they hope to undertake.  
**VENUE:** M.L. Bhartia Auditorium, Alliance Francaise De Delhi, 72, Lodhi Estate  
**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.



# LIVING ON A WING

Off limits for tourists, the Nalabana bird sanctuary in Odisha is now a paradise for migratory birds

## HOW TO GET THERE

**AIR:** The nearest airport is at Bhubaneshwar. The distance from Bhubaneshwar to Barkul (Chilika) is 105 kilometres.

**RAIL:** The nearest railway station is Balugaon, six kilometres from Barkul.

**ROAD:** The distance from Visakhapatnam to Barkul is 340 kilometres and takes about six hours.

## BEST TIME TO VISIT

In the months of November to March, the migratory birds make their journey from Northern Eurasia, the Caspian region, Siberia, Kazakhstan, Lake Baikal and remote areas of Russia.

## NIVEDITA GANGULY

As the sun rises over Nalabana in Odisha, dozens of bar-headed geese, greater flamingos, black-tailed godwits and northern pintails shuffle about on the edge of the shore, the wind caressing their feathers. The birds silently feed, sticking their long bills into the soft earth to dig up crabs and fish. Their languid, unhurried behaviour gives away little of their epic journeys to get here, from pole to pole.

The Nalabana island is part of the Chilika Lake, India's largest brackish water lagoon. This island, a secluded portion of green, is home to large flocks of migratory birds that make their way to the lagoon every year during winter.

### Most tourists who come to Chilika watch the birds from a distance, from behind the marked periphery of the sanctuary

According to Susanta Nanda, Chief Executive, Chilika Development Authority (CDA), the record number of birds seen this year is a result of rooting out the illegal prawn-rearing enclosures from the lake by the forest department.

For over two decades, the lagoon was ravaged by illegal prawn farming, choking one of the world's finest biodiversity hotspots. Last year, a demolition drive by the Odisha Government was

launched in June, to unclog the waters by removing miles of fine mesh nets. The illegal farming dealt a compounding blow to the lake's ecosystem. The prawn juveniles that were reared grew in size, feeding on most of the phytoplankton, that are a crucial part of the marine environment. From crabs and fish to birds, all animal life that lives off the oceans is directly or indirectly dependent on the phytoplankton community. According to environmentalists, the removal of the illegal prawn-rearing enclosures has led to a visible change in the lake's ecosystem. Last year, four new species were added to the bird atlas of Chilika – Eurasian bittern, glossy ibis, Goliath heron and eastern curlew.

Spread over an area of 15.53 square kilometres, the Nalabana bird sanctuary is a winter home for migratory birds from the Arctic and Sub-Arctic regions during their onward and return migration along the East coast.

Marked by poles with signboards that read 'No Fishing Inside', this island has been kept off-limits for tourists.

It takes an hour-and-a-half by speed boat from Barkul to reach this serene island. Most tourists who

come to Chilika watch the birds from a distance, from behind the



## BIRD HAVEN

Nalabana was declared a bird sanctuary in 1973 under the Wildlife Protection Act.

The island gets partially submerged during the monsoon.

As the monsoon recedes in winter, water levels decrease and the island is gradually exposed.

Birds flock to the island in large numbers to feed on its extensive mudflats.

The lake is the largest wintering ground for migratory waterfowl found anywhere on the Indian subcontinent.

Some rare, and endangered species listed in the IUCN Red List inhabit the lagoon for at least part of their life cycle.

marked periphery of the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is heaven for these migratory birds, thanks to the efforts of the Forest Department and CDA, who keep a strict vigil of the area. Armed with high-range binoculars, forest guards protect the coast from the bird protection camps which have three watch towers inside the sanctuary.

"If we see any suspicious activity, like a boatman straying inside the protected Nalabana area, the team rushes to the place to seize the boat as well as the catch," says Nirajan, who is a part of the bird protection group.

According to him, one doesn't need expensive equipment or expert knowledge to understand the avian world. "The most important 'tools' are your eyes, ears and mind! All other things are optional," he says. Nirajan, along with his team, patrols the bird sanctuary through the

day and night.

As dusk falls, the crimson sun in the backdrop and the spectacular flight of migratory birds over the still waters of the vast lagoon paint a picture of harmony. Amidst the peaceful setting, a white-bellied sea eagle – a magnificent raptor – makes a dive at a small northern shoveler. Startled, the shoveler makes a valiant attempt to escape to see another day at the Nalabana bird sanctuary.



Beco das Garrafas, the world's first feni cellar, is now open in Goa. Here is one more reason to head to the sunshine state

# Raising a toast to feni



Glass full: A tasting table set at the cellar ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## NUPURA HAUTAMAKI

Goa has just got the world's first feni cellar. Started by Hansel Vaz, founder of Cazulo Premium Feni, this initiative is his attempt to preserve Goa's heritage and make a case for feni the world over. "Feni comes first, Cazulo second, and money last. Family comes before everything," smiles Hansel.

Hansel's brainchild and Goa's latest attraction, Beco das Garrafas – Portuguese for alloy of bottles – is situated in the foothills of Canaulim. As you enter the space, you are embraced by the aroma of cashew fruits, spice trees and the fresh salty air. The old distillery is still well-preserved.

In the middle is a quaint structure in yellow, with large wooden doors. A few wooden tables and chairs lie outside, and there's the whiff of charcoal from the barbecue as a violinist and guitarist croon a few classics. Perfectly paired with all of this are refreshing feni

cocktails – our welcome drinks.

We are then taken around the plantation to see the process that starts at the fruit stage and ends at the cellar. The tour starts at a traditional *colombi*, a basin cut into the rock, where the cashew apples are brought for crushing. Nearby, are pots buried in the ground with their necks sticking out. These are non-porous *kodem* that are still used to ferment the cashew juice.

The distillery – made with stones and mud – uses copper pots and a wood fire, a 'technology' that has been in existence since way before modern distilleries made an appearance. It also has no temperature gauges or gadgets, just the power of observation and know-how passed down generations.

"Whisky-making is considered a science, wine-making an art, but feni-making is magic," says Hansel. The finale is the tasting session in the cellar. It's time for some feni

and Karl Fernandes, the in-house mixologist takes the lead.

He was laughing at for quitting his cushy job at Diageo to join in what everyone thought were Hansel's madcap ideas. "After every tasting session, people now want to buy feni and drink it. That is how I measure success," smiles Karl. Other than the original avatars, he also makes you try a few of the cocktails that he has developed.

The best, according to me, is Pataleo. It is based on a Goan dessert with the same name, and tastes just like its liquid version, but with a little kick.

### In vintage style

The pretty cellar is surrounded by around 1200 *garrafas* (bottles), in every imaginable shape, size and colour. These large-bellied, hand-blown glass bottles were brought by ship from Europe to India back in the 1600s.

Sadly, these are not made any more, which is why Hansel has been really keen on collecting and preserving them.

The tasting session is also peppered with interesting snippets of information. Sample this: some say feni has been made for 400-plus years, but the first written record of the spirit is in the 1580s, thanks to a Dutch spy.

Cazulo makes 35,000 to 40,000 litres of feni every season.

Sitting under the pretty night sky, with folks waltzing away, exploring their newfound love for all things feni and a lovely home-cooked Goan meal, I couldn't have asked for a better way to spend a Sunday evening.

Beco das Garrafas organises cellar visits over weekends, priced at ₹2,000 per person. You could also do a private visit if you are a large group of 20 or more. For details, log on to [www.cazulofeni.com](http://www.cazulofeni.com)

## GET, SET, GO

### Romance in Ireland



Ireland, with its fairy-tale castles, romantic mythology and breathtaking landscapes, is a great destination for Valentine's Day. Begin with a visit to the shrine of St Valentine. A church in Dublin's Whitefriar Street contains relics of St Valentine. On February 14 each year, there is a Blessing of Rings ceremony. Stay at an Irish lighthouse, like the County Donegal's Fanad Head Lighthouse. It's in a Gaeltacht (Irish speaking) area on the Wild Atlantic Way and boasts of picturesque landscapes. Movie lovers can recreate the iconic 'Jack and Rose' moment with their arms outstretched, at Titanic Belfast, the world's largest Titanic visitor experience. If that isn't enough, visit one of the fairy-tale castles. Built in 1868 as a lover's gift, Kylemore Abbey in County Galway is known for its Gothic architecture, Victorian walled gardens and lush woodland walkways. Spend late evenings and nights at one of the forest bubble domes at the Finn Lough Resort for some stargazing.

## The highway route



Driving through Nevada in the United States is a great way to observe the state's art and culture. Take Nevada's Highway 95 which is also the Free-Range Art Highway, an eight-hour arterial route connecting Reno to Las Vegas.

The highway is usually packed with travellers zipping by to reach their destinations. However, on a slow road trip, there's a lot to experience.

During the journey, stop by at the 40-foot fire-breathing praying mantis at Downtown Container Park in Las Vegas, visit the Ghosts of Goldwell while exploring Nevada's abandoned ghost towns, view the ancient glacial lakes, army fort ruins dating back to the 1800s, and some of the finely curated art galleries. Want more? The Free-Range Art Highway can take you to the Neon Museum responsible for masterfully resurrecting the vintage Las Vegas vibes.

## Carbon neutral resort



Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort in Aruba's Eagle beach, is one of its kind in the Caribbean. Bucuti takes pride in being eco-conscious ever since it was established in 1987. It was the first resort to be declared carbon neutral in the Caribbean. Their efforts towards sustainability, in their own words, goes beyond the usual towel and electricity-saving programmes. The resort has invested in eco technologies and environmentally-safe programmes. Using water reducers, it has helped bring down water flow by 60% in all showers and faucets. Solar panels are used to heat water for guest rooms and laundry, water is treated and re-used in gardens, and the resort has the lowest electricity usage among Aruba hotels for every occupied room. Bucuti is an adults-only resort that sources its necessities locally to reduce the carbon footprint. The resort also supports Donkey Sanctuary Aruba, Animal Rights Aruba and Turtugaruba, the local foundation that protects giant sea turtles.

## Remembering Rembrandt



The Netherlands has declared 2019 as the 'Year of Rembrandt' to mark the 350th death anniversary of Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn. Museums and cultural institutions across Netherlands will host special events to acknowledge and celebrate his contribution to art during the Dutch Golden Age. Exhibitions will be held in Amsterdam, Delft, Dordrecht, Haarlem, Enkhuizen, Rembrandt's birthplace Leiden, Middelburg and Den Haag. Some of these exhibits will be travelling from international museums. Exhibits from Jerusalem's The Israel Museum, for instance, will be on loan at the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam. The Rijksmuseum, which hosts the maximum number of Rembrandt works in the world, will display a repertoire of Rembrandt works – 22 paintings, 60 drawings, and 300 engravings. In Amsterdam, stop by at the Rembrandthuis, the artist's former residence that's now a museum. Here, visit three new exhibitions. For details, look up holland.com.