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## NEARBY



Arguments begin in  
Unnao rape case

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday started hearing arguments in the Unnao rape case in which Uttar Pradesh MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar is one of the accused. Counsel for the CBI submitted before District and Sessions Judge Dharmesh Sharma that the minor was assaulted by the expelled BJP MLA and co-accused Shashi Singh helped him in the commission of the crime as she had lured the victim to his residence on the pretext of getting her a job.

NORTH ▶ PAGE 5

## No trace of cab driver who 'raped' JNU student

NEW DELHI

After four days of investigation, the police are yet to trace the cab or the driver who had allegedly raped a 21-year-old JNU student. A police officer said the statements given by the student are not matching with the electronic evidence accessed by them.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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# Pakistan expels Indian envoy, suspends bilateral trade

It decides to take Kashmir issue to the UN, observe Aug. 15 as 'Black Day'

MEHMAL SARFRAZ

LAHORE

Pakistan on Wednesday expelled the Indian High Commissioner and suspended bilateral trade in response to New Delhi's decision to end the special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

"The Government of India has been told to withdraw its High Commissioner to Pakistan. The Indian government has also been informed that Pakistan will not be sending its High Commissioner-delegate to India," the Foreign Office said in a statement.

Ajay Bisaria is India's High Commissioner in Islamabad.

The decisions were taken at a National Security Committee (NSC) meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan at his office in Islamabad. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi read out the NSC decisions, while addressing a joint session of Parliament.

### Be vigilant, forces told

The Committee has also decided to review bilateral arrangements and take the Kashmir issue to the UN, including the Security Council, he said.

Pakistan will observe August 14, its Independence Day, "in solidarity with brave Kashmiris" and August 15 as a "Black Day." "The PM has



Dissent across border: Pakistanis staging a demonstration in Islamabad on Wednesday against India's decision to end the special status to Jammu and Kashmir. ▪ AFP

also directed all diplomatic channels to be activated in order to expose the brutal Indian racist regime, design and human rights violations. The PM directed Pakistani Armed Forces to continue vigilance," tweeted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, the ruling party.

The NSC meeting was attended by the Foreign Minister, the Defence Minister, the Minister for Human Rights, the Army chief, the DG ISI, the DG ISPR and several other senior officials of the military and the government.

On Tuesday, while addressing Parliament, Mr. Khan had warned that India's decision could trigger more violent incidents in Kashmir.

He had also said Pakistan decided not to pursue talks with India after having realized that it was not interested in them.

Senior journalist Ghairah Farooqi said he believes that the NSC decisions had changed the dynamics of the bilateral relations.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

## Pakistan shuts a part of its airspace

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Pakistan has closed a corridor in its airspace, which will result in an additional 12 minutes of flying time for overseas flights, an Air India official said on Wednesday. The flights would have to be diverted to other routes due to the closure.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12



Stranded on the street: Children sleeping on a pavement outside the Tourist Reception Centre in Srinagar as their parents make efforts to leave the Valley. ▪ NISSAR AHMAD

# Many Jammu residents hail integration as best option

Phone and Internet connectivity continue to be disrupted

DAMINI NATH  
JAMMU

Looking at a nearly deserted road that functions as Jammu's main outstation bus stand, Shubham Sharma said on Wednesday that though his business of ferrying passengers to Srinagar had taken a hit over the past three days, he was sure that "this [amending Article 370] was the best option, even for Kashmiris."

It had been three days since the government imposed restrictions under Section 144 of the CrPC, curtailing vehicular movement and shutting off mobile Internet services in Jammu, ahead of its announcement of revoking Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on Monday.

While many Jammu residents welcomed the Modi government's move, across the road from Mr. Sharma, Umar, a resident of Srinagar who also runs a tourism transport business, termed it a "betrayal."

Umar, who wished to be identified by his first name alone, said he drove from Srinagar overnight to avoid the stone-pelting by protesters, just in order to make a phone call to relatives abroad. Since Sunday night, all phone – mobile and fixed

befallen them. "Everyone is mourning what we lost...its the loss of statehood that has hurt people deeply. This is being seen as the biggest betrayal by the Indian State in last 70 years," the former IAS officer tweeted. ▶ PAGE 12

line – services and Internet connectivity in Srinagar have been stopped on government orders.

"The government has put us at gunpoint. We had an agreement with India, not with Pakistan, when we joined. Now, they have broken the agreement. What re-

lation do we have left with them? Now, anyone can come and claim Kashmir, be it Pakistan or China," said Umar, as he waited for information about when he could start driving back to Srinagar, if the roads were open.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

# RBI takes offbeat tack to help reverse growth slowdown

EMIs to fall after 'unconventional' 35 bps rate reduction

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday opted to break with convention by reducing the key policy rate, the repo rate, by 35 basis points (bps) to 5.4% as it focused monetary policy measures on helping revive demand to tackle a deepening economic slowdown.

While central banks typically cut or raise interest rates in increments of a quarter percentage point or in multiples, Governor Shaktikanta Das said too much should not be read into the departure from convention.

The extent of cut was determined by the situation, he said. This is the first time the RBI has moved rates by a figure that is not a multiple

of 25 bps. A percentage point comprises 100 bps.

"Given the evolving economic situation, the assessment of the MPC, based on demand conditions etc. 25 bps cut was inadequate, while a 50 bps rate cut was excessive, especially after taking into account the ac-

tions already undertaken," Mr. Das said in a post-policy press briefing. "That is why we have taken a balanced call."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12  
RBI'S GOLDILOCKS CUT  
► EDITORIAL  
MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 15

# Mayawati changes party U.P. chief, LS leader

Munquad Ali is new State BSP president

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW / NEW DELHI

Making key changes to its organisation, the Bahujan Samaj Party on Wednesday appointed former Rajya Sabha MP Munquad Ali as the president of its Uttar Pradesh unit, while also replacing its floor leader in the Lok Sabha, Kunwar Danish Ali.

Shyam Singh Yadav, the first-time MP from Jaunpur, is the new leader of the party in the Lok Sabha, where it has 10 members. Ritesh Pandey, the MP from Ambedkar Nagar, was nominated the BSP's deputy leader in the Lower House.

While Mr. Yadav is an OBC – the BSP highlighted his "pichda varg" (backward credentials) in its press statement – Mr. Danish Ali, MP from Amroha in western U.P., is Muslim.

Mr. Munquad Ali replaces R.S. Kushwaha as the head of the BSP's State unit.

# Liaison officers plan on-campus Id celebrations for J&K students

SAURABH TRIVEDI

NEW DELHI  
To help calm the nerves of students from Kashmir currently studying in various colleges in Delhi-NCR and neighbouring States, the liaison officers appointed by the J&K government are planning several measures, including Id-ul-Azha celebrations, on campus.

Acting on the instructions of the Chief Secretary, J&K government, all liaison officers who have the responsibility of coordinating with J&K students at various universi-

ties/colleges in north India have started visiting the campuses under their respective jurisdiction since August 6.

### Visit to colleges

"Liaison officers in Chandigarh, Delhi-NCR, Meerut, Jaipur and Aligarh have visited colleges/universities and met the students as well as the institute authorities. Around

50 students have approached them with a request to contact their families in the Valley," said Veedushi Kapoor, Deputy Director with Kashmir Bureau

of Information.

"The liaison officers are planning to celebrate Id with some of the students. All necessary arrangements are being made for the festival," said Ms. Kapoor.

The colleges have been asked to issue a formal advisory to all the students to avoid making any inflammatory remarks and not pay heed to any rumours, said Ms. Kapoor. The local administration, including the police, is also keenly involved in sensitising the students.

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 2

# Full state honours for Sushma

Tributes pour in from diplomatic community, world capitals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Tributes poured in from the diplomatic community and world capitals for former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, who was cremated here on Wednesday with full state honours.

The series of condolences were led by the Ministry of External Affairs that she exited in May.

"Enjoying immense respect within the Ministry and outside, for her compassionate and amiable personality, she has left a lasting legacy for putting people at the core of Indian diplomacy," said the Ministry of External Affairs in a statement.



Irreparable loss: Sushma Swaraj's husband Swaraj Kaushal and daughter Bansuri, centre, at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Wednesday. ▪ PTI

A distinguished public life spanning more than four decades. "Saddened to hear of the passing of my friend and former Indian External Affairs

Minister Sushma Swaraj. She was a strong partner who shared our view that a more democratic world is a more peaceful one," said Se-

cretary of State Mike Pompeo in a message.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

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## IN BRIEF

**Housing scheme: DDA to refund fee within a week**

**NEW DELHI**  
The DDA on Wednesday said that applicants who did not win the draw of lots conducted under the housing scheme 2019, will be refunded their registration amounts within one week. The DDA also said that successful applicants who want to return the flats that have allotted to them can do so without any deduction of the registration amount if they surrender within 15 days from the issuance of the demand-cum-allotment letter on the DDA's website.

**Humid day in the Capital, light rain likely today**

**NEW DELHI**  
It was a humid day in the Capital on Wednesday, with the mercury settling at 35.5° Celsius. The Safdarjung Observatory received 22.2 mm of rainfall. The Palam Observatory received 9.6 mm and Lodhi Road received 24.3 mm. The weather department has forecast generally cloudy skies with a possibility of light to moderate rains for Thursday. PTI

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	75	Gurugram	36
Ghaziabad	78	Faridabad	58
Noida	76	Greater Noida	87
Good 0-50	Satisfactory 51-100	Moderate 101-200	Poor 201-300 Very poor 301-400 Severe >401
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS)   SOURCE: CPCB			

A new beginning



Workers at a site where a demolition drive is being carried out for a redevelopment project at Netaji Nagar Block-F in New Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

**'Look into plea alleging pollution by plastic units'**

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Following a plea alleging operation of illegal plastic factories in the Bhajanpura, the National Green Tribunal has directed the Delhi Pollution Control Committee to look into the allegations and take appropriate action.

An Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said,

"Let the DPCC look into the allegations and take appropriate action in accordance with law."

The direction came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Manish Sharma who alleged that the illegal industries were adversely affecting the environment causing air, noise and water pollution.

While directing the pollution control body to take action, the Bench also said, "Needless to say that the order of the NGT is binding as a decree of court and non-compliance is actionable by way of punitive action including prosecution, in terms of the NGT Act, 2010."

C M Y K

## 'What happened to J&K was a prelude to BJP's plan for India'

Several senior leaders, students, activists march in the national capital to protest the Central government's decision to amend Article 370

**AARUSHI AGGARWAL**  
NEW DELHI

As Jammu and Kashmir remains under a communication lockdown, protesters gathered at Mandi House on Wednesday and marched towards Jantar Mantar in protest against the government's decision to remove the special status of the State and bifurcate it into two Union Territories.

The march was taken out under the eye of the police and paramilitary forces that made a ring around the protesters as a group of counter-protesters waved the national flag and shouted slogans of 'Vande Matram' and 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' at several locations along the route.

Several senior leaders, including CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI general secretary D. Raja, Politburo member Brinda Karat, and NFIW general secretary Annie Raja, along with student activists participated in the march.

Mr. Yechury said that what had happened to Jammu and Kashmir was a prelude to the BJP's plans for India.

"The promise that the same government made three years ago was to consult all the stakeholders before any decision on Jammu



Protesters gathered at Mandi House and marched towards Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

and Kashmir. But now the same people have been jailed and cut-off from the rest of the country. All this threatens federalism and the unity and integrity of India," Mr. Yechury said.

Kashmiri protesters, who have not heard from their families back in the State, are worried. Nasir Husain, a Kashmiri medical student studying in Delhi, shared that it had been three days since he last spoke to his mother who is unwell. "She

had an appointment with the doctor the day they announced the abrogation of the Article. There has been a complete blackout since and I do not know if she was able to go. People cannot even access the laws of their houses there," Mr. Husain said. He arrived at the protest with his luggage as he was heading back to Srinagar and said he feared for his life in Delhi.

"I think the Centre has given the paramilitary forces a licence to kill. They are ready

for the casualties," he added.

The crowd marching to Jantar Mantar shouted slogans of 'inquilab zindabad', 'goonda gardi nahi chalegi' and 'Amit Shah Murdabad'.

Avant Balachandran and Keeran Sam, third-year law students at O.P. Jindal University were also part of the protest. They said, "Kashmir has been under siege for 40 years and instead of eradicating that, we have allowed the State to go from having a special status to the lowest one."

Granddaughters of Kash-

miri politician Prem Nath Bazaz were also present at the protest. Seher and Tamanna Bazaz said that they had gathered there because they believed the BJP could do this to other States as well. "The people of Kashmir own Kashmir and they get to decide what they want. The thread of democracy that India shared with Kashmir has been broken. You cannot go lower than this because there is nothing left," they added.

Echoing this sentiment, Anjali Bhardwaj, a member of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information, said: "Arresting people,

blocking communication, sending troops, and then bringing a Bill in complete secrecy and in a surreptitious manner challenge people's right to know and participate. Where is the freedom of speech and expression?"

Calling the government's move "a travesty of democracy," CPI(ML) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya said, "Everyone is talking about buying land in Kashmir as if that is the only thing Kashmir has to offer."

## Kejriwal distributes smartphones to 10,000 anganwadi workers

CM launches government's Early Childhood Care Curriculum

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday distributed smartphones to around 10,000 anganwadi workers in the city and launched the Delhi government's ambitious Early Childhood Care Curriculum.

"There is a perception that anganwadis are merely centres for providing food to children. Children will come and they will be fed and sent back. Now an Early Childhood Care Curriculum is being introduced to ensure that anganwadis provide the kind of care and education that is provided at expensive playschools. Even the poor will have access to the facilities that the rich do. Anganwadis will now be developed into playschools," Mr. Kejriwal said.

The Chief Minister said that earlier, anganwadi workers had to maintain 11 or 12 registers monthly at each anganwadi. "Now using smartphones, you will be able to enter everything into our database and the government will directly have access to that information.



Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia with anganwadi workers in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

**Now an Early Childhood Care Curriculum is being introduced to ensure that anganwadis provide the kind of care and education that is provided at expensive playschools**

**ARVIND KEJRIWAL**  
Chief Minister

This is a digitisation of the entire anganwadi sector that will not only benefit you, but also the department," the

Chief Minister said.

Speaking at the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia, said, "Across the world it has been acknowledged that 80% of a child's brain development takes place by the age of six. But India has continued to neglect early childhood care. Delhi's anganwadi reforms are an effort to change that, and build a model for the country... Today we are launching the Early Childhood Care Curriculum along the lines of the world's best early childhood care methodologies."

Reviewed status of vacancies in various cadres of Delhi Government like Health, FSL & Delhi Fire Services. Directed to expedite promotions to fill post & streamline direct recruitment through a time bound action plan," Mr. Baijal tweeted.

"Advised CS to amend RRs wherever required within a fortnight [sic]," he also said.

It comes close on the heels of the L-G directing authorities to identify "tainted" officers and "compulsorily retire them".

## Expedite promotions of Delhi govt. staff, says L-G

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal on Wednesday directed authorities to expedite promotions of Delhi government employees to fill posts and also streamline direct recruitment through a time-bound action plan.

Mr. Baijal asked Chief Secretary Vijay Kumar Dev to amend the recruitment rules wherever required within a fortnight.

Directions were issued as the Lieutenant-Governor reviewed the status of vacancies of various cadres.

"Reviewed status of vacancies in various cadres of Delhi Government like Health, FSL & Delhi Fire Services. Directed to expedite promotions to fill post & streamline direct recruitment through a time bound action plan," Mr. Baijal tweeted.

"Advised CS to amend RRs wherever required within a fortnight [sic]," he also said.

It comes close on the heels of the L-G directing authorities to identify "tainted" officers and "compulsorily retire them".

## Irrigation department restores six waterbodies

Water from drains will be channelised during monsoon for groundwater recharge

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The Irrigation and Flood Control Department (I&FCD) has rejuvenated six dry waterbodies in the city by channelising water from drains during monsoon that will help recharge the groundwater.

"The idea was conceived during the monsoon and we did it only for waterbodies which are close to drains," Nikhil Kumar, I&FCD Secretary told *The Hindu*.

Currently, drains in the city largely do not recharge groundwater, as it is either lined with concrete or due to sludge deposited at the bottom, which makes it difficult

**The idea was conceived during the monsoon and we did it only for waterbodies which are close to drains**

**NIKHIL KUMAR**  
Secretary, Irrigation and Flood Control Department

for water to percolate. The department connected pipelines to drains, which took away only the top layer of water from drains when it rained. The pipeline then channelised the water to the waterbodies, which are up to 500-600 metres away from the drain, Mr. Kumar said.

"As we do not have regular access to rain water, in the future, we will use treated water from our sewage treatment plants to rejuvenate waterbodies," the Secretary

said. He also said that during the next monsoon, they will try to rejuvenate more waterbodies.

### Other projects

The I&FCD and the Delhi Jal Board are also working on the revival of around 200 waterbodies and will float tenders for the work. The I&FCD is also working on a project to build reservoirs on the Yamuna floodplain to store river water, when the river overflows during the monsoon.

### DELHI TODAY

**Talk:** Dr. Aruna Roy, social activist and founder of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) will deliver a talk titled, MKSS, the Right to Information Journey and its Relevance for India at Lecture Room - II, Basement Annex, India International Centre (IIC), 4 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Fontwala: Stone to mobile, what remains?", by Rajeev Prakash Khan and Shubhra Prakash. The show surveys the development of Devnagri letter form it's earliest stone engravings to its digital adaptations at Digital Art Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205 Tansen Marg, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Pratibimb", a group exhibition by Jyoti Sateja, Virendra Kumar at Open Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m.- 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** Save Environment & Species, a solo painting exhibition by Archana Jha at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m.- 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Confluence...", a solo painting exhibition by Meha Seth at Experimental Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m.- 7 p.m.

**Mail your listings for this column at** [cityeditor@delhi@thehindu.co.in](mailto:cityeditor@delhi@thehindu.co.in)

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**NEW DELHI**

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the AAP government to indicate steps it has taken to fill the vacancies in the fire department, which according to a plea, is facing a "manpower crunch" due to more than 1,500 vacancies.

Apart from that, it has recruited 500 people as fire operators and an equal number have been employed on contract basis.

The Delhi Fire Service

told the court that it has recruited 500 people as fire operators and an equal number have been employed on contract basis.

Apart from that, it has sent a requisition to the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board to initiate recruitment of an additional 706 personnel, the fire department told the court.

■ C M Y K

# Leaders remember the 'always-to-the-rescue' stalwart

'Sushma Swaraj was frank in her communication and was able to maintain a balance between being broad-minded in her thinking and traditional in her conduct'

JATIN ANAND  
JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ  
NEW DELHI

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the status of laws governing women safety, and doubts about her health were on senior BJP leader Sushma Swaraj's mind hours before she died on Tuesday.

According to Shobha Vijender, wife of Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta, Swaraj shared with her the reason for her decision not to contest the Lok Sabha election.

"She attributed her decision to doubts of whether she will be able to connect with people without breaking bread with them, which her health did not permit any longer," Ms. Vijender said.

She added, "I still can't believe it. I spoke to her for a good 25 minutes at her daughter's residence where she kept repeating that she was feeling fine and was okay. I still can't believe that the photo that we took together was our last."

Senior Delhi BJP leaders said that Swaraj, who was appointed Chief Minister of Delhi between October and December 1998, was brought in to help the party tide through a tough phase – the Delhi Assembly elections.

## A new face

A BJP leader recalled, "The issue of skyrocketing onion prices and lack of cohesion between the two tallest leaders of the party at that time, Madan Lal Khurana and Sahib Singh Verma – both of whom who wanted the CM's chair – triggered the need for an internal party survey which called for the projection of a new face. Swaraj was that new face."

Vijay Goel, who served with Swaraj in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Cabinet called her a "disciplined party hand and a simple human being".

## Maintained a balance

"She was frank in her communication and was able to maintain a balance between being broad-minded in her thinking and traditional in her being just the way she conducted herself. For example, when she contested against [Congress leader] Sonia Gandhi from Bellary in 1999 she knew it would be an uphill task but she never questioned the party's decision to field her," he said.

Recalling her fondness for traditional festival, Mr. Goel said that for Swaraj, festivals like Teej and Karva Chauth were occasions that she celebrated with as many people as she could. BJP national executive member and former Delhi Mayor Arti Mehra recalled how Swaraj would both nurture and scold her as an "elder sister".

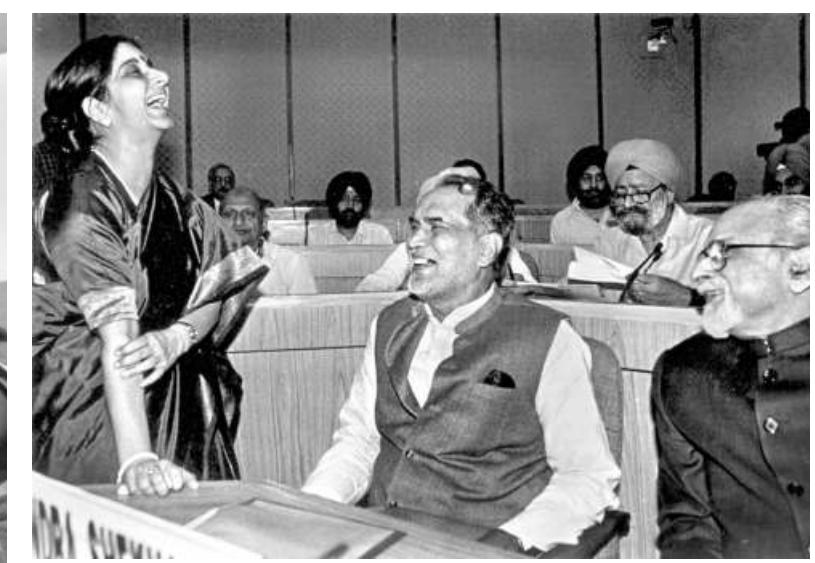
## Grateful for guidance

"She was always frank about what she had to say. Both praise and criticism came with the same honesty. She may not have been very active in Delhi's politics but her guidance on issues related to it was invaluable," Ms. Mehra said.

As a first-time councillor in 1997, Mr. Gupta remembered



(Clockwise from top left) Sushma Swaraj being sworn in as the Delhi CM by then L-G Vijai Kapoor at Raj Bhavan on December 10, 1998; with former Delhi Chief Ministers M.L. Khurana and Sahib Singh Verma; with former Prime Ministers I.K. Gujral and Chandrashekhar in May 1998; with BJP president L.K. Advani and Khurana at an election rally on April 5, 1996; with Shobha Vijender, wife of Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta, a few hours before her death on Tuesday. ■ FILE PHOTOS, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



## Traffic hit during Swaraj cremation

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Traffic moved at a snail's pace for a few hours in some parts of the Capital as former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's last rites were performed on Wednesday.

Delhi Police had issued an advisory on Wednesday afternoon wherein they mentioned that traffic will remain affected near Lodhi Road due to Swaraj's cremation. "Traffic will remain affected on Lodhi Road, Lala Lajpat Rai Marg, Neela Gumbad, Moolchand flyover, Defence Colony flyover, Lodhi Road flyover and adjoining roads from 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.," they said in a statement.

Almost 2,000 police personnel were deployed across central Delhi and south-east Delhi to ensure that the funeral procession from BJP headquarters to Lodhi Road crematorium moved without any hitch, a senior officer said.

Commuters complained of traffic movement as VIP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Mo-



Heavy traffic on Vikas Marg as roads leading to Lodhi Road crematorium were closed for over three hours on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

di and Home Minister Amit Shah among other noted leaders across parties, reached the crematorium. The leader's body was kept at the BJP headquarters and then taken to Lodhi crematorium where her last rites were performed.

Another commuter who did not wish to be identified said that she got stuck at Moolchand flyover as it was shut and had to walk till Lajpat Nagar metro station before taking a rickshaw to her home in Defence Colony.

## Two-day mourning announced

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Wednesday announced a two-day State mourning as a mark of respect to former Chief Minister of Delhi and senior BJP leader Sushma Swaraj who died on Tuesday following a cardiac arrest.

"This means, there will be no entertainment events during this period. All other government business will continue as scheduled," the government said.

"Delhi govt will observe two days state mourning as a mark of respect in the memory of former Chief Minister & senior leader respected Sushma Swaraj ji," Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia tweeted.

Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal condoled the leader's death on Twitter. "India has lost a great leader. Sushma ji was a very warm and remarkable person. May her soul rest in peace," he tweeted.

# Govt. discontinues road test for autorickshaw drivers

Kejriwal asks Imran Hussain to hold meeting to simplify procedure for recalibration of fare meters

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology Department Minister Imran Hussain on Wednesday announced the discontinuance of the practice of road try test for autorickshaws drivers after recalibration of auto fare meters.

The Delhi government statement mentioned that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had directed him to hold a consultation meeting with all stakeholders to simplify the procedure for recalibration of auto fare meters, Mr. Hussain said.

"This initiative of the Kejriwal government will benefit the autorickshaw drivers as well as the commuters, as recalibration will be done faster, which will also save cost and time," the statement said.

The Delhi government had recently revised auto fares which has necessitated the recalibration of auto fare meters after upgradeation of



Auto drivers had complained about being charged exorbitant prices by manufacturers, repairers and dealers of fare meters for the upgradation of software. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

This initiative of the Kejriwal government will benefit the autorickshaw drivers as well as the commuters, as recalibration will be done faster, which will also save cost and time

auto fares," the statement said.

Previously, the statement added, after recalibration and initial verification by the Weights & Measures Department, which has now been renamed Legal Metrology, in its laboratory at Wazirpur, auto drivers had to go for the road try test at Rewla Khanpur in Noida.

Inconvenient test According to the government, autorickshaw drivers were finding the road try

# Police yet to trace cab driver who 'raped' JNU student

'Woman's statement not corroborating electronic proof'

SAURABH TRivedi  
NEW DELHI

After four days of investigation, Delhi Police is unable to find the cab or the driver who allegedly had raped a 21-year-old JNU student.

A police officer said that the statement given by the woman are not corroborating the electronic evidence accessed by them.

On August 3, at 1.07 a.m., the woman was seen coming out of JNU campus but in her police statement she claimed that she was on the street after being raped by the driver.

## Walked away

"On scanning CCTV footage of the police station that was visited by the woman, it was seen that a woman police constable and a counsellor gave her a sheet of paper to write her complaint, but she simply walked out without saying anything," said a police officer.

The medical report of the woman found no injury marks anywhere on the body. Other samples have been taken and result is awaited," said the officer.

ice officer. The police have thoroughly scanned the CCTV cameras installed around the park where the woman claimed to have taken shelter but no clue of her presence was seen. They even questioned security guards and local visitors but no one had seen her.

## Woman in distress

"We have traced the biker who had dropped the woman at JNU gate on August 4 morning. He said he had found the woman in distress and had offered help to her. She asked him to drop her till JNU gate and he did," said the police officer.

"The medical report of the woman found no injury marks anywhere on the body. Other samples have been taken and result is awaited," said the officer.

Hostel warden in her police statement claimed that she had seen the woman in

the hostel premises at 1.30 p.m. on August 3. It was the same time when the woman claimed to have taken shelter in the park, said the officer.

"A woman was seen in a CCTV footage outside a temple on Mandir Marg. However, the identity of the woman is yet to be confirmed," added the officer.

A police officer said that they have been trying to connect the sequence of the events as the woman is unable to explain her movement as she was allegedly drugged at that time.

"We have got the report of cabs available online but no such cab as mentioned by the woman was available in the area at that particular time," added the officer.

"The case is under investigation. Around 40 police officers are working on the case to get any leads in the case," the officer said.

## HC tells police to repair or replace defunct CCTVs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the police to repair or replace the non-functional CCTV cameras installed by it at various locations in the national capital.

The direction by a Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar came after the Delhi Police told the court that out of the 4,388 cameras installed by it across the city, only 2,919 were functional and the rest were not working.

Delhi government additional standing counsel Satyakam, appearing for the police, told the court that the non-functional cameras were being repaired.

Taking note of the submission, the Bench said, "As the respondent is working [to repair the cameras] we see no reason to monitor the repair of CCTVs."

# Why use Urdu, Persian terms in FIR, asks HC

Court tells police to stop use of 'bombastic language'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the Delhi Police Commissioner to explain why Urdu or Persian terms are used in a FIR when the same are not used by the complainant.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar said: "Too much flowery language, the meaning of which is to be found out by a dictionary, should not be used. An FIR should be in the words of the complainant. The police is there for public at large and not just for persons with doctorate degree in Urdu or Persian. Simple language should be used, instead of high-sounding words.



People have to know what is written. It is applicable to use of English also. Do not use bombastic language

CHIEF JUSTICE D.N. PATEL  
JUSTICE C. HARI SHANKAR,  
High Court Bench

The High Court directed the Police Commissioner to file an affidavit explaining whether the Urdu or Persian words are used by the agency or the complainant. It listed the case for further hearing on November 25.

The High Court was hearing a petition filed by advocate Vishalakshi Goel seeking directions to the Delhi Police not to use Urdu and

Persian words in FIRs.

Delhi government additional standing counsel Naushad Ahmed Khan, appearing for the police, said the Urdu and Persian words used in FIRs can be understood by "making a little effort".

He added that the words are used when transferring the FIR to the higher authorities.

## Four held for murdering youth in Gurugram

Accused took revenge on victim for depositing against them in a case: police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

Four persons have been arrested for allegedly murdering a young man in Garhi Harsaru village here earlier this month for allegedly depositing against them in an attempt to murder case.

Yatin, a resident of Jonia village, had gone to deliver milk in Garhi Harsaru village on August 2 morning when unidentified men shot

him point-blank and escaped. Some passers-by took him to a hospital where he was declared brought dead.

Yatin's father Sunder Lal told the police that when he called his son on his mobile phone an unknown person took the call and told him that he was shot dead. A case was registered at Farrukh Nagar Police Station in this connection and a probe was initiated. Fingerprints and

Forensic Science Laboratory teams also visited the spot and collected the evidence.

On Wednesday, four persons were arrested from Pataudi Road in connection with the case. The accused have been identified as Bhupender, Sankit, Pushpendra and Hansraj alias Kalu.

During interrogation, the accused told the police that they along with Yatin and other accomplices had shot

at former Sarpanch of Farrukh Nagar village on February 23, 2017. But Yatin, who was then minor, turned witness in the case and deposed against them. Being a juvenile, he was acquitted in the case. The accused and their accomplices bore a grudge against Yatin for this and murdered him to take revenge, the police said.

The four were sent to judicial custody.

## Man bludgeoned to death in Punjabi Bagh

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 45-year-old man was bludgeoned to death in west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh, the police said on Wednesday.

The deceased has been identified as Shakeel Ahmed, a resident of Mehrauli, they said.

According to the police, they received a call on the early hours of Tuesday saying that a labourer died of electrocution in Punjabi Bagh. After reaching the spot, they found Ahmed lying unconscious in an office where medical equipments are being repaired. The victim was rushed to a nearby

hospital where he was declared brought dead, they said.

During investigation, it was found that Ahmed was working as a mechanic in the company. His relative Naushad Aalam (31), a resident of west Sagarpur also works there.

Aalam told the police that he found Ahmed lying on the floor when he came downstairs for some work. He also told the police that Ahmed suffered an electric shock. However, the post-mortem report revealed that Ahmed died due to head injuries and not of electrocution, the police said.

## Out on bail, criminal held again with illegal pistol

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old man, who was released on bail three months ago, was arrested from Dwarka's Najafgarh on Tuesday for allegedly carrying an illegal pistol, the police said.

A senior police officer said that the accused has been identified as Keshav Lamba, a resident of Shahbad Mohmmadpur.

"On the early hours of Tuesday, a police team was patrolling in Najafgarh when they noticed Lamba. The accused tried to run away on seeing the patrolling team. He was caught and a countrymade pistol with one live round was recovered from his possession," the officer said.

The police said that Lamba has four cases of robbery registered against him and was released on bail on May 10. "He was roaming in the area with a motive to commit crime," the officer added.

# HC seeks govt. reply on special educators

Plea alleges no process initiated to fill 1,000 vacancies in Directorate of Education

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought a reply from the city government and the Chief Secretary on a contempt plea alleging failure to initiate the process of recruitment of special educators for disabled children in government schools.

Though the period of four weeks has expired, the authorities have neither issued appointment letter to the man nor have they initiated any process for fresh recruitment...

CONTEMPT PLEA

The contempt petition alleged that the authorities "intentionally and deliberately" did not comply with the High Court's July 2 order. The HC has listed the case for further hearing on March 16 next year.

In the contempt petition, advocate Ashok Agarwal submitted that despite the order of a Division Bench of the High Court, the Delhi government failed to initiate

the process of recruitment to fill up over 1,000 vacancies of Special Education Teachers (SET) in the Directorate of Education (DoE).

tions were complied with within four weeks from July 2.

The contempt plea said though the period of four weeks has expired, the authorities have neither issued appointment letter to the man nor have they initiated any process for fresh recruitment to the post of SET in DoE.

The contempt petition, filed by Syed Mehedi, has sought initiation of proceedings against the authorities for "intentional and deliberate disobedience of the direction" of the High Court.

## NCW wants swift action in Tihar inmate rape case

Panel asks police chief for detailed report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Women on Wednesday urged the Delhi Police chief to take immediate action and submit a detailed report in the alleged rape of a Tihar jail woman inmate by a police constable.

escorting her, according to a complaint filed at the New Delhi Railway Station police station on Monday.

The following day, she told a doctor in the Tihar Jail about the incident in the train.

Taking suo motu cognizance of the case, the women's commission urged the Delhi Police to submit a detailed report in the case.

"The commission is anguished and has taken suo motu cognizance of the matter. The commission has urged the Commissioner of Police, Delhi to take immediate action in this regard and submit a detailed investigation report to the commission," the NCW said in a statement.

## Three arrested for killing 30-year-old in Nand Nagri

Another case also solved with the arrest

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Three persons were arrested for allegedly killing a 30-year-old man in north-east Delhi's Nand Nagri, the police said on Wednesday.

"When Harsh told Vicky about the fight, the victim went and roughed up Sumit and his brothers after which he decided to kill Vicky and raped in two of his accompanices," Mr. Thakur said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North East) Atul Thakur said that the accused identified as Sumit alias Bowler (29), Ajay Tyagi (31), and Raj (22) were arrested for allegedly opening fire at Vicky and killing him on Monday night. The incident happened a few metres away from the victim's house.

During interrogation, Sumit allegedly told the police that he had a fight with one Harsh on August 3 and Harsh is Vicky's friend.

The police said that Sumit resides in Nand Nagri and works as a driver, while Ajay is a resident of Modinagar and is a small time money lender and Raj is unemployed.

## Dangerous ride



A woman balances some goods while riding pillion in the Capital. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

## VVIP chopper scam: ED moves court seeking NBW against Ratul Puri

Move comes day after court dismissed his anticipatory bail plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate moved a Delhi court on Wednesday seeking issuance of non-bailable warrant (NBW) against Ratul Puri, nephew of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath,

in connection with a money laundering case related to the AgustaWestland chopper scam.

In its application, the agency said that Mr. Puri was directed to join the investigation on Tuesday but he failed

to turn up before the agency. The court had on August 6 dismissed Mr. Puri's anticipatory bail application, saying the investigation is at a crucial stage and the allegations against him were "grave" and "serious".

Mr. Puri, chairman of Hindustan Powerplants Pvt Ltd, had on July 27 approached the court seeking anticipatory bail in the case, saying he feared arrest in the case.

## Man detained on suspicion of murder

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old man was detained on Wednesday on suspicion of bludgeoning a man to death in South West Delhi's Vasant Kunj on June 7.

A senior police officer said that the man was held under the Excise Act on Wednesday along with a few others. During investigation, it was found that his looks matched with that of a murder suspect, whose CCTV footage was found during the investigation in June.

According to the police, the body of a man was found on June 7. But the victim remained unidentified. However, when the CCTV footage of the locality was examined, the suspect was seen with the victim near where the body was found.

The officer said that the suspect is being questioned and further investigation is underway.

## Two criminals caught after gunfight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GAZIABAD

Two notorious criminals wanted in over five dozen cases were arrested in separate instances after an exchange of fire, the police said on Wednesday. Both the criminals and a constable sustained bullet injuries, they said.

SP (City) Shlok Kumar said during a routine check around 11.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the Sahibabad police tried to intercept two-bike men on the Sikanderpur village road near the Hindon airport building. Instead of halting, the man riding pillion fired at the police, he said. In retaliatory firing,

one of the bike-borne men sustained a bullet injury. He has been identified as Riyaz of Lakshmi Garden in Indirapuram. His accomplice managed to flee. In the second incident, the police nabbed a criminal, Fazal, a native of Kaila Bhatta, after an exchange of fire on Wednesday evening.

<b>Bharat Nirman through Rural Roads</b>	
Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency, First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatiraj, Opp-IT Park, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun.	
Ref. No.:08/WAPCOS-PMGSY/2019	
Dated :29 July, 2019	
<b>BHARAT NIRMAN UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SAKAD YOJANA (PMGSY) E-Procurement Notice</b>	
The Chief General Manager, WAPCOS Limited on behalf of URRDA, Government of Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of Roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the District of Tehri for 01 number of Package with estimated cost totaling to Rs. 15.00 Crore, including their maintenance for Five years for Stage-II from the eligible contractors registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent*.	
Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 01-08-2019.	
Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgstendersuk.gov.in. The bidder will be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B. at WAPCOS Ltd, plot No. 209, Phase-I, Basant Vihar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive.	
Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 31-08-2019 01:00 PM.	
For further details please log on to www.pmgstendersuk.gov.in	
* Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.	
Note : For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2761531 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.	
DIPR UK 8736	

<b>Bharat Nirman through Rural Roads</b>	
Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency, First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatiraj, Opp-IT Park, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun.	
Ref. No.:09/WAPCOS-PMGSY/2019	
Dated :01 Aug, 2019	
<b>BHARAT NIRMAN UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SAKAD YOJANA (PMGSY) E-Procurement Notice</b>	
The Chief General Manager, WAPCOS Limited on behalf of URRDA, Government of Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of Roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the District of Almora for 02 number of Package with estimated cost totaling to Rs. 5.35 Crore, including their maintenance for Five years for Stage-II from the eligible contractors registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent*.	
Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 01-08-2019.	
Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgstendersuk.gov.in. The bidder will be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B. at WAPCOS Ltd, plot No. 209, Phase-I, Basant Vihar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive.	
Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 17-08-2019 01:00 PM.	
For further details please log on to www.pmgstendersuk.gov.in	
* Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.	
Note : For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2761531 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.	
DIPR UK 8735	

**DELHI** Timings

THURSDAY, AUG. 08	
RISE 05:47 SET 19:07	
RISE 13:14 SET 00:00	
FRIDAY, AUG. 09	
RISE 05:47 SET 19:06	
RISE 14:14 SET 00:27	
SATURDAY, AUG. 10	
RISE 05:48 SET 19:06	
RISE 15:12 SET 01:10	

<b>Delhi Weather</b>	max min
Delhi City	36 26
Safdarjung	36 26
Palam	34 25

**Delhi Palam Today**  
34°C Warm and humid weather with cloudy sky to prevail. Spell of rain or thundershower would occur.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
35°C Rise in temperature. Mostly dry and warm weather with humid conditions to continue.

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**IN BRIEF**



**Administration has derailed in U.P.: Akhilesh**

LUCKNOW  
Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday alleged that the administration had derailed in Uttar Pradesh. "The Chief Minister may take tall claims, but his control over officials cannot be seen," he said. PTI

**₹40 lakh looted from ATM in Punjab**

FATEHGANJ SAHIB  
Some unidentified people looted ₹40 lakh from an ATM in Punjab's Fatehgarh Sahib district in the wee hours on Wednesday, police said. They said the accused broke open the cash dispenser of the ATM at 2.15 a.m. in Rurki village and fled with the money. Later, a police team reached the spot and started an investigation. PTI

**Policy to make Rajasthan a solar energy hub**

10,000 MW target, says CM Gehlot

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

JAIPUR  
A new policy to be announced shortly by the Congress government will make Rajasthan the solar energy hub, protecting the rights of consumers opting for the renewable energy sector. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said here that a target would be set to produce 10,000 MW additional electricity from solar and wind power in the next five years.

Mr. Gehlot said at a review meeting that the policy would help develop a large number of solar power plants and attract fresh investments. "A robust power transmission infrastructure is taking shape in the form of a green corridor in western Rajasthan and 1.25 lakh hectare government land is available for setting up the plants," he said.

Mr. Gehlot said the State government would make

# Delhi court starts hearing arguments in Unnao rape case

Uttar Pradesh MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar is one of the accused

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday started hearing arguments in the Unnao rape case in which Uttar Pradesh MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar is one of the accused.

Counsel for the CBI submitted before District and Sessions Judge Dharmesh Sharma that the minor was assaulted by the expelled BJP MLA and his co-accused Shashi Singh helped him in the commission of the crime as she had lured the victim to his residence on the pretext of getting her a job.

When the State police did not take any action on the matter for almost a year after the incident, the victim's then approached a court there, counsel for the probe agency said.



Accused Kuldeep Sengar

Counsel for the accused submitted that the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) was not attracted against his client as the victim was a major at the time of the alleged assault.

He further said that the fact that the victim had attained adulthood was proved by the school documents and her medical report.

However, victim's counsel D.K. Mishra claimed that she

was a minor as per the school documents as well as the medical report at the time of the alleged assault on her.

**No media bar**  
Earlier, the court refused to debar media from reporting the proceedings as sought by counsel for the accused and the CBI. It advised the reporters to do balanced reporting without going into the minute details and making an opinion.

The court had on August 5 sent Sengar to judicial custody.

The Supreme Court had on August 1 transferred the rape case and three other cases related to it to the Delhi court. The apex court had also directed that the trial be wrapped within 45 days.

## HC dismisses former CMs' plea

Bahuguna, Koshiyari appealed against rent order

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand High Court on Wednesday dismissed the pleas of former Chief Ministers Bhagat Singh Koshiyari and Vijay Bahuguna seeking review of its order to the State government to recover market-rate rents from them for overstaying in their official bungalows.

**Void of merit'**  
A Bench of Chief Justice Ramesh Ranganathan and Justice R.C. Khulbe turned down their pleas, saying they are devoid of merit and not legally sustainable.

"The time taken in the review proceedings will not af-



Vijay Bahuguna

flect the duration of six months from the date of the order (May 3, 2019) within which the respondents were directed to pay rent dues as per market rate," said Kartikeya Hari Gupta, the counsel for a Dehradun-based NGO, which had moved the court for recovery of rents from the former CMs.

Both former Chief Ministers had argued before the

court that before computing the rent dues, they should have been heard by the State.

Countering their argument, Mr. Gupta told the court that this ground was completely false and baseless as their counsel were not only heard but specifically asked during the arguments if they wanted to reply on the computation of rent.

JD(U) Rajya Sabha member R.C.P. Singh in

who was the convener of the NDA, had decided not to support controversial issues like triple talaq, abrogation of Article 370 and Ram Mandir...so we're opposing government's move on these issues but once it has become a law, there is no point opposing it," he said.

## 10,600 classrooms to come up in Rajasthan

83 school buildings will be renovated

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

JAIPUR

As part of an action plan for time-bound implementation of budgetary announcements, 10,600 new classrooms will be constructed at a cost of ₹1,181 crore in Rajasthan's government schools and the information technology infrastructure strengthened. The utilisation of budgetary allocation is set to improve quality of education in the State.

Minister of State for Education Govind Singh Dostasara said here that the new classrooms would include computer rooms, science laboratories, library rooms and arts and crafts rooms.

Besides, the projects for renovation of 83 school buildings and construction of 23 new buildings will be taken up this year.

Mr. Dostasara said at Shiksha Sankul here that the

New classrooms would include computer rooms and science laboratories

**GOVIND SINGH DOSTASARA**

Minister of State for Education

Education Department would establish IT labs in the schools which were yet to be connected with the new communication network. "We are taking steps for ensuring a high quality of education and making available basic facilities of drinking water and toilets in the schools," he said.

The Minister said the works such as construction of boundary walls of schools would be taken up under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, while regular monitoring would be carried out to provide all facilities to the students.

## 4 suspended for mishap that killed 9

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

DEHRADUN

Four persons, including a transport officer, an education officer and two policemen, were suspended and Tehri's basic education officer was summoned on the direction of Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat in connection with Tuesday's road accident which killed nine school children in Uttarakhand.

The action was taken after preliminary investigations revealed that overloading led to the accident at Kangsali near Lambaon in Tehri district, an official release here said.

Sub-inspector Mayank Tyagi, constable Durgesh Kothiyal were suspended for not keeping an effective tab on overloaded vehicles.

Transport tax officer of the area Nikhilesh Ojha has also been suspended for dereliction of duty.

## Victim, lawyer still critical, says AIIMS

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

The Unnao rape victim and her lawyer, admitted to AIIMS Trauma Centre here, remain critical and on life support, hospital officials said on Wednesday.

The 19-year-old rape victim and her lawyer suffered critical injuries in a car-truck collision in a Rae Bareli district in Uttar Pradesh on July 28. Following a Supreme Court order, she was airlifted to New Delhi from a Lucknow hospital on Monday for better treatment.

The 19-year-old rape victim and her lawyer suffered critical injuries in a car-truck collision in a Rae Bareli district in Uttar Pradesh on July 28. Following a Supreme Court order, she was airlifted to New Delhi from a Lucknow hospital on Monday for better treatment.

## JD(U) does a U-turn on Article 370

BJP ally supports Centre's move after Monday's walkout from Rajya Sabha

**AMARNATH TEWARY**

PATNA

A day after opposing the Bill and walking out of Parliament, Bihar's ruling party, the Janata Dal (United), on Wednesday made a U-turn on the issue of Article 370 and supported the Centre's move. Earlier, the party MPs had walked out of the Rajya Sabha to oppose the Centre's move.

"We were opposing it, but now it has become law and implemented in the country. So we all should accept it...we all should be with the Central government now on this issue", said senior JD(U) leader and party Rajya Sabha member R.C.P. Singh in

Patna.

Mr. Singh, who is considered close to Chief Minister and party president Nitish Kumar, explained why the party had been opposing the Centre's move. "Our late leader George Fernandes,

However, JD(U) leader Ajay Alok had earlier urged party chief Nitish Kumar to review the stand taken against the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Bill.

**'Sentiments of people'**  
"With the country's interests in mind, I would appeal our national president @NitishKumar that a rethink be done on party's stand on the Bill that has been brought with regard to Article 370. The sentiments of the people of the entire country, including Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir, are supreme and a decision must be taken keeping the same in mind," Mr. Alok had tweeted.



JD(U) Rajya Sabha member R.C.P. Singh •

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**LOOK OUT NOTICE**

As reported by I/C PP Chinore, Jammu, applicant namely Shehnaz Akter W/O Mohd Nazir R/O Naka Manjari, Poonch A/P Chinore, Jammu reported that her husband has been missing from home since 31.03.2017. Accordingly, missing report entered at PP Chinore vide DMR No. 09 dated 31.03.2017. Despite thorough search his whereabouts are still unknown.

As such photograph of missing Mohd Nasir S/O Fayaz Hussain R/O Naka Manjari, Poonch A/P Chinore, Jammu is being published with consent of his legal heirs for the information of Police establishments/public in general and if anybody having any clue related to his whereabouts / present location, kindly communicate the same on the below mentioned contact/telephone numbers.

**Description Roll :-**

Name	: Mohd Nasir
S/O	: Fayaz Hussain
Permanent Address	: Naka Manjari, Poonch A/P Chinore, Jammu
Police Post	: Chinore, Jammu
Age	: 31/32 years
Height	: 5 feet 10 inch
Complexion	: Fair
Built	: Medium
Face	: Oval
Eyes	: Black & Brown
Contacts/Telephone Numbers:-	
1. DPO, Jammu	: 0191-2547807, 0191-2561578
2. SSP Jammu Mail ID	: <a href="mailto:spj@police.gov.in">spj@police.gov.in</a>
3. PCR Jammu	: 0191-2542000
4. SP Rural	: 0191-2605949
5. SDPO Domana	: 0191-2604220
6. P/S Domana	: 0191-2604214
7. Contact of Legal Heirs m	: 84918-05500

**Sr. Superintendent of Police Jammu**

RO DIP/J-4848

# Heavy rain batters parts of Odisha

Flood-like situation in some areas, train services hit in southern region: officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BHUBANESWAR

Heavy downpour triggered by a deep depression, which crossed the Odisha coast, battered several parts of the State on Wednesday creating a flood-like situation and disrupting train services in the southern region, the officials said.

Special Relief Commissioner B.P. Sethi said torrential rain submerged vast areas in Malkangiri, Rayagada, Koraput, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Gajapati and Ganjam districts. These districts received more than 100 mm of average rainfall since Tuesday, he said.

"Incessant rain has created flood-like situation in some areas and the government is keeping a close watch. The administration is on a high alert," Mr. Sethi said.

Malkangiri and Rayagada districts are facing a flood-like situation, officials said. Rain has snapped the road link between Malkangiri town and Jeypore and hit road connectivity in Balimela, Kalimela, Motu and Padia, they said.

#### More rain likely

The Met department said the deep depression over north-west Bay of Bengal moved north-north westwards and crossed north Odisha-West Bengal coasts,



One of the derailed wagons submerged in floodwaters. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

close to north of Balasore on Wednesday afternoon. Moderate rain or thundershowers occurred in most places in Odisha and heavy to very heavy rain was received in some areas in the southern region. Heavy to very heavy rain is likely till August 9, it said.

As many as 21 shelter centres and relief camps have been set up in Malkangiri and people are being evacuated, District Collector Manish Agarwal said.

The water level of the Sileru, Saberi and Saptadhara rivers in the Malkangiri district and the Vansadhar river in the Rayagada district was rising. All schools in

Malkangiri were closed on Wednesday, Mr. Agarwal said.

As the downpour washed away soil and ballast below the tracks between Dolkalu and Ambadola stations in Rayagada-Titlagarh section, at least six trains were cancelled, eight diverted and half-a-dozen partially cancelled on Wednesday, an East Coast Railway spokesman said.

Three loaded wagons of a goods train were derailed and got submerged in floodwaters, and rail traffic between Rayagada and Titlagarh was disrupted, said ECoR sources. Cranes from Kantabahji and Visakhapatna

nam are being used to salvage the wagons. Two track patrolmen – S. Naidu and M. Ramana – who sounded the alert will be awarded, the spokesman said.

In Kandhamal district, life came to a grinding halt, particularly in the hilly areas of Daringbadhi, Tumudibanda and Kotagarh blocks under the Balliguda sub-division, an official said.

Road links between Phulbani, Boudh, Kalahandi and Rayagada were snapped as several low level bridges and culverts were washed away, he said.

(With inputs from Staff Reporter in Berhampur)

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# Floods paralyse Kolhapur, Sangli; 1.32 lakh evacuated

16 dead in western Maharashtra in one week; CM orders survey of crop damage; Army, Navy, Air Force, NDRF teams engaged in rescue operations; bus services affected

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

Over one lakh people from 20,000 families have been moved to safety as local residents, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and the Armed forces are pulling out all the stops to rescue those stuck in waterlogged areas in Kolhapur and Sangli districts. The districts are experiencing the worst deluge since 2005.

Sixteen people in five districts – Pune, Kolhapur, Satara, Sangli and Solapur – in western Maharashtra have lost their lives over the past week, while 1.32 lakh people from these districts were evacuated till Wednesday, Pune Divisional Commissioner Deepak Mhaisekar said.

"As many as 51,785 people were moved to safe areas in Kolhapur, while 53,228 were shifted in Sangli district. In addition, 13,336 from Pune, 7,749 from Solapur district, and 6,262 from Satara district have been evacuated," Mr. Mhaisekar said. A total of 201 medical teams are working in the three most-afflicted districts of Kolhapur, Satara and Sangli.

Chairing an emergency meeting in Mumbai, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said **rescuing women, children and patients is the priority**, and directed the administration of the flood-hit districts to make alternative arrangements for food, essential items, and drinking water.

"I have directed for an immediate survey of crop damage. We will expand relief operations as and when required. At present, we are trying to mobilise maximum number of NDRF teams and those from the Armed forces. We have brought in NDRF teams from Gujarat and Odisha to focus on Kolhapur district where the situation is critical, while the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard teams are doing their best to rescue those stranded," Mr. Fadnavis said.

Mr. Mhaisekar said four



**Staying afloat:** Locals rescuing an old woman from floodwater at Renuka Mandir road, Kasba Bavada, in Kolhapur on Wednesday. ■ DEEPAK KUMBHAR

teams of the Territorial Army are engaged in rescue operations in Kolhapur and one team has reached Sangli. While six NDRF teams are already in action in Kolhapur, six more are on their way by road. One Navy team is in operation in Kolhapur.

"Air connectivity has been established over Kolhapur since Wednesday morning with five more Navy teams to be dispatched via air over the district. In addition, three NDRF teams have reached Sangli while three more are en route. As of now, 29 boats in Kolhapur, 43 in Sangli, and 17 in Satara have been pressed into service to evacuate people," he said, adding Pune divisional officials are in touch with the administration of the afflicted districts and the neighbouring Karnataka.

The deluge has completely thrown State Transport bus services in Kolhapur and Sangli out of gear. With 89 roads in Kolhapur under water, the district is completely cut off from the rest of Maharashtra.

"We have had to shut down traffic along the Pune-Bengaluru Highway owing to excess flooding in at least three places between Pune and Kolhapur. Likewise, we have lost contact with the Belagavi side owing to the deluge. Bus services to Kolhapur and Sangli have gone under water in some places. With major dairy operators like Gokul, Warana and Chitale being compelled to shut operations, western Maharashtra is expected to face a severe milk shortage in the coming days.

With the Panchganga river touching 54 feet mark and the Krishna waters wreaking havoc in Sangli, residential and government buildings, including commissionerates, collectors' residences, and jails, are half-submerged.

Rescue operations are under way in urban and the backwater areas of Kolhapur and Sangli. Video clips of a courageous ambulance driver wading through the floodwater in Kolhapur to rescue a man in need of medical attention went viral, as did one of a boat ferrying some women which capsized near the Venus Corner roundabout in Kolhapur city. There were no casualties in either case.

Dairy business in the region is severely hit while a number of poultry farms have gone under water in some places. With major dairy operators like Gokul, Warana and Chitale being compelled to shut operations, western Maharashtra is expected to face a severe milk shortage in the coming days.

The condition of the livestock is appalling with no fodder for those stranded. However, authorities said a number of farmers, anticipating the crisis and anxious to prevent a repeat of the massive loss of livestock in the 2005 floods, had already begun to shift animals before Kolhapur and Sangli being flooded.

"As per data, 16,633 livestock in Sangli have been moved to safe zones," Abhijeet Chaudhari, Collector, Sangli, said. "We expect extremely heavy, record breaking rainfall of 20.5 cm a day, in the ghat areas of Pune district over the next 48 hours. This may prompt a discharge from the dams yet again," he said, adding the situation will improve from August 11.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy rain for Kolhapur in the next 48 hours. "From Wednesday night till forenoon of August 9, we expect heavy to very heavy showers to hit the ghat areas, including Kolhapur. The rain over Sangli has relaxed in contrast, with light to moderate rain expected on Thursday," Anupam Kashyapi, head, weather and air pollution monitoring unit, IMD, said.

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Govt. has learned nothing from deluge in 2005, says Raju Shetti



**In safe hands:** A member of the district disaster management team shifting a newborn out of Chikhali village on the outskirts of Kolhapur on Wednesday. ■ ABHIEET GURJAR

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

Swabhiman Paksha chief Raju Shetti has hit out at Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for his government's unpreparedness and tardy response to the floods in Sangli and Kolhapur districts in western Maharashtra.

Speaking to *The Hindu* from his residence in flood-hit Hatkanangale in Kolhapur, the former MP accused Mr. Fadnavis of failing to gauge the seriousness of the crisis, while stating that the then Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh had secured help from the Armed forces well in advance and had personally visited the flood-hit zones.

The farmers' leader alleged that the administration has learnt no lessons from the 2005 experience. "The deluge of 2005 was considered the worst in western Maharashtra for a century. But the present situation is grimmer than that. Sangli and Kolhapur are inundated with waist-deep water and people can only navigate and help in rescue

operations through boats. But 40% of the boats in the districts are dysfunctional."

Mr. Shetti chastised Mr. Fadnavis for failing to mobilise rescue teams earlier and seeking help from the Army, Navy and Air Force only when the situation became critical.

He said the **incident** weather is preventing rescue teams from reaching far-flung villages in Kolhapur district.

"When this region was affected in 2005, the then Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh had secured help from the Armed forces well in advance and had personally visited the flood-hit zones. However, **with no break in rains and the discharge of excess water from dams continuing, the Army is facing difficulties in rescuing people marooned in the backwater villages as roads and rail routes in Kolhapur have been rendered inaccessible.**"

Instead, he said, the CM was busy on his pre-election

'Mahajanadesh Yatra', and the government has woken up to the crisis only now.

Mr. Patil said it is improper for the Opposition to play politics over floods while stating that he is trying to reach Kolhapur at the earliest opportunity.

"While Kolhapur, Sangli and Satara have been ravaged by floods, the situation in Kolhapur is critical. It is difficult to enter the district as it is cut off from all four sides. Even military helicopters were forced to turn back on Tuesday," Mr. Patil said in Mumbai.

He said he is coordinating with the administration of the three districts and reviewing the situation. "I am in touch with the Collectors of the affected areas over phone, reviewing the situation every half an hour. As of now, 40 boats in Kolhapur and 10 in Sangli have been pressed into service. All necessary provisions like milk and drinking water are being reached out to the flood-hit."

## Assembly polls: State defers campus elections

Cabinet amends Maharashtra Public Universities Act

SHARAD VYAS  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government has deferred campus elections in the State citing a law and order situation in the run-up to the Assembly elections. The government had decided to hold campus elections nearly 25 years after they were last held in colleges across the State, but the Maharashtra Police have given a less-than-favourable report on the possibility of holding the polls in September, said Higher and Technical Education Minister Vinod Tawde.

The Cabinet on Wednesday amended the Maharashtra Public Universities Act

2016 to include provisions which would allow the government to push forward elections in case of a law and order emergency or calamity and natural disaster. The government has already deployed as many as six companies of Central Reserve Police Force in Jammu and Kashmir by pulling them out of Naxal-hit regions.

*The Hindu* had reported earlier this week that in a letter to the Maharashtra Cabinet, senior security officials had said there is a shortage of troops due to the ongoing situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the forthcoming Assembly elections in October. Mr. Tawde said some chancellors and senior police officials have provided inputs suggesting holding elections would not be possi-

bility when the code of conduct was in place for the Assembly polls. Thereafter, the inputs were forwarded to the Maharashtra Home Department, which has done its own assessment of the emerging scenario. "I want to ensure students the elections are not being cancelled but only deferred. The police manpower and machinery will be busy in the Assembly polls and it will be impossible for them to make arrangements for the student polls," said Mr. Tawde. University elections in the State were banned in 1993 following the murder of a law student in 1989. Under the new norms passed earlier this year, the government has barred candidates from political parties from contesting or using any symbol, officials said.

The latest amendments have been forwarded to the Governor and he is likely to give his assent at the earliest.

Once the Governor signs the amendment, the State government will release a new date for the campus elec-

tions, Mr. Tawde said. The elections were deferred last year as well, but Mr. Tawde clarified it was because of a delay in planning of the polling schedule. "The statute itself was not ready last year, but our government has ensured it is prepared in less than a year. We are in favour of the elections since it will help determine evolved voters and candidates across the State. We assure that we will hold them after the Assembly elections," said Mr. Tawde. University elections in the State were banned in 1993 following the murder of a law student in 1989. Under the new norms passed earlier this year, the government has barred candidates from political parties from contesting or using any symbol, officials said.

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## IN BRIEF



Jagan makes a strong pitch for Centre's help

VIJAYAWADA  
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy explained the financial position of Andhra Pradesh to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi on Wednesday. Promises made to Andhra Pradesh in the Reorganisation Act and those made on the floor of Parliament came up for discussion at the meeting which lasted one hour, sources in the State government said.

## Orthodox Church serves ultimatum to Kerala govt.

KOTTAYAM  
Frustrated by an 'abdication of intent' by the Kerala government in implementing the Supreme Court orders in the Malankara Church case, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church on Wednesday served an ultimatum on the government asking it to implement the orders within a period of seven days. In a letter dispatched to the Chief Secretary, Biju Oommen, church secretary said the government allowed parallel administration and religious services by unlawful priests, and gave police protection to the dissident Patriarch group to occupy parish churches.

## A.P. govt. extends ban on Maoists by one more year

VIJAYAWADA  
The Andhra Pradesh government has extended the ban on the CPI(Maoist) and seven of its front organisations for one year under the A.P. Public Security Act, 1992. Except the Revolutionary Democratic Front, the ban on other organisations has been extended with effect from August 17, 2019. The ban on the RDF will be extended with effect from August 9, 2019.

## Overnight traffic ban in Bandipur will stay, rules SC

Centre told to file affidavit on long-term solution

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the continuation of the overnight traffic ban on the national highway running through the core area of the **Bandipur tiger reserve**. A Bench led by Justice Rohinton Nariman asked the Centre to come up with a permanent solution which would keep the endangered species away from harm by exposing them to highway traffic. **Highways do not have a place in the core tiger habitats and their buffer zones**, the court said.

"There is a need to strengthen another route. We direct the Union government's Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in consultation with the Ministry of Environment and Forest to file



Red signal: Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have supported the overnight traffic ban in Bandipur. ■ FILE PHOTO

an affidavit within four weeks with suggestions on closure of it in the long run," the Bench said.

The court said it is a necessity to accept the recommendation of the National Tiger Conservation Authority to continue with the overnight traffic ban.

Senior advocate Jaideep Gupta said the highway is not a thoroughfare for holidaymakers. Much-needed essential supplies from Mysuru to Kerala go through it. The

ban affected the flow of inter-State trade, commerce and tourism. "This is not a question of pleasure drive. This is essential for movement of goods. The ban was causing widespread unrest in the State," he submitted.

Senior advocate Basava P. Patil, for Karnataka, submitted that an alternative route is being developed at a cost of approximately over ₹70 crore. Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have supported the ban to protect ecology.

## Class X student held in hostel murder case

STAFF REPORTER  
VIJAYAWADA

The Krishna district police on Wednesday took a Class 10 student of the Government BC Welfare Hostel in Andhra Pradesh into custody for allegedly killing Dasi Aditya, 7, who was staying in the same hostel.

Aditya, studying in Class 3, was found dead in the bathroom of the hostel on Tuesday.

The 15-year-old boy allegedly killed Aditya by slitting his throat with a knife used for sharpening pencils, the police said.

Aditya and the senior student clashed a couple of days ago and Aditya reportedly abused him. Taking this as an insult, the senior planned to take revenge. He allegedly took Aditya into the bathroom and strangled him. To confirm his death, he slit his throat leaving him in a pool of blood and returned to his room. The victim died after some time, the police said.

## Rivers flow above danger level in north Karnataka

With no let up in the rain, flood situation worsens



Helping hands: A person being rescued from a flood-affected village in Kodagu district on Wednesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Water from Maharashtra

As of Wednesday morning, Maharashtra released 45.2 tmcft of water from its seven reservoirs in the **Koyna and Warna basins** and the inflow into Karnataka was estimated at 5,18,567 cusecs, according to irrigation engineers.

In Belagavi alone, over 30 bridges and barrages have submerged owing to the in-

creased water levels in all major rivers and tributaries.

The woes of Belagavi district further increased on Wednesday with a rise in water discharge from the **Malaprabha (Renukasagar) reservoir at Naviluteertha** in Savadatti taluk. The Malaprabha waters entered the streets, houses and shops in

Munavalli town downstream. Ghataprabha river surrounded the town of Gokak and its surroundings.

The National Highway 48 remained blocked owing to a landslip near Kolhapur and flooding at several places. The two roads to Goa via Chorla and Amboli have also been shut.

## Sister Lucy Kalapura, who joined stir against Bishop Franco, sacked

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHE

The Catholic religious order Franciscan Clarist Congregation has dismissed one of its members, Sister Lucy Kalapura, through a decree dated May 11.

A resident of Franciscan Clarist convent at Mananthawady in Wayanad, Sister Lucy shot into popularity after participating in a protest in Kochi against Bishop Franco Mulakkal of Jalandhar, who was accused of raping a nun.

The protest, which lasted for over a fortnight, ended with the arrest of Bishop Mu-



Sister Lucy Kalapura

lakkal. The Clarists had accused Sister Lucy of living a life against the style and substance of the Congregation. The letter claimed that the

Meanwhile, Sister Lucy has said that the action against her is inhuman and she will fight it legally.

## Nod to regularise buildings in Idukki

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Cabinet has decided to ask the Idukki District Collector to prepare a report on the encroachments in the district and regularise buildings having an area up to 1,500 sq ft located on titled land up to 15 cents and being used for own purposes.

The building owners should not have property anywhere else.

The Land Assignment Rules, 1964, would be amended for regularising the buildings. Building owners in this segment who are using it for commercial purposes will have to prove that it is their sole means of livelihood.

The Collector would examine each case and submit it for government decision.

## Land to be taken over

The Cabinet also decided to cancel the title-deeds of commercial buildings that

did not fall in the above category, takeover the land and buildings and vest it with the government. It would be leased out as per the rules in force.

Constructions on encroached government land without title-deeds would be taken over and used for public purposes. A five-member committee was appointed for scrutinising the title-deeds that were deemed as counterfeit, but were approved by the government. These title-deeds were issued by a tahsildar, Ravindran, earlier.

The committee has been told to complete the scrutiny in a time-bound manner so that the follow-up action could be completed in three months.

Since the Munnar Tribunal has been wound up, the pending cases would be transferred to the courts from where they originated. An ordinance would be promulgated in this regard.

## In full bloom



The glass house in Bengaluru's Lalbagh is being readied for the Independence Day flower show. This year a tribute will be paid to Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar on his birth centenary. The flower show will commence on August 9. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

## Kerala Cabinet nod for rail alignment

The train will cover the 532 km from Kochuveli to Kasaragod in four hours

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Cabinet has given clearance for the alignment of the ambitious ₹56,443-crore semi-high speed rail (SHSR) corridor from Kochuveli to Kasaragod for traversing 532 km in four hours.

The third and fourth railway lines of the State will be away from the existing one in the 300-km Kochuveli-Shoranur section and parallel to the line from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasaragod, with railway bypasses at Vadakara and Thalassery. It will traverse 11 districts, except Alappuzha, Idukki and Wayanad.

The alignment mooted in the feasibility report by the Paris-based engineering and consulting group Systra was

## On the fast track

## THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-KASARAGOD SEMI-HIGH SPEED RAIL PROJECT

## Distance from Thiruvananthapuram

Kollam	Chengannur	Kottayam	Kochi	Thirissur
55 km	108.7 km	142.2 km	194.9 km	259 km
24M	48M	1H 3M	1H 26M	1H 54M
316.5 km	357.4 km	448.17 km	530.29 km	
2H 19M	2H 37M	3H 16M	3H 52M	

RUNNING TIME FROM THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



presented to the Ministers on Wednesday morning by V. Ajith Kumar, Managing Director, Kerala Railway Development Corporation Limited (KRDC), the special purpose vehicle (SPV) set up to execute 'viable' projects

on a cost-sharing basis between the State and Railways.

The train will move at 200 km an hour to cover the north-south rail corridor with stops at Kochuveli, Kollam, Chengannur, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Tirur, and Kasaragod.

The fare would be ₹2.75 a km with an annual hike of 7.5 per cent, Mr. Kumar told *The Hindu*. The train can ferry 675 passengers and the coach will have a three-plus-two configuration, with a business class.

Only 1,226.45 hectares would have to be acquired for laying the track and building stations and 6,395 structures/families will be affected. Systra has found the third and fourth green corridor – to be completed by 2024 – and dedicated railway lines to the Thiruvananthapuram and Cochin international airports with railway stations for inter-modal transport 'financially feasible.'

## Act can't regulate online content, says HC

Transfer of files or films through Internet won't come under Cinematograph Act'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court on Wednesday held that films, serials and other multimedia contents transmitted, broadcast or exhibited through Internet platforms like YouTube, Google India, and online streaming platforms like Hotstar, Amazon Prime, Netflix and Alt Digital, could not be regulated under the Cinematograph Act, 1952.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice Mohammad Nawaz passed the order while rejecting a plea made in a PIL petition filed by Padmanabhan Shankar, a resident of Bengaluru. While pointing out that children were being affected

under the Cinematograph Act till a suitable legislation is made to regulate them. It was also contended in the petition that the Cinematograph Act, 1952 and the Cable Television Network Regulation Act, 1995 are silent with regard to broadcast or transmission of films, cinema, serials and other multimedia contents through the Internet.

The Bench said that going by the concept of Internet and its operation, the act of exhibition of films, serials and other content perhaps amounted to transfer of files based on requests by users, and hence it was not possible to accept that transfer of files or films, serials through the Internet came under the



The Bench said it hoped the government would find a solution if the petitioner submits a representation.

due to unregulated content transmitted through online platforms, the petitioner had sought a declaration from the court that films, serials, and other multimedia content transmitted through online platforms require certifi-

cation under the Cinematograph Act. However, the Bench observed that the anxiety of the petitioner, who is a senior citizen, that films, serials and other multimedia contents transmitted through Internet platforms would have an adverse impact on children could be well understood. While observing that the concern expressed by the petitioner merited consideration by the Union government, the Bench said it hoped that the Union government, considering a larger public interest, would find a solution within the four corners of the law if the petitioner submitted a representation seeking regulation of content of online streaming platforms.

# 'Whereabouts of Kashmir leaders a concern'

Mamata says the people of a State should be taken into confidence before making any decision in connection with the State



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with DMK president M.K. Stalin at a meeting to mark the first death anniversary of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi. •PTI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Reiterating that the people of a State should be taken into confidence before making any decision in connection with the State, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday expressed concern over the whereabouts of former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Ministers Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti.

Ms. Banerjee, who was in Chennai to attend a public meeting marking the first death anniversary of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M. Karunanidhi and to unveil his statue at the office of the party mouthpiece *Murasoli*, said

she had expected Mr. Farooq Abdullah to be there at the meeting.

"He should have attended the meeting. I thought I should talk to him. But he is not able to come. Yesterday, I saw a video, and if I am correct, he was crying. He was not able to visit even his daughter's house. I do not know what is happening," she said.

Ms. Banerjee said a political party could take a decision in connection with a State, but should always take its people into confidence.

Recalling the battles waged by leaders like Karunanidhi, she said one could sacrifice their life, but not their mother tongue. She called for a fight against dic-

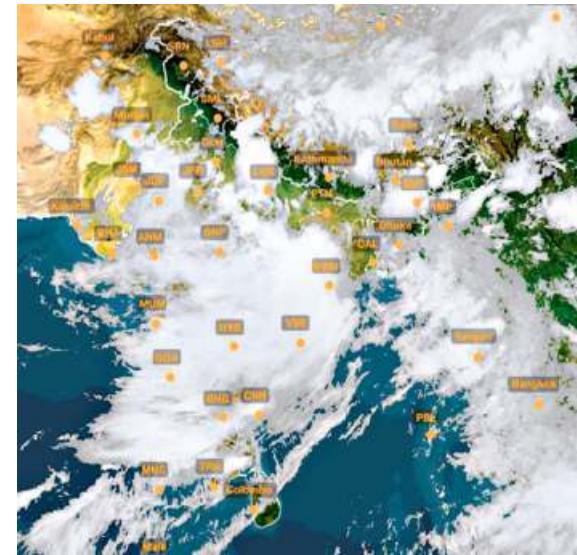
tatorship and fascism.

DMK president M.K. Stalin said though Mr. Farooq Abdullah's name figured in the invitation, he could not attend the function because of the developments in Jammu and Kashmir. He had been under house arrest. Recalling the days when Sheikh Abdullah, father of Farooq Abdullah, was interned in Tamil Nadu, he said an attempt was being made to "rewrite the dark history".

Mr. Stalin said the DMK did not require any lesson on patriotism since it had stood for the unity of the country when it waged wars with its neighbours. "But the BJP is instigating communalism in the name of patriotism," he alleged.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Thursday:** Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely over coastal Karnataka, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, central Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Gujarat, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Telangana, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, West Bengal, Sikkim and Odisha

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN  
Agartala 2.9...34.0...26.7 Kozhikode 95.5...31.0...24.4  
Ahmedabad 0.3...31.0...26.7 Kurnool ... 31.0...25.2  
Aizawl ... 32.7... Aizawl ... 31.0...25.0  
Aligarh 10.2...32.2...25.8 Madurai 0.7...37.0...25.0  
Bengaluru 2.0...25.4...21.1 Mangalore 81.1...27.0...24.1  
Bhopal 9.0...27.3...24.4 Mumbai 8.0...29.3...25.4  
Bhubaneswar 43.4...30.7...24.8 Mysuru 27.6...26.0...18.4  
Chandigarh 1.6...32.0...25.7 New Delhi 22.2...35.5...25.6  
Chennai ... 34.5...28.3 Patna 12.0...33.4...26.4  
Coimbatore 6.9...29.1...21.8 Port Blair 17.4...30.5...25.5  
Dehradun 0.7...34.8...24.3 Puducherry ... 33.2...25.5  
Gangtok 34.4...21.2...19.0 Pune 6.2...25.6...22.3  
Goa 29.9...28.0...23.6 Raipur 81.0...30.0...25.2  
Guwahati ... 39.2...28.0 Ranchi 4.2...28.0...22.4  
Hubballi ... 23.0...22.0 Shillong ... 26.5...18.9  
Hyderabad 2.7...28.7...22.9 Shimla 54.4...23.2...17.0  
Imphal 1.0...28.5...22.5 Srinagar ... 33.1...21.8  
Jaipur 74.6...32.6...24.2 Thiruvananthapuram 22.2...29.2...23.1  
Kochi 99.2...29.8...22.8 Tiruchi ... 35.7...27.0  
Kohima ... 29.8...19.5 Vijayawada 1.3...30.7...25.1  
Kolkata 16.2... ... 26.1 Visakhapatnam 18.8...27.2...24.8

(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	47	59	74	99	155	■■■
Bengaluru	08	48	84	25	55	■■■■■
Chennai	12	14	21	25	34	■■■■■
Delhi	11	55	57	75	135	■■■■■
Hyderabad	02	37	24	16	25	■■■■■
Kolkata	03	18	50	18	17	■■■■■
Lucknow	07	34	95	57	—	■■■■■
Mumbai	11	18	102	19	40	■■■■■
Pune	74	08	67	17	17	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	10	43	32	23	24	■■■■■

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES SO<sub>2</sub> NO<sub>x</sub> CO PM<sub>2.5</sub> PM<sub>10</sub> CODE

Ahmedabad 47 59 74 99 155 ■■■

Bengaluru 08 48 84 25 55 ■■■■■

Chennai 12 14 21 25 34 ■■■■■

Delhi 11 55 57 75 135 ■■■■■

Hyderabad 02 37 24 16 25 ■■■■■

Kolkata 03 18 50 18 17 ■■■■■

Lucknow 07 34 95 57 — ■■■■■

Mumbai 11 18 102 19 40 ■■■■■

Pune 74 08 67 17 17 ■■■■■

Visakhapatnam 10 43 32 23 24 ■■■■■

In observation made at 6.00 p.m., Ahmedabad, Gujarat recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 15. It is considered unhealthy level of pollution.

No: 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

## National film awards to be announced soon

They are likely to be out within a week; delay this year was caused due to the Lok Sabha election

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Winners of the long-delayed and much-awaited 66th National film awards are likely to be announced soon with the jury meeting and deliberations having started on August 7 at New Delhi's Siri Fort auditorium.

"They will be announced within a week," said a source. The awards were postponed this year due to the Lok Sabha election.

According to sources, the non-feature film awards and

the best writing in cinema awards had been locked before the election.

On the other hand, though the viewings had been completed by the feature films jury, no deliberations had been done when the postponement was announced by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

Even after the elections, the meeting



### 'Power of media'

Earlier, in a press release dated April 24, the Ministry said that "since the Model Code of Conduct [MCC] is in force, which facilitates level playing field to all political parties and the candidates and *inter alia* seeks to en-

sure that the power of media is not used in such a manner which affects the general conduct and level playing field during the election process, it has been decided to declare the awards after the election process is over and the MCC concludes".

### Designated date

Every year the winners of the awards are announced in April.

The presentation ceremony is held on the designated date, May 3, which is when

India's first feature film – *Dadasaheb Phalke's Raja Harishchandra* – is said to have had its theatrical release in 1913 at the Coronation Cinematograph and Variety Hall, Girgaon.

The event is organised and presented by the government's Directorate of Film Festivals.

Unlike this year, during the previous Lok Sabha election in 2014, the 61st National film awards were announced as per schedule on April 16 and presented on May 3.

## Centre unveils plan for coastal zone management

It will lay down guidelines for coastal States

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

The Environment Ministry has unveiled a draft plan that will dictate how prospective infrastructure projects situated along the coast ought to be assessed before they can apply for clearance.

The draft Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is part of a World Bank-funded project.

The document lays down guidelines for coastal States to adopt when they approve and regulate projects in coastal zones.

"The project seeks to assist the Government of India in enhancing coastal resource efficiency and resilience, by building collective

capacity (including communities and decentralised governance) for adopting and implementing integrated coastal management approaches," the introduction to the report notes. The document was prepared by the Society for Integrated Coastal Management, a Ministry-affiliated body.

Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) has to be a continuous process rather than a "one-off" investment action, the report said.

So far three coastal States, namely Gujarat, Odisha and West Bengal, have prepared Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans with support from the World Bank.

Such plans would be

## Just 83 tmcft water from Godavari for Tamil Nadu

T. RAMAKRISHNAN

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu has been allotted 83 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft) of water under the proposed Godavari-Cauvery link, according to a draft detailed project report of the National Water Development Agency (NWDA), a Central government organisation entrusted with the task of preparing proposals for linking rivers.

The allotment has not provided comfort to the State government, as Tamil Nadu has been demanding 200 tmcft of water, a quantity mentioned in a memorandum submitted by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June. A senior Tamil Nadu official, who is aware of the subject, said a letter will be sent soon, requesting the NWDA to re-

view the figure to at least 125-150 tmcft of water.

The report, which has been circulated to the States concerned for views, has also envisaged that 46 tmcft will be provided at the Grand Anicut.

The State government would prefer the Kattalai barrage to the Grand Anicut so that the diversion of water from Kattalai to Vaigai and Gundar basins in the southern districts of the State can be done smoothly, as the barrage is located at a higher elevation.

As per the current NWDA proposal, a total of 247 tmcft is sought to be diverted from the Godavari, through the Krishna river, to the Pennar basin. As much as 163 tmcft will be set apart for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and the balance will be given to Tamil Nadu.

## Tej Pratap is a drug addict, alleges wife

AMARNATH TEWARY

PATNA

Tej Pratap Yadav, former State Health Minister and elder son of Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu Prasad, has been accused by his wife Aishwarya Rai of being a drug addict, who often dresses up like Radha, Krishna and Shiva claiming to be their avatar. She has also alleged "mental, physical and emotional" torture by him and members of his family.

Filing an application in the family court of Patna under Sections 18, 19 and 26 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, Ms. Rai claimed that a few days into their marriage, she learnt that Mr. Tej Pratap "was addicted" to ganja (marijuana). "He told me that he considers himself to be an avatar of Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna," Ms. Rai said in her 18-page application. "On some days, he would completely transform himself and dress up like Radha, wearing a ghaghra-choli and lehenga [long skirt and blouse] sporting a wig and make-up all over his face," she said.

Ms. Rai continues to live at her in-laws' residence, 10 Circular Road, allotted to former Chief Minister and her mother-in-law Rabri Devi. She has requested the court for protection and permission for "private meetings with her family members." She also has requested the court to allow her to have a separate kitchen, keep her staff and live the kind of life the rest of the family lead in the house.

Ms. Rai's father Chandrika Rai is an RJD MLA and her grandfather Daroga Prasad Rai was a Chief Minister of Bihar.

CMYK

THE HINDU



## Blackout

Dissent does not have to invite measures aimed at throttling information flow

Jammu and Kashmir remains entirely cut off, ironically, as part of the efforts at effecting its "complete integration" with the rest of the country. Rightly or wrongly, the BJP government at the Centre in its wisdom thought that annulling the special status accorded to J&K in the Constitution and demoting and dividing it into two Union Territories were essential steps towards national integration. Information flow to and from J&K has been restricted to almost nil, and media platforms reported on the momentous changes abruptly announced by the Centre without any independent account of the situation on the ground. That the world's largest democracy could clampdown on information to the public in such a cavalier manner may appear incomprehensible under ordinary circumstances. But then, muzzling voices from J&K was only a corollary to a far more consequential directing of discourse. People in J&K even missed the Prime Minister's tweet on how the new scheme of things would be helpful for them, as they were, and continue to be, snipped off the Internet. Reporting from conflict zones is not new to Indian media. Journalists have covered riots, insurrections and wars for decades in the country, and governments have allowed them to do so. By and large, state agencies have even enabled reporting from conflict zones and sites of natural disasters with curfew passes and special communication facilities, though there have been exceptions. Accurate information is always the best counter to misinformation and treacherous rumours.

Information coming out of the State is sparse, costly and hard to gather. The announcement on the withdrawal of the special status of J&K was preceded by a flurry of reporting sourced to government officials that terror threats were the reason for additional troop deployment. The Amarnath yatra was discontinued and the Valley was emptied of tourists owing to these threats. Quite likely, irrespective of the nature of the threat alerts, these measures were linked to the Centre's decision on removal of the special status. Even before the clampdown on communication facilities, the government had been tight-fisted with information. The same attitude was evident subsequent to other critical decisions it made in recent years: official communication with the public has been strictly a one-way process, through press releases, radio monologues, and social media posts. Parliament, which ended a highly productive session in terms of business transacted, has been reduced to endorsing executive decisions with little meaningful discussions. While these are concerns that the government must address at the earliest, it must start with the immediate removal of all restrictions on movement of people and communication in J&K. Only security concerns under exceptional circumstances, and not aversion to democratic dissent in the normal course, can justify choking the information flow.

## RBI's Goldilocks cut

The government must now unleash measures to boost growth

Faced with slowing GDP growth and encouraged by benign inflationary trends, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has delivered a Goldilocks cut of 35 basis points in the benchmark repo rate. Though a rate cut was a foregone conclusion ahead of the monetary policy announcement, the expectation was of either a 25 or 50 basis points one. Given the extent of the slowdown in the economy, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) deemed the former as too low but taking into account factors such as the turbulence in the global financial markets and the rupee's fall in the last few days, the latter was seen as too high. In the event, the MPC settled on a median and unconventional 35 basis point cut, which keeps the powder dry for further cuts this financial year. With this, the RBI has cut rates in four consecutive policy announcements beginning February this year, aggregating to a total of 110 basis points. But the transmission by banks to lenders has not been even a third of this. The central bank says that banks have passed on just 29 basis points which is poor indeed. One factor inhibiting transmission was the tight liquidity conditions until June when the RBI flooded the market – in fact, the last two months the central bank has had to absorb excess liquidity floating around. There is, therefore, reason to hope that transmission from here-on would be quicker.

The repo rate at 5.40% is now at a nine-year low and is headed lower in the next few months and could well settle at 5% or very close to that by the time this rate cutting cycle plays out. Supporting this theory is the fact that inflation is projected to be benign for the next one year. Growth, on the other hand, is expected to be weak and the MPC has revised downwards the projected GDP growth rate for this fiscal to 6.9% from 7% earlier, with downside risks. Even this appears optimistic given the current impulses in the economy and it is very likely that GDP growth this fiscal will be closer to 6.5%. With the latest cut, the RBI has signified that it is willing to do the heavy lifting. But this alone will not suffice as cost of capital is just one aspect that determines investment. The government has to play its part too in boosting growth. Arguably, the space for fiscal concessions is limited given the overall revenue scenario, but the government can certainly push for further reforms to incentivise investment without impacting its fiscal arithmetic. The slowdown now is part cyclical – which can be addressed by a rate cut – and part structural, for which reforms are an absolute necessity. Therefore, unless the government responds with its own measures, the RBI's efforts to support growth may go in vain.

# The fragility of India's federalism

The government's Kashmir move exposes the contingent nature of India's asymmetric constitutional provisions



LOUISE TILLIN

**T**he abrogation of Article 370 has exposed ambiguities that have long been evident in India's federal system. Asymmetric agreements have been negotiated in settlement of a number of regional conflicts in India. Kashmir's autonomous status was the oldest and – in original conception – the most far-reaching of these provisions. But in practice, there has been a contingency to autonomy provisions, leaving them open to revision by popular majorities at the all-India level.

### An altered trajectory

The regionalisation of India's party system between 1989-2014 contributed to the appearance that deeper federalism and growing regional autonomy *vis-à-vis* the Central government was an almost inexorable process. However, the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to national political dominance has altered that trajectory.

By abrogating Article 370 and bifurcating Jammu and Kashmir State to create two Union Territories, the BJP has demonstrated the possibility of using the inherent flexibility in the federal order to centralise power and reshape the size, powers and stature of a constituent unit of the Indian Union – the only unit with a Muslim majority population.

The constitutionality of the abrogation of Article 370 will be carefully picked over in the months and years to come. But the government's ability to table and pass legislation with such important consequences for the fabric of federalism – while the elected assembly of Jammu and Kashmir is in abeyance – exposes the fragile set of compromises on which India's asymmetric federal system rests.

Asymmetric federalism involves the granting of differential rights to certain federal subunits, often in recognition of their distinctive ethnic identity. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the negotiation of Article 370 was a transitional and contingent constitutional arrangement agreed in the midst of a continuing conflict while the Indian Constitution was being finalised. Over time, this 'transitional' clause had become a semi-permanent institutional compromise, although this was ever an uneasy compromise. Kashmir's autonomy arrangements had been eroded under successive governments as tensions grew between the desire of Prime Ministers from Jawaharlal Nehru onwards to integrate the State more closely into the Indian Union and the desire of many Kashmiris to preserve a special status for their State. Since 1954, as many as 94 of 97 entries in the Union List and two thirds of constitutional articles have been extended to the State. This process has happened with the approval of the Supreme Court.

Subsequent asymmetric agreements were reached with the Nagas and the Mizos, which are enshrined in Article 371 in the Constitution. When the small State of Sikkim joined the Indian Union in the early 1970s, Article 371F was added to the Constitution. Article 371F allowed for laws that were in place before Sikkim's accession to remain in place unless amended or repealed by the legislature. Article 371 also contains measures that were intended to promote intra-State equity in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka.

### Contesting asymmetry

Asymmetric constitutional provisions are a common feature of federalism in diverse societies. Many have argued that India sets an international example for how asymmetric features can help dampen secessionist conflicts by recognising multiple modes of belonging within the Union. Rather than encouraging secessionism,



proponents of asymmetric arrangements argue that it is the denial of autonomy that can provide ground for secessionist claims to grow.

However, asymmetric arrangements are often contested by majority national communities and by other regions without special arrangements. The annulment of Article 370 has long been a *cause célèbre* for Hindu nationalism, but it was striking that it also received wide support from many regional parties in Parliament.

The rationale set out by the BJP this week drew on all the textbook critiques of asymmetric arrangements to attract the support of many regional parties to pass the legislation in the Rajya Sabha. These include the argument that asymmetric provisions are discriminatory, for instance, by placing prescriptions on who can own property in particular regions, or because they privilege certain kinds of 'special' identities over others. A Telugu Desam Party MP, from India's first linguistic State Andhra Pradesh, welcomed the fact that India would now be 'one nation with one flag and one constitution.' Alternatively, asymmetric status is presented as contributing to secessionist claims, hence the argument that Article 370 is the 'root cause of terrorism'. Autonomy arrangements are also presented as anti-egalitarian because they prevent the extension of rights in force elsewhere in a country. This last argument underscores the significance of the simultaneous emphasis on extending reservations for Scheduled

Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the new Union Territories alongside the abrogation of Article 370. As the Home Minister, Amit Shah, said in the Lok Sabha: "Those who support Article 370 are anti-Dalit, anti-tribal, anti-women."

### A deliberate flexibility

By design, India's federal institutions place relatively weak checks on the power of a government with a parliamentary majority. As the political scientist, Alfred Stepan, identified, federal systems can be more or less 'demos constraining'. In those at the more 'demos constraining' end of the spectrum, federalism serves to undermine the consolidation of power by national majorities. For instance, the American theorist, William Riker, saw American federalism as a counter-weight to national populism since 'the populist ideal requires that rulers move swiftly and surely to embody in law the popular decision on an electoral platform'. By contrast, other federal systems, such as India's, are more 'demos-enabling'.

This means that the design of federalism places fewer checks on the power of national majorities. For instance, the composition of the Rajya Sabha mirrors the composition of the Lok Sabha, rather than providing equal representation to States regardless of size, and the Rajya Sabha has weaker powers than the Lower House. Fewer powers are constitutionally allocated to federal subunits exclusively compared to more 'demos-constraining' federations.

Placing this kind of flexibility in the hands of the Central government was deliberate and designed to enable decisive Central action to protect national integrity in the aftermath of Partition. In the Constituent Assembly, B.R. Ambedkar highlighted the difference between the 'tight mould' of other federal systems and the flexibility hard-wired into India's which would enable it to be both 'unitary as well as federal' according to the requirements of time and circumstances.

This constitutional permissiveness has been used to do things that have deepened federalism in the past under both Congress and BJP-led governments, such as the creation of new States in response to regional demands from the linguistic reorganisation of States in the 1950s onwards. By granting the Central government the power to create new States or alter State boundaries under Article 3, and not giving State governments a veto over bifurcation, the Constitution enabled the Central government to accommodate linguistic and ethnic diversities in a way that would have been much harder in a more rigid federal system. It also enabled the Central government to adopt asymmetrical measures in the first place without facing a backlash from other regions that might have resented the 'special' treatment of minority regions. Until the 2000s, most of these changes were done based on a slow process of consensus building within the regions concerned.

### The unknown

By abrogating Article 370, bifurcating Jammu and Kashmir and downgrading the status of the successor units to Union Territories, the government has used the flexibility of the federal provisions of the Constitution to other ends. This is not the first time that a Central government has used its powers to bifurcate a State in the absence of local consensus. This was also seen with the creation of Telangana in 2014. As in the case of Telangana, the creation of the Union Territory of Ladakh does respond to a long-run demand in this region with a substantial Buddhist population. However, the decision to transform the remainder of J&K State into a Union Territory, at the same time as annulling Article 370, is a departure with profound and as yet unknown consequences in Kashmir, and wider implications for Indian federalism.

Louise Tillin is a Reader in Politics at King's College, London. She is the author of 'Indian Federalism' (2019)

## Hong Kong adrift and China without an anchor

Beijing should realise that political reform rather than economic lures is what resonates in Hong Kong



THOMAS ABRAHAM

**A**s Hong Kong's turbulent summer of protests continues unabated, China's patience with its restive southern city could be wearing thin, and it has hinted at using the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to quell the protests. That would be disastrous for both Hong Kong and China.

Angry and frustrated young Hong Kongers have confronted the city's government with a series of demands, including the withdrawal of a bill that would allow people to be extradited from Hong Kong to China. The government has said it will shelve the bill temporarily, but will not scrap plans to reintroduce it at a later stage.

The extradition bill is only the latest issue that has brought people out on the streets. In 2014, young people occupied the streets of central Hong Kong for several weeks demanding among other things universal suffrage rather than the current electoral college to choose the head of the Hong Kong government. Earlier, students had protested attempts to introduce what was described as patriotic education into the school curriculum.

The Chinese government is increasingly a target of the demonstrators, who recently attacked Beijing's liaison office in Hong Kong and defaced the Chinese national emblem. In China's view, this was a grave provocation, and appears to have triggered a threat to bring in the PLA to end the protests.

### The Tiananmen shadow

In a rare public statement, the head of the PLA garrison in Hong Kong, Chen Daoxiang, warned that "violence should not be tolerated" and that the PLA "was determined to protect national sovereignty, stability and prosperity of Hong Kong." To drive home the message the PLA released a video of anti-riot drills showing heavily armed soldiers supported by helicopters quelling demonstrators.

If PLA troops and tanks rumble through Hong Kong's streets it would effectively end any pretence of Hong Kong's autonomy within China. It would spell the end of Hong Kong as a city open to the world, where freedom of expression and the rule of law prevailed.

For China, it would be a rerun of June 1989, when troops and tanks were used in Tiananmen Square in Beijing to crush students protesting for reforms. That action taken at the urging of Deng Xiaoping quelled the unrest, but threw China into a decade of international isolation at a time when it was



desperately seeking to modernise its economy and emerge as a global power. The G7 refused to deal with China, World Bank loans were frozen, and many western countries imposed trade sanctions.

### Potential global fallout

Any violence in Hong Kong with the Chinese military will produce a strong reaction from China's main trade partners. The United States is already engaged in a trade war with China, and the Trump administration has slapped additional import duties on Chinese goods to force it to end what it describes as predatory trade practices. Military action in Hong Kong will only strengthen support in the U.S. for tougher trade and economic sanctions. Similarly the European Union can be expected to react strongly to any action by the PLA in Hong Kong.

China's leader, Xi Jinping, is extremely conscious of the legacy he wants to create as the most consequential leader modern China has

had, alongside Mao and Deng Xiaoping. Sending tanks into Hong Kong is not going to help him achieve this. But neither can he allow his authority to be defied in Hong Kong in a way that would not be allowed anywhere else in China.

China does not understand what fuels the anger in Hong Kong. It has fallen back on the standard argument that governments confronted with popular protests tend to use: foreign forces are behind the unrest. Yang Jiechi, a PolitBuro member of the Communist Party of China, has said that the U.S. and other unnamed countries had been stirring up trouble in order to undermine Hong Kong.

But there is no evidence to show that these protests are anything but home grown, and the continuing tragedy is that the Chinese leadership is either unable or unwilling to understand the roots of the anger in Hong Kong.

### A disconnect

The hard fact China has to face is that 22 years after the British withdrew and Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty, the former colony is drifting further and further away from China, rather than getting closer to the motherland.

The Hong Kongers who are at the forefront of the protests were all born shortly before or after Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty. They have only

known Hong Kong as a part of China. But their identity, outlook and worldview is not mainland Chinese, but distinctively Hong Kong. They speak Cantonese, not Mandarin. They look to Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the western world for their culture, not the mainland. When they travel on holiday, it is not to China but to other parts of the world. When they go abroad to study, it is not to China, but to the west. Like their parents who grew up under British rule, they have no desire to be integrated with the rest of China; they are suspicious of Chinese intentions.

China's leaders had thought that greater economic opportunities in a booming China would help bind Hong Kong to the motherland. The booming cities of the Pearl River delta have become closely economically integrated with Hong Kong, offering jobs in cutting edge industries to young Hong Kongers.

But these economic lures have not enticed them. Their desire is to preserve what they see as the Hong Kong way of life. And for that to happen, they demand their own elected government, not leaders appointed by the Chinese government. This is more than China is willing to concede, and therein lies the seed for future tragedy in Hong Kong.

Thomas Abraham is a former Editor of The South China Morning Post in Hong Kong

## 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.

### Inspiring Minister

Former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj was a very affable personality and a popular face of the Bharatiya Janata Party (Inside pages, "A BJP stalwart with Socialist roots", August 7). In her stint as foreign Minister, her untiring efforts were what helped a number of Indians stranded abroad being brought back safely. An excellent orator, her speeches had a great impact.

V. HARIHARAN,  
Chennai

Ms. Swaraj will be remembered as a model of

how an External Affairs Minister should function. She won the hearts of countless overseas Indians, particularly the NRI blue-collar worker in distress. She was an embodiment of compassion and a decent politician. At a time when the ruling dispensation is intent on implementing its agenda by hook or by crook, it is unfortunate that the country has lost a senior leader who was also a balanced thinker.

THARCIUS S. FERNANDO,  
Chennai

There is no doubt that Ms. Swaraj projected a very high image of India at the global level. There was a touch of

humanism in all her functions. She was a people's minister all through.

C.P. CHANDRA DAS,  
Collierville, Tennessee, U.S.

■ Ms. Swaraj was an able administrator, stateswoman and an adept parliamentarian. Kerala will remember her efforts in 2014, in rescuing 46 nurses who were held captive by the Islamic State. Without her intervention the operation would not have been possible. Governments and ministers may change but Ms. Swaraj will live on in the hearts of every Indian.

GEORGIA K. JEEMON,  
Palakkad, Ermakulam, Kerala

■ Over and above her administrative acumen, Ms. Swaraj will be fondly remembered for her humaneness during her stint as Minister. She was not only instrumental in arranging for the homecoming of several stranded Indians but also displayed a mother's touch by facilitating medical visas for ailing Pakistanis.

S. VAITHIANATHAN,  
Madurai

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administrative acumen, Ms. Swaraj will be fondly remembered for her humaneness during her stint as Minister. She was not only instrumental in arranging for the homecoming of several stranded Indians but also displayed a mother's touch by facilitating medical visas for ailing Pakistanis.

S.K. CHOUDHURY,  
Bengaluru

Over and above her

Y.G. Parthasarathy is a shock (August 7). "Big Miss" was a class apart. Her role stretched from taking English prose, Shakespeare, moral science class, morning and Friday assembly and overseeing school administration. Her favourite quote was: "More things are wrought by prayer than [what] the world dreams of".

S.S. RAMESH,  
Chennai

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# Downgraded at the stroke of a pen

The move to convert Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories could open a Pandora's Box



MALAVIKA PRASAD

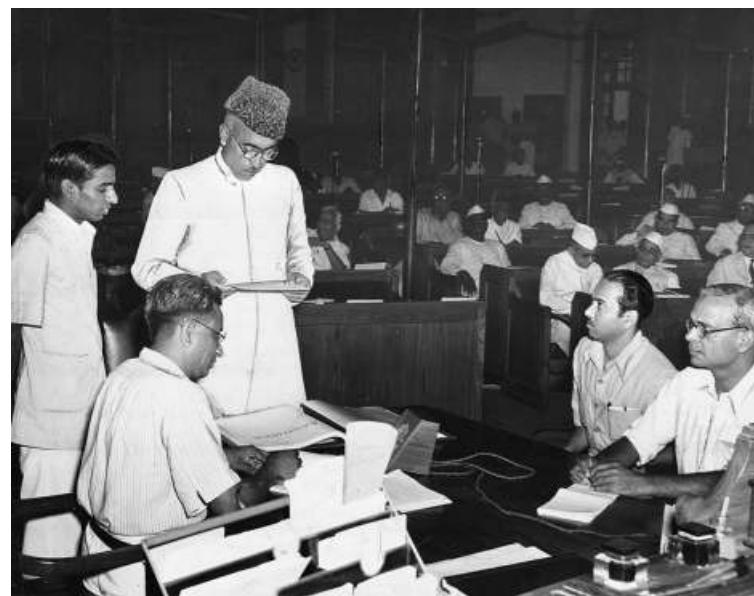
The Indian government's decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) raises many constitutional questions. One important question is whether the President had the powers to make all the provisions of India's Constitution apply to the State. Another is whether the Indian government was authorised to do this in the face of its own obligations to J&K under Article 370. Even assuming for a moment that these questions did not arise, a further question that does crop up is: Did Parliament have the authority to bifurcate J&K into two Union Territories (UTs)?

The last question assumes importance because the conversion of a State governed by an elected legislature into a UT/UTs adversely affects a people who had earlier enjoyed the freedom of full democratic participation. In the case of J&K, the centrally appointed administrator – called the Lieutenant Governor – will now have the power to make a wide range of decisions, as opposed to a regular State Governor, who must act typically on the aid and advice of the State's Council of Ministers.

Moreover, while the legislature of the UT of J&K – which the reorganisation law states will be akin to Puducherry's – will have the power to enact laws on matters in the State List and the Concurrent List of the Constitution, Parliament will retain the power to enact overriding laws. Consequently, the arenas open to decision-making by elected representatives will be diminished.

**The Delhi parallel**  
The total reorganisation of a full-fledged State into two UTs is historically unprecedented in India. However, one example here that can be cited is that of Delhi.

When the Constitution of India was adopted, Delhi was a 'Part C' State administered by the President acting through a Chief Commissioner or Lieutenant Governor. From 1952 to 1956, Delhi had a Legislative Assembly empowered to make laws on



Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) acceded to India in 1947 on terms recorded in the Instrument of Accession. Picture shows J&K Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah taking oath as member of Constituent Assembly in June 1949. ■ THE HINDU

all matters in the State List excepting law and order; constitution and powers of municipal corporations and local authorities; and land and buildings in possession of the Central government situated in Delhi. However, in 1956, Delhi and all the other Part C States were divested of their legislative powers and converted into UTs that would now be administered by the President acting through an administrator appointed by him.

Within some years, the other UTs were given legislatures, and by 1987, the UTs of Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Goa were even made into States. Only the restoration of a Legislative Assembly in Delhi was stalled, out of concern that Delhi holding legislative powers over matters in the State List would compromise the Union government's ability to discharge its functions towards the nation in the national capital.

Even when Delhi received partial Statehood in 1992, with full legislative powers on subjects in the State List – except public order, police and land – the elected government in Delhi found its hands tied by the powers of a centrally appointed Lieutenant Governor. This tussle for democratic power in Delhi finally culminated in 2018, when the Supreme Court recognised that the Constitution has sought to create a democrat-

ic and representative form of government in Delhi. Only in the exceptional case that the elected government and the Lieutenant Governor differ on matters fundamental to Delhi's governance could the latter's decision override democratic will.

#### Accession after Independence

However, J&K's entry into the Indian Dominion is not comparable with Delhi's beginning as a 'Part C' State. Delhi was an integral part of the India during Independence and later, when the Constitution came into force. J&K on the other hand was a sovereign Princely State at the time of India's Independence and acceded to the Indian Dominion in 1947 on terms recorded in a treaty – the Instrument of Accession. Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which accorded a special status to J&K in comparison with other States, was an embodiment of the treaty's terms.

However, J&K's special status was not a claim to sovereignty. This is apparent from Section 3 of the Constitution of the State of J&K, 1956, which recognises it as an integral part of India.

The special status merely meant that provisions of the Indian Constitution (other than Article 1 defining India as a Union of States; and Article 370 itself) were permitted to be applied to J&K differently from the way

they applied to regular States. Such a modified application allowed J&K a higher degree of autonomy.

For instance, while Parliament had exclusive powers to make laws pertaining to States, on all matters not in the State and Concurrent Lists, the residuary power rested with the State legislature in the case of J&K. With this autonomy, the people of J&K on paper had an even larger arena than regular States for enacting laws through democratic participation. Therefore, J&K's reorganisation into a UT amounts to a more severe curtailment of democratic rights than that of Delhi in 1956.

#### Not a constitutional amendment

Further, Delhi's conversion into a UT and the subsequent restoration of its Legislative Assembly were both carried out through constitutional amendments, which cannot easily be amended further. J&K's conversion into a UT, on the other hand, was effected through a regular law of Parliament, which can easily be amended at the behest of a majoritarian consensus from time to time.

Special status for States is not extraordinary in the Indian Constitution. Several States in India enjoy differential rights in their relationship to the Union by constitutional design, depending on their unique cultural, ethnic and geopolitical compositions. The thinking underlying this arrangement is that the interests of States with stronger intra-group ties or ethnic bases – like Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland – are better represented in the Constitution and the structure of the government, if we account for their subjective contexts.

The Constitution of India's chosen federal principle was to honour these subjective contexts to hold together the diverse Indian States in the Union, as B.R. Ambedkar stated in the Constituent Assembly. Therefore, the evisceration of the right to full democratic participation of an entire section of people, as happened earlier this week in the case of J&K, should make us all wonder:

what if more such laws are enacted, disregarding the subjective contexts of our other States and downgrading the States into Union Territories?

Malavika Prasad is a lawyer and doctoral fellow at the Nalsar University of Law

## Social reforms at a snail's pace

To be seen as a statesman, the Saudi Prince needs to free political prisoners and end the Yemen war

#### STANLY JOHNY

In an interview in April 2018, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) hinted that the country's male guardianship laws, which leave the legal and personal affairs of women in the hands of their male relatives, would be changed. "Before 1979 [the year of Iranian revolution and the Siege of Mecca] there were societal guardianship customs, but no guardianship laws. It doesn't go back to the time of the Prophet... we want to move on," he told *The Atlantic* magazine.

Sixteen months later, Saudi Arabia has amended the guardianship system. Under the new laws, women of 21 years or above may obtain passports, which will allow them to travel without male consent. They will also be permitted to register marriages, divorces, births and deaths and to receive family records. This follows last year's landmark decision to allow women to drive.

MBS has rightly been credited for these initiatives. After he rose to the current position, he initiated several economic and social reform measures. His 'Vision 2030' plan aims to lessen Saudi Arabia's near-total dependence on oil. It also promotes private enterprises, promises to raise women's participation in workforce, which is currently 22%, and to turn the country into a global investment favourite. Easing social restrictions has been an important part of this drive. While the goal is laudable, there are three fundamental problems with the model.

#### A complicated legacy

First, MBS is not the benign, visionary reformer that he's often presented as. His legacy is more complicated. The story of his rise to power is also a story of a brutal purge. He detained dozens of royals and businessmen in Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton hotel in November 2017 for weeks in the name of fighting corruption. The detentions lacked any legal basis and were inconsistent with the Saudi government's push to attract private investments. More worryingly, in recent years, the country has cracked down on both dissidents and rights campaigners. Political reform remains a taboo topic. Three prominent

women's rights activists – Loujain al-Hathloul, Samar Badawi and Naseema al-Sada – who wanted the guardianship laws to be changed, are still under arrest.

#### Gender equality

Second, the social reforms are too little and too slow. True, women being allowed to drive and travel without male consent are big measures in the Wahhabi Kingdom, where the guardianship laws effectively make them second-class citizens. But from a universal rights perspective, Saudi Arabia has a long way to go before treating its women citizens equally. The guardianship system survives despite the latest laws. A Saudi woman still needs a guardian's permission to exit shelters (for abuse victims) or be freed from prison. She still needs a guardian's consent for marriage. A man can still divorce his wife without her consent.

Third, the incremental reforms might boost the Crown Prince's image at home, but his foreign policy record is awful. A UN investigation recently held the "Saudi state" (euphemism for MBS, the de facto ruler) directly responsible for the assassination of

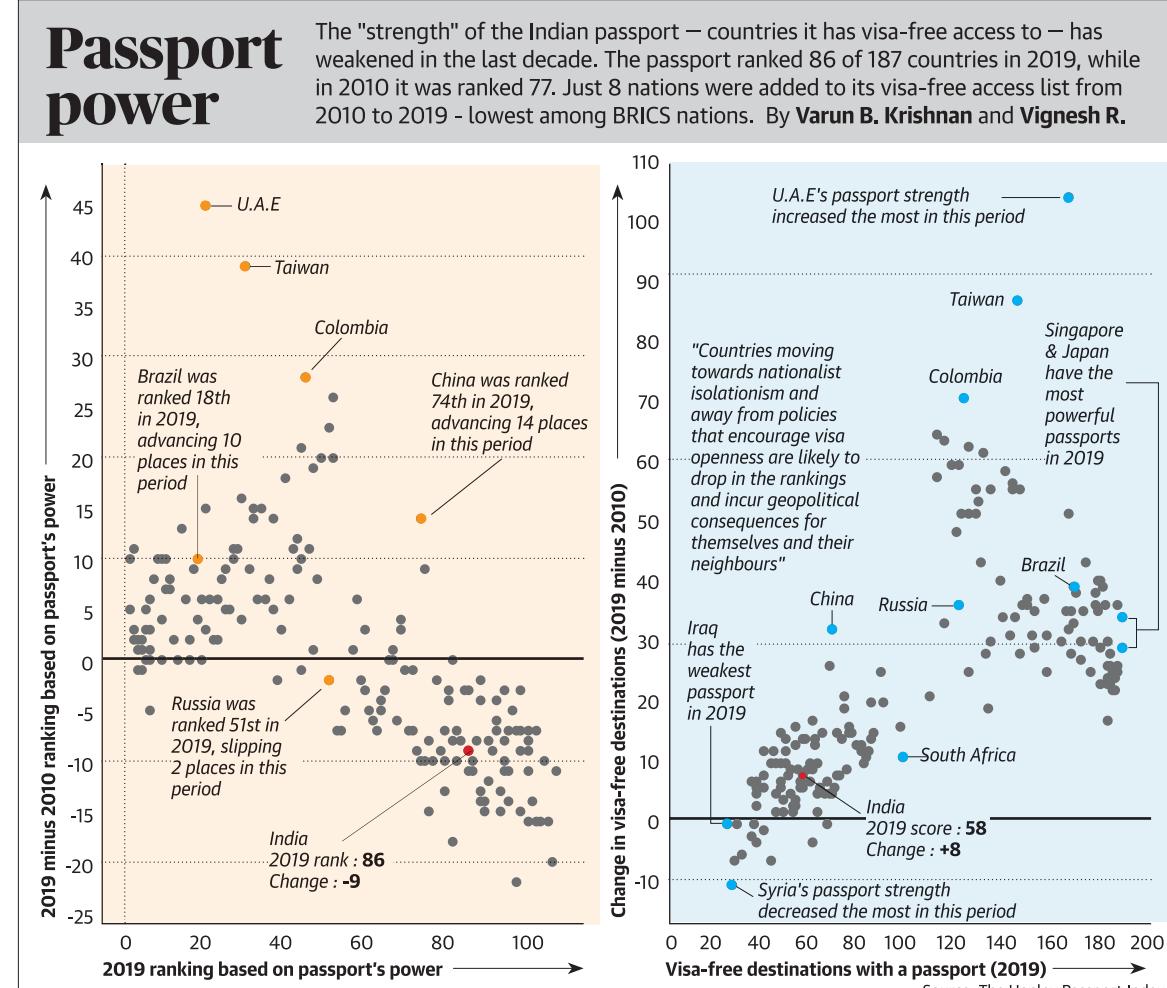
Jamal Khashoggi, the Saudi dissident journalist who was killed inside the Kingdom's Istanbul consulate in October 2018. Saudi authorities still haven't disclosed what happened to his body, while Turkish prosecutors had claimed that the body was dismembered and disposed using acid. Besides, the war MBS launched in 2015 in Yemen has turned the country into a humanitarian catastrophe. It's difficult to overlook the argument that MBS is using the reform card to amass more powers at home and divert criticism of his ruthless interventions abroad. If he wants to change Saudi Arabia and remake himself as a reformer-statesman, he should perhaps step up the pace of social and political reforms, release the political prisoners and rights campaigners, and bring the war in Yemen to an end.

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#### DATA POINT

### Passport power



# The big picture on tigers

While the number of wild cats has increased, infrastructure expansion plans have totally discounted their presence



NEHA SINHA

The tiger, which once sat crouching, is now roaring in India. Results of a once-in-four-years estimation of tiger numbers show us that India has about 3,000 of them. This is relevant not only nationally, but also globally – this is a majority of the world's wild tiger population, of around 4,000 tigers.

Each year, the tiger estimation increases its scope. Camera trap images, findings of foot surveys and other evidence on tigers and their prey species are collected. The latest estimate says that we have approximately 2,967 tigers in India, up from 2,226 as per the 2014 count. The scope of the effort was different this time: while the 2014 count included tigers that were over 1.5 years of age, this one included tigers as young as one-year old.

Yet, we must look at numbers, especially that on young tigers and cubs, as just one indicator in the tiger story. A couple of days before World Tiger Day (when the tiger report was released), a tigress was beaten to death in fields near the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve. Two days after the report's release, a tigress and her cub were found dead near Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh. Shortly after, another cub was found dead in Umaria in the same State. Earlier in July, there were the poisoning-caused deaths of a tigress and her two cubs in Chandrapur, near the Tadoba Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra.

#### Widening of rail, road networks

It may seem that these are stray cases with no real pattern. But while tigers are reproducing in India, new state policies are working directly against them. Relaxations in norms to allow for a widening of highway and railway networks are the new threats, adding to the old ones of retaliatory poisoning and poaching.

A report on management effectiveness of tiger reserves was also released on World Tiger Day. The report rated Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh as the best in terms of good management practices. This is fairly commensurate with its tiger numbers. Central India is one of the best tiger nurseries in India. Of all States, Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of tigers, over 500 of them.

Yet, tiger reserves cannot control what is around them; and the Pench tiger faces a

new threat. The National Highway 7 (NH7), which connects Pench and Kanha tiger reserves, has just been widened. Tigers, as well as the animals they prey on, find it hard to cross roads; for instance, a tiger died near Dehradoon in 2016 after being hit by a speeding vehicle. It may have been from Rajaji Tiger Reserve, an area that needs more male tigers. After sustained pressure from citizens and protests from the Madhya Pradesh forest department, authorities built underpasses meant for wildlife through NH7. But go down the spanking new highway in Maharashtra, and it has barriers on the road. It isn't much of a surprise then that a tiger was recently seen climbing the barrier to cross the road.

To put this incident into perspective, most National Highways are slated for widening and upgradation, and most tiger reserves have State or National Highways around them. Each year, thousands of animals die on the road. Apart from highways, railway and irrigation projects are coming up in tiger reserves, and the Ken-Betwa river interlinking project will submerge 100 sq. km of Panna Tiger Reserve.

So, while the numbers are reason to cheer, they can hardly be the whole story. The story is beyond and around the reserve boundaries that tigers have to cross. The numbers should also give pause to the plans being made discounting the presence of tigers. This is a time for thoughtful growth. Highways and railways should not be expanded to encroach into tiger areas; irrigation projects should also avoid the areas. Cost-benefit analyses need to take into account the needs of wild animals. At the moment, highways are not even able to do away with barriers, and it is assumed that tigers can swim through dam-submerged areas. So, to live, tigers are being made to swim across dams, cross highways, dash across railway lines, not eat livestock, and avoid people.

Currently, a group of tigers stand not too far from Bhopal. They may have come from the Ratapani Tiger Reserve, but the question is: what fate awaits them – roadkill, electrocution or poisoning? The question is bleak, but the answer need not be. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that development and environment do not need to come at each other's cost. This is true. And while tigers do not vote, our mandate to save them has never been greater.

Neha Sinha is with the Bombay Natural History Society. Views expressed are personal

The Hindu

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 8, 1969

#### PM receives threats to her life

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi said here [New Delhi] to-night [August 7] that she had received some threats not only to dislodge her from the high post she was holding but her life as well. She did not explain how, when and who made these threats to her. Mrs. Gandhi was addressing a gathering of about 300 Government school teachers outside the gates of her residence in Safdarjang Road just after 9 p.m. The teachers, including several women, had come in drenching rain to congratulate her on bank nationalisation. The Prime Minister declared she would rather not deviate from "the good and right path" that she was following in the larger interests of the overwhelming majority of 95 per cent of people than continue to hold the high office. "They are welcome to take away this Prime Ministership from me but I want to tell them that the ultimate victory will certainly be ours," she said amidst cheers and shouts of "Long live Indira Gandhi." Mrs. Gandhi said that bank nationalisation was the second stage of the freedom movement, of making freedom a reality for crores of the depressed.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 8, 1919

#### Amalgamation of Banks

Presiding over the annual meeting of the shareholders of the Bank of Bombay [in Bombay on August 7], Sir Jamsetji Jijiboy announced that the question of amalgamation of three presidency banks was under consideration. Proposals were to be submitted in due course to the shareholders for approval and sanction. Following the precedent set by the past Chairman, Sir Jamsetji delivered a lengthy speech reviewing the financial and trade situation. After pointing out that India had enjoyed another prosperous year and that the balance of trade in her favour was \$43 crores, he compared the figures of the last year with those of 1914. After showing what tremendous effect the war had on India's external trade, he said it remained to be seen whether the United Kingdom would make sufficient effort to divert it back in prewar channels. He drew attention to the critical currency situation in 1918 and to America's help to tide over the difficulties. Referring to the recent appointment of the Currency Committee he hoped as the fixing of the rates of exchange was of vital importance to the well-being and happiness of India's millions the committee would take various conflicting interests into account before making their recommendations.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## Full state honours for Sushma Swaraj

Earlier taking to the social media, U.S. ambassador Ken Juster said Ms. Swaraj will be "greatly missed."

Similar tributes came from the envoy of Bangladesh who conveyed the condolences from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and placed a wreath on the mortal remains of Ms. Swaraj, who passed away after a massive cardiac arrest late Tuesday evening.

Japanese Ambassador Hiromatsu also conveyed condolence from the people and government of Japan on the passing away of the former Minister of External Affairs.

In a message to the current Union External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, Russian Ambassador Nikolay Kudashev expressed Moscow's condolences, and described the departed

## Many Jammu residents hail integration

He said that after August 15 is when the real impact of the government's decision may be known, alluding to the potential easing of restrictions that are expected to be in place at least till then.

Another Srinagar resident who travelled to Jammu on Wednesday described the situation in his city as: "Everything is fine. There's a curfew that's all."

In other parts of Jammu, a handful of shops in otherwise busy marketplaces opened on Wednesday for the first time since Sunday, while concertina wire lay on crossings controlled by a large number of security personnel. Schools and colleges remained shut.

A senior government official said this was to control the number of people on the streets.

Standing outside a row of shuttered shops in Gujjar Nagar, Nazeer Ahmad said he should have been home on Monday. A resident of

## RBI takes offbeat tack to check growth slowdown

While all six members of the monetary policy committee (MPC) voted to cut rates, two members backed a 25 bps cut. With the GDP growth forecast for the year pared to 6.9%, the policy stance was kept accommodative.

The RBI lowered its forecast for GDP growth in the fiscal year ending March 2020 to 6.9%, from the 7% predicted in June, with "risks somewhat tilted to the downside".

The projection for consumer price index based inflation for the second half of the current financial year was poised to be slightly higher, at 3.5-3.7%, with CPI inflation forecast at 3.6% in the first quarter of the next fiscal.

With this rate cut, the RBI has now reduced the repo rate by 110 bps in 2019.

"RBI has painted a reasonably gloomy picture for the economy and the 35 bps cut seems to suggest that it concedes the fact that the extent of the slowdown is sharper than it had projected earlier although it does not see the need to push the panic button (that a 50 bps might have been interpreted

## Pak. expels Indian envoy, suspends trade

"Through NSC decisions, Pakistan has accepted – though not expressed in words – it's an attack and a semi-war like situation. Through NSC decisions, Pakistan has not just shown its seriousness in condemnation of revocation of Article 370 to India but to the international community as well and would now be in a better position to convince the world for its case on Kashmir."

She added that calling off all kind of bilateral trade means closure of all crossing points, "which also affects Indian trade with Afghanistan." Political analyst Mosharrif Zaidi says the NSC decisions represent Pakistan's effort to express its rejection of India's altering of the status of Kashmir.

## Rajya Sabha bids adieu to a 'voice of the people'

Nation has lost an able administrator, says Venkaiah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Paying homage to former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday said she was like his sister, and always addressed him as Anna (elder brother).

In the House, Mr. Naidu read out an obituary reference saying: "She was a regular at family and cultural events at my residence for a long time. Every year, on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, she used to tie rakhi on my hand. I will be missing this honour this year... I have lost a valuable sister in her demise, which is an irreparable loss to me."

## 'Voice of people'

Mr. Naidu said in her untimely demise, the nation had lost an able administrator, an effective parliamentarian and a true voice of the people.

Ms. Swaraj was a member of the House for three terms between April 1990 and May 2009. She was elected four times to the Lok Sabha – in 1996, 1998, 2009 and 2014.

Mr. Naidu said she had several firsts to her credit: she was the youngest Minister at the age of 25 in the Ha-



**Silent tribute:** Geeta, who accidentally crossed over to Pakistan, breaking down during a condolence meeting for Sushma Swaraj in Indore on Wednesday. Geeta was rescued after being stranded in Pakistan for 15 years, after an intervention by Ms. Swaraj. ■ PTI

ryana government, the first woman Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the first woman "Outstanding parliamentarian", the first woman Chief Minister of Delhi and the first full-time woman External Affairs Minister.

Stating that as a legislator and Union Minister, she remained committed and devoted to the cause of the people and country, he said that

in her four decade-long stint in public life, she had emerged as a role model. She was grace, grit, affection, amiability and ability personified. She always dreamt of an India at its highest glory, he said.

"As a Minister of External Affairs, she gave a human touch to the Ministry by being in the forefront of rescuing Indians in distress in several parts of the world. She

had come to be known as the most accessible Minister..." he said, adding that she was also an orator, with command over Hindi and English. Mr. Naidu mentioned her last message on Twitter, thanking Prime Minister on the issue of Article 370, stating that it showed her commitment to "One India, one Constitution". The members observed silence as a mark of respect to the departed.

## We will miss our friend: neighbours

Sri Lanka, Maldives recollect memories

MEEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

"Friend" was a recurring term in messages that poured in from leaders in neighbouring Sri Lanka and the Maldives, as they expressed grief over former Minister Sushma Swaraj's death.

Ms. Swaraj visited Sri Lanka in its post-war years, both in the capacity of Leader of the Opposition and later as External Affairs Minister.

Leaders across political hues fondly recalled their engagement with her. In a message on Wednesday, President Maithripala Sirisena called her a "true friend" of Sri Lanka, referring to her "immense contribution" to strengthen bilateral ties.

"She has etched a remarkable stamp in politics and diplomacy, reaching out to people of all walks of life through her pragmatic and people-centred foreign policy outreach," he said.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said the people of Sri Lanka would always remember the "personal touch" she brought to



Ranil Wickremesinghe, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

relations. Recalling his meetings with her, the PM said in her "pleasing personality" he found a "true friend, neighbour and a relation of Sri Lanka." Opposition leader and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa called her a "role model".

## Solih's condolences

Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih called her India's daughter. "Sad at the passing of @SushmaSwaraj. Our condolences to her loved ones, @PMOIndia and people of India. She was a great friend of the Maldives. She was truly India's daughter and will be greatly missed," he said in a tweet.

## Govt. plans to reach out during Id

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

other districts, curfew is all the more strict. You can say that the entire eight-million population has been incarcerated like never before," he said.

Mr. Faesal said there was no shortage of goods and essentials as of now. Only those having Dish TV could access news. "Many people still have a bleak idea of what happened," he said.

He said a few leaders who escaped detention had called for calm through TV channels. "It is being said that the government is ready for a casualty figure of 8,000-10,000. So, sanity demands that we don't give anyone a chance for mass massacre. My appeal has also been that let's stay alive, then we shall fight back," he said.

As Kashmir Valley remained cut off for the third consecutive day, a senior government official said some government outreach was expected during Id on Monday.

"I cannot share the details but the government is planning something to provide relief," he said.

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval interacted with security forces and a few people in the Valley on Wednesday.

"Everything will be all right. Your safety and security is our responsibility," he was heard telling people in Shopian.



**Ready to leave:** Non-locals queueing up for bus tickets in Srinagar on Wednesday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

numb...yet to make sense of what befell them. Everyone is mourning what we lost...it's the loss of statehood

"People are in shock,

that has hurt people deeply. This is being seen as the biggest betrayal by the Indian state in the last 70 years," he

said. "It was not possible to reach Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti, Sajad Lone or send a message to them. In

## A coup against Kashmiris, says PUCL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

The People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) has condemned the abrogation of key portions of Article 370 and the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir and taking away its statehood.

In a joint statement issued by its president Ravi Kiran Jain and general secretary V. Suresh, PUCL said that while the deed by itself was deceitful, the manner in which it was done was even more so.

"All the constitutional provisions, procedures, safeguards and values have been disregarded. What pains us most is that this change of status of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir was carried out with stealth, completely unilaterally, without even talking to or consulting the people of that State, even as part of government tokenism."

In particular, they strongly condemned the planned and sinister manner by which the Central government has gone about arresting important leaders of political parties, including former Chief Ministers Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti and others, soon after airlifting over 35,000 troops and suddenly and abruptly asking all Amarnath yatris and holiday visitors to leave the State creating an acute sense of fear and panic.

He added that calling off all kind of bilateral trade means closure of all crossing points, "which also affects Indian trade with Afghanistan." Political analyst Mosharrif Zaidi says the NSC decisions represent Pakistan's effort to express its rejection of India's altering of the status of Kashmir.

## Ending special status is legal: official

'Original Instrument of Accession was studied before decision was taken'

VIJAIITA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Officials in the Home Ministry fished out original copies of the "Instrument of the Accession" signed with 562 princely states during the time of Independence to make a legal basis for the amendment to Article 370 taking away the special status of Jammu & Kashmir.

The copies pulled out from the archival records were matched with the Instrument of Accession signed by Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of J&K, with

India on October 26, 1947. "We matched the accession document of J&K with that signed with the other princely States, each and every word was the same," an official said.

According to him, though the legal document was the same, Article 370 was only applied in J&K.

"The accession agreement was never an impediment for the merger of other States with India. This is what made it clear that Article 370 could be removed as it was not part of the original

agreement," he said.

The document was to accede in respect of only the following subjects – Defence, Foreign Affairs, Communications and ancillary that included matters related to courts and election.

On April 20, 1951, the Maharaja issued a Proclamation constituting a 75-member Constituent Assembly (CA) for the purposes of framing a Constitution for the State.

Home Minister Amit Shah has said in both the Houses of Parliament that Article

370 was "originally a temporary provision."

Mr. Shah told the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that Article 370(3) provided the President the powers to amend or repeal the Article by issuing a notification, based on a recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of J&K and since it doesn't exist any more, it would be read as the Legislative Assembly.

He added that since the Legislative Assembly of J&K was dissolved last year, its powers vested in both the Houses of Parliament.

## CWC meeting divided on Kashmir

Larger group will meet tomorrow to reinforce the party's ideological stand

SOBHA NAIR  
NEW DELHI

With open division coming to the fore at the Congress Working Committee meeting on revocation of Article 370 on Tuesday, a meeting of a larger group has been called on Friday to reinforce the party's ideological stand on Kashmir.

The CWC meeting on Tuesday night saw a heated debate between the old guard and the young leaders. Two CWC members, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Deepender Hooda, had already articulated their view supporting the revocation of Article 370.

A circular issued on Wednesday by general secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal has called all Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs, heads of various departments under the All-India Congress Committee, all general se-

cretaries, State unit heads and Congress legislative party leaders for a meeting.

At the CWC meet, according to sources, Mr. Scindia and Mr. Hooda's line found many takers, with the likes of former UPA Ministers Jitin Prasada and R.P.N. Singh backing them.

Outgoing president Rahul Gandhi, who heard out all the sides, said that persons from the northeast, southern States, Northern States and Kashmir would have divergent views on the issue and the party should reflect these views.

Former J&K Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, who has

been vocally against the government's action, spoke at length about the historical reasons behind Article 370.

Former Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram, who largely authored the CWC resolution, talked about the technical flaws in the process by which the government brought about the legislation.

In the end, there was broad unanimity on two issues. One, the manner in which the legislation was brought in, which was reflected in the resolution, and two, dismembering and reducing the State to a Union Territory.

## RS clears Bill for more judges in SC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday passed a Bill proposing an increase in the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court from 30 to 33 judges.

The House cleared the Bill by voice vote after the government agreed to a wider discussion on the functioning of the Supreme Court in the next session.



Rahul Gandhi

# 'Unshakeable faith is proof of Rama's birthplace'

Lawyer for Ram Lalla Virajman submits that references to disputed land are there in the Valmiki Ramayana

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

"Whether Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem... Has such a question ever arisen in any court," Justice S.A. Bobde asked senior advocate K. Parasaran, lawyer for Ram Lalla Virajman, the deity in Ayodhya, during the second day of hearing in the Ramjanmabhumi cross-appeals on Wednesday.

The appeals have been filed by Hindus and Muslims contesting each other's claims of ownership over the 2.77 acres in Ayodhya where Hindus believe Lord Ram was born in Treta Yuga. The structure, Babri Masjid, which stood on the disputed land was demolished by "Kar Sevaks" on December 6, 1992.

The Allahabad High Court attempted to resolve the decades-old dispute by giving joint possession of the disputed land to both Hindus and Muslims in a three-way partition among the deity,

Nirmohi Akhara and the Sunni Waqf Board in September 2010. But the parties responded by filing cross-appeals.

Mr. Parasaran submitted that references of disputed land were there in the Valmiki Ramayana.

He said the usual strict codes of evidence should be relaxed in this case as worshippers believed the spirit of Sri Ram "pervades/resides" in the Asthan. The unshakeable faith of the believers was itself evidence that the Asthan was the birthplace of Rama, he addressed the Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi.

Mr. Parasaran argued, "The Asthan has become a personification of the deity. It has by itself become an object of worship for the Hindus."

K. PARASARAN  
Lawyer for Ram Lalla Virajman



December 22-23 of 1949 was not a "continuous wrong" as an interim injunction order was passed on January 19, 1950, which was again confirmed on March 3, 1951. The appeal against the injunction order was dismissed by the Allahabad High Court in April 1955.

A Hindu deity in law is treated as a juristic person with rights. The Ayodhya deity is an infant form of

Lord Ram. The deity is deemed a perpetual minor. The law of limitation does not apply to minors. The Allahabad High Court had admitted the suit filed on behalf of Ram Lalla and appointed the next friend to represent the Lord. The suit in the name of the deity had sought a declaration that the Ramjanmabhumi belonged to the deity. It had also sought a judicial order pro-

hibiting any obstruction in the construction of the new temple building in the disputed area.

The court had asked Mr. Parasaran to commence his arguments after Nirmohi Akhara sought more time to produce oral, historical and documentary evidence to establish their claim over the entire area of the disputed Ramjanmabhumi.

#### 'Time for evidence'

The court, which is on a tight schedule as the CJI has about 50 working days left before retirement in November, decided to hear the deity and gave the Akhara time to prepare the evidence.

When a lawyer protested the move from the back row of the courtroom, Chief Justice Gogoi gave him a dressing down, saying "the First Court of this country should remain the First Court of this country. Don't try to make it anything else."

Earlier, the court did not

agree when senior advocate Sushil Kumar Jain, for Nirmohi Akhara, suggested reading the documentary evidence from the judgments of the lower courts in the case.

"These would be just excerpts. We want the original documents," Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, on the Bench, re-acted.

Mr. Jain said documentary evidence such as revenue records to establish the Akhara's claim of having managed and controlled the "temple" in the Ramjanmabhumi went missing in a "daocity" in 1982. But Justices Ashok Bhushan and S. Abdul Nazeer seconded Justice Chandrachud, who asked Mr. Jain at least to present oral evidence, such as testimonies in court, before the Bench.

"Statements here and there will not do. Present us the oral evidence," Chief Justice Gogoi said.

The hearing will continue on Thursday.

# Pilgrims leave for Kailash Mansarovar

Slight delay in granting visa by China

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

After a procedural delay of a few hours, two batches of Indian pilgrims for Kailash Mansarovar left for Tibet on Wednesday.



The pilgrims are expected to travel on land route through Himalayan passes to the holy mountain.

through the Himalayan passes to the holy mountain of Kailash.

Delay in the visas had triggered some concern among the pilgrims as the travel coincided with India's declaration on Kashmir and China's consequent objection to the creation of a Union Territory in Ladakh.

**Will bring back M.P. man from Pak: Nath**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Wednesday said the State government would make its best efforts to help bring back a man from Khandwa district detained in Pakistan for allegedly spying on a nuclear enrichment facility there.

"We direct officials to visit the family of Raju Lakshman Bheel of Indhawadi village of Khandwa district to provide the process within the August 31 deadline.

"Kindly direct the NRC authority to make the notice available on the Internet along with the physical serving so that people living in other States can also access the same and attend the hearing accordingly," the signatories said, also seeking instruction to the district administration to provide basic transport facilities in the greater interest of an error-free and fair NRC.

**C-DIT**  
**CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF IMAGING TECHNOLOGY (C-DIT)**  
Thiruvananthapuram-27  
0471-238091/0912/895  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
e-Tenders are invited for Supply of The Materials & Components for The Integration of Security Registration Board for Sea Going Vessels  
For details and online submission of bids visit [www.tenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.tenders.kerala.gov.in).  
Last date of online submission of bids: 17.08.2019, 03.00 PM.  
Tender id: 2019\_CDIT\_2071\_1  
07.08.2019 Registrar, C-DIT

# Good showing by Rajya Sabha, says Venkaiah Naidu

'32 Bills passed in the best Budget session in 17 years'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday said the Upper House had turned around from its disruptive past to a "new normal". In all, 32 Bills were passed in the Budget session, making it the best in the past 17 years and the fifth best in 41 years.

"Having reached a new normal in this session, the task now before all of us is to sustain it without getting back to old ways," he said.

The Chairman said the Budget session was the most productive in the past two decades in various aspects, appealing all "not to return to the old ways of persistent disruptions".

"With a total duration of 195 hours spent on transacting different kinds of business during the 35 sittings, this session turned out to be the best of 36 sessions during the past 11 years... the



M. Venkaiah Naidu

21st session in 2009 had a total business time of 147 hours 27 minutes," he said.

During the past five sessions, Mr. Naidu said that only a total of 173 hours and 33 minutes were spent on transacting business. With 35 sittings, the session was the longest in the past 14 years. The 204th session in 2005 had 38 sittings.

**Lost time compensated**  
With a total of 151 starred questions orally answered, the 249th session that concluded on Wednesday was

the best in the last 14 years after 45 sessions, the earlier record being 165 such questions answered in the 204th session (2005). In all, 194 special mentions and 326 Zero Hour mentions (the best in the past 20 years) were made.

The House lost 19 hours and 12 minutes due to disruptions, but gained about 28 hours by sitting beyond the scheduled hours.

Mr. Naidu said that during the session, the Council of States stood up for the interests of the States.

It reflected in the amendment made by the House to the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill.

The Chairman also noted that the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Bill and the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill passed during the session were "truly historic, which would help in addressing legacy issues".

The people of Assam have been supporting the NRC updating process and participating in the hearings and verifications, sometimes even by paying huge costs in terms of time, energy and financial resources. Nevertheless, they are ready to go through any verification whenever required for the

# Recall NRC notices, says plea to SC

People told to go to far-flung areas within a day or two, says civil society group

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

A group of 131 academics, intellectuals, professionals and civil society leaders in Assam have sought rescheduling of hearings for National Register of Citizens applicants who have been issued notices to have their citizenship documents re-verified within a very short time.

In an appeal to the Supreme Court, which has been monitoring the NRC updating exercise, the 131 signatories said the "sudden, suspicious and mischievous" notices have created panic among a section of the people who were included in the draft NRC published on July 30, 2018.

"The people of Assam have been supporting the NRC updating process and participating in the hearings and verifications, sometimes even by paying huge costs in terms of time, energy and financial resources. Nevertheless, they are ready to go through any verification whenever required for the

greater interest of an error-free and just NRC," said the appeal to Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi submitted to the court's Registrar on Tuesday.

#### 'Panicky situation'

"However, we would like to draw your kind attention regarding the panicky situation created by suspicious and mischievous notices served to NRC applicants for re-verification by the NRC authority in Assam. Now

notices are being served to people and they are asked to go in far-flung areas with a short notice of one or two days," the appeal reads.

"The people of Assam in general and people living in riverine areas in particular have experienced one of the worst floods in recent years. They are struggling to cope with the losses and many of them are still living in temporary relief camps. Under such circumstances, if these people are asked to attend

the NRC hearing giving them just one or two days and summoned to 500-600 km away from their homes, there is little doubt that a large number of them wouldn't be able to attend the hearings," the signatories said.

**'At least a week'**  
They asked the court to direct the NRC authority to reschedule the hearing either within the district or within adjoining districts and provide at least a week's time so that the applicants could attend the hearing and complete the process within the August 31 deadline.

"Kindly direct the NRC authority to make the notice available on the Internet along with the physical serving so that people living in other States can also access the same and attend the hearing accordingly," the signatories said, also seeking instruction to the district administration to provide basic transport facilities in the greater interest of an error-free and fair NRC.

"The people of Assam in general and people living in riverine areas in particular have experienced one of the worst floods in recent years. They are struggling to cope with the losses and many of them are still living in temporary relief camps. Under such circumstances, if these people are asked to attend

#### KOZHIKODE CORPORATION

EG12/8140/17 06/08/19

#### NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Kozhikode Municipal Corporation (KMC) invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputed firms for developing Multi Level Parking cum Commercial Complexes on PPP mode near EMS Indoor Stadium and Kidson Corner. For details visit [www.kozhikodecorporation.lsgkerala.gov.in](http://www.kozhikodecorporation.lsgkerala.gov.in). Last date of EOI acceptance: 30/08/19, 4.00 pm.

Sd/-

Secretary

The tender document can be downloaded from OPal website ([www.opalindia.in](http://www.opalindia.in)). For other details of this tender including corrigendum if any, please logon to OPal website [www.opalindia.in](http://www.opalindia.in).

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In

# Hong Kong facing worst crisis since 1997'

Chinese official says protests are getting increasingly violent and having 'a broad impact on society'

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SHENZHEN

China on Wednesday said Hong Kong is facing the most severe crisis since the city was handed over to Beijing by Britain in 1997.

Those protests are getting increasingly violent and having "an increasingly broad impact on society," said Zhang Xiaoming, Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Hong Kong.

"It can be said that Hong Kong is facing the most severe situation it has faced since the handover," Mr. Zhang told Hong Kong residents attending a seminar in the mainland city of Shenzhen just across the border from the Asian financial hub that has been wracked by daily protests against the administration of Chief Executive Carrie Lam.

Officials in Beijing were "highly concerned" and studying the situation to decide on measures to take, he said.

China so far has not visibly intervened in the situation, though in editorials and statements from officials it has condemned demonstrators and protest organisers as criminals, clowns and "violent radicals" and alleged that they have been inflamed by politicians from the U.S., Taiwan and elsewhere.

Speculation that the military could be deployed grew after Chinese officials pointed to an article in Hong Kong law that allows troops already stationed in the city to help with "public order maintenance" at the Hong Kong government's request.

Ms. Lam reappeared on Wednesday at the opening of an exhibition marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Communist state.

"Over recent months, con-

## City at a crossroads

China's semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong has been rocked since April by increasingly violent protests that were sparked by a proposed extradition law

### THE TRIGGER

**April 28:** Thousands march against a Bill that would allow extraditions to mainland China

- There are fears that the law will allow Beijing to pursue its political enemies in Hong Kong



**June 9:** Despite government tweaks to soften the law, tens of thousands more protest again

- It descends into violence after midnight when police, using batons and pepper spray hoses, try to disperse small groups of protesters who hurl bottles and use metal barricades

**JUNE 9**  
**240,000**  
people participated in protests, say police  
**19**  
people were arrested

**June 12:** Huge crowds attempt to storm Parliament, delaying the Bill's second reading



**JUNE 15:** Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam postpones the Bill, but a fresh demonstration the next day calls for its full withdrawal

"We all know this (Hong

### DEMONSTRATORS ATTACKED

**July 21:** Protesters are back on the streets and police fire tear gas and rubber bullets

- In the Yuen Long area, masked men – suspected

to be triad gangsters – attack protesters inside a train station  
**July 30**  
**44**  
protesters are charged with rioting



### UNREST SPREADS

**August 3:** Demonstrators erect barricades in the tourist district of Tsim Sha Tsui

**August 5:** Activists disrupt the subway system, paralysing much of the city and delaying scores of international flights

**148**  
people were arrested

**August 6:** China warns that "those who play with fire will perish by it"

**In return:** A protester throws a tear gas canister back at the police in Hong Kong.  
■ REUTERS

SOURCE: AFP

ditions in Hong Kong society have been extremely unstable," Ms. Lam said in remarks distributed by her office. "The special administrative region government will certainly join with all of you to deal with it calmly, restore social order, safeguard rule of law and cherish Hong Kong, cherish 'one country, two systems' and cherish our home."

Pro-democracy lawmak-

ers continued to criticise Ms. Lam's handling of the protests. Claudia Mo told reporters that Beijing and Ms. Lam were employing a two-pronged strategy of using the police force to handle the protesters physically while also attacking them ideologically by labelling their movement as seeking to destroy the "one country, two systems" framework.

"We all know this (Hong Kong) administration has become completely untrustworthy and this is just so sad for Hong Kong," Ms. Mo said.

### Lawyers' march

Protesters have come from all professions and age groups. On Wednesday, several hundred lawyers sought a meeting with Secretary of Justice Teresa Cheng and staged a silent protest. The authorities have refused to

open a dialogue with protesters and there was no immediate response from Ms. Cheng's office.

Margaret Ng, a lawyer,

said they wanted to meet Ms. Cheng to seek an assurance that there was no political motive in prosecution of those detained. More than 500 people have been arrested since the protests began and dozens have already been charged with rioting.

## Trump visits victims in Ohio amid protests

REUTERS  
DAYTON

U.S. President Donald Trump met in Ohio on Wednesday with victims and first responders from one of last weekend's two deadly mass shootings that shocked the country, even as critics and protesters accused him of inflaming tensions with anti-immigrant and racially charged rhetoric.

Mr. Trump visited Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio, where the victims were treated after nine people and the suspect were killed in a rampage early on Sunday.

Crowds of protesters outside the hospital set up a "baby Trump" blimp balloon, chanted "Do Something!" and held signs reading



"Hate not welcome here," "Stop this terror," and "You are why."

Later, Mr. Trump will visit the Texas city of El Paso, on the border with Mexico, where 22 people were killed at a Walmart store on Saturday.

The back-to-back massacres, occurring 13 hours apart, have reopened the national debate over gun safety.

## Is 'Bernie or Bust' the future of American Left?

Sanders' popularity has helped swell the ranks of the Democratic Socialists of America

MARC TRACY  
AUDRA MELTON  
ATLANTA

Three years ago, the Democratic Socialists of America had 5,000 members. Just another booth at the campus activities fair, another three-initiated group an uncle might mention over lunch.

Today, dues-paying DSA members exceed 56,000. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a rising star of American politics, is one. So are a couple of dozen local elected officials across the country.

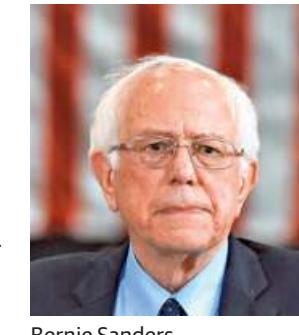
Sen. Bernie Sanders, a presidential candidate, is not, but he may as well be: he identifies as a democratic socialist and enjoys a totemic status with the group's members.

Mr. Sanders' popularity

during his unsuccessful 2016 run for the Democratic presidential nomination helped swell DSA's ranks. But a very different figure is primarily responsible for the group's staggering growth: President Donald Trump, who recently associated "radical socialism" with the "destruction of the American dream". In fact, the majority of current DSA members signed up in the past two years.

"Trump scared a lot of people," said Maria Svart, the national director. "So they joined."

Most of the roughly 1,000 DSA delegates who gathered at the convention last weekend to set organization policy doubtlessly share Ms. Svart's resoundingly nega-



Bernie Sanders

tive view of the President. And nearly as many would agree with her that Mr. Sanders, an independent senator from Vermont, is the one to beat him. The group endorsed Mr. Sanders in March.

But if Mr. Sanders is not the nominee? The group

passed a resolution on Friday saying it will not officially endorse anyone else. For the DSA, it is "Bernie or Bust." The vote does not mean DSA members cannot vote for a non-Sanders nominee in November 2020, of course, nor even that DSA cannot mobilise swing-State votes for such a nominee, as it did in 2016 when it did not endorse Hillary Clinton.

### Unifying figure

Yet the vote was a reflection of this charged moment for left-wing activists as well as the singular role Mr. Sanders plays in the minds of many members. "Bernie is a uniquely unifying figure in the DSA," said Thea Riofrancos,

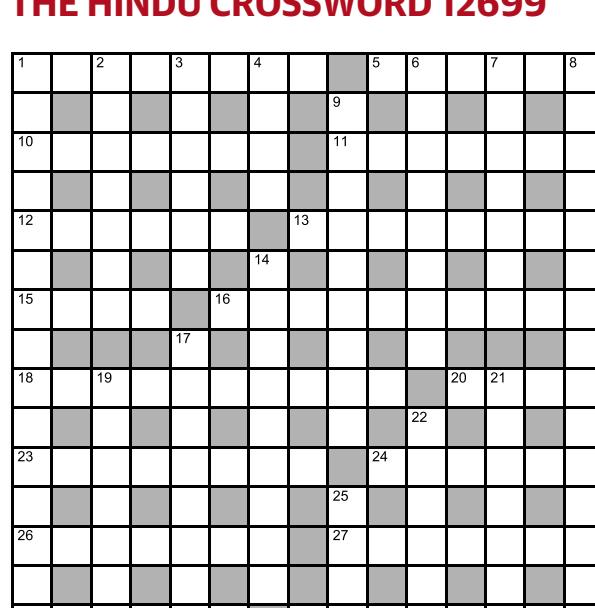
of the Providence, Rhode Island chapter.

Several DSA members made the persuasive case that Mr. Sanders' 2016 campaign fundamentally shifted the Democratic Party leftward, particularly on the signature issue of single-payer "Medicare for All."

And Winnie Wong, a campaign adviser for Mr. Sanders, who said she was attending the convention as a rank-and-file member and observer, not a delegate, in turn, credited the DSA for helping popularise Medicare for All, a policy it endorsed at its 2017 convention.

"I am extremely happy that the activist base of the DSA is energized around making sure we move the goal posts," she said. NY TIMES

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12699



### ACROSS

- Reserve beach around the tip of Triplicane (3-5)
- Mend carried out retaining middle fold of tomb (6)
- Sentimental Frenchman endlessly lauding dancing (7)
- Revised report about one French mime (7)

- (set by Gridman)
- Spell 'canter' incorrectly (6)
  - Writing on the wall: "German count healthy individual" (8)
  - Flower in the eye (4)
  - Interpreting prisoner's deceptive plan to trap Russian (10)
  - Aim to retain central hero as Number 1 (10)
  - The old, oddly thin, elusive subject (4)
  - In a month trophy goes to a new resident (8)
  - Resident Editor to follow market (6)
  - Exaggerate what's plain about airconditioning (7)
  - Copy lass' abrupt, odd Caribbean music (7)
  - Madman – last one in station, say (6)
  - Newspaper editing site's revised "Pesky Doc" (4,4)
  - What a mystery solver or you would look for (9,2,2)

### DOWN

- Somehow chose to ignore second iteration (4)

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

### Solution to puzzle 12698

M	A	H	A	R	J	R	I	P	O	F	F
A	A	E	A	U	A	E	F				
R	O	B	I	N	T	R	L				
R	I	E	A	U	S	L	R				
I	N	E	G	R	P	E	S				
A	U	U	A	I	N	I	N				
G	E	E	N	O	T	I	P				
E	R	E	R	E	P	P	N				
B	R	A	I	W	A	V	E				
R	T	T	U	A	E	P	F				
O	U	G	R	W	E	S	D	O			
K	A	T	A	U	I	N	A				
E	N	C	O	N	T	E	R				
R	I	H	R	E	E	R	I				
M	E	T	O	R	D	E	S				

### Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



4	7	3	1	2	9	6	8	5
2	5	1	6	8	4	3	9	7
8	6	9	5	7	3	2	1	4
5	1	8	7	9	2	4	6	3
7	4	6	3	1	8	5	2	9
9</								

## MARKET WATCH

	07-08-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,691	-0.77
US Dollar	70.89	-0.11
Gold	37,920	3.02
Brent oil	56.71	-4.99

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	372.25	-4.70
Asian Paints	1559.20	-6.65
Axis Bank	659.95	-19.05
Bajaj Auto	2605.10	-4.70
Bajaj Finserv	7152.45	56.10
Bajaj Finance	3265.80	-6.45
Bharti Airtel	366.10	-2.35
BPCL	331.10	-14.20
Britannia Ind	2540.55	-10.00
Cipla	518.30	18.15
Coal India	206.10	1.00
Dr Reddys Lab	2556.80	0.60
Eicher Motors	1646.65	-554.10
GAIL (India)	121.70	-1.65
Grasim Ind	737.95	-23.55
HCL Tech	1022.65	-1.55
HDFC	2175.20	-14.70
HDFC Bank	2184.00	-5.10
Hero MotoCorp	2505.25	36.70
Hindalco	176.40	-4.30
Hind Unilever	1777.25	33.15
Indiabulls HFL	445.40	-68.65
ICICI Bank	408.40	-1.85
IndusInd Bank	1426.35	9.25
Bharti Infratech	245.55	-0.55
Infosys	776.10	1.65
Indian Oil Corp	129.00	-3.40
ITC	253.65	-5.25
JSW Steel	212.25	-5.30
Kotak Bank	1476.30	-9.00
L&T	1360.05	-17.45
M&M	518.30	-31.15
Maruti Suzuki	5775.00	-58.30
NTPC	123.05	-0.30
ONGC	130.50	-0.95
PowerGrid Corp	198.85	0.75
Reliance Ind	1109.40	-18.90
State Bank	289.90	-11.50
Sun Pharma	421.05	2.85
Tata Motors	117.40	-5.10
Tata Steel	381.90	-19.70
TCS	2213.45	-1.45
Tech Mahindra	674.45	3.85
Titan	1028.45	-18.25
UltraTech Cement	4341.65	-15.35
UPL	532.80	-16.55
Vedanta	136.65	-4.15
Wipro	262.55	3.65
YES Bank	86.85	1.50
Zee Entertainment	327.90	15.45

## EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on August 07		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.69	71.01
Euro	79.33	79.69
British Pound	85.88	86.28
Japanese Yen (100)	66.85	67.15
Chinese Yuan	10.02	10.06
Swiss Franc	72.67	73.01
Singapore Dollar	51.09	51.33
Canadian Dollar	53.03	53.27
Malaysian Ringgit	16.86	16.96

Source: Indian Bank

## Spandana IPO fully subscribed

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI  
The initial public offer (IPO) of Spandana Sphoorty Financial, which closed for subscription on Wednesday, was subscribed 1.05 times till 6 pm on the last day of bidding.

According to data from the National Stock Exchange, the issue received bids for 1.03 crore shares, as against 98.22 lakh shares on offer in the price band of ₹853 to ₹856.

The lacklustre response from retail investors was seen even as many brokerages, including Motilal Oswal Financial Services, Emkay Global, Centrum, Prabhudas Lilladher and Angel Broking among others recommended subscribing to the issue with a long-term investment horizon.

## HCL first quarter net declines 8.2%

'Lower profit on account of certain cost items'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
HCL Technologies on Wednesday posted a decline of 8.2% in its net profit to ₹2,230 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2019, even as revenue rose 18.3% to ₹16,427 crore, compared with the same quarter last year.

The IT major, which is 'cautiously optimistic' about the growth this fiscal, maintained its revenue guidance of 14-16% in constant currency terms for FY19-20.

As per Indian Accounting Standards (Ind-AS), HCL Technologies' net profit stood at ₹2,431 crore in the year-ago period, while revenue stood at ₹13,878 crore in the same quarter last year.

"We have started FY20 on a very, very strong note with continued revenue momentum. We posted double-digit quarterly year-on-year

## Banks get more headroom for lending to NBFCs

RBI raises cap on exposure to single NBFC to 20%; lower risk weight for consumer loans may cut capital needs by ₹12,500 cr.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The on-going liquidity crunch faced by non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) has made the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to take further measures to increase credit flow to the sector.

The central bank has decided to increase the cap on a bank's exposure to a single NBFC to 20% of its tier-I capital from 15% now.

Further, RBI has decided to give 'priority sector' tag for banks lending to NBFCs, for on-lending to farm, small and medium enterprises and housing sector.

Banks have been allowed to lend to the NBFCs for on-lending to the agriculture sector up to ₹10 lakh, up to ₹20 lakh to micro and small

enterprises, and for housing, up to ₹20 lakh per borrower. These will be classified as priority sector lending.

This will improve the available sources of funding, especially for new-age mid and small-sized NBFCs, at a relatively lower cost, while improving banks' ability to meet their priority sector lending targets.

## 'Faster transmission'

"Permitting banks to on-lend through NBFCs for priority sector lending would make this transmission faster and more efficient," Umesh Revankar, MD and CEO, Shriram Transport Finance Ltd., said.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das also batted for mutual fund and insurance compa-



Shaktikanta Das flanked by RBI colleagues Michael Patra, N.S. Vishwanathan, B.P. Kanungo and Mahesh Jain. ■ PAUL NORONHA

nies, who are creditors of stressed NBFCs, to be part of the resolution process, and said inter-regulatory discussions were going on in this regard.

"It is necessary to look at the whole liability of the enti-

ty comprehensively. So, we have had inter-regulator meetings, and IRDAI has taken a decision to enable the insurance companies to be a part of the inter-creditor agreement. Our discussions with other regulators are go-

ing on," Mr. Das said.  
In the resolution process of mortgage lender Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL), where insurance and mutual funds have sizeable exposure, banks want other creditors to be a part of the resolution pro-

cess.

Mutual funds are awaiting approval from the markets regulator for becoming a part of the bank-led resolution plan.

In a bid to encourage

banks to extend loans to retail consumers segments such as individual vehicle loans and personal loans, amid a sharp slowdown in demand, the central bank has decided to lower the risk weight for consumer loans, excluding credit cards.

The risk weight, which was 125% as prescribed in 2004, will now become 100%. As a result, banks will need to set aside lower capital for these loans.

Ratings agency ICRA said with personal loans of ₹6 lakh crore outstanding as on June 2019, a 25-percentage point reduction in risk weight may also reduce the capital requirements of banks by ₹12,500 crore and add 14 bps to their capital ratios.

## Transfer funds 24x7 via NEFT from Dec.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Come December, you can transfer funds round-the-clock using the National Electronic Funds Transfer or NEFT facility. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced on Wednesday that the central bank would make available the NEFT system 24x7 from December.

Currently the system is available from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on all working days except second and fourth Saturdays of the month.

In another citizen-friendly measure, the Reserve Bank has thrown open the Bharat Bill Payment System to all categories of billers, except pre-paid recharge.

## INTERVIEW | SHAKTIKANTA DAS

## Lower rates will spur credit flow and revive growth, says Das

Slowdown is perhaps cyclical, not structural; there is room for structural reforms to be undertaken, says the RBI Governor

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

*During the post policy media interaction, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das explained why the bank announced an unconventional rate cut of 35 basis points (bps).*

## Why a 35 bps rate cut?

■ According to the assessment of the MPC (monetary policy committee), based on demand conditions etc, a 25 basis-point [rate] cut was inadequate, while a 50 basis-point cut was excessive. That is why we took a balanced call.

What are the underlying issues, according to the RBI, that are hurting growth?

■ There is a demand and investment slowdown; both put together having a dam-

pling effect on growth. We have reduced the growth projection to 6.9% with risks slightly to the downside. Our understanding is that, at this point, it is perhaps a cyclical slowdown, not really a deep structural slowdown. Nonetheless, we have to recognise that there is room for structural reforms which needs to be undertaken.

## What is the RBI's view on dollar bonds?

■ We have conveyed our views internally to the government. [The] Govern-

ment is consulting the Reserve Bank on this issue. For the moment, I would leave it at that.

Where do you see the recovery in growth coming from?

■ Our expectation is – and I am saying this after our interaction with the government – the government will take necessary, further measures as may be required to deal with various issues. With the RBI cutting interest rates, the credit flow will revive. Therefore, growth numbers will

pick up.

What steps will the Reserve Bank take to ensure faster transmission of monetary policy rates?

■ The system is flush – if I can use the word – with liquidity. So, therefore, the rate cuts done by the RBI and the liquidity

which we have injected, both have started the cycle of rate cuts so far as new loans from banks are concerned.

We have a sense that there will be improvement.

The RBI is monitoring it regularly. And in future, whatever steps are required for faster transmission of rates, the Reserve Bank of India will not hesitate to take those steps.

Despite interest rate cuts, there has been a demand slump. What

When something is done against convention, too much should not be read into it

■ At the moment, there is no proposal for a cut in the cash reserve ratio. As far as future rates are concerned, you have to wait for the incoming data and [watch] how the macroeconomic situation evolves.

RBI's effort to push if it depreciates further?

■ On the rupee, it won't be appropriate for me to give some kind of forward guidance.

I will just repeat the stated policy of the RBI that it is the RBI's responsibility to manage volatility of the rupee.

Is a CRR (cash reserve ratio) cut on the table? How long do you see the rate easing cycle continuing?

■ At the moment, there is no proposal for a cut in the cash reserve ratio. As far as future rates are concerned, you have to wait for the incoming data and [watch] how the macroeconomic situation evolves.

## SBI cuts lending rate by 15 bps

RBI promises steps for faster transmission to consumers



**Including today's MCLR cut, home loans have become cheaper by 35 bps since April 10, 2019**

banks, further reduction in lending rate are expected," said Sunil Mehta, MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank and chairman of the Indian Banks' Association. By the time the festive season sets in, the lower lending rate would help to boost domestic demand, he added.

## IN BRIEF



## Kia eyes global markets with India-made Seltos

PANJIM (GOA)

South Korean auto major Kia Motors is looking to export its made-in-India mid-sized SUV Seltos to various global markets such as Africa and South America. "We are looking at regions like South Africa, South America and South Asian countries for exporting Seltos. But it is going to be a small number as our main focus remains India," said N. Srinivasan, MD, Mahindra & Mahindra.

Manohar Bhat said here.

PTI

## Wipro bags contract from ADM Aeroparts

BENGALURU

Wipro has bagged a five-year 'strategic, IT and business transformation contract' from ADM Aeroparts de Montreal, which operates YUL Montreal-Trudeau International Airport. This partnership will transform ADM's airport operations through Wipro's integrated service delivery model, airport domain expertise and hyper-automation powered by Wipro HOLMES artificial intelligence platform, the company said.

## Ramco Systems net rises 66.67% on higher sales

CHENNAI

Ramco Systems Ltd. has reported a 66.67% growth in its standalone net profit for the first quarter ended June 2019 to ₹191.97 crore. During the quarter, total revenue increased to ₹1,392 crore from ₹1,225 crore. Operating profit grew to ₹367 crore (₹255 crore). RCL sold 2.70 million tonnes against 2.61 million tonnes.

Cost control measures

and customer preference

for new variety of cement

gave us premium and profit," said A.V. Dharmakrishnan, CEO, Ramco Cements.

He said by end 2020, capacity will be enhanced to 20 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) from 12 MTPA.

## India Cements plans ₹1,400 cr. expansion

Company's production capacity to grow by a third and touch 20 million tonnes in two years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

The India Cements Ltd. (ICL) is working on expanding its production capacity from the existing 16 million tonnes to 20 million tonnes over the next two years, according to a top official.

ICL has already started the ground work for an integrated plant at Damu in Madhya Pradesh and a grinding unit in Uttar Pradesh.

The expansion programme is expected to involve an investment outlay of ₹1,300 crore to ₹1,400 crore.

Upgradation of existing plants would also form part of the expansion initiative.

"We have a mining lease in Madhya Pradesh. We are now in the process of buying the land," said N. Srinivasan,

## Cementing growth



**C** There will be an increase in demand for cement in the coming quarters due to thrust on infra and housing for weaker sections

N. SRINIVASAN  
CMD, India Cements

order for equipment," he said. According to ICL officials, it would take at least three-to-four months to begin the project. It would be ready in two years, taking the total capacity to almost 20 MTPA.

## Net profit rises

ICL posted a 243% increase in its standalone net profit for the first quarter ended June 2019 to ₹72.43 crore on the back of improved selling prices, cost control measures and softening fuel costs.

Revenue from operations grew to ₹1,468.80 crore from ₹1,360.65 crore.

Earnings before interest, depreciation, taxes and amortisation (EBIDTA) improved to ₹245 crore from ₹162 crore.

vice-chairman and managing director, ICL.

To a question, he said ICL required about 500 acres for mining and another 200 acres for the integrated cement plant in Madhya Pradesh. The company had already acquired 160-170 hectares from private par-

ties, he added. The project cost would be met through a combination of borrowings and internal accruals, he added.

"We will start the work on the three-million-tonne integrated plant once the land acquisition reaches a sizeable portion and then place



**E**ven though the auto industry is passing through a difficult time, M&M is reasonably well-positioned and has good prospects

PAWAN GOENKA  
MD, Mahindra & Mahindra

Metrics	Q1 FY20	Q1 FY19	Growth (%)
Total income (₹cr.)	13,242	13,785	(3.9)
Net profit (₹cr.)	2,314	1,221	89.5
EPS (₹)	19.4	10.2	

## Profit from investments boosts M&amp;M net by 80%

Sans exceptional items, net drops 26%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Income from exceptional items (EI), mainly profit from investments of Mahindra & Mahindra Benefit Trust, pushed auto maker Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.'s (M&M) FY20 first quarter net profit up by 80% to ₹2,260 crore for the period ended June 30, 2019.

Without the EI, the company, along with its 100% subsidiary Mahindra Vehicles Manufacturers Ltd., reported 26% drop in net profit at ₹1,238 crore in the same quarter last year, owing to lack of demand for automobiles and tractors.

During the period, sales revenue was 4% lower at ₹12,997 crore as compared to ₹13,551 crore in the same period last year.

Job losses

However, he said without government's intervention, the industry would not revive, leading to job losses.

During the quarter when the Indian auto industry grew 12.3%, with all segments of the industry reporting a decline, M&M sold 5% less vehicles at 1,23,690 units as compared to 1,30,484 units sold in the same period last year.

On a consolidated basis,

## Ramco Cements profit up 53.6%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Ramco Cements Ltd. (RCL) registered a 53.6% increase in its standalone net profit for the first quarter ended June 2019 to ₹191.97 crore.

During the quarter, total revenue increased to ₹1,392 crore from ₹1,225 crore. Operating profit grew to ₹367 crore (₹255 crore).

Anupam Khanna, in a letter dated August 5, to chairman M. Damodaran, which has been made public by Mr. Gangwal, wrote, "I am still hopeful that you would have formulated a constructive approach addressing the concerns I had also expressed and built on the simple solutions I had suggested on July 24.

## Indigo director slams chairman

'Serious new governance issue appears to be emerging'

LALATENDU MISHRA  
MUMBAI

An independent director of InterGlobe Aviation Ltd. (IGAL), that owns and runs IndiGo Airline, has voiced concerns similar to the issues raised by IndiGo co-founder Rakesh Gangwal.

Anupam Khanna, in a letter dated August 5, to chairman M. Damodaran, which has been made public by Mr. Gangwal, wrote, "I am still hopeful that you would have formulated a constructive approach addressing the concerns I had also expressed and built on the simple solutions I had suggested on July 24.

"Alas, that has not happened and you have addressed 'remaining issues with a non-solution.'

"Moreover, a serious new

governance issue appears to be emerging with the approach you have laid out (especially relating to holding various meetings after the AGM).

The letter comes as a shot in arm for IndiGo co-founder Rakesh Gangwal, who had raised fresh issues in a bid to curtail the 'growing power' of other co-founder Rahul Bhatia and his Inter-

He said the suggested safeguard (by him and Mr. Gangwal) was precisely for situations when the full complement of independent directors "was not in place and the IGE Group can ride roughshod over the opposition".

He had also asked Mr. Damodaran not to schedule meetings as the AGM had been called on August 27.

Mr. Gangwal said he had to make this letter public as the company had not filed this relevant letter with the stock exchanges.

## Oil slips 4% on U.S. stocks, trade war

REUTERS  
HOUSTON

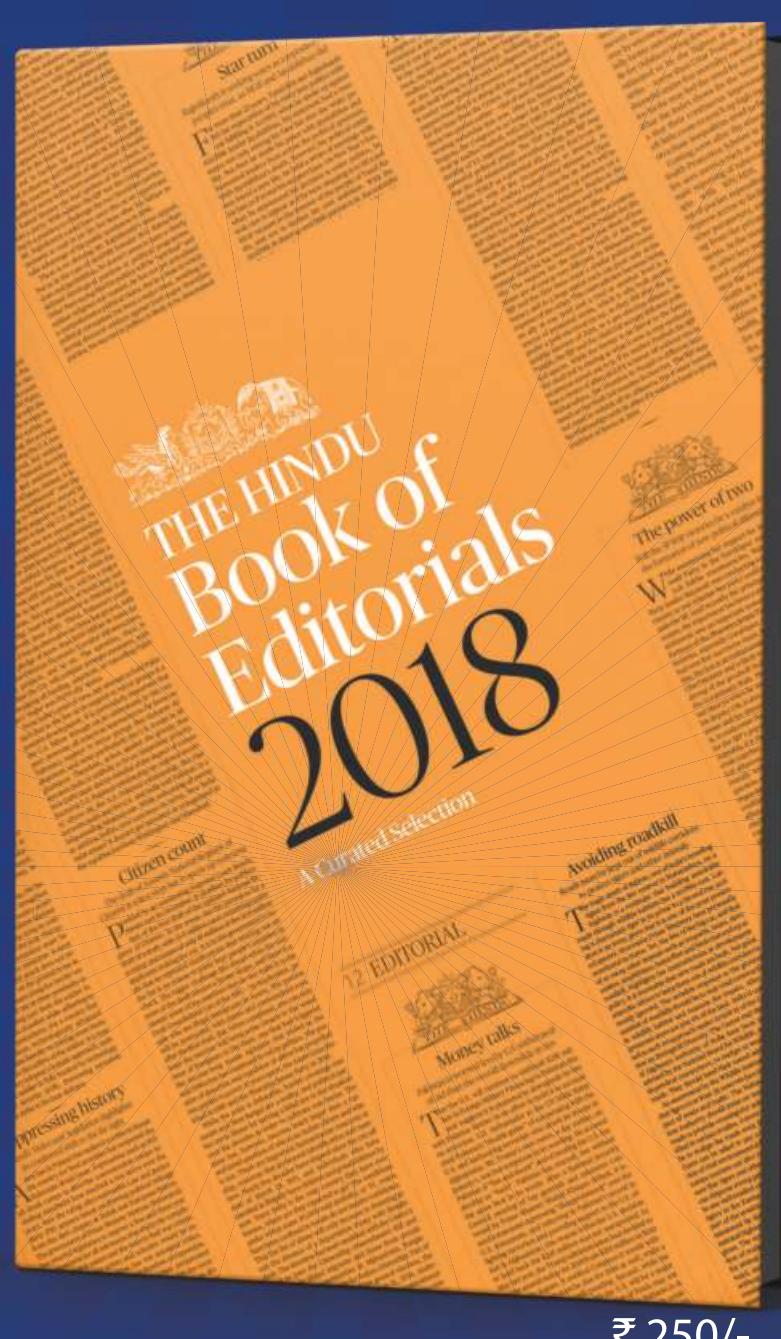
Oil prices tumbled more than 4% on Wednesday to a seven-month low, extending recent heavy losses following a surprise build in U.S. crude stockpiles and fears that demand will shrink due to U.S. escalation in trade war with Beijing.

Brent crude futures were down \$2.52, or 4.3%, at \$56.42 a barrel by 10.27 p.m. IST, setting a seven-month low. Prices have lost more than 20% since their 2019 peak in April. Oil fell on worries about the trade war, then extended losses after U.S. government data showed a build of 2.4 million barrels in U.S. stockpiles instead of the 2.8 million barrel draw expected.

On a stand-alone basis, M&M reported a lower net profit of ₹973 crore, as compared to ₹1,200 crore in the same period last year. However, including EI, the net profit was nearly double at ₹2,260 crore as compared to ₹1,238 crore in the same period last year.

On a consolidated basis,

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP



## A Valuable Collection

A selection of editorials that were published in *The Hindu* in 2018, these offer a 'recap' of the year that went by, from the editorial pages of India's national newspaper.

The editorials cover a variety of topics ranging from politics, governance and civil society, to media, health and education. This book is invaluable for its aggregation of editorial commentary of some of the key events of the year that have continuing relevance. Segregated topic-wise for ease of reading, *The Hindu Book of Editorials* is a bookshelf essential.



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# 'I keep reality apart from my characters'

Nawazuddin Siddiqui talks about *McMafia*, one of seven British dramas that will soon air on Zee Café

ANAHITA PANICKER

A sprawling story that unspools across the world – from London to Mumbai, Cairo to Qatar, to name a few – the crime drama *McMafia* is centred on Alex Godman (played by James Norton) a well-educated hedge-fund manager unwillingly sucked into the lawless world of his Russian mafia family. Also featuring Nawazuddin Siddiqui (as Dilly Mahmood, a Mumbai gangster), the show is inspired by the 2009 non-fiction book of the same name by journalist Misha Glenny and looks at the franchise-like world of organised crime.

With BBC First returning for a third season on Zee Café, the series will be one of seven British dramas that will air on the flagship programming block.

Edited excerpts.

**What drew you to Dilly Mahmood and how does he stand out from your other gangster roles?**

The role was offered to me since the director, James Watkins (*Black Mirror's* 'Shut Up and Dance', *The Woman in Black*) had followed my work – *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012), *The Lunch Box* (2013) and *Miss Lovely* (2012) – and was impressed by it.

Dilly was not only complex but also challenging. He is an ambitious and strong business partner who is willing to do whatever it takes to reach the top.

James was very clear on how he wanted the character – there is a rawness about Dilly he wanted to showcase. Many times actors put on an accent in English movies, but James wanted me to speak how Indians speak English. The character's journey to constantly scale newer heights is what sets him apart from the other roles I have played and it is the sheer zest of the character that has made me want to play the role.

**What was your experience working on a British show?**

Britain has been home to riveting dramas and is famous for its rich storytelling. BBC First's shows have a large fan following amongst the global audience, as they are very well crafted.

Each of the shows focus on detailed performances and narrate the simplest story in the most unique way. It gave me the opportunity to work with actors from around the world.

There's a point when your character



incisively reveals an uncomfortable truth about being a Muslim. He inevitably pits the identity against Shiv Sena in that line. You've played Bal Thackeray – a criticised choice, but your performance was lauded. How do you go about reconciling these aspects – between performer and character, and even the many identities you step into?

Whether it is playing the role of a gang lord in *McMafia*, or the role of the Shiv Sena leader, all of these are just characters I portray. In real life I don't strictly hold onto a specific ideology or philosophy, because then it

**Malefactor** Nawazuddin Siddiqui, James Norton in a still from *McMafia* • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

would be impossible for me to play the different characters I do.

You can only do justice to a role when you truly believe in him, his philosophy, his ideology and his thought process. I have played roles like Manto, Thackeray and even Faizal Khan – the only way I have been able to do justice to them is because I don't hold a strict ideology or thought process in my personal life.

A lot of people don't understand this way of life I lead, but as an actor my thought process keeps changing [on the] basis [of] the roles I portray. In the long run it helps me get rid of baggage or taboos and [I] easily slip into the role I'm playing. I consciously keep my reality apart from the characters I play and it ends the minute the director calls it a day.

**Was there a specific segment in *McMafia* that stood out for you?**

There is one scene which we shot in Croatia. It is set in a pub where I meet with David [Strathairn, playing Semion Kleiman]. During the meeting both the characters are saying something, meaning something completely different and the subtext is also something else altogether. The complexity of how all the minute details have been looked [at] is something I enjoyed.

**What are some other projects that are on your plate?**

I am working on my brother's [Shamas Nawab Siddiqui's directorial feature debut] movie *Bole Chudiyani* with

Tamannaah Bhatia. It's a movie that can be enjoyed with your family.

BBC First airs every weeknight at 10 pm

## ON BBC'S ROSTER

### BREXIT: THE UNCIVIL WAR – FROM AUGUST 5 AT 10 PM

The show unpacks the 2016 referendum that caused Brexit through the strategists behind the 'Vote Leave' campaign. Directed by Toby Haynes, the show features Benedict Cumberbatch as Dominic Cummings.

### MCMAFIA – FROM AUGUST 6 AT 10 PM

Director James Watkins' Alex Godman finds himself ensnared in the dealings of his crime family – much like Michael Corleone from *The Godfather* (1972). But modern organised crime has a globalised avatar.

### MOTHERFATHERSON – FROM AUGUST 19 AT 10 PM

This melodrama about a media dynasty revolves around Richard Gere's Max Finch – the owner of a large media empire, his estranged wife Kathryn (played by Helen McCrory), and his troubled son Cadan (played by Billy Howle) who has developed a cocaine addiction.

### LES MISÉRABLES – FROM AUGUST 28 AT 10 PM

Writer Andrew Davies and director Tom Shankland reimagine Victor Hugo's 19th century French novel by the same name into this miniseries that stars Lily Collins, Dominic West, Olivia Colman and David Oyelowo.

### THE SPLIT – FROM SEPTEMBER 9 AT 10 PM

Writer and creator Abi Morgan (*Sex Thriller*, and *The Iron Lady*) weaves a drama around the Defoes – a family of divorce lawyers with a family firm. But the oldest of three daughters, Hannah (Nicola Walker), joins a rival firm. Soon she faces her family in a custody case.

### PRESS – FROM SEPTEMBER 17 AT 10 PM

Mike Bartlett's show is a look at the challenges of modern British newspapers and focusses on the lives of journalists and editors in a left-leaning broadsheet paper, *The Herald*, and a populist tabloid, *The Post*.

### OUR GIRL – FROM SEPTEMBER 25 AT 10 PM

Writer and creator Tony Grounds brings back the military drama pivoted on Michelle Keegan's Lance Corporal Georgie Lane – an army medic in a male-dominated world, her platoon is sent to a Himalayan village hit by an earthquake.

## PLACE

### Integrating art and food

The Hut Cafe in Gurugram is filled with contemporary versions of India's various crafts



As you enter The Hut Cafe in Gurugram, you come across vibrant Rajasthani floral patterned-chairs and Saharanpur's hand-painted tables. They sit in between a collection of objects, that've come from various parts of India.

The founder, Harsh Roy, 35, has collaborated with artisans to make modern interpretations of age-old craft. For instance, the all-too-common leather lamps from Andhra and Karnataka, are made into chandeliers. There are also versions of Kashmiri papier-mâché on cutlery, wall panels, as well as Kavadi art from Chittorgarh, a story-telling box which when opened in a sequence, unfolds a mythological tale.

"Initially, it started with just collecting craft pieces," says Roy, who opened the cafe two months ago. "Later, it became more about talking to the artists, and getting to know their stories," recalls Roy, who started seeing the cafe as an opportunity to work with and for these artists.

A chemical engineer by profession, Roy is also an avid traveller, interested in the country's arts – specifically, he's been collecting art work from his travels over the last 13 years. The diversity of art he saw over this period, inspired him to open The Hut Cafe.

In keeping with this inspiration, the menu also has dishes specific to different cities and towns of India – including Dhamashala Maggie roll, Mumbai masala sandwich and Meerut ki shikanji.

Much like a handful of other restaurants in the city, everything in The Hut Cafe, from the art on the walls, to the chairs you sit on, can be bought or custom made on order.

"We pay the artists directly. We have tried to take away the middleman, so the artists get a fair amount for their art," says Roy. The cafe also features a board, which spotlights one artisan, whose creations find space here, each month.

B-106/107, First Floor, Nirvana Courtyard, Sector 50, Gurugram, Haryana 122018, ₹600 for two

SANSKRITI FALOR

## PRODUCT

### Melt in the mouth cookies



Paying an ode to the upcoming festive season, Yoku Moku, the Japanese confectionery brand, recently launched its first range of eggless cookies in Delhi.

Available as DCB – eggless cocoa cookies with white chocolate filling inside and DBL – eggless butter vanilla cookies doubled with milk chocolate inside, these cookies have been crafted specifically for the Indian market that is sensitive about egg in confectionery. They come in pastel coloured packing.

Interestingly, Yoku Moku owes its significance to the Swedish town, Jokkmokk where the founder Noriochi Fujinawa first tasted European butter cookies. Fujinawa's passion for creating unique confectionery could be gauged from the fact that it took him years to perfect the ingredients and recipe.

The result was a delectable butter cookie. The brand's philosophy is "Making Confectionery is a creation, not a production". After multiple test productions and samplings, the brand came out with the eggless version.

Two years ago, the brand made its entry into India and was brought by Liberty Group's Liberty Luxuries.

A box of egg-less cookies, with 26 cookies, ₹2405

Contact us at [delhimetro@thehindu.co.in](mailto:delhimetro@thehindu.co.in)

## IN OUR BACKYARD

# The ghost of the past

From kabootar-baazi to feeding the birds, pigeons have taken over our cities, disturbing what little remains of our city's ecological balance

ABHISHEK GULSHAN

It's the bird everyone recognises, which is not surprising. Not only are they found in great numbers throughout the city, but pigeons have also been a part of Indian culture and society for several centuries.

The rearing of such large flocks throughout history have left our cities infested with these feral birds. Pigeons are no longer wild species of birds. Feeding them, trading them and often releasing them is what disturbs the delicate ecological balance. There are dedicated feeding stations spread across the city, with shops



selling pigeon feed coming up right next to them. Everything from corn and rice to leftover food, even cake and cookies, is fed.

This is making the birds highly dependent on human beings for survival, changes their eating habits drastically, and killing their natural instinct to forage for food (they are grain-and fruit-eating). This changes the dy-

namics of the food chain drastically, eating away into the food cycle of several other native species like the house sparrow that also has a similar diet.

Historical buildings and statues are subjected to bird excreta, which contains uric acid and can cause irreversible damage to buildings: sandstone and limestone are extremely susceptible to it.

The corrosive effects may continue even after cleaning, which in turn leads to massive destruction of historical landmarks.

Pigeon excreta contains certain strains of the bacteria E. coli (*Escherichia coli*), which, when introduced in the food or water supply, may lead to illnesses, making pigeons a regular carrier of these diseases. Traditional

practices have often hurt us in ways unknown to human kind. To maintain a healthy ecological balance, it's wise to avoid feeding pigeons.

The writer is the founder of NINOS Owl About Nature, a nature-awareness initiative. He is the Delhi-NCR reviewer for Ebird, a Cornell University initiative, monitoring rare sightings of birds. He formerly led a programme at WWF India.



## 5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



### FASHION

#### Wedding show

Mine N Yours Wedding Show 2019, a two-day luxurious exposition that showcases premium and high-end products and services from the wedding industry, is back with its fifth edition. Curated by Harpreet Singh, this year's line-up of designers include Rohit Bal, Ashima Leena, Anjalee and Arjun Kapoor, Swati Vijayvargie.

**VENUE:** Hotel Ashok, Chanakyapuri

**TIME:** 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.



### FOOD

#### Monsoon special

Monkey Bar, a gastropub in South Delhi, has introduced a special monsoon menu with vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. On till August 31, this special menu has dishes like Butter Paneer Khichdi, Smoked Mushroom, Reddy's Popcorn Chicken, Chilli Cheese Dragon, Chicken Thai Green Curry, and more.

**VENUE:** Monkey Bar, Pocket C6&7, Vasant Kunj

**TIME:** 12 noon - 12 midnight



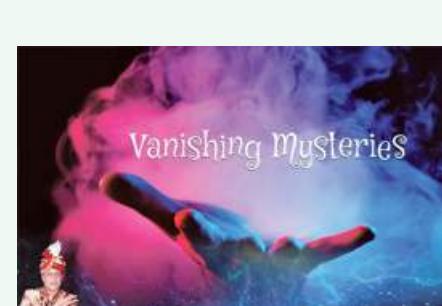
### DANCE

#### Kathak and Bharatanatyam

This year's IIC Monsoon Festival of Dance will be presented under the theme, Expressions of Abhinaya in Classical Dance. The festival will feature two different dance presentations -- a Kathak recital by Guru Prerana Shrimali and a dance presentation by Bharatanatyam exponent, Rama Vaideyanathan.

**VENUE:** C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, IIC

**TIME:** 6 p.m.



### PERFORMANCE

#### Magic

American Center New Delhi is hosting "Vanishing Mysteries: Magical Connections between India and America," a talk and performance on Indian magic by Fulbright Scholar, Shreyash Palshikar. This lecture and performance explores the history and culture of Indian magic and the ways that magic connects India and the US.

**VENUE:** American Center, 24, KG Marg

**TIME:** 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.



### FILM

#### Biography

IHC will screen *Anandi Gopal*, a Marathi biographical film, this evening. Directed by Sameer Vidwans, the film recounts the life of Anandibai Joshi, the first Indian woman who has studied medicine in the United States in the late 19th Century and went on to become one of the first female physicians in India.

**VENUE:** Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre

**TIME:** 7 p.m.

MEENAKSHI J

We drive towards the arterial Jammu-Pahankot highway and begin our ascent through the winding mountain trails of the Shivalik ranges, flanked by trees and rugged cliffs. The tiny hamlets and pastoral terrace farms serve as a perfect foil to the hustle and bustle of Jammu city.

After nearly a three-hour-long outing, we are close to our destination that once was home to Sanskrit scholars, Pashmina silk weavers, Ayurveda practitioners, and artists.

Basohli is one of the primeval towns of the Jammu region, an erstwhile prosperous kingdom founded by Raja Bhupat Pal in 1635 that lies on the banks of the Ravi in Kathua district.

At the fag end of this ancient valley is the Purthu beach, nicknamed Mini Goa, because the landscape here closely resembles that of a Goan beach. Upon entering the town, we drive through a surprisingly well-laid-out road towards this beach, flanked by tall trees burdened with huge nests with chirping birds, and chunks of intricately-latticed honeycombs hanging effortlessly.

Soon, we hit a dead-end, beyond which lay the placid waters of the Ravi, cuddled by the Shivaliks on one side, the snow-capped Dhauladhar on the other and the bountiful Pir Panjal range on the far side.

Alighting from the car in silence, dumbfounded by the landscape, we saunter in varied directions, clicking photographs.

The snow-clad silhouette of Dalhousie presents a majestic view, reminiscent of its colonial past from afar, while the newly-constructed Atal Setu, North India's first cable-stayed bridge connecting either side of the river banks, looks like an Olympian shouldering the burden of the passing traffic. None of us realises how the next 60-odd minutes pass until the driver signals us to move on to visit the fort.



A river runs through it  
(Clockwise from far left)  
The Atal Setu and snapshots from Basohli  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

# The car stops at Basohli

Cocooned amidst the Shivalik ranges, this town with its past glory and modern engineering marvel waits to be discovered

## Impregnable fort

Basohli fort that once reigned over Chamba and Nurpur is dilapidated now, yet stands loftily in some sections, with a water tank in front acting as a moat, and a temple that has kept vigil for aeons.

Catch a glimpse of this ancient town, from an open crumbling watchtower of the fort and one can feel the transition of time. Vibrantly painted houses dotted with dish antennas, jostle for space with as many temples amidst crumbling heritage, while the architectural marvel of Atal Setu looms large.

The construction of Ranjit Sagar Dam across the Ravi has led to a mammoth lake formation, holding an island amidst its emerald green waters and home to the Chamunda Devi temple. A ferry ride to pay obeisance at this temple is worth every penny. From Basohli fort, we soon drive to the fort shrine of Chanchlo Devi, a small-yet-well-maintained temple with



a strange cylindrical structure.

It serves as an ideal vantage point to take pictures of Basohli and its breath-taking surroundings. And, I realise that Basohli is unlike any other Himachali hamlet. Abundantly blessed with Nature's bounty, unparalleled vistas, and lush flora and fauna, alongside ancient ruins, Basohli also sports the antiquity of artistic and feisty by-

## GETTING THERE

Basohli is 148km by road from Jammu, 60km from Pathankot and 180km from Amritsar. State buses ply from Pathankot and Jammu. The nearest railway station is at Kathua. Direct trains run from Delhi and various Indian cities to Kathua. There are frequent flights connecting New Delhi with Jammu and Amritsar.

gones with panache.

After all, it was the epicentre of Pahari miniature paintings in the 17th Century, whose fame spread far and wide upto Kangra and Kullu, giving rise to their own schools of miniature painting.

## Show of colours

Immortalised by its artists, a bold-and-stark colour palette and aesthetic patterns, Basohli painting is an important part of Indian Classical art. The

fame of these paintings is such that some of them find place of pride in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and National Museum, New Delhi.

As I descend the fort and stroll in the town park, I could envision the palpable excitement in this town square during festive times. It serves as a venue for the century-old famous Basohli Ram Leela, when lakhs trinkle in from neighbouring towns and villages during the Dussehra festival.

On one hand, this 5,000-year-old ancient region of Jammu and Kashmir creates a fantastical wonderland image, while on the other, its serenity sounds too far-fetched.

However, Basohli, with its captivating views of snow-capped mountains, the crumbling ruins of its fort, pebbled shores of Purthu beach and the cyan waters of the river Ravi, is Nature's magnum opus waiting to be explored.



## POOCH CAFE



## PEANUTS



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



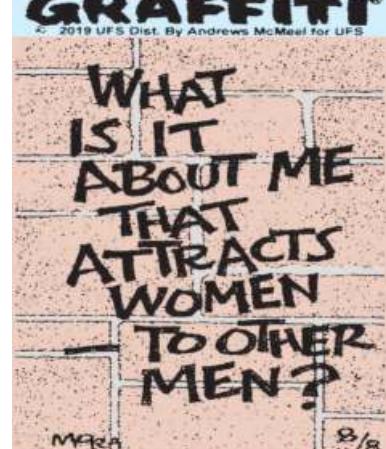
## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## TIGER



## GRAFFITI



## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13143

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4 British admiral d. 21 October 1805 (7,6)

5 Strength (5)

6 Constituent – habitat (7)

7 Japanese wrestling (4)

8 As a consequence (6)

13 Conspicuous wealth (8)

15 Mayonnaise-based sauce with capers, eaten with fish (7)

16 Red cold salad ingredient (6)

18 Green cold salad ingredient (5)

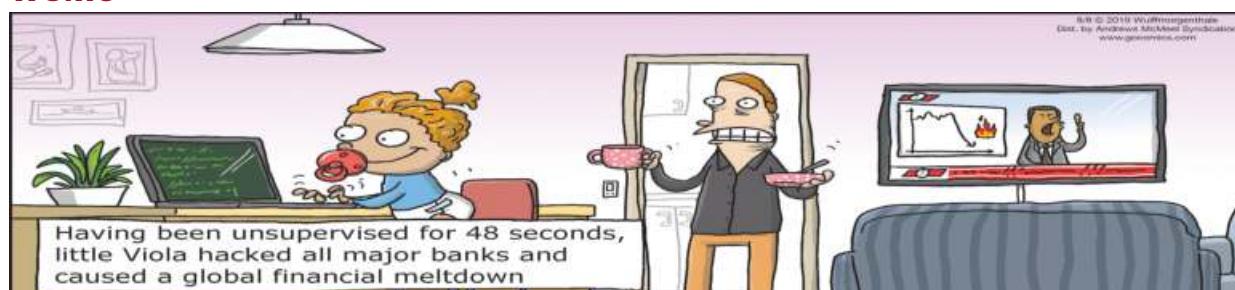
20 Spry (5)

21 Be in want of (4)

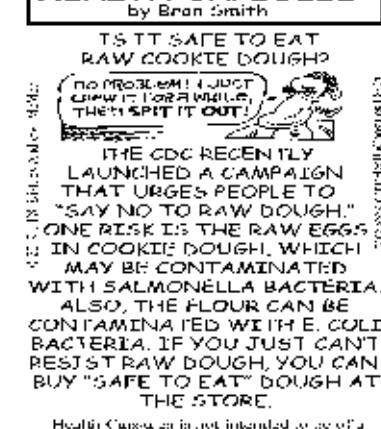
Solution will appear in The Hindu dated August 9, 2019.

Solution No. 13142

## WUMO



## HEALTH CAPSULES



## ACROSS

1 Largest Caribbean island (4)

3 Sparkling wine (slang) (8)

9 Crossbred hunting dog (7)

10 Moderate glow (5)

11 Comply with (3,2)

12 Sway, as if about to fall (6)

14 Very close by (2,3,8)

17 Medium of divine revelation (6)

19 Slow speech with prolonged vowels (5)

22 Obliterate (5)

23 Meeting of a court (7)

24 Sauce for salad (8)

25 Outdoor festivity (4)

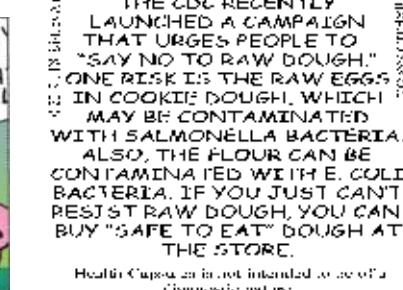
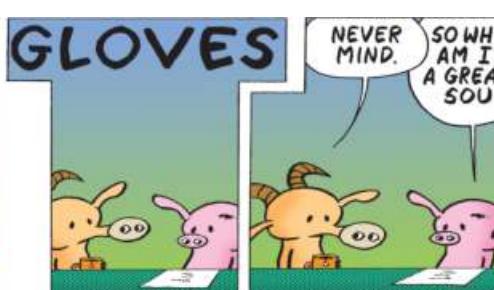
■ Down

1 Vocal ads (anag) – apple brandy (8)

2 Soft cap (5)

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## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Health Capsules is not intended as a diagnostic or therapeutic aid.

CM YK

# Kohli's men look to overcome World Cup disappointment

West Indies, too, will hope for a change in fortunes when the three-match ODI series begins today; Gayle's presence a big boost for the hosts

## INDIA IN WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

With an air of invincibility, India returns to the format that gave it heartbreak in the not-too-distant past, facing West Indies in the first of three-match ODI series here on Thursday.

Shikhar Dhawan makes a comeback in the format where he has been India's third best player after skipper Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma.

Dhawan will take his place at the top of the order alongside Rohit and like the initial matches of the World Cup, K.L. Rahul is likely to go back to being the No. 4.

With Kedar Jadhav expected to come in at No. 5 or 6 depending on how Rishabh Pant is used as a floater, it will be a toss up between Manish Pandey and Shreyas Iyer for the remaining middle-order slots.

With Bhuvneshwar Kumar playing three T20 Internationals he will probably get to cool his heels with Mohammed Shami leading the attack and Navdeep Saini making his ODI debut.

Kohli will fancy his team's chances in the series, notwithstanding the return of the swashbuckling Chris

Gayle.

Rohit Sharma will look to continue his golden run with the bat in the 50-over format, having caressed his way to a record five centuries at the showpiece in the United Kingdom.

Kohli, who also enjoyed a great run in the mega event, will not be short on motivation despite the lack of world beaters in the opposition camp. The batting mainstay is also aware that a section of former players raised question mark around his captaincy in the limited overs format.

Thoroughly outplayed in the shortest format, West Indies will hope the return of the talismanic Gayle bolsters it.

The squads (from):

**India:** Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, K.L. Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kedar Jadhav, Mohammed Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Khaled Ahmed and Navdeep Saini.

**West Indies:** Jason Holder (Capt.), Chris Gayle, John Campbell, Evon Lewis, Shai Hope, Shimron Hetmyer, Nicholas Pooran, Roston Chase, Fabian Allen, Carlos Brathwaite, Keemo Paul, Sheldon Cottrell, Oshane Thomas and Kemar Roach.

Match starts at 7 p.m. IST

## STAT SPHERE

As India gears up to take on the West Indies in a three-match ODI series, a look at how the teams stack up

### TOP RUN-GETTERS | INDIA

	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg.	SR	50s/100s
Kohli	33	1,912	157*	70.81	96.27	10/7
Tendulkar	39	1,573	141*	52.43	78.02	11/4
Dravid	38	1,348	109*	42.12	74.39	8/3
Rohit	26	1,237	162	61.85	90.55	10/2
Ganguly	27	1,142	98	47.58	72.18	11/0

### WEST INDIES

	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg.	SR	50s/100s
Haynes	36	1357	152*	42.4	64.28	9/2
Chanderpaul	41	1319	149*	35.64	76.37	10/2
Sarwan	31	1296	115*	58.9	75.65	11/1
Hooper	42	1279	113*	44.1	84.75	8/1
Gayle	38	1247	140	32.81	88.88	5/4

### TOP WICKET-TAKERS | INDIA

	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Avg.	Eco	4W/5W
Kapil	42	43	4/54	28.88	3.62	1/0
Kumble	25	41	6/12	23.73	4.36	1/1
Jadeja	23	36	5/36	27.55	4.69	1/1
Harbhajan	30	33	3/32	34.27	4.26	0/0
Agarkar	21	32	3/24	24.5	4.49	0/0

### WEST INDIES

	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Avg.	Eco	4W/5W
Walsh	38	44	4/16	24.15	3.24	2/0
Hooper	45	36	4/37	39.55	4.65	1/0
Richards	22	36	6/41	21.97	4.63	1/1
Ambrose	25	32	4/36	22.46	3.23	1/0
Rampaul	14	28	5/51	23.78	5.62	3/1

■ Anil Kumble's 6-12 at the Eden Gardens in 1993 is the fifth best bowling figures by a bowler in an ODI against the West Indies

■ Sir Viv Richards has the second-best bowling figures

■ Carl Hooper is the only player to feature on both the highest run-scorers' and wicket-takers' lists

### India vs West Indies in ODIs

Matches: 127, India: 60, West Indies: 62, Tied: 2, No Result: 3

### India vs West Indies in West Indies

Matches: 36, India: 14, West Indies: 20, No Result: 2

### The schedule

August 8, Providence

August 11, Port of Spain

August 14, Port of Spain

ALL MATCHES START AT 7 P.M. IST



Raring to go: Virat Kohli will not be short on motivation despite the lack of world beaters in the opposition camp. ■ AFP

## Third 'Test' on razor's edge

## Australia's Ashes sweep a possibility, says McGrath

'Smith hits the ball into unconventional areas; his ways at the crease are very effective'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
TAROUBA

West Indies-A was 163 for six in reply to India-A's 201 on the second day of the third and final 'Test' here on Wednesday.

The host's hopes rest on opener Jeremy Solozano who was unbeaten on 57. Sunil Ambris contributed 43.

Umesh (two for 29 off 16 overs) bowled an economical spell, picking up the wickets of Akim Frazer and Brandon King to reduce West Indies-A to 36 for three.

**Gowtham scalps three**  
Solozano and Ambris joined hands for a 66-run partnership for the fourth wicket before the latter fell to Shivam Dube. Off-spinner Krishnappa Gowtham took three for 56 as the Indian bowlers struck back.

In the India-A innings, skipper Hanuma Vihari (55 off 139 balls) and wicket-keeper batsman Wriddhiman Saha (62 off 66 balls) added 86 for the fifth wicket after the visitors were in a spot of bother at 48 for four.

Chemar Holder (three for 47) and Frazer (three for 53) were the pick of the bowlers for West Indies-A.

**The scores:** India-A 201 (Mayank Agarwal 33, Hanuma Vihari 55, Wriddhiman Saha 62, Chemar Holder three for 47, Akim Frazer three for 53) vs West Indies-A 163 for six (Jeremy Solozano 57, Sunil Ambris 43, Krishnappa Gowtham three for 56).

## PCB not to renew Arthur's contract

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KARACHI

Pakistan's cricket board axed coach Mickey Arthur on Wednesday after the team failed to get out of its group in a disappointing World Cup.

Arthur's contract expired after the World Cup and he had asked for a two-year extension.

But Pakistan Cricket Board chief Ehsan Mani said Arthur and his assistant coaches Grant Flower and Azhar Mahmood had all been shown the door.

Reports say Arthur has been shortlisted as the next England coach after Trevor Bayliss departs following the ongoing Ashes Test series.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI**

Glenn McGrath sees a potential 5-0 sweep for Australia in the ongoing Ashes series following its remarkable come-from-behind victory over England in the first Test at Edgbaston.

The Aussie pace bowling legend is back here at the MRF Pace Foundation where he will soon be joined by the emerging players of the Australian Academy team.

He said "5-0 is a possibility. It will not be easy for England who are without the injured James Anderson, such a big factor in the English conditions with the Duke ball."

And then he dwelt on Steve Smith whose battling twin hundreds in the first Test buried England. "The English crowd was after him but he showed enormous mental strength."

### Technique is for the purists'

Talking about Smith's methods, McGrath said, "Technique is for the purists. Smith's ways at the crease are very effective."

McGrath added, "Smith moves across and you think you can get him leg-before



Glenn McGrath, seen with M. Senthilnathan and Basil Thampi, is back at the MRF Pace Foundation in Chennai. ■ K. PICHUMANI

but he gets the better of you. He hits the ball into unconventional areas. You bowl outside off and he can hit you behind square on the leg-side. He uses the pace on the ball."

**Smith and Kohli the best**  
McGrath said, "Smith averages close to 63 after 65 Tests. If he maintains this average after 100 Tests, he will be among the greatest batsmen to have played the game. Right now, Smith and Virat Kohli are the two best batsmen in the world."

Still on Smith, McGrath said, "Smith is not ruffled by

the dot balls. Smith and Cheteshwar Pujara are two present-day batsmen who have loads of patience."

**Smith and Kohli the best**  
McGrath said, "Smith averages close to 63 after 65 Tests. If he maintains this average after 100 Tests, he will be among the greatest batsmen to have played the game. Right now, Smith and Virat Kohli are the two best batsmen in the world."

McGrath was excited with

the comeback of the pacy James Pattiinson and said,

"He is the enforcer in this Australian attack. He's got the pace, skill and presence."

He called his former teammate and now Aussie coach Justin Langer a tough bloke and said, "He emphasises discipline and commitment, has produced results with whichever team he has coached."

The pace ace sympathised with New Zealand's debatable defeat in the World Cup

final and said, "We should have had another Super Over or a Bowl Out. I think the boundaries countback rule was framed by a batsman!"

Asked about Rohit Sharma's lack of consistency in Tests, McGrath replied, "He has the ability. I am surprised why he has not been able to seal his Test place so far. He has the technique and the strokes."

McGrath called Dale

## McGrath bats for Shastri

S. DINAKAR  
CHENNAI

"If it ain't broke don't fix it," Glenn McGrath appears to be suggesting.

On the issue of India either continuing with

Ravi Shastri or picking a new coach, the Aussie pace legend said to *The Hindu*, "The Indian team has been performing well under Kohli and Shastri. They get along well. Only this year India won its first ever Test series in Australia."

# Karunaratne to lead Lanka against Kiwis

Series will mark commencement of Test Championship for both



**Raring to go:** New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson and Sri Lankan captain Dimuth Karunaratne at a media briefing ahead of their two Test cricket match series. ■AP

## KIWIS IN LANKA

IANS

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has named a 22-member squad for the two-Test series against New Zealand, starting August 14, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) announced on Wednesday.

The series will also mark the commencement of the World Test Championship for both the countries. Dimuth Karunaratne will lead the islanders when the series gets underway at Galle.

Meanwhile, Oshada Fernando and Kusal Mendis, who propelled Lanka to its historic Test series win against South Africa and become the first Asian team to win a Test series in the African nation, have also been

roped into the squad.

Dinesh Chandimal has been recalled for the series, apart from spinners Akila Dananjaya and Dilruwan Perera.

In the 15 Tests played in Sri Lanka dating back to 1984, New Zealand have won four, lost six and drawn five. New Zealand are currently ranked second in Tests, and Sri Lanka sixth.

### Hathurusingha suspended

The Sri Lankan cricket authorities on Wednesday suspended head coach Chandika Hathurusingha and appointed a temporary replacement for the New Zealand series.

Cricket Board chairman Shammi Silva said former

fast bowler Rumesh Ratnayake was made interim coach pending a final decision on the status of Hathurusingha.

"Hathurusingha will not be involved in this (New Zealand) series," Silva said. "We can't tell you details because this might end up being a legal issue."

**Sri Lanka squad:** Dimuth Karunaratne (captain), Angelo Matthews, Dinesh Chandimal, Lahiru Thirimanne, Kusal Mendis, Kusal Janith Perera, Niroshan Dickwella, Dhananjaya De Silva, Angelo Perera, Oshada Fernando, Danushka Gunathilaka, Shehan Jayasuriya, Chamika Karunaratne, Dilruwan Perera, Akila Dananjaya, Lasith Embuldeniya, Lakshan Sandakan, Suranga Lakmal, Lahiru Kumara, Vishwa Fernando, Kasun Rajitha, Asitha Fernando.

Stone, 25, took three wickets on his first Test appearance against Ireland last month and was in the squad for the first Test at Edgbaston, but did not play. The third Ashes Test at Headingley begins on August 22, making Stone's availability for that match highly unlikely.



Olly Stone. ■GETTY IMAGES

## KI Plus continues to play strong

### BRIDGE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

KI Plus continued to play strong after topping the qualification as it led 65-35 against Bedi's after two rounds, in the knock-out stage of the Team of Four Gold competition in the 17th HCL international bridge championship at the Aerocity on Wednesday.

The team of KI Plus from Bulgaria, comprising Ivan Nanev, Vladimir Mihov, Rosen Gunev, Julian Stefanov and Marta Nikolova had topped the 10-round Swiss league earlier with 138.35 VPs, from among 55 teams.

South Sweden and Russia were placed second and third respectively with 133.84 and 132.68 VPs.

In the knock-out stage featuring four sessions of 14 boards each among 16 teams, South Sweden led 78-68 against Pentagon, Russia led 50-43 against Cogito, Poddar Housing led 58-51 against Hemant Jalan, Don Julio Laws led 64-27.5 against Eager Eagles, Hema Narasimhan led 46-36 against CBC, Alpha led 67-58 against FII and Formidables were 87-72 ahead against Monika Jajoo.

In the Silver event after two sessions, I-Doctors, PBA, Hope N Pray, Saju, Captain's IV, Chandannagar, Amol and Invincibles led against their opponents.

In the Bronze event in which only top eight teams qualify for knock-out, Shiva, Ms KC, Apanjan and Antus made it to the semifinals, beating Galaxy, Pink Panther, Unpredictables and Iris respectively.

The Match Point pairs event started with 269 pairs playing in 12 sections. After three sessions of 18 boards each, the top 104 pairs will qualify for the second elimination round.

The non-qualifiers will participate in the Match Point pairs Strata-2 event from Thursday.

The business publication calculated that the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion earned \$29.2 million in the 12-month period ending June 1 – with just \$4.2 million of that coming from prize money.

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## Serena tops Forbes list again

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

Serena Williams topped Forbes magazine's list of the highest paid women in sports for the fourth straight year on Tuesday.

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## TV PICKS

**West Indies vs India:** 1st ODI, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.  
**TNP:** Star Sports 3, 7:15 p.m.  
**UTT:** Star Sports 1, Star Sports Select 1 (SD & HD), 7:30 p.m.  
**PKL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7:30 p.m.  
**Global T20:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 10 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



Rooney joins Derby County as player-coach

DERBYSHIRE  
Manchester United legend Wayne Rooney will make an unexpected return to English football as a player-coach with Derby County in the upcoming season. The 33-year-old will arrive from MLS outfit DC United on an initial 18-month contract until the summer of 2021, with the option of a further year. ANI

## Pragnanandhaa finishes third

ABU DHABI  
After finishing first in the Xtrac Open in Copenhagen hardly 10 days back, 13-year-old R. Pragnanandhaa produced another fine show to finish third, with nine points, in the Abu Dhabi International blitz tournament here on Wednesday.

## India crashes out

KUALA LUMPUR  
India lost to England 3-0 in the quarterfinal and crashed out of the World junior women's team squash championship on Wednesday. **The result (quarterfinal):** England bt India 3-0 (Elise Lazarus bt Sanya Vats 8-11, 11-1, 11-7, 11-6, 11-3; Alice Green bt Aishwarya Khubchandani 11-13, 11-8, 11-8, 11-6; Evie Coxon bt Yashna Singh 11-7, 8-11, 13-11).

**Record-signing Hernandez starts training**  
BERLIN  
Bayern Munich's record signing Lucas Hernandez took part in his first squad training session on Tuesday, four months after a serious knee operation, the Bundesliga champion reported on its website on Wednesday. The World Cup-winner is yet to feature for Bayern since his move from Atletico in March. AFP



Real excludes Bale for friendly against Salzburg

LEEDS  
Gareth Bale has not been named in Real Madrid's squad for the upcoming friendly against Red Bull Salzburg. Coach Zinedine Zidane has also opted to leave out James Rodriguez for the match, goal.com reported. ANI

## Diego Forlan retires



Forlan. ■ FILE PHOTO: AFP

ANI  
LONDON  
Uruguay forward Diego Forlan announced retirement from professional football on Wednesday. "After 21 years I made the decision to end my career as a professional footballer. A beautiful stage closes full of great memories and emotions but another of new challenges will begin," Forlan tweeted.

The 40-year-old played for the likes of Manchester United, Atletico Madrid, Inter Milan, and Villarreal. Forlan made 112 appearances for Uruguay and scored 36 goals. He also helped his side to the Copa America title in 2011. He claimed the Golden Ball at the 2010 World Cup.



Outplayed: Heo Kwang Hee's ability to retrieve from difficult angles and cross-court smashes were too much to handle for Sameer Verma. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

## Prannoy, Sameer knocked out

Sourabh Verma puts it across Namluk Adulrach

## HYDERABAD OPEN

## V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

HYDERABAD

It was a forgetful day for India in the Hyderabad Open badminton championship men's singles competition on Wednesday.

First, defending champion and top-seeded Sameer Verma was knocked out by former World junior champion Heo Kwang Hee of Korea, who notched up an impressive 21-18, 21-11 win in just 28 minutes in the men's singles first round.

Later, third-seeded H.S. Prannoy followed his teammate with the Malaysian Jia Wei Tan notching up a 21-17, 21-10 win in 37 minutes.

Sameer was clearly rattled by the reach of the Korean

opponent, who combined it with his ability to retrieve from difficult angles and come up with some stunning cross-court smashes.

Sameer's strategy of attacking Heo's forehand did not click and even the Indian shuttler's half-smashes were awry. The way the Korean controlled the pace of the game to push the Indian to the baseline hepted him hit the sidelines with unerring regularity.

Later, it was the turn of H.S. Prannoy to bow out in just 37 minutes. Not the kind of start India chief national coach, P. Gopi Chand, who was there to watch the matches, had expected.

However, there was something to cheer for the host when seventh-seeded Sourabh Verma put it across a

fighting Namluk Adulrach of Thailand 21-17, 21-14 to make it to the second round.

For the organisers, there was another embarrassment when the women's doubles match featuring Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy had to be shifted from Court No. 4 to No. 1 with the wooden flooring caving in one corner of the court.

Then, the tournament referee Pencho Stoynov of Belgrade had to leave back home following the demise of his 89-year-old father Lubomir in Sofia.

**Praneeth bows out**  
In the evening, second-seed B. Sai Praneeth too bowed out when 19-year-old Indonesian Ikshan Leonardo Imanuel Rumbay scored a 21-17, 21-23, 21-15 win.

**Important results: First round:**  
**Men:** Heo Kwang Hee (Kor) bt Sameer Verma 21-18, 21-11; Sourabh Verma bt Namkul Adulrach (Thai) 21-17, 21-14; Ajay Jayaram bt Teck Zhi Soo (Mas) 18-21, 21-3, 21-14; Tan Jia Wei (Mas) bt H.S. Prannoy 21-17, 21-10; Ikshan Leonardo Imanuel Rumbay bt B. Sai Praneeth 21-17, 21-23, 21-15.

**Women:** Jia Min Yeo (Sgp) bt K. Supanida (Tha) 21-12, 21-19; Shu Ting Ji (Chn) bt Shikha Gautam 21-11, 21-13; Zhang Yi Man (Chn) bt Riya Mookerjee 21-15, 21-13; Yulia Susanto (Ind) bt Mugda Agrey 21-13, 21-15; Tam Brittney (Can) bt Juchana Chananchida (Tha) 21-17, 16-21, 21-18; Chaiwan Phittayaporn (Tha) bt G. Krishuli 21-16, 21-10; Natalia Perminova (Rus) bt Anura Prabhusudai 21-18, 21-19; Lee Ying Ying (Mas) bt Ashmita Chaliha 21-13, 19-21, 21-17; Qi Zuefei (Fra) bt K. Sri Krishna Priya 21-15, 21-10.

## Danish Farooq nets Real Kashmir's winner

## DURAND CUP

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

A last minute strike from Danish Farooq helped Real Kashmir FC (RKFC) down reigning I-League champion Chennai City FC (CCFC) by a solitary goal, in a group-C league match of the 129th Durand Cup at Kalyani Stadium on Wednesday.

The result helped RKFC maintain its winning record against CCFC, which was reduced to 10 men after goalkeeper Kabir was given marching orders in the 76th minute.

Having won both the previous two meetings in last season's I-League, RKFC

continued its dominance and enjoyed a greater number of chances in the opening half. But Kabir stood alert under the bar and made a few good saves to keep the RKFC at bay.

Chennai City, which tried out its Indian recruits treating the tournament as a pre-season outing, continued to hold RKFC's onslaughts after the break before Kabir received the marching orders for handling the ball outside the box.

Real Kashmir made the most of its numerical superiority as Farooq found the target in the 90th minute to secure the win.

**The result:** Real Kashmir FC 1 (Danish Farooq 90) bt Chennai City FC 0.

"God help Indian cricket," said Sourav Ganguly, expressing his displeasure after Rahul Dravid was issued a notice from the BCCI's ethics officer on conflict of interest allegations against the legend.

Ganguly was backed by off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

The BCCI ethics officer, Justice (Retd.) D.K. Jain, issued the notice to Dravid on conflict of interest allegations made by Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association member Sanjay Gupta.

**'New fashion'**  
"New fashion in Indian cricket

et .....conflict of interest ....Best way to remain in news ...god help indian cricket .....

Dravid Gets Conflict of Interest Notice from BCCI Ethics Officer," Ganguly wrote on his Twitter handle.

## 'Insult'

Supporting his former captain, Harbhajan said, "Really ?? Don't know where it's heading to.. u can't get better person than him for Indian cricket. Sending notice to these legends is like insulting them.. cricket need their services for betterment.. yes god save Indian cricket."

Dravid has been given two weeks to reply on the allega-

tions levelled against him.

According to Gupta, Dravid is allegedly conflicted as he is the current National Cricket Academy (NCA) director and vice-president of India Cements Group, which owns Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Chennai Super Kings.

## Similar complaints

Gupta had earlier filed similar conflict of interest complaints against former cricketers V.V.S. Laxman and Sachin Tendulkar for their roles as Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) members and mentors of IPL franchises Sunrisers Hyderabad and Mumbai Indians respectively.

## Great show by Ganguly

Wins the Belt and Road China Hunan International

## CHESS

## SPORTS BUREAU

TONGGUANYAO (CHINA)

Surya Shekhar Ganguly played some sparkling chess to win the Belt and Road China Hunan International tournament here.

The 36-year-old ONGC staffer from Kolkata, who started out as the 15th seed, finished with seven points from nine rounds to triumph at what is one of the



S.S. Ganguly ■ FILE PHOTO

was 2876, way above his current rating of 2638.

His final tally of seven was half-a-point more than the second-placed Yu Yangyi of the host nation, who was seeded second, and Amin Bassem of Egypt, the fifth seed.

Top seed Wei Yi of China was among the six players who scored six points; he was beaten by Ganguly in the fifth round.

The Indian Grandmaster needed only a draw in the final round against Francisco Vallejo Pons of Spain, and he got that after 36 moves from the white side of a Sicilian Defence.

He finished his campaign unbeaten – five wins and four draws.

## Nikhhat left undone by cancelled selection trials

## BOXING

## Y.B. SARANGI

KOLKATA

The last-minute cancellation of World women's championships selection trials in New Delhi for 51kg by the Boxing Federation of India has left Asian championships bronze medal winner Nikhat Zareen helpless.

As per the schedule of trials for Tuesday, Nikhat was pitted against Vanlalduati in the first bout. The winner of the bout was supposed to fight M.C. Mary Kom. However, it was not held on Tuesday. Nikhat complained to selection committee working chairman Rajesh Bhandari that her name and weight category were missing despite the "assurance" that her bout for Worlds trials would be held on Wednesday.

"I request (sic) an urgent explanation as to what is the final decision in this regard. In the morning, I had gone to give my weight but our head coach Ali Qamar Sir told me that it's not required as I had already given my weight yesterday morning."

Bhandari said, "The BFI decided to select Mary Kom (switched from 48kg to 51kg) based on her past performances."

A BFI source threw more light. "In the light of the expression stated by Mary Kom for not taking the trials due to her continuous high-level performances in the last few months, the selection committee of BFI, after deliberations, has come to the conclusion that the Manipur pugilist will be exempted from the trials and will get direct entry into the Indian squad for the World championships.

"Her consistency in a new weight category and gold medal-winning efforts at the Round Robin Cup in Germany, India Open and the President's Cup in Indonesia, where she was able to outshine all her challengers in the 51kg category, were considered by the selection committee to arrive at the decision," said the source.

"The selection committee has decided to exempt Worlds bronze medalist Lovlina Borgohain from the trials after carefully considering her consistent performances in 69kg and also because of the difference of standard compared to her opponent at the trials. With a gold medal from the Umakhan Memorial and a silver from the India Open, the Assam boxer deserves consideration to arrive at the decision," said the source.

"She has decided to exempt Lovlina Borgohain from the trials after carefully considering her consistent performances in 69kg and also because of the difference of standard compared to her opponent at the trials. With a gold medal from the Umakhan Memorial and a silver from the India Open, the Assam boxer deserves consideration to arrive at the decision," said the source.

## Sneha in lead

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

HYDERABAD

Amateur Sneha Singh made good use of her local knowledge of the Hyderabad Golf Club layout by carding two-over 73 to take the first-round lead in the 11th leg of the Hero WPGL on Wednesday.

Sneha, who just turned 15 in June, had three birdies, one bogey and two double bogeys on the challenging but exciting course of the Hyderabad Golf Association.

Sneha was followed by Vani Kapoor who, playing her first event in two months, shot three-over 74 despite starting the day with three bogeys in a row. Vani had two birdies, both on par-3s, the 11th and 16th, while she dropped five bogeys.

Neha Tripathi and Gurjot Badwal shot 75 each, while Ridhma Dilawari, the only three-time winner this season, shot 76 as did Ananya Datar to be tied-fifth. Gursimar Badwal and Amadeep Drall were tied-seventh with 77 each while amateur Shreya Pal and Gaurika Bishnoi carded 78 each to complete the top-10.

ALL INDIA COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION  
(A Statutory Body of the Govt. of India)

Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110 070

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

## CURBING THE MENACE OF RAGGING IN AICTE APPROVED TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS

It is brought to the notice of all AICTE approved Institutions, students and other various stakeholders that ragging is a criminal offence and AICTE has already notified its Regulation vide F.No. 37-3/Legal/AICTE/2009 dated July 1, 2009 and subsequent amendments notified vide F.No. 37-3/Legal/AICTE/2009 & F.No. 34-AICTE/AR/Antiragging/2016 dated July 17, 2014 and February 22, 2017 respectively (available on AICTE web portal: [www.aicte-india.org](http://www.aicte-india.org)) on curbing the menace of ragging in AICTE approved Technical Institutions, in order to prohibit, prevent and eliminate the scourge of ragging in AICTE approved Technical Institutions.

The above Regulations are mandatory and applies to all AICTE approved Institutions. Therefore, all the Institutions should take necessary steps for its proper implementation such as:

- Constitution of Anti-Ragging Committee and Anti-Ragging Squad
- Obtaining Undertakings at the time of admission and at the time of allotment of Hostel
- Dedicated cadre of Warden(s) and regular visits to hostels
- Creating awareness through regular meetings with students
- Appointing Professional Counselor(s) for Freshers
- Erection of Poster/Banners displaying provisions of law, punishments etc.

Any violation of AICTE Regulations as cited above by an AICTE approved Institution or an instance wherein any Institution fails to take adequate steps to prevent ragging or fails to act in accordance with these Regulations or fails to punish perpetrators for incidents of ragging suitably, AICTE shall call for punitive action against erring Institutions as per provisions of the Approval Process Handbook.

Students in distress owing to ragging related incidents can access the Toll Free Helpline No.: 1800 - 180 - 5522 or write to the Member Secretary, AICTE, JNU Campus, Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110 070.

Advt. No.: PGRC/08 (01)/2019

## IN BRIEF



## Disney looking to reboot popular franchises

**LOS ANGELES** Disney is planning to revive franchises like the *Home Alone* series, *Night at the Museum* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* into individual web series for its upcoming streaming service, *The Hollywood Reporter* said. PTI



## Twitter apologises for unauthorised data use

**LONDON** Twitter has admitted that it used user data, such as country codes, for personalised advertisements without a user's permission due to issues with its settings. The company apologised and said the error has been fixed. No personal information such as email accounts were used, it added. REUTERS



## Victoria's Secret hires first transgender model

**NEW YORK** Valentina Sampaio has become the first openly transgender model hired by Victoria's Secret nearly a year after a top company official was pressured to apologise for implying transwomen would not fit the brand's identity. AP



**NASHVILLE** Grammy-winning folk singer and musician Rhiannon Giddens and the late Frank Johnson, the leader of a 19<sup>th</sup> century black brass band, will be the first recipients of the inaugural Legacy of Americana Award that was announced on Wednesday. AP



## Rocket Lab working on a reusable booster

**REUTERS** Small-satellite launch firm Rocket Lab plans to recover the core booster of its Electron rocket using a helicopter, a bold cost-saving concept that, if successful, would make it the second company after Elon Musk's SpaceX to reuse an orbital-class rocket booster.

"Electron is going reusable," Rocket Lab chief executive Peter Beck said during a presentation in Utah, showing an animation of the rocket sending a payload into a shallow orbit before speeding back through Earth's atmosphere.

The Auckland-based company is one of a growing cadre of launch companies looking to slash the cost of

## Mexico's cactus offers alternative to plastics

The pulp of the prickly pear is mixed with additives to produce sheets that can be used for packaging

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
GUADALAJARA

Mexico's prickly pear cactus, which is emblazoned on the country's flag, could soon play a new and innovative role in the production of biodegradable plastics.

A packaging material that is made from the plant has been developed by a Mexican researcher and is offering a promising solution to one of the world's biggest pollution conundrums.

"The pulp is strained to obtain a juice that I then

use," said Sandra Pascoe, who developed the product and works at the Atemajac Valley University in the western city of Guadalajara.

That substance is then mixed with non-toxic additives and stretched to produce sheets that are coloured with pigments and folded to form different types of packaging.

"What we're doing is trying to concentrate on objects that don't have a long life," she said, particularly "single-use" packaging.



A worker collecting cactus in Jalisco, Mexico. • AFP

Ms. Pascoe is still conducting tests, but hopes to patent her product later this year and look for partners in early 2020, with an eye to

wards large scale production.

The cacti Ms. Pascoe uses for her experiments come from San Esteban, a small town on the outskirts of Guadalajara, where they grow by the hundreds.

San Esteban is located in Jalisco state where, starting next year, single-use non-recyclable plastic bags, straws and other disposable items will be banned.

Pascoe says her new material would be no more than a "drop in the ocean" in the

battle to preserve the environment.

Given the rampant production of industrial plastics and the time it takes to make her material, there would need to be "other recycling strategies" to make any concrete difference, she said.

In March, UN member states committed to "significantly reduce" single-use plastics over the next decade, although green groups warned that goal fell short of tackling the Earth's pollution crisis.

## Swarajya ka aham hissa.



daCunha/AB/566

## Meet the giant parrots that lived 19 mn years ago

The birds were at least a metre tall and were flightless

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
WELLINGTON

The remains of a super-sized parrot that stood more than half the height of an average human and roamed the Earth 19 million years ago have been discovered in New Zealand.

Judging by the size of the leg bones, the bird would have stood about one metre tall and weighed up to seven kg, according to a report by an international team of palaeontologists published in the latest edition of *Biology Letters*.

"It could have flown but we're putting our money on it being flightless," said Paul Scofield, the senior curator of natural history at Canterbury Museum.

When the bones were found in 2008 no one was certain what they were, and they spent 11 years gathering dust on a shelf until the team looked at them again earlier this year.

"The thought they were from a giant parrot did not enter our minds. We thought it could be some type of eagle until we went back and looked at it again," Mr. Scofield said.

The parrot has been named *Heracles inexpectatus* to reflect its Herculean size and strength – and the unexpected nature of the discovery.

"Heracles, as the largest



**HERCULEAN STRENGTH:** An artist's conception of the super-sized parrot. • AFP/BRIAN CHOO/FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

parrot ever, no doubt with a massive parrot beak that could crack wide open anything it fancied, may well have dined on more than conventional parrot foods, perhaps even other parrots," Mike Archer, from the University of NSW Palaeontology research centre, said.

The bird was approximately the size of the giant "dodo" pigeon and twice the size of the critically endangered flightless New Zealand kakapo, previously the largest known parrot.

**Fossil-rich zone**  
Evidence of the parrot was unearthed in fossils near St. Bathans in southern New Zealand, an area that has proved a rich source of fossils from the Miocene period which extends from about five million to 23 million

years ago. New Zealand, home to the now-extinct flightless bird moa which was up to 3.6 metres tall with neck outstretched, is well known for its giant birds.

"But until now, no one has ever found an extinct giant parrot – anywhere," associate professor Trevor Worthy from Flinders University said.

"We have been excavating these fossil deposits for 20 years, and each year reveals new birds and other animals... no doubt there are many more unexpected species yet to be discovered in this most interesting deposit."

Last year, scientists found the remains of a giant burrowing bat that lived millions of years ago in the same region.

## Gazans struggle to protect antiquities

Plundering and trafficking of artefacts is rampant in the territory under siege

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**

KHAN YOUNIS

Walid al-Aqqad's Gaza home would be the envy of many an antiquities collector. Pieces of Corinthian columns greet visitors in the backyard. Inside, hundreds of ancient pots and other artefacts hang on the walls or are arranged helter-skelter on shelves.

They are remnants of five millennia of Gaza's history, from the Bronze Age to the Islamic caliphates and on down to the years of Ottoman and British rule in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A sliver of land on the Mediterranean, Gaza was a major trade route between Egypt and the Levant going back to ancient times. But decades of uprisings, war and political turmoil have inflicted a heavy toll on its rich archaeological heritage, exposing it to looting and destruction.

**Excavations hindered**  
The Islamic militant group Hamas seized Gaza in 2007 from forces loyal to the Palestinian Authority. In response, Egypt and Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza that has left the territory isolated and increasingly impoverished. The Palestinians say the closures have also hindered excavations and restricted experts' access to new discoveries.

"When they find something, they would hide it or build over it," he said.

Antiquities plundering and trafficking also remains a problem, said Heyam al-Bitar, an archaeologist with Gaza's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. She said the Ministry only learned earlier this year that dozens of an-



**FOR THE FUTURE:** Walid al-Aqqad with heritage pieces piled up inside his private museum. • AP

Palestinian Authority and Hamas equally for not protecting the territory's cultural heritage. He says Israel confiscated artefacts from archaeological digs in the decades it occupied Gaza and did little to prevent antiquities trafficking. Palestinian authorities governing Gaza since 1995 have "attacked many archaeological sites either intentionally or not", he said.

"When they find something, they would hide it or build over it," he said.

Antiquities plundering and trafficking also remains a problem, said Heyam al-Bitar, an archaeologist with Gaza's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. She said the Ministry only learned earlier this year that dozens of an-

cient Greek silver coins were smuggled out of Gaza in 2016. "It's difficult to track down the trafficking because everything happens in the dark," she said.

**Citizen spirit**  
Mr. Al-Aqqad is one of few trying to save antiquities in Gaza. He began his collection in 1975, buying from collectors or searching the beach and new construction sites. Now his house in the southern city of Khan Younis is an archaeological, heritage and cultural museum, welcoming school trips and history students.

"This museum was established by personal efforts and at the expense of my children's bread... to protect the pieces," Mr. al-Aqqad said. The Ministry keeps an inventory of all private collections to prevent artefacts from being sold or smuggled out, said Ms. al-Bitar.

Owners have received training from the Ministry and the Islamic University on how to preserve artefacts and restore clay objects when they fracture, she added.

The underfunded Ministry opened a public museum in 2010 at al-Basha Palace, a fort built by Gaza's Mamluk rulers in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century.

"The Ministry has plans to build a large national museum for all these archaeological pieces, but the political economic situation and the siege on Gaza are preventing this," she said.

## Rocket Lab working on a reusable booster

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## China to boycott cinema awards in Taiwan

Mainland films, actors and filmmakers have been banned from participating in the ceremony

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
BEIJING

China's national film board on Wednesday ordered mainland directors and stars to boycott Asia's top cinema awards in Taiwan, as relations between Beijing and the self-ruled democratic island worsen.

Taiwan's Golden Horse Awards, dubbed the "Chinese Oscars," ran into trouble with mainland authorities last year after a Taiwanese winner called for the island's independence in

an acceptance speech. Beijing sees Taiwan as part of its territory awaiting unification, even though the two sides have been ruled separately since the end of a civil war in 1949.

But it is unclear whether the speech incident was linked to the latest boycott.

The China film administration has "suspended mainland films and personnel" from participating in the awards in November, the body's official newspaper said. "We certainly would

will be held as scheduled.

Taiwanese presidential spokesman Ting Yun-kung called the boycott unfair to the Chinese people, and added it would be "unhelpful for positive exchanges between the two sides".

Taiwan's mainland affairs council said in a statement: "The incident shows that mainland China interferes in cultural exchanges."

As punishment, Beijing has cut official communications, ramped up military exercises, poached diplomatic allies, and ratcheted up economic pressure on the island.



Chinese director Zhang Yimou at last year's Golden Horse awards.

feel regret if it was true," Taiwan's Golden Horse Film Festival said in a statement: "The incident shows that mainland China interferes in cultural exchanges."

The move comes a week after China announced the suspension of individual travel permits to Taiwan "due

to current cross-strait relations".

Relations between Communist-ruled Beijing and Taipei have plummeted since President Tsai Ing-wen came to power in 2016 because her party refuses to recognise the idea that Taiwan is part of one China".

As punishment, Beijing has cut official communications, ramped up military exercises, poached diplomatic allies, and ratcheted up economic pressure on the island.

## Even in cities, natural signs can warn of floods, says study

Indigenous knowledge should not be overlooked'

**REUTERS**

JOHANNESBURG

Indigenous knowledge about how to spot flood risks ahead of time could save lives in cities, researchers said on Wednesday, as climate change and population growth put millions of people at risk of increasingly unpredictable weather patterns.

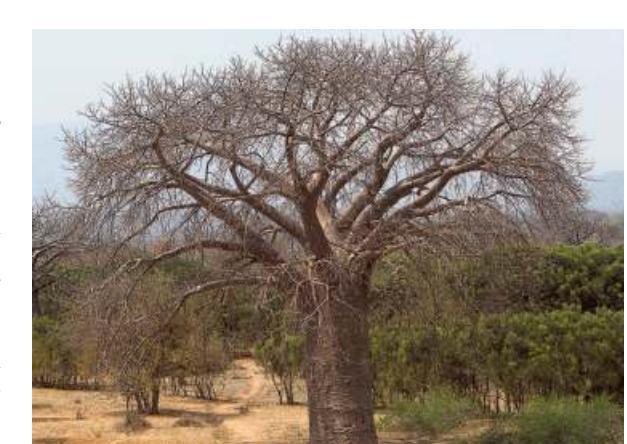
Understanding changes in natural indicators – such as plant and bird behaviour – could be used to alert urban residents to extreme weather where forecasts are seen as unreliable, said a study in the *Journal of the British Academy*.

"Indigenous knowledge is often overlooked," said Caroline Knowles, director of the cities and infrastructure programme at the British Academy, the U.K.'s national body for humanities and social sciences.

"There are knowledge transfers that can be made between rural and peri-urban spaces that could save lives and livelihoods around the world," she said.

The study interviewed 1,050 people in 21 rural and urban communities in Ghana, including the capital city Accra and the main city of Tamale in its northern region.

Researchers documented natural indicators used by indigenous communities to predict floods, droughts and temperature changes.



**PLANT BEHAVIOUR:** The flowering patterns of baobabs are used in some African communities to predict the weather. • AP

Those include links between rainfall patterns and ant behaviour, appearances of certain birds, flowering of baobab trees and observations of heat intensity.

Ms. Knowles said not all rural indicators could be transferred to urban spaces, but some are relevant for both environments, such as clouds, heat, insects and trees.

### More trees

Promoting tree-planting in urban areas could offer further opportunities to apply indigenous knowledge on flora in cities, said study author Raymond Abudu Kasei from Ghana's University for Development Studies.

"Indigenous people in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Myanmar and Ethiopia, for example, use their knowledge to observe and mitigate impacts of extreme climate events such as flooding and droughts," he added.