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NEARBY



Reign of terror prevailing in U.P., allege activists

NEW DELHI

Activists on Thursday alleged that with the Uttar Pradesh government "intimidating" citizens who were protesting against the CAA and the NRC, a "reign of terror" was prevailing in the State. An appeal signed by film personalities was read out by actors Swara Bhaskar and Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 13

Kejriwal vows free bus rides for all in next term

NEW DELHI

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, while addressing his first town hall meeting in the run-up to the Delhi Assembly election, said his government will provide free bus rides to all in the next five years.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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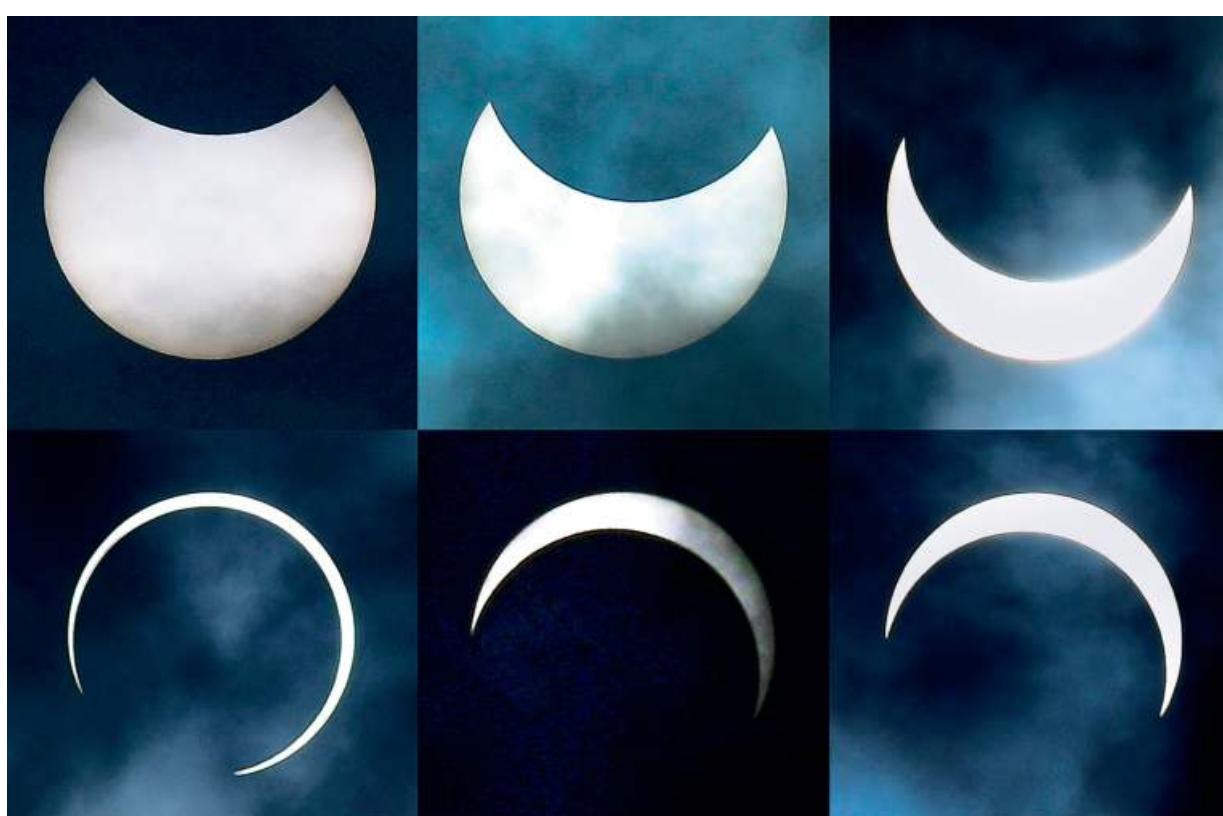
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FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ 4 PAGES

Ring of fire



Different stages of the annular solar eclipse as seen from Dindigul in Tamil Nadu on Thursday. ■ G. KARTHIKEYAN

Two injured from Firozabad die in Delhi hospitals

They had sustained bullet injuries on December 20 during protests against new citizenship law

HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

Mohammed Haroon, 30, and Mohammed Shafeeq, 40, from Firozabad in Uttar Pradesh, who were shot during protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act on December 20, died of their injuries at hospitals in Delhi on Thursday.

Haroon's relatives were at the trauma centre of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, where the body was kept. A few others were at the hospital police post completing the procedure.

His brother-in-law, Zaki Sheikh, said Haroon's four sisters were waiting for him to come back home in good health. "It was just bad luck that he went to that area on December 20. There was no plan," he said.



Detainees raising slogans outside U.P. Bhawan in New Delhi on Thursday during a protest against alleged police violence. ■ AP

The family members said that they were in the buffalo trade. They used to go to the weekly market at Rasulpur for business. "On December 20, a Friday, the weekly market had been set up. None of us had any plan to go, but Ha-

roon went. We don't know why he decided to go," Mr. Sheikh said.

According to the family, Haroon had sold a buffalo for ₹33,000. Mr. Sheikh said they had the receipt to prove he was in the area for business.

They haven't told Shafeeq's wife Rani about his

death. "She will lose her mind if we tell her straightaway. When we brought the body to the mortuary, we told her that he is being taken for operation. She will eventually get to know when we go to Firozabad," Shafeeq's brother Shaheed said.

Early on Thursday morning, Ms. Rani told *The Hindu* that her husband was still undergoing treatment. He had passed away at 2 a.m. The brother said doctors at Safdarjung told the family that he was brain-dead because of the gunshot wound in his head. He was brought here on Monday.

On December 20, several people sustained injuries. Haroon, Shafeeq and Muqeem, 20, were referred to the Delhi hospitals. Muqeem passed away on Tuesday morning.

Shot in the face'

"We don't know who shot him – whether it was the police or someone in public. We got the information that he was shot when he was taken to a hospital in Agra. He was shot in the face. They referred him to AIIMS and we brought him here on Wednesday," Mr. Sheikh said, adding that doctors here tried their best to save him but "it was his destiny".

At Safdarjung Hospital, Shafeeq's family stood outside the mortuary. They had just submitted the documents required before conducting the post-mortem.

They haven't told Shafeeq's wife Rani about his

EC sets the ball rolling on Delhi polls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Thursday reviewed preparations for election to the Delhi Assembly, the term of which will end on February 22.

Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and Elec-

tion Commissioners Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra

reviewed the poll preparedness at a meeting attended by district election officers, deputy commissioners of police and heads of municipalities, said a statement issued by the office of Delhi

Chief Electoral Officer Ranbir Singh.

During the meeting, Mr. Singh briefed the Commission on the status of the electoral rolls, EVMs and awareness drives.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 3

ForumIAS

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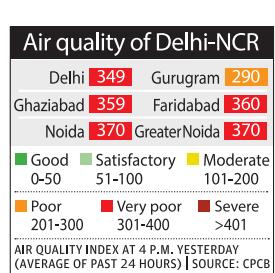
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IN BRIEF



Tiwari proposes new date to observe Children's Day

NEW DELHI Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding the observance of the Martyrdom Day of the sons of 10th Sikh Guru Gobind Singh as Children's Day. He said the birthday of former PM Jawaharlal Nehru is observed as Children's Day since 1956, based on the premise that children were "very much dearer to him...but the children of our country have also sacrificed for the country and the highest sacrifice is of the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh ji, named Sahibjaada Joravar Singh ji and Sahibjaada Fateh Singh ji".



DELHI TODAY

Music and dance: The second and concluding day of 12th Guru Debaprasad Nitriya Parampara event will feature a Odissi vocal by Dr. Sangita Gosain, a Mohiniattam performance by Gopika Varma & troupe, and a Odissi performance by Ramil Ibrahim & group at The Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Realms of peace", a solo paintings show by Bhaskar Singh at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: 'A Dialogue with Soil', a solo glass sculpture show by Sisir Sahana at Gallerie Ganesh, E-557, Greater Kailash-II, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Sands of Time", a solo art show by Rashmi Khurana at Art Konsult, 3, Ground Floor, Hauz Khas Village, 10:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

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

Rights body releases report on police action at Jamia university

'Right to protest must be recognised inalienable; FIR should be filed against police'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI



Activists Radhika Chitkara and Harish Dhawan releasing the report in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

The Peoples Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) on Thursday released a fact-finding report on the crackdown by Delhi Police at Jamia Millia Islamia and termed the police action "unjustified, excessive and unauthorised".

Demanding a Commission of Enquiry to be instituted, the PUDR, in its report, said: "The right of citizens to protest must be recognised as inalienable and the practice of routine refusal to grant permission must be stopped. An FIR should be registered against the police for brutal use of force inside the Jamia campus."

The PUDR also said that police stations in the vicinity

need to be "sensitised" to counter "communal outlook and ensure civil behaviour".

"The police personnel and officers who were part of the attack on students need to be shunted out of the police station without delay. Whatever evidence remains at Jamia should be preserved and we appeal to

"The patterns have been

similar - lathi-charge, tear gas firing followed by large-scale detentions and denial of legal and medical aid to detainees. Targeted attacks on Muslim neighbourhoods were seen at Seelampur-Jafarbad, Daryaganj and Seemapuri. The most brutal of these were in Daryaganj where 11-12 minors were detained till late in the night and without any medical or legal aid," the PUDR said.

The report by a six-member PUDR team added, "The residents of the area surrounding the Jamia campus have a high degree of distrust on the police. The police have, on its part, provided reason on past occasions to earn this distrust. The spiteful verbal abuse noted in this report is a reflection of the same."

Police oppose bail plea of nine accused in Daryaganj violence case

Court's decision will be pronounced on Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Thursday opposed the bail pleas of nine accused arrested in connection with a violent protest against the amended Citizenship Act in Daryaganj here.

The court will also hear on the same day the arguments on the bail plea of other six persons arrested in the case.

During the hearing, the prosecutor said that the police had 19 witnesses to support its case and as per an eyewitness, these accused were present at the site of the incident from where they were taken into custody.

The court has asked the police to verify the address and other details of one of the arrested accused in the case.

A magisterial court had denied bail to the 15 accused on December 23, after which they approached the sessions court for relief.

They were arrested after a violence broke out in the area on December 20 as a group of agitating demonstrators resorted to stone-pelting when police tried to forcefully evict them. One car was set on fire and several others were damaged.

All the accused are in judicial custody. One of those arrested had claimed he was a juvenile. However, the police said he had told them he was 23.

The court has asked the police to verify the address and other details of one of the arrested accused in the case.

A senior police officer said that they have deployed extra security personnel in sensitive areas in north-east, south and central Delhi. Rapid Action Force (RAF) and CRPF have also been deployed at certain locations.

"We have got intelligence

inputs regarding a march towards Jantar Mantar from Jamia Nagar and north-east Delhi. We met the Imams of various mosques and requested them to make an appeal to people to maintain peace and not to get involved in any kind of violence," the officer said.

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"We have got intelligence

EC sets the ball rolling on Delhi Assembly polls

Officials told to conduct 'flawless election'; term to end on Feb. 22

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday reviewed preparations for elections to the Delhi Assembly, the term of which will end on February 22, 2020.

Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and Election Commissioners Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra reviewed the poll preparedness at a meeting attended by District Election officers, Deputy Commissioners of Police and heads of municipalities, read a statement from Delhi Chief Electoral Officer Ranbir Singh's office.

In his presentation during the meeting, Mr. Singh informed the Commission of the status of the electoral rolls, electronic voting ma-

chines and awareness drives to target low turnout areas, among other things.

The DEOs also gave presentations on the preparations in their districts, while DCPs informed the ECI about the law and order situation in their jurisdiction, the statement further read.

Addressing the officials, Mr. Arora said the Constitution had given the ECI the mandate to conduct free, fair and credible elections. He asked all election officials to conduct "flawless election" in Delhi.

Mr. Lavasa told the election officials to be prompt in their response to complaints received through the ECI's C-Vigil app and to be attentive to the training on EVM/VVPAT.

"The Commission direct-

ed all the DEOs and DCPs to ensure immediate assessment of vulnerable areas so as to prevent any intimidation. The Commission further directed all the DEOs to ensure provision of assured minimum facilities including ramp of gradient of 1:10 or lower and adequate facility of mobile toilets on locations having more than six polling booths," the statement read.

Facilities for voters

The ECI asked local bodies to make sure that facilities for voters are made available at all polling stations.

The DEOs were asked to coordinate with local bodies in order to address any deficiencies in facilities. The DEOs were told to monitor the hands-on training on EVM/VVPAT.

"The Commission direct-

If voted to power, will make bus rides free for all: Kejriwal

'Will make Delhi the cleanest city in the world'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal while addressing his first town hall meeting in the run-up to the Delhi Assembly elections said the government will provide free bus rides to all in the next five years and also make the Capital, the cleanest city in the world.

"For women, we have already made it [bus rides] free and in the next five years, we will do it for others too," the Chief Minister said.

Stressing on the need to make the city clean, he said, "Our Delhi is very dirty... After coming to power, we had given priority to education, health, water among other things. Now my target in the next five years is to shine Delhi. We will make Delhi the cleanest city in the world."

As supporters of different MLAs started shouting slo-



Arvind Kejriwal.
• SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

gans supporting respective MLAs, Mr. Kejriwal said: "This type of sloganneering is not right. We have come to change the country. Not to give tickets to some people."

Answering a question on high traffic challan rates, he said: "After the rates of challans increased, the traffic has gotten better, right? It is high but the number of challans has now decreased."

Talking about women's safety, he said: "From tomorrow we will start installing 1.4 lakh CCTV cameras. For us, women's safety is very important."

City gets 100 new buses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday flagged off 100 new buses to be operated under the Cluster Scheme.

525 buses

The addition of 100 buses, equipped with features, including CCTVs, panic buttons on every seat, hydraulic lifts for differently abled passengers and GPS tracking systems, brings the total number of such vehicles to be inducted under the scheme to 525 since August this year, the government said.

"Hundreds of new buses will be added within the next 5-6 months. The shortage of buses for many years is now being addressed with these new additional buses," said Mr. Kejriwal, adding: "It is my dream to modernise Delhi's public transport infrastructure so that it becomes a comfortable option for every citizen. One thousand electric buses will also be inducted very soon."

The first lot of such vehicles to be inducted, which consisted of 25 buses, became operational in August following which 100 buses have been inducted every

month since, the government said. While 12 buses each from the lot inducted on Thursday will ply from Tilak Nagar to Bakkargarh Border and Auchandi Border to Azadpur, respectively, 11 buses will ply on the route between Inderlok metro station and Dhansa Border, nine buses will ply from Old Delhi Railway Station to Ramzanpur Village and an equal number from Singhu Border to Tikri Border.

"...This is a holy war to change the system, to change politics," Mr. Kejriwal says in a short audio clip as part of the video which then brings forth visuals related to AAP's governance model and its five-year Report Card released on December 24.

CM captions video 'holy war'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal captioned an introductory video "Yeh Dharmyudh hai [This is a holy war]", on his Twitter timeline on the day of the AAP government's first town hall meeting in view of the upcoming Assembly elections.

"...This is a holy war to change the system, to change politics," Mr. Kejriwal says in a short audio clip as part of the video which then brings forth visuals related to AAP's governance model and its five-year Report Card released on December 24.

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Mr. N SELVA KUMAR
PH: 98203 50726
selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in

Mr. GAURAV SEHGAL
PH: 98110 06590
gaurav.segal@thehindu.co.in

THE HINDU

CM inaugurates underground reservoir in south Delhi

He promises clean water within 15 days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated an Underground Reservoir (UGR) with a capacity of 60 lakh litres at south Delhi's Mahipalpur here on Thursday.

Mr. Kejriwal said: "I want to congratulate you all for the installation of the underground reservoir of 60 lakh litres of water capacity. Residents of this area have faced a lot of trouble in getting clean water, which will be resolved soon with the installation of the UGR."

"We also had to face a lot of obstacles while carrying out the installation work but now new pipelines have been installed and clean wa-

ter will be available to the residents within the next 10-15 days. This reservoir will also provide clean water supply to the residents of the Vasant Kunj area," he added.

The government's aim was to provide "clean and safe water to every household" in the city, he said.

Earlier, nearly 40% of Delhi received its water supply from tankers and only 58% of the households had access to water from pipelines, he added. But over the last five years, the government had ensured tap water availability to more than 90% of the households and installed water pipelines covering "almost the entire Delhi" with just 7% remaining.

BJP appoints convener of its poll management panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The BJP national secretary, Tarun Chugh, has been appointed the convener of the party's poll management committee for the Delhi Assembly elections, the party said here on Thursday.

As many as 35 different committees were formed at an organisational meeting convened by National Organizational General Secretary B.L. Santosh here in relation to next year's State poll. This, even as the party announced that BJP national president Amit Shah will address a significant meeting of booth level workers at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium here on January 5. "For winning the election in Delhi we must

expose the failures of AAP before the people due to which the people of Delhi are suffering," Mr. Tiwari said.

The party said while the significant poll management committee will be presided over by Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari, former Delhi BJP president Satish Upadhyay, New Delhi MP Meenakshi Lekhi and State-General Secretary, Rajiv Babbar, have been appointed co-conveners of the committee. In addition to these appointments, Union minister Harsh Vardhan was appointed convener of the manifesto committee with nine co-conveners including Vijender Gupta, Rambeer Singh Bidhuri, Kapil Mishra, Raj Kumar Chauhan among others.

With cloth bags as prizes, comic strips and street plays to spread awareness, the campaign will have 70 vehicles with LED screens displaying messages on the themes deployed across the city for 10 days. "The campaign will run in all 70 Assembly constituencies," Mr. Jain said.

Campaign launched for clean Delhi

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi Urban Development Minister Satyendar Jain and Social Welfare Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam on Thursday flagged off "Saaf Delhi, Swasth Delhi" for creating awareness on waste segregation, discouraging single-use plastic among others.

With cloth bags as prizes, comic strips and street plays to spread awareness, the campaign will have 70 vehicles with LED screens displaying messages on the themes deployed across the city for 10 days. "The campaign will run in all 70 Assembly constituencies," Mr. Jain said.

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Respond to plea of cancer patient: HC to AIIMS, Centre

'Hospital denied treatment saying cannot take outside cases'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has asked the Centre and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to respond to a plea by a woman suffering from fourth stage of esophageal cancer seeking direction to the hospital to provide her medical treatment.

Justice Navin Chawla, in an interim order, asked AIIMS to examine and render full treatment to the woman if she goes there till January 16.

"Till the next day of hearing, in case the petitioner [woman] produces herself for examination/ treatment before the respondent no. 2 [AIIMS], it shall examine and render full treatment to the petitioner," the court said and listed the matter for hearing on January 16.

Fifty two-year-old Shashi Bala, in her petition, sought



direction to the AIIMS to provide her treatment according to her present medical condition and after considering her previous reports and tests conducted in two different hospitals.

The counsel appearing for Bala also sought direction to the Centre to frame guidelines to be followed by government hospitals wherein no patient should be denied medical treatment if he/she is earlier treated at some other hospital.

"Denial to admit or treat

Woman found dead; three arrested for dowry death

Victim's husband is absconding

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

In a case of dowry death, a 25-year-old woman was found dead under mysterious circumstances at her residence in south-west Delhi's Kapashera on Wednesday. Three persons have been arrested in connection with the case, police said.

A senior police officer said that the accused have been identified as the victim's brother-in-law Mohit Vats, mother-in-law Suresh, and sister-in-law Meenu. Her husband Rohit Vats is absconding, police said.

According to the police, a PCR call was received at 5.40 a.m. on Wednesday stating that a woman had jumped from her second floor residence in Samalkha village. When police reached the spot, it was found that the woman had sustained multiple fractures on her skull. She was taken to the hospital where she

was declared brought dead. During investigation, the death appeared to be suspicious. It is being probed whether the woman fell herself or was being pushed by someone.

Family's allegation

The woman's father told the police that she got married in 2015 and had been harassed for dowry ever since her marriage. They also suspect that the family pushed her from the second floor, the police said.

Based on a complaint, police registered a case under Section 498A (husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty), 304B (dowry death) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code and arrested the three family members.

A magisterial inquiry has also been initiated as the couple hadn't completed seven years of marriage.

Five held for running fake currency racket

FICN with face value of over ₹1 crore seized

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Five men were arrested for operating a fake currency racket in the national capital and other parts of the country, police said on Thursday.

The accused were identified as Tabrez Ahmed (38), Shoaib Malik (28), Raghuraj Singh (52), Danish Malik (28) and Unwan Ansari (40), they said.

Fake Indian currency notes (FICN) with a face value of more than ₹1 crore in the denomination of ₹2,000, ₹500, ₹100 and ₹50 and 1,675 US dollars in the denomination of \$100 were recovered from their possession, the police said.

AAP gave undue benefits to discoms, claims Cong.

Party demands CBI probe into it

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Thursday alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party government had extended undue benefits to discoms. This scam should be probed by the CBI."

Mr. Chopra also said that the Delhi Congress, in its manifesto, for the upcoming Assembly elections will include free power up to 600 units as a "relief package" to consumers, the government has

committed corruption on a big scale. The power subsidy should have gone to the consumers directly. Instead it is going to the discoms. This scam should be probed by the CBI."

Mr. Chopra also said that the Delhi Congress, in its manifesto, for the upcoming Assembly elections will include free power up to 600 units as a "relief package" to consumers, the government has

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Four-storey building goes up in flames, 40 rescued

Most of the occupants managed to reach rooftop, which made the rescue operation easy: DFS director

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A major tragedy was averted and 40 people were rescued from a building in east Delhi after a fire broke out in the early hours of Thursday.

Delhi Fire Service Director Atul Garg said that plastic waste and scarp were stored

on the ground floor of the four-storey building in Krishna Nagar, while people lived on the upper floors. The building had only one staircase for entry and exit.

The officer said that they received a call at 2.10 a.m. and five fire tenders were rushed to the spot. As the

caller gave correct information, they could act swiftly. All the residents went to the terrace after the fire broke out and hence, the rescue operation was easy compared to other such incidents, he said.

Forty people were rescued from the building and the fire was doused by 4 a.m.

"We heard people screaming for help from the terrace. During the operation, the team was split into two with one trying to control the fire and the other rushing to the upper floors to rescue those trapped inside," said Santosh Kumar, Station Officer of Delhi Fire Service, Mandwali un-

it, who headed the operation.

The fire had started from the scrap on the ground floor. When those on upper floors sensed smoke, they ran towards the terrace. Most of them managed to reach the rooftop, though some couldn't. But all of them were rescued.

বিভিন্ন জলাধার এবং সরাসরি নদী থেকে লক্ষ জলের মাধ্যমে, সেচ খাল গুলির মারফত ২০১৯-২০২০ সালে
সারা রাজ্যে রবি ও বোরো চাষের রাষ্ট্রভিত্তিক সেচ প্রদানের এলাকা এবং সন্তান্য সময়সূচি

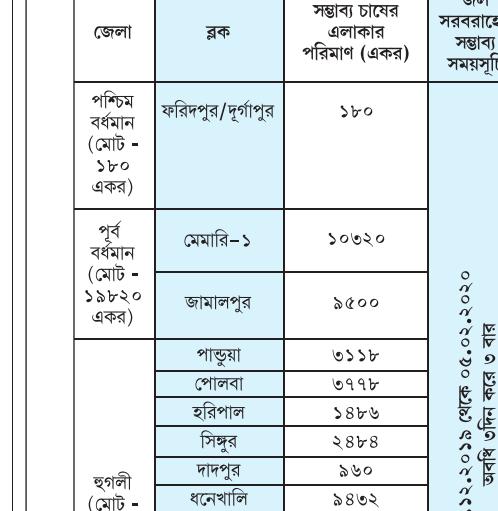
(ক) দামোদর উপত্যকা প্রকল্পের সেচ খালের মাধ্যমে

জেলা	রেক	সন্তান্য চাষের এলাকার পরিমাণ (একর)	জল সরবরাহের সন্তান্য সময়সূচি
পশ্চিম বর্ধমান (মোট - ১৮০ একর)	করিদগুপ্ত/দুর্গাপুর	১৮০	২০১৯-২০২০ জল প্রদান কর্তৃপক্ষ দ্বাৰা প্রকল্প কৰা হৈছে।
পূর্ব বর্ধমান (মোট - ১৯৮২০ একর)	মেমারি-১	১০৬২০	২০১৯-২০২০ জল প্রদান কর্তৃপক্ষ দ্বাৰা প্রকল্প কৰা হৈছে।
	ভাগালপুর	১৫০০	
	পাড়ুয়া	৩১১৮	
	পোমো	৩৭১৮	
	হরিপুর	১৪৮৬	
	সিন্ধুর	২৪৮৪	
	দাদপুর	৯৬০	
	ধনেকালি	১৪৩২	
	গুমা	৮২৮	
	বলাগড়	১০৫৮	
	তারকেপুর	৩২৮৮	
	জাপিয়াড়া	১৪৭৮	
	চতুর্ভুজ	১০৯০	
	আরামগাঁও	৯০০	
	মোট	৫০,০০০	

(খ) কংসাবতী জলাধার প্রকল্পের সেচ খালের মাধ্যমে

(গ) পূর্বচৰ্বী, বাঁকুড়া এবং বাঢ়গামের মাধ্যমে

জেলা	রেকের নাম	সন্তান্য চাষের এলাকার পরিমাণ (একর)	জল সরবরাহের সন্তান্য সময়সূচি
পূর্বচৰ্বী (মোট - ৬৫৫০ একর)	খাতড়া-১	২৫০০	২০১৯-২০২০ জল প্রদান কর্তৃপক্ষ দ্বাৰা প্রকল্প কৰা হৈছে।
	খাতড়া-২	৮০০	
	ইষ্টপুর	২৭০০	
	তালভারা	৭৫০০	
	সিমলাপাল	৭৬২০	
	সামোরা	৭০০	
	রাইপুর-১	১০১৯০	
	বাচীবাঁধ	১০২০	
	গুনা	৩০০০	
	বিষ্ণুপুর	১১০০	
	অগ্রণী	১২০০	
	কোতুপুর	১৪৮৫০	
	গুড়েতা-১	৬০০০	
	গুড়েতা-২	১৪৯০	
	গুড়েতা-৩	২০০০	
	চৰকেতা-৩	৪৫০০	
	চৰকেতা-৪	৩০০	
	শালবনী	৩০০	
	বিনপুর-১	১৯০০	
	বিনপুর-২	১১০০	
	গোপাট-১	৩১০০	
	গোপাট-২	৯৩০	
	মোট	১,৪২,১৯০	



(ক) দামোদর উপত্যকা প্রকল্পের সেচ খালের মাধ্যমে

জেলা	রেক	সন্তান্য চাষের এলাকার পরিমাণ (একর)	জল সরবরাহের সন্তান্য সময়সূচি
পশ্চিম বর্ধমান (মোট - ১৫৫০ একর)	কাঁকসা	৩০০০	২০১৯-২০২০ জল প্রদান কর্তৃপক্ষ দ্বাৰা প্রকল্প কৰা হৈছে।
পূর্ব বর্ধমান (মোট - ১৯৮০ একর)	বর্ধমান-১	১১০০	
	বর্ধমান-২	১০০০	
	আউশপ্রাম-১	১৬১০০	
	আউশপ্রাম-২	৬০০০	
	গুমা	১৪৬০	
	গুলামী	২১০০০	
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PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC

Anti-CAA protests continue in Assam

Students' groups lead largest gathering

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

GUWAHATI

Protests against the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, continued unabated across Assam on Thursday, primarily under the aegis of student bodies AASU and AJYCP, with agitators vowing not to relent till the law is scrapped.

The Opposition Congress, which has kick-started an 800-km 'padyatra' from Sadiya in eastern Assam to Dhubri in the western end of the State, reached Demow in Sivasagar district with thousands of participants.

The largest anti-CAA gathering took place at Tangla in Udalguri district under the banner of the All Assam Students' Union.

"[Prime Minister] Narendra Modi, [Union Home Minister] Amit Shah and their puppets [Chief Minister] Sarbananda [Sonowal] and [State Minister] Himanta [Biswa Sarma] are planning to snatch our food, but we will not tolerate that."

"Assam has to be for Assamese always. A conspiracy is being hatched to finish the identity, language and culture of the Assamese people," AASU general secretary Lurinjyoti Gogoi said while addressing the huge crowd.

Popular singers Zubeen Garg and Manas Robin and theatre artiste Pabitra Rabha also participated in the protest.

After singing a protest song that he has penned, Robin said, "The BJP government had promised to give two lakh jobs a year and seal the border with Bangladesh. Both did not materialise. Today, we are on the streets because we do not accept CAA as it will destroy us."



AASU general secretary Lurinjyoti Gogoi addressing a protest rally in Dibrugarh.

FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

Teacher suspended for protesting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JORHAT (ASSAM)

A woman school teacher in Assam's Jorhat district has been suspended for allegedly taking part in protests against the amended Citizenship Act, officials said on Thursday.

Bondita Bora, a teacher in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Titabar, was suspended on Tuesday for "unauthorised participation" in anti-CAA protests. "She is also accused of instigating students to take part in the protests," they said.

AASU president Dipanka Kumar Nath said the agitation against the Act will continue in the court and on the streets.

Protests were also held in Golaghat, Lakhimpur, Morigaon and Sivasagar.

Protests to continue till CAA is not withdrawn'

Mamata warns against attack on students

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Leading a march against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in the city for the fourth time since December 16, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asserted on Thursday that peaceful protests will continue as long as the law is not withdrawn.

Before leading the march from Rajabazar to Mullick Bazar, the Trinamool Congress chairperson warned the BJP-led governments not to use force against students protesting against the CAA. She also appealed to the students to continue their movement on the issue without bowing down to threats and repression.

"We express our solidarity with the students of Jamia Millia, IIT-Kanpur and other universities who are protesting against the CAA and the NRC [National Register of Citizens]," she said. The protesting students are adults and voters, Ms. Banerjee said. "So if they stage any protest, where is the harm in it? They have a role to play," she said, suggesting they use the social media to unite the people.

"In BJP-ruled States such as Uttar Pradesh, force is be-



CM Mamata Banerjee leads a rally against the CAA in Kolkata on Thursday. ■ AP

ing used on students. I would like to tell the BJP, don't try to muzzle the movement through force. If anybody tries to terrorise people, use brute force, then the people of the country, of Bengal, will not support that," said the Chief Minister.

Ms. Banerjee said her party stands by the families that have lost their loved ones during the anti-CAA protest. Earlier this month, the TMC sent a delegation to Uttar Pradesh but the members were not allowed outside Lucknow airport.

(With inputs from PTI)

One killed, three hurt in clash over land in Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

RAIGANJ (WEST BENGAL)

A woman was killed while three others suffered bullet injuries during a clash in West Bengal's North Dinajpur district on Thursday, the police said.

"The clash at Nayabasti village under Islampur police station limits took place over the control of a piece of land in a tea garden," said Islampur police district SP Sanchin Makkar.

The deceased has been identified as 34-year-old Rasheeda Khatun.

Sources said, the clash allegedly broke out between two factions of the Trinamool Congress. Islampur MLA Choudhury Abdul Karim of the TMC alleged that the persons who opened fire are supporters of the party's district president Kanaia Lal Agarwal.

Mr. Agarwal, a former Islampur MLA, had switched sides from the Congress to the TMC and unsuccessfully contested the Raiganj Lok Sabha seat this year. He has denied his involvement in the incident.

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Tender Notices are also available at website: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.irps.gov.in

Tender Notice No.: BJDR/EL/KKK/LT-CLS-QTRR-HT/OT-03 (Gr.344),

Dated: 23.12.2019. Open tender is invited by Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, Railway Electrification, Danapur for the following work. Name of work and its location: Open tender for modification of LT lines, power supply arrangement at CLS panel, Electrification of staff quarters, TW shed, OHE-PSI depot, TSS, OPC cable hut, AEE/DEE, CSI office, Relay room, Battery room, Equipment room, Panel room, ESM room, R/station, Modification work of 0.4 KV crossings, Modification work of 11 KV & 33 KV overhead crossings in connection with electrification of Jasidih (excl)-Deoghar-Dumka section including Deoghar-Banks section of Asansol Division. Approximate cost of the work: ₹ 5,03,24,314.52. Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹ 4,01,600. Date & Time for submission of the tender and opening of tender: Last date of submission up to 14.00 hrs. on 15.01.2020. Tender will be opened at 15.30 hrs. on 15.01.2020. Date & time for downloading tender document: From 23.12.2019 to 15.01.2020 (up to 14.00 hrs. on 15.01.2020). Validity of offer: 60 days from the date of opening of tender. Website particular where complete details of tender can be seen: www.irps.gov.in (MISC-263/2019-20)

Tender Notices are also available at website: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.irps.gov.in

Tender Notice No.: 222-S/1/W-II,

Dated: 20.12.2019. e-tender is invited online by the Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Sealdah for the following work: Tender No.: TN-173-19-20, Name of work: Barasat to Bongaon TFTR 1.528 KM with other ancillary works in the section of Senior Section Engineer/Works/Bongaon under the jurisdiction of Assistant Engineer/Barasat. Tender value: ₹ 2,38,79,308.92. Earnest Money Deposited: ₹ 2,69,400. Date and time of closing of tender : 22.01.2020 at 15.00 hrs. Tender documents and other details are available at www.irps.gov.in. The bidding is to be submitted through the e-tendering on above website. Manual offers will be summarily rejected. Date and time of opening of tender is 22.01.2020 at 15.30 hrs. (SDAH-258/2019-20)

Tender Notices are also available at website: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.irps.gov.in

Tender Notice No.: EL/HWH/25/21

(Notice)/384, dt.24.12.2019. Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah invites Open Tenders for the under-mentioned electrical works/ SI.No.-1, Tender No.: EL/HWH/25/21/3061. Name of work : Repairing of window AC and water cooler machines over Howrah Division for 24 months. Tender value : ₹ 8,49,677. Earnest Money : ₹ 17,000. SI.No.-2, Tender No.: EL/HWH/25/21/3063. Name of work : Preventive & breakdown maintenance contract of 25 KVA inverters (Make: Electro Waves Electronics Pvt. Ltd.) fitted in AC coaches located at Tikiapara and sorting yard coaching complex for a period of 36 months. Tender value : ₹ 1,27,387. Earnest Money : ₹ 2,13,700. SI.No.-3, Tender No.: EL/HWH/25/21/3060. Name of work : Electrical (G) Work in connection with improvement to car parking and circulating area in front of Howrah Station. Tender value : ₹ 34,91,387. Earnest Money : ₹ 69,800. SI.No.-4, Tender No.: EL/HWH/25/21/3035. Name of work : Preventive & breakdown maintenance contract of 6.5 KW Regulated Battery Chargers (Make: Autometer Alliance Ltd.) input-415V, 3 Phase AC, 50 Hz, Output-110V to 135V DC for EOG, LHB Non-AC coaches at Tikiapara and shorting yard coaching complex for the period of 36 months. Tender value : ₹ 68,93,250. Earnest Money : ₹ 1,37,900. Closing date and time of tender : 20.01.2020 at 15.00 hrs. The details of tender are available at website: www.irps.gov.in. Tenderers are requested to submit their offer online on the above website. (HWH-275/2019-20)

Tender Notices are also available at website: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.irps.gov.in

Open E-Tender Notice No.: 208-MLDT-19-20, dated: 17.12.2019. Open E-tender is invited by the Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Malda for the following work: Tender No.: 208-MLDT-19-20. Name of work with its location : Open tender for balance work (a) Computerization & Certification of Land Plan (100 Km) etc. with ancillary works over Malda Division and (b) Scanning, Digitization, Vectorization & Plotting of Railway Land Plan (310 Km) in AUTO-CAD for Malda Division. Tender Value : ₹ 39,10,425. Tender closing date & time: 07.01.2020 at 15.30 hrs. Website particulars & Notice Board : www.irps.gov.in / DRM Office/MLDT. (MLD-125/2019-20)

Tender Notices are also available at website: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.irps.gov.in

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Tender Notices are also available at website: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.irps.gov.in

No.: Com/Pub/Loco/ASN Divn/19,

Dated: 23.12.2019. Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Eastern Railway, Asansol invites e-tender from the interested tenderer having 'Eligible Criteria' for the following work: Name of work: To award the contract for Advertisement Right in the form of PU painting on the exterior surface for Branding of Electric Locomotive WAP-4 (both sides only leaving front and back space) of Asansol Division, for a period of 03 (three) years. Closing Date and Time: 16.01.2020 at 15.00 hrs. Details are available in e-tendering portal www.irps.gov.in (ASN-216/2019-20)

Tender Notices are also available at website: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.irps.gov.in

KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION e - TENDER

ABRIDGE NIT

The Director General (Roads), KMC invites tender online percentage rate two bid system for the following works.

1) NIT NO-KMC/ROADS/NORTH/067/2019-2020 (2nd Call)

Name of Work :- Strengthening and development of Strand Road from Howrah Bridge Approach Road to Nimtala Ghat Street under Br.-IV.; Estimated Amount (Incl. GST & CESS): Rs. 3,79,26,183.94 (Excl. Contingency amt.); Earnest Money : Rs. 7,58,600.00.; Period of Completion : 120 days.; Last date and time of submission of bid : 28.01.2020 - 12:00 noon.

2) NIT NO-KMC/ROADS/NORTH/190/2019-2020 (1st Call)

Name of Work :- Widening & strengthening of Panchan Mukherjee Road in ward no.-006, Br.-I.; Estimated Cost (Incl. GST & CESS): Rs. 45,22,531.88 (Excl. Contingency amt.); Earnest Money : Rs. 90,500.00.; Period of Completion : 45 days.

3) NIT NO-KMC/ROADS/NORTH/182/2019-2020 (1st Call)

Name of Work :- Restoration of trench at Aurobinda Sarani from JN of Bidhan Sarani to JN of A.P.C. Road in ward no.-11 under Br.-II.; Estimated Cost (Incl. GST & CESS) : Rs. 17,47,947.51 (Excl. Contingency amt.); Earnest Money : Rs. 35,000.00.; Period of Completion : 45 days.; Last Date and time of submission of bid : 15.01.2020 - 12:00 noon. (for SI no. 1&2); The bid forms and other details are available on and from 28.12.2019 at 12:00 noon from the website <https://etender.wb.nic.in> (for SI no. 1 to 3)

The Director General (Bustee), KMC invites tender online percentage rate two bid system for the following works.

1) NIT NO-KMC/DG(BS)/Br.-X/095/019/2019-2020/R

Name of Work :- Improvement of passage by providing paver block at 1/38, 2/39, 2/36, 2/25 Arabinra Nagar Colony, 9/19/4 Bijoygarh Colony etc. in ward no.-95, Br.-X.; Estimated Cost (Incl. GST & CESS) : Rs. 12,96,638.74.; Earnest Money : Rs. 25,933.00.; Period of Completion : 90 days.

2) NIT NO-KMC/DG(BS)/Br.-X/096/025/2019-2020/R

Name of Work :- Development of passage by paver block at colony area near premises no. 1/37/10, 1/83, 2/124 Bijoygarh Colony (R R Colony) etc. in ward no.-96, Br.-X.; Estimated Cost (Incl. GST & CESS) : Rs. 11,39,697.80.; Earnest Money : Rs. 22,794.00.; Period of Completion : 120 days.

3) NIT NO-KMC/DG(BS)/Br.-X/096/029/2019-2020/R

Name of Work :- Development of passage by paver block at colony area near premises no. 4/39, 4/53A, 2/82 Bijoygarh Colony, 17, 28 Narkelbagan, 3,4,10 Mahendragar Colony etc. in ward no.-96, Br.-X.; Estimated Cost (Incl. GST & CESS) : Rs. 16,93,938.29.; Earnest Money : Rs. 33,879.00.; Period of Completion : 120 days.

4) NIT NO-KMC/Br.-IX/080/021/2019-2020/D (2nd Call)

Name of Work :- Improvement of bustee I.P. passage at Sonai Bustee in ward no.-80.; Estimated Cost (Incl. GST & LWC) : Rs. 11,46,963.00.; Earnest Money : Rs. 22,950.00.; Period of Completion : 45 days.

5) NIT NO-KMC/Br.-X/0

IN BRIEF



Mandala puja at Sabarimala today

PATHANAMTHITTA
The presiding deity at the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple will be adorned with the Thanga Anki (golden attire) prior to the Mandala puja to be performed between 10 a.m. and 10.40 a.m. on Friday. The temple will be closed after the Athazhapuja at 11 p.m., marking the end of the 41-day Mandala festival. It will be reopened at 5 p.m. on December 30 for the Makaravilakku festival. The Makaravilakku day falls on January 15.

Tribal mauled to death by tiger in Wayanad

KALPETA
A 58-year-old tribal man was mauled to death by a tiger in the Wayanad wildlife sanctuary of Kerala on Wednesday. Masthi alias Jadayan of the Pachadi Kattunayakka settlement went missing on Tuesday noon after he went to the forest to collect firewood. His partially devoured body was found some 300 metres from his house. Officials found pugmarks of a tiger near his body. Ten cameras have been installed in the area to track the animal.

Jagan releases funds for fast-track courts

VIJAYAWADA
Enforcement of the Disha Act required fast-track courts in all the districts, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said on Thursday and ordered release of ₹2 crore for each of them. He also called for augmenting the capacity of the forensic laboratory at the State Police Headquarters and setting up of new ones in Visakhapatnam and Tirupati. Addressing a review meeting on the Act, Mr. Jagan called for a speedy investigation, particularly those pertaining to violence against women.

MLA eyes crowdfunding route to help kin of firing victims

Karnataka Chief Minister should apologise for backtracking on compensation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MANGALURU

Stating that the Karnataka government is "humiliating" the families of those killed in police firing by withholding compensation, Mangaluru MLA and former Minister U.T. Khader on Thursday said they would be compensated through crowdfunding.

Nausin, 23, and Jalil Kudroli, 49, were killed last week during a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens.

Mr. Khader told presspersons here that Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa spoke to the family members of the victims at the Circuit House in the city on December 22 and announced the compensation [of ₹10 lakh each to the kin of the duo] the next day. However, on Wednesday, he said the compensation could not be paid until an investigation proved them innocent.

Kerala plans detention centre for foreigners; set for headcount

K.S. SUDHI
KOCHI

Kerala will count the foreigners detained in its prisons, so that it can identify a suitable building to set up a Foreigners' Detention Centre, and move them there. This comes amid the raging nationwide controversy over such centres.

The Department of Social Justice (DSJ), Kerala, which has been entrusted with the task of setting up the facility,

has been awaiting the data on foreigners, who have been either convicted here or waiting to be extradited for various offences, for setting up the facility.

The department can scout for a building for the facility only after getting an idea of the requirement said a senior government official.

The department has been unsuccessfully writing to the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) since June this year

Mamata offers help

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday criticised her Karnataka counterpart B.S. Yediyurappa for putting on hold the compensation to the families of those killed during the anti-CAA protests. She said her party, the Trinamool Congress, would give such families

financial assistance.

Ms. Banerjee, who led yet another march in the city against the Act, said a delegation of the Trinamool trade union wing would visit Karnataka to meet the families. She did not name Mr. Yediyurappa, but referred to a "BJP leader from Karnataka". "If you make a promise, you should keep it," she said.

All-party meet in Telangana

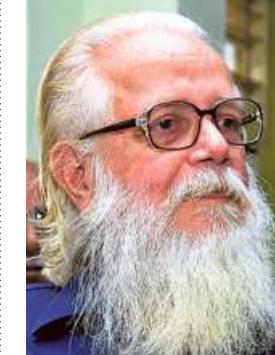
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD

The Joint Action Committee of all political parties, the United Muslim Action Committee (UMAC), Muslim organisations and student unions affiliated to Left parties and the ruling TRS on Thursday demanded that the Centre withdraw the CAA and the National

Population Register (NPR), describing them as anti-constitutional. UMAC chairman Mohammed Raheem Ansari said a public meeting would be organised here on Friday. MP and AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, Telangana Minister V. Prashanth Reddy would address the meet, he said.

Nambi Narayanan to get ₹1.3 crore

Govt. to give money to ex-ISRO scientist to settle case filed by him against State



Nambi Narayanan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala capital has missed an opportunity of being a second home to sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan. Mr. Khan has relinquished his plans to set up an international institute here for the convergence of diverse streams of music and hone young talent in view of his other commitments.

He returned the two acres of land sanctioned by the State government at Kadakkampally village here on February 18, 2016, with a request for setting up a world-class hospital that would cater to people of all religions. Mr. Khan has communicated his wish to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan too.

He rescinded the plan considering his commitments for holding performances all over the world. Mr. Khan reiterated the need for having more hospitals than temples and mosques. While working out the modalities of the institute,

music institute, it was expected to be a cultural hub for promoting universal brotherhood and amity.

Mr. Khan's plan was to impart training in Hindustani, Carnatic, Western and all instruments, including percussion. The residential programme proposed was expected to offer a unique milieu for nurturing Indian ethos and create an inextricable bond between students and teachers through constant interaction.

Nambi Narayanan to get ₹1.3 crore

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Acting on a report submitted by former Chief Secretary K. Jayakumar, the Cabinet on Thursday decided to submit the documents to be prepared in consultation with legal experts to the sub-court to settle the case and to act as per the directive from the court.

The Nation will dance to the Tribal beats



Inaugural Ceremony
27 Dec. 2019, 10 AM

Chief Guest
Shri Rahul Gandhi
Member of Parliament, Loksabha

Presided Over By
Shri Bhupesh Bhagel
Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh

Special Guests

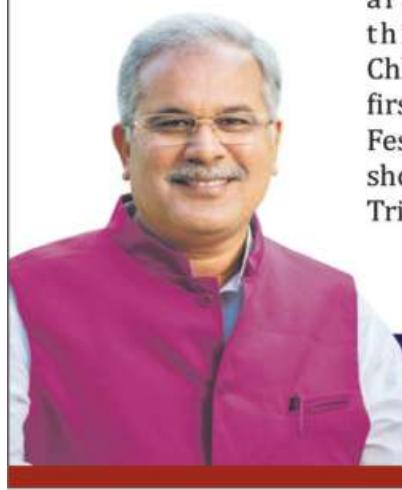
Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad
Shri Ahmed Patel
Shri K. C. Venugopal
Ku. Meira Kumar
Shri P. L. Punia
Shri B. K. Hariprasad
Shri Motilal Vora
Smt. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra
Dr. Charan Das Mahant
Shri Randeep Singh Surjewala
Shri Kantilal Bhuria
Shri Bhakta Charan Das
Shri Anand Sharma

You are cordially Invited



In order to save the natural beauty and natural life of the world, it is our primary duty to save the folklore, to create awareness about the identity, culture and existence of the tribal society, continuously fighting for their survival and identity in the nation. The National Tribal Dance Festival is a significant initiative where various dance forms will get a platform to showcase their talent with zeal and enthusiasm, an event to establish coordination among artists, inquisitive minds and thinkers. The Government of Chhattisgarh feels proud to host the first of its kind 'National Tribal Dance Festival', a step towards reviving and showcasing the myriad shades of our Tribal Culture.

Shri Bhupesh Bhagel
Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



For the Tribal culture and their identity,
An Event organized by
Government of Chhattisgarh

National Tribal Dance Festival

27-29 December 2019
Science College Ground, Raipur, Chhattisgarh

Performances in 4 categories



More than 1300 dancers from 25 different states across the nation

Performances by artists from Sri Lanka, Belarus, Uganda, Bangladesh, Maldives, Thailand



प्रतिकां छत्तीसगढ़ जननम के
दिसम्बर अंक एक पौड़ीएक प्राप्त करने
के लिए कृपया QR कोड स्कैन करें।

Amjad Ali Khan drops plan for global institute in Kerala

Sarod maestro cites commitments for performances

N.J.NAIR
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala capital has missed an opportunity of being a second home to sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan. Mr. Khan has relinquished his plans to set up an international institute here for the convergence of diverse streams of music and hone young talent in view of his other commitments.

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Nambi Narayanan to get ₹1.3 crore

Govt. to give money to ex-ISRO scientist to settle case filed by him against State

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Acting on a report submitted by former Chief Secretary K. Jayakumar, the Cabinet on Thursday decided to submit the documents to be prepared in consultation with legal experts to the sub-court to settle the case and to act as per the directive from the court.

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Some enthusiasts took flight to take a closer look at the sun; in contrast, people in villages took refuge in superstition

Scientists get air borne for special view of the eclipse

ADITYA ANAND

MUMBAI

A group of astrophysicists and space enthusiasts took to the skies for a special view of the solar eclipse on Thursday.

A six-seater Beechcraft C-90 aircraft flew at 21,000 feet with a clear view of the sun and the organisers dedicated this first eclipse flight to Narendra Dabholkar and Shreeram Lagoo, both of whom were associated with the anti-superstition movement.

Among those on the hour-long observational flight were Director of Nehru Planetarium Arvind Paranjape, Head of the Centre of Excellence for Astrobiology in Mumbai and Amity Space Centre, Delhi, Siddharth Pandey, astronomer Ananda Hota, and Gateway House fellow of the Space and Ocean Studies Programme Chaitanya Giri.

The astro tourism event



Astro tourism: The six-seater Beechcraft C-90 aircraft that took to the skies to view the solar eclipse. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

was jointly organised by Space Geeks – a group that promotes space and astronomy – and private jet operator MAB Aviation.

To ensure that the eclipse was clearly visible, Space Geeks had provided pocket-sized telescopes with filters that were fitted to the mobile phones of those on board.

Mr. Paranjape, who termed the experience

'amazing', said: "The sun above, clouds and earth below made it an exciting sight. The hour-long journey also gave experts an opportunity to converse and have a mid-air dialogue on amalgamating aviation, science and technology."

The flight landed at Juhu aerodrome and was welcomed by Ashok Kumar Verma, airport director, Juhu.

People perform 'half burials' of children

KARNATAKA BUREAU

KALABURAGI

Despite efforts to clear misconceptions surrounding the solar eclipse, people in parts of Karnataka continued to follow practices that are not founded in science. Among the bizarre were cases of children with disabilities being buried neck deep in compost pits during the eclipse in Kalaburagi, Vijayapura and Tumakuru districts, with the belief that it would cure them.

There were cases of three children being buried neck deep in Taj Sultapur village on the outskirts of Kalaburagi by their parents till the solar eclipse ended.

A team of rationalists, including Shrisail Ghooli, Ravindra Shahabadi and Sarangdhar Deshikendra Swami of Sarang Mutt in Srivilliputhur reached the spot and told the parents that such practices would only cause further health problems.



Unsound customs: Disabled children being buried in compost mud at a village in Karnataka on Thursday. ■ ARUN KULKARNI

State president of the Indian Orthopaedic Association S.B. Kamareddy, who visited the spot, said that as the children suffered from congenital deformity, surgery was needed. He also offered to perform the surgery free of cost.

In similar incidents in Vijayapura district, a five-year-old boy of Ainoli village and six-year-old girl of Gadilingadahalli village had to spend over two hours in compost pits during the solar eclipse. In Indi taluk, a 24-year-old physically challenged person was buried neck deep in compost.

Many locals gathered to see this ritual.

Closure of Aahar Kendras in Odisha invites criticism

STAFF REPORTER

BERHAMPUR

The decision to close down Aahar Kendras on Thursday in view of the annular solar eclipse has invited criticism from rationalists in Odisha, who said that the move only promoted superstitious beliefs regarding food intake during eclipses.

Aahar Kendras provide subsidised meal for ₹5 to the needy. There are 19 such centres in Ganjam district.

On Thursday morning, people, especially the poor who are the key beneficiaries

of the programme, were shocked to see notices at the Aahar Kendras in the State, stating that the centres were to remain closed for the solar eclipse.

According to authorities of Manna Trust, which manages Aahar Kendras in Ganjam district, the decision was taken as a large number of people do not eat during the day on a solar eclipse due to religious beliefs.

The authorities ordered closure of the centres fearing that there might be wastage of food.



No service: A closed Aahar Kendra at the Old Bus Stand area in Odisha's Berhampur. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Humanist and Rationalist Organisation (HRO), which organises feasts for all

during eclipses to tackle superstitious beliefs regarding food intake, criticized this

decision. "Usually the poor and the needy depend on the meals provided at Aahar Kendras. For no logical reason, these poor people suffered as most small and cheap roadside restaurants were also closed for the eclipse," said E.T. Rao, president, HRO.

Missed opportunity' According to Mr. Rao, the administration could have used this event to eradicate superstitious beliefs of not having food during eclipse is a scientific decision or not," Mr. Rao added.

"Today, food could have

been provided early at these centers and the needy would have eaten it. By doing that, the downtrodden would have realized that their time of food intake should be as per the need of the body, instead of any superstitious belief," he said.

"Seeing the poor eat openly at Aahar Kendras during the eclipse could have compelled the others to reconsider whether their superstitious beliefs of not having food during eclipse is a scientific decision or not," Mr. Rao added.

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 Friday: Light to moderate rain likely in many parts of Maharashtra while scattered showers are expected in Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Cold day conditions likely to continue in north-west India, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh.

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

Agartala	—	23.0	.00	Kozhikode	5.0	33.0	25.0
Ahmedabad	—	27.0	12.0	Kurnool	—	32.0	20.0
Aizawl	—	19.0	—	Lucknow	—	12.0	6.0
Allahabad	—	16.0	—	Madurai	0.4	30.0	23.0
Bengaluru	—	29.0	18.0	Mangaluru	—	37.0	24.0
Bhopal	—	23.0	10.0	Mumbai	—	29.0	22.0
Bhubaneswar	—	26.0	17.0	Mysuru	—	28.0	19.0
Chandigarh	—	10.0	—	New Delhi	—	14.0	5.8
Chennai	—	30.0	21.0	Patna	—	16.0	11.0
Coimbatore	6.5	28.0	22.0	Port Blair	—	29.0	21.0
Dehradun	—	16.0	—	Puducherry	—	30.0	20.0
Gangtok	—	11.0	—	Pune	—	31.0	22.0
Goa	—	33.0	—	Raipur	—	29.0	21.0
Guwahati	—	24.0	11.0	Ranchi	21.1	18.0	10.0
Hubballi	—	31.0	20.0	Shillong	—	15.0	4.0
Hyderabad	—	28.0	20.0	Shimla	—	11.0	—
Imphal	—	22.0	—	Srinagar	—	9.0	—
Jaipur	—	22.0	—	Tiruchi	—	29.0	23.0
Kochi	—	32.0	25.0	Vijayawada	—	30.0	21.0
Kohima	—	16.0	—	Visakhapatnam	—	31.0	21.0
Kolkata	—	21.0	—				

(Rainfall in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES SO NO CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

Ahmedabad	214	.65	.362	.249	■
Bengaluru	12	.60	.42	.68	.83	■
Chennai	26	.44	.55	.135	—	■
Delhi	8	.52	.65	.362	.249	■
Hyderabad	15	.42	.42	.154	—	■
Kolkata	23	.90	.38	.321	.285	■
Lucknow	33	.4	.43	.414	—	■
Mumbai	13	.42	.62	.282	.199	■
Pune	76	.25	.108	.160	.116	■
Visakhapatnam	10	.64	.45	.120	—	■

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 373 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Mysuru, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 43.

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

SO: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles and monomers.

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.

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

Two soldiers killed during bridging exercise in Pune

The tower support collapsed, injuring several jawans

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PUNE



Major mishap: A Court of Inquiry has been ordered by the authorities into the incident. ■ AGP PI-INDIAN ARMY/TWITTER

Two jawans were killed and five others injured during a bridging exercise on the premises of the College of Military Engineering (CME) in the city's Dapodi area on Thursday.

Sources said that a unit was training on a mobile bridge used in surmounting obstacles in rough terrain when the mishap occurred, resulting in serious injuries to seven jawans, two of whom died later. The deceased were identified as lance havildar Sanjivan P.K. and Naik Waghmode B.K.

"During the training of bridge construction, the tower support collapsed

and six-seven troops were injured. They were immediately shifted to Military Hospital in Kirkee and the Command Hospital. A Court of Inquiry has been ordered for investigating the incident and the next of kin of the deceased soldiers have been informed," said an official statement issued later in the day.

The CME is a technical and tactical training institution of the Engineer Corps of the Indian Army.

SC outlines 3 conditions for stay orders

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has outlined three aspects it usually considers while granting a stay order.

A Bench of Justices Deepak Gupta and Aniruddha Bose, in a judgment in November, said the three include: the balance of convenience does not favour the alleged violator; the stay order does not cause irreparable harm or injury; and there should be a prima facie case for granting the stay order. The observation came while deciding on pleas filed by Mizoram against an HC order to keep in abeyance all paper lottery draws pursuant to the pending outcome of a writ petition filed by a lottery company.

"Today, food could have

been provided early at these centers and the needy would have eaten it. By doing that, the downtrodden would have realized that their time of food intake should be as per the need of the body, instead of any superstitious belief," he said.

"Seeing the poor eat openly at Aahar Kendras during the eclipse could have compelled the others to reconsider whether their superstitious beliefs of not having food during eclipse is a scientific decision or not," Mr. Rao added.

"Today, food could have

In a message on WhatsApp to reporters, Ms. Bedi said differences with the government on policy matters and referring such disputes to the Centre could not be termed autocratic, irregular and illegal. Did being "sensitive to the social and spiritual fabric" of Puducherry reason enough to demand her recall, she asked.

Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy in a memorandum to the President had sought the removal of Ms. Bedi alleging that she was "functioning in an autocratic manner and subverting the provisions of the Constitution."

Ms. Bedi said the CM was duty bound to explain whether "opening of casinos, breweries and concurring with widespread lottery sale" was part of his development agenda for the UT.

Kiran Bedi questions recall plea +

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUDUCHERRY

A day after the ruling Congress in Puducherry sought the intervention of President Ram Nath Kovind in seeking her recall, Lt. Governor Kiran Bedi on Thursday questioned the government's rationale in terming her opposition to the Cabinet move to set up casinos and breweries as "autocratic, illegal and irregular".

A Bench of Justices Deepak Gupta and Aniruddha Bose, in a judgment in November, said the three include: the balance of convenience does not favour the alleged violator; the stay order



Endless wait

A prolonged election process will do little to end political instability in Afghanistan

The announcement of preliminary results for the Afghanistan Presidential election is a significant step for India's war-torn neighbour. The fourth Presidential poll since the Taliban's fall in 2001, it consolidates the country's democratic process in the face of odds, including continuing violence and terrorism there. According to the Independent Election Commission, President Ashraf Ghani has won 50.64% of the votes counted, which, if ratified, will obviate the need for a second round of polling. A second round – probably only after winter – would prolong the uncertainty around the polls, given that even these results took more than three months to announce. That these polls were held was a miracle, having been delayed for months, and almost cancelled after progress in reconciliation talks with Taliban leaders, who do not recognise the electoral process. The U.S.'s decision to cancel the talks in September – now resumed – gave the necessary breather for the September 28 polls and counting to be carried out. But questions remain. Voter turnout was a record low, with only about a quarter of 9.6 million registered voters voting. Thousands of votes were also disqualified after biometric match failures and other irregularities, setting off allegations of voter fraud. As a result, Afghanistan's former Chief Executive Officer and Mr. Ghani's chief rival, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, has rejected the preliminary results. Mr. Ghani's vote margin over Mr. Abdullah is only about 214,769, and if more votes are disqualified during the review process, the men may have to fight the second round. This will possibly be more divisive for Afghanistan given that Mr. Ghani, a Pashtun leader, has drawn much of his support from the Pashtun-majority south and Mr. Abdullah has won mainly in the Northern areas with Tajik presence. The U.S.-Taliban talks also cast a shadow over whether the results will be respected if the Taliban negotiates its way into a power-sharing arrangement in Kabul.

Setting aside the concerns, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Mr. Ghani for winning the elections, a gesture which will be noted by Mr. Ghani and Vice President-elect Amrullah Saleh. Mr. Modi reaffirmed India's close and strategic partnership with Afghanistan since 2010. The move came in sharp contrast to the rest of world that has chosen to be more cautious at present; the U.S. Ambassador has reminded all that "many steps remain" before the final results are certified and declared, and the UN has called for all candidates to "safeguard and complete the election". It will be in everyone's interests, particularly the Afghans who braved violent attacks to go out and vote, if the remaining steps of the electoral process are completed at the earliest, and democracy is reaffirmed in Afghanistan.

Cracks in the relic

The downturn in Turkey's relations with the U.S. holds implications for the future of NATO

Rising tensions in U.S.-Turkey relations are threatening to upset North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) unity. In the latest of a series of incidents, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to shut down two U.S. bases in retaliation for the proposed American sanctions on Ankara over purchasing Russian weapons. The U.S. and Turkey are the largest and second largest standing armies of NATO, respectively. There are U.S. nuclear warheads in the Incirlik airbase, a critical facility for American operations in West Asia. Mr. Erdogan has warned that Incirlik and the Kurecik radar base would be shut if there are sanctions. U.S.-Turkey ties began slumping in recent years after Washington's refusal to extradite Fethullah Gülen, a U.S.-based Turkish Islamic preacher who is accused by Ankara of orchestrating the failed 2016 coup against Mr. Erdogan. The U.S. decision to arm and assist Kurdish rebels in Syria against the Islamic State was another blow. Ankara sees the People's Protection Units, the main Syrian Kurdish militia that became an American ally in the anti-IS war, as an affiliate of the Kurdistan Workers Party, the Kurdish militia on the Turkish side. In return, Turkey moved closer towards Russia, now trying to raise its regional profile, and invaded Kurdish-held towns in northern Syria earlier this year. Turkey's decision to purchase the Russian S-400 missile system despite U.S.-NATO opposition, was the tipping point.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, NATO – founded as a Soviet counterweight – remained as a vehicle of western military might and continued to expand to Russia's borders, creating tensions between Russia and the West in the recent past. But with the resurgence of populist, nationalist leaders in several western countries, the NATO's relevance has been called into question several times; U.S. President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron have used the words "obsolete" and "brain death", respectively. Fast-deteriorating ties between the U.S. and Turkey is adding to the crisis. The Trump administration has already suspended Turkey from the F-35 programme, citing concerns over Russia spying on the fighter jet's capabilities using the S-400 system's radar. Earlier this month, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a bill seeking sanctions on Turkey over the S-400 purchase and the Syria offensive. But Ankara seems determined to go ahead with the S-400 deal and even buy advanced Russian aircraft if the U.S. does not deliver the F-35s. And with threats to shut down Incirlik and Kurecik bases, it is now clear that the cracks are wide open. The question the Atlantic alliance faces in this hour of crisis is not just whether the U.S. and Turkey would manage to resolve their differences, but also whether NATO, a Cold War relic, could stay relevant in a post-Cold War era where bilateral ties are fast-changing.

The Data Protection Bill only weakens user rights

A culmination of flawed policy proposals, this piece of legislation will refine, store and trade personal information



APUR GUPTA

In the continuing social churn and widespread citizen protests, it would seem out of place to direct thought towards issues such as data protection. The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha this month, is a revolutionary piece of legislation that promises to return power and control to people in our digital society. Pending deliberation before a Joint Parliamentary Committee, it is intimately connected to the very same fundamental rights and constitutional principles that are being defended today on the streets and in the fields.

The Bill has seen serpentine movement, passing expert committees, central ministries and then the Lok Sabha in the winter session. Before focusing on the nuances and finer details which merit deliberation we must take a step back to look at the broader politics of personal data protection. This would help contextualise the legislative proposal and understand the degree of protection which is limited by overboard exceptions in favour of security and revenue interests.

Securitisation and revenue
The rise of the national security narrative has not been given enough attention by seasoned political observers. What is novel in its intersection with technology. This is central to several policy and political pronouncements by the present government. In many ways, it is a continuation of the politics of

securitisation of the government from its previous term. For instance, the Bharatiya Janata Party's manifesto (sankalp patra) released before the general election 2019 provides useful insight where it states appropriate technological interventions centred around Aadhaar. This shrugs off any recognition of its contested legality before the Supreme Court which ruled on the fundamental right to privacy. Privacy is mentioned just once in this voluminous document – 49 mentions of 'security' and 56 mentions of 'technology'.

This is a trend which continues. The President of India's address to Joint Sitting of Parliament on June 20, 2019 – fresh from the results of the general election – proclaimed that "my government is committed to that very idea of nation-building, the foundation for which was laid in 2014". The priorities of the government are clearly charted out with zero mention of privacy or data protection; there are 18 mentions of 'security' and eight of 'technology'. This familiar template is again found in the Prime Minister's Independence day speech on August 15, 2019 which focussed on dramatic social change. He noted: "I believe that there should be change in the system, but at the same time there should be a change in the social fabric." There is zero mention of 'privacy' or 'data protection'; however there are seven mentions of 'security', six on 'technology' and five for 'digital'. There may be government policy documents that may emphasise or contradict these assertions. However these statements made by high public officials at historic times when they may be widely viewed by large number of Indians are deserving of primacy. They reveal, at the very least, a pecking order in terms of viewing both technology and se-



curity as high priorities in governance objectives.

As Edward Snowden explains in his *Permanent Record*, there is a symbiotic relationship between the financial model of large online platforms and security interest. They both feed off personal data and the attention economy, where platforms gather this data and the government then seeks access to it. In India this is being taken a step further. The government is seeking to not only access data but also collect it and then exploit it – making it an active data trader for the generation of revenue to meet its fiscal goals.

Principles in conflict

First, the scale of data collection is ambitious and broadly contained in the 'Digital India' programme; on its website it says: "to transform the entire ecosystem of public services through the use of information technology...". Here, all elements of a citizen-state interaction are being data-fied. In the view of some technologists, this also fulfils geostrategic goals when personal data is viewed as strategic state resource. However, this poses grave risks to the right to privacy. These become evident from a casual reading of the national Economic Survey of 2019, which in Chapter 4 devotes an entire chapter on the fiscal approach towards personal data. In a "Chapter at a glance" it says: "In thinking about data as a public good, care must also be taken to not impose

the elite's preference of privacy on the poor, who care for a better quality of living the most."

Two tangible examples show the operation of this policy framework. The first is with respect to the recent sale of vehicular registration data and driving licences by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. Here, quite often, the principles of a data protection law would conflict with these uses as it would break the fundamental premise of purpose limitation. This principle broadly holds that personal data which is gathered for a specific purpose cannot be put to any other distinct use without consent of the person from whom it was acquired. The second is an expert committee (headed by Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairperson, Infosys) on what is termed "community data". While the definition of such, "community data" is contested, as per the note it is plainly obvious this is again to serve fiscal interests of the state and technology businesses when it states that such data "is critical for economic advantage".

Muddled formulation

The existing draft of the Data Protection Bill is reflective of a political economy that is motivated towards ensuring minimal levels of protection for personal data. It has a muddled formulation in terms of its aims and objectives, contains broad exemptions in favour of security and fiscal interests, including elements of data nationalism by requiring the compulsory storage of personal data on servers located within India.

From its very preamble it seeks to place the privacy interests of individuals on the same footing as those of businesses and the state. Here, by placing competing interests on the same plane, two natural consequences visit the drafting

choices within it. First, the principle of data protection to actualise the fundamental right to privacy is not fulfilled as a primary goal but is conditioned from the very outset. Second, by placing competing goals – which contradict each other – any balancing is clumsy, since no primary objectives are set. This results in a muddy articulation that would ultimately ensure a weak data protection law.

This present draft of the Bill comes as a disappointment especially after the emphatic judgment by the nine-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on the Right to Privacy. The judgment contains categorical language that the Bill is a measure to actualise the fundamental right. However, this draft serves a political economy which at first blush appears attractive in its promise of taking us away from the dull maxims of constitutionalism and delivering us a digital utopia. Again, this was best phrased by the Prime Minister when he stated at the Digital India dinner on September 26, 2015, at San Jose, California: "... technology is advancing citizen empowerment and democracy that once drew their strength from Constitutions."

Hence, on a broader read, the Data Protection Bill is not a leaky oil barrel with large exceptions, but it is a perfect one. It will refine, store and then trade the personal information of Indians without their control; open for sale or open for appropriation to the interests of securitisation or revenue maximisation, with minimal levels of protection. For this to change, we have to not only focus on redlining the finer text of this draft but also reframing large parts of its intents and objectives.

Apur Gupta, Executive Director of the Internet Freedom Foundation, is a Delhi-based lawyer

Assam's identity fears face up to divisive politics

Protests in the State have been brought about by the BJP's failure to gauge the popular mood



UDAYAN MISRA

When Assam was first rocked by anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Bill protests in 2018, the argument put forward against the Bill was that granting of citizenship to Bengali Hindu immigrants up to December 2014 would eventually reduce the indigenous people to a minority in their homeland.

It was said that the Bill was blatantly unconstitutional because citizenship could never be given on the basis of religion. Not many outside Assam and the Northeast were then taken in by this argument because the common perception in the rest of the country was that the protests were chiefly motivated by the ever-present xenophobic fear of the outsider. The assertion that Assam was not prepared to accept any more foreigners, be they Hindu or Muslim, did not get enough attention at the national level.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 after being referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee, was reintroduced in the Lok Sabha in January 2019 and passed, but it lapsed with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha because the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did not have the requisite numbers in the Rajya

Sabha. Subsequently, the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was introduced in the Lok Sabha in December 2019. This revised version was bulldozed through, promptly receiving the President of India's assent, but this time the protests were not limited to the Northeast alone.

Threat to indigenous people
The dangerous divisive nature of the move to create second-class citizens of the country's largest minority population has become evident to all those who nourish the idea of India as enshrined in the Constitution of India. However, for the people of Assam, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, or the CAA, goes beyond re-defining citizenship on religious lines; it poses a threat to the identity of the many small indigenous communities that make up the composite Assamese nationality while at the same time fostering a linguistic-religious divide. Hence, there has been a massive upsurge cemented by a strengthened sense of Assamese identity. Some youth have already been killed in police firing and scores injured.

How does one describe the laceration of the soul of a people? This is exactly what has happened with the Central government's dictatorial move to impose the CAA on the people of Assam. What defies rationale is that the CAA applies selectively to only the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys of Assam and some areas of Tripura and Meghalaya while all the States,



which have Inner Line Permit regulations and all areas which fall under the Sixth Schedule, have been kept outside its purview. Yet, unlike Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram which do not share a border with Bangladesh, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura have extensive land borders with that country and have been facing continuous immigration from East Bengal/East Pakistan/Bangladesh resulting in a swift demographic change.

Immigration, land and identity have long been core issues for Assamese indigenes who, through the Assam Accord of 1985, accepted all Bengali-speaking Muslim and Hindu immigrants from 1951 to March 1971. The National Register of Citizens, all its shortcomings notwithstanding, was seen as a closure of sorts. Now that the cut-off date for illegal Bengali Hindu immigrants has been extended till December 2014, Assamese apprehensions about their language and culture being jeopardised have increased tenfold. Census figures over the years have shown a steady decline in Assamese speakers, prompting fears of the language

losing its official status in the State.

Just one voice

The marked feature of the current protests is that people in their thousands have taken to the streets defying curfew and other restrictions. Though 30-odd ethnic organisations, including the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, the All-Assam Students' Union and the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad have been at the forefront of the protests, yet, this time, the protests seem to have gained an even wider base. Not only have Opposition parties and several employees' unions extended support, but minority student organisations as well as tea tribes bodies have also joined in the demonstrations.

Not even during the heyday of the Assam Movement (1979-1985) were tea garden workers drawn into the protests. What is most striking is the fact that there is a sense of unison throughout the Brahmaputra Valley brought about by the arrogance of a party in power which has utterly failed to gauge the feelings of the masses. It is significant that attempts to divide the movement along linguistic and religious lines have met with stiff resistance.

For every struggle in Assam and the Northeast has, in some way or other, been linked to the rights of the small nationalities. The BJP will never be able to appreciate this, for in its scheme of a mono-cultural Hindu India there is obviously no space for a multi-nationality country.

Initially, the State BJP leadership tried to dismiss the rumblings against the CAA as an aberration. But the party has been caught off-guard, as people's anger is targeted at BJP legislators. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which thought that it was emerging as the determining political force under the Sarbananda Sonowal government, suddenly finds its offices being attacked, with most of its functionaries having disappeared from public view. The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, which had earlier brought out a procession or two in support of the CAA, faces an existential crisis, with many of its leaders having left the organisation. The BJP-RSS agenda of polarising the State on religious lines seems to have hit a major roadblock, with organisers and participants of the present upsurge insisting that they are against all post-1971 illegal immigrants, both Hindus and Muslims.

If the present outrage of people in Assam is any indication, it is almost certain that it will be impossible for the BJP-RSS to regain its pre-CAB position in the State. And, with the 2021 Assembly elections not too far away, it is almost certain that the party will pay a heavy price, especially in the Brahmaputra Valley. This, however, depends on how the present protests are channelised to offer an alternative to the BJP in the State.

Udayan Misra is a former National Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, and the author of 'Burden of History'

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.

Defusing the tensions

There is a lot of confusion around the Central government's proposed National Population Register (NPR) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Though the leaders who matter in the polity have denied there being any plan to take forward these plans, few people trust these statements. The country-wide agitations against these laws and plans might have led the Central government to step back temporarily, but it would be naive to believe that these ideas and plans have been shelved totally. In this atmosphere of mistrust, even the counting of ordinary residents under the NPR would be enough to heighten tensions again.

Some States have declared that they will not cooperate in the undertaking of these exercises even though it would be constitutionally untenable. Instead, the Central government should shelf these ideas and plans in total.

**D.V.G. SANKARARAO,
Nellore, Andhra Pradesh**

■ For the sake of clarity, credibility and uniformity, it would be better if the Central government issues advertisements in the media across the country spelling out the laws and plans in unambiguous detail and providing answers, with examples, to every possible question. This will go a long way in removing apprehensions.

**KAMAL LADHHA,
Bengaluru**

■ The faux pas on the Assam NRC had the government err in haste over its subsequent and contradictory narrative on the NPR-NRC. It must be said that the government counted on this miasma to look for electoral leverage in the upcoming Assembly elections. Assam, however, has long been vehement over the primacy of the Assamese ethos in any political prescription. The net result is a nationwide reaction, with each section interpreting the same page to its own understanding. The feverish attempts at translation by every stakeholder can be toned down, if not be subdued, only when the Supreme Court gives its ruling on the CAA. We have seen how a simple referendum over Brexit has tied up a nation

with four centuries of vintage democracy in knots for three long years.

**R. NARAYANAN,
Navi Mumbai**

■ The growing incidence of cancer, most detected due to

improvement in the use of diagnostics and epidemiological transitions, is cause for concern primarily because of the heavy financial burden associated with cancer care (Inside pages, "Study warns of growing cancer burden across India", December 26). Hence, appropriate preventive strategies need to be given enough consideration. According to the WHO, "between 30-50% of all cancer cases are preventable". Awareness about modifiable risk factors related to lifestyle and the environment needs to be

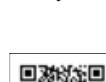
**H.N. RAMAKRISHNA,
Bengaluru**

■ The study reflects an urgent need for the government to focus more on establishing cancer health-care institutions. India's disease burden is bound to increase and there needs to be an equally fine-tuned response.

**RATNARAJ JAIN,
Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh**

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:
In the opening paragraph of the story titled "IPC law on suicide is redundant, says expert" (Dec. 26, 2019) the reference to Article 309 of the IPC needs to be corrected to Section 309 of the IPC.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in



created. Legislation needs to be in place to address issues about carcinogens in air, water and food.

**A. VENKATASUBRAMANIAN,
Tiruchi**

■ The study reflects an urgent need for the government to focus more on establishing cancer health-care institutions. India's disease burden is bound to increase and there needs to be an equally fine-tuned response.

**RATNARAJ JAIN,
Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh**

What are the amendments that the CAA needs?

PARLEY

India should ensure a clear, non-discriminatory and inclusive refugee policy



Gautam Bhatia
is a Delhi-based lawyer



Priya Pillai
is an international lawyer and head of the Asia Justice Coalition secretariat

Providing protection, and a home, to refugees facing persecution of any kind is a welcome idea but the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) has faced more questions about the people it excludes than those it takes in its ambit. Jayant Sriram speaks to Gautam Bhatia and Priya Pillai on what would the contours of a more humane law be. Edited excerpts:

When it comes to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), what according to you would be a more humane way to address the question of the status of refugees from India's neighbouring countries? I think we all agree that there are parts of it that are good, but how do we broaden this?

Gautam Bhatia (GB): I think the inclusive aspect of the Act is obviously good. It's the exclusionary part of it that creates a problem. So, look at the legal regime that existed before the CAA. There was a 2011 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by the Home Ministry, which is not yet in the public domain. And, according to that, anyone who could establish persecution of any form – not just religious, but also social persecution, caste-based and so on, would be entitled to a long-term visa in India. And, this would be examined on a case-to-case basis. So, that SOP actually provides you the base for what could be a decent legal regime. Of course, that also had a lot of discretion given to the Home Ministry. But something along those lines is what I think would be a good idea.

Priya, I want to ask you about the international law aspect. What does international law say on dealing with refugees? Does the CAA meet the tests?

Priya Pillai (PP): I want to preface this whole discussion by saying that some aspects of this in terms of the focus on refugees and refugee law are a bit of a red herring, in terms of looking at the larger context of what this is about, including the NRC [National Register of Citizens]. Having said that, there are a few aspects to

this: one is that India has not signed the Refugee Convention [1951] and protocol. India has not signed on to the Stateless Convention. But it is good to remember that the basic premise of a refugee law is that humanitarian concerns motivate the whole idea of having an inclusive regime. So, the fact is that India has not had any formal refugee policies; there are *ad hoc* provisions. If India is serious about ensuring that persecuted people are protected, there are few very simple things to do: sign and ratify the conventions; and ensure that you have a clear, non-discriminatory, inclusive policy. And the fact that the 1951 Convention has 145 state parties but India has not signed up to it is highly problematic.

I'll just add one more thing as well, which is that there's a basic premise of refugee law, which is called **non-refoulement**, which is that you don't send people back if they are in fear of life or of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or opinion. The CAA does not cater to [this principle]. Non-refoulement is a customary international law norm, which means that even if you've not signed up to the treaty, it is something that still binds you.

Gautam, I want to draw you out a little bit on the religion test for granting citizenship and also for determining who is a persecuted minority. How can a better law actually broaden these definitions?

GB: I think it's problematic on two points. One is to elevate religion and religious persecution to a level that links it with citizenship and ignore other forms of persecution that are as severe and have as serious consequences. For example, persecution of Tibetans, political persecution, and so on. So, I think the very act of elevating religion above other forms of persecution and giving it this special link with citizenship affects the secular character of the Constitution. And, of course, the second issue is one that has been discussed multiple times, and is there in the



Rohingya refugees in New Delhi holding a protest rally in 2017. ■ REUTERS

petitions challenging this law, which is that there is no rational connection between the countries and communities singled out and the goal of protecting people from religious persecution. So, even if you take the goal at face value, it leaves out Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, it leaves out Tamil Hindus in Sri Lanka and so on. So even within the subset of 'religiously persecuted people' from neighbouring countries, the CAA is irrational and exclusionary.

And Priya, what can you tell us about cases from other countries where similar laws have used religion as a basis for framing citizenship laws?

PP: The Refugee Convention article talks about what it means to be persecuted and what it means to be a refugee. And, by that logic and definition, you can assert that you were persecuted on the basis of religion, race, or a combination of factors, but it is not for the state to discriminate on these bases. So, your cause of persecution may vary, and it might just be religion, but the whole idea of non-discrimination on the part of the state is that it doesn't have the ability and cannot cater to those categories. If you say you're being persecuted on whatever basis, then it's incumbent on the state to ensure that there's humanitarian

protection and you are granted certain protections within the context of the refugee regime. That's really the fundamental point that I would emphasise, looking at the Rohingya case specifically.

I'd also like to draw attention to that because India has 40,000 Rohingya within the country. There have been statements made by the government of India that they are going to be deported. And, of course, this is a case that is pending before the Supreme Court right now. The persecution there is on the basis of ethnicity, of religion. And it's very, very problematic to have the government say that they are going to send them back, given that the UN fact-finding mission has clearly articulated that there is evidence of the possibility of genocide. So, the CAA is a very, very problematic terrain.

Gautam, even before this law was brought, and a few years back, when there was a discussion about clearing a path to citizenship for certain communities from certain countries, there was also a discussion about how India doesn't have a proper policy on refugees. Is there a sort of legal history to this? Has this been challenged in the courts? Have there been attempts to get this in legislation?

GB: The problem is that the courts have been even more strident on this issue, in fact much more strident than the executive. So you have this judgment in 2005, *Sarbananda Sonowal v Union of India*, which according to me was the worst judgment in our history. It refers to migrants as this 'hordes of people' streaming in from outside who constitute an external aggression onto the territory of India. So, I think that the courts have proven to be even more hostile to this entire issue than the [government]. And that's saying something, you know.

There has been a lot of discussion about the state's power to frame citizenship laws. Is this an absolute right?

PP: Absolutely not. There's a myth that state sovereignty is everything and state sovereignty is sort of fundamentally what dictates all these issues; but there is such a thing in international law called 'state responsibility' as well and the ability of the state is not unfettered.

India has signed a number of other international treaties and this means that there are international legal obligations on the state to ensure that fundamental principles such as non-discrimination are included within whatever laws the government frames. So, the argument that this is unfettered, that is completely untrue.

There needs to be a recognition that the legal norms that emanate from the obligations that states signed up to are also enforceable. I mean, traditionally, international law has always been seen as quite weak in terms of implementation and enforcement. But I would emphasise that there are a number of other legal avenues now that are opening up now. And, there are various committees that monitor these international conventions, and those are now gaining strength.

Have there been examples of international legal bodies actually intervening to place checks and balances on states, other countries enacting citizenship laws?

PP: Yes. The one example that I will give you, of course, links again to the Rohingya crisis right now. In

1982, Myanmar actually enacted a very discriminatory Citizenship Law, which excluded the Rohingya from a lot of basic rights and services, essentially created a system of apartheid within the country, and marginalised the Rohingya to an extreme extent.

Two weeks ago, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was seized of a case brought by Gambia against Myanmar on the basis of the persecution of the Rohingya and allegations of genocide. And, I think it is important to trace the evolution of the mass atrocities, hate speech and the persecution or the Rohingya Muslims to this pivotal point of a really discriminatory citizenship law. There is also a case moving forward at the International Criminal Court (ICC). And, in terms of other treaty bodies, they are also looking at inter-state disputes. So, there are multiple legal avenues and fora.

Assuming that this law does go forward, if you were able to write in a few amendments, what are the things that you would include?

GB: One is to adopt a national standard. And that should be the standard that the law follows. And second, I think there is a dichotomy in that we either look at people as 'illegal immigrants' or as citizens [but] there are a range of statuses that exist between those two – temporary work visas, long-term visas and so on.

So, we need to expand the conversation on migration to beyond this binary of 'illegal immigrants' and citizens. I think under the new law, I would definitely have a number of provisions that deal with the reality of economic migration, other kinds of migration and the appropriate statuses that go with that.

PP: Honestly, I would just echo that. And, I would just add one more thing, given that this is about prosecution and engaging refugees and the norms around refugees. This is an opportunity for the government to actually sign up to the Refugee Convention as well as the protocol and the Stateless Convention and, you know, show that it is serious about this issue beyond the narrow optics that are currently playing out right now.

Disrupting the gender-blind political discourse in India

Affirmative action can empower more women

PULAPARE BALAKRISHNAN

India is believed to be resolutely moving forward as an economic entity. Not even the currently slowing growth takes away from this perception. Added to this is a celebration of the Constitution undergirding our democracy. So here, it would seem, is a country forging ahead economically while upholding freedoms for its people. Recent reports of gruesome assaults on women, involving rape and ending with murder, have jolted this narrative.

Democracy in India is directly impugned when the accused men allegedly receive protection from the ruling dispensation, as is the case in Uttar Pradesh, or when the police force fails to protect women, as was the case in Telangana. In a democracy where the political class deploys identity politics to capture power, it is striking that not only is the case of women left scrupulously untouched, their very existence is increasingly under threat from misogyny in society.

When a society adopts democracy as its form of governance, it presumes the beginning of a social transformation. It is acknowledged that this should entail the elimination of religiously endorsed privileges, the ending of domination by some over others and a general ushering in of equality of opportunity. This process is abetted by economic growth and the emergence of markets, which enable people to shed the constraints that have held them back. This is a more or less universal trajectory, though it first occurred in Western democracies.

Emancipation movements

While this process took a long time, it gathered speed after the Second World War when an economic boom unleashed emancipation movements, particularly in the U.S., which had as their focus black rights, feminism and sexual liberation. Why has India not had anything even close, movements that constitute the social transformation that must accompany democracy if the latter is to achieve its ends? This is often answered by re-

course to the 'fatalistic attitude bred by Indian culture'. This we see to be false when we recognise the differentiation whereby not everyone is at the receiving end, most evident in the case of violence against women.

It is difficult to think of any part of the world where historic inequity has been removed entirely through the agency of the oppressed. An end to the most overt forms of domination of women in the U.S. came after at least half a century of education, which enabled women to imagine a life crafted by themselves. Education further enabled them to be economically independent, sloughing off the patriarchal norm that had bound them for ages.

Role of the public sector

The greater part of the spread of education in the U.S. was through public school system. By comparison, in India, very little of the myriad public policy interventions has been directed towards women's empowerment. Girls stop attending school due to the absence of functioning toilets there and women drop out of the labour force as they do not feel safe when travelling to work. This also restrains economic progress.

The empowerment of religion via 'Indian secularism' and a caste-laden political discourse has served to keep out a public discussion of the 'women's question' in India. It is not difficult to see that India's politics as 'honour among men' leaves patriarchy secure from challenge. The opposition of caste-based political parties to the Women's Reservation Bill only reflects this. They have no credible argument and rely solely on their numbers in a fractured polity. Affirmative action aimed at a far greater inclusion of women in India's institutions of governance, especially the police and the judiciary, is central to ending the violence against women. India's gender-blind political discourse needs disruption.

Pulapare Balakrishnan is Professor, Ashoka University and Senior Fellow, IIM Kozhikode



NOTEBOOK

Total eclipse of the heart

When a spectacle in the skies left the spectators transformed

DINESH KRISHNAN

Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's famed capital, added one more page to its rich history when it became the "observatory" for sky-gazers, scientists and photojournalists to watch a total solar eclipse.

On October 24, 1995, the date of one such eclipse, the weather-man had brought glad tidings: Chances of a stray rain were as slim as a quark. The winter fog was a few months away. Smog was not yet in our dictionary. There was little else to expect. Internet was in its nascent stage, restricted to chunky computers with tortoise-quick modems.

More significantly, there was no Google to quickly ferret out information and sound wiser before the event. My attitude towards the event lay somewhere between plain curiosity and nervous anticipation. It was a first for me, and I

did not have the luxury of being just a casual watcher. It was an assignment and I had to take images of the spectacle to my publication back in Delhi.

Being prepared

So, I treated it as I would any other assignment, making the necessary preparations. In this case, it meant hitting Fatehpur Sikri much before the crack of dawn, to get a sense of the trajectory of the sun before the drama unfolded.

Settling down with my equipment on a high platform within the ruins of Fatehpur Sikri complex, I could see Panch Mahal, over which the sun would sail. The eclipse would start a few seconds after 7.24 a.m. The tripod-mounted camera with its telephoto had been primed for the occasion. It was the day of the 'film', when the option of sneak peeks to see if the images were coming right was yet-unthinka-

ble. I had chosen to shoot the eclipse on the then-revered Kodak Tri-X 400. A few minutes into the eclipse, I realised that I was being rudely thrust into the unknown. Suddenly, I was forced to be as conscious of what was happening on *terra firma* as I was of the spectacle in the skies. There was feathered anxiety around me, as panic-driven birds were rushing back to their nests in the trees around. Once the birds settled in, silence spread its wings across Fatehpur Sikri. The only sounds heard were the whirs of cameras.

The temperature plummeted even as the sun shrunk in size and began to resemble a moon in a mod-

erately-lit sky. At 8.34 a.m., the sun vanished behind the moon, as it were camera-shy, and the sky became ominously-dark, and not just for the birds. The whole of Fatehpur Sikri was enveloped in a quiet I was not prepared for. As I took it all in, my breathing became shallow.

Many seconds later, the famed diamond ring phenomenon took place. From down on the ground, it did look like a giant diamond ring. Very soon after this, there were a series of flashes in the sky. They were all rays of the sun escaping towards the earth from behind the moon, and then, a crescent of the sun began to become visible. That was when I saw something beautiful that perhaps only such a celestial event can trigger in humans – even strangers were making a supernatural connection by exchanging hugs, their differences eclipsed by a rare sense of awe.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 27, 1969

Malayalam dialects

A survey recently completed by the Kerala University Department of Linguistics has helped identify 12 major dialect regions in Kerala in respect of Malayalam as spoken by a single community alone, the Ezhavas/Tiyas. The report said that these dialect regions had at least 25 sub-dialects due to criss-crossing of "Isoglosses" and this number of major and minor dialect regions astonishingly tallied with the number of major and minor kingdoms in Kerala during the late medieval period. The complexity in dialects is attributed to the political heterogeneity. The three-year project was taken up in 1965 with aid from the University Grants Commission. Among the Indian languages, it is for Malayalam alone that such an exhaustive survey of dialects based on a single community has been completed. Among the major gains of the project are: The marking out precisely for the first time in the history of Malayalam studies the dialect boundaries and the sub dialect regions in each major dialect area; listing the isogloss terms distinguishing one dialect region from another; completion of six dialect grammars, four of which have been submitted as Ph.D. dissertations and the other two also to be presented likewise shortly; compilation of a dialect dictionary of over 3,000 items.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DEC. 27, 1919

In Parliament: The Punjab Massacre

LONDON: In the House of Commons on the motion for adjournment, Mr. Wedgwood raised what had happened in the strongest terms and declared that it had destroyed our good reputation. He urged the necessity for having a perfectly independent enquiry. Mr. Wedgwood accused General Dyer of destroying Mr. Montagu's efforts to bring about complete co-operation between the people of England and India. Mr. Montagu interposed and condemned Mr. Wedgwood's action in dealing with matters which were sub-judice. He declared that he had never known a case where so many deductions had been drawn in the Home, for events which were being enquired into by an impartial tribunal. Col. Yate protested against Mr. Wedgwood's speech and declared his belief that General Dyer had saved the whole Punjab from being swept by another rebellion. Mr. Montagu stated that General Dyer had not been relieved of his command. He was communicating with the Viceroy on the whole matter.

FROM PAGE ONE

NPR: house-to-house verification planned

The manual says that if the respondent does not know the age of any member of the household and probing also does not help in determining the age of that person, "you will have to estimate her/his age by using your best judgment."

The manual was prepared before the pretest was conducted.

On Thursday, Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy confirmed that additional details related to the place of birth of the parents of a person being enlisted, Aadhar number and last place of residence were being recorded as part of "bas-

ic requirements for NPR."

Mr. Reddy said, "I strongly condemn the deliberate and baseless misinformation campaign being spread by the Opposition parties and a section of media that NPR is a precursor to NRC. I want to make it categorical that there is no link between the two. The present NPR is part of the 2021 Census enumeration. We are just continuing the NPR exercise started by the UPA Government in 2010 with just additions of three or four columns...The opposition parties are playing a mind game of vitiating people's faith in the government."

'Leading crowds for arson is not leadership'

Gen. Rawat, who is set to retire on December 31, is a front runner for the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), the creation of which was approved by the Union Cabinet on Tuesday.

Vice-Chief of the Army Staff M.M. Naravane has been named as the next Chief of the Army Staff.

"Since when have the Army chiefs started commenting about internal affairs. It undermines Civil-Military Relations whose cornerstone is that Armed Forces neither comment or interfere in domestic politics. This has been our singular

success going back to 1947," Congress Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari wrote on Twitter.

The CPI(M) also condemned Gen. Rawat's comments. "The Army chief's statement underlines how the situation has degenerated under the Modi government, where the highest officer in uniform can so brazenly breach the limits of his institutional role. It is, therefore, necessary to raise the question as to whether we are going the Pakistan way of politicising the military," the polit bureau said in a statement.

Revamp of railway passenger fares likely

On the restructuring of the Railway Board, Mr. Yadav said it was a long-pending reform suggested by many committees.

Following Cabinet approval earlier this week, the new restructured Railway Board will consist of one CRB/CEO and four members on functional basis – Member Infrastructure, Member Rolling Stock & Traction, Member Operation & Business Development and Member Finance.

Independent Members will be inducted in Railway Board as non-executive Members who will be in an advisory role. They will not be involved in day-to-day functioning of Railways...The idea to unify all eight services of the Indian Railways into one service namely the Indian Railways Management Service, is to break the departmentalism and make officers work in cohe-

sion for the development of Railways," an official release said.

Mr. Yadav said only officers of the Indian Railways will be considered for the post of CEO. "Secondly, career growth of Indian Railways officers is assured. No officer of Indian Railways shall be at disadvantage in this new restructured service," he said.

Better coordination'

The Railway Board Chairman added that offering apex level to the General Managers is a step to empower them for a better coordination with State authorities to take decisions swiftly and independently.

"This will enable the Railway Board to concentrate on policy framing, strategic planning and coordination of Zonal Railways," he said.

He was handed over to the NIA, which arrested him on December 16 and flew



Grand plans: HAM(S) president Jitan Ram Manjhi, right, is seen with RLSP leader Upendra Kushwaha and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav. ■ FILE PHOTO

barrassment to the alliance by demanding that it appoint a convener to avoid any confusion among the partners.

Congress leaders backed Mr. Manjhi's demand, and said a convener would be appointed soon but nothing has happened as yet.

Seemingly sidelined in the *mahagathbandhan*, Mr. Manjhi is reported to be exploring new political equations and platforms ahead of

the upcoming Assembly election.

Dalit-Muslim bloc'

"Mr. Manjhi's political game plan could be to bring Dalits and Muslims, both are in sizeable number in the State, on a common political platform to make it a big electoral force during the 2020 Assembly poll and this joint rally with AIMIM in Kishanganj may be the first step in



Under watch: KMSS adviser Akhil Gogoi being produced at an NIA court in Guwahati on Thursday. ■ PTI

NIA raids house of Assam peasant leader

Special court rejects plea for custody

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI
Officials of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday raided the residence of Assam peasant leader Akhil Gogoi as well as the office of his organisation, Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS), in Guwahati.

The three-hour raid preceded the production of Mr. Gogoi before the NIA's special court in Guwahati. It rejected the plea for further NIA custody and sent him to 14 days' judicial custody.

The police arrested Mr. Gogoi, who was leading an anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) movement, from eastern Assam's Jorhat on December 12. He was brought to Guwahati where the police registered a case against him the following day.

He was handed over to the NIA, which arrested him on December 16 and flew

him to Delhi. It brought him back to Guwahati on Wednesday for production in court.

An NIA team started the search operation at Mr. Gogoi's residence in the Nizarpur locality at 7 a.m. and another one raided the KMSS office in the Gandhi Basti area.

Files seized

The NIA teams reportedly seized files containing documents relating to the NHPC – Mr. Gogoi has been vocal against the 2000 MW Lower Subansiri Hydroelectric Project on the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border – and other issues. His laptop, identification and bank documents were also seized, his wife Geetashree Tamuly said.

The NIA has charged Mr. Gogoi, who has earlier been arrested on charges of sedition, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

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1,000 lawyers object to BCI stand on protests

'Resolution is not view of the Bar'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Close to 1,000 lawyers from across the country have distanced themselves from the statements made by the Bar Council of India (BCI) on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the protests against it.

The lawyers disassociated themselves from the BCI's resolution dated December 22, stating that it did not represent the views of the Bar.

"While the individual office-bearers of the BCI are free to express their opinions in their personal capacity, the use of the BCI's platform to express the personal views of some is a disservice to the principles that the BCI stands for," said a statement released by them on Thursday.

The lawyers said the resolution did not speak for all advocates as several of them had condemned the disparate impact of the CAA on minorities and the excesses of police forces.

A protest march was con-

CAA, removal of Article 370 key feats: MHA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in a year-end review report, has listed the legislation passed by Parliament for removal of special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019 as two of the top achievements.

"All provisions of the Constitution of India, without any modifications or exceptions, to now apply to J&K and Ladakh. Laws of the Union government with regard to education, empowerment of SC/ST, minorities etc. to be applicable. Boost to local economy and employment opportunities by increasing investment," the report said. The report also said that "marathon deliberations were held by Union Home Minister Amit Shah with stakeholders from the northeast and their concerns against the Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019 were addressed in the final Amendment Act."

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Lawyers protesting against the CAA in New Delhi on December 21.

ducted by advocates outside Jamia Millia Islamia on December 21 in this regard.

"It is also extremely distressing to note that in its resolution, the BCI has referred to the lakhs of citizens of this country who are exercising their democratic right to protest, out of sheer anguish, as the 'illiterate ignorant mass'. It did not befit the stature of the BCI for such statements to be made," they said.

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"To tackle the menace, 11 central teams have arrived in Gujarat," a senior officer from the Ministry of Agriculture said. "They will take all necessary steps, including spraying of pesticides, to contain the attack. The teams will remain in the State until the problem is solved," the officer added.

On Thursday, Gujarat's Additional Chief Secretary (Agriculture) P.K. Parmar told mediapersons that the State had formed 30 teams

Gujarat battles locust swarms with pesticides

Centre has rushed 11 teams to assist

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD
As insects swarm farms in north Gujarat gobbling up crops, the State government has initiated an elaborate pesticide spraying operation in affected areas as it battles to counter the massive locust attack.

The State administration, with the help of the central government, has constituted more than 30 teams to spray pesticides in villages in Banaskantha, which is the worst affected district, and neighbouring Patan and Sabarkantha.

"To tackle the menace, 11 central teams have arrived in Gujarat," a senior officer from the Ministry of Agriculture said. "They will take all necessary steps, including spraying of pesticides, to contain the attack. The teams will remain in the State until the problem is solved," the officer added.

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that direction," retired Patna University Professor N. K. Chaudhury told *The Hindu*. In Bihar, Muslims constitute 17% of the population, while Scheduled Castes are about 16%. "Together, they could make a major dent in the secular votes in the election," Mr. Chaudhury said.

In October, AIMIM candidate Qamru Hoda won the Kishanganj Assembly byelection defeating BJP candidate Sweety Singh by more than 10,000 votes. AIMIM's Bihar president, former MLA Akhtarul Iman, said the proposed joint HAM(S)-AIMIM rally would be the first of its kind in the State and would be held at Kishanganj's Ruidhas Maidan. Apart from the AIMIM chief, the Maharashtra cadre IPS officer who had recently resigned from the service in protest against the CAA, Abdur Rahman, too would address the rally, Mr. Iman confirmed.

Asked whether the party is unhappy over the allotted portfolios,

More trouble over MVA Cabinet expansion

Cong. likely to demand Deputy CM post

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government's troubles over Cabinet expansion seem to be far from over.

With a possibility that the Home Ministry may go back to the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), a section within the Congress is now reportedly staking claim to Deputy Chief Ministership saying the allotted portfolios to the party are not satisfactory.

Asked whether the party is unhappy over the allotted portfolios, Maharashtra Congress president and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat said: "It is natural for every party to wish for important departments. At the same time it has to be taken into account that there are three parties in this government. It is possible that someone would feel different

about the portfolio distribution." The MVA government, he added, works as per the Common Minimum Program (CMP) and will continue to do so.

As per the initial understanding between the three parties, NCP would get to keep the deputy CM's post with Home going to Shiv Sena. However, recent reports have indicated that the Sena may also give Home to the NCP. This, a section within the Congress fears, would make the NCP too powerful.

"There is a thought within the Congress that if this change happens, then the party must demand a Deputy Chief Ministership for itself. This government survives only if three parties are happy and there is no point in making one of the three grumpy," said a senior Congress leader on condition of anonymity.

NRC a routine exercise, says Ram Madhav

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav arrived in Kashmir on Thursday to dispel fears on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). He, however, refused to share any timeline on the release of political detainees or restoration of Internet services in the Valley.

Mr. Madhav said the National Register for Citizens (NRC) and the CAA are not linked and the new Act is not against anybody and doesn't discriminate Muslims. "The NRC is a routine exercise while the CAA is an extension of the countrywide census. The CAA is just to give citizenship to some people who had been living the majority of days, which was a little over six months, at the place of enumeration.

He said the UPA-era NRC would not have led to the NRC unlike what the present government wanted to do.

Mr. Maken said the fundamental difference between the NRC and the NRC was that the population register was only to enumerate "usual residents", which was defined by the United Nations as anyone who had been living the majority of days, which was a little over six months, at the place of enumeration.

He said, "If the BJP's motives are bona fide, let the government unconditional state that they support the NRC form and design of 2010 and have no intention of linking it to the controversial NRC."

The most important difference between the two was that there was no mention of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the UPA-era exercise.

The BJP-led government has a larger and more sinister agenda and that is why the NRC approved by them is very dangerous and different in terms of the TEXT as well as the CONTEXT of NRC 2010.

NRC 2010," he said. Mr. Chidambaram dared the BJP government to say unequivocally that it had no intention to link the NRC with the NRC.

In response, Mr. Chidambaram sought to highlight the differences in the UPA-era NRC and the present version through a series of tweets.

"We were enumerating the 'usual residents' of the country. The emphasis is on residency not citizenship."

The NRC was to aid the preparation of the 2011 census, he said. "Every usual resident was to be enumerated irrespective of his or her religion or place of birth."

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The most

Voters will punish divisive gang: Shah

Minister says the Congress-led group disrupted peace in Delhi during protests against the CAA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Thursday that it was time to "punish" the "tukde tukde" [splintering] gang led by the Congress, which had "disrupted the peace" in Delhi during protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. The people of Delhi would punish them, he said referring to the coming Assembly election.

Mr. Shah's statement comes in the wake of protests against the Act across the country, including in Delhi, where violence broke out during some of the protests.

When the Citizenship Amendment Bill was discussed in Parliament, "no one was willing to say anything", but then they started "misleading" people, he said at a ceremony for laying the foundation stone for the East Delhi Hub at Karkardooma.

"Delhi has seen it after a long time that people have come out on the streets and



Poll bugle: Amit Shah at a function to lay the foundation stone for a transit hub in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ PTI

peace has been disrupted. The Opposition has misled people and disrupted the peace in Delhi. I want to ask Delhites, that the police will

do its work, but should you not bring in a government in Delhi that maintains peace?... Time has come to punish the *tukde tukde* gang

under the leadership of the Congress that is responsible for making Delhi tense. Delhi's public will punish them," he said.

Swipe at AAP

With election to the Delhi Assembly expected to be announced soon, Mr. Shah hit out at the Aam Aadmi Party administration, accusing Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's government of obstructing development projects.

He said the "Kejriwal *jhadu* [broom, the AAP's election symbol] government" was the biggest obstacle before Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri's efforts to develop Delhi. The Centre's healthcare scheme, Ayushman Bharat, and the affordable housing initiative, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, had been obstructed by the Delhi government, he alleged.

He said Delhiites would

elect a BJP government to accelerate development works. The AAP government was trying to take credit for the work of the Modi government by issuing advertisements.

Along the lines of the Sabarmati riverfront in Gujarat, Mr. Shah said, the Centre had decided to redevelop the banks of the Yamuna in Delhi. The first phase, covering 90 hectares, had started and the second phase of 107 hectares would be started soon – both would be done in the next five years.

Mr. Puri spoke about the East Delhi Hub project being made by NBCC (India) Ltd., formerly National Buildings Construction Corporation Limited. The first transit-oriented development (TOD) project in the country, the first phase of the hub would cost ₹1,393 crore spread over 30 hectares. Under the TOD policy, 70% of the hub would be for residential use, 20% commercial and 10% civic amenities.

FIR filed against 1,200 unnamed AMU students

They had taken out candlelight march

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GAZIABAD

The Aligarh police have lodged an FIR against 1,200 unnamed Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) students who took out a candlelight march against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act to show solidarity with the students who faced police action in the university and Jamia Millia Islamia.

Most of the participants were non-resident students. All were charged with Sections 188 and 341 of the Indian Penal Code for violating Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The FIR said students blocked a thoroughfare for an hour and did not move out of the



Students taking out a march on the AMU campus.

university campus.

"Does it mean we could not protest peacefully even inside the campus," asked a student who participated in the protest. A senior university official said the road after the Sir Syed Gate was not a thoroughfare.

Earlier in the day, the U.P.

U.P. DGP orders SIT probe into riots

Internet suspended in five western districts; 1,113 arrested so far, say police

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL

LUCKNOW/ MEERUT

Uttar Pradesh Director-General of Police (DGP) O.P. Singh on Thursday ordered a Special Investigation Team (SIT) inquiry into the incidents of violence during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in the State.

Anticipating further trouble, Internet services were suspended in Meerut, Ghaziabad, Muzaffarnagar, Bulandshahr and Shamli in the evening and will be resumed on Friday evening, officials said.

Police and administration in all these districts and elsewhere in the region have been placed on alert.

Earlier in the day, the U.P.



Remains of the day: Charred motorbikes lying at a police post set on fire by demonstrators in Lucknow. ■ REUTERS

police in a statement said 1,113 people had been arrested in different parts of the State in connection with the anti-CAA protests and preventive action was taken against 5,558 others.

The statement added that

a total of 327 FIRs were lodged in connection with the protests and 19 people had lost their lives in the violence.

"288 policemen were injured, and 61 of them had received bullet injuries during

the protests," it added. "124 people arrested for posting inciting content on social media. 93 FIRs registered. Action was taken on 19,409 social media posts. 9,372 Twitter, 9,856 Facebook, and 181 YouTube profiles blocked," the statement said.

Minister sparks row

U.P. Minister Kapil Dev Agarwal stoked a controversy after he refused to meet the families of two victims of the violence.

"Why should I go to the homes of rioters? Those who are rioting and want to inflame passions, how are they part of society? Why should I go there? This is not about Hindu-Muslim," he said.

(With PTI inputs)

ATS rearrests five persons in 2008 Jaipur blasts case

Shahbaz Ahmed, acquitted in 8 cases, named in new case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of Rajasthan police has rearrested four persons, who were sentenced to death for the 2008 serial blasts in Jaipur, as well as the one who was acquitted for want of evidence, in connection with the case registered for a bomb which was defused. The five persons were picked up from the Central Jail here on Wednesday and arrested as accused.

Shahbaz Ahmed, 43, who had a production warrant in minor cases, was not released after his acquittal by a special court here on December 18. All the five accused, who were produced in a court on Thursday, were remanded in ATS custody for two days.

The case pertains to a bomb strapped to a bicycle parked in Chadpol Bazaar, which was defused by the police personnel before it could explode on May 13, 2008. Eight other ammonium nitrate-based bombs, packed with metal splinters, went off at different locations within a two-km radius in the densely populated Walled City, killing 71 persons and leaving about 200 injured.

The trial in eight cases registered by the police resulted in the conviction of four persons from Uttar Pradesh, but the case pertaining to the planting of unexploded bomb was not tried with the rest of the blast matters.

The four persons who were awarded the death penalty are Mohammed Saif, Mohammed Sarwar Azmi, Saifur Rehman and Mohammed Salman. Shahbaz, a resident of Lucknow who



Police van carrying the men convicted in the 2008 Jaipur serial blasts case earlier this month. ■ FILE PHOTO

was the first one to be arrested three months after the blasts, was acquitted in all the eight cases. He was charged with sending an e-mail which claimed responsibility for the blasts on behalf of the Indian Mujahideen, but the court did not find evidence beyond doubt to connect him with the crime.

The ATS had claimed to have cracked the Jaipur blasts case after arresting Shahbaz from his computer and career consultancy centre in Aminabad locality of Lucknow.

He was referred to as the mastermind of serial blasts in Jaipur and elsewhere till the controversial Batla House encounter took place in Delhi on September 19, 2008, and some alleged IM operatives were arrested in Mumbai and Pune. The four persons convicted with death sentence were nabbed in Delhi and different towns in U.P.

Breastfed child in distress after parents are jailed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

Support has poured in for activist couple Ekta Singh and Ravi Shekhar who were among the more than 60 persons arrested in Varanasi for protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act last week.

As both of them are in jail, with the bail hearing at a sessions court expected to be taken up only after January 1, their friends and well-wishers have expressed concern for their 14-month-old breastfed child.

The 60 persons, including several social activists

and students of the BHU and the Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, were arrested on December 19 while taking out a march in protest against the CAA and the NRC. The police charged them for rioting, unlawful assembly, disobedience and assault among other charges.

Associates of those booked say the protests were peaceful, and accused the police of excessive action.

While the FIR alleges that the protesters had created a sense of chaos and fear, there is no mention of any violence.

BJP, RSS take out rally in Bhopal

STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL

A day after Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath-led a rally, 1,000 members of the BJP, the RSS, the Bajrang Dal and the Yuva Morcha took out a rally here on Thursday.

Vikas Virani, BJP Bhopal district president, said the Congress was indulging in "vote bank politics" over the citizenship Act.

Organised under the banner of "Hum Bharat Ke Log: National Action Against Citizenship Amendment", which includes several rights groups, activist Harsh Mander said the Centre was spreading "blatant lies" especially with regard to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement on the

non-existence of detention centres in the country.

He also added that the government could use details collected through the National Population Register (NPR) to identify people as "doubtful citizens" and use the information for the NRC.

"There is so much of distrust with what the Prime Minister is saying," said Mr. Mander. "He has said that there are no detention centres in the country, while fact of the matter is that I have visited such centres myself. This kind of blatant lying is unprecedented," he contended.

Addressing the media, activists demanded a Supreme Court-monitored SIT probe into police action in the State.

An appeal signed by film personalities was also read out by actors Swara Bhaskar and Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, seeking a judicial inquiry into the incidents in Uttar Pradesh.

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

Office of the Chief Engineer (Kaveri), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G.Road, Bangalore-560 009.

Date: 26-12-2019

TENDER NOTIFICATION-2nd Call

BWSSP (Phase-3) Local competitive bidding (LCB) (JICA Loan ID-P266)

1. The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board has received an ODA loan from the Japan International Co-operative Agency (JICA) for Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Project (Phase 3) vide Loan Agreement ID-P266, dated 24th January 2018.
2. The Chief Engineer (K) BWSSB, invites sealed Bids for the Contract of **Ground Level Reservoirs along Eastern Route Gottigere (50 ML), Doddakanahalli (48 ML), Kadugodi (48 ML).** (Contract Package No. BWSSP (III)/JICA/CP-12).
3. This project area is located in Bengaluru city, (Gottigere, Doddakanahalli, Kadugodi) in the state of Karnataka, India.
4. Intending bidders can obtain hard copies of the Bid Documents, on submission of a written application with payment of non-refundable fee of INR 25,000/- + GST (5%) = INR 26,250/- (Indian Rupees Twenty Six Thousand Two Hundred Fifty only). The fee shall be payable in the form of a demand draft drawn in the favour of The Chairman, BWSSB, Bangalore, drawn from a Nationalized / Scheduled Bank and payable at Bangalore. The Bidders can also download only volume -1 of Bid Documents from the website <https://www.bwssb.gov.in>.
5. Bidders who require further information may obtain the same from the Employer at the above address during working hours. Bid submission is acceptable only through Hard copy (Technical and Financial proposal) in sealed envelopes.
6. The hard copy of the bid documents will be available in this office from **30.12.2019**.
7. The last date of submission of requisition for Blank tender form will be **11.02.2020 till 15.00 hrs.**
8. The Hard copy Bids (Technical and Price Proposal) shall be submitted as per ITB on or before **15.00 hrs on 12.02.2020.**
9. Technical bid opening date: **12.02.2020 at 15.30 hrs.**

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Kaveri)
BWSSB

Rahul, BJP trade charges on Assam detention centres

Congress leader will address rally in Guwahati on Saturday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi is scheduled to address a rally in Guwahati – the epicentre of the nationwide protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act – on Saturday.

His visit will coincide with the foundation day of the Congress.



Rahul Gandhi

"*Jhoothon ka sardar* (master of lies)". The party said Mr. Gandhi was "obfuscating" the fact that detention camps for illegal migrants in Assam were set up when the Congress was in power both at the Centre and the State.

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said at a press conference at the party headquarters in Delhi that Mr. Gandhi had used objectionable language, but that it was too much to ask for decency in public discourse from him.

Mr. Patra showed the official statement issued by the Congress-led UPA government in 2011 stating that detention centres had been set up in Assam.

"Rahul Gandhi is *Jhoothon ka Sardar*. The three detention centres were set up in Assam by his party which was in power both at the Centre and the State," he said.



Actors Swara Bhaskar and Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub at a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

'Reign of terror prevailing in U.P.'

Activists seek SC-monitored probe

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Activists on Thursday alleged that with the Uttar Pradesh government "intimidating" citizens who were protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens, a "reign of terror" was prevailing in the State.

Addressing the media, activists demanded a Supreme Court-monitored SIT probe into police action in the State.

Organised under the banner of "Hum Bharat Ke Log: National Action Against Citizenship Amendment", which includes several rights groups, activist Harsh Mander said the Centre was spreading "blatant lies" especially with regard to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement on the

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Department of Agriculture, AP invites bids for selection of Service provider for Development & Maintenance of **UNIFIED DIGITAL PLATFORM** portal and Mobile App for Dr YSR Agri Labs. For other details please visit : <http://apagrisnet.gov.in> or www.aai.aero. Further clarification / corrigendum/notifications pertaining to the above will be published only on above websites.

Sd/- AIRPORT DIRECTOR

DIPR 296PP/CL, Dt:

Violent protests rock Iraq over PM pick

President says he is ready to resign rather than put forward a candidate rejected by protesters

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BAGHDAD
Iraq's President said on Thursday he was "ready to resign" rather than put forward the candidate of a pro-Iranian coalition for the post of Prime Minister, deepening the country's political crisis.

Barham Saleh's announcement came as anti-government protesters blocked roads and bridges in Baghdad. In the southern city of Nasiriyah, demonstrators set the provincial government building ablaze overnight for a second time since the protests began. Protesters also torched the new headquarters of a pro-Iran militia in Diwaniyah.

In a letter to Parliament, Mr. Saleh said he wished to guarantee the "independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity" of Iraq. But he cited the Constitution, which obliges the President to task the candidate put forward by Parliament's biggest bloc with forming a government.



Sticking to their demands: Anti-government activists walking with a national flag at a makeshift roadblock in the southern city of Basra late on Wednesday. ■ AFP

"With all my respect to (Basra Province Governor) Mr. Assaad al-Aidani, I decline to put him forward for the post," Mr. Saleh wrote.

As that could be seen as violating the Constitution, "I place before members of Parliament my readiness to resign from the position of

President", Mr. Saleh added. Mr. Aidani is considered as the candidate of Iran, which protesters accuse of meddling in Iraqi affairs.

Independent PM'

Weeks into a protest movement that has rocked Baghdad and Iraq's south, leaving

hundreds dead, Parliament is in deadlock over the selection of a replacement for previous Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi. He resigned last month in the face of massive demonstrations over official corruption, economic woes and poor infrastructure despite the country's oil

reserves.

wealth. The demonstrators oppose the entire political class and have vented their anger against leaders who are negotiating to nominate an establishment insider as the next Prime Minister.

Pro-Iranian factions have touted outgoing Higher Education Minister Qusay al-Suhail for the post, later opting for Mr. Aidani after the President rejected Mr. Suhail's nomination. Both are unpopular choices with protesters, who also have slammed Mr. Aidani for crushing previous demonstrations in Basra province last year.

"We don't want Assaad the Iranian!" said protesters in the southern city of Kut.

The protesters want a technocratic premier who has had no involvement in the political system set up after the U.S.-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003.

"The government is hostage to corrupt parties and sectarian divisions", said an activist in Nasiriyah.

It said it had not detained

Russian authorities raid Alexei Navalny's office

Move was linked to criminal investigation, say officials

REUTERS

MOSCOW

Russian authorities raided the Moscow headquarters of Opposition politician Alexei Navalny on Thursday, using power tools to gain entry before dragging Mr. Navalny out by force and confiscating technical equipment such as laptops.

Mr. Navalny and his allies said the raid on his Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) was carried out by the Federal Bailiffs Service and was connected to his refusal to delete a video investigation which levelled graft allegations against Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and billionaire businessman Alisher Usmanov.

The Federal Bailiffs Service said it was carrying out investigative activities at Mr. Navalny's foundation as part of a criminal investigation. It said it had not detained



Alexei Navalny sitting outside his office during the raid on Thursday. ■ REUTERS

anyone during the raid.

Mr. Usmanov brought and won a defamation lawsuit against Mr. Navalny in 2017.

'Won't delete video'

That case ended with a court ordering Mr. Navalny to delete within 10 days all references to the allegations in his video, which Mr. Medvedev and Mr. Usmanov said were utterly false.

Mr. Navalny said on

Thursday he would not delete the video, which has been watched over 32 million times on YouTube since it was first posted in March 2017.

The raid occurred a day after Mr. Navalny said that the forcible military conscription of one of his allies to a remote air base in the Arctic amounted to kidnapping and illegal imprisonment. Allies said Mr. Navalny, who was barred from running in a presidential election against Vladimir Putin last year, had been due to present his own show, which is critical of the authorities, on his online TV channel later on Thursday.

Mr. Navalny's foundation, which specialises in publishing exposés on the alleged corruption of state officials, is the subject of a separate criminal investigation into alleged money laundering.

ELSEWHERE



Italian coalition hit as Minister quits

ROME
Italian Education Minister Lorenzo Fioramonti said on Thursday that he had resigned, dealing a blow to the country's four-month-old coalition government. Mr. Fioramonti, of the anti-establishment Five Star Movement, wrote on Facebook that he resigned because his demand for a minimum level of funding had not been met. ■ AFP

Typhoon Phanfone kills at least 16 in Philippines

MANILA
Typhoon Phanfone swept across remote villages and popular tourist areas of central Philippines on Christmas day claiming at least 16 lives, authorities said on Thursday. Tens of thousands of people in the mostly Catholic nation were also forced to evacuate their homes, they added. ■ AFP

Over 16,000 complaints filed over Afghan polls

KABUL
More than 16,000 complaints have been filed to Afghan election authorities over the handling of this year's presidential polls, officials said on Thursday, days after preliminary results gave President Ashraf Ghani a slim 50.64% majority. If the numbers hold following these investigations, the result is enough for Mr. Ghani to avoid a run-off, after he easily beat his long-time rival Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, who won 39.52% votes. ■ AFP

China, Russia and Iran to hold naval drills in Gulf of Oman

An attempt to deepen cooperation between the three navies'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BEIJING

China, Russia and Iran will hold joint naval drills starting Friday in the Gulf of Oman, Beijing and Tehran said, at a time of heightened tensions since the U.S. withdrew from a landmark nuclear deal with Tehran.

Set to take place from December 27 to 30, the military exercises aim to "deepen exchange and cooperation between the navies of the three

countries", Chinese Defence Ministry spokesman Wu Qian told reporters on Thursday.

Mr. Wu said the Chinese navy would deploy its Xining guided missile destroyer – nicknamed the "carrier killer" for its array of anti-ship and land attack cruise missiles – in the drills.

For Iran, the drill's purpose was to bolster "international commerce security in the region" and "fighting ter-

rorism and piracy," said senior armed forces spokesman Brigadier General Abdolaziz Shekarchi.

The exercise would "stabilise security" in the region and benefit the world, state news agency IRNA quoted him as saying on Wednesday.

China's Foreign Minister said the exercises were part of "normal military cooperation" between the three countries.

Netanyahu faces party leadership challenge

Election results are expected today

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

JERUSALEM

Israel's embattled premier Benjamin Netanyahu faced a challenge on Thursday for the leadership of his Likud party from a longtime rival, former Interior Minister Gideon Saar.

Likud's roughly 1,16,000 eligible voters have until 11 p.m. to choose between Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Saar, with the result expected by early Friday morning.

A defeat for Mr. Netanyahu, 70, would be a shock, but even a relatively close result could weaken his influence over the conservative party he has dominated for 20 years.

After a decade in power,

Benjamin Netanyahu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan government on Thursday filed a review petition against the Supreme Court's decision about legislation on the extension of service of Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

A three-member Bench headed by then Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa on November 28 granted a six-month extension to Gen. Bajwa after being assured by the government that Parliament will pass a legislation on the extension/reappointment of an army chief within 12 months early next year – but only if he first defeats his challenger.

Mr. Netanyahu is Israel's longest serving premier but he has been weakened by a series of corruption indictments. After months of political stalemate, he faces a third general election within 12 months early next year – but only if he first defeats his challenger.

The ruling came in the

nick of time as Gen. Bajwa, 59, was set to retire at midnight on November 28.

In the review petition filed by Attorney General Anwar Mansoor, the government has urged the top court to form a larger Bench to hear the case and set aside the earlier judgment. It also requested the court to keep the proceedings in-camera.

Firdous Ashiq Awan, the Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for Information and Broadcasting, said the review petition was filed "because our legal team thoroughly, comprehensively, and closely reviewed all aspects of the decision and concluded that there are several legal gaps in the verdict."

"With due respect to the judiciary, the government wants rectification of the faults and thus decided to file the review petition," she said.

General Qamar Javed Bajwa

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vernorate, a Houthi rebel stronghold.

At least 12 people were wounded, it said, without saying who was responsible or what weaponry was used.

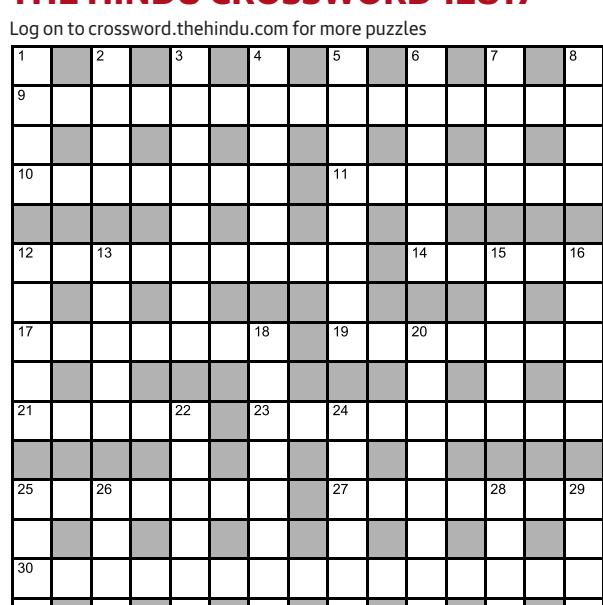
The Saudi-led coalition acknowledged on Thursday it had carried out an operation in Monabbih, a Saada district where the market is located.

The coalition did not provide further details.

An attack on Al-Raqw market on November 22 killed 10 civilians, again including Ethiopian nationals, and just days later, at least another 10 civilians were killed and 22 wounded in a second such incident.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12817

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- 9 No actor got this kind of movie (8,7)
- 10 Actively lead revolutionary struggle before harsh treatment (3,4)
- 11 By and large, UK, for one, is outside EU, at last (7)
- 12 Spooner's sped past packs of Arctic animals (4,5)

(set by Hypatia)

- 14 Gruff Arctic dog (5)
- 17 Mark Twain's plot changed show (7)
- 19 Exactly near main tourist location (4,3)
- 21 Supply, it can crawl without support (5)
- 23 Place for visitors to check out? (9)
- 25 Curtail banter to ban foot? (7)
- 27 Walking outfit (7)
- 30 Take out drawing tip near Joan Miro, perhaps (8,7)
- DOWN
- 1 Just softly pushed out loud couple (4)
- 2 Fight with woman's outlook (4)
- 3 What one on trial should do – lose one's temper? (4,1,3)
- 4 Feel sick, going through doctor's prescription? It's a natural reaction! (6)
- 5 Wretched queen blamed nurses (8)
- 6 Bear hugging river duck (6)
- 7 Shout in Hindi, started by parliamentarian (4)
- 8 Resent messenger delivering nothing (4)
- 12 Is A, B...C possibly this? (5)
- 13 Dull if not drunk (5)
- 15 Charge that woman picked up for Japanese food (5)
- 16 Long story about earth (5)
- 18 Plebiscite re-held suppressing rising dissidents (8)
- 20 Encourage boring 1 playing ordinary broken chord (8)
- 22 Say artist picked up prize (6)
- 24 Chaplin didn't finish playing dictator (6)
- 25 Wife left cereal in microwave (4)
- 26 Look before stone is misplaced (4)
- 28 Hypatia? Not otherwise keen! (4)
- 29 Crow over clothing (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12816

M	S	A	O	P	O	K
C	O	U	P	O	R	S
S	R	O	F	O	C	I
I	S	Q	R	P	L	N
U	N	A	E	I	O	H
M	I	S	T	E	A	T
S	T	E	A	T	E	A
C	O	M	A	T	E	A
P	A	C	T	A	E	A
A	F	F	A	T	E	A
A	F	A	R	D	O	R
L	S	Y	A	E	A	N
N	O	V	E	N	A	S
I	O	N	V	E	S	U
V	E	N	A	S	F	R
E	N	A	S	F	R	G
E	N	A	S	F	R	E
R	E	N	A	S	F	R

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

MARKET WATCH

	26-12-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	41,164	-0.72
US Dollar	71.31	-0.05
Gold	39,630	0.29
Brent oil	67.56	0.86

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	363.65	-4.95
Asian Paints	1809.60	6.15
Axis Bank	736.50	-4.15
Bajaj Auto	3230.05	3.30
Bajaj Finserv	9350.10	55.25
Bajaj Finance	4187.10	47.60
Bharti Airtel	447.55	-9.60
BPCL	477.20	-0.60
Britannia Ind	3062.30	-28.75
Cipla	474.15	-4.55
Coal India	197.30	-1.65
Dr Reddy's Lab	2865.60	-30.35
Eicher Motors	22045.70	177.05
GAIL (India)	118.10	-1.65
Gasim Ind	736.75	-1.75
HCL Tech.	560.50	-0.05
HDFC	2414.10	1.35
HDFC Bank	1270.45	-18.70
Hero MotoCorp	2438.65	6.00
Hindalco	215.00	-1.25
Hind Unilever	1944.95	-1.45
ICICI Bank	538.75	-2.35
IndusInd Bank	1515.40	-6.45
Bharti Infralet	256.20	0.90
Infosys	728.95	-4.45
Indian Oil Corp	125.10	-2.30
ITC	236.80	-1.95
JSW Steel	269.15	2.40
Kotak Bank	1694.25	-17.30
L&T	1279.30	-21.70
M&M	528.35	0.85
Maruti Suzuki	7240.90	-86.90
Nestle India Ltd.	14599.25	13.25
NTPC	116.40	1.20
ONGC	128.00	2.00
PowerGrid Corp	184.85	-2.30
Reliance Ind	1515.40	-31.05
State Bank	329.85	-1.60
Sun Pharma	422.15	-7.65
Tata Motors	174.60	-0.90
Tata Steel	467.90	4.90
TCS	2201.95	-13.65
Tech Mahindra	770.40	-1.65
Titan	1192.50	-11.60
UltraTech Cement	4062.75	-34.60
UPL	569.45	0.30
Vedanta	150.70	2.65
Wipro	250.30	-1.95
YES Bank	48.65	-2.55
Zee Entertainment	297.30	0.05

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	71.11	71.43
Euro	78.83	79.19
British Pound	92.22	92.67
Japanese Yen (100)	64.89	65.18
Chinese Yuan	10.16	10.21
Swiss Franc	72.46	72.79
Singapore Dollar	52.49	52.73
Canadian Dollar	54.06	54.31
Malaysian Ringgit	17.20	17.28

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI
December 26 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses
Retail Silver (1g) 50.4... (47.9) 22 ct gold (1 g) 3697. (3636)

Source: Indian Bank

More 5G spectrum sale on anvil

Telecom department to seek TRAI's views on auction for 24.75-27.25 GHz band

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

NEW DELHI

Preparations have started to bring in more 5G spectrum to be put on sale towards the end of 2020, according to an official.

This comes in the wake of the Centre's decision to conduct auctions for more than 8,300 MHz of spectrum, including those to be used to offer 5G service, in March-April next year.

The Department of Telecom (DoT) will soon seek the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI) recommendation on the auction of spectrum in the 24.75 to 27.25 GHz band, which is considered highly suited to 5G services deployment.

"We will soon be making a reference to TRAI for millimeter bands (24.75 GHz to



DoT has received applications from Ericsson, Samsung, Nokia, Huawei, ZTE and two others for 5G trials. ■ P.V. SIVAKUMAR

27.25 GHz)... these are 5G bands... This we plan to auction sometime late next year," a senior Ministry official said.

The Cellular Operators Association of India has been requesting the government to seek TRAI's views on 26

GHz band. Earlier this month, the Digital Communications Commission – the highest decision-making body in the DoT – gave its approval for TRAI's recommendation to put 8300 MHz of airwaves across 22 circles up for sale. About 35% of this spectrum is for 5G services.

5G trials

Asked about 5G trials, the official said the DoT had received seven applications, including from players such as Ericsson, Samsung, Nokia, Huawei and ZTE.

"The DoT will be calling each one of them to discuss what their plans are and evaluate their needs and then take a call accordingly. This should be finalised in the January-March quarter," the official added.

Oil nears \$68, highest in three months

REUTERS

LONDON

Oil rose towards \$68 a barrel to its highest in over three months on Thursday, buoyed by a report showing lower U.S. crude inventories, hopes of an end to the China-U.S. trade dispute and OPEC-led efforts to constrain supply.

The American Petroleum Institute, an oil industry group, said that U.S. crude stocks fell by 7.9 million barrels last week, much more than the decline forecast by analysts.

Brent crude, the global benchmark, reached \$67.83 a barrel, the highest since Sept. 17, and by late afternoon GMT was up 39 cents at \$67.59. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude gained 14 cents to \$61.25.

Tepid enthusiasm

In 2019, as many as 47 companies

Year	IPOs	OFS	QIPs
2019	12,982	25,811	35,238
2018	33,246	10,672	16,587
2017	68,827	18,094	61,148
2016	27,031	13,066	4,712
2015	13,874	35,566	19,065
2014	1,468	5,011	31,684
2013	1,619	23,964	8,075
2012	6,938	23,769	4,705
2011	5,966	-	3,459
2010	37,535	-	26,147
2009	19,544	-	34,676

All figures in ₹ cr.

Source: Prime Database

Initial public offers stayed muted in 2019

Offers-for-sale, however, saw a surge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

diamart Intermesh also registered a strong response. The year saw 47 companies – with a cumulative issue size of over ₹51,000 crore – allowing regulatory approvals to lapse even though such approvals by the Securities and Exchange Board of India are valid for a period of one year.

The American Petroleum Institute, an oil industry group, said that U.S. crude stocks fell by 7.9 million barrels last week, much more than the decline forecast by analysts.

In 2019, a total of ₹81,74 crore was raised through the public equity markets, which was 28% higher than the ₹63,651 crore raised in calendar year 2018, according to Prime Database. Incidentally, this was about half of the all-time high of ₹1.6 lakh crore seen in 2017.

In terms of IPOs, 2019 saw only 16 main board issues that collectively raised ₹12,362 crore, a decline of 60% compared with last year's ₹30,959 crore raised from 24 offers. The largest IPO in 2019 was of Sterlite & Wilson Solar for ₹2,850 crore. The average deal size was pegged at ₹773 crore.

Meanwhile, OFS saw a significant jump in the year with a total of ₹25,811 crore raised in 2019 against ₹10,672 crore in 2018. Of this, the government's divestment accounted for ₹5,871 crore, or 23% of the overall amount. The largest OFS was by Axis Bank, followed by SBI Life Insurance and HDFC Life Insurance.

As many as 11 firms mobilised ₹35,238 crore via QIPs, which was more than double last year's ₹16,587 crore raised via QIPs.

Rising prices to aid Essar Steel

'U.S.-China deal to spur metals; quicker turnaround likely'

PIYUSH PANDEY

MUMBAI

Stances of this case, the default has occurred due to lethargic indifference and needless procrastination and laxity of the Noticee...

"The brazen failure had clearly defeated the purposes of the regulations i.e. investor protection and orderly development of the securities markets... the default is grave and the gravity of this matter cannot be ignored," the SEBI probe has alleged.

ArcelorMittal has formed a 60:40 JV with Nippon Steel to operate Essar Steel and its immediate focus is to enhance the operating capacity of the plant to 8.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) in the medium term and to 15 MTPA in the long term.

Discussion on plans

The board of the JV held a meeting to discuss turnaround plans. The company declined to offer any comment on the plans beyond its

commitment to enhance the capacity to 15 MTPA.

Sanjiv Bhasin, director, IIFL Securities, told *The Hindu*, "Steel prices have already bottomed out and 2020 will be a great year for metal stocks with the trade deal between U.S. and China. Globally, steel prices have started improving and the same trend is expected in India with lower imports."

However, the JV may find it difficult to ramp up capacity especially when the demand is yet to pick up in India. "Selling steel in India becomes difficult amid weak demand," said an analyst.

Vivek Kamra, MD of Alvarez & Marsal's performance improvement and restructuring business in India, told *The Hindu*, "There was a 25% rise in production to 7

MTPA while the company was still under IBC."

Rising market share

It also helped that, as the IBC process was going on, the firm was not liable to pay interest during the moratorium period.

"They were able to offer a discount of about 2% compared with competition to enhance market share as the company saved around 12% on interest costs during the moratorium period," a person close to the development said.

Analysts said the JV could have a competitive edge over Indian peers as it can raise funds from Japan and the global markets at sub-4% compared with double-digit interest costs paid by competitors in India.

Reliance values retail arm at ₹2.4 lakh crore

Offers 1:4 share swap to retail unit staff

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Reliance Retail has been valued at ₹2.4 lakh crore, with its parent Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) offering one share in RIL for every four shares held in the retail arm to its employees under a share swap scheme.

The proposed scheme will not alter the capital structure of any of the companies.

"This will provide liquidity to Reliance Retail employees as RIL shares are listed, while Reliance Retail's are not," said a source in the know of the development.</p

Who put chicken in my sushi?

Thomas Zacharias picks the top five dishes that blew him away during his Chef On The Road trips in 2019

RANJANI RAJENDRA

His Instagram feed is usually filled with posts of him travelling either through the country or abroad. His trips are typically centred around food; after all, they are the Chef On The Road trips that Thomas Zacharias, executive chef and partner at The Bombay Canteen, undertakes several times a year. These trips go on to inspire his innovative menus at the restaurant that has gone on to be voted as one of the best in the country.

Here, he shares the five best foods he got to try this past year during his travels.

Chicken sashimi

I'd gone to Japan early this year, and one of the dishes that completely blew me away was a chicken sashimi I had at a yakitori place in Kyoto called Kuchibashi Modern.

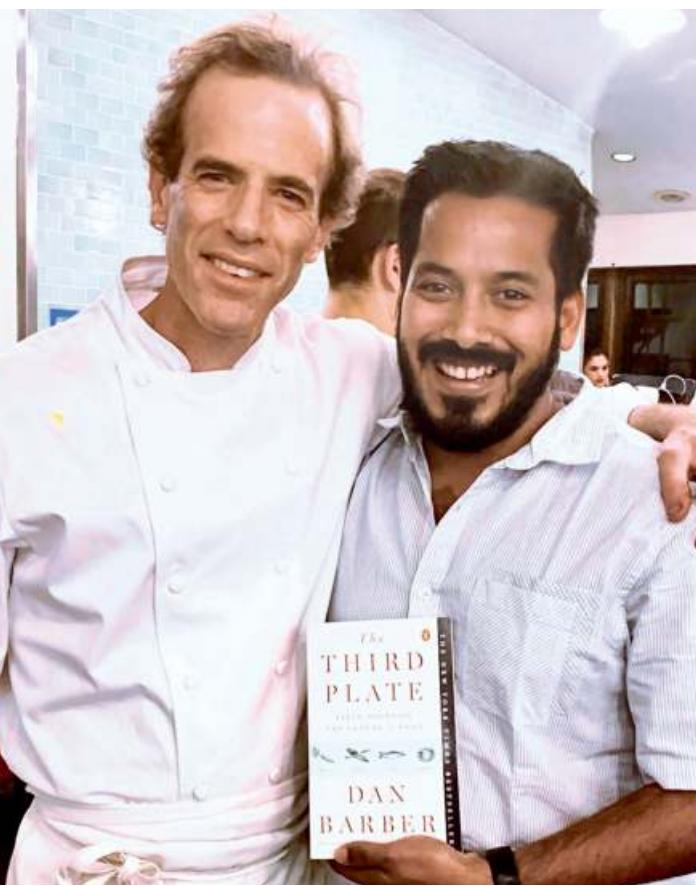
They have a special breed of poultry that is bred for sashimi; the bird is processed just before it is served to ensure freshness. It is typically eaten with wasabi and soy; and honestly, the dish made me rethink a lot of things about textures and flavours.

Until then, I had never thought that chicken sashimi would be so enjoyable or that I would be wowed by it. But it was one of those dishes that I wanted to order again.

Mushroom ceviche

This one was closer home; a delightful mushroom ceviche created by Chef Hussain Shahzad at O Pedro in Mumbai. It was a simple enough dish with some pickled oyster mushrooms, lima beans and a crisp tempura.

However, the depth of flavour the dish boasted was something else. I simply loved it.

**Wild thali**

Before the monsoon season, I had gone with the guys from the OOO Farms to Akole in the Sahyadri hills. Here, I met tribals and got to sample their cooking. They use vegetables that are either foraged or locally found, like pendra, gharbandi, chal vel and mahua fruit. Their cooking technique itself was quite simple but flavourful. All they would use was some

green chillies, onions and garlic. I realised just how little we know of local produce; it was a turning point for me and also paved the way for the evolving food at The Bombay Canteen. It was following this trip that we hosted Taste of the Wild, a two-month-long exploration of vegetables found in Maharashtra.

Chhatu patra poda

During my trip to Odisha, I happened to dine at the home of Alka Je-



Year in food
(Clockwise from far left) Thomas Zacharias with Dan Barber; mushroom ceviche; chicken sashimi; chhatu patra poda; wild thali in Akole

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

na, where I had the chhatu patra poda. It is basically straw mushrooms, mustard, green chillies and onions that are wrapped in sal leaves and charred. I loved the technique and the way the different flavours came together. It opened my eyes to how different Odia food is.

Beet steak

In November this year, I worked at Blue Hill at Stone Barns for a week while travelling to New York. Helmed by Dan Barber, it is a modern farm-to-table restaurant. I have followed Dan's work closely and to be able to work and talk to him was undoubtedly the highlight of my year. Towards the end of my week there, the team treated me to a 30-course meal that lasted four-and-a-half hours! It was here that I tried the beet steak; it was one of the last savoury courses. The beet was charred and sliced to look like steak; it was then served with some beet greens, beet puree and four slices of beef. The coolest part: the sauce



basically looked like a candle and we'd assumed it was part of the table décor. The wax, however, was made of beef fat, which was then poured into a gravy boat. The meal was a relook at how to achieve a balance on our plates, which are usually meat heavy with some starch and vegetables. Here, the vegetable was the star and the meat a mere accompaniment.

Strictly for the epicurean (From left) Thai Chicken Red Curry; Dim Sums

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



ghee. But another old favourite of mine – the fiery Andhra speciality Chicken 65 – did not impress me much. I found the chicken a bit too dry and salty. The Lemon Rice was not bad, but it was a wee bit dry, too. I love it when the lemon rice is moist.

The delivery services (Swiggy and Zomato) right now have the old menus, but I am told they will soon include all these delightful dishes – Sushi Rolls, Chinese Chilli Chicken with capsicum and onions, tempuras, Dim Sums, Chicken Korma, Dhaba Chicken, Aviyal, Vegetable Chettinad et al.

To end your meal, I would suggest that you get some Kheerer Singara – samosas prepared with sweetened and thickened milk – from New Annapurna Sweets near Yusuf Sarai. My brother-in-law sent some across, and I thought they were the most delicious sweets I had eaten in a very long time. That, to my mind, was the best way to end a meal on a cold winter's night.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

PEOPLE**Clay plan**

A weekend course will begin this weekend, at Claying Thoughts, a roof-top pottery studio in Noida



"You just need to love mud," says Pooja Verma, founder of Claying Thoughts, as she talks of how anyone can be a potter. She herself worked in PR and marketing, before turning to pottery full-time, first exploring the wheel, and then shifting to hand-building items, setting up her terrace studio in 2013. "I was always inquisitive about 3D craft and that drew me towards pottery," she says, adding that the first thing she ever crafted was a coil pot: The technique is her favourite style. Here, she talks about her journey and the course she has instituted.

Is pottery a sustainable practice?

We potters are really connected to the earth. We don't waste anything, so if something can't be used at home, we get it to the studio because anything can be utilised there. I believe in sustainability, that way my expenditure on the studio is minimal. If my neighbours have to throw something out, they ask me if I can get some use out of it.

What has your passion for pottery taught you in life?

Besides patience, I have learnt the art of detachment. Making a pot is like rearing a child. You spend a lot of time in preparing the clay, smoothening, designing and perfecting the details. Then you have to send your piece for bisque firing, where there is a good 10% chance that your pot will break. Initially, I used to get very upset over not receiving my art back in one piece. Eventually I learnt to enjoy the process and not be focused on the results.

What is the course all about?

The course is for beginners to experience pottery-making using handbuilding techniques. Participants will learn foundation techniques – slab, pinch, and coil building and combine them to create some interesting clay forms. They will be given a step by step demonstration of processes and will get a chance to create an independent clay project using their own idea or choose from the projects available. At the end of workshop, participants can take back their creation home.

Every weekend, from December 28th to January 26th at Claying Thoughts, Noida, Sector 21; ₹5,500 for eight sessions

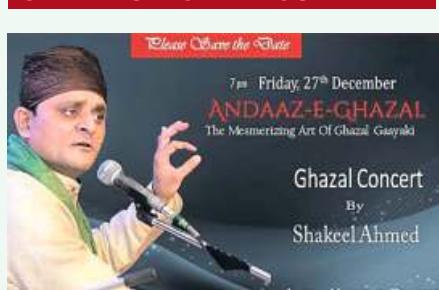
SHUBHRA ROY

PRODUCT**History on your hands**

Jaipur Watch Company's new limited edition series makes dials out of Indian postage stamps from 1937-1940. The stamps, originally printed at the Security Printing Press in Nashik, featured a portrait of King George VI. These watches come with a handmade leather strap, and a lotus engraving much like the reverse side of the One Rupee coin from the same era.

Upwards of ₹1,40,000; for more details about stores and ordering, jaipur.watch

Contact us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE**MUSIC**

Ghazal
Popular singer and composer Shakeel Ahmed will perform *Rooh-e-Ghazal*, an evening of music celebrating the ghazals of *Ustad Shayar*. The presentation will highlight the work and contribution of poets who were instrumental in shaping the ghazal. The evening promises some original compositions by the singer.

VENUE: Amaltas Hall, India Habitat Centre

TIME: 7 p.m.

**F&B**

Winter special
Masia, a new restaurant which specialises in Indian and Asian cuisine, has launched a special menu with signature cocktails for the winter. Curated by chef Chanchal Dutta the menu has Hanoi Lotus Root, Burmese Chili Garlic Corn, Lemongrass Chicken and Avocado, Shrimp Rolls, Goshit Seekh, Gunpowder Prawn, and others.

VENUE: Plot 102A, Sector 38, Noida

TIME: 11:30 a.m. - 12 midnight

**GIG**

Pop
The Piano Man Jazz Club presents rock, pop and fusion music tonight by Saptak Chatterjee. A singer-composer and producer based out of Delhi, Saptak is an independent artist, belonging to a third generation of a Hindustani classical music family. He has already released two albums titled *Kehishba* and *Material & Mind*.

VENUE: B 6-7/22 Safdarjung Enclave Market,

TIME: 9 p.m. - 11:55 p.m.

**DINING**

Festive menu
Asian cuisine BOA (Best of Asia) Village has introduced a special menu for the New Year festive season. On until 31st December, the special spread offers traditional favourites such as, Peking Duck, Honey Glazed Salmon Steak, Chicken Katsu Sushi, Hakusai Hosu Sushi, and Blueberry Cheese Cake and Plum Cake.

VENUE: Exchange Store Building, Civil Lines

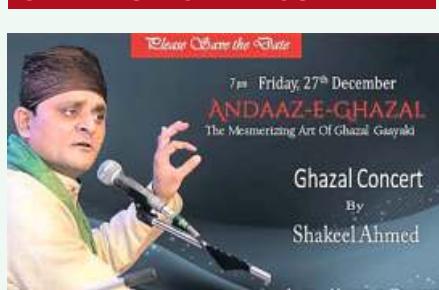
TIME: 11 a.m. - 1 a.m.

**FILM**

English classic
American Center, New Delhi will screen *Miracle on 34th Street*, an English classic film, this evening. Directed by George Seaton the story of this 1947 film takes place between Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day in New York City. It revolves around an elderly man Kris Kringle, who believes he is Santa Claus.

VENUE: American Center, 24, K. G. Marg

TIME: 6 p.m.

CMYK**MUSIC**

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Zoya Akhtar, Anurag Kashyap, Dibakar Banerjee and Karan Johar talk to MetroPlus on what scares them in film and in real life

United in HORROR

NAMRATA JOSHI

Five years after *Bombay Talkies*, Zoya Akhtar, Anurag Kashyap, Dibakar Banerjee and Karan Johar had directed another four-film omnibus, *Lust Stories*, last year for Netflix. They must have liked being in each other's company, as they have reunited again after 18 months for a quartet of scary tales, *Ghost Stories*, that drops on Netflix on the very last day of this decade. Edited excerpts from a short but no-holds-barred interaction with them, in which we started off by asking the obvious question...

Why ghosts?

Karan Johar: I got carried away at the screening of *Lust Stories* and decided let's jump in the deep end of the ocean. I suggested horror and everyone really got excited.

Then I realised how stupid I was to have suggested it, because I didn't know if I had the ability to pull off this genre. I dug my own grave but I ventured into it, kicking and screaming. I tried very hard to get out of it. We have a group chat in which I kept saying 'I can't do this, can we think of something else', but by then they had already shot their films. I was too late.

You work independently on films, do not consult each other. How have each of you interpreted horror? How similar, different?

AK: We are very different I think... But it

somewhat falls together.

KJ: It never seems to jump out. Thematically we are unified.

How is your horror different, Karan?

KJ: Mine is a ghost story.

AK: It's a spooked.

KJ: Mine is a pretty ghost story. Zoya described it really well. She said it was a Disney horror film.

DB: It is fun.

AK: There are at least two very laugh-out-loud moments.

KJ: Mine comes right at the end so after you have got scared, mine is the relief at the end.

What about yours, Dibakar?

DB: I haven't done a 'ghost ghost' story as such. I have grown up on stories that come from Indian folklore – *bhoot, pret, pishaach, raakshas, daitya*. Then there are lots in Bengali culture like *brahmmodaityo, shakchunnii, petni*. It came somewhere from there...

So yours is a sanskari ghost?

DB: No... Is it? [wonders]

KJ: His film will shake your foundation off. That's what it did to me. I thought I was going to have a cardiac arrest...

AK: It is a sanskari ghost. He has made a sanskari ghost story; how dangerous sanskari can be.

KJ: It is not sanskari but it is definitely a commentary-wala ghost.

AK: Most political...

DB: But the ghost is not doing the com-

mentary, ghost is having fun. Commentary *kuchh aur hai*.

Yours, Zoya?

AK: Hers is a ghost story. She is very diligent.

ZA: It's a classic ghost story. About two women. I think it's a bit of a feminist film. I don't know how else to put it.

DB: When we finished watching each other's films, I turned to her and said 'heartbreaking'.

And Anurag, is yours sledgehammer, like you are [these days]?

AK: Mine is a story that crawls upon you. It's atmospheric horror. What I like is what I got to do. It's a slow burn...

Are you all admirers of horror?

KJ: Not at all. I am not admiring of any such thing.

AK: I like horror.

DB: I like.

ZA: I also.

So 3:1!

KJ: I don't admire the genre at all. I don't watch it. I would admire it if I watched it.

I can't tell you that I have admired

Ramsay Brothers because those are the ones I have seen.

Then I can't ask you your favourite horror film...

KJ: No

DB: For the 23rd time in two days [of media interactions] *The Blair Witch Project*. So many people have asked me. Can I change it? The film that really scared me and also fascinated me is actually a short film by [Satyajit] Ray.

Called *Monihara: The Lost Jewels*. It is part of *Teen Kanya*. One of the stories in it. It was the original anthology that he did. It was made out of three [Rabindranath] Tagore stories if I am not mistaken. And this is a ghost story somewhere in the 20th century Bengal.

ZA: There are some that are scary and still creep me out. *Rosemary's Baby*, it's just an amazing film, *The Shining*, the first *The Omen*, *The Exorcist*. *The Sixth Sense* freaks me out.

AK: Classic horror is always good.

KJ: I remember one film I saw that I never recovered from, that scared me was *Carrie*. I think that's what scarred me when it comes to the genre.

DB: The Brian De Palma version or the new one?

KJ: Sissy Spacek...

ZA: That's Brian De Palma and it's superb.

AK: I like them all. I can talk about the last two decades. *Let The Right One In*, *Midsommar*, *The Witch*, *Halloween*, *Us*, *Get Out*, *The Devil's Backbone*.

DB: I have one schlock favourite, *Jeep-*

Chills and thrills Anurag Kashyap, Karan Johar, Zoya Akhtar and Dibakar Banerjee; a still from *Ghost Stories*
■ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ers Creepers 1.

KJ: There are two of those?

DB: I think there are three.

KJ: It's a franchise!

DB: You should see it.

KJ: I will not do any such thing.

AK: You don't like *Scream*, *Halloween*?

KJ: I don't like.

ZA: *Halloween* is very good.

AK: *I Know What You Did Last Summer* bhi nahin dekha? [asking Karan]

KJ: I have seen this anthology like this [covers his face].

DB: Wahi to mazaa hai.

Let's move on to horror in real life?

AK: What's happening in the country...

That's also your fear? [posed to all the four]

AK: My biggest fear is the people I have put at risk by putting myself out there. More than [about] me, it's people close to me, who I work with... I am inherently a survivor, but people around me, I don't think are equipped to be survivors.

ZA: Loss of human rights is horrific. It frightens me and it's here, there, everywhere. It's global.

AK: Power in the hands of people who are so unaware.

[Turning to Johar] You dislike horror. Is that why you keep away from it for real too?

KJ: The way I have addressed any kind of horrific situation, be it within the confines of our country or anything else, is to do it in my way. The film I am making next [*Takht*] is a very solid film based on commentary. I don't like to say these things. I think the more you state it, the more it dilutes what it is. It's a solid commentary film and it's saying something very strong.

DB: Three-four years ago, when the process started with the clamping down of JNU [Jawaharlal Nehru University] and FTII [Film and Television Institute of India] and when FTII was butchered with, we did something [referring to award wapsi] and at that point I had said that it wasn't a cinema industry issue.

I said that it was an education issue. If you stop students from asking questions then how will they learn? If you stop people from questioning then how will anyone learn anything and how will the society go forward?

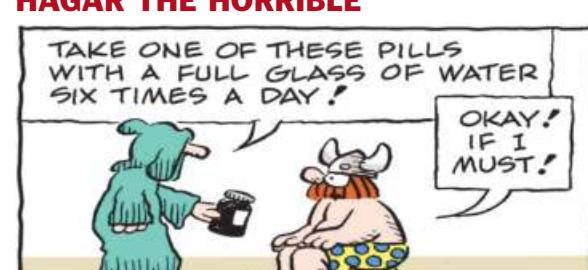
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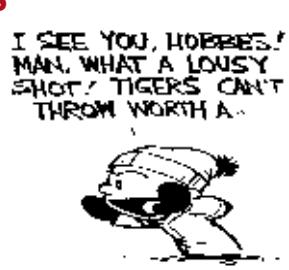
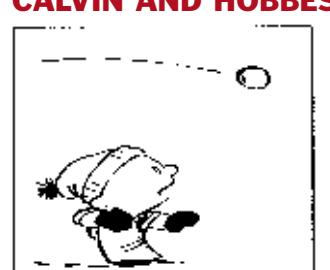
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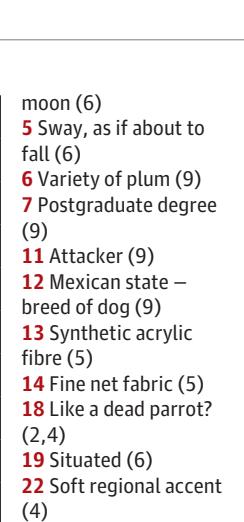
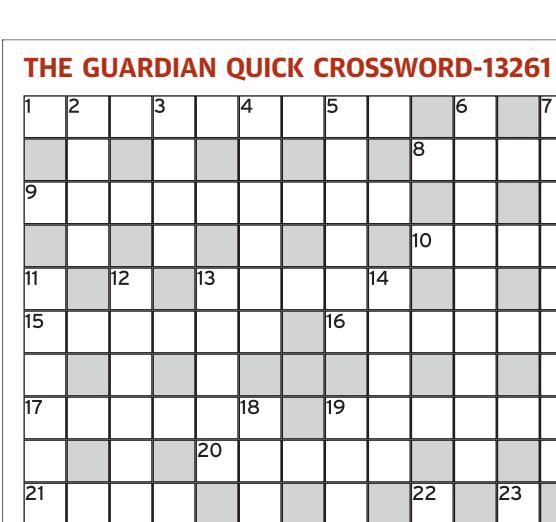
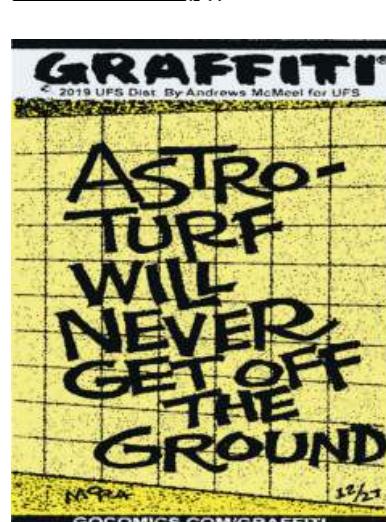
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



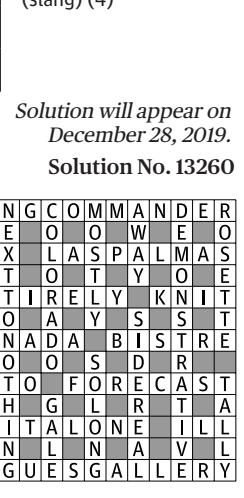
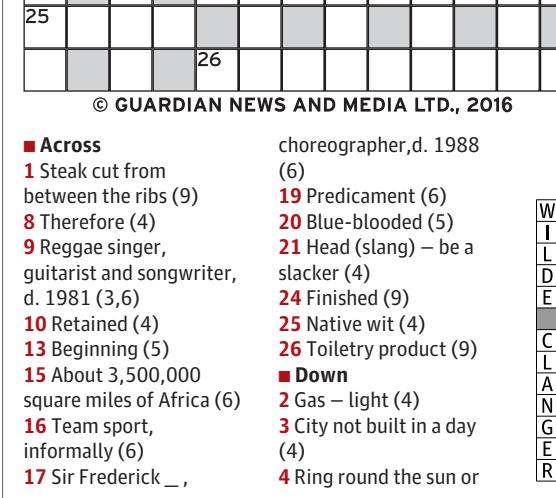
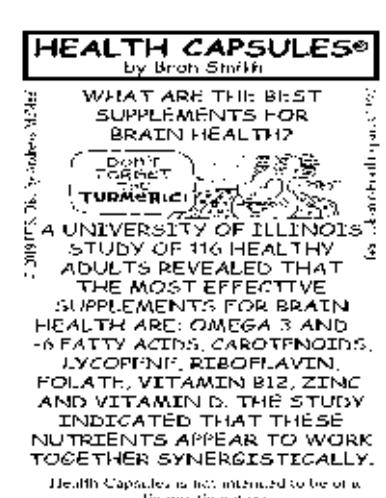
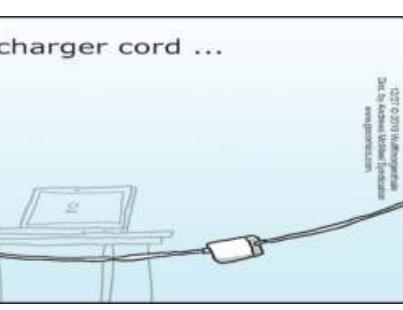
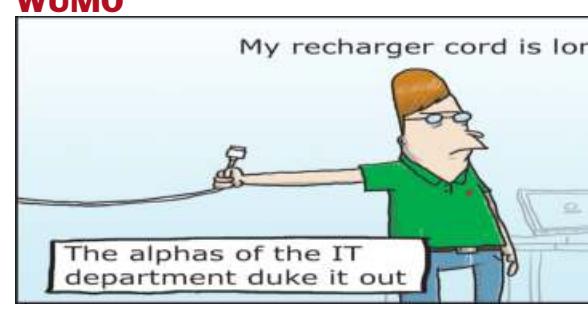
CALVIN AND HOBBES



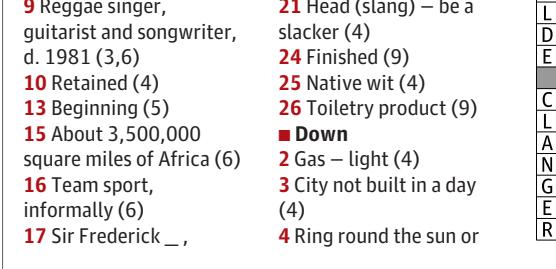
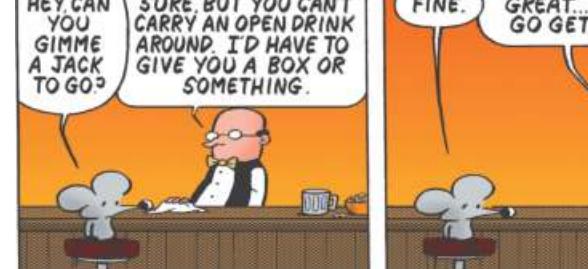
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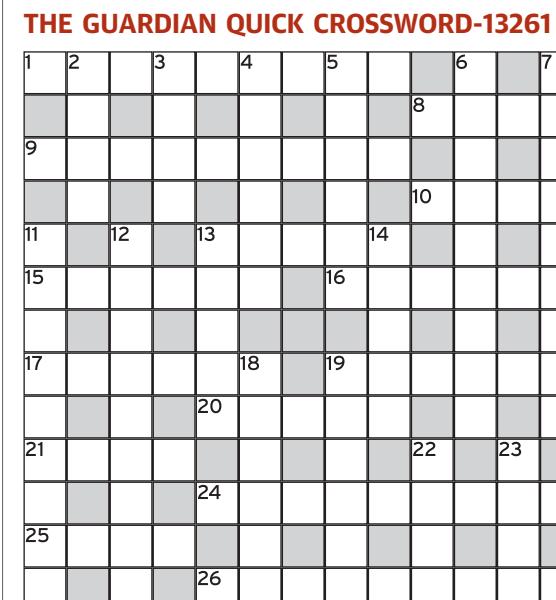
WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13261



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- Across
 - 1 Steak cut from between the ribs (9)
 - 4 Therefore (4)
 - 8 Reggae singer, guitarist and songwriter, d. 1981 (3,6)
 - 10 Retained (4)
 - 13 Beginning (5)
 - 15 About 3,500,000 square miles of Africa (6)
 - 16 Team sport, informally (6)
 - 17 Sir Frederick ...
- Down
 - 2 Blue-blooded (5)
 - 4 Slacker (4)
 - 5 Native wit (4)
 - 6 Toiletry product (9)
 - 7 Postgraduate degree (9)
 - 9 Attacker (9)
 - 11 Mexican state – breed of dog (9)
 - 12 Synthetic acrylic fibre (5)
 - 14 Fine net fabric (5)
 - 18 Like a dead parrot? (2,4)
 - 19 Situated (6)
 - 20 Soft regional accent (4)
 - 21 Head (slang) – be a
 - 22 Torn around.

Solution will appear on December 28, 2019.

Solution No. I3260



Smith eyes ton as Australia seizes control

Labuschagne and Warner rally after Boult dismisses Burns first ball

NZ IN AUSTRALIA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Master batsman Steve Smith ground out an unbeaten 77 on Thursday as he zeroed in on yet another century, putting Australia in the driving seat after the opening day of the second Test here against New Zealand.

In the Black Caps' first Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground since 1987, skipper Kane Williamson opted to bowl, and it looked to be a good decision with Joe Burns out first ball and David Warner just before lunch.

Frustation for Kiwis

But first Marnus Labuschagne (63), the world's leading run-scorer for 2019, and then Smith smacked half-centuries to seize back control and leave Australia on 257 for four, frustrating the disciplined Kiwi bowlers.

Along with the fidgety Smith, Travis Head was not out on 25, desperate for runs after a lean spell.

The signs are ominous for New Zealand with Smith scoring centuries in his past four Tests in Melbourne, and a fifth looking likely.

It was a bold decision by Williamson to bowl on a pitch that has traditionally been docile and favoured the batsmen.

And it appeared to pay dividends in a sizzling opening



Thunderbolt: Trent Boult rearranges Joe Burns' stumps for a golden duck. ■ AP

over from Trent Boult, back after missing two Tests with a rib injury. After three testing balls to Warner, his fourth clattered into Burns' middle stump, with the opener out for a golden duck.

Boult and Tim Southee found early swing and zip with the ball.

Boos and cheers

After Burns fell, Labuschagne and Warner dug in to wrestle back the initiative before a Neil Wagner delivery saw Warner caught at slip for 41, with Southee taking an

outstanding one-handed catch. The in-form Labuschagne looked set for another big score after plundering his fifth consecutive 50, having converted three of his previous four into centuries.

But it wasn't to be and he was out in bizarre fashion, with a rising de Grandhomme ball ricocheting off his elbow and onto the stumps as he attempted to leave it. Smith was met with a mix of boos and cheers as he walked to the crease and after a poor summer, by his standards, appeared deter-

mined to build a decent score. It was slow going, but he brought up his 28th Test half-century off 103 balls – his first in four Tests.

Along the way he passed Greg Chappell (7,110 runs) to

become Australia's 10th highest run-scorer, with David Boon's 7,422 his next target.

As in Perth, Matthew Wade again came under a short-ball barrage from Neil Wagner.

SCOREBOARD

Australia – 1st innings: D. Warner c Southee b Wagner 41, J. Burns b Boult 0, M. Labuschagne b de Grandhomme 63, S. Smith (batting) 77, M. Wade Watling b de Grandhomme 38, T. Head (batting) 25; Extras (lb-11, b-1, w-1); 13; Total (for four wkts. in 90

overs): 257.

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-61, 3-144, 4-216.

New Zealand bowling: Boult 20-2-60-1, Southee 21-5-63-0, de Grandhomme 21-5-48-2, Wagner 21-7-40-1, Santner 7-1-34-0.

Toss: New Zealand.

de Kock to South Africa's rescue

ENGLAND IN SA

REUTERS
CENTURION

Quinton de Kock fell five runs short of his century after dragging South Africa out of early trouble to 277 for nine at the close on the opening day of the first Test against England at the SuperSport Park on Thursday.

England took a wicket with the opening delivery of the four-Test series and had the host teetering on 111 for five after lunch but de Kock's beligerent innings brought South Africa back into the match.

First-ball wicket

James Anderson marked his 150th cap and return to the England attack with the first-ball wicket of opener Dean El-



Taking responsibility: Sam Curran led the way for England by picking up four wickets. ■ AFP

gar, setting the tourists up for early domination of an inexperienced home side.

Sam Curran's skilful bowling earned him figures of four for 57 and Stuart Broad returned from illness to claim three for 52. Broad also be-

came the second bowler after Anderson to take 400 Test wickets this decade.

But de Kock wrested the initiative away from England with an innings that combined early aggression with later circumspection.

SCOREBOARD

South Africa – 1st innings: D. Elgar c Buttler b Anderson 0, A. Markram c Bairstow b Curran 20, Z. Hamza c Stokes b Broad 39, F. du Plessis c Root b Broad 29, H. van der Dussen c Root b Curran 6, Q. de Kock c Buttler b Curran 95, D. Pretorius c Root b Curran 33, V. Philander (batting) 28, K. Maharaj c Stokes b Archer 6, K. Rabada b Broad 12; Extras (lb-4, nb-2, w-3); 9; Total (for nine wkts. in 82.4 overs): 277.

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-32, 3-71, 4-97, 5-111, 6-198, 7-245, 8-252, 9-277.

England bowling: Anderson 20-4-69-1, Broad 17-4-45-2, Curran 19-5-57-4, Archer 19-4-65-1, Root 4-0-26-0, Denly 3-0-4-0.

Toss: England.

Virender Sehwag to deliver Pataudi lecture

SHAYAN ACHARYA
MUMBAI

Virender Sehwag will deliver the seventh Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi Lecture in Mumbai on January 12. This was confirmed by BCCI president Sourav Ganguly to Sportstar on Thursday. The BCCI awards will also be given away on the same day.

Earlier, it was speculated that Sachin Tendulkar could deliver the memorial lecture, which is being organised since 2013. However, with Tendulkar travelling around that time, the Board has zeroed in on Sehwag – who has played 104 Tests, 251 ODIs and 19 T20Is for India.

Established to honour the former India captain, who passed away in 2011, the in-



Virender Sehwag. ■ FILE PHOTO

augural lecture was delivered by Sunil Gavaskar in February 2013 at Chennai.

Apart from Gavaskar, Anil Kumble, V.V.S. Laxman, Rahul Dravid and Farokh Engineer have done the honours.

Former England player Kevin Pietersen had delivered the last lecture in Bengaluru.

Goa comes out on top in a thriller

Chennaiyin's errors in the first half cost it dear

ISL

K. KEERTHIVASAN
CHENNAI

FC Goa took ample advantage of Chennaiyin FC's laxity in the first session to script a thrilling 4-3 win in the Indian Super League match here on Thursday.

The three goals conceded in the first 45 minutes put paid to the hopes of the host in the end analysis.

Trailing 3-0, Chennaiyin fought well to score two quick goals in the second session and one more towards the final moments of the match, but those weren't enough.

The contest saw 11 yellow and two red cards being flashed. Edwin Vanspaul (Chennaiyin) and Sergio Lobero (head coach of Goa) picked up red cards.

With this win, Goa took its tally to 21 points from 10 matches to remain at the top while Chennaiyin is in eighth position with nine points

from as many encounters.

For the first 20-odd minutes, even though Goa had more ball possession, Chennaiyin clearly had the edge in the coffin with a clean strike.

However, Goa scored first. A Tondrona Singh back-pass found Ferran Corominas, who ran past from the right to pass it to Hugo Boumous. The Frenchman then neatly passed it to Ahmed Jahouh and the Moroccan's right-footer gave little chance to the keeper Vishal Kaith.

The next two goals were in large part due to error in judgement of the host captain Lucian Goian. First, a back-pass from Edwin Vanspaul saw the Italian central defender fail to collect the ball properly. As a result, Brandon Fernandes had enough time to put it across the keeper Vishal Kaith.

The next two goals were in large part due to error in judgement of the host captain Lucian Goian. First, a back-pass from Edwin Vanspaul saw the Italian central defender fail to collect the ball properly. As a result, Brandon Fernandes had enough time to put it across the keeper Vishal Kaith.

The result: Chennaiyin FC 3 (Andre Schembri 57, Rafael Crivellaro 59 & 90) lost to FC Goa 4 (Ahmed Jahouh 26, Brandon Fernandes 41, Hugo Boumous 45, Ferran Corominas 63).

Crivellaro and a fine left-footer by latter reduced the margin for Chennaiyin. But Corominas hit the final nail on the coffin with a clean strike.

Crivellaro's curving left-footer gave a faint glimmer of hope for the host, but all went down the drain, thanks to lethargic moments in the first half.

Displeasure over refereeing

Chennaiyin's co-owner Vita Dani has expressed her displeasure on the quality of refereeing. "It was a disappointing game, but the standard of refereeing is getting poorer and poorer. I am sure all teams are suffering from this. However, I think Chennaiyin is suffering the most from it," she said while speaking to Star Sports.

The result: Chennaiyin FC 3 (Andre Schembri 57, Rafael Crivellaro 59 & 90) lost to FC Goa 4 (Ahmed Jahouh 26, Brandon Fernandes 41, Hugo Boumous 45, Ferran Corominas 63).

Mikel Arteta got off to an underwhelming start as Arsenal manager with a 1-1 draw at Bournemouth as Chelsea slumped to another shock home reverse, losing 2-0 to Southampton, on Boxing Day.

Carlo Ancelotti had a more positive impact on his Everton bow as Dominic Calvert-Lewin's brilliant diving header earned a 1-0 win over Burnley.

Chelsea's defeat allowed Tottenham to move back to within three points of the top four as it came from behind to beat Brighton 2-1 thanks to goals from Harry Kane and Dele Alli.

Arteta got an early lesson in the flaws that have blighted Arsenal's season as it was caught out trying to play

Aubameyang saves Arsenal's blushes

Kane and Alli give Spurs full points



Drawing level: Harry Kane fires in Spurs' equaliser. ■ AFP

Premier League

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Mikel Arteta got off to an underwhelming start as Arsenal manager with a 1-1 draw at Bournemouth as Chelsea slumped to another shock home reverse, losing 2-0 to Southampton, on Boxing Day.

The Blues have now lost to West Ham, Bournemouth and the Saints in their last four home league games.

The result: Aston Villa 1 (Houlihan 64) bt Norwich 0; Bournemouth 1 (Gosling 35) drew with Arsenal 1 (Aubameyang 63); Chelsea 0 lost to Southampton 2 (Obafemi 31, Redmond 73); Crystal Palace 2 (Kouyate 68, Ayew 90) bt West Ham 0 (Snodgrass 57); Everton 1 (Calvert-Lewin 80) bt Burnley 0; Sheffield United 1 (Norwood 36-pen) drew with Watford 1 (Deulofeu 27); Tottenham 2 (Kane 53, Alli 72) bt Brighton 1 (Webster 37).

Arteta got an early lesson in the flaws that have blighted Arsenal's season as it was caught out trying to play



Cool finish: Brandon Fernandes of FC Goa had enough time to put one past Chennaiyin FC goalkeeper Vishal Kaith ■ RAGU

Kohli among Wisden's Cricketers-of-the-Decade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

India captain Virat Kohli has been named in the Cricketers-of-the-Decade list alongside four others by Wisden Cricketers' Almanack.

South Africans Dale Steyn and A.B. de Villiers, Australia's Steve Smith and women's all-rounder Ellyse Perry also find a place in the list of five.

Kohli, who has scored 5,775 more international runs than anyone else in the last 10 years, has arguably been the best batsman over the last decade. The 31-year-old Indian was named captain of the Wisden Test team of the decade, while also

featuring in the ODI XI.

"His genius has been to rise, time and again, to the challenge. Between the end of the England tour in 2014 and the second Test against Bangladesh at Kolkata in November, Kohli averaged 63, with 21 hundreds and 13 fifties," Wisden says.

"It left him with a unique set of statistics – the only batsman to average at least 50 in all three international formats. Even Steve Smith was moved to remark recently that there is no one quite like him."

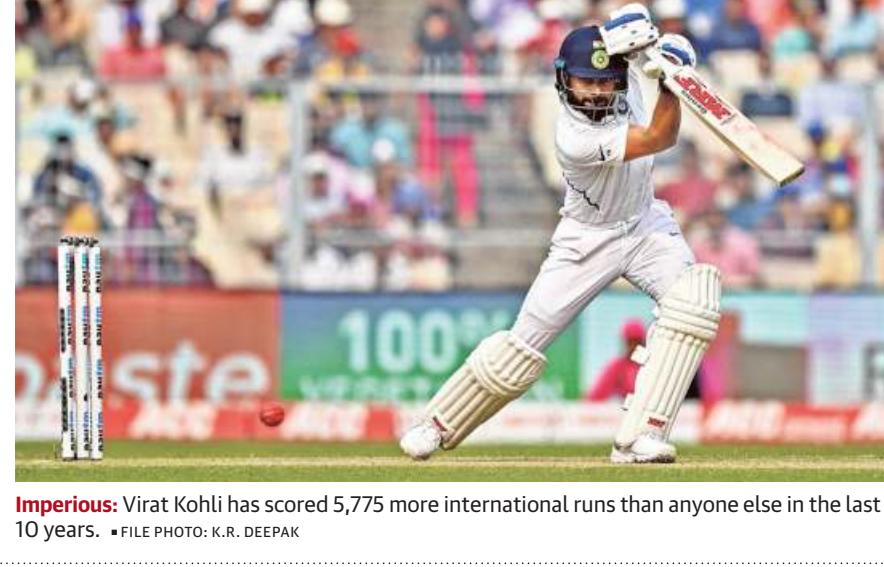
"In many ways, there isn't. Since the retirement of Sachin Tendulkar and the gradual waning of M.S.

Dhoni, no cricketer in the world has operated under such daily pressure as Kohli."

In the past decade, Kohli has amassed 7,202 runs in Tests – including 27 hundreds – while in the shorter formats the Indian skipper has 11,125 runs in ODIs and 2,633 runs in T20s.

Kohli has already amassed 70 international hundreds and is only behind Ricky Ponting (71) and Sachin Tendulkar (100).

He is third in the list of leading run-scorers of all time with 21,444 runs, behind Ponting (27,483) and Tendulkar (34,357).



Imperious: Virat Kohli has scored 5,775 more international runs than anyone else in the last 10 years. ■ FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

Ganguly, Dravid have a 'general meeting'

SHAYAN ACHARYA
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Sourav Ganguly had a long meeting with National Cricket Academy (NCA) director Rahul Dravid at the Board's headquarters on Thursday.

It has been learned that the duo deliberated on the roadmap for the academy in a two-hour long meeting.

Dravid did not take questions from the media, and Ganguly termed it as a 'general meeting', without elaborating. "It was a general NCA-related meeting," Ganguly told Sportstar.

The meeting happened days after reports surfaced that the NCA allegedly re-

fused to conduct a fitness test for pace ace Jasprit Bumrah.

Though it could not be confirmed whether this matter was discussed in the meeting, it was learnt that there were conversations on how to make the academy more effective in terms of injury-management.

TV PICKS

Australia v New Zealand: 2nd Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 5 a.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6 a.m. & 9 a.m.
Ranji Trophy: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.
Big Bash League: Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.
South Africa v England: 1st Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.
ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Clippers downs Lakers in LA showdown

LOS ANGELES Kawhi Leonard (*in pic*) scored 35 points as the Clippers rallied to beat the Lakers 111-106 in an all-Los Angeles NBA showdown on Wednesday. The Western Conference heavyweight clash was part of the NBA's five-game Christmas extravaganza, which saw the Philadelphia 76ers make a statement with a 121-109 victory over the league-leading Milwaukee Bucks. **The results:** Denver Nuggets 100 lost to New Orleans Pelicans 112; LA Clippers 111 bt LA Lakers 106; Philadelphia 76ers 121 bt Milwaukee Bucks 109; Golden State Warriors 116 bt Houston Rockets 104; Toronto Raptors 102 lost Boston Celtics 118. **APF**

Sumit Sangwan suspended for failing dope test

NEW DELHI Former Asian silver medallist boxer Sumit Sangwan was on Thursday banned for one year by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for failing a dope test. Sangwan, who competed in the 2012 London Olympics and formerly a 91-kg category boxer, was set to appear for the Olympic qualifier trials. But that will not be possible now as his suspension starts with immediate effect. "Sumit Sangwan banned for 1 year with immediate effect for consuming specified prohibited substance," NADA DG Navin Agarwal posted on his Twitter handle. **PTI**



Australia adds Swepson to Sydney Test squad

SYDNEY Australia has added leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson to the squad for the third and final Test of the ongoing three-match series against New Zealand. The 26-year-old has played one T20I for Australia, against England last year, and was part of the Test squad for the tours of India and Bangladesh in 2017, but is uncapped in the longest format. Swepson has been rewarded for an excellent showing this summer – 12 wickets from six Sheffield Shield games at 26.58. **IANS**

Rakesh stuns Bhag

SPORTS BUREAU BHILAI

Fourth seed Rakesh Kohli beat top seed Bhag Singh Negi 6-1, 6-2 in the semifinals of the over-60 age group in the ITF grade-3 seniors tennis tournament on Thursday.

In the final, Rakesh will play second seed Surinder Mohan Sharma who outplayed third seed Murthi Suresh for the loss of two games.

In the over-40 age group, Dilip Mohanty beat top seed Swarandeep Singh Dhodi 6-3, 6-1. He will play the winner of the match between Kohinoor Govardhan and second seed Binjo Mani.

The results (semifinals):

Over-35: Kanan Sethu bt Vikas Agrawal 6-3, 6-0; Sachin Patil bt Prateek Deoigirikar 6-2, 7-5.
Over-40: Dilip Mohanty bt Swarandeep Singh Dhodi 6-3, 6-1. **Over-45:** Jagdish Tanwar bt Binu Mani 6-0, 6-0; Rohit Rawat bt Vijay Kumar 6-1, 4-6, 6-3.
Over-50: Tuleswar Singh Thongbam bt Ravi Shankar Singh 6-1 (retd.); Gurdarshan Singh Ramana bt Tikam Singh Panwar 4-6, 6-4, 6-0.
Over-55: Chandra Bhushan bt Kranti Kumar Mandelkar 6-0, 6-1; Nagaraj Revanasiddhaiah bt Rajesh Patil 6-0, 6-4. **Over-60:** Rakesh Kohli bt Bhag Singh Negi 6-1, 6-2; Surinder Mohan Sharma bt Murthi Suresh 6-1, 6-1.

Ishant, Simarjeet scalp four each

Hyderabad in dire straits after folding up for 69

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Hyderabad was staring at its third defeat in as many outings in this season's Ranji Trophy after Delhi's pace duo of Ishant Sharma and Simarjeet Singh made the most of the friendly conditions at the Ferozeshah Kotla ground here on Wednesday.

At stumps on the second day, Hyderabad was 20 for two in its second innings after folding up for 69 in the first. This was after taking the last four Delhi wickets for 15 runs to keep the host at 284.

As things stand, Hyderabad trails Delhi by 195 runs with eight wickets in hand. Two more days remain.

On a day when 16 wickets fell in 45 overs, Hyderabad batsmen came a cropper. Though struggling to cope up with the cold conditions, Hyderabad lacked application as it scored 89 runs for 12 wickets. By default, the poor batting display of the visiting team also enhanced the importance of Delhi skipper Shikhar Dhawan's 140.

Though Delhi opted to go in with just three specialist fast bowlers – Ishant, Simarjeet and Pawan Suyal – it still proved a good bargain with

the Hyderabad line-up looking in a hurry to return home.

Briefly, Suyal made things a bit challenging for Delhi when by limping off without completing his ninth over. He did not return to the field for the rest of the day. After Suyal had taken two of the first three wickets, Simarjeet, who bowled the best on this day, and Ishant took four wickets each.

In the second innings, Kunwar Bidhuri caused the damage and left Hyderabad in a lurch.

Earlier, Ravi Kiran took the last four wickets for just two runs to halt Delhi's innings. Dhawan, overnight on 137, could add just three runs before being caught behind. The Delhi tail did not wag for long.

The scores

Delhi – 1st innings: Kunal Chandela c Sumanth b Siraj 1, Shikhar Dhawan c Sumanth b Kiran 140, Dhruv Shorey lbw b Siraj 0, Nitish Rana c Sumanth b Milind 25, Jonty Sidhu lbw b Hasan 15, Lalit Yadav c Hasan 19, Anuj Rawat lbw b Hasan 29, Kunwar Bidhuri c Sumanth b Kiran 27, Ishant Sharma c Hasan b Kiran 5, Simarjeet Singh c Thyagarajan b Kiran O, Pawan Suyal (not out) 1, Extras (b-4,

lb-13, nb-4, w-1) 22, Total (in 71.4 overs) 284.

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-4, 3-49, 4-100, 5-128, 6-212, 7-276, 8-279, 9-279.

Hyderabad bowling: Siraj 19-2, 72-2, Kiran 17.3-32-59-4, Milind 13-1-34-1, Hasan 17.1-2-61-3, Thyagarajan 4-1-25-0, Chaitanya 1-0-16-0.

Hyderabad – 1st innings: Tanmay Agarwal lbw b Simarjeet 8, Akshath Reddy b Suyal O, Chaitanya Reddy c Yadav b Suyal 3, Himalay Agarwal lbw b Simarjeet 14, B. Sandeep c Chandela b Simarjeet 16, K. Sumanth b Simarjeet 0, C. V. Milind c Rawat b Ishant 14, Tanay Thyagarajan c Shorey b Ishant 6, Mehdi Hasan (not out) 5, Mohammad Siraj c Rawat b Ishant O, Ravi Kiran lbw Ishant O, Extras (lb-2, nb-1) 3, Total (in 29 overs) 69.

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-10, 3-24, 4-32, 5-38, 6-43, 7-58, 8-65, 9-69.

Delhi bowling: Ishant 10-4, 19-4, Suyal 8.4-3-25-2, Simarjeet 10-1-23-4, Rana 0.2-0-0-0.

Hyderabad – 2nd innings: Tanmay Agarwal (batting) 11, Akshath Reddy c Rawat b Bidhuri 2, Chaitanya Reddy c Bidhuri 0. Himalay Agarwal (batting) 7, Total (for two wickets in 10 overs) 20.

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-12.

Delhi bowling: Ishant 4-1-10-0, Simarjeet 2-1-1-0, Bidhuri 3-1-7-2, Rana 1-0-2-0.



Firing it in: Simarjeet Singh, along with senior pro Ishant Sharma, broke the back of Hyderabad batting to give Delhi a huge advantage. **SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR**

Odisha ready to reinvent itself against Jamshedpur

ISL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Odisha FC and Jamshedpur FC will be looking to end their indifferent run of form in the Hero Indian Super League when they meet at the Kalinga Stadium here on Friday.

It should make for a spectacle in Bhubaneswar as Odisha FC finally make its debut in its home city. Josep Gombau's side has had to play its previous home games of the

season from Pune due to the unavailability of the Kalinga Stadium.

The Spanish coach will hope that a change of setting will turn its fortunes around and give it an impetus in its push for the playoff spots.

Odisha, placed seventh on the table (9 points), has won just one out of its last six games and is coming off a demoralising 3-0 defeat against FC Goa.

"Yes, there is a chance (of reaching the playoffs). We have nine points and we have

played nine games away. We are very excited to finally play at home," said a confident Gombau.

Crucial games

"We now have three crucial games at home. Depending on how these three games go, we will know if we have a chance to get into the top-four or not. Jamshedpur is fourth in the table with 13 points. But if we beat them tomorrow, we will be just one point behind them."

Jamshedpur FC is also in a

rut. It is winless in the last four matches and is placed fourth on the table (13 points) only because of a strong start to the campaign. However, a win on Friday will see it go level on points with third-placed Bengaluru FC.

Odisha has been inconsistent in front of goal. It has drawn blanks in four out of its nine matches and the attack, led by Aridane Santana, needs to start converting chances if it is to make a push for a top-four spot.

The likes of Xisco Hernan-

RANJI SCORES: ROUND 3, DAY 2

GROUP A

Jammu: Jammu & Kashmir 210/2 in 52 overs (Surjansh Raina 73, Shubham Khajuria 87 batting) vs Assam.

Jamshedpur: Haryana 285/6 in 91 overs (Ankit Kumar 53, Chaitanya Bishnoi 75 batting, Shivam Chauhan 53, Harshal Patel 47 batting) vs Jamshedpur.

New Delhi: Delhi 284 in 71.4 overs (Shikhar Dhawan 140, Ravi Kiran 4/59) vs Hyderabad 69 in 29 overs (Ishant Sharma 4/19, Simarjeet Singh 4/23) & 20/2 in 10 overs.

Surat: Gujarat 127 & 210 in 60.4 overs (Manprit Juneja 53, Chintan Gaja 50 n.o., Basil Thampi 5/56) vs Kerala 70 & 26/0 in 7 overs.

Nagpur: Vidarbha 196/6 in 67 overs (Ganesh Satish 88 batting) vs Punjab.

GROUP B

Mysore: Karnataka 166 vs Himachal 235/7 in 93 overs (Priyanshu Khanduri 69, Nikhil Gangta 46, Rishi Dhawan 72 batting).

Indore: Tamil Nadu 149 vs Madhya Pradesh 281/7 in 79 overs (Rameez Khan 87, Venkatesh Iyer 88, Mihir Hirwani 54 batting, T. Natarajan 4/96).

Mumbai: Mumbai 114 & 64/3 in 22 overs vs Railways 266 in 74.1 overs (Arindam Ghosh 72, Karn Sharma 112 n.o., Tushar Deshpande 4/44).

Rajkot: Saurashtra 331 in 92.5 overs (Harvik Desai 54, Cheteshwar Pujara 57, Sheldon Jackson 57, Saurabh Kumar 4/85) vs Uttar Pradesh 222/3 in 69 overs (Aryan Juyal 52, Akshdeep Nath 80 batting, Mohammad Saif 41 batting).

GROUP C

Bihar: Bihar 326 in 112 overs (Babul Kumar 160, Shashank Rathour 69, Felix Alemao 4/74) vs Goa 65/2 in 24 overs (Aditya Kaushik 44 batting).

Kolkata: Mizoram 73 & 30/4 in 11 overs vs Pondicherry 458/5 dec. in 86 overs (Paras Dogra 200, K.B. Arun Karthick 86, S. Suresh Kumar 103 n.o.).

Bhubaneswar: Sikkim 274 vs Nagaland 45/1 in 11 overs.

Mangaldoi (Assam): Day 1: Chandigarh 168/4 in 58 overs (Manan Vohra 90, Raman Bishnoi 40 batting) vs Meghalaya.

Toss:

Chandigarh.

PLATE

Dibrugarh: Manipur 196 & 80/3 in 35 overs vs Arunachal Pradesh 143 in 47 overs (Rahul Dalal 53, Ajay Singh 4/23).

Patna: Bihar 326 in 112 overs (Babul Kumar 160, Shashank Rathour 69, Felix Alemao 4/74) vs Goa 65/2 in 24 overs (Aditya Kaushik 44 batting).

Kolkata: Mizoram 73 & 30/4 in 11 overs vs Pondicherry 458/5 dec. in 86 overs (Paras Dogra 200, K.B. Arun Karthick 86, S. Suresh Kumar 103 n.o.).

Bhubaneswar: Sikkim 274 vs Nagaland 45/1 in 11 overs.

Mangaldoi (Assam): Day 1: Chandigarh 168/4 in 58 overs (Manan Vohra 90, Raman Bishnoi 40 batting) vs Meghalaya.

Toss: Chandigarh.

about defence or attack. We make a balance in both. We know the numbers but it is not a big deal for us. We don't have the offensive players to score many goals now and we have to improve," said Iriondo.

"The essence of our football is to have the ball for more time and keep it. We will try to score more goals than the

Star striker Sergio Castel is still doubtful for this match while Noe Acosta remains on the sidelines.

ICC ranking is absolute garbage, says Vaughan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Former England captain Michael Vaughan has slammed the International Cricket Council's ranking system, terming it as "absolute garbage".

India is currently ranked No.1 in ICC Test team rankings, followed by New Zealand, South Africa, England and Australia.

The cricketer-turned-commentator feels New Zealand and England don't deserve to get the second and fourth spot in the ICC Test rankings as they haven't won enough Test series in the last two years.

"I will be dead honest about the ICC rankings. I think they are absolute garbage," Vaughan was quoted as saying by the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

"I have no idea how – New Zealand have won plenty of series over the course of the last two years – but for them to be second, and where it stands out for me that the

opinion, have New Zealand as the second best Test match nation in the world. I think, particularly over here in Australia, Australia are a far better Test match team."

Vaughan also picked India as the only team that can trouble Australia at home.

"I think there are two teams, India and Australia, they are the best Test match teams in the world

Need to find specific coaching pattern: Gopi

Issue must be addressed with a long-term perspective, says chief National coach

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

"Yes, it was definitely not bad. We produced a World champion in Sindhu and a World championship bronze medallist B. Sai Praneeth. We have had good results from Lakshya Sen, Sourabh Verma and in doubles from Satwik and Chirag," says chief National badminton coach P. Gopi Chand in an exclusive chat with *The Hindu*.

After another tough session with World champion P.V. Sindhu at the Gopi Chand Academy here on Thursday, Gopi believes he has a bigger task ahead – producing an Olympic champion at next year's Tokyo Games.

Consistency factor

Are you happy with the results in 2019?

"There is a lack of consistency, but it is because of poor management of the international schedule. Sometimes you can't complain as they (Indians) are competing



All for a cause: P. Gopi Chand with Sameer Verma, B. Sai Praneeth and K. Srikanth at the Gopi Chand Academy in Hyderabad.

•V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

against each other to be in the race for the Olympics," Gopi says.

"We still don't follow a clearly demarcated system,

like addressing the coach's role in training and deciding players' schedule," he avers.

On his role, Gopi said: "It is only advisory. I cannot im-

pose myself in the given structure and format. Sometimes, out of respect, some players may listen. My advice is not binding."

Is there a need to change the coaching style for some of India's premier shuttlers, especially in singles?

"Definitely, coaching pat-

terns are changing. We need to find our path with clarity, a specific programme," he says. "It is not just about the Olympics. The problem needs to be addressed with a long-term perspective."

Despite the strain of striving tirelessly Gopi is not about to give up because of a faulty system. "I would still love to see an Olympic medalist in Tokyo."

So, will there be a point

when you might just give up?

"No way. For the simple reason, who else will do this. One should understand I am only raising relevant issues and want answers from the top," he says.

Not too concerned

On Sindhu, Gopi says: "Not too concerned. Seen her go up and down, has the ability to raise the bar on her day and she has done it at the Olympics and World championships."

On Saina: "Yes, she is struggling. But, I believe it is an issue of fitness."

Real shock for Chennai City

The defending champion slips to eighth spot



Tussle: Danish Farooq, who opened Real Kashmir's account, is challenged by Chennai City's Charles Anandraj Lourdusamy, right. • AFP

I-LEAGUE

SPORTS BUREAU

SRINAGAR

Real Kashmir FC registered its first win of the Hero I-League this season with a thrilling 2-1 win over defending champion Chennai City FC at the TRC Ground here on Thursday.

Danish Farooq gave the host the lead before Bazie Armand added another goal. Syed Suhail Pasha pulled one back for the visitors, but the Snow Leopards held on to bag three points.

Changes

Coach David Robertson made two changes to his previous line-up. Singam Subash Singh started upfront at the expense of Gohore Krizo. At the back, Armand was given the nod ahead of Dalraj Singh.

Chennai City made one

change when Akbar Nawas named Pradison Mariyadasan in his starting eleven in place of Bijay Chhetri.

Real Kashmir FC co-founder Sandeep Chattoo commented, "It was a splendid win. The coach and the team ensured that every Kashmiri returned home smiling."

The first goal came in the 22nd minute, when an exquisite set-piece delivery from Kallum Higginbotham found Hero-of-the-Match Danish in the box, who made just the right contact with his head, to give Real Kashmir the lead. The host doubled the lead in the 27th minute.

Yet again, it was Higginbotham who was involved in the mix. He cut inside on the left, which created some space for him to deliver another immaculate delivery into the box and Armand was at the right place to

head it into the top corner.

Chennai City reduced the deficit in the 48th minute. A cheeky back-flick by Pravito Raju generated just the right elevation for Jockson Dhas to head it past Phurba La-chenga in the Kashmir goal to bring the game right back in the balance.

Wayward
Kashmir almost scored in the 68th minute, but Loveday Okechukwu, who was completely unmarked, failed to tap in another Higginbotham set-piece, blasting it high and wide.

The win took Kashmir to seventh in the standings with five points. Chennai dropped to eighth, despite the same tally on inferior goal difference of 2.

The result: Real Kashmir 2 (Danish Farooq 22, Bazie Armand 27) bt Chennai City 1 (Syed Suhail Pasha 48).

Chennai City made one

Devang Gandhi asked to leave Bengal dressing room

Move to avoid breach of anti-corruption protocol

AMITABA DAS SHARMA
KOLKATA

National selector from East Zone Devang Gandhi was involved in an unsavoury incident on Thursday when he was asked to leave the Bengal dressing room for unauthorised entry by the BCCI anti-corruption unit at the Eden Gardens.

As frequent breaks owing to bad light curtailed the Ranji action between Bengal and Andhra, Gandhi wanted to get into the Bengal dressing room to consult the team physio.

However, senior players, including former captain Manoj Tiwary, cited anti-corruption protocol and Gandhi was asked to leave. "We have to follow anti-corruption protocol. A National selector

cannot enter the dressing room without authorisation.

Only players and officials who have their mug-shots at the entrance have access to the dressing room," Tiwary told reporters.

Gandhi maintained that he had not broken any anti-corruption protocol. "Knowing that I was having a back problem Bengal coach Arun Lal asked me to consult the team physio.

"Before entering the dressing room I took permission from the anti-corruption official and asked the physio to attend to me in the CAB medical room," Gandhi presented his point.

In the end CAB secretary Abhishek Dalmiya stepped in to get the situation under control and clear Gandhi of

any misconduct.

"Mr. Devang Gandhi, being a National selector, wanted to enter the dressing room area today when the game was not in play. He was allowed to enter the PMO (players and match officials) area as a temporary visitor by the ACU official only after obtaining necessary permission from the match referee.

"However, when Mr. Gandhi wanted to get some medical treatment done, he was instantly asked by the ACU officer to get it done in the medical room outside the PMO area in order to maintain required protocol.

Accordingly, Mr. Gandhi moved to the medical room forthwith to ensure there is no breach," said a statement signed by Dalmiya.

No harm in playing big shots: Rohit

Says youngsters should have the freedom to express themselves

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Playing flamboyant shots is not a "crime" if they translate into results, reckons batting maestro Rohit Sharma, who says youngsters should have the freedom to express themselves freely.

Memorabale 2019

The 32-year-old had a memorable 2019 when he scored 10 hundreds across formats, including five in the World Cup.

Rohit shared his experiences of his early days as a cricketer during an interaction with the young trainees at his own cricket academy, here on Thursday.

"There is no harm in playing big shots, trying to play a flamboyant cover drive. When we were growing up and used to play shots in the air, we were taken out of the nets, which was not right because eventually you want the results," said Rohit.

"If the guy is giving you results by playing the big shots, there is nothing wrong in that. As a young kid, growing in this generation, you want to play shots.

"You want to look good (while batting) but again it is very important what they think of their game and the understanding they have about the game," he added.

"What we need to be care-

ful of is, if the player is doing mistakes again and again, then he needs to be told how he should go about it the next time. I mean playing shots is not a crime."

Rohit emphasised that backing the young players is important to make them confident about their game.

"I would encourage them

to play shots if they want to, but at the same time they need to understand that they need to produce results, that's the game. You score 100 off 50 balls or 200 balls, it doesn't matter, it still is a hundred. These young players should be allowed to bat freely, that's how they will produce results."

Doping and over-age controversies held centrestage in the year 2019

Neeraj and Hima hampered by injuries; little to celebrate for Indian athletes except Dutee Chand's performance at World University Games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The two biggest stars of Indian athletics – Neeraj Chopra and Hima Das – were largely sidelined due to injuries, leaving the sport with very little to celebrate and mired in doping and age-fraud controversies in yet another barren year in terms of global medals.

Amid the many disappointments, Dutee Chand scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman athlete to clinch a gold at the World University Games, winning the 100m event.

The country also booked 2020 Olympic Games berths in mixed 4x400m relay and the men's 3000m steeplechase event (Avinash Sable).

Neeraj's transformation
In 2018, India watched with joy, the transformation of Neeraj into a world-class ja-



In the record books: Dutee Chand won the 100m, becoming the first Indian woman athlete to clinch a gold at the World University Games. • PTI

velin thrower as he grew in maturity after the 2016 world junior record to clinch both the Commonwealth and Asian Games gold medals.

But the 22-year-old from a village near Panipat injured himself during training in Patiala and underwent surgery on his right elbow in May this year. As a result, he remained on the sidelines and

could not defend his Asian Championships gold in Doha. He also missed the World Championships.

Hima's back injury
Junior world champion quadrilateral Hima, on the other hand, was in action in the first part of the season, but the lower back injury she suffered at the 2018 Asian

Games returned to haunt her.

She hogged the headlines with her training stint in Europe, winning six gold medals in average competitions in Czech Republic and Poland, creating a media frenzy here.

The 19-year-old "Dhing Express" from Assam, however, pulled out of the Asian Championships without finishing her first 400m race. She was named in the World Championships team, but was dropped at the last minute by the Athletics Federation of India.

Gomathi stripped of gold

As usual, doping controversies hurt athletics with the biggest offender being half-miler Gomathi Marimuthu, who was stripped of the Asian Championships gold after testing positive for steroids.

More than 100 athletes were found to be overaged and did not win any medal.

Fleeing tests

Rampant age-fudging also continued as 51 youngsters were found over-aged while another 169 fled to avoid verification tests during the National inter-district junior meet, which was touted as one of the biggest talent hunt programmes in the world.

In the World Championships held in Doha in September-October, the 27-member Indian team performed better than expected and booked quotas for the Tokyo Olympics, while jave-

lin thrower Annu Rani finished a creditable eighth.

Annu became the first Indian woman to qualify for javelin throw finals while Avinash broke his own national record twice in three days.

On the administrative front, Athletics Federation of India president Adille Sumariwalla was re-elected as a member of the World Athletics Council for a second term.



Neeraj Chopra. • FILE PHOTO



Hima Das. • FILE PHOTO

Bidhuri cries foul at exclusion from trial

Seeks Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju's intervention in the matter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Former World Championship bronze-medallist boxer Gaurav Bidhuri has challenged the selection procedure for the upcoming trials for next year's Olympic Qualifiers and sought Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju's intervention in the matter.

In a letter addressed to Rijiju, the Boxing Federation of India, and the Sports Authority of India, Bidhuri has said he has been unfairly kept out of the trials to be held on December 29 and 30 in Bellary, Karnataka.

"I have had enough of this unfair system. The medallists from this year's world championships were given direct slots in the Olympic Qualifiers. But when I won the world bronze in 2017, I wasn't even allowed to appear for Commonwealth and Asian Games trials," Bidhuri told PTI.

'Doesn't make any sense'

"At that time I was told I hadn't competed enough, this time I am being told I haven't competed against strong opponents. Can somebody explain what is the selection criteria here? It doesn't make any sense," he said.

Bidhuri wants to appear in the 57kg category trials for the Qualifiers scheduled in February in China. The world medallists exempted from trials are Amit Panghal (52kg) and Manish Kaushik (63kg).

The boxers finalised for the trials in the 57kg division, on the basis of a ranking points system, are former world quarterfinalist and Asian silver winner Kavin

der Singh Bisht, Commonwealth Games medal-winning duo of Mohammed Hussamuddin and Gaurav Solanki, and former world youth champion Sachin Siwach.

Responding to Bidhuri's allegation, a top federation official, on condition of anonymity, said that the boxer's exclusion was based on performance.

'No discrimination'

"The selection policy has been in public domain for a long time. There is no discrimination as he has alleged. Don't want to get into details, but the rankings have been made purely on performance," the official said.

Bidhuri said the "inconsistent" policy has left him confused about how to approach tournaments.

"OK, I lost to Kavinder and Solanki in the league but they were exceptionally close bouts. After 2-3 (scoreline) losses to them, I at least deserve a trial bout against them. I can't be simply told that I am not good enough," he asserted.

The Sports Minister, in the past, has made it clear that he cannot intervene in selection matters as it would be considered a violation of the Olympic charter.

Railways overcomes Karnataka