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NEARBY

'Kejriwal taking credit for work done by Cong. govt.'

NEW DELHI
Hitting out at Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, former Delhi CM and recently appointed Delhi Congress chief Sheila Dikshit said on Saturday that the party would hold programmes in all districts to make Delhiites aware that the AAP government was "taking credit for projects carried out by the Congress government during its 15-year rule".

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

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Opposition flexes its muscle in Kolkata

PM candidate not a priority; BJP past its expiry date, Mamata tells rally attended by 20 key leaders



United front: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee joining hands with leaders of various political parties at the rally in Kolkata on Saturday. ■ PTI

Deve Gowda wants common manifesto

While leaders across the political spectrum hailed the coming-together of parties as historic, former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda sounded a note of caution. "My bitter experience is that seat-sharing in the States is not easy. Every State has two or three parties and seat-sharing is going to be a Herculean task," he said. Mr. Gowda also wanted senior leaders of the Opposition to prepare a manifesto on "how best we are going to govern." ▶ PAGE 11



Alliance against the people, says Modi

On a day when many Opposition parties came on a common platform, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hit out at their proposed alliance, saying it was a combine of those whom he had prevented from "looting" India and it was not against him but the people. At a function in Silvassa, he took a dig at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, saying the BJP had only one MLA in her State, "but still they are so afraid of us that they are saying *bachao [save us]*." ▶ PAGE 11



who led a complex coalition government two decades ago, warned that "time is short and the work is difficult."

Ms. Banerjee said the "beginning of the end of the BJP" had started from this meeting. "This is not the time to think about the next Prime Minister. The question does not arise. We will decide that, all together, after the election," she said as she

spoke at the end of the rally. She argued that the BJP's strategy to ask "who would be the leader" of the Opposition was a ploy to divide the Opposition. "[Any] one [person] is not important but everybody needs to come together [as] the collective leadership is important," she said.

Quoting from Rabindranath Tagore, Ms. Banerjee said "Amra sobai raja amad-

er ei rajar rajyote [We are all kings in the reign of this king]," adding a caveat, "We have to keep in mind we are not 'kings,' but subjects as this is a democracy." She argued that the BJP not only "humiliates" the Opposition but refuses to extend respect to its own leaders.

"It is destroying all the institutions in the country, the CBI, the ED, the RBI, the banks, and now the plan is

make sure that you, the people, can't withdraw more than one lakh rupees from the bank," she said.

Echoing Aam Aadmi Party convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Ms. Banerjee said, "Pakistan, despite several attempts, could not break the country in 70 years, but the BJP has nearly done it in five years." The BJP is engaged in spreading hate among the people, she said.

Panel on poll reforms

In a rally that lasted over three hours, leaders, including Farooq Abdullah and Chandrababu Naidu, used

the occasion to raise questions on the use of electronic voting machines. The issue should be taken to the Election Commission, Dr. Abdulrahman said. Later Ms. Banerjee announced the formation of a four-member Opposition panel to suggest electoral reforms to the EC before the Lok Sabha election.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10



Construction work is under way near Gyanvapi mosque complex. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

SUNDAY SPECIAL

has caused anxiety among both communities, and threatens to create mutual distrust. "If this act is not anti-Hindu, what is? Demolish a single Muslim house, then see what happens. They only touched a *chabutra* and Muslims from several localities gathered in the streets," said Mr. Sharma.

The reference is to the protests by Muslims last October when a part of a boundary wall separating the Gyanvapi Mosque and the Vishwanath Temple.

Hopes gone
Rajiv Sharma points to the rubble behind him. Till a couple of months ago, his source of livelihood, a saloon, stood there. Today, he is unemployed. The building was acquired and demolished.

His frustration reveals

the communal faultlines of

the city where the project

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Nirmala sees corporate rivalry fuelling allegations on Rafale deal

'None should become pawns of international giants'

DINAKAR PERI NEW DELHI

Questioning if there was an "international corporate warfare" behind the allegations over the deal for 36 Rafale fighter jets, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said none should become a pawn in this battle. She also questioned if the procurement of these jets was being "sabotaged".

"Is India's strategic inter-

est top on your agenda, or are you becoming a partner to some kind of a corporate rivalry..." she asked the Opposition. "Therefore, by not procuring timely powerful equipment for the IAF, it is disservice to the country," she said, speaking on India's strategic interest in the context of the deal organised by the Foundation for Public Awareness and Policy.

Stating that this debate was critical for the country

and she wanted every strand of it explained as much as it could be explained in public, Ms. Sitharaman said, "None of us should play party to any corporate warfare. We cannot become pawns in the hands of corporate giants' warfare to constantly bully the government, to throw misinformation to the public, tell part-truth and part-story to the public."

ARTIFICIAL STORM ▶ PAGE 10

Court pulls up Delhi police in JNU sedition case

Defers taking cognisance of chargesheet filed without sanction for prosecution

NIRNIMESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday deferred taking cognisance of the chargesheet against former JNU Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar and others in a case of alleged shouting of anti-India slogans on the Jawaharlal Nehru University campus in 2016.

Metropolitan Magistrate Deepak Sherawat refused to take cognisance of the probe report stating that the police filed it without sanction for prosecution.

He adjourned the matter to February 6 after the police said sanction would be obtained within 10 days.

Under Section 196 of the

Criminal Procedure Code, "no court shall take cognisance of any offence punishable under Chapter VI of the IPC."

Section 124-A (sedition), under which the accused persons have also been charged, is placed under this chapter.

However, criminal lawyer Ashish Dikshit is of the view that it is not mandatory to file chargesheets in such cases without the prosecution sanction.

The Central Bureau of Investigation and the Delhi

police had on a number of occasions in the past filed chargesheets without approval for prosecution and submitted sanction letters to the courts later, he further said.

Former Standing Counsel of the Delhi government K.C. Mittal said the court shall not move further so far as the sedition charge is concerned as Section 196 specifically says that cognisance of the offence cannot be taken without sanction.

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 2

Cong. contests Centre's claim on economy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Saturday alleged that the Modi government's claim of India achieving the highest-ever growth in the past four-and-a-half years was based on "bogus" numbers.

"The BJP's claim of 'highest growth rate' under the NDA is based on the bogus numbers produced by NITI Aayog," Mr. Chidambaram tweeted.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 10

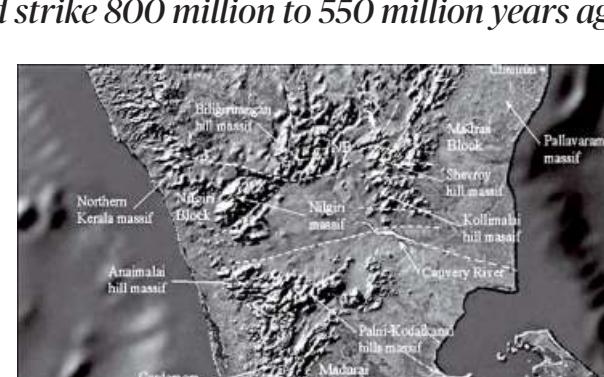
Did an asteroid hit south India millions of years ago?

Research by two scientists hints at asteroid strike 800 million to 550 million years ago, creating a crater

R. KRISHNA KUMAR MYSURU

Was southern peninsular India hit by an asteroid larger than the one that wiped out dinosaurs? Is the land between present day Nilgiris and Kodaikanal located on a crater formed by the impact? Two earth scientists think so. They make this claim in a scientific paper and have named the area 'Kaveri Crater', possibly the fourth largest in the world.

The investigations included megascopic (done with the unaided eye) and microscopic studies of rocks along with analyses of chemical signatures. The study was carried out by



Hidden history: The peninsular map with boundaries of mountain areas that contain ancient cores.

geological evidence stretching up to Belakavidi and Shivanasamudra in Karnataka, they said. The

coordinates are 10°20' to 11°30'N latitude and 76°50' to 78°E longitude, and the centre of the crater is close

to 11°N and 77°30'E. The study, which was funded by the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, suggests that the crater has a diameter of 120 km. The asteroid hit may have taken place 800 million to 550 million years ago. Unlike the impact event that led to the extinction of the dinosaurs about 65 million years ago, this one took place when there were very primitive life forms. Based on crater size and impact angle, the geologists conclude that the extra-terrestrial object was at least five km in diameter. Unlike smaller craters, Kaveri Crater can be visualised only through satellite images.

They were handed over to the Bangladeshi authorities who confirmed that they were from Syllhet and Kishoreganj districts of the country.

"They were detained for violation of the Passport Act over the past few months and kept at the detention camp in the Silchar Central

Jail. Six of them were held in Cachar district and 11 in Karimganj," said a police officer who handled the deportation process.

In July last year, 52 Bangladeshi nationals were de-

ported from the Mankachar sector of the Assam-Bangladesh border. They were "convicted foreigners", arrested for not possessing valid travel documents or for cross-border crimes.



Way home: Bangladeshi migrants being sent back from the Sutarkandi checkpoint on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

AN-NDE

IN BRIEF



DCP, NGO members meet Khyala survivors

NEW DELHI A day after family members and neighbours of three who were killed by their neighbour in west Delhi's Khyala staged a protest demanding relief for the family's surviving minor children, DCP (West) Monika Bhardwaj met them along with members of NGO. The police ensured maximum punishment for the accused and also gave some money for immediate needs. After three killings including parents and brother, an 8-year-old girl and 11-year-old boy are left orphaned as their elder sister got married last year. STAFF REPORTER

Senior citizen attacked by son-in-law

NEW DELHI A 62-year-old man identified as Kunjan was allegedly attacked with a knife by his son-in-law in south Delhi's Hauz Khas on Friday over a personal issue after which he was rushed to a private hospital. The police said that he was discharged after treatment and has lodged any complaint in the matter as of Saturday evening. STAFF REPORTER

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	378	Gurugram	368
Ghaziabad	313	Faridabad	355
Noida	403	Greater Noida	381
Good 0-50	368	Satisfactory 51-100	101-200
Poor 201-300	313	Very poor 301-400	Severe >401
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB			

DUTA opposes contract proposal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI A meeting of the Delhi University Executive Council was adjourned on Saturday after some members protested against the proposal to fill 10% permanent positions on contractual basis.

The Executive Council meeting began at 3 p.m. on Friday where some members had moved a resolution against the use of police force against protesting teachers from Delhi University Teachers' Association, alleging that it was done at the behest of the administration.

The DUTA on Friday protested outside the Vice-Chancellor's office against the proposal to fill 10% permanent positions on contractual basis.

Swine flu resurfaces in Capital; two deaths reported

State Health Department issues advisory asking people not to panic, lists out a series of preventive measures to follow

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN NEW DELHI Following two suspected swine flu deaths in a city hospital here, doctors have confirmed that the number of suspected swine flu cases in Delhi are on the rise with symptoms being very similar to normal influenza.

"We have reported a few cases for the influenza virus. This virus spreads like common flu. It is a droplet infection which spreads through act of sneezing, coughing and close contact with a known case of influenza infection," said Colonel Vijay Dutta, senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre at Vasant Kunj.

He explained that the dry winter chills has led to a spurt of swine flu/influenza cases in the Capital. Swine flu has common symptoms for a common cold and can thus, be ignored or misdiagnosed.

Patients complain
"Patients usually complain of irritation/sore throat, running nose and abdominal ache, cough. Usually in most of the cases, the symptoms

Uncertainty over prosecution sanction for JNU 'sedition' case

No file regarding it has been brought to the notice of any Minister, claims AAP

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

Uncertainty loomed over the grant of sanction to prosecute former Jawaharlal Nehru University student leaders and others in a 2016 sedition case, with the file pertaining to it pending with the Delhi government's Law Department on Saturday.

With a Delhi court on Saturday refusing to take cognisance of the charge sheet filed by the Delhi Police on January 14 for lack of approval, a spokesperson for the Aam Aadmi Party government said "no file regarding the prosecution sanction in the JNU case has been brought to the notice of any Minister or put up before any Minister".

Then JNU student leaders Kanhaiya Kumar, Umar Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharya, as well as seven students who were from Kashmir, had been charged in the case for allegedly raising anti-India slogans during a protest on the JNU campus on February 9, 2016.

Govt. sanction required

After filing the charge sheet in the case on Monday, the



JNU student leaders had been charged in the case for allegedly raising anti-India slogans. ■ FILE PHOTO

police had sought the prosecution sanction from the State government on the same day, a senior Delhi police officer said. Since one of the charges against the accused is of sedition, according to the Criminal Procedure Code the government's sanction is required.

"All the documents submitted in the court have also been given to the government. This happens in a lot of cases where the sanction is sought simultaneously and not prior to submitting the charge sheet. The court has given time till February 6. We'll wait for the government's decision," the officer said.

According to officials of

the Delhi Home and Law Departments, the file had been sent from the Home Department to the Law Department to seek its opinion on the matter. Whether or not the file would reach the Law Minister and then finally the Home Minister to take a call on the matter remained unclear, according to three officials.

While the elected government of Delhi and the Lieutenant-Governor had been fighting a legal battle over their respective powers, a Delhi High Court judgment on August 4, 2016, had said the elected government would decide matters of prosecution. After the Supreme Court's judgment on the

same case last year, files pertaining to such matters have been sent to the Home Minister and not the L-G, according to two officials.

One of the officials pointed out that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had ordered a magisterial inquiry into the alleged sedition case back in 2016. The inquiry had not found any evidence against Mr. Kumar and had declared some of the video footage of the alleged incident doctored. Since the Delhi Police chargesheet has relied on certain videos, the magisterial inquiry report could be brought up by the AAP dispensation if the file for prosecution sanction reaches it, the official said.

(With inputs from Hemani Bhandari)



There has been no evidence to suggest that the cause of death of any of the unidentified people is linked to the cold, said a DUSIB member. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

66% occupancy at night shelters: Delhi govt. data

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Night shelters for homeless people in Delhi have seen about 65% to 66% occupancy this week, the daily reports compiled by the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board show.

The 248 night shelters being operated by the DUSIB can accommodate 17,645 people, according to a DUSIB statement on Saturday. On Friday night, the occupancy was 11,805, around 66% of the total capacity, DUSIB's daily report showed. The occupancy was 11,715 on Thursday night, 11,612 on Wednesday night, 11,379 on Tuesday night and 11,537 on Monday night.

In response to allegations by some activists that home-

less people had died on the streets of Delhi due to the cold, DUSIB member Bipin Rai on Saturday said there had been no evidence to suggest that the cause of death of any of the unidentified bodies found by the police in December and this month had been linked to the cold. He added that the DUSIB had increased its night shelters' capacity to cater to more users when the mercury dips. The peak occupancy of DUSIB shelters was recorded in January 2018, when about 14,700 people used the night shelters, he said.

Apart from increasing the capacity, the DUSIB had also set up 16 rescue teams to take homeless people to the shelters, he added.

Kejriwal taking credit for work done by Congress govt.: Dikshit

Party to hold campaigns to highlight AAP's 'propaganda'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Hitting out at Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, former Delhi Chief Minister and recently appointed Delhi Congress president Sheila Dikshit said on Saturday that the Congress would hold programmes in all districts to make Delhiites aware of the "propaganda" of the Aam Aadmi Party government.



Sheila Dikshit

ment had not carried out any development works in the past four years and that the "truth" was that Mr. Kejriwal was "taking credit for the development works carried out by the Congress government during its 15-year rule", the statement said. She said the AAP government was "misleading" Delhiites when it came to their mohalla clinics and other healthcare services.

She added that with Lok Sabha elections soon, the Congress's target was to win all seven seats in Delhi, for which the district and block committee presidents would be the backbone.

"Ms. Dikshit said that the confusing statements of the BJP and the AAP, their corruption, wrong policies and failures should be told to the people to make them aware about such matters," the DPCC statement said.

700 flats booked within 24 hours of DDA housing scheme launch

Additional 300 flats were put on offer on Saturday

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Within 24 hours of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) launching this year's housing scheme, officials said that close to 700 flats have already been booked.

Home run

DDA housing scheme 2019:

- 1 BHK flats
- 700 (approx) flats already booked

1,250 flats on offer



sitioner Rajiv Gandhi said,

"On the first day, we put up 950 flats on offer and over 400 flats were booked within a few hours itself. Around 300 flats in Seeraspur were added on Saturday afternoon. Till around [Saturday] 5 p.m. over 670 flats have

been booked."

Returned by allottees

The urban body this year will be launching the housing scheme in phases, a senior official said. The one-bedroom flats being offered currently are the ones which were returned by allottees under the 2017 housing scheme.

Unlike previous years, the housing scheme launched by the DDA this year, is on a first come first served basis.

"This year we will not be conducting any draws and it is on a first come first served basis. Applicants can directly book the flats on the online portal by paying an initial booking amount," said Mr. Gandhi.

BJP youth wing to hold rally today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Delhi unit of the BJP's youth wing will hold a rally on Sunday at the Ramlila Maidan where young workers will take a pledge to spread awareness among people at the booth-level about schemes and policies of the Central government and to re-elect Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister.

The 'Yuva Vijay Sankalp Maha Rally' comes two weeks after the party hosted

a grand 'khichdi feast' at the Ramlila Maidan to connect with Dalits, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said on Saturday.

Mr. Tiwari said that on the one hand the trust of the people of Delhi in BJP is increasing and on the other India is emerging as a great power in the world under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi.

The rally will be a positive beginning amidst increasing negativity in Delhi politics, he said.

Braratiya Janata Yuva Morcha's Delhi president Sunil Yadav said, "With the pledge to re-elect Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister of India, the youth will also be given information about the schemes of the central government for the youth of the country. On January 12, BJP Yuva Samvad was started and in continuation, a campaign 'Pehla Vote, Modi Ka Sankalp' will be launched."

Continue inspection of plastic industries: NGT

Tells DPCC to furnish report in 3 months

SHINJINI GHOSH

NEW DELHI

Following submissions made by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) before the National Green Tribunal, pertaining to compensation levied on various authorities for non-compliance of solid waste management by plastic industries in Narela and Bawana, the green panel has asked the DPCC to continue its inspection and take further action.

D.S. Chaddha, director, Internal Medicine, Fortis Flt. Lt. Rajan Dhall Hospital stated that swine flu is resurfacing in India.

"Check with the health-care provider about any special care that might be needed if the patient is pregnant or has a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma or emphysema. Also ensure that you seek doctor's advice on whether the patient should take anti-viral medications. Keep the patient away from other people as much as possible. They should not be going to school or work," added Dr. Chaddha.

ly laid down that polluter pays principle applies not only against the polluter but also against those who fail to take action," the Bench said.

The directions came while the green panel was hearing a plea pertaining to remedial action required for "pollution caused by plastic industries" in Narela and Bawana.

A joint inspection report submitted by the Central Pollution Control Board and the DPCC had said that while in Narela drains were choked by waste and open dumping of municipal waste, in Bawana untreated industrial waste was being directly released into drains.

The DPCC further informed the NGT that a cost of ₹50,000 each was levied on 44 units in Bawana for construction and demolition activities and on 182 units for smoke and garbage. "Solid waste has been lifted and marshals have been deputed and notice issued to the DSIIDC for action against violators," the report added.

Cause for concern

Doctors have confirmed that the number of suspected swine flu cases in the city are on the rise

Symptoms:	Fever Headache Runny or stuffy nose, difficulty in breathing Bloodstained sputum Sore throat Cough Diarrhoea and vomiting
High-risk groups:	Children with mild illness but with pre-disposing risk factors, pregnant women, persons aged 65 years or older, patients with lung disease, heart disease, liver disease, kidney disease, blood disorders, diabetes, neurological disorders, cancer and HIV/AIDS. Patients on long-term cortisone therapy.

DOs

- Avoid crowded places
- Take adequate sleep and rest
- Person suffering from seasonal influenza must be confined at home
- Cover your nose and mouth with disposable tissue or handkerchief while coughing or sneezing
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water
- Stay more than one arm's length distance from persons having flu
- Drink plenty of water/liquids and eat nutritious food
- Person suspected with influenza like illness must consult doctor

DON'Ts

- Spitting in public places
- Excessive physical exercise
- Smoking in public places
- Unnecessary testing
- Touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Hugging, kissing and shaking hands while greeting
- Taking medicines without consulting doctor
- Disposal of used napkin or tissue paper in open areas
- Touching surfaces usually used by public (railing, door gates, etc.)

ated by the act of coughing and sneezing, indirect contact by touching a contaminated object or surface [fomite transmission like telephone, cell phones, computers, door handles, door bells, pens, toys etc.] and close contact [including hand shaking, hugging, kissing].

Many people in the Delhi-NCR region have already become victims of seasonal influenza (H1N1) virus, commonly known as swine flu. H1N1 has three categories - A, B and C.

While A and B categories need home care, category C requires immediate hospitalisation and medical intervention as its symptoms and out-

3 held for 'planning to kill VVIPs in south India'

Accused were working on instructions of India-based operatives and Pak.-based handlers, say police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Special Cell arrested three persons including a foreign national for allegedly planning to kill "important persons in south India", the officers said on Saturday.

The accused were allegedly working on the instructions of India-based operatives of the underworld, the police said.

One foreign national
Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said the accused have been identified as Wali Mohammed Saifi (45), from Afghanistan, Sheikh Riyazuddin alias Raja (32), from Odisha, and Muhammed CM alias Thaslim (41), from Kerala.

While Saifi and Riyazuddin were arrested from Delhi on January 11, Thaslim was arrested from his Kasaragod with the assistance of local police.



(From left) The accused – Wali Mohammed Saifi, Sheikh Riyazuddin alias Raja and Muhammed CM alias Thaslim – in police custody. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

On January 9, the police received information "through a reliable source" that underworld operatives are planning to kill important persons in South India.

In the First Information Report (FIR) registered on January 10, the police stated they were informed that "ISI Agency of Pakistan has assigned one Ghulam Rasool Patty, a Pakistan-based underworld element for killing close relatives of VVIPs in Delhi and other parts of the country," the FIR reads.

"On the basis of input and technical analysis, it is transpired that a deep-rooted conspiracy has been hatched by ISI with its operatives in

India to eliminate close relatives of VVIPs to infuse a terror in mind of people and to create instability in the country," the document read.

During interrogation, the accused allegedly told police that Thaslim and Saifi knew each other since their days in Dubai as both of them were businessmen in the city. They were told that it was Thaslim who had roped in Saifi who further involved Riyazuddin in the alleged plan.

Police claimed that Saifi who is married and has three

children deals in sale and purchase of old cars.

He got in touch with Thaslim in 2016 in Dubai and has come to India a few times on medical and tourist visa.

"This time he came to India in December, 2018, on a tourist Visa. He came in contact with Riyazuddin through one Abdulla, an Afghan, who was lodged in Tihar Jail in a murder case and was released on bail in 2017," Mr. Kushwah said adding that the other two are married too and Riyazuddin works as a welder.

Police claimed that Thaslim went to Dubai in 1999 and started a liquor business there. "He is previously involved in eight criminal cases including that of rioting, assault and obtaining Passport on forged documents," the officer said.

Police claimed to have recovered two pistols, six live cartridges and mobile phones from their possession.

8-year-old girl dies, sister critical after truck hits them

Driver rushed them to hospital and fled

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

An 8-year-old girl was killed and her 14-year-old sister severely injured after they were hit by a truck in south-east Delhi's Govindpuri on Saturday afternoon.

The accused driver who took the injured to the hospital is absconding, the police said.

DCP (South-East) Chinmoy Biswal said the deceased has been identified as Sandhya, a Class II student of a government school.

Her sister Kamini, a Class VIII student and resident of Tughlakabad Village's Balrami Mohalla is critical, he said.

On way to home
The sisters were returning home from school when the incident happened.

The police received a call about the accident at 1.46

C The girls were returning from school when a truck hit them at Ravidas Marg near the traffic signal

CHINMOY BISWAL
DCP (South-East)

p.m. "On reaching the spot, they were told that two girls returning from school were hit by a truck at Ravidas Marg near traffic signal. Enquiry revealed that the driver took the injured to the hospital and then fled the spot," said Mr. Biswal.

The body of the 8-year-old has been shifted to AIIMS mortuary for post-mortem, the police said.

A case under Sections 279 (rash driving), 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life), 304A (causing death due to negligence) of the IPC has been registered and efforts are being made to trace the accused, they added.

Minor girl's body found stuffed in gunny bag

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The body of a minor girl was found inside a gunny bag in Central Delhi's Daryaganj on Saturday morning. The police have preserved the body for post-mortem and are trying to ascertain the identity.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central), Mandeep Singh Randhawa said at 11 a.m., a ragpicker found the body inside the gunny bag and informed the beat officer.

Throat slit
On reaching the spot, the investigators found that the girl's throat was slit.

There were no other injury marks, the police said.

A case on charges of punishment for murder has been registered.

Video shows men firing in open; probe launched

Police claim to have leads in the case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The police are probing a viral video showing five masked men firing indiscriminately in Central Delhi's Deshbhandhu Gupta Road, the officers said on Saturday.

They claim that the video is about a week old. The accused have not been identified yet but they have got leads in the case, they said.

Neighbour trouble
A criminal identified as Vikas who was earlier arrested has an issue with his neighbours, they said.

Police suspect that Vikas might have asked some of his friends to show-off weapons outside his house to show the police that the other family is troubling him.

time that the families are having issues with each other. Two cases filed by both the families have been registered," said a senior officer.

A case has been registered based on the complaint of Vikas' wife on charges of attempt to commit culpable homicide.

Another case has been registered based on the complaint by the other family members who alleged that they were attacked with blades, the police said. A case on charges of voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons has been lodged.

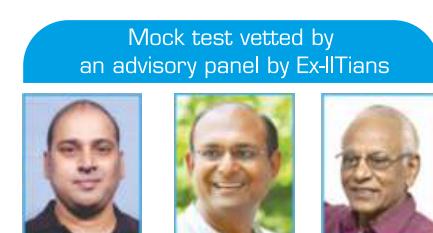
Police suspect that Vikas might have asked some of his friends to show-off weapons outside his house to show the police that the other family is troubling him.

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President, Sri Balaji Society

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City records 'very poor' AQI; improvement predicted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI
The Capital recorded "very poor" air quality on Saturday even as authorities predicted improvement as good wind

speed will continue to disperse pollutants faster. The air quality had slipped to the "severe" category on Thursday.

The CPCB data stated that

the overall air quality index (AQI) was 378, which falls in the "very poor" category. On Saturday, as many as 10 areas recorded "severe" air quality and 22 "very poor", the

CPCB said. In the NCR, Noida recorded "severe" air quality, while Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gurugram and Greater Noida recorded "very poor" air quality, it said.

U.P. CM to launch several projects on January 25

STAFF REPORTER
NOIDA

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate several projects and lay foundation stones for a few others on January 25, said Noida Authority officials on Friday.

He will inaugurate the second bridge on the Yamuna at Kalinjari Kunj, they said. "Mr. Adityanath will also flag-off the Aqua Line metro," said Noida Authority CEO Alok Tandon.

The Chief Minister will also lay the foundation stone for the 5.5 km six-lane elevated road over Shahdara drain on the Delhi-Noida stretch.

The ₹650 crore project, which is expected to be completed in three-and-a-half years, will be executed by UP State Bridge Corporation Ltd, said officials.

Mr. Adityanath will also lay the foundation stone for an electronic manufacturing cluster in Sector Ecotech VI on January 25. The cluster will manufacture nearly two lakh mobiles per day.

Work expedited
Work on several Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority projects have been expedited. Sources said projects, including rail overbridge in Dadri, Jewar airport's foundation, Gangajal project and Institute of Archaeology in Greater Noida will be finished in a month or two.

OFFICE OF THE POLICE TELECOMMUNICATION HEAD QUARTERS, MP, BHOPAL				
No. PDM/Purchase/CCTV/F-125/2019, Dtd. 16/01/2019				
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE				
IIInd Call				
e-tenders are invited by Senior Superintendent of Police (Radio) MP Bhopal on behalf of DGP MP Bhopal for the following items:-				
S.No.	Name of item	Qty.	EMD Required	Tender Fee
1.	Procurement of SIM Aggregator with installation and commissioning	50	Rs. 2,00,000.00	Rs. 10,000.00
2.	Procurement of USB Dongle with installation and commissioning	400		
1. Cost of tender document (Tender Fee) is non refundable and cannot be exempted in any condition. Tender fee should be deposited online through https://www.mptenders.gov.in . 2. The EMD should be deposited online through https://www.mptenders.gov.in . 3. The Tender should be submitted online on website https://www.mptenders.gov.in in favour of SSP (Radio) M. P. Bhopal within scheduled date and time. 4. Tender documents also available for ready reference on the website of MP Police (www.mppolice.gov.in) 5. Schedule :-				
Documents download/Sale Start Date		18/01/2019 from 14:30 Hrs.		
Bid Submission Start Date		25/01/2019 from 10:00 Hrs.		
Bid Submission End Date		11/02/2019 up to 17:00 Hrs.		
Bid will be opened on		13/02/2019 at 12:30 Hrs.		
Sr. Superintendent of Police (Radio) M.P. Bhopal				
G-22040/2019				

कार्यालय कार्यपालन यंत्री
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी विभाग खण्ड सागर (म.प्र.)
दूरध्वाष 07528-224269, E-mail: eephe_sagar@yahoo.co.in

निविदा सूचना

राज्यपाल मध्यप्रदेश की ओर से कार्यपालन यंत्री लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड सागर द्वारा ई-टैक्सिंग तीन लिफाको पढ़नी से आनलाइन निविदा <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। ठेकदार कन्दीय पंजीकृत श्रेणी में पंजीकृत होना आवश्यक है, कार्य अवधि 6 (छ) माह होगी। निविदा का विवरण निम्नानुसार है :-

सं. क्र.	निविदा क्रमांक एवं दिनांक	ई-टेंडर आई.डी.	ग्राम/विकास खण्ड	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की अनुमानित लागत रुपये (रु. लाख में)	ई-धरोहर राशि	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य प्रति सहर	निविदा जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि
1	क्र. 75/ 15.01.2019	2019_PHE D_3620_1	हनोता सहावन /बंडा	मुख्यमंत्री ग्राम नलजल योजना का क्रियाचारण एक मह द्वायल तर्थ एवं 24 मह संचालन विवरण सहित	5699169/-	56992/-	10000/-	30.01.2019 साय 5.30 बजे तक

निविदा क्रमांक 75 / 15.01.2019 से संबंधित समस्त दस्तावेज लिफाका 'A' एवं 'B' (Envelope 'A' & 'B') भौतिक (Physically) रूप से दिनांक 31.01.2019 साय 5.30 बजे तक इस कार्यालय में जमा किये जायेंगे उसके पश्चात प्राप्त होने वाले लिफाकों पर विचार नहीं किया जायगा।

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Government of NCT of Delhi



Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi

HIMACHAL PRADESH
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E-Procurement Notice
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1 The Executive Engineer Mandi Division No.II HPPWD Mandi,H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate in electronic tendering system in 2 cover system for the following works from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD department

Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated cost EMD	Cost of tender	Eligible class of contractor	Time limit
1	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Sandhappatian Bharol Bagora Bagla Hari Ropri Kalang, Trambil Basani Drubble Charon Banwar Kotli Kun Ka Tar Mandokhar Bhargaon Kotli road km MDR-057 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 7/60 to 7/100 73/00 to 75/00 and 80/00 to 82/00)	Rs.4458340/- Rs.74400/-	Rs.2000/-	"A to C"	Two months
2	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Mandi Gagal Chalchikow Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 1/0 to 2/0 4/450 to 8/0 15/0 to 16/190 HP0810MDR024	Rs.5976482/- Rs.71200/-	Rs.2000/-	"A to C"	Two months
3	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Mandi Rewalsar Kalkhar road (MDR) (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 15/0 to 19/0) HP0810MDR026	Rs.4246640/- Rs.71200/-	Rs.2000/-	"Ato C"	Two months
4	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Mandi Rewalsar Kalkhar road (MDR) (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 19/0 to 26/0) HP0810MDR026	Rs.11855191/- Rs.151100/-	Rs.5000/-	"A & B"	Two months
5	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Una Aghar Barsar Jahu Bhambie Nerchow road MDR (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 116/300 to 121/300) HP0810MDR084	Rs.5529507/- Rs.87800/-	Rs.2000/-	"A to C"	Two months
6	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Anna Kanchi Kushmal road DRDP No. HP0810VR0120 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 0/0 to 2/00 and 7/00 to 8/350) (Under PMGSY)	Rs.2772770/- Rs.49100/-	Rs.1500/-	"A to D"	One months
7	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Madan Ka Ghar Samrahan road DRDP No. HP0810VR0119 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 6/00 to 7/200) (Under PMGSY)	Rs.993305/- Rs.19900/-	Rs.350/-	"A to D"	One months
8	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Ganpati Ki road DRDP No. HP0805MRL005 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 18/0 to 22/00) (Under PMGSY)	Rs.3385152/- Rs.58300/-	Rs.1500/-	"A to C"	One months
9	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Motipur Dadar Dhamanya road DRDP No. HP0805MRL085 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 10/0 to 12/500) (Under PMGSY)	Rs.2064129/- Rs.38500/-	Rs.500/-	"Ato D"	One months
10	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Talyahar Pingla Thouna Sarkaghad road DRDP No. HP0810MRL094 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 4/0 to 5/0) (Under PMGSY)	Rs.825609/- Rs.16500/-	Rs.350/-	"Ato D"	One months
11	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Mangwain to Kathlag road DRDP No. HP0805MRL094 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 1/10 to 2/0 3/0 to 4/0 & 7/0) (Under PMGSY)	Rs.2085792/- Rs.38400/-	Rs.500/-	"Ato D"	One months
12	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Kapahi Palahi via Jhor DRDP No. HP0810VR0145 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 0/0 to 1/0) (Under State)	Rs.1894916/- Rs.36000/-	Rs.500/-	"Ato D"	One months
13	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Majhiyal to Kothi Gehri road DRDP No. HP0810MRL084 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 2/0 to 4/0 and 9/0 to 11/0) (Under State)	Rs.3464984/- Rs.59500/-	Rs.1500/-	"A to C"	Two months
14	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Lag Kasan road DRDP No. HP0805VR164 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 1/0 to 2/0 and 3/0 to 5/0) (Under State)	Rs.2680022/- Rs.47700/-	Rs.1500/-	"A to D"	One month
15	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Talyahar Pingla Thouna Sarkaghad road DRDP No. HP0810MRL094 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 0/0 to 1/0) (Under State)	Rs.893394/- Rs.17900/-	Rs.350/-	"A to D"	One month
16	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Gangpati Ki road DRDP No. HP0805MRL007 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 12/0 to 15/0) (Under State)	Rs.2680022/- Rs.47700/-	Rs.1500/-	"A to D"	One month
17	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Kalyana Laswai Khad road DRDP No. HP0805VR124 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 0/0 to 1/0) (Under State)	Rs.893394/- Rs.17900/-	Rs.350/-	"A to D"	One month
18	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Gharwanah to Taryasal road DRDP No. HP0810VR0117 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 3/0 to 6/00) (Under State)	Rs.2686686/- Rs.47800/-	Rs.1500/-	"A to D"	One month
19	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Saigaloor to Nalsor road DRDP No. HP0810VR0113 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 1/0 to 2/00) (Under State)	Rs.895611/- Rs.17900/-	Rs.350/-	"A to D"	One month
20	A.M.P.for the year 2019-20 on Roda Nallah Karkoh road DRDP No. HP0810VR0121 (SH-Providing Providing and laying bituminous concrete in km 0/0 to 1/00 and 5/00 to 7/00) (Under State)	Rs.2686686/- Rs.47800/-	Rs.1500/-	"A to D"	One month

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website <http://htptenders.gov.in> bidder would be required to register in the website which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <http://htptenders.gov.in> Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. Key dates:-

- i Date of online publication 23.01.2019 at 5.00 pm
- 2 Document download and end date 23.01.2019 at 5.00pm up to 6.02.2019, at 10.45 am
- 3 Bid submission start and end date 23.01.2019 at 5.30pm up to 6.02.2019 at 10.45 am
- 4 Date of technical bid opening 6.02.2019 at 11.30 AM
- 5 Physical submission of original documents i/c original EMD & cost of tender documents etc 6.02.2019 up to 10.45 AM

4. Tender Details:-

The tender documents shall be uploaded on line in 2 cover.

i) Cover 1: shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents eligibility" information

ii) Cover 2: shall contain "BOQ/Financial bid" where contractor will quote his offer for each item

5. Submission of Original Documents: The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and other Technical Documents with this office as specified in key dates at Sr.No.5 failing which the bids will be declared nonresponsive.

6. Bid opening Detail: The bid shall be opened on 6.02.2019 at 11.30 HRs in the office of Executive Engineer Mandi Division No.II HPPWD Mandi. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bid as specified the bid will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bid for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

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Executive Engineer,
Mandi Division No. II
HPPWD Mandi.

HP/ 4151/18-19

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BALIJA NAIDU 28/ M.E. Govt. (A.E PWD) 70,000 pm Seeks Bride. 9488502000

CHATTADHA SRI Vaishnava, 1983/ 167, Dental Surgeon Seeking for qualified bride decent family background caste nobar. Ct.9404980990

SEURED&UNSECURED&ALL TYPES OF LOANS avail @ 4.5% -9% PA for 20Cr. & Above. Quick approval & no upfront. 91-9840571243.araislyndicates@gmail.com

KAMMA NAIDU 27/172 B.Com MBA employed 7.5L per Month Seeks Qualified Religious Iyer.

KAMMA NAIDU 27/173 MBBS, MS 15Lac. PA, Well Settled Family, seeks any Profnl, 8056174102, 9754415378

BALIJA NAIDU, 30/170, MS, 20Lac. PA, Well Settled Family, seeks any Professional, 9500085718, 903077746

1000 CRORES naidu 30/ M.B.A., Own Granite & Mines Factory (Fact on Lands above 750 Acres) and so Many Business Royal Family seeks Bride. 8939165060

Palgat Iyer Boy 35/6.67L PA, CM BA Sums 35/6.67L PA well settled at Bangalore seeks graduate employed/homely girl. Contact 907171803 EM: au4uin2006@gmail.com

For a Smart Boy 30Yrs 180cms Iyer Vadama Athreyam Chithirai Teetotaller from an Affluent Family B.Tech MBA(US) Working in a Bank in Doha Qatar.

9791197150 , 7358443367

MARRIAGE BUREAU

GENERAL

BUSINESS OFFER

BUSINESS

CHENNAI BASED Telugu Betti Chettai

29/170 BE MS empd Germany (Non IT) seeks any South Indian Hindu slim profile profsnl willing to work in Germany. Caste no bar. 9940035483

KAMMA NAIDU 174/193 B.Com MBA employed 7.5L per Month Seeks any Profnl, 8056174102, 9754415378

KAMMA NAIDU 27/172 B.Com MBA (AnnaUv) VicePresident MNC 15Lpa seek educated bride 9380879808/ 9932554555

BALIJA NAIDU 27/173 MB, Tech(IIT) Engg, MNC/Chennai 13Lakhs pa, seeks any Naidu bride 9385599055/ 9938190909



ARVIND KEJRIWAL
Chief Minister, Delhi

Invitation of Application for Grant of Licence for Collection, Transportation and Disposal of Septic Tank Waste

Government of NCT of Delhi notified the Delhi Water Board Septage Management Regulations 2018. As per the Regulation, Septic Tank Waste shall be collected, transported and disposal only by an agency having a valid license for the purpose issued by Delhi Jal Board.

Address for submitting application:

**The office of Executive Engineer (SDW) XIV,
Delhi Jal Board, Kilokari Sewage Pumping Station,
Jal Vihar, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi-110024**

Last Date: 21st January 2019 upto 03:00 PM

The above said regulations, application Proforma, Terms & Conditions of License and notified sites for disposal of waste can be downloaded from Delhi Jal Board website www.delhijalboard.nic.in or may be obtained from the office of Executive Engineer (SDW) XIV, Delhi Jal Board.

दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

Department of Urban Development
Government of NCT of Delhi

दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL Pt. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU GOVT MEDICAL COLLEGE CHAMBA											
No.GMC/CBA)Interview/2019-572											
Dated: 15-1-2019											
OFFICE ORDER WALK-IN-INTERVIEW											
Selection of Faculty /Registrar/Tutors/ Jr. Residents FOR Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Govt. Medical College CHAMBA(HP).											
Applications are invited from candidates fulfilling the eligibility criteria for selection of Faculty/Registrar/Tutors/Jr. Residents in various specialities through walk-in-interview. The applications on prescribed form (Appendix-E) completed in all respects should be submitted on or before the date of interview between 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM respectively in concerned office where the venue has been fixed for walk-in-interview.											
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <th>Date & Venue</th> <th>Timing</th> <th>Venue/Address</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Venue: Jammu (J&K) Date: 27-01-2019 (Sunday)</td> <td>10.30 am to 3.30pm</td> <td>Guest House, Govt. Medical College, at Bakshi Nagar Jammu (J&K)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Venue: Pathankot (Punjab) Date: 28-01-2019 (Monday)</td> <td>10.30 am to 3.30pm</td> <td>HPPWD Rest House, Pathankot, Opposite Chakki Bank Railway Station, Pathankot (Punjab)</td> </tr> </table>			Date & Venue	Timing	Venue/Address	Venue: Jammu (J&K) Date: 27-01-2019 (Sunday)	10.30 am to 3.30pm	Guest House, Govt. Medical College, at Bakshi Nagar Jammu (J&K)	Venue: Pathankot (Punjab) Date: 28-01-2019 (Monday)	10.30 am to 3.30pm	HPPWD Rest House, Pathankot, Opposite Chakki Bank Railway Station, Pathankot (Punjab)
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Note:- for further information log into:- www.jlmgmcchamba.in											
By Order Principal Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru Govt.Medical College, Chamba. (Contact No.94180-17381)											
HP/4171/18-19											

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (Engineering Department)

Office of the Executive Engineer-M-III
Shahdara South, School Block, Shakar Pur, Delhi-110092
No.: EDMC/E.E.-M-III-Shah.(S)/TC/2018-19/30 Dated 17.01.2019

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

For online tendering at percentage rate tenders are invited for the execution of the following works by the EDMC from approved and eligible contractor and will be received as per time table.

Last date of Download of tender : 31.01.2019 at 12:00 Hours

Last date of Bid Preparation : 31.01.2019 at 14:00 Hours

Last date for close of Bid : 31.01.2019 at 14:00 to 16:00 Hours

Date of Re-encryption of Online : 31.01.2019 at 16:00 Hours to 01.02.2019 at 14:00 Hours

Opening of Financial Bid : 01.02.2019 at 14:05 Hours.

S. Name of Head of Tender Earnest Time of Cost of Tender No. work Account Amount Money Compl. No.

1. Improvement Development of road from Deviran House to Surender House, Shyam Lal Chowk to Raghukul School, Ramesh House to Thanu House and Sahab Ram House to Ganga House in Gholi Village in Ward No. 006-E in Shahdara (South) Zone.

XL-VIII-S-(i) Rs. 31,53,664/- Rs. 63,050/- 03 Months Rs. 500/- 313181

2. Improvement Development of lanes and drains of Kondli Village from DDA car parking Harlal House, Dhiraj House to Jagdish House and links and lane between DDA Community Hall and DDA car parking in Kondli Village in Ward No. 007-E in Shahdara (South) Zone.

XL-VIII-S-(i) Rs. 28,28,222/- Rs. 56,550/- 03 Months Rs. 500/- 313182

3. Improvement Development of road from Kondli Village main entrance to Panchayat Ghar, Panchayat Ghar to old Chaupal and various links in Kondli Village in Ward No. 007-E in Shahdara (South) Zone.

XL-VIII-S-(i) Rs. 36,91,032/- Rs. 73,800/- 03 Months Rs. 500/- 313183

4. Improvement Development of road from BSES Sub Station to Navodit Public School, Ashok Kumar House to Karanveer House, lane upto Jaichand House and adjacent links in Dallupura Village in Ward No. 005-E in Shahdara (South) Zone.

XL-VIII-S-(i) Rs. 42,39,005/- Rs. 84,800/- 03 Months Rs. 500/- 313184

5. Reconstruction of Boundary Wall of Pocket D SFS Flat and Imp./Dev. of drains by P/F of drain lids in Pocket D, SFS Flat in Ward No. 007-E, Shahdara (South) Zone.

XL-VIII-S-(i) Rs. 31,65,889/- Rs. 63,300/- 03 Months Rs. 500/- 313185

The demand draft for tenders cost & earnest money will be deposited in the office of E.E.-M-III Shahdara (South), School Block, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092.

Rates are valid up to Six months. Detailed NIT can be seen from the following website or from the office of the undersigned.

<http://engineering.mcdtenders.com>, (WAP & SMS enabled tenders portal).

RO NO -157/DPI/EAST/2018-19 Executive Engineer-M-III

EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. 155303

DipShabdarth/D/020818-19

Executive Engineer-M-III

Executive Engineer (M-III)

IN BRIEF



'No party has vision to bring normalcy in Valley'

HYDERABAD AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Saturday said whether it was the Congress or the BJP at the Centre, they have "no policy, no vision" to bring back normalcy in the Kashmir Valley. "I feel that there has to be a consistent policy on Kashmir which unfortunately is lacking," he said on Saturday. PTI

Jagan attack case: NIA to file chargesheet by Jan. 23

VIJAYAWADA The National Investigation Agency, which is probing the attack on YSRCP chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, said the investigation in the case is almost complete, and added that efforts are on to file the chargesheet by January 23. Mr. Reddy was attacked with a knife by J. Srinivasa Rao, a waiter at an airport restaurant, on October 25.

Schoolgirl gets her marriage stopped in A.P.

ONGOLE A 16-year-old schoolgirl managed to stop her marriage to an 18-year-old boy, which her family had fixed without her consent. With the support of her elder brother, the girl called the child helpline 1098. Social activists from the Childline India Foundation partner HELP rushed to the village and stopped the marriage.

Shed catches fire, five of a family suffer burns

ANANTAPUR Five members of a family suffered severe burns when a shed in which they were residing was engulfed in flames in Anantapur district of A.P. on Saturday. Uttappa, 55, wife Lakshmi, 35, daughters Suvarna, 7, Bhanurekha, 2, and a 15-day infant boy have been moved to a hospital. Their condition was said to be serious.

Cong. MLAs may leave resort today after talks with Venugopal

Show-cause notice issued to 4 members who abstained from Friday's CLP meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

A day after the Congress moved 77 of its legislators to a resort on the outskirts of Bengaluru in an effort to shield them from being "poached" by the BJP, former Chief Minister Siddaramiah on Saturday convened a meeting of the legislature party at the resort and discussed strategies to thwart rebellion in the ranks.

Meanwhile, show-cause notices were issued to four MLAs – Ramesh Jarkiholi, B. Nagendra, Umesh Jadhav, and Mahesh Kumathallu – who had abstained from the legislature party meeting on Friday, seeking an explanation as to why action should not be taken to disqualify them from holding Assembly membership.

On serving of show-cause notices, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Dinesh Gundu Rao



Former Chief Minister Siddaramiah addressing Congress MLAs at Eagleton resort in Bengaluru ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

said, "We have no intention to take action against our MLAs. But we expect a proper explanation."

MLAs may leave

Mr. Rao tweeted that AICC general secretary in-charge of Karnataka K.C. Venugopal "will interact individually

with each MLA on parliamentary elections and a decision on the future course of action will be taken."

After discussions with Mr. Venugopal, the legislators are expected to leave the resort on Sunday evening.

Party sources said the former Chief Minister, at the

Recover ₹982 crore from resort: BJP to Congress**BENGALURU**

Alleging that the resort where Congress legislators were staying fearing poaching owes ₹982 crores to the Karnataka government as a penalty in a land encroachment case, the Karnataka Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday asked the Congress leaders to collect the amount and use it to waive farm loans. After the crucial Congress Legislature Party meeting on Friday, the party had shifted all its MLAs to Eagleton Resort to "escape" allegedly from the BJP's "onslaught." PTI

CLP meeting, discussed the Karnataka political situation, drought issues, the 2019-20 budget, and the parliamentary polls. The CLP meeting was held after many MLAs "expressed unhappiness at being lodged in the resort without no "concrete agenda."

Congress move catches BJP by surprise

Party's efforts to topple Karnataka govt. may revive during legislature session

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The sudden decision of the Congress to move its Karnataka MLAs to a resort appears to have forced the Bharatiya Janata Party to rework its strategy to woo rebel Congress MLAs for a shot at power in the State.

A day after the Congress got its MLAs to the 'safety' of a resort, the BJP asked all its MLAs who were staying in a Gurugram hotel to return to

Bengaluru.

According to sources in the BJP, the decision was taken as wooing rebel Congress MLAs in a bid to topple the government may take some more time in the wake of the Congress becoming cautious. Besides this, keeping the MLAs away in a north Indian city had attracted much criticism.

However, it is learnt that the BJP has not abandoned its efforts to woo rebel Con-

gress MLAs. "The efforts are going on. However, we can't specify any time frame for either winning them over or toppling the government," a senior BJP leader said.

A prominent leader said the party had to put off its decision to get four rebel

Congress MLAs to resign on Saturday following the Congress move.

Some members felt that the exercise may gain mo-

mentum again when the legislature session begins shortly. This is despite BJP State president B.S. Yeddyurappa stating that his party would not try to destabilise the coalition government.

Though various political strategies, including the possibility of the BJP moving a no-confidence motion in the Assembly, are doing the rounds, senior leaders of the party said that they were yet to take a call on anything.

Annual pilgrimage season concludes at Sabarimala

The temple witnessed a heavy rush on Saturday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATHANAMTHITTA

The two-month-long annual Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season at Sabarimala temple came to a close with the Gurutti ritual at Malikappuram on Saturday evening.

The Ayyappa temple witnessed a heavy rush on Saturday too, as hundreds of devotees undertook the pilgrimage to the forest shrine on the last day of the pilgrimage season.

The five-day customary vilakkinezhunnellippu procession in the last lap of the Makaravilakku festival concluded with a procession to Saramukthion Friday.



Curtains down: The five-day customary procession conducted in Sabarimala on Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Temple stir 'not entirely successful' admits BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM The BJP on Saturday admitted that its fight to protect the faith of devotees on the Sabarimala issue, regarding entry of women

of all ages, was 'not entirely successful'. Speaking at the venue of the protest, Kerala BJP president P.S. Sreedharan Pillai said the party would end the indefinite fast on Sunday.

Temporary consensus in church row

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THRISSUR

A temporary consensus was reached at a meeting held by the District Collector on Saturday between the Orthodox and Jacobite factions of the Malankara Church over the row over the ownership of St. Mary's Church, Mannamangalam.

The church will remain closed and the Jacobite faction informed the Collector that they will not conduct the prayer planned for Sunday in the church. Both factions promised to maintain peace in the coming days.

The stand-off between the Orthodox and Jacobite factions started on Wednesday.

Kerala nuns write to CM, seek protection

Also want a stay on transfer orders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The nuns have also sought protection from transfer for Sister Neena Rose, another resident of the convent, "especially considering our safety," they said in their letter.

Copies of the letters have also been marked to State police chief Loknath Behera and the chairperson of the Kerala State Women's Commission.

The nun who has accused Bishop Franco Mulakkal of rape said in her letter that the five nuns, who were her colleagues, were giving her emotional support, even as the convent authorities were refusing to provide for their needs.

Telangana progressing on every front: Governor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Telangana, which was formed after six decades of relentless struggle, has been progressing on every front and has positioned itself as a leading State in the country, said Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan here on Saturday.

Addressing the first joint session of both Houses of the Legislature after the election to the Assembly, Mr. Narasimhan congratulated the newly elected members and said his government, in the last four and a half years, had implemented a number of welfare and development programmes.

Outlining the achievements of the State, the Governor said the process of reconstruction of the neglected Telangana region in the combined State was taken up straight away with focus on irrigation, power, and agriculture sectors.



Irrigation projects were given priority to provide water to one crore acres.

The works related to the Kaleshwaram project had been speeded up to launch lifting activity through river Godavari during the coming monsoon.

The Sitarama project in Khammam had been accorded all clearances. The government was committed to completing all projects in the State within five years, said the Governor.

Dry and ready



Price crash: A worker collects pepper after drying it, at Dharmasthala in Karnataka. The domestic black pepper market is witnessing lower prices and subdued demand, and the growers attribute it to a surge in imports. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

Excessive exposure to pesticides claims 2 lives

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PATHANAMTHITTA Two farmworkers died and three were hospitalised on Saturday after suspected excessive exposure to pesticides while working in the paddy fields of Bengaluru in the upper Kuttanad village of Peringara in Thiruvalla.

The dead were identified as Mathai Easo, alias Johnny, 68, and Sanalkumar, 44, of Kazhupill Colony at Bengaluru. They were taken to the Changanassery General Hospital with severe breathing difficulty on Friday evening. They were then referred to the Medical College Hospital, Kottayam, where they were declared brought dead on Saturday.

The other three farmworkers, Unnikrishnan, Sunilkumar, and Prabhakaran, who too experienced breathing difficulty, were administered first aid at the

Changanassery General Hospital and are out of danger, sources said.

Assistant Director of Agriculture Joyce K. Koshy told *The Hindu* that the workers were reportedly engaged in spraying pesticide at the paddy fields on Thursday.

The three workers, in their statement, said they had used a highly toxic mixture of three pesticides.

Ms. Koshy said unscientific use of the pesticide mixture, which included Cypermethrin and Quinalphos, and excessive inhalation of the toxic gas emanating from it might have led to the tragedy. She said the department had not recommended the pesticide with the trade mark 'Virat', a combination of Cypermethrin and Quinalphos.

The department sealed the shop at Peringara from where the workers bought the pesticide.

General Hospital and are out of danger, sources said.

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KSRTC buses will be refurbished once they return after Sabarimala season



KSRTC will be launching 10 zero-emission and noiseless air-conditioned battery electric vehicles. ■ FILE PHOTO

bished for making long-distance travel comfortable for passengers.

Though the BEV can attain a speed of 120 km per hour, the speed will be restricted to 80 km per hour.

On average, the BEVs operated 360 km daily on the Nilakkal-Pampa-Nilakkal corridor for Sabarimala pilgrims.

Limited stop service The low-floor buses will stop only at Attingal, Karunagapally, Kollam, Kayamkulam,

KSRTC got a profit of ₹57 a km, including the electricity cost, out of the fare collection of ₹10 a km.

Only 0.8 unit of electricity is needed for the BEV to run a km. Compared to the operational cost of ₹31 a km for HSD-powered buses, the BEVs operational cost is ₹6.

With one charging, which will need three to four hours, the buses can run up to 300 km.

"We have set up charging facility at Haripad and two others are in the pipeline at Alappuzha and Ernakulam. A 10-minute charging will provide 25% power," a KSRTC official said.

The 9-metre-long eBuzz K9 buses were manufactured in a plant near Hyderabad by Olectra Greentech in a tie-up with BYD Auto Industry Co Ltd.

TRS eyes varsity land for party office

University thwarts takeover bid; many suitors for the prime property

B. PRADEEP
NALGONDA

If the Executive Council of the Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU) had gone soft, its one acre vacant land in the heart of town would have bore the foundation stone of the Telangana Rashtriya Samithi's (TRS) party office by now.

Believed to be the brain child of a senior party leader from here, all plans were set in motion for its acquisition.

However, the land was not for sale and its rightful owner is the MGU.

The said land parcel, close to the Narketpally-Addanki State Highway, the railway and the bus stations, already had a foundation stone laid way back in 2000 by Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader A. Uma Madhava Reddy, for the then Osmania University PG College Hostel building for

women.

The property was transferred to the MGU after its establishment in 2007, and the land remains unutilised even now for "financial reasons." According to a member of the Executive Council, Nalgonda District Collector Gaurav Uppal had served letters to University's Vice Chancellor

and Professor Hussain explained that the attempt made by the TRS for its party office was true, however, "the Council handled it carefully," he added.

IN BRIEF



ISRO to demonstrate cost-saving technology

NEW DELHI The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will demonstrate a cost-saving Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) technology in a few months. "A helicopter will take the shuttle to a height and then release. The RLV will land automatically on the runway," ISRO Chairman K. Sivan told reporters.

Minor gives birth; 3 more found pregnant in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR Three minor girls, including two inmates of State-run residential schools, were found pregnant in different parts of Odisha, while another minor gave birth, the police said. The incidents came to light in Dhenkanal, Kalahandi and Jajpur districts. PTI

Probe confirms Sasikala got special treatment

CHENNAI The high-level inquiry, led by retired IAS officer Vinay Kumar, into allegations of irregularities in Bengaluru central prison has found "serious lapses" and "falsification of records" on the part of senior prison officials in extending special treatment to V.K Sasikala, who is serving a four-year sentence in a corruption case.

Kodanad case: TTV wants HC-monitored probe

TIRUCHI Seeking a thorough probe into the burglary at former T.N. Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's estate in Kodanad and the "mystery" behind the deaths of individuals linked to the incident, Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam leader T.T. Dhinakaran said on Saturday that the probe should be monitored by a senior High Court judge.

Himachal decides to implement 10% quota

SHIMLA The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Saturday decided to provide 10% reservation to economically weaker sections from the general category in State government services in Class-I, II, III and IV posts. PTI

Snowed out



White carpet: People walking on snow-covered tracks after a fresh round of snowfall in Budgam district of central Kashmir on Saturday. The meteorological department has forecast more snow in Kashmir and Ladakh in the next three days. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Two more bodies recovered in Leh, toll rises to seven

Three persons still missing in avalanche-hit Khardung La Pass

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Two more bodies were recovered, while three people remained missing on the second day of rescue operation in Leh's avalanche-hit Khardung La Pass, located at an altitude of 18,380 ft.

"After two days of rescue operations, seven bodies have been recovered. Three remain missing, for whom the rescue will resume at the first light on Sunday. The seven bodies are being airlifted to Zanskar on Sunday morning so that they can be handed over to their families," deputy commissioner of Leh, Avny Lavasa, told *The Hindu*.

The rescue was called off on Friday evening due to inclement weather and was resumed on Saturday morning. High-tech gadgets, in-



Racing against time: Rescuers searching for victims at Khardung La Pass on Friday. ■ PTI

cluding human detectors, and sniffer dogs were used to trace the civilians buried under snow, said an official.

Five locals killed in the avalanche were working as porters with the Army. Two vehicles carrying 10 civilians were swept away and buried under the avalanche of approximately 20 ft depth and 800 m length which hit the Khardung La Top-South Pulju stretch on the world's

highest motorable road on Friday morning.

The rescue is being jointly carried out by the State police, the Army and the State Disaster Response Force. It is likely to enter a difficult phase on Sunday as the meteorological department forecast more snow in Kashmir and Ladakh in the next three days and possibility of more avalanches in the upper reaches.

Woman gives birth on road, probe ordered

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Kashmir's government-run Lal Ded Hospital on Saturday ordered an inquiry into the death of a newborn after the mother delivered the still-born baby outside the hospital at sub-zero temperatures.

"The incident needs a thorough inquiry to take appropriate action in case of negligence. The Principal, Government Medical College, Srinagar, is directed to enquire... and furnish a report within two days," reads the order by Basheer Khan, Divisional Commissioner.

The woman from Kupwara was reportedly denied admission in the hospital on Friday, forcing her to deliver the baby by the roadside, alleged her family. Former Chief Ministers Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah demanded strict action in the case.

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Like cinema, India is also changing: Modi

Inaugurates National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Noting that Indian films that once focused on "helplessness" are now changing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that "in today's India, there are more solutions than there are problems."

The Prime Minister was addressing a gathering of film personalities after inaugurating the National Museum of Indian Cinema here.



Long shot: Narendra Modi visiting the children's film section at the National Museum of Indian Cinema on Saturday. ■ PTI

"Films and society are a reflection of each other. What you see in films is happening in society and what is happening in society is seen in films," Mr. Modi said. Once, only rich people from "Tier 1 cities" could enter the film industry, but now artists from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are getting a foothold on the strength of their artistic abilities, the Prime Minister said.

"This shows India is changing. Earlier, poverty was considered a virtue... Films were about poverty, helplessness. Now, along with problems, solutions are also being seen. If there are a

million problems, there are a billion solutions," he added.

Single-window clearance

Mr. Modi said the government was working on a single-window clearance system for film shoot permissions.

There was a need to set up a full-fledged "communication and entertainment university" in the country, Mr. Modi said, seeking a proposal from the industry. "Like the World Economic Forum held at Davos, can there be a similar global film summit in the country?" Mr. Modi asked, adding that "the world should get exposure to the industry that employs lakhs of people."

"A portal is being put in place, where you only submit required details and within a stipulated time clearances will be given," he said.

Terming piracy "an insult" to the hard work of the filmmakers, he said the government was taking steps to ensure that cam-cording

Two films portray difference between governments: Goyal

Railway Minister flags off Rajdhani Express from Mumbai

AJEET MAHALE
MUMBAI

Union Minister for Railways and Coal, Piyush Goyal, after flagging off a new Rajdhani Express from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) on Saturday afternoon, said, "We got to see a *majboor* leadership in *The Accidental Prime Minister* and a *majboot* leadership in *Uri - The surgical strike*. I know these are fictional movies and should not be taken at face value. But both show the difference between a weak and a strong system."



Piyush Goyal

gressive Alliance (UPA) government.

Mr. Goyal said that just like "double engines" were used to increase the speed of trains, the governments at the Centre and the State were pushing development in the State, and in Mumbai. He said ₹4,345 crore was invested by Railways in the State under the current government, as opposed to

₹1,171 crore between 2009-2014. "Projects worth ₹75,000 crore are going to be invested on the Mumbai suburban railway network. Since the first train ran from CSMT to Thane, there hasn't been such a large investment in Mumbai," Mr. Goyal said.

First on CR

The new Rajdhani Express, which will run bi-weekly between CSMT and Hazrat Nizamuddin in Delhi, is the first to run on the Central Railway (CR). "This will reduce the travel time by 5.5 hours and areas which did not have a Rajdhani will now get one," Mr. Goyal said. The other two Rajdhans starting from the city run on Western Railway (WR).

Demolish wall on jumbo corridor, SC tells refinery

Plea by Numaligarh Refinery Ltd. in Assam rejected



Elephants have the first right on forest, the court said.

part of the Deopahar Reserve Forest.

The refinery received flak from wildlife activists when a seven-year-old male ele-

phant died of haemorrhage in May 2015 after trying to force its way through the wall. Videos also captured herds trying to cross the high boundary wall with barbed wire in vain. In August 2016, the NGT ordered NRL to demolish the wall within a month, but only a 289-metre stretch was demolished.

Dismissing the NRL's appeal in the apex court, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said there cannot be any township as elephants have the first right on forest. "Ele-

phants do not go to office in a designated route. We cannot encroach upon the elephant's area," he observed.

"I hope NPL will take the Supreme Court ruling seriously and demolish the entire boundary. As it is, the wall and the refinery township violates the no-development zone around Kaziranga National Park declared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 1996," green activist Rohit Choudhury told *The Hindu*.

Insurance company asked to pay over ₹2 lakh

Complaint was filed by Delhi Airport

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

Following a complaint by the Delhi International Airport, a district consumer disputes redressal forum here has directed ICICI Lombard General Insurance to pay a sum amounting to over ₹2 lakh for wrongly repudiating a claim.

Stating that the repudiation of claim was "unjustified", the consumer panel said, "At the time of incidence the alleged policy in question was in existence... all the conditions mentioned in personal liability clause was duly completed by the complainant. Hence, in our view the repudiation is unjustified."

The directions came following a complaint moved by the airport which alleged that, despite having an "Overseas Corporate Travel Insurance Policy," the insurance company rejected the claim when one of its official met with an accident while

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H-BLOCK UDYOG NAGAR INDL AREA
PEERA GARHI CHOWK NEW DELHI-41
NIT No.-61/EE(NW)/2018-19
Press Notice Tender**

S. N.	Name of Work	Amount put to tender (Rs.)	E/M (Rs.) & Processing Fees	Dt. of release of tender procurement solution/I.D.No.	Last dt./time of receipt of tender through E-procurement solution
1	Replacement/Improvement of Sewer lines in B-Block and C-Block market Mangolpuri in AC-12 Under ZE-II/EE(NW)-I	26,66,705/-	53,400/- 500/-	17/01/2018/2019 DJB_166059_1	28-01-2019 at 3.00 P.M.
2	Replacement of old/damaged/corroded 80mm dia under size water line in various khancha's of Pkt. D-17 Sec-3 Rohini AC-12 Under ZE-VI EE(NW)	48,31,656/-	96,700/- 500/-	17/01/2018/2019 DJB_166061_1	28-01-2019 at 3.00 P.M.
3	Improvement of water supply by replacement of old/damaged water lines in Pkt-6, Sec-2, Rohini in AC-12 Under ZE-V/EE(NW)	48,29,423/-	96,600/- 500/-	17/01/2018/2019 DJB_166062_1	28-01-2019 at 3.00 P.M.

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
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Registration for Examination | Commencement Date | End Date

First Test 24.01.2019 11.03.2019

Second Test 24.01.2019 12.06.2019

The detailed brochure, relevant information will be available from 21.01.2019 onwards on website www.nata.in.

New Delhi

January 17, 2019

Registrar

FROM PAGE ONE

Opposition flexes its muscle in Kolkata

Addressing the rally, former Union Minister Arun Shourie, congratulated Ms. Banerjee for bringing all parties together.

"So far only Modi united the Opposition. Now since the Bengal tigress (Ms. Banerjee) has taken this job, I think other parties will follow it," Mr Shourie said.

Amaravati meet

His suggestion of holding similar rallies by the opposition was quickly followed by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's announcement of hosting one at Amaravati. Ms. Banerjee welcomed Mr. Naidu's proposal and Mr. Kejriwal's idea to host another meet in Delhi.

Congress leader in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge read out a statement from former party president Sonia Gandhi. Ms. Gandhi termed the Brigade Rally an "important attempt to galvanise leaders across the political spectrum to fight the arrogant and divisive Modi government." Mr. Kharge urged parties to rise above their differences. "Dil mile na mile, kamse kam haath mila kar chalo (Whether our hearts meet or not, we should walk holding hands)," he said.

Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda spoke of the challenges of running a coalition and how im-

portant it was to explain to people that coalition government can also deliver. He said senior leaders should come together and prepare a policy document. He named Mr. Naidu and Mr. Shourie informally as committee members.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Nationalist Congress Party president Sharad Pawar, Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav and former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha also spoke of doing "whatever it takes to defeat the Modi government in 2019."

While Mr. Yadav spoke of the significance of the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) alliance in Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Kejriwal said if voted to power again, the BJP government will change the Constitution. Politicians from north east such as Gegong Apang, former Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, and Pu Lalduhoma of Zoram Nationalist Party of Mizoram explained their reservations on the Citizenship Amendment Bill and how it may affect the BJP.

The rally saw young leaders such as Hardik Patel and Jignesh Mewani from Gujarat, Hemant Soren of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and Jayant Chowdhury of the Rashtriya Lok Dal congratulating Ms. Banerjee for organising such a gathering.

Kashi demolitions reveal communal faultlines



Demolition work in full swing for the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor in Varanasi. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

But it did little to allay the fear among Muslims that the demolition drive around the mosque, which RSS-led groups claim was built after a temple was demolished by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, is to eventually pull it down.

The demolition around the mosque has already left its exterior exposed, points out Sayid Yasin, joint secretary of the Anjuman Intejamia Masjid, the caretaker of the masjid.

Alleging a conspiracy, Mr. Yasin says the October alteration was a "testing point" to see how Muslims would react. "We have no opposition to the corridor. But we are worried about our security and our mosque. It is now exposed from all sides. There is no meaning of the security arrangements...look at what happened in Ayodhya despite a court order," said Mr. Yasin.

To our left, in the backdrop, the site resembles a war zone – entire buildings have been reduced to rubble; those still standing have their façades destroyed, waiting for the final blow, as dozens of construction workers, under the watchful eyes of the police, tear away at the buildings in a hurry.

"It is [Prime Minister] Modi's dream project and is going to provide better facilities to tourists. For us, it has only been a loss," said a dejected Mr. Sharma.

While the property owner received ₹1.40 crore compensation – the administration is paying double the circle rate to convince landlords – Mr. Sharma, among the six tenants of the building, received a nominal sum of ₹1 lakh to begin again.

"What business can I start with this amount," he asks. His requests to the administration for alternate work

have fallen on deaf ears.

Asked if his discontentment would reflect in his voting preference come the Lok Sabha elections, he quips, "How can we vote for someone who kicks us in the belly?"

Ateeq Ansari, a prominent Muslim weaver, who had helped calm the situation in October, says Muslims don't think the corridor is an election issue – no political party can be seen opposing Hindu interests – but the start of a long-pending destruction, "with the message to the local Hindus that the symbol of slavery by Aurangzeb is going to be razed down."

Informally, both supporters and sceptics, be it RSS cadre or Congress workers, repeat the same theory. "It is nothing but the BJP's agenda to create a second Ayodhya," said a senior journalist.

Heritage structures hit

The most common thread among the critics is that the demolition drive is ruining the mainstay of Varanasi, its heritage structures and narrow lanes. Many are irked by the demolition of a large number of small temples, commonly housed inside residential complexes.

Ganesh Shankar Upadhyay, head priest of the Kashi Karvat Mandir located next to Mr. Sharma's demolished saloon, is resisting demolition.

He says the project disregards the heritage of Varanasi and he feels consent was not acquired before the demolition drive.

"I am not against development. But since it is a religious site and development is taking place in the name of religion, development must also be based on it," he said.

On Thursday, *The Hindu*, published an exhaustive story on the huge price escalation in the deal for 36 Rafale fighter jets compared to the earlier agreement for 126 jets which was scrapped.

Ms. Sitharaman said in all debates on defence procure-

Grand alliance divided: Paswan

Union Minister says Congress is now demanding equal status with the RJD

SOBHANA K. NAIR

NEW DELHI

The anti-BJP grand alliance led by the Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar will have a tough battle arriving at a seat-sharing formula among its varied constituents, Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Saturday.

He said many conjectures were raised when seat-sharing talks were on between the three partners of the National Democratic Alliance – the BJP, the Janata Dal(U) and his party Lok Janshakti Party – but the issue was settled without complaints from any of three parties.

"Their alliance will look like orange. On the surface of it, they will look together, but once the skin is removed, half a dozen of them will all stand distinct and antagonistic to each other," he said, adding "the *gatbandhan* [alliance] will turn into *lath-*

G Their alliance will look like orange. On the surface of it, they will look together, but once the skin is removed, half a dozen of them will all stand distinct and antagonistic to each other

— RAM VILAS PASWAN
Union Minister and Lok Janshakti Party leader



bandhan [an alliance reached by the force of lathi or stick]."

The grand alliance has the Congress, the Hindustan Awam Morcha led by Jitan Ram Manjhi, the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party led by Union Minister Upendra Kushwaha, the Loktantrik Janata Dal led by Sharad Yadav, the Nationalist Congress Party and the Left parties. The State has 40 Lok Sabha seats. The RJD will get a major share of the seats. The Congress is now expecting a larger number of seats than it

was originally targeting at.

"Look, at what is already happening. After the BJP and the JD(U) divided the seats equally between themselves, now the Congress also wants to be an equal partner. By the time they reach an arrangement, their cadres will be at each other's throat," Mr. Paswan said.

Quota Bill

He said the RJD would have to bear the brunt for opposing the Narendra Modi government's legislation promising 10% quota in jobs and

educational institutes to economically backward among the forward castes. "Their own party is divided on the issue. In the Rajya Sabha, Misa Bharati and other MPs were abusing me when I rose to speak on the Bill, but now their own senior leader Raghuvaran Prasad has stood up in support of it," Mr. Paswan said.

He was dismissive of the recent efforts by the Opposition parties to come together on various platforms against the Amit Shah-Narendra Modi combine.

"BSP president Mayawati is dreaming of being the Prime Minister in 2019, when she does not have a single member in the present Lok Sabha," he said.

The Opposition rally organised by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was nothing but a congregation of "crowd-hungry" leaders.



A recent protest by the AGP against the Citizenship Bill, in Guwahati. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

grants from Bangladesh.

The AGP, which launched an anti-Bill protest on Friday, vowed to intensify the agitation.

Party general secretary Satyabrata Kalita said 70% of the BJP legislators in Assam were against the Bill but had been gagged by the party leadership.

AGP rules out rethink on alliance with BJP

Ties sour over Citizenship Bill

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) on Saturday ruled out a return to the alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party unless the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, is scrapped.

The regional party also criticised the Congress for shedding "crocodile tears" for the indigenous people of Assam feeling threatened by the Bill. The Congress had offered the AGP a common platform for fighting the BJP's "communal agenda".

"There is no question of rethinking about the alliance that we walked out of unless the Bill is killed," AGP legislator Rambendra Narayan Kalita said, while reminding the Congress of its move in 2011 to pave the way for citizenship to Hindu mi-

Congress contests Centre's claim on economic growth

Says it's based on 'bogus' numbers put out by NITI Aayog

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Saturday alleged that the Modi government's claim of India achieving the highest-ever growth in the past four-and-a-half years was based on "bogus" numbers.

"The BJP's claim of 'highest growth rate' under the NDA is based on the bogus numbers produced by NITI Aayog. Those numbers have been rejected by every economist and statistician of repute," Mr. Chidambaram tweeted.

He said the Central Statistics Organisation (CSO) numbers published earlier and those released by the National Statistics Commission Committee on Real Sector Statistics last August were the only "credible" figures.

G UPA 1 years were the best growth years since Independence
— P. CHIDAMBARAM
Congress leader

"UPA 1 years (2004 to 2009) were the best growth years since Independence and in fact, the best ever," he said.

Mr. Chidambaram's com-

ment comes a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi told the Vibrant Gujarat summit that India had seen highest-ever growth after his government came to power.

Congress leader Ahmed Patel was another Congress leader who contested contested such claims.

"In 4.5 years, India's debt increased by 50% to 82 lakh crore. Reckless spending & creating liabilities for future governments are key features of their so called 'Gujarat Model,'" he tweeted.

"Government is under illusion that last 4 years has been the best for GDP growth in India's history. Then why has export growth in last 4 years been one of the worst in India's history? 2013-2014: \$312 billion 2017-2018: \$302 billion."

Shahid ul Islam's daughters had appealed to Modi earlier

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) led by Mehbooba Mufti expelled senior leader and former Cabinet Minister Syed Attaf Bukhari on Saturday called up Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh to seek the release of senior Hurriyat leader Shahid ul Islam lodged in Tihar Jail following his arrest by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) deputy mayor Sheikh Imran also appealed to Governor Satya Pal Malik to consider his release. Aftab Ahmad, alias Shahid ul Islam, spokesman of the Hurriyat's Mirwaiz Umar Farooq faction, was arrested from Srinagar in July 2016 by the NIA in an alleged cross-border terror funding case.

Islam, known for his moderate views, was among seven separatists held by the NIA during the PDP-BJP rule.

Wife hospitalised

"I have spoken with the Union Home Minister requesting his [Shahid ul Islam's] early release on humanitarian grounds as his wife has suffered a brain haemorrhage," said Ms. Mufti.

Islam's wife, Nuzhat Shah, suffered a major brain stroke and was hospitalised on Ja-

nuary 12. Ms. Shah lives with her two daughters. SMC deputy mayor Imran also urged the Governor to look into the issue and "grant him bail on 'humanitarian basis' and as a confidence-building measure".

Islam's bail plea will come up for a hearing in a Delhi court on January 21. His daughters, Suzanne Shah and Sundas Shah, also wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year seeking his release.

"We never expected that peace-loving and moderate voices like him will be treated so shabbily," they said.

The ED probe has been initiated on the basis of a chargesheet filed by the National Investigation Agency on October 26, 2017.

According to the NIA, the accused preacher deliberately "insulted the religious beliefs of Hindus, Christians and non-Wahabi Muslims, particularly Shia, Sufi and Barelvi".

The ED alleges that Naik used the funds to the tune of ₹17.65 crore for purchase of properties from builders Salim Kodia, partner in MK Enterprises; Munaf Vadgama, partner in Aafiyah Realtors; Sameer Khan, partner in Pacific Orient Genesis Associates; and Musa Lakdawala, partner of Lakdawala & Yash Associates.

The ED had earlier made

ED attaches Naik's assets worth ₹16.40 cr.

In a money laundering case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has attached properties worth ₹16.40 crore in Mumbai and Pune in connection with the money laundering case against controversial Islamic preacher Zakir Naik and others. The total attachment in the case now stands at ₹50.49 crore.

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The ED had earlier made

BSP-SP alliance a mismatch'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BALLIA (U.P.)

Terming the Bahujan Samaj Party-Samajwadi Party alliance as a "mismatch", former SP leader Shivpal Yadav on Saturday alleged that the leaders of the two parties were unreliable as they both had betrayed Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Mr. Shivpal, who has floated Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party after parting ways with the SP, hit out at his nephew and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, alleging that he had deceived not only his father (Mulayam) but also the Congress party.

The BSP-SP alliance is a mismatch... their leaders Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav are unreliable as they have betrayed the SP patron Mulayam Singh Yadav," said Mr. Shivpal, who was here to attend a function in Saharanpur.

Nirmala Sitharaman with Air Marshal (retd) Shirish Deo, left, and Dr. Anirban Ganguly, director of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

ments, there is fine line between transparency and national security. Stating that the Congress has not bought any jet, or even concluded

the negotiations, Ms. Sitharaman said that when someone is trying to [buy the jets] there are attempts to question by pushing the strategic

interests of the country.

Taking a dig at the Congress, Ms. Sitharaman said defence procurements are cumbersome but in the past the rigour has been "tweaked" for somebody who has not gone through the system or "corners have been cut." "For good or bad, this government choose not to have middlemen at all. Not just in Rafale but in all deals... We have not had any middlemen in the corridors of South Block," she stated.

Ms. Sitharaman said the deal was necessitated as adversaries in the neighbourhood were acquiring 4th generation and possibly 5th generation aircraft while the IAF was flying with older aircraft.

Taking a dig at the Congress, Ms. Sitharaman said defence procurements are cumbersome but in the past the rigour has been "tweaked" for somebody who has not gone through the system or "corners have been cut."

"For good or bad, this government choose not to have middlemen at all. Not just in Rafale but in all deals... We have not had any middlemen in the corridors of South Block," she stated.

Ms. Sitharaman said the deal was necessitated as adversaries in the neighbourhood were acquiring



This rally marks an important attempt to galvanise leaders across the political spectrum to fight the arrogant and divisive Modi rule. I wish them all the success

SONIA GANDHI
UPA chairperson

To tease us, they (BJP) say we've got a lot of contenders for the PM's post, we say people will decide who'll become PM. As elections are approaching, you are forming alliance with the CBI and ED while we're forming an alliance with the people of India

AKHILESH YADAV
SP president

Subhas Chandra Bose fought against the British. We have to fight thieves. All of us are here to save the country and the Constitution

HARDIK PATEL
Patidar leader

BJP is offering huge cash to the MLAs of JDS and Congress to resign and join them. Legislatures are being treated as a commodity and democracy is being mocked at

H.D. KUMARASWAMY
Karnataka Chief Minister

The next (Lok Sabha) election will be the second fight for Independence. We will stop this poison of Hindutva and radical Hinduism from spreading

M.K. STALIN
DMK president

Kolkata rally: standing shoulder to shoulder against the BJP

The Hindu
report finds
mention

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The investigative report on the Rafale deal published in *The Hindu* on Friday was mentioned thrice in the unity rally, first by former MP and senior leader Sharad Yadav and then by Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge. BJP MP Shatrughan Sinha also spoke about the report by N. Ram on the escalation of the price of the 36 Rafale fighter aircraft being bought under an inter-governmental agreement between India and France.

Mr. Yadav said the "BJP government has committed a robbery regarding the Rafale deal". Mr. Yadav was one of the first speakers at the unity rally.

Countering Mr. Modi's slogan of a corruption-free government, Mr. Kharge alleged that the Prime Minister had given away ₹33,000 crore through the deal. "The increase in the prices is reported by yesterday's edition of *The Hindu*," he said.

Mr. Sinha said that the Prime Minister "needs to come clean on Rafale deal". "N. Ram, who is a great intellectual of the country, has said in a report that the cost of Rafale has escalated by 41%. We have such a good company like HAL which can build Sukhoi. Why was it not involved?" he said.

EVMs become a common grouse

Mamata Banerjee announces four-member panel on issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Several leaders of the Opposition who participated in the rally here on Saturday, raised concern on the use of electronic voting machines (EVM). At a press conference later in the day, a four-member committee was formed to look into the malfunctioning of these machines.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced that the panel comprised Abhishek Manu Singhvi of the Congress, Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party, Satish Mishra of the Bahujan Samaj Party and Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal.

To hold meetings

The committee will meet representatives of the Election Commission and will press on wider use of voter-veri-



Ground view: A section of the crowd at the 'Brigade Samavesha' in Kolkata on Saturday. ■ PTI

fied paper audit trails (VVVPATs).

The first leader to raise the issue was former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, who called the EVM a *chor* machine (a machine that steals votes). "The EVM is a *chor* machine. Honestly speaking, it is so. Its use must be put to an end.

Nowhere in the world is the machine used," he said.

Later, at the press conference, he said that there was little time left before the country went to the polls and the EC should carry out reforms expeditiously for the sake of democracy.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Nai-

du also raised the issue. "EVM is a big fraud. No other nation has the EVM. So we have to go back to paper ballot," Mr. Naidu said.

Mr. Singhvi, a Rajya Sabha member, pressed for greater use of VVVPAT machines. "We are not asking for returning to the physical ballot system immediately," he said.

Rahul backs Mamatadi for 'show of unity, hope'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

A carefully drafted message from Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday supporting "Mamatadi" for her "show of unity and hope", followed by a letter of solidarity from former party president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday left the Congress West Bengal unit in a spot. The party is fighting the Trinamool Congress tooth and nail in West Bengal.

Mallikarjun Kharge, party's leader in the Lok Sabha, said there was no clash of interest between the State unit and the central leadership.

"Let us not confuse between national exigencies and the requirement of the parties at the State level," Mr. Kharge told presspersons.

"This rally marks an important attempt to galvanise leaders across the political spectrum to fight the arrogant and divisive Modi government," Ms. Gandhi wrote in the letter, which Mr. Kharge read out at the unity rally. "An envelope of crisis



Rahul Gandhi

looms from our farmers to our borders. The youth are jobless, rice and jute farmers are in distress & fishermen are in deep loss. The country... is under immense strain," she noted.

She further argued that the citizens were "squeezed" and institutions were undermined politically, while the "pluralistic fabric stands vitiated".

"The upcoming Lok Sabha elections will not be an ordinary one. This will be an election to restore the nation's faith in democracy, defend our secular ethos and our heritage and defeat forces that are trying to sabotage the Constitution of India," Ms. Gandhi said.

Summit of contradictions, conflict: BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Opposition rally in Kolkata organised by the Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee is "a rally of self-interest and of conflicting ideologies", the BJP said on Saturday.

At a press conference at the party office here, BJP national spokesperson Rajiv Pratap Rudy termed the rally an anti-Modi exercise, and said the party was not threatened by it.

"Don't know where the threat to unity is. While Mamata calls it United India, we can clearly see a divided leadership. It's a summit of contradictions and conflict. They talk of a new front but I am not sure if it's even the second or the third front," Mr. Rudy said. He further said the rally had exposed divisions in the opposition camp, with many of these parties just "snubbing" each other.

Just self-interest

"Left has refused their invitation. SP-BSP alliance snubbed Congress in U.P. which has now extended support to rally. This is rally of self-interest," Mr. Rudy said.

People have seen the performance of the Narendra Modi government and the BJP will form the next government with a full majority, Mr. Rudy said while questioning who the leader of the united Opposition was.

"Today's Opposition rally in Kolkata is an anti-Modi exercise. Who is their leader," he asked.

The BJP has also threatened action against its Lok Sabha member Shatrughan Sinha for sharing the stage with Opposition leaders at the rally.

Deve Gowda calls for a common manifesto on governance



Sage advice: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu greeting former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda. ■ PTI

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

KOLKATA

While leaders across the political spectrum hailed the coming together of Opposition parties at the Kolkata rally as historic, former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda sounded a note of caution.

"The main task is how we should move forward. I have heard the speeches of all senior leaders and Chief Ministers. Time is very short, hardly two months. I think notification is going to be announced by Election Commission on March 1," Mr. Deve Gowda said.

Sharing of seats between Opposition parties is going to be the biggest challenge, he said.

"My bitter experience is that seat sharing in States is not so easy. Every State has two or three political parties and seat sharing is going to be a Herculean task," he said.

The JD(S) leader said senior leader of the Opposition should come together to prepare a manifesto on "how best we are going to govern."

Mr. Deve Gowda suggested that the committee should have leaders like Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and

former Union Minister Arun Shourie. The veteran leader emphasised that the leaders present at the gathering needed to create confidence among the people that they

Sharing of seats between Opposition parties is going to be the biggest challenge

were going to give good and stable governance.

DMK president M.K. Stalin said that a few months ago, Mr. Modi used to say he had no opposition. "Since we

have come together, he is afraid and now he feels that he is facing a sure defeat," he said.

Warning that if Narendra Modi returns to power, the country will go back 50 years, Mr. Stalin spoke of corruption in the Rafale deal and failure to keep the promise to return black money.

The initial part of Mr. Stalin's speech in Bengal, praising Mamata Banerjee for bringing the Opposition together, got a huge applause from the crowd. Later, he switched to Tamil and his speech was translated into Bengali.

Alliance against the people, says PM

'It is a combine of those who were prevented from looting the country'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SILVASSA

On a day when many Opposition parties came together on a common platform in Kolkata, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hit out at their proposed grand alliance, saying it was a combine of those whom he had prevented from "looting" India and it was not against him but the people of the country.

He took a dig at the Opposition rally and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, saying the BJP had



Narendra Modi

only one MLA in her State, "but still they are so afraid of us that they are saying *baat chao* (save us)".

"The grand alliance is not

against Narendra Modi but the people of India," Mr. Modi said at a public function at Silvassa, the capital of the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, after laying the foundation stone for a medical college.

Fought corruption'
"My actions against corruption made some people angry as I prevented them from looting public money. They have formed the *mahagathbandhan*," he said, adding that these leaders have come

together out of fear. Against the backdrop of the West Bengal government denying permission to the BJP to organise yatras, Mr. Modi said political parties in the Trinamool-ruled State were not even allowed to carry out their programmes.

"Party workers are killed there during elections and they talk about saving democracy. When those involved in suffocating democracy talk of saving it, then people will say, 'Wah kya baat hai...,'" he said.

On behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan, PHED invites bids online in electronic format on website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> from manufacturers for Procurement of ISI Marked Bleaching Powder Conforming to IS 1065:1989 (Amended/Revised upto date), Procurement of ISI Marked Deep Well Hand Pump (EDWP) conforming to IS 15500 (Amended/revised upto date) & Procurement of ISI Marked Sluice Valve conforming to IS 14846:2000 (Amended/Revised upto date) due on 04-02-2019. For details please visit website www.sppr.rajasthan.gov.in & <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>.

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Office of the Director
Department of Women & Child Development
2nd Floor, M.S. Building, Bengaluru-560001

No.DWCD/ICD/CNP/PSEK/09/2018-19 Date: 18.01.2019

SHORT TERM TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION KITS

(e- Procurement mode only, two cover system)

Department of Women and Child Development hereby invites technical and financial tenders from officially registered and eligible manufacturers/ suppliers for the supply of Pre-School Education (PSE) kits. Interested bidders shall submit the bids through Government of Karnataka's e-Procurement portal (<http://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in>).

1. Tender document available for download and onwards
2. Last date for receipt of Tender : Dt. 02.02.2019 by 5.30 p.m.

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Sd/-
Director
Dept. of Women and Child Development
Bengaluru

Karnataka drama finds an echo

Kumaraswamy says BJP preaches against corruption but engages in horse-trading

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Accusing the BJP of offering huge amounts of cash for MLAs from the Congress and the Janata Dal(S) in Karnataka, Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Saturday said the party was making a mockery of democracy in the State.

"Legislators are being treated like commodities. Perhaps this is the worst phase where the honour and pride of legislators is at stake. They are making a mockery of democracy in Karnataka," he said at the Opposition rally in Kolkata.

"On the one hand, the BJP makes a resolution at its na-



tional executive to fight against corruption and on the same day, the same BJP encourages horse-trading in Karnataka. This shows its double standard," he said.

Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge also spoke on the Karnataka situation.

Speaking to reporters at the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, Mr. Kharge said while the Con-

gress and the JD(S) "are trying to unite the State, the BJP is trying to divide it".

On the absence of four Congress MLAs from the Congress Legislature Party meeting, Mr. Kharge said two of them had offered explanations.

One MLA said he was in Delhi, the other said he was so far that he could not arrive", the Congress leader said.

In his address to the rally, former Union Minister Arun Shourie warned that a Karnataka-like situation can emerge in other States. "What is happening in Karnataka will happen in Madhya Pradesh," he said.

Regional focus: SP President Akhilesh Yadav and Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy in Kolkata. ■ PTI

Short Term Tender is invited by the Director, Department for the Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens, under e-procurement platform/e-portal in two parts (i.e., Technical bid and Financial bid) system from the original vehicle equipment manufacturers or their authorized dealers for supply of Motorised Two Wheeler 105 CC to 115 CC (Gearless) with Retrofitment of additional two wheels attachment for the use of severely affected orthopedically handicapped persons, to the Department for the Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens, The interesting bidders may see further details and may login in website: www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in

The tender can be submitted on or before 08.02.2019 till 4.00pm. The technical bid will be opened on 11.02.2019 at 11.00 am and the financial bid will be opened on 12.02.2019 at 4.00 pm. The details can be obtained from the Department for the Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens, Podium Block, V.V.Tower, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560001, Phone No:080-22866066, 28860907. For more info please see department website:www.dwdsc.kar.nic.in

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Sd/-
Director

DEPARTMENT FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED AND SENIOR CITIZENS, BENGALURU

No:DSD/33/MTW/2018-19 DATE:17.01.2019

SHORT TERM TENDER NOT

WHO

Shah Faesal, making a political turn

On January 9, Shah Faesal stunned the nation with his announcement that he was quitting as managing director of the Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation. The 35-year-old had topped the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) examination in 2010.

Why did he take such a step?
He termed his decision a "small defiance and protest against unabated killings in Kashmir, lack of reach-out and marginalisation of around 200 million Indian Muslims at the hands of Hindutva forces by reducing them to second-class citizens."

Did he court controversies?
Mr. Faesal's frequent brushes with controversy has constantly pushed him to the centre of discourse. As Deputy Commissioner, Bandipora, he ordered a magisterial inquiry into the killing of a civilian, Farhat Ahmad Dar, in firing by security forces on protesters within his jurisdiction in 2014. He followed up the

inquiry by writing to the General Administration Department, seeking an amendment to the rules to bring appraisals of officers of the rank of superintendent of police under a Deputy Commissioner's purview "to reduce human rights violations." His letter attracted a reprimand from the Chief Secretary, who called it "crossing of the red line." Subsequently, his tweets and write-ups on the Kashmiri problem landed him in a major row. Many BJP leaders, including Union Minister Jitendra Singh, were critical of his views. In July 2018, the Department of Personnel and Training pointed to a tweet of Mr. Faesal and said its contents were "prima facie in contravention of the provision of the All India Service (Conduct Rules), 1968, and All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1969." An inquiry is pending against him for his tweets.

Where did he grow up?
Mr. Faesal hails from the far-flung village of Sogam in

north Kashmir's Kupwara district, where militancy raged in the 1990s since the area is close to the Line of Control (LoC) and was a major route for youth exfiltrating the Valley into Pakis-

<https://t.me/TowardsTomorrow>

tan-Occupied Kashmir for arms training. His father, a teacher, was killed by militants in 2002 in the village. The decision of Mr. Faesal, an MBBS with a Masters degree in Urdu, came nine years after he topped the IAS examination. In 2010, he described his feat as "breaking of the myth" of discrimination. In fact, he did motivate hundreds of local aspirants to compete in the Union Public Service Commission examinations, an effort that resulted in a quantum jump in the number of students appearing from the Kashmir valley. With his speeches and interviews, widely televised on Doordarshan, he emerged as a poster boy from the troubled Valley. Mr. Faesal's story of success became a counter-narrative to the discourse of alienation that was driving young people to militancy and street protests.

What next?
Mr. Faesal, who

returned to the State recently from Harvard University after completing a course in public policy, has since announced that he is going to join politics. However, he remained non-committal on joining any ideological platform. He described his stint in politics as "an addition and not an alternative" and made it clear that "he has no aim to divide the J&K electorate further," a hint that he may join some regional party. In the face of an unprecedented feedback, especially from the youth on social media platforms, Mr. Faesal was swayed against joining a current mainstream party immediately. He said his politics would be "a politics of disruption." The mainstream parties, which had failed to represent the sentiments of the people, should reinvent themselves and find a new vocabulary, Mr. Faesal said. He has decided to go back to the grassroots and meet people for the next six months before taking a call.

PEERZADA ASHIQ



ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

WHAT

The goings-on in the top probe agency



WHAT IS IT? Alok Verma, an IPS officer of the 1979 batch, was removed as Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a second time on January 10, barely 48 hours after the Supreme Court had restored his position. His rival and the number 2, Rakesh Asthana, a 1984-batch officer of the Gujarat cadre, too, was transferred a week after Mr. Verma. The government is hoping that it brings the unprecedent-

ed internecine war in the country's premier investigation agency to an end. Both hand-picked officers of the Narendra Modi government, they took personal rivalry to a new low, finally reaching the Supreme Court. On October 23, 2018, when the government divested Mr. Verma of his powers and forced him to go on 'compulsory leave,' he challenged the decision in the Supreme Court. He contended that since he was appointed for a two-year tenure by a high-power selection committee, comprising the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India and the leader of the single largest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha, only the committee could remove him. He also challenged the order of the Chief Vigilance Commissioner to remove him for not "co-operating in an inquiry and not submitting required submissions." On January 8, the court restored Mr. Verma to his post but did not go into the merits of corruption allegations against him.

HOW DID IT COME ABOUT? It all started in the middle of 2017 when the government refused to appoint IPS officers recommended by Mr. Verma to the CBI. In October 2017, when the government was about to consider a promotion for Mr. Asthana to the rank of Special Director, Mr. Verma submitted a note to the CVC, alleging that the blue-eyed officer of the Modi regime had taken a bribe in the Sterling Biotech case that the agency was investigating for default of over ₹5,000 crore in loans. He alleged that a diary found on the premises of Sterling had mentioned that Mr. Asthana had received a bribe of ₹3.8 crore. Yet, the government promoted Mr. Asthana. This worsened relations between the two. In June 2018, the former CBI chief wrote to the CVC again that Mr. Asthana could not represent the Director at official meetings. In a tit-for-tat allegation, Mr. Asthana wrote to the Cabinet Secretary in August 2018, accusing Mr. Verma of

meddling in a probe and preventing a raid against former Railway Minister Lal Prasad in the IRCTC scam. Mr. Verma hit back, and on October 15, the CBI registered a case of bribery against Mr. Asthana, alleging that the agency's number two officer had received a bribe of ₹2 crore in the Moin Qureshi money laundering case. Mr. Asthana moved the Delhi High Court to quash the FIR. On October 23, the CBI's internal tussle peaked. Mr. Verma ordered Mr. Asthana to be stripped of all his powers since he was "under investigation for extortion and bribery." The CVC, who performs a supervisory role of monitoring the CBI under the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, stepped in by divesting Mr. Verma of all powers. The government, which had been a silent spectator until then, too, intervened. The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), under which the CBI functions, divested Mr. Verma of all functions and responsibilities. On learning about his midnight

removal, Mr. Verma moved the Supreme Court.

WHY DOES IT MATTER? The entire episode not only dented the CBI's image but the rivalry between two top officers split the agency into camps where subordinate officers went by personal loyalties rather than upholding the rule of law. Experts said the CBI, which has often been described as being a "caged parrot," was now witnessing a "gang war."

WHAT LIES AHEAD? The selection committee is meeting this Thursday to decide on a new full-time Director as Mr. Verma's original two-year tenure would have ended on January 31. The biggest task before the government is to restore the credibility of the agency by appointing an officer of impeccable record.

SANDEEP PHUKAN

<https://t.me/TowardsTomorrow>



The opening pair remains a work in progress. Regulars Murali Vijay and K.L. Rahul seem to have lost their touch, the last-named was a walking-wicket. Newcomer Mayank Agarwal (195 runs) did well and perhaps in future Tests he could pad up with Prithvi Shaw. Ajinkya Rahane's inability to convert starts into the odd century remains a worry but he has been an able deputy to Kohli.

Are there issues about discipline?

■ Morale is high but the squad's self-es-

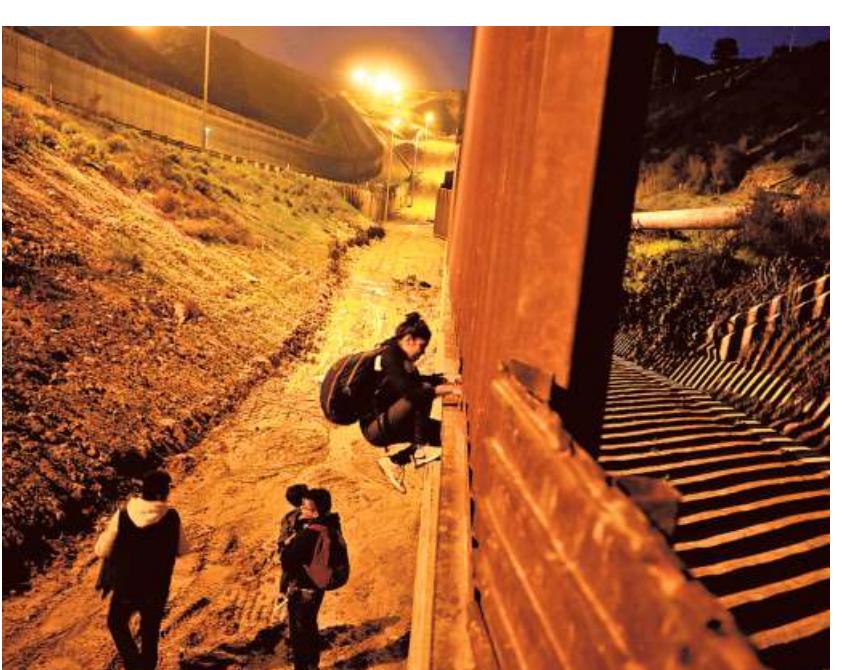
teem could border on the delusional. The constant posturing by coach Ravi Shastri that this unit is India's finest ever and even alluding that the latest milestone is bigger than the 1983 World Cup win seems to be stretching the limits of hyperbole. Kohli and some players have caught on to this 'we-are-the-best' anthem. The bubble they have built has its perils. The sense of immunity that seeped in has come back to haunt, especially after Hardik Pandya and Rahul's misogynist remarks on 'Koffee with Ka-

ran.' It would help if the players remember that they have stepped into the massive shoes of men like Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble and Rahul Dravid.

What's in store?

■ Sporting history is replete with tales of triumphs against a pedigree team, eventually causing upheavals in the hierarchy. India defeated the West Indies in an ODI at Barbados during the 1983 tour and perhaps it sowed the seeds of the subsequent World Cup high at Lord's. India has already slipped into the ODI mode and just won the latest series against Australia 2-1 on Friday. Next, New Zealand awaits. After that, Australia will arrive in India for a set of ODIs. All this is a prelude to the World Cup in England from May 30 to July 14. Confidence is a mighty ally to have. Meanwhile, it would help if the players mind their language on television.

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR



WHEN

15 January, 2019

Wall of people: As a partial U.S. government shutdown reached its 25th day, President Donald Trump on Tuesday invoked a new caravan of migrants, heading to the border, on Twitter to pressure lawmakers. Mr. Trump wants Congress to provide \$5.7 billion for building a wall on the Mexico border but Democrats have resisted. "A big new Caravan is heading up to our Southern Border from Honduras," he tweeted. "Only a Wall, or Steel Barrier, will keep our Country safe! Stop playing political games and end the Shutdown!" Hundreds of mostly Honduran migrants have entered southern Mexico, joining thousands of other people from Central America who are already there. Mexican authorities told Reuters the migrants would be put up in shelters. Pictures show migrants from Honduras walking along a road as others hitch a ride in Guatemala, and a migrant trying to reach the U.S. jumping a fence to cross illegally into San Diego from the border in Tijuana, Mexico. ■ REUTERS

WHERE

Confusion over construction plan in Bandipur



The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has proposed a proposal to construct elevated roads over the Bandipur Tiger Reserve. The proposal had triggered outrage and protests from NGOs. The tiger reserve, spread over nearly 912 sq km, is located in Chamarajanagar district of Karnataka, constitutes an important component of a forest landscape comprising

Nagarhole (Karnataka), Mudumalai and Sathyamangalam (Tamil Nadu) and Wayanad (Kerala). The tiger reserve is home to nearly 120 to 150 tigers as per the 2014 estimates made by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). Bandipur also supports nearly 1,600 elephants, according to a 2012 count by the Karnataka Forest Department. Conservationists feel any infrastructure project through the forests is bound to impact the wildlife habitat and should be dropped. But there are supporters of the project who want the night traffic ban lifted. The matter is pending before the Supreme Court.

What does the view signify?

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Environment Mahesh Sharma said the Ministry had not concurred with the proposal for elevated roads, but supported strengthening of the alternative route. While wildlife activists have welcomed the statement, they have underlined the

contradictory stance of the government. Conservation biologist Sanjay Gubbi argued that different Ministries were holding divergent views. While the MoEF&CC was against the project in principle, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways was for it. "In case the Centre was against the elevated road, the MORTH, which has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court on September 19, 2018, in support of the project, should be made to withdraw the affidavit and respect the views of the Ministry of Environment on forest issues," he said.

Why was the project proposed?

The ban on traffic through Bandipur, located 80 km from Mysuru in Karnataka, from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. was introduced on the directives of the High Court of Karnataka to reduce disturbance to wildlife and curb road kills. It has been in place since 2009. But the ban evoked opposition from a section of stakeholders, including the Kerala government which

challenged the High Court order in the Supreme Court on the grounds that it was impeding economic growth of the region. The Supreme Court constituted a committee to examine the disputes between Karnataka and Kerala. In an affidavit, the MORTH, which was part of the committee, proposed construction of elevated highways: five sections of 1 km each (four in Bandipur and one in the Wayanad sanctuary).

Why is it being opposed?

Activists have argued that such projects are prohibited under the final notification of the Eco-Sensitive Zone for Bandipur issued in September 2011 based on the Environment Protection Rules, 1986. The guidelines make it clear that in the areas of threatened taxa, there should not be infrastructure development, and since Bandipur is a source habitat for tigers, flyovers cannot be constructed, said Mr. Gubbi. Wildlife activist Santosh Pavagada pointed out that the Centre had also ignored the Tiger

Conservation Plan (TCP) for Bandipur, which was prepared under Section 38V (3) of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and it had recommended night closure of highways passing through the tiger reserve.

What is the State's view?

The Chief Conservator of Forests and Director of Bandipur, Ambadi Madhav, said the State government was consistent in opposing the project and developed an alternative road that bypassed the core forest area. The State has spent over ₹75 crore to develop an alternative road (SH-90) through Hunsur, Gonikoppa, Kutta and Kartikulam and another stretch between Konanur and Mukutta and Madikeri and Kutta that links northern Kerala. The detour is 30 km longer. The Board for Wildlife has exempted ambulance and fire-service vehicles from the ban and 16 State transport buses are allowed to pass through at night.

KRISHNA KUMAR

The root cause of corruption

If we want to cut down on corruption, we will have to start working more seriously on reducing the huge chasm between the rich and the poor



THE CONTROVERSIAL INDIAN

TABISH KHAIR
is an Indian novelist and academic
who works in Denmark

Transparency International, a global anti-corruption coalition, ranked India 81 out of 180 countries in its corruption index of 2017. The least corrupt nations were New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, Singapore, Sweden, Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the U.K. Just above India in the list were China, Serbia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ghana (less corrupt). And below India were Morocco, Turkey, Argentina, Benin, and Kosovo (as corrupt or more corrupt).

Now, 81 out of 180 might not seem too bad, especially to sceptical Indians, but it is misleading: often the same rank is occupied by as many as three countries (for instance, rank 71). As such, in terms of numbers, India is placed in the bot-

tom third of the list, if not the last quarter. This should not surprise sceptical Indians.

However, ranking the corruption level of a country is less of a science and more of an art. And it is an art that naturally obscures the advantages – which others might see in terms of invisible corruption – of rich First World nations, where polity and economy, Parliament and corporation often have long-established and uncontested relationships. This does not mean that nations like Ghana, India, Morocco and Turkey do not have considerably more corruption than nations like New Zealand and Denmark. What it means is that the ranking game is not sufficient to understand corruption at the global, national and local levels.

Cultural and historical factors

How, then, can we understand the corruption that we find in nations like India? One common option is to employ a cultural perspective. It is attributed to something like national character. For instance, it seems suggestive that all the least corrupt nations listed above, with the exception of Singapore, are Euro-



pean or European-settler states. Even Singapore has a highly 'Europeanised' structure, in all regards except that of some citizen rights. Another common explanation is basically historical: for instance, by referring to the top-down power structures of feudal or colonial regimes in places like Morocco, China and India until just a few decades ago.

I will not deny that cultural ethos and historical precedence play a role. After all, both abiding by the law and lawless-

ness have a domino effect: if you follow the law, other people around you are more likely to do so; if you break the law, other people around you are also more likely to do so. A history of unresponsive authoritarianism might increase the tendency to break laws, if one can get away with it, because the citizen has nothing invested in the status quo. Only fear upholds the law, and the moment the citizen can get away with it, he or she breaks the law. This can also

lead to a greater tendency towards corruption.

The most important factor

But culture and history are misleading as primary explanations. Far more important is another factor that few people talk about. If you look at India and the countries around it on the index, and at the top 10 (least corrupt) countries, you realise that the former group contains nations with huge socio-economic inequalities, and the latter contains nations with a high degree of social and economic justice. In that sense, Singapore belongs with the European and European-settler countries ranked as the 10 least corrupt nations. In short, corruption is directly proportionate to the socio-economic gap in a nation. Cultural and historical factors add to this or subtract from this, but the greater the socio-economic disparities, the greater the incentive towards corruption.

This happens in many ways, both among the rich and the poor. For instance, in a country where, say, ₹10,000 is nothing for the rich, it is easy for the rich to offer a bribe of that sum. But if, in the same country, ₹10,000 is what a

poor man may earn in an entire month, it is difficult for him to refuse a bribe of that sum. This leads to the gradual erosion of morality and ethics on both sides: some find it easy to spend money to get things done, others find it difficult to refuse to accept that money. On both sides, there builds up a disrespect for the system and for each other. The system itself is seen as thoroughly corrupt. This further 'justifies' the corruption on both sides. Moreover, the poor look at the affluence of the rich as basically a consequence of corruption, which is by no means the case all the time. And the rich look at the vulnerability of the poor as the consequence of a corrupt morality, which is again by no means the case all the time. Such a nexus saps the entire social fabric of a country, also creating apathy towards demands for greater transparency in the corridors of power. This further leads to the spread of corruption.

If we in India want to cut down on corruption, we will have to start working far more seriously on reducing the huge (and some say, widening) chasm between the rich and the poor.

You'll be fine without privacy

As a true patriot, you should donate it to the cause of national security



ALLEGEDLY
G. SAMPATH
is Social Affairs Editor, *The Hindu*

The problem with people like Rahul Gandhi is that they keep making completely false allegations against our Prime Minister. For instance, take his pet grouse that the Prime Minister doesn't listen to the heartbeat of the people. This is the most ridiculous thing I've heard in my whole life. Is he the Prime Minister of India or a cardiologist at Apollo, that he should listen to heartbeats all the time?

But every Indian knows that the Prime Minister does listen. If you really believe he is an arrogant man who never listens to anyone, I dare you to say so in a Facebook post, along with your address and phone number. I promise you that in 24 hours we will come to know who is a bad listener and who isn't. As they say in Hindi, milk will become milk and water will become water.

The Prime Minister is all ears

The biggest proof that listening to people is top priority for our Prime Minister is the recent order by his government authorising 10 central agencies to intercept, monitor, and decrypt "any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer". I can't think of a bigger step taken by any Prime Minister anywhere in the world to listen round the clock, everywhere, to every citizen irrespective of caste, class, religion, gender, mother tongue, and whether or not the urea they use comes with neem-coating.

Sadly, pliable journalists and their patrons in the shameless Opposition are opposing this move because they have nothing better to do. They are alleging that it will result in invasion of



people's privacy. What makes their protestations totally unconvincing is that they defended Aadhaar when people said Aadhaar invaded privacy. They said if you have nothing to hide, what's your problem?

Today I want to tell them the same thing: if you have nothing to hide, what's your problem? Thanks to Snowden, the whole world knows America snoops on the whole world. You never protested that. But now you accuse your own government of 'snooping' when all it wants is to know you better. Tell me: what better way to know someone than to spy on everything that passes through their computers? Why should there be any secrets between you and your dear leader who you so lovingly voted to power almost five years ago? What will you do with all your privacy anyway? Build Taj Mahal? Why not donate it to the cause of national security?

Don't you know that terrorists save all their evil plans on their personal computers? You must have read in the papers about our brilliant sleuths busting the sleeper cells of the dreaded terrorist group, Harkat-ul-Meerkat-e-Furqat-ul-Zameen-e-Asmaan-e-Mujahideen-e-Anti-India-e-Lashkar-e-Hizbul-e-Lol Qaida. How do you think they did it? It's not as if the sleeper cells were sleeping after a heavy breakfast of apam and coconut milk, waiting for the police to come and wish them 'Happy Bombing!' We caught them because we had been diligently monitoring the

laptops and smart phones of every single citizen of India, including those too poor to own a laptop or smart phone.

In other words, the compulsive contrarians who keep harping on privacy are actually doing two things: first, they are refusing to trust their own democratically elected government, which, if you ask me, makes them hardcore anti-nationals fully deserving of every bit of surveillance; second, they are taking the side of the terrorists and bad guys, for those are the only ones who stand to gain by not having their computers spied upon.

The solution to India's problems

Looked at objectively, it is clear that mass surveillance is a revolutionary step that can change the very character of Indian democracy. I can't tell you how excited I am by this move. Like every patriotic Indian, I also have great solutions for India's problems. Now all I need to do is communicate them to the government is to open a word file in my laptop and write them down. And I'm happy to tell you that this was the first thing I did in 2019: I wrote down the solution to India's problems. Since you can't do surveillance on me, let me voluntarily share my solution with you: dictatorship.

That's what Indian democracy needs. All our problems have the same root cause: population. Too many Indians. And too many poor Indians. If India can reduce its population by 50%, then we will have plenty for everyone. Plenty of jobs, plenty of food, and, most important, corruption and poverty will both come down by 50%.

And the only way to reduce our population is to let the army run the government and leave policymaking to experts, preferably from World Bank and McKinsey. Anyway, this is what I wrote down in my laptop and I'm confident our government has taken note of it. As for those who insist on asking what about right to privacy, well, if data is the new oil, then as they say in Hindi, privacy has gone to buy oil.

In one of India's oldest port cities

A walk through Lothal takes you back 4,500 years to the Harappan Civilisation



WHERE STONES SPEAK
RANA SAFVI
is a historian, author and blogger documenting India's syncretic culture



Ancestors and Where We Came From. He writes that "the way South Asians wash themselves hasn't changed all that much". Imagine, our fixation with washing up goes back all the way to the Harappan Civilisation!

As this thought was crossing my mind, I made my way past an ancient well, the remains of a storehouse, and found myself in the upper town or citadel. The city was divided into two parts: the upper town and the lower town. The remains of the brick walls there suggest wide streets, drains and bathing platforms.

Off to a bead-making factory

After spending some time in the citadel I followed the signs to a bead-making factory. I wish the signs were more accurate. Amidst ruins, my search turned into a guessing game with all the signboards being so vague.

Lothal was in the thick of Harappan maritime trade, and beads made from semi-precious stones, terracotta, gold, etc. were popular in areas as far as Sumer (modern-day Iraq), Bahrain and Iran. The Lothal bead-makers were highly skilled. According to the signboard in the Archaeological Survey of India museum there, which displays these beads, a bead-maker's house was excavated in the lower town. It had several rooms and a kiln. Eight hundred cornelian beads in various stages of production and tools and raw materials were also recovered from there. In the cool confines of the museum, I was also bewitched by the unicorn seal. There must be few students in India who have not seen that seal in their history textbooks.

I also learnt from *The Early Indians* about a vase discovered at Lothal. It has the painting of a crow standing next to a pitcher with a deer looking back at it. It reminds one of the tale of the thirsty crow in the *Panchatantra*. As Joseph writes, "So some of the tales we tell our children may have been the same ones told by the Harappans to their children."

Chance encounter with South Asian folk wisdom

Taxi rides can provide a few minutes of social intimacy among strangers. Occasionally, they can also be reminders of disappearing folk wisdom



THE PUBLIC EYE
RAJEEV BHARGAVA
is Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi

Taxis are mobile spaces that enable strangers to be physically proximate for a short duration. In an enclosed metallic 6x6 ft box on wheels, two individuals or a small group are accidentally thrown together. But if the passenger and the driver are so inclined, taxis provide an opportunity for ephemeral, social intimacy too. The journey cries out for conversation particularly if you seat yourself next to the driver. And when that happens, the episode can turn into an amateur ethnographer's delight, for it provides fleeting, meaningful data about a person, his society, and culture, which can be stored in memory for future use.

We all die empty-handed

In metropolitan cities such as New York or Sydney, Indian visitors can't escape a chance encounter with Pakistani taxi



drivers. Conversations begin with "where are you originally from?" and soon enough, the P-word is fluttering in the newly found common space. A lament curdles: how sad that India was partitioned – so unnecessary, so painful! And then the blame game begins: 'It is all the doing of politicians – not only of yesteryears but also today – whose avarice ordinary people fall prey to. If only people took matters in their own hands, but no politician allows that. We must live with our fate: as separated brothers for whom reunion is forever denied.' The journey ends with a slightly mournful, feel-good bye. The driver refuses to take any money. The passenger insists that he can't take a free ride. Money is finally exchanged and reciprocal pleasantries bring the encounter to a close. I must have gone through this ritual hundreds of times in the last two decades. Away from their respective homelands, diasporic South Asians feel a special, fleeting bond that they fail to replicate when they return.

When I hailed a taxi on my recent visit to Sydney, one Abdul Mallick from Karachi stopped by the curb and asked me to get in. He had the look of a proper, god-fearing Muslim – a beard that would be perfectly V-shaped if it was not inordinately long, facial hair shaven

away from squeaky clean, shining, cheekbones. He had no moustache. This is the kind of religious appearance that ordinary Hindus associate with a *kattar mussalman*, or dangerous Muslim. The conversation had a predictable beginning but then took an unexpected turn. "Sir, I don't understand our politicians," he said. "They all claim to be true Muslims. But a Muslim's foremost concern is with what happens in the afterlife. He gets Jannah only if he does good in the here and now, right? But he openly plunders his homeland and does no good to his holy land; all he is interested in is amassing power and wealth for himself and his family. Why

can't he realise that this does no good for his afterlife? He is simply not being a good Muslim."

I was stumped, but listened intently. "And you know, sir, they believe they are leaving behind a fortune for their family, but what do they get in return? When Benazir's family came to power after her assassination, did they go after her killers? No, sir, they only amassed more power and wealth for themselves. These people are rotten. They are so caught up in this terrible game that they have no qualms about betraying their mother or wife. Or perhaps what Benazir passed on to her family was just this: greed for power and wealth. That is her

legacy, that is their inheritance," he said despondently.

Perhaps simplistic and too harsh on the family, I thought, but he had a point. The stakes in big time moneymaking and power wielding are so high that ordinary values of love, affection, and respect are easily set aside. This philosophical lesson was rounded off with a soulful rendering of four lines from Shailendra/Mukesh's immortal song from *Teesri Kasam*: "Sajan re jhooth mat bolo, Khuda ke paas jana jai, na haathi hai, no ghoda hai, wahan paidal hi jana hai." He said: "Sab yaheen dhare ka dhara reh jaega janaab! Phir kyoo yeh mara maadi" (You're not going to take anything with you after you die, so why hanker after power and wealth?) "Yes, sir," I nodded in agreement.

Forgetting life's purpose

But are the really wealthy and the powerful listening, I wondered. Ruthless accumulation of wealth and power is at the expense of the nation, not for its sake as is sometimes claimed. Nor is it in the true interest of the family, which has no special claim anyway. Largely induced by wilful self-assertion, it is aimed at momentary pleasure, for pride and glory in the immediate here and now.

As I got off and walked towards my hotel, I chewed over Mallick's sagacious reflections. Today's politicians seem to have forgotten the very point of human life, he was saying: why we are here, what makes our life worth living, what gives it meaning. They give politics a bad name by overlooking its real point, he might have added: to use collective power to realise the common good. But why only blame politicians? Are we not all complicit? Have we all not forgotten the point of our vocations – law, medicine, education – and lost a sense of the overall purpose of human life?

It is hard for me to judge whether he interpreted Islam correctly. But indisputably, that was his interpretation of what true Islam required, what a true Muslim ought to do: abjure limitless pursuit of power and wealth for the sake of a better afterlife. But then, would a Hindu with an otherworldly inclination say anything different to contemporary politicians and builders of business empires who happen to be Hindus? It is hard not to conclude that despite all the manifest difference, the lived religion of ordinary South Asians, in taxis or outside them, contains ancient, common folk wisdom. Alas, the excessively wealthy and the extremely powerful are impervious to it.

CAPSULE



Hominid hybrid
Using deep learning, researchers have shown that a fossil of a hominid ancestor found in the caves of denisova is a hybrid – that is, it was an offspring of a Neanderthal mother and Denisovan father. This study was published in *Nature Communications*.



Pain and emotion
A study using *in vivo* neural calcium imaging in freely moving mice identified the brain circuits that respond to pain. The unpleasantness of pain is separate from the actual experience. The *Science* study sought to understand this and how the circuits motivated response to pain.



A day on Saturn
Using Cassini spacecraft's observations of Saturn's rings, researchers have estimated length of a day on the planet. It is 10 hours 33 minutes and 30 seconds. The wave patterns on the rings, caused by the planet's internal vibrations, prompted the discovery. The study is published in *The Astrophysical Journal*.

AIIMS team's model can predict shock 12 hours in advance

The machine-learning algorithm to detect shock by thermal imaging has 75% accuracy

R. PRASAD



Nearly 30% paediatric ICU patients suffer from sepsis shock and 30% of them end up dying due to multiorgan failure. (This photo is used for illustrative purpose only.) ■ K. GOPINATHAN

Predicting shock (less blood and oxygen supply to major organs, which can lead to death) even 12 hours before it can be clinically recognised by doctors by using the current gold standard (intra-arterial blood pressure) is now possible, thanks to the work by an AIIMS-led multi-institutional team of researchers. Shock can arise from loss of blood volume, inefficient pumping by the heart or infection (sepsis).

Efficient algorithm

The machine-learning algorithm to detect shock at the time a single photo is taken using thermal imaging has an accuracy of 75%. The ability of the algorithm to forecast the probability of a shock happening three, six and 12 hours before clinical recognition can be done using the gold standard method is 77%, 69% and 69% respectively. The algorithm was used in conjunction with pulse rate to both detect and predict shock. The results were published in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

In paediatric intensive care units, 70-90% babies develop signs of sepsis. Almost 30% paediatric ICU patients suffer from sepsis shock and 30% of them end up dying due to multiorgan failure. "This number will be much higher at district hospitals. Sepsis shock is one major killer in paediatric ICUs," says Dr. Tavpritesh Sethi from the Department of Paediatrics at AIIMS, New Delhi, who led the team. In principle, the model can be used

for predicting shock in adult patients too. But the model has to be tested on adults as the current study was limited to 539 thermal images of paediatric patients.

It is possible to prevent organ failure and death by adopting simple measures such as fluid management through transfusion and raising the blood pressure using certain drugs. Body starts responding to shock very quickly but takes some time for clinical recognition. This is where the machine-learning algorithm comes handy in saving lives with its ability to detect and predict shock.

"Due to noise, thermal images are fuzzy and so it is difficult for the computer to identify body parts. So the machine-learning algorithm was trained to identify body parts, capture body surface temperature and calculate the temperature difference between the abdomen and feet to detect and predict shock."

predict shock," says Aditya Nagori from Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology and first author of the paper.

No human judgement

When there is less blood and oxygen supply, blood starts to flow away from the hand and feet to important organs such as heart and brain. As a result, the temperature of the limbs falls compared with chest and abdomen. "This temperature difference is not measured all the time even in an intensive care unit. And there is human judgement as well to call it a shock. But ours is a quantitative method without human judgement to measure the temperature difference between peripheral and centre of the body and predict shock," says Dr. Sethi. "Most importantly, ours is a non-contact, non-invasive method."

Just like temperature diffe-

rence between peripheral and centre of the body, the pulse rate too increases when shock sets in. Pulse rate increases in response to reduced blood and oxygen supply. The heart beats faster to circulate smaller volume of blood causing higher pulse rate.

Since the current study used a single image to detect and predict shock, images have to be taken at regular intervals for continuous monitoring. "We are expanding the scope of the work to use video for continuous monitoring," Dr. Sethi says.

Since a single image along with pulse rate is all that is required for detecting and predicting shock, children admitted in ICUs at remote locations can be monitored using the model as a tele-diagnostic decision support system. "We are expanding the scope of the work to track patients remotely at the district level hospitals and primary health centres. We hope to start this before the end of the year," he says. "Clinical use of the model in the safe ICU at AIIMS will start within the next six months."

"The team is excited to launch a smartphone application which will incorporate the model capability to predict shock," he adds.

The researchers were able to use the machine-learning algorithm to detect difference in body temperature at AIIMS once the ICU with big data warehousing, the first of its kind in India, started functioning since February 2016. "Here data of every patient in the paediatric ICU at AIIMS is captured every second," Dr. Sethi says.

How the fruit fly experiences bitter taste

Reactions to bitter and sweet taste differ widely

SHUBHAREE DESIKAN

Deciphering how the fruit fly brain works has been a significant branch of study in the biological sciences for several decades now. In this, a team of researchers from National Centre for Biological Sciences, Tata Institute for Fundamental Research, Bengaluru (NCBS-TIFR), have figured out the neuronal circuitry that is involved in processing bitter taste.



If a fly senses a bitter, toxic or noxious substance, it won't extend its proboscis, says Ali Asgar Bohra. ■

repel insects," says Dr Bohra, who is now a research associate with King's College, London, in an email to *The Hindu*.

The reactions of fruit fly to bitter and sweet tasting material differ significantly. When it senses food cues, mainly sweet tasting, through the sensory neurons in its legs, or proboscis, it extends its proboscis for consuming the food. "If a fly senses a bitter, toxic or noxious substance, it won't extend its proboscis," explains Dr Bohra. "I used this assay [test] to screen and identify the neurons which are involved in bitter taste processing." The work is published in *Current Biology*.

To identify these interneurons, genetic and imaging approaches are used. "We genetically activated and inactivated particular neurons to identify their role in bitter taste behaviour. We then used imaging tools to record the activity of these neurons," says Ali Asgar Bohra, the first author of the paper, then a PhD student at NCBS-TIFR.

Partly the reason for the interest in the workings of the *Drosophila* (fruit fly) brain is because it is a good proxy to approach the goal of knowing how the human brain itself works. There is also another reason: "Studying the bitter taste circuit helps in understanding how insecticides and pesticides work to

History of India's last known hippo

ASWATHI PACHA

Nearly 5.9 million to 9,000 years ago, India was home to the hippopotamus. These entered Eurasia from Africa, then diversified in South Asia before going extinct.

Now, studying a small fragmented tooth unearthed in Madhya Pradesh, an international team of researchers has discovered the last known specimen of the Hippo *Hippopotodon* species. However, this does not mean that it is the last one to have lived in India.

This fossil was unearthed in 2003 by Rajeev Patnaik (Panjab University) and Parth R. Chauhan (IISER Mohali) who spent days studying the fossiliferous silt near the river Narmada. "We believed that the species was older than 50,000 years and did not study it fully. Recently, I analysed the date using accelerator mass spectro-

copy (AMS) in Taiwan. It revealed that the specimen was quite young and could possibly be among the last ones that lived in India," Dr. Patnaik says. Accelerator mass spectroscopy does not require a large sample and it also has a higher precision than traditional radiocarbon dating.

The paper published in *Quaternary International* also discusses the possible causes of the extinction. The researchers hypothesise that a "combination of climatic stress and anthropogenic impacts" could have led to their extinction.

Dating studies show that this hippo lived during a "particularly dry period in the late Quaternary" period (15,000-16,000 years ago). Severe drought in South Asia and weak Indian monsoons might have led to the extinction.

Researchers note that

hunting, habitat alteration, ecological human encroachment were the reasons for species extinctions during this period in other parts of the world. While *Hippopotodon* and *Homo sapiens* co-existed for several thousand years, researchers did not find any kill sites, but they note that this reason cannot be ruled out.

Direct dating

This is the only directly dated *Hippopotodon* from the Indian subcontinent, the report states. "A direct date means that the fossil bone of the animal was used to determine the date. Usually, charcoal or shells found alongside the fossil are studied and this known as an indirect or associated date," explains Advait M. Jukar, the paper's lead author, in an email to *The Hindu*. He is from the Department of Palaeobiology, National Mu-

seum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

He explains that carbon isotope analysis showed that the animal had a C4 dominated diet. "It refers to the kinds of plants the animal was eating. The plants leave a specific isotopic signature in the teeth of animals that eat them... basically, these hippos were eating grasses, and grasses prefer dry, seasonal climates."

The report concludes that ancient DNA could provide insights into the causes of the extinction. When asked if fossils hold DNA, Advait explained, "DNA does degenerate as soon as the animal dies, but fragments remain, and in some cases, have been isolated from fossils that are a few hundred thousand years old. This *Hippopotodon* specimen isn't very old, so it may be possible to extract DNA fragments."

AATHIRA PERINCHERY

This is one ten-year-challenge that city planners need to take note of. Tamil Nadu's Tirunelveli city now has less vegetation and more urban areas, all in just one decade. This could create an 'urban heat island' – urban area that is significantly warmer than its surrounding rural areas – finds a study.

Green vegetation and water bodies are often lost as built-up areas in a city increase. Radiation from cemented floors, roads and buildings add to the temperature. This leads to a surge in surface and air temperatures, causing urban heat islands (UHIs) to form. According to Rajchandar Padmanaban, scientist at Portugal's NOVA Information Management School, this is common in fast-growing cities in developing countries. Padmanaban and his col-

leagues including Avit Bhowmik (Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Sweden) investigated the environmental and climatological impacts of such unprecedented urbanisation in Tirunelveli, which has seen rapid population growth over the last two decades due to immigration of people.

To do this, the team fused satellite images of the city from multiple satellite sensors – a method usually used in remote sensing but rarely to model the emergence of urban heat islands. This however, gave them a higher accuracy in their results.

The team's results, published in *PLOS ONE*, show that the city has undergone rapid urbanisation (at an average rate of 4% between 2007 and 2017), with a 32% increase in the coverage of urban built-up area. Fertile cropland pastures (which show a decline of almost



Urban heat island effect might arise due to less vegetation and more built-up area. ■ MOHAMED SHAMSUDEEN M

60% in the city) have been converted to fallow lands (mostly real-estate plots, which have increased by a whopping 178%). Fallow lands have, in turn, been transformed into built-up areas. This was most prominent in the western riverine stretch of the city, where the Thamiraparani river flows by. Fertile cropland pastures (which show a decline of almost 12% while the bush and

shrubbery-covered infertile areas increased by 164% throughout the city.

The team's land surface temperature assessments from the maps revealed a high potential for the emergence of UHIs in Tirunelveli. The highest areas at risk of this are the western riverine zone (which showed a loss of greenery) and eastern and southeastern Tirunelveli. The southeastern portion could be a potential UHI hotspot, the scientists add.

According to the authors, proper zonal planning that accommodates sufficient green spaces (such as urban greenery and water bodies) can prevent the emergence of more UHIs in future.

"Smart and energy-efficient construction materials and green roofs may also substantially help prevent the emergencies of urban heat islands," wrote Dr. Bhowmik in an email.

When did modern science emerge in India?

A thematic issue in the *Indian Journal of History of Science* describes the evolution of modern science in pre-colonial and colonial India



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

Considerable debate and discussion have been going on in recent weeks about the practice of technology and science in India from ancient times to today. Sadly enough, some people have attempted to interpret mythological events in terms of the discoveries and inventions of today's science, thus claiming that they existed already centuries ago. In this context, a historian has rightly pointed out that the history of science in India must be treated as a serious subject rather than a matter of speculation (A. Ramnath, *The Hindu*, 15 January 2019). He quotes the historian David Arnold who cautioned that while the sages of antiquity may have had ideas compatible with the atomic theory of matter, their "felicitous intuition" was a step removed from the modern scientific method which relies on sophisticated instruments.

This seems to have been the practice not just in India but elsewhere in the world of those days. Now, "modern science" or the Baconian method (Fran-

cis Bacon, English philosopher 1561-1626) of inductive reasoning, careful observations and skeptical analysis of results has come to stay. The method of modern science involves: "ask a question or have a theory, do careful experiments/observations, interpret the results, conclude rationally, have it repeated and tested by others, and if it is confirmed by others, your theory is right. Note that if at a later date, this theory or law does not fit new facts and discoveries, your theory may need modification or even rejection".

European explorers

This "modern scientific method" started to emerge in India in the late 1490s as European explorers such as Vasco de Gama, John Cabot, Ferdinand Magellan and others came over to the "East Indies." This was quickly followed by traders and explorers from England, France and some other parts of Europe. Many of them, traders and capitalists, had to "discover India" and its environs, wealth and health, metals and minerals, began exploiting them for colonial gains. In order to do so, they used scientific methods. In addition, several of them who practised contemporary science, technology, agriculture and medicine spread such knowledge to the "natives."

This has been the emergence of modern science in Colonial India. A thematic issue with this title has just been published by the *Indian Journal of History of Science* (Rajinder Singh goes beyond



A view of the display gallery at Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata, founded by Meghnad Saha on the occasion of its diamond jubilee year (2011). ■ FILE PHOTO

the "Big Three" (C.V. Raman, S.N. Bose and M.N. Saha), and writes about Professors B.B. Ray, D.M. Bose and S.C. Mitra. The piece by Dr. John Mathew: "Ronald Ross to U.N. Brahmachari: Medical Research in Colonial India" talks about how Prof. Brahmachari's drug "urea stibamine" saved thousands of lives from the parasitic disease Kala Azar. Incidentally, Brahmachari talked about this in his Presidential Address in 1936 at the 23rd session of the Indian Science Congress at Indore. And the article on "Organic chemists of pre-independence India: with special focus on natural products" makes special mention of a remarkable polymath, Prof. Salimuzzaman Siddiqui, who isolated important drugs such as reserpine from sarpagand-

ha and azadirachtin from the neem tree. When Partition came and he was requested to come to Pakistan, he first refused and then went in 1951 where he helped start the CSIR and the Atomic Energy labs of Pakistan, and an excellent organic chemistry which is still carrying on excellent work. He may thus be regarded as the one who laid the foundations of science and technology in the nascent country, Pakistan.

Forgotten pioneers

Three other contributors are worth nothing; one of them by Sodhi and Kaur on "The forgotten pioneers of finger-print science: fallout of colonialism," talks about two Indian police officers, Azizul Haque and Hem Chandra Bose.

While these two subordinates did the hard work and quantified fingerprinting using analytical pattern method, their boss Inspector General of Police Edward Henry took the credit! Haque represented 5 years later to the Governor he was given an honorarium of Rs5,000 and Rs10,000.

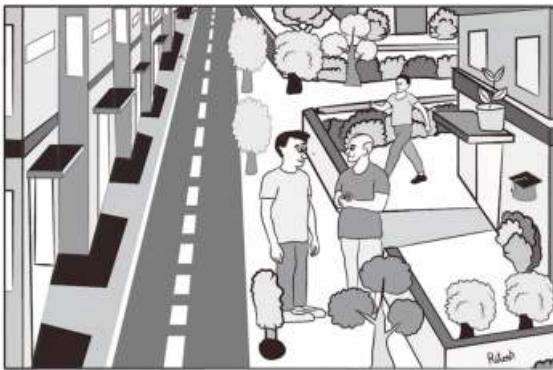
The second is about Nain Singh Rawat who travelled all the way from the Tajikistan Border of the Himalayas down the entire Himalayan track, took careful notes and helped prepare the Upper Road Map in the late 1800s. This helped the Survey of India later.

And the third is that of Radhanath Sikdar of Calcutta who discovered through his computation that Peak XV was 29,029 feet high, thus making it the highest in Himalayas and thus the world. However, it was named Mount Everest, after his head officer at the Topographical Survey of India. Dr Bag in his editorial mentions these two discoveries and how the government of India issued a commemorative postage stamp in honour of Rawat and Sikdar on June 27, 2004.

While we have highlighted only some articles from the journal, the entire issue is a collection of carefully researched, compactly written and easily readable articles on the birth and growth of modern science in India and would be an ideal teaching and research material in science education.

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HEALTHLINE RITESH KUMAR



"People with higher incomes and more education tend to have greater access to urban green spaces than those less privileged." — University of British Columbia

AROUND THE WORLD

Bacteria can clear toxic ammonia in blood

Scientists in the U.S. have engineered a probiotic strain of *Escherichia coli* bacteria that can reverse dangerously high levels of blood ammonia (or hyperammonemia) in mice. The therapy was also found to be safe in humans in a phase I clinical trial, suggesting it could be further investigated as a potential treatment for disorders such as cirrhosis (a disorder where scars accumulate in the liver) that are associated with hyperammonemia. The advent of synthetic biology has allowed scientists to engineer microbes as new treatments for diseases ranging from cancer to metabolic disorders. Researchers are particularly interested in using these therapies to target toxic metabolites that are present in the gastrointestinal tract. For example, defects in the enzymes that detoxify ammonia — which occur in urea cycle disorders (UCD), cirrhosis and other diseases of the liver — result in excessive amounts of ammonia accumulating in the blood, leading to brain damage and death. The study appears in *Science Translational Medicine*.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

The placenta's hidden powers

A study in the U.K. using mice to model conditions in the womb says that the placenta regulates how much oxygen and nutrients it transports to babies during challenging pregnancies. The placenta is a poorly understood organ and hard to study in pregnant women. But its ability to function properly is vital as it impacts pregnancy outcomes and the lifelong health of mother and child. The placenta develops during pregnancy and connects the developing baby to the mother. It serves as the lungs, kidneys, gut and liver for growing babies and carries oxygen and nutrients to the foetus whilst secreting hormones and discarding waste. The research focused on analysing small parts of the placental cells called mitochondria, the energy powerhouses found in the body's cells. The placenta mitochondria have a remarkable ability to adapt and compensate for environmental impacts such as when women are living in low oxygen areas at high altitude and not eating enough of a healthy diet during pregnancy. The study appears in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Stair-climbing, in short bursts, good for the heart

It just got harder to avoid exercise. A few minutes of stair climbing, at short intervals throughout the day, can improve cardiovascular health, says Canadian researchers. Their findings suggest that virtually anyone can improve their fitness, anywhere, any time. Previous studies have shown that brief bouts of vigorous exercise, or sprint interval training, or SIT, are effective when performed as a single session, with a few minutes of recovery between the intense bursts, requiring a total time commitment of 10 minutes or so. In addition to being more fit, the stair climbers were also stronger compared to their sedentary counterparts at the end of the study, and generated more power during a maximal cycling test. The findings appear in the journal *Applied Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism*.



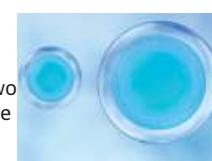
GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Long sleep linked to stillbirth

Sleeping more than nine hours per night during pregnancy may be associated with late stillbirth, a study in the U.S. suggests. Researchers analysed online surveys involving 153 women who had experienced a late stillbirth (on or after 28 weeks of pregnancy) within the previous month and 480 women with an ongoing third-trimester pregnancy or who had recently delivered a live born baby during the same period. The findings suggest an association between lengthy periods of undisturbed maternal sleep and stillbirths that were independent of other risk factors. But researchers caution that further research is needed to better understand the relationship and what it means for pregnant women. At the same time, very disruptive sleep has also been associated with poor pregnancy outcomes, including growth restriction and preterm birth. The findings appear in the journal *Birth*.

The perils of too much inter-cellular contact

Persistent physical contact between two cell types can convert a beneficial tissue repair mechanism into a destructive process that damages the lungs. The study by a team of researchers in Canada and Finland identifies a self-sustaining and potentially targetable mechanism involved in lung fibrosis, a dangerous condition with limited treatment options. Myofibroblasts, or MFs, which are fibroblast cells that activate in response to inflammatory signals or injury, repair damaged tissue in the lungs and other organs by secreting a substance composed of the connective tissue protein collagen. Despite their key role in tissue repair, persistent activation of MFs can lead to fibrosis, a condition characterised by excessive collagen production and an accumulation of scar tissue that hinders organ function. Importantly, cell culture experiments showed that direct contact was required for macrophages to activate MFs. The findings appear in *Science Signalling*.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

DEMYSTIFYING SCIENCE

What is embodied logic?

Even without a brain or a nervous system, the Venus flytrap, which is a plant, 'knows' when to snap shut on potential prey as well as to open when it has accidentally caught something it cannot eat. Such systems that depend on stimuli to make decisions about the outside world are an example of 'embodied logic'. Researchers are now trying to synthesise materials that use such principles. Using multi-material 3D printers, they can make these active structures with nested 'if/then' logic gates, and control the timing of each gate. This allows for complicated mechanical behaviours in response to simple changes in the environment. — Science Daily

Tracking health through sweat

A new generation of devices aims to use perspiration to give a real-time snapshot of a person's well-being or fitness

APOORVA MANDAVILLI

Someday soon, perhaps within a year, you'll be able to slap a soft, stretchy patch on to your arm that tells you if you're dehydrated. Or that your electrolytes are dangerously out of balance. Or even that you have diabetes.

Fitness trackers such as Fitbit and Apple Watch already track step counts, heart rate and sleep rhythms. But they tend to be rigid and bulky, and mostly gather mechanical metrics, rather than assess a person's underlying biology.

Ties in with care trends
A new generation of devices instead aims to analyse sweat for many chemicals at once, producing a real-time snapshot of the wearer's health or fitness. These devices also fit intimately against the skin, and are comfortable for anyone, from premature babies to the elderly. One version is already being advertised by Gatorade.

The latest advance in this technology, described in the journal *Science Advances*, provides real-time information on the wearer's pH, sweat rate, and levels of chloride, glucose and lactate — high levels of which could signal cystic fibrosis, diabetes or a lack of oxygen.

"It fits into a broader trend that you're seeing in medicine, which is personalised, tailored approaches to treatment and delivery of care," says John Rogers, a biomedical engineer at Northwestern University in Illinois, U.S., and the key architect of the device.

How they work
Technology like this has been anticipated for years, but the field has accelerated rapidly. Some similar devices in development are soft. Some use electric sensors to read chemicals. Others rely on colorimetrics, in which the intensity of the colour in the readout matches

the concentration of the chemical being monitored. The new device delivers all of that in a battery-free and wireless form.

The new device has minuscule holes at its base into which sweat naturally flows. From there, a complex network of valves and micro-channels, each roughly the width of a human hair, route the sweat into tiny reservoirs. Each reservoir contains a sensor that reacts with a chemical in the sweat, such as glucose or lactate.

"That's basically it," Dr. Rogers says. "There's nothing that penetrates the skin, and there's no power supply that's driving flow."

The device relies on the same technology that smartphones use to send wireless payments; the phone can both deliver power through this wireless coupling, and receives data back. Alternatively, the data could be sent to a reader attached to a treadmill or elsewhere in a fitness room — and, perhaps eventually, to a reader much farther away.

Dr. Rogers's team has begun testing the technology as a way to screen for cystic fibrosis, a rare genetic condition. Doctors already look at chloride concentrations in

sweat to identify children with the condition, but they typically use a rigid, uncomfortable device that straps tightly onto the child's arm for a one-time measurement.

In 2017, another team described a flexible, wearable sensor that also analyses chloride in sweat to screen for cystic fibrosis. But that sensor is battery-powered, and does not capture separate volumes of sweat as Dr. Rogers's device does.

"Really what is needed is big data for human health," said Ali Javey, a member of the team that proposed the earlier sensor and a professor of electrical engineering and computer science at the University of California, Berkeley. The device invented by Dr. Rogers "is really important," Dr. Javey said, because it is "comfortable to wear, has different sensing modalities and is robust."

Looking ahead

Dr. Rogers's team has been testing their device with children who have cystic fibrosis at Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. They are in the late stages of a clinical trial, and plan to apply for approval from the Food and Drug

Administration.

A much bigger market for sensors lies in helping the approximately 30 million people with diabetes in the United States track their glucose levels. The most advanced diabetes sensor, approved by the FDA in 2017, is a soft skin patch coupled to a small reader, and relies on tiny needles that pierce the skin to monitor blood glucose.

The ideal device would not involve needles or draw blood. To use sweat instead, however, scientists first need to learn more about it — how sweat rates vary among individuals, how different biochemicals make their way into sweat, and how well those levels reflect blood glucose.

Dr. Rogers is also working with collaborators to develop sensors for urea and creatinine, which are indicators of how well the kidneys are functioning, and to chart the progress of people undergoing rehabilitation after a stroke. Other labs, such as one led by Wei Gao at Caltech, are trying to develop sensors for mental health conditions, including depression.

Progress on many of these fronts is likely to be fast. NY TIMES



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Cause and effect?



Something is changing: Health officials in the U.S. are looking into a possible link between prescription opioids and a birth defect called gastroschisis — a condition when a baby is born with its intestines hanging outside the stomach, due to a hole in the abdominal wall. Most are repaired through surgery. Roughly 1,800 such cases are seen in the U.S. each year, but the number has been rising and officials don't know why. Researchers note that the condition seems to occur more often when the mother is a teenager or was smoking or drinking alcohol early in pregnancy. In a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S., that focused on 20 states, and which was released on Tuesday, the scientists noted that cases were 60% more common in places that had the highest overall opioid prescription rates. The study did not see if each mother had been taking opioids and it does not say opioids caused the birth defects. But it echoes earlier research that found a higher risk of birth defects when mothers took opioid painkillers such as oxycodone just before or early in their pregnancy. The CDC's director, Dr. Robert Redfield, and two other agency officials have written a commentary in the journal *Pediatrics* urging more study of the possible connection between opioids and birth defects. They say: "The report sounds an early alarm for the need to increase our public health surveillance on the full range of fetal, infant, and childhood outcomes potentially related to these exposures." Picture shows a standard prescription container with oxycodone tablets.

— MIKE STOBBS/AP • MARK LENNIHAN/AP

Loading up on fibre

There is more evidence now that a diet high on roughage cuts health risks

AFSHAN YASMEEN

A study commissioned by the World Health Organisation (WHO) has provided "convincing evidence" that consuming fibre and whole grains can reduce health risks from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease.

In a series of systematic reviews and meta-analyses, which was published in *The Lancet* on January 10, a 15%-30% decrease in all-cause and cardiovascular-related mortality was noted when comparing people who ate the highest amount of fibre to those who ate the least. According to the summary of the paper, eating fibre-rich foods also reduces the incidence of coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and colorectal cancer by 16%-24%.

A higher fibre intake is also associated with lower bodyweight, systolic blood pressure and total cholesterol when compared with lower intake. The paper adds that risk reduction associated with a range of critical outcomes is greatest when the daily intake of dietary fibre was between 25g and 29g.

Corroborating the findings, Avula Laxmaiah, a senior scientist at the National Institute of Nutrition, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Hyderabad, says that the recommended daily allowance, or RDA, of



the ICMR for fibre is 25g/day. He says, "The consumption levels should be more than 25g/day for the protective effect."

What to have

Attributing the increase in the incidence of NCDs to changing dietary habits (inclusion of more salt, fat and sugar diets) and more sedentary work, the scientist says promoting a "healthy diet" is very important.

According to him, a healthy diet is one in which about half is made up fruits and vegetables (45%-50% quantity) and a fourth from cereal and millets (rice/wheat/millets, etc.).

A person should get 55%-60% of energy from carbohydrates, 25%-30% energy from fats and oils (less than 10% energy from saturated fats and almost nil from trans fats), and 10%-15% energy from protein diet.

Dr. Laxmaiah says, "We have been conducting National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB) studies on

C The consumption levels should be more than 25g/day for the protective effect."

Dr. AVULA LAXMAIAH,
Senior Scientist,
National Institute of Nutrition, ICMR,
Hyderabad

the release of sugar into blood is slow. This means there will not be an abrupt rise of blood sugar."

Says Sheela Krishnaswamy, nutrition and wellness consultant, and former head of the Indian Dietetic Association, "The Position Paper on Dietary Fibre and Health brought out in December 2018 by the Indian Dietetic Association says people should consume at least 30g of dietary fibre from a variety of plant sources in order to attain various physiological benefits." She adds, "It is easy to bring back the fibre in our meals by incorporating unrefined grains, vegetables, fruits, pulses, nuts and seeds, regularly."

According to her, "More than 10g of fibre is found in wheat, jowar, bajra, ragi, maize and pulses (in 100g of edible portion each). Not just NCDs, higher intake of dietary fibre also helps in weight management and bowel function, better glycemic control, lower post-prandial (after food) glucose levels and increased insulin sensitivity."

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Think incremental innovation



GAJENDRA SINGH

India's position as far as many health-care metrics is disappointing. By 2020, non-communicable diseases will be the cause of 73% of deaths. With diabetes emerging as the fastest growing disease, India will have 49% of the global burden of diabetes. Not far behind will be cancer as the second most common disease. Evidently, we need more than just policies to counter the disease burden. Although we like to think of innovation as the light bulb moment of massive change, 70% of all innovation is incremental innovation, according to a 2012 study (*Harvard Business Review*).

Incremental innovation is 'the process of expanding therapeutic classes, increasing the number of available dosing options, discovering new physiological interactions of known medicines, and improving the secondary properties of existing medicines. This process is often dependent on the experiences of health-care providers and patients' needs. Incremental innovation can include expanding existing therapeutic classes by improving complex molecular structures, reformulating medicines to improve patient administration, or exploring new uses for existing medicines. For example, one way to improve a medicine's therapeutic-efficacy profile is to ensure that patients comply with dosing requirements'. Looking at the disease burden today, India needs to harness it more than ever before.

The health-care industry is on the brink of massive change. As organisations face unprecedented challenges in improving quality and access, increasing efficiency and lowering costs, incremental innovation is taking the lead in transforming health-care dynamics.

In a nutshell

Let's understand what incremental innovation is and why it matters. In short, we need simpler solutions to those already existing. Why the emphasis on 'incremental' innovation and not just innovation? By 2050, the elderly will form 20% of India's population. This means diverse patient profiles, rising health-care costs and a number of people needing frequent hospitalisation, follow-up and preventive care. Medical sciences have ushered in a new era where technology and research are changing the way patients are treated.

Take, for instance, cancer. In 2016, it was reported that the disparity in availability of advanced therapies in cancer was the most disappointing over a 10-year period till 2016, with not even one-third of 270-odd onco-molecules (cancer-fighting drugs) being available in India. The lack of advancements in medical sciences in India highlights the dire need for incremental innovation. Incremental innovations in the treatment of tuberculosis (TB) are reducing mortality rates. For tangible outcomes, requisite investment and a policy environment that makes cutting-edge medicines accessible to Indian patients are a must.

For decades, the policy towards incremental progress in pharmaceutical innovation has remained a bottleneck, affecting India's place among the top global drug innovators. A PricewaterhouseCoopers report says, "India invests just 0.9% of its GDP towards overall research and development." The report also shows that Indian biotechnology parks are extremely small when compared to those in leading countries, with limited proximity to centres of excellence.

To achieve the vision of Ayushman Bharat, we need more than just tall claims. A strong collaboration between the government, academia and the pharmaceutical industry and a policy framework that supports innovation will help India move up the value chain.

While incremental innovation is improving the quality of health care, India is still struggling with the basics — a substandard quality of medicines and policies that deter incremental innovation from reaching Indian shores. Over the years, incremental innovations in branded generics have paved way for the development of treatments for diseases such as malaria and TB. It is these that have helped in reducing health-care costs by improving the quality of drugs, thereby making lives better. Today, India needs an environment conducive for the most advanced drugs to reach patients and this choice should not be restricted by policies in favour of, or against, generics or branded generics. Doctors and patients should be able to make an informed choice.

Dr. Gajendra Singh is a public health researcher

Who we are and where do we come from

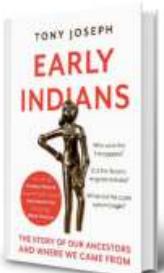
A compelling story of new DNA findings, tracing the people of India from prehistory to near history

SUJATHA BYRAVAN

Between 45,000 and 20,000 years ago, most of humanity lived in South Asia, reflecting the unmatched population expansion of people living in the region. This and other fun facts are scattered throughout the thrilling account of our past by Tony Joseph in *Early Indians*.

By interpreting the palimpsest of the human genome, population geneticists have made rapid progress recently and traced the migration of early humans out of Africa and into distant lands across the earth. Corroboration from anthropologists and philologists, who have independently written some parts of this story, now make it possible to make more definite claims regarding the waves of homo sapiens that migrated out of Africa (OoA). The first OoA migrants emerged around 70,000 years ago. About 5,000 years later their descendants reached India and faced archaic humans living here already. Waves of these OoA migrants also reached parts of central Asia and Europe between 60,000 and 40,000 years ago. Early Indians came to India over time from Africa, West, East and Central Asia. Homo sapiens or 'wise man' has been around for about 300,000 years but humans still carry traces of Neanderthal DNA in their genes.

Who were our forefathers?
Geneticists have for a long time been using the DNA in the nucleus of cells to identify specific shared DNA sequences, or haplotypes



■ **Early Indians**
Tony Joseph
Juggernaut
₹699

and haplogroups – when these are shared in sub-populations. These shared sequences can be traced and also compared with DNA from other individuals either living or dead in different geographical areas. This is how many African Americans try to identify the places in Africa and elsewhere from where their forefathers came. But, more recently population geneticists have also been using DNA from mitochondria – intracellular powerhouses that have their own DNA and can be traced in the maternal line.

The DNA in the Y chromosome can similarly be used to trace sequences inherited from the father or the male lineage, since the Y chromosome is present only in men. These approaches have yielded a wealth of results since it is mostly men who migrated from one place to another and passed on their Y-chromosome to their sons when they mated with local women. DNA from skeletal remains is revealing new stories about our past, our relationships and our cultures.



Civic lines: Dholavira in Gujarat has emerged as a major Harappan city remarkable for its town planning, architecture and water management system. ■ AFP

Joseph writes a compelling story about these findings and traces the people of India from prehistory to near history. It is an astonishing tale, difficult to put down, but dense given the amount of detail it covers. Following a short chronology of the modern humans in Indian Prehistory, the book has four chapters along with an introduction and epilogue. These narratives of population genetics, deftly interwoven with archaeological research and philology, are about the following: the first Indians, the first farmers, the first urbanites or the Harappans, and the last migrants or the Aryans.

Out of Africa
Each chapter presents many interesting storylines. For example:

Although from the same single OoA migration, our ancestors likely reached different areas of the Indian subcontinent at different times.

The earliest Palaeolithic tools in India are from Attirampakkam in Tamil Nadu dated to around 1.2 million years ago. But the earliest microliths, small stone tools used by modern man, dated to 45,000 years ago, were found in Mehtakheri in the Nimir region in Madhya Pradesh. It was possible to trace the spread of humans through central and eastern India from around 45,000 to 35,000 years ago, by following the mitochondrial haplogroup M.

Towards the end of this spread, the world was entering full glacial conditions, but new microlithic in-

novations most probably helped modern humans to hunt, increase their numbers, and overcome the adverse climate and archaic humans who had already been in the subcontinent for hundreds of thousands of years.

Another example: There is evidence of early agriculture, probably by the first Indians, in the Mehrgarh, Balochistan region from around 7000 BCE.

Evidence for migration of agriculturists from the Zagros region of Iran into this area is available and one can see signs of their genetic markings in the Indian population even today.

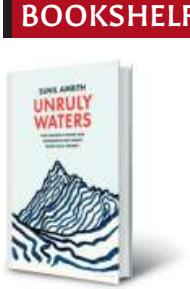
The Harappan civilisation was like none other in a large number of ways and covered close to a million square kilometres. With very

precise town planning, public infrastructure, storm water drains and sanitation, it had the region's first urbanites who were also trading with people of central Asia. With changing climate and deteriorating conditions, Harappans moved out, some of them southwards, where they interacted with people in South India and formed the Ancestral South Indians. Just as the Harappan civilisation was beginning to collapse, there was an influx of people from the east into India.

Significantly, by about 2000 BCE, critical aspects of India's population were already in place. Combining evidence from Y-chromosome haplogroups from the Steppes of Kazakhstan, conducting genome wide analyses and correlating these with archaeological discoveries indicates that between 2000 and 1000 BCE, multiple waves of migration from the Steppe pastoralists brought new European languages, cultural and religious practices that changed the people of South Asia forever.

This book is excellent science journalism, the kind that we need more of in other disciplines. Following the DNA sleuths and their stories is hardly a simple task. Ideologues of racial superiority may likely not agree with these or other scientific findings about evolution or human migrations.

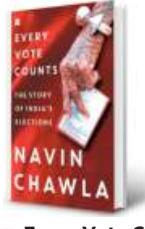
But since it is impossible to disprove non-science, there is no point in wasting one's energies to do this. Instead, now that we have an understanding of our histories, perhaps what Indians needs to focus on is where they and their country are headed.



■ **Unruly Waters: How Mountain Rivers and Monsoons have Shaped South Asia's History**
Sunil Amrit
Allen Lane/ PRH
₹799

The story of South Asia is told through climate, how its fate is bound to its position between the Himalayas and Indian Ocean. It's about fires, droughts, rains, rivers, and the history of how the importance of geography to the region was discovered.

Amrit also discusses the future of the region.



■ **Every Vote Counts: The Story of India's Elections**
Navin Chawla
HarperCollins India
₹699

The challenges before the Election Commission are many: How does one conduct free and fair elections? How does one hold elections in Maoist areas or in Jammu and Kashmir? How reliable are electronic voting machines? A former chief election commissioner tells us how the daunting task of conducting the largest electoral exercise in the world is undertaken.

Conflict zone

A journey to the LoC on each side reveals the plight of civilians and why both India and Pakistan are to blame

A.S. DULAT

If *Spy Chronicles*, written by two spy chiefs together, that too an Indian and a Pakistani, was improbable, so too is Happymon Jacob's entry into the sanctum sanctorum (GHQ) of the Pakistan Army or his unprecedented access to the line of control on the other side. No wonder, in his latest book, *Line of Control*, Jacob calls it "the most gripping and adventurous journey" of his life.

The Line of Control (LoC) is more than a researcher's dull academic exercise; it is at once moving and sometimes funny with unforgettablely colourful characters who light up the narrative. Those of us who have served in Jammu & Kashmir have a fair idea of what is transpiring on our side so it's hardly surprising that when Lance Naik Hemraj was beheaded, a Cabinet Minister with knowledge of the border remarked that both sides indulged in such activities. But Jacob has an advantage as he could research "ceasefire violations from the other side as well."

Oppressive nationalism

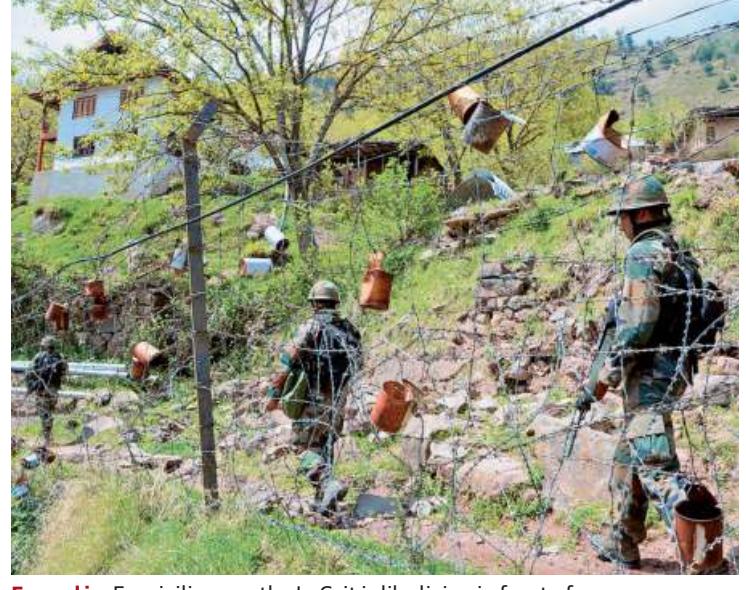
The LoC is an assumed, notional line not demarcated on the ground. "What India means in New Delhi," says Jacob, "is poles apart from what it is to a person living 100 metres from Pakistan." The Indian state appears to be present only through the barrel of the gun. Nationalism feels oppressive and compromises patriotism. There are villages that have been cut in half and the LoC runs through some houses.

As Jacob says, for civilians on the LoC, it is like living in front of a firing squad. In a standoff like this, there are no saints. Civilians are the biggest casualty on both sides. There are generations who have lived and died on the border with no other option. They are the sacrificial lambs of our respective national pride and prejudices.

The LoC then is one of the most dangerous places on earth which marks the collective failure of both India and Pakistan. If a Kashmiri is always wary of tension between India and Pakistan how much more deadly is it for those inhabiting either side of the LoC?

Midnight calls

Jacob's visit to Lahore is interesting and there are repeated references to the "midnight calls" and uninvited visitors to the Pearl Continental Hotel where he is put up, pointing at "the dark underbelly of Indo-Pak relations." Pakistan surveillance has always been aggressive and hence counterproductive as an intelligence tool whereas New Delhi, as



Fenced in: For civilians on the LoC, it is like living in front of a firing squad. ■ NISSAR AHMAD



■ **The Line of Control: Travelling with the Indian and Pakistani Armies**
Happymon Jacob
Penguin/Viking
₹499

Jacob puts it, is "not all that spook friendly."

Much of the book is classic Jacob territory: Pakistan and Kashmir. He believes that peace between India and Pakistan is in our national interest. Despite being taunted on a daily basis, Lahore signifies everything he loves about Pakistan.

Welcome change

He is at his best while describing the city whose lanes and bylanes remind him of Old Delhi – happening and welcoming. He is welcomed by Pakistan's 'Deep State' and treated as a special guest by the military. Somewhere he regrets that alcohol was not easily available in Pakistan but the three nights he spent with Ambassador Aziz Khan in Islamabad would have provided him his fill of nectar apart from all the beer he had with his 'faaji' friends.

The affable Aziz Khan, who was posted in Delhi at a crucial time during Gen. Musharraf's tenure, regrets how he missed the bus on Kashmir. As he puts it, "between India and Pakistan you can never tell what might happen tomorrow... if only the leadership showed more

courage." General Musharraf was by far the most reasonable Pakistani leader on Kashmir in the last 30 years.

Making it happen

Operation All Out will no doubt have its success but as Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway and her predecessor the former Prime Minister Bondevik said during their visits to India, there can be no military solutions to such problems. As Jacob rightly says such chances just don't come by – if you are determined enough you must make them happen. Pakistan sadly remains in denial about terrorism and cross-border infiltration, limiting its repeated references to Kashmir to self-determination which the Kashmiri understands is well beyond his grasp.

Jacob's connections took him to the LoC and other inaccessible areas including the very 'top' in Pakistan – as close as 25 metres from where power flows there.

The GHQ, he says, conveyed a sense of imperiousness and power. The Army, which is ruthlessly professional, has a pride of place in Pakistan. As the first Indian to enter the sanctum sanctorum, including the office of the Chief of General Staff who runs it, this is the ultimate intellectual pilgrimage. If you have been there you have almost seen it all in Pakistan. Jacob's honest portrayal is a must read for those interested in Kashmir and the India-Pakistan relationship.

Dissenting voice

A critique of the Modi government falls short on analysis

KANDASWAMI SUBRAMANIAN

Yashwant Sinha is angry over the economic management of the Narendra Modi government. In his early years, Sinha was a socialist and a Finance Minister in Chandra Shekhar's cabinet. In time, he moved over to the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) and served in the Vajpayee government as Finance Minister for four years and as Foreign Minister for a year. A loyal BJP acolyte, he has all the credentials to critique the policies of his government in *India Unmade*. But why now?

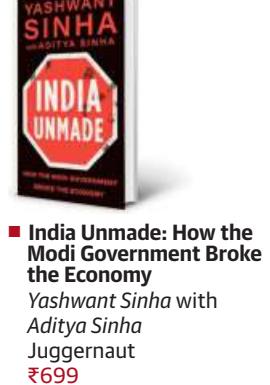
As he says in a dramatic vein, with the BJP coming to power, "India was blessed with a single-party government after three decades. Hopes soared, aspirations rose sky-high, and every section of the population looked forward to a new dawn."

He laments how "the elusive dawn never materialized... and hope turned into despair, despair into anger and anger turned into rage" among farmers, youth, Dalits, minorities. Overall, the essence of his charge is this: "The Modi government is

just about event management. He is the best in creating false impression. In the process, Modi has given India its 'lost half-decade'." Critics of the Modi government may agree with this summation. However, it is difficult to say that the detailed narration in the eleven chapters (plus an epilogue) lends support to it.

For instance, Sinha has a pathological aversion to demonetisation. He feels that it has "unmade" India. There are references to demonetisation in every chapter; but these are more

about the project than analysis.



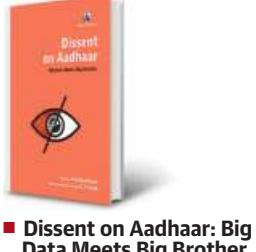
■ **India Unmade: How the Modi Government Broke the Economy**
Yashwant Sinha with Aditya Sinha
Juggernaut
₹699

in the nature of assertions rather than analysis-based conclusions.

Sinha appears to be still driven by his experience while he was Finance Minister in the Vajpayee government. He fails to reckon that the global scenario is vastly changed and there are limits to and doubts about investment-driven policies.

But his treatment of "make in India" policies is sound and explains how it serves more to attract foreign direct investment. Where Sinha proves his loyalty to the BJP is in dealing with the various Pradhan Mantri schemes, he approves of most barring Swachh Bharat. And he entirely leaves out larger issues such as autonomy of institutions, spreading majoritarian and divisive policies, beef killings.

This book falls between two stools: it is neither an economic treatise, nor a political pamphlet. It seems to have been written in a hurry revealing the absence of inner democracy in the BJP which would have learnt a few lessons from the recent elections in the Hindi heartland.



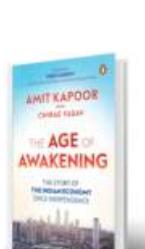
■ **Dissent on Aadhaar: Big Data Meets Big Brother**
Edited by Reetika Khera
Orient BlackSwan
₹475

Aadhaar, India's unique identity system, was introduced in 2009 with the purpose of creating a more inclusive welfare system. Hundreds of people were enrolled into the biometric database, making it compulsory for social benefits. This book argues that the project opens doors to immense opportunities for government surveillance and commercial data-mining.



■ **Parties and Electoral Politics in Northeast India: Contention of Ethno-regionalism and Hindu Nationalism**
V. Bijukumar
Kalpaz
₹790

The book is a collection of articles on elections and the performance of political parties in the States of Northeast India. It is also an attempt to highlight the trajectory of politics from ethno-regionalism to Hindu nationalism. After the 2014 general election, Hindu nationalist politics assumed centrestage.



■ **The Age of Awakening: The Story of the Indian Economy Since Independence**
Amit Kapoor with Chirag Yadav
Penguin Random House
₹599

The economic path that India chose post independence is often questioned and criticised for its lacklustre growth outcomes which led to a crisis in 1991. Since then India has shifted gears. This book tells India's economic story since independence and of the men and women who played a role.

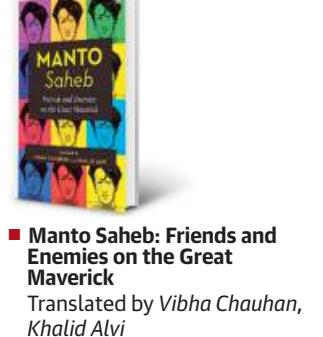
Words on Manto

Contemporaries on the *enfant terrible* of Urdu literature

RAKHSHANDA JALIL

If you want to read a *festschrift* with a difference read *Manto Saheb*. If you want to know how Manto's contemporaries and fellow writers viewed the maverick in their midst this collection of essays provides multiple mini biographies of a complex, troubled man, one might even say a mad genius. Manto himself has left behind several biographical sketches of his friends and foes – some jewel-bright in their luminosity, others darkly witty or sharply satirical; some are to be found in the evocatively titled *Ganjey Farishtey* ('Bald Angels'), others scattered amongst his vast and varied oeuvre and occasionally buried in the forewords he wrote for some of his own books.

Provocative, outrageous, scandalous, occasionally blasphemous, always ready to cock a snook at society, literary norms and most notions of propriety, Manto revelled in being the original *enfant terrible* of Urdu literature. Seldom shy of airing his views on fellow writers, it is no wonder that those around him thought fit to air theirs as well with varying degrees of frankness, occasionally also with little regard to literary propriety such as Upendranath Ashok's *Manto Mera Dushman* (Manto, My Enemy).



■ **Manto Saheb: Friends and Enemies on the Great Maverick**
Translated by Vibha Chauhan, Khalid Alvi
Speaking Tiger
₹499

Some of the essays included here were written in response to Manto's 'first strike', others spring from deep wells of affection, even love such as Ismat's tribute to her friend after his death. Krishan Chandar's elegantly sprawling reflection is by far the most insightful. After a description of Manto's physical form, he notes: 'Exasperation clearly writ on a face which reflects a singular kind of sophistication and refinement. An edgi-

ness in the voice. A restlessness to write. A kind of bitterness in behaviour. And hasty steps.'

Two personal essays bookend the others by contemporaries: Ibrahim Jalees, Muhammad Tufail, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, Balwant Gargi, among others. The first is, appropriately enough by Manto himself writing with an almost schizophrenic detachment about the other Manto, his twin, the one with an 'erratic mind', the one who 'refuses to walk the straight path'.

The last by his nephew, Hamid Jalal, is empathetic yet completely unsentimental. Praise from Ali Sardar Jafri, that eluded Manto while he lived, comes in the form of a bitter-sweet tribute entitled 'The Foul-mouthed One'.

Translated fluently by Vibha S. Chauhan and Khalid Alvi, the book would have benefitted with an Introduction and some context.

The 'Notes on the Contributors' and occasional footnotes are sketchy at best and, in one instance, contain a gross error for Ali Sardar Jafri did not preside over the first ever Progressive Writers' Conference; that honour went to Premchand.

Team-management's experiments show desired results

Each match had a new bowler as India looked at the future; Dhoni leaves an indelible mark while Chahal displays the range of his skills

OZ CHALLENGE

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's indelible mark on the one-day series was perhaps the most heartening feature of the one-day series against Australia which India won 2-1 after losing the opener at Sydney.

His patented finish at Melbourne, with a six to calm the nerves in the dressing room, was a throwback to his initial show in the middle - decisive.

India did exceptionally well to win the Test series 2-1. It made history, expectedly, since Virat Kohli's team had the required ammunition which, for various reasons, did not work effectively in the series in South Africa and England. Fans of Indian cricket wanted a series win in Australia and it came in style.

The focus in the one-day series was on experiments. Jasprit Bumrah was rested and each match had a new bowler as the team management looked at the future.



In focus: M.S. Dhoni, who was under the microscope during the ODIs, put all doubts about his finishing abilities to rest. ■ AFP

Khaleel Ahmed played at Sydney, Mohammed Siraj at Adelaide and the decider at Melbourne had Vijay Shankar, Kedar Jadhav and Yuzvendra Chahal making their maiden appearances.

Among the bowlers, Bhuv-

neshwar Kumar, Mohammad Shami and Ravindra Jadeja figured in all three matches.

Chahal's six for 42 showed

cased his skills - getting the batsmen out with turn, flight and the straighter one. "The ball was spinning a little bit,

BEST PERFORMANCES IN ODIS (TOP-5)

BATTING							
Player	Mat	Runs	HS	Ave	SR	100s	50s
Shaun Marsh	3	224	131	74.66	90.68	1	1
M.S. Dhoni	3	193	87*	193.00	73.10	0	3
Rohit Sharma	3	185	133	61.66	93.43	1	0
Virat Kohli	3	153	104	51.00	84.06	1	0
Peter Handscomb	3	151	73	50.33	103.42	0	2

BOWLING							
Player	Mat	Overs	Wkts	BB	Ave	Econ	SR
Bhuvneshwar Kumar	3	28.0	8	4/45	17.37	4.96	21.0
Yuzvendra Chahal	1	10.0	6	6/42	7.00	4.20	10.0
Jhye Richardson	3	30.0	6	4/26	18.66	3.73	30.0
Mohammed Shami	3	29.4	5	3/58	30.20	5.08	35.6
Marcus Stoinis	3	28.2	4	2/66	43.00	6.07	42.5

so I planned to bowl slow and vary my pace," said Chahal of his conquest.

Australia has produced some of the finest leg-spinners in the game and the dismissals plotted by Chahal must have rekindled their memories, especially Shane Warne, who loved beguiling the batsmen. Chahal was a joy to savour. So was Dhoni.

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli each had a hundred to his name. Dhoni did not. But the veteran made a huge im-

pact with his defining presence. He loves creating situations where he alone can dictate the course.

He has mastered last-over finishes and here he was at his vintage best, triggering the debate if he was to be India's man at No. 4 at the World Cup since Ambati Rayudu looks out of place in demanding conditions.

Dhoni, India's highest scorer with three fifties in an aggregate of 193 runs, regardless of the reprieves he

got, was humble as always. "It is not about where you want to bat; I am happy to bat at any number and after playing for 14 years I can't say that I don't want to bat at number six and want to bat at four."

India may not have found a solution for the No. 4 slot yet, but Dhoni, in the absence of K.L. Rahul, remains the evergreen choice. Not just for No. 4, as he puts it, but any position. He is eyeing the World Cup already.



Star sangam: Virat Kohli and wife Anushka Sharma enjoy their moment with Roger Federer. ■ AP

Kohli and his remarkable journey in Test cricket

The India captain continues to be fascinated by the challenges of the five-day game

S. DINAKAR

CHENNAI
Virat Kohli may have his faults. He can be brash, in-your-face and ill-tempered. His methods are not for everyone.

Yet, he has a priceless quality - his zeal for Tests. Kohli's heart is in the right place.

In this day and age when cricket is driven by commerce, Kohli prioritises Test cricket, continues to be fascinated by the challenges of the five-day game.

Kohli confesses to being obsessed by the thought of winning Test series away from the sub-continent and wants his men to show the same intensity.

He doesn't stop with just

putting in the hard yards himself - he follows a rather brutal fitness regimen - but drives his men to give their everything in pursuit of glory in whites.

And he wants the current bunch to carry the message forward to the next generation to chase the Test dream.

High point
This has been a momentous trip of Australia by India. The visitors finished the tour by winning ODI decider at Melbourne, but the high point of the campaign was the maiden Test series triumph in Australia, after 71 years of trying.

It was a historic feat. At the heart of the Indian conquest was skipper Kohli. His

passion for Test cricket is infectious. It rubs off on his men.

Rishabh Pant, the young wicketkeeper-batsman is a case in point. Just into his 20s, he is a phenomenal talent, not daunted by situations or adversaries.

An improving keeper, he has surprised many by raising the level of his glove-work. Pant's batting skill appears out of the ordinary with his bat speed, ability to pick the length and the strength of his wrists.

Pant, goaded by Kohli, is relishing the challenges of Test cricket, has grown in stature.

Right chemistry
Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri

- they share the right chemistry - also understood the value of developing the right pace pack and keeping it fit to win away series.

Bowling coach Bharat Arun and fitness trainer Shankar Basu had crucial roles to play in keeping the pacemen hungry and in good shape.

Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and the rest were on target, with their speed, hostility, variety and, most importantly, control. They maintained the pressure from both ends, gave very little away in terms of width or length and choked the batsmen with accuracy.

Catches were held - fielding coach R. Sridhar was on the ball. Then there was the old Test faithful Cheteshwar Pujara with loads of runs.

Kohli's journey in Test continues. The expectations have only risen.

Rahane to lead India-A

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Anjinkya Rahane will lead India A through the first three One-Day Internationals in the five-match series against England Lions to be played here from January 23.

A BCCI release, said Ankit Bawne will take over from Rahane as skipper of the side in the fourth and fifth matches. The intention of the committee seems to provide a chance to every player in its pool and national reckoning as the side for the last two one-dayers, also announced on Saturday has quite a few inclusions, leaving out several of those who

has picked for the first three matches.

The teams: India A (for first three ODIs): Ajinkya Rahane (captain), Anmolpreet Singh, Rituraj Gaekwad, Shreyas Iyer, Hanuma Vihari, Ankit Nawne, Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Krunal Pandya, Axar Patel, Mayank Markande, Jayant Yadav, Siddarth Kaul, Shardul Thakur, Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Shaini.

For fourth and fifth ODIs: Ankit Bawne (captain), Rituraj Gaekwad, Anmolpreet Singh, Ricky Bhui, Siddhesh Lad, Himmat Singh, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Deepak Hooda, Axar Patel, Rahul Chahar, Jayant Yadav, Navdeep Saini, Avesh Khan, Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur.

Halep defeats Venus, sets up showdown with Serena

Lights distract Djokovic, but only briefly, while against Shapovalov; Osaka battles back from the brink



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

World No. 1 Simona Halep set up a last 16 showdown with Serena Williams by beating her sister Venus on Saturday even as Novak Djokovic's relentless drive towards more Australian Open glory cranked up another gear.

On day six at Melbourne Park, the Romanian finally hit form to pull off her best win of the year and cruise past the veteran American 6-2, 6-3.

Nothing to lose

"I was super-motivated today," she said after being taken to three sets in both her matches as she bounces back from a herniated disc that ended her 2018 season early.

"I have nothing to lose," she added, looking ahead to Monday's clash against 23-time Grand Slam winner Serena. "I will be playing against a great champion. It's going to be a bigger challenge but I'm ready to face it."

Serena crushed Ukrainian Dayana Yastremska 6-2, 6-1 before consoling her at the net as the teenager burst into tears.

The 37-year-old, seeded 16, has dropped just nine games in her three matches so far on her return to the tournament since winning it in 2017 while pregnant.

Fourteen-time Grand Slam winner and top seed Djokovic is gunning for a record seventh Australian title.

He dropped a set for the first time this year against



In the moment: Novak Djokovic dropped a set for the first time this year, against fast-rising Canadian Denis Shapovalov before demolishing him. ■ MICHAEL DODGE/GETTY IMAGES

fast-rising Canadian Denis Shapovalov, before demolishing him in the fourth to win 6-3, 6-4, 4-6, 6-0.

"I just tried to be in the moment and weather the storm," said the Serb, who was unsettled when the lights were switched on in Rod Laver Arena for the television cameras, despite it still being daylight.

Staying on top

Djokovic's victory means he is guaranteed to stay World No. 1 when the new rankings are released after the tournament.

He next plays Russia's 15th seed Daniil Medvedev, who eased past David Goffin and is yet to drop a set.

Another young gun Alexander Zverev made the last 16 for the first time when he swatted aside Australian

Alex Bolt in three sets and will play former World No. 3 Milos Raonic.

Fourth seed Naomi Osaka looked down and out against Taiwanese veteran Hsieh Su-wei before battling back to win 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 and set up a meeting with Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova.

Osaka's win equals the 21-year-old's best performance at the Australian Open, where she reached the last 16 in 2018 but lost to Halep. But she looked headed for the exit when she conceded the first set and was down 4-1 in the second, before winning five straight games to force a decider.

"I just didn't want to give up," said the Japanese, who received a code violation after throwing her racquet.

Sixth seed Elina Svitolina struggled with a painful

shoulder complaint that required treatment at every changeover, and medical time-outs, before she beat China's Zhang Shuai 4-6, 6-4, 7-5 as the temperature rose in the centre court sunshine.

"I just told myself 'you're

THIRD ROUND RESULTS

Men: 15-Daniil Medvedev (Rus) bt 21-David Goffin (Bel) 6-2, 7-6(3), 6-3, 8-Kei Nishikori (Jpn) 6-1, 6-4, 6-1; 6-Elina Svitolina (Ukr) bt Shuai Zhang (Chn) 4-6, 6-4, 7-5; 13-Anastasija Sevastova (Lat) bt 21-Wang Qiang (Chn) 6-3, 6-3; 16-Serena Williams (USA) bt Dayana Yastremska (Ukr) 6-2, 6-1; 17-Madison Keys (USA) bt 12-Elise Mertens (Bel) 6-3, 6-4, 6-6; 1-Simona Halep (Rou) bt Venus Williams (USA) 6-2, 6-3; 18-Garbine Muguruza (Esp) bt Timea Babos (Cze) 6-2, 6-2; 7-Karolina Pliskova (Cze) bt 27-Camila Giorgi (Ita) 6-4, 3-6, 6-2.

Women: 4-Naomi Osaka (Jpn) bt 28-Hsieh Su-wei (Tpe) 5-7, 6-4, 6-1; 6-Elina Svitolina (Ukr) bt Shuai Zhang (Chn) 4-6, 6-4, 7-5; 13-Anastasija Sevastova (Lat) bt 21-Wang Qiang (Chn) 6-3, 6-3; 16-Serena Williams (USA) bt Dayana Yastremska (Ukr) 6-2, 6-1; 17-Madison Keys (USA) bt 12-Elise Mertens (Bel) 6-3, 6-4, 6-6; 1-Simona Halep (Rou) bt Venus Williams (USA) 6-2, 6-3; 18-Garbine Muguruza (Esp) bt Timea Babos (Cze) 6-2, 6-2; 7-Karolina Pliskova (Cze) bt 27-Camila Giorgi (Ita) 6-4, 3-6, 6-2.



Deliberation: M.M. Somaya, Anjali Bhagwat, Sunil Gavaskar, Anju Bobby George and N. Ram at the programme. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

SPORTS BUREAU

MUMBAI
The five-member jury for the Sportstar Aces Awards met here on Saturday to deliberate on the nominations.

Manish wins u-21 tennis gold

Prerna Vichare is the u-17 girls' champion

KHELO INDIA

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
PUNE

Manish Sureshkumar counter punched to outwit Dhruv Sunish 6-3, 6-3 in the men's under-21 final of tennis in the Khelo India Youth Games at the Balewadi Sports Complex on Saturday.

Dhruv started well and took a 3-1 lead, unleashing winners at will, but he could not sustain such high quality play for long. The 19-year-old Manish, one of the bright prospects who has been beating some of the best players in the country, won seven games on the trot to turn the match around on its head.

The wiry Manish, coached by Sureshkumar Sonachalam in Chennai, did drop serve in the third game of the second set, but broke Dhruv's serve at love in the eighth game before serving the match out.

"I expected a good fight as Dhruv has beaten Sasi Kumar Mukund in the international circuit. I knew that he was capable of playing high quality tennis. I was happy with the way I played and



All smiles: Dhruv Sunish, champion Manish Sureshkumar and Nitin Kumar Sinha with the men's under-21 tennis medals. ■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

knew that I would get back into the match", said Manish.

Suggesting that he did not have to face big serves as in the Challengers, Manish hoped that the gold would fetch him support.

"They may give scholarship. Most of the players struggle with the financial as-

pect. It is good to be in the government system through such a fine initiative," said the B.Com student of Loyola College, who expects to get a wild card for the Challenger in Chennai.

In the under-17 girls final, Prerna Vichare countered the fighting left-hander Priyanshi Bhandari for a 6-2,

5-7, 7-5 victory after an entertaining duel, to boost the gold medal haul for host Maharashtra.

She had earlier won the doubles title with Gargi Pawar.

Zeel Desai had the consolation of winning the women's under-21 doubles gold in partnership with Vaidehi

Gahlot.

Maharashtra topped the tennis medals table with three gold, four silver and a bronze, ahead of Gujarat which won three gold, a silver and two bronze. Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh were the other teams to win gold, while West Bengal, Telangana and Haryana managed to win a silver and a bronze each.

The results (finals):

Men: Under-21: Manish Sureshkumar bt Dhruv Sunish 6-3, 6-3.
Under-17: Doubles: Dev Javia & Krish Patel bt Sushant Dabas & Divesh Gahlot 6-3, 2-6, [13-11].

Women: Under-21: **Doubles:** Vaidehi Chaudhari & Zeel Desai bt Shrivali Rashmikaa Bhamidipaty & Humera Shaik 6-3, 6-2.
Under-17: Prerna Vichare bt Priyanshi Bhandari 6-2, 5-7, 7-5.

Haryana claims most golds

SPORTS BUREAU
PUNE

Haryana bagged maximum titles in the boys' and girls' U-17 category in boxing at the KIYV 2019, bagging eight gold medals, followed by host Maharashtra walking away with five golds, as the finals ended at the Balewadi indoor stadium.

The results (finals):

U-17: Boys: **46kg:** Ruchir Shirivas (MP) bt Manish Rathore (UP) 3-2; **Bronze:** Anshul Saroha (Har), Rudra Pratap Singh (Chd).

48: Bishwamitra Chongtham (Mah) bt Zorammuana (Mzr) 4-1; **Bronze:** Nameirkapam Singh (Mah), Kabir Pandit (Har).

50: Shaikhom Singh (Mah) bt Laldinsanga (Mzr) 5-0; **Bronze:** Naveen Siwach (Har), Vikash (Har).
52: Ankit (Har) bt Sanjay Kumar (Utk) 5-0; **Bronze:** Navraj Chauhan (HP), Harshit (Har).
54: Yaiphaba Meitei (Mah) bt Yashwardhan Singh (Har) 3-2; **Bronze:** Abhinash Jamwal (Pun), Pardeep (Har).
57: Vanraj (Har) bt Akash Gorkha (Mah) 3-2; **Bronze:** Sanjeeta (Har), Laxmi Patil (Mah).
60: Ankit Narwal (Har) bt Laisharam Singh (Mah) 3-2; **Bronze:** Rahul Mamgai (UP), Saurbab Chand (Utk).
63: Ajay Kumar (Har) bt Ankush (Har) w/o; **Bronze:** Sakshan Singh (UP), Dhruv Singh (Del).
66: Aman (Chd) bt Manish (Har)

(Utk), Thongan Kunjurani Devi (Man).

57: Huidrom Ambeshori Devi (Man) bt Sovi Jago (Man) 5-0; **Bronze:** Arshi Khanam (Raj), Neha (Har).

60: Preeti Dahiya (Har) bt Yashi Sharma (Har) 5-0; **Bronze:** Elisabeth Sinu (Ker), Sana Gonzales (Mah).

63: Mahi Raghab (Har) bt Vinika (Har) 4-1; **Bronze:** Sneha (HP), Nisha Gurjar (Raj).

66: Mitika Gunee (Mah) bt Muskan (Har) 5-0; **Bronze:** Alisha Sunny (Ker), Harnoor Kaur (Chd).

70: Arundhati Choudhary (Raj) bt Pranjal Yadav (Har) 5-0; **Bronze:** Raj Sahiba (Har), Sanamacha Chanu (Man).

Delight for TN under-21 basketball teams

Chandigarh has the last laugh in men's kabaddi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

Tamil Nadu controlled the climax well to beat Punjab 70-59 in the men's under-21 basketball final in the Khelo India Youth Games at the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Balewadi, on Saturday.

After trailing 12-20 in the first quarter, Tamil Nadu turned the match by scoring 23 points in the second quarter while conceding only eight. The match was evenly fought thereafter, but Tamil Nadu retained the lead after the teams were on par at 41-41 midway through the third quarter.

The Tamil Nadu under-21 women's team also bagged the gold, while Punjab won both the under-17 gold medals.

In the kabaddi men's under-21 final, Chandigarh beat Tamil Nadu 41-40 through a super raid, after having recovered from the ashes with a penalty point.

Premature celebration

The Tamil Nadu substitutes jumped onto the mat in a premature celebration at 40-39 before the final whistle, and that revived Chandigarh's fortune.

Haryana won two of the other gold medals, while it

Punjab won both the under-17 basketball gold medals

In women's under-17 hockey final, Haryana beat Jharkhand thanks to Deepika's brace

was stunned 30-27 in the women's under-21 final by Haryana Pradesh.

In women's under-17 hockey final, played at the National Defence Academy Complex, Haryana beat Jharkhand 2-1 thanks to two goals by Deepika. Odisha won the bronze, beating Punjab 3-2.

Real Kashmir beats Lajong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SHILLONG

Real Kashmir FC beat bottom-placed Shillong Lajong by a solitary goal to remain in the hunt for the I-League title in its debut season here on Saturday.

Zambian centre-back Aaron Katebe scored the all-important goal in the 74th minute, propelling the 'Snow Leopards' to second place on the league table with 25 points – five adrift of leader Chennai City FC from 13 games.

The visiting coach David Robertson and his Lajong counterpart Alison Kharaytine made two changes, both coincidentally in the midfield. For Lajong, the only consolation was that the Hero of the Match award was given to its keeper Phurba Lachempa for his vital saves.

The results: Shillong Lajong 0 lost to Real Kashmir 1 (Katebe 74); Minerva Punjab FC 1 (Musa Caicedo 90+4) drew with Gokulam Kerala FC 1 (Marcus Joseph 82).

The results (finals):

Basketball: Men: Under-21: Tamil Nadu 70 (Hariram 19, Arvind Kumar 18, Daniel Richards 11) bt Punjab 59 (Ajay Kumar 21, Princepal Singh 12).

Under-17: Punjab 91 (Navkarn Singh 28, Rajan 22, Avinder Singh 20, Mannatpreet Singh 11) bt Rajasthan 78 (Rishabh Mathur 30, Rajveer Bhati 18).

Women: Under-21: Tamil Nadu 82 (Pushpa Senthil Kumar 27, Dharshini 18, Nishanthi 11) bt Karnatakha 68 (Bhadravathy 21, K Lopamudra 17, B. Harshita 13, Supriya 11).

Under-17: Punjab 76 (Harsimran Dhami 45, Sapna 10) bt Tamil Nadu 71 (Sathyia 23, Nitika 12, Steffie Anges 10).

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

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CM YK

Salah to the fore again for Liverpool

Wolves win frantic game against Leicester; Goretzka secures Bayern victory

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Liverpool moved seven points clear at the top of the Premier League as Mohamed Salah's double inspired a dramatic 4-3 victory over Crystal Palace, while Manchester United stretched its winning streak to seven games as it beat Brighton 2-1 on Saturday.

Jürgen Klopp's side was pushed hard by Palace but Salah's predatory instincts and a woeful mistake from Eagles keeper Julian Speroni ensured Liverpool improved its unbeaten home league run to 32 games.

Liverpool's haul of 60 points from 23 games tops the Reds' previous best tally of 59, set at the same stage of the 1893-94 and 1987-88 campaigns.

The results: Shillong Lajong 0 lost to Real Kashmir 1 (Katebe 74); Minerva Punjab FC 1 (Musa Caicedo 90+4) drew with Gokulam Kerala FC 1 (Marcus Joseph 82).



Cool finish: Sadio Mane scores Liverpool's fourth goal in its hard-fought win over Crystal Palace. ■ REUTERS

win on Saturday.

Nuno Espírito Santo's side blew a two-goal lead and then wasted a 3-2 advantage, but still finished with all three points in one of the Premier League's games of the season at Molineux.

Jota was Wolves' hero with his winner deep into stoppage-time, capping a dramatic finale that left Puel

Into The Spotlight bags feature

BENGALURU: Into The Spotlight (David Allan up), won the R.W.I.T.C. Trophy, the feature event of the races held here on Saturday (Jan. 19). The winner is owned by M/s. Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt. Ltd. rep. by Mr. Zavaray S. Poonawalla and Mrs. Behroze Z. Poonawalla, Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Pvt. Ltd. rep. by Mr. Byramjee J. Appoo and trained by S. Padmanabhan.

THE RESULTS:

1 DHARWAR PLATE (1,600m), rated 15 to 35; ACEROS (Neeraj) 1, Touch Your Destiny (Trevor) 2, Secretsuperstar (R. Pradeep) 3 and Annalease (Suraj) 4. 1/2-1, shd and link. Im 13.90s. ₹20 (w), 13, 19 and 20 (p), SHP: 48, TPH: 45, FP: Rs. 66, Q: 52, Trinella 23 and 304, Exacta: 1,729 and 297, Exacta: 1,617 and 503. Favourite: Starry Wind. Owners: Mr. R.C. Puri, Mr. Manohar Duggal, Mr. J.A. Khan & Mr. Rajan Aggarwal. Trainer: Darius.

2 DR. C. VITTEL MEMORIAL TROPHY (Div. I), (1,200m), rated 30 to 50; SUMMER PALACE (R. Marshall) 1, Angels Kiss (Neeraj) 2, Madame Sultan (Nazerul) 3 and Hela (Arshad) 4. 1/3-1, 1 and 2. Im 12.90s. ₹62 (w), 18 and 42 (p), SHP: 34, TPH: 31, FP: 196, Q: 113, Trinella: 140 and 92, Exacta: 1,577 and 1,070. Favourite: Haedi's Folly. Owners: Mr. Rienzie M.K. Edwards & Mrs. P.P.M. Edwards. Trainer: Darius.

3 DR. C. VITTEL MEMORIAL

TV PICKS

Australian Open: Sony Ten 2 & Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. & 1.30 p.m.

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 7 a.m.

Tata Mumbai Marathon: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7 a.m.

Khelo India Youth Games: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.

AFC Asian Cup: Star Sports 3, 4.30 p.m., 7.30 p.m. & 10.30 p.m.

Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6.45 p.m. & 9.15 p.m.

PWL: Sony Six (SD & HD), 7 p.m.

Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. & 10.30 p.m. & 1 a.m. (Monday)

IN BRIEF



Warriors extend winning streak

LOS ANGELES

Stephen Curry scored 28 points, DeMarcus Cousins added 14 and Golden State Warriors pulled away in the third quarter to beat Los Angeles Clippers 112-94 on Friday for its seventh straight victory and sixth in a row on the road.

Other results: Boston Celtics 122 bt Memphis Grizzlies 116; Detroit Pistons 98 bt Miami Heat 93; Brooklyn Nets 117 bt Orlando Magic 115; San Antonio Spurs 116 bt Minnesota Timberwolves 113; Utah Jazz 115 bt Cleveland Cavaliers 99; Portland Trailblazers 128 bt New Orleans Pelicans 112. AGENCE

Lakers receive Rondo, LeBron boost

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles Lakers guard Rajon Rondo was cleared by team medical staff to resume full-contact workouts after missing 12 games with a sprained finger, the NBA club announced on Friday. Four-time NBA All-Star forward LeBron James suffered a groin strain that has seen him miss 12 games as well. Lakers said he was cleared to return to practice next week, opening the door for a possible return for a rematch with the Warriors on Monday. AFP

Lalita is champion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Lalita Dahiya of Ministry of Finance beat Sheetal Kargati of Delhi Audit 21-18, 21-18 in the women's final of the inter-Ministry badminton tournament at the AIIMS Gymkhana on Saturday.

The results: Men (semifinals): Sachin Rawat bt Sidharth Nandal 21-10, 21-15; Himanshu Saroha bt Amit Sharma 21-17, 6-21, 21-13.

Women (final): Lalita Dahiya bt Sheetal Kargati 21-18, 21-18; **Third place:** Sanyal Seshadri bt S Rachita 21-15, 21-17.

Semifinals: Sheetal bt Sanyal Seshadri 21-19, 21-16; Lalita bt S. Rachita 21-5, 21-4.

India shocks Malaysia

SPORTS BUREAU

Veer Chotraji's heroic effort after Yash Fadte's brilliant show earlier helped India shock the second seed Malaysia 2-1 and enter the boys' final of the Asian junior team squash championships here on Saturday. India will now face Pakistan in the final on Sunday.

Earlier the Indian girls' team had to settle for the third place after losing to Malaysia 2-0.

The results (Semifinals): Boys: India bt Malaysia 2-1 (Utkarsh Baheti lost to Siow Yee Xian 1-1, 9-11, 12-10, 8-11; Yash Fadte bt Duncan Lee Yung Yi 11-2, 12-10, 12-10; Veer Chotraji bt Muhammad Amir Amrul Bin Azhar 9-11, 14-12, 11-9, 20-18).

Girls: Malaysia bt India 2-0 (Aifa Azman bt Sanya Vats 11-2, 11-6, 11-6; Chan Yiwen bt Yoshna Singh 11-6, 11-1, 11-6).

Marin ends Saina's campaign

The 28-year-old Indian goes down to the fourth seed in a 40-minute contest

MALAYSIA MASTERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KUALA LUMPUR

Saina Nehwal's impressive run at the Malaysia Masters came to an end following her straight-game loss to reigning Olympic and World champion Carolina Marin of Spain in the semifinals, here on Saturday.

The 28-year-old Indian, who won the title in 2017 and was runner-up in 2011, went down 21-16, 21-13 to fourth seed Marin in a 40-minute match.

Tied 5-5 ahead of the clash, Saina had made a good start leading 5-2 at the start but an aggressive Marin reeled off seven straight points to turn the tables before grabbing an 11-9 lead.

Determined effort

The Spaniard extended it to 13-9 before Saina clawed back at 14-14. However, Marin produced a determined effort to gather six points on the trot.

She easily sealed the first game with a measured re-



Top form: Carolina Marin was at her best in quelling Saina Nehwal's challenge. ■ AFP

turn to the Indian's forecourt.

In the second game, Marin was more dominant as she surged to a 6-1 lead and kept her stranglehold at the interval with an 11-6 advantage.

Saina tried to make a co-

meback but Marin was always a step ahead.

The Spaniard slowly created a huge gap which the Indian failed to bridge.

Marin eventually grabbed eight match-points with a cross court smash. Saina saved one with a deep cor-

ner smash which Marin failed to connect, but the left-handed shuttler produced a straight return next to seal the issue.

The result:

Women (semifinals): Carolina Marin (Esp) bt Saina Nehwal 21-16, 21-13.

West Indies stands by Richard Pybus appointment

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ST. JOHN'S

West Indies cricket chiefs insisted they were standing by the decision to name Richard Pybus as its new head coach despite a storm of criticism which greeted the Englishman's appointment.

Pybus, who previously worked as director of cricket for the West Indies from 2013 to 2016, will coach the team for the series against England, the World Cup and

the tour of India in July and August.

Two-thirds support

"Following a meeting of the board of directors, the organisation affirmed that the appointment of Pybus was made with the support of more than two-thirds of its board."

"This was done to ensure the team had strong leadership ahead of the busy cricket season this year," said a

Cricket West Indies (CWI) statement.

Pybus, who has had brief spells as coach of Pakistan and Bangladesh, was blamed by former captain Darren Sammy for causing the West Indies squad to strike on the 2016 India tour.

CWI director Enoch Lewis was also highly critical of Pybus' nomination, accusing Cameron of "hand-picking" Pybus for the job.

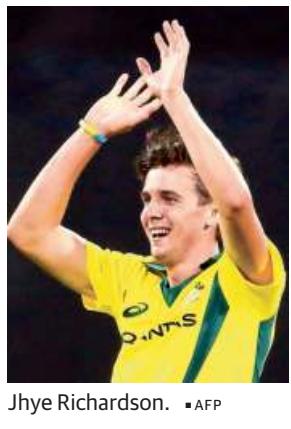
Richardson to replace Hazlewood

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELOUNRE

wood would recover in time for the World Cup in England and Wales.

Richardson joins Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Peter Siddle as the pace attack in the squad to face Sri Lanka.

The squad: Joe Burns, Pat Cummins, Marcus Harris, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Tim Paine (Capt.), Will Pucovski, Matt Renshaw, Jhye Richardson, Mitchell Starc and Peter Siddle.



Jhye Richardson. ■ AFP

Vidarbha and Saurashtra storm into the semifinals

Saurashtra and Vidarbha entered the semifinals of the Ranji Trophy, defeating Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, respectively on Saturday.

The scores:

At Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh 385 & 194 lost to Saurashtra 208 & 372 for four in 11.5 overs (Harvik Desai 116, Snell Patel 72, Cheteshwar Pujara 67 n.o.).

Sheldon Jackson 73 n.o.).

Saurashtra creates Ranji history

Saurashtra recorded the highest successful run chase in Ranji Trophy history in its quartet victory over Uttar Pradesh at Lucknow on Saturday. Opener Harvik Desai notched up a century, while India star batsman Cheteshwar Pujara and Sheldon Jackson scored unbeaten fifties. The earlier record was held by Assam which chased down 371 against Services in the 2008-09 season.

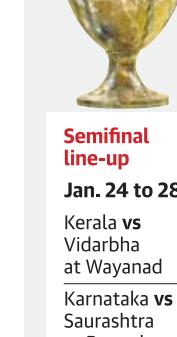
THE NUMBERS SO FAR (TOP-3)

Most runs

Player	Mat	Runs	HS	Ave	100s	50s
Milind Kumar (Sikkim)	8	1331	261	121.00	6	4
Wasim Jaffer (Vidarbha)	9	969	206	80.75	4	2
Rinku Singh (UP)	10	953	163*	105.88	4	3

Most wickets

Player	Mat	Wkts	BBI	Ave	5w	10w
Ashutosh Aman (Bihar)	8	68	8/51	6.48	9	5
Gurinder Singh (Meghalaya)	8	53	6/41	16.92	5	1
Saurabh Kumar (UP)	10	51	7/32	17.74	5	2



Semifinal line-up
Jan. 24 to 28
Kerala vs Vidarbha at Wayanad
Karnataka vs Saurashtra at Bengaluru

Vikas begins professional debut in style

Scores a technical knockout against American Steven Andrade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Indian boxer Vikas Krishan was off to a winning start in the professional circuit, notching up a technical knockout against American Steven Andrade in New York.

Vikas, who has signed up with the legendary Bob Arum's Top Rank Promotions, made his debut in what was to be a six-round super welterweight contest.

The bout, however, lasted just two rounds on Friday night at the Stone Resort Ca-



Vikas Krishan. ■ FILE PHOTO

sino in New York.

The fight was the undercard of Olympic silver-medalist Shakur Stevenson's IBF Intercontinental and WBC Continental Americas featherweight title contest.

The 26-year-old Vikas is one of India's most decorated boxers and has won gold medals at the Asian and

Commonwealth Games. He is also a world championships bronze-medallist and a multiple-time Asian championships medallist.

Vikas prepared for his pro debut under the aegis of Stevenson's grandfather Wali Moses.

Vijender Singh, India's first and only Olympic medalist in boxing, has also signed up with Top Rank Promotions after an undefeated professional run in England and India. His debut on US soil is being planned in March this year.

KALABURAGI MAHANAGARA PALIKE KALABURAGI

E-mail: itstaff.ulb_gulbarga@yahoo.com

No:KMP/EE-SD/HKRDB/TP-01/2018-19

DATE: 19-01-2019

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST CALL-02

"PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION / MAINTENANCE AND TRANSFER OF RAJIV GANDHI THEME PARK AT KALABURAGI "

KALABURAGI MAHANAGARA PALIKE KALABURAGI/KALABURAGI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (KMP/KMC) invites Expression of Interest (EOI)

through E-portal website of Government of Karnataka : <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> in a Single Cover (both Technical & Financial Bid) system with Proposed Concepts from reputed Organizations with proven Track Record for the Selection of Private Partners to Develop Rajiv Gandhi Theme Park at Kotnoor in Kalaburagi District in Public Private Participation (PPP) mode, as per the terms and conditions laid down in Document. KALABURAGI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (KMC) has envisaged the following 'CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION / MAINTENANCE AND TRANSFER OF RAJIV GANDHI THEME PARK AT KALABURAGI' from Leisure, Recreation, Adventure, Theme and Entertainment Sectors.

1. **Theme and Entertainment Park** with an array of Innovative and unique Theme and Entertainment concepts such as water world, Adventure zones, Multi-Dimensional stimulations & VR games.

2. **Children's Adventure Park** with Fun & Entertainment zones such as Kids House, Aquarium, Vortex, Horror House, Mirror Maze, Karaoke Studio, Abcd Studio.

3. **Family Entertainment Center (FEC)** with 12 D Theater, Observatory Tower with Sky Cafe & Planetarium, Varieties of Food courts, Roof Top Cafeteria along Event Area for Conducting Local Folk Dances and Different Shows.

4. **Sports & Recreation Arena** with Indoor Gymnasium, Mini Golf & Hydrotherapy Pool.

5. **Wellness** Center such as Aerobics, Yoga meditation, Steam Bath, Jacuzzi & Sauna.

6. **Landscape** Variety Of Theme Based Gardens (Lush Green Lawns & Flower Beds), Artificial Turf area , Shanti Vana , Sanjivani vana , Semi Arid & Cactus Land , Topiary & Green Maze Etc

7. **Water Entertainment** such as Water Games with Slides Mini Wave Pools, Rain Dance Attraction, Mini Hydro Therapy Pool of 2 To 3 Feet Depth, Beautiful Marble water Fountains etc.

The 'Developers' shall be free to implement their own concepts and Designs taking into consideration the approved master plan from KMC/KMP and all the applicable Building Regulations, Bylaws/ Norms & Zonal regulations as applicable for the Project site and all civil constructions shall be

Elite runners race the clock with eye on Doha

Leaders will be in the reckoning for qualifying for the 2019 World championships

MUMBAI MARATHON

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI

The Gold Label status given to the Tata Mumbai Marathon by the IAAF will result in the leading finishers in men and women's elite categories in Sunday's race coming into the reckoning for places among qualifiers for the 2019 World athletics championships in Doha. The qualifying standard is 2:16:00s for men and 2:37:00s for women.

IAAF is targeting 100 marathoners to be on the starting line at the Worlds, within a certified qualification period (up to September 6, 2019), so those with better season's bests will get more opportunities, beyond the Mumbai Marathon.

Window of opportunity
For Indian runners, racing in familiar conditions, the TMM is a window of opportunity to show the world the quality at home in distance-running,

For the course record-holders among Indian men and women (2:15:48 by Nitendra Rawat, 2:50:31 by Lalita Babar), the focus will alternate from the electronic timing display to the designated pace-setters pushing them towards faster timings.

Lalita is not running this year, Nitendra is among favourites in 2019.

He was beaten to second best among Indians finishing the race by Army Sports Institute teammate Thonakal Gopi, both took part in the Rio Olympics.

India's 3000m steeplechase runner, Sudha Singh, has taken on the mantle from Lalita in the women's ranks and is credited with a personal best 2:35:35 re-



The best: Gopi Thonakal, Nitendra Singh Rawat, Amane Gobena, Sudha Singh and Abera Kuma in Mumbai on Friday. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

- Fastest male runners are Ethiopia's Amane Kuma (PB 2:05:50), Kenyans Jacob Kendagor (2:07:33) and Elijah Kemboi (2:07:34)
- Best among women are Ethiopians Amane Gobena (PB 2:21:51), Dinkness Mekash (2:23:12), Shuko Gemo (2:24:31)

corded against the world's best in the 2015 World athletics.

Last year, pacing herself against Olympics marathoner from South Africa, Hendrik Ramalaa, invited by organiser Procam International, to set the pace for women, the steeplechase ace finished seventh overall, clocking 2:48:32.

The Indian steeplechaser-turned-marathoner will need to clock her personal best to be among the 100 marathoners on the IAAF shortlist for Doha.

Going by overall timings in Mumbai last year, only women's champion Amane Gobena (Ethiopia, 2:25:49)

displayed World championship quality.

According to the official entry list, the Ethiopian is defending her title in 2019 and with a personal best 2:21:51 clocked at Tokyo Marathon 2016, is the number one in the women's pack.

Tougher field

The men's field was tough for Gopi and Rawat last year, as the first nine in TMM 2018

went under 2:16 (Doha qualifying time). World-class competition is far superior a year later, the 2019 official entry list shows Ethiopian Abarra Kuma (personal best 2:05:50) at Rotterdam 2018 as the fastest in the fray.

Pace-setters and the elite runners in the lead pack will tire out many, the two Indian Olympians and teammates need to hang in there till the finish.

Equal prize money

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Tata Mumbai Marathon offers equal prizemoney for men and women.

Elite runners breaking the overall course record will get a bonus of \$15,000 (foreigners and Indians), while the bonus in the Indians category will be ₹2 lakh. Elite champions stand to gain

\$45,000, runner-up \$25,000, third place \$17,000 down to 10th place finisher \$1,500. Indians have a separate prize money structure - ₹5 lakh (first), ₹4 lakh (second), ₹3 lakh (third) down to ₹50,000 (10th place).

For those finishing within the first 10 in both overall and Indians category, the higher prize money will be allocated.

Nadal laments lack of young Spanish players

IANS
MELBOURNE

Spain's Rafael Nadal after defeating Australia's Alex De Minaur in the third round of the Australian Open here, said that tennis has skipped a few generations in Spain and it is probable that it will not be so successful in the coming years.

After his 250th Grand Slam win on Friday, Nadal said: "It is true that we are a country with the most number of players in the third round but it is not less true that none of us is really young."

No big news

He further added that it is logical that people stop appreciating the achievements of tennis players, because after experiencing such a good era, these achievements stop being big news.

"25 years ago, when a Spaniard would reach the quarter finals of a Grand Slam, it



Rafael Nadal, seen here with children from different tennis academies, feels tennis has skipped a few generations in Spain. ■ AFP

would be big news, but today, it's not because we have achieved it so many times," he added.

The former World number 1 said that tennis fans would appreciate all the

achievements of the current golden era of the national tennis and added that Spain has only Jaume Munar as a young revelation in the first hundred players of the ATP rankings.

"There is Jaume, and that's it, if I am not wrong, because the next among the young players would be Pablo. There is a series of generations that does not exist," Nadal said.

Allrounder's spot a concern: du Plessis

Says the team is more or less sorted for the 2019 World Cup

ANI
DUBAI

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis has said that the team is more or less sorted for the upcoming 2019 World Cup, but the allrounder's spot remains a concern.

Following the dropping of an injured J.P. Duminy, du Plessis is hopeful that one among Andile Phehlukwayo, Wiaan Mulder, Chris Morris, and Dwaine Pretorius will cement his position in the team.

"It is an answer that I am hoping to give to you after this series," ICC quoted du Plessis on Friday when he was asked about who can claim the allrounder's spot.

"We are hoping that over the next 10 games, over the Sri Lanka series as well, all the allrounders that are there in Andile Phehluk-



Faf du Plessis. ■ AP

wayo, Wiaan Mulder, Chris Morris and Dwaine Pretorius, you will at least have one or two who really put their hand up and shout to the selectors 'pick me,'" he added.

Looking for balance
Ahead of the five-match ODI series against Pakistan, the

captain said that he is still trying to find a balance in his team.

"Pakistan are a very good one-day side and probably they would be the first to say that from a performance point of view, their one-day team is much stronger."

"We are a one-day side that is still trying to find that balance in our team," he said.

South Africa has rested experienced cricketers Dale Steyn and Quinton de Kock for the first two ODIs, while pacer Lungi Ngidi has been ruled out after sustaining an injury.

"In their replacement, the Proteas have drafted top-order batsman Rassie van der Dussen and right-arm seamer Duane Olivier.

"With Quinton de Kock and Dale Steyn not here in

the first two games, it actually gives us an opportunity to look at what else we need to look at, which is important. There is a lot of competition for the batters."

"There are a lot of options available. And then he (van der Dussen) had a great Mzansi Super League. He has been knocking on the door very hard, so it is a great time for him to get an opportunity after all the runs he has scored," he said.

"We are always looking at X-factor players in our bowling attack. So Lungi, Dale and K.G. Rabada are fantastic seamers and they pick themselves, but possibly as one back-up extra seamer, we have got some nice pace bowlers in our country. Duane Olivier is one," du Plessis added on the bowling unit.

Mick Schumacher joins Ferrari Driver Academy

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MILAN

Mick Schumacher, the teenage son of seven-time Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher, has joined Ferrari's Driver Academy, the Italian Formula One stable confirmed on Saturday.

Schumacher, 19, who races in Formula Two next season, will take part in the pre-season activities of the Ferrari Driver Academy starting next week.

"I am thrilled that Ferrari has entered a partnership with me and my future in motorsport will be in red, being part of the Ferrari Driver Academy and also of the Scuderia Ferrari Family," said Schumacher.



Focused: Mick Schumacher feels his recent move will help him achieve his dream of racing in Formula one. ■ AFP

the immense amount of expertise bundled there.

"It is more than obvious that Ferrari has a big place in my heart since I was born and also in the hearts of our family, so I am delighted on a personal level about this opportunity as well."

Michael Schumacher, 50, has not been seen in public since suffering head injuries during a accident on December 29, 2013 while skiing

with Mick and his condition is a secret closely guarded by his family.

Exhibition on Schumi

Ferrari's Museum at Maranello is currently hosting an exhibition to mark Schumacher's 50th birthday.

"But we have chosen him for his talent and the human and professional qualities that have already distinguished him despite his young age."

"For someone like me who has known him from birth, there's no doubt that welcoming Mick into Ferrari has a special emotional meaning," said Ferrari's new Team Principal Mattia Binotto.

"In Schumacher's record-breaking F1 career he won an as yet unequalled seven world titles, 91 victories and 155 podiums."

Tejaswin has a strong season-opener

SPORTS BUREAU
KANSAS

Tejaswin Shankar, the Indian men's high jump record holder, opened his athletics season with an impressive 2.25m at the KU-KSU-WSU Triangular, an indoor inter-university meet, here on Friday.

Tejaswin, who holds both the outdoor (2.29m) and indoor (2.28m) national records, won the Triangular gold with his second attempt at 2.25m after clearing all the previous heights in his first attempt.

The business administration student from Kansas State University then tried to break his own national record but failed in all his three attempts at 2.30m.

"My season opener and also one of the toughest competitions I have competed in."

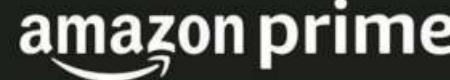
erland 6-4, 6-1 to cruise into the final of the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament here on Saturday.

SPORTS BUREAU
SINGAPORE

Ankita Raina crushed third seed Conny Perrin of Swit-

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INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

on Sunday

JANUARY 20, 2019

DELHI



Donald Trump will meet Kim Jong-un again at February-end
page 3



Baltimore is Kamala Harris's headquarters for potential 2020 run
page 3



SEBI nixes L&T's plan for ₹9,000-crore share buy-back offer
page 7

U.S. shutdown clouds consumer-driven growth outlook
page 8

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IN BRIEF



Mueller denies report on Trump lawyer testimony

WASHINGTON
Special Counsel Robert Mueller's office on Friday disputed a news report on his Russia investigation, saying a BuzzFeed article alleging that U.S. President Donald Trump directed his former lawyer Michael Cohen to lie to Congress is "not accurate." But a BuzzFeed spokesman said the publication stood by its report and was working to determine what Mr. Mueller was denying.

WORLD ▶ PAGE 3

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar enters presidential race

KABUL
Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, accused of war crimes, entered Afghanistan's presidential race on Saturday in a new challenge to President Ashraf Ghani who allowed him to return from exile.

WORLD ▶ PAGE 3

Indian taxpayers shell out ₹20,000 extra

NEW DELHI
Indian taxpayers, on an average, pay ₹20,000 per year more in taxes than they need to, an analysis by ClearTax has shown. It has also found that 90% of women do not do the most they can to save on taxes.

BUSINESS ▶ PAGE 7

Vibrant Gujarat: India reaches out to Africa

Stronger ties will lead to egalitarian world order: Sushma

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD

Seeking to enhance economic, business and cultural relations with Africa, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Saturday assured representatives of African nations that India will continue to be their trusted partner and work closely for their economic and social empowerment.

Ms. Swaraj was in Gandhinagar to participate in Africa Day held as part of the Vibrant Gujarat Summit in which representatives, including Ministers and diplomats, of over 50 African countries participated.

"Our PM has accorded top priority to Africa in our foreign and economic policy. As Africa marches in its journey towards security, renewal and prosperity, India will remain a trusted partner, working closely with Africa for the economic and social empowerment of its people," she said.

"Strong relations between India and Africa will go a long way in redefining the contours of the international order on more egalitarian lines," she added.

Stressing the importance of Africa for India, she said it was the first time India dedi-



Looking ahead: Sushma Swaraj with Vijay Rupani at the Vibrant Gujarat Summit in Gandhinagar on Saturday. ■ PTI

cated an entire day to a continent during the investors' meet. According to her, it was being held during the 150th birth anniversary year of Mahatma Gandhi and the 100th birth anniversary of African leader Nelson Mandela.

Key partner
Talking about growing business and economic ties between India and African nations, she said Africa had emerged as an important trade and investment partner of India.

"The trade between India and Africa stood at \$62.66 billion for 2017-18, which reflects a nearly 22% increase over the previous year. India is ranked third largest export destination in Africa," she added.

India has accorded Duty

Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme to 38 African countries. She said the recent signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement will further boost the ties with Africa.

"In recent years, there has been a surge in Indian investment in Africa. India is the fifth largest investor in Africa with cumulative investments of \$ 54 billion," she said.

Indian investments in Africa will grow manifold in the coming years due to the Indian government's thrust in strengthening ties.

According to her, major areas identified for investments are minerals and mining, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, infrastructure, high-technology manufacturing and information and communication technology.

Hot flight



Sky is the limit: Hot-air balloons soaring on the second day of Araku Balloon Festival in the Araku Valley in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh on Saturday. Twenty balloons from 15 countries are participating in the three-day event. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

No child left behind in these Chittoor villages

Dropouts who used to come to school just for mid-day meal are returning to class

K. UMASHANKER

CHITTOOR

The term 'school dropout' was ubiquitous in Bangarapalem mandal at the tail-end of Chittoor district, which is flanked by Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

But a group of NGOs working on issues of child rights in the western mandals of Andhra Pradesh has turned the tide and convinced as many as 20 dropouts, including 10 girls, of three villages, to return to school. The effort was sparked off in the last week of December when the headmistress of the Zilla Parishad High School at Thambuganipalli village spoke to some voluntary organizations about five students, including three girls, who had stopped attending school over the



Positive turn: A child rights activist counsellng dropouts at Moghilivipalle in Chittoor district. ■ K. UMASHANKER

past couple of months.

The Rural Organisation for Poverty Eradication Services (ROPS), Christian Children's Fund of Canada (CCFC) and Child Line 1098 launched combined efforts to end the problem of dropouts in the mandal, with its population consisting largely of

Delhi court grants bail to Lalu Prasad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

RJD chief Lalu Prasad was granted bail by a court here on Saturday in the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) scam case filed by the CBI.

Lalu Prasad, 70, who is serving his sentences in the fodder scam cases, is undergoing treatment at the Rajendra Institute of Medical Science in Ranchi.

Special Judge Arun Bhardwaj granted him bail on a personal bond for ₹1 lakh and a surety of a like amount.

The court extended the interim bail of Lalu Prasad, Rabri Devi, Tejaswi Yadav and others till January 28 in a separate case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for alleged money laundering in the scam.

five children from the ZP High School led to the detection of as many as 20 dropouts from these three villages alone.

Dalit students
A majority of the dropouts belonged to the Scheduled Caste community, with their parents working as farm workers or at odd jobs.

A school teacher said some of the children who had dropped out would come to school only for the midday meal, and return without wanting to attend classes.

The volunteers said they had studied the various reasons that led to the students quitting studies.

The children will return to school from Monday, when the schools reopen after Sankranti vacation.

Their mission to trace the



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IN BRIEF



Three held in Bhaiyyu Maharaj's death case

INDORE A woman and two aides of self-styled guru Bhaiyyu Maharaj were arrested here in Madhya Pradesh on Friday for allegedly abetting his suicide. The woman was allegedly in a relationship with Maharaj and was blackmailing him to marry her, the police said. Maharaj had shot himself dead in June 2018. ANI

Tiger mauls man to death in Shahjahanpur

SHAHJAHANPUR A 35-year-old man was killed by a tiger in a forest here in Uttar Pradesh, officials said on Saturday. "Shiv Kumar went out to attend nature's call when a tiger attacked him and dragged him into the forest. His body was found on Saturday morning," SDO Mahendra Nath Singh said. The body was sent for post-mortem examination. PTI

Assam increases pension for freedom fighters

GUWAHATI The Assam government has increased the pension for freedom fighters of the State by ₹1,000 a month with effect from January 1. Now, the freedom fighters will get a pension of ₹21,000 a month. The raise will be applicable to all those drawing the State freedom fighters' pension, said a release on Saturday. PTI

11 railway stations to get airport-like upgrade

GUWAHATI Eleven railway stations under the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), including five in Assam, have been identified to be upgraded to airport-like standards as part of the railways' ₹1 lakh crore station redevelopment programme, a senior official said on Saturday. The Railways have prepared a blueprint for 204 stations which will be upgraded. PTI

God's Own Country sprucing up for tourist season

Putting memories of deluge behind, Kerala planning special campaign

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A new campaign, focus on niche products such as adventure and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibition) tourism, and an IPL-modelled Champions Boat League in August figure in the initiatives chalked out by Kerala Tourism for the comeback phase after last year's devastating floods.

"It is time for Kerala" is the new campaign to be rolled out at the national and international level to reposition God's Own Country, increase footfall, and regain the upper hand enjoyed by Kerala Tourism in the domestic circuit over the years.

Dispelling fears

The print, visual and social media will be covered in the campaign and it is expected to give an impetus to the travel, trade and hospitality industry that is battling a dip in tourist arrivals and dispel fears about holidaying here.

Special campaigns will be taken up in West Asia, one of the emerging markets," Secretary, Tourism, Rani George told *The Hindu*.

Promotional activities in select national and international markets and more focus on north Kerala to leverage the connectivity through the new Kannur airport and thrust on the Malabar River Cruise, Thalassery Heritage, Muziris Heritage, and Alappuzha Heritage projects also figure in the new initiatives.

kets for Kerala, targeting arrivals in June, July, and August.

IPL-like Boat League

The Champions Boat League that could not take off last year will be held from August.

The sixth edition of Blog Express will be made more professional with focus on select destinations. Instead of a single itinerary, the authorities are planning to split the selected bloggers into two groups and focus on north, central and south Kerala.

The initiatives chalked out by Kerala Tourism were presented to the stakeholders during a recent tourism advisory meeting and focus group on marketing. The participation in roadshows, tourism fairs and festivals was also finalised.

"The action plan, post-flood campaign, Kerala Travel Mart, and Kochi-Muziris Biennale have helped the market make a comeback. More trips for travel writers, social media influencers and bloggers from within the country and abroad will be arranged in the coming months," Secretary, Tourism, Rani George told *The Hindu*.

Promotional activities in select national and international markets and more focus on north Kerala to leverage the connectivity through the new Kannur airport and thrust on the Malabar River Cruise, Thalassery Heritage, Muziris Heritage, and Alappuzha Heritage projects also figure in the new initiatives.

Spirits up: The Chinese fishing net, known in Kerala as *cheena vala*, is every tourist's delight. A shot from Munakkal beach near Azhikode in Thrissur. ■ K.K. MUSTAFAH

Move over houseboats, the kayaks are here

JOHN L. PAUL
KOCHI

Activity-based tourism is set to create waves in Kerala, with the State's Department of Tourism focused on promoting two core sectors – adventure tourism and 'Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibition' or MICE tourism this year.

The aim is to woo visitors back to Kerala, after the August 2018 deluge dealt a devastating blow to the tourism industry.

"We plan aggressive marketing of adventure tourism (AT) in 2019, as part of our 'experiential tourism package'. This will be in a largely rural settings, so that the local community too stands to benefit. It will also further the cause of Kerala's globally acclaimed Responsible Tourism (RT) initiative," explained Rani George, Secretary of Kerala Tourism.

Experiential tourism is a global buzzword today, aimed at attracting discerning tourists who care for the community and leave a minimal carbon footprint. In RT, hoteliers and other stakeholders source vegetables and other produce from the local



Big hit: Kayaking under way in Ernakulam. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

community, while tourists are taken on tours of households to see and savour anything from ethnic food to weaving of coconut fronds and traditional coir-making.

This apart, water bodies and hills that abound in the State provide the right setting for activity and adventure tourism. Private operators are already engaged in

AT in Wayanad and Idukki in the Western Ghats. While scuba diving is becoming popular in Kovalam beach, cycle trails are a hit in hilly terrain, Ms. George said.

Everybody's into it

Kayaking has taken off in a big way in extensive backwaters and inland waterways of Kerala hitherto the privileged haunt of houseboats. The initiative came from Ernakulam District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) a month ago, with children rowing alongside world champions in an introduction to the water sport.

It began with Muziris Paddle, a kayaking and stand-up-paddling (SUP) event in Kochi targeting tourists and adventure seekers in the 40 km route from Kochi to the

Muziris heritage locale. The participants included Shilpika Gautam, world record holder for paddling down the entire Ganga, international paddler Jim Bush from Australia and Cedric Reynard, renowned SUP trainer from Switzerland.

Elaborating on how kayaking has become a fad in Kochi, Joseph Dileesh, manager of Scuba Coaching, a firm that imparts training in AT activities, said the kayaks, shipped in from New Zealand, have been deployed in the Goshree backwaters. "They do not flip over, even if they encounter tides. About 95% of children and others who partake in the event do not know swimming but participants get the balance in 10 minutes," he said.



THE HINDU GROUP



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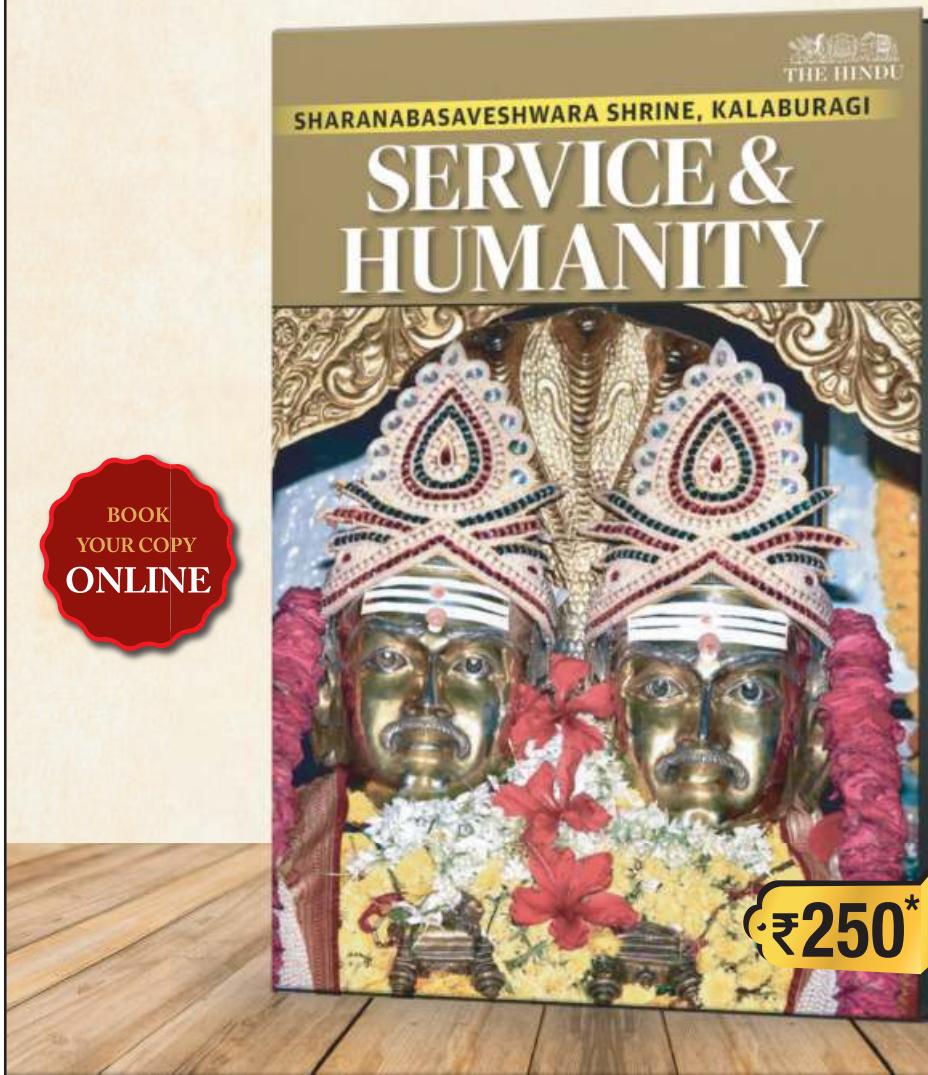
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A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

Trump, Kim to meet again in February

U.S. makes announcement after top North Korean official's visit; decision on location to be made soon

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump will meet for the second time with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un around the end of February, the White House said on Friday, after a top general from Pyongyang paid a rare visit to Washington. The announcement was welcomed by South Korea.

Vice-Chairman Kim Yong-chol, a right-hand man to Mr. Kim, met Mr. Trump at the White House for an unusually long 90 minutes as the countries seek a denuclearisation accord that could ease decades of hostility.

'No end to sanctions'
White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said that Mr. Trump would again meet the North Korean leader "near the end of February" at a lo-



The thaw endures: U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un during their summit in Singapore on June 12 last year. ■ NYT

cation to be announced later. Ms. Sanders praised North Korea's efforts to reconcile but ruled out, for now, a key demand of Pyongyang – a lifting of sanctions. "The United States is going to continue to keep pressure and

sanctions on North Korea until we see fully and verified denuclearisation," she said.

Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump first met in June in Singapore, where they signed a vaguely worded document in which Mr. Kim pledged to

work toward the "denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula." But progress stalled soon afterward as Pyongyang and Washington – which stations 28,500 troops in South Korea – disagree over what that means.

Singapore summit
Critics say that the Singapore summit was little more than a photo-op. The second round with the young and elusive North Korean leader will again offer a change of headlines for Mr. Trump amid a barrage of scandalous allegations and a political deadlock that has shut down the U.S. government.

While no decision has been made on location, a Vietnamese government source said that "logistical preparations" were under way to host the summit, most likely in the capital Ha-

noi or coastal city of Danang. Vietnam's cooperation with the United States has been growing for years as Hanoi sets aside memories of war.

Meanwhile, South Korea has welcomed the planned summit, saying that it hoped the meeting would be a "turning point" for peace on the Korean peninsula.

The announcement from Seoul's presidential office came hours after the White House announcement. "We expect the planned North-U.S. summit would be a turning point in establishing a permanent peace regimen on the Korean peninsula," said Kim Eui-kyeom, South Korean President Moon Jae-in's spokesman.

He added Seoul would expand dialogue with Pyongyang to make the planned summit "successful".

Mueller's office disputes claim that Trump asked lawyer to lie

'Such characterisation of Cohen's testimony is not accurate'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Special Counsel Robert Mueller's office took the rare step on Friday of disputing a news report on his Russia investigation, saying that a BuzzFeed article alleging that U.S. President Donald Trump directed his former lawyer to lie to Congress is "not accurate".

Mr. Trump's lieutenants had already strongly pushed back against the report, which said that he ordered Michael Cohen to lie about a Russian skyscraper project they pursued during the 2016 election. "BuzzFeed's description of specific statements to the Special Counsel's Office, and characterisation of documents and testimony obtained by this



Special Counsel Robert Mueller. ■ AFP

office, regarding Michael Cohen's Congressional testimony are not accurate," spokesman Peter Carr said in a statement.

BuzzFeed's Editor-in-Chief, however, said that the news organisation stood by its work. "We stand by our

reporting and the sources who informed it, and we urge the Special Counsel to make clear what he's disputing," Ben Smith tweeted.

Trump's rebuke

The statement was nevertheless a cause for celebration for the President, who retweeted numerous supporters slamming BuzzFeed and later wrote it was "A very sad day for journalism, but a great day for our Country!"

BuzzFeed reported late on Thursday that Mr. Cohen has told investigators that the President personally instructed him to lie about the Moscow Trump Tower plan in testimony in 2017 to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees.

Ex-warlord Hekmatyar enters presidential race

He is accused of numerous war crimes

REUTERS

KABUL
Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former warlord accused of war crimes, entered the Afghan presidential race on Saturday in a new challenge to Ashraf Ghani, who allowed him to return from exile two decades ago when he was forced out by the Taliban.

Mr. Hekmatyar, whose fighters killed thousands in Kabul during the bloody civil war of the 1990s, has remained a divisive figure since his return from exile in 2016. His decision to contest the presidential polls is seen by analysts as the ex-warlord's attempt to legitimise his Hizb-i-Islami party.

Announcing his candida-

cy, Mr. Hekmatyar pledged to restore peace and security and said the current government had failed to end the war with the Taliban. "Our country's situation requires a powerful central government lead by an elected President supported by the majority of people," he told a news conference in Kabul.

Also on Saturday, Interior Minister Amrullah Saleh resigned to run for the vice-presidency as part of Mr. Ghani's team, according to two political sources.

In December, Mr. Ghani appointed Mr. Saleh to his government in a bid to secure the support of his former opponents for a second term.

Fuel blaze



Theft of oil: A massive fire broke out at an illegal pipeline tap in central Mexico's Hidalgo State on Friday, killing at least 66 people and injuring 76 more, just as the new government wages a major crackdown on fuel theft. Picture shows soldiers standing guard near the location of the fire in Tlahuelilpan. ■ AFP

'Major announcement on U.S. shutdown likely'

The closure has entered its fifth week

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said he'll be making a "major announcement" on the government shutdown and the southern border on Saturday afternoon as the standstill over his border wall continues into its fifth week. Democrats are now proposing hundreds of millions of dollars for new immigration judges and improvements to ports of entry from Mexico but nothing for the wall, a House aide said, as the party begins fleshing out its vision of improving border security.

After days of bitter clashes between Mr. Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi,

it was unclear if the twin developments represented serious steps toward resolving the nasty partisan fight or posturing.

A new deal?

Mr. Trump was expected to propose the outlines of a new deal that the administration believes could potentially pave the way to an end to the shutdown, according to a source. The move represents the first major overture by the President since January 8, when he delivered an Oval Office address making the public case for his border wall.

Democrats have said they will not negotiate until the government reopens.

Kamala Harris has picked Baltimore as headquarters for presidential bid

She picked the city because of its diversity: newspaper

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

The U.S.'s first Indian-origin Senator, Kamala Harris, has picked Baltimore as headquarters for her potential 2020 presidential campaign, a report in *The Baltimore Sun* said.

Ms. Harris, 54, who recently came out with two books including one for children, has not officially announced a bid. But reports in mainstream U.S. media suggest that the announcement may happen soon.

Proximity to Washington
Ms. Harris picked Baltimore because of its diversity, its proximity to Washington and because it is in the Eastern time zone, said the report, quoting sources who requested anonymity because Ms. Harris has not yet announced her plans.

Ms. Harris endorsed Ben Jealous last year during his unsuccessful campaign for Maryland Governor's office.



U.S. Senator Kamala Harris. ■ NYT

on the future of cities like Baltimore. And Senator Harris is incredibly inspiring – hard not to love a strong, vertically challenged woman of color!"

Ms. Harris, 54, is of Jamaican and Indian descent. She was elected in 2016 to the Senate after serving as California's Attorney-General from 2011 to 2017.

Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, the first ever Hindu elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, is among the several Democratic leaders to have made announcements on a presidential bid so far. Senator Elizabeth Warren has launched an exploratory effort for a possible run.

Other possible candidates include former Vice-President Joe Biden, former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Senator Bernie Sanders, New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

France seeks tenth weekend of protests

Many have rejected Macron's talks offer

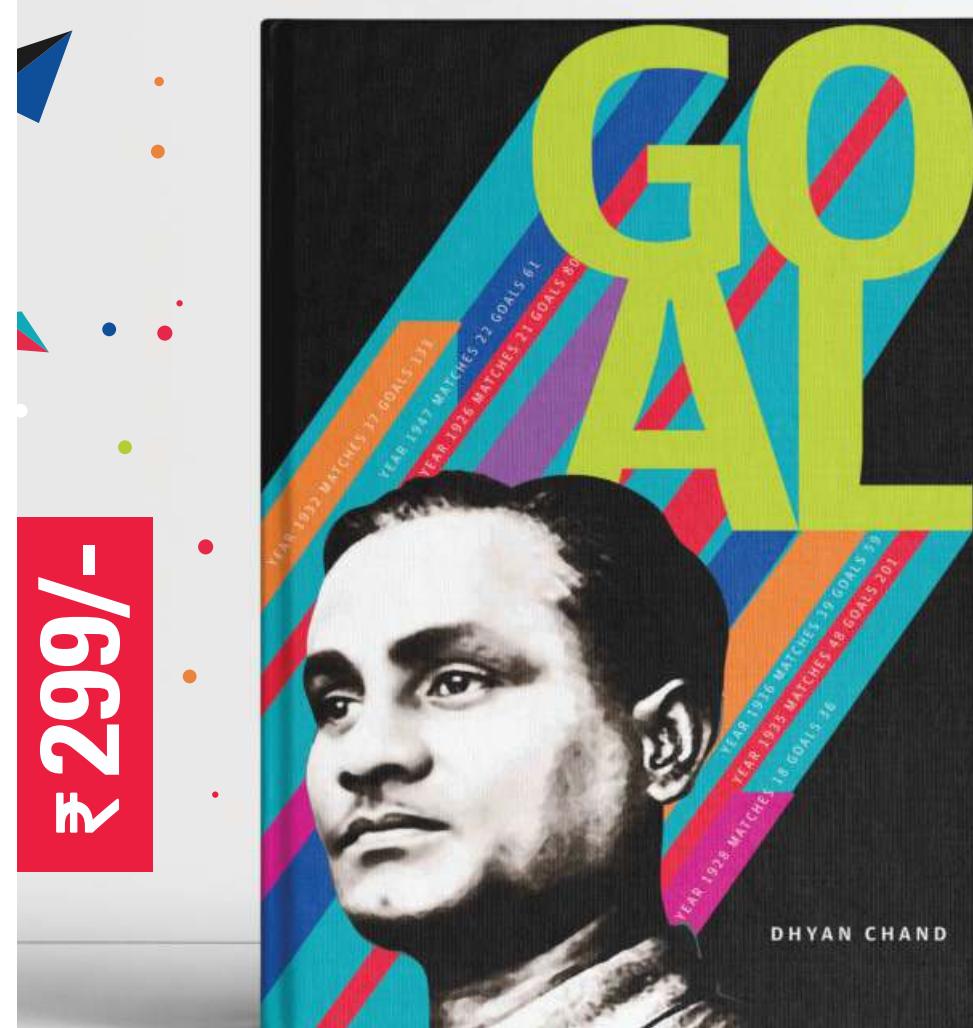
end of the year, the protesters remain fully mobilised.

Mr. Macron is hoping that the launch of a "grand national debate" on policy will mark a turning point. One of the yellow vests' top demands is that ordinary citizens be given a greater say in policymaking. He kick-started two months of public consultations on issues ranging from taxation to public services, spending over 12 hours in total debating with Mayors.

A police source said the authorities expected the protests to be "at least as big as last week" when over 80,000 people demonstrated over inequality, the privileges enjoyed by senior public servants and the governing style of a President accused of arrogance.

Last week's turnout confirmed that, after a lull at the

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Frank debate needed on Brexit impasse: Labour

'Referendum should remain an option'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

Britain's Opposition Labour Party has called for an "open and frank debate" on the government's stalled Brexit plan but still won't meet with Prime Minister Theresa May.

Keir Starmer, the party's Brexit spokesman, used a speech on Saturday to say that it is now up to Parliament to take the tough decisions needed to break the Brexit impasse.

He said holding a second referendum has to remain an option. Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn refuses to take part in the talks Ms. May has requested until



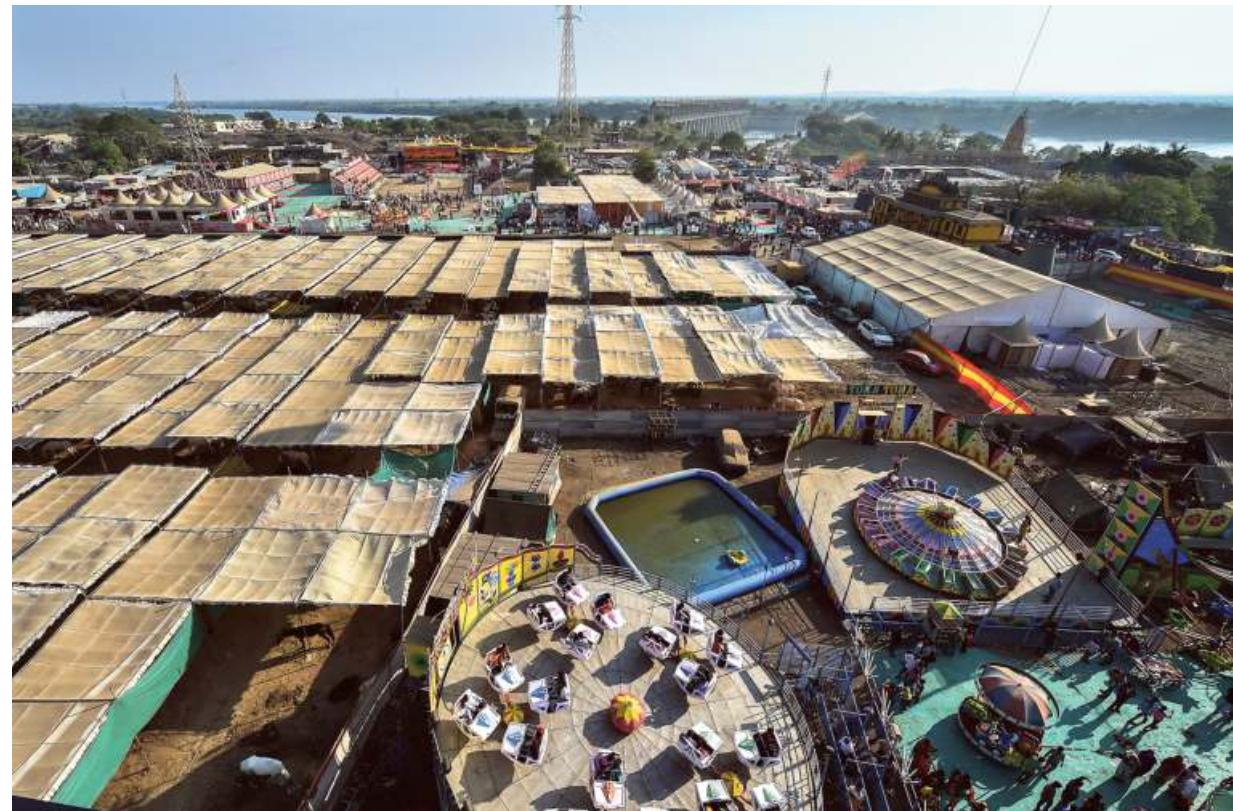
Labour's Brexit spokesman Keir Starmer. ■ AFP

she removes the possibility of a "no-deal" departure from the table. Ms. May says there is no legal way for her to do so.

Last week's turnout confirmed that, after a lull at the

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BND-ND



Horse sense: The banks of the Tapi at Sarangkheda in Nandurbar district of Maharashtra transform into a tent city during the annual Chetak horse festival. As many as 2,500 horses vied for attention during the fair from December 12 to January 8.



Weather worn: Braving the cold for hot deals, horse handlers from Uttar Pradesh gather near a bonfire.



Bit of shine: A horse gets a shower before a beauty competition.



Best face forward: An owner cleaning the face of his horse to present it to potential buyers.

Chetak on the trot

At the Sarangkheda horse fair in Maharashtra, local breeds attract buyers from as far as Saudi Arabia

TEXT AND IMAGES BY VIVEK BEHAR

You can smell horses in the air. As Sarangkheda on the banks of the Tapi river in Nandurbar of northern Maharashtra hosted its annual horse-trading fair from December 12 to January 8, the tradition of about 350 years unleashed much whinnying and snorting, not to mention the haggling for the best buy.

Buyers and sellers from all over the country and even Balochistan, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia gather here to take home Indian breeds. Legend has it that the Maratha warrior-king Shivaji used to visit the fair to buy prized warhorses. But things have changed. What started off as commerce has become the Sarangkheda Chetak Festival – named after Maharana Pratap’s favourite horse – over the past three years. A tent city pops up, hosting races and tent pegging, show jumping and horse beauty contests and dance shows, apart from buying and selling.

There are no thoroughbreds, but breeds such as Marwari, Kathiawadi, Punjabi and Sindhi are aplenty for the true connoisseur. A government-managed market committee estimates that 1,028 horses were sold in 2017, for ₹3.27 crore. The highest price a horse fetched that year was ₹3.11 lakh. Ajay Deshpande, who brought four horses from his town of Nanded in Maharashtra, says it is an expensive business. It cost him ₹20,000 just to transport the horses.



Speed test: A stallion gallops in the designated area of the fair.



Selfie time: A shot with the horse.



On the ramp: The beauty competition is a major attraction with judges checking the ears, eyes, noses, teeth, attitude and walking style of the steeds.



Hoof up: Horse dance is a favourite of spectators who travel from far-flung places to the age-old fair.



LONDON

A metropolis's struggle with toxic air

 In February 2013, after three years of suffering seizures and 27 hospital admissions, Ella Kissi-Debrah, a nine-year-old girl living in southeast London, died. She had been looking forward to attending her school's end-of-term disco and had even chosen an outfit for it, but never made it to the event. An inquest held a year later concluded that her death had been caused by acute respiratory failure from a severe asthma attack, with no mention of the role played by air pollution, a significant factor in the area that Kissi-Debrah lived in, by the South Circular, a major artery road in southeast London.

Her family has, however, long been adamant in maintaining that environmental conditions played a part in her death, and in a subsequent report on the case by a medical expert, Professor Stephen Holgate, Kissi-Debrah's death was linked to unlawfully high levels of air pollution in London at the time.

Following a public campaign by Kissi-Debrah's family, Britain's Attorney-General has agreed to support its request for a new inquest into the girl's death. The question of whether to hold a new inquest into her death will now

 Despite the introduction of low-emission zones in London, children exposed to air pollution in the city faced restricted development of their lungs, according to a study

be heard at the High Court. "I have concluded that there is new evidence which may alter the substantial truth of Ella's death," said Attorney-General Geoffrey Cox earlier this month, giving the necessary consent for the hearing to take place.

If successful, the family's campaign would have major implications for the U.K. – and potentially even beyond it given the widespread concern about the health implications of toxic air in the world's biggest cities. "Having the effects of air pollution recorded on her death certificate would be a legal first," wrote her mother Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah in a note to her supporters. "It would send a clear message to our government that they must now tackle the deadly impact of air pollution."

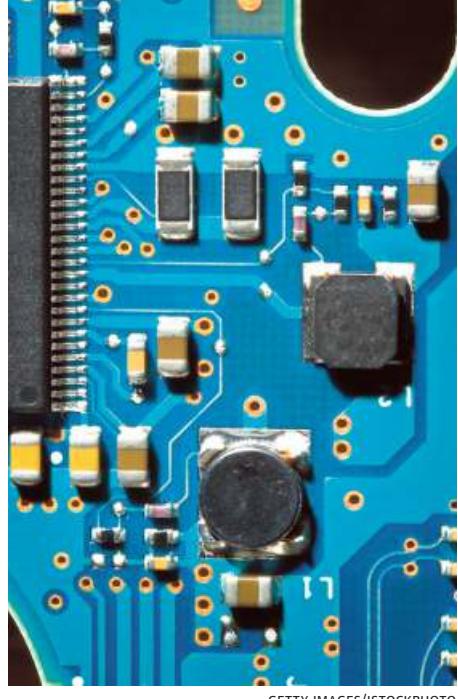
The family's campaign has received the backing of London's Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan, who has made tackling air pollution in the capital and beyond a key priority.

A major cause of concern

Kissi-Debrah's death came at a time when air pollution levels in the city regularly breached EU's acceptable limits and the issue continues to remain a major cause of concern even now. A study conducted by EarthSense last year found that the overwhelming majority of Britain's air pollution hotspots fell within London, while a separate study by charity Asthma UK found that children exposed to air pollution in London faced restricted development of their lungs, despite efforts such as the introduction of a low-emission zone across London that places charges on pollution caused by diesel vehicles entering the city. Last year, the city breached its annual legal limit for pollution within the first month of the year.

More change is on the horizon now. In April, London is set to toughen up the regime for the most polluting vehicles with a new ultra-low emission zone covering central London (which it says amounts to world first), set to be extended to the suburbs in two years.

The costs are in addition to the congestion charge that vehicles already pay for weekday trips into central London. While cars that don't meet the standards will have to pay £12.50, trucks will pay as much as £100 a day. There are more changes on the way – restrictions on wood-burning fires and biomass stoves used by farmers across the country and a plan to phase out the conventional combustion engines in vehicles sold after 2040. But not all are convinced that these are enough, particularly as Britain prepares to leave the EU and therefore no longer be subject to its environmental standards requirements.



BEIJING

China's hi-tech 'guerilla' war with the U.S.



The race for tech ascendancy between China and the U.S. is climbing new heights. The Americans want the Chinese to be dragged backwards, trying to keep them away from the crown jewels of digital technology – the tools for a new age of smart industrialisation, driven as much by data as by armament of clever robots.

At the heart of the seething competition between the world's largest and second-largest economies is the race for ever-powerful computer chips. The U.S. has been a leader in the domain of silicon wafers. But driven by massive state support that is tangibly benefiting both start-ups and established titans, or anything in between, China is also on its way, ready to catch up.

China has couched its lofty aspirations, which range from mastering Artificial Intelligence (AI) to making driverless cars, under its Made-in-China 2025 plan. Unsurprisingly, U.S. officials have raged against the Made-in-China 2025 project, which, if it succeeds, can topple the Americans from their perch on the top of the world's hi-tech tree.

Consequently, with so much bad blood flowing, a war to hurt China's tech advancement is turning nasty. The Chinese have been furious at the arrest in Canada of Meng Wanzhou, at Washington's behest. Ms. Meng is the daughter of the founder of Huawei. Her detention, and possible extradition to the U.S., have been widely interpreted in China as an assault on Huawei, which is widely seen as a global frontrunner in 5G technology.

In a move widely seen as a retaliatory measure, Beijing earlier this month sentenced to death Canadian national Robert Lloyd Schellenberg for drug-related crimes. This has embroiled Ottawa in ruthless proxy combat between Beijing and Washington over cutting-edge technology. The Chinese have so far shown the gumption to stand up to the fire and brimstone flaming from Washington.

In October, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a famous mantra of technological self-reliance during a visit to Guangzhou, an icon in China's vast industrial heartland. "Manufacturing is a key to the real economy, and the core strength of manufacturing is innovation, or the control of core technologies," Mr. Xi said. China, so far, is pursuing guerilla tactics to fight its tech war. Chinese officialdom and media have been instructed to drop

 While China is careful not to provoke the U.S. in the tech war, it continues to provide relentless state support for development of hi-tech tools, especially advanced computer chips

Made-in-China 2025 terminology from their lexicon, in order not to provoke Washington. Also, the state media has been asked to avoid references to China's 1,000 talents programme. This has been a successful scheme, where China's brightest graduates in foreign universities have been lured to return home, with offers of high salaries and a conducive environment for research and business.

State support

But beneath the radar, state-backed support for hi-tech development, especially advanced computer chips, has been relentless. The *Asian Nikkei Review* reported that an entrepreneur participating in this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas had received \$1.5 million last year in government subsidies for his chip-making start-up. Even Foxconn, well known as a giant iPhone assembler, apparently benefited from China's hi-tech largesse, with a \$9 billion local government infusion for its upcoming chip factory in Zhuhai. Some of big guns in China's private enterprise universe are in the fray in developing silicon chips. They include Alibaba, the e-commerce go-lah, which has set up an AI chip unit.

It appears to be only a matter of time when China's hit-and-run tactics of the tech war give way to decisive pitched battles with the U.S., whose results, at this time are hard to predict.



KABUL

Between stalled peace bid and growing attacks



A massive truck bomb explosion in Kabul on Monday claimed four lives, including those of an Indian and an American national, and injured at least 113 others, including 23 children. Claimed by the Taliban, this is one of the first major attacks in the new year in Afghanistan, after a brief period of quiet that followed the ongoing talks between various international stakeholders and the insurgent group.

The attack that took place in the late evening hours targeted an area that houses offices and guest houses for international organisations. However, despite high levels of security, the magnitude of the bomb – hidden in a sewage truck – caused tremendous damage and the blast was felt across the city, as far as 10 km away. "I was praying around 7 p.m. when the explosion went off and my family carried me to the NDS hospital," Hamid Hassanzai, a local resident who lives close to the site of the attack, told this correspondent. Mr. Hassanzai was knocked unconscious, while his wife and son were wounded in the attack.

This is the second such attack in recent months targeting the heavily-fortified area of

 India is weighing in on the talks as its interests in Afghanistan have been targeted. Several Indians, including engineers working in the northern provinces, were kidnapped in 2018

Kabul known as 'Green Village'. An attack on a British security firm, G4S, located in the same area, in November last year resulted in the death of at least 10 Afghans. "This has become a very dangerous place because VIPs and foreigners live here," Mr. Hassanzai said, adding that the locals staying close to the Green Village were extremely concerned for their safety as threats to the compound increased.

Mr. Hassanzai and other residents of the area urged the government to relocate the foreigner compounds away from civilian settlements.

"They should take this to another place. There are schools here and we are poor people. The enemies will always target this place and they never want peace," he added, frustrated at the volatile security situation.

Shipra Sharma, the Indian national killed in the attack, was also living close to the Green Village compound on the Kabul-Jalalabad Highway. Sharma hailed from Jodhpur and worked with the Afghanistan Institute for Civil Society.

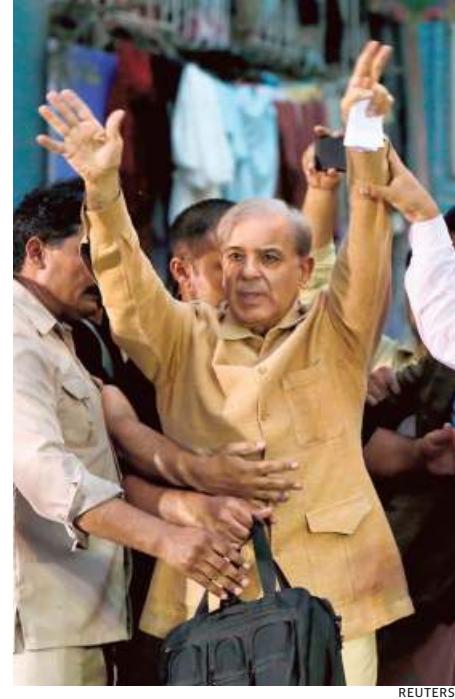
"India strongly condemns the horrific terror attack in Kabul in which an Indian national and many others lost their lives," a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs read. "India calls for the perpetrators of this heinous attack and those who provide them shelter to be brought to justice expeditiously."

Another foreign national, identified by the American media as Mano Kamaleson, has been reported to have been killed in the attack. Kamaleson worked with the First Micro-Finance Bank in Kabul. Some German policemen were also "slightly injured" in the blast, a German official confirmed.

India weighs in on the peace talks as the country's interests in Afghanistan have come under increased attacks. Several Indians, including engineers working in the northern provinces, were kidnapped last year. The Embassy recently advised caution to Indian citizens in Afghanistan after a threat was issued.

Talks stalled

This attack took place as the Taliban withdrew from the negotiations with the U.S., and a day before U.S. special representative Zalmay Khalilzad arrived in Kabul to meet Afghan government leaders. "The Islamic Emirate will be forced to stall all talks and negotiations until America ends her unlawful pressures and manoeuvring and steps forward towards true peace," a statement from the Taliban spokesperson read. The statement also warned that the insurgents planned to conduct similar "military activities".



LAHORE

Opposition comes together against govt.



Pakistan's Opposition parties have finally come together and forged an alliance against the Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government.

On Tuesday, Leader of the Opposition Shehbaz Sharif hosted a lunch in his chamber at Parliament House for other Opposition leaders. Interestingly, this luncheon meeting was attended by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leadership in full force. Former President Asif Ali Zardari and party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, after meeting Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Mr. Sharif, announced a joint political strategy.

Federal Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry termed this alliance an 'alliance for the restoration of corruption'. He was alluding to the corruption cases against the leadership of both parties. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was sent back to jail after another conviction last month, while the PPP leadership is facing cases related to money laundering and fake bank accounts.

"The PML-N and the PPP are two sides of the same coin. We beat them both. This alliance just proves the PTI's point of view that both parties are one and the same. There won't be any effect of their joining hands together," said Mr. Chaudhry.

The PTI leadership may be trying to make light of the alliance but experts are of the view that the Opposition can make things difficult for the government when it comes to important legislation. "These parties understand that to put pressure on the government, they have to come together and be effective within Parliament," said analyst Mazhar Abbas.

"The alliance is not on a solid footing due to the underlying insecurity and one of the parties may go for a deal," said Mr. Abbas. He added it suits the PTI if the Sharifs strike a deal.

If they do, the PML-N will be divided. "Mian Nawaz Sharif will only break if there is an adverse decision regarding Maryam Nawaz. On the other hand, when it comes to the PPP, they know that the party hardly exists anywhere outside Sindh, hence they are invoking the 18th Amendment and the Sindh card."

The PPP leadership feels that the 18th Amendment, which gives tremendous powers to the Provinces, is under threat. They also think that since Sindh is the only Province where the PTI or its allies are not in power, the government is targeting their leadership. It

 PPP leaders attended a luncheon meeting hosted by PML-N leader Shehbaz Sharif after which both parties announced a joint political strategy against Prime Minister Imran Khan's government

must be noted that Mr. Zardari, his sister Faryal Talpur, son Bilawal Bhutto and Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah were among the 172 suspects in the fake accounts case who were placed on the Exit Control List (ECL). The names of Mr. Bhutto and CM Shah were finally taken out of the ECL after the Supreme Court reprimanded the government.

'We will fight back'
Senator Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, spokesperson to Mr. Bhutto, said the PTI thought it could wipe out the Opposition through alleged corruption cases and turn Pakistan into a one-party system. "If the government thinks it can bully the Opposition into submission, it's in for a real surprise. We will fight back."

Mr. Abbas, the political analyst, said the cases against Mr. Zardari are serious. "Prime Minister Imran Khan may compromise on some issues at the government level but not on corruption cases." He said that even if some sort of a deal is offered to the Opposition in these cases, it will not be offered by the government but the powers-that-be. PM Khan could still say that he wanted to take action against 'corrupt leaders' but they ran away.

Only time will tell if the Sharifs or Mr. Zardari will strike a deal but what is clear at the moment is that the Opposition is ready to give a tough time to Mr. Khan's government.



COLOMBO

In Sri Lanka, many leaders eyeing top office



It's a poll year in Sri Lanka – except that few know whether it is the provincial, presidential or general election that will be held first.

Provincial elections are overdue, with the terms of six out of nine Provincial Councils in the island having expired in 2018, but the possibility of a presidential election has elicited more interest in the country.

"I am ready to contest presidential polls, if the people too are ready [for that]," former Secretary of Defence Gotabaya Rajapaksa recently declared, reaffirming his earlier indications, despite the Constitution barring dual citizens – he is also a citizen of the U.S. – from contesting. Soon after his announcement, his brother Chamal Rajapaksa – a former Speaker and two-time former President Mahinda Rajapaksa – said "I am also ready to contest for presidency," according to local media reports.

Neither of them may have said this but for a 2015 legislation – known popularly as the 19th Amendment – that disallows their brother and two-time former President Mahinda Rajapaksa from contesting a third term.

Mr. Rajapaksa, who has refrained from President Sirisena and two brothers of former President Rajapaksa have hinted at plans to contest this year's presidential election, while the UNP camp also has several contenders

spelling out his preference, in August 2018 spoke about finding out if he was still eligible to participate in the presidential race. However, President Maithripala Sirisena apparently had other plans for him – as was seen in the political drama that unfolded in the island on October 26.

Mr. Sirisena appointed his former boss-turned-rival his Prime Minister. From being a former President to being questionably appointed Premier, to now being named Leader of Opposition, all in a span of three months, it has been a whirlwind for Mr. Rajapaksa, as it has been for the entire country.

Even now, some legislators argue that Mr. Rajapaksa cannot serve as Opposition Leader, considering that his party leader, Mr. Sirisena, holds key Cabinet positions in government.

Meanwhile, it is not just the Rajapaksa brothers who are eyeing the top office. Mr. Sirisena himself is said to be exploring a second term. His senior party colleague Nimal Siripala de Silva recently said that President Sirisena would be the "common candidate" fielded jointly by the new party formed by Mr. Rajapaksa's supporters, along with the United People's Freedom Alliance to which both Mr. Sirisena and Mr. Rajapaksa belong. That leaves their camp with at least three contenders for candidacy.

There are at least three contenders on the other side as well, in the Ranil Wickremesinghe-led United National Party. Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, the party's Deputy Leader Sajith Premadasa and Speaker Karu Jayasuriya have their respective support bases – based on perceptions of their chances to win an election.

'October coup'

All this comes amid a growing chorus to abolish executive presidency – one of the key residual demands of many Sri Lankans following what they call the "October coup".

In their view, it is Mr. Sirisena's indiscriminate use of executive powers that set off the unprecedented political crisis, leaving the country with no legitimate government for two months.

The leftist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna has been campaigning for the abolition of the executive presidency, but it remains to be seen if either of the two main parties might commit to that. Going by the unkept promises of Sri Lanka's past political leaders in this regard or simply by the popular logic of power, it will be surprising if a candidate desiring to be President is willing to see all his/her powers being clipped once elected.

VIDYA RAM works for The Hindu and is based in London

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MEERA SRINIVASAN works for The Hindu and is based in Colombo

IN BRIEF



ICICI Lombard General Insurance profit rises 3%

NEW DELHI
ICICI Lombard General Insurance reported a 3% increase in profit to ₹239.14 crore for the third quarter of 2018-19 financial year. The company's net profit in the corresponding quarter of 2017-18 was at ₹231.76 crore. Total income increased to ₹2,416.39 crore against ₹2,019.77 crore in the third quarter of the previous fiscal. The board approved the re-appointment of Bhagav Dasgupta as the managing director and chief executive officer of the company. PTI

SEBI fines individual ₹1 cr. in DSQ Software case

NEW DELHI
Markets regulator SEBI slapped a fine of ₹1 crore on a former promoter of DSQ Software for failing to comply with its directions passed more than 14 years ago. Dinesh Dalmia failed to buy back 1.30 crore shares as directed by the watchdog, which had found him guilty of fraudulent trading in 2004. SEBI found that Mr. Dalmia had fraudulently issued shares in the secondary market.

SBI Life net income rises 15% to ₹264.28 crore

MUMBAI
SBI Life Insurance has posted a 14.8% growth in the December quarter net income to ₹264.28 crore. Net premium income moved up to ₹9.14 trillion from the ₹6.77 trillion, while income from investments came in at ₹3 trillion, up from ₹2.79 trillion. First year premium income was ₹2.73 trillion during the period against ₹2.38 trillion, while single premium income more than doubled to ₹1.16 trillion. PTI

HDFC Bank third quarter profit rises 20% on higher income

Private lender's net interest income grows 21.9%, domestic loans rise 24%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

HDFC Bank reported a 20.3% growth in its net profit for the quarter ended December 31 to ₹5,585.9 crore on interest income and non-interest income.

Net interest income grew 21.9% to ₹2,576.8 crore, driven by asset growth of 23.7% and a core net interest margin of 4.3% for the quarter, the bank said in a statement.

Other income grew 27.2% to ₹4,921 crore. The growth in other income was boosted by profit from sale of investments which was at ₹474 crore compared with ₹259.4 crore reported during the same period of the previous

On a high



Metrics	Q3 FY19	Q3 FY18	Growth%
Net interest income (₹ Cr.)	12,576.8	10,314.3	21.9
Net profit (₹ Cr.)	5,585.9	4,642.6	20.3
Net NPA (%)	0.42	0.44	-
EPS (₹)	20.6	17.9	-
Capital adequacy ratio (%)	17.3	15.5	-

year. Gross non-performing assets inched up to 1.38% of gross advances as on December 31, 2018 against 1.33% three months ago and 1.29% a year ago. Provision coverage ratio remained healthy at 70% – one of the highest

among Indian lenders. The bank made provisions for ₹2,211.5 crore in the quarter compared with ₹1,351.4 crore a year ago. Provision for NPAs was ₹1,734.6 crore compared with ₹1,356 crore a year ago.

"Provisions for the quarter ended December include a charge of ₹322.4 crore towards contingent provisions," the bank said.

Domestic loan growth was 24.1% year-on-year, driven by 24% growth each in retail and 0 growth. Retail loans constituted 55% of the total loan book. Deposit growth was 22% while current and savings account deposit growth was 13%.

South Indian Bank Q3 net profit falls 27%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Private sector lender South Indian Bank on Saturday posted a 27% decline in net profit at ₹83.85 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2018.

The bank had recorded a net profit of ₹115 crore in the corresponding period of the previous financial year. Total income of the lender, however, improved to ₹1,921.93 crore during the quarter under review, as against ₹1,735.77 crore in the year-ago period, South Indian Bank said in a regulatory filing.

Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) rose to 4.88% of the total advances, compared to 3.4% at the end of the third quarter of the fiscal year 2017-18.



Act and SEBI norms, the regulator said in a letter to the companies.

L&T had proposed to buy back up to 6.1 crore shares from shareholders at a price of ₹1,475 per equity share, aggregating to ₹9,000 crore. The offer was open to those holding equity shares as on October 15.

A buy-back reduces the number of shares available in the open market.

SEBI nixes L&T's share buy-back proposal

'Offer not in compliance with norms'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Engineering major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Saturday said market regulator SEBI has denied permission for its ₹9,000-crore share buy-back offer. In a regulatory filing with stock exchanges, L&T said the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had asked it not to proceed with the buy-back.

"Since the ratio of the aggregate of secured and unsecured debts owed by the company after buy-back (assuming full acceptance) would be more than twice the paid-up capital and free reserves of the company based on consolidated financial statements," the buyback offer is not in compliance with the Companies

IIFL Finance to raise ₹2,000 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

India Infoline Finance Ltd. (IIFL Finance), a non-banking financial company, is planning to raise up to ₹2,000 crore through bonds to meet its growth plans, said a top official.

"We are coming out with a unsecured redeemable non-convertible debentures aggregating to ₹250 crore," said R. Venkataraman, MD, IIFL Holdings.

"The issue opens on January 22 and comes with a green-shoe option to retain oversubscription of up to ₹1,750 crore." The firm plans to use the amount for lending, financing and repayment/pre-payment of interest and principal of existing borrowings.

Taxpayers shell out extra ₹20,000 on average per year*

Analysis by ClearTax finds 90% of women not optimising tax savings; lack of awareness, liquidity at financial year end cited

TCA SHARAD RAAGHAVAN

NEW DELHI

Indian taxpayers, on an average, pay ₹20,000 per year more in taxes than they need to, an analysis by ClearTax has shown.

It has also found that 90% of women do not do the most they can to save taxes.

"What we have learnt is that on average, the taxpayers on our platform are missing out on savings of about ₹20,000 a year on taxes," Archit Gupta, founder and CEO of ClearTax, said.

"That's a lot of money that people are leaving on the table. They could have done tax saving investments or tax planning better and they would have not had to pay the extra ₹20,000 that they are." We also learnt that on a country-wide level, when

the income crosses ₹7 lakh, less than 50% of the taxpayers avail of the maximum exemption they are eligible for under Section 80C," Mr. Gupta added. "Below ₹7 lakh, we figured that people might not have enough savings to do this, but it was surprising to see that for those above ₹7 lakh, this was the case. This is reflecting from real data from millions of data points."

He added that the analysis of taxpayer data also found that 90% of women do not optimise their tax savings.

Mr. Gupta pointed out that there were two main reasons for this – lack of awareness and lack of liquidity available at the end of the financial year.

"When we did surveys and analysis, one of the most



Greek and Latin: Taxes and exemptions are a complex topic for most people, says ClearTax CEO Archit Gupta. ■ R. RAGHU

common reasons for this was that taxes and exemptions are a complex topic for most people," Mr. Gupta said. "The opacity and complexity of what to do, how much to do, meant people made some effort, but didn't take it to the logical conclusion.

They think that 'oh, TDS has been cut, so there is nothing else I have to do.'

The second reason, he said, was the lack of liquidity at the last moment.

"People wake up to the need to invest in these tax-saving instruments only

when their employers ask for investment proofs, which is towards the end of the financial year," Mr. Gupta explained.

"When they reach January, they have other liabilities and payments to make such as rent, etc., so if they have not planned through the year and squirrelled away small amounts through the year, then there is not enough liquidity to do the entire tax savings investments at the last minute," he added. "So, they might be aware, but they don't have the liquidity."

To try to address this situation, Mr. Gupta said that his company had developed a free-to-use platform called ClearTax Invest that allows users to simply upload their payslip data, and then re-

ceive an artificial intelligence-powered recommendation of what investment instruments are available and advisable to save the most tax.

Investment proof

"The other part is, we also let you invest in tax-saving ELSS funds on our platform," Mr. Gupta said. "You get an investment proof immediately. If you don't have liquidity, you can start an ELSS SIP that allows you to make investments that are forward-looking, and not last-minute."

According to Mr. Gupta, the future of fintech will be where AI-driven personalisation will be the most common way in which consumers and businesses will benefit from the system.



Uncle Sam's watching: The U.S. could again resort to tariffs if it deems Beijing has violated the trade agreement. ■ REUTERS

U.S. wants regular China trade reform review

'Threat of tariffs is not going away'

REUTERS

BEIJING/WASHINGTON

The United States is pushing for regular reviews of China's progress on pledged trade reforms as a condition for a trade deal – and could again resort to tariffs if it deems Beijing has violated the terms of the trade war between the two countries.

The demands include changes to China's policies on intellectual property protection and other trade barriers.

An enforcement and verification process is unusual for trade deals and is akin to the process around punitive economic sanctions such as those imposed on North Korea and Iran.

Disputes over trade are more typically dealt with through courts, the World Trade Organization (WTO) or through arbitration panels and other dispute settlement mechanisms built into trade agreements.

Chinese negotiators were not keen on the idea of regular compliance checks, the source said, but the U.S. proposal "didn't derail negotiations."

Lacking clarity

A Chinese source said the United States wants periodic assessments but it's not yet clear how often.

"It looks like humiliation," the source said. "But perhaps the two sides could find a way to save face for the Chinese government."

The administration of U.S. President Donald

‘SME forging units need ₹200 crore to modernise’

High steel prices are a concern: AIFI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

The Indian forging Industry expressed serious concern over increasing domestic steel prices, according to a top official of an industry body.

It also sought ₹200 crore from the government under the Technology Upgradation Fund scheme for modernisation of SMEs in the foundry sector.

"For the last three quarters, we have been posting growth," said S. Murali Shankar, president, Association of Indian Forging Industry (AIFI).

"However, domestic steel prices have gone up by ₹6,000 per tonne in the last 12 months. Also, there is a gap between the quality of domestic and international steel. Steel imports are also

not viable considering the levies. The supply of steel within the country is also less than that of demand," he added.

EV focus harmful?

AIFI also expressed concern over the Centre's renewed focus on electric vehicles (EVs) as it could wipe out the entire industry.

The introduction of EVs would have an adverse impact on the Indian forging industry as 60% of such units were into manufacturing of auto components.

Internal Combustion Engines have about 2,000 moving parts compared with only 20 in EVs. As a result, on an average 60-70% of demand for forged auto components would be lost, resulting in job losses and shutdown of units, he said.

"It's a marginal dip. We are looking at various ways to drive our data consumption. Jio phone users data consumption is almost at par with any smart phone user."

Court ban

In a judgment on September 28, 2018, the Uttarakhand High Court had directed Internet service providers

(ISPs) to abide by the Union government's order to ban hundreds of pornographic sites.

Back in August 2015, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) had directed the ISPs to block more than 800 websites showing porn, or face the risk of losing their licences.

Following this, Reliance Jio has been blocking hun-

dreds of such websites on its network since October, 2018.

Reliance Jio also saw its net subscriber addition slowing to 27.9 million during the December quarter compared with 37 million during the September quarter, which was the highest in any quarter since the launch of commercial services.

"Customer engagement

Video consumption

Digital Life

Video consumption drove most of the usage, increasing to 460 crore hours per month," said Reliance Jio in its earnings release.

In its financial results for the September quarter, Reliance Jio had said customer engagement continued to grow with average data consumption per user per month of 11 GB and average voice consumption of 761 minutes per user per month.

In the September quarter, video consumption had driven most of the usage, increasing to 410 crore hours per month; average video consumption was 17.5 hours per subscriber per month.

Volkswagen Group India, said, "The technology centre will lay the foundation for the development of products that are specially designed for Indian market. We expect to roll out the first products, for both the Skoda as well Volkswagen brands, by 2020-21; starting with a mid-sized SUV based on MQB AO IN platform."

"A model campaign, led by Skoda, will follow.

"I am convinced that we can use all the strengths of Skoda to the great benefit of the entire Volkswagen Group," he said.

The vehicles developed in India would meet the same core standards for safety, quality and design that the Volkswagen Group represents worldwide, he said.

"The writer was in Pune

at the invitation of

Volkswagen Group India

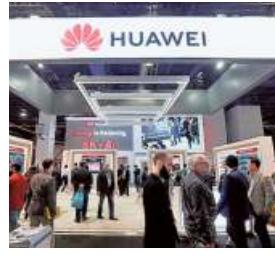
Volkswagen opens technology centre in India

IN BRIEF



Amid crises, key world leaders may skip Davos

MILAN An array of crises will keep several world leaders away from the World Economic Forum in Davos next week, which takes place against a backdrop of deepening gloom over the global economic and political outlook. Anxieties over trade disputes, fractious international relations, Brexit and a growth slowdown are likely to dominate the January 22-25 meet. **REUTERS**



5G networks: Germany mulls barring Huawei

BERLIN The German government is debating whether to follow the U.S. and allies in restricting Huawei from accessing its next-generation mobile networks on security grounds. U.S. officials told allies that Huawei is at the beck and call of the Chinese State, warning its equipment may contain "back doors" that could open them up to cyber espionage. **REUTERS**



CVS, Walmart resolve pharmacy contract row

Walmart will remain part of CVS Health network for commercial and Medicaid pharmacy customers, the firms said. On Tuesday, CVS had said the firms failed to agree on pricing and that Walmart was leaving the prescription drug network that CVS oversees for both companies and the government, as well as Medicaid. **REUTERS**



Tesla to cut jobs to make Model 3 sedan cheaper

Tesla said it would cut thousands of jobs to rein in costs as it plans to increase production of lower-priced versions of its Model 3 sedan. CEO Elon Musk said the need for lower-priced versions would become greater from July, when the U.S. tax credit drops by half, adding \$1,875 to the car's price, and at the end of 2019, when it goes away entirely. **REUTERS**

Shutdown dims consumer-driven economic growth outlook in U.S.

Fed officials, economists fear consumer boom may be on the cusp of a reversal

REUTERS
NEW YORK

After tax cuts, rising incomes and buoyant stock markets set off a consumer boom in 2018, signs are emerging that the main engine of U.S. economic growth could sputter, and a record-long government shutdown further muddies the waters.

Federal Reserve officials and many economists have long counted on continued robust consumer spending to keep the economy chugging along, despite headwinds from recent financial markets turbulence, trade conflicts and weakening global growth. Now they fear the consumer boom could be on the cusp of a reversal.

The warning signs span the income spectrum – from the well-heeled possibly cutting back after their stocks got hammered last fall, to the poor potentially getting squeezed if a lingering government shutdown delays food assistance payments.

Economists are also not certain, for example, whether last year's personal income tax cut will lead to higher refunds and boost big-ticket purchases, such as home appliances, typical for this time of year, or whether the windfall was already spent last year when paycheck withholding declined.

The shutdown could delay refunds and hit companies that rely on consumers spending a chunk of that money on their goods or services. The chief financial officer at T-Mobile US told investors last week any delay in re-



Tough times: A federal worker left unpaid or furloughed collects free groceries during the shutdown. **REUTERS**

funds was a concern for the company because its prepaid business, roughly 30% of sales, was "particularly sensitive" to tax refunds.

"Hopefully, this situation doesn't go on too long," J. Braxton Carter said. A delay in refunds could also hurt home improvement chains, such as Home Depot, Lowe's Cos Inc. and Wayfair Inc. that see furniture purchases and early spring projects boost sales.

"We don't see any material impact," a Home Depot spokesman said without elaborating. Lowe's and Wayfair did not respond to a request for comment. The government shutdown clouds the outlook for spending, retailers and the economy at large because executives and policymakers weigh not the direct impact of 800,000 federal workers going without pay, but also how much it can hurt consumer and business confidence.

Chicago Federal Reserve

President Charles Evans said last week that while the immediate effects of the shutdown on the U.S. \$20.7-trillion economy would be small, the indirect, psychological impact could be substantial. "Consumers get risk averse and start hunkering down, businesses start planning to do less, and you start magnifying these effects," Mr. Evans said.

Former Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen noted a general cooling of business sentiment at a retail trade show in New York last week. "We are hearing anecdotal reports about businesses beginning to put investment plans on hold because of uncertainty," she said. Those investments could include things like upgrades to a retailer's supply chain, Ms. Yellen said.

Constance Hunter, chief economist at KPMG told *Reuters* if the shutdown goes on until the end of the month "we will shave a couple of percentage points

from first quarter (gross domestic product)." Such concerns have spread among Fed officials who now advocate patience before considering any further rate hikes.

Fast food, grocers at risk
Consumer spending accounts for about two-thirds of U.S. economic activity, and the 4% jump in household spending on goods last year was a major reason the economy probably grew by a healthy 3% in 2018.

Steven Blitz, chief U.S. economist at TS Lombard

said the economy appeared to be slowing down, noting reports from Macy's, Nordstrom and other retailers talking of a weak December, and he expected the shutdown to hurt first quarter growth. "Some of it will come back in the second quarter, but there will be some industries that will see lasting damage such as restaurant operators," he told *Reuters*.

Former Federal Reserve

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show in New York last week.

"We are hearing anecdotal reports about businesses beginning to put investment plans on hold because of uncertainty," she said. Those investments could include things like upgrades to a retailer's supply chain, Ms. Yellen said.

The companies did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Brian Cantor, managing director of Alvarez & Marsal's retail performance improvement group, said grocery chains, including Walmart Inc and Kroger, could feel the pinch of weaker discretionary spending. Walmart declined comment.

Oil firm BP goes global with seismic imaging technology

Finds extra billion barrels of oil with the know-how

REUTERS
LONDON

Buoyed by the success of seismic imaging that found an extra billion barrels of oil in the Gulf of Mexico, BP is looking to take its latest technology to Angola and Brazil.

The software used in the Gulf, based on an algorithm created by Xukai Shen, a geophysicist straight out of Stanford University, led to BP discovering the crude in an area where it had long thought there was none to be found.

Industry experts said the scale of the discovery 8 km below BP's Thunder Horse field, announced last week, marked a major leap forward for deep water exploration – a costly business known for its low success rate and high risk. It is an example of how technology is helping deep water make a comeback after a decade when the industry has focused on advances in onshore shale.

The new deposit was found with software known as Full Waveform Inversion (FWI), which is run on a supercomputer and analyses reverberations of seismic sound waves to produce high-resolution 3D images of ancient layers of rock thousands of metres under the sea bed, helping geologists locate oil and gas.

It is more accurate than previous surveying methods, BP said, and processes data in a matter of days, compared with months or years previously.

While the discovery marked the biggest industry success for digital seismic



Barrel bounty: BP may use Wolfspar devices in Angola, Brazil where oil deposits are locked under salt layers. **REUTERS**

imaging, the British oil major's rivals are hot on its heels with similar techniques.

BP scientist John Etgen, the company's top advisor on seismic imaging, said it aimed to retain its edge with a new machine it has developed, Wolfspar, to be used alongside FWI.

Penetrating salt layers

The submarine-like Wolfspar is dragged by a ship through the ocean and emits very low frequency sound waves, which are particularly effective for penetrating thick salt layers that lie above rocks containing fossil fuels, he added.

Mr. Etgen told *Reuters* that BP planned to roll out Wolfspar alongside FWI in the second half of this year at the Atlantis field in the Gulf of Mexico, where a large salt layer still hides parts of the site.

The company plans to expand the use of the technology to other big oil and gas basins, including Brazil next

year and Angola at a later stage, he said.

"Seeing through very complex, very distorted salt bodies was the hardest problem we had, the most challenging," the Houston-based scientist said in an interview.

In both Brazil and Angola, oil deposits are locked under thick salt layers. Brazil's deep water oil fields comprise one of the world's fastest-growing basins in terms of production. BP last year signed a partnership with Brazil's national oil company Petrobras to develop resources there.

Billion-barrel oil finds are rare, particularly in mature basins like the Gulf of Mexico. But the scale of output from deep water wells means they can compete with the most low-cost basins in the world, in particular U.S. shale.

BP is far from alone in focusing on technology; all big oil firms have put a growing emphasis on digitalisation to reduce costs following the oil price collapse of 2014.

Bitcoin volumes on darknet markets doubled in 2018

Transactions rose though cryptocurrency's price crashed

REUTERS
NEW YORK

Use of bitcoin as a form of payment doubled in 2018 on darknet market sites, where users can buy anything from illegal drugs to fake IDs, even though the price of the cryptocurrency crashed, according to a study by data firm Chainalysis.

Bitcoin transaction volumes on darknet markets rose throughout 2018 to an average of \$2 million daily, nearly double the activity measured at the start of the year, according to Chainalysis.

Overall bitcoin flowing into darknet markets fell to \$600 million in 2018 from \$700 million a year earlier, Chainalysis found. The dip was attributable to the closure of major markets Alphabay and Hansa in mid-2017 which hampered flows until the start of last year when transaction vol-

umes started to steadily grow again, Kim Grauer, senior economist at Chainalysis, said in an interview.

"The reason for that drop is more law enforcement activity," Ms. Grauer said. "It would be misleading to think that this year it (the volume) will go down."

Bitcoin, the largest crypto-currency, is a popular form of payment on darknet markets because users do not need to reveal their identities.

Currency volatility

In 2017, bitcoin became wildly popular with speculators who trade it online against other virtual currencies as well as hard currencies such as the U.S. dollar.

Bitcoin's price peaked in December 2017 at just above \$20,000 and is now down more than 80% from its high.

While bitcoin's volatility

has attracted speculators, it has prevented it from becoming a more widespread form of payment in mainstream commerce. The value of bitcoins handled by major payment processors shrivelled nearly 80% in the year to September, earlier data from Chainalysis showed.

The wild price swings have not dissuaded darknet users, Ms. Grauer said.

"For someone who wants to buy something on a dark marketplace, the fact that bitcoin price is fluctuating doesn't really matter," Ms. Grauer said.

However, several factors could disrupt the rise of bitcoin flows into these markets this year. These include more closures of markets by law enforcement and the movement of activity from these venues to encrypted messaging apps to avoid detection, Ms. Grauer said.

Going green, going clean



Breath of fresh air: A worker cleans an E12 electric bus in Santiago. With a fleet of 2.4 million vehicles that produce 80% of the toxic emissions in Santiago – one of the five most polluted South American capitals – the arrival of Chinese-made electric

In Argentina crisis, firms do everything to cut costs — except fire workers

Reducing the workforce in the South American nation can dramatically increase costs and push a company into bankruptcy

REUTERS
BUENOS AIRES

Like many Argentine businessmen, Marco Meloni is doing everything he can to avoid laying off staff at his textile factory despite a slump in sales, more than 70% interest rates, and soaring utility bills.

The reason? He doesn't have the money to fire anyone.

A little-reported and unusual feature of the economic crisis gripping Latin America's third-largest economy is the absence of many workers losing their jobs.

Small businesses, the biggest employer in Argentina, have been hardest hit by inflation that is nearly 48%, a tumbling peso, and major cuts to subsidies for public utilities that have sharply in-

creased companies' operating costs. But the unemployment rate has barely budged from 9%.

Workers' interviews with business owners in textile, plastic, clothing and paint industries, government officials and union leaders show that many firms are adopting different strategies to try to survive until the economy begins to recover, which the International Monetary Fund expects to begin in the second quarter. Firms are reducing working hours, halting production on some days, cutting shifts and making workers take their vacations now in anticipation of more customer demand once the economy lifts.

The workforce contracted by just 1,20,000 registered workers between October 2017 and October 2018, the latest government data shows. That represents about 1% of the 12 million-strong labour force. In contrast, the U.S. lost about 6% or 8.7 million people of its workforce during the two years of the 2007-08 Great Recession as companies laid off workers to stay afloat.

Generous labour laws

Argentina has some of the world's most generous labour laws and they are making it more difficult for small business owners such as Meloni to adapt to an economy now in recession. Typically in a tough economic climate, a company might be expected to reduce its workforce to cut costs. But in Argentina, taking that step could dramatically increase costs and



Catch-22 situation: The country's labour laws make it expensive to employ or fire a worker. **REUTERS**

potentially push a company into bankruptcy.

The labour laws make the country one of the most expensive in Latin America to employ, or fire, a worker.

fired. And crucially, there is no cap on how much a company needs to pay. Layoff costs in Argentina are among the highest in the world, according to the World Bank's Doing Business project.

President steps in

The Argentine labour laws have helped to contain what could have been a big increase in the unemployment rate. In addition, President Mauricio Macri, a free marketer who wants to reform the country's rigid labour system to encourage foreign investment, is taking steps to dissuade companies from firing workers.

He announced on Nov. 13

that companies must give 10 days' notice of any plans to lay off workers so that the government can help find ways to keep them employed. Mr. Macri wants to expand an existing programme that helps subsidise salaries of workers at companies that can show they are in financial straits.

The government has not yet issued any regulations to enforce its announcement, so it is not clear whether companies are informing them of pending dismissals.

Mr. Meloni said the plant, which makes fabrics, used to operate 24 hours a day from Monday to Saturday but now operates 16 hours a day, five days a week. Like many other businesses, Mr. Meloni advanced the holidays to 100 employees with the hope that once summer ends in March, demand will pick up.

Daniel Funes de Rioja, the head of one of Argentina's biggest labour law firms, said

a major issue for companies was the seniority of many workers. Many, especially in low-skilled industries, stay in the same job for years, so paying them severance becomes very expensive.

Production Minister Dante Sica said companies were also reluctant to fire workers because of forecasts showing an economic recovery around the corner. "They prefer to suspend and not fire because of the cost of layoffs, plus the cost of hiring is costly," Mr. Sica said.

While workers are staying in their jobs, they are earning less because of the shorter hours and fewer shifts. Some have resorted to taking second jobs, working for Uber, the ride-hailing app, for example, according to anecdotal reports.

The millennial urban India

The changing scenes and narratives

ANUKRITI PATHAK

When I was a child, my father was posted somewhere on the western border of India and every summer we used to travel from there to the Nepalese border to visit my grandparents. The most exciting part of the vacation used to be the train journeys, 18 to 20 hours long, crossing cities interconnected by huge patches of open land. My parents used to algorithmically calculate the food required for the journey, store enough water to last between major cities. The train, crossing a cross-section of India, covered around 1,000 km and crossed two or three cities, so the calculation was done so that food lasted between these major stations where a refill could be made.

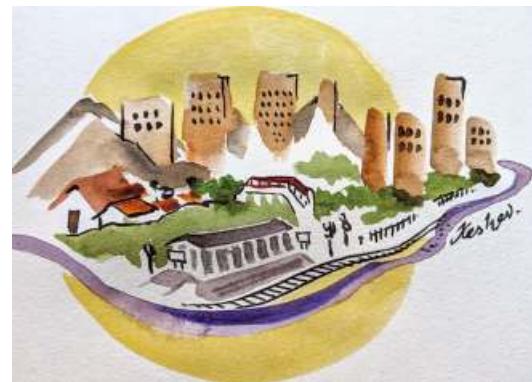
Recently I took the same route, this time for the sake of nostalgia. The landscapes that had seemed barren once, almost across Rajasthan, were now built up, and the fringes of the major cities seemed bigger. The distance between major cities also seemed to be less and the big stations which were two or three back in the 1990s now seemed to be almost double in number.

What is behind this change of picture for every 1990s kid like me, is the rise in the millennial Urban India.

In Census 2001 there were 35 million-plus cities, which number boomed to 53 in 2011 and is set to rise to around 75 in 2021. The urban which seemed an alien concept in the early planning years of India, understood as a negative spillover of villages, is now a way of life in millennial India, responsible for a major part of the government of India's expenditure. As in the rest of the world, the millennial urban India speaks the language of efficiency, down-sizing, sub-contracting of services, Public Private Partnerships and new models of public management, leading the state to re-scale itself and recreate social and geographical boundaries to participate in the race to match escalating GDP numbers.

Is there then scope for a model where social sciences are formed as a derivative of the scientific process, where both the lenses can act interchangeably rather than challenging the authenticity of one another?

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Face to face with Indira Gandhi

A citizen recalls a memorable visit to the Prime Minister's residence in 1980

SIMRAN SIDHU

It was November 19, 1980, when my mom, an eighth grader then, got a rare opportunity to meet Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It was an evening she remembers vividly this day.

Around 5 p.m. the gates of 1 Safdarjung Road opened to the appointed visitors. It was Indira Gandhi's birthday but it was a solemn occasion as she had lost her son Sanjay Gandhi a few months earlier.

Along with her family members she walked into the sprawling compound.

The pathway was lined with white dahlias. There was much greenery around. A shamiana had been erected on the lawns with chairs for the visitors. My mom sat on one of them: with oval-shaped backs woven with nylon strings. She was in awe of everything – the dahlias, the shamiana, even the chairs.

Folded hands, a smile

The visitors engaged in small talk, waiting for Indira Gandhi. The wait was long, but not tiring. Finally, she walked up to them. The visitors silently got up and

aligned themselves in a flawless queue. She silently walked along, acknowledging the greetings with folded hands and a faint smile.

She was wearing a white sari with a white choli and shiny black slippers. Her skin seemed translucent. She looked calm, composed, almost divine. Although broken from inside, the radiance of her face was intact. Although demure in form, she had a confidence that was so uncommon. Her face was an epitome of bravery amid adversity, an indomitable spirit. My mom said she

realised why Indira Gandhi was called 'the Iron Lady'.

When she reached the end of the line, she immediately went back inside. It was time for the visitors to leave. Once back on the dahlia-lined pathway, my mom turned to look back at the house one last time. She spotted Indira Gandhi through an open door of a visitor's room. That was the last glimpse my mom had of Indira Gandhi; a glimpse that is etched in her memory and she cherishes it till date.

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The Indians who fought the Empire's wars

They were not mere mercenaries; they believed they would have a role in an independent India

D.P. RAMACHANDRAN

A couple of years back when I wrote in this newspaper on our heroes of the Second World War, one reader lambasted me for 'singing praises' of 'mercenaries' who enjoyed privileges under the colonial regime to oppress our own people. This revealed an unfortunate prejudice many carry about the colonial legacy of our armed forces.

The strange role Indian soldiers played in the cause of the British Empire is essentially an offshoot of the socio-political environment of 18th century India when colonialism took roots in the subcontinent. With no central power, inept regional and local rulers were engaged in power struggles, unconcerned about governance. Maintaining no regular armies, they hired free-

booters who roamed the land to fight their frequent wars, which seldom saw any real fighting: the norm was for the side that was inferior in numbers to turn tail. Nevertheless, the freebooters were an innately intrepid lot with the soldierly instinct who found any other vocation mundane, and eager to fight given half a chance.

The Europeans made clever use of this vast indigenous potential to raise armies when they began their forays here. This was cheaper than importing soldiers. For the sepoys, the Indians who readily enlisted for service with them, the professional military training they received was a new experience, especially learning the use of firearms. They were also being paid regularly for the first time, giving them a sense of belonging. Also, they found themselves actually fighting

and winning battles, which gave them immense pride in the vocation of their choice.

While the British, emerging victorious in the Anglo-French rivalry, went on to establish themselves by subjugating one local ruler after another across India using the sepoys armies, the sepoys themselves felt no qualms about their role, because contextually they found rule by the East India Company to be more desirable. This in all probability was a feeling shared by a large part of the populace. This enabled the British to exercise their authority with comparative ease. The idea of nationhood had not really taken shape yet, and the British were merely one among the many players vying for power.

A positive outcome of this unsavoury exercise was that it created a unified India as never before. Ironically, ma-

ny of the institutions they built in India to pursue their ends eventually benefited the free nation, the most controversial among these being the Indian Army. While there is no denying its role in fostering the empire, it ignited the first spark for freedom with the "Sepoy Mutiny" of 1857, ending the EIC's reign and putting India under the British Crown.

As the freedom movement gained momentum, the army men were not altogether



oblivious of it. The soldiers of the Indian Army, which formed the largest volunteer force of the First World War, genuinely believed Britain would be obliged to reward India with freedom in return for their contribution, a belief even Mahatma Gandhi shared. That a larger number of men served in the army during the Second War even after such hopes were dashed was attributable mainly to widespread poverty. While many enlisted merely for two square meals a day, some were forcibly recruited through threats of denial of rations to families.

The Indian Army's distinctive performance in the war, despite the inhuman circumstances that forced men to enlist, spoke of the courage and resilience of an average soldier. Independence was not far, and they believed they had a mission to mould

themselves as soldiers.

The Indian armed forces played a silent role in hastening the British departure. They chose to bear a hasty retreat once they found they could no longer take the loyalty of the armed forces for granted, as signalled by fissures in the form of passions raised by the Indian National Army during the War, and the post-War naval mutiny.

It is imperative that our children grow up learning of such intriguing facts about our armed forces and develop an emotional connect with them, rather than see them as constituted of some kind of automatons. Soldiers are human, much like everyone else, except that they take it upon themselves to do a dangerous job, because someone has to do it, or we will have no country.

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Oh, the neighbours

Why life in an apartment complex can sometimes be challenging

SHIVANI REDDY

The quality of your life in an apartment will depend on whether you get a peace-loving neighbour or a touchy and irritable lot. Getting a sociable neighbour has become a matter of absolute luck. In today's life where everyone appears to be busy, we barely get to see each other and keep tabs on others' activities. There's only one soul that knows what's happening around: that one nitpicking and overly intrusive soul, the gossip-monger.

Life in an apartment complex can be challenging at times. It often seems like the whole universe is embodied in one place. Different people with their own ways. To mention a few, we have the rumour-rusher, the deserted player, the lone wolf, the consultant, the herdsman, the occasional befriender, and so on. Then there's you, carrying that one



nodding head with a fake smile to others' words and unnecessary advice. But then, you console yourself that they are one inseparable part of the entertaining

but dysfunctional apartment societies.

Here comes the worst neighbour, the Gossip-monger. You might experience the worst nightmare if you have one. I sometimes feel their life is so disproportionately unbalanced that they are only gratified by small talk and nonsensical chatter. They talk in such an unabashed manner and become so ultra-intrusive that it ultimately irritates you and makes you a hopeless soul.

Those creepy looks, abrupt love and care, tonnes of inappropriate questions and pseudo-detective attitude – mostly you get

ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

that James Bond vibe from them.

The most terrible thing is that they always grin and behave with such poise that you can't even figure out if it is actually them spreading the grapevine. Interfering tirelessly and hammering things up become a part of their daily chores.

Scuttlebutt neighbour can sometimes hit your morale if you are a vulnerable and sensitive soul. For me back then, personally as an independent woman in her 20s and staying away from family with a sister all alone, made things worse. People easily jump to conclusions and say something mean, and don't really understand the repercussions it could cause in an individual's life.

It's true that opinions are made in the mind, and you can't read and erase them all. At least now things to a certain extent are changing but today's societal stigma could be so vast and deep as an ocean, that you have to push greatly and magnanimously to see the end of it.

When you are in the budding young age, such people can truly bother you and drag you down. At first you get bogged down. But in the end you accept to live with this eccentric neighbourhood. Time passes and you learn to take certain things with a pinch of salt. In life, everything that leaves a mark teaches you a lesson and ultimately makes you a better person.

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The missing platform icons

Is anyone concerned about porters?

AARTI MANGAL

During a recent visit to the Old Delhi Railway Station to collect a relative, I was left wondering about the absence of porters from the platforms. The railway station itself was very different from what it was a decade back. There is still the bustle, the rush and the jostling to catch trains, but there are no porters except one or two.

I vividly remembered going to the railway station and noticing two sets of people – one that wore colourful clothes and another that wore crimson uniforms and were called porters. They would walk with the rushing passengers and deposit their luggage in the train in exchange for some money. They were useful also as providers of information to passengers.

The porters who used to be such an essential part of the scene was now missing and I wondered whether I was the only one who was shocked to not find them.

I believe the absence, by and large, of porters from the railway stations is owing to the growing use of trolley bags. People now manage their luggage on their own, and also they do not carry so much luggage when they move. Better technologies have made things compact. This is something that was bound to happen: machines would replace humans as we advance in technologies. But what about those that are being replaced? Do they simply cease to exist? Or if they exist, where are they? Only time will tell.

The idea of increasing the number of trolleys is a welcome step but only if it gets to be used by porters as there is not enough work for them. Instead of taking stock of the missing porters, the given measures are centred on the customers of the Railways. What the porters had demanded were retirement benefits, pension and job opportunities for their wards. However, *ad hoc* welfare measures have been extended to them.

I sometimes wonder: what would happen to them and their families? What are they doing now? Whether they are employed somewhere else or are unable to secure work, they would be cursing technology and the apathy of the Railways. Can anything be done to fix accountability? Certainly when everything is left to the market the costs that the poor will have to bear can be severe sometimes.



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Go ahead, do it

Spontaneous and spur-of-the-moment acts can make your day – and also others'

ANANYA AKHOURI

In a minefield of taboos

The widows' plight: how it could all have been different for them

S. SIVARAMAN

Into a no-plastics era, slowly

Looks like there's a long way to go to see genuine change on this front

SABITA RADHAKRISHNA

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IN BRIEF



Banksy 'snow' pollution mural sold for \$130,000

LONDON A mural by elusive British street artist Banksy depicting a child enjoying falling snow that is in fact pollution has been sold for over \$130,000. From one side, the mural on a concrete block garage in Wales shows a small boy with his tongue out to catch snow that, when viewed from another side, turns out to be ash from an industrial bin.



Sony Music drops U.S. singer R. Kelly

NEW YORK Sony Music has called it quits with embattled singer R. Kelly, ending his contract with subsidiary RCA after a documentary aired accusing him of repeated cases of sexual abuse. In the documentary *Surviving R. Kelly*, several women accused the singer and producer, 52. One woman who sued R. Kelly said he even threatened her. AFP



French actor Deneuve to auction personal clothing

PARIS French actress Catherine Deneuve's clothing collection designed by her friend Yves Saint Laurent will be auctioned in Paris next week. Ms. Deneuve, 75, is auctioning her clothing, including coats and accessories, by the late fashion icon after selling her country home, where she kept a wardrobe full of Saint Laurent items. AFP

Why do people lash out at humanoids?

Attacks on the rise with boys beating a robot in Japan and driverless cars getting smashed in U.S.

JONAH ENGEL BROMWICH

A hitchhiking robot was beheaded in Philadelphia. A security robot was punched to the ground in Silicon Valley. Another security bot, in San Francisco, was covered in a tarp and smeared with barbecue sauce.

Why do people lash out at robots, particularly those that are built to resemble humans? It is a global phenomenon. In a mall in Osaka, Japan, three boys beat a humanoid robot with all their strength. In Moscow, a man attacked a teaching robot named Alantim with a baseball bat, kicking it to the ground, while the robot pleaded for help.

Why do we act this way? Are we secretly terrified that robots will take our jobs? Upend our societies? Control our every move with their ever-expanding capabilities and air of quiet malice?

Robot uprising

Comedian Aristotle Georgeon has found that videos of people aggressing robots are



Friendly or not? Visitors interacting with a security robot at a showroom in Manhattan. ■ NYT

among the most popular he posts on Instagram under the pseudonym Blake Webber. And much of the feedback he gets tends to reflect the fear of robot uprisings.

Mr. Georgeson said that some commenters approve of the robot beatings, "saying we should be doing this so they can never rise up. But there are others who say we shouldn't be doing this because when they" – the robots – "see these videos they're going to be pissed."

But Agnieszka Wykowska,

a cognitive neuroscientist and editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Social Robotics*, said that while human antagonism toward robots has different forms and motivations, it often resembles the ways that humans hurt each other.

Sentient beings

Paradoxically, the tendency to dehumanise robots comes from the instinct to anthropomorphise them. William Santana Li, chief executive of Knightscope, the largest pro-

vider of security robots in the U.S. (two of which were battered in San Francisco), said that while he avoids treating his products as if they were sentient beings, his clients seem unable to help themselves.

"Our clients, a significant majority, end up naming the machines themselves," he said. "There's Holmes and Watson, there's Rosie, there's Steve, there's CB2, there's CX3PO."

Ms. Wykowska said that cruelty that results from this anthropomorphising might reflect "Frankenstein syndrome," because "we are afraid of this thing that we don't really fully understand, because it's a little bit similar to us, but not quite enough."

In his paper *Who Is Afraid of the Humanoid?* Frédéric Kaplan, digital humanities chair at École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland, suggested that Westerners have been taught to see themselves as biologically informed machines –

and perhaps, are unable to separate the idea of humanity from a vision of machines. At every turn, Mr. Kaplan wrote, "we see ourselves in the mirror of the machines that we can build."

This does not explain human destruction of less humanoid machines. Dozens of vigilantes have thrown rocks at driverless cars in Arizona and people have "intentionally" crashed their vehicles into driverless cars.

There may be a solution, Ms. Wykowska said. She described a colleague telling a story about robots being introduced to a kindergarten class. He said that "kids have this tendency of being very brutal to the robot," she recalled.

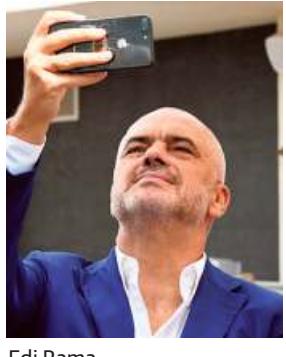
"That went on until the point that the caregiver started giving names to the robots. So the robots were now Andy, Joe and Sally. At that moment, the brutal behaviour stopped. So, it's sort of like giving a name to the robot puts it a little closer to the in-group." ■ NY TIMES

Albanian PM wages political battle online

Edi Rama is known for quirky humour

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TIRANA

Armed with quirky web humour and pop references, Albania's spiky Prime Minister Edi Rama is embracing the art of the Internet meme, waging political battles online across an arsenal of social networks.



Edi Rama
ing the leader of the opposition and waddling across the screen to lay an egg.

Mr. Rama is also active on Twitter and Facebook, where he has more than 1.1 million subscribers, far ahead of the other regional power in the Western Balkans, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic.

According to Iris Luarasi, a political analyst, the Albanian premier uses his online humour as "a double-edged political weapon: to calm the situation and intimidate the opponent."

NASA collaborates with China on moon mission

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The space agencies of the U.S. and China are coordinating efforts on Moon exploration, NASA said as it navigates a strict legal framework aimed at preventing technology transfer to China.

"With the required approval from Congress, NASA has been in discussions with China to explore the possibility of observing a signature of the landing plume of their lunar lander, Chang'e 4, using our @NASAMoon spacecraft's instrument," NASA's associate administrator for the science mission directorate, Thomas Zurbuchen, said on Twitter.

The hope was that NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) could observe the historic touchdown of the Chinese lander on January 3. NASA provided the planned orbit path of LRO to China, but it turned out the spacecraft was not in the right place at the right time.

Auto show models embrace new role in #MeToo era

With the new title of product specialist, they can tick off the features of each car and answer queries

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DETROIT

Every year at the Detroit auto show, good-looking women – and men – are deployed by the carmakers to present their new vehicles.

But with the shockwave created by the #MeToo movement still reverberating across the country, there are fewer auto show models of the human variety – and they are not just pretty faces.

The "product specialists" still have picture-perfect smiles, but they also can tick off the features of each car and prices with such assurance that the iPads they carry for reference can seem merely decorative.

Auto companies are also making sure their fleet of specialists are ethnically and physically diverse. Perched on stilettos, Priscilla Tejeda is working for Toyota. The tall black woman, whose father was a mechanic, is introducing the latest Supra, the Japanese brand's legendary sports car and one of the show's highlights.

Of course, Tejeda has heard dumb sexist remarks in the past – "Do you come with the car?" is a classic, she says.

But otherwise, she says she has not experienced harassment, and has noticed more respectful behaviour towards her since the #MeToo movement began.

"Now, it's more directly about the car," she says.

'Product specialist'
The new title of product specialist for both women and men working the auto show floor is a tiny step forward in an industry that is still male-dominated.

"We know about cars. We're not just a set of pearls, we're not just models," said Emerson Niemchick, a Toyota product specialist whose wife works for its luxury Lexus brand.

"There's obviously a lot of very attractive people doing the auto show but they are trained – they're very knowledgeable about the vehicles," he said. "We get to sell them without selling the actual vehicles. It's fun."

"We're looking for someone that can deliver a scripted presentation, that can come off the platform and engage on the floor as well," said Hedy Popson, president of Production Plus.

U.K. intelligence agency to train girls in cyber skills

Girls aged 12 and 13 will be taught coding and cryptography

REUTERS
LONDON

Britain's national intelligence agency unveiled plans to train about 600 teenage girls in cyber-skills this year in a bid to get more women into the male-dominated field.

The Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) said it would chose girls aged 12 and 13 to take part in four-day courses in coding, cryptography, logic, and protecting networks following a nationwide competition this month.

A spokesman from GCHQ unit, the National Cyber Security Centre, said the aim was to encourage more young people – particularly girls – to work in cyber security with figures showing



the course of a year.

Ali said girls' early exposure to images of male James Bonds and teenage boys coding in their bedrooms reinforced stereotypes about who fitted in the tech sector.

Without role models, girls did not consider entering the field which has tried to address the lack of women by training staff in unconscious bias, highlighting female role models on social media, and deleting gender from CVs, said Vinous Ali, head of policy at techUK that represents more than 900 technology start-ups and businesses.

Ms. Ali said it was also important for the public sector to be a role model for diversity.

only 11% of the global cyber workforce is female.

The initiative was welcomed by the technology industry and viewed as timely with U.K. government figures showing that in 2017 about 43% of businesses and 19% of charities reported a cyber security breach over

New beginning



Survivor's tale: Reshma Khatun, an acid attack victim, and Ashok Kumar, right, married in Delhi on Saturday. In 2014, Reshma was attacked when she spurned a proposal from a man who was already married, leaving her blind for two years. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

100 years on, legacy of Bauhaus design lives on

The imprints of the art school can be found worldwide, from iconic buildings of Tel Aviv to household objects

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WEIMAR

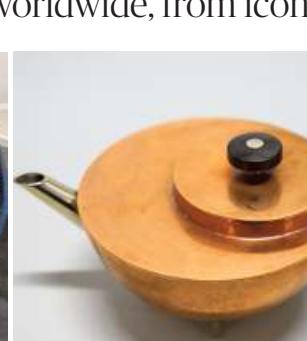
As Bauhaus, the most influential design school of the 20th century, marks its 100th birthday, examples of its keep-it-simple elegance can still be found across the globe.

The movement, based on the "form follows function" principle, revolutionised the practices of artists and artisans during 14 short years of existence before Adolf Hitler ran it out of Germany.

In sending its disciples, including Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer, into exile abroad, the Nazis ironically ensured the school's ideas would germinate the world over.



Elegant creations: (From left) Cradle designed by Peter Keler, teapot by Marianne Brandt, and students of Bauhaus University working on a project in Weimar. ■ AFP



Bauhaus may be best known for its architecture and no city in the world has a larger collection of buildings in its style than Tel Aviv, where it is designated as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. Designed from the 1930s by German Jewish architects fleeing the Nazis, the more than 4,000 remaining "White City" apartment buildings became af-



fordable housing for new arrivals. The "Wassily Chair" was designed by Marcel Breuer in 1926 and was revolutionary for its use of tubular steel and leather.

The Bauhaus was aesthetically radical but also had a reformist vision for society during its rocky tenure in Germany between the world wars.

It was one of the first technical schools to admit women and had rough gender parity among its student body in Weimar, where the university still teaches Bauhaus principles on the historic campus.

While Gropius tried to sign women to weaving and other traditionally "feminine" disciplines, a few trailblazers such as Marianne Brandt also worked in heavier materials. Her 1924 metal teapot had a giant impact for its whimsically angular geometry exuding a sense of harmony.

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SEEN ON
TWITTER

@MokaralaSridevi: The amount of love Rujuta Diwekar is getting has made me full. A woman gave her a laddoo made at home and the entire audience cheered as it was for them. She deserves it all!



@MadrasMobile: It is quite an art to rephrase what the speaker has said into a question at the end of the session



@the_malgudi_gir: This was my first time at the @HinduLitforLife and I regret having missed it for all these years! What an array of great speakers and interesting sessions!



80 sessions, a footfall of around 12,000, 208 people who attended the workshops at the three-day literary extravaganza. Added attraction: food stalls by ID, Madhatter Tea Garden, Tea Trails and Wangs Kitchen.



It's sad that people don't maintain diaries anymore
— Chike Frankie Edozien



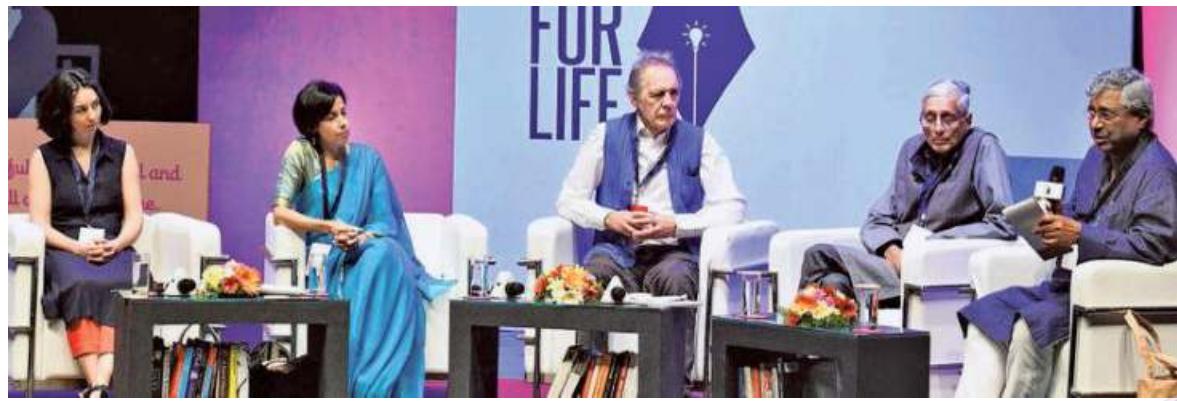
It's a majoritarian privilege to not know about others
— Nazia Erum



Compelling sessions, interesting people, lovely audience. Thanks Chennai and #HinduLitforLife
— AudreyTruschke

The past without filters

'There is a need to rid students of the communal reading of history,' said Audrey Truschke at the session titled 'The Battleground of Indian History'



The battle rages (From left) Audrey Truschke, Ira Mukhoty, John Keay, Rajmohan Gandhi, Aditya Mukherjee. R. RAGU

■ BY SUDARSHANA SRINIVASAN

What kind of history is being taught to our children in schools? Who are the groups left out of historical narratives? Is the subject plagued by too much Euro-centrism? The session, 'The Battleground of Indian History', held on the second day of The Hindu Lit for Life, raised these questions.

The panel was made up of biographer and historian Dr. Rajmohan Gandhi, history-writer John Keay, author Ira Mukhoty, and historian Audrey Truschke, who were in conversation with historian Aditya Mukherjee.

They discussed the distortion of history by political establishments in the country. The speakers expressed worry over confused and distorted histories being taught to school children. Speaking of her experience of teaching history to students who have completed high school in India, Truschke said, "The students need to

unlearn a lot of what they have been taught as part of their preliminary education. There is a need to rid them of the communal reading of history."

Keay pointed out that it isn't just political establishments, but also historians who are guilty of making history inaccessible to people. He said, "Too much history is written by historians for historians." He reminded the audience that history ought to be for everyone.

Gandhi discussed variations of the idea of 'let's take our country back.' He said that it implied a precarious notion that the country belongs more to some groups than to others. Refer-

C Rajmohan Gandhi said that Article 5 does not specify any criterion of gender, sect or caste for citizenship

ring to Article 5 of the Constitution, he pointed out how the Article does not specify any criterion of gender, sect or caste for citizenship. He also drew attention to the fact that the latest Citizenship Amendment Bill is in contradiction to Article 5.

Ira Mukhoty, on her part, said that in all of recorded Indian history (dating back to approximately 5000 BC), the representation of women has been 0.5%. Linking this to contemporary happenings in the country, she remarked how the number of roads in Delhi named after women is "less than half a dozen."

Truschke cautioned against entirely dismissing all European sources of history as biased, saying that would be throwing the baby out with the bathwater. There is the need to look carefully at European sources in order to get different perspectives on a historical event, she said.

The session concluded with the panellists agreeing on the need to view and understand the world objectively.

No Lemony Snicket cocktails please

'To write anything good, one must write several terrible sentences'

■ BY SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS

Parents are shocked and appalled when a man – no matter how handsome and handsomely dressed – talks about topics that are considered dangerous for their children." This deadpan statement from Daniel Handler was met by peals of laughter from a packed auditorium, setting the tone for the rest of the session, 'The Handler of Unfortunate Events', held on the first day of The Hindu Lit for Life.

The author, best known as Lemony Snicket of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, recounted how a "deeply Jewish" upbringing was key to developing his sensibility. "My father fled Germany in 1939 to escape Nazi persecution, and my teacher on hearing this said, 'Your father was very brave'. I repeated that compliment to my father (because he was a certified public account-

ant and I don't think people called him brave very often). He answered, 'Do you think I am braver than the ones who didn't make it?'

Although his books have sold more than 70 million copies, an entire generation was introduced to him through the Netflix show starring Neil Patrick Harris as the nefarious Count Olaf. While the experience of writing episodic pieces was quite different, Handler said that his favourite part of working on season two and three was

that the writer's room was right in his home. Several other interesting nuggets about Handler were revealed over the course of his conversation with Rosella Stephen, Associate Editor, *The Hindu*. For instance, he collects words and phrases – "Did you know mystery and museum are linked?"

Handler believes that to write anything good, one must write several terrible sentences. And he is particular that his books don't have all the answers. "I think literature is a means by which we may ask questions. One of the delights of writing for children and about travelling far from home is that I meet people who've been thinking about these stories and are interested in them. I hope it's because of the questions they offer rather than the answers they give." Judging by the two-hour book signing that followed, his hopes may not be far off the mark.



Ticked Rosella Stephen and Handler. R. RAVINDRAN

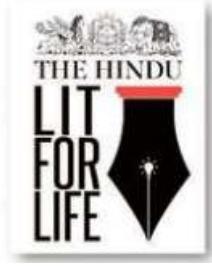


Team effort Anushka Ravishankar, Lisa Brown, Shobha Viswanath, Sandhya Rao. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Speaking images

Is it the text or the illustration that comes first while creating children's picture books?

■ BY SINDHURI NANDHAKUMAR



A book that takes a child's fancy is usually the one replete with colourful images and whimsical text. The session, 'Illustrating Children's Books', held on the first day of The Hindu Lit for Life, had Anushka Ravishankar, Lisa Brown and Shobha Viswanath in conversation with journalist and writer Sandhya Rao. It provided a glimpse into the lives of the teams that bring out the exciting books.

As San Francisco-based illustrator, author and teacher Lisa Brown pointed out, making a picture book for children is a team effort, right from conception to design, editing, and eventually, marketing. The panel reflected the diversity of the process, bringing Brown in conversation with award-winning children's author Anushka Ravishankar (who joked about how even drawing a stick figure was a challenge), and Shobha Viswanath, author and publishing director of the children's book publishing house, Karadi Tales Company.

"Picture books are the first introduction to fine art that children receive – something they might not get again," said Brown, speaking about why the medium is so formative and important. "It's the marriage of text and image."

The process of creating one, as the speakers revealed, can vary. Does text come first or the illustrations? "That is a chicken and egg question," joked Ravishankar, going on to reveal that each of her books was conceptualised in a different manner, sometimes with the text preceding the images, and at other times, vice versa.

Providing an insider's perspective into the process of creation, Vishwanath revealed how important the role of the editor and the design team is in marrying the work (and vision) of the writer and the illustrator.

The speakers also discussed the 'stepmotherly treatment' received by children's book creators within the publishing world, saying that some parents do not wish their children to read books with "too many pictures" as they grow older. "But each time kids return to picture books, they absorb new information," said Ravishankar, adding: "It's a craft, like any other form of writing."

After 1947, we saw Pakistan as an enemy and not a neighbour. There were a lot of people who saw it in a pragmatic sense.

Breakups happen but it's how you make up that matters and we didn't handle it well and hence we're not friends anymore

— Husain Haqqani



Picture Book: Illustration award. It is about Sooraj and his grandma, who love inventing: their latest adventure involves simple machines to make coconut barfi.

Eipe was thrilled to have won. "I am grateful to the organisers for recognising children's literature as an important category," he said. "I hope more such platforms emerge to acknowledge the excellent work that is being done in the children's book space."

And then there was the most exciting one of them all – the fiction award. Venita Coelho's *Boy No. 32* walked away with the honours. Four kids trapped beneath the rubble of a bombed building communicate through a mysterious telepathic code. Except for this streak of magic realism, the rest of this fascinating tale is rooted in the dark underbelly of Mumbai. "Winning an award is always special, but winning an award from *The Hindu* – ah! That is special indeed because that means not popular recognition, but recognition from your peers and readers who truly recognise and appreciate a book," said Coelho.

(With inputs from Archana Subramanian.)



The winners (From left) Rajiv Eipe, Vinayak Varma, Venita Coelho and Mamta Nainy. R. RAGU

Kids in Mumbai's dark underbelly; Indian art history; a young girl's anger; an inventor grandma – the four superb books that won The Hindu Young World-Good Books awards this year

■ BY MADHUVANTI S. KRISHNAN

It was heartening to see the eagerness with which the audience waited for the announcement of the The Hindu Young World-Good Books award, which recognises the best in children's literature published in India. Twelve books were shortlisted

across four categories this year. Mamta Nainy won the award for the best book in the non-fiction category for *A Brush with Indian Art*, a primer on different schools of art and important art movements in Indian history.

"I feel delighted, excited, surprised and grateful – all at the same time. In some ways, the award is a welcome affirmation, both for me and my

publisher, that literature on Indian art is much needed for young readers today. I feel less marginal as a creator and more confident about my craft," she said, after receiving the award.

It is hard to delineate strongly-felt emotions in a manner that can be comprehended by young readers. But that's exactly what Vinayak Varma's *Angru Akku* does.

The book, which got the award in

C I didn't expect my book to win, but it did. I am suitably shocked. I'm moderately amazed, I'm tickled mauve

the Best Picture Book: Story category, is about Akku, a little girl, and her quiet anger. The causes behind it are revealed through a gentle conversation between father and daughter.

Varma was "tickled mauve," when the verdict was out. "I didn't expect my book to win, but it did. I am suitably shocked. I'm moderately amazed," he chuckled. Rajiv Eipe's *Ammachi's Amazing Machines* bagged the Best



Shakespeare is nothing if not masala!
—Jonathan Gil Harris

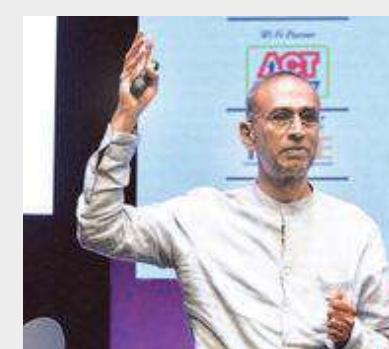


There is a danger we've become too gloomy about the prospects of a democracy
— James Crabtree



The more we weigh ourselves on the scale the more we get away from metabolic fitness
— Rujuta Diwekar

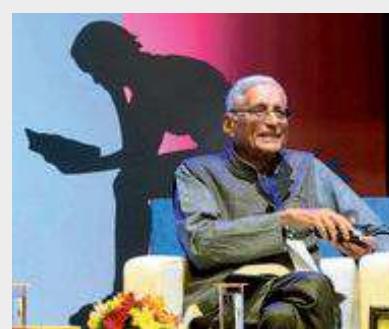
SEEN ON TWITTER



@parakaalan: A fascinating "housefull" session with Nobel Laureate Dr. Venki Ramakrishnan at The Hindu Lit for Life.



@fabwrite: Guess what! We ran into @lemonysnicket @DanielHandler & @lisabrown draws at Mahabalipuram today! #Chennai #LFL2019 @hindulitforlife



@Priyascorner: Rajmohan Gandhi was asked why he had written a book on the South. His reply: I wrote it for the North!



100 crates of mineral water, each containing 2 dozen 500 ml bottles were used last year. That's 2,400 plastic bottles done away with in this year's zero waste Fest. And the 57 signages were made of cloth, hand-drawn by local artists.

'Every single day, we are drenched in desire'

Who owns the narrative of sexuality and gender? What are the boundaries? Who draws them? A session that tried to address some of these issues

■ BY SINDHURI NANDHAKUMAR

Nandini Krishnan is, by her own admission, no stranger to controversy. Her recently published book, *Invisible Men: Inside India's Transmasculine Networks*, has been criticised for its portrayal of the country's transgender community, particularly in Manipur, where protesters alleged that the author has misrepresented their religious beliefs.

In response to a question from moderator and Australian feminist author Susan Hawthorne, Krishnan candidly admitted that the past week had been full of criticism. "I am discovering new controversies about the book," she said.

"The main issue is that a cis woman wrote this story." She was speaking at the session, 'Sexual personae: Overcoming prejudice and misconceptions about sexuality,' held on the final day of The Hindu Lit for Life.

Who owns the narrative of sexuality and gender? In debating this question, Krishnan was joined by academic and author Madhavi Menon, whose most recent book, *Infin-*



Sans borders (From left) Nandini Krishnan, Madhavi Menon and Susan Hawthorne. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Court-ruled medical checks to identify the gender of a person or to determine whether they are transgender are ways of being in a world that is dictated by the bureaucracy

nite Variety: *A History of Desire in India*, delves into the history of queer narratives in India.

"I am a bit allergic to drawing boundaries," said Menon. "And desire becomes the thing that militates against boundaries. Every sin-

gle day, we are drenched in desire, and we should not avert it." The resistance to desire, the speakers agreed, is what prohibits the expression of sexual and gender-based freedom in India. Prompted by Hawthorne to speak about the

decriminalisation of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (which prohibited 'carnal intercourse against the order of nature'), the authors remarked that despite celebrating the success of the 2018 Supreme Court ruling, there is still a lot to be done to give sexual minorities more freedom of expression. Court-ruled medical checks to identify the gender of a person or to determine whether they are transgender, are, Menon said, ways of being in a world that is dictated by the bureaucracy.

In speaking about gender and sexuality, Menon suggested that queer institutions and initiatives from other countries (largely of the West), might not be as relevant to Indian culture (even if they are progressive and admirable efforts on their own merit).

She cited pride parades as an example. Shame – which is what pride marches defiantly counter – is not the overarching experience of just the queer community in India, she said. "In India, it is a sentiment associated with heteronormative culture," where sexuality between a man and woman is often stigmatised.

We hope to reach people impacted by misinformation. We want to ensure social media doesn't become a source of violence
— Pratik Sinha



ILLUSTRATION: V. SRIRAM

It could be fear, greed or anything but what is worrisome is the poverty of investigative journalism on key issues. TV channels do a lot of investigations - but only stings. We have a very draconian system
— Arun Shourie



'It includes looking into one's self'

Feminism insists that we take notice of things and speak up, said the panellists of the session 'Why We Should All be Feminists'

■ BY SUSAN JOE PHILIP

The hall was packed for the session 'Why We Should All be Feminists', held on the second day of The Hindu Lit for Life. The panellists included authors Sumana Roy, Sharanya Manivannan, Manjula Padmanabhan and Madhavi Menon. They were in conversation with Vaishna Roy, as-sociate editor, *The Hindu*.

Padmanabhan kickstarted the session by declaring that she is not a feminist. "I don't have an anti-view towards feminism. We should not all be feminist in the same way that I believe that we should not all be Hindus or Christians or Marxists," She said that she chose generalism or humanism over feminism.

Sumana Roy found it sadly ironic that the panel was entirely made up of women.

Menon commented that while everyone aspired to be equal, some of us were more advantaged or happier than others. To say that one is a humanist allows us to erase those lines of discrimination in ways that are problematic.



Looking in (From left) Sharanya Manivannan, Madhavi Menon, Vaishna Roy, Sumana Roy and Manjula Padmanabhan. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

The power of feminism is that it does not allow us to get away with being blind. It insists that we take notice of things and speak up.

Modern feminism is more inclusive, said Manivannan: "It includes words like compassion and empathy and looking into one's self. It is still evolving."

Vaishna Roy commented that the fourth wave of feminism in the 2000s happened predominantly through social media movements like #MeToo.

"For me #MeToo is important as it makes the battle of feminism visi-

ble in a certain way which makes it impossible to ignore some of the things that women are facing on a day-to-day basis," she said.

While Sumana Roy agreed, she asked, "#MeToo belongs to the educated sector. How can we bring a change in the unorganised sector?" Manivannan answered that we should change our own eco-system, including our home and office. "Change the way you treat your employees," she said.

When the Sabarimala issue came up, Padmanabhan said, "I do not really think about it. If someone

does not want me to enter a temple, I do not want go to that temple. I realise that my attitude is not helpful for those who really believe."

The session ended with Manivannan speaking about Kodhai, the protagonist of her book, *The Queen of Jasmine Country*. "Kodhai is someone who is at odds with her society. She is educated and not married off at a young age. These empowering things set her apart from the rest. She lived in the ninth century. The feminism in this book does not necessarily have to fit into the radical politics of today."

Please don't catch them young

'We think children are too young to channel hatred. We are wrong'

■ BY CHITRA SWAMINATHAN

I delivered my daughter in February 2014, at the peak of the national elections. When I first held her in my hands and looked at her, fear clutched at my heart. As someone who has never worn her religious identity on her sleeve, has travelled around the world and always done what she wanted to, I suddenly felt the need to protect my child. And I decided not to give her a Muslim-sounding name," said Nazia Erum, author of the hard-hitting *Mothering a Muslim*.

In conversation with translator Arunava Sinha on the first day of The Hindu Lit for Life, Erum discussed her book for which she has travelled to 12 cities and spoken to more than 200 Muslim mothers and children. The book is a disturbing account of how faith has become a topic of casual discussion and dispute among children in some of India's most reputed schools.

"The knowledge of being the other was always there but there wasn't so much hatred. I have grown up with films such as *Amar Akbar Anthony*, Doordarshan playing



In conversation Nazia Erum R. RAVINDRAN

'Ek chidiya aneka chidiya' and celebrating Hindu festivals. The changing milieu around us is extremely worrying," she said. When Erum set out to write the book, many people, including her cousin, felt that the situation is not so bad after all. "We are constantly in denial. We still don't want to have a conversation on sex, homophobia, Islamophobia...What do you do when you hear a little child telling a classmate, 'Yes, I am Muslim, but I don't eat beef'; or when a Muslim boy in Bhopal, after being physically assaulted by a classmate, decides to befriend only Muslim children and takes to playing violent video

games," asked Erum. The abuse and fear, she felt, have become rampant, taking over classrooms, playgrounds and houses. "It's alarming, how we have allowed things to happen. We think children are too young to channelise hatred. We are wrong."

When asked by Sinha whether the secular past that she often refers to could have been just a façade, Erum said, "At least adults then reprimanded children for abusive behaviour. The mother of a Muslim boy told me her son's friend called him a terrorist and when she complained to his mother, she said, 'Because your son called him fat'. When a child is being pushed into a corner for his/her identity, I don't know where we are heading as a society."

The book also talks about the changes within the Muslim community and traces the reasons behind them. "From how we were when I was growing up to what we are now, I can perceive the changes. We have even stopped laughing at ourselves, which we did a lot earlier. We wear nationalism on our sleeve for the world and Islamism for the community. It's a tough balancing act," said Erum.

Setting the record straight

'A historian never judges, he defers judgement'

■ BY SURYA PRAPHULLA KUMAR

When a book on a man as colourful and controversial as Alexander Haughton Campbell Gardner is the subject of a session, a bit of drama is to be expected. But more on that later.

In a conversation with academic Shiv Visvanathan in a session titled 'The Tartan Turban: In Search of Alexander Gardner', renowned historian John Keay admitted that "writing your first biography on a man who died 150 years ago may seem a bit perverse."

But the main reason why biographers have fought shy of Gardner – a Scots-American and hired gun who "roamed the deserts of Turkistan", explored the western Himalayas, fought in Afghanistan and married an Afghan princess – is because what is known about him is so suspect. "Most of his stories are so outrageously improba-

ble as to be unbelievable. His critics have dismissed him as a plagiarist, a fantasist and a downright liar," Keay said, adding that Gardner's reputation plummeted quickly, and the few surviving copies of his memoirs were ousted from library shelves reserved for history and re-shelved beside books of fiction.

Keay has set this right with his 324-page biography, published by Kashi House, a London-based not-for-profit publisher of books on Sikh and Punjabi heritage. It is an exhaustive look at the maverick "who witnessed the death of the Sikh empire". When Visvanathan tried to pin the author down on why he kept the narrative so "antiseptic", it started a back-and-forth – about unbiased writing, facts, and more. Keay's final comment, which he later scrawled on books at the signing booth, said it best: 'A historian never judges, he defers judgement.'

Exhaustive look John Keay (left) and Shiv Visvanathan. R. RAGU

SEEN ON
TWITTER

@abdullah71: Good Bye Chennai! 3 amazingly blissful days. Great discussions. Wonderful audience. Thank you very much HinduLitforLife



@rblaaze: 47 first-time writers, rappers and poets between the ages of 7-16... their first Rap workshop at the prestigious Hindu Lit Fest 2019!



@jackerhack: Gun toting cops have arrived for the next panel featuring @AudreyTruschke, @mukhoty. Impressed!



@kanishkaab: VVS answers mostly with a straight bat. VVS not devious #lfl2019



1,000
vehicles came in during the morning peak hours of the Fest, of which nearly 500 were single-passenger cars (self driven or driver + 1). So, the Fest decided to reward anyone who took public transport.



I brought out my A game when the team required it – V.V.S. Laxman



When I was in jail, I decided. I've been given a life, I might as well make the best of it. So I learned to read and write. All the way from the 'aa's and the 'ee's.. – Manoranjan Byapari



I've given 50 years of my life for writing and given up many things because I didn't want writing to be the road not taken in my life – Neelum Saran Gour

Cities in the head

V. Sriram, Abdullah Khan, Neelum Saran Gour and Anjum Hasan spoke about books transporting you to places you've never been



Spaces Why do authors write eloquently about their own cities? B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

■ BY SOMA BASU

An hour before she was announced the winner of The Hindu Prize 2018 for Fiction, Neelum Saran Gour was in a session titled 'City Lights', with historian V. Sriram and authors Anjum Hasan and Abdullah Khan, on the second day of The Hindu Lit for Life. They discussed why authors write eloquently about their own cities.

"Allahabad, where I was born, is a visible city in history, but I have shared its invisibilities with a keen sense of place in 13 of my books," Gour said, describing herself as a "24 carat Allahabadi". Her novel, *Requiem in Raga Janki*, which won her the award, weaves together the history of Allahabad and Hindustani classical music to create an enthralling portrait of a 19th-century courtesan and singer, Janki Bai Ilahabadi.

"My city of birth and my work are my enduring world. People and the events in their lives reverberate in the places associated with them and that interests me," she said, talking of yet another of her recent books, *Three Rivers and a Tree: The Story of Allahabad University*. She has made a U.G.C. commissioned book interesting by showing the impact of national history on campus and narrating anec-

dotes about people who shaped the institution – for instance, the vice-chancellor, Ganganath Jha, who rode a bullock cart to the university daily in the 1920s.

It is the responsibility of writers to capture a city in a way that it comes alive in the minds of readers. As Sriram said, even if readers haven't visited a city, they should feel they know it after reading a novel. The works of the three speakers resonate with a sense of the places they are describing, underlining how the imaginative creation of ambience is as essential to good writing as a logical mind to connect the details.

There is certainly a relation between the two, felt Abdullah Khan, the Mumbai-based banker and author of *Patna Blues*, who grooved towards literature after discovering George Orwell was born in his town, Motihari, in Bihar. "One of the oldest cities in the country, Patna struggles forever, in a way," he said. He has brought this out

Each city has its mythology, gossip and rumours that affect individual experiences

through his story of a lower-middle class family making enormous sacrifices to get their son into the IAS. The son doesn't make it, but the family's aspirations tell us something about the character of the city, where every second family is training their child to become a bureaucrat.

You are transported to a place while reading about it, said Gour, who began to see Allahabad University as a factory for generating *sarkari babus* while researching its history.

Anjum Hasan talked about her first novel, *Lunatic in my Head*, where, incidentally, one of the characters is a young civil services aspirant stuck in the small town of Shillong. Shillong, humming with gossip and replete with idiosyncrasies, is as much a character in its own right. "Indian cities have become subjects of interest and can be presented differently as the city where you are born, grew up, work and live, the city you see outside your window or as one the media paints. There are tensions, contradictions, migration, alienation and a sense of freedom too. Each city has its mythology, gossip and rumours that affect every individual's experiences. When you observe, understand and write about it, the city becomes a character on its own in the story," she said.

"The cities may be distinctive, but their characteristics often apply to cities all over India," said Khan.

The authors said they would love to write about other cities too. Hasan, who grew up in Shillong and now lives in Bengaluru, said she would like to take on the challenge of writing about a city she has never lived in. Gour wants to remove the trappings of a location or language in her next book and do a threadbare storytelling. Khan's next book has chapters on Los Angeles, which he has never visited. "Research leads you to interesting facts and you wouldn't know about a place till you write about it," he said.

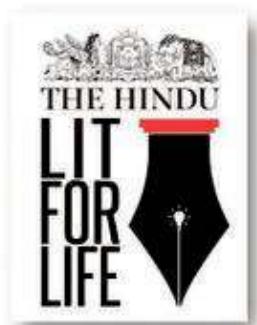


ILLUSTRATION: V. SRIRAM

My aim was not to correct any misrepresentations of the present, but to recall the past as honestly as possible – Rajmohan Gandhi

The men in white

Cooking in the age of #foodporn and the travelling gourmet

■ BY PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

A message to my young self would be to travel more," said London-based chef Alfred Prasad (the youngest Indian chef to win his restaurant Tamarind a Michelin star), who, along with chefs Vikramjit Roy (corporate chef for White Hat Hospitality) and Thomas

Zacharias (executive chef and partner, Bombay Canteen in Mumbai, and social media influencer), was part of a panel titled 'Food Safari: The Travelling Chefs', moderated by Shonali Muthalay, Sr. Deputy Editor, *The Hindu*.

"My first food trip was an excursion across France, Italy and Spain, across 36 towns and cities," said Zacharias. "As I travelled, I realised how little I had explored

India. After my first trip across the country, I realised how much there was to explore. I could do this all my life and still

not exhaust the sheer diversity of culture and cuisine in India."

Exploring helps these men in white go deep into cultures and discover new produces. "I was in Nagaland where I saw three dozen vegetables that I had never seen before," said Zacharias. He spoke of a variety of crunchy cucumber and tiny potatoes called *badami* that look like almond. And in Majuli (Assam), he had tried an "intense" chutney made of river fish burnt and stuffed in bamboo and fermented for two years.

Prasad felt that despite India being a farming land, we don't take enough pride in the produce. "I feel like crying sometimes when I see the quality of *dhania* here," he said.

Roy said this is why it is important to bridge the gap between a chef and a farmer. "We are never taught about farming or soil. We don't know the soil and the farmers don't know what we are cooking."

The session also touched upon sourcing ingredients, the supply chain, favourite dishes, and the best potato for French fries: *phadai* potatoes.

Across an alternative universe

Indian writers in English are creating a composite language, said the novelists in the session titled 'Tellers of Tales'

■ BY PETER GRIFFIN

Three novelists got together to converse with *The Hindu*'s ideas editor, Mini Kapoor, about the story-teller's craft, in a session titled 'Tellers of Tales' held on the second day of The Hindu Lit for Life. The first question that came up concerned why they chose to take up novel-writing.

Sumana Roy, author, most recently, of *Missing*, said that becoming a literary novelist was "Not like becoming an IAS officer; your parents don't tell you to do it. You just become one." Roy said that the idea for her last book came to her from hearing carpenters chat while working at her home in Siliguri: their version of events around them was very different from what she was hearing on television news channels. An acclaimed poet, she initially began by trying to tell

the story in poetry: "But it needed more directness than what is afforded by the elliptical nature of verse." A trigger for her, she said, was inequality: in some ways, her writing stems from having read almost nothing about her hometown in fiction and a desire to "draw attention to one's part of the world."

Abdullah Khan, screenwriter and banker, whose debut novel *Patna Blues* was released in late 2018, said that when he was seven, his father gave him

a story book: he told his father that some day, he too would write a book. But, Khan said laughing, it was only the day when Arundhati Roy won the Booker that he actually started writing. It took 20 more years for his book to appear in print.

Amitabha Bagchi, author of *Half the Night is Gone*, which was shortlisted for both the JCB Prize and The Hindu Prize for Fiction, said that he had never had any confusion about genre. After hav-

ing written seven or eight short stories, he realised they were not quite short stories. What he wanted was, without going to the lengths someone like Tolkien had, "recast the world and live in it. To escape into an alternative world not too different from the one we live in. A novel meant that this would carry on for a bit. Through language, you can create a world."

"The Indian novelist in English is first a translator," Roy said, talking about telling the story of small-town India and its cultural and linguistic universe in a book in English. *Missing*, she said, "is a Bangla novel in English."

Khan spoke of writing about worlds and realities different from his own, saying he doesn't always have to eat just litti: "If I want pizza, why should I go back to biryani?"

Bagchi said he envies those who wrote in Indian regional languages because of the cultural continuity and history they get to inhabit: "English must work harder for legitimacy."

Even so, Indian writers in English are no longer writing an English that is received from somewhere else. At the same time, writing in English has a certain power, and "There is no shame in admitting I want that," Bagchi said.

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Storytellers Mini Kapoor, Amitabha Bagchi, Abdullah Khan and Sumana Roy. R. RAGU

Poem is not a damsel'

Two poets from the margins described how they had given themselves up to poetry, to deal with difficult emotions that would otherwise find no other expression

■ BY PANKAJA SRINIVASAN

Two young poets came together at a session titled 'Words of Now, Words of Memory: Poetry of Disappearing Landscapes,' on the second day of The Hindu Lit for Life. Nighat Sahiba, a Kashmiri, and Jacinta Kerketta, an adivasi from Jharkhand, read out from their verse that reflected the pains of being less than equal. They hoped their poetry would keep their voices from disappearing altogether.

Saying that there is a 600-year-old legacy of recorded Kashmiri literature, Sahiba (winner of Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2017) rued that neither too many readers nor writers remained in the language today. "It is as if the language has been abandoned by its own people," she said. Sahiba comes from a conservative family: she spoke of how often she had to hide her love poems from her brothers since they might think she was writing them for a man!

On a more serious note, she also said

that there was no escaping patriarchy from where she came from. Praise for her work is reluctantly given. "I usually get, 'If this is your poem, it is good,'" she said with a laugh. She read out from a translation of her poem, 'Forward', that describes what a poem is and is not. She writes, "Poem is not a damsel/

That will accept/each of your decree/unquestionably! I often feel that English is not made for poetry," Sahiba said, before reading out the original poem in mellifluous Kashmiri that sounded like pure music.

For Kerketta, poetry has been an expression of her struggle for survival.

She writes mostly in Hindi and has been translated into many languages. Born into the Oraon Adivasi community of West Singhbhum district, Kerketta prefers to write in Hindi or English because she feels she can reach out to more people.

She became a journalist to give voice to the Adivasis as she felt that the reporting on them biased and uninformed. She soon realised that 'factual reporting' had no space for deeper feelings. "Where will all the emotions go," she asked and gave herself up to poetry.

Kerketta read her powerful poem 'The River, the Mountain and the Bazaar': "We're here at the bazaar!/ What would you like to buy, the shopkeeper asked/Brother, a little rain, a handful wet earth/ A bottle of river, and that mountain preserved/ There, hanging on the wall, a piece of nature as well/ And why is the rain so dear, pray tell? She said she would write now in her own language, if only to encourage women from her community to do the same.

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MAGAZINE



Four women explore the idea of the photographer as collector at the Serendipity festival

page 4

From the moraines of the Kerala floods have emerged stunning terracotta figurines

page 3

In the world's largest open-air theatre, stories of Krishna and Kansa are magically retold

page 6

<https://t.me/TowardsTomorrow>



Image and experience Visitors walk past 'It's my Biennale' posters in Fort Kochi; (below) Indonesian artist Heri Dono's installation 'Smiling Angels From the Sky' in Pepper House. THULASI KAKKAT & NYT

BY SHWETHA E GEORGE

I am standing on a cobbled pavement that goes on forever. All around me are colonial buildings, and centuries-old churches with Portuguese, Dutch and English influences. The absence of sound strikes me. It is almost eerie. I hear neither man nor machine. Everybody walking, eating, hawking or loitering observes a code of conduct, a special decorum. This can't be the loud, brash, opinionated, political Kerala, surely? But it is. This is Fort Kochi – the venue of the world's longest duration contemporary art festival, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale.

"Art is in the air," says Edgar Pinto, owner of Old Harbour Hotel and Kashi Art Gallery. He should know. A serious art aficionado and a Fort Kochite himself, Pinto acquired in 2006 the 300-year-old Harbour building with its lime-washed walls, high ceilings, tile roof and wooden flooring, and restored it to its current beautiful state. Today, every room has paintings, bronze sculptures and stone installations from his own private collection, chosen thematically by designer Karl Damschen and curator Tanya Abraham.

"Fort Kochi carries with it an enigma of antiquity and history," says Abraham, also the author of *Fort Kochi: History and Untold Stories*. "The space that houses art is as important as the art itself. Imagine a centuries-old spice godown showcasing art and installations? The very thought is alluring!" Indeed, what better canvas for an art event than royal court buildings, renovated warehouses, 19th century English company quarters and Dutch bungalows?

Myriad languages

The communities that have been living here – from the Jewish and Anglo-Indian to Tamilians and Pattans, speaking a myriad languages and dialects – also add to that inimitable flavour of Fort Kochi.

When the Kochi Muziris Biennale began in 2012, the entire neighbourhood came forward to support it with time, money and effort.

For the German-Spanish couple Joerg Drexsel and Txuku Solana, owners of The Malabar House, Biennale was their one chance to pay it back to a town that "adopted them like a sponge" when they first arrived here in 1994. The Malabar House conducts a programme called Beyond Malabar where local artists showcase their work at 'Passage Malabar,' a corridor that doubles up as an artisan deli and bakery.

All across and inside its open spaces, Purity, a 14-room award-winning boutique hotel under The Malabar umbrella, shows works of local artists Reghunandan Nair and Bhagyanath – paintings, sculptures and artworks – that Drexsel bought for exorbitant prices at the Biennale. Not that there weren't other national and international artists to choose

ART HOLDS THE FORT

How a sleepy little town is reinvented every two years when its warehouses, bungalows and streets are taken over by the art world



from, but Drexsel did what any real patron of the arts would do – encourage local talent.

Two women artists

CGH's David Hall gallery, a historical building, is a live, breathing space for art lovers throughout the year – but come Biennale, the gallery is rented out by artists. This year it is hosting the works of two women artists – Zanele Muholi and Vanessa Baird. Kashi Art Gallery has two collateral events this year for the Biennale. One is 'Red Crown, Green Parrot' which remembers the history of the Malabar Jews living in the Jew Town, Mattancherry. The other is an all-woman exhibition about concerns of a social and transitional nature of all that is 'unsaid, lost and forgotten.'

"How can we possibly not be open to an event like this?" asks Pinto. "Every one of us should be proud and grateful to have some of the world's greatest artists come to our very doorstep."

And the business is brisk. "Our busiest time is when the Biennale kicks off," says

Manoj Nair, General Manager, Hotel Brunton Boatyard. The high-end property had a near 100% occupancy rate for the first few days of the festival that began December 12.

"It wasn't just the rooms but our F&B bookings also hit the roof those four days. Then we had corporate events hosted by Biennale sponsors, also an everyday affair. Some of these events include a guided day tour of the venues with a cocktail dinner." Auctioneers from Mumbai's Christie's visit too. This year, the hotel's celebrity guests included the French ambassador to India, Alexandre Ziegler, and his daughter.

The Biennale generally sees a lull after Christmas and New Year, but the season

C When the Biennale began in 2012, the entire neighbourhood came forward to support it with time, money and effort

picks up again in the second week of January. Every hotel, high-end or regular, prepares its personnel to host Biennale clientele. "We keep maps on the counter, give them post-card versions of art collections, and keep updating the information on our notice boards," says Nair.

Buzzing with activity

Events are organised everyday at the Biennale Pavilion at Cabral Yard. There are dance and music performances and interactive sessions with artists and art workshops. The place is buzzing.

It's not just the hotel owners and home-stay entrepreneurs, but vendors and auto-drivers too who look forward to the Biennale.

I count 16 vendors outside the Cochin Club. "We have no idea about the art or artists," says one of the 16 vendors I see outside the Cochin Club, too shy to share his name. "Once I saw a guy pick up all the plastic bottles in the area and make music from it. I thought that was smart. But we are happy the Biennale has come to our town! Living within a 2 km radius

of the venue, Fort Kochi locals earn ₹800 to ₹100 per day selling everything from pyjamas and palazzos to kurtis, kaftans, handicrafts and curios not just to foreign tourists but also to Indian visitors. Between mid-January and early February, shops get business from the passengers who get off the luxury cruise ships that dock at Fort Kochi harbour as well. Now, businesses are looking forward to the period between mid-February and March 29, the last day of the Biennale.

Flood havoc

The floods last year had dealt all these small shops and business a sharp blow. "If it weren't for the Biennale, 2018 would have been the worst year in our lives!" a vendor tells me. "Last year, there was also the Nipah scare, and then the floods. Even the domestic tourists who should have come in October for Pooja and Diwali stayed away from Kerala."

An auto driver tells me: "If you ask us who the curator this year is, we don't have a clue. But we do know which of the venues are most popular, which ones are a hit or a miss, where to get authentic Kerala food, and where the stay is cheap."

No wonder then that the Kochi Biennale is now called the People's Biennale: be it discounts, concessions, freebies or simply going that extra mile, the tourism machinery is geared to receive its art-loving guests.

Influencing the future

Saji Joseph, CEO of Malabar House, recalls his first experience in 2016 as the official F&B partner. The venue was Aspin Wall, the biggest venue, and the most visited. Cooking was not allowed. "So we had to cook here at the restaurant kitchen, pack it, seal it and transport it to a makeshift café there, catering to hundreds of people every day for three months."

The Biennale is not all about money. "Culturally, the Biennale is going to have a tremendous influence on our future generations, their thoughts and their lives," says Abraham.

There's another happy fallout. Fort Kochi heritage buildings can no longer be neglected. Dilapidated, run-down or neglected, many of them are now being renovated, restored and preserved to serve a new role as dramatic show places for international art.

"What makes any tourist destination great today?" asks Saji, veteran in business re-engineering and change management. "It is an event." Like the film festivals for Berlin or Cannes, for Fort Kochi it's the Biennale.

And as for Fort Kochi, the giant show has injected into a sleepy little town a verve and vibrancy that both visitors and locals love. And every two years the historical site is reborn as an art town.

The Kottayam-based writer lives in a coffee plantation.

Turning points

Cafes, former godowns and colonial homes are refashioned as exhibition spaces at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale.

ASPIN WALL HOUSE

A large sea-facing property

CABRAL YARD

Once had a hydraulic press for coir yarn

DURBAR HALL

Built in the mid-19th century by the Maharaja of Cochin

KASHI ART CAFE

An old Dutch property converted into a cafe

KASHI TOWN CAFE

Once a family home in the heart of Fort Kochi

ANAND WAREHOUSE

Previously owned by Gujarati families

MAP PROJECT SPACE

Once served as a warehouse to store spices

PEPPER HOUSE

Has two godowns and now houses a cafe and gallery

TKM WAREHOUSE

The building is part of a working dock

DAVID HALL

Built around 1695 by the Dutch East India Company

60 MINUTES: WITH THE CASTELESS COLLECTIVE

'Our music is about raw primal instinct'

This band of youngsters from North Chennai is adding flair and style to the funeral music form of Gana

BY T.M. KRISHNA

Ever since its first performance last January, The Casteless Collective (TCC) has emerged as the most talked about independent music band in Chennai. Not only has it impressed with its no-holds-barred music but also set out on an artistic-political path that is unchartered. Its music is rooted in the sounds of Chennai's Dalit community, especially those who live in North Chennai. Singing the musical form Gana that has its origins in funeral music, accompanied by percussions that are socially associated with the rhythms of the graveyard, they have posed numerous aesthetic, social and political questions to the art world. (The band members are Tenma, leader and music producer, singers Muthu, Bala Chandar, Isaivani, Arivu and Chellamuthu, Dharani (dholak), Sarath (satti), Gautham (katta molam), Nandan (parai and tavil), Manu (drums) and Sahir (guitar).) Excerpts from an interview:

How did TCC happen?

■ Tenma: I come from the much stereotyped and stigmatised North Chennai. I began reading Periyar when I was 20 but it was only when I was older that I began expressing myself. I had started the Madras Indie Collective and was trying to bring musicians together. It was at that time that I received a call from Neelam, the organisation spearheaded by Pa. Ranjith, enquiring if I was willing to work with a bunch of Gana singers. Ranjith and I met the very next day and spoke for over an hour, the conversation was political, very little about music. Within a week or so, we put out an audition call and about 150 aspirants came in. Along with their musical proviso, it was the conversations that mattered, simply because we were embarking on a socio-musical-political journey. We were 19 when we began working together. But a band is not a project, it is a family, one that embraces and fearlessly and fiercely argues. It took while, but one day everything exploded, the inhibitions vanished and we realised that we had become a band, a unit, a family.

Why the name The Casteless Collective?

■ Tenma: The name is from 19th century anti-caste activist and writer C. Iyothee Thass's usage *jaathi illadha Tamizhargal*. The fundamental problem of Indian society is caste which masks itself behind other structures such as class. We are demanding the destruction of the caste system and the band is enabling this idea.

Arivu: We challenge the comfort level of people of and in caste and trigger a discussion. Those with caste privilege will never speak about caste because they have never felt the pain. Caste is an access card. Only when there is rejection will the questioning appear. We have moved way ahead from the times when we did nothing, giving up our rights. We are now saying caste must be eliminated.

If I may add, the name has another side to it. The casteless state is usually expressed by those of caste

who have never experienced caste oppression. But now by proclaiming casteless-ness, you are reimagining the term and taking control over the notion of being casteless. Are Gana and the music of the Dalits stigmatised in society? And has TCC changed people's view?

■ Gautam: When I used to go play at funerals, I couldn't even keep my molam in front of a tea shop. They would demand that I remove the instrument. I have never understood this. People dance with joy when we play at funerals, but treat our art as an untouchable.

Sarath: In temples, it is the raja-vad-

hyam that is used to worship the goddess, and also to placate her when she is angry. But people still hold on to negative perceptions. I once went for a studio recording. I kept the satti (instrument) on the ground floor. Soon people gathered and asked me to take it away and rudely enquired if I wished for death in their homes. When a song of mine became successful and I went back to the same studio, I was recognised and my work lauded. I asked them how it was fair to enjoy the music but stigmatise my instrument. "But you use it at funerals," they said. I told them it was the same instrument which created the art – the music they loved so much – on the silver screen.

Arivu: There is a huge difference between someone claiming to be a Carnatic singer versus a Gana singer – that in itself tells a story. But today there is a minor shift. And the credit for this change goes to singers like Gana Pazhani and in today's context, TCC too. The 90s' generation of Gana singers also reduced its stature by writing songs that contained abusive lyrics and were sexist in nature.

Balachander: Earlier, the singers would sit on the floor. Then they would stand like a rock and sing. But I began dancing while singing, I moved my bo-

dy, broke it away from physical rigidity. I believe that emotions must come from the body, starting with our legs, and consume us entirely. It is music only when your body sings.

I can say without a doubt that TCC has given Gana respectability. Gana is like an oppressed caste because it comes from those people. And hence when we performed on that big stage it was a victory for me.

Muthu (singer): I cried on the day of our first performance. I was used to singing only at deaths and other minor life events, but now we had a huge platform with thousands watching us. It was overwhelming.

How does one make sure that this challenge that TCC has thrown at larger society does not remain trapped within the identity of the collective, that it becomes an unfettered socio-aesthetic movement?

Caste is an access card. Only when there is rejection will the questioning appear

■ Arivu: But this is bound to happen. We are creating a counter culture and those in the forefront will receive the limelight. This has to move to the next stage of universal respect and recognition.

Tenma: That is the only thing I like about the Carnatic music community. You have institutionalised the music so well that it transcends individual artistry within the form and has become a larger than life image.

But that is because we have the social capital and privilege to do it.

■ Tenma: As of now, we are dealing with our own ecosystem, understanding it, figuring out who inhabits this space.

The biggest problem with Gana is that it is stuck in North Chennai. When TCC band members like Manu, Nandan, and Arivu who do not belong to North Chennai get involved in this art form, perceptions change, angles shift.

Isaivani, you are the only women in the band, right?

■ Isaivani (singer): Yes! And I am proud to be part of the band. Our thoughts are completely aligned. My family was initially hesitant, but after meeting the team, they realised this was an important opportunity. Today many girls are singing Gana after seeing me, and the band should take in more women.

Tenma: We have put out an open call for female musicians. We are very conscious of patriarchy and make sure that does not crop up within TCC. But not many women/girls are coming forward to be part of TCC. We are a very edgy band, we wear our politics on our sleeve and that probably makes it difficult. Our music is about raw primal instinct.

Is it a conservative mindset that is stopping women? And do aspiring members need to be overtly political?

■ Arivu: It is enough if they are not normalising patriarchy and castes.

The body of a woman is the very institution of caste. So when a woman sings against caste, society finds it very difficult to accept. People are angered by the presence of a woman in this band. The man is so used to dominating, controlling and using the woman to endorse his own patriarchy and casteism that he is unable to accept her strong voice. He cannot accept that he needs to come down and he does not want the equality that it brings.

What about sexuality?

■ Tenma: We talk about sexual fluidity in our songs. Sexuality is very normal. We speak of freedom and liberation and within that are the desires of the individual.

Has Tamil cinema bastardised Gana by reducing it to an item number?

■ Balachander: The Gana in cinema is what it is because we have to do what they demand.

Tenma: Gana is the easiest way to convey something because it does not use metaphors, it is direct and hence has been exploited. Cinema has vulgarised it and everyone is at fault – lyricists, music directors, film directors and playback singers. The caste hierarchy within the industry has also played a role. Even the North Chennai dialect in Gana has been stripped of nuance by the film world.

The Casteless Collective will perform on Besant Nagar beach at 6.30 p.m. on January 27 as part of Chennai Kalai Theru Vizha.

The writer is a rebel, whether against cultural conventions or injustice or just bad tea.

Uncharted path The Casteless Collective. R. RAVINDRAN



INSIDE INDIA

Once upon a canvas

Experience the *Ramayana* as told by Raghupathi Bhat in his exquisite miniature cards and gigantic chalk drawings

BY JUNE GAUR

Dressed in the traditional white *panche*, or *dhoti*, paired with a salmon pink *kurta* and *angavastram*, artist Raghupathi Bhat is intently painting the scene of King Dasharath's *putra kameshti yagna* (ritual sacrifice for a son) when I meet him in his modest studio on the leafy road to Chamundi Hill in Mysuru. He makes a few final strokes in chalk on the terracotta background and the scene comes magically to life: Dasharath, placed at the centre, towers above his entourage, who respectfully bow to him. This huge canvas, measuring 6'x4', is part of Bhat's latest series of 12 back-to-back line drawings on six wooden boards, each depicting a scene from the *Ramayana*.

These out-sized chalk drawings are a first for the artist, who is known for his exquisite *Ramayana* miniatures on tiny 4"x3" cards. Bhat had created 60 of these for the V&A some 30 years back and the series remains the *pièce de résistance* of his oeuvre.

White lines

The present series of chalk drawings is expected to have a brief life. But the size of the frames gave Bhat the space to make extensive use of folk art, to which he is partial. The panels accompanied the theatrical adaptation of Kuvempu's *Sri Ramayana Darshanam*, which was staged at Mysuru and Bengaluru in No-

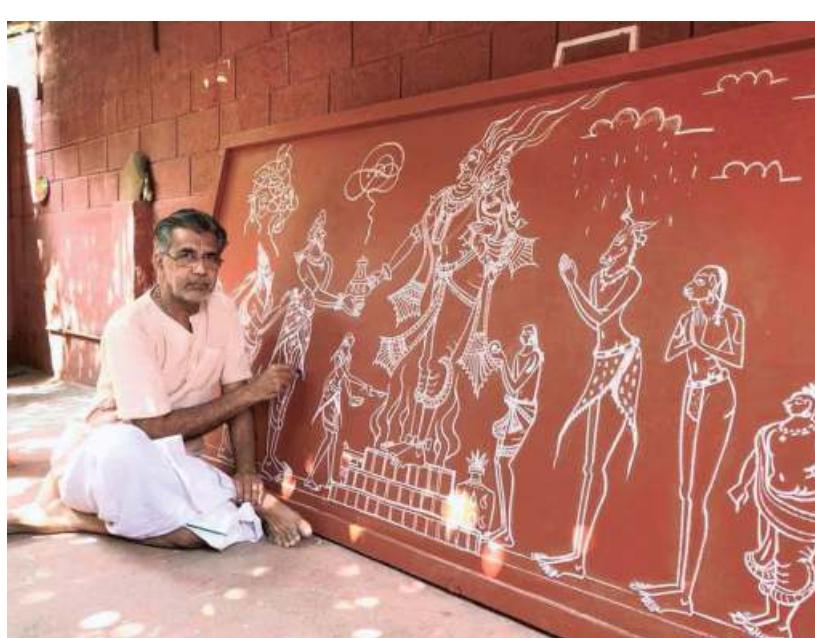
ember last year as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the awarding of the Jnanpith to the poet laureate.

There are personal connections between Bhat's sequence of mega drawings and his other *Ramayana*-based paintings, which number a whopping 900. His all-time favourite is the 'Sugriva Sakhy'a, a tribute to the strong bonds of friendship between Rama and Sugriva that blossomed out of adversity. Another favourite, the 'Jatayu Sambhavna', also stands out for the way the gigantic bird dominates the frame.

The walls of Bhat's home are alive with paintings of *rishis* in vibrant natural colours. "I am fascinated by our ancient Indian sages and use these images frequently in my work," he explains over cups of steaming filter coffee. He considers art a spiritual exercise and meditates or recites a mantra before he picks up a brush.

While he paints within a traditional style, Bhat's works are not mere reproductions of archetypal images. "Artists cannot afford to be mere imitators of their forebears if they are to stay relevant."

Ganjifa has almost disappeared as a game now, surviving mostly in small pockets like in the environs of the Puri Jagannath Temple



Fine strokes The artist at his studio in Mysuru; (right) *Ramayana* miniatures on tiny 4"x3" cards. JUNE GAUR

vant. So I have interpreted ancient themes in a contemporary way, based on my own understanding of mythology," he says.

Much of Bhat's artistic career has been spent in the revival of the traditional art of Ganjifa – paintings on oval playing cards, each around 8 cm in diameter. Ganjifa cards have a fascinating history going back to the first Mughal emperor, Babar, who introduced

them to India in a card game, also known as ganjifa. The game spread like wildfire across North India. Traditional artists enthusiastically adopted the form and the Hinduisation of Ganjifa followed, spawning a new variety of cards and games. Ganjifa has almost disappeared as a game now, surviving mostly in small pockets such as in the environs of the Jagannath Temple in Puri, Odisha. But the cards stay alive as collector's items. They have inspired Bhat and a handful of traditional artists in Odisha, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat to take up the art as a form of miniature painting.

Bhat had been fascinated in his childhood by the tiny ganjifa cards called *chhadas* commissioned by the Mysore maharaja, Krishna Raja Wadiyar III, in the 19th century. He developed a passion for the fast-disappearing art and

decided he would do everything in his power to preserve it. That was 40 years ago. There were no artists in Bhat's family, no mentors from whom he could learn this delicate art. So he had to teach himself.

Wet cloth and clay

Having mastered the art, he now trains upcoming artists at his studio, in a continuation of the *guru-shishya* tradition. There is art even in the way the cards are made – by soaking pieces of old cloth in a mixture of tamarind seeds and gum, priming the cloth with *ganji* or rice gruel and then coating it with a layer of clay to strengthen the material and give the painting longevity. Then the cards are cut to size and the background is filled in with vegetable colours. A few strokes of his squirrel-hair brush, and an amazing world of thought, feeling and creativity comes magically to life on the tiny card.

Attention to detail and complex iconography characterise Bhat's ganjifa cards and it is these two qualities that marked his V&A miniatures too. "Some of the figures were so small that they had to be drawn and illuminated by a brush containing a single hair – as in the episode of the final battle between Rama and Ravana. The clean, clear lines pulsating with life capture the great energy released at that time," he says.

The writer is an English teacher who sets off on quirky quests in Bengaluru.



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FIELD NOTES

Where the gods once lived

How the recent floods in Kerala unearthed a site filled with ancient terracotta figures



BY NIKHIL NARAYANAN

On a sunny day last August, a few men were fishing in the river Pamba in Kozhippalam near Aranmula town in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district. Like most villages in the area, Kozhippalam was devastated last year in the biggest floods to hit Kerala in living memory. Most houses in the village were empty, as people were scared to move back into homes that had been subsumed by the Pamba so recently.

But that day, the Pamba was calm, and the floods seemed to belong to a bad dream, except for the trees lying uprooted on the river bank. Suddenly, one of the fishermen saw some terracotta figures peeking at him through the filaments of the roots. Wondering if the floods had unearthed a piece of ancient history, the fishermen informed C.N. Sukumaran, a fellow villager. And the rest, as they say, is history – quite literally in this case.

Down history lane

The narrow lane at Anjilimoottil Kadavu – just wide enough for our SUV to pass through – ends at a plot with a rusted gate, half open, reluctantly allowing in history enthusiasts interested in a glimpse of the excavations in the adjacent compound. The floods that had wreaked havoc a couple of months ago had pulled down the compound wall that separated these two plots, and thus made the excavation site accessible by road.

Inside, the trenches baked in the heat of the sun, and the coconut palms and banana plants shone an even brighter

Sukumaran, academics, historians and enthusiasts soon got together and approached the government. Things moved fast. Kerala's Department of Archaeology swung into action within a matter of weeks. What till then had been just a 'riverfront plot' owned by 'someone settled in Mumbai' suddenly became a hotbed of activity.



A slice of history (Clockwise from left) The unearthed pieces are cleaned of the mud covering them; a trench next to the Pamba; and a set of terracotta female figurines. NIKHIL NARAYANAN

green in contrast. The artefacts in the trenches were partially visible from the outside, but were still held tightly by the soil that had protected them for centuries.

Under the sun

Unearthing these figurines under the hot Kerala sun is just the beginning. They also need to be cleaned of the mud they have been covered with for centuries. The fallen compound wall has now become a platform to dry the hundreds of terracotta faces, limbs, and torsos dug out so far. They will now need to slowly be joined together and brought to life, a task that could put a Ravensburger jigsaw puzzle to shame. Once put together, the pieces will hopefully become characters in a historical epic of the area.

Among the artefacts discovered were idols of mother goddesses (Sapta Matrika), naga (serpent) idols, and many figures of men. Each one tells a story. In the coming months, experts will examine these and the pottery shards to understand their origin and the period they belong to. Some of them, like the stylized naga caressing the upper half of its face with its tongue, have never before been discovered anywhere in Kerala, says K. Krishnaraj, lead archaeologist, as he gently brushes mud off the eyes of one of the faces. The site, with its trenches waiting to be excavated and its discoveries drying in the sun, is a surreal sight. A bygone era returning to life.

Iconographic studies and thermoluminescence dating (TL) of the pieces are expected to tell us more about their age and the lives of people who lived here and worshipped these gods. Who were they? Were they natives or settlers? When did they live? What did they eat? Was this a holy place of worship of a lost civilisation along the Pamba? What has been discovered so far appears to be only the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

Serendipity is not alien to archaeological discoveries. While the team was

busy excavating these figurines from a couple of hundred years ago, another story was waiting to be told across the Pamba, in Vellangoor. Rajeev Puliyoor, a Malayalam teacher in the College of Teacher Education in nearby Elanthoor, brought some of his students to the Anjilimoottil Kadavu site. One student called Gopika saw the idols and said, "This is nothing. There are bigger such buried in my house." Puliyoor, who is working closely with the excavations, immediately informed the archaeology team and they went to the student's house.

Mysterious stones

Mathesseril Gopalakrishnan Nair, Gopika's father, runs a palm leaf plate and bowl manufacturing unit. Very matter-of-factly, he took the experts around his land and showed them the various pieces lying around. There have been long cuboidal stones, obviously manually shaped, lying about his land for as long as he can remember. His family had never bothered to discover what they were. As a teenager, Nair had tried using the stones to build the house he now lives in. Fortunately for the world, the stones were too fragile for construction.

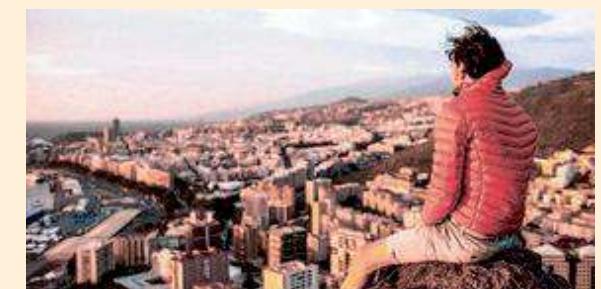
When the team revealed that the stones were part of cist burials from the Megalithic age, Nair was hugely surprised. The slabs he had treated so casually were part of 2,500-year-old graves, shaped by people adept at stone-cutting. The archaeologists believed more slabs lie under the earth.

Meanwhile, Nair has more practical concerns. "I am going to wait for the compensation the government will offer before I move out," he says.

As for Aranmula, the cultural capital of what's often called the Pamba Valley Civilisation and famous for the metal mirror and the annual boat race, it has just added one more feather to its cap.

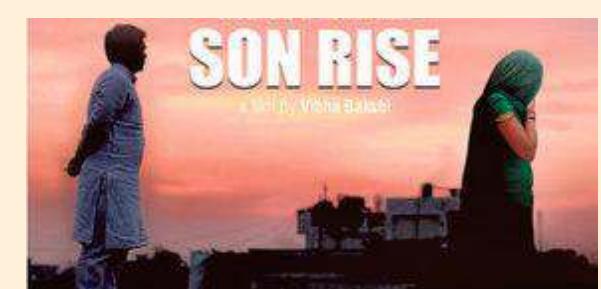
The writer is a history enthusiast from Bengaluru.

CREDITS



Africa's Drone Experiment
Jane Wakefield (BBC)
27 minutes

Lake Victoria, with its hundreds of inhabited islands, poses a formidable challenge for your friendly neighbourhood delivery app. But change may be in the air, literally, as the Lake Victoria Challenge – a project backed by the World Bank – tries to set up drone delivery in the populous area. Technology reporter Jane Wakefield goes to the island of Juma in Tanzania to see how the idea could work. Among others, Wakefield speaks to drone delivery service Zipline, which signed a deal with the Tanzanian government a year ago but is yet to set up in the country. Why?



Son Rise
Vibha Bakshi
50 minutes

The menfolk of Haryana are the unlikely heroes of this upcoming documentary on gender issues by Daughters of Mother India director and National Award winner Vibha Bakshi. Ordinary men challenge the patriarchal narrative in the 'darkest corners' of a state infamous for its khap panchayats. The documentary tells true stories, including that of a sarpanch who fights to get women involved in local politics, a village bard who campaigns against female foeticide through his folk music, and a farmer who goes through with his arranged marriage to a gang rape survivor and helps her in her quest for justice.

PEACE IN A POD

As gritty as it gets

The stories of Nikesh Murali's Indian Noir podcast make your stomach turn at times

BY USHA RAMAN

Think Sacred Games, but up close and personal. Think Vampire Diaries, but with an Indian twist. Think the X-Files, but the darkness speaks with a voice inside your head.

If that doesn't creep you out, then perhaps noir is your style.

Judging by some of the new fare on video streaming platforms, there's an appetite among Indian digital media audiences for the raw and unvarnished, for stories that plunge the depths of human darkness, even depravity, and tell it like it is, without the judgmental intervention of censors – or gatekeepers of any kind.

Nikesh Murali's Indian Noir podcast, launched in early 2018 and still in its first season, is a set of stories, unfolding in four to seven-minute bursts every couple of days, that attempt to offer the podcast audience with a different kind of dramatic experience. These are not tales for the fainthearted, or for those who want to spend a lazy Sunday afternoon being entertained by harmless humour and frothy romance. They are, as the web site describes, "fast-paced, edge-of-your-seat crime, fantasy and horror stories" set in India. The Indraprastha of Murali's imagination could be Mumbai, and the baddies could be your neighbourhood强men.

Story for a season

Murali, who responded to questions on email from Australia, asserts that "the book is dead." He chose to use this format for his stories for two reasons. One, he found that his writing in legacy formats (read: print)

was winning awards but not readers. And two, he "did not want to bore people to death." Most other fiction podcasts sustain a single story through a season, or tell one story in a given episode, but Indian Noir takes a different approach, choosing instead to unleash (that's an apt term, given the ferocity of the plots) three stories in its

Three stories, three genres

"I am going to trust the listener to use the playlist function in their podcast apps or read the titles for the episodes to follow along. If they are really confused, they

can always go to my website to follow along," explains Murali. "Crafting and recording three stories in three genres also keeps things interesting for me," he quips, "Writing after all, can devolve into a lonely and boring endeavour."

The three stories currently running on the podcast include a true crime serial told through the perspective of a hired killer, which takes us on a deeply disturbing ride involving a sex-trafficking ring; an oral history of Indian vampires; and a horror anthology featuring an out-of-work software professional's encounters with the demons inside – and outside – his

head. Murali is the narrator, and his voice, ideal for the medium, fluidly takes on the many characters that populate the stories – now raspy, now smooth, now angry, now afraid. "Indian audiences want gritty, sexy, thrilling stories in all genres. They want stories populated by people like them," says Murali.

One episode at a time

Another way in which Indian Noir departs from many successful serialised podcasts is its "sustained release" model – the first season did not drop in its entirety at one go, but continues to be delivered one episode at a time, every two or three days. While this works well in terms of getting people to return to the site (if you're listening on a laptop or from the browser) regularly, it can potentially lead to some falling off of listenership.

But the stories themselves – so far anyway – are gripping, even if they make your stomach turn at times (confession: I am one of those fainthearted). I would definitely not recommend listening to Indian Noir on a family road trip with children. But there's something about listening to horror or crime that draws you in and shocks you with its ability to plumb your own imaginative depths. Film noir is after all someone else's imagination presented before you. In a podcast, the writer asks you to collude with them to co-create the darkness. You just have to make sure you are not engulfed by it.

(A fortnightly series on podcasts.)

The Hyderabad-based writer and academic is a neatnik fighting a losing battle with the clutter in her head.



But there's something about listening to horror or crime that draws you in and shocks you

CM YK

ND-X

BY LOLA MAC DOUGALL

SPOTLIGHT

The photographer as collector

Four women photographers at Serendipity recast the past in unpredictable ways

The latest edition of Serendipity (December 15-22), the multidisciplinary arts festival held in Panjim, invited two new photography curators. Their debut arrayed a series of exhibitions that gravitated around the theme of turning "to the personal" in South Asian photography in the case of Ravi Aggarwal, and "new ways for passing images" in the case of Rahaab Allana.

Some of the most compelling works on display included exhibitions by four women photographers: Sukanya Ghosh, Chinar Shah, Avani Tanya and Indu Antony – each with her unique syntax and sensibility – that pointed to the idea of the practitioner as collector.

Chinar Shah dug through the last remains of Ahmedabad's Sabarmati river before its disappearance due to urban development. 'The River' is a collection of solarised objects found in the riverbed and presented in the form of photographs. Their directness somehow counters the risk of sentimentality posed by any attempt to eulogise an extinct river. The resulting images, with their resemblance to radiographs, read almost like a data analysis: the water bottles and the traces of packaging may be seen as a political statement on the dying river.

It is fitting that a project on the commodification of a river was displayed at a venue located just above the magnificent Mandovi river. For here, too, the river's commercial activities are visible, particularly at night, when the casino boats light up, their colourful neon glow interrupted occasionally by the passing of ore-transporting barges.

Objects in isolation

Avani Tanya found in the streets of Bengaluru the perfect site for the hunter-gatherer exercise she attempts in 'The Snapped Rope and Other Stories from the New Bangalore'. The exhibition was an idiosyncratic collection of objects or their photographic representations, both instances of the photographer's desire to seize them and, in doing so, perhaps make sense of the city. Tanya presents the objects as isolated, itemised, with a detachment that recalls the museum aesthetic while questioning its authority.

A piece of fake grass, a collected sample, a piece of ancient rock, a demon mask, the knife used in a crime are some of the apparently banal objects that make up this cabinet of curiosities. But on closer reflection and a careful reading of the explanatory texts – which are fun and betray the photographer's predilections – we realise that they paint quite an encompassing picture of modern-day Bengaluru, its fears, contradictions and aspirations.

Boxes of memories

Sukanya Ghosh's collages and little boxes are also the result of a compulsion to collect, one that not only focuses on photographs but also on found objects such as threads, pieces of machinery, frames, old dictionaries, etc., made un-



recognisable at times through their rearrangement. Interestingly, the series had its origins in the artist's grandmother's cupboard – although her intent is not to "fetishise nostalgia" but perhaps to reinvent memories, highlighting precisely how unstable they can be.

The geometrical shapes that constantly intersperse the work could indeed be seen as a reminder of the relative position of objects (and memories?) or the non-static nature of recollections. These "augmented memories," as Ghosh likes to call them, suit Rahaab Allana's intent to find future – and perhaps unpredictable – uses for past images.

The attempt to capture memory was also the subject of Malayalam artist Indu Antony's exhibition. 'Vincent Uncle' analyses with the precision of a scalpel a childhood memory, perhaps traumatic, that has remained dormant until recently.

Antony's Catholic mum would often encourage her to pray to ensure bad



Back in time (Clockwise from left extreme) Untitled, from the series 'Isometries' by Sukanya Ghosh; Indu Antony's installation of a series of kites, and a photograph from the 'Vincent Uncle' series; Chinar Shah's 'The River'; and Avani Tanya's 'The Snapped Rope'. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



It is fitting that a project on the commodification of a river was displayed at a venue just above the magnificent Mandovi

artist's hair into the cloth; peeping holes too low or too high that force the viewer to experience discomfort in order to witness them and even a collection of vials containing the uncle's smell.

Child's-eye view

The central work is a typology of men's hairy legs, which we can see because the lungs are raised. Despite the pleasure of the repetition, one can feel that there is something frightening at stake. The photographs seem to have been taken from the height of a child, the artist inviting us to share the point of view of the child she was then, when she was trying hard to not allow what she was witnessing to make its way into her mind.

Photography critic David Campany has described how the accumulation implicit in both photography and collecting can be seen as a transformative process. The work of these four women photographer-artists is not immune to some of the implied givens in every collection: the acceptance of chance as a building element of the repertory, the fetishising of objects and, perhaps most relevantly, the extent to which the collection exposes the collector.

The writer is the founding director of GoaPhoto and JaipurPhoto, and the author of essays on photography.

SCANNER

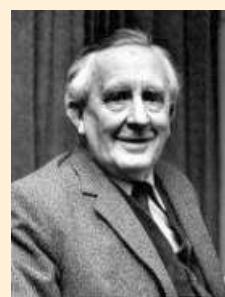
Showcasing Don McCullin



A retrospective covering a legendary career spanning over six decades, this Tate Britain exhibition, to be held from February 5 to May 6, will showcase the work of British photojournalist Don McCullin.

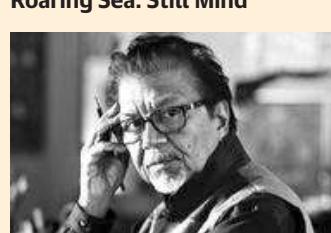
McCullin through more than 250 photographs, McCullin made a name for himself as Britain's leading war photographer starting in the 1960s, and images from a half-century's worth of conflicts – from Vietnam to Northern Ireland to Syria – will be featured in the collection, along with more tranquil scenes of life in industrial and rural England.

Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth



Every fan of J.R.R. Tolkien knows that the work published in his lifetime is merely the tip of the iceberg – beneath it lies a great mass of endlessly revised manuscripts, notes, hand-drawn maps and illustrations, correspondence and above all, constructed languages. This upcoming exhibit (January 25 to May 12) at New York's Morgan Library & Museum will pair such creative material with a collection of personal memorabilia to create "the most extensive public display of original Tolkien material for several generations".

Roaring Sea. Still Mind



Paintings, sculptures, Zen calligraphy, haikus and revelations will be some of the items on offer at this exhibition of the works of Satish Gupta – poet, author and artist – at the Visual Arts Gallery, India.

Habitat Centre, New Delhi, from January 19 to February 3. The title recalls Gupta's inspiration for this: "An evening along the beach in Normandy," France, where artist Claude Monet painted... a tumultuous sea and a mind deep in meditation, oblivious to the danger around.

UNPLUGGED

Three hidden jewels

When music makes you smell the earth, embrace yourself or questions your identity



GORI DANGE
is a novelist, counsellor and music lover who will take readers on a ramble through the Alladin's cave of Indian music

In the firmament of every art form, there are many little hidden and often overlooked stars. They are almost always upstaged by weightier or more popular and perhaps more dazzling or exotic candidates. Perhaps for this reason, they take on an unassuming quality. And yet they know how to hold their own, as well as be true to themselves.

In gardens it could be the periwinkle or the sada-phuli, needing no tending, growing brightly even out of the gap between paving tiles and compound wall. No one sets up night cameras to watch them blooming for one night of the year, like the Brahma-kamal, but there they appear, nodding, upright, perfect in form and colour. Amongst birds it could be the unobtrusive little jewels, like the tailor bird, the prinia, the sunbird – their sighting is not remarked upon, they're often bustling about in your garden, but no one runs in to take out a pair of binoculars or reports a 'sighting'. But were you to stand and look closely at any of them, they are utterly compelling, beautiful, and yes, with complex layered personalities too.

The examples from the world of painting, craft, science, cinema, literature, music are many – of people, forms, renditions, discoveries, that one can say have not got their due. And yet, to talk about 'getting their due' is to assume that they want more.

Being with the self

However, at the risk of anthropomorphising, they seem to be that quintessentially 'at ease with oneself' person. They do not need validation, popularity, a thousand likes and two thousand followers! They are, what is called 'swa-chhandi' entities – a difficult word to render into English. Loosely interpreted, it means, a person capable of being with the self, self-loving; not self-absorbed in a negative way, but complete within him/herself, a free spirit.

In Hindustani Classical Music, there are three ragas that answer to this description. Three hidden jewels: *Dhani*, *Gavti* and *Desi*. Less performed, overlooked on the concert circuit, overshadowed or eclipsed by stellar ragas, these are ragas worth pursuing – down the rabbit



Legendary Hindustani vocalist Veena Sahasrabuddhe at a 2007 concert in Bengaluru. G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

hole of YouTube, in requests to musicians, and in learning and discovery mode, if you are a student. They are by no means 'simple' or 'easy' (which raga is, actually? – the teaching of *Bhoop* and *Hindol* and *Durga* to newbies does not stamp them as simple) to render.

Thunder in the monsoon

Take that sparkler, *Dhani*. Sitting in the shadow of big brothers *Bhimpalasi*, it has its own following of worshippers. While the Mahars take hold of our imagination and provide the thunder during the monsoons, listen to a *varsha-rutu Dhani*, even in the non-monsoon, and you can smell the earth responding to rain drops.



Like that sunbird in your garden, it loops and pirouettes gracefully in the rendition

Kumar Gandharva's robust 'Aai ruta aii ruta aai'; Malini Rajurkar's plaintive 'Auliya Nizamuddin...tumhare bina'; and the limpid bhajan from the film *Hum Dono*, 'Prabhu Tero Naam' are great ways to make our acquaintance with this raga and its hues. (Disclaimer: If you spend the rest of the day wrapped up in its sweetness and poise, rendered by maestros and unknown gifted musicians too, don't blame me.)

In search of

Listen to what *Gavti* or *Gavati* has to say, in its quiet way. (I came to know only minutes ago that this raga is also called *Bheem*.) Again, a less-performed gem, it holds you transfixed within its mellow afternoon mood. Take a break from the exalted devotion of morning ragas, and the romance and strut of evening bigwigs, to listen to Veena Sahasrabuddhe's rendition 'Moray ghar'; Nazakat-Salamat's 1960 recording 'Dhana dhana bhaag'; Shaheed Parvez's or Vilayat Khan's *Gavati*; and perhaps a Marathi natyasaangeet 'Prem varadan'. (Disclaimer: if the afternoon simply slips away from you in the warm embrace of this raga, and leaves you with a kind of searching, longing, it's not my fault.)

The third hidden beauty is *Desi* (no relative of the much more performed *Desh*). Like that sunbird in your garden, it loops and pirouettes gracefully in the rendition – hence counted amongst the *vakra* ragas. Not easy, by a long chalk, and hence comes fully into its own in the hands of maestros.

If there's only one (but luckily for us there isn't only one) *Desi* to be heard, it surely is Nikhil Banerjee's on the sitar, though the raga is even more difficult on an instrument. 'Aaja gavat mama mero mann' from Baiju Bawra is an easy identifier.

Omkarnath Thakur's 'Kadamb ki chhai' seems to be a veritable *sawaal-jawab* with his maker, in the upper reaches. (Disclaimer: If this raga pulls you off the road, raises questions, gifts you with a feeling of disquiet, it's not my problem; keep listening and the raga itself will show you the way to address or dissolve those very questions.)

BY NAMRATA JOSHI

The only certainty in the uncertain business of filmmaking is that you can never predict the fate of a film – will it hit the jackpot? Be forced to embrace anonymity? But the unprecedented success of Shinichiro Ueda's Japanese zombie comedy, *One Cut of the Dead*, has become one of the most unforeseen phenomena of 2018. The tiny film came out of nowhere, delivered big numbers at the box office, lodged itself firmly in the hearts of film viewers, became the darling of international critics and has already become a part of contemporary filmmaking lore.

I asked producer Koji Ichihashi and actors Yuzuki Akiyama, Harumi Shuhama and Shinichiro Osawa if they had any inkling of the genie in the bottle when they started this off. "Never," came the unanimous response.

The team was in Mumbai last week for the Japanese Film Festival organised by The Japan Foundation in collaboration with PVR Cinemas in which *One Cut...* was the opening film. Shot in just eight days, the unique film emerged out of a performance workshop. The makers thought the workshop should be publicised and people should be able to see and understand it, and so they turned it into a movie. But they never thought it would actually lead to profitability and love and acclaim of such magnitude.

Rare run

An average low budget film in Japan costs about 15 million yen. *One Cut...* was made at a fifth of the cost, an unimaginable 3 million yen. By the end of 2018, it had grossed over 3,000 million yen and, in these times of short runs, it has been a rare one to be showing in the Japanese theatres for over six months.

C One Cut... reinvents the zombie genre while celebrating and using its long-standing codes and conventions

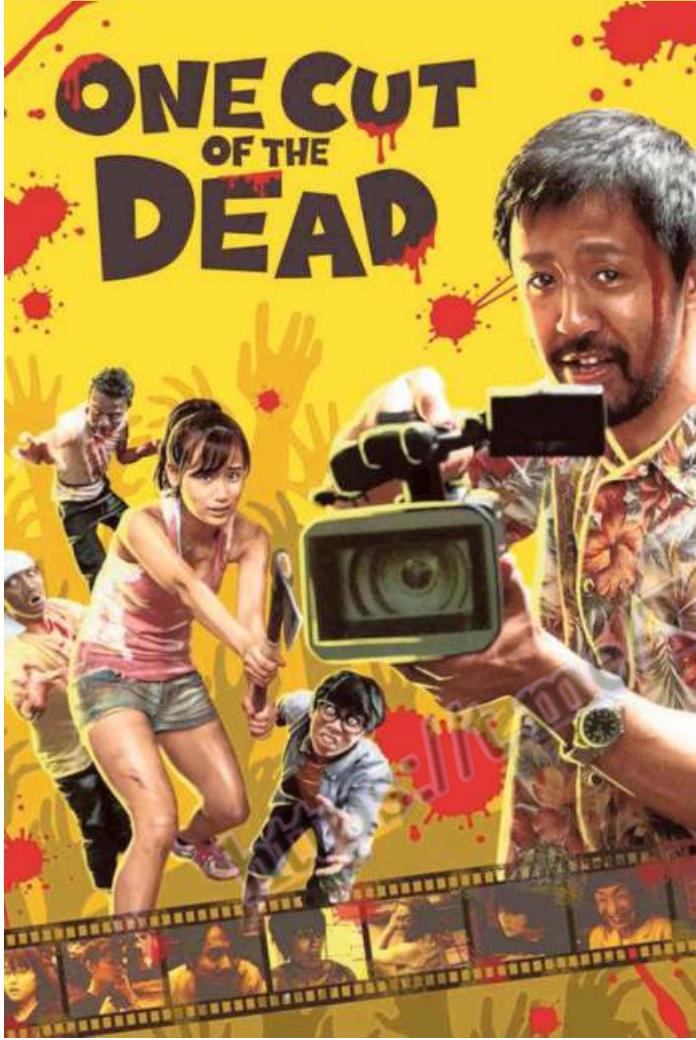
The micro budget, however, never came in the way, says Ichihashi. Locations were found well in time; during the shoot everyone stayed in the producer's house.

The film stars a bunch of little known actors. For Yuzuki Akiyama, who played Chinatsu, the girl at the centre of the mayhem, this was a first full-length film; she had acted only on stage and in shorts thus far. Harumi Shuhama, who plays the martial arts obsessed Nao, had been active in Japan's Off Broadway equivalent.

BIG SCREEN

The funny thing about zombies

How a micro-budget Japanese zombie comedy, which emerged out of a performance workshop, became a blockbuster



Horror story (Clockwise from above) The cast of *One Cut...* with (extreme right) producer Koji Ichihashi; the film poster; and a still. ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Without letting on much, *One Cut...* starts off with a 37-minute single-take opening shot, and is about a ragtag but resourceful film crew shooting a zombie film in an abandoned water filtration plant. They encounter some real zombies in the process.

It reinvents the zombie genre while celebrating and using its long-standing codes and conventions – some eccentric but likeable characters, a bunch of totally freakish people, a few undead corpses, an abandoned space, many butcherings, and lots and lots of blood.

Most of all *One Cut...* is a self-reflexive

film about movie-making with an emotional father-daughter story lurking at its core.

"Finest love letter to filmmaking" is how one fan described it: "Love letters rely heavily on exaggeration but this film is very sincere, self-aware, neither degrades nor exaggerates... it covers behind-the-scenes hardships of both films and live television."

It doffs its hat to the sheer ingenuity of low budget but high concept film-making, complete with the overt home video feel, the perennially on-the-move camera, the enforced improvisations to

set things right when everything is going wrong. Like the film within it, *One Cut...* is itself as low budget, high concept, clever and inventive. Did the cast and crew spot any parallels between their film and the film within the film? "There was supposed to be a zombie without a hand who didn't come out on time and the actors had to ad lib to somehow get through the scene," recalled Ichihashi. The actors doubled up as staff during the making of the film just as in the film within it.

In the lobby of PVR Icon in Andheri, the four team members were totally oblivious of the wave of love that *One Cut...* spawned among Indian viewers when it was first shown last year at MAMI. Popular demand had led to two extra screenings. Striking zombie poses in front of the film's standees and posters, they seemed a little lost in Mumbai. Their only exposure to India in Japan has been *Baahubali*, a big hit there. It was only after the film screening, when they were greeted with loud cheers and catcalls that they were visibly overwhelmed.

Singular appeal

Akiyama thinks there is a universality to the theme that helps build bridges. "The film is about normal people with normal lives and normal jobs suddenly finding themselves surrounded by trouble. It's about how they get together, cooperate and get out. So people across the world think that it is about them. It depicts them," she says.

One Cut... is a film that manages to bring viewers back for a second watch. "You want to see it again. You realise it's no fun watching it at home alone so you go to a theatre to see it with a lot of people," says Shuhama. It's the communal experience of viewing a film – the shared laughter, abandon and fun with total strangers in a cinema hall – that makes *One Cut...* singularly appealing. I haven't seen a film in recent times generating such spontaneous joy without ever trying too hard. "In Indian theatres people laugh, clap and make a lot of noise. In Japan this normally doesn't happen but in this movie it happened," says Ichihashi.

Now that the film has been such a hit all over the world has it made them rich? "Only him!" the actors laugh, pointing a finger at the producer. The film has brought the actors stardom and visibility. They have a busy time ahead with TV dramas, commercials and films to shoot.

Ichihashi plans now to make films with a bigger budget – "five times more than this one". Even as the actors cry out "Please take us," he tells us two films are coming up, planned exactly like *One Cut...*: "They will start as workshops and be made into films." And hopefully be just as successful.

BUFFER ZONE

What should I play next?

No, I don't want the algorithm to make up my mind for me



AKHIL SOOD
is a freelance culture writer from New Delhi who wishes he'd studied engineering instead



Patterns Algorithms are a big part of modern-day digital art. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The algorithm will destroy us. No one actually knows what it is, but we all sort of somewhat just about understand what it does. It sits right next to us at all times, carefully monitoring our every movement, and then using all that data to tell us what we should do next. And it's everywhere.

I have friends who carefully manage their Netflix or Amazon Prime viewing history to make sure the algorithm doesn't get confused. That way, they're not shown recommendations they wouldn't be interested in. I, too, get annoyed when my family accidentally logs into my Netflix account, and I then have to deal with suggestions for soppy Bollywood films or boring war documentaries for a week (imagine the travesty!).

And it gets murkier in the world of music. Last year, I became aware of a worrying trend. There's this simmering impression that artistes and bands are trying to sound more and more like other popular artists. This isn't anything new – the hold that good music can have over its listeners is hypnotic, and it can envelope and inspire you in many different ways. A lot of musicians end up sounding like cheap pastiches of the heroes they grew up admiring, accidentally or by design. It's not great, but it happens.

Gaming the system

But the thing I'm talking about here is a little more devious and calculating. It's a way of gaming the system. The artist writes something that sounds like whatever's trending on the charts, and in this way, the music-streaming algorithms will slot it into the 'similar artists' category or 'recommended listening'. And presto! They make lots (ish) of money and get lots of fans. So,

if you, the listener, are spinning a lot of

media too; whenever I read an article about A Thing on my Twitter, and I reopen the app, my timeline is swarming with similar articles about that same A Thing.

Big bad machine

Clearly then, unwittingly and without even realising, I've become a slave to the algorithm. A small, insignificant cog in a big bad machine that will swallow me whole. But I don't want to be. I want to reverse this development.

There are reasons of principle involved, no doubt. I don't want to limit my horizons and feed a system that thrives on homogeneity. I want to learn things about me, and not be taught them by a machine. I want to find a voice in a sea of indistinct hums. And blah, blah, blah.

But honestly, it's pettiness more than anything else. This year, I've decided to say a big eff-you to the algorithm. I intend to watch all sorts of crap on Netflix, sending the algorithm into a tizzy as it tries to figure out why this user has moved from foreign-language noirs to trashy reality TV to cringe-worthy masala films to cartoons. I want my YouTube to not be able to figure out which video or song I'll play next.

All I want, really, is a balance between human control and machine-defined access. If it means burning it all down, cutting my own nose off as I swim around pitifully with not a clue where to click next, then so be it.

C The computer doesn't judge; it just throws stuff at you that it thinks you may like, based on what you already like

IN THE NEWS

Shakespeare from Iran

The International Theatre Festival of Kerala promises radical possibilities

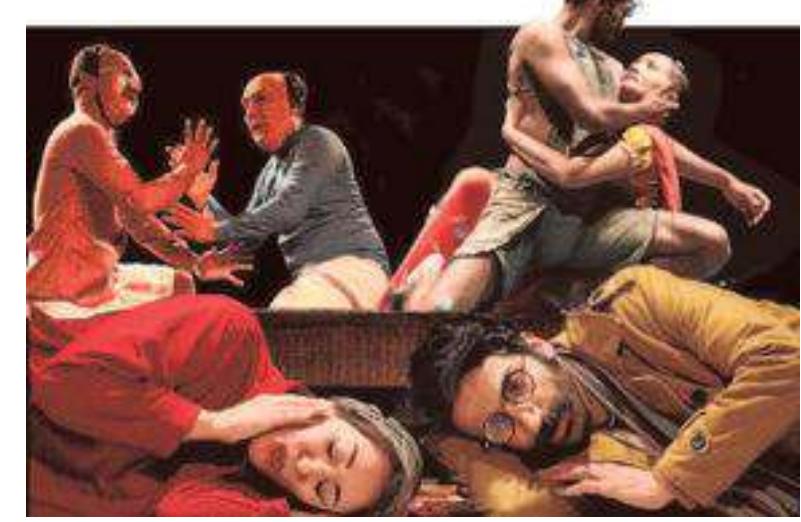
BY NAVAMY SUDHISH

Water puppets celebrating rich agrarian lore, women lost in an absurd abyss of role-playing, the fairy-infested woodlands of Athens, a semi-autobiographical sketch of an icon, and Kalidasa with a twist. Despite the shoe-string budget, the lineup for the 11th International Theatre Festival of Kerala (ITFOK) is tasteful and exciting, an event promising radical possibilities. Kicking off on January 20 and running through the week, this edition has only 13 plays, each handpicked by the three festival directors Arundhati Nag, M.K. Raina and Kumara Varma.

ITFOK, one of country's top-tier theatre festivals, is rolling without a theme for the first time in its 10-year history. It was really hard to pick a few from the vast spectrum of productions cutting through all genres," says Nag. Organised by Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, the festival features six international and seven Indian productions including four Malayalam plays.

Sri Lankan play *Bitter Nectar* directed by Rasaiya Lohanathan will open the festival, and Raina calls it "an intriguing work with immense political relevance". The festival will showcase a slice of cutting-edge contemporary theatre with all its stylistic excellence, he says. "There are brilliant productions like *The Well* from Iran, a splendid piece that delves into the love of

C Puppets sprint, skitter and pirouette like synchronised swimmers, controlled by puppeteers standing in waist-deep water



Onstage Stills from some of the featured plays this year. COURTESY ITFOK

two people who are dead." While *The Maids* from Malaysia explores the weird world of two housemaids engaged in a game of role-playing, *The Ritual* is the sole representation from Europe. The international spread also includes *Midsummer Night's Dream*, an Iranian production that reimagines Shakespeare. "It's a very unique production featuring extremely agile artists and I don't think it will be easy to find a band of Indian actors who can recreate it," says Nag.

Custom venues

Another highlight of the festival is water puppetry showcasing Vietnamese folk heritage. Lacquered puppets sprint, skitter and pirouette on water like synchronised swimmers, controlled by puppeteers standing in waist-deep water behind the curtain.

"Perhaps it's the first time they are getting a stage in India and it's a form totally different from Indian puppetry. This performance also demands customised venues," says Varma.

The Indian contingent of the festival is equally terrific, say the directors. "This time it's not just the revered names in the circuit. It's varied fare featuring emerging voices and multiple genres. There are really impressive works like *Dark Things* directed by Anuradha Kapur and Deepan Sivaraman. Such productions are indicative of the way Indian theatre is evolving," says Nag.

Nag says it's a not scale but substance that defines the 11th edition of ITFOK. "What matters is the flood-hit State is still hosting the festival and Sangeetha Nataka Akademi could put together this eclectic mix that will offer the audience a deeper understanding of the medium."

In the regional section are *Shakuntalam*, Lokadhami's reinvention of Kalidasa with an eco-feministic edge, and *Higuita – The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*, a theatrical take on N.S. Madhavan's much-celebrated short story. Directed by Jino Joseph and presented by Black Theatre, *Nona* is a hard-hitting satire set in rural Kerala. Punctuated by blues and reggae, *Ali – Beyond the Ring* is a blend of many elements, its style closer to the theatre of cruelty. Directed by Joy P.P., the play chronicles the rebellious spirit of the boxing legend.

This edition of the festival also comes with a new feature – repeat shows. "This time the plays will have multiple stagings so that they are accessible to many more theatre buffs. It has been a long-standing demand," says Raina. A range of seminars exploring topics like 'Art and Contemporary Indian Reality: The Quest for a Second Indian Renaissance,' 'Playwright and the Changing Idioms of Indian Theatre', and 'Spoken Word, Actor and Scenography in the Modern Indian Theatre Practice' are also part of the festival.

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BY SATYASUNDAR BARIK

Majestically seated on a bedecked elephant, the colourfully attired Bhubaneswar Pradhan, nicknamed Bhubana, often breaks into hysterical laughter and yells at passers-by while twirling a moustache that seems to get bushier each year. Bhubana, a tent-house supplier by profession, loves putting on this new persona.

Bhubana lives the life of King Kansa, the mythological demon king, and rules the tiny western Odisha town of Bargarh, which turns into Mathura, his kingdom, for 11 days every year. He rules from a decorated open-air platform, which is his Raj Darbar.

Six kilometres away from his court is the village of Ambapali, considered the mythical Gopapur, on the banks of the River Jeera, which in turn is given the role of River Yamuna. Ayush and Astosh, two schoolboys, who act out the roles of Krishna and Balaram, respectively, crack jokes and play childhood pranks in Ambapali.

In another part of Bargarh at Adimata Mandir near Khajurakta, preparations are on in full swing to celebrate the arrival of Krishna in Mathura from Gopapur.

In what is probably the world's largest open-air theatre event – sprawled over 30 sq. km. in Bargarh district – over 110 actors effortlessly and magically retell the mythological stories involving the childhood of Krishna and how the evil king Kansa meets his death at Krishna's hands in the annual festival called Dhanu Yatra. More than 2,000 people in soldiers' attire become part of the king's processions at different locations. It's a breathtaking sight.

What sets the event strikingly apart

from other mythological plays is its grace and grandeur that is taken to new levels by the synchronised participation of hundreds of invisible artists in multiple locations. The ordinary people of Bargarh make themselves available to be 'ruled' by the tyrannical king while residents of Ambapali deem themselves citizens of the mythological place, Gopapur, and shower their love on the child gods, Krishna and Balaram.

Drawing parallels
"We don't eat meat for the 11 days during the festival and every household washes the feet of Krishna and Balaram and pays obeisance to the gods who are believed to have incarnated in the form of Krishna and Balaram," says Iswar Bhoi, an inhabitant of Ambapali.

It has been 70 years since the festival was started, and its charm and mystique has not diminished a bit.

According to legend, the Dhanu Yatra was first conceptualised about 150 years ago when some devotees of Krishna of Bargarh found similarities in the geographical area of Bargarh, Ambapali and River Jeera with Mathura, Gopa, Brindavan and River Yamuna. But an organised Dhanu Yatra festival began only in 1948.

According to some of the organisers, the people of the area found a lot of resonance during the first celebration of

C The ordinary people of Bargarh make themselves available to be 'ruled' by the tyrannical king during the festival

RUBRIC

Live from Kansa's darbar

In what may be the world's largest open-air theatre event in Odisha, ordinary villagers come together to retell stories of Krishna and Kansa



Dhanu Yatra as they drew symbolic parallels between India's fight for freedom from British rule with the victory of Krishna, the embodiment of truth, justice and righteousness over Kansa who personifies arrogance and wickedness.

Traditionally, the yatra is celebrated for 11 days from the fifth day of the bright fortnight till the full moon day in the month of Sagittarius (Dhanu or Pausa) of every Hindu calendar year. The play begins with Kansa's accession to the throne followed by the wedding of King Kansa's sister Devaki with Basudev.

Unlike the unmitigated villain that

Kansa is portrayed as in mythology, King Kansa in Dhanu Yatra is a benevolent emperor who genuinely cares for his people and kingdom. Wherever his royal procession goes, the people on the street play along and they all get a role to play. "They all join in without any persuasion or invitation. Though the directions and fines imposed by King Kansa are not legally binding, they accept it as marks of obedience. People pay the token monetary fines and are even ready to undergo mild punishment," says Sureswar Satpathy, secretary of the organising committee.

Ministers, the district collector and the superintendent of police are regularly summoned by King Kansa to his darbar on the illuminated makeshift stage. They are subservient to the "king", and they give accounts of the welfare works they have executed in the area.

Usually, the directions of King Kansa carry a social message. On the second day of the Dhanu Yatra this year, which will end tomorrow, King Kansa hopped off from the elephant and entered an Odisha State Road Transport Corporation bus. He ordered the drivers not to

Living a myth (Clockwise from left) Local artistes perform before King Kansa; devotees offer prayers to child gods, Krishna and Balaram; and Kansa tours his kingdom atop an elephant.
BISWARANJAN ROUT

drink alcohol while driving and exhorted passengers to protest against any ill-treatment. The king slapped a fine of "two lakh gold coins" on the authorities for not keeping the bathrooms in the bus terminal clean. The penalty was, of course, in jest, but the message went through.

Washing away sins

"I have played many characters in dramas in my life. But the social recognition I get for playing King Kansa is beyond everything else. My fellow villagers call me Kansa Raja during the festival and even after that," says 51-year-old Bhubana.

The myth of Dhanu Yatra is so intertwined with local culture and daily life that 'Mathuranganji' becomes the date-line for almost all the vernacular dailies that report the event during the 11 days. The contour of the major events of the tale is always fixed, but the minute details and conversations between characters depend on the skill of individual artistes and can be impromptu, evolving according to the situation; there is no written script. As many as 21 places such as ponds, temples, rivers, cultural and commercial centres become open-air stages where the various episodes are enacted.

C Ministers, the collector and the police superintendent are regularly summoned by King Kansa to his darbar

Dhanu Yatra provides an opportunity for local performing artistes to showcase their talents. More than 3,000 folk singers and dancers as well as professional artistes from some 130 troupes perform during the 11 days.

In reality, Bhubana, the tyrannical Kansa, is anything but an atheist. To wash away the 'sins' he commits during the Dhanu Yatra, he visits the holy town of Puri after the 11 days and takes a holy dip in the sea. He seeks forgiveness for all his blasphemous utterances against Krishna and Balaram during the festival.

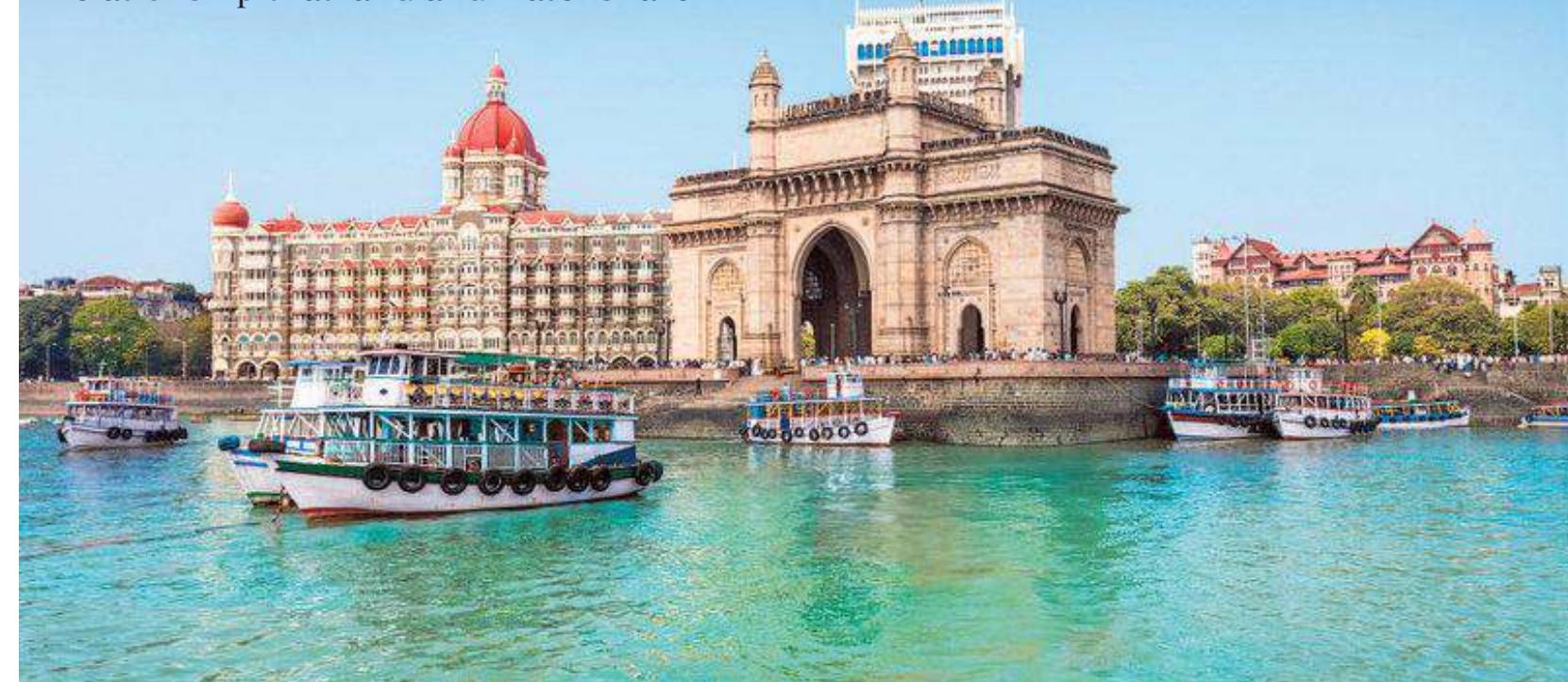
The Krishna Leela that is enacted during the Dhanu Yatra is not a mere theatrical performance by a bunch of artistes. It is so entrenched in people's minds that it becomes almost real. And the community bonds get stronger during the festival.

BY RAHUL SRIVASTAVA & MATIAS ECHANOVE

PLACE, WORK, FOLK

The sounds of water

Cities are not "built on land". They emerge from the relationship that land and water share



never really located "on land" in the way maps and visual representations usually portray them, but in a multi-dimensional ecosystem in which water, land, its inhabitants, and air, make up wholes that cannot really be audited into separate units.

The reduction of water as a life-giv-

ing, cyclical, flowing force into its simple visual representation of a line, or a channel, is at the root of several one-dimensional ways in which cities have learned to disregard a fundamental aspect of their existence – that they are not "built on land". They emerge from the relationship that land and water

share. The argument complements the learnings of many urban practitioners: that the basic units of urban planning, thanks to a focus on water as being intrinsic to space, have to always be immediate and connect to the local. There is really no escaping that. All habitats are made up of the sounds of water, as

they flow in and out of people, kitchens, bathrooms and sewers. From space stations on the edge of gravity to pipes hidden in expensive skyscrapers, gurgling sounds of water flows make up every living world's subterranean constitution.

Of course, habitats occupy time and space – but they also occupy these

Water city The estuary in which Mumbai has grown has its own flows and pathways. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

flows. Invisibilising them or suppressing their movements results in the experience of the flood – a word which seems to be more and more infused with biblical imagery these days. Striking year after year, from region to region, attacking old and new territories, and often out of season.

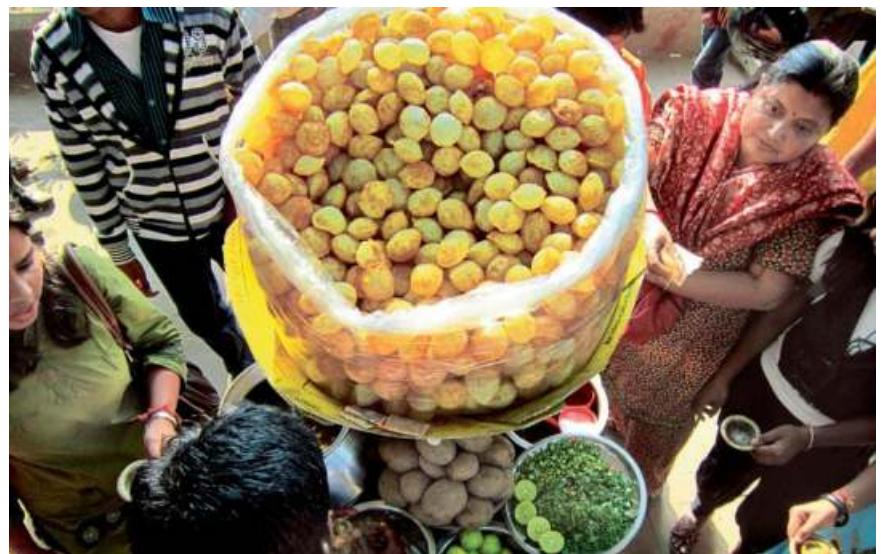
C All habitats are made up of the sounds of water, as they flow in and out of people, kitchens, bathrooms and sewers

The most important people on urban planning teams have to be those who know, manage, build and fix these moments where it matters the most, those who have their ears and hands to the watery ground, literally.

This, however, is far from reality. From contractors who build homes and structures for millions of people around the world to those who are still forced to manually clean sewers – the front-line warriors of lived habitats still remain at the bottom of the heap within the urban planner's worldview.

And it's not just that their skills are devalued. Their worldview itself and the enormous knowledge they embody, which can help produce more practical and geo-sensitive plans, remains far away from the grand designers of the master planner.

The writers are co-founders of urbz.net, an urban network that's active in Mumbai, Goa and beyond.



BY RUCHIR JOSHI

Whenever I return to Kolkata after a gap of a few months, I come back with food cravings that only my hometown can meet. I usually land back as winter is starting and this is one of the best times to be in the city – my list of grub I've been missing is much longer in November than it would be if, say, I was coming back in April.

Winter is when the deltaic region yields its full bounty – vegetables that you hardly see anywhere in the northern subcontinent; fruit of all sorts; the magnificent fresh, nolen gur/notun gur/liquid jaggery and all the seasonal products made from it; weather in which you can justifiably quaff all sorts of red meat; not to mention the full cornucopia of fish and fishy creatures. Even if you're not a carnivore, or prefer a vegetarian diet, this is the period when you can indulge in some deep-fried foodings without feeling too heavy or ill.

One of the great things about the city is that it is surrounded by one of the most fecund hinterlands in the world and most of the plant-based food comes into the city daily, recently plucked or harvested, carried in by small vans and trucks, small batches of mind-boggling varieties of shaak (greens) and veggies often brought in on the shoulder by the small farmers who grow them, with none of the days-long cold-storage truculence that you find in vegetables in a city like Delhi. Even if my fridge is full, I sometimes find myself visiting the markets in the morning, just to look, just to watch people's faces as they contemplate cascades of multicoloured produce.

Obsessed with food

It's an old and tired joke that Kolkata has more pharmacies per block than it has sweet shops but only just. The fact is, there's a reason for the proliferation of medicine-sellers and it doesn't just have to do with the often unsalubrious air of the city: people here are obsessed with food and they are willing to take some risks to score some particular taste or other. An alternative explanation for the gastrocentricity and its fallout might be that every city is obsessed with food, each in its own



Yummy treats Puchkas, chowmein and jhaalmuri: Kolkata has developed quite a cosmopolitan cuisine.
GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK & K.R. DEEPAK

grey for the local variations on things that are widely available elsewhere: puchka, puri-alu/alu-kochuri/luchi-alu/luchi-alur-dom and samosas. The puchkas in Kolkata are quite different from the pani-puri/golgappa iterations elsewhere, with no trace of any sweet chutney, the crusts super-thin and the pani light and pungent with jeera and green chilli, the potatoes in the masala boiled and very lightly spiced.

Complexly delicious

The alu-puri varieties, just in the one square kilometre around my house, are startling. There is the vendor I call 'Elgin I', because his stall is at the start of Elgin Road, and he serves the most complexly delicious, dark brown alu gravy, spicy, everything thrown into it, onions, tomatoes, ginger, a massive amount of green chillies as well as peanuts, his maida puris puffed up and crispy; and then there is one of the most popular shops, a little further down Sarat Bose Road, two blocks south of Rashbehari Avenue, which is always crowded with ravenous customers, this potato concoction being altogether lighter (no onions and tomatoes, I suspect), but highly punchy in terms of spice, the puris perfect, accompanied by a hot pickle and green chilli, to be followed by his equally famous gulab-jamun.

Similarly, there is a surprising variety of samosas you can get in the small area around Minto Park/Elgin Road. There are the full-spectrum, heavy Marwari halwai samosas; there is the sweeter Gujarati version from the local farsaan shop; the variation from Ray Street, really superb, made with potatoes, peas and peanuts. But my favourite kind is the classic Bengali shenga, smaller and lighter than its colleagues, the potatoes less mashed up so that you get a textured bite, the taste spectrum minimised beautifully while sculpting a precise, two-bite object.

It's when I think about the alu-puri and the samosas that it comes home to me that what I miss in many other cities is not so much variety as *variation*. Obviously, both assortment and mutation in food exist in other places: think of New York with its international diversity and its variations of pizza, pastrami sandwiches and hamburgers; think of London, capital of world cuisine, with its fish and chip shops; or even the somewhat provincial Paris and far more limited Berlin, the former with its great French food variations, the latter with its Turkish joints and flammkuchen places – but what I love coming back to is the small scale of Kolkata, of the even smaller scale of South Kolkata to be specific, where the tastes take me back to the time when this sector of this city was the entire world, a world full of surprises that constantly ambushed the taste buds.

The columnist and filmmaker is author of *The Last Jet-Engine Laugh and Poriborton: An Election Diary*.

TASTES LIKE HOME

What I miss in other cities is not so much variety as *variation*



C What I'm missing and looking for is something one could call 'homestreet-taste'

particular ways, and Kolkata is no different except that Bengalis like to complain about the ill-effects a tad more than other people.

Another aspect of food in Kolkata is that under the usual gastro-radar, the place has developed quite a cosmopolitan cuisine; for quite some time the city has offered far more than just the usually mentioned Bangla, Behala-Awadhi and Chinese food.

Leaving aside the horrors of the proliferating multi-cuisine joints and the *nafes*, trying-too-hard-to-be-trendy 'restos', the

town now has many small, unpretentious eateries where you can get really good Northeastern, Burmese and Southeast Asian food. At the same time, there are at least one or two places where adventurous chefs are building serious menus based on Bangla food but without being imprisoned by the great tradition.

None of these, however, are on my crave-list when I return. What I'm missing and looking for is something one could call 'homestreet-taste'. Besides the jhaalmuri, etc. particular to the city, I find myself hun-

Notes from Tashkent



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

BY RAUL DIAS

I'm technically still on Indian soil, sitting ensconced in a giant metal tube that's taking the form of an Uzbekistan Airways' aeroplane, en route Tashkent from Mumbai. But I'm also instantaneously made aware of the fact that remnants of the former USSR are very much alive and kicking in the country I'm to be deposited in, four hours later. The cabin crew greet me with a hearty "Dobro pozhalovot!" in Russian. The safety briefing is a trilingual English-Uzbek-Russian one, the rather robust wordage and flat intonations of the lost language not lost on me. But that's just the tip of the proverbial 'Soviet-influence iceberg', constant montages of which reveal themselves to me at almost every turn I take over my next two days in Uzbekistan's capital, Tashkent.

An hour after I land, I find myself on the brink of a mini meltdown as I try to navigate my way through block after block of bleak, Khrushchyovka-style residential buildings in the Tashkent suburb of Chilanzar. Bereft of a charged mobile phone, I'm trying desperately to locate the elusive Building No. 26 where Yura Vedenin, my friend of Russian descent, has promised to let me spend the night. Named after Soviet statesman Nikita Khrushchev – in whose era these low-cost, concrete-panelled apartment buildings were developed all over the former Soviet Union during the early 1960s – the 'Khrushchyovka' is a suburban Tashkent mainstay.

Alien words

The next day, at the city's glitzy Tashkent Janubiy Vokzal southern train station, I try to make sense of the indecipherable Cyrillic letters that form alien words printed on to my bullet train ticket to my next destination, the 'Silk Road' city of Bukhara. God bless the kind-hearted ticket counter lady who takes the effort to pen down all the vital details on the back of my ticket in Roman numerals and alphabets. Without her intervention, I'd surely be in Cyrillic blunderland!

C *Opulent* as an adjective doesn't do justice to the grandeur and scale with which the Metro stations have been built and decorated

On my way back to Chilanzar from the train station, I burrow my way underground to experience for myself the brilliance of the Tashkent Metro I had heard a lot about. Opened in 1977, the Metro today has 29 stations, each a shining (pun intended) beacon of the former USSR's legendary hubris. 'Opulent' as an adjective doesn't really do justice to the grandeur and scale with which each of them has been built and decorated, with everything from pink marbled walls to chandeliered ceilings. One of the most beautiful of these is the Kosmonavtlar station where Russian cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, is immortalised with a mural, wherein the ceramic wall panels surrounding her portrait fade from blue to black in imitation of Earth's atmosphere.

And speaking of space, just like this station that was influenced by the ambitious USSR space programme, Soviet architecture in Tashkent too greatly references the cosmos and science fiction. One such building in Tashkent is the turquoise-domed Tashkent Circus built in 1976, that pays homage to Yuri Gagarin's epic journey into outer space with its flying saucer-like appearance and alien limb-like pillars.

But it is the typical Soviet, brutalist style of architecture that augments the USSR's overarching influence over Tashkent, 27 years after Uzbekistan declared its independence in 1991. It was the devastating Tashkent earthquake of 1966, that gave rise to this style of utilitarian architecture where form and function trump ostentation and ornamentation of any kind.

Seemingly caught up in a time warp when bell bottoms and acid rock ruled, the gargantuan Hotel Uzbekistan, centrally located at Tashkent's Ground Zero – Amir Timur square – is the perfect specimen of 70s Soviet modernist architectural style that's associated with social, utopian ideology and influenced by the works of Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Though a tad tired and scruffy looking today, this icon of Tashkent's Soviet past draws in nostalgists by the busload.

The Mumbai-based writer and restaurant reviewer is passionate about food, travel and luxury, not necessarily in that order.

For the love of Kashmir

On June 14 last year, Kashmiri journalist Shujaat Bukhari was shot dead by terrorists. And with that, a voice of peace has forever been silenced, writes his wife

BY TEHMEENA BUKHARI

It is hard to write about a person who means everything to you. It is hard to put into words the irreparable loss and suffering that his death brings. It has been more than five months since Shujaat Bukhari, my husband, was killed in Srinagar. Since his murder – unsolved to this day – we have been dying a little everyday, slowly and bitterly. His murder and then his absence have filled us with a deep and profound sense of loss.

What did the killers of Shujaat Bukhari achieve?

Shujaat was a journalist above all else, a reporter for *The Hindu* and *Frontline*. He loved *Kashmir Rising*. He was devoted to peace, which was the ethical foundation of his journalism. Did his murderers celebrate his assassination? Did it provide them with something, the something that they took away from us? Are they at peace knowing that they have killed a man of peace? The murder of Shujaat Bukhari has silenced a voice of peace and damaged the cause of peace.

Elusive peace

Violence troubled Shujaat. It went against his personality. He valued peace and justice – from peace in the house to peace in the streets. Any episode of violence, particularly when people died, disturbed him. He would be troubled for days afterwards. It was difficult, therefore, for this man, to have lived and worked in a world where peace has been elusive. Shujaat began his career as a reporter in the 1980s,



Role model
Kashmiri journalists at a vigil in memory of Shujaat Bukhari.
NISSAR AHMAD

when the struggles inside and around Kashmir escalated. From his first days on the job, he had to navigate the reality of violence and his own longing for peace.

Rising Kashmir that modelled honest and truthful reporting of events that are fast-moving and difficult to understand.

Hard life

Shujaat believed that a newspaper should create a place for nuance and for dialogue. Many people spoke harshly against him. He engaged everyone in dialogue and defended the right to hold different opinions till his death. He was murdered for opinions that someone did not like, even as he defended the right of others to hold opinions different from his own.

In his column, 'On The Record' Shujaat wrote with feeling about the hardness of life. He never missed a column. The paper now republishes his old columns. I am told that this column is reprinted to remind pe-

Rising Kashmir now republishes his old columns to remind people of what he said, to remind us how little changes

ople of what he said, to remind us how little changes and how much remains the same. Many youngsters who worked at *Rising Kashmir* developed their craft in the newspaper and now work as leaders in so many important publications in India.

Part of his love for Kashmir was his love for the Kashmiri language. Shujaat was an advocate of the vernacular press. It was because of him that the Kashmir Media House added in *Sangarmal* (in Kashmiri) and *Baland Kashmir* (in Urdu) to their list of publications. In his columns, Shujaat championed Kashmiri and other vernacular languages. It was his love for Kashmir that moved his agenda of peace.

Last year, we visited the offices of *The Hindu* and *Frontline* in Chennai. It was a chance for me to see him with journalists of publications outside Kashmir for which he wrote. He was in his element. It was clear that he was happiest when around reporters. Right after Shujaat's death, Kashmir Media House and its publications faltered. But we now realise that these institutions are Shujaat's legacy. Journalism geared to peace was his life and we are committed to continue the institutions that he helped create.

The writer is a doctor in Srinagar.

Easy like Sunday morning

This week, it's all about electrodynamics

BY BERTY ASHLEY

1 Born on January 20, 1775, André-Marie Ampère was a major figure in both mathematics and physics and is credited with some of the earliest work in electromagnetics. He demonstrated that two wires would either attract or repel each other, depending on whether their currents were traveling in the same direction or opposite directions. The instrument used to measure current in a circuit is named after him. What is it called?

2 A power plant in the southeastern French town of Albertville uses the waste of a popular local product to produce electricity. When the product is made, a lot of 'whey' is produced. Bacteria is added to this, which transforms the whey to biogas. This gas is then fed through an engine which heats water to 90 degrees Celsius to generate 2,800 MWh/yr of electricity. What delicious and typically French product is this?

3 This word is a combination of two words. One is due to the presence of electricity in this phenomenon and the other means to 'carry out a sentence of death'. So technically this term should only be used when fatality occurs. If what occurs is only a mild sensation or if it was strong but there was no fatality, then there is another word that must be used. This second word comes from the French word for 'an encounter between charging troops'. What are these two words which are often mistakenly interchanged?

4 Regenerative braking is a mechanism which allows energy to be recovered by extracting it from the parts braked, to be stored and reused. Between Sweden and Norway, there is an operation in place where the regenerated energy is suf-



Stimuli Most aquatic animals are born with the ability of electroception.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

ficient to power one leg of the journey and excess energy is used to power homes and businesses in the region. What common entity is this that is responsible for this type of power generation?

5 This element with atomic number 34 is a non-metal with a peculiar electrical capability. It conducts electricity only when light shines on it and is an insulator in the dark. This property makes it useful in devices such as photo cells, light meters for cameras, copiers and solar cells. What is this element you would usually find in anti-dandruff shampoo?

6 Muscle cells are stimulated by electricity and the constant contraction and expansion of this vital muscle is thanks to electricity. If an external current passes through these muscles, it can override the natural process and disturb the

rhythm of this organ. This might cause a medical problem that could lead to major issues. What is this problem?

7 For electricity to travel through a liquid, a movement of charge must take place. This household appliance usually contains dilute sulphuric acid. Over time, with use, the sulphuric acid becomes concentrated. Distilled water, which by itself does not conduct electricity, is added to increase its conductivity, thus making it a carrying agent for ions. What is this appliance that's usually used more in the summer?

8 Electroception (or electroreception) is the biological ability to perceive natural electrical stimuli. It is almost always present in aquatic animals, as water is a good conductor of electricity. Most of these animals are born with this ability – even a bay by shark can use electricity to locate

prey. The only mammals to have fully evolved electroception are these strange creatures found in Australia. What is this animal that's also a rare mammal that lays eggs?

9 Jack Cover, a NASA researcher, developed an electric stun gun in 1969. It fired two small darts which attached to the target and delivered an electric current to disrupt voluntary control of muscles. This has been shown to reduce officer injuries during police work by 76%. Cover was inspired by the hero of one of his favourite childhood books, *Tom Swift and His Electric Rifle*. What did Cover name his stun gun?

10 A normal incandescent bulb uses almost 80% energy to create heat and only 20% for production of light. The most energy efficient alternatives are these lights that have semi-conductors in them. As electrons pass through this type of semiconductor, they turn into light. Unlike other bulbs, these don't burn out but only get dimmer with age. The expected life is at least 25,000 hours. The bulbs are known by a three-letter acronym which refers to the semi-conductor. What is the name?

A molecular biologist from Madurai, our quizmaster enjoys trivia and music, and is working on a rock ballad called 'Coffee is a Drink, Kaapi is an Emotion'. @bertyashley

ANSWERS
1. Ammeter
2. Cheese (Brie/Emmenthaler/cheese)
3. Electrical circuit and shock system
4. Electricity
5. Selenium
6. Amphoteric
7. UPS inverter battery
8. Black-billed Playpuss
9. Laser (Thomas A. Swift Electric Rifle)
10. LED (light emitting diode) bulbs

GOREN BRIDGE

Robbery in Oz



Neither vulnerable, East deals

BY BOB JONES

NORTH
♦ K 10 7 5
♥ A 3
♦ K Q J 9
♦ A 9 3

WEST
♦ 8 6
♥ 9 8 6 5
♦ 10 4
♦ Q 10 8 7 6

EAST
♦ A Q 9
♥ Q 10 4
♦ A 7 6 5 3
♦ J 5

SOUTH
♦ J 4 3 2
♥ K J 7 2
♦ 8 2
♦ K 4 2

The bidding:

EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH
1NT* Pass 2♦** Dbl
3♦ Pass 4♦
All pass
*12-14
**Transfer to clubs

Opening lead: Ten of ♦

Australian expert Terry Brown tells the story: "We arrived at the table and were greeted by Don and Judy Scown of Forster, New South Wales. On the evidence provided by this deal, Forster Bridge Club must be full of hucksters, con artists, and flim-flam merchants. After East opened a 12-14 no trump, West bid two spades, a transfer to clubs. North doubled, show-

ing spades, and then raised his partner's three-spade call to game."

"Don led the diamond 10. Judy won with the ace and returned the suit. Brown won in dummy and led a low trump. Good play! Not to be outdone, Judy won this with her ace, not the queen, and led a third diamond. Yes, maybe declarer should have ruffed in with the jack – would you have thought of it? At the table, Brown discarded and West scored his eight of spades. Judy's trump queen was still to come for one down."

"So be warned! Make sure to keep your wallet well and truly hidden if you ever go to Forster. There are some horse thieves out there after your hard-earned cash."

Note that Brown's play of a low spade at trick three was necessary. Had he crossed to his hand and led a spade to dummy's 10, a third round of diamonds would have assured the defense of a third trump trick. Also, ruffing the third diamond with the jack seemed pointless, as West could overruff with his "known" queen. Don't go to Forster!

A-N-A-T-O-M-I-Z-E

On the Terrace, Rolleboise

REHS GALLERIES, NYC



● Painted circa 1900, the piece was sold soon afterwards

● The model is speculated to be Madeleine, one of the two young women Knight worked with from 1899-1906

● Trend of rising popularity in 19th-century French Academic art

BY ROHAN MANOJ

For Daniel Ridgway Knight, fair peasant maidens in bucolic scenes were something of a speciality. And yet, one particular painting by the 19th century artist, an American expatriate who spent most of his career in France, was the cynosure of all eyes when it resurfaced recently after 118 years in a family collection.

Painted circa 1900, 'On the Terrace, Rolleboise' depicts a pretty young girl, dressed in village clothes, standing at the edge of a garden terrace in full bloom, looking down thoughtfully at the greenery of Rolleboise, a town some 40 miles west of Paris. The painting was sold to Samuel T. Wellman – American steel pioneer, captain of industry and prolific inventor – soon after its completion, and it

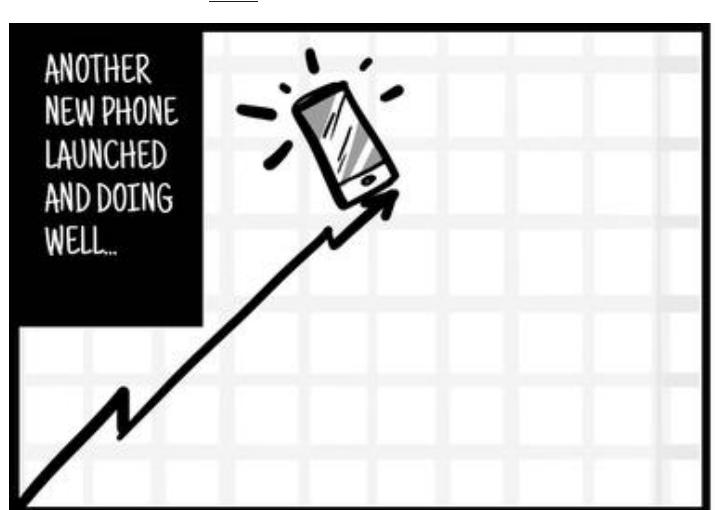
remained with his descendants until they decided to sell it late last year.

When fine art dealer Howard Rehs, of Rehs Galleries in New York, saw the initial images, all he could say was "wow". "The model was captured in profile, standing at a rocky edge with beautiful vista below – a rather unique image. In addition, the painting seemed to be in original condition," Rehs was quoted as saying.

With 19th century French academic art surging in popularity, five collectors contacted the gallery the day the painting was posted on its website. Within a week, before the gallery had finished sending framed images to the others, it was sold to one unidentified collector who was in a bit of a hurry. Whisked away once more, with no time for display!

ECOTISM

BY ASHVINI MENON



LETTER FROM A CONCERNED READER

Rosemilk better than phone

Respected madam/sir,

How are you? Two days ago I thought, ok long time since I read *The Day of the Jackal*. Maybe I will read it again once more. Why not? So I went to bookshelf in bedroom to find the copy. It has been in my family since at least 1975. Suddenly I heard sound of phone ringing. I looked in pants pocket. No. Shirt pocket. No. Living room teapoy. No. Dining table. No. Bathroom. No. Balcony. No.

Phone is ringing, ringing. 'Njan Oru Sindhu Kaavadi Chindhu' song from superhit 1985 Tamil film *Sindhu Bhairavi*. I thought, stupid phone. It rings means world should stop spinning or what. It's ok. I will call back later. As if I am managing director of Murugappa Group and some emergency is there.

Then it stopped ringing. Just as I was finishing first chapter, it started ringing again. My god, why Graham Bell invented telephone instead of something useful like rosemilk flavoured mysur pak.

Suddenly, Mrs. Mathrubootham came into living room like pneumonia enters lungs. She said, "Old man how many times I have told you just because rosemilk is there, don't switch off your brain. Your phone was inside fridge. If I hear that song one more time, I will put it in pressure cooker for four whistles minimum."

Madam/Sir, why so much jealousy of Suhasini? Am I jealous of Madhavan? No. Why? Because I can act.

Anyway, I looked at my phone and it was unknown number. Suspicious.

I picked up the phone. "Hello Mathrubootham, this is Kale. Your old friend from Ongole branch."

Madam/Sir, too much flashback came suddenly. I could not control emotions. "Oh my god, Mr. Kale, it has been decades and decades. What a pleasant surprise."

Many years ago, when I was working in Ongole branch, Mr. Kale came on temporary transfer from one branch near Pune. I am thinking it was Pimpri branch. Did we have branch in Pimpri in those days? Maybe Chinchwad?

Anyway, Mr. Kale was very nice man. Only one problem, sometimes little bit oversmart. I will tell you most famous story. One day, we got call from regional office saying, new customer service initiative. We must put

feedback box near branch main door. Before each customer leaves the branch, we must give feedback form and ask customer to definitely fill.

Madam/Sir, as you will know, asking customers for feedback is like asking mosquito to do blood test. Danger danger danger.

In the beginning, nobody put any feedback. Then manager got nervous and said, 100% if you don't put feedback form you are not allowed to leave branch, security guard will block. So we got many forms, but 85% form said same thing: "Security guard is blocking me, what nonsense."

Feedback danger

Then one day, full and full feedback forms started coming. This is best branch in India. Excellent employees. Superb service. My favourite bank. Mr. Avinash Kale is giving nonstop customer delight.

Head office became very happy. Then disaster. Peon found out Mr. Kale himself was putting feedback forms in during lunch break. Immediately, there was emergency meeting. "This is very bad," I said, "Mr. Avinash Kale, *viparidhabuddhi*, why are doing like this?" I said it in jest but it became world famous in Bank.

Since then, everyone called him 'Viparidhabuddhi'. On the phone he said, "Mathrubootham, I am in Chennai right now. Just came from Singapore, flight for Delhi is leaving at night. I am calling from airport booth. Shall we have one coffee?"

Immediately, I went to airport and we met after decades and decades. And then even better thing happened. Zero battery in my phone because of nonstop ringing. And zero roaming on Viparidhabuddhi's phone. So what option is there? Non-stop talking and talking only.

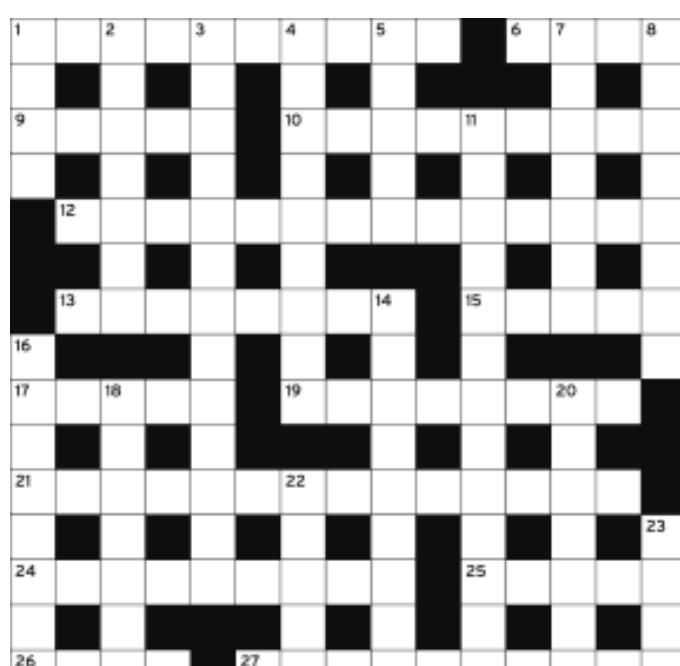
What a wonderful experience, madam/sir. These days and all who is doing face-to-face conversation? All out of fashion. We had lunch also and then I came back home and said, Kamalam, come let me tell you about Mr. Kale.

She said, "Old man, where is the coconut?" I said, "I don't know, maybe on tree?" She said, "Old man, I sent you WhatsApp message to buy coconut when you come. I gave her my phone."

"Kamalam," I said, "you give it four whistles."

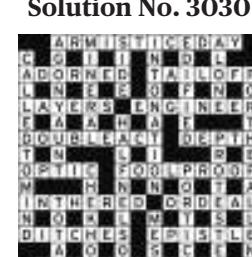
Yours in nostalgia satisfaction,
J. Mathrubootham

THE SUNDAY CROSSWORD NO. 3031



Crossword

- 1 Forceful machine one steered in quiet waterway (4,6)
- 6 See second best round (4)
- 9 House style according to declaration (5)
- 10 Scrambled over a dune, making an effort (9)
- 12 Part of building above foundations getting great new rust remedy – about time (14)
- 13 Roll into hearing in court (8)
- 15 Dull affair having no end (5)
- 17 Reel around in circles (5)
- 19 Final section from record, one left by villain, not right (8)
- 21 Heat's damaged container, perhaps, depending on circumstances (2,3,4,3,2)
- 24 Bed occupied by male with obvious illness (9)
- 25 Area in pub became finally empty (5)
- 26 Weighty book from my perspective (4)
- 27 Sharp sequence in neat broadcast (10)
- 28 Aimed at gain in trade all over the place (8)
- 11 Compromise? Hotel for instance offers it (13)
- 14 Garland around tree's not normally seen in city (9)
- 16 Definite corruption of cruel act (5-3)
- 18 Choose centre for holiday with mother? Perfect (7)
- 20 Universal fury about doctor causing offence (7)
- 22 False name, sadly, one admitted (5)
- 23 Garment in attractive style (4)



Solution No. 3030