

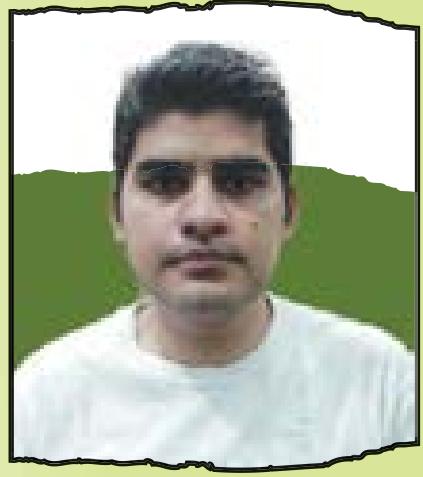


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25 lakh more to get benefit under scheme for farmers, says Patnaik

Farmers' welfare top priority, says BJD chief at rally; party team meets EC in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday promised that 25 lakh more identified peasants will get ₹10,000 under the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme on the day the Biju Janata Dal forms the government again in Odisha.

Addressing a public meeting at Jeypore in Koraput district on Friday, he said a list of 25 lakh more farmers has been prepared who will get the benefit under the scheme. "Not a single farmer will be left out," he reiterated. According to him, 40 lakh farmers have already benefited from this scheme.

Although the party election manifesto is yet to be declared, Mr. Patnaik said "farmers' welfare" was his top priority.

Mr. Patnaik's promise coincided with a meeting of a BJD team with the Election Com-



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik addressing a poll meeting at Mathili in Malkangiri district on Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

mission of India in New Delhi

on Friday afternoon. The team demanded permission for disbursement of its stalled second instalment. It alleged that the Odisha Chief Electoral Officer was not allowing disbursement of funds under the KALIA scheme citing model code of conduct, while there was no such restriction on transfer of funds under the Centre's 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana'.

On Friday, Mr. Patnaik had a whirlwind campaign tour of

the Maoist-affected Malkangiri district and Koraput district. He addressed public meetings at five places to campaign for Lok Sabha and Assembly candidates in Nabarangpur and Koraput parliamentary constituencies. Following Maoist violence in bordering Chhattisgarh that saw four security personnel being killed, security was tight during his visit.

At Kalimela and Mathili in Malkangiri district, he promised to alleviate the pro-

blems of Bengali settlers, terming them as family members. Bengali refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan had been settled in Malkangiri and Nabarangpur districts since 1972.

Polavaram project

Mr. Patnaik also addressed rallies at Pottangi, Jashwantpur, Dumuriput and Jeypore in Koraput district. At all these places he alleged that leaders of national parties visited Odisha only during election time for votes. He also came down on the Polavaram project in Andhra Pradesh, promoted by the Central government, that is expected to adversely affect life and livelihood of tribals in Malkangiri district. He criticised the BJP-led Central government for stopping the Central assistance for development of the KBK region and scholarship of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students of Odisha.

A fight among Kondh leaders in Koraput

It will be a triangular contest in this parliamentary seat reserved for STs

SIB KUMAR DAS
BERHAMPUR

It will be a triangular contest among Kondh tribal leaders in Odisha's Koraput Lok Sabha seat, which is reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST).

Kausalya Hikaka, wife of sitting MP Jhina Hikaka, is the BJD candidate, while the Congress has fielded Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, son of former State Minister Ramchandra Ulaka. Former BJD Koraput MP Jayaram Pangi is the BJP candidate. All of them are from the Kondh community. According to an

estimate, the constituency has around 47% Kondh tribals.

Apart from these three, Bhaskar Mutuka of the BSP, Samodar Sabar of the CPI-ML (Liberation), Banamali Majhi of the Ambedkarite Party of India and Rajendra Kendruka of the CPI-ML (Red Star) are also in the fray.

In 2014, Mr. Hikaka had defeated Congress candidate Giridhar Gamang, former Odisha Chief Minister and nine-time MP from Koraput. His wife Hema Gamang, as Congress candidate, had

won the 1999 by-election when Mr. Gamang vacated the seat to become the Chief Minister.

Mr. Gamang, a Saura tribal, the second largest tribal populace in this constituency, is now in the BJD and is expected to add to the tribal support for Mr. Pangi. Interestingly, in the 2009 Lok Sabha poll, Mr. Pangi as a BJD candidate had defeated Mr. Gamang, then in the Congress.

Since its inception in 1957, Koraput remained a Congress bastion till 2004. In

2014, the seat was bagged by the BJD, yet three of its Assembly seats in Koraput district – Jeypore, Laxmipur and Koraput – went to the Congress. The Congress is trying hard to regain its old bastion.

The other four Assembly seats in this constituency – Pottangi in Koraput district and Gunupur, Bisamkata, Rayagada in Rayagada district – went to the BJD. The BJD is also eyeing this parliamentary seat, hoping to gain from the loss of support base of the Congress.



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SC grants bail
to former
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The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to former Himachal Pradesh Inspector General of Police Zahur Haider Zaidi, an accused in the case related to the custodial death of a man who was among those arrested for gang-raping a minor girl in Kotkhai in Shimla in 2017.

The apex court, while granting bail to Mr. Zaidi, said it would later deal with the aspect of transferring the trial to Delhi from a Himachal Pradesh court.

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RISE	06:51	SET 19:39
SUNDAY, APRIL 07		
RISE	06:05	SET 18:42
RISE	07:28	SET 20:34
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Left parties to contest eight seats in Bihar

In direct fight with BJP nominees in Ara and Begusarai and three-cornered fights elsewhere

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

Largely cold-shouldered by the Mahagathbandhan in Bihar, the Left parties will be contesting eight out of the 40 Lok Sabha seats in the State. On six of them, they are likely to make the fight a triangular one, while the Left candidates are in a direct fight with BJP nominees in Ara and Begusarai.

Under the seat-sharing pact among Grand Alliance constituents, the three Left parties – CPI, CPI(M) and CPI (ML) could not be accommodated beyond the lone seat of Ara, which the RJD left for CPI (ML) from its own quota of 20 seats. In turn, the CPI (ML) withdrew its candidate from Patliputra seat in favour of RJD candidate Misa Bharti, the elder daughter of party

chief Lalu Prasad. The CPI (ML) has a significant electoral presence in this constituency.

"It was more to ensure smooth sailing for Ms. Bharti on Patliputra seat that the RJD left the Ara seat for the CPI (ML)," said political analyst Ajay Kumar. The official explanation of RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav, however, is that there is little room for ma-

nœuvre. "There are several alliance partners in the Mahagathbandhan and the number of seats remains at 40. We had to accommodate everyone... Somehow the Left parties got left out," he told *The Hindu*.

The CPI has fielded candidates in Begusarai (Kanhaiya Kumar), East Champaran (Prabhakar Jaiswal) and Madhubani, for which the candidates have not been named yet.

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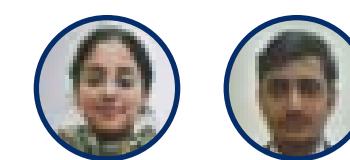
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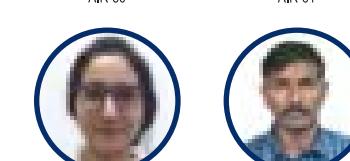
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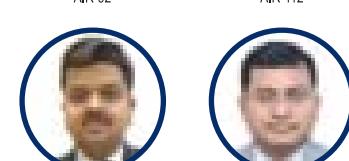
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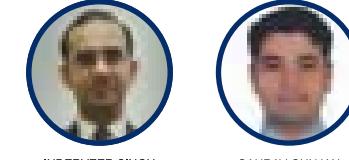
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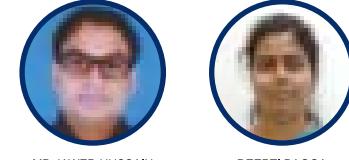
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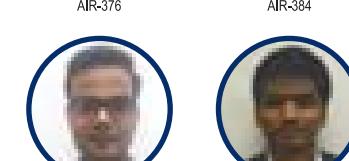
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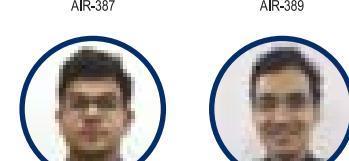
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IN BRIEF



Modi biopic to be released on April 11

MUMBAI
The biopic on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, featuring Vivek Oberoi in the lead, will hit theatres on April 11, film's producer Sandip Singh tweeted on Friday. The censor board had earlier said the film was still undergoing due process of examination. The Opposition parties had criticised the biopic saying it could give undue advantage to the BJP in the election.

Inmates, staff clash in Srinagar Central Jail

Srinagar
Authorities of the Srinagar Central Jail on Friday said there was "heavy damage" to jail property following clashes between inmates and jail personnel on Thursday night. Around 400 inmates damaged the premises in a attempt to break open the jail gates. They used LPG cylinders from the mess and triggered four blasts near the gate, an official release said.

ED attaches assets worth ₹83.8 crore in fraud case

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth ₹83.92 crore of Udaipur Entertainment World and others in connection with a ₹1,055-crore bank fraud in Rajasthan. The total attachment of assets in the case now stands at ₹386.58 crore. The agency has already filed chargesheets against 81 accused in the case.

Clarification & apology

A report from Srinagar, headlined "Jammu grenade thrower is a minor, says police", published on March 9, 2019, referred by name to a 15-year-old person, mentioned the class he was studying in and identified the village he hailed from.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, Section 74, lays down that no media report on "any inquiry or investigation or judicial procedure shall disclose the name, address or school or any other particular which may lead to the identification of a child in conflict with law..."

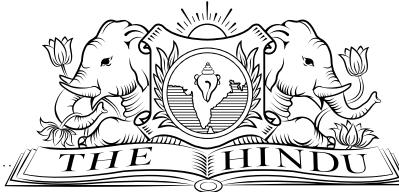
The disclosure of identity is also in violation of Rule 97, Chapter V of The Jammu and Kashmir Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2013 and Rules 2014. *The Hindu* apologises for the error of judgment that led to the breach of the law. — Editor

SC to hear Bhushan's plea on electoral bonds

A-G dubs counsel's plea poll speech



Prashant Bhushan



Country before party

The British Prime Minister's cross-party talks may avert a chaotic Brexit

This week, British pragmatism finally found its voice in the U.K.'s complex exit process from the European Union. The government's deliberations over a withdrawal had been held hostage by the English nationalists among the Conservative party who demand an exit sans an agreement. Prime Minister Theresa May, who had long insisted that "no deal with Brussels was better than a bad deal", declared on Tuesday that London would not quit without an accord. She clarified she would seek an extension of the April 12 deadline, which she did duly on Friday. Parliamentarians are trying to pass legislation that would require the government to avoid a no-deal Brexit – it has passed through the Commons by a slim majority and awaits its final stages. The government had opposed these moves, initiated by Conservative and Labour MPs in recent parliamentary votes. In a bold but risky gambit, Ms. May began talks with Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn to help break the deadlock. While the government has insisted it remains against a customs union, the talks with Labour, which strongly advocates this along with worker and environmental protections, mean that this is inevitably on the table. This is resisted vehemently by many Conservatives. Few seriously believe that Ms. May and Mr. Corbyn will agree to a deal. Equally, the Prime Minister will be severely constrained by the infuriated hardline eurosceptics within her party to not concede too much. That would force the government to ask Parliament once again to find a majority for any one of several alternatives, including the thrice-rejected withdrawal accord. These 'indicative' votes failed to deliver a majority to join an EU customs union, offer a second referendum, or revoke Brexit. But these proposals are certain to be put before Parliament with modifications drawn from inputs across different parties.

Calls for a second referendum, once voiced rather mutely by hardcore remainers, have emerged as a legislative proposal. The prevailing state of chaos and confusion, almost three years after the 2016 referendum, has caused immense frustration among businesses and people. But with Parliament having assumed charge of the process – which seems irreversible – there is reason to hope for clarity and certainty. Admittedly, Ms. May's commitment to a cross-party approach to deliver Brexit has come rather late in the day. But her willingness to put country above party at last has the potential to prevent the catastrophe of Britain going over the cliff when the date of departure eventually approaches. That is no small comfort going by the government's own assessment of the economic and social impact of the step, besides protecting the peace across Ireland.

Probing the probe

HC remarks on Jayalalithaa death probe panel are a needed caution against a roving inquiry. It is quite apposite that the Madras High Court has cautioned the Justice A. Arumugaswamy Commission of Inquiry, which is probing the circumstances leading up to the hospitalisation and demise of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, against exceeding its brief. The commission, through its counsel's questions and averments, has been unusually proactive in attributing motives to or casting aspersions on doctors who treated her at a corporate hospital for 75 days in 2016. Although the court concluded that the commission's functioning has not been vitiated by bias, it has voiced apprehension about some aspects. For instance, it questioned the "strange" procedure adopted by the commission in having its own advocate file applications and counter-statements, when it could have passed *suo motu* any order necessary in relation to the proceedings. It described as "unnecessary and unwarranted", even "disturbing", some of the averments made by the commission's counsel in applications and replies. The Division Bench did not go so far as to invalidate the proceedings, as nearly all of the work has been done, but it questioned the need for the fact-finding body to attribute "collusion", "conspiracy" and "fraud" to the hospital, or anyone else. The hospital had argued that the commission was biased against it, citing denial of adjournments on its doctors' request, posing of questions and suggestions casting aspersions on their testimony and credentials, and other forms of "harassment". The court found no merit in any of these accusations.

The appointment of the commission of inquiry itself was a political move. It is true that there was speculation about the nature of Jayalalithaa's illness and some public misgivings about the adequacy of the treatment given to her. A shadow was cast on the role of her close aide, V.K. Sasikala, who is now serving a prison term in Bengaluru. However, it is doubtful if such speculation provided the material basis needed to order a probe, especially a fishing expedition into anything that can be fitted into the term "circumstances surrounding" a leader's death. The Tamil Nadu government ordered the inquiry as part of a political compromise under which a judicial probe was made a pre-condition for the merger of two factions of the ruling AIADMK. Given this background, it was inevitable that the commission's functioning would come under scrutiny. Its credibility and image would have gone up had the court agreed to the constitution of a medical board, comprising doctors drawn from various specialties, to assist it. Instead, it has chosen to reject the request by citing the deputation of some government doctors to go through the case records. Now that the court has found that there is nothing to suggest bias or malice on the commission's part, it has a duty to complete its fact-finding mission without giving further room for speculation that it is moving towards any pre-determined conclusion.

A challenging text

By reworking the Indian dream, the Congress manifesto has opened up the space of politics



SHIV VISVANATHAN

Manifestos are generally acts of defiance and hope, which combine wishful thinking with critique. Manifestos have created world views and lived on as political and literary classics. The Congress manifesto is not quite literary or memorable but it contains within it nuggets which can shape the democratic process. In fact, there is a touch of nostalgia and dream, as the manifesto echoes Tagore's vision of a land where the mind is without fear.

Between the binaries

The Congress document begins with a set of dualisms marking alternative choices between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and itself. The polarities are stark. The battle is between freedom and fear, harmony and hatred, exclusion and inclusion. There is a poetry to these pages before one moves to the prose of policy choices. The BJP senses the power of this text and responds by calling the Opposition the Tukde-Tukde gang. For the BJP the election is a battle between unity and disorder. One suddenly realises that it has dropped its economic development plank and become 'secularitarian', hinting that a vote for the Congress is a regression to instability.

There is a hidden politics here which the manifesto exploits. The BJP is ideologically a votary of the nation state, of law and order, of patriotism as a world view. Sensing the weakness of this strategy, the Congress offers a broad weave of rights-based strategies, which provides a wide spectrum of solu-

tions including employment guarantees, the revival of agriculture and a critique of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act. What we have in front of us are two models of governance, modelling as two variants of democracy. The differences are stark but the Congress has at least acquired the humility to tacitly critique its errors. One wishes it had paid more attention to corruption. But its attempt to create a transformative policy of rights is genuinely welcome.

There is also a difference in world views. The BJP has a commitment to a liberal economic order serving corporate interests. The Congress manifesto makes a similar claim but one senses its claims to welfarism reflect more its socialist unconscious. But the choice, however, becomes starker. A law and order party is ready to battle a rights-oriented party which is dreaming a return to welfarism.

One must confess manifestos have been ignored in recent times, but by reworking the Indian dream, the Congress manifesto has created a challenging text that opens up the space of politics while making electoralism a real politics of choice – a choice not as a knee-jerk response between two fixed options, but as a dream of alternative possibilities which takes citizenship and agency seriously. There are shades of rethinking India especially around agriculture and institution-building. The pity is that the focus is uneven. A critique of the BJP idea of institutions would have added to the power of the document.

The employment pivot

Manifestos exude a sense of the magical which derives from the power of keywords. If there is a keyword that dominates the Congress document, it is employment. The spectre of unemployment becomes a counter to the spectre of



R.A. MORTARY

national insecurity. To counter the Modi model, the Congress offers a millennialism of jobs. The promise of a minimum guaranteed income has stolen the thunder from guarantees of national security. The Congress has promised to transfer ₹72,000 per year to the poorest families. This, accompanied by job creation, shifts the agenda from poverty alleviation to job creation, shifting agency back to the poor. The range of employment offered includes "make for the world", which sounds like a direct spoof of the BJP's much-touted "Make in India". By making job creation the major focus, the manifesto emphasises one of the key failures of the BJP-led government at the Centre, its inability to create jobs or to confront an economy in which the number of jobs is declining.

But what is sociologically fascinating is that it links employment to the future of the cities. The city now becomes a vision of startups for employment, and one wishes the Congress had elaborated this idea. The other part of employment which is different from the BJP's vision is the Congress's attempt to systematically link ecology and employment to regeneration of wastelands and recovery of water bodies.

Also central to the manifesto's economic imagination is the attempt to revive agriculture, especially through the Karpal Mukti programme, which also decriminalises debt. Yet while

agriculture is talked about in terms of commissions and prices, one wishes the Congress had emphasised agriculture as trusteeship of diversity and ways of life. Agriculture has to contain a wider vision of society if it has to be economically effective. A mention of its own past reflection of agriculture would have made its intentions more authentic. Its critique of the Fasal Bima Yojana is important because often reform enriches corporates at the expense of farmers. One senses the Congress has acquired a sense of the ironies of agriculture policy over the last few decades.

Rights-based model

If the revival of agriculture is one welcome strand of the Congress manifesto, its rights-based model of institution-building is another powerful counter to the Modi model of governance.

Its attempt to challenge the BJP

similar set of paragraphs on defunct tribes promises an immediate repeal of the Habitual Offenders Act.

The power of the second half of the manifesto stems from its link between governance and institution building. The emphasis on transparency and accountability is welcome. The Congress promises not only that it won't tamper with the Reserve Bank of India but also that it will let the media self-regulate itself. Its promise to strengthen the Right to Information and remove provisions which have diluted it is necessary. Yet there is an overall sensitivity when it observes that "we are an over legislated and over regulated country". Its attempt to decriminalise laws dealing with civil violations is a part of this perspective.

The Congress promises to review AFSPA and relocate at the National Register of Citizens in Assam. One senses a party rethinking itself at the institutional level. One wishes it had been more thoughtful in details about climate change but one smells the beginning of a different concern for the Anthropocene.

Wish list or actionable?

One can dismiss the document as a wish list, as a set of promises – or one can read between the lines and see a party groping to a freshness of thought, indicating it is no longer obsessed with its past but inventing itself for a future. Reading it and placing it next to the arrogance of the BJP's sense of achievement, one realises that hubris is not one of the party's problems. A tentative manifesto is often more attractive than boring repetitions of a party which sees itself as inevitable.

Shiv Visvanathan is an academic associated with the Compost Heap, a group in pursuit of alternative ideas and imagination

Privacy in the age of sunshine laws

The final judgment on the judiciary's right to privacy could have a bearing on other categories of people



PRASHANT REDDY T. &
VAIDEHI MISRA

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has finally concluded hearing a crucial appeal (after being nine years in cold storage) under the Right to Information Act (RTI), 2005. One of the three crucial questions raised in this case pertains to whether judges are required to publicly disclose their assets under the RTI Act in light of Section 8(I)(j). This provision prohibits the sharing of personal information that has no nexus to public activity or which amounts to an unwarranted invasion of privacy unless the larger public interest justifies such a disclosure.

The five judges hearing the matter face a difficult choice. Any attempt by them to assert the fundamental right to privacy as the basis for not disclosing assets to the public would necessarily require an implied overruling of landmark judgments in *PUCL* (2003) and *Lok Prahari v. Union of India* (2018), in which smaller benches of the

court rubbed the privacy claims of the political class while forcing them to publicly disclose not just their assets but also the sources of their income. The final ruling of the Constitution Bench will also impact the contentious Section 44 of the Lokpal Act, 2013, which requires all public servants (this includes judges) to disclose their assets but is silent on whether the disclosure should be to the competent authority or the general public. This provision has already been the subject of an amendment in 2016.

As RTI application

This case has its origins in an RTI application filed in 2007 in which the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the Supreme Court was asked by Subash Agrawal whether the judges of the Supreme Court had complied with the terms of a resolution adopted in 1997, in which all judges had committed to disclosing information about their assets and liabilities to the Chief Justice of India (CJI). The resolution had specifically mandated that the information would remain "confidential". In 2005, Parliament passed the RTI Act, creating a legal right to demand information held by public authorities which arguably also includes the CJI.

When the matter reached the Delhi High Court, both the single judge and the Full Bench conclud-

edly that judges, like other public servants, had a fundamental right to privacy. This right, it held, could only be curtailed if the RTI applicant demonstrated a showing of "larger public interest" as required by Section 8(I)(j) of the RTI Act. In other words, public servants as a class of employees cannot be forced to disclose their personal assets to the public merely because they hold public posts. However, in individual cases, if the person seeking such information could demonstrate a "larger public interest" such as wrongdoing or impropriety on the part of the public official, the information could be disclosed.

The implications

It is likely that the Supreme Court will follow the Delhi High Court's reasoning because of its own decision from 2012 in *Girish Ramchandra Deshpande v. Central Information Commissioner*. The court was faced with a case where an RTI applicant sought information on the service record and assets of a serving bureaucrat. In a very brief judgment, the Supreme Court ruled that the assets of the bureaucrat could not be revealed to an applicant under the RTI Act unless there was a showing of a larger public interest. The applicant could not demonstrate the larger public

interest and was denied the information.

A lot has happened on the privacy front since 2012. The litigation and the civil society campaign against Aadhaar resulted in a unanimous judgment from nine judges of the Supreme Court declaring informational privacy as a component of the fundamental right to privacy. When the Constitution Bench decides on Mr. Agrawal's appeal, it will most likely be viewing the privacy right enshrined in Section 8(I)(j) of the RTI Act through the lens of the Aadhaar judgment. If the Bench decides that all Supreme Court and High Court judges have a fundamental right to privacy (only two of the five judges hearing the case have voluntarily disclosed their assets) and that judges cannot be forced to disclose their assets to the public, questions will be asked as to why the court forced politicians to publicly disclose their assets and sources of income. It would then be only a matter of time before politicians and their spouses seek the overturning of the *PUCL* and *Lok Prahari* judgments, thereby turning back the clock on electoral transparency.

Prashant Reddy T. and Vaidehi Misra work on judicial reforms at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, New Delhi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Pre-poll survey

It would have been appropriate for the ruling dispensation to have gone to the electorate with its report card of what has been achieved against the backdrop of what had been promised (Page 1, "Balakot, quota & sop for farmers gave PM a boost", April 5). Though the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies-Lokniti-The Hindu-Tiranga TV-Dainik Bhaskar Pre-Poll Survey, 2019 finds that 43% of respondents favour Narendra Modi as Prime Minister, it also implies that 57% have a different choice. Though the Survey is not to be relied on in its entirety, it remains to be seen how far it is going to have an impact on voting patterns.

A. JAINALBEEN,
Chennai

■ The pre-election survey makes one thing clear – that

the impact of the Rafale issue is negligible. It is true that the debate, discussion and discourse around the subject have all taken place in educated circles and not among the rural masses, who are the voters who matter. At least now all those concerned should take it up for wider discussion among the masses to allow them to decide what they feel.

A.G. RAJMOHAN,
Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

Rahul in Wayanad
The statement by Congress president Rahul Gandhi after filing his nomination papers in Wayanad, Kerala, that he would not criticise the CPI (M) and "that he would absorb the CPI(M) attacks against him with happiness" was amusing to read ("Rahul files papers in Wayanad, promises not to attack CPI (M)", April 5). The Congress and the CPI(M) have been fighting each other in Kerala

on many issues. As such, it appears strange that the Congress can expect to get votes without attacking the CPI(M). Mr. Gandhi's campaign could confuse his party cadre in Kerala.

D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

■ The overwhelming support Mr. Gandhi enjoys was evident in the response he evoked before and after filing his papers. It is most unfortunate that the ruling party, and especially the Prime Minister, have pigeonholed the electorate in Wayanad as a case of "us-and-them". That a constituency's demographic profile is now dissected and spoken about in such shabby terms marks a new low in Indian politics. Members of the minority communities are as much Indian as members of the majority community. It is wrong to see politics through the religious prism. Mr.

Gandhi's statement that he would not say a word against the Left and absorb its attacks during his poll campaign should placate and persuade the Left not to lose sight of the larger political goal – of stopping the BJP's return to power and strengthening secularism, which is a pillar that holds the nation together.

G. DAVID MILTON,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

■ Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is reported to have made an appeal on Twitter asking Wayanad to take care of her brother and also assuring the electorate that he would not let them down. So far so good. But can she make one more assurance? That Mr. Gandhi will retain Wayanad if he wins both Amethi and this seat, take care of the constituency and never let his electors down?

E. SETHURAMALINGAM,
Kollam, Kerala

■ Mr. Gandhi's move may force the Left Democratic Front and the National Democratic Alliance to rethink their strategies. It may also compel the BJP to rethink its game-plan to bank on the Sabarimala issue. In fact, a leader hailing from the north deciding to contest from the south makes for a good outreach strategy. It will help the Congress drive home the point that its leader has a pan-India outlook as opposed to the Prime Minister who, in 2014, chose to contest from two seats, both in north India.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

■ The reason behind Mr. Gandhi's decision is pure and simple. It is not to jeopardise the prospects of the Left but rather to ensure his own electoral victory since Amethi is no longer a safe bet. This is a case of pure opportunism and a clear indication that Mr. Gandhi is insecure and hence desperate. It is unfortunate that the Congress does not even have a statesman who can guide him.

V. LAKSHMANAN,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

The iconic Ambassador
The letter by a reader ('Letters to the Editor', April 5), on the Ambassador car, shows that the car still enjoys legendary status in India. The comfort of a ride in the Ambassador, especially when seated in the rear, cannot be matched even by present-day fancy and technologically advanced sedans. The car's unique feature of easy ingress and egress makes it a desirable car even today. I do wish it makes a comeback on Indian roads.

S. RAVISHANKAR,
Chennai

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:
www.hindu.com/opinion/letters/

Encroachers on their own lands

In Chhattisgarh, the Forest Rights Act potentially allows 7.4 million tribal and other traditional forest dwellers to claim land rights. However, half these claims have been rejected and the land siphoned off, often arbitrarily. **Jacob Koshy** reports on the difficulties in implementing the Act and the plight of the Adivasis

Three years ago, Sunder Singh Kumeti, a Gond tribal, lost access to a parcel of land in the forest that he and his family had foraged for two generations. Before that, Kumeti recalls his work routine as being more or less the same everyday from boyhood. He would walk, along with his fellow villagers, several kilometres into the forest abutting his village looking for flowers from the mahua tree, or wood from the stout sal tree. His village, Patkalbeda, located in Antagarh panchayat of Kanker district in Chhattisgarh, is mostly forest area, though not classified as a reserve forest or a protected area.

Alongside maintaining their rice fields, collecting forest produce is a key economic activity for the nearly 30 families of the village. To collect berries and wood, the average Patkalbeda tribal forays 8-10 km deep into the forest. Fruits and timber apart, the palms – particularly the 'salphi' tree, known to produce a sweet, milky, alcoholic liquid – are also considered the bounty of these parts. The deciduous forests of this region, which make up the northern half of Bastar, are classified as 'moderately dense' by the forest law. Collecting and trading this produce with townsfolk has been a generations-old practice, says Kumeti. He imagined that life would be no different for his children. But that was not to be.

A year that changed lives

In September 2016, Kumeti and the residents of his village witnessed a cavalcade of trucks bearing iron rods, earth-moving equipment and large vats of cement mixers rolling into these areas. It didn't occur to Kumeti then that the collective fate of his village was going to irrevocably change. Some of the men accompanying the vehicles looked familiar: they were contractors with whom Kumeti had dealt with as a trader and who frequently visited for forest produce. This time, however, there were other men – from the Indian Railways, from the Bhilai Steel Plant, and officers from the Chhattisgarh forest department. They told Kureti and 15 others that tracts of land in Patkalbeda were being acquired for the Dallirajhara-Rowghat-Jagdalpur railway line.

In April 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a section of that railway line connecting Dallirajhara, in Balod district, and a traditional source of iron ore, to Bhanupratappur in north Bastar. The proposed 235 km-long track would connect the Rowghat mines (that local experts say has enough iron ore to last a century) to the mainland, and reduce the behemoth Bhilai Steel Plant's dependence on the Dallirajhara mines, which have iron ore that is estimated to last for only a few years. "The Rowghat-Jagdalpur line will reduce rail distance between Raipur to Jagdalpur by about 260 km. This will boost socio-economic interaction between the capital of Chhattisgarh and backward areas in and around Bastar region," a Press Information Bureau statement said then.

The rail project has been in the works for several decades but because of its location in the heart of the Bastar region, and proximity to regions with Naxalite presence, it saw glacial progress.

But in Patkalbeda, from September to November in 2016, workers cut nearly 300 sal, saja and fruit trees for the purpose of surveying and prospecting the forest. The next year, they deployed heavy machinery and destroyed swathes of standing crop, mostly rice, says Kumeti. By January 2018, the machines had uprooted several more trees as well as stumps of those that were previously hacked. In the course of this destruction, acres of land became unfit for cultivation. Kumeti doesn't know how much land he lost. Sanganath Dugga, 50, another resident of the village, says he lost three acres of land. Masooram, 42, Dugga's immediate neighbour, says he lost five acres.

Implementing the FRA

Kumeti, Dugga and Masooram are fortunate, for they have, at least in theory, recourse to a landmark piece of legislation, which was framed in order to correct historical injustice to Adivasis.



"A key reason for complications in the implementation of the FRA is the process of staking a claim." On paper, Sunder Singh Kumeti, a Gond tribal, is the owner of 2.5 acres of forest land. However, a portion of this land was taken for the Dallirajhara-Rowghat-Jagdalpur railway line, he claims. (Below) Kumeti holds the title deed that shows his claim over forest land. He is surrounded by his neighbours in Patkalbeda village.

■ NAGARA GOPAL

For the several thousand forest villages of India, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, which is informally called the Forest Rights Act or FRA, is a single sheet of laminated paper. This *patta*, or title deed, which is zealously guarded by owners, is often their most valuable possession, attesting to the rights to their land in the forest as well as to the number of acres they are entitled to. A key benefit of the deed is that villagers whose land is acquired by the government stand to gain monetary compensation.

As per the provisions of the FRA, forest dwellers have individual rights and villagers have community rights over tracts of land that they are allowed to manage in ways they deem fit. Any transfer of land for non-forest purposes requires the prior consent of gram sabha.

On paper, Kumeti is the owner of 2.5 acres of forest land. However, a portion of this land was taken for the railway project, he claims. And to ensure that Kumeti and fellow claimants to the forest land stay clear of the railway lines, there are now Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) forces stationed there. Attempts by villagers to point out stretches of their land which have now been made inaccessible are being thwarted by the heavily armed patrol. Work at the railway line came to a halt earlier this year after a "mini agitation" by the villagers,

one of the stationed SSB troops says. "Last year, half a kilometre from where we're standing, an improvised explosive device was detonated by the Naxalites. The government is extremely sensitive to the presence of anyone over here," he says.

While Kumeti has a piece of paper certifying his possession of the land, Soham Darro says his claims over a piece of land have been rejected. The head of a family of four, Darro owns some pasture land, but a sizeable portion ("at least three acres") in the reserved forest has been denied to him. Darro deposited with the village office documents to prove ownership, but they never made it back to him. "I was asked to deposit an application as well as proof of residence at the panchayat office two years ago. After that, I've never seen those papers. I don't know how I'm supposed to get them back," he says.

Kumeti and Darro are residents of the same village and their experiences exemplify the two major challenges in implementing the FRA effectively. Forest land that should ideally be managed by the gram sabha is not always legally transferred to the village community, and, sometimes, individuals are unable to claim ownership of their land.

In a blow to Kumeti and millions of others like him across India, the Supreme Court, on February 13, ordered that all Adivasis and forest dwellers whose claims under the FRA have been rejected should be evicted from the forests by July 2019. This was on the back of a petition in the court by some environment groups demanding that those who didn't have proof to identify themselves as forest dwellers be marked as encroachers and evicted. Their premise, it was argued, endangered wildlife and forest conservation efforts.

Following protests, the court temporarily stayed its own order on February 28, and directed the States to compile the reasons for rejecting the claims and explain whether and how due process had been followed.

A land of minerals

Chhattisgarh, 45% of which is forest area, hosts some of India's richest mineral deposits, including coal, iron ore, bauxite and limestone. Forest land was once the fiefdom of the British. Following Independence, it was seen as the elusive turf of the forest bureaucracy. However, after the enactment of the FRA and with mounting instances of the exploitation of this economic wealth to the detriment of Adivasis, the state's control over these forests is being contested by the tribal and forest-dwelling populace.

The FRA was enacted to recognise the close connection of Adivasis share with forests and their natural claim to forest land and its produce. Since the

FRA came into force on December 31, 2007, there have been 4.2 million title claims over 14 million acres of forest land nationwide, of which only 1.8 million have been accorded, according to November 2018 data from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Chhattisgarh topped the list among States. Nearly 8.9 lakh title claims, by individuals and communities, were made in the State. Only 4.16 lakh claims, or less than half, were actually granted. The rejection rate was also highest in Chhattisgarh among the States, the data indicate.

"Chhattisgarh epitomises the necessity of the FRA. It has rich natural wealth, which corporations and industry desire. There is a large tribal population that is dependent on the forests. Yet, awareness of the FRA is poor, from the district administration level to the forest officials," says Alok Shukla, convenor of the Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan, a coalition of activist groups that works on FRA matters.

In Chhattisgarh, the FRA has the potential to secure the rights and livelihoods of more than 7.4 million Adivasis and traditional forest dwellers, who constitute 32% of the State's population and are spread over at least 3.02 million hectares in over 11,500 villages. Only 5% of the total Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes population in Chhattisgarh has claimed individual forest resource rights. There are no data on titles recognised in favour of women. Community forest resource rights have also not been recognised in Chhattisgarh, says Puja Priyadarshini, a lawyer and activist with the Community Forest Resource-Learning and Advocacy, an NGO network that among other things analyses the political impact of FRA implementation.

The procedure of staking a claim

A key reason for complications in implementation of the FRA is the process of staking a claim. Adivasis may claim individual rights over forest areas if they can prove that they have been residents of the area before December 13, 2005. Their claims are vetted by a three-layered system: the gram sabha, where the claims are first submitted; a sub-divisional-level committee (SDLC) headed by a government officer; and a district-level committee (DLC) headed by the district collector.

Forest claims have to be accompanied by documentary evidence such as government identity cards, statements by elders, and physical evidence of possession or use of land. The gram sabha's forest rights committee verify the claims. If the gram sabha is satisfied, it directs the claims to the SDLC for review. If approved, the claim is forwarded to the DLC, which is the final legal authority to approve or reject claims.

The FRA specifies that claimants



We understand that the government requires land for developmental projects and we aren't against it. However, we would like our children to benefit too. What else can we bequeath them?

SANGANATH DUGGA
Resident, Patkalbeda village

can't be rejected without a personal hearing and they need to be provided, in writing, the reasons for rejections. "Most of the rejections take place at the gram sabha level," says Shukla. "Often forest and village officials, who are not supposed to be in the gram sabha committees, call the shots. The asymmetry of power is very evident in these interactions."

Keshav Shori, founder of DISHA, an organisation that scouts forests for Adivasi settlements to educate residents about the FRA and the need to file title claims, says that in the pursuit of forest land, officials frequently concoct rules, or bring in provisions of irrelevant legislation to lay claim to forest land. "The FRA says land cannot be taken away by the government until forest rights are recognised. Often, rules that apply to non-forest lands, such as the Land Acquisition Act or the Panchayat Act, are used to capture forest land," he says.

Early last month, the Environment Ministry granted clearance for diverting more than 841.5 hectares of forestland for mining coal in Chhattisgarh's Parsa block. The region is part of the pristine Hasdeo Arand forests. The coal will be mined from the area for use in captive power plants operated by the Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited. The mining operations will be handled by Rajasthan Collieries Limited, a unit of Adani Enterprises. While there are

cases pending in the Supreme Court regarding the allotment of these mining contracts, Shukla says similar exercises are imminent in southern regions of Bastar, that were so far inaccessible because of Naxal activity. "The takeover of forest land by private corporations has led to a certain level of activism and Adivasis are standing up for their rights in Sarguja and Parsa. But a lot more training and awareness programmes are required in these regions (Antagarh and Kanker) to avert situations like these," he says.

Political consequences

The demand for due recognition of forest rights was reflected in the Assembly election results in Chhattisgarh in 2018. In the rural constituencies, the BJP lost favour with the voters, while the Congress made marginal gains, largely because it promised to properly implement the FRA. Overall, the Congress swept the State. After the Supreme Court order, Congress president Rahul Gandhi asked Chief Ministers in Congress-ruled States to file a review petition against the mass eviction of Adivasis and other forest dwellers. Soon after coming to power, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel convened a meeting of district authorities and civil society organisations to discuss ways in which the FRA could be better implemented. "There was a lot of latent anger regarding the poor implementation of the FRA. That impacted the BJP in the election. The Congress has taken over only recently, so the expectations that people have from the party might carry over into the Lok Sabha elections too," says Shori.

An analysis in March by the CFR-LA finds that implementation of forest rights could be a key poll issue in a fourth of India's 543 parliamentary constituencies. In Chhattisgarh, this could resonate in the Bastar, Kanker, Raigarh and Sarguja constituencies. CFR-LA says, given that 43-70% of the voters in these areas stand to gain from proper implementation of the FRA.

Kumeti and his compatriots are divided about the effectiveness of either the BJP or the Congress in this regard. For now, they have put their faith in the court. Through a civil rights organisation, the villagers first petitioned the Collector of Kanker for compensation and jobs in lieu of their land being taken for the project, in November 2015, when they heard whispers that their land was going to be encroached. In January 2018, they finally petitioned the High Court but are yet to hear anything concrete. Dugga says, "We understand that the government requires land for developmental projects and we aren't against it. However, we would like our children to benefit too. What else can we bequeath them?"



INTERVIEW | P. CHIDAMBARAM

'Modi is rattled by the Congress manifesto'

The Prime Minister believes in a presidential system... the Cabinet is completely non-functional and ornamental

D.J. WALTER SCOTT

Former Union Finance Minister and architect of the Congress party's manifesto P. Chidambaram says Prime Minister Narendra Modi is rattled by the promises made in the document. Speaking at his home in Manangiri, near Karaikudi, he also said Mr. Modi would attempt to change India's parliamentary system into a presidential system.

What is your take away from your tour of the country ahead of drafting the Congress manifesto?

■ See, number one [issue] is jobs. People think the government has comprehensively failed to create jobs. They also think that GST and demonetisation destroyed jobs. It created a situation where new jobs have not been created. Number two issue in non-urban areas is farmers' issue. It is obvious that in the last 11 years after the last loan waiver, the farmers' indebtedness has mounted. According to a NABARD report, the average indebtedness is ₹1.04 lakh per farmer. They want some relief against indebtedness. They think the farmers' issue has been neglected by the Modi government and the government is actually favouring only corporates.

The third issue is security. Whoever we met – women, Dalits, minorities, scheduled tribes, writers, artists, self-employed people: auto-rickshaw drivers, taxi drivers – all of them have a sense of insecurity. Young people, young girls, particularly feel that these self-



CIf Modi was a *chowkidar*, how did he allow Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi, the Sandesaras to flee

point to a direction where, if the BJP gets a majority, it will make an attempt to amend the Constitution.

Mr. Modi, I think, personally believes in a presidential system. He is running his government as if he was a president. The Cabinet is completely non-functional and ornamental. He works directly with bureaucrats, bypassing Ministers. I think Mr. Modi will attempt to change the system – from a parliamentary system to a presidential system.

You said there would be no elections once in five years if the BJP retains power...

■ One of the BJP's prominent leaders said this – that 2019 election will be a tsunami; Mr. Modi will be voted back to

power and after that there will be no elections.

How do you see Mr. Modi's 'Chowkidar' plank?

■ *Chowkidar* of what? Who appoints *chowkidars* in their homes? Only the rich appoint *chowkidars*. Do the poor and the middle class appoint *chowkidars* for their homes? So when he says he is *chowkidar*, he is obviously referring to the fact that he is the guardian or watchman of interest of the rich people and the corporate class.

If he was a *chowkidar*, how did he allow Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi, the Sandesaras to flee? All the scamsters fled India under the Modi regime.

Mr. Modi has called the Congress election manifesto a bundle of lies and that it has come with an expiry date of May 23.

■ Why does not Mr. Modi speak about the promises that he made before 2014? Which promise he kept? The Congress manifesto has taken the country by storm. It is the principal talking point across towns and villages. It is obvious that Mr. Modi is rattled by the Congress manifesto and the great thought and effort that had gone into writing the manifesto.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley

quoted economist Abhijit Banerjee to say that the funding for NYAY would be possible only if taxes are raised...

■ We respect Mr. Banerjee's view. But we are also confident we can raise the sources without imposing an increased tax burden on the middle class and the average tax payer.

Mr. Jaitley also said only the merit subsidies will stay...

■ Is Mr. Jaitley admitting that there are non-merit subsidies? Merit subsidy has a special meaning in economics. It means subsidies that are intended to achieve specific socio-economic objectives.

We have made it clear that we will not tamper with any subsidy that intended to achieve specific socio-economic objectives.

What is the significance of Mr. Rahul Gandhi contesting from Wayanad?

■ It is a powerful signal to the people of the southern States that unlike the BJP, which is a north Indian party confined to the Hindi heartland, the Congress is an all India party and treats the southern States with great respect.

The Lokniti survey (published in *The Hindu*) has said the BJP's 10% quota to the economically weaker

sections, PM-KISAN and Balakot air strikes have given Mr. Modi a boost...

■ See, I don't attach any importance to surveys. The surveys were wrong in the last three State elections held in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

How do you assess the impact of demonetisation and the GST regime?

■ Demonetisation and the flawed GST had completely derailed India's economy. Between the two, they destroyed jobs, forced the closure of thousands of micro and small units, hit very badly the medium industries and pushed into debt, a number of daily workers and self-employed people, who had no option but to borrow in the immediate two months after demonetisation. They are still struggling to repay the debt.

There was a controversy over fielding your son Karti in Sivaganga. How was it resolved?

■ There was no controversy. The name was announced after 24 hours (after the first list). Why? Because, Wayanad, Sivaganga and one constituency in Karnataka were under consideration for Mr. Rahul Gandhi to contest. The controversy is only a manufactured controversy.

POLL POURRI



Sonia to file papers on April 11

NEW DELHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi will be filing his nomination from the Amethi Lok Sabha seat on April 10 while his mother and former Congress chief, Sonia Gandhi, will be filing her papers from the Rae Bareli parliamentary constituency a day later. Though there has been no official announcement, party insiders on Thursday said Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will accompany her mother and brother when they file their nomination papers from Uttar Pradesh.

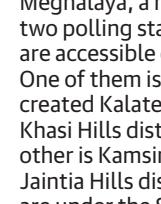
It's businessman vs daily wager



GUWAHATI
Shukur Ali, a 26-year-old daily wager, is contesting Assam's Dhubri Lok Sabha seat against the richest candidate – incumbent Badruddin Ajmal of the All India United Democratic Front. A resident of Madati

Pahar Basti in Kokrajhar district, Mr. Ali has spent ₹20,000 of the ₹50,000 he showed as cash in hand in his affidavit. He is relying more on social media to get support to defeat Mr. Ajmal, who has assets worth ₹75 crore. "I am contesting because he did not keep up the promise of developing our area," Mr. Ali said. The other candidates for the seat include Abu Taher Bepari of Congress, Zabed Islam of Asom Gana Parishad, and Nurul Islam Choudhury of Trinamool Congress.

Booths accessible only by boat



GUWAHATI
Meghalaya, a hill State, has two polling stations that are accessible only by boat. One of them is the newly-created Kalatek in East Khasi Hills district and the other is Kamsing in West Jaintia Hills district. Both are under the Shillong Lok Sabha constituency. Kalatek has 756 voters while Kamsing, Meghalaya's smallest polling station, has 29. The State's Chief Electoral Officer Frederick R. Kharkongor said boats have been readied for the polling officials and security personnel to reach the two booths before polling on April 11.

Shah makes development pitch



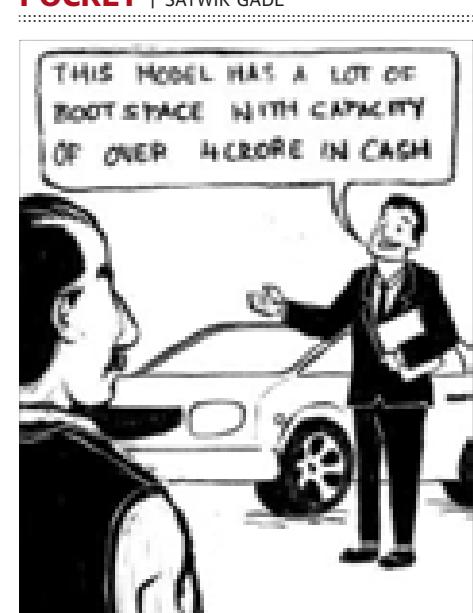
IMPHAL
BJP national president Amit Shah said on Friday that his party was the only one to focus on many development projects for the northeastern States. "There was no meeting of the North Eastern Council [nodal agency for development] for 40 years. It was only after the BJP came to power that the first meeting was held. The Centre had also increased the development fund for the northeastern States by 258%," Mr. Shah said, during a brief stopover in Manipur after visiting Arunachal Pradesh where he addressed a public meeting. "Wherever I go, the Modi wave is there. There will be more developmental projects as Modi will come back," he added.

Hayuliang will miss chowkidar

ITANAGAR

Much before the BJP launched the 'Main bhi chowkidar' campaign and the Congress countered with 'Chowkidar chor hai', a real-life *chowkidar* (watchman) living close to the China border became the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh. But Kalikho Pul's (in picture) reign was not recognised by law. In July 2016, the Supreme Court dismissed his "rebel Congress" government and restored that of his predecessor Nabam Tuki to the "previously existing state of affairs." A month later, the dismissed Pul was found dead in the Chief Minister's official bungalow in Itanagar that he continued to occupy. The Assembly election on April 11 will be the first for Hayuliang in Arunachal Pradesh, since 1995, without Pul.

POCKET | SATWIK GADE



It's all in the family in Odisha

Congress dominates with four father-son duos in the fray

PRAFULLA DAS
BHUBANESWAR

Notwithstanding popular criticism of dynastic politics, the number of political families, with more than one member in the poll arena has risen in Odisha.

As many as four father-son duos and one father-daughter are contesting the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the State – all belonging to the Congress. Another four pairs – a father-son duo from different parties in two Assembly segments, two sisters in the same Lok Sabha constituency, two brothers in one parliamentary seat, and a husband and wife in one Lok Sabha seat.

While only four families had two members each in the simultaneous polls in 2014, the number of such families has increased to nine this time. The trend is also no longer restricted to erstwhile royal families and a handful of influential fami-

lies or region specific. It has gotten more diverse.

The Opposition Congress party remains ahead of the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) when it comes to fielding more than one leader from a family for the ensuing Lok Sabha and Assembly polls.

In the Kalahandi Lok Sabha seat, the Congress has fielded former Union Minister Bhakta Charan Das, while his son Sagar Charan Das is the party's candidate for the Bhawanipatna Assembly seat.

Similarly, in Sundargarh, political families dominate.

While the Congress candidate for the Lok Sabha constituency is prominent tribal leader George Tirkey, his son Rohit Joseph Tirkey is the party's nominee in the Biramitrapur Assembly seat.

Ms. Singh Deo and Mr. Mishra are contesting against sitting Lok Sabha Member and BJD candidate Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo, whose younger brother Arakesh Singh Deo is also the BJD nominee for the Bolangir Assembly seat.

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Samarendra Mishra, the Congress candidate from Bolangir Lok Sabha constituency, is the son of the Leader of Opposition Narasingha Mishra, who is contesting the Bolangir Assembly seat.

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Similarly, in Sundargarh, political families dominate.

ELSEWHERE



U.S. revokes ICC prosecutor's visa

THE HAGUE
The United States has revoked the visa for the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Fatou Bensouda, her office said on Friday, over a possible investigation of American soldiers' actions in Afghanistan. AFP

David Malpass named World Bank president

WASHINGTON
David Malpass, a senior U.S. treasury official in President Donald Trump's administration, was unanimously chosen on Friday as the president of the World Bank. Since the bank's creation, all of its heads have been Americans, following an unwritten rule that also ensures European leadership at the top of its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund. AFP

Christchurch gunman to undergo psychiatric tests

CHRISTCHURCH
Brenton Tarrant, the man accused of shooting dead 50 Muslim worshippers in a Christchurch mosque, sat impassively on Friday as a New Zealand judge ordered him to undergo tests to determine if he is mentally fit to stand trial for murder. AFP

U.S. citizens among 7 held in Saudi crackdown

DUBAI
Saudi Arabia has arrested at least seven writers and bloggers, including two U.S. citizens, in an apparent crackdown on supporters of detained women activists, campaigners said on Friday. Prisoners of Conscience, a Saudi group that tracks political prisoners, put the number of people arrested at 10. AFP

May asks EU for a further Brexit extension till June 30

European Council president Donald Tusk proposes a one-year 'flexension'

VIDYA RAM
LONDON

The U.K. and European Council president Donald Tusk appeared to be nearing a consensus on a further Brexit extension.

Prime Minister Theresa May has written to Mr. Tusk, asking for an extension till at least June 30 this year.

It comes as Mr. Tusk himself was reported to be proposing a "flexension" – an extension that could last till April next year, but could also last a much shorter period were the U.K. to break the EU deadlock before that.

In her letter, Ms. May acknowledged that if the U.K. still fails to ratify the agreement and be prepared to leave the EU by May 23, it would be under a "legal obligation" to hold the European parliamentary elections between May 23 and 26. "The government is therefore undertaking the lawful and responsible preparations for this contingency," she assured Mr. Tusk in her letter. "The government is determined to bring this process to a resolution quickly."

It came as the BBC reported that Mr. Tusk was considering proposing a 12-month flexible extension that could be cut short if ratification happened before that.

Earlier this week, Ms. May adopted a new approach to Brexit, after her withdrawal agreement was defeated by MPs last week. Ms. May is engaged in talks with Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn and has extended an "open invitation" to MPs to achieve a consensus.

The government has indicated that it is not willing to open up the text of the legal



A lose-lose scenario? Anti-Brexit activists staging a demonstration outside the British Parliament in London on April 1. ■ AFP

treaty itself but is ready to negotiate on the political declaration on future relations that accompanies it. Labour is pushing for this declaration to require the U.K. to remain in a customs union with the EU (ensuring tariff-free movement of goods into and out of the EU) as well as to guarantee that the U.K. would continue to match the EU's high standards on worker and consumer rights and environmental protections.

Flawed vision

They are also discussing the possibility of holding a confirmatory referendum. The move to talk to Labour has put Ms. May at odds with many in her party, who fear it will lead to a "softer" version of Brexit, while some in the Labour Party fear it is merely an empty gesture made by the government in an effort to force Labour to share responsibility for its (in their view) flawed vision of Brexit. However, with regard to

the extension, much uncertainty remains. Ms. May faces resistance to any form of extension within her party. While an unsuccessful party no-confidence motion in her last year means she cannot be challenged again in this way, some have suggested that if there is an extension, they would try to be as "difficult as possible".

"We could veto any increase in the budget, obstruct the putative EU army and block [French President Emmanuel] Macron's integrationist schemes," suggested Jacob Rees-Mogg, a vocal Brexitite.

Even on the EU side, there are increasing concerns about whether granting an extension would be harmful to the EU. A long extension would "risk giving the keys of the EU's future to a Boris Johnson or a Michael Gove," warned Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament's interlocutor on Brexit, referring to the two MPs who cam-

paigning vigorously to leave the EU, and who could push Brexit in a very different direction to Ms. May.

"For those in the EU who may be tempted to further extend the Brexit saga, I can only say, be careful what you wish for," he added on Friday, pointing to Mr. Rees-Mogg's comments. And while German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that "till the very last hour" Germany is determined to do everything possible to avoid a no-deal Brexit, others including French President Emmanuel Macron have signalled frustration. He has warned that the EU could not be held "hostage" to Britain's internal Brexit battles.

An emergency meeting of the European Council is due to take place on Wednesday, April 10 at which Ms. May would need to have a clear road map to be able to persuade the remaining EU 27 leaders to back her in attempting to avoid a no-deal.

Brexit leaves leading political parties divided

Both Conservatives and Labour face internal challenges

VIDYA RAM
LONDON

When David Cameron made an election manifesto commitment to hold a referendum on Britain's EU membership back in 2015, he faced accusations of putting his party before his country. In fact, European Council president Donald Tusk told the BBC earlier this year that even Mr. Cameron had acknowledged to him that it was about his own party.

The Conservative Party has long been split on the country's relationship with the EU, with many opposing it from the outset and pressing for Britain to leave ever since it joined the union.

Hard-Brexit Jacob Rees-Mogg's father had even attempted to take the government to court to prevent Britain from ratifying the Maastricht Treaty (the EU's original treaty) in 1993.

Now, several years on, both the Conservative Party and Labour remain as divided as ever, with the route ahead on Brexit revealing deep fractures that could have a profound long-term impact on them and on Britain's political landscape.

Prime Minister Theresa May's decision to engage in talks with Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn this week has angered many MPs within her party. Two Ministers resigned in protest.

Their opposition centres around both the Labour push for customs union membership as well as the calls for any deal to be subject to a confirmatory vote.

They also dislike the idea of a long delay to Brexit that would require the U.K. to participate in European parliamentary elections on May

C A second referendum would have a corrosive impact not only on our politics, but on trust

KWASI KWARTENG
Junior Brexit Minister

23. Even ahead of the talks between the government and Labour, some Conservatives signalled that they might be willing to vote against the government if the Labour Party brought a no-confidence motion to Parliament.

No compromise

David Davis, the former Brexit Secretary, estimated that up to 20 of his fellow Conservative MPs could vote against the government in such a vote. This would be despite the fact that it could trigger a general election, and despite the fact that some polls put Labour ahead of the Conservatives.

Other Conservative MPs fear the government hasn't been flexible enough. On Monday, after the attempt to find a solution by putting different proposals to a vote failed, MP Nick Boles said he was leaving the Conservative Party because it wasn't willing to compromise.

Three other MPs had already left the party earlier this year to join the Independent Group of MPs, which also brought together eight former Labour MPs. They're collectively pushing for a second referendum and have applied to become a political party called 'Change UK'.

Within the government, there are some who believe a referendum may offer the route ahead. Chancellor Philip Hammond told an ITV

news programme earlier this week that there was a "credible case" for a referendum on any Brexit deal. Others have strongly disagreed: "A second referendum would have a very corrosive impact not only on our politics, but on trust," warned junior Brexit Minister Kwasi Kwarteng.

However, Brexit has proved just as divisive for Labour. The shadow cabinet's insistence that it wants to respect the result of the referendum has divided MPs.

Some – particularly those with constituencies in the north of England that voted strongly to leave the EU – believe this is the right strategy. Others are critical of the party's failure to come out decisively to support a second referendum. Some are equally critical of the potential of a second referendum being raised by Mr. Corbyn in his talks with Ms. May. This week, 25 Labour MPs signed a letter to Mr. Corbyn urging him to avoid a second referendum that "would be exploited by the far right" and could hurt the party's chances in the future.

More recently, the party's leadership has faced criticism for its insistence on ending freedom of movement with the EU. Labour (like the government) says it wants a managed migration.

Among those condemning this approach is the group Labour for Freedom of Movement – whose members include five MPs. "European freedom of movement is far from perfect, it's limited and doesn't protect everyone. However, the answer is not to scrap or further limit it," the group said in a statement.

134 homes destroyed in South Korea forest fires

4,000 people forced to flee homes



Up in flames: A house in Goseong, South Korea, that was hit by the wildfires that broke out on Thursday. ■ AP

REUTERS
SEOUL

South Korea mobilised more than 15,000 firefighters and soldiers to help douse most of the wildfires that have killed one person and forced more than 4,000 to flee their homes, authorities said on Friday.

President Moon Jae-in, who has ordered the use of all available resources to put out the fires, visited evacuation shelters and talked to victims.

About 872 fire trucks and 3,251 firefighters from all over the country worked to contain the wildfire, the National Fire Agency said.

The U.S. military said it supplied two helicopters with specialised buckets to drop water.

Subsidies of about 4 billion won (\$3.5 million) will fund the effort to rein in the fires and clear debris, while disaster relief funds of 250 million won (\$2,20,000) will help accommodate evacuees and provide necessities, the Interior Ministry said.

Late on Friday, just 275 people remained in gymnasiums and schools, of more than 4,000 citizens who had been taken there. About 52 schools were closed.

The fire in two areas in Gangwon has been contained, the government said, while about 80% of the fire in nearby Inje county was contained by Friday

night.

Sharper news every morning



A colourful end to campaigning in the Maldives

MDP hopes to get a parliamentary majority in Saturday's polls to push through legislature the reform agenda it promised

MEERA SRINIVASAN
MALE

Scores of Maldivians gathered at the seafront in capital Male on Friday to participate in their final rally on the eve of the island nation's parliamentary election.

Waving flags in different hues, they walked and rode bikes in groups, swaying to peppy campaign music. The city had closed down for the weekend and Friday prayers, but hours after lunch, the streets were teeming with people, as if it were a carnival.

The Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), the chief constituent of the ruling coalition, held a final rally on the eve of the island nation's parliamentary election.

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and former President Mohamed Nasheed, who is

running for a seat in Male this election, shared centre stage, flanked by other candidates and prominent party members.

Speaking at recent poll rallies, President Solih has slammed his predecessor Abdulla Yameen's administration for "widespread corruption". The MDP, which led an eclectic coalition in 2018 and dislodged Mr. Yameen from power, is hoping to garner a parliamentary majority in Saturday's polls to push the reform agenda it promised through the legislature.

"People of the Maldives are very keen to see that democracy survives here. They made sure that President Yameen is no more in power, and I am sure very confident that they are going

to follow it through [in this poll] and make sure we have a majority in Parliament," Mr. Nasheed told *The Hindu*, after the rally.

Uneasy partners

Given the former President's earlier proposal on the Maldives shifting to a parliamentary system, his possible entry into Parliament is said to have made some coalition partners in the ruling alliance uneasy, political sources here said.

The MDP's decision to go it alone further exposed the fissures within the alliance. Amid growing tensions within, President Solih is widely credited with holding much of the coalition together – except for the Speaker and leader of the Jumhooree Par-

C People of the Maldives are very keen to see that democracy survives here

MOHAMED NASHEED
Former President

ty (JP) Qasim Ibrahim, who has reportedly veered towards Mr. Yameen recently.

The main opposition force is Mr. Yameen's Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), but the party's pre-poll activity was noticeably subdued. Its candidates are contesting in some two dozen seats out of the total 87, and the party is backing select independent candidates in other constituencies.

Following Mr. Yameen's arrest in February for alleged corruption – he was released

last week – and a court order freezing his bank accounts until recently, party members complained about being denied access to their leader and party funds. After his release, Mr. Yameen made no public appearance on an election platform, but has addressed supporters at rallies over telephone, played over speakers.

Over 2.6 lakh persons are eligible to vote in Saturday's elections. Voters voiced diverse views, ranging from hope to cynicism, on the eve of the polls.

"We have not seen leaders deliver in the past, so many people have lost interest and faith in the polls," said Ajmed Sajid, a Male-based businessman. "For the moneyed class, the polls are in-

variably about backing a family member. There is no wider solidarity around issues or principles," he said.

With a nearly-4,00,000 population, the Maldives is home to a close-knit community where familial ties, business interests and political loyalties overlap. There are no clear election issues this time, say many, but housing has emerged a key talking point for many candidates. If capital Male is confronted with massive congestion, the atolls just do not have enough housing units for the people. Rent in Male has soared in recent years and according to residents, it is impossible to find a small, two-bedroom apartment in Male for anything less than \$1,200-\$1,500 a month.

Amal Clooney appointed U.K.'s media envoy

A panel led by her will seek to strengthen legal mechanism to protect journalists

VIDYA RAM
LONDON

Amal Clooney has been appointed the U.K.'s special envoy on media freedom, as the U.K. prepares to host an international conference this July in the wake of attacks on journalists across the world.

Ms. Clooney pointed to India as one of the five countries where journalists were most at the risk of "political assassination for their work" as she also noted that such attacks happened in Europe as well. She also highlighted

the brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul last year.

"We are here because it's never more dangerous to report the news," Ms. Clooney said at a press conference in London, alongside Britain's Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt and Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland, who are co-hosting the conference in London on July 10-11.

Ms. Clooney will chair a panel of legal experts who will work to "support coun-

tries to repeal outdated and draconian laws and strengthen legal mechanisms to protect journalists." Among the steps that could be put in place relating to regimes that abused journalists..

proposals to countries around national laws that don't comply with international standards, particularly around issues such as blasphemy and stringent anti-defamation rules.

She said the panel could also prepare mechanisms that could be used internationally to "raise the cost of non-compliance" with international standards, such as advising on sanctions regime that could be put in place relating to regimes that abused journalists..

WikiLeaks fears Assange's expulsion from embassy

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

British police stationed armed officers outside the Ecuadorian embassy in London on Friday after tweets from WikiLeaks quoted what it said were high-level sources saying that Julian Assange could be kicked out of the building within "hours to days".

WikiLeaks on Thursday tweeted: "BREAKING – A high level source within the Ecuadorian state has told WikiLeaks that Julian Assange

sange will be expelled within 'hours to days'... and that it already has an agreement with the U.K. for his arrest."

Another tweet said it had received a secondary confirmation from another high-level source. But a top official said while Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno was angered by the apparent hacking of his personal communications, he denied WikiLeaks' claim and said no decision had been taken to expel Mr. Assange from the embassy.

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DAILY QUIZ AND POLLS



MARKET WATCH	
05-04-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,862 0.46
US Dollar	69.23 -0.08
Gold	32,770 0.30
Brent oil	69.83 0.21

NIFTY 50	
PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	387.15 6.95
Asian Paints	1514.45 -4.55
Axiscity	762.20 0.05
Bajaj Auto	2861.65 2.55
Bajaj Finserv	7397.80 79.25
Bajaj Finance	3114.20 74.75
Bharti Airtel	356.65 -0.15
BPCL	358.10 3.80
Britannia Ind	2994.05 -47.75
Cipla	532.10 11.10
Coal India	234.70 -0.10
Dr Reddys Lab	2754.35 -17.00
Eicher Motors	20980.30 490.75
GAIL (India)	348.80 2.50
Gasim Gas	848.95 14.05
HCL Tech.	1092.80 -5.25
HDPC	2059.20 17.15
HDPC Bank	2305.60 21.65
Hero MotoCorp	2618.40 -18.80
Hindalco	215.40 4.95
Hind Unilever	1659.10 -7.45
Indiabulls HFL	903.05 4.90
ICICI Bank	390.55 1.80
IndusInd Bank	1767.95 31.80
Bharti Infratec	316.80 0.15
Infosys	759.30 11.40
Indian Oil Corp	158.45 3.25
ITC	294.55 -0.25
JSW Steel	294.25 6.45
Kotak Bank	1335.95 13.05
L&T	1373.80 5.10
M&M	658.20 4.85
Maruti Suzuki	7107.70 -5.40
NTPC	134.80 -0.85
ONGC	156.55 1.30
PowerGrid Corp	196.30 -3.05
Reliance Ind	1353.90 0.85
State Bank	317.05 -4.75
Sun Pharma	463.15 -2.45
Tata Motors	205.15 -1.00
Tata Steel	549.30 18.65
TCS	2048.30 33.80
Tech Mahindra	777.25 2.75
Titan	1106.40 0.30
UltraTech Cement	4190.40 110.45
UPL	941.00 9.50
Vedanta	191.70 4.50
Wipro	262.10 3.05
YES Bank	266.85 -1.20
Zee Entertainment	411.50 -5.80

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI
Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) and Indiabulls Housing Finance (IBHF) boards on Friday approved merger of the two entities.

The merger would solve LVB's capital needs as its capital adequacy ratio will go up to 20.6% post the merger, due to the mortgage lender's strong capital position.

IBHF, which has a loan book three times bigger than LVB, and was unsuccessful in getting a bank licence earlier, will now get access to the low-cost funds of the bank.

LVB's growth ambitions were choked due to capital needs, with its capital adequacy ratio falling to 7.7% as on end December, much below the regulatory requirement of 10.875%. IBHF's capital adequacy ratio is 23.1%.

IBHF's shareholders will own 90.5% of the amalgamated entity, while LVB shareholders will hold the remaining 9.5%.

Sources said Indiabulls

A new home

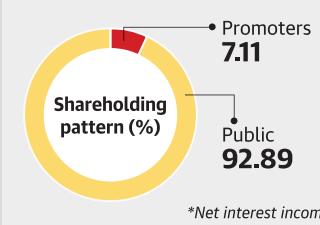
- Share exchange ratio: 14 shares of India Bulls Housing for 100 shares of LVB
- Combined entity to be among top 10 private banks by size and profitability
- Gross NPA of combined entity- 3.5%
- Net NPAs of combined entity- 2%

LAKSHMI VILAS BANK

- Founded in 1926
- 569 branches and 1,046 ATMs
- 4,881 staff ■ 20 lakh customers
- Rating: BBB-ve

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018

- Gross advances ₹24,123 cr.
- Gross NPAs: 14% Net NPAs: 7.6%
- Total deposits ₹30,787 cr.
- NII* ₹613 cr. ■ Net loss ₹630 cr.



group had significantly brought down its exposure in real estate business over the years and the revenues of the group from the financial services activities are over 80%. According to RBI's bank licensing norms, any entity that wishes to apply

for a bank licence should not have more than 40% of its revenues from non-financial activities.

Indiabulls founder and chairman Sameer Gehlaut's stake, which is presently at 21.5%, will be down at 19.5% in the merged entity. Mr.

Gehlaut will further bring down his holding to below 15% before the merger is effective, a statement from IBHF said. RBI has capped promoters' stake at 15% in a bank.

The four-promoter family of LVB has 7% stake, which

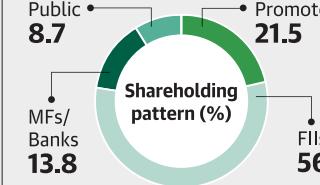
■ India's second largest housing finance firm

■ 220 branches in 110 cities

■ Rated AAA | 8,111 employees

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018

- Loan book ₹1.24 lakh crore
- Gross NPAs: 0.79% Net NPAs: 0.59%
- Revenue ₹9,591 cr
- Net profit ₹2,813 cr



SOURCE: BSE, LVB, INDIABULLS WEBSITES

Murugesh is Nasscom chairman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

IT industry body Nasscom on Friday said it had appointed WNS Global Services Group CEO Keshav Murugesh as its chairman for 2019-20. He takes over from his previous role as vice-chairman of Nasscom, succeeding Rishad Premji (Wipro chief strategy officer and board member), a statement said.

Nasscom has appointed Infosys COO U.B. Pravin Rao as its vice-chairman for 2019-20.

INTERVIEW | GAGAN BANGA

Merged entity will need ₹17,000 crore for CRR, SLR'

We expect to complete the process in six months, says vice-chairman and managing director of Indiabulls Housing Finance

MANOJIT SAHA

Gagan Banga, vice-chairman and managing director of Indiabulls Housing Finance, talks about the merger proposal with Lakshmi Vilas Bank. Edited excerpts:

What prompted you to go for the merger?

■ In the course of the last decade or so, Indiabulls Housing has come off a certain size where we have a balance sheet in excess of ₹1.20 lakh crore.

Our capital is well over ₹18,000 crore. As important as the size, we have 70% of

the shareholders as foreign and domestic investors with 56% as domestic investors.

If you look at RBI guidelines for new bank licences they have issued in 2016, we qualify on each of the parameters. There is an opportunity with a bank with a good franchise, [which] is in dire need of capital and that's our strength.

The bank, which is today

We are well capitalised. And also, extremely liquid.

How much cash the merged entity needs to set aside for cash reserve ratio (CRR) and statutory liquidity ratio (SLR)?

■ The amalgamated entity will have ₹17,000 crore of cash to be put in SLR, CRR requirements. At this point in time, we are sitting on ₹27,512 crore, so well in excess.

suffering from 7% capital adequacy ratio (CAR), will have almost 21% CAR making it amongst the best capitalised bank in the country. With their requirement on



capital and our strength on that front, it is a marriage which will result in tremendous complementarity.

And also, it comes in a regime where there are guidelines unlike in the past where there was none.

What are the benefits for Indiabulls HFC from this deal?

■ From our perspective, it is a liability franchise. We have built a large balance sheet which is only four times

geared. So, on equity capital, we have done extremely well. On debt capital, from a long-term perspective, we have also done well. One missing link in our armoury is the deposit franchise which is something we tremen-

dously value.

By what time you expect the transaction to get completed and secure RBI's approval?

■ For everything to go through, it is a six months' process.

+ Jet Airways may land in Tata Group

'Singapore Airlines is assisting in the bidding process and may pick up stake'

LALATENDU MISHRA

MUMBAI

The Tatas are learnt to be interested in acquiring the cash-strapped Jet Airways which has been put up for sale by Indian lenders.

In a bid to find a buyer at the earliest to mobilise an estimated ₹8,500 crore for revival, banks, led by the State Bank of India (SBI), on Thursday decided to invite expression of interest (EoI) from interested parties on April 6, 2019, and the Tatas are planning to submit a bid, people familiar with the development said. The last date for submission of bids is April 9. A Tata Sons spokesperson said, "We do not comment on market speculation."

In November last year, the Tatas, who run Vistara and

AirAsia India in joint ventures, had held preliminary discussions to invest in Jet Airways. Tata Group chairman N. Chandrasekaran even took the proposal to the Tata Sons board for approval.

The last six months has been damaging for Jet Airways. The delay has eaten away the company. Six months back, the valuation could have been better. Now, it is up to the banks on how much haircut they can accept," said Ansuman Deb, aviation analyst, ICICI Securities.

It is understood that Singapore Airlines, which holds 49% stake in Tata SIA Airlines that runs Vistara, is assisting in the bidding process and may pick up a stake.

According to analysts, the broader plan of the Tatas is to integrate its existing air-

lines ventures with Jet Airways. A combination of Jet, Vistara and AirAsia India can pose a tough challenge to IndiGo which is heading towards a near monopoly situation.

"The Tatas will be a good option for Jet Airways. They can consolidate and combine the strengths. The Indian aviation sector needs consolidation," said an analyst asking not to be named.

"Air India will survive because it is running with government money, IndiGo will be getting all powerful with \$2 billion cash on its books of account. We need one more large airline to match up to IndiGo. Tatas can make it and give a tough competition to IndiGo. Others like SpiceJet and GoAir are too small," he said.

Will send you to jail if found guilty, SC warns Ranbaxy promoters

CJI not happy with Singhs' reply on paying dues to Daiichi



In the dock: Malvinder (right) and Shivinder told the court that their shares could be sold to pay the dues. ■ KAMAL NARANG

tempt petition against the brothers.

The brothers, who were personally present in the court, said the assets in their companies were under encumbrance. They suggested that their shares in Fortis and Religare could be "strategically" sold to pay the dues. One of the brothers said he did not get the valuation done on the assets.

"You may have all the money in the world, but you cannot tell your creditors that there are assets but you do not know their value," the CJI responded to the submission. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal submitted that nearly ₹6,300 crore of the brothers' money was siphoned off by some 'baba'. "These children have been duped," Mr. Sibal submitted.

"We will hear the contempt petition alleging violation of this court's order. If we find that there is violation of orders, we will send them to jail," the CJI observed orally.

The court posted the case for April 11 to hear the con-



Vikram Kirloskar is CII's new chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Vikram Kirloskar, CMD of Kirloskar Systems Ltd., and vice-chairman of Toyota Kirloskar Motor, has assumed office as president of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for 2019-20. He takes over from Rakesh Bharti Mittal, vice-chairman, Bharti Enterprises. Uday Kotak, founder and MD & CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank, is the president designate of CII for 2019-20, while T.V. Narendran, CEO & MD of Tata Steel Limited, takes over as CII vice-president for 2019-20.

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tempt petition against the brothers.

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"We will hear the contempt petition alleging violation of this

IN BRIEF



Bank of India to sell 25% stake in life insurance JV

NEW DELHI
Bank of India said it would sell 25.05% stake in its insurance JV Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance Co. for at least ₹1,106 crore. The bank has floated a request for proposal for sale of over 6.48 crore equity shares, or 25.05% stake in its joint venture with Union Bank of India and Japan's Dai-ichi Life Holdings Inc. The floor price for the stake sale has been fixed at ₹170.50 a share, the lender said in a filing. PTI

I-T dept. notifies return forms for AY19-20

NEW DELHI
The Income Tax department has notified I-T return forms for individuals and companies for the assessment year (AY) 2019-20. While there has been no change in ITR-1, which is to be filled by the salaried class, some sections in ITR 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 have been rationalised. Individuals, firms and companies have to file returns for the income earned in 2018-19 in the current fiscal. PTI

Panel okays proposed L&T-Mindtree deal

NEW DELHI
The Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Friday said it has approved diversified group Larsen & Toubro's (L&T) proposed acquisition of up to 66.15% stake in IT firm Mindtree Ltd. L&T has made an unsolicited offer to acquire a majority stake in Mindtree. In a tweet, the CCI said, "it approves acquisition of up to 66.15% of the total equity shareholding of Mindtree Ltd, on a fully diluted basis, by Larsen and Toubro Ltd." PTI

'MF assets growth slowest in seven years'

Debt funds saw huge outflows in FY19; total AUM rose 6%, touched ₹24.51 lakh crore: CRISIL report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The recently-ended financial year 2018-19 saw mutual fund assets growing at the slowest pace in seven years as debt funds, which constitute a major portion of the overall assets under management (AUM) of the industry, saw huge outflows.

According to a latest analysis by Crisil, the total AUM rose 6% to touch ₹24.51 lakh crore in the fiscal, even as debt funds saw total outflows of ₹1.38 lakh crore between April 2018 and February 2019.

Debt funds, which account for nearly 45% of the total assets, managed to recoup some of the losses of the previous quarter, and were up 2.3% or ₹24,500 crore, to ₹11.08 lakh crore in the March quarter.



Testing times: Debt funds saw an outflow of ₹1.38 lakh crore between April 2018 and February 2019 • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

"Recovery can be attributed to mark-to-market (MTM) gains amid a pull back in yields and as sentiments soothed after the recent credit and liquidity crisis in the debt market," the Crisil report said. In percentage terms, assets of money market, banking and PSU, and

ultra-short duration funds, grew in double digits – around 20%, 19% and 15%, respectively. In absolute terms, liquid funds topped the chart with a gain of ₹14,500 crore in the AUM. Assets of low duration, medium duration, credit risk, short duration and floa-

ter funds fell the most in absolute terms among the debt categories. Meanwhile, the average AUM of the mutual fund industry rose 3.6% in the fourth quarter of the fiscal to ₹24.51 lakh crore as against a fall of 2.8% in the preceding quarter.

Supported by investor interest in equity mutual funds in the form of lump sum and systematic investment plans (SIP), the category's average assets rose nearly 6%, or by ₹36,000 crore to ₹6.58 lakh crore in the latest quarter.

"The industry continued to be highly concentrated, with the share of the top five and top 10 fund houses being 58% and 83%, respectively, as of March 2019 – almost the same as in the previous quarter," said the report.

As per data available with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), the category saw net inflows of ₹9,700 crore between January 2019 and February 2019.

Within the category, average AUM of multi-cap, large cap, equity-linked savings scheme (ELSS) and mid-cap

funds witnessed the biggest rise in absolute terms. On a consolidated basis, their AUM – 63% of the total equity average AUM – rose by ₹23,400 crore during the quarter.

In terms of assets, most of the fund houses registered a rise in their AUM, though the industry assets continued to be highly concentrated among the top mutual funds.

"The industry continued to be highly concentrated, with the share of the top five and top 10 fund houses being 58% and 83%, respectively, as of March 2019 – almost the same as in the previous quarter," said the report.

While HDFC Mutual Fund maintained its top position in terms of average AUM in the quarter, it was followed by ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund, and SBI Mutual Fund.



Safe and secure: Land worth ₹175 crore has been pledged with IL&FS Financial Services, says Sivasankaran. • REUTERS

Sivasankaran to settle dues to IL&FS arm

Siva Shelters owes more than ₹50 cr.

K.T. JAGANNATHAN
CHENNAI

Siva Shelters and Constructions Private Ltd. will settle its dues to IL&FS Financial Services, according to C. Sivasankaran, who is the mentor of Siva Group of companies.

IL&FS Financial Services had disbursed a total of ₹50 crore in two tranches to Siva Shelters in March last year.

The lender had exercised the put option and demanded the repayment of the loan. According to IL&FS Financial Services, Siva Shelters had a total outstanding of ₹58.65 crore (put option money) as on March 1, 2019.

Serves notice

The lender had since served notice on the guarantor as well on its decision to exercise the put option.

Siva Shelters, promoted by Hi-Tech Housing Projects Private Ltd., had been sanctioned the loan to develop affordable housing projects in Hyderabad district and Chennai.

The national roll-out of these three categories would be completed soon, the company said. BIL has launched baked multigrain chips in its renewed bid to penetrate the salted snacks market. It made an entry about eight years ago, but withdrew shortly thereafter.

"We learnt some lessons there," Mr. Kapre said.

BIL has put ₹100 crore on the ground for these facilities, according to Mr. Kapre. While salted snacks are made in BIL's unit in Bengaluru, croissants are made in Ranjangaon in Maharashtra. Cream-wafer manufacturing has been outsourced.

The company is trying to increase the share of non-biscuit segments in its turnover. While biscuits account for about 70% of BIL's turnover, non-biscuit products such as cakes, rusk, bread and dairy have a share of about 23%.

Total foods company

"We have laid out a vision for becoming a total foods company and are planning to get into some targeted spaces," Mr. Kapre said.

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He indicated that BIL was evaluating other sub-segments through differentiated offerings, but was unwilling to divulge further details.

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"In the case of BMIC, it is already settled. In Tata Group case, there is a pending personal guarantee and the matter is under arbitration. This will be settled amicably after arbitration," he added.

Panel set up to oversee Essar Steel's operations

Lenders' representatives on committee

PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI

Essar Steel's committee of creditors (CoC) has set up a monitoring committee to oversee the operations of the steel firm and ensure smooth transition to ArcelorMittal, the successful resolution applicant.

The monitoring committee is headed by resolution professional Satish Gupta and has four members from the lenders and three from ArcelorMittal, a source in the know of the development told *The Hindu*.

The lenders – SBI, IDBI Bank, ICICI and Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company – have their representatives as members of the



monitoring committee.

The development comes after the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) asked the committee of creditors to set up a monitoring committee to oversee the operations of the steel firm and smooth transition to ArcelorMittal.

Britannia eyes ₹500 crore from 3 new snack products

Plans to raise share of non-biscuit segments in turnover

INDRANI DUTTA
KOLKATA

Britannia Industries Ltd. (BIL) is aiming to generate ₹500-crore turnover from three new non-biscuit snack products it launched recently, Jayant Kapre, Business Head, Adjacencies and New Business, said.

Talking to *The Hindu* after the launch of Treat Croissant, a centre-filled snack made under joint venture with Greek company Chipli, he said, "The new products are cream-wafers, salted snacks and croissants. We are looking at a turnover of ₹500 crore [from nil now] in three years," he said.

The company is trying to increase the share of non-biscuit segments in its turnover. While biscuits account for about 70% of BIL's turnover, non-biscuit products such as cakes, rusk, bread and dairy have a share of about 23%.

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He indicated that BIL was evaluating other sub-segments through differentiated offerings, but was unwilling to divulge further details.



Election Commission of India
<https://eci.gov.in>

www.facebook.com/ECI/ www.youtube.com/eci/

*as on 05th April 2019

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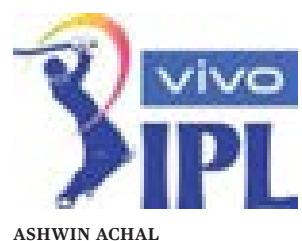
N-D-NDE

Russell's ruthless assault leaves Royal Challengers shell-shocked

Vintage Kohli and de Villiers help the host put up a mammoth 205 but Knight Riders chase it down with five deliveries to spare



Demolition man: Andre Russell was at it again, coming in at a crucial time and turning the game around with his mighty blows. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR



ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

An incredible late assault from Andre Russell powered Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to a thrilling five-wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) here on Friday.

Russell walked in with KKR needing an improbable 67 runs off 26 balls, and then proceeded to smash RCB into submission with a breathtaking, unbeaten 13-ball 48.

Shower of sixes

The West Indian blasted seven sixes in a power-hitting exhibition of the highest quality, taking KKR past the finish line with five balls to spare. RCB's disastrous campaign, meanwhile, extended to a fifth-straight loss.

The home team did itself no favours by dropping four catches – Navdeep Saini, Mohammed Siraj and Virat Kohli the culprits on the field.

Faced with a stiff 206-run target, KKR rode on useful knocks from Chris Lynn (43), Robin Uthappa (33) and Nitish Rana (37) to stay in the hunt.

When captain Dinesh Karthik departed, leaving KKR on 153 for five, RCB was well and truly on top. But everything changed when Russell got into the act.

Century partnership

Earlier, after being put in, Kohli and de Villiers came good with a rapid 108-run second-wicket partnership. The duo got together after Parthiv Patel (25, 24b) was trapped in front by off-spinner Nitish Rana.

Parthiv was not at his

fluent best, but played his part in a 64-run opening stand with Kohli.

Kohli (84, 49b, 9x4, 2x6) was in his element, striking the ball fluently.

All class

Two crisp cover drives off Prasidh Krishna in the very first over got him going. A short while later, Kohli dismissed Lockie Ferguson with a wristy flick and a textbook straight drive.

The shots oozed class, the technique reminiscent of Sachin Tendulkar in his prime.

Batting on 35, Kohli had a reprieve when Sunil Narine put down a sitter at mid-wicket. Rana got Kohli to play early at a length ball only to find the West Indian asleep at the wheel.

The error would prove costly, as Kohli buckled down and extended his stay.

de Villiers, too, had his share of luck. On 11, he miscued a slog off Kuldeep Yadav, lobbing it high in the air.

Ferguson rushed in from long-on but couldn't hold on.

The South African then went on attack mode, smashing the bowlers to all parts of the ground.

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de Villiers holed out to long-off in the next over, giving the tricky Narine a well

Kuldeep strikes

In the 18th over, Kuldeep prised out Kohli with a terrific reflex return catch. A disappointed Kohli walked back to the hut, even as the crowd gave him a standing ovation.

Parthiv was not at his

deserved wicket.

Marcus Stoinis (28 not out, 13b, 3x4, 1x6) threw the bat around to push RCB past the 200-run mark. However, it was Russell and Knight Riders who ruled the night.

Records galore for Kohli

1 Kohli (5,110) surpassed Raina (5,086) to become the highest run-scorer in the IPL.

9 Century stands by Kohli and de Villiers – joint highest with Gayle and Kohli.

9 Number of times Kohli and de Villiers have notched up 50-plus partnerships in an innings.

8K Kohli has completed 8,000 runs in T20 cricket, the youngest to do so (at 30 years, 151 days). Kohli (243 innigs) is also the second quickest to the feat after Gayle (213). The RCB captain has also become the second Indian after Raina to the landmark.

PACE VS SPIN (RCB INNINGS)

Pace: 90 runs in 6 overs (RR: 15.00)	Spin: 115 runs in 14 overs (RR: 8.21)
--------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Knight Riders' stunning chase

Equation: 53 runs needed off 18 balls (after 17 overs)

Over No. 18	0	0	1w	7nb	6	6	1w	1	1	23 runs	Russell: 47 runs
Over No. 19	1	6	6	6	4	6				29 runs	Gill: 3 Extras: 3
Over No. 20	1									1 run	



Points table						
Team	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Sunrisers Hyderabad	4	3	1	0	6	1.780
Kolkata Knight Riders	4	3	1	0	6	0.534
Kings XI Punjab	4	3	1	0	6	0.164
Chennai Super Kings	4	3	1	0	6	-0.084
Delhi Capitals	5	2	3	0	4	0.029
Mumbai Indians	4	2	2	0	4	-0.087
Rajasthan Royals	4	1	3	0	2	-0.333
Royal Challengers	5	0	5	0	0	-1.616

*after the RCB-KKR match on April 5

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLengers

Parthiv Patel lbw b Rana 25 (24b, 3x4), Virat Kohli c & b Kuldeep 84 (49b, 9x4, 2x6), A.B. de Villiers c Gill b Narine 63 (32b, 5x4, 4x6), Marcus Stoinis (not out) 28 (13b, 3x4, 1x6), Moeen Ali (not out) 0 (2b); Extras (lb-1, w-4): 5; Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 205.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-64 (Parthiv, 7.5 overs), 2-172 (Kohli, 17.1), 3-185 (de Villiers, 18.5).

KKR BOWLING

Prasidh 3-0-41-0, Chawla 4-0-32-0, Narine 4-0-30-1, Ferguson 2-0-32-0, Kuldeep 4-0-31-1, Rana 2-0-22-1, Russell 1-0-16-0.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Chris Lynn b Negi 43 (31b, 4x4, 2x6), Sunil Narine c Negi b Saini 10 (8b, 2x4), Robin Uthappa c Southee b Negi 33 (25b, 6x4), Nitish Rana c sub b Chahal 37 (23b, 1x4, 2x6), Dinesh Karthik c Chahal b Saini 19 (15b, 1x4, 1x6), Andre Russell (not out) 48 (13b, 1x4, 7x6), Shubman Gill (not out) 3 (3b); Extras (lb-2, w-8, nb-3): 13; Total (for five wkts. in 19.1 overs): 206.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-28 (Narine, 1.5 overs), 2-93 (Uthappa, 9.5), 3-108 (Lynn, 11.3), 4-139 (Rana, 15.4), 5-153 (Karthik, 16.6).

RCB BOWLING

Southee 4-0-61-0, Saini 4-0-34-2, Chahal 4-0-24-1, Siraj 2-2-32-0, Negi 3.1-0-21-2, Stoinis 1.4-0-28-0.

Toss: Kolkata Knight Riders.

MoM: Andre Russell.

KKR won by five wickets with five balls remaining.

PowerPlay, pillars of strength and all that



Dean Jones

SELECT DUGOUT CORNER

We are in the second week of the IPL and one of the trends that we are starting to see is the middle-overs. Personally, I would like to try to win the PowerPlay because overall in IPL cricket, 74% of the teams which win it go on to take a match. This year, for some reason, it's down.

Sunrisers Hyderabad coach Tom Moody loves winning the mids and he can when you have guys like Rashid Khan to knock teams over. The use of leg-spinners, in particular, is very important.

SRH has brought daylights out if they are batting early. They try to control the game right from the very first over and have been going way better than any other team: 10.8 runs per over in PowerPlay!

Circumspect

Conversely, CSK is a bit more circumspect. It has been one of the worst teams with the bat but catch up at the end mainly due to Mahendra

Singh Dhoni's class. They know how to finish it off. My philosophy is that you got to have four pillars of strength. The first pillar is selecting a death bowler. He is the most important player in the team. No. 2 is the opening batsman who can have a good strike rate of over 130 and bat deep into the innings.

No. 3, you need a blaster who can also bowl. A guy like Andre Russell. And the last is to have a spinner who can turn it both ways. Now, if you get three of them working in a match, you are going to win nine out of 10 games.

If you take SRH, they have got a Johnny Bairstow or a David Warner and a good

death bowler in Bhuvneshwar. I also have something to say about Rajasthan Royals and Kings XI. Rajasthan is struggling somewhat but I love the way Kings XI are going about their job.

Smart Hesson

They started with controversy and I think they have got a very good coach in Mike Hesson at the dug-out. He is very smart in how he goes about man-management and is a perfect foil for skipper Ashwin.

They are well prepared and won a game without Gayle.

They think on their feet and are really starting to change my opinion of their

squad when it comes down to good leadership.

(Tune into Select Dugout on Star Sports Select 1 for expert analysis and more on the IPL)

Top of the charts

ORANGE CAP

David Warner (SRH)

Matches: 4 | Runs: 264

HS: 100* | I/SR: 161.96

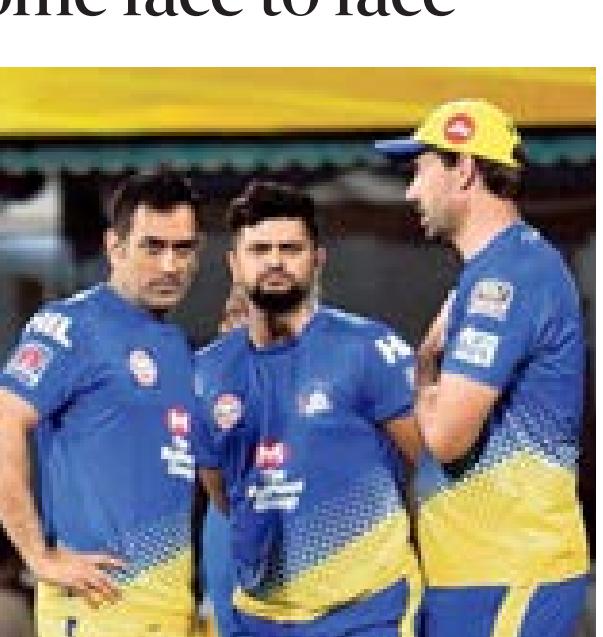
PURPLE CAP

Yuzvendra Chahal (RCB)

Matches: 5 | Wickets: 9

BB: 4/38 | Econ: 6.45

*after the RCB-KKR match on April 5



Talking tactics: M.S. Dhoni, Suresh Raina and coach Stephen Fleming during practice. ■ R. RAGU

plate playing two other Tamil Nadu cricketers – leggie Murugan Ashwin and C.V. Varadarajan with his assorted spin.

K.L. Rahul, Mayank Agarwal and David Miller add weight to Kings XI's batting. That skiddy seamer, Mohammad Shami, will be a distinct threat.

This match could go down to the wire.

The Saturday Show



CHENNAI, 4 P.M.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 19

CSK 11 | KXIP 8

Live on Star Sports 1, 2 & Select 1 (SD & HD)

The Saturday Show



HYDERABAD, 8 P.M.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 12

SRH 7 | MI 5

Live on Star Sports 1, 2 & Select 1 (SD & HD)

S. DINAKAR

</

TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 8 a.m.**Malaysia Open badminton:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Star Sports 3, 9.30 a.m.**Super Cup:** Star Sports 3, 8.30 p.m.**IPL:** Star Sports 1, 2 & Select 1 (SD & HD), 4 & 8 p.m.

IN BRIEF

**Bucks head into playoffs as East top seed**

WASHINGTON Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 45 points and had 13 rebounds as Milwaukee Bucks clinched the best record in the NBA Eastern Conference with a 128-122 victory over Philadelphia 76ers on Thursday.

The results: 76ers 122 lost to Bucks 128; Lakers 90 lost to Warriors 108; Kings 117 bt Cavaliers 104. AFP**Mandzukic extends Juventus contract**
MILAN Forward Mario Mandzukic has extended his contract with Juventus until 2021, the Italian champion club confirmed on Wednesday. "Mario Mandzukic's Bianconero career will continue until 2021," Juventus said in a statement. AFP**US's Alex Morgan enters century club**
LOS ANGELES Alex Morgan blasted home the 100th goal of her career as the US women's team posted a 5-3 win over Australia in a FIFA women's World Cup tune-up on Thursday. Morgan, the 2018 US Player-of-the-Year, now has 27 goals over her last 32 games and is tied with Tiffany Mibrett in sixth place on the American all-time scoring list. AFP

India to play for fifth place

KUALA LUMPUR India beat Hong Kong 2-1 to set up a fifth place play-off match with Qatar in the Asia Oceania World junior under-14 tennis tournament here on Friday. The Indian boys, who had qualified for the quarterfinals, had been beaten by Australia 2-0.

The results: 5-8th place: India bt Hong Kong 2-1 (Agriya Yadav bt Kwok Shun Dasson Chan 4-6, 6-3, 12-10; Yuvan Nandal bt Shun Wang Max Kwong 6-2, 1-6, 10-8; Ayushman Arjera & Agriya Yadav lost to Kwok Shun Dasson Chan & Hong Tseng Curtis Tan 6-1, 6-3).

Redeeming themselves on the IPL stage

Warner, Smith, Hardik Pandya and Rahul have gone through a tough time

IPL-12

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
JAIPUR

March 31, 2018, Sydney. David Warner breaks down at a press conference and fears that he may never play for Australia again because of his role in the ball-tampering scandal.

March 31, 2019, Hyderabad. David Warner leaps into the air, perhaps higher than he ever did before, after reaching 100 off 54 balls for Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL match against Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Now, you have to be brave to bet against the dynamic opener's return to the Australian squad for the World Cup.

How could you omit someone who has made 264 runs from four innings in the world's most competitive white-ball cricket league?

Warner, though, isn't the only man redeeming himself on the IPL stage.

His teammate Steve Smith, who also served a one-year ban for his role in the ball-tampering incident, hasn't done badly either for Rajasthan Royals, with scores of 28 and 38.

David Warner. • AP

On Wednesday night, Hardik Pandya – who was suspended and sent back mid-tour from Australia for making inappropriate comments on a chat show – won the match for Mumbai Indians against the unbeaten Chennai Super Kings.

The all-rounder made an eight-ball 25 and took three wickets, after making 31 and

32 not out in the previous matches.

K.L. Rahul, who was also on that plane back home three months ago, and had coffee with Karan Johar on the television programme, has had his night under the moon, too.

His unbeaten 71 off 57 balls led Kings XI Punjab to victory against Mumbai Indians.

All the four men have shown character to fight their way back from trying circumstances. After collecting his Man-of-the-Match award, Hardik had said how difficult the past few months had been for him.

Responding well

Sujith Somasunder, coach and former India Test opener who is doing his Ph.D. in sports psychology, is impressed by the way Hardik and others have responded to the crisis.



K.L. Rahul. • VIVEK BENDRE



Steve Smith. • PTI

"It is never easy for anyone to deal with such situations," he told *The Hindu*. "Man is a social animal, who

Hardik Pandya. • AKHILESH KUMAR

needs to be acknowledged, approved, appreciated and admired. So when he loses it because of some scandal – as has been the case with these four cricketers – it becomes a huge personal crisis."

Sujith believes Warner handled it particularly well. "I think he has become an even better batsman after a year of self-introspection," he said. "I liked the way he intelligently paced his hundred against RCB. I am sure he would have got some excellent counselling, an area Indian sport needs to focus."

Sathiyan survives but Sharath, Manika exit

SPORTS BUREAU
YOKOHAMA

G. Sathiyan stayed in contention to qualify for the knock-outs (quarterfinals), while Sharath Kamal crashed out of the Asian Cup table tennis championships here on Friday.

Sathiyan, seeded 10th, lost to Japan's Koki Niwa of Japan 11-7, 11-9, 10-12, 11-8 before upsetting Yun-Ju's eighth-seeded compatriot Chih-Yuan Chuang 11-5, 11-4, 11-8.

However, in his last group match, the 26-year-old Indian lost to Sangsu Lee of Korea 11-7, 11-4, 6-11, 11-5 and finished third in Group-C.

Sharath, seeded 11th, lost all his three matches in Group-B to finish fourth and last in the group. The 36-year-old lost to China's Ma Long 11-5, 11-5, 11-5, Lin Yun-Ju of Taipei 10-12, 11-6, 11-9, 11-8 and Japan's Harimoto Tomokazu 11-6, 14-12, 9-11, 5-11, 11-7.

In the women's section, Manika Batra, who lost two and won a lone match, ended up third in Group-D and exited from the event.

Minerva owner threatens to shut shop

Says he is 'sick and tired of fighting the AIFF'

SHYAM VASUDEVAN
CHENNAII-League team Minerva Punjab FC is considering shutting down, its owner Ranjit Bajaj told *Sportstar* on Friday.

Bajaj's staggering remark comes a day after Minerva was told it would not be able to play its Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Cup group stage matches at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar owing to renovation work.

Minerva is drawn in Group E alongside Chennaiyin FC, Abahani Dhaka, and Manang Marshyangdi. Its scheduled first home game is against Manang Marshyangdi on May 1.

"I'm sick and tired of

fighting with the AIFF (All India Football Federation). Instead of trying to help me, they keep sabotaging me. I was sued for (₹) 60 crores for an interview I gave last week, and now this.

It is a blatant attempt to shut me out as a whistleblower and they have succeeded," Bajaj said.

"I came into football for the love of the sport and to promote it. This is not what I wanted to be doing. Any other country would have made much of me, but they are victimising me here."

Minerva was informed about the unavailability of the Kalinga Stadium in an email on Thursday night.

The Odisha government's letter to Minerva states that

the Kalinga Stadium is being considered as one of the likely venues for the 2020 FIFA under-17 women's World Cup, and hence will undergo a renovation. Minerva is now planning on writing to the AFC for clarity.

No role

The AIFF's AGS and Head of Competitions, Anil Kamat, said the Federation has no role in choosing the venue.

"Minerva had first chosen to play in Delhi, then decided to play in Ahmedabad and finally fixed Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Stadium.

All three venues were inspected and approved by the AFC. The Kalinga Stadium was not chosen by the AIFF, it was a direct deal between

Minerva and the Odisha government," he said.

"It is up to the club to decide where to play. There is a provision that they can play at an alternate venue, provided it has been approved by the AFC. Minerva can write to the AFC and it's up to them to decide," said Kamat.

I-League CEO Sunando Dhar hoped Minerva would not shut down.

"The AIFF would be more than ready to help and support one of our clubs (find a new venue). Ranjit and Minerva's contribution to Indian football has been massive, across age groups, and no one would want them to shut down," he said.

Balwant proves the difference in seven-goal thriller

ATK overcomes Dynamos' challenge

SUPER CUP

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
BHUBANESWAR

Balwant Singh scored a hat-trick to take ATK past a fighting Delhi Dynamos 4-3 in an absorbing Hero Super Cup quarterfinal at the Kalinga Stadium on Friday. Captain Manuel Lanzarote was the other goal-getter for ATK while Mohammad Sajid, Daniel Lalhlimpuia and S. Nadhakumar found the goals for Dynamos.

Lanzarote created and finished the second one for ATK after releasing Jayesh Rane on the right. The winger relayed the ball back to Lanzarote inside the Dynamos' box and the Spanish playmaker swerved the ball home as ATK went ahead in the 27th minute.

With the Dynamos defence looking shaky after conceding two quick goals, ATK pushed for more. In the 33rd minute, Balwant found the target a second time with a powerful shot after Rane had set him up in the zone.

Dynamos pulled one back when Daniel Lalhlimpuia capitalised on an error from

ATK defender John Johnson who failed to clear a cross from Lallianzuala Chhangte.

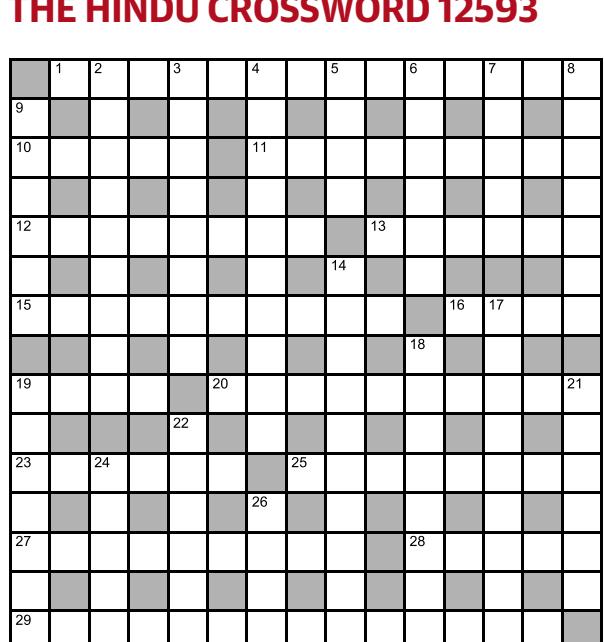
Keeping it going

After the change of ends, the Kolkata side sustained the momentum and regained the two-goal cushion as Balwant completed a hat-trick in the 51st minute. Rane provided the assist once again, setting up Balwant with a cross.

Dynamos briefly came back in the game when S. Nadhakumar's attempt found the target off a deflection from ATK defender Andre Bike. However, that proved to be the final strike of the day.

The result (quarterfinal): ATK 4 (Balwant Singh 23, 33, 51, Manuel Lanzarote 27) bt Delhi Dynamos 3 (Mohammad Sajid 15, Daniel Lalhlimpuia 35, S. Nadhakumar 72).**Sliding it home:** Balwant Singh was simply unstoppable against Dynamos. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12593



ACROSS

1 Terms of payment for midwives? (4,2,8)

10 Senior citizen partly recalled tattered letter (5)

11 Leader that's extremely fascist put in handcuff (9)

12 One who signs documents sitting in latte store (8)

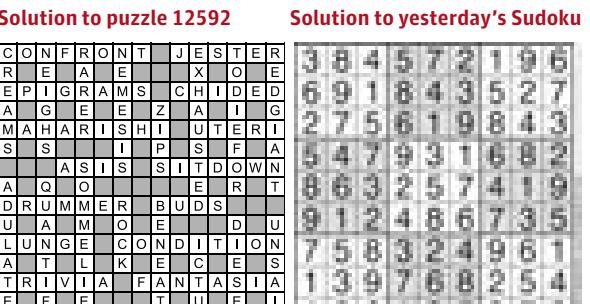
- 13 Most important parts of clue set first, definition finally added to the start (6)
- 15 Sit back to gain muscle after body becomes strong (10)
- 16 With maiden away, bathe girl in drink! (4)
- 19 When interrupted by rookie, shoot down idea (4)
- 20 Inspect top of ship's sail pierced by metal (10)
- 23 Trouble is, nothing honest earns money! (6)
- 25 Swallowing fruit with liquid thing (8)
- 27 English kid with a bit of appetite for Mexican food (9)
- 28 Scoundrel endlessly regrets eating nothing good (5)
- 29 Where the cover fielder stands is irrelevant! (6,3,5)
- DOWN
- 2 Sound gets facelift – At last, tone's back in theatres! (9)
- 3 Instrument with faulty dish causing distress (8)
- 4 Perhaps, may concern getting one's spirit back? (10)
- 5 Foul in play overturned (4)
- 6 Flood's high, condition unknown (6)
- 7 Running a mile for mode of communication (5)
- 8 Forcing refusal to be withdrawn by monarch (7)
- 9 Extraordinary fable involving husband's place (5)
- 14 Setter will think about giving up right to light up (10)
- 17 Attending to group working with top class model (7,2)
- 18 Successful champion has time till now (8)
- 19 Publicity's done with a little banner displaying catchphrase (7)
- 21 Boy abandons dogs for birds (6)
- 22 For a change, drive around area that's diverse (6)
- 24 Anchors make cakes every now and then (5)
- 26 Bit of appreciation on overcoming resistance (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12592

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Path of renunciation

The basis of Adyatma sadana or spiritual discipline is renunciation and sastras are very clear about what this term renunciation implies. Like bhakti, it is a bhava or state of mind that takes control of the individual in total and runs seamlessly through his thought, word and deed, pointed out Sri B. Damodhara Dikshitar in a discourse. That is why Krishna tells Arjuna that his decision to leave the battlefield and adopt a life of a renunciate would only complicate matters. One may turn away from the challenges of life and take up the life of a sanyasi in the hope that the way of life of a renunciate can be more peaceful and that the troubles of samsara can be overcome. Maybe one may live in solitude away from family, etc. But what matters is what is predominant in his mind at all times. Physical distance alone is not the issue at all.

Krishna's word of advice to give up 'sarva dharma' and seek surrender at His feet as a sure way to salvation is not to be understood as turning one's back on the dharma and karma ordained in the sastras. It only means one has to perform what is expected of him, that is one's 'swa-karma' and 'swa-dharma,' to the best of his abilities, but dedicate the results or fruits of his actions to God.

Adi Sankara says in Moha Mudgara that it does not matter what one does, either engaged in yoga or in worldly attractions; whether he is alone or in the company of people; what matters is where his mind finds delight, whether in worldly attractions and relations or in the Supreme Brahman. He alone experiences bliss if his mind delights in the latter. To remain very much in the world but also detached from it in one's inner being is the maturity of mind that one has to strive for.

IN BRIEF



Bancroft good choice for Durham captain: Smith

LONDON Australian cricketer Steve Smith on Thursday hailed Cameron Bancroft's appointment as Durham's captain. "Cam is a good choice for captain, he has got a good head on his shoulders and has shown great character in the way he has come back after his time out," ESPN Cricinfo quoted Smith as saying. ANI



De Bruyne tips England for Euro 2020 glory

LONDON Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne believes England's crop of promising teenage stars makes it favourite to win Euro 2020, alongside World champion France. De Bruyne believes the emergence of Jadon Sancho, Callum Hudson-Odoi and clubmate Phil Foden makes Gareth Southgate's side strong contender. AFP



UK's richest man wants to buy French club Nice

NICE Britain's richest man, Jim Ratcliffe, wants to further expand his sport network by buying French Ligue 1 club Nice after snapping up cycling's Team Sky last month, his brother revealed to French media on Friday. Robert Ratcliffe confirmed to newspaper *Nice-Matin* that the boss of petrochemical giant Ineos wants to purchase the club. AFP

Weightlifting teams for Asians

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

The Indian Weightlifting Federation has picked lifters with proven track record for the Asian championships to be held in Ningbo City, China, from April 18 to 28.

Former World champion S. Mirabai Chanu, Youth Olympics gold medallist Jeremy Lalrinnunga and two-time Commonwealth Games gold medalist Sathish Sivalingam feature among the selected lifters.

Another well known lifter, R.V. Rahul (89kg), who is nursing a back injury, has been named as a reserve.

The squad: Men: M. Raja (61kg), Jeremy Lalrinnunga (67kg), Achinta Sheuli (73kg), Sathish Sivalingam and Ajay Singh (81kg), Vikas Thakur (96kg), Pardeep Singh (102kg) and Gurdeep Singh (+109kg). Reserve: RV Rahul.

Women: Jhili Dalabhera (45kg), S. Mirabai Chanu (49kg), Swati (59kg), Rakhi Halder (64kg).

Sahil, Murad & Satish qualify

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA PUNE

Indian golfers Sahil Jain, Murad Talib and Satish Cheeti booked their spots in the World Finals of the Mercedes Trophy, scheduled to be held in Stuttgart, Germany, in October this year.

Playing at the National finals at Pune's Oxford Golf Resort, Sahil in handicap CAT A (3-10) won with a score of 39 points in his category.

Murad carded a score of 37 points in CAT B (11-17) to book the second Stuttgart spot while Satish playing in CAT C (18-24) scored 36 points to complete the troika of India qualifiers.

Chen Long subdues Srikanth

The Indian lets go of initial advantage to lose in straight games

MALAYSIA OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KUALA LUMPUR

A fighting Kidambi Srikanth suffered a straight-game loss to Olympic champion Chen Long of China to bow out of the men's singles quarterfinals at the Malaysia Open here on Friday.

The eighth-seeded Indian blew a 16-11 advantage in the opening game to lose the match 21-18, 21-19.

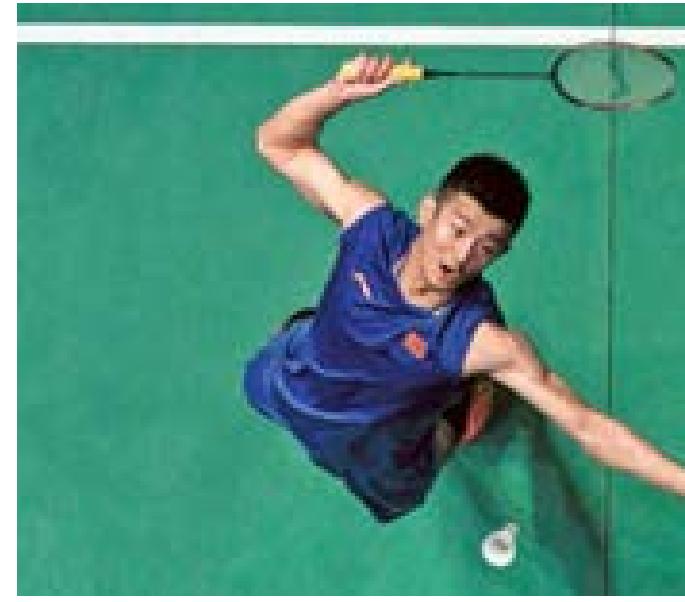
The 26-year-old had a 1-5 head-to-head record against Chen Long, whom he had defeated in their last meeting at the 2017 Australian Open.

The Chinese showed great defence, playing some exceptional shots like a between-the-legs return.

In the first game, the Indian opened up a 11-lead at the first break.

He stayed ahead till 16-11 when Chen started slowly clawing back into the contest.

The Chinese drew parity at 17-17 before sealing the game with a cross-court re-



Pulling through: Chen Long ended K. Srikanth's campaign in the quarterfinals. • AFP

turn that left the Indian stranded.

In the second game, Srikanth kept himself close to the Chinese before Chen unleashed a down-the-line smash to grab a 11-lead at the breather.

Srikanth made some simple errors like misjudging line calls, hitting wide and

long and also mistiming shots as Chen led 16-8.

The Indian won a long rally when Chen went wide and then the Chinese lost a couple of more points near the net before attacking the Indian's backhand to reach 17-11.

Srikanth kept breathing down Chen's neck and reduced the margin to 17-18

thanks to the Chinese falling in a heap of errors. The Indian levelled the scores at 18-18 and was 19-19 when Chen hit another long shot.

But the Chinese sent one at the backline to move to match point and sealed it when a fighting Srikanth dived full stretch but couldn't keep the shuttle in.

Jeevan-Purav duo enters semifinals

SPORTS BUREAU VILLENA (SPAIN)

The results:

€46,600 Challenger, Villena, Spain: Doubles (quarterfinals): Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Purav Raja bt Enrique Lopez Perez & David Marrero (Esp) 4-6, 6-3, [10-8].

\$15,000 ITF tournament, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt: Doubles (semifinals): Men: Marek Jalovci & Lukas Klein (Svk) bt S.D. Prajwal Dev & Adil Kalyanpur 6-4, 6-4.

Women: Zhibek Kulammabayeva (Kaz) & Katarina Kuzmova (Svk) bt Ange Oby Kajuru (Jpn) & Sai Samitha 6-1, 6-2.

Delhi meets Meghalaya

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Delhi will take on Meghalaya in the first round of the Santosh Trophy to be held at Ludhiana from April 8.

Delhi, which qualified after beating Chandigarh, J & K and Uttarakhand in the prelims at Katra recently, has been placed in Group-A with Odisha, Goa, Services and Meghalaya. Group-B comprises Assam, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab and Sikkim.

The semifinals are scheduled for April 19. The final will be held on April 21.

Pandit to assess future as Vidarbha coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Two-time Ranji Trophy-winning Chandrakant Pandit's hugely successful tenure at Vidarbha has attracted interest from other State associations and the sought-after coach on Friday said he will "assess" his future.

More time with family
The former India wicket-keeper, who also guided Vidarbha to back-to-back Irfani Trophy triumphs, added that he wanted to spend more time with his family.

"I have come to Nagpur to speak to the Vidarbha Cricket Association officials. I will

Chandrakant Pandit.
• FILE PHOTO

take a call about my future in a day or two. I am having some discussions with them. Let's see how it turns out,"

Pandit said.

"It is true that I want to spend some more time with my family but I have not taken any decision yet."

Feelers

"I have received feelers through indirect sources. Therefore I don't know if these are offers unless I am officially contacted by State associations. But yes, there has been some interest shown to avail my services," he added.

Pandit has played five Tests and 36 ODIs for India from 1986 to 1992.

Under the guidance of the 57-year-old taskmaster, Vi-

darbha won both the Ranji and Irfani trophies in 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons.

He was involved in his 11th Ranji final – sixth as coach – when Vidarbha took on Maharashtra in the final earlier this year.

After featuring in five Ranji finals – four for his home team Mumbai and one for Madhya Pradesh – during his 21 seasons in First Class cricket, Pandit has done one better in his second avatar as coach.

In the past, he has been the India Under-19 coach for a World Cup, and also served as the Under-19 chief selector.

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Compliment: Eden Hazard is a player he has always rated high, said Zinedine Zidane. • AFP

and rarely threatened Valencia on Tuesday, when it was beaten 2-1 at Mestalla.

Scoring problem

"I know the numbers and it has cost us," Zidane said. "This year we have had difficulty scoring. Will we change things? Yes."

Barcelona plays at home to second-placed Atletico Madrid on Saturday, meaning Real can close the gap on the top two if it overcomes Eibar at the Santiago Bernabeu.

But it is five points behind Atleti and 13 adrift of Barca while the loss to Valencia in midweek exposed its weaknesses both in attack and defence. "I'm not worried," Zidane said. "This season has

been difficult and I cannot say in two minutes what has happened but there are things that you have to accept."

"We know what all these players have won, not just in my time, but in the last five, six, seven years. We are going to try to turn it around, the club needs change, to win again, to do great things and that's what I'm here for."

"Our problems on the pitch? We accept them. Fewer people in the stadium? We accept it. But we must not forget what these players have done either. I'm not worried at all."

Dani Carvajal returned to training on Friday but Thibaut Courtois is unlikely to be available.

Colts embark for junior Davis Cup

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

The Indian under-16 boys' team looked strong, at least on paper, as the players went through the final preparations, including dope test, at the R.K. Khanna Stadium here on Friday.

"We have a good team and should be able to qualify. It will be a difficult choice for me to select the players for the matches, as all are equally good. Initially, I will go by the ranking," said the captain and coach of the junior Davis Cup team, Sajid Lodi.

"Once they play, we will go by their fitness level, quality of performance and their willingness to perform, to make the team for subsequent matches," said the coach.

Divesh Gahlot, Sushant Dabas and Ajay Malik make the team, and they are all capable of beating any player, on their day.

The boys' team will compete in Thailand at Nonthaburi, in the event which was originally scheduled to be played in Delhi.

The under-14 girls' team, with Olympian Rushmi



On a mission: The members of the junior Davis Cup team – Sushant Dabas, captain Sajid Lodi, Ajay Malik and Divesh Gahlot. • KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Chakravarthi as the captain, will be competing in the Asia-Oceania World Junior tennis tournament to be played in Kuala Lumpur.

"The girls have been playing tournaments regularly and performing well. I expect them to fight well," said Rushmi. Veda Raju Prapurna had, in fact, qualified for the UK under-14 championship to be played in Wimbledon in August, with a good performance in the Road to Wimbledon event on the grass courts of the Gymkhana Club here.

The under-14 girls' team, with Olympian Rushmi

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The under-14 girls' team, with Olympian Rushmi

Chakravarthi as the captain, will be competing in the Asia-Oceania World Junior tennis tournament to be played in Kuala Lumpur.

The teams: **Under-16 boys:** Divesh Gahlot, Sushant Dabas, Ajay Malik. **Captain:** Sajid Lodi. **Under-16 girls:** Bhakti Shah, Sudipta Senthilkumar, Sanjana Sirimalta. **Captain:** Namita Bal. **Under-14 girls:** Pari Singh, Veda Raju Prapurna, Shruti Ahlawat. **Captain:** Rushmi Chakravarthi.

The contenders

Who are the favourites to win the Masters? Here's what the tipsters think:



RORY MCILROY
Odds:
8/1

Masters played: 10
Cuts made: 9 | Top 10 finishes: 5

Scoring average: **71.61**

Best finish: **4th in 2015**

CURRENT FORM:

The World No. 3 has seven top-10s in eight starts in 2019. He won The Players Championship



DUSTIN JOHNSON
Odds:
10/1

Masters played: 8
Cuts made: 7 | Top 10 finishes: 3

Scoring average: **71.83**

Best finish: **4th in 2016**

CURRENT FORM:

The World No. 1 has five top-10s in eight starts in 2019. He won the WGC-Mexico Championship. He also has a European Tour title



TIGER WOODS
Odds:
12/1

Masters played: 21
Cuts made: 20 | Top 10 finishes: 13

Scoring average: **70.93**

Best finish: **Four-time champion**

CURRENT FORM:

The World No. 12 has two top-10s in five starts in 2019. His best: 10th at WGC-Mexico Championship



BROOKS KOEPKA
Odds:
14/1

Masters played: 3
Cuts made: 3 | Top 10 finishes: 0

Scoring average: **72.33**

Best finish: **T11 in 2017**

CURRENT FORM:

The World No. 4 has two top-10s in eight starts in 2019. He won The CJ Cup at Nine Bridges



JUSTIN ROSE
Odds:
14/1

Masters played: 13
Cuts made: 3 | Top 10 finishes: 5

Scoring average: **71.73**

Best finish: **2nd/T2 in 2015 & '17**

CURRENT FORM:

The World No. 2 has four top-10s in six starts in 2019. He won the Farmers Insurance Open

KEEP AN EYE ON:
Bryson DeChambeau **16/1**
Justin Thomas **16/1** | Jon Rahm
18/1 | Jordan Spieth **20/1**
Rickie Fowler **20/1**



Augusta — where narratives collide

Some of golf's biggest names — and its most interesting stories — will headline the season's first Major

There will be no shortage of plotlines when the year's first Major, the Masters Tournament, tees off at the fabled Augusta National golf course on April 11.

Rory McIlroy's quest to complete the career Grand Slam; Tiger Woods' hunt for a 15th Major title; Dustin Johnson's search for validation; Jordan Spieth's pursuit of redemption: the stories write themselves, and we haven't even got to Brooks Koepka's weight loss and Justin Rose's big-tournament funk.

But we begin with defending champion Patrick Reed, who, by all accounts, is on a hiding to nothing. Reed mastered his nerve in a fairytale finish last year and is looking to emulate Jack Nicklaus, Nick Faldo and Woods — the only repeat champions at Augusta. But the American's form since the 2018 victory suggests that he is a good golfer who had an inspired weekend, not an elite player who dominates the tour.

McIlroy, at his best, is an elite player who dominates the tour, but an inspired weekend has eluded him so far at Augusta. He had his chances last year — the Northern Irishman could have ended Reed's Sunday run before it started, but his game deserted him when he needed it the most.

Despite that setback, McIlroy

enters this year's Masters in a calmer frame of mind. "There's a difference between a personal desire and a need," he said recently. "I would have said a couple of years ago, 'I need to win a Masters. I need a green jacket'. Now, it's 'I want to, I want to win it. I'd love to win it, but if I don't, I'm OK.' And I think that is the difference."

At the highest level, wanting something too desperately often gets in the way of achieving it. McIlroy, a four-time Major winner, has played his best golf when relaxed, when his mind hasn't interfered with his physical skills. If he can maintain that attitude, easier said than done under pressure, he will give himself his best shot.

Woods will arrive in Augusta with less fanfare than last year, when fantasies of a magical comeback victory were all the rage. A sudden upsurge in form ahead of the 2018 tournament, after a prolonged battle with injury, had people believing.

This year, he has again shown glimpses of the Tiger of old, but has also made costly mistakes, such as missing a four-foot putt at the WGC Match Play which ended his chances of winning an 81st PGA Tour title.

Ranked 12th currently, Woods is among the world's top ten this year on strokes gained, strokes gained around the green, and

greens in regulation %. If he can get his inconsistent driving in order, and if he finds his touch putting on Augusta's tricky but familiar greens, there is no reason why he can't make a deep run.

Another contender for whom the rankings aren't the best indicator of how he will do at the Masters is Spieth. The 25-year-old has had a poor 2019 and finds himself at No. 32 — outrageously low for a prodigy who has already won three Majors.

But the Masters is Spieth's tournament: in five appearances at Augusta, he has a win, two runners-up honours and a third-place finish. His average position of 3.8 is nearly eight places higher than the next best (Rose, 11.6), when the last ten years are considered. What's more, his Masters scoring average of 70.05 leads the 2019 field.

Yet, for Spieth to redeem his year, he will have to buck a trend — four of the last five champions at the Masters have won at least one event in the two months leading up to the tournament.

Spieth, in 2019, has had no top-

10 finishes; his best came at the Farmers Insurance Open — 35th. Rounding out the list of favourites are three of the world's four top-ranked players: Johnson, Rose and Koepka.

Johnson could go all the way. He has the game for the course:

his driving gives him an advantage over most, and while his short game always seems to attract criticism, he has proven he can putt solidly when it counts. He said recently that his swing pattern has begun to feel like it did in 2017, when he looked a favourite for the Masters before a mishap at his rented home on the eve of the tournament forced him to withdraw.

Rose is something of an enigma. He is among the most consistent players on tour — only once since 2012 has his year-end ranking fallen outside the top 10. But while he's always a contender at the Majors, he has won just one of the 59 showpiece events he has entered, an unflattering record for someone of his quality.

Koepka, on the other hand, is a big-tournament player — three Major wins in 20 appearances confirms as much.

But he has lost 24 pounds (a little over 1kg) in the last six months, which he says has affected his driving distance because there isn't as much weight going through the stroke. He hasn't explained why he shed the pounds, but there's speculation that it's for a magazine photo-shoot!

From the epic to the bizarre, this year's Masters Tournament really has no shortage of storylines. SPORTS BUREAU

Course map

Augusta
National Golf Club
Par **72**
7,475 yards

Augusta National has been lengthened by 40 yards for the 2019 tournament — it's the first major change to the famous course since 2006. The fifth hole will now measure 495 yards, up from 455 yards last year, making it among the longest par-4s on the course, behind only the 505-yard 11th



Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Par	4	5	4	3	4	3	4	5	4
Yards	445	575	350	240	495	180	450	570	460
Hole	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Par	4	4	3	5	4	5	3	4	4
Yards	495	505	155	510	440	530	170	440	465

SOURCE: GRAPHIC NEWS, AUGUSTA NATIONAL GOLF CLUB

WORD PLAY

Manhattan



ON THE BOX



ICC Test Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	India	43	5,007	116
2	New Zealand	33	3,570	108
3	South Africa	42	4,397	105
4	Australia	44	4,566	104
5	England	53	5,490	104
6	Sri Lanka	51	4,737	93
7	Pakistan	32	2,803	88
8	West Indies	39	2,995	77
9	Bangladesh	28	1,898	68
10	Zimbabwe	11	138	13

ODI Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	England	59	7,259	123
2	India	71	8,508	120
3	New Zealand	54	6,071	112
4	South Africa	55	6,181	112
5	Australia	53	5,701	108
6	Pakistan	53	5,147	97
7	Bangladesh	42	3,792	90
8	Sri Lanka	62	4,734	76
9	West Indies	44	3,351	76
10	Afghanistan	40	2,554	64

T20I Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	Pakistan	39	5,280	135
2	India	47	5,726	122
3	England	25	3,036	121
4	Australia	30	3,613	120
5	South Africa	28	3,366	120
6	New Zealand	29	3,367	116
7	West Indies	30	2,932	98
8	Sri Lanka	30	2,798	93
9	West Indies	33	2,787	84
10	Bangladesh	30	2,321	77

Men's Top Five



LEWANDOWSKI



No room for error in late-season Der Klassiker

Two points separate Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich. The team that wins Saturday's face-off will feel it has one hand on the Bundesliga trophy

Saturday's Der Klassiker in Munich could decide this season's Bundesliga title race. Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund will be keen to gain an edge – both positional and psychological – ahead of the six-match sprint to the end.

Match-week 28 of 34 finds the rivals neck and neck – Bayern, which has won the last six league titles, trails Dortmund 61 points to 63. A Bayern victory would put it back in front in the race; defeat would leave it five points adrift.

The last time any team was ahead of the Bavarians after 27 games of the season was back in 2011-12, when Dortmund, under Jürgen Klopp, went on to claim the title. In-

terestingly, Bayern has lost the last four clashes against Dortmund when it has found itself behind its rival in the standings.

The 100th meeting between the two sides in the Bundesliga comes at an interesting time in the season. Bayern clawed its way back from a nine-point deficit at one stage to pull level with Dortmund, only to slip up in a surprise 1-1 draw at Freiburg last week. The side almost capitulated again, in midweek Cup action, but escaped with a 5-4 victory over second-tier Heidenheim.

Dortmund, on the other hand, has recovered from its slump in the past two months, earning last-gasp victories in its last two matches. Indeed, Dortmund has scored 21

goals in the final 15 minutes of games this season, establishing a new club record – something Bayern and its fans at the Allianz Arena will be wary of.

But win, lose or draw on Saturday, Bayern's players plan to party at an exclusive Munich nightclub at an event organised by defender Jerome Boateng. It hasn't gone down well with the club's hierarchy, and it will be worth keeping an eye on the reactions should the side end up on the wrong side of the result.

Boateng will have an important role to play in Saturday's game, given that Bayern's defence has been one of the reasons for its erratic season. The team has already conceded as many goals this season (28) as it did

in the whole of last term. The defence will breathe slightly easier if Dortmund's top-scorer Paco Alcacer doesn't recover sufficiently for the contest. Alcacer, who struck twice in stoppage time last week to beat Wolfsburg 2-0, is doubtful after injuring his arm in that game. But the *Bild* newspaper reported he could potentially play with a special arm sling.

There will be pressure on both the managers to get their tactics spot on. Bayern's Niko Kovac has been feeling the heat. He was compelled to clarify that he wasn't a stick-in-the-mud in comparison with Manchester City's Pep Guardiola or PSG's Thomas Tuchel, considered two of football's most interesting coaches.

Under Kovac, Bayern has switched between a 4-2-3-1 and a 4-1-4-1 – Thiago Alcantara's positioning usually determines if it's a midfield double pivot or if Javi Martínez plays as a lone holder.

Dortmund, to many observers, has looked more progressive: Lucien Favre's 4-2-3-1 system has been characterised by a high line, structured combination play and rapid cutbacks from wide positions.

But Kovac isn't having any of it.

"To say we don't have a philosophy is simply not true," he said. "Dortmund is having a fantastic season, but if we play at our best, we are the best team in Germany and we will win the league."

SPORTS BUREAU, REUTERS & AFP

PREVIEW PACK

Form guide

Bayern
WWWWWD
Dortmund
DWLWWW

H2H (all competitions)

Overall:
Bayern 56
Dortmund 31
Draws 33

Last six games:

Bayern 3
Dortmund 2
Draws 1

Last six games in Munich:

Bayern 5
Dortmund 1

Most goals

Bayern:
Lewandowski 19

Rodriguez 7

Gnabry 7

Dortmund:
Alcacer 16

Reus 15

Sancho 8

Trend spotting

- Bayern has won its last seven home Bundesliga games, keeping a clean sheet in five of them
- Dortmund has won two of its last six away Bundesliga matches, conceding two goals in three of them

SOURCE: WHOSCORED.COM, TRANSFERMARKET.CO.UK

Barca seeks decisive blow in Atletico showdown

If the Catalan side wins at Camp Nou on Saturday, it will take an 11-point lead at the top of the standings with seven games left

PREVIEW PACK

Form guide

Barcelona **WWWWWD**

Atletico **WWWLWW**

H2H (last six games)

Overall:
Barcelona 3 | Atletico 0 | Draws 3

In Barcelona:

Barcelona 4 | Atletico 0 | Draws 2

Most goals

Barcelona: Messi 32 | Suarez 19 | Dembele 8

Atletico: Griezmann 13 | Morata 4 | Saul 4

Trend spotting

- Barcelona has scored at least two goals in 10 of its last 11 home matches
- Atletico has won four and lost two of its last six away games

SOURCE: WHOSCORED.COM

make for encouraging reading, nor does the fact that strikers

Alvaro Morata and Diego Costa are struggling with fitness issues, despite returning to training on Friday. Record signing Thomas Lemar is injured, as well.

The club's top scorer this season Frenchman Antoine Griezmann and Croatian forward Niko Kulinic are coach Diego Simeone's only fully fit forwards.

Barca has an almost clean bill of health for the game and could welcome back Ousmane Dembele after the France forward started light training following a muscle injury.

The side's only worry is its dependence on Messi when things get tough. How will the rest of the team react if the opposition manages to neutralise his influence?

"Of course, Messi-dependence exists, it would exist in any other team in the world," Barca coach Ernesto Valverde said.

"But when he is there we also have to play. The first 15 minutes [when Barca was 2-0 up against Villarreal] we didn't need him, in the last 15 we really did. We all accept this."

REUTERS & AFP



GAME THEORY

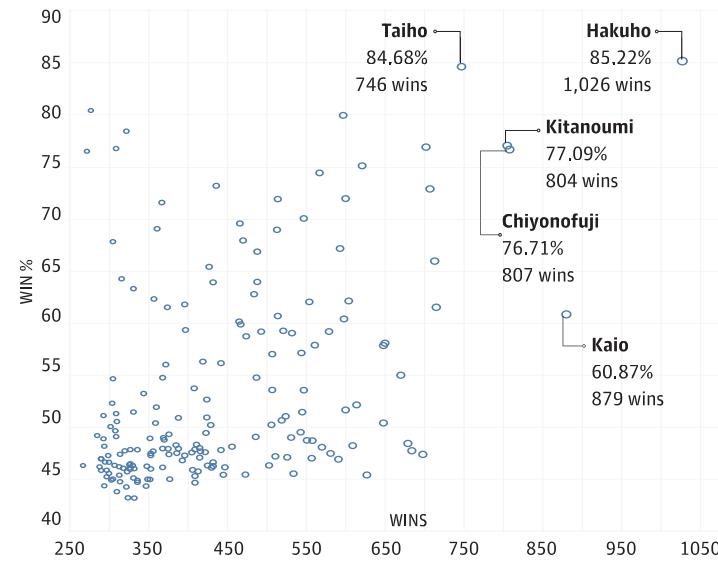
Both immovable object and irresistible force

Hakuho Sho is one of the most dominant athletes in the world of sport. The yokozuna (grand champion) recently won his 42nd yusho (top-division championship), with a 15-0 sweep, to reassert his claim of being the most successful sumo wrestler in more than a century. The Mongolian has won ten more championships than his nearest challenger, Japan's Taiho, who dominated the sport in the 1960s

Rank	Competitor	Top-division championships	Span
1	Hakuho	42	2006-
2	Taiho	32	1960-71
3	Chiyonofuji	31	1981-90
4	Asashoryu	25	2002-10
5	Kitanoumi	24	1974-84
6	Takanohana	22	1992-2001
7	Wajima	14	1972-80
8	Futabayama	12	1936-43
9	Musashimaru	12	1994-2002
10	Akebono	11	1992-2000

The outlier

Of all sumo wrestlers with at least 250 wins, no one approaches Hakuho's combination of success rate and victories. Although Taiho's success rate is nearly as good, he has 280 fewer wins



Compiled by Srinivasan Ramani

SOURCE: SUMO REFERENCE

PICTURE THIS



Rough and tumble

Many believe that the World Cross Country Championships is among the toughest races to win – tougher even than any at the Olympics.

Some also believed that the plot had been lost during the championship's 46-year history –

the courses got easier to navigate, the surfaces got more manicured and it wasn't a case of survival of the fittest.

But the 43rd edition in Aarhus, Denmark, recently, was a dream for the purists: the course included mud pits, sand pits, water holes and the grass roof of the Moesgaard

museum. The race also attracted the world's best athletes.

Kenya's Hellen Obiri made history, becoming the first woman to win world titles indoors, outdoors and at cross country. Joshua Cheptegei took the senior men's race.

The World Cross Country Championships are (currently) a

group of five races – senior men and women, junior men and women, and mixed relay – held on a biennial basis. What started off in 1973 with 286 athletes from 21 nations has grown to 520 athletes from 62 nations. The event was an annual affair until 2011, after which the format was changed.

'Deaths from C-sections high in developing countries'

Overuse and underuse of Caesarean section a global concern, says WHO

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Maternal deaths following caesarean sections in low and middle-income countries are 100 times higher than that in high-income countries, with up to a third of all babies dying, according to data from 12 million pregnancies. This according to a new review published in *The Lancet*, which has consi-

dered 196 studies from 67 low and middle-income countries.

Information released by the World Health Organisation under its sexual and reproductive health section further adds from the study that data from 1990 to 2017 show that a quarter of all women who died while giving birth in low and middle-income countries had under-

gone caesarean section.

"The outcomes for women in low and middle-income countries are far worse than we expected," said first author, Dr. Soha Sobhy of Queen Mary University of London.

Risk of complications

Dr. Ana Pilar Betrán, medical officer, WHO, said the overuse and underuse of caesarean section were a current global concern and the focus of debates and research.

"In many low and middle-

income countries, overuse and underuse coexist making it particularly difficult to increase the provision of caesarean section to those women in need without aggravating the overuse which, in turn, places women at higher risk of complications," she said.

Every year, 3 lakh women die during childbirth, 99% of whom are from low and middle-income countries. Timely access to caesarean section when needed is required for safe childbirth,

but 'too little, too late,' or 'too many, too soon' are part of a problem and not a solution, notes the study.

A third of all deaths following caesarean section were attributed to postpartum haemorrhage (32%), 19% to pre-eclampsia, 22% to sepsis, and 14% to anaesthesia-related causes.

Unjustified reasons

The study says that while many women in need of caesarean sections still do not have access to caesarean sec-

tion particularly in low resource settings, many others undergo the procedure unnecessarily, for reasons which are not medically justified.

Lead author Professor Shakila Thangaratinam, Queen Mary University of London, added: "Caesarean sections are the most commonly performed operation worldwide. They are meant to be life saving for both mother and the baby. Now that we know the risk factors and countries associated

with poor outcomes, we can make a more targeted effort so that timely and safe caesarean sections can be carried out wherever they are needed."

The authors also highlighted that training is needed in decision making to reduce unnecessary caesarean sections, and in appropriate intrapartum care, including instrumental deliveries to reduce caesarean sections performed in the second stage of labour, which carry greater risk.

Avicii's first posthumous album soon

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK

Swedish musician Avicii's first posthumous single will be released next week and a full album will be out in June. Avicii was close to completing his new album before he died last April. His co-writers continued to work on the nearly finished songs and a new single, SOS.

The album, titled *TIM*, will be released on June 6.

Mystery of weapons of China's terracotta warriors unravelled

Two-millenia-old bronze swords, lances are well-preserved

REUTERS

For decades, scientists have been perplexed by the marvellous preservation of bronze weapons associated with China's famed terracotta warriors, retaining shiny, almost pristine surfaces and sharp blades after being buried for more than two millennia.

Research by an international team of scientists published on Thursday may solve the mystery while putting to rest an intriguing hypothesis: that ancient Chinese artisans employed an unexpectedly advanced preservation method using the metal chromium.

The preservation of weapons, including swords, lances and halberds, was due to factors such as the bronze's high tin content and favourable soil composition, the scientists said after examining 464 bronze weapons and parts.

Chromium found on the bronze surfaces, they determined, was contamination from chromium-rich lacquer



Pristine and shiny: Bronze's high tin content and favourable soil composition helped preserve the weapons. ■ REUTERS

applied by the artisans to the terracotta figures and weapons parts.

No role for chromium

Chromium played no role in their preservation.

The terracotta army consists of thousands of life-sized ceramic warriors and horses alongside bronze chariots and weapons, part of the 3rd century B.C. mausoleum near the city of Xi'an for Qin Shi Huang, first emperor of a unified China.

Found in 1974, it represents one of the 20th century's greatest discoveries.

Earlier studies had detected chromium on the surface of some of the weapons, spurring the hypothesis that the weapon-makers used a chromium-based treatment to prevent corrosion.

Chromium-conversion coating, a technology discovered in the early 20th century, is used to treat metals to render them more corrosion resistant.

Japan probe blasts asteroid to make crater

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

A Japanese spacecraft, Hayabusa2, on Friday launched an explosive device at an asteroid, aiming to blast a crater in the surface and scoop up material that could shed light on how the solar system evolved.

The mission was risky as the spacecraft had to immediately move away so as to avoid getting hit by flying shards from the blast.

Hayabusa2 successfully released the so-called "small carry-on impactor" – a cone-shaped device capped with a copper bottom – as scheduled, as the probe hovered just 500 metres above the asteroid Ryugu. The impactor was programmed to explode 40 minutes later, propelling the copper bottom towards Ryugu, where it should gouge a crater into the surface of the asteroid that spins 300 million kilometres from Earth.

Hayabusa2 moved smartly away from the area to avoid being damaged by debris from the explosion or colliding with Ryugu.

Rise in obesity, vision-related issues in Indian schoolchildren, says study

30.4% of students have abnormal BMI and one in two may need spectacles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Obesity, vision and dental issues are the major health problems faced by schoolgoing children in the age group 2 to 17 years across India, according to a report.

The report, "Enhancing the Effectiveness and Impact of Schools: Insights from School Health Screening Program", released by Jarma Wellness, an organisation working in the area of healthcare consultation, assessed nearly two lakh children belonging to various socio-economic backgrounds from 20 cities.

Preventive healthcare

"Our health screening data shows a clear need for focused effort to improve health of children and young people through preventive healthcare. A continued failure to act will have serious ramifications for the health of generations to come," said Dr. Akshay Shah, co-founder, Jarma Wellness.



The study points out that an aware parent will invest more in preventive healthcare for the child. ■ GETTY IMAGES

The report adds that hygiene is a major issue. According to the report, vision screening of 1,55,584 children shows that an overall of 39,674 (25.5%) of children have abnormal vision.

The number of children with uncorrected myopia/hyperopia and wearing glasses touches nearly 50% in higher-secondary section, indicating that potentially one in every two children may need glasses.

Also, 30.4% of all students screened have been found to have abnormal BMI. Of this, 19.1% students have been found to be in the overweight and obese category.

The report also shows a significant jump from 16% to 23% in the same category as the child moves from pre-primary to primary grades, and goes up to 26% in higher secondary.

"Based on assessment of various dental/oral health

parameters – presence of cavities, plaque, tartar, gum inflammation, bleeding, oral hygiene and teeth alignment – the report observes that over 50% of all students screened were found to have dental issues and close to 27% of students have cavities. While alignment of teeth is more of a cosmetic issue, the other parameters point towards hygiene habits and brushing techniques. Interestingly, parental inaction is noticed most when it comes to their child's dental health; not realising that if left untreated, deteriorating oral health can impact the quality of the child's permanent set of teeth," it said.

"In schools where screenings were done in previous years, the percentage of parents taking action was very high when compared to schools where screening happened for the first time, clearly showing that an aware parent will invest far more in preventive healthcare," noted the report.

Kerala forests home to new spider species

Spotted in Eurasia & Africa so far

AATHIRA PERINCHERY
Kochi

A group of jumping spiders that mostly occur in Eurasia and Africa, has been spotted for the first time in Ernakulam's Ithilodu forests by arachnologists from Kochi's Sacred Heart College, Thevara. The team also found that the spider belonging to the genus (a taxonomic classification above species) *Habrocestum* is a species new to science.

The team came across the different-looking spiders – six of them, predominantly brownish-black in colour with white and creamy-yellow patches – while conducting a routine survey (funded by the Department of Science and Technology-Science and Engineering Research Board) for ground-dwelling spiders in the Ithilodu reserve forests of the Malayatoor forest division, barely 60 km from here. Back in their laboratory, they examined the physical features of males and females. They also compared these to similar-looking spider specimens collected earlier from the Thattekad Bird Sanctuary.

A detailed examination of the spiders' physical features revealed that they belong to the genus *Habrocestum* that has been recorded mostly in Eurasia and Africa and never in India, till now. Comparisons with studies of European *Habrocestum* spiders revealed that the spiders from Ithil-



Habrocestum longispinum

ode are a new species altogether, for they had distinctly different reproductive organs.

Single spine
The spider also has a single long spine on the underside of both its first legs, and this gave it its scientific name *Habrocestum longispinum* (after Latin 'longe' meaning long and 'spinae' for spine). "It measures just around 2 mm and seems to prefer dry habitats, dwelling in forest litter," said Mathew M. Joseph, assistant professor at Sacred Heart College and a co-author of the study published in the *Journal of Natural History* last month.

While more detailed ecological studies are required, threats could include unregulated tourism activities and even climate change (which could affect the small insects by altering the specific micro-climates that they prefer), he said.

The study extends the range of these spiders to India. The discovery also lends support to the continental drift theory that suggests that the world's continents were one large, contiguous landmass where these creatures thrived millions of years ago, he added.



VIT
Vellore Institute of Technology
(Deemed to be University under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956)

UNIVERSITY DAY

Hearty welcome to

CHIEF GUEST

**Hon'ble Justice
T. RAJA**
Judge, Madras High Court.

GUEST OF HONOUR

**VIT Alumnus
Dr. E. NATARAJAN**
Professor & Director,
Institute for Energy Studies, Anna University.

10:30 A.M - 6th APRIL 2019 (SATURDAY) - VELLORE



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PATANJALI
Prakriti ka Aashirwad

New Year Resolution

Let us vote for the government which is capable of keeping our country safe & secure and bring home products that will keep us and our families safe.

May this Indian New Year bring health and happiness to your family

Let us all take great pride in our culture and tradition which is 1,96,08,53,120 years old. Inculcate Sanatan Vedic culture, languages, education system and healthcare in your day to day life.



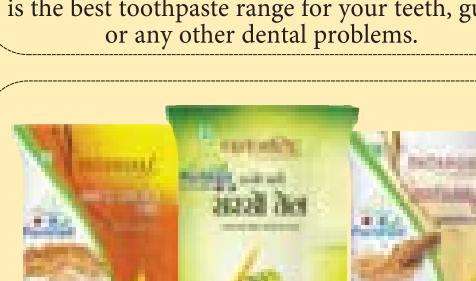
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Enriched with the goodness of Akarkara, Tumru, Laung, Vajradanti, Neem, Babul and other beneficial natural ingredients, Patanjali Dant Kanti is the best toothpaste range for your teeth, gums or any other dental problems.



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All natural nutrients like Oryzanol, natural minerals and vitamins are intact when oil is physically refined whereas they are completely destroyed when it is chemically refined.



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All your daily home and kitchen needs are made by Patanjali using highest quality standards.



Bath Soap

Patanjali natural & safe anti-bacterial bath soaps are made using Haldi, Chandan, Aloe-vera, Neem, Multani Mitti and other natural ingredients.