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9 AM

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Starts: 18 Dec | 1 PM

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► This Course is designed to help aspirants prepare for and increase their score in General Studies Paper I. It will not only include discussion of the entire GS Paper I Prelims syllabus but also that of previous years' UPSC papers along with practice and discussion of Vision IAS classroom tests and the Prelims All India Test Series.

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हिन्दी माध्यम : 13 Dec

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by Mrs Sosin

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Starting: 6th January

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</p

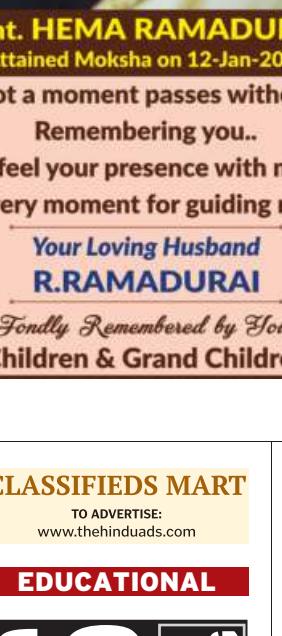
**OBITUARY &
REMEMBRANCE**

DEATH

Mr.N.S. Parthasarathy (82), Retired Supervisor, Composing Department, The Hindu, Chennai, passed away on 11-01-2019. Address: A3, Adithya Apartments, 29th Street, Thillai Ganga Nagar, Nanganallur, Chennai – 600 061. Phone No: 044-42640919 / Mobile: 9789932399.

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

6th ANNIVERSARY



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INSIGHT

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*Available in most pin codes.

3 hurt during protest against Bill

IBOYAIMA LAITHANGBAM
IMPHAL

Three persons, including a police officer, were injured here on Friday during a protest over the passing of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Members of six students' bodies staged demonstrations in small batches and later marched towards the women's markets, where they were joined by the vendors. The protesters obstructed traf-

fic and shouted slogans when the police tried to disperse them.

The police fired tear-gas canisters and mock bombs. Two persons and a police officer suffered injuries in the clash.

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82nd Birth Anniversary



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(Former Editor-in-chief, National Herald and Congress Sandesh)

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Kota Neelima Sriraj Kota
Pawan Khera Hima Bindu Kota
Gayatri and Ram

From family, friends, admirers and countless others inspired by you

Financial aid for poor students

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

After announcing cash for farmers, the Odisha government is ready to extend an annual financial assistance of ₹20,000 for each student belonging to the underprivileged section of the society in graduation and post-graduation programmes.

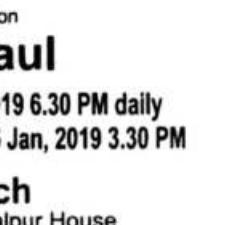
This scheme is in addition to the existing scholarships being availed by students. The financial assistance will be limited to the duration of the course. It will be given every year till the completion of the course.

"It is anticipated that the scheme will lead to participation of the underprivileged section in gaining access to higher education," said the State Higher Education Secretary.

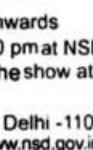
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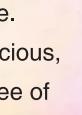
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SATURDAY, JAN. 12
 RISE 07:15 SET 17:44
 RISE 11:09 SET 23:12
SUNDAY, JAN. 13
 RISE 07:15 SET 17:45
 RISE 11:42 SET 00:00
MONDAY, JAN. 14
 RISE 07:15 SET 17:46
 RISE 12:14 SET 00:05

Delhi Weather max min
 Delhi City 22 05
 Safdarjung 22 05
 22 07

Delhi Palam Today
 21°C A shallow fog remain during cold morning. A partly cloudy sky with unhealthy pollution.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
 20°C Fog/mist would remain during cold morning. A partly cloudy sky on a pleasant day.

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IN BRIEF

Three arrested with fake currency in J&K

JAMMU
 Security personnel on Friday arrested three persons and recovered fake currency with a face value of more than ₹15,000 in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, police said. PTI

SC lifts stay on stalled Chardham projects

No relief for yet-to-begin projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Supreme Court on Friday lifted its stay on certain stalled projects under the government's ambitious Chardham development plan, which proposes to provide all-weather connectivity to the four holy towns of Uttarakhand.

The court said the stay

Speculation rife about Leader of Opposition

Front-runners include two former Ministers and ex-Speaker

MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPUR

After the appointment of former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje as BJP national vice-president, speculations are rife here about the choice for the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajasthan Assembly. The first session of the new Assembly is set to begin on January 15.

With Ms. Raje's shift to the Centre, BJP's politics in the State is likely to take a new turn, paving the way for emergence of a leadership acceptable to the party cadre. The party's central leadership has sent across a clear message for testing Ms. Raje's abilities for managing the affairs in the run-up to this year's Lok Sabha elections.

Ms. Raje was earlier keen to stay put and play the lead role in the State as the LoP. Last year, the central leadership had found it difficult to appoint the BJP State president of its choice, as Ms. Raje held her ground and opposed the appointment of



Former CM Vasundhara Raje has moved to the Centre. •

Union Minister of State Gajendra Singh Shekhawat to the post. A compromise was later reached with the appointment of Madan Lal Saini.

The former Chief Minister expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah for her appointment as the party's vice-president on Friday.

"I will execute the responsibilities assigned to me with full commitment," Ms. Raje said.

The front-runners for the LoP's post include former Ministers Gulab Chand Kata-

ria and Rajendra Rathore and outgoing Assembly Speaker Kailash Meghwali. While Mr. Meghwali is one of the oldest members of the House, Mr. Rathore is considered a close aide of Ms. Raje. Mr. Kataria, who earlier had Chief Ministerial ambitions, had come to terms with his position in the party and served as the Home Minister.

BJP meeting
 The LoP's name is likely to be finalised in Delhi and announced in the first meeting of the BJP Legislative Party here on January 13. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, appointed by the party's Parliamentary Board as central observer for LoP's election, will be present at the meeting.

Ms. Raje, who played an active role in the State's politics during the last 15 years, was appointed the BJP State chief in 2002.

The party won 73 seats in the recent Assembly polls, losing out to the Congress which got 99 seats.

Centre signs pact with 5 States on Renuka dam

For water to Delhi, other basin States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

The Centre has signed an agreement with Chief Ministers of five States – Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh – to restart construction of the Renuka multipurpose dam project in the Upper Yamuna Basin.

The Renuka dam project has been conceived as a storage project on the Giri river (a tributary of the Yamuna) in Sirsa district of Himachal Pradesh. The project envisages making a 148-metre-high dam for supplying water to Delhi and other basin States. It will also generate 40 MW of power.

'Enough water'

Speaking at a press briefing on Friday, Union Water Resources Minister Nitin Gadkari said that there is enough water available in the country but the real issue is effective water management.

Terming the signing of agreement for Renuka dam project a "historic" moment, he said that the government will "try to get the

Cabinet approval" as soon as possible.

After the construction of the dam, the flow of the Giri river will increase by about 110%, which will help meet the drinking water needs of Delhi and other basin States.

Water from the Renuka dam will be used by U.P., Haryana and National Capital Territory of Delhi from Hathnikund barrage, by the NCT of Delhi from Wazirabad barrage and by U.P., Haryana and Rajasthan from the Okhla barrage.

Plans to construct the Renuka dam started in 1976 but were aborted. At 2015 price levels, the total cost of the project is estimated to be ₹4,596.76 crore, of which the cost of irrigation/drinking water component is ₹4,325.43 crore and the cost of power component is ₹277.33 crore.

Around 90% of the cost of irrigation/drinking water component of the project i.e. ₹3,892.83 crore will be provided by the Central government and the remaining ₹432.54 crore by the rest of the basin States.

SAD forms poll manifesto panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal on Friday announced a 17-member committee which

will prepare the party's manifesto for the coming parliamentary polls. The panel was formed by party chief Sukhbir Singh Badal.

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Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
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G Vinay Reddy	Dibyan Bandyopadhyay	Ram Shankar Mishra	Ram Shankar Mishra	G Vinay Reddy
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- Candidates Starting Preparation Must Watch**

- i) **How to Crack IAS**
<http://y2u.be/t5cB18f1Lno>
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Geography/ज्योग्यता

By ALOK RANJAN
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IN BRIEF



Petrol price rises by 19 paisa, diesel by 28 paisa

NEW DELHI

Petrol price rose marginally by 19 paisa a litre and diesel by 28 paisa on Friday, the second increase in rates in as many days on firming input cost. Petrol in Delhi now costs ₹69.07 a litre, while diesel is priced at ₹62.81, according to state-owned oil firms. PTI

Case against J&J closed on Centre's assurance

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday closed the case seeking action against the U.S.-based pharma major Johnson and Johnson (J&J) for faulty hip implants in India that left several patients disabled. A Bench, led by CJ Ranjan Gogoi, was satisfied with the Centre's response that a scheme was framed to give compensation of up to ₹1.22 crore to the victims.

Narendra Modi is no Vajpayee, says Stalin

CHENNAI

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to the successful coalition formed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee two decades ago and said the BJP was open to alliance with "old friends" in Tamil Nadu, DMK chief M.K. Stalin said that Mr. Modi was no Vajpayee. The DMK would never tie up with the BJP, he said on Friday.

Baby decapitated inside womb, nurses suspended

JAIPUR

Two nurses were suspended after they reportedly caused an unborn baby to be decapitated inside the womb at a government healthcare centre in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district. The woman's family members alleged that the male nurses pulled the foetus forcefully, resulting in the death.

ISRO cranks up Gaganyaan project

Agency announces the setting up of Human Space Flight Centre, names Unnikrishnan Nair as director

MADHUMATHI D.S.
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday said work on 'Gaganyaan', the project to send a manned mission to space by 2022, would start soon at the newly created Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC).

"Gaganyaan is our highest priority now," K. Sivan, ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, told reporters here. "We have put in a management structure to realise it. The Human Space Flight Centre [based in Bengaluru] will carry out all activities related to the human programme. Under it will function the Gaganyaan Project," he added.

Dr. Sivan also announced the appointment of Unnikrishnan Nair – who led ISRO's Advanced Space Transportation Programme at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and has already worked in the area as the director of the Human Space Flight Project – as the director of the new centre.

The facility would be staffed by a dedicated team, with ISRO planning to deploy 800 to 900 people over

A giant leap

A lowdown on India's first manned space flight and its second mission to the moon

GAGANYAAN

ISRO's maiden human spaceflight mission will be launched aboard the GSLV-MkIII (file image on right)

- New Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru to be Gaganyaan hub
- Rocket from Kerala, Unnikrishnan Nair, will helm the mission expected to launch in Dec. 2021 with a 3-member crew
- ISRO to deploy 861 people, including additional workforce of 700, for the mission
- IAF to select astronauts, provide training at Institute of Aerospace Medicine, Bengaluru; advanced training could be offered in Russia

Cost: ₹9,023 crore



CHANDRAYAAN 2



A component of Chandrayaan 1. ISRO

▪ Cost: ₹800 crore ▪ Weight: 3,290 kg

- Objective: To orbit the moon and perform remote sensing operations to collect information on lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance and lunar exosphere



We are going to land at a place where nobody else has gone – moon's south pole

K. SIVAN, ISRO, Chairman

which produces about 100 space engineers each year, would be a primary source of talent, said a senior official.

'Big bang'

"The year 2019 has started with a big bang with Gaganyaan getting the government's approval and budget for putting three astronauts in space for seven days," Dr. Sivan said. The astronauts will orbit Earth at a distance of 400 km.

"The HSPC will work full steam now," Dr. Sivan said. "We must select the astronauts, train them, create and ensure livable conditions in space for them, bring them back safely and later rehabilitate them in their routines."

The heavy lift launch vehicle GSLV Mark III, which got operational in November after its second successive flight in a row, must be suitably certified or human-rated. It will have two non-crew flights in December 2020 and July 2021.

The actual flight with crew is targeted to happen by December 2021 – to meet the Prime Minister's goal of August 2022, India's 75th Independence anniversary.



ter noting down proper reasoning for waiving the time limit.

Late last year, many from the Indian media and entertainment industry took to Twitter to share personal accounts of being sexually assaulted and harassed by colleagues and seniors at workplaces. Many of these allegations, such as those against former Union Minister M. J. Akbar, were about incidents that were several years, and sometimes many decades, old.

It is reliably learnt that some members wanted no time restriction at all on the filing of complaints.

The Committee is also likely to propose that members of Internal Committees be treated on a par with "public servants" as defined under Section 21 of the Indian Penal Code so that they have immunity from prosecution. "It will ensure that the members don't get entangled in court cases," the source said.

However, until the law is amended, the sub-panel may recommend that an Internal Committee can relax the three-month window after a "speaking order" or af-

#MeToo: time limit on filing complaints likely to be relaxed

Govt. sub-committee readying draft

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

A government sub-committee formed in the wake of the #MeToo movement to recommend ways to prevent sexual harassment at workplace is likely to propose waiving the three-month time limit for victims to file complaints as laid down under the law.

The sub-panel headed by a Special Secretary-level officer from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has met thrice so far and is in the process of drafting its recommendations. These will be presented before a four-member Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Home Minister Rajnath Singh.

Amendment required

According to a government official in the know of the Committee's deliberations, relaxing the three-month window provided to victims for filing complaints will require an amendment to the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (PoSH) Act, 2013. Section 9 of the law lays down that a complaint will have to be filed within three months of an incident taking place.

The actual flight with crew is targeted to happen by December 2021 – to meet the Prime Minister's goal of August 2022, India's 75th Independence anniversary.

Chargesheet against Nalini in Saradha scam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The CBI on Friday named Nalini Chidambaram, wife of Congress leader P. Chidambaram, in the sixth supplementary chargesheet in the Saradha chit fund scam filed in a court at Barasat in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district.

She has been charged under Sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 420 (cheating) and 409 (criminal breach of trust) of the Indian Penal Code and 4 and 5 of the Prize Chit Money Circulating Scheme (Banning) Act.

The CBI alleged that she conspired with Saradha chief Sudipta Sen for cheating and misappropriation of funds. The agency said she had taken ₹1.4 crore of investors' money from Mr. Sen for helping and advising him. The Enforcement Directorate is also probing Ms. Chidambaram's role.

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CONVOCATION 2019

The 57th Convocation of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) is scheduled for Friday, February 08, 2019 at 11.00 A.M. in the lawns of Dr. B.P. Pal Auditorium of the Institute. Hon'ble Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice-President of India will be the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Eligible candidates may apply for admission to the Convocation latest by the January 31, 2019 to the Registrar, IARI, New Delhi-110012 with the information weather they desire to obtain their degrees in person or in absentia.

The alumni, may update their contact details by email: registrar_academic@iari.res.in

All alumni, ex-faculty members and invitees are cordially requested to attend the Convocation. For details visit: www.iari.res.in

Registrar

Email: registrar_academic@iari.res.in

Will not accept high-value Indian currency, says Nepal

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Upset over continued delays by New Delhi in exchanging demonetised currency, Nepal says it will not accept high-value Indian notes until the government gives specific assurances against future shocks.

Explaining the Oli government's recent move to ban all Indian currency of denominations above ₹100, Foreign Minister Pradeep Ku-

mar Gyawali said India was yet to respond to Nepal's two-year-old demand for the return of more than ₹7 crore in demonetised notes held officially by the Nepali Rashtra Bank (NRB). "We have asked the Indian government on several occasions to settle the issue," Mr. Gyawali told presspersons here on Friday. "We have now decided that on the use of high-value [Indian] currency, we will not allow it until we get

an assurance from the Indian government," he said.

When ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes were demonetised on November 8, 2016, countries such as Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar were left holding large sums of the currency. While India settled the issue with Bhutan, it is yet to respond to Nepal's requests, officials told *The Hindu*.

The External Affairs Ministry did not respond to a query on Nepal's demand.

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday questioned the Centre and the State of Meghalaya how lives were lost in rat-hole mines, saying these illegal mines could not operate without the connivance of officials.

Rat-hole mining was banned by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) four years ago.

"Lives are lost owing to il-

legal mining. What about the officials who allowed this to happen? It could not have been done without the connivance of officials," Justice A.K. Sikri, heading a Bench comprising Justice S. Abdul Nazeer, asked Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta and counsel for Meghalaya.

The court said it would look into how rat-hole mining survived a ban.

It urged that the rescue efforts continue in full swing

for the 15 miners trapped in a rat-hole mine in East Jaintia Hills since December 13. It heard Mr. Mehta's submissions on the airlifting of equipment to supplement the efforts to reach the trapped workers in the flooded mine. "Carry on with your rescue efforts. What if all or some are still alive," Justice Sikri said.

The Bench posted the matter to January 18 for further hearing.

Illegal mines operate with connivance of officials: SC

Cuts fuel spend, premature deaths'



JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

Cycling for short distance trips can yield an annual benefit of ₹1.8 trillion to the economy, and cycling regularly for an average distance of 3.5 km for just 120 days can help avoid 4,756 premature deaths, says an analysis by The Energy Resources Institute (Teri).

Even though cycle sales have risen only 1% in a decade – as opposed to a 9% rise in cars and two-wheelers – cyclists in cities constitute nearly 40% of those who travel more than 21 km for work. That's around the same as those who commute a similar distance by car, says findings from the 2011 Census, which were used in the study to analyse cycling trends in India.

"A significant number of people may be compelled to bicycle to work because they can't afford alternatives," said Megha Kumar, one of the researchers involved in the study. More than half of India uses "non-motorised" forms of transport, such as walking and cycling, to travel to work, followed by two-wheelers (18%) and buses (16%), the report notes.

Substituting just half the short distance work trips, which are typically undertaken by two-wheelers and cars, with cycles, could result in massive savings – about ₹27 billion from fuel expenditure and 0.35 Million Tonnes of Oil Equivalent (MTOE) in terms of energy, the researchers calculated.

The report, which was funded by the All India Cycle Manufacturers Association, said the government should reduce Goods and Services Tax (GST) on cycles that cost less than ₹5,000; promote manufacturing of bicycles, and "discourage" personal motorised vehicles through congestion charges, increased cost of parking, and a "pollution tax."

The detailed terms and conditions of this tender can be obtained from Govt. website <http://etenders.chd.nic.in/nicgep> or the office of the Executive Engineer, C.P. Division No.6, Chandigarh. Prospective bidders should download the complete tender documents only from the website <http://etenders.chd.nic.in/nicgep> upto the last date for submission. Addendum/Corrigendum, if any, to the tender documents shall be uploaded on the aforementioned website only. Hence, the bidders shall visit the same regularly. Bidders are requested to go through the complete bid documents, criteria and scope of work in particular, before submission of online bid.

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Estimated Tender Amount	Item Rate
Ernest Money	2.00 Crore
Time Limit	06 Years
Date of Pre-bid Conference	17/01/2019 at 11.00 AM
Last date & Time of download and Online submission of bid	01/02/2019 at 11.00 AM
Date & Time Opening of tender	01/02/2019 at 12.00 Noon

The detailed terms and conditions of this tender can be obtained from Govt. website <http://etenders.chd.nic.in/nicgep> or the office of the Executive Engineer, C.P. Division No.6, Chandigarh. Prospective bidders should download the complete tender documents only from the website <a href="http://etenders.ch



Disquieting decision

The unseemly tussle in the CBI's top echelons reaches an unsatisfactory end

The removal of Alok Verma as Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation is a disconcerting development to an unseemly episode. The controversy that began with a public tussle between Mr. Verma and Special Director Rakesh Asthana has ended with the former's removal, although it is couched as a transfer. It was obvious from the beginning that the government did not want him to continue, although it sought to give the impression that it was being even-handed in asking both Mr. Verma and Mr. Asthana to proceed on leave. Mr. Verma's transfer has exposed an uncomfortable truth – that the legal protection for the CBI Director from external interference is not as strong as some had believed. The Supreme Court's judgment makes it clear that as long as such transfers follow a set procedure, the incumbent may be replaced. Though the court declared that no authority, other than the high-powered selection committee, could transfer him, its reinstatement of Mr. Verma was not unconditional. It asked the committee – comprising the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India, and the leader of the largest Opposition party – to decide on whether he should be divested of his powers. The government quickly convened a meeting, which was attended by Justice A.K. Sikri, as the nominee of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi. Despite a dissenting note by Mallikarjun Kharge, the majority, that is, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Justice Sikri, ordered Mr. Verma's transfer.

Questions have been raised about the committee refusing Mr. Verma a personal hearing. The panel apparently chose not to hear him on the ground that the Central Vigilance Commissioner, who held an inquiry on the Supreme Court's earlier orders, had heard him in the presence of the retired judge, Justice A.K. Patnaik, a supervisor appointed by the court, and that the *prima facie* findings against Mr. Verma were enough to conclude that he should not remain in that office. As he was neither suspended nor transferred, but only given a post of equal rank, there was no need for a hearing. Even if this position is not strictly untenable from a legal standpoint, it has serious implications for the CBI's independence. Future regimes may use this precedent to get such an adverse report against an inconvenient director and unseat him. Mr. Kharge's demand for getting Mr. Verma's response should have been considered. Mr. Verma has claimed that the CVC report was based only on the complainant's charges against him, and did not represent the CVC's 'findings'. An important learning from the entire episode is that the bipartisan appointment process for the post with the presence of a high judicial functionary as envisaged by the 2003 amendments may not be enough to thwart political stratagems. Far from resolving the institutional crisis in the agency, the outcome may have deeply politicised it.

Wall of shame

The shutdown over the Mexico wall demand will long define Donald Trump's presidency

It began as a populist campaign promise that brought President Donald Trump's supporters cheering to their feet and paved the way for his election. Now, the border wall with Mexico has become a morass of partisan bickering that has stalemated the U.S. federal government into a three-week-long shutdown, leaving nearly 800,000 public sector workers furloughed without pay. At the heart of this political crisis is the increasingly bitter polarisation of public opinion over immigration. On the one hand, Mr. Trump has steadily contributed to the strident and crude anti-migrant rhetoric, characterising prospective migrants from Latin America as drug-dealers, rapists and violent criminals and shutting down the U.S. border to travellers from certain Muslim-majority countries. On the other, his insistence that he will not sign any appropriations bill to break the funding logjam in Congress and end what could soon become the longest shutdown in U.S. history, unless that bill includes \$5.7 billion in financing for a border wall, has gone down badly with Democrats, who control the House. Matters took a darker turn as Mr. Trump doubled down on his refusal to negotiate over funding for the wall and said he may declare a state of national emergency over this uncomfortable *status quo*.

There are disquieting questions about the veracity of some of Mr. Trump's claims: migrant border crossings have been in decline for the best part of two decades; it is through legal ports of entry and not unauthorised crossing points that hard drugs such as heroin enter the U.S.; and even the State Department has admitted that no terror operatives have entered the U.S. through Mexico. Then there is the more blatantly flawed reasoning touted by the President that "Mexico will pay" for the wall. Now it appears that even Mr. Trump is backing down on his claim, arguing that Mexico would only "indirectly" fund it through trade deals. It is well-known that only corporations pay tariffs under these deals, not governments, and hence no such payment will come from Mexico. Even as the acerbic back-and-forth between Mr. Trump and Congressional Democrats continues, the deeper malaise is a profound disagreement among Americans on what their nation's very soul stands for. Is the U.S. truly a melting pot, a country built on the prowess of entrepreneurship and technology, in large part driven by immigrants seeking the "American dream"? Or is it a declining world power that has squandered too much to other nations and peoples and is readying itself for an uncompromising battle to claw back what it reckons it has lost? If it is the latter, then we could expect Mr. Trump's vision to succeed, but if not, a course correction is in order.

No freedom without equality at Sabarimala

Freedom of religion means the right to practise one's own religion, not the freedom to undermine fundamental rights



ANANYA VAJPEYI

When Bindu Ammini and Kanakadurga's entry into the Ayyappa Temple at Sabarimala on January 2 elicited a 'purification ritual' from the shrine's priests (*picture*), one was reminded of the purification of the Chavdar Tank at Mahad in 1927, following B.R. Ambedkar's satyagraha for 'Untouchables' to drink water there. Brahmins from the area poured 108 earthen vessels of *panchagavya*, five organic substances associated with the holy cow, including its milk, urine and dung, into the tank to undo the supposedly "polluting" effects of close to 10,000 Mahars drinking the water.

The memory of Mahad

Ambedkar's Mahad satyagraha had two chapters, on March 19-20, 1927 and on December 25, 1927. The symbolism of mass drinking of the water, with Ambedkar himself taking the first sip, was akin to an act of civil disobedience. Both were carefully planned, peaceful and disciplined protests, and yet were violently disrupted. Mobs, rioters and police colluded to attack and disperse the Mahar satyagrahis; the local British administration ended up siding with the Hindu hardliners under the guise of not wanting to hurt the religious sentiments of this socially dominant and politically powerful group.

"The orthodox Hindu is a strange fossil of humanity," wrote Dhananjay Keer, Ambedkar's biographer, narrating the events at Mahad. At that time Ambedkar's efforts were focussed on claiming that the tank was a public resource and drawing water from it was a

basic human right for 'Untouchables' as much as for others. He was not interested in entering the Veereshwar Temple nearby. But he did play a role in temple entry satyagrahas at the Parvati Temple in Pune in 1929 and the Kalaran Temple in Nasik from 1930 to 1934.

All these campaigns ultimately failed: upper castes pushed back using Brahmin strictures of *adhi-kar* (entitlement) and *bahishkar* (exclusion), arguments from private property, outright physical violence, as well as the law and order machinery of the colonial state to keep Dalits out. Adding insult to injury, first they performed purification rituals, then they obtained stay orders from government authorities, and later they filed legal cases. At no point did they hesitate to use tactics of intimidation.

At Mahad, Ambedkar endorsed the Gandhian language of satyagraha. He was inspired by a recent struggle in the princely state of Travancore, where the reformists T.K. Madhavan and K.P. Kesava Menon led a movement in 1924 to allow the extremely stigmatised castes of Ezhavas and Pulayas to worship at a Shiva Temple in Vai-kom. In historian Ramachandra Guha's telling, it was a rare moment in modern India's history when progressive and dissenting voices, from distinct political streams and different regional backgrounds, rose together as one. Vaikom saw a convergence of Kerala's Sri Narayana Guru, Tamil leader E.V. Ramasamy "Periyar", and Mahatma Gandhi himself, who asked Namboodiri Brahmins point blank to explain their refusal to allow devotees from these castes to worship at their temple.

But a decade later, Ambedkar was disgusted by the resilience of caste discrimination, terminally alienated from Gandhi on the question of Untouchability, and disillusioned about the political efficacy of satyagraha. At the end of his tether, in Yeola outside Nasik in October 1935 he declared that he



was born a Hindu but would not die one. He abandoned the logic of his own earlier position on tank and temple entry, and decided instead that he did not want any part of a religious system and its attendant social structure that would simply never let go hierarchical and discriminatory principles to affirm the claim for equality, dignity and respect for all.

Different discriminations

Apart from the reactionary impulse to "purify" what has been sullied by the proposition of equality, Sabarimala is and is not like Mahad. True, a specific group is targeted for exclusion in both cases: women of ages 10-50 (deemed reproductively active) at the Ayyappa Temple, and Dalits at the Chavdar Tank nearly a century ago. But in today's India, Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality, and the Supreme Court verdict of September 2018 further reiterates that females of any age have the right to perform the 41-day pilgrimage and worship at the Sabarimala shrine.

Fittingly, as the arc of the moral universe bends towards justice, it is precisely Ambedkar's momentous intervention in our life as a nation that gives us an egalitarian Constitution and a strong judiciary. He did not have these institutions to back him up during his own shattering struggle against caste, but he ensured that Untouchability was outlawed, and that equal citizenship and fundamental rights – regardless of gender or community – were enshrined in the charter document of the Indian Republic. The historian

precedent of Vaikom, together with the gains of decades of progressive politics in postcolonial Kerala, make the resurgence of religious orthodoxy, caste mentality and misogynistic patriarchy at Sabarimala hard to swallow.

The 5-million strong, 620 km "Wall of Women" on New Year's Day saw Kerala's women asking for the right to worship Ayyappa like their male counterparts. Was this wall in 2019 like the "Walk on Mahad" in 1927? Yes, in a certain sense. Ambedkar's procession leading thousands of Mahars on March 20, 1927 gave "a new turn to the history of India", wrote R.B. More, the main organiser of the Mahad satyagraha. Thirty years later, in Nagpur in October 1956, Ambedkar led half a million Dalits to convert to Buddhism. He wanted them to leave behind their Hindu identity and with it the caste system that discriminated against them.

But women – whether in Kerala or elsewhere – cannot "convert" en masse out of their religious background because of aspects of patriarchal tradition that oppress them *qua* women. Gender and caste are both definitely grounds of discrimination in Hindu society, but they do not occasion similar responses from those who are at the receiving end. Hindus who disagree with caste can embrace Buddhism, emulating Ambedkar's example, but what are women supposed to do? India's feminist movement, Kerala's long engagement with Communism and the verdict of the Supreme Court all offer different avenues to women seeking justice at Sabarimala. However, a radical resort to Ambedkarite religious conversion does not seem to make sense in this situation.

Reform and renewal

In Sabarimala the Bharatiya Janata Party and Sangh Parivar are stoking the fires of religious conservatism, and acting against the inter-

ests of women. This is only to be expected of the right-wing Hindu nationalist political platform that is thoroughly reactionary. What is so disappointing is that even the Congress has taken a regressive stand on this issue, with prominent leaders in Kerala claiming that they are torn between two equally strong constitutional principles – Article 14 guaranteeing equality and Article 25 guaranteeing freedom of religion. To make this argument is to display a basic misunderstanding of the Constitution and of Hinduism.

Freedom of religion means the freedom to practise and pursue one's own religion, not the freedom to undermine the fundamental rights of others. Nor does freedom of religion warrant contravening the writ of the Supreme Court, which explicitly grants women the right to worship at Sabarimala. Hinduism as a faith is capacious, inherently diverse and continually evolving, with strong themes of self-criticism, self-correction and self-improvement written into it. This is particularly true in southern India, where inspiring figures like Andal and Nandana, Chokhamela and Kanakadasa, Basavanna and Akka Mahadevi, Ayyankali and Narayana Guru challenged the bounds of orthodoxy, broke the rules of caste and gender, and triggered popular movements of reform and renaissance over centuries.

Fellow citizens of all religious persuasions are as much the heirs of these dissenting, progressive and indeed provocative traditions from the deep past, as they are the children of a modern-day enlightenment brought about by Gandhi and Ambedkar. We owe it to ourselves as democratic Indians to throw open the doors of the Ayyappa Temple to all those who wish to enter and worship there.

Ananya Vajpeyi is a Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi

Hurrying through a legislation

The passage of the quota Bill highlights grave gaps in India's parliamentary procedures



M.R. MADHAVAN

Parliament ended the penultimate session of this Lok Sabha with both Houses passing the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019, that enables 10% reservation in education and employment for economically weaker sections. The process by which this was done illustrates the collective failure of parliamentarians to review the government's proposals and hold it to account.

Hasty steps

Let us review the sequence of events. On Monday (January 7), it was reported that the Cabinet had approved a Bill to provide reservation to poor candidates regardless of their caste, and that this would be introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, the last day of the winter session. News reports also suggested that the Rajya Sabha would extend its session by a day, so that this Bill could be discussed on Wednesday. There was no formal press release by the Press Information Bureau.

The rules of procedure of the Lok Sabha require every Bill to be

circulated at least two days ahead of introduction. This is to give time for MPs to read the Bill and discuss it (or make objections) when the vote on the motion to introduce the Bill is taken up. This Bill was not circulated, even on Tuesday morning. At 11 a.m., when unstarred questions are tabled, one question concerned whether the government was "exploring the scope of providing reservation for poor candidates from forward communities for education and employment" and the details. The Ministry categorically denied that there was any such proposal under consideration. Then at 12.46 p.m., the Bill was introduced, with copies having been circulated to MPs a few minutes earlier.

The usual practice is to refer Bills to the respective standing committee of Parliament. This step allows MPs to solicit public feedback and interact with experts before forming their recommendations. In the case of this Constitution Amendment – clearly one with far-reaching implications – this scrutiny mechanism was bypassed.

The debate started around 5 p.m., just a few hours MPs had been given a copy. The debate ended around 10 p.m.

Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha hardly functioned that day due to repeated disruptions. Finally, the chair adjourned the House till the

next day – the first official indication that the sitting was extended by a day. The next day, Wednesday, the Rajya Sabha took up consideration of the Bill around 2 p.m. and ended the debate just past 10 p.m. A motion was moved by some members to refer the Bill to a select committee, but this motion was defeated by a wide margin, and the Bill was then passed.

Let us summarise the number of ways in which due oversight was skipped. The Bill was not circulated ahead of being introduced, it was not examined by a committee, there was hardly any time between its introduction and final discussion. Barring a few small parties, none of the larger Opposition parties asked for the Bill to be carefully considered by a parliamentary committee – even in the Rajya Sabha where they might have been able to muster the numbers to ensure this.

The British contrast

Contrast this with the incidents in the British Parliament the same day (Wednesday) when the Speaker ensured parliamentary supremacy over the government. A member of the ruling Conservative Party wanted to move an amendment to set a deadline for the Prime Minister to put forward new plans if she loses the Brexit vote next week. When the government objected that such amend-



ments to set the business of the government in the House can be moved only by a Minister, the Speaker differed. He said that every member had a right to move an amendment. The motion was won by 308 votes to 297.

This case highlights three important ways in which the British Parliament works better than ours. First, the absence of an anti-defection law, so that each MP can vote her conscience. Note that the motion that put the government in a spot was moved by a former attorney general and a member of the ruling party. Second, it is known exactly how each MP voted. In India, most votes (other than Constitution Amendments that need a two-thirds majority to pass) are through voice votes – just 7% of other Bills had a recorded vote over the last 10 years. Third, the Speaker insisted on the supremacy of Parliament, and allowed a motion against the wishes of the government. Unlike in India,

the independence of the Speaker is secured in the U.K. as no party contests against the Speaker in the next general election.

Parliament has a central role to secure the interest of citizens. It is the primary body of accountability that translates the wishes and aspirations of citizens into appropriate laws and policies.

Falling short

However, our Parliament often falls short of these goals due to some structural reasons. These include the anti-defection law (that restrains MPs from voting according to their conscience), lack of recorded voting as a norm (which reduces the accountability of the MP as voters don't know which way they voted on each issue), party affiliation of the Speaker (making her dependent on the party leadership for re-election prospects), frequent bypassing of committees (just 25% of Bills have been referred to committees in this Lok Sabha), insufficient time and research support to examine Bills, and the lack of a calendar (Parliament is held at the convenience of the government). We need to address each of these issues to strengthen Parliament and protect our democracy.

M.R. Madhavan is the President and co-founder of PRS Legislative Research

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.

Extending reservation

The issue of reservation in educational institutions and government jobs has been a vexed issue for decades. Reservation has benefitted the deserving among claimants under the quota system. But has any scientific survey and data collection method been made to determine the legitimacy of the claims? The whole issue is causing unnecessary heartburn because of the continuation of the diabolic caste system. Can you do away with the caste system so that economic backwardness becomes the only norm in order to derive concessions from the government? The Constitution, which aims at building an egalitarian society, will be meaningful if all forms of inequality and injustice are removed

at the earliest. The powers-that-be must read the writing on the wall and lead the country on the right path or else they will be working against the lofty ideals of the Constitution.

M. GOVINDASWAMY,
Chennai

Faulty amenities

The Indian Railways claims to be making efforts to ensure greater passenger comfort and introduce newer trains such as Train 18 but it appears to be a mirage. I wish to highlight the travails passengers on 12626 Kerala Express 3 Tier AC Coach B2 (New Delhi to Thiruvananthapuram route) undertaken on December 31. All the 3AC coaches have a new type of bio-toilet installed. But in B2, for example, one toilet remained locked right from

departure because, as we learnt from coach staff, it had developed an air lock, a problem associated with the new version. A passenger also ended up getting herself and her clothes soiled when she tried to use the toilet as the water flow was not as it was meant to be. The toilets in the other B coaches had similar problems. We were told that the older version of the toilet did not have such a problem, which is related to the new design, and that it can only be resolved at the coach factory. It is unfortunate that a fancy design of an essential amenity has been introduced without adequate trial and experimentation. Long distance trains must have all amenities in working order. It was a different

matter that the ticket examiner was indifferent and that unauthorised hawkers had a free run of the coach.

RADHA SESADHI,
Coimbatore

TV show remarks

Cricketers Hardik Pandya and K.L. Rahul have brought the game of cricket into disrepute with their uncouth remarks on a TV show ('Sport' page, "Hardik, Rahul were 'very crass': Rai", January 11). It seems that fame and money have gone to their heads. Do they think that they can say anything and get away unscathed? They should be told in no uncertain terms that they have to mind what they say in public or else be shown the door. They are easily replaceable as the country has an abundance

of talented cricketers.

C.G. KURIAKOSE,
Kothamangalam, Kerala

■ Hardik Pandya's reportedly obtuse, sexist and misogynistic comments don't do him proud.

Considering that Pandya and Rahul have long cricketing careers ahead of them, match suspensions should act as a very stern warning for them. The BCCI should henceforth ensure prior permission before all contracted players appear on talk shows or give interviews in the electronic media. Our cricketers, who are hero-

worshipped, should always act as role models, which includes respecting gender equality at all times

It was the compensation cheque, for ₹1 lakh, that convinced Solibar Rahman, 64, that he would never see his 20-year-old son, Monirul Islam, ever again. Monirul is one of the 15 miners trapped in a coal mine barely 2 ft wide – hence called a ‘rat hole’ – in Meghalaya since December 13.

There has been no official word on the fate of the miners. If he had had to make a choice, rather than the modest compensation, Rahman would have preferred a “more valuable” death certificate. He and two others, Md. Abdul Mian and Abdul Salam, whose sons are also trapped in the same mine, had travelled 330 km from their villages in western Assam to Khliehriat in Meghalaya to collect the cheques, which were handed to them on January 7. The return trip, in a hired car, cost them ₹12,000.

Khliehriat, which is Meghalaya’s coal trade hub, is the headquarters of East Jaintia Hills district (EJH), which also has the most mineral resources among the eight mining districts of the northeastern State.

Says Rahman, “This cheque means the value of my son’s life was a mere ₹1 lakh. I had earned more in my last year at a coal mine in 2012.” In April 17, 2014, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had banned rat-hole coal mining in Meghalaya, but conditionally allowed transportation of extracted coal. Rahman was among the first in Bogidari, one of 22 villages in the flood-prone Bhangnamari village in Assam’s Chirang district, to have worked in the coal mines of EJH. Bhangnamari is about 140 km west of Guwahati.

A bad crop on a small farm and mounting interest on a loan taken from the local mahajan, or moneylender, had forced Rahman to venture out of his village in 1983. A recruitment agent working for coal mine owners introduced Rahman to Mookhain in EJH. Rahman earned enough money to repay the loan and sustain his large family for a few months. His experience marked the beginning of a trend that saw men in the villages of Assam take loans to escape poverty, grow a crop if they had some land, and take a bus to the mines when the yield was low. They would crawl into rat holes and take on the back-breaking job of cutting coal for about 180 days. The wages enabled them to repay their loans. It was not long before Bogidari and adjoining villages became a regular source of labourers for the mines.

But this trend came to an abrupt end with the NGT ban. Now the hunt for employment took scores of Bhangnamari’s men – who had the mines to fall back on in times of need – to stone-crushing units in far away Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Says Taijuddin Ahmed, ward member of Nizdamugaon near Bogidari: “At least 200 men from our villages have died of tuberculosis and breathing complications after working in these stone-crushing units. The wages were also much lower than in coal-mining. When they came back to their villages, many decided to go back to the mines, thinking that these were a better option compared to dying a thousand deaths elsewhere.” Ahmed’s brother-in-law, Amir Hussain, is among the 15 miners trapped in the 380 ft deep mine at Ksan, near Lumthari village in EJH district. Officials say the miners must have either hit an aquifer or the wall of an adjoining abandoned water-filled mine, causing the ‘hole’ to get flooded.

Blackmailed

Rahman knows that the ₹1 lakh he received on day 26 of the mining accident will not last long. Much of it will go into repaying the interest and principal of a ₹30,000 loan that Monirul had taken from a small bank last year for a farm project that failed to take off.

Monirul would probably have been alive today had the sirdar (mine manager or supervisor) of another mine not withheld his payment for the two months he had worked. Miners are paid on a weekly basis, but Monirul had opted to take his wages all together. Says Manik Ali, Monirul’s elder brother: “I forced him to return when I visited him in Meghalaya two months ago. I was scared when I saw the working conditions. There was no coal left in the mine he was working in, and the sirdar was pressurising him to work in another mine. He let my brother go, but said his dues would be cleared only if he came back and worked.”

The sirdar, a man named Mahesh from Mankachar in Assam, has not been seen since the tragedy at Ksan. According to Nizdamugaon’s Saheb Ali, one of five survivors of the December 13 disaster, they were not even supposed to be working in the Ksan mine in the first place. He says, “We needed a vehicle to move our belongings to the new location that Mahesh had taken us to earlier, but he diverted the mini-truck to a jungle atop a hill. We had no option but to work.”

In the two mining seasons that he worked – typically from October to March, but invariably stretched by greed – Saheb never knew who the owner of the mine was. It is a rule: nobody asks questions. Says Manik, “Monirul rang me on December 12, a day before all communication was lost. He said he had to work one more day for the weekly payment, and more than ₹30,000. In a way, I am responsible for his



Circles and wheels: “The mining is still going on in broad daylight because of the nexus between miners, politicians and administrators.” Labourers loading coal dug out from rat hole mines in the East Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

Meghalaya’s rat hole traps

As efforts are under way to reach 15 miners trapped in an illegal coal pit in Meghalaya since December 13, the tragedy puts the spotlight on the dark underbelly of coal mining in the State, despite a ban by the National Green Tribunal. **Rahul Karmakar** reports



death.”

Jrin Shullet, 32, is the owner of the mine that devoured the 15 workers. From Narwan village, an hour’s drive from the Ksan mine, he is listed as a coal miner in the ‘Directory of Establishments’ in Meghalaya’s Sixth Economic Census, 2013 for establishments having eight or more workers. He was arrested a few days after the accident. His partner and mine manager, James Sukhlain, is absconding.

Though Monirul and the 14 others are still officially only ‘trapped’, the EJH administration, in its SOS letter of December 13 to the National Disaster Response Force, said that “efforts are being made to recover the dead bodies by pumping the water with the help of generators”.

Manik, too, speaks of his brother’s death, as he knows that no trapped miner has ever come out alive from a rat hole in Meghalaya.

After receiving the compensation cheque at the Deputy Commissioner’s office in Khliehriat, Abdul Mian, 60, wondered when his son, Md. Safer Islam, would be declared “officially” dead. Khliehriat is 45 km from where his son remains trapped. He says, “I had gone to the doctors and officials in Chirang district seeking a death certificate. They said they were helpless as he had died in Meghalaya. My son took a loan to pay the labourers after having sunk ₹4 lakh in a disastrous bamboo business. The bank said the loan would be waived if I can produce a death certificate.”

Ending up nameless

The EJH district authorities are not clear about the formality. Says Deputy Commissioner Frederick M. Doph: “We are waiting for the rescue operation to end. Let us concentrate on the work at hand. Everything will be done as admissible.” Veteran miners of Bhangnamari such as Md. Hussain Sheikh, 48, know that it will not be easy to get a death certificate. Even before the December 13 disaster, there was a long history of coal mine workers dying without a name. For instance, 15 labourers each had died in the flooded mines of Meghalaya’s Garo Hills area in 1992 and in 2012.

Says Sheikh: “Apart from flooding, there is also the danger of the rat holes collapsing. But the risk in those days was less because the coal seams were closer to the surface. Money was also better in those days. You could make ₹250 per gaari (wheelbarrow) of coal then, compared to ₹150-170 now. The payment decreased after rat-hole mining was declared illegal.”

It is not only miners who die in these mine shafts. According to Balios Swer, president of the Jaintia Coal Miners and Dealers Association, there are about 60,000 mines spread across 360 villag-

es in the EJH.

Says environment activist Brian Kharpran Daly of the Meghalaya Adventurers’ Association (MAA): “There are thousands of huge holes, 90-100 m deep, all over the place. They just leave them like that after extracting all the coal. Many children and livestock have fallen in these mines and died. But there are no complaints lodged because the coal barons are too powerful and everyone is scared.”

Daly says that the December 13 incident, like most mine accidents, would have remained unreported had it not been for the fact that three of the trapped miners, Shalabas Dkhar, Dimonme Dkhar and Melambok Dkhar, are locals from Lumthari village. He adds, “In the pre-ban days, when coal was available closer to the surface, all the miners were ‘outsiders’ from Assam, Nepal and even Bangladesh. So they died nameless and nobody cared. But things have changed. The mines have poisoned the land, forcing even the local villagers to work there.”

A woman from Lumthari village, who does not want to be identified, says that the Lytein River valley used to be a productive paddy-growing area until 15 years ago. But today she barely ekes out a livelihood, breaking slabs of limestone. This is equally damaging to the environment but it is not illegal. The Jaintia Hills, especially West Jaintia Hills district, are rich in limestone too.

Says Daly: “The whole valley has become acidic, like a desert. Mining has robbed the poor villagers of their farmlands. There are no trees around, hardly any birds, only shrubs that you associate mostly with barren land, as the topsoil has disappeared. Worse, all the water sources in Jaintia Hills are polluted. The toxic cocktail unleashed by coal and limestone mining and the cement plants has turned the rivers either orange-yellow or a sickly blue.”

The Meghalaya Pollution Control Board, in its report of 2008 titled ‘Investigation Report on the Contamination of the Lukha River’, had blamed toxic effluents from the mines and cement

plants for the death of the Lukha as well as Lunar rivers. The cement plants began large-scale limestone mining and production activities in the area in 2007, when the Northeast Industrial Policy that offered tax holidays brought investors to the State.

The NGT’s order banning rat-hole mining came after the All Dimasa Students’ Union in neighbouring Assam filed a petition stating that the non-treatment of toxic discharge from the coal mines of Meghalaya was polluting streams and rivers downstream in Assam. Their petition was based on a study by O.P. Singh, a faculty member at the North-Eastern Hill University in Shillong, Meghalaya’s capital.

Meghalaya and Bangladesh too are suffering. For instance, Kharkhana, in West Jaintia Hills district on the Bangladesh border, used to be a fishing village. Says Daly, “Today not even a tadpole is there in the river that flows into Bangladesh, which is also bearing the brunt of mining-induced pollution.”

What fast-tracked the NGT ban was the presumed death of 15 miners at Nengkol in Meghalaya’s South Garo Hills district on July 6, 2012. A petition by Impulse, a Shillong-based non-governmental organisation, claimed that the mines employed 70,000 children. This, too, had influenced the NGT, though the State government maintains that a survey found only 222 child labourers. Children are preferred because their smaller physique makes them ideal to navigate the narrow rat holes from where the coal has to be dug out manually. Former miners say the burrows

There are thousands of huge holes... They just leave them like that after extracting all the coal. Many children and livestock have fallen in these mines and died. But there are no complaints lodged because the coal barons are too powerful

BRIAN KHARPRAN DALY,
Environment activist

are pitch dark, the ground slippery with constant water seepage, and stale toxic air makes it difficult to breathe inside.

Resource curse

Coal-mining has been taking place in Meghalaya since the 1840s, but production accelerated from the 1980s. The Meghalaya government’s latest estimates put the State’s coal reserves at 576.48 million tonnes, though only 133.13 million tonnes are classified as ‘proved’. The coal boom in Meghalaya saw annual production rise from 39,000 tonnes in 1979 to 5 million tonnes in 2014. Unlike open-cast mining in central India, rat-hole mining involves side-cutting – tunnelling in from a hill slope – or digging pits into the hills until miners hit a seam of coal.

The tunnels are then made from the bottom of the pit, where the extracted coal is collected and hauled up by cranes. In the shallower ‘traditional’ mines, labourers carried coal in conical bamboo baskets using makeshift wooden stairs. Sheikh, who had worked in the mines for 12 years until 2012, says that certain precautionary measures were taken in the pre-ban days. He says, “Water is always there in the mines. My job was to get into a rat-hole four-five hours before the coal-cutters went in, and pump out the water. The pump would be turned off only after the miners left.”

Says Sheikh, “They [rescue agencies working at the Ksan mine since December 30] can keep dewatering, but the flow will not stop as thousands of mines are interconnected because of the labyrinthine tunnels.”

“It is like an ocean underneath,” adds Daly.

Activists say that all the seams in the Jaintia Hills were exhausted a decade ago. So the mine owners are now exploring remote forest areas that were once out of bounds. Only a handful of rich coal barons can afford the machines that can dig deeper. The illegality of the whole exercise has let them throw caution to the winds.

A Citizen’s Report (prepared by civil society groups in Meghalaya and submitted to the Supreme Court a month after activists Agnes Kharshiing and Amita Sangma survived an attack by the ‘coal mafia’ in November) observes that the State’s mineral wealth has been a curse. It says: “Coal mining in Meghalaya operates as a ‘shadow’ economy, wherein district councils, traders’ associations, armed extortionists and insurgents, various tiers of government, border security forces (in the case of exports to Bangladesh), and even weigh bridge and toll gate operators have long operated with legal impunity – that is, until the 2014 NGT ban.” It blames loopholes in the Sixth Schedule and the land tenure system. Miners and local councils have allegedly been using exemptions given to tribal people (under the Sixth Schedule) to justify rampant mining.

The government has control over only 5% of Meghalaya’s land, with the rest being either community or privately owned.

Says Kharshiing, who has been documenting illegal coal mining and transportation: “Earlier, people used to mine their own land. As the trade boomed, rich miners took lands on lease and ended up owning mine after mine. Today, they are openly flouting the ban to mine fresh coal and passing it off as coal extracted before the ban.”

While imposing the ban, the NGT had allowed miners to transport an estimated 1.76 million tonnes of extracted coal. But traders are alleged to have transported 5.5 million tonnes, because of nine extensions of the deadline, the last of which expires on January 31.

Says Dolly Khonglah, a former coal exporter: “The coal extracted before the ban was exhausted long ago. But the mining is still going on in broad daylight because of the nexus between miners, politicians and administrators. This needs to be stopped immediately.”

Catch-22 situation

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma’s ruling National People’s Party (a Bharatiya Janata Party ally) had promised before the Assembly polls in 2018 to get coal mining back on track. He believes that Meghalaya needs regulated and safe mining to generate livelihoods. His government had challenged the NGT ban in the Supreme Court last November.

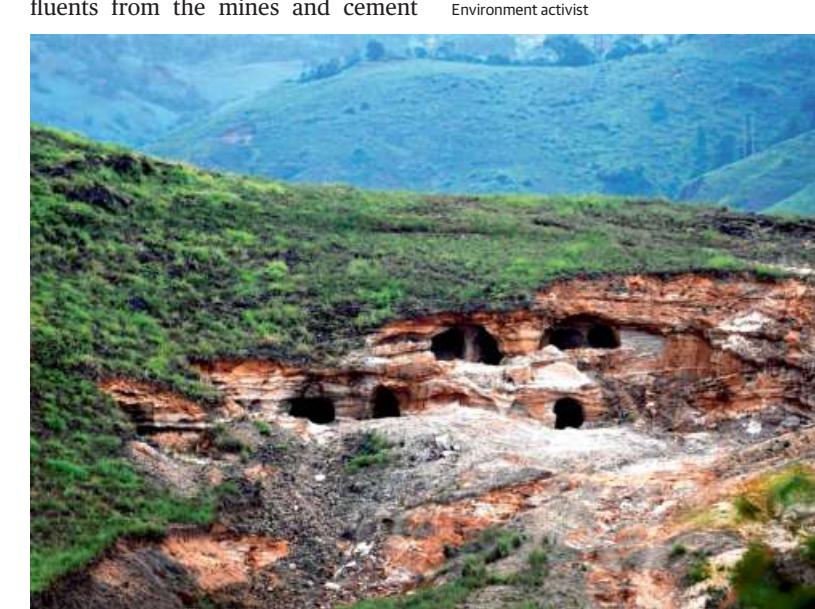
Congress MP Vincent H. Pala, among a dozen politicians named in the Citizen’s Report as coal mine owners, also wants coal-mining to continue with regulations. He says, “The ban was unfair to Meghalaya, where the topography necessitates a different type of mining.”

Former State Chief Minister Mukul Sangma had earlier said the ban was costing the State ₹600 crore in annual revenue. Balios Swer adds that mining has been sustaining lakhs of people directly and indirectly. “The ban has virtually destroyed the local economy,” he says.

Says Daly: “It is a catch-22 situation. The State is addicted to mining. People think they will be doomed if they stop, but they will not live long if they continue. Since they are going to mine anyway, it might as well be legal. But for that the State needs a proper mining policy which needs to be enforced strictly.” Activists say enforcement is lax because it is the coal money that funds elections and runs the State machinery.

Daly’s adventure group had, in 2007, petitioned the Supreme Court for a mining policy to protect Meghalaya’s cave systems from unregulated mining. He says, “Now it is 2019 and there is still no policy. This has come back to haunt us, with ordinary people vanishing in the mine shafts.”

But the last word is Rahman’s: “I am hoping that my son’s body will be found so that he can get a decent burial. The rat hole is not the place for him.” As he waits, his thoughts drift to the 20 men from Bhangnamari currently digging for coal near Ksan. “The least that mine owners can do is to follow some safety measures so that the sons of other fathers don’t end up the same way.”



Activists say enforcement is lax because it is coal money that funds elections and runs the State machinery. A series of rat hole mines in the East Jaintia Hills district.

■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

FROM PAGE ONE

'Youth out to 'kill Modi' died in fake encounter'

All 17 police shootings occurred between 2002 and 2006 when Mr. Modi was Chief Minister.

Most of the other cases in which he has recommended no further action deal with violent robberies gone fatal, murders and the repeated plot of suspects trying to escape police custody but ending up dead in shootouts with the police trying to defend themselves.

Justice Bedi, in the introductory passages of his report, explains the great degree of caution he took before recommending action against the police officers involved. He said he recommended trial against police officers whose versions tended to be "deeply suspicious" or in the cases in which there was a "reasonable chance of conviction."

Besides Sameer Khan's, the other two cases in which Justice Bedi has sought trial against the police officers for murder are the killings of "smuggler" Haji Haji Ismail in 2005 and Kasam Jafar of Mumbai.

Justice Bedi has recommended ₹14 lakh in compensation to Jafar's family.

But Sameer Khan's case stands out. Justice Bedi says in his report that there is something "drastically amiss in the death and investiga-

tion in Sameer Khan's case."

The police version is that Khan had killed a policeman in a chain-snatching incident in 1996 and fled to Pakistan using a forged passport obtained from Bhopal. There, he had undergone weapons-training from the JeM in places such as Karachi, Lahore and re-entered India through Nepal with assistance from the Inter-Services Intelligence.

He had subsequently established "hideouts" in Mumbai, Rajkot and Bhopal before being finally tasked to kill Mr. Modi.

Justice Bedi, however, is not impressed with the police version. He concludes that there is evidence in the case which lends "further support for my conclusion that the killing of the deceased [Sameer Khan] was indeed the result of a fake encounter." Justice Bedi concludes that it was a case of "custodial death."

Finally, the retired judge details the "tortuous and agonising" journey of Sameer's father, Sarfaraz Khan, who lost his 30-year job as a driver with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, when his son was declared an "absconder." Justice Bedi recommends a compensation of ₹10 lakh to Sarfaraz Khan for the loss of his son.

"Notwithstanding the above orders, all those officers who have been specially directed by their names to supervise, investigate or enquire into any case or matter by any Constitutional Court, shall continue to do so," said the order.

The CBI's chief spokesper-

son, Abhishek Dayal, who had joined the agency in July 2017, was also transferred out along with nine other officials of the Deputy Director and Assistant Director level in various States.

Mr. Dayal has been re-

placed by Nitin D. Wakankar, Additional Director-General of the Press Information Bureau.

Immediately after resuming office on Wednesday, following a Supreme Court directive, Mr. Verma had started rescinding most of the transfer and postings made under the supervision of Mr. Rao, who earlier held the additional charge for 77 days as the former had been divested of his powers.

After taking over the charge in the intervening night of October 23 and 24 last year, Mr. Rao had cleared transfer orders including those of the officials who were probing an alleged corruption and extortion case against CBI Special Director Rakesh Asthana and others.

Among the officials moved out were Deputy Superintendent of Police A. K. Bassi, Deputy Inspector-General M.K. Sinha and Joint Director A.K. Sharma.

Mr. Rao had approved the transfer of two more officials of the Joint Director rank on January 3. After Mr. Verma rejoined, he issued two orders withdrawing the transfers done under Mr. Rao. The next day, he approved five more transfer and postings.

The Left parties strongly condemned the decision taken by the select committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to shunt out CBI chief Alok Verma.

"The Modi government, through this action, also seeks to prevent its skeletons from tumbling out of the cupboard," a politburo statement said.

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Immediately after resuming office on Wednesday, following a Supreme Court directive, Mr. Verma had started rescinding most of the transfer and postings made under the supervision of Mr. Rao, who earlier held the additional charge for 77 days as the former had been divested of his powers.

After taking over the charge in the intervening night of October 23 and 24 last year, Mr. Rao had cleared transfer orders including those of the officials who were probing an alleged corruption and extortion case against CBI Special Director Rakesh Asthana and others.

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BJP focus on agriculture, social welfare

Resolution at national meet hails Modi government's 'policy-based, holistic approach'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The two resolutions, on agriculture and social welfare, passed by the BJP's national council on Friday reflected the party's political concerns after the loss in the three States of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Both resolutions spoke about the various government initiatives in both these sectors, in the wake of growing concern over farmers' distress, loss of income in rural areas and a jobs crunch hurting the party politically.

The resolution on agriculture moved by Home Minister Rajnath Singh extolled the Narendra Modi government's "policy-based, holistic approach" to agricultural growth and farmers' welfare, while the one on social welfare, moved by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, listed all the social welfare schemes including the 10% reservation for economically weaker section of the general category.



Centre of attraction: Narendra Modi being greeted at the BJP meeting. • SANDEEP SAXENA

"The BJP lauds its government for 'successfully' working out issues of farmers' income. 'New India', that we are trying to create, will take the country's economy to great heights," the resolution reads.

All speakers described the Modi government as the biggest well-wisher of farmers. Favourable comparisons for the NDA government were drawn with the UPA in

strong and prosperous farmer as our annadata, who will take the country's economy to great heights," the resolution reads.

On the issue of waivers, Rajnathji has said that all BJP-led governments offer terms of Budget outlays, production and procurement. The resolution did not say anything on farm loan waivers offered by Congress-led governments and which have cost the BJP dear in the past.

"On the issue of waivers, Rajnathji has said that all BJP-led governments offer

loans to farmers at 0%. Also we would like to ask the Congress why farmers in Karnataka promised waivers are getting recovery notices?" said BJP general secretary Bhupendra Yadav, briefing the media about the resolution.

'Historic' move

The decision to reserve 10% seats for EWS general category applicants for government jobs and education in government institutions, was described as a "revolutionary and historic" in the resolution on social welfare.

"This benefit will be available to the poor of all communities and religions and to groups who were not getting reservation up till now like Brahmins, Baniyas, Kapus, Marathas, Patels, Jats and Rajputs," said the resolution, a clear indication of some lessons taken from upper caste anger reflected in the results of the three State Assembly elections that the BJP lost.

Ensure victory for Modi government, says Shah

'Chowkidar' will bring back those who fled: BJP president

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party president Amit Shah on Friday likened the 2019 Lok Sabha election to the decisive third battle of Panipat between the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali.

"Some battles are limited to their time, others define their era. The third battle of Panipat saw Ahmad Shah Abdali defeating the Marathas who had won 131 battles before that. It led to 200 years of slavery and colonialism. The party should ensure a victory for the Narendra Modi government in 2019, as this battle too will be as decisive," he told the party's national convention here.



Amit Shah

chief Mayawati to announce their alliance, Mr. Shah said politics was beyond just arithmetic and that chemistry counted for much. "In 2017 too, there was an alliance ranged against us but we won an unprecedented majority in the Assembly polls. In 2019 too, we will win 74 (out of 80) seats in U.P., more than we did in 2014," he said.

Mr. Shah launched a fierce attack on the Congress and its president, Rahul Gandhi, on the issue of cor-

ruption, stating that industrialists Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi and Vijay Mallya had to flee the country under the BJP and not while the Congress was in power because they were "protected" by it. "I want to tell the country that the *chowkidar* (guard, reference to Prime Minister Modi) will bring all of them back to face the music," he said.

NRC exercise

The National Registry of Citizens exercise in Assam was an article of faith with the party as it concerned national security, he said. "When the figure of 40 lakh infiltrators in Assam came out in the NRC exercise, the Opposition raised a hue and cry about what would happen to them as though they were *musaere bhai* (cousins). We believe that the country needs to be protected from infiltrators," he said.

IN BRIEF



India grants consular access to Michel

NEW DELHI
India has granted consular access to British national Christian Michel, who is being interrogated by investigating agencies in the AgustaWestland case, a U.K. High Commission spokesperson said on Friday. This was confirmed by the External Affairs Ministry spokesperson.

Army officer, soldier, porter killed in J&K

Srinagar
An Army officer and a soldier were killed in J&K on Friday. An Army porter was killed in a ceasefire violation. An Army spokesman said the officer and the soldier were grievously injured in an IED explosion near the LoC in the Noshera sector in Rajouri around 3 p.m. The porter, Hemraj, was shot at in the Sunderbani sector.

Collegium recommends two names for apex court

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and a Delhi High Court judge, Justice Sanjiv Khanna, for appointment to the apex court. Justice Khanna was appointed a judge of the Delhi High Court in June 2005 and continue there ever since. If appointed to the Supreme Court, he would succeed Justice D.Y. Chandrachud as the Chief Justice of India in 2024.

10% reservation another jumla, says Prakash Raj

Bengaluru
Actor Prakash Raj, who recently announced his decision to contest the Lok Sabha election from Bengaluru Central constituency as an Independent, on Friday dubbed the Centre's move to extend 10% quota for the economically weaker sections (EWS) as "another jumla from the Modi government".

Bedi report dismisses pogrom charge

Says Muslims were not specifically targeted as alleged by senior IPS officer

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Former Supreme Court judge Justice H.S. Bedi, concluded that none of the 17 police encounters, which occurred between 2002 and 2006 and came under the Supreme Court scanner, was an instance of "selective elimination of Muslim extremists".

This is part of the 229-page report Justice Bedi had submitted to the Supreme Court in February 2018. The report was ordered to be shared with the PIL petition-



H.S. Bedi
ers who had moved the Supreme Court in 2007, highlighting the need for a fair investigation.

Justice Bedi was the chairman of the body which monitored the investigation by a Special Task Force into the cases. This was the final and 11th report filed by the retired judge in the Supreme Court and has been kept under wraps for the past year.

Justice Bedi's observation on whether the cases suggested a state pogrom against "Muslim extremists" comes in response to allegations by a former senior Gujarat IPS officer R.B. Sreekumar.

Rejecting the allegation,

the former judge said, "The circumstances belie the allegations as the victims belonged to several parts of India, as far afield as Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala and Maharashtra and as the names suggest, several communities as well".

Justice Bedi suggests that the "only common feature amongst most of them was the element of criminality of varying degrees and levels".

"The issues raised by Mr. Sreekumar are not, thus, relevant..." Justice Bedi said.

Pakistan still cosy with terrorists, says India

Islamabad must prove its sincerity for peaceful relations'

KALLO BHATTACHERJEE
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

India on Friday urged Pakistan to demonstrate its sincerity for maintaining peaceful ties with India. In a scathing remark, the Ministry of External Affairs cautioned Islamabad, saying that the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan was trying to integrate terrorists into Pakistani society.

"If they are serious about talks then why are they still allowing their territory to be used by terror groups, terrorist organisations and terrorists. And such terror groups which are not only targeting India but other places also," said Raveesh Kumar, Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs highlighting that Pakistani ministers in recent weeks were found on public platforms with terror mastermind Haфиз Saeed.

The spokesperson pointed out that India's demand for punishing those responsible for the Mumbai attacks



Neighbour talk: Sushma Swaraj with Nepal Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, who has called for India-Pak. talks. • PTI

of 26/11 2008 and the Pathankot terror attacks of 2016 had not been addressed so far by Pakistan.

This was the first time since the arrival of the Imran Khan government in 2018 that New Delhi reminded Islamabad that it had failed to show commitment to control terror.

Sources said that Pakistan was playing a game where it projected a sincere face through Mr. Khan, while in fact encouraging terrorism. In this regard the MEA said that some of the anti-terror

measures taken during the Nawaz Sharif era were discontinued.

Nepal plea
The Ministry's comments came on the heels of statements by other governments calling for talks between India and Pakistan to break the impasse. On Friday, Nepal Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali said that if "U.S. President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un can meet in Singapore, then why can't countries in the SAARC region."

Jaitley defends reservation for the poor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Poverty as a criterion for reservation does not in any way contravene the basic structure of the Constitution, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley wrote in a blog post on Friday.

"The Constitutional Amendment Bill to provide reservation to the economically weaker sections has been passed by both Houses of Parliament," Mr. Jaitley wrote. "It will soon become a part of India's Constitution. Caste in India was considered as a key determinant of either social or historical oppression as in the case of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes or a determinant of social and educational backwardness as in the case of the Other Backward Classes."

Secular criterion
"Poverty, however, is a secular criterion," Mr. Jaitley added. "It cuts across communities and religions. Poverty as a criteria for a carve out does not in any way contravene the basic structure of the Constitution."

The Finance Minister argued that the preamble of the Constitution expressed the intent of its framers when it mentioned equality of opportunity and justice for all, whether political, social or economic, was to be ensured by the State.

"Nor does the carve out amongst the general non-reserved categories for 10% of their poor in any way get restricted by the 50% reservation embargo placed by the Supreme Court," Mr. Jaitley said. "In the Indra Sawhney case, the Supreme Court had categorically mentioned that 50% criteria applies only to the caste based reservations envisaged in Article 16(4) of the Constitution," said.

Banker, AAP leader Meera Sanyal dead

Former Royal Bank of Scotland country head contested Mumbai South LS seat

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Meera Sanyal, top banker-turned-activist, who contested the Mumbai South seat in the last two Lok Sabha elections, passed away at her South Mumbai residence on Friday evening.

The former country head of Royal Bank of Scotland, the 57-year old Ms. Sanyal was battling cancer for over two years, and is survived by her husband and two children.

Her colleagues from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said



Meera Sanyal

Ms. Sanyal's funeral would be a private affair.

She was a daughter of much-decorated naval officer Vice-Admiral Gulab Mohanlal Hiranandani. **Book on demonetisation**
A book she had authored on the adverse effects of the demonetisation of high-value currency notes on the Indian economy, was released just two months ago.

A Harvard Business School alumnus, she had

joined politics in 2009, when she contested the Lok Sabha poll as an independent candidate for the Mumbai South constituency. She later gravitated towards the India Against Corruption movement that erupted across the country in 2011-12, quit her banker's job in 2013 and eventually joined the AAP formed by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. She contested the 2014 LS poll as an AAP candidate from Mumbai South, where she won more than 40,000 votes and finished fourth.

Ensure victory for Modi government, says Shah

'Chowkidar' will bring back those who fled: BJP president

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party president Amit Shah on Friday likened the 2019 Lok Sabha election to the decisive third battle of Panipat between the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali.

"Some battles are limited to their time, others define their era. The third battle of Panipat saw Ahmad Shah Abdali defeating the Marathas who had won 131 battles before that. It led to 200 years of slavery and colonialism. The party should ensure a victory for the Narendra Modi government in 2019, as this battle too will be as decisive," he told the party's national convention here.



Amit Shah

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Mr. Shah launched a fierce attack on the Congress and its president, Rahul Gandhi, on the issue of cor-

ruption, stating that industrialists Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi and Vijay Mallya had to flee the country under the BJP and not while the Congress was in power because they were "protected" by it.

Justice Bedi further explained that, as Chairman of the Monitoring Authority of the STF probe into the encounter cases, he was empowered to constitute teams of investigating officers from either within or outside the State of Gujarat.

But he was not authorised by the Supreme Court to remove any officer nominated by the State government.

Both the STF and the Monitoring Authority had been notified by the Gujarat government. "In any case", Justice Bedi added, "no cogent reasons had been spelt out by Ms. Hashmi."

'No reason to doubt STF chief'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The 229-page report of former Supreme Court judge, Justice H.S. Bedi, into the 17 Gujarat police encounters explained why he chose not to act on an allegation that the chief of the Special Task Force (STF) investigating the cases was "particularly close" to then Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

Justice Bedi was referring to a representation made by one of the petitioners in the Supreme Court, Shabnam Hashmi, about IPS officer A.K. Sharma, who was then heading the STF probing the 17 cases. "In this representa-

tion the primary grievance made was that Mr. A.K. Sharma was very close to the political leadership in the State of Gujarat and was a convenient officer who would do its bidding," Justice Bedi wrote in the report.

But Justice Bedi wrote that he did not entertain the allegation and had asked Ms. Hashmi to "pursue such other remedies that could be available to her". He adds that to his information nothing further had

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS:: TIRUPATI SUPEINTENDING ENGINEER-II					
Adv.No.46/TA/SE-II/TTD/TPT/2018-19 e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE Dated: 11.01.2019					
Sl. No	NITNo.	Name of the Work	Estimate Amount Rs in Lakhs & Tim for completion	Schedule download date & Start Date	Download End date & Last Date for bid submission

Donald Trump renews threat of declaring emergency

800,000 federal workers miss paycheck due to impasse over border wall

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MCALLEN

President Donald Trump has again threatened to declare a national emergency along the border with Mexico as he seeks funding for a wall he says will keep out dangerous immigrants – his latest jab in a fight with Democrats in Congress that has now shut down parts of the government for a record-breaking 21 days.

Such a declaration, almost certain to be challenged in court, would in theory allow Mr. Trump to sidestep Congress and divert money from military projects toward construction of the wall that has been a core focus of his nationalist campaign.

Speaking to Fox News in an interview broadcast on Thursday evening, Mr. Trump reiterated that he had “the absolute right to declare a national emergency.” But pressed on a timeline for doing so, he said he would “see what happens” over the coming days.

Analysts say the declaration would likely be challenged as a case of presidential overreach, which means



Up in arms: Union workers demonstrating in front of the White House against the shutdown on January 10. • AFP

the wall could still face being blocked. However, it would give Mr. Trump political cover with his base by showing he’d done what he could to build the wall. At that point, Mr. Trump could end the shutdown and declare a win.

Record closure

The embarrassing closure of parts of the U.S. government will set a record 22 days on Saturday.

Meanwhile, on Friday, FBI agents and air traffic controllers were among

8,000 federal workers left unpaid because of the impasse.

However, Mr. Trump renewed his Twitter barrage on Friday, calling the situation on the Mexican border “an invasion” and insisting that without a wall, “our Country cannot be safe. Criminals, Gangs, Human Traffickers, Drugs & so much other big trouble.”

He had toured the border with Mexico on Thursday to press his case for a wall and warned of murderers and

gangsters spreading across the country.

Mr. Trump used the backdrop of the Rio Grande border river at McAllen, Texas, to ramp up what has already turned into a hugely messy political fight with Democratic opponents. With typical rhetorical flourishes, Mr. Trump said that only building more walls along the Mexican border could stop an onslaught of violent crime.

“They just go where there’s no security and you don’t even know the difference between Mexico and the United States,” he told a meeting of border patrol officers. “They have women tied up, they have tape over their mouths, electrical tape.”

“If we had a barrier of any kind, a powerful barrier, whether it is steel or concrete..., we would stop it cold,” he said.

In preparation for the possible emergency move, the White House has asked the military to look into diverting funds currently allocated for disaster relief to the wall, the U.S. media reported.

‘U.S. has begun pulling gear, not troops’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The U.S. military has started moving non-essential equipment out of Syria but it was not withdrawing troops for now, a defence official said on Friday as the Pentagon sought to clarify an earlier statement. “We are not withdrawing troops at this stage,” the official said on condition of anonymity.

Earlier, U.S. military spokesman Colonel Sean Ryan had said that the U.S. had begun “the process of our deliberate withdrawal” from Syria.

A second U.S. defence official said the military had conducted a number of preparations for a deliberate withdrawal. “That includes planning for the moving of people and equipment, preparation of facilities to accept retrograde equipment.”

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights had reported earlier that the U.S.-led coalition had started scaling down its presence at Rmeilan airfield in the Hasakeh province of northeastern Syria. But the first defence official said this was merely part of a regular troop movement.

Ranil tables report on constitution proposals

Move enables a discussion in Constitutional Assembly

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on Friday tabled an experts’ report on the proposals to draft Sri Lanka’s new Constitution at the Constitutional Assembly sitting held in Parliament.



Ranil Wickremesinghe. • AFP

stitution, the government came under sharp attack on Thursday on the accountability front, when TNA parliamentarian M.A. Sumanthiran accused it of being “complicit” with the former Mahinda Rajapaksa regime in “covering up” crimes.

War crimes

He raised the issue in Parliament in the context of slain editor Lasantha Wickrematunge’s 10th anniversary observed recently. While perpetrators had not been brought to justice in the high-profile case, investigators were yet to begin probing even one of the several killings of Tamil journalists in the last decade, he noted.

Pressing for international investigations into war crimes, he said that if politicians in the south had no fear, then they would be willing to face any tribunal.

Since the war was waged by the Sri Lankan armed forces against the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, an arm of the Sri Lankan state must not investigate the crimes, he argued, underscoring the need for a “neutral umpire.”

U.S. President promises changes to H-1B visas

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday he is planning changes to the H-1B programme that grants temporary visas to highly educated immigrants who work in specialty occupations such as technology or medicine.

“Hi-B (sic) holders in the United States can rest assured that changes are soon

coming which will bring both simplicity and certainty to your stay, including a potential path to citizenship,” Mr. Trump said on Twitter.

The White House did not immediately comment on whether Mr. Trump was considering changes beyond those proposed in new rules issued in December by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Mr. Trump, who has sought to limit legal immi-

gration, in April 2017 ordered a reform of the U.S. visa programme to benefit educated and highly skilled workers.

Competition is tough for the temporary visas, which require a bachelor’s degree. In 2018, the United States hit the limit on the number of H-1Bs it could issue, 65,000, by the first week of April, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

When asked about Mr. Trump’s tweet, USCIS spokesman Michael Bars pointed to the earlier proposed changes. The proposal is designed to increase the number of H-1B beneficiaries by 16%, or 5,340 more workers, who hold advanced degrees from American universities. It would also entail a new electronic registration system meant to streamline the application process.

sent home to her family, which denies any abuse.

An 18-year-old Saudi woman who fled her family saying she feared for her life left Thailand on Friday en route to Canada, the Thai immigration chief said.

The saga of Rahaf Mohammed al-Qunun grabbed international attention this week after she barricaded herself in a Bangkok airport hotel room to resist being

still refuses to meet with her father and brother, and they are going to be travelling back tonight as well... They are disappointed.”

Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has confirmed that asylum had been granted to Ms. Qunun. “When the United Nations made a request of us that we grant Miss (Rahaf Mohammed) al-Qunun’s asylum, we accepted,” he said.

India-born Republican survives vote to oust him

Motion was called over his religion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HOUSTON

Shahid Shafi, an India-born Republican facing removal as Texas county leader for being a Muslim, will remain in office as his party officials have slapped down a motion to oust him from the post of vice-chairman.

The Tarrant County Republican Party rejected the motion to strip Mr. Shafi, a trauma surgeon and member of the Southlake City Council, at a contentious meeting on Thursday. The committee voted 139-49 in favour of Dr. Shafi, with 10 abstentions, Washington-based news website The Daily Caller reported.

“This vote reaffirms the commitment by a majority of Tarrant County Republicans to our core values and moral compass, a demonstration of our allegiance to the Texas Republican Party Platform and the Constitutions of the United States and Texas, which strictly prohibit religious and racial discrimination of any kind,” Tarrant County Party Chairman Darl Easton said.

Dr. Shafi said he was “honoured and privileged to receive the support of my fellow Republicans” and emphasised that he held no ill will towards those who voted against him. A small but vocal minority was behind the push to remove Dr. Shafi from his position.

Poland arrests Chinese man for spying

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WARSAW

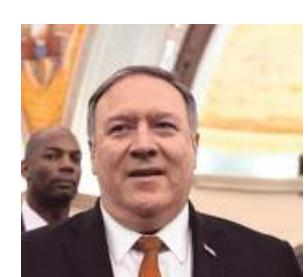
Poland said on Friday it had arrested a Chinese telecom executive suspected of spying, with local media identifying him as a Huawei director.

The arrest comes on the back of a difficult year for Huawei, which has seen the arrest of the daughter of the firm’s founder in Canada and U.S. efforts to blacklist the company internationally over security concerns.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said it was “highly concerned” by the arrest of its citizen. Huawei said in a terse statement that it was “aware of the situation” and “looking into it.”

Pompeo lays out strategy for West Asia

Advocates a policy of containment of Iran, presses allies to isolate the country



Mike Pompeo

achieve that goal at a moment when the U.S. force of 2,000 troops is scheduled to withdraw. And in an unusually explicit and personal attack on a former President’s foreign policy, a decade after Mr. Obama delivered a landmark speech at another Cairo university, Mr. Pompeo excoriated Mr. Obama for “fundamental misunderstandings” about the region that “underestimated the tenacity and viciousness of radical Islamism.”

Mr. Pompeo’s prescription was short on specifics, beyond bolstering alliances with Arab autocrats loyal to Washington. Instead he painted a picture of a West Asia cast into chaos by President Barack Obama, and that can only be rescued by crushing Iran.

He advocated a policy of containment of Iran’s power, pressing for allies in the region to isolate the country. He vowed to “expel every last Iranian boot” from Syria, but offered no plan to

by National Security Adviser John Bolton, was intended to reassure jittery allies concerned about the Syrian withdrawal.

Diplomatic tangle

Mr. Trump’s announcement last month that U.S. forces would leave Syria within 30 days has created a diplomatic tangle with Turkey and, since the resignation of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, has led to fears among allies that Mr. Trump is not on the same page as his national security team.

Mr. Trump said his only reason for remaining in Syria was the defeat of the Islamic State, a job he said had been completed. Only three months ago, Mr. Bolton promised that U.S. forces would not leave Syria until the Iranians were out of the country.

But if anything, the two officials left the administration’s message muddier than they found it. In Jerusalem

on Sunday, Mr. Bolton laid out conditions for withdrawal that could leave U.S. troops in Syria indefinitely. Asked at a news conference on Thursday to reconcile the apparent contradictions, Mr. Pompeo said: “There’s no contradiction whatsoever.”

Later that afternoon, Mr. Pompeo declared that “when America retreats, chaos follows”, part of a broadside against Mr. Obama’s policies. But the declaration confounded many in the region who interpreted the President’s orders as the definition of a retreat.

Mr. Pompeo argued that it does not take troops on the ground to influence events. “Let me be clear: America will not retreat until the terrorist fight is over,” he said.

Mr. Pompeo picked the timing and locale of his speech, the American University in Cairo, for dramatic effect, a deliberate echo of the setting for Mr. Obama’s speech. NY TIMES

NEW DELHI WORLD BOOK FAIR 5-13 JANUARY 2019



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- More than 600 Publishers
- 1300+ Stalls
- 250+ Literary Events



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- Nearly 50 Literary & Cultural programmes by Guest of Honour Sharjah and other countries
- Re-imagining Octavio Paz-- A Poster Exhibition

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- Thematic Exhibition of more than 500 Braille books, audio, silent, tactile books, integrated print-braille books etc.
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MARKET WATCH

	11-01-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,010	-0.27
US Dollar	70.49	-0.11
Gold	33,030	-0.12
Brent oil	61.26	0.48

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	301.15	-3.10
Axian Paints	1403.65	7.30
Axis Bank	666.50	3.25
Bajaj Auto	2720.95	-4.35
Bajaj Finserv	6371.65	-0.30
Bajaj Finance	2514.20	-0.45
Bharti Airtel	335.10	-2.20
BPLC	337.30	1.70
Cipla	510.20	-3.05
Coal India	232.25	-0.75
Dr Reddys Lab	2588.15	-12.25
GAIL (India)	338.60	-5.30
Grasim Ind	814.25	-5.95
HCL Tech	940.05	4.20
HDFC	1991.40	11.30
HFDC Bank	2111.90	3.40
Hero MotoCorp	2899.25	-20.25
Hindalco	205.85	1.85
HPCL	233.50	0.60
Hind Unilever	1769.40	-16.80
Indiabulls HFL	816.15	1.90
ICICI Bank	378.55	-0.95
IndusInd Bank	1515.15	-50.75
Bharti Infratech	277.20	-7.85
Infosys	683.50	3.80
Indian Oil Corp	131.20	1.30
ITC	295.35	5.75
JSW Steel	288.80	-0.50
Kotak Bank	1223.20	3.65
L&T	1369.60	-23.00
M&M	727.90	-5.30
Maurti Suzuki	7320.50	-71.10
NTPC	148.00	-0.10
ONGC	144.65	1.40
PowerGrid Corp	194.35	-1.30
Reliance Ind	1098.05	-9.45
State Bank	302.75	-2.80
Sun Pharma	444.40	-0.20
Tata Motors	180.30	-5.45
Tata Steel	474.20	-6.20
TCS	1842.55	-46.00
Tech Mahindra	699.20	4.65
Titan	959.30	-7.40
UltraTech Cement	3770.20	-48.00
UPL	783.45	10.35
Vedanta	196.60	1.15
Wipro	328.70	2.95
YES Bank	184.25	-2.65
Zee Entertainment	451.05	-0.30

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.29	70.61
Euro	81.05	81.42
British Pound	90.17	90.59
Japanese Yen (100)	64.89	65.19
Chinese Yuan	10.42	10.47
Swiss Franc	71.48	71.81
Singapore Dollar	52.04	52.28
Canadian Dollar	53.25	53.50
Malaysian Ringgit	17.16	17.26

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI
January 11 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses
Retail Silver (1g) 42.7 (42.8)
22 ct gold (1 g) 3072 (3076)

Infosys Q3 net profit declines 29.62%

Firm announces ₹8,260 crore share buyback programme; declares special dividend of ₹4 per share

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

Infosys' consolidated net profit year-on-year fell 29.62% to ₹3,610 crore for the three months ended December on revenue of ₹21,400 crore as its board cleared a buyback of equity shares worth ₹8,260 crore at a price not exceeding ₹800 per share.

The decline in net profit came despite a 33.1% growth in digital revenues to ₹942 million. The country's second largest software exporter raised the full-year revenue guidance in constant currency upward to between 8.5% and 9%.

Operating margin guidance

Operating margin guidance was also retained at between 22% and 24%. The Bengaluru-based company announced a special dividend of ₹4 per share.

Rough weather



We are building a portfolio of services for digital and core. For us, core is also growing and we are glad that it still has relevance

SALIL PAREKH, CEO and MD

Metrics	Q3FY19	Q3FY18	%growth
Revenue from operations (₹ cr.)	21,400	17,794	20.27
Profit (₹ cr.)	3,610	5,129	(-)29.62
Earning per share (basic)	8.3	11.27	
Special dividend (per share in ₹)	4	—	—

ru-based company announced a special dividend of ₹4 per share.

As the dollar to rupee exchange rate fluctuated from April 2018 – when the capital allocation policy was announced – the total capital allocation in dollar terms

amounts to \$1,872 million, according to a company statement.

"Volume growth was strong and revenue productivity was stable despite Q3 being a seasonally weak quarter. We had good growth across geographies and large

business segments," said Pravin Rao, chief operating officer. "Attrition declined during the quarter and we are continuing on the path of increased interventions and employee engagements to reduce it further."

Hedging strategy
Jayesh Sanghrajka, interim chief financial officer said: "We saw significant currency volatility during the quarter and managed it effectively by our hedging strategy. Cash generation was strong during the quarter."

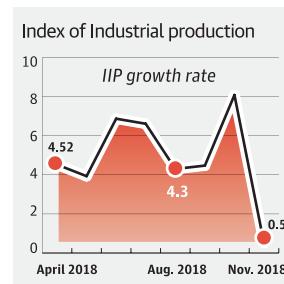
"Executing on the capital allocation strategy announced in April 2018, we have announced a share buyback programme and a special dividend."

The board approved the re-appointment of Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw as the lead In-

dependent Director from April 1, 2019.

"Kiran has been a pillar of strength to the board, especially over the last eighteen months as we steered the company to stability and growth," said Nandan Nilekani, chairman of the board. "As chair of the nominations and remuneration committee, she played a critical role in the CEO and CFO selection process. Her continuity, experience and insights are greatly valued by the board as it guides the company in executing its strategy in the coming years."

The board also approved the grant of restricted stock units to Salil Parekh, CEO and managing director, U.B.-Pravin Rao, chief operating officer, and other key management personnel and employees.



The manufacturing sector, which constitutes 77.63% of the index, recorded a contraction of 0.4% in November as against a growth of 10.4% a year ago.

The mining sector posted 2.7% growth during the month as against 1.4% in November 2017.

In terms of industries, 10 out of 23 industry groups in the manufacturing sector showed positive growth during November 2018.

Ashok Chawla resigns as NSE chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI
Ashok Chawla resigned as the chairman and public interest director of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Friday after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) informed a Delhi court that the Centre had given the go-ahead to prosecute five people, including Mr. Chawla, in the Aircel-Maxis matter.

"Ashok Chawla has resigned as public interest director/chairman of the board of directors of the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (NSE) with immediate effect in [the] light of recent legal developments," the NSE said in a statement.

Providing corporate income tax relief may require amendments to the Finance Act and the Income Tax Act

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN

NEW DELHI

While the government will need to amend the Finance Act or the Income Tax Act if it wants to give income tax or corporate tax relief in the Budget, and this can easily be done given its majority in the Lok Sabha, political experts say that doing so would fly in the face of convention.

Several tax analysts have opined that the government was likely to announce schemes and token expenditure during the vote on account on February 1, but added that it might desist from making changes to tax rates since this would require amending Acts of Parliament, which the Opposition might block so close to the

general elections.

"I think those things that require the Finance Act or the Income Tax Act to be amended may be avoided by the government," D.K. Srivastava, chief policy advisor, EY India, said. "Those that are merely policy statements or require some token expenditure commitment might be things that will be brought forward. Some token commitment can be provided for a policy announcement in the vote on account and when the final Budget is announced, the required amount can be provided."

No economic survey

Officials in the Finance Ministry also confirmed that the vote on account will not be accompanied by the release of the economic survey as the survey is usually released along with the full Budget. Political analysts, however, say that there is nothing in the rules that say the government cannot amend an Act of Parliament, if it so chooses. The only factor to be considered is that doing so would go against

the established convention.

"In theory, there is nothing that stops any government at any time to bring in a Bill to amend any Act," said M.R. Madhavan, president and co-founder of PRS Legislative Research. "Technically, the Income Tax Act can be amended in the monsoon or winter session. If it is purely a tax issue, it is clearly a money bill, and so only the Lok Sabha matters."

"But as a matter of convention, the Income Tax Act is amended only during the main Budget," Mr. Madhavan added. "Also, the convention is that if the elections are imminent and Parliament is ending, then the outgoing government does not make any significant changes in

the vote on account. It's anybody's guess whether convention will be maintained."

Mr. Madhavan also said that amending a normal Act of Parliament – as opposed to a Constitutional Amendment – requires only a simple majority.

However, if it does announce a major policy decision that affected not just the poor population, but also farmers, and government employees. The then Finance Minister J. Chidambaram had, in the vote on account in 2014-15, announced the One Rank One Pension scheme, which Opposition members claimed was an attempt to garner votes from the members of the armed forces.

Prior to this Pranab Mukherjee, as the Finance Minister in 2009-10, had in the vote on account in that year extended interest subvention scheme for exporters and had increased defence spending in the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks.

The NDA-I Government also announced several policy decisions that affected not just the poor population, but also farmers, and government employees. The then Finance Minister J. Chidambaram had, in the vote on account in 2014-15, announced the One Rank One Pension scheme, which Opposition members claimed was an attempt to garner votes from the members of the armed forces.

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NCLAT mints appointing former SC judge for IL&FS asset sales

Directs firm to submit details of arbitral proceedings



lution of IL&FS and its subsidiaries," said a two-judge bench headed by Justice S. J. Mukhopadhyay.

It added that in such a case, a committee of creditors (CoC) may be required to be formed for determining viability, feasibility and financial matrix of the plan or offer, if any, given by one or other party for acquisition of one or other group

"IL&FS will provide the details of arbitral proceedings filed by it or by any of its group companies or filed against IL&FS or any of its group companies by the next date," said the NCLAT.

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Jet Airways tops global airline product rating chart, Air India a close second

Indigo, SpiceJet lead among low-cost carriers in AirlineRatings ranking for 2018



Score card: The product is a competitive differentiator across the industry, says a Jet Airways spokesperson.

ing of 4 each out of 5, Air India and GoAir have got 5 on 5 and 3.5 on 5 respectively. Vistara Airlines is the only Indian carrier

IN BRIEF



Karnataka Bank posts 60.7% jump in Q3 net

NEW DELHI
Private sector lender Karnataka Bank on Friday reported a 60.7% jump in its net profit at ₹140.41 crore for the third quarter ending December 31, 2018, mainly on account of higher interest income. Karnataka bank had reported a net profit of ₹87.38 crore in the year-ago period, it said in stock exchange filing. Gross NPA rose to 4.45% of assets from 3.96% in the year-ago period. PTI

Yes Bank ties up with Kia Motors

NEW DELHI
Private sector lender Yes Bank said on Friday it had inked a pact with Kia Motors for finance and banking solutions. According to the memorandum of understanding (MoU) inked between both companies, Yes Bank will offer financing and banking solutions to Kia car dealers with products such as term loans, cash credit and inventory funding. PTI

Andhra Bank nod for employees stock plan

HYDERABAD
A committee of directors of Andhra Bank approved the Andhra Bank Employees Stock Purchase Scheme, 2018, under which the bank will be issuing fresh equity to the employees at a discounted price. Under the scheme, the bank would allot the shares at a discounted price. In September 2018, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had approved Andhra Bank's request to issue up to 10 crore fresh equity shares to its employees.

Eveready seeks strategic partner

The objective of stake sale proposal is to pare debt and unlock capital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Eveready Industries India Ltd. (EIIL), the flagship company of B.M. Khaitan family-controlled Williamson Magor Group, has mandated Kotak Mahindra Bank to scout for either a strategic or a financial partner. Best known for its dry cell batteries and flashlights, EIIL recently diversified into the FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) segment.

Growth opportunities

The proposed stake dilution is aimed at unlocking capital to reduce debt (at about ₹350 crore now) and increase growth opportunities for the new businesses of LED lights, small home appliances and FMCG, including confectioneries.

EIIL, which is planning to trim debt to ₹100 crore by



Legacy brand: Eveready operates in six segments, including the new small home appliances business. ■ ASHOK CHAKRABARTY

the first quarter of fiscal 2020, is now trying to sell its Hyderabad land. It sold its land in Chennai for ₹100 crore last year. Even as EIIL's stock rose and volumes spurted on reports of stake sale and talks of new partnerships, the company refused to comment on the matter. Managing director Amitanshu Khaitan could not be contacted.

The promoters' stake in EIIL is about 45% now. Depending upon the valuation, a stake dilution of up to 20% may be acceptable to the Khaitans, according to industry experts. The company is seeking a valuation of about ₹4,000 crore, it is learnt. Besides an over a century-old legacy brand, the deal offers to the strategic partner a one million-strong

country-wide direct distribution network with rural penetration. "The extensive network is attractive to any multinational dry cell battery-maker keen to enter the Indian market as well as to any financial service provider, who could utilise this to sell its financial products in an under-penetrated market," said a source on condition of anonymity.

In a report on EIIL, Kotak Securities said that battery sales were projected to rise after a prolonged disruption through a mandated BIS compliance (by April 2019), which can lead to reduced imports of Chinese batteries.

EIIL sells over 1.2 million batteries and 25 million flashlights annually. The company closed 2017-18 with a revenue of ₹1,694 crore. Profits stood at ₹114 crore last fiscal.

'Women bought a third of life policies sold in 2017-18'

IRDAI says 32% of policies, first-year premium from women

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Almost a third of the 2.82 crore life insurance policies sold during 2017-18 in the country has been bought by women.

Apart from purchasing 90 lakh policies, women contributed ₹29,801 crore by way of first-year premium (FYP). The total FYP collected during the year was ₹92,135 crore.

Both, in terms of the number of policies or the FYP, their contribution was 32%, according to insurance regulator IRDAI.

Of the 90 lakh policies bought by women, almost one-third came from three States – Maharashtra (12%); West Bengal (10.3%); and UP (9.4%). Out of ₹29,801 crore

found that in 19 States/Union territories, the share in number of policies bought by women to the total policies sold was higher than the all India average of 32%.

Top five States

The top five States/UTs with highest share in number of policies bought by women were Lakshadweep (55%), Puducherry (43%), Kerala (43%), Mizoram (41%), and Sikkim (40%). Men bought 1.91 crore policies and paid ₹62,334 crore premium during the year. In other words, two in three life insurance policies sold were to men.

At the all-India level, 210 persons purchased a life insurance policy, during the year, for every 10,000 population.

Two in three life insurance policies sold were to men, says IRDAI

FYP contributed by women, a little over one-third came from three States – Maharashtra (18.1%), West Bengal (10%), and Tamil Nadu (7.8%). Women comprise roughly 48% of the population. Their contribution to the economic activity of the country is significant and increasing every year, said a study on the share of women in life insurance business, forming part of IRDAI 2017-18 annual report.

The study, for which only individual new business data – number of (life) policies and first-year premium for 2017-18 – was considered,

Tata Motors' group global wholesales dip 14%

PV sales stood at 59,898 units in Dec.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI



Wholesales of the Land Rover for the month stood at 31,386 units. ■ AFP

Tata Motors' group global wholesales in December 2017 stood at 1,16,677 units. Global wholesales of all Tata passenger vehicles last month stood at 59,898 units, lower by 14% from the year-ago period, Tata Motors said in a statement. JLR sales were at 45,474 units. While Jaguar wholesales for the month were 14,088 vehicles, that of Land Rover stood at 31,386 units.

The company further

said its global wholesales of all Tata Motors commercial vehicles and Tata Daewoo ranged stood at 40,653 units last month, down 14% from December 2017.

Top fabric makers queue up to set up units at Solapur

District may attract investments worth ₹1,000 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Leading fabric manufacturers Reliance Industries, Raymond Ltd., Siyaram Silk Mills, Wadia Group and Valji Group have expressed interest in investing in garment stitching units in Solapur district of Maharashtra to capitalise on the demand for ready-made uniforms from schools and corporates, an industry official said.

"They all are keen to invest in Solapur," said Amit Kumar Jain, joint secretary, Solapur Garment Manufacturers' Association. The association recently organised a fabric manufacturers' fair to attract investments.

unit with 200 machines to make ready-made uniforms in Solapur, he added.

"Reliance, Raymond, Siyaram Silk Mills, Wadia Group, Valji Group and Mumbai-based Qmax World, Rupram Exports Amber Home, which make shirts for the European market, are next in the line," he added.

Making uniforms

Currently, Solapur has about 400 stitching units making school and corporate uniforms. According to S.R. Gaikwad, Director of Textiles, Government of India, Solapur has the potential to become the uniform hub of the country.

amount of about ₹15 crore.

It had approached the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal for recovery.

However, the NCLT had, on July 19, dismissed its plea saying that the committee of creditors (CoC) had approved nil liquidation value due to operational creditors and thus there was no reason for the tribunal's interference.

Requesting the NCLAT to set aside the NCLT's order, BHEL said in its petition that operational creditors should be given their dues in resolution plans also, a view which has been approved by the NCLAT.

The company has a due

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India primed for one-day action

L'affaire Pandya-Rahul compels management to rejig team composition plans

OZ CHALLENGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SYDNEY

Hit by an unexpected controversy after the high of the Test triumph, India will look to fine tune its World Cup preparations in the three-match One-Day International series against Australia, beginning here on Saturday.

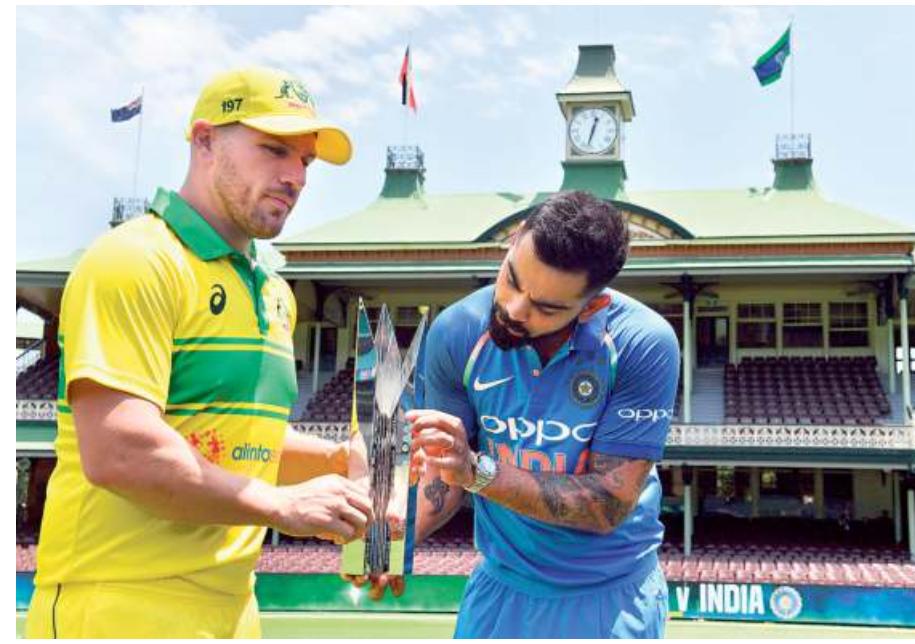
On the eve of the opening game, the BCCI suspended Hardik Pandya and K.L. Rahul pending an inquiry for their unsavoury remarks on women during a TV show, effectively ruling them out of the series.

While Pandya was a certainty in the playing XI, an out-of-form Rahul was not in contention for Saturday.

Individual opinion'

Skipper Virat Kohli, on Friday, condemned the comments made by his teammates and said the team did not align with the "individual opinions".

The two concerned



Staking his claim: India captain Virat Kohli takes a close look at the ODI series trophy as Australian counterpart Aaron Finch looks on. ■ AFP

players (have) felt what has gone wrong and they have understood the magnitude of what's happened," he said in the pre-match press conference.

Pandya's absence means

that India will have to rejig its attack. Jasprit Bumrah has already been rested for this series, as well as the tour of New Zealand, and this allows the think-tank to conduct one final experiment with

the bowling attack. Bhuvneshwar Kumar is a shoo-in, and thereafter it depends whether Kohli wants to go in with a three-man pace attack.

Kohli also stated that, in

the two concerned

Maharashtra girls, Kerala boys excel

They pick up two gold each in Under-21 and Under-17 4x100 relays

KHELO GAMES

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
PUNE

Relay teams were cheered from gun to tape on a busy day on the athletics track in Khelo India Youth Games.

Four relays races were run – Under-17 and Under-21 girls' and boys' 4x100 – where the sprinters got a chance to dash around the track for the State teams, before the focus turns to individual events.

Maharashtra girls showed pace and cohesion in ample measure to win the gold in U-17 (48.31s) and U-21 (47.22) relays. Kerala and Tamil Nadu bagged the silver and bronze respectively.

The Kerala quartet grabbed the gold in boys' U-17 (43.21) and U-21 (41.77) relays, pushing the host to third place, as TN sneaked into the second place.

Indicator

Subhash Pawar, Maharashtra team manager, views the re-



Pulling ahead: The Kerala boys, right, exchange the baton in the under-21 4x100m relay

■ JIGNESH MISTRY

lay results as an indicator of the likely trend in the upcoming 100 and 200m.

"Relay is a team event in athletics, otherwise a sport where the individual decides his or her fate. Runners chosen for the relay for Maharashtra understood their responsibility and put the training lessons to use. The home crowd in the stands

got involved, the runners get a boost when the cheer went around the track.

"We worked for six days to polish the baton exchange skill and decide the running order."

Rashmi Sheregari ran the anchor leg for Maharashtra U-21, Avantika Narale hit the tape first for the State in U-17. "Each of the four runners

need to do their part for the team to succeed. Credit goes to the athletes and their individual coaches," he said.

Asked about the reason for finishing ahead of Kerala and TN, he said: "Winning relays is not any State's right, Maharashtra sprinters are in form and will be serious contenders in the 100 and 200m."

The boys got a bronze in the U-17, U-21 relays but will push the best sprinters."

The results:

Girls U-17: 4x100m relay: 1. Maharashtra (Sudeshna Shivankar, Harita Bhadra, Aditi Paras, Avantika Narale) 48.31; 2. Kerala 48.61; 3. Tamil Nadu 51.36.

100m: 1. Sudeshna Shivankar (Mah) 12.48; 2. Deepthi Jeevanji (TS) 12.54; 3. Ann Rose Tomy (Ker) 12.72.

U-21: 4x100m relay: 1. Maharashtra (Rosaly Lewis, Siddhi Hirey, Kriti Bhoite, Rashmi Sheregari) 47.22; 2. Kerala 47.29; 3. TN 47.87.

100m: 1. T. Dineshwaran (Kar) 11.99; 2. Supriya Maddali (AP) 12.26; 3. Rashmi Sheregari (Mah) 12.27.

Boys U-17: 4x100m relay: 1. Kerala (R.K. Suryajit, Mohammed Lazer, T.J. Joseph, C.R. Abdul Razak) 43.21; 2. TN 44.43; 3. Maharashtra 44.80.

100m: 1. Nisar Ahmed (Del) 10.96; 2. Anshul (Del) 11.07; 3. P. Bharath Yadav (AP) 11.10.

U-21: 4x100m relay: 1. Kerala (C. Abhinav, K. Bijith, T.V. Akhil, P.S. Sarish) 41.77; 2. TN 42.01;

3. Maharashtra 42.79. **100m:** 1. B. Nithin (TN) 10.76; 2. Prajwal Mandana (Kar) 10.86; 3. Kiran Bhosale (Mah) 10.90.

Prachi makes a splash

SWIMMING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

Prachi Tokas played a significant role in keeping Delhi ahead of powerhouse Karnataka in swimming after two days competition in the Khelo India Youth Games here on Friday.

Prachi won the under-17 women's 400-metre freestyle with a time of 4 minutes 37.99 seconds, one tenth of a second ahead of Khushi Dinesh of Karnataka.

Later, she combined with Janvi Choudhary, Astha

Choudhury and Shivangi Sarma to win the 4x100 metres freestyle relay for Delhi, by beating Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Prachi had won the 800-metre freestyle gold on the opening day.

Swadesh Mondal won the 400-metre individual medley for Delhi with a time of 4:47.13, beating Shoan Ganguly of Goa comfortably.

Anurag Singh wound up the show nicely for Delhi with the 1500-metre freestyle gold, as he beat three from Karnataka by more than 22 seconds, timing 16

minutes 40.54 seconds.

Delhi took its tally in swimming to eight gold, four silver and six bronze.

Karnataka had seven gold, six silver and five bronze.

Maharashtra followed with six gold, four silver and four bronze, to be ahead of Tamil Nadu which had four gold, five silver and a bronze.

For Tamil Nadu, Bhavika Dugar added a third gold to her collection with the 400-metre freestyle, after having won the 200 and 800 metre freestyle events.

TN women in summit clash

Knock out star-studded Kerala in the semifinals

NATL. BASKETBALL

RAYAN ROZARIO
BHAVNAGAR

Everybody had predicted a Kerala win. But, the Tamil Nadu women proved everyone wrong by defeating the star-studded opponent 45-49 to enter the women's final of the 69th senior National basketball championship here on Friday.

It is the second time that the team has made it to the final. It came up with a similar show in the Ludhiana Nationals in 2012. And, the Tamil Nadu camp rejoiced at having pulled off a stunner.

Pushpa sparkles

S. Pushpa sparked for the team yet again. She scored a double of 21 points and 12 rebounds, which turned the tables in Tamil Nadu's favour.

Meanwhile, in men's trap, Asian Games silver medallist Lakshay Sheoran led with 74 out of 75 at the half way stage.

Dhanush, who is coached by Neha Chavan, and a second degree Dan in taekwondo, was really energetic with his approach and stayed focused on the technique, in delivering 84 classy shots through the day. He nearly had a 10.5 average in qualification.

Meanwhile, in men's trap, Asian Games silver medallist Lakshay Sheoran led with 74 out of 75 at the half way stage.

The results: 10m air rifle: Under-21 men: 1. Dhanush Srikanth 248.9 (629.7); 2. Yash Yogenash Padloskar 247.6 (621.8); 3. Arjun Babuta (Pun) 225.6 (623.8).

Under-17 men: 1. Avinash Yadav 250.9 (618.8); 2. Divyansh Panwar 250.7 (627.9); 3. Yash Vardhan 228.1 (629.9).

The presence of the formidable Stephy Nixon, who was in and out for most part, did no good for Kerala as the young guns from Tamil Nadu screened her pretty comfortably.

Dharshini and Nishanthi lacked the height but they stole the show with their speedy runs and fast breaks in the first two quarters. Tamil Nadu enjoyed a three-point edge at the halfway



Driving force: S. Pushpa's 21 points and 12 rebounds turned the tables in TN's favour. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

fighting Karnataka 81-75.

TN men dethroned

In a match that went to the wire, Punjab edged out defending champion Tamil Nadu 70-66 in extra time for a date with Services in the men's final.

The results (semifinals): Men: Services 81 (Nikhil Kumar 22, Mahipal 21, Joginder 16, Hemant Sheoran 12) bt Karnataka 75 (A. Arvind 21, Harish 19, Sashank Rai 14, Anil Kumar 10); Punjab bt Tamil Nadu 70-66.

Women: Tamil Nadu 65 (S. Pushpa 21, Dharshini 13, Sathyia 14) bt Kerala 49 (P. Jeena 23, P.G. Anjana 11, Poojam 11). Indian Railways 96 (Madhu Kumari 22, Shrutih Arvind 19, Bhandia 17, Sitamani Tudu 12, Libina 10, Raja Priyadarshini 10) bt Chhattisgarh 55 (Poonam Chaturvedi 34).

Stunning win for Avinash Yadav in U-17 10m air rifle

Dhanush Srikanth clinches the gold in the Under-21 category

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
PUNE

Avinash Yadav came out of obscurity to deliver the knock-out punch on the last shot against one of the emerging force in Indian shooting, Divyansh Singh Panwar, for a thrilling 0.2 victory in the men's Under-17 air rifle event in the Khelo India Youth Games at the Balewadi Complex on Friday.

On a day when Dhanush Srikanth of Telangana, who is groomed by Gun For Glory, had clinched the Under-21 gold, with a dominant performance from start to end, Avinash stole the thunder from everyone.

Having qualified with 618.8, a clear 11.1 point be-

hind leader Yash Vardhan, who eventually took the bronze, Avinash did not draw much attention.

However, in the final, he stayed close to Divyansh Singh Panwar of Rajasthan, a shooter of exceptional ability, all set to make the National team for the World Cup in New Delhi next month.

Divyansh had a 0.7 point lead before the last two shots that decided the gold. While Divyansh faltered with a 9.7, Avinash knocked off the deficit with 10.4. Tied before the last shot, Avinash shot quick for a 10.4 to pip Divyansh whose patient effort only fetched a 10.2.

Yash Vardhan had squeezed his way to the bronze, by 0.1 point ahead of Keval Prajapati who earlier



Champion stuff: Dhanush Srikanth with his coach Neha Chavan, right, and mind trainer Kirtika Pandey.

■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

had to win a shoot-off to progress past Vishnu Shivaraj Pandian.

In comparison, Dhanush Srikanth who is hard of hearing and speech, shot like a monk, for an all-10 sequence of 24 shots in the final. "I wanted to shoot 10.7 every shot," conveyed Dhanush, through his mind trainer Kirtika Pandey.

Dhanush, who is coached by Neha Chavan, and a second degree Dan in taekwondo, was really energetic with his approach and stayed focused on the technique, in delivering 84 classy shots through the day. He nearly had a 10.5 average in qualification.

Meanwhile, in men's trap, Asian Games silver medallist Lakshay Sheoran led with 74 out of 75 at the half way stage.

The results: 10m air rifle: Under-21 men: 1. Dhanush Srikanth 248.9 (629.7); 2. Yash Yogenash Padloskar 247.6 (621.8); 3. Arjun Babuta (Pun) 225.6 (623.8).

Under-17 men: 1. Avinash Yadav 250.9 (618.8); 2. Divyansh Panwar 250.7 (627.9); 3. Yash Vardhan 228.1 (629.9).

Cerise Noir justifies favourite status

BENGALURU: Cerise Noir (Sandesh up) won the Delhi Race Club Trophy, the feature event of the races held here on Friday (Jan 11). The winner is owned by Mr. Blazing Saddles (PF) rep by Mr. Niraj Tyagi & Mr. Vikas Sachdeva and trained by S. Attaullahi. Trainer S. Padmanabhan saddled three winners on the day.

TOPMOST PLATE (1,100m), rated 15 to 35: HARMONIA (Srinath) 1, Prodigal (Chetan) 1, Star Man (I. Chisty) 3 and Sun Power (M. Naveen) 4. Not run: No Opinion 1, 3/4 and 1 Im, 06.53s, ₹74 (w), 18, 37 and 14 (p), SHP: 109, THP: 58, FP: 3,744, Q: 1,481, Trinella: 3,434 and 1,57, Exacta: 17,695 and 9,479. Favourite: Mercury. Owners: Mr. Rajan Aggarwal & Mr. Gautam Aggarwal. Trainer: Pradeep Annaiah.

4 K.S. PREMCHAND MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,400m), rated 15 to 35: ROYAL RESOLUTION (David Allan) 1, Arsenia (Suraj) 2, Vail (Antony) 3 and Different League (I. Chisty) 4. Not run: Donna Rosa, Nose, 1-1/4 and 1 Im, 24.97s, ₹253 (w), 36, 10 and 18 (p), SHP: 47, THP: 49, FP: 75, Q: 1,32, Trinella: 197 and 59, Exacta: 14,790 and 6,338. Favourite: Hafnium. Owner: Mr. Nanda Kumar N. Trainer: Kishan Thomas.

5 DELHI RACE CLUB TROPHY (1,400m), rated 15 to 35: ROYAL RESOLUTION (David Allan) 1, Arsenia (Suraj) 2, Vail (Antony) 3 and Different League (I. Chisty) 4. Not run: Cosmos (Srinath) 1, Deseret Gold (Ivan) 4, Sandesh 3 and Raw Gold (Ivan) 4. Not run: Donna Rosa, Nose, 1-1/4 and 1 Im, 24.97s, ₹253 (w), 36, 10 and 18 (p), SHP: 47, THP: 49, FP: 75, Q: 1,32, Trinella: 251 and 93, Exacta: 631 and 199. Favourite: Cerise Noir. Owners: M/s. Blazing Saddles (PF) rep. by Mr. Niraj Tyagi & Mr. Vikas Sachdeva. Trainer: S. Attaullahi.

6 SHIVAGANGA FALLS PLATE (1,200m), rated 00 to 20, 5-y-o & over: HAFNIUM (Arshad) 1, Kruger Park (S. Shareef) 2, Aerospeed (Suraj) 3 and Dreams United (Radith) 4. Not run: Desert Gold, 2, Nose and 1/2 Im, 14.46s, ₹19 (w), 13, 18 and 11 (p), SHP: 54, THP: 57, FP: 218, Q: 132, Trinella: 197 and 59, Exacta: 14,790 and 6,338. Favourite: Hafnium. Owner: Mr. Nanda Kumar N. Trainer: Kishan Thomas.

7 SHIVAGANGA FALLS PLATE (1,200m), rated 00 to 20, 5-y-o & over: HAFNIUM (Arshad) 1, Kruger Park (S. Shareef) 2, Aerospeed (Suraj) 3 and Dreams United (Radith) 4. Not run: Desert Gold, 2, Nose and 1/2 Im, 14.46s, ₹19 (w), 13, 18 and 11 (p), SHP: 54, THP: 57, FP: 218, Q: 132, Trinella: 197 and 59, Exacta: 14,790 and 6,338. Favourite: Hafnium. Owner: Mr. Nanda Kumar N. Trainer: Kishan Thomas.

8 KALHATTI FALLS PLATE (DIV. I), (1,400m), rated 15 to 35: ROYAL RESOLUTION (David Allan) 1, Arsenia (Suraj) 2, Vail (Antony) 3 and Different League (I. Chisty) 4. Not run: Donna Rosa, Nose, 1-1/4 and 1 Im, 24.97s, ₹253 (w), 36, 10 and 18 (p), SHP: 47, THP: 49, FP: 75, Q: 1,32, Trinella: 251 and 93, Exacta: 631 and

TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6 a.m.

Australia vs India: 1st ODI, Sony Six (SD & HD), 7.50 a.m.

South Africa vs Pakistan: 3rd Test, day two, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.

I-League: Star Sports 3, 2 p.m.

AFC Asian Cup: Star Sports 3, 4.30 p.m., 7 p.m. & 9.30 p.m.

PBL: Star Sports 1, 7 p.m.

IN BRIEF

Nikita stuns Nirundorn, enters final

CHANDIGARH

Unseeded Nikita Vishwase continued to impress as she knocked out the second seed Mai Napatt Nirundorn of Thailand 7-6(4), 6-4 in the girls' semifinals of the ITF grade-3 junior tennis tournament at the CLTA Complex on Friday. In the final, Nikita will play sixth seed Holly Fischer of Britain who beat Malika Rapolu of the US 6-4, 6-0.

New Zealand beats Lanka by 35 runs in lone T20I

AUCKLAND

Recalled Doug Bracewell (44) and debutant Scott Kuggeleijn (35 not out) starred for New Zealand as the host beat Sri Lanka by 35 runs in the one-off Twenty20 International on Friday.

New Zealand recovered from 55 for five to finish on 179 for seven. Sri Lanka easily kept up with the required run rate to be four for 118 after 12 overs. But its last six wickets fell for the addition of only 26 runs and the innings folded for 144 with 19 balls remaining.

The scores: New Zealand 179

for seven in 20 overs (Bracewell 44, Kuggeleijn 35, Rajitha three for 44) bt Sri Lanka 144 in 16.5 overs (Thisara Perera 43, Ferguson three for 21, Sudhi three for 30). AFP

Sports Bureau DA NANG (VIETNAM)

Leander Paes and Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela beat fourth seeds Timur Khabibulin and Tsung-Hua Yang 6-7 (3), 6-3, [10-4] to enter the final of the \$54,160 Challenger tennis tournament here on Friday.

The results:

\$589,680 ATP, Sydney, Australia: Doubles (pre-quarter-

'Need to create a proper system'

If you want to get the best, you have to pay them the best: Devvarman

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

Former Indian tennis player Somdev Devvarman and the All India Tennis Association have been involved in a war of words. Devvarman hit out at the way tennis is run, after pulling out of the proposed Centre of Excellence project following funding cuts to it.

The former India No.1 who was appointed as the national observer for tennis by the Sports Ministry, recently questioned AITA's vision for the sport.

On Friday, when asked about the controversy during an the curtain-raiser event for an obstacle course race he will hold next month in the city Devvarman said, "When people don't do their job very well, they have to point fingers at others."

"It doesn't matter whether I'm the national observer or not. AITA has failed to show any progress in the last 30 years. I asked them how are we going to make the system better?"

"And their response was



Plainspeak: Somdev Devvarman feels fund squeeze will not help in getting the best people to move to India. •

'It's so great, why doesn't he implement his vision?' Are you joking? We're not having adult conversations over here.'

Devvarman said it is important to create a proper system in place and warned that such fund squeeze will

not help in getting the best people to move to India and settle here. "We need a culture where any kid anywhere feels that they have access to a certain system which can make them get better."

"If you want to get the

best people in the world you have to pay them the best. Imagine the risk these professional coaches take to shift their base to India. I imagine the battle I had to go through to convince certain people to come to India and then tell them they will only paid half of what was agreed."

The 33-year-old was accused of bias after he did not recommend Ankita Raina's name for the TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme) funding. But he defended saying, "Well, you called the scheme Target Olympic Podium."

"Had you called the scheme Target Asian Games Podium, it would've been a completely different conversation."

"Let's not forget, our very own Prajesh Gunneshwaran was also left out of the scheme and he was ranked higher than Ankita Raina at all times. He's going to break into the top 100, he's still not been funded by the government."

Paes in Challenger doubles final

SPORTS BUREAU

DA NANG (VIETNAM)

nals); Ivan Dodig (Cro) & Edouard Roger-Vasselin (Fra) bt Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan 6-2, 6-4.

\$54,160 Challenger, Da Nang, Vietnam: Singles (pre-quarterfinals): Denis Yevseyev (Kaz) bt Sasi Kumar Mukund 6-4, 6-2; Tsung-Hua Yang (Tpe) bt Sumit Nagal 2-6, 6-1, 6-0.

Second round: Sasi Kumar Mukund bt Shinji Hazawa (Jpn) 6-1, 6-4; Denis Yevseyev

(Kaz) bt Arjun Kadhe 6-2, 6-1; Sumit Nagal bt Sriram Balaji 7-6(0), 7-6(6).

First round: Arjun Kadhe bt Alessandro Bega (Ita) 6-4, 4-6, 6-4; Sriram Balaji bt Ji Sung Nam (Kor) 7-6(1), 7-6(3); Cheong-Eui Kim (Kor) bt Sidharth Rawat 6-3, 6-1.

Doubles (semifinals): Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela (Mex) & Leander Paes bt Timur Khabibulin (Kaz) & Tsung-Hua Yang (Tpe) 6-7(3), 6-3, 6-2, 6-4.

Quarterfinals: Reyes-Varela & Paes bt Antoine Escouffier (Fra) & Yusuke Takahashi (Jpn) 6-3, 6-1.

Pre-quarterfinals: Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela & Leander Paes bt Sriram Balaji & Arjun Kadhe 6-3, 7-5.

\$25,000 ITF men, Anning, China: Singles (quarterfinals): Naoki Tajima (Jpn) bt Vijay Sundar Prashanth 6-3, 6-2; Kazuki Nishiwaki (Jpn) bt Nitin Kumar Sinha 6-7(3), 6-2, 6-4.

Three Indians among five leaders

Creditable draws for Gukesh, Visakh and Rohith

DELHI OPEN

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Young Indian talent continued to get its share of attention after some fiercely-fought draws and few decisive encounters on the leading boards in the fourth round of the Delhi International Open chess tournament here on Friday.

After D. Gukesh, N.R. Visakh and Rohit Krishnamoorthy proved equal to Russian Grandmasters Aleksandr Predke, Ivan Rozum and Georgia's Luka Paichadze – seeded two, five and seven – 16-year-old Neelash Saha continued his splendid run to stay among the leaders.

The day that began with 23 leaders ended with just five in the lead. Besides Saha, who upstaged Armenian GM Karen Movsiszian, others in the leaders' group were Diptayan Ghosh, Debasish Das and the two Iranians, former champion Ehsan Ghaemi Maghami and Masoud Mosadeghpour.

Lone winner

In fact, Diptayan was the only winner from the top-seven boards following his 37-move triumph over Bengal



Good win: Debasish Das, right, got the better of Australia's Rishi Sardana. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

teammate Sayantan Das.

to Himal Gusain and Ankit Gajwa upset Commonwealth champion P. Karthikeyan,

Fourth round: D. Gukesh (3.5) drew with Alexandre Predke (Rus, 3.5); Ivan Rozum (Rus, 3.5) drew with N.R. Visakh (3.5); Zaur Rahma (Ban, 3.5) drew with Aleksej Aleksandrov (Blr, 3.5); Muhammad Khushnhojaev (Tjk, 3.5) drew with Arjun Erigaisi (3.5).

Diptayan Ghosh (4) bt Sayantan Das (3); Mohammad Nurbairshah Shaikh (3.5) drew with Deepan Chakravarthy (3.5); Kirill Stupak (Blr, 3.5) drew with Mikulas Manik (Svk, 3.5).

Debasish Das (4) bt Rishi Sardana (Aus, 3); Attila Czebe (Hung, 3) lost to Ehsan Ghaemi Maghami (Iri, 4); Masoud Mosadeghpour (Iri, 4) bt Mohab Ameir (Egy, 3); Karen Movsiszian (Arm, 3) lost to Neelash Saha (4); Farrukh Amontov (Tjk, 3.5) bt Aditya Mittal (3).

Surprises continued when Grandmaster Karthik Venkataraman, also the reigning National junior champion, surprisingly lost

Real Kashmir, Aizawl in goalless draw

I-LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AIZAWL

The high-flying league debutant Real Kashmir played out a goalless draw against former champion Aizawl FC in their I-League clash here.

Real Kashmir has drawn level on points with second-placed Churchill Brothers, but are behind on goal difference, as the head-to-head record between the two teams currently stands at 0-0.

Hence, the Snow Leo-

pards are placed third on the table with 22 points.

In a match with few chances for both sides, Aizawl FC skipper Alfred Ke-mal Jaryan was awarded the 'Hero of the Match' for his combative performance.



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// Open Tender Notice //



Date: 12/01/2019

Ballalidla Iron Ore Mines, Bacheli Complex, NMDC Ltd. invites sealed tenders for the following works. Intending tenderers are requested to visit and download Tender documents from our website www.nmdc.co.in. Any query related to this OTN can be raised on bld5contracts@nmcd.co.in. Tender documents shall be submitted at Contract Management Cell, NMDC Bacheli till 3:30 PM and will be opened on 04:00 PM on respective last dates.

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Name of work	Estd Cost (Rs.Lakhs)	Last date of Submission
1.	BIM/BC/CVNLC/MC/OTE/10/2019-20/C-036	Manpower Supply for Development & Maintenance of Nursery, Floral Park, Smriti Van and Herbal Park.	35.56	02/02/2019
2.	BIM/BC/MATL/CMC/OTE/10/2019-20/MATL-C02	Manpower Supply for various works in Materials Department, CSD-Hilltop and CSC, Bacheli	36.54	03/02/2019
3.	BIM/BC/CVNLC/MC/OTE/10/2018-19/C-013	External Face-lifting works of Type-II, III, IV, & V Quarters at Bacheli Complex.	100.48	04/02/2019
4.	BIM/BC/CVNLC/MC/OTE/10/2018-19/C-013	External Face-lifting works of Type-I, II, III, IV, & V Quarters at Bacheli Complex.	90.04	05/02/2019
5.	BIM/BC/CVNLC/MC/OTE/10/2018-19/C-037	De-silting of Pit No. 1, 2 & 3 and Misc Works at FOD and other Peripheral areas of Bacheli Complex.	59.09	07/02/2019
6.	BIM/BC/CVNLC/MC/OTE/10/2018-19/C-030	Construction of new Dumper Repair Shop for 100T Capacity at Service Centre, Deposit-5, Bacheli.	377.48	08/02/2019
7.	BIM/BC/GEO/CMC/OTE/10/2019-20/G-008	Loading of Iron Ore into Trucks for Dispatch to Customers for the Year 2019-20.	28.89	09/02/2019

Jt. GM&(S) CMC, BIOM, Bacheli Complex

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• Extended submission date of EOI is: 28.01.2019 before 4.00 p.m.
• Opening date of EOI is: 29.01.2019 at 11.00 a.m.

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PRESS NIT NO-67 (2018-19)

(1) Detail of the work:

S. No.	Name of work	Amount put to tender	Date of release of tender in E-Procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-Procurement solution
1	Shifting of water line which are encountering in the Alignment of proposed sewer line at various locations in Harsh Vihar, Mandoli Extension & Ganga Sahai Colony to avoid Contamination in AC-68 NE-I	49,44,815.00	09-01-2019 2019_DJB_165516_1	24-01-2019 2:10 PM

Further details in this regards can be

There was a time when the tournament wasn't rated as highly as the other three Grand Slams. But after a successful makeover, the year's first Major now sets the standard for player facilities and spectator experience

The importance of being the Australian Open



PREETHI RAMAMOORTHY

It was the year 1980 and 24-year-old Bjorn Borg had won the French Open and Wimbledon crowns five times each already. "This time I'm ready to slay the dragon," he publicly declared. He was referring to the U.S. Open, a Major he had never won despite being a finalist on multiple occasions.

"I should've won the U.S. Open at least once," he continued to rue, in an interview more than three decades later. Borg has never felt this strongly about the Australian Open. He avoided the tournament during his career, playing it just once. He wasn't the only big name to give Australia a miss; Jimmy Connors took part only twice.

Till three decades ago, it seemed the Australian Open was the poor cousin of the other three Slams and was never taken seriously enough. A number of factors – the long travel, the timing (it interfered with Christmas and New Year plans when it was held in late December or early January), and the meagre prize money – always left it playing catch-up.

But that is not the case now. Today, the Australian Open is considered a tennis oasis. Many players, including Roger Federer, have nicknamed it the 'Happy Slam' – and not just because of the endless supply of sushi rolls and goji berries, and the comforts of an in-house salon.

In 2018, when breakthrough star Hyeon Chung was asked which Grand Slam he always dreamt of winning, he said, "I think the Australian Open."

Fresh start

The tennis calendar, as is well-known, is long and arduous. Tennis matches today are decided by energy and technique in equal measure.

The Australian Open, with its vibrant blue skies and blue hard-courts, heralds the new season. The vibrancy is reflected in the players themselves: here, most of the leading players return fresh after a relaxing off-season, barring a few exhibition matches.

Eighteen-time Grand Slam champion Chris Evert feels the Australian Open is the most unpredictable of the Slams particularly for this reason. "You don't know what the players have done in the off-season, which could be anywhere up to two months. The off-season means focused training. You don't know how fit they're going to be. It also means plenty of time for strategising."

Could this perhaps ex-

plain why the Australian Open is home to some of the best matches witnessed over the last couple of years, which have otherwise been marked by a high attrition rate? "Nothing great can be accomplished if a player is not in a relaxed state. That's when they're gonna play their best tennis. At the Australian Open, the pressure is definitely less compared to the summer, which packs in three Slams in quick suc-

C The Australian Open used to be the slowest of the hard-court tournaments, but that has changed in the last couple of years. The faster conditions have made for more exciting matches

PATRICK MCENROE | ANALYST AND FORMER ROLAND GARROS DOUBLES CHAMPION

sion. That's why we had so many great matches, especially on the women's side last year," Evert said.

She said players use the Australian Open effectively as a springboard, irrespective of their performance. "I think the outlook with a lot of the players is also, 'I'm just going to go in this one, and if I don't do well, I have the rest of the year. This is the first one, I have three more to look at.'"

Court speed

Year after year, one of the hottest topics among players is just how quick play will be at the Australian Open. Till 1987, the Australian Open was played at Melbourne's Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club on grass. From then on, the tournament has bravely experimented with surfaces.

It moved to Flinders Park on the green Rebound Ace hard-courts. In 2008, it switched to the current blue, acrylic Plexicushion courts.

Former Roland Garros doubles champion and commentator Patrick McEnroe feels court speeds play a huge part in making or breaking a tournament. "The Australian Open used to be the slowest of the hard-court tournaments, but that has changed in the last couple of years. The faster conditions have made for more exciting matches. It rewards an aggressive player as well as a good server. At the same time, you could also play predominantly baseline tennis and still be successful," he said.

Indeed, players like Federer, Serena and Venus Williams have thrived on this surface. McEnroe believes tournaments tweak surfaces "depending on conditions, player style and for the benefit of the spectacle of the sport."

The Australian Open had

become notorious for its gruelling, thrilling five-setters. In 2012, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic played a marathon five-hour-53-minute-final at Melbourne, making it the longest Grand Slam final of all time.

But in recent years, things appear to have changed. Nadal, who is most comfortable on slow clay surfaces, said the courts were considerably speedier than they were in the past. Tennis Australia refuted this claim, reiterating that no change was made.

In 2017, Federer echoed Nadal's opinion. "I think there's nothing you can do about it. Maybe it has helped me, too, in my comeback, no doubt about it."

Making players happy

What Borg, Connors and others thought was a long journey to the southern hemisphere has become something essential to players now. In this year's entry list, which was released in December, the world's top 102 women and 101 men confirmed their attendance. In recent years, players have repeatedly cited the facilities as being superior to any other Slam.

The tournament may be marked by extreme conditions, but it is the only tennis venue that has three stadiums with retractable roofs. Wimbledon has one, the U.S. Open has one and the French Open has none.

And if the yesteryear stars protested about the prize money, the current field has nothing to complain about: the Australian Open

C The pressure is definitely less compared to the summer, which packs in three Slams in quick succession. That's why we had so many great matches, especially on the women's side last year

CHRIS EVERET | 18-TIME MAJOR SINGLES CHAMPION

has stretched its purse to \$62.5 million, an increase of 14% from last year. Tournament director Craig Tiley said, "The majority of these increases will be directed towards the players in qualifying, early rounds and doubles."

The Australian Open, and the entire four-week swing that accompanies it, also assumes great importance for fans and experts. Starved for two months without a Major tournament, they were treated to a rare event this year: Federer and Serena facing off for the first time. For tennis fans around the world, the Australian Open is the opening of a new chapter, a new storyline that sets the tone for the rest of the year.

WORD PLAY

Pendulum

• What is it? It's a type of serve in table tennis, delivered from the forehand side. At the highest levels of the sport, it's the most common service action employed. Done well, it's very effective at setting up third-ball attacks, allowing the server to control the point.

• Why is it so popular? For two reasons: versatility and disguise. With the same action, a server can put different spins (including no spin) on the ball, just by varying where and how contact is made. And the paddle moves so quickly that receivers struggle to get a read on it.



• Why the name? The service action – the movement of the paddle, to be precise – resembles the forward motion of a pendulum. The 'reverse pendulum' serve takes this up a notch. The paddle swings forward before retracting: it traces one complete pendulum cycle.

• Who does it best? In the modern day, Grand Slam champion Ma Long's 'pendulum' serve is deceptively good: it doesn't look spectacular, but it's near impossible to read and return strongly. Zhang Jike, also a Grand Slam winner, has a first-rate 'reverse pendulum' serve.

ON THE BOX

STACKING UP



■ Premier League: SAT: West Ham v Arsenal, 5.20 P.M., Brighton v Liverpool, 8.20 P.M., Chelsea v Newcastle, 10.50 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & HD; Leicester v Southampton, 8.20 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 2 & HD. **SUN:** Everton v Bournemouth, 7.30 P.M., Tottenham v Manchester United, 9.45 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & HD;

■ La Liga: SAT: Valencia v Valladolid, 8.45 P.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD. **SUN:** Athletic Bilbao v Sevilla, 8.45 P.M., Barcelona v Eibar, 11 P.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD.

■ NBA: SAT: Raptors v Nets, 6 A.M., Warriors v Bulls, 9 A.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD. **SUN:** Magic v Celtics, 5.30 A.M., Kings v Hornets, 8.30 A.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD.



ICC Test Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	India	43	5,007	116
2	England	49	5,310	108
3	New Zealand	30	3,213	107
4	South Africa	35	3,712	106
5	Australia	41	4,143	101
6	Pakistan	28	2,579	92
7	Sri Lanka	45	4,103	91
8	West Indies	35	2,463	70
9	Bangladesh	25	1,727	69
10	Zimbabwe	11	138	13

ODI Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	England	55	6,918	126
2	India	58	7,000	121
3	New Zealand	46	5,188	113
4	South Africa	45	4,985	111
5	Pakistan	43	4,370	102
6	Australia	40	3,980	100
7	Bangladesh	39	3,608	93
8	Sri Lanka	57	4,426	78
9	West Indies	40	2,899	72
10	Afghanistan	36	2,394	67

T20I Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	Pakistan	36	4,979	138
2	India	42	5,298	126
3	England	22	2,586	118
4	Australia	28	3,266	117
5	South Africa	22	2,502	114
6	New Zealand	25	2,803	112
7	West Indies	27	2,725	101
8	Afghanistan	27	2,490	92
9	Sri Lanka	29	2,518	87
10	Bangladesh	30	2,321	77

Men's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Novak Djokovic	31	9,135	18
2	Rafael Nadal	32	7,480	13
3	Roger Federer	37	6,420	17
4	Alexander Zverev	21	6,385	21
5	Juan Martin del Potro	30	5,300	18

Biggest Movers ▶

Women's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Simona Halep	27	6,641	16
2	Angelique Kerber	30	5,875	19
3	Caroline Wozniacki	28	5,436	19
4	Naomi Osaka	21	5,270	21
5	Sloane Stephens	25	5,023	21

Women's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Alison Riske (USA)	27	6,420	14
2	Ryan Harrison (USA)	27</		



Breaking down a historic year for Indian pace-bowling

The country's quicks registered exceptional numbers in 2018. We analyse the data to determine just how good they were and examine why they were so successful

Table 1: Most pace-bowling wickets in a year overseas

Team in Year	Wickets	Away Tests	Average	Strike Rate
West Indies in 1980	189	12	23.50	56.80
India in 2018	158	11	24.81	50.04
West Indies in 1984	156	10	22.70	50.17
West Indies in 1988	152	9	21.39	47.82
South Africa in 2008	149	11	29.13	51.52
West Indies in 1995	125	8	24.83	54.10
South Africa in 2012	121	9	29.21	57.73
West Indies in 1976	120	8	26.58	58.83
England in 1998	112	10	28.71	56.26
India in 2014	112	10	41.26	66.23

Table 2: Best pace-bowling strike rates in a year overseas

Team in Year	Away Tests	Wickets	Strike Rate
Pakistan in 2002	10	98	42.05
Australia in 1997	9	106	46.73
West Indies in 1988	9	152	47.82
India in 2018	11	158	50.04
West Indies in 1984	10	156	50.17

Table 3: Mistakes provoked and chances created (pace attacks in 2018)

Team	Balls bowled	Mistakes provoked & Chances created	M&C%
West Indies	3885	1257	32.36%
India	8509	2466	28.98%
South Africa	6028	1668	27.67%
Pakistan	4518	1180	26.12%
All Teams	49234	12697	25.79%
England	7438	1916	25.76%
Sri Lanka	4177	1040	24.90%
Bangladesh	1509	340	22.53%
Australia	7026	1563	22.25%
New Zealand	5309	1096	20.64%
Zimbabwe	835	171	20.48%

SRINIVASAN RAMANI

2018 was an outstanding year for Indian fast-bowling. Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Umesh Yadav and Hardik Pandya combined to pick up 158 wickets in the 11 overseas Tests India played.

Table 1 shows that this tally is second only to that of the West Indian pace battery in 1980, featuring Joel Garner, Colin Croft, Michael Holding, Malcolm Marshall, Andy Roberts and Sylvester Clarke, which picked up 189 wickets in 12 overseas Tests.

Ishant, Shami, Bhuvneshwar and Umesh were also part of the group that grabbed 112 wickets in 2014, ranking 10th in the list.

What's noteworthy is the Indian bowlers' strike rate of 50.04 balls per wicket – **Table 2** shows it's the fourth best by any team in any given year (min: eight overseas Tests and 75 wickets taken). Pakistan's pace line-up of 2002 (Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar, Abdul Razzaq and Mohammad Sami) holds the record.

Chipping in at home

India's pace attack was not only effective overseas in 2018 (five Tests in England, three each in South Africa and Australia), but was also quite good at home (two Tests against the West Indies and one against Afghanistan).

Overall, it picked up 179 wickets in 14 Tests. Only South Africa (222 wickets in 2017) and England (208 wickets in 2005) have managed more. And only South Africa's 2017 attack did it at a better rate (41.6 balls per wicket).

C The way the bowlers have dictated terms, not just this series [in Australia] but on the previous two tours [South Africa and England] as well... it's something I've never seen happen in Indian cricket

VIRAT KOHLI | INDIA CAPTAIN

than India's 47.5, considering a minimum of 150 wickets taken.

Batsmen's nightmare

Table 3, which lists aggregated ball-by-ball data obtained from analytics firm Cricket-21, shines a light on how much trouble India's pacers caused batsmen in 2018.

In terms of deliveries that led to a wicket or a false shot, or created a wicket-taking opportunity, India was exceptional: almost 29% of its deliveries tracked in 2018, home and away, were of this kind, second only to the West Indies' 32.36%. But India's pacers carried more than twice the workload of West Indies and bowled the most such deliveries in absolute terms.

Three Indian pacers – Shami, Bumrah and Ishant – were among the top 10 individual bowlers (min: 1000 balls and 25 wickets) in this category, as **Table 4** shows.

Relentless

The trouble India's pacers caused batsmen can be explained in part by their consistency. They managed to hit a good length the most of all teams – helpful in conditions favouring seam and/or swing bowling.

Table 5, compiled from data

shared by Cricket-21, compares India with all teams.

Fast and furious

Another thing that discomforts batsmen is pace. India's bowlers were among the quickest. **Cricket-21** data shows that among pacers who bowled at least 125 overs last year, three Indians – Bumrah, Shami and Umesh – were among the 10 pacers with the highest average speeds. In fact, as **Table 6** shows, Umesh and Bumrah bowled the fastest deliveries of 2018, at 156.5 kmph and 153 kmph respectively.

Last word

To sum up, Indian pacers were among the fastest in 2018 and the most consistent. They bowled among the highest proportion of deliveries that induced false shots and created wicket-taking opportunities, and shone both home and away. It is no wonder that their performance in 2018 rates among the best in history.

Table 6: Fastest bowlers in 2018

Bowler	Team	Inns	Overs	<=135 kmph	135-145 kmph	>=145 kmph	Fastest (kmph)	Avg. Speed (kmph)
Mitchell Starc	Australia	18	320.3	5.60%	76.90%	17.60%	152	141.5
Shannon Gabriel	West Indies	14	189.2	10.30%	79.50%	10.30%	151	140.6
Bumrah	India	18	379.4	15.80%	80.60%	3.60%	153	139
Kagiso Rabada	South Africa	20	331.1	19.50%	75.30%	5.20%	151	138.8
Pat Cummins	Australia	16	314.1	17.00%	81.30%	1.70%	150	138.4
Lahiru Kumara	Sri Lanka	11	206.5	29.50%	67.00%	3.50%	149	137.6
Shami	India	23	383.5	27.80%	72.10%	0.10%	149	137.2
Morne Morkel	South Africa	12	188.5	32.30%	67.20%	0.50%	149	137
Josh Hazlewood	Australia	16	317.2	31.70%	67.80%	0.50%	146.3	136.6
Umesh	India	10	126.5	31.90%	67.90%	0.40%	156.5	136.5

SOURCE: CRICKET-21; ESPNCRICINFO

GAME THEORY

Sharpshooters

A look at who is in the running for the Premier League's golden boot after 21 match-days



PICTURE THIS



Electric dreams

Formula E, one of the most popular classes of auto racing, has a very short history. It only began in 2014, three years after FIA president Jean Todt pitched the idea of a single-seater electric car racing championship to his dinner

companions at a small Italian restaurant in Paris.

Todt's idea stemmed from an interest in electrifying cars to reduce carbon emission – something the environment thanks him for, no doubt.

Since its conception, Formula E has gained quite a following,

with the likes of Felipe Massa and Richard Branson even touring it as a challenger to Formula 1.

In the last year alone, this

class had seen a massive spike in interest from Gen Z and – possibly as a result – from automobile-manufacturing giants.

The current season (the second

race of which is in Marrakesh today) features a few firsts – an extra race, new circuits, and the more-efficient-and-tech-savvy Gen2 cars.

Frenchman Jean-Eric Vergne is all set to defend his drivers' championship, even making the podium (in second place) in the season opener in Ad Diriyah, Riyadh.

IN BRIEF



Four on trial for giant gold coin theft in Berlin

BERLIN

Four men went on trial on Thursday for stealing a gold coin the size of a manhole cover from a museum here in a daring heist using a ladder and a wheelbarrow. German authorities believe the 100 kg Canadian "Big Maple Leaf" – once recognised as the biggest gold coin in the world – has been melted down since its theft from Berlin's Bode Museum in March 2017. REUTERS



DNA request made in Ronaldo rape case

LOS ANGELES

Las Vegas police have asked soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo to submit a DNA sample as part of their investigation into allegations of rape made against him. He has denied the accusations – with his lawyer, Peter Christiansen, saying the request was standard procedure. AFP



Female birds prefer intelligent males: study

WASHINGTON

Male birds are often the ones with the most vibrant feathers, but researchers said on Thursday that what lady birds could really appreciate is a male who shows his intelligence. The report in the journal *Science* aligns with one of Charles Darwin's old theories, which held that mate choice could contribute to the evolution of intelligence. AFP

Throat cancer patients get their voice back

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Vlastimil Gular's life took an unwelcome turn a year ago: minor surgery on his vocal cords revealed throat cancer, which led to the loss of his voice.

But the 51-year-old father of four is still chatting away using his own voice, thanks to an innovative app.

The app, developed for patients set to lose their voice, uses recordings of a patient's voice to create synthetic speech that can be played on mobile phones via the app.

Ideally, patients need to

AI beats doctors at detecting early stage cervical cancer

It found precancerous cells with 91% accuracy as compared to 69% by expert review

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TAMPA

Artificial intelligence may be poised to wipe out cervical cancer, after a study showed on Thursday that computer algorithms can detect precancerous lesions far better than trained experts or conventional screening tests.

According to the World Health Organization, cervical cancer is the fourth most frequent cancer in women with an estimated 570,000 new cases globally in 2018.

Despite major advances in screening and vaccination, which can prevent the spread of human papillomavirus which causes most cases of cervical cancer, those gains have mainly benefited women in rich nations.

Some 266,000 women died of cervical cancer globally in 2012, 90% of them in low-and middle-income nations, according to the WHO.

"Cervical cancer is now a



New hope: Scientists believe that simple innovations will help in early cancer screening. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

disease of poverty, of low resources," said senior author Mark Schiffman, a Washington-based doctor, who has been searching for a cure to cervical cancer for 35 years.

"We are trying to find ways that are extremely cheap, extremely easy but very accurate, so that we can attack cervical cancer by vaccine and also a bit later through a simple technique that is cell-phone based or something like it," Mr. Schiff-

man said. Mr. Schiffman was part of a team that built an algorithm from an archive of more than 60,000 cervical images collected from Costa Rica.

The pictures were taken using just a speculum, small light and camera – no advanced imaging required.

The study began in the 1990s, involving more than 9,400 women who were followed for up to 18 years.

The AI technique, called automated visual evaluation, found precancerous cells with 91% accuracy, according to a report published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

In comparison, a human expert review found 69% of pre-cancers, while conventional lab tests like Pap smears found 71%.

Among women aged 25-49, who face the highest risk of cervical cancer, the AI algorithm was even more accurate, finding 97.7% of precancerous cells.

Clinical trial

The goal is to roll out the technology in the next three to five years, enrolling more patients in clinical trials worldwide.

The technology has not been patented on purpose, he said. The aim is to keep costs low so that women most in need can benefit.

The Hindu group hands over ₹1.26 crore for Gaja relief

Contributions from readers, staff given to Chief Minister

STAFF REPORTER

CHENNAI

Chairman of The Hindu Group of Publications N. Ram handed over a demand draft for ₹1,26,99,204 that readers and employees of *The Hindu* had contributed towards relief and rehabilitation of people affected by Cyclone Gaja, to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, at his camp office in Chennai on Friday.

Cyclone Gaja, which hit several districts of Tamil Nadu in mid-November 2018, claimed 52 lives and caused immens damage to farms and property across a wide swathe.

The Hindu had made an appeal through its columns for contributions to The Hindu Relief Fund. The entire amount was made over to the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund. The contributions from the newspaper



Relief efforts: Chairman of The Hindu Group of Publications N. Ram handing over the demand draft to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

er group's employees amounted to a little more than ₹10 lakh.

The Chief Minister mentioned to Mr. Ram about the considerable progress made in the relief and rehabilitation work in the cyclone affected districts.

Mr. Ram, in turn, wished the Chief Minister and his administration success in the task of extending support to the affected people.

Vatican nuns will compete for Olympic glory

Priests, Swiss Guards and other workers are also part of the newly-launched Vatican Athletics team

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

VATICAN CITY

The newly-formed Vatican Athletics team, which is aiming to compete in international competitions, including the Olympics, was officially launched on Thursday after reaching a bilateral agreement with the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI).

So far there are 60 members of Vatican Athletics – the first Sports Association constituted in the Holy See – which includes nuns, priests, Swiss Guards and other workers.

Monsignor Melchor Joss Sánchez de Toca y Alameda,



Faster, higher...holier! Athletes with the members of CONI Italian Olympic Committee. ■ AP

president of Vatican Athletics, said at the launch that the Olympic Games were "the dream but not in the

short term".

"The dream that we have often had is to see the Holy See flag among the delega-

tions at the opening of the Olympic Games," he said.

But in the immediate future Vatican Athletics would like to be present at smaller competitions such as the Mediterranean Games.

Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) President Giovanni Malago praised the latest initiative at the Holy See which already has football and cricket teams.

"It will be necessary to affiliate with other federations," he said.

"I'm sure this will happen, today we have started a courageous and winning start up."

Team members wearing

navy track suits with the Holy See's crossed keys seal were present at the launch.

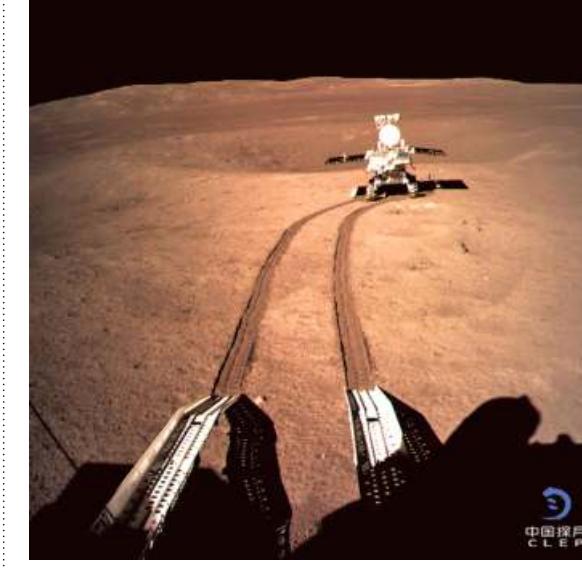
Bringing people together

The youngest athlete is a 19-year-old Swiss guard, and the oldest a 62-year-old professor of the Vatican Apostolic Library. Two young Muslim asylum-seekers Jallow Buba, a 20-year-old Gambian, and Ansou Ciss, a 19-year-old Senegalese, have also been registered as honorary members.

Vatican pharmacist and runner Michela Ciprietti said she welcomed the initiative as "sport is the means of bringing people together."

China's moon rover prepares for a rough ride

It has sent the first panoramic image



On course: China's lunar rover leaving behind wheel marks after moving away from the lander. ■ AP

superpower.

The mission sent the first panoramic image of its landing site on Friday, showing the grey moonscape it is exploring and the track marks left by the rover in the lunar soil.

"From the panorama, we can see the probe is surrounded by lots of small craters," said Li Chunlai, commander-in-chief of the ground application system for the Chang'e-4 mission, said Xinhua news agency.

'Oceans are heating up at a fast pace'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TAMPA

The world's oceans are heating up at an accelerating pace as global warming threatens a diverse range of marine life and a major food supply for the planet, researchers said on Thursday.

The findings in the U.S. journal *Science*, led by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, debunk previous reports that suggested a so-called

pause in global warming in recent years.

The latest technology shows no such hiatus ever existed, raising new concerns about the pace of climate change and its effect on the planet's main buffer – the oceans.

"Ocean heating is a very important indicator of climate change, and we have robust evidence that it is warming more rapidly than

we thought," said co-author Zeke Hausfather, from the University of California, Berkeley.

About 93% of excess heat – trapped around the Earth by greenhouse gases that come from the burning of fossil fuels – accumulates in the world's oceans.

The latest report relied on four studies, published between 2014 and 2017, that gave more precise estimates

of past trends in ocean heat, allowing scientists to update past research and hone predictions for the future.

A key factor in the more accurate numbers is an ocean monitoring fleet called Argo, which includes nearly 4,000 floating robots that "drift throughout the world's oceans to measure its temperature, pH, salinity and other bits of information," said the report.

Musk unveils prototype of Mars-bound rocket

First flight test of Starship Hopper soon



Starship may one day carry people to the Moon and Mars. ■ TWITTER

The

prototype, built in

Boca Chica, along the Gulf Coast of Texas, is nine metres in diameter – like the future rocket will be – but is shorter.

Its first test flights – suborbital "hops" reaching several km in the air before landing back on Earth – could come in March or April.

An orbital prototype is expected in June. That version will be paired with a massive rocket booster known as the Super Heavy.

SpaceX has said the duo could some day transport people from city to city on Earth, as well as propel passengers around the Moon, to the lunar surface, and even to Mars and back.

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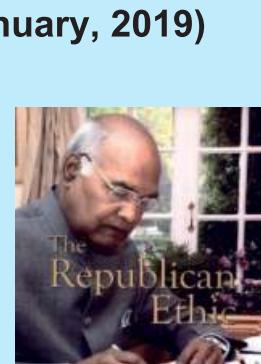
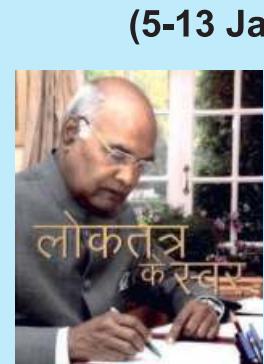
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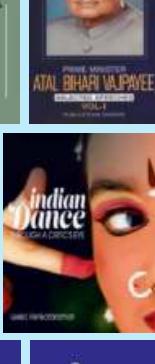
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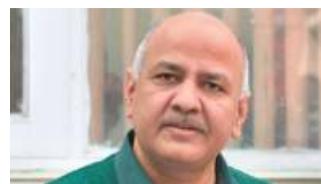
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DELHIMETRO



Admission to skill centres

Sisodia announces admission to 720 seats in professional courses in new World Class Skill Centres [Page 2](#)



Not all about loving family

The Accidental Prime Minister portrays Dr. Manmohan Singh as a nice though weak man [Page 4](#)



Younger self

Gayathri Prabhu discusses complexities of mental health issues and craft of writing a memoir [Page 5](#)



All women's world

Filmmaker Marcelo Martinessi discusses his critically-acclaimed debut, *The Heiress* [Page 6](#)

IN BRIEF



Drugs worth ₹32 crore seized, two arrested

NEW DELHI The Delhi police have busted an international drug cartel with the arrest of two foreign nationals and recovered narcotics worth ₹32 crore, the police said on Friday. The accused have been identified as Asadullah from Afghanistan and Moussa Zie from the Ivory Coast.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 3](#)

Gautam Buddh Nagar gets new SSP

NEW DELHI Vaibhav Krishna took charge as the new SSP of Gautam Buddh Nagar on Thursday night. Soon after taking charge, the SSP conducted meetings with senior officers in which policies for the future were discussed.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 3](#)

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	371	Gurugram	309
Ghaziabad	404	Faridabad	367
Noida	362	Greater Noida	384
■ Good	■ Satisfactory	■ Moderate	
0-50	51-100	101-200	
■ Poor	■ Very poor	■ Severe	
201-300	301-400	>401	

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

Eight infrastructure projects worth ₹1,572 crore get nod

EFC meeting chaired by Sisodia assures addition of beds in hospitals

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

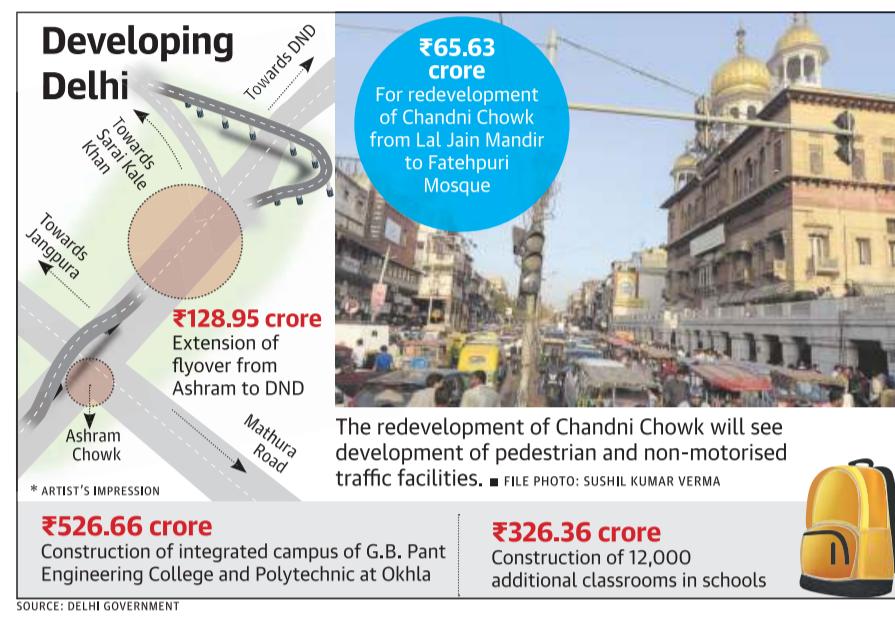
Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Manish Sisodia on Friday chaired the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) meeting in which eight significant infrastructure projects, worth a total of ₹1,572 crore, were granted approval.

The projects include the construction of an integrated campus of GB Pant Engineering College and Polytechnic at Okhla, worth ₹526.66 crore and the extension of a flyover from Ashram to DND, worth ₹128.95 crore.

Reduce congestion

The project related to an integrated campus, to be executed by the Directorate of Training and Technical Education, was required to meet the increased "infrastructure requirement" on campus while the extension of the flyover, to be executed by the Public Works Department (PWD), will seek to reduce congestion at Ashram, the government said.

The Health and Family Welfare Department would



execute three significant projects including the expansion of the existing bed capacity of the Dada Dev Government Hospital in Dabri from 106 to 281 at a cost of ₹53.44 crore and the remodelling of the Satyawadi Raja Harish Chandra Hospital in Shastri Park in Narela at ₹244.35 crore, the government said.

The hospital at Narela will be converted from a 200-

bed facility to 773-bed facility, which will consist of 513 beds under an integrated cancer hospital and 260 beds for Maternity and Trauma Care, read a statement.

The Jag Pravesh Chandra Hospital in Shastri Park will also see an increase in the number of beds from 339 to 560. Similarly, the Directorate of Education would undertake the construction of

1,587 classrooms across schools in the south and south-east district at a cost of ₹326.36 crore.

The redevelopment of Chandni Chowk from the Lal Jain Mandir to Fatehpuri Mosque, which consists of the development of pedestrian and non-motorised traffic facilities, will be executed at a cost of ₹65.63 crore.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 3](#)

Stuck in reverse



Congestion near ITO due to traffic diversions and restrictions during the BJP national convention in Delhi on Friday. ■ R. V. MOORTHY

Fire breaks out at furniture market, spreads to shanties

Fifteen cars gutted in another incident

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI A massive fire broke out in a four-storey building in a furniture market, which then spread to nearby shanties in west Delhi's Kirti Nagar in the small hours of Friday.

No casualties reported so far, the police said.

After a call about the blaze was received at 12.05 a.m., 30 fire tenders rushed to the spot. The fire was brought under control by 4.40 a.m., a senior official from Delhi Fire Service said.

As two railway tracks pass through the jhuggi cluster, train services were suspended for the time till the rescue operation was going on, the official added.

Police suspect that a short circuit might have triggered the fire in the building. All the wooden raw materials stored in the workshop were gutted in

the fire, said a senior police officer.

The officer added that the exact cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

Left homeless

Several residents of Indira Camp and Jawahar Camp were left homeless due to the incident.

In another incident, 15 vehicles were gutted after a fire broke out on the small hours of Friday on a car workshop in east Delhi's Jhilmil.

A senior fire official said they received a call at 4.40 a.m. regarding a fire break out in a car workshop. Seven fire tenders doused the flames.

The police said they suspect that the fire broke out because of a short-circuit.

A case has been registered and investigation is under way.

Sheila, three working presidents to officially take charge on January 16

Delhi unit meets for first time to discuss state of affairs

JATIN ANAND
DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The newly appointed core group of the Delhi Congress met for the first time here on Friday with veteran party leader Sheila Dikshit and her three deputies taking stock of the party's current situation in the Capital.

They discussed the modalities related to a ceremony where they will officially assume charge of their respective posts next week. Ms. Dikshit and the three working presidents – Haroon Yusuf, Rajesh Lilothea and Devender Yadav – chosen to assist her by the party's national president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday, will officially take charge at a ceremony to be held at the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) office on January 16. Both Mr. Lilothea and Mr. Yusuf said Friday's

The AAP is seeking an alliance with the party and not the other way around

RAJESH LILOTHIA
DPCC working president

deliberations revolved around preparations for the ceremony on January 16 where representatives from the party's national leadership "may be present". "We mainly assessed the situation on the ground in relation to the party and discussed preparations for the taking-over ceremony on January 16," Mr. Yusuf told *The Hindu*.

"The AAP is seeking an alliance with the party and not the other way around," Mr. Lilothea told *The Hindu*.

just the first meeting and was more of an assessment exercise. Formal discussions related to strategy can only be expected once we formally assume charge," he said.

Mr. Lilothea, while concurring with Mr. Yusuf, added that while the proposed alliance did not come up for discussion, the party was "yet to receive any proposal" for such an alliance from the AAP "which wants it."

"The AAP is seeking an alliance with the party and not the other way around," Mr. Lilothea told *The Hindu*.

"There has been no proposal from the AAP for such an alliance. If it [the proposal] is received, it will not be the Delhi unit's decision to make but that of the national leadership which will take a call and convey its decision to the Delhi unit to follow," he added.

During investigation,

Man beaten to death by neighbour; accused held

Victim was attacked with garden fork

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man was beaten to death allegedly by his neighbour after a fight broke out between them, the police said on Friday.

The accused hit Gautam Kumar's parked two-wheeler with his mini-truck following which the duo got into a fight, they said.

On Thursday, at 8 p.m., one Indrajeet Mishra, a security guard, had come to meet his brother-in-law – Gautam – in Rana Park, when the incident happened, the police said.

Mishra said Sanjay hit Gautam's two-wheeler and a fight ensued between the two.

Before he could seek help, Sanjay allegedly picked up a garden fork and attacked Gautam following which he sustained head injuries, a police officer said.

Gautam was rushed to Baba Sahib Ambedkar Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries during the course of treatment, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer-North) Gaurav Sharma said.

Case registered

A case has been registered, he said, adding that the accused has been arrested.

The weapon used for commission of crime was also recovered, he added.

None of them was drunk at that time, the police said.

Man shot dead while visiting daughter's grave

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A man was shot dead allegedly by three unidentified men at a graveyard in north-east Delhi's Welcome on Friday, the police said.

At 3.30 p.m., Mehfuz, a resident of Welcome, was offering prayers at his daughter's grave when the incident took place. Three unidentified persons came there and a scuffle broke out between the victim and them.

The accused shot him multiple times, said DCP (North-East) Atul Kumar Thakur said. Mehfuz was declared brought dead at a hospital, he said, adding that the victim sustained eight bullet injuries.

The case is being probed, they said. Mehfuz had two criminal cases registered against him and was out on bail, they added.

IN BRIEF



Removing CBI chief not good for country: CM

NEW DELHI A day after the Centre removed CBI director Alok Verma, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said "removing somebody from his position is not good for the country". "This will wreck the entire system", said a statement from the CMO. "[Rafale deal] was to be probed by Mr. Verma; what was wrong if this had been probe," he said. STAFF REPORTER

SDMC Commissioner transferred to Goa

NEW DELHI The South Delhi Municipal Corporation Commissioner, Puneet Kumar Goel, has been transferred to Goa, as per a Home Ministry order issued on Friday. An SDMC spokesperson said the transfer was routine and that a replacement is likely to be decided within seven days. Mr Goel was appointed SDMC commissioner in 2014. STAFF REPORTER

Attacks on critical thinking'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI In the last four years, there have been efforts to propagate pseudoscience and anti-science perceptions, D. Raghunandan of All India Peoples' Science Network said, while expressing concern over attacks on critical thinking in educational institutes like JNU.

Speaking at a panel discussion on 'Science Movements in India' in the presence of Professor M Jagadesh Kumar, Jawaharlal Nehru University vice-chancellor, Mr. Raghunandan said, "There are attacks on critical thinking, which is core to the idea of scientific temper. This is happening in institutes like JNU, IIT-Madras and Bomday."

Two major road projects initiated in Gurugram

Underpass near Delhi-Gurugram border to facilitate traffic

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

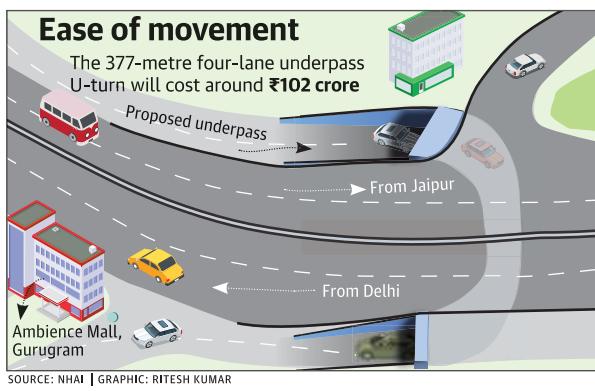
Construction for an underpass to facilitate U-turn towards Ambience Mall and an elevated U-turn flyover at Shankar Chowk on the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway started here on Friday. The two projects are likely to be completed in 18 months.

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) project director Ashok Sharma said the two projects would be constructed at a cost of ₹61.90 crore, including the civil construction cost of ₹10.85 crore. The projects will include utility cost of ₹30 crore, besides the other costs of around ₹24 crore.

Four-lane underpass

The 377-metre four-lane underpass will facilitate U-turn for traffic coming from direction of Jaipur towards Ambience Mall, cutting down travelling time for motorists who currently have to drive all the way up to Rajokri flyover in Delhi to take an about-turn for the shopping mall as well as the gated condominiums near it.

Half the cost for the underpass will be borne by the NHAI and the remaining will be shared equally by the Ambience Mall authorities and DLF, a private develop-



er. The underpass, to be constructed at a cost of around ₹102 crore, will also help traffic coming from direction of Jaipur to take a U-turn towards Cyber City, a DLF property, and Golf Course Road.

"More than the users of personal vehicles, the Ambience Mall underpass will be a boon to commercial vehicles such as hired cabs. The commercial vehicles now need to pay the municipal tax at Delhi-Haryana border to reach Ambience Mall coming from the direction of Jaipur," said Rakesh, a cab driver.

Elevated U-turn flyover

The three-lane elevated U-turn flyover near Shankar Chowk, to be built at a cost of ₹58.96 crore, will facil-

tate traffic coming from the direction of Ambience Mall and Cyber City to take about-turn towards Delhi, instead of going to IFFCO Chowk. It will also lessen traffic burden at IFFCO Chowk, one of the busiest intersections on NH-48.

Cost sharing

The flyover will come up on the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway just before IFFCO Chowk near Bharat Airtel building. While 75% of the cost for the project will be borne by the NHAI, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram will bear the rest.

The NHAI has also prepared a traffic diversion plan for the underpass project and the same has been sent to the Gurugram Police for its approval.

IIT-Delhi, ICRC launch humanitarian policy and technology platform

To facilitate research on technologies for humanitarian action

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has launched the 'Humanitarian Policy and Technology Platform' in the national capital.

"The platform aims to generate and facilitate research and discussions on the new technologies for hu-

manitarian action and the compliance of new technologies of warfare with International Humanitarian Law (IHL)," said a statement issued by IIT-Delhi.

IIT-Delhi director Professor V. Ramgopal Rao said, "We believe that this platform will play an important role in responding to the challenges and opportunities in humanitarian action

in an era of rapid technological advances."

Vice-president of ICRC Gilles Carbonnier said, "We believe this platform will bring together experts from IIT, ICRC and multiple stakeholders from Asia and beyond to address humanitarian concerns raised in global discussions on the application of IHL to new technologies of warfare."

NORTHERN RAILWAY

FINAL NOTICE FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM DUTY

Sh. Dwarka Kushwaha, App/JE/Bri working under Dy.CE/QC/USBR/N.Railway/JAT may please note that:-
a) WHEREAS you, upon recruited in terms of RRB/Chandigarh panel No.RRB/ CDG/CEN01/2015/JE/Bridge/NR/Panel-1/2016 dated 18/04/2016 (RRB merit No.08), appointed as Apprentice Junior Engineer/Bridge for an apprentice period of two years as per CAO/USBR/N.Railway/Jammu-Tawi's Notice of Engagement as JE/BRI No.-941-E/1/USBR/JEBRI/JAT/Pt-I dated 08/2016.

b) WHEREAS you have been reportedly found unauthorised from your training site since 01/03/2018. Since the lapsed period cumulating to more than 10 months, neither you nor any of your family aides, through any means of communication have tried to inform this office your whereabouts, which tantamounts to unauthorised absence from duty.

C) WHEREAS efforts were made to contact you on your mobile, several correspondences through registered letters posted at your home address available with this Office. However no response has been received from your side till date. The competent authority taking suo moto cognisance of your act of desertion of office in violation of Railway Service conduct Rules-1966, has initiated disciplinary proceedings as per powers conferred under Railway Disciplinary Appeals Rules-1968.

d) WHEREAS a major penalty charge sheet No. Dy.CE/QC/D&AR/Dwarka Kushwaha dated 28/08/2018 (SF-5) against your unauthorised absence from duty was framed and sent through registered post on your home address which was received back and again resent through registered post on 24/09/2018. However no response has been received from your side till date.

e) WHEREAS, an inquiry was fixed in connection with your unauthorised absence from duty on 10/ 10/2018 at 11.00 hrs in the office of Executive Engineer/ Const/ Chenab/N.Railway/Reasi which was informed to you at your home address through registered post, which you have not attended.

Further sufficient opportunities were given to you for attending the inquiry which was fixed on 30/10/2018 and 30/11/2018 and was also informed to you via registered post, which you have neither attended nor bothered to contact.

f) WHEREAS acting on the principles of natural justice, this notification published through various newspapers will serve as a last and final chance upon you to appear in person or submit your representation before the undersigned at my office within 15 days from the date of publishing of this notice, failing which you shall be deemed to have waived off your right to submit your representation before the disciplinary authority.

g) WHEREAS upon your failure to act on this notification, it shall entirely reserve the right with the disciplinary authority to order ex parte any major penalty whatsoever deemed fit in terms of Rule-9, D&AR-1968 which may include Termination of your services and you may have to deposit full training cost as per agreement executed by you with Northern Railway and as per your notice of engagement as Apprentice Junior Engineer/ Bridge. The order however shall be FINAL and BINDING on you.

Sd/-
Enquiry Official
XEN/C/USBR/LNR

Sh. Dwarka Kushwaha, App/JE/BRI,
S/o Sh. Rati Ram Kushwaha, H.No.190, Pocket-21,
Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi-110085.
55/2019
Serving Customers With A Smile

PUBLIC NOTICE

On account of launch of E-Arms License Module on 30.01.2019, the services for grant of Arms Licenses will be temporarily interrupted. Due to this technical upgradation, it is hereby intimated that new applications will not be processed (online/offline) from 14.01.2019 to 30.01.2019.

Inconvenience caused is regretted.

Sd/-

JOINT COMMISSIONER OF POLICE,
LICENSING UNIT: DELHI POLICE

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr. DEE/EMU/GZB for and on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:

1. N.I.T. No.	RT232-Elect-EMU-22-17-18
2. Name of the work	Repairing/re-conditioning of EMU/MEMU Traction Motor Stator (Magnet/Frame)
3. Tender Cost	Rs. 3540.00 (online payment mode available on IREPS website)
4. Approximate cost	Rs. 3275200.00
5. Earnest Money	Rs. 65500.00 (online payment mode available on IREPS website)
6. Completion Period	24 Months
7. Validity of offer	45 days
8. Date & Time from tender advertised on IREPS website	11.01.2019 (11:42)
9. Date & Time from tender submission start and end	23.01.2019 (00:00 Hrs.) to 06.02.2019 (15:00 Hrs.)
10. Tender closing Date & Time	06.02.2019 (15:00 Hrs.)
11. Date & Time of tender Opening (immediately when tender submission ends)	06.02.2019 (15:00 Hrs.)

Note 1: All participant Tender/Tenders will submit their requisite documents along with their tender offer, "No post tender correspondence for submission of additional document shall be entertained after opening of the Technical & Commercial offer. Even suo-moto post tender letters of the tenders shall be treated as null & void". Note -2: Duplicate documents should not be enclosed/uploaded. Tender Notice is available on website of www.reps.gov.in.

No.: RT232-Elect-EMU-22-17-18 Date : 11.01.2019 56/19

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that a unidentified male (depicted in the photo) **Namely Unknown S/o Unknown R/o Unknown Age : 60 years, Height : 5'7", Complexion : Shallow, Built : Normal, Face : Round, Wearing : Green colour check shirt & Grey colour pant found dead on 04.01.2019 at Gali No. 13, Pandav Road, Bhila Nath Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 52A dated 04.01.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Farsh Bazar, Delhi.**

Any person having any information or clue about this found dead person may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO

P.S. Farsh Bazar, Delhi

Shahdara Distt. Delhi

Tel. No. 011-22303600, 2238517

Sisodia announces admission to six skill centres

Total of 720 seats on offer; 19 more centres to be operational from August

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Friday that admission to 720 seats in various professional courses in six new World Class Skill Centres in Delhi will begin in March.

Speaking at the WCSC Vivek Vihar, Mr. Sisodia said that the new courses were a part of the government's plan to expand the number of such centres and train up to 25,000 people.

He added that 19 more centres will be operational, as part of Phase-II of the pro-

Courses on offer

Aspirants have a wide variety of disciplines to choose from:

- Sports Fitness and Yoga Application
- Sports Digitisation and Performance Management
- Beauty and Wellness Consultant
- Web Developer and Digital Marketing

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT

blished on January 13.

The centres, which have come up at Pushpa Vihar, Dwaraka, Jhandewalan, Wazirpur, Pusa and Rajokri, will run courses such as 'sports fitness and yoga application', 'sports digitisation and performance management', 'beauty and wellness consultant', 'computer systems operator', 'food production operator' and retail services.

Meanwhile, the main campus of the WCSC is being developed by the Public Works Department at Jonapur at a cost of ₹254.04 crore, the statement read.

ject, from August.

Recruiting staff

A statement from the Deputy CM's office said that the process of recruitment of va-

rious staff positions for the new centres is likely to be completed by February and the notice inviting admissions for the session starting March 2019 would be pu-

bearers for the seven constituencies till January 16, with the first one being Thursday's meeting.

Along with the AAP Delhi convenor, the party's South Delhi in-charge and potential candidate Raghav Chadha was also present during the meeting at Mr. Kejriwal's residence.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

AAP statement on Friday.

As part of the party's preparations for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the AAP chief will be taking meetings with the office-

when the BJP swept all seven seats, the BJP had got 46% of the votes share, while the AAP got 33% and the Congress 15%, he said.

Mr. Kejriwal said that surveys had shown that the BJP's votes share would go down by 10%, so AAP workers should tell Delhiites that the AAP will win all seven seats by getting 43% of the votes. "You have to explain to people that voting for the Congress means a victory for the BJP," he said. His statement comes in the wake of speculation of an alliance between the AAP and the Congress.

Air quality deteriorates to 'severe' category

PM2.5 level four times the safe limit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI Delhi's air quality deteriorated to 'severe' category on Friday due to reduced wind speed even as authorities have forecast rainfall in the next couple of days, which they said might lower the pollution level.

The overall air quality index (AQI) in the city was 402, which falls in the 'severe' category, as per data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Twenty-two areas recorded 'severe' air quality and 13 'very poor', the CPCB said.

Delhi's air quality was recorded in the 'poor' category on Wednesday and Thursday with increased wind speed, which helps in cleansing the air, before slipping into 'very poor' air quality, it said.

The overall PM2.5 level - fine particulate matter in the air with a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers -

Bill moved against Kashi Vishwanath corridor

AAP MP moves private member's Bill

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay Singh has moved a private member's Bill in Rajya Sabha opposing the Kashi Vishwanath corridor, alleging that the construction of the 700-metre corridor would lead to demolition of several temples.

In a statement on Friday, Mr. Singh said the Bill seeks to declare Varanasi or Kashi

the "oldest living city of utmost national importance" as well as the restoration of destroyed temples.

"Lakhs of people have been forced

IN BRIEF



Fire in kiosk at Noida City Centre metro station

NEW DELHI A kiosk at Noida City Centre metro station caught fire on Friday, leading to minor damage, said a DMRC official. "A kiosk in the unpaid concourse area in the metro station caught fire at 5.44 a.m. ... It had no major impact on services except some damage to cable ducts for the AFC system, which have been repaired," said the official. "The DMRC will take appropriate action against the kiosk-owning agency for negligence." STAFF REPORTER

Robbery case solved, three arrested

NOIDA The police claimed to have solved a robbery case with the arrest of the victim's aide, Noor Kalem and his aide Irfan were on the way to Ghazipur in an e-rickshaw when they were robbed of with ₹2.73 lakh near Sector 78 by two bike-borne men on Wednesday, the police said. The other accused are Irfan's uncle and cousin. PTI

M.J. Akbar case: more statements recorded

NEW DELHI A Delhi court on Friday recorded the statements of three more witnesses in support of a defamation case filed by journalist-turned-politician M.J. Akbar against his former colleague who had accused him of sexual misconduct. Three witnesses who were associated with Akbar earlier deposed before the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate. PTI

Driver of earth mover killed in mishap

STAFF REPORTER
GREATER NOIDA A 35-year-old driver of an earth mover was killed in an accident at a construction site in Pyavali village of Jarcha in Greater Noida. The deceased was monitoring work alongside a river, where cemented pipes were being placed, when one of the machines overturned on the deceased and crushed him to death.

The deceased was identified as Brijesh Kumar (35), a resident of Aligarh district.

The accident happened around 12.30 p.m. on Friday. Nearly 10 labourers were working at the site at the time of the incident. Brijesh was allegedly standing next to an earth mover that was shifting pipes when it tipped and fell on him. He died on the spot," said Jarcha police station SHO Prabhat Dixit.

Mr. Dixit added that the PCR received a call from a local who had witnessed the incident. By the time the police reached the spot, all workers had fled the spot.

DELHI TODAY

JANUARY 12

Exhibition: 'Voiceover' - a group show of contemporary artworks at Twin Art Gallery, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Janpath, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: 'Kababimbb-19' - a group show of painting, sculptures and digital art at India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: An exhibition of photographs by Sanjeev Kumar at IHC, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Screening: 'Mameshiba' Japanese film screening with English subtitles at The Japan Foundation, Lajpat Nagar IV, 2 p.m.

JANUARY 13

Talk: Discourse on 'Exploring Reality: Understanding the Masters' by Ambarish Dave at Ramana Kendra, 5 p.m.

Music: 'Chaar Yaar' - Lohri celebrations featuring the performances of composer-poet and vocalist Madan Gopal Singh; guitarist and banjo player Deepak Castellino; sarod player Pritam Ghoshal and percussionist Amjad Khan. Followed by a concert by vocalists, Vidya Shah, at IHC, 7 p.m.

Exhibition: 'Multiple Encounters: Prints and print images', a group exhibition of Anandamoy Banerjee, Dattatreya Apte, Kavita Nayak, Moti Zhoratia and Sushanta Guha at IHC, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. (Mail your listings for this column at cityeditordelhi@thehindu.co.in)

Drugs worth ₹32 crore seized, 2 held

The police claim to have busted an international cartel with these arrests

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have busted an international drug cartel with the arrest of two foreign nationals and recovered narcotics worth ₹32 crore, the police said on Friday.

The accused have been identified as Asadullah from Afghanistan and Moussa Zie from the Ivory Coast.

"We have recovered 8 kg of drugs worth ₹32 crore in the international market from the duo," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Kushwah.

Tip-off

According to the police, they received a tip-off that a huge consignment of drugs would be delivered on Tuesday by Asadullah to one of his contacts near Geetanjali Bus Stop in Malviya Nagar.

On receiving the information, officials went to the spot and found Asadullah. His bag was frisked, which led to the recovery of 6 kg of drugs. Asadullah was arrested.

During interrogation, Asadullah disclosed details of



Accused Asadullah and Moussa Zie at the Delhi Police headquarters on Friday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

the members of his drug cartel. He also told officials that he used to supply drugs to people of African origin in Delhi. Following this disclosure, Moussa was nabbed on Wednesday from Nihal Vihar. The police added that 2 kg of drugs were recovered from him.

"Asadullah said he smuggled the drugs from Afghanistan and handed them to people of African origin in Delhi. One of these people is Moussa," said Mr. Kushwah.

Regarding the modus operandi, Asadullah told the police that members of his cartel and he brought nar-

cotics into India via air either by swallowing drug capsules or hiding them in secret cavities in their bags as per directions from their Afghan-based kingpin.

The accused also told the police that he visited India frequently on a medical visa to smuggle drugs.

"Moussa arrived in India in July 2017 on a six-month tourist visa but did not return after the visa expired. He was lured into smuggling drugs by a Nigerian national and acted as a courier for him for six months," said Mr. Kushwah.

Further questioning of the accused revealed that many persons from North India visited Delhi and the accused provided them drugs.

Moussa also claimed that he had supplied drugs to Canada, England, France and South Africa through courier companies, said the senior officer. Efforts are on to identify the others involved in the racket, Mr. Kushwah added.

The Special Cell had recovered about 200 kg of narcotics last year as part of its drive against drug cartels.

Infrastructure company director dupes investors

Arrested by Economic Offences Wing

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) on Friday arrested the director of Big Bull Infrastructure for allegedly duping people to the tune of several crores by luring them to invest in a pre-launch project, officials said.

The accused, identified as Yogesh Sharma, was arrested based on a secret information from his Noida office, they added.

Sharma along with other directors – Chetan and Satyanarayana Sharma – had lured people to invest in their project 'Big Bull Ashiana' on NH-8 at Chandwaji in Jaipur, police said.

Further questioning of the accused revealed that many persons from North India visited Delhi and the accused provided them drugs.

The Special Cell had recovered about 200 kg of narcotics last year as part of its drive against drug cartels.

The other directors of the company are absconding... The company had neither developed the said project nor obtained any approval from the authorities concerned

VARSHA SHARMA
Deputy Commissioner of Police, EOW

said.

Sharma has been taken to police custody and remanded while other directors of the company are absconding, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Economic Offences Wing) Varsha Sharma said.

The company had neither developed the said project nor obtained any approval from the authorities concerned, said Ms. Sharma.

An investigation is under way to find out details of the bank accounts and the amount of money siphoned off. Police teams have been formed to nab the other accused, the DCP said.

Money laundering: O.P. Chautala gets bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday granted bail to former Haryana Chief Minister O.P. Chautala in the over ₹6 crore money laundering case, noting that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) did not arrest him during investigation.

Special Judge Kamini Lau granted the relief on a plea moved by him after he appeared before the court, which had summoned him as accused on a charge sheet filed by the ED.

The court directed him to furnish a personal bond of ₹5 lakh and two sureties of like amount. However, the court put various conditions on the accused, including surrendering his passport before it. In his application, Chautala said he was not required for custodial interrogation and that the agency itself did not chose to arrest him. Chautala is currently serving a 10-year jail term in a case related to teachers' recruitment scam.

New Gautam Buddh Nagar SSP to target traffic issues, organised crime

Vaibhav Krishna took charge on Thursday night

STAFF REPORTER
NOIDA

Vaibhav Krishna took charge as the new Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) of Gautam Buddh Nagar on Thursday night.

Soon after taking charge, the SSP conducted meetings with senior police officers, in which policies and plans for the future were discussed.

Mr. Krishna said he will focus on traffic problems, organised crime, cyber crime and street crime.

Women's security
In a meeting with journalists on Friday, Mr. Krishna said tackling traffic problems in the district will be one of his priorities.

"Ours is an urban district and traffic is a major problem here. Our focus will be to reduce the traffic snarls," said Krishna.

The deceased was identified as Brijesh Kumar (35), a resident of Aligarh district.

VAIBHAV KRISHNA
Gautam Buddh Nagar SSP

Tackling traffic problems in the district will be one of my priorities. Ours is an urban district and traffic is a major problem here. Our focus will be to reduce the traffic snarls...

Besides this, he said the police department will work to wipe out organised crime in Gautam Buddh Nagar. He also said that efforts will be made to heighten women's security.

Integrity of department
"We will also work to improve the integrity of the police department and to reduce the communication gap between the police and the public. Also, if any policemen are found to be in-

volved in nefarious activities, strict action will be taken against them," said Mr. Krishna.

"Social media cell of the Police Department will be strengthened, mafia of any sort will not be tolerated and drinking in public will be monitored," said the senior officer.

Mr. Krishna added that the police will continue with routine checking and added that they are hopeful of nabbing as many criminals as possible.

Mr. Krishna further added, "We direct the EAC to appraise the project afresh in terms of EIA notification 2006 and impose additional

NGT: give data on projects monitored after EC grant

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF & CC) to provide data on the number of projects that have been monitored after the grant of environmental clearance (EC).

Following previous orders of the NGT, the ministry informed a Bench of a proposal to empanel government institutions to monitor compliance with EC conditions with a view to achieve the real purpose of conducting environment impact assessment and imposing requisite conditions to neutralise any adverse impact on the environment.

The Centre further informed the tribunal that clauses pertaining to the same are proposed to be added in the EIA, 2006 notification.

Directing the Ministry to provide data on the same,

"According to the response of MoEF & CC, there is a proposal to empanel government institutions of national repute for compliance monitoring against the baseline information available in the Environment Impact Assessment [EIA] report," the Bench observed.

Granting protection to the accused, Special Judge Arvind Kumar directed him to appear before the Enforcement Directorate on Saturday for interrogation.

Raises allegations
Mr. Arora had sought anticipatory bail in the case, alleging that the probe agency was forcing him to falsely implicate Mr. Vadra in the case.

"Some officials of the ED

Vadra's aide gets interim protection from arrest

Arora told to appear before ED today

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday granted interim protection from arrest to Manoj Arora, the personal assistant of Robert Vadra, who is the son-in-law of former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, in a money laundering case.

The case relates to allegations of money laundering in purchase of a London-based property by Mr. Vadra.

Granting protection to the accused, Special Judge Arvind Kumar directed him to appear before the Enforcement Directorate on Saturday for interrogation.

general and specific conditions as may be considered necessary. EAC will be free to call for reports which it may consider necessary."

The green panel has directed the EAC to complete the appraisal process by April 15.

"Till the project is reappraised, status quo shall be maintained," the Bench said.

The directions came after environmentalist Manoj Mishra moved the NGT stating that the approval to the project was granted in 1987 and contended that "there has

been many changes on the ground after 1992, including the disaster in 2013".

The green panel also took note of a study undertaken by an expert body, following Supreme Court orders after the 2013 disaster.

Further the report added, "Without conducting cumulative impact assessments and disaster management studies of Yamuna and Kali basins, no such projects should be allowed at the risk of fragile ecology, biodiversity and lives of people living in and around project sites."

Man belonging to 'Meena' caste gets HC relief

Give him benefit of quota, Centre told

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

According to the physical standard guidelines, the requirement of minimum height for unreserved category was 170 cm for male candidates. However, for candidates belonging to ST category, there was a relaxation in the height standard and the minimum height required was 162.5 cm.

Rahul Kumar Meena's application for selection to the CISF, Delhi region, in the reserved category was rejected by the government as he belongs to the 'Meena' caste, which was not a notified ST category in the Central list.

However, a Bench of Justice G.S. Sistani and Justice Jyoti Singh referred to the High Court's September 2012 verdict which ruled that members of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and STs on migration from their home State to a Union Territory will carry their right to reservation.

The Staff Selection Commission (SSC) had in January 2015 put an advertisement for recruitment to the post of constable in BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP, SSB, NIA and SSF, and rifleman in Assam Rifles. The total number of vacancies was 53,857 in the male category. Of these, 27,604 vacancies were for the unreserved category; 12,204 for OBC category; 5,161 for STs and 8,888 for SCs.

On a visit to a gaushala in Bawana on Friday, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief said, while the BJP-ruled civic bodies did not release funds they are supposed to give to cow shelters, his government had.

'Maintain status quo on Lakhwar project till reappraised by panel'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Directing fresh appraisal of the Lakhwar Hydroelectric Project in Uttarakhand, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed authorities to maintain status quo on the construction till the project is appraised by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Union Environment Ministry.

A Bench headed by NGT judicial member Justice Raghuvendra S. Rathore said, "After considering the pleadings

and materials on record, we are of the considered opinion that the clarifications given by the project proponent, the report of the expert committee and finding of various studies need to be looked into and studied by the EAC and project needs to be reappraised in terms of the EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) notification, 2006."

The Bench further added, "We direct the EAC to appraise the project afresh in terms of EIA notification 2006 and impose additional

general and specific conditions as may be considered necessary. EAC will be free to call for reports which it may consider necessary."

Hitting out at the BJP-ruled municipal corporations for delayed payment to cow shelters in the city, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said those asking for votes in the name of cows don't even provide fodder for them.

'We just serve them'

"Those seeking votes in the name

FILM REVIEWS

Triumph of the will

Made with the clear intention of lionising Indian government's decisiveness and Army's determination in avenging the 2016 attacks on security forces, *Uri: The Surgical Strikes* is potently packaged propaganda

NAMRATA JOSHI



All for war: The filmmaker uses the oldest tricks in cinematic manipulation

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

phisticated and sombre. Patriotism is no longer overstated, it's implicit, a given. It's not just about heaping unbridled violence on the "other" but about combining it with sheer efficiency, skill, intelligence, counter-intelligence and efficacy. War is not just fought at the border but "ghar mein ghuske (by entering the homes)".

Whether it's the ambush in the North East, the combat in PoK, the various military strategies and operations or the final covert battle of supremacy - Dhar's storytelling keeps you invested and is tight, smart and slick when it comes to the portrayal of the security forces. He makes you care for the soldiers and their families. It only helps that he has a battalion of strong performers with Vicky Kaushal leading right from the front with his very finely calibrated performance as Major Vihaan Shergill and Swaroop Sampat as his Alzheimer-afflicted mother.

Forget the long-standing ties with Palestine, the inspiration for surgical strikes is Mossad's 'Operation Wrath of God' - the covert assassination operation after the massacre of 11 members of Israeli team at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Like the drones of Israeli intelligence we will put our "Garud" to use.

Although we've had an entire genre of desi jingoistic films based on the nation's collective animus against Pakistan, *Uri* manufactures it again.

The hostile messaging is still far from concealed but the rhetoric changes, the idiom and expression is so-

one-sided narrative. The many questions surrounding the surgical strikes are not raised at all. You know that the security lapses at Uri camp will not be brought into sharp focus. And the separatist movement in North East won't be probed, dismissed instead as "Nagaland Manipur ke terrorist".

Dhar uses the oldest tricks in cinematic manipulation and manages to push the right buttons - a soldier singing one moment, dead the next; a little daughter bidding farewell to her martyred father by shouting out his war cry.

It had my otherwise strong heart melt away. Then, in the very male world the two hands of Vihaan, metaphorically speaking, turn out to be two women officer, one providing intelligence from the ground, other flying his mission's chopper. It's fine, measured gender balance.

Even if you are on the other side of the political and ideological divide Dhar makes things palatable, though he may not be entirely persuasive. At times I found myself standing clear of my own political biases to

acknowledge his engaging craft. At other moments, I broke away from the film's emotional sway to question its politics.

The politicians and bureaucrats in the film (all obviously drawn from reality but not given their real names), are the weak link and feel exaggerated. The examples are rampant, whether it's Paresh Rawal (as Ajit Doval or Manohar Parrikar), or Rajnath Singh and Sushma Swaraj who should definitely lodge a formal complaint for being caricatured badly.

The most interesting is the portrayal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Rajit Kapoor) as a benevolent, caring and concerned patriarch who patronisingly pats Vihaan for being *achcha beta* (good son).

He is as much concerned about his ill mom as he is about Bharat Mata, stays up late till the operation meets a successful end and then celebrates with the team.

Surprise surprise he also seems to listen, talk, discuss and communicate and not just through Mann Ki Baat. Did we hear the elections are coming?

Characters: Drawn from real life but rendered cardboard flat.

Acting: It's more about bad prosthetics, terrible hair-pieces and awful mimicry passing off for performance.

Only Divya Seth looks reasonably human as Mrs. Singh in a parade of puppets and caricatures led by her own on screen husband-PM. And I was always of the firm belief that Anupam Kher could never act badly however terrible he is.

No more.

Narrative: A race through the events and headlines of those years with Sanjaya Baru (an irritating Akshaye Khanna who sports checked suits while looking

It's not all about loving the family

The Accidental Prime Minister portrays Manmohan Singh as a nice though weak man but goes hammer and tongs at the Gandhi family in a tacky fashion

NAMRATA JOSHI

There are some films which leave you at a loss for words. Not because they are overwhelmingly good but because they are unfailing and irredeemably bad.

Vijay Gutte's *The Accidental Prime Minister*, based on Dr Sanjaya Baru's book, throws light on the dynastic control and power play at the PMO during the reign of Dr Manmohan Singh. It left me with barely a few monosyllables here and there to describe the dull, tortuous experience.

Characters: Drawn from real life but rendered cardboard flat.

Acting: It's more about bad prosthetics, terrible hair-pieces and awful mimicry passing off for performance.

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Narrative: A race through the events and headlines of those years with Sanjaya Baru (an irritating Akshaye Khanna who sports checked suits while looking



No minister: The film is a dull and tortuous experience

at camera with arrogance and needless attitude) providing expert comments every now and then. When no one quite wants to hear!

Ambition: To try and do a desi *Yes Minister* of sorts. In other words, hubris.

Bigger aim: To keep pressing the sympathy button for the nice but weak and ineffectual MMS but bring

down the Gandhi family and make a Pappu of Rahul. And then posit the moral of the story at the end: that Narendra Modi is our only saviour against "*maa bete ki Sar-kar*".

Dialogue: Profound lines like "Politics economics *na-hin hoti*". "*Ek age ke baad daant khane ki capacity kam hi jaati hai*" (After a certain age your capacity to take in reprimand decreases).

Production design: Success in doing the impossible - turning the elegant Lutyens' Delhi homes and offices into fluorescent kitschy sets.

Music: A strange "*Har ghadi badal rahi hai roop zindagi*" kind of tune playing on and on to underline the bro-code of MMS and Baru. Did I miss some deeper meaning here?

Uri: The Surgical Strike

DIRECTOR: Aditya Dhar
CAST: Vicky Kaushal, Paresh Rawal, Mohit Raina, Yami Gautam, Kirti Kulhari, Rajit Kapoor, Swaroop Sampat
STORYLINE: A work of fiction that is based on the Indian army's surgical strikes on the militant "launchpads" in Pakistan Administered Kashmir, that were in retaliation against the deadly Uri attack on the security forces.

A real Rajinikanth feast

Despite quite a few underwritten characters, *Petta* triumphs by bringing back the Superstar of yore

SRINIVASA RAMANUJAM

Despite quite a few underwritten characters, *Petta* triumphs by bringing back the Superstar of yore

That swag continues the length of the film, a revenge saga filled with long action blocks and some solid surprises. Kaali (Rajinikanth) is recommended for a college warden's post and he arrives to set things that aren't in order in the institution. But tackling ragging and college politics isn't

just what he'll have to face - he has a past, one filled with secrets, and one that will return to haunt him.

The first half of *Petta* is a breeze - and it helps that we have cinematographer Thirunavukkarasu's lovely frames to capture the lighting and landscape of the hill station where the col-

lege is located. Anirudh also gets in a couple of foot-tapping numbers, though they do come across as speed-breakers to an otherwise smooth tale.

The flashback takes us to different lands, people and

problems. A friendship sub-plot, one of the many things that worked in an earlier Rajini hit (*Baasha*), gets an interesting twist here, and takes the storyline forward. The action blocks arrive soon - and we slowly get sucked into the dynamics between politi-

Petta

DIRECTOR: Karthik Subbaraj G.
CAST: Rajinikanth, Vijay Sethupathi, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Simran, Trisha
STORYLINE: A hostel warden has a past that forces him to take on a powerful politician

cian Singaar Singh (a reliable Nawazuddin Siddique in an underwritten role) and his Man Friday Jithu (Vijay Sethupathi, in a solid performance).

With respect to *Petta* at least, director Karthik Subbaraj proves that he's more a Superstar fan than filmmaker, filling the film with loads of Rajini-isms. There are punch dialogues replete, which will surely drive meme creators crazy in the days to come. Rajinikanth proves that he's still in sublime form when it comes to dialogue delivery and goes the extra mile in action sequences. His is the

best-written role in the film, but one wishes that the others, especially the villain and the leading ladies (Simran and Trisha), had more to do.

There are no significant confrontational sequences between the hero and villain to look forward to, but Karthik Subbaraj sort of makes up for it by dishing out some interesting 'twists' in the last half hour - something that he's well known for in Tamil cinema, thanks to *Pizza* and *Jigarthanda*. With *Petta*, he provides the real feast that Rajinikanth fans have been waiting for a long time.



Big bang: The first half of *Petta* is a breeze ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

POOCHE CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



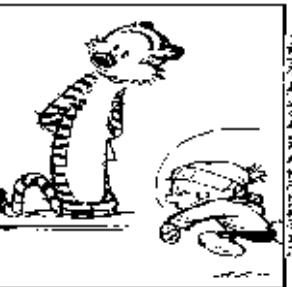
PEANUTS



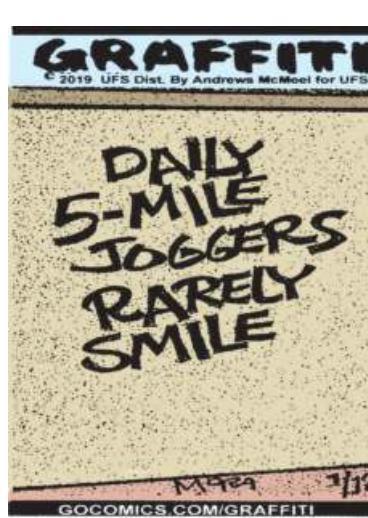
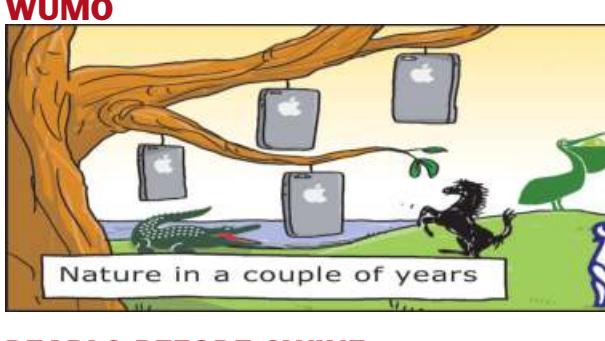
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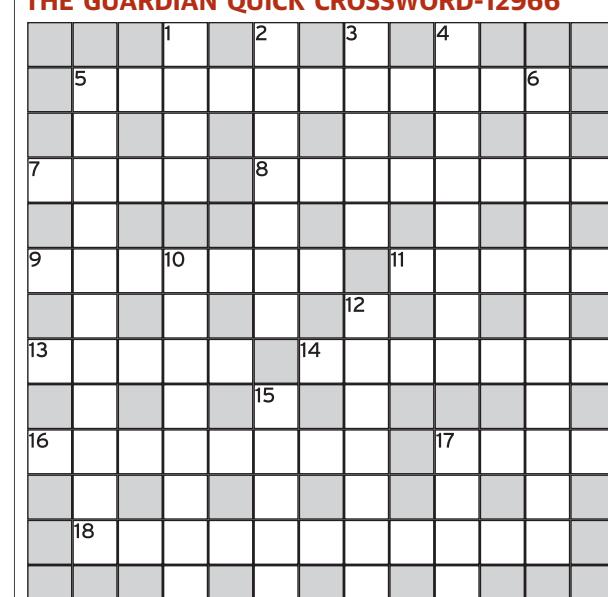
CALVIN AND HOBBES



WUMO



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-12966



- 4 Fungus that discharges a cloud of spores when mature (8)
5 Chamber for entertaining guests (7,4)
6 Idiot - leaked chunk (anag) (11)
10 Trying (8)
12 Arrogant gait (7)
15 Pool to won (5)
17 Black bird (4)

Solution will appear in *Delhi Metro* dated January 14, 2019.

Solution No. 12965

- Across
1 Tipper lorry (6,5)
2 Eye tooth (4)
3 Male hairdresser (8)
4 Success in a contest (7)
5 Piece of cloth for wiping eyes, nose etc (4)
6 Metal in thermometer or barometer (7)
7 Fighting on horseback in a tournament (8)
8 Lurch (4)
9 Don't tell! (4,3,4)
■ Down
1 Pleased with oneself (4)
2 Provocation (5)
3 Suffer when too hot (7)

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O	M	A	N	I	P	A	S	T	U
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Love letters to my younger self

Before her talk at *The Hindu* Lit for Life, author Gayathri Prabhu discusses the complexities of mental health issues and the craft of writing a memoir

SWETA AKUNDI

When pain, so sharp that it demands to be heard, tangible like an itch in the back of your throat, is given the face of words, will it dissipate? "We are deluding ourselves if we think writing will somehow provide closure," says Gayathri Prabhu, who actively resists this idea.

The author of *If I Had To Tell It Again*, a memoir dealing with her father's death and her relationship with him, believes we look in vain for catharsis in writing.

Gayathri will be part of a

"Good literature churns emotions, opens up some questions, even as it ties up some ends," she maintains. Her memoir, published in 2017, which also talks about how she coped with depression and suicidal tendencies in the period before her father's death, was widely lauded as a sensitive portrayal of a parent-child relationship. "My book is a love letter to a dead parent, to my multiple younger selves, as well as a reaching out to others like us" she says.

Gayathri will be part of a

discussion, 'The Silent Epidemic' at *The Hindu* Lit for Life, in conversation with neuropsychiatrist Dr Ennapanam S Krishnamoorthy, about mental health and the need to speak up about it. Having dealt with clinical depression herself and having written about it, she is now part of an initiative in Manipal that encourages students to seek help from mental health professionals. "I will be speaking not just as a person who has encountered mental health issues, but as a writer," she says, adding that

we tend to be very reductive when we talk about people with mental health difficulties. "We label people as bipolar, or depressed, or alcoholic... But our identities are much more complex," she says. Her book, she adds, isn't just a narrative on mental health, it is about families, difficult love, abuse, and even about animal companions.

Multiple voices

When Gayathri's father passed away in 2014 due to liver cirrhosis, she began thinking about everything she wanted to speak about with him – his addiction to alcohol, her own depression, how she was abused as a child. Some of these were conversations she'd had to

the point of exasperation, and some that she never uttered a word about.

However, while writing it down, she was sure she did not want it to be a case of pulling skeletons out of her closet. "I did not want it to be a voyeuristic narrative of my pain. I wanted to revisit the past, and join certain dots in a way that I had not done before," she says.

For this, she decided to employ different voices in the different sections of the book. So if one chapter is a single person narrative, the other is a third person narrative, and yet another, a play. She uses the literary tool of repetition to retell stories from multiple perspectives. "The question was, how do you write the story of some-

Speak up, reach out:
No more sweeping things under the carpet for Gayathri

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

one who is dead, how do you tune in to their voice?" she says. Gayathri knew what her father would have said if he were to read her book, and she wanted to give him the space to respond to it – a philosophy that psychotherapy too, propagates.

Writing the memoir also meant treading on many toes. "But I couldn't bear to be silenced one more time," she recalls. There were times when she was wrought with doubts and possible regrets. That's when she decided to go through every word she had written. "If I could stand by each sentence, it meant I stood by the book in its entirety," she says. "When the book was finally in my hands, I knew I made the right decision. This is literature, not just my life."

Tough love

"My father was a charismatic man, who loved to tell stories," says Gayathri. "When he struggled with certain life events and situations, like most people, he did not want a diagnostic word, but some explanation for the struggle. For many people in such situations, substance abuse or dependence can become a way of coping."

He would also talk about death quite often – "He longed for it". So much so that Gayathri had hardened her heart a decade before his death. "I later felt guilty about mourning his death before he was gone," she says.

Accepting her father's choices was never easy. However, he believed in making her independent from a young age. To her, both parents and children are adults with complex life narratives. You can reach out to loved ones, try to be part of their decision-making, but there is a stage when you need to let go.

French, for beginners

The Georges Blanc pop-up at The Oberoi, New Delhi's 360° is the right place to experience the food, if you're a newbie



Tres belle: Cauliflower soup with truffle; chicken in creamy sauce with potato pancakes ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SUNALINI MATHEW

other continental cuisines under the same roof!

You won't need it if you eat everything (well, chicken and lamb, because we're in India). It is, after all, a cuisine where the protein shines, where the chicken, flown in from France, is succulent, and the potato pancakes, though absolutely melt-in-mouth, aren't meant to be the star, leaving us, a carb-craving nation, longing for more. If you're vegetarian, the a la carte options help, but if you're vegan, give it a miss. What is French food sans the butter and cream?

The food is simple-sounding enough: Cauliflower Soup with Truffle, Poached Lobster with Saffron sauce, Red Mullet in Shellfish sauce, Stuffed lamb Saddle with Celery purée, making choices easier and explanations shorter.

The whole point of the afternoon or evening is to sit around, sip on the wine (2016, Domaine Lavantureux Frères Chablis, Chardonnay; Château Malmaison Baronne Nadine de Rothschild, Moulis-en-Médoc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon; 2016, Domaine Gayda Figure Libre, Cabernet Franc, amongst others). Let the hours slip away, as you savour each little bite. The point of the pop-up is to see how Delhiites respond to the cuisine, and to include some of the more successful dishes onto the 360° menu that already holds 80 plus dishes.

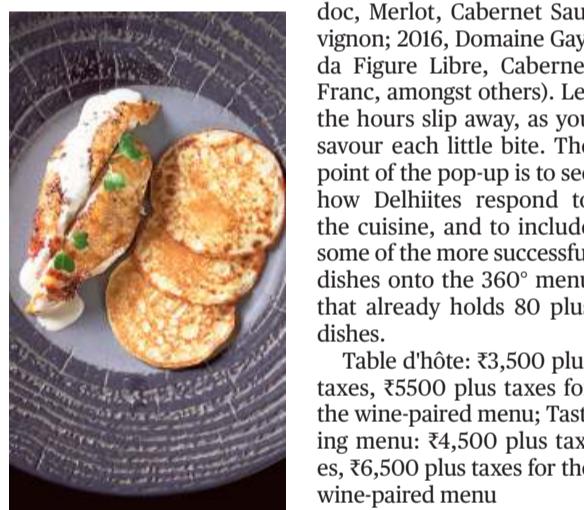


Table d'hôte: ₹3,500 plus taxes, ₹5500 plus taxes for the wine-paired menu; Tasting menu: ₹4,500 plus taxes, ₹6,500 plus taxes for the wine-paired menu

SHORT TAKE

Laurels for Aneeth

For her work in sustainability, textile innovation and utilizing India's indigenous skills, Delhi-based designer Aneeth Arora was honoured with an award by Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu at a function in Delhi recently.



Apart from Aneeth, who likes to be behind the scenes and make her artisan hog the limelight, the 'Threads of Excellence' award was conferred on 17 individuals from the textiles sector. This included Rajesh Pratap Singh, who received it for elegance and simplicity of his designs and Rahul Mishra for being the international face of Indian fashion.

Titled 'Accomplishments And Way Forward For Textiles Sector', National Conclave was organised by the Ministry of Textiles.

Speaking on the occasion, Sunil Sethi, president of Fashion Design Council of India said, "I feel proud that the FDCI designers have been recognized and felicitated for their contribution to the industry."

5 EVENTS WORTH-YOUR-WHILE



BEVERAGE

Tea festival
Harvest Gold presents "The Tea and Food Festival" the largest platform that will showcase a variety of tea - from loose tea to tea bags. This 2-day festival will have participants from more than 250 types of teas and various cuisines under one roof. The event will also include buyers-sellers meet and elaborate tea tasting sessions.

VENUE: Amphitheatre, Ansal Plaza

TIME: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.



THEATRE

Emil and the Detectives
Slingsby, an Australian theatre company is all set to premiere its award-winning production, "Emil and The Detectives" this evening. Adapted for the stage by Adelaide-based playwright Nicki Bloom, this drama is based on the 1929 detective novel written by Erich Kästner. It is presented as part of Australia Fest in India.

VENUE: Siri Fort Auditorium, August Kranti Marg

TIME: 12 p.m. and 7 p.m.



PERFORMANCE

Dance
Aditi Mangaldas' Drishikton Dance Foundation presents 'Drishikton Home-studio Baithak: Season V', an evening of Odissi and Kathak dance. The event will have the Odissi dance by Madhur Gupta followed by Kathak and contemporary dance by Gaurav S. Bhatti.
VENUE: Drishikton Dance Foundation, N-75/4/2, South Avenue, South Sainik Farm
TIME: 7 p.m.



THEATRE

Sadat Hassan Manto
Pandies' Theatre presents an English/Punjabi play "Sadat Hassan Manto: Pagaleyan Da Sardar" this evening, directed by Sanjay Kumar. The play captures and reproduces the stark anti-communal voice of Sadat Hasan Manto and highlights his work as a statement against bigotry and religious hatred.
VENUE: Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre
TIME: 7:30 p.m.



MUSIC FESTIVAL

Uttarayan 2019
Kumauni Jan Samaj Delhi Trust with the support of Delhi Government has organised 'Uttarayan Festival 2019', a musical event hosted by Rajan Pandey. Noted Kumauni folk singers from Uttarakhand including Heera Singh Rana, Gajendra Singh Rana, Kaushal Pandey, Moti Shah, Kishore Joshi, are going to perform this evening.
VENUE: Labor Court Park, Giri Nagar Kalkaji
TIME: 5 pm onwards

KENNETH ROSARIO

It's a rare experience to watch a Paraguayan film, let alone one that depicts the lives of a ruling-class lesbian couple in their late fifties. The Latin American country, which is relatively new to both democracy and home-grown cinema, has produced a handful of films, of which only a few have gone onto international film festivals. Marcelo Martinessi's *The Heiresses* is one such rarity. Last year, it competed at the 68th Berlin International Film Festival, bagged the Silver Gateway award in International Competition category at the 20th Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival and was Paraguay's official entry to the 91st Academy Awards but didn't make the shortlist, which was announced last month. The film, however, featured on several year-end lists, which acknowledged the best of debut features, queer and world cinema.

The film's appeal is best encapsulated in a moment after a screening in Mumbai last year. An elderly lady rose from her seat, struggling to hold onto the mic, she declared how closely she could relate to Chela, a woman born in wealth but now struggling to find her feet. "I'm neither Paraguayan, upper-class nor lesbian," she clarified. "But I have felt trapped like Chela." The film is rooted at an intersection where it can be read differently depending on the viewer's worldview – an aspect that has appealed to women at several festivals, informs the filmmaker. "The audience is not a group of people but the one person that the film touches," he says, sipping a soft drink at a Mumbai café one balmy afternoon.

Old and new money

Set in Asunción, the capital city emerging from the dark years of dictatorship, Chela (Ana Brun) and Chiquita (Margarita Irún) are holding onto their inheritance against the changing for-

An all WOMEN'S WORLD

Filmmaker Marcelo Martinessi discusses his critically-acclaimed debut, 'The Heiresses', a film that stands at the intersection of class, sexuality and ageing

tunes of time. As they begin to auction their heirlooms, Chiquita is sent to prison for fraud. It's now up to Chela to emerge out of her cloistered life and face a world that she seldom did before. "Chela has always been dead, she never had to fight for anything, [like] the social class I come from," explains Martinessi. Describing the Paraguayan petit bourgeois as "dead", the filmmaker expects no revolution from them. "These are people who have never struggled, so they never know how to cope with real life," says Martinessi. Chela's journey of self-actualisation is, in many ways, representative of an entire strata of Paraguayan society.

The tussle between the new and old money is palpable. As dictatorship is waning and democracy is on the rise, Chela and Chiquita are holding on to their status as the ruling class. There's a scene in the film when a newly rich buyer goes through Chela's inheritance and enquires about a bunch of orchids. Chela sternly informs her that the flowers are not on sale. "It shows that new mo-

ney doesn't have the taste of the traditional class," informs Martinessi. Later, as Chela takes to driving wealthy old women around town for money, the film highlights solidarity among the upper-crust and their collective pursuit to stay relevant.

Not so queer

The Heiresses is also among a súçon of queer films that refrain from using sexuality as a source of conflict. "Why do all gay and lesbian films have to be around difficulties of being gay or the struggle related to sexuality?" wonders the filmmaker. But would the narrative be different, if not for the petit bourgeois bubble surrounding the characters?

"Probably if Chela had been

from a different social class, her relationship with sexuality was going to be completely different," speculates Martinessi. "But the fact



[that her] sexuality was her only struggle [growing up] made her discover the real-life struggles later in her life, and this is key for everything around my society."

Much like Chela, Martinessi believes that the "homophobic Paraguayan society" ought to look beyond sexuality and focus on the socio-economic tribulations in his



From Latin America: (clockwise from above) A still from *The Heiresses*; Marcelo Martinessi; and Ana Brun at Berlinale

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

country. But the outcome is seldom as simple. Despite his efforts to market *The Heiresses* as a film dealing with class struggle and women's liberation, it was widely viewed as a "lesbian drama" in Paraguay. "The film was a bomb in my society, it wasn't accepted because they said, 'How could you make a film in Paraguay, [where] we have beautiful sightseeing and music, but you choose to tell a story of lesbians?'" says Martinessi.

But the backlash also brought along appreciation from the government, who recognised it as the first film from the country to compete at the Berlinale. The director and the cast were invited to the Senate, which lead to a number of walk-outs by conservative party members.

"One of the senators in the room started yelling when Ana Brun was speaking," recalls Martinessi. But on the other hand, the newly-elected President, Mario Abdo Benítez, and his wife supported the film publicly, going against the ideology of his party's conservative voters.

"I'm glad that cinema can break barriers sometimes," grins the filmmaker.

If Ana Brun was born in France or the UK, she probably would have [had] a career similar to Charlotte Rampling

ple, South Korea or Romania, get a lot more of the film, than they probably [understand] in America," observes Martinessi, who wanted to stay clear of "providing a history lesson". But not at the cost of authenticity. For the prison scenes, he cast female inmates as extras as well as his neighbour's domestic help to play the maid in the film. *The Heiresses* has almost an all-female cast, including extras.

Interestingly, Ana Brun, who plays Chela and won the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the Berlinale, has never acted before. Martinessi cast her because he believed she could act with her eyes. "If she was born in France or the UK, she probably would have [had] a career similar to Charlotte Rampling. But she was born in a country with no cinema and very little theatre, so she had to support her family and be a lawyer," informs the filmmaker.

Staying real

Politics in the film, however, lurks in corners and the dictatorship is seldom addressed explicitly. "[People in] places that went through a lot of oppression, for exam-



Sneak peeks for fans

The new trailer for the much-awaited *Captain Marvel*, along with Twitter

emojis and posters, have

got fans counting down the

days to March. Meanwhile, *Games of Thrones*

also released its trailer for the eighth season

(out in April) and Sony officially announced a

sequel to the Tom Hardy-starrer, *Venom*.

Byte Trail

Your guide to all things new on the World Wide Web



From novel to musical
Singer-songwriter Ingrid Michaelson took to Twitter to announce her latest project, the musical adaptation of the

2004 Ryan Reynolds-starring, *The Notebook*, which was based on the 1996 novel of the same name. Dates for the Broadway musical are yet to be confirmed.

**Barbie's first live action film**

This week, viral Twitter handle @WhatTheFFacts pointed out that if Barbie were life-size, she would stand at least seven feet tall. But for the recently-announced live action adaptation, expected to release this year, it is a 5 ft 5 inch Margot Robbie who will play Barbie.



ICC's Twitter challenge
The 'describe something without naming it' social media challenge has caught up with the cricket world.

This week, the International Cricket Council tweeted this question: 'without naming your team, what is your team known for?' From 'Rawalpindi Express' to 'Virat army', creative responses abounded.



Four More Shots Please trailer
Amazon Prime released the trailer for its original Indian series, *Four More Shots Please*, on Thursday.

Releasing on January 25, the show features four women in the lead (including Sayani Gupta and Kirti Kulhari) and is about "life, love, blunder and discovery" in Mumbai.



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Designer couple Falguni and Shane Peacock on the importance of staying grounded

Beyond GLAM ROCK

SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS

The last time I met Falguni Peacock, she was accompanied by husband and fellow designer Shane. This time she is alone, leaving him to take care of the backstage details at their Vogue Atelier show that was held in Chennai last month. Almost three years later, nothing else has changed – we still meet in a hotel lobby, have green tea and chat easily. It is almost surreal to think that she is the same person whose creations are worn by the likes of Beyoncé, Jennifer Lopez and Lady Gaga.

Clad in her signature all-black – lace bomber jacket, tee, pants and nails – Falguni says, "Being grounded is very important to me. It keeps us rooted to hard work and to our aesthetic, and our sanity." They certainly need to keep their wits about them: under their label, Falguni Shane Peacock (FSP), the duo designs extensively for Indian and international celebrities, apart from their commercial line and a monthly magazine (more on that later).

Ask her about the latest big ticket item – Beyoncé's beaded gold bodysuit at Isha Ambani's sangeet



Just using khadi does not mean you are a sustainable label

FALGUNI PEACOCK

with a twinkle in her eye. What they have said no to, however, are collaborations in different verticals. The couple echo each other in saying, "We will not do one just for the sake of it." They have worked with brands like IBM, Belvedere and Motorola for smaller projects, but Shane says they already have their hands full. Falguni wants to take things slow and do it wisely. "I want to launch cosmetics, but in the right time and space. Customers are very loyal to makeup brands: even I would not give up my Ruby Woo (the iconic lip colour by MAC) if I started a makeup line," she says in a conspiratorial tone.

Meanwhile, the duo is busy with their year-old pet project, *The Peacock Magazine*, a monthly online publication. Calling it a reflection of the brand, Falguni insists that it is not all about them. "It's also about people – politicians, women CEOs, power women. We enjoy the process, and every time we feel that we should be less involved, it only becomes more," she says.

Their daughter, who recently returned from boarding school, is now quite understanding of her parents' packed schedule. Falguni says, "She gets that mum and dad are trying to do something different, and encourages us to travel when we need to." Considering that their 16-year-old's aesthetic is more Zara and TopShop than FSP, they are quite happy to note that she has no interest in things like Le Bal des Débutantes – a social event in Paris at which young women are presented to society and the world of high fashion.

On the work front, the duo is looking forward to opening a store in Chennai tentatively in 2020. "We were considering it earlier, but then launched in Delhi – we have one store in Emporio and one in Mehrauli. I want to finish one project before moving on to the next," concludes Falguni.

– and she says, "The most amount of fun we have is when we design for a celebrity who is willing to try something different. That is the creative high we get." Speaking later on a phone call from Mumbai, Shane agrees. "We used the same material that we would use in a couture gown – crystals, beads, diamonds, sequins – to create something that worked for a performance," he says.

Defying definitions

Their statement pieces are great for the stage, and while some may call it glam rock, Shane is quick to say that they do go beyond that definition. "We are a very edgy brand, and we do have a lot of rock and roll influences. But the common thread is more about creating something that is glamour-

rous, young, fun, couture and luxury," he says. Falguni credits FSP's popularity to their joint ability to blend western silhouettes with Indian embellishments in a way that works on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Shane explains that in their line of work, agents are very important, as "they bridge the gap between us and clients across the world". For Falguni, they are there to represent her brand as she herself would. And how does one get on the speed dial of celebrity stylists? Just be young and fresh in your design. "Look at Karl Lagerfeld. Everything he makes for Chanel or Fendi is so young, because he thinks that way. Our profession keeps us young, and when you have something new to offer to the millennial, you are always going to be successful," she says.

Does this include going the sustainable route? Falguni muses that

