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## NEARBY



**Students protest against gang rape in Patna**  
PATNA  
Bihar's capital witnessed high drama on Friday as hundreds of Patna University students took to the streets to protest the gang rape of a college student. A large number of students gathered near Kargil Chowk, burnt tyres and shouted slogans against the government.

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

## JNU students continue to boycott exams

NEW DELHI  
Students of Jawaharlal Nehru University on Friday continued the boycott of their end semester examinations as talks with the administration yielded no positive results.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

## Boris Johnson wins huge majority

As his Brexit message pays off, Labour voters desert party



Decisive win: Staff greeting Britain's PM and Conservative Party Leader Boris Johnson in London on Friday. ■ AFP

Britain was speeding towards Brexit on Friday after Prime Minister Boris Johnson won a crushing election victory, ending three years of uncertainty since the country decided to leave the bloc.

Exiting the European Union (EU), a goal Mr. Johnson has pursued relentlessly since he put himself forward as the face of the victorious "Leave" campaign in a 2016 referendum, is Britain's biggest leap into the unknown since the Second World War.

Mr. Johnson is now free to lead his country swiftly out of the vast trading bloc, but faces the daunting task of negotiating trade deals around

the world, not least with the EU itself, and of keeping a divided kingdom in one piece. "We will get Brexit done on time by the 31st of January, no ifs, no buts, no maybes," a triumphant Mr. Johnson told cheering supporters.

### Meets Queen

Later, he went to Buckingham Palace to ask Queen Elizabeth for permission to form a new government – a formal step required under the U.K.'s constitutional monarchy system.

Results pouring in from the 650 parliamentary constituencies showed that Mr. Johnson's Conservative Party had trounced its main opponent, winning 365 seats to the Labour Party's 203. The Scottish National Party won 48, while Liberal Democrats got 11 seats.

A vindication for Mr. Johnson and his simple campaign message "Get Brexit Done", the result represented the biggest House of Commons majority for the Conservatives since Margaret Thatcher's 1987 triumph.

The Brexit issue, which has consumed politics and the public debate since 2016, has eroded traditional party loyalties, dividing the nation along new fault lines.

The Brexit effect was most starkly illustrated by the crumbling of Labour's so-called Red Wall, a rampart of working class areas across northern and central England where most people had voted "Leave" in 2016. Frustrated at the country's failure to quit the EU and at Labour's equivocal stance on Brexit, large numbers of voters deserted the party and flocked to the Conservatives.

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## As protests continue, Shah cancels NE visit

Curfew relaxed in Guwahati; Internet, data services still shut



Rising dissent: People protesting against the Citizenship Act in Guwahati on Friday. ■ PTI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah cancelled his scheduled visit to Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh on December 15-16 as protests continued in several parts of the northeast against the amended Citizenship Act.

"Both sides have decided

to defer the visit to a mutually convenient date in the near future," spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Raveesh Kumar said. ▶ PAGE 13

## India-Japan meet put off

The annual India-Japan summit, scheduled for December 15-17 in Guwahati, has been cancelled following the protests.

Delhi leadership" and vowed to continue to protest in a "Gandhian manner", while calling for calm and shunning violence.

Assam's Additional Director General of Police G.P. Singh told *The Hindu* that the situation was "absolutely normal" and no violence or arson was reported on Friday. He said the situation would be reviewed and a call would be taken to lift curfew. ▶ PAGE 12

FULL COVERAGE PAGE 13

The All Assam Students' Union, spearheading the protests against the legislation, accused Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal of "surrendering before the

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

## Supreme Court says no minors were held in J&K

Court rejects writ plea of activist relying on a ground report by J&K HC Juvenile Justice Committee

### LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday disposed of a writ petition filed by activist Enakshi Ganguly alleging that minors aged under 18 and as young as nine were illegally detained in the Valley following the withdrawal of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 on August 5.

The court relied on a detailed ground report submitted by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Juvenile Justice Committee, led by Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey, and comprising three other High Court judges, who made



No break: Security personnel manning the Srinagar streets during heavy snowfall on Friday. ■ PTI

visits to detention centres and jails to check the veracity of reports published in interna-

tional and domestic media that children had been detained. The committee said it did not find any children under detention.

A three-judge Bench, led by Justice N.V. Ramana, before closing the case, observed that the court had no reason to disbelieve the report of the four judges.

The court said that in case of any further allegations of illegal detentions or need for medical help, the persons concerned could approach the appropriate fora. It said

the State should assist in providing facilities and expert care to children in need of psychological care.

Mr. Ganguly, represented by senior advocate Huzeifa Ahmadi and advocate Shahrukh Alam, said the government's own records showed that children were kept under preventive detention. Mr. Ahmadi said the law did not allow children to be kept under preventive detention as the Public Safety Act did not apply to them.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

## Joint tribute



Remembering the brave: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, former PM Manmohan Singh, Congress president Sonia Gandhi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other leaders paying tributes to the martyrs of the 2001 Parliament attack in New Delhi on Friday, the 18th anniversary of the attack. ■ PTI

## No pot luck for youth who grew cannabis at home

Bengaluru students sourced LSD stamps and seeds over the dark web for peddling, say police

### K.V. ADITYA BHARADWAJ

BENGALURU

Growing weed at home and sourcing narcotics via the dark web has landed some youth in Bengaluru in trouble. Police discovered that they had turned their flat into an indoor site to cultivate cannabis, using pots kept under LED lights.

A business management student from Bihar studying in the city procured narcotics from the Netherlands through the dark web and sold it here. He also allegedly grew 'hydro' ganja (cannabis) in his flat in Kengeri, on the western outskirts of the city.

Police who raided the flat on Thursday arrested 23-year-old Amatya Rishi, along with

two of his associates, one of whom is a student from the same college. They allegedly recovered ₹20 lakh worth of 225 LSD slips (stamps) and 2 kg of ganja. The police said this was the second such ring they had busted recently.

It was the college authorities who tipped off the police. When the police raided the flat, they found two rooms fitted with LED lights. "Ganja plants were being grown in small pots using coco-peat," a senior official said. The police also recovered ganja seeds and 225 LSD slips, which Rishi had allegedly procured from the Netherlands through a dark web site named 'Empire Market'. "It was delivered via



In the spotlight: Ganja was grown using LED lights inside rooms in a flat. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

courier. A probe pointed to the involvement of another student from the same college, Aditya Kumar, 21, from Bengaluru; and one Mangal Mukhiya, 30, an

acquaintance of Amatya Rishi from Bihar," police said.

Two students from Kolkata were arrested in the last week of November and narcotics worth ₹1 crore, allegedly

procured from Canada, were seized.

"In both cases, tech-savvy students were running peddling operations. Bitcoins were the currency," said Sandeep Patil, Joint Commissioner (Crime), Bengaluru. "This is a new challenge. Those procuring narcotics do not know the identity of the supplier. Moreover, these are not large multi-nodal networks but short chains. Busting a ring only affects that chain," he added. The Bengaluru police have asked Customs officials at Kempegowda International Airport to ensure parcels containing narcotics and banned substances do not pass through.

## Sabarimala temple issue explosive now, says Supreme Court

Court advocates patience to women petitioners

### KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday advocated patience to women of menstruating age fighting for their right to enter and worship at the Sabarimala temple in Kerala.

The law was in their favour and any judicial order at this time may spark violence. The situation was already "explosive," it said.

Two women in their 30s recently approached the court with a plea to direct the police to provide them protection for their intended pilgrimage to the temple in the ongoing season. They pointed out that a Constitution Bench, in a majority

judgment on September 28 last year, had lifted the ban on women of menstruating age from entering the temple. The State's refusal to provide them protection was in gross contempt of the judgment, they argued.

Senior advocates Indira Jaising and Colin Gonsalves, for Bindhu Ammini and Rehana Fathima, said the court's silence now would send a wrong message.

"We know the law and the law is in your favour. But the situation is very emotive, that is why this court thought it best to refer the issue to a larger Bench... Please be patient," Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad Arvind Bobde advised.

But the lawyers insisted that there was no stay on the September 28 judgment.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

dict allowing women in the 10 to 50 age to enter the temple.

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M ND-NDE

# Capital erupts in protest over Citizenship Act

## Paranoia grips city's Muslim community

Emotions ranged from fear to resentment and helplessness to disbelief

HEMAMI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

Rukaiyah Khatoon, a 38-year-old resident of Jaffrabad in northeast Delhi, was scared of her future as well as her family's in the aftermath of the Citizenship Act. Hiding her face behind the veil of her black purdah, she broods over the fate of her grandmother, who was born in Old Delhi but doesn't have proof, should the controversial Act be implemented. "Will she be allowed to stay in India?" the woman wondered.

Rukaiyah was among the scores of people who gathered in Seelampur's Brahmputri on Friday afternoon to protest against the Act. "My parents and grandparents are illiterate. People, especially my grandparents' age, don't have any proof of identity except the Aadhaar card. They never kept proof of their birth in India; they didn't know that they will see a day when they will have to prove their identity," Rukaiyah said, adding that on Thursday, the atmosphere at her residence was grim and she cried worrying about the future.

Gulfsa, a 20-year-old woman who was at the protest venue and resides in Brahmputri, echoed her concern. "People from our generation have documents of their identity and existence but what about our elders?" she asked.

The protesters complained of being clueless about what the Act has in store for them or the documents that will be required in the process. They said that their only source of information is television and WhatsApp forward messages. "I have heard that we will have to show proof of our identity from 70 years ago. Who will have such papers? Ol-

der generations never kept any," said Mohammed Azeem (20).

Rukaiyah is wondering whether they will have to leave the country. "I have heard that whoever will have proof will stay and those who don't will be asked to leave. I have also heard that even Muslims who have proof will be asked to go," she said.

Eighteen-year-old Aftab Malik is scared of whether they would be sent to detention camps. "Some one told me that detention centres are being built," he said. They equivocally said that the government needs to share the complete process with the people for better clarity.

**'Biased against Muslims'**  
Protesters, visibly disappointed, called the Act biased against Muslims. "They shouldn't have been partial against Muslims. It is not right," said Chaudhary Maittee Ahmed, former MLA and Congress member, who had called for the protest. Standing next to him, Jameel Malik, said: "We are not saying that they should give citizenship to those from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who are coming now, but why displace those who have been living here for decades? For other religions, they are ready to give citizenship even if they have entered illegally but not Muslims. How unfair is this?"

Addressing the rally, Delhi Congress chief Subash Chopra said that the Act was a calculated attempt by the Modi government to create unease and communal divide. He said that there have been attacks on secularism not once, but many times, but the people of India had always rejected the agenda of divisive forces like the BJP.



**Simmering tension:** (Clockwise from top) Police using tear gas to disperse students of Jamia Millia Islamia protesting against the Citizenship Act on Friday; Protesters from Jamia venting their anger; Agitators in large numbers demonstrating against the Act at Jantar Mantar; Members of the Assam Congress Party staging a protest at Jantar Mantar. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA/R.V MOORTHY

## As talks fail to end stand-off, JNU students continue to shun exams

V-C conducting 'farcical stunts' in the name of dialogue: JNUSU

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI  
Students of JNU on Friday continued the boycott of their end semester examination as talks with the administration yielded no positive result.

The JNUSU said that talks with the MHRD are ongoing and they would not call off their protest until the administration and the MHRD agree that the service and utility charge, 10% annual fee hike and the increased room rent should be removed from the new hostel manual.

"JNU administration has exposed its mala fide intentions and breached the faith

with which all parties have entered into a dialogue by violating even the terms which it had already agreed to in the dialogue with the MHRD. The MHRD has conceded in the dialogue that exams shall be extended up to three weeks, but at the same time JNU administration has released a circular saying that the exams must happen immediately," the JNUSU said.

They added that the V-C was conducting "farcical stunts" in the name of dialogue to pull wool over the eyes of the public and divert attention from the core issues.

HC shocked as administration knows nothing about agitators

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI  
The High Court in its order on December 11 instructed the Vice-Chancellor to hold dialogue with the students and resolve the situation through discussion. The V-C and the JNU administration, rather than following the High Court order in letter and spirit, called two farcical meetings and talked about a need for standardising a model in the university where students have to pay in excess five thousand rupees a month according to a privatised model, which is precisely what we have been protesting against for the last forty five days," the JNUSU said in a statement.

Justice A.K. Chawla directed the university to file an affidavit giving details of the students named in the contempt petition, including their courses, its status and duration of stay in the campus.

## DUTA to continue protest

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI  
The Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) resolved to carry on its indefinite strike and protest to demand absorption of ad hoc teachers at a general body meeting on Friday.

The teachers have been

on strike and boycotting invigilation and evaluation of ongoing semester examinations since last week demanding one time regularisation of ad hocs.

As part of its continued protest, the union resolved to carry out an "umbrella demonstration" at the V-C's office on Sunday.

**Dance:** Second day of Nityayati 2019 dance festival will feature Satyriya, a dance-drama by Krishnakshi Kashyap, Kathak recital by Nikita Banwalikar and Odissi dance by Lipsa Satapathy at Triveni Kala Sangam, 6.30 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "The myriad hues of Madhubani", a solo exhibition by Kamakshi Gupta at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "A Dialogue with Soil", a solo show of artworks by Sisir Sahana at Gallerie Ganesha, E-557, Greater Kailash-II, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Heirloom of The Senses", a group exhibition of young upcoming artists at Arts4All, W-114, Greater Kailash II, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** A solo art show by Sonali Kumar at India International Centre (IIC), 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Family is Plural", an exhibition of recent works by Artist Probir Gupta at Bikaner House, Pandara Road, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Screening:** If She Built A Country, Hindi film with English subtitles, will be screened. Directed by Maheen Mirza, the film voices the concerns of rural Adivasi women, from the villages of Raigarh in Chhattisgarh at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

**Event:** Caritas India celebrating International Volunteers' Day – VolunEsia 2019 – to appreciate and honour volunteers across the Northern Region, Chief Guest - Mr Justice (Rtd) Kurian Joseph, former Supreme Court Judge, Diocesan Community Centre (adjacent to Sacred Heart Cathedral) 1 Ashoka Road, Delhi, 11 a.m.

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

## Jamiat urges Prez to use his power to stop the Act

Holds demonstrations across country

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

General Secretary of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind (JUH), Maulana Mahmood Madani on Friday urged the President of India to use the power of his office to stop "the communally targeted and draconian Citizenship Act". He also appealed to the Supreme Court to take suo moto notice of the new law.

JUH on Friday held protest demonstrations across the country. Addressing the demonstration in Jantar Mantar, Mr. Madani said that the law was against the Constitution of India which denies discrimination on the basis of religion. He also exhorted the Muslim youths to maintain peace and tranquillity.

Maulana Niaz Ahmad Farooqui, Secretary of JUH, while addressing the demonstrators said that though the Act has been passed by both

Houses of Parliament, the battle has just begun now. "Muslims never think about profit and loss while raising their voice against injustice but they are guided by their religion and faith which urges to raise voice whenever the injustice is committed," Mr. Farooqui said.

The protesters submitted a memorandum to the President of India in which they said that the Act uses religion as legal criterion for determining Indian citizenship and that the intent of the Act to provide refuge to persecuted minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan seems to camouflage the discrimination and division on the basis of religion.

"We appeal to all justice-loving and secular people to raise their voice collectively and employ every peaceful and legal means to lodge their protest to stall its implementation," the JUH said.

## DMRC closes gates at two stations over students' stir

the DMRC said.

The stations were closed following a Delhi Police advisory in view of a protest march organised by students of Jamia Millia Islamia.

While around 4.30 p.m., the DMRC on Twitter announced that the gates to the two stations will be closed, over an hour later they tweeted, "Entry and exit gates at all stations have been opened. Normal services have resumed in all stations."

The DMRC said that the entry and exit to both the stations were closed following a security advisory from the Delhi police. During the period, trains were also not stopping at the two stations.

HC shocked as administration knows nothing about agitators

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court on Friday described as "shocking" that the Jawaharlal Nehru University had no idea about the academic details of the students against whom it has filed a contempt petition for protesting within 100 metres of its administrative block.

Justice A.K. Chawla directed the university to file an affidavit giving details of the students named in the contempt petition, including their courses, its status and duration of stay in the campus.

## DELHI TODAY

**Dance:** Second day of Nityayati 2019 dance festival will feature Satyriya, a dance-drama by Krishnakshi Kashyap, Kathak recital by Nikita Banwalikar and Odissi dance by Lipsa Satapathy at Triveni Kala Sangam, 6.30 p.m.

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

# Hush-hush executions a thing of the past

SC guidelines, Delhi Prison Rules make it mandatory for jail authority to inform family ahead of hanging; Tihar officers

**SAURABH TRIVEDI**  
NEW DELHI

**A**s the nation erupts in outrage again, demanding nothing less than death penalty for rape convicts to send a strong message to the culprits, the four men found guilty in the Nirbhaya gang-rape-and-murder case explore all their legal options to escape the noose.

The demands for death penalty cannot dictate the way the case proceeds further, neither can the execution be carried out in "secrecy" as the Supreme Court guidelines state that the jail administration has to inform the family members and relatives of the convict after his mercy petition is rejected and the scheduled date of execution is declared.

In the Shatrughan Chauhan versus Union of India case in 2014, the Supreme Court in its judgment had specified that all steps for execution of capital punishment, including informing the convict and his/her family members, are required to be taken care of by the State governments/Union Territories concerned in accordance with the jail manual.

The court order came a year after Afzal Guru, the convict in the 2001 Parliament attack case, was hanged "secretly" in Tihar jail on February 9, 2013. His family members claimed they were not aware of the execution as the speed post sent by the Tihar jail authorities reached them two days after the



A minimum period of 14 days has been stipulated by the Supreme Court between the receipt of the communication of the rejection of the mercy petition and the scheduled date of execution. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

hanging.

#### New prison rules

According to the Delhi Prison Rules, 2018, a minimum period of 14 days has been stipulated by the Supreme Court between the receipt of the communication of the rejection of the mercy petition

and the scheduled date of execution. This is to enable the prisoner sentenced to death to prepare himself, settle his affairs and meet his family members for one last time or to avail any remaining judicial remedy.

An officer posted at Tihar prison said they strictly follow the

guidelines as the entire process is transparent. Giving an example of the Nirbhaya case, he said that all convicts were informed about the seven-day time they had to file the mercy plea before the President. Using his right, one of the convicts, Vinay Sharma, has filed a mercy plea before President Ram

Nath Kovind but later sought withdrawal of the petition claiming he was yet to exhaust all legal remedies available to him.

The officer said that if the President rejects a mercy petition of a convict, they apply for black warrant in the courts. It is a warrant which is taken out when a hanging has to take place.

"After the black warrant is issued, the convict is shifted to the condemned cell. In case of more than one convict, all of them are put in separate cells that are guarded round the clock. They are only allowed to meet relatives in case they want to meet them. No other person can meet them during the time," said the officer.

The execution is carried out at ward number 8 of Jail Number 3, which is known as 'Phansi Koti'. An executive engineer (PWD) has to inspect the gallows before the date of hanging. The gallows is inspected and the rope tested in the presence of the jail superintendent the evening before the execution, the officer said.

"Prisoners of all categories are kept locked up until the execution is over and the body removed from the prison. The body remains suspended for half an hour before being taken down. It is handed over to the family members after post-mortem. And if they refuse to take it, it is the responsibility of the prison administration to perform the last rites," said the officer.

## Heaviest Dec. rain in over a decade sees mercury dip

AQI improves to 'poor' from 'severe'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Air quality of Delhi-NCR		
Delhi	240	Gurugram 165
Ghaziabad	264	Faridabad —
Noida	254	Greater Noida 241
Good	—	Satisfactory
0-50	51-100	101-200
Poor	301-400	Very poor Severe >401

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

Heavy overnight rain lashed the city on Friday bringing down the temperatures during the day, causing waterlogging at several parts of the city. The Capital recorded its highest December rainfall in a 24-hour period in over a decade, the Met department said. The Capital recorded 33.5 mm rainfall till 5.30 p.m., the second highest after 70 mm in December 1997, Met officials said.

The maximum temperature was recorded at 18.7 degrees Celsius which was five degrees below normal and the minimum temperature settled at 12.8 degrees Celsius that was four degrees above normal.

The air quality of the city improved to "poor" category on Friday from "severe" on Thursday, as rain washed away the pollutants.

#### Forecast of rain

The Met department has forecast heavy rainfall accompanied with thunderstorm/hailstorm in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and east Madhya Pradesh on Saturday as well as dense fog at a few places with very dense fog at isolated pockets in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh,

Delhi, north Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in the morning of December 15 and 16. Moderate fog is expected on Saturday. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle between 19 and 10 degrees Celsius.

#### Waterlogging

The Safdarjung observatory experienced a squall from north-easterly direction around 9 p.m. on Thursday with a maximum wind speed of 75 kmph. The impact was such that branches of trees fell, which were cleared on Friday morning.

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## Delhi govt. gives green signal to set up fast-track courts

Matter to be taken up in the Cabinet for approval: Gahlot

**NIKHIL M BABU**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has given the green signal to set up 16 more fast-track special courts (FTSCs) to deal with sexual assault cases against women and children in the city.

"We have given in-principle approval to the proposal [for 16 FTSCs]. Now we will take it up in the Cabinet and approve it as soon as possible," Delhi Law Minister Kailash Gahlot told *The Hindu*.

This comes in the wake of the Delhi High Court writing to the Centre that a response from the Delhi government was awaited on setting up of 16 more FTSCs to dispose such cases faster.

The letter dated December 11, 2019 by the High Court to the Department of Justice of the Central government, accessed by *The Hindu*, reads, "Court vide letter... dated 22.05.2019 had requested the government of NCT of Delhi to set up 16 fast-track special courts... The response from the government of NCT of Delhi is awaited."

On November 16, 2018, the Central government had approved a proposal to set up 1,023 FTSCs across the country to dispose of pending cases of rape and POCSO Act quickly, including 16 in Delhi, at a cost of ₹76.25 crore from Nirbhaya Fund.

In December 2018, the



Centre had sought comments from the Delhi government on the proposal to set up 16 FTSCs in the city.

The Centre on September 5 asked for a "quick response" from the Delhi government on how to transfer funds for setting up the 16 FTSCs as the cost was shared by Central and State governments.

When the Delhi government contacted the High Court on the matter earlier this year, the latter had said with the pendency of such cases increasing every year, the city needs 59 FTSCs to dispose of 10,000 pending cases, as on December 31, 2018. The court also said that Delhi needs more such FTSCs in subsequent phases.

## AAP forms sports cell ahead of Assembly poll

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday announced the formation of a "sports cell", which will organise "Khel Samvad", a sports dialogue, from December 22 as part of its campaign for the upcoming Assembly election in Delhi.

The decision to form the sports cell was taken at a meeting held under the leadership of AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai on Friday.

"At the State level, nine people were appointed in the cell and the party [AAP] has also formed Lok Sabha-level and district-level teams. The main job of these teams would be an expansion of the organisation in the Assemblies," an official statement said.

The residents of unauthorised colonies will not have to pay property tax accumulated before this

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Various changes to property tax calculations, removal of amnesty and rebate schemes, education cess and increase in transfer duty proposed by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation Commissioner were rejected by the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Friday.

**Tax burden'**  
"Instead of increasing the tax burden on the citizen, we proposed that the municipal corporation increase the number of people in the tax net in order to increase its revenue," said chairperson Bhupendra Gupta said.

The residents of unauthorised colonies will not have to pay property tax accumulated before this

**C**The corporation has made no intervention worth mention in all the years that they have been in power...they are simply wasting money conducting business and have no vision

**VED PAL**  
Standing Committee member

Standing Committee member Ved Pal of the Congress. He also accused the BJP of making "false promises".

#### Assembly polls

Mr. Pal said by denying a hike in tax rates, the BJP was "handicapping the corporation".

While the BJP councilors said with Assembly elections around the corner, raising tax rates was not an option, Mr. Pal questioned as to why the rates had not been increased in the past several years.

"The corporation has made no intervention worth mention in all the years that they have been in power...they are simply wasting money conducting business and have no vision," he added.

## Man jumps to death, wife and daughter found dead

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A 33-year-old man, who hailed from Chennai, jumped to death at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium metro station on Friday, the police said. No note has been found.

The police were informed about the incident around 11.30 a.m. The caller said the man was declared dead at a hospital. The deceased's wife reached the hospital after they were informed about the death. She returned to her flat and later, bodies of the woman and her daughter were found in the flat. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem.

**Suicide prevention helpline:** Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health: 011-4076 9002 (Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.).

## 'Need community-driven, decentralised solutions to water crisis'

Ramon Magsaysay awardee Rajendra Singh delivers lecture on water literacy in Gurugram

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GURUGRAM

Ramon Magsaysay awardee Rajendra Singh, better known as 'The Waterman of India', on Friday said that community-driven, and decentralised water management solutions were the answers to the country's water crisis, adding that the democracy today was not people-driven, but corporate-driven. He said that the problem was global, but the solution to it was local.

Delivering a talk on "Citizen-centric Advocacy and Water Literacy in India" at Management Development Institute here under the aegis of School of Public Policy



and Governance, Dr. Singh, emphasised that humans had the right to take from nature, but to take without giving back was not sustainable. He said there was a need to work at the nature's pace and in co-ordination with it,

adding that the water-policy must be people-centric.

He advocated the need for sustainable development, free from destruction and displacement.

Referring to his community-based efforts in water harvesting in Rajasthan for more than four decades, Dr. Singh said that around 12,000 waterbodies were built leading to recharge of 2.5 lakh tube wells and reverse migration of around 17 lakh people. Sharing data on water crisis in India, Dr. Singh, also the winner of Stockholm Water Prize, said that in the current year, 190 districts were flooded while 365 districts across 17 districts faced drought. He said

that 72% of India faced high to extremely high water stress.

In reply to a query from the audience, Dr. Singh asserted that solution did not lie in the linking of the rivers, but in water harvesting. He said that in metro cities such as Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad and Meerut, where the problem of depleting groundwater was even more severe, rainwater should be harvested and not allowed to be mixed with sewage. He also advocated the need for "water literacy" movement in the urban areas to create awareness.

Dr. Singh, in his two-hour-long lecture, emphasised the need for congruity bet-

ween the crop and the rain patterns since around 80% of the water was used in agriculture. He also expressed concern over the fact that water in 2.65 lakh villages across the country was not fit for drinking and said that the solution lied in the nature for it.

#### 'River rights'

Dr. Singh said that it was high time to talk about the "river rights" and not just the human rights, adding that even our Constitution had failed to protect the rights of the rivers. He said that India had an age-old tradition of respect for water and can offer solutions to the world.

## Pan-IIM World Management Conference organised in Rohtak

Event saw discussion on sports and public policy

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Indian Institute of Management, Rohtak on Friday organised the seventh Pan-IIM World Management Conference on how contemporary issues of public policy need to be understood properly for progress.

The event had a discussion ensued on "Sports and Public Policy" in which Ayaz Memori, a sports writer and columnist, questioned the viability of a Sports Ministry of India. Citing policies of countries such as the US and China, which are the best perform-

ers in the Olympics, he called for the need for the independence of sports in our nation and that it must be free from the bureaucratic structure. The panelists discussed the importance of taking the concept of sports leagues to the grassroots level to build a culture of engagement and genuine sports spirit while acknowledging the long-term nature of the solution. They added that programmes like Post Graduate Diploma in Sports Management offered by IIM Rohtak can help build capable sports managers who not only specialise in marketing the talents of sports individuals but also in identifying skilful sportspersons and aiding them to find the right platforms and facilities.

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CM

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**Timings**

DELHI		
RISE	07:05	SET 17:26
RISE	19:33	SET 08:54
SUNDAY, DEC. 15		
RISE	07:06	SET 17:27
RISE	20:36	SET 09:49
MONDAY, DEC. 16		
RISE	07:07	SET 17:27
RISE	21:41	SET 10:39

**Delhi Weather**

	max	min
Delhi City	19	13
Safdarjung	19	13
Palam	18	13

**Delhi Palam Today**  
21°C Shallow fog is possible. A cool morning is likely. Day will be pleasant with a partly cloudy sky.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
21°C Morning will be cool with shallow fog in parts. Pollution level will remain very poor.

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**THE HINDU**  
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**Hang Nirbhaya case convicts at the earliest: CM****PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said he wants the convicts in the Nirbhaya case to be hanged at the earliest.

All remaining formalities to carry out the capital punishment should be completed at the earliest, he said.

Mr. Kejriwal added that the entire country wants capital punishment for these immediately.

# Govt. adds 30 more services to doorstep delivery scheme

With this, total services go up to 100; Chief Minister claims 91% success rate

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said 30 services have been added to the government's doorstep delivery scheme, taking the total services offered to 100.

"After bringing 70 government services to the doorstep of citizens, the government has now added another 30 services to the scheme. Now the citizens don't need to stand in long lines in government offices. It also avoids multiple visits to the government offices and touts to get public services," the Chief Minister said.

The 30 services include issuance of free bus passes for differently abled persons,

Delhi pension scheme to women in distress (Widow Pension Scheme) and registration of construction workers under Building and other Construction Workers (R&ECs) Act, 1996, among others, said the government.

Under the scheme, citizens can call on the number – 1076 – to avail government services. After the call, a person will visit the citizen and collect documents required for the service and process the request. Citizens can book an appointment online through www.edistrict.delhigovt.nic.in or www.delhi.gov.in or by visiting any RTO or SDM office.

He said the "revolutionary initiative" in governance has been successful for the last

15 months.

"Now, there are three ways to get things done at the government offices in Delhi. First by visiting the government offices, where the success rate is 57% and 43% of applications get rejected. Secondly, by applying online, in which 45% of applications get cleared while 55% get rejected. The third is doorstep delivery, where the success rate is 91%, whereas only 9% of applications get rejected. This is due to mobile Sahayaks's intervention to ensure that all documents are complete and attached in the right order along with the applications," he added.

The scheme was launched with 40 services on September 10, 2018, and 30 more

services were added in August 2019. A total of 16,31,772 calls were received and of this, many were enquires. The call centre received 2,89,762 service requests and 2,64,927 applications were disposed of till December 2019. The current disposal rate is about 95% and the remaining 5% under process, said the government.

"The top services under this scheme is issuance of caste [OBC] certificate [21%), issuance of caste [SC] certificate [19%), issuance of income certificate [17%), learners license [8%), issuance of domicile certificate [5%), registration of marriage [2.5%), issuance of delayed birth order [1.8%]," an official statement said.

## Nirbhaya case: court to hear on Dec. 18 plea seeking issuance of death warrants

Review plea of one convict pending before SC for Tuesday'

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

A Delhi court will on Wednesday hear a plea seeking issuance of death warrants against the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape-and-murder case.

Additional Sessions Judge Satish Kumar Arora on Friday deferred the matter till December 18, noting that the review petition of one of the convicts was pending before the Supreme Court for Tuesday.

The court was hearing a petition of Nirbhaya's parents, seeking to expedite

the process to execute the convicts. "At least, I have to wait till the time review petition is pending," the Judge said.

**'Wait for the outcome'**  
"My view is that once the review is pending before the Supreme Court, let us wait for the outcome," the Judge said.

He added: "Since his [Akshay Kumar] review petition is pending before the top court for December 17, I would adjourn it for December 18."

Urging the court to issue

death warrants, the prosecution said: "The court can issue death warrant. Nothing prevents court from issuing death warrants."

**'Delay tactics'**  
During the hearing, the parents of Nirbhaya told the court that the convict was doing delay tactics. Later, the convicts – Akshay, Mukesh, Pawan Gupta and Vinay Sharma – were produced before the court through videoconferencing in an in-chamber proceeding and the judge verified their identity.

## Nirbhaya's mother meets DCW chief

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

Nirbhaya's mother on Friday met Delhi Commission for Women chief Swati Maliwal at Rajghat, where the latter has been on a hunger strike for the last 11 days.

She also appealed to the Centre to fulfill Ms. Maliwal's demand for awarding capital punishment to all rape convicts. "Nirbhaya's mother wrote to the Union government to accept Ms. Maliwal's demands. She said it was sad that the government did not approach Ms. Maliwal, despite her fasting for over a week now," said DCW.

## Society too needs to do its bit to ensure women's safety, says Kejriwal

Schools told to hold discussions on matter, boys to take oaths

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

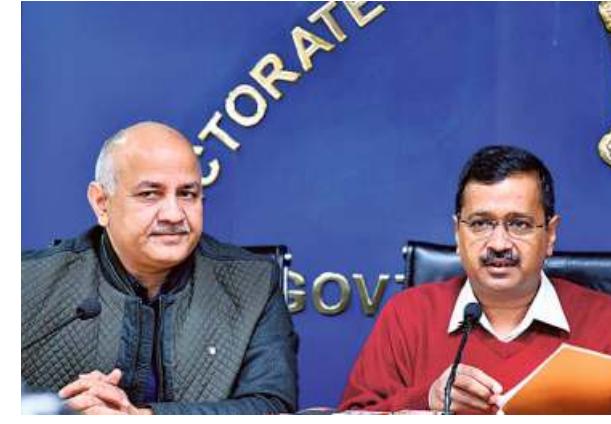
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said the government was doing its best to ensure the safety of women but the society too needs to play its role – initiate a conversation about the matter at home.

Mr. Kejriwal said in all the city schools and universities, the boys will take an oath to respect women.

**'Talk to men'**

Also, the girl students will be encouraged to talk to their brothers at home about the same, he added. All government schools have also been instructed to hold discussions on women's safety. Mr. Kejriwal said: "We will continue to install CCTVs, streetlights



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal with his Deputy Manish Sisodia at a press conference in the city on Friday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

and appoint bus marshals to improve the law and order system. But society also needs to do its part. We have to convince the men in our family that if they do anything wrong with any woman, they will face a boycott from family first."

The Chief Minister added that crimes against women will stop only if every mother talks to her sons and every sister to their brothers about the issue.

## Victim's mother moves SC opposing convict's review plea

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

Nirbhaya's mother on Friday moved the Supreme Court to oppose a review plea by one of the four men sentenced to death in the case.

On July 9 last, the apex court dismissed the review pleas filed by the other three convicts – Mukesh (30), Pawan Gupta (23) and Vinay Sharma (24) – in the case, saying no grounds have been made out by them for review of the 2017 verdict.

**'Pollution kills'**  
Akshay Kumar's petition, seeking a review of the apex court's 2017 verdict giving him capital punishment, is scheduled to be heard by a three-judge Bench on December 17.

The counsel appearing for

the victim's mother mentioned the matter before a Bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and said

"they are opposing the con-

## Snatchers target DRDO chairman's daughter

**SAURABH TRIVEDI**

NEW DELHI

The daughter of Defence Research and Development Organisation chairman (DRDO) was on Thursday targeted by two snatchers at New Delhi railway station, the police said.

The accused was arrested within five hours, they said, claiming that all valuables and jewellery worth ₹10 lakh have been recovered. DCP (Railways) Harrendra Singh said they received a complaint from G. Snigdha, daughter of G. Satheesh Reddy, that while she was travelling in Kerala express from Gwalior to New Delhi on Thursday at 4 p.m., two men snatched her purse and jumped off the running train near Nizamuddin railway station.

A team was then formed comprising officers from Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police. Mr. Singh said the complainant had taken a photo of the area where the accused had jumped off the train, which helped them in the probe. The criminals were spotted at Mathura railway station. After a few raids, one accused, Pawan, was nabbed. "The other accused will be arrested soon," added Mr. Singh.

## Trinamool Cong. to hold protest on Monday

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH**  
KOLKATA  
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced a series of protests in the State against the passage of the Citizenship

Act. Ms. Banerjee said that on Monday there would be a protest organised by her party from the statue of B.R. Ambedkar, Red Road to Jorasanko Thakurbari. A similar protest would be organised

on Tuesday in South Kolkata Jadavpur 8 Bus Terminus to Jadababu Bazar in Bhawinpore. She urged people from all political parties other than the BJP to join the rally. She reiterated that her go-

vernment would not allow the implementation of the Act. "They say they will forcibly implement the Act and the NRC. I would say again that the NRC and the Act won't be implemented."

## AMU students, teachers protest against Act amid Internet ban

Not a Hindu-Muslim issue, say protesters; memo submitted for its withdrawal

**ANUJ KUMAR**  
GHAZIABAD

Heavy police presence and inclement weather ensured that Friday passed off peacefully in Aligarh, Deoband and Saharanpur. Internet services remained suspended all through the day as hundreds of students and teachers of the Aligarh Muslim University and followers of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind submitted memorandum against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 to district officials in Aligarh and Saharanpur respectively.

Aftab Alam, professor of political science, who participated in the protest, said it was not a Hindu-Muslim issue.

"If we see it like that, we would fall into the 'trap' of the BJP. It is a constitutional issue that would affect everybody in the long run. This is what they want – polarise. Those who are protesting against the Act in Assam



A protest at the Aligarh Muslim University against the Citizenship Act on Friday. ■MANOJ ALIGADH

and Kerala are not Muslims," he said.

### 'Modi to Shah era'

Dr. Alam said the CAB issue also suggested a shift in the BJP from "the Modi era to the Shah era." "Now, Shah is the new hawk and Modi is trying to be a dove."

Faizy Usmani, a student in Deoband, said the government was testing the "patience" of Muslims, by bringing up one issue after

another that would divide society. "Should we study and look for jobs or start looking for documents that would prove our citizenship," he asked.

"The Hindu who runs the neighbourhood grocery store says that 90% of his business comes from Muslims. Will he not be affected if Muslims lose their Indian identity," he wondered.

In Aligarh, hundreds of students took out a march

after the Friday prayers. They crossed the barricades placed by the police at the university gate but were again stopped at the University Circle where the District Magistrate Chandra Bhushan Singh received the memorandum.

### Submit memorandum

Addressed to the Chief Justice of India, the memorandum said since Parliament had failed to save the Constitution in this case, the Chief Justice's office should rise to the occasion and save the spirit of the Constitution.

"We fear that if it is not stopped by the judiciary, it may lead to the conversion of India into a Hindu State," said Salman Imtiaz, the president of the outgoing AMU-SU.

Later, members of the Aligarh Muslim University Teachers' Association also submitted a memorandum to the district officials.

# ACB clean chit to Khadse challenged

Pune court allows activist Anjali Damania's intervention application in MIDC land grabbing controversy

**SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE**

There appears to be trouble ahead for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former minister Eknath Khadse after a court allowed an intervention application challenging the clean chit given by the State anti-corruption bureau (ACB) to him in an alleged land grabbing case.

Judge S.R. Navandar allowed the application filed by anti-corruption activist Anjali Damania in May last year against the clean chit to Mr. Khadse concerning a prime plot belonging to the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) at Bhosari that he had allegedly acquired by illicit means by abusing his position as revenue minister.

Last year, in its final sub-

mission to a Pune court, the ACB had said that it failed to find "definite proof" that Mr. Khadse had misused his office to seize a three-acre plot in the possession of the MIDC for his private use near Pimpri-Chinchwad.

"The intervention application was allowed after follow-up of more than one-and-a-half years ... We submitted before the court that we are not any 'third party' but the original complainant. We have also submitted, along with an affidavit, documents by which we can prove how Mr. Khadse came to acquire the land through illegal means by abusing his position," advocate Asim Sarode, who filed the petition, said.

Mr. Sarode said the court's decision has raised hopes of ordinary citizens who can



Eknath Khadse

January 9, 2020.

Ms. Damania had been nudging the ACB to probe Mr. Khadse since 2017, after having submitted documents allegedly containing proof of the BJP leader's illicit transactions in securing the plot.

In May 2016, city-based whistleblower Hemant Gawande had filed a complaint against Mr. Khadse in Pune, which, among other factors, eventually led to the latter's resignation from the State Cabinet.

In April 2017, the ACB had finally registered an FIR against Mr. Khadse in compliance with the Bombay High Court's directive based on Mr. Gawande's complaint. The FIR was under Sections 13 (1 d), 13 (2) and 15 of the Prevention of Corrup-

tion Act, 1988, and Section 109 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against the minister, his wife, Mandakini, son-in-law Girish Chaudhari, and Abbas Rasool Ukani, the original owner of the plot said to be in cahoots with Mr. Khadse in allegedly engineering the scam.

According to Mr. Gawande, the original valuation of the plot, according to the sub-registrar, stood at ₹31 crore, a far cry from Mr. Khadse's figure of ₹3.75 crore. Mr. Gawande had alleged that the value of the property when Mr. Khadse's kin applied for compensation would stand at ₹65 crore, twice the original market valuation (calculated per the compensation under the new land acquisition policy of 2013).

## 'No need to take Munde's remarks seriously'

Kakade hits out at Pankaja's criticism of BJP leadership

**SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE**

Facing a backlash, organisers of the Firodiya Karandak, a popular inter-collegiate theatre competition held in the city, announced on Friday there would be no restrictions on the choice of subjects. Participating colleges will need to obtain prior clearance for their scripts from the censor board, they said.

Earlier this week, the organisers released rules for the competition, held in February every year, which said the plays must not touch on "sensitive" subjects such as Babri Masjid, Article 370, Hindu-Muslim relations or caste dynamics. It had drawn widespread criticism from theatre circles.

"Despite holding two important portfolios [Rural and Woman and Child Development] and having the late Gopinath Munde's legacy, she could not manage her own constituency... she was given a lot of freedom by the BJP. So, her statement that 'the party can take me out if it so wants' is not in good



Pankaja Munde at her rally in Beed on Thursday. ■ FILE PHOTO

### Anti-party activities won't be tolerated, warns Patil

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SOLAPUR**

A day after Eknath Khadse and Pankaja Munde vented their ire at the party leadership in Maharashtra, State BJP chief Chandrakant Patil said on Friday "anti-party activities" would not be tolerated.

Addressing BJP workers at Solapur, he

said, "No one will be spared. The situation is being monitored from the Central to the local level." Mr. Patil said he attended Ms. Munde's rally on Thursday despite many asking him not to, because if he hadn't the situation would have been worse.

"The communication eased things," he said.

taste," Mr. Kakade said. He said Ms. Munde's statements were hurtful to a true BJP worker who was an ad-

herent of her father. "Pankaja says she will reach out to the masses by working through the Gopinath

Munde trust and resolve problems like water shortage in Marathwada. But what was she doing all this while in spite of being a Cabinet minister?" he asked. He said if Ms. Munde had worked harder for the uplift of the Marathwada, she would not have suffered a debacle at the polls.

"A significant number of MLAs are from the backward community... so, it is fallacious to say OBC leaders like Ms. Munde and Eknath Khadse are being slighted by the party leadership," the Rajya Sabha member said.

**Misal fires back**

In a riposte to Mr. Kakade's remarks, Pune BJP chief Madhuri Misal, known for her affinity with Ms. Munde, told reporters the MP's remarks were his opinions and not sanctioned by the party.

Ms. Misal questioned Mr. Kakade's intent, wondering if any outside force was attempting to divide the BJP. "Pankaja has worked a lot for the party. I don't think too much weight ought to be given to Mr. Kakade's remarks against her. Some people have a penchant for speaking before the media," said Ms. Misal, who was at Ms. Munde's rally on Thursday.

## Citizenship Act: uncertainty over implementation in State

Congress ministers oppose law, Sena yet to clarify its stand



**Fearing division:** Members of the Jamiat Ulama, Nagpur district, protest the amended Citizenship Act at LIC Square in Nagpur on Friday. ■ S. SUDARSHAN

**TANVI DESHPANDE**

Will Maharashtra join Punjab, Kerala and West Bengal in refusing to implement the amended Citizenship Act? Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray is yet to clear his stand on the matter, even as two Congress ministers of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government made it clear on Friday that they are opposed to it.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has demanded the immediate implementation of the Act in the State.

In Maharashtra, implementation of the Act may well be the biggest test of the MVA alliance. The Shiv Sena had supported the Bill in the Lok Sabha, a move that upset the Congress, but had

boycotted the vote in Rajya Sabha.

On Friday, Congress minister Balasaheb Thorat said, "This Act is unconstitutional. We have opposed it. We will discuss with party leaders in Delhi about its implementation in Maharashtra and convey it to the Chief Minister."

Congress minister Nitin Raut, too, made the party's stand clear, saying, "We are opposed to the Act, we will not allow it to be implemented at all in Maharashtra. We believe Uddhav Thackeray will cooperate with us as the Sena had taken a clear stand in the Rajya Sabha."

The pressure is mounting on the Sena to take a decision ahead of the winter session of the Assembly. State Home Minister and senior Sena leader Eknath Shinde said, "The Sena walked out in Rajya Sabha because there was no clarity on the Act yet. A decision will be taken by Uddhav Thackeray."

He said, "Two Congress ministers have opposed the implementation of the Act, which has led to an atmosphere of ambiguity among citizens. We oppose the Congress's stand and BJP insists on protecting the rights of displaced Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Hindus in the State. I demand that you make your stand as a government clear on this."

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## IN BRIEF



**Won't apologise for House fracas: Naidu**

VIJAYAWADA  
Former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday refused to express regret for the fracas with marshals in the Assembly on Thursday. The statement came after A.P. Speaker Tammineni Sitaram said, "As a senior member, it would be better if you express regret and take the issue to a dignified conclusion." Mr. Naidu replied that he was insulted by the closing of the main gate. If anyone takes responsibility and is ready to apologise, I also will," he said.

**Flood aid: Yediyurappa raps officials over delay**

BENGALURU  
Officials who tried to make excuses for delay in distribution of relief to the flood affected in Karnataka got an earful from Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Friday. He was upset when officials cited various reasons for the delay. Threatening action against those who fail to act on his directions, he asked: "What have you done in the past four months? Give me a report in one week." The meeting was attended by top officials, including the Chief Secretary and the Additional Chief Secretary.

**Chittoor techie ends life' in U.S.**

TIRUPATI  
Gummadiyakalay Dwarakanath Reddy, 34, a software engineer from Chittoor district, allegedly committed suicide by consuming sleeping pills in New Jersey, U.S., late on Thursday. He was working with Amazon Inc. He is survived by wife G. Kalyani and two sons. The family members are yet to receive information on the reason behind Mr. Reddy's extreme step. Those with suicidal tendency can call 100 for counselling.

## LDF, UDF come together for joint protest

Pinarayi and Chennithala will lead satyagraha against new Act

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The ruling Left Democratic Front and the Opposition United Democratic Front in Kerala will put up a joint front against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala and leaders of both fronts will stage a satyagraha at Martyrs' Column in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday, demanding that the Centre repeal the Bill.

The Chief Minister said in a release here on Friday that the decision on a joint movement was made considering the fact that the Bill would endanger equality and secular values enshrined in the Constitution. Prominent art, cultural and literary perso-



**Loud and clear:** Members of the Students Islamic Organisation protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act in Hyderabad on Friday. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

nalties will address the sa-

tyagraha.

Members of the Renaissance Protection Samithi will also participate.

The Bill, passed in both Houses of Parliament, has triggered protests in different parts of the country.

The movement is the un-

ified voice of Kerala, Mr. Vijayan said. At a press conference on Thursday, he had said the State would not implement the Bill since it was unconstitutional.

The CPI(M) took out marches to Central government offices in protest against the Bill on Friday.

The CPI also called for similar protests on Thursday.

LDF convener A. Vijayaraghavan said in a release here that the front would organise people at all district headquarters against the Bill on December 19. A decision to this effect was made by the LDF State committee.

## Alcohol traces found in Disha's viscera, says forensic report

ABHINAY DESHPANDE  
HYDERABAD

The accused in the rape and murder of Disha forced soft drink laced with alcohol down her throat as they raped her, confirmed the State Forensic Science reports submitted to the Telangana police.

"The victim's liver contain alcohol traces, which confirms the accused persons' confession that they forced her to drink alcohol," a senior police officer associated with the investigation of the case told *The Hindu*.

He said forensic experts gave the report after they examined Disha's viscera during post-mortem

examination.

The accused – Mohammed Arif, Jollu Shiva, Jollu Naveen and Ch. Chennekshvulu – had raped Disha at an open plot near Tondupally toll gate.

The 27-year-old veterinarian was a 'teetotaller,' her family told the police.

On Thursday, the investigators said the DNA taken from the burnt body found at the Chatanpalli underpass matched with that of Disha's parents.

The DNA report submitted by the State FSL to the police also confirmed that semen stains on the undergarment and scarf of the victim found at the open plot in Tondupally and near

the underpass in Chatanpalli matched with that of the accused persons.

When the accused were killed in an exchange of fire with the police on December 6, the Cyberabad Commissioner of Police said they suspect that the accused were involved in similar offences in the neighbouring States of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, besides Telangana.

"The DNA profiling of all the four accused was conducted, as we suspect that they might have committed similar offences in other States too," he said. Data will be matched with other records also, he added.

## Assembly unanimously passes A.P. Disha Act

STAFF REPORTER  
GUNTUR

Days after the rape and murder of the 26-year-old veterinarian in Hyderabad, which sparked off national outrage, Andhra Pradesh became the first State to enact a law aimed at awarding capital punishment to the guilty in specified offences against women and to complete trial in such cases within 21 days of the crime.

The A.P. Assembly on Friday unanimously passed two Bills, Andhra Pradesh Disha Act – A.P. Special Courts for Specified Offences against Women and Children Act 2019, and A.P. Disha Act – Criminal Law (AP Amendment) Act 2019, to constitute special courts in every district for speedy trial of speci-

### Dealing with an iron fist

**overtures repeatedly**

- Setting up of special courts for specified offences against women and children
- **Setting up of 'Women and Children Offenders Register' in electronic form**
- Amendments to Indian Penal Code (1860); new sections added
- **Section 354E to deal with cases relating to harassment of women, which includes abuse on social media platforms and making romantic**
- Period of disposal of appeals to be reduced to three months

awarding capital punishment to those convicted of rape. Minister for Home M. Sucharita introduced the Bills in the afternoon. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan

Mohan Reddy, in his address to the House before the Bills were passed, termed the tabling of the Bills a "revolutionary step" in ensuring justice in heinous crimes.

**Jagan expresses concern**

Turning emotional as he read out the contents of the Bill, he said: "Ever since the incident took place, I have been disturbed. I have been discussing with my Cabinet colleagues, members of my family and friends for days. I began pondering, if I were to be a father whose daughter has been molested and killed by men who turned into beasts, how would I react? I want to make sure such crimes do not happen in our State and that is why we have brought this Act."

## Kerala HC apologises to kin of road accident victim

Court appoints amici curiae to inspect roads, submit report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Friday apologised to the family of the Paravur youth who was killed in a road accident at Palarivattom here on Thursday.

Justice Devan Ramachandran said the court was hanging its head in shame. Yedulal was hit by a speeding lorry as he fell from his motorcycle while trying to negotiate a pothole.

"The apology may not be of any use to the family. But at least they should know that the people are with them. The young man worked with a food delivery company to support his family. His mother is reported to be a cancer patient," the judge orally observed.

It pained the court very much as the death occurred when it was considering a

case related to the filling up of potholes. No official had ever pointed out that such a pothole existed on the road, he said. "How many more precious lives will have to be lost for authorities to wake up and repair roads and fill up potholes and craters? The officials responsible for the upkeep of roads shall be on the road and not remain in their air-conditioned offices."

The court said it could not trust officials and government agencies any more, as they repeatedly maintained that the roads were properly maintained and the potholes filled.

The court appointed lawyers S. Krishna, Vinod Bhat and I. Deepak as amici curiae. They were asked to inspect all city roads and report on their condition. The amici curiae will act as the eyes and ears of the court, the judge said.

Advocate General C.P. Sud-

hakara Prasad said the District Collector had ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident, and action would be taken shortly. When Mr. Prasad informed the court that the State government was willing to pay compensation of ₹10 lakh to the family, the judge wondered how much compensation would the State pay.

On some roads, there were no slabs over drains and one might have to hear the news that pedestrians fell into them. There were potholes on the road near the Rajiv Gandhi Indoor Stadium, which was used by school students and others.

There was an electric post in a slanting position near Palarivattom, which could come down any time and fatally injure people. "Has anyone noted it and acted on it," asked the judge.

Kurnool Bar Association members staging a protest in Tungabhadra river demanding the shifting of the High Court to the district. The lawyers have been on a relay hunger strike for over three months now. ■ U. SUBRAMANYAM

from Parandoli village or Anarpalli in Kerameri mandal. Both the routes are unmotorable. The latter involves a journey of about 3 km on the hilltops, made more difficult as one has to walk barefoot on loose pieces of sharp-edged rocks near the cave.

A stream runs under the rocky roof inside the cave, which is where the Adivasis take a holy dip. The pilgrims perform puja and visit the temple of Lord Shiva located about 300 m from Kaplai in another green valley.

This temple is on a large piece of rock at a higher elevation and can be accessed through a staircase. However, it was damaged in the heavy monsoon rain.

to a length of just about 75 ft. It is the Kaplai Caves which are said to be much longer, running into a few kilometres, according to the Kolam tribe elders. Kolam can be accessed

Tribals resent intrusions by outsiders in the name of exploration



**Natural shrines:** Kolam tribals waiting for their turn to enter the Kaplai cave in Kumram Bheem district. ■ S. HARPAL SINGH

popular pilgrim centre for the Raj Gond, Pardhan and Kolam tribes of the former composite Adilabad district. It is located in the Kota-Parandoli gram panchayat. It is comparatively small, run-

## Now, neighbours of Maradu apartments are also unhappy

The house owners have raised issue of cracks in buildings

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHI

Hundreds of residents of Maradu in Kerala, who live near the four apartments that are to be demolished, took out a protest march on Friday demanding adequate protection for their homes.

The residents cooked porridge at Kundannoor junction as part of the protest. They demanded adequate insurance cover for their homes and raised the issue of some houses developing cracks during the pre-blast demolition works. Steps for containing the dust from the demolition of the apartments should also be undertaken, they demanded.

The residents demanded



**Cooking up a storm:** Residents of Maradu staging a protest at Kundannoor Junction in the city on Friday. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

that Jain Coral Cove, which is located at a relatively sparsely populated area, be demolished first to evaluate the impact of the controlled implosion of the complex. Justice P.K. Shamsudeen, former judge of the Kerala

High Court, inaugurated the protest meeting.

Meanwhile, a report on the structural audit carried out near the Maradu apartments will be submitted to the State government on Saturday.

## Fog Pass will ease the path for loco pilots

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

The South Central Railway (SCR) has started supplying Fog Pass devices, a GPS-based portable equipment, to loco pilots.

The device helps in alerting the crew about upcoming landmarks or structures, during foggy weather, through audio and visual indications.

During the winter, when visibility is low due to fog, loco pilots face a tough challenge of ensuring safe operations of trains.

The entire data of a particular section such as location of signals, stations, level-crossing gates, warning boards, curves and gradients, are mapped with GPS and fed into the device.

These devices are then incorporated with visual and voice indication for alerting the loco pilot, a senior railway official said.

In foggy weather conditions, loco pilots are forced to restrict the speed of the train as they are unable to sight signals.

A fog pass device displays details of at least three oncoming landmarks along with distance from the current location. An audio alert is given, around 500 metres before any approaching landmark, they explained.

Around 250 fog pass devices have, so far, been distributed to Secunderabad and Vijayawada divisions. These are kept at the crew booking points and are issued to loco and assistant loco pilots, when they are on duty. The feedback from them is good, according to chief public relations officer Ch. Rakesh. Since loco pilots are alerted well in advance about an approaching signal with a Fog Pass, constant speed can be maintained in the section resulting in no loss of punctuality of trains.

## Unexplored caves house Adivasi temples

S. HARPAL SINGH  
KERAMERI

The rocky hills of the desolate inter-State border that Kerameri mandal in Kumram Bheem district shares with Jitvi taluk in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra are home to some caves.

The natural wonders like the Jangubai Cave Temple and the Kaplai Caves are known to the aboriginal people and are their pilgrim centres, which have remained hidden from the outside world. Reason? Difficult in accessing the places and more importantly, because the Adivasis do not like 'interference' by outsiders in the name of exploration.

Among the caves is the Jangubai Cave Temple, a

popular pilgrim centre for the Raj Gond, Pardhan and Kolam tribes of the former composite Adilabad district. It is located in the Kota-Parandoli gram panchayat. It is comparatively small, run-

IN BRIEF



'Sitharaman among 100 most powerful women'

**NEW YORK**  
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, HCL Corporation CEO and executive director Roshni Nadar Malhotra and Biocon Founder Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw have been named among the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes. The Forbes 2019 list of 'The World's 100 Most Powerful Women' has been topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Ms. Sitharaman is ranked 34th on the list. PTI

**Supreme Court grants relief to Salman Khurshid**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Supreme Court on Friday granted protection from any coercive action to Congress leader Salman Khurshid in the alleged offence of trespassing into an office of the Delhi Public School Society in south Delhi here. A Bench of Chief Justice S. A. Bobde, B.R. Gavai and Surya Kant issued notice to Delhi government and the police on a plea by Mr. Khurshid challenging the High Court's order dismissing his plea for quashing of summons. PTI

**ED attaches ₹10 crore assets in ponzi scam**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Enforcement Directorate has attached properties worth over ₹10.20 crore of Ambidant Marketing Private Limited and other accused persons in a ponzi scheme case. The assets attached under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act include land and residential flats in Bengaluru, besides movable properties totalling ₹10.40 crore. The agencies found that the accused offered returns up to 15% per month to lure investors.

# Protest against gang-rape rocks Patna

Students burn tyres and hurl stones, police use water cannons and canes; two accused surrender



**Fight for safety:** Water cannons being used to disperse students who were protesting against the gang-rape of a college student, in Patna on Friday. ■ RANJEET KUMAR

## SC issues notice to poll panel on 'discrepancies'

Two NGOs sought investigation

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Election Commission of India (ECI) to respond to a petition filed by two NGOs seeking a probe into alleged discrepancies between voter turnout and the number of votes counted in 347 constituencies in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

"The lack of reasoned explanation by the Respondent No.1 (Election Commission of India) on mismatch and the clean-up of certain data from its website has caused serious doubts in the mind of citizens about the entire process of counting and result declaration," said the petition filed by the As-

sociation for Democratic Reforms and Common Cause, represented by advocates Prashant Bhushan and Neha Rathi. The petition said a study was done by them on the discrepancy patterns found in the ECI website and the 'My Voters Turnout App'. These discrepancies ranged from one vote (lowest) to 1,01,323 votes.

In fact, the petition said, there were six seats where the discrepancy in votes was higher than the winning margin. The total volume of discrepancies was in the nature of 7,39,104 votes put together, the petition quoted the study. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde issued the notice to the ECI.

## Targets missed, Accessible India campaign's deadline extended

It aims at making public spaces friendly for the disabled

**DAMINI NATH**  
NEW DELHI

The deadline for the government's Accessible India campaign that aims at making public spaces friendly for persons with disabilities has been extended due to "slow progress," the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has informed the Lok Sabha. Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Krishnpal Gurjar said "due to slow progress, revised deadlines have been extended to March 2020."

The decision was taken by the Central Advisory Board chaired by Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot.

Answering a question

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
PATNA

The Bihar capital witnessed high drama on Friday as hundreds of Patna University students took to the streets to protest against the gang-rape of a college student. A large number of students gathered near Kargil Chowk, set fire to tyres and shouted slogans against the government.

The youth hurled stones at police personnel accusing them of "trying to shield the perpetrators". Police used water cannons and canes to quell the protest.

A 20-year-old student of a college affiliated to the university lodged a police complaint on Thursday that four persons, including a senior student of the college, had gang-raped her on Decem-

ber 9. She initially kept silent as the perpetrators had warned her of dire consequences if she informed anyone. But one of her friends informed her father.

One of the accused is believed to be a friend of the girl. Two of the four accused persons have surrendered before a city court. One was arrested earlier and the fourth is at large. "We will arrest the fourth accused soon," said a police officer.

Meanwhile, the Opposition targeted Chief Minister Nitish Kumar over the increasing incidents of rapes in the State. "Every day, there is an incident of rape and gang-rape happening in the State, but the Chief Minister is busy with his Jal, Jivan, Hariyali Yatra," said RJD MLA Vijay Prakash Yadav.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Saturday:** Thunderstorms accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Chhattisgarh. Dense fog in isolated pockets very likely over Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Odisha, south Assam and Meghalaya.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	~28.3	12.4	12.4	Kozhikode	~25.2	24.6	24.6
Ahmedabad	~30.3	16.4	16.4	Kurnool	~32.3	19.2	19.2
Aizawl	~20.3	8.5	8.5	Lucknow	~16.1	15.6	15.6
Allahabad	16.6	25.0	15.9	Madurai	~31.0	22.6	22.6
Bengaluru	~28.2	17.4	17.4	Mangaluru	~25.6	23.0	23.0
Bhopal	21.6	25.9	16.4	Mumbai	~30.4	19.5	19.5
Bhubaneswar	~30.1	19.5	19.5	Mysuru	~28.1	16.8	16.8
Chandigarh	6	19.2	13.1	New Delhi	~33.5	18.7	12.8
Chennai	~23.4	12.4	12.4	Patna	~18.8	16.6	16.6
Coimbatore	~31.0	20.6	20.6	Port Blair	~30.3	25.7	25.7
Dehradun	20.1	15.8	10.4	Puducherry	3.6	21.4	21.4
Gangtok	~12.7	7.7	7.7	Pune	~29.7	15.9	15.9
Goa	~33.5	21.8	21.8	Raipur	~28.6	18.4	18.4
Guwahati	~26.6	12.6	12.6	Ranchi	~23.7	15.4	15.4
Hubballi	~29.0	17.0	17.0	Shillong	~19.4	5.9	5.9
Hyderabad	~30.0	18.7	18.7	Shimla	12.8	9.8	1.9
Imphal	~23.0	6.7	6.7	Srinagar	24.5	-1.0	-1.0
Jaipur	9.8	19.5	14.0	Thiruvananthapuram	~33.6	24.0	24.0
Kochi	~33.0	24.6	24.6	Tiruchi	~30.0	22.4	22.4
Kohima	~19.2	6.2	6.2	Vijayawada	~30.6	21.4	21.4
Kolkata	~28.2	19.2	19.2	Visakhapatnam	~30.5	22.2	22.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

Yesterday

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	35	15	11	.99	.92	■
Bengaluru	10	38	40	.66	.84	■
Chennai	24	23	48	.67	.76	■
Delhi	3	24	53	.288	.139	■
Hyderabad	.2	61	34	.81	.76	■
Kolkata	17	80	22	.305	.252	■
Lucknow	20	42	76	.305	.145	■
Mumbai	12	97	15	.205	.145	■
Pune	85	19	51	.108	.89	■
Visakhapatnam	11	49	47	.61	.100	■

In observation made at 6.00 p.m., Patna, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 351 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Mairah, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 36.

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

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

## + Policymakers yet to learn from Kargil

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

CHANDIGARH

Former Army chief General V.P. Malik on Friday stated that policymakers had not learnt due lessons from the Kargil war, leaving the nation vulnerable on the security front.

He was speaking at the Military Literature Festival, where he expressed disappointment over "the lackadaisical attitude of the political class" towards the defence needs of the country. "We should have by now built enough indigenous defence capacity platforms," said Gen. Malik, who headed the force during the Kargil war, adding that Parliament should debate the issue.

At a panel discussion on 'Make in India and the Nation's Security', he pointed out there was an urgent need to streamline the defence procurement processes, making them facilitators and not hurdles in the endeavour to strengthen the forces with cutting-edge weaponry.



## The day of Boris

Labour lost because it fought a Brexit election as if it were just another general election

The decisive victory the Conservative Party clinched in Thursday's elections to Parliament gives British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who built his campaign around the promise to "get Brexit done", a clear mandate to take the U.K. out of the European Union without further delay. Initial results show that his party is set to win 364 seats in the 650-member House of Commons, the greatest performance of the Conservatives in over three decades. The Labour, led by veteran socialist Jeremy Corbyn, is expected to win 203 seats, its worst performance in decades. It is Mr. Johnson's victory. He is the one who called for an early election after reaching a new divorce deal with the EU. He turned the poll into a de facto Brexit referendum, arguing that only a stable Conservative government could take the U.K. out of the EU quickly and end the lingering political standoff. His strategy was to consolidate the pro-Brexit vote, get a fresh mandate in Parliament and then quicken the divorce process. The Labour Party, on the other side, has been ambivalent on the question of Brexit. Mr. Corbyn promised another referendum and declined to state what his position would be during that vote. His focus was on the economy. He promised a radical expansion of the state, with plans to tax the rich, increase public spending and nationalise utilities. The Labour leader may have hoped that his radical economic agenda would cut through the Brexit narrative. But it did not. In the end, Labour fought a Brexit election without articulating a clear position on Brexit. Unsurprisingly, it lost even its traditional working class districts in the Midlands and north of England that had overwhelmingly voted to leave in the 2016 referendum.

Mr. Johnson is now confident that he could push his withdrawal agreement through Parliament at the earliest so that Britain could leave the union before the January 31 deadline. But a big victory or a timely exit does not mean that the road ahead is smooth. His Brexit agreement itself is controversial; once implemented, it could erect an effective customs border between Britain and the island of Ireland. The question is what impact Mr. Johnson's deal will have on the Good Friday agreement that brought peace to Northern Ireland and to the unity of the Kingdom in general. Second, a more difficult part of the Brexit process is negotiating an agreement on the U.K.'s future relationship with the EU. Mr. Johnson has promised to finish the negotiations during the 11-month transition period, but it could take years. Lastly, more than Brexit, the poll results pose administrative and constitutional challenges to the Prime Minister. In Scotland, the Scottish National Party's landslide victory – it is poised to win 48 out of the 59 Westminster seats – has already rekindled calls for a second referendum on Scottish independence. This will put the SNP on a warpath with the Tories who are opposed to a new referendum. Mr. Johnson might go down in history as the Prime Minister who took the U.K. out of the EU. But at what cost is the question. The answer will be known in bits and pieces in the coming days.

## Twin troubles

Low growth and high inflation raise questions about the root cause of the crisis

Economic data released by the government on Thursday suggest that India may be stepping even closer to stagflation. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) contracted 3.8% in October, as against a healthy growth rate of 8.4% witnessed during the same month last year. Industrial output, it is worth noting, had shrunk by 4.3% in September. At the same time, retail inflation jumped to a 40-month high of 5.5% in November fuelled mainly by a sharp jump in food prices. Retail inflation is now in the upper band of the inflation range targeted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) but might drop as fresh food supplies hit the market. Low growth combined with high price inflation is sure to cause further headaches for policymakers. Economic growth has declined for six consecutive quarters now, making it one of the longest downturns in recent history. With inflation raising its ugly head now, the RBI, which held rates stable in its recent policy meet, is unlikely to cut rates aggressively in the next few months at least. So it is entirely up to the government now to find ways to boost growth. Given the seriousness of the slowdown, the government cannot delay reforms.

For a long time, the government maintained that the country's growth rate was held back by the tight monetary policy stance adopted by the RBI under its previous governors. But with the benchmark interest rate being cut five times so far this year, the government can no longer shift blame on to the RBI. The favourite defence of the government right now is that the slowdown in growth is merely a cyclical one that will end sooner than later. But regardless of the nature of the current slowdown, it cannot be denied that the Centre has fallen short on its promise of bringing about major structural reforms to the economy. Except for the recent cut in corporate tax rates, the government has not come up with any other significant reform in response to the slowdown. Further, the presence of low growth along with high inflation also raises questions about the root cause of the slowdown, which has been attributed to a drastic fall in consumer demand. But aggressive rate cuts by the RBI that have extended over most of the year cannot stop the continuous slide in growth rate; it may well be that supply-side is also in deep trouble. The answer to the current slowdown lies in economic reforms that can first lift the potential growth rate of the economy. Otherwise, further rate cuts by the RBI will only add to the government's troubles by stoking inflation in the wider economy.

# Savings with a bonus – financial peace of mind

The Government can ensure that Indian savers have access to simple fixed return products offering safety of capital



AARATI KRISHNAN

**T**he confidence that ordinary Indian savers repose in guaranteed return products has been subjected to hard knocks of late. First there was the scare about public sector banks being placed under prompt corrective action by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Then there were the defaults by AAA-rated non-banks. Recently, the RBI's strictures on Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative Bank Limited (PMC) have opened a can of worms on the safety of co-operative banks, and the gaps in the working of deposit insurance.

**Issue of financial literacy**  
But whenever Indian savers complain of the lack of safe investments, they are usually told to observe more due diligence as far as their investments are concerned or embrace market risks through vehicles such as mutual funds. While this advice may be appropriate for affluent urban savers, it is quite impossible to follow for a majority of households in India which have a subsistence level of income and scant access to financial literacy.

The average Indian earned a per capita income of ₹1.26 lakh in FY19. A Global Wealth report from Credit Suisse (October 2019) found that the median wealth of an Indian adult was \$3,042 (₹2.1 lakh). A survey on financial literacy among Indian savers by the Tarun Ramadorai committee in 2015, found that over 30% of savers did not grasp the concept of compound interest.

This highlights the crying need for Indian savers to have access to simple fixed return products that offer complete safety of capital without their having to dig into balance sheets. The small savings schemes (also called national savings schemes) from India Post fit this description to a tee.

Given that these schemes make up part of Central government borrowings, they are sovereign-guaranteed. The Indian Government in any case ends up borrowing ₹6-7 lakh crore from the public markets every year to fund its fiscal deficit. Today, it is mainly institutional investors who get to participate in Government of India securities (G-sec) auctions. There is no reason why this opportunity cannot be opened up to more small savers instead.

But if savers are in search of safe options and post office schemes fit the bill, why are they so under-the-radar? Numbers from the RBI show that by the end of FY19, while commercial banks were sitting pretty on deposits of ₹126 lakh crore, small savings schemes managed just ₹8.9 lakh crore. It is amusing to note that HDFC, a private sector non-bank, has managed to garner the same volume of deposits (₹1.2 lakh crore) as post office time deposits with their massive outreach.

There is immense scope for reviving the popularity of the post office schemes, if the Central government can make five design changes that tailor them to better meet the needs of small savers.

**Transparent spreads**  
A few years ago, in a bid to wean savers away from administered interest rates, post office schemes were transitioning to floating rates by pegging their interest rates to government securities with comparable maturity. Over time



though, the quarterly rate changes have acquired a life of their own, bearing limited correlation to market rate movements.

There is nothing wrong, really, in the Central government offering small savers with special needs a premium over prevailing market interest rates. But to make such rate moves transparent, it is best that the Government specifies and sticks to a fixed spread over G-sec rates for each scheme.

The banking lobby is bound to be up in arms against "high" rates on small savings impeding transmission. But the caps on individual investments in the more popular schemes (₹1.5 lakh for Public Provident Fund, ₹15 lakh for Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS), ₹4.5 lakh for Monthly Income Account) restrict the sums that savers can park in these schemes. Such caps can be extended to all schemes with high spreads. This apart, the very intent of re-designing post office schemes is to attract bottom-of-the-pyramid savers who are not considered lucrative by banks.

Indian savers have felt a need for 10-year or 20-year fixed return instruments to park their long-term money. Presently though, a majority of debt options available to them are in the one to five-year bucket. Even among the post office schemes, six of the nine available ones cater to savings needs for one to five years only. Investors who would like a longer-term op-

tion have just two choices – the Public Provident Fund (PPF, 15 years) and Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP, 9 years), as the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana is restricted to those with a girl child.

Re-introducing National Savings Certificates in the 10, 15 and 20-year tenors can meet this need while helping the Central government source long-term funds for capital spending.

While deposits with private entities offer both regular income and cumulative options, with post office schemes it is an "either or" choice. Having both options on the menu can help savers decide whether they want regular cash flows or compounding benefits.

### Friendlier tax breaks

Today, most post office schemes offer tax breaks on the principal invested under Section 80C but their returns are taxed at income tax slab rates (the only exceptions being PPF and Sukanya Samriddhi).

Reversing this position may render these schemes more attractive to small savers. For savers whose income levels are likely to be at or below the lowest tax slab, the 80C benefit has limited utility. But an extra percentage point in tax-free returns can mean a great deal.

If the Central Government is loath to extend such tax benefits to all post office schemes, it can restrict them to special-purpose schemes. Taxation on more than three-year small savings products that accumulate interest, needs to be brought on a par with market products and given inflation indexation benefits.

Small savers may like the predictability of a fixed return for the long term. But given their limited savings, they also need early exit options in case they are beset by an emergency. While the time de-

posits and SCSS offer early exit on fairly simple terms, early withdrawals from the PPF or Sukanya Samriddhi are subject to convoluted conditions. Doing away with bureaucratic rules for investors to get their hands on their own money is critical to make post office schemes more attractive to their target audience.

### Better customer service

Finally, the foremost reason savers cite in shying away from post office schemes – despite their safety and reasonable returns – is the woefully poor customer service that they need to deal with. At a time when Indians from every strata have taken to digital transactions like ducks to water, India Post continues to rely on archaic modes of working in dealing with customers.

Its insistence on a paper application process, old-fashioned passbooks, cheque payments and branch visits ensures a process that is time-consuming and arduous for those seeking to invest their money with it. While India Post has been transitioning its record-keeping and backend operations to the digital mode, it appears that this has yet to percolate to its customer interface. On this aspect, the organisation can take a leaf or two out of the books of non-banks such as HDFC or Sundaram Finance who make deposit investing such a seamless experience for their customers.

If India Post can shed its half-hearted attempts to transform itself into a payments bank and convert itself into a digitally enabled, pure deposit-taking bank, it can render a yeoman service both to the government and small savers of this country.

Aarati Krishnan is an Editorial Consultant with the Hindu Business Line

## Britain votes for Brexit

With a thumping win, this is Boris Johnson's opportunity to refashion the U.K. according to his beliefs



KARAN THAPAR

**T**he British election results are the political equivalent of an earthquake. It is an unambiguous signal that in the months and years ahead, the United Kingdom will become a very different country – politically, economically, possibly territorially but certainly in terms of its international standing. After almost a decade of weak or coalition prime ministers, Boris Johnson will be a powerful head of government, strengthened not just by his sizeable majority of 78 but also by the weakest Labour opposition since almost 1935.

The first big change will be Brexit. Britain will leave Europe on January 31, 2020. Yet that will also constitute the first big challenge. Mr. Johnson has 11 months to secure a trade deal not just with the European Union but also with Britain's other significant trading partners such as the United States, Australia, China and India. Can it be done in such a short time? It won't be easy and if he fails the transition period will end with the equivalent of the hard Brexit everyone wants to avoid.

**Working class vote**  
A lot will turn on the political and economic changes Mr. Johnson's victory heralds. With 364 seats and 45% of the vote his Conservatives have achieved their best result since Margaret Thatcher's victory in 1987. In fact, in vote share

terms it is the best outcome since 1970. More significantly, the party has made major gains in Labour strongholds in the midlands, north-west and north-east. Tony Blair's Sedgefield has fallen to them. More tellingly, Stoke-on-Trent and Great Grimsby, which have never been won by the Tories, are now in their possession. In Bassettlaw the swing from Labour to Tories was an astonishing 18%. Even London constituencies such as Kensington, which voted 70% to Remain in 2016, have gone their way. So it is no exaggeration to say the Conservatives have transformed from a party of the shires to one that also represents the working classes and London.

In contrast Labour is diminished. This is the party's worst defeat since 1935. The 203 seats it has won are less than the 209 delivered by Michael Foot in 1983. At the time the party's manifesto was dubbed 'the longest suicide note in history'. Mr. Corbyn's could quite possibly have buried the party.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Corbyn has announced he will not lead Labour into the next elections. Though he wants to continue over the period of reflection that must follow it is hard to believe his party will let him. The truth is Labour was defeated not just by Brexit but also because Britain was not prepared to accept Mr. Corbyn's socialist policies. He cannot shrug off personal responsibility for this debacle.

**The Sturgeon factor**  
It has also been a disappointing election for the Liberal Democrats whose leader, Jo Swinson, lost her seat. The party ended up with just 11 MPs, one less than it had. But



across the border in Scotland it was a brilliant outcome for Nicola Sturgeon's Scottish Nationalists. Of the 59 seats to be won her party got 48, increasing its tally by 13 and securing a vote share of 45%. Along with Boris Johnson she is the other champion winner of this election.

Without doubt the Scottish Nationalists will demand a second referendum on independence for Scotland. They believe they have a mandate for it. Mr. Johnson, on the other hand, has already said he will not agree. With both politicians triumphant there's a clear and unavoidable clash looming ahead.

In these circumstances, what sort of prime minister will Mr. Johnson seek to be? First, he is the undisputed leader of his party which, in turn, has a firm and unshakeable grip on Parliament. He can do virtually what he wants. This is his opportunity to refashion the U.K. according to his beliefs.

In terms of political positioning, his victory speech suggests he might move from the right towards the centre. He defined the Conservatives as a "one-nation" party. As he put it, "we must change too". So will he distance himself from Tory right-wingers such as Jacob Rees-Mogg, one of the leaders of the eurosceptic Eu-

ropean Research Group? Yesterday, speculation on the BBC suggested this could happen. And, certainly, if Mr. Johnson wants to retain his party's hold on the seats it has won in northern and midland Labour strongholds, this would be necessary.

**What next for Labour?**  
Much the same could also happen to Labour. If the party is to recover from the grim defeat Mr. Corbyn has led it to then it can only be by returning to the centre ground Tony Blair identified in 1997 and which gave the party three consecutive election victories. Of course, a lot depends on who emerges as Labour's new leader. The Momentum lobby might want a younger version of Mr. Corbyn but the parliamentary party will undoubtedly opt for a social democrat who will harken back to Mr. Blair's style and tone.

The paradox is whilst both parties might see virtue in moving politically to the centre, economically Mr. Johnson could incline towards the right. As leader of the Brexit movement in 2016 he made it clear he did not share the protectionism, anti-globalism and even the rigid anti-immigration stand of many Brexiteers. Now, as Prime Minister, he may not subscribe to the Singapore-on-Thames vision of the Brexit hard-wiring but his first budget speech in March is likely to introduce radical tax reform, reduce regulation whilst substantially boosting incentives for enterprise and, in particular, the City.

However, this is likely to happen alongside several significant welfare measures. Mr. Johnson's victory speech also committed him to increasing public spending, particularly on infrastructure and

health. The National Health Service, which Labour claimed could be in danger in his hands, will be a significant beneficiary.

In foreign policy terms Mr. Johnson will forge a close relationship with U.S. President Donald Trump who, anyway, regards him as a friend. But he will be equally conscious of the need to maintain effective ties with Europe. He has repeatedly said he is not anti-European. Little England or British isolationism is not part of his thinking.

### For India

We, in India, can expect in Mr. Johnson a British Prime Minister with affection for and a substantive understanding of our country. Though separated from his wife Marina, who is half-Indian, his four children have Indian blood. He is a frequent visitor, including an unpublicised trip to Ranthambore last year.

The only concern could be his response to Mr. Narendra Modi's policies like the National Register of Citizens, the Citizenship Amendment Act and the broad stress on Hindutva. He may not criticise in public but he could express disapproval behind closed doors.

The final irony is whilst Britain distances itself from Europe, the world will be intently watching to see how much it changes and in which direction. The elections of 1945 and 1979 were turning points. This one is no less. It is even possible Mr. Johnson, who used to be considered a bumbling non-serious politician, could one day be compared to Clement Attlee and Margaret Thatcher.

Karan Thapar is a television anchor

## 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.

### Inclusion, exclusion

The passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill (CAB), 2019, marks a turning point in the country's history, sending out a clear message that the nation is only for the majority community. People in the country need to express their views very strongly and ensure that the secular core of the Constitution and the Republic, founded on the equal protection of and equality for all before the law within India's territory, survives the damage being caused.

ANSARI TARIQUE,  
Bangalore

### The Boris Johnson win

The landslide victory of Brexit proponent Boris Johnson and his Conservative Party in the United Kingdom election is not surprising given the atmosphere of high voltage campaigning and near-isolation of opponent Jeremy Corbyn and his Labour Party, both by the press and the people. Of late, the tendency of the press to take sides rather than present news and views neutrally is alarming. One is left wondering if this would be the order of the day in every democracy in the days to come. Besides, are the people too swayed

by such cacophony without giving a careful thoughtful and intelligent consideration to the issues at hand?

T. YOGANANDH,  
Chennai

■ The resounding electoral victory manifests people's desperation to get Brexit done. However, the future is murky for Mr. Johnson who will have to face an un receptive European Union and other domestic issues including health care and public infrastructure. With the United Kingdom's split with the EU mostly confirmed, it is unclear how long it will take for Britain to

reclaim its 'Greatness'.

PAUL JOM,  
New Delhi

■ While taking huge comfort in such a mammoth win, Mr. Johnson will have his tasks cut out: striking new international trade deals, ensuring London retains its status as a top global financial capital, and, most importantly, keeping the country together. Labour's humiliating defeat and the rise of the Scottish National Party in Scotland with its anti-Brexit stance are nothing but a pointer to the changing political landscape. M. JAYARAM,  
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

### Water planning

There must be constant monitoring of water tables in every district, with updated data every month. This is also an opportunity to focus on urban water bodies which scarcely receive attention. In a country such as India, where water scarcity can

# Rape, rage, and an exchange of fire

While the rape and murder of a young veterinarian on the outskirts of Hyderabad sparked fear and outrage across the country, the killings by the police of the four accused have been met with mixed reactions. **Abhinay Deshpande** pieces together the details of the ghastly incidents

**T**wo weeks after his daughter was brutally raped and murdered in Hyderabad, rage has morphed into deep sorrow for Disha's\* father. He patiently recalls his 27-year-old daughter's hobbies. "She loved cooking for us," he says. "She also liked collecting saplings as she was interested in gardening." Disha's family lives in the suburbs of Hyderabad in a middle-class gated community with a small garden. "She was artistic; she used to turn scraps into artefacts. And of course, she loved animals." Disha was a kind-hearted person who got along well with people, he says.

Disha had always dreamt of becoming a doctor. She opted to become a veterinarian when she was selected to study a course at the P.V. Narasimha Rao Telangana Veterinary University. She landed a government job in Mahabubnagar in 2017, less than a year after she graduated. "She had no life beyond the family and her work," her father says.

Every day Disha would leave home at 8.30 a.m. on her scooter, a red-coloured Hero Maestro, which had been handed down by her father. She would park it near the Shamshabad Bus Station, 5 km from her home. From there, she would board a bus to reach her office, 37 km away. She would return home by 4.30 p.m. Disha was a creature of habit.

#### A deflated tyre one dark night

On the fateful day of November 27, Disha reached home by 5.00 p.m. She was having a busy day: she had scheduled an appointment with a dermatologist in Gachibowli that evening. She had been seeing a dermatologist once in three months, her father says, to get treated for a mild acne rash. At about 5.40 p.m., she again left home. She parked her scooter at the Tondupally toll plaza, 7 km from the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), along the Outer Ring Road, to catch a cab to Gachibowli. It must have been after 6 p.m. when she parked her scooter at the plaza. After her appointment, she returned by 9.30 p.m. to drive back home. Disha had called her mother earlier to say that she wanted watermelon for dinner and to ask if her mother, who had high blood pressure, wanted her to buy any medicines from a pharmacy nearby.

The spot where Disha parked her scooter is a busy area. Apart from vehicular traffic, there is always the drone of aircraft landing and taking off. In the dark, when she returned, Disha discovered that the rear tyre of her scooter had been deflated. As she wondered what to do, a man stepped out of the shadows to offer help. His name was Mohammed Arif and he was a 26-year-old lorry driver. Arif called his helper, Jollu Shiva, to fix the tyre. Shiva took her scooter away only to come back after a while to inform her that all the repair shops had closed. He told her that he would take the scooter in the other direction in search of shops.

Discomfited by this turn of events, Disha called her sister. She told her that she was afraid and urged her sister to continue talking to her as there were not many people in the area. Her sister asked her to leave the vehicle there. She said she would call back as she was on night shift that day. When she did, about 15 minutes later, Disha's phone was switched off.

According to the police, Arif and his two accomplices, Jollu Naveen and Chennakeshvu, abducted Disha and took turns to rape her. Arif forced a soft drink laced with alcohol down her throat. The noise from the aircraft and vehicles would have drowned any scream or sound from her, the police say. Jollu Shiva, who had taken her scooter away, returned with it and joined the men. Then the four of them together held her down and closed her mouth and nose for a long time. Disha died of asphyxiation. They then took her body to an underpass near Chatanpalli and set it on fire. Policy say that during interrogation, the four men confessed to having checked if Disha had burnt beyond identification. After the dastardly crime, they all went home.

#### \*Please dial 100 first\*

The next morning, the country woke up to terrible news of the heinous gang rape and murder of the young veterinarian. The incident brought back memories of the gang rape of a young girl in Delhi in December 2012. That crime had also involved a working woman and was as nauseating in its barbarity.

By the time a numbed female workforce reached their offices the next morning, the police were already on the lookout for the accused – a suspected lorry driver and his helpers. Fear gripped the city. Human Resources departments of hundreds of IT firms sent out intra-office emails and WhatsApp alerts, cautioning women employees to Dial 100 or use the Telangana police mobile app, 'Hawk Eye', in case of emergencies. Of the workforce in the 1,283 IT companies in Hyderabad, about 2.3 lakh are women. Most work in the day shift, some work at night. Many or-



A week after the rape and murder of the young vet, the four accused were shot dead by the police near the Chatanpalli underpass on the Hyderabad-Bengaluru highway. (Below) A huge crowd gathers at the site as the bodies are taken away. ■ NAGARA GOPAL



**C** She loved cooking, collecting saplings and was artistic. She was kind-hearted and liked by everyone.

DISHA'S FATHER

ganisations follow a rule: if a woman is working after 7 p.m., a male guard from the organisation should accompany her home in a cab rented by the company. As nearly all software companies offer cab drop services to their women employees, few commute to work by two-wheelers. However, a vast number of women own scooters and drive around the city.

"In case of any emergency or vehicle breakdown, please dial 100 or press the SOS button on the Hawk Eye app to reach out to police immediately," read a WhatsApp message sent by the vice president of a prominent IT company operating in HITEC City, a buzzing tech industry hub.

Sharing a WhatsApp message, a 28-year-old data analyst with a software company says her manager told all the women employees to call the police first if they were faced with any problem on the street. "My boss specifically told all of my female team members to contact the police even in the case of a bike or car tyre puncture," she says.

The police did not anticipate the reactions that came in. Within hours, as panic set in, working women began to reach out to the police in large numbers. The Cyberabad police WhatsApp number was so flooded with texts that it had to be deactivated. It was restored in less than 48 hours. What turned into a bigger nightmare for the police was the fact that Disha's real name became a top trending search keyword on prominent porn websites.

So pervasive was the fear that the Hawk Eye app was downloaded by over one lakh people in less than five days. For at least a week after the incident, Hyderabad looked like a ghost city. People retreated into the comfort of their homes, paralysed by the incident and trying to come to grips with the ugly side of their city.

#### Police inaction

Even as the police sprung into action that morning, they came under fire for

the manner in which they handled Disha's sister's complaint the night she was abducted. When Disha could not be contacted, her sister grew worried. Anxiety slowly turned into a sense of foreboding as the clock ticked on. Along with her colleagues, she went to the RGIA police station to file a missing person report. Later, her father joined her at the police station. There, instead of assuring them, the police subjected them to humiliating comments. Instead of registering a Zero FIR (where the information about a cognisable offence is received, irrespective of whether the police has got territorial jurisdiction or not), the police asked if Disha had a boyfriend, suggesting that she had eloped with him. They also refused to register an FIR saying the case did not fall in their jurisdiction, the family says.

Disha's sister says the police took a look at the CCTV cameras in the area and concluded that Disha did not return from Gachibowli that night. Disha's sister first reached the RGIA police station at about 11.30 p.m., she says, but the missing person FIR was registered only at 3.10 a.m. at the Shamshabad police station. After filing the report, the police drove around the area with Disha's father for two hours looking for her.

The police provided no explanation for either the delay in filing the report or for their failure in locating Disha's body. It was a milkman who spotted her burnt body on November 28 morning. He saw it first on his way to a farm and thought it was a camp fire. It was only on his way back, at around 7 a.m., that he realised that it was a body burning. He alerted the sarpanch who called the police.

Later, three policemen were suspended for dereliction of duty.

#### Four accused versus 10 policemen

Within 48 hours of the gang rape and murder, Arif, Jollu Shiva, Jollu Naveen and Chennakeshvu, all aged 20, were arrested from their villages on the Telangana-Karnataka border in Makthal mandal in Narayanpet district. The police had identified the lorry thanks to a large, unmistakable swastika symbol on its rear end, which was clearly visible in

the CCTV footage. They tracked down the owner, Srinivas Reddy, who told them about his employees and escorted them to Arif's home in Jaklair, about 50 km from Mahabubnagar city.

Arif had been plying the truck without a licence. Two days before the rape, he had been caught by Road Transport Authority officials in Mahabubnagar. Police say Arif used a rod from the vehicle to stall the lorry, thus preventing officials from towing it away. As the officials walked away, he drove away in his truck.

When the police arrived at Arif's doorstep, he led them to the other co-accused, who lived in Gudigandla village, about 48 km from Mahabubnagar.

The police changed the first FIR case, registered on November 28, from Section 174 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (death in suspicious circumstances) to Sections 376, 302, 506, 201, 392, and 120-B of the Indian Penal Code. All four men were at home when they were arrested; none of them had anticipated arrest.

While social media debated solutions to the problem of sexual assault in India, with many advocating death to rapists, pressure mounted on the police to solve the case. On December 6, exactly a week after the accused were arrested, the country woke up to the shocking news that all the four men were shot dead in what was described by the police as an "exchange of fire". The police claimed that the four men had tried to escape from police custody at the crime scene where they had been taken for a "reconstruction of the crime".

The Telangana police maintained that the young men, who were "not handcuffed" when they were taken to reconstruct the crime scene, attacked the police with sticks and stones before snatching away two pistols and opening fire. "In self-defence, our men retaliated

**C** Bullets from armed policemen in the thick of the night cannot ensure justice to victims or survivors of rape.

AKSHITA  
Working woman, Gachibowli

and minutes later all the four accused were shot dead," said Cyberabad Commissioner of Police, Vishwanath Channappa Sajjanar. Sajjanar, who is referred to by his colleagues as a "silent operator", is known to shun the lime-light. He has the unenviable reputation of having watched over more than a dozen 'encounters' in which 'criminals' were killed. He is simply called the "encounter specialist".

The gunning down of the accused led to celebrations in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and across the country. At the shoot-out site near the Chatanpalli underpass on the Hyderabad-Bengaluru highway, hundreds of people showered flowers on the policemen, burst firecrackers and distributed sweets.

But there are also many who are dismayed by the incident. "Bullets from armed policemen in the thick of the night cannot ensure justice to victims or survivors of rape. It is done in spite of our judicial system, but more worryingly, it sets the wrong precedent by making police the ultimate authority in dealing with crimes," says Akshita, who works for a start-up in Gachibowli.

Sreyta V.S., a postgraduate student from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, says that there are many issues that need to be addressed to tackle the problem of sexual assault. While tackling the problem of patriarchy will take time, effective law enforcement and separation of powers of the executive, judiciary and legislature are urgent, she says.

While inaugurating the new building of the Rajasthan High Court, the Chief Justice of India, S.A. Bobde, said justice can never become instant and loses its character if it becomes revenge.

#### More questions

As TV channels discussed the killings, more and more questions were raised about the police version. Why were the men not handcuffed? How did four men overpower 10 police officers? Why were all four of them, and not the two who snatched the guns, shot dead?

The police claims that Arif and Chennakeshvu snatched their weapons and opened fire, while Jollu Shiva and Jollu Naveen attacked them with stones and sticks. On the parched agricultural field, barely 300 m from the underpass where Disha's body was torched, the bodies of the accused lay on the ground with bullet wounds. Sources say that over 20 rounds were fired from both sides. The firing ceased within 15 minutes. However, no policeman was injured.

The four men were taken to Chatanpalli around 5.45 a.m., the police say. By 6.15 they were dead. The police maintains that the men were taken to the site early in the morning because an angry mob had threatened to cause chaos when the men were being shifted from Shadnagar police station to Cherlapally central jail. The police say the wea-

**C** He is not strong to attack the police and snatch their weapons. He was undergoing kidney dialysis.

KURMAIAH  
Chennakeshvu's father

pons were unlocked that day. The accused had not been handcuffed as the police wanted them to show them what had exactly happened that day, they say.

In Gudigandla village, Kurmaiah, Chennakeshvu's father, does not believe the police version. He says his son would not have had the strength to overpower the police as he had been suffering from end-stage renal disease.

"He is not strong to attack the police and snatch their weapons. He was undergoing kidney dialysis at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences in Hyderabad. Doctors had advised complete bed rest," says Kurmaiah, an agricultural labour. Chennakeshvu, a former truck driver who had been under Reddy's payroll, had become a cleaner less than a year ago on the advice of the doctor.

#### Probes into deaths of accused

On December 1, five days before the accused were killed, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao had ordered the immediate constitution of a fast-track court in Shadnagar to try the accused. He had instructed officials to take measures to speed up the trial of the case and award severe punishment to the accused persons. But none of this became necessary when all the four were killed.

Taking suo motu cognisance of media reports that the accused were killed by the police, the National Human Rights Commission ordered a detailed investigation into the incident. On December 7, a seven-member panel landed in Hyderabad. The team visited the Mahabubnagar Government Hospital, where the bodies had been preserved after autopsy. Disha's family also informed the NHRC team of the inaction of the Cyberabad police on November 27, when they went to lodge a missing person complaint. The investigation team headed by Senior Superintendent of Police, Manzil Saini, recorded the statements of the policemen involved, and the family members of the accused and the victim. But since then the NHRC probe has been stayed by the Supreme Court. The court set up an inquiry commission led by its former judge, Justice V.S. Sirpurkar, to probe the incident and complete the investigation within six months. Earlier, the Telangana High Court had directed that the bodies be preserved. In its order, the Supreme Court has allowed this position to continue until further orders.

\*The name Disha was given to the victim by the police after consulting her parents



## FROM PAGE ONE

As protests continue,  
Shah cancels NE visit

In Itanagar, thousands of university students boycotted examinations and led by the Rajiv Gandhi University Students' Union (RGUSU) and the Students' Union of NERIST (SUN) marched till the Raj Bhavan. The agitators submitted a memorandum to Governor B.D. Mishra, demanding that the amended Act should not be implemented in the State.

The Chief Ministers of Kerala, West Bengal and Punjab have refused to implement the legislation. A senior government official said the Central legislation came under the seventh schedule and was applicable to all States.

Sabarimala issue  
explosive now, says SC

The CJI said, "Yes, there is no doubt. But equally without doubt is the fact that the issue has been referred to a larger Bench. I have not constituted that Bench... The situation today is as it existed for a 1,000 years. For balance of convenience, we will not pass any order today. If the case is finally decided in your [women's] favour, we will ensure that every woman goes to Sabarimala. We will jail anybody who will not comply with the law... The situation has become explosive. We do not want a situation now where violence erupts. So, yes, there is a judgment [September 28], but it is

equally true that the issue has been referred."

Chief Justice Bobde said, "We know what you are saying is what any court would pass. But we are using our discretion here."

When the lawyers asked if the two women could go on their pilgrimage, Chief Justice Bobde said, "We are not passing any order stopping them. We are not passing any order..."

The court said the review petitions would be listed as soon as the seven-judge Bench gave its judgment. "I will be constituting the seven-judge Bench at the earliest," Chief Justice Bobde said.

SC says no minors  
were held in J&K

Justice R. Subhash Reddy reasoned orally that children may have been rescued from violence, detained for a few hours and sent home on the same day. He said this would have been done for the children's own safety.

"Sometimes it is safe for them also. Or they may get hurt... In Hyderabad, schoolchildren were agitating. They were taken to police stations and kept for two or three hours or somewhere else. Can we call that detention?" Justice Reddy said.

Justice Gavai said someone might have prepared the report and the DGP may have just signed the document.

Mr. Ahmad had objected to the first report filed by the judges' committee, saying it merely reproduced the information provided by the J&K police chief without any independent application of mind by the judges.

In that report, the committee quoted the police chief that "no child has been kept or taken into illegal detention by police authorities." He had said juveniles found in conflict with law were "strictly dealt with in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Act."

Fresh snowfall stops air,  
road traffic in Kashmir

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

A fresh spell of snowfall on Friday affected both air and surface link connecting the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country, while two persons died in two incidents. All the 26 flights scheduled for the Valley were cancelled due to poor visibility.

ity and snowfall that started on Thursday night. It's for the first time since 1990 that the air traffic at the Srinagar Airport remained closed for seven consecutive days till Friday. The road network, including the Srinagar-Jammu, the Srinagar-Poonch and the Srinagar-Kargil Highways, were also cut-off.

INTERVIEW | K.C. VENUGOPAL

## 'Delhi rally is start of a movement against BJP'

Congress leader says his party will make all sacrifices needed to resist onslaught on the Constitution

VARGHESE K GEORGE

*A rally at Delhi's Ramila Maidan on Saturday is the first national-level mobilisation by the Congress against the Narendra Modi government, says party general secretary in charge of organisation K.C. Venugopal in an interview.*

What is the Congress rally for?

■ The Congress has been campaigning at the grassroots against the anti-people policies of the Narendra Modi government. Unemployment is the highest in history, and every day we hear stories of unspeakable violence against women. An economic slowdown is upon us, and prices are rising. The Prime Minister is silent on these issues... Modiji is talking all the time and praising himself, but why is he not talking about the real issues confronting us? While people

are suffering, the government is looking for new divisive issues all the time. The CAB [the Constitution Amendment Bill] is an assault on the Constitution. Saturday's rally in Delhi is culmination of our ongoing campaign against the anti-people government but it is also the bugle for a widening of the agitation.

Isn't it a little too late?

■ That is an unfair criticism. We have been mobilising people for several weeks now. Now the entire country will rise in protest.



Are other parties participating in the rally? Is the Congress willing to reach out to others to make a front against the BJP?

■ Saturday's rally is by the Congress only, but we are absolutely clear that we shall make all sacrifices necessary to resist the BJP's onslaught on India's Constitution. We

have political battles to fight against other non-BJP parties at the State level, but we are clear about the priority. The BJP is ruining the country, and it must be stopped.

Is alliance with Shiv Sena part of that strategy? Does it also mean that the Congress has no fundamental principle at all?

■ The alliance with the Shiv Sena is, of course, part of the wider strategy but that is certainly not at the cost of our fundamental values and principles. The CMP [Common Minimum Programme] is very clear in its commitment to constitutional values, and that, indeed, is the wider political struggle in the country.

At the same time, we are

willing to overlook small differences and overcome ego issues to strive for the largest possible coalition against the BJP.

There is an ongoing campaign within the Congress for the return of Rahul Gandhi as party president. Will he be returning?

■ The overwhelming sentiment in the party is that he must take over as president. Some people have expressed it loudly. We all feel that he should be Congress president but we also defer to his decision. What is, meanwhile, clear is that Rahulji will be at the forefront of the movement against the highly incompetent, insensitive and anti-people government.



War of words: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addressing the media outside Parliament House on Friday. ■ PTI

Centre in talks with J&K,  
Ladakh on special status'

It is at a consultation stage, says official

VIJAYA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is holding consultations with the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh to grant them "special status" on the lines of Article 371 of the Constitution, a senior government official said.

The said provision is applicable in States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Karnataka to protect their unique cultural identity and economic interest.

In Maharashtra and Gujarat, the provision enables separate 'boards' in certain areas for 'equitable allocation of funds for developmental work' and 'adequate opportunity for employment in service un-

der the control of the State government.'

"The proposal is still at a consultation stage. The Centre has sought response from the two UTs," the official said.

On Friday, Congress leader Ambika Soni in the Rajya Sabha demanded that the UT of Ladakh be brought under the Sixth schedule of the Constitution to provide it protection as a tribal area.

"People in Leh and Ladakh were initially very happy and by and large welcomed the announcement of the Union Territory as opposed to the people of Kargil. However, that initial euphoria is now giving way to a lot of apprehension, fear and disenchantment... if they are not able to protect and safeguard their resources or their unique cultural identity," Ms. Soni said.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Shahid said that he had visited Beijing last month and said there was "goodwill in the Chinese leadership" to discuss the debt Maldives

## 'Maldives is negotiating China debt'

Visiting Foreign Minister differs from Speaker, who said country will scrap FTA

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

Maldives is working with China "practically" to discuss its approximately \$1.4 billion debt, said Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid, indicating that the Solih government does not intend to cancel infrastructure projects or loans at present as the ruling party had promised ahead of elections last year. The comments came even as former Maldives President Mohammad Nasheed, who is the Speaker of the Assembly said that Maldives would not go ahead with the Free Trade Agreement signed by the previous government, and that it was necessary to "restructure the debt" with China.

"People in Leh and Ladakh were initially very happy and by and large welcomed the announcement of the Union Territory as opposed to the people of Kargil. However, that initial euphoria is now giving way to a lot of apprehension, fear and disenchantment... if they are not able to protect and safeguard their resources or their unique cultural identity," Ms. Soni said.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Shahid said that he had visited Beijing last month and said there was "goodwill in the Chinese leadership" to discuss the debt Maldives

owed. "To be fair to China, it has been a generous donor. It has invested in housing and infrastructure projects. There has been irresponsible borrowing by the previous government and unfortunately we have to deal with it," he said in an exclusive interview, while in Delhi for Joint Commission talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar as well as to attend the 11th Delhi Dialogue on "Advancing Partnerships in the Indo-Pacific."

Mr. Nasheed, who is also the leader of the ruling MDP, made it clear that the FTA with China will "not go forward" as it has to be ratified in Parliament, and said the combined private and public loans totalled more than \$3.5 billion, which must be restructured, warning that otherwise there will be a debt crisis in the Maldives by 2022 when the loans come due.

Debt trap, says Nasheed

"If you are unable to restructure these projects or amend the course, I don't see a soft landing for the Maldives at present. If you lack vision or a set of principles to take things forward, then what you do becomes unsustainable," Mr. Nasheed told jour-



To be fair to China, it has been a generous donor. There has been irresponsible borrowing by the previous government and unfortunately we have to deal with it.

ABDULLA SHAHID,  
MALDIVES' FOREIGN MINISTER

nalists in India, accusing China of "inflating project costs" to "debt trap" the Maldives, and compared it to the British East India company.

Both Mr. Nasheed, who led a parliamentary delegation to India and Mr. Shahid, met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday. In a statement released by the MEA, Mr. Shahid "expressed his deep appreciation for India's support in various development cooperation initiatives that are currently being implemented in Maldives," and stressed the commitment of the Maldives government to its 'India First' policy.

After the joint commission meeting, India and the Maldives exchanged MoUs on cooperation between their Election commissions and Financial intelligence units, and the ratification of the extradition treaties agreed to earlier.

Centre makes key transfers,  
shifts Higher Education Secy.

Amit Khare will take over portfolio from R. Subrahmanyam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD/NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday transferred Higher Education Secretary R. Subrahmanyam to the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment as Secretary. Amit Khare was named the new Higher Education Secretary. Mr. Khare, formerly with the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, was holding additional charge of School Education after Rina Ray was shifted in October.

The Human Resource Development Ministry – under which Higher Education falls – has been negotiating with students of Jawaharlal Nehru University over growing protests against the fee hike.

The Centre also made key appointments in the top bureaucracy with T.V. Somnath as Secretary, Expenditure and Ravi Mittal as Secretary, Information and Broadcasting. A senior IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, Mr. Somnath fills a post lying vacant since October.

Mr. Somnath, a 1987-batch IAS officer, is at present serving in Tamil Nadu. His appointment fills in the vacancy created after G.C. Murmu was made Lieutenant-Governor of the newly created Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory.

Arun Goel has been made Secretary, Heavy Industries, having been shifted from the Ministry of Culture while Su-

nil Kumar has been made Secretary, Panchayati Raj. Mr. Goel is a senior IAS officer of the 1985 batch belonging to the Punjab cadre. Sunil Kumar is a U.P. cadre officer of the 1987 batch.

Rajesh Bhushan has been moved from the Cabinet Secretariat where he was serving as Secretary (coordination) to the Department of Rural Development as Secretary. V.P. Joy will be the new Secretary (Coordination).

Praveen Kumar, currently a Special Secretary with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, will take over as Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship following the retirement of K.P. Krishnan on December 31.



**IN BRIEF**

**U.S. asks India to protect rights of minorities**

WASHINGTON, DC After the Rajya Sabha passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and the President gave it his assent, the U.S. urged India to protect the rights of its religious minorities. "Respect for religious freedom and equal treatment under the law are fundamental principles of our two democracies. The United States urges India to protect the rights of its religious minorities in keeping with India's Constitution and democratic values," a State Department spokesperson said in a statement.

**Centre diverting attention: Kamal Nath**

NEW DELHI M.P. Chief Minister Kamal Nath said the Centre was resorting to "divisive politics and politics of distractions" to divert attention from the economic slowdown. "Anything that is divisive, we will not do it," he said, asked whether the State would follow other Opposition-ruled States that have talked of not implementing the Citizenship Act.

**Curfew in parts of Shillong relaxed for 12 hours**

SHILLONG The curfew imposed in parts of Shillong following violent protests was relaxed on Friday for 12 hours, beginning 10 a.m., with no untoward incident being reported from the areas, officials said. The curfew was imposed on Thursday night in areas under Sadar and Lumdiengjiri police station limits. PTI

**Law is 'discriminatory' against Muslims: UN**

GENEVA The United Nations human rights office voiced concern that India's new citizenship law is "fundamentally discriminatory in nature" by excluding Muslims and called for it to be reviewed. REUTERS

**Troubled times**



A demonstrator burning tyres on National Highway-17 at Boko in Kamrup, Assam, on Friday during a protest rally against the Citizenship Act. ■ PTI

## Tripura's erstwhile royal questions Citizenship Act

It's a violation of the Instrument of Accession, says Barman

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

Erstwhile royal Pradyot Deb Barman from Tripura said the Citizenship (Amendment) Act was a violation of the Instrument of Accession signed by the princely state to merge with the Union of India in 1947.

Mr. Barman, who quit the Congress recently, said he had moved the Supreme Court against the "unconstitutional" Act.

He accused the BJP of having brought in the legislation with an eye on the West Bengal Assembly elections in 2021. "We are being sacrificed."

Mr. Barman, who was invited to Delhi by Union Home Minister Amit Shah for a discussion, said Tripura was never under British rule and the State has already accommodated persecuted migrants from Bangladesh. "How much more can Tripura absorb? The States that have had no history of accommodating persecuted minorities and that do not share borders with Bangladesh have been exempted [from the Act]. They have exempted the Sixth Schedule [tribal] areas in Tripura, but



Pradyot Deb Barman

do you mean to say that Tripura belonged to someone else before that?" Mr. Barman said.

He said the saddest day of his life was when he saw Members of Parliament from the northeastern region voting in favour of the Act.

"Amit Shah invited us to know why protests were happening in Tripura. There was no application of mind while going ahead with the Bill. We filed an application in the Supreme Court two years ago for a National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Tripura. The NRC should have been conducted before the Citizenship Act [was amended]. How do you know who is an illegal and who is not? Then you may have exempted them under certain law," he said.

## Petitions pour into SC against Act

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Parliamentarians, activists, NGOs, former Service officers and others from various walks of life filed petitions in the Supreme Court on Friday, challenging the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, which was notified as law by the President.

The Supreme Court Registry received a steady stream of petitions challenging the various aspects of the law. But they all showed the central contention that the Act, meant to provide "benefits" to immigrants fleeing religious persecution, actually ends up dividing them on the basis of faith and nationality of origin.

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh said the Act created an "unconstitutional exclusionary regime".

# India-Japan summit in Guwahati cancelled

Abe's visit deferred to a mutually convenient date: MEA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The annual India-Japan summit, scheduled for December 15-17 in Guwahati, has been cancelled.

The announcement came after protesters against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill brought the city to a standstill. "With reference to the proposed visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to India, both sides have decided to defer the visit to a mutually convenient date in the near future," Ravneesh Kumar, spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), said.



Rush hour: People gathering at a shop to buy rations after curfew was relaxed in Guwahati on Friday. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

## BJP plans meetings to bust 'myths' about Act

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The BJP has decided to hold programmes across the country to bust "myths" around the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill cleared by Parliament in the winter session.

It has drawn up an elaborate exercise to hold workshops for leaders and spokespersons, as well as its social media team members, at various cities. Thereafter a more elaborate programme of meetings will be drawn up.

+

**Workshops for leaders**  
The workshops will be held between December 14 and 18 in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Guwahati.

Apart from senior leaders, two party workers from the media and social media cell are expected to attend each workshop.

The BJP did the same after the government diluted Article 370 that accorded special status to Jammu and Kash-



Students and artistes at a hunger strike in Guwahati on Friday. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

mir, mobilising leaders and workers and holding nearly 100 meetings.

The protests that have followed the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Assam and the north-eastern region, as well as in Delhi by students of the Jamia Millia Islamia, have prompted the party to act.

Party leaders say the decision to go ahead with the legislation has to be explained to party workers and the people at large. "We can't depend on the media alone to build the narrative," a senior leader said.

## CAB, NRC are internal issues: French envoy

'We respect India's democratic system'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PUDUCHERRY

France is aware of the internal debate going on in India on the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill (CAB) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), but these are issues on which other countries should refrain from commenting, French Ambassador to India Emmanuel Lenain said here on Friday.

Interacting with a select group of reporters at the French Consulate, Mr. Lenain said, "These are issues obviously discussed during official deliberations. We are aware of the ongoing debate in India on CAB and NRC. I don't think another government should interfere in India's domestic affairs. But we recall our attachment to the freedom of religion."

On the removal of special status to Jammu and Kashmir and its bifurcation, the Ambassador said France respects India's democratic system. "The country is

world's largest democracy," he added.

"Some issues are domestic and there are some issues that are decided through a democratic process. Our country is also attached to certain values and shares those with India," he said.

**J&K a complex issue**  
Recalling the statement of French President Emmanuel Macron on Article 370, he said the Jammu and Kashmir issue was complex. "It can only be solved through bilateral discussions. There is no benefit in internationalising the issue. All parties should refrain from any action that could aggravate the situation. We are following the situation very carefully and wish the situation would become normal as soon as possible. The rights of civilian population and their humanitarian concerns need to be respected," Mr. Lenain said.



**MARKET WATCH**

	13-12-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	41,010	1.05
US Dollar	70.83	0.00
Gold	38,486	-0.60
Brent oil	65.37	1.19

**NIFTY 50**

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	376.95	-4.45
Asian Paints	1743.95	-6.70
Axis Bank	752.00	29.90
Bajaj Auto	3232.90	-28.55
Bajaj Finance	9210.30	41.05
Bharti Airtel	427.80	-10.85
BPCL	496.75	5.00
Britannia Ind	3054.40	-19.15
Cipla	461.25	0.20
Coal India	196.25	6.10
Hero MotoCorp	2821.50	-84.15
Eicher Motors	22034.75	81.20
GAIL (India)	119.80	0.85
Grasim Ind	782.30	8.10
HCL Tech	543.15	6.80
HDFC	2354.50	36.05
HDFC Bank	1263.85	0.25
Hero MotoCorp	2358.15	4.10
Hindalco	208.25	6.80
Hind Unilever	2006.20	-1.15
ICICI Bank	537.05	1.70
IndusInd Bank	1485.40	41.25
Bharti Infralet	252.40	0.20
Infosys	711.30	9.20
Indian Oil Corp	128.25	0.15
ITC	241.60	3.05
JSW Steel	257.60	2.00
Kotak Bank	1692.75	-22.85
L&T	1305.30	25.60
M&M	516.20	4.30
Maruti Suzuki	7214.95	215.15
Nestle India Ltd.	14301.60	146.65
NTPC	115.65	1.20
ONGC	126.50	0.60
PowerGrid Corp	185.70	0.95
Reliance Ind	1582.90	14.70
State Bank	332.55	10.70
Sun Pharma	439.25	5.10
Tata Motors	176.70	3.35
Tata Steel	428.40	9.70
TCS	2071.25	50.35
Tech Mahindra	761.85	5.40
Titan	1186.15	-1.85
UltraTech Cement	4082.60	90.50
UPL	565.00	-4.95
Vedanta	149.40	5.40
Wipro	243.85	4.40
YES Bank	46.65	1.30
Zee Entertainment	279.70	-4.60

**EXCHANGE RATES**

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.61	70.93
Euro	78.90	79.26
British Pound	94.51	94.94
Japanese Yen (100)	64.44	64.74
Chinese Yuan	10.12	10.17
Swiss Franc	71.84	72.17
Singapore Dollar	52.22	52.46
Canadian Dollar	53.63	53.88
Malaysian Ringgit	17.08	17.16

Source: Indian Bank

**BULLION RATES CHENNAI**

December 13 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g) ..... 47.35 ..... (46.6)

22 ct gold (1g) ..... 3600 ..... (3597)

Source: Indian Bank

**Granules to sell full stake in China JV**

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD**

Granules India is selling its entire stake in Granules-BioCause Pharmaceutical Co., an equal joint venture in China, to JV partner HuBei BioCause Heilen Pharmaceutical Co for RMB 109 million.

The agreement follows an announcement in October by Granules about an intent to divest the stake in the JV, which it had formed in 2007 to ensure a regular supply of ibuprofen API to support its requirements for manufacturing pharmaceutical formulation intermediaries and finished dosages. The manufacturing facility of the JV is in Jingmen, China. One of the reasons it had cited for the stake sale decision were environmental issues that "created an atmosphere of business uncertainty in China."

To comply with regulatory issues, Granules BioCause Pharmaceuticals' production unit had invested and will continue to invest substantial capex, which is contrary to Granules India's strategy of reducing capex outflow, the company had said.

# No talks yet in FinMin on GST hike: FM

FDI in first half up 13% at \$35 bn, says CEA in update on progress made after recent reform measures

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has not yet discussed proposing, to the Goods and Services Tax Council, an increase in tax rates, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday.

Last month, the Ministry had written to all States seeking suggestions on increasing GST revenues, including looking at the rates of tax and compensation cess on various items.

Since then, several officials had unofficially confirmed to the media that a proposal to increase GST rates was on the cards.

"The buzz is everywhere else other than in my office," she informed the media.

"I don't know where this is coming from. I have not been to the GST Council, so if it is to request them for a hike in rates or ask them to



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur in New Delhi on Friday. ■R.V. MOORTHY

review, nothing has been spoken among ourselves [the Minister and the Secretaries in the Finance Ministry]. We have not had any conversation on it yet on what we want to go to the GST Council for which data was available.

The Minister, however, refused to say if such a proposal was off the table. GST revenues had crossed the ₹1 lakh-crore mark in only four out of the eight months during the current financial year for which data was available.

In a presentation on recent progress made following reform measures by the government, Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian said more than 60% of the dues of 32 central public sector enterprises had been cleared in the last two months.

**Repo-rate linked loans**

He further said following the Reserve Bank of India's guidelines mandating banks to link their lending rates to external benchmarks, all public sector banks had introduced repo rate-linked loan products. As of November 27, 8.18 lakh repo-linked loans, amounting to ₹72,201 crore, had been sanctioned, he said.

On steps to boost investment, Mr. Subramanian said the government's continuous liberalisation reforms had resulted in record fo-

reign direct investments of \$35 billion in the first half of 2019-20, up from \$31 billion in the first half of the previous year.

Further, the government had already undertaken 66% of the budgeted capital expenditure of ₹3.38 lakh crore for the year.

He said the composition of employment in the country was gradually changing.

While casual workers made up 30% of the workforce in 2011-12, they made up 25% in 2017-18.

This shift has been towards salaried employment, which rose to 23% in 2017-18 from 17% in 2011-12.

In the same period, the proportion of workers in agriculture had decreased to 44% from 49%.

The proportion in services had increased to 31% from 27%, and in manufacturing to 25% from 24%.

**Exports contract for fourth month in a row**

Imports see steeper decline at 12.7%

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

leather and leather products and readymade garments of all textiles contracted by 13.12%, 8.14%, 15.10%, 5.29% and 6.52%, respectively. In November, oil imports declined 18.17% to ₹10.6 billion, while non-oil imports contracted 10.26% to ₹27.04 billion.

Cumulatively, during April-November 2019, exports declined 1.99% to ₹21.93 billion while imports contracted 8.91% to ₹318.78 billion.

Trade deficit for the period narrowed to ₹54.06 billion as against ₹82.47 billion in April-November 2018-19.

EEPC India Chairman Ravinder Sehgal said though engineering exports had put up a reasonably good show with 6.32% growth in November 2019, the external trade environment remains challenging and subdued.

## RBI central board meets over cooperative banks

Review in the backdrop of PMC scam

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

BHUBANESWAR

The RBI Central Board on Friday reviewed functioning of the urban cooperative banks and enforcement framework in the backdrop of scam in the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank affecting lakhs of depositors.

The Central Board headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das also discussed the current economic situation, as well as the domestic and global challenges facing the country, the central bank said in a release.

"The Board's discussions focussed on issues related to urban cooperative banks, extension of enforcement policy and framework to cooperative banks and NBFCs (non-banking financial companies)," it said.

Following exposure of the scam in the PMC Bank, which had over 9.15 lakh depositors, the RBI had imposed restrictions on with-



drawals. Statutory inspection of PMC by the RBI had revealed large group exposure towards Housing Development and Infrastructure Ltd's (HDIL) group companies to the tune of about ₹6,226.01 crore (inclusive of interest accrued in the related accounts).

Out of the total exposure of ₹6,226.01 crore at the end of March 2019 to the HDIL group, only ₹439.58 crore was disclosed to the RBI and the remaining ₹5,786.43 crore remained undisclosed.

dent, research, Religare Broking.

"The news report on a possible trade deal between the U.S. and China have arrived at a consensus on the first phase of their trade talks. Getting very close to a big deal with China. They want it, and so do we!" tweeted U.S. President Donald Trump.

Interestingly, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net buyers at ₹116 cr., while domestic institutions bought ₹385 cr. in shares

added. Reports suggested U.S. and China have arrived at a consensus on the first phase of their trade talks. "Getting very close to a big deal with China. They want it, and so do we!" tweeted U.S. President Donald Trump.

Meanwhile, shares of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank lost nearly 7% on Friday to close at ₹52.05.

The bank made a strong debut on the bourses on Thursday with its shares surging more than 70% to touch a high of ₹62.80 compared with its issue price of ₹37 apiece.

## Moody's cuts India GDP forecast to 5.6% for 2019

Slow job growth weighs on consumption

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service on Friday said it had lowered its 2019 GDP growth forecast for India to 5.6% as slow employment growth weighed on consumption.

It expected economic growth to pick up in 2020 and 2021 to 6.6% and 6.7%, respectively, but sees the pace of growth remaining lower than in the past.

"We have lowered our 2019 gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast for India to 5.6%, which is lower than the 7.4% growth in 2018," Moody's said in a report.

"India's economic growth has decelerated since mid-2018, with real GDP growth slipping from nearly 8% to 5% in the second quarter (April-June) of 2019," it

noted. Growth further slipped to 4.5% in July-September quarter.

**Weak demand**

"Consumption demand has cooled notably, with slow employment growth weighing on consumption," it said. "We expect economic growth to pick up in 2020 and 2021 to 6.6% and 6.7%, respectively, but the pace of growth will remain lower than in the recent past."

Moody's said fiscal measures undertaken by the government, such as corporate tax rate cuts, bank recapitalisation, infrastructure spending plans, support for the auto sector and others, do not directly address widespread weakness in consumption demand, which has been the chief driver of the economy.

The winner will design, structure and implement the auction process, advise on setting the rules for the bidding and develop an optimum auction plan, among other things.

## Endress+Hauser to invest ₹100 crore in plant

Swiss major to invest in flow technologies, making 'smart' products

# In Binoche's company

NAMRATA JOSHI

Hollywood's never held sway with the French actor. Instead, her 35-year career and 60-odd films have been about great directors and daring themes



GETTY IMAGES

FILM REVIEWS

## Mardaani 2

*Mardaani 2* engages with the gender issue in the all-too-familiar stereotypical way

NAMRATA JOSHI

Disclaimer: this review contains spoilers. Somewhere at the very start of *Mardaani 2*, cop Shivani Shivaji Roy compares and contrasts police with the media – “Police media nahin kt bina saboot ke faisa suna de” (the police is not like the media who pronounce judgement without any evidence) – and irony dies in the light of the recent vigilante justice incidents.

It's back to the line of duty: a woman cop fighting crimes against women. Roy returns in the *Mardaani* sequel, this time tracking down a serial rapist and killer. Gopi Puthran takes over as the director, the scene of crime shifts to the student hub of Kota, and we have a new actor – Vishal Jethwa – playing the villain.

Mukherji continues to play the cop in a solid, no-frills, straightforward way though the few tears

threatening to roll down her eyes get held back a tad too consciously. And for a cop as smart as her, it is hard to digest the fact that she can't ‘see’ the villain who is hiding in plain sight.

The film tries to address the larger gender question – the perceived social ‘threat’ of women taking over and gradually ‘becoming’ men – and aligns it with caste and politics. There is one brief, rousing moment where Roy talks about how *barabari* (equality) is too distant a dream, there is not even a modicum of *hissedari* (sharing and participation) in the man-woman dynamics.

There are statistics thrown at the audience during the credits at the end of the movie. However, the gender debate doesn't rise above the familiar and the stereotypical; in fact, barely any compelling layer gets added.

The larger design remains more

Stereotypical Rani Mukherji in a still from the film ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

### Mardaani 2

DIRECTOR: Gopi Puthran

STARRING: Rani Mukherji, Vishal Jethwa

STORYLINE: Cop Shivani Shivaji Roy returns to the scene of crime in the sequel to *Mardaani*, this time tracking down a serial rapist and killer

RUN TIME: 103 minutes

of an unusually short and crisp cat-and-mouse thriller. One which feels not so fully realised, that rushes to finish in a hurry and leaves one dissatisfied.

Just as in the previous outing, the criminal is shown lurking among us – a deviant posing as a regular – though Jethwa is too deliberately mannered and not half as effective in evoking menace as

Tahir Bhasin was in the previous movie. Rape is portrayed as a psychological aberration, an inheritance of perversion than patriarchal power play. The device of a criminal talking to the audience creates its own mixed messaging: Is he making the audience his friend or implicating society in rape culture?

The script takes expected turns specially the way the climax is laid out. Blood and gore and a mob justice solution of the 2014 film gets toned down. Whether it is fear, loathing or anger, it's not able to tap into or channel any of our collective feelings.

Or is it that we have grown immune to things, especially when reality is getting far more horrific and complicated than its portrayal in cinema?

Barely any physical humour in *Jumanji 2* is memorable. An adventure comedy, which has all the budget at its disposal, can do with better wit than taking jibes at eunuchs and severed ‘balls’ (which is censored in India). In the third act, there's the familiar emotional drama, which hints at the next edition, as is the case with all franchise films that ride on routine. In this one, the emotions lie in an old friendship between ageing men and dwindling self-worth because of Instagram, literally. The placement of these two elements in the script is calculated and forced that you can almost envision the execs, high-fiving each other at their collective genius.

The idea of ‘evil’ in the film is the same old desire for global control and destruction of indigenous peaceful tribes. A film that ushers you into the wild has so much potential to subliminally talk about the hot topic of the day: the climate crisis. But there's no allegory here, and looking for one is a far-fetched dream, more so when the core tenets of this film, of humour and adventure, are both barely above average.

## Lost in the wild

Only Awkwafina and Jack Black manage to carry *Jumanji: The Next Level*'s humour through the finish line

KENNETH ROSARIO

Like with most sequels, reboots, franchises, and calculated business ventures disguised as ‘entertainment’, *Jumanji: The Next Level* struggles to find a purpose. Why do we need this film? Beyond making money and merchandises, there seems to be no justifiable answer. Even the world-building – which is at the core of this film set in a video game – is as clichéd as clichéd gets, with characters entering familiar landscapes and yelling ‘We gotta get outta here!’. An un-



Did we need this film? Awkwafina (left) and Dwayne Johnson in a still ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ending desert, an oasis evil town that looks like a stereotype of the Middle East (of course), and a snow-capped climax – nothing inventive. As for execution, it is surprisingly sloppy at points, making me wonder if the effort to balance the 3D frames over my glasses was even worth it.

What's new and kind of enjoyable is the body-swapping between characters in the game. Those who re-enter the *Jumanji* universe in the sequel, find themselves in mismatched characters this time around. Then when another bout of body exchanges follow, it's sup-

posed to be hilarious. But most of the cast, including Dwayne Johnson and Kevin Hart, are unable to pull off the differences, and are rather inconsistent. It's Awkwafina and Jack Black, with their goofiness, who show how it's done, and the possibility of what could have been, if the film invested more in the characters, dialogues, and plot, rather than just setting up a grand world that's marketable. Awkwafina, especially, demonstrates how comedy can be done with a straight-face without requiring high-pitched tone and exaggerated expressions.

■ Mardaani 2 ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

### Jumanji: The Next Level

DIRECTOR: Jake Kasdan  
CAST: Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Kevin Hart, Karen Gillan, Nick Jonas, Awkwafina, Alex Wolff, Morgan Turner, Madison Iseman, Danny Glover, Danny DeVito

STORYLINE: Spencer, Fridge, Martha, and Bethany reunite after Spencer decides to re-enter the Jumanji universe  
RUN TIME: 123 minutes

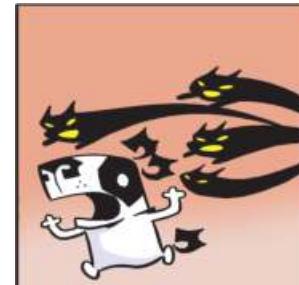
on being chased by cat demons: they're just as lazy as cats.

■ Jumanji: The Next Level ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

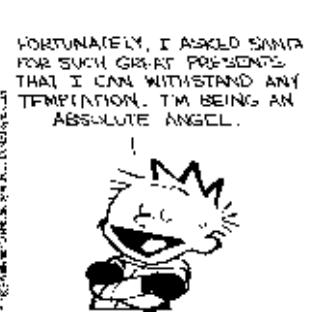
## PEANUTS



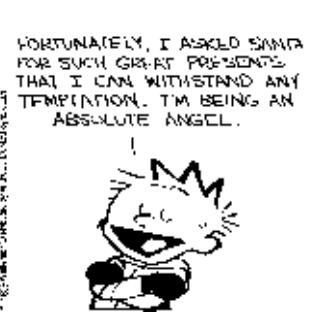
## POOCH CAFE



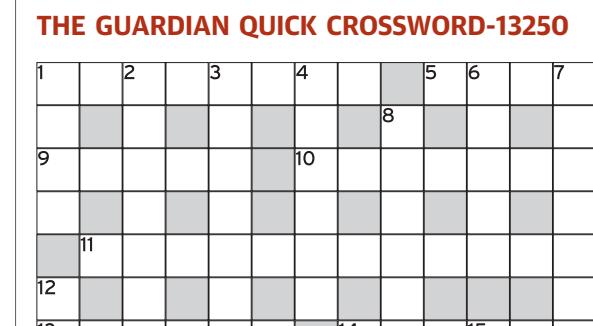
## CALVIN AND HOBBES



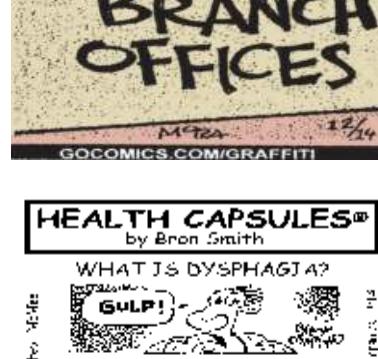
## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



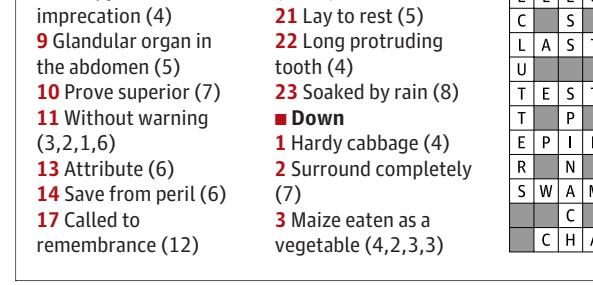
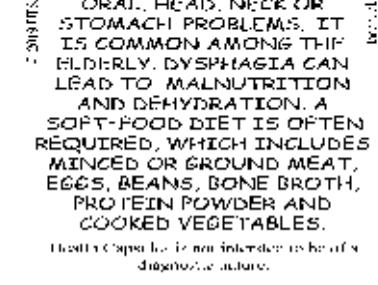
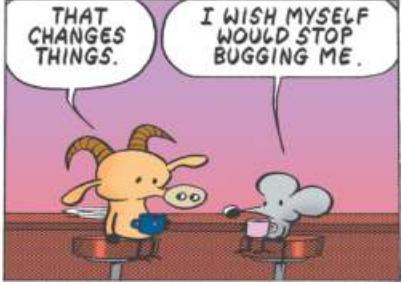
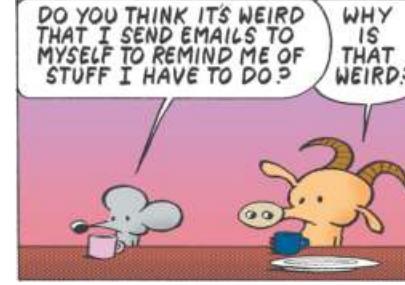
## TIGER



## WUMO



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Solution will appear in The Hindu dated December 16, 2019.

Solution No. 13249

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CMYK



The latest from Audible Suno is *Thriller Factory*, helmed by Anurag Kashyap, and is one of over 60 exclusive Indian shows

ANAHTA PANICKER

In a recording studio in Andheri, Tabu sits in front of a microphone. “Babes,” she says, in a voice deeper than hers, “Mujhe paise ki za-roorat hai (I need money).” Her brows are furrowed as she leans into the mic, flitting between the performances of a confused woman, demanding man, and a tense narration.

The actor is lending her voice to one of the 10 episodes of the free Android app Audible Suno’s *Thriller Factory*. Careful to not give too much away, Tabu says her story, *Kala Gulab*, follows a young woman stuck in a trap.

The audio show, overseen by filmmaker Anurag Kashyap, ties together crime and intrigue in an homage to Hindi mystery novels. Kashyap explains that the episodes’ writer, Pravesh Bhardwaj, undertook an eight-month-long journey to perfect the scripts, which were largely inspired by the works of the late Hindi author, Ved Prakash Sharma. “Sometimes they were edited, sometimes adapted, and sometimes an element was borrowed and [built upon],” he says.

The pulp noir series is one of an offering of over 60 original audio shows curated exclusively for Indian listeners on the Audible Suno app. With a different actor voicing each of its 40-minute episodes, *Thriller Factory*’s narrators also include names like Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Sachin Khedekar and Sapan Saran.

On what drew him to the medium, Kashyap says, “[The medium is] a storyteller and also a literature professor.” He describes how audio books lend themselves to the genre, layered over the traditional experience of reading a text. “The music, sound design, pauses, breathlessness and sense of a chase – the emotions [are] heightened,” he adds.

Exploring Sharma’s literature seemed like a natural choice for Kashyap. “I grew up reading pulp [fiction] from him and other writers. [The books] have dramatic titles that sound great in English, but in Hindi, it’s kind of kitschy and funny in a tongue-in-cheek way.” Bhardwaj adapted the stories and directed the

## Also on Audible

**Kaali Awaazein:** Amitabh Bachchan’s voice will guide listeners through a collection of 10 horror stories inspired by incidents around the country

**My Ex-Breast:** Writer-director Tahira Kashyap offers an intimate conversation about her journey surviving breast cancer. **She Says She’s Fine:** Dr Munjal Kapadia, a gynaecologist, delves into women’s questions surrounding sex and reproductive health and unpacks the shame and guilt often associate with these topics.

**Picture Ke Peeche:** Film critic Rajeev Masand hosts this deep-dive into beloved Hindi films from the last two decades, alongside their stars and directors.

**The Unexperts:** Comic Abish Mathew brings together a panel of his comedians or “unexperts” to share their bizarre opinions from relatives, to artificial intelligence and supernatural beings.

episodes, but the first episode, *Apni Katli ki Supari* – narrated by Siddiqui – is co-directed by Kashyap.

For Kashyap and Siddiqui, the process was reminiscent of their childhood, since they grew up listening to radio. “On Vividh Bharti [artists] would narrate movies, and I used to wait for every Sunday,” shares the director.

Tabu has been revisiting the audio book experience for years now through Hermann Hesse’s 1951 book of self-discovery, *Siddhartha*. “This was the only audio book I had, and I still have it,” she shares. The trio usually find the time to delve into aural stories as they travel. The increasing traffic and growing economy were driving factors behind Audible’s decision to arrive in India last year. Perhaps it will be in the midst of glacial city travels that vernacular pulp fiction will reincarnate. Let’s hope we won’t have to wait too long.

## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13250

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# Woods' secret to battling Father Time: staying in the present

The 43-year-old golfer has fought back from injuries and personal troubles to resume his pursuit of Jack Nicklaus' record of 18 Major titles. But he's taking it one swing at a time

**C**It had taken Jack a lifetime to get there... he was 46. I'm just proud of what I've done... Unfortunately, tomorrow is never promised. So I just enjoy the moment

**C**My body may not be in peak shape, but my mind is. Putting has been difficult because bending is tough on the back. When I enter a tournament, I find a way to manage the stiffness and get the job done on the fly



ASHWIN ACHAL

**T**here was a buzz in the air at the start of the final round of the Hero World Challenge at Albany Golf Course. A big crowd had gathered at the first tee box, to watch and cheer for tournament host and star attraction Tiger Woods.

Woods was only two shots behind the leader, Gary Woodland, and was expected to make one of his famous come-from-behind runs. The American, who walked the course with purpose and focus, evoked a thunderous ovation when he made a birdie on the seventh to take the sole lead.

A bogey on the 14th, however, put paid to Woods' hopes of claiming the trophy. He finished fourth, three shots behind eventual champion Henrik Stenson, but those present at the course got a glimpse of the renowned self-belief so synonymous with Woods.

By his own admission, this self-belief was absent not too long ago. At the time, Woods was riddled with injuries and personal troubles, which came to a head when he was charged with driving under the influence in Florida in May 2017. Woods was found to have a combination of painkillers and sleep drugs in his system, and the unpleasant police mug-shot only confirmed a shocking fall from grace. Woods looked to be down for the count, with speculation rife that he was set to walk away from the sport.

**Turning the clock back**  
And then, in what must surely rank among the greatest comeback stories in sport, Woods turned back the clock with a vintage performance at the 2019 Masters. Two shots behind leader Francesco Molinari, he fired a two-under final round to wear the coveted Green Jacket for the fifth time. The epic

win in April gave him a new lease on life. Woods, after all the ups and downs in his long career, established himself, once again, as a world-class golfer.

**Tying Snead**  
A few months after his Augusta triumph, Woods won the Zozo Championship to match Sam Snead's all-time PGA Tour record of 82 titles. The awe-inspiring Woods of old was well and truly back in action.

"2019 has been incredible – I won a Major again, and I tied with Sam. To come back from what I've endured – it's been pretty good. To have won a Major championship again, with my family and friends present there for that moment... There were times when we thought that moment would never happen again," Woods said on the eve of the Hero World Challenge.

The 43-year-old got the chance to relive those great

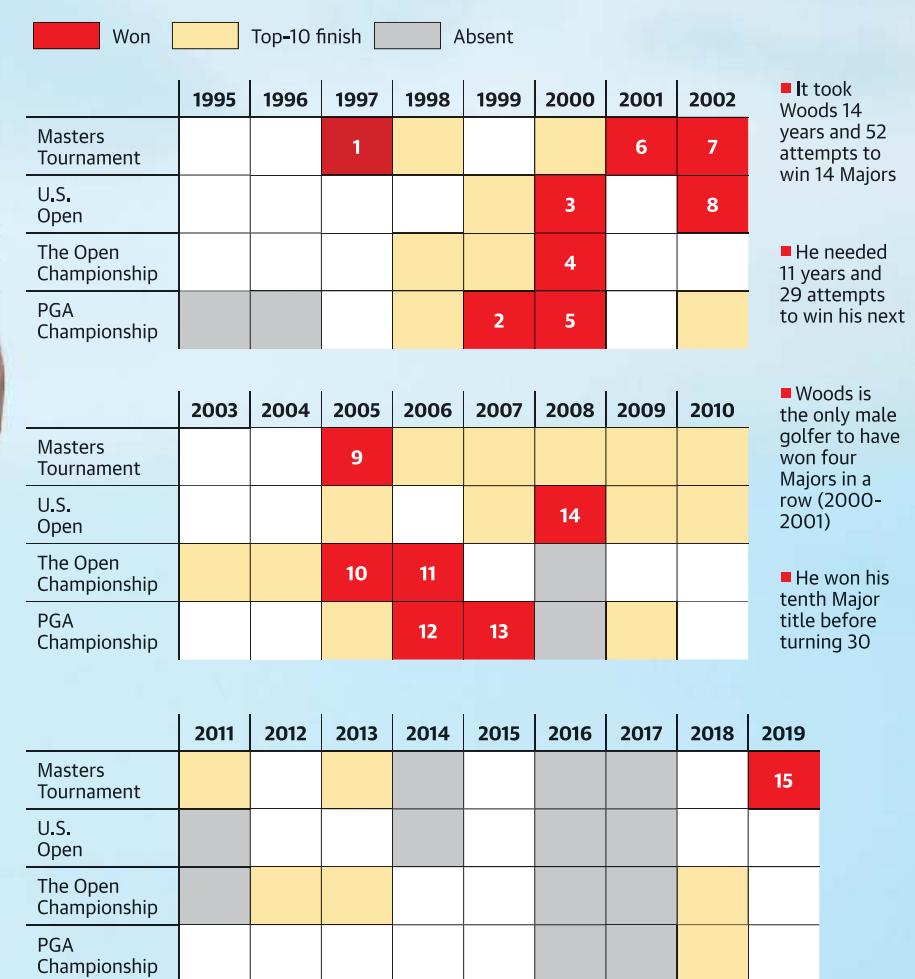
memories, when he watched the Masters highlights with caddie Joe LaCava. The duo have been together since 2011, after Woods ended his 13-year relationship with bagman Steve Williams.

"Joe and I had a few beers and watched it on television," Woods said. "We spoke about the conversations we had over each shot; some of our friends and family who were there were like, 'Oh my god, you guys really talked about that?' We were running through all the scenarios, with Joe and I looking at the boards. We were trying to figure out what was going on; who birdied what, who was making a move. You heard roars and tried to figure how many holes ahead it is, and who would be on that hole. It was a lot of fun watching the run and sharing it with Joe, because he has been through all the tough times with me."

Woods has had to deal with the demands of an ageing,

## Tiger down the years

The chart plots Woods' performance at the Majors from his debut in 1995 (aged 19) to his most recent appearance this year (aged 43)



## Most Major titles

**18 JACK NICKLAUS**  
1962-1986

**15 TIGER WOODS**  
1997-2019

**11 WALTER HAGEN**  
1914-1929

**9 BEN HOGAN**  
1946-1953

**9 GARY PLAYER**  
1959-1978

*The U.S. Amateur and The Amateur Championship were once considered to be Majors, but they are no longer recognised as such. Wins in these competitions are not included in the list*

Palmer. Guys like Arnold and Gary Player played all over the world. They set the precedent that golf can grow around the world, and it has. For me to be a part of that growth, and to see so many new young faces with a golf club – whether it was me who inspired it or not – is great for the game."

There is one elusive record that will truly cement Woods' spot in the list of all-time great sportspersons. Woods is three shy of Jack Nicklaus' tally of 18 Major wins – the highest statistical peak on the golf range. It is a tough ask, but Woods still has some time to pull it off.

"It had taken Jack a lifetime to get there, until he was 46. I'm just proud of what I've done... Unfortunately, tomorrow is never promised. So I live in the present and enjoy the moment," he said.

(The writer was in Nassau recently on invitation from Hero MotoCorp)

## GAME THEORY

GRAPHIC: KANNAN SUNDAR

### Charting Arsenal's Premier League decline

The Gunners are ninth on the table, heading into the weekend's home game against defending champion Manchester City. A consistent top-four side for much of the Premier League era, the North London club has struggled in recent years. We take a look at the numbers behind its slide:

#### TOP-LINE NUMBERS

Compared with the 10 previous completed seasons, Arsenal has won a smaller percentage of its games and dropped more points in its current campaign (after 16 of 38 games)

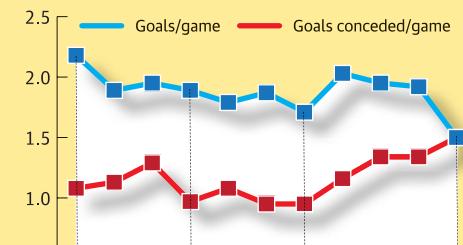
Season	Position	Win%	Points/game
2009-10	3	60.53%	1.97
2010-11	4	50.00%	1.79
2011-12	3	55.26%	1.84
2012-13	4	55.26%	1.92
2013-14	4	63.16%	2.08
2014-15	3	57.89%	1.97
2015-16	2	52.63%	1.87
2016-17	5	60.53%	1.97
2017-18	6	50.00%	1.66
2018-19	5	55.26%	1.84
2019-20	9	31.25%	1.38

In 2016-17, Arsenal recorded its second-best win% and second-best points/game ratio of this 11-year period, but had its second-worst finish, a measure of how tight it was at the top that season. The club hasn't finished in the top four since then.

Arsene Wenger exited in 2018 after Arsenal finished fifth and sixth in successive seasons. These were the only seasons during his 22 years in North London in which the club finished outside the top four

#### DRY IN FRONT, LEAKY AT THE BACK

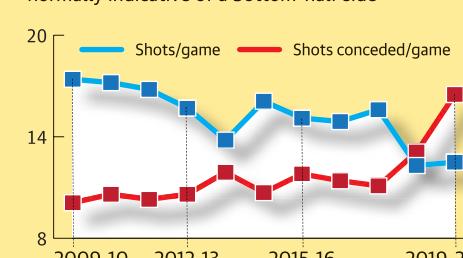
Arsenal is conceding more goals than it has since 2009-10; indeed, the last three years have been particularly bad. To compound matters, it's also scoring fewer goals



The side has struggled to score from open play in 2019-20: only 58.33% of its goals have come this way, its lowest percentage in these 11 seasons

#### SHOT-SHY AND UNDER ATTACK

The shot data offer a sense of Arsenal's struggles at both ends of the pitch. Over the years, it has progressively taken fewer shots per game and allowed opponents to take more per game. This is worrying because shots correlate positively with goals. In 2018-19 and so far in 2019-20, it has conceded more shots than it has taken – numbers normally indicative of a bottom-half side



#### LAST WORD

In summary, Arsenal, in recent seasons, hasn't done as much with and without the ball as it has in the past: it has taken fewer shots and completed fewer defensive actions per game. What's more, it has allowed opponents to take more shots and spend more time in its third. It will need to address all of these issues if it wants to turn things around.

#### IN RETREAT

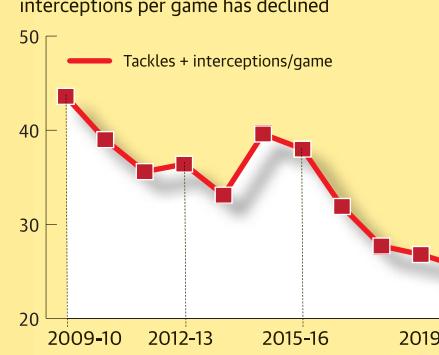
The positional breakdown is in consonance with the goal and shot data. Between 2009-10 and 2017-18, Arsenal, on average, spent 25% of the game in its own third, 44% in the middle third and 31% in the opponent's third. In these last two seasons, its time in its own third has increased and its time in the opposition third has decreased – not ideal if you're looking to score and prevent the opposition from scoring



Source: whoscored.com

#### LESS ACTIVE WITHOUT THE BALL

Arsenal's possession numbers haven't changed significantly since 2009-10 (it averages 56.5% over the last four seasons and 56.7% in the seven previous seasons), but it's completing fewer defensive actions without the ball: the sum of its tackles and interceptions per game has declined



Unai Emery was sacked in late November, with Arsenal eighth in the Premier League and without a win in seven games across all competitions. Under Emery, the club finished fifth in 2018-19

# Every game we play is with the World Cup in mind: Arun

India returns to the one-day format for the first time in four months with the series against the West Indies



**Power of wrist spin:** India's bowling coach B. Arun says that, on their day, Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav can prove to be match-winners. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Rain truncates play again

## SL IN PAKISTAN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
RAWALPINDI

Pakistan's first home Test in a decade was affected by bad weather on Friday, with rain and an already sodden pitch forcing officials to suspend play on the third day of the contest against Sri Lanka.

After day three's first session was washed out, only 27 minutes of play was possible. In the 5.2 overs bowled during the day, Sri Lanka progressed to 282 for six from 263 for six, with Dhananjaya de Silva remaining unbeaten on 87 and Dilruwan Perera on six.

Consolation win for Sindhu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GUANGZHOU

Already out of the reckoning, India's P.V. Sindhu recorded a consolation win over China's He Bingjiao in the third Group A match to end her campaign on a positive note at the year-ending BWF World Tour Final here on Friday.

Sindhu, whose title defence lay in tatters after her second successive loss on Thursday, scripted an incredible turnaround after being 9-18 down in the opening game to eventually outwit Bingjiao 21-19, 21-19 and finish third in the group.

## Bravo does a u-turn, to play T20Is

### DOMINIC RICHARD CHENNAI

Former West Indies captain Dwayne Bravo announced his return to international cricket here on Friday, making himself available for selection to the West Indies T20I side in the lead-up to the T20 World Cup in Australia next year.

"I'd be making a return to international T20 cricket, but not ODIs or Tests. "I want to fully commit myself to the West Indies

cricket team and play the T20 World Cup," said the all-rounder at a media interaction.

Bravo had called time on his international career in October last year.

"(Kieron) Pollard is a very passionate guy. His leadership skills are good.

"The coach-captain relationship is very important for any team.

"He and Phil (Simmons) enjoy a good relationship, said Bravo.



Bravo. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Starc puts Kiwis on the backfoot

### NZ IN AUSTRALIA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PERTH

A stunning catch by Steve Smith snared the prized wicket of Kane Williamson as Mitchell Starc tore through the New Zealand top-order on the second day of the first Test on Friday.

Smith dived to his right a second slip to remove Williamson for 34 off the bowling of Starc just when it appeared that the Kiwis were fighting back after losing the openers with just one on the board.

After Australia posted 416, the visitors were struggling at 109 for five in reply at stumps, still 307 in arrears.

Ross Taylor, who put on 76 for the third wicket with Williamson and had made 290 in his previous Test in Perth, was battoning on 66 and B-J Watling was yet to score.

Smith's catch was a key moment as the Kiwis slumped to 97 for five, losing three wickets for just 20 runs. Starc (4-31) did the damage with four wickets, including those of Henry Nicholls (7) and nightwatch-

man Neil Wagner (0) off successive balls.

Australia had also lost opening bowler Josh Hazlewood to a left hamstring injury after he had bowled opener Jeet Raval (0) in his first over.

### SCOREBOARD

**Australia — 1st innings:** David Warner c & b Wagner 43, Joe Burns lbw b de Grandhomme 9, Marnus Labuschagne b Wagner 143, Steve Smith c Southee b Wagner 43, Mathew Wade b Southee 12, Travis Head c Southee 56, Tim Paine c Watling b Southee 39, Pat Cummins b Raval 20, Mitchell Starc c Williamson b Southee 30, Nathan Lyon c de Grandhomme b Wagner 8, Josh Hazlewood (not out) 0; Extras (b-2, lb-1, nb-2, w-8); 13; Total (in 146.2 overs): 416.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-40, 2-75, 3-207, 4-225, 5-301, 6-325, 7-363, 8-408, 9-416.

**New Zealand bowling:** Southee

30.2-7-93-4, Ferguson 11-47-0, Wagner 37-7-92-4, de Grandhomme 22-8-37-1, Santner 33-5-111-0, Raval 13-1-33-1.

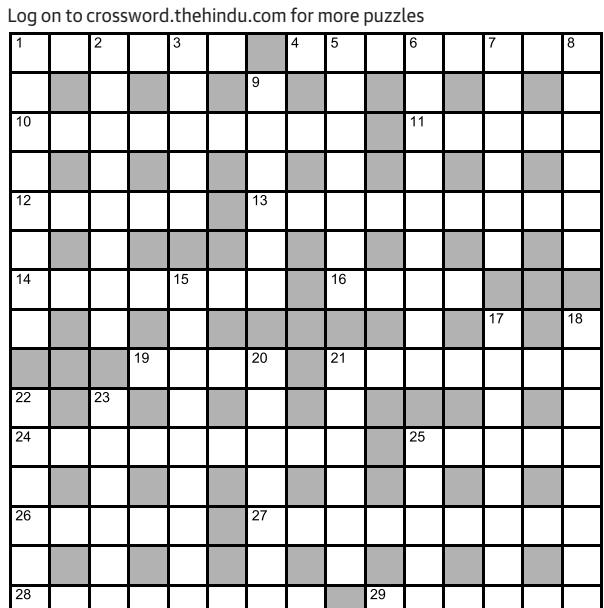
**New Zealand — 1st innings:** Jeet Raval b Hazlewood 1, Tom Latham c & b Starc 0, Kane Williamson c Smith b Starc 34, Ross Taylor (batting) 66, Henry Nicholls c Paine b Starc 7, Neil Wagner b Starc 0, B-J. Watling (batting) 0; Extras (b-1): 1; Total (for five wkts. in 32 overs): 109.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-1, 2-1, 3-77, 4-97, 5-97.

**Australia bowling:** Starc 11-31-4, Hazlewood 1.2-1-0-1, Cummins 10.4-2-34-0, Wade 2-0-0, Lyon 7-0-35-0.

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12806

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



### ACROSS

- 1 Gems of quiet noblemen (6)
- 4 Is inside kid's rail (8)
- 10 Reporters ran back to gunners on hills (9)
- 11 Precise demand (5)
- 12 Temp typist's available (5)
- 13 Wrongly enamoured by appearance (9)

(set by Sunnet)

14 First off, treason is an issue (7)

16 See dry fruit (4)

19 Grain in gelato machine (4)

21 Small quantity (around a yard) given to lean rider (7)

24 Former student has pets taken back to the French blocks (9)

25 River is on the other side of husband's home (5)

26 Males cooked food (5)

27 Wind a wire to explode (4,1,4)

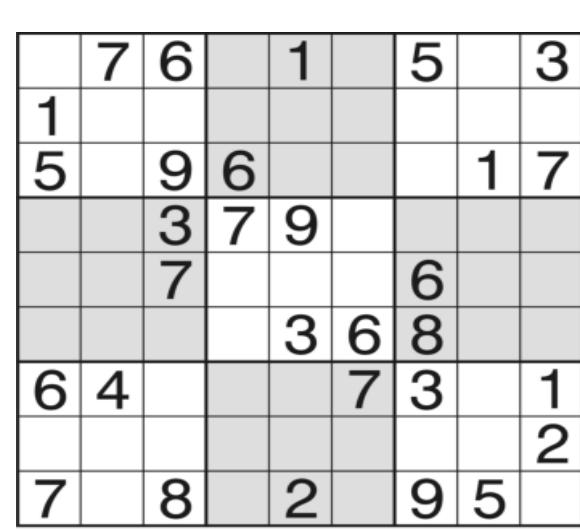
28 Therefore heartless intellectual is alone (8)

29 Black lodge for rich travellers (3,3)

### DOWN

- 1 Glasses to fix engineer having acid reflux (5-3)
- 2 Degeneration of a prize mostly given by Iowa (8)
- 3 Porous meadows near Kentucky (5)
- 5 Adopted or used sad muse (7)
- 6 Rigid elected jerk avoids backing deal (9)
- 7 Kettle's companion ate crumpled 'pan' (6)
- 8 Put back on shift (6)
- 9 Excellent General's over the hill (6)
- 15 New train isn't on the way (2,7)
- 17 Spirits live near one unfinished row house (8)
- 18 Road engineer's trial is most expensive (8)
- 20 Coast of Malta according to court (7)
- 21 Every other cruise by boy is routine (6)
- 22 Say pads for detective (6)
- 23 Attack when on voyage (6)
- 25 Lift given by man on street (5)

## SUDOKU



No. SS5565 Distribution: www.mightyfingers.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

T	E	N	N	I	S	P	L	A	Y	E	R
B	I	E	I	E	E	E	C				
E	N	D	O	G	R	A	U				
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E	R	S	U	C	A	N	O				
S	E	R	E	S	E	N	O				
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A	R	T	A	L	P	A					
T	A	R	T	A	L	P	A				
A	R	T	A	L	P	A					

Solution to puzzle 12805

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

## IPL auction at a glance

AMOL KARHADKAR  
MUMBAI

A look at a few significant numbers ahead of the IPL auction to be held in Kolkata on December 19:

**332:** Players in the fray after the initial list of 997 was pruned in consultation with the franchises.

**143:** Indians who will go under the hammer, including 19 capped players.

**189:** The overseas players, including three from Associate nations. Australia, as usual, will have the biggest representation after the Indians, with 35 players shortlisted.

**7:** Those carrying a maximum base price of 2 crore - Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Chris Lynn, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell (all Australia), Dale Steyn (South Africa) and Angelo Mathews (Sri Lanka).

**1.5 (Crore):** Highest base price for only one Indian cricketer - Robin Uthappa - who has been released by KKR. Piyush Chawla and Jaydev Unadkat have opted for 1 crore.

**73:** Maximum slots available (all eight teams combined).

## Bhuvi injured

Bhuvneshwar Kumar has joined Shikhar Dhawan in the injured players' list ahead of the ODI series starting from Sunday, since it is a format the team has struggled in the recent past.

"You have got a benchmark in (Virat) Kohli. He is somebody who will be in the gym and work very hard."

"A lot of players can learn from him."

"Hard work is boring but it can give you great success."

Meanwhile, West Indies' Evin Lewis, who suffered an injury in the final T20 in Mumbai, is still a doubtful starter. The opening batsman suffered soft tissue damage to his right knee.

Anand recalls his wonderful journey with witty anecdotes

## Mind Master will become a sporting classic, says Ram

Anand recalls his wonderful journey with witty anecdotes

### BOOK LAUNCH

K. KEERTHIVASAN  
CHENNAI

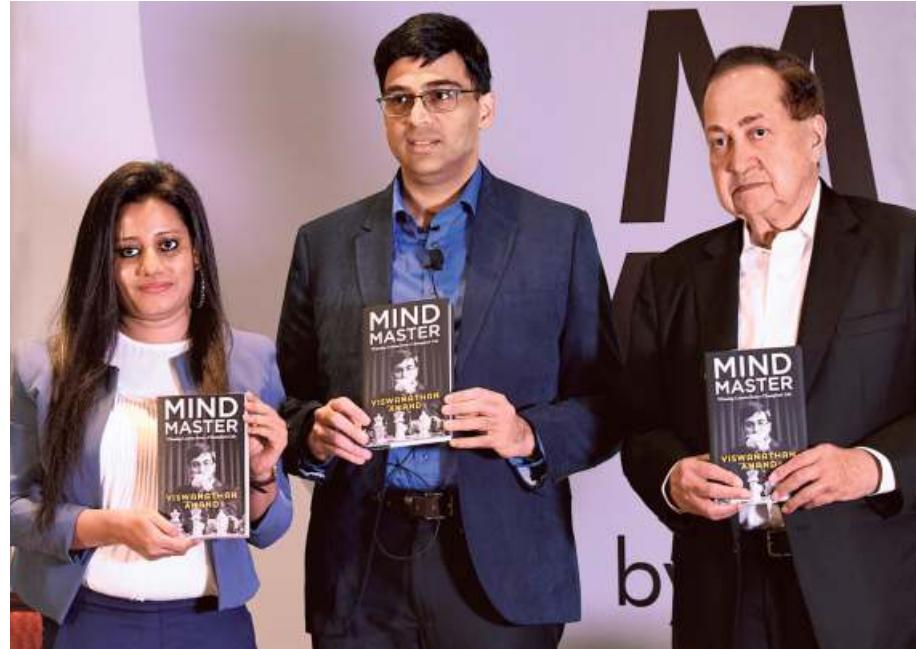
It was an evening when everyone at the ballroom of Hotel Taj Coromandel came face to face with how intelligent, thoughtful and humorous Viswanathan Anand, the five-time world chess champion, is off the chess board.

While releasing his book 'Mind Master', co-authored by sports journalist Susan Ninan, the chess legend, in a conversation with N. Ram, Chairman, THG Publishing Private Limited, on Friday recalled some wonderful memories of his journey through witty anecdotes and astute observations.

### The Putin quip

Reading from portions of the book, Ram said when Anand won his fourth successive World Championship crown in 2012 in Moscow - he defeated Boris Gelfand of Israel - the Russian President Vladimir Putin, after coming to know that Anand had learned his early lessons at the Tal Chess Club in Madras, joked: "So it is a problem we have brought upon ourselves!"

While praising the book, Ram said it is destined to become a "sporting classic." It strikes a fine balance between being a book for keen



**A champion's story:** Viswanathan Anand, centre

## TV PICKS

**BWF World Tour Finals:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 a.m.  
**Pakistan vs Sri Lanka:** 1st Test, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 10.30 a.m.  
**Australia vs New Zealand:** 1st Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 10.30 a.m.  
**I-League:** D Sport, 5 p.m.  
**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 p.m., 8 p.m. & 11 p.m.  
**Big Bout League:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.  
**ISL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**Bundesliga:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 8 p.m. & 11 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



Embiid ends Celtics' home record

LOS ANGELES  
 Joel Embiid scored a season-high 38 points and grabbed 13 rebounds as Philadelphia 76ers ended the Boston Celtics perfect home record with a 115-109 win on Thursday.  
**The results:** Philadelphia 115 bt Boston 109; Cleveland 117 bt San Antonio 109 (OT); Dallas 122 bt Detroit 111; Denver 114 bt Portland 99. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

## Mann-Dutta pair tops

KOLKATA:  
 Gopinath Mann and Sandeep Dutta garnered 1175.8 points to emerge as the top pair to qualify for the final round of the pairs event of the Winter National Bridge championships at the Netaji Indoor Stadium here on Friday. Altogether 28 pairs made the cut.

## Hyderabad races cancelled

HYDERABAD  
 The Stewards of the Hyderabad Race Club have cancelled the races scheduled to be held on Sunday (Dec. 15) due to paucity of acceptors. The following three races of Sunday, The Telangana Andhra Sub Area Cup (1,100m), The Bakranalang Plate (1,600m) and The R.W.I.T.C. Plate (1,400m), have been shifted to Monday (Dec. 16).

## Divyansh shows his class

## SPORTS BUREAU

BHOPAL  
 Divyansh Singh Panwar was able to assert himself as the World No. 1 in commendable fashion as he won the gold in the men's, junior and youth sections of the 63rd National shooting championship organised here on Friday.

The 17-year-old Divyansh, who qualified in the fifth place with 628.6, shot 250.4 in the men's final to beat the 18-year-old Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar by 1.1 point. Yash Vardhan managed to get ahead of another Olympic qualified shooter, the Asian Games silver medallist Deepak Kumar, by 0.2 point to clinch the bronze medal.

**The results: 10m air rifle:** Men: 1. Divyansh Singh Panwar 250.4 (628.6); 2. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar 249.3 (628.2); 3. Yash Vardhan 226.8 (629.4). Juniors: 1. Divyansh Singh Panwar 253.0 (628.6); 2. Yash Vardhan 250.5 (629.4); 3. Hriday Hazarika 229.4 (627.2). Youth: 1. Divyansh Singh Panwar 251.2 (628.6); 2. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar 251.0 (628.2); 3. Paarth Makrilia 229.2 (627.0). Sub-youth: 1. Rishav Ghosh 623.9; 2. Manvendra Singh Shekhwat 623.2; 3. Deependra Singh Shekhwat 622.8.

## Messi's brace saves Blasters

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

Raphael Messi Bouli's brace saved Kerala Blasters' blushes as it came back from a two-goal deficit to share the honours with Jamshedpur FC in their Hero ISL match at the Jawaharlal Nehru stadium on Friday.

**The result:** Kerala Blasters 2 (Messi 75, 86) drew Jamshedpur FC 2 (Francisco Medina 38, C.K.Vineeth 71).

## Late fightback keeps US in hunt

Thomas and Cantlay drill huge putts on the 18th to clinch narrow victories

## PRESIDENTS CUP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MELBOURNE

Tiger Woods' USA staged a stirring late comeback to stay in the hunt at the Presidents Cup on Friday after the tournament appeared to be slipping away.

The USA went into the alternate shot or foursomes format on day two trailing 4-1, after Ernie Els' Internationals enjoyed its best start to the biennial matchplay event since 2005.

The day ended at 6.5-3.5 for Internationals after the USA clawed its way back after Els' young unit looked to be closing on a first victory since 1998.

At one point Internationals was ahead in all five matches, but Justin Thomas and Patrick Cantlay drilled huge putts on the 18th to clinch narrow victories.

**Good omen**  
 The omens looked good for Internationals in a heavyweight opening clash that pitted former World No. 1 Dustin Johnson and Matt Kuchar against the experienced Louis Oosthuizen and Adam Scott.

Behind them Canada's Adam Hadwin gave his team a lead on the first hole after a beautiful approach shot from young Chilean Joaquin Niemann against Xander Schauffele and Patrick



Unbridled joy: Justin Thomas, left, and Tiger Woods celebrate pulling off a narrow win in the foursomes. ■ AFP

putt. Oosthuizen then missed a simple putt to hand the USA a two-up lead by the fifth, before the International pair began clicking to win the sixth and eighth.

They turned the screws as the crowd roared them on to win at the 11th, 13th and 14th and whip the dejected Americans 3 and 2.

Behind them Canada's Adam Hadwin gave his team a lead on the first hole after a beautiful approach shot from young Chilean Joaquin Niemann against Xander Schauffele and Patrick

Cantlay.

## See-saw tie

In a see-saw tie, the advantage kept changing hands before Cantlay stepped up to sink a massive pressure putt on the last to get the US team on the scoreboard.

Inspired, Woods and Justin Thomas, the only US pair to win on Thursday, matched the exploits. Woods missed a birdie putt on the first but found his range and he and Thomas raced two-up through five against Hideki Matsuyama and An Byeong-hun, before Internationals incredibly won three in a row to be one-up by the eighth.

**The results: Internationals leads USA 6.5-3.5 (Friday foursomes):** Louis Oosthuizen & Adam Scott bt Dustin Johnson & Matt Kuchar 3 & 2; Adam Hadwin & Joaquin Niemann lost to Xander Schauffele & Patrick Cantlay 1-up; Marc Leishman & Abraham Ancer bt Webb Simpson & Patrick Reed 3 & 2; An Byeong-hun & Hideki Matsuyama lost to Tiger Woods & Justin Thomas 1-up; Im Sung-jae & Cameron Smith tied with Gary Woodland & Rickie Fowler.

**Group D: LASK Linz 3 (Trauner 23, Klauss 38-pen, Raguz 90+3)** bt Sporting Lisbon 0; P.S.V. Eindhoven 1 (Ihattaren 63) drew with Rosenborg 1 (Hellend 22).  
**Group E: CFC Cluj 2 (Burca 44, Djokovic 70) bt Celtic 0; Rennes 2 (Gnagnon 31, 87) bt Lazio 0,**  
**Group F: Standard Liege 2 (Bastien 47, Amallah 69) drew with Arsenal 1 (Lacazette 78, Saka 81); Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Da Costa 31, Kamada 12) lost to Victoria Guimaraes 3 (Rochinha 8, Al-Masri 85, Edwards 87).**  
**Group G: FC Copenhagen 0 lost to Malmo 1 (Papagiannopoulos 77-og); Dynamo Kiev 1 (Tsygankov 90+4) drew with Lugano 1 (Aratore 45).**  
**Group H: Rangers 1 (Morelos 30) drew with Young Boys 1 (Barisic 89-og); Porto 3 (Luis Diaz 14, Malacia 16-og, Soares 34) bt Feyenoord 2 (Botteghini 19, Larsen 22).**

representation to the Sports Ministry on Thursday.

Raja called the meeting after cancelling Chauhan's notice for the Central Council meeting, slated on December 22 in Gurugram.

On Friday, the Ministry's letter addressed to AICF President and signed by Deputy Secretary S.P.S. Tomar stated: "It has been observed that a meeting has been called by the President on 14.12.2019 and that by the Hon. Secretary on 22.12.2019 with almost same agenda."

It also asserted that non-compliance of the directive would invite "suspension/de-recognition of the federation."

The meeting was called by AICF president P. R. Venkatesh Raja through a letter dated December 7. The latest twist in the crisis came after the AICF secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan made a

## Government orders cancellation of AICF GBM

## CHESS

RAKESH RAO  
 NEW DELHI

In a dramatic development, the Sports Ministry suggested cancellation of All India Chess Federation's urgent meeting of the General Body scheduled in Chennai on Saturday.

It was also asserted that non-compliance of the directive would invite "suspension/de-recognition of the federation."

The meeting was called by AICF president P. R. Venkatesh Raja through a letter dated December 7. The latest twist in the crisis came after the AICF secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan made a

server for the meeting. The meeting proposed to be convened by the President, AICF, on 14.12.2019 may be cancelled and meeting may be held on 22.12.2019 as scheduled by Hon. Secretary, AICF, so that the Government observer is able to attend the meeting.

## Warning

The letter ends with a warning, "In case, the directions of the Ministry are not complied with and there is an attempt to suppress the complaints regarding financial irregularities, the Government will take a serious view in the matter, warranting action for suspension/de-recognition of the federation by the Ministry."

## Man United, Arsenal advance to last-32

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PARIS

Teenager Mason Greenwood again grabbed his chances for Manchester United, scoring twice in a 4-0 thrashing of AZ Alkmaar in the Europa League.

**The results: Group A: APOELO 1 (Savic 61) bt Sevilla 0; Qarabag 1 (Gueye 90) drew with Dudenlage 1 (Bourguine 63).**

**Group B: FC Copenhagen 0 lost to Malmo 1 (Papagiannopoulos 77-og); Dynamo Kiev 1 (Tsygankov 90+4) drew with Lugano 1 (Aratore 45).**

**Group C: FC Basel 2 (Widmer 22, Stocker 72) bt Trabzonspor 0; Getafe 3 (Cabrera 76, Molina 78, Kenedy 86) bt Krasnodar 0.**

**Group D: Espanyol 0 lost to**

CSKA Moscow 1 (Vlasic 84); Ludogorets 1 (Lukoki 24) drew with Ferencvaros 1 (Signevich 90+5).

**Group I: Wolfsburg 1 (Paulo Otavio 52) bt Saint-Etienne 0; Gent 2 (Depoitre 7, 16) bt Olexandriya 1 (Miroshnichenko 54).**

**Group J: Borussia Moenchengladbach 1 (Thuram 33) lost to Istanbul Basaksehir 2 (Kahveci 44, Crivelli 90+1); Roma 2 (Perotti 7-pen, Dzeko 19) drew with Wolfsberg (AUT) 2 (Florenzi 10-og, Weissman 64).**

**Group L: Manchester United 4 (Young 53, Greenwood 58, 64, Mata 62-pen) bt AZ Alkmaar 0; Partizan Belgrade 4 (Soumah 4, Sadig 22, 76, Asano 26) bt Astana 1 (Rotaru 79).**

## Crespo hopes Messi wins a WC

The former Argentine striker rates EPL as the best league

Copa America (title)."

from another planet.

"I prefer Messi than Batista, but Batista is the best striker ever in Argentina."

Crespo, who had an illustrious career in Serie A, rated the English Premier League (EPL) as the best league at present. "In my heart Serie A, but now EPL is the best."

"When I was in Italy, the name of the Serie A was 'Seven Sisters' because all the seven teams had a chance to win. Not any more. It's the same with EPL now. It's so competitive."

Recalling his days in the Serie A and EPL, Crespo said the basic difference between the two leagues was their culture. "It is another rhythm of the game. It's more intensive in EPL but it's more tactical and strategic in Serie A."

Well-known Argentine striker of yesteryear Hernan Crespo hopes that current star Lionel Messi ends his country's more than three-decade World Cup title-drought before calling it quits.

Crespo, who is here as the event ambassador of the Tata Steel Kolkata 25K, said it would be nice to see the 32-year-old Messi win the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. "I hope (Messi wins the World Cup). It will be very hard. I hope he tries again. This is really our dream," said Crespo during a select media interview on Friday.

"The first one is Copa America. We host it, in Argentina and Colombia (in June-July next year), and we have a good chance to lift the trophy," said Crespo.

The second one is the English Premier League (EPL). We have had some great strikers – Mario Kempes, Batista. I don't want to forget Messi, (Gonzalo) Higuain, (Sergio) Aguero. They deserve to be part of greatest of our strikers. Diego (Maradona) is

from another planet.

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## War Hammer may score an encore

BENGALURU: War Hammer, who is in fine nick, may score an encore in the Bangalore 2000 (I, 2000m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Saturday (Dec 14).

There will be no false rails.

**GULBARGA PLATE (I,100m)** rated 00 to 20, 2-15 p.m.: 1. Love Music (3) S. Shareef 60, 2. Air Force One (4) Darshan 59.5, 3. Song And Dance (7) Raja Rao 59, 4. Debonair (5) Aman 55.5, 5. Seaborn (2) R. Manish 56, 6. Tudor Prince (6) Ashok Kumar 56, 7. Kanthaka (1) Rajesh K 54 and 8. Perfectasther (8) Arshad 51.

**Fastest Lap:** Viscaal (02:00.349).

**Qualifying:** 1. Schumacher (01:59.765); 2. Viscaal (01:59.918); 3. Ushijima (02:00.815); 4. Hijjawi (02:00.905); 5. Sundaramoorthy (02:01.000).

6. Eriksen (02:01.034); 7. Mason (02:01.174); 8. Young (02:01.243).

9. Amendola (02:01.264); 10. Ali (02:01.608); 11. Korada (02:03.218).

**Leading scores (second round):** 136-K. Kapil Kumar (68, 68); 137-Anil Mane (69, 68); 138-M. Dharma (73, 65); 139-Akshay Sharma (69, 70); 141-Mohammad Sanju (70, 71), Ankur Chadha (68, 73), Amarjeet Malik (72, 69), Mithun Perera (71, 70); 142-Sunit Chowrasia (70, 72), R. Mari Muthu (70, 72), Chiragh Kumar (74, 68).

plied at five-under 149.

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**Leading scores (**