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Opposition unity based on a shared vision for India, says Rahul Gandhi
page 10



Bangladesh detains dozens in student protest crackdown
page 14

India Green meets India Red in Duleep Trophy opener
page 18

NEARBY

Cops unsure of new video's authenticity

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Police has questioned the authenticity of the video uploaded on social media in which two men have claimed responsibility for the attack on JNU student leader Umar Khalid. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Kushwah said he cannot comment on the authenticity of the video till the accused are arrested.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 2

'What steps taken to fill vacancies in fire dept.?

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Thursday sought a response from the city government on whether it had done anything to fill over 45% vacancies in the Delhi Fire Service. The court's direction came on a petition by the Association of the Victims of Uphaar Tragedy (AVUT), which relied on a news report published in *The Hindu* on May 21.

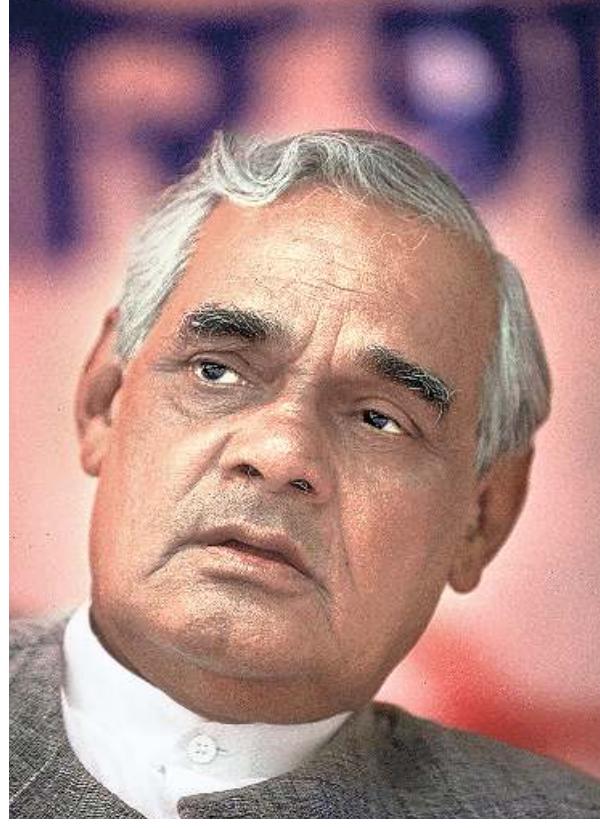
DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ 12 PAGES
(TABLOID)
DELHI METRO ▶ 4 PAGES

BJP's gentle colossus fades away

■ Funeral will be held today; Seven-day state mourning

■ Only non-Congress PM to complete full term in office



End of an era: Atal Bihari Vajpayee died at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences on Thursday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

blic life and was confined to his residence for several years.

In his condolence message, President Ram Nath Kovind stated, "His leadership, foresight, maturity and eloquence put him in a league of his own. Atalji, the Gentle Giant, will be missed by one and all."

Mr. Vajpayee was PM thrice in 1996, 1998-1999 and 1999-2004. As his health deteriorated, he slowly withdrew from pu-

and served it assiduously for decades."

In its tribute, the RSS said, "A great personality, a steadfast & universally accepted leader, who instilled Bharatiya culture & values in public life, Atalji has left us today. The void left behind will remain forever."

The BJP cancelled its national executive scheduled for August 18-19.

Born on December 25, 1924, in Gwalior, former

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The

DELHI Timings		
SATURDAY, AUG. 18	RISE 05:52	SET 18:59
SUNDAY, AUG. 19	RISE 05:53	SET 18:57
Saturday, Aug. 18		
Delhi Weather	max 36	min 28
Delhi City	36	28
Safdarjung	36	28
Palam	37	27

Delhi Pilm Today
36°C Drizzle is likely in some parts. The morning will be pleasant. Sky will remain cloudy over the city.

Delhi Pilm Tomorrow
36°C Light rains are expected with a comfortable morning. Sky will be cloudy with a warm day. Night will be warm.

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IN BRIEF



Spurious milk seized in Punjab

Teams of the food and drug administration department seized huge quantities of spurious milk, milk products and adulterants from two units in Punjab's Patiala and Moga districts on Thursday, an official said. PTI

Constable arrested for allegedly taking drugs

A head constable posted in police lines here was arrested on charges of consuming heroin, police said on Thursday. One gram heroin was also recovered from his possession. PTI

THE HINDU
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Sukhbir cries foul over 5-day session

Says Amarinder government scheduled brief Assembly session to escape Opposition scrutiny

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

Opposition parties Shiromani Akali Dal and Aam Aadmi Party lashed out at the Punjab government on Thursday for scheduling a mere five-day Assembly session, terming the "brief" session "a cruel joke" aimed at shielding the Congress's "false promises" from being exposed.

The State Cabinet on Thursday decided to summon the next session of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha from August 24 to August 28.

"By reducing the period for the forthcoming assembly session, the Congress government in Punjab wants to prevent the Akali Dal from exposing their false promises. If the Captain-led government has fulfilled the promises they must face our questions boldly," SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal tweeted.

Talking to reporters later, he demanded a longer, 10 to 15-day session.



Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal. •

"We want to raise issues pertaining to the Congress's false promises on debt waiver and employment. They have kept the session short as they know they stand exposed," said the former Deputy Chief Minister.

Rebel AAP MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira described the session of "brief duration" as a "cruel joke".

"The proposed 24th-28th session is a cruel joke played with the august platform of

Vidhan Sabha by Capt Amarinder, it's actually only a 2-day session as 24th will witness only obituaries then two weekend holidays!" Mr. Khaira tweeted, adding that the people's issues will suffer. He urged the government to have at least a 15-day session.

Kanwar Sandhu, rebel AAP legislator from Kharar, described the "short" Assembly session as a "murder of democracy".

"The short August 24 to 28 Punjab Vidhan Sabha session, as announced, is a murder of democratic and legislative practices. It is only a two-day session in actual effect. This is contrary to the spirit of the Vidhan Sabha rules, procedures and practices," Mr. Sandhu said.

A spokesperson for the Chief Minister's Office, meanwhile, said the session would commence on the August 24 afternoon with obituary references.

Ranjit Singh panel submits full report

On sacrifice incidents in Punjab

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Justice (retd) Ranjit Singh Commission, set up in April 2017 by the Congress government to investigate the various incidents of sacrifice of the Guru Granth Sahib and other religious texts, submitted its full report to Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday. It had submitted the first part of the report on June 30.

"The complete set of reports, along with action taken report, will be tabled in the next session of the Vidhan Sabha," an official spokesperson said.

The government had decided to constitute the panel after rejecting as 'inconclusive' the findings of the Zora Singh Commission, set up by the previous Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP government.

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Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the Commission were to conduct an inquiry into the cases of sacrifice of Guru Granth Sahib, Bhagwad Gita and the Koran, inquire into the detailed facts and circumstances and chronology of events and to identify the role played by various persons.

The Commission was also mandated to inquire into the firing in Kotkapura and Behbal Kalan village, Faridkot, in which two persons were killed.

PDP urges Vohra to defend Article 35A

Party delegation meets Governor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR

A Peoples Democratic Party delegation called on Jammu and Kashmir Governor N.N. Vohra here on Thursday and emphasised the need to defend Article 35A, which guarantees special status to the State, before the Supreme Court.

The delegation led by senior leader Abdul Rehman Veeri included Ghulam Nabi Lone, Ashraf Mir, Mehbooba Beg and Nizamuddin Bhat, a party spokesman said.

"The delegation conveyed to the Governor their concern over the offensive being launched against the special status of the State and also underscored the need of defending Article 35A in the Supreme Court for State's overall prosperity and tranquillity," the spokesman said.

The delegation also highlighted the need to defend the Article in the Supreme Court with the same seriousness as was exhibited by the PDP when it was the part of government in the State, he added. The PDP leaders expressed hope that the Governor-led administration will take similar measures to defend the special position of Jammu and Kashmir in the top court of the country, he said.



Jammu and Kashmir Governor N.N. Vohra. •

the Article in the Supreme Court with the same seriousness as was exhibited by the PDP when it was the part of government in the State, he added. The PDP leaders expressed hope that the Governor-led administration will take similar measures to defend the special position of Jammu and Kashmir in the top court of the country, he said.

The delegation also pitched for speeding up of projects that were executed during the tenure of the PDP-led regime.

Congress plans 'Sankalp Rallies' across Rajasthan

To raise issues including corruption, crime against women

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR



Rajasthan Pradesh Congress chief Sachin Pilot. •

The Congress in Rajasthan has planned to organise 'Sankalp Rallies' across the State to raise the issues of "anarchism, corruption, inflation, crime and atrocities on women under the BJP rule", as part of its election campaign, which was launched by party president Rahul Gandhi last week.

Assembly polls
Assembly polls in Rajasthan are scheduled to be held later this year.

"After the successful road show of Rahul Gandhi and meetings with Congress delegates, we will hold 'Sankalp Rallies' in the districts. The BJP government ignored people of the State and now

held in Chittorgarh district on August 24. It will be followed by other rallies in Churu (August 28), Barmer (September 5), Karauli (September 10) and Nagaur (September 12).

He said the rallies will be held to make the State "free from anarchism, corruption, crime and atrocities on women under the BJP government".

Pilot to address rallies
Pradesh Congress Committee vice president Archna Sharma said all the rallies will be addressed by the party's State unit chief Pilot, AICC general secretary and in-charge of party affairs in the State Avinash Pande, former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and other leaders.

it is making an unsuccessful attempt to regain the lost trust in the election year through 'Gaurav Yatra' in which government machinery is being misused," State Congress chief Sachin Pilot said on Thursday.

The first such rally will be

Vital transport



Waterway: Boats make their way into the interiors of the Dal Lake in Srinagar on Thursday. • NISSAR AHMAD

Fake call centre busted

22 arrested in Indore for allegedly duping U.S. citizens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE

A fake call centre was busted in Indore on Thursday and 22 people were arrested for allegedly duping American citizens by posing as officials of the U.S. Social Security department and threatening to block their social security number (SSN) cards, the police said.

The "fees" collected by the callers from the gullible U.S. citizens, mostly elderly people, were converted into

Bitcoins, a virtual currency, they said.

The police suspect the fraudsters are in possession of SSNs, phone numbers and other confidential data of about 2.5 lakh U.S. citizens, a senior officer said.

'1,500 people cheated'
Prima facie, the gang had duped about 1,500 U.S. citizens.

The kingpin of the gang has been identified as Vatsal Mehta (25), a resident of Ah-

medabad, DIG Harinarayanchari Mishra said.

He said Mehta was running the racket under the garb of a call centre in Indore's Lasudia locality.

"The gang members used to pose as officials of the U.S. Social Security Department and call up the U.S. citizens, especially the elderly people who have little technical knowledge, through a special software," Mr. Mishra said while explaining the gang's modus operandi.

Amarnath Yatra resumes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAMMU

The Amarnath Yatra resumed on Thursday from Jammu after it was suspended for three days due to bad weather in Kashmir, with a fresh batch of 548 pilgrims leaving for the Pahalgam base camp, officials said.

The pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp here in 28 vehicles, the officials said.

Walk unravels Bharatpur's splendour

Earlier known only for its world-famous Keoladeo bird sanctuary

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

A unique heritage conservation drive launched in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district has unravelled the unsung ingenuity, valour and splendour of the region and created awareness about its rich cultural inheritance reflected in its monuments. The drive has brought to light a new aspect of Bharatpur, which was earlier known only for the world-famous Keoladeo bird sanctuary.

The Bharatpur Virasat Abhiyan has received support from activists, academicians, traders, tourist guides, hotel owners, merchant chambers, transporters, school children and government officials.

Lohagarh fort
As part of the campaign, the heritage walks being organised every week have started exploring the historic Lohagarh Fort at the heart of Bharatpur town along with the artistic grandeur of as many

as 353 heritage properties.

The Centre for Advancement of Traditional Building Technology and Skills, which is the force behind the initiative, has set the focus on the region's "built heritage" which needs to be popularised among both the residents and visitors. "We are creating awareness through heritage walks, mapping, documentaries, exhibitions

and publications," CATTs

founding chairman and former Chief Secretary Arun Kumar said on Thursday.

The heritage walks have been organised in collaboration with Lupin Foundation and with the support of district administration. In addition to the Lohagarh Fort, the walk explores artistic grandeur of the landmarks such as Chauburja, Ganga

Mandir, Jama Masjid and Safra Bazaar.

"The walk is unique in bringing a rustic fort experience coupled with exploring the historic bazaar along with live demonstration of handcrafted woodwork, jewellery, flower decor and metalware, and stimulating tastes and smells of an era slipping past," CATTs secretary Urvashi Srivastava said.

'Lack of publicity'
Lupin Foundation's Executive Director Sita Ram Gupta said since the tourists visiting the region did not know about historical monuments because of lack of publicity, the heritage walks would connect the people with the history and help promote the palaces and old temples as tourist spots.

The CATTs has also started an exercise for mapping of cultural heritage in several towns of Bharatpur district, which have a repository of ancient Rajput and medieval Mughal and Jat architecture.

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IN BRIEF

**1 killed, 6 injured in lightning strikes**

BARIPADA (ODISHA) A man was killed and six others were injured, two of them seriously, after lightning struck them at a village in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district on Thursday. The victims had taken shelter under a thatched structure at Khodikasole under the jurisdiction of Bangiposhia when the lightning struck, the police said. PTI

Heroin worth ₹10.5 lakh seized in Mizoram, 2 held

AIZAWL Officials of the Mizoram Excise and Narcotics department on Thursday seized more than 200 grams of heroin, valued at ₹10.5 lakh, from an area near here and arrested two persons in this connection. The contraband was reportedly smuggled from neighbouring Myanmar. Lalzuineisial (29) of Kolasib district and Ginminlun (49) of Tamenglong district of Manipur were arrested. PTI

Manipur University agitation to be suspended temporarily

Stakeholders reach mutual agreement, memorandum signed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

IMPHAL The 75-day-long agitation at Manipur University will be temporarily suspended from Friday. The decision was taken after the stakeholders reached a mutual agreement on Thursday.

The students of the university have been demanding the removal of Vice-Chancellor A.P. Pandey and constitution of an Independent Enquiry Committee to look into the allegations of administrative and financial lapses made by him.

The decision to temporarily suspend the agitation was taken following rounds of talk held consecutively since August 14, according to

Hardcore woman Maoist surrenders

Odisha's Nayan Khilo carried ₹1 lakh reward on her head

**STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR**

Another hardcore Maoist carrying ₹1 lakh reward on her head surrendered in Odisha's Malkangiri district on Thursday.

Nayan Khilo (19), hailing from Sanyasiguda village under Chitrakonda police station, surrendered before Malkangiri Superintendent of Police Jagmohan Meena.

She was a member of Gumma area committee under Malkangiri division of outlawed CPI(Maoist). She had joined the organisation in 2016 and had several cases of Maoist violence pending against her.

The Odisha government had declared ₹1 lakh reward for her capture.

Heightened security

After her surrender, Nayan Khilo said that the recently inaugurated Gurupriya Bridge was a major reason behind her decision to leave the Maoist organisation. Ac-

**Bridge to peace:** The Gurupriya Bridge has troubled the Maoists by connecting areas that were earlier inaccessible. ■ FILE PHOTO

cording to her, increased presence of security personnel in the erstwhile cut-off areas of Balimela reservoir after the inception of the Gurupriya Bridge had affected the morale of the Maoists operating in the region.

She said she had also realised the futility of violent activities of the Maoists. She criticised the activities of

Maoist leaders like Dhananjay Gope, who, according to her, were "cold-blooded brutal killers".

The Malkangiri SP said Nayan Khilo would be rehabilitated as per the schemes of the Odisha government for surrendering rebels.

Maoists' nemesis

The Gurupriya Bridge has been troubling the Maoists operating in the region that had remained cut off from mainland Odisha due to the Balimela reservoir.

On July 29, a Maoist couple from the area surrendered before the police citing the increased presence of security forces in the region. The surrendered Maoists – Waga Urmani and his wife Mude Madhi – were carrying ₹5 lakh reward on their head [₹4 lakh for Urmani, ₹1 lakh for Madhi]. Both of them were active members of Andhra-Odisha border military platoon of CPI (Maoist).

BJP bandh hits life in Jeypore

**STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR**

Normal life was disrupted in Jeypore Assembly constituency in Odisha's Koraput district on Thursday following an eight-hour bandh call given by the BJP.

Local BJP workers had called the 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. bandh in support of four demands, including declaration of Borigumma as a notified area council. Borigumma is currently a panchayat and not recognised as an urban centre. The other demands included 'non-transferable' tag in land records of all residents in Jeypore constituency, a CBI probe into the alleged distribution of fake land patta (documents) by the administration, and Jeypore government hospital to start functioning as a full-fledged district headquarters hospital.

The BJP workers took to the streets early morning and were seen picketing at several key points across the constituency. Many passenger vehicles stayed off the roads while several others were stranded due to the picketing. Many shops downed their shutters while educational institutions, banks and government offices could not function properly.

Two loaded trucks torched in Manipur

Incident during 'Zeliangrong bandh'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

IMPHAL Two loaded trucks carrying essentials were torched by unidentified miscreants at a village in Tamenglong district of Manipur on Thursday, the police said.

The incident was reported during a 24-hour 'Zeliangrong area bandh' called by Zeliangrong Baudi and its allies since Thursday midnight.

Reinforcements sent
The trucks were torched at Tupul area along NH-37 (Im-

phal-Jiri Road) around 2 a.m., said a senior police officer. Tupul is located at least 54 km from the State capital.

Reinforcements have been sent to the area from Keithalmanbi police station, the officer said.

The bandh has been called to protest the alleged move by the NSCN(IM) to create divisions in the Zeliangrong community, settled mostly in the Tamenglong district of Manipur and adjoining areas of Assam and Nagaland.

"We would organise the movement to lend support to the youth Congress' 'Bharat Bachao Andolan' All India Youth Congress president Keshav Chandra Yadav and vice-president Srinivas B.V. would join other party leaders in the agitation on that day," Mr. Sinha told reporters at Congress Bhavan here.

He said the rally would start from 11 a.m. and "at least 5,000 activists" would gherao the office of the DGP. "We shall not seek any permission. The agitation will be purely non-violent," Mr. Sinha said.

He said there is no democracy in Tripura and accused Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb of withdrawing all security guards of former MLAs after assuming office.

Reacting to the allegations of corruption, BJP spokesperson Mrinal Kanti Deb said the Congress is the "most corrupt party" in the country. "We don't need advice on corruption from them," Mr. Deb said.

Monsoon blues



Rain cover: A fisherman tries to guard his fishing baskets as dark monsoon clouds hover over the banks of the Brahmaputra in Guwahati on Thursday. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

Odisha to showcase its biodiversity

World-class interpretation centre to come up at Dangamal near Bhitarkanika Park

**STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR**

The Odisha government is setting up a world-class interpretation centre at Dangamal near Bhitarkanika National Park to showcase its efforts in protecting crocodiles and preserving its rich mangrove diversity.

The project, which has been approved under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project, will be taken up at an estimated cost of ₹3 crore.

Environment learning
"We plan to develop the centre both as a tourist attraction and a place for students to learn about the environment. Experts are



Tourist hub: The Bhitarkanika National Park is one of Odisha's finest biodiversity hotspots. ■ FILE PHOTO

being consulted for adding value to the project," said Susanta Nanda, project director of ICZMP, Odisha.

Bhitarkanika, one of the State's finest biodiversity

birds, turtles, estuarine crocodiles and countless creeks. It is said to house 70% of the country's estuarine and salt-water crocodiles, conservation of which was started way back in 1975.

Bio-shield
In 1999 when coastal Odisha was battered by Super Cyclone, the rich mangrove forests had then acted as a bio-shield. There was very little impact of the cyclone in the mangrove-forested regions.

In fact, Kalibhanjdia Island spread over 8.5 square km, a place in Bhitarkanika, has attracted the attention of foreign scientists as its possesses 70% of the total mangrove species of the world.

IN BRIEF



Temple ritual concludes at Tirumala

TIRUMALA Priests performed 'purnahuti' at the temple of Lord Venkateswara here on Thursday, signalling the conclusion of the six-day Astabandhana Balalaya Maha Samparkshana ritual, which is performed once in 12 years. Earlier, Kankana Bhattacharya Khadri Narasimhacharyulu performed 'Maha Samparkshana' to the 'Sikhara Kalasam' atop the three-tier golden canopy Ananda Nilayam.

Loud sound triggers panic in Bengaluru

BENGALURU A loud sound heard around 3.15 p.m. on Thursday brought residents out of their houses in Konanakunte, Banashankari, Nagarabhavi, Jayanagar, Uttarahalli, and BTM Layout, among other areas in south Bengaluru. Regional television channels attributed this to an earthquake, but the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre confirmed that no tremors were recorded at the earthquake observatory in Tippagondanahalli.

Biometric glitches result in salary cuts

HYDERABAD A section of employees and faculty members of the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj reportedly gave a representation to the management over deduction of salary based on biometric attendance. Some of the employees were shocked to find that about ₹50,000 had been deducted from their salary for July, though the biometric attendance system came into effect only from July 18.

Rain claims three lives in Kodagu

Trio buried alive in landslip near Madikeri; Karnataka govt. seeks deployment of helicopters

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSURU

Torrential rain continued to wreak havoc in Kodagu district, with three persons buried alive in a landslip at Katakeri village, near Madikeri, on Thursday.

One person was killed in a rain-related incident on Wednesday, which takes the toll to four during the last 24 hours in the district.

Yashwanth, Venkataramana and Pavan, all hailing from Katakeri, were caught under loads of debris following the landslip and died.

Rescue has been hampered because of sludge lying around the area.

60 trapped

Meanwhile, over 60 people were feared trapped in a landslip at Makkandur village in Madikeri taluk that received heavy rain in the last few days. The Karnataka government requested the Ministry of Defence to deploy



Rendered unusable: A road connecting Melpal to other villages in N.R. Pura taluk of Chikkamagaluru district which was damaged by heavy rain. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

helicopters for airlifting the rescuers.

Reports reaching here said that about 20 people had been brought to safety

by the teams, which were finding it tough to reach other locations in the area to rescue the trapped people. Many houses at Makkandur have collapsed. More than 100 people were feared to have been trapped and awaiting help in Tantipala and Hemmethalu where

massive landslips were reported on Thursday.

Kodagu Additional Deputy Commissioner Praveen told *The Hindu* that communication had been established with the people trapped at Makkandur and other villages where landslips occurred.

Helicopters could not be operated for carrying out rescue operations owing to bad weather, he said, adding that fresh efforts would be made to rescue the trapped people on Friday.

Railway staff stranded

A Hassan report said as many as 16 railway staff were stuck at Yedakumaru Railway station in the Western Ghats, amid heavy rain and landslips.

The Hassan district administration is considering airlifting them, following a communication from the Mysuru division of the South Western Railway.

MLA deposits money into DRDA staff account

They were not paid salary: YSRCP leader

leading to his move to deposit the money.

The MLA's act invited the wrath of the Sanghamitra groups some of whom had staged protests at the Durga Samudram and the Sainagar dragirai Assembly constituency.

Some workers said it was 'disgusting' to receive the cash from the MLA.

The Telugu Desam leaders took serious objection to the move. With only a few months left for the Assembly election, Mr. Reddy had resorted to money power politics, they said.

When contacted, DRDA project director B. Ravi Prakash Reddy told *The Hindu* that "if any complaints come from the Sanghamitra women, we are ready to launch an inquiry."

A 'blind box' to fight drug menace

Whitefield police's novel idea

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Want to report something illegal, but scared to reveal your identity? The Whitefield police have a solution:

"a blind box". All you have to do now is write down what you want to report to the police and drop it in the box.

The Whitefield police, who celebrated Independence Day on the theme 'freedom from drugs,' have set up the blind box.

Abdul Ahad, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Whitefield, who launched the campaign on Wednesday, put up one such box at the Forum Neighbourhood

Mall. "The idea is to help people who want to give information about illegal activities anonymously," he said.

"There are many residents who know about illegal activities, but are scared to reveal their identity. The Whitefield police have a solution: a 'blind box'. All you have to do now is write down what you want to report to the police and drop it in the box."

The Whitefield police, who celebrated Independence Day on the theme 'freedom from drugs,' have set up the blind box.

The Whitefield division has reported a substantial number of drug abuse cases recently.

Telangana authorities ready for early polls

M. RAJEEV
HYDERABAD

As the talk of early election in Telangana is gaining momentum, the State election authority, the Chief Electoral Officer, has intensified efforts to complete rationalisation of the polling stations and other processes involved to ensure smooth conduct of polls whenever they are held.

Barring three districts – Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Sangareddy – rationalisation of polling stations is completed in all the districts and the election authority is expecting the number of polling stations to be around 34,000. This is over 3,000 polling stations higher than the previous elections.

The number of polling stations was pegged at 32,204 initially, but there could be around 1,600 polling stations more because of the limitations imposed by the Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines that are being introduced for the first time in the State.

Each VVPAT is programmed to record 1,400 votes in the polling stations in the urban areas and the number will be 1,200 when it comes to rural areas.

However, the election authority has decided to allow enlisting of 1,300 votes in each VVPAT so that a cushion of 100 votes is kept for including the names of newly enrolled electors.

While officials claimed that there was no intimidation so far from the Election Commission about the scope for advancing the elections, they said the CEO's office had, however, intensified efforts to ensure that the requisite processes are completed ahead of schedule so that the election authority is prepared for elections.

"The users would get a receipt with QR code that helps the organisers check the vehicle status while going in and out. There is no change in pricing of the parking tickets," he added.

Gauri killing: SIT awaits ballistic reports on 16 pistols

Country-made weapons were recovered from 3 men arrested by Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The Special Investigation Team probing the murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh is awaiting ballistic reports on the 16 country-made pistols recovered from three right-wing activists arrested by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS). Acting on information gathered from those arrested in the Gauri case, the Maharashtra ATS arrested Vaibhav Raut, 40, Sharad Kasalkar, 25, and Sudhanwa Gondhalekar, 39, and recovered a cache of low-intensity bombs and country-made pistols.

The three are closely

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Rajesh Bangera, 51, from Madikeri, arrested by the SIT in the Gauri Lankesh murder case, has emerged to be one of the founding members of the unnamed group that killed rationalists starting with Narendra Dabholkar. He was the key arms trainer for the group and

linked to Amol Kale, the alleged kingpin of the murder. These pistols are now being matched with the empty cartridges found at the crime

scenes of the murders of Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare, M.M. Kalburgi, and Gauri Lankesh. A comparison of cartridges at these

had trained several key accused, sources said.

Apart from training Parushuram Waghmore, the alleged shooter of Gauri Lankesh, it has now emerged that he trained Amol Kale, the kingpin in the conspiracy, and Veerendra Tawde, arrested by the CBI and chargesheeted for the murder of Dabholkar.

crime scenes had earlier revealed that the pistol used to kill Dabholkar was used to kill Pansare along with another pistol. The second

+ Naidu to review land allotments in Amaravati

Some institutions yet to begin work, says Minister

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government will decide on the action to be taken for non-commencement of works on lands allotted to various institutions in Amaravati after a high-level meeting with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu next week, Minister for Municipal Administration P. Narayana said on Thursday.

Addressing media persons at the Secretariat, Mr. Narayana said there were some institutions to which land was allotted at reasonable prices in the purview of AP-Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA), but the works were not ground-edged in the stipulated time.

Mr. Naidu would discuss reasons for it with senior ex-

Minister P. Narayana says capital bonds were purchased after due diligence

■ C.VIJAYA BHASKAR

ecutives of those institutions and chart the future course of action.

Whether such lands could be taken back and allotted to others if original allottees did not fall in line would be the crux of the deliberations.

It was market-driven interest rate and there was nothing the CRDA could do once the bonds crossed the appraisal stage.

Mr. Narayana said the tremendous response received by Amaravati bonds on the

appraisal stage.

Mr. Naidu would discuss

reasons for it with senior ex-

Bengaluru celebrates



Folk artists taking part in a procession to mark Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Day as the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike remembered the founder of the Garden City on Thursday. ■ SREENIVASA MURTHY

It's an oxygen cylinder, no hindrance, say residents

Villagers of Khambampadu in Prakasam district breathe fire if century-old-tree is touched

S. MURALI
ONGOLE

A huge more-than-a-century-old Jammi tree (*Prosopis cineraria*) stands in the middle of the road in the non-descript Khambampadu village.

The tree was fortunate enough not to face the axe during road widening, as the residents are sentimentally attached to it. Nobody in this environment-conscious village, about 75 km from the district headquarters, considers it as hindrance in their path. "We understand the impact of global warming and the severe biodiversity loss on our lives," says a group of people in the village in the drought-prone Prakasam



Standing tall: The Jammi tree growing from strength to strength at the Khambampadu village. ■ KOMMURI SRINIVAS

district in Andhra Pradesh. The residents nurture the tree, which faced several testing times, including the devastating Deviseema

cyclone that caused havoc in 1977.

Several avenue trees elsewhere faced the axe be it for the expansion of the

Chennai-Kolkata highway or for the four-laning of the Ongole-Chirala highway.

"But we made it a point to leave the tree undisturbed when the concrete road was laid a few years ago, as we consider it is an oxygen cylinder provided by mother nature. We don't even prune it. We allow it to shed leaves as and when it desires," explains 78-year-old resident D. Subba Rao, who has been keeping a watch since his childhood days and even beats up youth if they break a branch or two.

"It is the older trees which produce more oxygen," adds Ch. Kantha Rao expressing concern over the decrease in the number of rainy days of late

and years of consecutive droughts making farming a gamble with the monsoon.

Environment protection The trees had been deified by our forefathers to protect the environment, adds a group of women busy offering worship to it for a bumper crop at least this year amid rain as the southwest monsoon, after playing a truant in the early phase, turned active.

Volunteer Environment Organisation chairman G. Veerabhadraiah feels that environment-friendly practices at the grassroots level such as this one should be identified and replicated to improve the green cover to 50% by 2029 as envisaged by the State government.

Parking goes smart in Vijayawada

Slots can now be booked through app

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Mayor Koneru Sreedhar and Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner J. Nivas on Thursday launched the first of its kind "smart parking" initiative in the city.

The initiative taken up by Chennai-based Smart Parking India Pvt. Ltd. on a contract basis operates and maintains VMC's parking lots in 20 locations in the city.

The 'Parkinslot' mobile application available for Android and iOS phone users allows them to book the parking space in advance.

"The parking system in the city has been streamlined with this initiative. It is a transparent system and

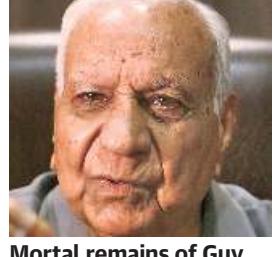
puts an end to all sorts of irregularities. The parking lots were rented out to the private firm for ₹2.58 crore whereas the civic body could earn only about a crore due to various shortcomings in the past," Mr. Sreedhar said on the occasion.

Mr. Nivas said that the mobile app would be of a great help to the city's guests to easily find parking space at busy centres. They could book the space even before entering the city, he said.

"The users would get a receipt with QR code that helps the organisers check the vehicle status while going in and out. There is no change in pricing of the parking tickets," he added.

While officials claimed that there was no intimidation so far from the Election Commission about the scope for advancing the elections, they said the CEO's office had, however, intensified efforts to ensure that the requisite processes are completed ahead of schedule so that the election authority is prepared for elections.

IN BRIEF



Mortal remains of Guv consigned to flames

CHANDIGARH

The mortal remains of Chhattisgarh Governor Balramji Dass Tandon were consigned to flames with full State honours in Chandigarh on Thursday. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Ministers of several States paid tributes to the leader. The funeral pyre was lit by Tandon's son, Sanjay Tandon. Earlier in the day, the body of the veteran BJP leader, wrapped in the Tricolour, was brought to the Punjab BJP office here for people to pay their last respects.

PTI

21 farmers arrested after clash in Uttar Pradesh

MUZAFFARNAGAR

The Uttar Pradesh Police on Thursday arrested 21 farmers in connection with a clash that broke out between two groups over a minor dispute at Ramkore village in Shamli district, an officer said. On Wednesday, a clash broke out between the farmers of Ramkore village in Uttar Pradesh and the farmers of Nanheda village in Haryana. Twenty-five people were booked and 21 others were arrested in this regard.

PTI

Policeman stabbed to death in Jharkhand

GIRIDIH

A policeman in civil dress was on Thursday stabbed to death by unidentified persons in Palamau district, a senior police officer said. Rajvanish Ram, a havildar deputed at Town police station here, was attacked at Hutt Bazar Hat, SP Surendra Kumar Jha said. The victim was a resident of Sasaram in Bihar. The cause behind the killing was not yet established, he said, adding that police investigation has begun.

45 rescued from Sultan Garh Waterfalls in M.P.

More than six still missing after being swept away by sudden surge in water

ANUP DUTTA
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh police have rescued at least 45 people who were stranded in the Sultan Garh Waterfalls in Shivpuri district on Wednesday due to a sudden surge in water.

"We have rescued 40 people and five others were brought out with the help of a helicopter. All these 45 people are safe now," said Rajesh Hingankar, Superintendent of Police, Shivpuri.

A search operation is under way to locate a few missing persons who were swept away by the gushing water, he added. According to the police, at least six families have filed missing complaints as their kin, who went to the waterfall on Wednesday, have not returned.

Meanwhile, the district administration has stopped the rescue operation which started on Wednesday evening,



Nature's fury: Rescue operations under way after tourists got stranded at Sultan Garh Waterfalls in Shivpuri on Wednesday.

PTI

said an official.

Wednesday being a national holiday on the occasion of the 72nd Independence Day, several people had gone to the Sultan Garh Waterfalls, a popular picnic destination located near Mohana village. The picturesque waterfall, located in an area bordering the Gwalior

district, is connected to the Parvati river.

Caught unaware

Following a sudden release of water from a dam and heavy rains upstream, the water level rose dangerously around 4.30 p.m. and caught those bathing and relaxing near the waterfall

unawares.

In a video clip of the tragedy being shared on social media, at least five people can be seen being swept away by the gushing waters.

Madhya Pradesh Minister Yashodhara Raje Scindia congratulated the Indian Air Force, SDRF, Home Guards, ITBP, and M.P. police personnel for the successful rescue operation. State Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan thanked Union Minister Rajnath Singh and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for extending their help in the rescue operations.

"I thank @rajnathsingh ji & @nsitharaman ji who extended their support to help in the rescue operations. I monitored the situation on minute to minute basis as my heart was with the families whose loved ones were stuck in rapids of Sultangarh Water Falls," he tweeted.

Violence in Bihar district over illegal abattoir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KISHANGANJ

Violence erupted on Thursday when vigilantes tried to force closure of an unlicensed slaughterhouse in a remote part of the district, prompting the police to fire in the air and burst tear-gas shells for bringing the situation under control, official sources said.

The incident took place in Bishampur locality under Kochadhaman police station area where activists, including a woman, of NGO 'Gau Gyan Foundation' asked those running an illegal abattoir to shut shop, a statement issued from the office of District Magistrate Mahendra Kumar said.

A mob gathered at the spot and began moving menacingly towards the activists, who rushed to a police outpost nearby and locked themselves inside.

SHO heckled

When the SHO Abhay Kumar tried to pacify the crowd he was heckled and his uniform ripped apart.

As the mob went on the rampage, setting vehicles parked inside the premises on fire, senior officials including the DM and Superintendent of Police Kumar Ashish rushed to the spot.

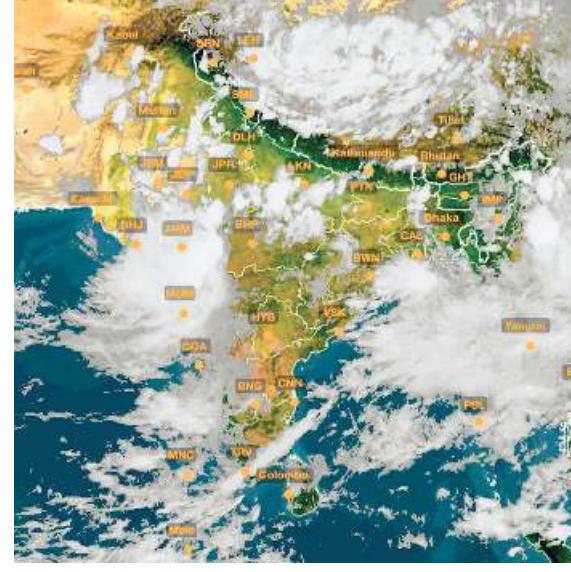
Baton charge, firing gunshots in the air and bursting of tear-gas shells were resorted to by the police personnel to quell the mob which fought a pitched battle.

A flag march was also taken out by police, which was assisted by a battalion of the Sashastra Seema Bal.

The DM's office added that those involved in vandalism and arson would be identified and action will be taken against them.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Heavy to very heavy rain at a few/isolated places over Gujarat, Saurashtra, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, east Rajasthan, south-west Madhya Pradesh, north-central Maharashtra, north Konkan, west Vidarbha, coastal and south interior Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.6...	36.0...	26.6	Kozhikode	133.6...	25.4...	23.5
Ahmedabad	—	35.2...	25.6	Kurnool	2.2...	28.1...	24.4
Aizawl	5...	30.0...	12.7	Lucknow	50...	32.6...	26.0
Allahabad	13.2...	33.8...	27.0	Madurai	6...	34.6...	23.7
Bengaluru	2.7...	25.5...	20.2	Mangaluru	28.2...	25.7...	22.8
Bhopal	16.1...	30.1...	23.9	Mumbai	7.4...	28.5...	25.0
Bhubaneswar	7.5...	31.9...	26.2	Mysuru	1...	24.9...	19.4
Chandigarh	—	35.5...	27.5	New Delhi	—	35.6...	27.6
Chennai	2.5...	35.0...	25.1	Patna	30.6...	33.5...	26.1
Coimbatore	11.6...	28.6...	21.4	Port Blair	3.1...	29.0...	25.6
Dehradun	0.4...	34.4...	25.2	Puducherry	38.1...	35.6...	22.3
Gangtok	—	24.5...	17.9	Pune	—	24.6...	21.9
Goa	29.7...	26.4...	24.0	Raipur	0.6...	32.0...	25.8
Guwahati	—	33.5...	26.1	Ranchi	9.4...	28.9...	23.0
Hubballi	—	22.0...	21.0	Shillong	15...	26.8...	18.3
Hyderabad	5.2...	26.7...	21.3	Shimla	0.4...	22.1...	16.7
Imphal	0.4...	31.8...	22.0	Srinagar	—	31.6...	18.6
Jaipur	12.6...	34.1...	24.9	Trivandrum	41.8...	28.0...	21.7
Kochi	113.2...	27.4...	22.4	Tiruchi	—	35.6...	26.4
Kohima	—	28.2...	20.4	Vijayawada	7.5...	32.0...	24.5
Kolkata	5.4...	31.6...	27.4	Vishakhapatnam	4.7...	30.0...	24.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	43	.56	.25	.73	—	■
Bengaluru	.7	.31	.66	.40	.87	■
Chennai	.5	.16	.35	.41	—	■
Delhi	.7	.72	.160	.42	.89	■
Hyderabad	.4	.77	.23	.15	.19	■
Kolkata	.2	.39	.63	.18	.28	■
Lucknow	.6	.36	.37	.35	—	■
Mumbai	14	.28	.54	.47	.87	■
Pune	33	.12	.53	.36	.30	■
Vishakhapatnam	—	—	.35	—	—	—

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Jodhpur, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 183

indicating moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Brahmapur, Odisha recorded a healthy AQI score of 22

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

SO₂: 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.

NO₂: 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

Pay up, says green panel to U.P. govt.

Tells it to bear cost of treatment of victims affected due to contaminated water



Give job to a dependent of such victim: NGT • FILE PHOTO

part of the action plan so that persons who had suffered diseases are provided treatment first from the State funds and the amount recovered from the polluters."

Additionally the Bench said that apart from monetary compensation, "the State may consider giving employment to a dependent of such victims".

"Water is to be made available not only to few who can afford bottled water and mineral water but also to every citizen of the country. The State is under constitutional obligation to ensure that potable water is available to every citizen and

very stern action is taken against any individual responsible for such contamination" the Bench added.

The directions came while the green panel was hearing a plea by NGO Doaba Paryavaran Samiti seeking directions against industries running illegally in some districts of U.P. including Meerut, Baghpat and Ghaziabad.

It had been alleged that after consumption of polluted water from rivers Kalinadi, Krishna and Hindon, residents had developed several diseases including liver damage, cancer and kidney failure.

The green panel further suggested the formulation of "appropriate schemes" both by the State government and the Central Pollution Control Board.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Adarsh Kumar



Distress signals: A view of a landslip on the Punalur-Sengottai railway stretch in Kollam on Thursday. (Centre) A migrant worker being rescued at Kampanipady in Aluva. The worker, who was holding on to a raft, lost his grip due to strong waves but was saved by locals. (Right) The Army engineering wing team from Pune arriving at the Thiruvananthapuram airport for rescue operations on Thursday. • C. SURESHKUMAR, THULASI KAKKAT & S. GOPAKUMAR

Centre to scale up relief measures in Kerala

National Crisis Management Committee takes stock of the grim situation in flood-ravaged State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A high level committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary met on Thursday and decided to scale up relief and rescue operations in flood-hit Kerala by involving the three defence services and other agencies.

Chaired by Cabinet Secretary P.K. Sinha and attended by chiefs of the three services, the secretaries of Home, Defence and others, the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) took stock of the prevailing situation in Kerala and directed all concerned to ensure continued assistance to the State government to meet the crisis, a Home Ministry spokesperson said.

PM's directive
The meeting was held following a directive of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the spokesperson said. He said so far, 2,182 persons had been rescued and 968 stranded people evacuated.

The Central government

has been providing full support to Kerala and has launched massive relief and rescue operations in the State, the spokesperson said.

In the meeting, the Cabinet Secretary pressed into service all the forces – Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard, National Disaster Response Force and other Central armed police forces (CAPFs) – and directed that all possible assistance be provided to Kerala for relief and rescue operations.

Relief material
The Cabinet Secretary also directed that relief material, including supply of drinking water, dry food packets and powdered milk, should be made available to Kerala, the spokesperson said.

As of now, 18 teams of the NDRF, 9 columns and 8 teams of the Engineering Task Force of the Army, 22 teams of the Coast Guard, 24 diving teams of the Navy along with helicopters, aircraft, boats, equipment, life buoys and life jackets have

been dispatched to Kerala for rescue operations as well as evacuation of stranded people.

Medical assistance is being provided by the NDRF, the Army, the Navy and at special medical camps.

The Prime Minister spoke to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday morning and discussed with him the flood situation.

During his visit to Kerala on Sunday, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh announced a ₹100 crore assistance package.

The NCMC meeting was attended by the Secretary of the Union Water Resources Ministry and chiefs of the Coast Guard, the NDRF, the Member, National Disaster Management Authority, the Chairman, Central Water Commission and others. Kerala Chief Secretary and his team participated through video conference.

The National Crisis Management Committee will meet again on Friday to review the situation.

Situation worsens

Water levels (measured in metres) were higher in 19 of the 21 flood monitoring stations on Thursday compared to previous day in Kerala. 12 stations touched Highest Flood Levels (HFL), classified as "severe" (highlighted in table), compared to four stations on the previous day

Station, River, District	HFL	Aug. 15	Aug. 16
Ramamangalam, Muvattupuzha, ER	8.42	7.04	9.36
Thumpamon, Pamba, PA	13.73	10.71	12.90
Pulamanthole, Pulanthodu, PK	19.07	17.45	19.63
Karathodu, Kadalandi, MA	13.5	10.14	12.05
Kalampur, Kaliyar, ER	15	15.67	17.43
Mankara, Bharathapuzha, PK	52	50.89	52.40
Neeleeswaram, Periyar, ER	11	10.84	12.31
Kuniyil, Chaliyam, MA	10.63	8.83	10.21
Pattazhy, Kallada, QU	13.8	9.52	10.87
Kumbidi, Bharathapuzha, PK	10	9.30	10.56
Kidangoor, Meenachil, KM	8.01	6.85	8.10
Pudur, Kannadiyupuzha, PK	65.55	63.70	64.84
Perumannu, Valapattanam, KA	14.75	13.98	15.11
Malakkara, Pamba, PA	8	7.50	8.46
Arangali, Chalakudy, TR	8	8.38	9.18
Muthankara, Kabini, WA	713	712.40	713.15
Kallooppara, Pamba, PA	9.31	7.92	8.58
Erinjipuzha, Payaswani, KG	19.08	18.18	18.65
Vandiperiyar, Periyar, ID	794	796.68	797.10

Compiled by Vignesh Radhakrishnan

Source: Central Water Commission, IMD-Thiruvananthapuram

Kochi international airport to remain shut till Aug. 26

All airlines asked to shift to Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram



An aerial view of the Kochi International Airport on Thursday. • THULASI KAKKAT

Special dispensation for flights by foreign carriers

MUMBAI
The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted special dispensation for eight foreign carriers to operate flights to Thiruvananthapuram instead of Kochi, whose airport has been shut till August 26, following extensive flooding of the apron and other operational areas.

with evacuation and dispatch of relief materials. The naval base can handle smaller turboprop planes.

"We are ready to step in at short notice if the need arises," the senior official added.

The DGCA has told airlines to check airfares for flights to Kerala and asked them not to levy more than ₹10,000 for a Delhi - Thiruvananthapuram flight.

Mullaperiyar is safe, EPS tells Pinarayi

T.N. CM cites inspection by SC panel

DENNIS S. JESUDASAN
CHENNAI

Responding to concerns raised by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on the storage in the Mullaperiyar dam, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Thursday conveyed that the dam "is safe" in all respects – hydrologically, seismically and structurally – as per the Supreme Court order in May 2014.

"During the past, the dam was inspected by many experts and they had also found that the dam is safe in all aspects," Mr. Palaniswami said in a letter to his Kerala counterpart.



The Mullaperiyar dam.

Even during its last inspection on August 4, the SC-appointed Supervisory Committee said the dam "is safe to store water up to 142 ft" and hence "there is no threat to the safety" of the dam and water is being stored at the permitted level of 142 ft as per the orders of the Supreme Court, he said.

Rahul seeks special assistance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday to request him for special financial assistance to Kerala and increase the deployment of Army and Navy in the flood-hit State.

"Kerala is in great pain. I spoke to PM and requested him to massively increase deployment of the Army and Navy. I also said that it is critical that he gives the state special financial assistance as this is a tragedy without parallel in Kerala's history," he said on Twitter.

The Congress chief made an appeal for donations to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. "Many have lost their loved ones. It's time to step up & help. Please contribute generously to the CM's relief fund," he said in another tweet.

Aviation regulator
The Cochin International Airport Limited has informed that due to rain, the airport is not available up to 2 p.m. on August 26. As a result, aviation operations and flights [to and from the airport] will remain suspended till then. The situation is being constantly reviewed in consultation with the State Government," Secretary, Civil Aviation Ministry, R.N. Choubey said.

The airport was earlier supposed to be shut for four days from August 15 to August 18.

Mr. Choubey also spoke to authorities in Kerala and offered to start flights at the Cochin naval airbase to help

In crisis, a heart-warming gesture from Lini's widower

Donates first salary as a clerk to the CM's distress relief fund

K.P.M. BASHEER
KOZHIKODE

"The government and people of Kerala stood by me and my two children in our worst crisis, and I wanted to make at least a token repayment of this huge emotional debt."

This is how Sajeesh Puthur, 36, described the donation of his first monthly salary as a government clerk to the Kerala Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund to battle the fury of the floods raging across the State.

Viewed against the mammoth task of rebuilding lives, livelihoods and the economy, Sajeesh's donation of Rs. 25,200



Sajeesh with his family a few months before Lini's death.
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

could look a pittance. But his sentiment doesn't.

He is the husband of nurse Lini, who died a valiant death this year, having contracted the virus.

Nipah during the May-June outbreak of the virus in Kozhikode and Malappuram districts that took 17 lives.

"My wife sacrificed her life for the sake of her duty as a nurse," Sajeesh told The Hindu. "I am proud of her. The government gave me my current job in lieu of her sacrifice."

Lini, 33, mother of a five-year-old and a two-year-old, worked at the taluk hospital at Perambra when Mohammed Sadiq, who was the second Nipah victim, got admitted there. She nursed him in spite of the huge risk, and eventually contracted the virus.

Reduce water level in Mullaperiyar to 139 ft, orders SC

Kerala, T.N. told to ensure safety

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday told Tamil Nadu and Kerala that "an effort has to be made to bring the water level [in the Mullaperiyar dam] to 139 feet so that people downstream (of the dam) do not live in constant fear".

The authorities should notify a disaster management plan to the public in Kerala, "so that people ultimately do not suffer a catastrophe".

The Bench, also comprising Justice Indu Malhotra, was hearing – on an urgent basis – a petition filed by Russel Joy, a resident in the downstream area of the Mullaperiyar dam in Idukki district of Kerala, highlighting the perils of a dangerously high water level in the British-era dam, made worse by the utter lack of co-ordination between the two State governments and a non-existent disaster management plan.

The court asked Kerala and Tamil Nadu to bury the hatchet and work with the Union Cabinet Secretary-led National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) to find a way to reduce the water level in the dam so that the "disaster of floods in Kerala does not turn into a catastrophe".

"Action speaks much faster than words... there should be absolute co-ordination. The two States shall

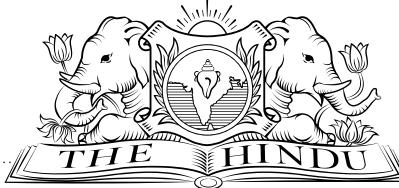
work in harmony," Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra said.

Kerala's fears

Kerala submitted that the water level in the Mullaperiyar dam may have reached 142 feet, the maximum permissible level allowed by the Supreme Court.

With the death toll in Kerala nearing 100, release of water by Tamil Nadu from the dam would be devastating, Kerala said.

The Chief Justice, asking both the States to work together in the current situation, said, "This is a time for situational adjustments. Both States have to work out a solution in co-ordination with the Centre. First, you (Kerala and T.N.) should face the situation. What is being done to reduce the storage level in the dam?"



Consensus-maker

Vajpayee demonstrated that politics is indeed the art of the compromise

If one word could best describe a man, then for Atal Bihari Vajpayee that would have to be compromise. Ever the contrarian, Vajpayee was equally the consensus-seeker and the alliance-builder who could traverse ideological divides and overcome political animosities with a skill set that was a throwback to the Nehruvian era. A brilliant parliamentarian and a shrewd politician who could demolish political opponents with his acerbic wit, Vajpayee was also the elder statesman who was never afraid to reach out and make peace with India's neighbours. Without a doubt, he was born of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the torch-bearer of Hindutva. But his rise in the Jana Sangh was at a time when it was not on the ascendant, and this meant he always tried to outgrow his organisation. Vajpayee spent a lifetime trying to make his party displace the Congress from power, and to this end he switched between fighting the Congress's tactics and mimicking them. If the Jana Sangh came to power as part of the Janata Party in 1977, it was in no small measure due to his readiness to mend fences and build bridges with former political opponents. Indeed, he became the acceptable public face of a party propelled by divisive forces. Whether he was a mere frontman, a 'mask' as one of his party colleagues described him, or a driver of change in an organisation with deep-seated prejudices, is difficult to tell; the truth lay somewhere in between.

Vajpayee's first hold on power was a stint as External Affairs Minister in the Janata government in 1977-79, where he made a bold effort to normalise relations with China. Subsequently, he had three stints as Prime Minister, a 13-day misadventure without the required support in 1996, a 13-month experiment with strange bedfellows in 1998-99, and a full term with a reasonably cohesive alliance during 1999-2004. The National Democratic Alliance that the BJP formed in 1998 would not have been possible without Vajpayee as the leader. His image as a moderate trying to rein in extremist elements in his party made it easier for others such as the Telugu Desam, the Trinamool Congress and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam to join the NDA. The BJP would not have come within sniffing distance of power without him, but he brought the party to power by keeping its most contentious issues, Ayodhya, Article 370, uniform civil code, out. It is a matter of debate whether Pokhran-II was a strategic mistake, an unnecessary concession to a hyper-nationalistic constituency, but there is no denying the remarkable maturity he displayed during the Kargil crisis in 1999. But the compromise man could not win a second substantive term. Forced as he was to carry on a delicate balancing act, he often came across as an indecisive and cautious Prime Minister, even if at times an endearing and loveable one. There was no way to judge whether he softened the BJP or the BJP toughened him. Perhaps it was a bit of both.

Back from the woods?

His run at the PGA Championship suggests that the Tiger fairy tale is far from over

Truly great sportspersons may have their ups and downs, but they rarely fade away, as Roger Federer and Serena Williams have reminded us. For almost a decade, the golfing world has debated whether the Tiger Woods fairy tale is really over. Having notched up 14 majors and looking as if he would overhaul Jack Nicklaus's record 18, the story began to sour in November 2009, after Woods crashed his car into a fire hydrant a couple of days after news of his infidelity became public. A broken marriage, four spinal surgeries, and an alarming drop of form left the former world number one's ranking in tatters; he languished at 1,199 just last December. Last weekend, Woods hinted, and very strongly, that he still has what it takes to be amongst the best. Finishing a close runner-up to Brooks Koepka in the PGA Championship, the fourth and final 'Major' of the year, Woods shot a stunning final round 64, signing off with a magical 19-foot birdie. It wasn't enough to win, but more than sufficient to demonstrate that he cannot yet be written off. The fist pump that followed his loss seemed like a celebration of what his form signalled for the future. Already the golfing world is electrified, speculating whether he can add to his cache of 14 majors and end the drought that has continued since his third triumph at the 2008 U.S. Open.

In a relative sense, 2018 has been a decent year for Woods. He played all four Majors and raised hopes of winning two of them, the other being the British Open, where he eventually finished in a tied sixth place. He had a poor start in the PGA before going on to shoot 64, his best score in the final round of a Major. When personal issues led to his form dropping a decade ago, it seemed as if what prevented him from returning to his winning ways lay entirely in the mind. Over the years though, the challenge also assumed physical proportions. What began as niggling injuries morphed into a major back problem. The spinal fusion surgery 16 months ago and the need to cope with excruciating pain forced Woods to overmedicate himself, after which he was arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) in 2017. An exasperated Woods had said, "I'm done with golf." But the game was clearly not done with him. It is doubtful whether Woods will ever relive his glory days, when he stood well above his fellow golfers like a colossus. The competition today is talented and runs deep, and it is important to remember that Woods has 'lost' about a decade of his golfing life. But the next few months will provide the great man the opportunity to demonstrate that he has truly returned to form and that his run in the PGA was not just a last stab at glory.

A statesman and an orator

Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a large-hearted leader, always civil and never afraid to take tough decisions for India



MANVENDRA SINGH

Barmer had suffered devastating floods in 2006, and as the MP representing the constituency, I was involved in relief operations. Pranab Mukherjee, as Defence Minister in the United Progressive Alliance government, had accompanied Sonia Gandhi, then Congress president, for a survey to take stock of the operations. A district administration briefing was planned in Barmer for them, and as soon as they arrived Ms. Gandhi told me, in earshot of mediapersons, "Your MLA has behaved very badly with me." Unaware of what had happened, I nevertheless apologised with folded hands "on behalf of everyone", including the MLA, who like me belonged to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). That little apology made it to a tiny news story, which in turn reached Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then already in retirement from politics. He sent me a thank you message, the first and only one I received from him, "for maintaining Indian traditions, culture and our dignity".

A dignified man
It was this civility and dignity that marked Vajpayee's life and politics, and which seems completely at odds with the prevailing political culture of today. His enduring manner, display of affection and quality of giving earned him respect all around, including from the Opposition. His easy manner was reflected in his ready smile and a wink, and it kept debates

from escalating into confrontation. His mannerisms, including his long pauses, were easy to interpret as earnest. Yet, he would not shirk from the toughest decisions – in calls he took for India, he revealed the steel in him that his amiable persona often cloaked. There were two decisions that he took during his prime ministership (1998-2004) that helped change India completely; they still define India today. In taking them he demonstrated the willingness to take the bull by the horns.

On May 11, 1998, India began a two-stage series of nuclear tests that changed the way the world perceived decision-making in New Delhi. To top it off, de facto nuclearisation was claimed as a policy, giving nightmares to economists and policymakers. Vajpayee had factored it all in, including the likely course of Pakistan's reactive tests and the effect of sanctions on both countries, before giving the green signal. From that moment, the global attitude towards India began to change, and it defined India's rise.

The second decision has changed India internally – it was the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). Unlike the much celebrated 'Golden Quadrilateral' and the expansion of other highways undertaken on his watch as Prime Minister, it is the PMGSY that has completely altered the lives of farmers in India's far-flung villages and hamlets. For the first time they came to be connected to markets through a motorable road, thus bypassing middlemen who had always controlled access. Till date, it remains India's only pure data-driven scheme, unalterable by political pressure. Both decisions were game-changers for India.



Vajpayee's birth in Gwalior on December 25, 1924 to Krishna Devi and Krishna Bihari Vajpayee, and his subsequent upbringing and education are well documented. His early influences from Arya Samaj and then the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) are just as well known. His full-time commitment to the RSS, and subsequent secondment to the Jana Sangh, brought him in contact with Syama Prasad Mookerjee. The political graph was only upwards from there, bringing him appreciation from India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who prophesied that one day Vajpayee would lead the country. But before he became Prime Minister, Vajpayee cut his teeth as India's first non-Congress External Affairs Minister (1977-79) in the Janata Party government, and provided a glimpse of his future direction.

Efforts with Pakistan

By the time he became Foreign Minister, Pakistan had been defeated in war, divided into two, and was headed for another round of military rule. Despite all that, he launched persistent efforts with Pakistan, beginning with a visit to the neighbouring country. This was to remain the foreign policy theme through his tenure as Prime

Minister. It drew from a realisation that India would never be able to earn its place under the sun unless it made peace with Pakistan.

But doing business with Pakistan was never easy. After the bitter rhetoric of the 1998 nuclear tests, there was the euphoria of the bus journey to Lahore in 1999. A little-known fact about the bus trip is that it crossed the Radcliffe Line at Wagah, the Border Security Force was playing Daler Mehndi's Punjabi pop hit 'Sade naal rahohe to aish karoge' (If you stay with us, you'll do well). Obviously it was a message lost on Pakistan, which thereafter responded with the intrusions in Kargil that led to a brief but bitter war that summer. Vajpayee held his nerve and didn't waver despite adverse military conditions in the early days. Eventually India won a military victory as well global goodwill, a rare double achievement. Years later, I was the first Indian journalist to meet Nawaz Sharif, who had been Prime Minister of Pakistan during the Kargil war, when he was in exile in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He said: "Mr. Vajpayee is justified in feeling let down, we did let him down."

Quietly purposeful

The humiliation at the end of the year in 1999, with the hijack of an Indian Airlines plane to Kandahar, was followed by another attempt to forge peace with Pakistan at the Agra Summit in July 2001. In between, in 2000, Vajpayee didn't hesitate to let Pakistan know what he was about. Unknown to most, though it is murmured about occasionally and was even hinted at in the Pakistani media at that time, there was a devastating strike across the Line of Control (LoC) that lasted the longest, and till now

accounts for the most casualties ever on the other side. All that the Indian raiding party left behind as evidence was an HMT watch, showing India time. Troops manning India's posts said at the time that they had lost count of the number of ambulance sirens wailing across the LoC. Behind Vajpayee's cherubic, charming exterior, there was indeed a spine, and he could take, and handle, ruthless policy decisions.

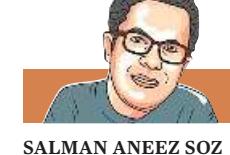
Vajpayee will ultimately be remembered for his oratory, the skill with which he summoned the apt word out of nowhere, his longish silences that would be suddenly broken by a beautifully worded sentence. His resignation speech of 1996 in the Lok Sabha stands out, as does his Srinagar address of April 2003 in which he held out the hand of friendship to Pakistan and which led to a sustained peace process. The 1996 speech had drama, anguish, integrity, hope, and sincerity that seeped through every word, every phrase. It remains a benchmark in speech-making, all of this before the era of PR speech-writers and social media platforms to take things viral. His speech went viral by the oldest known medium, word of mouth.

His command of words will always set him apart from other leaders. And nothing more so than his poetry. A couplet of his found pride of place in the BJP central office for the longest time. In translation: "With a small mind you cannot become great/ with a small heart you cannot stand tall." It was a dictum he heeded by living and governing with a broad mind and a big heart.

Manvendra Singh is an MLA representing the Shiv constituency in Rajasthan's Barmer district

A long march since freedom

To overlook the strides India has made since 1947 is to miss the lessons of history



SALMAN ANEEZ SOZ

The Partition and the bloodletting that accompanied our Independence took up much of the energy of our founders. An opinion piece by an unnamed Indian official in the October 1952 issue of *Foreign Affairs* magazine describes the challenge: "In its [Partition's] wake came the immense task of organising, within a few weeks, the movement of no less than 6,000,000 refugees, of improvising arrangements for their immediate relief, and devising plans for their permanent resettlement and rehabilitation. When was a 'refugee problem' of this magnitude set before an untried government in the very first days of its existence and solved with equal expedition and success?" There was no significant foreign assistance to deal with a refugee crisis that was second in scale only to that generated by World War II. While presenting the

first Budget of independent India on November 26, 1947, Finance Minister R.K. Shanmukham Chetty noted that the immediate impact of the Partition's "tragic developments has been to divert the attention of the Government almost completely from normal activities".

A difficult start

The Partition was an unwanted addition to an already full plate of immense problems. Most of India's 350 million people then lived in staggering poverty. One of the biggest problems was that of food, or the lack thereof. The Bengal famine of 1943, which claimed three million lives, was still fresh in memory. In his maiden budget speech, Chetty noted that India's "food position has continued to cause grave anxiety both to the Provincial Governments and the Central Government".

Writing in 1958, more than 10 years after Independence, the economist John Kenneth Galbraith was of the view that India's villages, where over 80% of Indians lived, were "preoccupied, with the production of food". Galbraith noted that "Indian economic life



as a whole" was mostly about food production. To address inadequate food production, our first government focussed on expanding India's irrigation capacity. Chester Bowles, an American diplomat, noted in an opinion piece that India embarked on creating three large dam systems (Damodar, Hirakud and Bhakra-Nangal) that had an irrigation capacity 70% more than that of the Grand Coulee (in the U.S. state of Washington), which was at that time the largest irrigation system in the world. The breathtaking ambition of such an irrigation system at a time of deep uncertainties and insecurities is a marvel in itself.

Be that as it may, our founders were visionary and understood the need for balanced develop-

ment. While today we keenly observe the ups and downs of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), India imported 90% of industrial goods around the time of Independence. The Five-Year Plans that many mock today helped India's industrial sector grow by an average of 7% over the 1950-65 period. The decline under the British was being reversed even as the basic building blocks of a new socio-economic order were being put in place. In the 50 years before Independence, India's GDP growth averaged about 0.9% per annum. During the first three Five-Year Plans, it averaged 4%. In 2018, we can say that 4% was low and that our founders were ineffective. Who in the year 1900 could imagine that India would grow at 4% a year over a 15-year stretch? In those 15 years (1950-1965), India's average GDP per capita growth rate was almost 20 times that achieved during the 1900-47 time period.

Building blocks

Yes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi can call today's IITs "India's instrument of transformation" but he fails to express a sincere debt of

gratitude to those who founded IITs. We can debate the quality of education in India but must also keep in mind that when India became free, the literacy rate was just 12%. The current government takes victory laps after reportedly electrifying 18,000 villages even as it whitewashes the fact that when independent India was born, only 0.2% were electrified. By the time Manmohan Singh passed the baton to Prime Minister Modi, 97% of villages had been electrified already. For those of us who want India to become truly great, developing an understanding of where India came from is essential. Otherwise, with the benefit of hindsight, we can mindlessly criticise past efforts and be distracted from our current context. After all, with all of the knowledge and expertise available in 21st century India, the current Prime Minister ended up enacting a disastrous economic policy of demonetisation that his predecessor described as "organised loot and legalised plunder".

Never forget.

Salman Aneez Soz, formerly with the World Bank, is a member of the Indian National Congress. Views are personal

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.

Remembering Vajpayee

Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a beloved leader whose appeal cut across party lines ("Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former Prime Minister, passes away at 93", August 16, online). He was a paradox: a liberal and moderate politician and an avowed pracharak. He was a poet and had a pluralist approach to politics. He will go down in history as a great statesman.

Vajpayee was too much in the Nehruvian mould to look like the inheritor of the legacy of the likes of K.B. Hedgewar and M.S. Golwalkar. He once said, "The Sangh is my soul." Yet he had an uneasy relationship with the RSS when he was Prime Minister. He famously distanced himself from the Ayodhya movement and revealed his mental make-up when he asked Narendra Modi, then Gujarat Chief Minister, to follow 'raj dharma' in 2002. Vajpayee's efforts with

Pakistan hold lessons for today. He believed that friends can be changed but not neighbours. His coinage, "Insaniyat, Kashmiriyat and Jamhooriyat", still resonates as the only plausible solution to the Kashmir problem. What is still debatable is whether the Pokhran nuclear tests he conducted fortified our national security.

G. DAVID MILTON,
Maruthancode

Vajpayee will be remembered as a poet-politician. During my college days in the 1960s, some classmates who had heard Vajpayee speak on stage told me that he was the most eloquent speaker around. My own chance to hear him in person came in January 1971. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had got the Lok Sabha dissolved and had called for elections in February 1971. The Grand Alliance opposing her was countering her popular slogan "Garibi

Hatao" with "Indira Hatao". Vajpayee, then the national president of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, came to Mumbai to address an election meeting at Gandhi Maidan in Chembur. He began his speech: "Hamari Pradhan Mantri kehti hain 'Garibi Hatao' (Our Prime Minister says remove poverty)." Then, after a brief pause, he said: "Garibi hatai nahin hai! Garibi ghati bhi nahin hai" (Poverty has neither been eradicated nor reduced.)

J.V. YAKHMI,
Mumbai

Vajpayee will be especially remembered for his acumen in running coalition governments, which was why he is often referred to as the architect of coalition politics.

MURARI MOHAN,
Kolkata

1973 to protest against the increase in petrol and kerosene prices. Vajpayee was also known for his oratory, so much so that it was Nehru who had noticed his questions and speeches in the Lok Sabha and had predicted that Vajpayee would become Prime Minister one day. As Prime Minister, Vajpayee's biggest gifts were the National Highways Development Project, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, not the nuclear tests that he is remembered for today. He will also be remembered as a politician who was civil in public discourse. His passing away is a great loss to the nation.

BIDYUT KUMAR CHATTERJEE,
Faridabad

In the passing away of Vajpayee, the country has lost a great parliamentarian, a charismatic leader and a great Prime Minister. Vajpayee's eloquence is

unparalleled. There are few statesmen like him, in the true sense of the word.

SESHAGIRI ROW KARRY,
Hyderabad

The PM's speech
Narendra Modi's last Independence Day speech before the next general election was a politically significant one, both in terms of what he said and what he didn't ("PM healthcare scheme from Sept. 25", August 16). The Prime Minister harped on farmers' distress, violence against women, and the condition of the marginalised. He also spoke of Muslim women and an "inclusive Constitution". Thus he sought to blunt the Opposition's campaign about how the NDA government is intolerant. Projecting himself as an impatient agent of change, he as usual castigated the previous Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government by taking 2013 as the base year to measure the level of progress of the

nation in the last four years. His speech was a report card of his government's performance, but the Prime Minister knows that his government has to step up to challenges such as providing employment, which he mentioned but didn't dwell on, and the falling rupee.

K. S. JAYATHEERTHA,
Bengaluru

Floods in Kerala
The Kerala government has dealt with the unprecedented emergency, which has led to the loss of many lives, quite well ("Kerala reels under its worst floods", August 16). If not for its efficiency, the casualties would have probably been much higher. Though the Centre has promised all possible help from its end, it would help if the catastrophe is declared a national calamity.

T.N. VENUGOPALAN,<

FROM PAGE ONE

Relentless rain savages Kerala

All but one of the State's 14 districts are on high alert, sources said.

Suspension of operations at the Kochi International Airport at Nedumbassery has been extended till August 26 due to heavy waterlogging. All services from the Thiruvananthapuram Central station were suspended. Over 25 trains were either cancelled or rescheduled, a Southern Railway statement said. Passengers were stranded as several trains were terminated ahead of their destinations.

Road traffic was disrupted at several places, communication lines were down and many parts of the State were without power supply, hampering rescue efforts.

Idukki landslips

A major landslide at Vettipalara in Eranad taluk in Malappuram claimed the lives of eight persons. Landslips and floods occurred at several places in Idukki and the high ranges in the district remained cut off for the second day following heavy rains.

Another massive landslide occurred at Amabayathode in Kottiyur village in Kannur, causing extensive damage to crops and property. Local people have been directed to relocate to safer

places. The Attapady tribal belt and Nelliampathy hill station were isolated following a series of landslides on Thursday morning.

Patients marooned

Patients in hospitals and students in college hostels were among those marooned by floodwaters. Hundreds of students were marooned at the Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit in Kalady near Kochi.

A high alert was issued for residents along the banks of the Chittur river after Tamil Nadu prepared to release 11,000 cusecs of water from the inter-State Alayar to Palakkad.

The Periyar, Chalakudy, Bharathapuzha, Kunthipuzha and Bhavani rivers were in spate. Kochi city remained tense as waters from the Periyar began invading more areas along the banks in Ernakulam.

The district administration has begun evacuating people.

The Kochi Metro services were suspended after the yard at Muttom was flooded. Traffic along the Kozhikode-Bangalore, Kottayam-MC road, Kottayam-Kattappana and Kalady MC roads was disrupted and vehicles stranded at many locations.

(With PTI inputs)

'No creamy layer norm for SCs/STs'

Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal argued that SC/ST are a "homogeneous group and any action to regroup them based on economic or social advancement would not be apt".

Mr. Venugopal said rigorous modalities were prescribed for inclusion of communities in the list of SCs/STs. "For inclusion of communities in the list of the SCs, one of the important determinants is the traditional practice of untouchability," he submitted.

The government wants a larger Bench of the Supreme Court to set aside its 2006 judgment in the Nagaraj case. This verdict mandates that the government cannot introduce quota in promotion for SC/ST persons

in public employment unless they prove that the particular Dalit community is backward, is inadequately represented and such a reservation in promotion would not affect the overall efficiency of public administration.

The opinion of the government should be based on quantifiable data, too, it said.

The government has argued that the judgment was a

Rupee slides to a new low vs dollar

Foreign exchange reserves have declined by \$23 billion in the last four months, and stood at \$402.7 billion as of the week ended August 3, 2018.

The weak trend in the global markets along with the fall in the rupee affected investor sentiment in the equity market as well, with the 30-share Sensex losing 188.44 points, or 0.50%, to close at 37,663.56.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, Vedanta, HDFC, Wipro, L&T

and Tata Steel were among the top losers, shedding 1.4% each.

The rupee's fall may not be as beneficial to exporters as widely believed since other emerging market currencies were also depreciating, said Ravi Sehgal, chairman of EEPIC India.

"Our import intensity of exports is also increasing," Mr. Sehgal said, adding that short-run volatility "exacerbates uncertainty for the exporters."

One killed, 3 injured by mob in Assam

People suspected the victims, on their way to buy livestock, to be cattle lifters

tacked them at Diplunga Tea Estate early Wednesday morning. Police came to know about the lynching from a video uploaded on social media a day later.

The mob intercepted the vehicle and assaulted the four - Deben Rajbongshi, Phoolchand Sahu, Bijoy Nayak and Pujen Rajbongshi - with sticks, iron rods

The victims were travelling in a three-wheeler to buy livestock from a weekly market when the mob at

and machetes.

They were admitted to a hospital in Biswanath Chariali town, where Deben succumbed to his injuries.

The condition of the other three, all belonged to the Adivasi community, was said to be stable.

Reminiscent of the May lynching of an audio engineer and businessman in

central Assam's Karbi Along district, the video showed the four victims pleading to the mob with folded hands to spare their lives as the blows rained on them.

The four were heard on the video saying they were going to buy pigs.

But the police said they were travelling with two stolen cows.

8 outfits to be heard on NRC claims process

No need to consult political parties on modalities for filing and disposing of objections to draft register, says Supreme Court

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to take the views of political parties on the Centre's standard operating procedure (SOP) and modalities for filing and disposal of claims/objections leading to the publication of the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam.

State NRC Co-ordinator Prateek Hajela informed a Bench of Justices Ranjan Gogoi and Rohinton Nariman that the opinions of various political parties on the NRC were sought by a State sub-committee in 2012-13.

However, the Bench shot down the idea of involving political parties. Instead, the court directed that the SOP should be examined by stakeholders and petitioners in the current litigation. The court then named eight of them - Assam Public Works, Assam Sanmitra Mahasangha (an indigenous people's organisation of Assam), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Progressive), Indigenous Tribal Peoples Federation, All Assam Bhojpuri Parishad, Joint Action Committee for Bangali Refugees, All Assam Minorities Stu-



Lines of hope: A file picture of people waiting to collect claim forms seeking inclusion of their names in the NRC in Assam. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

dents' Union (AAMSU) and Jamait Ulama-i-Hind - for the purpose.

Modalities on August 28

All the eight have been asked to present their views on the SOP, drafted by the Centre in consultation with the Assam government, Registrar General of India and Mr. Hajela, by August 25. The court said it would finalise the modalities on the next date of hear-

ing, that is, August 28. On its part, the Bench refrained from making comments about the SOP as of now.

The court directed Mr. Hajela to file, in a sealed cover, the percentage of the population in each district left out of the final draft NRC. This information has to be filed in court on or before August 25. The Bench further ordered Mr. Hajela to provide copies of the final draft NRC in pan-

chayat offices and "such other places" so as to make access to the draft NRC freely available to the public.

The filing of claims and objections would commence from August 30, the Bench recorded in its order.

On July 31, a day after the second and last draft of the NRC was published, the apex court had directed authorities not to initiate any 'action' against 40 lakh persons

'Foreigner' involved in NRC update arrested

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The police on Wednesday arrested a declared foreigner at Moirabari in Morigaon district of Assam.

In February 2015, a foreigners' tribunal declared Khaifur Islam a foreigner.

Islam, a government school teacher, challenged the verdict in the Gauhati High Court in September 2016. But the district administration appointed him at an NRC Nagarik Seva Kendra in December 2017

without verifying his credentials. In June, a Bench of Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and Nelson Sailo upheld the verdict and declared him a foreigner. The administration removed him from his post on August 1.

Islam went missing soon after. "We caught him on Wednesday night. We hope to arrest his mother, sister and two brothers too," SP Swapnil Deka said on Thursday. Islam, he said, would be sent to the detention camp in Tezpur.

cond and final draft of the NRC shows 2.9 crore names out of the total 3.29 crore who applied in Assam. The names of 40.07 lakh applicants were not included in the historic document, considered proof of Assamese identity. The first draft NRC was published in the intervening night of December 31 and January 1 and showed the names of 1.9 crore people.

Opposition not united by anti-BJPism alone: Rahul

We have a common vision for India, says Congress chief

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

The Opposition is not united merely to oppose the Bharatiya Janata Party but by a common vision for India, Congress president Rahul Gandhi said on Thursday, sharing a platform with nine other parties.

He was speaking at Sanji Virasat Bachao Sammelan or Save Composite Culture Seminar, an initiative of the Janata Dal-United (JD-U) rebel leader Sharad Yadav. Others on the stage included Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, Communist Party of India (CPI) general secretary Sudhakar Reddy, Nationalist Congress Party's (NCP) general secretary Tariq Anwar, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) leader Jayant Chaudhary, Samajwadi Party's (SP) Dharmendra Yadav, RJD's Jai Prakash Yadav, and Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) leader Dharmendra Yadav.

He said there is an "intense investigation before the notification under Articles 341 and 342 is issued. The inquiry identifies the people who have suffered for centuries and hence, by applying the 'creamy layer' concept, they should not be deprived of the benefits which accrue to them."

"Imposition on state" Mr. Venugopal submitted that the Nagaraj verdict destroyed the very essence of Article 16 (4A) by imposing on the State the need to bring to the table "quantifiable data" to justify its decision to promote SC/ST officers in public employment. The Opposition had no common ideology other than ousting



Coming together: Rahul Gandhi, right, Sharad Yadav and Farooq Abdullah in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

the BJP government.

Mr. Gandhi said that he had deliberated on how Opposition parties with diverse ideologies are standing together. "When I thought about it deeply, I came to the conclusion that there are two visions for India - one is that of the BJP, whose president said recently in a speech that India is a *sone ki chidiya* or a golden bird. And the second is our view - we see India as a river that can imbibe every stream of ideology in it," he said.

The BJP's view of India, he claimed, is the same as that of the British. "They want to construct a cage to put the bird in and we are

trying stop them from constructing it," he said.

Mr. Gandhi said whether it be demonetisation or hasty implementation of the Goods and Services Tax, it is the smaller businessmen and the poorer classes that are worst affected. He also brought up questions over the Rafale deal.

Playing on the BJP's 'Congress Mukt Bharat' slogan, Mr. Gandhi said that the Opposition was not aiming at a "BJP-Mukt Bharat". "We do not want to finish them, kill them or destroy them. We realise their ideology too exists, and we just want to say that our ideology is stronger than theirs," he said.

HC stops it from 'any coercive step'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Income Tax department told the Delhi High Court on Thursday that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's tax assessment for the year 2011-12 was reopened as material facts were concealed.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Tushar Mehta, appearing for the I-T department, made the submission before a Bench of Justices S. Ravindra Bhat and A.K. Chawla.

The Bench reserved its order on the pleas of Mr. Gandhi, his mother Sonia Gandhi and Congress leader Oscar Fernandes, all of whom have challenged reopening of their tax assessments for the same year (2011-12).

Oral instruction

The Bench orally asked the Income Tax Department not to take any coercive step against them till pronouncement of its verdict on September 10.

During the hearing, the ASG argued that the Congress leaders had alleged

'mala fide' on the part of the tax department but had not



4 jawans injured in gunfight near LoC
SRINAGAR
Four soldiers were injured as fresh gunfight erupted near the Line of Control for the fourth consecutive day on Thursday in Jammu and Kashmir. A police official said Army's 8 Bihar regiment intercepted a group of infiltrators near the Sangam Post at around 9.20 a.m. in Kupwara's Sangam Sector. Four injured Army soldiers were shifted to the hospital. "The entire area has been cordoned off. An operation was launched to flush out the militants," said the police official.

made any averments in this regard in their petition.

Mr. Mehta also defended the department's decision to send a notice to the Congress leaders at 11.28 p.m. on March 31, 2018 saying the officers were doing their duty.

"I [assessing officer] will be guilty of dereliction of duty if I do not send the notice before the stipulated time," Mr. Mehta argued.

Senior Congress leader and senior advocate P. Chidambaram, appearing for the party leaders, argued that the notice issued by the tax department informing the reopening of assessment was "perverse" and sent with "non-application of mind."

Three madrasa teachers charged with treason
MAHARASHTRA
A case of treason has been filed against three teachers of a madrasa in U.P. after a video purportedly showed them stopping children from singing the national anthem during the Independence Day function, the police said on Thursday. The video of Maulana Zubaid Ansari of madrasa Arba Ahle Sunnat stopping the children from singing the national anthem after the unfurling of the national flag went viral in the district on Wednesday.

District Magistrate Amarnath Upadhyay ordered an inquiry, and a case was lodged against three teachers under various Sections of the IPC, including treason. One of the teachers has been arrested and a hunt was on to nab the other two, the police said. PTI

Srijan scam: CBI registers seven more cases
NEW DELHI
The CBI has taken over seven more cases against office-bearers of the Bihar-based non-governmental organisation Srijan Mahila Vikas Sahayog Samiti and bank officials. It is alleged that about ₹1,000 crore of government funds were swindled. The new FIRs have been registered against the then Srijan officials, bank managers and unknown officials of the Bank of Baroda and the Indian Bank, accusing them of entering into a criminal conspiracy to illegally transfer and divert government funds. Earlier this week, the agency had registered two more FIRs in connection with the Srijan scam. The NGO's activities between 2003 and 2014 are under investigation.

Rahul to visit London, Berlin next week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Continuing with his effort to engage with the Indian diaspora, Congress president Rahul Gandhi will be visiting Germany and Britain next week where he will address two public events apart from meeting political leaders, business leaders, professionals and students.

"During his trip he will meet a large number of non-resident Indians, professionals, businessmen and others and address two ma-

Tamil Nadu keeps a watch on 11 districts; flood alert issued

CM chairs high-level meeting to review preparedness

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

With heavy inflows into major reservoirs across the State and floods in certain districts, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami chaired a meeting at the Secretariat here on Thursday to review precautionary measures.

Earlier in the day, the Central Water Commission (Southern Rivers Division) issued an advisory cautioning authorities in 11 districts of Tamil Nadu and Karaikal in Puducherry to take precautionary measures following a flood alert due to heavy discharge of water from the Kambini and Krishna Raja Sagar dams in Karnataka. The districts that were put on alert were Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Salem, Erode, Namakkal, Karur, Tiruchi, Thanjavur, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur and Ariyalur.

Teams deployed

"So far, a total of 2,538 per-

sons in various parts of Namakkal, Erode, Tiruchi and Dharmapuri districts have been shifted to 35 relief camps," an official release stated.

On the instructions of the Chief Minister, senior IAS officers are monitoring the flood situation. A total of 492 personnel of the Tamil Nadu Disaster Response Force have been deployed along the banks of Cauvery in various districts to undertake relief measures. As for restoration work, 14 roads, four bridges and

Atalji's passing away is a personal and irreplaceable loss for me. I have countless fond memories with him. He was an inspiration to karyakartas like me. I will particularly remember his sharp intellect and outstanding wit

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister



Atalji will be remembered as the pioneer of the first ever stable non-Congress coalition government at the Centre and I had the privilege of working as his deputy for six years. As my senior, he always encouraged and guided me in every possible manner

L.K. ADVANI, Former Deputy Prime Minister

Though we opposed each other vehemently on political & ideological issues, Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji's good-nature, decency and willingness to engage with all political leaders always made him stand out. Condolences

SITARAM YECHURI, CPI (M) leader

India is at a great loss today. Shri #AtalBihariVajpayee ji's contributions to our nation have been innumerable. Thoughts and prayers go out to his loved ones

SACHIN TENDULKAR
Former Indian cricket team Captain

Today India lost a great son. Former PM, Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, was loved and respected by millions. My condolences to his family & all his admirers. We will miss him

RAHUL GANDHI
Congress President



The man who steered BJP to power

Vajpayee put economy on track to liberalisation

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI
Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee led a 13-day government in 1996, as the head of the BJP, the single largest party, but could not get enough numbers to stay in power.

After an interval of two years, with a United Front government having fallen after the Congress withdrew support, he was again sworn-in as Prime Minister with the National Democratic Alliance in place after the 1998 polls. Within a month of this, Mr. Vajpayee oversaw the Pokhran nuclear test and the subsequent international sanctions that went with it.

Peace initiatives

The term was also marked by his initiatives for peace with Pakistan and the Lahore Declaration. His 13-month government, however, could not withstand the rather fragile coalition that he had put together and with the AIADMK withdrawing support, his government fell. The following polls in 1999, saw the NDA ensconced with a comfortable majority and lasted a full term till 2004. He undertook many reform measures with regard to the economy, keeping it on the liberalisation track despite resistance from the RSS.



Last respects: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paying homage to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at his Krishna Menon Marg residence in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ PTI

My closest friend: Advani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A pall of gloom descended on the BJP headquarters here after news of the death of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee came in.

Senior BJP leader L.K. Advani, one of the early visitors to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences where Mr. Vajpayee had been admitted since early June, couldn't hide his grief. "I am at a loss for words to express my deep grief and sadness today as we all mourn the passing of one of India's tallest sta-

tmen, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. To me, Atalji was more than a senior colleague – in fact, he was my closest friend for over 65 years," he said in a statement.

He recalled the beginning of their public life as pracharaks of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and his guidance.

"His captivating leadership qualities, mesmerising oratory, soaring patriotism and, above all, his sterling humane qualities such as compassion, humility and his remarkable ability to win

over his adversaries, despite ideological differences, have all had a profound effect on me in my years in public life. I will miss Atalji immensely," he said.

Yashwant Sinha, a Minister in the last NDA government of Mr. Vajpayee, said: "He was unparalleled. There was nobody like him. I was fortunate to have worked closely with him, under his guidance."

BJP president Amit Shah described the former Prime Minister as a "banyan tree" that nursed the party with skill and tenacity.

Pakistan hails his support for SAARC

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

A.B. Vajpayee was a reputed statesman who supported regional cooperation in South Asia, Pakistan said on Thursday, paying tributes to the former PM.

"Mr. Vajpayee was a renowned statesman who contributed to bringing a change in India-Pakistan relations and remained a key supporter of SAARC and regional cooperation for development," the message from Pakistan said.



Fond memories: Former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee with former President Pranab Mukherjee. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

Chidambaram said it was Mr. Vajpayee who didn't allow the BJP to go extreme right.

In keeping with the stature of the former Prime Minister, even political rivals were effusive in their praise. In a letter to Mr. Vajpayee's foster daughter Namita, Mr. Mukherjee wrote, "A democrat to the core, Atalji dominated the Opposition space like a titan and led the Government with aplomb. An inheritor and practitioner of the best traditions and qualities of leadership, in his demise the nation has lost a great son. An era that will always be fondly remembered has passed away."

The Congress chief, who was among the first few political leaders to have visited him at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, said

"Today India lost a great son. Former PM, Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, was loved and respected by millions. My condolences to his family & all his admirers. We will miss him."

Leaders remembered the former Prime Minister's ability to build consensus as a hallmark of his politics. Former Finance Minister P.

He was an intense, decisive leader: RSS

NEW DELHI
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat and general secretary Suresh "Bhaiyyaji" Joshi paid a joint tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, terming him a decisive leader, who was acceptable to all. "With his ideas and conduct, he established the Indian cultural values in his public life. He was an intense, decisive leader who was acceptable to all," they said in a joint statement. The vacuum created by the demise of such a tall leader will not be easy to fill, the Sangh statement added. Mr. Vajpayee joined the RSS as a young boy in 1939, and throughout his life considered himself a staunch RSS pracharak.

Was critical to India-U.S. ties, says Kenneth Juster

NEW DELHI
"A.B. Vajpayee was absolutely critical to India-U.S. ties. He began the dialogue with President Clinton (after the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests) but he also worked closely with President Bush. He coined the term 'natural allies' to which we all refer," U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Juster told *The Hindu*. Mr. Juster said Mr. Vajpayee's long lasting legacy will be his genuine efforts to resolve the decades-long hostility between Pakistan and India. Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said, "He never hesitated in giving full credit to his Opposition party leaders whenever due."

INTERVIEW | MANMOHAN SINGH

+ 'He shared Nehru's vision of India'

Former PM says Vajpayee was committed to a consensus approach in politics

SUHASINI HAIDAR

Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee stood among the tallest leaders of modern India, his successor Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said in an interview. Dr. Singh said both he and Mr. Vajpayee carried forward each other's policies on economic liberalisation and ties with the U.S. and Pakistan. Excerpts:



Mutual admiration: A file photo of former PM Manmohan Singh greeting Atal Bihari Vajpayee. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

What does the passing of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee mean for the nation?
■ Vajpayeeji was truly a great Indian and a great Prime Minister, and his idea of India, I found in many ways was close to Nehru's vision of India, and that's the legacy I feel should be preserved. Political differences will be there, but Nehru's vision of India, both in domestic policies and international affairs, was something Vajpayeeji also subscribed to.

But Mr. Vajpayee differed with Mr. Nehru and Nehruvian ideals on many counts, primarily on domestic politics. What do you think was the similar chord?

■ I think in politics, people should not be judged by

what they say, but what they do, and in terms of actions, the approaches of these two great men were not very different.

What were your own relations with him?
■ I had developed good relations with Mr. Vajpayee when I was Finance Minister. I used to consult him and I believe both he and Advani were in sympathy with the liberalisation policies that I was advocating. And on important occasions, like when I presented the Budget for 1992, and fertiliser prices were a big issue, he rescued me in Parliament. Once, when I had a very rough time in Parliament, he called me, and said, 'Dr. Singh, one ought to have a thick skin. Even if we don't support

you, you must stay strong on your path,' he said.

Is that kind of bonhomie now also a thing of the past?
■ Well, he was truly committed to a consensus approach to politics. That legacy is now in danger, and the challenge before the country is how not to do what will hurt the legacies of Jawaharlal Nehru and A.B. Vajpayee.

You spoke about Mr. Vajpayee taking forward your legacy of economic liberalisation, but you also took forward some of Mr. Vajpayee's initiatives...

■ In two areas – relations with the United States, and ties with Pakistan, I took more or less the same line as Mr. Vajpayee had taken. The Vajpayee government started the process of reaching out to the U.S. after our nuclear explosion in Pokhran, but those discussions broke down. When I became PM, I said to our officials that that is a path we must pursue. On Pakistan, I was in great sympathy with Atalji's approach to make peace. Atalji's approach in dealing with the internal dissensions in the Kashmir valley, were best summed up by his slogan: *Insaniyat, Jumhooriyat, Kashmariyat*, which should be our norm.

Mr. Vajpayee also travelled to Pakistan for the SAARC summit...

■ I think that relations in our neighbourhood, and that includes China, are important for India to realise its chosen destiny. It was ahead of Mr. Vajpayee's visit that President Musharraf promised that Pakistan would not allow its territory to be used by terrorists. Frankly, without that statement, without Mr. Vajpayee's visit, I would never have been able to proceed with my efforts in normalising relations.

A last meeting with journalists

Ill-health forced an unexpected exit of party stalwart from the political stage

VIKAS PATHAK
NEW DELHI

It was almost 11 years ago, in 2007, that Atal Bihari Vajpayee made his last public appearance in a brief meeting with a few journalists, who had gathered at his residence on December 25 to wish him on his birthday.

The key question for mediapersons that day was whether Mr. Vajpayee was

ready for another fight in 2009 or would his deteriorating health ensure his retirement from active politics and see the rise of L.K. Advani as the party's unchallenged leader.

A group of about 10 journalists sought out BJP leader Shahnawaz Hussain amid a crowd of frenzied supporters at Mr. Vajpayee's 8, Krishna Menon Marg resi-

dence and urged him to facilitate a meeting.

Mr. Hussain assured the journalists that he would arrange a short meeting with the ailing leader. And minutes later, the brief meeting materialised.

As we queued up to enter his room, we were asked to just wish him and leave.

As we entered his room, it was a very different Mr. Vaj-

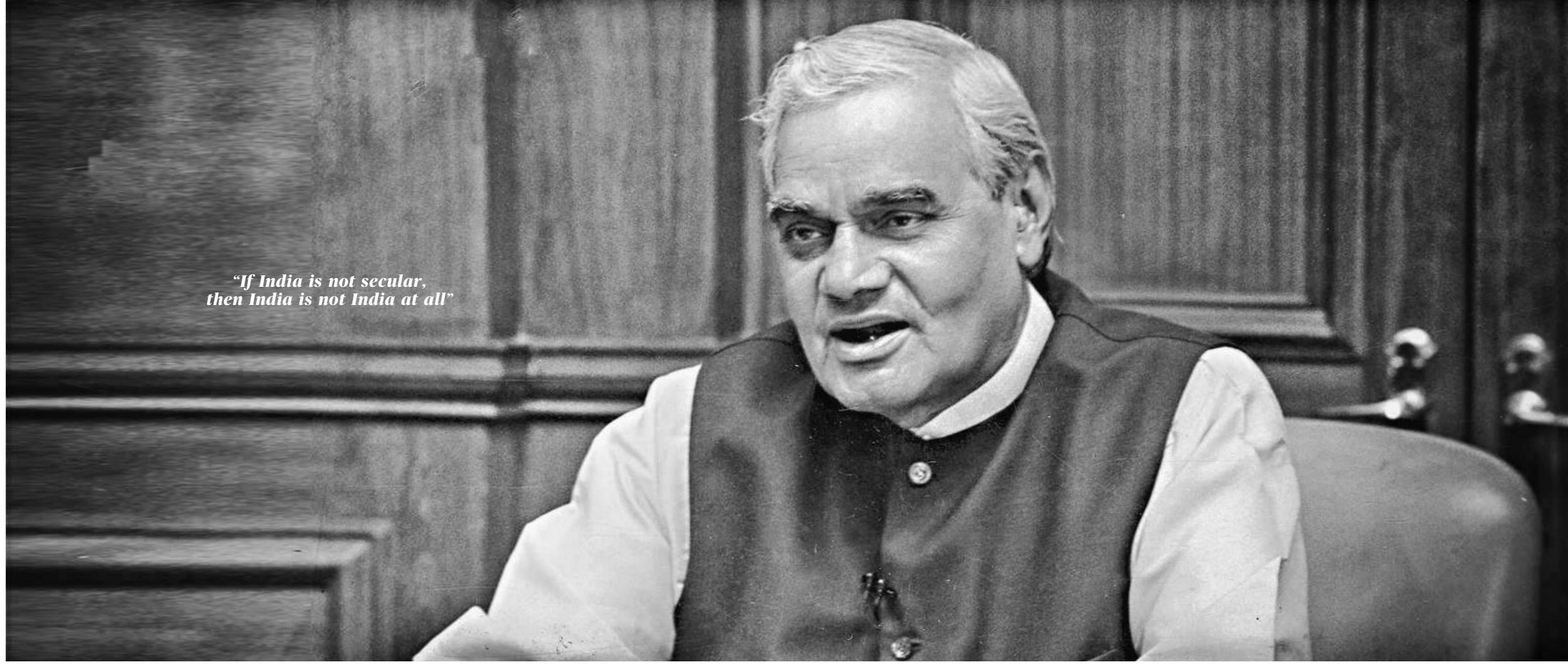
payee who faced us. He sat on a chair, one hand almost immovable, his face pale and lined – age and ailment starkly visible – without the trademark wide smile.

We gathered around him in a circle, just getting to wish him. The politician, once famed for his oratory, just whispered "namaskar" to each of us.

And the meeting ended.

12 ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (1924-2018)

NOIDA/DELHI THE HINDU
FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 2018



Atal Bihari Vajpayee

THE PM

Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee walked into history books a long time ago as the first

non-Congressman at the top post to complete a full term. Some say that the feat could only have been achieved by him, a man uniquely suited to make sure the delicate coalition, which the mandate of 1999 had thrown up, lasted its whole term.

Mr. Vajpayee himself said once in Parliament that, as Prime Minister, he may have been at the helm for a short time, but had achievements that would be remembered forever. The BJP may now occupy the pole position in Indian politics by invoking the emotions of Hindutva, but when it came to forming the government in 1998 and in 1999 (the third time that Mr. Vajpayee was sworn in, and the term that would last the full five years), the party under its consensus-building leader kept its three core issues of the Ram Temple, the abrogation of Article 370 and the demand for a Uniform Civil Code aside. Mr. Vajpayee, a self-proclaimed staunch pracharak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), did it to hold the fragile coalition together, and to also avail his party the opportunity of securing other important goals for itself.



INDIA

The first among these, in the short-lived 13-month government between 1998-99, was the Pokhran test that made India a nuclear state, an exercise that shocked the world, but which also gave the BJP the patina of a 'doer'. The strong nationalist sentiment it invoked, as well as Mr. Vajpayee's handling of the war in Kargil with Pakistan, enabled the party to, without much of a role in the freedom movement, occupy a nationalist plank. It also afforded Mr. Vajpayee the headroom he needed to think out-of-the-box on relations with Pakistan in his third term, and in Jammu & Kashmir, where his declaration that issues relating to the State be resolved within the contours of *insaaniyat* or humanism, still the most accepted template there, gave him rare popularity.

The tenuous coalition he led was not the only thing he overcame. In initiating and taking forward far-reaching economic reforms in infrastructure and telecom, and some unpopular decisions with disinvestment, he took on elements of the RSS that opposed such actions. This deft handling of the pulls and pressures of an ideological anchoring with the compulsions of a coalition, made him a prime minister who had friends across the board. In a memorable speech in Parliament, he declared he stood by the ancient wisdom that exhorted critics should be kept close and sycophants far away. His attempts to build consensus over his government's decisions reflected this view.

As Prime Minister, he did not allow his political compulsions to consume him. He turned them tactile, malleable, sometimes even to an advantage, to emerge as a statesman Prime Minister, comparable to the greatest in the country.

Nistula Hebbar

THE FM

Nuclear tests in May 1998, a peace-making bus ride to Lahore in February 1999, the Kargil war a couple of months later, a transformative visit to China in June 2003 and a peace deal with Pervez Musharraf in January 2004 stand out in Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's foreign and security policy calendar.

After the nuclear tests, the United States and China came together to mount unprecedented pressure on India and it took all the guile that Mr. Vajpayee and his advisers possessed to break this nexus and begin a tango with the U.S. that continues to this day.

The ensuing dialogue even led to an American request for India to send its troops to Iraq, a request that was declined after much consideration in July 2003.

With Pakistan, Mr. Vajpayee made two roller-coaster efforts at peace - one with Nawaz Sharif and the second with Pervez Musharraf. He also responded to infiltration in Kargil and ordered a massive mobilisation of Indian troops after the 2001 attack on Parliament House before agreeing to a peace deal with General Musharraf in Islamabad.

After Pakistan downed two Indian MiG aircraft during the Kargil conflict, there was enormous pressure on Mr. Vajpayee to respond in kind, which he resisted, a decision that won him much acclaim abroad. Eventually, the U.S. intervened and Pakistan had to vacate Indian positions in Kargil. The failed Agra summit in 2001 didn't dampen his efforts for peace. In January 2004, Gen. Musharraf committed to India that he would not allow Pakistani territory to be used by terrorists.

With China, he put in place the Special Representatives' mechanism in June 2003 on the border question and bought enough goodwill from the Chinese to make them change their maps from showing Sikkim as an "independent kingdom" to a constituent unit of India. The overall improvement in ties with China has led to major expansion of trade between the two countries - from about \$6 billion in 2003 to \$84 billion in 2017.

A point of interest is that Manmohan Singh, who succeeded him as Prime Minister, continued India's engagement with China, Pakistan and the United States. The trajectory of ties with all three was strikingly similar under Dr. Singh. Mr. Vajpayee was widely travelled and enjoyed his contacts with Indians living overseas. As *The Hindu*'s diplomatic correspondent, this writer accompanied him on many trips abroad and faced trying moments in reporting his Hindi speeches, which were almost always peppered with elements of ambiguity.

There was always a press conference at the end of his visits abroad - either on board his special aircraft or on the ground. Mr. Vajpayee was easy with the press despite the many crises he faced. Without doubt, his PMO was one where the press enjoyed the most access.

Amit Barua



INDIA

In the short-lived 13-month government between 1998-99, was the Pokhran test that made India a nuclear state, an exercise that shocked the world, but which also gave the BJP the patina of a 'doer'. The strong nationalist sentiment it invoked, as well as Mr. Vajpayee's handling of the war in Kargil with Pakistan, enabled the party to, without much of a role in the freedom movement, occupy a nationalist plank. It also afforded Mr. Vajpayee the headroom he needed to think out-of-the-box on relations with Pakistan in his third term, and in Jammu & Kashmir, where his declaration that issues relating to the State be resolved within the contours of *insaaniyat* or humanism, still the most accepted template there, gave him rare popularity.

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As Prime Minister, he did not allow his political compulsions to consume him. He turned them tactile, malleable, sometimes even to an advantage, to emerge as a statesman Prime Minister, comparable to the greatest in the country.

April 4, 2002 - during his visit to Ahmedabad

Poverty is multi-dimensional. It extends beyond money incomes to education, health care, skills enhancement, political participation at all levels from the local to the global, access to natural resources, clean water and air, and advancement of one's own culture and social organisation

September 25, 2003 - addressing the 58th session of UN General Assembly

We in India are inheritors to a great civilisation whose life chant has been "shanti", that is peace, and "bhaichara", which means brotherhood. India has never been an aggressor nation, a coloniser or a hegemon in her long history. In modern times, we are alive to our responsibility to contribute to peace, friendship and cooperation both in our region and around the world

January 31, 2004 - speaking at the inauguration of the Global Convention on Peace and Non-violence

THE Politician

Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's long time friend and associate L K Advani, summed up his political legacy when he called him the pioneer, who gave India the first stable, non-Congress coalition government.

After failing to find the numbers for his 13-day old government in 1996, Mr. Vajpayee resigned on the floor of the House but not before leaving a mark with his standout speech. "Governments come and go and parties are born and disappear. Above it all, the country must stay shining, its democracy immortal," the outgoing Prime Minister said in what has become the defining moment of his long parliamentary career.

After the collapse of coalition experiments like the United Front governments, Mr. Vajpayee stitched up a formidable alliance of 13 parties in 1998, including the BSP, AIADMK, the TDP and the TMC. But the government lasted a little over a year.

The number 13 stuck to Vajpayee - his first government lasted 13 days, his first coalition government had 13 parties and lasted 13 months.

In 1999 as the BJP came back to power, 20 parties came together to make Mr. Vajpayee the Prime Minister for a third time.

"Vajpayee was instrumental in strengthening the BJP. From a party that had just two members in Lok Sabha, Vajpayee rode it to power. He was a successful MP, leader of opposition, Minister of External Affairs and eventually the Prime Minister," TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu said in his tribute.

Often described as the "right man in the wrong party", Mr. Vajpayee managed the rare feat of wearing his RSS identity just as easily as his image of being a moderate in the Sangh Parivar.

Starting out as a Jana Sangh member in the Lok Sabha in 1957, when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was a giant in Indian politics, Mr. Vajpayee made his mark as an orator in Parliament. It speaks to his strong commitment to parliamentary democracy that while he was not afraid to take on the Prime Minister in Parliament, he compared him to Lord Ram in his speech after Nehru died in 1964. Among leaders who were jailed during the Emergency, the former Prime Minister's affable manner endeared him to the Opposition. And building political consensus became a hallmark of his politics.

In her tribute, UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi said, "Shri Vajpayee was a towering figure in our national life. Throughout his life, he stood for democratic values and demonstrated this commitment in all his acts, whether as a parliamentarian, a cabinet minister, or Prime Minister of India."

"He was a spell-binding orator, a leader of great vision, a patriot to the core for whom the national interest was paramount. But above all, he was a man with a very large heart and a real spirit of magnanimity," she added.

Sandeep Phukan

THE Orator

The long political career of Atal Bihari Vajpayee is marked by one unique facet: his mesmerising oratory

in Hindi that touched friends and foes alike.

While he stayed Prime Minister for six years - from 1998 to 2004 - his long parliamentary stint was marked by sharp oratory laced with humour.

The older Prime Minister Vajpayee was more guarded and spoke with pauses, unlike the younger fiery orator Vajpayee. Arguably the best Hindi orator Parliament has ever seen, he held people in rapt attention from the 1950s to the 1990s.

Mr. Vajpayee first entered Parliament in 1957 from Balrampur in Uttar Pradesh, in what was to be the first of his 10 Lok Sabha terms. Yet he made a mark, despite his party, the Jana Sangh, being insignificant at that time.

Hearing him speak, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru is believed to have told a visiting foreign dignitary of the young MP's immense promise, saying that he could be Prime Minister one day.

When Nehru died in May 1964, Mr. Vajpayee's obituary speech in Parliament read like poetry. He said, in characteristic Vajpayee style, that Mother India was sad as "her most beloved prince had gone to sleep". A dream has remained half-fulfilled, a song has fallen silent, Mr. Vajpayee said, adding, "The dream was of a world free of fear and hunger; the song a great epic resonant with the spirit of the Gita and the fragrance of a rose."

Yet, the man who had admirers across the political divide - and who said there should be "mathbad" (difference of opinion) but not "manbad" (personal differences) in politics - was also known for his sharp ideological speeches.

In 1977, as External Affairs Minister, Mr. Vajpayee addressed the UN General Assembly in Hindi. In the 1990s, as a rising BJP sought a face acceptable to allies, Mr. Vajpayee returned as the party's prime leader, delivering one unforgettable speech in Parliament after another.

Particularly appealing was his speech when his government could not garner a majority in 1996 and fell in 13 days. Before dramatically announcing that he was going to the President to resign, Mr. Vajpayee defended his decision to try to form a government and said the Opposition was a disparate lot trying to put in place a lame duck government. He said the BJP had the highest number of Dalit MPs, arguing that the BJP's support base was deep.

His speeches - which the House heard in rapt attention - were not without humour. Once Ram Vilas Paswan took a jibe at a rising BJP by saying he too was "Ram"; Mr. Vajpayee said: "Aap Ram to hain, par vilas Ram hain" (You are Ram, but a Ram given to pleasure). When Somnath Chatterjee was taking charge as the Lok Sabha Speaker in 2004, he said while the veteran leader came from Bolpur, his present post was not one where he would be able to talk (*bol*) a lot.

Vikas Pathak

WORD FOR WORD

My one message to the Chief Minister is that he should follow 'raj dharma'. A ruler should not make any discrimination between his subjects on the basis of caste, creed and religion

April 4, 2002 - during his visit to Ahmedabad

Poverty is multi-dimensional. It extends beyond money incomes to education, health care, skills enhancement, political participation at all levels from the local to the global, access to natural resources, clean water and air, and advancement of one's own culture and social organisation

September 25, 2003 - addressing the 58th session of UN General Assembly

We in India are inheritors to a great civilisation whose life chant has been "shanti", that is peace, and "bhaichara", which means brotherhood. India has never been an aggressor nation, a coloniser or a hegemon in her long history. In modern times, we are alive to our responsibility to contribute to peace, friendship and cooperation both in our region and around the world

January 31, 2004 - speaking at the inauguration of the Global Convention on Peace and Non-violence

Gun can solve no problem; brotherhood can. Issues can be resolved if we move forward guided by the three principles of 'Insaaniyat' (humanity), 'Jamhooriyat' (democracy) and 'Kashmiriyat' (Kashmir's age old legacy of amity)

April 23, 2003 - Speaking in Parliament on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir

One cannot wish away the fact that before good neighbours can truly fraternise with each other, they must first mend their fences

June 23, 2003 - Speaking at Peking University

He created a peace template for the subcontinent



SUDHEENDRA KULKARNI

A truly great leader is one who swims against the current of public opinion in attempting to solve the big problems of his times. He may or may not succeed. If he does, history of course reserves a higher place of honour for his accomplishment. But even if he doesn't, his greatness still lies in having created a template of the effort that would, if continued with the same determination and vigour by his successors, bring success someday.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee's most enduring legacy as Prime Minister is that he attempted to liberate India from the prison of the past with regard to two of the most intractable historical problems – Kashmir and Pakistan. That he did not succeed is evident. Indeed, when he demitted office in May 2004 after failing to win a renewed mandate in the elections to the 14th Lok Sabha, any lasting solution to the Kashmir issue, or to normalisation of India-Pakistan relations, seemed a long way off, even though some footprints of progress made during his tenure in office were undeniably visible. But does that mean he was a failure? Think again.

Twin, intertwined problems

The template, which his successor Dr. Manmohan Singh used to find a solution to the twin, and intertwined, problems of Kashmir

and Pakistan, was essentially the same as what Mr. Vajpayee had created. More to the point, has Narendra Modi discovered or devised any new path? Mr. Modi, in his Independence Day address to the nation, conceded that neither *goli* (bullets) nor *gaali* (abuses) could bring Kashmir closer to peace and normalcy. What could, he stated, was the path shown by Vajpayee's three-point formula – *kashmiriyat* (respect for Kashmir's unique identity and pluralistic personality), *jamhuriyat* (genuine respect for the democratic aspirations of Kashmiri people) and *insaaniyat* (respect for their human rights).

It was present when Mr. Vajpayee had offered this formula during his landmark visit to Kashmir in April 2003. He had taken a big risk in addressing a public rally in the Valley, but the response to his appeal was electrifying. After many decades of false starts and missed opportunities, the people of Kashmir felt reassured that New Delhi was genuinely interested in, and also committed to, pursuing a bold new path to peace. Their hope was rooted in another audacious new move by Mr. Vajpayee.

Taking almost everyone by surprise, and with the dramatic gesture of his outstretched hand pointing to Islamabad, he had announced, "I am extending my hand of friendship with Pakistan. India is ready for talks with Pakistan on all issues, including the issue of Kashmir."

Mr. Vajpayee knew in the depth of his heart that India could never find a permanent solution to the Kashmir problem without co-evolving that solution with Pakistan. In other words, the Kashmir problem had an internal dimension and an external dimension, and the two were inseparably linked.

Which is why, improving relations with Pakistan was the leitmotif of his politics ever since he became India's External Affairs Minister in Morarji Desai's government in 1977. On his first visit to Islamabad, he tried to allay the misgivings of the rulers and people of Pakistan by saying, "You might be having doubts about me since I previously belonged to the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which believed in the idea of 'Akhand Bharat'. But let me assure you that I have come here as a messenger of peace." Old-timers remember that India-Pakistan relations hit a high during the brief period of the Janata Party's rule.

Picking up the thread

Mr. Vajpayee picked up the thread when he became Prime Minister in 1998. His first major foreign policy initiative was to reach out to Pakistan, and he did so in the form of an imaginative bus *yatra* from Amritsar to Lahore in February 1999. As one who accompanied him on this bus, I was witness to the enormous amount of hope he generated on both sides of the border. I vividly remember that, after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif welcomed him on Pakistani soil, Mushahid Hussain, who was then a Minister in Mr. Sharif's government, whispered to me on the sidelines, "Your Prime Minister has real guts to come to Pakistan like this, and at this time." (Within few months, after the Kargil fiasco, there was a military coup in Islamabad.)

Two highlights of that visit are etched in my memory. One was Mr. Vajpayee's visit to Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore, the monument that commemorates the historic session of the All India Muslim League in March 1940, which adopted the 'Pakistan Resolution'. Some colleagues, who had reservations over

this visit, asked him: "Won't you be putting your seal of approval on Pakistan by going there?" His reply was highly instructive. "Who am I to put a seal of approval on Pakistan? Hasn't history already done so?" The visit sent the clearest signal yet that any discussion on 'Akhand Bharat' was now meaningless.

The second highlight was the speech Mr. Vajpayee gave at the Governor's House in Lahore. He made a passionate appeal for both Indians and Pakistanis to leave the hostilities of the past behind and, instead, courageously embrace a future of peace and friendship. He concluded his speech by reciting his own popular poem *Jang na hone denge...*

Bharat Pakistan padosi, saath-saath rehna hai,

Pyar karen ya 'war' karein, donon ko hi sehra hai,

Jo hum par guzari, bachchon par na hone denge,

Jang na hone denge

India and Pakistan, we are neighbours. We have to live together. Whether we love or fight each other, we both have to face the consequences. What we had to endure, we shall not let our children suffer the same. We shall not let another war break out between India and Pakistan.)

The speech received thunderous applause from the audience. But what especially caught my attention was the tears in the eyes of some Pakistanis sitting next to me.

The best tribute to Mr. Vajpayee would be to continue his peace mission until it is crowned with success.

(The author was an aide to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the PMO between 1998-2004.)

THE FACE OF THE BJP

December 25, 1924:

Born in Gwalior

1942: Vajpayee and his elder brother Prem were jailed in August during the Quit India Movement; he was released after giving a written undertaking, expressly declaring that he would not participate in the anti-British struggle



1951: Joined the Jan Sangh

1957: Elected to the Lok Sabha from Balrampur

1968: After the death of Deendayal Upadhyaya, Vajpayee became the national president of the Jan Sangh

1975: Jailed along with several other Opposition leaders during the Emergency

1977: Vajpayee merged Jan Sangh into the Janata Party

1977-1979: Served as the Minister for External Affairs in Prime Minister Morarji Desai's Cabinet. Visited China in a significant effort at normalisation of ties (in pic). Delivered speech in Hindi in the UN General Assembly



1980: Helped found the Bharatiya Janata Party and became the BJP's first president

1996: Sworn in as the 10th PM, but his government failed to win support. He resigned after 13 days

March 19, 1998: After the BJP assembled a winning coalition, he was sworn in as PM again

May 1998: India conducted five nuclear tests in Pokhran (see pic) in Rajasthan, 24 years after its first test in 1974

Late 1998 and early 1999: Vajpayee began a push for peace with Pakistan. Inaugurated the Delhi-Lahore bus service in February 1999

April 17, 1999: Resigned after just 13 months in power after his government lost the trust vote in Parliament

June 1999: Operation Vijay launched to remove militants and non-uniformed Pakistani soldiers from around the town of Kargil, Batalik and Akhnoor sectors

October 13, 1999: Sworn in again as Prime Minister after the BJP-led NDA won 303 seats out of the 543 seats in the Lok Sabha (see pic)

December 1999:

Indian Airlines flight IC 814 from Kathmandu to New Delhi was hijacked by five terrorists and flown to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan

July 2001: The Agra Summit was held between Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf (in pic). It failed to move the peace needle



December 13, 2001:

A group of terrorists stormed Parliament. Vajpayee ordered a mobilisation of the military, and as many as 5,00,000 servicemen amassed along the Indo-Pak boundary

Feb.-March 2002: Following the killing of kar sevaks in Godhra and the eruption of riots in Gujarat that resulted in hundreds of deaths, Vajpayee visited the State and publicly criticised Chief Minister Narendra Modi for not doing his moral duty to protect the people

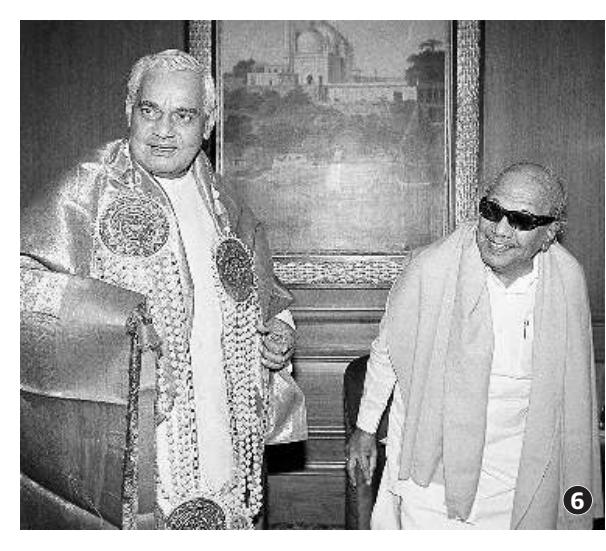
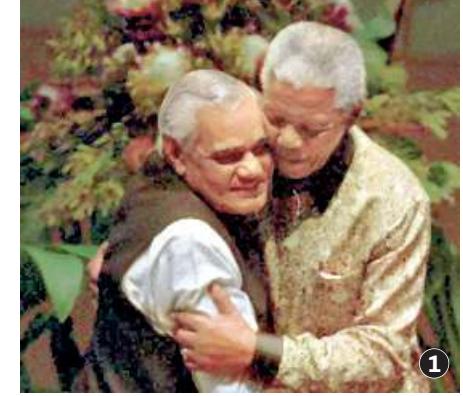
May 13, 2004: Resigned as Prime Minister after his party lost in the parliamentary elections

December 29, 2005: Announced his retirement from politics

December 25, 2014: Vajpayee's 90th birthday was observed nationally as Good Governance Day

March 27, 2015: President of India conferred India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, on Vajpayee

A POLITICIAN AND A GENTLEMAN



Many moods: (1) Atal Bihari Vajpayee with South African President Nelson Mandela in September 1998; (2) At Rashtrapati Bhavan on May 15, 1996, soon after receiving the invitation to form the Central government; (3) Waving to the crowd following his arrival in Lahore on February 19, 1999; (4) With L.K. Advani and Narendra Modi at a public meeting in Ahmedabad in November 2004; (5) With ISRO chairman Dr. G. Kasturi Rangan and party colleague Murli Manohar Joshi in Sriharikota on May 26, 1999, following the launch of a PSLV satellite; (6) With DMK chief M. Karunanidhi in Chennai in April 1998. • PTI, THE HINDU ARCHIVES

WORD FOR WORD

The Pokhran-2 nuclear tests were conducted neither for self-glory, nor for any display of machismo. But this has been our policy, and I think it is also the policy of the nation, that there should be minimum deterrence, which should also be credible. This is why we took the decision to conduct tests

1998, speaking after the Pokhran nuclear tests

If I break the party and forge new alliances to come to power, then I will not like to touch that power even with a pincer

1996, replying to the no-confidence motion in the Lok Sabha

The freedom of the press is an integral part of Indian democracy. It is protected by the Constitution. It is guarded in a more fundamental way by our democratic culture. This national culture not only respects freedom of thought and expression, but also has nurtured a diversity of viewpoints unmatched anywhere in the world

September 13, 2003 - speaking at the 125th anniversary of The Hindu

Persecution on account of one's beliefs and insistence that all must accept a particular point of view is unknown to our ethos

September 13, 2003 - speaking at 125th anniversary of The Hindu

Mutual suspicions and petty rivalries have continued to haunt us. As a result, the peace dividend has bypassed our region. History can remind us, guide us, teach us or warn us; it should not shackle us. We have to look forward now, with a collective approach in mind.

January 2004 - talking on South Asia at the 12th SAARC Summit in Islamabad

ELSEWHERE



Malian President wins second term

Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita won a landslide victory in a run-off against Opposition rival Soumiala Cissé, the government said on Thursday, giving him a second term. Mr. Keita won 67% of the vote in an election marred by militant attacks and allegations of fraud. **REUTERS**

Pak. authority threatens to block Twitter

Twitter has been warned by Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) that it could be banned in the country for not complying with its directive to block objectionable content, according to a media report. PTA official Nisar Ahmed told a Senate committee that only 5% of Islamabad's requests to block content were entertained by Twitter. **PTI**

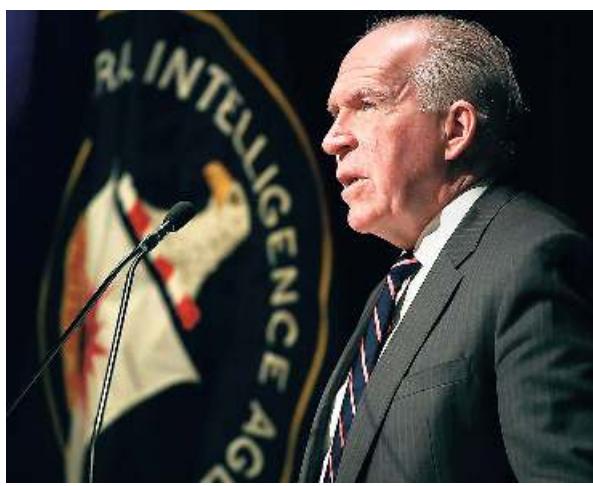
Trump revokes Brennan's clearance

Former CIA chief's 'recent conduct is inconsistent with access to the nation's most closely held secrets'

VARGHESE K. GEORGE
WASHINGTON

In a dramatic escalation of tensions between the White House and conventional security strategists of the country, President Donald Trump revoked the security clearance of the former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), John Brennan. Senior intelligence officials routinely retain their access to classified information and Mr. Trump's decision to block Mr. Brennan was widely seen as unprecedented.

Mr. Trump and the country's security agencies are at loggerheads over American strategy. The President has questioned the record of America's intelligence organisations, particularly the unfounded declaration that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, paving the way for the invasion of the country in 2003. Mr. Brennan was Deputy Executive Director of the CIA then. He has been a severe critic of Mr. Trump. "It was nothing short of treasonous," he said of the President's press conference with



Access denied: John Brennan was appointed the CIA chief by President Barack Obama in 2013. •AFP

Russian President Vladimir Putin in July.

"Mr. Brennan has recently leveraged his status as a former high-ranking official with access to highly sensitive information to make a series of unfounded and outrageous allegations – wild outbursts on the Internet and television – about this administration. Mr. Brennan's lying and recent conduct, characterised by in-

creasingly frenzied commentary, is wholly inconsistent with access to the nation's most closely held secrets," Mr. Trump said in a statement.

'Russian asset'

The President said he was reviewing the security clearances of several other former officials, including former FBI chief James Comey and former Director of National

Intelligence James Clapper. Mr. Clapper had earlier termed the President a Russian intelligence "asset".

Escalating Mr. Trump's tensions with the security establishment are the diverging views of the two sides on America's relations with Russia, and the alleged Russian interference to facilitate the President's victory in 2016. An investigation led by Special Counsel Robert Mueller into Russian interference remains open 15 months after it started, and indictments so far of American citizens relate to tax frauds and deceit. No indictment related to collusion has been brought.

"I call it the rigged witch hunt, (it) is a sham. And these people led it!" Mr. Trump said in an interview to the *Wall Street Journal*, about the Russia investigation, published on Wednesday. "So I think it's something that had to be done."

Mr. Brennan said in a *New York Times* piece after his security clearance was revoked that there was collusion bet-

ween Mr. Trump and the Russians. "Mr. Trump's claims of no collusion are, in a word, hogwash. The only questions that remain are whether the collusion that took place constituted criminally liable conspiracy, whether obstruction of justice occurred to cover up any collusion or conspiracy and facilitates the very aim of our adversaries, which is to sow division and chaos..." he wrote.

President Barack Obama appointed Mr. Brennan as CIA chief in 2013, overlooking the concerns raised by many liberals for his role in the Bush-era tactics against terrorism. On Wednesday, the Democrats appeared to be rallying behind Mr. Brennan. "In the time I have known him, John Brennan has never been afraid to speak up and give it to you straight," former Vice-President Joe Biden posted on Twitter.

China, U.S. to hold trade talks in late Aug.

Lower-level officials will take part

REUTERS
BEIJING

China will hold a fresh round of trade talks with the United States in Washington later this month, Beijing said on Thursday, offering a glimmer of hope for progress in resolving a conflict that has set world financial markets on edge.



Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen will lead the talks for China. •REUTERS

There also remains a wide gap between the two sides over Washington's demands that Beijing improve market access and intellectual property protections for U.S. companies, and slash a \$375 billion trade deficit with China.

The meeting would end what had been a lull in talks between the two sides, but it is unclear whether it will take place before or after August 23, when Washington is due to activate additional tariffs on \$16 billion of Chinese goods. Beijing has said it will retaliate in kind.

'Labelling media as enemy is dangerous'

The Boston Globe

REUTERS
LOS ANGELES

Hundreds of U.S. newspapers on Thursday launched a coordinated defence of press freedom and a rebuke of President Donald Trump for denouncing some media organisations as enemies of the American people.

The Boston Globe and *The New York Times* took part along with more than 350 other newspapers of all sizes, including some in States that Mr. Trump won during the 2016 presidential election. *The Globe* said it coordinated publication among the newspapers and carried details of it on a database on its website. Each paper ran an editorial.

+ *The Globe's* editorial accused Mr. Trump of carrying

JOURNALISTS ARE NOT THE ENEMY

Last week, *The Boston Globe's* editorial board put out a call to counterparts in news organizations across the country – liberal and conservative, large and small – to join



out a "sustained assault on the free press". "The greatness of America is dependent on the role of a free press to speak the truth to the powerful," it said.

'An un-American remark'
"To label the press 'the enemy of the people' is as un-American as it is dangerous to the civic compact we have

shared for more than two centuries."

Mr. Trump lashed out on Thursday, tweeting "THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPPOSITION PARTY. It is very bad for our Great Country... BUT WE ARE WINNING!" His comments reflect a view held by many conservatives that most newspapers and other news outlets

lets distort, make up or omit facts because of a bias against them.

The New York Times editorial said it was right to criticise the news media for underplaying or overplaying stories or for getting something wrong in a story.

"News reporters and editors are human, and make mistakes. Correcting them is core to our job," it said. "But insisting that 'truths you don't like are 'fake news' is dangerous to the lifeblood of democracy. And calling journalists the 'enemy of the people' is dangerous, period."

The editorials were criticised by some in the media, including a CBS News commentary that described them as a "self-defeating act of journalistic groupthink".

Kabul training centre comes under attack

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

Gunmen attacked an intelligence training centre in Kabul on Thursday, officials said, as families of loved ones killed by a suicide bomber a day earlier.

"Clashes are ongoing and the area is cordoned off by the Afghan security forces," said police spokesman Hashmat Stanikzai.

The firefight erupted near a training centre overseen by the National Security Directorate – Afghanistan's intelligence agency – with the gunmen holed up in a construction site near residential buildings, an official at the scene said.

97 students held over Dhaka protests

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DHAKA

Bangladesh police said on Thursday that they had arrested nearly 100 people as they step up a crackdown after student protests paralysed the capital.



Bangladeshi students protesting in Dhaka on August 5. •AFP

leader said Bin Yamin Molah. "Everyone is in a panic," he said. "Almost all the students who have led the protests have gone into hiding."

"Many students who posted about the protests have either changed their Face-

book accounts or removed their posts. Even yesterday two students were arrested for their Facebook posts. Teachers are being harassed for supporting the protests," he said.

On Wednesday, police arrested a 22-year-old student leader, Lutfun Nahar Luma, at a remote hideout.

Dhaka police's cyber-crime chief said on Monday that officers had investigated about 1,000 Facebook accounts they say spread rumours during the unrest.

Rights groups have criticised the crackdown and the violence used to end the protests. About 1,000 people were injured in police action and attacks by pro-government groups on students and journalists.

U.S. to impose more sanctions on Turkey if pastor is not freed

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin warned on Thursday that Washington would levy more sanctions on the troubled Turkish economy if Ankara does not soon release a jailed American pastor.

Mr. Mnuchin on Thursday suggested that the next spiral of tit-for-tat sanctions was coming soon.

"We have put sanctions on several of their Cabinet members," Mr. Mnuchin told President Donald Trump in a Cabinet meeting attended by the press.

"We have more that we are planning to do if they don't release him quickly."

'Not a good friend'
Mr. Trump prefaced Mr. Mnuchin's remarks by saying that Turkey had not been

a very good friend to America.

Referring to imprisoned pastor Andrew Brunson, Mr. Trump said "they have a great Christian pastor there, he's a very innocent man".

The threat comes as Turkey sought on Thursday to reassure investors rattled by the sanctions-fuelled crash of the Turkish lira, insisting that the country would emerge stronger.

Perhaps the most arresting statistic in support of the view that Turkey is the canary in the coal mine is the vast amount of cheap dollar-based loans that have accumulated worldwide since global central banks began their rescue operations in early 2009.

According to the Bank for International Settlements, a forum for central banks, the total amount of dollar-based loans has jumped from \$5.8 trillion in the first quarter of 2009 to \$11.4 trillion today. Of that, \$3.7 trillion has gone to emerging markets, more than doubling during that period. **NY TIMES**

the risks." In a research note Mr. Subbaraman published on Monday, he pointed to South Africa, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Chile and Mexico as having the most vulnerable economies.

Mr. Subbaraman said the build up in cheap dollar credit could ultimately threaten South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and even China, whose currency, the renminbi, weakened further against the dollar this week.

Now, the borrowing binge that fuelled rapid growth in emerging markets and piled up returns for their investors is looking like a problem.

Financial experts worry that the turmoil in Turkey, which for the better part of a year has been contained, will spread, following the path of other emerging market meltdowns like those in Mexico in 1994 and Asia in 1997. "The risk of contagion is pretty high," said Robert Subbaraman, an emerging market economist at Nomura in Singapore.

The crisis in Turkey has been made worse by a diplomatic dispute with the U.S. and the mercurial moods and questionable policy po-

litions of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, but the combination of heavy international borrowing and a fall in the national currency is the same scenario that could undermine other emerging economies.

Growing challenges
"Turkey is a symptom of the growing challenges for emerging markets," said Mr. Subbaraman. "Due to super-low interest rates, investors have been on the hunt for yield – until this year. Now they will be blindsided by

the risks." In a research note Mr. Subbaraman published on Monday, he pointed to South Africa, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Chile and Mexico as having the most vulnerable economies.

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Why Turkey's crisis feels familiar for emerging markets

Experts worry the turmoil will spread to other countries

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Perhaps the most arresting statistic in support of the view that Turkey is the canary in the coal mine is the vast amount of cheap dollar-based loans that have accumulated worldwide since global central banks began their rescue operations in early 2009.

According to the Bank for International Settlements, a forum for central banks, the total amount of dollar-based loans has jumped from \$5.8 trillion in the first quarter of 2009 to \$11.4 trillion today. Of that, \$3.7 trillion has gone to emerging markets, more than doubling during that period. **NY TIMES**

Growing challenges
"Turkey is a symptom of the growing challenges for emerging markets," said Mr. Subbaraman. "Due to super-low interest rates, investors have been on the hunt for yield – until this year. Now they will be blindsided by

the risks." In a research note Mr. Subbaraman published on Monday, he pointed to South Africa, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Chile and Mexico as having the most vulnerable economies.

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The crisis in Turkey has been made worse by a diplomatic dispute with the U.S. and the mercurial moods and questionable policy po-

litions of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, but the combination of heavy international borrowing and a fall in the national currency is the same scenario that could undermine other emerging economies.

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MARKET WATCH

	16-08-2018	% CHANGE
Sensex	37,664	-0.50
US Dollar	70.15	-0.37
Gold	30,340	-0.94
Brent oil	70.92	-2.39

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	370.30	-2.85
Asian Paints	1394.80	-0.30
Axis Bank	623.45	5.40
Bajaj Auto	2667.50	21.10
Bajaj Finance	7076.00	-36.70
Bharti Airtel	2856.60	26.40
BPCL	372.00	5.00
Cipla	648.35	5.60
Coal India	282.70	0.05
Dr Reddys Lab	2353.45	75.00
Eicher Motors	2880.85	-188.50
GAIL (India)	393.80	14.00
Grasim Ind	999.45	12.85
HCL Tech.	997.25	-2.45
HDFC	1891.20	-50.30
HDFC Bank	2075.70	-13.40
Hero MotoCorp	3282.65	16.30
Hindalco	216.10	-5.35
HPLC	266.15	-3.90
Hind Unilever	1737.40	-6.85
Indiabulls HFL	1259.59	-31.10
ICICI Bank	334.30	1.85
IndusInd Bank	1984.20	-13.40
Bharti Infratech	280.65	-3.25
Infosys	1429.55	21.25
Indian Oil Corp	158.50	-2.20
ITC	307.45	-0.45
Kotak Bank	1245.40	-47.60
L&T	1231.65	-21.60
Lupin	849.75	13.00
M&M	951.25	0.80
Maurti Suzuki	9200.55	67.95
NTPC	158.55	1.65
ONGC	164.45	-1.80
PowerGrid Corp	187.70	-0.20
Reliance Ind	1200.80	-9.80
State Bank	292.70	-2.20
Sun Pharma	619.70	17.90
Tata Motors	251.30	2.50
Tata Steel	567.55	-11.40
TCS	2008.50	4.95
Tech Mahindra	668.65	-4.15
Titan	919.45	-6.15
UltraTech Cement	4213.50	-85.60
UPL	609.65	-0.80
Vedanta	208.80	-6.30
Wipro	279.45	-5.60
YES Bank	378.45	-4.05
Zee Entertainment	500.45	-13.30

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	69.95	70.27
Euro	79.55	79.92
British Pound	88.83	89.24
Japanese Yen (100)	63.11	63.40
Chinese Yuan	10.14	10.19
Swiss Franc	70.40	70.73
Singapore Dollar	50.84	51.08
Canadian Dollar	53.22	53.46
Malaysian Ringgit	17.03	17.44

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

	Aug 16 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses
Retail Silver (1g)	40.2.....(40.9)
22 ct gold (1g)	2817.....(2827)

IN BRIEF**India Yamaha Motor rolls out two motorcycles**

CHENNAI India Yamaha Motor Pvt. Ltd. has introduced all new YZF-R15 Version 3.0 (155cc) Moto GP Limited Edition in 'Yamaha Racing Blue' colour, and the blue core technology-enabled FZS-FI (149 CC) with rear disc brake in Mattgreen and Darknight colours. The YZF-R15, priced at ₹1.30 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi), is to be booked online. The FZS-FI is priced at ₹87,042 (ex-showroom Delhi). Vehicle delivery will start in September, the company said in a statement.

Maruti Suzuki raises prices by up to ₹6,100

NEW DELHI Country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India on Thursday increased prices of its vehicles by up to ₹6,100 to partially offset increase in commodity and distribution costs and adverse foreign exchange rates, the company said in a statement. The new prices are effective from Thursday, it added. Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors and Honda Cars India have also announced increase in prices from this month citing rising input cost. PTI

Mercedes-Benz India increases price by 4%

MUMBAI Mercedes-Benz India has announced a 4% upward revision of prices of its entire range effective September 1. "The rising inflation due to geo-political dynamics, coupled with rising input costs and increasing foreign rates has been exerting significant pressure on overall operations. The combination of these factors led Mercedes-Benz India to upwardly revise the prices of its entire model range and also the retail finance rates," the company said.

Growth impulses remain strong: Patel

Monsoon augurs well for farm sector, investment positive, MPC minutes show RBI Governor as saying

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Urjit Patel sees domestic growth impulses continuing to remain reasonably strong as the monsoon, which has been normal 'so far', augurs well for the farm sector, according to the minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee's meeting earlier this month.

"The manufacturing sector has continued to be robust," Dr. Patel was cited as having said at the meeting, the minutes of which were released on Thursday. "Several high frequency indicators of services activity have expanded at a faster pace in recent months," he said, adding rising trade protection-



External risks: Rising trade protectionism may impact growth prospects by dampening exports, says Urjit Patel. ■REUTERS

ism may impact domestic investment and growth prospects by dampening India's exports.

The RBI on August 1 retained its forecast for GDP growth in the current fiscal

year at 7.4% and projected the pace at 7.5% for the first quarter of 2019-20.

While noting that consumer price inflation, excluding the impact of house rent allowance, had risen for the

third consecutive month in June, Dr. Patel said there was considerable uncertainty around the full impact on inflation from the changes in the minimum support price for kharif crops, adding that a clearer picture would emerge only in the coming months.

On August 1, the RBI, raised the benchmark repo rate by 25 basis points (bps), with five of the six members voting for an increase.

'Upside risks'

"I am more concerned about upside risks materialising compared to downside risks" for the inflation outlook, RBI deputy governor Viral Acharya said during the meeting, the minutes show.

Court asks CBDT to file reply on STT

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has directed the Central Board of Direct Taxes to file its reply by August 23 in the matter related to the levy of securities transaction tax (STT) on physically-settled derivatives contracts.

A circular issued by NSE in April included a list of 46 stocks whose derivatives contracts would be physically settled. NSE decided to levy an STT of 0.1%, much higher than the STT charged on stocks that are cash-settled. While NSE put the onus of collecting STT from the clients on brokers, Association of National Exchanges Members of India said that there was no provision in the Finance Act to tax physically-settled derivatives contracts.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has upgraded the unified payments interface (UPI) with enhanced security features and overdraft facilities.

Unveiling the UPI 2.0 on Thursday, RBI Governor Urjit Patel said that the upgraded UPI was the result of the calibrated approach adopted by RBI in the initial years as a developer and in the later years as a catalyst and facilitator.

'Setting standards'

He said the payments systems in India were not only comparable to any system anywhere in the world, but also set standards for others

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

to emulate. He also outlined the need for ensuring adequate importance to cybersecurity, adding that all efforts needed to be channelled to this area. Costs should not be an inhibiting factor to this critical area, Dr. Patel said.

"In addition to current and savings accounts, customers can link their overdraft ac-

count to UPI," NPCI said in a statement. Nandan Nilekani, advisor – Innovation and non-executive Chairman, Infosys, lauded the payment systems vision of the Reserve Bank in creating robust and varied payment products and infrastructure.

He thanked Dr. Patel and the RBI for the innovation-fostering approach which resulted in India having many payment systems that were state of the art and cost-effective.

"UPI is a path-breaking innovation that is unprecedented globally. Its high volume, low cost and highly scalable architecture built on an open source platform is key to India's transformation to a digital payment economy," Mr. Nilekani said.

In the backdrop of rupee volatility, a 22-member delegation led by Tea Board deputy chairman Arun Kumar Ray will visit Kazakhstan from August 22-24.

The delegation will comprise large and small tea growers, packers and tea brokers. While small growers had participated in overseas tea expositions earlier, this is the first time they would be part of a delegation, said Bijoy Chakraborty, president of the Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association.

Estimated at about 30 million kg, the Kazakhstan market is now dominated by African countries led by Kenya, with India ceding share.

International tea market.

India's tea exports remained flat at 46.8 million kg between April and June.

Contract already done

"Most of this year's contracts are already done," he said. Besides China and Sri Lanka, African countries like Kenya are among India's main competitors in the in-

ternational tea market.

India's tea exports remained flat at 46.8 million kg between April and June compared to a year earlier although prices increased marginally.

Arijit Raha, secretary general, ITA concurred that in



Alloy ahoy: Imports of steel products used in construction more than doubled to nearly 22,000 tonnes. ■REUTERS

some measures, we will not hesitate on that account," Singh said in an interview.

Between April and June, India became a net importer

of steel, with foreign supplies reaching 2.1 million tonnes, 15% higher than a year earlier, according to the note.

of steel, with foreign supplies reaching 2.1 million tonnes, 15% higher than a year earlier, according to the note.

With the increase, the South Asian nation has now passed the United States as South Korea's third-largest market for steel, according to data from the Korea Iron & Steel Association.

New Delhi could look at

Renewed measures

However, renewed government measures would take place despite India's domestic steel industry being unable to meet the country's demand for high-end steel products needed for railroads and structural steel used in construction projects.

Imports**Technology****innovation****commercial****industry****market****innovation****industry****market****innovation****industry****market****innovation****industry****market****innovation****industry**

In this unit, there is no negative bone: Shastri

The head coach backs Rahane who is struggling for form

INDIA IN ENGLAND

SHREDDUTTA CHIDANANDA
NOTTINGHAM

India may be 2-0 down in the series and facing a barrage of criticism back home but morale in the camp does not appear to have suffered.

Ravi Shastri, never one to take a backward step, was his usual confident self at Trent Bridge on Thursday. His message to the players was to believe in themselves, India's head coach said.

"I told them: 'You have been in this position couple of times before and you have responded. There is no reason why [you cannot do it again].'" One thing's for sure: in this unit, there is no negative bone. In spite of what happened in the last Test match – OK, conditions favoured England but that is no excuse whatsoever – we are here without a negative bone, wanting to play to win, as simple as that."

India's batsmen have had a rough time in the series so far, with none of the top six – with the exception of Virat Kohli – scoring more than 30 in the first two Tests. R. Ashwin was the team's top-scorer in both innings at Lord's. It is a worrying situation.

"Conditions have been tough as you have seen right through this series," Shastri said. "But that's where character comes into play and discipline comes into play, the resolve to know where your stump is, leave a lot of balls, be prepared to look ugly and dirty and show some grit."

The head coach was asked about Ajinkya Rahane, once India's best batsman in tough overseas conditions but now struggling for form. "I don't think it's fair to single out any one player," he said. "Batsmen from both teams have struggled. When the occasion demands, it's a case of mental resolve, how you put mind over matter. Mental

discipline will be the key as far as batsmen are concerned going forward in this Test match. He (Rahane) is one of our pillars and he will remain one of our pillars."

Team selection

Team selection was a touchy subject for Shastri and Kohli on the South Africa tour, with the pair not taking kindly to any criticism. But the captain admitted after the Lord's Test that choosing Kuldeep Yadav in place of Umesh Yadav was a mistake. And Shastri agreed with him. "In hindsight, it was an error," he said.

"We should have gone, seeing the conditions, with an extra seamer. It might have helped. Then again, you didn't know how much it would rain, whether a match could go into the final day where just in case spinner is needed and the ball starts to turn, would we have needed him. But in hindsight the way things panned out, the

amount it rained, the time we lost, a seamer could have been a better option."

Shastri stated that he was looking forward to seeing Ben Stokes restored to England's line-up. "He is a terrific cricketer. We would like to play against top cricketers. If he is cleared by the courts, what's the reason for him not to play? If I was in England's position I would have wanted him to play," he said.

When asked if India would attempt to provoke Stokes, who is reputed to have a short fuse, the 56-year-old delivered a typically fierce response. "This team is not worried about who winds whom up, it will give you back as good as it gets," he said.

"It doesn't matter if the team is England, Australia or South Africa. We keep it very simple: if it is a vocabulary I understand, I will give it back in that vocabulary, otherwise in the vocabulary I know best."



Tough times: Ravi Shastri wants the Indian batsmen to show more character, discipline and grit. • AFP

Bayliss non-committal on Stokes' inclusion

It's good to have him back around the squad, says the England coach

SHREDDUTTA CHIDANANDA
NOTTINGHAM

The inclusion of Ben Stokes in the England team for the third Test has divided opinion.

There are those who feel the all-rounder has paid enough for his indiscretions by losing the vice-captaincy and missing the Ashes, while there are others who believe he has brought the game into disrepute.

There are still others who wonder if Stokes is in the right frame of mind to play a Test match after a stressful trial in Bristol.

Stokes, who was found not guilty of affray after being involved in an ugly street brawl, is also set to face a Cricket Disciplinary Committee set up by the ECB.

Nothing automatic

"There's nothing automatic about selections and we'll see how he is mentally as well as physically," the England coach Trevor Bayliss said here on Thursday.

"He hasn't played for a couple of weeks. He's been a guy that in the past has been able to come in and perform without having played a lot of cricket. We'll take that in-



Back in action: Ben Stokes with Moeen Ali at practice. • AFP

to consideration. But also, when someone gets injured – someone else comes into the team and does well, it's a bit difficult for that injured player to come back in."

Bayliss was pleased that

Stokes had been cleared and was now free to concentrate on cricket. "It's good to have him back around the squad. I'm happy for Ben that it's all over," he said.

"It was a collective deci-

sion [to include him in the squad]. It was basically thought that for his own well-being, it was good to get him back around cricket."

The Australian felt Stokes had learnt his lesson. "He certainly understands that he was out when he shouldn't have been and got involved with something that he shouldn't have been involved in. I'm sure it has been a wake-up call for him," he said.

Bayliss stated that Stokes had apologised to the team for his behaviour, but agreed that he had to express his contrition publicly. "Certainly [he should apologise publicly]. I think it was important to actually apologise to the boys in the team, management of the team and the ECB. I'm sure something will be forthcoming."

England had thought a lot about team culture after the Bristol incident, Bayliss revealed.

"Sportsmen are human beings as well and throughout society there are these sorts of incidents and I suppose there's going to be a small amount of indiscretion from sports people as well," he said.

Pant gears up, Kohli seems in no visible discomfort

Bumrah among the first quicks to turn his arm over in nets

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NOTTINGHAM

With wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik struggling for form with the bat, India could hand Rishabh Pant a Test debut at Trent Bridge. Pant was prominently involved in the wicketkeeping drills in India's first training session here on Thursday, while Karthik remained in the background. In fact, the latter was seen helping his younger colleague with catching practice, firing balls at him out of a bowling machine.

Pant also batted in the nets immediately after the top six had finished, suggesting that he was seriously being considered. Ravi Shastri remained mum on the explosive wicketkeeper-batsman's inclusion, however. "About Rishabh you will know [on] the day-after," he joked.

Meanwhile, Virat Kohli showed that he was steadily recovering after struggling with a sore back at Lord's. The Indian captain was evidently in pain on the final day of the second Test, hobbling between the wickets and grimacing every time he

way. "Kohli is feeling much better. You saw him in the nets, he is moving much better and improving by the day," Shastri said.

Later, Kohli – sporting a woolly cap – also took catches in the slips, diving without issue. If Kohli was injured, there was more reason to fear him, felt the England coach, Trevor Bayliss.

"It could mean he's more of a dangerous player. Through history there are a lot of players who have played with an injury and scored runs and taken wickets. I don't know if that focuses the mind more. But I have just seen him take some slips catches without any problems, so I'm sure he'll be playing. That won't change our approach to the way we play him," he said.

Jasprit Bumrah, who had been ruled out of the first two Tests with a thumb injury, is available for selection for the third. The Gujarat fast bowler, no longer encumbered by a plaster on the left hand, was among the first set of quicks to turn his arm over in nets.

Hardik not an all-rounder yet: Holding

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

West Indian fast bowling great Michael Holding feels Hardik Pandya is not yet the all-rounder India wants him to be, because he is ineffective as a bowler and also not scoring enough runs with the bat.

"I don't think he does a lot with the ball. That is number one," he said. "He is not consistent. He does not have the control that puts batsmen under pressure constantly. He will bowl a couple of good deliveries, yes, but you need to have the control to put batsmen under pressure consistently. And he doesn't have that."

"If he was a good batsman, if he was getting runs – 60s, 70s, not even regular hundreds – at the number at which he bats and then he bowls and gets two or three wickets, happy."



Kohli has his back checked on by the team physio. • AP

pushed forward in defence.

He did light training on Thursday, warming up with a gentle jog before stretching and working on his back with a foam-roller. Although he did not bat for long, Kohli

was in no discomfort against throw-downs in the nets.

He faced a number of short-pitched throws, and he handled them with ease, pulling or ducking out of the

A giant when it came to reading the game, says Kapil

Was someone I could go to anytime for anything: Tendulkar

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

Kapil Dev and Sachin Tendulkar, strikingly different personalities, had a common bond – their relationship with Ajit Wadekar.

It was a delightful dressing room as long as Wadekar was the manager. For Kapil, a veteran, and Tendulkar, a youngster soaking in the glories of international cricket, it was one of the most memorable phases of their cricketing career – picking Wadekar's brains and learning the nuances.

Being the promoter, he got the top floor of the building when it was built and since I was on the floor immediately below him he used to always joke, 'I am the only one on top of Sunny'.

In recent times, with my travel schedule, we hardly met but whenever we did, he would as usual come up with a joke in his easy drawl.

There's hardly been a day when I haven't mimicked his 'arre kare re' at least once and not just me but even Sachin Tendulkar told me that he too says the same at least once a day.

My captain is no more but he will always be with me when I say, 'arre kare re'.

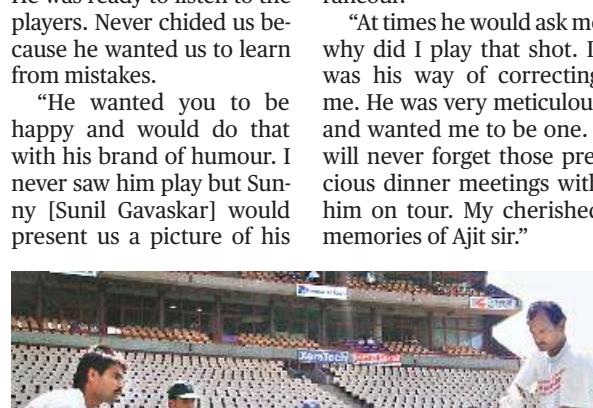
RIP, Captain.

Professional Management Group

anything. He played a huge role as a manager/coach. Kept the team together. Taught us to win. Personally, it was a critical stage for me and I was fortunate to have Ajit sir around."

With his disarming smile, Wadekar would effortlessly hide his disappointment. "He changed the thought process of the team. He came from the old school but welcomed the new era. He was ready to listen to the players. Never chided us because he wanted us to learn from mistakes."

"He wanted you to be happy and would do that with his brand of humour. I never saw him play but Sunil [Sunil Gavaskar] would present us a picture of his



Fine-tuning skills: Manager Ajit Wadekar with wicketkeeper Vijay Yadav, Sanjay Manjrekar, Kapil Dev and Anil Kumble during the 1992 series in South Africa. • FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

Ajit one of our finest skippers: Shastri

SUNIL GAVASKAR

'Sunil, sorry, he is no more'.

Those devastating words conveyed to me that 'my captain' Ajit Wadekar had passed away.

Just a little while earlier, I was trying to help put him in the car to rush him to the hospital since the ambulance was going to take another 15 minutes to arrive and, even then, it looked like it was a hopeless battle.

Ajit Wadekar was my captain when I made my debut for Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy and he was my skipper when I got my India cap. So for me he was always 'Captain'. That he was from Shivaji Park Gymkhana and I was from Dadar Union Sporting Club, the great rival clubs then, made no difference as I was a fan first.

Prolific scorer
Those days there was hardly a single weekend where you didn't read that Wadekar had got a century. He was so prolific in local and Ranji Trophy cricket that it was a surprise to many that he made his India debut as late as 1966 against Garry Sobers' West Indies team.

Five years later it was against Garry Sobers' team that he led India for the first time and went on to win the series, beating West Indies for the first time. A couple of months after that he led India to another historic win when India beat England in England for the first time.



Master and Little Master: Wadekar and Gavaskar enjoy the English summer of 1971. • THE HINDU ARCHIVES

vote that made Wadekar the new Indian captain then.

Credit not given
Even after these twin wins and another in India a year later neither Merchant nor Wadekar got the credit they deserved for bringing India those hat-trick of wins.

Ajit retired from Test cricket suddenly when he was left out of the West Zone team for the Duleep Trophy by a committee led by another Indian great Polly Umrigar, and thereafter concentrated on his banking career and also cricket administration with the Mumbai Cricket Association. He was also a successful manager/coach of the Indian team in the early '90s.

When some of us sportspersons requested the Maharashtra Government for a plot of land to build an apartment block, it was Ajit who took the lead and there was Umrigar also in the society formed showing that he harboured no hard feelings towards his senior.

Being the promoter, he got the top floor of the building when it was built and since I was on the floor immediately below him he used to always joke, 'I am the only one on top of Sunny'.

In recent times, with my travel schedule, we hardly met but whenever we did, he would as usual come up with a joke in his easy drawl.

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My captain is no more but he will always be with me when I say, 'arre kare re'.

RIP, Captain.

Professional Management Group

Can't believe
Tendulkar struggled for words. "I can't believe he is not with us. What a wonderful guide, mentor, senior, friend. I can go on. For me, he was Ajit sir. Someone I could go to anytime, for

Indian hockey team makes its presence felt

It is a proud moment for all of us, says coach Harendra at flag hoisting ceremony



UTHRA GANESAN
JAKARTA

At 2.45 p.m. Indonesia time, the Indian presence at the 18th Asian Games was formally recognised with the Indian flag officially going up at the Athletes Village in Jakarta on Thursday, a day after the officials and athletes put up smaller versions on their own on the occasion of Independence Day.

Attended by a handful of coaching staff from a few sports including wrestling, the bulk of Indian presence was marked by the men's hockey team that turned out in full force.

Not surprising, given the special emphasis coach Harendra Singh puts on both patriotism and the symbolism of it.

Proud moment

"It is a proud moment for all of us and unless there is a genuine reason for it, I feel we should be there to see the flag go up. It makes the entire experience so much more real at such multi-discipline games," Harendra said.

Attended by the Indian chef-de-mission Brij Bhushan

SNIPPETS

an Sharan Singh and his deputies R.K. Sacheti and D.K. Singh, the ceremony also saw an exchange of mementos between host Indonesia and the visiting nations. Qatar, Myanmar and Tajikistan were the other nations to raise their flags alongside India.

No press attache

It was a surprise when the list of officials submitted by the IOA did not include a press attache for the Games, specially since four deputy chef-de-missions have been named – two each for both Jakarta and Palembang. The absence is being felt already.

A meeting by the organisers and the OCA on Thursday to brief NOC media officials saw India go unrepresented.

The meeting was about distribution of media tickets for the opening and closing ceremonies but no one in the Indian contingent was even aware of it. No one knew of the process either.

"Is there a separate process and ticket for the opening and closing even for media?

"Let me check up, I have no idea," a delegation official said.

Another advised to buy them online but then said he



Aiming for glory: The Indian contingent will be targeting a rich haul at the Asiad. ■ AFP

would check up when told there is a quota of media tickets for every NOC.

No press attache

This is the first time the Indian contingent is travelling without any press attache who acts not just as the official liaison between the contingent and the travelling media but also helps facil-

tate interactions with athletes and officials on important issues. The Indian handball teams were the first to reach the city and check into the athletes village on August 11.

They will be among the last to leave the place, on September 1.

This, despite their competitive outing being all but

over after losing their first two matches so far.

While the men only have one more preliminary game left, against Iraq, the women have two with neither in with a chance to register any upsets. While the women have never won a game since participating for the first time in 2006, the men have a better record – they have won a

grand total of three matches in their four appearances.

"We will be staying on for the classification matches, they are also important," a team official said, in all seriousness.

The handball teams' inclusion had been controversial even before they travelled but the team clearly couldn't care less.

Chance for players to impress selectors

Pink ball and floodlights could spice up the tournament which begins today

DULEEP TROPHY

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
DINDIGUL

The weather at Natham, a quiet village guarded by the Sirumalai Hills in Tamil Nadu, was capricious on Thursday.

It drizzled, but the sun would peep out of the clouds teasingly. Then it rained and before long there was bright, glorious sunshine.

Cricket, to be played at the lovely NPR College ground, over the next three weeks could well be as unpredictable and therefore fascinating.

The pink ball, the floodlights and what seems a sporting wicket, with evident shades of green, could spice things up in the Duleep Trophy, which begins on Friday with India Green taking on India Red.

India Blue is the other team in the fray. The three will play each other before the final – a five-day affair – starting on September 4.

No longer the bridge

The five-decade-old tournament may no longer be that bridge between the domestic and international cricket – the IPL has taken its place – but much is still at stake for



Gearing up: India Green players at a practice session on Thursday. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

the players.

The next three weeks would provide opportunities for many of them to try to make it or get back on to the big stage.

The fact that the senior squad is touring England and India A and B teams are in Andhra for an international quadrangular series, has helped the selectors to give chances to a wider pool of players for this tournament.

Thankfully, the season-opener begins on a firmer

foot this year than the last, when the tournament was scrapped only to be reinstated three days later, following the intervention of Sourav Ganguly who was the head of BCCI's technical committee.

With Virat Kohli's men not exactly having a good run in the Old Blighty, at least a few players from across the three teams will be keen to impress the selectors who have to pick the team for the last two Tests.

Among them will be the

wicketkeeper and captain of India Green Parthiv Patel, whose last Test was in South Africa earlier this year, and India Red skipper Abhinav Mukund, who scored 81 in his last Test innings, against Sri Lanka at Galle a year ago.

Interesting

It would be interesting to see how the younger, lesser-known players – India Red's left-arm pacer Yarra Prithviraj, for instance – perform, too.

It would be interesting to see how the younger, lesser-known players – India Red's left-arm pacer Yarra Prithviraj, for instance – perform, too.

Among them will be the

(set by Arden)

- 12 First one in the dock (7)
 - 13 Soldiers retreat – essentially oppose revenge (7)
 - 14 Favourite cover for a smuggler (5-6)
 - 19 Show friend about what's good, no force used (7)
 - 21 Time allowed to intercept text message for a Dutch theologian (7)
 - 23 Do imbibie, lift a tumbler (7)
 - 25 Show of devotion – not over, OK? (7)
 - 26 Girl's husband – he is from Limerick (8)
 - 27 Empty container at the back of the boat (5)
- ACROSS**
- 6 Throw up writing, make an impression (5)
 - 7 Soon the lawyer assumed Bill is a South American resident (8)
 - 10 Credit allowed in former name of business (7)
 - 11 Killer Fish, sort of reproduced parrot-fashion (7)
- DOWN**
- 1 Way one will lift impasse (8)
 - 2 Asked to say it before you're shot – opposing churches find peace finally (6)
 - 3 Coffee breaks for underground public utility (10)
 - 4 Complain about fish (4)
 - 18 Look, a group keeps quiet! (6)
 - 20 Bullfighter gets rent on half the place (6)
 - 22 Can air become balmy? (6)
 - 24 Book millions in digital form (4)

First round called off

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
VIJAYAWADA

The quadrangular matches, scheduled for August 17 and 18 (reserve day), have been called off owing to heavy rain, according to a BCCI media release late on Thursday.

The India-A vs Australia-A and India-B vs South Africa-A games have been cancelled.

The match officials, in consultation with the curator S. Sriram, felt that the ground conditions were not suitable for the next two days.

"The rest of the fixtures will continue as per schedule from August 19," said the release.

Nakamura wins title

SPORTS BUREAU
ST. LOUIS

Hikaru Nakamura of the United States completed a fine double on Wednesday when he lifted the blitz title, with 22.5 points, at the St. Louis tournament after winning the rapid event. Frenchman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (21.5) was second while Viswanathan Anand finished last with 13.5 points.

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12398

G	O	W	I	T	H	E	T	I	D
C	R	M	E	A	O	I	D		
O	P	U	I	M	P	L	A	T	
N	E	I	N	P	I	L	M		
S	A	N	D	G	L	A	S	C	
I	C	T	R	H	M	C	R	E	
E	C	S	T	A	S	I	P	E	
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N	A	P	H	T	E	D	U	T	
A	A	R	E	M	O	A			
T	U	R	I	N	C	I			
I	V	O	O	A	N	N			
O	V	E	R	U	M	E			
N	N	E	N	R	S	I			
G	U	I	D	M	I	S			

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

Paes pulls out

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Leander Paes, who won two gold medals in the last Asian Games that he had competed in Doha in 2006, has withdrawn from the Games in Jakarta and Palembang, with a "heavy heart."

After having long discussions with captain Zeehan Ali over the past few weeks, the 45-year-old Paes decided to convey his decision to the All India Tennis Association (AITA) on Thursday.

Once Rohan Bopanna joined hands with Divij Sharan, Paes was left with no partner.

ceptionally well this season and one of them definitely deserved to strengthen the Asian Games squad," wrote Paes.

Three singles specialists did not make sense as the current edition does have team events, and only two singles players can be fielded by a country.

Sumit Nagal, the Asian Indoor Games champion, may not get an opportunity in singles as Ramkumar Ramachandran, Purav Raja and Jeewan Nedunchezhiyan drafted into the team fell on deaf ears.

"Our doubles specialists Sriram, Vishnu, Purav and Jeewan have been doing ex-

"I would have loved to play doubles with Ramkumar, but considering that he has a golden chance to win a singles medal, it is not fair to distract him," said Paes.



Taking a call: Leander Paes, left with no playing partner, has decided to skip the Asian Games. ■ FILE PHOTO

Davis Cup shake-up approved

Receives 71.43% support from about 120 delegates

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ORLANDO

World tennis chiefs on Thursday approved a radical Davis Cup revamp that will overhaul the 118-year-old competition, condensing the annual showpiece into an 18-team, week-long event.

The India-A vs Australia-A and India-B vs South Africa-A games have been cancelled.

The match officials, in consultation with the curator S. Sriram, felt that the ground conditions were not suitable for the next two days.

"The rest of the fixtures will continue as per schedule from August 19," said the release.

ITF president David Haggerty supported the revamp proposed by Kosmos, a group led by Barcelona football star Gerard Pique and

The current format is a

knockout event played February, July, September and November at home and away venues around the globe, best-of-five match ties following Grand Slam events until the final round.

Many top players have skipped it in recent years to ease their workload.

The reform plan will create a November finals with 18 teams: 12 winners from 24-team home and away qualifying in February, the previous year's four semifinalists and two wildcard countries.

ITF Tennis You guys are a shame for tennis

— LUCAS POUILLE (FRANCE)

NEW DAVIS CUP FINALS QUALIFYING

WHAT?	12 TIES TO DEFINE 12 QUALIFIERS TO THE NEW 2019 DAVIS CUP FINALS

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TV PICKS

Quadrangular series: India-A vs Australia-A, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.
KPL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.
Cincinnati Open: Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Sainz to replace Alonso at McLaren
LONDON
Spaniard Carlos Sainz will drive for McLaren in next season's Formula One championship, filling the vacuum left by the retirement of Fernando Alonso, the team announced on Thursday. The 23-year-old – son of the legendary Rally driver who bears the same name – has signed a “multi-year deal” with McLaren. He is presently 11th in the championship this year driving for Renault. AFP

Kishore scores Tamil Nadu's winner

HYDERABAD
Tamil Nadu scored a solitary goal win over Kerala, thanks to R.A. Kishore's eighth-minute strike, in the South Zone sub-junior National football championship on Thursday. The other team which made it to the all-India finals was Telangana.

The result: Tamil Nadu 1 (R.A. Kishore 8) bt Kerala 0.

Fourth consecutive win for Bagan

KOLKATA:
Henry Kisselka's 73rd minute strike enabled Mohun Bagan to record a 1-0 win over Peerless in the Calcutta Football League here on Thursday. Following a goalless first half, left-winger Abhishek sent in a brilliant cross and Kisselka executed a fine header to earn full points for Bagan, which posted its fourth consecutive win.

Djokovic downs Mannarino

Battles stomach issues to reach third round; Muguruza and Pliskova crash out

MASTERS TENNIS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CINCINNATI

Novak Djokovic battled stomach issues to beat Adrian Mannarino and reach the third round in Cincinnati on Wednesday as women's title holder Garbine Muguruza crashed out.

Djokovic called for the doctor during the second set against Mannarino but put aside his discomfort to progress 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 over the Frenchman.

Seventh-seeded Muguruza played for the first time since crashing out in the second round of her Wimbledon title defence, falling 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 to Lesia Tsurenko.

Important results (second round):

Men: Milos Raonic bt Malek Jaziri 6-3, 7-5; Novak Djokovic bt Adrian Mannarino 4-6, 6-2, 6-1; Grigor Dimitrov bt Mischa Zverev 7-6 (5), 7-5;

Robin Haase bt Alexander Zverev 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

Women: Lesia Tsurenko bt Gar-

bine Muguruza 2-6, 6-4, 6-4;

Nick Kyrgios bt Borna Coric 7-6

(1), 0-6, 6-3; Marton Fucsovics bt Guillermo Garcia-Lopez 6-7

(5), 6-4, 7-5; Stanislas Wawrinka bt Kei Nishikori 6-4, 6-4.

Women: Lesia Tsurenko bt Gar-

Causing a flutter: Lesia Tsurenko upstaged Garbine Muguruza. ■ AFP

rev 5-7, 6-4, 7-5; Pablo Carreno-Busta bt Bradley Klahn 6-4,

6-4; Karen Khachanov bt Sam

Querrey 7-5, 6-4; Marin Cilic bt

Marius Copil 6-7 (4), 6-4, 6-4;

Kevin Anderson bt Jeremy

Chardy 7-6 (6), 6-2; David Gof-

fin bt Benoit Paire 5-7, 6-4, 6-2;

Nick Kyrgios bt Borna Coric 7-6

(1), 0-6, 6-3; Marton Fucsovics

bt Guillermo Garcia-Lopez 6-7

(5), 6-4, 7-5; Stanislas Wawrinka

bt Kei Nishikori 6-4, 6-4.

Women: Lesia Tsurenko bt Gar-

bine Muguruza 2-6, 6-4, 6-4;

Angelique Kerber bt Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 4-6, 7-5, 6-4.

Aryna Sabalenka bt Karolina Pliskova 2-6, 6-3, 7-5; Kiki Bertens bt Caroline Wozniacki 6-4, retired.

Women: Lesia Tsurenko bt Gar-

bine Muguruza 2-6, 6-4, 6-4;

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Aryna Sabalenka bt Karolina Pliskova 2-6, 6-3, 7-5; Kiki Bertens bt Caroline Wozniacki 6-4, retired.

Doubles (quarterfinals): Benjamin Lock (Zim) & Rubin Statham (Nzl) bt Toshihide Matsui (Jpn) & Arjun Kadhe 6-2, 7-5.

\$15,000 ITF men, Sintra, Portugal: First round: Pedro Vives Marcos (Esp) & Adil Kalaynur bt Samuel Shropshire (USA) & Alexandre Tsuchiya (Bra) 6-4, 3-6, [10-7].

\$25,000 ITF women, Nonthaburi, Thailand: Quarterfinals: Patcharin Cheapchandej (Tha) w/o Rutuja Bhosale.

Doubles: Semifinals: Wang Xin Yu & Wang Xiyu bt Mana Ayukawa (Jpn) & Zeel Desai 6-4, 6-1.

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**Simpsons creator brings fantasy show to Netflix**

The creator of the TV series *The Simpsons* brings his first new show in 20 years to Netflix this week, a story that centres around a drunken princess, an elf and a demon. Set in a medieval world called Dreamland, *Disenchantment* is creator Matt Groening's take on shows like HBO series *Game of Thrones*. **REUTERS**

**Quitting smoking and the risk of diabetes**

Weight gain can be a big concern for smokers who want to quit, and a new study suggests that it raises the odds of developing type 2 diabetes in the first six years after quitting. But any new health risks due to putting on a few kilos are small compared to the benefits of giving up tobacco, said a study in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. **REUTERS**

**U.K. to regulate social media endorsements**

Celebrities and influencers who endorse products without labelling their social media posts as paid-for or supported by the brands in other ways have been warned against the practice. The U.K. Competition and Markets Authority said that such endorsements could mislead customers. **REUTERS**



The 'Queen of Soul' is dead

Singer Aretha Franklin had dozens of hits over the span of a half century

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK

nieces, nephews, and cousins knew no bounds."

Aretha Franklin, the undisputed "Queen of Soul" who stood as a cultural icon around the globe, has died at age 76 from pancreatic cancer. A family statement said that Franklin died on Thursday at her home in Detroit in the U.S.

The family added, "In one of the darkest moments of our lives, we are not able to find the appropriate words to express the pain in our heart. We have lost the matriarch and rock of our family. The love she had for her children, grandchildren,

A professional singer and accomplished pianist by her late teens, a superstar by her mid-20s, Franklin had long ago settled any arguments over who was the greatest popular vocalist of her time. Her gifts, natural and ac-



Aretha Franklin

quired, were a multi-octave mezzo-soprano, gospel passion and the courage to channel private pain into liberating song.

She recorded hundreds of tracks and had dozens of hits over the span of a half century, including 20 that reached No. 1 on the R&B charts.

She performed at the inaugurations of former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter.

Former U.S. President George W. Bush awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honour, in 2005.

Franklin's best-known appearance with a U.S. President was in January 2009, when she sang *My Country 'tis of Thee* at Barack Obama's inauguration.

Scientists to test land for LIGO

Gravitational wave observatory may come up in Maharashtra's Hingoli district

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

ice – there are only three of its kind in the world – requires an extremely flat surface.

The LIGO-India consortium, made up of physicists from several institutes, had submitted a proposal to "prospect" 121 hectares of forest land in Dudhala village, Hingoli.

Typically, mining companies prospect a region by sinking boreholes to get a sense of the geology of the site and ascertain availability of required minerals and metals. In the case of the LIGO project, it is to check if the land can be made perfectly level at a reasonable cost.

"We are in the process of acquiring the necessary land – some of it is private and some barren forest land," said Tarun Souradeep, spokesperson, LIGO-India and a professor at the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics. "We have to level the land and assess the time and effort it will

We have to level the land and assess the time and effort it will take for this

TARUN SOURADEEP
Spokesperson, LIGO-India

take for this." The consortium is yet to formally declare the Dudhala site as the host of the interferometers.

The prospecting permission, according to the minutes of the forest clearance committee meeting of the Union Environment Ministry, was only for sinking boreholes in 0.375 hectares and separate permission would be needed at a later stage for constructing the observatory.

Network of detectors

The LIGO project operates three gravitational-wave (GW) detectors. Two are at Hanford in the State of Washington, north-western USA, and one is at Livingston in Louisiana, south-eastern USA. Currently these obser-

vatories are being upgraded to their advanced configurations.

The proposed LIGO-India project aims to move one Advanced LIGO detector from Hanford to India. The LIGO-India project is an international collaboration between the LIGO Laboratory and three lead institutions in the LIGO-India consortium: Institute of Plasma Research, Gandhinagar; IUCAA, Pune; and Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology, Indore. The LIGO lab would provide the complete design and all the key detector components. Indian scientists would provide the infrastructure to install the detector and it would be operated jointly by LIGO-India and the LIGO Lab.

The project, piloted by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Department of Science and Technology (DST), reportedly costs ₹1,200 crore and is expected to be ready by 2025.



Crowning glory: A volunteer weaves a wig as part of the Bosnian "My hair, your hair" campaign. **AFP**

Bosnians weave wigs for children living with cancer

Volunteers step in as the country lacks a wig-making industry

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SARAJEVO

Ajla Nizic did not know what cancer was when she was diagnosed with it at age four.

"But I knew that I lost my hair," said the Bosnian leukaemia survivor who is now 19 years old.

Now a medical student, Ms. Nizic is leading a campaign to give other sick children a luxury her parents could not afford: wigs.

Bosnia, one of Europe's poorest countries, has no domestic wig-making industry. The nearest available source has been neighbouring Croatia, where wigs cost up to €2,000 (\$2,300) – more than four times the average monthly salary in Bosnia.

"As trivial as it might seem at first while a person is battling such an aggressive disease, hair loss is often a huge psychological burden, particularly for girls who do not dare to go out without hair," said Nizic, who now has long brown tresses.

Her campaign – "My Hair, Your Hair" – is encouraging Bosnians to donate their locks to a new wig-making workshop that opened in Sarajevo in October.

There, volunteers are weaving wigs specifically for children who are undergoing chemotherapy or have lost their hair because of other health complications.

Hundreds of people – mainly women, as the hair must be at least 30 cm (12 inches) long – have flocked to hair-cutting events held at schools and shopping malls around the country.

Others have cut their own hair and mailed it to the campaign.

On a recent afternoon at an elementary school in Sarajevo, several young pupils

lour as possible, said Fuad Halilovic, 22, who manages the workshop where the weavers work under bright lamps.

"We try to make it so the wig resembles the hairstyle the child had before losing their hair," he said. "We measure their heads and look at photographs of how their hair looked before."

The wig project is part of a wider effort by a Bosnian association called "A Heart for Children with Cancer" which helps young patients and their families.

Home for parents

In 2016, the group opened Bosnia's first "Parents' House" – a small apartment complex near Sarajevo's paediatric hospital where families who live far from the capital can stay while their children are being treated.

"Before, some parents slept in their car near the hospital, because it is expensive to pay for accommodation in Sarajevo, particularly because the process of recovery is very long and exhausting," said Fikret Kubat, the association's president.