

# The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

## Modi's Ram temple card

Leaves window open for ordinance

**I**N one fell swoop, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has managed to placate the restive RSS on the Ram temple and push the emotive issue back to the centre stage months before the Lok Sabha elections. Amid the growing clamour from Hindutva organisations for an ordinance regarding early construction of the 'mandir', Modi said in a televised interview that his government was ready to make all efforts in this direction, but only after the completion of the judicial process. The PM made it clear that he acknowledged the supremacy of the Supreme Court, which is scheduled to hear the case on January 4, but suggested in the same breath that his 'sarkar' might have the last word on the matter.

In its manifesto for the 2014 parliamentary elections, the saffron party had reiterated 'its stand to explore all possibilities within the framework of the Constitution to facilitate the construction' of the temple. Five years later, the BJP finds itself under intense pressure to walk the talk, especially with the Shiv Sena — the second biggest constituent of the ruling NDA — breathing down its neck. Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray had even threatened to 'trash' the senior ally if it came up with more 'jumlas' in the name of Hindu gods.

The Congress has been quick to point out that there would practically be no room for an ordinance once the apex court declares its verdict, which should ideally be accepted by all. The ground reality is that the BJP, stung by electoral reversals in three key states of the Hindi belt, desperately needs a tried-and-tested poll plank to win over voters. Its failure to offer any out-of-the-box solution to bail out the beleaguered farmers, coupled with the adverse impact of demonetisation and GST on the electorate, has left the party with little to gloat over. Weighed down by the burden of unfulfilled promises, including the elusive 'achche din', the BJP again seems to be putting all its eggs in the religious basket. However, Team Modi-Shah will need much more than divine intervention to turn the tide.

## Haryana's cotton scam

How GST fraudsters are duping the state

**E**VEN as most small and middle-rung farmers are distressful debt-ridden, the chain of operators of their produce down the line is reaping a bounty, albeit of the black variety. Take the case of the cotton scam in Haryana: of the total cotton (1-1.25 crore quintal) reaching the mandis, as much as 50 per cent is on the black. This daylight robbery has duped the state of Rs 200 crore in the form of evasion of market fee and GST. Interestingly, while the GST regime that was rolled out on July 1, 2017, with the noble aim of having a uniform tax rate structure in the country is still in the process of rationalisation, racketeers have already found ways to hoodwink the taxman.

As the scam-busting report of *The Tribune* shows, their modus operandi involves the setting up of non-existent firms. In the name of these fly-by-night companies, nearly 45 lakh quintal of unbilled cotton has been turned lily-white with the connivance of unscrupulous officials. Not only this, a fraudster also gobbles the cherry on the top: it is the tidy profit he pockets by taking advantage of the differential tax slabs. He 'buys' a bill from the next in the 'organised loop of looters': a dealer of high GST (18-28 per cent) items such as cement, cigarettes, TMT bars etc for a mere 1-2 per cent. This input credit is then adjusted against the 'sale' of cotton worth up to 5.5 times since cotton attracts only 5 per cent GST.

This story is just the tip of the iceberg. There are many more such scams worth crores waiting to be unearthed. Physical verification of all firms registered by the excise and taxation authorities and data mining of the amounts of all commodities purchased and sold is sure to lead to the tumbling out of many more fake invoices issued for transactions that never took place. A couple of high-profile trials and convictions in fiscal crime cases should send the much-needed message across the state. It will deter potential scamsters as well as enrich Haryana with its duly deserved taxes.

### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Details create the big picture. — Sanford I Weill

### ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

## The Tribune.

LAHORE, FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 1919

### The Queen's Message to Women of India.

THE old party system in England has now for some time been in the melting pot, and people have been predicting all sorts of things. Here as elsewhere the result of the election has been a surprise. The one thing which no one predicted is the thing that has happened. Two great parties, which everybody expected would be strengthened, have practically disappeared, the Liberals and Irish Nationalists. The last has got only 7 seats out of a total for Irish Home Rule of 80, while the Liberals are only 161, in a House of over 700, of whom, again, the vast majority do not belong to the orthodox party of which Mr. Asquith is the head. There is every reason to believe, however, that here as elsewhere appearances are deceptive, that a considerable number of those who have been returned as Unionists are in no sense Unionists of the old school.

### The Queen's Message to Women of India.

PEOPLE in India will be much gratified by the gracious message sent by Her Majesty Queen Empress to the women of India. The full text of the message, which we publish elsewhere, shows Her Majesty's keen interest in and deep sympathy for India's women during the war and after: The secluded life of most Indian women and the restraints in their activities are noticed by Her Majesty, who expressed admiration for their loyalty, heroism, fortitude, and sacrifices during the war. Her Majesty offers to the many influences that make for their greater well-being and advancement, especially opportunities for education and medical relief, and we have no doubt that the cheerful and encouraging Royal message will put heart into the suffering of the women of this country and enable them to look forward to days of greater freedom and happiness in future.

# Understanding the big picture

Bangladesh is a test case of efficacy of Indian policies to curb Chinese influence



MK BHADRAKUMAR  
FORMER AMBASSADOR

**T**HE victory of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League in the parliamentary poll in Bangladesh was a foregone conclusion. Yet, the scale of the victory causes embarrassment. The Awami League's grand alliance won 288 of the 299 seats in parliament, increasing its tally by 54 seats. Sheikh Hasina now joins a rare pantheon of democratically-elected leaders like Kim Jong-un. She could have done without the dubious honour, because she is doubtless a popular leader.

It remains a mystery why even charismatic politicians fear the mystique of elections. Probably, they regard themselves as indispensable. Sheikh Hasina's government had a good record in executing the development agenda, and she could as well have emulated Indonesia's Joko Widodo who is approaching the people for a renewed mandate in April. But she, instead, chalked up the landslide win by suppressing the opposition parties. The restrictive electoral environment and the crackdown on civil liberty, the opposition and the media have been widely reported. The government went to the extent of slowing down 3G and 4G Internet services in an attempt at censorship. Over half a million security personnel, including army soldiers, were deployed on 'election duty' to intimidate political opponents, giving a free run to Awami League activists at polling booths.

The really alarming part is the disdain with which Hasina has brushed away the criticism of her government. In an interview to the *New York Times*, she retorted, 'If I can provide food, jobs and healthcare, that is human rights... What the opposition is saying,



REALITY CHECK: Regional equation is changing; the 'sphere of influence' era is past.

The Bangladeshi paradigm must compel us to reconsider the phobia that whatever China is doing in the region is 'India-centric'. It is watching its interests, as should we.

or civil society or your NGOs — I don't bother with that.' True, on Hasina's watch, the GDP growth in Bangladesh increased from 5.57 per cent for 2009-2010 to 7.28 per cent in 2016-2017, and per capita income from \$500 to nearly \$1,800. But then, that is also India's dismal story. The impressive growth largely benefited the elite. Make no mistake, there is a groundswell of protest building up in the country among workers, teachers and youth. Democracy is much more than about holding elections at regular intervals. Empowerment and inclusiveness are important prerequisites, and rule of law, freedom of opinion and pluralism are the lifeblood of democracy.

This is where India could have played a helpful role. Sensing the appalling drift in the democratic values, New Delhi could have used its influence with Hasina to counsel moderation. On the contrary, passivity replaced the frenzy that was apparent over the practice of democracy in the Maldives. If New Delhi went overboard to prescribe democratic values to the Maldives (country of half a million people), it went into hibernation with regard to

Bangladesh (country with a population of 165 million.) Three things emerge here. One, it is about self-interest! Under the garb of democratic values, India pursues an interventionist policy in the neighbourhood to buttress its self-interest. Two, the interventionism as such is highly selective. India prescribes only to the weak and humble. Three, across the board, the 'China factor' has come to be the leitmotif of India's neighbourhood policies.

The China factor merits particular attention. Bangladesh becomes a test case of the efficacy of Indian policies to curb the expanding Chinese influence in our region. Bangladesh has been the biggest recipient of Indian credit and aid since the Modi government came to power — an estimated \$9 billion. However, this has not prevented the dramatic expansion of Bangladesh's relations with China, especially since the state visit by President Xi Jinping in 2016, when Sheikh Hasina government officially joined the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Since then, the two countries have signed eight Chinese-funded projects esti-

ated at \$9.45 billion. China has factored in that Bangladesh's sustained economic growth is rapidly increasing the demand for energy and transportation. Beijing has offered \$30 billion for infrastructure investment as part of its massive BRI plans. Simply put, China has successfully dovetailed the BRI with Bangladesh's development agenda.

The Bangladeshi paradigm ought to compel us to think through the phobia that whatever China is doing in the region is 'India-centric'. China's interests are increasingly global and there is growing evidence that it is moving toward a new phase of engagement that goes beyond dealings with individual countries to dealing with regions as a whole. In the excessive focusing on the 'debt trap' syndrome, we have overlooked that the BRI is actually about creating global standards and new value chains. According to figures released by the ministry of commerce in Beijing in August, there has been a massive expansion of China's trade and investment ties with countries along the Belt and Road in the past five years, estimated to exceed \$5 trillion, with China's combined direct investment in those countries growing at 7.2 per cent annually. China has become the largest trading partner for 25 countries amongst them. Clearly, India lacks the 'big picture'. The era of sphere of influence is long past.

Again, China's financial support for other countries is based on pragmatic considerations. Take Latin America, the backyard of a superpower. Panama has emerged as the hub of China's trade and logistics in the Americas. It is the regional headquarters of the Bank of China. The right-wing governments in Chile and Brazil are signalling interest in doing business with China. The salience here is that on a global scale China is de facto becoming the last-resort lender for countries that have limited access to international credit markets. Indeed, money talks in today's globalised and multipolar world. The RSS recently praised Hasina as India's 'most trusted and tested ally'. Aren't we losing the plot? If there is no SAARC, let us create one.

# Funny, it is wide of the mark!

NAVNEET KAUR

**M**Y mother was a professor of English. Every year, she would receive a heap of answer sheets of university examinations for evaluation. As kids, we used to get repelled at the very sight of the postman unloading the burden at our doorstep. Immediately after receiving the bulky consignment, mother would take up the task of evaluation with utmost sincerity. She would never allow us to touch a single sheet and would herself wrap it up, stitch it in a cloth bag, seal it properly and then meticulously dispatch the consignment back, with all its paraphernalia.

Naturally, we were annoyed with her for not sparing time for us. Whenever we began with our fretting and fuming, she would try to cheer us up with some hilarious responses she would come across in the answer sheets. One of the questions posed in a university examination was: 'Name the word that represents the sound each of the following animals makes: donkey, monkey, dog, horse and lion'. While the correct answer should have read as, 'bray, chatter, bark, neigh and roar', the answer given by an impish student had us in splits. The imaginative, if incorrect, answers were: donkey — *honhuhonhuhun*; monkey — *gurrrrrrrr*; dog — *baw-baw*; horse —

*burrrrrrrrr*; and lion — *hauuuuuuu*.

Another question asked students to 'write a letter to the editor of a newspaper complaining of non-working of hand-operated water pumps in their residential area'. A student had discharged straight from his heart, thus: 'In my area, there is one hand-pump. When I press it, with the noise of *dhadak, dhadak*, it goes down without any pressure. From the pump, water does not come. Only *zzzzzzzz* sound comes up. Many snakes mistake this pump as their worthy companion as both the snake and this pump hiss heavily.

'Once, when an old lady pressed the handle of the pump with a big *dadakh*, an irate snake came out of

the pump. Since then, every Friday we have been performing snake *puja* to the pump and offering milk. But the milk which we get from vendors contains only water. After we complete the rituals of this *puja*, municipality officials visit the area and declare that water does come from the pump. I can only request the municipality to remove this hand-pump immediately and save us from the dangers of the deadly snakes.'

I am tempted to conclude that the letter could have passed the editorial muster of any newspaper those days, but I am not sure whether the same degree of favour could have been expected from an exacting examiner.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Court vacation

Refer to the reopening of the Supreme Court after winter vacation, this tradition of winter breaks in courts, starting from the lower courts to the highest one, going on since British era, has no rationale. No other Central or state government undertaking offers such vacations to its employees, except the education sector. Our courts have lakhs of cases pending at various stages, resulting in delayed delivery of justice, which means denial of judicial rights of citizens. Already, states and Central governments have a long list of holidays and vacations would only add to the pending court lists. The government should consider abolishing this British-era tradition, considering its pan-India ramifications on judicial reforms and wastage of time and money of litigants.

ANIL VINAYAK, AMRITSAR

#### No end to rapes

Refer to the editorial 'The Gurugram gangrape' (Jan 2); even though we do have various laws, why is it that crimes like rape are not stopping? Our laws and justice delivery system have failed to deter such crimes and instil confidence among victims. Why is it

that we need to teach our men to respect women, even after so many such cases? Why is the government not focusing on real issues, instead of changing names of cities and dreaming of a Hindu *rashtra*? All these questions are the reason why most victims have stopped speaking up because they think that the path to justice is too tough. Answers to these questions are important or such crimes will continue and women will never be safe, both from strangers and known people.

SAMRIDDI PRASAD JAISWAL, VARANASI

#### Course correction

Refer to 'BJP searching desperately for new allies' (Jan 2); the writer has hammered upon DeMo, besides the party's indifferent attitude towards its allies and internal rift on the vexed Ayodhya issue. Its follies caused debacle in three key states. While John Stuart Mill cautious people against placing their liberties at the feet of great leaders, yet Indians are susceptible to *bhakti* and that came true when the BJP's humongous planks proved to be mere fairytales. Shall basic amenities like drinking water, education and healthcare remain inaccessible to

forgotten subjects? Farmers' suicide, too, has not been addressed satisfactorily. Moreover, performance does not need alliances, nor to be cowed down by any party.

GURNAM SINGH SEETAL, KHANNA

#### BJP class act!

Apropos 'BJP searching desperately for new allies'; the BJP may have an inkling of a dispersed mandate in 2019, entailing support of others beyond traditional allies. The shift in headwinds within the BJP is sharper after it lost three Hindi heartland states. By toning down on Hindutva, the BJP looks to have ceded the theme, the hard one to the Shiv Sena and the soft space to Rahul Gandhi. Much like the let-down of 'Shining India' of 2004, *achche din* seem to be going the same way. In his recent address to officers of the IB, Nitin Gadkari had words of appreciation for Nehru's brand of secularism and inclusiveness, to perhaps pitch a more conciliatory ideology for the party. It also had a subtle hint of an altered leadership for improved acceptability, within and without the alliance. In a matching gesture, the PM, too, has offered to let the mandir issue be left to courts to adjudicate. Trust the *Parivar* to weave its pragmatism in

contrasting strands.

R NARAYANAN, NAVI MUMBAI

#### Misguided Brahmastra

Reference to the middle 'Brahmastra' in common hands' (Jan 2); despite the *Brahmastra*, the common man's concerns are none of the concerns of the politician who knows how to get it misfired. Caste, creed, religion, language, region, timidity, greed etc of the common man are potential weapons in the politician's hands, which are often used to misdirect the *Brahmastra*. If that is not enough, we have countless *babas* with large followings through whom the politician can always render the super weapon in the common hands ineffective. Mostly, rather than the common man, it is the politician who has the last laugh.

HL SHARMA, AMRITSAR

#### The younger Sahibzadas

It was published on December 29 that the Jor Mela was organised at Fatehgarh Sahib in memory of the two elder Sahibzadas 'who were bricked alive'. The fact is that the two younger Sahibzadas were bricked alive. Such a mistake is not expected from an esteemed newspaper like *The Tribune*.

GURBIR SINGH, BY MAIL



# Cong, BJP can't take Mayawati for granted



**RADHIKA RAMASESHAN**  
SENIOR JOURNALIST

Another new year dawned, Mayawati scored her first 'tactical' win in years. She used her legislative 'strength' in the 230-strong Madhya Pradesh Assembly to browbeat the ruling Congress and accede to a demand she raised once she offered support to the Kamal Nath government that was short by exactly two members — the number the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has. Invariably, Mayawati's clout was disproportionate to her party's numerical weight, but her intrinsic worth as the country's most influential Dalit leader is such that the Congress and the BJP dare not undervalue her.

The pressure point was The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 — the SC/ST Act in short. It is as much an article of faith for the BSP as the Constitution itself and a tender spot for most other parties, especially the Congress and the BJP. Mayawati demanded that the nascent government drop the cases that were slapped against 'innocents' during the Bharat bandh that Dalit and tribal organisations had called in April 2018 or face withdrawal of support. The Chief Minister promptly acquiesced and said he would recommend to the court to close the bandh-related and similar cases filed by the

then Shivraj Singh Chouhan government. In obliging Mayawati, Kamal Nath probably went against his grain. In the run-up to the Assembly elections, he, too, faced the wrath of the upper castes along with the BJP leaders when the Congress endorsed the Centre's move in Parliament to restore the original provisions of the Act which the Supreme Court sought to dilute.

## Act of contention

In March 2018, the apex court ruled that the police cannot arrest anybody under the Act just because a case was filed. The ruling was based on an affidavit from the Centre that was in line with the court's stand. The two stances caused an outcry among the Dalits and Adivasis across the country. Under pressure, the Centre abjured its earlier view and introduced amendments, restoring the original provisions to circumvent the court's order. The Lok Sabha unanimously adopted the amendments. In its first form, the Act did not provide for anticipatory bail to an accused and ruled out a preliminary inquiry before registering a criminal case, both of which the court had watered down.

Stung by the Centre's flip-flop, MP's sizeable upper castes banded themselves into a protest outfit that morphed into a political party called the Samanya Picchada Alpasankhyak Adhikari Karamchari Sanstha (SAPAKS). The outfit contested the polls. It did not win seats, but sliced away the BJP's upper caste/upper class urban votes.

What pushed the Congress to bend before Mayawati? First, to convey that she must become part of the proposed *mahagathbandhan* or grand



**CLOUT:** Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party carries the aura of being the true-blue Dalit party.

What pushed the Congress to bend before Mayawati? First, to convey that she must become part of proposed grand alliance that remains a job half done because the parties Congress desperately sought, such as the BSP, Samajwadi Party and Trinamool Congress, have stayed away so far.

alliance that remains a job half done because the parties the Congress desperately sought, such as the BSP, Samajwadi Party and the Trinamool Congress, have stayed away so far. Unless these big leaguers come in, the kernel of a coalition, 'grand' or otherwise, will be weak.

The country over, the BSP carries the aura of being the true-blue Dalit party. Before the Chhattisgarh polls, Mayawati slighted the Congress and joined hands with Ajit Jogi's party. Although the combine hardly dented the Congress base, the party felt Mayawati could have brought value to the table in MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Second, the BSP's six legislators are critical in keeping the minority government in Rajasthan

afloat. The Congress fell two short of a majority. If the BSP pulls out, the four Independents will be its main source of sustenance. Third, in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress badly needs to be under the SP-BSP umbrella to become even a little relevant and go beyond winning just Raebareilly and Amethi, the Gandhi's pocket borough.

## Courting upper castes

The MP episode is as much a word to the wise in the Congress as those in the SP and Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD). The SC/ST Act continues to be a red rag to north India's upper castes. Remember, when Mayawati was voted with a majority in UP in 2007, she relegated the Act to the back-

ground while courting the upper castes, which she successfully managed. Once in power, one of her first decisions was to mitigate its provisions. She had rules inserted to ensure that no 'innocent' person must be framed and if a fake case was called out, the offender must be penalised under Section 182 of the IPC. Her government said action must not be taken based on a complaint and arrests should be made only after an accused was found prima facie guilty following an initial investigation.

By the end of her tenure, she had packed the police stations with her handpicked men who allegedly used the Act with 'impunity'. While the veracity of the allegations against the cops were never fully nailed, the Act's 'abuse' was flagged as a major issue by the SP's Akhilesh Yadav in the 2012 elections to win over the upper castes — which he did.

How the UP coalition itself contains and resolves its inner contradictions will run as a major narrative in the prelude to the Lok Sabha elections. Arithmetic alone cannot underwrite success. On the ground, doubtless the SP-BSP-RLD alliance, tenuous as it was, walked away with wins in the recent Uttar Pradesh by-elections. On a larger canvas, the question of these parties being able to mutually transfer their votes remains unanswered. Electoral history shows that Mayawati can ensure the migration of the Dalit votes to other parties. Whether the others can is up in the air. The SP's core Yadav supporters and the RLD's Jats have been traditionally adversarial towards the Dalits. Having said that, caste equations are also fairly fluid and not necessarily frozen in prejudice and time.

# An iconoclast and a humanist



**SAIBAL CHATTERJEE**  
FILM CRITIC

Like many of the characters in his cinematic masterpieces, Mrinal Sen was an agent provocateur, directing sharp barbs at the shibboleths driving a top-down approach to understanding the inequities inherent in Bengali, and by extension Indian, society. He was a genteel rebel who never failed to raise his cinematic voice when he felt the need.

MRINAL Sen, part of an iconic Bengali cinema trinity that he constituted with illustrious contemporaries Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak, made his last film, *Amaar Bhubon* (This, My Land), a decade and a half before he breathed his last at the age of 95 in his home in Kolkata. But the maverick writer-director's formidable body of work — 27 features, five documentaries and 14 short films — still inspires younger Indian filmmakers, especially those who believe that cinema is more than just a medium of escapist entertainment. "The best thing about him was his humility, from which sprang a spirit of generosity," says National Award-winning filmmaker Sekhar, a representative of a generation after Sen's. "Mrinalda was always willing to listen to his juniors as well as mentor them."

Politically clued in and always in tune with his times, Sen captured the ills of the status quo and questioned the structures that resisted change. He was a genteel rebel who never failed to raise his cinematic voice when he felt the need.

In his heyday, Sen, at once an iconoclast and a humanist, was by far the most political of India's filmmakers, frequently wading into the sensitive themes of the plight of the dispossessed, disillusionment among the youth and the many moral and ethical dilemmas of the urban middle class. His was a cinema of rage and provocation — many of his films were a call to



**FILM ICON:** Mrinal Sen (1923-2018)

action. All the stories that he put on the big screen were underlined by deep empathy for the disempowered and the exploited.

What elevated his cinema many notches above the ordinary was his ability to be both a chronicler and an observer without appropriating the presumptuous role of a know-all solution-giver. He was rooted in his own culture, a conscience-keeper of his city and a genial but uncompromising critic of the middle class, but in essence he was a globalist who could see humanity in a holistic manner.

One of Sen's early feature films,

*Neel Akasher Neechey* (Under the Blue Sky), adapted from a story by Hindi writer Mahadevi Verma, revealed his internationalist vision, his empathy with the underdog and his political leanings. The film tells the story of a Chinese silk hawker selling his wares on the streets of Calcutta and of his growing bond with a Bengali homemaker. Set in the 1930s, when the Raj was on its last legs and imperialist Japan was launching attacks on China, *Neel Akasher Neechey* had obvious overtones. It was the first film in post-independent India to be banned by the government.

Like many of the characters in his cinematic masterpieces, Sen was an agent provocateur, directing sharp barbs at the shibboleths driving a top-down approach to understanding the inequities inherent in Bengali, and by extension Indian, society. The social class that he himself belonged to was his favourite target, notably in films like *Kharij* (The Case is Closed, 1982), in which the death of a servant boy by asphyxiation unsettles a bourgeois Kolkata couple, and *Ek Din Pratidin* (And Quiet Rolls the Dawn, 1979), the story of a family thrown into disarray when a working daughter fails to return from work one evening.

Sen also often went beyond his immediate milieu to probe the hardships faced by the subaltern classes. *Mrigaya* (The Royal Hunt, 1976), for instance, narrated a tale that looked at the effects of imperial rule on the

lives of the simple tribal people of the jungles of central India. The film viewed the fraught relationship between a colonial ruler and an untamable young hunter (played by debutant Mithun Chakraborty) not through an elitist prism, but from the standpoint of the subjugated tribal population. The performance fetched Mithun a National Award.

In *Parashuram* (The Man with the Axe, 1978), featuring another National Award-winning lead performance, this time by Arun Mukherjee, the protagonist is a rural migrant who shares a shelter with a beggar in a graveyard. Under the film's spotlight is the crushing loneliness and unbearably subhuman existence of those that live on the fringes of a metropolis.

By the time Sen made *Mrigaya*, he had already been making films for over two decades, a period during which he had established himself as one of the foremost cinematic voices articulating concerns about the distortions that affected the power dynamics in a newly independent nation. He revelled in challenged the established order.

*Mrigaya* had been preceded by Sen's highly political, experimental Calcutta trilogy — *Interview* (1970), *Calcutta 71* (1972) and *Padatik* (The Guerrilla Fighter, 1973). The film that followed the trilogy, *Chorus* (1974), was not only trenchantly political but also continued Sen's mixing of unbridled stylisation with cinema verite-style neo-realism.

Sen debuted in 1955 with *Raat*

*Bhore* (1955). The cast of the film featured Uttam Kumar before the actor became Bengali cinema's biggest superstar. This was the only time he cast Uttam Kumar in a film, but his association with the other major Bengali male star, Soumitra Chatterjee, known the world over as Satyajit Ray's alter ego, was far more sustained. Sen first cast Soumitra in 1961's *Punascha* (Over Again) and thereafter in *Protidinidhi* (The Representative, 1964), *Akash Kusum* (Up in the Clouds, 1965) and *Mahapritihibi* (World Within, World Without, 1991).

Among Sen's most acclaimed films was *Akaaler Sandhaney* (In Search of Famine, 1980), about a film crew that arrives in a village to make a movie about the Great Bengal Famine of 1980, a man-made calamity precipitated by World War II. As the work progresses, the recreation of the past begins to overlap with the present.

Although his roots were firmly in Calcutta, Sen often moved beyond the boundaries of Bengal and its language in search of creative inspiration, yet another proof of his capacity to embrace varied cultural impulses. He made six Hindi-language films — *Bhuvan Shome* (Mr Shome, 1969), *Ek Adhuri Kahani* (An Unfinished Story, 1971), *Khandhar* (The Ruins, 1983), *Genesis* (1986) and *Ek Din Achanak* (Suddenly One Day, 1989), besides *Mrigaya*. He also made a film each in Telugu (*Oka Oori Katha*, based on a Munshi Premchand story), and in Odia (*Matira Manisha*).

## QUICK CROSSWORD

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- ACROSS**
- Arrangement (3-2)
  - Highest in authority (7)
  - Other than (3)
  - Opportune (4-5)
  - Mistakenly (2,5)
  - Myth (5)
  - Prize (6)
  - Binding promise (6)
  - A conifer (5)
  - Condemnatory (7)
  - Surliness (3,6)
  - Towing vessel (3)
  - Artillery unit (7)
  - Sharpened (5)

- DOWN**
- Remain alive (7)
  - On the credit side (2,3,4)
  - Electricity (5)
  - Hot and humid (6)
  - Contemptible (7)
  - Hard heavy wood (3)
  - To clothe (5)
  - A court game (9)
  - Hirsute (7)
  - Betrothed (7)
  - Imbecility (6)
  - Ascent (5)
  - Merriment (5)
  - Destiny (3)

**YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION**  
**Across:** 1 High-handed, 8 Usher, 9 Soprano, 10 Surfeit, 11 Slain, 12 Attest, 14 Strait, 17 Debar, 19 Recluse, 21 Nervous, 22 Brawl, 23 Deep-seated.  
**Down:** 2 Inherit, 3 Horde, 4 Assets, 5 Deposit, 6 Drama, 7 Down at heel, 8 Upstanding, 13 Scrooge, 15 Adulate, 16 Crisis, 18 Bored, 20 Cobra.

## SU DO KU

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V. HARD

## CALENDAR

**JANUARY 3, 2019 THURSDAY**

- Vikrami Samvat 2075
- Shaka Samvat 1940
- Posh Shaka 13
- Posh Parvishite 19
- Hijari 1440
- Krishan Paksh Tithi 13, up to 3.21 am
- Gand Yoga up to 1.47 am
- Anuradha Nakshatra up to 11.03 am
- Moon in Scorpio sign
- Gandmool start 11.03 am

## YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

## FORECAST

**SUNSET:** THURSDAY 17:33 HRS  
**SUNRISE:** FRIDAY 07:21 HRS

Sunny Partly Cloudy Cloudy Rainy Foggy

CITY	MAX	MIN
Chandigarh	21	05
New Delhi	23	05
<b>PUNJAB</b>		
Amritsar	19	03
Bathinda	19	03
Jalandhar	19	05
Ludhiana	20	05
<b>HARYANA</b>		
Bhiwani	21	06
Hisar	21	06
Sirsa	20	06
<b>HIMACHAL PRADESH</b>		
Dharamsala	14	05
Manali	11	-02
Shimla	12	01
<b>JAMMU &amp; KASHMIR</b>		
Jammu	17	05
Leh	04	-14
Srinagar	06	-03
<b>UTTARAKHAND</b>		
Dehradun	21	05
Mussoorie	15	03

TEMPERATURE IN °C