

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Chanda Kochhar indicted

Conviction must lead to withdrawal of national honour

THE Justice Srikrishna report is the final nail in Chanda Kochhar's banking career. A commission of inquiry does not have the rigour of a trial court, but the highly regarded judge has irrevocably strengthened the public perception about a serious conflict of interest between the role of the Padma Bhushan awardee as the custodian of public money and inappropriate lending predicated on a quid pro quo. Whether the CBI will go the whole hog in the case, given the split in the higher echelons of the government over a wide-brush case against bankers, remains to be seen.

But the brazenness displayed by Kochhar and before that of the ICICI board comprising the stars of Indian private banking hints that the breadth and seriousness of the crimes may be more than that uncovered so far. The whistleblower's revelations might as well have died a natural death; after all the CBI's preliminary probe had hardly made glacial progress for two years and burst into life after a new officer was entrusted with the probe. While the investigation will plod its course, there is a need for an examination of reform options to infuse greater accountability even among the monitors for even the RBI in 2016 could not detect anything amiss in the bank's dealings and let the alleged misconduct go unpunished.

Moreover, the banks are now manufacturing myriad financial products and it is even more crucial to firmly tackle both personal as well as structural inadequacies that could lead to erosion of public trust. Currently accounting for 30 per cent of business, private banking has a huge growth potential. Chanda Kochhar's alleged breach of faith must not be allowed to taint the entire sector. In this respect, if Chanda is convicted, it would be very necessary to take a second look at the national honour bestowed on her. In the past, former Haryana DGP RPS Rathore had the police medal withdrawn on conviction for moral turpitude. There is no reason for an example to be made of a black sheep in the banking industry, if that is, indeed, the case.

Jind jolt for INLD, Cong

BJP on top, fledgling JJP makes presence felt

AN impressive victory in the Jind Assembly byelection has given the ruling BJP a strong head start in the run-up to the Lok Sabha and Haryana Vidhan Sabha elections. The verdict is also a triumph of sorts for young MP Dushyant Chautala, who had parted ways with the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) amid a no-holds-barred family feud and founded the Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) late last year. On its electoral debut, the AAP-backed JJP put up a good fight to finish second.

The big losers are the INLD and the Congress, the main opposition parties in the state. The former finished a lowly fifth, even below the Loktantra Suraksha Party formed by BJP's rebel MP Raj Kumar Saini. The INLD lost face as well as the seat it had won in 2009 and 2014 thanks to Hari Chand Middha, whose death necessitated the bypoll. The seat stays with the family as his son, Krishan Middha, who switched over to the BJP a few months ago, emerged victorious. Rahul Gandhi had raised the stakes very high by fielding Congress spokesperson and Kaithal MLA Randeep Singh Surjewala, but the desperate move exposed the party's inability to find a suitable candidate from Jind itself. Factionalism in the state Congress made things even worse for Surjewala, who ended up third. The humbling loss suggests that the party's recent resurgence in the Hindi belt might not spread to Haryana in the bigger battles to be fought later this year, unless former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda and other bigwigs somehow bury the hatchet.

The crucial division of the Jat vote — the community claims to account for over one-fourth of the Jind electorate — worked in favour of the BJP, which fielded a Punjabi face (three other major candidates were Jats). The saffron party has reasserted its supremacy, but it needs to be wary of the JJP, which is projecting itself as a viable alternative to the voters. As far as the INLD is concerned, it is in danger of being rendered a spent force sooner than later, not unlike its octogenarian supremo — the JBT scam-tainted Om Prakash Chautala.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Among the followers of every religion, religious people are the exceptions. — Friedrich Nietzsche

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1919

The Punjab High Court.

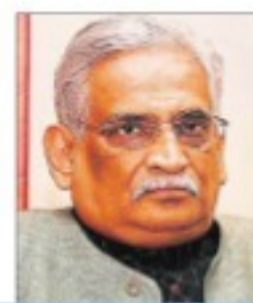
A DRAFT Bill to amend the Punjab Courts Act has just been issued, the object being to enable it to apply to the Courts on the establishment of a High Court of Judicature at Lahore. The constitution of the new High Court will be determined by Letters Patent and not by the Punjab Courts Act. The Chief Court will disappear when the High Court is established and the present measure is necessary to place the subordinate courts under the High Court. The measure will be passed beforehand in order to avoid any hiatus in the administration of justice. The Bill is so framed as to come into operation at once, and the Punjab Government will be empowered to notify the amendments on a date coinciding with the establishment of the High Court.

The Sedition Bills — a Plausible Argument.

IN our leading article we have referred to what is perhaps the strongest ground on which the new legislative proposals are based, namely, that it is the operation of the Defence of India Act that has put an end to the manifestations of lawlessness and that there is no guarantee that when in due course that Act will lapse crime will not raise its head again. It is worthy to note that it is exactly on this ground that one of the two Indian members of the Rowlatt Committee recently opposed a resolution in the Bengal Council recommending the release of detenus in that Presidency. That the argument has a plausible look we do not for a moment deny. But is it really worth anything? Granted that it is with the passing of the Defence of India Act that lawlessness has ceased. What does it prove? It proves at the very best that all the persons who were actual or potential criminals are now under detention or surveillance.

The unfair Ayodhya move

Union Government is acting as a shadow *benami* party for Hindu owners



RAJEEV DHAVAN

SENIOR ADVOCATE, SUPREME COURT

AYODHYA'S Ram temple was the mascot of the BJP's electoral politics from the time of the rath yatras of the eighties. A White Paper on the wanton Talibanesque destruction of the Babri Masjid (1992) was presented in 1993. There has been a continuous barrage of support for the temple at all costs. The party's latest application in the Babri case to release the appurtenant land to the Hindu owners is to appease the Sangha Parivar to encircle the disputed site. It is acting as the 'benamidar' of the Hindus with malice aforethought.

In the 1994 Faruqui verdict, the Supreme Court gave an interpretation to the 1993 Ayodhya Act, converting an acquisition statute into a standstill statute and making the Union Government a 'statutory receiver', subject to a clear decision on the title by the courts. By definition, the Union was a neutral party with no ill will or favour towards any party, apart from its constitutional obligation not to discriminate on the grounds of religion. The properties in question under this statutory receivership were the disputed site of 0.313 acre and 67.703 acres of appurtenant land, which the Union in its application mischievously calls 'surplus land'. According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons, the reason for this extra acquisition was to create 'suitable adjacent land for setting up a complex land which could be developed in a planned manner, wherein a Ram temple, a mosque, amenities to pilgrims, a library, museum and other facilities could be set up'. That moment has still not come. The Faruqui judgment thought that the appurtenant land would 'not be



SO FAR NOT GOOD: There are three winners and three losers, with no clear answers.

There is a solution: Give 0.333 acre to Muslims for a masjid. Take 67.703 acres, leaving a generous access to the Muslims, and build the Ram temple.

rendered meaningless if the Muslims are found entitled to the disputed area' and that the Manas Bhavan and Sita Ki Rasoi being 'strategic in location' were in a 'unique class' to justify acquisition. It added that if this land was not needed, it could go back to its Hindu owners. That moment, too, has not yet come.

On March 17, 2002, in the Mohd Aslam case, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court ordered that this land would not be handed over to the Hindus and remain neutral without *puja* and *shilanyas*. Interestingly in 2003, Attorney General Soli Sorabjee appeared for handing over this land to the Hindus, even though he appeared for the Muslims in the Faruqui case — a complete flip-flop. On March 31, 2003, a five-judge Constitution Bench rejected the Union's argument (this time not led by Sorabjee) that the Faruqui judgment had overreached itself and ordered status quo till the Allahabad judgment, 'not only to maintain communal harmony, but also fulfil the objectives of the Act'. The 2010 Allahabad judgment is in

first appeal before the Supreme Court, which is a continuation of the High Court case whose decision was too fractured to yield a satisfactory result. A first appeal is a rehearing on all points raised. All the main parties (Muslim and Hindu) are in appeal. On May 9, 2011, the Supreme Court, in the Mohd Siddiq case, again examined the issue and ordered 'status quo of the site and adjacent land'.

To *namdar* and *kamdar*, we must now add *benamidar*. In the present application, the Union is actually siding with, and openly acting *benami* for the Hindu owners. When the Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas asked the Union for this land on June 6, 1996, the then government declined the request on August 14, 1996 — a view approved by the Supreme Court. Today, in this application, the Union claims a 'duty' to restore the land. Actually, its duty is to remain neutral. It goes further to say that which part should be released 'in the domain of policy' beyond 'judicial scrutiny' and beyond the Act of 1993. Hence, judicial hands off. By

saying this, the Union is challenging a judgment accepted since 1994. When the Nyas had filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking directions, the court had on July 21, 1997, praised the Central Government for its correct stance in refusing the Nyas' request. This position was reiterated by the court in 2002, 2003 and 2011. Today, the Centre has no objection, in principle, to restoring the land as a matter of duty to the Hindus after 25 years, even though legal proceedings continue. The Union thinks it is 'in the larger interest of justice' because the Nyas approached the Union Government, which is obviously approaching the court on the Nyas' behalf. The Union is not party to the case. Now, it is a shadow *benami* party.

The land is needed because no one liked the 2:1 Allahabad decision: one-third each went to the Nirmohi Akhara, the Deity and the Muslims — with the Muslim claim to be adjusted elsewhere, if necessary. Where is this elsewhere? But the Hindu parties are fighting with each other. The Nirmohis say the Deity's claim is corrupted, and want all of it. The Deity wants all of it. The Sunni Waqf Board wants all of it. But the appurtenant land was kept in status quo, so that access would be available to the winners. But so far, there are three winners and three losers — all need access to the site. The nation needs harmony.

The Union's application is in the campaign mode, devoid of moral or legal justification. The Hindu *sants* now want to lay the foundation stone on February 21. Where? On the site? This duplicity adds threat to outrage and is contempt of court.

There is still a solution: Give the site (0.333 acre) to the Muslims to rebuild their masjid. Take your 67.703 acres, leaving a generous access to the Muslims, and build the Ram temple. This intimidation began in 1857. In July 1992, Muslims destroyed a Ramjanmasthan temple, 45 metres north of the masjid. Statesmanship, not intimidation, is the answer. There is a solution.

Up & down the NPA roller-coaster

ANMOL RATTAN NARANG

BANKERS these days remain obsessed with NPAs (non-performing assets). Whatever you may talk to them, they will reply in terms of NPAs, the formidable form as they have taken.

In March 2010, when I was posted at Srinagar as a chief manager of a bank branch, the NPA mania had begun to engulf bankers. A Sikh gentleman, who was running a business empire in the Valley, had a loan with us, whose outstanding was around Rs 5 crore. The loan was not being serviced for the past two months and was on the verge of becoming

an NPA. My bosses in Delhi were after me to ensure that it did not happen. The main reasons for the account not being serviced were the conditions prevalent in the Valley, as also the poor health of the head of the family, who, due to a kidney problem, was admitted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Delhi.

Sardarji had two sons, who were helping him in business but he had more trust in the elder one.

When Sardarji got admitted to hospital, I panicked — I admit not because of concerns whether he will survive or not, but for the reason that in the eventuality of his death, my loan account will certainly

become NPA, which would affect my future prospects.

One evening, his younger son came to our branch. Due to my anxiety, the very first question that I asked him was about the health of *bade* Sardarji. He said he was coming directly from the hospital and that his father's condition was serious, as only 14 per cent of his kidneys were working.

It dampened my spirits. Seeing me tense, my second-in-command entered the cabin and enquired what had happened. I told him that Sardarji's son had lost all hope and was waiting for his father's passage to heaven.

My second-in-command became serious. Unlike me, he was more concerned with the divine soul rather than the NPA.

After that, we daily waited for the news of Sardarji's death, but it did not come. I was transferred from that branch in November 2010.

On joining my new office, I started concentrating on my new assignment and forgot all about the accounts of the Srinagar branch. Time passed by. Six-seven months later, I received a phone call from my erstwhile second-in-command, informing me that Sardarji had passed away.

On learning, my mind went, not for the account, but for the soul.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Toxic the water flows

Buddha Nullah will remain toxic till the government wakes up to the reality and takes drastic steps against units releasing industrial effluents into it ('Buddha Nullah remains toxic'; Jan 31). Some units dump poison underground via bore-wells, thus polluting drinking and irrigation water. At places, even sewage is released into water bodies. Any number of attempts can be made to clean the water bodies, but unless the source of pollutants is checked, our rivers, nullahs, ponds and lakes will remain polluted. Once polluted, no technology will help to restore the purity of underground water. The lackadaisical attitude of the governments to this serious problem will stretch the health services.

COL KULDIP S GREWAL (RETD), PATIALA

Death by negligence

It is shocking to know that three newborns died in a single day at the special neonatal care unit of the General Hospital, Panipat, due to the non-availability of a paediatrician and ventilator. As many as 33 children had died last year. This is the state of affairs in a well-off state, where the government is on a spree to announce new projects.

The explanation by the officiating Civil Surgeon that they have advertised for the post of paediatrician, but no doctor is ready to join at a salary of Rs 80,000 is ridiculous. Will the bureaucracy and politicians realise the situation and do something for the well-being of the poor or will it be 'sab chalta hai'?

SHADI LAL, BY MAIL

Status quo on Ayodhya

Apropos the editorial 'Last-ditch move on Ayodhya' (Jan 31), the Centre's unnecessary move on handing back the 'superfluous land' acquired around the disputed site to the Ram temple trust has no justification at this juncture, when appeals against the Allahabad HC's verdict in the title suits have reached the final stage of adjudication before the SC. There is a barely concealed political motive. Status quo needs to be maintained.

SS PAUL, NADIA

Will go MGNREGA way

Refer to the editorial 'Minimum income for poor' (Jan 30); distributing freebies from government coffers in the form of 10 per cent reservation among the upper class by

the BJP and the minimum income for poor by the Congress to lure voters are the seedy ways of our politicians. What would be the norms for identifying the poor? The first time a survey to identify BPL families was conducted was in 1980-81. The process continued till 2002 after a gap of every five years and thereafter no such survey has been done. That survey was also incorrect as ineligible families were included and eligible ones were ignored. The Congress promise is not realistic. The other promises will also meet the same fate. Even if such huge funds are arranged by squeezing honest taxpayers, undoubtedly such heavy sums will go down the drain. MGNREGA is already dying its slow death for want of adequate funds as wages to the tune of crores of rupees are pending for payment in different states.

RAJ KUMAR KAPOOR, ROPAR

Yes to English

Reference to the news report 'From next session, 2,387 govt schools to turn English medium' (Jan 31); the initiative of the Punjab Government is laudable. The importance of English can't be underestimated on any parameter. Let us not forget that before the

reorganisation of states in 1966, all high/higher secondary schools of present-day Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were affiliated with Panjab University, Chandigarh. During this period, the university did a lot to maintain a dignified standard of English in all schools. Dilution started taking place when the schools got affiliated with state education boards. Before giving the decision a practical shape, the state government should ensure that necessary training is provided to English teachers so that a firm foundation is laid for this step.

VK ANAND, CHANDIGARH

Prisoners' rights

Refer to the article 'Norms for pre-mature release need uniformity' (Jan 31); in present times, prisons are to be viewed not as cages to quarantine criminals, but institutions aimed at reforming them, so that they become useful members of society. The pre-mature release of prisoners is not immune from political considerations and discretions. Prisoners are entitled to live with dignity and humane treatment. The rules must be the same for all prisoners.

DIVYA SINGLA, PATIALA

Temple gambit evokes a sense of déjà vu



RADHIKA RAMASESHAN
SENIOR JOURNALIST

RAISING a *bhavya* (magnificent) temple for Ram on the disputed land in Ayodhya that had housed the Babri mosque is the last arrow in the BJP's quiver that is being darted before the General Election. A sense of déjà vu descended on this pilgrim town in Uttar Pradesh, as indeed the country, when the Centre moved the Supreme Court to seek permission to return the acquired 'excess/superfluous' land measuring 67.703 acres to its 'original owners', principally the Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas. The Nyas was constituted as an 'independent' trust by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) on January 25, 1993, to 'administer' the site of Ram's 'birthplace' and oversee the construction of the envisioned temple.

Two circumstances led to the creation of the Nyas: one, on January 7, 1993, a month after the mosque was razed, the Narasimha Rao government promulgated the Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Ordinance (replaced by an Act in April 1993) and took over the land surrounding the disputed 2.77 acres with the stated objective of building a Ram temple and setting up related infrastructure for Ayodhya's residents and pilgrims. The agenda was never realised, but its articulation unsettled the VHP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), who feared that the Congress

might steal a march on them. The Nyas was a signal that the VHP was very much in business as far as Ayodhya went. Second, four BJP state governments were sacked, including the one in Uttar Pradesh, that deprived the Sangh fraternity of the official patronage it had enjoyed until then. The RSS calculation was that the BJP would win the 1993 UP elections, having fulfilled a major promise of obliterating the mosque for eternity, and then a full-fledged temple could be built. That never happened, because the party lost to the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party coalition.

However, months before the Lok Sabha elections, the RSS and the BJP are somehow convinced that they have a winner in the temple. If, by a twist of fate, the Supreme Court expedites hearing of the title suit and adjudicates in favour of the Hindu litigants represented by the Hindu Mahasabha and the Nirmohi Akhara, the judgment would be projected as a 'triumph' of the 'majority'. Conversely, if the verdict is advantageous to the Sunni Waqf Board, it would be interpreted as an affront, even an assault, to Hindu sentiments and give the BJP an opening to play the victim.

For the past over four years of the Narendra Modi government, the temple issue lay dormant, while other subjects and controversies signifying 'nationalism' and Hindutva — notably the violent campaign against cow slaughter, re-conversion (*ghar wapsi*) and the surgical strikes — were placed on the radar of the cadre and the faithful. Ironically, in the 2017 UP elections, the temple did not figure in the discourse of the BJP leaders or the minds of the voters. Even in Ayodhya, topmost on the electors' minds was the military's



TIMING: For the past over four years of the Narendra Modi government, the Ram temple issue lay dormant.

Demoralised by the poll loss in three states, an economy that is questioned for not creating enough jobs, the downturn in manufacturing after demonetisation and GST, and the agrarian distress, the BJP-RSS cadres are desperately seeking an issue that will raise the emotional volume on the hustings. The surgical strike is over and done with. It's time to revisit Ayodhya.

operation across the western border. The anointment of Yogi Adityanath as the UP Chief Minister stoked hopes of a breakthrough because his mentor, the late Mahant Avaidyanath, had spearheaded the 'movement' for a temple and indoctrinated his protégé so thoroughly that in February 2003, when the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government was embroiled in the Ayodhya tangle, the Yogi, then an MP from Gorakhpur and a member of the VHP's steering committee, told the media that the Hindu clergy alone owned the "right to adjudicate an issue that was a matter of faith".

Adityanath is probably committed to the same position even now, but his tenure saw little push on the temple issue, barring his celebrated touch-down on Ayodhya on Diwali that set off a controversy because the state government had allegedly spent crores on adorning the town. The CM promised a total makeover of Ayodhya

from a filthy, shambolic town to a 'moksha-seeking' destination with a grand Ram statue.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the Art of Living Foundation, briefly initiated an effort to resolve the imbroglio, joining a line of godmen that included Chandraswami, the 'tantrik', and Jayendra Saraswathi, the pontiff of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham. It was unclear if the spiritual guru from Bengaluru was empowered by the Modi government to start a dialogue with the Shia Waqf Board and other stakeholders or if he acted unilaterally. However, the VHP disregarded the move, justifiably emphasising that the Shia Board had no locus standi in the Ayodhya legal cases and it was, therefore, 'pointless' reaching out to its members.

The RSS and the VHP were determined not to let go of Ayodhya, even as the BJP was uncertain of its electoral dividends and its potential to

evoke the emotions of the late eighties and the nineties. Although a lemon that was squeezed for all it was worth, cynically of course, the BJP was hoisted by the petard on which the RSS placed it. As the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi successfully frustrated the VHP's repeated exertions to distract him from his chosen path of *vikas* (development) by flagging Hindutva. A distance of 903 km separates Gandhinagar from New Delhi. That's big and Modi finds that he cannot deploy the counters of the past to checkmate the VHP and its affiliated clergy.

Demoralised by the poll loss in three states, an economy that cannot be called buoyant or depressed but one that is questioned for not creating enough jobs, the downturn in manufacturing after demonetisation and GST, a stagnant unorganised sector and agrarian distress, the BJP-RSS cadres are desperately seeking an issue that will raise the emotional volume on the stump. The surgical strike is over and done with. It's time to revisit Ayodhya like the late Vajpayee did in 2003, a year before he faced a parliamentary election.

Like the Modi government, the Vajpayee dispensation moved the Supreme Court to restore the land adjacent to the contentious site to the Nyas. The 2003 judgment stated that the land must not be 'disturbed' for two reasons: one, if the Muslims won the title suit case, they could not be denied access to the extended property. Second, it was imperative to maintain communal harmony and peace, pending a resolution. Ashok Singhal, the late VHP patriarch, blamed Vajpayee for nixing a settlement. How will the Parivar judge Modi, its 'poster boy'?

Unfinished business on the leprosy front



DR SANJEEV HANDA
HEAD, DEPT OF DERMATOLOGY, VENEREAL & LEPROLOGY, PGIMER, CHANDIGARH

ONE of the oldest diseases known to mankind, leprosy continues to be a major public health concern in India despite significant developments in management strategies. India accounts for more than half of the leprosy burden worldwide. The other high-burden countries include Brazil and Indonesia. Of the new cases, approximately 8.9 per cent are children and 6.7 per cent have visible deformities. Scaled-up interventions are needed with the focus on preventing transmission of leprosy.

Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease affecting peripheral nerves and the skin. It usually manifests as light or red-coloured patches on the skin, loss of sensation or abnormal sensation, and muscle weakness. It is a curable disease; treatment is provided by the government free of cost. If untreated, the disease may lead to deformities such as claw hand, foot drop and ulceration on the hands and feet. Over time, it may affect the eyes, joints and bones.

In India, there is still fear and stigma associated with leprosy. Patients often face discrimination. The deformities and complications associated with leprosy are witnessed less frequently nowadays owing to the availability of multi-drug therapy used to cure the disease and strategies to prevent and repair deformities.

Public awareness regarding leprosy is of the utmost importance for early detection, control of transmission and cure. People need to be educated by



TARGET: India's goal of leprosy elimination (less than one case per 10,000 people) was achieved in 2005. It is hoped that the disease will be eradicated in the near future.

health professionals, social workers and the media to remove the stigma associated with the disease. Several prevalent myths have been major roadblocks in the battle against leprosy. According to one, the ailment is a 'punishment' for past sins. Such myths often make patients seek treatment belatedly, leading to irreversible nerve damage and disabilities. Early detection of leprosy is vital as it offers the dual advantage of ensuring initiation of treatment at an early stage and reducing the chances of transmission to close contacts. Health professionals treating patients must screen close contacts and family members of the patient, especially children, for early signs of leprosy.

Various amendments have been passed in Parliament, seeking to end discriminatory laws against leprosy, such as holding it as a ground for divorce and considering it an incurable and virulent disease. Every year, Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom day (January 30) is commemorated as World Leprosy Day to generate awareness among people regarding the disease, reduce stigma associated with it and remember the Father of the Nation's selfless work for the welfare of leprosy patients.

The National Leprosy Control Programme (NLCP) was launched by the Union Government in 1955 to treat and control the transmission of the disease. In 1983, the NLEP (National Leprosy

Eradication Programme) was launched as a centrally sponsored health scheme under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Multi-drug therapy (MDT) a three-drug combination of rifampicin, dapsone and clofazimine that is administered for six to 12 months has been implemented by the NLEP since 1982 to cure the infection. Significant success in controlling and treating leprosy has been achieved owing to the efforts of the NLEP and the introduction of MDT. The goal of elimination (less than one case/10,000 people) of leprosy at the national level was achieved in December 2005, down from a prevalence rate of 57.8/10,000 in 1983. Attempts are being made to achieve eradication of leprosy. Since the introduction of MDT, 16 million cases of leprosy have been treated and 4 million deformities have been prevented till now.

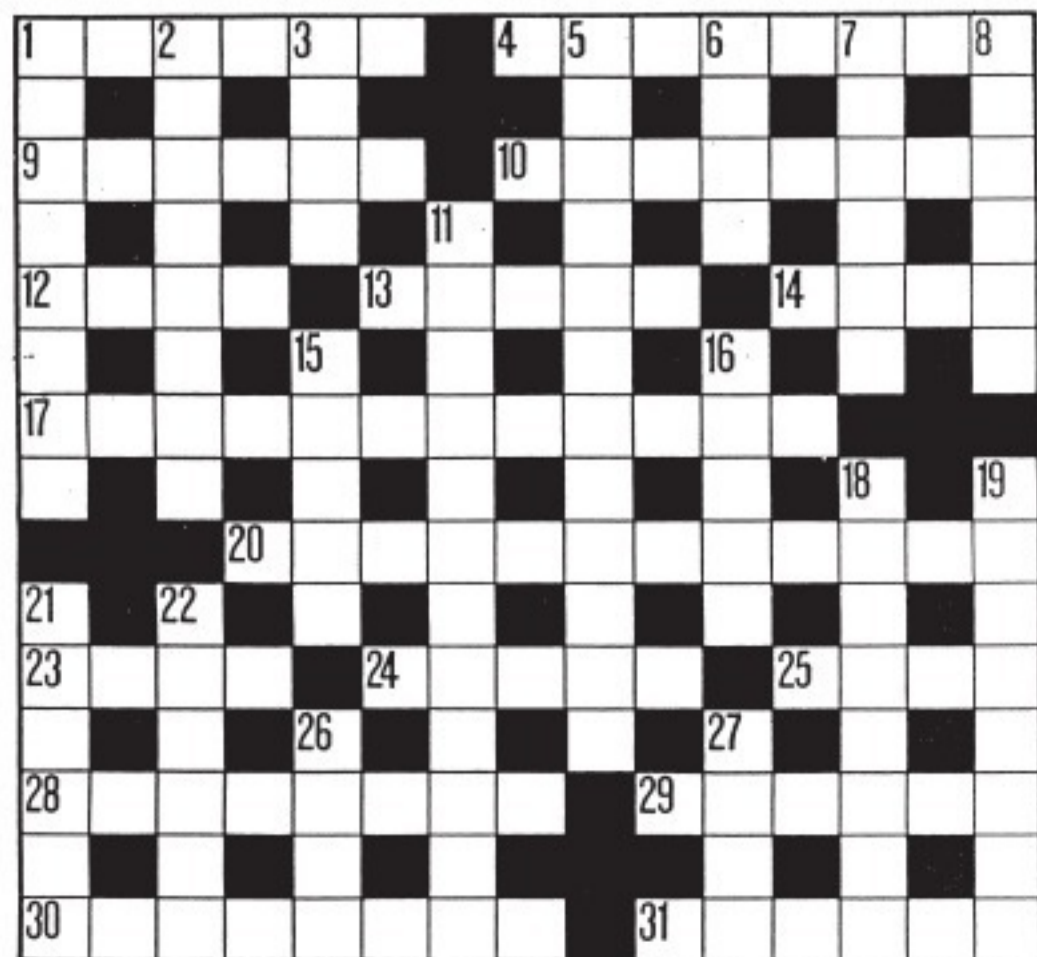
India still accounts for around 60 per cent of the newly detected cases and is categorised among the 22 'global priority' countries. The new-case detection rate has not declined significantly over the past few years. According to the NLEP progress report, 1.35 lakh new cases were detected during 2016-17. This shows an Annual New Case Detection Rate (ANCDR) of 10.17 per lakh population. After achieving disease elimination in 2005, funds have been diverted from the leprosy control programme to programmes for controlling other diseases. However, four states (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha) and two union territories (Dadra and

Nagar Haveli, and Lakshadweep) are yet to achieve this epidemiological goal of elimination. Due to a significant migrant population in Chandigarh, the leprosy burden in the union territory is high. The Department of Dermatology at the PGI has been running a weekly leprosy clinic since the past more than 30 years.

To improve the detection of new cases and expedite treatment, the NLEP recently launched an active case-finding strategy known as the Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC), which led to the detection of 34,000 new cases in 2016, especially from highly endemic areas accounting for around 25 per cent of the total fresh cases. Research on vaccines against leprosy is still going on. Various vaccines have been tried, but none have been uniformly effective and are used more for boosting the immune system to help in the faster clearance of the disease in leprosy patients and indirectly in prevention of transmission. Single-dose rifampicin, given to the close contacts of patients, has been found effective in preventing transmission. This strategy can be adopted for use on a mass scale in leprosy-endemic areas.

It is hoped that the disease will be eradicated in the near future with the initiatives of the health authorities, strong political will and community participation. Efforts need to be made to reduce deformity through early detection, self-care, physiotherapy and reconstructive surgery and developing sound surveillance systems.

QUICK CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
1 Boisterous laugh (6)
4 Adversary (8)
9 In full view (6)
10 Sign of authenticity (8)
12 Depressed (4)
13 Comic entertainer (5)
14 Intended method (4)
17 Crucial (3-9)
20 Symbol of cowardice (5,7)
23 Loot from robbery (4)
24 Journal (5)
25 Large long-necked bird (4)
28 Wrong-headed (8)
29 Capital of Colombia (6)
30 In these times (8)
31 Hurt (6)
- DOWN**
1 Considerable amount (4,4)
2 Voluntary choice (4,4)
3 Join by treaty (4)
5 Take unnecessary risks (4,4,4)
6 Sole (4)
7 Make possible (6)
8 Fascinating (6)
11 Murderously intent (12)
15 US city, D-Day beach (5)
16 Move furtively (5)
18 Decisive confrontation (8)
19 A soak (8)
21 Polish-born French composer (6)
22 Rabbit hole (6)
26 Dispatch (4)
27 Jot (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION
Across: 1 Enslave, 4 Suspend, 8 Run, 9 Rotterdam, 10 Teacher, 11 Lobby, 13 Choosy, 15 Chilly, 18 Wheel, 19 Station, 21 Liverpool, 23 Out, 24 Sincere, 25 Where.
Down: 1 Erratic, 2 Singapore, 3 Earth, 4 Suture, 5 Stealth, 6 End, 7 Dummy, 12 Baltimore, 14 Splurge, 16 Yangtze, 17 Ashore, 18 Wales, 20 Allow, 22 Van.

SU DO KU

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

V. HARD

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 1, 2019 FRIDAY

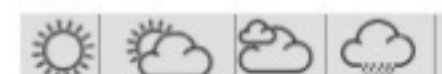
- Vikrami Samvat 2075
- Shaka Samvat 1940
- Magh Shaka 12
- Magh Parvishite 19
- Hijari 1440
- Krishan Paksh Tithi 12, up to 7.00 pm
- Harsh Yoga up to 6.18 am
- Moola Nakshatra up to 9.07 pm
- Moon in Sagittarius sign
- Gandmool up to 9.07 pm.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

FORECAST

SUNSET: FRIDAY 17:58 HRS
SUNRISE: SATURDAY 07:14 HRS



CITY **MAX** **MIN**

Chandigarh 19 07

New Delhi 20 10

PUNJAB

Amritsar 17 06

Bathinda 17 07

Jalandhar 16 06

Ludhiana 19 05

HARYANA

Bhiwani 20 09

Hisar 20 07

Sirsa 18 07

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Dharamsala 12 04

Manali 08 -03

Shimla 08 01

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Jammu 14 08

Leh -01 -09

Srinagar 03 0

UTTARAKHAND

Dehradun 21 08

Mussoorie 10 01

TEMPERATURE IN °C