

Jagan Mohan Reddy seeks road map to implement prohibition
page 8

Disgruntled public utility worker kills 12 persons in Virginia
page 12

PLAYING TODAY
South Africa vs Bangladesh
VENUE: The Oval
Live on STAR Sports 1, 2 & Select 1 (SD & HD, 3 p.m.)

Henry, Ferguson bundle out Sri Lanka; New Zealand wins at a canter
page 17

NEARBY



J&K guide saves tourists from capsized boat, dies

SRINAGAR
A local guide, Rouf Ahmed Dar, died saving five tourists, including two foreigners, when a boat capsized during rafting in tourist hotspot Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Friday evening.

Nitish to expand Cabinet with JD(U) members

PATNA
Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is set to expand his Council of Ministers on Sunday with the likely induction of four new Ministers from the Janata Dal (United), party officials said on Saturday.

Aqua Line trains to run at a frequency of 7 1/2 mins

NEW DELHI
The Noida Metro Rail Corporation is set to increase the frequency of metro trains on the Aqua Line from June 3. Trains will be available at a frequency of 7 1/2 minutes during peak hours on weekdays and 10 minutes during non-rush hours.

MAGAZINE

32 PAGES (TABLOID)
CLASSIFIEDS: PAGES 4 & 6

Sonia Gandhi elected leader of Congress Parliamentary Party

Uncertainty continues over choice of its floor leader in the Lok Sabha

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

United Progressive Alliance (UPA) chairperson Sonia Gandhi was elected leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) at a meeting here on Saturday. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh proposed Ms. Gandhi's name, which was unanimously approved by all the MPs.

"Smt. Sonia Gandhi elected as the leader of Congress Parliamentary Party! She says, 'We thank the 12.13 Cr voters for reposing faith in the Congress Party,' chief spokesperson of the Congress Randeep Surjewala said on Twitter.

'For effective opposition'
Addressing the MPs, Ms. Gandhi urged them to play the role of an effective opposition and ensure better coordination with like-minded parties in the Rajya Sabha.

Ms. Gandhi will now pick the party's floor leader in the Lok Sabha. There has been speculation that Rahul Gandhi, who resigned from the post of president, may opt for this position. Mallikarjun Kharge held the post in the outgoing Lok Sabha. He was



A role to play: Sonia Gandhi being elected as leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in New Delhi on Saturday. Manmohan Singh proposed her name. •PTI

defeated in Gulbarga in the recent general election. The other front runner is the three-time MP Shashi Tharoor. The floor leader sets the agenda for his party in the House, decides its parliamentary strategy and coordinates with other Opposition parties and the government.

Rahul thanks voters
At the meeting, Mr. Gandhi also thanked the voters and the party workers. "Every Congress member must remember that each one of

us is fighting for the Constitution, for every person in India, irrespective of the colour of his skin or belief," he said.

With 52 MPs, the post of Leader of the Opposition remains elusive again for the Congress. As per the norm, an Opposition party that has the strength of at least 10% of the 545-member House gets the position.

CONGRESS NOT TO SEEK LEADER OF OPPOSITION POST ▶ PAGE 10
GEHLOT REJECTS MINISTER'S RESIGNATION ▶ PAGE 10

Shout a little more: Rahul

At the first meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party on Saturday, Rahul Gandhi urged the new MPs to be more aggressive. "You are going to shout a little more than usual. You are going to have to be a little more aggressive," he said. "There is no institution that is going to support you in this country..." he said.

▶ PAGE 10

Trump ends concessions for Indian exports under GSP

Says New Delhi did not assure equitable access to markets

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

A day after a group of journalists was told that India's access to preferential trade terms under the U.S.'s Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) was on its way out, U.S. President Donald Trump issued a proclamation ending the trade benefits effective June 5.

However, the benefits could possibly be reinstated subject to India and the U.S. reaching an agreement, according to a senior State Department official.

"I have determined that India has not assured the United States that India will provide equitable and reasonable access to its markets. Accordingly, it is appropriate to terminate India's designation as a beneficiary developing country effective June 5, 2019," Mr. Trump's proclamation read.

The GSP is a programme that seeks to aid developing countries by giving some of their products non-reciprocal, duty-free access to U.S. markets. In 2018, some \$ 6.3 billion of Indian merchandise exports to the U.S. were covered by GSP, according to the Congressional Research Service.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Lost designation

What is GSP?
Generalized System of Preferences is designed to promote economic development by allowing duty-free entry for thousands of products from 120 designated beneficiary countries/territories

I have determined that India has not assured the U.S. that it will provide equitable and reasonable access to its markets. Accordingly, it is appropriate to terminate India's designation... effective June 5, 2019
— DONALD TRUMP, U.S. PRESIDENT

IMPACT ON INDIA

LOSSES: Of the \$5.6 billion exports under the GSP category, the loss is estimated at \$190 million

SECTORS: Industries such as gem and jewellery, leather and processed foods likely to be impacted

Will resolve issue: India

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**
The government on Saturday exuded confidence that India and the U.S. would continue to work together for further growing ties following Washington's decision to withdraw concessions under the Generalized System of Preferences.

"In any relationship, in particular in the area of

economic ties, there are ongoing issues which get resolved mutually from time to time," the Commerce Ministry said in a statement. The Congress termed the U.S. decision a "double whammy", coinciding with unemployment at a 45-year high and a five-year low in the GDP.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10
TASK CUT OUT ▶ PAGE 11

ED summons Praful on Air India's route sharing deal with 3 airlines

Procurement of 43 Airbus aircraft is also under the scanner

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The Enforcement Directorate has summoned former Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel for recording his statement on June 6 in connection with the alleged irregularities in the sharing of Air India's profitable routes with three international airlines.

The procurement of 43 Airbus aircraft during his tenure in the UPA government is also under the scanner, said an official. The ED's money-laundering probe is based on the FIRs registered by the CBI in May 2017 at a Supreme Court directive.

Mr. Patel, a senior NCP leader and Rajya Sabha member, told the PTI: "I will be happy to cooperate with the ED for their understanding of the complexities of the aviation industry."

According to a senior ED



Praful Patel

official, the investigations also pertained to corporate lobbyist Deepak Talwar, who along with his son was recently charge-sheeted by the agency for allegedly lobbying with politicians, Ministers and Civil Aviation Ministry officials for the Emirates, Air Arabia and Qatar Airways.

"He illegally managed to secure favourable traffic rights for these airlines during 2008-09 at the cost of na-

tional carrier Air India," the ED had earlier said, alleging that the three airlines paid ₹272 crore for the job.

E-mail exchanges

In the chargesheet, the agency had appended some e-mail exchanges allegedly between Mr. Talwar and the office of the former Union Minister, said the official. Mr. Talwar was deported by the Dubai immigration authority on January 31 and arrested by the ED.

Agreements for the purchase of 111 aircraft worth ₹70,000 crore, including 43 from Airbus and 68 from Boeing, are also being investigated by the CBI and the ED. Mr. Patel's statement may also be recorded on the issue of procurement of aircraft from Airbus. Mr. Talwar has already been questioned, said the official.

7 foreigners, 1 Indian missing during trek to Nanda Devi

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PITHORAGARH**

An eight-member mountaineering team, including seven foreigners, has gone missing on its way to the 7,434-metre-high Nanda Devi East peak. A massive search and rescue operation has been launched amid bad weather.

The team, led by well-known British mountaineer Martin Moran, includes three other climbers from the U.K., two from the U.S. and one from Australia, besides an officer of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), New Delhi.

It had left Munsyari near Pithoragarh on May 13, but did not return to the base camp on May 25 as scheduled, Pithoragarh District Magistrate V.K. Jogdanda said on Saturday.

Body scanners made mandatory at 84 airports

Government sets one-year deadline for installation of the equipment

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The government has made it mandatory for 84 airports in the country to install full-body scanners to screen air travellers within a year and issued a standard operating procedure for their use.

The 84 airports include 26 hyper-sensitive airports and 58 sensitive airports. Other airports have two years' time to introduce these scanners.



Nothing to hide: The equipment will replace metal detectors and passengers have to remove metallic items.

Global standard

This equipment will replace walk-through metal detectors and passengers will have to remove shoes, belts, jackets, thick clothing and be "divested" of all metallic items, which is a practice at most prominent airports across the world, according to the SOP laid down by a Bureau of Civil Aviation Security

(BCAS) circular sent to all airports in April.

However, 10% of passengers will also be subjected to full pat-down searches at random.

"Walk-through metal detectors and hand-held metal detectors cannot detect non-metallic weapons and explosives. Body scanners detect

both metallic and non-metallic items concealed on the body," reads the circular on reasons for the change.

Following concerns over these machines generating naked images of passengers, the BCAS has mandated privacy filters. As a result, these scanners will produce only an outline or a mannequin

like image, which is same for all genders. A yellow box appears on the body image to highlight areas that may need further screening.

'Safe for use'
"Scanner shall provide image-free solution using a generic mannequin. Threats shall be graphically presented," reads the circular.

These scanners use millimetre wave technology, which means passengers will not be subjected to harmful X-ray radiation, and the machine is safe for use by all, including pregnant women.

These scanners will help airports improve passenger throughput as they are required to screen a passenger in eight seconds and 300 passengers per hour, according to the technical specifications spelt out by the BCAS.

Rahul's IAS Coaching Institute for Judicial Services Exams.

English & Hindi Medium

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Exceptional, unmatched... unparalleled!!!

411 final selections from Rahul's IAS in Judicial Services, with 11 First Rankers, in the last 2 yrs. alone, apart from thousands of our earlier overall (Judicial, APO, Law officers, etc.) selections over the last almost two decades. In 2019, Jan. - May results alone, we have 27 final selections in Delhi Judiciary (Jan.), 22 final selections in M.P. Judiciary, one final selection (2nd Rank) in Assam Judiciary & 6 final selections (including 1st Rank) in Gujarat Judiciary, 2 final selections in Jharkhand HJS (including 1st Rank), One final selection (668th Rank) in UPSC-IAS, 93 final selections in Delhi Judiciary (May) & 2 final selections in H.P. Judiciary.

We have a record success in Delhi Judiciary, 2019: 27 Final Selections from Rahul's IAS, out of 32 Total Seats (85% approx.) in Jan., 2019 results and 93 out of total 126 seats (74% approx.) in May, 2019 results. That in itself speaks volumes about what 'We' are.

We are 'distinct'... a 'class apart'... 'boundless'.

"Competing with our own self".

"My dear students, 'more energetic and motivated', I am still 'on'...at my 'fullest'. You are my only 'driving force'. Keep working 'consistently and persistently'; success will certainly be 'Yours'. God bless you."

...Rahul Sir.

OUR RESULTS IN 2019 : 154 SELECTIONS ALREADY (TILL DATE)

HP JS-2019	DELHI JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS, 2019 (MAY) - 93 Selections out of 126																																																																			
SUNIT THAKUR 2	SHEPRA DHANKAR 3	ADITHESH KUMAR 4	KANAKA AGARWAL 5	ARISHMAN S. CHEEMA 6	UMANG JOSHI 7	MANU KAUSHAL 8	NEHA SAINI 9	GAURAV GOYAL 10	AKASH GARG 11	RIYAN GUPTA 12	RIYAN SHARMA 13	SHIKHA CHAHAL 14	SURISHA 15	ARUSHI SAKHIA 16	KARTIKA TAPARIA 17	ABHILASHA SINGH 18	SHRIJATI 19																																																			
DEVAM LEA 25	ANUJ BAHAL 26	HARSHALI SINGH 27	DEEPIKA SETHI 28	ASHISHA SHARMA 29	SANVI DALAL 30	DEEPIKA SALWAN 31	REKHA TYAGI 32	SHRUTI SHARMA 33	SHWETA TALWAR 34	SNANA SINGH 35	HRANDEEP KAUR 36	NEHA 37	SHWETA SINGH 38	SHWETA SINGH 39	SHWETA SINGH 40	SHWETA SINGH 41	SHWETA SINGH 42	SHWETA SINGH 43	SHWETA SINGH 44	SHWETA SINGH 45	SHWETA SINGH 46	SHWETA SINGH 47	SHWETA SINGH 48	SHWETA SINGH 49	SHWETA SINGH 50	SHWETA SINGH 51	SHWETA SINGH 52	SHWETA SINGH 53	SHWETA SINGH 54	SHWETA SINGH 55	SHWETA SINGH 56	SHWETA SINGH 57	SHWETA SINGH 58	SHWETA SINGH 59	SHWETA SINGH 60	SHWETA SINGH 61	SHWETA SINGH 62	SHWETA SINGH 63	SHWETA SINGH 64	SHWETA SINGH 65	SHWETA SINGH 66	SHWETA SINGH 67	SHWETA SINGH 68	SHWETA SINGH 69	SHWETA SINGH 70	SHWETA SINGH 71	SHWETA SINGH 72	SHWETA SINGH 73	SHWETA SINGH 74	SHWETA SINGH 75	SHWETA SINGH 76	SHWETA SINGH 77	SHWETA SINGH 78	SHWETA SINGH 79	SHWETA SINGH 80	SHWETA SINGH 81	SHWETA SINGH 82	SHWETA SINGH 83	SHWETA SINGH 84	SHWETA SINGH 85	SHWETA SINGH 86	SHWETA SINGH 87	SHWETA SINGH 88	SHWETA SINGH 89	SHWETA SINGH 90	SHWETA SINGH 91	SHWETA SINGH 92	SHWETA SINGH 93
GUJARAT JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS, 2019	DELHI JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS, 2019 (JAN.) - 27 Selections out of 32																																																																			
SANJEEV BHATTAR 1	SHRUTI SINGH 1	DEEPIKA SINGH 2	DEEPIKA SINGH 3	DEEPIKA SINGH 4	DEEPIKA SINGH 5	DEEPIKA SINGH 6	DEEPIKA SINGH 7	DEEPIKA SINGH 8	DEEPIKA SINGH 9	DEEPIKA SINGH 10	DEEPIKA SINGH 11	DEEPIKA SINGH 12	DEEPIKA SINGH 13	DEEPIKA SINGH 14	DEEPIKA SINGH 15	DEEPIKA SINGH 16	DEEPIKA SINGH 17	DEEPIKA SINGH 18	DEEPIKA SINGH 19	DEEPIKA SINGH 20	DEEPIKA SINGH 21	DEEPIKA SINGH 22	DEEPIKA SINGH 23	DEEPIKA SINGH 24	DEEPIKA SINGH 25	DEEPIKA SINGH 26	DEEPIKA SINGH 27																																									
ASSAM JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULT 2019	M.P. JUDICIAL SERVICES RESULTS, 2019 - 22 Selections.																																																																			
NADEEN RAHMAN 2	NADEEN RAHMAN 1	NADEEN RAHMAN 2	NADEEN RAHMAN 3	NADEEN RAHMAN 4	NADEEN RAHMAN 5	NADEEN RAHMAN 6	NADEEN RAHMAN 7	NADEEN RAHMAN 8	NADEEN RAHMAN 9	NADEEN RAHMAN 10	NADEEN RAHMAN 11	NADEEN RAHMAN 12	NADEEN RAHMAN 13	NADEEN RAHMAN 14	NADEEN RAHMAN 15	NADEEN RAHMAN 16	NADEEN RAHMAN 17	NADEEN RAHMAN 18	NADEEN RAHMAN 19	NADEEN RAHMAN 20	NADEEN RAHMAN 21	NADEEN RAHMAN 22																																														

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DELHI Timings

SUNDAY, JUNE 02
RISE 05:24 SET 19:15
RISE 04:35 SET 18:11

MONDAY, JUNE 03
RISE 05:24 SET 19:15
RISE 05:18 SET 19:13

TUESDAY, JUNE 04
RISE 05:24 SET 19:16
RISE 06:06 SET 20:16

Delhi Weather max min

Delhi City 43 28
Safdarjang 43 28
Palam 46 30

Delhi Palam Today
44°C Rise in pollution level. Dry and hot weather to continue. Heat wave will uneasy. Afternoon will uneasy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
44°C Heat wave to continue with dry and hot weather. Moderate to poor pollution level will affect.

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Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	264	Gurugram	281
Ghaziabad	301	Faridabad	264
Noida	262	Greater Noida	210

Good 0-50 Satisfactory 51-100 Moderate 101-200
Poor 201-300 Very poor 301-400 Severe >401

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

IIT-D sets up centre for research on e-vehicles

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Setting its eyes on being a global pioneer in the field of research and services in electric vehicles and energy storage and tribology, the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi on Friday inaugurated a Centre for Automotive Research and Tribology (CART).

IIT-D director V. Ramgopal Rao said the centre will play an important role as electric vehicles are going to become a mainstream mode of transport not just in India but worldwide in the next five-seven years.

"IIT-Delhi is in the process of building a world-class centre in this important area, which will not only help the country's transition to more environmentally-friendly transport options but also will play a role at the global level by contributing to these technologies," Mr. Rao said.

The institute said CART envisages strong networking and collaboration among various industries, research labs and universities in India and abroad to carry out research in the area of automotive research and tribology along with offering postgraduate programmes.

"A unique mandate given to CART at the time of its establishment is that one third of its faculty would be adjunct faculty with current industry affiliation. This is likely to give a different flavour to the PG programmes that would be offered by the centre," the institute said.

CART's research areas include design, development and analysis of electric vehicle motors and drives, optimal sizing and design of battery packs, power train and chargers for on-board electric vehicles and development of smart and secure infrastructure for charging station and battery health monitoring among other fields.

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Ambarish Dave will recite selected verses from 'Sri Bhagavad Gita' at Ramana Kendra, Lodhi Road, 5 p.m.

Exhibition: "Energy that inspires her soul" a solo painting show by Sneha Agarwal at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Human/Nature" a solo show of photographs by Juhi Saklani, focusing on the loss of Delhi's trees for 'redevelopment' at DFC Gallery, 78, Janpath, 11:30 a.m. - 11 p.m.

Exhibition: A solo show of artworks by T.K Hareendran at Art Konsult, 3, ground floor, Puzh Khas Village, 10:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@thehindu.co.in)



(Far left) Electric cables hanging precariously at one of the coaching centres; and a view of the coaching institutes in Mukherjee Nagar. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Surat fire tragedy prompts a relook in Delhi

Civic bodies, fire service department and Delhi Police team up to ensure coaching centres adhere to fire safety norms

SAURABH TRIVEDI
SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

The Surat fire tragedy last week that snuffed out 22 lives has prompted a fire safety push at coaching centres in the Capital. Even as the authorities in Surat shift the blame on each other, officials in Delhi have launched a drive to inspect and guarantee safety aspects in the coaching centres.

In its mission to ensure safety of students, the civic bodies have teamed up with the Delhi Fire Service and Delhi Police. While the law enforcement agencies are

meeting the owners of coaching centres and making them aware of the need to keep fire safety equipment at the ready, the civic officials have started surveying coaching centres under its jurisdiction.

Safety measures

Chief Fire Officer Atul Garg said the DFS has initiated a drive to identify those flouting fire safety norms. "Four teams have been formed for inspection of coaching centres in Karol Bagh, Mukherjee Nagar, Laxmi Nagar and Lado Sarai and their adjoining areas. The teams will submit their report at

the earliest," said Mr. Garg.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, a senior police officer said all 15 district DCPs have been instructed to visit coaching centres and direct them to procure fire safety equipment.

"We have made a list of coaching centres and held meetings with owners over fire safety. They have assured us of arranging fire safety equipment within a week. Beat constables have been instructed to visit the coaching centres after a week to verify the status," a DCP said.

The civic bodies have also undertaken different mea-

sures to check the safety of buildings. The East Delhi Municipal Corporation had started a survey of coaching institutes in its jurisdiction prior to the start of Lok Sabha elections based on an NHRC complaint regarding the safety of such centres, a senior official said. But the survey was conducted only in the Shahdara South zone, primarily in Laxmi Nagar. It is unclear whether the corporation plans to conduct more surveys.

The inspections dealt with checking building by-laws, whether they possess or had applied for appropriate trade licences and registrations. The official claimed that out of 37 institutions inspected in Laxmi Nagar, only 10 were found to have proper registration. The 27 violating institutions had applied for licences last week, the official added.

In the North corporation, following the fire at Hotel Arpit Palace in February which led to the death of 17 people, a committee to survey all buildings has been

Safety first

Delhi Fire Service survey teams: 4

UNDER SURVEY: coaching centres, PGs, hostels, lodges



formed. Zonal officers have been asked to carry out a survey of buildings, including whether they are following building by-laws and other minor issues such as wiring, the Commissioner said. Besides this, the North body started a fire assessment drive of buildings in its jurisdiction on May 20, four days prior to the Surat tragedy.

In the South Delhi corporation, the Mayor has instructed the authorities to find out how many institutions require No Objection Certificate. The South body will undertake a survey, a spokesperson said.

Authorities also said that they were looking forward to a software-based joint inspection and approval process to be finalised by the MHA which, according to sources, is currently in its advanced stage of development.

The process, at its core, has a unified software - similar to the ease of doing business single portal - but in this case for construction

permits.

The initiative will bring the police, fire department and civic bodies on one single portal to give clearance based on an online application and ensure that applicants do not have to approach more than one office to procure permits. Each department will simultaneously conduct its document processing followed by a joint inspection of the premises.

Spot check

When *The Hindu* visited one of these coaching centres preparing students for Chartered Accountant examination in Laxmi Nagar, it was in a pathetic state with not enough space for students to sit. The building was in a narrow lane and the stairs were crammed for even three students to climb at a time.

"We have no other choice. Only two students can sit on a bench but the coaching owners squeeze in three. All three floors of the building have coaching

classes and at a time around 400 students are in the building. We pay hefty fees and risk our lives for a better future," said Anuradha, a student.

However, a supervisor at a coaching centre in Laxmi Nagar said that after the Surat tragedy, the parents who are visiting coaching centre to enrol their children have a separate query over fire safety. "We are trying to convince them and also getting fire safety equipment installed at the earliest to secure more admissions during the season," said the supervisor.

Meanwhile, a fire officer said that most of the coaching centres do not fall under the category that required No Objection Certificate from the fire department. It is a commercial activity and it should be taken care by civic agencies who issue licence to these coaching centres for operation. The problem is that many of these coaching centres are run illegally in either a basement or a small room.

"Every high-rise taller than 15 metres must have an NOC from fire department but most of the coaching classes, hostels, and PG accommodations do not fall under the category," said the officer.

However, students enrolled in coaching classes feel helpless and are not interested in doing activism as it might snap their dreams. "If we report fire safety issues at coaching centres, the authorities will shut the centres and we have to bear the brunt. The classes span from three to six months and no one wants to rake up the issue as we have paid the fee in advance," said Kushal Gupta, a student at a coaching centre in Laxmi Nagar.

No respite as temperature crosses 46-degree mark in the Capital

Heatwave conditions to persist for another week

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The temperature crossed the 46-degree mark in parts of the Capital here on Saturday resulting in the city and parts of the national capital region (NCR) reeling under blistering heat for most part of the day. On Friday, the mercury hit the 47-degree mark, the season's highest so far, in the diplomatic enclave of Chanakypuri

The Safdarjung observatory, which provides official figures for Delhi, recorded a high of 43.5 degrees Celsius, three notches more than the normal, and a low of 27.6 degrees Celsius. Humidity levels oscillated between 30% and 56%. Weather stations at Palam, Ayanagar and Jafarpur recorded maximum temperature at 46.1, 46 and 45.7 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Mahesh Palawat of the SkyMet Weather said heatwave conditions will persist in the national capital for another week and the maximum temperature will hover



Boys take a dip in the Yamuna on a hot and humid day at Wazirabad in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

around 46 degrees Celsius. Due to the easterly winds blowing in most parts of Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, maximum temperatures may drop by one to two degree Celsius in the Delhi-NCR region, while the night temperature may increase by a few degrees, he said.

Air quality remains poor

Government-run System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) said due to intensified lifting of dust because of the

high temperature, overall air quality in the city remained in the poor category, with PM10 being the major pollutant.

In large areas, a heatwave is declared when the mercury touches the 45-degree mark for two consecutive days and a severe heatwave is when the temperature soars to 47 degree Celsius for two days on the trot. In small areas, like the Capital, a heatwave is declared if the maximum temperature is recorded at 45 degrees Celsius.

St. Stephen's row: three teachers move HC

Challenge Supreme Council decision

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three teachers of the St. Stephen's College have approached the Delhi High Court against the inclusion of a member of the institution's Supreme Council in the interview panel for the selection of Christian students.

The teachers of the St. Stephen's College governing body - N.P. Ashley, Abhishhek Singh and Nandita Narain - challenged the decision taken by the St. Stephen's Supreme Council at its meeting on March 12, 2019, according to a statement from Rajib Ray, president, and Vivek Chaudhary, secretary of Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA).

The decision was to the effect that an additional Christian member nominated by the Supreme Council from the Supreme Council or governing body would be a part of the interview panel in respect of admission of Christian students in all subjects.

"The St. Stephen's teachers were represented by Sunil Mathews, Sabah Iqbal Siddiqui and Babita who argued that the decision of the Supreme Council went against the Constitution of St. Stephen's College which expressly prohibited interference of the Supreme Council in administration of the college," the statement from the three teachers said.

Pointed out SC remark

According to the statement, the counsel also pointed out the observation of the Supreme Court in the St. Stephen's case of 1992. The court had also approved of the selection mode which at that time only had the principal and teachers of the department concerned conducting the interviews for admission of students.

Dr. Rasal Singh, a member of the Academic Council said, "We are in complete support of the struggle of colleagues from St Stephen's College to protect the academic integrity of the admissions process."

NMRC to increase frequency of trains on Aqua Line

Trains will run at a frequency of 7.30 minutes during peak hours on weekdays from June 3

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

In a bid to improve connectivity, the Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) is set to increase the frequency of metro trains on the Aqua Line from June 3.

From Monday, trains run at a frequency of 7.30 minutes during peak hours on weekdays and during non-rush hours, the frequency will be 10 minutes, the NMRC announced on Saturday.

Currently, trains ply at an interval of 10 minutes during

Enhancing connectivity

Current frequency (Monday-Friday)	New frequency (Monday-Friday)
Peak hours 10 minutes	Peak hours 7.30 minutes
Non-peak hours 15 minutes	Non-peak hours 10 minutes

(Peak hours: 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.) (Ridership data for period from January 26 to May 28)

Total ridership **16,38,052**
Average daily ridership **13,317**

lometre long Aqua Line that runs between Noida and Greater Noida has seen a daily average ridership of 13,317 as on May 28.

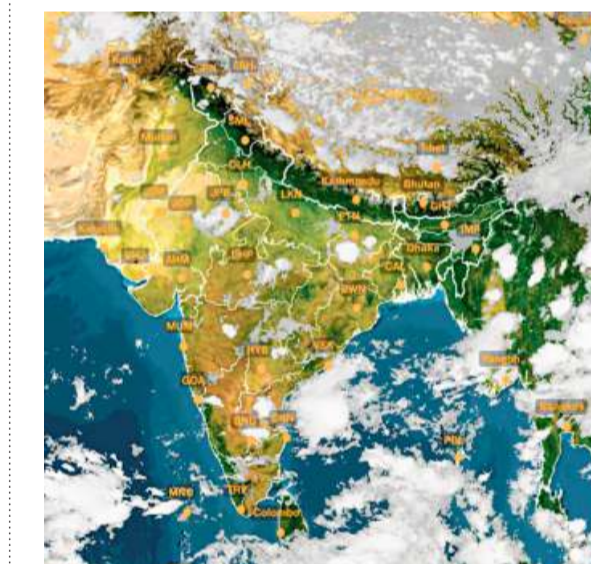
Low frequency of trains on the line has been a complaint among commuters apart from the fact that the line is not directly connected to the Delhi Metro's Blue Line. Currently, the NMRC has a dedicated pathway that connects the Sector 51 station on the Aqua Line and Sector 52 station on the Blue Line.

Commuter Nitin Singh, a resident of Pari Chowk said, "The frequency is not only low but also unpredictable and the timing of the last train, which is 10 p.m., is a big hassle for commuters."

Dr. Balveer Bhati, a Greater Noida resident said, "The section supposed to display the ETA of the train at the Knowledge Park II station is always blank. No one knows when the train will arrive. The weather and the heat wave add to commuters' frustration."

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18:00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, south interior Karnataka, Rayalaseema, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Heat wave conditions likely at isolated pockets over Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, central Maharashtra and Jharkhand

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...	32.3	21.6	Kozhikode	0.2	34.4	25.2
Ahmedabad	...	44.2	29.1	Kurnool	1	39.1	28.7
Alizaw	26	25.6	18.2	Lucknow	...	40.5	28.2
Allahabad	...	44.5	30.0	Madurai	17.3	39.8	26.6
Bengaluru	2.4	33.0	21.0	Mangaluru	3.2	34.7	25.0
Bhopal	...	44.1	29.2	Mumbai	...	35.1	28.0
Bhubaneswar	13.2	35.6	22.9	Mysuru	...	32.7	20.6
Chandigarh	...	42.4	27.4	New Delhi	...	43.5	27.6
Chennai	...	40.6	30.4	Patna	...	38.6	26.2
Coimbatore	...	36.0	24.4	Port Blair	1.5	30.8	24.9
Dehradun	...	38.5	25.4	Puducherry	...	38.6	28.6
Gangtok	...	23.9	15.7	Pune	...	37.9	24.7
Goa	...	32.6	27.8	Raipur	...	40.5	31.1
Guwahati	...	33.9	23.4	Ranchi	...	40.2	24.6
Hubballi	...	35.0	24.0	Shillong	...	24.2	15.4
Hyderabad	...	35.3	27.1	Shimla	...	29.9	21.4
Imphal	7.2	27.8	19.0	Srinagar	...	30.1	12.7
Jaipur	...	45.0	31.7	Trivandrum	...	34.0	26.3
Kochi	1.8	32.4	25.6	Tiruchi	...	41.1	27.6
Kohima	...	32.7	16.4	Vijayawada	...	40.6	28.2
Kolkata	...	36.2	26.9	Visakhapatnam	...	34.0	29.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	90	64	93	...	...	...
Bengaluru	11	83	76	46	75	...
Chennai	14	17	52	122	...	...
Delhi	42	144	62	282	379	...
Hyderabad	3	37	19	78	107	...
Kolkata	3	32	12	72	101	...
Lucknow	6	35	52	202	...	...
Mumbai	20	18	78	21	46	...
Pune	45	21	31	61	60	...
Visakhapatnam	9	36	...	...	...	...

In observation made at 4:00 p.m., Loni Dehat, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 338 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Eloor, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 38

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

BJP MPs celebrate victory, drum up support for Assembly poll probables

Tiwari asks partymen to work towards dislodging 'anarchist Kejriwal government'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party MPs celebrated their recent victory in the Lok Sabha poll at thanksgiving public events, which were organised as part of a larger outreach strategy here on Saturday.

The events were held to keep up the momentum and drum up support for its MLA probables for the Delhi Assembly elections due in early 2020.

These were conducted as part of the party's attempt to bolster support beginning from the Parliamentary down to the booth level. Such events, meant to felicitate workers and party volunteers, were organised across the Capital on Saturday.

The party's State president and North East Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari and West Delhi MP Hans Raj Hans were part of two such events organised at Jai Garden and Alipur, which



BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi being felicitated by the workers in Nehru Park on Saturday. *SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

fall under the West and North East Delhi Lok Sabha segments respectively. New Delhi MP Meenakshi Lekhi and West Delhi MP Parvesh Verma participated in similar events organised at Chankyapuri and Rajouri Garden, which fall under their respective Parliamentary constituencies.

"By virtue of your hard labour, we have been able to win all the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi...Just like the

way in which we emerged victorious with positive thinking, the same way we have to work towards dislodging the anarchist Kejriwal government from Delhi," Mr. Tiwari said.

"Now, the time has come to free Delhi from the anarchism of the Kejriwal government and work with full energy in our areas," said Mr. Hans.

Acknowledging their "hard work" towards taking the "country in the right direction" Mr. Tiwari credited workers' contribution towards the formation of a government, which had started taking decisions "from the first day itself" and also respected the "spirit of 'Jai Jawan and Jai Kisan'."

'Love for Modi'
Even as both Mr. Hans and Mr. Tiwari attributed the formation of another Narendra Modi-led government to the

average Indian voters' "love" for him, both leaders also took the opportunity to pitch a 'Centre-Delhi partnership' in governance as the solution to the Capital's development woes. "Mr. Modi lives in the heart of the people and they have elected him again as the Prime Minister. I am very much influenced by your enthusiasm," Mr. Hans said.

"The people very well understand the falsehood of the Kejriwal government and we have to tell them that there is BJP Government at centre and if we form BJP government in Delhi," Mr. Tiwari added.

On the one hand, Mr. Hans added, there were those who were working with "nationalistic" fervour while on the other there were "people like Kejriwal" who supported those trying to "split the country." "The present government has ruined Delhi," he added.

Woman, live-in partner kill boy; arrested after body exhumed

They staged crime committed in April to look like natural death

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old woman and her live-in-partner in Dwarka's Bindapur allegedly killed the former's son as "he was a burden", the police said on Saturday.

Komal and her live-in-partner Ravikar, who committed the crime on April 23, were arrested on Friday, a senior officer said.

The police said Ravikar had told his neighbour that the Saksham died after falling off the staircase. "The neighbour received a call from his daughter-in-law that Komal's son has died. He went and asked Ravikar about the boy's death. Ravikar said the victim fell off the staircase three days ago after which he had taken him to a hospital. He was discharged but then suddenly died," the officer said.

Ravikar asked his neighbours to help him bury the

body after which a few of them went to Nigam Bodh ghat but were told that last rites of children were not allowed there, the police said.

They then went to Wazirabad around 1 a.m. where they were told that they can bury the body only after sunrise. Following this, the accused then completed the boy's last rites at 5 a.m. The police learnt about the incident from Komal's relative. "Komal had told her father, who lives in Bihar, that Saksham died in an accident. Her father then called the relative and they were discussing the matter when the latter suspected something amiss and called the police," the officer said.

Meanwhile, when the police tried to reach the couple, they were found missing. "Her father, relative and the neighbour were called for questioning," the

officer added.

The police then sought permission from the Magistrate to exhume the boy's body, which was done on May 2. The body was sent for post-mortem at Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital.

On Friday morning, Komal and Ravikar returned to their residence. The police had asked their neighbour to inform them about the couple's presence.

"I asked them again and again about the boy's death. Finally, Ravikar said he pushed the boy against the wall and strangled him. He did not want the boy as he was Komal's first husband's son and felt like him to be a burden," the neighbour told the police.

The couple was then arrested, the police said. Komal was married in 2013 but left her husband to live in with Ravikar in January 2018.

Railway coach attendant held for stealing over ₹1 lakh from passenger

Police yet to find evidence against him; released on bail

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

A 33-year-old railway coach attendant has been arrested for allegedly stealing cash and jewellery worth ₹1.48 lakh from a passenger on a Haridwar-Mumbai train, the police said.

Deepak Jagdish Puri was arrested by the Maharashtra police. However, the Delhi Police are yet to find any evidence against him.

Shankar Hiranand Bhatia (64) from Maharashtra's Thane allegedly told the police that he and his wife Neelam were on their way back from Haridwar to Mumbai via Delhi on May 24 when the incident happened.

"We were all sleeping when the Travelling Ticket

Examiner (TTE), carrying a bag, asked my wife if it belongs to her. "It was Neelam's bag. When she checked, she found ₹20,000, some jewelry and three mobile phones missing," Mr. Bhatia said.

The TTE said he found it lying outside the coach, the complainant added.

A Delhi Police officer said that the complainant told the TTE that he suspected involvement of a coach attendant. "The man said that the coach attendant was very friendly and kept asking them if they needed something like water. He suspected that when they went to sleep at 11 p.m., he took the bag, stole things from it and threw it. They nabbed the at-

tendant when the train reached Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station in Delhi," the officer said.

Following this, when they complainant reached Maharashtra, he approached Kalyan railway station police station. The Maharashtra Police arrested Puri from Uttar Pradesh on suspicion. "They sought transit remand on May 25 and brought him to Delhi," the officer said.

The accused was then produced before the court on May 28 and subsequently released on bail the next day. "No recovery has been made. He has no previous criminal records. Further investigation is under way," the officer said.

Make ends sweet



A man sells semiya — a traditional sweet — near Jama Masjid in Old Delhi. *REETI AGARWAL

Warehouse employee run over by truck; driver held

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 34-year-old worker at a warehouse in Dwarka was killed after a truck, from which he was unloading articles, allegedly ran him over on Friday evening, the police said. The accused driver, Santosh Yadav, has been arrested, they said.

The warehouse belonged to an online shopping outlet and the tempo had come there to deliver articles. Gajendra Singh was unloading

when the driver reversed the tempo, not realising that the victim was standing at the back. "The driver tried to help the victim but he had been severely injured. Gajendra was rushed to a hospital nearby where he was declared dead," the officer said.

Case registered

A case has been registered by the police on charges of rash driving and causing death due to negligence.

Fire at NDMC building in CP

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Fire broke out on the second floor of the NDMC building in Connaught Place on Saturday evening.

No casualties

No injury or casualty was reported, a fire official said. The fire department said they received a call about the blaze at 6.36

p.m. Following this, five fire tenders were rushed to the spot. "The fire was brought under control by 7.15 p.m. It occurred inside a kitchen between the rooms of joint director of Public Grievances Monitoring System and the director of municipal housing," the officer said, adding that no damage was done to any document.

Double murder case: teenager's selfie with victim offers cops clues

Juvenile tried to assault woman before murder: police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two days after a woman and her son were found murdered at their residence in Central Delhi's Patel Nagar, a selfie clicked by her 17-year-old cousin led to his apprehension, the police said on Saturday.

DCP (Central) Mandeep Singh Randhawa said the accused tried to sexually assault the 26-year-old woman before the murder. He killed her 4-year-old son as he said he would inform his father about the incident. He returned later faking ignorance, Mr. Randhawa said.

On Thursday, the police said they received a call regarding the two murders. On reaching the spot, they found the woman lying dead with throat slit. They were told that the boy died by hanging. A bloodstained knife was also recovered from the spot, they said.

We found some injuries like teeth bite, scratch marks on his [accused] body

MANDEEP SINGH RANDHAWA
DCP (Central)

The landlord's son told investigators that the door of the victims' house on the top floor was bolted from outside. The woman lived there with her son, husband, brother-in-law and the accused. The murders were discovered by the brother-in-law and the accused. They then informed the police.

During investigation, the police suspected the role of a family member and started questioning them. "It was revealed that the cousin was the last present in the room till the afternoon. We found some minor injuries like teeth bite, scratch mark on face, neck, and back, on his body," Mr. Randhawa said.

His phone was then examined, which showed a selfie taken by him with the woman just before the incident. His bloodstained locket was also found. "During interrogation, he confessed to the murders," the officer said.

He allegedly told the police that he tried to sexually assault the woman and got injured when she tried to resist. "He then hit her with a stone, leaving her unconscious. Meanwhile, the minor woke up and told the accused that he would tell his father," Mr. Randhawa said.

The accused then strangled the child and tried to hang him. However, the woman gained consciousness and tried to stop the juvenile when he slit her throat with a knife. "He also managed to hang the child before he left the house," the officer added.

The juvenile, a vegetable seller, was staying with the family for the past 20 days.

Juvenile's appeal in murder case dismissed

After he did not surrender as told by JJB

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

Pulling up a juvenile-in-conflict with law (JCL) for not surrendering even after expiry of the deadline for filing an appeal in a murder case, a court here has upheld his conviction and sent him to a Special Home for two years by a Juvenile Justice Board (JJB).

"Perusal of the record reveals that vide order dated 25.09.2018, the JJB suspended the sentence awarded to JCL for 30 days from that day or till filing of the appeal whichever was earlier. JCL preferred the present appeal on 22.12.2018. However, till that day, JCL had not surrendered as directed by JJB. The said conduct of JCL shows his malafide," Additional Sessions Pankaj Gupta said dismissing his appeal.

The JCL had stabbed the victim to death in a market

over some dispute. There were two other accused in the case. As they were adult, their cases were sent to a regular court. The brother-in-law of the accused was the complainant and eyewitness in the case.

The JCL had challenged his conviction by questioning the neutrality of the complainant, submitting that he was an interested witness.

Weapon not recovered
He further submitted that the weapon of offence was not recovered from his possession. But the Judge dismissed his arguments.

"In view of the foregoing discussions, I do not find any infirmity in the judgment dated 24.08.2018 and dispositional order dated 25.09.2018 passed by the Juvenile Justice Board-I. Therefore, the appeal stands dismissed," Mr. Gupta said.

Court acquits man in dowry death case

'She was having psychiatric ailments, which ultimately culminated in her death'

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

Attributing unnatural death of a woman to psychiatric ailments, a Delhi court has acquitted her husband in a 2013 dowry death case.

"It appears that she was having psychiatric ailments running for almost nine years, which ultimately culminated in her death by suicide," Additional Sessions Judge Sanjeev Aggarwal said.

There were two key witnesses on the basis of which the prosecution tried to

prove the charges against the accused — victim's father and her brother. As the victim's father died during the trial, the court did not take his testimony into account while deciding the case. It also rejected her brother's evidence as it found contradictions between his evidence and cross-examination.

"Two statements made by him [victim's brother], one in the examination-in-chief and the other in the cross-examination are contradictory versions and cannot stand

together. If he had not met the accused prior to her death, then how and under what circumstances he had demanded cash of ₹1 lakh from him and construction of room on the floor of their house is not clear, and it appears to be a false statement, which does not inspire confidence," the Judge said.

The prosecution also failed to prove that the victim was subjected to cruelty soon before she died by hanging.

"Since the prosecution

has failed to prove the last ingredient [cruelty to the victim soon before she died by hanging] to make out a case under 498-A/304-B IPC, therefore, the stage for invoking the presumption under Section 113-B of Evidence Act has not reached, as the said presumption would only come into play once the prosecution has been able to prove all the ingredients necessary to make out a case under 498-A/304-B IPC, which it has miserably failed to prove," Mr. Aggarwal said.

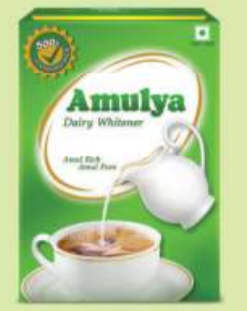
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- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing



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Kejriwal orders crackdown on private tankers in Deoli

Vows to give residents drinking water at homes within 4 months

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday directed Delhi Jal Board officials to find private tankers, "file FIR against them and put them behind the bars" in south Delhi's Deoli.

He ordered the crackdown after he spoke to the residents during a padyatra and found that many were forced to buy water from private tankers due to a major crisis in the area.

"I have learnt that people are forced at times to buy water from private tankers. I have given strict orders to the Delhi Jal Board officials that now onwards, no one will have to pay for water tankers. DJB will send as many tankers as required. These tankers will give you



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal interacts with Deoli residents on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

water for free," Mr. Kejriwal said.

During summer, Delhi faces a water shortage with a demand of 1,120 Million Gallons Per Day (MGD) and the average water production touching 900 MGD, which at times peaks to 935 MGD.

Mr. Kejriwal also found

two private borewells in the area and ordered the DJB to takeover them. He also asked the officials to file FIR against theft of water by such people.

The Chief Minister also promised that people in the area will get drinking water in their pipes within four

months. "Very soon you will get clean drinking water in your taps. Orders have been passed to lay water pipelines in the area. The work will start in two months and completed in four months," he told the residents.

He was accompanied by local MLA and senior officials of the DJB.

'DJB tankers take money'
Talking to residents, he said, "Many have complained that in some cases, the DJB tankers are also taking money. I have come here to solve these issues."

Mr. Kejriwal also told the residents that the government has ordered 60 new borewells. "These bores will be done on a priority basis. These will cut down the problem of water," he said.

School told to pay ₹75,000 for denying student admit card

Complaint says student scored less due to harassment

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has directed the Bal Mandir Senior Secondary School to compensate a former student by paying ₹75,000 for harassment after the school denied him admit card for his board exams.

The directions came when the consumer panel was hearing an appeal moved by the city school against the order passed by the State Commission here.

"The State Commission has rightly awarded compensation of ₹75,000 for mental agony and harassment caused to the student," the apex consumer forum observed.

However, it set aside the lower forum's directions

pertaining to derecognition of the school.

"Initiation of proceedings for cancellation or affiliation of the school in view of the fact that several students studying in the school would suffer irreparable loss and injury in case of derecognition of the school and in the larger interest of other students studying in the school, this direction of the State Commission is set aside," the NCDRC said.

In the complaint, it was alleged that the school initially refused to provide the admit card for the CBSE examinations. The consumer panel was informed that it was only after proceedings in a civil court that the complainant received his admit card.

"Due to the late issuance

of admit card, the student was upset and harassed.

Due to this, he scored less marks than expected and therefore could not get admitted in a good college," read the complaint.

Attendance shortage

The school had, however, contended that the admit card was refused due to shortage of attendance.

However, the NCDRC held, "The State Commission rightly observed that despite submission of medical certificate, the school had not taken any action to obtain condonation of shortage of attendance from CBSE...this clearly shows negligence and deficiency in service on the part of the school keeping the future of students at stake."

Lok Sabha candidates skip meet to review Congress poll debacle

Probe panel meeting saw only a few leaders in attendance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

None of the Congress' seven Lok Sabha election candidates from the national capital attended the Saturday meeting of a party committee on examining the poll debacle in Delhi.

The meeting of the Delhi Congress' probe committee was attended by some leaders, including two district presidents of the New Delhi parliamentary constituency, but no MP candidate from the party was available as many of them are out of the city, committee member Yogand Shastri said.

The panel, which was formed by the party's Delhi

president Sheila Dikshit last Monday to look into the reasons behind its poor performance in the general election, had met last week. The five-member committee will submit its report to Ms. Dikshit in 10 days.

Besides Ms. Dikshit, who contested from North East Delhi, Rajesh Lilothia and Vijender Singh, Congress candidates from North West Delhi and South Delhi, respectively, have appeared before the committee so far.

All the seven Congress candidates, including Ms. Dikshit lost the Lok Sabha polls, with huge margins to their BJP rivals.

"The party leaders and

workers have expressed the view that the Congress can spring up a surprise in the Assembly polls in Delhi, provided everyone unites to face the challenge," Mr. Shastri said.

Questioned authority

A section of Congress leaders, who have questioned the authority of the probe committee, have avoided appearing before it. The group of such leaders maintained that no such committee can be formed without the consent of the AICC in-charge of Delhi unit P.C. Chacko. He has denied having any information about the committee, they claimed.

Insurance firm told to compensate over ₹60K

For 'unjustified' repudiation of mediclaim policy, notes consumer forum

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A district consumer disputes redressal forum here has directed the United India Insurance Company to compensate a policy holder by paying over ₹60,000 for "unjustified" repudiation of a mediclaim policy.

The directions came when the consumer panel was hearing a complaint moved by city resident Paramjit Singh Belvi, who alleged that despite holding a valid mediclaim policy, the claim, meant for his wife's treatment was rejected by the insurance firm on the grounds of a "pre-existing disease."

There is no mention in the policy as to the applicability of the relevant clause barring claim based on pre-existing disease

DISTRICT CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL FORUM

Dismissing contentions put forth by the insurance firm, pertaining to clauses mentioned in the policy, the consumer panel observed, "We have read the contents of the policy with great circumspection. There is no mention in the policy as to the applicability of the relevant clause

barring claim based on pre-existing disease."

The consumer disputes redressal forum further observed, "Not only this, the terms and conditions of the policy were never supplied to the complainant. Since the insurance contract is in good faith, both parties have to be honest to each other. The insured should disclose the true state of his health and the insurer should apprise the insured of all the terms and conditions, which has not been done in the present case."

Holding the insurance firm deficient in services, the bench additionally observed that the firm had

failed to provide evidence of the "pre-existing disease."

"Where the plea of pre-existing disease is taken up for repudiation of claim, the firm should lead medical evidence or examine the doctor who treated the insured. The firm has not led any such evidence," the panel observed.

For harassment

Directing compensation of over ₹50,000, the consumer panel awarded an additional amount of ₹10,000 to the complainant for harassment and mental agony caused to the latter.

Issue guidelines for operation of STPs: NGT

Action against release of harmful gases from plant sought

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea seeking remedial action against the release of hazardous gases from sewage treatment plants near Mayur Vihar, the National Green Tribunal has directed the Delhi Jal Board to carry out recommendations put forth by an NGT-appointed committee.

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel also directed the Central Public Health Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to issue

guidelines on the operation and maintenance of STPs.

"The Central Pollution Control Board [CPCB] may bring out norms with reference to odour control of STPs to avoid public nuisance. These may be brought out in three months, if not brought out so far," the Bench said.

In a report furnished by a joint committee comprising representatives from the Delhi Jal Board and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) several deficiencies were pointed out and recommendations made. "To minimise the emissions from the opera-

tional STPs, the DJB should ensure that all the components of STPs are in operational condition so that chances of anaerobic process are minimal. The DJB should do more plantation towards the residential areas in consultation with specialised government institutions..." the report had said.

Directing the DJB to ensure compliance the Bench added, "Let the recommendations be carried out by the DJB and further report furnished to the DPCC. The DPCC may take appropriate action as may be found necessary."

4 held after mob thrashes 2 men over theft suspicion

Video doing the rounds on social media

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NOIDA

Four men, who were part of a crowd that thrashed two persons here after tying them to a pole on suspicion of stealing batteries from autorickshaws, have been arrested, the police said on Saturday.

The accused - Mohd Saleem (60), Ajay (36), Jibraail (25) and Akhil Biswas alias Govind (28) - were arrested on Friday night, hours after a video surfaced on social media purportedly showing the incident, they said.

From auto stand

"A case was registered against unidentified persons at Sector 20 police station. Those arrested were identified on the basis of their appearance in the videos. They were held from the local auto stand," said Circle Officer (Noida 1st) Kaustubh.

On May 30, the two victims, whose identity still remains unconfirmed, were thrashed by a crowd, including autorickshaw drivers in Sector 26 after locals suspected them to be auto battery thieves.

Case registered

The purported video of the incident got widely circulated on social media by next day, prompting police to file a first information report under the Indian Penal Code sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 342 (wrongful confinement).

'Beat them up'

"The men, allegedly intoxicated, were found sitting in a parked autorickshaw with wrench in their hands and then held by the crowd which tied them to a pole with a rope and beat them up in scorching sunlight," an officer said.

Make policy to curb illegal groundwater extraction: NGT

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea seeking remedial action against illegal extraction of groundwater by private water tankers, the National Green Tribunal has directed the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to formulate a policy against illegal withdrawal of groundwater.

Taking note of a report furnished by the DJB, a Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed authorities to take action against those involved.

"We find that illegal installation of tube well being an offence under the Environment [Protection] Act, 1986, the DJB in coordination with the DPCC must initiate prosecution, apart from recovering compensation for the damages caused," the Bench said.



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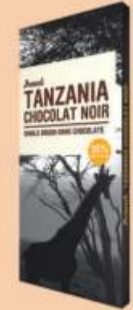
- Verify ownership of plot from land owning individual or agency (like DDA, L&DO, HUDA, NOIDA, GDA etc.)
- Visit project site/land to know the real status of construction.
- Examine title documents and its chain, Builder Buyer Agreement, Sale Deed, GPAs, SPAs, Will etc.
- Consult a legal expert before signing. Don't rely upon unregistered/pre-signed documents.
- Check and verify the license/approved layout or site plan/map as well as building plan and other clearances from concerned civic agencies.

- Check status of land regarding any acquisition proceeding from Land Acquisition Collector (LAC), mortgage from Central Registry of CERSAI Act or Civil/Criminal litigations.
- Purchase only through registered sale deed with preference of thumb/finger impressions over signatures.
- Always make payment through Cheques/ DDs/RTGS and other Banking instruments in owner's name.
- Take owner's signatures/thumb impression for payment along with original/chain of documents.
- Take physical possession after finalization of payments and execution of documents.

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Churu temperature soars to 50.8°C

No respite soon from heatwave conditions in Rajasthan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR

Rajasthan reeled under intense heat on Saturday with Churu sizzling at 50.8 degrees Celsius, nine degrees above normal.

Sri Ganganagar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Kota recorded maximum temperatures of 49 degrees Celsius, 47.9 degrees Celsius, 47.2 degrees Celsius and 46 degrees Celsius respectively, the Meteorological Department said.

Jodhpur, Barmer and Jaipur registered day temperatures at 45.6 degrees Celsius, 44.5 degrees Celsius, and 45.2 degrees Celsius respectively, it said.

Weather conditions would remain the same for the next two days.

Unidentified gunmen shoot at SP leader in Greater Noida

Preliminary probe does not confirm a case of targeted firing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

A Samajwadi Party leader, Brijpal Rathi, was shot at by unidentified men in Greater Noida on Friday night, the police said on Saturday.



Brijpal Rathi.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The incident comes less than 12 hours after a local party unit chief was gunned down in Dadri.

According to local sources, Mr. Rathi, a party secretary of Gautam Buddha Nagar unit, was driving home late on Friday when car-borne unidentified gunmen fired at him near Tilapta Chowk in Surajpur. A bullet hit his right hand. He was taken to a local hospital. There were two more persons with him in the car at the time of the incident.

Surajpur SHO Munish

out of danger. No complaint has been lodged by Mr. Rathi. An FIR has been filed in the clash between two groups."

Enmity angle ruled out
Family members maintained that Mr. Rathi did not have enmity with anybody and also ruled out robbery as the reason behind the incident.

Official sources, requesting anonymity, claimed that it appears to be a "self-hatched" episode by Mr. Rathi to get police security again.

Local Samajwadi Party office-bearers will be meeting Gautam Buddha Nagar police chief Vaibhav Krishna to take up the matter with him. (With inputs from PTI)

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Our pillar of Strength."
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Alfred & Sunita,
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Family & Friends
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Kasimedu Cemetery.

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2nd Anniversary

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*Bureau Chief UN, Bhuvanewar
*Special Correspondent, UN, New Delhi
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GOOD IYER Family living in Coimbatore seeks alliance for their grandson. Good Iyer family having an educated marriageable girl, boy age 27/180 has done Hotel Management & Catering Course presently working in a hospital as PRO with good bright future prospectus. Ct: 0422-2976502/8870005240.

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Naidu 37 / 187 Rohini fair BE Nationalised Bank seeks graduate employed Bride. SNB. Contact: 06381905749.

TAMIL

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IN BRIEF



Narendra Modi to visit Guruvayur on June 8

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Sri Krishna temple, Guruvayur, on June 8. Mr. Modi, who is expected to reach the temple at 12 noon, will spend two hours there. Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal will accompany him. Mr. Modi, who will reach the Sri Krishna College ground in a helicopter from the Kochi airport, will reach Guruvayur by car. This is the first time Mr. Modi is visiting Guruvayur as Prime Minister.

Man held on charge of sexual abuse of women

The Kottayam district police have arrested a 25-year-old man, who allegedly abused over 60 women and blackmailed them using their photographs, some of them morphed, in compromising positions. The arrested was identified as Pradeesh Kumar, alias Hari, a native of Aareparambu. A scientific examination of his laptop revealed that he had approached several women through social media, got into affairs with them, and abused them.

Three drown in Telangana reservoir

A 32-year-old man and his two sisters-in-law drowned in the Bommakur reservoir in Jangaon district on Saturday. The police identified the victims as Lakavath Sangeetha, 19, her sister Lakavath Sumalatha, 20, and their brother-in-law Avinash. Avinash and wife Bhargavi along with her two sisters went to the reservoir for a picnic. While Bhargavi stayed on the shore, the other three entered the water. They drowned as they strayed into deep waters.

Jagan sets in motion plan to implement prohibition in A.P.

State officials told to crack the whip on 'belt shops' doing roaring illegal business

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Taking a step towards implementing prohibition, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Saturday asked officials to draw up a roadmap for its phased introduction. He asked them to crack the whip on 'belt shops' (illegal extension of a licensed liquor outlet).

The socio-economic impact of liquor was ignored because it was treated as a mere source of revenue, he observed.

Awareness programmes

In his first departmental review on Commercial Taxes, Prohibition and Excise and Registration and Stamps, at his residence at Tadepalli in Guntur district, Mr. Reddy stressed the need to curb the menace of belt shops. If necessary, the government should consider running liquor shops on its own, he said. Mr. Reddy wanted the



Telangana CM K. Chandrashekar Rao and Andhra Pradesh CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy meeting Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan at Raj Bhavan on Saturday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

best practices followed in other States to be studied for eradicating the social evil, and ordered that the licences of authorised dealers supplying liquor to the belt shops be cancelled. He said awareness and rehabilitation programmes should be conducted to wean the poor people away from liquor.

Imposition of prohibition is one of the 'Navaratnalu' promises of the YSRCP election manifesto.

It is targeted to be

achieved in three phases by 2024. Mr. Reddy had vowed that he would not seek votes if he failed to deliver the promise by that time.

Fiscal discipline

On other fiscal matters, the Chief Minister took a serious view of the alleged diversion of funds garnered with State guarantees during the TDP regime, and warned that violation of financial discipline would be dealt with sternly. He instructed the officials to

make a strong case before the 15th Finance Commission for the Special Category Status (SCS) by preparing a comprehensive report on the sagging finances.

"The dire straits in which the State finances are mired should be explained to the 15th Finance Commission to impress upon it the need to confer SCS on the State, which was ruled out by the Modi government." He said SCS, if given, would help tide over the financial crisis.

Andhra Pradesh govt. may restore 'general consent' to CBI

TDP government had withdrawn the consent in 2018

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government headed by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is reportedly contemplating restoring the general consent to enable the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to exercise its powers and jurisdiction in the State.

Sources in the Chief Minister's Office indicated that it was likely to be a priority item on the agenda of the

upcoming Cabinet meeting. A Government Order (G.O.) to that effect might be issued in due course.

'Misusing powers'

It may be recalled that the Telugu Desam Party government had withdrawn the general consent to the CBI in late 2018, accusing it of misusing its powers and citing the corruption charges which brought it disrepute. Former Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had, at that time, defended his decision, saying it was intended to protect the State's autonomy and the Anti-Corruption Bureau was doing a better job.

He claimed that many States agreed with his view. The Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal government subsequently withdrew consent (to the CBI) that was accorded by the then Left Front government in 1989.

CBI searches TDP leader's house, offices

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Teams of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted searches on the residence at Srinagar Colony and two offices of former Union Minister and TDP leader Y.S. Chowdary at Jubilee Hills and Punjagutta in Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and other places on Saturday for gathering evidence related to a massive bank loan default. The CBI officers have reportedly seized some documents and computer hard disks.

Congress has a tough task to avert rebellion in Karnataka

Inducting Independents into Cabinet may not end troubles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Despite Karnataka BJP president B.S. Yeddyurappa claiming that the party central leadership has instructed him not to get involved in any plans to destabilise the coalition government headed by Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, the Congress has a tough task at hand of keeping its flock together, given that there are many groupings and Ministerial aspirants.

Legislators continue to make adverse comments against the party. In the latest case, former Minister and senior MLA R. Roshan Baig's tweet appreciating the new entrants in the Narendra Modi government has caused some embarrassment to the party.

Mr. Baig was among the few legislators who had skipped the Congress legislature party (CLP) meeting on Wednesday. A group led by former Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi also continues to pose a threat to the Congress and the government.

At the CLP meeting, sources said, some legislators questioned the advan-



Many in Congress believe that induction of Independent MLAs R. Shankar, left, and H. Nagesh will only benefit the JD(S).

tage the Congress had in being a part of the Kumaraswamy government.

There is a view in the party that the representation from Karnataka in the Lok Sabha has declined from nine in 2014 to one in 2019 owing to the alliance with the JD(S).

Expansion in first week?

AICC president Rahul Gandhi has reportedly told Congress and JD(S) leaders to only expand the Cabinet and not embark on a reshuffle. The Cabinet is likely to be expanded in the first week of this month. Sources, however, said the proposed expansion might only fuel dissident activities in the

Congress in the coming days. With too many senior legislators aspiring to become Ministers, induction of Independents would not serve the purpose, sources said.

Only three Cabinet berths are vacant now. Induction of two Independents — R. Shankar (Ranebennur) and H. Nagesh (Mulbagal) — would only ensure the stability of the government and benefit the JD(S) and Mr. Kumaraswamy, many in Congress believe.

Meanwhile, Mr. Kumaraswamy and Congress leader Siddaramaiah met on Saturday and held discussions on the proposed induction of the two Independent MLAs.

Karnataka government seeks divine intervention to bring rain

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

As Karnataka faces severe water scarcity, the State government seems to be hoping for a divine intervention to bring rain. The Revenue Department, which administers over 35,000 temples in the State, has asked all shrines under it to conduct special pujas and rituals to woo Lord Varuna, the rain

god, on June 6. The government circular has asked all the Muzrai Department temples to conduct 'Parjanya Japa' and offer special pujas to propitiate the rain god.

Temple officials have been asked to limit the expenses of special pujas and rituals to ₹10,000.

This is not the first time that the State government is seeking to invoke the gods

for rain by ordering prayers in temples controlled by it. A similar circular in the past had drawn criticism, with many arguing that it amounts to encouraging superstitious beliefs.

Like Karnataka, the Tamil Nadu government too had issued orders directing authorities to conduct prayers in the government-controlled temples.

Kerala Congress(M) leaders trade charges

Select a new chief, says Jose K. Mani

HIRAN UNNIKRISHNAN
KOTTAYAM

The brewing conflict within the Kerala Congress (M) apparently reached a new height with those leading the two factions now coming directly at each other's throats for the first time.

Talking to presspersons here on Saturday, party vice-chairman Jose K. Mani maintained that the only way forward for the party was to select a new chairman through a democratic process by convening the party State committee.

He said the letter empowering the working chairman with all powers and functions of the party chairman in his absence was dispatched to the Election Commission, without holding due consultations.

KC(M) working chairman P.J. Joseph said, "The letter was intended to officially in-

formulate the EC about the demise of our party chairman and a corresponding change in the address for making official communications. At the same time, all others will continue in their respective positions. This is just a formal thing to be done and there was absolutely no need to convene the party committee for it."

Citing clause 29 of the party constitution, Mr. Joseph stated in his letter that he assumed temporary charge of the chairman from April 10 onward following the demise of K.M. Mani on April 9. Requesting the agency to note his own office and personal address as the new address of the chairman, it further held that the election to the existing vacancies of chairman and parliamentary party leader would be held as per law in due course.

Smuggling it out



Bone dry: A small mud path is laid downstream of Manjeera Reservoir near Sangareddy in Telangana for a vehicle to pass into the river bed and lift sand illegally. Owing to the scorching heat the inflows have totally dried up. •NAGARA GOPAL

Karnataka soon to get common mobility card

It is part of the Digital India mission

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Metro rail commuters in Bengaluru and four other cities will be the first to experience a single pan-India multi-purpose payment card system that is expected to be introduced this year.

Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL), which is part of the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) project, is fine-tuning the gate payment systems for metro stations.

BEL would aim for buses next and is developing hand-held systems to suit payments at stations of State road transport corporations, BEL Chairman and Managing Director M.V. Gowtama, said on Saturday.

Unveiled in March

The common mobility card unveiled by the Prime Minister in March in Ahmedabad is meant to eventually indigenise and transform payments for all modes of travel, shopping, parking, money withdrawal and other uses in place of separate credit, debit and prepaid cards.

The NCMC is part of the Digital India mission and is spearheaded by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. CDAC is a technology partner.

Mr. Gowtama said the NCMC project was one of the civil-sector activities of the defence electronics company. BEL is working on pilots for the metro gates and command and control systems over the next 12-18 months.

"The first cities will be Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru and Kochi," he said.

"We plan to start putting two to three of our gates in at least 50% of stations in these cities. We will evaluate them over six months and

then start replacing the older ones," he added.

Eventually the card would be introduced wherever a service is on payment and where finding small money is difficult. "The effect of the common mobility card will be seen only when both metros and other modes of travel such as roads can work on it," Mr. Gowtama said.

Currently, the country imports almost all component systems for metro rail systems. The card apart, NCMC would also help indigenise on a large scale, metro, toll and other payment gates, command and control systems and many other systems, said BEL's Director Marketing Anandi Ramalingam.

The aim would be to ensure that new metros have only the indigenous systems. BEL would engage small and medium industries to manufacture the devices.

No mismatch

In the recently concluded general elections, BEL did not have a single case of mismatch between its electronic voting machines (EVMs) and the VVPAT (voter verifiable paper audit trail) machines, according to its CMD.

Brushing aside criticism about potential for misuse of the machines, Mr. Gowtama said, "The storm created before elections has died down after the elections. All parties have realised that these machines cannot be tampered with."

This time, the Election Commission used about 74%, or over 10 lakh EVMs, that were supplied by BEL along with VVPAT machines. BEL's revenue from the EVM business in 2018-19 was ₹2,600 crore.

Expatriates from Kerala get another fare jolt from airlines

Cost of tickets from four State airports to destinations in West Asia shoots up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Airlines have again increased fares from the four international airports in Kerala to destinations in West Asia to cash in on the demand for seats from Non-Resident Keralites (NoRKS) returning to their workplaces after Ramadan.

The latest hike, the second in two months, comes close on the heels of a 200%-400% hike in airfares during the summer vacation of educational institutions in the State.

One-way fares from the Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Kozhikode and Kannur international airports to various destinations in West

Asia have suddenly gone up from the existing ₹6,000-₹12,000 range.

A one-way economy class ticket from the four airports to key destinations in West Asia, in budget and regular flights of both Indian and foreign carriers, on June 9 (after Ramadan), costs somewhere between ₹14,000 and ₹48,500.

Exorbitant hike

An economy class ticket in Gulf Air from the State capital to Dubai on June 9 is available for ₹14,000, whereas the fare from Kannur to Dubai by Indigo Airlines is ₹25,700.

The economy class fare from the State capital to Jed-

dah by Gulf Air on June 9 is ₹20,100.

One has to pay ₹48,500 for flying from Kannur to Jeddah by Air India, the national carrier.

The airlines are also cashing in on the demand for seats by those who had returned with their families for the reopening of educational institutions on June 6 in the State, and were planning to fly back.

The inability of the Union government and the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to regulate the fares during festive seasons and the summer vacation has come as a blessing for the carriers, industry analysts say.

The grounding of over 75 aircraft by Jet Airways, SpiceJet, GoAir and IndiGo continues to compound the problems as over 500 flights have been cancelled.

Vexed issue

The inability to operate more international flights from Kannur to Dubai and other destinations in West Asia, and linking the flights with other airports of the State, can reduce the pressure and airfare, analysts say.

Kerala Association of Travel Agents said the Union Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muralidharan should intervene to find a solution to the vexed issue.

Sky-high fares

FARES ON JUNE 9 FROM KERALA

Dubai		
Thiruvananthapuram-Dubai	Gulf Air	₹14,000
Kannur-Dubai	Indigo	₹25,700
Kochi-Dubai	Indigo	₹12,700
Kozhikode-Dubai	Gulf Air	₹15,000
Riyadh		
Thiruvananthapuram-Riyadh	Gulf Air	₹16,200
Kannur-Riyadh	Air India Express	₹26,700
Kochi-Riyadh	Air India	₹16,000
Kozhikode-Riyadh	Gulf Air	₹16,250
Jeddah		
Thiruvananthapuram-Jeddah	Gulf Air	₹20,100
Kannur-Jeddah	Air India	₹48,500
Kochi-Jeddah	Indigo	₹14,100
Kozhikode-Jeddah	Spicejet	₹17,600
Kuwait		
Thiruvananthapuram-Kuwait	Oman Air	₹14,200
Kannur-Kuwait	Indigo	₹19,000
Kochi-Kuwait	Air India Express	₹15,450
Kozhikode-Kuwait	Gulf Air	₹14,700

In Kashmir Valley, hundreds of pellet gun victims face a hazy future

Study by Srinagar-based Government Medical College on 380 pellet injury patients found that many of them developed depressive disorders

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Memories haunt Zuhaib Maqbool, 32, a photojournalist, even two years and eight months after the incident. He sleeps next to his father and gets up in the middle of the night to escape the recurrence of traumatic memories, like hundreds of other restless pellet victims who live in all major towns and villages in Kashmir. They find it hard to cope with the trauma of being hit by pellet shotguns.

It was on September 4, 2016, when Zuhaib, like hundreds of others, was hit by a volley of pellets in his left eye. In his case, he was covering a protest in Srinagar's Rainawari area, when hot metal balls pierced his left eye and the upper body.

It was dark for 15 seconds, and thereafter, his life stands changed from being a storyteller to becoming a sad story himself.

Handicap for life

"I have a handicap to nurse all my life now. The world has grown hazy for me. I have to live behind shades. Every time I am alone in the bathroom or bedroom, I cry. It's hard to be alone now," Mr. Maqbool told *The Hindu*.

The photojournalist endured three procedures comprising six surgeries to save some degree of his eyesight, but they have not yielded the desired results. "Doctors have suggested three more procedures to rectify the damaged retina. It's all in Allah's hand now.

Even painkillers fail to provide relief," he said.

Last year, Mr. Maqbool went to meet a person who was born blind to lessen his anxiety. "He asked me 'how is the world outside'. I said it's hazy. He replied 'say thanks to the Almighty that it's not black,'" recalls Mr. Maqbool, who has also met counsellors.

Study findings

The latest study titled 'Psychiatric Morbidity in Pellet Injury Victims of the Kashmir Valley', conducted by the Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College (GMC), Srinagar, has thrown a spotlight on hundreds of pellet victims that are now a part of Kashmir's growing population living with anxiety and depression.



Blinding force: A man whose eyes were injured by pellets being brought to a hospital in Srinagar. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

sion.

According to a 2016 survey by the Geneva-based Medecins Sans Frontieres, nearly 1.8 million (45%) adults in the Kashmir Valley are experiencing symptoms of mental distress, with 41% exhibiting probable depression, 26% having anxiety,

and 19% ailing from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"37% of males and 50% of females in Kashmir suffer from probable depression, while 21% of men and 36% of women suffer from a probable anxiety-related disorder," the report had men-

tioned. The number of suicide attempts has also increased by more than 250% between 1994-2012.

The study carried out by the GMC on 380 pellet and pellet-plus firearm injury patients showed that many of them were diagnosed with major depressive disorders (25.79%), followed by other issues - adjustment disorder (15.79%), panic disorder (12.11%), PTSD (9.21%), generalised anxiety disorder (7.89%), mixed anxiety with depression (5%), substance abuse (4.21%), specific phobia (2.89%), and hypomania (2.11%).

Pellet epidemic

According to various government and non-governmental data, the number of pellet victims in Kashmir

since the pellet shotgun was introduced in 2010 to quell mass street protests, is likely to be between 10,000 to 20,000 persons.

Adil Ahmad, a minor, who was injured near an encounter site in May this year in south Kashmir's Shopian, says he fears the light the most now. "I feel like smashing lamps. The sunshine proves harsh to my eyes. I have to either be in the shade or step outside home only after sunset," says Mr. Ahmad, who has a significant perforation in his right eye.

The latest study shows psychiatric morbidity among those with eye injuries caused by pellets at 91.92%, when compared with 70% incidence among victims receiving pellet inju-

ries in other parts of the body, according to the report prepared over a period of two years from August 2016 to August 2018. It was carried on 333 males and 47 females in the Valley from different districts and socio-economic background.

Doctors fear it may impact the mental health of the next generation, too.

Alarming figures

Dr. Hussain said the current prevalence of depression in Kashmir is 7.3% compared with 4% in mainland India, which is an even higher figure by global standards. He said pellet victims who have suffered disabilities or lost jobs "are the most vulnerable to grave psychological issues".

IN BRIEF



In a first, a female IAF pilot flies a Hawk jet

Flight Lieutenant Mohana Singh has become the first woman fighter pilot to fly by day a Hawk advanced jet aircraft, a defence release has said. She achieved the feat at the Kalakunda Air Force Station in West Bengal on Thursday, it said. PTI

2 held for murder of Congress candidate

Two criminals, allegedly involved in the murder of Manoj Kumar Jena, the Congress candidate from the Aska Assembly constituency, were arrested after an exchange of fire on the outskirts of Odisha's Berhampur late on Friday night. The suspects suffered injuries in the encounter and were admitted to a hospital.

Lion cub, langurs rescued from smugglers

A lion cub and three white-headed langurs were on Saturday rescued from the northern fringes of the city by officers of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and the West Bengal Forest Department. Three persons were arrested for allegedly smuggling these endangered animals.

Kashmir tourist guide saves five from capsized boat, dies

Raft sank due to gusty winds near Pahalgam; 2 foreigners among those rescued

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

A local guide died saving five tourists, including two foreigners, when a boat capsized during rafting in tourist hotspot Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Friday evening.

"One raft capsized at the rafting point of Pahalgam's Mawoora. It was caught in sudden gusty winds," said Amir Ali, Director of the Disaster Management cell in Kashmir.

"All the passengers onboard fell in the fast flowing water of Lidder. The tourist guide, Rouf Ahmed Dar, without caring for his own safety rescued all the tourists but lost his life," he added.

Abandoned search

A search and rescue team, drawn from the State Disaster Response Force, the police and locals, launched an operation on Friday but abandoned it due to darkness.

"The body of the brave guide was retrieved on Saturday morning near the Bhawani bridge from the



A rescue team placing the body of the tourist guide on a boat after it was fished out. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Lidder river," said Mr. Ali.

The body was handed over to his relatives after completion of medico-legal formalities.

Khurshid Ahmad Ganai, the Adviser to the Govern-

ment, announced that the tourist guide would be awarded posthumously.

The family of Dar, a resident of Yeened village of Pahalgam, will also receive ₹2 lakh from the adminis-

tration. His act of bravery attracted praise from all political parties in the Valley.

"My salute to this braveheart Rouf Ahmed Dar. He saved the tourists from his capsized raft but lost his own life in the process. May Allah grant him the highest place in heaven," said former Chief Minister and National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah.

Praise galore

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president G.A. Mir described Dar as a "real symbol of Kashmiriyat".

"I urged upon the State government to provide full compensation to the bereaved family to ensure their livelihood," he said.

Sheikh Ashiq, president of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also praised Dar's valour.

"Adventure tourism has its perils and it is always important to follow proper safety procedures and guidelines while carrying out activities which could endanger human lives," he said.

Plant 25 trees, court tells man who killed vultures

Villager found guilty of poisoning 25 birds

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Gauhati High Court has ordered a villager in Assam to plant and take care of 25 trees as punishment for poisoning as many vultures to death three months ago.

The State Forest Department had filed a case against Dhanpati Das of Kamalpur, about 40 km north of Guwahati, for lacing a goat carcass with pesticide that killed the 25 rare vultures.

On April 4, the High Court granted him bail after he had spent 28 days in custody under Section 429 (mischievous killing, poisoning, maiming animals or rendering them useless) of the Indian Penal Code read with Section 5(a) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

Hearing the case a month later, the court made an ecological statement by asking him to plant saplings and nurture them. The man, though, said he did not poison the carcass in the first place.

Green activists welcomed the judgment. "The man could have been sentenced to six months in prison. But this form of punishment should have a positive impact on the person and make him contribute to nature," Bibhab Talukdar of NGO Aaranyak said.

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Saturday announced on social media the launch of the One Citizen One Tree campaign ahead of the World Environment Day for greening the State affected by unregulated coal and limestone mining.

"With the State fast losing its forest cover, the campaign aims at people's involvement in planting more trees. All districts will be covered in the mass plantation drive wherein all indigenous plants raised by the communities across the State will be provided to citizens who want to participate in the campaign," a statement from the CM's Office said.

Skymet: wait for monsoon may get longer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The sluggish pace of monsoon has further delayed its onset over Kerala to June 7, private weather forecaster Skymet has said.

Skymet previously said the monsoon would reach Kerala on June 4 with an error margin of plus or minus two days. "Present weather conditions are indicating monsoon onset would be now around June 7, with an error margin of plus or minus 2 days," Skymet said.

The India Meteorological Department has said monsoon arrival over Kerala could happen on June 6, with an error margin of plus or minus four days.

"Dynamics of monsoon keep changing. So far, not even one out of the three criteria needed for declaring the onset of monsoon has been met," said G.P. Sharma, president, meteorology and climate change, Skymet Weather.

Azam Khan booked for occupying public land

FIR also names 2 Jauhar varsity officials

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party MP from Rampur Azam Khan was booked for allegedly obstructing government work and occupying public property without permission, the police said on Saturday.

A First Information Report was registered at the Azimnagar police station on a complaint from Nayab tehsildar K.G. Mishra, Rampur Superintendent of Police Shiv Hari Meena told reporters.

Besides Mr. Khan, Mohammad Ali Jauhar University registrar R.A. Qureshi and security officer Alhe Hasan Khan were named in the FIR.

Riverine land

Mr. Khan is the Chancellor of the university which, according to the FIR, illegally



Azam Khan

occupied a five-hectare riverine land belonging to the Seegan Khera gram sabha and built an eight-foot-high boundary wall around it.

The staff members had allegedly obstructed officials from carrying out land measurement on May 25.

The FIR invoked Sections 3, 4 and 332 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (Divyangjan) (NIEPMD)
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Director

GULBARGA ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Government of Karnataka undertaking)

No:GESCOM/GM/AO(P)/2019-20/15042 Dated : 01-06-2019

RECRUITMENT- PUBLISHING OF PROVISIONAL 1:2 LIST NOTIFICATION

Sub : Publication of Provisional 1: 2 list for the post of Company Secretary
Ref : Employment Notification No:GESCOM/GM/AO(P)/2019-20/11949 dt:18.05.2019.

In pursuance to GESCOM Employment Notification No:GESCOM/GM/AO(P)/2019-20/11949 dt:18.05.2019. the provisional 1:2 List of eligible candidate's interview will be held on 06.06.2019 at 11.00 AM and the original documents verification will be on the same day. The provisional 1:2 List of eligible candidates hosted in GESCOM website on 03.06.2019.

Interview Venue: The General Manager (A &HRD), Corporate Office, GESCOM, Main Road, Kalaburagi 585102.

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ADMISSION NOTIFICATION FOR M.Sc. (SPORTS NUTRITION)

Conducted By
MYAS - NIN DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS SCIENCE FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-21

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) - National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Department of Sports Science invites applications from eligible candidates for admission into two years M.Sc. (Sports Nutrition) Course at the ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad offered under MoU with Osmania University, Hyderabad, Telangana for the academic year 2019-21.

Eligibility: Candidates seeking admission into the two-year M.Sc. (Sports Nutrition) course must have passed B.Sc. in Home Science (with specialization in Food & Nutrition) / Nutrition / Food & Nutrition / Applied Nutrition & Public Health / Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics / Food Science & Quality Control or B.Sc. in Life Sciences - Botany / Zoology / Genetics / Microbiology / Biochemistry / Biotechnology or MBBS or BAMS. In addition, the candidate should possess a minimum of 55% aggregate marks in the qualifying examination and with weightage for SC/ST candidates as per rules. Candidates awaiting final year/semester results may also apply and produce the certificates at the time of joining.

Application Forms: Application forms along with prospectus can be downloaded from the website: www.nin.res.in or can be obtained in person from the Head, MYAS-NIN Department of Sports Science, ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition, Janga-Osmania PO, Opp. Tarnaka Metro Station, Hyderabad - 500007. The applications will be available from 10:00 AM of 20.05.2019 to 5:00 PM of 28.06.2019.

Last date for submission of applications: The duly filled in applications, along with the demand draft of Rs. 3000/- (for OC/BC/OBC Candidates) and Rs. 2700/- (for SC/ST Candidates) towards registration fee from any nationalised bank drawn in favour of "The Director, NIN" payable at Hyderabad and necessary enclosures should be submitted to the Head, MYAS-NIN Department of Sports Science, ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition, Janga-Osmania PO, Opp. Tarnaka Metro Station, Hyderabad - 500007 on or before 28.06.2019 by 5:00 PM.

Applications received after the last date and time will not be accepted. NIN or OU is not responsible for the postal delay or any loss in transit.

Number of seats: 15 students from India and abroad will be admitted to the course as per the GOI norms.

List of Eligible Candidates & Entrance Test: The list of eligible candidates to appear for the test will be uploaded on NIN's Website on 03.07.2019. The candidates should download their hall tickets from NIN Website (www.nin.res.in) on 03.07.2019. Entrance Test will be conducted on 14.07.2019 (Sunday) at 11:00 AM. Results of the Entrance Test will be uploaded on the website (www.nin.res.in) on 22.07.2019. **First Counseling session will be held at NIN on 02.08.2019 from 10:00 AM onwards. Classes will commence from 09.08.2019.** If the number of applicants is minimal, then the admissions will be made based on the merit and aggregate marks secured in the qualifying exam by the candidate in the optional subjects.

For further details and important dates refer the prospectus and rules & regulations on www.nin.res.in

Date: 16th May 2019
Hyderabad.

Sd/- Director

FROM PAGE ONE

Trump ends export concessions for India

This represented 11% of all merchandise from India. India was the largest beneficiary of the programme, accounting for over one quarter of all the U.S.'s GSP-covered imports.

The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) began a review of India's eligibility for GSP in April 2018. The U.S. medical devices and dairy industries had made representations on market access issues in India. Tariffs in the ICT sector had also become an irritant in ties.

Package rejected

India had offered the U.S. a "meaningful package" that covered U.S. concerns, but this was not acceptable to the U.S., India's Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan had said in March.

Friday's proclamation was issued despite requests from U.S. lawmakers that GSP not be withdrawn as it would harm U.S. companies.

The proclamation also withdrew the exemption for India from safeguard measures on CPVS (crystalline silicon photovoltaic) pro-

ducts and large residential washers.

U.S. firms unhappy

The Coalition for GSP, an industry body, was not supportive of the measure, saying it would cost American companies \$300 million in additional annual tariffs.

"There are no winners from today's decision," Dan Anthony, executive director of the group, said in a statement, as reported by Bloomberg. "American importers will pay more, while some American exporters will continue to face current market access barriers in India and others, including farmers, are very likely to be subject to new retaliatory tariffs."

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Nisha Biswal, president of the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) said, "It is unfortunate that the U.S. has moved to terminate GSP benefits. USIBC and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have long advocated for continuation of the GSP program, which provides important benefits for both India and the United States."

India hopes GSP issues will be resolved

The Indian government on Saturday pointed out that the GSP benefits given by developed countries like the U.S. to developing nations such as India are "unilateral, non-reciprocal and non-discriminatory".

Earlier Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan had stressed that the move will have a "minimal and moderate impact", amounting to only \$190 million on the value of \$5.6 billion in exports to the U.S. that fall under the GSP category. "India, as part of our bilateral trade discussions, had offered resolution on significant U.S. requests in an effort to find a mutually acceptable way forward. It is unfortunate that this did not find acceptance by the U.S.," the Ministry statement said.

It added, "India, like the U.S. and other nations, shall always uphold its national interest in these matters. We have significant development imperatives and concerns and our people also aspire for better standards of living. This will remain the guiding factor in the Government's approach."

Sharp Cong. attack

Reacting to the development, the Congress party

urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make a comprehensive statement on how he intended to overcome this "grave trade and economic crisis".

Addressing a press conference, Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said it was a "double whammy" for India which had "succumbed to U.S. pressure" of not buying crude oil from Iran and had also lost special trade status.

"What is of concern is that the withdrawal of 'special trade status' was notified on March 4, 2019 itself. Yet the government did nothing to pre-empt it. The most serious implication would be for sectors like agriculture, auto parts, pharmaceutical etc. which are already facing serious crisis," he said. Up to 66% of Indian exports would be impacted by the U.S. decision, he added.

He also urged the government to withdraw the hike in LPG prices which it had "gifted" to the people soon after coming back to power. The LPG prices had risen by ₹323.5 per cylinder in the non-subsidised category and ₹85.37 per subsidised cylinder in the last five years, he alleged.

J&K Governor briefs Shah on ground situation

On Day 1, he reviews 22 departments of the Ministry

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

On his first day in office, Home Minister Amit Shah sought to know the number of freedom fighters who received pension from the Centre.

The Ministry has a separate division to serve the freedom fighters who are alive and the families of those who have died. It disburses pension to around 36,000 freedom fighters and their families. In 2016, it had increased the pension amount by 20%.

Mr. Shah assumed charge at North Block on Saturday afternoon. At a meeting that lasted more than an hour, Mr. Shah reviewed the 22 departments of the Ministry. Senior officers including Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba and Director, Intelligence Bureau, Rajiv Jain, were also present. "While he sat through the presentation, he stopped it and asked about the number of freedom fighters availing pension," said a senior official.



Amit Shah being greeted by Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba at North Block in New Delhi on Saturday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

Mr. Shah directed that each division give a detailed presentation on its functioning on Monday.

Mr. Shah was briefed on the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir by Governor Satya Pal Malik. After the meeting, Mr. Malik said, "I have briefed the Home Minister about the development work and the ground situation in J&K. We had no talk about [Assembly] elections, it's the mandate of the Election Commission."

Mr. Shah tweeted, "Coun-

Cong. for no slugfest on Opposition Leader post

But party divided on the issue with some seeking legal recourse

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday said it would not stake claim to the post of Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha since the party was short of the numbers required for the position.

"It's a fact that it's 10% of the strength of the House. Since we are two short of this figure, officially we can't have a Leader of the Opposition. However, onus also lies at the doorstep of the government whether they want to designate a party formally as principal Opposition or not," Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said.

Rumbling within

The party, however, is divided on the issue. A section feels that all possible legal options should be explored, though the stronger sentiment is not to turn this into a slanging match with the government.

"If a pre-poll alliance can be allowed to form the government, then why should such an alliance not be allowed to stake claim to the



Fresh start: Congress president Rahul Gandhi addressing the CPP meeting on Saturday. • PTI

Leader of Opposition's position," a senior Congress leader asked.

Together with the DMK and other parties, the UPA — with 92 members — is well above the necessary figure.

Legal position

Former Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha P.J. Kurien said the Congress was legally entitled to the position.

"The 10% formulation was the Speaker's ruling to choose the LoP. The ruling is inconsistent with the law: 'The Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977', which

only says that the largest Opposition party should get the post," Mr. Kurien told *The Hindu*.

He said if the Congress were to move the court, the party would easily win, though it was for the party to decide.

The Act says the "Leader of the Opposition" is the "Leader in that House of the party in opposition to the government having the greatest numerical strength and recognised as such by the Chairman of the Council of States or the Speaker of the House of the People, as the case may be."

In 1984, when the Congress got 404 seats in the Lok Sabha, it did not concede the position to the Telugu Desam Party, which was the second largest party with 30 seats. The "10% rule" was brought in 1985 by the then Lok Sabha Speaker, Balram Jakkhar, to deny the position to the TDP.

Meanwhile, the question of who will lead the Congress in the Lok Sabha remains unanswered. There was speculation that since Rahul Gandhi had said he wanted to step down as president, he may opt for this position.

No ghost voters, says Election Commission

'Final numbers yet to be uploaded'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Saturday said there were no "ghost voters" in the Lok Sabha election, as reported in a section of the media based on the provisional turnout data uploaded on its website.

"The provisional voter turnout data, reported on the ECI website, is only the tentative number of voters and not the final numbers. Therefore, it is an incorrect inference to find ghost voters when there are none," the EC said in a statement.

It said two categories of votes — those polled in the electronic voting machines (EVMs) and the postal ballots — are counted to determine the final result.

"The provisional voter turnout data is displayed as a percentage figure on the ECI website and the voter helpline mobile app on the poll day as uploaded by the Returning Officer/Assistant Returning Officer..." Based on the EVM votes and the postal ballots, the Returning Officer prepares Form 21E



Officials at a counting centre near Mohali. • FILE PHOTO

(the certificate given to the winning candidates) and the index card in which the break-up of the turnout is tallied to get the final turnout for each constituency. "For the General Election, 2019, the Commission has already directed all the Returning Officers on March 26, 2019, to send the index cards within 15 days of the declaration of the results," the EC said.

The reconciliation of voters' data has been completed in all States and the index forms of all 542 Lok Sabha constituencies are expected to reach the EC soon. They would be made public after compilation, it said.

Nitish to expand Cabinet with JD(U) members

CM meets Governor, four Ministers likely to be inducted

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is set to expand his Council of Ministers on Sunday with the likely induction of four new Ministers from the Janata Dal(U), party officials said on Saturday.

Earlier, Mr. Kumar called on Governor Lalji Tandon amid reports that he would expand his government to fill four ministerial berths, including the vacancies created by three Ministers who had resigned after being elected to the Lok Sabha last month.

One post fell vacant last year after Manju Verma resigned as Social Welfare Minister in connection with the Muzaffarpur shelter-home sexual abuse case.

Mr. Kumar's meeting with the Governor came a day after the JD(U) leader had made it clear that none of his party MPs would join Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in the future. The Cabinet expansion is



Nitish Kumar

likely to take place at 11 a.m. on Sunday at the Raj Bhavan, with four JD(U) leaders considered close to Mr. Kumar set to become Ministers, a party official said on condition of anonymity.

With only 25 Ministers in the 243-member Assembly, the Ministry is below full strength.

"There could be 11 more Ministers in the Cabinet but tomorrow [Sunday] only four are likely to take oath," said a JD(U) leader, who declined to be identified.

Shout a little more, Rahul tells MPs-elect

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The first meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party on Saturday not only elected UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi as its leader but also saw a spirited address by party president Rahul Gandhi.

Mr. Gandhi exhorted the Congress MPs-elect to be more aggressive. "...You are going to enjoy yourself, you are going to shout a little more than usual. You are going to have to be a little more aggressive," he urged the MPs. Congress MPs should realise that they are probably the first people in this country's independent history, "who have fought an election not against a political party but against every single institution in this country", he said.

"There is no institution that is going to support you in this country, not one is going to support you. It is like during the British period, when not a single institution supported the Congress party, yet we fought and won and we are going to do it again," he said.

He asked the newly elected members to remember that their fight was for the Constitution and for "the right of every single individual in this country regardless of the skin colour, regardless of his religion, regardless of his gender, regardless of his State". Mr. Gandhi reminded them that they would be contesting against not only hatred and anger but also lack of confidence and self-belief.

CPP leader Sonia Gandhi used the occasion to praise the 18-month tenure of Mr. Gandhi as party president, amid the uncertainty on whether he would continue at the helm. It is understood that Ms. Gandhi wants her son to continue to lead the party but does not want to pressure him.

She said Mr. Gandhi ran a "valiant" and "relentless" campaign. "Even as I speak, emotional messages are coming from all corners, vindicating his leadership. We all express our gratitude to him for his sincerity of purpose, his relentless effort, his hard work and leadership," she said.

Gehlot rejects Minister's resignation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has rejected the resignation of Agriculture Minister Lalchand Kataria, who had taken the decision in the wake of the Congress's dismal showing in the Lok Sabha election.

Mr. Kataria released his resignation letter on a social media platform on May 26 and left for an ashram in Uttarakhand for "meditation". On Friday evening, the Minister met Mr. Gehlot and reiterated his desire to resign. Sources in the CMO said Mr. Gehlot rejected the resignation and asked Mr. Kataria to continue in office and play his role in "good governance". "At this difficult time when the election results are not favourable for the Congress, it is our moral responsibility to face the challenges ahead," Mr. Gehlot reportedly told him.

Mr. Kataria had stated in his resignation letter that he considered it "morally inappropriate" to continue in the Cabinet after the party's debacle.

After Article 370, debate on Nagaland's 371(A)

NDPP legislator says it hinders growth

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Amid calls for scrapping Article 370 of the Constitution that gives autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir, a legislator of the ruling party in Nagaland has triggered a debate on Article 371(A) that guarantees special status for the people of the north-eastern State.

Neikiesalie Nicky Kire of the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) had a few days ago attributed the lack of development in Nagaland to Article 371(A) that safeguards the customary rights of the Nagas.

The NDPP rules Nagaland in alliance with the BJP.

"Land and its resources in Nagaland belong to the people and not the government. Landowners usually wield the provisions in Article 371(A) to prevent the government from carrying out developmental activities on their land," Dr. Kire said. He appealed to the people not to use Article 371(A) to hinder development work.

Shurhozelie Liezietsu, the president of the Opposi-



Neikiesalie Nicky Kire

tion Naga People's Front (NPF), said it was not right to blame Article 371(A) for the government's inability to push projects.

Some agreed with Dr. Kire though. "The MLA certainly did not mean Article 371(A) needs to go. The problem with this Article lies in its interpretation. The government must undertake an awareness campaign with a detailed interpretation of the rights given to landowners. But yes, some landowners do take advantage of the provisions which affects development," said Chuba Ozukum, president of Naga Hoho, the apex body of the State's tribal organisations.

Funds and indigenisation, key challenges for Rajnath

Defence Minister tells officers to set time-bound targets

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Former Home Minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh took charge as the Defence Minister at South Block on Saturday afternoon. His immediate challenge would be to get additional funds and the long-term challenge to give momentum to the ambitious 'Make-in-India' pitch in defence manufacturing which has made little progress in the past five years while also ensuring that modernisation makes progress.

"Rajnath Singh was given a brief presentation on the functioning of the MoD and all the four departments of the MoD namely department of defence, department of defence production, department of ex-service-man welfare and department of research and development organisation," the Ministry said in a statement.

Mr. Singh instructed the officers to prepare detailed presentations on all divisions and set time-bound



Rajnath Singh and the three services' chiefs paying homage to the martyrs at the National War Memorial in New Delhi. • PTI

targets to achieve the desired outcome, it said.

'Long history of courage' Before taking charge Mr. Singh paid tributes at the National War Memorial. "These fallen heroes represent the character of India which has a long history of courage, sacrifice and patriotism. I salute them for keeping India safe," he said in a tweet.

Apart from additional funds and indigenisation, Mr. Singh also has to address growing resentment among

the military fraternity over pay, parity and equivalence issues.

The immediate concern for Mr. Singh to take forward military modernisation is to secure additional allocation for defence in the full Budget in July.

In the interim Budget in April, the allocations to the three services did not cover even the revenue and committed liabilities meaning the Ministry might default on some payments for earlier deals unless the situation is addressed.

IN BRIEF



Sports Minister makes a pitch for team play
NEW DELHI
Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Saturday that he would work with athletes and federations collectively as a team to bring about a revolution in sports. "I sincerely thank all the sportspersons of India for the warm welcome and good wishes to me," Mr. Rijiju, a Member of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh, tweeted. "I shall be working closely with you all and the Sports Federations to bring about a sports revolution" he said. PTI

Nine Rohingya arrested in Manipur
IMPHAL
Nine Rohingyas have been arrested from Moreh town near the Indo-Myanmar border in Manipur's Tengnoupal district with fake Aadhaar cards, police said on Saturday. Superintendent of Police Vikramjit said that they apprehended four Rohingyas, including two women, from the Tengnoupal check-post on May 27 and five others on May 28. PTI

WCD Minister Irani meets predecessor Maneka
NEW DELHI
Newly appointed Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani met her predecessor Maneka Gandhi on Saturday to discuss important issues in the Ministry. Sharing a picture with Ms. Gandhi on Twitter, Ms. Irani wrote, "It was extremely kind of her to highlight important issues in the WCD Ministry and guide me on the way forward." Ms. Irani is likely to assume charge of the Ministry on Monday. PTI

Pawar dismisses rumours of NCP-Congress merger
MUMBAI
Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar on Saturday dismissed speculation that his party was likely to merge with the Congress. Speaking at a party meeting here, Mr. Pawar said, "The NCP has its own identity and will maintain it. Speculation over the merger with the Congress was a rumour spread by some journalists who did not want us to be with allies," he said. He also touched upon the issue of the alleged tampering of electronic voting machines, saying he had doubts from early on. PTI

With a bristling U.S., Jaishankar has his task cut out

The Trump administration withdrawing GSP status is just one of a slew of announcements that gives India cause for worry

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that Washington was withdrawing the GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) trade status given to India 30 years ago came hours after former diplomat S. Jaishankar assumed office as External Affairs Minister, pointing to the fact that the immediate challenges before him will come from the U.S. and its "great power rivalry" with Russia and China.

While Mr. Trump's decision, based on what he called India's inability to assure the U.S. "that it will provide equitable and reasonable access to its markets", is a continuation of the new tariffs and trade war he is now waging with China, it is just one of the slew of U.S. announcements in the past week that will give the Modi government cause for worry.

The India-U.S. trade relationship had been under heavy strain for the past year, over what the Washington calls unfair trade restrictions on sale of dairy products and medical equipment, as well as proposed Indian regulations on data localisation and e-commerce companies operating here.

No breakthrough
Despite several rounds of talks on a comprehensive trade package, there has been no breakthrough, and Mr. Jaishankar will have to work with the new Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal to revive the talks, possibly when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visits Delhi this month.

On Thursday, the U.S. Special Representative for Iran, Brian Hook, said plainly that the U.S. would sanction, without exception, any



Hot seat: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. • REUTERS

country that buys or has bought Iranian oil after the May 2 deadline. While India has not bought Iranian oil since May 2, it is yet to say categorically that it won't, and the new External Affairs Minister is expected to make a clear policy statement on

this soon. Russia and China have opposed the sanctions, and are likely to discuss this at the upcoming SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

On Friday, a senior State Department official told a

group of reporters in Washington, which included *The Hindu*, that the U.S. would also bring sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, CAATSA, against India, if it goes ahead with its purchase of the S-400 Tri-

umf missile shield from Russia. The purchase would "preclude" a deep and broad defence relationship with the U.S., the official said. India has announced that it will India get its first Triumf system by October 2020 and the \$5.5 billion contract will be completed by April 2023, and unless the government changes plans, it is set on a collision course with the U.S. on the issue.

NEWS ANALYSIS

On Saturday, Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan made it clear that the U.S. wants its partners to join in the ban on Chinese telecommunication company Huawei for its 5G technology. "Huawei is too close to the [Chinese] government," said Mr. Shanahan, speaking at the annual "Shangri-La Dialogue" in Singapore, warning of cybersecurity and in-

tellectual property issues with the company.

Message from Pompeo
Mr. Shanahan's warnings followed a stark message from Mr. Pompeo, who said during a visit to Germany on Friday that the U.S. may cut intelligence sharing with countries that choose telecommunication companies the U.S. doesn't trust.

India has thus far declined to ban Huawei from its process for 5G telecommunication network.

Significantly, Mr. Modi will meet the leaders of all three nations: Mr. Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping this month at the SCO summit in Bishkek on June 13-14 and G-20 summit in Osaka on June 28-29.

With his new role, and the job of preparing for the meetings, Mr. Jaishankar will have his task cut out.

Assam police discharge ex-soldier declared 'foreigner'

Retired JCO's lawyer says plea filed against tribunal's order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Mohammad Sanaulah, the retired Army Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) who was declared a foreigner by a Foreigners Tribunal in Assam's Kamrup district on May 23 and sent to a detention camp in Goalpara, has been discharged from service by the Assam police.

The ex-serviceman had been appointed as a Sub-Inspector of the State police's Border wing after retiring from the Army as an Honorary Captain in 2017. The Border wing is tasked with detecting, detaining and deporting foreigners.

On May 29, the office of the Special Director General



Mohammad Sanaulah

of Police (Border) issued an order in reference to Mr. Sanaulah having been declared a foreign national of "post-March 25, 1971 stream". The Assam Accord of 1985 seeks deportation of foreigners or illegal migrants who entered the State after March 24, 1971.

"Hence, Md Sanaulah... is shown discharge from service with effect from the date of order, i.e., May 23, 2019, and is deprived from all the facilities as Govt. servant henceforth," the Border wing said in an order signed by a Superintendent of Police.

'As per law'
"Since the Foreigners Tribunal declared him a foreigner, the police discharged him as per the law," said Sahidul Islam, Mr. Sanaulah's advocate.

"However, we filed a petition in the Gauhati High Court on Friday challenging the order passed by the tribunal," Mr. Islam added.

Bangladesh sends back two Indians

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Bangladesh has sent back two Indians who had illegally entered the country and spent a few months in jail there. Iqbal Hussain Dillowar and Selim Uddin reached home in Hojai district of Assam on Saturday.

The police said they had sneaked into Bangladesh in 2018 without travel documents. They were arrested and lodged in a jail in Moulvibazar district.

They were released after several rounds of talks between the High Commissioners of India and Bangladesh. India, too, deported a Bangladeshi national through the same checkpoint. Babul Roy had strayed into India four years ago.

AugustaWestland case: defence dealer gets bail

Sushen Gupta is charged by the ED for money laundering

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday granted bail to Sushen Mohan Gupta, an alleged defence agent arrested in a money laundering case related to the AgustaWestland VVIP choppers scam case.

Special Judge Arvind Kumar granted him relief on a personal bond of ₹5 lakh and two sureties of like amount. The court put various conditions on the accused, including that he will not tamper with the evidence and not leave country without the court's prior permission.

Senior advocate Siddhartha Luthra, appearing for Gupta, had said the accused



Sushen Mohan Gupta

had always cooperated with the investigation and will be available as and when required by the probe agency as he has deep roots in India.

The application was opposed by ED's special public prosecutors D.P. Singh and N.K. Matta, who said the probe was at a initial stage and if granted the relief, the

accused may flee from justice and hamper the investigation.

The agency on May 22 had filed a supplementary chargesheet against Gupta, who was arrested by the ED under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and is currently in judicial custody.

There was clinching evidence of Gupta's role in the chopper scam as well as in various other defence deals, agency's advocate Samved Verma told the court.

According to the ED, Gupta's role in the case came to light on the basis of disclosures made by Rajeev Saxena, who turned approver after he was deported from the UAE.

After IAF move, Pakistan likely to lift airspace curbs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAHORE

Pakistan on Saturday indicated that it may lift the airspace ban along its eastern border with India to reciprocate the Indian Air Force's decision to remove all restrictions on all air routes in the Indian airspace.

Reacting to the India's Friday decision, a senior official of the Pakistan government said, "Once the Indian government lifts the air restriction on Pakistani flights, Pakistan is likely to reciprocate it."

The official said India had yet to inform Pakistan about

lifting of airspace ban for its flights.

"We only heard about this through the media as no communication in this respect has taken place as yet. We may follow the suit once India lifts air restrictions on our flights, he said.

Earlier, Pakistan Foreign

Office spokesman Mohammad Faisal had said Islamabad want de-escalation.

"If de-escalation takes place we would not like to have a ban on our airspace for India for a single day but for the purpose, India will have to talk to us," he had said.

INTERVIEW | WALTER ANDERSEN

'Not the end of secularism'

India too complex and diverse for such dramatic change, says scholar

NISTULA HEBBAR

Walter Andersen, Senior Adjunct Professor of South Asia Studies at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and author of books on the RSS including "The Brotherhood in Saffron" and "RSS: A View To The Inside" spoke on the election results of 2019 and its implications for the Sangh Parivar. Excerpts:



The big challenge before the government is job creation for which FDI may be pushed

How do you look at the results in terms of a long-term trend in Indian politics?

I am not among the people who consider this mandate as a dramatic inflexion point for the country, and while there will be Hindu-centric assertions in certain matters, it is not the end of secularism in India as some people fear. India is too complex and diverse for such a dramatic change, and this complexity is also its strength. It means that things will proceed at a relatively slow pace compared to say, China, were things move faster because there is an authoritarian regime. In India, things move slowly but change is more permanent, less dramatic.

How do you see the relationship between the RSS and Prime Minister Narendra Modi after a result of such magnitude? Do you think there will be a decisive push for the construction of the Ram temple?

chief Mohan Bhagwat is fairly good, perhaps because they are closer in age and have some shared experiences, unlike Mr. Vajpayee and late RSS chief K. Sudarshan. Mr. Bhagwat is by nature a diplomat. I know of specific instances where he managed a mediated compromise on certain issues that had the potential of turning contentious. There were reports when Mr. Modi met Mr. Bhagwat after the polls that some "instructions" were given to the former, but that's not the case at all, as it's not characteristic of Mr. Modi nor Mr. Bhagwat. In the last government, and in future, there will be more of coordination meetings initiated by Prime Minister Modi.

The RSS has had a suspicion of a "cult of personality" as they believe that fundamental change comes from below and not from the top, that in and as itself is a constraint on how much they get

involved in power politics. They expect to have inputs in the next five years but not the way others envisage.

Specifically with regard to Ram Janmabhoomi, it's obvious that the Sangh Parivar including BJP want a temple but it was not an overwhelming issue in the poll campaign. Both Mr. Modi and Mr. Bhagwat asked for patience with the court process and the new leadership at the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) after the exit of Praveen Togadia is also more cautious. The gait on this is a more elephantine, lumbering one.

What other core issues of the Sangh Parivar do you see being pushed in this tenure?

That is going to be complicated; the RSS now has over 100 organisations of diffused and specific interests that are attached to it. But going by the Vijay Dashami addresses by Mr. Bhagwat, populist economic orientation will be preferred, like the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh's call for better value for crops etc. The big challenge before the government is job creation for which Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) may be pushed, despite reservations by the Swadeshi Jagran Manch. The RSS has become neutral over the issue, though not enthusiastic over FDI. In that scenario it will be interesting to see how this pans out.

(For full interview, log on to bit.ly/WalterAndersenInterview)

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जयपुर विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड
जयपुर विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड (जयपुर), जयपुर (Registered Office Vidyut Bhawan, Jyoti Nagar, Jaipur) E-Mail: secvillpr@vvn.org, Tel.No. 0141-2207932
अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 01/2019-20 एवं ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 02/2019-20
अधिकांश अधिनियम (सिविल) ज.वि.वि. निगम लि. जयपुर के अधीन विभिन्न निर्माण, परम्पन एवं विद्युत संबंधित, सिविल कार्यों के लिए अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना 01/2019-20 एवं ई-निविदा सूचना 02/2019-20 द्वारा मोहम्मद निविदाय आमंत्रित की जाती है। कार्य का नाम, कार्य की अनुमानित लागत, निविदा शुल्क तथा निविदा खुलने की तिथि एवं अन्य विवरण अधिकांश अधिनियम (सिविल) ज.वि.वि. निगम लि. जयपुर के कार्यालय के सूचना पट्ट और वेबसाइट www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in, www.tenders.gov.in एवं State Public Procurement Portal पर उपलब्ध है। भविष्य में जारी सूचना के माध्यम से वेबसाइट <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> पर रजिस्टर्ड करवाना आवश्यक है। NIB Nos. VVN1920A0005, 0008, UBN No. VVN1920WS0B00007-00017 जेपीआर-2463 (2019) राज. संवाद/सी/357/2019-20 अधीक्षण अधिनियम (सिविल) विद्युत संबंधी शिकायतों के लिए टोल फ्री नम्बर 1800 180 6507

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division, BBMP Office Building, Robertson Road, Frazer Town, Bengaluru
No.: EE/PN/TEND/01/2019-20 Date : 01-06-2019

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (Two Cover) (Through GoK e-Procurement Portal only)
The Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division, BBMP, Bengaluru on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP invites tenders from eligible contractors for the below mentioned works.

Sl. No.	Name of the works	Approx. Value of Work (Rs. in lakhs)	EMD (in Rs.)
1	Construction of Small Animals Sheds at to Slaughter House in Ward No.60, Sagayapuram. (3rd Call)	100.00	2,00,000/-

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from GoK e-Procurement portal <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> from 03.06.2019, 4.00 PM. (2) Tenders must be submitted online through e-procurement portal on or before 10.06.2019 upto 4.00 PM. (3) Date of Pre-bid Meeting: 04.06.2019 at 4.00 PM at above office. (4) Date of Opening of Technical Bids: 12.06.2019 at 11.00 AM if possible or next working day at above office. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division
"Pay development charges, help to develop Bengaluru"

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF, WATER RESOURCES, ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR.
Procurement Notice No.CELMB 01 OF 2019-20

- Name of the Work : Anti Sea Erosion Work to Protect Saline Embankment at Chandipur and Parikhi in Balasore District (From RD 00 to RD 835 mtr at Chandipur and RD 00 m to RD 2000 mtr of Parikhi Saline Embankment and RD 00 mtr to RD 670 mtr bank protection work at Parikhi) Package-I under NABARD Assistance RIDF-XXIV.
- Amount put to Tender : Rs.20,79,69,893.00
- Bid Document Cost : Rs.10,000.00 (online)
- E.M.D. : Rs.20,79,700.00 (online)
- Class of Contractor : Super Class
- Period of Completion : 18 Calendar months (548 Days)
- Other details are as follows.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)
		From	To	
Chief Engineer FC & Basin Manager, LMB, Bhubaneswar	CELMB BLS 01 OF 2019-20	07.06.2019 10.00 hrs	24.06.2019 17.00 hrs	25.06.2019 11.00 hrs

8. e-mail id : celmbbsrs@yahoo.co.in
Further detail conditions can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Sd/-
Chief Engineer FC & Basin Manager, Lower Mahanadi Basin

Office of the Chief Construction Engineer
Upper Kolab Project, Bariniput, Dist.:Koraput, ODISHA-764006
email id: ccekolab@yahoo.com, Phone / FAX:08854-242035
e - PROCUREMENT NOTICE No-CCEUKP-01/2019-20
No. 1905 / Dated : 28.05.2019

- No. of work : 01 (One) no
- Value of work : Rs.951.75 Lakh (Exc.uding GST)
- Bid Security/EMD : Rs.9,51,800/-
- Class of contractor : "Special" & "Super Class"
- Period of completion : 6 (Six) Calendar months (Including rainy season)
- Type of contract : Percentage Rate
- Cost of Tender paper : Rs. 10 000/- (Non refundable)
- Availability of Tender on-line for bidding : From 9.00Hrs on 07.06.2019 to 17.00Hrs on 24.06.2019
- Date & time of on line bid submission : From 9.00 Hrs on 07.06.2019 to 17.00 Hrs on 24.06.2019
- Date & time of opening : 11.30Hrs on 25.06.2019. in Office of the Chief Constructon Engineer, Upper Kolab Project, Bariniput.
- Date & time of opening : to be intimated to the qualified Bidder(s) after approval of Financial Bid.

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in/www.dowradisha.gov.in. Addendum/Changeorder/Corrections if any required will be published in Govt. website only
Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Upper Kolab Project, Bariniput

12 killed in U.S. municipal office shooting

The suspect, a 'disgruntled' public utility employee, was killed by the police after a long gun battle

REUTERS
VIRGINIA BEACH

A disgruntled public utility employee opened fire with a handgun on co-workers at a municipal building in Virginia on Friday afternoon, killing 12 people and wounding at least four before he was fatally shot by the police, authorities said.

The mass shooting in the coastal resort of Virginia Beach was the deadliest instance of U.S. gun violence since November 2018, when a dozen people were slain at a Los Angeles-area bar and grill by a gunman who then killed himself.

Virginia Beach Police chief James Cervera said the suspect, identified as DeWayne Craddock, was armed with a .45-caliber pistol equipped with a "sound suppressor" device and "extended" ammunition magazines he used to reload repeatedly during the attack.

Craddock had worked for the public utilities department for about 15 years, Mr. Cervera said at a news conference.



Difficult times: Officials releasing the photographs and names of the victims on Saturday. ■ AFP

All but one of the victims were employed by the city, officials said, while the other was a contractor seeking a permit.

Survivors recounted scenes of pandemonium and fear that erupted as gunshots rang out, and workers scurried frantically for cover.

"We just heard people yelling and screaming to get down," Megan Banton, a public utilities worker, told television station WAVY-TV, re-

calling that she and co-workers barricaded themselves in their office.

"We put the desk up against the door because we didn't know if they were coming in. We were just hoping that it would be over soon, and then we heard the cops yelling up the steps."

The first victim was shot in a vehicle outside the public works and utilities building at the city municipal centre before the suspect en-

tered that building and "immediately and indiscriminately fired upon all the victims," Mr. Cervera said. Bodies were found on all three floors of the building.

Officer wounded

The chief said the suspect engaged in a "long-term gun battle" with four police officers who confronted him inside, preventing the gunman from "committing more carnage in that building".

One officer was wounded in the shootout, but his bullet-proof vest saved his life, Mr. Cervera said.

Authorities said the gunman ultimately was shot by the police and was declared dead at a hospital.

Mr. Cervera described the suspect as "disgruntled", but declined to say more about what may have precipitated the attack. "We have more questions than we really have answers," he said.

The shooting was believed to be the deadliest act of workplace gun violence in the U.S. since February, when a factory worker shot five colleagues to death in Aurora, Illinois, just after he was let go from his job.

The bloodshed unfolded, according to the police, at Building Two of the municipal centre complex, where office space for more than 400 employees houses IT, public works, planning and utilities departments.

"This is the most devastating day in the history of Virginia Beach," said Mayor Bobby Dyer.

Boris Johnson will make an excellent British PM: Trump

Criticises Theresa May's handling of Brexit negotiations

AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE
LONDON

U.S. President Donald Trump has said that former British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson would make an "excellent" Prime Minister to replace Theresa May.

Mr. Trump was speaking ahead of the start of a state visit to Britain on Monday, during which he will meet Ms. May.

She is set to resign on June 7 over her failure to deliver a deal to bring Britain out of the European Union.

Asked by the British tabloid newspaper *The Sun* for his opinion on the 12 candidates to replace her, Mr. Trump said, "I think Boris would do a very good job. I think he would be excellent." "I have always liked him. I don't know that he is going to be chosen, but I think he is a very good guy, a very talented person," Mr. Trump said.

He added that several



Boris Johnson

candidates in the Conservative leadership race had asked for his support, without revealing who.

A key Leave campaigner in the Brexit referendum, Mr. Johnson has said he is prepared to take Britain out of the European Union, "deal or no deal".

'Advantage EU'

In the interview, Mr. Trump also repeated his criticism of how Ms. May has handled Brexit negotiations, saying Britain had allowed the EU to "have all the cards".

"It is very hard to play well when one side has all the advantage," he said. "I had mentioned to Theresa that you have got to build up your ammunition."

Ms. May concluded a divorce agreement with the EU in November but her deal was rejected three times by the British Parliament, forcing her to seek a delay in leaving the bloc, now scheduled for October 31.

Commenting on Britain's domestic politics and opining on ruling-party leadership choices at a sensitive time would normally be an unusual move for a U.S. President - but not for Mr. Trump, a former reality-TV star who often speaks his mind. It could however add to tensions during his three-day visit to Britain.

Mr. Trump is to be received in Buckingham Palace on Monday by Queen Elizabeth II.

'U.S. Justice dept. preparing antitrust inquiry of Google'

Probe will look into practices related to web search: report

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SAN FRANCISCO

The U.S. Department of Justice is preparing an antitrust investigation of Internet titan Google, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday.

The *Journal* cited unnamed sources close to the matter as saying the department would look into Google practices related to web search and other businesses. Justice department offi-

cial share antitrust oversight with the Federal Trade Commission, which conducted a wide-ranging investigation of its own into Alphabet-owned Google that ended in 2013 with no action taken.

Google did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A new investigation would come as backlash grows against major tech

companies that dominate key segments of the online economy.

Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren has argued that big firms such as Facebook, Google and Apple should be broken up through antitrust enforcement.

In March, the European Commission had slapped the company with a \$1.7 billion anti-trust fine.

No ceasefire soon, says Taliban leader

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

The Taliban's leader said on Saturday the insurgents will not call a ceasefire any time soon, even as a U.S. envoy was heading to the region for a fresh round of peace talks.

In a defiant message, Taliban chief Haibatullah Akhundzada boasted that foreign forces in Afghanistan were "condemned to defeat", but said the Islamist insurgents would continue talks with the U.S.

'Investing heavily to defend Asian allies'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SINGAPORE

The United States warned China on Saturday against threatening its neighbours' sovereignty and said Washington is investing in new military technology to defend its Asian allies.

Washington and Beijing have been vying for influence in the region, which hosts potential flashpoints such as the South China Sea, the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait.

Ties between the two powers are once again taking centre stage at the weekend Singapore conference

known as the Shangri-La Dialogue, which gathers Defence Ministers and top military officials from around the world.

"China can and should have a cooperative relationship with the rest of the region ... But behaviour that erodes other nations' sovereignty and sows distrust of China's intentions must end," acting U.S. Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan told the forum. "Until it does, we stand against a myopic, narrow, and parochial vision of the future, and we stand for the free and open order that has benefit-

ted us all, including China." Washington has been pushing back against Beijing's aggressive militarisation of the South China Sea, where China has staked "indisputable" ownership over almost the whole area and rejects partial claims by Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

For the first time since 2011, China has sent its Defence Minister, General Wei Fenghe, to the Singapore gathering. Mr. Wei is scheduled to speak on Sunday, when he is expected to respond to Mr. Shanahan's remarks.

Mr. Shanahan said the U.S. was investing heavily in new military technology to combat fresh threats and maintain its superiority and capability to defend its Asian allies. He said North Korea "remains an extraordinary threat and requires continued vigilance" and stressed Washington would continue to meet its defence obligations to Taiwan. "The Indo-Pacific is our priority theatre. We are where we belong. We are investing in the region," he said, adding that military investments will rise significantly over the next five years.

IN BRIEF



Ocasio-Cortez pushes for minimum wage raise

NEW YORK
U.S. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez returned to her restaurant roots on Friday, donning an apron and serving drinks in Manhattan in a push to raise the country's minimum wage. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez is calling for a raise to the federal hourly minimum wage to \$15 for service workers. ■ AFP

3 Jaish activists get jail term for terror funding

ISLAMABAD
A court in Pakistan has sentenced three activists of the Masood Azhar-led Jaish-e-Mohammad for five years each in jail for arranging funds for the proscribed terror outfit. The Anti-Terrorism Court found the trio guilty in three separate cases on Friday. ■ PTI

79 people injured in blast at Russian explosives plant

200 buildings damaged; safety violations to be probed

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

A blast at a major explosives plant in central Russia on Saturday injured 79 people and damaged nearly 200 buildings nearby, local officials told Russian news agencies.

The explosion happened at the 'Kristall' factory in Dzerzhinsk, about 400 km east of Moscow, in the Nizhny Novgorod region.

A local Health Ministry official, quoted by the TASS news agency, said 79 people had suffered light or moderate injuries, a huge increase on the initial figure of 19.

"According to the latest information, 79 people asked for medical help after the explosion at Kristall: 38 factory workers and 41 residents of the city. There are



Smoke rising from the blast site in Dzerzhinsk on Saturday. ■ REUTERS

no children among the injured," a Health Ministry statement said.

Fifteen people were hospitalised but none had life-threatening injuries, it said.

Earlier, Health Ministry officials told news agencies that the wounded had "shrapnel wounds of mild and moderate severity" and that they were receiving medical assistance.

The force of the blast damaged five factory buildings and 180 houses nearby.

The Deputy Governor of the Nizhny Novgorod region, Dmitry Krasnov, told Russian state television that two people were missing.

Russia's Investigative Committee said it had opened an investigation into potential violations of industrial safety at the plant.

Local emergency services told news agencies that more than 300 people and 50 technical vehicles were taking part in cleaning the blast site.

Trump bets the U.S. economy on tariffs

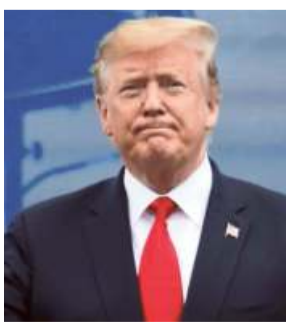
President insists change in trade policy poses no economic risk to America

JIM TANKERSLEY
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump is upending the U.S. economy, and perhaps jeopardising his re-election prospects, with an abrupt escalation of protectionist trade policies.

Mr. Trump announced on Thursday that he would soon impose a 5% tariff on imports from Mexico, which could quickly grow to 25%, unless Mexican officials stop the flow of immigrants across America's southern border.

The move capped a furious month of cross-border tariff threats that has rattled investors and raised economists' concerns about a slowdown in global growth. Just three weeks ago, Mr. Trump increased tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods and started the



Donald Trump

process to tax nearly everything China sends into the U.S. And he said the U.S. was prepared to impose tariffs on autos from Europe and Japan in six months, setting a tight deadline for those governments to reach trade deals with the Trump administration.

In the span of 30 days, Mr. Trump has enacted or threatened what amounts to a

nearly \$200 billion annual tax increase on U.S. businesses and consumers, which would be enough to cancel out the average annual value of the tax cut package the President signed in late 2017. His actions have also further imperilled congressional passage of the new trade agreement he negotiated last year with Mexico and Canada.

Markets have shown clear damage from the escalation. At the start of May, the U.S. economy was riding a strong quarter of growth at 3.2% and investors were bullish on the months to come.

Thereafter, the China talks broke down, and Mr. Trump said he would increase tariffs until a deal was reached. Stocks are down more than 6% since then. "Trump trade policy

might well mean a permanent state of endemic uncertainty and instability in the global trading system," Krishna Guha, vice-chairman of Evercore ISI, wrote in a research note on Friday morning.

Mr. Trump continues to insist that tariff escalation poses no economic risk, saying tariffs boosted U.S. growth earlier this year. He tweeted in May that tariff payments "are partially responsible for our great economic results" - a statement that little evidence supports.

Most economists warn that large and sustained tariff increases, along with likely retaliation from China and Mexico against American farmers and other exporters, will dampen global trade and drag on growth in the U.S. ■ NY TIMES

THE HINDU GROUP

TRANSCENDING TIME

The journey of an Inimitable Sage traced through lens and letters

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A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

IndiGo close to new engine deal with CFM

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

Low-cost carrier IndiGo is close to a decision on engines that could mark a dramatic shift away from Pratt & Whitney towards its French-American rival CFM, but a final decision is only expected later in June, according to three people aware of the matter.

IndiGo has an order book of 430 Airbus planes of the A320neo family, of which the first 150 aircraft were to be powered by engines from United Technologies Corp's Pratt & Whitney. IndiGo is now running a bidding process in which Pratt and CFM, jointly owned by General Electric and Safran, are competing to provide engines for the remaining 280 planes, two of the three people said.

Car sales skid as demand remains sluggish

Sector woes continue; Maruti posts 22% decline in May; weak sentiment hits Toyota, M&M, Tata Motors and Honda

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Saturday reported a 22% decline in sales at 1,34,641 units in May. The company had sold 1,72,512 units in May 2018, the company said in a statement. Domestic sales declined by 23.1% to 1,25,552 units as against 1,63,200 units in the year ago month, it added.

Sales of mini cars, comprising Alto and WagonR, declined 56.7% to 16,394 units. Sales in the compact segment, which includes models such as Swift, Celerio, Ignis, Baleno and Dzire, were down 9.2% to 70,135 units.

Mid-sized sedan Ciaz sold 3,592 units as compared to 4,024 units in the same month a year ago. Sales of utility vehicles, including Vitara Brezza, S-Cross and Ertiga,



Silver lining: Toyota exported 928 units of the Etios series in May as against 827 units last year. *G.R.N. SOMASHEKAR

were down 25.3% to 19,152. Exports in May were down by 2.4% to 9,089 units.

Toyota sales dip 6.2%
Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) reported a 6.3% decline in total vehicle sales to 13,066 units in May, as against 13,940 in the same

month last year. In the domestic market, the company posted sales of 12,138 units, down 7.4%, TKM said in a statement.

"The company exported 928 units of the Etios series this month....The company exported 827 units of the Etios series (in May 2018)...."

it added. TKM deputy managing director N. Raja, said: "The customer demand had witnessed a continued slow-down before the election results. Customers have been spending cautiously, which led to sluggishness in the domestic auto sales. Added factors such as liquidity tightening, high insurance costs, increase in fuel costs have also weakened the retails."

Mahindra sales fall
Mahindra and Mahindra (M&M) reported a 3% decline in total sales at 45,421 units in May, M&M said.

In the domestic market, sales were down 1.7% to 43,056 units last month compared to 43,818 units in May 2018. Exports dropped by 21.9% to 2,365 units as against 3,030 units in the

year-ago month. In the passenger vehicles segment – which includes UVs, cars and vans – it sold 20,608 vehicles in May this year, against 20,715 vehicles in the same month last year. In the commercial vehicles segment, the firm sold 17,879 vehicles as against 18,748 units earlier. In the medium and heavy commercial vehicles segment, M&M sold 637 vehicles for the month.

Tata Motors slides
Tata Motors reported a 26% decline in domestic sales to 40,155 units in May, Tata Motors said in a statement.

"Tata Motors commercial and passenger vehicles business sales in the domestic market in May 2019 at 40,155 units witnessed a drop of 26%, as against 54,290 units sold in May 2018, as market

sentiment continued to be muted," it said in a statement.

Honda drops
Honda Cars India Ltd. (HCIL) reported a 27.87% decline in domestic sales to 11,442 units in May as against 15,864 units in the same month last year. HCIL said it exported a total of 450 units last month.

"The market continues to be tough for the auto industry with two consecutive months of such a high degrowth. It is unprecedented in the last two decades. After elections, we were expecting an upswing. Factors such as liquidity are affecting capital to the auto sector and increase in fuel prices has remained a challenge," HCIL senior VP and director, sales and marketing, Rajesh Goel said.

GST receipts at ₹1 lakh cr. in May

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

GST collections touched ₹1 lakh crore in May compared with ₹94,016 crore in the year-earlier period, the government said.

The gross collection in May at ₹1,00,289 crore is, however, lower than the ₹1,13,865 crore collected in April. A total of 72.45 lakh GSTR-3B returns were filed in May, higher than 72.13 lakh in April. "The total gross GST revenue collected in May is ₹1,00,289 crore of which CGST is ₹17,811 crore, SGST is ₹24,462 crore, IGST is ₹49,891 crore and Cess is ₹8,125 crore," the Centre said. An amount of ₹18,934 crore has been released to the States as GST compensation for the months of February and March.

Brij Mohan Khaitan passes away

The 92-year-old was patriarch of Williamson Magor Group

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

Industrialist Brij Mohan Khaitan, who hogged the limelight by acquiring the Indian business of Union Carbide in the 1990s, passed away on Saturday morning at his residence here due to old-age ailments, family sources said.

Mr. Khaitan, 92, was the patriarch of the Williamson Magor Group that deals in dry-cell battery, tea and engineering services.

Citing old age, he had stepped down as the chairman recently from the boards of the group's two key companies – Eveready Industries India Ltd. and McLeod Russel India Ltd.

He, however, remained chairman emeritus for both



Brij Mohan Khaitan

the companies. Business chambers and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee have offered their condolences.

In a tweet, Ms. Banerjee said, "Saddened at the passing away of noted industrialist B.M. Khaitan Ji. He was a much respected elder states-

man of the business community of Bengal. My condolences to his family, his colleagues and his friends."

Indian Chamber of Commerce said: "ICC is extremely grieved to learn the sad demise of B.M. Khaitan ji. We deeply mourn his sad demise as he was our revered guide and patron. His passing away is a great loss to the family and to the Business fraternity as well. He was a doyen of the Indian industry."

Mr. Khaitan got the Lifetime Achievement Award from the ICC in 2013. His acquisition of the Indian business of Union Carbide in the 1990s gave him a dominant position in the dry-cell battery business, which continues till today.

Citroen banks on 'phygital' approach for India sales

Carmaker plans to initially open stores in ten Indian cities with a focus on digital experience

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR
PARIS

French auto major Citroen, which will make its India debut next year with its C5 Aircross SUV, plans to use a 'phygital' approach while entering the highly competitive Indian market, where many foreign carmakers have found the going difficult.

Citroen, which would be the second French automaker after Renault to enter the Indian market, plans to initially open stores in ten Indian cities with a focus on the digital experience within the store.

Physical, digital
"The word phygital is a play on physical and digital," said Saurabh Vatsa, senior director, marketing operations,



Future perfect: Customers can even see the final look of the car before booking. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Citroen India. "We already have such stores in France under the name of 'La Maison' which means house. The aim is that when someone comes to the store, it should feel like home. We will have the same name and theme everywhere," added

Mr. Vatsa. As part of the 'phygital' experience, the company will have big screens and a kiosk in the store where customers can try all the accessories available for the car and even see the final look of the car before booking.

"Incidentally, to enhance the seamless experience between home and the store, the company will allow users to customise the car through its website and the customisation can be saved, only to be directly downloaded later at the kiosk in the store.

Large-screen novelty
"The screens in the stores will provide a larger-than-life experience while allowing a person to sit with his or her entire family. It is always good to see a car in a large format than on a small mobile screen or tablet," said Mr. Vatsa.

While the company plans to open stores in various formats, the larger format stores are likely to be spread across 5,000 to 6,000 sq ft

with the mid-sized ones measuring about 2,500 sq ft.

Established in 1919, Citroen is part of Groupe PSA, which is the second-largest automaker in Europe after the Volkswagen Group, and plans to launch one new vehicle every year in the Indian market, starting 2020 onwards.

In an earlier interaction with *The Hindu*, Citroen's chief executive officer Linda Jackson said that she intends to increase the annual sales of the company from the current one million units to 1.5 million globally with India expected to become one of the key markets in the next five years.

(The writer was recently in Paris at the invitation of Citroen)

INTERVIEW | JEAN-MICHEL CASSE

Accor Group plans to bring more brands into Indian market

Our brand strategy has shifted to being 'client-centric,' says COO — India, S.Asia

N. ANAND

Accor Group has drawn up plans to bring international brands to India and expand its luxury, lifestyle and premium brands portfolio, says its chief operating officer — India and South Asia Jean-Michel Casse.

How is the hospitality sector doing in India vis-a-vis your hotels?

■ India's hospitality industry has witnessed tremendous growth. In the last year, the industry has witnessed the highest occupancy and average room rate (ARR) in a decade, thus, continuing to show promising progress.

This is true across segments, from luxury to premium and economy.

The opportunity is immense, and this has enabled us to further develop properties and bring in more Accor brands to India.

The arrival of the Raffles brand in Udaipur and Jaipur is a testimony to the flourishing market for luxury brands. Our brands and properties are also currently witnessing similar growth.

The mid-scale and economy segment, which caters to both leisure and business travellers, is also on the rise.

For example, Novotel has also experienced positive growth. Last year, we launched our 20th Novotel in India and are in the midst of launching our Novotel20 campaign to celebrate this. Also, our economy ibis brand has experienced great occupancies and high ARRs.

What is your plan for the next five years,

including keys, investment and properties?

■ Accor globally is an asset-light company. Our growth is led by densification, which is a key development strategy for Accor on the back of strong market demand with opportunities to deliver quality brands across segments.

Accor's approach overall, on its brand strategy, has

The arrival of the Raffles brand in Udaipur and Jaipur is a testimony to the flourishing market for luxury brands

shifted from 'product-centric' to 'client-centric,' by which it means focusing more on serving a customer in all their varied personas and changing needs.

In April, we announced the arrival of the iconic luxury Raffles brand in India with two properties – the Raffles Udaipur and the Raffles Jaipur. While we continue to drive our mid-scale and economy portfolio aggressively, we are focused on expanding our luxury, lifestyle and premi-

um brands portfolio in the country. Banyan Tree, SO/, SLS, Delano, Mondrian, Hyde and Tribe, amongst others, are some of the brands which have the potential growth and audience in the Indian market.

We are also interested in the development of branded, private and serviced residences in urban and sought-after locations in the country. We also have the Fairmont Mumbai under development and are in active discussion for coming up with a Fairmont in Goa.

Your plans of having 1,500 keys in five years... are they on track?

■ As shared earlier, currently we have approximately 5,000 keys (rooms) in the pipeline and under active development. We are on track in terms of increasing the number of rooms in the region.

When will Raffles and Banyan Tree open to guests in India?

■ Raffles Udaipur with 101 lake-facing rooms is expected to open by mid-2020 and Raffles Jaipur by 2022.

For the Banyan Tree brand, we believe that it has growth potential in the Indian market and we are in discussions

to develop the brand in the country.

After quickly opening many hotels, everything seems to be silent on your side?

■ Currently, we have 25 hotels and approximately 5,000 keys in the pipeline and under active development. In 2019, we opened two properties – Mercure Goa Devaaya Retreat and ibis Kolkata Rajarhat and will open the Grand Mercure Ahmedabad GIFT City with 158 keys. In 2020, we have Grand Mercure Bangalore OMR, Novotel Mumbai International Airport and ibis Mumbai LBS Road in the pipeline.

Initially, you were focussing on Novotel and Ibis; what is your stand on Mercure and Pullman?

■ At Accor, our strategy is to densify in markets of India. Novotel (20 properties) and ibis (19 properties) are the most visible brands due to the sheer number of hotels.

We develop brands based on the requirement of the market and what travellers are demanding.

Our focus is to expand the brands in the luxury, premium, mid-scale and economy segments.

For Pullman and Mercure, we continue to focus on increasing the number of hotels depending on the demand from our guests and the city as well.

Will you be entering tier II cities?

■ Our strategy is to densify in key cities with our mid-scale and economy brands Novotel and ibis, respectively.

We also are developing properties across the luxury and premium segments in the region.

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In a fog of war

How did an Indian Air Force Mi-17 helicopter get shot down by the IAF? What are the protocols in place to distinguish enemy from friendly aircraft?

DINAKAR PERI

The story so far: On the morning of February 27 this year, as jets of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Pakistan Air Force were engaged in a dog fight over the Naushera sector in Jammu and Kashmir, an IAF Mi-17 helicopter with two pilots and four personnel took off from Srinagar air base. It crashed within 10 minutes at Budgam killing all the personnel and a civilian on the ground. As the fog settled, it was suspected that the Mi-17 may have been shot down by friendly fire. A Court of Inquiry (CoI) was ordered to ascertain the facts of the incident.

How are aircraft identified?

There are a range of methods used to identify friendly aircraft. These include visual sightings, radio transmission, designated entry and exit points for friendly aircraft and a transponder-based Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) system. With supersonic aircraft and long range radars, the IFF system is the predominant method used in both civil and military aviation to identify aircraft. The IFF is a transponder-based identification device that communicates with ground radars and exchanges encrypted codes to indicate that the aircraft is a friendly one. Some modes of transponders also indicate the speed and specific coordinates of the aircraft

which are used by civil air traffic controllers to identify commercial aircraft. In addition, there are designated air corridors marked safe for friendly aircraft to fly. This is because during a combat situation, air defences in sensitive areas are free to fire at any violator.

What went wrong with the helicopter?

The Mi-17 had crashed in an inhabited area and the Flight Data Recorder (FDR), commonly referred to as the black box and the most crucial thing in case of any air accident, was lost. It could not be traced and officials said it may have been taken away by civilians who thronged to the helicopter. The absence of the FDR has delayed the inquiry process. In the absence of the black box which would have provided straight answers to most questions, the CoI had to pursue circumstantial evidence and rule out options to draw likely conclusions. Preliminary indications are that the Mi-17 was shot down by the IAF's Israeli-origin SPYDER surface-to-air missile system.

The CoI has found several procedural violations. The biggest of them is that the IFF system was switched off, especially when there was a high alert, and an aerial engagement was under way close by. Due to this, in the midst of the air battle over the skies close by, the Mi-17 was mistakenly identified as belonging to the adversary. In fact, last year, the IAF had issued a directive that all aircraft coming in to land should have the IFF system switched on. But contrary orders seem to have been issued at the Srinagar air base which the CoI would confirm in its report. In addition, it is not clear why the Mi-17 was called back after taking off and not diverted to a safe corridor instead.

As the investigation was under way, the Air Officer Commanding (AOC) of the Srinagar air base under whose watch the incident occurred was posted out in early May. However, the IAF has not said if it was related to the incident or other reasons.

What happens next?

The CoI is expected to submit its report soon. However, a CoI is a fact-finding body ordered by the assembling authority. Ascertaining blame is only the first step in a long process. Also, a CoI has no legal standing. After completion of the CoI, the court based on its findings makes several recommendations. Recommending action against personnel found guilty on certain counts is one of them.

Based on the facts of the case and recommendations, the authorities may go for administrative action or disciplinary action. If disciplinary action is intended, a charge sheet is framed and a summary of evidence may then be ordered. Based on it, authorities may again take a call on a court martial or other action. For instance, an error of judgement can be awarded administrative action, but a gross violation will be given a court martial. A legal branch gives its final recommendation on the punishment and the file is then sent to the Air Headquarters for final decision. A punishment under the Indian Penal Code can also be awarded. IPC is read under Section 71 of the Air Force Act.

However, with clear indications of serious procedural violations leading to loss of life, senior IAF officials have said that criminal proceedings are likely to be initiated against those responsible as soon the report comes in.

Why is China laying down gene editing rules?

After twin experiments with genetic engineering technology, the country agrees with the worldwide scientific community that it needs to be used with care

R. PRASAD

The story so far: In a bid to make babies immune to infection by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), He Jiankui, a researcher from the Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, China, used a clinically untested gene editing tool (CRISPR-Cas9) to modify a particular gene. The tool has also been used on another woman to make a gene-edited embryo; the pregnant woman is expected to deliver in August. The announcement of the birth of gene-edited twin girls late last year set off an international furor.

How does it work?

Unusual but repeated DNA structures that scientists had been observing for some time were given a name – Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats or CRISPR. In 2012, scientists discovered that CRISPR is a key part of the “immune system”. For instance, when a virus enters a bacterium, it fights back by cutting up the virus’s DNA. This kills the virus but the bacterium store some of the DNA. The next time there is an invasion, the bacterium produce an enzyme called Cas9 which matches the stored fingerprints with that of the invader’s. If it matches, Cas9 can snip the invading DNA. The CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing tool thus has two components – a short RNA sequence that can bind to a specific target of the DNA and the Cas9 enzyme which acts like a molecular scissor to cut the DNA. To edit a gene of interest, the short RNA sequence that perfectly matches with the DNA sequence that has to be edited is introduced. Once it binds to the DNA, the Cas9 enzyme cuts the DNA at the targeted location where the RNA sequence is bound. Once the DNA is cut, the natural DNA repair mechanism is utilised to add or remove genetic material or make changes to the DNA.

Was it wrong to use the gene tool?

Dr. He used the CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing technique in the twin girls to disable a gene called CCR5, which encodes a protein that allows HIV to enter and infect cells. Though no guidelines have been drawn up so far, there is a general consensus in the scientific and ethics communities that the CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing technique should not be used clinically in embryos. There is also consensus that gene editing can be potentially used only to prevent serious genetic disorders that have no alternative treatment. While HIV cannot be cured, medicines can keep the virus under check.

Importantly, human clinical trials have not been carried out anywhere in the world to test whether disabling the gene completely prevents HIV infection and what the side-effects of doing so would be. In the absence of any clinical trial data as well as consensus to use this tool to prevent HIV infection, performing it on babies as a form of medical intervention is unethical.

According to *Nature*, the hospital that had supposedly given Dr. He ethical approval to use the technique on pregnant women issued a press statement denying this. The hospital also “questioned the signatures on the approval form” and said no committee meeting had been held related to his research work.

Apparently, information on the consent form suggests that the parents who had participated in the experiment were never told about the problems of disabling the gene.

Can disabling the CCR5 gene prevent HIV?

While it is generally believed that babies without a

Snip and change

A DNA editing technique, called CRISPR/Cas9, works like a biological version of a word-processing programme’s “find and replace” function



On January 21 this year, Dr. He was fired from the university where he worked after a probe by the Guangdong health commission found that he had violated the national regulations against using gene-editing for reproductive purposes

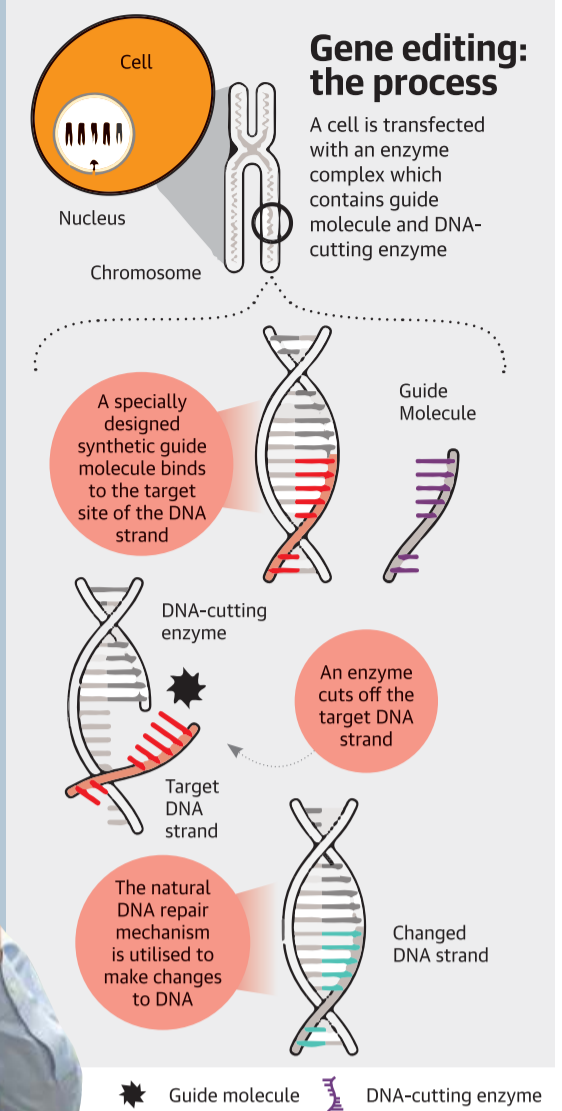
Chinese scientist He Jiankui ■ AP

Source: Reuters, Nature

It is generally believed that babies without a functional CCR5 gene will become resistant to HIV infection

On the other hand, the CCR5 gene is known to protect the lungs, the liver and the brain during certain serious infections and chronic diseases. The gene is known to prompt the immune system to fight the influenza virus in the lungs

Human clinical trials have not been carried out anywhere in the world to test whether disabling the gene completely prevents HIV infection and what the side-effects of doing so would be



functional CCR5 gene will become resistant to HIV infection, certain other strains of HIV use another protein (CXCR4) to infect cells. Hence, even people who are born with two copies of the non-functional CCR5 gene are not completely protected or resistant against HIV infection.

According to the draft regulation, those found violating the rules will be punished and this includes a lifetime ban on research

There is also the possibility that the gene editing tool could have caused unintended mutations in other parts of the genome, which may lead to unpredictable health consequences.

Most importantly, medicines and delivery through caesarean section and avoiding breast feeding can prevent vertical viral transmission from mother to foetus. While women with HIV have greater chances of passing the virus to the foetus, in this case, the mother was HIV-free; the father was HIV positive.

Does the CCR5 gene have any protective role?

The CCR5 gene’s protective role against the West Nile virus is well established. According to *Nature*, the CCR5 gene also helps to protect the lungs, the liver and the brain during certain serious infections and chronic diseases. The gene is known to prompt the immune system to fight the influenza virus in the lungs. Without this gene the defence system would fail. In the case of people with multiple sclerosis, absence of this gene

makes them twice as likely to die early.

Was the gene removed in both babies?

There are two copies of the gene in every person. In the case of one baby girl both the copies of the gene were disabled but in the other baby, only one copy was disabled. So the baby with one functional copy of the gene might still be susceptible to HIV infection. The decision to implant the embryo with only one disabled copy makes the work all the more unethical. Though Dr. He claimed the babies were born in early November last year, *The New York Times* reported that the babies were born premature in October.

What steps has China taken to prevent misuse?

The day Associated Press broke the story, the Chinese national health commission asked the Guangdong health commission to start an investigation. On January 21 this year, Dr. He was fired from the university where he worked after a probe by the Guangdong health commission found that he had violated the national regulations against using gene-editing for reproductive purposes.

According to *The Scientist*, Dr. He’s experiment violates the 2003 guidelines that prohibits the use of gene-manipulated embryos for reproductive purposes. On February 26, China posted the draft regulation requiring researchers to obtain prior approval from the government before undertaking clinical trials. Those found violating the rules will be punished and this includes a lifetime ban on research. China is now all set to introduce gene-editing regulation.

What does the merger of NSSO and CSO entail?

Will the move undermine the NSSO’s autonomy which has been dogged by controversies over data reporting?

PRASHANTH PERUMAL J.

The story so far: On May 23, the government announced that the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) will be merged with the Central Statistics Office to form the National Statistical Office (NSO). Many believe that this move will undermine the autonomy of the NSSO which has been at the centre of various public controversies over data on economic growth and unemployment. The NSO will be headed by the secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI). This is in contrast to the original plan proposed by experts to merge various statistical bodies such as the NSSO and others to create a unified statistics body that is accountable to Parliament, rather than the government.

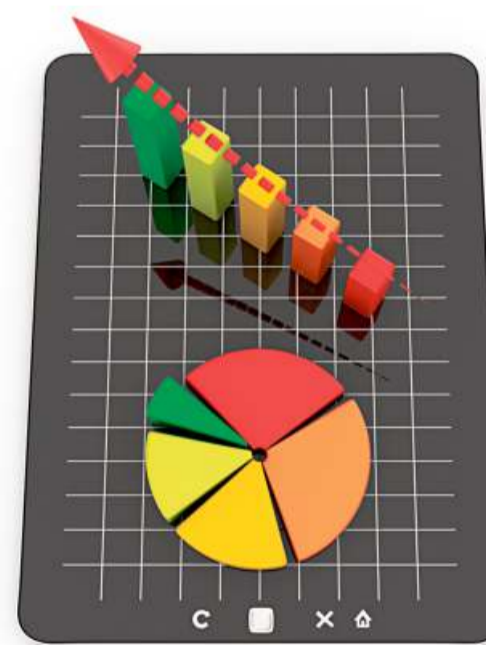
What is the issue?

In May, the NSSO came out with a report which cast serious doubt on the reliability of raw data that is used to calculate India’s gross domestic product (GDP). The NSSO stated that it could not either trace or classify 38.7% of the companies included in the MCA-21, a database of private companies that is maintained by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, whose financial numbers the government currently uses to calculate GDP figures. The NSSO found that data from the Economic Census and the Business Register were far less affected by these issues that plagued the MCA-21 database.

Many believe that the poor quality of raw company data could heavily skew the measurement of private sector business growth, which is a part of the overall GDP of the economy. When data gathered from the MCA-21 database was first used to revise earlier growth figures, sectors such as manufacturing showed significant growth in size in 2013-14. This was in stark contrast to the earlier estimates that showed an actual contraction in the size of manufacturing.

What is the government stand?

MOSPI, however, has defended the use of the MCA-21 database to calculate GDP numbers stating that appropriate adjustments are made to make sure there is no overestimation of GDP. In a clarification issued on May 10, the government stated that companies classified as “out-of-coverage” by the NSSO still contributed to the economy even though they may not fall strictly under the services sector. It further stated that the weightage given to companies that report their financial numbers is far greater and that, in reality, only about 16.4% of companies in the MCA-21 are either closed or non-traceable. The NSSO’s apprehension over the MCA-21



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

database still adds to concerns that already exist about the reliability of GDP data that is put out by the government due to recent changes in methodology.

How is MCA-21 important to GDP?

Experts feel that the financial accounts of several shell companies that are included in the MCA-21 database could be fictitious, and thus cannot be considered as a good proxy for real economic activity. For instance, under the revised GDP series that was introduced in 2015, financial data from companies that filed their accounts with the government even just once in three years were considered sufficient to help make GDP growth estimations. Supporters of the new methodology believe that, in reality, the accounts of most shell companies reflect the financial activities of actual businesses which remain camouflaged behind these fictitious entities. So, they believe, the non-inclusion of shell companies will actually lead to a significant underestimation of the true size of the economy.

Government statisticians have for long used small surveys to gather the raw data that are required to make “blown up” estimations about the growth of the wider economy. This, however, changed in 2015 when the government introduced a new GDP series with 2011-12 as the base year (from the previous base year of 2004-05)

and introduced the MCA-21 database as the mainstay for calculating GDP figures. The fact that even data for the organised sector of the economy were unreliable has

The lack of transparency in the production of economic data can over time cause the users of such data to discount its value

Is the data collected reliable?

The field of economic statistics largely involves the estimation of trends in the economy based on sample data that is collected through surveys and other means. This usually gives rise to disagreements even among experts within the field who could have a genuine difference in opinion about how raw economic data should be collected, and about the various assumptions that should go into the calculation of GDP and other economic estimations. What has caused a rise in concerns about the reliability of India’s GDP figures in the last few years, however, is the belief that the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi may be increasing its interference in the process of the production of economic data. Further, the divergence between official GDP figures which show that growth has fallen below 6% in the fourth quarter and high-frequency economic data which reveal how various sectors are facing a serious slowdown has cast further doubt on the reliability of government data. In January, two non-government members of the National Statistical Commission resigned over, among other reasons, the government’s reluctance to release jobs data collected by the NSSO. The NSSO’s periodic labour force survey, which was leaked in January, had reported that the unemployment rate was at a 45-year high of 6.1% in 2017-18.

Will the merger impact the credibility of government data?

The move will give the government greater leverage over production of key data. The lack of transparency in the production of economic data can over time cause the users of such data to discount its value. This has been the case in countries such as China where the constant tinkering with official economic data has caused analysts to lose trust in them.

CAPSULE



Targeting mosquitos

By genetically engineering a fungus that attacks anopheline mosquitoes to carry insect-specific toxins, researchers caused a population collapse of the targeted mosquitoes in about 45 days. The study was carried out in near-field conditions in Burkina Faso, a landlocked country in West Africa. The fungus infected about 75% of wild insecticide-resistant mosquitoes.



Many circadian clocks

A study published in *Cell* finds that we may have not just one central body-clock located in the brain's hypothalamus. Different body parts respond differently to day and night rhythms. The University of California, Irvine, researchers found that mice's livers stopped functioning only when they were subjected to complete darkness and that the liver had its own circadian clock.

IIT Madras develops material with properties suitable for quantum optoelectronics

Drop-casting gold nanoparticles on tungsten diselenide effectively 'brightens' the 'dark excitons'

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

Materials such as tungsten diselenide (WSe₂) and molybdenum diselenide are being studied keenly for their optoelectronic properties - a combination of optics and electronics. A key property of these materials is photoluminescence, in which the material absorbs light and re-emits it as a spectrum. Researchers from IIT Madras have found a way of enhancing this property about 30 times in tungsten diselenide, by drop-casting gold nanoparticles on to a two-dimensional film. The work is published in *Applied Physics Letters*.

Two-dimensional material

Consisting of practically one layer of atoms, these materials are two-dimensional in structure. Photoluminescence properties can be used in various devices such as quantum LEDs which can be used in communication and computation. "The most challenging aspect of this study was the controlled photoluminescence measurement of these materials from room temperature to 100 K," says Pramoda Kumar Nayak, a DST Ramanujan Fellow at the Department of Physics of IIT Madras and an author of the paper.

As is well known, electrons in semiconductors occupy bands of energy known as valence bands. As long as they live in these bands, they do not



The most challenging aspect was the controlled photoluminescence measurement from room temperature down to 100 K.

move and contribute to conduction. If excited by a small energy input, they get kicked into what is called the conduction band where they can actually be delocalised and contribute to the conduction by moving around.

Excitons

When an electron jumps from the valence to the conduction band, it leaves behind a shadow called a "hole." The electron in the conduction band and

the hole in the valence band can bind together and form a composite object (or pseudoparticle) known as an exciton. Photoluminescence in tungsten selenide is a result of such excitons.

There can be two ways in which an exciton can form - when the spins of the component electron and hole are opposite to each other and when they are aligned in the same direction. The former is called a bright exciton and the latter, a dark exciton. Because

their spins are opposite, the electron and hole forming the bright exciton can recombine, giving out a quantum of light in the process. Such a simple way of recombining does not exist for the dark excitons. Since there, the spin of the electron and the hole are parallel, their recombination is discouraged by the rule of conservation of angular momentum. Hence the dark excitons are longer lived than the bright excitons. The dark excitons need an external influence to help them recombine. In their work, the IIT Madras researchers find exactly such an external influence.

Power of gold

When they drop-cast gold nanoparticles on the surface of the monolayer tungsten diselenide, they find that the dark excitons couple to the surface fields generated and recombine to give off light quanta. Thus, the dark excitons are "brightened" with the help of the gold nanoparticles.

"That plasmonic effect arises due to gold nanoparticles is a well known concept. But, its application to 2D systems is in nascent stage. So, I thought that if we drop-cast gold nanoparticles onto monolayer WSe₂, then it will generate out-of-plane electric field due to plasmonic effect, which can help for spin-flip of conduction band electrons, thereby making dark excitons bright," says Dr Nayak.



U.S. astronaut Scott Kelly shortly after landing near the town of Dzhezkazgan (Zhezkazgan), Kazakhstan, March 2, 2016. REUTERS

Astronaut's body biology changes during space travel

NASA's twin case-control study was a brilliant strategy to find out how



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

The world's first astronaut was Yuri Gagarin of the then Soviet Union. He journeyed into outer space, completing one orbit around the Earth on 12 April 1961. This provoked the US to launch "Project Apollo," to send humans to the moon and bring them back - and they did. After returning from the moon, the astronaut Armstrong made the famous statement: "one small step for man, a giant leap for mankind." And as of today, over 536 people from 37 countries have been astronauts, including our own Rakesh Sharma. And today, there are at least four companies that will, if you have the purse and passion, arrange to make astronauts out of you.

How does going out of the Earth into space affect the human body - its chemistry, physiology, biology and associated medical conditions? For example it takes about 300 days to reach Mars which is 57 million km at its closest from the Earth. How much bodily change can happen during this one-year trip? It was with these issues in mind that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the U.S. set up an experiment to test the changes that happen to various biological features in an astronaut, who will be stationed at the International Space Station (ISS) which is 400 km above, and completes multiple orbits around earth every day.

They placed an astronaut named Scott Kelly on the ISS for a year, measured many biological parameters there as he was in flight. For comparison, as "control" they chose his genetically identical twin Mark Kelly, kept him on earth and did the same set of measurements on him. This case-control study was a brilliant strategy, since whatever changes they monitor in Scott vis-à-vis Mark can be attributed to the effects of space-stay.

Zero gravity and ionising radiations

What are the factors that may go to affect the body biology in space in contrast to these on Earth? One is what is called zero gravity or micro-gravity. Out in space, the individual feels weightlessness, which will affect his body. On the earth, gravity allows us to stay erect. While standing or walking, our body fluids flow downwards (we have body pumps and valves built in, so as to maintain our circulation against the natural downward flow). In space with microgravity, such fluid movements will be affected. As Dr. Lobrich and Dr. Jeggo point out (*Science*, 12 April 2019, pp 127-128), surface gravity has shaped life on earth and most, if not all, physiological process have adapted to it. How will zero- or microgravity affect them?

The second point of concern is exposure to ionising radiation or IR. This arises from cosmic rays, solar flares and such, which will affect the circumnavigating astronaut. On Earth, the atmosphere and the magnetic field of Earth protect us earthlings reasonably efficiently. The terrestrial twin is thus better protected from IR than the space twin.

This twin experiment of comparing many of the chemical, physiological and biochemical features of the space twin with those of his twin on land was done in detail by a group of scientists (Francine Garrett-Bakelman et al., *Science* 364, eaau8650 (2019) DOI: 10.1126/science.aau.8650). They studied cognition, physiology, biochemical changes, microbiology, and gene expression through a variety of methods, as well as the ends of the chromosomes called telomeres. They did exactly the same with Mark on Earth. In addition, they monitored these on Scott before his flight, during the flight and immediately after he returned, and again six months afterwards. This whole study lasted over 25 months.

What did they find? Some biological functions such as immune response (T cells), the body mass, the microbial content in the gut and a few others were in the "low risk" category. Some others, such as the fluids in the vasculature were of mid-level risk. High risk in space flight had to do with the telomeres at the chromosome ends- they shortened. This appears to suggest that IR had an effect on him in flight. The effect of microgravity was felt in a head-ward shift of fluids, thickening of the carotid wall and hence cardiovascular and cerebrovascular changes. The blood flow around the retina of the eye and the thickening of the choroid was noticed, making his vision a bit blurred.

Back to normal on return?

Happily enough, as they monitored Scott months after he returned from ISS, they found much of the in-flight changes reverted to pre-flight levels. While we need more such studies, it becomes clear that long time space travel may affect biological and physiological levels and that, the longer the travel the more the effect. And one may need even more recuperation time post-flight in order that the changes disappear, and the space-tourist gets his/her body back to normal.

dbala@hpei.org

Using genes to understand rice blast disease resistance in Indian rice varieties

From 1980-1987, seven blast endemics have occurred in India causing severe losses

ASWATHI PACHA

Rice blast, caused by a fungus *Magnaporthe oryzae*, is one of the major diseases of the rice crop. Now, researchers from ICAR-National Rice Research Institute (NRI), Odisha have mapped out the diverse genes in rice that help in disease resistance.

By characterising over 150 rice varieties from nine States across the country they also identified new markers associated with blast resistance.

Blast endemics

From 1980-1987, seven blast endemics have occurred in India causing severe losses. Fungicides are very expensive, harmful for the environment and inappropriate application can cause health issues. So researchers around the globe have been on a hunt for resistant genes against the



The rapid changes in pathogen virulence pose a constant challenge to the success of existing blast-resistant rice varieties, says Manoj Kumar Yadav (left).

pathogen and so far, more than 100 resistance (R) genes in the rice genome have been identified.

"The rapid changes in pathogen virulence pose a constant challenge to the success of existing blast-resistant rice varieties. Therefore, there is always a need to identify

new broad-spectrum blast resistant genes/alleles in rice germplasm such as landraces, wild rice, etc," explained Manoj Kumar Yadav from NRI and the first author of the paper published in *PLOS ONE*.

The seeds of landraces grown over nine states were

collected from the National Gene Bank, ICAR-NRRI, Cuttack. Leaves' resistance to blast disease was checked by growing the seeds in uniform blast nursery for two wet seasons (2015 and 2016) at the experimental farm of the institute. This farm is considered as the hot spot for leaf blast disease and the disease was recorded 25 days after sowing.

The present study showed that the rice landraces collected from north-eastern states of India had the highest resistance. Dr. Yadav explains that this may be due to co-evolution of resistance genes along with the fungal pathogen over several centuries.

Gene hunt

Specific DNA markers were used for accurate identification of specific resistant genes. The researchers found

the presence of 24 previously pin-pointed resistant genes in the 161 rice landraces. The landraces were found to harbour 5-19 resistant genes.

The landraces from Tripura had the highest number of resistant genes, followed by those from Maharashtra. The study also pointed out that rice varieties in the same ecological conditions can have different resistant/susceptible behaviours.

The combination of screening and molecular characterization will help in the identification of potential donors for leaf blast.

"The identified associated marker could be used for the selection of parental materials for the improvement of existing varieties with blast resistance," adds P.C. Rath, Head Crop Protection Division and co-author of the paper in an email to *The Hindu*.

Rose-inspired novel device to collect, purify water

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Scientists have taken inspiration from roses to develop a low-cost device for collecting and purifying water.

The team developed a new approach to solar steaming for water production that uses energy from sunlight to separate salt and other impurities from water through evaporation.

In a study published in *Advanced Materials*, they outline how an origami rose provided the inspiration for developing a new kind of solar-steaming system made from layered, black paper sheets shaped into petals.

Water finds its way to the petals where the polypyrrole material coating on the flower turns the water into steam. Impurities naturally separate when condensed in this way.

Image manipulation, duplication in 106 papers from CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research

106 papers published between 2004 and 2018 by scientists from IITR, Lucknow, have serious problems with the images

R. PRASAD

With almost all journals checking for plagiarism at some stage before papers get published, plagiarised papers from India are almost a non-issue now. Indian researchers are now being exposed for a different kind of scientific fraud that is lot harder to detect - manipulating images, and reusing images in the same paper or in different papers.

Problem papers

At last count, 106 papers published between 2004 and 2018 by scientists at the Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (CSIR-IITR), Lucknow have serious problems with the images. The final numbers might be way higher if one were to critically look at all papers published by scientists at IITR during the last 20-25 years.

All the 106 papers posted on Pubpeer website are by independent researchers who have an eye to spot image manipulation and duplication, something that peer-reviews seem to have failed to spot at the time of reviewing the manuscripts. Leading the pack with 40

problematic papers is Dr. Yogeshwar Shukla, a senior scientist at IITR. In a blog post in For Better Science, Smut Clyde had exposed Dr. Shukla's unethical practices in about 25 papers.

In an email to *The Hindu*, Dr. Shukla says: "I have also been informed that this information of Pubpeer is addressed by a committee at our institute to verify authenticity." While not denying the problems with his papers as highlighted on Pubpeer, he says: "We are hurt. I admit that unintentional mistakes might have been made. There was no way to check if the images have already been used in other papers. This is done just to create doubts about Ayurveda and to target someone. A committee is looking into it and we will clarify each and every query raised by the committee."

Pattern in manipulation

There is a pattern to the kind of manipulation that IITR researchers seem to be resorting to. Manipulated and reused Western Blots are the most common. They are also a little harder to spot. The most common practice is to duplicate bands of Western



CSIR-Indian Institute of toxicology Research is at the centre of a controversy, with some faculty allegedly manipulating images and reusing images in the same paper or in different papers.

Blot for completely different experiments mostly in the same paper and at times in other papers.

"Western blots are the most common types I see in papers with photographic images and those are also the ones I seem to find the most," Dr. Elisabeth M. Bik, Science consultant at Harbers-Bik LLC, San Francisco, California had earlier said in an email. Dr. Bik has an eye for manipulated images and has caught tens of papers.

Duplication of microscopic images within the same paper and between papers is the

next common practice adopted by IITR scientists. While using the same image within the same panel or between panels in the same paper might arise from honest mistakes at the time of making the panels, reusing them in papers dealing with very different experiments cannot be a mistake.

"[In general], simple duplications (same magnification, same orientation) are the most common, and they might just be simple errors, caused by selecting the same image twice instead of picking the correct one. After that,

Rotated or manipulated images (in which the same cells are visible multiple times) are less common, but also harder to spot

ELISABETH M BIK
Harbers-Bik LLC, California

overlapping images are very common as well. Rotated or manipulated images (in which the same cells are visible multiple times) are less common, but also harder to spot," says Dr. Bik.

"There is no good software yet on the market to automatically screen images for duplications, but several journals and publishers use human eyes for initial screening, and subsequently software to help confirm irregularities in background noise or similarities using false-colour imaging," she adds.

Retracted papers

Two of Dr. Shukla's papers published in 2011 in *PLOS ONE* and another in *Life Sciences* in 2007 were retracted for problematic images. Both the papers were listed on Pubpeer website and the problems listed with the images have been cited by the

journals in their retraction notice. The third one that has been retracted is an old paper.

After pointing out the problematic images in the retraction notice, *PLOS ONE* says: "The authors have been unable to provide any primary data underlying the figures. The authors commented that the regions of similarity in histopathological images arose due to similarity in lesions studied. For the similarities noted in flow cytometry plots, the authors commented that this could have arisen due to similarity in equipment and protocols. In the absence of the data underlying the figures and in light of the above concerns, the *PLOS ONE* Editors retract the article."

The retraction note in *Life Sciences* paper notes: "Multiple figures in this article appear to be falsified/fabricated. Figure 2A. The images appear to be rotated and reused. Figure 3A. The Beta-actin band appears to be identical to articles from multiple [four] other journals. Figure 6. The Beta-actin band appears to have been reused and possibly manipulated."



ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

To Siri, with love

When a household pet turns out to be more than just a pet over a period

RANOO HARICHANDAN

Dear Siri, you turned one today. Happy Birthday Gelhu, Dholu (as bhai, my son, calls you), Mama (as mummy, or I, call you) and Sira (as papa, my husband, calls you).

I remember the day the two of them brought you home. While on their way home, papa sent me a picture of you sitting in the lap. You were a tiny white cushion. But at that time, honestly speaking, I was scared and my mind was confused. "Why did they bring him home, how will I manage when they leave for office and college respectively?"

Then you came home. Bhai was holding you, and he told me, "Mummy, please hold him and feel how soft he is, he won't do

started melting overnight, again hardened and I started scolding bhai.

This went on for three days. Then bhai left for his hostel and papa, as usual, went to office. So it was only you and me at home. Before leaving, papa had tied you with a leash near the balcony.

But that day you fell sick. You didn't have any food and were asleep. By evening I felt bad. I don't know what happened but something made me come near you. I sat next to you. I gathered courage and gently lifted you up (you were indeed so soft) and placed you on my lap. You were half-awake. When I put you on my lap, you looked at me and went back to sleep. I held you, stroking you.

And today, a year later, you have become one of us, from a nuclear family of three we have become four. All this happened with time. You started going with us on long drives, started sleeping on our bed, going with us to the bazaar.

Slowly, you became familiar with friends, neighbours and relatives, something of a crowd-puller. Everyone started accepting you as part of our family. You are no more a puppy; you've become a young, smart retriever. A happy, joyful, energetic and playful dog. Our morning kick-starts with you, and the day ends with you too. Every night the way you wait for papa at the door for him to come back from work is worth watching.

You are a blessing, and more. Thanks for coming into our life and making it more joyful. You taught us many things, including how to live without any conditions attached. Now, a life without you is just unimaginable.

On your birthday, I pray to god to keep you healthy and make you smart and happy.

It's not only your birthday, it's a birthday for all of us too. You have given us a happier new life. Thank you very much, Siri.

ranoooh@gmail.com

Where art thou, SHAKESPEARE?

The Bard's name is invoked left, right and centre

VIKRAM SINGH THAKUR

The Polish theatre scholar Jan Kott, in his influential work *Shakespeare: Our Contemporary* (1965) wrote, "Shakespeare is like the world, or life itself. Every historical period finds in him what it is looking for."

Kott seems to be most appropriate in twenty-first century India. It's natural for a race of people who have been fed on Shakespeare for long to go back to the wise man for his sage words. Even the Bard is always willing to help his Indian bhakts. His continuing popularity cannot be judged only in terms of his works being adapted across theatre, films and fiction but also in the way he has discreetly entered our lives to become virtually a part of our psyche.

Look at India's Who's Who and you will realise that Shakespeare is very much a part of our socio-cultural and political-legal consciousness. Even the Supreme Court of India has referred to Shakespeare on more than one occasion in judgments. Justice A.K. Ganguly of the Supreme Court in 2012 quoted from *Henry IV* while describing the position of then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in the 2G spectrum sale case. He noted, "The position of the Prime Minister in our democratic polity seems to have been summed up in the words of Shakespeare – uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." He was referring to the delay caused by the Prime Minister's Office in

taking a decision that caused further delay in prosecuting Telecom Minister A. Raja. More recently, the Supreme Court, while giving its verdict on Section 377 of IPC on September 6, 2018, quoted from *Romeo and Juliet*, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose/ By any other name would smell as sweet."

Dipak Misra, as Chief Justice of India, describing the importance of identity, wrote in a judgment, "The said phrase ['What's in a name? That which we call a rose/By any other name would smell as sweet'], in its basic sense, conveys that what really matters is the essential qualities of the substance and the fundamental characteristics of an entity but not the name by which it or a person is called."

Poor Shakespeare, in whose Elizabethan England homosexuality was considered a crime on a par with murder, would be turning in his grave to know he is being invoked today in India to decriminalise homosexuality.

Not only members of the judiciary but also sportsmen and actors have taken to Shakespeare to express themselves. Sachin Tendulkar's crisis as the captain of the Indian cricket team has been described by the same quote that Justice Ganguly had used, in his biography, *Sachin Tendulkar: A Definitive Biography*. Deepika Padukone recently posted her picture on Instagram with a quote from *Henry IV*, "All things are ready, if our mind be so – William Shakespeare", in the

context of her upcoming film *Chhapaak*.

Why should the Indian politician lag behind in this "Quote the Bard Contest"? After all, who can beat the Bard at rhetoric? And what is Indian politics today but rhetoric?

Pranab Mukherjee, while presenting Union Budget 2012 as Finance Minister, leaned on *Hamlet*, "I must be cruel only to be kind," only to justify the "cruel" budget and "kind" intentions of the government.

Smriti Irani, then Minister of Human Resource Development, quoted the witches of *Macbeth*, 'Fair is foul, foul is fair', accusing the Opposition of twisting facts while replying in the Rajya Sabha in February 2016 on Rohith Vemula's suicide.

During the 2017 Kolkata Book Fair, Mamata Banerjee, in her enthusiasm to boast West Bengal's resonance with Shakespeare, made a startling claim that Tagore was a great friend of Shakespeare and Keats.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his radio show 'Mann Ki Baat', on August 27, 2017 displayed his eclectic knowledge when he referred to the *shastras*, Mahatma Gandhi and Shakespeare in the same breath (a potential research project for researchers if they don't want

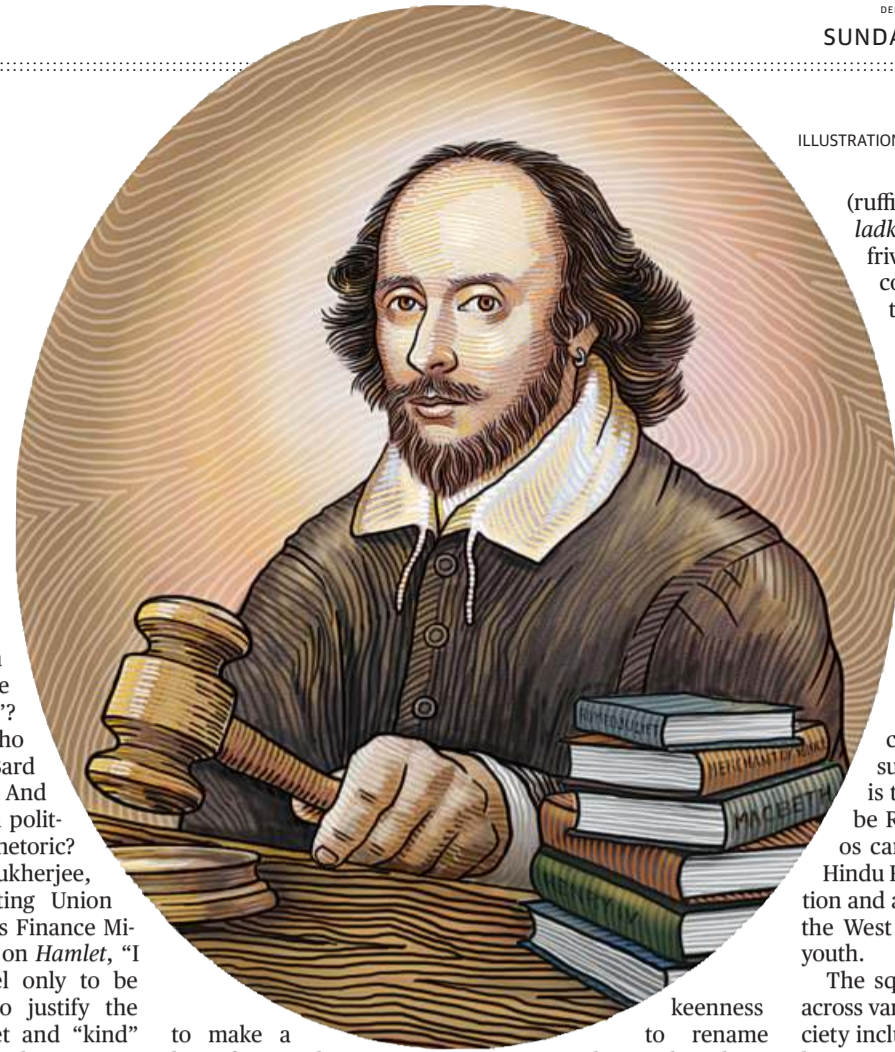


ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

(ruffian), *chichore-type ladke* (young man of a frivolous kind). In this context, Romeo, *aka* the potential molester, needs to be located in the political compulsion to borrow the villain from the other community/culture/religion who needs to be brought to book. Naming the squad after Romeo also suggests the absence of its equivalent in Hindu religion and culture. The assumption, it seems, is that Hindus cannot be Romeos and Romeos cannot be Hindus. A Hindu Romeo is an aberration and another instance of the West corrupting Indian youth.

The squad was criticised across various sections of society including intellectuals, lawyers and social activists who alleged that in the name of protecting women they were harassing young men and making women more dependent in an already patriarchal society. The criticism from various quarters has led to the changing of the squad's name from 'Anti-Romeo Squad' to 'Nari Suraksha Bal'. However, as Juliet said, 'What's in a name? That which we call a rose/ By any other name would smell as sweet.' (How can I desist from quoting the Bard?)

The changing of the name doesn't suggest any change in the squad's work. One thing, however, that it definitely has achieved is to supplant the negative *firangi* name with a more positive Hindu term that goes well with the party's ideology.

Jai Shakespeare!

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It's not only your birthday, it's a birthday for all of us too

anything to you." I wasn't expecting this. I ran to the bedroom and climbed atop the bed. Bhai came in and placed you on the floor below the bed. I had decided that after a few days I would ask them to get rid of him.

We didn't know what we should feed you with, and so you mostly had a branded cereal and curd rice. While both papa and bhai used to play with and cuddle you, I maintained my distance.

I told bhai that at night you won't be allowed to stay inside the home and would need to be in the balcony. He reluctantly agreed. But that night you didn't sleep. You were sitting near the balcony door and looking into the bedroom, waiting to see if someone would take you inside.

I also couldn't sleep. I was looking at you from my bed. Something inside me told me it's not fair to treat a tiny animal in such a manner. He has just come away from his mother and I have left him alone in the balcony? What harm had he done?

The next morning the ordeal started. You had messed up the whole balcony. My heart, which had

Those favourite toys that never grow old or die

A life lesson learnt: in choosing to do the right thing over demands made by friendships, it is wiser to choose the former

HEMA NAIR

In the mid-1990s, my husband and I were struggling young doctors, still in our training jobs. The stipend amounts barely stretched till the end of the month for our meagre household expenses. It was around that time one day that I found Paul and many others like him, in a discount box in a bookstore. He was a walrus that belonged to a tribe called Beanie Babies.

These were horribly expensive stuffed toys that fit in the palm of your hand, and but for their surplus numbers and possibly age accumulated dust, would never have fit into my budget. Although we rarely ever splurged on luxuries, I thought our four-year-old, who generally favoured cars, and robots with movable joints, deserved this treat. Krish eagerly adopted Paul when we took him home.

Krish was a self-sufficient little boy who could spend hours minding his own business and playing by himself with his toys. So there one would find him, sitting on the floor with remarkable flexibility, on his bent back leg, assembling the parts of his plastic rocket made up of virtually a million pieces, being watched quietly by Paul while the two discussed the suitability of the different pieces available.

Krish grew up and Paul remained the same. Nestled in his cupboard, lying around on his table, scrunched up on his bed – he was always around somewhere. Paul made it through not less than six moves, including two years spent in storage while we were out of the country. By the time Paul made it out of the box after his hibernation, quite a few changes had occurred in the world outside. For one, Krish had acquired a little brother. After



ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

10 years of solitude and calm, he now had to accommodate in his life a long-cherished sibling, but a tornado nevertheless. Although Krish had first rights to Paul, he was not averse to sharing, and Paul sometimes found himself in the company of his little brother.

The little one was at an age

gested that they flush Paul down the toilet and record the deed, the little one just went along. He probably has no first-hand memory of it now, but the regret prompted by the retelling of the story is always intense.

His first lesson in life that when it comes to choosing to do the right thing over demands made by friendships, it is wiser to choose the former. Paul was now gone forever, and it was a very sad day for the whole family, notwithstanding the fact that he was just a stuffed toy.

Krish never spoke much about that episode, but I know my boy, and I knew his hurt. The wound was probably hurting a great deal, because he even told his close friend about it. She later moved to England to complete her education, but they kept in touch.

I don't know if she actively went on a Beanie Baby hunt or if she came across one and

was reminded of Krish's loss. But a few years later on his birthday, she sent him a picture of an identical Paul that she had bought for him as his gift. It was a few months more before Paul made the long-haul flight from Heathrow to Bengaluru with someone from her family, and the last-mile journey in a courier box to our home.

I am sure Krish was very aware that it was not his Paul, but the thoughtfulness of the gesture and the utter beauty of this remarkable experience is sure to have touched his soul.

The rest of us are just even more than happy to have Paul back – nestled in his desk drawer, lying around on his table or scrunched up on his bed.

As for the little one, he is now grown older and wiser, and still plays, albeit more responsibly with Paul.

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How close we really are to the edge of the precipice

There's no gainsaying what the next hour or second may bring; it will take just a moment for the bottom to fall out

THOMAS PAUL

November 23, 1956. My date of birth was eventful, not just because I was born on the day the Tuticorin Express derailed near Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu killing over a hundred and forty passengers, but because my dad had booked to travel on the train that day. But since I was born that day – a couple of days prematurely – he had cancelled his ticket and stayed back in Madras, now Chennai. And, in the event, escaped death.

From here it is conjecture which raises goosebumps whenever I think about it – the 'what if' kind. We were a hair's breadth away from disaster, and had it struck, had my dad taken that train, I can imagine how life would have turned out for our family: mom turning single parent overnight; juggling job and

household. And how the level playing field we had had till then would have turned rough, the environment would have turned hostile, and so on. We would have inhabited a parallel universe of struggle for decades.

That gets me thinking sometimes. We never know how close we are to the edge. Accidents ranging from getting hit while just crossing a road, to a bewildering array of natural and unnatural causes, can change lives in an instant. Currently our lives might be relatively incident-free – relative, that is, to what one sees daily in the newspapers. Heart-rending stories reside there.

Besides what befalls us accidentally, there is also the very station in life we are born into, which places some of us at a serious disadvantage from which it is difficult to emerge. What many



ILLUSTRATION: SATWIK GADE

of us take for granted – family security, financial security, knowing that the next meal is certain, the social status, access to opportunities – are not available to a huge percentage of the population.

Whenever I feel that life could have been better, I tell myself it could actually have been worse, too – unimaginably worse. Just a casual browsing on the Net for 'Hu-

man Diseases' throws up tens of thousands of them. The human body is so vulnerable, causing us to doubt whether the divinity that designed us had any clue, throwing in so many diseases ranging from the debilitating to those that are just needless nuisances. If we are afflicted with only one or two from the 30,000-strong list, we should still feel thankful

we are left to tell the tale.

There's no gainsaying what the next hour or second may bring. Sant Kabir's '*Pal mein pralay*' comes to mind. It takes just a moment for the bottom to fall out of our world, with some sudden flood, a tsunami or an earthquake, a fire in the building that catches us off-guard, some falling masonry, or a road accident, in their thousands per second, all over the world. What we take for granted today might simply not exist the next day. Apart from natural disasters, social or financial disasters can arrive from nowhere.

Kindness is needed, one to another. We don't know other people's struggles, the brave face they are putting on despite their problems, the mountains they are climbing, against odds. Every time we cause hurt, especially by means of our bril-

liant ability to communicate in harsh words – our ability to surgically strike in fancy English or whatever language we are clever at. It gets passed on to others as the chain of pain. Communication skills may just be hyped.

Let us not take offence at slights, real or imagined. A grim-faced person could be dealing with serious personal problems, or it could be that the expression is but a manufacturing defect. He may not be upset with us at all. Half our 'easily offended' attitude will disappear if we realise that people have their own issues and may not be thinking of us at all.

We exhaust our lives proving points, and 'showing' others who we are, forgetting that we too are standing on the cliff's edge, just a step away from oblivion.

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Between humans and machines

Why we need explainable Artificial Intelligence to avoid risks from malfunctioning systems
RAJEEV SANGAL

Here's a plan for you

The importance of trying to figure out life as we move along, and not giving up
VARADA MENON R.

Ready for everything

Speech or silence, action or inaction, design or default – anything may cause embarrassment
S. SIVARAMAN

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Henry, Ferguson breathe fire as Kiwis take off in style

The pacers pick up three wickets apiece as Sri Lanka crumbles without a fight; skipper Karunaratne carries his bat



Deadly spell: Matt Henry's burst swung the contest New Zealand's way. ■ AP



**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CARDIFF**
New Zealand made a flying start to its World Cup campaign as paceman Matt Henry struck three times in a 10-wicket thrashing of Sri Lanka on Saturday.
Henry returned figures of three for 29 and combined with fellow paceman Lockie Ferguson, who also took three wickets, to bowl out Sri Lanka for just 136 in 29.2 overs. Martin Guptill and Colin Munro then hit unbeaten half-centuries to make short work of their modest target.
The Kiwis cruised home in 16.1 overs to register their third win in a World Cup game by 10 wickets.

The right-left batting combination of Guptill, who hit 73, and Munro, who scored 58, had little trouble in smashing the Sri Lankan bowlers to all parts of the ground.
Guptill hammered eight fours and two sixes including one that sailed out of the ground.
But it was Henry's spell of seven straight overs that opened the gates for New Zealand's domination against the 1996 champion.
"It's a great start for us. You want a balanced attack going into any surface. It is important that you have that to have aggressive options for different occasions," New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said.

"The two at the top played beautifully. It was nice for those guys to play a few shots. It was a good all-round performance."
Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne added: "It was a good toss to win. In the morning it was seaming and swinging. They had that advantage and they have good bowlers to do that, so they took their chances.
"The batters aren't low on confidence. We batted well in some practice games and we work really hard. We need to think about the game."
Southee misses out
Henry stood out in the absence of senior paceman Tim Southee, who missed the game due to a calf injury, with his incisive pace and swing. He struck with the second delivery of the game to send Lahiru Thirimanne trudging back to the pavilion after the left-handed opener had hit a boundary off the first ball.
Thirimanne was initially ruled out by the on-field umpire, but the Kiwis successfully reviewed the lbw call. The left-handed Karunaratne, who has returned to the one-day side after a gap of four years, then added 42 for the second wicket with

Kusal Perera.
But Williamson kept Henry on for the bowler's fifth over and the decision paid off as he got Perera for 29 and Kusal Mendis without scoring off successive deliveries. Dhananjaya de Silva played the hat-trick ball with a glorious off drive, but soon fell to the pace of Lockie Ferguson, trapped in front.

Karunaratne fought on to register his third ODI fifty off 81 balls before he ran out of partners after Lasith Malinga was bowled by Ferguson.

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Karunaratne stands firm amidst ruins

1 First time three opening batsmen remained unbeaten in a completed ODI match (Karunaratne 52, Guptill 73 and Munro 58)
1/15 Sri Lanka has won only one game in its last 15 ODIs and this is its ninth straight loss against a Test-playing nation
2 Karunaratne is the second player to carry the bat in the World Cup after West Indies' Ridley Jacobs (vs Australia, Manchester, 1999). He is also the second captain to carry the bat in ODIs after Tharanga (2017)
Lowest scores carrying the bat in ODIs
33* Javed Omar, Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe, Harare, 2001
49* - Jacobs vs WI vs Aus, Manchester, 1999
52* - Karunaratne SL vs NZ, Cardiff, 2019



228 balls, SA bt Ban (2003)
203 balls, NZ bt SL (Today)
6 Karunaratne is the sixth batsman to carry the bat in both Tests and ODIs, after Grant Flower, Anwar, Stewart, Omar and Latham

SL	NZ	SL	NZ
0	Maidens 0	51/3	10 overs 77/0
11	Fours 14	92/6	20 overs --
2	Sixes 3	--	30 overs --
52 (7th)	Best stand 137* (1st)	--	40 overs --
4.63	RR 8.47	--	50 overs --

For	Batting	Bowling
Sri Lanka	Karunaratne 52* (84b, 4x4)	--
New Zealand	Guptill 73* (51b, 8x4, 2x6)	Ferguson 3/22 (6.2), Henry 3/29 (7)

Warner lets his bat do the talking; Australia crushes Afghanistan

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRISTOL**
David Warner hit an unbeaten half-century on his official return to international cricket on Saturday as Australia romped home by seven wickets in its opener against Afghanistan.
The five-time champion bowled out Afghanistan out for 207 in 38.2 overs on a warm day and then made steady progress, reaching the target with more than 15 overs to spare. Warner was unbeaten on 89.
"It's good to be back and it's a good win for us," said Man-of-the-Match Warner at the presentation ceremony.
"There were nerves getting back into the camp and getting back into the full intensity of training, but to come out and bowl the way we did helped us set the tone with the bat. There's a great buzz about this team at this moment."
Aaron Finch set the tone, reaching his fifty off 40 balls with three sixes. Warner, not



In the thick of it: David Warner found his rhythm after a cautious start. ■ REUTERS

at his belligerent best, had a narrow escape when he was on 19, scrambling back after chopping a delivery and losing sight of the ball as wicket-keeper Mohammad Shahzad whipped off the balls.
The breakthrough finally came in the 17th over when Finch mistimed a slower ball. Warner was dismissed, but he was not out. Warner was dismissed, but he was not out. Warner was dismissed, but he was not out.

AFG	AUS	AFG	AUS
3	Maidens 2	37/2	10 overs 55/0
24	Fours 17	77/4	20 overs 117/1
7	Sixes 4	134/5	30 overs 180/2
83 (6th)	Best stand 96 (1st)	--	40 overs --
5.40	RR 6.00	--	50 overs --

For	Batting	Bowling
Afghanistan	Najibullah 51 (49b, 7x4, 2x6)	Naib 1/32 (6)
Australia	Warner 89* (114b, 8x4)	Cummins 3/40 (8.2), Zampa 3/60 (8)

cover. Warner played watchfully during the early part of his innings but found his touch as he neared his fifty, reaching the mark off 74 balls and raising his bat to a chorus of boos.
The dismissal of Usman Khawaja by Rashid Khan brought Smith to the wicket and he too was booted. Smith was dismissed tamely, caught by Hazratullah Zazai

for the third wicket. However, the team was reduced to 77 for five before Najibullah Zadrani hit a half-century off 46 balls with an edge over slip off a sharp Mitchell Starc bouncer. He was dismissed for 51. Rashid Khan's late

flourish took the team past 200, but Afghanistan was all out with more than 11 overs remaining.

South Africa hopes to bounce back

PREVIEW
**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON**

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis has challenged his side to make amends for the painful start to their World Cup campaign as the team aims to bounce back against Bangladesh on Sunday.
The Proteas suffered a 104-run thrashing against hosts England in the tournament's opening match on Thursday.
Not the time to panic
But it has a chance to get back on track when it returns to the Oval to face Bangladesh and du Plessis says now is not the time to panic.
"This is where it's impor-

THE FACE-OFF
**SOUTH AFRICA VS BANGLADESH
THE OVAL**
HEAD-TO-HEAD

	Matches	SA	BAN	Tie	NR
Overall	20	17	3	0	0
World Cup	3	2	1	0	0

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & SELECT 1 (SD & HD, 3 P.M.)

tant for us to make sure that you look at the World Cup for what it is. You know, you're going to play games. You're going to come up against quality opposition," du Plessis said.
"Lungi, he's got a beautiful action. The way he came back (from a slow start) was beautiful. You know, to get Jos Buttler out, he's probably one of the best strikers in the

Rabada calls Kohli 'immature'

"He is a phenomenal player but can't take abuse"
**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI**
South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada has described India captain Virat Kohli as "immature" and someone who cannot take abuse, while talking about a face-off between the duo in an IPL match.
Rabada and Kohli had a verbal exchange during one of the IPL matches between Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bangalore. Kohli is the captain of RCB, while Rabada plays for DC.
Asked about that particular face-off with Kohli in the IPL match, Rabada said, "I was just thinking about the game plan, really, but Virat, he hit me for a boundary

and then he had a word. And then when you give it back to him, he gets angry. "I don't get the guy. Maybe he does it because it gets him going, but that comes across as very immature for me. He is a phenomenal player but he can't take the abuse," Rabada was



Anxious moment: Virat Kohli is attended to by the Indian team physiotherapist Patrick Farhart after the skipper hurt his thumb during practice in Southampton on Saturday. ■ AP

SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA
Lahiru Thirimanne lbw b Henry 4 (2b, 1x4), Dimuth Karunaratne (not out) 52 (84b, 4x4), Kusal Perera c de Grandhomme b Henry 29 (24b, 4x4), Kusal Mendis c Guptill b Henry 0 (7b), Dhananjaya de Silva lbw b Ferguson 4 (13b, 1x4), Angelo Mathews c Latham b de Grandhomme 0 (9b), Jeevan Mendis c Neesham b Ferguson 1 (4b), Thisara Perera c Boult b Santner 27 (23b, 2x6), Isuru Udana c Henry b Neesham 0 (3b), Suranga Lakmal c Santner b Boult 7 (13b, 1x4), Lasith Malinga b Ferguson 1 (2b); Extras (b-1, w-8, nb-2); 11; Total (in 29.2 overs): 136.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-4 (Thirimanne, 0.2 overs), 2-46 (Kusal Perera, 8.1), 3-46 (Kusal Mendis, 8.2), 4-53 (Dhananjaya, 11.5), 5-59 (Mathews, 14.4), 6-60 (Jeevan Mendis, 15.2), 7-112 (Thisara Perera, 23.4), 8-114 (Udana, 24.4), 9-130 (Lakmal, 28.1).
NEW ZEALAND BOWLING
Henry 7-0-29-3, Boult 9-0-44-1, Ferguson 6.2-0-22-3, de Grandhomme 2-0-14-1, Neesham 3-0-21-1, Santner 2-0-5-1.

NEW ZEALAND
Martin Guptill (not out) 73 (51b, 8x4, 2x6), Colin Munro (not out) 58 (47b, 6x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-3, w-2, nb-1); 6; Total (for no loss in 16.1 overs): 137.
SRI LANKA BOWLING
Malinga 5-0-46-0, Lakmal 4-0-28-0, Udana 3-0-24-0, Thisara Perera 3-0-25-0, Jeevan Mendis 1.1-0-11-0.
Toss: New Zealand.
MoM: Matt Henry.
New Zealand won by 10 wickets with 33.5 overs remaining.

Next assignment
NEW ZEALAND
June 5 vs Bangladesh, The Oval, 6 p.m.
SRI LANKA
June 4 vs Afghanistan, Cardiff, 3 p.m.

Karunaratne's feat
■ Karunaratne's unbeaten 52 made him the second opener, after West Indies' Ridley Jacobs, to carry his bat in the World Cup

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TV PICKS

Roland Garros: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 2.30 p.m.
ICC World Cup: South Africa vs Bangladesh, Star Sports 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.
FIFA U-20 World Cup: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. (Monday)

IN BRIEF



Aditi makes cut at the US Women's Open

CHARLESTON
Aditi Ashok birdied three times on her second nine including the final hole to card an even par 71 and make the cut at the US Women's Open. Aditi was one-over 143 and placed Tied-33rd as there were still many players yet to complete the round. Mamiko Higa of Japan posted an even-par 71 to maintain a one-stroke lead in the weather-hit second round. PTI

Patra qualifies for World Cup parallel bars final

NEW DELHI
Indian gymnast Rakesh Kumar Patra has qualified for the parallel bars finals at the FIG World Cup in Koper, Slovenia. He was placed eighth with a score of 13.250. The top eight qualify for the finals. The FIG World Cup in Koper is third of the seven World Challenge Cup Series for 2019. PTI

Sidhanta Patnaik passes away



Sidhanta Patnaik.

SPORTS REPORTER BENGALURU
Bengaluru Sports journalist Sidhanta Patnaik passed away here on Saturday after a prolonged illness. He was 34.

Born in Bhubaneswar, Sidhanta spent most of his journalism career in Bengaluru. He began his career as a freelance writer with Cricket Country, before joining Wisden India in 2012. He was an integral part of the Wisden India Almanack team, and oversaw the running of Women's CricZone website and magazine until recently.

A champion of women's cricket, Sidhanta co-authored a book titled The Fire Burns Blue: A History of Women's Cricket in India. Sidhanta is survived by his parents, wife and daughter. The Sports Writers Association of Bangalore (SWAB) condoled his death.

Yuvraj Singh — triumph of spirit as much as talent

The allrounder's scintillating performance was the cornerstone of India's 2011 WC triumph

MEMORY FILES

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

He was fighting opponents, and himself too, in a silent campaign to live a dream. Something was happening to his body. "Not to the spirit," Yuvraj Singh was to recount later, glancing at the picture in his drawing room of holding the World Cup, rejoicing with the team.

He was part of India's World Cup triumph in 2011 after unsuccessful attempts in 2003 and 2007 and it was a kind of "nirvana" for the celebrated cricketer who initially wanted to be a champion at roller skating. He has a pair still tucked away in an attic.

Yuvraj was a toddler when Kapil Dev's team was making history in 1983 at the World Cup. "He hailed from Chandigarh and was a hero to us. I grew up listening to inspiring tales of Kapil paaji," said the left-hander, who was "Man-

I grew up listening to inspiring tales of Kapil paaji

of-the-Series' when India regained the Cup in 2011.

Key element

He aggregated 362 runs and, importantly, claimed 15 wickets. Yuvraj's bowling, experts insisted, was the key element in India's win. His tally of wickets was far more than some of the established bowlers in the team.

"The decision to bowl was important," Yuvraj observed. It helped the team gain a bowler who could strike a restrictive line and length and also make far-reaching breakthroughs. Yuvraj bowled 75 overs in nine matches — with five for 31 in 10 overs against Ireland as his best. He also bowled his full quota in the knockout matches against Australia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. As batsman, his 113 against West Indies had come at a critical stage.

"It was a dream. I had a medical condition to deal with. I would feel breathless and cough constantly. But the dream of winning the Cup was the driving force of my life," said Yuvraj who must have repeated these lines countless times.

No wonder, Sachin Tendulkar described Yuvraj aptly in the message for his autobiography, calling him "Pure Inspiration". In his heart, Yuvraj has "reverence" for Tendulkar, who he describes as "simply amazing."

Rigorous preparation

The impact that Yuvraj made on the 2011 World Cup was the result of some rigorous preparation that helped him play every match of the tournament.

The circumstances demanded him to be performing consistently. He did not let down his team, bowled with his heart, batted with a calm mind, emerging the decisive factor on the field. His

absence, in hindsight, may have proved catastrophic for Indian cricket.

Yuvraj came into the 2011 World Cup with an experience of 265 ODIs but his career lasted another 30 one-dayers after the tournament was over. His last ODI appearance for India came in June 2017 in the West Indies as national selectors looked beyond this fine all-rounder, who trudged the course of domestic cricket for two years in vain, waiting for an opportunity to showcase his fitness and utility amidst rising competition.

In *The Test of My Life*, where he writes of his journey from cricket to cancer and back, Yuvraj shares his philosophy "Never give up."

As he wishes Virat Kohli and his team "success" at the World Cup, Yuvraj devotes most time to his life's new mission — YouWeCan, the foundation established to fight cancer and spread awareness about the disease.



Goal that mattered: The dream of winning the World Cup was the driving force of his life, says Yuvraj Singh. • FILE PHOTO: VIJAY LOKAPALLY

Siniakova shatters top seed Osaka's Paris dream

Serena follows the Japanese out; Djokovic steps up his bid for a second 'Djoko Slam'

ROLAND GARROS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PARIS

World No. 1 Naomi Osaka's hopes of winning a third successive Grand Slam ended on Saturday when she was knocked out of Roland Garros in the third round by unheralded Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic.

Japanese top seed Osaka, the reigning US and Australian Open champion, crashed to a 6-4, 6-2 defeat to the 42nd-ranked Czech.

Osaka's defeat left just four of the women's top 10 seeds left in the tournament, including three-time winner Serena Williams and defending champion Simona Halep.

Serena's bid to win a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title was thwarted again when she was knocked out 6-2, 7-5 by US compatriot Sofia Kenin.

It was the 37-year-old's earliest exit at the Slams since a third round loss to Alize Cornet at Wimbledon in 2014.

"There's a lot of emotions now," said Kenin, who wasn't even born when Williams made her Paris debut in 1998.

Osaka was undone by a shocking 38 unforced errors as she finally ran out of luck in Paris having had to come back from a set down in her first two matches.

"It's amazing, I can't believe it, I am so happy now," said Siniakova, who was the women's doubles champion in Paris in 2018 alongside Barbora Krejickova.

"I played my best tennis and I hope it continues."



The big one: Katerina Siniakova was ruthless as she made top seed Naomi Osaka pay for every slip up. • REUTERS

Osaka dropped the first set for the third successive match at the tournament, squandering seven break points in all.

Siniakova made her play, breaking for 5-4 and taking the opener when Osaka sent

back her 16th unforced error of the set. The Czech, who is the World's No. 1 doubles player, kept up the pressure on the misfiring top seed, breaking for a 3-2 lead in the second set.

Siniakova backed it up

with another break for 5-2 off Osaka's third double fault of the match.

Victory was hers on Court Suzanne Lenglen when Osaka unleashed another misguided forehand.

The Czech goes on to face

Madison Keys of the United States for a place in the quarterfinals in what will be her first appearance in the last 16 of the majors.

There were no such problems for men's World No. 1 Novak Djokovic, who eased into the last 16, stepping up his bid to hold all four Grand Slam titles simultaneously for the second time.

The Serbian saw off unseeded Italian Salvatore Caruso 6-3, 6-3, 6-2.

Crowd favourite Tsitsipas became the first Greek player in 83 years to reach the second week at Roland Garros as he survived a scare against Filip Krajinovic. The sixth seed led by two sets when the match was suspended at 5-5 in the third due to darkness on Friday.

On the resumption Saturday, Tsitsipas lost the set in a tie-break but sealed a 7-5, 6-3, 6-7(5), 7-6(6) success on Court Philippe Chatrier.

The 20-year-old will take on former champion Stan Wawrinka for a place in his second Grand Slam quarterfinal.

Sunday's picks

- MEN**
 - 2-Nadal vs Londero
 - 3-Federer vs Mayer
 - 6-Tsitsipas vs 24-Wawrinka
 - 7-Nishikori vs Paire
- DOUBLES**
 - Bopanna-Copil vs Lajovic-Tipsarevic
- WOMEN**
 - 7-Stephens vs 19-Muguruza
 - 12-Sevastova vs Vondrousova
 - 23-Vekic vs 26-Konta
 - 31-Martic vs Kanepi

THE RESULTS

Men: Third round: 14-Gael Monfilis (Fra) bt Antoine Hoang (Fra) 6-3, 6-2, 6-3; 4-Dominic Thiem (Aut) bt Pablo Cuevas (Uru) 6-3, 4-6, 6-2, 7-5; 8-Juan Martin del Potro (Arg) bt Jordan Thompson (Aus) 6-4, 6-4, 6-0; 10-Karen Khachanov (Rus) bt Martin Klizan (Svk) 6-1, 6-4, 6-3.

6-1; 5-Alexander Zverev (Ger) bt 30-Dusan Lajovic (Srb) 6-4, 6-2, 4-6, 1-6, 6-2; 24-Stan Wawrinka (Sui) bt Grigor Dimitrov (Bul) 7-6(5), 7-6(4), 7-6(8); Jan-Lennard Struff (Ger) bt 13-Borna Coric (Cro) 4-6, 6-1, 4-6, 7-6(1), 11-9.

Doubles: Second round: 3-Juan Sebastian Cabal & Robert Farah (Col) bt Leander Paes & Benoit Paig (Fra) 6-0, 4-6, 6-3.

Women: Third round: Sofia Kenin (USA) bt 10-Serena Williams (USA) 6-2, 7-5; 8-Ashleigh Barty (Aus) bt Andrea Petkovic (Ger) 6-3, 6-1; Aliona Bolsova (Esp) bt Ekaterina Alexandrova (Rus) 6-2, 7-5; Amanda Anisimova (USA) bt Irina-Camelia Begu (Rou) 7-6(6), 6-4.

SUDOKU

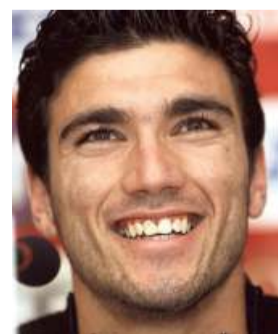
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

'Invincibles' star killed in car crash



Jose Antonio Reyes. • AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MADRID

Former Arsenal, Real Madrid and Spain star Jose Antonio Reyes has been killed in a car crash, his hometown club Sevilla said on Saturday. He was 35.

Reyes shot to fame at Sevilla before a switch to Arsenal where he was part of the unbeaten 'Invincibles' 2003-2004 Premier League winners, before spells at Real and Atletico Madrid.

Arsenal described the accident as "awful news".

Sethu slips, recovers but slips again

Senthil Chandrasekaran finishes 18th in Race 1

ARRC

ANIRUDH VELAMURI BURIRAM (THAILAND)

It was a day of mixed emotions for IDEMITSU Honda Racing India with Rajiv Sethu finishing 22nd and Senthil Chandrasekaran 18th in Race 1 of the FIM Asian Road Racing Championship Round 3 here on Saturday.

Before the start, the mood in the camp was one of delight and optimism after Rajiv finished a career-best seventh in qualification for the Asian Production 250 category, with a personal best 1:53.573s at the Chang International Circuit.

Costly error

In a race that's done and dusted in 10 laps, one mistake can make a lot of difference — as Rajiv found out.

Mistiming the clutch release in the opening lap forced him into an impressive but unnecessary wheelie which saw him drop 14 positions.



Mixed day: Rajiv Sethu fought his way up to 10th before a crash sent him spiralling down. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Despite being forced to go wheel-to-wheel with the chasing pack, he held his nerve and fought his way up to 10th by the final lap — a position he and his team were aiming for. Looking for the slipstream at turn 3 to further move up the order, the 21-year-old lost control of his bike and crashed. He dropped places again, 12 this time, to finish a disappointing 22nd.

Teammate Senthil Chandrasekaran, placed 20th after qualifying, moved up two places to finish 18th heading into Sunday's

Round 2. Rajiv was visibly upset about not making the most of an excellent qualifying but was determined to leave Thailand with a good performance in Race 2.

"It was not what I expected, but there is a lot to learn," he said, adding, "I had a bad start, managed to recover but after the crash at the end, my aim was to just finish the race. Tomorrow is a new day, a new race. I hope to make amends."

(The writer is in Buriram at the invitation of Honda Racing India)

Nihal Sarin crosses a milestone

Is third youngest to breach 2600 Elo

CHESS

P.K. AJITH KUMAR KOZHIKODE

India's Nihal Sarin became the world's third youngest player to cross 2600 Elo points on FIDE's rating list. In the latest list released by FIDE on Saturday, the 14-year-old from Kerala has 2606 points.

He is also India's youngest ever to reach the milestone, beating the record set by Parimarjan Negi in 2009 as a 15-year-old.

Five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand is ranked No. 9 in the world, not a mean feat for a 49-year-old. P. Harikrishna is the next-best ranked Indian at No. 25.

Three other Indians — Vidit Gujarathi, B. Adhiban and K. Sasikiran — are in the top 100. Nihal is ranked No. 240.

World champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway conti-



Nihal Sarin. • FILE PHOTO

nues to be the World No. 1, followed by Fabiano Caruana (US), Ding Liren (China), Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (France) and Anish Giri (Netherlands).

India's Koneru Humpy is the World No. 4 among women, behind the Chinese duo of Hou Yifan and Ju Wenjun and Mariya Muzychuk of Ukraine. Dronavalli Harika is ranked No. 14.

IN BRIEF



Durant to miss second game due to injury
TORONTO
Golden State Warriors star forward Kevin Durant will miss Sunday's second game of the NBA Finals with the strained right calf that has sidelined him for the past six games. Steve Kerr gave no indication of a timetable for Durant's return. "He's still progressing," Kerr said. "When he's ready to play he will play. That's our approach." AFP

Hank Haney got what he deserved, says Woods
WASHINGTON
Tiger Woods said former swing coach Hank Haney "got what he deserved" when he was suspended from the *SiriusXM PGA Tour Radio*. "He deserved it," Woods said. "Just can't look at life like that. And he obviously said what he meant, and he got what he deserved." AFP

Rawat enters the final

SPORTS BUREAU
NONTHABURI (THAILAND)
Third seed Sidharth Rawat beat eighth seed Yu Hsiou Hsu of Chinese Taipei 6-4, 6-2 in the semifinals of the \$25,000 ITF men's Futures here on Saturday.
In the final, Sidharth will play fifth seed Rio Noguchi of Japan who beat Alexander Crnokrak of Australia 6-4, 7-5.
The 25-year-old Sidharth will be looking for his first singles title at this level. He had won the doubles title last year with Manish Sureshkumar.

Inter-State Nationals postponed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI
The National inter-State championship, Athletics Federation of India's main qualification event for this September's Doha World Championships and scheduled to be held in Kolkata from July 14 to 17, has been postponed.

West Bengal backs out
Though the AFI has said, in its communication to State associations on Saturday, that the inter-State Nationals have been put off as the national coaches felt that the gap between the National meet and the Worlds was too big, the real reason appears to be West Bengal backing out.

"It is not going to be held in Kolkata. The organisers have said that they don't want to host it," Bahadur Singh, the chief National coach, told *The Hindu* on Saturday.

"We are not hosting it, the problem is due to the election and it will be raining in July."

"I have written to the AFI that we will not be able to host it," said West Bengal Athletics Association Secretary Kamal Kumar Maitra.

India-A fights back, takes control of 'Test'

Good knocks by Anmolpreet, Bharat and Lad; Mendis stands firm, but Sri Lanka-A concedes the lead

SL-A IN INDIA

ASHWIN ACHAL
HUBBALLI
India-A moved into the driver's seat on the second day of the second 'Test' against Sri Lanka-A, at the KSCA Stadium here on Saturday.

The Indians did well to bowl Sri Lanka-A out for 212 and take a 57-run lead. Anmolpreet Singh (60, 69b, 9x4), Siddhesh Lad (58, 76b, 6x4) and K.S. Bharat (60, 56b, 4x4, 2x6) came good to push the home team to 216 for six at close of play.

India-A enters the penultimate day with an overall lead of 273 runs – a comfortable margin on a pitch that offers plenty of help to the bowlers.

Resuming at 87 for four, Sri Lanka-A struggled after Niroshan Dickwella departed for 39. Pacer Ishan Porel did the trick, getting some movement to induce an edge from the in-form wicketkeeper-batsman.



Castled: Kamindu Mendis, who played a sensible innings, is bowled by Aditya Sarvate.

The compact and intelligent Kamindu Mendis (68, 105b, 11x4) rescued the side from 145 for seven.

The resistance came to an end when Mendis couldn't connect with a big hit, and lost his stumps to left-arm spinner Aditya Sarvate.

was the pick of the bowlers, justly rewarded for keeping a tidy length around off-stump. India-A's second essay did not start well, with left-arm fast bowler Fernando removing Abhimanyu

Easwaran (3) and Priyank Panchal (15) early.

A 63-run stand between Anmolpreet and Lad, followed by a 99-run partnership between Lad and Bharat, however, put the visitors on the backfoot.

India-A suffered a late hiccup, losing three wickets in quick succession.

Lad was wrapped on the pads by chinaman bowler Sandakan, while Bharat was castled by a flatter delivery from left-arm spinner Malinda Pushpakumara, which stayed low and crept below his bat.

Sandakan then had Sarvate caught-behind for a duck. Shivam Dube (5 batting) and Rahul Chahar (5 batting) prevented further damage.

Rawat enters the final

The new look



Ready for action: The Indian women's hockey players don new jerseys at SAI, Bengaluru, on Saturday ahead of the FIH Women's Series Finals. •PTI

Indians on a roll at Railways tennis meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian team was in a different class as it outplayed Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Belgium to strengthen its chances of retaining the title in the 21st US-IC World Railways tennis championship in Albena, Bulgaria.

With four singles being played in each tie, India beat Slovakia and the Czech Republic 4-0, to top the group.

Ten teams – Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, Germany, India,

Slovakia, the Czech Republic, France, Switzerland and Russia – were divided into three groups for the preliminary league stage.

The top two teams from each group played the elimination round.

Super league
The three winners, India, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic were set to compete in the super league leading to the champion.

Nitin Kumar Sinha, Mohammed Fahad, P.C. Vignesh and Prithvi Sekhar played the

four singles in each of the four ties, with guidance from coach Nitten Kirrtane.

"If we beat Czech Republic, whom we beat in the league, we will win the gold," said coach Nitten Kirrtane, quite happy with the professional execution by the competition team.

The results: Super league: India bt Bulgaria 4-0 (Nitin Kumar Sinha bt Serafim Grozev 6-4, 6-4; Mohammed Fahad bt Krasimir Stoykov 6-0, 6-1; P.C. Vignesh bt Hristo Boyanov 1-0 (ret.); Prithvi Sekhar bt Radomir Tonev 6-2, 6-2).

Champion couple launch academy

KOLKATA: The champion couple of table tennis – Soumyadip Roy and Poulomi Ghatak – have come together to launch a residential academy that aims to bring out Olympic medalists in future.

"It has been a dream to win a medal in the Olympics which I now want to do as a coach," said Poulomi, who won seven National titles, at the launch ceremony of the RCS Poulomi Ghatak-Soumyadip Roy Table Tennis Academy on Saturday.

"We plan to pick players early – at the age of five or six – and start training them at the specialised academy," said Soumyadip, a former National champion who is also a part of the coaching team.

"Once fully operational, the academy will house 14 tables for the kids and 10 for the seniors, and have a team of physios working on the trainees," said Poulomi.

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Chhetri wants clarity on domestic calendar



FOOTBALL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India's football star Sunil Chhetri on Saturday urged the sport's stakeholders to "quickly" clear the confusion around the upcoming season's domestic calendar. There is still no clarity on whether the Indian Super League would merge with the I-League and if so when, leaving the players and fans confused about the future of domestic football.

Waiting for answers

"I just want to get the answer quick. It is always conducive when you know the whole calendar as to what team, which team, what league, which games and stuff like that," said Chhetri.

Stimac's man-management has been exceptional as he talks to everyone

"I've heard that the think-tanks are working very hard, I know it's not easy. I just hope we get the answers soon. And if we don't you guys, the media, please keep asking them," he said.

The 34-year-old Chhetri currently stays a match away from being the most-capped Indian footballer in the international arena. He is tied on 107 matches with his mentor Bhaichung Bhutia. "It may sound strange, but I am the fittest in my life at the moment. It's a bit weird when I say this, but it's true," he said.

"I think the knowledge and discipline is the highest in my life right now, in terms of taking

risk, in terms of having the right food, and in terms of training – and that's probably why I am this fit," he added.

Chhetri was speaking on the last day of the team's preparatory camp for the forthcoming King's Cup.

"It's been 7-8 days of training, and what the players have been really happy is about the coach's tactical, and technical knowledge where we understand things, and improve ourselves."

"Stimac's man-management has been exceptional as he talks to everyone. He is open-minded. Players can go and talk to him anytime. It also helps as he was a player. When he talks to you, you get to understand that he too understands what a player goes through, and his needs. It's all synchronised," Chhetri said.

Shesmascript claims Speaker's Trophy

BENGALURU: Shesmascript (Trevor ur) won the Speaker's Trophy, the feature event of the races held here on Saturday (June 1).

The winner is owned by Mr. R. Shiva Shankar & Mr. G. Surendranath and trained by Iran Ghatala.

THE RESULTS

1. MAMMA'S MINK PLATE (Div. II), (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 4-y-o & over: TIO RICO (Trevor) 1, Ido What I Do (Dhebe) 2, Mayurana (Irvan) 3 and Look Out (Zervan) 4. 1-1/2, 1-1/2 and Nk. Im 13.76s. ₹18 (w), 12, 10 and 101 (p); SHP: 28, THP: 166, FP: 35, Q: 17, Trinella: 1,564 and 778, Exacta: 6,463 and 1,385. Favourite: Tio Rico. Owners: Mr. K. Harish Nayak, Mr. Pradeep Lala, Mr. Pratap Madhukar Kamath & Mr. H.J. Balram. Trainer: Neil Darashah.

2. MAMMA'S MINK PLATE (Div. D), (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 4-y-o & over: STAR MAN (Shobhan) 1, Sahara (R. Marshall) 3 and Aine (A.S. Peter) 4. 1-2, 3-1/2 and 3-3/4. Im 13.17s. ₹107 (w), 25, 10 and 36 (p), SHP: 37, THP: 80, FP: 344, Q: 88, Trinella: 2,066 and 1,096, Exacta: 94,520 (carried over) and 40,508. Favourite: Sahara.

Owner: Mr. T.C.V. Ramani. Trainer: G. Nityanand.

3. BEAUTIFUL BABE PLATE (Div. II), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only. (Terms): LIGHTNING BOLT (Akshay K) 1, Unstoppable (Kiran Naidu) 2, Ice Floe (Neeraj) 3 and Sea Of Cortez (Trevor) 4. Not run: Strategist. 2-1/2, 2-1/2 and 1. Im 13.77s. ₹16 (w), 10, 34 and 16 (p), SHP: 143, THP: 29, FP: 293, Q: 263, Trinella: 1,076 and 450, Exacta: 1,744 and 630. Favourite: Lightning Bolt. Owners: Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt Ltd rep by Mr. Zavaray S. Poonawalla & Mrs. Simone Poonawalla Pandole. Vijay Racing & Farms Pvt Ltd rep by M/s. Vijay Kumar Gupta & Susheel Kumar Gupta & Mr. Aditya P. Thackersey. Trainer: Deshmukh.

4. V.P. VELU MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,200m), rated 45 to 65: ARECA LEGEND (Suraj) 1, Shira (P.S. Chouhan) 2, Super Success (Ajay K) 3 and Teodoro (S. Shareef) 4. 4, 2-1/4 and 2. Im 11.77s. ₹18 (w), 10, 12 and 31 (p), SHP: 26, THP: 43, FP: 37, Q: 17, Trinella: 240 and 156, Exacta: 783 and 220. Favourite: Areca Legend. Owners: Mr. Ronak J. Kimmame & Mr. Jairam G. Kimmame. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

5. SPEAKER'S TROPHY (1,400m), rated 60 & above: SHESMASCRIPT (Trevor) 1, Sakura (Akshay K) 2, Raha (A. Imran) 3 and Dr. Logan (Neeraj) 4. 1, 2-3/4 and Nose. Im 26.37s. ₹17 (w), 10, 14 and 25 (p), SHP: 30, THP: 43, FP: 37, Q: 37, Trinella: 385 and 236, Exacta: 1,818 and 987. Favourite: Shesmascript. Owners: Mr. R. Shiva Shankar & Mr. G. Surendranath. Trainer: Irfan Ghatala.

6. BEAUTIFUL BABE PLATE (Div. I), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only. (Terms): STORM BREAKER (Yash) 1, Harbour Sunrise (Trevor) 2, Yours Forever (P.S. Chouhan) 3 and Kionia (C. Umesh) 4. 4, 3-1/4 and 2. Im 13.03s. ₹19 (w), 13, 17 and 16 (p), SHP: 36, THP: 39, FP: 62, Q: 59, Trinella: 199 and 92, Exacta: 1,018 and 778. Favourite: Storm Breaker. Owners: Mrs. B.E. Saldanha, Mr. Mark Saldanha, Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt Ltd rep by Mr. Zavaray S. Poonawalla & Mrs. Simone Poonawalla Pandole, Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Pvt Ltd rep by Mr. Byram N. Jeejeebhoy. Trainer: M. Narredu.

Jackpot: ₹2,010 (241 tkts); Runner-up: 322 (645 tkts); Treble (i): 461 (19 tkts); (ii): 157 (230 tkts).

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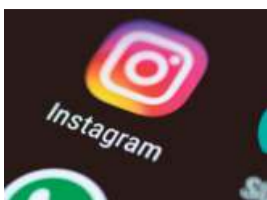
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IN BRIEF



Instagram rolls out new stories design in India

NEW DELHI Instagram has rolled out a new design on its Stories option in India. The semi-circular selector wheel design has reduced the previous eight camera options to three — Live, Camera and Create. The Live feature arranges Augmented Reality (AR) filters in the semi-circular format. IANS



1 mn computers still at risk of malware attack

SAN FRANCISCO Microsoft has warned that nearly one million computers globally are still at risk of "BlueKeep" malware attack, similar to WannaCry that spread worldwide in 2017 causing huge loss. IANS

Have your plate and eat it too

Biodegradable platter a viable alternative as EU plans ban on plastic ones from 2021

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ZAMBROW

Polish inventor and entrepreneur Jerzy Wysocki catches a brown plate — still warm — as it drops out of a machine and he begins to eat the crunchy, fibrous tableware.

"A pork chop will always be more delicious on this wheat bran plate than on plastic," said Mr. Wysocki at the Biotrem factory in Zambrow in northeast Poland. Taking a bite, the plate does not have much of a flavour. It calls to mind dry cereal flakes or maybe what you would imagine cardboard to taste like.

However, Mr. Wysocki said, what matters is that the tableware is biodegradable.

The sexagenarian invented the plate some 15 years ago, and today Biotrem makes around 15 million of them a year. That figure could skyrocket thanks to a decision by the European Union to ban plastic plates and cutlery starting in 2021.

A son and grandson of



Healthy diet: Women serving meals on wheat bran plates in one of Warsaw's vegan restaurants. • AFP

millers, Mr. Wysocki got the idea for the tableware when he was looking to use up the leftovers of flour production, which take up a lot of space.

Made of wheat bran

"To make the plates, we only use wheat bran, which we compress at a precise pressure point and temperature, using a machine," he explains.

Biotrem CEO Malgorzata

Then acknowledges, of course, that at 15 euro cents a pop or 20% more for exports, wheat bran plates are more expensive than their plastic counterparts.

But "the current price of plastic doesn't factor in the environmental cost, that of recycling and marine pollution," she adds.

At first, the company targeted clients who were environmentally inclined as well

as restaurants and hotels that wanted to offer something original. "Now, with the measures taken by the EU, even clients who are uninformed about the environment are forced to take an interest in biodegradable products," Mr. Then said.

Biotrem distributes the plates in Europe, Asia, North America and Australia.

You do not have to eat the plate to be a friend of the environment. In favourable weather conditions, with a little humidity, wheat bran products decompose after a month, or even after two weeks if there is rain.

Researchers from the Gdansk University of Technology have developed a way to make biodegradable cutlery out of potato starch.

The forks, spoons and knives are even safe for sea creatures to eat. "We are the only ones to have tested the biodegradability of our products on aquatic organisms and it looks like this cutlery is environment-friendly," professor Helena Janik said.

It's official: Warner Bros casts Robert Pattinson as Batman

The actor succeeds Ben Affleck who played the part in 3 films

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

Actor Robert Pattinson has been chosen as the new Batman, beating out several others, including Nicholas Hoult, to play the Caped Crusader, *Variety* said.

The 33-year-old *Twilight* heartthrob is set to play the vigilante superhero in a standalone movie called *The Batman*, under the direction of Matt Reeves, who was behind the last two *Planet of the Apes* sequels, the entertainment magazine said.

Filming is slated to start in the coming months with a release date expected in June 2021.

A Warner Bros spokeswoman would not confirm the news to AFP, saying only: "I can confirm that we are in negotiations."

Mr. Pattinson's agent did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Mr. Pattinson, who shot to



Gotham's new hero: Actor Robert Pattinson will star in director Matt Reeves' *The Batman*. • AFP

fame as teenage vampire Edward Cullen in the *Twilight* saga, has avoided the spotlight in recent years, evolving from a teenage heartthrob to an indie darling.

He recently starred in acclaimed French director Claire Denis's sci-fi mystery *High Life*, which earned him critical praise.

He also stars in *The Light House*, a dark fantasy horror

film that was also well received at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

As Batman, Mr. Pattinson will be replacing Ben Affleck who retired from the role after playing Bruce Wayne in 2016's *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice*, *Suicide Squad* and 2017's *Justice League*. Mr. Pattinson will also feature in filmmaker Christopher Nolan's *Tenet*.

No cuts for Elton John's biopic *Rocketman* in India

Singer slams removal of scenes in Russia

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Legendary singer Elton John's biopic *Rocketman*, scenes from which were cut out for a preview in Russia, has released in India without any excisions.

The film, which is exclusively distributed in India by Viacom18 Studios, received the censor certificate with-



out any cuts. It was certified on May 29 and got an 'A' certificate for release on May 31.

Meanwhile, Elton John, in a statement, slammed the removal of gay sex scenes from the musical biopic by Russian distributors.

"We reject in the strongest possible terms the decision to pander to local laws and censor *Rocketman* for the Russian market, a move we were unaware of until today," the statement read.

"That the local distributor has edited out certain scenes, denying the audience the opportunity to see the film as it was intended is a sad reflection of the divided world we still live in and how it can still be so cruelly unaccepting of the love between two people," it read.

Turning heads



Show time: Racegoers turn out in their finest at the Epsom Derby Festival in Surrey, southern England. • REUTERS, AFP



'Tank man' photographer urges China to open up

'Time to come clean on Tiananmen stir'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ALHAMBRA

The American photographer who shot the iconic image of a man standing in front of tanks at the 1989 Tiananmen protests says it's time for the Chinese government to come clean about the bloody events of 30 years ago.

Jeff Widener was an Associated Press photo editor based in Bangkok when he was called in to help cover a growing student-led pro-democracy movement centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

The day after the military crushed the protests on June 3-4, Mr. Widener took the shot of an unknown man holding shopping bags facing a row of tanks. The photo of "tank man" became one of the most famous images of defiance of the 20th century.

"I started to take a photograph and a guy walks out with shopping bags and I am thinking to myself, 'you know this guy's going to mess up my photograph,' he said. "I mean it really was like I was not thinking clearly."

The man moved at least twice to block the tanks and climbed on the turret of one to converse with a crew member. Eventually, he was



Jeff Widener

whisked from the scene by two men in blue, whose identities, like that of the man himself, have never been revealed.

'Reveal the truth'

In an interview, Mr. Widener said he doesn't understand why China's leaders won't admit to errors made and reveal the truth behind the crackdown.

"I think it's time for China to move forward and just come clean on what happened, report to the family members what happened to their loved ones so that they can put this to rest," he said. "I think that's the right, decent thing to do." Mr. Widener entered Beijing through Hong Kong. With the protests in full swing, he developed a daily routine of riding a bicycle early in the morning to Tiananmen Square, where thousands of students were camped out.



Image of defiance: A Chinese man blocking a line of tanks in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 5, 1989. • AP

Pak. town struggles with surge in HIV infections

Over 700, most of them children, get infected; doctor held responsible for 'negligence and carelessness'

REUTERS
RATODERO

Doctors in a town in Pakistan are struggling to cope with a surge in patients infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, with nearly 700 cases since April, most of them children.

Health officials suspect the outbreak is linked to reused syringes and needles and improperly screened blood transfusions.

"For me it was impossible to imagine," said Nazeer, recalling the day a doctor said his 16 month-old girl had tested positive for HIV.

"I told him 'are you joking with me, how can she have HIV?'," he said in his home in Ratodero, 480 km from Karachi, the capital of the southern province of Sindh. His daughter is receiving



Dr. Imran Akbar Arbani checking a four-year-old HIV positive boy, at his clinic in Ratodero, Pakistan. • REUTERS

treatment, he said, adding he did not know how she was infected.

Health officials say 681 people have tested positive for HIV in Ratodero, of whom 537 are children, since April.

More than 21,000 people have taken an HIV test at Ra-

tedero's only screening centre in a government hospital. Others have been tested at private clinics.

Tip of the iceberg

"I have identified the tip of the iceberg. This could be in the thousands, not hun-

dreds," said Dr. Imran Akbar Arbani, who operates a clinic in the nearby town.

About 60% of Ratodero patients were infected by reused needles and syringes, or through transfusions of blood that were not screened properly for HIV, said Dr. Sikander Memon, head of the AIDS control programme in the province.

Police and doctors conducted an initial investigation and found that 123 HIV patients had been treated by one doctor before they were infected.

Dr. Muzaffar Ghanghro was arrested on April 30 and has been charged with unintentional murder, police said.

"Negligence and carelessness of Dr. Muzaffar Ghanghro has been the prime rea-

son behind the spread of HIV at the later stage," the investigation team said in a report.

Intiaz, a labourer, said he had taken his three children to Ghangro because there was no pediatrician in town. All three became infected with HIV. "He applied the same drip on 50 children without changing the needle," he said.

Pakistan has some 1,63,000 HIV and AIDS patients.

At Pakistan's request, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have sent a team of experts to the area.

The government has ordered 50,000 HIV screening kits and is setting up three treatment centres.

Women can be toxic too: Meryl Streep

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

Veteran actor Meryl Streep says she takes offence with the phrase "toxic masculinity".

During a panel discussion to promote the second season of HBO show *Big Little Lies*, Ms. Streep said toxicity is not just limited to men as women can also be toxic, reported *The Guardian*.

"We hurt our boys by calling something toxic masculinity," the multiple Oscar winner said.

"We have our good angles and we have our bad ones. I think the labels are less helpful than what we're trying to get to, which is a communication, direct, between human beings," she added.

New breast cancer drug boosts survival rates

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CHICAGO

A new form of drug drastically improves survival rates of young women with the most common form of breast cancer, researchers said on Saturday, citing the results of a clinical trial.

The findings, presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology in Chicago, showed that the addition of a drug, cyclin inhibitor, increased survival rates to 70%. The mortality rate was 29% less than when patients were given a placebo.

Lead author Sara Hurvitz

said the study focused on hormone receptor-positive breast cancer, which accounts for two-thirds of all breast cancer cases among younger women and have in the past generally been treated by therapies that block estrogen production.

"You can get synergy or a better response, better cancer kill, by adding one of these cell cycle inhibitors" on top of the hormone suppression, Ms. Hurvitz said. The treatment is less toxic than traditional chemotherapy as it selectively targets cancerous cells, blocking their ability to multiply.

Tawang yields a new species of dung beetle

New find is bigger in size than one discovered in 2016, also in Arunachal Pradesh

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

A new species of dung beetle has been discovered in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The species, *Enoplotrupes tawangensis*, is shining dark blue in colour and, measuring up to 27 mm, is relatively bigger than most of the dung beetles.

The specimens were first collected and studied by two scientists from the Zoological Survey of India, Kailash Chandra and Devanshu Gupta. David Král, a Czech scientist who is an expert on dung beetles, confirmed that he



A male, left, and a female dung beetle (*Enoplotrupes tawangensis*). • ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

had in his collection similar specimens from Bhutan, which borders Tawang. Dung beetles belong to the

super family scarabaeoidea, having clubbed antennae and pro-tibiae (pro-legs) modified for burrowing dung

inside the soil. This group of insects are considered beneficial to the environment as they help in nutrient cycling of the soil. Often referred to as little recyclers, these scavenger beetles require mammalian dung to survive.

The details of *Enoplotrupes tawangensis* were published in *Oriental Insects* on May 29, 2019. The paper has been authored by Devanshu Gupta, Kailash Chandra, David Král, Joyjit Ghosh and Priyanka Das. "Insects comprise almost 65% of all animal species on the planet. From India, approximately

65,000 species of insects are known, of them, more than 22,000 species are beetles. Dung beetles are the one of the fascinating group of insects because of their ability to bury dung deep in the soil and are indicators of the ecological health of an ecosystem," Kailash Chandra, who is also the director of ZSI, said.

Other than the relatively large size and distinct blue colour, another important distinguishing characteristic of this species is the strong sexual dimorphism, with the fronto-clypeal horn shorter

in females than males. Three more species of dung beetles from the group Geotrupidae, which roughly means earth borers, were discovered by the same scientists in the past three years. One of them, *Odontotrupes tawangensis*, black with metallic lustre, was also discovered in Tawang in 2016. In the past three years, Mr. Chandra and Mr. Gupta also discovered *Bolbocerans darjeelicans*, measuring about 10 mm, dark brown in colour, from Darjeeling in West Bengal; and *Bolbocerans bilaspuricans* from Chhattisgarh.

Magazine



FOCUS

She is 70, a self-help group leader, and now a first-time MP. Meet Pramila Bisoi from Odisha **p9**

CINEMA

Twenty years after Kubrick's death, his cinematic themes seem eerily prescient **p10**



LITERARY REVIEW

A weekly round-up of essays, reviews, interviews and more **p18-25**

NOSHTALGIA

Chaat exists in its own little world, approved by all and unsullied by gastro-politics **p26**



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK (REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE)

Iskcon's Akshaya Patra Foundation provides mid-day meals to over four lakh children in Karnataka but refuses to add onion or garlic to the food even though the children crave it **p6**



No onions
for Sabitha



Who's an alien? A former army officer was sent to a detention camp in Assam after a tribunal declared him 'foreigner'. Mohammad Sanaullah, now an assistant sub-inspector in the border police, told journalists he is Indian and has all the citizenship documents. His family said they will appeal to the Gauhati High Court.



Rainbow shave Gillette's last ad attacked toxic masculinity and its latest one supports the LGBTQ+ movement. The ad shows a father helping his transgender son to shave for the first time. So far, the ad has met with positive responses.

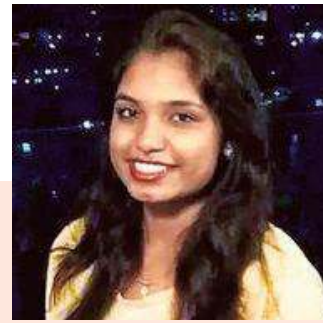
Woman power Safiya Ali made history when she became Somalia's first female mayor on May 27. Ali was elected to lead Beledweyne, the famous capital city of the Hiiran province that shares its borders with Ethiopia. Last year, Meaza Ashenafi became Ethiopia's first woman Chief Justice.



Jumbos at risk Botswana has lifted the five-year ban on elephant hunting, allowing sport hunters to legally kill elephants. The government claims the ban had hurt livelihoods and increased incidents of elephants destroying crops. It added that all hunting would be "orderly and ethical".



Top table With Justice B.R. Gavai of Bombay High Court appointed to the Supreme Court, a judge from the Dalit community returns to the top court after nine years. After the retirement of former Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan in 2010, the SC had not had any judges from scheduled caste communities.



Doctor Hydes Three absconding senior doctors were arrested in connection with the suicide of Mumbai doctor Payal Tadvi for harassing and using casteist slurs against her. Payal, 26, would have been the first woman doctor of the Tadvi Muslim Bhil community.

Eats, leaves Wildlife cameras captured the first ever photos of one of the world's rarest bears: an Albino Giant Panda in Wolong National Nature Reserve in Sichuan, China. Not much is known yet besides that the panda is a healthy juvenile, but wildlife officials are setting up more cameras to study the albino bear closely.



Banksy was here Banksy came to Venice Biennale 2019 with an installation on St. Mark's Square that had a super-sized cruise ship almost dominating the already sinking city, a commentary on the over-tourism that plagues Venice. Unfortunately, the installation was removed by cops.



Last one standing Tam, Malaysia's last male Sumatran rhino, died in captivity on May 27. Iman, his female counterpart, is now the only surviving member. Scientists have preserved Tam's genetic material in hopes of bringing back Sumatran rhinos in the future.



Fierce fashion Just a year after courting controversy with her black catsuit at the 2018 French Open, Serena Williams made headlines again with her latest Roland Garros outfit: a cape printed with the words champion, goddess, mother and queen on it in French. Williams proudly previewed the outfit on social media, thanking designers Nike and Virgil Abloh for their work.



Israeli imbroglio Just one month after winning elections, Benjamin Netanyahu had to step down after Israeli Parliament Knesset voted to dissolve itself and hold snap polls in September. Netanyahu failed to form a coalition government.



Wyatt a win Ken Wyatt made history by becoming Australia's first indigenous cabinet minister. Wyatt, who belongs to the Noongar community, has fought for aboriginal representation all his life. The appointment, he said, will help in "shattering the brown glass ceiling".

Hugely invisible An asteroid nearly a mile wide and with its own moon hurtled past earth last weekend but was too far off to do any damage or even be seen by the naked eye. 1999 KW4 came some three million miles close, the closest an asteroid's ever come in recent history.

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

WITH RUCHIR SHARMA

‘Indian politicians have to be like Bernie Sanders’

All parties seem to have a welfare-minded, socialist form of thinking that blurs the line between Left and Right, says the fund manager



- Started working with Morgan Stanley in 1996; is today Chief Global Strategist and head of Emerging Markets Equity team
- Trains as a sprinter six days a week. In 2011, ran the 100-metre and 4x100 relay at the World Masters in California
- Named one of 50 Most Influential People in the World by *Bloomberg Markets* in 2015
- His 2012 book *Breakout Nations* debuted at No.1 in India, and made the *Wall Street Journal* hardcover business bestseller list

alternative to the Modi persona. Unless a strong leader emerges who can take on Mr. Modi, or Mr Modi himself makes mistakes that hurt his popularity, it does not seem that the Congress can make a recovery.

In West Bengal, the BJP has made a major breach in the Trinamool stronghold, and even attracted Left voters. What did you find during your visit?

■ I can't remember any State where we have travelled so far where one party has disintegrated and another risen so sharply in such a short span. We went to cover WB and TN elections in 2016, and the BJP's vote share in Bengal was close to 10-11%. The complete disintegration of the CPI(M) needs investigation.

In Bengal we noticed two big issues: anti-incumbency against Trinamool, which has inherited the strong-arm tactics of the Left, and anti-immigration sentiment, against what many considered an "open borders" policy in parts of Bengal. The BJP has managed to exploit these two,

silence and I realised that this did not resonate with them. And when they did come to power, they followed a very different agenda.

My disappointment is that when Mr. Modi first came to power, I was ready to say that he may be an economic reformer and should be given a chance due to rhetoric like "minimum government, maximum governance" and "the government has no business of being in business". That hope quickly faded after demonetisation. In Turkey and Russia, the leaders pursued a lot of economic reforms but soon turned towards consolidating power, and reforms became secondary.

In India on the other hand, I think, for anyone to win elections, they have to be like Bernie Sanders. All parties seem to have a welfare-minded, socialist form of thinking that blurs the line between the Left and the Right. Mr. Modi especially, to try and win back support this year, went further down the "welfarist way" in terms of what he announced in the budget in January.

But isn't there a distinction between the UPA's and NDA's approaches to welfare? The UPA tried a rights-based approach — the Right to Information, Right to Work etc., while the NDA's was more about redistribution of club goods, through the Ujjwala scheme and so on.

■ I think there is a distinction, but what I am trying to say is that there is a tendency for each government to come in and launch one scheme after another without stopping to evaluate existing ones; I am told we have more than 1,000 centrally sponsored schemes.

In Madhya Pradesh, last year, I spoke to the District Magistrates. They told me that with few targeted schemes like the one to construct toilets, which has had a lot of focus, we can get outcomes. But with so many schemes, how can you expect delivery? And this is why the average voter remains frustrated — so many promises are made but the delivery is so limited.

You talk in your book about how reform-minded politicians don't always succeed in India. Is there more to governance than just growth — job creation, for example?

■ I have counted 27 instances in India when a State grew at over 8% across a five-year period under a chief minister. In half of those instances the party lost the next Assembly elections, although to say they lost because the growth did not result in job creation would be over-simplification.

The point is, development is only one factor in an election. In the early 2000s, Chandrababu Naidu would speak to us in a reformist way, but once on the campaign trail he would start describing the welfare schemes he had put in place. Nitish Kumar is also a case in point. He has delivered economic growth, and still searches for the right allies to win an election. In India, the connection between economics and politics is rather weak.

but even then its rise is staggering. Just three months ago, no one gave the BJP a chance.

In your book you say that in your 20s you expected that the only way for India to get out of its morass would be through inspired leaders pushing in tough reforms. You mention Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as someone who started out as an economic reformist. But since then, Erdoğan has consolidated power and cracked down on democratic institutions. Is there a danger of something similar happening in India?

■ In the book I detail how I met Sonia and Rahul Gandhi in the early 2000s and made the case for greater reforms. I discussed emerging markets and how leaders like Putin and Erdoğan were then coming to power and pursuing a reformist agenda — so why not do something similar if you're looking for a formula to return to government? I got complete radio

There were 27 instances in India when a State grew at over 8% across a five-year period under a CM; the ruling party lost the next Assembly elections in half those cases

SRINIVASAN RAMANI

In his latest book, *Democracy on the Road: A 25-Year Journey through India*, global investor Ruchir Sharma writes about his travels across India with a varying contingent of journalists, researchers and others to gauge public mood around the various elections held in the past two decades. Excerpts from an interview:

What do you think explains this strong verdict for a return of the Narendra Modi-led government?

■ For me, the extent of the BJP's win was a huge surprise. We had in our travels in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal during the elections noted that Mr. Modi was popular. While there was a saffron surge in West Bengal, there was no indication of a wave in the BJP's favour, in U.P. We found most voters looking to vote along community lines, and the Samajwadi

Party-Bahujan Samaj Party combine seemed to be recovering ground based on this. A look at the six percentage point nation-wide swing towards the BJP suggests that a lot of new voters — youth — voted largely because of Mr. Modi's popularity rather than on community lines. The BJP also increased its vote share substantially by 15-20 points in States where it had lost to the Congress in the Assembly elections. That sort of a swing within six months has never happened before in Indian electoral history.

Where does the Congress go from here, having failed to improve significantly on its seat share?

■ Many of the voters we met suggested they were voting for the BJP because of the Prime Minister's leadership, but no one named Rahul Gandhi as a reason they were voting for the opposition. It seems to me that the Congress is unable to offer any

INNSBRUCK

A scandal in Austria that brought down a govt.

 Last Monday was one of the most eventful in Austria's recent history. For the first time since the Second World War, the country's Chancellor was ousted by a no-confidence vote following a corruption scandal, details of which emerged about a week earlier.

Der Spiegel and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* – two of Germany's most prestigious publications – released videos featuring two leading politicians of the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ). Heinz-Christian Strache and Johann Gudenus had been secretly filmed in 2017 during their vacation in Ibiza, Spain, talking about a deal with a woman who claimed to be related to a Russian oligarch.

In the almost seven-hour long video, the two were seen speaking about how the woman could use her money to influence Austrian politics. Enjoying sushi, alcohol and energy drinks in a luxury apartment, the politicians also promised the alleged millionaire government contracts and suggested that she buy the *Krone* newspaper, Austria's largest tabloid.

Filmed months earlier

The video was filmed months before last year's election and the creation of a coalition between the Conservatives and the FPÖ. It is not yet fully clear who lured both politicians into a trap and filmed them. However, as a result of the revelations, Mr. Strache resigned from his position as Vice-Chancellor and head of the FPÖ. Mr. Gudenus, MP and leader of the FPÖ's parliamentary group, did not just resign from his positions, but also left the party.

Additionally, he claimed that he was "probably under the influence of knockout drops and drugs". Mr. Gudenus also feared that further problematic material against him would be revealed.

Finally, the 'Ibiza affair' led to the fall of not just the two politicians, but the whole Austrian government.

"The Freedom Party used to portray itself as the 'party of the poor man'. Even before this scandal, many knew this claim to be a lie. But it now has become more than obvious. All of it was a total farce. Leaders of the party just wanted to be elected to get all the money and the power for themselves. They would even sell the country to foreign oligarchs," said Armin Anfang, a teacher from Vienna.

According to Mr. Anfang, the Conservatives, who led the government, immediately tried to benefit from the scandal. "It is well-

known that Herbert Kickl [FPÖ leader who was sacked as Interior Minister following the scandal] was the main opponent of



The 'Ibiza exposé', which caught two Austrian far-right leaders allegedly compromising on national interests, brought down Chancellor Kurz's dispensation

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, and now he is gone," he said.

Now the Chancellor himself is gone too, and after the successful no-confidence vote, Austria is being led by an interim government. Fresh elections are scheduled for September.

As a result of the far right's fall, many people in Austria participated in spontaneous celebrations. In Vienna, thousands first gathered to demand Mr. Strache's resignation, and after the government apart, they started to party. The Ibiza affair also brought a lot of international attention.

"Because of these folks [the FPÖ], our country is considered as a total banana republic. I hope that this image changes soon," said Davut Demirci, a law student from Innsbruck.

Nevertheless, some people are not satisfied with the current situation. "The current spirit of optimism in Austria is exciting. It appears that mainly the Social Democrats [Opposition party which brought the no-confidence vote] are thrilled by that. In my opinion, the vote was a bit too radical since it was targeting the whole government," said Miriam Imarhiagbe, a jurist from Vienna.


According to Ms. Imarhiagbe, a vote solely against Mr. Kurz himself might have been enough to secure stability.

Probably the person who spoke the wisest words was Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen. "Do not think about short-term benefits for your party. Ask yourself: does this help Austria? Does it help us within, does it strengthen our credibility in the world?," he said after the release of the Ibiza videos.

In his long statement, Mr. Van der Bellen also turned to the country's citizens and apologised for recent events. "Please do not turn away disgustedly from politics," he urged the people.

DHAKA

The perilous pull of illicit sea voyages

 Dreams of going abroad for a job took Masum Miah, a man from eastern Bangladesh, on a journey across the Mediterranean, a vast sea known for tourist romance on the one side and migrant deaths on the other.

This dark chapter of Mr. Miah's life slowly unfolded in Sylhet after a human trafficker started shadowing him with a promise to transport him to Italy, one of the gateways for illegal migrants to Europe. The cost of the illicit migration was 800,000 taka (\$9,450 approximately). That was paid for by Mr. Miah's brother Masud Ahmed. The smuggler, named by Mr. Miah as Rafique Baraigi, put him in touch with his son who runs a trafficking ring in Tripoli, Libya.

In early May, after spending 15 days in Tripoli, Mr. Miah, 30, and 14 others set out for the Libyan coast by car. After a long overland journey, the vehicle came to a halt. They then had to walk for about two hours, sometimes through waters along the coastline, to a waiting migrant boat. More desperate groups appeared on the scene – all bound for Italy.

After some time, a large boat packed with migrant workers – 51 of them from Bangladesh – headed out to sea. The journey became even riskier after smugglers transferred them to three smaller inflatable boats by force, to cross the rest of the Mediterranean. Those who refused to oblige were beaten up.

On May 10, some 65 people drowned after one overloaded boat sank, approximately 45 nautical miles off the coast of Tunisia, in one of the worst incidents on the Mediterranean in months. Local fishermen spotted the migrants. Sixteen of them were pulled from the water and brought to the coast of Zarzis by the Tunisian Navy. Mr. Miah was one of them.

The group had left Zuwara, around 120 km west of Tripoli, on the evening of May 9, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said, citing the survivors. Their boat ran into trouble soon after encountering strong waves.

"This is a tragic and terrible reminder of the risks still faced by those who attempt to cross the Mediterranean," Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR Special Envoy for the Central Mediterranean, said in a statement. As many as 164 people died while navigating between Libya and Europe in the first four months of this year. One person has died on the central Mediterranean for every three who reached European shores after departing from Libya. Many of those who undertook dangerous sea crossings were Bangladeshis.

These deaths of migrants during sea journeys expose a dark



The death of migrants, forced to take desperate journeys across the Mediterranean, exposes a dark underbelly of poverty and unemployment in Bangladesh

underbelly of joblessness and poverty in Bangladesh, a country often feted globally for its economic growth. This shows that the nation's bright development story has bypassed a large section of young people, often struggling to escape the country's rural backwaters and ending up undertaking fatal journeys.

"When Bangladesh is reported as one of the single-biggest sources of refugees in the world, it is a shame for the entire country. We need to control trafficking in the name of migration. It is a new threat. We really need to work hard to stop these people from taking desperate journeys," said Shariful Islam Hasan, head of the migration programme at BRAC, a non-governmental organisation. "The government needs to find out why these people are so adamant at leaving the country. Is the issue connected to good governance?" For many Bangladeshis, migration offers one of the few paths out of the squalor of their everyday life. For some, it is a passage to upward mobility.

Cries of dying people

Bahadur, 26, said he shunned his job as a mobile-phone repairman in his hometown, located in the central district of Kishoreganj, and headed out to Libya with the help of a trafficker. After being trapped in a warehouse in the middle of a Libyan desert for two days, he had to walk and, sometimes, run for miles in the dark towards a migrant boat. The overcrowded boat capsized after hours of its journey across the sea. "I can't sleep at night. I hear the cries of dying people around me," he said. "I can't explain how I survived."

After these tragic episodes in their lives, Mr. Miah and Mr. Bahadur will try to settle down in Bangladesh, but many more, inspired by the stories of other successful sea crossings, will take up similar risky journeys. To stop that, the government should act fast.



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WASHINGTON

The many biases of facial recognition tools

 Last month, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors, in an 8-1 vote, banned the use of facial recognition technology by local agencies. The liberal city is the first in America to pass such a law – especially significant given that San Francisco is also the beating heart of the tech universe. There has been growing concern about the use of facial recognition in the U.S. and talk about it is particularly noticeable, given that the U.S. is in the midst of taking China to task for the extraordinary surveillance it conducts on its Uighur Muslim minority.

More than 50 agencies across the country use, or have used, facial recognition technology for ID checks or to identify criminals, *The Washington Post* reported. This has raised not only concerns around privacy but also around accuracy and bias. Last year, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reported that it tested Rekognition – Amazon's controversial facial recognition tool – and was able to (incorrectly) match mugshots of those who have been arrested for a crime with those of 28 members of the U.S. Congress. Racial minorities were disproportionately represented in the set of mismatches.

An MIT Media Lab study found that facial recognition misclassified women as men 19% of the time and the error rate got worse, to 31%, for darker skin, as per *The New York Times*.

Civil rights concerns

The ACLU and a group of other similar organisations wrote to Jeff Bezos in May 2018 requesting that Amazon stop selling its facial recognition technology to law enforcement agencies. But technology companies are pushing back to varying degrees, and Amazon is chief among those resisting curbs on the technology. Last month, it was revealed that just 2.4% of Amazon shareholders voted for a proposal to stop the sale of facial recognition technology to government agencies, and just 27.5% supported a proposal to study the civil rights implications of Rekognition.

At the moment, there are no federal laws governing the use of the technology, so there is broad scope for companies and subnational governments to do as they please, unless specific laws like the one in San Francisco limit the technology's use.

In March, BuzzFeed News reported that the U.S. Customs and Border Police (CBP) is planning to scan the faces of passengers on 16,300 flights per week (or 100 million passengers)

going abroad within two years. This is 100% of all passengers at the top 20 airports in the U.S.

Buzzfeed reported



Sriram Lakshman is *The Hindu's* Washington correspondent



The use of facial recognition technology in the U.S. has raised concerns of privacy and accuracy. There currently are no federal laws governing its use

that the images of departing non-citizens could be retained for up to 14 days and used in “evaluation of the technology” and “assurance of the accuracy of the algorithms”. In other words, the images could be used to train the facial recognition AI tool. The images of non-citizens can be retained for up to 75 years, the report said.

Congress has authorised the collection of biometrics of non-citizens but the legality of collecting citizens' facial data stands on a much flimsier ground. This is on the top of the known inaccuracies of the system.

However, the situation is starting to show signs of change. On May 22, the U.S. House of Representatives Oversight Committee held a hearing on the impact of facial recognition technology on civil rights and liberties. The cause brought Republicans and Democrats together, a rare event in Washington these days.

“You've hit the sweet spot that brings progressives and conservatives together,” said Mark Meadows, a Republican Congressman.

“So what demographic is this [facial recognition] most effective on?” freshman Democrat Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez asked.

“White men,” said Joy Buolamwini, founder of Algorithmic Justice League, an organisation that fights bias in codes and algorithms.

“And who are the primary engineers and designers of these algorithms?” Ms. Ocasio-Cortez asked. “Definitely white men,” said Ms. Buolamwini, going on to describe the possibility of using facial recognition technology on body-worn cameras used by the police. In a system already fraught with racial bias, Ms. Buolamwini said, technology can exacerbate the challenges.

The hearing is only an early step in what will have to be a substantial but quick journey if the law is to catch up with and regulate the burgeoning use of facial recognition.

BANGKOK

The enduring charm of the game of thrones

 The world clearly cannot get enough of the ‘game of thrones’. For those interested in such pastimes, the first weekend of May was a revelation. Be it the scores of loyalists who speculated about who the Lord of the Seven Kingdoms would be, or an entire country that joined in the celebrations accompanying the coronation of King Vajiralongkorn of Thailand, it was apparent for many that the ‘throne’ was back as the centrepiece of a good part of the world.

Landing in Thailand, it was easy to believe that the throne had always been the centre of that universe. “Two weeks! You are here exactly two weeks after the King's coronation,” the taxi driver said, by way of welcome. He pointed out to the banners, posters, shrines lined with white and yellow ribbons and flowers, centred around the picture of a youngish King Vajiralongkorn in full military regalia (he's the head of the Thai Armed Forces) and a stern visage.

In a coronation ceremony between May 4 and 6, the King transformed into ‘Devaraja’, an embodiment of the gods, the driver explained as he burnt rubber on the highway on a hot summer day. “He is the protector of Buddhism too, you know?” he added in practised tones.

On the King's sudden marriage to Queen Suthida a few days before the coronation though, he foxed us by responding with just shy laughter.

While Thailand as a constitutional monarchy ensures that the King's powers are not absolute, and endows him with largely symbolic and ceremonial stature, he does have considerable influence. The reverence of the people of Thailand and their reluctance to engage in a well-rounded conversation about their royalty makes sense when we figure out that the *lese-majeste* law is in force in the country, making it a crime for citizens to criticise the King or the royal family.

“Oh, we all love our King,” deflected our tour guide in Bangkok. Oi, as she preferred to be called, had just given us an elaborate account of the royal family's history, ending with: “We are a parliamentary democracy now.” She was dressed in a yellow tee and explained how yellow, a colour associated with the royalty, was fixed as Thailand's colour for Monday – the country has a colour for every day of the week – because the present King and his predecessor were both born on Mondays. There was an extraordinary amount of yellow on the streets – ribbons adorning government buildings, schools, even

malls; hoardings congratulating King Rama X (the title); and a lot of people dressed in yellow.



Ramya Kannan works for *The Hindu* and was in Thailand



Be it the coronation ceremony of the Thai King, or the birth of a royal baby in England, events concerning the royalty are still able to enthrall the commoners

Even a fortnight after the coronation, people on the streets were still wearing yellow ‘Long live the King’ tees. Magazines devoted pages to the King, his life, and the coronation, all in the Thai language but easily distinguishable by the abiding image for us during this visit – that of the King standing tall – to a country full of beaches, Buddhist temples, and beautiful trans-women.

Ms. Oi said people watched the royal procession as it solemnly marched the streets, waving cheerily at the lines. Clearly, the Thais' connect with their royalty is organic.

So it is across the oceans. Among European nations that have some form of monarchy left, it is Britain where a coronation is still considered huge. Of course, it hasn't seen a coronation since the ascension of Queen Elizabeth II to the throne of seven countries in 1952, but England, circa 2002, was agog celebrating the golden jubilee of this event.

Britain's royal present

Yes, television shows debated about the relevance of the monarchy; newspapers devoted reams to wondering if money spent on the royalty was justified and yet you had to jostle with reverent, and not-so-reverent people to get into classical music and rock concerts, flower shows, special exhibitions, and to get your hands on shiny, new souvenirs that were minted to celebrate this triumph of Elizabeth Regina II.

Another event of import happened during the same weekend as the Thai King's coronation – England went into a tizzy about the birth of a royal baby, the seventh in the line of succession to the throne. No one can deny that Archie, first born of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, got a hero's welcome.

In these modern times, who would have thought that the ‘game of thrones’ would continue to have us thus transfixed.



To eat or not to eat
Children wait for lunch
to be served at a school
in Mysuru. M.A. SRIRAM

ARCHANA NATHAN

Tabarak, a 14-year-old boy in Devarjeevanahalli, a locality in central Bengaluru, would rather walk home at lunch break to quickly grab a bite than eat the free meal served at school. “He finds the school food too bland,” says his mother, standing in the narrow passage of their house. “He says the *saaru* is too watery and the sambhar too *pheeka*,” says Tabarak’s grandmother from inside, where she is cutting onions for lunch.

Tabarak studies at the government school up the road from his house where food is served six days of the week by Iskcon’s Akshaya Patra Foundation (APF) as part of the Central Government’s mid-day meal (MDM) scheme.

A few blocks away, 11-year-old Sabitha is too shy to say much. Her male classmates dismiss the question about whether they like the food at school, but Sabitha, hiding behind her elder sister, finally ventures: “It’s not very good. I prefer to eat at home because the food is tastier.”

“She gets to eat chicken and eggs at home,” says one of her friends, prompting Sabitha to seek further refuge in the folds of her sister’s dupatta.

Most children in Yelahanka’s LBS Colony in north Bengaluru seem to

FOOD CHAIN

The politics of of food

Why does Iskcon’s Akshaya Patra Foundation refuse to add onion or garlic to the mid-day meals it provides in Karnataka even though the children crave the familiar taste?

think the same. For instance, Snehapriya, 14, starves through the day at school and only eats when she comes home. “On some days, she’ll insist on taking a dabba from home but she won’t eat the food served in school,” her sister says. “She says she doesn’t like the taste – even if it is bisibelebhath or pulao.” At

Snehapriya’s school too, the food is catered by APF.

Lesser foods

The testimonies of these children come at a time when APF, which caters to 2,814 schools and roughly 4.43 lakh children in the State, has been dominating headlines for its

stubborn decision to not use onion and garlic in the meals it makes.

Onion and garlic are ‘tamasic’ ingredients, is what APF reportedly believes. In a post on a blog run by Iskcon’s devotee network, a volunteer explains why onion and garlic are not considered favourable. Citing an email from leader Janananda Goswami Maharaj, the blogger explains that onion and garlic have the potential to “adversely affect one’s consciousness”. As ingredients, they are in the “lower modes of nature,” and are associated with passion, ignorance, lethargy, lack of focus and confusion.

Several activists in Karnataka, especially those associated with the Right to Food Campaign and the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, have criticised APF’s stance and demanded that the State Government cancel the contract with Iskcon on the grounds that it is trying to impose its religious beliefs on lakhs of children.

Activists say APF has also violated the terms of the MoU it signed with the Karnataka government under the mid-day meal scheme. Here’s how.

The controversy has its roots in a field visit by the Karnataka State Food Commission in December 2018. “The commission noticed that children were not eating as much as they should in schools,” said Siddharth

In the menu prepared by the government, onion is an ingredient on four of six days. All organisations except APF follow this

Joshi, an independent researcher associated with the Right to Food Campaign. “Over a period of time, the amount of food consumed by children had become less, and so the amount of food supplied to schools had also reduced. The main reason for this, the commission said, was because the children did not find the food palatable.”

According to Joshi, the food commission then learnt that the story went further back, to 2013, to a review meeting of the scheme in Delhi, which ascertains the performance of different States. “In that meeting, it was found that Bangalore Urban and Dharwad were performing poorly and were designated as special focus districts,” Joshi said. When the State Government looked into the matter, it was found that the contractors were supplying foods of their choice instead of local foods familiar to the children. “The government said, therefore, that it was important to prescribe a menu specifying the dishes for each day and the ingredients to be used in their preparation. In the menu prepared by the government, onion is an ingredient on four out of six days at least. All organisations except APF, under contract for the scheme, follow this menu,” pointed out Joshi.

Not balanced

Last December, when the food commission learnt of APF’s refusal to follow the ingredient list, it asked the government to send a notice to APF. “We pulled them up for disregarding the MOU,” a government official said on condition of anonymity. “We asked them, when every other NGO is following the menu, why can’t you. They then submitted documents that said the ingredients they used in the preparation of the food do not compromise on the nutritional requirements of the meal and that there are adequate substitutes for both onion and garlic in their meals.”

The State Government sent these documents and APF’s menu for a review by the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and the Central Food



Not full Studies show the children are eating less, defeating the purpose of the mid-day meal. (representational image) ISHAAN RAGHUNANDAN

Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) – which brings us to the present day.

In February 2019, NIN gave its formal nod to APF’s menu and said: “The nutritive values of menus with ingredients used in the mentioned amounts certainly meet and often exceed the prescribed energy (Kcal) and protein requirements prescribed by MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development) for the MDM.”

It also added: “With regard to the bio-availability of minerals, it is well established that inclusion of seasonal

and fresh vegetables and the use of turmeric, lime, curry leaves, cumin seeds, tamarind, green leafy vegetables also improve the bio-availability of nutrients apart from additional health benefits and are also effective substitutes of onion and garlic.”

Appalled by NIN’s order, activists last month circulated an open letter signed by 10 organisations and 94 experts (including activists associated with the Right to Food Campaign, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, and faculty from TISS, Mumbai, and IIM-Ahmedabad).

The letter argues that NIN has neither sampled nor measured the food to arrive at its conclusion.

Nor has it considered the testimonies of the stakeholders, particularly the

children eating the food. “They have made recommendations based on a menu provided by APF, which doesn’t even mention the quantities of ingredients used to prepare the meals. In view of such serious lapses, it is clear that the conclusions reached by NIN are unscientific and biased, void of any basis in any systematic study and have been provided only to give a clean chit to APF,” said the letter.

When asked about this, Hemalatha R., director, NIN, said “accepted norms” were followed to assess the APF menu.

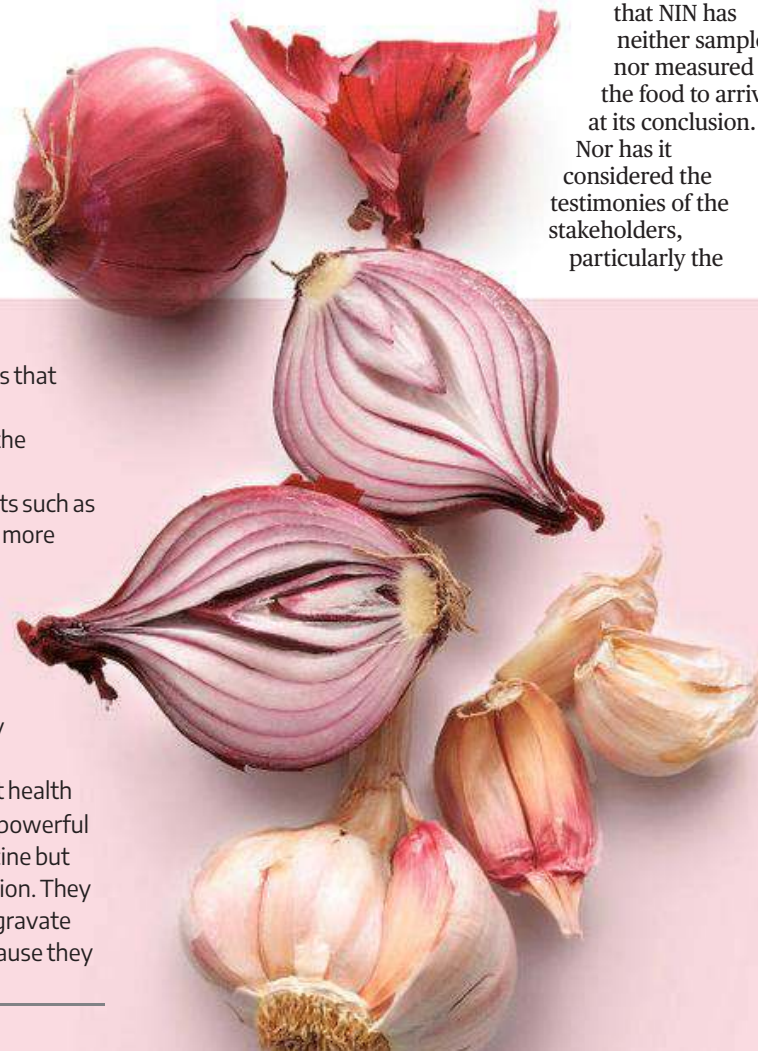
“We computed macronutrients and micronutrients from the MDM menus recommended by the Karnataka government and the MDM menus provided by APF from the published

The administration cannot function on the basis of philosophical arguments. I’ve told these activists they have their heads in the clouds. I live on earth

scientific data of the Institute [Indian Food Composition Table (IFCT-NIN) and Nutritive Value of Indian foods (NVIF)]. It is an accepted norm to assess the nutritional quantity and quality of food using the computational methods from the quantities of ingredients that go into making it.”

But Joshi’s argument is that “the government should have just enforced the menu they themselves have prescribed. There was no need to seek an opinion from NIN or CFTRI. Also, the government phrased the question to NIN in such a strange way. The question should have been, why not onion and garlic?”

Umashankar S.R., principal secretary of education in Karnataka, defends the decision. “Under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, what the government has prescribed are the nutrient levels required in a meal – the level of carbohydrates, proteins,



Fact file

Onion and garlic belong to the Allium genus that includes shallots, leeks and chives. They’re traditionally considered super foods with the following properties:

- Low in calories but packed with nutrients such as Vit.C, Vit.B, potassium, manganese and more
- Contain anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds
- Reduce cholesterol and blood pressure
- Contain cancer-fighting compounds
- Associated with improved bone density
- Have antibacterial properties
- Rich in fibre and prebiotics, good for gut health

Ayurveda considers onion and garlic to be powerful herbs. They are traditionally used as medicine but not recommended for everyday consumption. They are considered ‘heating’ foods that can aggravate the body both physically and mentally because they are supposed to be hyper-stimulants.

CREDITS



Namma Betta: Our Crags

SANATH REDDY, 10 MIN

This short YouTube film centres on the burgeoning rock climbing community in Bengaluru and aims to raise awareness of this unique wilderness activity. The filmmaker said the goal of his film was “to document a growing community, its history and the implications of outdoor activities in the current environmental context”.



The Hour of Lynching

SHIRLEY ABRAHAM AND
AMIT MADHESIYA, 19 MIN

With the recent surges in communal violence, a new *Guardian* documentary brings to light Rakbar Khan's story: a Muslim farmer who was murdered while transporting two cows. The single case study reveals the growing pattern of violence by Hindu cow vigilantes against Muslims and Dalits.



After Maria

NADIA HALLGREN, 37 MIN

Netflix's latest documentary looks at the lives of three displaced Puerto Rican women whose federal housing aid is about to expire. The dark and provocative film exposes the plight of those whose troubles continued even after Hurricane Maria ended.

The politics...



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

etc. They have not prescribed the ingredients. So when we got this particular complaint, we referred it to CFTRI and NIN asking them about the advantages of onion and garlic and if we have to use them. NIN has said that APF meets the nutrition standards, so why should we cancel the contract with APF? Except for this one small reason (the refusal to use onion and garlic), there are a lot of advantages for the government to continue its contract with Iskcon. They provide hygienic meals and cater to a large group of children in the State as well as in the country. We aren't delving into philosophical and religious issues. And we cannot punish them unnecessarily for somebody's objections.”

Logistical issues

When asked if the government was being partial to APF, Umashankar denied it. “Who is going to serve such a huge number of children if we cancel this contract?” he said. “There are logistical issues; overnight, we cannot build kitchens and hire cooks. The administration cannot function on the basis of philosophical arguments. I've told these activists directly – they have their heads in the clouds. I live on earth.”

When contacted, APF responded with a long mail that basically repeated the same points without referring to onions and garlic at all. The mail reiterates: “With the responsibility of feeding millions of children every day, we take all the necessary steps to ensure that our mid-day meals are not just safe and hygienic, but nutritious and tasty as well.”

As the controversy rages, Right to Food activist Sylvia Karpagam reminds us that the absolute bottom line, and something the controversy distracts us



Do the kids like eggs? 'Oh yes,' says Dayanand, 10. 'Miss, will they give eggs in our school? I love eggs'

from, is the fact that children are not eating the food. “They don't like the food,” she said. “You can bring bowlfuls of something I've never eaten in my life and tell me it is really healthy for me, but I'm not going to eat it. It is human behaviour. You need to like the smell, the taste, you need to want to eat it. What's happening is that because they're so hungry, the children are eating a bit, but definitely not to a full stomach. Isn't the entire objective of the mid-day meal scheme then just lost?”

Dr. Karpagam's arguments find resonance in another school in Kattigenahalli in Bengaluru. Parents in the village said that a huge amount of food gets wasted each day in the school. “Most of it is just emptied into the local drain here because children don't feel like finishing what is on their plate,” says Nagamma, a mother.

Hungry kya Akshaya Patra Foundation caters to roughly 4.43 lakh children in Karnataka.

M.A. SRIRAM & ISHAAN RAGHUNANDAN

“Some of the children eat what they get; they don't really know what onion or garlic does to their meal. But if you ask them what their favourite meal is, they say bisibelebhath or pulao, because that is tastier than rice and sambhar.”

No budget

Do the kids like eggs? “Oh yes,” says Dayanand, 10. “Miss, will they give eggs in our school? I love eggs.”

Umashankar, however, said the government has no budget in the scheme to provide eggs. “The money we get is barely enough to sustain the existing scheme. There's no talk of eggs as of now. The State Government is providing hot milk as part of its scheme. That'll have to do for now.”

Meanwhile, in an email response, NIN endorses eggs. “Meat and egg are good sources of protein and [possess] a wide variety of other beneficial nutrients. Incorporating them in the diet of children is any day beneficial.”

Joshi describes how at a broader level, there is utter incongruity between the kind of food provided by the government and the local cultures and tastes of the children eating it. In reality, the recipients of the mid-day meals are children from minority and socio-economically backward communities. “As much as it is linked to need and nutrition, food is also inextricably linked to one's culture,” said Joshi.

“If we examine the food traditions in Karnataka, we realise that only 15% of people are vegetarian,” he said. However, there appears to be a widespread belief that vegetarianism is superior, possibly because of its association with upper caste customs. And, as Joshi said, to say that “the government, in its schemes to mitigate hunger, will only serve a dominant caste group's food is terribly unfair and deeply problematic. What about the cultures and food traditions of the children actually eating these meals?”

Dr. Karpagam agrees. “If you are eating ragi or eggs at home, you should be able to have that as part of your meal.” When children of a certain culture are able to access that culture in their school, it can add a lot of value to the experience of schooling. “Even more important is to encourage local cooks, specifically Dalit cooks, women's self-help groups, and locally sourced ingredients. This way, you're also sustaining the local economy,” she said.

Ultimately, as activists argue, what needs to shift is the language and narrative surrounding such schemes. Food is a right, not a favour or an act of benevolence by the government.

The writer is an independent journalist based in Bengaluru.

POLL PRIDE

Pari ma's ready to fly to Parliament

She is 70, a self-help group leader and a first-time MP. Meet Pramila Bisoi from Aska in Odisha

SIB KUMAR DAS

With the pallu of her Sambalpuri saree draped over her head, a vibrant line of sindoor parting her hair, and the traditional dual nosepins gleaming on her face, 70-year-old Pramila Bisoi stands out in the line of MPs elected from Odisha.

Last month, this down-to-earth self-help group activist from Cheramaria village in Ganjam district won the Aska Lok Sabha seat on a Biju Janata Dal (BJD) ticket with a comfortable margin of over two lakh votes.

The commoner-turned-MP represents lakhs of rural women in Odisha who fight for emancipation while staying rooted to their tradition and cultural heritage. Residents of Cheramaria say their *pari ma* (fairy godmother), as she is popularly known in the village, looks "*khanti odiani maa* (cent percent Odia mother)".

Bisoi was the face of BJD's flagship Mission Shakti programme for women. Started in 2001, the scheme is reported to have benefited around 70 lakh women from six lakh women's SHGs in the State. Declaring Bisoi's

Let them speak whatever they want. I am a mother, and cannot hold a grudge against anyone. I will only try to do my best



Champion Pramila Bisoi with party supporters after her Lok Sabha win; (bottom) with SHG members in Aska. LINGARAJ PANDA

candidature for the Lok Sabha polls in March, Odisha Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik had said, "It is a tribute to lakhs of women in our 'Mission Shakti' movement." Incidentally, Aska constituency is where Patnaik began his political career in 1997 with a win in a by-election.

First flight

Her nomination had shocked many in Odisha's political circles. She was cooking the mid-day meal for students of a primary school in her village when she received a phone call from the BJD headquarters to reach Bhubaneswar to receive her ticket for the Aska seat. During campaigning, she took a flight for the first time when she flew with Patnaik in his helicopter.

Her detractors are still to come to terms with her resounding victory.

Her lack of formal education and of a political background were the subject of many jibes on social media during election campaigning and even after her win. She keeps abreast of all the news, both good and bad, by talking to her supporters, but Bisoi stays unfazed. She does not own a smartphone yet.

"Let them speak whatever they want. I am a mother, and cannot hold a grudge against anyone. I will only try to do my best," she says. Even during campaigning, when it's de rigueur to hurl abuses at your opponent and show up his inefficiencies, Bisoi refrained from talking about her rivals. "My greatest strength is that a win or loss has no meaning for me, I am just enjoying the encouragement given to me by Naveen Patnaik," she says.

Her childhood and early life have been no different from those of scores of women in rural India. Born in a low-income family, Bisoi was married off at the age of five and studied only till Class III.

Her husband Banchhanidhi Bisoi was a low-level employee of Odisha Lift Irrigation Corporation and they have four children, two sons and two daughters. The older son, Dilip, runs a tea stall and the younger one, Ranjan, owns a two-wheeler workshop. The daughters are married.

The family lives in a dingy tin-roofed house and that is where they will continue to live even though she is now an MP. "My peasant family lives a simple life and has few aspirations. With this electoral win, I have to look after the larger family, my constituency, instead of focusing on my own family," says Bisoi.

Even as a child bride with limited resources, Bisoi never gave up on working for the upliftment of women. "It all started with fighting for clean water, sanitation and women's health

during childbirth. Later, I became the leader of a women's SHG and of the local Van Surakshya Samity (VSS)," she says. She was a major force behind the villagers' peacock protection movement at Pakidi hills near Aska, for which she was honoured with the Odisha government's Prakruti Mitra and Prakruti Bandhu awards.

From the grassroots

Since the past five decades, she has also been assisting with childbirth and postnatal care in her village – and it's this service that earned her the moniker *pari ma*.

Bisoi is secretary of the women's SHG collective in Aska block that has around 700 SHGs. It is her grassroots involvement and knowledge of ground realities that have paved the way for her political win. "Earlier, I was only working for the women in my area. But with the blessings of Naveen Patnaik, I have now taken up the responsibility of 70 lakh women from Odisha's SHGs," she says.

Bisoi refuses to be cowed down by the criticism that she does not know Hindi and English and so cannot be a good parliamentarian. "I will proudly speak Odia, my mother tongue, in Parliament," she says. Her habit of reading Odia literature makes her a good public speaker. She also writes her own songs on women's empowerment and sings too. "At worst, I will sing a ditty to draw their attention," she quips with a smile.

So, what's first on her agenda as an MP? She wants to highlight the need for proper rehabilitation and restoration post Cyclone Titli.

Her other dream is a railway project that will pass through Aska to connect Berhampur and Nayagarh. "I also want the government to do something to save the people of Aska from the ravages of continuous floods."





BIG SCREEN

Twenty years after maverick filmmaker Stanley Kubrick's death, his cinematic themes seem eerily prescient

How I learned to love the bomb

VIKRAM ZUTSHI

In a 1972 interview on the heels of his latest release, *A Clockwork Orange*, the director Stanley Kubrick said, "Man isn't a noble savage, he's an ignoble savage. He is irrational, brutal, weak, silly, unable to be objective about anything where his own interests are involved – that about sums it up. I'm interested in the brutal and violent nature of man because it's a true picture of him. And any attempt to create social institutions on a false view of the nature of man is probably doomed to failure."

Perhaps nothing else the late director said in his 50-year-long career captures his approach to cinema and life better than this quote. In *A Clockwork Orange*, the custodians of law who seek to civilise the murderous youth gangs, resort to methods as barbaric as the perpetrators they seek to reform. In *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), an advanced alien civilisation toys with the fate of humans as we might do with our pets. The unhinged warmongers in *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) are driven by their sexual insecurities while in *The Shining* (1980), we witness the terrifying descent of a family man into homicidal frenzy.

In Kubrick's world, man projects his hopes and aspirations on to the universe, while it remains supremely indifferent to his fate. He examines human pathologies as an entomologist might study insects under a microscope, simultaneously fascinated and repelled, without ever identifying with his subjects.

Rather than aspire towards

cinematic realism – the goal of most filmmakers – Kubrick built barriers to prevent audiences from personally identifying with the world of the film. "We are not trying to photograph reality," he said, "we are trying to photograph a photograph of reality." Kubrick was creating a unique perspective. He was telling us, this is not our world, this is the world of the movie.

Kubrick was fascinated with the power of images and sound to plumb the recesses of the subconscious mind. His films are loaded with hidden symbols and recurring motifs (the phallic symbols in *Dr. Strangelove*, the bloody elevators and ghostly twins in *The Shining*) designed to trigger the subconscious even as the eye registers only the outermost layer. Dialogue is often treated as a secondary aspect of storytelling. In *2001: A Space Odyssey*,

for instance, he dispenses with conventional exposition, favouring long interludes free of dialogue, allowing the visuals to take on a life of their own.

Political and prophetic

He attempted every genre imaginable over the course of his career, but *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* is perhaps the most overtly political and prophetic film he ever made. He understood that the most effective way to portray the paranoid delusions and insecurities that drove political brinkmanship was through the medium of satire.

Employing Freudian ideas, Kubrick conceived the film as a sexual allegory satirising cold war fears of a nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The

eponymous Dr. Strangelove, played by Peter Sellers, is a former Nazi scientist building a doomsday machine for the United States. In Kubrick's imagination, the nuclear standoff is seen as a pubescent sexual fantasy to dominate the world through sheer libidinal prowess. The male sex drive is compared to the drive for war through recurring phallic motifs, ranging from cigars and missiles to a fuel nozzle.

Here, sexual insecurity or "performance anxiety" is the engine that drives the quest for world domination. Women are conspicuous by their absence in this paranoid, hyper-masculine world. Instead, we see outsized male egos afflicted with penis envy, outwardly loathing but secretly attracted to each other. The Freudian allusions couldn't be any clearer.

Kubrick built barriers to prevent audiences from personally identifying with the world of the film



Kubrick's world
(Clockwise from left) Stills from *A Clockwork Orange*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *The Shining* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.



In the opening sequence, a B-52 bomber refuelling in mid-air is made to resemble an act of coitus while the soundtrack croons 'Try a Little Tenderness'. This is not straightforward vanilla sex but 'strange love' as both aircraft symbolise giant penises.

The iconic shot of Slim Pickens riding the nuclear missile, rodeo style, to obliterate the Commie menace, ends in a mushroom cloud of orgiastic frenzy, a climax of such mammoth proportions that it marks the end of humankind, even as it fertilizes the earth for a new race to be reborn from the ashes of the old. Meanwhile, Vera Lynn croons 'We'll Meet Again' on the soundtrack.

Into the wood-chipper

The film, released only a couple of months after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, came at the cusp of a cultural watershed (moon landing, Vietnam war, Hippie counterculture, Watergate) shaking a naively innocent American public out of its stupor. As John Patterson wrote in *The Guardian*, "There had been nothing in comedy like *Dr. Strangelove* ever before. All the gods before whom the America of the stolid, paranoid 50s had genuflected – the Bomb, the Pentagon, the National Security State, the President himself, Texan masculinity and the alleged Commie menace of water-fluoridation – went into the wood-chipper and never got the same respect ever again."

With the ascension of characters like Trump, Bolsonaro, Putin and Kim Jong-un on the world stage, the outrageously farcical set-ups in *Dr. Strangelove* don't seem so far-fetched any more. Tectonic upheavals in world politics, macroeconomics and technology are upending the smug certainties of the liberal order, dismembering a paradigm that everyone took for granted.

Kubrick would not be surprised at all. In fact, he would see it as an affirmation of his worldview. The Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose ideas still

guide liberal thought, began *The Social Contract* (1762) with the famous line: "Men are born free, yet everywhere are in chains." From here, he goes on to describe the many ways in which the shackles of civil society keep man in bondage, preventing him from attaining his natural birthright to a state of complete freedom.

Kubrick rejected the Romantic notion that man in his primal state is inherently good until "the system" makes a beast of him. As he once said, "Rousseau's romantic fallacy, that it is society which corrupts man, not man



Sexual insecurity or "performance anxiety" is the engine that drives the quest for world domination. Women are conspicuous by their absence

who corrupts society, places a flattering gauze between ourselves and reality. This view is solid box office but, in the end, such a self-inflating illusion leads to despair."

It may serve us well to discard illusions and embrace our true nature as inherently flawed creatures driven by lust, envy and greed. Perhaps then, we would not be discombobulated when the world as we know it unravels before our eyes.

The writer and columnist runs a vineyard, designs sustainable habitats, and makes films.

ONE MOMENT PLEASE

Dead man listening

How a corpse can be an active participant – or a sounding board – in a film

The ambitious, energetic Tamil film *Super Deluxe*, directed by Thiagarajan Kumararaja, begins with the voices of two people over the opening credits: Vaembu and her ex-boyfriend are setting up a tryst on the phone. It's a lively exchange, but one of these two will spend the bulk of the film very dead. The boyfriend, deeply stressed because of a financial tangle, dies during sex – precipitating a macabre but slapstick-y situation where Vaembu must try to hide the body before her husband Mugil gets home.

Later, when everything is out of the closet (or the refrigerator), the two of them try to figure out what to do with the corpse. And some of the film's goofiest scenes centre on this dead body that becomes a sounding board for the playing out of living people's emotions.

As I wrote the above sentence, I deliberated for a second whether it should be "dead body who..." or "dead body that...". Vaembu and Mugil don't face any such dilemmas. In one droll scene, where they have the body propped up in the back seat of their car, she refers to the corpse as "it" and "this thing" – prompting Mugil to say: "Remember what you were doing with 'this thing' just a few hours ago?"

He, she and 'it'

As it happens, *Super Deluxe* – which casts its philosophical net very wide, commenting on the nature of consciousness and self-perception across multiple narrative strands – contains other scenes where "it" is used for people (or creatures) who exist outside conventional human categories. The word is contemptuously directed at a transwoman named Shilpa (a wonderful performance by Vijay Sethupathi), who has just returned home after many years and returned as a woman, much to her family's shock. And it is even, in one of the most delirious scenes, used for an actual extraterrestrial. This film has fun with the different implications of "alien".

But stone-cold dead bodies are a whole other dimension of 'it-ness', especially when they have a full-fledged role to play in a narrative. In that car scene, when Mugil and Vaembu speak with each other in the front seat and the camera cuts between them, the framing never stops showing us the corpse in the back: a silent third participant in dark glasses. When Mugil is alone with the body, he directs a cuckold's anguished

monologue at "it", asking "What have you got that I don't?" and is even on the verge of opening the dead man's trousers to size-check.

The car scene reminded me of other dead bodies – or ghosts – in backseats, in films as diverse as Georges Franju's *Eyes Without a Face*, 1960 (which opens with a murder victim being transported in a car, again sitting up as if alive), Konkona Sen Sharma's *A Death in the Gunj* (2016) and the 1968 comedy *Sadhu Aur Shaitan*. However, the scene also suggests that the dead can be used as blank slates, on which we can impose our own feelings or perspectives – not unlike the famous 1920s Kuleshov effect where an expressionless actor's face was intercut with different objects, resulting in viewers interpreting the expression to fit their own emotional responses.

When Mugil is alone with the body, he directs a cuckold's anguished monologue at "it", asking "What have you got that I don't?"

Of course, the most famous extended role for a dead body in an Indian film is in *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro* (1983), where Commissioner D'Mello, having shuffled off his mortal coil halfway through the story, is then subjected to many indignities for the remainder. Satish Shah, who played the part, told me that in some scenes he arranged his expressions such that viewers could imagine what the corpse was "thinking" (looking fearful while standing high up near a theatre's rafters, for instance).

Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro is known for its many eye-popping D'Mello scenes: a coffin mistaken for a sports car, the corpse travelling on rollerskates, the corpse dressed up as Draupadi onstage. But some things that didn't make it to the final film are even more suggestive of the corpse as distorting mirror. In one scene that was never shot, for instance, the body ends up in a hospital where the doctor gives it a complete check-up and proclaims, "*Ghabraane ki koi baat nahin* (No need to worry). You'll be fine in two days."

These scenes and others – even while operating within a framework of goofy humour – contribute to the film's denouncement of social hypocrisies, and it takes a mute "it" to make them more effective. Much like the dead swain in *Super Deluxe*, playing buffer – or therapist? – to a married couple who have many issues to sort out.

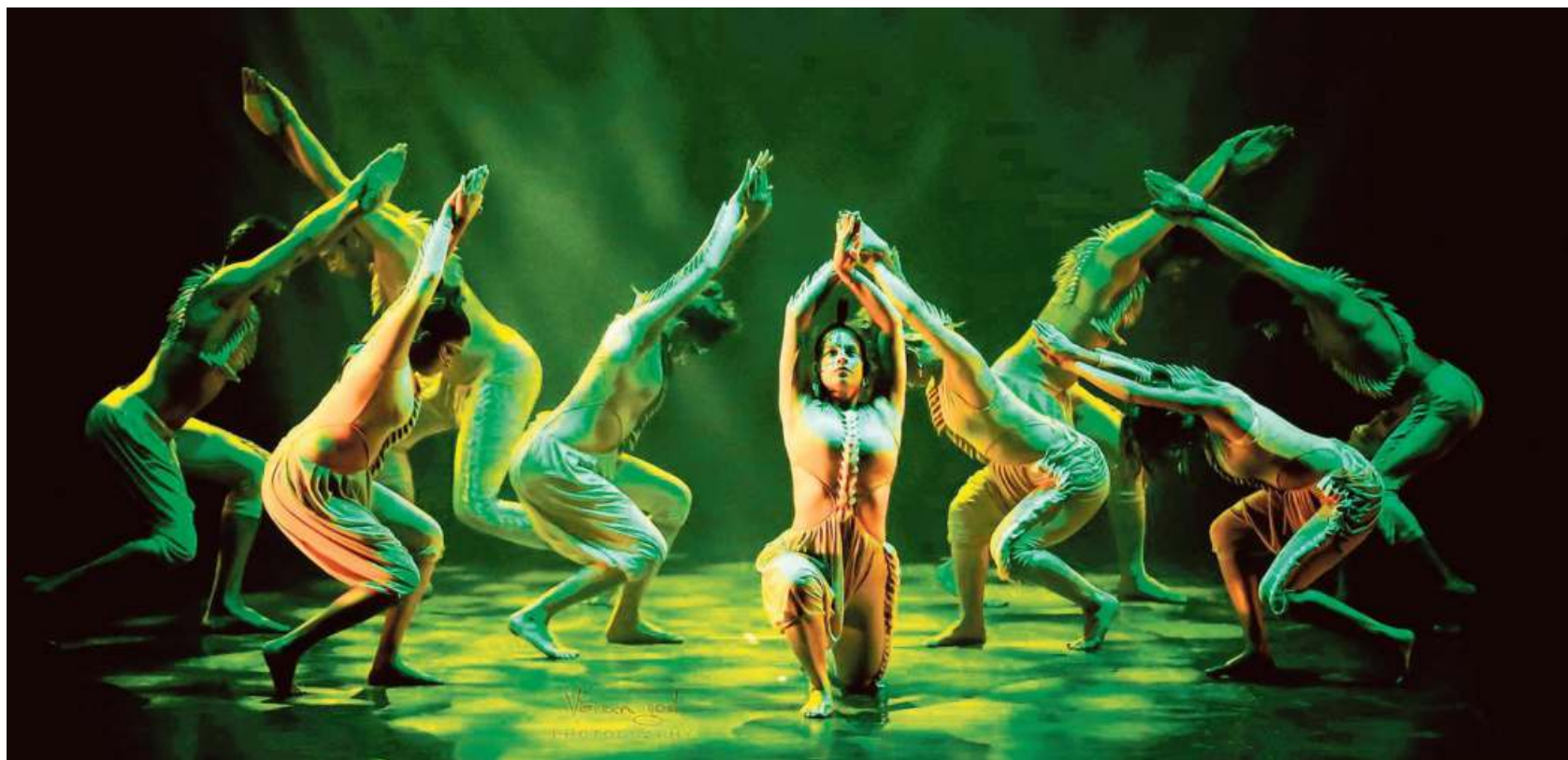


Jai Arjun Singh is a Delhi-based writer and film critic who says he finds it easier to concentrate on specific scenes as he grows older.

SPOTLIGHT

A muscular dynamic

Contemporary dancer Santosh Nair innovates while drawing energy from traditional dances

A wide range From the productions *Mystical Forest* and *Frenzy*. VARUN GOEL PHOTOGRAPHY

SREEVALSAN THIYYADI

Insulted, dishonoured, vengeful, a kneeling Draupadi looks on as Bhima and Duhshasana bound, pivot and fly across the stage. It's a most martial performance – almost stylised, choreographed combat. You might even call it 'manly,' with the dancers' legs often spread wide apart in stances that evoke the forms of Kathakali and, to a greater extent, Chhau, the eastern Indian martial dance with tribal moorings.

The show is *The Game of Dice*, a 2004 production by dancer Santosh Nair and his troupe, Sadhya. This most familiar of tales – adapted from a colourful Kathakali scene from the story-play *Duryodhanavadham* – frames an exploration of human inner conflict as Nair applies his own interpretation to the whole set of characters by slotting them into a current context.

In short, it's an unconventional presentation of a classical episode, freer in spirit than a traditional form

might allow. It's also a window into Nair's roots, in the Kathakali his father taught him at their Delhi home. Now a contemporary dancer of renown, the 46-year-old Nair does delve into mythological episodes occasionally, and has evolved a distinct body language over the past quarter century that certainly owes its share to Kathakali sensibilities, but that's not all. More than anything, Nair banks heavily on another dance he learned as a young man on the lookout for experimental productions – Chhau. And it's a major presence in his work.

Training after school hours

There's a smile on Nair's face as he recalls how he began learning Kathakali as a schoolboy from father Kalamandalam Padmanabhan, a native of Vellinezhi, a heritage village in Kerala's Palakkad district. "As soon as we got out of our classrooms and reached home, father would tell us to get ready for training. We four siblings, sulking at having lost a chance to play in the grounds, would

line up before him reluctantly."

Padmanabhan, a disciple of Kathakali maestros of the pivotal Kalluvazhi style, migrated to New Delhi in the mid-60s.

Initially, he was a member of a collective called Natya Ballet Centre, who blended a range of Indian dances in their productions. Then, in 1969, he joined the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's Song and Drama Division as an artist to publicise government initiatives. Between all this, he took time off to teach his children dance.

Sensing Santosh's talent, he took the boy to the International Centre for Kathakali where Sadanam Balakrishnan taught him. And in 1988, Nair debuted on stage as Krishna in the invocatory *Purappad* at the Ayyappa temple in Delhi's R.K. Puram.

It was K.K. Mohandas, Santosh's uncle, a Kathakali dancer inclined to experimental dance, who cultivated the taste in his nephew as well. "My uncle's artistic activities opened before me new vistas of the art we

loved. I began realising the thrill of dances beyond the classical genres," says Nair.

Nair soon had his first tryst with a top contemporary dancer. That was Narendra Sharma, a Delhi-based disciple of iconic fusion choreographer Uday Shankar (1900-77). "I took weekend classes under him at the guru's Bhoomika school. In 1990, I was inducted into Sharmaji's dance group. That year, we had a tour of East Germany," recalls Nair.

World of opportunities

Soon, the youngster rose to become a regular in Bhoomika's productions, giving him ample opportunity to explore the world of contemporary dance. "The themes were novel. For instance, a show based on a hockey match!"

Then, in 1995, a fresh wave of aesthetics swept Nair: he was bowled over by the beauty of Odisha's Chhau. The artist found the Mayurbhanj version of the dance particularly striking, so much so that he began

Nair was bowled over by the beauty of Odisha's Chhau, so much so that he began training in the Mayurbhanj form of the dance under veteran Jenmojay Sai Babu

SCANNER



Gathering delights

The Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile presents Indian artist N.S. Harsha's largest-ever solo show in Hong Kong. Starting on July 28, the exhibition revolves around the limitless use of textiles as a blank canvas, and incorporates traditional Indian styles and geopolitical commentary.



The Joan Miró Prize

On May 24, Indian contemporary artist Nalini Malani won the 2019 Joan Miró Prize for her work's contribution in uplifting "the silenced and the dispossessed all over the world, most particularly women." The prize comes with €70,000 and brings her international prestige.

training under veteran Jenmojay Sai Babu. “The two traditional dances I ended up learning are Kathakali and Chhau. Both thoroughly masculine like no other in India,” says Nair, who went on to found the Sadhya performing arts institution in Delhi in 1998.

Over the past two decades, Sadhya (meaning ‘achievable task’ in Sanskrit) has come out with close to a dozen productions. “Our ways of innovation draw their style and energy from the country’s traditional dances,” says Nair, who travels all over not just with performances but also to lead workshops and choreograph productions. “We have our artists trained in the institution before they become part of any of Sadhya’s work. We don’t hire anyone.”

Any production is a major challenge. “It takes no less than six months for one to gain a definite shape,” says Nair. “First comes the idea, on which we hold talks to sense its feasibility as production material. If positive, research starts in a big way. What follows is floor work, where a lot of improvisations take place. Added to these are music, lighting and costume. The shows usually last around two hours.”

Their works thus far have spanned a vast range of subjects. *A Doll’s House*, for instance, is a 2006 production that coincided with the death centenary of Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian playwright. On the other hand, *We Can Make the Difference* is more activist in spirit, recalling how modern man is increasingly turning against nature and suggesting ways to avoid the risk of bigger catastrophes.

“We at Sadhya keep evolving. Every time I revisit a production, I find some scope to redo it,” says Nair. “It’s another matter that we usually move on by doing new works instead of refashioning old ones.”

The writer is a keen follower of Kerala’s traditional performing arts.



STAGE WHISPERS

If the writer is alive, reach out

When you play a recorded track or perform an existing song, when you use a script or design element, obtain the rights



Fee deal A scene from *Baghdad Wedding*.

The elections are done. The results are out. Everyone has an opinion. Social media is buzzing with reactions. I think it is thanks to the advent of social media that these elections and the wait until their results were characterised by a lot more involvement in general. It wasn’t just uncles and aunties who had some wisdom to share. It was all-pervading.

Coincidentally, during this charged phase, I watched two plays that were political in nature. The first, *A Farming Story*, written by Vineet Bhalla (it won the Sultan Padamsee Award) and directed by Faezeh Jalali, was more like an allegory. The characters were mostly ‘hummals’ (a hybrid species of humans and animals, referred to as ‘maanvar’ in *Krrish 3*), who share an unstable relationship with the dominating, rule-making humans. There is much to relate to. The townsfolk are afraid of being inclusive, and suspicious of workers. The human is manipulative and proposes building fences to keep outsiders where they belong – out. Many parallels can be drawn.

The second was *Eidgah ke Jinnat*, the Hindi/ Urdu version of Abhishek Majumdar’s *The Djinnns of Eidgah*. The English original



Akarsh Khurana, theatre producer and director, is often broke. To cope, he writes and directs films and web series and occasionally acts, albeit reluctantly.

was produced by Rage Productions and featured an all-star cast including Ali Fazal, Neil Bhoopalam, and Rajat Kapur. It also featured Faezeh Jalali in a prominent part. I remember it being smart and subtly told, with arresting visuals.

Better in Hindi

The play has since evolved and the Hindi version is directed by the playwright himself. It is a highly stylised and radically different

Michael Puzzo, playwright of *The Dirty Talk*, was pleasantly surprised that his play was being performed in India, and waived his fee

version. I do believe that this is the language more suited to the material, and makes the content more authentic. But there were some poignant moments in the earlier version that I missed. Anyhow, comparisons are odious, and I’m glad I watched it; it is an important play, and also I got a chance to see the venue, G5A, which is gaining popularity. (*Eidgah ke Jinnat* was the play that was shut down by an angry mob not so long ago at a theatre festival in Jaipur.)

I also attended a discussion

organised by Prithvi Theatre about copyright. The focus was on the rights for the music we use in our productions. We need to pay royalty for all of it. Representatives from the Indian Performing Rights Society and Phonographic Performance Ltd explained how most rights can be obtained by simply applying online. Whether you play a recorded track, or perform an existing song, legally you are required to obtain the rights/ pay royalty. A senior copyright lawyer warned us that copyright infringement is a criminal offence. Unfortunately, there wasn’t much information on the copyright of scripts and general design elements. Probably because the infrastructure doesn’t exist yet for theatre in India.

Get the rights

With the Internet, it is now very easy for rights holders to discover any unlicensed production. And contrary to popular belief, Samuel French is not a one-stop shop. I have paid amounts ranging from ₹2,000 to ₹60,000 per show to organisations such as Dramatists Play Service, Knight Hall Agency, Nick Hern Books, and countless others. Most agents I have dealt with have been reasonable, and have understood the paucity of funds in theatre work. A word of advice: if the playwright is accessible, make that the first point of contact.

Michael Puzzo, New York-based playwright of *The Dirty Talk*, was pleasantly surprised that his play was being performed in India, and waived his fee. Hassan Abdulrazzak gave us a heavy discount on *Baghdad Wedding*. As did David Harrower for *Blackbird*. Based on friend and journalist Pragya Tiwari’s words, I reached out to Ruskin Bond directly, and found him to be wonderful and gracious. It began a relationship that has spanned a decade and three productions. So, if the writer is alive, reach out. And don’t be afraid of agents. They can be damn difficult, but they’re willing to listen.

Next time, I am going to talk about the dwindling audience for children’s plays. Is it the heat? Is it Netflix? If you have any ideas, reach out to me on social media.



Play of asuras

The Museum Theatre, Chennai, hosts Theatrekaran’s retelling of the *Ramayana* from a completely different perspective. Revolving around the familiar characters of Kumbakarna, Indrajit, Mandodari, and the infamous Ravana, the two-hour play will debut on June 15.



Stonewall 50 at La MaMa

LGBTQ+ artists from America, Paris, Italy, and South Korea come together to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, commemorating the gay rights movement in 1969. Ranging from burlesque to drag to political theatre, the performances go on till June 30, at La MaMa, NYC.



Storytellers Director Subodh Pattnaik with artists during a rehearsal at Natya Chetana in Khurda, Odisha; and (below) artists cycle to remote villages to get stories and stage plays.

BISWARANJAN ROUT

STEPS IN TIME



The bicycle diaries

Members of Odia theatre group Natya Chetana cycle from village to village, teasing out stories from the everyday lives of the people they meet

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

Imagine cycling thousands of kilometres along bumpy roads, camping wherever the day's journey ends, picking up untutored talents from remote villages, delving into people's lives to ferret out true stories, and shaping them all into plays. Natya Chetana, an Odisha-based theatre group, has been doing just that for 33 long years under the aegis of Subodh Pattnaik.

Set up in 1986 with the objective of reviving cultural roots and highlighting socio-political themes, Natya Chetana recently staged its 79th play.

"Of the 79 plays, 65 are original stories and the rest are adaptations. The stories have been discovered during the course of interactions with villagers, passersby and the faceless people we have met during our cycling expeditions," says Pattnaik.

After graduating from Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, Odisha's premier college of performing arts, Pattnaik took it upon himself to accumulate stories from villages.

"Villagers are more creative, more relaxed and culturally richer than urban elites or the so-called educated people. We value villages as our theatre bank," says the director, who is influenced by Badal Sircar. Like Sircar, Pattnaik is a firm believer in theatre's power to bring social change.

The Natya Chetana plays are chiefly of two types: the 'cyco theatre', which is 35-40 minutes long, and the 'intimate theatre' for townships, which lasts longer.

Cyco theatre

For cyco theatre, the artists cycle to remote villages and land up there unannounced to hold long discussions with villagers on the problems plaguing them. They take with them

short plays, which are performed mostly during the daytime, with bamboos, sticks and ropes used for stage sets. The group has staged 50 cyco plays so far. Intimate theatre often takes up the stories of the cyco plays, urging urban audiences to think through and question what they see.

Even while working to highlight social issues, Natya Chetana has taken care to distance itself from government awareness programmes so that it doesn't become a propaganda tool. The group firmly believes in artistic freedom.

Pattnaik says, "With total savings of ₹84,000 in 1991, we had set out in search of five acres of land to establish a village where artists will have complete freedom and will be guided only by our own rules. It led us to remote Sialia village on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar. Thus, Natya Gram (theatre village) was created." Today, 20 to 30 budding artists can be found

rehearsing plays in the village on any given day.

Stuff of legend

Some of the stories Pattnaik has written and directed have now become the stuff of legend. *Tangia Chhap* ('The Symbol is the Axe') is about an unemployed tribal youth struggling to earn enough so that he can take his sweetheart along with him. By the time the protagonist reaches his fiancée's home with money, she has been starved to death in Kalahandi.

"We stumbled upon the central character of the play during our cycle expedition in 1996. While we were resting in a village, somebody told us about a drought victim and his tragic love affair. The story stirred us so much that we visited his village a couple more times more to fine-tune the script," recalls Pattnaik.

Katha ('The Wood') is the story of a

Set up in 1986 with the objective of reviving cultural roots and highlighting socio-political themes, Natya Chetana recently staged its 79th play

firewood collector from Kandhamal. “While passing by a slum in Bhubaneswar in 1995, I heard a woman crying. I found that she had all the ingredients to cook a meal, except firewood. It had gotten dark by the time she came home; it was too late to gather wood or buy it – and a custom in coastal Odisha forbids anyone from selling firewood after dark,” Patnaik tells the story.

The woman, also from Kandhamal, had been a firewood seller herself, but had migrated to Bhubaneswar in search of a better life. *Katha* tells the story of her life and displacement.

Identifying with others

Patnaik’s repertoire is full of such stories which provoke the audience, and make them identify with people from social backgrounds very different from theirs.

But how does Patnaik pull it off? Who are his foot soldiers? “We do not get a constant flow of trained artists. We cannot afford to compensate them either. It was this that drove us to look for raw talent, hone skills, and empower them in the process,” he says.

Convincing parents to send their girls on cycle expeditions and act in plays was not easy. “To dispel any

Some of the stories Patnaik has written and directed have now become the stuff of legend

misgivings, I took my sister along on one of the expeditions. When parents saw a girl travelling about nonchalantly and acting in plays, they started sending their girls too. It made all the difference,” says Patnaik.

Manini, 19, a school dropout from a Kandhamal tribe, is part of Natya Chetana. She would have been collecting produce from the forests if she had not found a place in Natya Gram. It is difficult to imagine Manini playing mother to Mahatma Gandhi in the play *Tyagi*, but this is exactly what she did. With her limited knowledge of Odiya, the girl, who had never stepped outside her village till then, travelled to Bhubaneswar with the troupe and gave a rousing performance.

Raghunath Soren, a 20-year-old college dropout from Keonjhar, has rediscovered himself through Natya Chetana. “I would have been just one of those people roaming about in the villages had I not got the address of Natya Gram. Now I am studying hard to get into the National School of Drama,” says Soren.



SERENDIPITIES

A tale of two cities

The election may be remembered as the battle of awkward metaphors

In their introductory essay to *The Continuum Companion to Hindu Studies*, the editors summarise various ‘models’ that academics use to understand how Hindu belief and society interact. To some scholars, Hinduism is a pot pourri of beliefs, to others it is a banyan tree, and to some a kaleidoscope. The list of metaphors and analogies goes on. While the underlying conceit behind such a list is to impress upon the reader the difficulty of thinking about Hinduism, two deep truths emerge. One, humans rely on a combination of metaphors, analogies, and similes to comprehend complex phenomena. Two, metaphors, analogies, and similes can illuminate but also obscure and lead us to believe that the metaphor is the world.

In the recently concluded elections, no metaphor was more widespread than ‘chowkidaar’ – a trisyllabic noun upon which was foisted the politics of 1.2 billion Indians. From the shrill *chowkidaar chor hein* campaign that was met by the fury of *main bhi chowkidaar* – the 2019 elections may well be remembered as the battle of awkward metaphors.

Changing forms

But metaphors in politics that aim to cut through the noise to distil political messaging don’t stop at the level of the individual or campaign slogans. When viewed from a certain distance, and without the emotional urgencies of the present, political parties can resemble cities. Some large, some small, some mere townships masquerading as metropolises. All, however, have a period of growth that in turn facilitates the creation of elites within, who eventually resist new ideas, which lays the seeds of decline.

But unlike cities, which can sometimes suffer body blows (ask Vijayanagara), political parties don’t always need to die. Instead, they can merely change forms, lay low for a stretch, then when the wheel of time turns in their favour, their ideas can gain currency, reproduce feverishly, and a renaissance can begin.

Viewed thus, the BJP – now flush with victory – reminds one of a city like Shanghai.

Cash-rich, marked by energy, steeled by a party leadership that



Still standing Can the Congress come out of the shadows? AP

remains unquestioned and, more importantly, filled with a collective optimism that, finally, their time is now. In contrast, a party like the Congress – despairing about the future – reminds one of Kolkata. Once a great, historic city, but now riven with a fraying infrastructure, an old elite who view the rest with condescension, and the young who escape it for greener pastures.

A party like the Congress — wracked by despair about the future — reminds one of Kolkata

Framed in this manner, the challenges facing both the ‘national’ parties are radically different. For the BJP, it is one of how to sustain its drive and energy, how to keep its pipes unclogged of bureaucratism and factionalism, and ultimately how to make itself acceptable to a wider world that still views it suspiciously as an authoritarian wolf in democrat’s clothing. Narendra Modi’s inaugural speech in the Central Hall was filled with a premonition of these curveballs coming down the line.

For the Congress, however, the challenge is not just diametrically opposite but also more existential: how to become relevant again? While there are tactical answers offered up by many, it is important to recognise that the Congress and its courtiers still talk of the Congress

as a ‘big tent’ party, when in reality it is now only an insurgent. What history teaches us is that any kind of political rebirth requires three ingredients – a mass movement, the courage of one’s convictions, and an enemy.

The hardest of all

One, the Congress needs to be heavily invested in a medium-term socio-political struggle that comports with historical forces and demographics, no different from the BJP, which bootstrapped itself to power on the backs of a decade-long Ram Janmabhoomi movement or the caste-based parties that were born from the Mandal agitations.

Two, the Congress must be lucky in that the BJP makes a fatal mistake, but it also must find the courage to capitalise on that error. No different from the BJP, which capitalised on the Shah Bano case.

And the third is the identification of an enemy – a group, in opposition to whom one defines one’s own political identity. This is the hardest of all.

Absent these, it is entirely likely that the Congress will survive – an election victory here and another there, through an assemblage of tactics, cunning, and supplication to regional parties. But, over time, in an act of historical irony, the Congress will have slowly returned to the days of A.O. Hume who founded that old, long-forgotten Congress of the late 19th century, a genteel club irrelevant to the masses.



Keerthik Sasidharan is a writer and lives in New York City.

Not a drop
The Poondi lake in Tiruvallur district, once an important water source for Chennai, is now just a dry piece of land.



ARID SPACES

A thirsty city waits

Chennai faces the driest summer in many years, with no water in its lakes and reservoirs

IMAGES AND TEXT BY
B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

As the last of the waters evaporates from the Red Hills, Poondi, Sholavaram and Chembarambakkam reservoirs, Chennai is scrambling for every drop of precious blue gold that it can get this summer.

The city is now looking at the cavernous quarries scattered around it, some of which hold vast quantities of water. Giant pipes have been dipped into one such at Sikkarayapuram, near Mangadu.

But the city's giant thirst cannot be quenched by just one quarry, so the managers at Chennai Metrowater expanded the quarry network, bringing in newer sites.

Chennai's big lakes normally brim with water after a spell of rainfall, but now the ground is dry and cracked in the sweltering heat. The vast lake beds have become home to livestock that feeds on the sparse vegetation.

In the city, people depend on water brought by tankers, a precious commodity priced at ₹8 a litre and never to be taken for granted.

If Cauvery water is released, as directed by the Water Management Authority, it might bring some respite to Chennai. If not, the city's hopes will lie only in a timely monsoon.

Last resort
Chennai Metrowater is drawing water from abandoned quarries in Sikkarayapuram.



Plumbing the depths With storage at Red Hills reservoir dipping to its lowest level, Metrowater is pumping dead storage through giant pipelines to supply the city.



Waiting
Sholavaram lake, one of the city's important rain-fed reservoirs, runs dry.



Vital link The giant pipes drawing water from quarries in Sikkarayapuram to the Chembarambakkam treatment plant.

Dry earth A view of the bone-dry Chembarambakkam reservoir.



Grazing fields Most lakebeds, such as that of the sprawling Sholavaram lake below, now provide fodder for cattle.





Game's up A Sherlock Holmes statue stands outside Baker Street tube station in London; and (facing page) rewritten spin-offs of Sherlock books at Higginbothams bookstall in Coimbatore Junction. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK & ZAC O'YEAH

THE LEAD



The adventure of the drowned detective

Sherlock Holmes' India connection is elementary. No wonder he keeps reappearing, more than 100 years after his first outing, in Indian spin-offs, spoofs and poor rewrites

ZAC O'YEAH

Even if Holmes is slightly dated and dusty, he's still mined for inspiration by modern crime writers like myself

Waiting for a train at Coimbatore Junction a few days ago, I browsed at the Higginbothams only to find that the bookstall doesn't have that many books on offer – mainly Chetan Bhagat and Sudha Murthy, the ruling pulp maharajah and maharani respectively, while the foreign section consisted, predictably enough, of Dan Brown and Sidney Sheldon. As well as a bunch of crime novels with lurid

covers but, myopic as I am, I couldn't quite make out the author's name. The proprietor handed them over and they turned out to be a set of detective story collections by an author who was born exactly 160 years ago and whose books have never been out of print – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Mind matters

It is an elementary fact that Sherlock Holmes is literary history's most popular sleuth and his presence on the Coimbatore railway platform just

reinforces that. I purchase *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* at a rather affordable ₹140, start reading and get so engrossed I nearly miss my train – I'm especially taken by a story called 'The Crooked Man' in which the Indian Mutiny plays a pivotal role and the suspect is a British soldier who is captured by rebels and kept as a slave in Darjeeling. After escaping from their clutches he learns conjuring tricks from Punjabis before returning to Britain as a queer sideshow attraction.

But as I continue reading more of

the stories on the train, I find the writing style jarring and somewhat unfamiliar, the language appears sloppy, there are inexplicable gaps in the narratives that are not told from Doctor Watson's perspective. This book reads, in fact, as if Bhagat and Brown co-authored it to pay off a mortgage.

I'm puzzled until I recheck the cover which, although it features the original author's name in discreet print, is adorned with a prominent banner that I had somehow missed: "Abridged, Rewritten & Illustrated for Ultimate Reading Pleasure!" Whose pleasure that might be I cannot fathom, but I certainly don't get any added kicks from the dumbing down of Sherlock Holmes, the prototype of all literary detectives.

Even if he is slightly dated and dusty, he's still mined for inspiration by modern crime writers like myself because in one way or another, all fictional detectives are related to him – just consider Bengali detective fiction's brainy sleuths Byomkesh Bakshi (created by Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay) and Feluda (by Satyajit Ray) who are rather directly derivative of the Sherlock persona. So any tampering with the corpus of Sherlockiana feels like an unholy desecration of a sacred book.

That way I am a purist. I was never able to watch the recent film adaptations of the Holmes stories starring that terrible actor essaying him as a ballistic cartoon character. Holmes to me isn't about running around like James Bond getting brain-bashed, but about sitting in a chair and doing the most remarkable things with one's brain. The original books embodied an idea of the supremacy of the mind over all other organs – such as biceps and six-pack abs, which are more prominent in modern crime literature and cinema – and how, in order to solve problems, one must not let one's emotions get in the way but coolly examine details, and draw rational conclusions.

An armchair type

Or as Holmes himself said, "When you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." The cerebral image of Holmes is perhaps idealised but it is, in fact, based on a real model, Doctor Joseph Bell, who had been Doyle's dazzling mentor during his medical training. Granted Holmes occasionally stepped out on creepy moors to investigate mysterious incidents regarding the nightly behaviour patterns of dogs and he once famously popped down a waterfall in the Alps, allegedly losing his life in the process. But by and large he was an armchair type, just like myself – which is what is so likeable about him.

It also gives me infinite pleasure to spot the Indian elements in the stories, such as the doped mutton curry in 'The Silver Blaze', while in 'The Adventure of the Three Students' one suspect is "a quiet, inscrutable fellow; as most of those Indians are," and in



Nemat Sadat's **The Carpet Weaver** talks about what it means to be gay in Afghanistan p22



Tamil Characters by A.R. Venkatachalapathy makes its 'characters' dance on the stage of modern Tamil history p25

'The Adventure of the Speckled Band' – Doyle's own favourite plot – the murder weapon turns out to be a deadly Bengali swamp-adder trained to kill. Although quite unscientific (Bengal never exported swamp-adders to be used by Western murderers simply because there are no swamp-adders in India), the corrupting influences of colonialism loomed large: the culprit, if you recall, turns out to be a Calcutta-returned brutish British self-taught snake charmer.

It is a well-known fact that Doctor Watson, Holmes' trusted companion and chronicler, had partaken in the Afghan campaigns. But the one remarkable journey that Holmes himself undertook in his fictional life, and which is the most fascinatingly alluring aspect of his myth, is his purported trip to India.

I hear your doubts – and yes, there's no story by Doyle that tells us of his adventures hereabouts. But clues in the compiled Sherlockiana hint at an Indian sojourn. As mentioned above, Holmes drowned in the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland as a result of a mortal battle with the Napoleon of crime, Professor Moriarty; this was a ruse Doyle used at a time when he felt that writing detective stories was distracting him from more important work (he was into fairies and spiritualism).

Spiritual world tour

Due to the public outcry at Holmes' death, Doyle resurrected him a few years later and upon returning to London, the detective shrugs off his absence by casually mentioning that he had disguised himself as a Norwegian who hung out with the Dalai Lama! Says Holmes, "I travelled for two years in Tibet, therefore, and amused myself by visiting Lhasa and spending some days with the head Llama." He had faked his death in order to hoodwink his enemies and gone on a spiritual tour that, apparently, also took him to Mecca, probably something of a dream itinerary for Doyle himself.

Interestingly, several Indian writers have taken up the challenge to rewrite Holmes' adventures from an Indian point of view: I'm thinking, for example, of Partha Basu's *The Curious Case of 221B: The Secret Notebooks of John H Watson, MD*, which looks at Holmes from a subaltern perspective (here Watson provides us with the real facts behind the published cases).

Or, even more, Vithal Rajan's *Holmes of the Raj* that spoofs the Orientalist fiction genre and in which Holmes is dispatched on a confidential mission to India, where he makes the acquaintance of the virtual Who's Who of colonial days, including Motilal Nehru, Tagore, Aurobindo, Kipling, Ronald Ross and Madame Blavatsky.

And, most of all, the prominent Tibetan freedom fighter Jamyang Norbu's *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes*, which justly won the Crossword fiction award in 2000. It was that Tibetan quip by the detective that inspired Norbu, who grew up in exile in India, to write his novel that

contains some very evocative episodes set in Bombay about a hundred years ago. To top it all, Holmes teams up in this novel with a fictional spy from Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim!*

Eventually, the clues of the case lead him to travel up to Tibet, filling in that famous gap that Doyle left open in the larger narrative.

Detective Doyle

But an even more remarkable story is, perhaps, Doyle's own investigation into a real-life criminal case involving an Indian family persecuted by British racists, which inspired Julian Barnes' Booker-shortlisted *Arthur & George*. That novel is centred around George Edalji, a half-Indian solicitor in Birmingham who was jailed on trumped-up racist charges. He was the son of a British vicar's daughter and Shapurji Edalji, a Parsi from Bombay who converted to Christianity and worked as a priest in Britain, and who too was the focus of the vicious hate mail campaign lasting many years.

Doyle tried to clear the family's reputation by doing what Holmes would have done – checking out the crime scenes and talking to the people involved. George Edalji was accused by anonymous racists of running around during rainy nights, slashing and killing ponies and other animals. But how could he? He was blinder than a bat and in the dark he couldn't see a pony even if it stood inches away.

Doyle, who was trained as an ophthalmologist, was "confident in his diagnosis. Myopia, possibly of quite a high degree. And who knows, perhaps a touch of astigmatism too." No way could this man be guilty: the police investigation was an incompetent affair full of racist conjecture and his trial was a farce.

Because of his fame as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, people took Doyle's conclusions seriously, and eventually Edalji was pardoned. Subsequently, appeal laws were modified in 1907 to allow more protection for those wrongly accused of crimes.

Elementary, as Holmes would have said.

The writer is a detective novelist based in Bengaluru and the author of the *Majestic Trilogy*.



The one remarkable journey that Holmes himself undertook in his fictional life, and which is the most fascinatingly alluring aspect of his myth, is his purported trip to India

REPRISE

Silent Spring

by Rachel Carson



Strange blight People using DDT for mosquito control in Bangkok. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

SUDIPTA DATTA

Rachel Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring*, on the relationship between nature and human beings, starts with "a fable for tomorrow" which seems terrifyingly close to the realms of possibility today. "There was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings... Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change."

She writes of "mysterious maladies" wiping out flocks of chicken; cattle and sheep dying; birds falling silent; apple trees that came into bloom with no bees droning, thus denying pollination and fruit. Her chilling conclusion that people had done it themselves and nature's voice was being silenced in many towns made her want to explain what was going wrong.

First serialised in the *The New Yorker* before being published as a book, *Silent Spring* raised an alarm about the use of chemical pesticides, particularly DDT being sprayed widely first to kill mosquitoes, then all insects. This was the post-War years and "the use of toxic substances to eradicate pests was spearheaded by the US Department of Agriculture."

In the 40th anniversary edition, biographer and historian Linda Lear

Initially the scientific community and particularly the chemical industry unleashed a fury against Carson, an outsider and a woman who had studied biology

says Carson's writing "stirred an awakening of public environmental consciousness." But initially the scientific community and particularly the chemical industry unleashed a fury against Carson, an outsider and a woman who had studied biology, "held in low esteem in a nuclear age," and had discovered nature in the company of her mother.

And no birds sing

She loved to read and the Romantic poets of England were her favourite, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that the title is inspired by John Keats' poem, 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', with two of its lines contributing to the epigraph as well: "The sedge is wither'd from the lake/ And no birds sing."

A zoology professor urged her to major in Biology rather than English, and she pursued a career in science despite the fact that it had "few opportunities for women" in the 1930s.

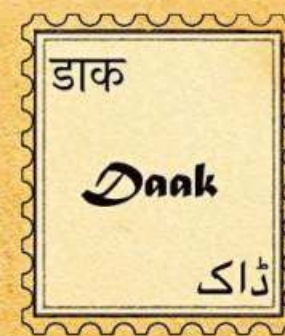
When Carson's book caught the attention of President John F. Kennedy, investigations were launched to verify her claims leading to the ban on DDT for agricultural use in 1972. She didn't live to see it, dying of cancer two years after the publication of *Silent Spring*.

But the words she wrote – "Can anyone believe it is possible to lay down such a barrage of poisons on the surface of the earth without making it unfit for all life? They should not be called 'insecticides' but 'biocides'" – launched an environmental movement that made the world aware of the poisoning of nature.

The writer looks back at one classic each fortnight.

Sri Lankan Painter George Keyt's tribute to childhood in a hand-painted nursery rhyme book for daughter Diana.

1938



Blissful Illustrations from Keyt's book in Daak's newsletter; and (facing page) Keyt with Diana. DAAK & NURSERY RHYMES FOR MY DAUGHTER DIANA.

ESSAY

Whenever you see a gombee dance

Sri Lankan painter George Keyt immortalised his daughter's childhood in a book of beautifully illustrated nursery rhymes

ONAIZA & PRACHI

The people and events that enlivened Diana's childhood are recorded in a riot of characters and incidents in the book

A few years back, we started Daak, a digital publication and weekly newsletter, to revive lost cultural relics of the Indian subcontinent. This project has allowed us to tap into the wellspring of our wide cultural landscape and enabled many fortuitous discoveries. The latest one is the Sri Lankan painter George Keyt's loving tribute to the joys and sorrows of childhood in a hand-painted book

of nursery rhymes for his firstborn.

George Keyt, Sri Lanka's most well-known painter, was also internationally acclaimed as a giant of modern art. His unique style combined Cubist and Fauvist forms with ancient South-Asian fresco techniques seen in Ajanta and Sigiriya. Although his art focused on indigenous life and traditions, his style and technique is often compared to that of Picasso. Pablo Neruda said that Keyt's paintings "radiate an aura of intensely profound feelings."

While an artist's public offerings can reveal their creative vision or method, it is often their private creations, not meant for the public eye, that offer us true glimpses into their minds and hearts. Keyt's book of nursery rhymes is a testimony to this.

Flights of fancy

Early on in his career, Keyt's first wife, Ruth Jansz, became the breadwinner of the family to enable him to follow his artistic ambitions. This meant that Keyt looked after the children. Described by his firstborn, Diana, as "the most wonderful playfellow in the world," Keyt was a suitable companion for the young ones, ever-ready to indulge their fantasies and regale

them with delightful rhymes. Like this one about a naughty boy
*Who ate up his sister, Seedeви Dapple
Mistaking her cheeks for a Japanese
apple!*

When Diana was two, he wrote a book of nursery rhymes based on the little girl's fears and fascinations. In 2013, Diana Keyt published a copy of this book containing 23 rhymes. Each leaf in the book has the facsimile of a hand-written poem accompanied by Keyt's crayon illustrations. The people and events that enlivened Diana's boisterous childhood in Kandy are recorded here in a riot of characters and incidents.

Diana's memoir, 'Those Sweet Kandy Days', makes up the preface to *Nursery Rhymes for my Daughter Diana*. Here we get to read her side of the memories on which her father built the rhymes.

A child's voice

For instance, she writes, "[The] villains of my childhood were snails (*gombellas*) who destroyed my grandmother's flower beds. Nightmares of 'Gombees' disturbed my sleep."

Keyt addresses this fear in a loving and gently reassuring rhyme:
Whenever you see a gombee dance

BOOKMARK



More novels for the web

Eight new Indian books are to be adapted into web series by ZEE5. They include, among others, *The Wise Man Said* by Priya Kumar, *Hutatma* by Meena Deshpande and Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay's historical novels, *Tungabhadra Teere* and *Kaler Mandira*.



Nine Dots Prize

Annie Zaidi has won the \$100,000 Nine Dots Prize, a book award created to address innovative thinking centred on contemporary issues. Zaidi won for her entry, *Bread, Cement, Cactus*, which combines memoir and reportage to explore concepts of home and belonging.



You may safely say
That's quite by chance.
They seldom see themselves as others
For gombees never meet their
brothers.

Diana also mentions numerous
“aunties” and visitors who were
“almost like family” to her and her
siblings. One of them, Sujatha,
married and left Kandy. Noticing his
daughter's despair at this sudden
separation, Keyt writes:
*Aunt Suja, she lives on a hill
A lonely hill so far away
So far away in a jungly place
And comes so seldom
Believe me, Auntie,
So seldom,
I seem to forget her face.*

The little blue woman

Using simple rhymes and crayon
drawings, Keyt channels a child's
unaffected voice and artistic
sensibilities, seeing and representing
the world through her eyes.
*O tell me, Anula, tell me now
Where have you hidden the laughing
cow
The laughing cow and the feathery
spoon
The milky mouth and the hungry
moon.*

Or
*Banda, Sumana, Sisily, Toby
Went to the village to see the dhoby
To see the dhoby over the rocks
And the little blue woman who darns
the socks.*

Perhaps these rhymes were meant
as a diary recording the trifles of
childhood. Or perhaps they were
Keyt's way of immortalising Diana's
innocence that would inevitably fade
with the passage of time.

Reflecting on these distant
memories, Diana says, “Even now as I
turn its pages I feel I am back in that
happy place. In my mind I hear the
wind in the raintrees and the sound of
evening music floating over the water
from the temple across the lake.”

The writers are the founders of Daak.

WORD COUNTS

Books that are us

Rereading in the time of 'tsundoku'

Some time last year, a Japanese
word went viral. I discovered it
in a BBC article, but you could
have found it in a variety of
sources: tsundoku, translated there
as “buying reading material and
piling it up”, that is, not reading it. As
happens with foreign words acquired
out of their cultural context and
made the new user's very own, it has
meant different things to different
folks.

It could mean, for instance, what
the headline of that BBC article said:
“The art of buying books and never
reading them.” This changed the
meaning from the translation within
the column. Are these accumulated
books piled up specifically to be
never read, or are they the outcome
of buying more books when you
already haven't read so many books
on your shelves and when you are
not certain you will get around any
time soon to the new books being
acquired?

Art of failing

Either way, for a while there was a
collective sigh of relief; it blew away
the guilt of hoarding half-read or
unopened books. For me, in fact, the
imagery was not of those stylistically
and copiously hoarded books that
flood the social media space with
hashtags like #bookstagram. It was
freedom from the nagging guilt about
unaddressed reading lists or about a
book borrowed and unread. In a
culture of endless distractions, this
new word, tsundoku, that most of us
never quite got the measure of,
seemed to condone our shortening
attention spans – as if our social
media, channel-surfing, Netflix-
driven distractedness was not the
problem that kept us from getting to
the book at hand. Failing to read a
book that we had made the effort to
procure, it seemed, was an “art” (or
“act”, making it sound
somewhat less virtuous)
that harked back to the
time before



Mini Kapoor is Ideas Editor, *The Hindu*.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

smartphones, almost as if it were
part of the human condition.

In other words, why be guilty?
The very existence of the term
tsundoku appeared to be a counter to
the anxiety about falling behind that
comes from seeing columns about
the masses of books someone famous
is reading, or the weekly book review
pages brimming with posts on new
publications that promise to enhance
our understanding of the world
around us and the new novels that
will surely transform the way we see
ourselves. It offered a survival hack:
put the book on your shelf or just on
your reading list, and get to it at your
own pace.

Diminishing returns

But my conveniently repurposed
definition of tsundoku, of course, did
not hold for long. The excuse-making
behind this adoption of the word had
to show. As it did once again this
week upon reading the latest issue of
Granta, its “40 Birthday Special”. A
doorstopper at 448 pages, it has
selections from issues between 1979
and 2013. To read them is to be
reminded about how so many of my
generation discovered great writers
in literary magazines like *Granta*.

It is a reminder of how there was
no distraction from the real thing – if
you wanted to read something by
Bruce Chatwin, you went to his text;
there were no Instagram posts with
the book invitingly photographed

alongside a cup of coffee, flowers,
etc. to be lost in instead. As a
substitute for reading a book or an
essay, you couldn't inhale the text
from blogposts about it. What point
could there be at the time to acquire
a book just to keep it on the
bookshelf unread?

This is not to romanticise the
past. As the current editor of *Granta*,
Sigrid Rausing, reminds us, the
publication was in the early years
“startlingly male” – as could be said
about the literary world in general.
The opening selection in the
anniversary issue is ‘Cousins’ by the
British writer Angela Carter from the
Autumn 1980 volume.

A photograph of her typewritten
letter to the then editor, Bill Buford,
along with the submission is
revealing. It has the clarification that
she had failed to adequately “cross
the t's and dot the i's” on purpose
because the the story “is meant to be
read plain and clumsy”. Clearly
apropos a previous letter from
Buford, she goes on to say: “Glad you
liked the [John] Updike review. Does
he, and [Philip] Roth, et al, realise
how sexist they are? It beats me.”

In tracing a 40-year arc, the
anniversary issue is an invitation to
reread familiar writers – including
Kazuo Ishiguro, Primo Levi, Ved
Mehta, Edward Said, Gabriel García
Márquez – with the selection at hand
as the vantage point. Is there a word
for a work that triggers rereading?



Big Little Book Award

The Big Little Book Award (BLBA), a first-of-its-kind award instituted by the Parag initiative of Tata Trusts and 'Literature Live!' is inviting nominations for its fourth edition. The award honours contributions of Indian authors and illustrators to children's literature.



The Mirror and the Light

Thomas Cromwell is coming back in Hilary Mantel's fiction with *The Mirror and the Light*. HarperCollins has announced that the final novel in Mantel's trilogy centering on Thomas Cromwell will be published in March 2020. It will cover the final four years of Cromwell's life.

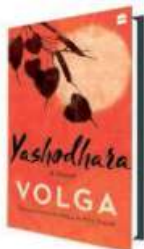
BROWSE FICTION**Yashodhara: A Novel**

Volga, trs P.S.V. Prasad

Harper Perennial

₹299

• Volga reimagines the life of the Buddha's wife, Yashodhara. It reopens conversations about the role of women in spiritual spheres, shedding light on what has changed in the gendered politics of spirituality since ancient times. Yashodhara is seen as someone who plays a key role in bringing women to the forefront by questioning prevailing rituals.

**The Belated Bachelor Party**

Ravinder Singh

HarperCollins India

₹199

• It's been 12 years since Happy, MP, Raam ji and Ravin graduated. Well into their married lives, they realise that none of them had a bachelor party before their weddings. So they go about planning their belated bachelor party — a Euro trip. And it turns out to be the trip of a lifetime that transforms them.

**Half Man**

Asim Mukhopadhyay

Niyogi Books

₹450

• Bholu Mahato is the Half Man in this novel about India's oppressed millions. The novel focuses on the Naxal Movement and narrates in vivid detail the Cossipore-Baranagar massacre that took place in August 1971. We also get to experience the Narmada Bachao Andolan through the eyes of the displaced.

**I'm so Hacked**

Gautam Mayekar

Leadstart Publishing

₹199

• @v! is a hacker who spends his days working in India's No.1 anti-virus company as a security researcher and his nights, crawling through underground hacking forums. He is completely unmotivated until he receives a letter from M@dR1, a mysterious revolutionary who wants to change the world.

**A Useful Death**

Sriram Chellapilla

Om Publications

₹399

• Aspiring actress Priya is dead. It's a suicide, and rumour has it that Anil, son of politician and former Telugu-movie superstar Mohan Krishna, drove her to it. Is this just another film-industry scandal? Or is it something bigger? Partha, hired by Mohan Krishna's family to handle the crisis, thinks it is the latter.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

REALISM

Poetry of the rented earth

This novel about homosexuality, religious intolerance and political conflicts in Afghanistan, is also about the beauty of life amidst ugliness

TABISH KHAIR

How do I review *The Carpet Weaver*, the first novel by Nemat Sadat, a well-known Afghan gay scholar now based in the U.S? Do I review it as a heterosexual man reading a gay love story? Do I review it as someone reading about a part of the world where the religion I was born into weighs, like Karl Marx's vision of history, like a nightmare on the brains of the living? Do I review it as someone who has never had to flee for safety? Do I review it as an Indian who has grown up with the wondrous fact, however flawed, of democracy? Do I review it as one of those middle-class people who live at least on the seam of the suburban dream that Ta-Nehisi Coates rightly blames for many of our woes?

The Carpet Weaver begins in Afghanistan in 1977, when the narrator

and protagonist, Kanishka Nurzada, the son of an affluent carpet seller, falls in love with his male friend, Maihan. In due course, Maihan, who is bisexual, reciprocates, but the two young men have to keep their feelings hidden from everyone.

Tightening space

Afghanistan is a country where, at least in the upper classes, girls and boys mix freely, and alcohol can be consumed. But homosexuality is still, at best, a dirty secret, and both the boys, in their late teens, do not want to disappoint their families.

But Kanishka's father, "Baba" to Kanishka, has his own secret. He is a leader of the underground Maoist movement, which has now been cut adrift by globalising

Beijing. It is one of the leftist movements fighting for democracy. The burgeoning Islamists and various other groups, including two mutually hostile Marxist ones supported by the U.S.S.R, not to mention the CIA and others agents, are in the fray too. But the politics of the times stays mostly in the background, and that makes its echoes more powerful. Even as the weak-kneed royalist government tries to appease Islamists and stay modern at the same time, the space around the two boys tightens: there is news of girls wearing Western clothes being attacked with acid, mullahs barge in to hector Baba for naming his shop after Marco Polo, the two boys receive threats from unknown people. The times worsen. Even

**The Carpet Weaver**

Nemat Sadat

Penguin Random House

₹599

as the boys are beaten and sexually abused by schoolmates who discover them together, an army coup takes place, and the regime changes after the usual bloodshed. Baba is arrested for complicity in an attempted coup, and he disappears into the prisons, never to emerge again. The Soviet-led change of regime makes matters worse.

Finally, Kanishka, his mother and his little sister get themselves smuggled – a horrific journey – into Pakistan. Kanishka hopes to make it to the U.S. and eventually be united with Maihan there, but life never turns out exactly as one hopes.

For me, the strongest part of the novel is that which takes place in Afghanistan. Sadat is a highly competent writer: he writes lucid lines, but he is no poet, at least in English. And yet, there are passages about Afghan food or streets or family traditions or folklore full of such precision and subdued poignancy that a kind of poetry emerges. When the narrative moves out of Afghanistan, in the last third of the novel, it remains just as gripping as before, but loses the impact of the deeply felt details of the earlier part. Nevertheless, this is an accomplished and highly readable novel.

Nightmare of history

What strikes me as the strongest element of this novel, and Sadat's greatest achievement, is not the bravery and necessity of its narration of homosexuality, or of religious intolerance and the political conflicts that have devastated Afghanistan. These are the obvious skids on which the rollers of this captivating narrative run. But more remarkable is the backdrop that Sadat etches, the gaps and rents that he displays, fleetingly, in his narrative of the nightmare of history.

There is the family function in which the Quran and the Rig Veda are venerated. There are girls and boys meeting freely in private groups, but avoiding any public contact. There is Baba, who has defied his Sunni family to marry a Shia, Kanishka's mother, but nevertheless bears a grudge against Shias for 'splitting' Islam. There are secular Maoists who believe in the existence of flying carpets and flying horses mentioned in religious texts. There is Kanishka's mother who accepts so much, but cannot really accept his homosexuality. There are the religious boys who detest and persecute gays, but are happy to sodomise others as 'punishment.' And there is Kanishka himself, whose sexuality is natural to him, and who tries to force himself into heterosexual relations without success.

Finally, then, that is how I would review *The Carpet Weaver*: a novel about how beautiful life can be, and how ugly we often make it. The bravery of its narrator is not just the bravery of being gay or turning an atheist; it is also the bravery of retaining hope in the midst of despair, quoting poetry in the face of persecution.

The writer is an Indian novelist and academic who teaches in Denmark.

HISTORICAL NOVEL

It's showtime, folks

Elizabeth Gilbert, the author of *Eat Pray Love*, writes a coming-of-age tale that is a glorious, if occasionally wistful, remembrance of things past



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

There are passages about Afghan food or streets or family traditions or folklore full of such precision and subdued poignancy that a kind of poetry emerges

VINEETHA MOKKIL

Vivian Morris, the narrator of *City of Girls*, is bundled off to Manhattan by her parents in the spring of 1940. Vivian is 19 and without any discernible plans for the future. The listless college dropout is instructed to hang out with her Aunt Peg who owns the grand but crumbling Lily Playhouse in New York City. Aunt Peg's theatre company is a whole new universe.

Vivian, "a girl so freshly hatched that there is yolk in her hair", is thrilled to hang out with a bunch of sexy showgirls, dancers, playboys, eccentric actors, and writers. She puts her formidable sewing skills to good use by taking on the challenge of designing costumes for the impoverished company's productions. Wild nights and drunken dancing follow, love and lust are Vivian's for the taking in the city.

Striking details

Told from the perspective of an aged Vivian, Elizabeth Gilbert's new novel is both a coming-of-age tale and a glorious, if occasionally wistful, remembrance of things past. Gilbert, a skilled storyteller who endeared herself to readers with her bestselling novels, *Eat Pray Love* and *The Signature of All Things*, paints an animated portrait of Vivian's life in 1940s' New York before America "inevitably did enter the War".

Embellished with striking details, all things come alive – the beautiful costumes Vivian sews; her shopping expeditions to Orchard Street and Ninth Avenue; the flurry of rehearsals for the productions at the Lily; Vivian's

nights out with Celia, the stunning showgirl who looked like "an angel who had fallen to earth"; Vivian's encounters with handsome men and drunken rogues; her sexual awakening; her chase of pleasure and excitement, "sailing through the neon and shadows of New York City, in a nonstop search for action."

Despite its precariousness, life at the Lily Playhouse has a certain shabby chic. The glamour quotient is elevated to stratospheric levels with the sudden arrival of Edna and Arthur Watson, guests of Aunt Peg, whose London home has been destroyed by German bombs.

With Edna, Vivian encounters "true glamour" for the first time. Until then, she had taken New York City showgirls and their "spangled radiance" to be the height of glamour. The stylish and incredibly talented Edna makes Vivian realise that everything and everyone she had been admiring so far is "gaudy and glitzy" compared to the diva.

Gilbert fleshes out her characters deftly. Memorable characters abound: Vivian's eccentric and generous aunt Peg; Olive, who steers both Peg's life and the Lily's floundering ship, valiantly trying to inject some method into the general madness; flaky charmer Billy, Peg's ex-husband and good friend; impeccably dressed acting legend Edna; troubled Frank who is scarred for life by memories of the War.

Female friendship

The bonds the characters share are distinctly drawn. Every relationship – between friends, former spouses,

lovers, co-actors, siblings – has an identity of its own.

Gilbert avoids clichéd definitions of love, lust, hate, envy and resentment, sparking moments of genuine chemistry among the characters and springing some delicious surprises on the reader. There are also welcome moments of hilarity such as the scene in which Vivian loses her virginity with a little help from her show-girl friends.

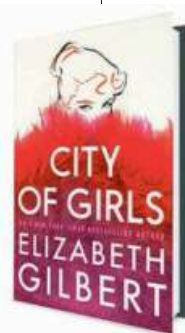
Female friendships like the ones between Olive and Aunt Peg, Vivian and Celia, Vivian and Marjorie, form vital strands of the narrative. Vivian, who starts out believing she is only good at two things – "sex and sewing" – is eventually rewarded with the realisation that she is very good at being a friend and that over the years, she has been a "good friend to a great many women."

City of Girls is an engaging tale, told with verve and flair. Incisive insights about female desire surface as the plot breezes ahead, a woman's quest for pleasure and sexual autonomy gets the space it deserves, and the reader is offered glimpses of the shape of sexual politics in pre #metoo times.

Gilbert's canvas is vast, spanning many decades, many lives. New York City too takes on a life of its own, playing a pivotal role in the story. A strong sense of place anchors Vivian's journey across the years, giving it an authentic feel.

Though hindsight adds gravitas to the tale's telling, the aged Vivian's commentary on events often gets in the way of the story's immediacy. Like an annoying voiceover in an otherwise interesting film, this device sticks out, calling attention to itself instead of letting the story flow smoothly.

The writer is the author of *A Happy Place And Other Stories*.



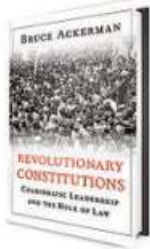
City of Girls
Elizabeth Gilbert
Bloomsbury Publishing
₹599

BROWSE NON-FICTION

Revolutionary Constitutions: Charismatic Leadership and the Rule of Law

Bruce Ackerman
Harvard University Press
₹799

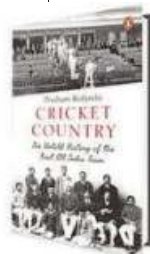
• Drawing on his scholarship into the successes and threats to revolutionary constitutionalism, Ackerman takes us to India, South Africa, Italy, France, Poland, Myanmar, Israel, and Iran to explain the tribulations that confronted popular movements in their campaigns for democracy.



Cricket Country: The Untold History of the First All India Team

Prashant Kidambi
Penguin/Viking
₹699

• Conceived by a coalition of imperial and Indian elites, it took 12 years before an 'Indian' cricket team made its debut on the fields of Britain in 1911. Drawing on archival sources, Kidambi tells the story of how the team came to be picked years before independence.



India and Bilateral Investment Treaties: Refusal, Acceptance, Backlash

Prabhash Ranjan
Oxford University Press
₹1,495

• After being sued by more than 20 foreign investors, India terminated close to 60 investment treaties and adopted a new Model Bilateral Investment Treaty to balance investment protection with the host State's right to regulate. This book is a critical study of India's approach to BITs.



Trillion Dollar Coach

Eric Schmidt & others
Hachette India
₹599

• Bill Campbell, a former college football player and coach, helped to build some of Silicon Valley's greatest companies. Schmidt, Jonathan Rosenberg and Alan Eagle explain how the coach developed trusting relationships and fostered growth.



A Savage Dreamland: Journeys in Burma

David Eimer
Bloomsbury India
₹499

• The story of modern Burma is told through the voices of the people Eimer encounters along the way: former political exiles, the squatters in Yangon's shanty towns, radical monks, Rohingya refugees, princesses and warlords, and the ethnic minorities clustered along the country's frontiers.



Outward The book is a bold statement against the problems of the Modi government irrespective of its electoral majority. p71

POLITY

The idea of a 'New India'

Is our secular and socialist credentials under threat? What is the state of the economy? Experts critically assess the Modi regime

MAIDUL ISLAM

Professor Niraja Gopal Jayal's edited book is a fascinating collection of essays in assessing the recent trajectory of the Indian nation-state in an era of economic reforms particularly after the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government came to power in 2014 under the prime ministership of Narendra Modi. While some essays do take note of trends in the pre-Modi years, nonetheless, all of them are focused on governance, development, economy, politics and society that is unfolding in the Modi years.

Fundamental questions

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with major themes in the area of governance and development, while the second one reflects on politics and society. The tome consists of 32 essays that have been penned by leading experts in their respective fields besides the introduction by the editor of the volume. The fundamental questions that the book asks are the following: Is the Indian nation-state getting transformed in an opposite direction when compared to the original promise of liberal constitutional democracy during the birth of the republic? Are the corrective measures of economic reforms that were started from the early 1990s to address some economic issues been replaced by a dangerous trend of re-forming the very idea of a pluralist and secular India?

The collection of essays have all emphasised that the government under Modi has not been concentrating much on the aspect of reforms. Instead, it has set its priorities that challenge the very

foundational ideas of the Indian republic.

In the first part, the essays have covered a wide range of themes from how the Prime Minister's Office and the NITI Aayog work, the increasing challenges facing the RBI, the failure of demonetisation, the complications of the Goods and Services Tax and the problems it posed for small business, the lack of job creation, the symptoms of impending economic crisis, the slump in the creation of new entrepreneurs, and an examination of the failed promises and claims of the Modi government on corruption, welfare schemes, farm incomes, rural sanitation, and anti-poverty initiatives. Further, the first part also has contributions that analyse the ecological crisis in India, which gets aggravated by specific business policies, the autonomy and accountability of the judiciary, the government's flawed approach towards Kashmir and the lacklustre performance in foreign policy.

Failed promises

The second part of the book comprises essays that also has a broad spectrum of issues like Ashutosh Varshney's formulation of Modi's regime as an emergence of right-wing populism that has some international parallels and the contradictions embedded within the so-called political culture of 'New India' as pointed out by Suhas Palshikar.

Like the first part, many essays in the second part chronicle the failed promises of Modi like in the case of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme, the skills development initiatives, and

the smart cities programme along with narrating the dangerous culture of mob lynching, the shrinking space of civil society activism, atrocities against Dalits, the hate campaigns and attacks against Muslims and Christians, the threats to the public university, student politics, free speech and secularism.

Other contributors in this section have dealt with the issues of the changing demographic profile of the Indian population in favour of the youth and their aspirations and frustrations, the changing nature of class and its relationship with culture, work and religion in an era of consumerism, the menace of social media and fake news, the attacks on independent journalism, and the publicity campaigns through advertisements in television, and new media.

The book is a fine balance of some good academic and journalistic prose. All essays are lucidly written and have persuasive arguments for the reader, who wants to have a critical understanding of the Modi-led government. In an era of sycophancy and self-censorship among sections within the academia and the media, this volume is a bold statement against the problems of the Modi government irrespective of its electoral majority. It quite correctly points out the inherent problems of the government, which cannot be simply justified and ignored by electoral results. In this respect, this book is a courageous effort to speak truth to power and is a welcome addition to a growing body of literature in the appraisal of the first majoritarian government in the country.



Re-forming India: The Nation Today
Edited by Niraja Gopal Jayal
Penguin/Viking
₹799

HISTORY

Politics and social justice

Venkatachalapathy gives us a ringside view of Tamil Nadu's history through its varied personalities

R. AZHAGARASAN

Historian A.R. Venkatachalapathy's book, *Tamil Characters: Personalities, Politics and Culture*, demonstrates that his sense of history emerged not while studying in JNU but from his acquaintance with Tamil scholars – the Dravidianist 'Mugam' Mamani and Tamil scholar/poet M.L. Thangappa. The book, in three sections, 'Political Personalities', 'Cultural and Literary Figures' and 'Cultural Questions', seeks to create a dialogue between political and cultural history. Written as obituaries, reviews, prefaces to books and columns, this book makes the 'characters' dance on the stage of modern Tamil history.

Non-Brahmin movement

The century-old non-Brahmin movement in Tamil politics helps Venkatachalapathy or Chalapathy as he is known as show how Tamil political personalities differ from those in national politics. Since this history is tied to literary and film personalities, the style of Tamil Nadu politics offers a resistance to the discourse at the national level. Placing Periyar as a 'prophet of the South'



Dual roles Actors M.G.R. and Jayalalitha eventually became chief ministers of Tamil Nadu.

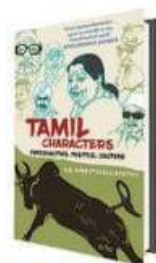
whose vision enabled Dravidian parties to hold on to power for more than half a century, Chalapathy sees the emancipatory face of Tamil Nadu politics. Aptly, Chalapathy reads the political functioning of leaders like Annadurai, M. Karunanidhi, M.G.R. and Jayalalitha within the framework of social justice.

Through his acquaintance with writers and archival sources on authors, the second section takes us into Tamil literary/ cultural history. If Subramania Bharati, Pudumaippithan, Jayakanthan and Sundara Ramaswamy seek to evolve a Tamil modernism, Asokamitran, Perumal Murugan and Cho. Dharman move towards a literary

realism that foregrounds local culture. The classical Tamil scholar and poet Thangappa and the late 19th century Dalit intellectual Iyothethos Pandithar offer a different route to Tamil modernism. If the former breaks the classical vs modern binary through his translation of Sangam poetry (challenging the earlier translations), the latter offers a Buddhist route to Tamil modernity.

The third section initiates the popular debate of Centre vs State, and national vs regional culture. Pointing at the history of Dalits being denied the right to worship, Chalapathy hints at the 'paradoxical nature of Dravidian politics with regard to the Dalit question'.

While Dalit oppression is viewed sympathetically, Dalits' questioning Dravidian politics is normally viewed with contempt. Chalapathy also falls into this trap. Saying "Periyar is often blamed for the delayed emergence of the Dalit movement in Tamil Nadu by some fringe Dalit intellectuals," he brushes aside the life-long efforts of Dalit intellectuals and activists who recovered Dalit history and challenged Dravidian politics. The only piece written on a woman is former Chief Minister Jayalalitha, making her an example for a misguided ruler.



Tamil Characters: Personalities, Politics, Culture
A.R. Venkatachalapathy
Pan Macmillan India
₹399

TRAVEL

On the steps of intrepid travellers

Bringing to life the journeys and adventures of explorers to Tibet

R. KRITHIKA

Parimal Bhattacharya's *Bells of Shangri-La: Scholars, Spies, Invaders in Tibet* opens with a vivid description of Shimla that a person familiar with the hill town would savour. In fact the first few pages are devoted to descriptions: of Mall Road, an antique bookstore, a kabari store in another hill town (Darjeeling).

'There was a river!'

In the antique bookshop, Bhattacharya finds a copy of the Report of Pandit Kinthup's Exploration of Yarling Tsangpo – priced at a whopping ₹18,000 – which leads him into his own explorations of how Tibet was 'discovered' by the British. "I felt like the marriage guest in Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. The ancient mariner... clasps the marriage guest's wrist and snaps: "There was a ship!"...And here a dowdy tailor had emerged from the pages of yellowing documents and had gripped my mind with the words, "There was a river!"



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Bhattacharya does not just recount the history of the exploration – beginning with Kinthup's exploration of the Tsangpo in the early 1880s, which confirmed that this was the river Indians knew as the Brahmaputra, to Sarat Chandra Das'

trips to Tibet and their grisly conclusion – he intersperses it with his own travels along the paths the intrepid explorers took giving the reader a sense of then and now along with eye-witness accounts of Sikkim's initiatives to develop tourism.

Bhattacharya also tracks down Sarat Chandra Das' relatives; as they evade his calls and miss appointments, he suspects they were holding back "some dark secret." In an anti-climax, he finds that "they didn't have anything to show."

Sarat Chandra Das came back to some measure of success. A trained civil engineer he had brought back a huge wealth of knowledge in the form of "topographic data, draft maps and glass plate negatives." Unfortunately Kinthup, who had been sold off as a slave and barely managed to escape with his life, was not believed when he came back. He returned to his tailor's shop and had to wait until the Bailey-Morshead mission confirmed his findings.

In the final pages, Bhattacharya finds himself in Arunachal Pradesh as he travels in Bailey's footsteps.

Stranded in a village due to snowfall, he finds a veteran of the Indo-China war and hears a sorry tale of young men from the "flat green plains of north India" who "had come this far, to these lonely mountains, only to die."



Bells of Shangri-La: Scholars, Spies, Invaders in Tibet
Parimal Bhattacharya
Speaking Tiger
₹450



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

NOSHTALGIA

Golgappa, pani puri, phuchka

Chaat exists in its own little world, approved by all and unsullied by gastro-politics

AKHIL SOOD

No!" The man known to all only as "Panditji", the owner of the stall, was angry with me when I tried to reach for the plate in his hand; my plate, which I'd paid for. "Open your mouth!" he instructed. With his grubby paws, this so-called Panditji fed me my first helping ever of sev puri – aka a fun-sized portion of bhel puri on top of a tiny papri, sort of. Minus the invasion of my personal space and the ludicrously polluted locales of the Juhu Chowpatty – famous for its sev

puri, chaat, and pav bhaaji (and garbage) – the experience was exquisite. I was visiting what was still "Bombay", but the memory has stuck.

Belonging to the North Indianoid race of people headquartered in New Delhi, I'd been blessed with an appreciation of chaat, one I naively believed to be unique to my people. It was only later, once I'd stepped out of my butter-chicken-rajma-chawal bubble, that I realised that chaat cuts across all kinds of boundaries.

Years later, living in Mumbai, I went to one of those anachronistic Indian fast-food restaurants that still

exists, unsullied by any incursion of "fusion" beyond, say, a schezwan dosa – you know, those old-school places with little regard for modern hospitality laws, instead focussing purely on quality of food and volume of customers. We had golgappas. Well, I did. My friend, who has family in Kolkata, ate "phuchkas" apparently. The Mumbai locals around us (people, not trains) were busy eating "pani puri".

Surprise: all of us were eating the exact same thing. Our eyes (and noses) were equally watery with all the spice; we each had a gulp of the

golgappa water at the end, followed by a sookha – a dry phuchka/puri/golgappa – to conclude. The rituals had been the same too; give your specific instructions for each golgappa: more saunth, more water, more aloo-chana; look distressed while eating; dump the whole thing in your mouth in one go; wait your turn impatiently; make that comforting tsssss sound when it's too spicy.

Lines of battle

Chaat, conceptually, puzzles me. I won't say it 'unites' people across state lines or any such idyllic twaddle.

SUNDAY RECIPE

DAHI PURI**INGREDIENTS:**

2-3 potatoes
1 small onion
1 small tomato
A handful moong sprouts (optional)
1 cup green chutney
1 cup sweet chutney
A small bunch of

coriander leaves
1/2 cup curd (or as required)
Puris or golgappas or phuchkas (as many as you wish)
Fine sev
Red chilli powder (to garnish)
Chaat masala (to garnish)

Black salt (to garnish, optional)

METHOD:

1. Green chutney: Grind together 2 cups of coriander leaves, 1-2 green chillies, small piece of ginger, 1.5 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tsp jeera powder and



salt to taste, with a little water. Adjust consistency with water as required.
2. Sweet chutney: In a small saucepan, boil together half cup seedless tamarind and half cup seedless dates with 2 cups of water. After about

8-10 mins, when they are cooked soft, add half cup powdered jaggery. Once jaggery dissolves and thickens, add half tsp each of red chilli powder, coriander powder, jeera powder, and dry ginger powder. Cook for 2

mins, add salt to taste, turn off stove and let the mixture cool. Once cooled, grind to a paste with some water if needed. Strain mixture and keep.
3. Boil potatoes, cool, peel and roughly crumble with your

But it tends to be met with general approval regardless of one's political leanings. Most foods incite such heavy examination that it gets quite tedious after a point. Look at b**f, for starters, and what it's done to our country. It was food, in fact, that kick-started India's independence struggle, no?

Then, on a much lower-stakes level, there's the notoriously dreary vegetarian vs. non-vegetarian debate, with the newly-joined vegans spicing things up with their bland tofu. And let's not even get started on whether pineapple goes on top of a pizza or not. Dear god.

But then we come to chaat, which, outside of what to call it, seems to be free of any heavy-duty belief systems. To be clear, I am – for the sake of convenience – counting all its individual team members as falling under the larger 'chaat' umbrella, so it includes bhel puri, papri chaat, sev puri, golgappas, aloo-tikki, aloo-chaat, and that big fat round thing stuffed with all of the above, which takes about an hour and one minor coronary to finish. And everyone loves, or largely enjoys, most of the variants. Some don't, and they mostly just shrug it off. There's very little bleeding-heart virtue signalling around chaat.

Rags to riches

It's of course thrilling to eat chaat from one of those roadside vendors with a "we use mineral water" board, or even the allegedly unhygienic dirty water kinds – all the more when you're financially secure enough to feel all quaint and exotic about doing these so-called rustic things. A set-piece that appears often in my visions is of eating bhel puri in that one corner shop in South Extension (the left side, not the right) in Delhi, which kept growing in size with every visit because of how popular it was becoming.

But chaat, unlike a lot of street



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

food – momos, for instance – isn't fun to eat only on the streets. It's the rags-to-riches tale; the kid come good in the face of adversity. It works even in the big establishment restaurants. The India Habitat Centre – home to the second snootiest set of people in Delhi (after the Delhi Gymkhana) – has a chaat counter in the buffet at its Indian restaurant, Delhi 'O' Delhi, every night.

And there's the memories I have of Chor Bizarre, a fancy restaurant in Old Delhi that eventually grew more branches, which had this cult, 'institution' status in Delhi culinary circles. I don't know about now, but they used to have a vintage car inside – that's how old they are – inside which was a fascinating DIY chaat counter. You could make your own chaat, as per your exact taste preferences. In a car.

At weddings, too – fancy or not-fancy – you'll usually have a chaat counter regardless of the size of life-savings being dumped into said celebration. It's used as much as bait as for appeasement; it's not dinner-time yet, and the guests are grumpy because of the hundred ceremonies going on. So let's just open the chaat counter to shut them up.

Old husbands' tale

And since we're on the subject, chaat is also the source of the number one old husbands' tale, a home remedy I've resisted so far. Apparently, according to nutjobs who peddle this theory, if you have a cold, a blocked nose, a fever, a cough, all you have to do is eat like a sh*t-ton of extra-spicy golgappas. "Sab clear ho jayega – all that phlegm will come tumbling out," they'll tell you with a triumphant, sagely expression. Sounds totally believable.

What I'm getting at, basically, is how chaat seems to exist in its own little world. It's free from a lot of the baggage that's attached to so many foods around and there's a vague kind of consensus around it. Plus it qualifies as neither sweet nor savoury – somewhere in between, really – so we don't even need to open that particular can of worms. And it's vegetarian (though the presence of onions and potatoes can cause some cultural discomfort here, which, let's just not get into). Isn't it time we start exporting this stuff instead of selling it dirt-cheap on street corners?

The author is a freelance culture writer from New Delhi who wishes he'd studied engineering instead.

A home remedy: If you have a cold a blocked nose, all you have to do is eat a sh*t-ton of extra-spicy golgappas — all that phlegm will come tumbling out

Notes from Mostar



Souvenirs

Some souvenirs for the visitor to Mostar. YAMUNA MATHESWARAN

YAMUNA MATHESWARAN

The bus rolls slowly into the central station in eastern Mostar, the familiar crunching sound of gravel under the tires signalling the end of the ride. The journey from Sarajevo had taken just a little over two and a half hours, and we'd got to enjoy the sight of the enticing emerald-green waters of the Neretva river along the way. In a couple of days, I'd catch a ride to Split, Croatia, from the bus station in the western Croat-majority part of the city.

Mostar is a city in the southern Herzegovina region of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a population of a little over 1.5 lakh, primarily Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats. I wondered why a city this small needed two main bus stations.

Legacy of division

Soon enough, I learned that nearly 25 years after the end of the Bosnian War, Mostar remains a divided city. It isn't the only city in Bosnia and Herzegovina where the major ethnic groups – Muslim Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats – continue to lead segregated lives. The majority of Bosnian Serbs live separately in Republika Srpska in the north and east, and Bosniak and Croat children continue to attend segregated schools.

I'm staying in a small apartment in the eastern Bosniak-majority part of Mostar. Outside, a sign announces that the building, which was wrecked during the war, has been renovated with the help of European Commission donations.

It's a balmy April day and Mostar's famed Old City – a short walk away – is buzzing with tourists. Souvenir shops and gelaterias line the path leading to the iconic Stari Most. A man perches nonchalantly at the edge of the 24m bridge, ready to plunge into the cool waters below.

Built in 1557 during Ottoman rule in the Balkans, Stari Most (Old Bridge) is an exquisite single-arched stone bridge that stretches 30

metres across the width of Neretva river. It was constructed to replace an older wooden structure in the same spot. Today, the area is a well-known UNESCO World Heritage Site and the bridge a spectacular example of Balkan Islamic architecture.

View from above

Across the Old Bridge stands the Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque. Climbing the constricted staircase up the minaret is not for the faint-hearted but, once on top, you're rewarded with sweeping vistas, the lush mountain, emerald waters and historic bridge painting a breathtaking picture. Strolling through the vibrant lanes of the Old City, it's easy to forget Mostar's grim past and the fact that the formidable Old Bridge was destroyed by Croat forces in 1993.

The Bosnian War of 1992-95 has been referred to as the deadliest conflict since WWII; it culminated in widespread destruction and a genocide largely orchestrated by Bosnian Serbs. Termed a "war within a war", the Siege of Mostar pitted Bosniaks and Croats against each other and constituted one of bloodiest episodes of the war.

Today, scars from the conflict are scattered all around: abandoned buildings riddled with bullet holes, graffiti, and an ethnically divided city with separate water plants, colleges and bus stations.

During the early 2000s, the efforts of various countries and international organisations led to the Stari Most being painstakingly rebuilt by hand, ensuring that it remained true to the original structure. Some choose to see it as a symbol of hope in an increasingly polarised environment.

There's a spot near the river bank where people from all over the world gather to gaze up at the extraordinary bridge. As the moonlit waters of the Neretva gleam below, I feel grateful to be here.

The writer, artist and full-time vagabond is currently based in New Delhi.

hands. Make sure the pieces are not too big.
4. Finely chop onions, tomatoes and coriander leaves.
5. Lightly salt the curd and whisk it smooth.
6. To assemble: Arrange puris in a plate, carefully crack

the top with thumb so you can add the potatoes and chutneys.
7. Now add small quantity of boiled potato, moong sprouts (if using), and a little chopped onion and tomato.
8. Top with green

chutney, sweet chutney and beaten curd as needed.
9. Sprinkle red chilli powder, chaat masala and black salt.
10. Throw on the sev generously and garnish with coriander leaves. Serve immediately.

AD LIB

Bloodsport in the schoolroom

To each of my students, against whom I turned the whiplash of my tongue, I would like to say: I am sorry



JERRY PINTO

KGB. No, not Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti. This was Kindergarten-B and I was three years old.

“He’s in KG-B?” Another lady asked my mother, pointing at me. “Lucky. He’s got Mrs. R. as class teacher. She’s very good.”

“Is she?” my mother asked.

“Yes,” said the lady. “My elder son had her two years ago. She was good for these devils. Once she gave everyone a slap. Just like that. Because they must have done something to deserve it.”

I was flattered to be thought of as a devil. I was terrified of Mrs. R. I learned nothing in her class.

Fifteen years later, I became a tutor, a mathematics tutor. One of my pupils was a little boy who was known to be mischievous.

“If he doesn’t listen,” said his grandmother. “Just take this agarbatti and give him one quick *jatka*.”

I didn’t believe she was serious.

She was.

The fascist teacher is sometimes very entertaining. The classroom is an arena, there is the smell of bloodsport in the air, and there’s a febrile excitement in not knowing who will be the victim

The power equation

I have been a teacher for several decades now. I began by teaching mathematics and I ended up teaching journalism at the Social Communications Media department of the Sophia Polytechnic in Mumbai, now ranked as one of the top ten media institutes in the country. I have therefore been teaching for nearly 35 years. I do not know if anyone should spend that kind of time on the wrong side of the power equation.

Teaching is a very peculiar occupation in India. All over, the International Labour Organization tells us, the lowest-paid professions are those of the journalist and the teacher. But this is not a gripe about how badly I have been paid. It is an apology.

I want to apologise.

To each one of my students, against whom I turned the whiplash of my tongue, I would like to say: I am sorry. I am genuinely sorry because I may have hurt you. I may have thought then, I am only being cruel to be kind. I may have thought then, I am doing this for your own good. I may have even told you: I am only preparing you for the boss from hell.

I was fooling myself.

Was I balancing the power equation out? Yes, I may be poorly paid; yes, I may be the subject of aphorisms like ‘Those who can, do; those who can’t, teach’ but right here, right now, I am in charge and I can make your life a living hell for the next 45 minutes and, if you cross my path, for the next semester.

The question I should have asked myself: How should I like to be treated

if I were a student?

I know the answer to that because late in life I went back to school. I went to a yoga class run by my friend, Jehangir Palkhivala. He was a good teacher, a great teacher, knowledgeable, confident, committed. But most of all, he was compassionate.

I didn't think compassion was part of the armamentarium of the teacher.

Savage skill

This was probably because the teachers I remembered were also skilled at savagery. They had cut-glass English accents – this was important to my generation and I suspect it still holds much more value than it should but it is perhaps diminishing now – and of them it was said, 'Every morning I get up and brush my teeth and sharpen my tongue on a whetstone.' Surviving a class with one of them was a badge of honour and once you had earned your badge, it had to mean something, it had to be given meaning, and in order that it be given meaning, you had to work backwards and make your scars into symbols. You had to prove that it was worth it. So you made it seem as if there was no other way you could possibly have learned what you learned were it not for the excoriation that went with it.

This is complete nonsense.

It is true that the fascist teacher is sometimes a very entertaining teacher. The classroom is an arena, there is the smell of bloodsport in the air, and there's a febrile excitement in not knowing who will be the victim. And if the victim is not you, you can settle down and enjoy it secretly, breathing a sigh of relief. The downside is learning is impossible if you are hurt, if you are angry, when you are sad, when you are tense.

But again and again, the teachers who are fêted, the ones who are celebrated, are the ones who could skin you at 50 paces. No wonder that was the model. No wonder that was my model. No wonder the jackboot in the face seems to be the only way we think power can be wielded. Or experienced.

We're all a bit power-mad, no? Most of us just don't have that much power to make it count. Most of the time, we must rely on the cooperation of our victims. Some of it is institutionalised, some of it is sanctioned, but a lot of it arises out of the emotional hold we have over others. The patriarchs of families, the passive-aggressive mothers, the teachers, all wielding power, all trying their best to rewrite the worlds and lives of others in the shape and form they want.

Hurt people, they say, hurt people.

What can I say? I'm sorry. In the words of that sad and sorry student confronting the imperium of the teacher: I'll try not to do it again.

The author tries to think and write and translate in the cacophony of Mumbai.

Of my teachers, it was said, 'Every morning I get up and brush my teeth and sharpen my tongue on a whetstone'

PASSING BITE

Pick your future: tick a box

The state of the nation, from your point of view



Let's do a quick multiple-choice questionnaire. Please tick one from the choices given below each question:

1. At the moment the Indian economy is: a) Robust, soaring, doing fantastically well. The government's fiscal management has been superb; far better than anything seen previously. Led by our great industrial houses, people across the social spectrum are prospering as never before.

b) On an even keel, with some ups and downs, with some serious challenges ahead. About the same as what it was under the last few months of Manmohan Singh's premiership.

c) In an abysmal state, perilously on the brink of serious collapse. The government's mismanagement of everything from the Reserve Bank to demonetisation has seriously damaged many different sectors of the economy; the government's fudging of figures has eroded the trust of foreign investors, and if the conflicts between the U.S., China and Iran escalate, we are going to be part of the collateral damage.

2. What happened in Pulwama and Balakot was: a) The terrorists got through and killed our jawans despite our eagle-like vigilance; we retaliated without the cowardly constraints shown by the previous government; our Air Force struck with skill and precision and destroyed a terrorist camp inside Pakistani territory, killing hundreds of jihadis; when the Pak Air Force came at us the next day, our most obsolete fighters brought

down one or maybe even two of their most advanced fighters; our pilot was also shot down but Pakistan and Imran, quivering in fear at what our lion-like Prime Minister would do, released our pilot forthwith. *Uske ghar pe jaa ke mara.*

b) Unclear, I don't really know, but we did kind of okay.

c) There was a bad intelligence botch-up, where, despite warnings, we exposed our troops to a deadly suicide-bombing attack and lost 46 men; the botch-up continued when we launched an ill-advised retaliatory air attack; we shot down one of our own helicopters; our planes bombed a patch of forest next to a camp that

If today the open attack is on minorities and Dalits and other marginalised communities — while we stand by and watch — tomorrow it will be our turn

had been abandoned ages ago. The next day, when Pakistani planes attacked, our most obsolete fighters were caught on the back foot and one of them was shot down while the Pakistanis sustained no losses; the reason we are still flying MiG-21s goes back to the mistakes of defence ministers in both the Congress and BJP regimes; the triumphant Pakistanis saw a huge advantage in returning our pilot quickly and pulled off a diplomatic coup by doing so; our military and especially our Air Force came out looking ill-equipped and incompetent from the whole affair. *Ghar pe koi nahi tha lekin dushman ke kaafi ped jalaa diye.*

3. These election results are actually a mandate for: a) Turning India into a Hindu Rashtra; installing a statue of Nathuram Godse in front of Parliament House; uprooting all false, pseudo-secular, Nehruvian, Ambedkarite, deracinated, libtard ideas from our Constitution and national institutions; removing Tagore and all other weak, namby-pamby poets and thinkers from our textbooks; putting the minorities in their place, which is under the feet of us Hindus.

b) Continuing the work in progress of the NDA government, but with a few course corrections, which will naturally come from the essential fair and humane nature and innate decency of the Prime Minister and his close associates.

c) Huge money power that allows one party to carry out precision mapping of each constituency and then use that to lay down a huge and constant bombardment of an ill-informed, uneducated population with fake news and propaganda via the electronic and print media and social media.

Unflagging resistance

If you've ticked 'A' in any of the questions above you can look forward to a happy few days in the near future. Congratulations, enjoy. However, if you've ticked 'C' or even tended towards ticking 'C' then your work is cut out for you. As citizens of India we have to resist this takeover of our country and polity. Whatever our religious denomination, we have to remember the essence of the *Bhagavad Gita* – do your duty without worrying about result or reward – and keep struggling and resisting no matter what the vote share, no matter what the parliamentary majority of a party and political ideology that's on the wrong side of history and humanity.

Let's be under no delusions, if 2014-19 was terrible, the next few years are going to be worse; it will get far grimmer before it gets any better. Let's also not imagine that keeping quiet will lead to a peaceful life; let's not make the mistake of the frog swimming in water that is slowly heating up to boiling point. If today the open attack is on minorities and Dalits and other marginalised communities – while we stand by and watch – tomorrow it will be our turn. We must strive towards a nation and society where the only thing marginalised is hate and prejudice.

No matter what strategy or tactics we employ, there has to be one basic principle underlying our resistance and that is non-violence. It is far easier to dismiss and hate than it is to find *sahanubhuti* and connect, and it is our challenge not to play out this struggle according to the opponent's rules. However, humour, pastiche, photoshopped cartoons, sarcasm, ribaldry and scatology are all okay. Let's stay constantly vigilant and never far from laughter and love.



Ruchir Joshi is a writer, filmmaker and columnist.

BROWN PAPERBAG BY SAILESH GOPALAN



FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND



F MINUS BY TONY CARRILLO



GREEN HUMOUR BY ROHAN CHAKRAVARTY



GOREN BRIDGE

Not Blackwood

Both vulnerable, North deals

BOB JONES



Many players are not confident in bidding to slam without using the Blackwood convention to ask for aces. Experts hold Blackwood in high esteem,

but they will often prefer looking for slam via cue bidding.

The four-diamond bid and the four-heart bid were both cue bids. South's five-club bid was a signoff denying a spade control. When North continued with a five-diamond cue bid, this revealed a world of information to South. North had to have a spade control. He would not continue toward slam without a spade control after South had denied one. Furthermore, North's bid was a grand slam try! They couldn't go back and play in five clubs, so North was not willing to settle for six clubs just yet. Because North's bid was an effort to reach seven clubs, he had to have a first-

round spade control – either the ace or a void.

South didn't have any particular interest in a grand slam, but he did have two more trumps than North could reasonably expect, so he bid five no trump rather than six clubs. This sent the message that he was not able to cue bid anything at the five level, but he might have a suitable hand for seven clubs. That was all the encouragement North needed and the grand slam was reached.

There was nothing to the play. South discarded his losing heart on the ace of diamonds and ruffed two spades in the dummy for 13 tricks. Nice bidding!

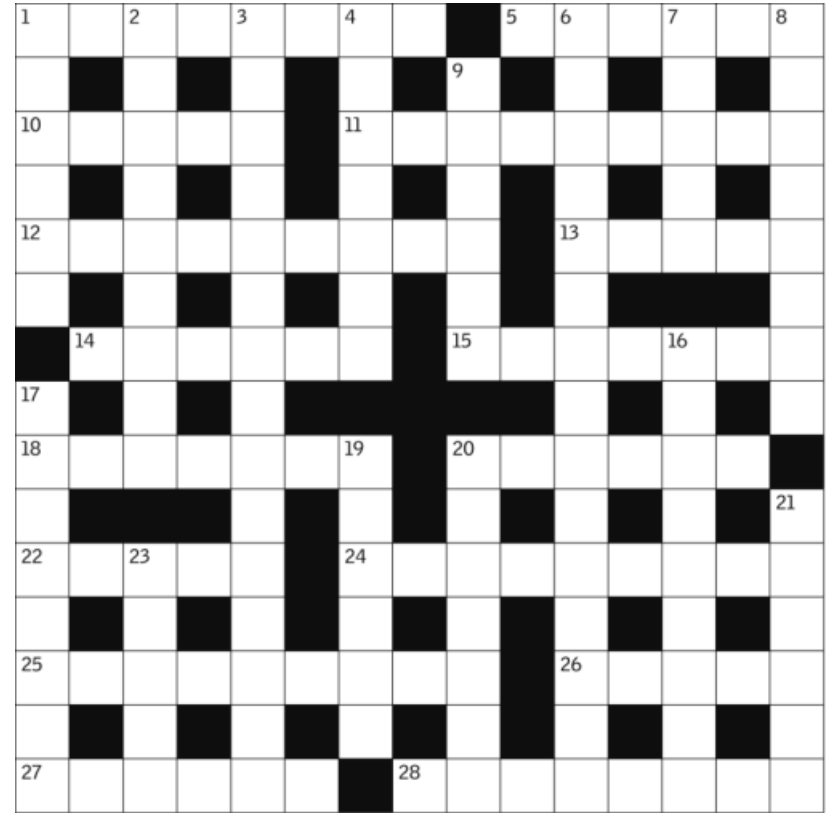
NORTH			
♠ A			
♥ A J 2			
♦ A 9 8 6 4			
♣ A J 3 2			
WEST		EAST	
♠ K 6 5 4 3		♠ Q 10 8 2	
♥ 10 6		♥ K 9 8 7 5 4	
♦ Q 10 5 3 2		♦ K J 7	
♣ 7		♣ Void	
SOUTH			
♠ J 9 7			
♥ Q 3			
♦ Void			
♣ K Q 10 9 8 6 5 4			

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	1♥	2♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	Pass	5NT	Pass
7♣	All pass		

Opening lead: Ten of ♥

THE SUNDAY CROSSWORD NO. 3050



Across

- 1 At the end of the day, a lovable rogue (5,3)
- 5 German army unit (1-5)
- 10 Strike a pose, fabulous figure? (5)
- 11 Composition of quiet soul (5,4)
- 12 50 admitted to pious golf club in California suburb (9)
- 13 Enormous honour's meeting earl (5)
- 14 Face of donkey kissed noisily (6)
- 15 Vociferously against taking pudding through to bedroom (2,5)
- 18 Waster, poet, communist (7)
- 20 Is concerned about son, gives show of affection (6)
- 22 Had put robe on (not grand) (5)
- 24 Bigot at heart, host's without skill, dignity? (9)
- 25 Wasting time in Tate Modern, busy tourist spot (5-4)
- 26 Early on, state administered by old New Zealander? (5)
- 27 'Savage'!? Sorry, it's 'unruly' (6)
- 28 What toffs shoot, short-of-height bumpkins (8)

Down

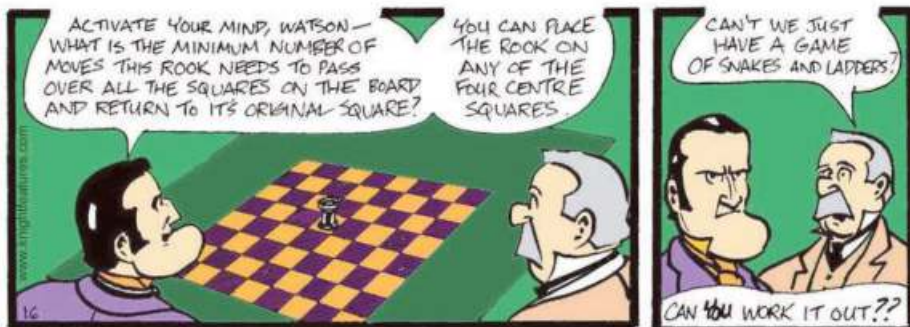
- 1 Flatness of a route's variable (6)
- 2 Old boy, solitary and square, extremely chaste date (9)
- 3 Folly to have run into deserted cape (5-10)

- 4 The French bay is severely run down (4,3)
- 6 Tricky to anticipate surplus of rifles in mess (4,2,9)
- 7 In her novel, there's a valley (5)
- 8 Breeze drifts over Tyneside, making someone cold (8)
- 9 Even the old hippies do this (3-3)
- 16 Composed of sane mind, I will be a mole (6,3)
- 17 Once snared by lasso on a sierra (2,4,2)
- 19 Parrot in old TV show (6)
- 20 Train company greet stranger(7)
- 21 City's bankrupt financiers, hard to ignore (2,4)
- 23 Celebrated being ruggedly toned (5)

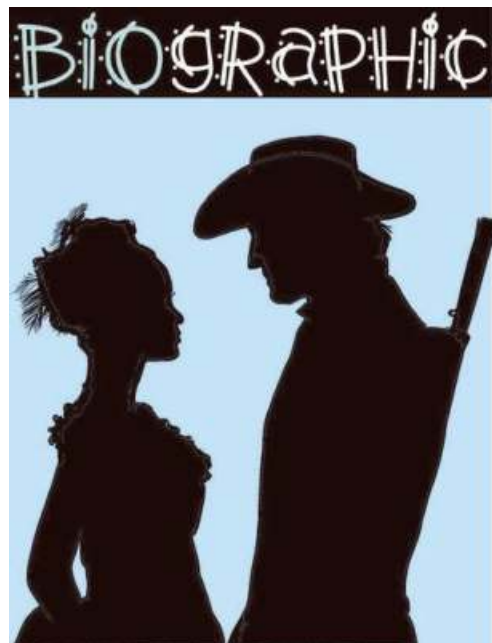
Solution No. 3049



BAKER STREET



ANSWER: THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF MOVES IS 16.



THANDIE NEWTON WAS BORN IN LONDON ON NOVEMBER 6, 1972. RAISED IN LONDON AND CORNWALL, SHE STUDIED DANCE AT THE TRING PARK SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS. SHE HAD NEVER ACTED WHEN SHE LANDED A ROLE IN THE 1991 MOVIE "FLIRTING." BETWEEN SUBSEQUENT ACTING ASSIGNMENTS, SHE EARNED A SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY DEGREE FROM CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY.

FOLLOWING A ROLE IN 1994'S "INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE" ALONGSIDE BRAD PITT AND TOM CRUISE, SHE PLAYED SALLY HEMINGS IN "JEFFERSON IN PARIS." SHE PLAYED LEADING ROLES IN A HANDFUL OF SMALLER MOVIES BEFORE TAKING THE TITLE ROLE OPPOSITE OPRAH WINFREY AND DANNY GLOVER IN THE HORROR DRAMA "BELOVED." IN 2000 - THE YEAR THAT THE FIRST OF HER THREE CHILDREN WITH HER HUSBAND, DIRECTOR AND WRITER OL PARKER, WAS BORN - SHE PLAYED THE FEMALE LEAD OPPOSITE TOM CRUISE IN "MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE 2." THANDIE PLAYED MAKEEMBA "KEM" LIKASU ON TV'S HIT SERIES "ER," DURING WHICH TIME SHE ALSO STARRED AS DAME VAAKO IN "THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK" AND TURNED IN AN AWARD-WINNING PERFORMANCE IN THE 2009 ENSEMBLE MOVIE "CRASH."

IN THE LATE 2000s, SHE PLAYED EDDIE MURPHY'S LOVE INTEREST IN "NORBIT" AND THE OBJECT OF SIMON PEGG'S AFFECTION IN "RUN FATBOY RUN," AND SHE EARNED PRAISE FOR HER PORTRAITAL OF CONDOLEEZZA RICE IN "W."

SHE STARRED ON THE COP DRAMA SERIES "ROGUE" AND RACKED UP CREDITS IN A NUMBER OF SMALLER PRODUCTIONS, INCLUDING "FOR COLORED GIRLS" WITH JANET JACKSON AND WHOOP! GOLDBERG.

THIS WEEKEND SEES THE RETURN OF "WESTWORLD" FOR A SECOND SEASON, WITH THANDIE REPRISING HER ROLE AS THE ANDROID MAEVE MULLAY. FOLLOWING HER RECENT ROLE IN THE CRIME COMEDY "GRINGO," SHE WILL BE SEEN LATER THIS YEAR IN "SOLO: A STAR WARS STORY."



THANDIE NEWTON

QUIZ

Easy like Sunday morning

June suns, you cannot store them
To warm the winter's cold: A.E. Housman

BERTY ASHLEY

1 Born on June 2, 1740, Donatien Alphonse François, Marquis de Sade was a French philosopher and writer. He claimed to be unrestrained by morality, religion or law, and some of his works depicted the pleasure of inflicting pain on others. In 1843 a critic used his name as an adjective to mean deliberate cruelty. Which English word do we get from this writer?

2 On June 2, 1896 this gentleman applied for a patent for his wireless telegraph, putting in motion a series of events that led to an invention that revolutionised communication. 13 years later he won a Nobel Prize in Physics for the same, and even got to set up one of his inventions for the Pope. Who was this engineer?

3 Johnny Weissmuller was born on June 2, 1904. He won five Olympic Golds in the 1920s, set 67 world records and was the first man to swim the 100-metre freestyle in under one minute. After retirement he became even more famous for playing an iconic role onscreen. Even today his distinctive yell is easily identifiable with the character. What character did he play who was raised by apes?

4 On June 2, 1910, Welshman Charles became the first man to make a non-stop double crossing of the English Channel by plane. This was just two years after he took his maiden trip with Wilbur Wright. Charles also started a company that made some of the best engines with his friend Henry. The company was named after both of them. What were the full names of these gentlemen?

5 Born on June 2, 1943 as Gnanathesikan, this gentleman is a prolific composer, having scored over 1,000 movies and 7,000 songs. Known for his ability to integrate Indian folk music and Western classical music, his works are often performed by international symphony orchestras. Who is this composer who has been awarded the Padma Vibhushan and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and will be performing even on his 76th birthday?

6 Born on June 2, 1956, this Padma Shri recipient has won six National Film Awards for his works. He is well known for the trilogy of films he did about terrorism in the 1990s. He handles the screenplays for a majority of his films and they are known for technical expertise in cinematography,

art direction, editing and background score. Who is this director?

7 Born on June 2, 1965, these twin brothers became two of the most popular players of their sport in the world. One of them led his country to a record sixteen consecutive wins in the long form of the sport, and to victory in the 1999 World Cup. His younger brother (by a few minutes) scored a century on debut and till 2009 had the world record for the most catches. Who are these two brothers who played for their country at the highest level?

8 Lou Gehrig, one of baseball's first superstars, died on June 2, 1941. He had to stop playing due to an incurable neuromuscular illness that stunned players and fans, leading them to name the disease after him. Its actual name is Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), and it causes progressive weakening of muscles, leading to paralysis. In 2014 there was a viral internet sensation where people recorded doing something to themselves in order to increase public awareness of this condition. What was this that left a person unable to move their muscles for a small time?

9 On June 2, 1970 this New Zealand race car driver and engineer was testing his new car, which he had designed at the company named after him. The rear bodywork gave way and the loss of aerodynamic downforce caused it to crash, leading to the death of one of the most iconic drivers in Formula 1. The team he founded went on to win eight Constructors' Championships and 12 Drivers' Championships, although they are currently going through a rough patch. Who was this iconic driver and what legendary team did he found?

10 This country celebrates June 2 as National Social Forestry Day by planting tree saplings all over. It was started to celebrate the King's coronation anniversary. Over time this has led the country to become one of the greenest in the world, with forest cover of 70%. Which country is this?



Pioneer The first man to make a double non-stop crossing of the English Channel by plane. GETTY IMAGES

ANSWERS
1. Sadist,
Sadism
2. Guglielmo
Marconi
3. Tizian
Charles
Rolls and
Henry Royce
(Rolls Royce)
5. Maitrayaraj
6. Mani
Ratnam
7. Steve
Waugh and
Mark Waugh
8. Ice Bucket
Challenge
9. Bruce
McLaren,
McLaren,
10. Bhutan

LETTER FROM A CONCERNED READER

More extra danger

Dear madam,

Too much work I have done this week, nonstop cleaning and cooking not to mention all extra work for housing colony. Just now, madam, in addition to Kitchen Garden Association, Building Society and Ladies Club, I have started one number Reading Club in Mrs. Shankaramenon's garage. No place in mine, I have explained. Too much storage *saamaan* is being kept there.

Books are very good, madam, very important. So only I thought why not do this one more social service? We have organised many books like Alistair MacLean, Ludlum, Erle Stanley Gardner on the shelves, also some Chetan Bhagat for the youth. It seems he is writing about IIT days and marrying one Tamil woman, which is making him very popular.

Always active

I told ladies to bring one chair each from their houses and put it there. I don't know why Mrs. Shankaramenon is complaining *nachunachu* all the time – I have told her only to put table fan and organise some light tiffin once a month. No point colouring hair and pretending to be young-young if everything is making you feel tired, no madam? So only I am telling her, be active. Automatically you will feel strong.

Everyone is asking how you are managing, Mrs. Mathrubootham? So much you are doing for housing colony. Take some rest, they are telling. In fact, yesterday only three-four ladies are visiting. Mrs. Mathrubootham, you must not over-work. We will manage. You go on holiday. Long holiday. We can buy ticket for you.

But what to do madam? My son is saying that Himalaya cave is house-full. No chance till December-January. So only I am putting extra time into social work.

Anyway, next week onwards Mathrubootham is coming home which means more work only. That man will be wanting bajji for tiffin and erisseri for lunch and manga pachadi for dinner, and what not, Guruvayurappa, no time to breathe also.

More extra danger now madam because America daughter-in-law is giving him non-stop tofu pizza and broccoli pasta and Big Mac or Jack or something, which and all he is not able to tolerate, but how to tell her. So bravely he is smiling-smiling but inside stomach is hollow, not even one glass rose milk available there it seems.

Variety food

On phone, he is asking in weak voice, Kamalam, what you made for lunch yesterday? I informed about the raw papaya thoran and brinjal sambhar and few appalams. Of course little puli inji also. I am telling you madam, I am sure I heard one choking sound on other side of line.

I cannot confirm because my son is taking the phone. What happened, I asked. Nothing amma, he said, we are getting ready to go for dinner to Tex Mex joint and appa has gone

to get ready. America very good for variety food.

But nothing to beat our variety rice I am thinking. But I am not speaking. You please tell me, whether America can make brinjal rice and tomato rice and jeera rice and curd rice and lemon rice and bisibelebaath? This is not even tip of iceberg, just tiny morsel of tip of iceberg. Variety it seems.

Anyway I am sorry madam, I cannot waste more time writing to you. You are very kind to publish and all but you are thinking working for paper fulltime job. No chance. Working in house is fulltime job, how you will know that. Now I am going to go and clean Mathrubootham's cupboard. Since 3-4 years he is collecting many ugly short-sleeved kurtas in garish colours. I am giving all to old-age *illam*. They will enjoy.

*Yours fashionably,
Mrs. Mathrubootham*