



Saudi Crown Prince linked to Khashoggi murder: UN official

Page 14



HDFC ERGO snaps up Apollo Munich Health for ₹1,347 crore

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PLAYING TODAY

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2019

Australia vs Bangladesh

VENUE: Trent Bridge

Live on STAR Sports 1, 2 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.

Injured Dhawan ruled out, Pant drafted into the squad

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## NEARBY



### DU to release first cut-off list on June 28

NEW DELHI  
Delhi University on Wednesday announced a revised cut-off schedule for admissions to merit-based undergraduate courses. The first cut-off list will now be released on June 28 and students will have to get their documents verified between June 28 and July 1, the university said. The second list will be announced on July 4.

CITY PAGE 3

**GEOGRAPHY**  
**OPTIONAL**  
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### Oppn. slams U.P. gov't's ordinance on varsities

LUCKNOW  
The draft ordinance to ban use of campuses of private universities in Uttar Pradesh for "anti-national activity" has not gone down well with the Opposition, with the Congress saying that the move smacks of "foisting RSS ideology on educational institutions".

NORTH PAGE 7

### Car bomb used to target Army patrol vehicle: NIA

NEW DELHI  
A Maruti 800 car is suspected to have been used in Monday's terror attack on an Army patrol vehicle on the Aihal-Pulwama road in South Kashmir, initial probe suggests. An improvised explosive device packed in a car parked by the road was detonated when a mobile patrol vehicle of the 44 Rashtriya Rifles passed by.

NEWS PAGE 13

# Panel will study the '1 nation, 1 poll' issue

11 parties, including Congress, DMK, BSP, Trinamool Congress and AAP, skip four-hour meeting

SOBHANA K NAIR  
SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

A committee will be formed by the Narendra Modi-led government to prepare a road map for "One nation, one election", Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced here at the end of an over four-hour meeting with presidents of 21 political parties. Eleven political parties, including the Congress, skipped the meeting convened by the Prime Minister. Speaking to reporters at the end of the meeting, Mr. Singh said: "Majority of the parties supported. CPI and CPI(M) raised questions about its feasibility but didn't oppose the move. The Prime Minister then said he



Mapping the mood: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and other Ministers after the all-party meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

will form a committee regarding this issue." All the political parties were given the opportunity to put forth their views, after which Mr. Modi spoke in support of the idea. "The Prime Minister said that this is not the government's agenda but

the country's agenda. If there are differences of opinion, they are welcome," Mr. Singh quoted the Prime Minister as saying. Sources said Mr. Modi stressed that this formula needs to be accepted even if it takes 10 years to achieve

synchronisation.

Other than the Congress, the notable absentees included the Trinamool Congress, the Samajwadi Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, the Aam Aadmi Party and the Rashtriya Janata Dal, among others. The AIADMK sent Tamil Nadu Minister C.V. Shanmugam and Rajya Sabha MP Navaneethakrishnan, both of whom were denied entry since the meeting was only open to the party chiefs. They submitted in writing the AIADMK's position on the issue. Among the NDA allies, the Shiv Sena was missing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## RS bypolls: SC seeks EC reply on petition

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought the response of the Election Commission of India (EC) on a petition challenging its decision to hold separate bypolls for two Rajya Sabha seats in Gujarat. The seats fell vacant on the election of BJP president Amit Shah and Union Minister Smriti Irani to the Lok Sabha.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

# PM's panel rejects former CEA's paper on GDP growth

'Lacks rigour, won't stand up to scrutiny'

## Numbers don't add up

The PM's Economic Advisory Council has rejected Arvind Subramanian's claims made in his research paper:

### SUBRAMANIAN'S PAPER

- Analysis of 17 indicators suggests that GDP growth between 2011-17 was overestimated
- Analysis of tax data not included because changes in the law have rendered their relationship with the GDP unstable
- National income accounting and the methodology of the new series must be reviewed

### PMEAC'S REPLY

- The 17 indicators look at only the industry, whereas nearly 80% of GDP (services & agriculture) were not included
- Tax revenue is hard data, not the product of surveys or estimates. Major changes in law (GST) happened after the period under review
- The methodology of the new series is in line with a transparent and well-managed economy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) has released a detailed note enumerating its objections to former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian's paper on India's GDP growth. The note said that Mr. Subramanian's paper "lacks rigour" and would not stand up to academic scrutiny.

### Low GDP

The paper, released in Harvard University, postulated that the GDP growth between 2011-17 was significantly lower than the 7% shown by the official figures. "Having closely read the paper and taking into account all information available until June 19, 2019, the primary contributors of this note reject the author's methodology, arguments and conclusions in the said paper," the note by the PMEAC said. "A critique of official GDP estimates must specifically critique cover-

age or methodology, the author does neither."

"Given the fact that his paper lacks rigour in terms of specific data sources and description, alternative hypothesis, rationale of equation specifications, use of dummies, and robustness-check diagnostics of estimated equations, and choice of countries in the sample and a specific list, it would not stand the scrutiny of academic or policy research standards," the note added.

The Council, however, said this did not mean that the paper should not be taken seriously, but that "to believe it as gospel truth is equally problematic." In a detailed rejoinder, it said the 17 indicators "cherry-picked" by the former CEA were sourced from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), which was not in itself a primary source of information.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## A cry for water



Pot of woe: Women staging a protest with empty pots in front of the Coimbatore Corporation on Wednesday to highlight the acute shortage of water. The protest was organised by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. ■ M. PERIASAMY

## Muzaffarpur AES death toll mounts to 115

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUZAFFARPUR/PATNA

The death toll due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) rose to 115 in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district on Wednesday, as a Public Interest Litigation was filed in the Patna High Court urging it to direct the State government to take adequate action to contain the outbreak.

The deaths took place at the Shri Krishna Medical College and Hospital where 138 children were still undergoing treatment.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday also agreed to hear a plea seeking a direction to the Centre to urgently constitute a team of medical experts for the treatment of the children suffering from AES in Bihar.

DETAILS ON PAGE 9

# HC raps police for 'brutality' in tempo incident

Asks for identification of all cops involved in assault on driver, minor son

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Video clips of policemen dragging and assaulting a 15-year-old boy and his father, a tempo driver, in broad daylight in north-west Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar drew the ire of the Delhi High Court, which described them as evidence of "police brutality".

"Why was the boy dragged along the street in broad daylight," asked a Bench of Justices Jayant Nath and Najmi Waziri after watching video footage of the Sunday incident, which has since snowballed into a political issue. "How can you [Delhi police counsel] standing for the State justify the action of the

five police officers who ran after a 15-year-old boy who had been trying to take his father away," the Bench asked.

"If this is not evidence of police brutality then what more do you need? This is a case of extensive disquiet in society. How can any unformed force do this? This would scare the citizens," the Bench added.

### Independent report

The court also called for an independent report on the incident from an officer of the rank of Joint Commissioner of Police within a week.

The Delhi police's counsel

submitted that cross FIRs have been lodged on the complaints of the two sides and the case transferred to the Crime Branch for a detailed investigation. The counsel further said that three officers involved in the incident have been suspended. To this, the Bench said, "There are eight to nine police personnel who can be clearly seen [in the videos]... Identify the five officers who dragged the boy along the street, all the while pelting him with sticks, and those who assaulted the father."

The High Court also issued notices to the police, the Centre and the city government on a petition filed in

public interest seeking a CBI probe into the incident.

It posted the matter for further hearing on July 2.

One of the petitioners, advocate Seema Singhal, has sought framing of appropriate guidelines for police reforms to prevent such "violent acts of police brutality and excessive force".

"A service gun was pointed towards the minor boy by these policemen threatening him with dire consequences," her petition stated, adding that "the atrocities committed by the police amount to violation of Section 4 of the Model Code of Conduct for the police".

SEE ALSO PAGE 3

## Sunny Deol told to explain poll spend

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Actor-turned-politician Sunny Deol, the BJP Member of Parliament from Punjab's Gurdaspur, has been issued a statutory letter to explain his 2019 Lok Sabha election-related expenditure, an official said on Wednesday.

"We have issued a statutory letter of accounts reconciliation to Mr. Deol among other candidates. Such a letter is issued to every contesting candidate 26 days after the declaration of results. If any discrepancy is found, then the concerned candidate is given the chance to explain," said Gurdaspur District Election Officer-cum-Deputy Commissioner Vipul Ujjwal.

A source, privy to the matter, said that in the "shadow registers" maintained by the Election Commission the poll expenditure of Mr. Deol has been estimated to be above ₹70 lakh, which is the statutory limit.

"We can't give any figure for anyone unless reconciliation of account has taken place. We maintain record of the expenditure of candidates during the election and issue the letter after results. If any discrepancy is found after the candidate's reply, then we issue a notice to the candidate. It is a normal statutory process," said Mr. Ujjwal.

Mr. Deol defeated Congress's Sunil Jakhar by a margin of 82,459 votes to win the Gurdaspur seat.

# A water clinic for elephants opens in Mathura

Injured, sick and geriatric jumbos undergo specialised treatment for rehabilitation

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

India has opened its first specialised hydrotherapy treatment for elephants suffering from arthritis, joint pain and foot ailments, near the Wildlife SOS' Elephant Conservation and Care Centre (ECCC), which currently houses 20 rescued animals and is run in collaboration with the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department and the NGO Wildlife SOS.

Situated on the banks of the Yamuna in Mathura, the hydrotherapy jumbo pool is 11-foot-deep and has 21 high pressure jet sprays that create water pressure that massage the elephants' feet



Water baby: An elephant relaxing in a hydrotherapy pool in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and body and help in increasing blood circulation.

"The hospital started in 2018 already offers state-of-the-art facilities, including wireless digital X-ray, laser treatment, dental X-ray, thermal imaging and ultra-

sonography to treat injured, sick and geriatric elephants," said Dr. Yaduraj Khadpekar, senior wildlife veterinary officer.

He said that with each elephant rescue they had observed a disturbing pattern.

"In captive elephants their bodies are weakened due to improper nutrition, their bodies and delicate feet are riddled with wounds and painful abscesses. Osteoarthritis and foot issues are common ailments. Water resistance is useful for muscle strengthening and cardiovascular training while water pressure can reduce oedema and swelling," he said.

The elephants at the Wildlife SOS have been rescued from extreme distress. Some were privately owned and had the cruel history of being used for begging.

HYDROTHERAPY TO HEAL FEET AND JOINTS PAGE 12

# Delhi's sweet spot: 25°C to 31°C

Study says power demand doesn't rise with increase in temperature in this range

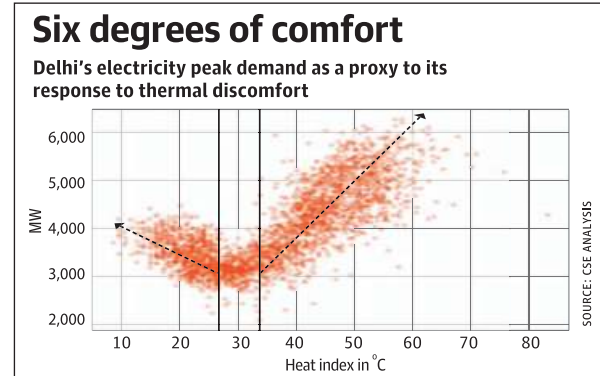
NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

The Centre for Science and Environment, in a study which is to be released on Thursday, has found that there is a temperature "sweet spot", between 25 and 31 degrees Celsius, in which Delhiites are comfortable. In this range, the power consumption does not rise with increase in temperature, says the study.

The study analysed Delhi's power consumption over the past eight years. "Electricity consumed on days when heat index was 25°C-31°C was observed to be unaffected by thermal stress (heat or cold)," the study states. Heat index is a measure of how hot it really feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature.

The study also found that in summer months in Delhi, the peak power consumption during the night was more than the daytime, which showed that the peak power demand was driven by domestic consumption. It also found that the power demand in winter was driven more by the use of geysers than spacial heaters.

The study "A Midsummer Nightmare, Decoding the



link between comfort, space cooling and energy consumption in a climate-stressed world", written by Avikal Somvanshi, also found that there was a direct correlation between thermal discomfort and power consumption.

#### More demand at night

Thermal comfort is a state of human satisfaction to the thermal environment. "In Delhi, the peaks [power demand] are now more in night rather than at day, which is a weird behaviour. At this time, the commercial establishments are not working and this shows that the peaks is being driven by households. Though the overall consumption has always been more for households, the peaks were never driven

by households," Mr. Somvanshi said.

"During May (2018), for as many as 21 days, the late-night peak demand had been higher—up from 14 days in 2016," the report states.

Explaining power consumption of January 2018, Mr. Somvanshi, said: "The power consumption starts picking up from around 4 a.m., when people start waking up. They switch on the geysers to get hot water for shower. The power consumption peaks around 10 a.m. and starts to dip at a time when most people go to office." "This pattern doesn't reflect use of space heaters, but that of water heaters."

Thermal stress can be attributed 25%-31% of the total electricity consumed in Delhi in the last five years, ac-

ording to the study.

The study also has a list of recommendations to reduce energy consumption. Mr. Somvanshi said that we need smarter building designs.

#### Recommendations

"Mandate sunshades for all windows and make a provision for installing desert coolers in all new housing. Builders have resorted to providing only ACs in new buildings, making it difficult for people to use any other means of cooling," the report states. "Run aggressive market awareness campaigns on multiple benefits of energy-efficient buildings, such as reduced operational costs, health and comfort, environmental and societal benefits," reads another recommendation.

Mr. Somvanshi said that the Bureau of Indian Standards has been directed by the Centre to come up with comfort standards. "Unless we have these comfort standards for summer and winter and regulate unnecessary cooling, we will be wasting energy. We keep designing buildings which are driven by comfort standards of the AC industry, which is not trying to help us, but make profit," he said.

IN BRIEF

**Man held for flashing woman at metro station**

**NEW DELHI**  
A 25-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly flashing a woman at HUDA City Centre metro station on June 14, the police said on Wednesday. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) P.S. Kushwah said that the accused has been identified as Dinesh, a resident of Sushant Lok, who works as an office boy at a private company.

**Correction & Apology**

A report headlined 'Monty Chadha gets bail in cheating case', published in the Delhi city edition on June 18, was accompanied by a picture that was erroneously identified as that of Monty Chadha. The image was actually that of Pawandeep Singh Anand, a Gurugram-based industrialist. We apologise to Mr. Anand for the inadvertent use of the wrong image owing to an archiving error.

# DU admissions: first cut-off list for UG courses to be out on June 28

First list for postgraduate admissions to be released on July 17, says university

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

Delhi University on Wednesday announced a revised cut-off schedule for admissions to merit-based undergraduate courses. The first cut-off list will now be released on June 28 and students will have to get their documents verified between June 28 and July 1, the university said.

The second list will be announced on July 4 and the verification process will be carried out between July 4 and July 6. The third, fourth and fifth cut-off lists will be announced on July 9, July 15 and July 20 respectively. The university, in a statement, said that the schedule for



further cut-off lists will be announced later depending on the number of vacant seats.

The university said that for online fee payment, applicants will have to log on to

the undergraduate admission portal. Students will first have to get the approval of admission on the portal and they are allowed to pay the fees by 3 p.m. of the following day.

For PG admissions, the first list will be released on July 17 and document verification needs to be done between July 17 and July 19. The second, third, and fourth list will be out on July 22, 27 and August 2 respectively. Further lists, if any, will be announced depending on the availability of seats, the university said.

Students will have to pay the fees online on the admission portal. They will have to get an approval on the portal

first and the window will be open for them till 3 p.m. of the following day.

The new schedule for the cut-off lists was released after the university was ordered to keep the admission portal open till June 22. Earlier, the first cut-off list was scheduled for June 22.

The dates were postponed after the Delhi High Court, which was hearing pleas against the university for effecting change in eligibility criteria just a day before the registrations were to commence, said that changes in eligibility criteria had to be made in accordance with law that would require a minimum of six months of notice to the public at large.

# Man held for trying to kill rival, hiring contract killers

Accused suspected victim was in a relationship with his wife

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

A 34-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly trying to kill a man in Dwarka, the police said on Wednesday. The accused, they said, suspected that the victim was in a relationship with the former's wife.

The accused, identified as Jitender alias Jitu, was also incurring loss after he had stopped working in partnership with the victim, the police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Anto Alphonse said that the accused, a resident of Najafgarh, and his accomplices Rajbir and Santosh allegedly fired at Nabodh Kumar (21) on June 10 in Jafarpur Kalan. They also injured him with a knife, but Nabodh managed to escape.

The police said that on June 10, they received an information that a man had been stabbed and fired at. The victim later told the police that he had been attacked by Jitender and his accomplices.

An investigation was ta-



Accused Jitender in police custody. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ken up. Santosh was arrested on June 15, but the other two accused remained absconding. Jitender was finally arrested on Tuesday, when he had come to take his family to flee to Mumbai, the police said.

During interrogation, Jitender said that he and his wife had come to Delhi from UP around eight years ago. He started working as a mason and Nabodh was his neighbour. "Jitender and Nabodh began taking contracts for smaller masonry works in partnership. Jitender said he suspected that Nabodh and his wife were in a relationship. This led to the end of their partnership," Mr.

Aphonse said, adding that Jitender had started losing contracts due to Nabodh.

The accused then planned to eliminate Nabodh and gave the contract to Rajbir and Santosh, whom he promised to pay ₹50,000 for the job. On the day of the incident, the three accused lured Nabodh to an isolated spot. The four drank together and Rajbir then fired at the victim and Santosh attacked him with a knife. The victim, however, managed to flee and started shouting for help. The three panicked and fled the spot. Jitender had left his house with the family and was hiding in Noida and Jhansi before he was caught, the police said.

Mr. Alphonse also said that Jitender left his wife and children at a railway station in Jhansi promising them that he would return. However, when he failed to do so after a day, the wife came back to Delhi. "He contacted his wife later and on Tuesday, he had come to pick his family to flee to Mumbai, but was arrested," the officer said.

# Mukherjee Nagar case: constable gets 'threats' for social media post

Cop claims relative operates account bearing his picture

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

After several videos of the Mukherjee Nagar assault incident went viral, the Delhi police have started keeping a watch on social media accounts that are spreading hatred and trying to disturb peace by circulating morphed and edited videos.

A comment posted from the account of a city police constable on the incident was reported to the police after it went viral on the social media on Wednesday.

The police said that the identified social media account belongs to a police constable who has been identified. They also have sought an explanation from

**CM welcomes HC order, AAP MLA writes to Shah**

**NEW DELHI**  
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday welcomed the HC order on the Mukherjee Nagar case. "Those entrusted with protecting citizens cannot create discord in society and spread senseless violence," the AAP chief tweeted. Meanwhile, AAP Tilak Nagar MLA Jarnail Singh on Wednesday wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah, urging him to take action against the other policemen involved in the case.

him. The constable told the police that the account was being operated by his relative and he had no knowledge as to how and when

the comment was written. He also claimed that he has been receiving threats on the social media after the comment from the said account bearing his picture went viral.

**'Account deactivated'**

"The social media account reported to the Delhi Police has been deactivated. We request everyone to stop spreading rumours and report such activities to the police. We are keeping a watch on the social media to identify accounts that are spreading hatred by circulating morphed and edited pictures and videos of the Mukherjee Nagar incident," said a police officer.

# Two members of Bachhan gang held

Men involved in over 100 snatching cases

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Police has arrested two members of the 'Bachhan gang' for robbing people in the national capital, officials said on Wednesday. The police said that the arrested persons were involved in more than 100 snatching cases reported across the city.

The accused have been identified as Rohit and Rahul, both aged 22 and residents of Delhi's Sultanpuri. They have confessed to their involvement in more than 100 incidents of mobile and purse snatching in Outer, Rohini, North-West, and West districts, the police said.

The 'Bachhan gang' comprises vehicle thieves and mobile snatchers who are

active on the outskirts of the city. The gang targets people when they are alone, at isolated places. It selects unemployed youth as its members.

The police got a tip-off that members of the 'Bachhan gang' would arrive at Sultanpuri bus terminal with stolen motorcycles and snatched mobile phones to sell those. The police laid a trap near the bus terminal and the two members of the gang were held. Ten two-wheelers and three snatched mobile phones were recovered from them. The police said that a total of 12 FIRs were lodged at various police stations in connection with the theft and snatching of the items that were recovered.

# Arms supplier, accomplice arrested

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

A 42-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly supplying illegal arms to criminals in Delhi, the police said on Wednesday. The man from whom he used to procure the weapons has also been arrested.

DCP (South) Vijay Kumar said that the accused have been identified as Mohammad Parvez, a resident of Jasola village, and Iqbal, a resident of UP's Hapur. A total of five pistols and 30 live cartridges have been recovered from their possession.

Parvez was convicted in a murder case registered at Kalkaji police station in 2008 and after being released from jail, he started supplying weapons.

# Youth stabbed to death

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

An 18-year-old boy was stabbed to death and his friend was injured in north Delhi's Timarpur allegedly after being attacked by two bike-borne men, the police said on Wednesday. The two sides had an argument before the victims were attacked, they said.

The incident was reported on Monday and the teen succumbed to injuries on Tuesday. The deceased has been identified as Suraj. His friend Irshad is currently undergoing treatment.

Suraj and Irshad were drinking with two of their friends near a drain in Timarpur when the two accused came and asked them what they were doing. "An argument broke out between the two sides over this and the bike-borne men stabbed Suraj and Irshad," the officer said. No arrests have been made so far.

# Bumps ahead for GMDA's plan to revive Aravali road project

'NHAI officials not amused by proposal to review road alignment'

**ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM**

The Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority's (GMDA) plan to revive the controversial road project passing through the Aravali Biodiversity Park off Mehrauli-Gurugram Road may again hit rough weather with National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) officials not being keen on the authority's proposal to review its alignment.

Highly placed sources in the NHAI told *The Hindu* that its senior officials were not amused by the GMDA's proposal to review the alignment of the road for the revival of the project. The sources said that the NHAI had already invested huge sums of money and time in getting the plan prepared for the road as per the earlier alignment and the process of land acquisition in Delhi had

**NHAI officials are of the view that the GMDA should get the study done and report prepared for the review of the alignment if they want the plan to be altered**

SOURCES IN NHAI

also been initiated then.

"After the GMDA advised the NHAI to revise the project and review its alignment earlier this year, the proposal was forwarded by the NHAI Gurugram office to its Delhi office, but senior NHAI officials have decided to keep it in limbo as of now. The NHAI officials are of the view that the GMDA should get the study done and report prepared for the review of the alignment if they want the plan to be altered," said the source.

Though shelved in Novem-

ber last, following strong protests by environmentalists and common people, the GMDA had in its meeting on March 27 asked the NHAI officials to revive the six-lane road project through the biodiversity park. The Chief Executive Officer, GMDA, had advised the NHAI officials to review the alignment for the road causing minimum impact on the park and aiming to decongest the Delhi-Gurugram border at Sirhaul.

Besides, GMDA's Urban Environment Department and the MCG have also objected to the project, raising environment related concerns. The National Association of Software and Service Companies had in a letter to Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, in December last, made an appeal to not create a bigger problem in order to solve the problem of traffic congestion.

# 3 sex workers gang-raped; 7 held, 2 at large

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NOIDA**

Three sex workers have been allegedly raped by nine men at a farmhouse here after they were picked up from Delhi, the police said on Wednesday.

Most of the accused are private security guards, while one is a cab driver, the police said, adding that seven of them have been arrested after the matter was reported around 5 a.m.

The complainant and two of her friends said that they were waiting for a client at Lajpat Nagar metro station in Delhi on Tuesday night when two men approached them around 11.30 p.m. "A deal was struck between them and the women were told that they would have to come to Noida Sector 18," SSP (Gautam Buddh Nagar) Vaibhav Krishna said. The women were instead taken to a farmhouse in Sector 135 and gang-raped.

# 7 rescued as fire breaks out in parking lot

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

Seven persons were rescued after a fire broke out in the parking lot of a residential colony in south-east Delhi's Abul Fazal Enclave in the early hours of Wednesday, a Delhi Fire Service official said.

The fire department said that a six-year-old boy sustained minor injuries in the incident and was taken to a nearby hospital. He was discharged after treatment. Three cars, four motorcycles and two scooters were gutted in the fire. "A short-circuit in the electric meter at the parking lot led to the fire," the officer said.

# CyPAD struggles with limited staff, data

Tech giants not sharing information on time with Cyber Prevention Awareness and Detection unit

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

The Cyber Prevention Awareness and Detection (CyPAD) unit of the Delhi Police is facing challenges due to tech giants not sharing information on time and manpower crunch.

The CyPAD was inaugurated by former Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in February this year. Cyber crime unit was earlier under the Economic Offences Wing and the cases taken up by the unit mostly pertained to financial irregularities. "But now we have started taking up cases that affect the public at large like stalking and online cheating," said a senior officer at CyPAD.

Sources claimed that tech giants like Twitter and VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) service providers don't share information easily through Google and Facebook. But Yahoo has been cooperative with law enforcement agencies.

"WhatsApp has recently submitted an affidavit in a city court that its encryption

software is such that it cannot share information. There are websites, applications and service providers that give VoIP numbers and they don't share information with us as well," the officer said.

VoIP is a software which enables people to use Internet as transmission medium wherein the caller can use an Indian number but it will show as an international number.

## Time consuming

Sources said that the formal procedure to get the information is through Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) and various provisions under Information Technology Act, but they are time consuming. "By the time we get the required information, it becomes useless as substantial amount of time lapses by then," the officer said.

So far, the police have been able to extract information from tech giants who "don't cooperate" by mutual understanding and by getting in touch with their representatives.



"Appropriate legal action can be taken against the companies but we are trying to resolve it mutually," the officer said.

Apar Gupta, lawyer and executive director of Internet Freedom Foundation, said tech giants are legally bound to share information with the law enforcement agencies in India under Section 91 of the Criminal Procedure Code. "If they don't comply with this, the CrPC further defines that criminal penalties may be instituted against the online platforms," Mr. Gupta said.

When asked about why

the social media platforms fail to share information on time, Mr. Gupta said that there are three reasons for the same. "First, the department sometimes sends notice that is vague or not even available with the platform. Second, the platforms have based their compliance teams not in India but abroad so it takes time to process. Third, it takes time for the compliance team to turn the information to a law enforcement agency given the impact it may have on the privacy of its user," he said.

Another problem that the

unit is facing is manpower crunch. Sources said that the unit has about 150 officers in total, out of which only 10%-20% are technically sound.

## Lack of manpower

"Under the IT Act, only an inspector-rank officer can investigate such cases and we have about 12-13 inspectors who have about 15 cases each," the officer said.

However, 50 constables, fresh out of academy, are recently deployed in the unit and are being trained from scratch. The officer said that the unit has a strong technical team of about 10 officers headed by an inspector who conducts in-house training sessions.

When questioned about the technology to investigate cases, the officer said that the unit has access to some of the latest technology, including retrieving data from a damaged hard disk or mobile phone. They are in the process of acquiring more, including sophisticated software for social media analysis.

# 780 hectares accumulated under land pooling policy so far: DDA

Stakeholders can register their land till August 4

SHINJINI GHOSH  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has received applications for over 780 hectares under the land pooling policy, senior DDA officials said on Wednesday.

The online portal for the land pooling policy was launched in February this year by Union Minister Hardeep Puri and Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal. The much awaited policy that aims to provide around 17 lakh houses in the Capital, including 5 lakh for the economically weaker sections, was approved by the Centre

in October last year.

While interested stakeholders can register their respective land on the online portal till August 4, a senior DDA official said that till now around 782 hectares have been accumulated under the policy. Under the policy, however a sector of 250 to 300 hectares will be eligible to be developed once a minimum of 70% contiguous land within a sector is assembled.

## Templates being made

"We are in the process of superimposing and ascertaining the extent of the land that has been accumulated. Once

the process is completed, we will make the consortiums that can then approach with their respective layouts and designs. The DDA is also making templates for the layouts depending on the land accumulated," the official said.

While approving the policy, the urban body had said that it will only act as "facilitator and planner" and that the "development will be taken up by the developer entities or consortiums."

The policy has projected dwelling units for approximately 76 lakh people in the Capital.

# Piped water reaches Badarpur: DJB

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on Wednesday said that residents of Badarpur have started getting piped drinking water from Wednesday.

On June 6, Chief Minister

Arvind Kejriwal had visited different parts of Badarpur constituency and assured the residents that Ganga water will reach their households soon.

"The people of Badarpur now have access to clean

drinking water. Camps are being set up in the area to provide people with water connections," an official statement said.

"Sewer lines and roads are also being set up in the constituency," it said.

# Ozone pollution higher this summer, says CSE

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Ozone pollution has increased in Delhi-NCR this summer compared to last year, an analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi, has found.

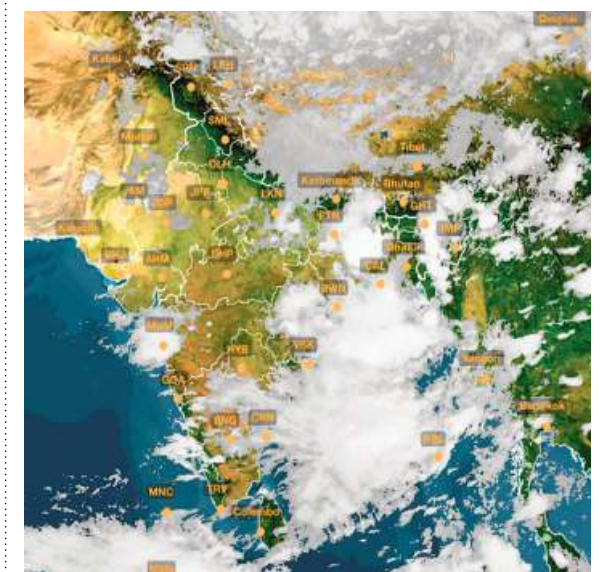
"When temperature increases, the rate of production of ozone also increases. It can cause fatigue, breathlessness, and asthma," an official at the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting said. Surface ozone is not a primary pollutant, but it is produced due to chemical reactions of nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide in the presence of sunlight.

According to the analysis, during this summer, the Delhi-NCR region had more days with average ozone levels more than the national air quality limits than the last summer. The CSE tracked the daily ozone data released by the CPCB for Delhi and NCR from April 1 - June 15, 2019, to arrive at the conclusion.

"As the air quality index is also beginning to show ozone as a dominant pollutant, it will require strong action to cut down gaseous emissions from combustion sources - vehicles and industry," said Anumita Roychowdhury, Executive Director (research and advocacy) of CSE, who did the analysis.

## 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 Thursday:** Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over West Bengal, Odisha, Kerala, Mahe, coastal Karnataka, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Konkan & Goa, Telangana and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal and Yanam

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala.....	—	36.8	27.0	Kozhikode .....	49.1	33.6	23.4
Ahmedabad.....	52.9	36.1	25.3	Kurnool.....	—	39.4	28.2
Aizawl.....	—	28.2	20.8	Lucknow.....	—	32.0	28.7
Allahabad.....	—	35.5	29.4	Madurai.....	—	40.8	27.9
Bengaluru.....	—	32.3	21.5	Mangaluru.....	2.1	31.9	23.0
Bhopal.....	—	31.6	24.4	Mumbai.....	18.6	32.6	25.7
Bhubaneswar.....	—	37.7	26.4	Mysuru.....	—	32.5	21.8
Chandigarh.....	—	37.8	25.5	New Delhi.....	—	36.8	24.2
Chennai.....	—	41.1	30.4	Patna.....	—	41.6	29.8
Coimbatore.....	—	34.5	22.8	Port Blair.....	35.8	27.2	24.0
Dehradun.....	—	34.6	21.5	Puducherry.....	—	40.2	29.1
Gangtok.....	0.3	24.1	17.4	Pune.....	0.3	29.6	23.3
Goa.....	—	32.7	23.7	Raipur.....	—	40.7	27.5
Guwahati.....	—	37.0	27.2	Ranchi.....	—	38.2	26.2
Hubballi.....	—	29.0	23.0	Shillong.....	7.6	26.7	16.6
Hyderabad.....	—	38.4	27.4	Shimla.....	—	25.4	15.3
Imphal.....	—	30.8	22.7	Srinagar.....	2.1	27.1	12.2
Jaipur.....	14.2	32.6	22.2	Trivandrum.....	—	32.5	26.1
Kochi.....	4.2	31.8	25.2	Tiruchi.....	—	40.1	28.6
Kohima.....	3	28.2	18.2	Vijayawada.....	—	42.7	30.5
Kolkata.....	15	37.6	26.4	Visakhapatnam.....	0.4	35.2	29.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad.....	—	—	24	—	—	—	—
Bengaluru.....	8	43	72	41	80	—	In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Karnal, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 260 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Eloor, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 40
Chennai.....	23	34	45	118	—	—	—
Delhi.....	13	124	75	271	335	—	—
Hyderabad.....	14	22	19	50	73	—	—
Kolkata.....	3	27	14	104	109	—	—
Lucknow.....	2	35	49	311	—	—	—
Mumbai.....	26	20	97	24	57	—	—
Pune.....	62	8	29	32	32	—	—
Visakhapatnam.....	22	71	46	110	166	—	—

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.  
**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.  
**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.  
**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

**DELHI** ☀️ **Timings**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 20**  
 RISE 05:24 SET 19:22  
 RISE 21:54 SET 07:50

**FRIDAY, JUNE 21**  
 RISE 05:24 SET 19:22  
 RISE 22:35 SET 08:44

**SATURDAY, JUNE 22**  
 RISE 05:24 SET 19:22  
 RISE 23:12 SET 09:38

**Delhi Weather** max min

Delhi City	37	24
Safdarjang	37	24
Palam	39	26

**Delhi Palam Today**  
**40°C** A comfortable and hazy morning. Day will be hot with partly cloudy sky.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
**42°C** Rise in temperature. Dry and hot weather with sunny sky to continue.

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**IN BRIEF**

**QS ranking for JGU**  
 NEW DELHI  
 O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) has become the youngest, and only new Indian university to break into the top 1,000 in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings, the university said in a statement on Wednesday. The QS global rankings 2020 were released in London.

# ‘1 nation, 1 poll’ a slogan, need White Paper: AAP

Not allowed to attend all-party meeting on issue, says party

**STAFF REPORTER**  
 NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday said that there is no White Paper or policy draft on the Central government’s proposal to conduct simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha, State Assemblies and local bodies.

The party said that currently the idea is just a slogan and urged the Central government to issue a document on the plan.

“We note with concern the lack of a vision document, policy draft or White Paper on the proposed concept of ‘One nation, one poll’ or ‘simultaneous polls,’” read a letter written by AAP’s national spokesperson Raghav Chadha to Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi.

“In the absence of a clear basis/vision, it would be futile for any political party to comment on the merits or demerits of a proposal such as this,” it read.

Prime Minister Narendra



Raghav Chadha

Modi had called an all-party meeting on the issue on Wednesday and AAP said that though Mr. Chadha was supposed to attend it on behalf of party chief Arvind Kejriwal, he was not allowed to attend the meeting.

“Two days ago, the Chief Minister’s office had informed the office of the Parliamentary Affairs Minister in writing that I will be attending the meeting on the CM’s behalf. But today, about 90 minutes before the meeting, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister’s office informed us that I can’t attend the meeting as only party presidents were allowed,”

Mr. Chadha told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Chadha also raised questions on what will happen if a State government dissolves the Assembly.

“As the law stands, if a government chooses to dissolve itself, or loses its majority... under a ‘simultaneous elections’ regime, will the people of the State have to wait till the Lok Sabha election to get another democratically elected State Assembly? What if that waiting period is one or two years or more?,” the letter read.

**‘Anti-democratic tint’**

He said in the letter that the concept of “compelled” simultaneous elections has an “anti-democratic tint basing its foundation on premature dissolution of any government. The harrowing experience of emergency where Lok Sabha and some Assemblies were extended before five years and other Assemblies dissolved to suit Congress’ political interest is worth recalling.”

# Sisodia offers ‘full help’ to Bihar in wake of encephalitis deaths

Deputy CM attacks Centre’s Ayushman Bharat scheme

**STAFF REPORTER**  
 NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Manish Sisodia on Wednesday offered “full help” to the Bihar government, including sending medical teams, ambulances, paramedical teams and medicines, in the wake of deaths of children due to acute encephalitis syndrome (AES).

At a press conference, Mr. Sisodia said that the Delhi government will contact the Bihar government on the issue and added that the central government’s Ayushman Bharat scheme was not helping the people of Bihar.

“During such a severe healthcare crisis, it becomes clear that what the people truly need is a strong network of healthcare infrastructure, not insurance schemes such as Ayushman Bharat. Instead of enriching insurance companies, the government should have focused on building Mohalla Clinics, Poly Clinics, adding capacity to existing hospitals and building more hospitals.



MANISH SISODIA, Deputy Chief Minister

More beds, more ICUs, more modern machinery is the need of the hour,” Mr. Sisodia, said, adding: “Ayushman Bharat Scheme is nothing but a white elephant.”

Health Minister Satyendar Jain asked why children suffering from AES in Bihar are not being treated at private hospitals under the Ayushman Bharat scheme.

**‘A state run by the BJP’**

In a separate statement, AAP chief Spokesperson, Saurabh Bharadwaj said: “It is also distressing that this is happening in Bihar, a State run by the BJP, which was one of the early adopters of

the Ayushman Bharat scheme. The Prime Minister has been claiming that lakhs of people have benefited from the scheme, but it is incomprehensible that if this scheme is designed to treat poor patients in private hospitals free of cost, then why is this happening in Bihar?”

He said that it is a very serious issue that the Ayushman Bharat scheme has severe shortcomings and is not helping the poor. “Before forcing the scheme on others, the Centre should reconsider the scheme, identify the shortcomings and fix the problems in the scheme,” he added.

# Tiwari invites CM, Dikshit to join him on Yoga Day

**STAFF REPORTER**  
 NEW DELHI

BJP Delhi chief Manoj Tiwari on Wednesday invited Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his counterpart from the Delhi Congress Sheila Dikshit to join him at an event to be organised by the party here on International Yoga Day on June 21.

Mr. Tiwari said the Delhi BJP will be holding around 300 event across the Capital where an estimated three lakh people are expected to attend. Of these, 40 venues will see the participation of Union Ministers and MPs.

“Yoga is a positive process creating energy that purifies the body, mind and thoughts. I will perform *pranayam* on the banks of Yamuna in Ghonda and I invite Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Pradesh Congress President chief Sheila Dikshit to perform yoga with me,” Mr. Tiwari said.

Working BJP chief J.P. Nadda is likely to attend the event, he added.

# Reducing Delhi-Mumbai travel time by five hours

Part of the Railways 100-day plan

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
 NEW DELHI

The Railways plans to bring down by five hours the travel time in the busy Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Mumbai routes with an investment of about ₹14,000 crore in infrastructure over the next four years.

This is one of the 11 proposals prepared by the Railways in the 100-day plan, with instructions to initiate immediate action to implement them by August 31.

The two routes account for 30% of passenger and 20% of freight traffic. Presently, the fastest train on the Delhi-Howrah route takes 17 hours to complete the journey, while on the Delhi-Mumbai route the quickest train takes 15.5 hours.

The proposal is to reduce the travel time to 12 hours and 10 hours respectively. The proposal is being sent to the Cabinet Committee for Economic

Affairs for approval.

According to the proposal document, the railways has set a target to ramp up the speed of the trains on these routes from the present 130 kmph to 160 kmph.

The document, a part of the 100 day-plan being prepared by union ministries on the direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, lays down the vision for the national transporter for the next three months. The project is proposed to be implemented within four years from the date of approval.

The document also lists 10 other targets for the railways which need to be initiated within the next 100 days.

One of them is the railways’ version of the “give it up” scheme which was introduced by Railway Minister Piyush Goyal for encouraging people to give up their subsidies on train tickets.

# L-G reviews ways to curb faecal sludge in drains

**STAFF REPORTER**  
 NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the problem of faecal sludge in drains and violation of construction and demolition material disposal rules in the city

The meeting was convened by the chairman of the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority, Bhure Lal. It was attended by representatives from several government departments.

“In Delhi, nearly 50% of

the population is dependent on on-site sanitation systems like septic tanks, especially in the periphery of the city. These septic tanks are cleaned using private operators and the faecal sludge is often dumped in the drains. Nearly four million litres of septage/faecal sludge is collected a day,” a statement from Raj Niwas said.

“It was decided that all vacuum tankers must be registered and should have GPS so that their movement can be tracked,” the statement said further.

# Assault on 6-year-old: DCW issues notices

**STAFF REPORTER**  
 NEW DELHI

Taking suo-motu cognisance of media reports pertaining to the sexual assault on a six-year-old girl in Bawana, the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Wednesday issued notices to the Delhi Police and Maharishi Valmiki Hospital seeking a detailed status report on the case.

Citing previous orders passed by the Delhi High Court, the DCW, in its not-

ice, said: “It was ordered that the duty officer, immediately upon receipt of complaint of a rape case, has to intimate the Rape Crisis Cell. Please provide detailed explanation on not informing the cell.”

The panel further sought information on why the victim was not taken to a one-step centre for a medical examination.

The DCW has asked the authorities to furnish the information by June 24.



## Oppn. smells 'RSS ideology' behind bid to regulate varsities

Yogi government defends draft ordinance; private universities say 'nothing new in it'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LUCKNOW

The draft ordinance to ban use of campuses of private universities in Uttar Pradesh for "anti-national activity" has not gone down well with the Opposition, with the Congress saying that the move smacks of "foisting RSS ideology on educational institutions".

Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya defended the ordinance, terming it "a very big decision" to maintain the sanctity of the "temple of

education". "It is true that a very big decision has been taken. Not just in Uttar Pradesh but in any educational institution across the country, anti-national activities will never be accepted," he said.

UPCC general secretary and spokesman Dwijendra Tripathi, however, said, "The hidden purpose behind the law is to create fear and pressure on educational institutions for foisting RSS ideology."

"The law, when enacted, will act as the sword of Da-



CM Yogi Adityanath.

mocles and the universities will constantly face the threat of derecognition," Mr. Tripathi said, adding it was

"sort of dictatorship".

### 'Lack of clarity'

The Congress leader said it was an attempt by the Yogi Adityanath government to exert greater control over private universities and the education system, particularly given the lack of clarity over what defines "anti-national activities".

U.P. Private Universities Association secretary Pankaj Agarwal welcomed the move but said there is nothing new in it. "We have these points

in constitution of our university and abide by them," he said, adding that educational institutions are sensitive towards the objectives.

On the specific clause regarding anti-national activities, he said, "There must be some plan and private universities will seek details on how to go about it. All want that there should be no anti-national activities... I feel that patriotism and moral values should also be imparted through the education system."

## Rajasthan to train youth in job-oriented skills

To set up livelihood business incubators in all districts of State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

The Congress government in Rajasthan has launched a major initiative to establish livelihood business incubators (LBIs) in all districts to promote employment-oriented skills training for the youth in a big way.

For the first time, the State is replicating the model adopted by the National Small Industries Corporation.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Principal Secretary Alok said here on Wed-

nesday that a department team would shortly visit the NSIC Technical Services Centre in Okhla, New Delhi, to study its model. He said though the establishment of LBIs had earlier been sanctioned for eight districts, the progress on the work was very slow.

### Margin money

Mr. Alok said a target had been set to provide margin money of ₹101.93 crore this year under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme against

₹71.99 crore in the previous year, to facilitate the release of loans to unemployed youth. Loans worth ₹25 lakh are given in the production sector and ₹10 lakh in the service sector through the programme.

The LBIs, to be established with the Centre's financial assistance, would impart training to the youth and encourage them to take up new ventures.

The task force committees have been asked to dispose of the applications received under the PMEGP on time.





**IN BRIEF**

**15 dead in two road accidents in U.P.**

**SAMBHAL/FATEHPUR**  
At least 15 people were killed and 36 injured in two accidents in Uttar Pradesh, police said on Wednesday. Seven people died when a bus collided with a truck in Fatehpur on Wednesday. In Sambhal, eight people were killed when their vehicle collided with a lorry. PTI

**ED lens on relative of Chanda Kochhar**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Enforcement Directorate has searched a Mumbai premises of the sister-in-law of Chanda Kochhar, former ICICI Bank managing director and chief executive officer, in connection with the Videocon Group loans case, according to an agency official.

**Hotel owner held for sanitation workers' death**

**AHMEDABAD**  
Vadodara Police have arrested the owner and the manager of the Darshan Hotel, where seven persons, including four sanitation workers, died of asphyxiation while cleaning a septic tank. Hotel owner, Hasan Abbas Boraniya and his brother Imdad Boraniya, who is the manager, were arrested from their residence in the city, late on Tuesday night, the police official said.

**1 held for sex offence in Eastern Command**

**KOLKATA**  
One person has been arrested on charges of sexual misconduct against a minor girl inside the Army Headquarters, Eastern Command, here on Wednesday. Police said the accused went inside Fort William to meet a relative and eventually molested the 12-year-old girl.

**Headless body found near Assam temple**

**GUWAHATI**  
The headless body of a woman was recovered near the Kamakhya temple in Guwahati on Wednesday evening. Police are not ruling out the possibility of a human sacrifice. The body was recovered on the stairs leading to the Jai Durga temple, one of many places of worship scattered around Kamakhya temple on the Nilachal Hills.



**Bereaved:** A woman mourning Muskan Sahni, who died from AES at the State-run Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, on Wednesday. • AFP

# Plea seeks expert team to treat AES patients

The deaths are a direct result of negligence, SC told

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to hear a plea seeking a direction to the Centre to urgently constitute a team of medical experts for the treatment of the children in Bihar's Muzaffarpur suffering from suspected Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES), which has claimed more than 100 lives. A Vacation Bench of Justices Deepak Gupta and Surya Kant agreed to hear the plea on June 24 after the petitioner's counsel sought an urgent listing of the matter. The plea also sought a direction to the Centre for providing medical equipment and support for the effective treatment. The petition, filed by advocate Manohar Pratap, claimed he was deeply saddened by the deaths, mostly in the age group of 1 to 10, in the past week and the figures were rising day by day. "The deaths are a direct result of negligence and inaction on the part of the respective State governments of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and the Union of India in handling the epidemic-like situation which arises every year due to the outbreak of AES also called Japanese encephalitis," the plea said. It claimed that thousands

## Muzaffarpur toll hits 115

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUZAFFARPUR**

Fresh deaths due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) have been reported in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district, taking the total number of casualties to 115. The deaths took place at the Shri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH), where 20 fresh cases were brought since Tuesday night. The number of children admitted to the hospital with AES are 372 since June 1, the district administration said.

of young children were losing their lives every year but the governments (State and Centre) had done nothing to prevent its spread. "This year i.e. in 2019, the epicentre of the disease is Muzaffarpur where more than 126 children have lost their lives in the past week. Media reports show there is acute shortage of doctors, medical facilities, intensive care units and other medical equipment in the nearby hospitals," the petition said. The petitioner sought a direction to the Centre for constituting a board of experts and immediately sending it to Muzaffarpur to review and assist the emergency situation. He asked the Supreme Court to direct the Centre and the State for arranging 500 stationary and 100 mobile ICUs with doctors to deal with the patients. He also sought a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the bereaved families.

## A national tragedy: Cong.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

The Congress party on Wednesday described the deaths of infants in Bihar as a "national horror and tragedy" and asked the Centre to immediately constitute an expert team of doctors to deal with the situation. "It is a sorry state of affairs and we feel that the State government has been both unprepared and insensitive... we can see the insensitivity in the Chief Minister's delayed visit to the hospital," said Mr. Gogoi.

## Pride of place for IISc. Bengaluru

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

Top Indian institutions punch well above their weight in terms of research impact, with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) Bengaluru has ranked second in the world in terms of citations per faculty, according to the QS World University Rankings for 2020.

In fact, IISc scored a perfect 100 in that indicator, while five Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) – in Roorkee, Kanpur, Delhi, Kharagpur and Guwahati – stood in the top 100 ranks with scores ranging from 93.8 to 71.2. However, Indian institutions have not breached the top-100 barrier in any of the other indicators: academic reputation, teacher-student ratio, employer reputation, and the ratio of international students and faculty.

## Onboard scuffle as AI pilot asks crew to wash lunchbox

Airline likely to ban home-packed food for pilots

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

Air India has de-rostered a pilot and a cabin crew after the two entered into fist-cuffs in full public display inside an aircraft after the former asked the crew to wash his lunchbox.

The altercation took place on Monday aboard AI 772 which was scheduled for take off from Bengaluru to Kolkata at 11.40 am. The fight delayed the flight as the airline had to arrange for a replacement for both.

"The pilot was carrying his home-made food which was served to him by the crew. He later asked the crew to wash his tiffin. The crew refused to do so and that's when the scuffle happened. Washing tiffin boxes is not part of their job pro-



The altercation took place on Monday on an aircraft scheduled for take off from Bengaluru to Kolkata.

file," said an airline employee.

"It was an altercation that should not have happened. We will take action to ensure such incidents do not recur," said Air India Chairman and Managing Director Ashwani Lohani.

The two employees have been called for questioning at Air India's headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday.

Consequently, Air India is likely to ban pilots from bringing their own food on board an aircraft. "We have taken a serious note. We will soon ask pilots to not bring their own food on flights," said a senior official. (With PTI inputs)

## SC seeks reply on Maharashtra quota

Petition challenged State ordinance

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Maharashtra government to file its response on a petition challenging a Bombay High Court decision to dismiss a plea against 16% quota for Marathas in admission to PG medical and dental courses.

The petition filed by Nagpur resident Sameer challenged the State government's decision on quota for Marathas in PG medical courses for the current academic session, through an ordinance.

A Bench of Justices Deepak Gupta and Surya Kant said either the High Court or the Supreme Court has to adjudicate on the issue as the "petitioner cannot be left remedy less."

Senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, appearing for the petitioner, argued that the Bombay High Court did not consider the matter as the Supreme Court had on June



4, restrained courts from entertaining any plea related to admission to PG medical courses.

The petitioner had challenged the Maharashtra Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (Amendment and Validation) Ordinance, 2019 before the High Court.

The plea said that the High Court had ordered the conduct of the admission process afresh by eliminating the reservation for the current academic session. This High Court order was upheld by the Supreme Court, it added.

The Supreme court will hear the case on June 24.

## Allot land or forego institutes, States told

'Land allotment delays double costs'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

The Human Resource Development Ministry has warned States that if they fail to allot land for permanent campuses to house Centrally funded premier educational institutes within a stipulated time, those could be shifted to other States.

Currently, IIT-Goa and NIT-Sikkim are operating out of temporary campuses. Both had allotted plots for permanent campuses that ran into ecological hurdles. They are now likely to face a one-month deadline to allot land, according to Ministry officials.

The "zero tolerance policy" that HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank laid down during recent review meetings on such institutes comes after delays in land allotment led to severe cost overruns in the construction of previous IITs, NITs, IIMs and IIITs.



Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

"The financial implications are severe. If the estimate for the construction of an IIT is prepared in 2007...and it only starts construction in 2017, that means the cost estimates are almost 10 years old. Expenditure would be double that of the original estimate," said a senior Ministry official. Five IITs – in Jammu, Dharwad, Tirupati, Bhilai and Palakkad – are still in the process of constructing permanent campuses.

"In future, no institution will be sanctioned unless land has already been allotted by the State government," added the official.

## U.P. site expected to get 'national importance' tag

Largest necropolis of late Harappan age

**DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI**

An ancient site with chariots, swords and other objects pointing to the presence of a warrior class around 4,000 years ago in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat district could be declared a site of national importance soon.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has started the process of declaring the site at Sadikpur Sinauli, which is spread over 28 hectares, of national importance, issuing a notification on June 6 seeking objections, if any, from the public for a period of two months. An ASI official said the

site, where excavation and preservation work is still ongoing after being started in 2018, was deemed to have national importance due to the finds uncovered. Among the treasures unearthed are three chariots, legged coffins, shields, swords and helmets - all which point towards a warrior class that must have existed around 2,000 BCE, according to an ASI statement.

In an official statement about the excavation earlier this year, ASI said the site, which is 68 km northeast of Delhi, was the "largest necropolis of the late Harappan period of the early 2nd millennium BCE".

## PIL plea in Madras High Court seeks pre-censorship of TV programmes

Bench seeks a response from IBF by July 10

**MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.  
CHENNAI**

The Madras High Court on Wednesday sought the response of the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF), an association of both news and non-news television channels in the country, to a public interest litigation petition for the constitution of a censor board for editing programmes aired by entertainment channels.

A Division Bench of Justices S. Manikumar and Subramonium Prasad ordered

notice to the IBF, returnable by July 10, to the petition filed by 38-year-old advocate K. Suthan of Chennai. The judges wanted to know if a committee or a board, akin to the Central Board of Film Certification, could be constituted for censoring television content.

The petitioner had primarily complained about the "obscene" content of a Tamil reality show titled Big Boss anchored by actor Kamal Haasan and telecast by Star Vijay. He had made the television channel and the actor too respondents to the case and urged the court to issue notices to them seeking an explanation. However, during the course of

hearing, he agreed not to press the PIL petition against the actor since he had no role to play in deciding the content of the reality show. After recording his submission, the judges ordered notices to IBF, Star Vijay and Endemol Shine India which produces the reality show for the channel.

In his affidavit, the petitioner pointed out that the IBF had constituted an independent self-regulatory body named Broadcasting Contents Complaints Council (BCCC) for examining content-related complaints against entertainment channels and the council too had framed elaborate rules

which expressly prohibit sex, obscenity and derogatory content.

But the rules were not followed by many television channels, the petitioner contended. He claimed that the content of Big Boss in particular was against "our culture and it leads to social degradation."

When the Centre insists upon mandatory pre-censorship for movies, which are watched only by select audience who prefer to pay for it and which adheres to different certification norms, such censorship should be made mandatory for television programmes too watched by an entire family, the petitioner insisted.

## Activists pan Assam elephants' proposed trip to Gujarat

Propose to move Supreme Court against event

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI**

Animal rights activists in Assam and elsewhere in India have decided to petition the Supreme Court against the proposed "torturous train trip" of four juvenile elephants from the State to Gujarat for a religious event in Ahmedabad.

NGOs such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) too have panned the imminent journey of the elephants in railway wagons, reminding that the decision is an apparent



A file photo of elephants at a festival in Guwahati.

violation of the apex court's 2016 order prohibiting people in possession of elephants from parting with the animals by way of transfer in any manner. "It appears that the Assam government is under pressure from very powerful people to let the elephants tra-

vel more than 3,000 km amid the heat wave in metal wagons they are not likely to survive in. Only the Supreme Court can do something about it, and a group of activists from across the world are getting together in a bid to save the elephants the torture," Guwahati-based animal rights activist Nandini Baruva said. "Experts have already warned of the dangers of transporting these elephants over such a huge distance, forcing them to work in heat, and of the risk of these elephants ending up in the illegal wildlife trade. We have long recommended the use of mechanical elephants or other novel and humane ap-

proaches instead of real elephants in processions and events," said Manilal Valliyate, chief executive officer of PETA India.

Officials in the Assam Forest Department said Chief Wildlife Warden Ranjana Gupta granted permission for the transit on a six-month lease after fixing microchips on the elephants and taking DNA samples. She reportedly ignored the request from two people who came to meet her for taking the elephants for the Jagannath Rath Yatra in Ahmedabad in the first week of July, but later relented.

Ms. Gupta did not answer phone calls despite repeated attempts.





## Beyond Mayday

The Jet Airways case has takeaways for the bankruptcy code as well as for other airlines

Jet Airways may have finally run out of runway. Two months after Jet halted all flight operations, lenders to the beleaguered full service airline have decided to refer it to the National Company Law Tribunal and initiate insolvency proceedings in a bid to recover the money owed to them. The lenders' consortium arrived at this conclusion after unsuccessfully trying to rope in a white knight – an investor who would have helped put the airline's flights back in the air, thus saving thousands of jobs and potentially helping turn around the carrier. And while, theoretically, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code was conceived to help achieve a resolution that could potentially protect a running business and help revive it through capital restructuring under a new promoter, in Jet's case the chances of a resolution seem rather remote now. The lenders have to shoulder a fair share of the blame as the delay in initiating the insolvency process has drastically eroded some of the airline's key assets, including customer goodwill, its aircraft fleet, routes and landing slots and even its experienced flight crew. Ironically, while the banks may have viewed Jet's request for emergency lines of credit in the run-up to the suspension of operations as 'good money chasing bad money', nothing could potentially kill an airline more effectively than protracted grounding. And one doesn't even need to look too far back in time to recall what happened to Kingfisher Airlines.

It would surely have been instructive for the creditors to revisit the Chapter 11 bankruptcies that a clutch of U.S. legacy airlines opted for in the early 2000s. That protection helped Delta and United to not only survive the crisis of confidence in aviation triggered by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the surge in jet fuel and labour costs and the intense competition from low-cost carriers, but emerge stronger and rank among the top five contemporary American carriers. A look at some of Jet's industry-specific operational metrics, at least until the recent cash-starved implosion, show an airline that had consistently posted growth in terms of revenue passenger kilometres and cargo tonnage till the 2017-18 financial year. So it wasn't a lack of business that led to Jet's stall and crash. For the health of India's airline industry, it will be crucial for policymakers to review several issues that affect viability: from the way aviation turbine fuel is taxed, to the charges airports levy. The carriers too need to reappraise their pricing strategies and ensure that in the quest for market share they don't end up in a race to the bottom. The government must take a closer, harder look at the IBC and examine the viability of a framework akin to Chapter 11 that may ultimately be more suited to industries like aviation.

## Deadlock in Libya

Prime Minister al-Sarraj's peace plan can work only if the big powers help enforce a ceasefire

Libya's UN-recognised government's decision to launch a peace initiative aimed at stabilising the civil war-stricken country is a welcome move. Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj of the Tripoli-based government has proposed setting up a national peace forum with help from the UN, to be followed by simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections. Mr. al-Sarraj made the offer at a time when the rebel army of warlord Khalifa Haftar was fighting the Tripoli government troops on the outskirts of the capital. But an offer for peace alone won't make any difference in the complex, war-torn polity. The country descended into chaos after protests against dictator Muammar Qadhafi in 2011. A NATO invasion helped oust Qadhafi, but neither the foreign powers nor their local allies managed to fill the vacuum left by the regime that had been in power for four decades. Today there are two governments in Libya, one based in Tobruk and the other in the capital Tripoli. The self-styled Libyan National Army, commanded by Mr. Haftar, backs the Tobruk government and has captured huge swathes of territory, while the Tripoli government, which has international recognition, is defended by a host of militias, including Islamist groups. Mr. Haftar claims he is fighting terror groups and wants to unify Libya under his leadership, while Mr. al-Sarraj says his government is legitimate.

The current crisis was triggered when Mr. Haftar moved his troops to Tripoli in April 2019 to oust the government of Mr. al-Sarraj. But in contrast to other battles Mr. Haftar's forces had fought in the east and the south, they were stopped on the outskirts of the capital by forces loyal to the government. Hundreds of people have already been killed, but both sides have refused to agree to a ceasefire despite international calls. The regional dynamics are also at play in the Libyan crisis. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are backing Mr. Haftar's forces, while Turkey and Qatar back the Tripoli government. When Mr. Haftar launched the Tripoli offensive, the U.S. had also taken a favourable view, President Donald Trump having talked to him on the phone. Libya illustrates what regime change wars could do to a country. Changing a regime using force could be easy as the examples of Iraq and Libya suggest, but rebuilding a new state is not, and it can't be done with the aid of military power. All the countries that invaded the oil-rich north African nation and backed its paramilitary groups, including the U.S., Britain and their Gulf allies, should share some responsibility for Libya's crisis today. At least now, they should look beyond their narrow geopolitical interests and use their influence to rein in the militias the war has unleashed and help establish order in the country. Prime Minister al-Sarraj's offer could be a new beginning only if a ceasefire is reached, and respected, by all sides.

# What a \$5 trillion economy would look like

The economy must be evaluated in terms of how much it contributes to the ease of our living



PULAPRE BALAKRISHNAN

At the meeting of the Government Council of the NITI Aayog last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the target of a \$5 trillion economy for India by 2024. It is necessary to think big when seeking to make a difference, for transformation does not come from modest plans. Hopefully, the Prime Minister will also use the drive to growth to place India's official statistics on a firmer footing, so that we can be sure that economic policy-making is based on reality. However, getting the numbers right will not ideally end the task. What this task is may be illustrated by a question that was asked some years ago when a high-speed expressway connecting the polar extremities of one of our States had been proposed. A wit had asked what we would hope to find once we have reached our destination.

A similar question can be asked of plans for growing the economy. What would we like to see in the proposed \$5 trillion economy? Moreover, unlike in the case of an expressway, which can always be built by simply borrowing money and ideas from the global market, a quantum leap in the size of the economy is not so easily achieved. It will require design, funding and governance.

### Without investment

The importance of funding, and to an equal extent design, may be seen in the failure of the quite sen-

sible aspiration, 'Make in India'. Though technically applicable to every sector, it was clearly focussed on manufacturing. Articulated very early on in Mr. Modi's first term (2014-19), and accorded a certain prestige in the pronouncements that followed, it played out as a damn squib. One of the reasons for this was the absence of commensurate investment outlay. To raise the share of manufacturing in the economy from its present 16% to 25%, an ambition declared by both the United Progressive Alliance and National Democratic Alliance governments, requires a scaling up of investment. This did not come about.

Whether this was due to the corporate sector, Mr. Modi's chosen vehicle, not having the wherewithal or due to it not being convinced of the plan is beside the point. Investment there must be and if the private sector is, for whatever reason, not coming forward to invest, then the government must. This is no more than accounting, but Mr. Modi's government seems to be unfavourable to this diagnosis, perhaps on ideological grounds. Remember 'minimum government'?

A small digression should clarify matters. The first attempt to make in India was in the 1940s. Finance Minister Shanmukham Chetty's first budget speech had identified increasing "internal production" as the economic priority. And this was achieved quite soon. Along with the quickening of the economy as a whole, the share of manufacturing had risen, the mocking epithet 'Hindu rate of growth' notwithstanding. This had not emerged as part of the moral victory of an oppressed people. The reason was that it had resulted from a surge in investment, led by



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the government. That resources could have been mobilised on such a scale in so short a time in an economy devastated by colonial rule is testimony to the availability of the three ingredients – design, resources and governance – necessary when contemplating a move to the next level, which is what aiming at a \$5 trillion economy amounts to.

### The wish list

While lauding the efforts of leaders of early independent India, however, we would do well to remember their follies. Principal among them was the failure to articulate, possibly even adequately imagine, the contents of the economy that was being raced towards. If this is repeated now, a moment of triumphalism different in character but nevertheless there, it would amount to not having learned the lessons of history. Something missing from "internal production" and 'Make in India' is the difference these intentions would make to the lives of Indians. At least in the 1940s, the priority was to get the economy moving in the first place. This is no longer the issue. Today the economy must be evaluated in terms of how much it contributes to the ease of our living. So what would be some of the characteristics of a valuable economy?

## The forgotten funds

The government must utilise cess proceeds and publish an annual account of how they have been spent



ALEX M. THOMAS & VARUN NALLUR

The season of filing tax returns brings with it an increased emphasis on the accountability of the private sector towards the government. In this period of accounting and accountability, as citizens, it is equally important to apply the same principles to the working of the government. A key area is the social accounting of the education cess, which is a compulsory contribution made by all taxpayers, both individuals and firms.

### The difference

A cess is levied on the tax payable and not on the taxable income. In a sense, for the taxpayer, it is equivalent to a surcharge on tax. Direct taxes on income are compulsory transfers of private incomes (both individual and firm) to the government to meet collective aims such as the expansion of schooling infrastructure, an increase in health facilities, or an improvement of transportation infrastructure. A cess can be levied

on both direct and indirect taxes. The revenue obtained from income tax, corporation tax, and indirect taxes can be allocated for various purposes. Unlike a tax, a cess is levied to meet a specific purpose; its proceeds cannot be spent on any kind of government expenditure. Recent examples of cess are: infrastructure cess on motor vehicles, clean environment cess, Krishi Kalyan cess (for the improvement of agriculture and welfare of farmers), and education cess. To make the point clear, the proceeds from the education cess cannot be used for cleaning the environment and vice versa.

From the point of view of the government, the proceeds of all taxes and cesses are credited in the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI), an account of the Government of India. It constitutes all receipts, expenditures, borrowing and lending of the government. The CFI details are published annually as a part of the Union Budget documents. And the approval of Parliament is necessary to withdraw funds from the CFI. While the tax proceeds are shared with the States and Union Territories according to the guidelines by the Finance Commission, the cess proceeds need not be shared with them.

To meet specific socioeconomic



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goals, a cess is preferred over a tax because it is relatively easier to introduce, modify, and abolish.

The education cess, at 2%, which was first proposed in 2004, was aimed at improving primary education. In 2007, an additional cess of 1% was introduced to fund secondary and higher education (SHEC). And recently, in the 2019 Union Budget, a 4% health and education cess was announced which incorporates the previous 3% education cess as well as an additional 1% to provide for the health of rural families.

### What data show

Data from various years of the Union Budget show an increase in the amount of education cess collected via corporation tax and income tax. Initially, the education cess was also levied on customs, excise, and service taxes. When tax proceeds increase, the cess collected also rises. From the inception of the education cess until 2019, the

total proceeds have been ₹4,25,795.81 crore. In order to utilise the cess proceeds lying in the CFI, the government has to create a dedicated fund. As long as a dedicated fund is not created, the cess proceeds remain unutilised. The dedicated fund for primary education is the 'Parambhik Shiksha Kosh', or PSK, (created in October 2005, a year after the cess was introduced) while that for higher and secondary education is the 'Madhyamik and Uchchatar Shiksha Kosh' (set up in August 2017). It is baffling why the government set up the dedicated fund for higher and secondary education in 2017, 10 years after the introduction of SHEC; it is also shocking that this fund has remained dormant as of March 2018.

Moreover, data from the 2017-18 annual financial audit of government finances conducted by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) show that ₹94,036 crore of SHEC proceeds is lying unutilised in the CFI. In fact, it appears that the government finally set up the 'Madhyamik and Uchchatar Shiksha Kosh' after consecutive CAG reports, repeated Lok Sabha queries, and newspaper articles. The degree of economic injustice becomes sharper when the unspent account is seen in conjunction with the Central govern-

ment's expenditure on education; for example, in 2017-18, the public expenditure on school and higher education was estimated to be ₹79,435.95 crore. In other words, the cumulative unutilised SHEC funds far exceeded the expenditure on both school and higher education for the year 2017-18.

### Conserving nature

Finally, an economy, whatever its size, cannot be meaningfully evaluated independently of the extent of presence in it of natural capital. Till now, by referring to the imperative for growth, to eradicate poverty, any effort to conserve nature has not just been ignored but treated with derision, by both right and left. This is no longer a credible political stance. Two-thirds of the world's most polluted cities are in India, when we accept less than a fifth of its population. Air pollution shortens lives and lowers productivity, reducing the capacity to earn a living when alive. The poor are the most affected as they cannot afford to live in gated communities that somehow manage to commandeer scarce natural resources. Some part of environmental depletion in India is due to the pursuit of unbridled growth.

This implies that any improvement in the life of the majority would require a re-alignment of the growth process so that it is less damaging. This would very likely require that we have slower growth but the process can be configured to channel more of it towards poorer groups. We may end up in a situation of less tangible goods in the aggregate than otherwise but one in which more people are happier than in the past. Such an economy is more valuable.

Pulapre Balakrishnan is Professor of Ashoka University, Sonapat and Senior Fellow of the Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode

Taxes in democratic societies indicate the presence of a collective socioeconomic vision aimed at improving livelihoods. Just as taxpayers have a responsibility to pay taxes, the government ought to ensure that tax proceeds are appropriately utilised. Since a cess is introduced with a specific purpose, it is completely unjustified when the proceeds remain unutilised for so many years. Moreover, in the current context of self-imposed fiscal discipline and the consequent reduction of public expenditure, the opportunity cost of unutilised education cess proceeds is significantly high. Finally, it is imperative that the government immediately begins utilising cess proceeds and also publishes an annual account of the manner in which they have been utilised.

### Going forward

As a reader has rightly pointed out, Taiwan legalised same-sex marriages in May 2019 and the Data Point graphic – "Not a free world yet" (June 19, 2019, OpEd page) missed this fact. The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association's report, from which the data was gathered, takes into account only those events which happened till March 2019. The graphic should have mentioned this. As this clarification was missing from the graphic, the statement that "No Asian country allows same-sex marriage" is wrong.

Alex M. Thomas teaches economics at Azim Premji University. Varun Nallur works with the Bengaluru District Institute, Azim Premji Foundation

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Oath-taking

It is unfortunate that a very solemn occasion such as oath-taking by the new MPs of the 17th Lok Sabha has been trivialised by many of them in their act of raising slogans on religious lines and by taunting political opponents to demean them or their ideology ("Competitive slogans drown out Lok Sabha oath-taking", June 19). Once the elections are over, all parliamentarians should set their differences aside and venture out to discharge the huge responsibility of nation building. While taking the oath or affirmation, members should stick to its form as prescribed in both letter and spirit. This will help nurture an environment of mutual goodwill and trust.

KAMAL LADDA,  
Bengaluru

■ The shameful behaviour on a solemn occasion destroyed the dignity of the House.

Even the Speaker looked on helplessly. MPs of the ruling party in the hubris of their victory have forgotten that the general election is over and they now represent the whole country. The ruling party has also exposed its true underbelly – of intolerance and majoritarianism, forgetting the basic principles of secularism and inclusiveness as enshrined in the Constitution. The silent senior leaders must now remind those down the line that the need of the hour is not further division and polarisation based on religion.

Dr. K. VARKEY,  
Oddanchatram, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu

### Chennai's water woes

If there is one thing that can be most aptly described as the elixir of life, it is water. The water crisis in Chennai is for real. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's claim that the water crisis is "exaggerated" is simply not true (Page 1,

"Water crisis is being exaggerated, says CM" and "Have to make do with available water till monsoon, says CM", both June 19). Ministers denying water scarcity cannot be oblivious to queues of women across the city with empty water pots and waiting in the blistering summer heat for the arrival of water tankers. Residents are now experiencing what life is like with scant water. While poor rain has affected water supply, the human factor in the making of the crisis cannot be denied. Encroachments, pollution and the gross neglect of water bodies (Chennai city, "Dead fish prompts study of illegal sewage connections", June 19) and reckless exploitation of groundwater are some of the key human contributions that have exacerbated the crisis.

G. DAVID MILTON,  
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

■ With the city's major reservoirs touching dead

storage, the Chief Minister's remark is appalling. Instead of parrying issues, the government must focus on saving much of the bounty of the Northeast monsoon by desilting and dredging existing reservoirs. The Chief Minister must understand that this is not a question of saving face but water.

SAM VIJAY KUMAR J.,  
Vannur, Villupuram, Tamil Nadu

■ It is strange that Chennai, with its extensive estuarine ecosystem, now has scant potable water. The Buckingham Canal, though not a natural flowing river, is a disaster, but can be fixed to play an important role in water supply considerations. According to research, the total water supply to Chennai can touch a comfortable level if enough attention is paid to recharging groundwater.

■ The State government is being criticised rather

unfairly. I have been a resident of Chennai for four decades and have seen several such scarcities in the past. This year's problem has been blown out of proportion. Looking forward, the following actions should be initiated on a war-footing, preferably under the watch of the Madras High Court. Catchment areas to the main reservoirs should be immediately cleared of encroachments. Almost all political parties are responsible for allowing such encroachments. All drinking water lakes should be desilted and the channelling of sewage into waterbodies should be stopped. Chennai

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

As a reader has rightly pointed out, Taiwan legalised same-sex marriages in May 2019 and the Data Point graphic – "Not a free world yet" (June 19, 2019, OpEd page) missed this fact. The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association's report, from which the data was gathered, takes into account only those events which happened till March 2019. The graphic should have mentioned this. As this clarification was missing from the graphic, the statement that "No Asian country allows same-sex marriage" is wrong.

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# Game of Chicken in the Gulf

Why an Iran-U.S. conflict looks like a realistic possibility



STANLY JOHNY

When two powers are heading towards each other in an escalating game for leverage, the situation is often referred to as a Game of Chicken. This is a concept in game theory. The strategic calculus of the Game of Chicken is that each player thinks the other will either slow down or swerve away and therefore become the "chicken". This will not only avoid a crash, but also give the persistent player an advantage over the other. The risk of the game, of course, is that if no player backs off, a crash is certain.

There is no better theoretical description to understand the Iran-U.S. tensions that are unfolding now. U.S. President Donald Trump began the escalation by pulling the country out of the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018. He then reimposed crippling sanctions on Iran, termed a branch of the Iranian armed forces a terrorist group, and sent more troops to West Asia in a bid to force "behaviour change" in Tehran. The U.S. administration calls this strategy the "maximum pressure" approach. But with Iran now threatening to breach the nuclear deal and increasing anti-U.S. military rhetoric, this strategy appears to be failing. As a result, war clouds have gathered over the Gulf with U.S.-Iran ties sinking to levels seen in the final years of George W. Bush's presidency.

## Returning to talks

Unlike some members of his administration, Mr. Trump has said he doesn't want a war with Iran. But he was unhappy with the nuclear deal reached between Iran and world powers in 2015 under his predecessor, Barack Obama. The deal, its critics argued, paid Iran for not making a nuclear bomb, while leaving unaddressed critical issues such as its ballistic missile programme and its "disruptive" activities in the region. Mr. Trump wants Iran to return to talks on terms set by the U.S. so that they can renegotiate the nuclear issue. He may have hoped that the "maximum



"War clouds have gathered over the Gulf with U.S.-Iran ties sinking to levels seen in the final years of George W. Bush's presidency." Iranians at a rally in May in Tehran after U.S.-Iran tensions escalated. ■ AFP

pressure" the U.S. has put on Iran would force it to return to the table.

The sanctions have been effective in isolating and choking Iran's economy. After the U.S.'s pullout, the nuclear deal was practically a dead agreement. The other signatories to the deal – the U.K., France, Germany, Russia, China and the European Union (EU) – did nothing concrete to save Iran from U.S. sanctions. Corporations that had shown interest in investing in Iran, including Chinese companies, pulled out after the sanctions. The U.S. also scared off the top-buyers of Iran's oil, including India, resulting in a massive drop in Iran's oil exports. But where Mr. Trump erred was in his calculation that economic misery would force Iran to give up its resistance and return to talks.

## Back to hostility

Iran has cooperated with the U.S. in the past. After the September 11, 2001 attacks, it assisted the U.S. war in Afghanistan. It arrested and deported Taliban members who crossed into its territory and also conducted search and rescue operations for downed U.S. aircrew members. Iran also played a critical role in the formation of the first post-Taliban Afghan government. But thereafter, the U.S. turned hostile to Iran, with President Bush lumping the country together with Iraq and North Korea as the "Axis of Evil".

With help from the European powers and Russia and China, President Obama got the Iranians to the table. After months-long painstaking diplomatic engagement, all sides agreed to the nuclear deal, which scuttled Iran's nuclear programme in return for the lifting of international sanctions. After the deal was signed, the U.S. and Iran cooperated in Iraq in the fight against the Islamic State (IS). But once the direct war against the IS in Iraq was over, Mr. Trump pulled the U.S. out of the deal.

## Iran's options

Broadly, Iran has a choice of tactical pathways. One was to return to talks on the U.S.'s terms and negotiate another nuclear deal for sanctions relief. But this would have been humiliating for nationalist Ayatollahs who have built their political capital on anti-Americanism since 1979.

The second was to wait out Mr. Trump's presidency and hope that his successor would take the U.S. back to the nuclear deal. This is still not impossible as there are Democratic presidential candidates who back the deal. But with sanctions biting, Iran can't wait till the next U.S. presidential election. Also, there's no certainty that Mr. Trump will not be re-elected.

The third option was to force the EU to defy U.S. sanctions and save the deal. Iran, in fact, waited for a year after the U.S. pullout for the other

members to come up with a solid mechanism to save the deal. When it did not materialise – the EU has set up a channel with Iran called Instex (Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges), but this is used mainly for transacting essential goods, not high-value exports such as oil and gas – Iran moved to the last option, "maximum resistance" to "maximum pressure".

Iran's response has been gradual. In May, it gave a 60-day deadline to other signatories to fix the deal and also vowed to keep unspent enriched uranium and heavy water, which it had been exporting ever since the deal was sealed. This week, as the deadline is set to expire in two weeks, Tehran said it will keep the low-enriched uranium and threatened to begin enriching the uranium to higher levels of purity. Under the agreement, Iran is allowed to enrich uranium to 3.67%, which it plans to raise to 20%, taking the country closer to weapons-grade level (90%). If Iran starts producing high-enriched uranium, it would be a breach of the nuclear deal.

This may sound dangerously aggressive, but it is not totally irrational. First, it proves that Mr. Trump's "maximum pressure" doesn't work. Second, it holds Mr. Trump primarily responsible for the collapse of the deal and seeks to deprive the U.S. of any help from Europe in the event of a conflict. Third, if Iran is actually responsible for the tanker attacks in the Gulf, it is an indication to countries dependent on oil that flows through the Strait of Hormuz what disruption caused by war would look like. If Iran is not behind the attacks, the "maximum pressure" strategy has raised the stakes so high that even a third party is capable of carrying out false flag attacks to trigger an all-out conflict. Either way, Iran is using counter-escalation for deterrence.

But the danger in the Game of Chicken is that the risk of a crash is always there unless one power swerves away. Will Mr. Trump do so after realising that his "maximum pressure" approach has failed? Or will Iran be able to sustain its "maximum resistance" in the wake of continued U.S. targeting? If not, there will be war.

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# State of the artefacts

The discourse surrounding the identification of stolen cultural property should not be politicised



ROHAN P. KOTHARI

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has seldom found itself in the gleam of the public eye. Its work does not necessarily contain the stuff of high drama. The ASI is seen as a bespectacled, burrowing outlier amongst the larger governmental bodies that line the avenues of central Delhi.

However, this has changed since famed art dealer Subhash Kapoor's arrest in Tamil Nadu, and the subsequent unearthing of a multi-million dollar antiques smuggling racket. Kapoor was at the centre of that racket. 'Operation Hidden Idol', initiated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, eventually culminated in the seizure of several hundred historically significant artefacts. Over 200 of these were returned to India in June 2016, but many still remain on American soil.

In May, the ASI released a statement that two of its officials had visited New York and identified close to 100 antique objects in a tranche seized by the U.S. investigative authorities from Kapoor's storage units. This statement was purportedly given to a news agency, without any press release being made available either through the ASI or the Ministry of Culture. A post on the ASI's Facebook page made things clearer: out of more than 230 items in the possession of the Indian Consulate in New York, close to 100 had been identified and declared to be antiques. The post trailed off stating that the Consulate would be advised to transport the antiques back to India. While there is some confusion in the media about how many objects are currently with the Indian Consulate, it is clear that the return of these objects to India is likely to take significant time.

## Asking all the wrong questions

There is little point in discussing how delayed the ASI's or the Indian government's response in general has been compared to foreign agencies engaged in the work of repatriation of cultural property. The Homeland Security Investigations's International Operations Division, which deals with tracking illegally smuggled antiques, has 64 attaché offices in 46 countries. India's Idol Wing can barely manage Tamil Nadu. We have not prioritised the conservation of our

heritage enough, and it is a concern that has remained alive for decades. However, what is of more immediate relevance is the discourse surrounding the identification of stolen cultural property.

Instead of seeking answers to questions germane to the identification of the artefacts, such as why it took so long or how many objects still remain to be identified/returned, popular TV news bulletins turned the conversation towards base, communal sentiment. Tickers were populated with questions such as "Does no one care about Hindu heritage?" Or, "Why is Hindu Heritage loot not a poll issue?" They referred to the fact that the antiquities identified included idols from Hindu temples. These are not the ways in which the public ought to be informed about the ASI's work, and it is irresponsible for the news media to controversialise a dialogue that has barely been understood.

## Not another photo op, please

S. Vijay Kumar, co-founder of the India Pride Project, had written with uncanny foresight that the absence of a robust idol theft investigation apparatus "threatens to turn the present identification into just another photo opportunity". It is therefore not altogether unsound to picture election rallies where crowds are riled up on the plank of a new-found zest for lost idols. Indeed, in the recent past, efforts have been made by the current political dispensation to present itself as a stalwart of India's heritage, albeit not activated by the purest motivations. Whatever the posturing might be about, the agencies in charge of securing the return of stolen antiques have little to show, or have shown very little so far.

Awareness about laws to protect India's ancient heritage is negligible. Working under unreasonable resource constraints, India's bureaucratic and investigative agencies are doing far less than they can. In a climate that is already so apathetic, it is no one's real gain to politicise and cheapen the issue of safeguarding our past.

Some may remember the kind of scathing criticism that the ASI came under from the academic community when it released its report on the purported remains of a temple under the Babri Masjid. Allegations had been made that it had misplaced its scientific temper, handling the survey with a predetermined goal in mind. A loss in credibility cannot be allowed to happen, not when so many of our public institutions are falling into decay.

Rohan P. Kothari is a Bengaluru-based advocate

## SINGLE FILE

# Water woes

The crisis in Tamil Nadu shows that we have a lot to learn about rainwater harvesting from our ancestors

MARKANDEY KATJU



In *Delhi Water Supply & Sewage Disposal Undertaking v. State of Haryana* (1996), the Supreme Court said, "Water is a gift of nature. Human hand cannot be permitted to convert this bounty into a curse, an oppression."

But human beings have converted water into precisely that in Tamil Nadu, where

there is now an acute shortage of water. Many people are struggling to find adequate water in Chennai and other parts of the State. There are pictures going around of rows of women holding plastic buckets and waiting for tankers. IT firms, restaurants and the construction industry have all admitted that they are struggling without water. Clashes over water have been reported in some parts. It is a bad situation.

Yes, there was no rainfall last year, which is why major reservoirs that supply water to the city are drying up. But could this situation not have been anticipated by the authorities? Could there not have been timely desilting of lakes?

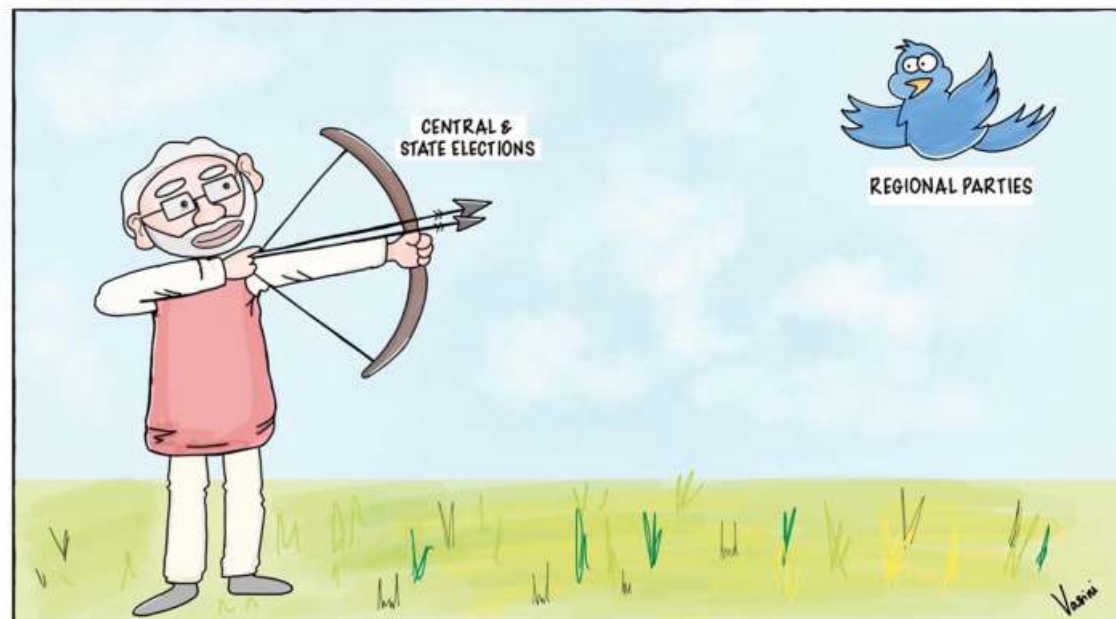
Our ancestors knew that there would be drought in the future. That is why they built ponds in and near every village, and tanks in every temple. They knew how to harvest water. There were tanks even in the Harappa-Mohenjodaro civilisation. Have we learnt more water harvesting techniques or have we gone backwards in the past few millennia?

There was acute water shortage in Tamil Nadu when I was Chief Justice of the Madras High Court in 2004-2005. In *L. Krishnan v. State of Tamil Nadu* (2005), a Bench that I had presided over noted that most of the lands marked in the revenue records of the State as ponds or lakes had been encroached on. Illegal houses and shops had been constructed in those areas. The Bench directed removal of all these illegal encroachments. In *M.K. Balakrishnan v. Union of India* (2009), I presided over a Bench of the Supreme Court. We noted the acute water shortage in several States, and set up a committee chaired by Thirumalachari Ramasami, a former Secretary in the Union Ministry of Science and Technology, to work out scientific solutions to the problem.

In China, some parts experienced frequent floods, while others experienced drought. The Huang He was known as the 'river of sorrow'. After the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the authorities constructed huge dams. Canals were built to carry excess water to areas with drought. Flood as well as drought problems were solved. Why could not this have been done in India?

I appeal to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to immediately set up a committee comprising scientists, administrators and other eminent people to consider the seriousness of the problem and find solutions.

Markandey Katju is a former judge of the Supreme Court

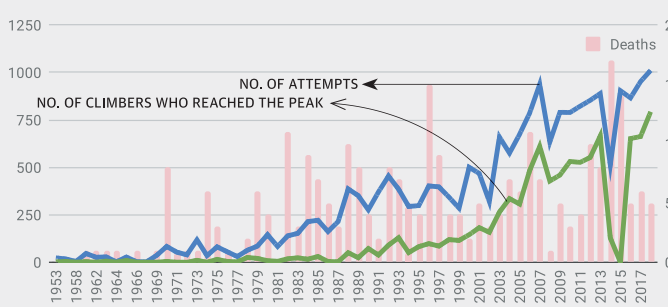


## DATA POINT

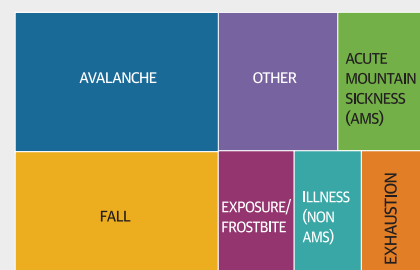
# Test of Everest

Since 2000, there has been a sharp increase in the number of people attempting to scale Mount Everest, the world's tallest peak. In about 61% of the expeditions between 1921 and 2018, the climbers were able to reach the summit. As many as 295 people died trying to conquer the peak in that period. By Varun B. Krishnan and Sumant Sen

**MORE CLIMBERS & SUCCESSES** The highest number of attempts to scale the peak were made in 2018\*. Success rates have improved over the years due to better technology. In 2015 no one reached the top due to the devastating quake in Nepal



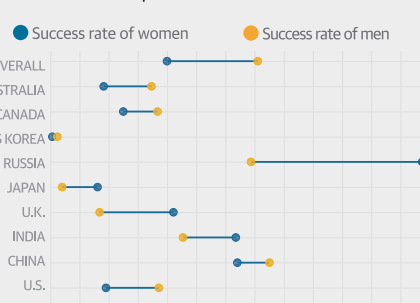
**CAUSES OF DEATH** Falls and acute mountain sickness were the most common causes of deaths. Avalanches killed a significant number of climbers in 2014 and 2015



**EXPERT CLIMBERS** Nepali nationals, several of them from the Sherpa community, attempted and reached the peak the most number of times. They also have the highest success rate. Indian climbers have the fourth highest success rate



**BETTER SUCCESS FOR WOMEN** Women have a better success rate than men among Russian, Indian and U.K. climbers. But overall more men have scaled the peak



SOURCE: THE HIMALAYAN DATABASE (UPDATED TILL 2018) | NOTE: \*COUNT DOES NOT INCLUDE MULTIPLE SUCCESSES BY THE SAME PERSON IN THE SAME SEASON

## FROM The Hindu. ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 20, 1969

## Priority for housing

(From an Editorial)

The backlog in housing goes on mounting, because the building effort has lagged far behind need. Mr. K. K. Shah, Union Minister, is not the first of Government spokesmen to admit this gap, but his warning against the socially explosive consequences of any further neglect of this prime need of millions living in substandard conditions should stir the State Housing Ministers in conference at Bangalore to some dynamic action at least now. The difficulty in financing other sectors of the Plans has led the Government to relegate allocations for housing to a minor place. Even so, the tempo of new construction could be stepped up if the urge of most citizens to possess their own homes is capitalised by intelligent official policies. Mr. Shah has done well to emphasise this means of getting thousands of new houses built on a hire-purchase basis, and there is no doubt that many middle class people will tighten their belts to save some money to meet the instalment commitment.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 20, 1919.

## An offensive term.

In dismissing the appeal of an Indian who claimed damages from a European for terming him a 'coolie,' the Judge President of the Natal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court said: "Whatever might be the significance attaching to the term 'coolie' in India, what they were concerned with was its meaning in Natal, and the people affected could not expect Europeans here to have a knowledge of a class distinction and of the customs ruling in India, and therefore could not be surprised if such find distinctions were misunderstood by the Europeans in Natal." Now we should say, says 'Indian Opinion' commenting on this grotesque view, that that is not a fair view of the matter; we venture to say that the most ignorant European in Natal knows full well that, when he calls an Indian, not of the labouring class, a 'coolie,' the term is offensive.

## CONCEPTUAL

# Rotten kid theorem

FAMILY ECONOMICS

The rotten kid theorem says that in the presence of parents who care equally about the welfare of all their children, even selfish children within the family may possess a strong incentive to be kind to their siblings. This is because any harm caused by the selfish child to the other children in the family will push the parents to allocate more wealth to the well-being of the other children and will in turn reduce the selfish child's own share of the family wealth. The rotten kid theorem was proposed by American economist Gary Becker in his 1974 paper, "A theory of social interactions".

## MORE ON THE WEB

Watch: Family builds their house around a 150-year-old tree

bit.ly/FigTreeHouse

FROM PAGE ONE

## Panel to study 'One nation, one poll' issue

Congress president Rahul Gandhi skipped the meeting but his party made known its opposition to the proposal of simultaneous polls at a press conference by spokesperson Gaurav Gogoi. The Congress MP said the proposal violates basic features of the Constitution like flexibility and federalism.

But former Congress MP Milind Deora, who now heads the Mumbai Congress, said the proposal is worth a debate. In a statement he argued that "being in continuous election mode is a roadblock to good governance, distracts politicians from addressing real issues and adds populism to the character of governance."

The CPI (M) and CPI have strongly opposed the idea. "Why were the State elections detached from the general elections? It was because of the gross misuse of Article 356 of the Constitution. As long as this article remains we can't have simultaneous elections," CPI (M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury told reporters. He said his suggestion of removing Article 356 was met with silence. Simultaneous elections, Mr. Yechury said, will subvert democracy. "Any suppression of the will of the people by prolonging or shortening Assembly or Parliament is anti-democratic and is against federalism," he added.

According to sources, regional parties such as Biju Janata Dal, YSR Congress and Telangana Rashtriya Samiti have supported the idea. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu is abroad has submitted a memorandum. The TDP has argued that "One Nation One Election" is a serious and sensitive subject that requires much deliberation. BSP chief Mayawati told reporters in Lucknow that holding simultaneous national and State elections "appears to be an undemocratic and unconstitutional" idea for a vast country.

ment falls after two years, then there should be a re-election with the new government holding power only for the remaining three-year period," a top YSR Congress leader said.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who was one of the first to leave the meeting, told reporters that his party supported the idea. On the other agenda of the meeting, to pay tribute to the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary, Mr. Patnaik suggested that "ahimsa" and "non-violence" should be added to the Preamble of the Constitution.

### 'Noble, not practical'

Many other parties remained ambivalent and flagged the need for further study. NCP's Sharad Pawar, according to sources, said the idea was noble but not practical. "He said during the meeting that simultaneous elections will have a lot of grave implications and the idea needed further intensive study," a top Opposition leader said.

Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee too had expressed a similar opinion in her letter to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi declining the invite. She said that this formula can't be hurriedly implemented and there is a need for a white paper.

The Telugu Desam Party, which didn't attend the meeting since its president Chandrababu Naidu is abroad has submitted a memorandum. The TDP has argued that "One Nation One Election" is a serious and sensitive subject that requires much deliberation.

BSP chief Mayawati told reporters in Lucknow that holding simultaneous national and State elections "appears to be an undemocratic and unconstitutional" idea for a vast country.

## RS bypolls: SC seeks EC reply on petition

A Bench of Justices Deepak Gupta and Surya Kant asked the poll panel to respond by Monday on the petition filed by Gujarat Congress leader Pareshbhai Dhanani.

The question whether such vacancy is 'casual' or statutory needed to be decided, the Bench remarked as it posted the case for further hearing on June 25.

Counsel appearing for the poll panel argued that a petition in such issues cannot be entertained.

Mr. Dhanani, the Opposition leader in the Gujarat Assembly, in his plea contended that the conduct of election for each vacancy separately would only lead to one result — the victory of the party which commands simple majority in the State legislature. "This would turn the very objective of proportional representation i.e. to give each minority group an effective share as per its strength, on its head," he said in his plea.

## PM's panel rejects former CEA's paper

"Further, a cursory look at the indicators suggests a strong link with industry indicators (a sector that contributes an average of 22% to India's GDP), while the representation of services (60% of GDP) and agriculture (18% of GDP) is as good as missing," the PMEAC said.

"It is difficult to believe that indicators in the services sector would not correlate with Indian GDP."

The note pointed out that while Mr. Subramanian had stated in his paper that he was not including tax collection data in his analysis be-

cause their relationship to GDP was unstable, the fact is that tax collections are hard data that are not based on surveys and should not have been ignored.

"Unlike many indicators, tax data is not collected through surveys or by agencies through arcane techniques. These are hard numbers and should be an important indicator of growth," the note said. "Further, there have been no major changes in tax laws until the end period in the author's analysis (March 31, 2017). GST was introduced on July 1, 2017."

# Birla unanimous choice, promises impartiality

Says he will safeguard the interests of all Lok Sabha members

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Om Birla, BJP MP from Kota in Rajasthan, was unanimously elected Lok Sabha Speaker on Wednesday. In his maiden address from the chair, Mr. Birla promised to run the House in an impartial manner and "safeguard the interests of the members irrespective of the strength of their parties in the House".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed Mr. Birla's name after he received support from almost all parties, including a rather late submission of notices supporting his candidature from the Congress and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. The motion moved by the Prime Minister was adopted by a voice vote.

A total of 13 motions were moved in support of Mr. Birla, but since the one moved by Mr. Modi, the Leader of the House, was adopted, the



Starting point: Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeting Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Wednesday. •PTI

others became infructuous. In his speech, Mr. Birla assured the members that they would be "heard", and urged the government to respond to them.

Praising Mr. Modi for running a transparent government, the Speaker said he expected the "government to be more responsible and answerable in the House".

Mr. Modi, in his turn, spoke of his long association with Mr. Birla in organisa-

tional positions in the BJP, but had special words for Mr. Birla's philanthropic activities.

### 'Life of service'

"Om Birlaji's life has been devoted to service. I cannot forget how he stayed for months in Kutch when it was affected by a devastating earthquake. In the same way, he stayed in Kedarnath during the floods there. He has also worked to ensure

that people do not stay hungry in Kota," Mr. Modi said. "[I] on behalf of the government and the Treasury benches assure you full support in conducting the House. I also assure you that your order will prevail and you must be tough even if anyone from our side [Treasury benches] crosses the limit."

The newly appointed Congress leader in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, made an eloquent appeal to the new Speaker, urging him not just to be fair in his running of the House but also to urge the government to keep away from the "ordinance route".

Referring to sloganeering in the House during the oath-taking ceremony, Mr. Chowdhury said the House heard in the past two days religious slogans such as "Jai Shri Ram" and "Allahu Akbar", and it was unseemly.

## YSRCP refuses post of Deputy Speaker

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

The YSR Congress Party has made it clear that it will not take the post of Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha even if it is offered till the government grant special status to Andhra Pradesh.

"We will not accept the position. What do we get out of it? What do we achieve out of it?" a party leader told *The Hindu*.

Sources said the BJP sent feelers to the YSRCP and it rejected them. "We don't want to align with the ruling dispensation unless and until they accord special category status to Andhra Pradesh," the leader said.

"We hold the Opposition equally responsible for Andhra Pradesh not getting the special status tag. It was the Congress which bifurcated the State but did not fulfill the condition of special status."

## IB to report directly to Amit Shah

Home Minister allocates work to deputies Kishan Reddy and Nityanand Rai

VIJAYA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Almost a fortnight after Home Minister Amit Shah took charge, he allocated work to the two junior Ministers in North Block. While the management of other departments has been distributed among the two Ministers of State, Mr. Shah will hold charge of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) himself. Former Home Minister Rajnath Singh also had IB report directly to him.

The distribution of work comes at a time when Mr. Shah is expected to undertake his first official visit as a Home Minister to Jammu and Kashmir to oversee the preparations and security arrangements for the Amarnath Yatra that commences on July 1.

The two Ministers of State, Nityanand Rai and G. Kishan Reddy, did not have defined roles till now. The or-



In tandem: Amit Shah with G. Kishan Reddy, left, and Nityanand Rai in New Delhi. •FILE PHOTO

der was issued late Tuesday night.

Mr. Shah is known to put in long hours in the office. The three Ministers took charge on June 1.

As per the new set of responsibilities, Mr. Rai will look after the Left-wing Extremism division, Centre-State relations, border management, Central Armed Pol-

ice Forces (CAPF) and the Foreigners Division.

The Jammu and Kashmir desk and Northeast have been allocated to Mr. Reddy. This is the first time that J&K and Northeast divisions have been allocated to the same Minister. In the previous Cabinet, the Northeast division was handled by Kiren Rijju and Kashmir desk was with the other Minister of State, Hansraj Gangaram Ahir.

In all, there are 22 divisions in the Home Ministry. Both Mr. Rai and Mr. Reddy were State presidents of the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) in Bihar and Telangana respectively.

During the Lok Sabha election, they reported to Mr. Shah, who is the BJP president. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked all Cabinet Ministers to delegate more work to Ministers of State and involve them in decision-making.

## Joint election not must, Delhi HC ruled in 2009

Ruling was on casual RS vacancies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The issue of holding separate bypolls to two Rajya Sabha seats, which has been challenged in the Supreme Court by the Gujarat Congress, had come up before the Delhi High Court in 2009.

It had then held that it was not mandatory to hold joint election in the case of casual vacancies.

"It is not necessary for us to express any opinion on the issue as to whether the elections to regular vacancies are required to be held together. However, there cannot be any doubt that insofar as casual vacancy is concerned, holding of joint election is not mandatory, even if more than one casual vacancy occurred at about the same time," the High Court said in the Satyapal Malik vs Election Commission of India case on January 20, 2009.

The same order, which pertained to two casual vacancies from Uttar Pradesh,



has been quoted by the Election Commission in its press note for bypolls to fill six casual vacancies in the Rajya Sabha from Bihar, Gujarat and Odisha. The EC's note mentions that byelections to all Houses, including the Rajya Sabha, are considered separate vacancies. Separate notifications are issued and separate poll is taken for each of the vacancies.

In Gujarat, two Rajya Sabha seats fell vacant after BJP president Amit Shah and Union Minister Smriti Irani were elected to the Lok Sabha. On Gujarat Congress's petition, the Supreme Court has sought a response from the Election Commission by June 24.

## Rahul turns 49, Modi wishes him good health and long life

Stalin, Mayawati and Mamata extend birthday wishes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the many top political leaders who wished Congress president Rahul Gandhi good health and a long life on his 49th birthday on Wednesday.

"Best wishes to Shri Rahul Gandhi on his birthday. May he be blessed with good health and a long life," Mr. Modi tweeted early in the morning, putting behind the bitter exchanges between the two leaders during the election campaign.

Mr. Gandhi soon reciprocated tweeting, "Thank you for your greetings Narendra Modi ji. I appreciate them."

Though the party or its workers did not resort to any celebrations because of the encephalitis deaths in Bihar, Mr. Gandhi did meet his colleagues and workers at the party headquarters.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress general secretary in charge



Sibling support: Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra hugs her brother and party president Rahul Gandhi on his 49th birthday at the AICC headquarters. •PTI

of western U.P. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad were among those who wished Mr. Gandhi at the party headquarters. The Congress chief appeared in a joyous mood, shared light moments with party workers and offered sweets to reporters. Several senior Opposition leaders including DMK chief MK Stalin, BSP su-

premo Mayawati and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee took to Twitter to wish the Congress chief.

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh added a personal touch to his wishes. "Wish you a very happy birthday, dear @RahulGandhi. Proud of who you have become over the years; I see my dear friend (late) Rajiv (Gandhi) in you," he said.

## Cong. urged to adopt RSS outreach style

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi has advised the Congress to adopt the outreach model of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for its Mission 80, which envisages winning that many seats in the State's 2021 Assembly election.

Assam has a total of 126 Assembly seats.

He insisted that he was opposed to the RSS ideology but appreciated how the organisation — "the Bharatiya Janata Party's backbone" — reached out to people at the grassroots level. "The reason behind our party's debacle is dwindling mass contact. The Congress must follow the RSS model minus the religious ideology to reconnect with people," Mr. Gogoi said. "There is no harm in learning how the RSS has expanded through a network of socio-cultural organisations in Assam and elsewhere in the north-east," Mr. Gogoi added.

## Hydrotherapy to soothe elephants' feet and joints

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

Captive elephants are made to navigate environments that their bodies were not built for. "Standing on concrete for long periods becomes an invitation to the early onset of arthritis. Also, due to lack of proper foot care, the toenails and cuti-

cles of the elephants overgrow and become more prone to cracking," said Dr. Yaduraj Khadpekar, senior veterinary officer at the Wildlife SOS Elephant Conservation and Care Centre (ECCC), situated on the banks of the Yamuna in Mathura.

"As such, standing and walking becomes painful for


these long-ranging animals," he said, pointing to the benefits they will get from the new hydrotherapy clinic.

Kartick Satyanarayan, co-founder and CEO Wildlife SOS, said: "An effective complementary treatment for the elephants' painful joints and feet is hydrotherapy, a form of physical therapy that

uses the therapeutic benefits of water to perform physical rehabilitation in animals."

"Exerting hydrostatic pressure that compresses muscle and joints, hydrotherapy helps in relieving chronic muscle aches as well as rebuild muscle memory with its natural resistance," he said.

**APPEAL**



Name of Patient: B. Chaitanya Veera Venkata Anil, 7 years. Hospital Name: Christian Medical College. Diagnosis: Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia with Bone Marrow. His Treatment is for 3 years and total cost of treatment is Rs.7 Lakhs.

We request Kind Hearted Philanthropists to save him. Kindly send donation by Cheque/DD/M.O favouring Save Poor Lives A/c, Chaitanya Veera Venkata Anil S/B Account No. 20000913487, State Bank of India, Raja Annamalaiapuram Branch, IFSC CODE: SBIN001855, which is exempted under 80G of ITACT.

Contact: SAVE POOR LIVES REGISTERED (ADMIN DIVISION) Flat No. 44, Caesars Garden, Ground floor, Old No.76 Kamarajar Salai, Raja Annamalaiapuram, Chennai - 600 028. Ph: 044 42044165, Mobile: 9884607377, E-mail: savepoorlives@gmail.com  
Our website: www.savepoorlives.com  
Donation given to Patients upto March 2019 for Rs. 4,26,89,335/- and Scholarship 7,30,800/-

# Car bomb used to target Army patrol vehicle: NIA

It was the third such attack in the past four months

VIJAITA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

A Maruti 800 car is suspected to have been used in Monday's terror attack on an Army patrol vehicle on the Aihial-Pulwama road in South Kashmir, initial probe suggests.

An improvised explosive device (IED) packed in a car parked by the road was detonated when a mobile vehicle patrol of the 44 Rashtriya Rifles passed by. Two Army personnel were killed and six others injured in the attack. The Army said it was "a failed attempt".

A team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) visited the scene of the explosion on Tuesday and picked up samples for forensic examination.

A senior government official said they were not certain about the explosives used in the attack, the third of its kind in the past four months.

## Probe stuck

The NIA is also investigating the February 14 Pulwama terror attack, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed after a car bomber — Adil Ahmed Dar, a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist — rammed into a bus on the



**Fallen comrade:** Army personnel carrying the coffin of havildar Amarjeet Kumar, who was killed in an IED attack in Pulwama on Monday, at the Jaiprakash Narayan Airport in Patna on Wednesday. •PTI

Jammu-Srinagar highway near Pulwama.

The second such case being investigated by the NIA was reported on March 30, when "some terrorists exploded a car laden with explosives near Banihal (in Ramban district) with intention to kill the CRPF jawans." Six alleged Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, including a Ph.D. scholar, were arrested for the "failed attack".

The NIA's investigation into the February 14 incident is stuck, as the agency is yet to

trace the source of explosives used. A senior government official told *The Hindu* that the NIA had not received the forensic report that would establish where the explosives came from.

## Lone link

The lone link, Sajad Bhat, who would have provided details about the Pulwama conspiracy, was killed in an encounter with security forces on Tuesday.

The Maruti Eeco car used in the February incident had

changed hands seven times and the last person to own it was Bhat, a resident of Bijbehara in Anantnag.

The NIA said Bhat acquired the vehicle on February 4, 10 days before the attack. A student of Siraj-ul-Uloom in Shopian, Bhat later joined the JeM.

As per the initial post-blast analysis conducted by the National Security Guard (NSG), hours after the February attack, the suicide bomber's vehicle was packed with RDX, a high grade mili-

tary explosive mostly found in Army stores.

## Forces warned

Security forces deployed in the Kashmir Valley have been alerted to car-borne IEDs and extra measures were being taken to sanitise routes for the Amarnath Yatra that commences on July 1. More than two lakh pilgrims are expected to visit the shrine.

Around 30,000 security forces have been deployed for the Yatra's security.

## Major IED attack averted, claim police

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir police on Wednesday foiled militants' design to detonate another improvised explosive device, days after two soldiers were killed in a car-fitted IED attack in south Kashmir.

"A sophisticated and well-designed IED has been recovered from the possession of a group of militants apprehended in a counter-insurgency operation. Thereby, a major terror attempt was foiled," a police spokesman said.

He said five militants of the Hizbul Mujahideen were arrested in raids conducted after "specific inputs about their presence" in the volatile Shopian.

"During the questioning of the apprehended militants, it was revealed that they were planning to target police and security forces by planting an IED in the area," the police said.

The arrested were identified as Aqib Nazir Rathar, Amir Majeed Wani, Sameer Ahmed Bhat, Faisal Farooq Ahanger and Rayees Ahmed Ganai.

# Pak. must share intelligence: Malik

Militancy tackled, says J&K Governor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

Days after Pakistan reportedly shared intelligence on an impending militant attack in Jammu & Kashmir, Governor Satya Pal Malik said in Srinagar on Wednesday that it was "duty-bound" to do so.

"Pakistan is duty-bound to share intelligence inputs with us. But how many attacks Pakistan was able to stop in its own backyard also remains to be seen," Mr. Malik said.

His statement assumes significance after intelligence was passed on to J&K security agencies by Pakistan's security agencies on a "likely attack by militants of the Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind to avenge the killing of the group's chief Zakir Musa in Tral recently".

The Governor said his administration had been able to disrupt the militant infrastructure in the State since June last year. However, militants were "still receiving directions from outside because the militancy is facing a defeat".

"You are witness to how the previous governments tackled militancy. You are aware of our administration's role in tackling mili-



**Both militant recruitment and stone-throwing incidents have come down**

SATYA PAL MALIK  
J&K Governor

tancy problems in the Valley. Both militant recruitment and stone-throwing incidents across the Kashmir Valley have come down," he said. "People have understood that this way will lead us nowhere."

## 'No threat to tourists'

Mr. Malik said there was no threat to tourists in Kashmir. "Stray incidents [of violence] are still taking place. Even America, France, England and other countries failed to stop it [violence against tourists in those countries]," he said.

He said his administration would ensure the smooth conduct of the Amarnath Yatra, which begins on July 1.

## IN BRIEF



### India, Russia discuss ways to strengthen ties

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yuriy Trutnev on Wednesday and discussed ways to strengthen ties between the two nations and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Vladivostok for the Eastern Economic Forum later this year. The meeting comes days after Prime Minister Modi met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. •PTI

### ACB raid on properties of ousted J&K Bank chief

A team of the Anti-Corruption Bureau on Wednesday carried out fresh searches on the properties of the expelled J&K Bank chairman, Parvez Ahmad Nengroo. An official said the ACB team searched the private residences of Mr. Nengroo in Srinagar. Several magistrates were part of the search team. The team did not divulge any details about the seizures made during the searches.

### Plan to waive registration fee for electric vehicles

The Road Transport and Highways Ministry has proposed to waive registration fee for all electric or battery-operated vehicles. A senior official of the Ministry said this would entail a benefit of ₹600 to ₹3,000 for buyers. The Ministry issued a draft notification on Tuesday to amend the Central Motor Vehicle Rule, 1989, which lays down the registration fee for the renewal or issuance of registration certificates, and has sought stakeholder comments.

### Bangladesh, South Korea to telecast DD India

The Indian government has signed agreements with Bangladesh and South Korea, under which Doordarshan India will be available in those countries. This was announced by Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar here on Wednesday. The move is part of a robust cultural exchange, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Act East policy, he said. The government has also approved the proposal of Prasar Bharati for making KBS World, an English 24x7 channel of the government of Republic of South Korea, available on the DD Free Dish.

# Minister terms son's arrest 'unfortunate'

Law will take its course: Prahlaad Patel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A day after his son was arrested along with six persons in an attempt-to-murder case in Madhya Pradesh, Union Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlaad Singh Patel on Wednesday termed the situation "sad and unfortunate".

The "law will take its course", Mr. Patel said here, declining to comment on the case.

## Five injured

Mr. Patel's son, Prabal Patel, and his nephew, Monu Patel, were among those booked for attempt to murder after an attack that left five people, including a Home Guard, injured at Gotegeon in Narsinghpur district on Monday night.

"The victims have alleged



Prahlaad Singh Patel

that Prabal Patel, 26, Monu Patel, 27, and about a dozen others attacked them at Bhaihai Bazaar around 11.30 p.m. on Monday. Guns were fired, and one person was hit. Seven persons, including Prabal Patel, were arrested in this connection," Superintendent of Police Gurukaran Singh said on Tuesday.

(With PTI inputs)

# U.S. wants fair and reciprocal trade with India, says State Department

'India is one of our closest strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific region'

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN  
WASHINGTON DC

The State Department on Wednesday reacted to India's announcement of retaliatory tariffs on certain U.S. imports, reiterating U.S. President Donald Trump's message of reciprocal trade and the strength of U.S.-India ties.

"India is one of our closest strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific region. The U.S.-India partnership stands upon a shared commitment to democratic values and the rule of law. As the President has repeatedly stated, the United States wants fair and reciprocal trade," a State Department spokesperson told *The Hindu* via email, adding, "The United States is India's top market for exports and



**Strong link:** U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo is expected in New Delhi next week. •AFP

U.S. companies see great opportunity in India."

Last Friday, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) told *The Hindu* that there was no trade action to announce at the moment but that the U.S. continued to raise market ac-

cess concerns with India. U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo is expected in New Delhi next week for discussions prior to the G-20 meeting in Osaka, Japan, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet U.S. President Donald Trump.

Among the challenges in the Indo-U.S. relationship that Mr. Pompeo is expected to discuss, are the U.S.'s preferential trade access system, the Generalized System of Preferences (India was recently taken off the beneficiary list as of June 5), 5G network infrastructure, and data localisation. Regarding 5G, the U.S. is trying to dissuade countries from letting Chinese telecom giant Huawei participate in building their next-generation networks citing security concerns. The U.S. is also concerned about the direction in which India's policies with respect to data portability across borders is going and that has become one of the areas of disagreement in trade discussions.

# ED arrests two former IL&FS executives

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday arrested two former top executives of the IL&FS group in connection with a money laundering case.

Those arrested were Arun Kumar Saha, the then joint managing director of IL&FS and a member of the committee of directors of the committee of directors of IL&FS Financial Services Limited (IFIN); and Karunakaran Ramchand, then managing director of IL&FS Transportation Network (ITNL). Mr. Ramchand was also a member of the IFIN committee of directors.

They allegedly sanctioned and disbursed loans without taking proper security to the groups which were already in financial distress and were unable to repay earlier loans.

# Intense lobbying on in BJD for Rajya Sabha ticket

Three Odisha seats fell vacant after the recent elections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BHUBANESWAR

Intense lobbying is on in the ruling Biju Janata Dal in Odisha for ticket to contest three vacant Rajya Sabha seats from the State.

With the BJD likely to win all three, given its strength of 112 in the 147-member Assembly, aspirants are thronging Naveen Nivas, residence of Chief Minister and party president Naveen Patnaik, to press their case.

The Election Commission last week announced July 5 as the bye-election date. The BJD candidates are likely to file their papers on June 25, the last date for doing so, party officials said on condition of anonymity.

The seats fell vacant after Achyuta Samanta, Soumya Ranjan Patnaik and Pratap Keshari Deb resigned following their victories in the recent Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. While Mr. Samanta was elected to the Lok Sabha from Kandhamal, Mr. Patnaik and Mr. Deb were elected to the Assembly from Khandapada and Aul, respectively.

The possible choices of the party include Prasanna Kumar Patasani, former



**Bright prospects:** The possible choices include Prasanna Kumar Patasani, left, and Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik.



Bhubaneswar MP, and Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik, former Berhampur MLA. Both were assured Rajya Sabha berths by the party president when they were denied ticket for the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

Party officials, however, said Mr. Patasani's chances may have been hurt by the fact that the BJD's nominee for the Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha seat, former Mumbai Police Commissioner Arup Patnaik, lost the election. Mr. Chyau Patnaik may be chosen since the party's nominee for the Berhampur Assembly seat, Bikram Kumar Panda, won.

The aspirants for the Rajya Sabha seats include prominent leaders who lost in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections and those who could not be given ticket to contest those elections.

## Woman candidate

Besides, there is a strong possibility of the party choosing at least one woman for the Rajya Sabha. The BJD has only one woman Rajya Sabha member at present.

With the BJD having given 33% of the Lok Sabha ticket to women candidates, several women leaders are hoping for the best if the party decides to adopt the same formula for the Upper House.

# UN report links MBS to Khashoggi killing

Says execution of the dissident journalist was the responsibility of the state of Saudi Arabia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

There is "credible evidence" linking Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) to the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a UN expert said on Wednesday, calling for sanctions on the Prince's foreign assets.

The allegation regarding Prince Mohammed's possible direct role in Khashoggi's execution was detailed in a new report by the UN special rapporteur on extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Agnes Callamard.

Ms. Callamard, an independent human rights expert who does not speak for the United Nations, called on UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to initiate a formal international criminal investigation into the case.

She told reporters it was clear "the execution of Mr. Khashoggi was the responsibility of the state of Saudi Arabia".

She added: "There is credible evidence, warranting further investigation of high-level Saudi Officials' individual liability, including the Crown Prince's."

Khashoggi, a *Washington Post* contributor and critic of Prince Mohammed, was murdered at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2. His dismembered body

## Who killed Khashoggi?

UN Special Rapporteur Agnes Callamard released on Wednesday her report on Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi's killing

### KEY FINDINGS

a) Khashoggi's murder constitutes extra-judicial killing, for which Saudi Arabia is responsible

▪ The murder can also be considered an international crime, for which states should claim universal jurisdiction

b) There is credible evidence that high-level

Saudi officials, including Crown Prince **Mohammed bin Salman**, can be held liable for the attack

c) Investigations conducted by Saudi Arabia and Turkey fail to meet international standards

d) There is a need for further investigation by an independent and impartial international team



### HOW IT UNFOLDED

**Sept. 28: 11.50 a.m.:** Khashoggi and fiancée **Hatice Cengiz** visit Saudi's Istanbul consulate unannounced, seeking a certificate. Officials ask Khashoggi to return on Oct. 2

**2.40 p.m.:** Khashoggi flies to London but, before that, information on him is relayed to Riyadh

**Oct. 1, 4.30 p.m.:** Five Saudi men, later identified as part of the 15-member team involved in the killing, arrive in Istanbul

**Oct. 2, 3.30 a.m.:** Nine other Saudi officials arrive

▪ The Consul General orders

non-Saudi staff to either not report to work on October 2 or to leave it at noon

**Oct. 2 (morning):** An official asks Khashoggi to arrive at the consulate at 1 p.m.

**10-11 a.m.:** The 15 Saudi officials split into two groups. Five go to the Consul General's residence, while the other 10 go to the consulate

**1.15 p.m.:** Khashoggi enters the consulate, leaving his phones with Cengiz

▪ Recordings suggest that he could have been injected with a sedative and suffocated using a plastic bag

▪ **3.53 p.m.:** Cameras record two

Saudi officials exiting the back door. One of them is wearing what appears to be Khashoggi's clothes and the other has a plastic bag

▪ **4.41 p.m.:** Cengiz phones an emergency contact on Khashoggi's disappearance

▪ **4.53 p.m. till Oct. 3, 1.25 a.m.:** The 15 Saudi officials leave in three different flights

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has never been found. Riyadh initially said it had no knowledge of his fate, but later blamed the murder on rogue agents. Saudi prosecutors have absolved the Crown Prince of responsibility.

But Ms. Callamard said probes by Saudi Arabia and Turkey "failed to meet international standards regarding the investigation into unlaw-

ful deaths". The report specifically came across evidence that the crime scenes were "thoroughly, even forensically, cleaned" by the Saudis, in what "may amount to obstructing justice."

### Cover-up efforts

Ms. Callamard said the Saudi Crown Prince must have been aware of the cover-up efforts. She stressed she had

not found concrete evidence of who ordered the killing, but pointed out to reporters that "people directly implicated in the murder reported to him (the Crown Prince)".

"What needs to be investigated is the extent to which the Crown Prince knew or should have known what would (happen) to Mr. Khashoggi, whether he directly or indirectly incited

the killing... (and) whether he could have prevented the execution," she said.

The UN expert also insisted that any international sanctions over Khashoggi's killing "ought also to include the Crown Prince and his personal assets abroad, until and unless evidence is provided and corroborated that he carries no responsibilities for this execution".

## Sri Lanka Minister slams monk over racially charged comments

Samaraweera calls for unity against 'Talibanisation' of faith

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera on Wednesday slammed a Buddhist monk's controversial comments targeting Muslims and urged "true Buddhists" to unite against the "Talibanisation" of the religion.

In a tweet, Mr. Samaraweera said on Wednesday: "True Buddhists must unite NOW against the Talibanization of our great philosophy of peace & love of all beings. No Buddhist can condone a statement to stone another human being to death, even if it emanates from the robbed orders. #lka"

### Monk's message

His message comes days after a senior monk attached to the Asgiriya Chapter – one of the two most influential Buddhist orders in Sri Lanka – accused Muslims of "destroying the country", and called for a boycott of Muslim-run shops and businesses.

"Don't eat from those (Muslim) shops," the monk said, at a temple ceremony in the central city of Kandy,



Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera. ■ THE HINDU

they should be stoned to death. I don't say this, but what should be done is this," the monk said, according to translation by the local media of his speech in Sinhala.

The Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka wields significant influence in national politics. Hard-line monks have in the past resorted to hate speech with little consequence.

### Lone voice

Mr. Samaraweera, the only prominent politician so far to directly challenge the Asgiriya-affiliated monk's racially charged comments, earlier challenged a fasting Buddhist monk's demand that three Muslim politicians resign over alleged links to Easter suspects.

Following the collective resignation of nine Muslim Ministers early in June, he tweeted: "Hatred is never appeased by hatred. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is a law eternal. Today, it was left to our Muslim Ministers to exhibit this sacred teaching of Lord Buddha while impostors in robes incited hatred in his name. A shameful day for our beloved #lka"

## Mike Pompeo cancels Sri Lanka visit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
COLOMBO

U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo has cancelled his visit to Sri Lanka due to "scheduling conflicts", the American mission in Colombo said on Wednesday.

Mr. Pompeo was scheduled to arrive in Sri Lanka on June 27 on a short visit. "Due to unavoidable scheduling conflicts during his upcoming visit to the Indo-Pacific region that includes accompanying President Donald J. Trump to the G20 Summit in Japan, U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo is unable to visit Sri Lanka as previously announced," the U.S. Embassy in Colombo said.

The development comes in the wake of a raging debate within Sri Lanka's political class on the government's proposed signing of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), more recently referred to as the 'Visiting Forces Agreement', with the U.S. Amid speculation, a senior official told *The Hindu*: "SOFA was not on the cards during Secretary Pompeo's visit this time... his cancellation has nothing to do with that."

## MH17 crash: 3 Russians, 1 Ukrainian to face charges

REUTERS  
NIEUWEGEIN

Three Russians and a Ukrainian will face murder charges for the 2014 downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine which killed 298 people, in a trial to start in the Netherlands next March, an investigation team said on Wednesday.

The suspects are likely to be tried *in absentia*, howev-

er, as the Netherlands has said Russia has not cooperated with the investigation.

Justice Minister Ferdinand Grapperhaus said in a letter to Parliament that the Netherlands had taken unspecified "diplomatic steps" against Moscow for failing to fully comply with legal requests.

The Dutch-led international team, tasked with as-

signing criminal responsibility for the plane's destruction, named the four suspects as Russians Sergey Dubinsky, Oleg Pulatov and Igor Girkin, and Ukrainian Leonid Kharchenko. It said international arrest warrants for the four had been issued.

Girkin, 48, a battle-hardened Russian nationalist, is believed to live in Moscow where he makes regular pu-

blic appearances. Ukrainian authorities said they would try to detain Kharchenko, the suspect believed to be on their territory.

Most of those on board the crashed plane were Dutch. The investigation team formed by Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine found that the plane was shot down by a Russian missile.

## ELSEWHERE



### Morsi was murdered, says Erdoğan

ANKARA  
Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Wednesday vowed to try to ensure the Egyptian government is tried in international courts for the death of Mohamed Morsi. "Mohamed Morsi flailed on the courtroom floor for 20 minutes and the authorities did not help him. This is why I say Morsi did not die, he was murdered," Mr. Erdoğan said at an election rally. REUTERS

### U.S. again blames Iran over tanker attack

FUJAIRAH  
A Japanese-owned tanker attacked in the Gulf of Oman last week was damaged by a limpet mine resembling those used by Iran, the U.S. military said on Wednesday, as Tehran slammed accusations against it. The Japanese-owned *Kokuka Courageous* came under attack last Thursday. AFP

## A fortnight after resignation, 2 Muslim MPs return to govt.

7 others have decided not to rejoin the administration

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

A fortnight after resigning from their ministerial positions in protest, two Muslim legislators were on Wednesday sworn in to the posts they earlier held.

Parliamentarians Kabir Hashim and Abdul Haleem took oath but seven other former Ministers, who resigned with them, did not assume ministerial charge.

Citing growing instances of Sri Lanka's Muslims being "demonised" and "framed" following the Easter terror attacks, all nine Muslim Ministers had stepped down on June 3. This sudden move came in the wake of a fasting Buddhist monk's demand that three key politicians, including a Minister, resign over alleged links with the Easter bombing suspects.

The resignations sparked anger among critics who accused the country's leaders



Kabir Hashim, who took oath as Minister on Wednesday.

of succumbing to undue pressure from the Buddhist clergy. Soon after, the monk called off his "fast unto death". Days later, senior clergy met the Muslim leadership and reportedly urged them to withdraw their resignations.

### UNP members

The two Ministers who took charge on Wednesday are from the ruling United National Party (UNP). The seven others are from the Sri

Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and the All Ceylon Makkal Congress (ACMC).

All Muslim MPs met on Tuesday and held discussions on next steps. Local media reported that the meeting was "inconclusive". "The two of them were under a lot of pressure from their party and its leadership to re-join as Ministers. We appreciate their need to work within their party," SLMC deputy leader H.M.M. Hareez said.

However, the other former Ministers decided that they would not take up the posts until their concerns are fully addressed. "So many Muslims have been arbitrarily arrested. And our politicians have been accused of several things – let the authorities probe all that and clear any doubts. We have decided that the ministerial posts can wait until then," Mr. Hareez told *The Hindu*.

MARKET WATCH

	19-06-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	39,113	0.17
US Dollar	69.68	0.03
Gold	33,740	0.06
Brent oil	62.3	-0.65

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	407.70	-13.70
Asian Paints	1381.15	1.10
Axis Bank	770.70	-5.05
Bajaj Auto	2822.90	-32.70
Bajaj Finserv	8257.00	10.75
Bajaj Finance	3525.50	16.20
Bharti Airtel	341.10	-4.05
BPCL	379.35	-6.20
Britannia Ind	2875.70	8.45
Cipla	533.70	-13.90
Coal India	257.05	-3.30
Dr Reddys Lab	2550.85	-40.40
Eicher Motors	19790.70	58.85
GAIL (India)	307.75	-0.30
Grasim Ind	882.05	2.40
HCL Tech	1084.10	-5.50
HDFC	2175.40	22.40
HDFC Bank	2428.35	11.10
Hero MotoCorp	2606.15	-61.65
Hindalco	190.05	0.10
Hind Unilever	1811.70	2.10
Indiabulls HFL	555.50	-54.30
ICICI Bank	419.80	-2.35
Indusind Bank	1381.35	-27.65
Bharti Infratel	272.10	2.00
Infosys	751.90	1.75
Indian Oil Corp	154.40	-3.25
ITC	277.20	2.10
JSW Steel	260.55	-3.00
Kotak Bank	1497.80	35.95
L&T	1505.15	-0.15
M&M	615.15	-10.75
Maruti Suzuki	6424.65	-14.35
NTPC	134.65	2.25
ONGC	167.35	1.20
PowerGrid Corp	200.30	2.50
Reliance Ind	1277.35	-3.65
State Bank	338.85	-1.20
Sun Pharma	375.20	-3.25
Tata Motors	154.65	-3.65
Tata Steel	494.10	21.80
TCS	2259.90	9.05
Tech Mahindra	735.60	-5.95
Titan	1275.10	17.60
UltraTech Cement	4485.00	-26.45
UPL	950.30	-49.40
Vedanta	168.50	0.40
Wipro	294.05	-3.95
YES Bank	103.20	-6.10
Zee Entertainment	353.00	13.65

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on June 19

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	69.48	69.80
Euro	77.87	78.23
British Pound	87.41	87.85
Japanese Yen (100)	64.10	64.39
Chinese Yuan	10.06	10.11
Swiss Franc	69.66	69.98
Singapore Dollar	50.81	51.05
Canadian Dollar	51.95	52.19
Malaysian Ringgit	16.63	16.73

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

June 19 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	40.3	(40.1)
22 ct gold (1g)	3147	(3145)

# Apollo Munich to merge with HDFC ERGO

HDFC buys Apollo Hospitals Group's stake in the health insurance venture for ₹1,136 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

HDFC Ltd. has signed a definitive agreement with Apollo Munich Health Insurance to buy out the entire Apollo Hospitals Group's stake of 50.8% for ₹1,136 crore and another 0.4% stake held by a few employees for ₹10.84 crore.

Post the acquisition of shares by HDFC, Apollo Munich would be merged with the former's general insurance subsidiary - HDFC ERGO. ERGO is a subsidiary of Munich Re, which has been a joint venture partner of HDFC ERGO since 2008.

Munich Re will continue to hold 49% stake in HDFC ERGO post the merger.

The acquisition would make HDFC ERGO the second-largest private sector

## Behemoth in the making

The merger will create the second largest private health insurer with a combined market share of 7.2% and the third largest private player in general insurance with 6.4% share

HDFC ERGO		Apollo Munich
₹8,277 cr.	Gross Written Premium	₹2,194 cr.
₹383 cr.	PAT	₹11 cr.
98.9%	Combined ratio	100.7%
2.8%	Market share (health insurance)	4.4%
3,391	Employees	3,949
122	Branches	186
110 lakh	Policies	12 lakh

all in FY19

insurer in the combined accident and health insurance vertical, with an 8.2% market share.

"What is particularly attractive for us is Apollo Munich's strong agency network with over 70,000 agents. A

diversified distribution network is essential to strengthen market position," said Deepak Parekh, chairman, HDFC Ltd. HDFC ERGO would retain all the employees of Apollo Munich. Based on the acquisition

## What is attractive for us is Apollo Munich's agency network with over 70,000 agents

DEEPAK PAREKH, chairman, HDFC Ltd.

price, Apollo Munich is valued at a multiple of 1.2 times the gross written premium of FY19 which is ₹2,194 crore.

"Strong synergies" "We believe this valuation is reasonable and this transaction will result in strong synergies and bring in economies of scale," Mr. Parekh said.

The combined entity would have a market share, in overall insurance, of 6.4% compared with 5.1% of HDFC ERGO and a combined gross written premium of ₹10,807 crore.

He also said this acquisition was a step towards the initial public offering of HDFC ERGO as scale was important before tapping the capital market.

Apollo Hospitals, which had invested ₹300 crore in the health insurance venture, would use the proceeds from this deal to reduce debt and invest in infrastructure.

There is a three-year non-compete clause in the deal which means that Apollo cannot re-enter the health insurance sector for three years.

Munich Health Germany would pay ₹294 crore to Apollo Hospitals Enterprise and Apollo Energy to support the transaction.

Mr. Parekh said he expected 9-12 months to secure the requisite approvals.

# 'HDFC open to buying retail portfolios of HFCs'

Not looking at acquiring firms: Mistry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Mortgage lender HDFC Ltd. is open to buying out retail portfolios of housing finance companies (HFCs) looking to raise resources.

Most HFCs are facing a liquidity crunch with banks becoming reluctant to extend loans as the shadow banking sector fights a crisis of confidence post the debt default of IL&FS in September last year.

"We are not looking at buying out the companies. We can buy retail, individual portfolios only," Keki Mistry, vice-chairman and CEO, HDFC told reporters on the sidelines of an event when asked if the company was looking to acquire stressed HFCs.

Deepak Parekh, chairman, HDFC Ltd. said there was adequate liquidity in the banking system with the Reserve Bank of India is infusing money through open market operations.

"So far as liquidity is concerned, RBI is doing open market operations... they are buying government bonds and putting liquidity in the system.

"So, there is adequate liquidity in the banking system. Now it is up to individual banks whom to lend to and whom not to lend to," Mr. Parekh said.

"In the affordable housing space, we see phenomenal growth happening. High-value flats...there is a slowdown in demand in the last six months," he added.

# Banks' association tweaks inter creditor agreement

Aims to align ICA with RBI norms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The Indian Banks' Association has tweaked the inter-creditor agreement (ICA) that was framed by the Sashakt Committee, to keep it in line with the revised guidelines of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on stressed assets resolution announced on June 7.

## Review period

The revised norm had mandated that if there was a default by any lender, all lenders should review the borrower account within 30 days of the default, which is termed 'review period', and to chalk out a resolution plan. It has been made mandatory for all the lenders to

enter into an ICA within the review period.

RBI had said ICA must "provide that any decision agreed to by lenders representing 75% by value of total outstanding credit facilities and 60% of lenders by number shall be binding upon all the lenders."

IBA has now drafted the ICA in consultation with Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, who also advised on the ICA recommended by the Sashakt Committee.

As many as 36 banks and financial institutions had endorsed the Sashakt Committee recommendations.

The revised ICA has been circulated by the IBA to the member banks and financial institutions.

# 'Extend date for filing GST returns'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GUWAHATI

Tax and legal consultants on Wednesday complained about the time-limit of three months given to file the GST returns for 2017-18 as hundreds of amendments, notifications and circulars had made the Act very complex.

The Tax Bar Association (TBA) said that the government had made the entire GST procedure and filing of returns very 'confusing with hundreds of changes in the rules and taxes.'

"The due date for filing GSTR-9, 9A and GSTR-9C for the year 2017-18 should be extended by at least four months till October 31, 2019," said TBA president Gopal Singhania.

# FM holds talks with financial sector regulators on budget

Meeting comes as growth hits a five-year low of 6.8%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reviewed the state of the economy and discussed various budget-related suggestions and proposals at a meeting with financial sector regulators here on Wednesday.

Ms. Sitharaman will present the first budget of the new government on July 5 against the backdrop of India's economy hitting a five-year low growth of 6.8% in 2018-19.

Financial sector regulators, including RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, SEBI Chairman Ajay Tyagi, and IRDAI chief Subhash Chandra Khuntia, and top Finance



Nirmala Sitharaman

Ministry officials were present at the meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) headed by the Finance Minister, the government said in a statement.

"As discussed in the other FSDC meetings, there was a

general review of the current state of the economy, of the overall macro-economic situation, global developments, and there was a discussion on the forthcoming budget and various budget-related suggestions and proposals," the RBI governor said after the meeting.

Asked if any stimulus was required to prop up the economy, the Governor said, "It is for the government to decide, and it's the Finance Minister's prerogative to take a call on such matters."

Mr. Das further said the Bimal Jalan committee, looking into the size of capital reserves that the RBI should hold, is likely to submit its final report by June-end.

# AI sale: FinMin to prepare new proposal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry is preparing a fresh proposal for the sale of Air India, incorporating issues such as crude oil prices and exchange rate volatility, flagged by EY last year on possible reasons for the government failing to attract bidders for the carrier.

The proposal, to be placed before the Air India Specific Alternative Mechanism, will also include the option of selling either 100% or 76% of the government's stake in Air India.

The Centre, last year, invited bids to sell 76% stake in Air India, along with the transfer of management control. However, it did not attract any bidder.



Nitin Bansal

# India has highest data usage: report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India has the highest average data usage per smartphone, reaching 9.8 GB per month at the end of 2018, according to a new study by Swedish telecom equipment maker Ericsson.

The report, released on Wednesday, also forecasts that this figure is likely to double to 18 GB per month per smartphone by 2024.

"Increased numbers of LTE subscriptions, attractive data plans being offered by service providers, and young people's changing video viewing habits have driven monthly usage growth," Nitin Bansal, head of Ericsson India and head of network solutions, southeast Asia, Oceania and India, said.

In 2018, mobile data traffic per smartphone per month stood at 7 GB for North America, 3.1 GB for Latin America, 6.7 GB for Western Europe, 4.5 GB for Central and Eastern Europe, 3 GB for Middle East and Africa, 7.1 GB for northeast Asia and 3.6 GB for southeast Asia and Oceania region.

Interestingly, according to Ericsson, Indian smartphone users are willing to pay more than 66% premium for 5G services.

"In fact, more than half of smartphone users in India expect their own provider to switch to 5G or will wait for a maximum of six months before moving to another provider that does," Mr. Bansal said.

# Sensex swings 555 points, ends with modest gains

Over 1,900 stocks lose ground on BSE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Equity markets witnessed a volatile session on Wednesday with the benchmark Sensex swinging in a range of more than 550 points before ending the day with modest gains.

The 30-share Sensex touched a low of 38,881.05 - down 555 points compared to the day's high of 39,435.80 - during intra-day trades before closing at 39,112.74, up 66.40 points.

The broader Nifty closed almost unchanged at 11,691.45.

Across the board, stocks lost ground as the market breadth was significantly weak with more than 1,900 stocks losing ground on BSE as against only 660 gainers.

Market participants attributed the volatility to the

uncertainty ahead of the U.S. Fed decision on interest rates. Sentiment has also taken a hit due to the slow onset of the monsoon and reports of a 44% deficit in rains till now, they added.

However, reports of top level talks between the U.S. and China over the trade war issue did provide some comfort, which was reflected in the positive trend in most markets across geographies.

Meanwhile, the ongoing liquidity crisis in the non-banking finance companies segment is also affecting stocks across sectors in India, with auto majors bearing the brunt.

Auto majors like Tata Motors, Hero Motocorp, M&M and Bajaj Auto were among the top losers in the Sensex pack.

# Jet pilots, engineers want to be made party in bankruptcy case

Two Dutch firms also seek nod to file intervention petition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The hearing in the bankruptcy case against Jet Airways is scheduled on Thursday at the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) by a bench comprising V.P. Singh and Ravikumar Duraisamy.

## Bankruptcy plea

A consortium of 26 bankers led by State Bank of India had filed for bankruptcy on Tuesday seeking to recover over ₹8,000 crore which they had lent to Jet Airways, which has been grounded since April 17, 2019. On Wednesday, the unions representing Jet Airways' pilots and engineers and two Dutch logistics firm who had provided services to Jet Air-



Hopes afloat: Jet's employees have demanded an expeditious process for an early solution. ■ PAUL NORONHA

ways moved the NCLT seeking to be made parties to the bankruptcy hearings. The pilots and engineers unions want to be made party to the case, while the two Dutch firms want the tribunal's nod to make an intervention petition. Jet's employees have demanded an expedi-

tious process for an early solution. "Emphasis should be that NCLT process should speed up and see if they find a bidder, else there will be no pilots, engineers and staff left to fly the planes," said Captain Rohit Chaudhary, Senior Commander, Jet Airways.

# Celebi Aviation to invest €45 million in taxibots

Service at key airports in 5-6 years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Turkish ground handling company Celebi Aviation on Wednesday announced that it would make an investment of up to €45 million to bring Taxibots at key Indian airports over the next five to six years to provide eco-friendly taxiing solution to airlines and airports.

Taxibot is a semi-robotic equipment that tows an aircraft from the terminal gate to the runway with the aircraft's engine turned off. This helps airlines to cut down fuel consumption by 85% during the takeoff stage as well as reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

"Our investment may go up to €45 million over the next five to six years if the industry takes to this technology. We plan to bring 30-

40 Taxibots to Indian airports over this time period. Apart from Delhi Airport, where Taxibot operations have already commenced, we are also in talks with Bengaluru and Hyderabad airports," Murali Ramachandran, CEO-India, Celebi Aviation, said.

The company has signed an agreement with Delhi International Airport Limited for seven years and is already providing the service to Spicejet. The airport became the first to use the semi-robotic equipment globally for taxiing of aircraft in May. There are two Taxibots at Delhi airport and there are plans to get three more in the near future.

Celebi has entered into a partnership with KSU Aviation and invested approximately €6.5 million so far.

# Will appeal against SEBI's penalty: NDTV

Broadcaster 'yet to receive order copy'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

News broadcaster and listed entity New Delhi Television Ltd. (NDTV) will file an appeal against the monetary penalty of ₹12 lakh that has been imposed on the company by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for alleged delay in making mandatory disclosures.

In a stock exchange statement issued on Wednesday, the company said while it had not received a copy of the order yet, it would file an appeal when it received the order and believed that the order would be set aside.

"With respect to the media reports about an order having been passed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India against New Delhi Television Limited imposing a penalty of ₹12,00,000... due to certain alleged non-compliances... by the company, we wish to inform you that the company has not received any such order from SEBI," stated the company statement.

"However, an order dated June 17, 2019 passed by SEBI to this effect has been uploaded on the SEBI website.

The company will be filing an appeal against the said order if and when the same is received by the company, and as per advice re-

ceived by the company, this order is likely to be set aside in appeal," it added.

On June 17, the capital markets regulator passed an adjudication order, imposing a penalty of ₹12 lakh for alleged delay in disclosing the change in ownership of the shares of the company.

As per the SEBI order, the company failed to make timely disclosures about Indiabulls Financial Services acquiring 6.4% stake in the company and thereafter the promoters acquiring 20.28% shares post an open offer. According to SEBI, there was a delay of 170 days in making the required disclosures.

## SAT stays SEBI ban

The firm's statement comes a day after it received relief from the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) against the SEBI order that barred the promoters (Prannoy Roy and wife Radhika Roy) from holding any directorship in the firm for allegedly concealing material information from shareholders while entering into loan agreements between 2008 and 2010.

While staying the SEBI order, the tribunal said that it would hear the matter on September 16, and in the meantime barred the two individuals from creating any encumbrance on their holding in the company.



SEBI's order said NDTV failed to make timely disclosures about acquisition of stakes in the company. ■ REUTERS



### Renault unveils Triber globally in India

NEW DELHI Renault globally unveiled its compact multi-purpose vehicle Triber here in India, where it aims to double sales by 2022. Renault Triber is the outcome of a joint project between Renault teams in India and France. "India is a key market for Groupe Renault. We aim at doubling our sales by 2022," Groupe Renault CEO Thierry Bollor said. The firm also said it would stop selling diesel vehicles in India from 2020 when BS-VI norms kick in. PTI

### Solar tariff stays low at ₹2.5 per unit in auction

NEW DELHI State-owned power giant NTPC, Mahindra Susten, Hero Solar Energy and Azure Power Maple on Wednesday emerged as the lowest bidders for 750-MW solar projects, in an auction by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI). The four firms quoted a tariff of ₹2.5 per unit each in a reverse auction conducted by the Solar Energy Corporation on Wednesday for Rajasthan Tranche II (750 MW) projects, a source said. PTI

### IndiaMart's ₹475-crore IPO to open on June 24

NEW DELHI IndiaMart InterMesh, an online marketplace for business products and services, on Wednesday said it would launch its initial public offering (IPO) from June 24 and has fixed a price band of ₹970-973 per share. The IPO for the sale of up to 48,87,862 equity shares, the company said in a statement. At the upper end of the price band, the offer is expected to raise about ₹475 crore. The issue will close on June 26, it added. PTI

# Won't allow FDI in multi-brand retail, predatory pricing: Goyal

Urges small retailers to spruce up shops, avail Centre's schemes such as MUDRA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday reiterated that the central government will not allow foreign direct investment in multi-brand retail, and also assured small traders that he would not allow predatory pricing by multinationals.

"Commerce and Industry Minister again reiterated that India will not allow multi-brand retail by foreign companies and on the pretext of B2B, no entry will be allowed for multi-brand retail," the Commerce Ministry said in a release following a meeting between Mr. Goyal and representatives of kirana store



**Allaying fears:** No entry will be allowed for multi-brand retail on the pretext of B2B, the Commerce Minister said. •AFP

owners and traders. "He also asserted that predatory pricing will not be allowed and necessary action will be taken against defaulters."

Representatives of the as-

sociations of kirana stores had raised the issues of the need for a level playing-field and the adverse impact of anti-competitive practices such as predatory prices by

foreign companies.

"Piyush Goyal urged small retailers, kirana stores to make use of modern technology and avail benefits of Government of India schemes like MUDRA to improve their business, spruce up their shops, improve stocks by storing high quality products and pass on the benefits to people employed by them," the release added.

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) submitted a memorandum to the Minister demanding that the same restrictions and conditions imposed on global e-commerce players be made applicable to domestic e-commerce companies also.

## IT staff in W.B. launch effort to form trade union

Aim to oppose 'unfair labour practices'

INDRANI DUTTA  
KOLKATA

IT and ITES employees in West Bengal have launched an effort to form a trade union to protest 'unfair labour practices in the industry.' The proposed name for the union is Kolkata – Forum for IT Employees (FITE).

An application has been filed by a section of employees who are keen to keep their trade union (as and when it is formed) free of any political patronage. The application is accompanied by the signature of 140 employees.

The sector employs about 1.8 lakh people in the State, a source said. As per stipulations, any such application for a trade union registra-

tion is to be accompanied by the signatures of 100 or 10% of (whichever is lower) employees.

The application filed with the Registrar of Trade Unions is usually followed by hearings.

Sources said that although similar trade unions had been "allowed" in some States, they were sceptical about the Trinamool government allowing the same in this sector.

"That is the sense we were given during our year-long, informal interactions with the State labour department officials and some Ministers. But, we do not want to be linked to any political party," a source involved in the initiative said.

## Plastic sector asks Centre not to hike import duty on raw materials

'Government must support MSMEs in infra and financing'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The plastic industry, which is expected to double its size by 2025, has urged the government to support micro, small and medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the sector and not to increase import duty on raw materials.

Speaking at a convention, industry leaders strongly opposed the proposal of the Indian Chemical Council to hike import duty on raw material as it could lead to supply disruption and, in turn, will affect the cost competitiveness of 50,000 plastic processors in India.

They have asked the Centre to increase the customs duty on finished goods



Meela Jayadev

to 20% to stop the imports of cheap and unsafe materials to India.

It has also demanded the imposition of anti-dumping or safeguard duty on import of cheap plastic finished goods and maintaining the

## OVL, partners may invest \$20 billion in LNG unit

Associated infra also to be set up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

ONGC Videsh Ltd. and its Indian as well as foreign partners have agreed to invest \$20 billion in constructing a gas liquefaction and export terminal in Mozambique to monetise vast offshore natural gas reserves they had found.

In separate but almost identical regulatory filings, Oil and Natural Gas Corp. (ONGC), Bharat Petroleum Corp. Ltd. (BPCL) and Oil India Ltd. (OIL) said their subsidiaries along with Anadarko Petroleum of the U.S. have taken a final investment decision for Area-1 Mozambique LNG project.

The project would initially consist of two LNG trains with a total nameplate ca-

capacity of 12.88 million tonnes per annum. Feedgas will come from the Golfinho/Atum field in offshore Area 1. To be built on the Afungi peninsula in Cabo Delgado province, the project would also involve the construction of associated infrastructure, storage tanks and export jetty facilities.

The LNG project would be fed with nearly 100 million cubic feet of natural gas a day from the Golfinho/Atum fields in the Rovuma Basin, which are set to be developed as part of the Offshore Area 1 gas project. The companies plan to commission the project during 2024. OVL holds 16% stake in Mozambique Rovuma Area-1 offshore project, while OIL holds 4%.

## Mahindra to raise prices by up to ₹36,000

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. (M&M) has decided to increase the prices of personal vehicles by up to ₹36,000 effective July 1, 2019. This price increase is due to the implementation of AIS 145 safety norms across all passenger vehicles in India, the firm said.

Sport utility vehicles Scorpio, Bolero, TUV300 and KUV100 NXT would see a substantial increase.

The XUV500 and Marazzo would only see a marginal increase in prices. Rajan Wadhwa, president, automotive sector, M&M, said: "Safety regulations led to some cost rise. Hence, we are taking a price hike across some of our passenger vehicles."

## HCL inks agreement with Cricket Australia

To deliver 'digital experience' to fans

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

HCL Technologies on Wednesday said it has signed a multi-year deal with Cricket Australia, the national governing body for the game in that country.

As part of the deal, the firm would help deliver a digital experience to cricket fans, players, partners, employees and volunteers across Australia and around the world. The firm did not disclose the deal amount.

HCL Technologies would manage Cricket Australia's digital products, including Cricket Australia Live App, cricket.com.au, bigbash.com.au and community cricket applications such as My-Cricket as well

community.cricket.com.au.

"...this partnership will serve as a blueprint for organisations worldwide who are exploring technology platforms that can scale existing value chains into ecosystem-centric business models, resulting in inspiring and exceptional experiences," said Michael Horton, HCL executive vice president and country manager, Australia and New Zealand.

Cricket Australia CEO Kevin Roberts said: "Cricket is rapidly evolving, and part of that evolution involves advancements in technology and the digital landscape...HCL, as our official digital technology partner, will help take our digital offerings to the next level."

# Dhawan ruled out with fracture

ICC accedes to BCCI's request to name Pant as the replacement



K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR  
SOUTHAMPTON

Shikhar Dhawan has been ruled out of the ICC World Cup following a final confirmation that the fracture in his left thumb will need more time to heal. Subsequently, the BCCI sought permission from the ICC to name Rishabh Pant as the replacement and the request was approved.

The Indian team manager Sunil Subramaniam, who addressed the media at the Hampshire Bowl here on Wednesday, said: "Shikhar has a fracture on the base of his first metacarpal (near the thumb) on his left hand. Following several specialist opinions, he will remain in a cast till mid-July which rules him out of the ICC World Cup. We have written to the ICC and requested for Rishabh Pant as the replacement."

Dhawan was struck on his hand by a delivery from Pat Cummins during the course of his 117 against Australia at the Oval on June 9. The southpaw, however, continued batting till he was dismissed in the 37th over. The team-management, on learning about the opener's



**Tough luck:** Shikhar Dhawan will feel hard done to not take any further part in the mega show, especially considering the terrific touch he was in. •AP

injury, stated that a decision would be taken after 10 to 12 days as it needed a fair timeframe to judge Dhawan's state of recovery.

### Contingency measure

As a contingency measure, Pant was asked to join the team as stand-by and get acclimatised to the conditions in England. Interestingly, in all its communication specific to Dhawan's injury back then, the BCCI did not mention the word 'fracture'. Now with Dhawan being deemed unavailable, India will continue to stick with Rohit Sharma and K.L. Rahul as its opening pair. The duo

added 136 runs during last Sunday's clash against Pakistan at Old Trafford.

Meanwhile, Dhawan limbered up with the rest of the squad here in a morning training session. He bantered with his teammates, kept an eye on Jasprit Bumrah's solo effort in the adjoining nets and warmly greeted a senior scribe and strode away with a laconic smile. Pant, the opener's replacement, did his practice stints too.

Dhawan posted a video-message and a note on Twitter which stated: "I feel emotional to announce that I will no longer be a part of

### Dhawan in ICC ODI events (WORLD CUP & CHAMPIONS TROPHY)

Matches: **20**  
Runs: **1,238**  
HS: **137**  
Avg.: **65.15**  
100s: **6** | 50s: **4**

CWC19. Unfortunately, the thumb won't recover on time. But the show must go on. I am grateful for all the love and support from my team mates, cricket lovers and our entire nation. Jai Hind!"

# The man behind Team India's fitness flourish

We have had the least number of injuries in the last three-four years: trainer Basu

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR  
SOUTHAMPTON

In the distant past, Indian cricketers would jog, dunk some biscuits in tea, train in the nets and off the field, dig into greasy food while the calories soared. Cut to the present, the Men in Blue prepare scientifically as they blend ideal work-outs, monitored diets and perfect sleep-patterns.

At the Hampshire Bowl here on Wednesday, Indian team's trainer Shanker Basu explained to the media about how Virat Kohli's men gear up for their sporting battles. "Rome was never built in a day and this team's brand of training started in 2015," Basu said.

### Immense value

There is a zing to Indian fast bowlers these days and Basu attributed that to prime fitness: "In the last one year, (Jasprit) Bumrah, (Mohammed) Shami, Ishant (Sharma), Bhuvu (Bhuvneshwar Kumar) and Umesh (Yadav) have bowled much quicker. We did a few lifestyle modifications and we got this GPS last year. It gave us data that is of immense value, based on that we understood our training methodology and prepared our schedules. All this helped our fast bowlers bowl at more than 140 and 145 clicks (kmph)."

Asked about the lifestyle modifications and also the IPL's impact, Basu replied: "We educated them about the circadian rhythm. The human body has a particular



**Reaping the rewards:** Shanker Basu, right, seen with manager Sunil Subramaniam, feels that India's brand of training which started in 2015 is yielding dividends now. •COURTESY: BCCI-TV

sort of sleep-wake cycle but what happens during the IPL is that the boys take a beating. This World Cup preparation was critical (especially) with the IPL preceding it. We used to jokingly say that the IPL is a sort of Mount Everest, then we come to the base camp and then we are coming to Kilimanjaro here. During the IPL, the boys sleep late - 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock. To get them back to sleeping early and to do a training regimen was a challenge and we had only eight days to come here. Since the boys have done it over the last four years, they quickly understood the value of sleep-wake cycle, good nutrition programme, supplements, training, strength work, conditioning and warm-ups. It has made a difference. The IPL's impact, Basu replied: "We educated them about the circadian rhythm. The human body has a particular

camp could have been counter-productive."

### Self awareness

Basu reiterated that the players were nudged to watch their diet and become self-aware. "We introduced a Dexa-scan which is used for checking bone density and fat percentage. The moment you have a number in your hand and it says 20, 30, 10 or 12, there is a sort of healthy competition within the team. What are the ways you can bring down the fat percentage? One is healthy eating habits. Everybody started eating better, they lost fat and moved better. We have had the least number of injuries in the last three to four years. The players have cut on junk (food). This team is as good as an athletic team. We also did a DNA test that gives you an indication of what sort of a person you exactly are - whether you are

power-oriented or endurance-oriented, whether you are gluten-intolerant or lactose-intolerant. We gave them the report card and they made informed decisions and that was really gratifying," Basu said.

### Blessing in disguise

He also lauded Shami's metamorphosis: "He failing the fitness test was a blessing in disguise. After that, he was a changed man. We have done his fat testing over three years and it is the same. He has changed his entire training regimen and training is part of his lifestyle. This is 2.0 version of Shami."

Moving from the tropical heat of India to England's alleged summer where temperatures dip and the rain is a constant companion, Basu has a tough task on his hands in the coming days but he trusts his wards to stay warm and fit.

# India back in training after a break

Afternoon drizzle forces suspension of team practice

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SOUTHAMPTON

After a two-day break following the big game against Pakistan at Manchester's Old Trafford, Virat Kohli's men were back in training at the Hampshire Bowl here on Wednesday. First up, most of them including the skipper and M.S. Dhoni indulged in a spot of sepak takraw, a sport akin to volleyball but one in which only the legs and head were permitted to be used while relaying the ball across the net.

There was chit-chat and comedy too as Hardik Pandya and Yuzvendra Chahal got struck awkwardly while the rest laughed. Later, the Men in Blue trooped to the adjacent practice ground and had a round of nets till an afternoon drizzle forced them to seek the indoor facility. Rohit Sharma, Kohli,



**Follow the coach:** Vijay Shankar and B. Arun during practice in Southampton on Wednesday. •AP

K.L. Rahul, Pandya and Dhoni had a hit, while Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah wheeled their arms over. Coach Ravi Shastri then had a long chat with Kohli and Pandya.

Dinesh Karthik, meanwhile, did his wicketkeeping drills at the main ground

and Kuldeep Yadav had to do his shuttle runs as part of his fitness regimen. Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who is recovering from a hamstring strain, jogged a bit and even ran up the stairs but he is unlikely to be fit in time for Saturday's clash against Afghanistan.

# Aussie test awaits Bangladesh

### PREVIEW

IANS  
NOTTINGHAM

Buoyed by its emphatic win over West Indies, Bangladesh will be brimming with confidence when it faces a stiff test against Australia in a crucial World Cup fixture at Trent Bridge, here on Thursday.

On Monday, Bangladesh came out with a commanding performance in the game against the Windies as it comfortably chased down 322-run target in Taunton. Shakib al Hasan (124 not out) and Liton Das (94 not out) played brilliant knocks as the Bangla Tigers made mockery of the Windies total and crossed the line with more than 50 balls to spare.

With wins against South Africa and Windies, Bangladesh has declared that it is



**Getting ready:** Glenn Maxwell gets throwdowns at a training session ahead of Australia's match against Bangladesh. •AFP

no more underdog and, now, it would aim to make a place in the semifinals.

Mashrafe Mortaza's men have been excellent so far, but it would be really interesting to see if they can live up to the challenge of competing against the five-time champion.

Australia has not been at

the top of its game so far. It has suffered batting collapses and has been put under pressure.

Despite that, it has been able to register four victories. Pacers Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins are proving to be a nightmare to face for the opposition, barring India which took them for plenty at the Kennington Oval.

Skipper Aaron Finch and David Warner are providing solid starts and laying the platform for the likes of Steve Smith, who has been a rock in the middle order.

Thus, it would require a below par performance from the defending champions to lose against Bangladesh.

# Ice-cool Williamson pilots New Zealand to the top

Kiwis' exciting four-wicket win puts South Africa on the brink of elimination

SHAYAN ACHARYA  
BIRMINGHAM

New Zealand rode on Kane Williamson's unbeaten century to clinch a thrilling four-wicket victory against South Africa at Edgbaston on Wednesday.

In a game reduced to 49 overs-a-side, New Zealand restricted the Proteas to 241 for six. The Kiwis lost opener Colin Munro early before Martin Guptill and Williamson forged a 60-run stand. Guptill was hit-wicket off a delivery from Andile Phehlukwayo.

Chris Morris then removed Ross Taylor and Tom Latham in quick succession. With the side in trouble at 80 for four, Williamson was involved in two crucial partnerships - 37 with Jimmy Neesham (23) and 91 with Colin de Grandhomme (60, 47b, 5x4, 2x6).

### Getting it wrong

David Miller dropped de Grandhomme off Imran Tahir in the 37th over and a few balls later, Williamson edged to the 'keeper - later confirmed by replays. Though a confident Tahir appealed, his teammates didn't back him.

Williamson made the Proteas pay for that lapse, guiding the team home. He finished with a flourish, smashing Phehlukwayo for a six to reach his century. His unbeaten 106 off 138 deliveries



**Kane is able:** Williamson combined style with substance during his match-winning knock. •REUTERS

ies contained nine boundaries and a six.

### Deadly strikes

Earlier in the day, Trent Boult vindicated his captain's decision to field first, castingling Quinton de Kock. Skipper Faf

de Plessis (23), too, departed soon, failing to keep out a perfect yorker from Ferguson, who finished with three wickets.

Barring Hashim Amla and Rassie van der Dussen, the other South African batsmen

### Where they stand

Team	Mat	Won	Lost	NR	PTS	NRR
New Zealand	5	4	0	1	9	1.591
England	5	4	1	0	8	1.862
Australia	5	4	1	0	8	0.812
India	4	3	0	1	7	1.029
Bangladesh	5	2	2	1	5	-0.270
Sri Lanka	5	1	2	2	4	-1.778
West Indies	5	1	3	1	3	0.272
South Africa	6	1	4	1	3	-0.193
Pakistan	5	1	3	1	3	-1.933
Afghanistan	5	0	5	0	0	-2.089

\*Till the South Africa-New Zealand match on June 19

INNINGS SCAN		PROGRESSION	
RSA	NZ	RSA	NZ
2	Maidens 1	40/1	10 overs 43/1
18	Fours 24	73/2	20 overs 86/4
4	Sixes 3	123/3	30 overs 124/4
72	Best stand 91	166/4	39 overs 183/5
(5th)	(6th)	241/6	49 overs --
4.91	RR 5.05		

### TOP SHOWS

For	Batting	Bowling
South Africa	van der Dussen 67* (64b, 2x4, 3x6)	Morris 3/49 (10)
New Zealand	Williamson 106* (138, 9x4, 1x6)	Ferguson 3/59 (10)

### SCOREBOARD NEW ZEALAND VS SOUTH AFRICA

#### SOUTH AFRICA

Quinton de Kock b Boult 5 (8b, 1x4), Hashim Amla b Santner 55 (83b, 4x4), Faf du Plessis b Ferguson 23 (35b, 4x4), Aiden Markram c Munro b de Grandhomme 38 (55b, 4x4), Rassie van der Dussen (not out) 67 (64b, 2x4, 3x6), David Miller c Boult b Ferguson 36 (37b, 2x4, 1x6), Andile Phehlukwayo c Williamson b Ferguson 0 (5b), Chris Morris (not out) 6 (7b, 1x4); Extras (lb-7, w-4): 11; Total (for six wkts. in 49 overs): 241.

#### FALL OF WICKETS

1-9 (de Kock, 1.5 overs), 2-59 (du Plessis, 13.6), 3-111 (Amla, 27.4), 4-136 (Markram, 32.3), 5-208 (Miller, 44.5), 6-218 (Phehlukwayo, 46.3).

#### NEW ZEALAND BOWLING

Henry 10-2-34-0, Boult 10-0-63-1, Ferguson 10-0-59-3, de Grandhomme 10-0-33-1, Santner 9-0-45-1.

#### NEW ZEALAND

Martin Guptill hit wkt. b Phehlukwayo 35 (59b, 5x4),

Colin Munro c & b Rabada 9 (5b, 2x4), Kane Williamson (not out) 103 (138b, 8x4, 1x6), Ross Taylor c de Kock b Morris 1 (2b), Tom Latham c de Kock b Morris 1 (4b), James Neesham c Amla b Morris 23 (34b, 3x4), Colin de Grandhomme c du Plessis b Ngidi 60 (47b, 5x4, 2x6), Mitchell Santner (not out) 2 (3b); Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-6): 8; Total (for six wkts. in 48.3 overs): 242.

#### FALL OF WICKETS

1-12 (Munro, 2.1), 2-72 (Guptill, 14.6), 3-74 (Taylor, 16.1), 4-80 (Latham, 18.1), 5-137 (Neesham, 32.2), 6-228 (de Grandhomme 47.1).

#### SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING

Rabada 10-0-42-1, Ngidi 10-1-47-1, Morris 10-0-49-3, Phehlukwayo 8.3-0-70-1, Tahir 10-0-33-0.

#### Toss: New Zealand.

#### Man-of-the-match: Kane Williamson.

New Zealand won by four wickets with three balls to spare.

### STAT SPHERE

Williamson has taken the fewest innings to 1000 ODI runs in England  
17 Williamson  
18 Rohit  
19 Dhawan  
21 Richards  
22 David & Trescottick  
23 Bairstow

Williamson has recorded his first World Cup century and also his first back-to-back 50-plus score  
1 Tahir is the lone spinner to concede a six in this WC (min: 10 overs)  
5 Number of times Boult has dismissed de Kock in ODIs, the most by a bowler

Amla has become the fourth South African to reach 8,000 ODI runs, after

Kallis, de Villiers and Gibbs.

He is also the second fastest player (176 inns) to the milestone, after Kohli (175)

**THE BREAK-UP**  
1k: 24; 2k: 40; 3k: 57; 4k: 81; 5k: 101; 6k: 123; 7k: 150; 8k: 176

**76.14** van der Dussen's ODI average, the best among batsmen who have played a minimum of 10 games

**Lowest strike rate in this WC (min: 100 balls)**  
56.72 Rahmat Shah  
59.02 Amla  
60.66 Hashmatullah  
61.16 Noor Ali Zadran  
65.43 Imam

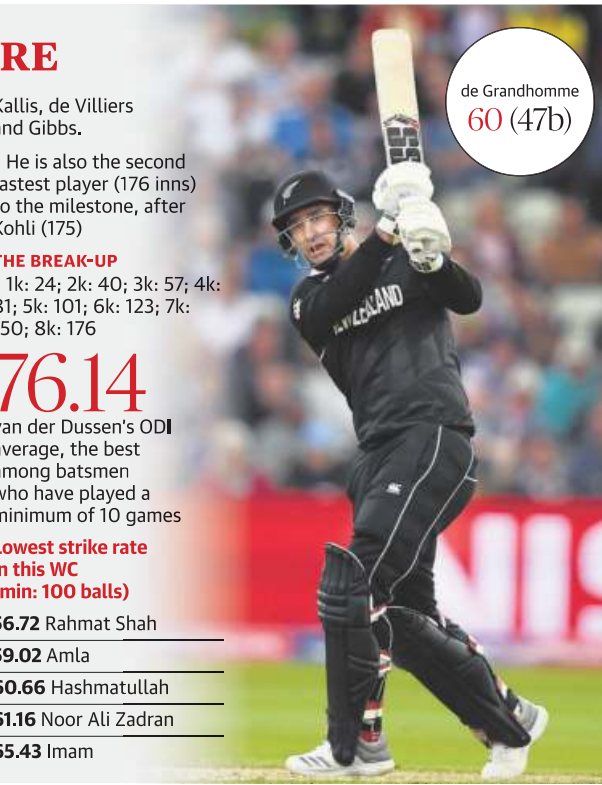
### Next assignment

**NEW ZEALAND:** June 22 vs West Indies, Old Trafford, 6 p.m.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** June 23 vs Pakistan, Lord's, 3 p.m.

THE FACE-OFF					
Australia v Bangladesh			TRENT BRIDGE		
HEAD-TO-HEAD		FINCH		MORTAZA	
Matches	Aus	Ban	Tied	NR	
Overall	20	18	1	0	1
World Cup	2	2	0	0	0

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 (SD & HD), 3 P.M.



de Grandhomme  
**60 (47b)**











**Ancient citadel** (Clockwise from left) Wat Arun, streetfood in Bangkok and tuk-tuks in Chinatown • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK



for lunch. The chain store 7-Eleven is everyone's best friend for quick munchies. Grab a yoghurt and make way for the glorious fruit cart. It is filled with the sweetest pineapples, juiciest guavas and toothsome mangoes.

Order a Grab bike and weave your way rapidly through traffic to Wat Arun, the scenic Buddhist temple on the banks of the Chao Phraya river. Head to the east bank and pay four baht to sail to the other side. It is a good place to introduce oneself to old shrines and the captivating Thai culture. Stroll around, and if you are into photography, your lens will not shy away.

Next, find your way to Saranrom Park for a serene afternoon. Sit back and unwind for an hour or two by writing, reading or whatever charges your imaginative side. Don't be surprised if a squad of college students runs up and records a video of you conversing with them in English.

**Eat to shop**  
Find yet another Grab bike and get to bustling Yaowarat street, located in one of the largest Chinatowns. Large billboards in yellow and red push against golden noodle baskets and Chinese cutlery for sale. Get lost in the numerous sois and discover Chinese antiques. The aroma here is a blend of spicy bird's eye chillies, fragrant teas, and flavour-centric seafood. Dive in and eat, then bargain with a tuk-tuk driver for a ride to Pratunam market, where you can splurge on clothes and accessories. They always have sales in the little lanes, so shop to your heart's content.

Head over to Jack's Bar close to the Shangri-La Hotel and breathe in the Bangkok air from the deck overlooking a sunset-skyscraper landscape. Local beers here, such as Leo and Singha, are available cheap, and combined with the view, there is a chance you will choose to end your night here.

If not, head to Gaa for their distinctive 14-course tasting menu and it is okay to make a reservation for one. Helmed by head chef and owner Garima Arora from Mumbai, simple and local Thai ingredients combine with her Indian roots to make for a memorable meal. Chances are high that you may make a friend while you are tasting adventure around the City of Angels.

# Lounging with the angels

Here's an indulgent way to spend a day in Bangkok

APORVA PRAKASH

Bangkok is a destination that welcomes travellers of all sorts to the city's inbred maze. Architecture and culinary delights form the stand-out highlights of this capital. 'Soi', which means lanes, is a part of the local lingo and happens to be casually thrown around by every passing tuk-tuk or bike taxi. Yes, bike taxi is a well-versed concept around this

nation and a perfect getaway for every solo traveller in the midst of traffic. Since globalisation took over in the 20th Century, we have all formed our likes and dislikes. This captivating city, however, has always managed to outshine and cater to every diverse human. If you desire a self-indulgent day, Bangkok has plenty to offer.

**Carpe diem**  
Step out of your plush hotel, hos-



tel or Airbnb before noon, because it's crucial to make the most of your day. The temperature hovers around 25 degrees Celsius or higher, so grab yourself an iced coffee from a local street vendor. If you are not Thai, his hands are going to go straight for that Nescafe glass bottle. Stop him and ask for that rich Thai coffee. Whether you want it served black, sweetened with condensed milk, or just good old sugar, the choice is yours. But try this local cup of joe.

For breakfast, go light with the intention of keeping some room

### BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI

In 1942, Kanchanaburi in Thailand was under Japanese control. It was here that Asian forced labourers and Allied POWs, building the infamous Burma Railway, constructed a bridge. Almost half of the prisoners died.



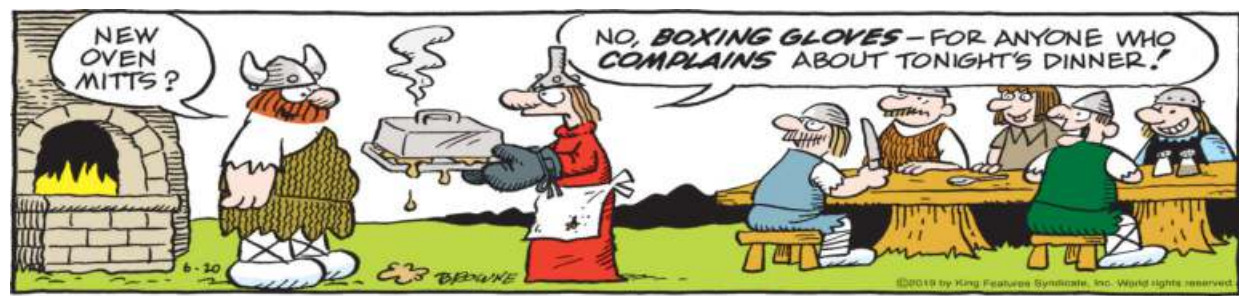
### POOCH CAFE



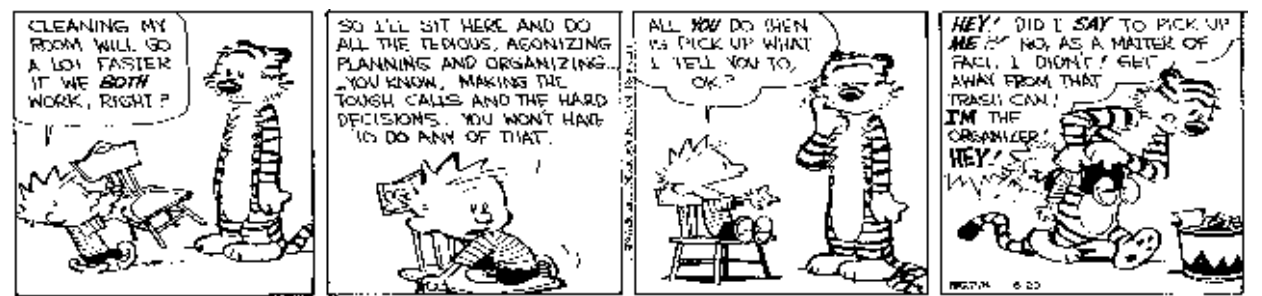
### PEANUTS



### HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



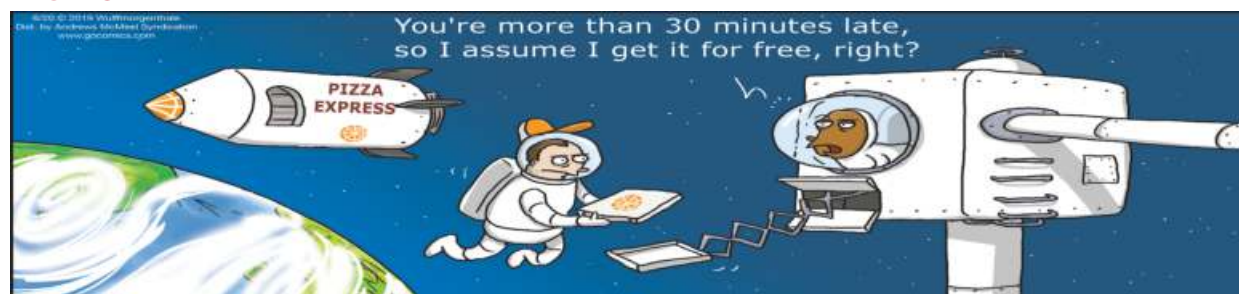
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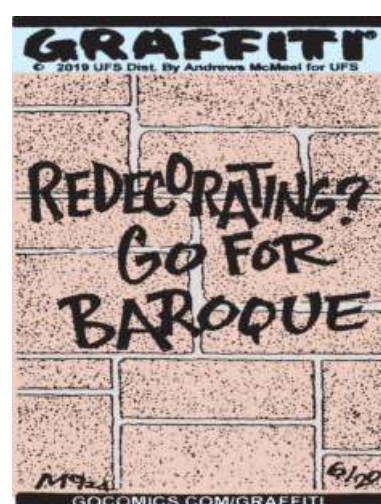
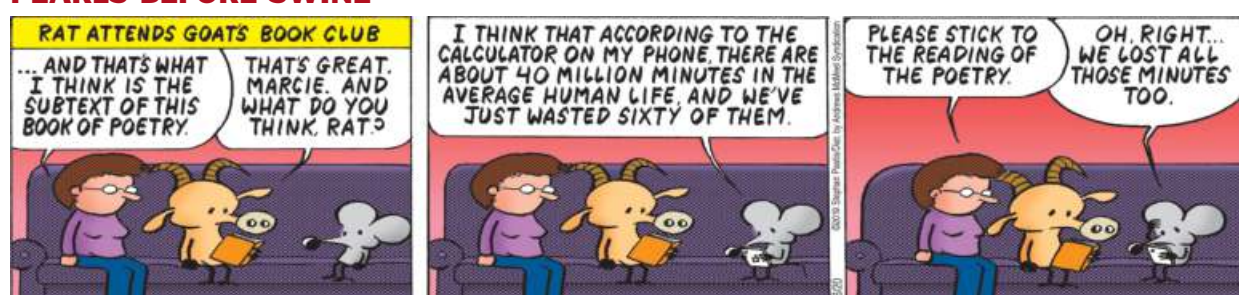
### TIGER



### WUMO



### PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



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by Bron Smith

CAN THE DASH DIET REDUCE MY RISK OF HEART FAILURE?

THE DASH DIET WAS DESIGNED TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE WITHOUT MEDICATION. THERE'S ONE BIG CATCH... YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW IT.

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Health Capsules is a trademark of the publisher.

### THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13101

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

- 1 Extended built-up area (11)
- 2 Acknowledge (3)
- 3 Without assistance
- 4 Skimpy bathing costume (6)
- 5 Larceny (5)
- 6 Aim (9)
- 7 Young people (11)
- 8 Chirping insect (11)
- 9 Sparkling wine (9)
- 10 Storage container (3)
- 11 Easily understood (5)
- 12 Section (anag) - spots (7)
- 13 Section (anag) - spots (7)
- 14 Broken pieces of pottery (6)
- 15 Disappear (6)
- 16 Blow up (7)
- 17 Inexpensive (5)
- 18 Label - children's game (3)
- 19 Projecting bay window - Oxford college (5)
- 20 Information (3)
- 21 Label - children's game (3)
- 22 Prestigious group of US universities (3,6)
- 23 Information (3)
- 24 Waterproof boots (11)

Solution will appear in The Hindu dated June 21, 2019.

Solution No. 13100

C	R	R	A	N	T	H	M	M		
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## IN BRIEF



### Gun 'that ended Van Gogh's life' sold

PARIS

The revolver with which Vincent van Gogh is believed to have shot himself sold for €162,500 at a Paris auction on Wednesday — nearly three times the estimate. Billed as “the most famous weapon in the history of art”, the rusty 7 mm Lefauchaux revolver was bought by a private collector with a telephone bid. The troubled Dutch painter died in July 1890. AFP



### Cat-fox of Corsica may be a new species

In the forest of northern Corsica, two wildlife rangers have revealed a striped, tawny-coated animal, one of 16 felines known as “cat-foxes” and thought to be a new species. “We believe that it’s a wild natural species which was known but not scientifically identified because it’s an extremely inconspicuous animal with nocturnal habits,” they said. AFP



### Thailand temple has altar featuring David Beckham

BANGKOK

Soccer legend David Beckham has such a global appeal and fan base that a Buddhist temple in Thailand has a gold-painted statue of the footballer on an altar. The Pariwat temple has turned it into a surprising tourist attraction. REUTERS

# Cancer cell detection ‘dots’ developed from coal

CQDs are futuristic materials whose demand is on the rise

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

A team of scientists in Assam has developed a chemical process that turns ‘dirty’ coal into a biomedical ‘dot’ to help detect cancer cells.

The team, led by Binoy Kumar Saikia and Tonkeswar Das, has applied for a patent for their chemical method of producing carbon quantum dots (CQDs) from cheap, abundant, low-quality and high-sulphur coals.

CQDs are carbon-based nanomaterials whose size is less than 10 nm, or nanometre.

“Carbon-based nanomaterials are used as diagnostic tools for bio-imaging, especially in detecting cancer cells, for chemical sensing and in opto-electronics. A few chemical companies in the U.S. and Japan have been manufacturing CQDs. What we have done is develop fluorescent carbon nanomaterials at one-twentieth the cost of imported CQDs,” Mr. Saikia told *The Hindu* on Wednesday.



Binoy K. Saikia, second from right, in the lab with coal and carbon quantum dots (inset). ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He is a scientist in the polymer petroleum and coal chemistry group of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR-NEIST) in Assam’s Jorhat.

The CQDs that the CSIR-NEIST team developed emit a bluish colour with “high-stability, good-conductivity, low-toxicity, environmental friendliness, and good optical properties”. The study was published in the *Journal of Photochemistry and*

*Photobiology.*

“Our source material is abundant, low-quality Indian coal not directly suitable for thermal electricity production. Even if the selling price is twice our cost of production of ₹50 per ml, it will be much cheaper than the imported CQDs with market price of up to ₹2,000 per ml,” he said.

Scientists said CQDs are futuristic materials whose demand in India has been increasing leading to a considerable volume of import.

# Entrapped turtles rescued in Goa

The ghost nets are hazardous to marine life

PRAKASH KAMAT  
PANAJI

The sea turtles entrapped in a net and washed ashore on three beaches in Goa last week have been released back into the ocean.

Earlier this week, Drishti lifeguards spotted sea turtles in a fishing net and washed up on the shore in Betalbatim, Cavelossim, and Rajbag Canacona, South Goa.

The incidents were re-

ported to the Forest department immediately. Drishti is a lifeguard agency contracted by Goa Tourism department to guard its coastline, for the safety of tourists and others.

The turtles were freed from the net and examined. As medical intervention was not required, the turtles were released back into the ocean. Marine Wildlife Stranding Network, Ocean

Watch – Goa, expressed strong concern over the incident. The nets in which the marine mammals get entangled are commonly called ghost nets. These are fishing nets that have been lost or discarded by fishermen in the ocean. The nets are hazardous to turtles and other marine life

Once caught, the weight of net may not allow them to surface.