



NEARBY



'Govt. has ignored benefits of cannabis'

NEW DELHI
There is not a single document which shows that cannabis is lethal to humans, a social cause litigation has claimed before the Delhi High Court in its pursuit to bring an end to various existing laws in India that prohibit and criminalise its use.

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FRIDAY REVIEW ► 8 PAGES
(TABLOID)

Karnataka CM asked to prove majority by 1.30 p.m. today

Govt.'s fall appears imminent as Governor sets deadline; rebels to skip session

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In what came as a shock to the Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) government in Karnataka, Governor Vajubhai Vala has directed Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy to prove his majority by 1.30 p.m. on the floor of the Assembly on Friday.

With the rebel MLAs resolute in their stand that they will not attend the session, the fall of the 13-month-old government appears imminent.

The Governor's direction came after the House adjourned earlier on Thursday amid a heated debate without a vote on the confidence motion moved by the Chief Minister.



Sleeping over: B.S. Yeddyurappa sleeping in the Assembly Hall in protest on Thursday. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

This was despite the Governor sending a message to Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar, expressing a desire that the House complete the pro-

cess by the end of the day. The ruling party leaders, who had argued that the Governor's message was an infringement on their rights,

also opposed the deadline he set for the Chief Minister. However, the Opposition BJP, which had petitioned the Governor against the "delay" in putting the confidence motion to vote, welcomed his directive.

In the night, the entire BJP Legislature Party, led by Leader of the Opposition B.S. Yeddyurappa, slept in the Assembly, protesting against the delay in the motion being put to vote. Mr. Yeddyurappa called it a "diversionary tactic" to prolong the trust vote.

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NEED TIME TO CLARIFY ISSUES RAISED BY REBELS: CM ► PAGE 8
SC REMOVED WHIP-ISSUING POWER: CONGRESS ► PAGE 12

SC to hear Ayodhya title dispute cases from Aug. 2

Mediation panel told to submit report by August 1

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, on Thursday fixed the Ayodhya title dispute cases for hearing from August 2.

It asked the Registry to keep the case records ready and the mediation committee, led by the former Supreme Court judge F.M.I. Kallifulla, to submit by August 1 a report on the outcome of the proceedings till July 31. The mediation is the court's initiative to amicably resolve the dispute. The order came after the court perused a progress report filed by the committee earlier this week. It was filed on the basis of a July 11 order.

"Taking into account what has been brought to

Work in progress

Jan. 8: Supreme Court sets up a Constitution Bench to hear the case

Jan. 29: Centre moves court seeking permission to return the 67-acre acquired land around the disputed site to owners

Feb. 26: Court favours mediation, fixes March 5 for order on whether to refer matter to the mediator

March 6: Court reserves order on whether the dispute can be settled through mediation

March 8: Court refers the dispute for mediation by a panel headed by former judge F.M.I. Kallifulla



July 18: A Constitution Bench fixes the cases for hearing from August 2. It also asks the mediation committee to submit by August 1 a report on the outcome of the proceedings till July 31

our notice by the report, we fix the hearing of the cases on and from 2.8.2019. The Bench will assemble again on the said date, i.e., 2.8.2019, at 2.00 p.m. Office to make the cases ready...

We request the mediation panel to inform the court the outcome of the proceedings as on 31.7.2019 by 1.8.2019..." the order read.

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Owner of Saravana Bhavan dies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Owner of the Saravana Bhavan chain of restaurants P. Rajagopal, 72, who was ailing, died in a city hospital on Thursday. Last week, he surrendered in a sessions court to serve the life sentence awarded to him for abduction and murder of an employee in 2001. The court later allowed him to be shifted to a private hospital for treatment.

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Stranded at home



Assam's 28 districts remained affected by the floods, which claimed nine lives on Thursday. The Kaziranga National Park is still under the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, forcing one-horned rhinos to take refuge on a mound of land. • REUTERS (PAGE 9)

FinMin expects no flight of FPIs on higher tax

Companies won't be hit, she says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The increase in tax on high net worth individuals, announced in the Union Budget, will not result in an outflow of Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPIs), Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

The higher tax will only apply to individuals and FPIs registered as trusts, which are also treated as individuals. The FPIs that are registered as companies will

not be affected, she said.

"The increase in the effective tax rate is only on individuals who are earning above a certain amount per year, and this includes forms of FPIs that are registered as trusts, which are treated as individuals," Ms. Sitharaman said in her reply during the debate on the Finance Bill in the Lok Sabha.

The House passed the Finance Bill after the debate.

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CONGRESS UPSET ► PAGE 12

Release Jadhav forthwith, India tells Pakistan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) asked Pakistan to review the death penalty given to former naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav, India called upon Pakistan to release him forthwith.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, making a statement in both Houses of Parliament, said India would vigorously continue its efforts to bring him back.

Mr. Jaishankar described the verdict as a vindication of India's position and a reiteration of the rule of law.

"We once again call upon Pakistan to release and repatriate him forthwith. Pakistan was found to have deprived India of the right to communicate with Shri Jadhav, have access to him, visit him in detention and arrange his legal representation. The government will vigorously continue its efforts to ensure his safety and well-being, as well as his early return to India," Mr. Jaishankar said.

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GIVE ACCESS TO JADHAV, INDIA TELLS PAKISTAN ► PAGE 13
A REPRIEVE ► EDITORIAL

Wayanad's tribal hamlets one step from 100% literacy

E.M.MANOJ
KALPETTA

After making two successful forays into the tribal hamlets of Wayanad, Kerala's State Literacy Mission (SLM) is all set to earn the '100% literate' badge for the outlier region, which has the highest tribal population among all districts. Tribal pockets are among a handful of areas where full literacy remains elusive in the State.

As part of its efforts, the SLM drew up the Wayanad Literacy Equivalency and Attappadi Literacy Equivalency programmes, besides Samagra, a framework to develop effective schooling strategies. They addressed gaps in literacy programmes for marginalised people.

"The initiatives were a huge success and we were inspired to pursue 100% literacy among tribal people in Wayanad by end-2020," SLM Director P.S. Sreekala said.

So far, the literacy campaign has touched the lives of people in 483 remote tribal hamlets among 2,000 such habitations in the district. In 2017, when the first phase began, there were 4,309 learners from 283 hamlets.

Ahead of the second phase, the SLM surveyed 4,371 houses in 200 tribal hamlets and found that 5,342 individuals, including



Some residents of a tribal hamlet in Wayanad working on lessons in class.

3,133 women, were illiterate. With help from educators, 3,179 residents, including 2,590 women, made progress and took the literacy test recently.

The project is now focussed on the remaining 1,517 hamlets in the third phase, and it has attracted wide public participation, Dr. Sreekala said. Classes will begin soon here.

Instructors' role
Instructors play a key role in spreading literacy, and they are to be recruited from among the residents themselves.

The quest is to identify those who speak various indigenous languages as they get a good response from the learners.

"The programme has helped many tribal people," said M. Geethanandan, State coordinator, Adivasi Gothra Mahasabha.

"It has helped school dropouts continue their studies, and the SLM should have programmes for such aspirants," he added.

IN BRIEF



Speaker sends legal notice to BJP MLA Sirsa

NEW DELHI
Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel on Thursday sent a legal notice to BJP MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa, terming remarks made by the latter on Twitter against Mr. Goel as "false" and "defamatory". Retweeting a photo of a white SUV on which it was written 'Son of MLA', Mr. Sirsa had said on July 15, "This vehicle belongs to son of AAP MLA and Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel..." The Speaker has asked Mr. Sirsa to immediately withdraw all the allegations and tender an unconditional apology in writing.

Delhi Cong. appoints 3 new spokespersons

NEW DELHI
DPCC president Sheila Dikshit on Thursday appointed three new spokespersons for the Delhi Congress. The three new spokespersons are Rohit Manchanda, Pushpender Srivastava and Ratan Jain.

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	85	Gurugram	58
Ghaziabad	133	Faridabad	88
Noida	87	Greater Noida	88
Good	0-50	Satisfactory	51-100
Moderate	101-200	Poor	201-300
Very poor	301-400	Severe	>401

Source: CPCB

Govt. has ignored benefits of cannabis, claims plea in HC

Petition challenges NDPS Act that criminalises cultivation and use of the drug

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

There is not a single document which shows that cannabis is lethal to human, a social cause litigation has claimed before the Delhi High Court in its pursuit to bring an end to various existing laws in India that prohibit and criminalise its use.

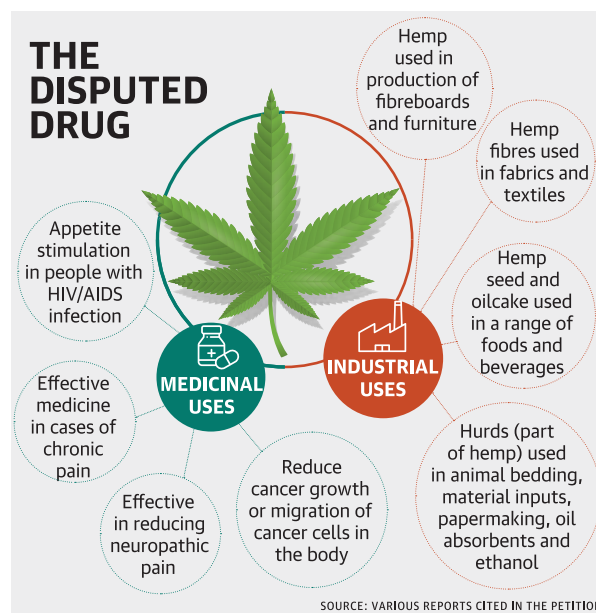
Bangalore-based cannabis advocacy group Great Legalisation Movement India, in its petition, has challenged various sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and Rules that criminalise the cultivation, possession and use of cannabis.

Seeks more details

A Bench of Justice G.S. Sistani and Justice Jyoti Singh, which heard the petition on Thursday, asked for more details on the plea, including on the aspect of regulation while raising concerns over rising drug abuse cases.

The Bench has posted the hearing on the petition in late August.

The advocacy group, represented by senior counsel Arvind Datar and advocate J. Sai Deepak, said that the prohibition on cannabis in India happened in 1985, after the



passing of the NDPS Act.

"The treatment of cannabis at par with other harmful and lethal chemicals is arbitrary, unscientific, unreasonable and hence unconstitutional," the petition filed through advocate Avinash Kumar Sharma said.

It argued that various scientific research papers published by the World Health Organisation and the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission (IHDC) (1894) establish its medicinal benefits.

The IHDC had concluded that the total prohibition of the cultivation of the hemp plant and manufacture of drugs derived from it was not necessary, the plea said.

It argued that NDPS Bill, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 23, 1985, was passed after merely four days of legislative debate. "The issues addressed by the members of Parliament were predominantly restricted to the problem of illicit drug trafficking and

drug addiction among the youth," the plea argued.

Nowhere in the debates was there a discussion on the history of use of cannabis in India, the findings of the IHDC or the effects of cannabis on human health nor was any scientific or technical report relied upon, the petition said.

The plea argued that the government failed to take into consideration the medicinal benefits of cannabis which includes its affect as an analgesic, its role in fighting cancer, reducing nausea and increasing appetite in HIV patients.

Also, cannabis has immense industrial application which include its use as biodegradable plastic, fibres and other items. It additionally said that countries, including U.S., Canada, South Africa and the Netherlands have started legalising the medicinal, industrial and recreational use of cannabis.

Curious case of 'bhaang'

It is unfathomable as to how there are government-run 'bhaang' shops running in this country when the cultivation of cannabis is prohibited under the Act, the plea argued.

NGT raps official over Ridge encroachment

DM asked to file affidavit within 1 week

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) pulled up the New Delhi District Magistrate for delay in submission of information pertaining to the demarcation of the Southern Ridge.

A Bench headed by NGT judicial member Justice Raghuvendra S. Rathore noted that according to the tribunal's June 26 order, the district magistrates of South and South East had provided information about the total areas of land to be demarcated and illegal constructions were identified.

"It is difficult to under-

stand why DM New Delhi could not file an affidavit whereas the other two DMs have done so. It is due to such manner in which the officers are perusing the matter that demarcation and fencing of South East Delhi ridge could not be so far," the Bench, also comprising NGT expert member S.S. Garbyal, said.

Directing the official to file the affidavit within one week, the Bench said, "The usual excuse is being made by the officers, even today, that she has recently joined...we grant time of one week to the DM New Delhi to file affidavit."

Centre can't dictate to Delhi govt. on DMRC board nominees: Minister

Says both are 50:50 partners in the rapid transit system

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot on Thursday said that the Delhi government and the Centre are 50:50 partners in Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and the latter has no right to "dictate" on who the Delhi government should nominate to the DMRC board.

The Minister made the comments in a letter he wrote to the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in reply to the latter's letter to withdraw the Minister's recent nomination of "four private individuals" to the DMRC board of directors.

Four candidates

On July 13, Mr. Gahlot had nominated Aam Aadmi Party leaders Atishi and Raghav Chadha, vice-chairperson of the Delhi Dialogue and Development Commission Jas-



Kailash Gahlot

mine Shah; and Naveen Gupta, son of AAP Rajya Sabha MP N.D. Gupta, as the Delhi government's nominees to the board.

Mr. Gahlot said in the letter that the MoHUA's earlier letter relies upon the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Enterprises dated March, 16, 1992.

"A perusal of these guidelines shows that they, in fact, say quite the opposite of what Central government wants us to do," the letter read. "In fact, these guide-

lines strongly recommend that non-government officials should be nominated as Board Members," he said in the letter.

"Department of Public Enterprise vide DPE OM. No. 2(19)/99-GM dated January 2, 2000, instructed all Government Departments to bring down the number of Government Directors on Board of Directors of PSUs to two. In the case of DMRC, out of a total strength of 17 Directors, presently there are 6 Directors who are Government officers [5 Central government nominees and the MD who is a Delhi Government Nominee]. This is much more than what has been prescribed by Central government guidelines. Therefore, nomination of 4 Non-Government officials by Delhi Government is in accordance with the Central government guidelines," the Minister said in the letter.

Over 1,000 students get admission in DU under ECA

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Up to 1,027 students have been admitted to undergraduate courses at Delhi University under the Extra Curricular Activities quota, reveals data shared by the university on Thursday.

The most number of students were admitted under the theatre category at 110 students across colleges. Among these, Kirori Mal College got the most theatre students with seven, followed by Ramjas College and Zakir Hussain College which have taken in six students each. Theatre was followed by Indian classical dance which had 80 students admitted.

The highest number of students admitted to any one college under this category was five at Laxmibai College.

Overall, the most number of students admitted to a single college under a particular quota was nine students under the divinity quota at Mata Sundri College. Up to 19 students were admitted under the divinity quota in DU. Ten students were also admitted under the yoga quota. Apart from this, debate had 54 students admitted for English and 49 for Hindi.

ABVP's 'hooliganism' condemned

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The All India Democratic Students' Organisation and the CPI(M) on Thursday condemned the ABVP for its alleged "hooliganism" at a Delhi University's Academic Council meeting earlier in the week.

The way the ABVP was allowed to enter the Vice-Chancellor's lodge is a symbol of the relationship between the BJP government and the DU administration, the CPI (M) said. There is an attempt to change the syllabus through "immoral pressure" behind which a political motive is apparent, it added. The ADISO made similar allegations against the V-C.

IN BRIEF

'Sexual assault' on boys: DCW notice to police

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Commission for Women on Thursday issued notice to Delhi Police after it received a complaint pertaining to alleged sexual assault on three minor boys. The commission said that the complaint alleged that the victims, aged 15, 10 and nine were sodomised by boys from their neighbourhood.

17 head of cattle die in roof collapse, 5 injured

NEW DELHI
Seventeen animals — 13 buffaloes, two cows and two calves — died after a tin roof collapsed due to heavy rainfall in Najafgarh's Prem Nagar in the early hours of Thursday. The police said that the terrace was loaded with fodder and grass which fell on the cattle. Five buffaloes have also sustained injuries.

HC seeks list of banquet halls flouting norms

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Thursday asked the civic bodies here as to why no action has been taken against the banquet halls which are unlicensed and lack adequate fire safety measures. The court gave a "last chance" to the three civic bodies and the government to come up with a list of all such halls.

Snatchers who targeted women in west Delhi held

NEW DELHI
Two snatchers have been arrested for targeting women in west Delhi, the police said on Thursday. One countrymade pistol along with live cartridge and a motorcycle have been seized and two mobile phones have been recovered from their possession. The arrested accused were identified as Rajan and Golu.

Meat shop owner shot dead in Punjabi Bagh

NEW DELHI
A 34-year-old meat shop owner was shot dead allegedly by an acquaintance in west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh, the police said on Thursday. Victim Saleem Qureshi lived in Nangloi. A senior police officer said he was shot around 7 p.m. on Wednesday, following which he was rushed to Balaji Hospital where he succumbed to injuries around 11 p.m. The police suspect personal enmity behind the murder.

Aadhaar can take you places, but not to Nepal

Can't be construed as 'any other ID' issued by govt.: NCDRC

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

Following a complaint seeking compensation from an airline for refusing to accept Aadhaar card as a valid document for travel to Nepal, the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission held that Aadhaar cannot be construed as "any other ID issued by the Government of India" for travel to the country.

The observations came after contentions put forth by the complainant that the Aadhaar card falls within the category of "any other" ID issued by the government that is required for identification purposes at the time of issuance of boarding passes.

"This argument is erroneous. As Aadhaar number is a 12-digit random number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India



to the residents of India after satisfying the verification process laid down by the Authority and [it] can in no manner be construed to be 'any other ID issued by the Government of India' in the specific context of it being an acceptable travel document to travel to Nepal," the Bench held.

₹10,000 cost imposed

Taking note of the fact that the Bureau of Immigration "specifically proscribes" the use of Aadhaar as a valid travel document to Nepal and Bhutan, the NCDRC

dismissed the complaint while imposing cost on the complainant for moving a "frivolous" complaint.

"The complaint is dismissed with stern advice of caution to the complainant through the imposition of ₹10,000 to be deposited by the complainant with the Consumer Legal Aid Account of the District Forum... the objective being to emphasise that consumer protection fora are not meant to be tools for creating nuisance by filing frivolous and vexatious complaints," the consumer panel observed.

The directions came while the apex consumer disputes redressal forum was hearing an appeal moved by SpiceJet against orders of the district forum and state commission that had allowed the complaint against the airline.

IIT disciplinary body told to decide on sexual harassment complaint

Allegation levelled against a professor of the institute

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the Disciplinary Authority of IIT-Delhi to decide on a complaint of sexual harassment against one of its professors, within eight weeks.

Justice Vibhu Bakhru clarified that the petitioner could approach the High Court again if she was aggrieved by the decision of the Disciplinary Authority.

The court's order came on a plea seeking directions to the Board of Governors of IIT-Delhi, to take action on a report submitted by the internal complaints committee (ICC).

The petitioner had made a complaint of sexual harassment against the professor serving in the Department of Mechanical

Engineering at IIT-Delhi.

In her petition, she said her complaint was examined by the ICC and it submitted an inquiry report, dated May 18, 2018, to the Disciplinary Authority.

She claimed that the ICC found that the allegations made by her, including that of stalking, were correct and accordingly, recommended that punitive should action be taken against the professor.

She later approached the High Court due to "inaction" on the part of Disciplinary Authority.

The counsel representing IIT, Delhi said that the Disciplinary Authority had examined the report submitted by the ICC and had expressed a "prima facie view that the ICC report did not appear adequate for

charges of stalking".

"In view of the above, the Disciplinary Authority had considered it appropriate to give the accused a reasonable opportunity to submit a representation in accordance with Rule 15 of the Central Civil Services [Classification, Control & Appeal] Rules, 1965," the counsel said.

The counsel told the High Court that an informed decision would be taken in the matter on receipt of the representation from the professor.

In view of this, the High Court said, "The present petition is disposed of by directing respondent no.2 [Disciplinary Authority] to take a final view in the matter as expeditiously as possible and in any event, within a period of eight weeks."

Officers stop to relieve themselves, accused flees

He was held in a cheating case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 39-year-old man, who was arrested on Tuesday in a cheating case reported in east Delhi's Laxmi Nagar in January, fled from police custody on Thursday.

DCP (East) Jasmeet Singh has confirmed the incident.

A senior police officer said that Nitin Nagpal was arrested on Tuesday on charges of breach of trust and cheating and taken on three-day police remand. "Investigating officer of the

case, ASI Vijay Dutt and Constable Mohit Panwar had gone to Dehradun with Nitin on Wednesday for a raid as part of the probe. On the way, they had stopped at a restaurant in Khatauli, Muzaffarnagar, to relieve themselves. The accused went to the toilet and taking advantage of the darkness fled from there," the officer said.

Mr. Dutt, then informed senior officers about the incident. Teams have been formed to nab the accused, the police said.

Woman constable found dead at residence

No note found; investigation on

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 27-year-old woman constable was found dead at her house in Dwarka on Wednesday, the police said on Thursday.

The PCR received a call around 6.30 p.m. about the woman who lived in Dwarka Sector 16-B.

The police reached the spot and sent the body for a post-mortem.

"The deceased's husband is also a policeman. The couple had got married in 2014," said a police officer.

During the incident, the deceased's husband was on duty and their twins

were at home. The husband reached home and kept knocking on the door, but nobody responded. He then called the police.

No note has been left by the deceased, the police said.

SDM informed

"Since the woman was married less than seven years ago, the Dwarka Sub-Divisional Magistrate was informed. An investigation is under way," the officer said.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health (011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

Roads cave in on KMP e-way, Rampura flyover

Construction material to be examined

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

A portion of the road on Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway caved in and a small chunk of the Rampura flyover on Gurugram-Jaipur Expressway near Manesar came off due to rain on Thursday.

The sizeable portion of the road on KMP Expressway that caved in near Panchgaon toll plaza have resulted in a huge crater. The damaged portion on Kundli-Palwal carriageway of the expressway was barricaded to prevent any untoward incident. It was later repaired. Haryana State Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation spokesperson Surender Deswal said the cave-in happened near the exit for Manesar, but it was

repaired soon.

The 83-km stretch of the expressway from Kundli to Manesar was opened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November last. The expressway has been built at a cost of around ₹6,000 crore.

In a similar incident, a nearly two-square-foot chunk of the upper layer on the Rampura flyover on Jaipur-Delhi carriageway came off forcing the closure of one of the lanes for traffic. Project Director, National Highways Authority of India, Jaipur, N.N. Giri said the damaged portion was repaired and barricaded by evening. He said that it might take a week before it gets fixed. He said that a sample of the construction material would be sent for detailed examination.

Residents of 1,797 illegal colonies will soon get ownership rights: CM

Says Centre has responded positively; BJP hits out at Kejriwal for 'taking credit'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said that people living in 1,797 unauthorised colonies in the city will soon get ownership rights for their properties.

"Good news for people living in unauthorised colonies... Their dream of getting ownership rights will soon come true," the Chief Minister said at a press conference on Thursday.

Mr. Kejriwal said that the Central government has given a positive response to Delhi government's proposal on the same. But the proposal is yet to be approved by the Centre, according to the Chief Minister.

However, Delhi BJP Chief Manoj Tiwari said that the Centre was regularising the colonies and Mr. Kejriwal was trying to "take credit".

Meanwhile, speaking at the press conference, Urban Development Minister



Arvind Kejriwal

Satyendar Jain said that the colonies which had applied for regularisation before January 1, 2015, will be eligible as agreed by both the Central and Delhi governments.

The Chief Minister said that on November 2, 2015, the Delhi government passed a proposal in the Cabinet to regularise the unauthorised colonies and give ownership rights to people living in the colonies. On November 12, the proposal was sent to the Cen-

tral government for approval.

"Yesterday [Wednesday] evening, the Centre gave a positive response on it. The Centre is ready to regularise the unauthorised colonies. We want to congratulate the Central government on behalf of the people of Delhi," he said.

Mr. Kejriwal said that the Centre had asked a few questions on the proposal and the Delhi government will respond to it in the next three to four days. "And soon, the Centre will approve it [proposal]," he added.

The CM said, "Until now, all Central and state governments had betrayed the people living in unauthorised colonies. Before every election, they would promise regularisation, but would not fulfil their promise."

Reacting to it, Mr. Tiwari said, "Mr. Kejriwal had deliberately withheld the

work of demarcation for the last four-and-a-half years."

Committee report

"When the Central government is not to regularise these unauthorised colonies, the then Union Urban Development Ministry formed a committee under L-G to recommend the measures for regularising these colonies. The committee submitted its report to the Ministry within three months and the process of regularising these colonies has started at fast pace," he added.

Mr. Tiwari said before the Assembly elections, the unauthorised colonies of Delhi will be regularised by the Centre and the occupants will get ownership rights. "This will be the greatest gift from the Centre to the people of Delhi," he added.

Regularisation proposal to be sent to Cabinet soon: officials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry's proposal on granting ownership rights in unauthorised colonies of Delhi would be sent to the Cabinet soon, officials said.

The Cabinet note in question had been drafted and was being circulated within the government, a senior official said. The proposal is based on the report submitted by a committee chaired by L-G Anil Bajjal to Housing and Urban Affairs Minister of State (Independent charge) Hardeep Singh Puri on June 10, officials said.

While Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Thursday that the Centre had responded "positively" to the Delhi government's "proposal" regarding ownership rights sent in 2015, another senior Ministry official said the Centre's proposal was based on the report of the committee.

Kejriwal demands hike in share of Central taxes

Writes to Shah and Sitharaman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, demanding that Delhi's shares in Central taxes be raised in view of its burgeoning population.

"Delhi has the character of a 'State' and there is a strong case for treating it at par with other States for the purpose of share of Central taxes" and grants to its local bodies through recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission," he said.

"The transfer of grants in lieu of share in Central taxes has remained stagnant at ₹325 crore per annum since 2000," the letter read.

'Inadvertent omission'

He said that due to the "inadvertent omission" of Article 270(3) of the Constitution, which deals with share of taxes between the Centre and the Union Territories, Delhi is missing out on "its legitimate share in Central

CM'S LETTER
The transfer of grants in lieu of share in Central taxes has remained stagnant at ₹325 cr. per annum since 2000

taxes of at least ₹6,500 crore per annum".

The Chief Minister said that the "unfortunate" omission of the constitutional provision in the year 2000 "resulted in an anomaly which has adversely affected the finances of the NCT of Delhi".

Mr. Kejriwal said that as the Capital of the country and one of the fastest growing metropolises, Delhi's claims on its resources are immense and varied.

The Chief Minister requested Mr. Shah and Ms. Sitharaman to look into the matter personally and "provide additional terms of reference to the 15th Finance Commission to enable" it to recommend the legitimate shares of Delhi in Central taxes.

Athlete to face trial for intimidation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has refused to quash a summon order asking a woman national basketball player to face trial in a case of criminal intimidation saying that there is no infirmity in it.

Accused Meena Gill had sought quashing of the order passed by an Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) at Tis Hazari district courts by filing a revision petition in the court of Special Judge Kovai Venugopal.

Dismissing her petition, the Judge said: "In view of the settled legal position and statements of complainant witnesses, I do not see any infirmity in the order passed by ACMM."

Traffic restrictions in Gurugram from July 20

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

The road opposite to HUDA City Centre metro station and Fortis Hospital will remain closed to traffic during the construction of a flyover and an underpass on the stretch. The traffic restrictions for this will come into force on July 20.

As per the traffic plan, motorists driving from Signature Towers to Sushant Lok should take left turn at Sector 29 T-point and then turn right at a traffic signal near the fire brigade station. Similarly, the vehicles

coming from IFFCO Chowk metro station need to turn right at fire station traffic signal to reach Subhash Chowk.

Those driving from Ardee City to HUDA City Centre need to take left turn near CNG pump in Sector 44 to reach Subhash Chowk. The vehicles driving from Subhash Chowk to Signature Tower will continue to use the existing slip road to reach their destination.

The construction time as per the tender is around 12 months.

Chargesheet filed in Rohit Tiwari murder case

The 518-page document has statements from 56 witnesses: senior officer

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Thursday submitted a chargesheet in Rohit Shekhar Tiwari's murder case at the Saket Court. His wife Apoorva Shukla was arrested in the case and is in judicial custody.

A senior police officer said that the 518-page chargesheet has statements from 56 witnesses, including family members, employees of the house, police officers and other officials.

Rohit Shekhar Tiwari, son of former U.P. and Uttarak-

hand Chief Minister N.D. Tiwari, was found dead in his room on the afternoon of April 16 by his house help. The case initially handled by district police was transferred to the Crime Branch and the post-mortem report stated that he had been strangled to death after which a murder case was registered.

Arrested on April 24

After sustained interrogation, Apoorva was arrested on April 24.

The officer said that in the

chargesheet, they have mentioned the sequence of events that led to Rohit's murder. Apoorva allegedly came to Rohit's room around 1 a.m. on April 16 and confronted him about his relationship with his sister-in-law. "He had gone to Uttarakhand to cast his vote along with his mother, cousin brother and sister-in-law. He had denied to take Apoorva along with them and returned after five days against the initial plan of two days. While they were returning home, Apoorva had made a

video call to Rohit to ask him what he wanted to have for dinner. During the course of the video call, she might have seen the woman relative in the car."

At night when the two were together, Rohit mentioned that he and the sister-in-law were drinking from the same glass which agitated her. "Apoorva strangled him before smothering him with a pillow. While she initially claimed it to be an accident, we have strong evidence that it was a murder," the officer said.

Kejriwal lied about construction of 23 flyovers, claims Congress

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Thursday accused Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of lying that his government had constructed 23 flyovers in the city. The Delhi Congress

said that the AAP government had built no new flyovers and that only those projects that had been started by the Congress government when Sheila Dikshit was Chief Minister had been completed.

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee spokesperson Jitender Kumar Kochhar said "Kejriwal should be put to a 'lie-detector test' for repeatedly mouthing blatant lies with the latest example being his claim of the Aam

Aadmi Party government in Delhi building 23 flyover during its four-and-a-half-year tenure though the fact is that it did not construct even a single flyover."

Mr. Kochhar said that all the flyover projects which

were completed in the last four-and-a-half-years were started when the Congress government, led by Ms. Dikshit, was in power in Delhi. Reply to RTI queries submitted by Tej Pal Singh, a Congress party worker and

an RTI activist, regarding the number of flyovers constructed by AAP government in Delhi shows that no new flyovers were built by the PWD during the tenure of the AAP government, he added.

DELHI Timings

FRIDAY, JULY 19		
RISE	05:35	SET 19:20
RISE	21:11	SET 07:30
SATURDAY, JULY 20		
RISE	05:36	SET 19:19
RISE	21:46	SET 08:23
SUNDAY, JULY 21		
RISE	05:37	SET 19:19
RISE	22:18	SET 09:16

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	30	23
Safdarjang	30	23
Palam	29	22

Delhi Palam Today
33°C Light rain will continue at some places over Delhi and NCR. A pleasant morning lies ahead.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
32°C Rain is expected to decrease now. A marginal rise in temperatures is expected.

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THE HINDU
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Sonbhadra killings: SC/ST panel orders invocation of NSA

Main accused Yagya Dutt, whose henchmen opened fire, arrested on Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW

The U.P. SC/ST Commission on Thursday asked the State government to invoke the NSA and the Gangster Act against culprits behind the killings of 10 tribal people in Sonbhadra district and take action against officials for their "negligence" in averting the massacre.

The Commission also rushed a two-member team of its Deputy Chairman Maniram Kaul and member Ramsewak Kharwar for a first-hand probe into the shoot-out, said an official statement.

Team to visit site

The team will visit the scene of crime, meet the tribal people and injured persons and submit a report to SC/ST Commission Chairman Brij Lal, said the panel.



An injured being brought to a hospital in Varanasi on Wednesday. • PTI

Meanwhile, the police on Thursday arrested the village headman whose henchmen opened fire on the villagers.

With main suspect Yagya Dutt's arrest, the number of those held after Wednesday's shoot-out in Ubha village has risen to 26, police said. The police had earlier

arrested his two nephews.

An FIR has been lodged against 61 people, including 11 named.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed the Director-General of Police to personally monitor the case and ensure action against the culprits, a government

spokesperson said.

Mr. Adityanath had also directed the Mirzapur Commissioner and Additional Director-General (Varanasi zone) to jointly investigate the cause of the clash and fix responsibility.

The land in the district's Ghorawal area earlier belonged to an IAS officer and he had sold it to village head Yagya Dutt, who wanted to take possession of it, Uttar Pradesh DGP O.P. Singh had said.

When Dutt reached the spot with his henchme, local villagers tried to stop them from taking over the land, police said. Those accompanying him then showered a hail of bullets on the villagers, all tribals, killing nine of them. Official sources said another person injured in the firing died during treatment on Wednesday night.

BJP MLAs boycott question hour in Rajasthan Assembly

Over Speaker's refusal to allow supplementary questions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The Opposition BJP MLAs boycotted question hour in the Rajasthan Assembly on Thursday to protest against Speaker C.P. Joshi's refusal to give them permission to raise supplementary questions on oral reply by Ministers. The Speaker had ruled that only those legislators who have asked starred questions would be allowed to put up two subsequent queries each.

Except for the MLAs whose questions were listed for question hour, no BJP member went to the House during the budget session's proceedings. The decision to boycott the Assembly was announced by Leader of the

Opposition Gulab Chand Kataria after a meeting of the BJP Legislature Party.

'Protest to continue'

Senior BJP MLA and former Health Minister Kali Saraf said disallowing the legislators to ask supplementary questions would deprive them of their right to raise matters of public significance in the Assembly. He said the boycott of question hour would continue during the rest of the budget session, unless the Speaker revoked his ruling.

Mr. Joshi pronounced his ruling on Wednesday when the BJP MLAs staged a walk-out while complaining that they were not being allowed to raise their objections to

the reply of Minister of State for Skill Development and Employment Ashok Chandra to a question on unemployment allowance. The BJP members alleged that the Congress government was misleading the House.

However, ruling party's Chief Whip Mahesh Joshi said the Speaker had only reiterated the provision which already existed in the rule books.

'Publicity gimmick'

He said while the ruling was meant to ensure that the maximum number of starred questions were taken up during question hour, the BJP was trying to exploit it for its "publicity gimmick".

Hunt on for escaped undertrials in U.P.

Duo had shot dead two constables

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Combing operations are still on to arrest the three undertrials who escaped from police custody after gunning down two constables in Sambhal on Wednesday afternoon.

"We have rounded up seven suspects who might have helped the undertrials. We have got important clues from their fourth accomplice who could not escape. The borders of Sambhal have been sealed and the Special Task Force is carrying out combing operations. We are confident that they will be nabbed soon," Yamuna Prasad, SP Sambhal, told *The Hindu* over phone. Ajay Pal Sharma, SSP, Rampur, known as an 'encounter' specialist, also inspected

the area on Thursday.

The incident took place near Dewakheda village under the Banyathar police station area, when five constables were returning to Moradabad jail in a police van with 24 undertrials after a court hearing in Chandausi, police said.

'Chilli powder thrown'

"The three prisoners were carrying chilli powder and used it against fellow inmates and policemen. They also had a countrymade pistol It appears that they shot two constables using their weapons," Mr Prasad said. The constables have been identified as Harendra and Brijpal Singh. The three undertrials have been identified as Kamal Singh, Sha-keel and Dharam Pal Singh.

Salt Lake Mayor resigns after stand-off with party

Says he has not quit Trinamool

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Bidhannagar [Salt Lake] Municipal Corporation Mayor Sabyasachi Dutta resigned on Thursday after a months-long stand-off with the leadership of his party, Trinamool Congress. His exit came in the wake of a pending a no-confidence motion against him in the TMC-controlled corporation.

"I cannot tolerate the people living within the jurisdiction of the corporation [BMC] suffering owing to the prevailing stalemate or for apprehended suspension of basic municipal amenities which would have soon followed had I continued as the Mayor for satisfying ego owing to vindictive acts (sic)," Mr. Dutta said in his resignation letter.

"I have resigned and sent my resignation letter to the Chairperson and Commissioner of BMC as well to the individual councillors," he told journalists on Thursday.

Mr. Dutta told newsmen that relations between him and the party leadership had soured after he took part in a protest programme of a TMC-backed labour union in power sector in Salt Lake on July 5 and criticised the State government for not fulfilling the long-standing demand for increase in salaries.

He also said that he had opposed illegal filling of waterbodies in the area under his jurisdiction. Also the



Salt Lake Mayor Sabyasachi Dutta.

TMC MLA from Rajarhat-New Town, Mr. Dutta however clarified that he was not quitting the party – his cordial relations with BJP leader Mukul Roy had further infuriated TMC leaders.

Soon after tendering his resignation, Mr. Dutta went to meet primary teachers who have been protesting in the city demanding a revised pay structure.

Approached HC

Mr. Dutta had approached the Calcutta High Court over a notice issued to him on July 9 by the BMC Commissioner convening a meeting of the board of councillors on Thursday for removing him as Mayor. But the court on Wednesday observed only procedural discrepancies, quashing the notice since it had not been issued as per the provisions of West Bengal Municipal Act, 2006. It held that only the Chairperson can issue such a notice and asked for a no-confidence notice to be brought against the Mayor in the next two days.

(With PTI inputs)

H.S. Sidhu back as Punjab STF chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

In a major administrative reshuffle, the Punjab government on Thursday transferred 26 IPS and five PPS officers in the State.

Harpreet Singh Sidhu, who was posted as Special Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, has been given charge of the Special Task Force as Additional Director-General of Police. He will replace Gurpreet Kaur Deo, who will take over as ADGP (Crime). Last year, Mr. Sidhu was removed as STF chief after a reported tussle between him and the then DGP Suresh Arora.

Promotion for three

Three IPS officers – Prabhod Kumar, Rohit Choudhary and Iqbal Preet Singh Sahota -- have been promoted to the rank of Director-General of Police.

Mr. Kumar has been posted as Special DGP and Director (Bureau of Investigation) while Mr. Choudhary will take over as Special DGP (Policy and Rules). Mr. Sahota will be Special DGP (Armed Battalions) in Jalandhar.

An official statement said ADGP (Admin) Gaurav Yadav has been given additional charge of the litigation wing.

ADGP Ishwar Singh has been given charge of law and order while Jitendra Kumar Jain, ADGP (Policy and Rules), will hold additional charge of SCRB as Director.

No decision yet on Sidhu's resignation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is yet to take a call on Navjot Singh Sidhu's resignation from the State Cabinet, official sources said on Thursday.

Capt. Amarinder, who was in Delhi earlier this week, had said on Tuesday he would decide on Mr. Sidhu's resignation after going through the contents of the letter once he reached Chandigarh.

The Chief Minister returned to Chandigarh on Wednesday evening.

Meanwhile, speculations were rife that the top Congress leadership has intervened in the matter to resolve issues between Capt. Amarinder and Mr. Sidhu. There was no confirmation from the party regarding the same.

3 electrocuted as man exacts 'revenge'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MAHESHTALA (WEST BENGAL)

Three persons were electrocuted to death and six others suffered burn injuries when a man laid live electrical wire outside his neighbour's house to take revenge against a man who had eloped with his wife, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place at Maheshtala in South 24 Parganas district on Wednesday night, the police said.

With the accused absconding, angry locals launched a search and found him near Akra railway station on Thursday.

They beat him up severely before handing him over to the police. The accused was arrested and is in a hospital in Kolkata.

Patna protest



Policemen chase away teachers during a protest for 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' in Patna on Thursday. • PTI

A lot at stake for BJP candidate from Patkura constituency

A founder member of the BJD, Bijoy Mahapatra has not won any election since his last win in 1995

PRAFULLA DAS
BHUBANESWAR

Will Odisha's Patkura Assembly constituency remain a stronghold of the ruling Biju Janata Dal or will the Bharatiya Janata Party spring a surprise with senior leader Bijoy Mohapatra as its nominee? The outcome will have no bearing on the political future of the BJD or the BJP, but will be crucial for Mr. Mohapatra himself.

A founder member of the BJD, Mr. Mohapatra has not won any Assembly election since his last win in 1995. It is a question of political survival for the 68-year-old leader

who was elected from Patkura four times in 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995, and was a member of Biju Patnaik's Council of Ministers in his last term.

Campaigning ends

Often referred to as Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik's bete noire, Mr. Mohapatra is once again trying his luck from Patkura where polling is scheduled to be held on July 20. The high-voltage campaign in the seat under the Kendrapara Lok Sabha constituency came to an end on Thursday evening with the BJD, the BJP

and the Congress as main contenders for the seat.

All the three parties had engaged 40 star campaigners each to woo the voters in Patkura, where campaigning started more than three months ago when polling was scheduled to be held in the fourth and last phase of the general elections in April this year.

The polling in the seat was postponed twice – first due to the death of BJD candidate Bed Prakash Agarwalla few days before the poll date and subsequently due to Cyclone Fani. When Mr. Mohapatra, Jayanta Mohanty of the Con-

gress and Independents remained in the fray, the BJD fielded Sabitri Agarwalla, widow of Mr. Agarwalla, as its nominee.

Mr. Mohapatra, who played a key role in the formation of the BJD as well as seat sharing with the BJP before the 2000 elections, had failed to contest the 2000 polls as the party cancelled his ticket at the last minute. He has lost all elections in subsequent years irrespective of the parties he contested from.

In 2001, Mr. Mohapatra had formed the Odisha Gana Parishad, a regional party

political party which he later merged with the Nationalist Congress Party. He joined the BJP when the NCP turned an ally of the BJD before 2009 polls. He had quit the BJP in November last year, but returned to the party again before this year's general election and entered the fray from Patkura.

Tough challenge

Mr. Mohapatra is facing a tough challenge this time too. The Chief Minister has campaigned personally seeking votes from many of his Ministers and MLAs.

'Opposition MLAs will join BJP soon'

Expect spate of resignations in coming week, says Chandrakant Patil; Congress dismisses claim

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Several legislators from the opposition Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress were in touch with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), claimed the newly-appointed State unit president Chandrakant Patil on Thursday, adding that one could expect a spate of resignations in the coming week.

"Had the opposition MLAs resigned six months before Assembly elections, it would have necessitated bypolls. With Assembly elections barely three months away, a number of Congress and NCP legislators will be resigning in the coming eight to ten days. A number of their MLAs are in touch with us. They will be given entry into our party at the appropriate moment," Mr. Patil told reporters before starting his tour of Solapur and Osmanabad districts.

However, Mr. Patil, who is also the State Revenue Minis-



Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil is confident that the BJP-Sena coalition will win 220 Assembly seats. •PTI

ter, refused to disclose any names. "Where's the fun if I reveal names. The joy of life is in its uncertainty?" he remarked.

Mr. Patil said the top leadership of the Congress and the NCP had lost confidence following their rout in the Lok Sabha elections. "With its top leadership [Rahul Gandhi] busy tendering resignations, how can they [Congress-NCP leaders] expect others to carry on working for the party?" he said.

Asked if the entry of turncoats and their being given tickets would make the loyalists unhappy, Mr. Patil said no injustice would be done to old-timers.

"We only give tickets to nominees if we discern any winning potential in them. We changed candidates on as many as seven Lok Sabha seats [in Maharashtra] and all newcomers who were fielded carried the day for us," he said adding that that the BJP-Shiv Sena was plan-

ning its strategy in such a way that the coalition would win at least 220 seats.

Reiterating that there was no ambiguity on the question of an alliance between the BJP and Shiv Sena, Mr. Patil said that only seat-sharing arrangements remained to be worked out.

"There is no doubt whatsoever on the question of an alliance, what will be its nature is known only to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Sena president Uddhav Thackeray and the BJP's national president Amit Shah," Mr. Patil said.

Laughable, says Thorat Meanwhile, newly-appointed Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) chief Balasaheb Thorat dismissed Mr. Patil's claim of Congressmen resigning and joining the BJP as "ludicrous" and "laughable". "There is no grain of truth in his [Mr. Patil's] claims," Mr. Thorat said in Mumbai.

Dr. Vishwajeet Kadam, the Congress MLA from Palus-Kadegaon in Sangli district, too, dismissed the claims as rumours deliberately designed to mislead and create misconceptions before the Assembly polls.

"This is all the BJP's doing. With such claims, Chandrakant Patil is deliberately trying to pollute the political climate," said Dr. Kadam, who is also one of the five newly-appointed working presidents of the MPCC.

Mr. Patil had on Wednesday hinted at Dr. Kadam's possible defection to the BJP, and said that it ought to come as no surprise if one of the five working presidents of the MPCC joined the BJP in the next 15-20 days.

"Such statements [on Mr. Patil's part] are utterly meaningless and unfounded...Like my father, the late Dr. Patangrao Kadam, I will always continue to remain a Congress loyalist," Dr. Kadam stressed.

Will build a new Maharashtra, says Aaditya Thackeray

Yuva Sena chief sets off on his first five-day Jan Ashirwad Yatra



Wooring voters: Yuva Sena chief Aaditya Thackeray bows to the public before addressing a meeting at the start of his Jan Ashirwad Yatra at Jalgaon on Thursday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

Ahead of Assembly polls, Yuva Sena president Aaditya Thackeray began the first phase of his ambitious five-day Jan Ashirwad Yatra from Pachora in Jalgaon district on Thursday

Mr. Thackeray said his 4,000 km tour, intended to shore up the Sena's base, was to "build a new Maharashtra" and was not merely being undertaken for electoral gains or to seek votes for Assembly elections.

"For me, this [tour] is akin to a pilgrimage to build a new Maharashtra. It is to seek the blessings of the public who have showed faith in us and to thank the hard work of those Shiv Sainiks whose efforts helped us win 18 Lok Sabha seats in the State. One need not wait for any auspicious moment to thank all

those who voted for us...My grandfather, [the late Sena supremo Bal Thackeray], had he been alive, would have advised me to do the same," he said, adding that the rationale behind his tour was to understand and help resolve the problems faced by citizens in the rural hinterland.

He also exhorted party workers to go out and conquer the hearts and minds of the people.

Lavishing praises on the young Mr. Thackeray, Sena spokesman and MP Sanjay Raut said the Yuva Sena chief was "an extremely promising leader indeed" and said that Mr. Thackeray would be the party's Chief Ministerial candidate if the polls favoured the Shiv Sena.

"Maharashtra requires a new face and Aaditya Thackeray has all the qualities to lead the State," he said.

Mr. Thackeray will be interacting with a cross section of citizens of every vocation — farmers, students, businessmen, labourers — during his tour through Jalgaon, Nashik, Dhule and Ahmednagar districts.

With the BJP and the Sena contesting independently in the 2014 Assembly elections, the Sena had managed to win only 63 seats.

"Despite reiterations that their alliance is sealed, there is a significant section within the BJP that feels no need to take the Sena along. With Narendra Modi's spectacular win in 2014 and consolidation in this year's general elections, the roles of the BJP and the Sena have been reversed to such an extent in the State that the latter has to seriously think of retaining its base outside Mumbai," says a city-based analyst.



Newly appointed Maharashtra Congress president Balasaheb Thorat (centre) with Congress leaders Sushilkumar Shinde, Mallikarjun Kharge, Ashok Chavan and Prithviraj Chavan in Mumbai on Wednesday. •VIVEK BENDRE

Ajit Pawar joins clamour for ballot paper

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar on Thursday demanded that Assembly elections be held using ballot papers and not Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

"Such an overwhelmingly one-sided result in the Lok Sabha election has increased doubts among people about EVM tampering. Questions are being asked as to whether the vote is going to the right candidate or the

party. Hence, the Election Commission should conduct the Assembly elections using the ballot paper to retain people's faith in the electoral process," he said, adding that developed countries too were using the ballot paper.

The NCP leader's statement is a *volte face* from his remarks made prior to the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year.

On at least two separate occasions, Mr. Pawar had broken ranks with his uncle, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, and

had instead questioned those raising suspicions on the functioning of the machines. In June, Mr. Ajit Pawar had even exhorted his party works to stop worrying about EVM-tampering and concentrate on campaigning.

Meanwhile, commenting on the defeat of his son, Parth, from Maval Lok Sabha constituency, Mr. Pawar said the loss was "not a big setback" for the Pawar family as was being made out by the BJP and other observers.

Avoid infighting, Thorat tells Congmen

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Exhorting leaders to forget groupism and infighting, newly appointed Maharashtra Congress committee president Balasaheb Thorat on Thursday said the party would promote new, young faces in the Assembly polls.

After officially taking charge from former chief minister Ashok Chavan, Mr. Thorat, accompanied by the five newly-appointed working presidents, said, "The party faced similar troubles in 1978,79 and 80. But we won. The Congress is still in the minds of common people and we have to reach out to them with new vigour."

"The results of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections can be different. A number of people are expressing concern over the EVMs. We also demand that ballot paper be

used for Assembly elections," he said. Earlier, a number of speakers, including the Assembly campaign committee head and former MP Nana Patole called on party workers to participate in the nationwide movement against EVMs to begin from August 9.

Asked about those who quit the party, Mr. Thorat, without naming former Leader of Opposition Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, said, "Those those in the party who wish to reach to new heights, should take this as a golden opportunity."

Senior Congress leader in-charge of Maharashtra Mallikarjun Kharge slammed the BJP over its attempts to destabilise the government in Karnataka. "Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnis too is indulging in these tricks," he alleged.

Ethanol biorefinery to come up in Vidarbha

BPCL to set up plant in Bhandara

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) will set up Maharashtra's first ever ethanol biorefinery in Vidarbha's Bhandara district at a cost of nearly ₹1,500 crore.

"The State government has finalised the location along with BPCL and it will be set up in Bhandara's Makardhokda village. The plant will manufacture ethanol from rice straw and will be set up on 46 hectares of land that is currently with the Revenue Department," said Parinay Fuke, Guardian Minister of Bhandara.

The project will utilise 2 lakh tonne of rice straw annually and has a capacity to produce 700 tonne of biofuel. This project is one among 12 such refineries planned in different States.

"Bhandara and Gondia districts annually produce 3.62 lakh and 3.87 lakh rice straw annually. The supply of raw material won't be a problem. This project is likely to create around 10,000 jobs directly or indirectly," he said. The rice

straw will be collected, chopped and dried and then supplied to the refinery.

The Revenue Department holds 146 hectares at the site, out of which 46 hectares will be used for this project. The government plans to set up allied industries in the remaining land. The process to hand over the land to the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation has begun and once complete, the land will be notified as industrial. After this, it will be handed over to BPCL.

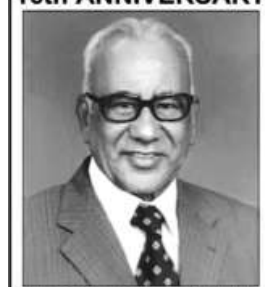
"We expect to initiate the project within a year. BPCL will ensure environmental clearances. We will be charging BPCL a nominal fee of up to ₹3 crore for the land," said Mr. Fuke.

The National Policy on Biofuels, 2018, aims to increase the percentage of ethanol in petrol and diesel. Currently, it is at nearly 2% in petrol, while in diesel, biofuel is less than 0.1%. An indicative target of 20% of ethanol in petrol and 5% of biodiesel in diesel is proposed by 2030.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

16th ANNIVERSARY



K.P.SUBRAMANIAM
02-02-1915 - 19-07-2003
FOUNDER
Automotive Ancillary
Services Pvt. Ltd.
Fondly Remembered by
K.S.MOHAN, UMA MURALI,
SHWETHA, SHRADHA,
AMRUTHAVARSHINI & APSARA

REMEMBRANCE DAY



K.R.RANJITH KUMAR
09.01.1975 - 19.07.2007
You still live in our hearts
Daddy, Mummy, Uncle,
Sneha &
Baby Tharangini (Daughter)

FIRST ANNIVERSARY



A. FRANCIS ROCHE
S/o. Elangadu R. Amirdasamy Pillai & Amalorpamary
DOB: 14-09-1941 DOD: 19-07-2018
Fondly Remembered by
Alice Francis
Anita & Frederic Arulraj
Vijay Francis & Priscilla
Grand Children: Joshua & JoAnna
97910 13995, 95000 93446

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IN BRIEF



A.P. Governor to take charge on July 24

VIJAYAWADA
New Governor for Andhra Pradesh Biswabhusan Harichandan will assume office on July 24. Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court C. Praveen Kumar will administer him the oath of office at a ceremony scheduled at 11.30 a.m. on that day. Reports suggest that the former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's camp office will be transformed into the Raj Bhavan.

Maoists kill two tribals in Andhra Pradesh

VISAKHAPATNAM
Maoists killed two tribal people after branding them as police informers at Veeravaram hamlet of Chintapalli mandal here in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday night. The police said a squad of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army dragged Gammela Bhaskar Rao and Pangti Sattibabu, both aged 40, out of their houses and killed them. A third tribal, Pangti Linga, sustained grievous injuries after they beat him up.

Do not blame TRS for split, KCR tells Cong.

HYDERABAD
Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday advised the Congress to refrain from blaming the ruling party if two-thirds of their MLAs split and wanted to merge with the Telangana Rashtra Samithi. It happened in the Rajya Sabha when some TDP members joined the BJP and a similar scenario was happening in Goa. If the Congress had leadership capability, why would its members leave the party, asked Mr. Chandrababu Naidu.

I need time to clarify issues raised by rebels: Karnataka CM

'It is my duty to respond to the allegations they have made'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, who moved a one-line motion seeking vote of confidence on Thursday, insisted that no time frame should be fixed for the completion of proceedings related to the motion.

He said he had to clarify a lot of things that had been raised with respect to his government by the rebel MLAs in their petition before the Supreme Court.

This was prior to a communication from Governor Vajubhai R. Vala later in the day asking him to prove his majority before 1.30 p.m. on Friday.

The Chief Minister made the submission to Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar on Thursday as the BJP members insisted even before he moved the motion that there should be a time frame for completing the proceedings regarding the motion of con-



Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, Deputy CM G. Parameashwara, and Water Resources Minister D.K. Shivakumar in Bengaluru on Thursday. *K. MURALI KUMAR

fidence. They claimed that all the seven such motions taken up since the formation of the Assembly had been completed within a day.

Annoyed, the Chief Minister said the rebel MLAs had alleged in their petition before the Supreme Court that the administration had come to a standstill ever since he took charge as Chief Minister and that the government had never been stable.

They had also alleged that various scams had surfaced during the term of this government.

He maintained that it was his duty to clarify on all these issues and respond to

the allegations in the interests of protecting the honour of his government as well as that of the MLAs of the governing coalition.

"Of late, people have started feeling disgusted with the MLAs. I need to clarify the reasons for such a trend and mention the people who tried to destabilise my government," he said.

"It is not important whether I will have to quit or someone else will replace me. What is important is to debate on the drama of making a mockery of democracy which is being watched throughout the country," he said.

'Missing' Congress MLA creates flutter

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

The mysterious disappearance of Congress MLA from Kagawad Shrimant Balasaheb Patil from a resort here and his appearance in a Mumbai hospital on Thursday rocked the Assembly proceedings, as the Congress accused the BJP of engineering the defection and terming it a case of "kidnapping".

Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar eventually directed Home Minister M.B. Patil to make inquiries with his family. While the Congress had issued a whip to all its legislators to be present during the session, Mr. Shrimant Patil's disappearance further reduced the Janata Dal (S)-Congress coalition's strength in the Assembly.

KPCC president Dinesh Gundu Rao said Mr. Patil was healthy and was with all the Congress MLAs till late on Wednesday.

Suspected treasure hunters vandalise tomb in Hampi

**STAFF REPORTER
KOPPAL**

The 'Brindavana' (tomb) of Sri Vyasaraja Tirtha, a renowned saint of the Madhwa tradition at Anegundi near Hampi, was found razed on Thursday. It is one of the nine such at Nava Brindavana, on the banks of the Tungabhadra.

The incident came to light on Thursday when people came to perform rituals. The police suspect it to be an act of treasure hunters.

The incident is suspected to have happened during the lunar eclipse early on Wednesday.

"Our investigation team is already at the spot. We found some puja material there. It is evident that some kind of puja was offered to the seat of the saint as well. We *prima facie* feel this is an act of treasure hunters. I have formed a special team headed by the Circle Inspec-



Erasing history: The vandalised 'Brindavan' of Sri Vyasaraja Tirtha on the Tungabhadra banks. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tor, attached to Gagavati Rural, to investigate the case," Renuka K. Sukumar, Superintendent of Police, Koppal, told *The Hindu*.

The situation was tense as news of the vandalism spread. The police appealed to the people to maintain calm. Sri Vyasaraja Tirtha was the 'Raja Guru' of Sri Krishnadevaraya, the Vijaya-

nagar Emperor. He was buried at Nava Brindavana in 1539.

Speaking to presspersons, Vidya Shreesha Tirtha Swami of Sosale Vyasaraja Mutt, announced that the reconstruction and the restoration of its sanctity would begin right away. By evening, the reconstruction of the Brindavana had begun.

Priests go on relay hunger strike against Cardinal

Say Alencherry should step down

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI**

Priests of the Syro-Malabar Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly on Thursday launched a relay hunger strike against Major Archbishop and Cardinal George Alencherry saying the Cardinal should not preside over the synod of bishops scheduled for early August.

The priests also said the police action against a number of priests and lay people in the "forged documents" case should end as these cases were foisted on them.

In what has widely been described as unprecedented

action in the history of the Catholic Church in Kerala, Father Joseph Parekkattil started a fast unto death to highlight the demands raised by a vast majority of the priests.

The priests had openly defied the Cardinal, who is the head of the Syro-Malabar Church. The priests said the Cardinal, against whom there are more than a dozen court cases pending, should step down from his authority. They also demanded that the police end foisting cases on priests and members of the laity in the "forged" documents case.

Chandrayaan-2 launch set for July 22

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

The first Indian lunar lander-rover mission Chandrayaan-2 will be launched on July 22 at 2.43 p.m. without affecting the chosen day of its landing on moon, September 6. The new date, after the July 15 launch was aborted, was announced on Thursday by the ISRO.

Even though the launch date has slid by a week, ISRO Chairman K. Sivan said engine burns in the Earth-bound and lunar orbit phases would be reworked without affecting the landing day.

Ramalinga Reddy withdraws resignation

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

Senior Congress leader Ramalinga Reddy withdrew his resignation and participated in the Assembly session seated on the treasury benches on Thursday. Mr. Reddy had submitted his resignation on July 6 along with 11 other Congress and JD(S) MLAs, now holed up in Mumbai,

but was later convinced by the Congress to stay back. It was hoped that this would bring back three other Bengaluru Congress MLAs into the party fold as they had earlier called Mr. Reddy their "leader."

However, minutes before the Assembly session commenced on Thursday, the three MLAs - S.T. Somashe-

kar, Byrathi Basavaraj and Munirathna - released a video reiterating their stand that they would not withdraw their resignations.

"Before resigning, we met Ramalinga Reddy and all four of us submitted our resignation letters together. We had agreed that we will not withdraw our resignations at any cost. But we

have now seen in the media that he has made a U-turn on the day of the trust vote. None of us is going to follow Ramalinga Reddy and we are firm in our decision on the resignation and won't participate in the Assembly session," said Mr. Somashekar, seen in the video flanked by Mr. Munirathna and Mr. Basavaraj.

\$250 mn ADB loan to rebuild Kerala

The aid will be project specific

**S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

Close on the heels of the \$250 million Development Policy Loan from the World Bank for the Rebuild Kerala Initiative (RKI), decks are being cleared for securing a \$250 million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"Talks are in the final stage to work out the modalities and the \$250-million ADB loan will be mainly for the augmentation of the drinking water supply," official sources told *The Hindu*.

ADB Country Director Kenchi Yokoyama, who attended the Development Partners Conclave held on Monday at Kovalam to drum up support for the ₹36,506.88 crore for implementing the Rebuild Kerala Development Programme (RKDP), had committed

₹1,300 crore for urban rebuilding efforts of the State and to continue with the existing partnerships for development projects.

Unlike the DPL made available to the exchequer as budgetary support with the 'flexibility' on disbursing the funds for achieving targets set under the RKI, the ADB aid will be project specific.

The Water Resources Department is also putting pressure to get the ADB loan to augment the piped drinking water supply.

With the first anniversary of the August 2018 deluge not far away, the RKI authorities are expediting steps to secure investment to the tune of ₹8,709 crore needed for the critical sectors for a short term from 2019 to 2021-'22 for the three-phase RKDP.

Bay watch



In the race: A boy runs through the shallow waters at Lawson's Bay in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. The plan to develop the beach to attract visitors is yet to take off due to open defecation and sewage discharge into the sea. *K.R. DEEPAK

'No second thoughts on razing encroachments'

Naidu has set a bad precedent: Jagan

**STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA**

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched a broadside against his predecessor and Leader of the Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu for questioning the government's crackdown on the illegal structures that sprang up along the river and canal banks such as Praja Vedika and the Lingamaneni guest house in which the former Chief Minister was staying even after being served eviction notices.

Mr. Reddy said he had asked District Collectors to take a tough stand on such constructions in order to protect the rivers and water bodies from encroachments, the consequences of which would be devastating.

Mr. Reddy said many buildings were constructed

across the State in blatant disregard for the River Conservancy Act of 1884, orders of the Lokayukta for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to remove illegal structures obstructing the flood courses of rivers, and the Building Regularisation Scheme.

"Mr. Naidu had set a bad precedent by violating the rules. If the Chief Ministers themselves commit irregularities, who will care for the laws enacted by the elected representatives. What he [Mr. Naidu] did was unacceptable. Unfortunately, he is trying to gain sympathy out of the issue by raising a hue and cry in the Assembly," Mr. Reddy observed.

Mr. Naidu said there were certain exemptions which the Chief Minister should take note of, and that he had no objection to move out of his temporary accommodation.

Vizianagaram fascinates Finnish couple

Thrilled to learn that their national bird is the divine vehicle of Hindu Goddess

**K. SRINIVASA RAO
VIZIANAGARAM**

A couple from Finland, fascinated by the stories they had heard of Vizianagaram's heritage and culture, arrived here on a six-day trip.

Retired pilot Veli-Matti Heinijoki and his wife Hippi Heinijoki, a physiotherapist, said they were keen on visiting India after coming to know that the swan, the national bird of Finland, is also the divine vehicle of Saraswati, the Hindu Goddess of knowledge, learning and the arts.

"A few years ago, I read a book called *The Land of Saraswati and Indian Culture*. I was surprised to know that the swan is also her sacred vehicle. Finland's national bird is also the swan and the bird can be found on our



Veli-Matti Heinijoki and his wife Hippi Heinijoki from Finland visiting the Sanskrit College of Vizianagaram.

currency too. This sparked in us an interest to visit India. We chose to visit Hyderabad and Vizianagaram on our first trip, which went off happily," said Mr. Veli-Matti, who is 70 years old.

The couple visited the 150-year-old Maharaja Sanskrit College, where they saw old manuscripts and learnt about the techniques used to preserve the manuscripts. They also visited the Ra-

ma Narayanam temple and later went to the under-construction Hamsa Velly project. "We are fascinated by the town's rich history and culture," the Finnish couple said.

Friends in India

The couple said they are members of the Rotary Club in Finland, and were shown around Vizianagaram by the president of the club's local branch Ravi K. Manda and former president Durga Balaji.

"We visited Finland last year where we met Mr. Veli-Matti and Ms. Hippi. We invited them to India after coming to know of their fascination for our country and culture. We are thrilled to see them here," Mr. Ravi and Mr. Balaji said.

TDB chief hits out at Forest Department

'It is ignoring Cabinet decision on sand collection'

**RADHAKRISHNAN KUTTOOR
PATHANAMTHITTA**

Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) president A. Padmakumar has accused the Forest Department of ignoring even the Cabinet decision on collecting river sand from the Pampa in the foothills of Sabarimala for various construction works at Sabarimala, Pampa and Nilackal.

Mr. Padmakumar told *The Hindu* that the Cabinet had decided to permit the TDB collect 20,000 cubic metres of sand from the Pampa where huge quantities of sand had accumulated in the deluge of August last.

He said Forest Minister K. Raju was present at the Cab-



A view of the sand accumulated on the Pampa's banks following last year's floods.

net meeting and the matter was conveyed to the top Forest officials.

However, the forest personnel at Pampa, on the directions of their department's top authorities in Thiruvananthapuram, had objected claiming that the Cabinet had not mentioned

the location from where the sand could be collected.

Issue raised at meeting
The issue was raised at the meeting of the High Power Committee for implementation of the Sabarimala Master Plan, attended by the Principal Chief Conservator

of Forests, in Thiruvananthapuram a week ago and at another meeting attended by the Forest Minister and the Devaswom Minister. The Forest Minister had directed the officials to permit the TDB to collect sand from the Pampa, he said. Though the PCCF too did not raise any objection to sand collection, the TDB was yet to be given clearance by the Forest officials at Pampa, he alleged.

'Sand being sold'

The Forest Department, however, had been selling river sand from the Pampa to private parties and 2,000 cubic metres of sand had already been sold, the TDB chief alleged. He said the execution of various major pilgrim amenity projects under the Sabarimala Master Plan was affected owing to the indifferent attitude.

IN BRIEF



Robert Vadra withdraws plea from Delhi court
NEW DELHI
Robert Vadra, on Thursday withdrew his plea filed in the Delhi High Court seeking a direction to the Enforcement Directorate not to take any coercive action against him in a money laundering case. Mr. Vadra withdrew it saying he had already been granted anticipatory bail by a trial court.

Notice issued to govt., accused in Kathua rape

CHANDIGARH
The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Thursday issued notice to the accused and the J&K government on a petition seeking an enhancement of the sentence awarded to the convicts of rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in Jammu's Kathua in 2018. The girl from the nomadic Bakerwal community was kidnapped from Rasana area on January 10 in 2018 and found dead on January 17.

SC declines urgent hearing on lynching plea

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court declined urgent hearing on a plea seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against some states for their alleged failure in curbing lynching incidents. It did not allow the submission of a lawyer that the judgements, laying down guidelines to deal with lynching and cow vigilantism incidents in the country, have not been followed by various State governments and such incidents are rising. PTI

ED attaches assets worth ₹200 crore in ponzi case

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate has attached 103 assets worth ₹200 crore across various States in connection with a Ponzi scheme case involving Basil International Limited. More than 60 private and public limited shell companies were allegedly used to divert funds collected from investors.

Off track



Narrow escape: A major mishap was averted as a coach of the Mumbai-Gorakhpur Antyodaya Express derailed while it was crossing a British-era bridge between Kasara and Igatpuri in Maharashtra on Thursday. ■WALMIKI GAWANDE

Animals seek refuge on highlands

Floods drive rhinos out of Kaziranga park

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Kaziranga National Park (KNP)'s man-made highlands have turned into islands of relative safety for the park's animals as large parts of Assam remain inundated by flood waters.

Among the handful of species that have taken refuge in these patches of higher ground are the one-horned rhino and the water buffalo, while most other animals have moved to the hills of Karbi Anglong district just beyond a highway that runs along the southern fringe of the park.

Floods are a necessary evil in Kaziranga, which comprises a mix of wetlands, grasslands and forests. Every monsoon, the neighbouring Brahmaputra inundates the 880 sq km park — its core area is 430 sq



Taking cover: A tiger seen on a bed in a room adjacent to a scrap outlet near Kaziranga National Park on Thursday. ■AFP

km — primarily serving to flush out the aquatic plants and weeds that choke its ecosystem.

The annual natural process, however, tests the survivability of the park's animals and leaves a trail of death.

Two decades ago, the Assam Forest Department constructed 111 highlands as an experiment. It helped keep a few animals above the water level but served little pur-

pose when 75% or more of the park was flooded.

In 2017, the park authorities started work on 33 more highlands that were bigger in dimension. "The older ones were 100x40 metres in area and 4 metres high," said Rohini B. Saikia, KNP's Divisional Forest Officer. "The newer ones are 100x50 metres and 5 metres high," Mr. Saikia added.

The new highlands, constructed at a cost of ₹13

Tiger takes rest on bed

A Royal Bengal tiger on Thursday came out of the flooded Kaziranga National Park and took refuge in a room attached to a scrap outlet on the fringes, before returning to the jungle after eight hours of rest on a bed. But it made a U-turn after a few minutes and entered the backyard of a house.

SC to reconstitute bench probing Manipur killings

Case pertains to the alleged 1,528 extra-judicial killings

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to reconstitute a Bench to continue monitoring a CBI probe into alleged extra-judicial killings by the Army, the Assam Rifles and the police in Manipur when insurgency was at its peak.

The case has been on the back-burner since Justice Madan B. Lokur, who led the earlier two-judge Bench, retired in December last. Justice U.U. Lalit was the companion judge on that Bench.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, for the victims' families and petitioners, made an urgent mention before Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, apprising him of the fact that the case had not come up in a while.



The case has been on the back-burner since Justice Madan B. Lokur retired.

Mr. Gonsalves submitted that he had first mentioned the matter before Justice Lalit, who told him to mention it before the CJI. The CJI alone had the administrative power to constitute Benches to hear cases.

"We will try to reconstitute the Bench," the CJI told

Mr. Gonsalves. In 2017, the court ordered a CBI probe into the alleged 1,528 extra-judicial killings from 2000 to 2012. The last few hearings saw the Justice Lokur facing pressure to re-use himself from the case.

This was in the form of a plea by Army officers that there was a perception of judicial bias caused by certain oral comments made by the judges in court. The plea claimed that certain oral remarks, questioning the non-arrest of accused persons, spooked the Army personnel operating in the State.

Incidentally, the plea was fully supported by the Centre. Attorney General K.K. Venugopal had pitched in, saying that "more soldiers are killed than insurgents".

Child labour in films, TV comes under scanner

Labour Ministry expresses concern

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The Union Labour and Employment Ministry has expressed concern over violations of child labour rules in film and television and urged the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to ensure "strict compliance" by the industry with the norms on working conditions for children, as well as the inclusion of mandatory disclaimers when they appear on screen.

In a letter dated June 26, the Labour ministry flagged violations of the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, as amended in 2016, as well as the rules framed under it for the audio-visual industry. The I&B Ministry is likely to issue advisories on the issue to film producers and broadcasters soon, Labour Ministry officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Thursday.

Under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2017, child artistes are supposed to work for a maximum of five hours a day and not more than three hours without rest, the ministry noted. The rules also require permission from the District Magistrate and an undertaking by the producer, as well as the deploy-



The I&B Ministry is likely to issue advisories to film producers.

ment of one person each for ensuring the safety and security of a maximum of five children. Children should not be away from schooling for more than 27 days and 20% of their income should be deposited in a fixed deposit in their name, as per the rules.

If a child was involved in filming, the film should include a disclaimer saying that all measures were taken to ensure that no abuse, neglect or exploitation of the child took place during shooting.

"In this regard, it has been observed that the CALPR Act, 1986, and the rules framed thereunder are not being strictly adhered to in the audio-visual industry," the Labour ministry wrote, adding that this amounted to violation of the Act, attracting punishment.

TISS team to help shelter home victims

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

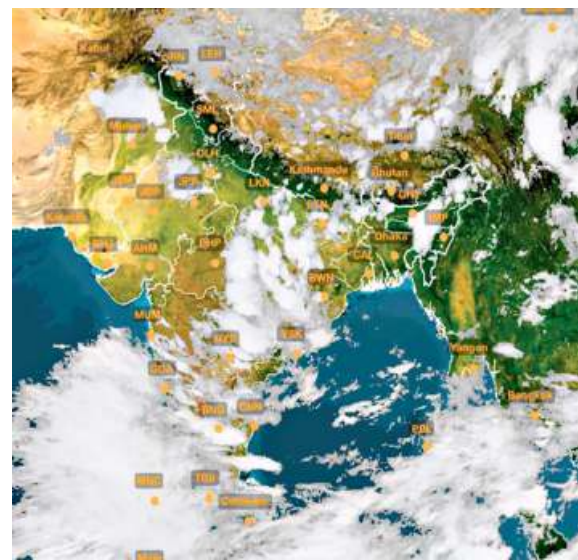
The Supreme Court on Thursday permitted Koshish, a field action project of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), to meet the victims and families of the Muzaffarpur shelter home abuse case to understand and chalk out a conducive plan for their rehabilitation.

A Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana agreed with advocate Vrinda Grover that experts should closely interact with the victims in order to help them out of their trauma.

Ms. Grover said the outreach would include finding out the circumstances under which the girls got estranged from their families. This would include ascertaining whether the they had faced any hostility at their family home, the financial status of their family, and whether the family would be receptive to having the child back.

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 Friday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places likely over coastal and south interior Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep and central Maharashtra. Thunderstorm and lightning very likely at isolated places over Gangetic West Bengal.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.2	35.0	27.0	Kozhikode	0.2	30.0	24.0
Ahmedabad	0.0	39.0	28.0	Kurnool	0.0	35.0	26.0
Aizawl	55.0	31.0	21.0	Lucknow	0.0	37.0	28.0
Allahabad	0.0	39.0	28.0	Madurai	0.0	39.0	27.0
Bangalore	40.3	29.0	21.0	Mangaluru	3.5	30.0	23.0
Bhopal	0.0	35.0	25.0	Mumbai	7.2	32.0	27.0
Bhubaneswar	0.2	35.0	25.0	Mysuru	0.0	30.0	21.0
Chandigarh	0.0	29.0	25.0	New Delhi	12.1	30.0	23.0
Chennai	0.0	34.0	29.0	Patna	0.0	37.0	28.0
Coimbatore	0.0	32.0	23.0	Port Blair	16.7	31.0	25.0
Dehradun	7.9	32.0	23.0	Puducherry	0.0	34.0	27.0
Gangtok	0.0	24.0	18.0	Pune	0.0	31.0	23.0
Goa	4.6	30.0	23.0	Raipur	3.6	35.0	26.0
Guwahati	0.0	35.0	26.0	Ranchi	0.0	33.0	24.0
Hubballi	0.0	27.0	22.0	Shillong	0.0	26.0	18.0
Hyderabad	0.0	35.0	25.0	Shimla	0.2	20.0	15.0
Imphal	0.0	34.0	16.0	Srinagar	1.8	30.0	19.0
Jaipur	0.0	36.0	28.0	Thiruvananthapuram	34.0	39.0	23.0
Kochi	17.2	29.0	24.0	Tiruchi	3.2	39.0	27.0
Kohima	0.0	28.0	19.0	Vijayawada	0.0	37.0	27.0
Kolkata	0.0	36.0	28.0	Visakhapatnam	0.0	34.0	26.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	119	121	63	53	53	4
Bangalore	7	65	84	51	89	3
Chennai	7	38	53	120	120	4
Delhi	3	27	87	54	55	5
Hyderabad	46	26	15	56	99	3
Kolkata	4	40	9	111	111	4
Lucknow	4	30	50	115	115	4
Mumbai	14	15	10	37	113	3
Pune	68	8	68	52	52	3
Visakhapatnam	15	56	33	78	113	3

Yesterday
Moderate levels of particulate matter pollution recorded in most cities across the country. Going by Central Pollution Control Board data, Bahadurgarh, Haryana, recorded a healthy Air Quality Index (AQI) of 33. On the contrary, Rohtak city in the same state fared the worst with an AQI of 232, indicating poor air quality.

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM_{2.5} & 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

Dawood's nephew arrested

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Mumbai police have arrested terrorist Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar's nephew Rizwan Kaskar in connection with an extortion case, an official said on Thursday.

Rizwan Kaskar, son of Iqbal Kaskar, was arrested on Wednesday night from the international airport here when he was trying to flee

the country, the official said. Iqbal is lodged in a jail in Thane after he was arrested in an extortion case in 2017.

Investigations by the Anti Extortion Cell of the Mumbai police revealed that Rizwan has been involved in his uncle's illegal activities for at least one-and-half year. Police officials see this as Dawood's move to hand over the reins of his activities to younger family members.

According to Crime Branch, they initiated inquiries into the matter in June after the complainant, a Mumbai-based businessman, received calls from one Sheikh Mohammed Faheem alias Faheem Machmach, a close aide of Shaheel Babumiyaan Sheikh alias Chhota Shakeel.

Naval training ships to have facilities for women

Changes to be part of all future ships

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

In a step forward towards deploying women officers on board naval ships, the recently issued tender for cadet training ships has facilities catered for women aboard, a Navy source said on Thursday.

"This is the first tender to be issued with design inputs incorporated for separate facilities for women officers. Such design changes will be part of all future warships to be procured by the Indian Navy," the source told *The Hindu*.

In February this year, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) accorded the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for three Cadet Training ships for the Navy, which would be utilised to provide basic sea training for "officer cadets including women officer

Sagardhwani sets off for research

The INS Sagardhwani, a marine acoustic research ship of the Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL), was flagged off for a scientific venture in the northern Indian Ocean.

The ship would visit Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia for collaborative research programmes with institutes in these countries.

tance and Disaster Relief, undertaking search and rescue missions and non-combatant evacuation operations.

The three Services have been progressively inducting women in all arms and services and the Navy has stated that women officers cannot be posted immediately on board ships as there are no separate facilities.

As of May 2019, women constituted 6.7% of the Navy officers, excluding medical and dental services, according to information given in Parliament.

Pak. espoused Khalistani agenda: India

In a dossier, India mentioned 30 instances of Sikh pilgrims being subjected to anti-India propaganda

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

In a dossier to Pakistan, India has mentioned nearly 30 instances in the past four years when Sikh pilgrims visiting the neighbouring country were subjected to “anti-India propaganda” such as espousing the Khalistani cause.

The 23-page dossier was handed over to the Pakistani delegation during the Kartarpur corridor talks held at Wagah last week.

Gopal Singh Chawla, a key “Khalistani element”, instigated the Sikh community to support Kashmiris for the formation of “Azad Kashmir”, says the dossier accessed by *The Hindu*.

In April, Chawla, president of the Punjabi Sikh Sangat (PSS), “raised the demand of liberation of Punjab and Kashmir from India”

India's grouse

The 23-page dossier handed to the Pakistani delegation during the Kartarpur corridor talks last week cites specific instances:

2019: Gopal Singh Chawla, a key Khalistani element, “raised the demand of liberation of Punjab and Kashmir from India” during a function at Panja Sahib in Pakistan’s Attock attended by Indian pilgrims in April

2018: U.K - and U.S - based pro-Khalistani elements Avtar Singh Sanghera and Pritpal Singh were allowed to campaign openly for Khalistan at the Panja Sahib Gurudwara



2017: Tara Singh, Bishan Singh and Maninder Singh displayed Khalistani propaganda and led a protest against India on the Wagah border in July

2016: Sardar Mohammad Yousuf, Pakistan’s Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Harmony, at a function at Gurdwara Nankana Sahib, ‘eulogised Burhan Wani, a Kashmiri militant, and alleged that the Sikhs and Kashmiris are treated like slaves by the Indian government’ Also, “attempts were made to instigate the Sikh pilgrims against the Indian government over issues such as demonisation of Indian currency”

during a function at Panja Sahib in Pakistan’s Attock where Indian pilgrims were present, the dossier says.

The dossier contains a photograph of Chawla with Hafiz Saeed, founder of

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Under a 1974 bilateral protocol, four Sikh *jathas* visit important gurdwaras in Pakistan every year. The Kartarpur corridor will link two revered Sikh shrines in India

and Pakistan and is expected to be operational before the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in November.

India said that Chawla was a well-known “Khalistani element who often spews ve-

nom against India in his speeches and supports militancy in Punjab”. The paper also contained a “pictorial catalogue of his anti-India activities on social media”.

Facebook evidence

Eleven photographs culled out from Chawla’s Facebook account include posters of J.S. Bhindranwale, a Sikh separatist killed in 1984 during the anti-Sikh militancy raids in Amritsar, and “Referendum 2020”.

Jagroop Singh Rupa, who went with a *jatha* to Pakistan in 2016, was imparted arms training by two fugitive Sikh militants Lakhbir Singh Rode and Harmeet Singh, alias PhD, to “carry out terror attacks in India.” India said the recently banned Sikhs for Justice was given a free hand to promote secessionism during visits of pilgrims.

CMs’ panel mulls move to tie State farm reforms to funds

Group weighs steps, including scrapping ECA for food

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

With a view to usher in sweeping reforms to boost agricultural growth, a panel of Chief Ministers discussed ways to bring State Governments on board including the possibility of linking the adoption of reforms to the Finance Commission’s grants and allocations.

Some of the reforms discussed by the panel, which held its first meeting at the NITI Aayog on Thursday, included the potential scrapping of the Essential Commodities Act (ECA) for the food sector and a review of agricultural subsidies, said Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis who chaired the meeting. The dismantling of market monopolies, and steps to increase private investment and investment credit in the sector were also mullied, Mr. Fadnis told reporters on the sidelines of the meeting.

‘State subject’

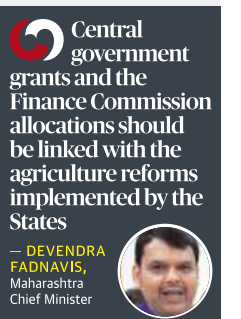
“Agriculture is a State subject and all the States must be brought on board,” he said, emphasising the importance of simultaneous and time-bound reforms across States to bring effective transformation country-wide. “Central government grants and the Finance Commission allocations should be linked with the agriculture reforms implemented by States,” he opined.

The panel has finalised its terms of reference and is preparing a paper to be circulated among States. State government feedback is expected by August 7, and the panel is due to meet again in

On the agenda

The Chief Ministers’ committee, tasked with recommending sweeping reforms in the agriculture sector, wants:

- Scrapping of the Essential Commodities Act for the food sector
- Review of agriculture subsidies
- Dismantling of market monopolies
- Steps to increase private investment and investment credit in the sector
- Ways to ensure fair prices and end manipulative monopolies in the local markets
- Obstacles to the implementation of the digital e-NAM system to be removed



Mumbai on August 16. The meeting was attended by Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and the Chief Ministers of Gujarat, Haryana and Arunachal Pradesh. The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister participating via video conferencing, while the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister sent his input in writing.

Mr. Fadnis asserted that farm sector growth had lagged behind other sectors as it had not been part of the economic reforms of 1991. Almost three decades later, the Chief Ministers are attempting to build consensus around structural changes in the agriculture sector.

Bipartisan view

The Chief Ministers of both Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh – one from the BJP and the other from the Congress – spoke on the need to do away with the restrictions of the Essential Commodities Act in the food sector, according to Mr. Fadnis. The panel also discussed ways to ensure fair prices and end manipulative monopolies in

the local agriculture produce mandis, as well as the need to remove obstacles to the implementation of the digital e-NAM system in all States.

Approaches to spur growth in the food processing sector, which must grow at a faster pace than the overall agriculture sector in order to increase farmers’ income, were also discussed.

The panel also considered the need for better coordination between the Agriculture and Commerce Ministries to ensure a dynamic pricing policy based on global market trends for major agricultural commodities.

With regard to subsidies, the panel discussed ways to ensure that they are targeted better in order to maximise benefits for farmers. Holding that private investments were key to the growth of the sector, the panel discussed ways to reduce credit costs and improve linkages with financial institutions.

The need for States to adopt the Centre’s Model Contract Farming Act was also stressed at the meeting.

Give access to Jadhav, India tells Pak.

Multiple requests from India submitted earlier are pending, a source said

KALLOL BHATTACHARJEE
NEW DELHI

Pakistan can immediately grant consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav, acting upon the multiple pending requests on the matter from India, says a diplomatic source.

The comment came a day after the International Court of Justice at The Hague pointed out in its verdict that Pakistan violated the Vienna Convention by not granting consular access to the former Indian Navy official who was given a death sentence by a Pakistani military court in 2017.

“Pakistan already has sev-

Consular access soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan will grant consular access to Indian national Kulbhushan Jadhav, according to the Pakistani laws for which the modalities are being worked out, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Thursday night.

The Ministry also said that

Mr. Jadhav had been informed of his rights under Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on consular relations.

“As a responsible state, Pakistan will grant consular access to Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav... according to Pakistani laws,” the Ministry said.

eral formal requests from us regarding consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav. We hope they act on these requests now without delay,” said a di-

plomatic source indicating that there is no need for a fresh request from India for getting access to Mr. Jadhav. India made several submis-

sions to Pakistan for allowing Indian officials to visit Jadhav in custody that did not get a positive response from Islamabad till the verdict from the ICJ.

Earlier, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said Pakistan should comply with the ICJ’s directive and provide consular access to Mr. Jadhav without “any further delay”.

It was time for Pakistan “to act” and help Indian consular officers in meeting Mr. Jadhav.

Pakistan maintained that Mr. Jadhav did not carry his authentic Indian passport while entering its territory.

Arbitration Bills passed amid uproar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Thursday passed the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bill and the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill. Trinamool MPs walked out, with Sukhendu Sekhar Ray of the party terming the Bills “draconian”.

He said the Bills were passed in haste on World Bank diktats.

Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the government was keen that India became a hub of domestic and international arbitration.

IN BRIEF



Nelson Mandela my inspiration: Priyanka

NEW DELHI
Describing former South African President Nelson Mandela as her inspiration and guide, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said on Thursday that Mandela had suggested her to join politics long before others. Remembering the anti-apartheid icon on his 101st birth anniversary, Ms. Vadra posted an old photograph with him and said the world misses men like Mandela more than ever today.

‘Army tracking Chinese activity at Doklam’

NEW DELHI
India and China have reduced their presence on the Doklam plateau after the disengagement in 2017, but the Army is monitoring Chinese activities in the area and is prepared to respond to any contingency, the Defence Ministry said in a report. Noting fewer Chinese transgressions this year, India said it would continue to take “robust and decisive” steps to ensure national security. The report also said Pakistan should take “credible and irreversible” steps to stop supporting terrorists and terror groups operating from its territories. P11

Sri Lanka, India ink pact to upgrade railway line

COLOMBO
Sri Lanka has signed an agreement with India to upgrade tracks in a key railway segment at a cost of \$91.26 million. This is the first time in 100 years that the 130-km tracks from Maho town in the Northwestern Province to Omanthai in the Northern Province are being upgraded. The initiative seeks to double the speed potential of the tracks from the current 60 kmph to 120 kmph, reduce maintenance costs and potentially improve travel comfort of passengers, according to a press release from the Indian High Commission.

India must back Taliban talks, says German envoy

He is here to discuss outcome of intra-Afghan dialogue

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Urging the government to publicly express support for the ongoing peace process with the Taliban, the German special envoy on Afghanistan has said that the international community would like to see a larger regional role for India in the ongoing conflict and its resolution.

Ambassador Markus Potzel is in Delhi for talks with Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale on the outcome of the intra-Afghan dialogue held in Doha on July 7-8, as well as the larger peace process between Taliban representatives and U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad who met at the same time.

“I am here to brief the Indian government, and I wanted to share my information about Doha and the intra-afghan dialogue,” Mr. Potzel, who organised the Doha talks told a select group of journalists ahead of his meetings in South Block on Friday. The talks in Doha co-sponsored by Germany and Qatar ended with an unprecedented joint statement



Markus Potzel

agreed to by more than 60 representatives of the Taliban and Afghan government officials (in their personal capacities), civil society members, politicians and women leaders. The statement included a commitment to reduce violence and bring civilian casualties “to zero”.

India has refused to be a part of talks with the Taliban directly, sending only retired officials in a “non-official” capacity for one round of talks in Moscow last year. Last week, “four-party” talks between the U.S., Russia, China and Pakistan appeared to cut India out of the talks on Afghanistan’s future. However, officials indi-

cate that the next round of talks with regional powers will be held soon, which would invite India, central Asian neighbours like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as well as Iran.

In a statement ahead of the German envoy’s meetings, the Ministry of External Affairs reiterated India’s traditional position on supporting only an “Afghan led, Afghan owned and Afghan controlled” process, which includes the government in Kabul.

“We believe that all initiatives and processes must include all sections of the Afghan society, including the legitimately elected government. Any process should respect the constitutional legacy and political mandate and should not lead to any ungoverned spaces where terrorist and their proxies can relocate,” said MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar on Thursday, in a veiled reference to Pakistan-sponsored groups in Afghanistan and the Taliban, that continue to carry out terror attacks and refuse to hold direct talks with the Ghani government.

Hafiz Saeed’s arrest a drama, says India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday described the arrest of terror mastermind Hafiz Saeed in Pakistan as a “drama”, indicating that it will wait and see if Islamabad is sincere about holding him accountable for the violent actions that he and his front organisations planned against India.

“This is not the first time that Hafiz Saeed has been arrested or detained. This drama has taken place at least eight times since 2001.

The question is whether this time it would be more than a cosmetic exercise and whether Saeed will be tried and sentenced for his terrorist activities,” said External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar. Mr. Saeed is a designated terrorist by the UN Sanctions Committee under Security Council Resolution 1267.

“Effective action mandated internationally against Saeed and his terrorist organisations is an obligation on the part of all UN member states,” Mr. Kumar said.

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(Sd/-) Managing Director

IN BRIEF

**All Nippon connects Tokyo with Chennai**

MUMBAI Japan's All Nippon Airways (ANA) has announced a new route connecting Tokyo's Narita Airport and Chennai International Airport starting October 27. The airline would deploy Boeing 787-8 aircraft on this route. This expansion would bring the total number of cities serviced by ANA to 46. "When the service begins this October, ANA will be the only airline providing direct flights from Japan to south India," the airline said in a statement.

L&T Hydrocarbon bags over ₹7,000-cr. project

MUMBAI L&T Hydrocarbon Engineering Ltd. (LTHE), a subsidiary of Larsen & Toubro has bagged another mega project in the Marjan Field by Saudi Aramco, worth over ₹7,000 crore. The company is executing the Hasbah Gas Increment Project and other projects in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including, Marjan, Safaniya, Zulf and Berri. All projects were executed through LTHE's fabrication facilities in west Asia and India.

EU fines chipmaker Qualcomm \$271 million

BRUSSELS In yet another European Union (EU) move against a U.S. tech giant, the bloc's antitrust chief on Thursday fined chipmaker Qualcomm \$271 million, accusing it of "predatory pricing" to drive a competitor out of the market. EU Antitrust Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said Qualcomm was abusing its market dominance in 3G baseband chipsets. She said it sold them below the cost of production. AP

'Interest subsidy subject to GST'

TN AAR order comes in a case relating to Daimler Financial Services India

SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Authority for Advance Ruling (AAR) has ruled that the interest subvention income received by Daimler Financial Services India Private Limited (DFSIL) from Mercedes-Benz India Private Limited, to reduce the effective interest rate to the final customer, attracts a GST of 18% (9% CGST and 9% SGST).

Daimler Financial Services had moved the AAR seeking a clarification on whether interest income from the motor vehicle manufacturer for retail financing to purchasers of motor vehicles is liable for GST (Goods and Services Tax).

"Customers who purchase Mercedes-Benz cars from the authorised dealers



Given the ambiguity, the Centre should consider issuing an explicit clarification, says an analyst. • GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

may require financing. Daimler Financial acts as a financier and provides loan to customers at interest rates lower than alternative providers," it said.

The differential interest (market rate less the rate offered to customers) is paid to Daimler Financial by Mer-

cedes-Benz. The AAR said that the agreement between DFSIL and Mercedes-Benz India is for the furtherance of the business of lending of the former.

The customers would prefer to take out a loan from DFSIL because of the lower interest rates offered as a con-

sequence of their agreement with Mercedes-Benz and therefore, the transaction is a supply under Section 7 of CGST Act, it said.

'Not setting precedent'

"An advance ruling is binding only on the applicant and the revenue in so far as that applicant is concerned. It is not in the nature of a judicial precedent and need not affect other assesseees," said K. Vaitheeswaran, advocate and tax consultant.

Abhishek Jain, tax partner, EY, said "This has been an issue especially for the automotive and consumer goods industry from the service tax era, with inheritance under GST as well. Given the ambiguity, the government should consider issuing an explicit clarification."

ACC first quarter profit rises 39% to ₹456 crore

Firm reports better realisations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

ACC Limited, a member of the LafargeHolcim Group, reported a 39% growth in its first quarter net profit to ₹456 crore led by better realisations and operational efficiencies

The rise in profit was reported on an 8% increase in consolidated revenue to ₹4,059 crore despite weak offtake in the quarter due to the slow pace of construction activity. Operating EBITDA for the quarter registered year-on-year growth of 25% to ₹783 crore.

"ACC made significant progress in its goals in the quarter with strong operating performance, including good net sales growth. I am

pleased that EBITDA improved significantly on account of better realisations, operational efficiencies and supply chain efficiency improvement. Despite subdued cement demand, our strong customer relationships, loyal channel network and range of innovative products have helped us deliver a robust quarter," said Neeraj Akhoury, managing director and CEO.

Cost increase on account of higher fuel prices year-on-year was partly mitigated by lower cost of raw materials, improvement in operating efficiency and lower fixed cost. The ready mix concrete business continued to deliver robust sales volume growth of 11%.

Cyient profit rises to ₹90 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

IT firm Cyient posted a consolidated net profit of ₹89.9 crore for the quarter ended June 30, a 10.17% growth over ₹81.6 crore recorded a year earlier.

Revenue from operations of the Hyderabad-headquartered firm was almost flat at ₹1,089 crore (₹1,080 crore).

Managing director and CEO Krishna Bodanapu said the results were "disappointing. We recorded a revenue of \$156.6 million, lower by 4.8% quarter-on-quarter (Q-o-Q) and 0.6% year-on-year. Our services business was lower by 5.7% Q-o-Q predominantly driven by communications, aerospace, energy and utilities and portfolio business units."

Centre seeks response from IndiGo on 'misgovernance'

Co-promoter Gangwal has levelled charges against Bhatia

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The government has sought a response from IndiGo on allegations of corporate misgovernance levelled by its co-promoter Rakesh Gangwal, the airline informed the stock exchanges on Friday.

"The company has received a communication from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), Office of Registrar of Companies... requiring the company to furnish certain information/explanations pursuant to Section 206 (4) of the Companies Act, 2013, in relation to complaint dated July 8, 2019 received from Mr. Gangwal, co-founder and director of the company. The

SEBI moots tougher disclosures for resignation of auditors

Auditors quitting abruptly have to give a detailed reason

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Auditors who resign in an abrupt manner in the middle of a financial year may soon have to give a detailed reason for such a move while ensuring that the audit is either completed for the fiscal or at least a limited review or audit report is issued prior to the exit.

Companies, on their part, will have to disclose their audit committee's views on the resignation along with the details of the deliberations of the committee on the reasons of such a move by the auditor.

These are part of the proposals in the discussion paper released by the Securities and Exchange Board of India

(SEBI) as part of its attempts to strengthen the disclosures for investors while also strengthening and clarifying the role of the audit committee.

"If the auditor has signed the audit report for all the quarters [limited review/audit] of a financial year, except the last quarter, then the auditor shall finalise the audit report for the said financial year before such resignation," stated the discussion paper. If the reason for the auditor's resignation is the entity not providing information, the auditor shall provide an appropriate disclaimer in the audit report to that extent, it added.

The recent past saw Price Waterhouse resigning

abruptly as the auditors of some of the group companies of Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG). Similar resignations have been witnessed in many other listed entities as well.

Meanwhile, the regulator has said that the auditor would have to disclose the detailed reasons for resignation and also that there are no material reasons other than those mentioned in the resignation letter.

Auditors will also have to disclose whether "the inability to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence was due to a management-imposed limitation or circumstances beyond the control of the management," as per the SEBI.

Filatex India to set up fabric unit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE

Filatex India, which produces synthetic filament yarn, plans to set up a fabric-making unit next year.

Madhu Sudhan Bhageria, chairman and managing director, Filatex, said the company planned to invest ₹200 crore in the fabric-making unit set to come up in Maharashtra or Gujarat.

"We want to get into the value chain. We can innovate and think of a garment unit, too, later," he said.

The firm, which has two manufacturing facilities, has the capacity to make 3.28 lakh tonnes of yarn a year and is expanding the capacity to make 3.82 lakh tonnes annually.



Mr. Bhatia called the charges an attempt to dilute his controlling rights

rights' available with another promoter, Rahul Bhatia, allegedly leading to governance problems.

He had also raised an issue with the businesses conducted between IndiGo and Mr. Bhatia's InterGlobe Enterprises.

Mr. Bhatia, though, had called these charges "hot air" and an attempt to dilute his controlling rights.

Amid this tussle, the IndiGo board is headed for a stormy meet on Friday to finalise June quarter results.

company will respond to MCA within the prescribed period," IndiGo said.

Battle of sorts

The airline is witnessing a battle of sorts with Mr. Gangwal seeking the Securities and Exchange Board of India's intervention in the matter relating to 'unusual

TAKING BACK THE STREETS

A Youtube channel is documenting the women street-food sellers in Delhi



FOUR OTHER STORIES IN THE SERIES

HARSHRANI JI: A lemon-soda seller in Krishna Nagar, who lives alone on a widow's pension and struggles to make ends meet

DALBIR KAUR: One of the only women in the series, who makes and sells food on a street in Moti Nagar, for no other reason than because she loves to

SHALLY JI: Featured for keeping up the legacy of a 35-year-old mutton and chicken curry stall, started by her father-in-law in Sadar Bazar ("a market full of mostly male vendors," says Dua)

KANTA DEVI: A 65-year-old, whose son's family is dependent on her, has sold tandoori rotis for the last 30 years in Fateh Nagar, for ₹1 each

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

You'll find Manjeet Kaur sitting in one corner of a platform opposite Hotel Surya Grand in Rajouri Garden. This 50-something-year-old rises at a quarter-to-five every morning, preparing for a day of feeding home-made Punjabi *khaana* to a couple score of people.

Kaur comes to this spot daily. Her husband, an auto-rickshaw driver, helps her transport a table, a stove and pan, three big containers of rice, atta, and other dishes, to her makeshift shop in the morning. In the evening, he zips back here in the auto, helping her wind up and go back home with him.

This is a textbook desi heart-warmer: She serves full Punjabi meals on the street; her husband helps her prep and pack up; she's sweating it out in Delhi's Petri-dish-like conditions, to earn a living, all with a wide smile. But, more importantly, her daily hustle on the street unfolds in a city, the streets of which aren't deemed safe for women.

According to latest data released by the Delhi Police, cases of rape exponentially increased in the period from 2012-2015, going from 706 to 2,199 cases. This has gradually fallen since, but at 1,067 cases, recorded up to 30th June this year, it's not negligible. Other cases of "assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty", categorised under section 354 of the Indian Penal Code, also shot up between 2012-



2015, going from 727 to 5,367. The statistic now stands at 1,460, halfway through 2019.

Despite this, over the last year, Karan Dua, the man behind the popular Youtube street-food channel DilSeFoodie, has been consistently finding women street-food sellers throughout the capital. Kaur was the first. Usually middle-aged women have their stalls open through the day, some even staying open till close to midnight.

To document the journeys of women setting up street-food stalls, Dua started a separate series on his channel, called "Superwoman". He even invites viewers to tell him about more such women-led stalls.



Big money

The tenth and latest episode in this series features not a street-food vendor, but a woman who runs a tiffin-delivery service, cooking at home. But Dua's heart remains on the street, especially since he finds that his videos might help the vendors more. "I find that most of the women we've featured on the Superwoman series, are doing this out of a compulsion - their families are in need of the extra financial support," he says.

DilSeFoodie is his full-time job; he also does content and branding for other food establishments in Delhi. Dua's team has just one more person, a videographer. Their content makes you want to get on the street-food trail, but not because of their production value.

Between a lot of jump cuts, chaos, and sometimes unnecessary length ("I keep it at about 10 minutes so I can have multiple ads," he says), Dua's very hearty, desi approach to the food he spotlights is the only plausible reason for his channel having got over 87k followers in a year. Initially, he says, he would earn about ₹4 lakh annually

Daily hustle (Clockwise from left) Manjeet Kaur at her stall in Rajouri Garden; Dua with Kanta Devi and her mother; Dalbir Kaur

• VANGMAYI PARAKALA &
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

through DilSeFoodie. This income has shot up now to over ₹75 lakhs.

Getting personal

It is with this money that Dua has been able to help Kaur and a few others like her. When he re-visits the stall, she tells him that the table on which she lays out her dabbas, is falling apart. It is - the ply on its surface is chipped, and its legs are alarmingly wobbly.

Not too long ago, Dua even got her stove fixed. Other than this, the video and ensuing attention from mainstream media has only helped her sell more. A lot of the women street vendors are usually wary of publicity, because it only ups the threat of municipal authorities telling them to vacate. But so far, Kaur says, she's only got love.

"Beta, roti ek aur loge," she asks an office-going customer already eating at a table she's placed on the side. She slathers the freshly puffed up, hot roti with a spoonful of ghee, and slides it into his plate. With a domestic ease, he tells her he's already full, but continues to eat.

"I've never seen this kind of hospitality when a man is operating a street food stall," says Dua acknowledging that while this is a stereotype, it comes with a whole dollop of truth on it. A full meal at Kaur's stall doesn't usually go over ₹50. On Tuesdays and Saturdays, there's kadhi-chawal, along with two regular sabzis and roti. On other days, there's *langar ki daal*, her most popular dish, with *baigan ka bharta* and *rajma-chawal* as regular features.

PEOPLE

A call to action

Social Alpha, a non-profit startup incubator, is looking for entrepreneurs in the field of assistive technologies



Late last month, Social Alpha, the non-profit startup incubator set up by the Tata Trusts in Bengaluru, came together with Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a not-for-profit arm of the government's Department of Biotechnology in Delhi.

Together, they launched a quest to find young entrepreneurs working in the field of assistive technologies: innovations in tech that provide enabling and empowering solutions for people with disabilities. The programme would and support them through monetary and market access.

The quest, which invites applications to be made through Social Alpha's website, also has on board the support of a Bengaluru-based IT company called MPhasis, for its curation, design, and implementation.

Four young companies, already discovered and incubated by Social Alpha, were showcased at the launch. Of these, Bionic Vantra from Bengaluru designs affordable bionic exoskeletons for those with mobility problems; Blee Tech from Mumbai provides tech- and design-driven solutions for those with a hearing impairment; Innaumation from Bengaluru makes voice-boxes for throat cancer patients; and Tactopus, also from Bengaluru, makes texture-rich Braille aids for students who can benefit from better access to science and maths concepts.

Successful applicants will be admitted to a three-month accelerator programme that will make the entrepreneurs investment-ready. Social Alpha aims to identify 10 innovations, providing them with upto ₹20 lakhs each, giving them a push towards accepting and implementing work orders.

"Our aim is to build up sectors in which the mainstream market is absent. So we search for innovators and entrepreneurs in such sectors, with assistive technologies being the latest," says Manoj Kumar, the CEO and co-founder of Social Alpha.

Right now, most start-ups in the sphere of assistive technologies have come from Bengaluru, Pune, and Mumbai. The team plans to do an outreach by going to various cities in India. "It is likely that people in engineering and medical colleges, working in the rehabilitation space, might have some ideas," Kumar says, adding that despite welcoming applicants of all ages, they foresee most coming from young people. "People born in the '80s and '90s are likely to solve this country's problems," he says.

Deadline for applications, August 15th, 2019; to apply: Socialalpha.org/assistive-technologies

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

For a listing or to be featured here, email us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in



RAHUL VERMA

My first visit to Singapore left me longing for more. I was part of the jury for Miele Guide, which judged the best restaurants and chefs in South and Southeast Asia. I had a great time there because I dined at some of the finest restaurants in the island-nation and had some of the most delectable dishes cooked by the best of chefs there.

I remember in particular the Hokkaido scallops with truffle vinaigrette, fresh pickled king salmon with baby vegetables and horseradish cream and the seared tuna with mango salad and coriander oil. I can't forget the meal at Iggy's - run by the great Ignatius Chan - of smoked veal cheeks, truffle mashed Ile de Batz potatoes, braised shallots.

FOOD SPOT

Simple, yet memorable

Singapore has a rich and diverse cuisine that shows up on the street with as much flavour and nuance as a fancy dine-in restaurant

It left me asking for more because while I had some absolutely delicious food, I missed the street food of Singapore. And that is why, when the Singapore Tourism Board invited me to the Annual Singapore Food Festival, I agreed. The festival, which started on July 12, carries on till July 28. It includes Streat - the festival's signature event of various kinds of food sold by hawkers



Assortment of dishes A big tablespread; (above) wall art
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

outdoors. There is something for everybody, from braised duck to burgers and from chicken-rice and kueh pie tee (pastry tart with a filling) to chilli-crab ramen.

I was particularly looking forward to visiting Hawker Chan, in Chinatown. Ever since I read about the one-pot dish that he had become famous for, I had

been hoping to have a meal there. The dish, called soya chicken and rice, costs a little more than ₹100, and is simply mouth-watering. Chef Chan takes a chicken, mari-

nates it with soya sauce, and then roasts it. The rice is cooked in chicken fat. He chops the chicken on the side of the place, and puts a healthy dollop of the fragrant rice at the centre, with some of the roast gravy on top. A boiled egg is added to the dish, along with some sliced cucumber.

His story is fascinating, too. Chan was 15 when he came to Singapore from Malaysia and has been cooking for 35 years. He learnt this soya chicken dish from a Hong Kong chef. The dish has earned Hawker Chan a Michelin star.

The chef is so popular that there is always a huge queue outside his restaurant. It is a large-ish eatery, with tables and benches on one side. On the table are all kinds of sauces. You place an order, and pick up your food when it is ready.

He has a huge menu now, consisting of all kinds of good stuff: roast pork noodles, roast pork rice, pork rib and rice, soya chicken with noodles, flat rice noodles with gravy, tofu cooked Thai style

and veggies cooked in oyster sauce.

I enjoyed my rice and chicken dish immensely. The chicken was soft and had been nicely flavoured. The rice had the aroma of the chicken fat that it had been cooked in, and the gravy had the basic flavour of soya sauce. Put together, it was sublime. It is also one of the cheapest dishes you can have in Singapore. Not surprisingly, the eatery's cheerful and brightly coloured awning says: "Soya Sauce Chicken Rice & Noodles". Underneath, it announces: "The Cheapest Eatery Being Awarded One Michelin Star".

I was also struck by the wall art next to the eatery. It showed an elderly Chinese man, possibly a calligraphist, seated on a wooden chair, with beautiful red banners on the wall.

Hawker Chan is a symbol of the spirit of the bustling streets of Singapore. It tells you that life can be simple, yet memorable.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



PERFORMANCE

Classical music and dance
Monsoon Rhythms, a performing arts event, will feature two acts. The first act will have Vidwan Vikku Vinayakram on the ghatam, his son Selvaganesh on the Kanjira, and his grandson Swaminathan on a variety of percussion instruments. This will be followed by a Bharatanatyam presentation by actress Shobana.
VENUE: Kamani Auditorium, Mandi House
TIME: 6:30 p.m.



EXHIBITION

Canvas
Shifting Expression, a solo show by artist Sujata Kar Saha, will be on display till 22nd July. The collection is a mix of shades and contrasting colours, all done as oil on canvas. Saha's works portray natural imagery that resemble mountains, rivers, valleys, and vast landscapes with the horizon.
VENUE: Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam
TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



FOOD

Monsoon special
The House of Ming, a restaurant at Taj City Centre, specialising in Oriental cuisines, has launched a new menu for monsoon. There are dishes like, Prawns Har Gau, Scallop Golden Garlic, Barbecued Mushroom Bao, Steamed Chilean Sea Bass with Ginger, and Peking Roast Duck with Plum Sauce.
VENUE: Taj City Centre, Sector-44, Gurugram
TIME: 12:30-3 p.m. and 7-11:30 p.m.



GIG

Live at Farzi
Farzi Cafe is hosting Traffic Jam, a four-member Delhi-based band. This multi-genre band is comprised of Jimmy Thang doing lead vocals, Kennedy Singh on the guitar, D. S. Mung on the bass, and Stevekid Valte on the drums. Traffic Jam will play soft and hard rock, as well as covers of retro Hindi tunes.
VENUE: GF 01-FF 01, Worldmark 3, Aerocity
TIME: 9:30 p.m. - 12:30 midnight



FILM

Hindi classic
IHC, in collaboration with the National Film Archive of India will screen a restored version of the Hindi classic *Pehli Nazam* (1945) this evening. Directed by Mazhar Khan, with music composed by Anil Biswas, the film had starred Motilal, Baburao Pendharkar, Veena, and Munawar Sultana.
VENUE: Casuarina Hall, India Habitat Centre
TIME: 7 p.m.

Michelin ON A BUDGET

A chat with Chef Mak Kwai Pui, the man behind Tim Ho Wan, the cheapest Michelin star restaurant



NILOSREE BISWAS

I meet Chef Mak Kwai Pui, the 57-year-old chef who has revolutionised the world of Michelin dining, on a crisp spring morning at his restaurant Tim Ho Wan in Hong Kong. This restaurant has created a landmark presence in the culinary landscape of Hong Kong and

beyond: It is widely known as the cheapest Michelin star restaurant, having received the honour in 2010. The restaurant has since opened three more branches, each receiving its own star in due course.

Between bites, while making sure that I am initiated into the authentic yum cha (Cantonese



MUST TRY

- Baked bun with barbecued pork
- Steamed fresh shrimp dumpling
- Poached seasonal vegetable
- Shrimp wrapped in bean curd skin
- Tonic medlar and petal cake
- Egg cake

Encouraging me to savour the food, he continues, "I was feeling a little saturated and wanted to expand. With Michelin star dining experiences catching up, I wanted to create Tim Ho Wan, my own identity."

He continues, "I discussed with my peers the idea of the most inexpensive Michelin experience, holding on to superior ingredients and quality. No one seemed to see it as a tangible concept, but somehow my heart said fine dining can be made available for all at a reasonable price."

Eventually, he realised that this could only be attained if he trained his team to perfection. Cooks had to agree to train exclusively with him for six continuous months, before actively operating in the kitchen.

"I played with memories of food, bringing back a few that had gone out of reckoning – like egg cakes – and then brought my own innovations. For example, authentic Cantonese is fairly less spicy. I added spice. I experimented with handmade wheat noodles."

Tim Ho Wan reportedly has 46 outlets in seven countries and two Special Administrative Regions now, including Thailand, Japan, the US and Australia.

Which probably translates to a lot more work for Mak. How does he keep up? Pat comes the answer, "I tell myself each morning to go slow, maintain the balance, retain discipline... and yes, add passion to my food. I have been working for 44 years, and still have the same connect with my kitchens."

He then heads back into the kitchen and starts making dim sum, his nimble fingers wrapping giant pearly globules one after the other, in a slow, steady rhythm.



Childhood influence Chef Mak got his first taste of the culinary world from his father ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND GETTY IMAGES/STOCK

found himself in the kitchen, observing his uncle and father making hundreds of dim sums in a day – from start to finish. "It got me hooked and I started running again, but this was a different kind of run – to speed up my learning," he continues, in a slow, soft voice, a faint smile spreading across his face.

Over the next decade, Mak learnt and excelled in making dim sum and other Cantonese dishes.

He worked at the Lung King Heen restaurant, at Four Seasons Hong Kong, where he also learned to experiment with recipes: tweaking traditional Cantonese cuisine and embellishing it with a finesse that was appreciated by his urban well-travelled diners.

His creations included signature dishes like a simple yet magical baked bun with barbecued pork, and desserts like egg and petal cake. To no one's surprise, the restaurant was soon awarded a Michelin star rating. Today, Lung King Heen has three.

Mak, however, had left long ago to spread his wings. He wanted to create his own identity, he recalls, while gesturing to a senior waitress in Cantonese. More dumpling baskets arrive. The restaurant is fragrant with the scent of spring onion, shrimps and braised beef mixed, as lid after lid is opened.

TEA TIME STORY

Dim sum's origins date back hundreds of years to the Silk Road, when purveyors would set up roadside tea services for travelling merchants.



brunch consisting of cha and dim sum) ritual, Chef Mak shares his life's journey.

He begins by saying, "I was pathetic in my studies and dreaded going to school. I used to run away, make pleas of not going to school almost every day, till one

day, my uncle grabbed my hand and said, "If you are not going to go to school, it's okay, but learn something that will sustain you lifelong. After all, we Cantonese value skills and more so the mastery of hand skill." I was 14-years-old." The very next day, the chef

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



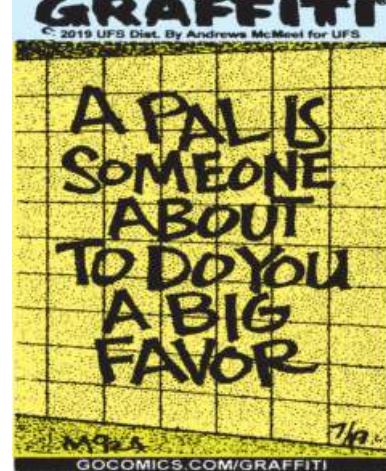
CALVIN AND HOBBS



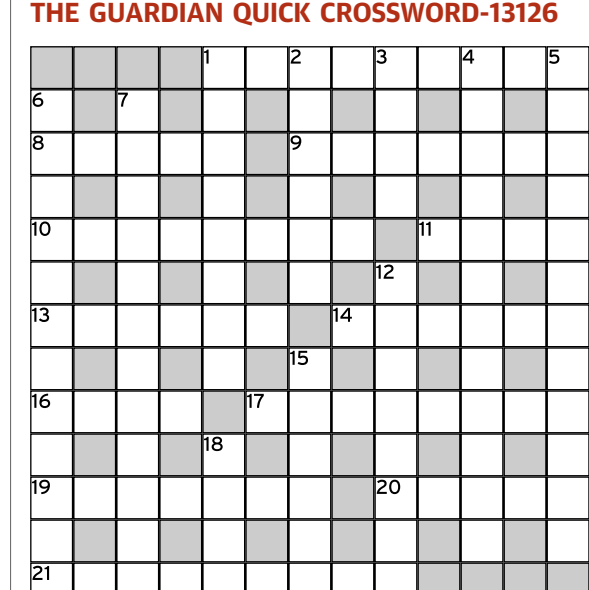
TIGER



GRAFFITI



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13126

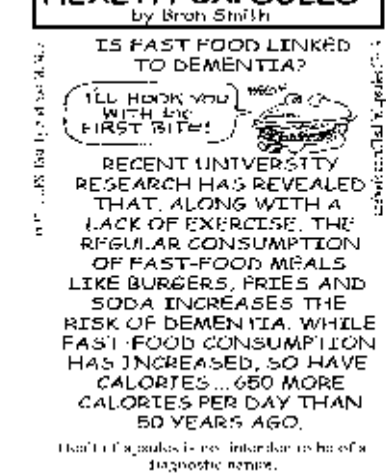


- water (4)
- 4 Inflammation of a sac attached to the large intestine (12)
- 5 Booth used for making calls (9,3)
- 6 Raise a glass (4,3,5)
- 7 Female singing voice (5-7)
- 12 Biscuit made with oats, syrup and butter (8)
- 15 Skin painting (6)
- 18 Red Planet (4)

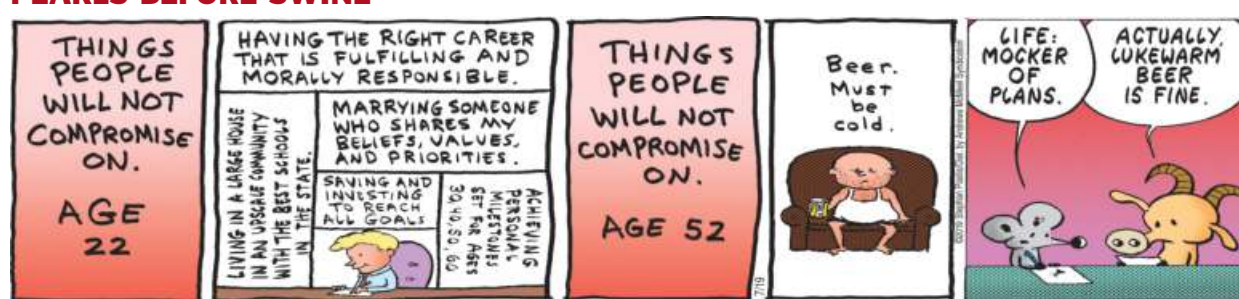
WUMO



HEALTH CAPSULES



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



- Across
- 1 The accused (9)
- 8 Poem of mourning (5)
- 9 Theatrical knife (7)
- 10 Brilliant (8)
- 11 Trim (4)
- 13 Light cavalry soldier (6)
- 14 Animal lacking pigment (6)
- 16 Notice (4)
- 17 On which scouts cook and around which they sing (8)
- 19 Obvious (7)
- 20 Pal (from Madrid?) (5)
- 21 1969 US rock festival (9)
- Down
- 1 Deal with soiled clothing without water (3-5)
- 2 Joining together (6)
- 3 Tidy – without



Solution will appear in The Hindu dated July 20, 2019.

Solution No. 13125

FRIDAY REVIEW

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Time to improvise!

A peek into the world of improvisational theatre **Pages 4 & 5**



Unravelling new ideas Artists of Kaivalya Plays in performance

INSIDE



'I don't sing to please'

Inspired by Kumar Gandharva, vocalist Rahul Deshpande has forged his own path

P3



This peacock is the pride of Punjab

Taus is a string instrument similar to the violin and is played during shabad kirtans

P6



The heritage of swing

Be it Rajo Parba or Teej festival, swing is linked with the themes of expectancy, love and fertility

P7



In sync Archana and Chetana in performance

A double treat

Arunima Sengupta Basu and the dancing duo Archana and Chetana conjured up myriad flavours of mythical tales through Kathak and Bharatanatyam

MADHUR GUPTA
.....

Keeping the tradition of introducing young artists to connoisseurs of the Capital alive, India International Centre recently presented Arunima Sengupta Basu from Kolkata and the dancing duo Archana and Chetana from Bangalore in their IIC Double Bill concert.

Aptly titled, the event presented a double indulgence for the rasikas to view high classical arts of Kathak and Bharatanatyam with a tinge of regional flavours.

The evening began with Kathak by Arunima, a student of Gurus Luna Poddar and Pt. Rajendra Gangani. Presenting the much revered text excerpts from Ramayana, the dancer depicted various stages of Lord Rama's life including those of intense hardships and the ultimate establishment of Ram Rajya.

Musically composed and choreographed by Pt Rajendra Gangani, the piece coaxed the audience to meditate upon the unparalleled standards of Lord Rama, eluding any literal translation of the saga. On being asked about her association with the stalwart guru and her thoughts on Guru Shishya tradition, the dancer commented, "Our parampara entails a lifelong bonding between the teacher and the disciple, whereby the disciple becomes an integral part of the guru's family, rendering service to his guru in all possible way, in return of the knowledge imparted by the maestro that incorporates a complete education both about the subject and about life as a whole."

"Mora Saiyaan Bulawe Adhi Raat Ko" was another piece in *bhav paksha* of the dancer. This thumri, a rendition by late Jayeeta Pandey, explored the charted waters of the *virahini nayika* waiting to be one with her beloved and exuding immense joy on receiving an inkling of his call to meet her. With deft qualities of a dancer, Arunima managed to evoke the sense of separation by ending her piece in a tragedy, when the heroine, unable to cross the flooded river, shatters into deep grief. Interspersing with, paran, tukras, high velocity pirouettes, and vilambit and drut laya tatkar, the dancer chose to draw curtains on her recital.

Next in the lineup were Bharatanatyam dancers Archana and Chetana; students of Guru B.Bhanumati, Sheela Chandrasekhar, and Devaki Narasimhan. Also evoking the Vaishnavite deities Rama, Krishna, and Vishnu, the dancers titled their presentation: 'Sarvam Krishnamayam'.

Continued on page 8

The life and times of Josh

Marked by sophistication and poetic musings, Salima Raza's "Yaadon Ki Baraat" unravelled the romantic side of the poet of revolution

DIWAN SINGH BAJELI
.....

The Wings Cultural Society headed by talented young theatre practitioner Tarique Hameed is undoubtedly a first-of-a-kind which mainly focuses on novelists and poets whose works inspire to create a morally better world. We have seen in the past fine productions by the group that appeared at prestigious festivals including Bharat Rang Mahotsav.

Critically acclaimed, its productions include "Chand Roz Aur Meri Jaan" by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, "Topi Ki Dastaan" by Rahi Masoom Raza and "Sara Ka Saara Asmaan" based on the life of poetess Sara Shagufta. Continuing its artistic credo, it has presented "Yaadon Ki Baraat" based on the autobiography of Josh Malihabadi at Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre recently under the direction of Salima Raza.

Poetic musings

Candidly frank, the production evokes multiple moods, vividly bringing alive vignettes of the life of poet Josh Malihabadi (1898-1982) and his turbulent times. It is marked by sophistication and poetic musings. Such evenings are rarely witnessed on the Delhi stage these days.

Director Salima Raza has evolved her own presentational form which unravels content in an unpretentious manner. There are two performers – Salima herself and Arshad Eqbal, producer, director and voice caster, – who sit on the chairs occupying centre stage.

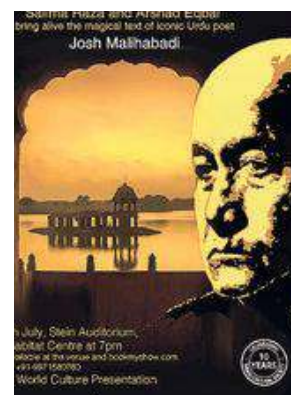
Both are holding copies of autobiographical account of the poet, elaborating their point by reading relevant passages from the autobiog-



Beyond the obvious Arshad Eqbal and Salima Raza in "Yaadon Ki Baraat"; Josh Malihabadi in a poster of the play ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

raphy. After establishing themselves in conversational mode in an unaffected style, they establish a lively rapport with the audience. In this process, Salima and Arshad transcend the concept of the fourth wall and make the members of the audience involved in the revelation of the poems and times of the poet and to reflect on his works and social conflicts he confronted. The performers remain sitting on their chairs throughout the show, their tonal variations, clarity of accent using punch at the right place and facial expression eloquently convey the central idea of the autobiography.

Another innovative aspect of Salima's production is the use of recorded off stage music which is beautifully rendered in soulful voices highlighting the poet's world view. The melody appears to start from a distance, rising steadily, making transition from conversation into melodious renderings of poems



lyrical and an integral part of the narrative.

Enlightened visionary

Known for his defiance of dogmas and British colonial rulers, Josh Malihabadi is greatly venerated for his poetic richness and social vision and is famously called Shayar-e-Inqilab. He is one of the finest Urdu poets who stood for the oppressed. He remained in India till 1956 and later migrated to Pakistan.

The performers narrate his poems, biography full of romantic anecdotes that impart insight into the emotional world of a poet who wrote fearlessly.

The director interpreted his work and times not in a style that is ostentatiously philosophical replete with pompous Persianised Urdu. Her aim was to capture everyday occurrences which kept audience in good humour.

Here is a humorous anecdote: Malihabadi kept him away from drinking. Once he

was invited by his friends to have a good time in the evening, he encounters a voluptuously beautiful dancing girl who was instrumental in introducing him to the taste of wine and the company of beautiful women.

The performers narrate a chapter from Malihabadi autobiography with his wife. It is witty, comical and a wife's concern for her husband fearing that he has affairs. In this narration, the poet does not express his bitterness about his wife's behaviour who is critical about his lifestyle. Instead, in this narrative, love and understanding between wife and husband are revealed. Though known for his affairs, he married only once.

There is a poem which celebrates composite culture of India and display the sense of joie de vivre by Hindus and Muslim while celebrating Holi. There is an undercurrent of peaceful co-existence between different communities illustrated through his references to the Gita and the Quran.

Though the dominant mood of the production is one of light-hearted amusement, the denouement ending with the couplet: "Raje Almas Ke Tere Khas-O-Khashak Mein Hain, Haddiyan Apne Bujurgon Ki Tiri Khak Mein Hain... Ghar Jo Chhodange To Phir Chhawini Chhayenge Kahaan", rendered in a melodious voice steeped in deep poignancy, stirred the soul of the audience.



'I don't sing to please'

Inspired by Kumar Gandharva, vocalist Rahul Deshpande is forging his own path

SHAILAJA KHANNA

Despite his rich lineage, it was only after the success of songs he sung in "Katyar Kaljat Ghusali" that Rahul Deshpande became a household name. He has acted and sung in over 100 shows of the play of the same name over the last few years.

Articulate and chatty, Rahul, grandson of Pt Vasant Rao Deshpande, a popular figure in Maharashtra music and theatre circles, is not your typical music centric musician. Educated in a premier English school, Rahul confessed to listening to popular Western music in his youth rather than his grandfather's tapes. Only three years after Vasant Rao Deshpande passed away, Rahul found his musical inspiration initially through the music of the iconic Pt Kumar Gandharva. Incidentally, Rahul has even adopted Kumar ji's stance of leaning on his arms!

Rahul's concert recently at the month-long Swara Malhar festival in Pune was an eye opener. Despite it being a Malhar festival, Rahul chose boldly to sing raga Madhu Kauns, with even the lyrics of his opening khayal "de mohe darshan Rama" in Jhaptaal, making no concessions to the season of the rains. He held the audience attention with fast taans, gamaks, more used on instruments, and subtle laya play. There is no doubt Rahul has forged his own path musically. His concluding thumri "chhaa rahali kali ghata" was sung with innovative embellishments.

One admired his candour and his willingness to take on all questions head on.

Edited excerpts:

You wear many hats - sin-



I am optimistic about the future of our music, but I must admit that it is the few crowd pullers who carry a festival.



Striking a chord Rahul Deshpande

ger, actor, organiser...

"Katyar Kaljat Ghusali" is not the first film I did; but yes, everyone is talking about it. In 2011, I had acted in a Maharashtrian film "Bal Gandharva" in which I sang and also played a small role, but "Katyar Kaljat Ghusali" is by far the biggest hit. I have always wanted to revive Marathi musicals.

The time of Pt Deenanath Mangeshkar and Bal Gandharva was the golden era of Marathi musicals, and I wanted to recreate this era. My grandfather had acted as Khan sahib, the central character in "Katyar..." in the original play, and I wanted to revive it as a play for a newer audience. So we did around 100 shows of it, spread over 10 years. At NSD, Delhi students had only heard of Natya sangeet, they didn't know musical theatre even existed.

I also did other plays such as "Man Apmaan", "Saubhadra". I think because the interest in and popularity of these plays, the films happened. I also did a show on Kumar Gandharva ji entitled "Raagvilas" based on his book "Anuprag Vilas" which contains his bandishes.

I am happy to say that after watching my plays and films, more youngsters are coming to learn classical music. That was my aim.

There is another biopic that I can't talk about yet, but in that too I sing and act. Another film is about my grandfather. It's the

first film I have composed music for, and that was quite a challenge.

However, I am very clear about my identity. I am a classical singer and that is what I want to be remembered as. I do love to perform, but it is primarily to push my agenda of popularising classical music.

How did you gravitate towards singing?

My musical inspiration is Kumar ji. For me music equalled him. I started singing because of him. I wanted to sound like him. I also learnt from his son Mukul Shivputra for 8-9 years. I studied in an English school where the music I heard was Western popular music.

The classical music interest happened later. I feel my music sounds current because it has all that I heard. Amongst the classical musicians I was inspired by include Pt Bhimsen Joshi, Kishori Amonkar, Mallikarjun Mansoor. At some point, when I was 23-24, I decided I wanted to do nothing but sing, and sing well. I did riyaz for 8-10 hours. I devoured the recordings of my grandfather; his singing sounds easy but it is so difficult to do. I consciously did not try to sound like him, I felt it was impossible. With Kumar ji, I felt closer. Kumar ji and my grandfather were very close friends, and I think in a way my involvement with Kumar ji's music brought me closer to my grandfather too.

I admired his approach to

music. The way he interprets each bandish is different each time. I still have so much to learn from the recordings.

Tell us about your signature style?

As a singer one should not try to copy a voice or even a style. Your personality has to come out in your music. Initially, I tried to copy, but it didn't work. When I sing, I can switch modes and bring out the style of Mukulji, or Bhimsen ji or Vasant Rao ji - but ultimately it's my music. I travel a lot, and I do think all these influences seep into my music. I like to watch meaningful films and read what my friends recommend.

I try to bring in newer audiences by singing the type of music they want to hear, but do not move away from the tradition I have been trained in. I believe artist can command audience attention; it's your own confidence as a performer that holds attention. I don't believe one has to compromise on style or time. I don't look at my watch while singing unless I have been told to contain myself. I don't care how I am being judged; I don't sing to please. It bothers me to think that I sang for the gallery.

Let's talk about your annual music festival Vasant Utsav.

It's been 11 years now, and I was quite clear the festival had to be a befitting tribute to my grandfather's legacy, which was not confined to only classical music. He loved ghazals, laavani, natya sangeet - so I wanted the festival to include all that too. I wanted the festival to include Marathi musicals too.

In 2020, we will celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of my grandfather. So, I am planning a big event.

How do you see the classical music scene in India today?

I am optimistic about the future of our music, but I must admit that it is the few crowd pullers who carry a festival. Unknown artists at a standalone concert will fail, even if it is not ticketed. In Madhya Pradesh, the Tansen festival is well run by the State. I wish Maharashtra would also patronise classical music.

I did a new type of concert called 'baithak' where I talked to the audience, explained what a khayal was, then sang it. It was popular but it's been two years now. I have not been able to carry it on. Sadly, classical music needs to be sponsored as ticket sales do not cover costs.

I am excited about my concert for Banyan Tree at Kamani auditorium on July 20th. There are very few opportunities in Delhi I feel, so this for me is nice.



Sonal Mansingh

Well-deserved!

Forty four artists from the field of music, dance, theatre, traditional/folk/tribal music/dance/theatre, puppetry and overall contribution/scholarship in the performing arts have been selected for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for 2018.

At its General Council meeting held at Guwahati recently, National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama announced that noted tabla maestro Zakir Hussain, seasoned classical dancer Sonal Mansingh, Satriya exponent Jatin Goswami and veteran Bharatanatyam dancer K. Kalyanasundaram Pillai, have been selected for Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellow (Akademi Ratna).

Veteran theatre critic of *The Hindu*, Diwan Singh Bajeli has been selected for Overall Contribution /Scholarship in the Performing Arts. Along with him, Puru Dadhich has also been selected for the same category.

In the field of music, 11 artistes including seasoned Hindustani vocalist Madhup Mudgal and sarod maestro Tejendra Narayan Majumdar have made it to the list.

Malini Awasthi, Gazi Khan Barna, Narendra Singh Negi and Mohd. Sadiq Bhagat have been selected in traditional/ folk/ music /theatre category.

In dance, Radha Sridhar for Bharatanatyam, Ishira and Maulik Shah for Kathak, Akham Lakshmi Devi for Manipuri, Surupa Sen for Odissi, Tanakeswar Hazarika Borbayan for Satriya, Gopika Varma for Mohiniattam and Pasumurthy Ramalinga Sastry for Kuchipudi are among nine exponents selected for the prestigious award.

In theatre, nine eminent artists have been selected including Rajiv Naik and Lalitluangliana Khiangte for playwriting, Sanjay Upadhyay and S. Raghunandana for direction and Suhas Joshi and Teekam Joshi for acting.

The honour of Akademi Fellow carries a purse money of ₹3,00,000 and Akademi Award carries ₹1,00,000, besides a Tamrapatra and Angavastram.

The SNA Awards will be conferred by the President of India in a special investiture ceremony.

Unscripted and spontaneous, improvisational theatre is emerging as a powerful tool for developing life skills and building communities

SHRINKHANA SAHAI

Life as usual, flipped in a moment for Shruti Jain when she decided to try out a class of improv. A financial planner and analyst by profession, she wanted to explore her creative side with the workshop. Among several game-changing takeaways, she realised that as in the session, also in her life out there, she wasn't really listening actively to people. "During an act, I figured that I am nodding and maintaining eye contact but not listening, back in my work. It's the same. This changed my relationship with my clients and I have evolved remarkably as a professional."

Stepping into different roles during the workshops shifted her perspective on people. "I had never thought about how a waitress at a restaurant might be feeling, or my domestic help at home when I said something mindlessly to her. To be able to feel like others is so profound!"

Similarly, for Training and Development professional Avijit Shastri, a brush with improv transformed his approach in corporate life. "I realised fears are so hard-wired within us that it is difficult to break out and let your guard down. While this may take several years with regular HR training sessions, 'letting go' can happen easily in just one improv session where you find a safe space to be silly, imaginative, make your team member look good and accept people without judging."

Nurturing empathy is central to improvisational theatre for Blessin Varkey who facil-

tated these workshops. "At its core, improv is about acceptance. Accepting stories, characters and people for who they are."

As the Artistic Director of The Improv Company, Delhi, he prefers to use the term 'improv', tipping the hat to the pedagogy of the 'Improv System' pioneered by Keith Johnstone in the 1970s. This is just one of the several schools of spontaneous theatre that have their own distinct formats and approaches.

Not just for laughs

Unlike a regular play that is scripted, rehearsed, prepared and staged, improvisational theatre is primarily unscripted, unplanned and created collaboratively by the players in the moment. Incidentally, the term 'improv' has become hemmed to refer mainly to comedy, though there is an array of other experimental, dramatic and narrative-based



Improv allows us to experience awareness, acceptance and vulnerability. It also helps us understand what it means to have a learner's mind' Blessin Varkey

improvisational theatre. The focus in improv shifts deeply from performance production to process-oriented work.

Balastree Viswanathan of Improv Comedy Bangalore points out, "Comedic improv has taken off in India in a big way, but it also puts improv in a box of being just comedy." A closer look at the trends in the past five years reveals the possible reason. "Stand-up and improv were taking off together so they got bundled together because people were familiar with the comedy vehicle and mostly shows of both genres were happening at the same event and venue."

Ankur Sardana forayed into improv during his time in the US. Back in India, he had a brief stint as a playwright before returning back to the world of unscripted theatre, which proved "much easier to begin with less resources, and has powerful potential for developing life-skills."

Based in Gurugram presently, he founded Nautanki-baaz Improv Comedy nine years back, with core team members Anshu Daga, Ankur Nigam, Mayank Mondgil and Sumit Mehra. Inspired by the work of legendary improv-a-theatcan, Viola Spolin, he reflects, "The shift from scripted plays to improv is also about a way of life. In improv, there are no meaty roles, we work as a team and it is a lot about community-building." In the recent past, their workshops with children and families have drawn a large number of participants. "It is often difficult to tell people what exactly improv is. We realised that the venue makes a lot of



Wings it on STAGE



Exploring diverse issues (Clockwise from above): A performance of Admant Eyes in progress, members of Playground Comedy Studio ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

difference. It doesn't work so well in an auditorium-setting where people come to sit and watch. It needs to be interactive, collaborative, game-like."

For Sardana, an important aspect of improv is that it should be now and here, relevant to what people are experiencing and for them to bring their lives into it. "Since it is spontaneous, people can share or reflect on the topics relevant to them right now. It is basically a means for people to talk and build communities."

Gender bender

While improv may have a topical and timely edge to it, the acts can often be gender-skewed and it was important for Madhu Shukla and Balastree Viswanathan to explore this influence. "Prevailing gender stereotypes often overwhelm a regular improv act. For instance, if it is an interaction between a doctor and nurse, it would be as-

sumed that the doctor is male and the nurse is female, similarly for a boss and secretary. And often the women roles would just be relegated to being the romantic interests for the men. This can get quite limiting." With this in mind they started Admant Eyes in

2017 within Improv Comedy Bangalore, an experiment as an all-women's group. They realised that it is easier to explore a diverse array of issues, roles and topics within this format. "The dynamic between team members changes," says Viswa-

Directors share some memorable improv moments

"Two male actors are on stage. They begin the conversation and we realise gradually that they are actually playing sisters. They brilliantly use the space and the objects around them to give us (audience) the illusion that they are at a camp site. After talking about their marriage plans and their day like any other ordinary women, we realise that they are also the two most wanted criminals of the Interpol! The brilliance of the improviser lies in establishing the ordinary, basic setting first and then collectively working towards building an interesting story."

Blessin Varkey, The Improv Company

In our improv theatre production 'Urnaveel', as the audience enter the venue, they are handed a sheet of paper with questions. The questions are seemingly simple, and could also be interpreted deeply. For instance, 'What would make you happy?' For some, it's an ice cream of their favourite flavour, someone wants to be at the beach, while another starts pondering over their true calling in life. The sheets are collected and set aside, they re-emerge later in the performance, as cues for the actors. A stray sigh, random giggles, nervous claps from the audience indicate that their answer-sheet made its way into the play in a way they couldn't have imagined. And that's the impact of improv.

Vaaron P Anand, Kaivalya Plays



Vaaron P. Anand

nathan, "One can be more open to taking risks with performative choices on stage. The audience can't typecast us so easily into the regular characters and concepts, there is a different kind of comfort between the players and we can explore the depth

of social equations and emotions without the pressure of punch-lines." The group plays around with topics, including insights into gender issues, "Sometimes the topics revolve around gender just by bringing our real lives onto stage. When women are coming to an improv session after being groped, catcalled, pushed over, these emerge as critical issues to explore, with comedy or through non-comedic improv." Reflecting on whether they are tagged as a feminist performance group, she says, "We are not a feminist improv group by design, but by virtue of us all being women, it is feminist, for sure."

Inclusive approach

Blessin Varkey believes that within the directorial role in improv, one must also double as an educator. "Improv allows us to experience awareness, acceptance and vulnerability. It also helps us understand

what it means to have a 'learner's mind'". He co-founded the improv collective at the Playground Comedy Studio and also served as its artistic director earlier. Presently spearheading The Improv Company, he believes it is crucial to explore improvisation as an approach and pedagogy in mainstream and inclusive education.

"Improv has also been part of my day job as the head of the Innovation and Research unit at a Delhi based non-pro-

Improving on Improv
Nautanki-baaz Improv Comedy: Introducing **Bollywood Improv** - Six-week Performance-oriented improv series starting in August.

The Improv Company: 'Keep Calm and Improv' series for different groups, alongside special sessions of Impro for the elderly. **Not so Blue** series for young individuals with autism.

ICB: A unique **Improv Musical** (Qued) titled 'Hum'. Later this month, the musical included duo - Balastree Viswanathan and Nasir Engineer would be presenting a feature-length improv performance filled with games and stories on music and singing, all improvised in the moment.

Kaivalya Plays: Starting **Head Space** a series of monthly improv jams and workshops at Oddbird Theatre, Delhi.

tically coherent. So, to see the boy contribute in the story was a big surprise to the special educators and the vice principal because it opened up for them a whole new range of tools to explore working with students."

Mental health matters

In their latest improv show- Urnaveel, Kaivalya Plays, a Delhi-based collective, unpacks issues of mental health. Improvisation games and exercises alongside audience suggestions provide an entry point into unsettling discussions that probe the stigma around mental health through the production. The ensemble uses spontaneous improv theatre exercises and audience suggestions to devise the final performance on the spot. The show aims to create safe spaces for the performers and audience alike to acknowledge and possibly articulate their own experiences with mental health. Initially commissioned for the ReUnion programme by Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller

fit, where we research and design innovative solutions to assist children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their education, employment and rehabilitation through technology. I've been using improvisation with my team, which usually involves special educators, speech and occupational therapists, psychologists and developers during the ideation phase."

Recalling an instance where improv and education blended seamlessly he says, "My favourite experience of using improvisation, till date was to see a 17-year old, young adult with severe learning disabilities and limited verbal capacity contribute to an improvisational exercise called the one-word story. The story was simple, it was about a lion in the jungle having water. One word story can be really challenging. It's important to listen, be present and be syntac-



Resonance

This peacock is the pride of Punjab

Taus is a string instrument similar to the violin and is played during shabad kirtans



DR M LALITHA AND M NANDINI



We were recently invited to perform for the UNESCO's City of Music programme in Germany, where we represented India and Carnatic Music. As part of our concert, we collaborated with a German ensemble and had a chance to listen to a rare Indian string instrument, Taus being played by a German lady.

Intrigued by its sound and peacock-shaped structure we decided to explore this instrument. Taus, which falls under the category of Chordophones, belongs mainly to North and Central India, with specific connection to Punjab. It is associated with the Sikh saints and mainly used in devotional music.

'Taus', a Persian word, denotes a peacock. The neck of this peacock-shaped instrument holds a long wooden rack with 20 heavy metal frets. On top of the instrument, there are four main strings that run along the fingerboard. There are four pegs for these main strings that are made of either wood or steel. The main strings are usually tuned to shadjam, madhyamam and panchamam.

Apart from the main strings, there are around 30 sympathetic or resonant strings that are attached to the pegs located on the side of the instrument. The main strings, made usually of metal, pass through a bridge that is traditionally made of ivory or bone but more often of rosewood. The notes from the first fret of the last string

start from the mandra sthayi madhyama and go up to tara sthayi gandhara.

Taus is usually made from one piece high-quality wood, usually the Tun wood, which is similar to the red cedar. At the tail portion of the instrument is the sound hole. The instrument has a large resonating chamber. The sound chamber of the Taus is bigger in size and is covered with wood or goat skin. The peacock feet, carved in wood, holds the instrument. Sometimes peacock feathers are attached to the instrument as an embellishment.

Bowing technique

The Taus is played with a bow, a bit concave in structure. The bow has the frog and the upper portion similar to that of the violin. The index, middle finger and the thumb of the right hand hold the stick portion of the bow, while the ring finger is placed near the frog and the little finger is kept below the stick portion. Long bowing is special to this instrument. The bow hair, made of nylon, is coated in Rosin like the way it is applied to the bow of the violin.

The playing techniques are more similar to that of the violin. The left hand fin-

gers produce the melody while the right hand fingers hold the bow to strike the strings. The index and middle fingers of the left hand are used to play the notes, sometimes the ring finger is used to play certain phrases.

Taus artistes mostly play seated on the floor, with either one leg or both tucked in, the top portion of the instrument resting on the performer's shoulder.

Taus's construction and playing technique are also akin to Dilruba, another string instrument mostly used in the North. Scholars say that Dilruba originated from Taus.

While some say that Taus was invented by Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, there are others who think that it was created by Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th guru of the Sikhs and was a poet. As a master of the Persian language, it is said that he gave the instrument a Persian name in the language and he could play it.

Taus is part of Gurbani kirtan/Shabad kirtan, where the performer recites the hymns while playing the instrument.

The writers are well-known Carnatic musicians



Theatre Talk

‘The effect of stage is magical’

Amruta Sant on reinventing herself with each character she plays

DEEPA GAHLOT



In Mumbai show business, where supply of beauty and talent, far outweighs the demand, how does a girl, who, admits with charming self-deprecation that she does not have the “figure, height or complexion” make a successful acting career for herself?

In the case of Amruta Sant, who has done theatre, television, films (including an important part in the foreign film *The Extraordinary Journey Of The Fakir*), it must be her mix of Marathi (father) talent and Punjabi (mother) confidence, that pushed her to approach the stage directors she wanted to work with, and land roles.

“It all started it Ruia College,” she says, naming her central Mumbai *alma mater*, which has a very active theatre department, and a tendency to consistently win inter-collegiate drama contests.

“I started doing a lot of plays there, which led to my getting some TV shows and also a marketing job. The job I gave up because I thought marketing involves fooling people; and TV I eventually quit, because I could not go there day after day and do the same thing. Fortunately, I joined Thespo (a youth theatre festival) and did some plays. I also tried to get into Marathi theatre, but could not give it too much time at that point.”

Meeting Dubey

When Amruta met the legendary Satyadev Dubey, she told him about her desire to work with him. “He cast me in his play ‘Khuda Ke Liye Mat Dekhna’. Imagine, he has a play that says don’t come to see it, and audiences still came! Working with Dubeyji was an eye opener. I understood what theatre is all about. With the same confidence, I approached Mak Sir (Makrand Deshpande) and he cast me in his play. Through his play, I met Divya Jagdale and worked with her. Then I did plays with Sunil Shanbag, Jaimini Pathak, simultaneously I started doing Marathi plays like ‘Dhol Tashe’ with Vijay Kenkre, ‘Gidhade’ with Athisha Naik, I did a Gujarati play and an Urdu play also. I enjoy doing plays in different languages.”

By the time she thought of formal training in theatre, she was 26 and had done enough theatre to know that she had talent and loved being on stage.

Amruta went on to win awards for her Marathi play ‘Talyat Malyat’ with Abhijit Guru and *Panhala*, a film with Nagesh Bhosale. “Abhijit is the most popular writer of Marathi soaps, but



he always returns to theatre. Imagine, it was his dream to perform at Prithvi. I told him, there is no language barrier, and I made him write a play that we performed during the festival, so his dream came true. No matter how many films I do, I will come back and do plays. It’s a different experience altogether, I did a workshop with Vijaya Mehta and she said, theatre completes an actor.

There is the audience, the actor, stage, light and there is space in between; when you feel the silence, you breathe together, the space vanishes and they (audience) are there with you. That’s when the whole experience gets completed. When I did ‘Talyat Malyat’, in which I played a bipolar character, I think I got into that zone.”

She likes the fact that every time you do something on stage, you can do it differently. “After a point, you start doing it more for yourself than the audience. Divya Jagdale is one of the best directors. She says forget the earlier show, and makes you create something afresh each time. Mak Sir takes that to another level. He will let you go to any extent and then he will get what he wants. In one of the plays, he played an eight-year-old boy, with his moustache and white hair, and he was convincing. Divya makes you feel the complete character. In one of her plays ‘Coffee In The Canteen’, I played a teenager, and in the next, ‘Toxic’, I was a mother of two kids. I think I am a director’s actor, every time I reinvent myself as a new character, I enjoy it. On stage, I can feel it... it may be the same line, but the effect is magical,” says Amruta.

The writer is a critic and columnist

The heritage of swing

Be it Rajo Parba or Teej festival, swing is linked with the themes of expectancy, love, and fertility

NAVINA JAJA

The poignant picture of a mother rocking her baby lying in a hammock made from her torn sari in the sweltering heat at a road crossing evokes the all-pervasive idea of the universe of the 'swing'. One that conveys a map of hidden roots where joy and expectancy enjoin mundane with spirituality. The swing has a tangible presence in visual arts of textiles, crafts, paintings, and architecture; but there is a greater web of the intangible world of the swing comprising poetic songs, dance, rituals, and beliefs. Like a reel, one frame moves into another exposing swinging world of the wonder that is India.

The essence of the heritage of swing comprises largely of the season of the monsoon, the omniscient presence of Lord Krishna as the archetypal lover of Radha as much as the Supreme Being. Swing is a metaphor linked with the themes of expectancy, love, and fertility. For example, a three-day festival of the swing called Rajo Parba in Odisha is celebrated to mark the mensuration of Mother Earth. It corresponds to the astro-climatologic of the spirit marking the start of the wet season. There is a certain pregnancy - there is no breeze under the dark hanging clouds, it is hot and moist, sweat and body odour permeates; the women wearing new dresses ride the swing breaking the stillness and relieving themselves in the breeze.

In several other parts of India, the third day of the monsoon month of shravana is celebrated as Haryali (green) Teej in several parts of North India. Dressed in green attire, women hang swings on trees, the mango tree is the most preferred one to celebrate the fertility festival. While the married women fast and aspire for conjugal bliss, the unmarried girls wish for good husbands. Their desires swaying in nature, alternately touching the sky and saluting the earth.

The canvas shifts, somewhere in



The swing of hope (Clockwise from above) Girls enjoying the Teej festival in Chandigarh; Dola bedi textile of Odisha; a miniature painting depicting Radha and Krishna on a swing ■ AKHILESH KUMAR, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the South in Tamil Nadu as part of a ritual in the marriage ceremony, a young newly married couple sat on a swing (Oonjal). Ladies of the house gently rocked the swing singing special songs, "...On the golden swing, she flowered under the warmth of the love of her Lord." The swing went up and down and the song whispered to the couple of the ups and downs they needed to share as part of their journey together. The women circulated rice balls around the couple and threw them in different directions to ward off evils spirits.

Oscillating back to the North, the gathering monsoon clouds in the bygone days in Banaras saw the elites organising stag parties all through the rainy season. The success of these monsoon stag parties was the performance of the courtesan. She sat on a swing and sang songs. Amidst the rising dark clouds, the melody echoed - (jhoola pada kadam ki daari, jhoole brij ke nar naari) "The swing hangs from the branch of the Kadam tree on which sway the men and women of Braj."



The swing went up and down and the song whispered to the couple of the ups and downs they needed to share as part of their journey together.

The wind blows, the moving clouds over Western India, on the one hand, reveal swings in most homes in Gujarat; and on the other hand, inside cave number 2 in the World Heritage site of the Buddhist Ajanta Caves snuggles in a dark corner the painted Vidhurpandita Jataka Tale. The painting of the story depicts the beautiful princess Irandati swinging singing a love song to attract Purnaka, the powerful general of the Yakshas (the benevolent nature spirits in Indian myths or gaathas).

From the West, the swing pulsates to Central India where early Afghan rulers in the 15thc created the monsoon site of Mandav - "City of Joy" in Madhya Pradesh. Amidst the group of the world heritage monuments stands the majestic

Hindol Mahal (Swinging palace) comprising a large hall with arched openings and solid inclined buttresses that lend the building its name.

Along the stretch of forest land covering several states, there is among a large number of indigenous communities a variety of swing rituals linked with statues of several goddesses. These images crafted in wood and the lost wax process of the Dhokra metal art have become a popular item for urban homes.

Festival of hearts

Of the many Indian Gods, Krishna (from the pastoral community) and his overarching lineage from within Vaishnavism postulates the most vibrant form of celebrations through which a devotee finds himself. Seva or service to Krishna is an important element for the believers to connect with the divine. "We experience Krishna with our eyes, we feel Him through all of our senses. Hari is the desire, the festival of our hearts. To imibe Krishna's form is the ultimate reward. "(Venu Gita, Subodhini). The festivals of the Swing - Hindol Utsav remains an important event in the festival calendar of Krishna worship.

In spring, in the season of Holi, the Eastern coastal state

Odisha celebrates the Dola (swing) Festival. The statues of the three central Gods (Krishna, his sister Subhadra, and brother Balram) are shifted to pavilions (mandaps) and placed on swings. The motif of the pavilion of swings is replicated as design called Dola vedi in Odisha textiles.

In other parts of India, the monsoons provide relief from the intense summer heat giving way to an exuberant spirit. It is time for lovers to unite, the environment is colored with lush greenery, sweet-smelling flowers, and fruiting trees.

Krishna is believed to be in service of his female principal Radha whom he woos on the swing. For a month, swings are hung in all Krishna temples and every day for an hour in the afternoon, the idols of Krishna-Radha are taken out and placed on a swing. The swings made of silver, gold, mirrors, fruits, vegetables, jasmine, Indian roses, and greenery represent fertility and love in union.

A string pulls the swing to and fro and the devotees in the cour-

tyard bind themselves through the string to the divine couple who are venerated with songs and flowers are showered. The worshippers, in turn, are sprinkled with red dry powder gulal representing love by priests. Soon after, a pool of perfumed water with lotus blooms is prepared. A small boat is floated in the pool of water. The idols of Radha-Krishna is removed from the swings and the divine couple is given a joyous boat ride. The boat ride ends, the divine couple is placed back on the swing, after which bhog (sacred food) is offered to the divine couple.

The elevated swing

Madhusudan Baul roams around the terracotta temples of Bishnupur in West Bengal singing the 400-year-old mystical wisdom, "live your life swinging gently between the two chakras - The Ajna Chakra (psychic centre located between the two eyebrows) and the Vishuddhi Chakra (located in the throat); If you swing higher you be-

come an ascetic, and if you swing lower your animal instincts predominate."

Kabir, the mystic, uses the loom-weaving imagery in a word jhini jhini that mirrors the movement of swaying. In both lyrics,

the swinging, says Madhusudan Baul, "is about the *spandan* or the motion of vibration. Life is nothing but negotiation of swaying vibratory movements."

Far away, sits Pandit Birju Maharaj recreating the motion of the swinging of the divine couple (Krishna and Radha) in his famed performance of a jhoola "Jhoolat Radhe Naval Kishore". The realm of his dance communicates the primary sensation of seeing. He mediates through his performance the forces of tension in the ropes and the flowing swaying movement of the swing. He recreates the bending of the monsoon cloud, his hand embraces Radha and then a rain-drop falls.

Half evaporates in the motion of the swing, the other half of the rain-drop is soaked in the fold of the scarf that binds the two energies of Radha and Krishna. Such is the power of his performance that the submerged divine forms seem to dissolve leaving an empty swing rocking amidst the monsoon clouds and the undifferentiated space!



Double treat

Continued from page 2

Commencing with a composition of Arunachalaki, Yen Pallikondirayya in ragas Mohana and Kapi set to Adi tala, the allegorical piece asked the Anant Shayan Lord Vishnu the reason for his tiredness. Is it because of the innumerable duels with demons in his avatar as Krishna, is it because of the long walks during vanavasa with Sita as Lord Rama, is it because he lifted Govardhana Giri to protect the people from the wrath of Indra as Bala Gopala?

Archana and Chetana commented that both guru and the student have better understanding of each other's capabilities with one-on-one mentorship, which in turn helps the guru tap full potential in students, "Unlike the academic education system, in the art scenario student learns from the same guru for long durations lasting 15 to 20 years or more. We don't just learn the art from them but also the way of life and in the years to come develop a beautiful parental bond with them."

Succeeding with a Padavarna as seen through the eyes of Rukmini, the piece extolled the magnificence of Krishna. Beautifully expressed by Archana and Chetana, the piece explored Krishna's various exploits like Gajendra Moksha, Draupadi Cheerharan, Raas in Vrindavan; laced all throughout with jathi patterns executed in a neat style in raga Khamach Adi tala.

The duo chose to conclude the evening with a Devaranama, Kadagolataarena set to Yamankalyani raga in Adi tala. A pleasant change from reciting the heroic and love-lorn epics of Krishna, the dancers presented this soothing *vatsalya rasa* piece where little Krishna takes away the churning stick of Yashoda, making her plead and coax him with much wit. With Yashoda's enticement of Bala Gopala with balls of butter and bowls of sugar, the evening came to an end leaving a sweet flavour of these mythical tales with the audience.



Capturing Delhi's past!

Camera has been a constant companion for Vidur Sodhani, a Delhi-based photographer and avid traveller. Now, his love for monuments of Delhi can be seen in a month-long exhibition at India Habitat Centre. In "Delhi Evolution Through Flora & Time", nature and architecture have been highlighted through pictures that appear like work of art.

Blast From The Past

Cinema for a cause

A socially conscious filmmaker, Jahnu Barua's narratives are a fine blend of the ethical and the allegorical

PARTHAJIT BARUAH
.....

"Just because you gave my land back, don't think, I'll vote for you. Don't think the world around will never wake up," cries out Rakheswar. His anguish and long suppressed anger are distinctly visible when he strikes at the face of the landlord's poster pasted on a tree with his spade. The plight of Rakheswar, how he got back his land, is poignantly displayed in Jahnu Barua's iconic film "Halodhia Choraye Baodhan Khai" (Catastrophe) that won the National Award for Best Film in 1988. The 12-time National Award winning filmmaker continues to be a voice of the subjugated, poor farmers and the marginalised.

Barua emerged as a staunch practitioner of alternative cinema and became the first Assamese to receive an International award - the Silver Leopard award - for "Halodhia Choraye Baodhan Khai" at the Locarno International Film Festival in 1988. Before that, Assamese film "Puberun" (1959) by Prabhat Mukherjee was screened at the Berlin International Film Festival.

In his journey of 40 years in the world of cinema, Barua has made 14 thought-provoking films which have transcended the linguistic, cultural and geographic barriers. Barua emerged as a filmmaker of note with his seminal work "Aparooa". The film projected an Assamese woman as breaking the expected norms and values of family and society.

As a socially conscious filmmaker, human values are always at the forefront in his films, and Barua believes that the idea of humanity was born in him when he was in the village called Japihojya of Sivsagar district where he studied for two years. His protagonists such as Rakheswar in "Halodhia Choraye Baodhan Khai" (Catastrophe), Powal in "Hkhagoroloi Bohu Door" (It's a Long Way to the Sea), and Dandeswar in "Baandhon" (Waves of Silence)



Showing the way Jahnu Barua in the thick of action: (below) a still from "Aparooa"

are ordinary human beings with ordinary human emotions and passions but are given ethical and allegorical dimensions.

Maternal bond

The image of his mother as a strong woman is often reflected in Barua's films. He says, "In my childhood, I saw my mother managing the entire household chores and their families. Her leadership and wisdom have left an indelible mark in my mind."

His female characters such as Aparooa in "Aparooa", Ritu in "Firingati", Mrs Barua in "Bonani", Mrs. Khatun in "Kanikar Ramdhenu", Trisha in "Maine Gandhi Ko Nahi Mara" and Juree in his short film "That Gusty Morning" are strong women and in a way, shadows of his mother.

Aparooa, the wife of a well-off owner of a tea estate, feels suffocated in the four walls of her bungalow. In spite of living in a conventional Assamese society, she

elopes with her ex-lover Rana and thus breaks the social shackles. In "Firingati" (Spark), Ritu Baruah, a widowed teacher goes to an interior village Koronga and starts a school fighting against the evil forces in the village. While Mrs Khatun in "Kanikar Ramdhenu" (Ride on the Rainbow) is portrayed as a caring and loving superintendent of a juvenile home. She reprimands the police officer when he comes with a court order and enters inside the juvenile home in a police uniform. Similarly, Trisha and Juree are shown as emotionally strong girls who sacrifice their personal likings for their ailing parents.

Nature lover

Barua's films are replete with evocative images, and the most recurring images are of sea, river and birds. Sea has become a strong symbol in films such as "Hkhagoroloi Bohu Door" (It's a Long Way to the Sea), "Maine Gandhi Ko Nahi Mara" and "Baandhon". Both the sea and life are suggestive of unpredictability.

Barua uses the sea as a central symbol for life itself, and his point of suggestion is not to surrender, but to keep moving. In "Baandhon", when the old couple loses their only grandson in the Mumbai terror attack, they sit in a bench facing the sea and Dandeswar goes on saying: "We are common people. The world is too big for us. We have no choice but to have trust in it. But like you also, I

don't know why it has betrayed us again!"

Again, in the film "Maine Gandhi Ko Nahin Mara", Uttam Chaudhary and his daughter Trisha face the sea and recite the poem, "Lehron se Darkar nauka par nahin hoti / koshish karne walon ki haar nahin hoti..." by Harivansh Rai Bachchan.

The image of bird is repeatedly used as a symbol of liberty in his films like "Aparooa" and "Pokhi". Bird symbolises both freedom and captivity. Birds can fly away but they can be chained too in a cage. While the river, an image of lifeline and a means of survival, is strongly used in his films like "Halodhiya Choriya Bau Dhan Khai", "Firingati" and "Pokhi". The river Diroi in "Firingati", the river Dihing in "Hkhagoroloi Bohu Door" and "Pokhi" are used as the recurring images which suggest the life force of the village people. On the other hand, the image of child in his films like "Halodhiya Choriya Bau Dhan Khai", "Hkhagoroloi Bohu Door", "Pokhi", "Tora", and "Konkar Ramdhenu" is used to suggest a possibility of positive change in society.

Awarded with Padma Shri in 2003 and Padma Bhushan in 2015, Barua says, "Since the day I have been making films, awards are not my prime focus. It does give me immense joy, but I don't carry forward the images of awards. I just move ahead after each award."