



Mansoor Khan, prime accused in Bengaluru ponzi scam, arrested

page 8



U.P. puts SP leader Azam Khan's name on list of land mafia

page 5



Forensic audit of IL&FS credit rating agencies finds serious lapses

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Lowry, Holmes in lead; Shubhankar set to make the cut

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NEARBY



Appeal filed to reopen Samjhauta case

NW DELHI
A Pakistani woman has filed an appeal in the Punjab and Haryana HC against the acquittal of all accused, including Aseemanand, in the 2007 Samjhauta Express blast case.

NATION PAGE 9

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Karnataka trust vote on Monday

Governor's second direction also ignored, Speaker adjourns Assembly

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Despite two directions from Karnataka Governor Vajubhai Vala to Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy to hold the trust vote on Friday, the process got put off to Monday, with Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar adjourning the Assembly.

All eyes are now on the Governor's possible moves, while the Congress-JD(S) government seems to have got a chance to hang on at least till Monday. Coalition leaders are hopeful of the tide turning in their favour in the Supreme Court.

The adjournment came after a protracted discussion on whether a Governor



Biding time: Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy holding talks with MLAs in the Assembly on Friday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

could set such deadlines at all, but only after the Speaker extracted an assurance from the Chief Minister and Congress Legislature Party

leader Siddaramaiah that the trust vote would not be postponed beyond Monday.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

JD(S), Congress move SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Amid the political turmoil, Karnataka JD(S) president H.K. Kumaraswamy and the Congress Legislature Party on Friday approached the Supreme Court with separate applications. Mr. Kumaraswamy said Governor Vajubhai Vala was intruding into the conduct of the trust vote and was even dictating the time it should be held.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

CONGRESS'S CHARGE PAGE 12

Tough trek



Long path to devotion: Devotees near Mahagunas Top in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir while on their way to visit the Amarnath shrine earlier this week. Over 6,000 pilgrims offered worship at the cave shrine of Lord Shiva on Friday, officials said. ■ PTI

Three killed in Bihar over 'buffalo theft'

Police detain two for interrogation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHAPRA

Three people were beaten to death by a mob in Saran district of Bihar on Friday, alleging that they attempted to steal a buffalo, the police said. The families of the victims denied the allegation.

Raju Nat, Bides Nat and Naushad Qureshi were attacked at Nandlal Tola of Pithauri village in the Baniapur police station limits in the

early hours. Two of them were killed on the spot. Another died of injuries on the way to hospital. Superintendent of Police Har Kishore Rai said. He said two or three people have been picked up for interrogation.

DSP Ajay Kumar Singh rushed to the village as a clash erupted between the alleged attackers and the family members of the deceased

DETAILS ON PAGE 13

Supreme Court questions need for NRC sample reverification

Centre, Assam had wanted July 31 deadline extended

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday questioned the plea made jointly by the Centre and Assam to indefinitely extend the deadline for the publication of the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) from July 31 to conduct a "sample reverification" to quell the "growing perception" that lakhs of illegal im-

migrants might have made it to the list.

The Centre and Assam had urged the court for more time to cross-check "wrong inclusions and exclusions" from the draft published on July 30, 2018. They said a 20% sample reverification of the names included in the draft should be conducted in districts bordering Bangladesh and a

10% reverification in the other districts. But the court voiced its scepticism. It referred to NRC Coordinator Prateek Hajela's reports and said reverification seemed to have been done during the disposal of claims.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

FEARS OF EXCLUSION PAGE 13

INCLUSION OVER EXCLUSION

EDITORIAL

Dissent in Cong. over search for party chief

'Informal' process questioned by MPs

SOBHANA K NAIR
NEW DELHI

A clutch of Congress leaders are planning to raise questions about the legitimacy of an informal process under way for selecting a successor to Rahul Gandhi, who resigned as party president in May. The MPs are likely to begin a public battle demanding that the Congress Working Committee be disbanded, and fresh elections

be held to put a new committee in place.

"If the president has resigned, the CWC has to be automatically disbanded and there should be elections... If we can get elected under such adverse circumstances, why should nominated members decide the future of the Congress?" a Lok Sabha member said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Finish Babri case in nine months: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The trial in the Babri Masjid demolition case, in which prominent BJP and Sangh Parivar leaders such as L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti are accused of criminal conspiracy, should be completed in nine months, the Supreme Court ordered on Friday.

TENURE EXTENDED PAGE 12

Priyanka stopped on way to U.P. village

Congress leader sits on road in protest, escorted to Chunar guest house

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The gunning down of 10 tribal people by a village head and his associates over a land dispute in Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district on Wednesday, led to the unfolding of a political drama on Friday, with the State government preventing Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from travelling to the affected area to meet the kin of the victims.

The day began with Ms. Vadra first visiting the BHU trauma centre in Varanasi and meeting some of those injured in the firing.

Section 144

However, when she moved towards Ghorawal in Sonbhadra, 80 km south, government officials stopped her in Narayanpur on the way to Mirzapur. The administration also imposed Section 144 of the CrPC in Sonbhadra, which restricts assembly of more than four



No going back: Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra sitting on a road in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, on Friday after she was stopped from proceeding to Sonbhadra. ■ PTI

persons.

Flanked by her security guards and Congress leaders, Ms. Vadra sat on the road in protest and demanded that the officials show her the order or cite the law under which she is being prevented from going to Sonbhadra. She also offered to go there in a group of four keeping in mind Section 144.

Ms. Vadra was then taken to the Chunar guest house in a government vehicle.

She later tweeted that she was kept under arrest for nine hours and asked to furnish a bail bond of ₹50,000 to avoid 14 days of judicial custody.

She said she was prepared to go to jail but would not backtrack on her stand on meeting the kin of the victims.

"We have only come here to meet the families peacefully," she said. She blamed the government for 'lapses' leading to the incident.

"A big atrocity has taken place. What happened to the tribals in Sonbhadra is wrong."

Amid the development, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held the previous Congress governments responsible for the land dispute.

The then Congress government illegally transferred gram sabha land in the name of Adarsh Cooperative Society on December 17, 1955 through an order of the tehsildar, "to snatch the rights of locals."

Illegal arrest: Rahul

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi came to his sister Ms. Vadra's support, saying her 'illegal arrest' was 'disturbing.'

In a tweet, he said: "This arbitrary application of power, to prevent her from meeting families of the 10 Adivasi farmers brutally gunned down for refusing to vacate their own land, reveals the BJP Govt's increasing insecurity in UP."

Release pleas of Jessica, Mattoo murder convicts rejected

Manu Sharma, Santosh Kumar Singh rebuffed by Sentence Review Board

SAURABH TRIVEDI
JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

The Sentence Review Board, which is headed by the Delhi Home Minister, on Friday rejected the release pleas of the accused in the Jessica Lal and Priyadarshini Mattoo cases.

In April 2018, Jessica's sister Sabrina Lal, in a letter to the welfare office of Central Jail, Tihar, had mentioned that she had no objection to the release of Manu Sharma as he has spent 15 years in prison. He is serving life im-

prisonment in the murder case. It is the second time the SRB has rejected the premature release plea of Sharma.

The SRB also rejected the request of premature release of Santosh Kumar Singh, who is serving life term for the 1996 rape and murder of law student Priyadarshini Mattoo.

According to Delhi government sources, 205 cases were considered by the seven-member Board which, apart from the Delhi Home Minister, also consists

of a District and Sessions Court judge, a Joint Commissioner of Delhi Police, the Home Secretary, the Law Secretary, the Director General of Prisons and an external expert.

59 cases approved

"Of the total number of cases considered by it, the Board was of the view that release be recommended in 59 cases and 145 cases were rejected. One case which was on the list is undergoing adjudication in the Supreme Court, so it was not con-

sidered by the Board," a Delhi government source said.

Sharma's lawyer Amit Sahni said that his client has undergone more than 22 years of incarceration (with remission) and ought to have been recommended for release. He said he will challenge the rejection in Delhi High Court. "In spite of fulfilling all parameters for premature release, his case has been rejected yet again, while convicts who do not fulfil the parameters are released," Mr. Sahni said.

Now, learn to be happy along with govt. officials

Bimonthly course on introspection opened to Madhya Pradesh public at ₹200 per session

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

Happiness is a universal virtue worth acquiring. It must be shared, and learning to embrace it collectively can be much more invigorating, so believes the Madhya Pradesh government.

Soothing the tempers of government officials since 2017, the Rajya Anand Sansthan (State Happiness Department) has now opened its doors to the general public.

"Before asking others to work on themselves, you should work on yourself," says Akhilesh Argal, CEO of the department. A bimonthly course on

introspection, Alpviram, can help you become a better human not by means of sermons, but by sharing experiences.

Positive outlook

At day-long sessions every first and fourth Saturday in Bhopal, master trainers share their journeys to happiness. Until now reserved for government servants, the sessions have been opened to the public at ₹200 per session. "There is no religious angle. Each session has a different trainer," says Mr. Argal.

The department plans to expand the course to other districts, where 50,000 volunteers are running



A session on introspection in progress in Bhopal. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

programmes on happiness, supported by Initiatives of Change, Panchgani.

Temporarily renouncing home to rediscover oneself and know others pursuing a similar quest for happiness

can be revitalising, believes the department. Now, others can accompany officials, on government duty, to attend "Anand Shivirs" in Coimbatore, Bengaluru and Panchgani.

"If you attend a shivir as part of a group instead of individually, there is support and you never feel alone. You go there representing your State and inculcate a sense of cohesiveness," says Mr. Agal.

Around 10 of the 30-40 seats are reserved for the public to attend courses on 'Building Capacity to Live a Fulfilling Life', 'Inner Engineering Retreat' and the 'Art of listening to Yourself'.

Departments shell out around ₹20,000 for officials attending any of the four-day-long courses. Others can also avail of the subsidised price, but the registration window for them closes at least 10 days earlier.

Exchange programme brings together 'ambassadors of peace'

Seven school students from Pulwama spend 8 days in Capital with host families

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ
NEW DELHI

Titled Art in Fusion, a painting of Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar and Humayun's Tomb in the Capital overlapping with the domes of both monuments coming together as one, was created by students from The Dolphin International School, Pulwama, and Bluebells School International in the Capital as a part of a student exchange programme.

The painting captures the essence of the initiative by both schools which is being carried out as a friendship building exercise. Seven students from Classes VI and VII from Pulwama have spent eight days in the Capital living with host families and attending classes at Bluebells School International.

Speaking about their experience, the students said they were excited to visit the Capital, some of them for the first



Students from Pulwama at the Bluebells School International in the Capital on Friday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

time, and were eager as well as nervous to travel by air for the first time. "I really enjoyed the light show at India Gate at night, shopping at malls and the food in Delhi. I particularly enjoyed the freedom with which we got to roam around at night as this is not possible back home, said Zaira a Class VI student.

Soha, another Class VI student, said she felt completely at home at her host Sohna's house "On the first day itself I stayed up till late at night

chatting with Sohna and her family and I told them about Pulwama and my life back home. The schedule is a little different in both the schools but overall it is quite similar. Delhi is really nice, especially Big Chill Cafe, where we had a nice meal," Soha said.

Ayaan, who loves playing cricket, felt that it was unfortunate that people associate the name (Pulwama) with terror attack. "Many teenagers, who did not know about Pulwama, now only think about

the terror attack when the name is mentioned. I think that more student exchanges like this will help show what a nice place Pulwama is as they will come visit and see for themselves," Ayaan said. He added that he liked the hospitality of the people in Delhi.

Bonded well

The students of Bluebells School International were visibly excited to not only pay host but also to visit Pulwama soon.

On Friday, the students on exchange got to participate in a workshop organised by an NGO WISCOMP with five other schools in Delhi in which they were encouraged to pair up with someone they had never met before and share stories about their life, hobbies and fears. They were also taught the concept of identity and how they could build bridges and become ambassadors of peace.

As tomato price soars, Safal to sell it at ₹40/kg

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

With monsoon disrupting the supply of tomatoes to the Capital, the Centre has directed government-owned Mother Dairy to curb price rise by increasing its availability and selling the vegetable for ₹40 per kg at its own Safal shops.

Tomato price has doubled over the last week in the NCR, now selling for at least ₹60-₹80 per kg in most

city markets.

The price spike and supply disruption were discussed at a high-level Inter-Ministerial Committee meeting chaired by Consumer Affairs Secretary Avinash K. Srivastava on Friday. Noting that tomato prices have been rising sharply since July 10, the committee directed Mother Dairy to immediately begin selling quality tomatoes through its retail outlets at ₹40 per kg.

NGT panel to check operation of stone crushers near schools

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea seeking directions against the operation of stone crushers near schools in Mahendergarh, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has constituted a joint committee to look into the pollution allegations and furnish an action taken report on the same.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "Let a joint committee of Central Pollution Control Board, Haryana State Pollution Control Board and the District Magistrate, Mahendergarh to look into the matter and furnish a factual and action-taken report within one month."

DELHI TODAY

Talk: "Mind and Society: From Indian Studies to General Sociology" by J.P.S. Uberoi, Oxford University Press at Seminar Rooms - I, II and III, Kamaladevi Complex, Main Building, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Music Talk: IHC Lok Sangeet Sammelan 2019 on the Folk Music of Maharashtra. The Emergence of Folk through Classification of Music: The Case of Lavani and Other Genres in Maharashtra. A scholarly lecture with recorded music by musician and sociologist Dr. Urmila Bhirdikar, drawing on her research in Lavani, Marathi theatre and other forms at Amaltas Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Dance: India International Rural Cultural Centre (IRCEN) presents a Kuchipudi dance recital by T. Reddi Lakshmi at Govt. Girls Senior Secondary School, No. 1, Roop Nagar, 9 a.m., and Govt. Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Sarai Rohilla, 11 a.m.

Exhibition: "Pushpanjali", an exhibition of paintings and drawings by artist Gouri Shankar Mukherjee at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@delhi@thehindu.co.in)

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	145	Gurgaon	84
Ghaziabad	165	Faridabad	88
Noida	169	Greater Noida	146
Good	0-50	Satisfactory	51-100
Poor	201-300	Very poor	301-400
		Severe	>401

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

SCHOLARSHIP for civil services aspirants

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IN BRIEF

Traffic violators can now pay fine online

NEW DELHI
With the launch of e-challan and e-payment system on Friday, traffic violators can now pay fines online from anywhere, the police said. Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik along with Special CP (Traffic) Taj Hassan and DG (NIC) Neeta Verma launched e-challaning system and e-payment gateway.

NDMC launches campaign to prevent dengue

NEW DELHI
The New Delhi Municipal Council on Friday said that it has launched an intensive campaign in collaboration with representatives of RWAs, MTAs, NGOs and other government buildings to prevent dengue. It said that the drive would continue till the end of the monsoon season.

International Police Conference held

NEW DELHI
The International Police Conference-2019 under the theme 'Challenges to strengthen peace and security' was organised at Pragati Maidan on Friday. The event will end on Saturday. Manufacturers and technology players from 25 countries have participated in the event

Snag hits Delhi Metro's Violet Line

NEW DELHI
Services on the Delhi Metro's Violet Line were affected for over an hour on Friday due to some technical snag, officials said. There was slow movement of trains between JLN Stadium and Khan Market stations. Many passengers, deboarded trains at JLN Stadium stations.

Take challenges as opportunities: JNU V-C

NEW DELHI
Addressing new students at an orientation programme, JNU Vice-Chancellor M. Jagadesh Kumar said that the real challenge was not getting into JNU but to equip themselves and develop skills to be able to address the modern challenges that the country is facing.

Insurance firm finds fake cover notes in its name

Lodges police complaint after receiving notices from MACT

HEMAMI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

An insurance company based on Barakhamba Road approached the police after it discovered 12 fake insurance cover notes issued in its name to vehicle owners.

The zonal manager of the firm said they received notices from Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) to issue insurance amount claimed by victims involved in accidents with vehicles insured by the company.

"After a notice is received, the company checks the genuineness of the claim... It has been found that fake insurance cover notes are being issued in the name of the company for insuring vehicles. The notes are forged," he alleged.

In a genuine case, the accused party's insurance

The persons are not only cheating the company but also accident victims with forged insurance policy because they will not be entitled to any insurance cover

INSURANCE COMPANY IN ITS COMPLAINT TO POLICE

company gives the claimed amount to the victim's party after the latter approaches the MACT.

The firm shared details of the 12 cases in which claims were sought for and the insurance cover were found to be "forged". In most of the cases shared by the firm, the accident victims are dead. They found that the vehicles which caused the accident and claimed to have insurance policy document in the

firm's name did not exist in their records.

The firm, in their complaint, said that unidentified accused are suspected to have been collecting money in the name of insurance policy premium and issuing fake policies. "The persons are not only cheating the company but also accident victims with forged insurance policy because they will not be entitled to any insurance cover," the complainant said.

FIR lodged

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Eish Singhal said that a first information report has been registered under Sections 420 (cheating), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating) and 471 (using as genuine a forged document) of the Indian Penal Code and an investigation has been taken up.

News channel files defamation case against Mahua Moitra

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

Zee Media Corporation Limited has filed a criminal defamation case against Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra.

Taking the complaint on record, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate posted the case on August 1 for consideration.

Similar complaint

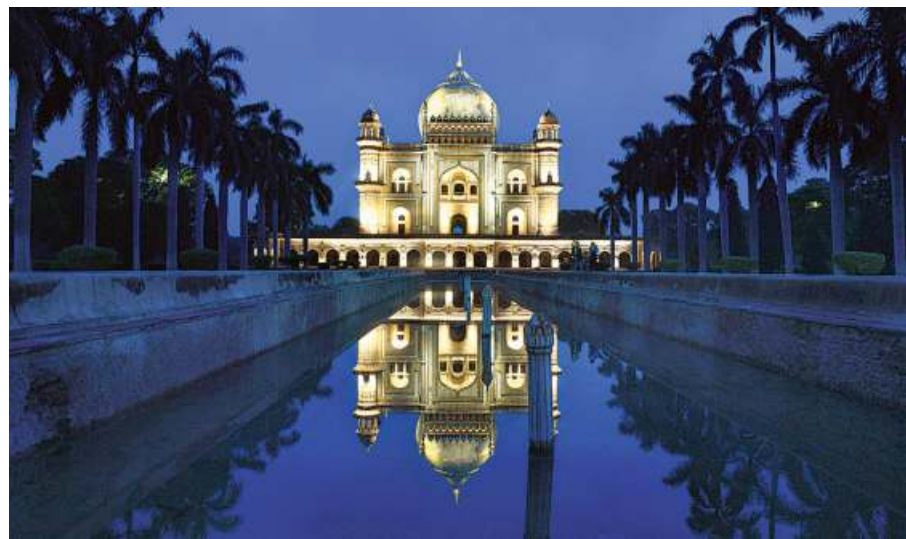
The MP has also filed a similar complaint against the news channel and its editor-in-chief Sudhir Chaudhary for alleging that her speech in the Lok Sabha on the "seven signs of fascism" was plagiarised.

"Ms. Moitra had on July 3 made defamatory statements against the company. She knowingly made several frivolous, false, malicious and derogatory statements," the complaint by the said new channel alleged.

"The intentional hate campaign of the accused [Ms. Moitra] has tarnished the reputation of the complainant [news channel]," the complaint further said.

The channel has sought prosecution of the MP under Sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code.

Glow-ry



Safdarjung Tomb, the Mughal-era monument, glows in a new light after sunset on Friday. The illumination project has been completed by the Archaeological Survey of India. It comprises simple yellow and static lighting that accentuates the silhouette of the monument with the interplay of light and shade. The tomb will be illuminated from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. daily. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Foreign national gang-raped by 2 auto drivers

She had hired the vehicle to reach a metro station; accused arrested

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

A 24-year-old foreign national was allegedly gang-raped by an autorickshaw driver and his friend after she hired the three-wheeler to reach a metro station late on Thursday, the police said on Friday. The two accused have been arrested, they said.

The woman, a hair stylist, had hired the autorickshaw from outside Sahara Mall around midnight to reach Guru Dronacharya metro station. She had come from Delhi to visit a night club at

the shopping mall on Mehrauli-Gurugram Road and was returning home when the incident happened, the police said.

The driver's friend was there on the rear seat of the auto-rickshaw when the woman boarded the vehicle. The accused took the woman to a room in Sheela Mala Colony and then allegedly took turns to rape her.

The woman, however, managed to open the door of the room without the knowledge of the accused and escaped around 3 a.m. She

stayed at a friend's place and approached the police during the day on Friday to file a complaint. A case was registered on charges of rape at Sector 5 police station in this connection.

Her medical examination was conducted and statement recorded before a Magistrate under Section 164 of the CrPC.

Several police teams were formed and the driver's friend was arrested from CRPF Chowk. The driver was later arrested and his vehicle was impounded.

Gurugram Police Spokesperson Subhash Boken said that the accused have confessed to having gang-raped the woman. The accused, both autorickshaw drivers, live in rented accommodations in Gurugram. Mr. Boken said that they would be produced before the court on Saturday.

The M.G. Road stretch in Gurugram, dotted with shopping malls, is infamous for crime against women. Many cases of abduction and rape have been reported in this area.

CM orders release of ₹500 crore for unauthorised colonies' development

'Facilities include sewers, drains, roads, laying of water lines'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Delhi government said in a statement on Friday, has directed that ₹500 crore be released for developmental work at unauthorised colonies across the Capital.

The statement said that the Urban Development (UD) Department has released ₹500 crore to the Irrigation and Flood Control

(I&FC) department for the purpose and of the total ₹1500 crore for the present year's budgetary allocation, ₹700 crore had already been released to the department in the first quarter of the ongoing year.

"The fund has been transferred to the I&FC under the head of 'Development of Unauthorised Colonies' for the financial year 2019-2020. Mr. Kejriwal directed the UD Department to ensure that

there is no financial constraint for the development work and funds must be released on time," the statement also said.

The work of providing basic developmental facilities, which include sewers, drains, roads and lanes, the statement said, is being carried out on a "war footing" in unauthorised colonies and water distribution lines are being laid by the Delhi Jal Board.

Man shot dead by stepson, accused held

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 24-year-old man, identified as Munna Khan, allegedly shot his stepfather Anis dead in Narela Industrial Area on Friday, the police said.

DCP (Outer) Gaurav Sharma said that Munna has been arrested and he said that he killed Anis as he allegedly used to beat Munna's mother. The weapon of offence has been recovered, police said.

UP POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED Tender Notice against specification No. SD-872 through E-Tendering, E-Tender in two parts, part-I and part-II valid for six months are invited for supply of material as per details given in the following table for 400kV & 220kV substations of UPPTCL against tender specification No. SD-872. Sl. No.: 1, Item: 60 MVA, 220/33kV Power Transformers, Specn. No.: SD-872, Qty (Nos.): 15, Earnest Money (Rs.): 27,00,000.00 (Rs. Twenty Seven Lacs only) BG To be submitted on a non-judicial stamp paper of Rs. 10,000 in favour of SE, ESDC-I, Lucknow as per Prescribed format given in the bid document, Schedule date & time of submission: 19.08.2019 15.30 hrs, Schedule date & time of opening: 20.08.2019 15.30 hrs, Cost of Tender documents including 18% GST charges (Rs.): 11,800.00. In case of public Holiday on date of opening date will be on the next working date. Complete tender documents against this Bid specification can be downloaded from e-procurement website of U.P. Govt. etender.up.nic.in and Tenderer will require to pay non refundable fee of Rs. 11,800.00 (inclusive of 18% GST) towards cost of E-tender documents through RTGS/NEFT in "UPPTCL SBI A/C No. 30231982762" (IFSC code-SBIN0003347). E-Tenders can be submitted only on e-procurement website etender.up.nic.in up to schedule date and time. Tenderer(s) are requested to get them registered with U.P. Electronics Corporation so as to obtain digital signatures for participation. The bid of the firm without E-Tender documents fee, against the purchase of document, and without EMD will not be opened. Tender documents fee will be deposited through RTGS/NEFT in the UPPTCL account mentioned above and proof of such deposit e.g. UTR no., Name of account, scanned copy of pay-in slip countersigned by the tenderer should be uploaded along with tender documents. Earnest money deposit (EMD) will be deposited through RTGS/NEFT in UPPTCL account mentioned above and a proof of such deposit e.g. UTR no., name of account, scanned copy of pay-in slip countersigned by the tenderer, should be uploaded alongwith E-tender documents OR in the form of Bank Guarantee in favour of Superintending Engineer, Electricity Substation Design Circle-I, UPPTCL, Lucknow. If EMD deposited in the form of Bank Guarantee, scanned copy of EMD BG along with a scanned of mail in confirmation of the same from the bank issuing the BG will be uploaded with tender document & the hard copy of the original BG shall be submitted within 01 week from opening of Part-I of tender or date of opening of part-II whichever is earlier. Please note that tender part-II of bidders not submitting original BG with stipulated time shall not be opened. No tender document including tender fee and other commercial papers are required to be submitted in hard copy or through messenger on date of tender opening. Undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any offer/cancellation of tender at any stage without assigning any reason. Please visit the e-procurement website etender.up.nic.in as well as our website www.upptcl.org for all amendments, corrigendum, modifications and extensions till the date of submission of tender. Superintending Engineer, Electricity Substation Design Circle-I, U.P. Power Transmission Corporation Ltd., 13th Floor, Shakti Bhawan Extension, 14-Ashok Marg, Lucknow-226001 (Uttar Pradesh), Email id: seesdc1@upptcl.org, UPPTCL website: www.upptcl.org eprocurement website: etender.up.nic.in. Email id: seesdc1@upptcl.org "SAVE ENERGY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION" RO no. - 254/ESDC 1/(GS)/Tender/A 19 RO date :

Directorate of Transport Himachal Pradesh

Press Note

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India vide its letter dated 31.10.2018 and subsequent notification dated 02.11.2018 has made it mandatory that all Public Service Vehicles registered on or after 01.01.2019 and National Permit Goods Vehicle shall be fitted with Vehicle Tracking System device as per AIS 140.

In order to ensure fitment of AIS 140 compliant device, Department of Transport has formulated a registration document for Vehicle Location Tracking Device Manufacturers which is available on Department website (<http://himachal.nic.in/transport/>) whereby it has been made mandatory to ensure that there should be zero tolerance on quality of VLTDs, OEMs/manufacturers should be capable of providing efficient after sale service to ensure that devices so fitted are functional and live without any break. Some of the salient features are as under:-

- setting up of Command and Control Centre by VLTD manufacturer/consortium
- web interface and mobile application for customer
- manufacturer shall provide warranty and AMC for their products
- setting up of service centres by the manufacturer
- redressal of complaints by the manufacturer through web interface and mobile app
- penalty provisions if VLTD installed not repaired in time.

All concerned are requested to procure the Vehicle Location Tracking Device form the authorised manufacturer only. The Vehicle Location Tracking Device Manufacturer who are desirous to get registered with the Department of Transport may download the document from (<http://himachal.nic.in/transport/>) and apply with complete details as prescribed in the document.

Sd/-
Director Transport, Himachal Pradesh.

HP/0196/2019-2020

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER DESIGN DIVISION NO.-1, MEDININAGAR.

e-Procurement Notice

2nd Call

e-Tender Reference No-WRD-Design Div. No.-1, Medininagar-SBD 02/2019-20 Date : 17.07.2019

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Construction of W.B.M. Road on Service Bank of Batane Right Main Canal Under Batane Reservoir Scheme
1	Estimated Cost (Rs)	Rs. 4,11,48,300.00
2	Time of Completion	270 Days (Two Hundred Seventy Days)
3	Period of Availability of Bidding Document on Website	From 24.07.2019 (04:00 PM) To 07.08.2019 (5:00 PM)
4	Period of Online Submission of Bids	From 24.07.2019 (04:00 PM) To 07.08.2019 (5:00 PM)
5	Time and Date of Opening Technical Bids	09.08.2019 (3:00 PM)
6	Time and Date of Opening Financial Bids	To be Announcement Later.
7	Place of Opening of Bids	e-Procurement Cell, Chief Engineer, WRD Medininagar
8	Officer Inviting Bids & Mobile No.	Executive Engineer, Design Division No.-1, Medininagar. 9431177416
9	Help Line Number of e-Procurement Cell	06562- 240841
10	Last date of receipt of hard copy of cost of bid document & EMD	08.08.2019 (5:00 PM)
11		

Note :- Only e-Tender will be accepted
Quoted Amount lesser than 10% of BOQ Amount will not be accepted. Estimated Cost May be Increase or Decrease. Further details can be seen on Website - <http://jjharkhandtenders.gov.in>

**Executive Engineer
Design Division No.-1, Medininagar**

PR 212066 (Water Resource)19-20#D

जिसो अब तक ना समझे, वो कहानी हूँ मैं, मुझे बर्बाद मत करो यानी हूँ मैं।

IN BRIEF

Govt. politicising fund allocation: councillors

NEW DELHI
Several councillors of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation sat on a protest at Chandagi Ram Akhara on Friday over the "politicisation" of fund allocation to the civic body by the Delhi government.

Self-defence module for girl students

NEW DELHI
The Directorate of Education on Friday announced that with the assistance of Delhi Police, it has prepared a training module on self-defence for girls studying in Delhi government schools.

EDMC to hold mega parent-teacher meet

NEW DELHI
The East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) will hold a mega parent-teacher meet on Saturday, the civic body said. The meeting will focus on the all-round development of children, spreading awareness on cleanliness and vector-borne diseases, the EDMC said in a statement.

DU releases fifth cut-off list

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi University released the fifth cut-off list for merit-based undergraduate programmes on Friday. The cut-offs will be displayed on the notice boards of colleges on Saturday.

While admissions to several courses at DU have closed, cut-offs for several others have been reduced. Among these, B.Com and B.Com (H) courses, two of the most popular subjects at DU, remain open at several colleges. B.A Economics remains open at SRCC with a cut off of 98.62%.

This is the last list of cut-offs the university had scheduled to release.

CRPF man killed, 2 injured as teen rams luxury car into their vehicle

Passer-by nabs accused, hands him over to police; drunk driving ruled out

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 24-year-old CRPF man was killed and two others were injured after a luxury car driven by a teenager jumped a red light on BRT and rammmed into their vehicle on Thursday, the police said. The injured persons, who were deployed for the Prime Minister's security, were heading home after completing their duty.

Vijay Kumar, DCP (South), said that the PCR received a call at 11 p.m. on Thursday regarding a road accident at Archana crossing on BRT. A police team rushed to the spot and took the injured persons to AIIMS for treatment where one of them, identified as Narendra, succumbed to injuries. He added that the injured CRPF personnel, Vinod Kumar and Babulal, were dis-



The vehicle in which the victims were travelling. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

charged after treatment. Mr. Vinod was driving the car.

Mr. Kumar said that a black luxury car and another hatchback were found at the accident spot. The driver of the luxury car, Sanidhya Garg (19) was caught by a passer-by and handed over to the police. He is a resident of Model Town in Delhi and his father owns a factory in Noida. He is pursuing grad-

Father-in-law of deceased meets with accident

NEW DELHI
The father-in-law of the CRPF constable, who was killed on Friday, was hit by a bus in Manesar near Gurugram while he was on the way to the national capital after being informed about the tragic incident, his family members said. Shri Ram (55), a resident of Alwar district in Rajasthan, was coming to the city to collect the body of his son-in-law when the accident happened.

uation from a college in London.

"Eyewitnesses told the police that the luxury car, which was coming from Siri Fort side, hit the victims' car after it jumped the red light at Archana crossing. Another car involved in the accident was coming from Mool-

chand side and going towards Chirag Delhi," said Mr. Kumar.

"On the complaint of Vinod, an FIR was registered at Greater Kailash police station under IPC Sections 279 [rash driving] and 304 A [causing death by negligence]. Accused Sanidhya has been arrested in the case and has been medically examined. No traces of alcohol were found in either of the drivers involved in the accident," said Mr. Kumar. The driver of the luxury car was given bail in the case. He was going to meet his friends after visiting his grandmother, the police said.

The police have obtained CCTV footage of the accident. Mr. Kumar said that the vehicles have been impounded for forensic survey adding that probe is on.

RS members condemn 'intimidation' of DU council by ABVP activists

Seek PM's intervention to ensure autonomy of university

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Eighteen Rajya Sabha members on Friday have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, condemning the "intimidation" of the Delhi University's Academic Council by the ABVP activists.

The parliamentarians, belonging to the CPI, CPI(M), Congress, DMK, RJD and SP, have expressed concern over the reports of the ABVP's forcible entry into the V-C's office complex on Tuesday, and allegations of threats made to the council members. "We have learnt that the intention behind this

forced entry was to intimidate professors of certain departments to coerce them into making certain changes in their syllabi that would make it acceptable to the ideology and values endorsed by the RSS," the letter stated.

The MPs said that the atmosphere of physical threat raised questions about the state of law and order, free speech and debate in public institutions and demanded that the PM intervene to ensure the academic autonomy of DU at the earliest.

Saikat Ghosh, professor of the English department and member of the Academic

Council claimed that the UG Curriculum Revision Committee had sent another list of corrections. Earlier, "The NDTF and ABVP may be successful in their nefarious agenda as they are more powerful than the university. Academic arguments are not being heard and the university is following their diktats" he alleged.

Meanwhile, the ABVP has decided to start a "satyagrah" from Monday till the Executive Council Meeting on Tuesday to protest what it termed "propagandistically introduced changes in the curriculum".

Second cut-off for NCWEB out

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi University has released the second cut-offs for undergraduate programmes under the Non Collegiate Women's Education Board (NCWEB) on Friday.

With this, admission to only two courses offered across 26 colleges have closed.

The courses closed for admissions to unreserved students include B.A. programme with economics and political science at Miranda House which had posted the highest cut-off of 85% (along with three other courses) and the same programme at Rajdhani College.

DELHI ☀️ Timings

SATURDAY, JULY 20		
RISE	05:36	SET 19:19
MOON	21:46	SET 08:23
SUNDAY, JULY 21		
RISE	05:37	SET 19:19
MOON	22:18	SET 09:16
MONDAY, JULY 22		
RISE	05:37	SET 19:18
MOON	22:50	SET 10:08

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	36	25
Safdarjang	36	25
Palam	36	25

Delhi Palam Today
35°C A comfortable morning turns warm day with partly cloudy sky. Thunderclouds may develop at some parts with light rain.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
36°C Rise in day and night temperature is expected. A warm and humid day. Chances of thunderclouds in parts.

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THE HINDU
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IN BRIEF

HC stays meet to hold municipality trust vote

KOLKATA
The High Court on Friday stayed a meeting for holding a vote of confidence in the chairman of the Halisahar Municipality on a plea by a councillor that the provision is being misused by the head of the civic body to get protection. PTI

U.P. puts Azam Khan's name on list of land mafia

Govt. rejects SP charge of him being framed in fake cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA RAMPUR (U.P.)
Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan's name has been put on an online list of land mafia by the district administration here following FIRs registered against him, drawing strong protest from his party. The SP raised the issue in the Legislative Council alleging that he is being framed in "fake" cases.



Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan. ■ FILE PHOTO

The State government dismissed the allegations, saying that it was treating everyone the same and the action was not driven by any political vendetta.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath alleged that Rampur was an example of "land-grabbing" culture under the previous SP government.

"The name of the Rampur MP has been put on the list of anti-land mafia portal of the State government on Thursday after FIRs were lodged against him on land-grabbing charges," Additional District Magistrate (Administration) J.P. Gupta said.

"The listing was done by the SDM Sadar," he said.

The former State Minister was named in the FIRs lodged in connection with alleged forcible acquisition of land for Mohammad Ali Jauhar University, of which he is the founder and Chancellor.

District Magistrate A.K.

assembled at 11 a.m., Mr. Hasan raised the issue, saying, "The most painful thing is that Khan has taken land for building a university and not for any personal gains. In which direction is the government going? Azam Khan is part of the land mafia?"

Leader of the House and Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma termed the SP's allegations "baseless". "The government is treating everyone in the same manner, and it is not an act of vengeance."

"The allegations are baseless, and do not have any link with the policy and intention of the government," he said. He added that since Mr. Khan is not a member of the House, the matter cannot be raised. Following this, Mr. Hasan requested the Chair that an all-party committee be formed, but Mr. Sharma opposed it.

Amid unruly scenes, the Deputy CM sought cooperation of the Opposition to run the House. But the agitated SP members trooped into the Well, prompting Chairman Ramesh Yadav to adjourn the House till 12 noon. When the House re-assembled, Mr. Hasan raised the matter and SP members came into the Well of the House. Later, the Chairman adjourned the House till Monday.

21-member panel

SP president Akhilesh Yadav has constituted a 21-member committee, led by the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Ahmad Hasan, to "probe fake cases" against Mr. Khan.

Proceedings in the Legislative Council were disrupted on Friday as the SP members protested against the issue. As soon as the House

Mayawati asks BJP to reveal source of funds

'BJP, RSS casteist outfits, don't want deprived people to progress'



Mayawati ■ FILE PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LUCKNOW

Terming the BJP and the RSS casteist outfits, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Friday asked the former party to make public the source of funds deposited in its bank accounts during the election.

"The BJP and the RSS are casteist outfits that do not want to see people of the deprived sections progress in education and business," the BSP chief said here.

The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's remarks came a day after the Income Tax Department attached a 'benami' commercial plot worth ₹400 crore in Noida belonging to her brother and his wife.

The BSP president said after coming to power under Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, the BJP had bought properties worth millions of rupees. "From where has this money come to the BJP? Why are the BJP and the RSS afraid of giving their account? Is this massive wealth not BJP's benami property," she asked.

The BSP chief said when their own people became wealthy overnight, they had no problem but they could not tolerate it when people

from the deprived sections progressed, especially in business.

She said the BJP used power and government machinery against them to serve its casteist rivalry. She said the BJP had not made public the source of ₹2,000 crore deposited in its accounts during the election. "It is not clear who gave the money and everyone wants to know its source. Is it benami?"

"This money was used to influence voters from the poor and deprived sections during the election. All are aware of it," Ms. Mayawati added.

Warning that the attempt to crush the voice of the deprived people would not succeed, Ms. Mayawati said the BSP was with them.

On the attachment proceedings against Ms. Mayawati's brother, U.P. Deputy CM Dinesh Sharma said, "The government will not act against anyone in a prejudiced manner. There will be an impartial and transparent probe."

Opposition blasts Punjab govt. over drugs issue

Questions Sidhu's return as STF chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

The Opposition in Punjab hit out at the Congress government on Friday, accusing it of not having any concrete policy to fight the drugs menace prevalent in the State.

The criticism came a day after the State government brought back IPS officer Harpreet Singh Sidhu as chief of the anti-drugs Special Task Force, nearly a year after he was removed from the post following reports of a tussle between him and the then DGP.

Leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party, the principal Opposition, said the State government's decision of yet again change the STF chief shows lack of planning and concrete policy.

"The Congress has been in power for over two years now, yet the problem of drugs continues unabated. It's time for taking decisive

action, but the government is busy in 'cosmetic' moves to save its face," said senior party leaders Kultar Singh Sandhwan, Sadhu Singh and Gurdit Singh Sekhon in a joint statement here.

CM targeted

The leaders also took potshots at the Chief Minister. "The government should give the reason why Mr. Sidhu was removed earlier and why now he is being brought back. While we do not question Mr. Sidhu's determination towards his duty, the Chief Minister's intentions are under cloud," said the leaders.

Punjab BJP chief Shwait Malik said that the purpose of setting up the STF was only to corner political opponents. "Replacing officers only proves that if anyone does not cooperate with the government's whim and fancies, he or she should be moved," he told reporters.

Punjab badly hit by heavy rain: Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

Punjab Local Government Minister Brahm Mohindra on Friday held a meeting with senior department officials to take stock of the waterlogging at many places in the State following incessant rain.

Mr. Mohindra said that Punjab has been badly hit by torrential rain in the last few days. "Some of the cities of the State have a saucer-shaped topography, which resulted in flooding as it is not possible to drain off rainwater with natural gravity," he said.

The Minister said the department is keeping a close watch on the ground situation. "Bathinda has been badly affected as it received 178 mm rainfall on July 16, which created a flood-like situation. All the accumulated water was drained out on July 18 and the situation is under control," he said.

'Make statement on deficit rainfall'

Odisha Speaker directs Revenue Minister Sudam Marndi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Assembly Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro on Friday directed Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marndi to make a statement on the deficit rainfall situation in the State within two days.

The Speaker gave the ruling after Leader of the Congress Legislature Party Narasingha Mishra and Congress MLA Santosh Singh Saluja expressed concern over the deficit rainfall in Bolangir district. Both the leaders are from different constituencies in Bolangir.

Mr. Saluja said one farmer's death by suicide due to crop loss in the Sadar block of the Bolangir district this week has already been reported.

All the blocks of the district were facing drought-like situation, he added.

Delayed action

Mr. Mishra also blamed the State government for delaying action to tackle the situation thus arising.

The State government had been falsely claiming that 33% of the cultivable land in Bolangir had assured irrigation, he said.

Mr. Mishra also demanded financial assistance for the farmer who had died in Bolangir due to loss of his kharif crop.

On Thursday, ruling Biju Janata Dal MLA Ananta Das from Bhograi had also claimed that a drought-like situation was prevailing in coastal Balasore district.

At least 17 of the 30 districts in the State have recorded deficit rainfall so far, according to weather experts. As a result, agricultural operations have been badly hit in many parts of the State, including districts of Jagatsinghpur and Jajpur.

No protection given: triple talaq case petitioner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KOLKATA

Ishrat Jahan, a petitioner in the triple talaq case, on Friday claimed that she had not received police protection despite her representation earlier this week alleging threat to her life.

She also alleged that her landlord was exerting pressure on her to move out of her house.

In a complaint lodged at Golabari police station in Howrah on Wednesday, Ms. Jahan had accused her landlord and brother-in-law of abusing her and threatening to kill her for attending a 'Hanuman Chalisa' recital in a hijab. She also alleged that the two had threatened to throw her out of her house and had sought police protection.

"My landlord is still pressuring me to vacate the house... I have no place to go... I am yet to receive police protection," Ms. Jahan said.

The police, however, said an officer visits her house daily to check on her. "No policeman has been posted outside her house, but an officer visits her house every day," an officer said.



People will decide if I am ready to be chief minister: Aaditya

Says Shiv Sena is the only party which stands with the people all the time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DHULE

Amid talks of him being the Shiv Sena's contender for chief minister's post, Yuva Sena president Aaditya Thackeray said on Friday it is the people who will have to decide whether he is ready for the top job or not.

Speaking during his Jan Ashirwad Yatra, Mr. Thackeray said his immediate priority, however, is to listen to the people's voice and fulfil promises made by Shiv Sena.

The 29-year-old chief of the Shiv Sena's youth wing is on a mass outreach programme ahead of Assembly polls due in September-October.

Shiv Sena's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut, who is accompanying Mr. Thackeray, had said on Thursday that the Yuva Sena leader would be chief minister if the post comes to Shiv Sena.

The Shiv Sena currently shares power with the BJP at the Centre and in the State.

"It is the people who will



Yuva Sena president Aaditya Thackeray interacting with college students at Jaihind College in Dhule on Friday, the second day of his Janadesh yatra. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

have to decide whether I am ready to occupy the post or not. I can't talk about it as this is the only thing which is not in my hand. What is in my hand is to fulfil the promises the Shiv Sena makes," Mr. Thackeray told Marathi news channels here.

The young politician, son of Shiv Sena chief Uddhav

Thackeray, has embarked on the yatra "to thank" those who voted for the party in the recent Lok Sabha polls and "win over hearts" of those who didn't.

The Shiv Sena had won 18 of the 23 Lok Sabha seats it contested in Maharashtra.

"My first priority and duty is to listen to the voice of the

people. Whether we are in power or not, the Shiv Sena is the only party which stands with the people all the time," he said.

During an interactive session with students at a city college, organised as part of the yatra, a student asked Mr. Thackeray if he would like to be the education minister to solve the academic problems faced by youngsters. To this he said, "Yes. The home ministry is considered as the most important department in the country. But equally important is the education department if we were to look at the future. I definitely would like to work in that department," he added.

He pitched for encouraging research and innovation in the country.

The yatra, which will cover four districts of north Maharashtra, was launched in Jalgaon on Thursday and will cover Nashik and Ahmednagar districts over the next two days.

Businessman from Pune files cheating complaint

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE

A case of cheating has been registered by police in Chinchwad town near here against a couple for allegedly duping chairman of BVG group Hanmant Gaikwad of over ₹16 crore.

Mr. Gaikwad (46) lodged a complaint on Friday against Vinod Jadhav and his wife Suvarna Jadhav, who allegedly own several firms.

In the complaint, Mr. Gaikwad said that in 2011 the couple persuaded him and his wife to invest over ₹16 crore in their firms Sava Medica, Biodeal Laboratories and Anagha Pharma, promising high returns.

"Gaikwad allegedly did not get the assured returns and felt duped, so he approached police. We have registered a case under IPC sections 406 (criminal breach of trust) and 420 (cheating)," said an official attached to the Chinchwad police station.

Nobody has been arrested in the case, he added.

Beach shack worker gets 10 years for rape, murder of British teen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

Eleven years after the bruised body of British teenager was found at the Anjuna beach here, the High Court of Bombay at Goa on Friday sentenced a shack worker to 10 years rigorous imprisonment.

A Division Bench of Justices R.D. Dhanuka and Prithviraj Chavan had held Samson D'Souza guilty on July 17 for "culpable homicide not amounting to murder" and molestation, among other charges.

The Bench had overturned the verdict of Goa Children's Court which had acquitted D'Souza. It however upheld the acquittal of the second accused Placido Carvalho.

The 15-year-old victim, who was holidaying in Goa with her mother and siblings, was found dead on the popular beach on February 18, 2008. The cause of death, according to the autopsy report, was drowning.

Initial investigation was conducted by Goa Police. However, the victim's mother alleged that the probe was "shabby". The State then



Policemen escorting Samson D'Souza from court in Panaji on Friday after he was sentenced for 10 years for the rape and murder of a British teenager in 2008. ■ AFP

handed over the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

D'Souza, who worked at a beach-side shack, and Carvalho, a suspected drug dealer, were first arrested, based on witness accounts, by Goa Police.

The CBI named both in its charge sheet, claiming they drugged the girl and sexually abused her. Trial court judge Vandana Tendulkar acquitted them in 2016, which the CBI challenged.

The high court two days ago held D'Souza guilty under IPC Sections 328 (for administering drugs), 354 (outraging modesty), 304

(culpable homicide not amounting murder) and 201 (destruction of evidence) and for child abuse under section 8 (2) of the Goa Children's Act. D'Souza was present in the courtroom on Friday. His lawyer sought a stay to the sentence for 12 weeks so that he could file an appeal in the Supreme Court. The Bench rejected the plea. D'Souza was sent to judicial custody and will be shifted to a prison at Colvale in North Goa district. Senior lawyer Vikram Varma, who represented the victim's mother, said justice has been finally delivered.

HC junks plea seeking ban on 'Alibaug se aaya hai kya?'

Have fun... don't get humiliated, says Chief Justice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday dismissed a petition seeking a ban on the phrase 'Alibaug se aaya hai kya?', observing that there was nothing derogatory in it and it should not be taken as a humiliation.

As per the plea, the

phrase is commonly used in Maharashtra to address someone who is considered foolish or naive.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Pradeep Nandrajog and Justice N.M. Jamdar dismissed the public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Rajendra Thakur, a resident of Alibaug.

"Jokes are made on every community...Santa-Banta jokes...Madrasi jokes and jokes on north Indians. Have fun... don't get humiliated," Chief Justice Nandrajog said.



"We do not find anything derogatory in this," the Bench added.

In his plea, Mr. Thakur said that the phrase is "unfair and humiliating" as it

projected people of Alibaug as illiterates.

Mr. Thakur's plea states that Alibaug is a well-to-do place, a major tourist attraction, and that it has several good schools and a high literacy rate. It also says that Alibaug has a rich culture and history.

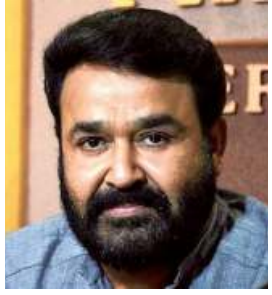
"Alibaug is bestowed with nature with scenic beauty. In spite of having such a rich background filled with history, culture, industry, tourism, medical facilities, nature and education, it is

highly objectionable to ridicule the people of Alibaug by projecting them as 'illiterate' who do not have common sense," the plea said.

Mr. Thakur had urged the court to direct State authorities to get public refrain from making such a comment.

He had also urged the court to ensure that films, documentaries, TV serials, among others, that have the above phrase as part of its dialogue, are not granted censor certificate.

IN BRIEF



'Mohanlal secured ivory ownership certificate'

KOCHI The Kerala Forest Department has informed the Kerala High Court that though it was found during an inquiry that actor Mohanlal and others were in illegal possession of two pairs of ivories, the investigation officer did not submit the inquiry report before the magistrate court due to subsequent issue of ownership certificate for them by the government.

Narrow escape for passengers at Renigunta

TIRUPATI As many as 40 passengers of a private bus, travelling from Visakhapatnam to Bengaluru, had a narrow escape when the bus tilted while stopping at a coffee kiosk, near the Renigunta checkpoint on Friday. CCTV footage showed the driver was making a sharp curve. The vehicle swerved to its left and tilted sideways. It could have overturned, but leaned on a cargo vehicle parked next to it.

Cardinal's supporters draw flak from forum

KOCHI The Archdiocesan Movement for Transparency (AMT) treats with contempt statements of All Kerala Catholic Congress and KCBC Laity Commission, belittling the relay hunger strike against Cardinal George Alencherry, launched on Thursday by the priests of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Church, AMT general secretary Riju Kanjoorkaran said on Thursday. Those treating the strike with disdain could be among the beneficiaries of the land deal involving the archdiocese, he said.

'I am not clinging on to power'

Karnataka Chief Minister narrates his ordeal as head of the coalition government

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy used the debate on the confidence motion moved by him as an opportunity to insist that he was "not clinging on to power" and narrated the political ordeals he has had to endure since he came to head the coalition government in 2006 and during the Opposition BJP's recent attempts to topple the present coalition government.

Mr. Kumaraswamy said that 14 months of the JD(S)-Congress coalition was now approaching its final stage. He reiterated that he was not interested in official positions and it was the Congress that had urged him to become Chief Minister after the fractured mandate in 2018.

Political turbulence

"Power is not permanent. Power comes and goes," Mr. Kumaraswamy said. "The BJP may have won 303 seats today. But I would like to remind the BJP that the late Rajiv Gandhi had won a mandate with more than 400 seats. But what happened later? Let them not assume power is permanent," he said.



Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy and Deputy CM G. Parameshwara at the Assembly session. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

Recalling episodes of political turbulence during the 2008-2013 BJP government, he said it was the BJP that started a new chapter in the State's history by getting MLAs to resign to circumvent the anti-defection law. Arguing that it only led to instability in the BJP government, he said: "I want to see how stable a government you will give after all this exercise." Alleging that the BJP had been making attempts to topple the coalition government from day one, the Chief Minister said: "You are having a good time now, but it's temporary. You will also face trouble in future."

He sought a detailed debate on the allegations the Opposition had made against his government, and the manner in which the BJP

had systematically been circumventing the anti-defection law and thereby our democracy. "It needs to be recorded for posterity," he said.

He insisted that there should not be a sense of urgency in the voting on the trust vote. He recalled that the former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee took 10 days to debate and put the motion of confidence to vote in 1999. "Why such a big hurry now?" he asked.

Responding to allegations that the government was effecting transfers before he had proved that he enjoyed the confidence of the House, the Chief Minister said he had not taken any policy decisions. The government was still in office and transfers were regular business.

Charge of '₹5 crore offer' creates furore

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

Charges of horse-trading dominated the Karnataka Assembly proceedings in the first half of the day on Friday, with legislators of the governing JD(S)-Congress coalition making serious allegations against BJP leaders, accusing them of buying MLAs to destabilise the government.

Srinivas Gowda, JD(S) MLA for Kolar, made a pointed allegation that the BJP offered him ₹5 crore. "Malleswaram MLA C.N. Ashwath Narayan, Yelahanka MLA S.R. Vishwanath, and former MLA C.P. Yogeshwar came to my house and offered ₹5 crore to cross over. I refused and said I am not a person who can be bribed. Now, they are offering me ₹30 crore. If they say it is false, I will prove it is otherwise. I want to ask them if people voted for us to be purchased with money," he said.

IMA founder Mansoor returns, held by ED

**STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU**



Mohammed Mansoor Khan

I Monetary Advisory (IMA) Group founder and managing director Mohammed Mansoor Khan, accused of cheating investors of over ₹2,500 crore, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) after he landed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi from Dubai early on Friday. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up by the Karnataka

government said in a statement that it tracked Khan to Dubai after he fled the country on June 8. It then persuaded him to return to India and submit himself before the law, said the statement. Police officials expect the ED to present Khan in a local court before bringing him to Bengaluru on Saturday.

Khan fled the city a day before a complaint was filed against him, leaving behind

an audio clip in which he threatened to commit suicide, apart from accusing politicians of borrowing money from him.

As the furore over the case increased, he released another video where he offered to return to India and cooperate with the probe.

The IMA is accused of running a ponzi scheme that defrauded thousands by promising them returns of over 50%.

Brindavana of Vyasaraja Tirtha rebuilt in Karnataka

It was destroyed by suspected treasure hunters

**STAFF REPORTER
KOPPAL**

The Brindavana of Sri Vyasaraja Tirtha that was destroyed early on Wednesday by suspected treasure hunters was rebuilt by devotees on the same spot at Nava Brindavana at Anegondi in Karnataka on Friday. A team from Vellore, Tamil Nadu, helped in reconstructing the Brindavana. Employees of the Archaeological Survey of India assisted architect Neeharaj in the reconstruction and restoration. The reconstruction was initiated on a war-footing on Thursday soon after Sri Vidya Shreesha Tirtha of Sosale Vyasaraja Mutt rushed to the spot from Mysuru.

"The actual grave of Sri Vyasaraja Tirtha is intact.



Restoring sanctity: Sri Vidya Shreesha Tirtha of Sosale Vyasaraja Mutt offering puja to the Brindavana of Sri Vyasaraja Tirtha after it was reconstructed. ■ RACHAIAH S.S.

Only the superficial stone structure on the grave is destroyed. It is a matter of relief for all of us that the miscreants could not reach the actual grave," Sri Vishweshha

Tirtha of Pejavar Mutt said in Gangavati.

After the reconstruction, the seers performed rituals to restore the sanctity of Brindavana.

Governor summons Kerala University Vice-Chancellor

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

Governor P. Sathasivam summoned Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University V.P. Mahadevan Pillai to the Raj Bhavan on Friday in connection with the scandal surrounding the alleged use of stolen answer sheets by leaders of the Students Federation of India (SFI) to cheat in the examinations.

Officials said the Governor, who is the Chancellor, sought an explanation from Mr. Pillai at the one-to-one closed-door meeting.

Mr. Pillai purportedly briefed the Governor about the progress of the varsity's probe to trace the provenance of the answer sheets. He is also believed to have

Police recover penknife

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

The police on Friday said they retrieved the penknife used in the near-fatal attack on University College student Akhil Chandran on July 12.

Investigators recovered

the weapon from under a pile of dry leaves near an open stage the Students Federation of India (SFI) had expropriated as its unit committee office.

The Kerala campus violence had occurred during a recess.

The police had chanced upon the stolen answer books during their raid on the house of SFI leader Sivarenjith last week.

He is the main accused in a case relating to the near-fatal knife attack on University College student Akhil Chandran on July 12.

Municipal approval not needed for houses of urban poor

New rules will bring about transformation in Telangana: KCR

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD**

In a major benefit to the urban poor under the New Telangana Municipalities Act, 2019, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao announced in the State Assembly that no municipal approval was needed for construction of Ground plus 1 houses in plots of up to 75 sq. yards.

Home owners will have to pay just ₹1 for registration and ₹100 as property tax to bring them on municipal rolls for house numbers and provision of water connection and other civic amenities. The government, he said, also proposed to give new door numbers to all houses with 'QR' code in the State for safety and security.

As part of citizen-friendly urban governance, one need not go to a municipal office for building construction



K. Chandrasekhar Rao

permissions in an area up to 500 sq m and 10 m of height. Online permission will be given automatically if every document is in order within stipulated time or it will be deemed approved.

The Act brought in heavy penalties for violations of the rules. For property tax, online self certification will be enough but if the flying squads led by Collector detect any discrepancy, then the property owner will be slapped with a penalty of 25 times the accurate amount.

Significantly, the Act has strict provisions for demolition of illegal constructions without notice.

Another major feature is that layout approvals with self-certification will be given by the Collector who is given ample powers of regulation by the Act to rid the State of land mafia and illegal layouts. Common spaces in a layout for roads, parks should be registered to the municipality before final layout approval is given.

"I am there in every sentence of the Act drafted without affecting the spirit of the Constitution," said Mr. Rao, explaining the Act which has provisions in place to bring about transparency, remove corruption for issuing birth, death and other bonafide certificates, and reduce human interference in sanctioning approvals and permissions.

Sea power



Journey halted: Fishermen unloading nets from a boat after rough seas forced it to return to the Vizhinjam harbour in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Seven fishermen have gone missing since Wednesday. Heavy rain on Friday claimed two lives. The Met Department has issued a red alert for most of the districts as rain is expected to continue till Tuesday. ■ S. GOPAKUMAR

Pandemonium over Polavaram project

Andhra CM tells Assembly that previous government was responsible for delay

**STAFF REPORTER
AMARAVATI**

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly witnessed pandemonium over the Polavaram project on Friday. The ruling YSR Congress Party and Opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) got into a heated argument on the issue.

TDP protests

TDP members were on their feet all through Question Hour, demanding a "proper reply" to their queries. Several attempts made by Speaker Tammineni Sitaram to placate them went in vain. Ignoring the obstruction, the Speaker went ahead with the agenda. TDP members, however, chose to continue the



Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

protest instead of participating in a discussion on the questions raised by them.

Intervening, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said the expert committee constituted by the government would reveal the shoddy and corrupt deals in con-

tracts relating to the Polavaram project. The committee was examining the contracts in detail. "The project turned out to be full of scams. The rates were enhanced and the contracts were awarded to close associates of TDP ministers and Chandrababu Naidu in the name of subcontracts and [on] nomination basis," he alleged.

According to preliminary estimates, the savings would be at least 15%-20%. Mr. Jagan claimed, and on works worth ₹6,500 crore, the government could save ₹1,500 crore. Reverse tendering would be undertaken once the expert committee submitted its report, he said. Pre-qualification criterion

would be relaxed so that many firms could participate in the tenders, the CM added.

'Wrong priorities'

Mr. Jagan further said the previous government should be held responsible for the delay in the progress of the works. Wrong priorities had impacted progress and four months were lost, he alleged. The government, however, was committed to completing the Polavaram project by 2021, and works would begin by November, he said.

Water Resources Minister P. Anil Kumar said only 3,900 of 1.06 lakh displaced families had been rehabilitated during the TDP's five-year tenure in the State.

'Varavara Rao kept under pathetic condition'

Wife writes to Maharashtra Governor again, demands better facilities in prison

**STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD**

Revolutionary writer Varavara Rao's wife P. Hemalata demanded better facilities for the former in Yerawada Central Prison of Pune, as he is being allegedly kept under pathetic jail conditions.

According to her, 79-year-old Varavara Rao is being forced to sleep on the floor and not provided adequate facilities, including a cot and chair. "After repeated appeals, the prison officials have installed a ceiling fan in his barrack in the end of summer, which had a switch outside," she said.

On Friday, Ms. Hemalata wrote to Maharashtra Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao asking him to intervene in the



Varavara Rao

matter and direct the government to provide basic amenities to her septuagenarian husband, keeping in view his age and deteriorating health.

Addressing a press confe-

rence on Friday, she said that Mr. Varavara Rao, a Telugu poet and lecturer for the past six decades, is being denied to read or write in his mother tongue, Telugu. "The prison staff has allowed him books only in English. We request the government to let him read Telugu books and newspapers," she said.

Mr. Varavara Rao and eight others, including civil rights activist Sudha Bhargava and Sudhir Dhawale, were arrested by Pune police last year for allegedly plotting to assassinate Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They are also accused in a case related to the Bhatta-Koregaon violence in Maharashtra in 2017.

"I came to know through the media that Varavara Rao and his eight co-accused had written a letter to you (Mr. Vidyasagar Rao) and waiting for your response for the last one month. However, neither did I get any response from the media nor was there any improvement in the conditions in Pune jail. That's why I chose to write to you once again," Ms. Hemalata said in her letter. She reminded the Maharashtra Governor of his association with Mr. Varavara Rao during the Emergency days in prisons.

Over 30 people, including educationalists, poets, writers, journalists and social activists had extended their support in the letter.

IN BRIEF



Hari Singh's birthday to be a holiday in J&K

SRINAGAR
In a rare move, the Jammu Municipal Corporation has passed a resolution to declare the birth anniversary of Dogra monarch Maharaja Hari Singh on September 23 as a State holiday, days after the State paid tributes to people killed during his rule in 1931 in the Valley.

Pilot suspended for transmitting hijack code

NEW DELHI
The DGCA on Friday suspended an AirAsia India pilot for a period of three months for erroneously transmitting the 'hijack code' to the Air Traffic Services during a Delhi-Srinagar flight on June 9. "Capt. Ravi Raj was supposed to transmit the emergency code 7700 to the ATS. Instead, he erroneously 'squawked' the hijack code 7500," said sources. PTI

India, China to have joint exercise in December

NEW DELHI
The annual joint army exercise between India and China will be held in December at Umroi, near Shillong. "The two-week long company-level exercise will take place in the second half of December. The planning conference to finalise the modalities will be held in August," said an Army source.

ED attaches assets of Devas Multimedia

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached movable assets worth ₹3.1 crore of Devas Multimedia Private Limited in a case of alleged illegal agreement with Antrix Corporation, the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It had earlier attached assets worth ₹79.76 crore in the same case.

Plea to frame guidelines on identifying 'minorities'

SC asks AG to be served copy of advocate's writ petition

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Attorney-General of India to be served a copy of a writ petition filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, who is seeking directions to the government to either frame guidelines for identification of minorities at the States' level or, in the alternative, to "declare Hindus as 'Minority' in States where they are a real minority".



A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi,

was hearing the petitioner, represented by senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, challenging a notification issued on October 23, 1993 under the "unbridled powers" of Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act of 1992.

The petition said the October 1993 notification declared Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis as "Minority" community without conducting any study, research or homework.

Management quota students can't be charged more: HC

'Higher fees applicable only to NRI category'

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S. CHENNAI

Frowning upon the practice of private medical colleges charging exorbitant fees from students gaining admission under the management quota, as compared to those admitted under the government quota, the Madras High Court held that there should not be any differentiation in the fee structure for students admitted under the two quotas.

A Division Bench of Justices R. Subbiah and C. Saravanan said, "The only discrimination that is permissible is regarding fees that can be charged from students admitted against the seats allocated under the NRI quota, which has been pegged at 15% of the total seats available in every medical institution."

Asserting that merit should not be given the go-by even while making admissions under the NRI quota, the judges said that the fees collected should be used only for subsidising education of students from economically weaker sections.

Orders refund

Sounding a note of caution on the possibility of medical institutions misusing the NRI quota to make money, the Bench suggested that either the Assembly could pass a law to

regulate such admissions or the government could issue executive instructions on the subject.

"So long as the State does not do it, it will be for the fee fixation committees, constituted pursuant to the directions of the Supreme Court in the Islamic Academy of Education case in 2003, to regulate," the judges clarified, while ordering two private medical colleges in Puducherry to refund excess fees collected from students.

Authoring the judgment, Justice Saravanan said that the need for constitution of fee fixation committees, headed by retired High Court judges, in every State and Union Territory of the country had arisen on account of the tendency of private colleges to charge exorbitant fees in their quest to commercialise higher education and generate profits.

"Higher fee amount can be collected only from students admitted from the NRI quota and such excess money collected from those students can be used for subsidising the fees of students coming from the economically weaker sections of society. Once fee is fixed, approved by the committee concerned and notified, it cannot be tampered with," they concluded.

Women in CRPF will soon get specially designed body gear

Idea first mooted in 2016; they have been using gear designed for men



VJAJITA SINGH NEW DELHI

In a first, women personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) who have to face riotous mobs will soon get a body gear that fits them.

Since Independence, the women personnel had to compromise with bulky, oversized body protectors designed for men. Around 300 women CRPF personnel posted in Srinagar to control the stone-pelting incidents are to benefit from these gears, a CRPF official said.

The full body protector has been designed by a team of scientists of the Defence

Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS), a unit of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Dr. Bhuvnesh Kumar, Director, DIPAS said, "The gear covers all soft parts of human body such as rib-cage, back of the arm, inner calf, thigh and groin area of females deployed in riot control."

Scientist Dr. Shweta Rawat, who led the designing team, said anthropometric data was used to design the gears which ensure protection of vital organs of women.

"The gear is anti-stab, anti-acid. The prototype has been tested and soon we will

go for mass production. It will increase the efficiency of women as the protectors being used earlier were designed for men and the ease of operation was lacking," said Anupam Kulshreshtha, IG, CRPF.

The gear is anti-stab, anti-acid. The prototype has been tested

ANUPAM KULSHRESHTHA IG, CRPF

Ms. Kulshreshtha added that the idea for gender-specific protective gears was first mooted at the National Conference for Women in 2016.

"It will be available in all

sizes and the material used is the same as that used in male body protectors. It will ensure better mobility. It has also paved the path for further research and development in the field of women-specific body armours and vests," said Moses Dhinakaran, DIG and spokesperson, CRPF.

Another official said once the mass production starts, the gears will be available for other central armed police forces and State police forces also. It will weigh around 6 kg.

Around 8,000 women deployed in the anti-riot Rapid Action Force (RAF) will get the body protectors. The CRPF is likely to place an order for 9,000 such pieces.

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 Saturday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Kerala, Mahe, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Konkarn, Goa, Vidarbha, east Rajasthan, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Gujarat, Marathawada, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, central Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	
Agartala	6.4	34.2	26.5	Kozhikode	146.0	26.4	23.0	
Ahmedabad	—	39.1	28.4	Kurnool	—	36.5	25.2	
Aizawl	20.0	29.3	21.5	Lucknow	—	37.3	28.6	
Allahabad	—	39.5	29.0	Madurai	—	38.6	27.3	
Bengaluru	1.0	28.4	21.6	Mangaluru	6.9	28.6	24.1	
Bhopal	—	35.0	25.4	Mumbai	1.6	36.2	26.6	
Bhubaneswar	12.5	—	26.7	Mysuru	—	31.0	21.4	
Chandigarh	0.1	31.5	27.4	New Delhi	—	36.4	25.0	
Chennai	—	34.2	28.6	Patna	—	37.6	28.4	
Coimbatore	—	32.2	23.4	Port Blair	0.3	32.4	25.4	
Dehradun	—	33.0	23.6	Puducherry	—	34.3	26.6	
Gangtok	7.6	24.0	18.0	Pune	—	33.3	22.4	
Goa	—	4.6	29.4	23.8	Raipur	—	13.3	24.8
Guwahati	—	35.0	27.2	Ranchi	—	33.2	24.0	
Hubballi	—	27.0	22.0	Shillong	—	1.2	25.1	
Hyderabad	—	35.0	25.2	Shimla	—	2.4	20.2	
Imphal	—	34.4	17.5	Srinagar	—	3.1	29.3	
Jaipur	—	35.8	25.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	29.1	23.0	
Kochi	—	90.0	25.0	23.8	Tiruchi	—	3.2	38.5
Kolkata	—	12.4	25.0	17.4	Vijayawada	—	64.2	36.7
	—	35.8	28.6	Visakhapatnam	—	5.8	34.2	

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing					Yesterday	
CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	105	134	67	70	—	—
Bengaluru	9	64	89	45	104	—
Chennai	11	32	55	87	—	—
Delhi	18	51	57	106	298	—
Hyderabad	46	33	16	81	114	—
Kolkata	2	17	7	39	43	—
Lucknow	4	29	50	172	—	—
Mumbai	13	17	9	43	120	—
Pune	68	8	67	68	68	—
Visakhapatnam	12	58	53	103	97	—

Air Quality Code: **■** Poor **■** Moderate **■** Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Monsoon now covers entire country, says IMD

Cyclone Vayu delayed advancement

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Southwest monsoon has finally covered the whole country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a statement on Friday. That makes it four days behind its normal schedule of July 15.

"Due to favourable monsoon circulations, there has been light to moderate rainfall with isolated heavy falls over West Rajasthan during the past 24 hours. Thus, the Southwest monsoon has further advanced into re-

maining parts of West Rajasthan and hence covered the entire country today," the IMD said in a release.

This year, the southwest monsoon set over Kerala on June 8, against its normal date of June 1. The delay and the effect of cyclone Vayu substantially delayed the monsoon's advance into south, central and east India and led to a deficit of about 33%.

Rainfall has been significantly below normal in south India, with the shortfall at almost 27%.

Gujarat must act on Devalia lion attack death, says NHRC

Labourer was killed, 2 others were mauled inside safari area

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to the Gujarat government, urging it to act within eight weeks over the death of a forest labourer and injuries to two others in a lion attack in the Devalia Safari Park in the Gir forest of Junagadh last November.

Acting on a petition filed by wildlife activist Ajay Dubey, the NHRC, in a letter dated July 4 and addressed

to the Secretary, State Department of Forest and Environment, directed the authorities concerned to "take appropriate action within eight weeks associating the complainant/victim and inform them of the action taken in the matter".

At noon on November 29, 2018, two lions attacked Rajnish Keshwala and Dinesh Shokhat, daily wage labourers employed by the Forest Department who were leading the big cats to their cage.

While the lions dragged Keshwala into the forest and killed him, Mr. Shokhat managed to escape with injuries. He informed officials of the department about the incident, after which 50 foresters began a search for Keshwala, whose body was recovered two hours later. Another labourer, was attacked while recovering the body. Mr. Dubey alleged that the park had been functioning without permission from the Central Zoo Authority.



Inclusion over exclusion

Fears of a vocal section should not override the rights of NRC claimants to due process

With the Supreme Court-led process of updating the National Register of Citizens in Assam nearing its deadline of July 31, the complexities involved in the gargantuan exercise have dawned upon the executive. Both the Central and State governments have sought an extension. But it remains to be seen whether the Court, which has insisted on sticking to the timelines, would relent when it hears the matter on July 23. The first draft NRC published on the intervening night of December 31 and January 1, 2018 had the names of 19 million people out of the total 32.9 million who had applied for inclusion as citizens. The second draft NRC, published on July 30 last, upped it to 28.9 million but left out four million found ineligible. Around 3.6 million of them subsequently filed citizenship claims. An "additional exclusion list" was issued last month containing 1,02,463 names included earlier in the draft list. In anticipation of millions being ultimately left out, the Assam government is moving to set up 200 Foreigners' Tribunals to handle cases of people to be excluded from the final NRC, as part of a larger plan to establish 1,000 such tribunals. The State government is also preparing to construct 10 more detention centres; six are now running out of district jails.

A humanitarian crisis awaits Assam whether the final NRC is published on July 31 or after. In the run-up to the final publication, case after case has emerged of persons wrongfully left out of the list. The process has left no group out of its sweep, be it Marwaris or Biharis from elsewhere in the country, people tracing their antecedents to other Northeastern states, people of Nepali origin, and caste Hindu Assamese. The prime targets of this exercise, however, are Hindu Bengalis and Bengali-origin Muslims of Assam — more than 80% of the 4.1 million people named in the two lists belong to these two groups. Yet, the rationale of the Centre and State in seeking a deadline extension, as found in their submissions in the Supreme Court, betrays an exclusionary bias. The joint plea sought time to conduct a 20% sample re-verification process in districts bordering Bangladesh and 10% in the rest of the State to quell a "growing perception" that lakhs of illegal immigrants may have slipped into the list. This, despite the State NRC Coordinator's reports to the apex court suggesting that up to 27% of names have been reverified during the process of disposal of claims. It hasn't helped that the Central government keeps holding out the prospect of unleashing a nationwide NRC to detect and deport illegal aliens, when it has no index to base such an exercise on — the 1951 register was exclusive to Assam. The accent should be on inclusion, not exclusion. The wheels of justice cannot pander to the suspicions of a vocal majority without giving the excluded access to due process.

Unpresidential slant

Trump's racist tweets risk damaging the fabric of American society further

Again gripped the United States, after President Donald Trump attacked four Democratic Congresswomen of colour, asking them to return to the "totally broken and crime infested places from which they came". His tweets raised a furor over their racist tenor and exacerbated the sense of bitter polarisation, given the strident ongoing debate over Mr. Trump's zero-tolerance approach toward undocumented migration. The House of Representatives, under Democratic control, voted to condemn Mr. Trump's remarks as racist, marking the first such reprimand of a sitting President in over a century. Not only did that Congressional rebuke to Mr. Trump pass mostly along partisan lines, by a vote of 240 to 187, but other senior Republicans including Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell defended the President against the racist label. Nevertheless, Mr. Trump hit back again at the four Congresswomen — who have adopted the moniker "the Squad" — on Twitter for what he called their "horrible and disgusting actions", "racist hatred", and for being "anti-America", "anti-Semitic", and possibly communist sympathisers.

Stepping back from the immediate, acerbic terms of this exchange, the bigger concern is that these hateful comments risk damaging the fabric of American society further, as they are an unmistakable and painful hint from their President that legal immigrants, especially people of colour, are not welcome. Yet, there can be no denying the significance of immigrants as a demographic cohort of the country. More than 44.5 million immigrants, at least 13.7% of the overall population, reside in the U.S.; one in seven U.S. residents is foreign-born. Mexicans, Indians and Chinese immigrants are respectively the largest sub-groups within this cohort. It was little surprise then, that Ilhan Omar, one of Mr. Trump's targets, situated the comments in the agenda of white nationalism, arguing that given the direct contravention of U.S. constitutional values implied, it was time to consider impeaching him. Yet impeachment would be an option only if the Senate were also to come under Democratic control, or if there might be some conceivable reason why Republicans would break with their recent record of siding with Mr. Trump no matter how egregious his conduct. A more tedious, but deep-rooted approach would be for liberals of all hues to engage in a meaningful dialogue with their conservative detractors, over what they could agree on as a common minimum agenda and values that could anchor their nation's march into the 21st century. If a nationwide conversation of this sort, aimed at discovering a reasonable middle ground is not undertaken, the very idea of the American dream, of a meritocracy built on harnessing talent from around the world, will unravel fast.

The NEP and liberal arts education

The draft's endorsement of critical thinking would have gained credibility if it had promoted liberal values



KRISHNA KUMAR

A few months ago, a school principal told me about her conversation in the morning assembly with children of the middle (Grades VI-VIII) section. She had asked them for suggestions to turn the school into heaven. Some children suggested a garden, with trees, grass, and flowers blossoming all year round. Others pointed out that the school already had a nice garden. They suggested that heaven should have peace, so we should end all fights. The assembly ended with everyone taking a vow to stop all fighting in the school to make it like heaven. A short while later, two boys came scuffling into the principal's office, quarrelling and seeking her intervention. On inquiry, one of them said, "Ma'am, didn't you say you want our school to be like heaven?" Then he pointed at the other boy and asked, "What is he doing here, Ma'am? He fights with me all the time."

This story came back to me when I started reading the section on higher education in the 480-page draft of the National Education Policy (NEP). I had completed my reading of the section on school education, so I was ready to be told how a future generation that spends its school years under the guidance of the proposed new policy will spend its college years. For improvement in learning at school, the draft NEP wants critical thinking and creativity to be treated as the cornerstones of intellectual development from early childhood onwards. As a term,

critical thinking or inquiry has gained enormous popularity of late. It does not mean 'critical' in the common sense. How the term has evolved in recent educational theory implies the ability to place ideas and problems in a larger context in order to locate creative links and clues by using information and concepts drawn from different subjects. Imagine our youngsters proceeding to higher education after this kind of intellectual training at school: you can picture a transformed college classroom.

Pivotal to reform

In the draft NEP, the section for higher education opens with 'liberal arts' as the key to reform. This is another term that has been gaining currency in India over recent years, but its history is rather different from that of critical thinking. In India, owing to our colonial history, we are more used to the term 'liberal'. In modern education, 'liberal arts' refers to undergraduate courses in America's elite private universities. For years, I have been looking for a suitable term in my mother tongue, i.e. Hindi, to convey the many layers of meaning underlying the word 'liberal'. The common translation is 'udaar' or large-hearted. (I am sure this is the term they will use when the draft NEP is made available in Hindi.) The idea of liberalism as large-heartedness or intellectual generosity ran into trouble when 'neo-liberalism' gained centre-stage in economic policy. The only way one might notice some generosity in it was by recognising the state's willingness to loosen its grip. Neo-liberalism has now settled in, transcending ideological boundaries, but its impact on liberal arts education in America is far from clear. Many scholars have suggested that the turn to-



wards neo-liberal policies has weakened critical thinking in liberal arts courses. This matter has suddenly become relevant for us in the wake of the draft NEP proposing both critical thinking and liberal arts, virtually in the same breath.

Applying critical thinking

Implementing the draft NEP in my own mind, I thought of using critical thinking to reflect on the prospects of liberal training. The late Professor Ravinder Kumar, an eminent historian of modern politics, was a self-avowed liberal. I once heard him explain why liberalism is the hardest social doctrine to practice. He said the capacity to tolerate your adversaries, with curiosity to understand them, calls for a mutual agreement. If there is no such consensus, i.e. liberal outlook is practised by one side only, it can be frustrating, and might even lead to a tragic failure of liberalism itself. When I hear about liberal arts courses being offered in private universities, I often wonder what future awaits them. How will they face a world in which the 'narrow domestic walls' are rising higher and higher? This metaphor was used by Tagore, a bold liberal, who wanted India to become a 'heaven of freedom'. 'Where knowledge is free', the same poem

said. The liberal arts undergraduate courses I am referring are to cost ₹8 lakh per year.

The draft NEP's support for liberal arts comes with a plea for increased public funding. It also cites employability as a justification. Even more interestingly, the argument excavates historical grounding. It says: "Indian universities such as Takshshila and Nalanda... definitely emphasised the liberal arts and liberal education tradition.... The critical Indian concept of liberal arts has indeed become extremely important in the modern day employment landscape of the 21st century, and liberal arts education of this kind is already being extensively implemented today (e.g. in the United States in Ivy League schools) with great success. It is time India also brought back this great tradition back to its place of origin." (pp. 223-224).

The resounding, elaborate commendation of liberal arts in the draft NEP brought me back to the principal's story about turning her school into heaven. The boy who asked her about his classmate — "What is he doing here, Ma'am?" — was asking a fundamental question pertinent to the future of liberal values. The youngster's query demonstrates that he has internalised the spirit of the age. Many children do that. Their questions carry valuable material to understand our times better and more objectively than we might be able to do as adults, submerged as we are in our ethos, feeling forced to cope with it. The boy's query contained the hope that principal Ma'am, being the custodian of heaven, will exercise her authority to adjudicate in his fight. What were her choices? There were mainly two: to expel the alleged fighter or to ask the complainer to talk to his adversary. Only the latter would

qualify as a liberal administrative measure.

Perhaps this is what the draft NEP also wants in its push for the liberal arts, as a futuristic substitute for the monochromatic 'BA' our system is used to and stuck in. Since the draft NEP is committed to critical thinking, surely its writers had cast a glance at the larger ethos and noticed the demise of several bastions of liberal education. Had they evinced even moderate concern, their endorsement of the liberal arts would have gained credibility. Unless liberal arts graduates are to be produced exclusively for export, their training would have to include the smartness to not let anyone know what exactly you believe in. One suspects that their American counterparts already receive such training.

Let me get back to the heaven alluded to in the principal's story. Trees and peace apart, a school turned into heaven will surely have to resolve the problem of fear, so endemic to our education system. The boy who wanted the principal to adjudicate was not afraid of indicating to her his own preferred solution. It was implied in the question: 'What is he doing here?' This stance also carries the hope of impunity from being charged of intolerance. As a grown-up he might say: 'If we want to preserve our neatly fenced heaven, why can't we expel from it the people we don't appreciate?' We might add: isn't this already being argued in many liberal countries, so why should we hesitate? My principal friend, however, followed her instinctive good sense and sent the two boys away, asking them to talk it over and play without a quarrel together.

Krishna Kumar is a former director of the NCERT

Green shoots of economic growth

Without factoring in agriculture, the vision of a \$5-trillion economy will remain a distant dream



NAVEEN P. SINGH & RANJITH P.C.

India's dream of becoming a \$5-trillion economy by 2024 is now in the open with a 'blue sky' vision envisaged in the Economic Survey this year. The document lays down a clear strategy to augment the growth of key sectors by shifting gears as the current economic conditions are smooth in terms of macroeconomic stability to expand growth. However, unless there are adequate investment reforms in primary sectors, steps taken to augment growth in other sectors would be futile.

Investment is the key

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), insufficient investment in the agriculture sector in most developing countries over the past 30 years has resulted in low productivity and stagnant production.

In India, with a steadily decreasing share of 14.4% in Gross Value Added since 2015-16, the sector's contribution to a \$5-trillion economy would be around \$1 trillion — assuming a positive annual growth rate hereafter.

Investment is the key to unlocking the potential of a developing economy. However, the myopic

policy regime in the past several decades has resulted in sluggish investment growth in the farm sector. Therefore, strengthening the sector with an enabling investment package (both public and private) is critical.

First, the wave of investment should touch segments such as agro-processing, and exports, agri-startups and agri-tourism, where the potential for job creation and capacity utilisation is far less. Integrating the existing tourism circuit with a relatively new area of agri-tourism (as a hub-and-spoke model), where glimpses of farm staff and farm operations are displayed to attract tourists, would help in boosting the investment cycle and generate in-situ employment.

Second, investment needs to be driven to strengthen both public and private extension advisory systems and the quality of agriculture and research through collaboration and convergence. It would also serve as a stage to demonstrate resource conservation and sustainable use through organic, natural and green methods, and also zero budget natural farming.

Third, given that India has the highest livestock population in the world, investment should be made to utilise this surplus by employing next-generation livestock technology with a strong emphasis not only on productivity enhancement but also on conservation of indigenous germplasm, disease surveillance, quality control, waste utili-



sation and value addition. This would lead to a sustained increase in farm income and savings with an export-oriented growth model.

Fourth, investment in renewable energy generation (using small wind mill and solar pumps) on fallow farmland and in hilly terrain would help reduce the burden of debt-ridden electricity distribution companies and State governments, besides enabling energy security in rural areas.

Fifth, a farm business organisation is another source of routing private investment to agriculture. Linking these organisations with commodity exchanges would provide agriculture commodities more space on international trading platforms and reduce the burden of markets in a glut season, with certain policy/procedural modifications.

Pivotal role for data

Finally, data is the key driver of modern agriculture which in turn can power artificial intelligence-led agriculture, e-markets, soil mapping and others. Currently, there are issues of enumeration, maintenance and accessibility to help maintain agri-data on various

fronts. There also needs to be a centralised institutional mechanism to help maintain farm level-data available for real time (virtual) assessment, while also helping plug the loopholes in subsidy distribution, funding and unrealistic assumption in production estimation. This will help in effectively implementing and monitoring various schemes for a pragmatic food system.

It is widely accepted that resource conservation comes with behavioural change, which needs dedicated investment in behavioural farm research sets. Perhaps this would help find a way to leverage nudge policies/choice architecture for resource conservation, fertilizer use, irrigation and electricity consumption. Above all, there is a need to converge fragmented investments (public, private and foreign) to address the structural weaknesses in the agriculture sector, enunciated in the Economic Survey 2016-17.

Trickle-down effect

Though economic transition has seen significant growth contribution from services and industry, agriculture remains the most trusted sector in helping alleviate poverty, hunger and malnutrition and ensuring better income distribution.

An earlier experience of BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) nations has shown that a 1% growth in agriculture is at least two to three times more effective in reducing poverty than similar

growth in non-agricultural sectors. Public investment in agriculture research and development in terms of percentage share in agri GVA stands at 0.37%, which is fairly low in comparison to between 3% and 5% in developed countries.

Also, in real terms, current investment can create an enabling environment to route private investment in R&D. Therefore, public investment in agriculture should see a commensurate rise with a healthy mix of education, research and extension encouraging 'blue-sky thinking' in all segments, while pushing for a targeted pruning of public expenditures on subsidies, kind transfers, loan waivers and populist measures.

Agriculture and its allied sectors are believed to be one of the most fertile grounds to help achieve the ambitious Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs). However, with the current pace of agriculture growth, India requires 'patient capital', as financial returns to investment are unlikely to materialise in the initial years. An inclusive business model facilitating strong investor-farmer relations should be created, with a legal and institutional framework for governance. Expanding institutions is essential to accommodate the developmental impacts of foreign agricultural investment.

Naveen P. Singh and Ranjith P.C. are with the ICAR-National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Betrayal of verdict

The political conundrum in Karnataka, and the apex court's reaction to it, come as a disappointment to the State's electorate (Front page, "Karnataka CM asked to prove majority on Friday," July 19). Legislators get elected because of the backing of their party and voters choose a party more than the candidate. Hence, it is unethical for MLAs to switch loyalties midway into a term. To pre-empt such crises, the Representation of People Act should be amended and the new rule should stipulate that once a candidate gets elected from a given party's ticket, his resignation, stepping down or demise will result in the party nominating a different member. This

would ensure that the mandate given to a party is not sabotaged by individual politicians and also save the expenditure incurred in conducting bypolls.

B. SUNDAR RAMAN,
Coimbatore

The anti-defection law has been often misused by some legislators to suit their unethical and immoral political intentions. However, deleting the 10th Schedule will amount to throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Also, the suggestion that legislators who act in unscrupulous ways should be voted out in subsequent elections may not work in India as polls are fought not on the merits of a candidate but on extraneous factors like caste and money power. The ever-increasing numbers

of legislators with criminal records vindicates this point (Parley, "Does the anti-defection law serve any purpose?" July 19). The Karnataka crisis has turned into a street-fight with legislators switching sides and throwing barbs at each other. The parties care less about what the people want; winning the crown is all that matters to them. The Supreme Court's bizarre verdict on the rebel MLAs has only come as the cherry on the cake. The common man is left scratching his head in bafflement.

A.V.S. SHUBHANGI,
Bengaluru

ICJ reprieve

The International Court of Justice's directive to Pakistan to reconsider the case of Kulbhushan Jadhav can be

construed as an indictment of Islamabad's military courts and its system of dispensing rough-and-ready justice. However, though the ICJ has halted Mr. Jadhav's execution pending a review of his trial, it has not entertained India's request for either his acquittal or a retrial in civilian courts. The international court did not have the jurisdiction to rule on such matters. Both the countries must now move forward and pursue diplomatic channels to bring closure to the case.

K.S. JAYATHEERTHA,
Bengaluru

Abolish sedition law

Section 124A of the IPC, introduced by the British to curb dissent, is a draconian provision. It is condemnable

that more than 70 years since India's Independence, the state is deploying it not just to settle political scores but also to silence journalists when they report on issues like the Maoist insurgency and communal violence (Editorial, "Sword against pen," July 18). The sedition provision is not just an anachronism in the democratic set-up of the country, it also runs counter to the freedom of speech and expression enshrined in Article 19 (a) of the Constitution. It is high time the government of the day abrogates the provision.

VIJAY SINGH ADHIKARI,
Nainital, Uttarakhand

Violation of rights

The Indian state's violations of human rights in Jammu and Kashmir in the name of

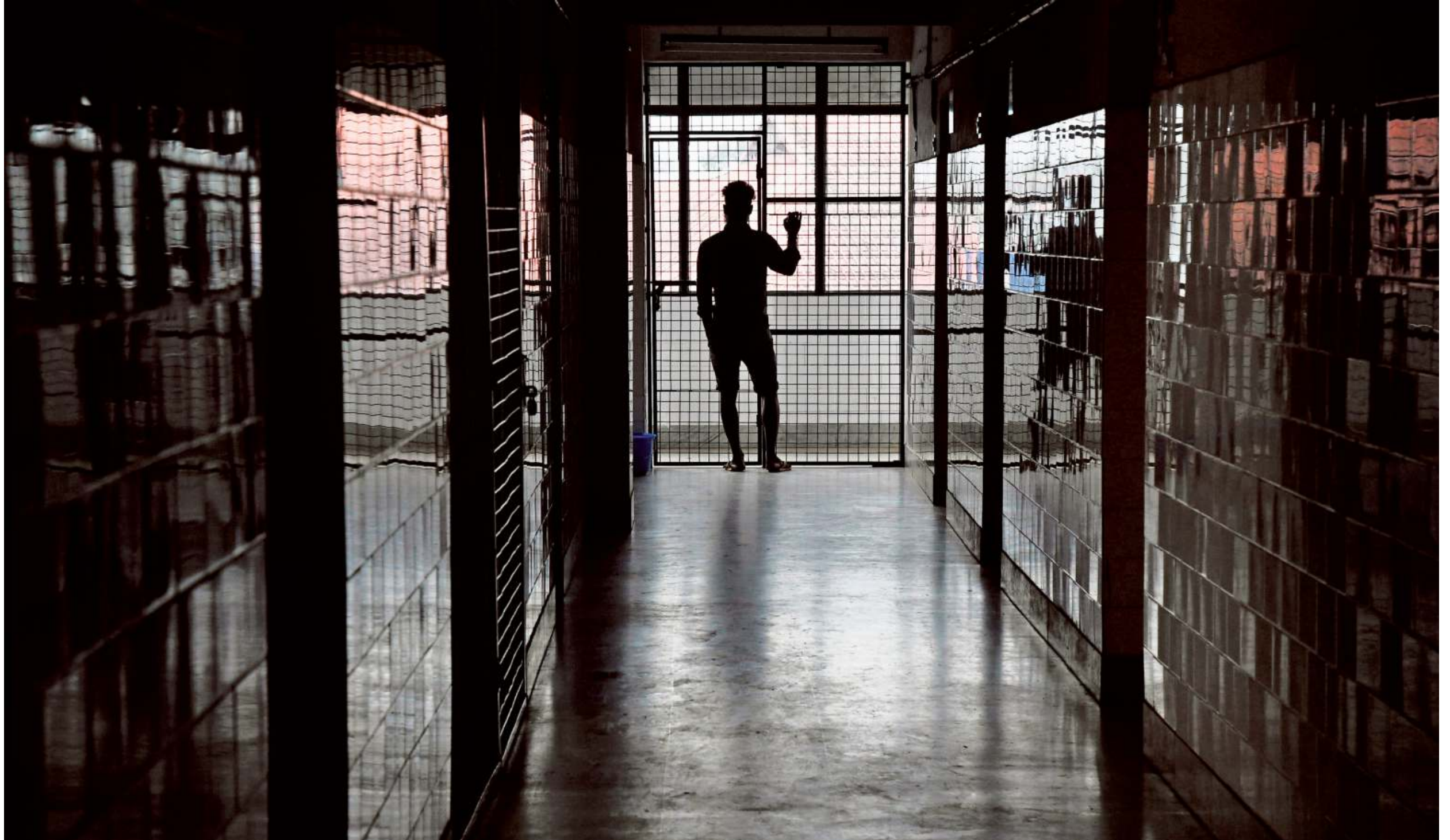
protecting national security are open knowledge (Editorial page, "OIC's curious record on Xinjiang," July 19). The writer's observations on how countries in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) work may have some substance but it won't be appreciable for India to indulge in 'whataboutery'. The OIC's silence on restrictions in Xinjiang doesn't absolve India of its own responsibilities. If New Delhi wants to get more respect in the international arena, it needs to raise the bar when it comes to protecting the human rights of all its citizens and residents.

BITRA RAGHUVEER,
Mangalagiri, Andhra Pradesh

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Ecstasy and the agony

The small town of Aluva in Kerala is emerging as a hub for narcotic traffic and use. The State is stepping up its efforts to curb the problem, but easy availability and access to drugs is spurring the trade, reports **M.P. Praveen**



"Stringent laws and severe punishment do not seem to have worked as a deterrent for peddlers." • THULASI KAKKAT

Dressed in a grey shirt and black trousers, Amal*, 21, walks into the room with a big smile. No one would be able to guess that he was locked up in a drug rehabilitation centre in Muvattupuzha in eastern Ernakulam for over a fortnight. Amal was acquainted with drugs when he was just 13 years old. He was in danger of "losing his mind", he says, before he controlled his impulses in order to get his life back on track. Gentle prodding by the excise officials who had nabbed him as well as his mother's tears paved the way for his rehabilitation.

Amal looks composed. "It feels like waking up from a nightmare," he says. "Earlier, I could not smile, enjoy jokes, or have a normal conversation. I was in a different world. I could beat anyone to pulp and feel nothing about it. I feel more human now."

While his little hamlet Manjali in Ernakulam district is famous for its halwa and biryani, it was ganja that Amal fell in love with as a teenager, influenced by his peers. "But I never got addicted to it. The ganja that we get here is of low quality. Once, during an online chat, a friend and I shared some pictures of the grass we smoked. And he snubbed me for savouring trash," he says.

Like several others, Amal went on to trade ganja for headier stuff, all because of a friend who was into "real stuff" and kept the source of his supply close to his chest. Soon, Amal was catapulted to a life of perpetual high, riding on a cocktail of meth, MDMA, and LSD.

His family, comprising an indifferent father, clueless mother and a younger brother, had known that something was amiss with him. But it took his mother time to find out what was going on.

Vishal*, 19, was on the verge of depression at 15 when his learning disability isolated him from his competitive peers. At his school in suburban Ernakulam, neither his teachers nor his peers came to his rescue. His aloofness, however, attracted the attention of a peddler who introduced him to ganja. By the time his dependence on drugs was detected by the family, Vishal had become an addict. He went through a de-addiction routine, which proved futile. But four years since his first experience with ganja, Vishal is slowly piecing together his life. A bad accident which confined him to bed for about three months was what finally pulled him away from the clutch of drugs.

An emerging hub for narcotics
It is hardly a coincidence that Amal and Vishal hail from places near Aluva, which is to the north of Kochi in Kerala. Located on the banks of the Periyar river, the town is in the news almost every other day for its unenviable profile as an emerging hub for narcotics traffic and



The theory for long has been that youngsters with emotional problems and from dysfunctional families are most vulnerable to drugs. Now youngsters from perfectly normal families are also turning to drugs solely for recreational purposes.

C.J. JOHN
Psychiatrist

use. Easy availability of drugs, peer patronage, mobile phone-aided access to dope networks, and lack of care from family or society are egging on the trade. The users are mostly students who are barely out of school and college.

"It was after considering the vulnerability of these students that we began two enforcement drives in Aluva: Operation Holiday with a focus on students who stayed back in hostels during the summer vacation, and Operation Monsoon to sensitise newcomers at the start of the new academic year," says K. Chandrapalan, Deputy Excise Commissioner, Ernakulam district.

"Sniffer Sheikh", a well-known supplier of Nitrazepam tablets to the students of a college in Aluva, was caught during Operation Holiday. Nitrazepam is a psychotropic drug prescribed for anxiety and insomnia, but is a hit among the youth.

"He had thick, lustrous hair and a feminine face. He used to cleverly use that to enter girls' hostels too. He ran a well-entrenched network assisted by four aides for the State-wide supply of Nitrazepam tablets which he sourced in bulk from neighbouring States," says N.D. Toomy, a Civil Excise Officer who was part of the drive and was awarded by the Excise Minister for exemplary enforce-

ment work.

Two months into Operation Monsoon, excise officials conducted an awareness session at a school in Aluva when a section of students tipped them off about an ice-cream vendor who sold toffees to senior students. The sleuths sent a student to purchase toffee, sold in the range of ₹30 to ₹50. The toffee turned out to be ganja parcelled in wrappers. The seller had purchased the wrappers in bulk from Tamil Nadu. "Aluva is perhaps ideally located for transporting, storing and supplying the contraband across the district," says Toomy.

From Aluva, the shadowy network has cast its spell over Kochi. Former Excise Commissioner Rishi Raj Singh had warned a few years ago that Kochi would become home to the second biggest community of drug addicts after Amritsar. He wasn't completely off the mark.

Despite the spike in demand for designer drugs, ganja continues to have a stranglehold over drug abusers – perhaps because it is cheap and readily available. "Ganja largely comes from the Naxal-infested areas of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. This is where a few ganja farmers from Idukki district have migrated and it is from these places it is smuggled in via Namakkal, Cumbum and Theni in Tamil Nadu. A colony named Uthampuram, located between Namakkal and Cumbum, is notorious for ganja trade but remains out of bounds for enforcement agencies," says T.A. Ashok Kumar, Assistant Excise Commissioner (Enforcement).

The business model for ganja is simple. A couple of kilograms for a few thousand rupees are smuggled in, split into numerous small packets, and marketed under the brand name, Idukki Gold, to leverage the popular perception that ganja from Idukki is the best, says Kumar.

Vying with ganja in terms of volume are the Nitrazepam tablets. These are smuggled from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka where they can be bought from medical shops without a prescription. A strip of Nitrazepam tablets bought for around ₹40 is sold for as high as ₹500 making it a highly lucrative business proposition, Kumar says.

There are other types of drugs too. Early this year, an excise squad in Ernakulam made arguably the biggest-ever haul of hashish in Kerala. Over six kilos of hashish valued at ₹13 crore in the market were seized from a man who used to smuggle the substance from Nepal via Uttar Pradesh.

In September last, 30 kg of MDMA, also known as Ecstasy, worth around ₹200 crore, was seized after it landed at a courier company in Kochi from Chennai while on way to Malaysia. Aluva is

transforming into a transit point, a cog in the wider scheme of international drug cartels.

The anti-narcotics squads have also noticed a unique but disturbing trend in the State where abusers double up as carriers. And this is forcing the squads to keep a tab on youngsters commuting between Kochi and places like Bengaluru and Goa. "A sense of adventure gets the better of many youngsters when they are away from home. They try out drugs thinking it's going to be a one-time thing, but soon find themselves linked to the rackets as the trade fetches easy money," says a squad member.

Spike in cases

The number of narcotic cases registered in Kerala by the Excise Department alone spiked from 2,033 in 2016 to 5,946 in 2017 and 7,573 (nearly 1,000 in Ernakulam district alone) in 2018. In the first five months of 2019, 3,316 cases were registered, of which Ernakulam accounts for 421. The figure has already surpassed the total number of cases for the whole of 2016.

The police registered 6,501 narcotic cases in 2016, 9,359 cases in 2017, 9,521 in 2018, and 3,970 cases till May this year. The volume of ganja seized by the Excise Department for the corresponding periods stood at 502 kg, 1,333 kg, 1,885 kg, and 1,365 kg. Seizure of hashish dropped from 10.79 kg in 2016 to 1.98 kg in 2017 before soaring to 65.94 kg in 2018 and 40 kg till May this year.

The most perceptible rise was in the seizure of Nitrazepam tablets – from 1,500 tablets in 2016, it rose to 7,800 in 2017, 10,700 in 2018, and 3,100 in 2019.

"The seizures account for just a fraction of the drugs smuggled in," says Sam Christy Daniel, State Additional Excise Commissioner (Enforcement). "The apex court decree that the informant and the investigation officer should not be the same person has further dented the enforcement drive of the Excise Department which is already affected by manpower shortage. The enforcement wing of the Excise Department is restricted to 58 circle inspectors and 14 Deputy Excise Commissioners for 138 excise range offices across the State."

While contraband drugs always had their presence in the State, the proliferation of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substance cases is attributed by large sections to the previous government's decision to close down bar hotels below the four-star category towards the end of its term in 2015.

Constitutional expert Sebastian Paul thinks that the growing menace of drugs is a fallout of the liquor ban. "Enforcing prohibition without laying the groundwork will not only lead to its failure but give rise to other more serious societal problems. History is replete with evi-

dence to that effect. The advent of bootlegging and consequential law and order problems in America in the aftermath of prohibition is a classic case," he says.

By the time the decision to close down bars was reversed by the new government in 2016, drug peddlers had spread their tentacles far and wide.

A long journey to de-addiction

At the rehabilitation centres, counsellors have a tough time dealing with the addicts. "In most cases involving ganja, the users gather a lot of wrong information on the perceived benefits of cannabis. Ganja is found to be the most common gateway to synthetic drugs and intravenous (IV) drug abuse using stuff like Buprenorphine. Once people reach that stage, chances of recovery are very remote," says Faris Basheer, Medical Officer at the Vimukthi de-addiction centre run by the Excise Department at Muvattupuzha.

Set up six months ago, the centre has so far treated 462 outpatients and 62 inpatients. The Vimukthi de-addiction centres are manned by a psychiatrist-social worker, a medical officer, a psychologist, a counsellor and three nursing and security staff each. The centres follow a protocol starting with detoxification of victims, a personality study and motivational sessions leading to eventual rehabilitation and mainstreaming during a three-week-long stay, free of cost.

Psychiatrist C.J. John, who has over the years dealt with several drug abuse victims from all age groups and family backgrounds, says that there is a new trend among the youth. "The theory for long has been that youngsters with emotional problems and from dysfunctional families are most vulnerable to drugs. While that theory still holds water, a new tendency seems to be on the rise where youngsters from perfectly normal families are turning to drugs solely for recreational purposes. As we focus more on treatment and rehabilitation, the most critical area of early detection is often overlooked," he says. He says there is a need for an enforcement protocol in dealing with the youth caught in drug trade so that they are not stigmatised for the rest of their lives.

Stringent laws and severe punishment do not seem to have worked as a deterrent for peddlers. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act has two schedules dealing with narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The punishment varies with the kind of drug and the quantity of seizure. "It is only in the case of contraband drugs like ganja that less than one kg is treated as a small quantity and bail is granted. As for psychotropic drugs, even a few milligrams are considered the commer-

Earlier, I could not smile, enjoy jokes, or have a normal conversation. I was in a different world. I could beat anyone to pulp and feel nothing about it. I feel more human now (after rehab).

AMAL
Manjali resident

cial quantity, and anyone found possessing that much even inadvertently or out of ignorance lands up behind the bars for years," says M. Revi Krishnan, a lawyer in the Kerala High Court. "The statute is rigorous. With the judiciary also taking a serious note of the drug menace, even procedural lapses are not taken as a ground for bail," he adds.

State-led initiatives

Efforts are under way at various levels to deal with the crisis. Student Police Cadet, a novel initiative of the Kerala police, has emerged as an effective tool in countering the problem. There are about 60,000 student police cadets across school campuses in the State and one of their major tasks is to ensure that the immediate vicinity of their schools is tobacco-free. These cadets also pass on information about substance abuse among their peers to teachers to ensure timely, corrective intervention.

Besides, a campaign named Our Responsibility to Children, run by the State Police and the Women and Child Development Department, is under way for early detection of children vulnerable to drugs. Under the programme, 15,000 teachers have been trained to detect potential victims early on, intervene where correction is needed, and ensure their integration into the mainstream. Over 100 psychiatrists and psychologists and 2,000-odd social mentors are also associated with the programme.

Then there is Hope, a programme introduced a couple of years ago, which is aimed at extending academic and career support to students who failed to clear the 10th standard exam. "You can imagine the state of mind of these students. They are the most vulnerable as they crave for acceptance. This makes them perfect targets for anti-social elements and drug networks," says P. Vijayan, Inspector General of Police (Administration), Police Headquarters.

School Protection Groups operated jointly by the Education, Police and Excise departments and ward-level Vimukthi Senas with five volunteers each are some of the other initiatives being tried out by the State to keep its younger generation away from drugs.

The number of addicts and seizure of drugs shows that it requires sustained efforts to curb the new scourge.

*Names have been changed to protect identities

FROM PAGE ONE

Confidence vote to be held on Monday

While the Governor's first letter to the Chief Minister sent on Thursday had set 1.30 p.m. on Friday as the deadline to prove his majority, the strongly-worded second one gave him time till the end of the day. The Governor had also sent a communiqué to the Speaker the previous day stating he desires a floor test by the end of Thursday.

In his second letter to the Chief Minister, the Governor expressed suspicion that "detailed debates and discussions appear to be merely to delay the floor test."

He said, "I am receiving various reports about the attempts being made for horse-trading. This can be averted only and only if the exercise of conducting floor test is conducted at the earliest and without any delay."

He added that these facts

and circumstances convey "a very sorry state of affairs."

However, the debate through the day in the House was around the Governor's right to set deadlines when the process of trust vote is under way in the House. The Chief Minister took exception to the letter and said, "The Governor cannot act as an ombudsman of the legislature." He said that he was "pained by the second love letter from the Governor."

Rural Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the Governor could not set deadlines once the Chief Minister has moved the confidence motion and accused the BJP of "misusing" Constitutional offices, amid shouts of "Go back Governor" from the treasury benches.

JD(S), Congress move Supreme Court

Both Mr. Kumaraswamy and the Congress, through its State president Dinesh Gundu Rao, sought a clarification from the court on its July 17 order allowing 15 dissident MLAs liberty to opt out of the Assembly session.

They said this freedom worked to whittle down the constitutional right of the parties to issue whip against them. It was also in the teeth of the Tenth Schedule (anti-defection law) of the Constitution, they noted.

In his five-page application, Mr. Kumaraswamy complained that the Governor sent his first communication on July 18 "directing that the confidence motion

and the trust vote should be held before 1:30 pm on 19.07.2019". The application, filed by advocate Sunil Fernandes, said, "It is respectfully submitted that no such direction could have been issued by the Hon'ble Governor when the confidence motion has already been initiated. The debates on the motion are currently ongoing and the House is in session. The Speaker has opined that the Division will take place only at the end of the debate."

Notwithstanding the first communication, the Governor sent a second one. This time, he demanded that the trust vote be held at 6 p.m. on Friday.

SC questions need for NRC re-verification

"Mr. Hajela's report says while disposing of claims, 80 lakh names have been re-verified. That means at least 27% of names have been re-verified, and you are asking for 20%... So, is there need for a sample re-verification? If we are satisfied that verification has been done properly, then there is no need for a sample re-verification, isn't it," Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, who is accompanied by Justice Rohinton Nariman on the Special Bench, told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for both Assam and the Centre.

"Mistakes have crept in" Mr. Mehta said the findings in Mr. Hajela's reports may

not truly reflect the reality on the ground. "They must have done excellent work, but mistakes have crept in. The quantum of people included in certain areas is more... Wrongful inclusions are manifold in the bordering districts, lakhs of illegal immigrants have been included in the draft NRC list. The problem in the border districts is more," he submitted. He said the wrongful inclusions may be because local officers were used in the NRC process.

The Bench adjourned the case to July 23. It asked Mr. Mehta to go through what Mr. Hajela had to say on the issue of re-verification in his reports to the Supreme Court on July 10 and 18.

Dissent in Cong. over search for party chief

A group, that includes both Lok Sabha MPs and party functionaries, has decided that once the Karnataka political crisis ends, a public battle will be mounted to raise the demand for fresh elections to the CWC. "The delay is hurting us as the Congress president's chair has not been vacant for so long in the past," another MP said.

The group has both elected members as well as senior Congress functionaries, a source said.

The last time Congress saw a contest for the post of president was in October 2000 when Jitendra Prasad stood against present United Progressive Alliance chairperson Sonia Gandhi. Ms. Gandhi was contesting for the president's post for the first time. Of the 12,000 votes cast, Mr. Prasad secured less than 1,000 votes at the time.

Because of the situation in Karnataka, the Congress has put on hold the process

of selecting the new president.

Rahul Gandhi resigned as party president on May 24, during the CWC to discuss the Lok Sabha election results. More than a month later, on July 3, he wrote an open letter calling an end to speculation that he may want to continue.

Two MPs from LS

Till now, the process of consultations to bring in a new regime has been limited to the CWC.

Together with 24 members, 19 special invitees and 10 special invitees, the CWC has 53 persons.

There are only two Lok Sabha MPs in the committee. CWC members were asked for their preference for the president's post, and it was decided that based on these deliberations, a meeting of the committee will be called to pick a provisional president, who will then chair the elections for a new president.

Discuss Karnataka in LS: Danish Ali

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Bahujan Samaj Party MP Kunwar Danish Ali has demanded that the events unfolding in Karnataka and inside the Assembly be discussed in the Lok Sabha as they concerned "the independence of the legislature".

Mr. Ali, who was previously with the Janata Dal (S), is considered one of the architects of the Congress-JD(S) coalition in Karnataka.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Ali also demanded a relook into the anti-defection Law and the 10th Schedule of the Constitution.

"What is happening in Karnataka is a farce. If one buys MLAs wholesale, it's not defection, retail shopping of MLAs or if one switches allegiance becomes defection. It's a mockery of the 10th Schedule of the Constitution," he said.

Congress alleges plot against Karnataka govt.

MPs protest after Speaker disallows discussion on issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The political turmoil in Karnataka was raised in the Lok Sabha on Friday with Congress members repeatedly raising slogans against the BJP for "conspiring" to bring down the Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) government in the State.

Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury wanted to raise objection regarding the Karnataka Governor issuing directions to the Speaker, and alleged that the BJP was conspiring to bring down governments in States where Opposition parties were in power.

Speaker Om Birla allowed Mr. Chowdhury to raise the issue in the House, but made it clear he could not speak about any Assembly or the person who was sitting in a



What is happening in Karnataka is a threat to the independence of legislature

ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY
Congress leader in LS

Constitutional post.

"Sir, suppose the President of India issues a directive to you and tells you this won't happen or 'this will happen', you will not like it as you have autonomy. Simi-

larly, every Assembly and its Speaker has its own autonomy," Mr. Chowdhury said.

He said what was happening in Karnataka was a "threat to the independence of legislature and democracy is being killed in the State".

As soon as the Lower House began proceedings, Congress members wanted to talk about the situation in Karnataka, but the Speaker did not entertain the request. This prompted Congress and DMK MPs to troop to the Well of the House.

Over 30 members from the Congress, DMK and a few other parties were in the Well for over 15 minutes with some members displaying placards, saying "Save democracy".

Opposition MPs, many first-timers among them, were heard shouting "We want justice" slogans.

Drug haul unveils unique smuggling strategy

Five arrested, heroin worth ₹600 crore seized in late-night raid by Delhi police

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

A unique modus operandi of smuggling heroin into the country has come to light following a Delhi police crackdown on an international drug syndicate operating in the Capital.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Manishi Chandra said five persons, including two Afghan nationals, have been arrested and 150 kg of Afghan heroin worth ₹600 crore in the international market recovered from their possession.

Heroin-soaked sacks

The five men were allegedly extracting the narcotic from jute sacks soaked in heroin-laden solution, dried and packed with spices to be transported to India from Afghanistan, the police said.

The accused have been identified as Shinwari Reh-



The police seized 150 kilos of Afghan heroin from the possession of the five accused.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

mat Gul (30) and Akhtar Mohammad Shinwari (31), both residents of Afghanistan's Jalalabad, Vakeel Ahmed (36) and Raees Khan (43) from Delhi and Dheeraj alias Deepak (21) from Faridabad.

A senior police officer said the syndicate was busted after a tip-off from a Special Cell officer living in disguise in Jamia Nagar a few

months ago regarding a convoy of luxury cars moving late at night in the congested area at intervals of 10-15 days.

Cars intercepted

Stepped-up surveillance revealed that the convoy was transporting drugs and a heroin processing unit was possibly being set up.

Based on a specific input

that the convoy would assemble near Ashram flyover around 12.30 a.m. on Thursday, a trap was laid and two cars intercepted with Deepak and Raees in them. Sixty kilos of heroin were recovered from a cavity between the back seat and the boot of the two cars, the police said.

Processing unit

The duo allegedly told the police about a three-storey building in Zakir Nagar where the processing unit was being set up. "A raid was conducted and the two Afghan nationals were arrested from the building," Mr. Chandra said.

He added that another consignment of 60 kg of heroin was recovered from the place. Vakeel was arrested from the spot with another 30 kg of heroin which he was loading in his car, the police said.

Pistols, cartridges, four

Bills to help transgenders, depositors introduced

Ruckus prevents debate in Lok Sabha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A new Bill that seeks to empower the transgender community and another legislation to crack down on Ponzi schemes were introduced in the Lok Sabha on Friday amid protests from Opposition members over the Karnataka political turmoil.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, introduced by Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawarchand Gehlot, provides a mechanism to empower the transgender community socially and economically, along with their educational advancement.

Though Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla called out the name of the Congress's Shashi Tharoor, he could not speak as members from his party were protesting over the Karnataka political crisis.

The Transgender Persons

Bill gives a person the right to choose to be identified as a man, woman or transgender, irrespective of sex reassignment surgery and hormonal therapy.

Clause dropped

While the legislation provides for a person to go through a district screening committee and the district magistrate to get certified as a transgender, a contentious provision that criminalised begging by transgenders has been dropped. The Transgender Bill had been introduced in the 16th Lok Sabha but had lapsed.

The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2019, will replace an ordinance. It seeks to help crack down on illicit deposit taking activities exploiting regulatory gaps and lack of strict measures to dupe poor and gullible people. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Bill.

BJP MP's proposal gets RS support

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Members of the Rajya Sabha on Friday welcomed a resolution moved by BJP member Vijay Pal Singh Tomar, seeking the setting up of a National Farmers' Commission with constitutional status. However, he withdrew it following the government's assurance that all possible steps were being taken for the farmers' welfare.

Mr. Tomar sought an increase in the funds provided to farmers under the Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme from ₹6,000 a year to ₹10,000 a year till the time farming turned remunerative. He urged the government to educate farmers on the latest technologies and ensure proper implementation of the crop insurance scheme. Member Sukhendru Sekhar Ray raised the issue of farmers' land being grabbed.

'Scheme for minorities a non-starter'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 15-point programme for minorities is a complete "non-starter", said Samajwadi Party MP Javed Ali Khan on Friday in the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Khan said the monitoring committees that had been set up from the district to Centre level had not met in the last five years.

"When I entered Rajya Sabha in 2014 I got a letter from the Minority Ministry appointing me as a member of the monitoring committee for my district. I have not been invited even once in these years for the meeting," he said during the zero hour and demanded that the programme be scrapped.

Five more hectic days for govt. in Parliament

It plans to introduce 13 Bills and take up talaq ordinance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The last five working days of the first session of the 17th Lok Sabha is going to be jam-packed with pending legislation as government plans to introduce 13 Bills and take up the triple talaq ordinance amid speculation about extending the session that ends on July 26 to August 2.

Detailing the business for next week, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs V. Muralidharan told the Rajya Sabha that the government planned to move 13 Bills in the Lok Sabha, which would go to the Upper House.

Other than these, there



The Rajya Sabha has to debate and pass the Budget.

which was cleared by the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

There is no clarity yet on whether the government will indeed extend the session. According to sources, the Opposition is not on board as the session has been on for nearly a month now.

No scrutiny: Opposition

The Opposition alleged that none of the legislation had passed the scrutiny of standing committees as the panels had not been formed yet. "Except the Motor Vehicles Bill, none of the Bills has been scrutinised," Trinamool Congress floor leader Derek O'Brien said.

SC extends tenure of Babri case judge

He sought more time to conclude trial of Masjid demolition, conspiracy cases

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Supreme Court Bench led by Justice Rohinton Nariman extended the tenure of the Special Judge conducting the joint trial of the Babri Masjid demolition and criminal conspiracy cases.

The judge, who was scheduled to retire on September 30, had sought more time to complete the trial.

On April 19, 2017, the apex court gave the judge two years to complete the trial after reviving the criminal conspiracy charge against prominent BJP and Sangh

Parivar leaders such as L.K. Advani, Murlidhar Joshi and Uma Bharti in connection with the demolition of the 16th century mosque on December 6, 1992.

The court evoked the maxim 'Let justice be done though the heavens fall' to flex its extraordinary constitutional powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to bring the cases to justice. It extolled its "power, nay, the duty to do complete justice in a case when found necessary. In the present case, crimes which shake the secular fabric of the Constitu-

tion of India have allegedly been committed almost 25 years ago" in a 40-page judgment.

Rae Bareilly case

In 2017, the Supreme Court transferred the Rae Bareilly case, languishing in a magistrate court, to the CBI court in Lucknow for trial along with the Lucknow case, which is against "lakhs of unknown kar sevaks" and deals with the actual act of demolition and violence. It was being investigated by the CBI.

The Rae Bareilly case accuses the BJP and Sangh Pa-

river leaders of having given speeches to promote enmity and threatened national integration.

With the clubbing of the cases and revival of the conspiracy charge, the accused political leaders would be tried under the composite charge sheet filed by the CBI on October 5, 1993. The Bench agreed with the chargesheet's finding that both the criminal conspiracy by the leaders and the actual demolition by kar sevaks were part of the "same transaction" and warranted a joint trial.

Lok Sabha clears Bill on NHRC constitution

Piecemeal and cosmetic, says Tharoor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Friday passed the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019 by voice vote.

The Bill expedites the process of appointment of Chairperson and members of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and provides for, among others, including the chairpersons of the National Commission for Backward Classes, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities as members of the NHRC.

In his reply in the House, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said the government was sensitive to the rights of humanity and was committed to strengthening the commission.

Promises transparency

"With this Bill, every section of society has now received representation. We are a government that stands for the human rights of victims not of terrorists and perpetrators of sexual crime. The amendment will ensure transparency in the appointment of chairman and members of the commission and will help fill all the vacancies," he said.

The debate witnessed sharp exchanges between the Opposition and Treasury benches. Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, initiating the debate, said there were several gaps in the Bill, and asked



Nityanand Rai speaking in the Lok Sabha.

the government to bring a fresh one. He said the Bill was "piecemeal and cosmetic".

Mr. Tharoor alleged that human rights were being violated in the detention tribunals in Assam over the National Register of Citizens, and said that 57 people committed suicide after failing to produce citizenship documents.

BJP MP and former Mumbai Police Commissioner Satya Pal Singh alleged that human rights activists often targeted the police and government institutions and take foreign funding. "They never speak against terrorists, they will never speak against Naxals," he said.

Mr. Singh's comments that he believed Indians were descendants of great sages (rishis), and not monkeys, drew sharp criticism.

"My ancestors are not any rishis. And I was born out of Sudras... We are here because of the fight of social justice system," DMK leader Kanimozhi said, and urged the House to uphold scientific temperament.

IN BRIEF



Radha Mohan Singh to head panel on BJP polls

NEW DELHI
BJP president Amit Shah on Friday named party veteran Radha Mohan Singh head of the BJP's organisational elections panel to put a new president in place. The elections are expected to conclude in December. Mr. Singh will be assisted by former MP Hansraj Ahir, Karnataka MLA C.T. Ravi and Lok Sabha member Vinod Sonkar, who heads the party's Scheduled Caste Morcha.

Vivek Kumar appointed Private Secretary to PM

AHMEDABAD
Vivek Kumar, currently Director of the Prime Minister's Office, was appointed Private Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday after the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, headed by Mr. Modi, cleared his new role. Mr. Kumar, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 2004 batch, replaces Sanjeev Kumar Singla, who is taking over as India's Ambassador to Israel. Mr. Singla is from the 1997 batch of the IFS.

Centre's assurance on banking sector sought

NEW DELHI
Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh on Friday sought an assurance from the Centre that public sector banks would not be privatised. During a special mention at the Parliament, Mr. Ramesh said, "I welcome the announcement of the Finance Minister on the recapitalisation of public sector banks to enable them to meet prudential norms. At the same time, I urge the government to come out with a categorical statement in Parliament that privatisation of public sector banks will not take place."

Three killed in Bihar over 'buffalo theft'

Police detain two for interrogation; kin of victims deny charge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CHAPRA

Three people were beaten to death by a mob in Saran district of Bihar on Friday, alleging that they attempted to steal a buffalo, the police said. The families of the victims denied the allegation.

Raju Nat, Bides Nat and Naushad Qureshi were attacked at Nandal Tolola of Pithauri village in the Baniapur police station limits in the early hours. Two of them were killed on the spot. Another died of injuries on the way to hospital, Superintendent of Police Har Kishore Rai said. He said two or three people have been picked up for interrogation.

Deputy SP Ajay Kumar Singh rushed to the village as a clash erupted between the alleged attackers and the family members of the deceased. The relatives said the



A cry for help: Relatives of the victims of the mob attack pleading with police officers at Chapra in Bihar on Friday to take action in the case. **• REUTERS**

victims had gone out to relieve themselves when they were beaten to death.

"We can say it with certainty that this is not one of those incidents of mob lynching. The animal allegedly being stolen was a buffa-

lo. The attackers and the attacked belonged to the same social groups," Mr. Singh said.

Police have been deployed in the village, while people from both sides were at the police station to lodge

complaints. The families of the victims "created a ruckus" at the Sadar hospital, where the bodies were taken for post-mortem, prompting police to use "mild force" to bring the situation under control, officials said.

Man dies after being thrashed in Rajasthan

JAIPUR
A 28-year-old Dalit man died after allegedly being thrashed by a mob at Phalsa village, near Bhiwadi, in Rajasthan's Alwar district following a road accident in which his motorcycle hit an elderly woman. The injured woman's relatives and villagers allegedly thrashed Harish Jatav and fled, after which he was taken to hospital. The Alwar police are investigating the case.

Mistaken for thief, Dalit man set afire in U.P.

LUCKNOW
A 28-year-old Dalit man on Friday sustained injuries after some people mistook him for a thief and allegedly set him on fire when he entered a house to avoid stray dogs in Uttar Pradesh's Barabanki district, the police said. The victim, Sujit Kumar, was rushed to a hospital, where his condition is stated to be stable, they said, adding that two of the four accused named in the FIR had been arrested. The incident took place in Raghopur village.

RTI Bill introduced amid Opposition flak

Centre to set service terms of panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Amid protests by the Opposition parties, a Bill to amend the Right to Information (RTI) Act and give the Union government the power to set the service conditions and salaries of Information Commissioners was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

The Bill was eventually introduced after the Treasury benches won a vote with 224 MPs supporting it and nine opposing.

Though the Congress opposed the introduction of the Bill with senior leader Shashi Tharoor calling it an "RTI elimination Bill", the party chose to walk out when Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi demanded a vote.

Power with Centre

The new Bill seeks to change the status of the Information Commissioners who are on a par with the Election Commissioners, and states that the term of office, salaries, allowances and other terms and conditions shall be "as prescribed by the Central government". Currently, Section 13(5) of the Act provides that these are equivalent to that of the Chief Election Commissioner for the Chief Information Commissioner and to an Election Commissioner for an Information Commissioner.

"The functions being carried out by the Election Commission and the Central and State Information Commissions are totally different. The Election Commission of India is a constitutional body... On the other hand, the Central Information Commission and State Information Commissions

are statutory bodies established under the Right to Information Act, 2005," the Bill said.

Introducing the amendment, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh said the Bill is aimed at institutionalisation and streamlining of the RTI Act. He said it strengthened the overall RTI structure, corrected anomalies and described it as an enabling legislation for administrative purposes.

"Has it ever happened that the CIC has the status of a Supreme Court judge but the judgment can be appealed in a High Court," asked the Minister as the Opposition protested.

Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the draft law was a threat to the independence of the Central Information Commission while Mr. Tharoor said this Bill was actually an "RTI elimination Bill" removing two greater powers of institutional independence.

Trinamool Congress leader Saugata Roy sought that the Bill be referred to a parliamentary standing committee. He said only 26% Bills were referred to such panels in the last Lok Sabha.



NRC: minority outfits fear large-scale exclusion

Vetting of papers nears completion in Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Minority organisations in Assam apprehend a large-scale exclusion from the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) to be published on July 31. They have attributed it to the alleged pressure on officers handling the vetting process to be strict in accepting certain documents issued in other States, including in the northeastern region.

Vetting, or careful exami-



NRC officials checking documents. **• AFP**

nation of documents, is the last and most crucial phase of the exercise. It has two stages.

The revenue circle officers take care of the first and the

Deputy Commissioners of the districts handle the second.

Expected to be completed by Saturday in some districts, vetting entails critical-

ly investigating the opinions of some 3,300 disposing officers for inclusion or exclusion of the applicants.

The draft, published in July 2018, excluded 40.07 lakh people, out of which 36.2 lakh reapplied for inclusion. Another 1.02 lakh names were removed from the NRC and put on an additional exclusion list on June 26, but they were allowed to reapply.

The fear that the applications of most of those who reapplied – primarily the Bengali-speaking Hindus and Muslims and Gurkhas – could be rejected has stemmed from the NRC auth-

ority's alleged instruction to treat certain documents with "utmost suspicion". These include birth certificates issued in States such as Nagaland and refugee registration and citizenship certificates issued in Tripura and West Bengal, besides Assam.

"Despite the Supreme Court allowing these documents... we have come to know that officials handling the vetting process have been told not to entertain them. There is a conspiracy to deliberately keep certain communities out of the NRC," said a leader of the All Assam Minority Students' Union.

Constable gunned down in J&K

He was the personal security officer of PDP leader Sajad Mufti

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR

Unknown gunmen killed the personal security officer of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Sajad Mufti outside a mosque after Friday prayers in the Bijbehara area of Anantnag.

"Policeman Farooq Ahmad Reshi sustained critical gunshot injuries. He was evacuated to hospital for medical treatment. However, he succumbed to his injuries," the police said.

Mr. Mufti was inside the

mosque when the gunmen struck outside and snatched the service rifle from the constable, police officials said.

The attack came just six days after National Conference (NC) leader Peer Tauqeer Shah's guard was killed in an attack in the Kokernag area of Anantnag.

Heavy price

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, a close relative of Mr. Mufti, said, "Such dastardly acts only add to the woes of

the masses. Either ways, Kashmiris are paying a heavy price."

Several parties have condemned the attack.

NC's view

"Another police bodyguard killed in the line of duty in south Kashmir. I condemn the attack," National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah said.

The Congress, in a statement, demanded that the authorities "ascertain the identity of the killers for sev-

ere punishment".

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee described the incident as a "mindless and shameful act on the part of killers".

"Violence in any form and manifestation is condemnable. Such incidents are inhuman and unfortunate and the perpetrators of violence have achieved nothing except for rendering irreparable loss to the victim family," Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami, Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader, said.

Assam tribal body seeks inclusion of STs on 12-member panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

An apex body of the scheduled tribes (STs) of Assam has resented the "snub" by the Centre while constituting a high-level committee on the implementation of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

This clause of the Assam Accord, signed in August 1985 to end a six-year agitation for the ejection of illegal migrants from the State, says "constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people".

The Centre had formed the 12-member committee headed by retired Gauhati High Court judge Biplab Kumar Sarma on Tuesday. None of the members belong to any of the more than 20 scheduled tribes of Assam accounting for at least 15% of the population.

"We appreciate the Centre's move, but a panel for safeguarding the interests of the indigenous people is ridiculous without the real sons of the soil – the tribal people who have been marginalised more than any other group. The Centre has insulted us," All Assam Tribal Sangha secretary-general Aditya Khakhlari said.

Mr. Khakhlari is a Bodo, the largest ST community in the Kachari group that is considered the earliest inhabitants of Assam.

The tribal body demanded the inclusion of a retired civil servant or any other capable person from among the tribes.

ELSEWHERE



Trump picks Scalia for Labour Secretary's post

WASHINGTON U.S. President Donald Trump has selected lawyer Eugene Scalia to be his new Labor Secretary.

'China home to worst human rights crisis'

WASHINGTON U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said China was home to one of the worst human rights crises of the present times.

Kosovo PM resigns after summits from war court

PRISTINA Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, a wartime commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army, resigned on Friday after being called as a suspect before a war crimes court in The Hague.

Israel spyware firm can hack data from social media: report

NSO told buyers it can scoop user data from servers of Apple, Google, Facebook

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE JERUSALEM

An Israeli spyware firm has told clients it can scoop user data from the world's top social media, the Financial Times reported on Friday.

Denies link

An NSO spokesperson, however, denied the allegation. "There is a fundamental misunderstanding of NSO, its services and technology," it said.

"NSO's products do not provide the type of collection capabilities and access to cloud applications, services, or infrastructure as listed



Cyber threat: The tool can access history of a target's location data, archived messages and photos.

and suggested in today's FT article."

In May, Facebook-owned WhatsApp said it had released an update to plug a security hole in its messaging app that allowed insertion of spyware that could be used to spy on journalists, activists and others.

It said the attack bore "all the hallmarks of a private company that works with a number of governments around the world".

It did not name a suspect but Washington-based analyst Joseph Hall, chief technologist at the Center for Democracy and Technology, said at the time that the hack appeared related to the NSO's Pegasus software.

It is normally sold to law enforcement and intelligence services.

Friday's FT report, citing documents it had viewed and descriptions of a product demonstration, said the

programme had "evolved to capture the much greater trove of information stored beyond the phone in the cloud, such as a full history of a target's location data, archived messages or photos". NSO says it does not operate the Pegasus system, only licensing it to closely vetted government users "for the sole purpose of preventing or investigating serious crime including terrorism".

The group came under the spotlight in 2016 when researchers accused it of helping spy on an activist in the UAE.

NSO is based in Herzliya, near Tel Aviv. It says it employs 600 people in Israel and around the world.

Pegasus is an invasive tool that can reportedly switch on a target's cell phone camera and microphone, and access data on it, effectively turning the phone into a pocket spy.

Tehran dismisses U.S. claim of destroying Iranian drone

Trump reiterates U.S. warship shot it down for coming too close

ASSOCIATED PRESS TEHRAN

Iran on Friday denied President Donald Trump's claim that a U.S. warship destroyed an Iranian drone near the Persian Gulf.

The Iranian military said all its drones had returned safely to their bases and denied there was any confrontation with "USS Boxer" naval vessel the previous day.

"We have not lost any drone in the Strait of Hormuz nor anywhere else," tweeted Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Mr. Trump on Friday insisted the U.S. had taken down an Iranian drone that was threatening a U.S. naval vessel in the strategic Strait of Hormuz. "No doubt about it, no - we shot it down," Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Trump on Thursday said that the vessel took action after the drone ignored commands to stay away and came too close to it.



In troubled waters: A file photo of USS Boxer.

Iran says it has seized tanker

ASSOCIATED PRESS TEHRAN

Iran said on Friday it has captured a British-flagged oil tanker, Stena Impero, in the Gulf.

The website of Iran's Revolutionary Guard said the tanker was seized for "non-compliance with international maritime laws and regulations" and was taken to an Iranian port. The report did not say which port.

Gibraltar extends Iran tanker's stay

REUTERS LONDON

Gibraltar's Supreme Court ruled on Friday that a seized Iranian tanker suspected of breaching sanctions by shipping oil to Syria can be detained for 30 more days.

The Grace 1 supertanker was intercepted by British Royal Marines and Gibraltar's police on July 4 as it was on waters claimed by Gibraltar.

Kabul University blast kills 8

Students were waiting to take an examination at the time

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KABUL

At least eight people were killed and dozens more wounded on Friday when a bomb detonated near Kabul University while students were waiting to take an exam, officials said.

The blast comes amid a wave of violence across Afghanistan, where civilians are being killed almost every day in the country's grueling conflict, now in its 18th year.

The Taliban denied any



Security personnel at the site of a bomb explosion in front of Kabul University on Friday.

involvement in Friday's blast.

Health Ministry spokesman Wahidullah Mayar said the death toll had reached

eight, with another 33 injured. "Wounded have been receiving the required medical and surgical treatment," he said on Twitter.

Indian jailed for smuggling people into U.S.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW YORK

A 51-year-old Indian-origin woman was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and ordered to forfeit more than \$7 million for her role in smuggling hundreds of undocumented people, primarily from India, into the U.S. for fees ranging from \$28,000 to \$60,000 per person.

Last year, Hema Patel pleaded guilty to smuggling of people for financial gain.

Merkel shows solidarity with lawmakers

Says Trump's tweets against Congresswomen "go against what makes America great"

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BERLIN

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Friday condemned President Donald Trump's xenophobic tweets against four minority Democratic Congresswomen, saying the U.S. leader's attacks "go against what makes America great".

"I firmly distance myself from (the attacks) and I feel solidarity towards" the women, she told journalists.

"In my view, the strength of America lies in that people from different (origins)

contributed to what makes the country great."

Mr. Trump on Sunday urged a group of four progressive Democratic congresswomen of colour - all American citizens and three of them U.S.-born - to "go back" to their countries of origin.

Despite a domestic uproar over the comments which were deemed "racist" by the House of Representatives, Mr. Trump repeatedly renewed his attack.

"If you're not happy here, you can leave... This is about



Angela Merkel

love for America, certain people hate our country," he tweeted on Tuesday, while repeating the same message to a rally on Wednesday.

International condemnation has rained down over the comments. British Prime Minister Theresa May called them "completely unacceptable". New Zealand's leader Jacinda Ardern said she "completely and utterly" disagreed with Mr. Trump.

While usually refraining from commenting on other countries' domestic politics, Ms. Merkel on Friday had markedly sharp words about Mr. Trump's latest attacks.

Questions over racism are particularly sensitive in Germany given its Nazi past.

Airspace closure costs Pak. \$50 mn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KARACHI

Pakistan suffered a whopping \$50 million loss after it closed its airspace with India for nearly five months following the Balakot air strikes in February, according to the country's Aviation Minister.

Pakistan closed its airspace on February 26 after the Indian Air Force struck a Jaish-e-Mohammed camp in Balakot in retaliation for the Pulwama attack.

Pakistan's Minister for Aviation Ghulam Sarwar Khan said that the Civil Aviation Authority suffered a loss of Rs. 8.5 billion (\$50 million), but underlined that this restriction "hit India harder than Pakistan".

DA files complaint in U.S. court against art dealer for trafficking antiquities

Subhash Kapoor and 7 others smuggled artefacts, worth about ₹988 cr., from India, Pak., Afghanistan, Nepal and other countries, say court documents

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN WASHINGTON

Eight individuals, including Subhash Kapoor who achieved notoriety on allegations of antiques trafficking, were charged in a Manhattan court last week in connection with the looting and trafficking of antiquities, a criminal complaint filed by the Manhattan District Attorney's office revealed.

Kapoor is allegedly the ring leader of a network that trafficked in thousands of antiquities from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Thailand and Cambodia, as per the complaint filed by prosecuting attorneys Matthew Bogdanos and Christopher Hirsch, both Manhattan Assistant District

Attorneys. Kapoor, 70, is currently in jail in Tamil Nadu, as he awaits trial on similar charges. He was arrested in Germany in 2011 and extradited to India thereafter.

Loot of over two decades

The idol and antiques trafficking occurred over a period of at least two decades from 1986, when Kapoor's company Art of the Past was incorporated, to October 26, 2016, when it was dissolved. The total value of the antiques stolen exceeded \$14,35,17,000 (about ₹988 crore), the court documents revealed.

In addition to Kapoor, individuals named in the complaint are Sanjeev Asokan, Dean Dayal, Ranjeet Kanwar,

Aditya Prakash, Vallabh Prakash, Richard Salmon and Neil Perry Smith.

The charges brought against these individuals include knowingly possessing stolen property in excess of \$1,000,000 with the intent to benefit a person other than the owner and to impede recovery of said property by the owner.

'False legitimacy'

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Investigations (DHS-HSI) investigation led to the seizure of over 2,600 antiques, documents and computers related to Kapoor's and his employees' business dealings for Art of the Past. The complaint said that



Subhash Kapoor, 70, is currently lodged in prison in Tamil Nadu.

Kapoor loaned antiquities to major museums and institutions, thereby creating a false veneer of legitimacy, describing the laundering process as "the creation of a

false history of an antiquity - generally through forged invoices and letters - attempts to cleanse an antiquity of its illegal past".

"There is absolutely no doubt that Subhash Kapoor and his accomplices have wreaked havoc on our historical sites and temples. They helped create an obnoxious market for antiquities and hurt us very badly," India's Consul General in New York, Sandeep Chakravorty, told The Hindu.

"The happy part of this story is the extraordinary cooperation we received from the Americans and the authorities in India and several police departments. I have worked personally with Manhattan District Attorney

Cy Vance's office and he came to the Consulate not long ago and handed over two extraordinarily valuable pieces. As a result of the cooperation, several trafficked antiquities have been returned to India and some more are in the pipeline. The indictment is a very positive step and will discourage other traffickers," Mr. Chakravorty said.

Faces 86 counts

Kapoor faces 86 counts, including grand larceny, criminal possession of stolen property and scheme to defraud in the first degree.

"The case filing by the U.S. law enforcement is a lesson for our own law enforcement on how meticulous an inves-

tigation should be conducted. Sadly, it's precisely this lack of qualified work both on the technical support from the Archaeological Survey of India and even support from a legal standpoint that has allowed looters to escape from the clutches of the law despite the thousands of idols he sold," said S. Vijay Kumar, a Singapore-based art enthusiast and co-founder of the India Pride Project.

"Further, this filing exposes the dark underbelly of the art world using Hong Kong as an important transit point and also the criminal nexus between professional restorers in London and America." (With inputs from R. Sivaraman in Chennai)

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12683

Grid for crossword puzzle 12683 with numbers 1 through 30.

- ACROSS
1 Obstacle being chic? (6)
4 Captive sailors went round in circles (8)
9 Complex vitamin bonds in lettuce (6)
10 Publicity-seeking noisemaker - one can go on and on (8)
12 Pay attention to opinion and reputation (4,4)

- (set by Scintillator)
3 Dunk in sauce that's cold (6)
5 Rub on the back softly (4)
6 Failing man penned sad notebooks (2,3,3)
7 Judges change heart, eject violently (5)
8 They can leave you in stitches by running errands (7)
11 Seat of old dynasty in Turkey (7)
14 One casts aspersions on Queen departing Great Britain and Ireland? (7)
17 Sense of endless mist, possibly? (9)
18 At home, a lungi is worn about the groin (8)
19 When baby boomers were born in, i.e., stiff conditions (7)
21 Right, ask him about a place in North India (7)
22 Cold outcome of partners securing last grade in engineering branch (6)
24 Study accounts of auto firm, Tesla (5)
26 Gape at flight turning north (4)

SUDOKU

Grid for sudoku puzzle with difficulty rating of five stars.

Solution to puzzle 12682 and Solution to yesterday's Sudoku.

FAITH

The three gunas

In chapter 14 of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna how the three gunas - sattva, rajas and tamas - keep the atma bound to samsara, said Valayapet Ramachariar in a discourse. The Lord says that what He is now going to tell Arjuna is uttamam jnanam - the best form of knowledge. Not only should we acquire knowledge of the gunas, but we must also be devoted to God to attain moksha. Those who have knowledge of the gunas and worship Him become like Him, in the sense that they are not born during creation - na upajAyante. Nor do they lose their jnana at the time of pralaya - na vyathanti. The Lord has already spoken about prakrti and purusha. So, we should view this knowledge of the gunas together with that. So, knowledge of prakrti, purusha and gunas gives liberation from births and deaths. "Such atmas become similar to Me," says the Lord. They do not attain onement with the Supreme One. The distinction between jivatmas and the Paramatma is not lost, even when the jivatmas reach Sri Vaikuntha.

Just as a seed is planted in the Earth, the Lord plants a jiva in Prakrti. Prakrti is the place where the jiva has experiences according to its karma. This applies to all, whether it is Brahma or a blade of grass. Lord Krishna is responsible for all births. In this sense He is the father, for He is the One who plants the jivas on this earth. Every birth is according to the jivatma's karma, and for each of these births Lord Krishna is the father. Sattva, rajas and tamas cannot be understood by observation. Can we tell if something is poisoned just by looking at it? Only when the effects of the poison begin to show up in a person who consumes it do we realise that the food was poisoned. In the same way, we can understand the three gunas only from the effects they manifest.

MARKET WATCH

	19-07-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,337	-1.44
US Dollar	68.80	-0.24
Gold	35,950	0.78
Brent oil	62.02	0.04

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	405.50	-6.90
Asian Paints	1369.10	-15.85
Axis Bank	729.25	-11.15
Bajaj Auto	2558.25	-72.55
Bajaj Finserv	7566.35	-281.30
Bajaj Finance	3323.10	-144.55
Bharti Airtel	339.95	-2.55
BPL	351.00	-1.75
Britannia Ind	2749.15	-71.70
Cipla	236.70	-10.30
Coal India	221.90	1.60
Dr Reddy's Lab	2613.15	-42.40
Eicher Motors	17664.00	-742.00
GAIL (India)	137.60	-4.35
Grasim Ind	879.95	-27.75
HCL Tech	1015.60	-2.95
HDPC	2303.55	-41.60
HDFC Bank	2375.65	-36.25
Hero MotoCorp	2387.40	-92.05
Hindalco	196.00	-4.55
Hind Unilever	1720.40	-18.75
Indiabulls HFL	634.95	-24.15
ICICI Bank	410.30	-8.35
IndusInd Bank	1422.15	-49.30
Bharti Infratel	259.50	-3.65
Infosys	785.40	-7.30
Indian Oil Corp	146.50	-1.10
ITC	268.30	-4.70
JSW Steel	259.05	-7.05
Kotak Bank	1498.90	-39.35
L&T	1411.55	-23.65
M&M	571.30	-26.10
Maruti Suzuki	5769.10	-113.25
NTPC	129.90	2.85
ONGC	143.90	0.50
PowerGrid Corp	205.70	0.35
Reliance Ind	1249.00	-12.85
State Bank	356.00	-7.65
Sun Pharma	421.35	-4.85
Tata Motors	154.85	-5.90
Tata Steel	458.05	-8.55
TCS	2076.95	11.00
Tech Mahindra	675.05	-12.15
Titan	1091.05	11.05
UltraTech Cement	4522.95	-78.80
UPL	643.45	-11.30
Vedanta	161.25	-3.30
Wipro	264.70	-4.40
YES Bank	83.25	-2.55
Zee Entertainment	352.95	-7.15

EXCHANGE RATES

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

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	68.60	68.92
Euro	77.10	77.46
British Pound	86.00	86.41
Japanese Yen (100)	63.73	64.03
Chinese Yuan	9.97	10.02
Swiss Franc	69.79	70.12
Singapore Dollar	50.49	50.73
Canadian Dollar	52.59	52.84
Malaysian Ringgit	16.68	16.77

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

	July 19 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses
Retail Silver (1g)	44.6 (43.8)
22 ct gold (1 g)	3363 (3332)

How villas, donations eased IL&FS' way to ratings

Forensic audit also flags possible conflict of interest via IL&FS' stake in an agency; says NBFC's officials influenced ratings

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR
MUMBAI

The forensic audit report on credit rating agencies (CRAs) of IL&FS has alleged serious lapses on the part of such agencies that had concerns related to the operations of the entity way back in 2012 but chose to downgrade ratings only in 2018.

The report, prepared by Grant Thornton, also raises questions on the protocols followed by CRAs while stating that credit rationale reports, made by the agencies, were modified by key employees of IL&FS.

The report has also stated that IL&FS Group and its senior staff provided favours to rating agency officials.

As per the report, Ramesh Bawa, former CEO, IFIN, facilitated the purchase of a vil-

la for Ambreesh Srivastava of India Ratings. Similarly, Arun Saha, former CEO, IL&FS Ltd., arranged Real Madrid football match tickets for Brickwork Ratings' D. Ravishankar. The IL&FS Group also donated ₹25 lakh to Sameeksha Trust whose managing trustee D.N. Ghosh was also the ICRA chairman.

The report cited instances where the CRAs initially decided to downgrade IL&FS but did not actually do it after meeting senior officials of IL&FS. "We identified multiple emails which indicate that credit rating agencies had raised multiple issues with regard to the operation of the IL&FS group, mainly ITNL (IL&FS Transportation Networks Limited), IFIN (IL&FS Financial Services Li-



Shades of grey: Credit rationale reports, prepared by CRAs, were modified by key staff of the beleaguered group. ■ REUTERS

mitted), and IL&FS Limited. The emails identified are over the period from 2008 to 2018," stated the report.

"... it was noted that although credit rating agencies had concerns/issues with the operations of the IL&FS

ded. The report also stated that "the credit rating rationale, which is supposed to be drafted by the rating agencies, was materially modified by or significant suggestions from the former key employees of IL&FS were incorporated to provide and support good ratings given by the CRAs." In the case of Care Ratings, the report has also alleged a possible conflict of interest as IL&FS Limited and IFIN owned about 5.9% stake in the CRA which, as per the report, could have affected the "independence of the rating agency."

The report said IL&FS officials pressurised CRAs for good ratings and even intentionally provided incorrect or incomplete information to avoid a downgrade. "We noted instances where, if the

then key employees of IL&FS did not receive the desired rating... they used to potentially pressurise CRAs to either withdraw the rating or approach other CRAs [for] the desired ratings," said the report. Queries sent to Crisil and Care Ratings remained unanswered till the time of going to press. "We are reviewing the... report; however, we cannot comment on the accuracy of the information at present," said an ICRA spokesperson.

"The report... ignores the fact that the government has charged the former management of IL&FS with engaging in... fraud and producing 'falsified, spruced up' financial statements, which all CRAs rely on to produce accurate ratings," said an India Ratings spokesperson.

Centre rejects SEBI plea on transfer of reserves

Bill says 75% surplus meant for Centre

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI

In what could spark the souring of ties between the Centre and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the Finance Ministry has refused pleas from the capital markets regulator to amend the provision that mandates that about 75% of its surplus be transferred to the Centre's coffers.

The Finance Bill 2019, passed by the Lok Sabha on Thursday, has a provision stating that the SEBI must set up a reserve fund into which 25% of its surplus is to be transferred. The remaining amount is to be transferred to the Centre.

"The [SEBI] Board shall

constitute a reserve fund and 25% of the annual surplus of the general fund in any year shall be credited to such reserve fund and such fund shall not exceed the total of annual expenditure of preceding two financial years," the Finance Bill says.

"After incurring all the expenses... and transfer to reserve fund... the surplus of the general fund shall be transferred to the consolidated fund of India," the Bill added.

This decision has been opposed by SEBI, with Chairman Ajay Tyagi meeting Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman earlier this week.

(With Ashish Rukhaiyar in Mumbai)

'India's refining capacity needs to expand'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Amid a push for electric vehicles, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday said India will continue to rely on petrol and diesel for running automobiles, and needs to expand its oil refining capacity by 80%.

"EV is a priority but the incremental requirement of fuel will have to be met through a combination of (ultra-clean) BS-VI grade petrol and diesel, CNG and biofuels alongside EVs," he said at an event here.

India would need a combination of cleaner diesel and petrol, compressed natural gas (CNG), biofuels and electric vehicles (EVs) for meeting its transportation needs, he said.

IndiGo clocks highest-ever quarterly net

Profit surges to ₹1,203 cr., aided in part by cessation of operations by Jet Airways

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

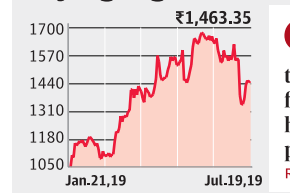
IndiGo on Friday reported its highest-ever quarterly profit of ₹1,203 crore for the quarter ended June, a 43 times jump over the same period last year.

The airline's revenue from operations stood at ₹9,420.1 crore for the quarter, an increase of 44.7% over the year-earlier period.

Its expenses rose 22% to ₹8,277 crore. Passenger ticket revenue rose 46.4% to ₹8,445 crore and ancillary revenue stood at ₹902 crore, an increase of 32.2% over the year-earlier period.

IndiGo's CEO Ronojoy Dutta attributed the strong revenue performance partially to the cessation of operations by Jet Airways, optimisation of the airline network

Flying high



This quarter saw a high percentage of bookings in the 0-15 day window with closing fares holding up and helping our revenue performance

RONOJOY DUTTA, CEO, IndiGo

Metrics	Q1 FY20	Q1 FY19	Growth (%)
Revenue from operations (₹ cr.)	9,420.1	6,511.9	44.7
Net profit (₹ cr.)	1,203.1	27.8	4,243.0
EPS (₹)	31.3	0.7	

as well as a 35% increase in revenue from cargo with the airline adding a range of products for its cargo belly.

"This quarter also saw a high percentage of bookings in the 0-15 day window with closing fares also holding up and helping our revenue per-

formance," he said in a conference call with analysts

Giving an outline of its plans for international expansion, the CEO said that it will connect Vietnam and Myanmar next quarter.

The board meeting preceding the announcement of

Sensex tanks 560 points; bank, auto stocks bleed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Extending losses for the second consecutive session, market benchmark BSE Sensex plunged 560 points on Friday after the government thwarted hopes of a tax relief for FPIs.

Led by a sell-off in auto and banking stocks, the 30-share index cracked 560.45 points or 1.44% to settle at 38,337.01. The broader NSE Nifty sank 177.65 points to 11,419.25.

On Thursday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said the proposed hike in tax on individuals earning more than ₹2 crore will not impact FPIs, provided they organise themselves as a company.

+ RIL reports slowest growth in 10 quarters, Q1 net at ₹10,104 cr.


Gross refining margins slump to \$8.1 per barrel, sluggish petrochemical business weighs on earnings; exports fall by 4.5%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) reported a 6.8% growth in its first quarter net profit to ₹10,104 crore, the slowest growth in 10 quarters, as lower gross refining margins (GRMs) and a sluggish petrochemical business continued to weigh on earnings, a trend partly offset by the growth in consumer businesses.

The energy-to-telecom conglomerate saw its GRMs (the amount a refiner earns for every barrel of crude processed) falling to \$8.1 per barrel, the lowest in the last 18 quarters, compared to GRMs of \$10.5 per barrel in the year ago period.

The profits came on the back of a 22.1% growth in revenues to ₹1,72,956 crore, with the consumer business accounting for 32% of total revenues. RIL's exports dur-

 The company continues to make major strides in its retail and digital services businesses

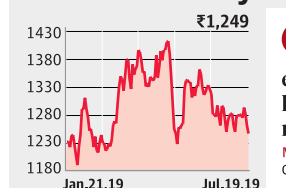
MUKESH AMBANI, Chairman, RIL

ing the quarter fell 4.5% to ₹50,158 crore.

Deep integration

RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani said, "Our first quarter earnings were strong despite a weak global macroeconomic environment and challenging hydrocarbon market conditions. Our downstream businesses delivered resilient performance in an environment of slower demand growth and incremental supplies. The performance reflects the benefits of deep refining and petrochemicals integration, chain economics and feedstock flexibility."

Slow and steady



Earnings were strong despite weak global macroeconomic environment and challenging hydrocarbon market conditions

MUKESH AMBANI, Chairman, RIL

Metrics	Q1 FY20	Q1 FY19	Growth (%)
Revenue from operations (₹ cr.)	1,72,956	1,41,699	22.1
Net profit (₹ cr.)	10,104	9,459	6.8
EPS (₹)	17.0	15.9	

RIL, which became India's most-valued firm by market value last week, saw its refining and petrochemicals businesses contributing ₹8,810 crore and ₹5,152 crore to the EBITDA respectively. Organised retail and digital services contributed ₹2,049 crore and ₹4,908 crore to the company's EBITDA respectively.

"The company continues to make major strides in its retail and digital services businesses, led by focus on growth markets with offerings in the right product segments and compelling value proposition. We are pleased with the robust growth both in revenues and operating income for Reliance Retail. Our

digital services business continues to transform the mobility market in India, while scaling newer milestones," Mr. Ambani added.

RIL had an outstanding debt of ₹2,88,243 crore as on June 30, 2019 against cash and cash equivalent of ₹1,31,710 crore.

Commenting on the results, investment adviser S.P. Tulisan told *The Hindu*, "Overall, good results with a bit of disappointment on the GRM side. The petchem EBIT margins have improved by 120 basis points. Retail and Jio have done considerably well."

RIL shares on the BSE declined 1.01% to close at ₹1,249 in a weak Mumbai market on Friday, valuing the company at ₹7,91,750.71 crore.

The results were announced after the closure of market hours.

Jio net up 45.6% to ₹891 cr.

Brookfield to invest in RIL tower arm

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Reliance Jio has reported a 45.6% increase in net profit to ₹891 crore during the June quarter.

The average revenue per user fell to ₹122 during the quarter even as the subscriber base increased to 331.3 million. In another development, Canada's Brookfield Asset Management has agreed to invest ₹25,215 crore in the units proposed to be issued by Tower Infrastructure Trust of Reliance Industries (RIL), making it among the largest foreign investment transactions in an Indian

infrastructure vehicle. In a regulatory filing, RIL said its wholly owned subsidiary Reliance Industrial Investments and Holdings Limited (RIIHL) has entered into an agreement with BIF IV Jarvis India Pte Limited, an affiliate of Brookfield Asset Management Inc. (Brookfield) for the investment.

Jio has picked Bharti Airtel (32.03 crore mobile subscribers) to become the second largest mobile operator with 32.29 crore subscribers and 27.80% market share in May, according to TRAI data.

(With PTI inputs)

RBI's Das, PSB chiefs discuss rate cut

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das met chief executives of public sector banks (PSBs) on Friday where the need for a deeper rate cut by the banks was discussed.

The meeting, ahead of the monetary policy review announcement on August 7, discussed various issues, including challenges of credit flow to the productive sectors of the economy.

"The Governor acknowledged discernible improvements in the banking sector while underscoring that several challenges still remain to be addressed, particularly with regard to the stressed asset resolution and credit flows to needy sectors," RBI said in a statement.

'Merger with Gruh will help Bandhan expand'

Bank eyes presence in south, west

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The proposed merger with Gruh Finance will enable Bandhan Bank to achieve better geographical balance, said the bank's MD and CEO Chandra Shekhar Ghosh.

Addressing a press meet, he said that the bank was trying to increase its presence in States where it was weak. This would include the southern and some western States. The Gruh portfolio will enable it to mark a strong presence in Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Mr. Ghosh said that Bandhan Bank had closed the first quarter with a 45.4% rise in post-tax profit to ₹701 crore on the back of a 36.1% rise in net interest income to ₹1,411 crore.

Total advances grew by

39.4% to ₹45,420 crore, while total deposits increased by 42.3% to ₹43,701 crore.

Bandhan Bank's net NPAs were at 0.56% against 0.58% a year ago. "The year has started on a promising note," he said, adding that he expected it to get better through the subsequent quarters.

Mr. Ghosh said the merger was now awaiting the approval of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) after getting approval from the Reserve Bank of India, the Competition Commission of India and the Securities Exchange Board of India.

"During the year, we expect the Gruh merger to get consummated, which will bring diversification and add to growth," he said.

RBL shares fall on asset quality concerns

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Private sector RBL Bank (erstwhile Ratnakar Bank) saw its share price plunging almost 14% despite reporting a 41.5% rise in its net profit for the April-June quarter. This was because of the management's guidance that asset quality may worsen significantly over the next 6-9 months and credit costs may rise.

According to Vishwvair Ahuja, MD & CEO, RBL Bank, the lender could incur additional 40 bps credit costs on account of stress in some of the corporate lenders and gross non-performing assets could go up to 2.2.5%.

"Given the difficult environment, we do expect to face some challenges on some of our exposures in the near term," he said.

CoC okays resolution on \$10-mn interim funding for Jet Airways

E-voting for first meeting ends, bidding process from today

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

A \$10-million interim fund infusion into Jet Airways and appointment of consultants – to value the company's assets and to decide the eligibility criteria for the bidders – were among the resolutions approved by the Jet Airways' Committee of Creditors in an e-voting process as per provisions.

The bidding process for Jet Airways is likely to start from Saturday with Ashish Chhawchharia, the Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) appointed for Jet Airways (India) Ltd. by the National Company Law Tribunal, planning to release advertisements inviting Expression of Interest (EOI). A person privy to the development confirmed this.



The window for e-voting under the IBC opened on Thursday and closed on Friday. In a filing with the exchanges, Jet Airways said, "We wish to inform that the e-voting for the First Meeting of Committee of Creditors of Jet Airways (India) Limited concluded at 4 pm IST on July 19, 2019, in accordance with the Regulation 26 of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy

Board of India (Insolvency Resolution for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016, wherein all the resolutions, including appointment of Interim Resolution Professional as Resolution Professional, have been approved by requisite majority."

"Further, resolution to raise interim finance and key terms for the eligibility criteria for prospective resolution applicants have been also approved by the requisite majority of voting share," it added.

This clears the way for inviting the EOI by setting the terms and conditions. Currently, only the consortium of Jet Airways employees and U.K. based Adi Partners are serious players in the fray.

Sundaram Finance to focus on core markets

Disbursements grow 9.3% to ₹17,170 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Sundaram Finance Ltd. (SFL) will focus on its core markets and segments while simultaneously exploring opportunities in newer geographies, said a top official while addressing the shareholders at the 66th annual general meeting.

During 2018-19, SFL posted a 9.3% growth in disbursement to ₹17,170 crore due to sharper focus on the rapidly growing construction equipment and light commercial vehicle segments and the deepening of its presence in new geographies and market segments, said S. Viji, chairman, SFL.

He also said that SFL was able to counter pricing pressure in the fiercely competitive vehicle finance segment

on account of the strong customer relationships that it had built and nurtured over the decades and its ability to raise resources at competitive rates.

T.T. Srinivasaraghavan, managing director, SFL, said that in recent years, the firm had ventured into new States and geographies.

Now, it would expand its presence in these markets. "Over the years, SFL has grown on the basis of prudence. Our growth this year will be cautious, without compromising on quality," he said.

On the outlook, Mr. Viji said that the uncertainties surrounding market liquidity, interest rates, global oil prices and the imminent introduction of the BS-VI emission norms rendered forecasts difficult.



Having withdrawal symptoms after the World Cup? Don't worry; the World Test Championship is here

The inaugural edition of the ICC's global tournament for cricket's longest format starts on August 1. Here's everything you need to know about it:

Just what is the World Test Championship?

It is, in essence, a World Cup for Test cricket. But unlike the World Cup, which is a standalone tournament every four years, the World Test Championship will be played over two-year cycles. The first edition starts in less than two weeks and runs till June 2021.

Why was it introduced?

The International Cricket Council (ICC) wanted to make bilateral Test cricket more engaging for the casual fan. A tournament with a global title to be won at the end of it, the ICC felt, sharpened the context of each individual series within the competition, making it more meaningful and gripping. Also, the introduction of the World Test Championship ensures every format of the game will have a 'pinpoint' tournament and a clearly identifiable world champion.

Didn't the ICC try this before?

The ICC first approved the idea for a World Test Championship in 2010. But two attempts to the stage the inaugural tournament, in 2013 and 2017, were cancelled before the current

version of the competition came into being.

How will it work?

The nine top-ranked Test teams will each play six series – three at home and three away – against mutually chosen opponents over the two-year cycle. So every side will face six of the other eight sides – it isn't a complete round-robin league. Also, each series will have between two and five Tests – so not all sides will play the same number of Tests (*See: League-stage breakdown*).

But every series is worth 120 points, irrespective of the number of Tests in it. A team can score a maximum of 720 points (six series, 120 points each) over the two-year cycle. The two sides with the most points at the end of the league will contest the final in England in June 2021.

How are the points distributed?

To ensure that the countries that play fewer Tests aren't at a disadvantage, the same 120 points will be available from each series. Also, the points will be awarded for Test results, not series results, to do away with 'dead rubbers'. So

Points System

Matches in series	Points for a win	Points for a tie	Points for a draw	Points for a loss
2	60	30	20	0
3	40	20	13.3	0
4	30	15	10	0
5	24	12	8	0

The 120 points will be split equally among all the Tests in a series – in a five-match series, 20% (or 24 points) will be available each match, as against a two-match series in which 50% (or 60 points) will be up for grabs in each match. A tie will be worth half the points for a win and a draw will earn a third of the points for a win. If that's too many fractions to keep track of, the *Points System* table above should clarify things.

Are the Ashes a part of the World Test Championship?

Absolutely. Indeed, the first Ashes Test, which begins on August 1 in Edgbaston, is the opening game of the 2019-2021 World Test Championship. August is a busy month for the tournament, with New Zealand travelling to Sri Lanka for two Tests (from August 14) and India touring West Indies for two Tests (from

August 22).

What about the other Test-playing nations?

Zimbabwe, Ireland and Afghanistan will not figure in the inaugural edition. But they are scheduled to play Tests against one another and also against some of the Championship sides – in line with the ICC's Future Tours Programme (FTP). Zimbabwe's future is uncertain, however, after its suspension by the ICC. The results of these games will have no effect on the Championship. But they will count towards the Test rankings.

So, there will be Tests outside the Championship cycle in these two years?

Yes. In addition to the non-Championship Tests described above, England tours New Zealand for two Tests this November. This series is on the FTP but

will have no bearing on the Championship. Interestingly, the two sides don't meet in the tournament cycle.

What do the critics say?

The idea of a tournament for Test cricket has been welcomed by a wide section of cricketers, fans and administrators. And the ICC has been praised for implementing it. But the format hasn't escaped censure.

The primary point of criticism is that the World Test Championship isn't an equal, even tournament – not being a full round-robin league, the countries have had a large say in the six teams they play and the two teams they don't. Some sides, which don't play

INDIA'S SCHEDULE

- August-September 2019 West Indies (away) | 2 Tests
- October 2019 South Africa (home) | 3 Tests
- November 2019 Bangladesh (home) | 2 Tests
- February 2020 New Zealand (away) | 2 Tests
- November 2020-January 2021 Australia (away) | 4 Tests
- January-March 2021 England (home) | 5 Tests

top-ranked opposition, have 'easier' schedules than others. Another issue is the home-away division: although the series are split equally, three at home and three away, some teams play more Tests at home than they do away (*See: League-*

stage breakdown). And with a home win and an away win not being weighted differently – winning overseas is generally regarded as the tougher challenge – teams which play more home Tests in the two-year cycle have an edge.

And finally, what happens if the final is tied?

If the final is tied, or drawn for that matter, the team that scored the most boundaries in the 2019 World Cup will win. No, we jest. In all seriousness, in the event of a tie or a draw, the side that finished on top of the table in the two-year league cycle will be declared the champion.

LEAGUE-STAGE BREAKDOWN

A look at how many Tests each team will play in the two-year World Championship cycle and who they will and won't face

Current ranking	Team	Tests	Home Tests	Away Tests	Will not face
1	India	18	10 (vs. SA, Ban, Eng)	8 (vs. WI, NZ, Aus)	Pak & SL
2	New Zealand	14	7 (vs. Ind, WI, Pak)	7 (vs. SL, Aus, Ban)	Eng & SA
3	South Africa	16	9 (vs. Eng, SL, Aus)	7 (vs. Ind, WI, Pak)	Ban & NZ
4	England	22	11 (vs. Aus, WI, Pak)	11 (vs. SA, SL, Ind)	Ban & NZ
5	Australia	19	9 (vs. Pak, NZ, Ind)	10 (vs. Eng, Ban, SA)	SL & WI
6	Sri Lanka	13	7 (vs. NZ, Eng, Ban)	6 (vs. Pak, SA, WI)	Aus & Ind
7	Pakistan	13	6 (vs. SL, Ban, SA)	7 (vs. Aus, Eng, NZ)	Ind & WI
8	West Indies	15	6 (vs. Ind, SA, SL)	9 (vs. Eng, NZ, Ban)	Aus & Pak
9	Bangladesh	14	7 (vs. Aus, NZ, WI)	7 (vs. Ind, Pak, SL)	Eng & SA

SOURCE: ICC

WORD PLAY

Juego de Posicion

What is it? It's a progressive football philosophy, which translates roughly to 'positional play'. A team coached in 'Juego de Posicion' uses positioning and movement to stretch an opponent's lines, creating space and time for its players between these lines.

How does it work? The aim is to move the ball up the pitch, often starting with the goalkeeper playing it out from the back. For it to work, the players need to know where to situate themselves at all times, in relation to the ball, their teammates and the opposition.



So, it's possession football? No. It isn't a slavish devotion to possession. Antonio Conte's Italy, which used 'positional play' principles, progressed the ball without constantly needing it. Possession can aid 'Juego de Posicion', but it's no more than a means to an end.

Who did it best? Johan Cruyff, Marcelo Bielsa, Ricardo La Volpe and Pep Guardiola have done the most to advance, deepen and nuance its ideas. Quique Setien was one of its boldest exponents over the last few seasons, his Real Betis a noted slayer of big clubs.

ON THE BOX



PL Asia Trophy: SAT: Third-place playoff, Newcastle v West Ham, 2.15 P.M.; Final, Wolves v Manchester City, 4.45 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & HD.

World Cup Kabaddi: SUN: 3.10 P.M.; SONY TEN 3, SIX & HD.

Indonesia Open badminton: SAT: 10.30 A.M.; STAR SPORTS 1 & HD. SUN: 12.30 P.M.; STAR SPORTS 1 & HD.

PKL: SAT: Telugu Titans v U Mumba, 7.15 P.M.; Bengaluru Bulls v Patna Pirates, 8.20 P.M.; STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & HD. SUN: Bengaluru Bulls v Gujarat Fortune Giants, 7.15 P.M.; Telugu Titans v Tamil Thalaivas, 8.20 P.M.; STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & HD.



STACKING UP



ICC Test Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	India	32	3,631	113
2	New Zealand	23	2,547	111
3	South Africa	27	2,917	108
4	England	35	3,663	105
5	Australia	27	2,640	98
6	Sri Lanka	37	3,462	94
7	Pakistan	27	2,263	84
8	West Indies	29	2,381	82
9	Bangladesh	22	1,438	65
10	Zimbabwe	9	140	16

ODI Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	England	52	6,420	123
2	India	56	6,807	122
3	New Zealand	42	4,763	113
4	Australia	49	5,470	112
5	South Africa	47	5,193	110
6	Pakistan	49	4,756	97
7	Bangladesh	43	3,873	90
8	Sri Lanka	51	4,009	79
9	West Indies	47	3,606	77
10	Afghanistan	40	2,359	59

T20I Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	Pakistan	26	7,365	283
2	England	16	4,253	266
3	South Africa	16	4,196	262
4	Australia	21	5,471	261
5	India	28	7,273	260
6	New Zealand	16	4,056	254
7	Afghanistan	16	3,849	241
8	Sri Lanka	18	4,093	227
9	West Indies	21	4,747	226
10	Bangladesh	16	3,525	220



F1 Standings

#	DRIVER	TEAM	POINTS
1	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	223
2	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	184
3	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	136
4	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari	123
5	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	120
6	Pierre Gasly	Red Bull	55
7	Carlos Sainz	McLaren	38
8	Kimi Raikkonen	Alfa Romeo	25
9	Lando Norris	McLaren	22
10	Daniel Ricciardo	Renault	22
11	Nico Hulkenberg	Renault	17
12	Kevin Magnussen	Haas	14
13	Sergio Perez	Racing Point	13
14	Daniil Kvyat	Toro Rosso	12
15	Alexander Albon	Toro Rosso	7
16	Lance Stroll	Racing Point	6
17	Romain Grosjean	Haas	2
18	Antonio Giovinazzi	Alfa Romeo	1
19	George Russell	Williams	0
20	Robert Kubica	Williams	0



Men's Top Five

#	PLAYER	EVENTS	POINTS	AVG. PTS.
1	Lewis Hamilton	44	483.91	11.00
2	Dustin Johnson	47	452.04	9.62
3	Rory McIlroy	47	401.00	8.53
4	Justin Rose	48	396.05	8.25
5	Tiger Woods	40	285.68	7.14

#	PLAYER	EVENTS	POINTS	AVG. PTS.
1	Sung Hyun Park	49	408.44	8.34
2	Jin-Young Ko	53	385.94	7.28
3	Lexi Thompson	41	280.96	6.85
4	Minjee Lee	56	366.77	6.55
5	Inbee Park	33	209.16	5.98

#	PLAYER	EVENTS	POINTS	AVG. PTS.
1	Gaganjeet Bhullar		Rank 192	
2	Shubhankar Sharma		Rank 196	

Women's Top Five

#	PLAYER	EVENTS	POINTS	AVG. PTS.
1	Aditi Ashok		Rank 130	
2	Diksha Dagar		Rank 343	



Men's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Kento Momota	24	108,318	17
2	Shi Yuqi	23	89,261	16
3	Chou Tien Chen	29	79,118	19
4	Chen Long	30	75,840	16
5	Viktor Axelsen	25	75,228	14

#	PLAYER	RANK
1	K. Srikanth	Rank 9
2	Sameer Verma	Rank 12

Top Indians

India's next best

Women's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Tai Tzu Ying	25	90,645	14
2	Nozomi Okuhara	24	88,836	19
3	Chen Yufei	21	87,165	16
4	Akane Yamaguchi	22	86,550	20
5	P.V. Sindhu	24	75,472	17

#	PLAYER	RANK
1	Saina Nehwal	Rank 8
2	Rituparna Das	Rank 65



ATP Rankings

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Novak Djokovic	32	12,415	16
2	Rafael Nadal	33	7,945	16
3	Roger Federer	37	7,460	16
4	Dominic Thiem	25	4,595	23
5	Alexander Zverev	22	4,325	24
6	Stefanos Tsitsipas	20	4,045	28
7	Kei Nishikori	29	4,040	22
8	Karen Khachanov	23	2,890	26
9	Fabio Fognini	32	2,785	24
10	Daniil Medvedev	23	2,625	26
11	Kevin Anderson	33	2,500	16
12	Juan Martin del Potro	30	2,380	15
13	Roberto Bautista Agut	31	2,320	23
14	Borna Coric	22	2,195	22
15	John Isner	34	2,040	19
16	Nikoloz Basilashvili	27	1,995	27
17	Marin Cilic	30	1,940	19
18	David Goffin	28	1,860	25
19	Gael Monfils	32	1,815	21
20	Matteo Berrettini	23	1,800	27

Top Indians

ATP

#	PLAYER	RANK
1	Prajnesh Gunneswaran	Rank 89

WTA

#	PLAYER	RANK
1	Ankita Raina	Rank 171

WTA Rankings

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Ashleigh Barty	23	6,605	16
2	Naomi Osaka	21	6,257	18
3	Karolina Pliskova	27	6,055	22
4	Simona Halep	27	5,933	17
5	Kiki Bertens	27	5,130	25
6	Petra Kvitova	29	4,785	19
7	Elina Svitolina	24	4,638	19
8	Sloane Stephens	26	3,802	21
9	Serena Williams	37	3,411	12
10	Aryna Sabalenka	21	3,365	26
11	Anastasija Sevastova	29	3,356	24
12	Belinda Bencic	22	2,963	27
13	Angelique Kerber	31	2,875	20
14	Qiang Wang	27	2,872	23
15	Johanna Konta	28	2,790	22
16	Marketa Vondrousova	20	2,762	14
17	Madison Keys	24	2,555	14
18	Caroline Wozniacki	29	2,478	18
19	Anett Kontaveit	23	2,335	23
20	Petra Martic	28	2,335	19

Superstar shake-up

A flurry of player moves in the off-season has changed the NBA's landscape

ASHWIN ACHAL

About a month ago, the Toronto Raptors captured a historic maiden NBA championship title and were given a heroes' welcome.

Even as the champagne bottles were being emptied out, and the open-bus parade made its way to downtown Toronto, the focus shifted to more pressing matters. Would Kawhi Leonard – the new poster-boy of Canadians – leave the Raptors for greener pastures? Would Kevin Durant trade his

Golden State Warriors jersey for another? Would the struggling Los Angeles Lakers be able to add an All-Star-calibre player to lighten the heavy burden placed on LeBron James?

The frenzied NBA player-trade and free-agency phase began on July 1 and the flurry of moves has ensured that many NBA teams will be unrecognisable next season. Within a span of two weeks, a number of key free agents and players have already moved teams. Here is a look at some of the biggest transactions so far:



Kawhi Leonard (Toronto Raptors to Los Angeles Clippers)

The Clippers have won the jackpot, having secured the services of the reigning NBA Finals MVP. Leonard's arrival has instantly transformed a middling side into title contenders. Many believed that Leonard would link up with LeBron and form a 'Super Team' at the Lakers, or even stay put at Toronto where he is so adored. But it was not to be. Leonard had hinted before his trade to the Raptors from the San Antonio Spurs last season that he wanted to return to his roots in Southern California. Perhaps the reason for Leonard choosing the Clippers over the Lakers is that he is keen to carve out a legacy all on his own, rather than ride on the coattails of another star. He achieved the impossible as a one-man army at Toronto, so there is no reason to believe that he cannot do it again with the Clippers. The addition of six-time All-Star Paul George, a two-way wing from Oklahoma Thunder, a fantastic supporting cast of role-players and a stable coaching environment under Doc Rivers will help Leonard's quest for another championship ring.

OTHER NOTABLE DEALS



Chris Paul
(Houston Rockets to Oklahoma Thunder)



Jimmy Butler
(Philadelphia 76ers to Miami Heat)



Al Horford
(Boston Celtics to Philadelphia 76ers)



Mike Conley
(Memphis Grizzlies to Utah Jazz)



Brandon Ingram
(LA Lakers to New Orleans Pelicans)

Russell Westbrook (Oklahoma Thunder to Houston Rockets)

Westbrook joins his old teammate James Harden, seven years after the two last played together at Oklahoma. Westbrook's trade to the Rockets was a consequence of Paul George's departure to the Clippers – it left the Thunder in no position to contend, forcing them into a rebuilding phase. So Westbrook was allowed to leave, part of an exchange deal which involved point guard Chris Paul going the other way. Westbrook, the only player apart from Harden and LeBron to have averaged at least 25 points, 8 assists and 6 rebounds in the last five years, may not, however, be a perfect fit at the Rockets. It remains to be seen whether Westbrook and Harden – both used to dominating the ball – can keep their egos aside and work together for the good of the team.

D'Angelo Russell (Brooklyn Nets to Golden State Warriors)

Golden State may have lost a big asset in Durant, but it has managed to replace him with one of the best young talents going around. Russell fits the free-flowing attacking style of the Warriors well. He will shoulder the scoring load with Stephen Curry while Klay Thompson recovers from an ACL tear. Golden State, which lost key defender Andre Iguodala in its bid to sign Russell, is significantly weaker following Durant's loss and Thompson's injury. Russell is, therefore, set to play a key role in the side's quest to contend again.

Kemba Walker (Charlotte Hornets to Boston Celtics)

The Hornets blundered by low-balling three-time All-Star Walker in free agency negotiations, leaving Walker with no choice but to walk away. Walker expected a contract close to the 'supermax', worth \$221 million, but the Hornets had little salary space to work with. The Hornets not only lost Walker, but also found a weak replacement in Terry Rozier. While Rozier – signed for a reported \$56.7 million three-year deal – is a quality player, he doesn't offer as much as Walker. Hornets team chairman Michael Jordan was known as a shrewd operator on the court, but in the boardroom with suit and tie, he has not been up to scratch.

Kevin Durant (Golden State Warriors to Brooklyn Nets)

Durant, who won two titles and dominated the scoring charts in his three-year stint with Golden State, sprung a huge surprise by signing with the unheralded Nets. Although an Achilles injury is likely to keep Durant out of action for the bulk of the 2019-20 season, Nets fans have welcomed the offensive machine with open arms. Two other All-Stars – Kyrie Irving and DeAndre Jordan – have also been brought in, giving the team a fearsome look. Cross-town rival New York Knicks – rumoured to have been the frontrunner in the fight to get Durant's signature – is now no longer the prime basketball destination in the Big Apple.



Anthony Davis (New Orleans Pelicans to Los Angeles Lakers)

The Lakers endured a tough 2018-19, failing to make the Playoffs despite having LeBron – arguably the world's best player – in their ranks. The lack of depth in the squad hurt their record, with LeBron left with too much to do on his own. It was clear that he needed another top-draw partner to share the load, and in Davis, he has got just that. Davis, who demanded a trade to the Lakers last season, finally got his way with the Pelicans' new management. A first-rate scorer, shot-blocker and all-round player, Davis should thrive in the company of LeBron, an elite playmaker who is happy to share the ball. The LeBron-Davis show will inject life into the ailing franchise.



GAME THEORY

The rate of greatness

The all-time records for the most Grand Slam singles' titles won have been in play for the last few years. Roger Federer has set the men's mark, but he is being closely pursued by Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic. In the women's game, Serena Williams is chasing Margaret Court's record, having passed Steffi Graf. Vignesh Radhakrishnan compares how the six most prolific winners of tennis Majors have progressed over time

The tables are colour-coded based on a player's results in each Grand Slam across his/her active years. ■ denotes a tournament victory; ■ denotes a loss in the final; ■ denotes a loss in the earlier rounds; ■ denotes non-participation. Also, the title wins are numbered. For instance, Novak Djokovic won three Slams, his second, third and fourth, in his seventh year – represented by three green squares – and didn't make the final in the French Open – denoted by the solitary grey. The tables on the left compare the progression of the men while the tables on the right do the same for women. SOURCE: TENNIS ABSTRACT, ITF

AGE AT FIRST SLAM: 17 YRS 7 MONTHS (IN 2005) Total Majors won/Total Majors played: 16/58 | Win rate: 27.6%

Active years →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Australian Open				1			2	5	6			8	11		15
French Open													12		
Wimbledon							3			7	9			13	16
US Open							4				10			14	
		Won/Played: 1/20		Win rate: 5%		Won/Played: 6/20		Win rate: 30%		Won/Played: 9/18		Win rate: 50%			

■ Djokovic won 7 Majors in his first 10 years – significantly fewer than Federer, who won 13 in his first 10 years, and Nadal, who won 11 in his first 10

■ But between years 11 and 15, Djokovic has won every other Major he has entered to close the gap to the other two

AGE AT FIRST SLAM: 14 YRS 5 MONTHS (IN 1983) Total Majors won/Total Majors played: 22/56 | Win rate: 39.3%

Active years →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
Australian Open				NH		2	6	9				15							
French Open					1	3					12		16	19			22		
Wimbledon						4	7			10	11	13		17	20				
US Open						5	8				14		18	21					
		NH: Not held		Won/Played: 1/16		Win rate: 6%		Won/Played: 10/19		Win rate: 53%		Won/Played: 10/16		Win rate: 63%		Won/Played: 1/5		Win rate: 20%	

■ Steffi Graf has the best year-6-to-year-15 period, winning 20 Majors of 35 entered at a rate of 57%

AGE AT FIRST SLAM: 17 YRS 0 MONTHS (IN 2003) Total won/played: 18/57 | Win rate: 31.6%

Active years →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
Australian Open							6												
French Open			1	2	3	4		7	10	11	12	14		15	17	18			
Wimbledon						5		8											
US Open							9								16				
		Won/Played: 3/15		Win rate: 20%		Won/Played: 8/18		Win rate: 44%		Won/Played: 5/17		Win rate: 29%		Won/Played: 2/7		Win rate: 29%			

■ Nadal has been the steadiest collector of Grand Slam titles of the three – he has won at least one Major in 13 of his 17 years

AGE AT FIRST SLAM: 16 YRS 3 MONTHS (IN 1998) Total won/played: 23/72 | Win rate: 31.9%

Active years →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
Australian Open						5		7		8		10	12						19		23		
French Open					2													16					
Wimbledon						3	6												20				
US Open							4				9				15	17	18						
		Won/Played: 4/17		Win rate: 24%		Won/Played: 4/15		Win rate: 27%		Won/Played: 7/17		Win rate: 41%		Won/Played: 8/17		Win rate: 47%		Win rate: 0%					

AGE AT FIRST SLAM: 17 YRS 5 MONTHS (IN 1999) Total won/played: 20/79 | Win rate: 25.3%

Active years →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
Australian Open						2		7	10					16						18	20		
French Open													14										
Wimbledon					1	3	5	8	11		15									19			
US Open						4	6	9	12	13													
		Won/Played: 1/20		Win Rate: 5%		Won/Played: 12/20		Win Rate: 60%		Won/Played: 4/20		Win Rate: 20%		Won/Played: 3/16		Win Rate: 19%		Win rate: 0%					

AGE AT FIRST SLAM: 16 YRS 6 MONTHS (IN 1959) Total won/played: 24/47 | Win rate: 51.1%

Active years →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17						
Australian Open		1	2	3	6	8	10	13			14	17	21		22								
French Open				4		9					15	18			23								
Wimbledon					7						19												
US Open						5					12				16	20							
		Won/Played: 7/14		Win rate: 50%		Won/Played: 6/14		Win rate: 43%		Won/Played: 11/16		Win rate: 69%		Win rate: 0%									

■ Serena has won 8 Majors after her 15th active year, seven more than Graf and Court did, combined, after their 15th year

■ Court has the best win rate (51%) overall, claiming 24 of 47 Majors entered (including 11 of 14 at her home Australian Open)

'We should have WC playoffs like the IPL'

Arun says the teams that finish first and second in the league phase deserve some incentive

EXCLUSIVE

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

Bharat Arun has been a quiet achiever as India's bowling coach, putting together an aggressive wicket-minded attack that can sting.

Despite India's shock exit in the ICC World Cup semifinal, chiefly caused by a batting collapse in the first 10 overs, Arun, in a conversation with *The Hindu*, felt there were many positives for Virat Kohli's men from the competition.

On India topping the 10-team group stage: We performed with consistency and aggression and were the team of the World Cup till the semifinal, topping in a gruelling format revived after 1992.

On the semifinal defeat against New Zealand: The whole team was heart-broken. Just 45 minutes of bad cricket saw us out. Also India batting on the second day hurt us. The ball always does things in the mornings in England and it moved. On day one, the pitch actually eased out and the momentum was with us.

On the format for the knockout stages: There should be some incentive for the teams that finish first and second in this long, demanding league phase. We should have playoffs like in the IPL.

On the criticism directed at M.S. Dhoni: It was very unfair. He has contributed so much to the Indian team, is a legend. In fact, on many oc-



Top bunch: B. Arun said many felt that India was the bowling side of the World Cup. ■ AP

casions, Virat Kohli bounces off ideas off Dhoni, respects him. In the semifinal, we were all confident till Dhoni was there. We could see he was lining himself up for the big hits in the final over. Sadly, the run out happened.

On the harmony within the team-management and the support staff: It's not that we agree on everything. We have our arguments and discussions on various aspects like the composition of the team and the strategy. Everyone voices his opinion. But, at the end of the day, the other person's view is respected and a collective deci-

sion is taken.

On the relationship between skipper Kohli and vice-captain Rohit Sharma: It has to be seen to be believed. Rohit often runs up to Kohli to discuss things. They get along very well, share great admiration for each other's ability. Kohli led the side well, is maturing as a captain and it's nice that he has Rohit for support. The spirit in the camp was wonderful throughout.

On the Indian bowling in the World Cup: Many felt we were the bowling side of the tournament. Jasprit Bumrah was brilliant with

his pace and variations. His hard-to-pick short-pitched deliveries skid on to the batsmen.

Bhuvneshwar [Kumar] showed character, moved the ball. Hardik Pandya was a revelation with his changes

STAT SPHERE

The Indian bowlers picked up 74 wickets in CWC2019, the fourth highest behind England (90), New Zealand (82) and Australia (76)

Bumrah led the pack with 18 wickets, followed by Shami (14)

Shami's wickets, which came

at an average of 13.78, was the best among bowlers with five wickets or more

Bumrah recorded the best economy rate (1.50) in an innings. In his six overs against the West Indies, he conceded just nine, bowled a maiden and also took two wickets

On wrist-spinners not having a great World Cup: The conditions did not really suit them, it was cold. The batsmen also played them well, a lot off the back-foot.

On the effective deliveries in the tournament: The deliveries on a good length that moved. The slower off-cutter bouncers, the quick bouncer and the cross seam deliveries.

On how the final concluded: I agree with Sachin Tendulkar that one more Super Over could have been played. Why look only at boundaries when there are so many methods to make runs? Looking at the number of wickets lost is the best way to decide.

West Indies tour: Bharat in the race for Test spot

Saha on comeback trail too; Pant likely first-choice 'keeper

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

Ten days have passed with bated anticipation after M.S. Dhoni returned to the Old Trafford dressing room falling a run out-victim to Martin Gupthil in the World Cup semifinal against New Zealand.

The cricketing fraternity, somewhat disappointed with the way he batted in the World Cup, believed that he would announce his retirement from white-ball cricket after having bid adieu from the traditional Test cricket after the second Test of the 2014 series against Australia in Melbourne.

Those who have wished Dhoni well right through his spectacular career believe that he would not allow his procrastination to be a stumbling block to the Indian team selection.

With the BCCI president and secretary rendered irrelevant by certain actions of the Committee of Administrators (CoA), only the chief selector M.S.K. Prasad can talk it over with Dhoni about his future with the national team.

Selection on Sunday

It may have already happened or will happen before the selection committee meets here on Sunday to pick the Indian team for the West Indies tour that involves three ODIs and T20Is each and two Tests, all from Aug. 3 to Sept. 3.

The committee is looking



Wicketkeeper-batsman K.S. Bharat. ■ FILE PHOTO

■ Bharat has played 11 unofficial Tests against the 'A' teams of West Indies, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and England Lions, scored 686 runs, held 41 catches and effected six stumpings

at a basket that's not really full, but offers options. One is Andhra's wicketkeeper-batsman K.S. Bharat. The rationale is that performances for India-A should be given meaning and recognition.

If there is an award for an India-A player of the year, the 25-year-old Bharat would be among the front-runners. Rishabh Pant, though, would be the first-choice wicketkeeper for the Test series. He scored an unbeaten

159 in the fourth and final Test against Australia in Sydney. In fact, Pant should figure in all three teams.

The Prasad-led selection committee has chosen Bengal's Wriddhiman Saha and Bharat in the India-A team for the three multi-day matches against the West Indies-A to be played in July-August in Antigua, Port of Spain and Tarouba.

Saha, 34, is trying to stage a comeback after an injury forced him out of the team after the first Test against South Africa at Cape Town in January 2018. Saha returned to active cricket during the IPL and, most importantly, in the Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament for Bengal.

In the last 12 months, Bharat has played 11 unofficial Tests against the 'A' teams of West Indies, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and England Lions, scored 686 runs with three centuries and two half-centuries, held 41 catches and effected six stumpings.

Impressive record

Overall he has an impressive record of 65 First Class matches, 3798 runs with eight centuries, 20 fifties and 223 catches and 27 stumping and thus has made a strong claim for a Test squad spot.

He has scored three centuries against Australia-A (106 at Alur), England Lions (142 at Wayanad) and Sri Lanka-A (117 at Hubble), and these good numbers cannot be ignored.

Stokes — New Zealander of the Year?

IANS
WELLINGTON

England all-rounder Ben Stokes, who broke millions of Kiwi hearts in the recently concluded World Cup, has been nominated for the 'New Zealander of the Year' Award.

New Zealand-born Stokes has been nominated for the award along with Black Caps captain Kane Williamson, Newstalk ZB host Simon Barnett, former league star Manu Vatavei and one of the heroes of the Christchurch mosque attacks, Abdul Aziz, reports *New Zealand Herald*.

New Zealander of the Year Awards chief judge Cameron Bennett said both Stokes and Williamson had received several nominations after the dramatic World Cup final.

"He might not have been playing for the Black Caps but, having been born in Christchurch, where his parents now live, and with Maori ancestry, there's clearly a few Kiwis about who think we can still claim him," Bennett said of Stokes.

No suspension for over-rate offences: ICC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

International cricket captains will no longer run the risk of being suspended for slow over-rates, with the ICC deciding instead to dock points and fine the entire side for any such violations, starting with the upcoming World Test Championship.

The recommendations of the ICC Cricket Committee were approved by its board in order to curb the menace of slow over-rates. The world Test championship, which runs from 2019 to 2021, gets underway with the Ashes, starting August 1. "In World Test Championship matches a team that is behind the required over rate at the end of a match will have two competition points deducted for each over it is behind," the ICC said in statement here.

Tendulkar and Donald in ICC Hall of Fame



Sachin Tendulkar. ■ FILE PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

Indian batting icon Sachin Tendulkar has been inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame alongside South African pace legend Allan Donald. Joining Tendulkar and Donald in the Hall of Fame was two-time World Cup-winning Australian woman cricketer Cathryn Fitzpatrick.

"It's a huge honour for me," Tendulkar said at the induction ceremony held here on Sunday night. The 46-year-old former right-hand batsman is regarded the greatest to have played



Allan Donald. ■ LAURENCE GRIFFITHS/GETTY IMAGES

the game along with Sir Donald Bradman and remains the top run-accumulator in both Tests and ODIs. He has 34,357 runs across formats and is the only batsman to have 100 internationals hundreds under his belt.

The 52-year-old Donald is one of the finest bowlers to have played the game and had 330 Test and 272 ODI wickets to his credit before calling it quits in 2003.

Fitzpatrick is the second highest wicket-taker of all time in women's cricket with 180 ODI scalps and 60 in Tests. As a coach, she guided the Australian women's team to three World Cup titles.

Double delight for Indian paddlers

Men's and women's teams get past England in contrasting styles

C'WEALTH TT

AMOL KARHADKAR
CUTTACK

India's men and women overcame England in contrasting finals to repeat their last year's team championship double-gold medal feat at Commonwealth Games by lifting the glittering trophies on the third day of the 21st Commonwealth table tennis championship.

While the women rolled over England 3-0 in an one-sided affair to win a historic first gold for India in the tournament's 48-year history, A. Sharath Kamal's boys made a stunning comeback to edge past England 3-2 and retained their team title.

Challenging

The men's final turned out to be far more challenging than India anticipated. Veteran Sharath suffered a shock defeat to England's promising youngster Tom Jarvis. G. Sathiyian then led 2-0 against England's top paddler Sam Walker but the latter rallied to help England double the lead, leaving the gallery spell-bound with his powerful backhand winners.

Harmeet Desai then survived tense moments before overcoming England's David McBeath to celebrate his birthday in style. An aggressive Sathiyian and a composed Sharath then saw India home by making short work of Jarvis and Walker, respectively, to help India win its third team championship.

Women, however, had it easy. After breaking eight times defending champion Singapore's run in the semifinals, Manika Batra, Archana Kamath and Madhurika Pat-



Total success: India's men's and women's teams pose with their rewards. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

kar sailed past the England girls without breaking sweat. The results: **Team Championship: Men: Final: India bt England 3-2** (A. Sharath Kamal lost to Thomas Jarvis 7-11, 8-11, 4-11; G. Sathiyian lost to Samuel Walker 11-5, 11-9, 4-11, 8-11, 8-11; Harmeet Desai bt David McBeath 4-11, 11-5, 8-11, 11-8, 11-8; Sathiyian bt Jarvis 11-2, 6-11, 11-4, 11-4; Sharath bt Walker 15-13, 12-10, 11-6).

Semifinals: India bt Singapore 3-0 (Sharath bt Pang Yu En Koen 11-5, 8-11, 11-8, 11-5; Sathiyian bt Chew Zheyu Clarence 11-6, 11-8, 13-11; Desai bt Beh

Kun Ting 11-9, 10-12, 11-9, 11-8); **England bt Malaysia 3-1** (Walker bt Wong Qi Shen 11-5, 11-2, 9-11, 11-6; Jarvis bt Ashraf Muhammad Rizal 12-14, 11-7, 11-6, 11-7; McBeath lost to Leong Chee Feng 11-9, 4-11, 11-5, 10-12, 7-11; Walker bt Rizal 8-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-2).

Final standings: India, England, Singapore, Malaysia, Nigeria, Wales, Australia, Sri Lanka, Cyprus, South Africa, Bangladesh, Scotland.

Women: Final: India bt England 3-0 (Archana Kamath bt Ho Tin Tin 8-11, 13-11, 11-9, 11-9; Manika Kamath bt Denise Payet 11-6, 11-8, 13-11; Desai bt Beh

Manika pulls out of individual events

AMOL KARHADKAR
CUTTACK

Despite leading India's women paddlers to a historic first gold medal, Manika Batra had mixed emotions while cheering her male counterparts in their final versus England, here.

After all, the bug has forced her to withdraw from all the individual

events.

"I am very sad because I really wanted to play and win but I didn't know that this (infection) will happen. But it's okay as I have to take care of my health as well," said Batra.

"I pushed myself in the teams (championship) and we won, so I am happy after winning a gold medal in teams."

11-4, 11-3; Madhurika Patkar bt Emily Bolton 11-9, 11-7, 11-6). **Semifinals: India bt Singapore 3-0** (Batra bt Wong Xin Ru 7-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-3, 13-11; Kamath bt Goi Rui Xuan 7-11, 11-2, 11-8, 11-5; Patkar bt Lim Eunice oe 11-6, 11-7, 11-7); **England bt Nigeria 3-0** (Ho bt Cecilia Akpan 11-9, 11-3, 11-4; Payet bt Offiong Edem 10-12, 11-8, 9-11, 11-6; Bolton bt Ajoke Ojomu 7-11, 11-7, 2-11, 11-5, 11-9).

Final standings: India, England, Singapore, Malaysia, Nigeria, Wales, Australia, Sri Lanka, Cyprus, South Africa, Bangladesh, Scotland.

Women: Final: India bt England 3-0 (Archana Kamath bt Ho Tin Tin 8-11, 13-11, 11-9, 11-9; Manika Kamath bt Denise Payet 11-6,

11-4, 11-3; Madhurika Patkar bt Emily Bolton 11-9, 11-7, 11-6).

Semifinals: India bt Singapore 3-0 (Batra bt Wong Xin Ru 7-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-3, 13-11; Kamath bt Goi Rui Xuan 7-11, 11-2, 11-8, 11-5; Patkar bt Lim Eunice oe 11-6, 11-7, 11-7); **England bt Nigeria 3-0** (Ho bt Cecilia Akpan 11-9, 11-3, 11-4; Payet bt Offiong Edem 10-12, 11-8, 9-11, 11-6; Bolton bt Ajoke Ojomu 7-11, 11-7, 2-11, 11-5, 11-9).

Final standings: India, England, Singapore, Nigeria, Malaysia, Australia, Wales, Sri Lanka, Cyprus, Scotland, Bangladesh, South Africa.

Lowry surges with a sizzling outward nine, Holmes consolidates

Shubhankar in line to make cut; no such luck for Woods, Mickelson; Frittelli's charge tempered by a double-bogey at the 17th



REUTERS
PORTRUSH (NORTHERN IRELAND)

Ireland's Shane Lowry proved master of the Dunluce links for the second successive day to move into a share of the halfway lead with American J.B. Holmes at the British Open on Friday.

A flurry of birdies early in a sizzling outward nine of 31 looked like giving the 32-year-old from across the border the outright lead but a bogey at the 18th left him on eight under after successive rounds of 67.

Holmes, the overnight leader, had the better of the

weather earlier in the day and consolidated his challenge with a 68.

They will play together in the last group on Saturday in what promises to be a battle of the beards.

Tough terrain

Once again the par-71 layout on the Antrim coast proved tough terrain for the world's best golfers, although there were some low numbers on a congested leaderboard.

English duo Tommy Fleetwood and Lee Westwood, both looking for their first Majors, made hay with rounds of 68 moving them to seven under while South African Justin Harding's posted the lowest round of the day, six birdies and an eagle helping him to a six-under 65 to move three off the lead.

Alongside Harding are Australian Cameron Smith,



Digging deep: Shane Lowry's push for sole lead suffered due to a bogey at the 18th that put him eight under after successive rounds of 67. ■ STUART FRANKLIN/GETTY IMAGES

who scored a 66, and England's Justin Rose after a 67. South Africa's Dylan Frittelli, who only secured his place last week, was also on six under after his charge

was tempered by a double-bogey at the 17th. Shubhankar Sharma has

assured himself of the weekend action after signing for a one-over-par 72 in the second round. It will be the second time he would make the cut in as many starts at the Open. With 70-72, he was even par for 36 holes and T-51.

I'm disappointed with the bogey but I'm where I want to be and happy. I knew the rain was coming so I wanted to get a fast start. I'm very, very excited for tomorrow

SHANE LOWRY

assured himself of the weekend action after signing for a one-over-par 72 in the second round. It will be the second time he would make the cut in as many starts at the Open. With 70-72, he was even par for 36 holes and T-51.

Well-placed

Holmes left several other bigger-name Americans in the shade again although Brooks Koepka, the world number one, and 2017 winner Jordan

Spithet, are well-placed to challenge on five under. There will be no trademark Tiger Woods charge on Saturday, however, after he missed the cut.

Woods looked more like a 15-time Major champion on Friday after his opening-round 78 but his one-under 70 was in vain.

Phil Mickelson was also cut, meaning it is the first time in the 83 Majors in which the two American heavyweights have both appeared that neither survived for the weekend.

Late in the day all eyes turned to local favourite Rory McIlroy who produced a thrilling counter-attack in a bid to make the cut after his nightmare 79 on Thursday.

After 12 holes McIlroy was five under for his round and just two shots off the one-over cut mark.

TV PICKS

Commonwealth TT: DD Sports, 10 a.m.
Indonesia Open badminton: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 10.30 a.m.
The Open golf: DSport, 3.30 p.m.
PKL: Star Sports 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF

North Korea wins Intercontinental Cup

North Korea triumphed in the second edition of the Intercontinental Cup football tournament, beating Tajikistan by a solitary goal in the final here on Friday. Pak Hyon Il scored the match-winner for North Korea in the 71st minute after coming on as a substitute. The champion was richer by \$50,000 while the runner-up received \$25,000.

Rutuja & Strakhova duo bow out

Third-seeded Rutuja Bhosale and Valerija Strakhova of Ukraine were outplayed 6-1, 6-0 by Anastasia Detiuc and Johana Markova of the Czech Republic in the doubles quarterfinals of the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament here.

Sindhu makes last four

Gets the better of Okuhara in straight games

BADMINTON

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAKARTA

P.V. Sindhu stormed into the semifinals of the Indonesia Open badminton tournament after beating Japan's Nozomi Okuhara in straight games on Friday.

Sindhu, seeded fifth, hardly had to break a sweat as she posted a comfortable 21-14, 21-7 win over the third-seeded Japanese shuttler.

The Indian will face second-seeded Chen Yu Fei of China in the last-four clash of the BWF World Tour Super 1000 tournament.

Meanwhile in Vladivostok, Meghana Jakkampudi progressed to the semifinals of both mixed and the women's doubles at the Russian Open BWF Tour Super 100 tournament.

However, it was curtains for Rituparna Das and Siril Verma in singles quarterfinals.

Rituparna lost 21-10, 16-21, 21-16 to top seed Kirsty Gil-



Smooth sailing: P.V. Sindhu had it easy against Nozomi Okuhara in the quarterfinals. *AP

mour of Scotland, while Siril went down 21-11, 29-27 to Ihsan Maulana Mustofa of Indonesia.

The results (quarterfinals):

Indonesia Open: Women's singles: P.V. Sindhu bt Nozomi Okuhara (Jpn) 21-14, 21-7.

Russian Open: Men's singles: Ihsan Maulana Mustofa (Ina) bt Siril Verma 21-11, 29-27.

Women's singles: Kirsty Gil-mour (Sco) bt Rituparna Das 21-10, 16-21, 21-16.

Doubles: Meghana Jakkampudi & Poorvisha S. Ram bt Viktoriya Kozyreva & Mariia Sukhova (Rus) 21-19, 21-11; Erina Honda & Nozomi Shimizu (Jpn) bt Aparna Balan & Prajakta Sawant 21-17, 21-11

Mixed doubles: Meghana & Dhruv Kapila bt Maksim Makalov & Ekaterina Riazantseva (Rus) 21-3, 21-12; Evgenij Dremmin & Evgenia Dimova (Rus) bt Krishna Prasad Garaga & Poorvisha 21-11, 21-14.

Prithu Gupta is India's 64th GM

'The journey has just begun. I know, I have a long way to go'

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Less than six years after taking to chess, Prithu Gupta became the country's 64th Grandmaster on Thursday night.

The city-lad, aged 15 years, four months and 10 days, met all technical stipulations needed to be a GM following the fourth round of the Portugese League.

Earlier this month, in the Porticcio Open, Prithu made his third and final GM norm to go with the ones made in the 2018 Gibraltar Masters and the 2018 Biel Masters. On Friday, he touched the rating stipulation of 2500 points by beating Germany's Lev Yankelevich.

Pat from Anand

Reacting to Prithu's feat, country's first GM and five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand tweeted: "And we are complete. 64th GM!! Welcome our newest GM Prithu Gupta!"

Prithu responded by tweeting: "Thank you Anand



Prithu Gupta. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sir... You have always been the biggest inspiration."

A milestone

A boy of very few words, Prithu's initial reaction on reaching the landmark was, "Call it a milestone in my journey. Nothing more. The journey has just begun. I know, I have a long way to go."

A Class X student of Modern School (Vasant Vihar), Prithu made ripples early last year when he became an International Master before

SPORTS BUREAU

SUHL (GERMANY)
■ A Class X student of Modern School (Vasant Vihar), Prithu made ripples early last year when he became an International Master before his 14th birthday

his 14th birthday.

His incredible rise can be gauged from the fact that he gained a whopping 1300 rating points in quick time – from being 1187 in October 2013 to July this year.

Unlike children of his age, Prithu is very selective about the events he participates in. Last year, he played in only six tournaments and collected two GM norms besides taking his rating from 2373 to 2462!

According to his coach, International Master Roktim Bandyopadhyay, "Prithu has a good positional understanding and plays imaginatively. He loves to work hard.

Now that the GM title is out of the way, I expect him to play freely and scale greater heights."

Aishwarya takes gold with record

Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar clinched the gold with a junior world record 459.3 score in the final in the rifle 3-position event at the Junior World Cup on Friday. The earlier record of 458.7 was shot by Filip Nepejchal of the Czech Republic in the Beijing World Cup in April.

After qualifying in the fourth place with a total of 1171, Tomar beat Zalan Pekler of Hungary by 4.5 points for the gold. The qualification topper Zhang Changhong of China, who had shot 1181, was pushed to the bronze medal.

India was on top of the table with 10 gold, nine silver and four bronze. **The results: Junior men: 50m rifle 3-position:** 1. Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar 459.3 WRJ (1171); 2. Zalan Pekler (Hun) 454.8 (1170); 3. Zhang Changhong (Chn) 442.8 (1181); 18. Harshraj Singh Gohil 1163. **Team:** 1. China 3502; 2. Norway 3490; 3. Russia 3488; 6. India 3479.

Gift Of Grace may repeat

BENGALURU: Gift Of Grace, who is in fine nick, may score an encore in the Nawab M. Arshad Ali Khan Memorial Cup (1,400m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Saturday (July 20). False rails (width about 4m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

DELHI CUP (DIV. II), (1,400m), rated 00 to 20, 2-00 pm: 1. Savisa (12) S. Shareef 60, 2. Above The Rest (2) R. Manish 58.5, 3. Jersey Storm (1) Chetan K 58, 4. Odyssey (8) M. Kumar 57.5, 5. Winx (9) T.S. Jodha 57, 6. Duty Call (6) B. Harish 56, 7. Parity (10) Antony 56, 8. Aafrikaan (5) Darshan 54.5, 9. String Of Pearls (4) A. Merchant 54.5, 10. Turf Prospector (1) Md. Asif Khan 54.5, 11. Romantic Haven (7) Nazerul 53.5 and 12. South Bell (3) Irvan 53.

1. ABOVE THE REST, 2. PURITY, 3. JERSEY STORM

MYSORE CUP (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2-30: 1. Desert Combat (5) M. Naveen 56, 2. Mzilikazi (8) Akshay K 56, 3. Awesome Girl (3) A. Merchant 54.5, 4. Cipriani (6) Ranjeet Singh 54.5, 5. Donna Bella (9) P.S. Chouhan 54.5, 6. Mrs Thatcher (1) Sandesh 54.5, 7. Queen Regnant (4) Bhawani Singh 54.5, 8. Radiant Beauty (7) Suraj 54.5 and 9. Skiatios (2) Zervan 54.5.

1. MZILIKAZI, 2. RADIANT BEAUTY, 3. DONNA BELLA

DELHI CUP (DIV. I), (1,400m), rated 00 to 20, 3-00: 1. Chinese Princess (9) Ranjeet Singh 60, 2. Three Wishes (6) Sandesh 60, 3. All By Myself (5) S. Shareef 59.5, 4. Honey Trap (3) John 59, 5. Show Girl (2) P.S. Chouhan 59, 6. Lovemyboss (7) Akshay 58, 7. Ocean Park (1) T.S. Jodha 57.5, 8. Aksef (1) Md. Asif Khan 57, 9. Great Celebration (8) Akshay K 57, 10. Hunters Moon (10) Sai Vamshi 57, 11. Natalie (4) M. Naveen 57 and 12. Irish Prince (12) M. Prabhakaran 56.

1. SHOW GIRL, 2. THREE WISHES, 3. HONEY TRAP

K.N. GURUSWAMY MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,600m), rated 60 & above, 3-30: 1. Ultimate Warrior (6) Chetan Gowda 64, 2. Buscadero (5) Sai Vamshi 58, 3. Magistero (1) Darshan 58, 4. Psychic Force (3) Zervan 57.5, 5. Shesmascript (4) P.S. Chouhan 57, 6. Corybantic (10) Arshad 55, 7. Punjabi Girl (12) Akshay K 55, 8. New Creation (2) Sandesh 54, 9. Dr Logan (11) S. Shareef 53.5, 10. Mr Handsome (8) S.A. Amit 52.5, 11. Blue Moon (7) T.S. Jodha 51 and 12. Ambrosio (9) Trevor 50.

1. AMBROSIO, 2. PUNJABI GIRL, 3. NEW CREATION

N R I Power wins

HYDERABAD: N R I Power (Kuldeep Singh up) won the first division of S. Malakonda Reddy Memorial Cup, the feature event of the races held here on Friday (July 19). The winner is owned by Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male and trained by Robin Reddy.

NIZAMABAD PLATE (1,100m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms): SOVET PRIDE (Trevor) 1, Southern Lady (Ashhad Asbar) 2, Excelsior (Suraj Narredu) 3 and Safra (N. Rawal) 4. 5. shd and nose. Im, 5.98s. ₹17 (w), 7, 5 and 7 (p), SHP: 17, FP: 42, Q: 14, Tla: 131. Favourite: Southern Lady. Owners: M/s. Y. Damodar & Ashok Kumar Gupta. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

NELSTON PLATE (DIV. I), (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): PLATINUM CLAASZ (Afroz Khan) 1, Humaaghar (G. Naresht) 2, New Comer (Jitendra Singh) 3 and Thundering (Trevor) 4. Not run: Joy Of Giving, 1-1/4, 1/2 and nk. Im, 13.85s. ₹24 (w), 8, 7 and 13 (p), SHP: 17, FP: 145, Q: 60, Tla: 1,394. Favourite: Thundering. Owner: Mr. Syed Abdul Subhan. Trainer: M.F. Ali Khan.

TINTINNABULATION PLATE (1,600m), 3-y-o & over, (Cat. II), (Terms): WAVE RIDER (Akshay Kumar) 1, Rikki Tikki Tavi (Suraj Narredu) 2, Doroteo (Koushik) 3 and Nimble Mind (Nakhat Singh) 4. 1/2, 2-1/2 and 2. Im, 39.85s. ₹15 (w), 5 and 6 (p), SHP: 19, FP: 30, Q: 7, Tla: 156. Favourite: Rikkii Tikki Tavi. Owners: Dr. Peddi Reddy Prabhakar Reddy, M/s. P. Prabhakar Reddy & Rama Seshu Eyunnai. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

NAWAB MEHDI JUNG BAHADUR MEMORIAL CUP (1,200m), 3-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): MON GENERAL (Gaurav Singh) 1, Victory Parade (Trevor) 2, Liberate (Suraj Narredu) 3 and Kanyar (Santosh Raj) 4. 1/4, 3/4 and 2-1/2. Im, 12.02. ₹26 (w), 8, 6 and 7 (p), SHP: 19, FP: 76, Q: 21, Tla: 260. Favourite: Victory Parade. Owner: Mr. S.R. Sanas.

3. NEW CREATION

NAWAB M. ARSHAD ALI KHAN MEMORIAL CUP (1,400m), 3-y-o only, (Terms), 4-00: 1. Breaking Bounds (1) Trevor 57, 2. Roma Victor (5) Akshay K 55, 3. Mystic Bay (4) Yash 52, 4. Star Cavalry (8) Darshan 52, 5. Victorious Sermon (3) Sandesh 52, 6. Abira (6) Neeraj 50.5, 7. Gift Of Grace (2) Zervan 50.5 and 8. Palm Reader (7) P.S. Chouhan 50.5.

1. GIFT OF GRACE, 2. ABIRA, 3. MYSTIC BAY

CHENNAI CUP (DIV. I), (1,100m), rated 15 to 35, 4-y-o & over, 4-30: 1. Ultimate Speed (10) Darshan 60, 2. Charmaine (7) Trevor 59, 3. Mischief Flyer (3) A. Ramu 58.5, 4. Papadokia (11) A. Imran 58.5, 5. Flicka (2) Ashok Kumar 58, 6. Princess Holly (6) Rajesh K 57, 7. Simply Magical (5) Yash 57, 8. Lagopus (4) Tauseef 56.5, 9. Kasauli (8) Arshad 56, 10. Bold Runner (9) Akshay K 54.5 and 11. Perfect King (1) Irvan 54.

1. BOLD RUNNER, 2. CHARMAINE, 3. MISCHIEF FLYER

ANGEL DUST TROPHY (1,200m), rated 30 to 50, 5-00: 1. Tzar (3) Rayan 60, 2. Venus Bay (7) Zervan 60, 3. Mega Ikon (8) A. Imran 58.5, 4. Spanish Beauty (10) Sandesh 58, 5. Animal Queen (5) Suraj 57.5, 6. Commodus (4) Trevor 55, 7. Scarlet Princess (6) M. Prabhakaran 55, 8. Bernardini (12) Akshay K 54.5, 9. Desert Rose (1) Arshad 54.5, 10. Half-sies (11) S.A. Amit 54.5, 11. No Opinion (2) R. Manish 54.5 and 12. Tonys Pet (9) P.S. Chouhan 53.5.

1. COMMODUS, 2. BERNARDINI, 3. ANIMAL QUEEN

CHENNAI CUP (DIV. II), (1,100m), rated 15 to 35, 4-y-o & over, 5-30: 1. Midnight Sky (6) Adarsh 60, 2. Perfectgoldenera (11) M. Kumar 59.5, 3. Air Of Distinction (5) Bhawani Singh 57, 4. Galvarino (3) Akshay K 56.5, 5. Grecian Light (12) S. Shareef 56.5, 6. Princess Pride (9) Shobhan 56.5, 7. Winning Force (1) Suraj 56, 8. Colonel Harty (8) Rajesh K 55, 9. Sky-bound (10) Vaibhav 54.5, 10. Admirable (7) Irvan 54, 11. Mayurana (2) Md. Asif Khan 53.5 and 12. Commandpost (4) R. Manish 53.5.

1. GALVARINO, 2. WINNING FORCE, 3. PRINCESS PRIDE

Day's best: GIFT OF GRACE
Double: MZILIKAZI – COMMODUS
Jkt: 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8; Tr (i): 3, 4 and 5; (ii): 6, 7 and 8.

Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

S. MALAKONDA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. I), (1,400m), 4-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): N R I POWER (Kuldeep Singh) 1, Nayadeep (P. Sai Kumar) 2, Miss Lily (Trevor) 3 and One One One (Abhay Singh) 4. 1-1/4, 1-1/4 and 1-3/4. Im, 25.85s. ₹35 (w), 8, 10 and 5 (p), SHP: 34, FP: 352, Q: 164, Tla: 627. Favourite: Miss Lily. Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: Robin Reddy.

NELSTON PLATE (DIV. II), (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): MARINA DEL REY (Umesh) 1, Proud Warrior (P. Sai Kumar) 2, Actually Surya Prakash) 3 and Freedom Fire (B. Nikhil) 4. 5-1/4, 3-1/2 and shd. Im, 12.67s. ₹15 (w), 6, 12 and 8 (p), SHP: 37, FP: 190, Q: 117, Tla: 570. Favourite: Takisha. Owners: M/s. Gautam Chand Jain, Prakash Chand Jain, Rahul Jain & Pratik Jain. Trainer: L. D'Silva.

S. MALAKONDA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. II), (1,400m), 4-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): ACE ACE ACE (Koushik) 1, Siyabonga (Akshay Kumar) 2, Golden Fortune (Ajeeth Kumar) 3 and Dunkirk (Afroz Khan) 4. Shd, 2 and 3/4. Im, 25.63s. ₹18 (w), 6, 6 and 8 (p), SHP: 16, FP: 38, Q: 12, Tla: 131. Favourite: Siyabonga. Owner: Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

WANDERING STAR PLATE (1,400m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III): DELMONICO (Ajeeth Kumar) 1, N R I Flame (Kuldeep Singh) 2, Symbol Of Star's (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Brave Warrior (Koushik) 4. Hd, 1-1/2 and nk. Im, 28.22s. ₹150 (w), 17, 10 and 7 (p), SHP: 20, FP: 1,911, Q: 804, Tla: 6,315. Favourite: Symbol of Star's. Owner and trainer: Mr. M.P. Ananta Vatsalya. Jackpots: ₹22,936 (three tkts.), Runner-up: 1,637 (175 tkts.), Mini Jackpots: 40,332 (three tkts.), Tr. (i): 532 (82 tkts.), (ii): 867 (46 tkts.), (iii): 3,292 (37 tkts.).



MALAVIKA
BALASUBRAMANIAN

Laila Tyabji

"Marriage is not an insurance for old age. I think this is a very wrong idea inculcated into women, till this date. There are several women - not just me - who are quite happy living single even in their old age."



Kalpana Sharma

"Writing about being single is not an easy subject, even if you are a writer. It is a very deeply personal decision, which not only involves you, but your family and surroundings as well. It practically lays you open to the public."

SOLO advantage

Essays from 13 unmarried women on dealing with the pressure to get married, and why they opted to stay single

In a heartwarming essay from the upcoming book, *Single by Choice*, sports journalist Sharda Ugra recounts a scene from more than 10 years ago. A male friend, upon walking into her Delhi apartment (where she lived alone), asked astonished, "Who did all this?"

"What provoked this question perhaps, was its sheer normalcy," Ugra writes. And possibly the assumption that unmarried women lead dark, forlorn, depressing lives. But the writer goes on to remind us that singlehood is, in fact, a normal experience.

It is no wonder then that Ugra's essay sparked a conversation on social media - one which continues to resonate with many single women who ward off questions about their solitude and single state.

Published by Women Unlimited and edited by journalist Kalpana Sharma, *Single by Choice* is a compilation of 13 essays penned by unmarried women who are quite com-

fortable - and more importantly, content - in their singlehood. Other contributors include craft activist Laila Tyabji, scientist Vineeta Bal and Tamil Dalit writer Bama.

Peppered with humour and sober revelations in equal measure, the book addresses the liberation of being single, as well as the challenges of societal pressure, and loneliness. "The idea was to bring together voices across age groups, and not just older women who had

decided to stay unmarried," says Sharma, who also authored the introductory essay.

Good the way it is
For craft activist Laila Tyabji, singlehood was more a natural process than a conscious decision, despite the 15 proposals that came her way.

Between her busy work schedule, social commitments and the added bonus of no familial pressure, life continued without the need for marriage, she says. "One day,

I suddenly woke up and realised that my life was so crowded and busy, where would I be fitting a husband and family into it? Life was good the way it was," the 72-year-old says.

However, she acknowledges that she had it easy, thanks to her unconventional family who did not pressure her into marriage. With two aunts who were unmarried themselves, it did not come as a surprise to her parents when their motorcycle-riding daughter decided to go down the same road.

In her essay, Delhi-based Tyabji speaks candidly about the bouts of insecurity and loneliness she experienced in her 30s, particularly when her friends got busy with parenting. But she's over that now. "Of course, from time to time you will feel a vacuum somewhere," she admits. "But you fill it with the resources you have, in the best way you can."

But even as more of us ditch the image of the 'old, moody spinster', Tyabji believes that we have a long way to go. "I think it's a bit facile to say that just because societies in Delhi and Mumbai are more open to the idea today, everything across the country is hunky-dory. Women in rural India still face a lot of challenges and the situation is completely different," she says.

But that hasn't stopped some of these women from looking "almost wistfully" at her when she visits villages in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Karnataka, on work. "They look at me and say, 'you're so lucky not to have to deal with an evil mother-in-law,'" she laughs.

Living single in rural India

Tamil writer Bama's decision to stay unmarried was conscious. In her early 20s, she decided that serving her community and becoming an activist were priorities that would only get diluted with marriage. "I value my free-

dom too much, and I cannot live selfishly, dedicating my life to one man and my children," explains the author, whose first novel, *Karukku* (1992), established her as a Dalit feminist. "By staying unmarried, I have the independence to dedicate my time, resources and finances to a cause that is dear to me."

The decision came with its challenges. As a young, unmarried woman, she struggled to find a job in her village of Pudhupattii (where she still lives), and then was refused accommodation. "I even lied about being married, and said that my husband worked elsewhere," she admits. She also had to contend with loneliness, especially during bouts of illness that included a stint of pneumonia and later, a hysterectomy surgery.

Tackling pronounced unkindness in rural communities was another challenge. "In a village, people are more direct. They will ask you to your face, 'Why are you not married? What is wrong with you?' And they treat you like a stranger person. But in a city, almost everybody is a stranger to the other in a crowd."

The 60-year-old has learnt to laugh off the biting comments and snarky remarks. "After a point, I began ignoring their taunts. It wasn't easy, but they too realised that nothing is going to shake me."

Single by Choice, published by *Women Unlimited*, will be available for ₹275 starting July 30



Bama

"Women - like men - are precious human beings. A woman should be allowed to explore her potential and the possibilities with her life. That is what will help bring her inner peace."

PEOPLE

Back with the band

Akhil Sachdeva is back in the city, to perform with his old group Nasha



Singer-songwriter-music composer Akhil Sachdeva sprang to fame with his hit song *Humsafar* in the film *Badrinath Ki Dulhania* in 2017. Since then, he's done concerts, an album and worked for a movie, until *Kabir Singh*, hit the screens this year. Now, the Delhi boy is back in the city with his Sufi rock band, *Nasha*, ready for his five-city Tera Ban Jaunga India Tour. Edited excerpts from a short chat.

When did you know you wanted to compose music and sing for a career?

I didn't realise anything or choose anything, it just happened to me. I participated in the All India Level Competition by TATA Indicom in 2010. I was a solo artist and I won that competition. I found my bandmates who are playing with me right now, there. They used to play in a different brand then - Nasha happened from there. And *Nasha* was the first song I wrote in my life. I feel was destined to become a musician. It's the only thing gives me happiness and decided I should do this all my life.

Which do you prefer: singing live with Nasha or playback singing in Bollywood?

Both have their own charm; the more I sing as a playback singer, the more it will help my band to more shows. I'm a stage artist, a performer. I'd say stage is the biggest high ever.

Do you keep in touch with music artists in Delhi? Any plan to collaborate with them?

I'm open to collaborating with good artists. A lot of people started at the same time that I started my music career. I was the first ever guy in India to start a Sufi Rock band. I love collaborations, especially when there are a lot of people involved. I'm vocal about how independent bands shouldn't be in competition but should collaborate to put the best music forward.

Have you got a chance to practise with Nasha?
We will practise on 19th July for the show as half of the band is in Mumbai and half in Delhi. It's important as it is a part of Tera Ban Jaunga India Tour, and the first one is going to happen in Delhi today.

At Imperfecto Ruin Pub, Ansal Plaza; 9 p.m. onwards; ₹1,000 onward; tickets at BookMyShow.com. UNNATI SAINI

FYI



Apollo's 50th

It has been five decades to the day since Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin took a giant leap for mankind by stepping on the lunar surface. NASA's permanent exhibit at Langley, 'Be the Astronaut', is a first-person experience that fuses video game technology, simulators, and actual NASA reconnaissance data. If you'd like to own a piece of history, Sotheby's is auctioning first-generation footage of the big event today (bidding starts at 8.30 pm IST on sothebys.com) and is expected to bring in about \$1 million.

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

Fighting fast fashion

Uniqlo, the Japanese retail giant, which is opening its first Indian store in Delhi, wants its designs to stand the test of time

SUNALINI MATHEW

If you must put Uniqlo, the Japanese apparel retailer, into a slot, it would ride the tide of all things functional. No longer a concept bleached of attitude and devoid of meaning, products that fall into the functional zone do more. Functional foods, for instance, give you more than just a bunch of vitamins and minerals - they may have probiotic value, too. In a marketplace that's echoing current mindsets of longevity, responsibility and sustainability, functional fashion is the logical corollary.

Uniqlo, born in 1984 in Hiroshima, enters India at a time when we're tired of shopping each time a fast fashion brand drops a sale. We're going back to picking staples that will



last, and the brand has come even as we are getting used to other Japanese labels like Muji and Asics.

DIY style

In a Japanese-precision style interview (where they stipulate 10 mi-



Welcome to India
Pieces from the label's newest collection
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

nutes, apologise about running 10 minutes late, but stick to the allotted time), Yuki Katsuta, head of research and development, says what's baked into the philosophy is that Uniqlo's "clothes shouldn't have too much attitude.... I hope they create their individuality by using us. We feel our products are tools for everybody". There is no target audience, therefore, but it also makes it tricky for the brand to get into accessories in the future, though Katsuta doesn't rule that out, saying they'll have to be simple, high quality and long-lasting

in terms of design and wear (five to 10 years) - all core values.

Their designs are meant to work a range of styles, which is also why the label has global appeal, he says. With over 2,000 stores in 22 countries, it remains to be seen whether sizing will work in the Indian market.

Tech on fabric

The first store in Delhi - at Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj - to be opened in October, will be spread across 35,000 sq ft and three floors, and will have everything that the Tokyo and New York stores have. In India, the company has chosen to go as a wholly-owned subsidiary, with 100% foreign investment in single-brand retail model. Two more stores, in Saket and Cyber Hub, are planned.

Prices start at ₹990, which puts them in the Zara and H&M league, but Uniqlo asserts that they are not fast fashion. How they'll communicate this to customers is not clear yet. They will get into e-commerce, they say, though not immediately.

Except for their UT line (tees with popular character tie-ups, like *Lion King* and *Marvel Retro Gaming*) they're not into anything that could be construed as OTT. What they do is tech with R&D on fabric. A red dress, made with a 3D knit technology called Whole Garment, has no seams at all. UV Cut claims to cut out the harmful rays of the sun with reflect-

ive materials and UV-blocking components. The three technologies they're best known for - ultra-light down jackets that are all about warmth and lightness; Heattech for warm innerwear; AIRism for dry comfort - are not fashion-season specific.

Christophe Lemaire, the artistic director of the Paris R&D division, brings in the colours and silhouettes for Uniqlo U. Denims, especially water-saving ones, are now researched at their Jeans Innovation Centre in Los Angeles.

It's not all rosy though. At this year's UTGP: Uniqlo T-shirt Grand Prix, a competition that saw over 18,000 global participants, the winner's design had to be rejected after being declared, because someone found it had already been used by the artist. Also, some creations, such as the AIRism for men are made from micro-polyester fibre (though the women's version uses cellulose fibre).

This year though, as the world watched Roger Federer - his Uniqlo logo prominent on his tennis outfits - it seemed like the clean-lined Japanese brand was sitting beside the Nikes and Lacostes.

"He's such a great athlete but also a great gentleman," says Katsuta, who shares that the brand is planning more with collabs with the athlete, not just in terms of sport, but also in humanitarian efforts.

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



EVENT
Book launch
Author and playwright, Sarabpreet Singh will launch his latest book titled, *The Camel Merchant of Philadelphia*, this evening. The book, which examines the life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh will be released in the presence of Lt. Gen.(Dr.) D.D.S. Sandhu - PVSM ADC (Retd), and Aanchal Malhotra, an author and historian.
VENUE: Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, Gole Market
TIME: 4 p.m.



CONCERT
Fundraiser
This Sunday, Saints N Sinners is holding a fundraiser concert called A Song for a Voice. In its second edition, the event will feature performances by four bands comprising teenagers. This includes a band from the One World College of Music. The proceeds will be utilised for the education of unprivileged girls.
VENUE: GF-21 Global Foyer, Sector 43, Gurugram
TIME: 6 p.m. onwards



TRIBUTE
Kargil Diwas
On the occasion of 20th anniversary of Kargil Diwas, Select Citywalk has organised a two-day event called Let's Not Forget, in honour of Indian soldiers. This will feature a thematic installation, film screening, cultural show, and dance and music performances. Collected funds will go towards the Army Wives Welfare Association.
VENUE: Select Citywalk, Saket
TIME: 5 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.



FOOD
Sunday brunch
Jaypee Vasant Continental at its all-day dining Canadian concept restaurant, Eggspectation, has introduced a specially curated Sunday brunch. The menu offers some seasonal ingredients and features starters, salads, assorted cold cuts, Arabic mezze, farm house cheese, pasta, dim sum, briyani, all served with soft beverages.
VENUE: Jaypee Vasant Continental, Vasant Vihar
TIME: 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.



FILM
Documentary on the Parsis
Kriti Film Club will screen the national award winning documentary, *Qissa-e Parsi: The Parsi Story*, in English. Directed by Shilpi Gulati and Divya Cowasji, the film explores the history of the Parsi community, their relationship with the Indian state, and their association with the city of Mumbai.
VENUE: Kriti, A-15, Tara Apartments, Alaknanda
TIME: 6 p.m.

FILM REVIEWS

Sexism, lies and vapid women

Jhootha Kahin Ka should've stuck to situational humour instead of getting trapped in crass jokes



Loud humour only Kang's film has very few inspired moments •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

NAMRATA JOSHI

This may sound too preposterous but throughout *Jhootha Kahin Ka*, I was thinking of Hrishikesh Mukherjee. A bunch of his genteel and genteel comedies – *Chupke Chupke*, *Golmaal*, *Jhooth Bole Kauwa Kaate* – have sprung from mistaken

identities and harmless lies. Smeep Kang also tries to build his film on a similar web of falsehoods and adds elements of Luv Ranjan's brand of rom coms, told from the point of view of callow young men. But, beyond a few inspired moments towards the end, the film refuses to fly.

Varun (Omkar Kapoor) can't get along with his farmer dad Yograj (Rishi Kapoor) in Punjab and goes to Mauritius in search of a job. Soon, we find him lying to get married to Riya (Nimisha Mehta). One lie leads to another and it's no holds barred when his father decides to come calling.

Jhootha Kahin Ka

DIRECTOR: Smeep Kang
STARRING: Rishi Kapoor, Jimmy Sheirgill, Rajesh Sharma, Manoj Joshi, Sunny Singh, Omkar Kapoor, Lillete Dubey, Nimisha Mehta, Pujita Ponnad
STORYLINE: Varun (Omkar Kapoor) can't get along with his farmer dad Yograj (Rishi Kapoor) in Punjab and goes back to Mauritius in search of a job. Soon we find him lying his way through to get married to Riya (Nimisha Mehta). One lie leads to another and it's no holds barred when his father decides to come calling.

emerged organically from the kooky situations his characters would get caught in and he had an intrinsically dignified way of juggling with even the risqué elements. Kang can't stop the humour turning loud and crass with double entendres

slipping in, specially when it comes to women. Not just sexist jokes – unlike Mukherjee's sparkling ladies – but here the women are rendered deliberately vapid and inconsequential.

The single biggest problem, however, is that the young cast is colourless to the core, unable to leave an impression. Their only strength, so to speak, that keeps getting projected on the big screen, is jiving with a group of dancers in the background on the beach. But even that is utterly forgettable. It's the older actors who manage to somehow hold the show together – Rishi Kapoor and Rajesh Sharma with their brothers-in-law banter; Rakesh Bedi in a small but effective turn. And the reliable Jimmy Sheirgill as a sharp-shooter called Tommy, who is the butt of some infantile man-dog jokes that only he could have pulled off with his deadpan comic timing.

Circle of life

The Lion King's new digital animation version stays loyal to the original, though a few outdated tropes could well have been reinterpreted

NAMRATA JOSHI

Be it traditional animation or contemporary photorealistic digital/computer animation, what has worked for *The Lion King* is the "humanification" of animals. I am deliberately not using the word humanising here because, as we are well aware, it's the animals who are at most times more humane than the brutes that the human race has become.

Humanification is to imply that what transpires on screen transcends the animal kingdom; it is what one associates with the world of women and men. Hence, something we can identify with closely. There is a familiarity to the relationships, the clear divisions between the good and the bad individuals, the situations and emotions, with each character personifying a feeling – love and pride (Mufasa); ambition, jealousy, treachery and violence (Scar); loyalty, care and concern (Timon, Pumbaa and Zazu); loss, grief and the denial of it; the overwhelming guilt, its psychological ramifications and the battle in coming to terms with it (Simba).

The lion crown prince Simba's jealous uncle Scar kills his father, King Mufasa. Burdened with the misplaced guilt of being the reason for his killing, Simba goes into exile in the company of Timon and Pumbaa, the meerkat and the warthog. But can the son of the king not be a king himself?

er 30, Nandish Singh is again seen managing a coaching centre on screen. This time on his own and not for his brother. He seems most comfortable playing the manager but very ill at ease romancing his lady love Suman (Pranati Rai Prakash). Bollywood song-n-dance around the trees is not so easy after all.



Aural magic The 2019 version stays true to the original film •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Lion King

DIRECTOR: Jon Favreau
STARRING: Voices of Donald Glover, Seth Rogen, Chiwetel Ejiofor, James Earl Jones, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter (English) Voices of SRK, Aryan Khan, Ashish Vidyarthi, Sanjay Mishra, Aasrani, Shreyas Talpade, Shernaz Patel, Achint Kaur (Hindi)
STORYLINE: The lion crown prince Simba's jealous uncle Scar kills his father, King Mufasa. Burdened with the misplaced guilt of being the reason for his killing, Simba goes into exile in the company of Timon and Pumbaa, the meerkat and the warthog. But can the son of the king not be a king himself?

the father-son relationship. Simba's hero-worship of his dad Mufasa and their mutual love gives the film its emotional tug but the idea of the ruler and his successor also makes it a trifle antediluvian. The film does try to play down royalty by positing the king as a protector, the one who serves and gives instead of owns and takes. The country can't belong to one person.

The 2019 version pretty much sticks to everything

from the original. However, a larger reinterpretation of the lineage-inheritance trope – why does the son of a king have to take over from him – would have made it a little less out of joint in these times. However, having said that, it's also a trifle ironic that in India, the most looked forward to thing about the film's Hindi version has been the fact it's Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan who has voiced Simba. Does the son of Bollywood's Badshah have it in him has been the moot question.

Well, the voice does have gravitas, flexibility and an ability to articulate trauma. In fact the film hinges on the aural more than the visual magic. The animation at large makes it seem as though one is on a virtual safari into the jungle but the digital animal visages themselves remain flat, two dimensional, not half as vivid and layered as those in the original. It's the soundtrack and the star voices – both in the English and the Hindi versions – that bring things alive, specially in some throwaway light moments, like a affianced-betrothed wordplay or a hornbill versus woodpecker debate.

All about that bro code

The cast of *Family of Thakurganj* is let down by the film they're featured in

NAMRATA JOSHI

It's a Jimmy Sheirgill double bill this week. And he, along with a set of reliable veteran actors, remains the only strong reason to head to a cinema. *Family of Thakurganj* has an army of polished performers. However, while they try to put their best foot forward, the film is unable to rise up to their collective talent.

Basically the film is *Deewar* redone. In a small town, peopled with ordinary folks, two brothers grow up on either side of the law. Nannu (Sheirgill) is the Robin Hood-esque figure while younger brother,



Unwieldy mess The film is overtaken by people settling scores with each other •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Munnu (Nandish Singh) is the righteous good boy. What's interesting is the recasting of women – the wife Sharbati (Mahie Gill) as the shrewd, manipulative mind

behind Nannu and Supriya Pilgoankar does a Nirupa Roy with a twist. Even Nannu's young daughter is a devious one. Instead of dwelling a bit more on these

ladies with swag, Manoj K. Jha turns *Family of Thakurganj* into an unwieldy, pointless mess about a group of gangsters and cops fighting it to the finish with a Baba Saheb at the centre as the bossman (Saurabh Shukla) who is excellent, especially when asking his goons to speak better Hindi: "Character nahin to bhasha sudhaaro (if you don't have character at least improve your language)".

There are some nice lines and wordplay in the film, but all of it gets overtaken by shoot-outs, killings and blood as people settle scores with each other. Close on the heels of *Sup-*

Family of Thakurganj

DIRECTOR: Manoj K. Jha
STARRING: Jimmy Sheirgill, Nandish Singh, Mahie Gill, Supriya Pilgoankar, Saurabh Shukla, Manoj Pahwa, Mukesh Tiwari, Pavan Malhotra, Raj Zutshi, Yashpal Sharma, Sudhir Pandey, Pranati Rai Prakash
STORYLINE: A small town, some ordinary people and two brothers on either side of the law
RUNTIME: 133 minutes

er 30, Nandish Singh is again seen managing a coaching centre on screen. This time on his own and not for his brother. He seems most comfortable playing the manager but very ill at ease romancing his lady love Suman (Pranati Rai Prakash). Bollywood song-n-dance around the trees is not so easy after all.

POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



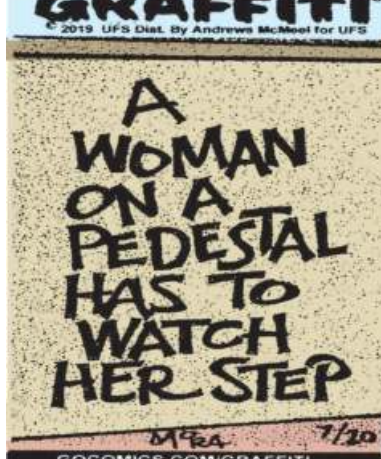
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GRAFFITI



HEALTH CAPSULES

HOW DOES FAST FOOD AFFECT THE BODY?
WHEN COMPARED TO HOME-MADE FOOD, FAST FOOD IS HIGHER IN FAT, CALORIES & SODIUM.
ACCORDING TO THE FDA, MORE THAN A THIRD OF ADULTS CONSUME FAST FOOD ON ANY GIVEN DAY. OVERCONSUMPTION OF FAST FOOD HAS BEEN LINKED TO A NUMBER OF HEALTH CONDITIONS, INCLUDING COLORRECTAL STOMACH AND RESPIRATORY TRACT CANCERS. DEEP-FRYING FOOD AT HIGH TEMPERATURES CAN PRODUCE CHEMICALS WITH CANCER-CAUSING PROPERTIES.
Fastid. Capsules is not intended to be a dog's pet.

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- Across
 - 1 Radiant – clever (6)
 - 4 Vinegary (6)
 - 8 Thin biscuit (5)
 - 9 Make stronger (7)
 - 10 In a moderately slow pouch (7)
 - 11 Say baa! (5)
 - 12 One who talks in an offensive way (9)
 - 17 Muse of love poetry (5)
 - 19 Edible root, eaten cooked – fils, say (anag) (7)
- Down
 - 1 Archer (6)
 - 2 Unbeliever (7)
 - 3 Wading bird (5)
 - 5 North American reindeer (7)
 - 6 Very short time (5)
 - 7 North American wild dog (6)
 - 9 Forenames (anag) (9)
 - 13 Perfect (7)
 - 14 Woman likely to succeed? (7)
 - 15 Launch an attack on someone, verbally (3,3)
 - 16 Mineral used to make plaster of Paris (6)
 - 18 Tea-growing state in north-east India (5)
 - 20 Cattle-catching rope (5)

Solution will appear in *The Hindu* dated July 22, 2019.

Solution No. 13126

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The Walmiki brothers' journey — from darkness to light

Amazing success story of the siblings from Mumbai

HOCKEY

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

The Walmiki brothers, Yuvraj and Devinder, recall the great hardships they had faced when they were young.

"Very often, I had to skip meals so that Devinder had something to eat. Our family lived in a small shanty in Mumbai, with no electricity, water or even a proper roof," Yuvraj, the elder of the two, tells *The Hindu* here on Friday.

Their life forever changed when Yuvraj scored a crucial tie-break goal against Pakistan in the final of the 2011 Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament in China. "My parents had taken a lot of loans to help us pursue our dream of playing hockey. When Yuvraj returned from China, he paid off all the loans — totalling around ₹30 lakh," Devinder says.

Dream realised

Watching Yuvraj shine strengthened Devinder's resolve to break into the Indian team. The ultimate dream was realised in 2015, when both Yuvraj and Devinder scored a goal each in a 3-0 win over Poland in the Hockey World League semifinal.

"All the newspapers carried a photo of me lifting and hugging Yuvraj, with a headline 'Walmiki Brothers do India proud'. That was a truly memorable moment," Devinder says.

Along with the highs came the lows as well, when injuries and other issues forced Yuvraj out of the 2012 and 2016 Olympics. Devinder, on the other hand, made it to the 2016 Rio Games.

"We have one Olympian in

our house, which is something to celebrate," Yuvraj says.

Out of favour

Devinder too has since fallen out of favour with the national selectors, but like Yuvraj, he hasn't given up hopes of making a grand comeback yet. "We still have international quality; all we need is one chance to prove ourselves," Yuvraj says.

Regardless of what the future holds, the brothers can take pride in what they have accomplished so far.

"When I started playing hockey in 1999, my mother struggled to buy ice to treat my injuries.

"She would wash my match jersey every single day with her bare hands. When I scored against Pakistan in 2011, she watched the match on our neighbour's television. Right through school, Devinder and I studied under candle light. Now we have a television, washing machine, air conditioner, lights and fans — things that my parents have never owned in their lives.

"Even now I get emotional when I think of those days. From darkness to light — that is our journey," Yuvraj says.



The stars: The Walmiki brothers, Devinder and Yuvraj, are keen to get back into national reckoning. ■G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

A mother's diktat

A thunderous reverse-click from forward Yuvraj gives Bengaluru United Hockey Club the lead against South Central Railway in the Bengaluru Hockey super division championship here on Friday.

His younger brother, midfielder Devinder, is

among the first to run over and congratulate him.

"If Yuvraj doesn't score a goal, I get into trouble because our mother scolds me for not passing the ball and creating chances for him," Devinder laughs and says.

Yuvraj nods in

agreement. "I call my mother after every match.

"If I don't score a goal, my mother bluntly says that I am not fit to be a striker. "So it's imperative for me to keep finding the net, or else we'll be in big trouble when we return to our home in Mumbai," Yuvraj says.

Chhattisgarh suspended, West Bengal warned

National Youth Championships slammed for poor facilities

ATHLETICS

UTHRA GANESAN
AGRA

Chhattisgarh Athletics Association was suspended and West Bengal issued show-cause notice as the Athletics Federation of India's annual general meeting here became a day of chastisement for state associations on Friday.

"We have decided to suspend the federation, form an ad-hoc body and give it six months to conduct fresh elections and find a new set of office-bearers. We cannot keep giving warnings and also allotting competitions," AFI Planning Committee chairman Lalit Bhanot said categorically.

The 2019 National Youth Championships in February had been slammed for poor facilities and organisation and also racked with age-fraud controversy.

The state is supposed to host the next National Games but athletes and officials had complained of poor arrangements at the 2017 national cross country championships as well.

West Bengal, meanwhile, was issued notice for pulling out of hosting the national Inter-State Championships without any satisfactory reason. "We have changed venues before but never been forced to change the dates. Other than a natural calamity or Force Majeure, no other reason can be acceptable.

"We have had to postpone the tournament, the last qualifying event for the World Championships, to end August (27-30) in Lucknow. Once they reply, we can suggest to the State Olympic Association to rethink their affiliation also," AFI president Adile Sumariwalla said.

The AFI top management made no secret of its displeasure at the lack of accountability and performance at the grassroots.

"A vast majority of doping and age-fraud issues happen at the state and district levels and it is the state body's responsibility to ensure it doesn't happen. If it does, they have to pay the price," Bhanot slammed. The AFI has provisioned for a one-year suspension of the secre-

tary if there are more than two cases of over-age athletes from a state, a decision that saw many protesting to no avail.

In fact, the state units were squarely blamed for most of the ills in Indian athletics.

"It is not the job of the AFI to prepare athletes. The international federation only conducts events but we have taken this responsibility because the states were not doing their job — identifying athletes and training them, providing good competition and getting good coaches.

"They have to conduct district level meets and provide a strong foundation to athletes before they join the elite ranks. What we do at national level, you have to do in states — scrutinise and conduct tests," Bhanot added even as Sumariwalla cautioned that there was increasing pressure from IAAF and WADA to get Indian athletics in order.

The AFI also unveiled new kits for Indian athletes with the legendary Sriram Singh and Anju Bobby George doing the honours.



Legendary honours: Sriram Singh and Anju Bobby George unveiled the new kits for Indian athletes at the annual general meeting of the AFI. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sohil and Tijl take pole

SPORTS REPORTER
CHENNAI

Bengaluru teenagers Sohil Shah and Tijl Rao took pole positions in the MRF F1600 and Formula LGB 1300 categories in the third round of the MRF MMSC-FMCSI Indian National Car Racing Championship at the MMRT here on Friday.

Sohil, 18, came up with his best lap of one minute, 39.218 seconds, much quicker than his timings in the two Free Practice sessions earlier in the day.

In the second spot was Nayan Chatterjee, followed by Manav Sharma and Nirmal Umashankar.

In the FIA Formula-4 South-East Asia series, Oman's Shihab Al Habsi topped the practice session with a flying lap of 01:37.862, while the three Indians in the fray, Yash Aradhya, Mira Erda and Sneha Sharma were fifth, seventh and eighth fastest.

Tijl (Momentum Motorsports), 16, put in a fine performance in Formula LGB 1300 with a hot lap of 01:53.523, nearly a second quicker than his best in the practice sessions earlier.

Alaphilippe beats Thomas in 13th Stage

REUTERS
PAU

France's Julian Alaphilippe claimed an impressive victory in the 13th stage of the Tour de France, a 27.2-km individual time trial, to extend his overall lead on Friday.

The Deceuninck-Quick Step rider clocked 35 minutes over the lumpy course to beat defending champion Geraint Thomas by 14 seconds and Belgian Thomas de Gendt by 36 seconds.

Smooth start to AITA Trust scholarship scheme

TENNIS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The AITA Trust scholarship camp — to identify eight boys and girls for a per year scholarship of ₹1,00,000 — got off to a smooth start at the DLTA Complex here on Friday.

Davis Cupper and FedCup team captain Vishaal Uppal made it clear that scores and results would only be one of many factors to be considered for selection.

Fed Cup coach Anika Bhambri told the players to relax and enjoy their tennis.

Former national coach Balram Singh advised pa-

rents not to neglect their children's education in pursuit of a tennis career.

"Education is very important for the development of a player, and kids will lose confidence if they don't get good education," he said.

Holistic

Every aspect of their game and behaviour — in victory and defeat, while playing at their best or not — would all be noted, the players were told clearly.

Uppal was categorical in stressing that it would be a holistic process.

Another seasoned coach, Nar Singh, who has rich experience of guiding the In-

dian junior teams in many events over the years, requested the players to capitalise on the immense knowledge of the selection committee.

"It is a challenge to play good tennis in an adverse situation," said Anika.

Four groups

The 32 boys and girls were divided into four groups each. They will all play on a league basis in the group, in a 'best of 13 games' format. Thereafter, all the No. 1 players will get into one group, the No. 2 in the second group, etc. for another spell of matches.

The matches are being

kept short to help the youngsters tackle the heat and humidity on the hard courts, with minimal physical strain.

On the last two days, there will be a fitness test which would also demand good physical condition of the players after a series of matches.

"We will also look at how hungry you are to become a world class player," Uppal said.

Talking to parents, Balram suggested that the children should be handled with care, especially when they lose a match. "Don't talk to the child immediately. Talk later," said Balram.

Sanjivani gets two years for doping violation

Set to lose her Asian 10,000m bronze medal

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) has handed a two-year suspension to 23-year-old long-distance runner Sanjivani Jadhav for testing positive for probenecid, a banned substance under the category Diuretics and Masking Agents, in-competition twice last year.

Sanjivani, whose urine samples collected during the TCS World 10k (Bangalore, May 27, 2018) and National inter-State athletics championships (Guwahati, June 29, 2018), said that she had not taken probenecid knowingly.

The AIU, which implements the IAAF anti-doping rules, charged Sanjivani with committing anti-doping rule violations and offered her an opportunity to either admit the anti-doping rule violation and accept a two-year suspension or request a hearing before a disciplinary panel.



Sanjivani Jadhav. ■FILE PHOTO

Sanjivani admitted to the doping violation.

She, nevertheless, requested for a reduction in her period of ineligibility on grounds such as the concentration of probenecid was too low to be used as a masking agent, she suspected the prohibited substance might have entered her body due to use of contaminated ayur-

vedic medicines and she never cheated.

While noting that Sanjivani "failed to disclose the use of ayurvedic medicines on dope control forms," AIU, in its order released on Thursday, said there was no evidence to support her claim that these medicines contained the banned substance.

Considering that the athlete admitted to the doping violation, the AIU handed her two years' suspension for her first offence.

It ordered that Sanjivani's results at the TCS World 10k, National inter-State meet and events following that would be "disqualified" and titles, awards, medals, points and prizes won would be forfeited.

As a consequence, Sanjivani will lose her 10,000m bronze medal achieved in the Asian championships in Doha in April this year.

The decision is appealable.

Swati and Priyanka suffer defeats

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KARAIKUDI

Former national champion and WGM Swati Ghate and seventh seed WIM Priyanka Nutakki of Andhra Pradesh suffered shock defeats in the opening round of the 46th National women's chess championship here on Friday.

Senthamizh Yazhini of Tamil Nadu defeated Priyanka and Bindu Saritha (LIC) stunned Swati.

However, the other seeded players had a relatively easy day out.

Playing the black side of the London System game, Swati blundered on the 33rd move to hand over piece advantage to her LIC teammate and surrendered after five more moves.

Meanwhile, WGM Soumya Swaminathan (PSPB), the top seed, got past V. Nanditha (Telangana) and defending champion Bhakti Kulkarni (Air India) made short work of Ananya Bothra (West Bengal).