



**Veteran industrialist
Basant Kumar Birla
passes away**
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**England crushes
New Zealand, cements
its semifinal spot**
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PLAYING TODAY

Cricket: Afghanistan vs West Indies

VENUE: Headingley

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

**Rayudu announces
retirement from all
forms of cricket**
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NEARBY



**Chawri Bazar normal;
six more arrested**
NEW DELHI
After three days, normalcy returned to Chawri Bazar which witnessed communal tension over vandalism of a temple on Sunday. Six more persons involved in the violence were arrested on Wednesday hours after Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik met Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

**DU second cut-off list
sees marginal dip**
NEW DELHI
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**Centre defends existing
definition of rape**
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Defending India's gender-specific rape law under which the perpetrator of the offence can only be a 'man', the Centre has told the Delhi High Court that "the existing definition of rape under Section 375 (rape) should be left untouched".

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MLA murder case: Ansaris acquitted

**NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI**
A Delhi court on Wednesday acquitted Ghazipur MP Afzal Ansari of the Bahujan Samaj Party, his brother and Uttar Pradesh MLA of the party Mukhtar Ansari and others in the 2005 murder case of BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai as all the eyewitnesses turned hostile. Besides the politician, six persons were also killed in the firing in the vehicle in which they were travelling. "This is a gruesome case involving murder of seven persons. The investigation of the case was transferred from U.P. Police to CBI. The trial of the case was also transferred from U.P. to Delhi. Unfortunately, the case of the prosecution has suffered as all the eyewitnesses and other material witnesses turned hostile," Special Judge Arun Bhardwaj said.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 5

Rahul Gandhi formally quits as party chief, makes letter public

Holds himself responsible for poll debacle; senior Cong. leaders go into a huddle

**SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI**

Ending speculation about his continuance in office as Congress president, Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday formally resigned, holding himself responsible for the party's Lok Sabha poll debacle. He also maintained that accountability would be critical for the party's future growth.

Mr. Gandhi's decision to make his resignation public sent senior Congress leaders into a huddle.

Sources told *The Hindu* that senior leaders, including Ghulam Nabi Azad, Moti Lal Vohra, A.K. Antony, Ahmed Patel, Anand Sharma and Mukul Wasnik, among others, are believed to have met informally to decide the next course of action, including options available in the party constitution to deal with such a situation.

Asks CWC to form group
In a four-page open letter, Mr. Gandhi said he had empowered the Congress Working Committee (CWC) to constitute a group of people that could find his successor and distanced himself from the process of selecting the next chief.

Amidst reports that Mr. Gandhi and his mother, Sonia, could be travelling out of the country shortly, sources



Show of support: Youth Congress workers gather outside the residence of Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi last week to appeal to him to continue as party chief. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

said the CWC could meet as early as July 10 on a future course of action.

One of the options being discussed is once again passing a resolution asking Mr. Gandhi to continue. Party veterans claimed that he continues to be the president until the CWC formally accepts his resignation and appoints an interim president.

If the 49-year-old Congress chief does not relent, then the longest-serving general secretary, Mr. Azad, could be asked to take interim charge. Mr. Azad became a general secretary of

the CWC as far back as 1986.

Defends campaign
Mr. Gandhi – who has been firm on his decision to quit as party chief since May 25, two days after the results of the general election in which his party won 52 seats – defended the party's "strong and dignified campaign against the Prime Minister and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the institutions they have captured with."

"As President of the Congress Party, I am responsible for the loss of the 2019 election. Accountability is criti-

cal for the future growth of our party. It is for this reason that I have resigned as Congress President," he said in his letter that sounded both emotional and combative.

"Rebuilding the party requires hard decisions and numerous people will have to be made accountable for the failure of 2019. It would be unjust to hold others accountable but ignore my own responsibility as President of the party," he said in the letter shared on his Twitter account.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12
NO TIME TO LOSE ▶ PAGE 13**

23 feared dead after dam breaches in Maharashtra

Seven villages downstream flooded; 11 bodies recovered

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI**

Twenty-three persons are feared dead as the Tiwara dam in Ratnagiri in Maharashtra's Konkan region breached on Wednesday following incessant rain, officials said.

Bodies of 11 persons have been recovered so far. Additional Superintendent of Police (Ratnagiri), Vishal Gaikwad said.

The Tiwara dam was built 14 years ago in Chiplun taluk, with a capacity of 20 lakh cubic metres.

The breach occurred late on Tuesday, a district official said, leading to flooding in seven villages downstream; 12 houses were swept away.

Search and rescue operations have been launched by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State police. A police officer said rescue operations were



Force of nature: Water flowing out of the breached Tiwara dam in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. • RAJU SHINDE

hampered initially due to darkness and the sudden influx of water.

Relatives of the victims said they had asked the district administration to repair the dam as they had spotted cracks in the structure in November last year. There was an issue over the jurisdiction of which tehsil the Tiwara

dam falls in, with both Chiplun and Dapoli tehsil offices ignoring the villagers' petition, said a family member of one of the dead.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis has ordered an inquiry into the incident.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12
MUMBAI MAROONED ▶ EDITORIAL
MALAD TOLL UP ▶ PAGE 9**

First investors' summit to be held in J&K

**NISTULA HEBBAR
SRINAGAR**

Jammu and Kashmir will host its first-ever investor summit in September-October of this year in Srinagar – with a chapter in Jammu – to attract investment and counter perceptions about the State.

Government officials said they are expecting participation from at least eight countries, besides the rest of India.

The State is presently under President's Rule, which was extended by another six months last week after a vote in Parliament.

"The strong points of the State are, of course, tourism, horticulture and handicrafts.

"The stress would be on some of these sectors, along with the power sector and manufacturing," said an official.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Marginal hike in MSP for 14 kharif crops

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The Centre has hiked the minimum support price (MSP) for paddy by less than 4% to ₹1,815 per quintal for the 2019-20 season. The ₹65 per quintal increase is much lower than last year's hike of ₹200 per quintal, but it will ensure that the MSP remains exactly 50% above the cost of production, not including land costs.

The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Tuesday. MSPs were hiked for 14 major crops of the kharif or summer season, to ensure they remain at a level that is 1.5 times the cost of production.

Lower returns
The only commodities with MSP that will ensure a higher than 50% return over input costs are bajra (85%), urad (64%) and tur dal (60%). However, even for these crops, returns are lower than last year.

The MSP is the rate at which the Centre procures these crops from farmers. However, there is no guaranteed procurement mechanism for most crops. Just over a third of the paddy harvest is bought by the Food Corporation of India for use in the public distribution system.

PROCUREMENT PLEA ▶ PAGE 12

Cattle traders move SC against 2017 rules

Claim it is being used to seize livestock

Livelihood worries

The petition concerns The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Care and Maintenance of Case Property Animals) Rules, 2017 notified on May 23, 2017



• The rules were framed in pursuance of the powers granted by Section 38 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960

• The petitioner challenged the validity of the rules on the following grounds:

i. Rule 3, 5 (1) to (8), 7, 8 (1) and (2) and 9 are ultra-vires Sections 29 and 35 of the parent Act

ii. The rules have not been passed by Parliament as required under Section 38A of the 1960 Act

• Alternatively, the petitioner sought a direction that the rules, having been withdrawn by the Centre, ought not to be implemented

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

An association of cattle traders and transporters has approached the Supreme Court against rules notified in 2017, which are being used to seize and forfeit their cattle.

A Bench led by Justice S.A. Bobde ordered the government to respond to a petition by the Buffalo Traders Welfare Association, represented by advocate Sanobar Ali Qureshi, on threats faced by them. They said they were being forcibly deprived of their cattle, which were then sent to gaushalas.

The traders told the court on Tuesday that the seizure

and forfeiture of their livestock, a means of livelihood for many, was happening on the strength of the 2017 rules against animal cruelty and cattle slaughter.

Two years ago, the Centre promised the top court that it would amend and re-notify these rules. Its notification had led to a public furor. But nothing has been done so far, and the rules were being employed to seize cattle, the petitioners said.

The law had emboldened "anti-social elements" to take matters into their hands and loot cattle traders, the petitioners said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

SC notice to Centre, Assam on plea by paralysed man declared foreigner

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Central and Assam governments to respond to a petition filed by a paralysed man languishing in detention for over two years after being declared a foreigner by a tribunal in an ex parte proceeding.

Azizul Hoque, represented by senior advocate Sanjay Hegde and advocate Anas Tanwir, was declared a foreigner by a Foreigners Tribunal in Assam and he has been in detention since March 24, 2017.

He sought a stay on the ex parte order as he feared being deported to Bangladesh any time.

No relief from HC
Mr. Hoque had failed to appear before the tribunal to present his defence due to lower limb paralysis. He could not depute anyone to appear on his behalf. He approached the SC after the Gauhati High Court denied him relief despite accepting his medical certificate.

Mr. Hoque submitted that neither the tribunal nor the High Court had appreciated

the fact that he had produced 'jamabandi' documents in the name of his grandfather, issued in 1941-1942, along with the voter list excerpts of 1965 showing the names of his grandparents, father and mother.

His school certificate stated his date of birth as March 5, 1978.

The petitioner said his name appeared in the draft National Register of Citizens for Assam. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi ordered the Centre and the State to respond within two weeks.

Soon, read SC judgments in your language

New app, similar to Google's translation software, is likely to be launched this month

**KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI**

In a novel measure, the Supreme Court will translate its judgments into all vernacular languages for the benefit of the public and litigants across the length and breadth of the country.

The software application is intended to be launched by mid-July.

In single phase
The app, similar to Google's text translation, is likely to be launched in a single phase and cover "all vernacular languages," a source said.



Sathesh Vellinezhi

The court was taking the help of the High Courts in making the move a success. Most likely, the new app would be launched in the

inaugural function of the Supreme Court's new office buildings at Appu Ghar.

President Ram Nath Kovind is expected to preside

over it, the source said. The move is the brainchild of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi.

CJI gave the idea
The CJI, in an informal interaction with Supreme Court journalists in November last, where he was accompanied by the court's number two judge Justice S.A. Bobde, mooted the idea of translating the court's judgments into regional languages.

The CJI had said the project included not only translating the apex court judgments into Hindi and other

vernacular languages but also to provide summaries of the apex court's verdicts. This, he had said, was to benefit litigants, who after fighting their cases for years, were left unable to read the judgments in their own cases for the sole reason that they did not know English.

In the Constitution Day function last year, President Kovind took the opportunity to laud the CJI for proposing the initiative to provide certified copies of judgments, translated from English to regional languages, to litigants.

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Delhi Weather max min Delhi City 39 29 Safdarjung 39 29 Palam 42 30

Delhi Palam Today 36°C Dusty morning to turn very warm and humid weather with cloudy sky during day.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 35°C Fall in temperature. Warm and humid weather to continue. Spell of thunder-shower will affect the city.

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Air quality of Delhi-NCR Delhi 136 Gurugram 140 Ghaziabad 138 Faridabad 79 Noida 128 Greater Noida 152

DELHI TODAY

Exhibition: "A Traveller in Abstract Universe", a solo painting show by Yashvanti Singh at Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Exhibition: "Delhi Evolution through Flora and Time", a solo show by Vidur Sodhani at Delhi O Delhi Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Exhibition: "Seventy Five by Thirty Two", a solo show of paintings of Indira Govil at Convention Centre Foyer, IHC, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Exhibition: "Art convergence", a group paintings and sculptures exhibition at Visual Arts Gallery, IHC, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

Screening: "Drifters", a Swedish film directed by Peter Grönlund will be screened today as part of the ongoing European Union Film Festival at Gulmohar Hall, IHC, 7 p.m.

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

DU second cut-off list sees marginal dip

Over 23,000 students enter university under first list; admissions close for many popular UG courses

SIDHARTH RAVI NEW DELHI

Admissions to many popular undergraduate courses at Delhi University have closed after the first round of admissions. For the remaining courses, the second cut-off list released on Wednesday saw a marginal dip in the eligibility requirement.

Surprisingly, seats for B.A. (Hons.) political science at Hindu College which saw the highest cut-off at the university at 99% have been filled under all categories except economically weaker section category. For EWS students, a second cut-off of 97.75% has been issued. Up to 84 students have been admitted to the course so far.

In fact, admissions to B.A. political science at several colleges with high cut-offs have been closed, including Miranda House (98%) which admitted 110 students, Lady Sri Ram College (98%) 166 students, Ramjas (97%) 181 students, Kirori Mal (96%) 287 students and Gargi (96%) 155 students among others.

The course clearly comes out as one of the most popular courses having received 1,30,240 applications and admitted 2,794 students. The number of applications were second only to B.A. English which had 1,42,970 applications but only 876 students have been admitted so far.

Table with columns: COLLEGE, B.Com, B.Com (Hons.), BA (Hons.) English, BA (Hons.) History, BA (Hons.) Pol Science, BA (Hons.) Economics, B.Sc (Hons.) Mathematics, B.Sc (Hons.) Physics, B.Sc (Hons.) Chemistry. Rows include colleges like Aryabhata, ARSD, Daulat Ram, DCAC, Dyal Singh, Gargi, Hansraj, Hindu, IP College, Kamala Nehru, Kirori Mal, LSR, Maitreyi, Miranda House, Motilal Nehru, Ramjas, Bhagat Singh College, Sri Venkateswara, SRCC, Zakir Husain.

At Lady Sri Ram College which posted the highest cut-off for B.A. English, the second list saw a marginal dip of 0.25% from the first list of 97.75%, having admitted 57 students.

At Miranda House, where B.A. economics and B.A. geography had the highest cut-off of 98.25%, both announced a slight drop in the

cut-off to 97.75% and 98% having admitted only nine and 17 students respectively.

At Shri Ram College of Commerce, while admissions for B.A. (Hons.) economics has been closed, B.Com (Hons.) remained open with a drop of 0.50% from the first cut-off of 98%.

Among science courses, B.Sc (Hons.) physics at Hin-

du College which had one of the highest cut-offs at 98.33% was also closed for admissions. However, science courses at multiple colleges remained open with a marginal dip in cut-offs.

Applying in colleges At the close of admissions under the first list, a total of 23,266 admissions were

made according to data from the university. The total allotted strength of the university this year is about 63,000 students. For students wishing to take admissions have time up till July 6 to approach colleges for approvals. Those who wish to switch college will have to cancel admissions at the first one and then reapply.

HC refuses to entertain petition on DU hostel accommodation

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday declined to entertain a petition seeking direction to Delhi University (DU) to ensure that all regular students studying in the varsity get hostel accommodation.

A Bench of Chief Justice

D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar was of the view that there was no statutory obligation for Delhi University to provide hostel accommodation to all students.

Monthly stipend The Bench also rejected additional plea of the petition by Praveen Kumar Singh to

pay a monthly stipend of ₹10,000 to each regular student who is not able to secure a hostel seat.

The petition, filed through advocate Kamlesh Kumar Mishra, stated that of the 1,84,668 students enrolled in DU as per RTI reply, only 6,235 or 3.37% have hostel accommodation.

Other students have been left at the mercy of exploitative landlords and property dealers, the plea said.

The plea had sought to declare the area in and around the 5-km radius of the Delhi University "South Campus and North Campus" as a special students zone where a minimum rent is fixed for

the accommodation for the students.

It also sought to end the disparity between the rates of the departmental canteen food for staff members and canteen for students.

Advocate Mishra said he will move the higher court against the High Court's decision.

Meeting on administrative transfer of Delhi zoo soon

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) will discuss in its July-end board meeting with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change's letter to bring the Delhi zoo under the former's administrative control.

The National Zoological Park, locally known as Delhi zoo, is currently under the administrative control of the MoEF&CC. Earlier this month, the MoEF&CC had written to the CZA, asking it

to bring the zoo under its control. "We have received the letter and we will put it before a technical committee in the next 15 days. It will be taken up in a board meeting of the CZA which will be chaired by Minister, MoEF&CC towards the end of this month," CZA member secretary Anup Nayak said. Zoo director Renu Singh said that they are yet to receive any official information about the transfer, either from the Ministry or from the CZA.

North Corporation works towards securing ODF tag

Inspections are due later this week

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation has been making intensive preparations in order to secure an 'Open Defecation Free' certification, with inspections due later this week.

ODF certification is granted to municipal corporations after inspections by agencies such as the Quality Council of India (QCI).

This plays an important role in the Swatchatta ranking of the municipal corporations. In the 2019 Swatchatta rankings, the North Corporation was marked as 'self-declared ODF'.

Commissioner Varsha Joshi, addressing the Standing Committee on Wednesday, said that the corporation did not get the

NGT seeks report on construction in Aravalis

Gives governments one-month time

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has sought a joint report from the Centre and the Haryana government on a plea seeking action against construction of police lines in the forest land of Aravalis.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the regional office of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change in Chandigarh and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of the State government to furnish a report on the same.

"Let a factual and action taken report in the matter be furnished jointly within one month. The nodal agency will be the PCCF, Haryana for coordination and

compliance," the Bench said. The directions came when the panel was hearing a plea while alleging that Haryana Police is carrying out construction work on forest land where it is not permissible.

The plea contended that the parcel of land is recorded as Gair Mumkin Pahar or "land unfit for cultivation." It was further contended that construction cannot take place in the said piece of land without prior approval from the Centre.

Petitioner Ram Avatar Yadav moved the plea based on an RTI reply which said that the land allotted to the police department for construction of police lines, lies within the Aravali Plantation Forest which is a deemed forest.

Forest dept. staff crunch: NGT gives govt. last chance

To furnish details on employee strength

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Wednesday gave the Delhi government a "last opportunity" to furnish details on a plea alleging shortage of staff at the government's Forest Department.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel observed, "The issue for consideration is on the subject of appropriate enhancement in the strength of the Forest Department and other infrastructure for reasons of forest law. The Chief Secretary has still not filed his report."

The observations came after the green panel noted

that the State government had failed to comply with an order passed by the tribunal in December 2015.

"The report furnished by the Forest Department does not have the relevant information showing compliance of the earlier order. We give another opportunity to comply with the order on or before July 17," the Bench said. The directions came when the NGT was hearing a plea alleging shortage of staff at the State's Forest Department.

The plea alleged that the shortage of staff was preventing the department from "discharging statutory duties and implementing provisions of forest law."

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA Office of the Executive Engineer, Public Works Division No. 2, Nagpur E-Mail: div2nagpur.ee@mahapwd.com Telephone No. 07122565048 E-TENDER NOTICE No. 09 / 2019-2020 (Short Tender Notice) Online E-tenders in 'B-1' Forms are invited by Executive Engineer, Public Works Division No. 2, "Bandhkan Sankul" Civil Lines, Nagpur for the following works from the registered contractor who satisfy the qualifying criteria...

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Govt. of Jharkhand Energy Department Jharkhand Renewable Energy Development Agency (JREDA) 3rd Floor, S.L.D.C. Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-834002. Ph.: 0651-2491161, Fax: 0651-2491165. E-mail: info@jreda.com, Website: www.jreda.com e-Procurement Notice Tender Reference No. : 05/JREDA/CMC/DEO-BAS/19-20 Dated: 02.07.2019

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on July 12 will flag off the first trip of 'Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana', under which the government will pay for pilgrimage of citizens, above 60 years of age, to different places in India. It will include their travel, stay, and food. Revenue Minister Kailash Gahlot said that the first trip of Delhi-Amritsar Attari Border-Anandpur Sahib corridor, via train, will be flagged off by Mr. Kejriwal on July 12 evening from Safdarjung railway station and the group will be back on July 16. The second tour on the Delhi-Vaishno Devi-Jammu corridor will be from July 20 to 24. SDMC report on encroachment drive in Mayapuri As part of the Special Task Force set up to check violations at Mayapuri Industrial area, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation on Monday reported major encroachment removal in the month of June. Between June 12 and July 2, the civic body removed nearly 355 tonnes of scrap from the area, it said in a statement. The corporation also removed multiple illegally parked vehicles and temporary structures, with deployment of up to 49 trucks, 76 cranes or loaders and 146 labourers, it said. So far, the SDMC has issued challans to up to 271 scrap units. In its survey of up to 2,530 units, it found up to 575 units running without trade licences.

IN BRIEF

Nearly 59 buildings in north Delhi 'dangerous'
NEW DELHI
As many as 49 buildings have been found to be in a dangerous condition in the pre-monsoon survey conducted by the North Delhi Municipal Corporation, officials said on Wednesday. Of these, 26 structures in City-Sadar Paharganj Zone were found to be unsafe for habitation. PTI

Over 27,000 stray dogs caught in 2018-19
NEW DELHI
There has been a rise in the number of stray dogs caught by civic authorities in north Delhi with over 27,800 being captured and sterilised in 2018-19, official data shared on Wednesday stated. However, there has been a fall in the number of monkeys caught by the North Delhi Municipal Corporation in the last two years. PTI

Worker dies at build site in Noida
NOIDA
A construction worker died on Tuesday after he allegedly slipped and fell off a building in the commercial Noida Special Economic Zone, the police said on Wednesday. PTI

Traders return to Chawri Bazar; six more nabbed for vandalism

Delhi Police Commissioner meets Home Minister; locals allege delay in arrests

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

Normalcy returned to Chawri Bazar with traders returning to their shops on Wednesday, three days after the area witnessed communal tension after a temple was allegedly vandalised.

Shyam Agarwal, a trader, said: "On Monday morning, I was shocked to find the entire market shut due to Sunday's scuffle. I have never seen such a situation in the last 20 years. I appreciate the efforts made by the police, administration and locals in restoring normalcy."

Daily-wage workers, who suffered the most due to the shut-down, welcomed efforts made by people of different communities to restore peace in the market.

Meanwhile, hours after Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik met Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday, more persons in-



A bustling Chawri Bazar on Wednesday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

involved in vandalism were arrested. Mandeep Singh Randhawa, DCP (Central), said that they have arrested a total of five persons and apprehended four juveniles for their involvement in vandalism, following a scuffle between two men over parking. All of them are locals, he added. The Special Cell, Crime Branch, is also investigating the matter.

"The accused were identified with the help of CCTV footage and mobile clips obtained by the police. We have formed five teams to nab accused involved in the attack," said Mr. Randhawa.

More arrests likely

He also said that most of the people in the mob that vandalised the area have been identified and will be arrested,

adding that one of the arrested accused was involved in two criminal cases.

Mr. Patnaik said that he had briefed the Home Minister about the situation at Chawri Bazar and that everything was under control.

On the other hand, people living near the temple premises have alleged police inaction in the case.

"Why was not a single person arrested just after the attack took place, even after CCTV footage was provided to the police for their identification? Why did they wait for political interference into the matter?," said Babloo, a resident of Gali Durga Wali.

Another resident said, "After the crowd was dispersed from Hauz Qazi police station, it straightaway reached the temple and started the vandalism. Why did the police not act immediately and instead waited for senior officers to arrive?"

Hussain files complaint against BJP leaders

'Allegations levelled by them baseless'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Ballimaran MLA and Delhi Minister Imran Hussain on Wednesday filed a police complaint against Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders in reaction to their allegations of his involvement in vandalism of a temple in the Chawri Bazar area on Sunday.

Mr. Hussain's complaint came in the wake of allegations made by BJP Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Goel on the Minister's interaction with local residents in the area. Mr. Goel had said that the Delhi Environment and Food and Civil Supplies Minister had "deliberately" given the incident a "communal colour".

'Rumours being spread'

"After reaching the [police] station around 11.30 p.m. on that day [Sunday] I appealed to both the sides, on loudspeaker, to calm



Imran Hussain •

down," Mr. Hussain said, followed by his complaint to the police, alleging that Mr. Goel and SAD-BJP MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa were spreading "rumours" and levelling "baseless allegations" against him.

Tiwari demands arrest

Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari "strongly condemned" the role of AAP in "vitiating the harmony", demanding Mr. Hussain be "arrested immediately".

Petition seeks SIT probe into vandalism

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A petition filed in the Delhi High Court has sought a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the alleged conspiracy behind vandalism of a temple in Old Delhi's Chawri Bazar on Sunday.

The petition said that an SIT, duly monitored by the court, must investigate into the attack on the Durga Temple and identify the real perpetrators of the crime.

Advocate Alakh Alok Shrivastava, in his plea, also prayed for initiation of stringent action and formulation of suitable guidelines to avoid such attacks on other religious places in future, considering the wider ramifications of such acts in disrupting communal harmony and peace in the society. "The attack on a temple in the nation capital has hurt the religious sentiments of crores of people across country," the plea claimed.

Four body builders held for robbing ₹17 lakh

Incident happened on June 29

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Four persons have been arrested for their alleged involvement in a robbery of ₹17.3 lakh from cash collections agents in Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar, the police said on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch), Rajesh Deo, said that the accused have been identified as Sukhram (28) - the kingpin, Robin (28), Rohit (21) and Lucky (28).

The police said that on June 29, an employee of a cash collection firm approached them and said that he going to a bank on his scooter with a colleague to deposit cash around 12.30 p.m., when three persons on a bike hit his scooter from behind. "A scuffle ensued and the accused forcibly snatched the scooter and ₹17.30 lakh from the complainant and fled," Mr. Deo said.

During investigation, CCTV footage of the area was examined and electronic surveillance was mounted



The accused in police custody. • R.V. MOORTHY

on the identified accused. On a tip off, Sukhram was arrested first and the others were arrested at his instance, the police said.

"The accused are all body builders who do not use weapons, but use their physical strength to threaten or overpower the victims," said a senior police officer.

The police said that with the four arrests, they have solved four cases of theft, robbery and extortion. "Sukhram worked as Civil Defence volunteer and then intermittently as a private security guard. He started committing robberies after he came in contact with other accused," Mr. Deo said.

Man impersonates bureaucrat, arrested

Duped people of crores, say police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 29-year-old man was arrested for allegedly impersonating a senior bureaucrat and duping people of crores of rupees on the pretext of procuring licences for petrol pumps, gas agencies and house allotments, police said on Wednesday.

DCP (Crime Branch) Ram Gopal Naik said that the accused, Sampath Kumar Surappagari, a resident of Ammapur in Telangana's Mehboobnagar, was arrested on Tuesday from a hotel in city's Mahipalpur.

The police said that in February 2019, Malipaddi Sandeep, a resident of Hyderabad, told them that he was approached by one K. Ramaswamy, who said his nephew Surappagari is a senior bureaucrat and is posted in New Delhi. "He also told Mr. Sandeep that Surappagari could get licences approved for Bharat Petroleum and Bharat Gas. Mr. Sandeep was asked to pay ₹1.8 crore for the licences. He was also told to come to Delhi to apply for

the licences," Mr. Naik said.

Subsequently, the accused met the victim in Delhi and latter transferred ₹1.40 crore to the accused's bank account. Surappagari allegedly asked him to give ₹40 lakh in cash to Ramaswamy in Hyderabad in the first week of July, 2017, the victim was assured that he would get the licences by the end of August 2017.

However, from October 2018, the accused started telling Mr. Sandeep over phone that the work could not be completed and issued cheques to the victim. When the cheques bounced, the victim contacted Surappagari. The accused then threatened him that if he complained to the police, he would send his PSO and get him killed.

During interrogation, the accused told the police that he had come to Delhi to prepare for civil services examination. However, he could not pass the exam and started publishing a daily newspaper from Karol Bagh. The accused was earlier arrested thrice in Hyderabad.

Lok Sabha discusses 'guerrilla tactics' of traffic cops

Question raised regarding personnel 'hiding behind trees, pouncing on motorists'

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's popular 'guerrilla tactics' - concealing themselves behind trees before pouncing on erring motorists - have found mention in the Lok Sabha.

A question raised in the Lower House sought to know if the government has received any complaints regarding issuance of challans by Delhi traffic police personnel 'who hide behind trees'.

Gangapuram Kishan Reddy, Minister of State for Home Affairs, in a reply to

the question, said that according to the Delhi Police, no complaint has been made in this regard against any officer during the last three years, till June 15.

"Directions have been issued by Delhi Police to all the field functionaries of the Traffic unit to position themselves at some conspicuous place at the junctions. The field supervisory officers have also been directed by the Delhi Police to strictly ensure sufficient availability, visibility, punctuality and mobility of traffic staff at important roads/

intersections," Mr Reddy said in his reply.

On being asked about the details of the directions given by the State police to issue challan of vehicles, Mr. Reddy said that the police department has reported that its personnel are regularly briefed and sensitised to enforce traffic rules and regulations in true letter and spirit, in a professional manner and to also focus on ensuring smooth movement and regulation of traffic and less on prosecution.

The series of questions asked about issuance of

challans by the Delhi police involved one on whether the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued instructions to the Delhi Traffic Police to not challan vehicles on red lights, but standing behind trees away from red lights.

Mr. Reddy replied to the question saying that no such instruction has been issued.

8,000 fined daily

Data provided by the Delhi Traffic Police stated that around 8,000 motorists are fined every day for violation of various traffic rules.

Man tries to immolate self at police station

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 37-year-old man tried to end his life inside outer Delhi's Nihal Vihar police station on Wednesday afternoon, alleging that his complaint submitted in December was not paid heed to. An ASI has been suspended in connection with the case.

DCP (Outer) Seju P. Kuruvilla said that the man, identified as Rahul, is a resident of Nangloi and runs a business of e-rickshaw recharging.

A senior police officer said that around 2.30 p.m., Rahul came inside the police station, poured petrol on himself and lit a matchstick. "Officers and locals immediately rushed and doused the fire. He was rushed to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital where he is undergoing treatment," he said.

Rahul had submitted a complaint at the police station in December, stating that he had had a monetary dispute with a man over ₹50,000-60,000 and that the man was threatening him. The complaint was marked to ASI Vijay Kumar for action. "Rahul said that he tried to kill himself as the ASI did not take any action on his complaint. No FIR was also registered," the officer said.

An enquiry has been initiated, the police said.

डॉ बी. आर. अम्बेडकर विश्वविद्यालय दिल्ली
Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI
(Accredited with NAAC grade 'A')

ADMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC SESSION 2019-2020

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), a State University established by the Government of NCT of Delhi, invites applications from students who would enrol under its expanded foreign student quota. A fixed number of study places for foreign applicants are reserved in several degree programmes of the university. The foreign student application period for the 2019-2020 session will be 1 July - 20 July 2019. For details about eligibility, fees, programmes accepting foreign students, and the mode of admission, see the website: aud.ac.in/admissions2019.

Date: 01.07.2019 **Dean, International Affairs**
DIP/Shabdarth/0317/19-20

INSTITUTE OF BIORESOURCES & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (IBSD)
Department of Biotechnology, Government of India
6th Mile, Upper Shillong, Meghalaya-793009
Website: www.ibsd.gov.in

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW
Advertisement No. 02/2019
Shillong, 4th July, 2019

A Walk in Interview will be held on 16th July 2019 at 9:30 am at the Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD), Meghalaya for selection for 2 no. of Junior Research Fellow under projects titled "Bioresource and Sustainable livelihoods in North East India" and "Study of flora and fauna using Foldscope". Details can be obtained from the Office of IBSD, 6th Mile, Upper Shillong, Meghalaya-793009, India, Tele. No. 0364-2561600 on any working days or can also be downloaded from the website: <http://www.ibsd.gov.in>. Filled in application can be send at ibsd.meghalaya@gmail.com

Sd/-
Administrative Officer
IBSD, Meghalaya

DELHI POLLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, (GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI)
5th Floor, I.S.B.T. Building, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006
Visit us at: <https://dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in>

PUBLIC NOTICE

Kind Attention: All Producers, Recyclers and Manufacturers of Carry Bags, Recyclable Plastic Bags, Multi-layered Packaging and Processing of Plastic Waste in NCT of Delhi.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India has notified the Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2018 as amended to date. These rules shall apply to all waste generators, waste processors and manufacturers of plastic carry bags, multi-layered packaging material.

As per Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2018 as amended to date all persons who generate, collect, store, transport, re-use, recycle and dispose plastic waste in any form including importer, producer, individuals or agencies, groups of individuals voluntarily engaged or authorized, are required to obtain registration under the Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2018 as amended to date, and Consent to Establish/Operate under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 from Delhi Pollution Control Committee. The Rule 13 of the Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2018 as amended to date, provides:-

- (1) No person shall manufacture carry bags or recycle plastic bags or multilayered packaging unless the person has obtained a registration from Delhi Pollution Control Committee, prior to the commencement of production;
- (2) Every producer shall, for the purpose of registration or for renewal of registration, make an application of DPCC, in Form I.
- (3) Every person recycling or processing waste or proposing to recycle or process plastic waste shall make an application to the DPCC, for grant of registration or renewal of registration for the recycling unit, in Form II.
- (4) Every manufacturer engaged in manufacturer of plastic to be used as raw material by the producer shall make an application to the DPCC, for grant of registration or for the renewal of registration, in Form III.

All the Producer. Recyclers and Manufacturer of Carry Bag. Recycle Plastic Bags or Multi-layered Packaging in NCT of Delhi, are hereby directed to apply online at the website of DPCC at: <http://dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in> for registration under the Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2018 as amended to date and Consent to Establish/Operate under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 by 15 July, 2019, failing which, action shall be taken against the defaulter units including closure of the unit, disconnection of electricity/water supply and levying of Environmental Compensation.

Note: These Rules provides complete ban on the usc, sale and storage of plastic carry bags, Plastic Sheets or like covers made of Plastic Sheets & multilayer packaging having thickness less than 50 microns.

Member Secretary, DPCC
DIP/Shabdarth/0319/19-20

Do not alter existing definition of rape, Centre tells High Court

Affidavit submitted in reply to petition claiming current law is gender-specific

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Defending India's gender-specific rape law under which the perpetrator of the offence can only be a 'man', the Centre has told the Delhi High Court that "the existing definition of rape under Section 375 (rape) should be left untouched".

In an affidavit filed before the High Court, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) stated: "These sections have been enacted to protect and keep a check on the rising level of sexual offences against women in the country".

The MHA's affidavit came in response to a public interest petition claiming that the existing law pertaining to rape was gender-specific and protects only females.

The High Court had previously asked the Centre to clarify its stand on the issue, particularly in view of the recommendation of the Law Commission of India, to make rape laws "gender neutral".

The MHA admitted that



the law panel, in its 172nd report, had recommended changes for widening the scope of rape law to make it gender neutral, by substituting the definition of 'rape' with that of 'sexual assault'.

December 16, 2012, case

The Centre said that a process was initiated in 2012 to make rape law gender neutral through the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill.

However, after the December 16, 2012, Delhi gang rape case, the process was suspended.

Subsequently, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, was enacted, which widened the definition of

sexual offences and enhanced punishment, but did not go into the issue of making rape law gender neutral.

"After due deliberations at various levels, including various stakeholders and women groups, it was decided that Section 375 of the IPC would be kept gender-specific qua the perpetrator of the offence and the perpetrator is said to be a man".

It added that the existing definition of rape under Section 375 should be left untouched as the "ambit of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, which covers all forms of sexual offences against minors, and Section 377 of

the IPC were adequate to cover all sexual offences".

The petition filed by social activist Sanjiv Kumar has challenged the constitutionality of Sections 375 and 376 of the IPC as they were not "gender neutral".

Protects only females

"Gender neutrality is a simple recognition of reality — men sometimes fall victim to the same, or at least very similar, acts to those suffered by women," the petition contended.

"Male rape is far too prevalent to be termed an anomaly or freak incident. By not having gender-neutral rape laws, we are denying a lot more men justice than is commonly thought," the petition added.

No legal recourse

The plea further stated that in India, sexual crimes against boys under 18 years are covered under the POCSO Act, but once they become adults they do not have any legal recourse.

Classroom 'scam': BJP continues attack

Alleges AAP govt. spent ₹28.7 lakh each on construction of over 360 classrooms

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday claimed to have unearthed "Scam Part-II" in the education sector alleging that the AAP government spent ₹28.70 lakh each for the construction of around 366 classrooms in nursery schools.

Claiming that a "nexus" between Education Minister Manish Sisodia and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and "corruption in the name of education" had come to light, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said that the AAP government had committed "serious corruption".

Documents obtained by BJP spokesperson Harish Khurana and media co-in-charge Neelkant Bakshi are a proof of this, Mr. Tiwari said. The documents comprised purported minutes of a Delhi government finance committee meeting held in March 2018.

The papers come in the wake of the BJP's allegations on Tuesday that the Delhi government had perpetrated a "scam" of ₹2,000 crore in the construction of classrooms in



⚠️ Serious corruption has been committed in the construction of classrooms in Zone 25 and 29 of the South and South East districts

MANOJ TIWARI
Delhi BJP chief

government schools.

"On December 2, 2015, a budgetary allocation of ₹221.44 crore was made and the contract was given. Subsequently, by oral order, the budget allocation was raised to ₹326.36 crore, which is against the rules and comes in the category of corruption," Mr. Tiwari said.

'No written order'

"Serious corruption has been committed in the construction of classrooms in Zone 25 and 29 of the South and South East districts... the Principal Secretary had questioned the PWD officers on why semi-permanent structures were being built... the Finance Secretary had also ordered an inquiry," Mr. Tiwari added.

Sisodia sends legal notice to Tiwari, two others for 'false statements'

Seeks written apology; BJP ready to 'take matter to court'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Education Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday sent a legal notice to Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari, MP Parvish Singh Verma and MLA Vijender Gupta for allegedly making "false" and "defamatory" statements against him and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

On Monday, the BJP had accused the AAP government of partaking in financial "buddling" to the tune of ₹2,000 crore. The BJP alleged that a single classroom constructed by the Delhi government had cost around ₹24.85 lakh.

In the notice, Mr. Sisodia threatened the BJP leaders of legal proceedings if they do not tender an apology to him in writing and print the same



Manish Sisodia

along with correct facts on various newspapers across the country.

Challenge accepted

Mr. Tiwari hit back at the Minister and said they would take the matter to court. "We refuse to bow to your pressure tactics, Mr. Sisodia. We will prove your corruption... the BJP stands with the people of Delhi and will recover taxpayer's money. We will go

to the Lokayukt and the courts," he said in a tweet.

The legal notice stated: "The statement during the press conference and the various publications on social media are false... and were made with the sole intent of harming reputations".

AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj, said: "The BJP and its State president [Manoj Tiwari] have been trying to malign the Kejriwal model of education by levelling totally baseless and fabricated allegations."

Meanwhile, AAP claimed that during a protest against allegations made against Mr. Sisodia, a delegation of parents of children studying in government schools agitated outside Mr. Tiwari's residence and were detained by the police.

Remedial classes suspended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Wednesday suspended remedial classes for Class X and XII students in its schools due to the ongoing heatwave in the city.

The government had on Sunday announced extension

of summer vacation for students up to Class VIII till July 8 in view of the hot weather conditions. "Keeping in mind the heatwave, I have directed the Department of Education to post-hoc remedial classes until further notice," Deputy CM Manish Sisodia tweeted.

Govt. revises scholarship schemes for students

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Wednesday said it has approved the revision of its scholarship schemes for SC, ST, OBC and minority category students.

The department for the welfare of SC, ST, and OBC has reviewed the scholarship schemes in the current scenario and aims to simplify it for students who apply online as well as for government agencies for smooth processing of the applications, read a statement.

The schemes include reimbursement of tuition fees for SC/ST/OBC/minority category students studying in Class I-XII can be claimed for 100% of the tuition, lab and library fee up to ₹48,000 or actual paid, whichever is less.

Students, who are pursuing their technical/professional/vocational courses, that have secured 60% marks or more in the previous exam are eligible for ₹8,000 per annum.

Think tank's report on gov't. schools paints dismal picture

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday attacked the AAP government over "dismal" performance of its schools based on a report by a think tank, prompting AAP to issue a challenge to the party for a "healthy debate" on the Capital's education sector.

The report was released by the Public Policy Research Centre (PPRC), which has BJP leaders Vinay Sahasrabudde and Nalin Kohli as its board members.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta said the report pointed out the AAP government's "lackadaisical approach" towards policy implementation in the field of education.

PPRC director Sumit Bhasin and the BJP released the report 'Delhi Government Schools - A Factual Analysis', at the BJP office here.

"The report paints a dismal picture of performance of government schools, showing the average pass percentage in Class X as 71.58% compared to 93.18% in private schools," Mr. Gupta said.

The LoP argued that the data revealed 95% of Class XII students from government schools were "unable" to get admission in Delhi University in 2018, considering the average cut-off of 85.03% in its third list.

Reacting to the report, Aam Aadmi Party chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj invited the BJP for a "healthy debate" on education, asking it for a comparison of Delhi government schools with those in States ruled by it.

"We are really thrilled that the BJP and its related organisations have started thinking about the education system," Mr. Bharadwaj said in a statement.

Make marital rape ground for divorce: plea

Seeks directions to Centre to frame guidelines for lodging of FIRs in such cases

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A plea filed in the Delhi High Court has sought directions to the Centre to frame guidelines for registration of FIR for marital rape and laws to make it a ground for divorce.

The petition has sought clear guidelines for regis-

tration of cases related to marital rape so that accountability, responsibility and liability of the authorities concerned can be fixed.

The plea was filed after the Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain it and asked the petitioner, advocate Anuja Kapur, to approach the High Court

for relief. Ms. Kapur also sought directions to the government for fixing appropriate punishment/penalties for violation of the guidelines.

"Marital rape is no less an offence than murder, culpable homicide or rape. It denigrates the honour and dignity of a human be-

ing and reduces her to a chattel to be utilised for one's self convenience and comfort. It reduces a woman to a corpse, living under the constant fear of hurt or injury. Medical evidence proves that rape has severe and long-lasting consequences for women," the plea contended.

झारखंड सरकार
ग्रामीण विकास विभाग (ग्रामोकाओमामले) मुख्य अभियंता का कार्यालय
102, द्वितीय तल्ला, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी रोड, रांची

ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

ई-निविदा संख्या:- 26/2019-20/RDD(RWA)/DUMKA दिनांक: 02.07.2019
मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विभाग(ग्रामोकाओमामले) झारखंड, रांची द्वारा निम्न विवरण के अनुसार e-procurement पद्धति से निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

| क्र. सं. | आईडी-टी फिकेशन संख्या/ पैकेज संख्या | कार्य का नाम | प्राक्कलित राशि (रुपये में) | अंश में | कार्य समाप्ति की तिथि |
|----------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1. | RDD(RWA)/DUMKA/01/2019-20 | मेवासार से खैरवनी पथ माया नगरी/तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य (लम्बाई-11.500 कि०मी०) | 3,98,48,300.00 | तीन करोड़ अमलानवे लाख अड़तालीस हजार तीन सौ रु० मात्र | 18 माह |
| 2. | RDD(RWA)/DUMKA/02/2019-20 | आखंडोओ रोड मनकाचक से खैरवनी पथ माया सुखवाड़ी नोड/तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य (लम्बाई- 9.300 कि०मी०) | 2,37,18,100.00 | दो करोड़ सैंतीस लाख अठारह हजार एक सौ रु० मात्र | 12 माह |
| 3. | RDD(RWA)/DUMKA/03/2019-20 | मोडकरोओ (खैरवनी बाजार) पथ से झिका पथ माया नमोडीह, दुन्दुवा आम्लाईही तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य (लम्बाई- 7.900 कि०मी०) | 2,01,82,800.00 | दो करोड़ एक लाख ब्यासी हजार आठ सौ रु० मात्र | 12 माह |
| 4. | RDD(RWA)/DUMKA/04/2019-20 | टोंगरा से तारणी तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य (लम्बाई- 4.100 कि०मी०) | 1,22,20,100.00 | एक करोड़ बाईस लाख बीस हजार एक सौ रु० मात्र | 09 माह |

2. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि:- 15.07.2019
3. ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय:- 24.07.2019 अपराहन 5.00 बजे।
4. जिला नियंत्रण कक्ष, रांची में निविदा शुरू, अर्पणन की राशि, शेष पत्र के मूल प्रति एवं अपलोड किये गये तकनीकी शोयता दस्तावेज की एक प्रति जमा करने की तिथि:- 25.07.2019 पूर्वाहन 10.00 बजे से अपराहन 3.30 बजे तक।
5. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय:- 26.07.2019 पूर्वाहन 11.30 बजे।
6. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले परदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता:- मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विभाग (ग्रामोकाओमामले), झारखंड, रांची, 102, द्वितीय तल्ला, अभियंत्रण भवन, रांची।
7. ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया का दस्तावेज सं-0651-2207819
8. निविदा शुरू भारतीय स्टेट बैंक द्वारा निर्मित बैंक ड्राफ्ट के रूप में कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विभाग (ग्रामोकाओमामले), कार्य प्रभंडल, दुमका के पक्ष में भुगतान होगा जो लौटाया नहीं जायेगा।
विकृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट jharkhandtenders.gov.in में देखा जा सकता है।

नोडल परदाधिकारी
ई-प्रोक्चुरमेंट सेल
PR 210701 (Rural Work Department) 19-20 (D)

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender Notice No. MGS/EL/G/19-20/09 Date :- 01.07.2019
On line (through E-Tendering) for the following work is invited by DRM/ Elect/MGS for and on behalf of the President of India from experienced and financially as well as technically sound contractors including those enlisted with the Railway, CPWD, BSNL, MES, PWD and other public sector undertakings.

Sl.(1), Name of Work with its location :- No.MGS/EL/G/P/19-20/06 Sub : (Electrical work)-Provision of Lift in DRM Building at Mughalsara for Divyangjns. Approx. cost of the work. - Rs. 23,97,279.00, Earnest Money :- Rs. 48000.00 Tender closing Date Time - 25.07.2019 15:00 Hrs., Website particulars of E-Tendering - www.ireps.gov.in

Sl.(2), Name of Work with its location :- No.MGS/EL/G/P/19-20/07 Sub : (Electrical work)-Replacement of route relay interlocking on age cum condition basis at Mughalsara. Approx. cost of the work. - Rs. 1,31,56,954.54, Earnest Money :- Rs. 2,15,800.00 Tender closing Date Time - 25.07.2019 15:00 Hrs., Website particulars of E-Tendering - www.ireps.gov.in
Sr. Divnl. Elect. Engr. (G),Mughalsara PR/642/MGS/Elect./T/19-20/40

GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, ART CULTURE, SPORTS AND YOUTH AFFAIRS (TOURISM)
Director Ph. :- 0651-2400493, Fax :- 2400492, Email :- dirjharkhandtourism@gmail.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR HIRING OF TIC SPACE AT BODH GAYA, KOLKATA, TARAPITH, PURI, VARANASI & DELHI FOR JHARKHAND TOURISM

Tender Notice

Ref. No. Tou./Dir./Plan-26/2017- 892 / Ranchi/ Dated:-01/07/2019
The Directorate of Tourism (DoT), Govt. of Jharkhand as an endeavor for promotion of tourism and culture of Jharkhand State intends to **Hiring of TIC Space at Bodh Gaya, Kolkata, Tarapith, Puri, Varanasi & Delhi for Jharkhand Tourism.**
Interested agencies may download the document from **2/07/2019** onwards from the Department of Tourism website:-www.jharkhandtourism.gov.in/ and submit their Applications. The Application Due Date is on **23/07/2019 at 1400 hours.**
A pre-application conference will be held on **10/07/2019 by 15:00 Hours** at MDI Building, 2nd floor, HEC Campus, Dhurwa, Ranchi - 04, Tele Phone : 0651-2400493, e-mail: dirjharkhandtourism@gmail.com.
All subsequent notifications, changes and amendments will be posted only on the website www.jharkhandtourism.gov.in/. Tender/Bid Document Fee is **Rs. 2,240/-** (Two Thousand Two Hundred Forty only) inclusive of GST(Not Refundable).
Directorate of Tourism reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and annul the selection process at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever. **Sd/-**
PR 210583 Tourism, Art Culture Sports And Youth Affairs (19-20)D **Director, Tourism.**

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(Procurement Cell)
Tel. No. 022-24100478. E-mail-procurementcell@vaccinehaffkine.com
Acharya Donde Marg, Parel, Mumbai 400 012 (INDIA)

TENDER NOTICE

Date: 29/06/2019.
Managing Director, (Procurement Cell), Haffkine Bio Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd, Mumbai invites tenders in two envelope systems from eligible bidders for following items for various Health Institutions in Maharashtra.

| Sr. No. | Tender No. | Name of Description | Date of Pre Bid Meeting | Period of Sale and Preparation of bid & bid submission | Bid Opening |
|---------|---|------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | E-1320, E-1337 to E-1345 E-1364, E-1365, E-1407 to E-1412, E-1414, E-1538 to E-1544 | Purchase of Equipments | 11.07.2019 At 11.00 am. | From 03.07.2019 10.00 am to 24.07.2019 up to 14.00 hrs. | 26.07.2019 at 14:01 hrs. |
| 2 | E-1213 to E-1226 E-1228 to E-1233 | Purchase of Equipments | 09.07.2019 At 11.00 am. | From 03.07.2019 10.00 am to 24.07.2019 up to 14.00 hrs. | 26.07.2019 at 14:01 hrs. |
| 3 | E-1203 to E-1206, E-1244 to E-1248, E-1291, E-1296. E-1384 to E-1393 | Purchase of Equipments | 12.07.2019 At 11.00 am | From 05.07.2019 10.00 am to 26.07.2019 up to 14.00 hrs. | 29.07.2019 at 14:01 hrs. |
| 4 | E-1346 to E-1363 E-1545 to E-1551 | Purchase of Equipments | 10.07.2019 At 11.00 am. | From 03.07.2019 10.00 am to 24.07.2019 up to 14.00 hrs. | 26.07.2019 at 14:01 hrs. |

For detailed information, the interested bidders may visit the website <https://mahatenders.gov.in>
For e-tendering help/ information, please contact.
Website:- <https://mahatenders.gov.in>
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Email - eproc.support@maharashtra.gov.in

sd/-
(Dr.R.M.Kumbhar)
General Manager-1,
Haffkine Bio Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd.,
(Procurement Cell), Mumbai

DGIPR/2019/2020/1030

Government of Jharkhand
Department of Information Technology and E-Governance
Jharkhand Mantralaya, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004

Corrigendum-1
Tender Ref. no.:- IT/UID-Rate Contract-2014(Part File)-001
Advertisement PR No.:- 210096

1. Schedule of Invitation to Tender (Chapter-1, Point no.2, Page no. 7):

| | |
|---|---|
| (a) Name & Address of the Purchaser | The Secretary, Department of IT & e-Gov., 3rd Floor, Project Bhawan, Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand-834004 |
| (b) Locations where the AMC Services | At Block offices and Jails in the state of Jharkhand |
| (c) Pre-Bid Meeting | 12.07.2019 at 04:00 PM, Director Chamber, 3 rd Floor, Project Bhawan, Ranchi |
| (d) Place of submitting Tender (Hard Copy) | The Secretary, Department of IT & e-Gov., 3rd Floor, Project Bhawan, Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand-834004 |
| (e) Last date and time for submission of bids and scanned copy of DD for Tender Fee and DD of EMD | 24.07.2019 till 06:00 PM. |
| (f) Last Date & Time for Submission of Tender is on or before (Hard Copy) | 26.07.2019 at 12:00 Noon. |
| (g) Date & Time of Opening of Technical bid | 26.07.2019 at 4:00 PM |
| (h) Date till which the Tender is valid | 180 days from the date of opening of Financial bid. |

2. For Pre-Bid Query (New): Email ID: uidnupts@gmail.com Phone: +91-651-2401028
3. Eligibility Criteria of Tenderer/ Bidder (Chapter-1, Point no.-1, Page no.6): Bidder(s) must have at least 2 years of experience of running IT/Electronic equipment service center(s) or AMC of Aadhaar Enrolment Kit.
4. List of Items for AMC (Chapter-5, Page no.-18): OEM Authorization certificate in support of AMC for 3 years.

Sd/-
(Vikas Kumar)
P.R.210631 Information Technology(19-20):D **Under Secretary to Government**

HC seeks RBI, ED reply on online payment platform

It is operating 'illegally', claims petition

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought the response of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on a plea alleging that online payment platform PayPal was operating "illegally" without the RBI's authorisation.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar also issued notice to PayPal Payments Pvt Ltd (PayPal) and sought their stand on the petition.

The petition filed by Abhijit Mishra, a financial economist, has claimed that "Paypal is operating as a payment and settlements

system in blatant violation of the Payments and Settlements Systems Act".

"Paypal Payments Private Limited is not mentioned on the list of 'Payment System Operators' as authorised by the RBI to set up and operate in India under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007," the petition said.

PayPal through its unauthorised operation "has unmonitored and unauthorised access to personal information such as Aadhaar, PAN, etc. of the public", the petition claimed and sought probe by investigative agencies against the directors, management and officers of PayPal.

U.P. to book bootleggers under NSA, Gangster Act



U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday directed the district administration to strictly enforce the provisions of the National Security Act and the Gangster Act against bootleggers.

In a circular, Principal Secretary (Excise) Sanjay R. Bhoosreddy directed that in events of loss of human lives due to consumption of illicit and poisonous liquor, the action should be taken under various Indian Penal Code sections and also under the stringent NSA.

Under the NSA, the government can detain a person for as long as it wishes and the authorities need not disclose the grounds of detention.

On the other hand, a person booked under the provisions of the Gangster Act becomes part of a gang listed in police records. It entitles the police to keep track of those booked under the Act and issue summons to them for attendance at the local police station for questioning even if no fresh case has been lodged against them. The Act permits the police to seek remand of an accused for a maximum of 60 days as compared to a maximum 14-days' remand under normal circumstances.

Mr. Bhoosreddy directed the officials to register cases under the NSA and the Gangster Act against those found guilty of indulging in distilling and smuggling of illicit liquor.

He also underlined the need for effective prosecution of cases through senior prosecution officers or district government advocates before special courts.

Ansaris acquitted in MLA murder case

Another example of prosecution failing due to hostile witnesses, observes judgment

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday acquitted Ghazipur MP Afzal Ansari of the Bahujan Samaj Party, his brother and Uttar Pradesh MLA of the party Mukhtar Ansari and others in the 2005 murder case of BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai as all the eyewitnesses turned hostile.

Besides the politician, six persons were also killed in the firing on the vehicle in which they were travelling.

"This is a gruesome case involving murder of seven persons. The investigation of the case was transferred from U.P. Police to CBI. The trial of the case was also transferred from U.P. to Delhi. Unfortunately, the case of the prosecution has suffered as all the eyewitnesses and other material witnesses turned hostile," Special Judge Arun Bhargava said.

Gangster Munna Bajrang was also an accused in the case. He was killed during

The murder trial

Nov. 29, 2005: Krishnanand Rai, BJP's then sitting MLA from U.P.'s Mohammadabad constituency, murdered along with six others

Feb. 21, 2006: First chargesheet filed by the State police against Azaz-Ul-Haq, Afzal Ansari, Prem Prakash Singh, Atta-ur-Rehman and Firdaus

March 15: Second chargesheet filed against Mukhtar Ansari

May: Allahabad High Court orders a CBI inquiry based on a plea filed by the MLA's widow Alka Rai

Aug. 30: Third chargesheet filed by CBI against Sanjeev Maheshwari

She files a transfer petition before the Supreme Court



(Left) Afzal Ansari, Mukhtar Ansari

saying she has apprehensions about her security

Aug. 30: Third chargesheet filed by CBI against Sanjeev Maheshwari

Dec. 12: Fourth chargesheet filed against Rakesh Pandey and Ramu Mallah

March 20, 2007: Fifth chargesheet filed against Mansoor Ansari

April 22, 2013: SC transfers the case from Ghazipur district court to sessions court in Delhi

March 15, 2014: Sixth chargesheet filed against Prem Prakash Singh alias Munna Bajrang

May 22, 2019: CBI court reserves order in the case

July 3: Court acquits Ansaris and five others as witnesses turn hostile

trial of the case in Baghat jail in Uttar Pradesh last year.

The CBI alleged that the enmity between Rai and Mr. Afzal Ansari began following the defeat of latter at the hands of the former in the Mohammadabad Assembly constituency in 2002.

Dismissing the charge, the

judge said: "This court is of the view that when a contestant loses Assembly elections, it will not result in enmity of such a nature and enormity that he will think of murdering his opponent who has defeated him."

"Moreover, this defeat of Afzal Ansari in legislative

elections in 2002 became a blessing in disguise in as much as he won the election of Member of Parliament from Ghazipur constituency in 2004," the judge said.

"This is one strange case where the prosecution has set out its case of conspiracy in the broad daylight and in

the presence of 1,000-2,000 people including police, supporters and correspondents."

'No reliable evidence'

"In this case, there is no shred of evidence which is reliable for proving conspiracy alleged against Afzal Ansari," the judge stated.

"In the end, the prosecution has not proved the charges framed against Azaz-Ul-Haq, Afzal Ansari, Mukhtar Ansari, Sanjeev Maheshwari@eeva, Rakesh Pandey, Ramu Mallah and Mansoor Ansari. They are, therefore, acquitted of the charges framed against them," the judgment said.

The 478-page judgment concluded with the observation that "the case is another example of prosecution failing due to hostile witnesses. If the witnesses in this case had the benefit of the Witness Protection Scheme, 2018, during trial, the result may have been different."

Indore civic body serves fresh evacuation notice on family

M.P. High Court on Tuesday dismissed its plea for stay

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE

The Indore Municipal Corporation on Wednesday served a fresh evacuation notice to the occupants of the dilapidated house here which made headlines last week when BJP MLA Akash Vijayvargiya assaulted a civic official while opposing its demolition.

On Tuesday, the Madhya Pradesh HC had dismissed a petition filed by the family which lives in the house seeking a stay on demolition.

Municipal commissioner Ashish Singh said the family has been asked to vacate it by Friday, and then the structure, declared dangerous due to its condition ahead of monsoon, will be pulled down. The family was also informed that it can stay for three months in a flat in a

Don't think Shah will act against Vijayvargiya: Digvijaya Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHOPAL

Welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stern message following MLA Akash Vijayvargiya's assault on a government official, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Wednesday wondered whether BJP chief Amit Shah would let any action be taken against the son of his "dear friend" Kailash Vijayvargiya.

Akash Vijayvargiya, the MLA from Indore-3, was caught on camera assaulting an official of the Indore Municipal Corporation with a cricket bat during an argu-

building constructed for people over a demolition of a dilapidated house in Ganji compound area on June 26.

"... Modi ji expressed his anger against Akash's statement and instructed to take action against him... and the BJP workers who welcomed him after his release from jail," Mr. Singh said in a tweet.

"If this happens, then congratulations to Modi ji. If not, then we can only say that there is a lot of difference between what you say and what you do... I don't think Amit Shah will let his dear friend's son face any kind of loss," he said.

weaker section in Bhuri Tekari area, he said.

ITBP brings 7 trekkers' bodies home

It took the team 500 hours of mission in Uttarakhand's Himalayan peak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PITHORAGARH/NEW DELHI

The bodies of seven mountaineers killed on the way to Nanda Devi East Peak in May were brought down on Wednesday, ending an operation that involved the ITBP climbers and the IAF helicopters.

It took the ITBP team a total of 500 hours over 15 days to bring the mortal remains back so that the families of the deceased could find a closure of the tragedy.

Two base camps

The bodies were flown to the Pithoragarh's Naini Saini airport in IAF helicopters from a base camp at an altitude of 15,250 ft. in the mountains, where a 15-member team of the ITBP climbers had brought them down on their shoulders from another base camp at 18,000 ft.

The bodies were first spotted by the IAF's search planes on June 3, days after they were reported missing



ITBP personnel carrying the body of one of the seven mountaineers in Pithoragarh on Wednesday. •PTI

on May 25.

Following the detection of the bodies, lying partially buried in a terrain too difficult to be retrieved in IAF's

choppers, the ITBP launched its "daredevil" mission on June 13 and managed to reach them on foot after an "arduous" trekking and

climbing operation. They first brought the bodies to the first base camp at 18,000 ft and then to a second one at lower altitude.

Haryana police start mapping past cases of animosity

To avert any possibility of murders or attacks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

As a precautionary measure, the Haryana police have started mapping cases of animosity that could possibly result in fatal incidents.

Information collection

Haryana Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Navdeep Singh Virk on Wednesday said the police have started collecting information about such cases from their reports and are developing a strategy to prevent any unfortunate incidents.

of police personnel to compile a database of such cases.

"We will systematically study police records and also collect information or intelligence regarding such cases where there is a possibility of murders or attacks due to prolonged past enmity. This process will continue till July 15," Mr. Virk said.

State Director General of Police Manoj Yadava has directed top police officers, including the commissioners and superintendents of police, to depute a special team

Unpreventable category Mr. Virk said that such incidents come under the unpreventable category where a trivial issue suddenly takes an ugly shape.

"An analysis of cases of murders in the past few weeks in several districts of the State shows that the basic motive behind the crime was past enmity," the Additional DIG added.

Rise above party lines, Naveen tells BJD MLAs

'Stay away from corruption, work for the people without any discrimination'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Chief Minister and Biju Janata Dal president Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday advised the newly elected MLAs of his party to stay away from corruption and work for the people without discriminating against anyone on party lines.

Citing the example of his father late Biju Patnaik at a meeting at his residence, Mr. Patnaik told the MLAs that Biju Babu always worked for the masses rising above party lines.

Mr. Patnaik further asked the new MLAs to stay simple, humble and away from cor-

A gap is created between the people and their MLA if he becomes arrogant

NAVEEN PATNAIK
Odisha CM

ruption in order to win elections time and again. "A gap is naturally created between the people and their representative if an MLA becomes arrogant and maintains a luxurious lifestyle," said Mr. Patnaik.

Important suggestions

The Chief Minister's suggestions to the newly elected BJD MLAs assume signifi-

cance in the wake of the arrest of their party legislator from Patnagarh, Saroj Kumar Meher, over forcing a junior engineer to do sit-ups in public.

Mr. Meher is in judicial custody at present.

Narrating his own experience as an MLA since he was first elected in 2000, Mr. Patnaik said that after his election he had asked the Block Development Officers in his constituency to work for the benefit of all the people without any fear or favour.

Stating that as an MLA and as the Chief Minister, he had been working for the welfare

of the people without any discrimination, Mr. Patnaik asked the MLAs to accept his advice in order to maintain people's trust on their party.

Of the 59 newly elected MLAs in the Assembly, 40 belong to the ruling BJD. The party has been in power in the State since 2000 and Mr. Patnaik has been leading it to victory all these years.

Contesting from two Assembly constituencies in the recently held elections, Mr. Patnaik had won from both seats - his old constituency Hinjili in his home district Ganjam and Bijepur seat in Bargarh district in western Odisha.

Protest against sharing of Punjab river waters

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Leaders and workers of Lok Insaaf Party (LIP) on Wednesday staged a protest here against the ruling Congress government for allegedly failing to secure river water of the State.

The police used water cannons on the protesters after they attempted to cross the barricades erected on the way to Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's official residence.

Protesters detained

Police detained several protesters including LIP president and Ludhiana MLA Simarjeet Singh Bains, who led the protest. All of them were later released.

"Punjab would not share its water at any cost. State government is letting our water go to Rajasthan free of cost. Either the government should charge Rajasthan for the water or stop sharing it," said Mr. Bains.

"We would not allow even a single drop of our precious river water to go outside the State and we would do anything for that," he added.

'Implement resolution'

The LIP president said that State government should implement the resolution passed in Punjab Assembly in 2017, in which royalty was sought from Rajasthan, Delhi and Haryana for using water of Punjab rivers.

Baal Sabha initiative extended to include village elders

Distinguished villagers will also be made members of school management committees in Rajasthan

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

An initiative launched by the Congress government in Rajasthan to organise Baal Sabha (children's assembly) of schools at public places in the villages has been extended to include the village elders, on whose advice the work for raising academic standards will be taken up. Distinguished villagers will also be made members of the school management committees.

The latest round of Baal Sabhas in the State was held on Tuesday, with a call made for enhancing the role of rural society in bringing qualitative improvement to school education. Principals of the government schools laid emphasis on reducing



Minister Govind Singh Dotasara (centre) inaugurating a Baal Sabha in Jaipur district's Shahpura tehsil. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

dropout rate of students and encouraging the rural families to send their children to schools.

At the Baal Sabha of the Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Amarsar, in Jaipur district's Shahpura

tehsil, Minister of State for Education Govind Singh Dotasara said his department would make an all-out effort for increasing enrolment of students and ensuring their stay at various levels in the schools.

Addressing the Baal Sabha at the Amarsar 'chaupal' (village square), Mr. Dotasara said the government schools would start holding their annual functions from this year, while the establishment of sports complexes on the school premises would help promote physical activities among young children.

Students taking part in the Baal Sabha presented an all-religion prayer, 'Antakshari' (spoken parlour game) and songs and dances. A student, Aastha Saini, who presided over the Baal Sabha, delivered a powerful speech on the current state of girls' education and challenges in future.

Mr. Dotasara said Mahatma Gandhi's vision for education would be publicised

during his 150th birth anniversary celebrations, while the initiatives such as the launch of Rajiv Gandhi career portal, opening of an English medium government school at each district headquarters and change of staffing pattern for appointment of teachers would go a long way in improving standards of education.

Donations announced

Minister of State for Technical Education Subhash Garg and Rajasthan School Education Council's Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Borad also attended the Baal Sabha. Philanthropists announced donations of ₹1.12 crore on the occasion for creating infrastructure facilities in the local schools.

Recall pardon of convicted cops: SAD

Badal says appeal is pending in HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal on Wednesday urged Punjab Governor V.P. Singh Badnore to recall the pardon granted to four convicted police officers who are serving life sentence for the abduction and murder of a Sikh youth in 1993 to secure out-of-turn promotion.

A delegation led by Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal met the Governor to submit a memorandum regarding its demand.

"The four cops were sentenced to life imprisonment in December 2014 by a special CBI court. Notably, the convicts have appealed against this judgment and

that plea is pending before the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Pardon cannot be granted in such cases," said Mr. Badal.

The four policemen were convicted of killing Ludhiana resident Harjit Singh in a fake encounter.

'Misleading Governor'

Mr. Badal alleged that the ruling Congress government is unjustified in recommending the pardon and it amounts to misleading the Governor as he was not "appropriately" briefed about the case.

"The State government failed to take mandatory permissions from the Union Home Ministry," he said.

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AND
M/s. Yukta Engineering Works, # 692, 4C Macheda Loha Mandi Road, Jaipur Rajasthan-302013, Rep.by its Prop-Manoj Sharma ... Defendant
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Dam burst: Congress seeks culpable homicide case against govt. officials

Wadettiwar demands action against Shiv Sena MLA's firm, resignation of Water Resources Minister

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday ordered an inquiry into the Tiware Dam burst in Konkan's Chiplun, where 23 people are feared dead. The Congress, however, demanded that a case of culpable homicide be filed against the government officials, who neglected the cracks in the structure despite complaints from locals, and a Shiv Sena MLA's firm that constructed the dam.

CM takes stock

"The reason for the breach will be probed and action will be taken against those found guilty," Mr. Fadnavis said. He contacted the district administration and took stock of the relief and rescue operations, a statement said.

At a press conference, Leader of Opposition in the



Trail of misery: A house at Tiware village, which was damaged following a breach in Tiware Dam in Ratnagiri district on Tuesday night after heavy rain. • RAJU SHINDE

Assembly, Vijay Wadettiwar, said, "The dam was constructed 19 years ago by Hemraj construction, which

is run by Sena MLA Sadanand Chavan." "The fact that the dam developed cracks in less than

two decades and breached, resulting in loss of innocent lives shows the work was mired in corruption and ir-

regularities," he said.

Mr. Wadettiwar said last year, locals had complained to the district administration that the dam had developed cracks. "This year, the dam was repaired and still there was a breach. Why were the complaints of locals not taken seriously?"

Apathy and negligence

Mr. Wadettiwar said the loss of lives was due to the government's apathy and negligence, and demanded resignation of Water Resources Minister Girish Mahajan. "The minister knows how to breach other political parties, but doesn't know how to prevent breach of dams."

The Congress leader also demanded that a case under IPC Section 302 (murder) be filed against the government since the problem in the dam was brought to the notice of the administration, but no action was taken.

Hearing on plea against Fadnavis: CMO, Oppn. can't comment now

His disqualification for non-disclosure of criminal cases sought

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday fixed for hearing on July 23 a petition seeking Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's disqualification as legislator for his alleged non-disclosure of two criminal cases against him in his 2014 election affidavit.

When *The Hindu* contacted the Chief Minister's Office, it said the matter is before the court and it would not be appropriate to comment at this moment.

The Opposition too chose not to make any comment saying the matter is sub-judice. "I don't think I should comment on a case which is pending and yet to be heard by the apex court. The court will decide based on the merits of the case. I will react after the verdict in the case is out," Leader of Opposition Vijay Wadettiwar said.

Nationalist Congress Party chief spokesperson Nawab Malik also said that commenting on a case, which is

The court will decide based on the merits of the case. I will react after the verdict in the case is out

VIJAY WADETTIWAR

currently being heard in the court, is inappropriate.

A special leave petition, filed by advocate Satish Uke, challenged an order passed by the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court that quashed an order passed by the Sessions court, Nagpur, and upheld the order of judicial magistrate, first class, (JMFC) Nagpur, dismissing the complaint filed by Mr. Uke against the CM.

Mr. Uke alleged, "On May 7, 1996, a criminal complaint was filed by advocate Madanlal Parate against Mr. Fadnavis and that the JMFC passed an order to issue process for offence under Section 500 (punishment for defamation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)." He said, "On June 7, 1999, another criminal com-

plaint was also filed by Mr. Parate and the JMFC, Nagpur, passed an order to issue process under Sections 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (using as genuine a forged document or electronic record), 217 (public servant disobeying direction of law with intent to save person from punishment or property from forfeiture), 218 (public servant framing incorrect record or writing with intent to save person from punishment or property from forfeiture), 467 (forgery of valuable security, will, etc.), 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property), and 34 of the IPC."

Mr. Uke said Mr. Fadnavis withheld this information on the affidavit filed by him before the elections. He said as per Section 125A of the Representation of the Peoples Act, the act of providing false information or concealing of information is a punishable offence with imprisonment up to six months, or with fine, or both.

State warns port operators against lax coastal security

Centre flags non-compliance of standard operating procedure

SHARAD VYAS
MUMBAI

The Central government has asked private port operators along the Arabian coast to maintain strict security protocol declared by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

In a recent communication to the State governments and operators, the Centre asked operators to ensure coastal security by following the standard operating procedure. "We have received the Central advisory and directed port operators to prepare a contingency plan for the respective ports and submit it to the Coast Guard and the district administration for approval at the earliest," a State government official said.

The advisory said several port operators are not following the security protocol along the Arabian coast. The Maharashtra government in a meeting on May 16 had demanded that all operators and stakeholders strictly follow compliance of security measures. "At the meeting, all port operators were asked to fix a timeline with the required equipment to combat oil spill as well," the official said.

Chief Minister Devendra



Policemen stand guard at Badhwar Park in Colaba. • FILE PHOTO

Fadnavis had, along with Indian Navy, recently declared 20 ports in Raigad as sensitive, and made the information public in the Assembly. Of the 591 ports in the State, 20 in Raigad district have been categorised as sensitive by the Navy. The naval inspection also recommended that security around these ports be beefed up, Mr. Fadnavis told the Assembly.

Officials confirmed that the State has been trying to improve security around 90 ports.

These were also part of the Union Home Ministry's Ram Pradhan Committee report, which had recommended measures to make ports and wharfs safer fol-

lowing the 26/11 terror strikes. The panel had also recommended security protocols for the ports, measures to record boat movements, and checking of licence and documents of fishermen among others, to improve security.

While the State fisheries department has registered fishing boats, nearly 72,000 biometric cards were yet to be distributed until 2017. According to official data, of the 2,11,857 fishermen, only half have been given a card. About 91 sea wardens, who were to be deployed at an equal number of vulnerable points identified by the police, have also not been put in place, officials said.

Improper planning, lack of monitoring defeating aim of green power, says CAG

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

An audit report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on setting up small hydro projects on public-private partnership (PPP) basis said due to improper planning and inadequate monitoring, the objective of harnessing the green power with the help of private sector was largely defeated.

The report that was presented in the Assembly on Tuesday said as against the estimated installed capacity of 417.85 MW, only 36.85 MW installed capacity was achieved.

The report on implementation of small hydro projects on PPP basis covering the period 2013-18 revealed that of the 121 sites identified by the water resources department, the feasibility study of 61 sites (installed capacity: 266.87 MW) had not been completed at the time of identification of sites and 27 sites (installed capacity: 78.65 MW) were dropped being

Status of small hydro projects

| STATUS | GOVT. IDENTIFIED | | SELF-IDENTIFIED | | TOTAL | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| | NO. | INSTALLED CAPACITY (MW) | NO. | INSTALLED CAPACITY (MW) | NO. | INSTALLED CAPACITY (MW) |
| Bidding completed | 19 | 31.30 | 11 | 39.40 | 30 | 70.70 |
| Bidding in progress | 3 | 1.70 | - | - | 3 | 1.70 |
| Feasibility study in progress | 61 | 266.87 | - | - | 61 | 266.87 |
| Project dropped | 26 | 78.15 | 1 | 0.50 | 27 | 78.65 |
| Total | 109 | 378.02 | 12 | 39.90 | 121 | 417.92 |

Had the planning and monitoring been better, the outcome could have been different

CAG REPORT

financially non-feasible.

In respect of six selected commissioned projects, only one project was commissioned within the scheduled time and five projects were commissioned after delays ranging from 17

months to 63 months.

"There was time overrun ranging from 39 to 53 months in respect of two ongoing projects due to non-completion of dam and land handed over to developer was not in the name of the department. The projected annual power generation was not achieved, among other things, due to release of lesser volume of water," the report said.

"Had the planning and monitoring been better, the

outcome could have been different," it said.

The CAG has recommended that the feasibility study in respect of listed projects be completed in a time-bound manner. "The government may address the issue of less release of water so as to have fair terms for PPP projects. There is a need to focus on the issues at hand and work out a solution to take the project forward or short-close the same if a feasible solution is possible," it said.

Rahul's exit: uncertainty over future of Maharashtra Cong.

Prakash Ambedkar offers 40 seats ahead of Assembly polls

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

With resignation of Congress president Rahul Gandhi from his post on Tuesday, the fate of the party's Maharashtra unit is also under doubt as Mr. Gandhi had reportedly accepted the resignation of State committee president Ashok Chavan.

According to senior party leaders from Maharashtra, the high command had already finalised the next president of the State unit. "The Assembly elections will be held in two months. There has to be clear directions from the leadership as to who will lead the party in the polls," a Congress leader said.

Mr. Chavan in an interview to an English daily confirmed that his resignation had been accepted and his successor would be chosen soon. He could not be reached for a comment on Wednesday. Sources said Congress legislative party leader Balasaheb Thorat is a frontrunner for the State committee chief's post, but Mr. Thorat refused to comment. Leader of Opposition



Sources said Congress legislative party leader Balasaheb Thorat is a frontrunner for the State committee chief's post. • FILE PHOTO

Vijay Wadettiwar said the decision of the high command will be accepted by all.

The party may also have four working presidents in the State where a leader from each of the geographical regions will be chosen and given the responsibility in the Assembly polls. "A change in guard at this moment is likely to create difficulties on ground, but we can deal with that only if a decision is taken soon. The party cannot be kept on waiting mode when the elections are approaching," the leader said.

A week ago, all senior leaders from Maharashtra held a meeting with Mr. Gandhi where he reportedly questioned them over the failure of the party in the Lok Sabha polls. He also asked as to why the party could not stop Dalit votes from being shifted to the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA).

Meanwhile, Prakash Ambedkar-led VBA on Wednesday mocked the Congress saying it is ready to give 40 seats to the Congress as it will contest 248 of the 288 Assembly seats. It has given the Congress 10 days to reply.

Rain brings hope



Greener pastures: Daily wage labourers at a paddy field at Nerul, South Goa. Agricultural activities gain momentum after moderate rainfall. • ATISH POMBURFEKAR

Elderly woman dies in suspected tiger attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDRAPUR

A 65-year-old woman was killed in a suspected tiger attack on Wednesday in Chandrapur district, said a senior

forest officer. The incident took place around noon in Chichpalli range under the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) area, he said.

According to Sunil Atram, Divisional Manager, West Chanda Division, FDCM, the deceased was identified as Shantabai Sonurle, a resident of Jambarla village.

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IN BRIEF



TV9 case: Telugu actor Shivaji detained at RGIA

HYDERABAD
Tollywood actor Sontieni Shivaji was on Wednesday stopped from boarding a flight to New York by authorities at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, as a lookout circular was issued against him, following Cyberabad police's request. The actor, who was absconding for the last couple of months, is wanted by the police in connection with the TV9 "cheating cases" following the complaints lodged by P. Kaushik Rao, Director of Alanda Media Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. which owns TV9 channels, the police said.

Gold smuggling case: CBI conducts raids in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
The CBI on Wednesday conducted multiple raids across Kerala on the homes and offices of persons alleged to be involved in large-scale illegal import of gold through the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport. Officials said the CBI examinations were focussed on the business links and alleged illicit wealth of the main suspect, B. Radhakrishnan, Superintendent, Customs Air Intelligence Unit, Thiruvananthapuram.

Company to coordinate works at Sabarimala

PATHANAMTHITTA
The Kerala government has decided to constitute a separate company for coordinating the development works at Sabarimala. Eleven projects, estimated at ₹1,327 crore, would be executed through the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB). The proposed company, chaired by the Chief Secretary, would coordinate the execution of all projects.

Karnataka police take Varavara Rao into custody in 2005 case

Others charged in the attack on KSRRP camp in Tumakuru were earlier acquitted

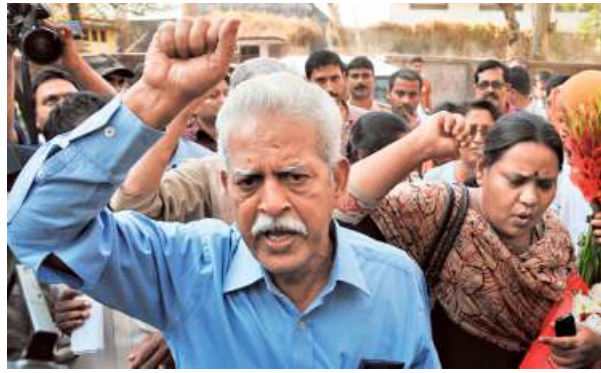
STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The Karnataka police on Wednesday took into custody Telugu poet and activist Varavara Rao from the Yerawada Central Jail, Pune, in connection with the 2005 naxal attack in Pavagada taluk of Kolar district. Mr. Rao has been in Pune jail since his arrest in the Elgar Parishad case in 2018.

He will be produced before the JMFC Court, Pavagada, on Thursday, officials said. The State police are trying to arrest Telugu poet Gaddar too in connection with the case, and a team has been deputed for this.

A Karnataka State Reserve Police (KSRRP) camp in Pavagada, Tumakuru district, came under attack, allegedly by extremists, on February 10, 2005, leaving seven dead including six KSRRP personnel.

The attack was seen as retaliation for the encounter in which naxal leader Saketh Rajan alias Prem was shot dead in Chikkamagaluru.



Varavara Rao paying homage to Maoist leader M. Koteswar Rao in Kolkata in 2011. ■ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

Both Mr. Rao and Mr. Gaddar were named accused in the chargesheet along with others. They were charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and for murder. Both Mr. Rao and Mr. Gaddar were listed as absconding, while the other accused who stood trial were acquitted.

An appeal by the State against the acquittal is pending before the Karnataka High Court. K.V. Sharat Chandra, IGP (Central Range), Karnataka, said the

arrest was made as Mr. Rao was available in custody.

HC reviewed case

Mr. Rao was taken into custody after the State police assured the Karnataka High Court on June 7, 2019 that they were in the process of securing him and Mr. Gaddar, cited as accused number 11 and 12, in the chargesheet. They had been declared absconding. The assurance was given before a Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice Ra-

vi Malimath and Justice H.P. Sandesh at a hearing on an appeal from the State, challenging the 2011 verdict of a Tumakuru sessions court, which acquitted Nagaraja and 19 others.

The prosecution told the Court that trial against accused number 14 and 42, who were absconding earlier, had commenced.

The prosecution and counsel for 19 acquitted persons contended that a HC decision either way on appeals would impact the trial against others, upon which the court deferred the appeals till completion of trial against Mr. Rao, Mr. Gaddar, and two others was completed. However, the court also asked the police to submit report on securing Mr. Rao and Mr. Gaddar for commencing trial against them.

Mr. Rao's wife P. Hemalatha said his arrest in a case where all the rest of the accused were acquitted only smelt of a collusion of agencies to harass him further to extend his jail stay.

Five held for gang rape of college student

Incident came to light after video clips of incident were circulated on WhatsApp

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MANGALURU

The Dakshina Kannada police on Wednesday arrested five youth after video clips of them allegedly raping a college girl were shared widely on social media, sending shock waves through the coastal district.

The police identified the arrested persons as Gurunandan of Bajathoor village, Prajwal and Kishan of Perne village in Bantwal, Sunil of

Aryapu village in Puttur, and Prakhay from Barimaru village in Bantwal, all aged 19. The five are accused of raping the girl and circulating videos on WhatsApp groups.

In a statement, the police said the victim was called by Sunil, her senior in the college, to accompany him in the car in the last week of March. The four other accused also joined them. They took her to a secluded place and gang-raped her. The ac-

cusced had then reportedly threatened the victim against revealing the incident.

The incident came to light after the social media monitoring cell of the district police noticed the videos on some WhatsApp groups. The cell alerted the District Women Police, who registered a *suo motu* case under the Information Technology Act, 2000.

The police have booked the accused under Sections

341, 376 (D) of the Indian Penal Code, Sections 3(1)(w)(1) (11) and 3 (2)(v) of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, and under Sections 66 (E) and 67 (A) of the Information Technology Act.

In a statement, Superintendent of Police B.M. Laxmi Prasad cautioned against sharing the video clips.

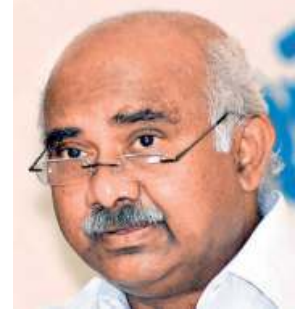
Mr. Prasad denied reports that the girl was drugged before the assault.

Karnataka JD(S) chief's moves spark exit rumour

Vishwanath meets BJP leaders in New Delhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In what is being seen in political circles as an indication of his imminent exit from the party, Janata Dal (Secular) Karnataka president A.H. Vishwanath on Wednesday attacked leaders of the coalition parties, saying there was no coordination in running the government and they were not serious about making the coalition a success. Fuelling the speculation was his meeting with several State BJP MPs both at Karnataka Bhavan and Parliament House in Delhi on Wednesday. Though Mr.



A.H. Vishwanath

Vishwanath has tendered his resignation to the party post, it is yet to be accepted.

Mr. Vishwanath, however, remained non-committal on his next moves. "When I go

to the BJP, I will announce it. At the moment, I do not have any plans," he told reporters. On meeting the BJP leaders, he said, "BJP members are all over the place, both in Karnataka Bhavan and in Parliament, and I happened to meet them."

Mr. Vishwanath, who visited the Kali temple in Kolkata and the Kamakhya temple in Guwahati, reached Delhi and met the parliamentarians. Among those whom he met were MP for Shivamogga B.Y. Raghavendra, son of BJP State president B.S. Yeddyurappa.

Mumbai court grants Binoy anticipatory bail

'Should cooperate with probe officer'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI/THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A Mumbai sessions court on Wednesday granted anticipatory bail to Binoy Kodiyeri, 37, son of Kerala State CPI (M) secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, in an alleged rape case against him on his paying ₹25,000.

The complainant, a former bar dancer, 33, had deposed that Mr. Kodiyeri could harm her and her child if accorded bail. She also posited that Mr. Kodiyeri is the son of a powerful politician, a former Home Minister, whose party is in power in Kerala.

While granting a pre-arrest bail, judge M.H. Shaikh directed Mr. Kodiyeri to appear at the Oshiwara police station every Monday between 10 a.m. and 1 a.m. Mr. Kodiyeri was told to cooperate with the investigation of



Binoy Kodiyeri

ficer and if the investigating officer demands he would have to undergo DNA test and give a blood sample for further investigation.

The court granted bail on the condition that he should not threaten prosecution witnesses or tamper with prosecution evidence. He was also ordered to not to leave the country without taking prior permission from the court.

Four arrested for H-IB fraud in the U.S.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA

Two Telugus are among four executives of New Jersey-based IT staffing companies arrested in the U.S. on Tuesday on charges of fraudulently using the H-IB visa programme.

The U.S. Attorney's Office, Department of Justice in New Jersey, said the defendants Vijay Mane, 39, of Princeton, New Jersey; Venkataramana Mannam, 47, of Edison, New Jersey; Fernando Silva, 53, of Princeton; and Sateesh Vemuri, 52, of San Jose, California, were charged with one count of conspiracy to commit visa fraud which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The four were alleged of gaining unfair advantage over competitors, Attorney Craig Carpentio said.

Custodial death: 2 Kerala police officers arrested

Those held have confessed to crime

A CORRESPONDENT
IDUKKI

A Crime Branch special team on Wednesday arrested two Kerala police officers, including a former sub-inspector of the Nedumkandam police station, in connection with the custodial torture and death of Kolahamedu resident Rajkumar, who had been arrested in a financial fraud case recently.

The police personnel arrested were former Nedumkandam SI K.A. Sabu and civil police officer Sajeev Antony. The two were taken into custody late on Tuesday.

Rajkumar was reportedly in police custody from June 12 to June 16, till he was produced before the Nedumkandam magistrate court. He was taken in a very serious condition from the Peerumade sub-jail to the taluk hospital on June 21,

where he died immediately. It has been alleged that the police, led by the SI, resorted to third degree torture methods on Rajkumar in an inebriated condition.

Immediately after the arrest was recorded, Sabu collapsed. The arrested confessed to the custodial torture of Rajkumar in order to recover money he had taken from 34 self-help group members, said the official.

Eight police officers, including the arrested, were placed under suspension; all of them were transferred from the Nedumkandam police station.

The Kerala government formed a seven-member team last week to inquire into the circumstances that led to Rajkumar's death.

An autopsy conducted on the deceased at the Kottayam MCH had revealed 22 wounds in his body.

Wave power



Obstacle course: Sea erosion has left a gaping hole in a walkway in the coastal town of Vizhinjam in Kerala. The walkway is close to the Bollard Pull Test Facility, which is used to check the tugging capacity of ships. ■ S.GOPAKUMAR

A.P. CM Jagan rules out encouraging defections

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Ahead of the Budget session of the Assembly, which is likely from July 11, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday said "though many have suggested," he would not encourage any defections from the Telugu Desam Party to the YSRCP to deprive the latter of the Opposition party status.

Speaking at the two-day orientation programme for MLAs on Assembly rules and regulations, Mr. Reddy said even if five TDP MLAs were allowed to join the YSRCP, it would have lost the Opposition status.

'Resign first'

"But I took a principled stand against it. If TDP MLAs want to cross over to the YSRCP, they will have to resign first. We want to set an example for others by scrupulously following the



Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

procedures and morals," he said. Mr. Reddy recalled that there were no instances of the Speaker disqualifying MLAs who joined another party after winning the election.

The YSRCP wanted to be different from other political parties that encourage such immoral acts.

Unless the candidate wins on YSRCP ticket, he or she could not become a party MLA, he asserted.

Kerala gets its first high security prison

55 'hardcore' criminals to be shifted here

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THRISSUR

Body scanners, biometric fingerprint lock system and surveillance cameras – these are among the facilities available at Kerala's first high security prison launched at Viyyur here on Wednesday.

In the first phase, 55 'hardcore' criminals from the three Central prisons in Kannur, Thiruvananthapuram and Viyyur will be shifted to the new facility. Among those to be shifted are convicts booked by the National Investigation Agency.

State-of-the-art facility

The jail, constructed with state-of-the-art security facilities, has the capacity to



DGP (Prisons) Rishiraj Singh at the High Security Prison, Viyyur, after it was opened on Wednesday. ■ K.K. NAJEEB

house 600 prisoners. It has 192 cells. The three-storey building is situated in a nine-acre compound and has an administrative block. A body scanner has been installed at the prison as part of the security arrangements. A bio-

metric fingerprint lock system is also in place for the entry and exit of staff and others. Though it was inaugurated by the then Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala in 2016, safety arrangements had not been provided with-

in the prison at the time. The building was constructed at ₹22 crore and security systems were later installed at ₹11.51 crore. Director General of Prisons Rishiraj Singh launched the prison on Wednesday after the pending works were completed.

The cells have been built in such a manner that the inmates will not see each other. Interaction between inmates and visitors will be through video conferencing. All rooms have toilets and CCTV cameras. Four watchtowers with 24-hour monitoring facility are also there.

Work on roads inside the premises and a modern kitchen is progressing. A hospital with a capacity of 30 beds will also be arranged. A dog squad will also be stationed there. Sixty-two posts have been created for the high security prison.

SCR constructs longest electrified tunnel

The 6.6-km stretch was completed in a record time of 43 months at ₹460 crore

RAJULAPUDI SRINIVAS
VIJAYAWADA

The South Central Railway (SCR) has added another feather to its cap by commissioning the longest electrified tunnel in Indian Railways. The tunnel, measuring 6.6 km, is situated between Cherlopalli and Rapuru stations and is part of the 113-km new railway line completed recently between Obulavaripalli-Venkatachalam-Krishnapatnam Port.

Efforts lauded

Two freight trains have been run successfully on the electrified railway line a few days ago, thereby opening up viable rail connectivity between Krishnapatnam Port and its hinterland for goods train services.



Workers inspecting the tunnel between Cherlopalli and Rapuru Stations in Vijayawada. ■ CH. VIJAYA BHASKAR

SCR general manager Gaganan Mallya lauded the efforts of the railway authorities and all the staff involved in completion of this tunnel in a record time of 43 months.

"The tunnel, an engineer-

hinterland areas by 60 km.

At present, the average travel time taken by goods train from Krishnapatnam Port to Obulavaripalli is 10 hours. With the commissioning of the new line, it would be reduced to five hours, the general manager said.

The electrified tunnel has been constructed in the shape of a horse shoe on the New Australian Tunnelling Method, at a cost of ₹460 crore. The height of the tunnel (rail level to roof) is 6.5 metres and the minimum height of the contact wire maintained at 5.2 metres, railway officials said. Mr. Mallya said the new line would facilitate direct connectivity between South Coast and West Coast Railway and improve freight revenue of the zone.

IN BRIEF



More flights between New Delhi, Colombo
NEW DELHI
Sri Lankan Airlines on Wednesday announced the launch of four additional weekly flights between New Delhi and Colombo from July 4. The latest addition will take the airline's frequency between the two cities to a total of 18 flights per week, its CEO Vipula Gunatilleka said at a press conference.

Women's panel seeks FIR against singer
CHANDIGARH
The Punjab State Women Commission has recommended legal action against singer Honey Singh for allegedly using objectionable words against women in a song. In a letter to the Additional Chief Secretary (Home), the DGP and the IGP (Crime), Commission's Chairperson Manisha Gulati said, "The words used in his recent song are objectionable and vulgar. Hence we have asked the police to register a case against him and also against the company, T-series."

SC denies relief to Trinamool MP's wife
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court Wednesday refused to interfere with the Calcutta High Court order which put in abeyance the summons issued by the Customs Department against Trinamool MP Abhishek Banerjee's wife Rujira Naroola. The department had asked Ms. Naroola to appear before it for obstructing its officers from checking her baggage at the Kolkata airport on her arrival from Bangkok on March 16. PTI

Aditya Pancholi blackmailed me: actor
MUMBAI
A leading Bollywood actor, who lodged a case of rape against actor Aditya Pancholi last month, has claimed in her statement to the police that he also blackmailed her when she was a newcomer in the film industry. Mr. Pancholi, 54, has denied the allegations. She suspected that he had spiked her drink, she stated. PTI

Malad wall collapse toll hits 26

Rescuers extricate four more bodies from debris in Mumbai suburb as rains ease

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The death toll from the compound wall collapse in Mumbai's Malad rose to 26 after rescuers recovered four more bodies on Wednesday. Officials said the bodies were found at least 3 feet beneath the debris, with the help of sniffer dogs. Of the four, two were women, one was a man and the fourth was a female child. On Wednesday, with the rains receding, rescue teams, worked round-the-clock to clear the debris and look for survivors or possibly more bodies. Meanwhile, the police was inquiring with local residents to ascertain how many more people were still missing.

Difficult to access
"The area is such that getting a JCB demolition vehicle or an ambulance inside is very difficult," said Inspector K. Dhule of the Malad police station. "We are trying our best despite the challenges," he added. The local NCP corporator Dhanashree Bharadkar had



Rescuers carrying a body recovered from the wall collapse site in Malad on Wednesday. *EMMANUAL YOGINI

written to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in 2017, warning that the new wall did not have any outlets for storm water to drain out and that it could lead to a collapse, the corporator asserted in a statement. "We had specifically written to the BMC in this matter as we noticed that it had left no outlets for water to flow out in the wall," said Vaibhav Bharadkar, the corporator's husband. "We had received lot of complaints from locals as well. But nobody from BMC did anything. We are a

small party in BMC, so they do not seem to care," he asserted. A senior officer from the BMC's Hydraulic Engineer's department said, "A total five box drains were provided during the time of construction of this wall. This includes four cross drains and one culvert. However, their capacity is limited, maybe around 100 mm. When it rained close to 450 mm, they could not take the load and the wall broke. In some places, water had been flowing from above the three meter wall."

The officer, who did not wish to be identified, however, also alleged that slum dwellers had obstructed the drain holes meant for allowing the flow of water by inserting bamboo sticks in them for supporting their houses. In Malad's Ambedkar Nagar, one of the two sites of the collapse, dazed looking survivors joined the police and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel in checking the debris. While some were looking for their belongings, others were looking for their family members.

"All I have left are my wife Ayesha Bano's bangles, which I found while digging through the rubble," said a resident Afzur Rehman, 30. "I don't know where she is, or how she is. Nor do I know who I should blame for my misery," he added. Semma Manna, 38, said, "None of us have slept since the incident. I keep seeing the faces of my dead neighbours every time I close my eyes. We do not feel safe any more."

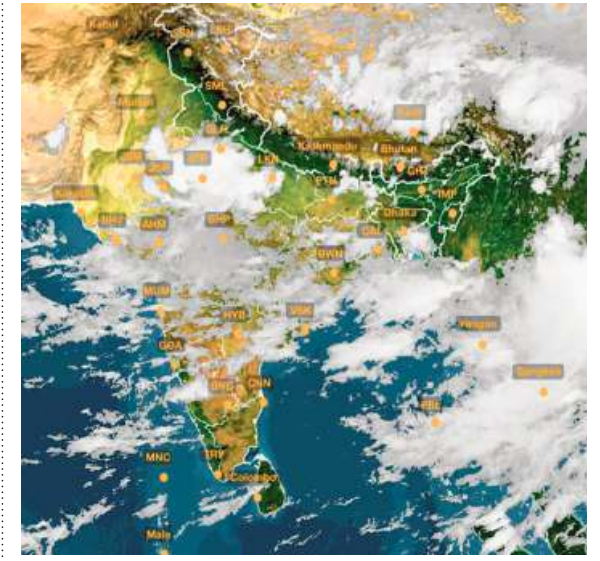
More rainfall likely in July, says official

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The country could get more rainfall in July than anticipated in May, according to Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) M. Rajeevar. However, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) — an organisation under the MoES, isn't yet planning to revise its estimate of the monsoon as of May, which remains at 96% of the Long Period Average (LPA) of 89 cm. "Our extended range forecast system [a monsoon model that gives a forecast over the coming fortnight] shows a rain bearing low pressure system as well as favourable conditions. There has been above normal rainfall so far in July and hopefully should continue. We could get some extra rainfall in July," Mr. Rajeevar told *The Hindu*. Rainfall in June was "significantly below" the IMD's expectations due to cyclone Vayu that delayed the monsoon's progress, he added.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places in Uttarakhand, east Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Konkan & Goa; heavy rainfall at isolated places over Gujarat, coastal Karnataka, Kerala, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipu, Mizoram & Tripura

| CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN | CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN |
|-------------|------|------|------|---------------|------|------|------|
| Agartala | 35.4 | 27.4 | 24.4 | Kozhikode | 3.6 | 33.6 | 26.2 |
| Ahmedabad | 37.0 | 26.8 | 19.0 | Kurnool | 36.1 | 26.2 | 24.8 |
| Aizawl | 26.0 | 27.8 | 19.0 | Lucknow | 10.2 | 36.0 | 24.8 |
| Allahabad | 36.0 | 29.5 | 21.4 | Madurai | 41.2 | 27.0 | 24.8 |
| Bengaluru | 30.8 | 21.4 | 19.0 | Mangaluru | 31.7 | 24.8 | 24.0 |
| Bhopal | 15.7 | 27.5 | 23.8 | Mumbai | 34.2 | 30.7 | 24.0 |
| Bhubaneswar | 32.2 | 32.0 | 26.4 | Mysuru | 31.0 | 21.0 | 21.0 |
| Chandigarh | 38.7 | 31.0 | 26.4 | New Delhi | 41.9 | 30.2 | 27.6 |
| Chennai | 38.0 | 30.0 | 26.4 | Patna | 0.6 | 35.4 | 27.6 |
| Coimbatore | 34.4 | 23.8 | 26.4 | Port Blair | 3.9 | 30.9 | 26.0 |
| Dehradun | 35.4 | 26.3 | 26.4 | Puducherry | 39.6 | 28.3 | 28.3 |
| Gangtok | 4.8 | 22.4 | 18.7 | Pune | 24.7 | 27.9 | 21.8 |
| Goa | 18.4 | 30.5 | 24.2 | Raipur | 0.1 | 28.4 | 23.0 |
| Guwahati | 3.6 | 35.0 | 26.0 | Ranchi | 2.0 | 27.0 | 22.6 |
| Hubbli | 26.0 | 22.0 | 22.0 | Shillong | 25.6 | 18.1 | 18.2 |
| Hyderabad | 32.6 | 24.0 | 24.0 | Shimla | 24.1 | 18.2 | 15.2 |
| Imphal | 32.5 | 24.3 | 24.3 | Srinagar | 32.5 | 15.2 | 15.2 |
| Jaipur | 1.2 | 39.2 | 30.0 | Trivandrum | 0.7 | 32.2 | 26.3 |
| Kochi | 0.4 | 32.6 | 27.4 | Tiruchi | 40.4 | 27.4 | 24.7 |
| Kohima | 9.2 | 25.0 | 18.2 | Vijayawada | 0.6 | 36.5 | 24.7 |
| Kolkata | 10.7 | 33.6 | 26.5 | Visakhapatnam | 0.2 | 32.2 | 28.4 |

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

| CITIES | SO ₂ | NO ₂ | CO | PM _{2.5} | PM ₁₀ | CODE | Yesterday |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-------------------|------------------|------|--|
| Ahmedabad | 63 | 132 | 80 | 70 | 118 | 118 | In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Jind, Haryana, recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 228 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Guwahati, Assam, recorded a healthy AQI score of 21 |
| Bengaluru | 16 | 43 | 75 | — | — | — | |
| Chennai | 4 | 24 | 38 | 237 | — | — | |
| Delhi | 24 | 20 | 46 | 104 | 222 | 222 | |
| Hyderabad | 4 | 19 | 31 | 48 | 37 | 37 | |
| Kolkata | 4 | 31 | 51 | 24 | 48 | 48 | |
| Lucknow | 3 | 29 | 51 | 92 | — | — | |
| Mumbai | 31 | 23 | 102 | 20 | 42 | 42 | |
| Pune | 64 | 48 | 30 | 32 | 32 | 32 | |
| Visakhapatnam | 17 | 54 | 61 | 52 | 115 | 115 | |

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Centre's high quality research team to fix cause of AES

In affidavit, govt. says move aimed at saving lives

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central government on Wednesday informed the Supreme Court that it had decided to constitute an "interdisciplinary, high quality" research team to ascertain the precise cause of the acute encephalitis syndrome (AES) outbreak that led to mass child deaths in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar. In an 11-page affidavit, the Centre said the decision was taken to "save precious human lives in future". The AES in Muzaffarpur dated back to 1995. Though 'health' was a State subject, it had taken "substantive measures" to support and guide

'153 children died of AES'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

As many as 153 children have died due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) while 720 such cases were reported in Bihar till June 28 this year, Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey has said. He was asked about the

steps taken by the government to investigate the cause of deaths and the remedial measures adopted. According to figures available till June 28 this year, the number of AES cases was 720 and number of deaths 153, the minister informed the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

the State government. On July 2, the State government defended its public health system in the top court, saying steps taken by its authorities had lowered the AES fatality rate to 19%,

much less than the global fatality rate pegged at 30%. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was "personally involved in finding ways and means to control and treat the dreaded AES," it said.

Nitish's mango outreach turns sour

Faces flak for distributing fruits

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

The Nitish Kumar government on Wednesday turned to the king of fruits to deflect the opposition's sustained attack over the past few days on the death of over 150 children due to suspected Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in the State. The State government distributed a basket of the fruit along with a mango sapling to legislators at the end of the Assembly debate on the upcoming agriculture budget. While most legislators, across party lines, were seen carrying the basket containing seven mangoes of State's famous "Digha

maldah" variety, Rashtriya Janata Dal leader and former chief minister Rabri Devi along with a few other MLAs criticised the decision as insensitive. "The fruit and saplings were distributed among legislators to make them aware about its plantation and save the environment," said State Agriculture Minister Prem Kumar. "This government has become insensitive as they're distributing mangoes when over 150 children died due to AES in the State...anybody who will accept this gift will be cursed," said Ms Rabri Devi, who is also Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council. The Congress party also echoed her views.

Transfer ₹100 crore to CPCB, SC tells Meghalaya

Lambasts State for illegal mining

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Urging the need to stop rampant illegal mining in the hill districts of Meghalaya, the Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered the northeastern State to transfer ₹100 crore from the Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund (MEPRF) to the Central Pollution Control Board to be used for restoring an environment ravaged by miners. The case was based on a 2012 incident concerning the death of 15 of 30 labourers trapped inside a rat-hole coal mine in South Garo Hills. The State had appealed against a National Green Tri-

bunal order against it to pay ₹100 crore for not acting against illegal mining activities. The tribunal had found that the unregulated mining had not only cost lives but destroyed pristine hills too. "Natural resources of the country are not meant to be consumed only by the present generation of men or women of the region where natural resources are deposited. These treasures of nature are for all generations to come and for intelligent use of the entire country. The present generation owes a duty to preserve and conserve the natural resources of the nation..." Justice Bhushan, who authored the judgment, said.

FIR lodged against school teacher

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

An FIR was lodged after a video went viral showing a teacher holding an axe on the neck of a schoolboy, evoking instant outrage. The man is seen in the video threatening to kill the minor student in north Kashmir's Handwara. The boy is seen crying in panic as he was pinned down by the man. "The police have taken cognizance of the video. A case under FIR number 167/2019 was registered in Handwara. The video has been captured a few months ago," said Asish Mishra, SP, Handwara. He said a few persons had been detained.

Govt. nod for leasing out 3 airports to Adani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday approved leasing out of three State-owned airports — Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Mangaluru — to Adani Enterprises Limited through a public-private partnership. In February, Adani Enterprises emerged as the winning bidder for six airports bid out by the Airports Authority of India. With the Union Cabinet approving leasing of only three of them, uncertainty hangs over the Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Jaipur airports. It is learnt that the Ministry of Civil Aviation had sent a proposal for all the six airports to the Cabinet. The

bids expire on July 30, though a senior AAI official said their validity could be extended. Following the Cabinet's nod, the AAI is expected to issue a Letter of Intent for each of the three airports to the Adani Enterprises after which a joint measurement of land and assets will be carried out. The other three airports are embroiled in controversy. In March, the Kerala government filed a writ petition in the High Court challenging AAI's proposal to award the Thiruvananthapuram airport to Adani Enterprises. The Congress-led government in Rajasthan, too, has objected to the Jaipur airport being awarded to Adani

Last-minute change leaves B.Arch students stranded

Row erupts as admission norms are altered

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

When Bhavishya Suresh got his results for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for a B.Arch course this May, he was pleased with his performance. "I got an all India rank of 2,033... I was aiming for a 99.2 percentile and I achieved that, so I was pretty confident that I would get into an NIT [National Institute of Technology]," said the 18-year-old. A month later, on June 27, he got through the first round of counselling



The change in rules has affected many students.

and was provisionally allocated a seat in the architecture programme of NIT, Bhopal. The very next day, his dream of becoming an architect came crashing down when he went to the centre for document verification at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

"They told me the eligibility requirement was 75% aggregate marks in the Class 12 examination, despite the fact that the government notification [from the National Testing Agency and the Joint Seat Allocation Authority] had said 50% was needed," said Mr. Suresh, who had scored

an aggregate of 69.2%. "They said the rules had been changed" in the preceding week, he added. On June 19, well after the JEE examination and results, the Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA) issued a brief corrigendum amending the requirement. The last-minute change left a section of students stranded and angry. As late as July 3, the main business rules on the JoSAA website still featured the 50% aggregate requirement for B.Arch admission. S.T. Ramesh, coordinator of the Central Seat Allocation Board-2019, admitted that a mistake had been made in the JoSAA rules. "Point number 1 in the rules makes it

clear that admission into any NIT requires a 75% aggregate. But point number 2 seemed to indicate a 50% aggregate, so we amended it last week to avoid the conflicting statements," said Dr. Ramesh, adding that the CSAB was in discussions with the Ministry of Human Resource Development regarding the fate of students affected by the change for no fault of their own. A senior official at the HRD Ministry told *The Hindu* that the error seemed to stem from a Council of Architecture revision of minimum standards, which was accidentally incorporated into the JoSAA rules. "We don't want to let the students suffer," added the official.

PROFESSOR JAYASHANKAR TELANGANA STATE AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY
Administrative Office, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-30, Telangana State, India
Advt.No.6005/Exams/2019(1) Date: 03-07-2019

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION

ONLINE applications are invited from the eligible candidates for admission into B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture under NR/NRI Sponsored quota. The online application, prospectus and other details are available on the University website www.pjtsau.edu.in.
The last date for online submission of application is 31-07-2019 (4 PM).
Dr. S.SUDHEER KUMAR, REGISTRAR.

MAHARASHTRA JEEVAN PRADHIKARAN

E-Tender Notice No.2 of 2019-20

Maharashtra Jeevan Pradhikaran invites e-Tender for 'Expression of Interest for Appointment of Chartered Accountant for the Financial Year 2019-20, 2020-21 & 2021-22. Please visit website www.mahatenders.gov.in & www.mjp.gov.in for detailed information.

Date :- /06/2019 Director (Finance)
Maharashtra Jeevan Pradhikaran Navi
DGIPR/2019/2020/1044

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, R.R. Nagar Zone, No.144, 2nd main, Jagajyothi Layout, Bengaluru - 560 056.
No. EE/KNG/TEND/13/2019-20 Date: 03.07.2019

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)
(Two Cover System) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division invites tenders on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP, Bengaluru from eligible Tenderers for the Construction of works detailed in the table below.

| Sl. No. | Name of the Works | Approx. Value of Work (₹. in Lakhs) | EMD (in ₹.) |
|---------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Improvements and Development to Areas around Seegehalli Solid Waste Processing Plant. | 1000.00 | 1000000 |
| 2. | Improvements and Development to Areas around Doddabidankallu Solid Waste Processing Plant. | 1000.00 | 1000000 |

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender documents can be downloaded in the e-procurement portal GOK from 18.07.2019 from 4:00 pm. (2) Tender must be submitted online through e-procurement portal on or before 03.08.2019 upto 4:00 pm. (3) Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, on 05.08.2019 at 4:00 pm. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>
Sd/-
Executive Engineer - Kengeri Division
Pay Development Charges - Help to Develop Bengaluru



Power play

BJP senses an opportunity to return to power in Karnataka through a series of defections

With two MLAs of the Congress resigning from the Karnataka Assembly, it is clear that horse-trading to pull down the State government is under way. The BJP is not just waiting in the wings; it is actively trying to reenact a script it has perfected over a decade and more. The resignations of Vijayanagar MLA Anand Singh and Gokak MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi can only be seen as a replay of a strategy the BJP used earlier, luring Opposition MLAs to resign from the Assembly, thereby forcing by-elections. The BJP's confidence in winning the by-polls stems from its spectacular showing in the Lok Sabha election. The party is yet to reconcile itself to the role of the Opposition after having emerged as the single largest party in the May 2018 Assembly election. At 105 seats in the 224-strong House, it was eight short of a simple majority and began plans to manoeuvre its way to power. The BJP appears to be convinced that the time is ripe for a strike, both because of its success in the parliamentary election and the disenchantment in the Congress over the alliance with the JD (S). If enough number of coalition MLAs resign, the BJP could claim a majority with its present strength in an Assembly of reduced strength, and by-polls could follow. The Congress-JD(S) coalition could be facing a stormy Assembly session, scheduled to begin on July 12.

A Karnataka model had come to inspire non-BJP parties nationally after the formation of the coalition government. The Congress decision to concede the Chief Minister's position to junior partner JD(S) in order to prevent it from joining hands with the BJP was remarkable. But it was also remarkable for its opportunism. Instability is inherent in coalitions led by smaller partners, but the present contradictions in the Congress in Karnataka, the only southern State where the party is face-to-face with the BJP, have another dimension. Legislators yearning for positions of power is nothing unusual, but they usually think twice before crossing over to a different party. The skills of leaders and claims of a larger purpose, however meagre those may be, are factors that hold together vastly divergent ambitions within a political party. The Congress is lacking in these aspects and is paying a heavy price. If power is the only glue, it is natural that legislators who are denied ministerial berths would rebel. The party still enjoys significant public support in Karnataka, as was demonstrated in the local body elections weeks after its rout in the Lok Sabha election. The Congress cannot lend itself to brazen business and rent-seeking rivalries that overshadow politics in Karnataka. If the party and its coalition survive the current turmoil it will still be only a hiatus. Their long-term survival will be even more challenging, requiring an ideological reorientation and commitment to addressing the people's larger livelihood concerns.

Mumbai marooned

Despite past experience, the metropolis remains unprepared for the monsoon

Mumbai once again struggled to stay afloat after the first heavy spell of rain this year, bringing back memories of the July 2005 flood. Each massive rainfall event is making it evident that the city is putting on a brave front and projecting resilience, but the failure of the Maharashtra government to upgrade its tattered infrastructure is taking a heavy toll and weighing down on the financial capital. A single day of rain has killed 22 people in a wall collapse in north Mumbai, while many more died in Pune and elsewhere. In Ratnagiri, a dam gave way creating a catastrophe; flights have been cancelled and normal life is affected. Clearly, the State government should have regarded the 94 cm of rain that paralysed Mumbai in one day 14 years ago as the baseline disaster to prepare for. That it could not manage 37 cm in 24 hours, that too after incurring a massive expenditure on management projects, shows a lack of resolve among political leaders, rampant inefficiency and lack of integrity in the administrative machinery. As one of the wettest metropolises in India getting about 210 cm of rain annually, it should have been a top order priority to restore rivers and canals to manage floods. The government of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis needs to explain why Mumbai is yet unprepared to cope, especially when rainfall is projected to become erratic in coming years, and when scientific insights point to intense rainfall in a short span of time, driven by warmer oceans and hotter cities.

In a recent report, the Comptroller and Auditor General identified prolonged delays in the upgrading of storm water drain infrastructure in Mumbai. On the other hand, after the deluge of 2005, the consensus was for the flood-carrying capacity of the Mithi river in the city to be increased. But the choked and polluted river was again overflowing this year. Beyond the sclerotic management of flood waters that relies on storm drains in Mumbai, and several other Indian cities, there is a need for a new urban paradigm. For one thing, Mumbai, Thane, Ratnagiri and Raigad have, during the last century, displayed a high seasonality index, indicating a relatively small monsoon window bringing a lot of rain. This is in contrast to steady, prolonged rain in the central districts in Maharashtra. So a new climate change-influenced normal could mean fewer days of torrential rain and erratic monsoons. Managing them calls for a new approach that is ecological, and makes restoration of existing urban wetlands and creation of reservoirs and water channels a high priority. The water question is the biggest challenge for Indian cities today, as both drought and flood are common. State governments should give it priority and address it by making urban planning people-centric. A strong framework is needed to manage water, starting with Mumbai.

Hurdles, ideas and silver linings

The economy needs a stimulus and the Budget has to push for growth while ensuring fiscal responsibility



RAGHUVIR SRINIVASAN

Faltering GDP growth, a consumption slowdown, a truant monsoon that has already hit kharif sowing, global trade tensions and a freeze in the credit market that has set alarm bells ringing across the financial system. This is the backdrop to the maiden Budget of the Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman.

Walking a tightrope

The Minister has had less than a month to work on this crucial Budget which is expected to work its magic on the economy. Ms. Sitharaman's position is unenviable. She has to push for growth, which means stimulus measures, but also stay fiscally responsible, which means sticking to the fiscal deficit glide path. This balance is almost impossible to achieve in an environment where tax revenues do not offer enough support for a stimulus package.

The questions before Ms. Sitharaman are simple: Should she opt to stimulate consumption in the economy even if it means putting the fiscal deficit glide path in temporary cold storage? If yes, what is the best way to do that?

Following from the above are subsidiary questions such as these: Will the resultant higher borrowings crowd out the private sector borrowers and push up market interest rates at a time when the monetary authority is driving rates down? What will be the impact on inflation? Should the stimulus be in the form of cutting taxes and putting more mo-

ney in the hands of the consumer? Or should it be in the form of even higher spending on infrastructure that will have definite fiscal spin-offs? And what about welfare spending? The government has already announced an expansion of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana that will take away ₹87,500 crore this fiscal. And there are many other pet schemes of this government that need to be funded.

Ground realities

To be sure, the answers are not easy. But just consider these. GDP growth fell to 5.8% in the fourth quarter of 2018-19, with important industry segments reporting a fall in growth. Sales of automobiles, the bellwether for the larger economy, has been sliding since October last year and in the first quarter of this fiscal, sales volumes are down by about 18%. Fast moving consumer goods, two-wheeler and consumer durables manufacturers are all reporting dull rural sales.

Real estate and construction, one of the biggest job creators in the economy, have been in stupor for several months and are a direct cause of the credit freeze in the markets now. It is clear that the bottom has fallen off consumption demand, something reflected in the annual results of a host of companies in the consumer sector.

Given these, there is little doubt that the economy needs a stimulus. The downside to the government embarking on this path is clear. Direct tax revenue growth failed to meet budgeted levels in 2018-19, falling short by ₹82,000 crore from the target of ₹12 lakh crore. Goods and Services tax collections, though rising, are still not stabilising at the required level of between ₹1,00,000 and ₹1,10,000 crore a month.



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It will be next to impossible for the government to meet its over-ambitious tax estimates in the interim Budget for 2019-20. And then there are the bills to pay from last year to the Food Corporation of India and a couple of other public sector undertakings which helped the government 'achieve' the fiscal deficit target last year.

Pros and cons of options

There are a few options that the government can consider for off-balance sheet financing. First, go big on asset sales. The interim Budget had earmarked ₹90,000 crore from disinvestment but if the government is able to successfully pull off the Air India sale, it would be almost half-way there. There are a host of other government companies that can be sold off to raise the targeted proceeds.

Second, a one-time transfer from the Reserve Bank of India's reserves, which is under the consideration of the Bimal Jalan Committee. However, if reports of the committee's deliberations are to be believed, it may be futile for the government to hope for a major windfall here. The committee will anyway submit its report well after the Budget is presented.

Third, 5G spectrum auctions. While there is reason to hope for some support here, it is unlikely that it would materialise this fiscal. The telecom companies are still

licking their wounds from the combined effect of past excesses and bruising competition in the market. Their appetite, as it is, is poor for any more spectrum. So pushing through a 5G auction now would be disastrous.

That leaves us with just one option – that of increasing borrowings which will, of course, mean curtains for the fiscal deficit target of 3.4% this fiscal. Higher government borrowings may elbow the private sector borrowers out.

Increased borrowings by the government will have the unintended negative consequence of pushing up market rates which is something that the government would not desire. And then, of course, there will be questions to answer from Standard & Poors and Moody's which are certain to take a dim view of the fiscal indiscretion.

But then there is some good news too. Thanks to the recent directive of the stock market regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India directing mutual funds to put away 20% of their liquid scheme investments in government securities, a new market opens up for the government. Whether it is deep enough to absorb the increased borrowings is a matter of detail but it can certainly cushion the market to some extent.

Second, yields on government securities are at around 6.82% currently. So even a 10 or 20 basis point rise due to higher borrowings may not cause much dissonance. The market is aware of the difficult circumstances now and should be able to take this in its stride.

As for the ratings agencies, the government needs to be in dialogue with them, reiterate its commitment to fiscal discipline and reassure them that this is a tem-

porary aberration.

On stimulus

So, once the decision is made to be accommodative, Ms. Sitharaman's problem will be to identify the best way to impart stimulus. There are two choices – either to cut taxes and let consumers to go out and spend the excess. Or just borrow and spend on asset creation in infrastructure. Given that there is a serious slowdown in consumer-facing sectors, the better option may be to put more money in the hands of consumers.

A good option to consider would be adjusting income tax slabs and increasing deductions under Section 80C which is a measly ₹2 lakh now. Better still would be to increase the interest deduction for housing loans which would also give a boost to the real estate market. These measures would run counter to the reform objective of easing out all exemptions and lowering rates. But then that is under examination by the Direct Tax Code (DTC) panel; the concessions given now will automatically become a temporary measure assuming that the DTC is soon implemented.

The fall in tax revenues from the concessions will be eventually made up downstream from indirect taxes if consumers spend the extra money in their hands. The choice to borrow and spend is indeed a difficult one but in the current circumstances this may be inevitable. Fiscal conservatives are bound to frown at this and there would be dire warnings of the consequences of not adhering to the fiscal deficit commitment. The best answer is that this government now has five years to make up for the indulgence. Will Ms. Sitharaman go the whole way?

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The primacy of the elected

The questions the constitutional crisis in Puducherry raises are fundamental to the concerns regarding federalism



MATHEW IDICULLA

The return of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance government in 2019 with a resounding majority in the 17th Lok Sabha raises pertinent questions about the future of federalism in India. Will a "strong" Union government which does not require the support of "regional" allies be detrimental to the interests of States? While the Prime Minister has often invoked the need for "cooperative federalism", the actions of his government in its first term sometimes went against this stated ideal. These include dismantling the Planning Commission and transferring its power to make state grants to the Finance Ministry; introducing terms of reference to the Finance Commission which threaten to lower the revenue share of the southern States; and the partisan use of the Governor's office to appoint Chief Ministers in cases of hung Assemblies.

The most blatant abuse of power was the imposition of President's Rule in Opposition-ruled Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, decisions the Supreme Court subsequently held as unconstitutional. Further, through the Lieutenant Governor (LG), the

Centre ran a protracted war with the Delhi government which brought its administration to a stalemate until the Supreme Court affirmed the primacy of the elected government. A similar long-running battle between the LG and Chief Minister of Puducherry has now reached the Supreme Court. This case will further test the strength of Indian federalism in the Modi era.

Distinct provisions

Since the appointment of Kiran Bedi as the LG in May 2016, Puducherry Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy has protested her continual interference in the daily affairs of the Puducherry government and running an alleged parallel administration. The Union Government, in clarifications issued in January and June 2017, further bolstered the case of the LG. When this was legally challenged, the Madras High Court quashed the clarifications issued by the Union government and ruled that the LG must work on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers and not interfere in the day-to-day affairs of the government. The Union government challenged this decision in the Supreme Court where a vacation Bench passed interim orders recently restricting the Puducherry cabinet from taking key decisions until further hearing.

The Madras High Court had relied on the 2018 decision of the Supreme Court regarding the power of the National Capital Territory (NCT) government of Delhi. In that



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case, a five-judge Bench unanimously held that the Chief Minister and not the Lieutenant Governor is the executive head of the NCT government, and that the LG is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. It held that the executive power of the NCT government is co-extensive with the legislative power of Delhi's Legislative Assembly and the LG must follow the decisions of the cabinet on all matters where the Assembly has the power to make laws.

Puducherry, like Delhi, is a Union Territory with an elected legislative Assembly and the executive constituted by the Lieutenant Governor and Council of Ministers. However, Puducherry and Delhi derive their powers from distinct constitutional provisions. While Article 239AA lays out the scope and limits of the powers of the legislative assembly and council of ministers for Delhi, Article 239A is merely an enabling provision which allows Parliament to create a law for Puducherry. Interestingly, while Article 239AA restricts Delhi from creating laws in sub-

jects such as police, public order and land, no such restriction exists for Puducherry under Article 239A. In fact, the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 which governs Puducherry vests the legislative assembly with the power to make laws on "any of the matters enumerated in the State List or the Concurrent List". Hence, the legislative and executive powers of Puducherry are actually broader than that of Delhi.

After analysing the laws and rules governing Puducherry, the Madras High Court held that the LG has very limited independent powers. Under Article 239B, the LG can issue an ordinance only when the Assembly is not in session and with the prior approval of the President. If there is a "difference of opinion" between the LG and the cabinet on "any matter", like in Delhi, the LG can refer it to the President or resolve it herself if it is expedient. However, the Supreme Court in the NCT Delhi case held that "any matter" shall not mean "all matters" and it should be used only for "exceptional" situations. Hence, there is no legal basis for the LG to exercise powers independently and bypass the elected government of Puducherry.

Respecting federalism

Ultimately, the question is whether state actions should respect the underlying principles of democracy and federalism. Why should a legislative Assembly be elected and a Council of Ministers ap-

pointed if actual powers are independently exercised by an unelected nominee of the Centre? The Supreme Court, in the NCT Delhi case, rightly employed a purposive interpretation of the Constitution to hold that since representative government is a basic feature of the Constitution, the elected government must have primacy. Given this precedent and the fact that Puducherry has lesser legal restrictions on its powers, the Supreme Court should uphold the Madras High Court judgment and ensure that the LG acts only as per the aid and advice of the elected government.

Perhaps because of its distance from Delhi, small area and relatively low political heft, the constitutional crisis in Puducherry has received far less attention than it deserves. However, the questions it raises are fundamental to the concerns regarding federalism in India. While Puducherry may not be a "State" under the Constitution, the principle of federalism should not be restricted to States but also include the legislative Assemblies of Union Territories and, arguably, councils of local governments. As more centralising measures such as simultaneous elections to Parliament and State Assemblies are being proposed by the Centre, it is important to reaffirm the values of federalism at every forum.

Mathew Idiculla is a research consultant at the Centre for Law and Policy Research, Bengaluru

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.

Lip service

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's warning that he would not tolerate arrogance and misbehaviour is just lip service and, in reality, he wouldn't take any action against erring members, as can be seen from his past record (Page 1, "Won't tolerate bad behaviour, PM Modi warns BJP members," July 3). He maintained studied silence against legislators following the Kathua and Unnao rape incidents and numerous attacks by cow vigilantes. He never condemned remarks by leaders from his party like Yogi Adityanath, Jayant Sinha and Pragya Thakur. It is futile to expect such action from him now. KSHIRASAGARA BALAJI RAO, Hyderabad

Trump's Korea gambit

U.S. President Donald Trump's off-the-cuff personal diplomacy is an excellent way to bring some thaw to a frozen relationship (Editorial, "Trump in North Korea," July 3). One only hopes that this leads to meaningful dialogue and the two countries move away from their rigid positions on denuclearisation and sanctions relief to strike a middle path. KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI, Hyderabad

Unrealistic goal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of a \$5 trillion economy by 2024 seems to be unrealistic (Editorial page, "Not by wishful thinking," July 3). India has to grow at an annual rate of

13%, which is impossible without an increase in agricultural productivity and transfer of semi-skilled labour from agriculture to other sectors. Escalating trade tensions, stagnant exports and low consumer demand are among the challenges in our path. ALAN SEEMON, Kottayam, Kerala

Health-care woes

Pathogens cause disease in general but it is poverty that causes disease in India (Op-Ed page, "Health care's primary problem," July 3). Many patients visiting the tertiary health-care institutions are from rural areas who cannot afford private medical care. Policymakers can bring down their numbers by equipping better the

Primary Health Centres and Community Health Centres – an astonishing number of them are poorly manned and resourced. As long as apathy plagues the decision-makers, it would be futile to expect any positive change. A.G. RAJMOHAN, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

Sunny's representative

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Sunny Deol's act of appointing a 'representative' to attend meetings and follow up on important matters on his behalf is not only strange but also unheard of (News page, "Sunny Deol appoints representative, draws ire," July 3). Mr. Deol, an actor who has played macho roles, is trying to assume a larger-than-life image as a

politician. Fortunately, he has not so far authorised the 'representative' to attend the Parliament and take part in the deliberations on his behalf. C G KURIKOSSE, Kothamangalam, Kerala

Policeman suicides

The article, "Why policemen kill themselves," (July 3) has sensitised readers to the high emotional costs borne by our country's police

officers. Though the police force is idolised, the perils of working there do not motivate many to join it. This only skews the already low policeman-citizen ratio further. The state needs to care for the well-being of our policemen, in addition to ensuring a more humane work environment and better welfare provisions. VARSHA V. SHENOY, Mangaluru

MORE LETTERS ONLINE: www.hindu.com/opinion/letters/

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

A report headlined "LCA Tejas drops fuel tank on farmland in Coimbatore" (some editions, July 3, 2019) had erroneously given the full form of LCA as Light Compact Aircraft. It should have been Light Combat Aircraft.

The reference to Dominic Thiem as a two-time French Open champion in a Sports page story titled "Federer shakes off a slow start to advance" (July 3, 2019) is incorrect. Thiem is a two-time finalist in the French Open.

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Hindutva's onward march in Kerala

The growth is not just ideological, but can also be clearly seen in electoral terms



P.K. YASSER ARAFATH

Secular and democratic Malayalis are hoping that Hindutva will continue to remain undesirable in Kerala, where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) got no seats in the 2019 parliamentary election. Political commentators and non-Hindutva Malayalis are busy providing a long list of factors that ensured the BJP's defeat in the State. These include 'enlightenment', 'education', 'political awareness', 'progressiveness', and 'strong communist sensibilities'. In the process, the argument for a rethinking of Hindutva and an understanding of its everyday growth amongst the upper castes and new upwardly mobile social groups has effectively been contained.

A different trajectory

Unlike many northern States where Hindutva has been making consistent electoral inroads, its growth in Kerala has a slightly different trajectory. In Kerala, ideological Hindutva took precedence over electoral Hindutva. And in the process, it built a cohesive network of informed loyalists across the State. From the formation of the Hindu Mahasabha in the first quarter of the 20th century to the present, Hindutva has been successful in ideologically shaping a substantial section of the Hindu middle class in the State. Starting with disgruntled elites, former ruling households and landed aristocracy in the 1940s, Hindutva managed to reach out to middle class entrepreneurs by the 1970s. Over the last 20 years, it has been successful in attracting a significant section of aspirational lower/intermediary caste groups like the Ezhavas. However, people overlook how Hindutva has made steady electoral inroads into the State over the last 15 years.

A microanalysis of the National Democratic Alliance/BJP vote share in Kerala in the last three parliamentary elections questions the Malayali euphoria. Electoral data show that if Hindutva can sustain its current acceptability among the larger Hindu



"The 'poach Northeast' policy, which successfully attracted a significant number of Christian religious outfits and leaders, is being attempted in Kerala too." A BJP campaign in Thiruvananthapuram. • S.GOPAKUMAR

population, Kerala is only 10 years away from what West Bengal has become today, where Hindutva has established its strong presence after working patiently for more than a century. In the 2009 parliamentary election, the BJP alone secured more than 10 lakh votes in Kerala (6.31% of the total votes polled). With no 'wave' in sight and the BJP's chances in every single parliamentary constituency being zero, each voter in this 10 lakh block stood testimony to the ideological reach that Hindutva made after a hundred years of beginning its work since the early 20th century.

A better picture emerges when we take a closer look at the total vote share in Kerala, where Muslims and Christians constitute over 45% of the population. If we assume that the bulk of the votes was from the Hindu community, as the BJP is seen as a Hindu majoritarian party, and that Muslims and Christians had little reason to vote for the BJP in 2009, then the BJP actually secured more than 11% (around 10 lakh votes) of the total Hindu votes (around 90 lakh), who constituted 55% of the total voters,

numbering around 1.65 crore. Thus, the popular perception of the BJP's 6.31% votes in 2009 does not reflect the appropriate picture of Hindutva's electoral and ideological growth in Kerala. Going by the same logic, in 2014, the BJP alone secured 19% (around 19 lakh votes) from the Hindu majority electorate (around 1 crore), jumping from the previous 11%. However, political analysts continue to assert that the BJP only secured 10.33% vis-a-vis the total votes polled in the State.

The results of this general election show a tremendous inclination among the majority of voters to adopt the social, moralistic, and ideological sensibilities of Hindutva. The BJP-led NDA secured around 32 lakh votes from this constituency of voters (over 1.11 crore), who comprised about 50% of the total polled votes (around 2.3 crore). Such a shift is quite an eye-opener in the wake of massive resentment in the State against the Modi government's lukewarm response to the devastating floods in Kerala and its aftermath in 2018. The Hindutva mood in the State seems to have enhanced as the

BJP used the Sabarimala issue to expand its electoral and ideological base. Thus, the NDA's 32 lakh votes in 2019 shows a significant increasing section of the Hindu electorate preferring the BJP's ideology despite demonetisation, the Goods and Services Tax, unemployment, the Modi government's antipathy towards the State, and the presence of strong and consistent anti-Hindutva narratives in the State.

The micro details of these three elections clearly show that the BJP has been growing really fast among the majority electorate. With this growth rate, which is most likely to persist, the Sangh Parivar is not far away from garnering about 50% of the majority electorate in the next 10 years. The argument about this possibility can also be supported by a survey by the Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) which clearly shows how the NDA successfully secured more than 38% of the upper caste vote in Kerala in 2019. An undivided 50% from the majority electorate would definitely help Hindutva make strong electoral inroads into Kerala as it happened in West Bengal.

Replicating the Northeast policy

As the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has already positioned the Sabarimala controversy as a repeatable emotive investment like the Ram Mandir issue, maintaining such a growth rate and acceptance seem feasible. This can work with critical support from sections of the media, individuals from the film industry and bureaucracy, and a wide network of socio-ritual gatherings at both micro and macro levels.

This growth rate can be further strengthened if Hindutva succeeds in building what can be termed the 'Christian electoral corridor' in southern Kerala with the support of a number of prominent Christian notables in the NDA such as Alphons Kan-nanthanam, P.C. George, Tom Vadakkan and P.C. Thomas.

Clearly, the 'poach Northeast' policy, which successfully attracted a significant number of Christian religious outfits and leaders over a period of time, is being attempted in Kerala too.

P.K. Yasser Arafath is Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Delhi

A scheme for farmers that has not reached most farmers

PM-Kisan is limited in both scope and implementation



BHIM REDDY AND ABHISHEK SHAW

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan), a cash transfer programme that draws on major initiatives by two State governments, has a long way to go in terms of both its implementation and scope of coverage. Even as the cropping season is under way, the scheme's support has not reached farmers in most of the country's regions.

Launched by the Centre at the end of its previous tenure and made effective retrospectively from December 1, 2018, the measure is a necessary state response to assuage agrarian unrest. The scheme's original objective, to "supplement financial needs" of the country's Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) and to "augment" farm incomes, has now been broadened to include all categories of agricultural landowners. This expansion would benefit an additional 10% of rural landed households.

PM-Kisan offers ₹6,000 a year per household in three instalments. Broadly speaking, this amounts to only about a tenth of the production cost per hectare or consumption expenditure for a poor household. Hence, though what the programme offers is meagre, it promises some relief to poor farmers by partially supplementing their input costs or consumption needs.

Not linked to land size

The cash transfer is not linked to the size of the farmer's land, unlike Telangana's Rythu Bandhu scheme, under which farmers receive ₹8,000 per annum for every acre owned. While landless tenants have been left out in both the schemes, the link with land size makes the support provided by the Telangana scheme more substantial. PM-Kisan also falls short of Odisha's Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme, which includes even poor rural households that do not own land.

Though the first quarterly instalment, for the December 2018-March 2019 period, was to be provided in the last financial year, the benefits of PM-Kisan have not reached farmers in most parts of the country. With kharif cultivation activity under way already, the scheme's potential to deliver is contingent on its immediate implementation.

There are 125 million farming households

owning small and marginal holdings of land in the country, who constitute the scheme's original intended beneficiaries. However, at present, the list of beneficiaries includes only 32% (40.27 million) of these households.

Further, a majority of the intended beneficiary households are yet to receive even their first instalment of ₹2,000. Only 27% (33.99 million) received the first instalment, and only 24% (29.76 million) received the second. In budgetary terms, only 17% of the estimated ₹75,000 crore expenditure has been spent. Moreover, implementation in certain States has been prioritised. U.P., for instance, accounts for one-third of total beneficiary households – 33% (11.16 million) in the first instalment and 36% (10.84 million) in the second. About half of the State's SMF households have been covered. Only two other States – Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh – have gained a prominent share. A total of 17 States have received a negligible share of the first instalment, accounting for less than 9%.

Larger structural issues

For the scheme to be effective, PM-Kisan needs to be uniformly implemented across regions. However, one needs to be mindful that it is not a fix for larger structural issues. Cash transfers will cease to be effective if the state withdraws from its other long-term budgetary commitments in agricultural markets and areas of infrastructure such as irrigation. Subsidies for inputs, extension services, and procurement assurances provide a semblance of stability to agricultural production. Food security through the National Food Security Act is also closely linked to government interventions in grain markets. If the budgetary allocations shift decisively in favour of cash transfers, they will be a cause for great concern. Further, the scheme recognises only landowners as farmers. Tenants, who constitute 13.7% of farm households and incur the additional input cost of land rent, don't stand to gain anything if no part of the cultivated land is owned. Hence, there is a strong case to include landless tenants and other poor families.

Moreover, though the scheme is conceptualised to supplement agricultural inputs, it ceases to be so without the necessary link with scale of production (farm size) built into it. It becomes, in effect, an income supplement to landowning households. If income support is indeed the objective, the most deserving need to be given precedence.

Bhim Reddy is a Fellow at the Institute for Human Development, Delhi; Abhishek Shaw is a doctoral student in Economics

Not a bloodless option for India

A cyberattack may not prove to be a feasible retaliatory measure for strategists in New Delhi

SIDHARTH KAPOOR

Amidst U.S.-Iran tensions, an American drone was shot down by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in June. President Donald Trump delivered a customary response on Twitter stating that Iran had made a "very big mistake". A military strike was planned, and even authorised, but later called off by Mr. Trump who apparently favours bloodless wars.

In pursuance of this bloodless war, the U.S. cybercommand conducted online attacks against Iran. It is speculated that the strikes targeted Iran's military command and systems such as those that control Iran's missile and rocket launchers. In this context, a general question that arises is: Can India conduct such retaliatory attacks?

After every terror attack, India has few kinetic options to retaliate. Primarily, they comprise air strikes, ground-based surgical strikes, stand-off strikes from inside the border and covert operations. Additionally, there is the option to impose diplomatic pressure on Pakistan.

The implicit criteria

Following India's response against Pakistan, especially on the past two occasions, a few implicit criteria relating to the handling of the aftermath of an operation can be deduced. It is necessary to meet, or foresee the meeting of, these criteria before any operation is incorporated into India's arsenal of retaliatory options. It is pertinent to note that these criteria are not in the context of the operational requirements of the Indian armed forces. The criteria are: pre-emption, non-military nature, and deterrence.

First, the fulfilment of the criterion of pre-emption would allow India to argue and justify the operation on international forums. It feasibly falls under the exception of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter through the passage of self-defence. Second, in such instances, the operational aim has never been to target the Pakistani people or even the Pakistani military. Accordingly, it is imperative for any

operation to be able to claim that it is non-military in nature. Third, the operation should be of such an impact that it creates deterrence, that is, it fulfils the purpose of imposing substantial damage on the enemy, which invariably leads to deterrence.

Aimed at the establishment

The conduct of U.S. cybercommand was aimed at the Iranian establishment, specifically targeting its military installations. If India conducts a cyberstrike against Pakistan's military command or systems, it will be termed as one against Pakistan and not the terrorists. The non-military nature and pre-emption of the operation will be viewed through the perspective of attacking Pakistani military and Pakistan in essence, rendering them as futile, for example in terms of diplomatic parleys. Further, a cyberstrike against Pakistan will call for counter-cyberstrikes. Instead of the intended deterrence, it will likely lead to an escalation. In such a situation, all or at least most of the criteria will not be met. Hence, a cyberattack is not a feasible retaliatory option for India at present.

It is, however, noteworthy that the dependency of terrorist groups on computers, networks and the Internet has increased. Various, if not all, terrorist groups use the Internet for propaganda. This can certainly be curtailed by any necessary cyberoperation. Most importantly, such an operation should not be a 'retaliatory operation' but a 'regular operation'.

A cyberattack can certainly be an option when the situation changes, and India decides to act against providers of safe haven to terrorists. In such instances, the Pakistani establishment might be targeted beyond diplomatic pressures. The ability of the Indian armed forces to conduct such cyberstrikes is not completely known, and rightly so, given that disclosure of such details would take away the element of surprise.

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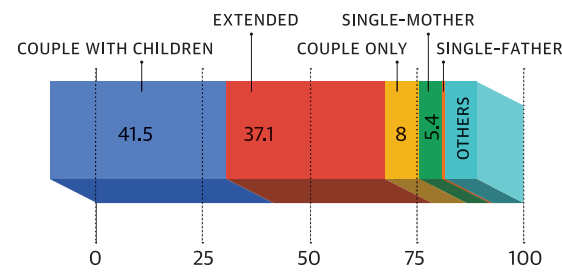
DATA POINT

Families & the gender divide

Though nuclear families are the norm in India, the percentage of single-mother households is on the rise. In India, there are far fewer women in the workforce compared to all other regions. By Varun B. Krishnan

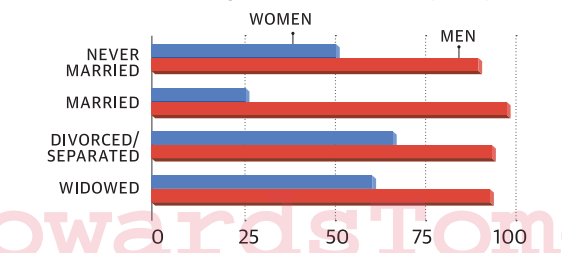
Society dynamics

Nuclear families (couple with children) form the highest % of households. Extended families (one or more parents or relatives) are also common. There are more single-mother households (5.4%) than single-father households



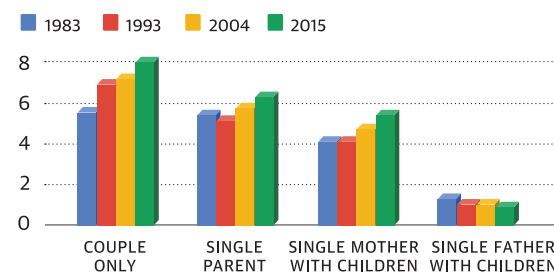
Participation in the workforce

Over half the unmarried women aged 25-54 are part of the labour force. This proportion halves when they are married, possibly due to family constraints or requirements. A higher % of married men than single men are part of the labour force, which means that marriage does not affect their participation



The changing household

As the nuclear family system has gained traction, the percentage of 'couple only' families has increased. The percentage of single mothers too has increased, corresponding to increasing rates of divorce in the country



Global low

Central and Southern Asia have the lowest % of women in the labour force, irrespective of their marital status. All the figures indicate % of women who are part of the workforce

| Region | Married/In union | Divorced/separated | Never married |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Central and Southern Asia | 29.1 | 65.2 | 50.5 |
| Eastern and Southeastern Asia | 74.4 | 83.7 | 87.1 |
| Europe and Northern America | 78.2 | 86 | 84.7 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 60.3 | 80.7 | 77.7 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 73.8 | 75.6 | 64.3 |

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 4, 1969

President's Rule for Bihar

The Internal Affairs Committee of the Union Cabinet, which met briefly after the Prime Minister's return to New Delhi this evening [July 3] to consider the Bihar situation, has accepted the Governor's recommendation for the imposition of President's rule in the State. An official announcement is expected to-morrow. The necessary proclamation under Article 356 of the Constitution will be issued from the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Union Government has also accepted the Governor's suggestion that the Bihar Legislature should not be dissolved straightaway, but kept under suspension for the time being so that its members could participate in the Presidential election next month. The President of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee, Mr. A. P. Sharma, and the leader of the Congress Legislature Party, Mr. Harihar Singh, put up a brave fight against the imposition of President's rule. But they failed to convince the Central leaders that the Congress was in a position to form another coalition Government in the State. The two Bihar leaders were invited to attend the meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board tonight to personally present their case for permission to enter into a new coalition.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 4, 1919.

Influenza in Madras.

Dr. K. Raghavendra Rao, B.A., M.B & C.M., Ag. Health Officer, Corporation of Madras, writes to us: I have the honour to request you to kindly publish the following for the information of the public: "During the last fortnight there has been an increase in the incidence of fever cases in the City and it appears to be due to a recrudescence of Influenza. Considering the distress and suffering caused to the public during the last epidemic, it is as well that people in this City be warned, so that they can readily adopt suitable prophylactic and curative measures against this disease. An attack of Influenza is easily recognised by the sudden onset of fever, accompanied with a little cold in the nose and a slight cough, associated with severe prostration. It is very dangerous to neglect the patient even for a few hours owing to the liability of complicating Pneumonia. If treated at home, the patient should be isolated in an airy, well-ventilated room, with only one or two attendants. The nasal secretions and sputum should be thoroughly disinfected by receiving them in carbolic lotion or in boiling water."

FROM PAGE ONE

Rahul Gandhi formally quits as party chief

The most visible face of the Congress's 2019 campaign, Mr. Gandhi said he fought the ideals that India was built on. "I fought because I love India... At times I stood completely alone and am extremely proud of it," he said.

Mr. Gandhi alleged in his letter that the RSS' goal of 'capturing the country's institutional structure, is now complete' and claimed that future elections could become 'mere rituals'.

He said the Congress must reclaim the institutions but for that to happen, the party must transform.

"To achieve this important task, the Congress Party must radically transform itself. Today the BJP is syste-

matically crushing the voice of the Indian people. It is the duty of the Congress Party to defend these voices," he said.

Mr. Gandhi, who lost his Amethi seat and now represents Wayanad in Kerala, claimed he did not fight a political party in the 2019 election but the entire machinery of the Indian state.

"A free and fair election requires the neutrality of a country's institutions; an election cannot be fair without arbiters - a free press, an independent judiciary, and a transparent election commission that is objective and neutral. Nor can an election be free if one party has a complete monopoly on financial resources," he said.

Cattle traders move SC against 2017 rules

"It is pertinent to mention that these frequent lootings are also threatening the rule of law and generally emboldening groups of persons to take the law into their own hands. Moreover, these incidents are acting as triggers for communal polarisation of society, and if not halted effectively and immediately, will have disastrous consequences on the social fabric of the country," the association said.

The law under question is the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Care and Maintenance of Case Property Animals) Rules, 2017 notified on May 23, 2017. The rules were framed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. The 2017 rules allow a magistrate to forfeit the cattle of an owner facing trial under the Act. A trader loses his cattle even before he is adjudged guilty of cruelty, the petition said.

Maharashtra dam breach: 23 feared dead

Chief Minister Devendra said, "The reason for the breach will be probed and action taken against the guilty expeditiously."

Local elected representatives also said the government had neglected their pleas for repair of the dam. Maharashtra Water Resources Minister Girish Mahajan said villagers in the area had complained of cracks in the

dam. "This dam was built 14 years ago. The State government will find out at which level there was negligence and necessary action will be taken accordingly," he said.

Homes of the villagers washed away will be constructed at safe places, he said. A compensation of ₹4 lakh will be given to the kin of each of the deceased, he added.

First ever investors' summit in J&K

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Commerce Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad said the image of the State as strife ridden has often come in the way of drumming up business, as well as negative perception by the national media.

Land laws

Another sticking point is land. Laws governing ownership of land do not allow non-State subjects (who are not permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir) to purchase land or immovable property in the State.

However, the Land Grants Bill, passed by the government headed by late Shaikh Abdullah in 1978, allows the government to lease out land to outsiders for 99 years.

The State government

can designate lands as industrial and offer long term leases, but a suggestion that land outside of industrial parks could be given out on lease has met with stiff resistance from various quarters of civil society. The proposal was sent for a review by the BJP-PDP government.

"That, however, is not the only sticking point with regard to land. Suppose a business turns turtle and banks need to foreclose on assets; then leased land cannot be considered under the foreclosure. This reduces the assets that can be sold off to pay off loans during bankruptcy procedures. This directly affects the loans available for businesses. All these issues will, hopefully, be discussed and some way forward can be found," said a government official.

Curbs due to Yatra rile Kashmiris

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

For the first time, the Jammu and Kashmir government has ordered stopping of traffic on the 97 km National Highway and halting train services in south Kashmir during daytime till the 45-day Amarnath Yatra concludes in the State, evoking sharp reactions.

According to an official handout of the Railways, no train will be available between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. from Qazigund to Banihal. "Before 10 a.m. and after 3 p.m., trains will be available between Baramulla and Banihal. After completion of the yatra, trains will be available all day," the spokesman said.

In a separate order, the government directed that no civilian traffic be allowed on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway from Qazigund to Nashri from 10 a.m. up to 3 p.m. during the yatra period.

In the past, authorities used to set a cut-off time for vehicles carrying pilgrims from outside the State to reach the twin base camps in south and central Kashmir. The unprecedented move has evoked sharp reactions from the civil society and political parties.

A delegation of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) met Divisional Commissioner Baseer Ahmad Khan to discuss the issue.

Rajya Sabha debates poll reforms

Prasad counters Opposition charges on misuse of media and electoral bonds

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday that the government would not allow the abuse of Indian data by foreign powers or foreign companies and it would bring a data protection law soon.

Mr. Prasad made the remark while responding to a debate on electoral reforms in the Rajya Sabha.

Participating in the debate, Kapil Sibal of the Congress raised the misuse of social media, and said the BJP was the top spender on Google and it paid ₹18.3 crore for advertisements during the elections.

Mr. Sibal said, "A certain political party used Google, Facebook and other social media platforms to target particular voters and the money spent" was something to be worried about.

"BJP officially spent ₹1.32 crore on Facebook but (through) unofficial FB pages namely Bharat ke Mann ki

The voting machine has become a counting machine. We don't know the source code, what programme is loaded on it... The ballot paper (in an electronic form) is loaded in the EVM unit two-three days before the elections, it is an engineer who puts it... this is not done by the EC, it is outsourced

KAPIL SIBAL
Congress leader

Baat, Nation with Namo, My First Vote for Modi... cumulatively ₹4.5 crore was spent. Both the BJP and the Prime Minister enjoyed complete media hegemony. If you want free and fair polls, it cannot happen like this. The social media, billboards, newspapers were flooded with the PM's pictures," Mr. Sibal said.

Raising doubts on the EVMs, Mr. Sibal said, "Our objection to EVM is principled, the voting machine has become a counting machine. We don't know the source code, what programme is loaded on it... the ballot pap-

er (in an electronic form) is loaded in the EVM unit two-three days before the elections, it is an engineer who puts it... this is not done by the EC, it is outsourced...no one knows what goes on there."

Mr. Prasad said that Cambridge Analytica, accused of harvesting data of Indian users from Facebook, was sent two notices, but the firm did not respond, following which a CBI inquiry was initiated in 2018.

Mr. Prasad accused the Opposition of adopting double standards on the issue of EVM, saying leaders from

their parties had become Chief Ministers and Prime Ministers through the same voting process.

"This hypocrisy and double standards impinges upon the credibility and polity of the country," Mr. Prasad said.

He also pitched for the idea of "one nation, one poll", and urged the Opposition to consider the proposal with an open mind.

The Minister said the government would write to the Election Commission to have a single voter list for Lok Sabha, Assembly and panchayat elections in the country.

Replying to a short-duration debate on electoral reforms, Mr. Prasad countered Opposition charges related to misuse of media, social media and electoral bonds during the recently-concluded general elections.

He said certain gaps needed to be plugged in electoral funding and corporates had been asked to give donation only through cheques.



Strong counter: DMK MP T.R. Baalu said that the tweet had belittled Tamil Nadu. •PTI

Uproar in LS over Kiran Bedi's tweet

DMK MP T.R. Baalu raises concern

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday witnessed uproar as Opposition members trooped into the Well of the House after DMK leader T.R. Baalu raised objections over a tweet by Puducherry Lieutenant-Governor Kiran Bedi on water crisis in Chennai.

It was the first time in the 17th Lok Sabha that Opposition MPs went to the Well after Speaker Om Birla told Mr. Baalu that he could not speak about a person holding a constitutional office without bringing a motion.

Mr. Baalu cited Ms. Bedi's tweet, and said she had belittled Tamil Nadu and sought the Union government's reply.

Congress members as well as Aam Aadmi Party's Bhagwant Mann joined the protests and went to the Well after Mr. Baalu was not satisfied with the Speaker's response.

Defence Minister and Deputy Leader of the House Rajnath Singh intervened, and said the Opposition must bring a motion if they wanted a discussion on this issue as Ms. Bedi holds a constitutional post.

The Zero Hour witnessed exchange of words between Trinamool Congress and BJP members after Sudeep Bandopadhyaya (Trinamool) referred to BJP MP Locket

Chatterjee's allegations of 'cut money' being taken by Trinamool leaders including the Chief Minister.

'Cut money'

"Cut money is a kind of a bribe and yesterday the member talked about the Chief Minister. It is not right and should not be part of the records. If the Bengal Assembly makes such a charge against the Prime Minister, it will not be acceptable," Mr. Bandopadhyaya said.

Though the Speaker said he would look into the records and remove any objectionable portion, BJP MPs countered the Trinamool members with slogans.

"Don't turn this into Bengal Assembly," said the Speaker even as he asked the members to observe discipline.

Separately, BJP member from West Bengal Arjun Singh raised the issue of cow smuggling to Bangladesh, and alleged that the ruling Trinamool patronised the smugglers.

"Cow smuggling is rampant in West Bengal and this is happening with the support of the State government. The smuggling takes place through the Bangladesh border in return for fake currency and drugs," he said.

We saved Rae Bareilly factory: Goyal

Says double standards of the Congress have been on display in the House

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday hit back at the Congress on the Rae Bareilly rail coach factory issue, and said that not a single coach was made there before the Modi government came to power in 2014.

"In 2007-08, they [United Progressive Alliance] made announcements but they did nothing. Until 2014, not a single coach was made here. They were either painting coaches or tightening fixtures," Mr. Goyal told the Lok Sabha during Question Hour.

In a rare Zero Hour men-

tion on Tuesday, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi opposed the corporatisation of the Modern Coach Factory and called it the first step towards 'privatisation'.

When Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury raised the issue during Question Hour on Wednesday, Mr. Goyal said double standards of the Congress were on display in the House.

The Minister said the coach factory made 1,422 coaches last year, exceeding its capacity of 1,000 coaches.

When Mr. Goyal read out



Piyush Goyal •PTI

down five printing presses under the Railways.

No job losses

Mr. Goyal gave an assurance that there would not be any job losses. He, however, maintained that the printing presses set up by the British had become uneconomical and, at times, the cost of printing a ticket was more than its value.

"Not a single person will lose job... [but] we will not allow inefficiency in Railways," he said and added that while the world was moving towards digitisation, some parties and alliances were living in history.

Farmers urge govt. to step up procurement

'Mere hike in MSP not enough'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The decision of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Tuesday to marginally hike the minimum support price (MSP) for 14 kharif crops received a cautious response from farmers' groups.

They pointed out that MSPs do not actually help the farmer unless procurement can be increased. Badri Narayan Chaudhary, general secretary of the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, a farmers' group affiliated to the ruling BJP, welcomed the increase in MSPs, but said it was now up to the government to ensure that farmers get the full benefit on the ground.

"What is the rationale of symbolically increasing prices when paddy is being sold at 40% lower rates in the mandi?" asked V.M. Singh, convener of the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, a platform of more than 200 farmers groups.

He noted that paddy was

sold at ₹1,100-1,200 per quintal in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar last year when the official MSP was ₹1,750 per quintal.

Guarantee buyback

"The government must guarantee buyback at that rate so that the benefits reach 100% of farmers, or it is useless," Mr. Singh said.

He added that production costs should have been calculated including land costs, as recommended by the M.S. Swaminathan Commission.

"Whatever the government has announced may cover costs, but is available to so few farmers that it is almost a ritual," said Avik Saha, convener of the Jai Kisan Andolan.

He urged the Centre to ensure the implementation of the PM-AASHA scheme announced last year to increase procurement.

"It has the ingredients of a good scheme, and now that the electoral rush is over, it must be implemented," he said.

'Name change for Bengal not cleared'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre has not yet cleared the proposal of the West Bengal government to change the name of the State to 'Bangla', Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in a written response in the Rajya Sabha to a question from MP Ritabrata Banerjee on Wednesday. Changing a State's name requires constitutional amendment, the Minister said.

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Indicating that there is still some confusion in India's position on stopping oil imports from Iran in line with sanctions by the United States, the government said on Wednesday that it does not propose to cancel trade, including oil imports, from Iran.

Replying to a direct question on whether the government would "withdraw or discontinue" trade with

Centre and SP on the same page on 'obscene, vulgar' ads

MP calls it a 'moral crisis'; Minister says 'serious situation'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The country is going through a great "moral crisis" with the increase in the frequency of obscene and vulgar advertisements in electronic and print media which is leading to perversion among young boys who in turn harass women, Samajwadi Party MP Ramgopal Yadav said on Wednesday during Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha.

"I can't even watch news with my family because such obscene and vulgar advertisements are interspersed in news programmes too," Mr. Yadav told the Upper House.

Going a step further, Mr. Yadav quoted from *A Study of History* by Arnold J. Toynbee, saying the "London University Professor had noted that civilisations have disintegrated because of nudity and alcoholism. And both these trends are spreading



Keeping track: SP member Ramgopal Yadav. •RSTV/PTI

in our country at a rapid rate."

He used the occasion to take a dig at the Narendra Modi government: "You promised to remove Article 370 instead you dropped IPC 377," he said.

Article 370 of the Indian Constitution accords special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, while Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code made homosexuality illegal in India.

Mr. Yadav called wardrobe malfunction during

fashion shows as deliberate. "All this incites perversion in boys and leads to harassment of women," he added.

Replying to Mr. Yadav's submission, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar conceded that it was a serious situation. "We have a mechanism to redress complaints on this issue which has so far settled 6,700 complaints. But we need a more effective redressal mechanism and we are working on the same," he added.

Iranian oil imports not stopped: govt.

Minister's answers in Lok Sabha at variance with stand taken at bilateral meeting

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Iran, Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan said, "No."

U.S. push

He was responding to a supplementary question from Congress Member of Parliament Anto Antony in the Lok Sabha on "whether there is any pressure on the Government from United States of America or any other country in this regard".

Mr. Muraleedharan said, "India's bilateral relations

with Iran stand on their own and are not influenced by India's relations with any third country."

The MEA's answer reflects India's traditional position but is at considerable variance from the stand taken last week at the G20, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi reportedly told U.S. President Donald Trump that New Delhi had, in fact, reduced its intake of Iranian oil, in accordance with Washington's request to "ze-

ro out" Iranian oil imports after May 2.

When asked about the differing positions, a senior government official said the Ministry of Petroleum could confirm that levels of Iranian oil imports had, in fact dropped, but that the decision to reduce oil imports was based on "commercial considerations and national interest". The official distinguished between "stopping" oil imports, and "reducing" them considerably.

IN BRIEF



Bill for faculty quota in varsities cleared

NEW DELHI The Rajya Sabha passed a Bill to enable universities or colleges to be considered as a unit while providing reservation for filling vacancies of teachers in Central education institutes. The passage of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Bill, 2019 in the Rajya Sabha will help in fill up the existing 7,000 vacancies in Central universities, said Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Minister for Human Resource Development.

Paramilitary forces to get Group 'A' benefits

NEW DELHI A long-pending demand of the officers of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) seeking the same benefit of non-functional financial upgradation that IAS and IPS officers get was cleared by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday. Under it, if there is a lack of vacancies at a certain level and an officer of a particular batch is promoted, then others of that batch will also get financial upgradation without actually being promoted.

No plan to scrap sedition law, says government

NEW DELHI The government has no plans to repeal the sedition law as it is needed to effectively combat anti-national, secessionist and terrorist elements, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai told the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. He was replying to a written question by Telangana Rashtra Samithi MP Banda Prakash who had asked if the government was considering the scrapping of the "colonial-era law applicable on free citizens of the Republic".

Congress has no time to lose to find a leader

CWC likely to chart next course on July 10 as Assembly polls in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Haryana are fast approaching

SANDEEP PHUKAN SOBHANA K. NAIR NEW DELHI

More than a month after he first announced to the Congress Working Committee (CWC) his decision to quit as party president, Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday changed the status on his Twitter handle to a member of the Congress and MP.

Congress veterans are now exploring options for a way out of the crisis as the party has to get ready for the Assembly elections in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Haryana.

Sources said the CWC, which alone could decide on the next course, was likely to be convened on July 10.

Onerous tasks
From appointing an interim president to complete Mr. Gandhi's three-year tenure that started in December 2017 to setting up a collective

decision-making body with nine to 11 senior members under a working president are being discussed.

In recent past, only P.V. Narasimha Rao and Sitaram Kesri from outside the Gandhi-Nehru family had been at the helm of the Congress.

And the last time anyone challenged the family was in 2000 when Jitendra Prasad took on Sonia Gandhi in November 2000 and lost to her.

Party insiders believe that though Rahul Gandhi made it clear that he would not involve himself in the selection of his successor, the family will certainly have a large say as his mother, Sonia Gandhi, heads the Congress Parliamentary Party and his sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, is a general secretary in the CWC.

Among the top contenders whose names are doing the rounds include former Home Minister Sushil Kumar

Shinde, former Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Malikarjun Kharge and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

With a new president, the existing CWC will have to be dissolved and a new one constituted.

"All existing CWC members including the Gandhis will have to resign and the new president will have to choose the new team. That is



Clear stand: Congress president Rahul Gandhi arrives in Parliament on Wednesday.

Shinde, former Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Malikarjun Kharge and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

With a new president, the existing CWC will have to be dissolved and a new one constituted.

"All existing CWC members including the Gandhis will have to resign and the new president will have to choose the new team. That is

when the real test of internal democracy will happen. That is when we will know if this is a charade or a genuine step-back," said Sri Prakash Singh, Professor of Political Science, Delhi University.

New chorus

But Mr. Gandhi's open letter has already started a chorus among leaders who maintain that they would ask him to continue.

"We request him to take back his resignation because we know his struggle," Deputy Chief Minister Rajasthan Sachin Pilot told presspersons.

Veteran leader Moti Lal Vohra echoed Mr. Pilot, saying, "We will again ask Rahulji to rethink his position."

"His decision borne out of conviction should now be respected and an inspiring structure of leadership should be put in place with the support and guidance of

Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi," former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar said.

"It is very sad to see him quit as he put in enormous effort and at one point, we felt he caught the pulse and we saw a return of the Congress. Even though he has quit as the Congress president, he continues to be our leader. Reluctantly, we have to accept it. If he has announced it, his advice sadly has to be followed. We will put our heads together and do our best," former Union Minister and senior party leader Salman Khurshid said.

"Rahulji's resignation letter is unfortunate. We all are accountable for this defeat. He has, in a short span, already made tremendous contribution in strengthening the party and we all believe his endeavour should continue," senior leader Ahmed Patel tweeted.

Modi holds meeting with BJP's OBC MPs

It is the first in a series of interactions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday met 43 BJP MPs from the Other Backward Classes at his official residence, the first in a series of meetings with party MPs that he will be holding through the Parliament session.

Sources present at the meeting said it had no specific agenda and was more of an informal interaction.

"Modiji interacted with us briefly, and the MPs introduced themselves to him," an MP said.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi was present.

BJP MPs, party sources said, have been divided into seven groups such as youth, women and those from the Scheduled Castes, Sched-



Narendra Modi

uled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. The Prime Minister will meet the Scheduled Caste group on Thursday.

Each group will meet Mr. Modi separately, the sources said. During the previous Lok Sabha, he had met BJP MPs from various States in every session of Parliament and spoken to them about the government's agenda.

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Each group will meet Mr. Modi separately, the sources said. During the previous Lok Sabha, he had met BJP MPs from various States in every session of Parliament and spoken to them about the government's agenda.

IN BRIEF



Man arrested for abusing M.P. CM in Facebook post

SAGAR (M.P.)
Police in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district arrested a man on Wednesday for using abusive words for Chief Minister Kamal Nath while slamming the State government for frequent power cuts. Sachin Taneja, a resident of Sagar city, was arrested on a complaint filed by a local Congress leader. "A case has been registered against the accused under IPC section 294 (obscene act) and the Information Technology Act," said City SP Amrita Diwakar. Deepak Dubey, a district Congress leader, had filed a complaint against Taneja at Makronia police station, said Sandeep Sablok, State Congress spokesperson.

HC sets up panel on H.P. school bus accident

SHIMLA
The Himachal Pradesh High Court on Wednesday set up a three-member panel to examine causes behind a school bus accident in which two children and the driver were killed. A Bench of Chief Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Justice Anoop Chitkara formed the panel, taking suo motu cognisance of the accident on Jhanjiri Road in Shimla on Monday.

Twitter storm over Army note on pensions

Veterans say it has been insensitive to disabled

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Army came in for sharp criticism from its veterans on social media on Wednesday over its stand on taxing disability pension after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman put out an unsigned note of the force which said some "unscrupulous personnel" were exploiting the disability benefits. Parts of the note were later tweeted by the Army's Additional Director-General of Public Information (ADG PI).

"ADGPI at its worst possible. Campaigning against its own," said Lt. Gen. Syed Ata Hasnain (ret) on Twitter.

Another veteran, Major Naveep Singh, a High Court lawyer, observed on Twitter, "The PMO has shown extreme sensitivity towards Divyangs. Mr. Parrikar made sure disabled soldiers, including those suffering from regular ailments, were given due comfort. Mr. Rajnath Singh has also been very caring. Today's developments are saddening."

Major Singh added in another tweet, "Actually I'm too unbenumbed to even react. This note goes against rules, judgements of the Supreme Court, medical science, and various reports of commissions and committees on the subject. Just too shocked. Unbelievable. Totally unbelievable."

In a notification dated June 24, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) under the Finance Ministry said that "such tax exemption will be available only to armed forces

Gujarat Cong. MLAs out of BJP's prying eyes

In safe location ahead of RS polls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AHMEDABAD

Wary of attempts at poaching ahead of the Rajya Sabha byelections to two seats in Gujarat, the Congress on Wednesday shifted all its legislators to a "safe" location in north Gujarat.

The legislators were taken by bus to Ambaji, from where they were likely to be taken to either Mount Abu in Rajasthan or housed in a nearby resort, where the party has organised a day's workshop.

Six legislators resigned from the Assembly and the party to join the ruling BJP in the run-up to the Lok Sabha election, and a few more are reportedly in the queue.

The Congress camp is facing brewing discontent among some of its MLAs who are likely to cross-vote in favour of the BJP candidates - External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Jugalji Thakor.

The byelections were necessitated after Home Minister Amit Shah and Textiles Minister Smriti Irani resigned from the Rajya Sabha after being voted to the Lok Sabha in May.

Party's predicament

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The byelections were necessitated after Home Minister Amit Shah and Textiles Minister Smriti Irani resigned from the Rajya Sabha after being voted to the Lok Sabha in May.

The Congress MLAs led by Leader of the Opposition Paresht Dhanani boarded a private bus to Ambaji. According to Congress leaders, all but rebel Congress MLAs were travelling together.



The Congress has fielded former Minister Chandrika Chudasama and Gaurav Pandya, a local party leader.

"Since the BJP is trying to use of money and muscle power, we are taking our MLAs to ensure that horse trading does not succeed in the Rajya Sabha byelections scheduled for July 5," Congress legislator and Chief Whip in the Assembly Ashwin Kotwal told presspersons.

There is also a strong possibility of rebel Congress MLA and OBC leader Alpesh Thakor and some of his supporting legislators to cross-vote in the Rajya Sabha election.

The Congress MLAs led by Leader of the Opposition Paresht Dhanani boarded a private bus to Ambaji. According to Congress leaders, all but rebel Congress MLAs were travelling together.

Ex-officials cast doubt on poll result

Say irregularities in conduct of election has thrown 2019 mandate into doubt

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Listing out serious irregularities in the conduct of the 2019 Lok Sabha election, a group of former senior civil servants has said that "there is no doubt that the mandate of 2019 has been thrown into serious doubt."

In an open letter to the Election Commission of India, 64 retired IAS, IFS and IPS officers said, "The 2019 General Elections appear to have been one of the least free and fair elections that the country has had in the

past three decades or so."

The issues raised in the letter include serious violations of the Model Code of Conduct by the Prime Minister and senior BJP leaders, which were ignored by the ECI; allegations of voter ex-



clusion; blatant media violations including the rise of Namo TV and suspicion of bias in the election schedule and a number of concerns related to Electronic Voting Machines, among other issues.

The letter, which was also endorsed by 83 veterans, academics and activists, accused the ECI of glaring bias. It warned that, unlike in previous elections, "an impression has gathered ground that our democratic process is being subverted and undermined by the very consti-

Wage Code Bill gets Cabinet nod

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Code on Wages Bill, which subsumes existing laws regarding minimum wages and other salary issues.

I&B Minister Prakash Javadekar said the Cabinet had approved Bills on arbitration, wage code and surrogacy, but details could not be shared since Parliament was in session.

Airspace ban cost Air India ₹490 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Air India incurred a loss of ₹491 crore due to the closure of Pakistani airspace, the government said on Wednesday adding it was a unilateral decision taken by the neighbouring country and it was up to it to revoke the ban.

The loss suffered by Air India between February 27, when Pakistan imposed the ban, and July 2 translates into a daily loss of ₹3.8 crore.

Indian carriers collectively suffered a loss of ₹548.93 crore, according to data provided by Minister of State for



Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri in the Rajya Sabha.

SpiceJet suffered a loss of ₹30.73 and Go Air ₹2.1 crore until June 20. IndiGo saw a loss of ₹25.1 crore until May 31.

The large size of loss incurred by Air India is mainly on account of its long-haul

flights to Europe and the U.S. which had to take a detour via the Oman airspace with an additional technical halt for refuelling, adding at least two hours to its flights leading to an additional fuel burn.

Asked if India was planning to resolve the issue through diplomacy, Mr. Puri said: "The airspace closure by Pakistan is a unilateral measure that followed the non-military counter terrorism air strike by the Indian Air Force against terror camp in Balakot. It is for Pakistan to decide."

USTR team to visit Delhi next week

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN WASHINGTON DC

Senior officials from the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) will visit New Delhi next week for trade talks with their Indian counterparts. Assistant USTR Christopher Wilson and Deputy Assistant USTR Brendan Lynch will lead the team.

"Since India's election period has now passed, USTR officials plan to visit India for relationship-building with Indian government counterparts, including introductory meetings for the new AUSTR for India [Mr. Wilson]," the USTR office told *The Hindu* via email.

News of the visit comes a week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump met in Osaka, Japan, and discussed trade, the 5G network, Iran and energy security.

The Osaka talks, and U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo's visit to New Delhi to meet External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar earlier last week, were aimed at containing the growing challenges in the India-U.S. relationship, largely centered on trade and tariffs.

Office of the Director
Project Implementation Cell,
Ground Water Department, U.P.
A-2/39 Vishal Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow
Uttar Pradesh, India. Phone No. 0522-2302804
Website: www.upgdw.gov.in, Email: upgdw.in@gmail.com
IDA Credit No. 5298-IN
UP Water Sector Restructuring Project-II

Corrigendum
Lucknow: Dated: June 28, 2019

In reference to NCB No. 62 /GWD/WBP/DWLR 200 Nos./NCB, DL26-06-2019 for Procurement of Supply, Installation, and Commissioning of 200 Digital Water Level Recorders of Venturi/Non-Venturi Pressure Type (Includes 100 nos. for medium wells and 100 numbers for shallow wells) with telemetry, including Protection box, fencing and security arrangements, establishment of Data Acquisition system along with its maintenance for Real Time Ground Water Level Monitoring. Published in newspapers. The following corrigendum for Invitation for Bids is hereby authorized to be issued as under:-

| S. No. | As Read | Now to be read |
|--------|---|--|
| 1 | Column-3 Bid Security in Lac Rs. 3 Indian Rupees Rs. 5,60,000/- (Indian Rupees Nine Lacs Sixty Five Thousands only) Cost of Document (Rs.) 4 | Now to be read Bid Security in (INR) 3 Rs. 5,60,000/-(Rs. Five Lac Sixty Thousand only) Cost of Document in (INR) 4 |
| 2 | Column-4 Indian Rupees Five Thousand (Rs.5000/-) Plus GST @18% i.e. Rs. 900/- Total Rs. 5900/- only | Rs. 5000/- + Rs. 900/- (GST @18%)=Rs. 5900/- |

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.
Note:- In case of any difference in Hindi and English version, terms and conditions mentioned in English version would prevail.

Director
Ground Water Department, UP
RO No 141724, Ro Date - 27/19 website-www.upgovnic.in

MAHATMA GANDHI POST GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF DENTAL SCIENCES
GOVT. OF PUDUCHERRY INSTN., PONDICHERY - 605 006
Phone: 0413-2279601 - 2279606. Fax : 0413-2278124/2277255. Gram: 'PONDENT'
E-mail: mgpgids@bsnl.in, mgpgids@gmail.com, mgdch.pon@nic.in

No.08/MGPGI/PUR-1/2019-20/728 **Date: 02.07.2019**
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

On behalf of the Chief Secretary to Govt./Chairman, Mahatma Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Dental Sciences, Puducherry, tenders are invited through e-Tender by the Dean, MGPGI, Puducherry, for supply of the following items.

1. DENTAL CHAIRS & EQUIPMENTS/INSTRUMENTS
2. O.T. TABLE & LIGHT, MICROSCOPE, pH METER AND DIGITAL BALANCE.
3. CONSUMABLE DENTAL MATERIALS AND RADIOLOGICAL ITEMS.

The details of Tender Schedule, Terms & Conditions, Critical Dates etc. may be downloaded from the website <https://pudutenders.gov.in> from 08/07/2019 in respect of SL.Nos. 1 and 2 and from 18/07/2019 for SL No.3 respectively.
Sd/-
Dr.V.RAMESH, DEAN, MGPGI

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, BHADRAK
Tel : 06784-240979, e-mail: rwsdsdivisionbhadrak@gmail.com

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Tendering

143-Q Identification No.033 Dt. 29.06.2019

1. Name & Nos of work : 4 Nos of Rural piped water supply Scheme
2. Estimated cost : Rs.102.56 lakhs to 235.64 lakhs
3. Class of Contractor : B & A
4. Cost of Tender Paper : As Per DTCN
5. Period of Completion : 10 Months to 11 Months
6. Mode of submission : Tenders should be submitted only online in www.tenderorissa.gov.in
7. Period of Availability of tenders online : 10.00 hours of dt. 09.07.2019 to 17.30 hours of date 19.07.2019
8. Last date & time of Seeking clarification : Date 16.07.2019 up-to 5.30 P.M.
9. Last date & time of bidding online : Date 19.07.2019 up-to 5.30 P.M.
10. Date & time opening of tender bid : Date 20.07.2019 at 11.00 A.M.
11. Name and address of the : Executive Engineer RWS&S Division, Bhadrak officer inviting Tender
12. Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal www.tendersorissa.gov.in (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>)
13. Subsequent modification/ corrigendum/ Addendum if required shall appear in website only.
14. Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal www.tendersorissa.gov.in (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>)

25920/11/0095/1920 **Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bhadrak**

HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT ENGINEERING WING
Office of the Chief Engineer, 1st Floor, PHI Building, Seshadri Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. Telephone No. 080-22274892
E-mail: ceahsdrp@gmail.com Website: ceahsdrp-hfw@karnataka.gov.in

No: HFWD/EW/CE/TA-3/AE-1/TND/2019-20/683 **Date: 03-07-2019**

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Chief Engineer, HFWD, Engineering Wing, Bengaluru invites tender from eligible Class-I contractors and above registered in KPWD in two cover system in e-procurement for the following work.

| Sl No. | Description of Work | Estimated Cost (Rs. Lakhs) | Earnest Money Deposit (Rs. Lakhs) | Stipulated Period for Completion (including monsoon) |
|--------|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Construction of Community Health Centre (CHC) and Staff Quarters at Akkuruhosahalli in Channapattana Taluk, Ramanagara District. | 1200.00 | 12.00 | 12 Months |

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- 1) Last Date for Receipt of Tenders: **02-08-2019 upto 16.00 Hrs.**
- 2) Date of Opening of Tenders (Technical Bids): **05-08-2019 at 16.00 Hrs.**

The tender details can be downloaded from the e-Procurement platform. Tenders shall be submitted electronically at www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in and EMD and Tender Processing Fee shall also be paid electronically. Interested eligible contractors shall register on the e-procurement platform to participate in this tender.

NOTE: 1) All the rights are reserved by the under signed for postponement or cancellation of entire tender process, rejection of bids / individual bid etc., without assigning any reason. 2) Henceforth, any changes in the schedule / contents will not be published through news papers and further changes will be updated only on e-procurement portal.

Sd/- Chief Engineer H&FWD, Engineering Wing, Bengaluru

'U.S. detention centres are overcrowded'

Report by government agency says the situation at border facilities in Texas is 'a ticking time bomb'

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

An internal U.S. Government watchdog report has warned the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of "serious overcrowding and prolonged detention" in border facilities in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas and has said the situation requires "immediate attention".

The report, from the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of DHS, addressed to DHS Acting Secretary Kevin McAleenan, was released on Tuesday and came a day after a group of Democratic lawmakers strongly criticised the conditions of Texas detention facilities.

The report, based on five site visits, says it had issued a management alert on overcrowding in May 2019 and this is the final management alert. It has also published photographs of overcrowded spaces, some with standing room only. The inspectors say 8,000 individuals were being held at the time of the visit and that 3,400 or almost half were held for more



Confined to cages: A portion of the report reveals images of people penned into overcrowded Border Patrol facilities. ■ AP

than 72 hours, against Customs and Border Protection (CBP) guidelines.

The report also says that roughly 30% of the unaccompanied children in the facilities visited had been detained for longer than 72 hours, and in three of the five facilities children had no access to showers.

Two facilities had not provided access to hot meals for children, until the week of the OIG visit.

The report says that while Border Patrol tried to hold

children in as minimally restrictive circumstances as possible (such as by leaving room doors open), children who were in need of medical isolation were sometimes being held in cells.

Asking for help

One panel of photographs shows 51 adult females in a room with a maximum capacity for 40 male juveniles and another room with 71 adult males in a room with maximum capacity for 41 adult females. "...at one facility,

some single adults were held in standing room only conditions for a week and at another, some single adults were held for more than a month in overcrowded cells," the report says.

The photos of these spaces shows detainees with their faces pressed against the glass screen of the room. One detainee can be seen holding a placard that says "HELP" and "40 DAY" and what appears to be "HERE" written on it. Others are seen making signs for help.

One of the facility managers called the situation a "ticking time-bomb", according to the report. Significantly, the report cautions of the dangers of overcrowding but mentions dangers to DHS agents first. "We are concerned that overcrowding and prolonged detention represent an immediate risk to the health and safety of DHS agents and officers, and to those detained..." it says, listing security risks such as detainees refusing to re-enter their cells after cleaning. "Border Patrol brought in

its special operations team to demonstrate it was prepared to use force if necessary," the report says.

The CBP plans to add a tent that will house single adults as part of its response to the situation, having already added two tents in the Rio Grande Valley, each capable of holding 500 people, the report says. Longer term housing is the responsibility of another DHS agency, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

"This report is even more troubling after the discovery of the vile, crude comments made on social media by some of those in CBP responsible for caring for migrant families and children," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement, referring to a ProPublica report from earlier this week on a Facebook group of past and current border agents that had made light on migrant deaths and shared racist and sexist memes about female members of Congress who made border facility site visits in Texas on Monday.

Baloch Liberation Army, a rebel force with many faces

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

The U.S. on Tuesday designated the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) as a terror organisation. "The BLA is an armed separatist group that targets security forces and civilians, mainly in ethnic Baloch areas of Pakistan," said the U.S. State Department in a statement.

The BLA, the armed wing of the Baloch movement, has carried out several violent attacks in Pakistan. It has about 6,000 cadre spread across the Balochistan Province and in the bordering areas of Afghanistan.

Who are their leaders? The BLA, which has been banned by Pakistan since 2006, has maintained a fluid leadership pattern.

In 2018, Aslam Baloch, the young radical leader of the BLA, was killed in a suicide bombing in Kandahar along with some of his followers. Unconfirmed reports suggest that Aslam had travelled to India in the past and met with people sympathetic to the Baloch cause.

The organisation lost a major supporter with the October 18 assassination of Kandahar police chief General Razik by the Taliban. Since the assassination of Aslam, the BLA has maintained silence about its leadership. It is known that regional commanders are playing a crucial role in steering the organisation at present.

Apart from the BLA, the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), founded by Jumma Khan in 1964, is the other recognised armed militant organisation fighting for the cause of Baloch freedom. The BLF used to be popular once, but it is believed that most of the BLF fighters have merged with the BLA.

Almost all the militant Ba-



Pakistani security personnel in Quetta, Balochistan. ■ AFP

have suffered in the hands of the Pakistan military but do not espouse a direct military confrontation with the Pakistani state.

India's approach

It is established that BLA commanders, in the past, had sought medical treatment in India's hospitals, often under disguise or with fake identity.

In one such case, a militant commander in charge of Khuzdar city was based in Delhi for at least six months in 2017 when he underwent extensive treatment for kidney-related ailments. Pakistan has blamed India for supporting the Baloch rebels.

It is known that the Baloch sardars like the late Akbar Bugti and Ghaus Bukhsh Bizenjo maintained warm personal ties with various Indian political figures. However, visits by militants are often under assumed identities unlike those by prominent well known leaders.

Another leader, who visited India last year, was Mama Qadeer. He has become a popular face of civil society movement after he launched a long march seeking the truth about his missing son, a Baloch activist.

U.S. ban

Pakistan is expected to make it difficult for commanders and module chiefs of the BLA to travel in the region. The fighters are also likely to find fund-raising more difficult.

In a communication to *The Hindu*, Baloch rebels, however, have indicated that they are planning to intensify the struggle against Pakistan as they remain "the most popular" militant organisation in Balochistan despite Pakistan military's crackdown.

Pakistan cracks down on Hafiz Saeed

REUTERS
VIJAITA SINGH
LAHORE/NEW DELHI

Pakistani authorities announced a crackdown on Wednesday against Hafiz Saeed, leader of the group blamed for the deadly attacks on Mumbai in 2008, amid growing international pressure to act against militant groups.

Pakistan's counter-terrorism department said it had launched 23 cases against Saeed and 12 aides for using five trusts to collect funds and donations for the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), blamed by

India and the U.S. for the attacks in Mumbai that killed 166 people.

Two banned LeT-linked charities, the Jamaat-ud-Dawa and the Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation, were also targeted, the department said in a statement.

'Assets will be frozen'

"All the assets of these organisations and individuals will be frozen and taken over by the state," said a counter-terrorism senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The counter-terrorism de-

partment said the action was in accordance with U.N. sanctions against the individuals and entities.

The move follows pressure from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which last year placed Pakistan on its "grey list" of countries with inadequate controls over money laundering and terrorism financing.

A diplomatic source in Delhi said the crackdown was a direct result of the FATF plenary's ultimatum to Pakistan to implement all the 27 points of action by October. The plenary met in Or-

lando, U.S., last month.

The source added Pakistan was pulled up on four counts, which included "no investigation done by Pakistan against terror funding done by UN designated terrorists". Other areas pertained to Pakistan include not freezing weapon stores, ammunition dumps of the terror outfits, lack of implementation of legal provisions for targeted financial sanctions against all UN designated entities and not stopping the sustenance allowance to terrorists given by the Pakistani government.

Will exceed enrichment limit, says Iran

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

Iran on Wednesday announced that it will exceed the enrichment limit it agreed for uranium under the 2015 nuclear deal, in response to other signatories' failure to provide sanctions relief. "On July 7, our enrichment level will no longer be 3.67%. We will increase (the enrichment level) beyond 3.67% to as much as we want," President Hassan Rouhani said.

IN BRIEF



After SC ruling, Trump abandons census change
WASHINGTON
Following a Supreme Court ruling, President Donald Trump's government on Tuesday gave up a controversial attempt to put a question about citizenship on next year's census, handing a victory to those who argued the item would lead to discrimination against minority residents. ■ AFP

44 killed as air strike hits Libya migrant centre

TRIPOLI
An air strike hit a detention centre for mainly African migrants in a suburb of the Libyan capital Tripoli late on Tuesday, killing at least 44 people and wounding more than 130. UN Libya envoy Ghassan Salame said the strike "clearly amounts to the level of a war crime". ■ AFP

9 get death, 25 life term for attack on Hasina

They are Opposition BNP activists

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DHAKA

A court in Bangladesh on Wednesday sentenced to death nine Opposition activists over an attack on a train carrying current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina 25 years ago, a prosecutor said.

A further 25 activists from the main Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) were jailed for life and 13 other members jailed for 10 years by the court in Pabna, prosecutor Akhtaruzzaman Mukta said.

"Thirty-four of the convicts were present when the judge delivered the verdict. Others have been fugitive for years," Mr. Mukta said.

The BNP, whose leader Khaleda Zia was jailed last year for corruption in a case that her supporters say is politically motivated, said the new verdicts were



Sheikh Hasina

aimed at crippling the party. "It is a fabricated case and the verdict is a farce," BNP spokesman Rizvi Ahmed said, adding the judgement was "stage-managed" by the government.

The prosecutor said BNP activists shot at a train carrying the then Opposition leader Ms. Hasina and attacked it with molotov cocktails in September 1994 when it reached the Iswardi rail station, where Ms. Hasina was scheduled to address a rally.

Hong Kong police arrest protesters

REUTERS
HONG KONG

The Hong Kong police said on Wednesday it had arrested 12 people in connection with incidents on July 1, although it was unclear if they were among protesters who smashed their way into the city's legislature and ransacked the building.

The police said it also arrested six people linked to incidents the day before, and eight others suspected of being involved in the illegal disclosure online of police officers' private information.

Eleven of the 12 people arrested were males, and all were between the ages of 14 and 36, it said. Charges included "possession of offensive weapons, unlawful assembly, assaulting a police officer, (and) obstructing a police officer".

IMF approves \$6 billion loan for Pakistan

\$1 billion to be released immediately

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund Executive Board on Wednesday approved a \$6 billion, three-year loan for Pakistan to try to right the nation's economy.

The fund released \$1 billion to Pakistan immediately and said in a statement the programme aims to "support the authorities' economic reform programme" and to help "generate sustainable and balanced growth." The IMF will review Pakistan's performance quarterly over 39 months, phasing release of the additional aid over time.

The Imran Khan government agreed on the loan programme last month and announced plans to slash civil expenditures and freeze



Imran Khan

military spending while promising to substantially raise revenues to stem a yawning fiscal deficit, and pledging to collect 5.5 trillion rupees (\$36 billion) in taxes.

"Pakistan is facing a challenging economic environment, with lackluster growth, elevated inflation, high indebtedness and a weak external position," the result of a "legacy" of uneven policies, IMF mission chief Ernesto Ramirez Rigo said in a statement in June.

Cannot reveal details of submersible fire: Russia

It belongs to category of state secrets'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

The Kremlin on Wednesday said details of a fire that killed 14 crew on a deep-water submersible will not be made public because they include classified information.

The seamen died on Monday, but the disaster was only made public on Tuesday. Officials have given little information about the vessel or the circumstances of the accident.

Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Wednesday there were survivors of the accident, without clarifying how many. "This information cannot be made public completely," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said of the disaster. "It belongs to the category

of state secrets." "It is completely normal when this kind of information is not made public," Mr. Peskov said, adding that this was "within the law of the Russian Federation".

The Defence Ministry said the 14 crew were killed by inhaling poisonous fumes after a fire broke out on a "scientific research deep-sea submersible" studying the sea floor.

However the *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper cited sources as saying that the accident took place on an AS-12 nuclear mini-submarine, which is capable of going to extreme depths.

The presence of many senior ranking officers on board could suggest the submarine was not on an ordinary assignment.

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MARKET WATCH table with columns: 03-07-2019, % CHANGE, Sensex, US Dollar, Gold, Brent oil.

NIFTY 50 table with columns: PRICE, CHANGE, Adani Ports, Asian Paints, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv, etc.

EXCHANGE RATES table with columns: CURRENCY, TT BUY, TT SELL, US Dollar, Euro, etc.

BULLION RATES table with columns: CHENNAI, Retail Silver, 22 ct gold.

Items not declared? You can still pay GST

Finance Ministry clarifies on issues faced by taxpayers, seeks to ease concerns of small businesses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Wednesday issued clarifications regarding the filing of annual returns under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in a bid to ease taxpayers' concerns.

Notable among the clarifications are that taxpayers can still pay tax and interest on items that were not declared earlier, and regarding the source of data that must be provided in the annual return.

The Ministry clarified that the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act provides an opportunity for self-correction to all taxpayers in case they have not paid tax on some transactions, or have erroneously been granted a refund.

"Therefore, in cases where some information has not been furnished in the statement of outward supplies in Form GSTR-1 or in the regular returns in Form GSTR-3B, such taxpayers may pay the tax with interest through Form GST DRC-03 at any time," the clarification said.



Once more: The CGST Act affords an opportunity to taxpayers for self-correction. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

turn provides an additional opportunity for such taxpayers to declare the summary of supply against which payment of tax is made." Another major query among taxpayers is regarding the source of the data that must be furnished in the annual return form. The con-

fusion is whether the data must be sourced from the GSTR-1, GSTR-3B, or the books of accounts. "Ideally, information in Form GSTR-1, Form GSTR-3B and books of accounts should be synchronous and the values should match across different forms and the books of accounts," the government said. "If the same does not match, there can be broadly two scenarios, either tax was not paid to the government or tax was paid in excess."

In the first case, the government said, this should be declared in the annual return and tax should be paid.

In the case of latter, all information must be declared in the annual return and a refund (if eligible) can be applied for through Form GST RFD-01A. "Further, no input tax credit can be reversed or availed through the annual return," the clarification noted. "If taxpayers find themselves liable for reversing any input tax credit, they may do the same through Form GST DRC-03 separately."

The clarification also sought to ease the concerns of small businesses who were finding it difficult to furnish all the data required in the annual return form.

It said that taxpayers are advised to declare all such data "to the best of their knowledge and records" and that this data was only for information purposes and "reasonable/explainable variations in the information reported" would not be viewed adversely.

"Declare data" The clarification also sought to ease the concerns of small businesses who were finding it difficult to furnish all the data required in the annual return form.

Kuwait firm buys 20.7% stake in Uniply

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CHENNAI

Uniply Industries Ltd. on Wednesday said it had signed an agreement with Kuwait-based Markab Capital WLL under which the latter would acquire a controlling stake in the company. "The deal values Uniply at an enterprise value of over ₹1,550 crore on a fully diluted basis," a company statement said.

Markab Capital WLL and its wholly owned Indian subsidiary Markab India SPV Pvt. Ltd. will acquire 20.7% stake from Uniply chairman Keshav Kantamneni and his group entities at ₹82 a share.

'Avoiding commercial realty helped'

Adhering to risk appetite held us in good stead, says HDFC's Deepak Parekh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Indicating stress in the commercial real estate sector, Deepak Parekh, chairman of mortgage lender HDFC, said the decision to stay away from such lending helped maintain healthy asset quality.

"In the first half of the financial year [2018-19], we were often asked why we were not growing as aggressively as others in certain segments of the commercial real estate market. We held our ground by consciously staying away from funding what we perceived were riskier assets," Mr. Parekh said in the annual report to the shareholders.



Deepak Parekh

"Unsurprisingly, in the second half of the year, we were asked what we did differently that enabled us to stay resilient and be the preferred choice in the flight to safety.

"Perhaps a combination of experience and adhering to our risk appetite held us in good stead," he said.

Most housing finance companies are facing crisis of confidence as banks have become reluctant to lend to the sector which, in turn, increased their cost of borrowing and impacted business growth.

Preserving asset quality Mr. Parekh said in the current environment, HDFC had to work extremely hard to preserve asset quality.

HDFC had decided to curtail some non-individual loans in the previous financial year which resulted in lower growth of the overall loan book.

Non-performing loans of the individual portfolio stood at 0.7% while that of the non-individual portfolio stood at 2.34%.

He also admitted that there were a few wrong calls and [we] underestimated certain risks.

"In instances where we have had to write off loans, it has been done only after we had exhausted all possible options. Barring these few loans, our ethos of being conservative in our financial decisions has paid off," he added.

Separately, HDFC said it was planning to raise up to ₹45,000 crore by issuing bonds in tranches on a private placement basis.

USFDA raps Aurobindo for 'repeated CGMP failures'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) has sought to come down heavily on Aurobindo Pharma with regard to the current good manufacturing practice (CGMP) compliance levels at a few of its facilities.

In a warning letter that it issued recently to the firm, post inspection of its active pharmaceutical ingredient facility (Unit XI) in Andhra Pradesh's Srikakulam district, the FDA pointed out that CGMP observations similar in nature were also observed at other facilities. "Aurobindo Unit I and Aurobindo Unit IX were also inspected and cited for CGMP deficiencies related to the manufacture of (b) (4) API and intermediates. These facilities are also considered to be in an unacceptable state of compliance with regards to CGMP," it said.

On June 21, intimating the stock exchange about receipt of the warning letter for Unit XI, the firm said the USFDA had inspected the site in February.

Summarising significant deviations from CGMP for API, the letter said since "your methods, facilities or controls for manufacturing, processing, packing or holding do not conform to CGMP, your APIs are adulterated within the meaning" of U.S. laws. The letter said "until you correct all deviations and we confirm your compliance with CGMP, FDA may withhold approval of any new applications or supplements listing your firm as a drug manufacturer. Failure to correct the deviations may also result in FDA refusing admission of articles manufactured" at the Unit XI.

CEA to present maiden Survey

Predecessors' analyses could provide context for his views

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN NEW DELHI

Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy Subramanian is all set to present his first Economic Survey on Thursday, which will also be the first Survey presented under the second term of the NDA government.

"Looking forward with excitement to table my first - and the new Government's first - Economic Survey in Parliament on Thursday," Mr. Subramanian tweeted on Tuesday. The Survey will be presented in Parliament at noon.

While much attention will be given to the analysis of the economy that every Survey incorporates, focus will also be on Chapter 2, which is conventionally written by the CEA himself. This chapter usually covers the CEA's views, issues that need to be highlighted, and ideas where the need for further discussion is felt.

A look at some of the key issues brought up by previous CEAs could provide context to Mr. Subramanian's first attempt at Chapter 2, and also whether these ideas go on to be adopted.

Arvind Subramanian took a dynamic approach to the Surveys during his term as CEA (October 2014 to June 2018), using Chapter 2 to present radical ideas that he felt needed more discussion.

His first Survey of 2014-15 highlighted the potential of the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity and its ability to make huge leaps in financial inclusion, service delivery and, as he put it "wiping every tear from every eye". This is a model that the government has adopted in a big way, using Aadhaar and One-Time Passwords to present radical ideas that he felt needed more discussion.

The Jan Dhan Yojana aimed at providing bank accounts to all has also seen widespread implementation. In his next Survey, Mr. Subramanian highlighted the difficulties associated



Krishnamurthy Subramanian

with exiting business in India - a key problem that he said contributed to the high number of stalled projects and bad loans with banks. Here too, the government has made significant strides, notably with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

It was in his Survey of 2016-17 that Mr. Subramanian diverged the most from convention, devoting several chapters to ideas and analyses he felt would add to the national discourse. It was here that he raised the idea of a Universal Basic Income (UBI) for all Indians.

"UBI's appeal to both ends of the political spectrum makes it an idea whose time has come, perhaps not for immediate implementation but at least for serious public deliberation," Mr. Subramanian wrote.

UBI idea The idea has not yet met with much acceptance on either end of the political spectrum, but the Congress party's election manifesto promise of a ₹72,000 per year income for all the poor, and the BJP government's PM KISAN scheme aimed at providing a basic income for all farmers, are a version of Mr. Subramanian's UBI idea.

Raghuram Rajan spent only a little more than a year as the CEA (August 2012 to September 2013) before he went on to take over as Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. His commentary in his only Survey (2012-13) focussed extensively on employment and the need for quality jobs. "The central long-run

question facing India is where will good jobs come from," Mr. Rajan wrote. "Productive jobs are vital for growth. And a good job is the best form of inclusion... India's challenge is to create the conditions for faster growth of productive jobs outside of agriculture, especially in organised manufacturing and in services, even while improving productivity in agriculture."

This contribution to the national discourse is particularly relevant today, with government data showing that unemployment is at a 45-year high. Incidentally, even the current CEA recently weighed in about the need to focus on the quality of employment. He said that focussing on the unemployment rate missed the point, and that the key aspect was meaningful employment.

Kaushik Basu, who was CEA from December 2009 to July 2012, presented three Economic Surveys during his term. His first commentary in the 2009-10 Survey, coming as it did in the immediate aftermath of the global financial crisis, dealt extensively with how to stimulate GDP growth. The second (2010-11) was almost exclusively about inflation, its causes, effects and how to control it.

It was in his third Survey (2011-12) that Mr. Basu made his most radical suggestion. In a relatively small box in Chapter 2, Mr. Basu made the argument that while large-scale corruption must be dealt with strictly, there was a risk that over-regulation could hamper the legitimate activities by public institutions.

"While we need to ruthlessly crackdown on corruption, it must, at the same time, be recognised that the fear of a large and cumbersome anti-corruption bureaucracy can be detrimental to risk taking and may hamper legitimate activities in public institutions," Mr. Basu said. In essence, be strict about corruption but not over-zealous.

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS : TIRUPATI NOTICE INVITING TENDER. Re-e-tender is invited for Supply of Annual Requirement of certain Paper materials to TTD Press, Tirupati in one time supplies. For tender Notice & EMD details of e-tender please log on the web site https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in.

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RAIL WHEEL FACTORY Website : www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in. Corrigendum dated 02.07.2019 to Global Tender Notice No.RWF/S/001/2019 dtd.15.05.2019. The Due date of opening of the following Global Tenders are postponed from 05/07/2019 to 16/08/2019.

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Industry doyen B.K. Birla passes away at 98

Mamata, industrialists condole demise

INDRANI DUTTA KOLKATA

The grand old man of Indian industry Basant Kumar Birla passed away in Mumbai on Wednesday, at the age of 98.

Although away from active business for some years now, his larger than life but low-key, austere presence was felt not only through the Birla Building here, the corporate headquarters of some group companies, but also throughout Indian industry. His passing away truly marks the end of an era.

He is survived by daughters Manjushree Khaitan and Jayshree Mohhta and grandson Kumar Mangalam. His wife Sarala and son Aditya Vikram Birla predeceased him. The youngest son of legendary Ghanshyam Das Birla (GD), Mr. Birla got involved in the family business from his teens.

The group flagship, Kesoram Industries Ltd., turned 100 this year, and he was its non-executive chairman till the time of his demise.

GD's industrial empire comprised jute mills, cotton textile units, sugar companies and trading ventures. These were distributed among his sons and nephews. Mr. B.K. Birla expanded the businesses to include tea, fertilizers, cement and tyres, among others, during the time of the licence system.

He remained the chairman of most of the companies. The companies included Kesoram Industries, Century Textiles, Jayshree Tea and Century Enka. He was also the chairman of the Krishnarpan Charity Trust.

The executive control of these firms now rest with



Basant Kumar Birla

(1921-2019)

his daughters and his grandson Mr. Kumar Mangalam, with whom he spent his last few years. There are now some 50 firms in the group, some listed and some unlisted.

The stakes of many of these companies are held by Piloni Investment and Industries Corporation (PIIC). A year after one of the most acrimonious ownership battles faced by the Birlas, Mr. B.K. Birla took the initiative to untangle some cross-holdings at PIIC through a family pact, which saw increased holdings by him and his grandson.

His death was mourned by industry captains. Industrialist Sanjiv Goenka said he led transformational thoughts in Indian industry and it was a huge family loss. Patton Industries chairman Sanjay Budhia said that the grit and determination of Mr. B.K. Birla was manifest in the industrial empire that he built during the licence raj. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also condoled his death. The funeral would be held here on Thursday.

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GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT Request for Expression of Interest. Expression of Interest (EOI) is called for from the interested candidates for the following subject matter Expert posts on contract basis in PMU of World Bank assisted APIIATP.

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IN BRIEF



ICICI Bank, IndoStar join hands for CV financing

NEW DELHI
ICICI Bank has tied up with a non-banking financial company IndoStar Capital for financing small and medium fleet owners to buy new and old commercial vehicles. Under this partnership, IndoStar will originate and service the customers through the entire loan life cycle, including sourcing, documentation, collection and loan servicing, ICICI Bank said in a release. ICICI Bank will provide funding to these customers, it said. PTI

Dr. Reddy's unveils Hemabate generic in U.S.

HYDERABAD
Dr. Reddy's Laboratories on Wednesday announced launch of Carboxiprost Tromethamine injection USP 250 mcg/ml (1 ml) single-dose vial, a therapeutic equivalent generic version of Pfizer's Hemabate injection. "We are pleased to be first-to-market with this product that has been designated as a competitive generic therapy (CGT) by the FDA," said Marc Kikuchi, CEO, North America Generics.

IRFC raises ₹2,120 crore through bond issue

MUMBAI
Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) on Wednesday said it had raised ₹2,120 crore via issuance of 15-year bonds, through book building process. The issue consists of 21,200 secured, redeemable, non-cumulative, taxable bonds of ₹10,00,000 each at a coupon of 7.85% per annum. The allotment of bonds was done on July 1, 2019. The issue received a total of 85 bids for ₹4,940 crore. PTI

'PMLA and IBC do not overlap'

NCLAT ruling comes in a case seeking the release of assets of Rotomac Global

**SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR
CHENNAI**

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) said Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 gets invoked simultaneously with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and that neither of the laws has an overriding effect over the other.

The observation was made in a case relating to Rotomac Global Private Limited.

Bank of Baroda had initiated insolvency proceedings against Rotomac and since the resolution process did not attract any viable and feasible resolution plan, National Company Law Tribunal, Allahabad had ordered liquidation.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Enforcement had



Strings attached: The IBC provides for moratorium against the firm from transferring its assets. *GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

launched an investigation against the company and its directors on the basis of inputs from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and found that the accused had misappropriated/diverted bank funds, committed criminal breach of trust and

laundered the money so diverted. The agency also made provisional attachments of the properties lying in the name of the company and its directors.

Rejected by NCLT
Anil Goel, liquidator for Ro-

tomac, had sought the release of assets attached by the Directorate of Enforcement, which was rejected by NCLT, Allahabad. Against this, the liquidator moved the NCLAT.

The NCLAT, citing the provisions of the PMLA, said it relates to 'proceeds of crime' and the offence relates to 'money-laundering,' resulting in the confiscation of property derived from, or involved in, money-laundering and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

"Thus, as the 'Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002' or provisions therein relates to 'proceeds of crime,' we hold that Section 14 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) is not applicable to such proceeding," it said.

RBI sets up panel to review CICs

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up a working group to review the regulatory and supervisory framework for core investment companies (CIC).

The group will be headed by Tapan Ray, non-executive chairman, Central Bank of India and former Secretary in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

"Over the years, corporate group structures have become more complex, involving multiple layering and leveraging, which has led to greater inter-connectedness with the financial system through their access to public funds," the RBI said. The troubled Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services is registered with the RBI as a CIC.

Welspun gets U.S. court nod to settle claims

Aggregate settlement cap at \$36 mn

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI**

Welspun India Ltd. has received preliminary U.S. court approval for a settlement agreement to resolve all pending legal claims made against the company in the United States.

These claims concern the past marketing and labelling of its premium cotton home textile products, the company said in a statement.

In 2016, U.S. retail major Target Corporation terminated the product sourcing contract with the company following allegations of supply of products made of inferior cotton as against Egyptian cotton which was promised in the contract.

After that, several class action suits were filed in U.S. courts, claiming damages.

"The plaintiffs in other pending litigations involving these issues have also agreed to withdraw their objection to the global settlement and suspended litigation pending the settlement agreement's final approval," it said. The firm has also, inter alia, agreed to increase payouts to individual settlement class members without increasing the aggregate settlement cap of \$36 million.

"The provision already made by the company during the quarter ended March 31 remains unchanged and adequate," the company said.

Activity under PMI Services contracts

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI**

The country's services sector activity in June contracted for the first time since May 2018 as weak sales, competitive pressures and unfavourable taxation hampered output, a monthly survey showed.

The IHS Markit India Services Business Activity Index fell to 49.6 in June, down from 50.2 in May.

"The latest PMI results bring some concerns over the sustainability of the relatively robust growth rates seen at the start of the year, and the ability of companies to create jobs," said Pollyanna de Lima, Principal Economist at IHS Markit.

Indian suppliers of U.S. tech to Huawei warned

Penal action under U.S. rules: Prasad

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI**

Indian entities that will supply U.S.-origin technology components to Chinese telecom major Huawei may face penal action under American regulations, Union Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in Parliament on Wednesday.

"Any Indian company which will act as a supplier of U.S.-origin equipment, software, technology to Huawei and its affiliates in entity list could be subject to penal action/sanction under US regulations," Mr. Prasad said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

He said that as per the information available till now,

the Department of Commerce, USA, had added Huawei Technologies to the entity list on May 16, 2019, by amending the U.S. Export Administration Regulations.

"Huawei's inclusion in the entity list implies that U.S. companies require prior export licence for sale of any equipment/software/technology to Huawei," Mr. Prasad said.

The U.S. government has directed its companies, including Google, not to supply software and hardware to Huawei, alleging security risk to the company.

Huawei has teamed up with Vodafone Idea to conduct 5G trials in India.

CLP India to purchase Kalpataru transmission assets for ₹3,275 crore

Acquisition to boost CLP India's reach

**PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI**

CLP India, one of the largest foreign investors in the Indian power sector, has entered into a binding agreement with Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd. (KPPTL) and Techno Electric & Engineering Co. Ltd. (Techno) to buy equity stakes in three special purpose vehicles (SPVs), owning power transmission assets, for an estimated enterprise value of ₹3,275 crore.

The estimated amount of debt at the SPVs-levels would be approximately ₹2,000 crore at the time of commercial operation date (COD). The transaction is subject to requisite approvals and compliances.

The transmission lines include 240 kilometres (km) inter-state Kalpataru Satpura Transco Private Ltd. in Madhya Pradesh, 324 km inter-state Alipurduar Transmission Ltd (ATL) in Bihar - West Bengal and 251 km inter-state Kohima-Mariani Transmission Ltd (KMTL) in the States of Manipur, Nagaland and Assam.

The transaction marks CLP India's entry into the power transmission sector. With this, CLP India has broadened its portfolio to straddle two out of the three main segments in India's power value chain.

Clean energy portfolio

Commenting on the deal, Rajiv Mishra, MD, CLP India, said, "India is a primary growth market for CLP and CDPQ, and the two companies share a vision to invest in a low-carbon, clean energy portfolio in India. Entering the transmission sector



is a landmark for CLP India. The acquisition of the KPPTL assets will enable us to expand our geographical reach across the country and reinforce our commitment to grow our investments."

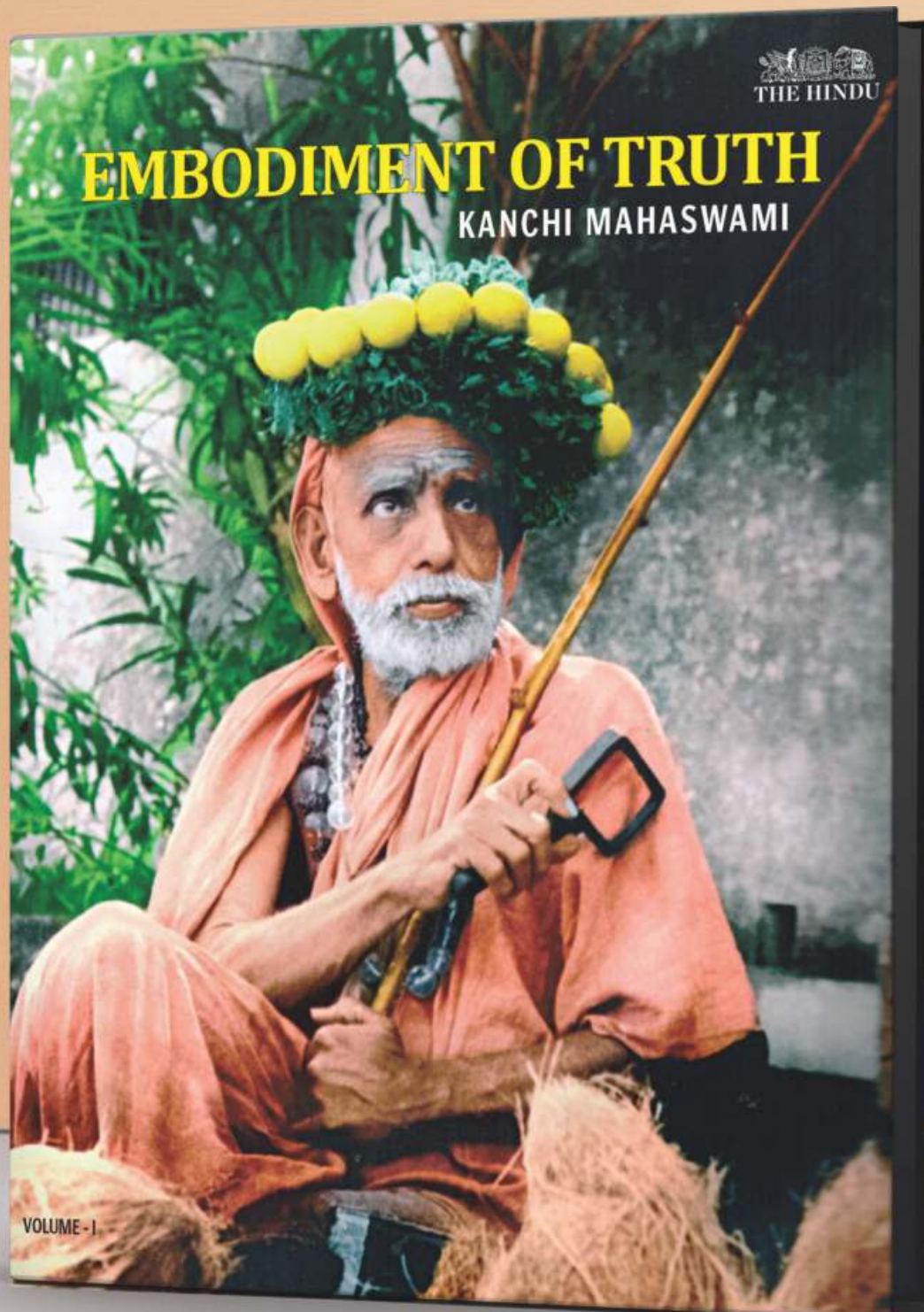
As a part of this deal, the transaction for ATL and KMTL will be effective post COD and fulfilment of certain conditions. Techno owns 26% stake in KMTL.

"We have had the intent of entering this segment for some time now and we are glad that our entry will be marked by these three quality projects, which are at different stages of their life cycles.

"With our shareholders' strategic backing and financial support, we intend to pursue a faster pace of growth to a more diversified portfolio," said Naveen Munjal, director - business development and commercial (conventional), CLP India.

CLP India is owned by the CLP Group, one of the largest investor-owned power businesses in Asia, and Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ), one of Canada's leading institutional fund managers.

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With basic target achieved, India readying for steep road ahead

Men in Blue need to make the required adjustments, as even a lone error in a knockout game can have a debilitating effect



K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR
LEEDS

Virat Kohli's men did what they were expected to do as a first step in the World Cup – qualify for the semifinals. Given the squad's pedigree, a last-four berth was the most basic requirement and the Men in Blue seized that with aplomb, barring a solitary loss to England.

The remaining yards, though, would be the most difficult. Every joust during the next fortnight under English skies finally reflecting summer's warmth, will be invested with a certain value. Even the last league match against Sri Lanka at Headingley here on Saturday, will have its consequences in terms of influencing the playing eleven for the semifinal and, hopefully, the summit clash at Lord's on July 14.

India has progressed, thanks to the colossal individual performances of Rohit Sharma (544 runs), Kohli (408), Mohammed Shami (14 wickets) and Jasprit Bumrah (14). Equally, the seemingly smaller contributions have played a part, be it the ones



Well done, mate! After overcoming a fighting Bangladesh, the Indians took the privilege of patting themselves on the back • AFP

from K.L. Rahul, Hardik Pandya and Rishabh Pant or even a Ravindra Jadeja, stepping in as a substitute and excelling on the field. All this paints a mosaic of winning moments in a campaign soaked in pressure and harking back to the nostalgia of 1983 and 2011 when India won the World Cup.

One game at a time

On Tuesday, after quelling a fighting Bangladesh, the Indians indulged in a rare moment of patting themselves

on the back before peering at the steep road ahead. "We did have a bit of a celebration in the dressing room. We are two steps closer to winning the trophy. But we need to take it one game at a time," Rahul said.

Going ahead, the team-management would want to plug even the faintest cracks within the unit. Picking Dinesh Karthik over Kedar Jadhav against Bangladesh was part of an exercise that aims at shoring up the middle-order which hasn't exactly

kicked on from the dream starts that the top-three pro-

Briefly on Tuesday, Bumrah left the turf at Birmingham's

niggle, India would be a bowler short. This is unlike the glory days when Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Virender Sehwag and Yuvraj Singh could make a mark at the bowling crease. The current imbalance crept in after Vijay Shankar left with a toe fracture.

Flaw to the fore

The other worry is that once the sixth wicket falls, the rest don't survive with the exception of Bhuvneshwar Kumar. It affects the manner in

SERVO CRICKET TRIVIA
WORLD-CLASS LUBRICANTS
Alec Stewart was born on 8-4-63 and scored 8463 Test runs.

vided. But it is a move that has its after-effects.

ham's Edgbaston and there was a fear that in case he had

Where they stand

| Team | Mat | Won | Lost | NR | PTS | NRR |
|------------------|-----|-----|------|----|-----|--------|
| Australia (Q) | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 14 | 1.000 |
| India (Q) | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 0.811 |
| England (Q) | 9 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 12 | 1.152 |
| New Zealand | 9 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 11 | 0.792 |
| Pakistan | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 9 | -0.175 |
| Sri Lanka (E) | 8 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 8 | -0.934 |
| Bangladesh (E) | 8 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 7 | -0.195 |
| South Africa (E) | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 5 | -0.080 |
| West Indies (E) | 8 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 3 | -0.335 |
| Afghanistan (E) | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | -1.418 |

* till the England-New Zealand match on July 3. Q: Qualified, E: Eliminated

which numbers five and six bat. There was this perplexing passage of play on Tuesday which highlights this flaw.

In the last over against Mashrafe Mortaza's men, M.S. Dhoni drilled Mustafizur Rahman's first two deliveries to the deep, refused the singles and was dismissed off the third ball. The former captain's intent was to single-handedly bolster the total but the non-striker was Bhuvneshwar, who is no mug with the bat. But to play the devil's advocate, once Dhoni left, two more wickets fell and only three runs were added.

India has an issue with its batting structure and the loss to England held a mirror. "The result apart, there were lot of answers we got in terms of our combination and about what we need to do. It is difficult to play 11

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games on the trot and win all. Sometimes when you lose you learn more than when you win. Suddenly you realise what needs to be done and make those adjustments," India's fielding coach R. Sridhar said.

Kohli and company better make those changes as even a lone error in a knockout game can have a debilitating effect.

Sridhar has an unenviable job on hand

Must find ideal slots for wicketkeepers masquerading as fielders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BIRMINGHAM

India suddenly has a surfeit of wicketkeepers. And with Dinesh Karthik getting a spot during the World Cup clash against Bangladesh at Edgbaston here on Tuesday, the number of glovemen went up to four in the playing eleven! There was M.S. Dhoni the master, Karthik the comeback man, Rishabh Pant the rookie and K.L. Rahul the part-time wicketkeeper.

There is an advantage there because if your main stumper is injured or has to take a small break like Dhoni did briefly during the course of the contest, another cricketer is ready to stand behind the stumps. Pant donned the wicketkeeping paraphernalia when the former Indian captain was away.

The downswing is that a



Corrective measure: Rishabh Pant must improve his technique in throwing, says India fielding coach R. Sridhar. • AFP

wicketkeeper is usually adept in the inner-circle but may lack the skills to monitor the far corners. India's fielding coach R. Sridhar has the unenviable task of finding ideal slots for wicketkeepers masquerading as fielders. Rahul is fine both in the inner-

circle and at the deep, while Karthik was used in positions near the batsman.

Struggles in the outfield Pant, though, struggled in the outfield, and Sridhar, who met the media at the ICC's mixed zone, explained:

"A lot of work has to go into him, first of all, he needs to improve his technique in throwing and he also needs to get in to the mindset of being an outfielder. For now, we will have to use him in the appropriate position. That is why Virat (Kohli) and M.S. (Dhoni) are keen to keep him in the right place. In the previous game (against England) he saved five runs which is a bonus and he took a catch as well. So no complaints."

And as for Karthik, Sridhar said: "Dinesh is a reasonably good fielder. He pulls off some good saves at backward point. That's a big plus for us." In the days ahead, Pant and the members of his tribe are bound to get extra attention as the Men in Blue gear up for the final phase. But first there is Saturday's face-off with Sri Lanka at Headingley (Leeds) to counter.

'You'd be a fool if you get tempted to bat like Rohit'

He is from a different planet, especially when he gets going, says Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BIRMINGHAM

Shifting up and down the order, K.L. Rahul has adapted rather well to his role as opener in ODIs. It is not as if the position is strange to him as the lanky batsman does take first strike in Tests and for his home State Karnataka. But in the blue shade, he had to slot himself in the middle-order as Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan forged an explosive partnership atop the batting tree.

Dhawan's thumb injury paved the way for Rahul's elevation to the top and subsequently he etched scores of 57, 30, 48, 0, 77 against Pakistan, Afghanistan, the West Indies, England and Bangladesh respectively in the current World Cup. The cricketer interacted with the media in the ICC's mixed zone at Edgbaston here on Tuesday



Praising the partner: K.L. Rahul says Rohit Sharma is in good form, but to keep putting up those performances is special. • AP

night. **Excerpts:** **The starts:** I have been batting well and I am playing the role to the best of my ability. I am a little disappointed that I can't carry on. When I speak

will get there eventually. **Missing link:** It will be great to score big runs and every batsman wants to do that. I am in a good head-space. I just want to keep doing the things I have been doing right and if I can prolong it, then obviously I will get a big score and it will benefit the team.

Rohit the Superman: You would be a fool if you get tempted to bat like him because he is in a different class. He is from a different planet, especially when he gets going. He made it look really easy (against Bangladesh) but the pitch was two-paced and the ball wasn't coming on to the bat. He is in good form but to keep putting up those performances is special. He takes the pressure off you, keeps the scoreboard ticking and it is great fun to bat with him.

Dominant England seals a semifinal spot with a big win

Bairstow's hundred helps the host go past 300; New Zealand batsmen come a cropper in face of some sustained bowling

SHAYAN ACHARYA
CHESTER-LE-STREET

Jonny Bairstow hammered his second consecutive World Cup century as England defeated New Zealand by 119 runs to storm into the semifinals of the World Cup.

At the picturesque Riverside ground on Tuesday, Bairstow's gritty knock of 106 guided England to 305 for eight.

And, chasing a rather tricky total, two crucial run-outs of Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor, cost the Kiwis, who folded up for 186 in 45 overs.

Despite the defeat, New Zealand stands close of reaching the semifinals. However, Pakistan's hopes of reaching the last-four dimmed further. It will now have to beat Bangladesh by a heavy margin.

On a surface that had very little for the bowlers, New Zealand had a messy beginning as it lost openers Martin Guptill and Henry Nicholls for just 14 runs.

Though Williamson and Taylor tried steadying the innings, a freak run out in the 15th over crashed Williamson's dreams, and also that of New Zealand's.

Mark Wood got a slight touch on Ross Taylor's drive in his follow-through, and



Blistering start: Jonny Bairstow's whirlwind of a knock ensured England put up a winning total • MICHAEL STEELE/GETTY IMAGES

Williamson, who backed up too far at the non-striker's end, had to depart. In the next over, Taylor too was run out by Adil Rashid.

Those two dismissals tilted the game England's way, even though Tom Latham played a knock of 57. It turned out to be a memora-

ble day for local boy Mark Wood, who scalped three wickets for 34. Earlier, the burly Bairstow started in a whirlwind fashion, helping England reach the 100-run mark in the 15th over, the host looked poised for a mammoth total. England stayed on course

and was 194 for one at the 30th over mark. But the Kiwi bowlers found back their rhythm to check the opposition.

Bairstow and his in-form opening partner, Jason Roy, put together 123 runs. While Bairstow focused on keeping the scoreboard ticking, Roy

SCOREBOARD ENGLAND VS NEW ZEALAND

ENGLAND
Jason Roy c Santner b Neesham 60 (67b, 8x4), Jonny Bairstow b Henry 106 (99b, 15x4, 1x6), Joe Root c Latham b Boult 24 (25b, 1x4), Jos Buttler c Williamson b Boult 11 (12b, 1x4), Eoin Morgan c Santner b Henry 42 (40b, 5x4), Ben Stokes c Henry b Santner 11 (27b), Chris Woakes c Williamson b Neesham 4 (17b), Liam Plunkett (not out) 15 (12b, 1x4), Adil Rashid b Southee 16 (12b, 1x4), Jofra Archer (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (b-4, lb-4, w-7): 15; Total (for eight wkts. in 50 overs) 305.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-123 (Roy, 18.4 overs), 2-194 (Root, 30.1), 3-206 (Bairstow, 31.4), 4-214 (Buttler, 34.2), 5-248 (Stokes, 41.6), 6-259 (Woakes, 44.5), 7-272 (Morgan, 46.1), 8-301 (Rashid, 49.3).

NEW ZEALAND BOWLING
Santner 10-0-65-1, Boult 10-0-56-2, Southee 9-0-70-1, Henry 10-0-54-2, de Grandhomme 1-0-11-0, Neesham 10-1-41-2.

NEW ZEALAND
Martin Guptill c Buttler b Archer

8 (16b, 1x4), Henry Nicholls lbw b Woakes 0 (1b), Kane Williamson run out 27 (40b, 3x4), Ross Taylor run out 28 (42b, 2x4), Tom Latham c Buttler b Plunkett 57 (65b, 5x4), Jimmy Neesham b Wood 19 (27b, 1x4), Colin de Grandhomme c Root b Stokes 3 (13b), Mitchell Santner lbw b Wood 12 (30b, 1x4), Tim Southee (not out) 7 (16b), Matt Henry b Wood 7 (13b), Trent Boult st. Buttler b Rashid 4 (7b, 1x4); Extras (b-2, lb-6, w-6): 14; Total (in 45 overs): 186.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-2 (Nicholls, 0.5 overs), 2-14 (Guptill, 5.2), 3-61 (Williamson, 15.1), 4-69 (Taylor, 16.4), 5-123 (Neesham, 25.1), 6-128 (de Grandhomme, 28.1), 7-164 (Latham, 38.3), 8-166 (Santner, 39.2), 9-181 (Henry, 43.4).

ENGLAND BOWLING
Woakes 8-0-44-1, Archer 7-1-17-1, Plunkett 8-0-28-1, Wood 9-0-34-3, Root 3-0-15-0, Rashid 5-0-30-1, Stokes 5-0-10-1.

Toss: England. MoM: Bairstow
England won by 119 runs.

Improbable task ahead of Pakistan
England's win against New Zealand has made Pakistan's task of qualification improbable.
FOR PAKISTAN TO QUALIFY
In its last round-robin match against Bangladesh on Friday, it must win
• by 311 runs after scoring 350
• by 316 runs after scoring 400
• by 321 runs after scoring 450
However, if Bangladesh opts to bat first, Pakistan stands eliminated even before a ball is bowled

TOP OF THE CHARTS

| BATTING | M | I | R | HS | Avg | SR | 100 | 50 |
|--------------|---|---|-----|------|-------|--------|-----|----|
| Rohit (Ind) | 7 | 7 | 544 | 140 | 90.66 | 96.96 | 4 | 1 |
| Shakib (Ban) | 7 | 7 | 542 | 124* | 90.33 | 97.83 | 2 | 4 |
| Warner (Aus) | 8 | 8 | 516 | 166 | 73.71 | 86.57 | 2 | 3 |
| Finch (Aus) | 8 | 8 | 504 | 153 | 63.00 | 102.43 | 2 | 3 |
| Root (Eng) | 9 | 9 | 500 | 107 | 62.50 | 91.74 | 2 | 3 |

| BOWLING | M | I | W | BB | Avg | Econ | SR | 5w |
|---------------|---|---|----|------|-------|------|------|----|
| Starc (Aus) | 8 | 8 | 24 | 5/26 | 15.54 | 5.01 | 18.5 | 2 |
| Ferguson (NZ) | 7 | 7 | 17 | 4/37 | 18.58 | 4.96 | 22.4 | 0 |
| Archer (Eng) | 9 | 9 | 17 | 3/27 | 22.76 | 4.78 | 28.5 | 0 |
| Amir (Pak) | 7 | 7 | 16 | 5/30 | 20.43 | 4.95 | 24.7 | 1 |
| Wood (Eng) | 8 | 8 | 16 | 3/18 | 23.06 | 5.22 | 26.5 | 0 |

THE FACE-OFF
Afghanistan vs West Indies
HEADINGLEY

| | Mat | AFG | WI | Tied | NR |
|---------|-----|-----|----|------|----|
| Overall | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

World Cup : First Meeting
LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & SELECT 1 (SD & HD), 3 P.M.

Rayudu announces retirement

The World Cup snub could have been the reason for the sudden decision



Good bye: Ambati Rayudu thanked the BCCI and all State associations that he represented. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

One of the most exciting batsmen to represent India, Ambati Rayudu, announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on Wednesday. This comes close on the heels of the snubbing by the selectors again when they preferred Mayank Agarwal to him after Vijay Shankar was ruled out of the World Cup.

The 33-year-old communicated his decision in a letter addressed to the Committee of Administrators of Hyderabad Cricket Association

(HCA). "I would like to bring to your kind notice that I have come to the decision to step away from the sport and retire from all forms and levels of the game. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the BCCI and all the State associations that I have represented which include Hyderabad, Baroda, Andhra and Vidarbha," Rayudu, who made his Ranji Trophy debut in 2002, said in the letter.

'Honour and privilege'
"I also would like to thank the two IPL franchises MI and CSK for their support. It

Rayudu file

Considered an India prospect from early in his career, Ambati Rayudu was the recipient of the inaugural Border-Gavaskar Scholarship from the NCA, which helped him train at the Australian Cricket Academy.

■ Though he has achieved considerable success in the domestic circuit, having played for Hyderabad, Andhra, Baroda and Vidarbha in the Ranji Trophy, he found his India recognition a tad too late and his international run was not extensive.

CAREER IN NUMBERS

| Format | M | R | Avg. | 100s | 50's | HS |
|-------------|----|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| ODI | 55 | 1,694 | 47.05 | 3 | 10 | 124* |
| T20 | 6 | 42 | 10.50 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| First Class | 97 | 6,151 | 45.56 | 16 | 34 | 210 |

Wish you the best going forward Ambati. You're a top man @RayuduAmbati. — KOHLI

Can understand the pain and anguish Ambati Rayudu may be feeling after the World Cup snub even after performing well. I wish him lots of happiness and peace in his second innings — V.V.S. LAXMAN

Must definitely be very painful at being ignored for the World Cup but I wish him all the very best in life after retirement — SEHWAG

I would like to thank the captains I have played under, Dhoni, Rohit and especially Kohli, who always had shown great belief in me throughout my career

has been an honour and privilege to have represented our country. I would like to thank the captains I have played under, M.S. Dhoni, Rohit Sharma and especially Virat Kohli, who always had shown great belief in me

throughout my career with the Indian team," said Rayudu, who played 55 ODIs and scored 1,694 runs with three centuries and 10 fifties at 47.05. He also played six T20Is, scoring 42 runs.

"It has been a wonderful journey of playing the sport and learning from every up and down it brought up on for the last 25 years at various different levels.

"Finally, I would like to thank my family and all the wellwishers who have been with me through this wonderful journey," Rayudu concluded.

Big-serving Opelka stuns Wawrinka

Pliskova and Azarenka move into the round of 32 with straight-set wins



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Three-time Major winner Stan Wawrinka was knocked out of Wimbledon on Wednesday, falling in five sets to 6ft, 11in Reilly Opelka.

The 34-year-old, two-time quarterfinalist was beaten 7-5, 3-6, 4-6, 6-4, 8-6 by his American opponent, the tallest man in the sport and 13 years his junior. Opelka fired 23 aces and 59 winners in his win.

Opelka will be appearing in the third round at a Slam for the first time having never won a grass court match in his career prior to coming to Wimbledon.



Big scalp: Reilly Opelka, the tallest player on the men's circuit who is debuting at The Championships, outlasted Stan Wawrinka over five sets. ■ MATTHIAS HANGST/GETTY IMAGES

Also feeling the pain was Russia's Margarita Gasparian who was forced to retire when just two points from victory against Ukraine eighth seed Elina Svitolina.

World No. 62 Gasparian was 7-5, 5-4 ahead when she collapsed to the ground on Court Three, suffering with cramping.

Although she bravely tried to continue, the Russian, who has undergone three knee surgeries in her career, was forced to quit.

Czech third seed Karolina Pliskova, one of four players who could end Wimbledon as World No. 1, reached the last 32 with a 6-0, 6-4 win over Puerto Rico's Olympic champion Monica Puig.

Sweeping win
Former World No.1 and double Australian Open winner Victoria Azarenka swept past Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic 6-2, 6-0.

Azarenka, a semifinalist at the All England Club in 2011

and 2012, will next take on former World No.1 Simona Halep.

The seventh seed's first Grand Slam meeting with a fellow Romanian ended in victory as she battled past Mihaela Buzarnescu 6-3 4-6 6-2.

Estonia's Anett Kontaveit beat local favourite Heather Watson 7-5 6-1, while Viktorija Golubic ended Yulia Putintseva's run with a 6-4, 7-6 (3) win.

IMPORTANT RESULTS

Men: Second round: 21-David Goffin (Bel) bt Jeremy Chardy (Fra) 6-2, 6-4, 6-3; Reilly Opelka (USA) bt Stan Wawrinka (Sui) 7-5, 3-6, 4-6, 6-4, 8-6; 28-Benoit Paire (Fra) bt Miomir Kecmanovic (Srb) 7-6 (5), 6-4 ret.; 11-Daniil Medvedev (Rus) bt Alexei Popyrin (Aus) 6-7(6), 6-1, 6-4, 6-4; 15-Milos Raonic (Can) bt Robin Haase (Ned) 7-6(1), 7-5, 7-6(4); 23-Roberto Bautista Agut (Esp) bt Steve Darcis (Bel) 6-3, 6-2, 4-2 ret.; 21-David Goffin (Bel) bt Jeremy Chardy (Fra) 6-2, 6-4, 6-3; Thomas Fabbiano (Ita) bt Ivo Karlovic (Cro) 6-3, 6-7

(6), 6-3, 6-7(4), 6-4; 10-Karen Khachanov (Rus) bt Feliciano Lopez (Esp) 4-6, 6-4, 7-5, 6-4
Women: Second round: 8-Elina Svitolina (Ukr) bt Margarita Gasparian (Rus) 5-7, 6-5 ret.; 31-Maria Sakkari (Gre) bt Marie Bouzkova (Cze) 6-4, 6-1; 20-Anett Kontaveit (Est) bt Heather Watson (GBR) 7-5, 6-1; 28-Hsieh Su-Wei (Tpe) bt Kirsten Flipkens (Bel) 7-6(3), 6-3; 3-Karolina Pliskova (Cze) bt Monica Puig (Pur) 6-0, 6-4; 7-Simona Halep (Rou) bt Mihaela Buzarnescu (Rou) 6-3, 4-6, 6-2; Dayana Yastremska (Ukr) bt 27-Sofia Kenin (USA) 7-5, 4-6, 6-3.

Brazil beats Argentina in Copa America

Enters final after a pulsating encounter between the regional superpowers

REUTERS
BELO HORIZONTE

Brazil advanced to the Copa America final with a 2-0 win over Argentina on Tuesday in a pulsating and, at times, bad-tempered match decided by a goal in each half from Gabriel Jesus and Roberto Firmino.

Both sides tried to impose themselves physically early on but it was Jesus who gave Brazil the lead after 19 minutes when Firmino sent in a low cross for the unmarked striker to side-foot home from close range.

The two combined again on the counterattack after 71 minutes to make it 2-0 after great work from Jesus left Firmino with the simplest of tap-ins.

Brazil which lost twice in 42 games under coach Tite, will face either Peru or Chile in Sunday's final at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro and captain Dani Alves said its goal was within reach. "There is one more step to go before we fulfil our objective," he added.



Tap-in: A flowing move started by Dani Alves ended with Gabriel Jesus, second left, making the simplest of shots to give Brazil the lead. ■ AFP

"The standard here is very high there are no easy teams. You have to work and fight for what you want and we worked for this."

Argentina has not beaten Brazil in a major competitive fixture dating back to 2005 and that run rarely looked like ending at the Mineirao stadium here.

Sergio Aguero hit the bar with a header in the first half and Lionel Messi struck the post 11 minutes into the se-

cond period but the visitor had little luck in front of goal and was never on top for any length of time.

While the tournament has been plagued by lengthy stoppages for the video assistant referee (VAR), officials preferred to let the game run, though Argentina was incensed VAR did not come into play when Arthur felled one of its players at a corner.

Messi, who has still not won a major title with Argen-

tina, was more influential than in his first few matches here but was still a pale shadow of the player who has won everything with his club side. "We had chances, the ball hit the woodwork, it flashed across the six-yard box, there were penalties that weren't given," said Messi, who like coach Lionel Scaloni complained about the refereeing.

The result: Brazil 2 (Jesus 19, Firmino 71) bt Argentina 0.

PASSING SHOTS



Bernard Tomic. ■ CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

Tomic faces fine after losing second shortest match

Bernard Tomic shrugged off the prospect of being stripped of his 45,000-pound (\$57,000) prize money after losing the second shortest match to Jo-Wilfried Tsonga at Wimbledon on Tuesday. "I think I played as best as I could. It's just I played terrible," said the World No. 96, who was a top 20 player in 2011 but has been dubbed

"Tomic the tank engine" by a critical Australian media. AFP

Had goosebumps walking on to Centre Court: Lloyd Harris

As a 10-year-old, Lloyd Harris sat on Centre Court at Wimbledon to watch his idol Roger Federer. "I was 10 and it was the first time I had seen a pro tennis match," recalled Harris. "I thought it was amazing seeing these guys moving and the way they played. Here I am, playing him a few years later," said the World No. 86 who was making his Wimbledon debut. "I had goosebumps when I walked on," he said. AFP

Wimbledon roof debuts on Court One

The new roof on Wimbledon's Court One was used for the first time on Tuesday - but for fading light rather than for rain. A decision was made to shut the roof at 5-5 in the final set



Serena Williams and Andy Murray. ■ REUTERS

of the match between Croatian 22nd seed Donna Vekic and Alison Riske of the United States. The atmosphere around the court changed, with sound echoing much more around the arena. AFP

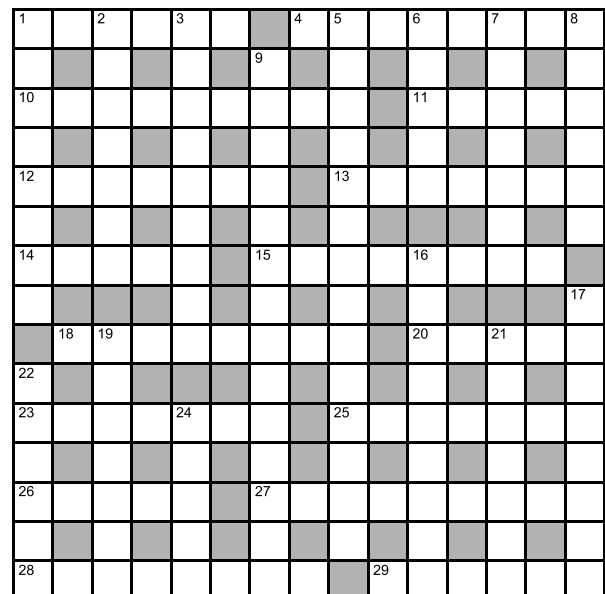
Murray-Serena form dream mixed doubles pair

Andy Murray and Serena Williams will form a mixed doubles dream team at Wimbledon, his management announced on

Tuesday, as he gradually returns to tennis following career-saving surgery. Murray, who is easing his way back into the sport following a radical hip resurfacing, will join forces with Williams in an all-star partnership when the draw is announced on Wednesday.

The two-time Wimbledon champion's partnership with seven-time winner Williams will make them instant favourites for the title. AFP

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12669



ACROSS

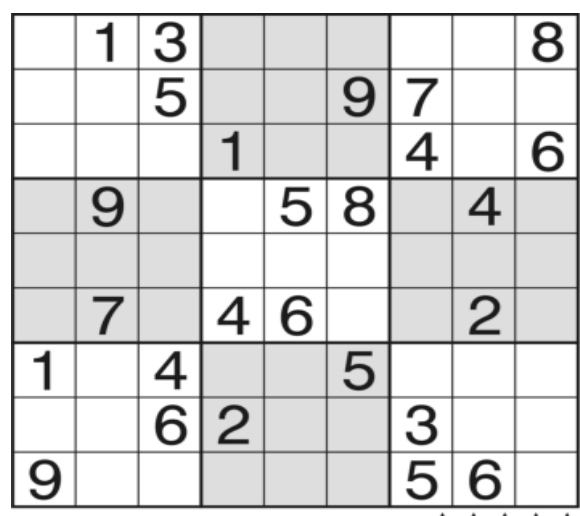
- 1 Drink and music - starts getting pally all around (6)
- 4 One drinks soft drink, daughter gets award (8)
- 10 Crack vital code for a sweet life in Rome (5,4)
- 11 Wastage under fine thread (5)
- 12 Plight of regular setter to break into two (7)

- 13 Discomfort like involving one in sex, say... (7)
- 14 ...and you are told it's not proper (5)
- 15 Breach chosen along border (8)
- 18 Harry managed to block capital (8)
- 20 Article is hidden inside another, Lord! (5)
- 23 Everything in Delhi gets a scrub, no work today (7)
- 25 Arab people found in the desert, mostly (7)
- 26 Can it be found in Lakshadweep and Andamans? No chance! (5)
- 27 They are fancy book binds (9)
- 28 Complaint about side protecting partner in crime (8)
- 29 Town evacuated, hold forth in bar (6)

(set by Arden)

- 3 People carry mobile phone leading to a series of events (9)
- 5 Forced march - campaign will flatter to deceive (5,9)
- 6 Not on everything, limited to internals (5)
- 7 One opposed due sharing (7)
- 8 Followed the girl finally (6)
- 9 With war a possibility, there is opportunity for one to succeed (8,6)
- 16 Among other things I learnt about India from both sides (5,4)
- 17 Tension grips the city, I will leave the bard (8)
- 19 Country secret could be ascertainable (7)
- 21 Records reach assembly within four... (7)
- 22 ... the pill bug therefore infects a media device (6)
- 24 Informed about fighting in Aden regularly (5)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12668

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| F | S | R | F | A | A | G | D | |
| A | V | A | R | I | C | E | L | A |
| L | L | L | S | O | A | Z | U | |
| L | E | A | F | L | E | A | R | N |
| O | M | E | V | T | T | E | | |
| W | R | I | T | L | A | R | G | E |
| M | A | L | A | C | C | A | A | R |
| A | A | H | C | R | E | I | S | A |
| G | O | M | E | R | A | B | E | L |
| K | E | N | D | E | M | I | C | A |
| E | N | D | E | M | I | C | A | F |
| R | U | S | O | F | I | A | E | |
| E | X | I | S | E | D | L | E | N |
| L | K | E | E | E | T | Y | A | |

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Be free of bad traits

Saints like Appar were able to describe the beauty and magnificence of Lord Siva, because of their steadfast faith. Their minds were unwavering. Had they succumbed to worldly distraction and temptations, they would not have been able to sing His praises, elaborated M.A. Manickavelu, in a discourse. Appar describes Lord Siva as the One with arched eyebrows, lips red like a ripe coccinea, a smile on the lips, matted locks moistened by the Ganges, a coral red body smeared with milk white ash, and a raised foot. How can one witness this beauty unless one is born a human being, wonders the saint. It is not just enough to be free from temptation to be able to enjoy the wondrous spectacle of Siva dancing. One must also be free of bad traits, and Vallalar, in his Deiva Manimalai, lists these traits - anger, jealousy and so on. Anger is akin to barren land. An angry man keeps people away from him and none will want to be in the company of a short-tempered person.

Thiruvalluvar warns of the dangers of anger. He says if you want to protect yourself, keep your temper in check. Otherwise your anger will destroy you. A miser, who hoards his wealth has a mind that is like a dark cavern. When a man is under the influence of the quality of moha, then he becomes like a man who is in darkness. He does not see the liberating light, which is the Lord. Jealousy makes you miserable, because instead of focusing on your life, you are busy looking at another person, making comparisons, and in the process, you become unhappy. Thiruvalluvar says that where jealousy resides, it will destroy a man's wealth and lead him to hell. If a person is jealous, Lakshmi will move away, leaving her elder sister Jyestha in charge, says Thiruvalluvar. Jyestha is the Goddess of misfortune.

TV PICKS

ICC World Cup: Star Sports 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.
Wimbledon: Star Sports Select 2 (SD & HD), 4 p.m., Star Sports Select 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Harmanpreet returns to Lancashire Thunders

MANCHESTER
Indian women's T20 team captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Wednesday signed up for Lancashire Thunders for her second consecutive season with the club in Kia Super League. Harmanpreet became the club's first overseas signing of the year, with two more additions set to be announced ahead of the start of the Kia Super League 2019. Harmanpreet scored 164 runs in the last edition at an average of 32 and strike rate of 151.85. PTI

Jamshedpur FC ropes in Gahlot

JAMSHEDPUR
Indian Super League outfit Jamshedpur FC on Wednesday announced the signing of 18-year-old defender Narender Gahlot from I-League side Indian Arrows for the upcoming season. The youngster penned a deal for three years with the Jharkhand-based side. The youngster had an impressive outing for Arrows, racking up 10 appearances last season. On signing with Jamshedpur FC, Narender said: "When this opportunity came to me, I did not wait long to say yes." IANS



Messi vows to play on after Brazil loss

BELO HORIZONTE
Lionel Messi vowed to extend his international career after yet another bid to win a major title with Argentina ended in failure at the Copa America on Tuesday. "If I can still help in any way, I will continue to do so. I feel really good in this group. This is a good, talented generation who showed that they love the national team. They have a future and great foundations, just need to be given time," said the five-time Ballon d'Or winner. AFP

Morgan, Naeher put USA in final

Houghton's missed penalty proves costly for England

WOMEN'S WC

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LYON

Alex Morgan scored what proved to be the winner but hailed goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher after her late penalty save from Steph Houghton allowed holder the United States to claim a dramatic 2-1 victory over England in their women's World Cup semifinal on Tuesday.

Morgan headed home her sixth goal of the World Cup just after the half-hour mark in this last-four showdown to put her team back in front after Ellen White had cancelled out Christen Press's early opener.

But after an open first 45 minutes, the second half was dominated by more VAR controversy, with England having another White goal disallowed for the tightest of offside calls following a review by the Brazilian referee.



Crucial stop: Goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher's late penalty save helped the United States claim a dramatic 2-1 victory over England. *AFP

Phil Neville's team later benefited from Edina Alves Batista's decision to award it a spot-kick when Becky Sauerbrunn made the slightest of contact with White in the box, yet Houghton's 84th-minute kick was

stopped by Naeher diving low to her right.

England finished with 10 players after Millie Bright was sent off for a second yellow card late on, and the USA held out to reach the final, despite being without

the injured Megan Rapinoe.

"Alyssa Naeher, she should be the player of the match today," said Morgan.

The result: England 1 (White 19) lost to USA 2 (Press 10, Morgan 31).

Ranji Trophy to be played from December to March

BCCI sticks to last season's format despite concerns raised in some quarters

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Despite reservations expressed in the domestic captains and coaches conclave, the BCCI has decided to stick with last season's format for the Ranji Trophy knockouts and the Duleep Trophy for the forthcoming season.

While announcing the calendar – the season commences with the Duleep Trophy from August 17 to September 8 – the BCCI said the move to accommodate nine new teams will be persisted with.

In a statement on Wednesday, it said, "the Ranji Trophy will be played from the months of December to March."

"The format remains similar to last season wherein the top team that qualifies

The domestic calendar

MEN: Duleep Trophy: Aug. 17 to Sept. 8; Vijay Hazare Trophy: Sept. 24 to Oct. 25; Deodhar Trophy: Oct. 31 to Nov. 4; Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy: Nov. 8 to Dec. 1; Ranji Trophy: Dec. 9 to March 13; Irani Cup: March 18 to 22.
WOMEN: Senior T20 League: Oct. 14 to Nov. 10; T20 Challenger Trophy: Jan. 4 to 11; One-day League: Feb. 19 to March 20; One-day Challengers Trophy: March 26 to 30.

for quarterfinals from the Plate group will be promoted to Elite Group C in the next season. The top two teams that qualify for the quarterfinals from Elite Group C will be promoted to Elite Group A & Elite Group B in the next season."

During the conclave in May, representatives of a majority of top teams had criticised accommodating a mediocre team at the cost of one of the two teams from the top two tiers.

Similarly, coaches had also voiced the need to revert the Duleep Trophy to a zonal format instead of the national selectors selecting three squads. However, their request seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

The BCCI, meanwhile, has ensured that the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy – the inter-state T20 tournament – will be played in November-December to ensure that it will get over before the IPL auction.

I-League, ISL to co-exist for two more years

Praful Patel to approach Asian body to get its consent

FOOTBALL

VIJAY LOKAPALLY NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Wednesday assured I-League clubs that efforts would be made to safeguard their interests. The announcement came at the end of a meeting between the AIFF president Praful Patel and representatives of the clubs.

Patel told the clubs that *status quo* would be maintained between the I-League and the Indian Super League (ISL) and the two would co-exist for two more years. He is going to approach the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to allow the two to co-exist until a solution is found.

The AIFF claimed that the game's backbone has been the developmental and promotional activities, including the youth programmes conducted by the I-League clubs.

"With the advent of the ISL, which is also a league

recognised by the AFC, it is imperative to find a viable, and sustainable mechanism to mitigate the concerns about the future of the I-League, and its clubs," said Patel.

Solution for the present

The decision would also involve the approval of FSDL, the subsidiary of AIFF's commercial partner IMG-Reliance. "We don't want to pack up the I-League. It should continue. But ultimately there should be a roadmap of Indian football. Two leagues cannot go on permanently. The AFC will also not allow it forever. It is just a solution for the time being," Patel added.

The champion of every national league now play the Asian Champions League, while the winners of knockout tournament compete in the AFC Cup.

The current arrangement is to give the ACL slot to the I-League winner and the AFC Cup to the ISL champion. The AIFF is looking to reverse this arrangement

which would automatically make the ISL the official main league of the country.

The clubs have been at loggerheads with the AIFF and had taken exception to one of the AIFF officials claiming the ISL to be the main league.

"There is a historical issue with Indian football, within that framework, I feel a reasonable two to three years window should be given for I-League also to be continuing. I cannot give you any assurance yet because I have to talk to the AFC. The AFC also has to agree to what I am saying," Patel said.

The AIFF president stressed, "the AFC will have to agree. Our commercial partners have to be consulted. At the end of the day, there are costs involved. I feel that the I-League also must co-exist with the fullest recognition of the AFC so that it is an AFC product."

The clubs, who have been given a day to respond to Patel's suggestions, are unlikely to agree to the proposal.

Hima runs to gold in 200m

Four Indians take home bronze medals across disciplines

ATHLETICS

SPORTS BUREAU POZNAN

Hima Das, the under-20 World champion quarter-miler who had been struggling with a back injury, won the women's 200m gold in the Poznan Athletics Grand Prix here on Tuesday night.

Hima, who has a personal best of 23.10s, clocked 23.65s while teammate V.K. Vismaya pipped Poland's Iga Baumgart-Witan to finish third in a personal best 23.75s.

Vismaya had clocked a personal best in the 400m a few days ago.

Muhammed Anas, the 400m National record holder, was third in the men's 200m with a season-best 20.75s while Nirmal Noah Tom was fifth in a personal best 21.30s and Mohan Kumar did not finish the event. South African Thando Dlodlo won in 20.60s.

Meanwhile, K.S. Jeevan won the men's 400m bronze



Hima Das. *FILE PHOTO

in a mediocre 47.25s while Kunhu Muhammed was fifth (47.48).

All-India affair

With M. R. Poovamma pulling out of the women's main 400m race, the attention was on the event's 'B' which was an all-India affair. Sarita Ben Gayakwad topped the race with a time of 54.21s while R. Vithya (54.33) and V. Subha (54.35) clocked personal bests while taking the

next two spots with V.K. Shalini finishing fourth in 56.14. Sarita was fifth overall with Cuban Roxana Gomez winning the gold in 52.24.

Asian champion Tajinder Pal Singh Toor took the men's shot put bronze with a fourth round effort of 19.62m while the host's Michal Haratyk, the European champion, too the honours with 21.26m.

The results (events featuring Indians):

Men: 200m: 1. Thando Dlodlo (RSA, 20.60s), 3. Muhammed Anas (20.75), 5. Nirmal Noah Tom (21.30), Mohan Kumar (DNF).

400m: 1. Rafal Omelko (Pol, 46.92s), 3. K.S. Jeevan (47.25), 5. Kunhu Muhammed (47.48).

Shot put: 1. Michal Haratyk (Pol, 21.26m), 3. Tajinder Pal Singh Toor (19.62).

Women: 200m: 1. Hima Das (23.65s), 3. V.K. Vismaya (23.75), 6. Sonia Baishya (24.50).

400m (overall after races 'A' and 'B'): 1. Roxana Gomez (Cub, 52.24s), 5. Sarita Ben (54.21), 6. R. Vithya (54.33), 7. V. Subha (54.35), 9. V.K. Shalini (56.14).

Ramkumar progresses

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU RECANATI (ITALY)

Ramkumar Ramanathan beat qualifier Nikola Cacic of Serbia 6-3, 6-3 in the second round of the €46,600 Challenger tennis tournament in here on Wednesday. Ramkumar, who had a bye in the first round of singles, made the doubles quarterfinals, seeded fourth with Goncalo Oliveira of Portugal.

The results: €46,600 Challenger, Recanati, Italy: Singles (second round): Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Nikola Cacic (Srb) 6-3, 6-3. Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Goncalo Oliveira (Por) & Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Alessandro Bega (Ita) & Viktor Durasovic (Nor) 7-6(6), 6-3.

\$15,000 ITF men, Tabarka, Tunisia: Singles (first round): Alexander Weis (Ita) bt Siddhant Bhanthia 6-4, 6-2.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Jake Harsey (GBR) & Siddhant Bhanthia bt Alex Marti Pujolas (Esp) & Zakhar Trapeznikov (Rus) 6-3, 7-5.

Salonika beats Jyothsna, shares lead

NATL. U-17 CHESS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

Second-seeded Neelash Saha defeated his West Bengal teammate Utsab Chatterjee and maintained his all-win record in the 30th National under-17 Open chess championship at the Oberon Mall here on Wednesday.

Saha now has six points from as many rounds while West Bengal's top-seeded Aronyak Ghosh shares the second spot with Delhi's Arjun Gupta and Tamil Nadu's Jayachandra Srinivas (all with five points).

Big upset

Arjun Gupta, the 16th seed, produced the day's big upset defeating Jharkhand's third-seeded Vatsal Singhania.

The 11-round championship has just moved past the halfway mark and Saina Salonika, who started the National here with a disap-



Springing a surprise: Saina Salonika defeated overnight leader L. Jyothsna in the sixth round. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

pointing draw, is now back in the top pack after defeating Tamil Nadu's L. Jyothsna, the overnight leader.

Jyothsna, Salonika and Andhra Pradesh's B. Kalyani share the lead in the girls section after six rounds.

Select results (sixth round): Open: Utsab Chatterjee (WB, 4.5) lost to Neelash Saha (WB, 6), Aronyak Ghosh (WB, 5) bt Rakshit Srinivasan (Kar, 4). Vatsal Singhania (Jha, 4) lost

to Arjun Gupta (Del, 5), M. Shyam Kumar (TN, 3), B. Kalyani (AP, 5) bt S. Srimozhi (TN, 4), Avishkar Wankhede (Mah, 4) lost to Jayachandra Srinivas (TN, 5).

Girls: Saina Salonika (Odi, 5) bt L. Jyothsna (TN, 3), B. Kalyani (AP, 5) bt S. Srimozhi (TN, 4), M. Benasir (TN, 4) drew with Samridhaa Ghosh (WB, 4).

Diya Chowdhury (WB, 4.5) bt Palkin Kaur (Del, 3.5), B. Kruthika (TN, 3.5) lost to Garima Gaurav (Bih, 4.5).

Anmolpreet, Raturaj for India-A

PREST TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Raturaj Gaikwad, Anmolpreet Singh and Ishan Kishan have been included in the 15-member India-A ODI squad for the West Indies-A tour, the BCCI announced on Wednesday. Raturaj comes in for an injured Prithvi Shaw. Anmolpreet and Kishan replace Mayank Agarwal and Rishabh Pant, who are part of the India team for the World Cup. India-A will travel to the West Indies to play five unofficial one-dayers and three Tests starting July 11.

Revised India-A ODI squad: Manish Pandey (captain), Raturaj Gaikwad, Anmolpreet Singh, Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, Hanuma Vihari, Ishan Kishan (wk), Rahul Chahar, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Krunal Pandya, Deepak Chahar, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Navdeep Saini.

Indian shuttlers start well

CANADA OPEN

PREST TRUST OF INDIA CALGARY

India's Ajay Jayaram, Sourabh Verma and Lakshya Sen entered the men's singles second round after contrasting wins on the opening day of the Canada Open Super 100 badminton here.

Ajay recovered from a mid-game slump to outwit local hope Huang Guoxing 21-15, 20-22, 21-15 and set up a clash with Rajiv Ouseph.

National champion Sourabh and Asian junior champion Lakshya, however, didn't have to break any sweat as they prevailed in straight games over their opponents.

P. Kashyap and H.S. Pranoy had received a bye in the first round.

The results: Ajay Jayaram bt Huang Guoxing (Can) 21-15, 20-22, 21-15.

Sourabh Verma bt Antonio Li (Can) 21-18, 21-13.

Lakshya Sen bt Chun Kar Lung (Eng) 21-7, 21-8.

Amandeep Drall in lead

GOLF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

Amandeep Drall shot an even-par 72 to claim a two-stroke lead as the ninth leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour commenced here on Wednesday.

Drall led from the trio of Afshan Fatima, Suchitra Ramesh and Ridhima Dilawari.

er-par 74 in the first round of action. Gaurika Bishnoi was one stroke (75) further adrift in fifth while Neha Tripathi finished the first day in eighth place after enduring four bogeys and a double bogey in her five-over-77.

The scores (top eight after 18 holes): 72: Amandeep Drall; 74: Afshan Fatima, Suchitra Ramesh, Ridhima Dilawari.

75: Gaurika Bishnoi; 76: Khushi Khanijau, Gursimr Badwal; 77: Neha Tripathi.

Laxman halts Abhijeet's winning run; Debashis goes into joint-lead

Bhakti gets the better of Swayams, while Aravindh bounced back to best Tania

C'WEALTH CHESS

RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI

R.R. Laxman managed to end the winning run of Abhijeet Gupta by forcing a draw following perpetual checks in a wild fifth-round encounter in the Commonwealth chess championship on Wednesday.

Abhijeet, leader after four successive victories, settled for a 49-move deadlock and ended the day sharing the lead with sixth seed Debashis Das at 4.5 points.

ebashis outwitted K. Saravana Krishna in 60 moves.

After eight of the top 10 boards witnessed decisive battles, nine players trailed the leaders by half-a-point.

Among them, National women's champion Bhakti Kulkarni pulled off the biggest surprise by beating Grandmaster in-waiting Swayams Mishra in 76 moves.

Seventh-seeded youngster Arjun Erigaisi got the better of veteran Pravin Thipsay, that too, with black pieces in 48 moves.

Bouncing back
National champion Aravindh Chithambaram bounced back by beating Tania Sachdev, the reigning women's champion, in 62 moves. It was Aravindh's timely trading of rook for Tania's bishop that hastened the end.

Similarly, second seed S.L. Narayanan scored his fourth win at the expense of an

overly passive Divya Deshmukh, the highest-rated female player.

The results: **Fifth round:** R.R. Laxman (4) drew with Abhijeet Gupta (4.5); Debashis Das (4.5) bt P. Saravana Krishna (3.5); S.L. Narayanan (4) bt Divya Deshmukh (3); Aravindh Chithambaram (4) bt Tania Sachdev (3); M.R. Lalit Babu (4) v K. Ratnakaran (3); P. Shyaamnikhil (3.5) drew with

Deepan Chakravarthy (3.5); Pravin Thipsay (3) lost to Arjun Erigaisi (4); Swayams Mishra (3) lost to Bhakti Kulkarni (4); Swapnil Dhopade (4) bt Niranjan Navalgund (3).

S. Nitin (4) bt C.R.G. Krishna (3); Abhijit Kunte (3.5) drew with Shantanu Bhambure (3.5); Suyog Wagh (3.5) drew with M.S. Thej Kumar (3.5); Ajay Karthikeyan (4) bt Jubin Jimmy (2.5).

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR (MEDICAL SERVICES)
NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
CHARAK PALIKA HOSPITAL, MOTI BAGH, NEW DELHI-110021
e-Procurement Tender Notice
TENDER ID NO. 2019, NDMC, 175473_1
Sub: Procurement of Arthroscopic Set with Buyback at Charak Palika Hospital, Moti Bagh with two years warranty including G&MC for five years after warranty period of two years.
Estimated Cost: Rs. 1,00,77,730/- (Rupees One Crore Seventy Seven Thousand and Seven Hundred Thirty Only) + GST
Date of release of tender through e-procurement solution: 02.07.2019
Date of Pre-Bid Meeting of tender through e-procurement solution: 10.07.2019 at 02.30 PM (Pre-bid meeting is to be held in the chamber of Director (MS)).
Date of uploading the minutes of pre bid meeting of tender through e-procurement solution on or before: 17.07.2019
Last date/time for receipt of tenders through e-procurement solution: 24.07.2019 at 2:30 PM
Date of Opening of tender at 3:00 PM on 24.07.2019
Further details and any corrigendum can be seen at e-tendering system Government of NCT of Delhi https://govt.procurement.delhi.gov.in
Note: To participate in e-tender in NDMC registration with e-tendering System, Government of NCT of Delhi, is mandatory. Sd/- DIRECTOR (MEDICAL SERVICES)
To be The Global Benchmark for a Capital City

As you read it

Amish Tripathi on how different versions of *The Ramayana* have found their way into his Ram Chandra series, including the just released *Raavan: Enemy of Aryavarta*

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

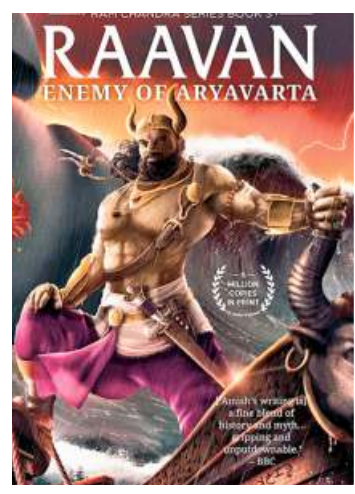
Raavan: Enemy of Aryavarta (Westland), the third book in Amish Tripathi's Ram Chandra series, is out. With a warrior princess Sita, a violent yet cultural Ravana, and a morally conflicted Ram, the series has drawn readers, in droves, ever since the first book – *Ram: Scion of Ishvaku* – released in 2015.

But the author doesn't take credit for a fresh approach, nor does he consider it a fresh one to begin with: instead, he talks of different versions of *The Ramayana* he has read over 30 years (he includes the tales he was told as a child, among his research) that he drew these characters from.

"The *Adbhut Ramayana* is an ancient version that is also credited to Valmiki, like the original text. In that version, there are two Ravana. The elder one is killed by Sita *ma*," he points out, by way of example. He has also read the *Ananda Ramayana*, *Ramayana Darshanam*, and others, but he says *Adbhut Ramayana* holds a particular appeal for him because, in his words, "In this narrative, all three characters suffered. All three of them had experienced grief; fate was unfair to all three of them. But how they reacted to it was different. It tells you something about their characters."

This is where Amish's judgement and biases as the author comes in, and where he decides the characteristics of the three protagonists.

His Ravana, despite all accomplishments, is an inherently ne-



gative character – "Ravana's reaction to his grief was anger and hatred. Sita *ma*'s was pragmatism and fierce determination. Lord Ram's approach was that the more people were unfair to him, the more honourable he behaved." Though Amish depicts his Ravana as a deeply flawed man – doing things like skinning hapless animals alive – he refuses to describe the character as 'evil'.

"Evil is a very loaded word," says Amish, "I have used 'evil' only in a few places in my story, because of the restrictions of the English language. In Vedic Sanskrit, the word '*adharna*' does not mean evil, it just means that which causes imbalance. And it serves a purpose in the world, our ancestors believed."

He continues, "Unlike the popular, more simplistic perception today, Ravana was not just a thug. He was violent, no doubt, and brutally so, but there were good points to him, too. He was genuinely a scholar, he was ex-

tremely well read. He was a brilliant musician and had invented instruments. He had written books." But having said that, the king of Lanka was also, at the end of the day, the villain in Amish's story: a king whose soldiers used brutal torture techniques and a child who has no qualms about sabotaging competitors.

In contrast is his characterisation of Ram, a believer of the rule of law, whose conflict lies in unintended consequence. "Justice and law are not always the same thing," says Amish, "Ram faces this when he decides to set free a juvenile, guilty of terrible crimes, because the law says so." If this dilemma (from the first book) sounds like one pertinent to the conflicts of today, it isn't the only one. In the latest book, Ravana and Kumbhakarna discuss – of all things – the entry of women in Kerala's Sabarimala temple.

Why? Because the author feels that everything he reads, or is affected by, can find its way into his work. But when he – or his character Kumbhakarna – takes it upon himself to explain the issue, gender equality is taken right out of the equation.

"It is not a gender issue. There are female paths to nirvana, temples where men are not allowed. These [and Sabarimala] follow the *sanyasa* route: you and I don't hear about them because most such temples were destroyed long ago. The ones we are used to today, follow the *grihashta* route – where relationships are celebrated."

Raavan: Enemy of Aryavarta is available at all leading bookstores and on www.amazon.in



Write on track
Amish Tripathi shows the epics in a new light
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

PEOPLE

Literary baithak

A bi-monthly, themed literary meet in Delhi is slowly finding popularity



Back in the early 2000s, a Yahoo groups of Gulzar fans was formed. They'd meet offline, and stay up late into the night, reciting poetry to one another, passionately talking about any cross-influences between poets, and the social history of the literary worlds these figures had inhabited.

Of this group, Priyanka Bhaskar, a software engineer from Delhi and Prerak Vyas, an ad-professional originally from Mumbai, became great friends. Wanting to keep this engagement with poetry going for longer and beyond the Yahoo group, the two started Parwaz "a set of people passionate about poetry in all forms and shapes", in August 2015.

"Earlier, friends would meet and talk. But now, people tend to interact only through Facebook," says Priyanka. She adds that in a bid to recreate actual conversations on topics like film, song poetry, and literature, Parwaz tries to "make a space for creative and constructive conversations." The idea is to draw people into the discussion, so in time, poetry will be a choice, over shopping.

For the last year, Parwaz's adda has been at the Sangeeta Gupta Art gallery, a basement space tucked away in Safdarjung Enclave. When they started off though, the group would hold its meets in bistros and cafes, but abandoned those locations in favour of less distracting spaces. Once, they even held a meetup on Ghalib's works in a haveli in Old Delhi.

Recently, peppered with Amir Khusrau's riddles and anecdotes of petty rivalries between court poets, Parwaz traced out the history of Delhi's poets in their *bazm* or *baithak*. Starting from Khusrau, to Mir Taqi Mir, and the saint poet Jamali, among others, the discussion touched upon the literary heritage during the reign of various kings.

Many of the session's 20-odd attendees, broke into the conversation with their own knowledge, adding lines written by the poets being talked about, in order to illustrate a point. Some would also recognise a line, referencing how Bollywood has co-opted many of these words into its songs now.

Now, with the monsoon having made its entry, Priyanka hopes to revisit a topic that didn't get a great response before. Rain poetry. "Starting from Kalidasa's *Meghadootam*, India has had such a unique relationship with rain, which doesn't exist elsewhere. I hope to do a session on poets of the rain soon," she says.

In the meantime, their next session will be a dip into the works of the Urdu writer Ismat Chughtai in Sly Granny, Khan Market. The restaurant has invited Parwaz to hold a session in its space. With dramatised readings, the *baithak* will be in collaboration with theatre artists Vani Kumar and Shamir Abadan.

Aapa ke Afsaane – Dramatized reading of Ismat Chughtai's Stories, 4-6 p.m.; July 7th, Sly Granny, Khan Market. To reserve a spot, contact ek.parwaz@gmail.com or +91 9810011955

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

IN OUR BACKYARD



ABHISHEK GULSHAN

For most people, bats are synonymous with darkness and disease, whether it's the *Twilight* series, the legend of *Dracula*, who, according to the book, would turn into a bat and suck blood, or the Nipah virus. But these creatures need a little more understanding.

Bats are the only flying mammals in the world, and the Indian Flying Fox is one of the largest. The name of the species, *Pteropus giganteus*, explains the size. Also called the Great Indian Fruit Bat, it eats fruits, feeding on the juice, and helps in seed

Misunderstood much

The Indian Flying Fox has little interaction with us, but is important for seed dispersal especially in our cities

dispersion and pollination, making them an integral part of the ecosystem.

It's really a gentle giant that lurks around our neighbourhood without being noticed, living lives parallel to ours, but at night. They are nocturnal animals with weak eyesight, and hang upside down in tall dense trees (palm, banyan), staying in their places for long hours, easily overlooked.

Bats are one of the few mammals that can use sound (bio-sonar technology) to navigate, called echolocation. They rely on echolocation to detect obstacles in flight, find their way into roosts, and forage for food. But the Indian Flying Fox does not echolocate and relies on its sense of vision and smell.

To feed, they'll squeeze pieces of the fruit into their mouths, so pulp-rich fruits are their choice: mangoes, for instance (bananas, in other regions), and often even

nectar from tree flowers. They swallow the juice and spit out the pulp and seeds. If the pulp is really soft, like that of a banana, they may swallow some of it. They are often observed chewing on eucalyptus and probably other flowers to obtain the juices and pollen. They drink water from water bodies while flying to and from their feeding and sleeping locations. They can actually travel more than 50 km in a night in search of food and water.

These bats, like all mammals, are warm-blooded and maintain a body temperature of about 33-37°C. The males are often territorial with their particular roosting place in the tree. At times they'll guard the entire tree as part of their food territory. However, they roost communally on treetops in large colonies and make a lot of screeching noises at dusk and at night.

Breeding usually takes

place between July and October and the young ones are carried by the females for several weeks. Females are often seen flying from one location to another with their young ones clinging to the underside of their mothers. Later, the young are subsequently left in a tree once they feel they are ready to be on their own.

The bat population is declining almost everywhere due to rampant tree felling in cities, leading to a loss of habitat. Preserving the natural heritage around urban settlements is the only way to protect these flying mammals. Catch them in sky at dusk or in the dense foliage around Race Course Road.

The writer is the founder of NINOX - Owl about Nature, a nature-awareness initiative. He formerly led a programme at WWF India as a naturalist, and is the Delhi-NCR reviewer for Ebird, a Cornell University initiative, monitoring rare sightings of birds in the region

Batting for the flying fox

Bats love eating pulp-rich fruit, like mango •

CHARLES J SHARP/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; AND ABHISHEK GULSHAN



PRODUCT

Masking care

The 130-year-old beauty brand, Avon, is keeping up with global beauty trends.

They've introduced a range of K-beauty products in India, with sheet masks, specially tailored for Indian skin-types. One of these promises 'glass skin', a Korean skincare routine that has been surging in popularity since it first took the internet by storm in late 2017. Avon's Glass Effect Hydrogel Face Mask, made with Korean sugar maple is said to scrub out dead skin and boost hydration. Incorporating other viral Korean beauty trends, Avon also has a Golden Mushroom Sleep Mask. Left overnight, this blend of Chaga, Shiitake and Matsutake mushrooms – all billed as superfoods now – promises to moisture and add radiance to your skin.

Available at avon.co.in; ₹499 upward

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

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



SPORTS

Abilympics

The National Abilympics Association of India is hosting the 19th edition of India's Regional Abilympics in Delhi. This event is modelled on the Olympics, to showcase the skills of people with disabilities (PwDs). The two-day event will see participation of over 400 such persons from Delhi/NCR, and adjoining North Indian states
VENUE: Lady Irwin College, Sikandra Road
TIME: 10 a.m.



FASHION

International expo

The 12th edition of Indian Fashion Jewellery & Accessories, an international exhibition, will start in Greater Noida today. Dedicated entirely to the jewellery and accessories industry, this three-day show will feature products from more than 250 member-exporters, displaying a range of fashion jewellery and accessories.
VENUE: India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida
TIME: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.



HANDICRAFT

Iranian craft

On the occasion of 70 years of Indo-Iran Diplomatic Relations, Iran Culture House has organised a three-day exhibition of Iranian arts and handicrafts. The programme is aimed at introducing Iranian-Islamic art and culture to Delhi, with a collection of Persian miniatures, pottery, calligraphy, and wood mosaic on display.
VENUE: Twin Art Gallery, IGNC, Janpath
TIME: 11 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.



MUSIC

Live acoustic

Hard Rock Cafe in Gurugram will have musician Janvi Anand perform live tonight. Based in Los Angeles, Janvi is an Indian acoustic-guitarist, singer, songwriter, composer. Having experimented with guitar, piano and drums, she has decided to perform as an acoustic pop rock artist at music shows.
VENUE: R-Block, DLF City, Phase 3, Gurugram
TIME: 9 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.



FILM

French family drama

Alliance Française de Delhi is screening *Keteke*, a French drama, this evening. Directed by Peter Sedufia, the film focuses on a couple from a remote village in Ghana. They want to have their first baby delivered in a hospital in the town nearby, but have to rely on the only source of transportation, which is a weekly train.
VENUE: M.L. Bhartia Auditorium, Lodhi Estate
TIME: 6:30 p.m.

MINI ANTHIKAD CHHIBBER

Arrive

If there is one place that encapsulates all that Mexico has to offer, it is Chiapas. The southern Mexican State has everything from lovely beaches, rain forests, and serene Mayan ruins to soaring colonial architecture and a coffee route.

The city of Palenque is 152 kilometres, a two-hour drive, from the Carlos Rovirosa Pérez Airport in Villahermosa, which incidentally means beautiful city in Spanish. It is late at night as we drive to Palenque and visions of ancient rites and rituals flash before my eyes as we storm past silently-swaying trees.

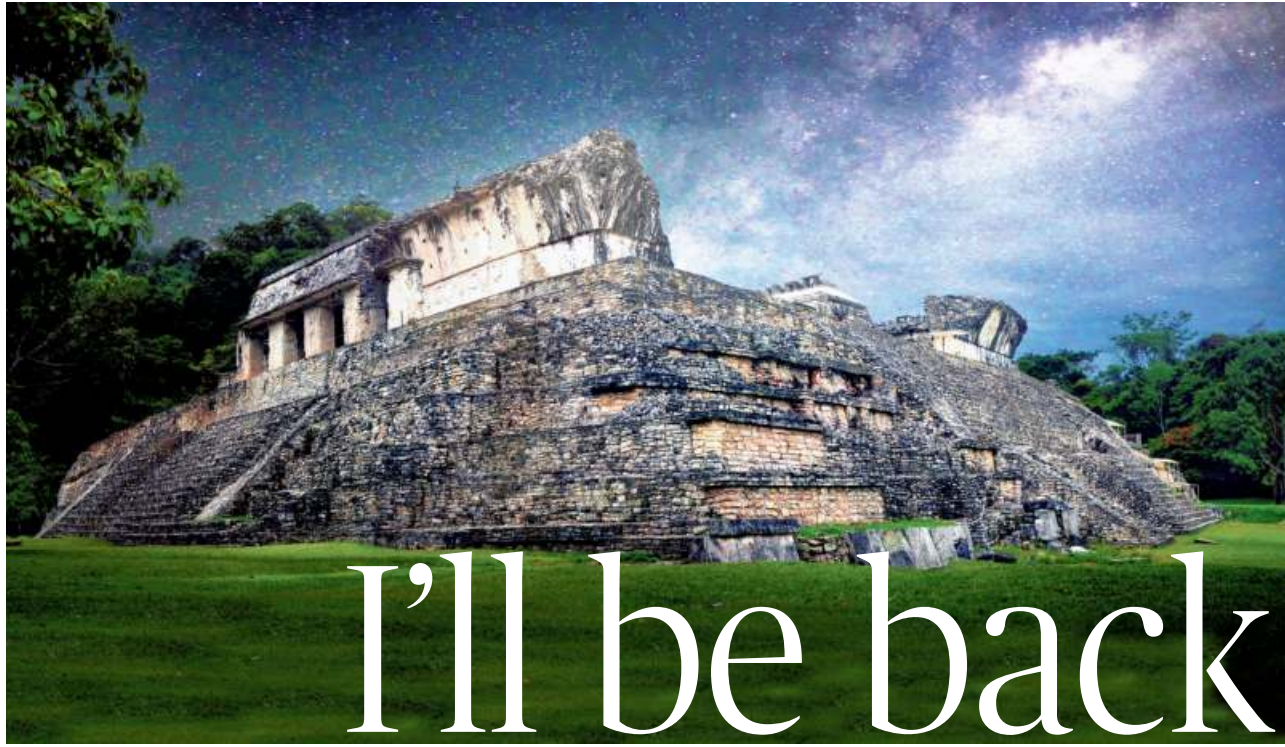
Day 1

10 a.m.

In deference to our late-night arrival, we start for the archaeological site of Palenque an hour later. The site, which the jungle claimed after its decline by 799 AD is fascinatingly well-preserved. Our guide is the fabulously well-informed Fabio Romero Zacarias. With a degree in History, Fabio shares interesting tidbits starting with the meaning of Mexico, which comes from the Aztecs and means navel of the moon! Saying the original name for Palenque was Bakal, meaning land of limestone, Fabio takes us through the important structures at the archaeological site, giving us an intriguing slice of Mayan life from the T-shaped windows that represent the god of wind, light and illumination to the sauna baths. The Mayans believed sauna baths were like being reborn and so you came out of the low doors like a baby. Wandering through the ruins, seeing the inscriptions and sculptures, including one of the famous Mayan king of Palenque, Pakal, holding a prisoner by his hair to decapitate him, does not bring us any closer to solving the mystery of the inscrutable Reina Roja or the Red Queen. As we leave the sun-dappled mossy ruins, the only thing that seems permanent is the jungle – Nature will take back her own inexorably.

1 p.m.

After looking at the brilliant scarlet macaws, lazy crocodiles and the majestic jaguar, among many other indigenous species, at the conservation site of Aluxes Ecopark, we head for lunch to the Cascada de Misol-Ha. The Mayans



I'll be back

A packed 48 hours does not even begin to skim the surface of the diversity the beautiful southern Mexican state of Chiapas has to offer

believed the black jaguar was the celestial vault, while the spotted ones were stars, and macaws were the sun. The pristine waterfall, Misol-Ha, incidentally, is the one Arnold Schwarzenegger popped out of to take care of a nasty skin-stripping alien in the 1987 movie, *Predator*.

8 p.m.

Dinner is at Restaurante Bajlum (*bajlum* means jaguar in Mayan) where our host Francisco Alvarez, is passionate about Mayan cuisine.

Being vegetarian, figuring out a menu for me was a bit of a challenge to my host, but he met it magnificently with *crema de echalotes* (shallot soup), a vegetarian platter with delicately-seasoned lentils and corn, a sweet potato palate cleanser with amaranth seeds and a heavenly dessert featuring fleshy, succulent avocado.

Day 2

6 a.m.

We have an early start to visit Yaxchilán. Meaning place of the green stones, Yaxchilán (250 AD to 900 AD) developed into a powerful city centre along the banks of the Usumacinta River.

We drive to the border town (Guatemala is on the other side of the Usumacinta River) of Frontera



Corozal. Channelling my inner Lara Croft and Indiana Jones, with a dash of JLO from *Anaconda* (a maroon auto-rickshaw jauntily putting on the road ruins the impression just a wee bit), I set off on the boat ride to Yaxchilán.

12.30 p.m.

It is as if time has stopped in the quiet ruins. As we look at the remarkable structures, one can only imagine the bustle of life. In the

still green, among the towering ceiba trees (considered holy by the Mayans), I thought I could hear the thwack of the ball. In 1200 BC, the Olmecs were the first to play a ball game. The ball weighed a hefty one to two kilograms, and the players could not touch it with their hands, feet or head. They could only hit the ball with their hips or elbows.

The partially-preserved roof combs, the lintels, the inscriptions, all speak in the silence of

the rise and fall of a mighty civilisation. Puffing and panting up the 150 steps of Structure 33 to see the lintels, sculptures, the niches in the frieze and roof comb, the stucco work and hieroglyphic stairway is a reward in itself.

2.30 p.m.

Over lunch at the Nueva Alianza Tourist Center in Frontera Corozal, Fabio says the 150-year-drought was one of the causes of the Mayan civilisation's decline.

How to get there

There are flights from India to Benito Juárez International Airport in Mexico City. Make sure you do not have two transits in Europe or you will need a Schengen visa (As I found out to great dismay and cost).

While there is an airport in Chiapas, Palenque International Airport, there are more flight options from the Carlos Rovirosa Pérez International Airport in Villahermosa. The city of Palenque is a 152-kilometre, (two-hour) drive from the airport.

Yaxchilán

A two-hour ride from Palenque to Frontera Corozal and a further one-hour boat ride brings you to the place of green stones.

The mysterious massacre of Mayan nobles in Cancun, Guatemala is also thought to be the result of the drought. Only 10% of the Mayans survived and they migrated thereafter to Yucatan where they found water underground.

6 p.m.

We reach the Lacandon Camp, Top Che, which means wild flower in Mayan. The Lacandon are Mayan people who have managed

to preserve their customs and rituals with minimum contact with civilisation. They live in the Lacandon jungle, a rain forest, and speak one of the Mayan languages. The cottages at the camp have thatched roofs and mosquito nets. The lack of WiFi is a blessing as I unwind in the still of the night.

8.30 p.m.

At dinner (quesadillas are my go-to meal as the corn bread goes perfectly well with cheese and beans), we discuss our early morning trek the next day through the rain forest.

Our guide Paco will show us the tree (guano palm) that is used to thatch the roof as well as the chewing gum tree otherwise known as the *sapota* tree – yes, the *chikoo* comes all the way from Mexico! Outside the restaurant, there are handicrafts and I buy a jaguar made of a soft wood.

While the Lacandon jungle is one of the largest rain forests in North America to support jaguars, I don't expect to see one on our five-mile hike. Never mind, I have this splendidly-snarling specimen of the celestial vault to remind me of an enchanted sojourn in the place that time forgot.

The writer was in Chiapas at the invitation of Tianguis Turístico 2019 and the Chiapas Tourism Board

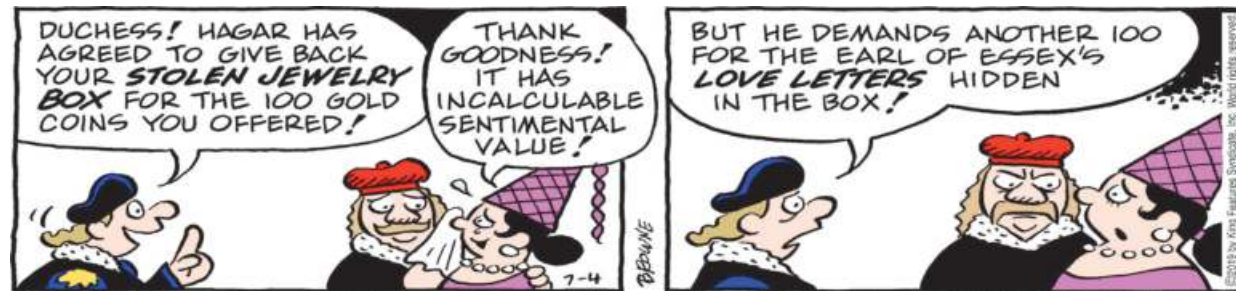
POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



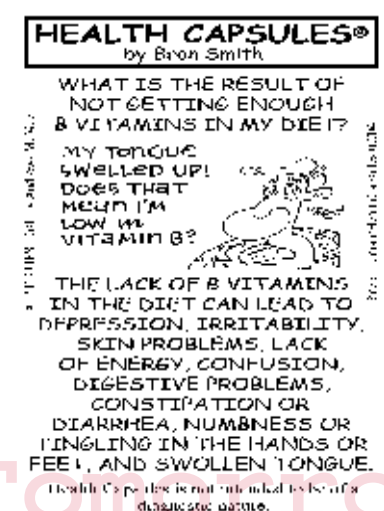
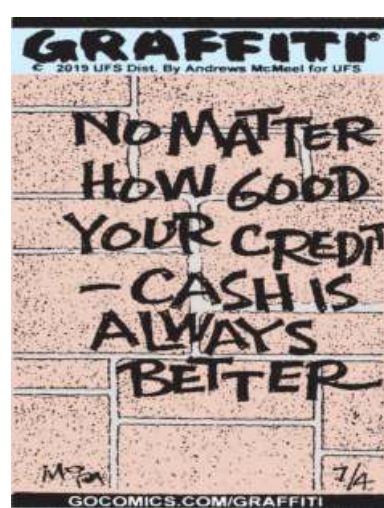
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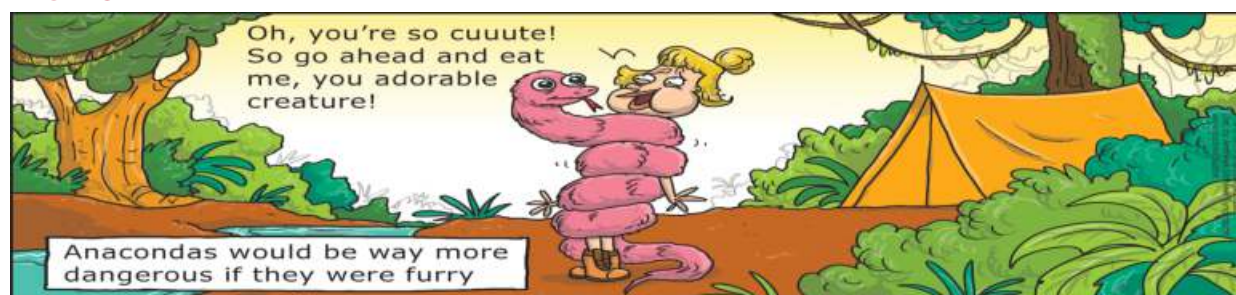
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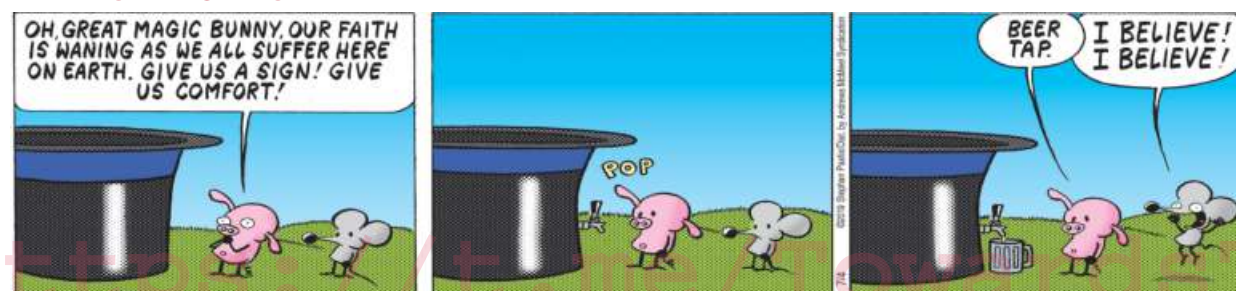
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PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13113

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- 5 Pertaining to the stomach (7)
- 6 Diatribe (6)
- 11 Swear word (9)
- 13 Guaranteed (7)
- 14 Obliterated (7)
- 15 As a group (2,5)
- 16 New York borough (6)
- 18 Endured (5)

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- Across
- 1 Not so difficult (6)
- 4 Single figure (5)
- 7 Environment (6)
- 8 Rodent-catching cat (6)
- 9 Vivacity (4)
- 10 Made ready (8)
- 12 Work of outstanding artistry (11)
- 17 Obvious – clumsy (8)
- 19 Renown (4)
- 20 Gaffes (6)
- 21 Engrave (6)
- 22 Grass-like plant growing in wet places (5)
- 23 Stick one's oar in (6)
- Down
- 1 Witty saying (7)
- 2 Mariners (7)
- 3 Kit (9)
- 4 Hang down loosely (5)

Solution will appear in The Hindu dated July 5, 2019.

Solution No. 13112

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IN BRIEF


DiCaprio helps create environmental alliance

NEW YORK
Actor Leonardo DiCaprio is joining with philanthropists Laurene Powell Jobs and Brian Sheth to create a nonprofit environmental powerhouse charged with tackling climate change and the loss of biodiversity. The organisation, Earth Alliance, "will work to protect wildlife and ecosystems, ensure climate justice and support renewable energy". AP


Cigar-shaped object not a spaceship, say scientists

WASHINGTON
After tracking 'Oumuamua' for four months, an interstellar cigar-shaped object spotted in 2017, scientists have concluded that it is not an alien spaceship. However, its composition remains a mystery. The reddish object estimated to be 800 m long, was first spotted by astronomers in Hawaii. REUTERS


U.S. rapper A\$AP Rocky arrested after brawl

STOCKHOLM
U.S. rapper A\$AP Rocky was arrested in Sweden early on Wednesday for serious assault, prosecutors said. The 30-year-old performer was detained with three others for getting involved in a street brawl on Sunday, a few hours after performing at a hip hop festival. Of the three, two people were held for serious assault. REUTERS

An Arctic fox's record journey

It trekked over 3,500 km from Norway to Canada under harsh conditions in just 76 days

MEGAN SPECIA

The journey of a young arctic fox, which trekked more than 2,175 miles (3,500 km) from Norway to Canada in just 76 days, has stunned researchers and shed new light on the movement of the species over vast distances of sea ice. The animal, also known as a coastal or blue fox, set off from the Svalbard Archipelago of Norway last year and ended up on an island in northern Nunavut, Canada, says a study in *Polar Research*, published by the Norwegian Polar Institute.

The areas are connected seasonally by sea ice, and much of the journey was completed over frozen Arctic Ocean. The fox also passed through Greenland, but kept forging further west, the researchers' data

showed, moving quickly across the ice sheets where food was scarce and conditions were harsh.

While this type of arctic fox has long been known for its endurance in the barren polar climate, such a fast transcontinental journey has never been documented before.

Eva Fuglei, one of the researchers, said, "We didn't think it was true," she said. "Could the fox have been found dead, the collar taken off and now aboard a boat?"

But Ms. Fuglei said that no boats could travel that far north through the ice, so they knew it had to be the fox that was still on the move.

The animal left Spitsbergen in the Svalbard Archipelago on March 26, 2018, and



The fox may have taken such an extreme trip in search of food. • REUTERS

reached Ellesmere Island in Nunavut two-and-a-half months later.

Using a satellite tracking device, researchers determined that in one day alone, the fox, a female, had tra-

velled about 154 km.

"This is, to our knowledge, the fastest movement rate ever recorded for this species," Ms. Fuglei said in the report.

The fox's tracking collar stopped transmitting in February 2019, according to the report, so the animal's ultimate fate is unknown.

Why did the fox take such an extreme, transcontinental journey in the first place? The study indicated that the trek may have been prompted by a lack of available food or by the need to seek a new habitat.

Sea ice plays a vital role in foxes' ability to migrate between areas and find resources, the study noted. But that ice has become increasingly threatened as a result of climate change. NY TIMES

NASA tests launch-abort system for moon mission

It aims at evacuation of astronauts under real-life conditions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

NASA carried out a successful test on Tuesday of a launch-abort system for the Orion capsule designed to take U.S. astronauts to the Moon.

The three-minute exercise at Cape Canaveral in Florida aimed to test in almost real-life conditions the evacuation of astronauts from the capsule in the event of an explosion or rocket booster failure.

In the test, an unmanned Orion capsule was launched by a mini-rocket – a repurposed first stage of an intercontinental ballistic missile. Fifty-five seconds after the launch, at an altitude of



Big moment: The Ascent Abort-2 flight test of NASA's Orion spacecraft lifting off from Cape Canaveral. • REUTERS

9,500 m, a rocket-powered tower on top of the crew module ignited its engines to quickly pull the Orion away from a hypothetical rocket experiencing problems.

In just 15 seconds, the capsule gained two miles of

altitude. Then the tower reoriented the capsule to prepare it for descent and disengagement from the tower.

In real-life conditions, parachutes would open to ease the manned capsule's fall toward the Atlantic Ocean.

U.S. auto industry legend Lee Iacocca dies aged 94

He created Ford Mustang, saved Chrysler from bankruptcy

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

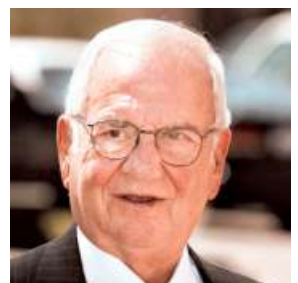
WASHINGTON

Automobile industry legend Lee Iacocca, who is credited with creating the iconic Ford Mustang and saving Chrysler from bankruptcy, died on Tuesday at the age of 94.

Mr. Iacocca died at his home in Bel-Air, a neighbourhood of Los Angeles, from complications of Parkinson's disease.

Chrysler said in a statement that the company "is saddened" by news of Mr. Iacocca's death. "He played a historic role in steering Chrysler through crisis and making it a competitive force," the statement read.

Mr. Iacocca began his career in 1946 at the Ford Motor Company, first as an engineer and then in sales. It



Lee Iacocca

Ford fired him in 1978. He, then, moved to the floundering Chrysler Corporation.

In 1979, the U.S. government bailed Chrysler out of a potential bankruptcy with \$1.5 billion in secured loans. Mr. Iacocca took the reins once more and implemented a painful restructuring process. He had twisted Congress's arm for the loan, and he successfully brought Chrysler back from the brink – then paid off the loan ahead of schedule.

Under his leadership, Chrysler invented the minivan and later the suburban utility vehicle (SUV). His famous line in Chrysler ads – "If you find a better car, buy it!" he would say, pointing at the viewer – turned him into a legend.

was his talent in marketing that helped realise his full potential.

Mr. Iacocca had reaped in massive sales over his career, particularly with the Ford Mustang that he designed in 1957. However, he was accused of plotting against Chairman Henry Ford II in a quest to reach the top company position.

South Americans marvel at solar eclipse

People in large numbers flocked to Chile's Coquimbo region to witness the moment

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LA HIGUERA

A rare total solar eclipse plunged a vast swath of Latin America's southern cone into darkness late on Tuesday, briefly turning day into night and enthralling huge crowds in much of Chile and Argentina.

Hundreds of thousands of people flocked to Chile's northern Coquimbo region near the Atacama desert – festooned with some of the planet's most powerful telescopes – which was situated directly on the eclipse's 100-mile-wide "path of totality."

Large crowds congregated in the town of La Higuera, some 2,400 m above sea level and near the landmark La Silla Observatory, operated by the European Southern Observatory.

"I don't believe there's a better place in the world to see an eclipse than La Silla,"



said Australian tourist Betsy Clark.

Ms. Clark and her family were among thousands who flocked to the craggy peaks around the observatory on Tuesday.

They were not disappointed. The eclipse had its longest duration as it made to



Stargazers' paradise: People watching the total solar eclipse in La Higuera, Chile, and, right, a view of the moon after it completely blocked the sun. • AP

La Silla: 2.36 minutes. "It was an experience to last several lifetimes," said Chilean tourist Rene Serey.

Solar eclipses happen when the Sun, the moon and earth line up, allowing the moon to cast its shadow on earth. The area where the observatory is located, with

its dry weather, crystal-clear air and low light pollution, is the perfect spot for such spectacles.

In Argentina, people gathered to look into the sky in the western Cuyo, a wine-producing region, which had the country's longest exposure to the eclipse.

Shillong to host short film festival in November

Awards will be given in six categories

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

A three-day festival of short films, the Kelvin Cinema Festival of Films, is set to roll out in Shillong from November 7 to 9, 2019. The festival will host a national competition for short films with prize money worth ₹4 lakh. The competition will be in six categories – best film, director, actor-male and female, cinematographer and editor.

The northeast hosts many film festivals. The Guwahati International Film Festival is in its third edition. The Brahmaputra Valley International Film Festival focuses on the cinema of the region. There is also the Adda Film Festival held in Guwahati.

The Kelvin Cinema Film Festival is being presented by producer, distributor

and philanthropist Shankar Lal Goenka and Jeevan Ram Mungi Devi Charitable Trust in association with Directorate of Information and Public Relation in the Department of Arts and Culture of the government of Meghalaya and Arts Cine Entertainment Society. It is supported by the Federation of Film Societies of India and will be held in the State Central Library in Shillong.

The brainwave of young filmmakers Dominic Sangma and Pradip Kurbah (who are artistic director and head of programming, respectively, of the festival), it is named after Kelvin, one of the first (now defunct) cinema halls in the northeast that was opened in 1926. Incidentally, the name Kelvin came from the projectors and technology used in the cinema halls.

27% of children with disabilities have never been to school: UNESCO

There are fewer girls with disabilities in school than boys, says report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

More than one in four children with disabilities between ages 5 and 19 in India have never attended any educational institution, while three-fourths of five-year-olds with disabilities are not in school.

A report by UNESCO and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences released on Wednesday recommends structural, funding and attitudinal changes to ensure that no child is left out of the right to education.

Census data

Citing 2011 census data, the report showed that there are more than 78 lakh children with disabilities in the country between 5-19 years. Only

61% of them were attending an educational institution. About 12% had dropped out, while 27% had never been to school at all.

"The number of children [with disabilities] enrolled in school drops significantly with each successive level of schooling. There are fewer girls with disabilities in school than boys," says the report. In 2014-15, there were more than 15 lakh children with disabilities in primary school. Two years later, enrolment had dropped by more than two lakh, data shows. At the higher secondary school level, there were less than 63,000 such children in 2016-17.

Differences remain among various types of dis-

abilities. Only 20% of children with visual and hearing impairments had never been in school. However, among children with multiple disabilities or mental illness, that figure rose to more than 50%.

Home-based education

Experts say the situation is worse than what the statistics show as the government data on enrolment includes home-based education, which often exists only on paper for children with disabilities. "In many parts of rural India, if a parent opts for home-based education, the child may not be getting an education at all. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan teacher is supposed to visit and check, but how often does

that happen? The number of excluded children is much higher than government data shows," said Arman Ali, executive director of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, who was part of the editorial board overseeing the report.

"The Right to Education Act mandates enrolment, but not the provision of resources needed for the actual education of a child with disabilities," pointed out Susheela Jeliya, a disabilities specialist with World Vision India.

Amendments to the RTE Act, 2009 to make it align with the Right of Persons With Disabilities Act, 2016 are among the major recommendations of the report.

Singapore schoolchildren struggle with stress

The country is embarking on reforms that will scrap some academic tests, change the rigid streaming process

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SINGAPORE

Schoolchildren are paying a heavy price for Singapore's success in global education rankings, with rising numbers seeking psychiatric help as they struggle to cope with the relentless pressure for academic excellence.

Children are reporting symptoms of anxiety and stress related to school as early as primary school, experts warn, and there have been extreme cases where pupils have been driven to suicide.

Children often face long days at school, hours of homework, and are then pushed by parents to have private tuition, which is hav-

ing an impact on mental well-being – a recent report found that overall the city's pupils reported higher levels of anxiety than average.

Now, in a bid to reduce stress in its schools, Singapore is embarking on reforms that will scrap some academic tests and change the rigid streaming process.

"We have to balance the joy of learning and the rigour of education," Education Minister Ong Ye Kung said as he announced some of the changes in Parliament earlier this year.

The move comes at a time when more authorities in Asia are being forced to assess if pupils are being overwhelmed by pressure to per-



All work and no play: Students in Singapore have hectic schedules both due to school and private tuitions. • AFP

form – Hong Kong's Child Fatality Review listed problems with schoolwork among one of the key reasons for teen suicide. Japan reported it's highest

youth suicide rate in 30 years in 2016/17, with officials admitting there is an annual spike on September 1 – the start of the new school year.

Singapore has placed education at the heart of its development since independence in the 1960s and now tops the PISA international rankings for maths, reading, and science.

But a study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which conducts the PISA assessment, found that despite academic success Singapore's students reported higher levels of anxiety about schoolwork than other nations.

"Children are being forced to mature too fast without the relevant foundation and reasoning power to reassure oneself," said the psychologist Daniel Koh.

Nike pulls offensive shoes amid race controversy

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

Sportswear giant Nike said on Tuesday that it had withdrawn a shoe displaying an early version of the American flag, amidst reports of former National Football League quarterback Colin Kaepernick warning the company that the flag was associated with slavery.

Nike had unveiled the design featuring an American Revolution-era design known as the 'Betsy Ross flag' to commemorate the U.S. Independence Day on July 4.

But *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Mr. Kaepernick, who had led kneeling protests against racial inequality during the na-



The Nike Air Max 1 USA featuring 13 white stars in a circle on the heel. • AP

tional anthems of NFL games in 2016, said that the design featuring 13 white stars in a circle was associated with a period of slavery legalised in the US after independence from Britain.

However, Nike said in a statement that it withdrew the design on "concerns that it could unintentionally offend and detract from the nation's patriotic holiday."

Nicki Minaj to perform in Saudi Arabia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

RIYADH

U.S. rapper Nicki Minaj will perform in Saudi Arabia this month, organisers said on Wednesday.

Ms. Minaj, known for her profanity-laced lyrics and raunchy music videos, will perform in Jeddah on July 18. The news was widely welcomed in a country where two-thirds of the population is under 30.

The performance in the kingdom, which has a strict social code, comes as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman pursues a liberalisation drive that has led to new cinemas, concerts and sporting extravaganzas.