



NEARBY



CM to go on pilgrimage with aam aadmi

NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and their families will join a fully government-paid pilgrimage for senior citizens to Vaishno Devi via train on July 20. The pilgrimage will cover the Delhi-Vaishno Devi-Jammu corridor from July 20 to 24.

Boy scolded for ordering earphones found dead

NEW DELHI
A 17-year-old boy was found dead at his house allegedly after his father scolded him for ordering Bluetooth earphones, on Wednesday evening in south-west Delhi's Vasant Vihar. The family said that the boy was an extremely talented sketcher and was also good in studies.

'New report on zoo irregularities a cover-up'

NEW DELHI
Former Member Secretary of the Central Zoo Authority D.N. Singh, whose report in 2016 had found multiple irregularities in the Delhi zoo, told *The Hindu* that a new report on the irregularities in the zoo is a "cover-up".

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FRIDAY REVIEW
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Economic Survey sets out blueprint for \$5 tn economy

■ Projects GDP growth for 2019-20 at 7%, an improvement from last fiscal's pace of 6.8%

■ Bats for private investment to help propel growth in demand, jobs and productivity

■ Suggests moving the economy into a 'virtuous cycle' of savings, investments and exports

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Economic Survey 2019 presented by Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy Subramanian focusses on moving to a "virtuous cycle" of savings, investments and exports to transform India into a \$5 trillion economy in the next five years.

According to the survey, India's GDP is forecast to expand by 7% in fiscal 2019-20, slightly higher than the 6.8% in 2018-19.

In his preface to the survey, the CEA said the team had been guided by a "blue sky" thought process, an unfettered approach to thinking about the appropriate economic model for India.

"When the economy is in a virtuous cycle, investment, productivity growth, job creation, demand and exports feed into each other and enable animal spirits in the economy to thrive," the survey's authors wrote. "In contrast, when the economy is in a vicious cycle, moderation in these variables dampen each other and thereby dampen the animal spirits in the economy."

In his first Survey, Dr. Subramanian highlighted the fact that private investment was a key driver for demand, capacity, labour productivity, new technology adoption, and for job creation.

"What we have tried to

talk about is that investment is really critical; related to that is that investment by the private sector cannot happen unless there is no crowding out because of the government," the CEA said at a press conference.

Further, he said, implicit in the emphasis on private investment was the fact that the government had and would stick to its fiscal consolidation glide path. It has committed to a fiscal deficit of 3.4% of GDP in 2019-20, and 3% each in the subsequent two years.

Fiscal glide path

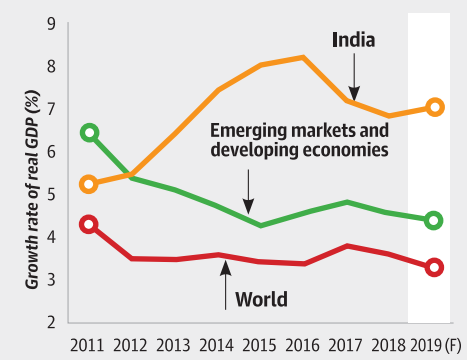
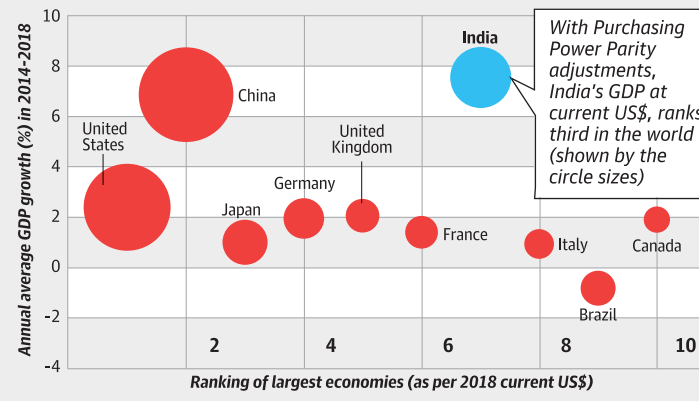
"Implicit in the emphasis on private investment, what we are also talking about is sticking to the glide path, which over the last five years we have done a very good job of," Dr. Subramanian said. "And, therefore, we anticipate that is the path we would continue on. We will be sticking to the fiscal path."

Moving the economy into a virtuous cycle would require the adoption of certain practices and norms on data, legal reforms and policy certainty, and some micro-economic aspects such as boosting MSMEs and reducing the cost of capital, he said.

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ONLY TALL CLAIMS, NO VISION, SAYS OPPOSITION PAGE 13

Among the top

India is the seventh largest economy in terms of GDP. The average growth rate of India's GDP between 2014 and 2018 was higher than that of China and other top major economies (measured in terms of GDP at current US\$ terms). India's growth of real GDP has been high with average rate of 7.5% in the last 5 years (2014-15 onwards)



Govt. can sell PSU land, reduce majority stake to boost non-tax revenue: CEA

T.C.A. SHARAD RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI

The government can sell land held by PSUs and potentially reduce its majority stake in some companies to make up for the significant shortfall in tax revenues, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy Subramanian said on Thursday.

According to the figures in the Economic Survey 2019, the government is expected to receive as much as ₹1.6 lakh crore less than what

was estimated in the interim Budget presented by then Finance Minister Piyush Goyal in February. Mr. Goyal's interim Budget pegged the government's receipts in 2018-19 at ₹17.2 lakh crore, while the Economic Survey's provisional actual figures show this will be only ₹15.6 lakh crore.

The main reason for this sharp downward revision is a commensurate reduction in the tax revenue the government expects to earn in 2018-19. This has been slashed to ₹13.16 lakh crore, from the ₹14.84 lakh crore estimated in the interim Budget.

Many avenues

There are several avenues for the government to increase its non-tax revenue, the CEA said, including selling land held by PSUs and increasing disinvestment. "The non-tax revenues have a significant potential to expand, especially because our

PSUs, many of them, are sitting on large pools of land which can be monetised," Dr. Subramanian told *The Hindu*. "There is also an opportunity for greater returns from divestment." Regarding disinvestment, Dr. Subramanian made the somewhat radical suggestion that the government could reduce its holdings in some PSUs to below the majority stake of 51% of direct control.

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Kulbhushan Jadhav case verdict on July 17: ICJ

He was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Hague-based International Court of Justice on Thursday said it will deliver on July 17 its verdict in the case relating to Kulbhushan Jadhav, who is on death row in Pakistan.

Mr. Jadhav, a retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017. India approached the ICJ in May 2017

against Pakistan for denying consular access to Mr. Jadhav. India challenged the "farfetched trial" by the military court against Mr. Jadhav.

The ICJ said a public sitting will take place at 3 p.m. (6.30 pm IST) on July 17 at the Peace Palace in The Hague, during which the President of the Court will read out the verdict.

The court held a four-day public hearing in the case in February during which both

India and Pakistan submitted their detailed pleas and responses.

India based its case on two broad issues – breach of Vienna Convention on consular access and the process of resolution. It also urged the ICJ to annul Mr. Jadhav's death sentence and order his immediate release, saying the verdict by a Pakistani military court was based on a "farfetched trial" and it failed to satisfy even the minimum standards of due process.

Indrani allowed to turn approver in INX case

She will now record her statement before a metropolitan magistrate

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A special court here on Thursday allowed former director of INX Media, Indrani Mukerjea, to turn approver in a corruption case against the company.

She had moved an application to turn approver seeking pardon and promising help in the probe. Following the court's approval, she will now record her statement before a Metropolitan Magistrate which will be kept in a sealed cover to be opened in the trial.

Former Union Minister P.



Indrani Mukerjea

Chidambaram's son Karti Chidambaram is also an accused in the case.

Ms. Mukerjea is at present lodged in Mumbai's Byculla jail along with her hus-

band Peter Mukherjea in connection with the murder of her daughter, Sheena Bora.

Facing trial

They are facing trial for allegedly conspiring to kill Bora, Ms. Mukerjea's daughter from an earlier relationship, in April 2012.

The CBI had last year arrested Mr. Karti Chidambaram in the INX case. He was later granted bail.

The probe agency had in 2017 lodged an FIR in the case alleging irregularities in the Foreign Investment

Promotion Board's (FIPB) clearance to the INX Media for receiving overseas funds to the tune of ₹305 crore in 2007 when P. Chidambaram was the Finance Minister.

Later, the Enforcement Directorate lodged a money laundering case in the matter under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

The probe agency's allegation against Mr. Karti Chidambaram is that he demanded and accepted \$1 million for scuttling a possible probe against INX Media for violation of FIPB's conditions in 2007.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal on Thursday approved steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal-led ArcelorMittal's ₹42,000 crore bid for the acquisition of bankrupt Essar Steel.

The tribunal, however, modified the "Resolution Plan" submitted by ArcelorMittal to safeguard the rights of the 'Operational Creditors' and other 'Financial Creditors' of Essar Steel. It said the sale proceeds are to be shared among creditors.

A Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process was initiated in 2017 against Essar Steel to recover ₹54,547 crore of unpaid dues of financial lenders and operational creditors.

The tribunal said that any profits of Essar Steel generated during the insolvency proceedings would also be distributed to the creditors.

It said the profit cannot be given to ArcelorMittal as it had not invested any money during the insolvency process.

REPORT ON PAGE 16

AAP MLA gets six months in jail for assault

Granted bail to appeal against conviction in 2015 case of beating up man

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday awarded six months of rigorous imprisonment to Sadar Bazar AAP MLA Som Dutt for beating up a man with a baseball bat while campaigning for the 2015 Delhi Assembly elections. The MLA was also fined ₹2 lakh.

The court, however, granted him bail on furnishing a personal bond of

₹10,000, with the surety of a like amount to permit him to file an appeal against his conviction.

Dismissing Mr. Dutt's plea for a lenient punishment, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal said: "When an influential person breaks the law, there is an impression in his mind that he may break through it [sic], in one way or the other. But that is not the case al-

ways... Nobody has more sacred obligation to obey the law than those who make it... I do not find it expedient to grant the benefit of probation to the convict."

Mr. Dutt was convicted under Section 325 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt) of the Indian Penal Code. The man he had attacked was left with a fractured fibula. The court observed that the incident did not take place on

the spur of the moment but was a "premeditated assault" carried out with a baseball bat.

Of the ₹2 lakh fine imposed on the MLA, the court ordered ₹1 lakh be paid to the complainant as compensation under Section 357 of CrPC. "In default of payment of fine, the convict shall undergo a further simple imprisonment of two months," said the magistrate.

BJP councillor attacks man with sword

Mangilal Kadel attacked the victim following an altercation

STAFF REPORTER
BHOPAL

The Ujjain police on Thursday arrested a Bharatiya Janata Party councillor for allegedly attacking a man with a sword.

A case under Section 307 (attempt to murder) was registered against him.

FIR filed

According to the first information report filed by the

The victim is a history-sheeter and sold illicit alcohol in the area.

PARAS CHANDRA JAIN
Former State Cabinet Minister

victim, the councillor, Mangilal Kadel, allegedly attacked him following an altercation in front of the victim's house, said Sachin K. Atulkar, Ujjain Superintendent of Police.

Former State Cabinet Minister Paras Chandra Jain told *The Hindu*: "The victim is a history-sheeter and sold illicit alcohol in the area. During the scuffle, the councillor was also injured."

The Superintendent of Police clarified that the other cases registered against the victim in the past had no relation to the current incident.

DELHI Timings

FRIDAY, JULY 05

RISE 05:29 SET 19:23
RISE 07:57 SET 21:49

SATURDAY, JULY 06

RISE 05:29 SET 19:23
RISE 09:05 SET 22:34

SUNDAY, JULY 07

RISE 05:30 SET 19:23
RISE 10:11 SET 23:16

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	39	31
Safdarjang	39	31
Palam	40	31

Delhi Palam Today
36°C Humidity is likely to increase. Fall in temperatures is likely. Warm and humid weather will prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
35°C A comfortable and dusty morning lies ahead. Day will be warm and humid. Spell of rain are likely.

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Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	103	Gurugram	67
Ghaziabad	112	Faridabad	50
Noida	104	Greater Noida	118

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

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

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Discussion on Mandira Ghosh's volume of verses, "Poetry and Science: Opposites Meet". Speakers: Alexey Shaposhnikov, Head, Science and Technology Section, Russian Centre of Science and Culture; Nimish Kapoor, Head-Science Films Division, Vigyan Prasar; Dr. Rita Malhotra, poet and mathematician; and the author who will read poems from the book. Chair: Gauhar Raza, scientist and Urdu poet at Conference Room - I, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Exhibition: "Vibhor's VIBGYOR", a solo art show by Vibhor Gupta at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

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

Screening: Two films will be screened today as part of the ongoing 24th edition of European Film Festival. The first, Italian film "Drive Me Home", will be screened, followed by Maltese film, "Of time and the Sea" at Instituto Cervantes, 48, Hanuman Road, 4 p.m.-6 p.m. (Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@thehindu.co.in)

DU's second cut-off prompts withdrawals, new admissions

College help desks flooded with queries on eligibility criteria

PALLAVI KESWANI
NEW DELHI

Release of the second cut-off list to undergraduate courses at Delhi University on Wednesday prompted withdrawal of nearly 2,000 admissions on Thursday.

Through the day, help desks of most colleges staffed with student volunteers fielded queries about the change in cut-offs and whether new applicants would be eligible.

According to university officials, there have also been 26,692 "unique admissions" till Thursday night, compared to 23,266 at the close of the first list.

At Kirori Mal College, student volunteers reported that many applicants inquired about the 1% reduction announced for women students at selected colleges of the university and whether it applied there. Others were especially disappointed to find out that their marks exceeded the first cut-off at colleges they now wished to apply to.

Steady rush of students

Colleges such as Lady Shri Ram saw a marginal crowd, after seats in most courses had been filled up in the first cut-off list itself.



Admission seekers at a Delhi University college on Thursday.
■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Other colleges, including Kamala Nehru and Gargi, saw a steady rush of students who were eager to cancel their admission after popular courses at other colleges saw a marginal dip in the second cut-off list.

"I had taken admission into B.Com after the first list but the second cut-off has made me eligible for B.Com (Hons.) in the same college, so I am here to change my course," said 18-year-old Shivani Goel who had come to seek admission in Kamala Nehru College.

"I had taken admission in B.A. Programme as a standby, but in the present cut-off, I am eligible for political

science in Janki Devi Memorial College, so I am withdrawing my admission from here," said Meenal Gupta, 17, waiting at Gargi College.

Students were faced by a slowed-down process as some colleges handled a high number of applications with limited resources, after categories such as SC and ST saw a significant decline in the cut-off percentage.

ABVP protests

Meanwhile, students' union ABVP held demonstrations at Arts Faculty over increase in the fees at several colleges and certain issues faced by applicants during the admission process.

'Submit report on forest area encroachment'
NGT raps govt. for inaction, directs Chief Secretary to complySTAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea seeking remedial action against unauthorised construction on a forest land in south Delhi, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) pulled up the Delhi government over inaction to curb the same.

A Bench headed by NGT

chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel noted that an order passed in December 2015 in the matter had not been complied with.

The Bench took note of a status report filed by the SDM, Mehrauli, that said removal of encroachments was to begin in August 2017 but there were "difficulties"

as approximately 3,000 people had encroached into the forest land.

The Bench said, "Let a status report about the compliance of the order of this tribunal be furnished by the Chief Secretary, Delhi, after gathering relevant information from the officers concerned."

ASI suspended for firing from service pistol

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A Delhi Police ASI posted at Keshav Puram police station in North-West district was suspended was allegedly firing from his service pistol on Wednesday night, officers said on Thursday.

DCP (North-West) Vijayanta Arya said that Jeetha Ram was on night duty when he fired from his service pistol. The matter came to light on Thursday morning and he was suspended following a preliminary inquiry. The police said that the medical examination of the policeman could not be done as the matter was brought to the knowledge of senior officers late on Thursday. They are trying to find out as to why he fired from his pistol.

Boy found dead hours after being scolded by father

17-year-old had ordered Bluetooth earphones online

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 17-year-old boy was found dead at his house allegedly after his father scolded him for ordering Bluetooth earphones, on Wednesday evening in south-west Delhi's Vasant Vihar.

The deceased's maternal uncle said that the boy had ordered the earphones while he was at home, on Wednesday evening.

His father received a message on his mobile phone regarding the order. "When he received the message, he called him [the boy] and scolded him for spending money unnecessarily. The father also told him that he

The father called him [the boy] and scolded him for spending money unnecessarily. He also told him that he should concentrate more on his studies instead

DECEASED'S MATERNAL UNCLE

should concentrate more on his studies instead," the uncle claimed.

A few minutes later, he was found hanging in his room by other family members. "The body was sent for a post-mortem examination. It was handed over to

the family after the conducting the post-mortem. Inquest proceedings are under way," said a senior police officer.

The uncle said that the boy's father works at a government college as a peon and had no idea that the boy could end his life after being scolded.

The victim is survived by two sisters and parents.

The family said that the boy was an extremely talented sketcher and was also good in studies.

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

Man's body with head injury found in Dwarka

Steel tumblers found at spot; 1 held for questioning

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old man was found dead in Dwarka's Jafarpur Kalan on Thursday morning, the police said. They have registered a murder case and begun a probe.

A senior police officer said that the victim has been identified as Vikram alias Vicky, a resident of Isapur village.

"The police control room received a call around 9 a.m. regarding a person lying dead on a street. When the police reached the spot, they found that he was murdered. The body had an injury on the head," the officer said, adding that the body was then sent for a post-mortem examination.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the body was found near the house of a man who was an acquaint-

It is suspected that the victim and his acquaintance were drinking together on Wednesday night. A fight might have ensued between the two leading to the murder

SENIOR POLICE OFFICER

ance of the victim. Steel tumblers were also found from the spot.

"It is suspected that the victim and his acquaintance were drinking together on Wednesday night. A fight might have ensued between the two leading to the murder. However, the exact sequence of events will become clear once the accused is arrested," the officer said.

The police have picked up one person for questioning in connection with the case.

Youth threatens shopkeepers with knife, flees

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old man was seen brandishing a knife and threatening shopkeepers in northwest Delhi's Welcome, the police said on Thursday. The incident took place on Tuesday, they said.

In a video that has surfaced online, he can be seen intimidating shopkeepers with a knife in an open market. Accused Salman is absconding, while his accomplice, Maroof, who was with him during the incident has been arrested. They were under the influence of alcohol, the police said. A case was filed and a manhunt is on.

IN BRIEF

Property tax office to remain open on weekend

NEW DELHI
Property tax office will remain open on Saturday and Sunday to facilitate payment before the end of the extended rebate period of July 15, the civic body said. The North corporation had recently announced extension of the last date of payment. The South and East corporations too extended the dates. The offices will remain open during regular working hours.

New report on zoo irregularities a cover-up: ex-member secretary

'Junked many irregularities, including false post-mortem reports of animals'

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Former Member Secretary of Central Zoo Authority (CZA), D.N. Singh, whose report in 2016 had found multiple irregularities in the Delhi zoo, told *The Hindu* that a new report on the irregularities in the zoo is a "cover-up".

The new report by a five-member high-level committee, accessed by *The Hindu*, has junked many irregularities found by Mr. Singh, including false post-mortem reports of animals.

'Waited for retirement'

"The [new] report is a cover-up. They waited for me to retire and took more than one-and-a-half years to come up with the [new] report," Mr. Singh said adding that he had submitted his report in December 2016.

When asked about who is trying to cover up the is-



A 2016 report said that a sample of a horn of a female rhinoceros went missing from the Delhi zoo in 2015.

*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

sues at the zoo, Mr. Singh said, "Directly or indirectly, the Ministry [MoEF&CC] is also responsible for the irregularities."

When reached out, M.S. Negi, Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife) of MoEF&CC, who was the Chairman of the committee, refused to comment.

Though the 2016 report

by Mr. Singh said that a sample of a horn of a female rhinoceros 'Maheshwari' went missing from the Delhi zoo in 2015. However, the new report states, "no horn is missing."

Rhino horn missing?

Mr. Singh in his report said that a sample of the horn collected on July 11, 2015, by A. Bhawal of the Delhi

zoo had gone missing. "Not taking the permission of the Director and not weighing the sample and recording it in register raise doubts about the intention of Dr. Bhawal behind sample collection" Mr. Singh noted in the report.

The high-level committee's finding that "no horn is missing" was also the finding of former Delhi zoo Director, Amitabh Agnihotri, during whose tenure the alleged incident took place.

But the new report said that casual approach in the collection can lead to "misuse".

"Such casual approach in collection of sample from animal body parts like rhino horn may lead to a possibility of misuse of such costly body parts of animals." The new report has also recommended disciplinary action against officers of the zoo.

Delhi zoo initiates action against erring officials

Move comes after Ministry's rap

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

The Delhi zoo has initiated disciplinary action against at least five officials after a report by a five-member high-level committee flagged irregularities in the National Zoological Park (NZP), commonly known as Delhi zoo, during the tenure of the previous zoo director.

Following the submission of the report, the Central government had ordered the zoo authorities to take action against erring officials.

In a letter sent by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to NZP Director Renu Singh in June, the Ministry had ordered to take action against at least five officers.

Problems in zoo

The high-level committee report found irregularities, including use of expired medicine, and warned officials of their "casual" nature in multiple matters like record keeping and procurement of drugs. The report

also directed the zoo to take up corrective measures like computerised data management and record keeping.

The high-level committee was also studying findings of former Central Zoo Authority (CZA) Member Secretary D.N. Singh, who had submitted a report on the alleged irregularities in 2016.

In a different letter, accessed by *The Hindu*, the Ministry had ordered the zoo to carry out a slew of measures, including filling up of vacant posts and carrying out annual inspection on the lines of CZA.

"I have initiated the process of taking action against officials who are under my appointing authority. It would take a month to complete it," said Ms. Renu.

Ms. Renu also said that she is making efforts to fill up vacant posts and is carrying out inspections.

"Currently, we are carrying out inspections, but it is not exactly in line with the CZA methods," Ms. Renu added.

Chadha moves HC, challenges Bidhuri's win

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

AAP leader Raghav Chadha on Thursday moved the Delhi High Court challenging the results of Lok Sabha election to South Delhi constituency in which BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri emerged as the winner.

The petition contended that Mr. Bidhuri suppressed information in his affidavit as a candidate with regards to an FIR lodged against him in a police station in Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

It said the election of Mr. Bidhuri was vitiated by the "corrupt practices of undue influence committed by the candidate inasmuch as by failing to disclose material particulars regarding his antecedents..."

"The BJP candidate willfully and intentionally concealed the factum of registration of an FIR against him in police station... Muzaffarpur, Bihar, under Sections 504, 506, 153 and 153(a) of the IPC," it added.

Classroom row: BJP files complaint against Deputy CM, PWD Minister

Accuses AAP Ministers of 'corruption', demands enquiry

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP which had alleged a "scam" in the construction of classrooms in government schools filed a complaint with the Delhi Lokayukta on Thursday against Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and PWD Minister Satyendar Jain.

'Inflated cost'

The complaint filed by party leaders on behalf of Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari accused the Ministers in the Aam Aadmi Party government of "corruption" and "abuse of position" in the construction of over 12,000 classrooms of government schools.

"Construction of around 12,748 classrooms at a very high and inflated cost is being carried out by the Delhi government through various agencies," read the complaint.

Mr. Tiwari in his complaint, has also demanded an enquiry against public functionaries involved.

RTI query

Based on a response to a Right To Information (RTI) query related to the cost incurred for the construction of schools as well as rooms on the school campuses, Mr. Tiwari and other BJP leaders on Monday had alleged that a single room had cost the state exchequer an estimated

₹24.85 lakh.

Responding to the allegations, Mr. Sisodia had challenged the BJP to "arrest" him if he had done wrong or apologise to the people of the Capital for levelling such allegations.

Delhi BJP leaders, including spokesperson Harish Khurana, maintained that the party will "expose corruption" in the matter and stick to its ground.

"The legal and media team of Delhi BJP filed a complaint against the same in construction of classrooms by Delhi government. We promise to the people of Delhi that the BJP will take this case to a logical end," Mr. Khurana said.

Defamation case: BJP MLA to face trial

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday framed charges and sent on trial BJP MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa and others in a criminal defamation case filed by Health Minister Satyendar Jain.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal framed the charges and fixed July 17 as the date for recording of Mr. Jain's evidence.

In his complaint filed in 2017, Mr. Jain accused Mr. Sirsa of defaming him at a press meet by alleging that he was circulating huge amount of illegal money within AAP. Mr. Jain also accused a Hindi daily of publishing the libellous statements made by Mr. Sirsa.

Centre tells High Court it is mulling rules to regulate online pharmacies

Plea seeks strict action against defiant e-pharmacies

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Central government told the Delhi High Court on Thursday that framing of rules to regulate e-pharmacies was under consideration and consultations were being held with all the stakeholders.

The Centre's submission came during the hearing of a plea seeking contempt action against e-pharmacies for continuing to sell drugs online despite a High Court order staying such activity.

Seeking ban

The contempt plea was filed by Zaheer Ahmed who had earlier moved a petition seeking a ban on "illegal" sale of drugs online.



not sell them, instead they are only delivering the medications akin to food-delivery app Swiggy.

After several of the e-pharmacy companies and the Centre sought time to file their response to the contempt plea, a Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar granted them time till September 24, the next date of hearing.

The High Court had earlier stayed the sale of drugs and prescription medicines by online pharmacies while hearing Mr. Ahmed's plea.

The petition has said that the online illegal sale of medicines would lead to drug epidemic, drug abuse and misutilisation of habit forming and addictive drugs.

Rain washes away Gurugram officials' monsoon-ready claim

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

More than 30 minutes of heavy rain led to waterlogging and traffic jams in several parts of the Millennium City on Thursday afternoon, washing away the claims of the administration regarding their preparedness for the monsoon. It, however, brought a welcome relief from the sweltering heat.

A heavy spell of rain that started around 3 p.m. led to waterlogging at several pe-

renial flooding points in the city such as Hero Honda Chowk, Subhash Chowk, IFFCO Chowk, Sector 15 Part-II, Sohna Road and Old Delhi Road. It slowed down traffic resulting in snarls and jams.

Traffic police tweets

Soon after the rain, the Gurugram Traffic Police tweeted from its official handle informing the residents about the waterlogged roads and asking them to plan their travel according-

ly. "waterlogging has been reported from Hero Honda Chowk to Himgiri Chowk. Our officials are on the spot to facilitate traffic flow. Commuters are requested to plan their travel accordingly," said one such tweet from the Gurugram Traffic Police.

The rain also resulted in power outages in many parts of the city, forcing the residents to take to Twitter to vent their ire.

Referring to a newspaper report quoting Haryana

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar saying that Gurugram's flooding has been take care of, a tweet said: "Gurgavan/Gurgaon/Gurugram flooded in one short spells of rain. No electricity as well. (sic)".

Claiming that 90 mm rainfall in an hour was not moderate, Deputy Commissioner Amit Khatri said the preparedness of the administration was much better in many aspects and there was no flooding of underpasses this time around. He

added that there was waterlogging on Delhi-Jaipur carriage of Delhi-Gurugram Expressway near Narsinghpur due to three non-operative pumps of the NHAI. It was, therefore, decided to double the capacity. He said that four more water pumps would be installed by the MCG at this point.

"The second critical point was Sohna Road. We were limited in our preparedness on this road due to ongoing construction," he added.

BJP leaders demand probe into Hauz Qazi incident

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A delegation led by BJP MP Vijay Goel met Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik on Thursday demanding a thorough probe into the Hauz Qazi incident.

The Delhi BJP has also written a letter to L-G Anil Bajjal seeking directions to the force to move court to seek permission to try juveniles allegedly involved in

the incident as adults.

A temple was vandalised after a fight broke out on Sunday night over parking of a vehicle in Lal Kuan area.

The delegation submitted a memorandum to the police chief while asking him to probe AAP MLA Imran Husain's alleged role in the incident. On Wednesday, Mr. Goel had accused Mr. Husain of being "involved" in the incident.

Rath yatra passes off peacefully

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Amid high-security, Jagannath Rath Yatra passed off peacefully through the walled city on Thursday where communal tension took place earlier this week. Around 200 devotees participated in the procession that started from Red Fort.

A police officer said that

around 600 policemen were deployed on the rath yatra route. However, taking preventive measures, the procession route was slightly diverted when it entered Hauz Qazi area.

Meanwhile, the police on Thursday nabbed three more persons in connection with the alleged vandalism of a temple in Old Delhi's Chawri Bazar area.

CM, deputy and kin to join Vaishno Devi pilgrims

Delhi government to fund 'tirth yatra' for senior citizens

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and their families will join a fully government-paid pilgrimage for senior citizens to Vaishno Devi via train on July 20.

The pilgrimage is a part of 'Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana', under which the government will fund the pilgrimage of citizens aged above 60, to different places in India, including their travel, stay, and food. The pilgrimage will cover the Delhi-Vaishno Devi-Jammu corridor from July 20 to 24.

Mr. Kejriwal will flag off the first trip under the scheme for Golden Temple

The Opposition is trying to politicise this issue. But I want to tell them that I will continue spending money on the elderly

ARVIND KEJRIWAL
Chief Minister

Wagah Border-Anandpur Sahib corridor on July 12. The beneficiaries are selected on a first come, first served basis and 77,000 people – 1,100 from each Assembly constituency – will be sent on pilgrimage every year.

On Thursday, Mr. Kejriwal made the announcement at Delhi Secretariat Auditorium while interact-

ing with people slated to go on the tirth yatra in batches – first on July 12 and second on July 20. "To all the elderly citizens of Delhi, I want to say, this son of yours will send you on at least one 'tirth yatra' in your lifetime," he said.

Attacking the Opposition, the Chief Minister said, "The Opposition is trying to politicise this issue. But I want to tell them that I will continue spending money on the elderly."

The other three routes under the scheme are Delhi-Mathura-Vrindavan-Agra-Fatehpur Sikri-Delhi, Delhi-Haridwar-Rishikesh-Neelkanth-Delhi, Delhi-Ajmer-Pushkar-Delhi.

Two minor boys held for assault on five-year-old

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two minor boys – aged 10 and 11 – have been apprehended for sexually assaulting a five-year-old girl in south-west Delhi's Kapasheera on Monday, the police said on Thursday.

A senior police officer said that the victim and the accused are residents of the same colony and the incident happened when the girl was playing in a nearby park.

"The accused caught hold of her and took turns to sexually assault her. Meanwhile, the mother of the victim reached the park to check on her. Seeing her, the accused fled," the officer said.

The mother then called the police who reached the spot and took the victim to a hospital where her medical examination was conducted. The victim was discharged the next day.

The accused were also apprehended on Tuesday and sent to juvenile home, the police said.

A case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act has been registered and further investigation into the matter is under way, the police added.

Truck driver, helper in police net for smuggling drugs

Over 200 kg of marijuana found in vehicle's secret chamber

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police arrested a driver and his helper on Thursday for allegedly smuggling over 200 kg of marijuana in their truck, officers said.

The accused, Rajkumar and Kanhaiya Lal, were smuggling marijuana from Odisha to Delhi-NCR, the police said. "After getting a tip-off, the police laid a trap near Okhla Estate Road and arrested them around 2.30 a.m.," said DCP (South-East), Chinmoy Biswal.

During search, 11 gunny bags containing 205.10 kg of marijuana were found concealed in a secret cavity



The accused in police custody. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

of the vehicle, Mr. Biswal said.

Interrogation revealed that the accused are relatives. Rajkumar lives in Fariabad and has been driving trucks for the last seven-eight years. Last year, he had come in contact with two persons who smuggled

liquor and marijuana. Later, he, along with Lal, started working for them, the DCP added. They used to smuggle liquor from Haryana to Bihar and drugs from Odisha to Delhi-NCR, he said.

Rajkumar was arrested at Masrol in Bihar last year for smuggling liquor and was in jail for three months, the police said. The arrested accused disclosed that they had built a secret chamber in the truck to conceal narcotics. The chamber has an iron wall between the driver's cabin and the container of the truck. The cavity was designed to hide or camouflage the narcotics.

2 poachers from Myanmar held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ITANAGAR

Five suspected poachers, two of them from Myanmar, were arrested from the Kamlang wildlife sanctuary in Lohit district and over 50 kg of meat of the endangered mishmi takin, the goat-antelope, was seized from them, police said on Thursday. The Myanmar nationals, who are suspected to have sneaked into the Indian territory for poaching wild animals, were apprehended during routine patrolling on July 1.

Patkura Assembly poll on July 20

Counting on July 24; election for the seat was postponed twice

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR
Election to the Patkura Assembly seat in Odisha, which was postponed twice, will be held on July 20, the Election Commission of India announced on Thursday.

The counting of votes will be held on July 24. The model code of conduct has come into force with immediate effect in Kendrapara district since Patkura comes under it.

The election to the Patkura Assembly seat was first

scheduled to be held in the fourth phase of the recently concluded general election on April 29.

It was, however, adjourned due to the death of the Biju Janata Dal nominee Bed Prakash Agarwalla on April 20.

Subsequently, the ECI called upon the BJD on April 24 to nominate another candidate and fixed May 19 as the next date of polling. The BJD fielded Agarwalla's wife Sabitri Agarwalla as its nominee.

But after Cyclone Fani hit the State on May 3, the Chief Electoral Officer, Odisha, proposed to postpone the poll schedule, and the ECI extended the completion of the election in Patkura by 60 days.

The ECI said on Thursday that EVMs and VVPATs will be used in all the polling stations in Patkura. Adequate numbers of EVMs and VVPATs have been made available and all steps have been taken to ensure that the poll is conducted smoothly.

Main accused responsible for tension in Meerut held

Badar Ali was picked up from a mall in Ghaziabad

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

The main accused for the tension in Meerut on Sunday evening, Badar Ali, was arrested on Thursday from the busy Shopprix Mall of the city.

The arrest came a day after new SSP Ajay Sahni took over and announced an award of ₹5,000 for anybody providing information on Ali.

The Yuva Sewa Samiti president had given the call for the Sunday congregation at the Faiz-e-Aam College to protest against the lynching of Tabrez Ansari in Jharkhand. According to locals, around 20,000 people assembled at the college. Violence erupted when they were going back, leading to a lathi charge.

The BJP leaders described it as an administrative failure, leading to the transfer



Badar Ali after his arrest on Thursday.

of SSP Nitin Tiwari.

“Ali is a known troublemaker and has been charged under Sections 147, 148, 149, 353, 187, 188, 332 of the IPC and Section 7 of Criminal Law Amendment Act,” said SP (Rural) Avinash Pandey. “He was also behind the Mawana protest and his role is suspected in the burning of a mosque in Machhra block of Meerut in March this year,” he added.

Sheher Qazi Zainus Saji-

din Siddiqui, whose role is also being investigated, said Ali's image in society was of a social worker who stands up for the cause of the community. “He gave the call for a peaceful protest where I was expected to lead the prayer for the departed soul. If we can't even pray for the dead, we will become dead as a society.”

Permission denied

Prof. Siddiqui said as the police had not granted permission for the procession, Ali and he appealed against it. “However, people had to go home and the violence erupted more than 4 km away from the college. Now the police are saying Section 144 was in place and even the assembly was unlawful. They can put as many charges as they want, but they will have to back it with evidence in court.”

Suspects rounded up in rape case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The Jaipur police have rounded up a few suspects in connection with the alleged rape of a seven-year-old girl in Shastri Nagar locality here on Monday night, after which violent protests were staged and tension gripped some parts of the city. Police said the suspects were being interrogated, but no formal arrests have been made so far.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who returned here from New Delhi on Thursday, took the feedback from senior police officers at Sanganeer airport and appealed to people to maintain peace and communal harmony.

The district administration also extended the suspension of mobile Internet services in 13 police station areas of the city till Friday to check the spread of rumours.

IN BRIEF

**Varavara Rao remanded in 2-day police custody**

PAVAGADA
A Tumakuru court remanded Telugu poet and activist Varavara Rao in two-day police custody on Thursday. He was produced before the Pavagada JMFC court in Karnataka in connection with the 2005 naxal attack case in the taluk, in which he was chargesheeted but shown absconding for nearly a decade-and-a-half.

Basanth Kumar is TTD joint executive officer

TIRUMALA
Augmenting facilities for visiting devotees and providing a clean administration will be accorded a top priority, P. Basanth Kumar said after assuming office of the joint executive officer of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams on Thursday.

Sabarimala Karma Samiti to launch 'rath yatras'

PATHANAMTHITTA
The Sabarimala Karma Samithi has decided to launch 'rath yatras' across Kerala and in other south Indian States spreading awareness among the people on the importance of protecting the custom and practices attached to the Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala.

Girl forced to marry rape accused, rescued

HASSAN
The case of a 13-year-old girl being allegedly raped by a 19-year-old in Arkalgud taluk and forced to marry him after she got pregnant only to avoid a police case has come to light following a call to the child helpline. The helpline staff rescued the girl with the help of the Arkalgud police and produced her before the Child Welfare Committee on Tuesday. The accused had married her in June.

H.K. Kumaraswamy named JD(S) Karnataka president

CM's son Nikhil Kumaraswamy will head youth wing of the party

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

Putting at rest all speculation, five-time legislator H.K. Kumaraswamy was appointed Janata Dal (Secular) Karnataka president on Thursday. He replaces A.H. Vishwanath, who tendered his resignation following the party's debacle in the Lok Sabha polls and has since been vocal in his criticism of the coalition government.

The party appointed former legislator Madhu Bangarappa as the working president of the party. In a surprise move, Nikhil Kumaraswamy, son of Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, has been appointed the youth wing president.

Mr. Vishwanath, who headed the party for one year, handed over the par-



A.H. Vishwanath handing over the JD(S) flag to H.D. Deve Gowda, in the presence of newly appointed office-bearers in Bengaluru on Thursday. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ty's flag to Mr. Kumaraswamy. While the party leaders, including supreme H.D. Deve Gowda and Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, had tried to convince Mr. Vishwanath to withdraw his resignation, he remained firm.

Mr. Gowda told the media that he would continue to work towards strengthening the party and they would complete the process of appointing the other office-bearers soon.

Thanking the party for reposing faith in him, Mr. Kum-

araswamy, who represents Sakleshpur in the State Assembly, said: "Despite losses, we will work towards strengthening the party and providing support to the Chief Minister. Defeat is not permanent."

Meanwhile, Mr. Vishwanath, who had expressed displeasure over the functioning of the coalition government and its leaders said: "The new president should be independent and get the responsibility as well as resources at his disposal. I'm confident that the party will be organised well."

The JD(S) has decided against appointing four working presidents. It has also appointed former Minister N.M. Nabi and legislator K. Gopalaiah as senior vice-presidents.

Orthodox Church lambasts Kerala government's inaction

**STAFF REPORTER
KOTTAYAM**

Endorsed by Supreme Court's strictures on the Chief Secretary for the Kerala government's failure in implementing its order of July 3, 2017, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is contemplating legal action against the government for delaying the implementation of the order. In its 2017 verdict, the Supreme Court had held that 1,100 parishes and their churches under the Malankara Church should be controlled by the Orthodox faction as per the 1934 Malankara Church guidelines.

Addressing presspersons

Will execute order: CM

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told the Assembly on Thursday that his government will implement the Supreme Court's judgement of July 3, 2017, resolving the prolonged dispute between the Orthodox and Jacobite

on Thursday, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan Baselios Mar Thoma Paulose II, head of the Church, accused the government of siding with the Jaco-

factious on the management of parish churches in Malankara. The State is duty-bound to implement the July 3, 2017 order or any other being issued by the Supreme Court in this connection, the Chief Minister said while replying to a submission by Antony John.

bite faction. It had not only remained insensate to the court order, but also continued lending support to the Jacobite faction, he said.

Meet to discuss revolt against Alencherry

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI**

The permanent synod of the Syro-Malabar Church will meet here on Friday to discuss the repercussions of an open revolt by 250 priests against the reinstatement of Cardinal George Alencherry as head of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese. The meeting is likely to discuss action to be taken against the priests, who had also protested against the removal of auxiliary bishops Sebastian Adayanthrath and Jose Puthenveetil.

Those supporting Alencherry have demanded action against the priests.

Mullaperiyar: Kerala gets 15 days to respond to plea

Car park planned in water spread area

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on July 4 gave 15 days for Kerala to respond to a contempt plea filed by Tamil Nadu on the construction of a "mega car parking" in the water spread area of the Mullaperiyar dam.

A Bench, led by Justice S.A. Bobde, gave Kerala time to reply, while orally cautioning the State's officials to stay in line.

Tamil Nadu has contended that the construction was in violation of the top court's order and aimed at preventing the restoration of the storage level of the reservoir to the original level of 152 ft.

Tamil Nadu had earlier submitted that the project was located in the area leased to it. The project, which involves various supplementary construction

activities, would environmentally affect the catchment area, the water spread area of the dam and consequently the waters of the reservoir, used for drinking and irrigation purposes by the people of five districts in Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu has been arguing that Kerala encroached into about 2.5 acres, and through this project, proposed to take over about 20 acres in the water spread area of the dam for parking tourist vehicles and construction of reception blocks, cafeteria, a sewage treatment plant, eco-shops complex, toilets, dining block, office block, road work, and road work for battery operated vehicle, developing different thematic arboretums, landscaping, etc, intended for tourism and commercial activities.

Hot potato



Seeking showers: Shortage of rainfall has become a cause of concern for the farmers who grow Chinese potato at Mattumantha near Palakkad in Kerala. They say the crop will crash if it doesn't rain copiously in July. *K. K. MUSTAFAH

Bengaluru puts curbs on collection of waste

Will decline mixed waste from Sept. 1

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

From September 1, only wet waste will be picked up during door-to-door collection every day while dry waste will be collected twice a week. Mixed waste will not be accepted, and steep fines will be levied on households and apartments that fail to abide by the rules.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Commissioner N. Manjunath Prasad laid down the rules at a press conference on Thursday, where he unveiled a roadmap for solid waste management.

The civic body has set itself high targets and aims to achieve 100% door-to-door collection and 90% segregation levels across Bengaluru by September 2019.

Under the new garbage tenders that are likely to be

finalised soon, contractors can pick up only segregated wet waste while ragpickers will collect dry waste twice a week. The civic body also hopes to minimise the waste sent to landfills to 13% to 15% and adopt zero tolerance for garbage black spots and plastic usage.

However, citizens remain skeptical about the implementation of the plan, with the current segregation levels of just 35%.

SWM cess

The BBMP is proposing to increase the fines by five times, apart from increasing the solid waste management (SWM) cess to 15% of property tax from the existing 3%.

Mr. Prasad pointed out that while the BBMP spends nearly ₹1,000 crore on SWM annually, it gets just around ₹53 crore from SWM cess.

A Japanese touch to Telangana green drive

Forest Department to introduce the famous 'Miyawaki' method in 'Haritha Haaram' programme

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM**

Having been entrusted with the huge task of planting around 3.29 crore saplings under the fifth phase of the Telanganaku Haritha Haaram (TKHH) in the district, the Forest department has introduced the famous Japanese "Miyawaki" method of afforestation in the Velugumatla urban park here on a pilot basis to supplement the green drive.

Popular technique

The Forest department has drawn up a plan to harness the popular technique, developed by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki, to grow urban forests and



Haritha Haram OSD Priyanka Varghese and District Collector R.V. Karan inspecting Velugumatla urban park. *G.N. RAO

expand the district's green cover as well as to meet the stipulated plantation target under the TKHH, sources said.

Thanks to the initiative of

Collector R.V. Karan, the department has decided to grow native plant species on about one hectare in the Velugumatla urban park on the outskirts of the town on

a pilot basis.

The move is aimed at creating natural green spaces by gradually extending the method, well-known for growing mini urban forests in limited spaces in a relatively less time, to other areas in the district, sources added.

Officer on Special Duty (TKHH) at Chief Minister's Office Priyanka Varghese planted saplings at the urban park at Velugumatla in adherence to the Miyawaki method of afforestation on Thursday.

Nurseries inspected
Mr. Karan, District Forest Officer Praaveena, and others were present. Earlier in the day, Ms.

Varghese inspected various nurseries in Kusumanchi, Mudigonda and Khammam urban mandals.

She said adequate saplings had been kept ready in around 12,751 gram panchayat nurseries across Telangana to plant 100 crore saplings across the length and breadth of Telangana under the fifth phase of TKHH.

Efforts are under way to plant saplings in the areas which received the initial spell of rains in the current monsoon season.

She exhorted all sections of people to collectively strive to make the fifth phase of TKHH a success and help improve Telangana's green cover.

Polavaram project's deadline extended by three years

Coffer dam is the first priority, says project authority CEO

**STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA**

The Polavaram multi-purpose project, considered a lifeline for Andhra Pradesh, is likely to be completed only by 2022.

An indication to this effect was made by Polavaram Project Authority (PPA) Chief Executive Officer Rajendra Kumar Jain after emerging from a review meeting here on Thursday. The PPA team will visit the site on Friday.

Mr. Jain said work on the coffer dam was partially completed, and a target had been set to complete it before floods hit the area. It was estimated that about 10,000 cusecs of flood water would reach the coffer dam

this year. The coffer dam, however, would not be affected, he added.

The Estimates Committee had to examine the increase in project expenditure. The Committee has asked the State government to submit a few more details. The Central government had already released ₹6,700 crore for the project, he said.

Audits pending

Mr. Jain said the State government was yet to complete certain formalities with regard to the submission of bills to the Centre, which initiated an audit into the expenditure incurred on the project in 2014. An audit relating to the expenditure

of ₹1,300 crore on relief and rehabilitation was still going on. The audit relating to the expenditure incurred by the State government on the project before it was declared a national one was also yet to be completed, he said.

To a question, Mr. Jain said he had no information on reverse tendering for the project. The PPA was in no way concerned with the tenders. The State government would take a call on it, he added. The previous government had announced that water would be released through gravity by December 2018 and the project would be completed in December 2019.

IN BRIEF



Govt orders SFIO probe against Jet Airways

NEW DELHI
The government has ordered an SFIO probe into the affairs of the now defunct Jet Airways after finding instances of fund diversion and large-scale irregularities, sources said on Thursday. Besides, the government would oppose airline founder Naresh Goyal's plea in the Delhi High Court seeking lifting of his travel ban. The sources said Mr. Goyal is likely to be summoned by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), which comes under the Corporate Affairs Ministry. **PTI**

Amid runway mishaps, DGCA starts special audit

NEW DELHI
The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said on Thursday that it had started a special audit of all airlines as well as airports located in monsoon-affected areas following a spate of runway mishaps recently. The DGCA has also grounded 12 pilots involved in six recent incidents, which included tail strikes and planes overshooting the runway. The audit of airlines will focus on pilot licence currency training or requirements for recent experience that demonstrate that one's skills and flight experience are "current."

Suspense over BJP action against Vijayvargiya

BHOPAL
Suspense prevailed about BJP's action against its MLA Akash Vijayvargiya as the party's Madhya Pradesh unit chief said no decision on the matter had been taken yet. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday disapproved of the conduct of Mr. Akash, who had assaulted a civic official in Indore, triggering speculation that the party may act against the son of its powerful national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya. **PTI**

Sea of devotees



Pull of faith: Devotees pulling chariots during the annual Rath Yatra in Puri, Odisha, on Thursday. Two persons were killed and seven injured when they came in contact with a live wire while readying a chariot at Kaliapani in Jajpur district. **PTI**

MLA's men pour mud on engineer

Legislator later surrenders to police

**STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI**

Days after a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA from Madhya Pradesh beat up a government official with a cricket bat, a Congress MLA from Maharashtra watched on as his supporters on Thursday were caught on camera throwing buckets of muck at a road department official for not repairing potholes.

MLA Nitesh Rane, who represents Kankavali in Konkan, later turned himself in at the Kankavali police station and was arrested along with some of his supporters.

Threatens official

A video shows Mr. Rane, son of former Maharashtra CM and BJP Rajya Sabha MP Narayan Rane, threatening the official.

The official to suffer was Prakash Shedekar, engineer with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The incident occurred when



Nitesh Rane, right, watches as his supporters pour mud on Prakash Shedekar. **PTI**

Mr. Rane was inspecting repairs on the Mumbai-Goa highway, in his Assembly constituency. The video shows Mr. Rane pointing to the condition of the road and telling Mr. Shedekar "to suffer today in a manner common citizens are suffering every day."

His supporters then empty buckets of muck on the officer and also tie him to the railing of a bridge on the highway. "Now do you get it? Who has given you the right to sink this area under slime," he asked the officer.

Tribal man lynched in Tripura

Legislator later surrenders to police

**STAFF REPORTER
AGARTALA**

A tribal man was lynched by a mob on suspicion of theft in a remote village in Tripura's Dhalai district on Tuesday night. The police confirmed the incident on Thursday.

The man was attacked around 11.30 p.m. in Noarampara, a tribal hamlet, under the jurisdiction of the Rasyabari police station near the Bangladesh border. The police registered a murder case after the family of the deceased, Budhiram Tripura (36), filed a complaint, but they are yet to make any arrests.

The police said Budhiram was beaten to death by fellow villagers after he was caught breaking into a house. Some reports said the victim had earlier been accused of stealing cattle in the village. The police have not confirmed whether the lynching was related to cattle theft.

Dhalai district police officers said the case is under investigation.

Newly wed couple hacked to death in T.N.

Kin opposed marriage as they were from different SC groups

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI**

A couple were murdered by an armed gang in the early hours of Thursday in front of their house near Kulathur in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu.

The police have picked up the girl's father in connection with the double murder, as he was against the marriage. T. Solairaja, 24, a saltpan worker from Thanthai Periyar Nagar under the Kulathur police station limits in the district, was in love with his co-worker A. Petchiammal alias Jothi, 21, police sources said. As they belonged to different groups of Scheduled Caste, the girl's parents opposed the affair.

Stiff resistance

Despite stiff resistance, Solairaja married Jothi in April at a temple, reportedly with his family's support.

After marriage, the couple started their life in a small house with a single



Solairaja married Jothi in April at a temple, reportedly with his family's support.

room at Thanthai Periyar Nagar. Solairaja's mother was staying at a relative's house nearby.

On Wednesday night, owing to a power cut they slept on the small courtyard in front of their house. As there was no compound wall around the house, an armed gang entered the courtyard, and hacked Solairaja and Jothi to death.

When the girl tried to protect herself from the attackers, her left wrist was chopped off.

When Solairaja's mother came to the house in the morning, she saw her son and daughter-in-law, who was carrying a 60-day-old foetus, lying in a pool of blood with multiple cut injuries on their necks and faces. Hearing her scream, the neighbours came out to see the couple murdered.

Superintendent of Police Arun Balagopalan visited the spot and sent the bodies to the Thoothukudi Government Medical College Hospital for post-mortem.

Police suspect that Jothi's family, who vehemently opposed her marriage with Solairaja, might have orchestrated the double murder.

Demanding the arrest of the suspects, relatives of Solairaja, cadre of the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi and members of the Untouchability Eradication Front staged a dharna in front of the mortuary of the Thoothukudi Medical College Hospital.

Warning issued against insulin pumps

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

A week after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warned about cybersecurity risks attached to some models of insulin pumps manufactured by American medical equipment supplier Medtronic, India's apex drug regulator, the Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has also issued an alert.

CDSCO noted that some models were vulnerable to hackers and an unauthorised person with technical skills and equipment could potentially connect wirelessly to a nearby insulin pump to change the settings and control insulin delivery.

CDSCO has advised that patients and caregivers should check and see if the model and software version of their insulin pump is affected, keep the insulin pump within their control and not share their pump serial number and be attentive to pump notifications, alarms and alerts.

SC seeks Centre's response on leases to operate mines

Case tied to 358 facilities across India

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Thursday gave the Union government four weeks' time to respond to a petition filed by advocate M.L. Sharma to quash the allotment, extension or continuation of leases for firms to operate 358 iron ore mines across the country.

A Bench led by Justice S.A. Bobde asked the Centre to reply to the PIL, which has sought a CBI probe into the leases.

The plea alleged that 288 mining leases were extended in exchange for "large

donations," resulting in a "serious financial loss" to the tune of ₹ 4 lakh crore to the public exchequer.

Due process bypassed

Mr. Sharma said the leases were extended in over 358 mines without adopting the auction process. He even asked the court to consider the issue of recovery of the market value of minerals mined illegally for years.

The plea has arraigned as respondents the Ministries of Law, Mines and Minerals and the States of Odisha and Karnataka, parties, along with the CBI.

Woman complains of harassment on train

Konkan Railway has registered a case

**R. AKILEISH
COIMBATORE**

The Konkan Railway filed a case on Wednesday following a complaint by an IT employee from Coimbatore regarding harassment by a group of men allegedly in an inebriated state.

The 27-year-old woman, who had been working in Coimbatore for about a year, told *The Hindu* that the incident occurred on Sunday night when she boarded the Coimbatore-Jalapur Superfast Special train at Thivim near Goa. A man allegedly beckoned her to sit near him and his

friends, which led to an argument. The woman shifted to the general compartment from the AC berth following the incident.

Responding to her tweets, the Konkan Railway said that a case had been registered under Section 145 (drunkenness or nuisance) of the Railways Act against the "suspected passengers" and that "the enquiry is under progress."

The Konkan Railway sent some pictures for identification of the suspects but none of them matched with the identities of the group of men, she said.

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 Friday: Heavy rainfall likely at Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, east and west Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, east Rajasthan, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	35.4	26.7	Kozhikode	12.8	29.4	25.4
Ahmedabad	1.7	32.3	27.2	Kurnool	—	36.1	26.5
Aizwal	—	27.8	20.1	Lucknow	—	37.7	28.8
Allahabad	0.6	39.7	28.8	Madurai	—	40.0	27.0
Bengaluru	1.5	30.3	21.6	Mangaluru	5.8	31.7	25.3
Bhopal	1.1	27.5	23.8	Mumbai	4.1	30.6	25.0
Bhubaneswar	3.5	32.0	25.6	Mysuru	—	31.0	21.3
Chandigarh	29.0	31.5	25.3	New Delhi	—	38.6	31.2
Chennai	—	40.4	30.0	Patna	—	35.4	27.6
Coimbatore	—	33.5	24.0	Port Blair	2.6	28.8	26.2
Dehradun	48.3	26.7	22.6	Puducherry	—	39.2	28.0
Gangtok	1.0	23.8	19.0	Pune	—	0.2	29.9
Goa	3.9	30.5	25.7	Raipur	—	0.3	29.6
Guwahati	—	35.0	26.9	Ranchi	—	2.0	29.8
Hubballi	—	27.0	22.0	Shillong	—	0.1	26.1
Hyderabad	—	32.6	24.6	Shimla	—	11.2	25.5
Imphal	—	32.5	22.5	Srinagar	—	32.0	22.3
Jaipur	—	39.2	29.4	Trivandrum	—	8.7	31.7
Kochi	—	49.6	30.4	Tiruchi	—	—	39.6
Kohima	—	20.4	25.0	Vijayawada	—	—	37.6
Kolkata	—	0.1	34.8	Visakhapatnam	—	—	32.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	56	170	84	—	86	—
Bengaluru	17	54	84	—	117	—
Chennai	7	21	42	—	139	—
Delhi	15	19	29	—	252	—
Hyderabad	10	47	11	—	40	—
Kolkata	12	43	18	—	76	—
Lucknow	3	27	49	—	133	—
Mumbai	30	23	103	—	22	—
Pune	62	8	29	—	52	—
Visakhapatnam	19	52	43	—	128	—

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ballabgarh, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 193 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Eloor, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 32

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



Blue-sky visions

The ambitions of the Economic Survey depend on the implementation of its ideas

The Economic Survey for 2018-19 reflects the views of its principal author, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy Subramanian. And the CEA has made bold to use the new government's first economic assessment-cum-agenda setting exercise to posit a range of ideas that he attributes to "blue sky thinking". From an embrace of a "world that is in constant disequilibrium", and the need therefore to adapt to it, to the stress on drawing upon Richard Thaler's work in the behavioural economics of 'nudge' for addressing issues including gender equality, savings and tax compliance, the survey attempts to reset multiple paradigms. The broad goal is to help drive economic strategy to achieve sustained real GDP growth of 8% so as to enable fulfilment of the government's grand vision of making India a \$5 trillion economy by 2025. For that, the first task is to take stock of the economy's current state. The CEA is cautiously confident that the slump in investment, which he rightly identifies as the key driver of growth, jobs and demand, has bottomed out. Setting the huge electoral mandate for the government as an enabler that would "push the animal spirits of the economy", the survey projects real GDP growth to rebound to 7% in 2019-20. But the CEA doesn't shy away from flagging 'consumption' as being crucial in determining the growth trajectory in the current fiscal year, and in pointing out its vulnerability to the health of the monsoon-dependent rural economy. With rainfall as on July 3 about 28% less than average and large parts of southern and western India in the grip of a crippling drought, clearly the circumspexion appears well warranted.

On the fiscal front, the survey is even less optimistic. It lists several challenges to achieving the fiscal deficit target of 3% of GDP by March 2021: the "apprehensions of slowing of growth" and the implications for revenue collections; the shortfall in GST collections and the imperative that it places on revenue buoyancy this year; the hunt for resources to fund the expanded PM-KISAN scheme, Ayushman Bharat and other government initiatives; and the impact on oil purchase prices due to the U.S. sanctions on import of crude from Iran. It is, however, on the policy prescriptions front that the CEA comes into his own. Central to the recommendations is the focus on triggering a self-sustaining "virtuous cycle" of savings, investment and exports. To achieve which, he suggests, presenting data as a 'public good', ensuring policy consistency and reducing the cost of capital. Micro, small and medium enterprises must be nourished, especially firms that are most likely to boost both job creation and productivity, and labour laws made flexible. Ultimately, it is the implementation that may well decide how "blue sky" these ideas are.

Raising the bar

Rahul Gandhi has forced a churn in the Congress that might lay the basis for a revival

With Rahul Gandhi stating categorically that he would not continue as Congress president, one uncertainty that had gripped the party has ended. But this culmination does not end the disorder and chaos in the party, which is in a state of paralysis since its rout in the parliamentary election. Mr. Gandhi's letter of resignation is part self-reflection, about the Congress in general and his own personal role in it, and part a critique of the state of affairs of Indian politics. Mr. Gandhi felt the need for introspection and accountability, and restated his long-held position that he was in politics not for power but social change. By sticking to his decision to quit as party chief, he has thrown a challenge at his colleagues to find a life outside the shelter of the Nehru-Gandhi family. The coterie that flourished around his mother and predecessor Sonia Gandhi had reduced politics to manipulation and turned the party into an instrument of vested interests. A small club of self-seekers who reinforce one another and don't face the electorate had taken over the Congress years before Mr. Gandhi came on the scene. His letter is an indictment of these leaders, whose personal fortunes never waned, even as the party's plummeted.

Mr. Gandhi's limitation is not in his understanding of the challenges before the party or the country, or in his vision for both. His inexact articulation is not reflective of any insurmountable weaknesses. His real failure has been his inability to free the party from the clutches of what his father Rajiv Gandhi had famously called power-brokers. In calling for accountability, he is effectively asking a group to self-destruct for the larger cause of the party, which in turn must fight for the larger cause of the country. By refusing to be the façade for their parasitical existence, Mr. Gandhi might have forced a productive churn at all levels. Any moral appeal could only have had a limited impact on the seasoned veterans, but the example Mr. Gandhi set by accepting responsibility for the defeat while reiterating his commitment to the larger cause might help inspire a resuscitation of the party. But questions abound. Mr. Gandhi himself will remain active in politics, as he has made clear, but how much authority he would want to exercise remains an open question. His insistence on stepping aside also comes from a realisation that the dynasty tag is more a drag than a booster for his politics, and the party, in the current environment. The process of reducing the Congress to a family enterprise had started with Mr. Gandhi's forbears and their supporters as much as their opponents. Only a family member could have sought to challenge the notion that the Congress cannot survive without the dynasty. If the absence of a Nehru-Gandhi at the helm was a precondition for the reconfiguration of the Congress and the formation of a viable alternative to Hindutva, Mr. Gandhi has created that situation.

Expanding India's share in global space economy

ISRO should embrace a civilian identity and, aided by legislation, form partnerships with the industry and entrepreneurs



RAKESH SOOD

From a modest beginning in the 1960s, India's space programme has grown steadily, achieving significant milestones. These include fabrication of satellites, space-launch vehicles, and a range of associated capabilities.

Today, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s annual budget has crossed ₹10,000 crore (\$1.45 billion), growing steadily from ₹6,000 crore five years ago. However, demand for space-based services in India is far greater than what ISRO can supply. Private sector investment is critical, for which a suitable policy environment needs to be created. There is growing realisation that national legislation is needed to ensure overall growth of the space sector. The draft Space Activities Bill introduced in 2017 has lapsed and the government now has an opportunity to give priority to a new Bill that can be welcomed by the private sector, both the larger players and the start-ups alike.

ISRO's thrust areas

Since its establishment in 1969, ISRO has been guided by a set of mission and vision statements covering both the societal objectives and the thrust areas. The first area was of satellite communication, with INSAT and GSAT as the backbones, to address the national needs for telecommunication, broadcasting and broadband infrastructure.

Gradually, bigger satellites have been built carrying a larger array of transponders. About 200 transponders on Indian satellites provide services linked to areas like telecommunication, telemedicine, television, broadband, radio, dis-

aster management and search and rescue services.

A second area of focus was earth observation and using space-based imagery for a slew of national demands, ranging from weather forecasting, disaster management and national resource mapping and planning.

These resources cover agriculture and watershed, land resource, and forestry managements. With higher resolution and precise positioning, Geographical Information Systems' applications today cover all aspects of rural and urban development and planning. Beginning with the Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) series in the 1980s, today the RISAT, Cartosat and Resourcesat series provide wide-field and multi-spectral high resolution data for land, ocean and atmospheric observations.

A third and more recent focus area is satellite-aided navigation. The GPS-aided GEO augmented navigation (GAGAN), a joint project between ISRO and Airports Authority of India, augmented the GPS coverage of the region, improving the accuracy and integrity, primarily for civil aviation applications and better air traffic management over Indian airspace. This was followed up with the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), a system based on seven satellites in geostationary and geosynchronous orbits.

It provides accurate positioning service, covering a region extending to 1,500 km beyond Indian borders, with an accuracy greater than 20 metres; higher accuracy positioning is available to the security agencies for their use. In 2016, the system was renamed NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation).

With growing confidence, ISRO has also started to undertake more ambitious space science and exploration missions. The most notable of these have been the Chandrayaan and the Mangalyaan missions, with a manned space

mission, Gaganyaan, planned for its first test flight in 2021. These missions are not just for technology demonstration but also for expanding the frontiers of knowledge in space sciences.

None of this would have been possible without mastering the launch-vehicle technology. Beginning with the Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV) and the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV), ISRO has developed and refined the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) as its workhorse for placing satellites in low earth and sun synchronous orbits. With 46 successful missions, the PSLV has an enviable record.

The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) programme is still developing with its MkIII variant, having undertaken three missions, and is capable of carrying a 3.5 MT payload into a geostationary orbit. Compare this to the French Ariane 5, which has undertaken more than 100 launch missions and carries a 5 MT payload, with an Ariane 6 in the pipeline for 2020.

Over the years, ISRO built a strong association with the industry, particularly with Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) like Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited and Bharat Electronics Limited and large private sector entities like Larsen and Toubro, Godrej and Walchandnagar Industries. However, most of the private sector players are Tier-2/Tier-3 vendors, providing components and services. The Assembly, Integration and Testing (AIT) role is restricted to ISRO, which set up Antrix, a private limited company, in 1992 as its commercial arm to market its products and services and interface with the private sector in transfer of technology partnerships.

Today, the value of the global space industry is estimated to be \$350 billion and is likely to exceed \$550 billion by 2025. Despite ISRO's impressive capabilities, India's share is estimated at \$7 bil-



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lion (just 2% of the global market) covering broadband and Direct-to-Home television (accounting for two-thirds of the share), satellite imagery and navigation. Already, over a third of transponders used for Indian services are leased from foreign satellites and this proportion will rise as the demand grows.

Developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data analytics has led to the emergence of 'New Space' – a disruptive dynamic based on using end-to-end efficiency concepts. A parallel is how the independent app developers, given access to the Android and Apple platforms, revolutionised smartphone usage. New Space entrepreneurship has emerged in India with about two dozen start-ups who are not enamoured of the traditional vendor/supplier model but see value in exploring end-to-end services in the Business-to-Business and Business-to-Consumer segments. However, these start-ups have yet to take off in the absence of regulatory clarity.

'New Space' start-ups

The New Space start-ups discern a synergy with government's flagship programmes like Digital India, Start-Up India, Skill India and schemes like Smart Cities Mission. They see a role as a data-app builder between the data seller (ISRO/Antrix) and the end user, taking advantage of the talent pool, innovation competence and technology know-how. They need an enabling ecosystem, a culture of accelerators, incubators, Venture Capitalists and mentors that exists

in cities like Bengaluru which is where most New Space start-ups have mushroomed.

Equally, clear rules and regulations are essential. ISRO can learn from its 1997 SatCom policy which neither attracted any FDI in the sector nor a single licensee. A similar situation exists with the Remote Sensing Data Policy of 2001, amended in 2011, which too has failed to attract a single application. The 2017 draft Bill raised more questions because it sought to retain the dominant role of ISRO/Antrix as operator, licensor, rule-maker and service provider.

Another revolution under way is the small satellite revolution. Globally, 17,000 small satellites are expected to be launched between now and 2030. ISRO is developing a small satellite launch vehicle (SSLV) expected to be ready in 2019. It is a prime candidate, along with the proven PSLV, to be farmed out to the private sector. This requires giving it responsibility for AIT activities.

Years ago, ISRO launched the idea of Village Resource Centres to work in collaboration with local panchayats and NGOs but only 460 pilots have begun. Expanding this for rural areas is a formidable challenge but has the potential to transform rural India if properly conceived as a part of the India Stack and the Jan Dhan Yojana.

With the Ministry of Defence now setting up a Defence Space Agency and a Defence Space Research Organisation, ISRO should actively embrace an exclusively civilian identity. A new Space law for India should aim at facilitating growing India's share of global space economy to 10% within a decade which requires a new kind of partnership between ISRO, the established private sector and the New Space entrepreneurs.

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Talking sanctions, endangering peace

The Trump administration's successive punitive actions against Iran can only be interpreted as a desire for direct conflict



SUVRAT RAJU

More than a year ago, the U.S. unilaterally abrogated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and began to squeeze the Iranian economy using sanctions. The latest round of sanctions were announced in June. Iran announced a week later that it had exceeded a limit set by the JCPOA on its stockpile of nuclear fuel.

The U.S.-Iran conflict is often portrayed in the media as one that involves two flawed actors struggling for supremacy on a complex West Asian stage. But a closer look reveals a simpler underlying reality: the Donald Trump administration is using the U.S.'s clout in an old-fashioned attempt to assert the country's hegemony; Iran is just doing whatever it can to resist U.S. pressure.

The Shah connection

The roots of this dispute can be traced back to 1953, when the Central Intelligence Agency orchestrated a coup to remove Iran's elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh. After instituting the rule of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the U.S. encouraged him to establish a nuclear programme.

The U.S. built Iran's first nuclear reactor in 1967. The Shah was clear that his ambitions went beyond nuclear energy, and extended to nuclear weapons. In 1974, he explained that Iran would acquire nuclear weapons "without a doubt, and sooner than one would think." Nevertheless, the West continued to provide nuclear technology to his government.

After the Shah was toppled in 1979, the new government, under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, cancelled his plans for a large nuclear-energy sector, retaining only those facilities that had already been established. Khomeini also declared that nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) were *haram* – forbidden in Islam. Whatever one may think about Khomeini's government, his spiritual injunctions were taken very seriously. When Iraq attacked Iran with chemical weapons, with the tacit support of the Ronald Reagan administration, Tehran refrained from responding in kind despite having the requisite technology.

It is possible that during the Iran-Iraq war, some elements within the Iranian establishment started exploring the possibility of developing a nuclear deterrent. Even if this was the case – and the evidence on the matter is far from conclusive – these activities were definitely stopped by 2003. In the same year, Khomeini's successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, issued an



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

unambiguous fatwa against nuclear weapons.

Soon after invading Iraq on the false pretext that it had WMDs, the U.S. attempted to build a similar narrative around Iran, which had established a modest programme to enrich uranium to fuel its existing reactors. The U.S. alleged that the fuel was intended for a bomb. These allegations were undercut by U.S. intelligence agencies themselves who reported that "in fall 2003 Iran halted... nuclear weapons... activities". In 2015, after a multi-year investigation, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) went further, declaring that "activities relevant to... a nuclear explosive... did not advance beyond feasibility and scientific studies" and, as a "coordinated effort", were only carried out "prior to the end of 2003".

In spite of these facts, successive U.S. administrations imposed sanctions on Iran, demanding that it completely halt uranium enrichment. It was only during President Barack Obama's second term that the U.S. sought a temporary truce,

leading to the JCPOA.

The JCPOA recognised Iran's right to maintain a civilian nuclear programme, but placed significant restrictions on its size and scope for 10 to 15 years. Most importantly, Tehran reiterated that "under no circumstances" would it "seek... nuclear weapons." The IAEA was granted unprecedented powers to inspect Iran's nuclear activities, and has repeatedly verified Tehran's compliance.

So, when the Trump administration ceased to abide by the JCPOA last year, this could only be interpreted as a message that the U.S. was not interested in arms control, but rather in initiating a direct conflict with Tehran.

An economy devastated

Over the past year, the U.S. has made threats, mobilised troops and warships, and provoked Tehran by flying military planes dangerously close to its border. However, Washington's primary strategy has been to use economic measures as a weapon. It has prevented foreign entities from trading with Iran, devastating the Iranian economy.

India has also been hurt by these policies. Until recently, Iran was one of India's largest oil suppliers. Even though Iranian oil came with discounts on freight, and favourable terms of payment, the Indian government obeyed Washington's dictates and stopped purchasing oil from Iran in May.

India's investments in Iran's Chabahar port are nominally exempt from U.S. sanctions, but they have been damaged anyway since suppliers are reluctant to deliver equipment. The sanctions have also prevented ONGC Videsh, which discovered the Farzad B gas field off Iran's coast, from pursuing its investments there.

Further, New Delhi has refused to explore several available strategies that could ameliorate the impact of sanctions. China has maintained some commercial ties with Iran by routing transactions through the Bank of Kunlun. U.S. sanctions on this bank have been ineffective since it is carefully insulated from the U.S. financial system. European countries have attempted to bypass sanctions through a special mechanism called INSTEX.

It is revealing that India has failed to join any of these initiatives or to develop its own solution. A few months ago, Prime Minister Modi boasted that India's foreign policy had become "fearless, bold and decisive". Is this fearlessness restricted to India's interactions with its smaller neighbours, or is his government also willing to stand up to the biggest bully in the room and protect India's interests from Washington's destructive policies?

Suvarat Raju is a physicist associated with the Coalition for Nuclear Dismantlement and Peace. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Rahul bows out

Rahul Gandhi's resignation as Congress president is a rare instance of a leader accepting responsibility for his party's defeat in elections (Page 1, "Rahul Gandhi formally quits as party chief, makes letter public," July 4). The fact that his party won 19% of the national vote share attests to its political relevance. The need of the hour for the party is to choose a strong successor to Mr. Gandhi, someone who can help Congress regain the trust of the voters. Indira Gandhi lost the 1977 election following

the Emergency, but made a strong comeback in 1980 by winning back the people's confidence. Mr. Gandhi's successor can take a leaf out of Mrs. Gandhi's book.

JAYANT MUKHERJEE,
Kolkata

■ The Congress should learn to sail through difficult times even without a captain from the Nehru-Gandhi family. It should go back to the leadership system it followed in the pre-Independence period, by electing presidents for a year and conducting sessions in different parts of the country. The party should

stand for the principles of truth and non-violence. The next president should also put all his efforts to bring back the breakout parties like Trinamool Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party and the YSR Congress Party back into the Congress's fold. Finally, it should utilise the popularity of Mr. Gandhi to consolidate its presence across the country.

K. MUHAMMED ISMAVIL,
Koduvally, Kerala

Petition to EC

It is laudable that a group of former senior civil servants have listed out serious irregularities in the conduct

of the 2019 elections (News page, "Ex-officials cast doubt on poll result," July 4). The common man was a witness to blatant violations of the Model Code of Conduct by leaders and parties, transgressions ignored by the Election Commission. The poll body also did not make public the dissenting opinion of Ashok Lavasa. However, one wonders whether the petitioners can expect an honest reply from the EC.

THARCIUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

Rayudu retires

Ambati Rayudu's decision to retire, after being snubbed

twice for the World Cup, does not come as a surprise. Mr. Rayudu, a reliable middle-order batsman, was all along tipped to fill the crucial No. 4 spot in the team and should have found a place in the original squad. But it was shocking that he was not considered even

after two players got injured. Of course, he is not the first victim of the cricketing body's whimsical selection process and, one fears, he will not be the last either.

N. VISWANATHAN,
Coimbatore

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

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: >>>The report about Telugu poet and activist Varavara Rao being brought to Karnataka – "Karnataka police take Varavara Rao into custody in 2005 case" (South page, July 4, 2019) – talks about the 2005 naxal attack in Pavagada taluk of Kolar district. It should be Tumakuru district.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturba Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com

Can the government help create jobs?

PARLEY

Expansion of public employment and a national skilling programme could boost employment

Data released by the Labour Ministry show that the unemployment rate in 2017-18 was 6.1%, arguably the highest in 45 years. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) findings have been the subject of intense scrutiny and debate ever since a leaked report in January revealed a surge in joblessness as well as a drop in the labour force participation rate. In a conversation moderated by Suresh Seshadri, Jayati Ghosh and Ajit Ranade discuss the issue. Edited excerpts:

Dr. Ranade, how much confidence do you place in the PLFS data and what do you draw as the key conclusions from it?

Ajit Ranade: This was started as a pilot project about two years ago and the purpose was to get a much more granular and in-depth understanding of the labour market. And there was a change in methodology, from sampling based on expenditure categories, which was done by the National Sample Survey (NSS), to education status. So, of course this is a very welcome initiative, because we need better data on the labour market. As far as how much confidence we have, since this is the best we've got, I think we have to use this data. I'm sure it will be fine-tuned and perhaps the numbers will become more reliable, but as such the numbers do tally with other indicators of the labour market conditions or the economy's condition.

Dr. Ghosh, you had in a blog post pointed to how the PLFS data coheres with other estimates including those of the CMIE. How do you then view opinions that posit that the unemployment rate is painting an inaccurate picture when viewed in the backdrop of rising school and college enrolment?

Jayati Ghosh: Many of the criticisms of the PLFS survey are actually not very well informed because they are suggesting that the results are not comparable with the earlier

large sample surveys of the NSS. The sampling method has not changed; it's never been a stratified sample, it's always been a random sample of households and it always tries to capture as many different forms and levels of education, occupation and so on and so forth. That's the point of the sample.

The PLFS is different because it was trying to get quarterly data: that is, how does the employment of the same family vary across every quarter, and that is very important and would have been very useful. However, what the earlier NSS used to do was to take just one quarter for each household and extrapolate to that for the whole year. If you take the same PLFS data and do that, you get completely comparable data. The PLFS will give us slightly better estimates of how the same family, the same household, responds over a period – over four quarters of the year: do they stay in employment, do they lose employment, does it go from casual to regular and so on and so forth. In that sense, it's a better survey. The trouble is that it was really meant to be continuous. We were not supposed to have any gaps in it at all. So, not only did we get only one year's data but we then didn't get that for a very long time because it was suppressed.

If one accepts the premise that improved access to education has led to a more aspirational youth segment, which in turn is loath to work in low remuneration jobs, how do we tackle the problem?

AR: This is a very big challenge to having adequate, good-quality, well-paying jobs and this is a very large agenda. But since you asked me what would help, then one can think of multiple things, each of which is probably a small step but it does help. For example, setting up an enterprise. As you know, in India there are perhaps 60 million odd enterprises, and mostly in the unregistered sector. And out of the 60 million only about one, one-and-a-half million, 1.2 million actually contribute towards Provident Fund or ESI [Employees' State Insurance]. So, a very large proportion is in the unregistered or informal sector. So, as a first step, perhaps we can make it easy for these firms to get registered, or to comply. So, the big, big challenge is in the ease of doing business, setting up businesses, getting them registered. You have multiple registrations – you need to register for GST, for ESI [ESI Corporation], for Provident Fund.



REUTERS

employed. The highest unemployment rates are found among the tertiary educated, that is, those who have done beyond high school, and that reflects the fact that you're then not willing to take just any job; that you will actually try and wait and hope to get something that, at least, is vaguely related to your qualifications.

If one accepts the premise that improved access to education has led to a more aspirational youth segment, which in turn is loath to work in low remuneration jobs, how do we tackle the problem?

AR: This is a very big challenge to having adequate, good-quality, well-paying jobs and this is a very large agenda. But since you asked me what would help, then one can think of multiple things, each of which is probably a small step but it does help. For example, setting up an enterprise. As you know, in India there are perhaps 60 million odd enterprises, and mostly in the unregistered sector. And out of the 60 million only about one, one-and-a-half million, 1.2 million actually contribute towards Provident Fund or ESI [Employees' State Insurance]. So, a very large proportion is in the unregistered or informal sector. So, as a first step, perhaps we can make it easy for these firms to get registered, or to comply. So, the big, big challenge is in the ease of doing business, setting up businesses, getting them registered. You have multiple registrations – you need to register for GST, for ESI [ESI Corporation], for Provident Fund.

The PLFS data will be fine-tuned, but as such the numbers do tally with other indicators of the labour market conditions or the economy's condition.

There are probably dozens and dozens of registrations. This just makes it very hard for the whole process, to set up and start employing people. Then, you have this thing about on-the-job training, that workers need to be skilled but employers don't want to invest in skilling. We need a portable national programme where you acquire apprenticeships in one firm, you solve this problem of underinvestment in skilling by individual firms, so that is a very big agenda. But this is a huge challenge, how to get firms to hire in bigger numbers and how to get them a little more into the formal, registered sector.

Dr. Ghosh, is the situation of decades-high joblessness more a result of the economy's trajectory or an outcome of government policies?

JG: It's clearly both. This is a process that's been ongoing for about 15 years, this separation of economic activity and job creation. So, I think it's a deeper structural problem and part of the difficulty that I am having with the current government is that whenever you talk about joblessness, they seem to see this as a political attack, whereas this is really an issue of economic policy that has deeper roots.

Now, in terms of what you do about it, I think some of the issues

that Dr. Ranade mentioned are certainly valid, but I would argue that you also need a very large push in terms of the expansion of public employment. And there are two reasons for this. One, public employment has very obvious, standard multiplier effects, which are fairly pronounced in a country like India, and we know that we are hugely lacking in terms of the public services that we provide our people.

If you look at the average of public employees per population, which is a kind of indicator of what public services you're providing: globally the average is 3.5 per 100 people, in Europe it's more like 6 per 100, in Scandinavia it's as high as 8 per 100, in India it's less than 2 per 100. We are under-providing public services. It's not just in health and education. If you actually bring public services up to a minimum level that is required of, let us say, even a lower middle-income country, Kenya, you would require a tripling of public employment. That, in turn, has massive multiplier effects. All these people who you pay will get incomes that they will go out and spend, and when they spend they will create demand; there's a huge paucity of demand in the economy. With that demand, you will get the emergence of new activities, which will then generate the kind of entrepreneurs that Dr. Ranade was talking about and then if there are start-ups, if there are micro entrepreneurs, they will have a market to cater to. In other words, you really have to have a big employment push from the government.

Dr. Ghosh, this talk about the need for reforms to labour legislation, has it been a little wrong-headed? Instead of focusing on easing restrictions on hire and fire and contractual hiring norms, should we move towards ensuring more formalisation, say of high-volume job-creating sectors like construction, with more supportive laws? There are some laws, but I think it's at the State level and not all of them have been implemented well.

JG: You put your finger on it. None of them is enforced. We have actually pretty good legislation for construction workers; we have a num-

ber of laws and regulation for various other workers. Mostly they are not implemented. On the other hand, you do have inspector raj of a most terrible kind for small and micro-entrepreneurs. It's a peculiar combination of the worst of all possible worlds, whereby the legislation and things that would actually protect workers are simply not enforced, and all the kinds of things, the flexibilities that small producers do need are not allowed to them or rather they'd have to pay massive bribes to be able to take advantage of any kind of flexibility.

Whether it is your street vendor or it is a small person running a small factory or a small service provider, all of them have to face the rather oppressive hand of the state in different ways, which doesn't really help them in terms of improving their productivity. Now, does that mean that we should just allow the freedom to hire and fire? I frankly think that's a red herring. I mean, factories do what they want anyway, this is all nonsense that they cannot expand. I will take you to factories in the National Capital Region where more than half of their workforce are actually daily wagers and do not have a permanent contract. So, this notion that factories can't expand, or employers can't expand because of labour laws, I think it's completely off track.

AR: On labour laws, I think we have to move towards a system where the laws protect the worker but not the job. So, worker protection is paramount but not job protection.

JG: I would argue that at the moment they protect neither.

Lastly, if there's one single key intervention that the government can do to create jobs, what would be your prescription?

JG: Fill the vacancies [in the government sector], but expand good quality public employment.

AR: I would support filling up the vacancies, which are more than two million. But also, a national-level apprenticeship programme with portability, subsidised and well-defined accreditation, which you can take to any part of India.



Jayati Ghosh is Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University



Ajit Ranade is Chief Economist with the Aditya Birla Group



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

An upbeat tone amid tensions

The gushing rhetoric between India and the U.S. says something about the strength of the relationship

MICHAEL KUGELMAN

In recent weeks, amid an upsurge in U.S.-India tensions, the rhetoric on both sides has remained remarkably upbeat. While there has been ample criticism from senior U.S. and Indian officials, it has largely been directed at policies rather than at the partnership. Even U.S. President Donald Trump's India-directed taunts tend to target the issues that aggravate him rather than the relationship.

Gushing rhetoric

Witness, for example, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's effusive praise for the partnership in June. "We've come a long way," he said. "And now the Trump administration and the Modi administration have an incredibly unique opportunity to take advantage of this special partnership. We can move further." Mr. Pompeo and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar expressed similar sentiment about the relationship and expressed hope that they could overcome its obstacles when they held a joint press conference in New Delhi several days ago. And President Trump himself said of the relationship at the G20 meeting in Osaka: "We have become great friends and our countries have never been closer. I can say that with surety."

Given that the U.S.-India relationship is suffering through one of its most challenging periods in years, it's natural to dismiss such happy talk as a mere ploy to mask the serious strains in the partnership. In reality, the gushing rhetoric is more significant than it may seem – and it says something about the continued strength of the relationship.

For one thing, it is a reminder of just how much worse things could be. The last time the relationship faced a particularly bad stretch was in 2013, when India's deputy consul general in New York, Devyani Khobragade, was arrested in New York, subjected to a strip search, and briefly jailed. During that tense period – much tenser than today – there was no happy talk, only angry words. One

Indian official described Ms. Khobragade's treatment as "despicable and barbaric," while another fumed that "we're not a banana republic". In a dramatic response, New Delhi removed security barriers from the U.S. Embassy and revoked many perks for American diplomats in India.

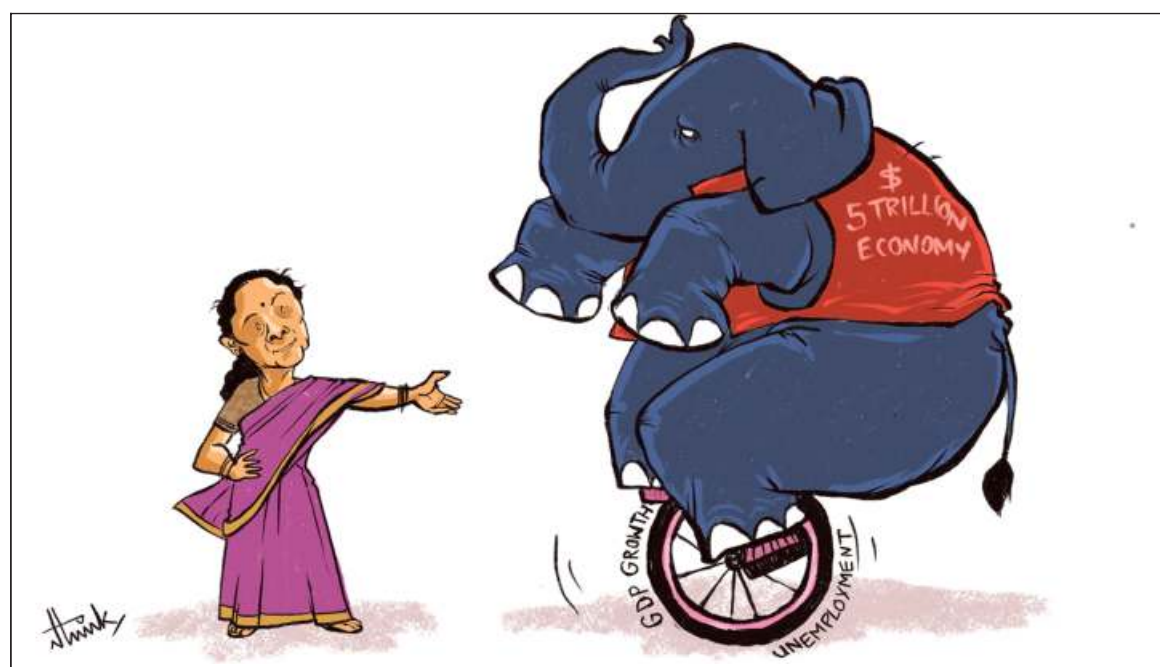
Imperative to move forward

In contrast, today the criticism is softer and the reprisals less dramatic. In fact, until New Delhi's recent decision to slap retaliatory tariffs on the U.S., India had been very restrained amid the intensification of trade tensions. Additionally, the positive messaging from both sides signals the commitment of both countries to work through their disputes – a commitment rooted in the realisation that there is a strategic imperative to move forward. Washington and New Delhi appear to genuinely believe

that their shared vision for Asia – a free, open, rules-based system meant to push back against Chinese power – ensures a continued strong partnership. To be sure, such future comity is far from guaranteed. As pointed out in a recent essay by the Brookings Institution, converging U.S.-India views on China following the 1962 India-China war did not lead to deeper cooperation. Still, the positive rhetoric telegraphs the belief on both sides that the relationship, warts and all, remains on a positive trajectory, at least for now.

Also, the relationship could eventually turn sour and even plunge into a full-blown crisis. Imagine if the U.S. were to investigate India's trading practices, or if it penalises New Delhi for completing its S-400 deal with Russia. Such moves would ratchet up tensions to the point where any effusive rhetoric would sound disingenuous more than reassuring. But that's not where we are today.

The writer is Deputy Director and Senior Associate for South Asia with the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Washington, DC



NOTEBOOK

The many ways of watching a movie

One man's abuse is often entertainment for many

NAMRATA JOSHI

Sometimes it's not a movie but the experience of watching a movie that stays in the mind – and not entirely for the right reasons. For me, the popular *Once Upon A Time In Mumbai* franchise will always be about grandiloquent lines. There is one exchange in *Once Upon A Time In Mumbai Dobaara!* between Akshay Kumar and Sonakshi Sinha in which Kumar tells his lady-love: "Paanch minute mein izzat utaar sakta hoon (I can rape you in five minutes)." I don't know what hit me more: the obnoxiousness of the hero and his expression of so-called love or the catcalls and whistles of the audience in reaction to this statement. The insensitivity and inappropriateness of the response made me feel vulnerable, disgusted and angry in turn.

That was in 2013. Six years later, the story re-

peated itself with *Kabir Singh*. The majority of viewers rolled in laughter as a deplorable scene of abuse – a house help being ill-treated and threatened on screen – played out. There was evident approval when the heroine was slapped; I flinched. It's not to do with women alone. In *Badrinath Ki Dulhania* the assault on a man evoked big laughs. I couldn't understand what the joke was.

Are these scenes and responses a reflection of the inherent conservatism and toxicity of our society or are they indicative of cinema's role in the formation and acceptance of newer and more insidious themes being played by role models? The eternal debate rages on.

Meanwhile, for a film critic, watching a film 'first day, first show' all alone on a Friday morning often feels like being marooned on a choppy sea, holding

on to your own little raft of personal opinions in the face of tidal waves threatening to drown you. I choke on my coffee often, feeling the sheer solitariness of being at a tangent from the larger film audience universe. But more often than not, my digressive beliefs strengthen in the process and I feel the urgency to state them candidly and vigorously. It makes me dive deeper into the personal. The consensus around fires up the contrarian in me.

Simultaneously there is also the wonderment at the many possible ways of seeing. I often wonder whether I am watching the same film as the people around me. And it's not just to do with gender representation, it's also about humour and how it is perceived. A Mehmoond in *Padosan* may have brought the house down in north India, but was the character perceived as anything more

than a convenient caricature in the south? Was the Kantaben track in *Kal Ho Naa Ho* about homosexuality or was it a joke about homophobia? Be it the *balatkaar* (rape) gag in *3 Idiots* or the ageist one in *Sanju* about a 91-year-old woman, what may have been offensive and politically incorrect to a small section is also the kind of broad and adolescent humour that has more ready takers than you can even begin to imagine. One wo (man)'s abuse is often entertainment for many.

But on some rare occasions there is harmony. I don't think I would have been able to sit through the inanity of *Race 3* were it not for the manner in which the audience was laughing at its cheesiness. They sang the ditty written by 'Bhai', "Ik baar baby, selfish hoke, apne liye jeeyo na", in unison, deliberately out of tune. My heart couldn't help but sing along.

FROM THE HINDU ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 5, 1969

Decade of Disappointment

(From an Editorial)

The disappointments of the first Development Decade that is ending this year are writ large in the report of the 18-member United Nations Committee on the goals and strategy of developmental planning for the Second Development Decade commencing next year. Apart from emphasising the responsibility of the advanced nations to set apart one per cent of their gross national product for economic assistance to the developing countries, the report suggests that "developed countries should attempt to supply at least 80 per cent of their financial assistance in the form of grants by 1975". It is indeed true that the volume of net aid has thinned considerably from year to year, what with debt charges (on repayment of principal and payment of interest) mounting and the quantum of total aid steadily going down. A larger element of grant in the assistance given will no doubt help. But more lasting help would be opportunities for increasing trade and this would call for the advanced nations lowering their trade barriers. The trade picture, however, remains unchanged despite the much-boosted Kennedy Round of tariff concessions.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 5, 1919.

Gold Theft at Mint.

Mr. Aston, Chief Presidency Magistrate, on Thursday [July 3, in Bombay] disposed of a case in which Harold Durham, head melter of His Majesty's Mint in Bombay, stood charged at the instance of the C.I.D. with disposing of gold on three occasions, valued at nearly Rs. 6,000 and on attempting on the 9th May to dispose of through an agent a gold bar valued at Rs. 3,594, when he knew it to be stolen. At the opening of the case the Crown Prosecutor, Mr. Campbell, stated that Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Harkar on receipt of information that gold was being smuggled from the Mint through one Kashiram, a subordinate of the Mint, and sold to one Rahimtullah in the city, laid a trap and arrested Kashiram while he was disposing of a gold bar weighing 112 tolas at Rahimtullah's shop. Kashiram implicated Durham. Mr. Campbell further stated that they were unable to show from the Mint records that there was any shortage in the gold and the only suggestion that they could make was that it was just possible that very small amounts might have been taken at a time which in the course of time, when accumulated must have made up the full amount.

FROM PAGE ONE

Survey sets out blueprint for \$5 tn economy

Notably, the Survey made the point that data must be viewed as a public good and used in a concerted way to deliver services.

It said that as data of societal interest is generated by the people, it can be created as a public good within the legal framework of data privacy.

The government must intervene in creating data as a public good, especially of the poor and in social sectors.

Interestingly, the Survey talked about merging the distinct datasets held by the government into a single dataset, which would generate "multiple benefits."

Another key area of focus for the Survey was the MSME sector and how to make it grow so as to boost profit creation, job creation, and enhance productivity.

It noted that "dwarf" firms (with less than 100 workers), accounted for more than 50% of all organised firms in manufacturing by number.

Despite this, their contribution to employment was just 14% and to productivity a mere 8%. Large firms, on the other hand, are just 15% in number but account for 75% employment and close to 90% of productivity. Therefore, there is a need to "unshackle" MSMEs and enable them to grow into large



K. Subramanian

er firms. Regarding employment, the Survey pointed out that the general apprehension was that a high investment rate would mean labour would be substituted out by capital. This, the authors said, was an incorrect assessment as shown by the Chinese model.

"The Chinese experience illustrates how a country with the highest investment rates also created the most jobs," the Survey's authors wrote.

When the full value chain is examined, Dr. Subramanian explained in the press conference, then it becomes clear that capital investment fosters job creation since capital goods production, research and development, and supply chains also generate jobs.

The Survey also pointed to the need for labour reform, highlighting the fact that factories in States that have flexible labour markets are much more productive than those in States with rigid laws.

Cong. begins search for chief

Ahmed Patel reaches out to senior leaders to decide on Rahul's replacement

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

A day after the formal resignation of Rahul Gandhi as the Congress president, senior Congress leaders on Thursday intensified their informal discussions on a possible replacement for Mr. Gandhi even as his sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, endorsed her brother's decision.

Congress treasurer Ahmed Patel has once again emerged a key leader who is reaching out to senior leaders including Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled States to arrive at a consensus candidate.

Party insiders say like Mr. Gandhi, his mother and Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi too turned down suggestions from her party colleagues that she should involve herself in the selection of the next party chief.

The Gandhi family, claimed sources, didn't want a new Congress chief to be viewed as the family's nominee. But she is learnt to have conveyed her 'full support' to look for Mr. Gandhi's successor.

Congress general secretary, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, too supported her brother's decision when she tweeted,



Business as usual: A day after making public his resignation letter, Rahul Gandhi was in Mumbai on Thursday to attend court proceedings. •VIVEK BENDRE

"Few have the courage that you do, @rahulgandhi. Deepest respect for your decision."

Mr. Gandhi's decision to go public also prompted former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat to follow in his footsteps. He tweeted that he had stepped down as the party's general secretary in-charge of Assam for the poor showing in the State.

With the next round of Assembly elections in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Haryana coming up around October-November, time

seems to be running out for the Congress and its highest decision-making body, the Congress Working Committee (CWC).

Though no official announcement has been made, the CWC could be meeting as early as the next week to zero in on the successor

Names that are doing the rounds include former Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, former Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde, general secretary Mukul Wasnik, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot

and his deputy, Sachin Pilot.

A section of the Congress said former PM Manmohan Singh could easily emerge as a consensus candidate if Dr. Singh agrees to shoulder the responsibility.

The Congress constitution mandates that in the event of an emergency including the president's resignation, "the senior most General Secretary will discharge the routine functions of the President until the Working Committee appoints a provisional President pending the election of a regular President by the AICC."

Pakistan action exposes terror complicity: India

Take irreversible steps: Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Reported Pakistani actions against terrorists and terror groups have exposed the country's complicity in using terrorism as a tool of statecraft, the External Affairs Ministry said here on Thursday.

The statement comes amid reports that JuD chief Hafiz Saeed and 12 of his close aides will be arrested "very soon", a day after Pakistani authorities booked them for multiple offences of terrorism financing and money laundering.

At the weekly media briefing, Raveesh Kumar, spokesperson of the Ministry, said Islamabad should take irreversible steps against the groups responsible for incidents such as the 26/11 Mumbai attack.

"Pakistan claims that they have taken steps against terrorists and terrorist outfits, but when it comes to taking action against the people that we have demanded, they go into a denial mode, they even deny that they exist in their country. On the other hand



Hafiz Saeed

they try to show the international community that they are taking some action against terrorist groups operating from their soil. They stand completely exposed as far as their claim of taking steps against terrorist groups in Pakistan is concerned," said Mr. Kumar, saying that Pakistan's announced financial crackdown on banned militant groups is not sufficient.

The steps against the terror outfits were undertaken just days after Pakistan faced the heat at the FATF (Financial Action Task Force) and barely escaped from being blacklisted.

(With PTI inputs)

Penalty, jail term to private entities storing Aadhaar data

LS clears Aadhaar amendment Bill amid stiff opposition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha cleared the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 by a voice vote on Thursday. The Bill replaces an Ordinance promulgated on March 2 and provides for a stiff ₹1 crore penalty and a jail term to private entities for storing Aadhaar data.

It also makes the use of Aadhaar voluntary for opening a bank account, securing a mobile phone connection, or receiving treatment in hospital.

Data protection

Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad, speaking about the Bill, assured the House that the government is also working on a data protection Bill, which will be brought in at a later date to ensure data privacy for all Indians.

"Aadhaar is voluntary. It is a wholesome amendment in compliance with the Supreme Court order and it is also a mark of the trust that

SC to hear case today

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

A Supreme Court Bench led by Justice S.A. Bobde is scheduled to hear on Friday a writ petition challenging the new Aadhaar Ordinance and Regulations, saying they will create a "surveillance state" and enable the Aadhaar da-

tabase to be exploited by private players for commercial gain.

The petition said through the new regulations, the Unique Identification Authority of India seeks to commercialise personal data of citizens and use of Aadhaar database by private entities.

the common man has in this government," he said.

"There is a clear injunction that data or biometrics cannot be stored. The benefits of the scheme will not be denied to someone who does not have Aadhaar. If privacy is the question being raised, I want to ask: if the people of the country are happy, why are some members of the House unhappy? We have ensured safeguards for the prohibition of data theft," Mr. Prasad asked.

Speaking on the possible violation of the Supreme Court judgment on Aadhaar, the Minister replied: "Parliament has been given power to frame laws, and we are not violating the Supreme Court judgment."

"This is my Aadhaar card [Mr. Prasad held up his card in the House]. This has my name and some very basic information about me but what it does not have is my race, religion, caste. My biometric details, which are in the system, cannot be accessed under any provision."

Trinamool Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Mahua Moitra said the Bill strikes at the very heart of an individual's privacy.

Rahul, Yechury plead 'not guilty' in libel case

Court grants bail, waives appearance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and CPI(M) general secretary Sitarum Yechury pleaded "not guilty" before the Mazgaon court on Thursday in a criminal defamation case filed against them by a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) worker for making allegations against the Sangh after the murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh in 2017 in Bengaluru.

Metropolitan magistrate P.I. Mokashi granted bail to Mr. Gandhi on the surety of former MP Eknath Gaikwad and Mr. Yechury was granted bail on the surety of CPI (M) party worker Shantaram Mankumare.

Advocate Kushal Mor, representing Mr. Gandhi told *The Hindu*, "both have also been granted permanent exemption from appearance in the case and the matter will be heard on September 21."

Former MP Sanjay Nirupam, Mumbai Congress president Milind Deora and Congress leader Naseem Khan were present with Mr. Gandhi during the hearing.

Addressing the media after the hearing, Mr. Gandhi said, "I am with the poor,

Rahul to appear in Bihar court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi is to appear in a local court in Bihar on July 6 in connection with a defamation case filed against him by senior State BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi over a "Modi" surname jibe during the election campaign.

The State Congress confirmed Mr. Gandhi's visit.

the farmers and the labourers. This is a fight of ideologies, and it will continue."

Complainant advocate Dhritiman Joshi alleged that while speaking to a reporter outside Parliament, Mr. Gandhi, had linked the RSS with Gauri Lankesh's murder.

Mr. Yechury had also allegedly made a statement that it was the RSS ideology and RSS men who had killed Lankesh. The two leaders are also facing a civil defamation case for a similar statement made by them outside Parliament.

Don't punish southern States: Jairam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh sought an assurance from the government in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday that the five southern States will not be punished by reducing their representation in Parliament just because they managed to control their population.

The six States that have total fertility rates in excess of the replacement level of 2.1 are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, he pointed out.

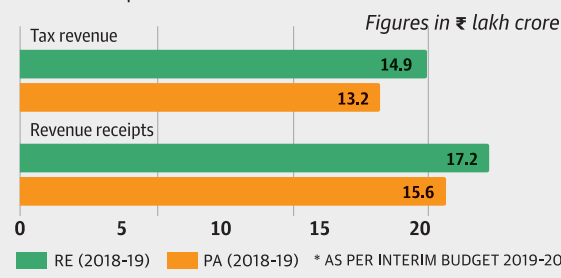
"Even the much-heralded model State of Gujarat would have reached this landmark 20 years after undivided Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, 25 years after Tamil Nadu and 30 years after Kerala," Mr. Ramesh said.

By 2050, population in the five southern States will decline from the present level of about 15% to around 12% while the share of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan will increase from about 40% to about 44%.

Govt. can sell PSU land, says CEA

Fall in expectations

The expected tax revenue has been revised down by ₹1.7 lakh crore in the survey's Provisional Actual (PA) numbers compared to the revised estimates (RE)* of 2018-19. As a result the expected total revenue was also revised down



"This is something that can be thought about as well, that the 51% majority stake of the government... instead of looking at it as 51% only of the government, you can look at a situation where it is 40% of the government and 11% of LIC, that is also 51% effectively," he said. "And that change can enable you to raise a lot more money from divestment as well. The divestment targets are expected to fill in some of the gaps that the tax revenue is creat-

ing." The subdued tax receipts were mainly due to slower economic growth, he said.

"Tax revenues themselves depend on growth," he said. "Last year, we clocked 6.8% and the buoyancy in the indirect taxes has not been that great because of a lot of tax concessions that were given over the last year. Once that is streamlined, the tax buoyancy for indirect tax should improve."

Centre banks on Kashmir panchayats for political dividend

Attempt to have village-level set-ups with enough funds

NISTULA HEBBAR
SRINAGAR

The conduct of panchayat elections in Jammu & Kashmir in November-December last year, despite boycotts by prominent regional outfits such as the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has had an interesting spin-off however, with the coming release of ₹2,600 crore granted by the 14th Finance Commission as the State's share for devolution to panchayats.

Apart from this amount, an outreach to 9 lakh people with government programmes in the next six months has been set for the administration of the State. This would involve a disbursement of nearly ₹1,600 crore under various heads such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the Integrated Child Development Scheme. "Since Kashmir did not have local body polls from 2011, the grant from

the 14th Finance Commission could not be released or disbursed," said a government official.

The attempt is to shore up the panchayats by infusing the village-level set-ups with enough money for infrastructure such as panchayat buildings and small works, the bigger plan is to create some traction for devolution of powers at the grassroots, and an alternative space for political activity. Whether or not the experiment will pay off is still to be seen, but devolution, as witnessed in other parts of the country, is a process that creates its own possibilities. A fact that the Centre is counting on.

Sticking points

While the fund situation is likely to ease post budget, the political questions, however, remain. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Shaheena Parveen, elected sarpanch from Bijbehara, the pocket borough of the PDP's Muftis, says that security remains an

issue. "Why should I give any proof to agencies that there is a threat to my life? The fact that I held on to the Indian flag by the simple fact of contesting should be enough," she said. Abid Hussain Khan, from Kulgam said that elected sarpanchs have been getting some blow back locally. "We were accused by others of being the agent of some [security] agencies. If the sarpanchs have risked all to contest, then the government should encourage us by all means available," he said.

Leading from below

Home Minister Amit Shah told Parliament last week that other levels of local bodies will be seeing polls soon. Senior government officials in Srinagar shared the view that a vast infusion of political workers, both as part of and separate from the State's main political parties, is a phenomenon that could have an effect on the politics of the State.

'Enhance prestige of Parliament'

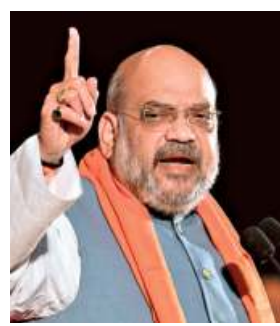
Amit Shah appeals to first-term MPs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday told first-term MPs of the Lok Sabha that they must work to enhance the prestige of Parliament, pointing out his own agreement with the view that legislatures had "weakened" over time ceding space to the judiciary and executive.

Addressing first-time Lok Sabha members at an orientation programme, Mr. Shah said the blame for it lay with the legislature and cautioned that a continued skewed balance between the three pillars of democracy could be devastating and even imperil democracy.

"Over a period of time, this is everybody's complaint and rightly so that the legislature has weakened a bit, and the judiciary and executive have dominated it a little. For this, we sometimes blame judiciary or executive, saying that bureaucrats do not hear us or judiciary has encroached on



Amit Shah

our territory," he said.

"I as a parliamentarian agree with this but will say that blame for it does not lie with the judiciary and executive but the legislature, us all. There is such a fine balance that if they allow the legislature to go down, other institutions will automatically encroach on its turf," he told the MPs.

"This is our duty to strengthen it," Mr. Shah said. He asked them to use the MPLAD funds allocated to them annually as per prescribed guidelines, and said many MPs had received a bad name by not doing so.

Protesting veterans meet Rajnath Singh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A group of veterans of the Indian Ex-Servicemen Movement met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh earlier this week to apprise him of their protest demanding the "rightful implementation" of One Rank, One Pension (OROP) and the ongoing case in the Supreme Court over the issue.

"He is new to the defence ministry; so we were keen to brief him at the earliest on our main issue, OROP," Major General Satbir Singh (retd), Chairman of IESM, told *The Hindu*. "He listened to us very patiently. He was non-committal as he has to go through the whole correspondence and go through a process. He said he will speak to us again after that," Maj. Gen. Singh added. The delegation of seven veterans met the Minister on July 1. Veterans under the IESM banner have been protesting at Jantar Mantar since OROP was notified in 2015.

Mahua Moitra moves privilege motion

TV channel accused her of 'plagiarism'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Trinamool MP Mahua Moitra on Thursday moved a breach of privilege motion in the Lok Sabha against a private Hindi news channel and its Editor for reporting that her first speech in Parliament was plagiarised.

When she raised the issue during Question Hour, Speaker Om Birla informed her that he had received a notice and the matter was under his consideration.

However, when she named the channel and the Editor, Mr. Birla didn't allow it as the journalist was not a member of the House. After drawing praise on social media for her speech, the Trinamool MP was trolled on allegations of plagiarism.

"The reason there is so much of mudslinging and lies sold as news to the unsuspecting public all over is because the perpetrators are allowed impunity by the powers that be," Ms. Moitra tweeted.

Defence Minister Rajnath



Mahua Moitra

Singh told the House that Puducherry Lt. Governor Kiran Bedi had expressed her 'deep regret' over her tweet on the water crisis in Chennai and urged it to put the matter to rest.

The Minister said the Home Ministry had taken notice of Ms. Bedi's remarks - in which she blamed the 'corrupt politics' of Tamil Nadu for the water crisis in Chennai - and said the matter was also raised in the House by DMK leader T.R. Baalu on Wednesday.

When Mr. Baalu raised the issue, Mr. Singh said Ms. Bedi has apologised and the matter should be treated as closed.

Economic Survey presented in the Parliament today signals towards worrying signs for our economy. GDP growth rate is virtually stagnant and all indicators point that we are in a slowdown

ARVIND KEJRIWAL
Delhi Chief Minister



The Survey provides a comprehensive and clear picture of economic trends and challenges ahead. The measures to accelerate investments, especially from the private sector, to give a push to growth are the steps in the right direction

RAJIV KUMAR
NITI Aayog vice chairman



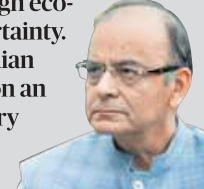
There is a lot of information on good governance in those texts and the Survey needs to be complimented for not just quoting Kautilya but also Kamandakiya Nitisara

BIBEK DEBROY
Chairman of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister



From the highest level of economic policy uncertainty in 2011-12, India has made a leap into the era of high economic policy certainty. The graph of Indian growth story is on an upward trajectory

ARUN JAITLEY
BJP leader



Economic Survey is pessimistic about the economy and makes a feeble attempt to wake up the ruling party from its deep slumber of inaction on the economic front

RANDEEP SURJEWALA
Congress leader



We should focus on a virtuous cycle — increase in investments leads to higher productivity and this, in turn, leads to higher exports and more jobs

KRISHNAMURTHY SUBRAMANIAN
Chief Economic Adviser



'Greying India must delay retirement'

Survey says the elderly population is expected to nearly double from 8.6% in 2011 to 16% by 2041

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

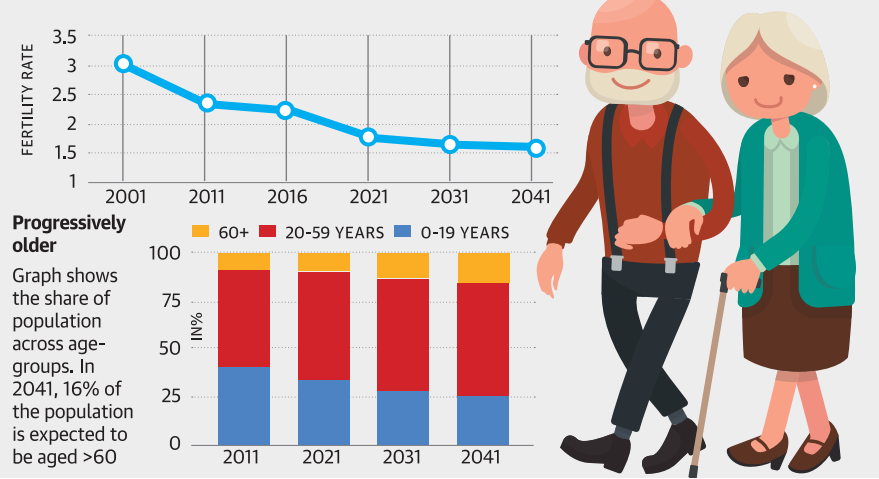
India may have to raise the retirement age as the country sees a rapid increase in the size of the elderly population over the next two decades due to the slowing down of the population growth rate, according to the Economic Survey 2018-19.

It is forecast that the population rate will grow less than 1% from 2021 to 2031 and under 0.5% from 2031 to 2041. This is primarily due to the fall in the total fertility rate (TFR), which is projected to decline between 2021-2041 and fall below replacement level fertility at 1.8 as early as 2021.

The total fertility rate of 2.1 is called the replacement level fertility below which populations begin to decline. For India, the effective replacement level fertility is slightly higher than the normal benchmark due to the skewed gender ratio and is at 2.15-2.2. The current TFR in 14 out of the 22 major States

Ageing India

With decreasing fertility rates and increasing life expectancy numbers, India is set to witness an increase in its aged, based on projected figures. First graph shows India's total fertility rate



is already below the effective replacement level fertility.

At the State level, southern States as well as West Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh have below replacement level fertility and will see TFR decline to 1.5-1.6 by 2021. And

by 2031, all States are likely to see below replacement level fertility.

The size of the elderly population, 60 years and above, is expected to nearly double from 8.6% in 2011 to 16% by 2041, whereas the population size of those bet-

ween 0-19 years, which is on the decline, is likely to drop from as high as 41% in 2011 to 25% by 2041.

This will throw new policy challenges such as provision for health and old-age care, access to retirement-related financial services, public

pension funding, and retirement age, states the survey.

"Increasing the retirement age for both men and women going forward could be considered in line with the experience of other countries. This will be key to the viability of pension systems and would also help increase female labour force participation in the older age-groups," it suggests.

Many countries such as the U.S., Germany and France have already raised the retirement age to reduce the burden on pension funding. The working-age population is expected to see a large increase leading to India's demographic dividend peaking around 2041, when the share of those in the age group of 20-59 is expected to hit 59%. The survey highlights that this will mean additional jobs will have to be created to keep pace with annual increase in working-age population of 9.7 million during 2021-31 and 4.2 million during 2031-41.

Needed: a well-designed minimum wage system

Survey calls for streamlining the complex mechanism

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A well-designed and streamlined minimum wage system is required to reduce wage inequality in the country, the Economic Survey says.

Currently, the minimum wage system, under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, in India is complex, with 1,915 different minimum wages defined for different job categories across States, the survey said. Despite the complex system, workers were still falling through the gaps, it said.

"One in every three wage workers in India is not protected by the minimum wage law," it said, citing the International Labour Organisation.

For instance, the survey stated, domestic workers were covered under minimum wage laws in only 18 States and Union Territories. It also pointed out that while



the law did not discriminate between men and women, analysis of different wages showed a bias.

"For instance, women dominate in the category of domestic workers while men dominate in the category of security guards. While both these occupations fall within the category of unskilled workers, the minimum wage rate for domestic workers within a State is consistently lower than that for the minimum wage rates for security guards," the survey said.

Apart from increasing the ambit of the minimum wage system, it recommended deciding minimum wages on the basis of skills and split across geographical regions. With the government in the process of bringing the Code on Wages Bill in Parliament, the survey said the rationalisation of minimum wages proposed by the Bill should be supported.

The survey suggested the government should notify a "national floor minimum wage" across five regions, after which the States can fix their own minimum wages, but not lower than the floor wage.

This, it said, would bring uniformity and make States "almost equally attractive from the point of view of labour cost for investment as well as reduce distress migration."



Sordid state: Garbage clogging a drain near the Seelampur area in New Delhi. ■ R.V.MOORTHY

Private funds needed for Swachh Bharat

100% safe disposal of waste targeted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

With the Centre claiming that 99.2% of rural India is now open defecation-free, the next big goal on the Swachh Bharat journey is the 100% safe and scientific disposal of solid and liquid waste, according to the Economic Survey 2018-19.

However, it emphasises that the large resources needed to reach this milestone will need to be met through crowd and corporate funding, private partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms along with government allocations.

'Positive impact'

Progress in the first phase of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, focussing on toilet construction and use, had a positive impact on the health, economy and environment of rural India, said the report, citing a number of studies. However, these benefits will not be sustainable if solid and liquid waste management is ignored.

"Currently, many States are not concentrating enough on this aspect which could pull us back to where we were a few years ago. Scientific techniques for the safe and effective disposal of waste should be the next on the agenda for this mission," says the survey.

According to it, the scientific disposal of waste has a noticeable impact on "social development", referring to the sanitation workers and manual scavengers who now work to dispose of waste, mostly in unscientific and unsafe ways.

Some of the areas which

must be dealt with in this next phase are sewer construction and water availability, scientific techniques for waste disposal, treatment of industrial effluence, drain bio-remediation, river surface cleaning, sustained rural sanitation and monitoring of villages, says the survey.

"As the resource requirements are large, there is a need to facilitate and sustain innovative financing mechanisms by exploring the suitability of various financial instruments in specific contexts and interventions," it says.

Some examples are micro-financing, concessional loans, private partnerships, corporate social responsibility, and crowd funding aligned with local government financing.

While these can ensure a smooth flow of funds for the procurement of various scientific technologies for waste disposal and mass awareness, governments must also "assign significant weight to the allocation of adequate resources as improvement in sanitation is one of the key determinants for the wider economic development," says the survey.

Mindset change

Apart from financial resources, mindset change is the other major ingredient required for sustained progress in sanitation. The swachhagrahis or village level ambassadors who have already been recruited for Phase 1 of the programme are key to maintaining momentum, it says, in keeping with its thrust on leveraging behavioural economics.

Only tall claims, no vision, says Opposition

Glosses over plight of millions, whitewashes terrible economic record of past five years: Yechury

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties slammed the Economic Survey saying that it made tall claims, was clueless on the government's vision for the country and did not reflect ground reality.

CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury said it ignored the challenges faced by millions of Indians. The leader also said the survey "whitewashes" the "terrible" economic record of the last five years and hit out at the government over the resignation of top RBI officials.

"The Economic Survey is full of bombastic claims and grandiose declarations with-

out any basis in facts," he said. Mr. Yechury added that any growth strategy on private investment will be a non-starter.

"Economic growth needs more purchasing power amongst people, not more investment with higher unemployment," he added.

'Glossing over'

The survey, he said, glossed over the major challenges faced by millions of Indians in the past five years.

"The departure of so many RBI governors and previous CEA tells us of the harsh reality," Mr. Yechury said. His colleague from the

The Economic Survey is full of bombastic claims and grandiose declarations without any basis in facts. Any growth strategy based on private investment will be a non-starter; economic growth needs more purchasing power amongst people, not more investment with higher unemployment

SITARAM YECHURY
CPI(M) general secretary



Communist Party of India, D. Raja, said that blaming the past will not help the country.

"...The government is trying to shirk its own responsibility. The survey does not portray the real picture of the economy. Instead it is

making tall claims in flowery language. It should have given a road map for the way forward," Mr. Raja said.

Trinamool Congress Parliamentary Party leader in the Rajya Sabha Derek O' Brien in a cryptic tweet indicated that the survey was

fuzzy about the government's vision. "Spent three hours this afternoon, speed reading the two volumes of the #EconomicSurvey2019. It's a cloudy, overcast afternoon in Delhi. Enough said," Mr. O'Brien tweeted.

Stagnant growth

The Economic Survey showed that India's growth rate was stagnant, Aam Aadmi Party convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said.

"...It signals worrying signs for our economy. GDP growth rate is virtually stagnant and all indicators point that we are in a slowdown," he tweeted.



Outlook is pessimistic: Chidambaram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said the Economic Survey tabled in Parliament on Thursday was "pessimistic" and didn't have any sector-wise growth projections.

Mr. Chidambaram, in a statement, said the volume 02 of the Economic Survey did flag issues such as slowing growth, falling revenues and rising oil prices that were "neither positive nor encouraging."

"It appears to me that the government, speaking through the Economic Survey, is pessimistic about the economy," he said.

The first economic survey of the new government under Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, claimed Mr. Chidambaram, opens with self-congratulatory references about the economy performing well in the past five years and had a 'bland' outlook for the year ahead.

"I looked for the Outlook for 2019-20. It is in Volume-2, Chapter 01, but there is only a bland statement that growth of the economy is expected to be 7% in 2019-20. There are no growth projections sector wise," he said.

Mr. Chidambaram said chapter 02 of Volume 2 of the survey came closest in terms of describing the 'Outlook for 2019-20'.

"The economic survey flags (1) slowing growth, (2) shortfall in revenue, (3) finding resources without compromising the fiscal deficit target, (4) impact of oil prices on the current account and (5) recommendations of the Fifteenth Finance Commission on central government finances. I am afraid, none of these is positive or encouraging," he said.

India's economic growth, according to the survey, is expected to register 7% this year from a five year low.

Zero train collisions, 46 derailments

But incidents related to fire go up to 6



The total number of train accidents came down from 104 in 2016-17 to 59 in 2018-19, the Survey said. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

While the incidents of train collisions came down to zero and those of derailments declined to 46 during last year, occurrence of fire in trains went up to six, according to data provided in the Economic Survey 2018-19.

The category-wise break-up of consequential train accidents shows that the incident of collisions has come down to zero in 2018-19 from three in 2017-18, while those of derailment declined to 46 from 54 in the previous year. However, incidents related to fire in trains increased to six in the year 2018-19 as against three in 2017-18, the survey said. The total number of train

accidents came down from 104 in 2016-17 and 73 in 2017-18 to 59 in 2018-19.

Additionally, the survey said that in 2018-19, Indian Railways carried 1221.39 million tonnes of revenue earning freight, an increase of 61.84 million tonnes or 5.33% over 2017-18.

The revenue earning freight loading by Indian Railways during 2017-18 was placed at 1159.55 million tonnes as against 1106.15 million tonnes during 2016-17, up 4.83%.

"There is an increase of 2.09% in the number of passengers carried by railways during 2017-18 as compared to 2016-17 and 0.64% increase in 2018-19 as compared to 2017-18," the survey said.

Call to ease legal logjam for better contract enforcement

'Economic activity affected by delays across legal landscape'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Contract enforcement remains the single biggest constraint to improve India's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) ranking, which currently stands at 163 in the world ranking, the Economic Survey 2018-19 said.

It remarked that in spite of a number of actions to expedite and improve the contract enforcement regime, economic activity was affected by the long shadow of delays and pendency across the legal landscape.

Noting that the relationship between economic governance and the rule of law (Dandaniti) is the key to prosperity, and a bulwark against *Matsyanyaya* (law of the fish/jungle), the survey said two key issues need to be dealt with in order to make the judiciary more efficient and to clear the 'legal logjam'.

Firstly, the courts must achieve a 100% case clearance rate (CCR) so that there is zero accumulation to the existing pendency. Secondly, the backlog of cases already present in the system must be removed.

CCR is the ratio of the number of cases disposed of in a given year to the number of cases instituted in that year.

District and Subordinate

Justice delayed

Indian courts had a backlog of more than three crore cases in 2018. Table shows the additional number of judges required to clear this backlog

Parameter	D&S*	HC**	SC*
Case backlog (2018)	3,03,95,534	42,39,966	56,320
Additional judges required to clear this backlog in 5 years	10,431	454	9
Judges working as a % of sanctioned strength	78.64%	62.19%	90.32%
Disposal rate per judge	746 cases	2,348	1,415



*District and Subordinate Courts **High Court *Supreme Court

(D&S) courts, which account for the bulk of pendency, received 1.5 crore additional cases in 2018 and had a backlog of 2.87 crore (as on January 1, 2018).

But it managed to dispose of 1.33 crore cases in the year, thus, closing 2018 at 3.04 crore.

There are currently 17,891 judges compared to the sanctioned strength of 22,750. On average, a judge disposes of 746 cases.

"In order to reach 100% CCR in 2018, the D&S courts needed 2,279 additional judges. This is within the

sanctioned strength! However, in order to clear all the backlog in the next five years, a further 8,152 judges are needed," the survey said.

It suggested improving the efficiency of the courts, increasing number of working days of courts, establishment of Indian Courts and Tribunal Services, and deployment of technology in legal system.

"Given the potential economic and social multipliers of a well-functioning legal system, this may well be the best investment India can make," it said.

IN BRIEF

**Amid Ukraine crisis, Pope, Putin hold talks**

VATICAN CITY
Russian President Vladimir Putin thanked Pope Francis for "very substantive" talks on Thursday, a day before Ukraine's Catholic leaders were due at the Vatican. "It was a very substantive, interesting discussion," he said. A statement from the Vatican stated that the talks concentrated on the situations in Syria, Ukraine and Venezuela. REUTERS

Tehran fumes as Britain seizes Iranian oil tanker

LONDON/DUBAI
British Royal Marines seized a giant Iranian oil tanker in Gibraltar on Thursday for trying to take oil to Syria in violation of EU sanctions, a dramatic step that drew Tehran's fury. Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned the British ambassador to voice "its very strong objection to the illegal and unacceptable seizure" of its ship. The diplomatic gesture lifted any doubt over Iran's ownership of the vessel. REUTERS

U.S. is hell-bent on sanctions, says N. Korea

UNITED NATIONS
North Korea has accused the U.S. of being "hell-bent on hostile acts" days after the countries' leaders agreed to resume denuclearisation talks. Pyongyang's delegation to the UN on Wednesday said the U.S. continues to be "obsessed with sanctions". It complained that while Mr. Trump invited Mr. Kim Jong-un to hold talks, the U.S. had also sent a letter to all UN members urging them to send back North Korean workers. AFP

China signals Xi won't bow to Hong Kong protesters' demands

Storming of legislature has prompted the sharpest denunciations in Beijing so far

STEVEN LEE MYERS
BEIJING

When protesters in Hong Kong became more forceful on Monday, the *People's Daily* reprised a recent speech of China's leader, Xi Jinping, calling on party cadres to carry forward the struggle of the communist revolution fought 70 years ago.

"We must overcome all kinds of difficulties, risks and challenges," he said.

It was the latest signal that Mr. Xi has no intention of bowing to the protesters' demands for greater rights. On the contrary, the storming of Hong Kong's legislature on Monday night seems to have given ammunition to hardliners and prompted the sharpest denunciations in Beijing so far, suggesting the ruling Communist Party's patience was wearing thin.

"I think they have realised it is time to take measures" to restore order, Song Xiaozhuang, a professor in the Center for Basic Laws of Hong Kong and Macao at Shenzhen University, said in a telephone interview, referring to authorities in Beijing. "This does not mean there is no patience, or that they want to get it done promptly, but it does mean that they cannot wait for long."

Mr. Xi has not publicly addressed the political tumult in Hong Kong. Nor have officials disclosed any options they might be considering. But there is little doubt about Mr. Xi's convictions, which are shaped by history and a deeply felt sense of the perils of popular uprisings.



Writing on the wall: A July 3 photo of the Hong Kong Legislative Council lobby, which was damaged by protesters. • AP

"I have heard him talk at length, and passionately, about the challenges of governing China, and the need to maintain order in order to keep the country together," said Ryan L. Hass, who served in the Obama administration.

He noted that the mass protests that toppled authoritarian governments in North Africa and West Asia in 2011 coincided with Mr. Xi's ascent to the presidency and were "seared into his brain".

Sense of destiny

Mr. Xi's stance is not without risks, but he has governed with a millenarian sense of destiny, regularly exhorting the Communist Party to return to its original mission to transform the nation into the global power.

While the events in Hong Kong have generated considerable sympathy for the protesters, forcing the city's leader to back down and sus-

pend a deeply unpopular extradition Bill, Mr. Xi still has most of the advantages of power on his side.

Those include time and influence. The central government can still mobilise a vast network of supporters in Hong Kong, including civil servants and business people beholden to the central government, economically or politically.

In a last resort, there is also the Chinese military. Few analysts expect Mr. Xi intends to use force, but few doubt that he would if security significantly deteriorated in the city.

The People's Liberation Army disclosed on Tuesday that troops from its Hong Kong garrison had conducted training exercises last week.

One photograph accompanying an article in the official military newspaper showed soldiers aboard a gunboat in Victoria Harbor, weapons drawn, with the ci-

ty's skyline in the background.

After weeks of relative restraint, officials in Beijing have also begun to warn of grave repercussions. A spokesman for the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office warned that the defacing of the legislature was "a blatant challenge" to Beijing's red line: its sovereignty over the territory. The *Global Times*, a nationalist tabloid controlled by the Communist Party, called for "a zero-tolerance policy", warning that more violence could open a Pandora's box.

That the protests in Hong Kong took place shortly following the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests and other cities in China has only hardened official views. This year is also the anniversary of the popular movements that swept Eastern Europe in 1989, toppling not only the Berlin Wall but also, ultimately, the Soviet Union itself two years later.

"There has also been a tendency to present these struggles — and Tiananmen was presented this way — as not being spontaneous expressions of the popular will," Jeffrey Wasserstrom, a professor of history at the University of California, Irvine, wrote in an email, "even in cases when that is clearly what they are." Rather, he wrote, Beijing describes such protests as "illegitimate efforts by small sets of malcontents spurred on by mysterious foreign forces." NY TIMES

STF, police personnel acquitted over Lanka students' murder

Five persons were shot dead at Trincomalee in 2006

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

A magistrate court in Sri Lanka has acquitted Special Task Force (STF) and police personnel accused of killing five students in Trincomalee in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province, in 2006.

According to the State-run *Daily News*, the Trincomalee Chief Magistrate on Wednesday released 13 suspects, including 12 STF members allegedly linked to the gruesome killings, after clearing them of "all charges".

Local human rights organisations and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights cite the students' killings as an "emblematic case" raising difficult questions about war crimes and accountability in Sri Lanka.

Even as the STF's possible role in the murder was widely speculated by those familiar with the developments

in the island's eastern district, a U.S. State Department cable from October 2006, which was later released by WikiLeaks, quotes Basil Rajapaksa, brother and advisor of then President Mahinda Rajapaksa, as telling the then U.S. Ambassador Robert Blake: "We know the STF did it, but the bullet and gun evidence shows that they did not. They must have separate guns when they want to kill someone. We need forensic experts. We know who did it, but we can't proceed in prosecuting them."

Charged for murder

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probing the case charged the STF suspects for murder, for "shooting the students", who had gathered to meet near the Gandhi roundabout in Trincomalee. While the

CID had named 36 witnesses, eight of them failed to appear in court and who had migrated abroad were absent, according to local media reports.

University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna), a group of academics that documented rights violations committed by state forces, the LTTE, and the IPKF, in 2007 published a report on the incident, pointing to "lapses" in investigations.

"It was a shocking case in which the State has operated with blatant impunity; its disregard for the rule of law has been offensive and insidious. Numerous exposes and statements by human rights agencies have been released on the subject that provide overwhelming evidence of state complicity, but as usual the case has stalled," the UTHR said in the report.

New EU chief seeks 'smart advice'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRUSSELS

European Union President-elect Ursula von der Leyen on Thursday made her first trip to Brussels since being nominated as senior officials sought to shore up support for her appointment in the European Parliament.

After talks with Jean-Claude Juncker, the man she is to replace as European Commission President, current German Defence Minister von der Leyen tweeted she had come to seek "smart advice" as she prepares her



Ursula von der Leyen

cooked up by EU national leaders over three days of tortuous summit wrangling.

"My priorities will be to seek smart advice, listen to all parliamentary groups and together work out the best plan for the future of Europe," she tweeted, a day after talks with MEPs at the Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France. The multilingual von der Leyen sent out the message in English, French and German after a warm welcome from Mr. Juncker at Commission headquarters in Brussels.

plan for the next five years.

She must win the approval of the highly fragmented European Parliament, where there have been grumblings about the deal to appoint her, which was

China says U.S. tariffs must be lifted for a trade deal

Talks to break deadlock to begin next week, says Washington

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

U.S. tariffs against China must be lifted for the two sides to reach a deal to end the trade war, the Chinese Commerce Ministry said on Thursday.

Trade teams from the world's top two economies "have maintained communication", Ministry spokesman Gao Feng said, days after Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping agreed at the G20 in Japan to revive negotiations.

"The United States' unilateral tariff increase on China's exports to the United States is the starting point for the Sino-U.S. economic and trade frictions," Mr. Gao said at a weekly press briefing. "If the two sides can reach an agreement, the tariffs imposed must be completely eliminated. China's attitude toward this is clear



Donald Trump and Xi Jinping

and consistent," Mr. Gao said.

The countries have exchanged tariffs on \$360 billion in two-way trade and negotiations broke down in May after the United States accused China of reneging on its commitments.

The U.S. leader said he would not slap new tariffs on Chinese exports and suggested he could take a softer stance on Chinese telecom giant Huawei, which he has moved to blacklist.

On Wednesday, Trump administration officials said top representatives of the U.S. and China are organising a resumption of talks for next week to try to resolve the trade war. "Those talks will continue in earnest this coming week," White House Economic Adviser Larry Kudlow told reporters.

An official from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said later that the two sides were in the process of scheduling a principal-level phone call with Chinese officials for next week.

Mr. Kudlow was unclear about the timeline for relaunching face-to-face talks. "I don't know precisely when. They're on the phone. They're going to be on the phone this coming week and they'll be scheduling face-to-face meetings," he said.

(With Reuters inputs)

Imran Khan to visit U.S. on July 22

MEHMAL SARFRAZ
LAHORE

Prime Minister Imran Khan will travel to the U.S. to meet President Donald Trump on July 22, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry said on Thursday. This is Mr. Khan's first visit to the U.S. after he became the Prime Minister.

In his weekly media briefing in Islamabad, Mohammad Faisal, a spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry, said: "At the invitation of U.S. President Donald Trump, Prime Minister Imran Khan will visit Washington and hold a meeting with President Trump on July 22. The agenda of the meeting is being prepared through diplomatic channels... The focus will be to refresh the bilateral relationship."

The announcement comes at a time when the U.S. is seeking Pakistan's help in finding a way out of Afghanistan.

Submarine reactor safe, Putin told

REUTERS
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin disclosed on Thursday for the first time that a secret military submarine hit by a fatal fire three days ago was nuclear-powered, prompting the Defence Minister to assure him its reactor had been safely contained.

Mr. Putin revealed that the submarine had been nuclear-powered by asking Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu during a Kremlin meeting about the reactor's condition after the fire.

"The nuclear reactor on the vessel is completely isolated," Mr. Shoigu told Mr. Putin, according to a Kremlin transcript. "All the necessary measures were taken by the crew to protect the reactor, which is in complete working order."

Trump, protesters gear up for an untraditional July Fourth

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

In a sweltering capital threatened by storms, the traditional Fourth of July parade on Thursday served as a warm-up act to a distinctly nontraditional evening event at the Lincoln Memorial, where President Donald Trump made plans to command the stage against the backdrop of a show of military muscle.

Protesters unimpressed by his "Salute to America" programme inflated a roly-poly balloon depicting Mr. Trump as an angry, diaper-clad baby.

With his decision to add his own production to the usual festivities, Mr. Trump set himself up to be the first President in nearly seven decades to address a crowd at the National Mall on Independence Day. "I will speak on behalf of our great Coun-



A girl taking part in Independence Day celebrations. • REUTERS

try!" he said in a morning tweet. "Perhaps even Air Force One will do a low & loud sprint over the crowd."

But thunderstorms threatened, with periods of "torrential rain" forecast by the National Weather Service.

"We think that he is making this about himself and it's really a campaign rally," said Medea Benjamin, co-director of the anti-war organisation Codepink. "We think

that he's a big baby... He's erratic, he's prone to tantrums, he doesn't understand the consequences of his actions. And so this is a great symbol of how we feel about our President."

In a message marking the 243rd anniversary of the Founding Fathers' adoption of the Declaration of Independence, Mr. Trump called the document a milestone that "cast off the shackles of tyranny."

The Pentagon was arranging for an Air Force B-2 stealth bomber and other warplanes to conduct flyovers. There will be Navy F-35 and F-18 fighter jets, the Navy Blue Angels aerobatics team, Army and Coast Guard helicopters and Marine V-22 Ospreys. A small number of Army Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles were stationed in the zone.

MARKET WATCH		
	04-07-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	39,908	0.17
US Dollar	68.50	0.56
Gold	33,210	-0.49
Brent oil	63.58	0.80

NIFTY 50		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	414.90	0.00
Asian Paints	1359.70	7.70
Axis Bank	808.85	2.65
Bajaj Auto	2894.80	-2.95
Bajaj Finserv	8537.55	107.10
Bajaj Finance	3732.50	17.10
Bharti Airtel	362.75	9.55
BPC	380.00	-1.20
Britannia Ind	2841.35	46.65
Cipla	551.55	-1.70
Coal India	251.10	0.15
Dr Reddys Lab	2602.40	5.70
Eicher Motors	19825.40	175.30
GAIL (India)	307.80	2.55
Grasim Ind	941.60	13.70
HCL Tech	1040.75	-10.45
HDFC	2280.25	3.05
HDFC Bank	2483.80	-5.85
Hero MotoCorp	2606.15	18.65
Hindalco	206.90	-1.80
Hind Unilever	1793.60	8.90
Indiabulls FHL	703.85	12.90
ICICI Bank	436.20	0.25
IndusInd Bank	1493.10	22.50
Bharti Infratel	263.10	-2.55
Infosys	733.80	2.50
Indian Oil Corp	156.55	0.40
ITC	277.65	0.95
JSW Steel	275.05	-2.35
Kotak Bank	1497.80	22.80
L&T	1571.70	-6.35
M&M	672.15	2.90
Mauriti Suzuki	6544.45	10.65
NTPC	143.45	0.20
ONGC	167.10	0.80
PowerGrid Corp	210.20	1.25
Reliance Ind	1284.00	1.45
State Bank	367.40	1.25
Sun Pharma	392.10	-3.60
Tata Motors	165.20	2.90
Tata Steel	495.30	-15.00
TCS	2242.65	5.00
Tech Mahindra	700.60	-0.50
Titan	1290.35	-38.10
UltraTech Cement	4645.35	84.20
UPL	698.35	46.55
Vedanta	171.05	-1.65
Wipro	283.85	1.00
YES Bank	96.25	-3.50
Zee Entertainment	356.45	-4.45

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on July 04		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	68.31	68.63
Euro	77.11	77.48
British Pound	85.90	86.30
Japanese Yen (100)	63.38	63.68
Chinese Yuan	9.94	9.99
Swiss Franc	69.30	69.62
Singapore Dollar	50.37	50.62
Canadian Dollar	52.26	52.51
Malaysian Ringgit	16.53	16.62

BULLION RATES CHENNAI		
July 04 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses		
Retail Silver (1g)	40.5	(40.7)
22 ct gold (1 g)	3255	(3274)

INTERVIEW | KRISHNAMURTHY SUBRAMANIAN

'FDI needed to spur the virtuous cycle in India'

Foreign savings can start investment, boost jobs, says CEA

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN

Foreign investment in India is needed to spur the domestic private investment cycle, says Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy Subramanian. Excerpts from a Q&A session:

Could you elaborate on what you mean about treating data as a public good?

Let me start with an example. Imagine a woman in a village accessing on her smart phone all the hospitals that are there in her vicinity. Not only can she access the hospitals but she can click on a particular hospital and get the quality of emergency care, let's say, of that hospital. And suppose, she can get this in the local language. Now, if someone falls ill in her village, she knows very well where to go. This is an example of ease of living that can be generated by bringing in data.

That is possible today and it can't happen without viewing data as a public good. While you have companies like Amazon, Google, etc. which utilise data, they do it in a particular area. They will only do it where there is profit, they are private entities.

Much like the government invests in public goods such as roads, ports, etc., these [data for public use] are areas where the private sector will not make investments. It can reduce inclusion and exclusion errors as well via Aadhaar.

That's the basic idea. And it can be created within the framework of the privacy laws in the country because

Banks have cleaned up their balance sheets and credit to large firms has started going up

we have the necessary technologies to do that.

The main plank of your Survey is that investment will drive all the other factors of the economy such as growth and job creation. Where will this investment come from?

When we were writing this chapter, we had the choice of going into each of these details or focussing on the big picture message, which is what we need to do to get on that 8% growth path.

These are questions to which we have the answers, but we wanted to keep the Survey focussed.

I think some of the overhang from the previous period has unwound completely. Second, banks have cleaned up their balance sheets and credit to large firms has started going up.

Third, which I think is a very important opportunity that we have not tapped enough, is that if you look at the global environment in terms of liquidity and the surplus and the interest rate environment that has been prevailing, it is as benign as it ever was. There is a lot of flush liquidity that is looking for ave-

nues for investment.

If you have an economy that is going to grow at 8% growth rates, this money finds it profitable to be invested there.

In order to trigger this virtuous cycle, we have to rely on some of these foreign savings. They can come in and start investment, and once this happens, that will enhance productivity, which creates jobs, fosters exports and thereby, demand.

In the Survey, you have missed out on focussing on the banking sector or the problems affecting the NBFC sector. Why is that?

As I articulated, we wanted to focus on the big picture. We will be writing another Survey in six months, that will be presented on January 30. So, we had to make a choice. One thing we knew very well when we started working on the Survey is that this will be the Survey of a new government and therefore, a government that potentially has five years to implement policies.



'Shift focus to water productivity'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

The Economic Survey 2018-19 has said as far as agriculture is concerned, the country should shift its focus from land productivity to irrigation water productivity and on devising policies to incentivise farmers to adopt efficient ways of water use.

This should become a national priority to avert a looming water crisis.

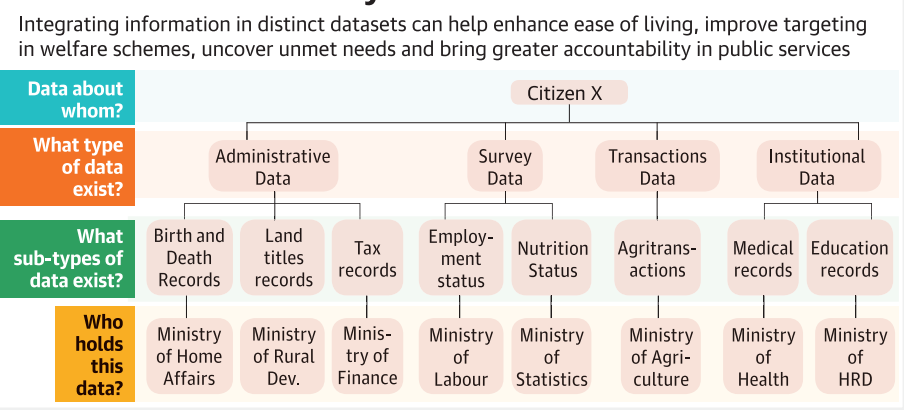
Agriculture remains the predominant occupation in terms of number of people employed. Also, agriculture is dependent highly on water. So, appropriate mechanism needs to be framed for economical use of water among small and marginal farmers, said the Survey.

"The cropping pattern in India is highly skewed towards crops that are water-intensive. The incentive structures like minimum support price, heavily subsidised electricity, water and fertilizers have played a significant role in the misalignment of crop patterns in the country," said the Survey, adding that the water guzzlers, paddy and sugarcane, consume more than 60% of irrigation water available in the country, reducing water availability for other crops.

The survey said States such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, which have high land productivity, tend to have very low irrigation water productivity, reflecting inefficient use of water and the need to recalibrate cropping pattern. "Adopting improved methods of irrigation and irrigation technologies will have a critical role in increasing irrigation water productivity," it said.

What data can do for you

SOURCE: ECONOMIC SURVEY 2018-19



Note: Names of some Ministries abbreviated. Data types and sub-types are illustrative examples and not exhaustive

Economic Survey moots central welfare database of citizens

'Information can be used to improve targeting in schemes'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Economic Survey 2018-19, tabled in Parliament on Thursday, pitched for setting up a central welfare database of citizens - by merging different data maintained by separate Ministries and departments - which can be tapped for enhancing ease of living for citizens, particularly the poor.

While the Survey pointed out that governments can create data as a public good within the legal framework of data privacy, it added that care must also be taken not to impose the "elite's preference of privacy on the poor, who care for a better quality of living the most."

Stringent safeguards

It also recommended granting access to select database to private sector for a fee, given that "stringent technological mechanisms exist to safeguard data privacy."

The Survey noted that there had been some discussions around the "linking" of datasets, primarily through the seeding of an Aadhaar number across databases such as PAN database, bank accounts and mobile numbers. However, it clarified

that the linking is "one-way." For example, banks can use the tokenised Aadhaar number to combine duplicate records and weed out benami accounts, but this does not mean that the UIDAI or government can read the bank account information or other data related to the individual. "While private sector does a good job of harnessing data where it is profitable, government intervention is needed in social sectors of the country where private investment in data remains inadequate," the Survey said.

These recommendations come at a time when India is working on finalising its personal data protection policy. "The principle is that most data are generated by the people, of the people and should be used for the people," it said.

The Survey highlighted that the governments already held a rich repository of administrative, survey, institutional and transactions data about citizens, but these data were scattered across numerous government bodies. Merging these distinct datasets would generate multiple benefits with the applications being limitless.

The government could utilise the information embedded in these distinct datasets to enhance ease of living for citizens, enable truly evidence-based policy, improve targeting in welfare schemes, uncover unmet needs, integrate fragmented markets, bring greater accountability in public services and generate greater citizen participation in governance, etc.

The datasets talked about inclusion of administrative data such as birth and death records, pensions, tax records, marriage records; survey data such as census data, national sample survey data; transactions data such as e-national agriculture market data, UPI data, institutional data and public hospital data on patients.

On granting access to the public sector, the Survey said, "Consistent with the notion of data as a public good, there is no reason to preclude commercial use of this data for profit... Although the social benefits would far exceed the cost to the government, at least a part of the generated data should be monetised to ease the pressure on government finances."

India could host 'Detroit' of EVs

The country sold 54,800 electric two-wheelers in 2018

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

With the right policies, it's possible that one of India's cities could become the "Detroit of electric vehicles," the Economic Survey said in a chapter on enabling inclusive growth through affordable, reliable and sustainable energy.

India has a "National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020 (NEMMP)" in place to "achieve sales" of 60-70 lakh units of electric vehicles (that includes buses, two-wheelers and cars) by 2020.

In 2015, the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme was launched to fast-track the goals of NEMMP with an outlay of ₹795 crore.

FAME India Phase II, with an emphasis on electrification of public transport, was also launched from April 1,

2019, with a total outlay of ₹10,000 crore over the next three years. Several states, had drafted EV policies.

Globally, the sales of electric cars have grown from just over 2,000 units sold in 2008 to over 10 lakh in 2017.

More than half of the sales were in China. The market share of electric cars is around 2% in China while it is around 39% in Norway. Electrification of two-wheelers and buses has also picked up. Global sales of electric buses were about one lakh and sales of two-wheelers were estimated at three crore, according to the chapter note.

In India, electric two-wheelers have been the major part of EV sales with sales of around 54,800 in 2018. Compared to this, sales of electric cars have been only around 2,000 in 2017, Indian market share in electric cars

is only 0.06%. According to the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV), Uttar Pradesh topped the list of the States with highest EV sales of 6,878 units in 2017-18, followed by Haryana at 6,307 units and Gujarat at 6,010 units. Maharashtra reported a sales of 4,865 EVs while West Bengal came in fifth with sales of 4,706 units.

India's adoption of electric vehicles, the report said, was part of its larger thrust towards increasing the share of renewable energy and reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The share of renewables (excluding hydro above 25 MW) in total power generation was around 10% in 2018-19 compared with around 6% in 2014-15. India stands fourth in wind power, fifth in solar power and fifth in renewable power installed capacity.

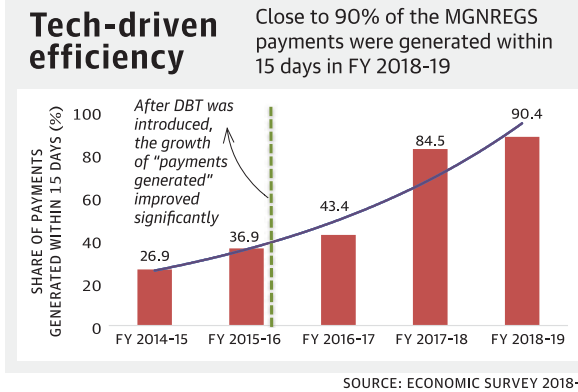
'Aadhaar aided MGNREGS beneficiaries'

Other welfare schemes must also implement Aadhaar-based payments: Economic Survey

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Refuting criticism of Aadhaar-linked payments and the direct benefit transfer system, the Economic Survey 2018-19 has used the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) as a case study to show the benefits of the use of technology in improving targeting and efficiency in welfare schemes, especially for the most vulnerable groups.

Going forward, the Survey recommends that digital technology and the JAM trinity - Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile - be expanded to other welfare schemes. The Survey cites data on the timeliness of wage payments, worker turnout, demand and supply of work under the scheme before and after Aadhaar-linked payments (ALP)



SOURCE: ECONOMIC SURVEY 2018-19

were implemented as a proof for its benefits.

Data show that in 2014-15, less than 27% of wage payments were generated within 15 days. Direct benefit transfers were introduced two years later. By 2018-19, more than 90% of wage payments were generated within 15 days. "Payment delays drive away farmers in genuine dis-

stress, while others not in distress take the benefits. A person undergoing economic distress needs immediate and certain liquidity. Working for uncertain promised wages, which are likely to be realised with a substantial lag, presents an unattractive proposition for a person in distress as delayed payments effectively imply zero wages

in adverse times," says the Survey. The Survey also compared the MGNREGS performance in blocks affected by drought versus other blocks, using drought as a proxy for distress. In drought-affected blocks, the number of persons demanding work increased more than 20% after the implementation of ALP, while there was no effect in other blocks. A similar trend is seen in the supply of work. Muster rolls, which are work site attendance registers, show a 19% increase after ALP implementation in most blocks. In drought-affected blocks, muster rolls increased by 44%.

"It appears that before the implementation of ALP, the rural poor treated MGNREGS as an option to earn additional income during good times rather than a shock absorber during bad times. This ac-

tually defeated the purpose of the programme. Post implementation of ALP, there is a reversal of trend, wherein an increase in demand for work under MGNREGS is observed in drought-affected areas," says the Survey, arguing that effective targeting has been possible because of ALP.

The Survey suggests that going forward, "demand for work under MGNREGS may be used to develop a real-time indicator of distress at the granular district or panchayat level." The Survey also recommends that other welfare schemes implement the lessons learnt from Aadhaar linkages in MGNREGS.

Scholarships, pensions, and subsidies for food, kerosene, and gas cylinders should be next in line to implement Aadhaar-based payments, it said.

'Recovery under IBC higher at 43%'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Recovery by financial creditors has seen a significant rise after the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) kicked in compared with the previous recovery regimes like Debt Recovery Tribunal, Lok Adalat and SARFAESI Act, the Economic Survey for 2018-19 pointed out.

Between 2007 and 2017, recovery from all those other sources was 23% while the same was 43% under the IBC between 2017-19. "These earlier mechanisms have resulted in an average recovery of 23% to lenders as against nearly 43% under the IBC," the Survey said. The overall recovery in resolved cases is nearly ₹74,497 crore for the financial creditors, the Survey said.

'Reward top taxpayers, shame defaulters'

Allowing fast-lane access, naming of roads, buildings after top taxpayers mooted

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA NEW DELHI

Rewarding top taxpayers with 'diplomatic' type privileges, fast-lane access, expedited boarding at airports and even naming of building and roads after them are some of the suggestions laid out in the Economic Survey 2018-19 to push tax compliance in the country.

The Economic Survey advocates the application of the behavioural principles to enhance tax compliance "as people often indulge in conspicuous consumption to convey their social status..."

The Survey recommended that top 10 highest tax payers within a district can be highlighted and accorded due recognition. "This may take



First in queue: The Survey recommended expedited boarding at airports, among others, for top taxpayers. *K. GOPINATHAN

the form of expedited boarding privileges at airports, fast-lane privileges on roads and toll booths, special 'diplomatic' type lanes at immigration counters, etc."

It added that the highest taxpayers over a decade could be recognised by naming important

buildings, monuments, roads, trains, initiatives, schools and universities, hospitals and airports in their name.

Honour 'clubs'

"The idea is to create exclusive membership of 'clubs' that exude not only social status but also

honour. Such steps can also help propagate the social norm that "paying taxes honestly is honourable," the Survey said. Another use of behavioural principles suggested in the Survey is public shaming of individuals who don't pay taxes to "reduce non-compliance if they are reintegrated immediately." It, however, added that persistent public shaming can be detrimental to compliance because of stigmatisation effects.

"If cheats feel that the probability of their detection has increased, voluntary disclosure programmes for tax payments can increase tax evasion incidence as these programmes may offer the possibility to avoid strict punishments," it said.

Survey calls for tax cuts, space for hotels in infra boost to tourism

Need to sensitise States on sector's push in rolling out jobs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Economic Survey 2018-19 has recommended a series of measures to boost the tourism sector, which saw a "sharp slowdown" last year.

The recommendations include increased budgetary allocation for development of infrastructure, making land available for hotels, and reduction in taxes.

The Survey, which was tabled in Parliament on Thursday, added that there was a need to strengthen the coordination mechanism of various Ministries and stakeholders to resolve issues in promotion of tourism in the country.

Additionally, the State governments need to be sensitised about tourism being a major driver of employment



and poverty alleviation, it said.

Pointing out that the sector experienced a sharp slowdown in 2018, the Survey stated that the foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in 2018-19 stood at 10.6 million compared with 10.4 million in 2017-18.

"In terms of growth, the growth rate of FTAs declined from 14.2% in 2017-18 to 2.1%

in 2018-19." Likewise, foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) from tourism stood at \$27.7 billion in 2018-19 as compared to \$28.7 billion in 2017-18. "In terms of growth, the FEEs declined from 20.6% in 2017-18 to -3.3% in 2018-19."

"Land should be made available for hotels and reserve land for hotels in all new townships under planning... Fast-track clearances for hotel projects... Increase skill development efforts to train more persons... Make the taxation regime on hospitality industry globally competitive," the Survey said.

The Survey also showed that FDI in hotel and tourism also declined from \$1,132 million in 2017-18 to \$1,076 million in 2018-19.

Yes Bank gets 9.47% stake in Eveready

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Yes Bank has acquired 9.47% stake in Eveready Industries by invoking pledged shares, the lender informed the exchanges.

The pledged shares were invoked since one of the group companies, McLeod Russel, defaulted.

"Shares have been acquired pursuant to invocation of pledge of shares of Eveready Industries India Limited subsequent to default/breach of terms of credit facilities sanctioned by Yes Bank to McLeod Russel India Limited which is a group company of BM Khaitan Group," Yes Bank said.

Eveready had a consolidated turnover of ₹1,541.86 crore in FY 2018-19.

Adani Power buys GMR unit for ₹4,792 cr.

PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI

Adani Power has signed a definitive share purchase agreement with GMR Infrastructure Ltd. (GIL) to buy its 47.62% stake in GMR Chhattisgarh Energy Ltd. (GCEL), held by its wholly owned subsidiary, GMR Generation Assets Limited (GGAL).

The company will buy the remaining stake from lenders as the consortium of lenders of GCEL adopted "change in management" as a resolution plan (RP) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India. The deal was executed at an enterprise value of ₹4,792 crore. The lenders followed a detailed bidding process.

ArcelorMittal bid for Essar Steel okayed

NCLAT rejects Ruia plea challenging eligibility; proceeds of the sale to be shared among creditors

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal on Thursday approved steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal-led ArcelorMittal's ₹42,000-crore bid for the acquisition of bankrupt Essar Steel.

Resolution plan tweaked

The tribunal, however, modified the Resolution Plan submitted by ArcelorMittal to safeguard the rights of the operational creditors and other financial creditors of Essar Steel. It said the proceeds of the sale were to be shared among the creditors.

A Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process was initiated in 2017 against debt-ridden Essar Steel Limited to recover ₹54,547 crore of unpaid dues to financial len-



Profits generated during pendency of insolvency proceedings can't be given to ArcelorMittal, the NCLAT said. •AFP

ders and operational creditors. The tribunal also clarified that any profits of Essar Steel generated during the pendency of the insolvency proceedings would al-

so be distributed among the creditors on a pro rata basis.

It said the profit cannot be given to the successful resolution applicant ArcelorMittal as it had not invested any

An issue settled by the Supreme Court [eligibility of ArcelorMittal] can't be re-agitated again and again

JUSTICE S.J. MUKHOPADHAYA

money during the insolvency process.

The tribunal also rejected the application by Prashant Ruia, the promoter, and Essar Steel Asia Holdings Limited, challenging the eligibility of ArcelorMittal as a bidder.

"An issue which has been settled by the Supreme Court i.e., eligibility of ArcelorMittal India Pvt. Ltd. as a resolution applicant for Essar Steel India Ltd., cannot be re-agitated again and again," the tribunal headed by Justice S.J. Mukhopadhyaya said.

Mr. Ruia had challenged the March 8, 2019 order of the Ahmedabad Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal approving ArcelorMittal's bid for the takeover of Essar Steel.

He had contested ArcelorMittal's eligibility on the ground that it had suppressed facts by stating that Mr. Lakshmi Mittal had completely exited from the Indian businesses of the Mittal family, more specifically, Gontermann Peipers India Ltd., GPI Textiles Ltd., and Balasore Alloys Ltd.

ArcelorMittal had argued that it was a mala fide attempt to derail the corporate insolvency resolution process. It also submitted that Mr. Ruia had no locus standi as his settlement plan was disallowed.

Ineligibility under Sec. 29A not considered: Essar

May move SC against NCLAT order

PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal's (NCLAT) decision to approve ArcelorMittal's bid for debt-laden Essar Steel has not gone down well with Essar Group promoters.

The group's promoters made a last minute bid of ₹54,389 crore to pay all creditors, financial and operational, compared with ArcelorMittal's ₹50,000 crore, which includes funds that it promised to pump into the Indian steel maker.

An Essar spokesperson said, "It appears that new facts regarding ineligibility under Section 29A, which emerged only after the previous judgment of the Supreme Court, have not been

given due consideration. We are awaiting the detailed order and will decide our course of action thereafter."

Essar's promoters can still move the Supreme Court against the tribunal's order, a source in the know of the development told *The Hindu*. "We can decide our course of action only after getting the detailed copy of the order." Essar promoters contested that the proposal of ArcelorMittal India was in violation of IBC code as the proposal if approved negates the right of 'Subrogation of the Guarantor'.

An ArcelorMittal spokesperson said, "We need to review the full written order to understand any implications on completion of the transaction."

Patel admits RBI was slow to take timely steps

Current capital buffers not enough to tackle huge amount of stress, he says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

A failure on the part of banks, the government and the regulator till 2014 has got us into the current bad loan mess and the resultant low capital buffers, Urjit Patel, the past Reserve Bank Governor, has said, asking all to resist the temptation of going back to status quo.

In his first comments after resigning as the RBI Governor on December 10 last year amid sharp differences with the government, Mr. Patel said banks indulged in over-lending while the government did not 'fully play' its role.

He also conceded that the regulator should have acted earlier.

Speaking at an event in Stanford University, Mr. Pa-



Urjit Patel

tel listed out the areas of concern for the country's banking sector, including high non-performing assets (NPAs), especially with state-run lenders, and current capital buffers being "over-stated" and insufficient to tackle the huge stress.

"How did we get here? Plenty of blame to go

around! Prior to 2014, all stakeholders failed to play their role adequately. Banks, the regulator and government," he said in the presentation.

It can be noted that after 2014, which saw a change of guard in government, the RBI, under the governorship of Raghuram Rajan, started an asset quality review that led to the recognition of the huge pile of hidden stress in the system and an attempt at resolution through the introduction of bankruptcy laws.

Sagging growth

These actions led to a sharp decline in banks' ability to fund the needs of the economy, where growth had been sagging.

Mr. Patel, who spent over five years at the RBI, including in his role as the Deputy

Governor, advised stakeholders to stay the course even in the face of difficulties.

"Temptation to reset 'back to the past' should be eschewed," Mr. Patel said, adding that 'episodic concerns' on stability are possible if there is 'foot dragging, or, worse, back-peddalling'.

"Short-cuts/sweeping the problem under the carpet is unlikely to work, but will only delay unlocking of capital, and come in the way of financing future investment efficiently," he warned.

On the Supreme Court striking down the February 12, 2018 circular, which was also a major bone of contention between him and the government, Mr. Patel said only time will tell whether a system of 'extend and pretend' will make a comeback.

CCI to probe Maruti Suzuki for discounting practices

'Resale price maintenance' banned as it affects competition

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

India's antitrust body on Thursday said it had ordered an investigation into how Maruti Suzuki, the country's biggest carmaker, controlled discounts its dealers could offer.

Reuters reported in May that the Competition Commission of India (CCI) was looking into allegations that Maruti forced its dealers to limit the discounts they offer, effectively stifling competition among them and harming consumers.

Carmakers, at times, set a limit on discounts to ensure there is no price war among dealers but Indian law says the practice, described as



Pricing battles: Carmakers, at times, set a limit on discounts to ensure there is no price war among dealers. •REUTERS

"resale price maintenance," is prohibited if it causes "appreciable adverse effect on competition in India."

Need for detailed probe

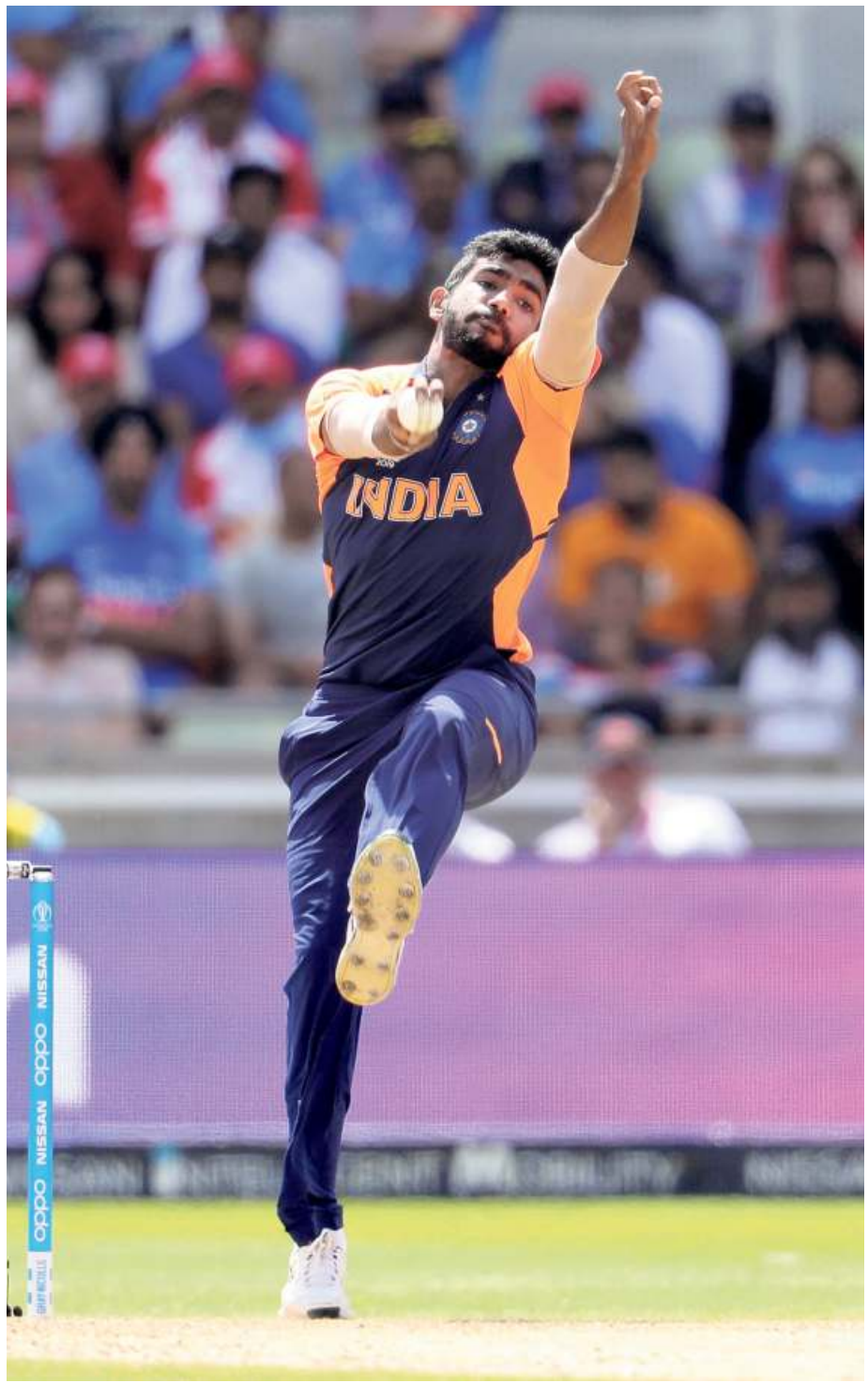
The CCI on Thursday said a detailed probe was needed to assess the methods used

by Maruti as the "allegations, prima facie, reveal a fit case for investigation in respect of the alleged resale price maintenance arrangement".

Maruti, majority-owned by Suzuki Motor Corp., did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In Bumrah, India has unearthed the real deal

From a conveyor belt that has thrown up trundlers and express-quicks, the pacer's unconventional action stands apart



One of a kind: Jasprit Bumrah's bowling action may be quirky, but top batsmen from across the board agree that he is one of the best in the business. • AP



K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR
LEEDS

Discussions about Indian cricket's lineage are often centred around wristy batsmen and wily spinners. It is as recurrent as water-melon slices sold on Indian streets during summer.

But India does have a tradition of fast bowling. It may be muted when compared to the riches in batting and the slow art of turn but there were purveyors who dispensed the red cherry at high velocity. When the weather-beaten pages of history are flipped, there are stirring references to the fast-men.

Former England captain Walter Hammond said this about Amar Singh, who bowled in India's inaugural Test at Lord's in 1932: "He is as dangerous an opening bowler as I have ever seen, coming off the pitch like the crack of doom". Interestingly, Amar Singh was partnered by the equally fiery Mohammad Nissar.

Varied range

As the years rolled by, the conveyor belt threw up a varied range. Some trundled in with a gentle rhythm, others bowled medium-pace and a few were express-quick. Kapil Dev, Javagal Srinath and Zaheer Khan lit up the legacy that Amar Singh and Nissar first shaped.

And in this digital age of Twitter-brevity, in walks Jasprit Bumrah with his lopsided grin and whirring arms that hypnotise willow-wielders. A series of rapid steps explodes into the shortest of sprints and then Bumrah leaps, his back arches in an exaggerated fashion and as the non-bowling arm leads the way, the right hand is a blur.

At the other end, a nervous batsman tries to counter whatever Bumrah can come up with, be it a delivery hovering temptingly around the off-stump, a yorker threatening toes and timber, a bouncer or even a slower-ball. It isn't easy squaring upto Bumrah's thunder-bolts and none are spared, even his team-mates at nets. Virat Kohli vouched for this trait and some paid a price too like Vijay Shankar did with a fractured toe while Bumrah's preamble remains constant: "If I practise better, I bowl better."

Drastically abridged

Bumrah's method isn't part of the conventional grid. The long looping run gaining pace before it culminates in the leap and delivery, the usual attribute of fast bowlers, has been drastically abridged in his case. He could be inflicting bio-mechanical stress upon his torso while generating all that pace from his shoulder but so far it has worked wonderfully well for him and India reaped the rewards.

It wasn't supposed to be this way because unconventional merchants of lightning were supposed to be found only in Sri Lanka. We still have Lasith Malinga, who with his slinging action is still raging against the light in his

last World Cup. It is sheer serendipity that both Malinga and Bumrah turn out for Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League. Obviously notes have been exchanged and surely the baton has been passed as Bumrah's skills, especially in the death overs, has won universal acclaim.

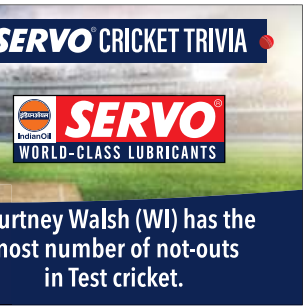
Through this World Cup, stars ranging from Chris Gayle to Aaron Finch have referred to Bumrah as the number one bowler. The words were uttered with respect and while his peers treat him with awe, the man in the vortex of attention, takes all this lightly. Wickets are taken, scoring-rate is slowed down but there are no exaggerated mannerisms. He is never rushed on the turf except while scampering in the deep to stop a four.

ASTOUNDING ECONOMY

While India sealed its semi-final spot, Bumrah deserves

much needed triumph and qualified for the last-four. When the great Waqar Younis did duty for Pakistan, in the neighbouring land there was always this yearning for an equivalent hero, someone who could scatter stumps with regularity. Zaheer did his bit but in Bumrah, India has unearthed the real deal. Shami isn't far too behind either.

It isn't as though Bumrah had an easy World Cup. In



credit too. His 14 wickets at an astounding economy rate of 4.61 along with a similar yield from Mohammed Shami, has helped Kohli's men keep a lid on the opposition despite the odd expensive affair involving England.

Against Bangladesh when its tail-enders targeted a miracle, Bumrah fired his yorkers and India secured its

early games, he bowled a touch short and was vulnerable to the cut and pull. But as the campaign warmed, his radar was back in the zone. As India gears up for its last set of contests in the World Cup, Bumrah will have to do what he does best, pushing the speed-gun and gifting trepidation to the opposition.

Kohli's men opt to rest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LEEDS

The Men in Blue opted to rest here on Thursday, preferring to be in their rooms besides sweating at the team hotel's gym. Initially a round of optional nets at an alternate venue was considered since Headingley got busy with the World Cup game between the West Indies and Afghanistan. But the plan was shelved while Sri Lanka, India's opponent for Saturday's match, trained at the Leeds University Ground.

Rijiju wishes team ahead of semifinals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday sent his wishes to the Indian cricket team ahead of its ICC World Cup semifinals.

Rijiju conveyed his wishes through a letter. Rijiju wrote, "The whole nation is inspired by your team's performance. Your passion, skills, togetherness and sportsmanship have been commendable throughout all the matches."

"A billion cheers galore as you go into play in the semifinals, hoping that this success continues through to the final, and you bring home the World Cup."

'Universe Boss' Gayle — omnipresent as ever

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR
LEEDS

The World Cup scripts fresh chapters and equally ushers in the last curtain. It is a cycle that repeats every four years where some teams gain fresh wind and veteran stars bid the long good-bye.

All eyes on Gayle

As the West Indies and Afghanistan clashed in an inconsequential game at Headingley here on Thursday, all eyes were on Chris Gayle.

This was supposed to be the last outing for the Universe Boss until he revealed plans of perhaps bowing out after the home series later against India.

Yet, one thing is certain; the big-built Jamaican will not be seen in another World

Cup. He is 39 and his best years have lapsed.

The belligerent opener failed to fire, falling cheaply for just seven but when Afghanistan commenced its pursuit, Gayle was omnipresent.

The southpaw lumbered at first slip, often appealing in hope, arms flung wide and topped with a longing gaze at the umpire. As always, the crowd rooted for him.

Later, he tumbled from his great height as Rahmat Shah popped a catch off Carlos Brathwaite. Gayle moved a touch gingerly and as the shot dipped, he dived and snapped up just before the ball grazed the grass. He just lay there, like a huge ship that ran aground. Brathwaite ran towards

Gayle and he too rested on the turf, opposite the big man. And then the irreverence and fun that sweeps through the Caribbean Islands came into view. Both did push-ups and laughter rippled.

In his final World Cup game, Gayle couldn't be suppressed. He turned up as an off-spinner and scalped Ikram Ali Khil.

Curtly Ambrose recently termed Gayle's bid for an extended farewell as 'nonsense' but the maverick, the last of a cricketing species, which made its debut way back in 1999 along with Pakistan's Shoaib Malik, would be missed, whenever his last walk happens.

Yes, he scored massive runs clipped at a break-neck



Spring chicken: Chris Gayle belied his 39 years when he did press-ups, along with Carlos Brathwaite, after taking a catch to dismiss Rahmat Shah. • REUTERS

speed, be it Tests, ODIs or Twenty20 leagues. And he also suffered notoriety with his damning streaks of mis-

ogyny. But above all, Gayle would remain the last of those players with a distinct style,

who refused to be slotted. Importantly, he always connected with the fans, not for him the ivory tower.

Mission impossible

SHAYAN ACHARYA
LONDON

The last time Pakistan faced Bangladesh in a World Cup fixture, it faced a shock defeat against the minnows. That was in 1999.

While Bangladesh has crashed out, Pakistan has a mathematical chance of reaching the last-four. However, for that to happen, it has to win the toss at Lord's on Friday and then defeat

Bangladesh by a 316-run margin.

"It is very difficult. 316 runs is a big margin. Only if you're batting first, you can score 500 or 600," said Sarfaraz. "We're just interested in finishing the tournament on a high and doing our best against Bangladesh."

Bangladesh, which has won its last four matches against Pakistan, will play its maiden ODI at Lord's.

THE FACE-OFF					
Pakistan vs Bangladesh					
LORD'S					
HEAD-TO-HEAD					
	Matches	Pak	Ban	Tied	NR
Overall	36	31	5	0	0
World Cup	1	0	1	0	0

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

West Indies wards off Afghan challenge

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LEEDS

Chris Gayle removed Afghanistan top-scorer Ikram Ali Khil with his off-breaks as the West Indies secured just its second win of a chastening World Cup campaign on Thursday.

The Caribbean side scored 311 for six in its 50 overs and although the Afghans put up a brave fight, they ultimately went down by 23 runs.

Gayle, almost certainly playing in his final World Cup match at the age of 39, failed with the bat but struck with the ball, trapping Ali Khil lbw for 86 in the 36th over to put a dent in Afghanistan's slim hopes of victory.

West Indies smashed 111 off the last 10 overs, thanks to captain Jason Holder and Ni-

cholas Pooran, after solid contributions from Evin Lewis (58), Shai Hope (77) and

Shimron Hetmyer (39).

Gayle was caught behind after a slash against Dawlat Zadran for just seven and remained 10 short of Brian Lara's all-time West Indian record of 10,348 ODI runs.

Pooran picked up where he left off against Sri Lanka, hitting 58 to add to his century. Holder hit a quickfire 45 while Carlos Brathwaite lashed 14 off four balls.

In reply, Ali Khil put on 133 for the second wicket with Rahmat Shah (62) and there were notable contributions by Najibullah Zadran and Asghar Afghan, but ultimately the team did not have the batting firepower to get over the line.

Sachin was good on any surface: Lara

AMOL KARHADKAR
NAVI MUMBAI

On a day the West Indies took on Afghanistan in a battle between the bottom-placed sides in the World Cup, Brian Lara mourned the fact that Caribbean cricket has been unable to gape out of a hole for a little too long.

"My only disappointment in 2019 is that we have been turned into a corner for pretty long time. Every country, every team goes through a little bit of cycle, but we seem to be, you know (stuck in it) for quite some time, which is unfortunate," Lara said after being conferred with the Doctorate of Science (Honours Causa) by Dr. D.Y. Patil University in Nerul on Thursday.

Revival

West Indies, one of the two teams that entered the World Cup through a qualification tournament, started on an impressive note but fizzled out as the campaign progressed. Lara hoped its recent success in white flannels against England will pave way for a revival of sorts.

"What I am excited about is the fact that we are now starting to be good at home. We beat England in the Test



Another feather in his cap: Brian Lara, second from left, receives a D. Litt. citation from Dr. Vijay Patil, president, D.Y. Patil University. • YOGESH MHATRE

series and we drew the one-day series but it doesn't mean that we are going to leave our shore and be the same," Lara said.

"And India is a country very similar to that. Back in 1980s and 1990s, you come to India, you could not beat them, but the minute India travelled, they did not look the same team. But today, at home they (West Indies) are bad and away from home, they are even badder (worse), as we would say in Jamaica."

The legendary batsman

picked Sachin Tendulkar's achievements to be greater than run-machine Virat Kohli's. However, Lara had no hesitation in saying that Kohli was way ahead of his contemporaries.

"No doubt there is a huge gap between Kohli and the rest of the world in all forms of the game. Rohit Sharma might have got four centuries in this World Cup, (Jonny) Bairstow or whatever, if you want somebody to bat in T20, T10, 100 balls or Test cricket, it is going to be Virat Kohli today," he said, adding

Tendulkar's impact was in a way responsible for the rise of the Kohlis and Rohits.

"The (impression) Sachin left on the game is just unbearable, because he sort of bridged that period, where you felt that when an Indian batsman leaves the Indian soil and pitches, they are not that good."

"But Sachin was good on every surface and all the Indian batsmen are good on every single surface today, I think, simply because they took a page out of his (Sachin's) book," he said.

SCOREBOARD AFGHANISTAN VS WEST INDIES

WEST INDIES

Chris Gayle c Ikram b Dawlat 7 (18b, 1x4), Evin Lewis c Nabi b Rashid 58 (78b, 6x4, 2x6), Shai Hope c Rashid b Nabi 77 (92b, 6x4, 2x6), Shimron Hetmyer c sub b Dawlat 39 (31b, 3x4, 2x6), Nicholas Pooran run out 58 (43b, 6x4, 1x6), Jason Holder c Dawlat b Shirzad 45 (34b, 1x4, 4x6), Carlos Brathwaite (not out) 14 (4b, 2x4, 1x6), Fabian Allen (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (lb-4, w-9): 13; Total (for six wkts. in 50 overs): 311.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-21 (Gayle, 5.3 overs), 2-109 (Lewis, 24.5), 3-174 (Hetmyer, 34.5), 4-192 (Hope, 37.4), 5-297 (Pooran, 49.1), 6-297 (Holder, 49.2).

AFGHANISTAN BOWLING
Mujeeb 10-0-52-0, Dawlat 9-1-73-2, Shirzad 8-0-56-1, Naib 3-0-18-0, Nabi 10-0-56-1, Rashid 10-0-52-1.

AFGHANISTAN
Gulbadin Naib c Lewis b Roach 5 (6b, 1x4), Rahmat Shah c Gayle b Brathwaite 62 (78b, 10x4), Ikram Ali Khil lbw b Gayle 86 (93b, 8x4), Najibullah

Zadran run out 31 (38b, 1x4, 1x6), Asghar Afghan c Holder b Brathwaite 40 (32b, 4x4, 1x6), Mohammad Nabi c Allen b Roach 2 (6b), Samiullah Shinwari c Hetmyer b Roach 6 (9b), Rashid Khan c Holder b Brathwaite 9 (16b, 1x6), Dawlat Zadran c Cottrell b Brathwaite 1 (2b), Sayed Shirzad c Allen b Thomas 25 (17b, 2x4, 2x6), Mujeeb Ur Rahman (not out) 7 (5b, 1x4); Extras (lb-2, w-10, nb-2): 14; Total (in 50 overs): 288.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-5 (Naib, 1.3), 2-138 (Rahmat, 26.2), 3-189 (Ikram, 35.3), 4-194 (Najibullah, 35.5), 5-201 (Nabi, 37.4), 6-227 (Shinwari 41.4), 7-244 (Afghan, 44.2), 8-255 (Dawlat, 44.6), 9-260 (Rashid, 46.3).

WEST INDIES BOWLING

Cottrell 7-0-43-0, Roach 10-2-37-3, Thomas 7-0-43-1, Holder 8-0-46-0, Allen 3-0-26-0, Brathwaite 9-0-63-4, Gayle 6-0-28-1.

Toss: West Indies.

West Indies won by 23 runs.

Nadal overcomes Kyrgios; Federer cruises

Davis dethrones Kerber even as Isner & Cilic's campaigns end; Djokovic and Gauff keep delighting

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON Rafael Nadal defeated Nick Kyrgios 6-3, 3-6, 7-6(5), 7-6(3) in a stormy and bad-tempered Wimbledon second round encounter on Centre Court on Thursday.

It was Nadal's 50th win at the tournament as he continues his push for a third Wimbledon title and 19th Major.

Kyrgios twice served underarm on game point, was handed a code violation for unsportsmanlike behaviour and waged a bitter war of words with umpire Damien Dumusois. Nadal will face France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga for a place in the last 16.

Earlier, eight-time champion Roger Federer eased into the third round beating British wild card Jay Clarke 6-1, 7-6(3), 6-2 to equal American legend Jimmy Connors' record of 17 appearances in the last 32.

On the women's side, there will be a new name adorning the trophy as defending champion Angelique Kerber went out to lucky loser Lauren Davis 2-6, 6-2, 6-1.

Federer and Nadal's half of the draw lost two of the potentially more awkward customers in big serving duo John Isner and Marin Cilic. Ninth-seeded Isner fell to unseeded Kazakh Mikhail Kukushkin 6-4, 6-7(3), 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 in just over three hours of play, while Cilic, the 13th seed and finalist in 2017, lost in straight sets to Portugal's Joao Sousa, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

Scare for Serena There was a scare for seven-time champion Serena Williams, who dropped the first set against 18-year-old Slovenian qualifier Kaja Juvan before prevailing 2-6, 6-2, 6-4. Ashleigh Barty's bid to become the first woman since Serena in 2015 to win the French Open and Wimbledon in the same year stayed on track with a 6-1, 6-3 second round victory over Belgium's Alison van Uytvanck.

Moving ahead On Wednesday, four-time champion Novak Djokovic reached the third round for the 11th successive year while 15-year-old Cori Gauff aimed to write another episode in her history-making All England Club debut.

Top seed Djokovic hit 13 aces and 37 winners as he eased past Denis Kudla of the United States, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

Coco Gauff reached the third round by beating 2017 semifinalist Magdalena Rybarikova of Slovakia 6-3, 6-3 under the new Court One roof.

The American schoolgirl is the youngest player in the last 32 since Jennifer Capriati, also 15, went all the way to the semifinals 28 years ago.



Memorable win: Lauren Davis bounced back to knock out Angelique Kerber. • AFP



Who is 'Coco' Gauff?

Age: 15 Born: Atlanta, Georgia Currently ranked: 313 Coach: Corey Gauff

Youngest ever girls' finalist, US Open 2017

Second youngest winner of the junior's title, Roland Garros, 2018

Youngest player in the Open Era to qualify for the main draw at Wimbledon 2019. She is yet to drop a set in her five matches in the tournament, including three qualifiers



Nadal could have been a fantastic footballer: Mourinho Jose Mourinho believes Rafael Nadal would have made "a fantastic footballer" had he not chosen tennis. "He's incredible. He could

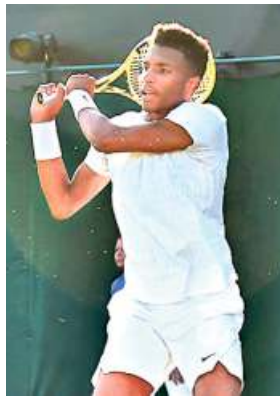
IMPORTANT RESULTS

Men: Second round: John Millman (Aus) bt 31-Laslo Djere (Srb) 6-3, 6-2, 6-1; Dan Evans (GBR) bt 18-Nikoloz Basilashvili (Geo) 6-3, 6-2, 7-6(2). 8-Kei Nishikori (Jpn) bt Cameron Norrie (GBR) 6-4, 6-4, 6-0; Steve Johnson (USA) bt 25-Alex de Minaur (Aus) 3-6, 7-6(4), 6-3, 3-6, 6-3; 33-Jan-Lennard Struff (Ger) bt Taylor Fritz (USA) 6-4, 6-3, 5-7, 7-6(2); Sam Querrey (USA) bt Andrey Rublev (Rus) 6-3, 6-2, 6-3. 2-Roger Federer (Sui) bt Jay Clarke (GBR) 6-1, 7-6(3), 6-2; Joao Sousa (Por) bt 13-Marin Cilic (Cro) 6-4, 6-4, 6-4. Mikhail Kukushkin (Kaz) bt 9-John Isner (USA) 6-4, 6-7(3), 4-6, 6-1, 6-4; 1-Novak Djokovic (Srb) bt Denis Kudla (USA) 6-3, 6-2, 6-2. Felix Auger-Aliassime (Can) bt Corentin Moutet (Fra) 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2; Fernando Verdasco (Esp) bt 30-Kyle Edmund (GBR) 4-6, 4-6, 7-6(3), 6-3, 6-4; 4-Kevin Anderson (RSA) bt Janko Tipsarevic (Srb) 6-4, 6-7(5), 6-1, 6-4; 26-Guido Pella (Arg) bt Andreas Seppi (Ita) 6-4, 4-6, 4-6, 7-5, 6-1. 3-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt Nick Kyrgios (Aus) 6-3, 3-6, 7-6(5), 7-6(3); 17-Matteo Berrettini (Ita) bt Marcos Baghdatis (Cyp) 6-1, 7-6(4), 6-3. 27-Lucas Pouille (Fra) bt Gregoire Barrere (Fra) 6-1, 7-6(0), 6-4; Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (Fra) bt Ricardo Berankis (Ltu) 7-6(4), 6-3, 6-3. Doubles: First round: Wesley Koolhof (Ned) & Marcus Daniell (NZ) bt Rohan Bopanna (Ind) & Pablo Cuevas (Uru) 6-4, 6-4, 4-6, 7-6(7). Women: Second round: 11-Serena Williams (USA) bt Kaja Juvan (Slo) 2-6, 6-2, 6-4; 13-Belinda Bencic (Sui) bt Kaia Kanepi (Est) 6-3, 6-1. Magda Linette (Pol) bt 25-Amanda Anisimova (USA) 6-4, 7-5; 18-Julia Gorges (Bel) bt Varvara Flink (Rus) 6-1, 6-4. 19-Johanna Konta (GBR) bt Katerina Siniakova (Cze) 6-3, 6-4; 4-Kiki Bertens (Ned) bt Tanya Townsend 3-6, 7-6(5), 6-2. 1-Ashleigh Barty (Aus) bt Alison Van Uytvanck (Bel) 6-1, 6-3; 15-Wang Qiang (Chn) bt Tamara Zidansek (Slo) 6-1, 6-2; 9-Sloane Stephens (USA) bt Wang Yafan (Chn) 6-0, 6-2; 6-Petra Kvitova (Cze) bt Kristina Mladenovic (Fra) 7-5, 6-2. Lauren Davis (USA) bt 6-Angelique Kerber (Ger) 2-6, 6-2, 6-1; 24-Petra Martic (Cro) bt Anastasia Potapova (Rus) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; Danielle Collins (USA) bt 12-Anastasija Sevastova (Lat) 4-6, 6-4, 6-3. Polona Hercog (Slo) bt 17-Madison Keys (USA) 6-2, 6-4; Coco Gauff (USA) bt Magdalena Rybarikova (Svk) 6-3, 6-3; 14-Caroline Wozniacki (Den) bt Veronika Kudermetova (Rus) 7-6(5), 6-3.

PASSING SHOTS

have been a fantastic footballer with his physique, mentality and skill," said the Portuguese, who worked with Nadal's uncle, Miguel Angel when he was on the coaching staff at Barcelona. "I am happy that he isn't a footballer. In tennis he is what he is." Tomic doped for tanking Australia's Bernard Tomic was stripped of his entire £45,000 Wimbledon prize money for tanking his first round match which was over in just 58 minutes, officials announced. The controversial Tomic, who had been accused of not trying previously in his

career, lost 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 to France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga. Legend Ashe benchmark for Auger-Aliassime Canadian teenager Felix Auger-Aliassime has been compared to Arthur Ashe, the only black man to win three Grand Slams, and he said on Wednesday he would love to emulate the American legend. The 18-year-old, the youngest in the men's singles, said Ashe, who won Wimbledon in 1975 to add to his US Open (1968) and Australian Open (1970), was to be admired not only for what he achieved on court but also off it. "Obviously, he's a big model



for me but also many players. But he was just a great human and he kind of changed things in a sport and in his life, and he changed a lot of people's lives."

Groenen strike takes Dutch to final

Face USA after extra-time win over Sweden



Over the moon: Groenen celebrates after her long-range effort sealed the deal for the Netherlands. • REUTERS

WOMEN'S WC

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LYON

The Netherlands' rise as a force in women's football continued on Wednesday as Jackie Groenen's extra-time strike saw it edge out Sweden 1-0 in a gruelling World Cup semifinal in Lyon, taking the European champion through to this weekend's final against the USA.

After a goalless 90 minutes, midfielder Groenen - a former judo European Championship bronze medalist as a youth, who recently agreed a move to Manchester United - broke the deadlock in the 99th minute of a tense contest, breaking Swedish hearts in the process. When Danielle van de

The Netherlands is the eighth different team to reach the final, and fourth different European side to do so

This semifinal is the first ever to go to extra-time in women's WC

Donk's pass was touched into her path, Groenen sent a low shot from 20 yards beyond the reach of goalkeeper Hedvig Lindahl and into the far corner.

Having knocked out Italy and former winner Japan in the previous two rounds, the Dutch are now just one game away from adding a first World Cup to the title they won at Euro 2017 as hosts.

The results: The Netherlands 1 (Groenen 99) bt Sweden 0.

Rayudu must have been heart-broken: Laxman

Says the Hyderabad batsman still had four to five years left in him

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM HYDERABAD

Former India cricketer V.V.S. Laxman said Ambati Rayudu has been one of the most talented cricketers he has ever seen and felt that the Hyderabad, who announced his retirement from all forms of the game today, has still four to five years left in him.



V.V.S. Laxman. • FILE PHOTO

"I can understand the reasoning behind his decision. He must have been heart-broken. Having scored lot of runs at No. 4 and done well against the West Indies and in New Zealand before the series against the Aussies (against whom he had a poor run), he would have been expecting to be picked for the World Cup," Laxman told The Hindu from the United Kingdom.

Dotted with setbacks

"I just hope he continues to love the game and has a very successful post-retirement life" Laxman said. "Rayudu's career has been dotted with some setbacks like a couple of injuries. But, I liked the way he fought back

every time," Laxman added. "Ever since I met him the first time in 2002 after his brilliant century for India u-19 in England, I have been following his career and been speaking to him consistently as a well-wisher.

"There has never been any doubt about the kind of potential he had as a cricketer. Retirement is always a personal decision and Rayudu must have weighed his options before taking the call," Laxman said.

"Personally, I feel that he should have played white ball cricket for Hyderabad for four to five years and helped the youngsters in the process," Laxman added.

IN BRIEF



Steve Waugh to mentor Aussies during Ashes

Australia's hopes of winning an Ashes series in England for the first time in 18 years have been boosted by former Test captain Steve Waugh agreeing to mentor the side. Waugh was enlisted by coach Justin Langer, who has made a point of bringing in former greats to help rebuild the team's image. Ricky Ponting is currently assisting him at the World Cup. The first Ashes Test starts at Edgbaston on August 1. AFP



Australia opener Burns back after fatigue disorder

Australia Test opener Joe Burns has been cleared to play again after being diagnosed with a fatigue disorder which threatened his chances of being part of the Ashes series against England. The 29-year-old was diagnosed with "post-infectious fatigue disorder", stemming from an October 2018 viral infection. Burns has spent the past fortnight training, including sessions with Darren Lehmann. AFP



Lampard returns to Chelsea as head coach

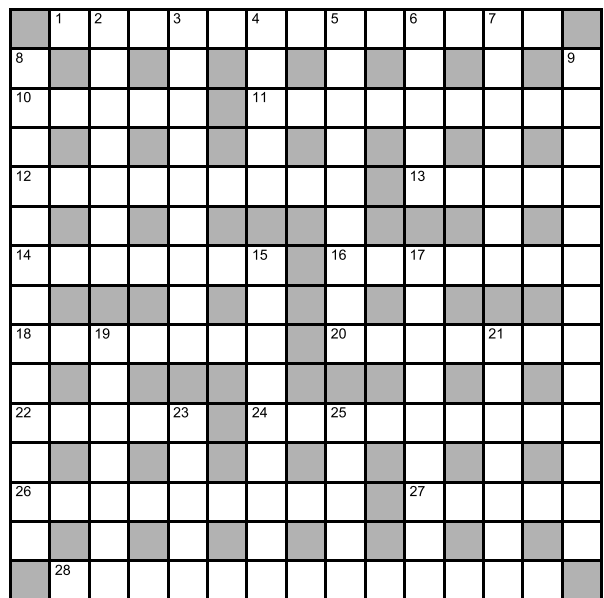
Frank Lampard was appointed Chelsea head coach on Thursday. Lampard has signed a three-year contract with the Premier League club, where he spent 13 years and became the team's all-time leading scorer with 211 goals. The former England midfielder succeeds Maurizio Sarri after just one season in management, having led Derby to the Championship play-off final in May. Lampard made 648 appearances for Chelsea, winning three Premier League titles, four FA Cups and two League Cups, as well as the Europa League and the Champions League. AFP



Buffon back 'home'

Former Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon has returned to Juventus on a one-year contract after a season spent at PSG. The 41-year-old, who will be number two to Polish keeper Wojciech Szczesny, previously spent 17 seasons with the Turin club, winning nine Serie A titles and playing three Champions League finals. AFP

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12670



ACROSS

- 1 For a boulder, it's nothing - in short you can get instant justice here (8,5)
10 Arranging help, at the core there is an investor (5)
11 Calculate the time in crossing a river (9)
12 Fish by the lake, consume right in the restaurant (9)

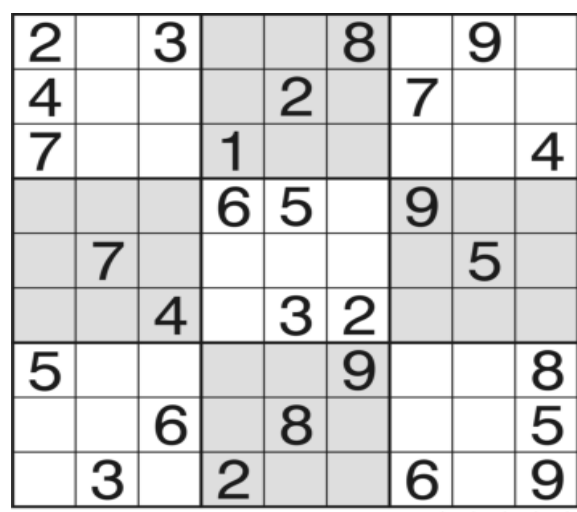
(set by Arden)

- 13 Cloak worn by husband breaking laws (5)
14 Best example of a short story book (7)
16 Anonymous nonsense about unity (7)
18 Not worried about whine, gets rich (7)
20 Electronic watch allowed to cover the fugitive (7)
22 Clog boats at sea (5)
24 Soldiers hurry, worker finds it offensive (9)
26 Fresh group of people have left for the city (9)
27 Subject discussed in the meeting (5)
28 A deposit that makes child fat (7,6)

DOWN

- 2 Hang if a criminal gets money (7)
3 Complaint heard about girl's voice (9)
4 Surveillance as one comes under bill of rights all around (5)
5 Correct one - honest, as it should be... (2,3,4)
6 ...or Queen announces knighthood for Root (5)
7 Anti revolutionary checks way to subvert... (7)
8 ...or rubs Bengali the wrong way calling for a bandh (6-7)
9 New best seller, let it become a literary work in French (6,7)
15 Compound interest? One lodges a complaint (9)
17 Climb from bottom to top, a system goes up (9)
19 Erect single silo for missile launcher, reduce weight (7)
21 Level off on gold disc (7)
23 Ship's first mate is soaked in gin (5)
25 Fold in with a simple attachment (5)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12669

Table with 9 rows and 9 columns containing the solution to puzzle 12669.

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

Table with 9 rows and 9 columns containing the solution to yesterday's Sudoku.

FAITH

The greater avatara

While the Supreme One incarnated many times, ten avatars of His are usually spoken of elaborately. And of these ten, the Rama avatara and Krishna avatara are considered purna avatars, that is the most complete avatars. And of these two, the Krishna avatara is superior, thereby making it the best of all the Lord's avatars, said Kidambi Narayanan, in a discourse. Rama showed the importance of adherence to dharma. The word dharma itself is, however, hard to define, often being different in different situations. That is why we talk of sadharana dharma and visesha dharma. We are asked to be merciful and forgiving. But what if someone is a ruler? Can he forgive mistakes and move on? Will that not harm his subjects? He is in the position of having to punish. So, the sadharana dharma of forgiving does not hold good in his case. His visesha dharma is to punish. Given the difficulties in properly defining what dharma is, Rama's constant keeping to dharma is an admirable trait of His.

But why is it then that the Krishna avatara is said to be even greater than the Rama avatara? It is because of Krishna's leelas. Rama is not known for His leelas. In just ten slokas, Valmiki talks of His birth, His being named, His education, etc. He says the four sons of Dasaratha studied the Vedas, and so they always abided by dharma. Rama's childhood is covered very quickly. But Krishna's birth itself is a leela - born in a prison and carried away the same night to Gokulam. Every leela has a message. The lifting of the Govardhana hill gives us the message that He will always save us, if we trust Him. Brahma Mohanam shows us that we should shed our ego, for in this leela, Brahma is taught a lesson because of his ego. Rasa leela shows that we can serve Him only if He wills it.

TV PICKS

ICC World Cup: Star Sports 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.
Wimbledon: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 5.15 p.m.; SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Willian to miss Copa final with hamstring injury

RIO DE JANEIRO
Brazil's attacking midfielder Willian will miss Sunday's Copa America final against Peru after injuring his hamstring, the tournament host said on Wednesday. A Brazil football federation (CBF) spokesman said Willian had felt "pain in his hamstring" and was sent for tests on Wednesday afternoon where it was found that he had a "pulled muscle." Brazilian media said he was injured during Tuesday's match. **AFP**



City gets Angelino back from PSV Eindhoven

LONDON
Manchester City re-signed Spanish defender Angelino from PSV Eindhoven on Wednesday after the Premier League champion activated his £5.3 million buy-back clause. Angelino left City last year but boss Pep Guardiola was impressed enough with his progress in the Netherlands to decide to bring him back. **AFP**

Arjen Robben hangs up his boots

THE HAGUE
Dutch winger Arjen Robben announced his retirement from professional football on Thursday at the age of 35 after a 10-year spell with German giant Bayern Munich. **AFP**

Jamshedpur FC ropes in 18-year-old Jitendra

JAMSHEDPUR
Jamshedpur FC on Thursday announced the signing of 18-year-old defender Jitendra Singh from I-League side Indian Arrows. The youngster has penned a three-year deal. **IANS**

Annual recognition procedure for NSFs introduced

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Government on Wednesday gave assurance in the Lok Sabha that steps have been taken to ensure transparency and accountability in the functioning of the national sports federations (NSFs).

Replying to a question from Tukaram Godse, MP, Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said, "From 2010, the Government has introduced a system of annual recognition procedure for the NSFs, under which annual recognition is granted to those NSFs which comply with the provisions of the National Sports Development Code of India."

Regarding details of the elections conducted in these associations, the Government said information was being collected from the NSFs.

The Government, while giving details of the 56 NSFs functioning in the country, also said model election guidelines have been formed to be followed by the NSFs with instructions on democratic and healthy management practices, age and tenure limits of office-bearers.

In response to a question from Sunil Kumar Mondal, MP, the Sports Ministry said the "The NSFs have been notified to ensure transparency and accountability in their functioning, adopt and follow the basic universal principles of good governance in sports, prevent age fraud and sexual harassment of women and comply with the provisions of Right To Information."

Inspired Peru dethrones Chile

Will now face Brazil, which had thrashed it 5-0 in the group stage, in title clash

COPA AMERICA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PORTO ALEGRE

Peru stunned defending champion Chile 3-0 to reach the final of the Copa America for the first time in 44 years.

Goals from Edison Flores, Yoshimar Yotun and Paolo Guerrero handed Peru a deserved win which sends it into a final against Brazil at the Maracana Stadium on Sunday.

Little was expected of Peru in the knock-out stages after it ended the group phase with a humbling 5-0 thrashing by Brazil.

Riding its luck

But after riding its luck – and being saved by VAR three times – to beat Uruguay on penalties in the quarterfinals, it was a completely rejuvenated outfit in Porto Alegre.

Goalkeeper Pedro Gallese saved a penalty and made a number of other vital stops.

From the start Peru dominated the reigning champion, with Christian Cueva wastefully shooting wide two minutes



Stunner: Edison Flores, left, lets fly a left-footed volley to open the scoring for Peru. ***AP**

after he was teed up in space by his captain Guerrero.

Flores took advantage of an Erick Pulgar slip in midfield to dart towards goal but he dragged his weak shot woefully wide.

But a minute later he was alone at the back post to lash home left footed from an Andre Carrillo flick on from Cueva's cross.

Yotun doubled the lead on 38 minutes after punishing Chile goalkeeper Gabriel

Arias's rush of blood to the head.

Guerrero put the icing on the cake in injury time after rounding Arias.

The results: Chile 0 lost to Peru 3 (Flores 21, Yotun 38, Guerrero 90+).

Real to open season away at Celta

LA LIGA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Eden Hazard is set to make his Real Madrid debut against Celta Vigo and Barcelona will begin its title defence away at Athletic Bilbao, according to the *La Liga* fixture list announced on Thursday.

The opening games are scheduled for August 18, but Hazard will have to wait for the second round to play his first Madrid match at the Santiago Bernabeu, when his new team hosts Real Valladolid.

Los Clasicos

The first *Clasico* of the season will be at Camp Nou on October 27, with the return in Madrid scheduled for March 1. Both could come after Champions League ties midweek.

Zinedine Zidane's hopes for a fast start may have been



The new home boy: Eden Hazard will have to wait for the second round to play his first Madrid match at the Santiago Bernabeu. ***REUTERS**

boosted by what appears a kind early set of games. After Celta and Valladolid, it plays away at Villarreal and at home to Levante before a tougher trip to Sevilla, where former Madrid coach Julen Lopetegui is now in charge.

Barcelona's introduction looks more awkward. After Bilbao, the reigning champion is at home to Real Betis and away to newly-promoted Osasuna. Then it hosts Va-

lencia, who it lost to in the Copa del Rey final in May, before travelling to Granada, also just up from *Segunda*.

Atletico Madrid, last season's runners-up, begins at home to neighbour Getafe, which came fifth last term. Atletico faces Real Madrid in the first city derby at the Wanda Metropolitano on September 29 and Barcelona, also at home, on December 1.

Kashyap and Sourabh in last 16

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CALGARY

Former Commonwealth Games champion P. Kashyap and reigning National champion Sourabh Verma progressed to the pre-quarterfinals in a mixed day for India at the \$75,000 Canada Open Super 100 tournament here.

Kashyap defeated France's Lucas Corvee 21-12, 21-17, while Sourabh thrashed Canada's B.R. Sankeerth 21-14, 21-11.

The results: P. Kashyap bt Lucas Corvee 21-12, 21-17; Sourabh Verma bt B.R. Sankeerth 21-14, 21-11; Rajiv Ouseph bt Ajay Jayaram 21-19, 21-17; Koki Watanabe (Jpn) bt H.S. Pranroy 21-16, 21-10; Weng Hong Yang bt Lakshya Sen 21-7, 21-13.

Neelash Saha continues to lead

U-17 CHESS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

West Bengal's second-seeded Neelash Saha hung on to his top spot after signing a peace treaty with top-seeded Statemate Aronyak Ghosh in the eighth round of the 30th National under-17 open chess championship at the Oberon Mall here on Thursday.

Arjun in second spot

Saha has seven points from eight rounds while Delhi's Arjun Gupta (6.5) is second.

In the girls' section, Odisha's top-seeded Saina Salonika and Tamil Nadu's L. Jyothshna were at the top of

the heap with 6.5 points each from eight rounds.

The results (eighth round): Open: Aronyak Ghosh (WB, 6) drew with Neelash Saha (WB, 7).

Jayachandra Srinivas (TN, 6) drew with R. Sibi Visal (TN, 6); Arunachalam Shivaa (TN, 5.5) lost to Arjun Gupta (Del, 6.5).

Wairagade Khush (Mah, 5) lost to Ayush Sharma (MP, 6); Vrandesh Parekh (Guj, 5.5) drew with M. Mohammed Anees (TN, 5.5).

Girls: B. Kalyani (AP, 6) drew with Saina Salonika (Odi, 6.5); L. Jyothshna (TN, 6.5) bt V. Nanditha (TS, 5).

Samridhdha Ghosh (WB, 6) bt Yuti Mayur Patel (Mah, 5).

M. Benasir (TN, 5) drew with Sneha Bharathakoti (TS, 5.5); Diya Chowdhury (WB, 5) drew with Shanya Mishra (Del, 5).

Elavenil shoots silver

SHOOTING

SPORTS BUREAU NAPOLI

Elavenil Valarivan bagged the women's air rifle silver medal in the 30th Universiade on Thursday.

After topping qualifying with a University record of 630.8, Elavenil shot 249.0 in the final, losing by 1.3 points to Lucie Brazdova of the Czech Republic.

In the World Championship in Changwon, Korea, last year, Elavenil had bagged the junior silver after scoring 631.0 in qualification.



Elavenil. ***FILE PHOTO**

"I am thrilled by the achievement and want to thank all my coaches who have trained me so well,"

said Elavenil, who is being groomed under Project Leap of Gagan Narang Sports Promotion Foundation.

Pat from Gagan Narang

"I am proud of Elavenil. She is a great shooter and I believe she has all the ingredients to become a champion," said Gagan Narang.

The results:

10m air rifle: Women: 1. Lucie Brazdova (Cze) 250.3 (UR) 628.1; 2. Elavenil Valarivan 249.0 (630.8 UR); 3. Ying-shin Lin (Tpe) 225.2 (629.8).
10. Aayushi Gupta 624.8; 62. Nina Chandel 610.6.

Mohun Bagan rekindles the idea of a unified league

Suggests formation of a 'way-forward committee'

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA KOLKATA

Mohun Bagan has suggested the formation of a 'way-forward committee' to explore the possibility of a unified League as the future of Indian football.

Debashish Dutta, the club's finance secretary who attended the meeting hosted by AIFF president Praful Patel to hear the I-League clubs on Wednesday, said a solution could well be a possibility, now that all those who mattered in the "impasse" have decided to shed their egos and converged on the discussion table.

"We need to have a unified league but that needs to be structured. You cannot ignore club-based football but again you need a patron like FSDL to secure the future of Indian football," Dutta said while attending a panel discussion hosted by the Calcutta Sports Journalists Club on Thursday.

"The way-forward com-

mittee will have representation from the national federation, FSDL and the clubs to effectively find a way to have a league structure that conforms to the FIFA statutes," he added.

Concurrence

East Bengal assistant secretary Dr. Santi Ranjan Dasgupta also agreed with his Bagan counterpart.

"People thought ISL would be a magic show that will dramatically transform Indian football but after five seasons they find the magical element gone.

"It is now imperative to have one league where the top clubs of the country will play," said former India cap-

tain Manoranjan Bhattacharya.

Noted footballer and coach Subhash Bhowmick also insisted on finding the right balance that would help nourish the Indian football ecosystem.

Subrata Dutta, senior vice-president AIFF, said the clubs are quintessential to the growth of Indian football.

"Football is club-based all over the world. The sport would not grow if the club-based system is obliterated.

"We need a strong league in the country and in order to make it happen every unit involved in developing football, including the state associations, need to have a development plan," Dutta said.

The statement assumes significance ahead of the AIFF executive committee meeting, which among other things will discuss the future of I-League, on July 9.

Mona, Reema, sharing a bond beyond the field

The duo played for India in Asia Cup, T20 World Cup and the World Cup in 2013

CRICKET

BHRIGU BAGGA NEW DELHI

Playing a sport together builds partnerships that go beyond the field. Cricketers Mona Meshram and Reema Malhotra share such a bond.

Mona is a member of the Indian women's cricket team and plays for Railways under Mithali Raj. Reema, who retired from international cricket early this year, is now exploring the world of broadcasting.

In ups and downs

After the National Cricket Academy camp at Bangalore, Mona travelled to Delhi to spend some quality time with her mentor-cum-friend. "A friend who keeps you motivated and grounded... Reema has been there with me in my ups and downs, having someone like her is really



Treasure: Mona Meshram, left, says Reema Malhotra keeps her motivated and grounded. ***SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

precious," says Mona.

The duo played for India in the Asia Cup, T20 World Cup and Reema's last World Cup in 2013.

Reflecting on her career, Mona says, "Initially when I was playing for Vidarbha, I never thought of the India jersey."

"The idea was to enjoy playing. Then I started scoring at junior levels and got recognised by the BCCI. After that, I chose cricket as a

profession."

Leagues like the Kia Super League, Women's Big Bash League, Women's Indian Premier League, etc. are gradually bringing about a revolution in women cricket. Some big names from India are part of these global leagues.

"Things have changed quite a bit after our World Cup performance in 2017," points out Mona, adding, "the WBBL and now in the

WIPL, we had three teams. Earlier, we had just one exhibition match."

Reema has moved on to become a cricket pundit for various TV channels and radio platforms.

"Earlier, I had a bat in my hand. Now, it's a microphone. It was more about physical activity and now it's more mental. It is good to be sharing my experiences," says the former batting all-rounder.

Reema is looking forward to a possible India-England final in the World Cup. "Rohit has struck a purple patch. Look at Bumrah, he seems to be at a different level. I'm also highly impressed by Mohammad Shami," says Reema.

"There is no team which is perfect, and England has started to look dangerous. Once again, the host could be tough customers," she says.

Anand's draw count becomes six

CHESS

SPORTS BUREAU RECANATI (ITALY)

Viswanathan Anand took an easy 27-move draw with China's Ding Liren for his sixth successive draw following the seventh round of Croatia Grand Chess Tour here on Wednesday.

In the only decisive encounter, Magnus Carlsen stopped fellow leader Ian Nepomniachtchi in 31 moves to emerge as the sole

leader. Wesley So, the other overnight leader, drew with Sergey Karjakin.

The results (seventh round): Viswanathan Anand (3) drew with Ding Liren (Chn, 4); Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus, 4) lost to Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 5); Sergey Karjakin (Rus, 3) drew with Wesley So (USA, 4.5); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 4) drew with Anish Giri (Ned, 2.5); Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (Aze, 2.5) drew with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 3); Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 2.5) drew with Levon Aronian (Arm, 4).

Abhijeet outwits Das

C'WEALTH CHESS

RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI

Using his endgame-expertise to the hilt, four-time winner Abhijeet Gupta proved stronger to Debashish Das in a minor-piece ending and stayed ahead after six rounds of Commonwealth chess championship here on Thursday.

Abhijeet, at 5.5 points, held a half-point lead over former champion M.R. Lalit Babu and Arjun Erigaisi. Lalit downed R.R. Laxman in a marathon stretching to 87 moves. In contrast, Arjun nailed Ajay Karthikeyan in just 29 moves.

On the top board, Abhijeet and Das fought fiercely till the 63rd move. A draw looked possible until Abhijeet managed to push one of his queen-side pawns to the seventh rank.

It was clear the lone knight of Das was over-

worked. Soon, Abhijeet's dark-squared bishop and an advancing king-side pawn made Das give up.

Impressive show

The day also witnessed three other notable performers. Bhakti Kulkarni held second seed S.L. Narayanan, Suyog Wagh scored a rare win over Abhijeet Kunte and R. Vaishali surprised M.S. Thej Kumar.

The results (sixth round): Abhijeet Gupta (5.5) bt Debashish Das (4.5); Bhakti Kulkarni (4.5) drew with S. L. Narayanan (4.5); Aravindh Chithambaram (4.5) drew with Swapnil Dhopade (4.5); M.R. Lalit Babu (5) bt R.R. Laxman (4); Arjun Erigaisi (5) bt Ajay Karthikeyan (4.5); Deepan Chakkravarthy (4.5) bt S. Nitin (4); Rahul Sangma (4) drew with P. Iniyan (3.5); Suyog Wagh (4.5) bt Abhijeet Kunte (3.5); M.S. Thej Kumar (3.5) lost to R. Vaishali (4.5); Shantanu Bhambure (4) drew with P. Karthikeyan (3.5); P. Saravana Krishnan (4.5) bt P. Shyam Nikhil (3.5).

Indian pairs fail to make final

SHOOTING

SPORTS BUREAU LONATO DEL GARDA (ITALY)

Prithviraj Tondaiman was in fine form in the mixed trap, as he shot three rounds of 24 (72 out of 75), but together with Seema Tomar (57) could not make the final of the Shotgun World Championship on Thursday.

The other Indian team, the Olympian pair of Kynan Chenai (69) and Shaqun Chowdhary (63), fared better but a total of 132 proved inadequate to make the cut for the knock-out.

In junior mixed trap, Vivaan Kapoor (71) wound up with a perfect round, but together with Kirti Gupta (59) could reach only a total of 130.

FIBA women's Asia Cup in Sept.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

The FIBA Women's Asia Cup 2019 (Division A) will take place here from September 24 to 29, it was announced on Thursday.

Division A of the competition features Japan, Australia, China, Korea, Chinese Taipei, India, Philippines and New Zealand.

The host of Division B is set to be announced at a later date.

Caught up in colour



When I ask Claude about the colour palette chosen for SMFFH, he smiles and holds up swatches of muted hues and fans them out for me to see. "There is one thing that is clear when we look at these tones: no red, a colour we associate with Spider-Man. We create everything around these actors, and working with visual effects elevated that." As shown in the trailer between the subdued shades of the stationary European buildings, Spider-Man is a bright red, dynamic dart.



Additional challenges, though interesting, came about when they had to recreate certain European environments on a set. "We'd recreate Venice on the back-lot complete with imported gondolas and taxi-boats. Our visual effects department could then bring Venice to life. Special effects also had to recreate the blue-green water of Venice in our tank which was very challenging. With the cinematography team, there was a constant exchange of ideas, keeping in mind the lighting and such."

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

What do *It*, *Dark Phoenix* and *Spider-Man: Far From Home* (SMFFH) have in common? Claude Paré is the production designer for the three films.

Over a Skype interview, the French-Canadian, currently in Montréal, looks relaxed after the non-stop work over the last few years with different crews.

Production designers are some of the unsung heroes behind the visual concept of a film. They essentially identify a design style for sets, locations, graphics, props, lighting, camera angles and costumes, while working closely with many other departments. Paré shares that he was working with different moods – from the tension and fear in *It* to the conflict and struggle in *Dark Phoenix*.

"The last few years, I have been working back-to-back on *It*, *Dark Phoenix* and *SMFFH* (the latter, directed by Jon Watts, released in the United States on July 2 and yesterday in India). I was on a roll, but at the end of SMFFH, I realised how much of a journey it was." He chuckles, "Getting these jobs is not easy; these are movies everyone wants to work on. So you have to adapt to the different moods of these films and crews."



He also needed to adapt to different genres and storylines. "The story was in the continuity of the other films so I had to learn about the whole franchise," Claude recalls, "Similarly, before doing *It*, I was not a fan of horror movies. The learning curve of apprenticeship is always very steep for any movie. With *Dark Phoenix* (which was shot in Montréal), there are sets we are familiar with like Cerebro and Hank's lab, although we actually recreated Hank's lab for the film."

Claude has fulsome praise for Simon Kinberg who made his directorial debut with *Dark Phoenix*. "Simon has written *Apocalypse*, *Days of Future Past* and *Dark Phoenix*. His brief was to give a personality to the environments of all these characters and I was working on how to put everything together visually. I want each other to be happy, which is what I try to establish with every director."

SMFFH's trailer reveals Peter Parker, travelling around Europe as part of a school trip, fighting crime as per Nick Fury's orders,

wards but that is how it was done." Claude adds that some of the trailers won't be in the film, adding, "For example, some trailers show Spider-Man arresting mobs in a restaurant; but it is not in the film. It was tricky to work backwards by splicing and assembling the visuals we had, to make it transparent. It keeps you on your toes; especially the fact that we were dealing with five countries and five art departments. There was an art director for each of the other countries... probably a total of 11 art directors including those in the UK."

Covert globe-trotting

With such mammoth moves underway, how do you keep a project with international fan-following under wraps? "The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is incredibly secretive, you sign detailed Non Disclosure Agreements at the start of anything," Claude admits, adding, "As they were putting together *Endgame* and *Infinity War*, there were so many things happening in those films which had to be reflected in ours. We were learning as those Marvel movies progressed. For director Jon Watts, it was tricky to reveal things and there were even moments we were asked to do things we didn't fully understand. It became clear as other films developed and were released. That was the nature of the beast. Sometimes we had to build sets two weeks before a shoot (design, construction and everything)."

Needless to say, *SMFFH* and *Dark Phoenix* have their fair share of chaos and destruction; that is a given with any MCU project. So what goes into designing chaos? "I always make a joke now; when we work on a budget, we make a line for the set and a line just below that for the 'destruction' because there is so much work going on and many resources. There is a moment in the trailer where Spider-Man meets Mysterio in a desolate location. It took forever to build this set. This intended location is a small town in ruins in Spain which is actually retained as a tourist spot. So much had to be observed and noted: the colour and texture of the rubble, the people walking about and the distress of the area. You have to build stuff up to break it apart so that it doesn't look like it has been broken by special effects. It is a huge job."

It is safe to say it requires the energy of the Avengers and espionage-like capabilities of S.H.I.E.L.D to pull off an MCU project.

Whole new worlds



French-Canadian production designer Claude Paré, who worked on *Spider-Man: Far From Home* and *Dark Phoenix*, talks about what it takes to create chaos



FOOD SPOT



RAHUL VERMA

Two little words – chicken patties – and they open up a magical world. I wonder if any other people like their chicken patties as much as we Indians do. I, for one, am greatly fond of these buttery and fluffy chicken-filled puffs. Generally I like lamb a lot more than I enjoy chicken, but somehow chicken patties hit a spot that the lamb ones don't.

My first encounter with chicken patties was at Wenger's in Connaught Place eons ago. I think they still make the best patties, but there are other eateries in different parts of the city where you can get some excellent puffs, too. For instance, just a few days ago I had a chicken puff from a tiny place called Coffee Break in central Delhi, and was quite impressed by its taste, size and price.

Coffee Break is in the Constitution Club of India. The club, sandwiched between VP House (where I lived for many years) and Mavlanekar Hall (where I saw a great many films and plays), is on Rafi Marg. You enter the club, walk down the corridor in front, and you will find this well-lit, cheerful-looking place, with a small sitting area. You can sit there at high tables and have a light



Chicken-patty crush

The easily accessible Coffee Break, located in the Constitution Club of India, has a comprehensive menu of sandwiches and pizzas, apart from pastries and tarts

meal and coffee, or pack something to take back home.

The menu is pretty comprehensive, for such a tiny place. They have various kinds of sandwiches: Egg and Mustard (₹110), Chicken Ham and Cheese (₹110); Tomatoes, Cucumber and Cheese (₹100) and American Coleslaw (₹50). I had the

Egg and Mustard sandwich, which I thought was delightfully creamy.

They can rustle up a pizza for you, too (though, sadly, the pizza that I had been hearing good things about – with wild mushroom – has been taken off the menu). The Paneer Tikka Pizza costs ₹90, while the Herbed Chicken Pizza and Bar-

becue Chicken Pizza are at ₹100 each. They have added wraps to the menu now, with Falafel and Hummus Wrap (₹70), Chipotle Veggie Wrap (₹70), Chicken Shawarma Wrap (₹80) and Butter Chicken Wrap (₹80).

There are various kinds of pastries and tarts. And, yes, you can

Wrap and roll At the Constitution Club of India *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

have your chicken patties, too. The patties are big enough to be cut into two. The casing is flaky (a bit too flaky perhaps), but the mildly spicy chicken stuffing is delicious. I had it with my tea, and loved it. I also tried out the chicken sausage roll – a sausage wrapped in a small loaf (₹70) – and that wasn't bad either. I had some of their Focaccia (₹75) and Garlic Loaf (₹75) for dinner (with home-cooked Cajun chicken, I may as well add). The breads came with a small jar of salsa.

Coffee Break is open to all, seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. (phone: 23711849, 23327337). It's humming with life, with a lot of young people stopping by for a cup of tea or coffee. The beverage list includes Masala Tea, Lassi, Latte, Flavoured Latte, Smoothies and Milkshakes. The shakes and flavoured cappuccino cost ₹70.

There is a restaurant next to it, too, but I shall write about it another day. All that I can tell you right now is that their three-bean salad deserves three cheers.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

PRODUCT

Stay comfortable



Feminine hygiene brand Pee Safe, has launched a Period Care Box that takes a woman through three months of menstruation. The box includes 15 regular pads, 15 overnight ones, 16 panty liners, and what they call a cramp-relief roll-on. All products are organic cotton and hence biodegradable. Works well for the office and for the guest room.

Available at peesafe.com and Amazon.in; ₹999

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

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



TALK

Health
Dr Nandita Shah, Nari Shakti Award recipient and founder of SHARAN, an organisation dedicated to holistic health awareness, will deliver a lecture titled, *Conquering Cancer*. In her talk, she will shed light on chemotherapy and radiotherapy and explain why cancer is common these days, and ways to prevent it.
VENUE: Amaltas Hall, India Habitat Centre
TIME: 7 p.m.



FOOD

Special menu
Titled Golden Triangle, this new menu at Indus Express is an amalgamation of dishes from Rajasthani, Mughlai and Awadhi cuisines. In addition to their regular dishes, this special curation offers Rajma Ki Gilawat, from Agra; Machhli Jaisamandi from Jaipur; and Laccha Tokri Chat, from Delhi.
VENUE: Indus Express, Vivanta New Delhi
TIME: 7:30 p.m. - 11:45 p.m.



LECTURE

Culture
To mark the launch of its latest volume, Gandhara: A Confluence of Cultures, MARG has organised a series of four lectures, delivered by art curator, Prof. Naman P. Ahuja. In these richly illustrated lectures, Prof. Ahuja will use a series of 30 objects, to narrate a story of conflict and coexistence through history.
VENUE: Multipurpose Hall, IIC
TIME: 6:30 p.m.



FILM

Malayalam film
Two films will be screened today as part of the ongoing Malayalam Film Festival. The first *Kanthon – The Lover of Colour*, directed by Shareef Easa, is a recipient of the Kerala State Award for best film. The second film *Body Deep (Udalazham)* is by director Unnikrishnan Avala.
VENUE: C. D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre, Lodhi Road
TIME: 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.



DESSERT

Ice Cream Social 3.0
The third edition of Ice Cream Social, a two-day summer fiesta hosted by DLF Promenade, starts this Saturday. It brings to visitors the best ice creams, and will showcase an array of flavours. This include handcrafted dondurmas, Hong Kong waffles, ice cream tacos, and flavoured Kulfi from across ten brands.
VENUE: The Atrium, DLF Promenade, Vasant Kunj
TIME: 11:30 a.m. onwards

FILM REVIEW



Raising the bar A scene from the film • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

DEBORAH CORNELIOUS

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) has a lot riding, read: flying, on *Spider-Man Far from Home*. For one, it's the last film of the third phase, completing The Infinity Saga. Then there's the colossal fact that it follows the pop cultural phenomenon that is *Avengers: Endgame*. In the aftermath of the demise of several superheroes, the *Spider-Man* franchise not only had to hold on to its bubble-gum innocence but also push the character's boundaries.

The film, a sequel to 2017's *Homecoming*, also has to deal with last year's *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* that successfully brought the nostalgia of comic books to the big screen with path-breaking animation and an even better manipulation of the superhero's succession theories. Could 2019's Marvel Spidey live up to these challenges? The resounding answer is yes.

Rather than give audiences an Avengers-style mission, *Spider-Man: Far from Home* perfectly utilises its teenage playground to deliver several emotional punches with plenty of knee-slapping zingers and lots of unexpected twists. It's a classic Marvel enterprise, and yet director Jon Watts and writers Chris McKenna and Erik Sommers make *Far from*

Another swinging WIN FOR MARVEL

Spider-Man: Far from Home is a worthy sequel to the superhero's origins with lots of teenage fun

Home stand out in the MCU. In the aftermath of Iron Man's death, Peter Parker aka Spider-Man (Tom Holland) is back at school and pining for fellow classmate MJ (Zendaya) while struggling to cope with being a superhero. In spite of being recently gone, Stark continues to reach beyond the unknown to mentor Parker, leaving him a powerful augmented intelligence tech named E.D.I.T.H.

As a primer, the 'blip', where half the world vanished is touched on, to keep everyone in the loop. Parker needs a vacation, he's just the friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man, he insists. He deliberately decides not to carry his suit to a class Euro trip al-

beit aunt May (Marisa Tomei) has other ideas. But trouble has a way of finding the weary, in this case it's Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) with all his hard charisma and caustic one-liners. Giant monsters called Elementals, from other dimensions are wreaking havoc and Spider-Man has to step up. All help is welcome when Quentin Beck (Jake Gyllenhaal) a benevolent superhero from another dimension shows up to the fight.

Battle sequences, a watermark of the MCU takes a backseat in *Far from Home*. Instead, the film is a growing-into-his-own field for Spider-Man. Sure he messes up, which teen wouldn't. But it's up to Parker to let

his 'Spidey Tingle' lead the way. When the film's twist surfaces, it won't entirely be unpredictable. But *Far from Home* has other ideas to lasso in viewers, namely Holland's vulnerability and sincerity as Parker. Of course, kudos to Gyllenhaal who, as always in top form, makes character transitions appear seamless. But the real winner of the film - like it has been with every single Marvel outing - are the spectacular special effects that blur the lines between fantasy and reality. In this case, the audience, like Spider-Man is on tenterhooks waiting for the real to be revealed.

Far from Home could never and wasn't really intended to outperform or trump *Avengers: Endgame*. But it's a definitely earned a place in the MCU while being a fantastic sequel for *Homecoming*.

Talent spotting

Javed Ali, the voice behind iconic songs like *Kajra Re* and *Ghuzarish*, talks about his role as judge in the just-launched kids singing reality show, *Superstar Singer*

MADHUR TANKHA

It was Ghulam Ali, the ghazal singer, equally popular in India and Pakistan, who discovered him. And now it is playback singer and TV host Javed Ali's turn to pay it forward, as a judge on the show *Superstar Singer* that airs on Sony Entertainment Television every Saturday and Sunday. Contestants are groomed by mentors from the music industry to put forth their best. Javed remembers his own association with his own mentor: "Every time Ghulam Aliji visited Delhi, I accompanied him to all his shows in order to learn first-hand from him." Here, he talks about the children on the show, and his co-judges. Edited excerpts from an interview.

Tell us about the contestants and how you chose them.

The varied contestants we have managed to gather is remarkable. We made sure that we visited even the smallest of places so that we can give a platform to the talent we have identified. All the contestants are extraordinarily gifted; they all have the zeal to learn more. If given a chance, we will bring in more talent on the show, but as per the show format, we have to bring forth 16 contestants.

How does this show differ from *Indian Idol*?

The concept is very different from *Indian Idol* as there are four different Captains who are going to guide the children. My fellow judges Alka Yagnik and Himesh Reshammiya, and I will also be helping the participants. In *Indian Idol*, participants would come and sing and judges would give them feedback. Additionally, *Superstar Singer* is a kids' singing reality show.

Are you trying to revive our country's guru-shishya parampara in some way?

Yes, the *guru-shishya parampara* is one of India's valuable relationships. Our focus is for children to value this relationship, as gurus help their shishya in different phases of their lives. They try to impart the best education to their shishya and always want them to excel in their fields.

Why do you think Salman has become a household name?

Salman is a fabulous singer. His singing is peaceful and relaxes the contestants.

You have great camaraderie with your co-judges...

I share a great bond with Alkaji and Himeshji. One of the reasons is that I have worked with both of them in the past; the second reason is that they are both genuine, humble people. Not just the contestants, even I am learning a lot from both.

Every time Ghulam Aliji visited Delhi, I accompanied him to all his shows, in order to learn first-hand from him

As a judge, what are your expectations from this show?

I expect to meet a lot of talented contestants who will not only take our Indian music industry to another level but will also inspire children keen on taking up music as a profession. We have already met many marvellous children during the course of the audition and our established Captains Salman Ali, Nitin Kumar, Jyotika Tangri and Sachin Valmiki will be polishing their talent.

Lending a hand

Javed Ali
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



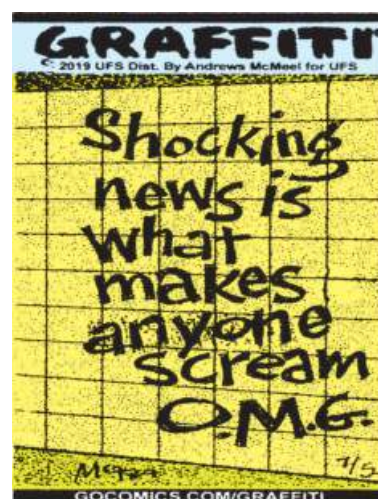
TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



HEALTH CAPSULES
by Bron Smith

HOW MANY B VITAMINS ARE THERE?
A VITAMIN B COMPLEX SUPPLEMENT INCLUDES ALL OF THE B VITAMINS IN ONE PILL.

THE VITAMIN B COMPLEX HAS EIGHT CONSTITUENTS, INCLUDING: B1 (THIAMINE), B2 (RIBOFLAVIN), B3 (NIACIN), B5 (PANTOTHENIC ACID), B6 (PYRIDOXINE), B7 (BIOTIN), B9 (FOLATE) AND VARIOUS FORMS OF B12 (COBALAMINS).

Health Capsules is not intended to be a diagnostic or cure.

THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13114

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16						17
18		19		20	21	
22			23			
24				25		

- 5 Path around (5)
- 6 Gin and vermouth (7)
- 7 Hold close, affectionately (6)
- 8 Humiliating (11)
- 14 Embodiment (7)
- 15 Crate used by orators at Speakers' Corner? (7)
- 16 Deceive - lead on (6)
- 17 Painted or sculpted band running round under the ceiling (6)
- 19 External (5)
- 21 Tropical fruit with yellow skin and pink pulp (5)

- Across
- 1 Remove weapons from (6)
- 4 Large - universal (6)
- 9 Sturdy 'British' dog (7)
- 10 Fed up (5)
- 11 Staunch (5)
- 12 Undergoing court process (2,5)
- 13 Dinner jacket worn with a white shirt (informal) (7,4)
- 18 Kenyan capital (7)
- 20 Irk (5)
- 22 Perch (5)
- 23 Anger at having been offended (7)
- 24 Work by Keats or Shelley, say (6)
- 25 Breathe out (6)
- Down
- 1 Try something briefly and superficially (6)
- 2 Preposterous (5)
- 3 Sign of danger (or socialism)? (3,4)

Solution No. 13113

E	A	S	I	R	D	I	T
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G	L	I	O	T	A		
B	R	I	O	P	R	E	A
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M	A	S	T	E	R	P	I
Q	S	N	L	F	N		
U	N	S	U	B	T	L	E
E	U	O	T	A	A		
N	E	R	R	O	R	S	
S	E	D	G	E	M	E	D

Solution will appear in *The Hindu* dated July 6, 2019.

IN BRIEF



Greece's Acropolis shut down due to heat

ATHENS
Greece's most famous archaeological site, the Acropolis, was shut to visitors for four hours on Thursday because of hot weather. The monument would remain closed in the afternoons if temperatures in Athens rose above 36°C, as the temperature on the Acropolis hill would be even higher, authorities said. AP



YouTube's new policy bans hacking videos

SAN FRANCISCO
Video-sharing giant YouTube has banned "instructional hacking and phishing" videos citing them as harmful or dangerous content under its recent policy update. The move has puzzled content creators who say that there is a lack of clarity on how the policy will be applied. IANS



Volcano erupts in Sicily, one tourist killed

MILAN
A volcanic eruption on the Sicilian island of Stromboli sent about 30 tourists jumping into the sea for safety on Wednesday as molten material ignited a series of fires. Authorities said that a hiker was killed during the eruptions. Italy's two other active volcanoes are Etna in Sicily and Vesuvius near Naples. AP

Scientists find new gene linked to schizophrenia

Collaborative effort between Indian and Australian team aims to shed more light on the mental illness

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE**

After 18 years of research, Indian and Australian scientists have identified a new gene directly linked to schizophrenia.

Scientists from the University of Queensland (QBI) in Australia and a team of Indian researchers analysed the genomes of over 3,000 individuals and found those with schizophrenia were more likely to have a particular genetic variation.

The team of Indian re-



R. Thara

searchers was led by R. Thara, co-founder and director of the Chennai-based Schizophrenia Research Foundation.

Bryan Mowry from QBI said such studies had predo-

minantly been done in populations with European ancestry, with more than 100 schizophrenia-associated variants identified previously.

"Looking at other populations can highlight different parts of the genome with a more robust association with the disease," Dr. Mowry said.

"This study identified a gene called NAPRT1 that encodes an enzyme involved in vitamin B3 metabolism – we were also able to find this gene in a large genomic data-

set of schizophrenia patients with European ancestry," he said.

Function in the brain

"When we knocked out the NAPRT1 gene in zebrafish, brain development of the fish was impaired – we are now working to understand more deeply how this gene functions in the brain," Dr. Mowry said.

"Our studies aim to shed more light on what makes people susceptible to schizophrenia and possible treat-

ments for the future," Dr. Mowry added. According to a statement released by the university, Dr. Mowry and Dr. Thara met in the late 1990s when they discussed studying a population in India.

"Thara is a driving force for research into schizophrenia in India and her team in Chennai has been central in recruiting patients, while QBI has been able to fund the processing of blood samples they've collected," Dr. Mowry said.



Arctic mission to 'trap' researchers in ice to study climate

Teams from 17 nations will take part in the year-long programme, where a research ship will allow itself to get stuck among floes in the ocean

**ASSOCIATED PRESS
BREMERHAVEN**

In a couple of months, the German icebreaker *RV Polarstern* will set out for the Arctic packed with supplies and scientific equipment for a year-long mission to explore the planet's frigid far north. The icebreaker will be the base for scientists from 17 nations studying the impact of climate change on the Arctic and how it could affect the rest of the world.

Scientists plan to sail the ship into the Arctic Ocean, tether it to a large piece of sea ice and allow the water to freeze around them, effectively trapping themselves in the vast sheet of white that forms over the North Pole each winter.

The organisers say that the project is unprecedented in scale and ambition. As temperatures drop and the days get shorter, the scientists will build temporary winter research camps on the ice, allowing them to perform tests that wouldn't be possible at other times of the year or by satellite sensing.



"So far we have always been locked out of that region and we lack even the basic observations of the climate processes in the central Arctic from winter. We are going to change that for the first time," said Markus Rex of Germany's Alfred Wegener Institute, who will lead the €140 million expedition. The mission's aim to un-

derstand global warming means there's no time for national rivalry, said Mr. Rex. Scientists from United States, China, Russia and other countries will be rotating every two months as other icebreakers bring fresh supplies.

By combining measurements on the ice with data collected from satellites,

scientists hope to improve the increasingly sophisticated computer models for weather and climate predictions.

"We can do a lot with robotics and other things but in the end the visual, the manual observation and also the measurement, that's still what we need," said Marcel Nicolaus, a German sea ice



Sea fever: The German Arctic research vessel *Polarstern*, left, is docked for maintenance in Bremerhaven, Germany, while atmospheric scientist and leader of the MOSAIC expedition Markus Rex, above, inspects maps on the bridge of the ship. AP

physicist who will be part of the international mission.

Fully funded

The mission has received funding from U.S. institutions such as the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and NASA.

Once the *Polarstern* is carried into the depth of the Arctic night, far off the coast of northern Greenland, the scientists will be on their own, making any emergency evacuation almost impossible. Nonetheless, the ship has a fully equipped medical station to avoid any calamity on board, said Verena Mohaupt, a logistics expert who

has prepared elaborate safety measures for the ship.

The MOSAIC mission which stands for Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate, comes about 125 years after Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen first managed to seal his wooden expedition ship, *Fram*, into the ice during a three-year expedition to the North Pole.

Scientists now believe that the cold cap that forms each year is key to regulating weather patterns across the Northern Hemisphere. Mr. Rex cited the polar vortices that blasted cold air as far as Florida last winter and the early summer heat wave in Europe as prime examples of the impact.

"The dramatic warming of the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic. We as scientists, I think, have the obligation to produce the robust scientific basis for political decisions," Mr. Rex said, adding that understanding the processes is crucial for world leaders to tackle climate change effectively.

Man files cheating case against Hrithik over gym advertisement

Claims false promises were made by fitness company

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HYDERABAD**

Actor Hrithik Roshan has been named in a charge of cheating along with three representatives of a health and wellness start-up, for which he was a brand ambassador.

The Hyderabad police registered the case based on a complaint by a customer who said that "false promises" were made by the company's advertisement on its fitness centre.

The complainant alleged that he was not given daily workout sessions at Cult.Fit wellness centre although he had paid the fee for "unlimited" classes. The company claimed that the customer had behaved "inappropriately and violently" with its staff and that he was wrong to drag the brand ambassador into the issue.



Hrithik Roshan

Bengaluru-based CureFit operates its chain of fitness centres under the brand 'Cult.Fit'.

The client lodged the complaint with police here on June 22 stating that in November 2018 he had enrolled at the fitness centre/gym paying ₹17,490 as mem-

ber for 10 months of unlimited classes, but was "cheated by not getting workout sessions daily".

"Most of the time the workout session is not available which is denying good health benefits," he said.

Following the complaint, a case under IPC sections 420 (cheating) and 406 (criminal breach of trust) was registered against the actor, being the firm's brand ambassador and three senior officials of the company, police said.

In a statement, Cult.Fit said it was cooperating with authorities "as per due process and evaluating remedial action". "The customer against whom we were constrained to take action had behaved inappropriately and violently with our staff," it said.

Circle of life



Cooling off: A tiger, named Chota Matka, making a brief appearance at a pool in the Tadoba National Park after concealing a partly-eaten kill in a nearby culvert on Thursday. C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

King Tut's statue sold amid protests

**ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON**

Christie's, a British auction house, has gone forward with the auction of a 3,000-year-old stone sculpture of the famed pharaoh Tutankhamun despite protests from the Egyptian government.

The brown quartzite head depicting King Tut, one of the most prominent symbols of Egypt's history, was sold for more than \$5.9 million on Thursday evening.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry had demanded that the auction house provide documents proving the statue's ownership and said Egypt holds rights to the piece based on its current and previous laws.

But the auction house defended the sale saying that it carried out "due diligence" to verify the provenance of the statue.

Fingerprinting to track users online is on the rise. Here's what to do

The technique, which involves looking at device characteristics and triangulating data to follow users, happens invisibly in the background in apps and on websites

BRIAN X. CHEN

If there's one lesson to learn about digital privacy, it's that we can never grow complacent. Even if we secure our data so we are not tracked online, the ad tech industry will find ways to monitor our digital activities.

And so it is with the rise of so-called fingerprinting, which security researchers are calling a next-generation tracking technology.

Fingerprinting involves looking at the many characteristics of a mobile device or computer, like the screen resolution, operating system and model, and triangulating this information to pinpoint and follow users as they browse the web and use apps. Once enough device

characteristics are known, the theory goes, the data can be assembled into a profile that helps identify the user the way a fingerprint would.

"Get enough of those attributes together and it creates essentially a bar code," said Peter Dolanjski, a product lead for Mozilla's Firefox web browser, who is studying fingerprinting. "That bar code is absolutely uniquely identifiable."

And here's the bad news: The technique happens invisibly in the background in apps and websites.

Growing slowly

Security researchers discovered fingerprinting as a tracking method about seven years ago, but it was rarely discussed until recently. On-



Fingerprinting can create user profiles. NY TIMES/GLENN HARVEY

ly about 3.5% of the most popular websites use it today for tracking, but that's up from about 1.6% in 2016, according to Mozilla. And an unknown number of mobile apps also use fingerprinting.

There are restrictions to the data that apps and web-

sites can get about your device. On iPhones and Android phones, for example, a user must give an app permission to gain access to location data, the camera and the microphone.

But fingerprinting collects seemingly innocuous characteristics that are generally shared by default to make apps and websites work properly.

Blocking solutions

Here are some solutions for blocking browser fingerprinting. For those who use iPhones and Macs, Apple introduced a fingerprinting defence mechanism in its Safari browser last year. It basically makes many Macs and iPhones look the same to a website by sharing the bare minimum of information that the site needs to load properly.

To take advantage of this defence, just make sure of running a recent version of the iPhone and Mac operating systems. Android users and Windows users can try

the Firefox web browser. Mozilla introduced fingerprint blocking in its Firefox browser this year, but the feature can prevent content for some websites from loading or a shopping site from processing a payment properly, so it's not turned on by default, the company said.

Mozilla said it was making progress and expected to block fingerprinting by default in a future release. For now, a user can enable the feature by opening the browser preferences, clicking on the privacy and security page, selecting "Custom" and checkmarking "fingerprinters".

Google announced this year that it planned to introduce fingerprint defence for its Chrome browser, but it

did not specify when the feature would be released.

Other desktop browsers can install an add-on, such as "Disconnect" which works on Google's Chrome browser.

For mobile phones

Mobile fingerprinting is a different beast.

Fingerprinting can be done directly inside apps, without people easily seeing what data an app is gathering in the background or when it runs.

One example of this surfaced in 2017 when *The New York Times* revealed that Uber used a form of fingerprinting inside its iPhone app to identify users even after they erased content from their devices.

Fingerprint defences in

mobile apps are only beginning to emerge. "Disconnect" offers mobile apps for blocking trackers inside other apps.

For iPhones and Android devices, Privacy Pro and Disconnect Premium can analyse app activities on devices to detect and block trackers. The problem with the Disconnect apps is that it is difficult to decipher which specific apps are doing the fingerprinting so that you can delete them.

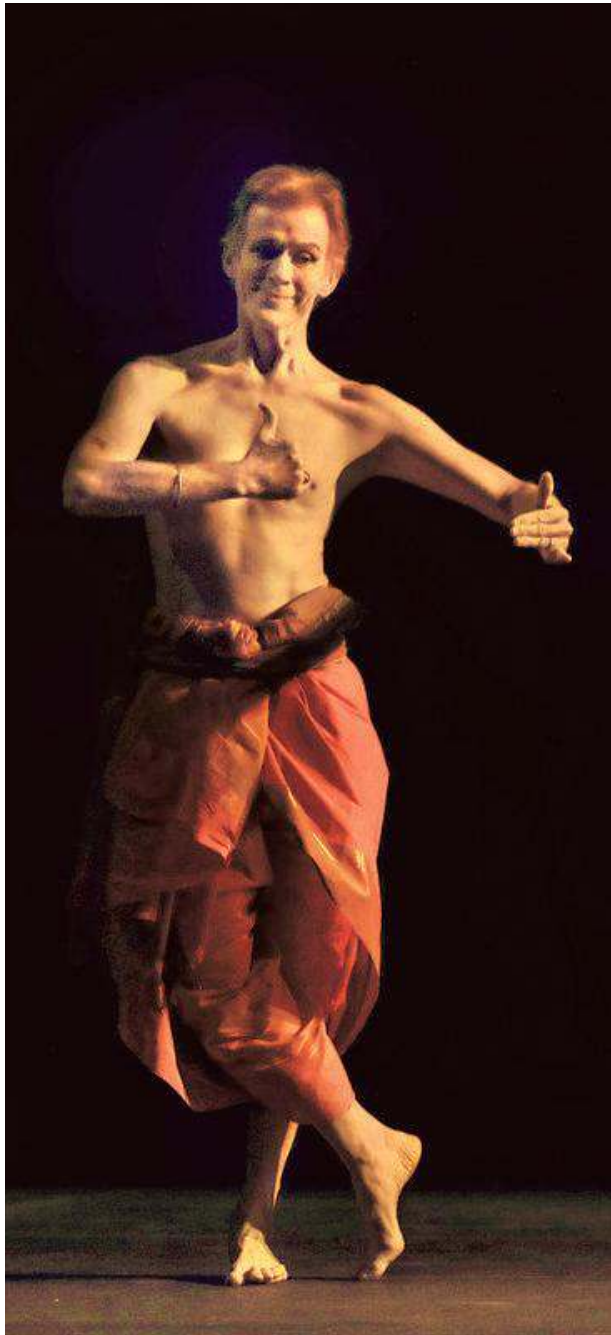
So what's the most practical thing you can do for mobile? Start by deleting apps you rarely use, especially the ones from obscure brands. Free apps are most likely to be loaded with trackers, though some paid ones track you, too. NY TIMES

FRIDAY REVIEW

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Art and Identity

Four seasoned dance exponents of foreign origin trace their journey into Indian classical tradition **Pages 4 & 5**

INSIDE



Dancing in devotion

In 'Samagama Leela', Geeta Chandran gives us a glimpse of her evolving relationship with bhakti **P3**



Class and classical

Prateesha Suresh is advocating for Borgeet of Assam to be recognised as a classical art **P7**



Beauty and beyond

Benoy K. Behl's "Grandeur Of The Lord" explores how splendour and spirituality was carved in stone during the Chola period **P8**



Talented trio Milan, Mahima and Rishi Upadhyay

Celebrating a rich tradition

The torch bearers of Pt. Vasudev Upadhyay's legacy presented the nuances of the unique blend of dhrupad and pakhawaj

MANJARI SINHA

Music lovers witnessed an array of impressive performances last week, by talents representing rich legacies of Hindustani classical vocal and instrumental music. If Milan, Mahima and Rishi Upadhyay represented the dhrupad and pakhawaj tradition of Pt. Vasudev Upadhyay Parampara with a remarkable lecture-demonstration (lec-dem), Waseem Ahmed Khan the gifted vocalist of Agra Gharana gave a rousing recital for the Raga Dopahari concert of Sangeet Natak Akademi and young Saumitra Thakur, featured in the 'Legends of Tomorrow' series of Pracheen Kala Kendra, brought a whiff of Vishnupur and Maihar Gharanas in his Sitar recital.

The exceptionally talented Milan, Mahima and Rishi Upadhyay, were featured in the monthly Baithak of IHC Music Club, organised with an aim to 'Listen, Share & Discuss'; in this case, the contribution of Pt. Vasudev Upadhyay Parampara to dhrupad and pakhawaj. The gifted children and disciples of Malati and Pt. Ravi Shankar Upadhyay from Pt. Vasudev Upadhyay Parampara, Milan is trained in dhrupad whereas Mahima and Rishi Shankar Upadhyay play pakhawaj. They took turns, deliberating upon the history and salient features of this tradition, known for both dhrupad gayan and pakhawaj vadan.

The originators of this four hundred years old tradition were two brothers from Rajasthan named Ugan and Budhan Upadhyay, one was a dhrupad singer and the other was a mridangam player. Invited as court musicians by the king of Behat Estate, they settled in Gaya thus the gharana carried forward both, the dhrupad *gayan* and pakhawaj *vadan* from the very beginning. The parampara was named after Pt. Vasudev Upadhyay in view of his significant contribution to the age old tradition. This introductory deliberation was followed by a dhrupad recital by Milan Upadhyay in raga Bageshree, set to Chautala "Tum ho Karuna-nidhan...", accompanied on pakhawaj by Mahima and Rishi Upadhyay. Milan later explained that the four part introductory *alaap* had *vilambit*, *jod*, *gamak* and the fast speed fourth segment of 'Nom-tom'.

Story of pakhawaj

Rishi underlined the importance of pakhawaj *sangat* that goes hand in hand with the dhrupad singing and demonstrated it evoking *Veera* rasa since this tradition comes from the Khandar Bani. Rishi also talked about how Pakhawaj was created by Lord Shiva and played first by Ganesha, reciting the famous *Paran* of his gharana, "Shravan Sundar naam Ganapati...". He also recited the *Ganesh Paran* of Pt. Kishan Maharaj that refers to "Brahma Vishnu Mahesh Taal dai Dhurpad gavain, Ati-vichitra Gananaath aaj Mirdanga bajavain..." He explained how the application of *atta*, the wheat flour on the left side of Pakhawaj adds to the grandeur of its sound. He then talked about the special features of pakhawaj compositions of his grandfather Pt. Ram Ji Upadhyay, his father and Guru Pt. Ravi Shankar Upadhyay and how he himself and his younger sister Mahima have added to the wealth of compositions in family tradition. The special work of Pt. Ram Ji Upadhyay in off-beat 'aad laya', especially in *Tisra Jati* were demonstrated, adjusting four in three i.e. *Kahrawa Ang* in *dadra*, on pakhawaj. Milan talked about dhrupad and explained how they refrain from the lighter ornamentations like *khatka-murki* and use *meend* instead, by practically demonstrating it. Her totally tuneful renditions of dhrupad were mesmerising. There was also a question-answer session with active floor participation before Milan concluded with a *Sooltala Bandish* in raga *Adana*.

Old story, novel treatment

DIWAN SINGH BAJELI

The dominant theme of Kirti Jain's oeuvre is to portray deep-rooted malaise in Indian society to make the members of the audience aware of social antagonism. A former director of the National School of Drama and recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi award, Kirti's revival of "Subarnalata", which she directed for Kshitij and was staged at Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, recently, reinforces her social commitment as an artist. An austere production, the focus is to unravel threads of the tormented world of a woman in a seamless manner.

Adapted by Geetanjali Shree, novelist, short-story writer and a playwright, from Ashapurna Devi's celebrated novel in three parts, the play traces the growth of Indian feminism from colonial to post-colonial India. We have seen the stage adaptation of Geetanjali's novel "Hamara Sheher Us Baras" which was directed by Kirti Jain not long ago. Its spectacular design projected the vast canvas of the novel by exploring the theatrical space vertically and horizontally. In the Hindi adaptation of "Subarnalata", Geetanjali has captured the language and idiom of a middle class family in which women are treated as commodity. Her dialogues are simple and are laced with disparaging remarks that are made against women. Like "Ladki Ka Asli Ghar Sasural Hi Hota Hain" - (daughter's true home is in-law's house) and "Biwi Ka Ghulam" - (henpecked husband) - reserved for one who treats his wife with respect. These dialogues betray the inhuman treatment meted out to women in a patriarchal society.



Moving experience A scene from the play; (below) Kirti Jain

The play's opening scene is set in the centre downstage with Subarnalata sitting underneath a near-worn out table. She takes out her dolls from an old-fashioned trunk and plays out the game about her life as a child. Suddenly, an old woman enters and sits on the table. Though conceived and enacted in an unaffected manner with a touch of spontaneity, it assumes the significance of a prologue, setting the tone for unravelling the past, present and future of the struggle for women's emancipation. While depicting the time and suffering of Subarnalata, the production provides a historical perspective of Indian women's struggle to achieve their dignity as human beings.

Face-off

Called Majhili Bahu, the wife of the second son, there is already a stigma attached to Subarnalata on account of her mother who has the courage to revolt against the suffocating middle class family's conventions and for starting a school for girls.

Subarnalata dares to face her domineering and cruel mother-in-law. In fact, the middle class in which Subarnalata lives is the large joint family ruled by the mother-in-law. Nobody could dare to oppose her dictatorial decisions.

The house in which the joint family lives has no verandah and windows that could be opened to

the outside world. The ladies of the house are confined within these terrifying four walls. Initially, Subarnalata's husband shares some happy moments with her but her loving attitude towards his wife angers the mother-in-law and other family members and gradually he shows his true colour and leaves no stone unturned to humiliate Subarnalata. He finally forces her to leave for her father's house where she is not welcomed because she has come alone. Where she should go now? Her father insists that she should go to her true home - the house of her in-laws but the in-laws want her to stay with her father.

Subarnalata has inherent thirst for knowledge and keen desire to visit new places and see vast ocean. Since the married woman is strictly prohibited to read and write, she would surreptitiously get books from her friend next door. Once she gets caught reading a book, she is beaten black and blue. The tortuous world she lives in is like a prison from which she is trying hard to escape.

Intense drama

As the narrative moves forward, the past and the present converge. She joins the *Swadeshi* movement, burning foreign goods publicly. Her children also join her. Again, through the device of letter, she encounters her rebel mother and exchange views on brutal

Capturing the idiom of a middle-class family, Kirti Jain's "Subarnalata" highlights the plight of a thinking woman in a male-dominated society

functioning of patriarchy. The sensitive direction and the performer's ingenuity to internalise the dilemma of their characters create the right ambience transforming the production into an intense drama. The music by Anuradha Kapur, which is blended with other expressive theatrical elements, is remarkable for its subtlety and intricacy which produced emotional impact on to the audience. These days such artistic treatment of stage music is rarely seen on the Delhi stage.

The denouement where Subarnalata is highly elevated to see her book in print but her moment of triumph turns into utter shock and humiliation shaking her entire being when she hears the disdainful and mocking comments of her husband and son on her book. The dramatic power with which the scene is enacted leaves you stunned.

Lovely Raj as Subarnalata gives a brilliant performance, internalising the emotional and psychological wounds inflicted by her husband and mother-in-law. Her Subarnalata is candidly frank and humane as she faces sustained torture.

Bharti Sharma as the cruel and domineering mother-in-law makes her scenes pulsate with life. Anurag Thakur as the mean, greedy and brute husband of Subarnalata and Prabhat Mishra as the kind hearted son-in-law, fit the parts.

In 'Samagama Leela', Geeta Chandran gives us a glimpse of her evolving relationship with *bhakti*

SHRINKHLA SAHAI

Bhakti has been the central theme of several Bharatanatyam presentations, yet it is rare to see a performer's story unfold through this lens. In 'Samagama Leela', the recent production by dancer, choreographer and guru, Geeta Chandran, bhakti emerges as the thematic foundation for reflection into her own life journey. The autobiographical solo performance takes a refreshing stance by delving into the deeply personal. It braids the artistic and spiritual journeys together to step away from a routine recital and present a *margam* of life.

Conceptualised by Geeta Chandran and Sudhamahi Regunathan, the performance moves through six compositions, most of which may be familiar to a discerning audience, and have been hand-picked carefully to mark milestones in the dancer's life. The audience get a glimpse of the artist's evolving relationship with bhakti through subtle story-telling before each composition, narrated by Rajiv Chandran.

"Everybody's journey in dance is very different," says Geeta Chandran, "to talk about bhakti through my own life journey is the most simple and personal connection." She developed the performance when invited to participate in the international conference on Bhakti at Yale, New Haven, United States, earlier this year. While the scholars speaking at the conference focused on the historical and aesthetic aspects of bhakti, the idea to present an autobiographical take emerged as a way of exploring the topic more experientially as an artist.

Early impressions

For Chandran, bhakti has been a way of life since childhood. The opening invocatory shloka 'Kripa samudram' is also symbolic of her initiation into the world of dance at the age of five. Deeply impacted by the iconography at the Nat-araja Temple in Chidambaram, the dancer reflects that her early moorings established both dance and spirituality as the essential pillars of life. "My first guru (Swarna Saraswathy) belonged to the temple tradition. For her, dance was an offering. At home as well,



Dancing in devotion

Refreshing stance Geeta Chandran in performance ■ SARABJIT SINGH DHILLON

the environment was ritualistic and spiritual, forming a continuum of sorts where my artistic and spiritual understanding started evolving together."

The experience of devotion and engagement with bhakti transformed over time for the dancer. "Initially, it was about imitating my teachers, seeing them soaked in a certain tradition," recounts Chandran. At this point, music played a major role in leading her into the nuances of the bhakti tradition. "I enter dance through music.

Sense of peace

As a student and practitioner of Carnatic music it is ingrained in my life and I was able to access the lyrics, poetry and multiple meanings through music." She recalls the strains of Bhakti compositions rendered by great maestros playing at home all the time, since her father was a devoted music connoisseur. "The music used to make me emotionally charged and I would feel it intensely." The powerful "Shiva Mahapanchakshara Shloka" signified this discovery of form and content of bhakti through dance and poetry in the dancer's life.

Reflecting on the experience of bhakti during the early days as a student of music and dance, Chandran says, "I used to feel a sense of peace after listening to, dancing to or singing an intense bhakti



It was difficult to capture the essence of what bhakti was, but it was experienced in certain moments...

composition. It was difficult to capture the essence of what bhakti was, but it was experienced in certain moments - where I left aside thoughts about daily life, and felt deeply connected, vulnerable and charged."

Artistic search

Moving further in her journey, as a young artist, bhakti emerged as a tool for aesthetic exploration, curiosity and critical thinking. Texts, stories and narratives posed the primary artistic challenge for Chandran. Her interpretation of various characters from epics and mythology also placed her at a precarious position, poised at the brink of traditional training and discovery of her own individuality as a choreographer. Marking this shift, she presented a Haveli Sangeet rendition. The 'Govinda Vandana' depicts the twin sides of Vishnu - as Jishnu, the invincible, and Trishnu, the fearless one.

"Historically, bhakti has also been deeply political and subversive," Chandran points out. Eventually, she began exploring the primary texts, studying the myriad interpretations of various scholars and delineating her own perspective through new works. Citing one of her landmark productions, 'Kaikeyi', Chandran reflects, "It is really important to question. Mostly, Kaikeyi has been seen as a uni-dimensionally dark character. When I read the Ramayana, I felt there was a lot more to her and decided to explore another dimension of her character."

The oft-performed and well-known composition "Krishna nee begane baro" was presented in the evening's performance in this vein - of questioning, exploring, and

arriving at a different interpretation. Mostly the composition is essayed through the eyes of Yashoda, searching, calling and cajoling mischievous child-Krishna. "Who is really calling out to Krishna here?" asks the dancer. "Why, only a mother calling out to her son? It could also be Radha seeking her lover, or the devotee searching for their lord," she says. The composition was presented with Chandran portraying all three roles, one after the other, the most riveting one being the devotee where she lays out an ambit of emotion, from restlessness, curiosity and fervour to devotion and gratitude.

New paths

The penultimate Kabir bhajan resonated with shifting ideologies and coming of age as an artist - a journey towards interiority and quietude. Reflecting on her artistic experiments over the years, she says, "Interpretations are just perspectives. We must keep approaching and discovering them in different ways that suit our rational, contemporary minds. Context is most important, it keeps changing and provides new insights for understanding human nature."

When Chandran set up Natya Vriksha, her dance institute in Delhi, she was mostly teaching first-generation learners whose home environment was vastly different from her own early initiation into dance.

Continued on page 7

In memory of the master

Ahead of his performance in Shimla, sitarist Shakir Khan talks about his rich lineage and the importance of hard work

SHAILAJA KHANNA

Shakir Khan, the 8th generation musician of the Imdadkhani gharana, will be playing at the first memorial festival dedicated to Ustad Vilayat Khan in Shimla. The Himachal Pradesh government has taken the welcome, though much belated, decision to commemorate Ustad Vilayat Khan's stay in Shimla in the late 1960s and early 1970s. (His home was called "Parimahala")

The event will feature the inaugural concert on 5th July by Ustad Vilayat Khan's son and musical heir Ustad Shujaat Khan. The festivities will conclude with a recital by Shakir Khan, the legendary Ustad's grand nephew on 6th July.

Shakir, who has just returned from a series of concerts in Europe, talks about his craft.

Tell us about your rich lineage.

Yes, without doubt, ours is the premier family of sitar, but it doesn't end there. Unless one can learn the difficult techniques, we are known for, play to perfection the iconic compositions of my ancestors, it's no use saying I belong to this tradition. I have never found it a burden to say I am so and so's descendant, rather I regard it as a responsibility which I am proud to shoulder. It does mean practising hard with one pointed focus, but I am ok with it. One learns how to make the best use of time - hang out with friends less, limit one's time on social media.

In today's world, there are many issues that my generation has to deal with - marketing oneself, trying to remain in the public eye, but my father (Ustad Shahid Parvez Khan) has always maintained that true artists come up because of their undeniable talent, not because of marketing skills. I also believe that in the world of music, there are no age limits. Someone may be a mature musician at 25, another at 35. One has to just keep at it.

But surely, as a musician, mere hard work is not enough?

No doubt, one needs musicality and correct training. By God's grace, music is in my DNA, and I have been taught by the best teacher, my father.

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Tales of immersion

Sharon Lowen, Justin McCarthy, Marie Elangovan and Carolina Prada on how they merged into the ocean of Indian classical dance

RANVE KUMAR

They were drawn to *natya* from different parts of the world. India, the source of classical dance and music, became their chosen destination. They arrived here like brave hearts, clueless about the country, its climate and its living conditions. Today, Delhi is home to them in more than ways than one. In the decades they have been here, they have enhanced themselves as artists of calibre, set up their life, evolved into revered gurus and established an identity through their art.

Meet Odissi guru and a Manipuri and Chhau practitioner Sharon Lowen, Bharatanatyam exponents-gurus Justin McCarthy and Marie Elangovan and Mayurthani Chhau wizard Carolina Prada. Hailing from diverse backgrounds such as the US, French-Canada and Columbia, they converged here to merge into the ocean of Indian classical dance. All of them were naturally inclined towards performing arts, especially dance and they all did learn Western dance or ballet or music initially on their home turfs. In course of time, each one of them came across an Indian classical dance performance that set the ball rolling. Like Columbus, they steered towards Indian shores with a flame in heart to pursue Indian classical dance through whatever means was available, such as cultural exchange programmes or scholarships on offer.

Let's rewind:
Sharon: Right from childhood in Michigan, that's where I belong to, I've had this innate love for dance but could not come to terms with my

ballet teacher when I was 7, because I was too scared of him. (laughs). By 13, a sort of realisation dawned on me that my multi-various interests in puppetry, theatre, literature, human rights had to be harnessed into pursuit of just one and that would be dance! I credit my mother for her active participation to further my passion.

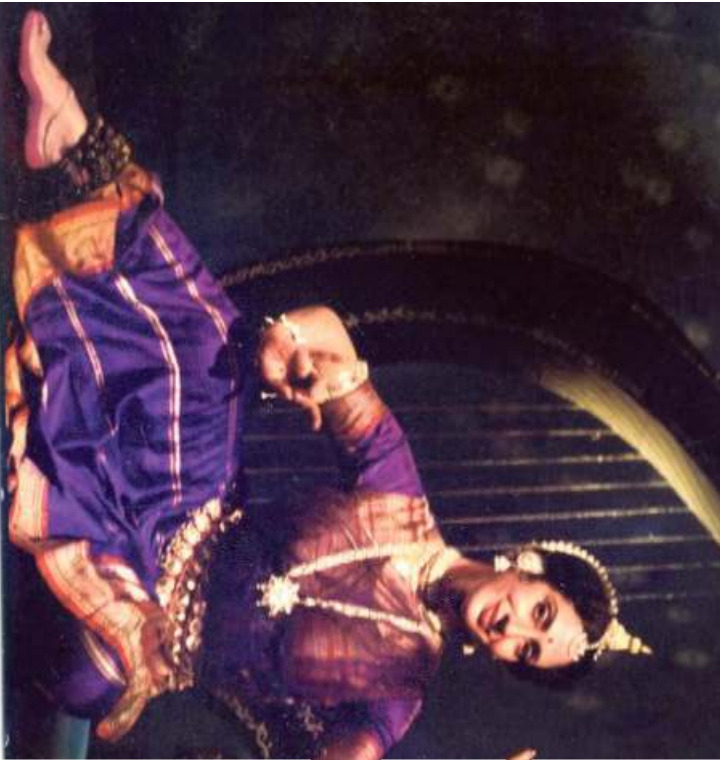
Justin: Like Sharon, I'm from Michigan too. I initially loved music, especially the Baroque and Renaissance. I guess and began taking piano lessons like many others of my age there. I loved ballet music and dance too but then dance was a sort of anathema for a boy to pursue those days. I'm talking of the '70s in the US. So I had to be content watching ballet videos secretly and trying to emulate those movements. I could only envisage learning dance after college when I would be on my own.

Marie: I too was interested in dance and began learning ballet in Quebec at the age of seven.
Carolina: I inherited this passion to learn dance from my mother but unlike Sharon or Marie, I didn't start the ballet till I was all but 19.

All four of them were attracted to the Indian dance scene after watching an Indian dance performance.



Though I knew that in the US there would be a more secure and economically comfortable life, I felt that my art would be tangential to the mainstream
Sharon Lowen



Marie: My course on Religious Studies at the Universite de Montreal

(1990) sowed the seed of interest in spirituality in relation to dance (Bharatanatyam). One thing led to another and I got closer to the Indian community in Montreal, attending Indian classical music and dance performances. And then the course of my life changed when I met Guru K. J. Govindarajan who was on a work visit to Kala Bharati (Montreal). His advice to me was simple: 'It's vital to immerse in the Indian ethos and culture in order to master the art form.' Following my heart, with no strings attached, I set off to India on a five-year student visa to learn Bharatanatyam under his tutelage here in Delhi. To be honest, I did initially feel homesick, being cut off from my roots. I miss my loving family and my swimming pool

(with a wink).
Carolina: With me, it was a more or less divinely-ordained thing. My interest in Eastern practices egged me on to learn Tai Chi Chuan, Aikido, Capoeira, and Colombian swordplay. But it was a video of Gotipua, Odissi and Mayurthani Chhau presented to me by a Mexican Odissi dancer with whom I was initially training in Odissi that put the map in place. I had a natural love and inclination for martial arts. It seemed impossible at the time (2005) to find dance scholarships to India, for South Americans. But somehow I managed to secure an ICCR scholarship by 2008, landed in Delhi to pursue Odissi dance in Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra.

There, I met my guru Jammejoy Satabhu who was also teaching Chhau from whom I began taking lessons simultaneously. It's ten years now and I'm committed to my dance form and my guru. In Chhau, I find a perfect combination of a dance language and martial attitude with display of movement.

Sharon: I was pursuing my BA (Hons) with Fine Arts in 69 as one of the subjects when I was learning Manipuri from Minati Roy there. Armed with a Fulbright scholarship, I joined Triveni Kala Sangam in 1973 to learn from Guru Singhajit Singh. During my second year of Fulbright study, I took an intensive workshop in Odissi offered at Triveni Kala Sangam with Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra and studied Mayurthani Chhau with Guru Kristina Chandra Nalk at the Bharatiya Kala Kendra.

Justin: Unlike them, I landed in India on impulse and that too in Chennai with no due diligence what-



Perfect synchronisation Justin McCarthy; Carolina Prada; Marie Elangovan; (below) Sharon Lowen

soever. Earlier I had explored the Western dances but wasn't happy.

Then I joined Bharatanatyam classes under two American lady dancers who had learnt under the illustrious Balasaraswati on her US sojourn. In India, I went straight to Kalakshetra and then trained under Subbaraya Pillai. I met my guru Jammejoy Satabhu who was also teaching Chhau at her place. He charged ₹ 200 a month for classes every day. I would have continued but for multiple health issues that cropped up making it impossible for me to continue in the place. Then on better advice and sense, I came to Delhi and literally stood in front of Leela Samson's door. She gave me everything a guru could to a shishya for more than a decade (1978-90). She got me an ICCR scholarship too when I ran out of money.

But Sharon couldn't take a decision that fast to settle down for good as she was married and the couple had to make number of trips up and down, taking up teaching jobs in the US while the other three had lesser hassles. Marie went ahead to become the daughter-in-law of her guru by marrying his musician son Elangovan. Carolina decided to take her guru's legacy forward by being here and making several trips to Odissa villages where different forms of Chhau was being practised. She



Perfect synchronisation Justin McCarthy; Carolina Prada; Marie Elangovan; (below) Sharon Lowen

Yes, there is little money in dance but then when you love something so deeply, the peripherals no longer matter
Justin McCarthy

picked these up with alacrity. Justin decided to forgo his American citizenship and become an Indian citizen for he "just wanted to be here all his life."

Justin: My liking for dance and India is very irrational. Back home, my large family can make no sense of my decision. But they are all there for me. So I decided to forgo my American citizenship in 1997 and settle down here for good (chuckles).

Down the decades, how does it feel now?

Marie: More than the others, it's me who has had a total makeover in personal life and I'm so happy for it. I'm into a South Indian Tamil joint family who are fourth generation Carnatic music practitioners and nattuvanars (dance gurus). My husband Elangovan's grandmother is Kirtanoor Jayalakshmi, the first woman flautist to play in public concerts. In our home here, we breathe music



The spiritual connect and the guru-shishya parampara is what makes Indian classical dances a heritage treasure trove vis-a-vis western dance forms

■ GURMEET SINGH

and dance all through the day. Being in such an environment, I've been able to imbibe more than I ever dreamed of. I have been moulded into a purist performer and a choreographer with ample sense of music and its nuances. Though I can read and write Tamil and cook South Indian dishes, I'm not confident in conversing (laughs). My mother-in-law tried to teach me and ended up learning to speak fluent English, much to the amazement of her sons.

Sharon: During the three winters from 1983-85, I travelled to India along with my little daughter Fara on tourist visas. I used to make the best of the time on hand performing on Doordarshan (national and regional), pick up new repertoire from guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, go back to the US and get busy with performances of Manipuri, Odissi, and Chhau. It was a perennial feat for my husband and me. During 1986-87, I was in India with my husband as accompanying spouse as I held an American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Faculty Fellowship, for research on "Medieval Text and Modern Context of Odissi Dance" which got published by the University of Heidelberg, Germany. I decided to stay back in India after that. Though I knew that in the US, there would be

a more secure and economically comfortable life, I felt that my art would be tangential to the mainstream.

Justin: I've been here for four decades and I should say the going has been pretty good. Yes, there is little money in dance but then when you love something so deeply, the peripherals no longer matter. Thanks to the unquestioning support by art patron Sumitra Charatram and the Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra (now under Shoba Deepak Singh), I've been given a free hand to train students in my style of Bharatanatyam and unquestioning which I have developed on my own after the 10-year stint with my guru.

Carolina: I'm here for more than a decade. I have no plans to leave India for the time being. I need to be here alongside my guru. The driving



The driving point that keeps me here is the spiritual connection to dance, its intricate technique, the mind-body connection through symbols, stories...
Carolina Prada

When a non-Indian aspires to learn and perform dance, be it Bharatanatyam, Odissi or any other form, he/she gives their whole to it with dedicated discipline. Except pure love of the art form, there is no other agenda like fame, name, money, etc. Further, most of them take to classical performing arts in its entirety, learning the tough Carnatic music and its idiom, since dance is so interlaced with music, which many Indian aspirants don't. They are the most sincere, involved artists giving their best in its purest form. Dance overrules all other considerations and they willingly put up with material inconveniences, lead an uncomplicated life with just one goal in the which is to be admired.

I would like to quote an example: this year's Padmasri awardee Milena Salvin embraced the Indian way back in the '40s and trained in Bharatanatyam from my mother M K Saroj, Kathakali in Kerala and various other dance forms. She has done unending service of 60 years to the cause of dance and the crowning glory is her setting up her institution the Centre Mandapa in Paris which now is the hub of ICCR too.

Aashish Mohan Khilkar, dance historian and culture critic



point that keeps me here is the spiritual connection to dance, its complex isolation, its intricate technique, the mind-body connection through symbols, stories and the emotive quotient. Dance is not empty movements. I have visited many villages in Odissa where this dance abides in different styles. I have studied and researched on the existing gharanas and got a clear picture of the grammar and techniques of the dance form. My Kalaripayattu training has given me strength and flexibility.

They are confident about the road ahead
Sharon: My work expanded to setting up my own school to take my

dance inheritance forward. Manasa-Art without Frontiers was born. Among the numerous festivals, choicereographies, performances I did also as a Telugu film 'Swarna Kamalam' for K. Vishwanath. I have overcome all obstacles by letting my dance lead me where it did. If the audiences admired my art without the 'foreign' tag, I owe it to my gurus who have groomed me to imbibe the art forms and projected them as a part of myself. I'm constantly conducting workshops and giving exclusive performances as and when I'm being invited to other places.

Marie: The spiritual connect and the guru-shishya parampara is what makes Indian classical dances a her-

itage treasure trove vis-a-vis western dance forms. The mind opens up to the body and your creativity unfolds as you delve deeper into dance. And as the layers open up, you are able to establish a oneness with the spirit as they say immersing yourself in bliss.
Carolina: My path has just opened. It's still a long way to go, in fact as I'm delving deeper, I feel it will take many more births to reach the ultimate in dance; it is so complex and so divine. I'm committed to this end, God-willing.
Not just this quartet; there are many more such as Ileana Citaristi, Nikolaina Nikoloski and Liesbeth Pankeja Benink to name a few who have chosen the art as their identity.

Mind Your Yoga

Listen to your breath

Feel it, observe it... for health benefits

A.G. MOHAN AND DR. GANESH MOHAN



The effort of breathing is the essence of life. When breath changes,

there are immediate effects at every level of the body and mind. Ancient hatha yoga shows asana as the pathway to change and control the inner experience of the breath; it is not meant to be just exercise or a posture of the body. To achieve this, we should connect to our breath and develop breathing skills in the asana itself. Then we can deepen them in pranayama. This is a key factor in the yoga path that is not always sufficiently emphasised in modern yoga – coordination of body and breath in a structured pathway.

Breathing well for good health needs greater skill and subtlety than working with the body. The breath is not as obvious as say the hips or hamstrings in its movement! It is easier to see and feel the body than the breath. What is more, breathing is mainly involuntary. We only have partial control over the breath. In other words, we do have control over many of our movements in complex ways, whereas, breathing mostly takes care of itself. However, in modern life, our natural breathing patterns are often not healthful, because of acute stress, poor posture and erratic lifestyle.

Learn to feel it

There is a pathway to working with the breath intelligently, guided by yoga knowledge and wisdom. The first skill to work with the breath is learning to sense or feel it. This is an ongoing process where we observe the breath in different ways – in various areas of the body, during inhalation and exhalation and the pauses, and stay in touch with breath sensations through the day.

As the next step, we try to let our breath become smoother and easier. If we cannot feel the breath well, or breathing is strained,

breathing practices will not lead to



good health. Then we must approach the different patterns of breathing – for instance, breathing into the abdomen, lower ribs, upper chest, back and combinations of these areas.

As we work on these parameters, we can also observe the inhalation, exhalation, and pauses, and gradually begin lengthening the breath. The ability to breathe long is important for good health in multiple ways and it also leads us to the capacity to suspend the breath. Suspending or pausing the breath offers the psychological benefits of bringing stillness to the body and mind, and also physical health benefits to the body.

Then, in classical yoga, we progress to doing the bandhas in the appropriate asanas – for example, bridge pose, tadaga mudra, downward dog, inver-

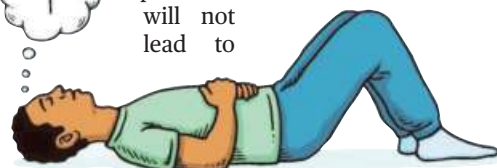


sions and more. We also simultaneously learn the important techniques of pranayama such as nadishodhana and sheethali. In time, we are able to combine the bandhas in pranayama also.

As we progress in this pathway, we always keep our attention on deepening the skill of sensing the breath and watching the effort of breathing. Gradually, this will lead us to feel our inner or subtle body through the breath experience – this is described in the ancient yoga texts using the system of prana, nadis, chakras and more.

There are profound health benefits at every step of this pathway from the modern medical angle too – efficiency of breathing and the oxygen-carbon dioxide balance, parasympathetic activation and the polyvagal theory, stress reduction, mood and energy balance and more.

As the classical yoga text, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, cautions, it is important to manage the breath slowly, as forcing it can create many health problems. As with all self-care and well-being practices, patience, wisdom, and guidance are invaluable!



Theatre Talk

The walls are coming down!

Have an idea, come to us, says Aditya Birla Group's Aadyam

DEEPA GAHLOT



Mumbai has an overactive theatre scene, but most groups suffer from a severe shortage of funding, which then results in working around available and often, inadequate resources. Which is why, when Aadyam was introduced by the Aditya Birla Group in 2015, it was a boon to those theatre groups that had the ideas and the people, but lacked the financial backing to bring their productions to the stage. Aadyam gave the projects selected all support, including lavish marketing, for nine shows, after which the groups could run the shows on their own. For those who had the ability and ambition to run with their production, Aadyam was a great springboard.

The Aadyam mandate for the selection of plays was: the troupes have the content and production values to attract bigger and newer audiences. So, the shows on stage were accompanied by imaginative touches in the foyer décor to match the milieu of the play, live music, food, photo booths, games, prizes, discounts at restaurants in the vicinity, all of which enhanced the theater-going experience. Over the past few years, the productions have been a mixed bag, some ran successfully, some scaled down to be able to tour and some simply packed up. The genres have included comedy, musicals, classics, new writing and, one year, two experimental plays for smaller venues.

In the fifth season, the opening play is 'A Few Good Men', written by American playwright and screenwriter, Aaron Sorkin (which was turned into a Hollywood movie in 1992 by Rob Reiner, with Jack Nicholson, Tom Cruise and Demi Moore heading the cast) and directed by Nadir Khan – a tense legal drama set against a military backdrop. Shernaz Patel, who has been Artistic Director for two years, says that it is not imperative for the productions to be Indian. This year, of the four plays picked, two in English and two in Hindi, only one is original. "Aadyam is really looking for big shows for a proscenium stage, which would be appreciated by large audiences. And far as possible, the genres are mixed, and there is something exciting that will allow it to run for nine shows. Last year we had had a nice mix, something completely original like 'Hello Farmaish' and also a massive musical like #SingIndiaSingh – so we have had a range."

Shernaz has been associated with theatre for several years, as an actress as well as a part of the production company Rage, so she un-



'A Few Good Men' is the opening play in the fifth season; (Below) Shernaz Patel, artistic director, Aadyam

derstands things from both sides of the fence – as producer-performer and curator-administrator. "We get a lot of entries, a lot of people pitch shows, I put it out to the entire community. We are very clear that we are looking primarily for big shows. I was hoping we would do some of the smaller shows as well, but didn't get the go-ahead. In my ideal world I'd like to be able to do both, because you can try something more out of the box, and push the envelope further. Some people in Mumbai just want to do the small shows."

Good writing

The building block for a good production is a story, which is what she looks for first. "If there was fabulous writing coming out of India for the commercial stage, then we would not have to look anywhere else, but most of the writing we have is experimental in nature. The absolute blockbuster kind of shows which we have in Marathi, we don't seem to have in other languages."

Those who get selected for the Aadyam season, do not have to cut corners. "The With the support given by Aadyam, a group does not have to be afraid of having large cast plays and superior productions. They don't have to bring clothes from home, they can design costumes. They can plan sets. Otherwise who is giving you money to do theatre? Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla takes such interest himself, meets people, comes to shows. But we don't interfere with the creation of the work, we are facilitators. We don't want to be seen as financiers either, then you are only creating a show for Aadyam. We say, 'Do you have a play you

are working on already for which you'd like support? Then we will be happy to help in any way.' Being a theatre person, I contribute in any department that they need help for."

With an eye on developing "theatre addicts" of the future, Shernaz is putting together a package for schools. "Students will be given a background of the play, we will do workshops; they will get to meet the team. If they want to do reviews of the plays, we will guide them. The wall between the performer and audience should be broken. Some schools have shown interest, so I hope that happens. I would like to do more in terms of development for the community, because that's where it all begins. There is a need to do more development work."

Is there any lacuna in the effort undertaken by Aadyam? "Directors!" says Shernaz. "We don't have enough, and most have very limited vision. I really want to do a proper structured training programme for directors. Where is the idea? We need ideas and directors who are equipped to embrace all kinds of spaces, be it a library or a large auditorium. At the same time, because there is so much devising work happening, where are the script writers? There should have been ten direction courses in Mumbai by now. And designers – the good ones gravitate towards films and ad films," she adds.

Of the 21 plays performed under the Aadyam banner so far, not all have succeeded. "That can happen in any creative process," she says. "Some work resonates more than others. But, what Aadyam set out to do so, it is on the right path. Slow and steady, the audience base is growing."



Prateesha Suresh is advocating for Borgeet of Assam to be recognised as a classical art

ANJANA RAJAN

Discussion continues over whether certain Indian dance and music forms warrant the term 'classical'. With a bewildering variety of genres, it seems the conventional English vocabulary of classical folk, ritual and tribal, etc. falls short. Hindi uses the equivalent of *shastriya* and *lok* to refer to classical (related to *shastras* or art treatises) and folk (of the people, or *lok*). But to call India's *lok kalas* folk forms would be to ignore that many of these are indeed intertwined with *shastras*.

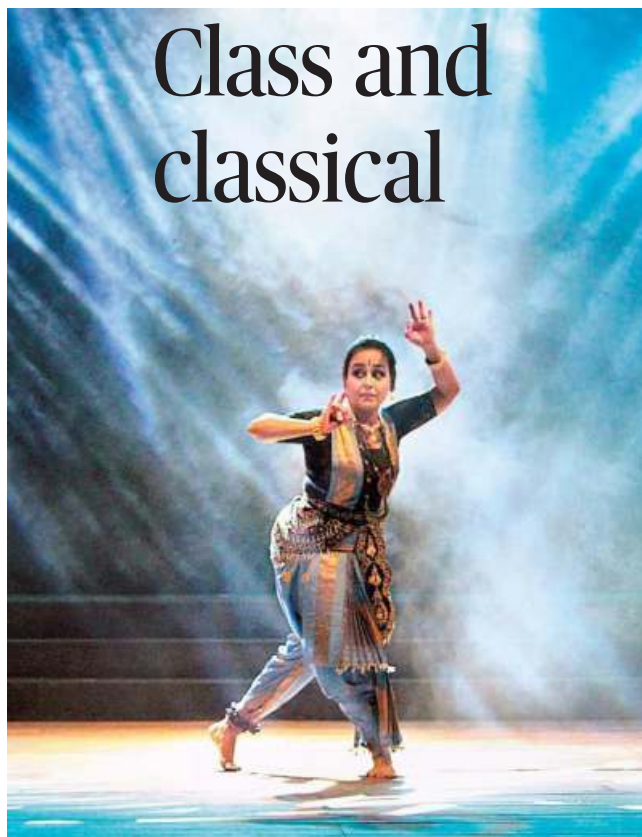
The national Sangeet Natak Akademi, set up in 1952 by the Government of India, is accepted as the authority whose nomenclature sets the norm. The SNA gives awards under specific performing art names grouped under the broader 'Dance', 'Music' and 'Theatre'. These are not specified as classical, but instead of fitting all performing arts under these three broad categories, it has a seemingly umbrella term, 'Traditional/Folk/Tribal/Dance/Music/Theatre and Puppetry'. There is also a field 'Other Major Traditions'. It is evident from its website that the SNA has grappled with shifts in perception over the years.

Take Odissi music, which artists and scholars have advocated for decades as deserving of being listed alongside Hindustani and Carnatic music as a classical genre. Till 2009, Odissi musicians like Balakrushna Das and Bhubaneswar Misra were identified as receiving the award under the 'Traditional/Folk/Tribal...' heading. But Gopal Chandra Panda (2011) and Bankim Sethi (2013) received it under 'Other Major Traditions'.

The vocabulary is not fool-proof. If Yakshagana is one of the Other Major Traditions of Theatre in 2007, it comes under Traditional/Folk/Tribal in 2008 and 2011, shifting back to 'Other Major' from 2014.

More recently, Mumbai-based Sattriya dancer Prateesha Suresh, who has been engaged in propagating Sattriya and allied arts of Assam for over two decades, has been advocating for the recognition of Borgeet of Assam as a classical music genre.

As a part of this effort, Pra-



Forward movement Prateesha Suresh ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Class and classical

teesha was in New Delhi the other day to present a performance under the auspices of her

Pratishruti Foundation, which she explains she founded in 2008 to work for Sattriya Music, Dance, Theatre, etc.

Edited excerpts from an interview:

Before Sattriya was designated 'classical' by the SNA, the eminent scholar Dr Kapila Vatsyayan once stated from the stage after a performance, "Of course it is classical," apparently reminding us how clearly it met the criteria. Audiences could see that Sattriya was highly structured, codified, and required a high degree of training to execute. What principle features of Borgeet qualify it to receive similar acceptance?

Yes, I remember that performance. That was in 1999 when I had performed with Barbayan Ghanakanta Bora at Triveni Kala sangam where Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan was the chief guest.

Borgeet is a collection of devotional songs set to raga and tala composed by Shri-manta Shankardev and his chief disciple Shri Madhavdev. The technique of Borgeet follows the Prabandha Gana tradition. According to Dr Pabitra Pran Goswami, "there are other evidences too in support of the thesis that Indian classical music was in practice in Assam even before Sankaradeva". Just as much as classical dance was prevalent in Assam and Devadasis practiced their tradition in the temples of Assam. Bor-

geet is performed in a group and it is called 'Proxongiya' tradition which literally means singing in a group (Hindi equivalent can be 'prasang'). Dr Goswami, who has researched Borgeet, says, "In fact, there is no musical tradition either contemporary or prior to *Bargit* alive today anywhere in India. Even *Dhrupada* and *Kirttana* evolved at a later stage. The differences between the *ragas* of *Bargit* with their modern counterparts in Hindustani and Carnatic music may be understood in that context".

Similarly in respect to tala, he says, "*Bargit* exhibits its speciality through the uniqueness of its *talas* too. There are *talas* from eight *matras* to thirty-two *matras*, all comprising three parts of proportionate length, viz., *Gaman*, *Ghat* and *Cok*. These *talas* are different in structure, rhythmic pattern as well as playing style from the *talas* now played with Hindustani and Carnatic music. A few like *Rupaka*, *Ektali*, *Yati*, *Bisam*, etc. are mentioned not only in the *Sangita Sastras* like *Sangit Ratnakara* but also in Jaydeva's *Gita-Govinda*". The tala-pattern definitely also brings in the percussion instrument used in Sattriya dance and music, the *Khol*.

This instrument has also not received its classical status. It is very important to understand that if a dance style is considered classical then automatically the percussion is also a classical instrument. The two are complementary.

What other people/organisations are trying to

draw the SNA's attention to give Borgeet classical status?

I don't have any idea about other organisations. There may be but I don't know. I have been working on this for a long time. It became important for me to present this outside Assam to draw attention. However, I have presented this in Guwahati also. I am working with Shri Krishna Goswami who has been trained under his father late Kushakanta Deva Goswami who was the Sattradhikar in Chamaguri Sattri, Majuli. He has been working on it for years and training his students.

He has also made notations for more than 60 Borgeets and published books on the same. Borgeets did not have any notations as it is an oral tradition and this led to confusion. As an artist I can understand his passion for his art and therefore I have come forward to do whatever I can for Borgeet.

What has been the response of the Akademi - central or state - so far?

Akademi always wakes up after the work is done by dedicated artists like us and then chooses to ignore us. I had done a lot of work on Sattriya dance before it was given classical status. I continue to do so but the Akademi has never acknowledged the hard work.

What are your thoughts on similar debates, like conferring classical status on Odissi sangeet and Gaudiya Nritya, etc.?

There should be an open discussion and meeting of all these arts. Any art does not need a "classical" tag but unfortunately the arts are at the mercy of a select few. All artists are equal and everyone is working hard to keep the traditions alive, some known and some unknown. We cannot take that hard work away from these artists. We have to acknowledge and welcome them.

A moot point seems to be the adoption of 'classical' and 'folk' as mutually exclusive.

Classical definitely means following a structure. They are more technical in following set patterns and that is how the style becomes more defined. However, classical has drawn a lot from the folk, which is the case in Sattriya. I would say that folk is like the flowers in the garden and classical is like when you pick them up and string them together into a garland with beautiful patterns. Folk has always been a part of us, till we decided to stylise our dance and music.

Dancing in devotion

Continued from page 3

This called for new methods of teaching. Synthesising the artistic search with a commitment to pedagogy, Chandran opines, "Dance has changed so much in the present scenario, but pedagogy has not changed to that degree. For instance, we see a lot more group choreographies these days as opposed to the solo performances that dominated earlier. As artists, students and also as teachers, it is important to learn and unlearn."

The performance concluded with a Sankeertan, evoking the dancer's present focus of devotion - regular visits to Vrindavan to pay reverence to her spiritual guru. Aesthetically and spiritually, presenting dance as a *sewa*, is also where Chandran arrives back to her own beginnings, where dance was seen as an offering in the vast ocean of devotion.



..In memory of the master

Continued from page 3

But I do believe mere innate talent goes nowhere without practice. Technique helps to attain perfection, but it's practice that achieves it. What is the point of having a musical idea, if you can't execute through your fingers?

You are known to be open to trying new things

Yes, I do believe it's important to get out of one's comfort zone musically. Solo concerts are obviously the easiest to do; it's what we train for. From the age of 5, average of minimum two hours practise every day - it adds up! Engaging with someone's else's musical thoughts in concert, to present something cohesive and pleasing, that is the challenge. I am not competitive on stage; my aim is to present something aesthetic, not to show I am the superior musician. I have been happy to play with as diverse musicians as Arshad Ali, sarodiya Abhishek Borkar and violinist Tejas Upadhyay. I have shared the stage with seniors such as vocalist Pt Sanjeev Abhyankar and Pt Kaivalya Kumar. My father has taught me to absorb what is good from wherever it comes.

I am also part of jazz bands Taalim and Human Evolution; that's a different type of engagement but I find it equally stimulating as a musician. At the same time, it's important not to lose the intrinsic quality of one's instrument.

Tell us about your forthcoming concert at the festival in memory of Ustad Vilayat Khan, your grand uncle.

I am really privileged to perform in his memory. Without doubt, he was one of the most important instrumentalists of the 20th century and his music has influenced generations after him. For me, he is the God of sitar.

(Shakir will perform at Gaiety Theatre Shimla, 6th July, 6 p.m.)

New kid on the block

ATIF KHAN
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Adding to the list of débutantes this year, Meezaan is starting his career with "Maalaal" opposite another débutante Sharmin Segal. Produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and directed by Mangesh Hadwale, the romantic drama is a remake of Tamil hit "7G Rainbow Colony". "I am playing a character who is totally different from me and it was a difficult one to play. He is a normal Marathi boy living in a chawl and I am sure people will definitely relate to this character," says the seasoned actor Javed Jaffery's son.

Excerpts-

Was it an obvious decision for you to become an actor?

I will say Sanjay Leela Bhansali was the only reason for me. Acting just came to me when Sanjay sir told me that he wants to introduce me. I can say that I was not able to understand my own capabilities but when it came from the master, I thought, why not? Before that I was a student of business studies in United States but midway I changed my course to filmmaking.

Did the filmmaking course and assisting Sanjay Leela Bhansali on "Padmaavat" help you in acting?

When I was changing from business studies to a course in cinema, my father advised me to take film making. Because according to him, acting is not something which you can learn. He asked me to focus on editing, production and understand the craft which goes into films. My father even insisted Sanjay sir for letting me finish education but I had to drop out in between as I joined the Padmaavat shoot. One learns more on the sets!

Having born in a house of actors, what has been your relationship with the cinema in your growing up years?

I was obviously influenced by my family. As my whole family is fan of Amitabh Bachchan and Dilip Kumar, I too became a die-hard fan. I always saw my father and grandfather (Jagdeep) acting, dancing, doing television and the knowledge got ingrained in me subconsciously. I realised that when I was doing the film.

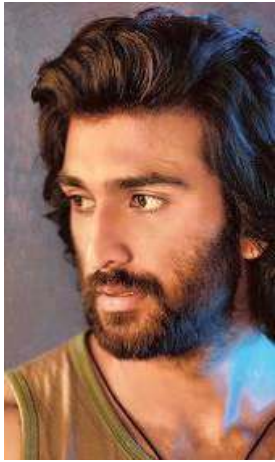
Both your father and grandfather were not typical Hindi film heroes...

I am happy that I came in a time when the audience is accepting different kinds of films and that gives me a space for doing so much more. My father was restricted to a particular kind of roles and even my grandfather was offered one kind of roles. They both were extremely talented but there was no place for them to show their creativity and versatility.

I am playing the lead in a film that is a good package - a good story, good music and singing and dancing. But I will take it as a character role because I think I am playing a regular character, not a larger than life hero. I really admire Ayushmann (Khurana) for what he is doing.

But your mannerisms are being compared to Ranveer Singh and Ranbir Kapoor.

I think people are judging the book by its cover. I have a very long way to go. Once the film is released, I am sure the people will change their perspectives and understand what I am and as I have my own personality.



Beauty and beyond

Benoy K. Behl's "Grandeur Of The Lord" explores how splendour and spirituality was carved in stone during the Chola period

S. RAVI
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Regarded as great repositories of art and architecture, temples in India provide a wealth of information on the era they were built in. These aspects come out spectacularly in the Chola temples and sculptures in south India. Noted historian and filmmaker, Benoy K. Behl's documentary, "Grandeur Of The Lord", screened recently at the India Habitat Centre, captures them in great detail. Tracing briefly the history of the temples in the region, the film comprehensively brings to fore their evolution during the Chola rule.

According to Padma Shri Dr. Sharada Srinivasan, professor at National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, "The art of the Cholas represents a watershed in architecture and sculpture, demonstrating mastery of engineering skills in working with stone masonry culminating in the amazingly symmetrical, tiered and towering vimana of the Brihadisvara temple built by Rajaraja Chola and an astonishing ability to sculpt a hard and intractable stone, granulite, into the most life-like and animated forms of deities and other forms." Observes Behl, "The sculpture created, took the devotee to the deepest realms of the peace to be found within."

Bringing to light the extraordinary quality of early Chola sculpture, the film focuses on the Brahmapurishvara at Pullamangai. "It sees the Chola architectural and sculptural idiom coming into its own and out of the shadow of Pallava sculpture from which it richly borrowed initially,"



Aesthetic masterpiece Nataraja at Mooverkoil, Kodambalur

■ BENOY K. BEHL

observes Srinivasan. The temples of this period were not very large. "The purpose was not to inspire awe through size and grandeur. It was to take us to the world of peace which can be found within us," says Behl. According to him, "It presents a tradition which developed further in later Chola temples. The deities are carved in niches on the walls and attendant figures are made in adjoining niches. The same high quality of art and the inward look is seen in the deity and in the attendants. Every part of the temple wall has dressed stones. Small, yet extremely detailed relief, adorn sections of the temple, along with the larger sculptures. A favourite motif in Indian art, from north to south, is seen here: a human figure riding on a vyala or leogryph."

Stress on devotees

Highlighting the role of devotees, Brahmapurishvara has several figures of Ganas, an example of finest expressions of Chola art. Being devout, they have the eternal right to be close to Lord Shiva. "In Indian art, the entire range of emotions and human life is given a place...be it glee, sorrow or mischief. Ganas are seen lost in devotion to the Lord. We can relate most easily to them as they play their musical instruments or dance with elation," explains Behl.

Drawing attention to the panel where the Ganas sit atten-

tively around an imposing image of Ganapati, Srinivasan points out, "The sensitivity in their treatment, at times soulful and at times playful, suggests that it was not only the body beautiful that was thought to be worthy of celebration and veneration."

Varied temples

Other temples of this period covered in the film are Mooverkoil (Kodambalur), Koranganatha (Srinivasanalur) and Bhumishvara (Virallur). The Nataraja made at the top of the temple at Mooverkoil truly stands out for its grace with Shiva dancing on the demon of ignorance. Elaborating, Behl says, "The body is nimble and agile and the dynamic movement is clearly seen. At the same time, the face has sublime stillness, which can only come from the deep peace of the spirit." The deity is made visible in different forms through niches in temple walls. "Through these images, the divine is given a personality which the worshipper can relate to."

Recalling drawing inspiration from Chola temples and sculptures, especially their linear quality, noted sculptor K.S. Radhakrishnan, says, "One doesn't see the sculptures as mere deities but also from basic aesthetic perspective. They evoke elegance and a sense of monumentality. Not huge in scale, there is a sense of intimacy and connect with

human feelings and emotions, making them relatable." Stating that his Nataraja art works have several elements of Chola art, he adds, "The sculptures are the best of south India. They are energetic, with the figures being extremely stretched and elongated - from realism to best of idealism. Stylised, the postures are relaxed and easy, reflecting no strain or effort even while standing or moving."

The beginning of 11th Century heralded a dramatic shift in the scale of temples. While in ancient India art was patronised by the people, with sculptures and stupa railings sponsored by farmers, fishermen, shopkeepers, housewives, monks and nuns, kings began to do so directly by 8th Century. Royal patronage began to change the shape and art on the temples. In 1010, Rajaraja Chola completed the Brihadisvara. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, it is the tallest and largest temple which had been made in India. "It was made to express his power and military might as much as the grandeur of the Lord," states Behl. Five times the size of previous Chola temples, its vimana or tower stands 216 feet tall, while the monolithic stupa or crowning element weighs 80 tonnes. "It is believed that an earthen ramp, six kilometres long, was made to take it up to its position," he adds.

Interestingly, the second half of the 10th Century witnessed temple building during Sembiyan Mahadevi's reign, the widowed queen of Gandaraditya Chola. A great patron of art, the Umamaheshvara Temple at Konerirajapuram has her portrait seated in devotion before a Shiva linga. "The temples of her time were made on a modest scale with emphasis on a very personal devotion to the divine," says Behl.

Describing her as a remarkable patron, Srinivasan adds, "as testified by inscriptions, she built and renovated a large number of shrines in the second half of the 10th Century with rich endowments, and was revered to the point of having a town, Sembiyan Mahadevi, named after her. It seems that it is in her temples that the full blown Nataraja image in stone really comes into vogue such as at Konerirajapuram and Aditurai."

The 22-minute film's informative content and well shot frames are bound to spark viewers' interest.