



Govt. had promised to send triple talaq Bill to select panel, says Azad  
page 12; editorial: page 10



Motor Vehicles Bill doesn't infringe on States' rights: Gokulakrishnan  
page 12



Afghan highway blast kills at least 35 on bus, wounds 27 others  
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Root's England starts favourite against Paine's Australia in Ashes series  
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## NEARBY



**Cabinet nod for more judges in Supreme Court**  
NEW DELHI  
Acting at the request of the Chief Justice of India, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided to increase the number of Supreme Court judges from 31 to 34. The move comes against the backdrop of the rising number of cases in the top court, which stands at nearly 60,000. At present, the sanctioned strength of the court is 30, excluding the Chief Justice of India.

NEWS • PAGE 12

**DERC cuts fixed charges, hikes energy rates**  
NEW DELHI  
The Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission on Wednesday announced a slew of changes in power tariffs, including reduction in fixed charges of various categories, an increase in energy charge rates and other changes, which will be applicable starting Thursday.

CITY • PAGE 3

## Siddhartha cremated in family estate

Body was recovered from Nethravati river near Mangaluru; thousands pay their last respects

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HASSAN/MANGALURU/  
CHIKKAMAGALURU

Café Coffee Day founder and billionaire entrepreneur V.G. Siddhartha, whose body was traced in Nethravati river near Mangaluru 36 hours after he went missing, was on Wednesday cremated in his family's coffee estate in Chathanahalli village in Hassan district.

His eldest son Amartya Hegde lit the funeral pyre after the last rites were performed in an atmosphere marked by quiet grief, as his mother Malavika Hegde and grandfather and former Chief Minister S.M. Krishna struggled with their emotions.

Earlier in the day, thousands of people paid their last respects to Siddhartha at Coffee Day Global Ltd, a firm owned by him in Chikkamagaluru. Siddhartha's biggest entrepreneurial innovation, CCD, had its roots in the coffee-growing hilly districts of Chikkamagaluru and Hassan, where his father owned large estates.

**Mobile phone recovered**  
It was in the early hours of Wednesday that the body of Siddhartha was found by a group of local fishermen in Nethravati river.

He had gone missing from the bridge across the river on Monday evening and an intensive, all-day search by a



**Search ends:** The body of V. G. Siddhartha being removed from the banks of the Nethravati river near Hoigebazar on Wednesday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

300-strong team on Tuesday had failed to find the body. Three fishermen found it floating near the Hoigebazar area, where the river joins the Arabian Sea, at 6.30 a.m. They brought it ashore and informed the police. The police have also recovered his mobile phone.

The police are continuing investigations into the circumstances leading to his death, with a letter purportedly written by him blaming the Income Tax Department for his "succumbing to the situation".

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12  
SIDDHARTHA'S DEATH RAISED  
IN LOK SABHA ► PAGE 13

## Wife may take over as CMD of Coffee Day

MINI TEJASWI  
BENGALURU

Malavika Hegde, wife of billionaire coffee entrepreneur V.G. Siddhartha Hegde, who died under mysterious circumstances in Mangaluru, may be appointed as chairperson and managing director of Coffee Day Enterprises.

"She is already on the board of the company, and the board will have to discuss the possibility of delegating to her bigger respon-

sibilities. But all these things can happen only when she recovers from the personal trauma she's suffered," said a top company source.

Siddhartha was the CMD of the company, and on confirmation of his death, the board on Wednesday appointed former IAS officer and a member, S.V. Ranganath, as interim chairman.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12  
TRIBUTES POUR IN AS COFFEE  
KING BIDS ADIEU ► PAGE 15

## CDE tanks 20% for second day

The shares of Coffee Day Enterprises were locked at their lower circuit of 20% for the second successive day on Wednesday. On the BSE, the company's shares dropped 20%, or ₹30.80, to close at ₹123.25, a new low for the company. ► PAGE 15

## Oppn. targets probe agencies

Several Opposition leaders questioned the role of investigating agencies in V.G. Siddhartha's death. A letter, supposedly written by him a few days before his death, "discusses tax terrorism, an ugly face of politically motivated institutions..." Congress leader Siddaramaiah said. ► PAGE 8

## Letter as dying declaration?

The letter V.G. Siddhartha supposedly wrote, blaming the IT Department for his decision, will have to be treated as a dying declaration after its veracity is checked, say legal experts and police officials. ► PAGE 8

## SC takes note of complaint by rape survivor's family

Letter to CJI surfaced after accident



**Taking to the streets:** Students organising a protest march at Delhi University on Wednesday. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on July 31 took suo motu cognisance of a letter written by the family of the Unnao rape survivor on July 12 to Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on the threats received from the accused persons.

It came to light two days after a truck collided with her car, causing serious injuries to her and her lawyer.

### 'Volatile situation'

The CJI called it a "highly volatile situation". He said he was informed about the letter only on Tuesday (July 30). He asked why the registry had not brought it to his attention. He listed the case for hearing on August 1, pro-

missing that an order would be passed to ensure the safety of and better conditions for the rape survivor.

The accident, which happened near Rae Bareilly on July 28, claimed the lives of two of her aunts. Kuldeep Singh Sengar, four-time BJP MLA from Uttar Pradesh's Bangermau, is an accused in the rape case and was arrested last April.

The letter narrates the incidents of July 7-8 when some people allegedly associated with Sengar threatened her family. It also sought a direction for registration of an FIR against them.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12  
CBI FORMS TEAM ► PAGE 13

## When retirement is a flight of fantasy

Govt. school staffer takes a three-km helicopter ride home after farewell



Kude Ram (right) along with his brother after alighting from the helicopter at Sadpura village. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ASHOK KUMAR  
FARIDABAD

Kude Ram was only 20 years old when he landed a government job, no mean feat for someone from a family of landless farmers. Through over four decades of working as a Class IV employee at Government Higher Secondary School, Neemkaa, he harboured a dream of finishing his service life on a high. On Tuesday, the day of retirement, the dream was literally lived sky-high: farewell over at school, Mr. Ram, along with his brother, took a three-kilometre helicopter ride from the Raja Jait Singh ground nearby to his village, Sadpura.

### Rousing reception

Sporting a turban and a white kurta-pyjama, flower garlands and wads of currency notes slung around his neck, he stepped out of the helicopter to loud cheering and the beating of drums.

"I have seen politicians reaching rally grounds on helicopters since childhood but this was the first time I sat in one. It was a proud moment,"

said Mr. Ram.

His family, comprising 24 members, later took rounds of the village in the helicopter.

### Months of preparation

The grand retirement plan didn't come cheap. It took months of preparation and a tab of ₹3.25 lakh to hire the helicopter for two-odd hours, besides securing a whole host of permissions from several departments.

"We started preparing for it in March. We sought the permission of the Public Works Department, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Ballabgarh, the Deputy Commissioner and fire brigade among others. We paid around ₹40,000 as fees to the PWD and fire brigade," said younger brother Shiv Kumar, 49, also the village sarpanch.

The flight may have ended in minutes but it has ensured the retired man his fifteen minutes of fame.

"I have been getting calls from media persons since last [Tuesday] evening. I got a couple of calls from Delhi too," said Mr. Ram, basking in his post-retirement glory.

## Food doesn't have a religion, tweets Zomato

'Request for specific delivery man rejected'

SIDHARTH YADAV  
BHOPAL

A man from Jabalpur on Tuesday night took to Twitter to state that he had cancelled an order on food aggregator Zomato as he was assigned a non-Hindu delivery executive.

Using the handle @NaMo\_SARKAAR, Pandit Amit Shukla, at 8.26 p.m. wrote: "Just cancelled an order on Zomato they allocated a non hindu rider for my food they said they can't change rider and can't refund on

cancellation I said you can't force me to take a delivery I don't want don't refund just cancel."

Stating that he would take up the issue with his lawyer, he shared screenshots of his chat with Zomato. He complained that he didn't want his order to be delivered by "a Muslim man."

Zomato's handle responded: "Food doesn't have a religion. It is a religion."

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 9

## Officials keep vigil as Godavari rises at Bhadrachalam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BHADRACHALAM-KOTHAGUDEM

Telangana irrigation officials are maintaining a vigil on the water levels in the Godavari with the river at the famous temple town of Bhadrachalam reaching 39 feet, just 4 feet below the first flood warning level, on Wednesday evening.

The level is likely to rise further with water being released from five dams in north and western Maharashtra into the Mutha and Godavari rivers. The reservoirs have recorded good inflows owing to heavy rain in catchments, officials said. Warnings have been issued



**Touching danger levels:** Following heavy rain in the upstream areas, water in the Godavari touched 50 feet in Rajahmundry on Wednesday. •S. RAMBABU

to villages on the banks of the two rivers.

An official of the Maharashtra Water Resources De-

partment said, "All gates of the Hatnur dam in Jalgaon and the Gangapur dam in Nashik district [both in

north Maharashtra] have been opened to release excess water into the Tapi and Godavari rivers," he said. Rain in Madhya Pradesh led to the Hatnur dam filling up, he said.

"The water from the Gangapur dam (across the Godavari) would flow downstream into the Jayakwadi dam near Aurangabad," he added. Heavy rain in the Godavari catchments and release of flood waters from the Taliperu reservoir in Telangana have added to the increase in the level.

(With PTI inputs)

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12



## IN BRIEF

**'AAP won't form political alliance with anyone'**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Aam Aadmi Party has decided to not form a political alliance "anywhere in the country" as the idea of associating with the Congress for the Lok Sabha election earlier this year went against it, said senior AAP leader Gopal Rai on Wednesday. He also ruled out the possibility of an alliance with the Jannayak Janata Party in Haryana for the coming Assembly election.

**HC directs Tihar jail to produce Christian Michel**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed AgustaWestland VVIP chopper case accused Christian Michel to be produced in court on August 21 on a plea of Tihar jail authorities challenging a trial court order allowing him to make international calls for 15 minutes a week in violation of prison rules.

**Air quality of Delhi-NCR**

Delhi	80	Gurugram	56
Ghaziabad	83	Faridabad	48
Noida	69	Greater Noida	119

■ 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

**Exhibition:** "Fontwala: Stone to mobile, what remains?" by Rajeev Prakash Khare and Shubhira Prakash. The show surveys the development of Devnagri letter form from its earliest stone engravings to its digital adaptations at Digital Art Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205 Tansen Marg, 10:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Liminal spaces", a solo art show by Kanwal Singh at Open Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** A solo painting show by Nitin Gupta, at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

# If more people were happy, litigation would end: Gogoi

CJI attends inaugural session of 'happiness conference' organised by Delhi govt.

**STAFF REPORTER**  
**NEW DELHI**

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Wednesday said that if India had more happy people, the problem of litigation would be over.

"There will be no cases, because everybody would be happy," Mr. Gogoi said.

The CJI was speaking at the inaugural session of a 'happiness conference' organised by the Delhi government as a part of its Happiness Utsav to celebrate a year since the launch of happiness classes in Delhi government schools.

Mr. Gogoi said that he was happy that the new generation was being taught to be mindful and said that there was a need for the country to work towards increasing its position on the global happiness index.

"I have seriously thought about this... we should perhaps have happiness classes in our judicial academies also," Mr. Gogoi said.



(From left) Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal, Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy CM Manish Sisodia during the Happiness Education Conference-2019 on Wednesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

He added that the happiness classes was a big achievement and a brilliant idea. "Without happiness, education can never be complete. There is a serious problem with the younger generation. They are a dejected lot, unhappy seeing what is happening around us. It is very important that this curriculum is carried to its fullest extent, perhaps introduced in schools across India," he said.

"Catch them young when they are still open. Teach them to be happy. Teach them the values," he added.

**'True nation-building'**

Speaking at the conference, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that the Happiness Curriculum is not just another government scheme and called it "true nation-building as the future of the nation was being built in schools".

"The success of the programme is a feeling that eight lakh students of Delhi government schools experience every single day. Every parent is observing this change," he said.

Talking about spreading the happiness curriculum across the country, Deputy CM Manish Sisodia said: "We are working on a certificate course for those who want to start the Happiness Curriculum in different parts of the country and the World. We feel the need for this as India's position on the World Happiness Index has dropped from 118 to 140. Our dream is that India should be on top of this list."

The conference was attended by the education Ministers from Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Telangana, apart from the Executive Councillor Education of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and advisor to the Nagaland government.

# Form action plan to make Delhi crime-free for women: HC to govt.

Court asks why over ₹3K crore of Nirbhaya Fund is unused

**STAFF REPORTER**  
**NEW DELHI**

Why can't the Capital be safe for women, the Delhi High Court remarked on Wednesday while comparing the city to Mumbai where "women can walk freely in the night".

A Bench of Justices G.S. Sistani and Jyoti Singh asked the city government, the Delhi Police and other stakeholders to prepare an action plan to make the Capital "crime free for women".

"In Mumbai, women can walk freely in the night, why can't it happen in Delhi? We have the best resources and officers in Delhi, where are things going wrong," the Bench asked.

**Special Task Force**

It also questioned why over ₹3,000 crore is lying unused in the Nirbhaya Fund, which was announced in 2013, when it "could have been used for installing CCTVs and streetlights". It also said that a special task force should be formed and

**HC junks plea to amend sexual harassment law**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday declined to entertain a plea seeking directions to the Centre to consider amending the law on sexual harassment at work place to make provisions for protecting victims and witnesses from retaliation. The court stated that it cannot advise the legislature to amend a law. PTI

police officials be given motorcycles so that they can access darkspots in the city.

After considering the suggestions given by advocate Meera Bhatia, who was appointed amicus curiae to assist the court in the case, the Bench asked the Public Works Department to ensure that all streetlights are functional.

The HC was hearing a petition initiated by it in 2012 after the December 16, 2012, gangrape of a young woman in a moving bus. The woman later succumbed to the injuries.

It further directed that more staff be recruited in 44 police stations. These stations have been identified

as having areas under their jurisdiction that have been flagged as vulnerable spots for crime based on a crime-mapping exercise.

The Bench said that women police officers in plain clothes be deployed so that repeat offenders are brought to book. It also asked the police to file an affidavit complying with the court's direction and to submit a monthly report.

In a status report, the police said that CCTVs had been installed in 179 of 182 police stations.

# Green panel junks plea on 'illegal' water tankers

**STAFF REPORTER**  
**NEW DELHI**

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Wednesday dismissed a petition alleging illegal operation of water tankers in the Capital.

The panel junks the plea, which alleged illegal extraction of groundwater by water tankers not registered with the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), for lacking concrete evidence.

The petition was filed by

environmental activist Vikrant Tongad. "While the DJB sends around 900 water tankers everyday to supply water to households, there are more than twice as many private and unregistered water tankers that are traversing throughout the NCT, where there is no level of regulation with regard to where they are sourcing their water from or to whom it is being supplied," the plea had alleged.

# Kejriwal reviews AAP public outreach programme

**STAFF REPORTER**  
**NEW DELHI**

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday chaired a meeting of party MLAs to review 'Aapka Vidhayak Aapke Dwar', a public outreach programme launched in June after the party lost the Lok Sabha election in Delhi.

Under the programme, MLAs go to a particular area in their constituency at a designated time and interact with the public. A senior party leader said the programme was launched after

an analysis of the Lok Sabha election failure showed that the party needed more work at the ground level.

"The Chief Minister said we have to distribute pamphlets and stick posters and invite people ahead of the programme... this is being done by only a few MLAs right now," said an AAP MLA who attended the meeting at Mr. Kejriwal's residence.

"The CM asked us to increase our public contact," the MLA added. AAP MLA and party chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj, ho-

wever, said that "nothing like that" was mentioned during the meeting. "The CM asked MLAs to stick posters and distribute pamphlets so that people know they are coming," he said.

**Mohalla clinics**

Another MLA said that the meeting focused on mohalla clinics, a flagship healthcare project of the Delhi government. "There was discussion on the availability of land for the clinics... there was consensus that the number of clinics in each constituency

has to be increased," the MLA added.

AAP Malviya Nagar MLA Somnath Bharti said: "The CM said that the people voted us [the AAP] to be available for them and he asked us to fulfil this mandate."

"He [Mr. Kejriwal] asked us about what people are telling us during the programme and said that if there are any problems that we cannot solve, then we should inform him. He also asked about areas where the mohalla clinics are not being built," said AAP MLA Surender Singh.

# DU releases 6th cut-off list

**STAFF REPORTER**  
**NEW DELHI**

Delhi University released the sixth list of cut-offs for its undergraduate courses on Wednesday. DU had planned to release only five lists but there are seats empty in various colleges.

Under the sixth list, candidates solicited under a special drive by DU, can also take admission. Many courses at north campus colleges are still open for unreserved and reserved category students.



IN BRIEF



Mobile library service launched in city

NEW DELHI  
Mobile library bus service was flagged off on Wednesday by Minister of Culture Prahlad Singh Patel under the "Ghar Ghar Dastak Ghar Ghar Pustak" scheme of the Delhi Public Library. It aims to provide books to the citizens of Delhi, especially to resettlement colonies, slums and rural areas. The Minister of Culture visited the mobile library and encouraged students and young readers to develop reading habits. The Minister emphasised on the role, books play in the all round development of a person and the impact they create on young minds.

Former Congress leader joins AAP

NEW DELHI  
Former Congress leader Haje Taj Mohammed and his supporters took membership of the Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday. AAP, however, did not share the membership form of Mr. Mohammed despite multiple requests. A press release issued by AAP said that Delhi convener Gopal Rai was at the event and AAP national spokesman Dilip Pandey gave the party cap to Mr. Mohammed.

# Fixed power charges reduced, energy rates increased

New power tariff to apply from today as DERC announces slew of changes

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

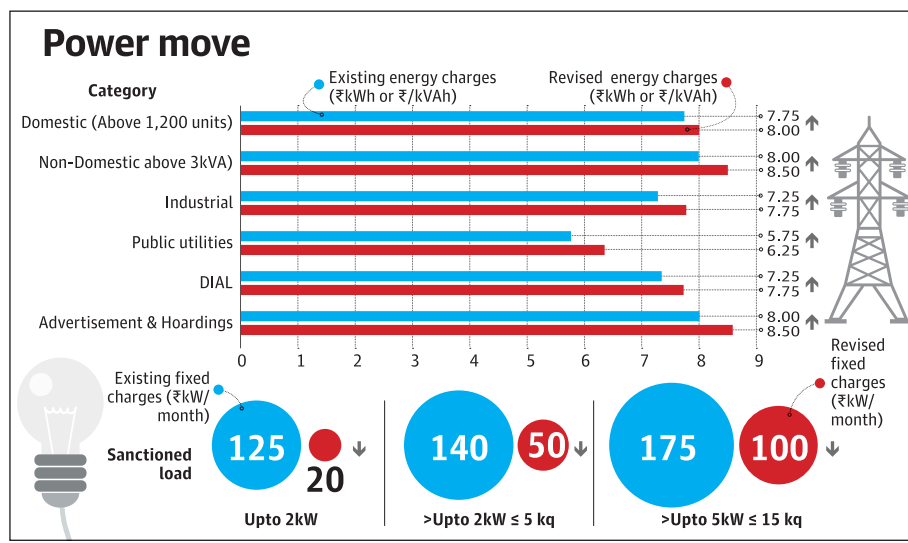
The Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) on Wednesday announced a slew of changes in power tariffs, including reduction in fixed charges of various categories, an increase in energy charge rates and other changes, which will be applicable starting Thursday.

Fixed charges for consumers with a sanctioned load of up to 15kW have been slashed. For consumers with a sanctioned load of up to two kilo watts, the fixed charges has been revised from ₹125 to ₹20.

For sanctioned load between 2 kilo watts to 5 kilo watts, the fixed charges have been reduced from ₹140 to ₹50. And for a sanctioned load between 5 kilo watts and 15 kilo watts, the fixed charge has been reduced from ₹175 to ₹100.

New sub-category

On the other hand, however, the energy charge rates have been increased for multiple categories. These include domestic category consuming above 1,200 units, non-domestic categories consuming above 3 kilo Volt-Ampres, industrial consumers, public utilities, Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) and for advertise-



ments and hoardings.

Apart from this, the commission has introduced a new sub-category of "non-domestic consumers" which will be applicable small shopkeepers. A sanctioned load of up to 3 kVA and an energy charge rate of ₹6 per kVAh. Additionally, psychologists and physiotherapists will be extended benefits of domestic category.

In a move to "encourage mushroom cultivation", the DERC also announced a change in category of mushroom cultivators from the agriculture category, allowing it an increased sanctioned load of 100 kW from

20 kW. A fixed charge of ₹200 will be applicable for them with rates of ₹6.50 per kWh. To encourage electric vehicles, tariffs for charging have also been reduced for both low transmission (LT) supply and high transmission (HT) supply.

CM congratulates

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that there has been no hike in electricity tariffs in the Capital for the fifth consecutive year. He further said that Delhi had the lowest power tariffs in the country.

"Congratulations Delhi For fifth consecutive year NO

electricity tariff hike. On the contrary, for fifth consecutive yr [year], tariffs reduced. Delhi has lowest electricity tariffs in the country now. And Del [Delhi] is the only place in India wid [with] 24 electricity [sic]," Mr. Kejriwal tweeted.

Speaking at a press conference, Deputy CM Manish Sisodia said that electricity rates in Delhi had been one of the lowest in the country and has been declining continuously. With this move, electricity rates would further reduce he said. He compared electricity rates with that of neighbouring Haryana and Gurugram.

## BJP, Congress demand total rollback of fixed charges

Parties want discoms to pay compensation to consumers

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The BJP and the Delhi Congress on Wednesday called for a total rollback of fixed charges in electricity bills and demanded that the AAP government order power companies to return the money collected by them.

The BJP also claimed credit for a reduction in power tariffs for consumers even as it argued that a reduction in fixed charges was incomplete without a rollback of Power Purchase Cost Adjustment Charges (PPAC) in addition to other similar charges.

It demanded that discoms pay compensation to electricity consumers for the financial loss on account of payment of fixed charges since April 1, 2018.

"The Kejriwal government has allowed systematic loot of electricity consumers by turning blind eye to the cunning manipulation by discoms," alleged Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vjender Gupta. "During the last 16

months, electricity consumers have paid crores of rupees on account of wrongly imposed increased fixed charges. The consumers must be repaid the enhanced amount extracted from them," he argued.

'Victory for BJP'

Terming the reduction of fixed charges a "big victory for the BJP", Mr. Gupta argued that the party had been fighting against the increase in such charges.

The BJP leader had taken up the demand for their rollback at a Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) public hearing on July 10 where AAP MLAs, leaders and workers, he alleged, "shamelessly defended the government" on increased tariffs.

'Looting people'

Congress Committee Working presidents Haroon Yusuf, Devender Yadav and Rajesh Lilothia in a statement said, "the very fact that the Kejriwal government has reduced the fixed charges ta-

riff is proof enough that it has admitted to looting the people of Delhi over the past one and a half years by hiking the fixed charges." They added that the AAP government had put an unnecessary burden on the citizens of Delhi by increasing the fixed charges and surcharge in power bills to benefit the private discoms.

'Election stunt'

Mr. Yusuf, former Power Minister, said that the AAP was pulling an election stunt to fool the people of Delhi by reducing the fixed charges after looting them in the name of fixed charges and pension fund for the past one and a half years.

"Fixed charges were hiked six times and pension funds at the rated of 3.8% were collected by the power distribution companies though according to the agreement with the discoms, it was the responsibility of the power companies to contribute to the pension funds," the Delhi Congress alleged.

## Former Central govt. bureaucrat, wife and son sent to jail for dowry death

Local court also slaps a fine of ₹1.8 lakh on them

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NOIDA

A former bureaucrat in the Central government, his wife and their son were convicted on Wednesday for the death of his pregnant daughter-in-law over dowry pressure.

They have been sentenced to jail terms ranging between three and 10 years by a local court.

Swatantra Kumar Jain, 72, wife Kamla Jain, 65, and their son Anurag Jain, 37, were also slapped with a fine

of ₹1.8 lakh by Additional Sessions Judge Indrapreet Singh Joshi.

Swatantra retired as a deputy secretary in the Central government, his wife retired as an official in the Union Public Service Commission, while their son was educated abroad and worked at a private company in Noida.

'Fell off balcony'

Swatantra's 28-year-old daughter-in-law Sejal died in February 2014, after she allegedly fell from the balcony

of their house in Kendriya Vihar in Sector 82, Noida. Her parents then filed a dowry death complaint against the in-laws and an FIR was lodged at the Phase 2 police station. Sejal and Anurag married in May 2013 and she was pregnant at the time of her death.

"The husband will serve a 10-year rigorous imprisonment and his parents will serve a three-year term each," the judge ordered.

The bureaucrat's family had refuted the charges.

## 'Segment of rapid rail corridor to be operational by March 2023'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Commuters will be able to travel on the country's first rapid rail transit corridor in just four years as its 17-km-long Duhai-Sahibabad section in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad is expected to be operational by early 2023, an official said on Wednesday.

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), the executing

agency of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), said that the entire Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor, spanning 82 km, will be operational by 2025.

The corridor will cut travel time between Delhi and Meerut to around 55 minutes from the current three-four hours by road.

The NCRTC has already commenced civil construction work on the 17-km-long

Duhai-Sahibabad section of the corridor.

It will have four stations: Duhai, Guldhar, Ghaziabad and Sahibabad, besides a depot at Duhai.

More connectivity

"This priority section is expected to become operational by March 2023, while people can avail the benefit of fast and safe commute on the 82-km-long full corridor by

2025," the official said.

The opening of the Duhai-Sahibabad section will connect the Ghaziabad RRTS station to Delhi Metro's Ghaziabad New Bus Adda station, while the Sahibabad RRTS station will integrate with the proposed Vasundhara Sector 2 metro station and bus terminal.

The Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor will have a total of 24 stations, in-

cluding two depot-cum-stations at Duhai and Modipuram. "The RRTS trains have a design speed of 180 kmph, operational speed of 160 kmph and the average speed will be 100 kmph. The trains will be three times faster than the Delhi Metro trains in terms of operational speed," the official added.

The distance between the stations will vary from 5 km to 10 km.

## A welcome change



Schoolchildren walk past a wall painting in Lodhi Colony. •V.V. KRISHNAN

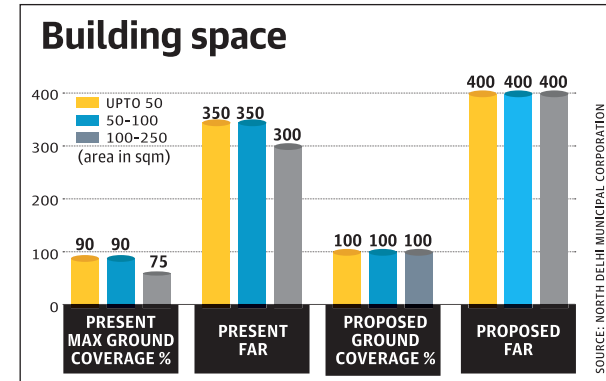
STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation on Wednesday introduced a resolution to make amendments to the building by-laws. It reiterated a resolution passed in December 2017 to increase the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of constructions up to 250 sq metres and to regularise "projections".

Rate for regularisation

The resolution had proposed an increase in FAR (the ratio of the building's total floor area to the size of the plot it is built on) for plots up to 250 sq metres from the previous figure of 300-350 to 400. It also proposed to regularise the projection or chhaza portion of plots up to 250 sq metres, built before December 2016, which are "up to one metre above three metres from the ground level".

Municipal officials were to



determine the rate for regularisation based on which to undertake work. However, these rates had not been determined as of yet, the resolution passed on Wednesday noted. Additionally, an action-taken report on work undertaken following amended FAR was to be presented to the standing committee but this was not done either. It directed the commissioner to implement the amended FAR and rates applicable for regularisation af-

ter seeking approval from the DDA.

The move was being undertaken to remove the "sword of sealing" hanging over the heads of citizens of Delhi, said Leader of the House Tilak Raj Kataria who introduced the resolution. Municipal corporation of Delhi have been facing backlash from the Supreme Court-appointed monitoring committee which has denounced attempts to regularise illegal constructions.

## Speeding car kills youth in north Delhi

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

In another case of drunk driving, a 22-year-old man was killed after a speeding car allegedly hit him on a flyover in north Delhi's Wazirabad, the police said on Wednesday.

The deceased has been identified as Rishabh, a resident of Mainpuri in Uttar Pradesh. Rishabh and his friend Krishna Kant (22), were preparing for competi-

tive exams and were staying at Wazirabad.

On Monday evening, they both were sitting on a divider on Jagatpur flyover after having dinner. A speeding car came and hit Rishabh, the police said. Rishabh was rushed to a hospital where he was declared brought dead, an officer said.

The two car occupants were drunk at the time of the incident. They have been arrested.

## Foreigner held with drugs worth ₹45 cr. at airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

A Mozambican woman was arrested at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying more than 10 kg of heroin worth approximately ₹45 crore concealed in pipes, a Customs official said on Wednesday.

The foreigner, who arrived at Terminal 3 of IGI Airport from Addis Ababa on Tuesday, was intercepted by officers of the Air Intelligence Unit and Air Customs Preventive. During a search of her baggage, two wire/pipe rolls made of plastic were discovered.

## Delhi police arrest three for supplying illegal arms

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Three men were arrested for allegedly supplying illegal arms in the national capital and its peripheral areas, the police said on Wednesday.

The accused have been identified as Shahzad Ali (24), a resident of Ranholla, Gurmeet Singh (25), a resident of Tilak Nagar, and Yashpal (38), a resident of Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh. "The police received information on July 27 that Ali was going to purchase arms near Dwarka Sector 16, following which a trap was laid and Ali and Singh were apprehended," said DCP (Crime) Ram Gopal Naik. On their instance, Yash-



The accused in police custody on Wednesday. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

pal was arrested on July 28 from Muzaffarnagar, the DCP said. Nine country-made pistols, 26 live cartridges, six motorcycles and one car were seized from their possession.

## Youth 'honeytrapped', booked in rape case

Mastermind nabbed; says he was settling an old dispute; victim's father denies claim

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old youth, who was planning to go to the United Kingdom for higher studies, was allegedly honeytrapped by four persons in south-east Delhi's Sarita Vihar, the police said on Wednesday.

According to the police, Pushkar Hira, who was honeytrapped, met a minor girl Vaishali (name changed) on Facebook around three months ago and started chatting with her.

However, Vaishali had filed an FIR against Mr. Hira on June 26 under Sections 376 (punishment for rape) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of IPC and Section 6 of POCSO Act, following which he was sent to jail on June 27, a senior police officer

On July 3, I received a call from one Javed who said that my son [Pushkar Hira] was in trouble inside the jail and he, along with Mahinder, can resolve the matter if I pay ₹20 lakh. Later, they reduced the amount

PRAMOD KUMAR  
Father of victim

er said. Mr. Hira's father Pramod Kumar (50) received a call early in July from one person to settle the matter. "On July 3, I received a call from one Javed who said that my son was in trouble inside the jail and he, along with

Mahinder, can resolve the matter if I pay ₹20 lakh. Later, they reduced the amount and demanded ₹12 lakh," Mr. Kumar said. On Monday, Mr. Kumar had filed a complaint that his son was honeytrapped by some people and now he is getting calls from them to settle the matter, they said.

Case registered

"We have registered a case under Sections 384 [punishment for extortion] and 120B [punishment of criminal conspiracy] of the Indian Penal Code and arrested the main accused Mahinder on Monday," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) Chinmoy Biswal.

During interrogation, Mahinder said that there was an old

property dispute between him and Mr. Kumar with the latter winning the case in 2017, the police said.

In order to take revenge, Mahinder, along with Javed, Vaishali and her mother, planned to honeytrap Mr. Hira. Vaishali's mother asked her to contact Mr. Hira through social media befriend him.

However, Mr. Kumar said that there was no property dispute between them. "I did not have any property dispute with Mahinder and he planned it just to extort money," Mr. Kumar said.

Mahinder was earlier arrested in 2018 for honeytrapping a doctor, the police said.

The police are trying to nab the absconding persons, Mr. Biswal added.



## IN BRIEF

**Bodies of two youth recovered from canal**

GHAZIABAD  
The bodies of two youth have been recovered from a canal in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar, police said on Wednesday. The deceased have been identified as Rohit (23) and Nikhil Sachan (20). Onlookers told the police that Sachan, a third-year B.Tech student, and Rohit, who ran a shop and catering business had jumped in the canal near Kushaliya village for swimming. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem. PTI

**Man held for bursting crackers at deserted spot**

NEW DELHI  
A 29-year-old man has been held for bursting crackers at deserted area in Vijay Chowk, the police said on Thursday. A senior police officer said that a man identified as Mizoram Subgha, who hails from Sikkim was held from a lawn near Vijay Chowk where he had burst crackers and raised pro-India slogans. The police are verifying background. No suspicious item has been recovered from the possession of the accused.

# Maliwal meets U.P. Governor, seeks relief for Unnao victim

Will fight for rape survivor, says DCW chief; urges U.P. govt. to act before it is 'too late'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal on Wednesday met Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and demanded that the Unnao rape survivor be airlifted to Delhi for treatment.

Ms. Maliwal also demanded that the rape survivor and her family be compensated following the accident that took place on Sunday.

The chairperson of the women's commission had earlier termed the accident as a "conspiracy" against the rape victim for her having named BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar as the accused in the matter.

Urging Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to ensure that the family is compensated, Ms. Maliwal said, "Why haven't you [CM] met the victim till now



Students hold a protest march and burn an effigy of suspended BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, outside the Faculty of Arts, DU, on Wednesday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

and why has no compensation been awarded? Despite 33 complaints made by the victim in the past one year why no action was taken? Why was no action taken against the personal security guard of the victim who used to leak information to Mr. Sengar?"

"The DCW will fight for the victim and her family. We urge the Uttar Pradesh government to act before it is too late. With delay of every passing minute, they are strangulating the flow of justice," Ms. Maliwal further said.

Meanwhile, the Krantikari

Yuva Sangathan (KYS) held a demonstration outside Delhi University's Arts Faculty demanding an apology and resignation from Mr. Adityanath.

"It should be noted that the rape survivor and her lawyer were critically injured and her aunts died in the accident on Sunday. It is evident from the circumstances surrounding the incident that the accident was planned..." read a statement issued by the KYS.

Condemning the incident, the students' group added, "The KYS demands that a judicial inquiry be instituted to probe the nexus among Uttar Pradesh Police, accused MLA and the State government. The Chief Minister should publicly apologise to the people for failing to protect the victim and should immediately resign from his post."

# SC frees man charged with selling adulterated milk 40 years ago

Milkman was awarded 6-month imprisonment, fined ₹1,000

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Facing legal ordeal for 40 years, a milkman booked for selling adulterated milk in 1979 and handed 6-month jail term with ₹1,000 fine, was finally acquitted by the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

When an accused is made to suffer the penal consequences, the legal provisions of law have to be construed strictly, the top court observed.

A Bench of Justices R. Banumathi and A.S. Bopana said that there is a dispute on timely delivery of a report of a public analyst on the milkman that would have enabled him to seek reference to the Central Food Laboratory, Calcutta.

It said that in the facts and circumstances of this case, the report of the analyst has not been served on the appellant and its mere despatch as per the statement of



a prosecution witness was not sufficient.

"In that circumstance when the appellant/accused is made to suffer the penal consequences, it [provisions of law] will have to be construed strictly," the Bench said.

The top court also noted that an independent witness has turned hostile and the manner as to whether the sample was appropriately taken after properly stirring the milk and whether the same was sent for analysis as required has not been established. "Therefore, in that

circumstance even if the other aspects are not adverted to, the very fact that the analyst's report being served not being proved and the sample being taken in an appropriate manner not being established, it would be sufficient to hold that the prosecution has not proved the guilt of the appellant beyond reasonable doubt and the conviction is not justified," the Bench said.

The top court set aside the June 2, 1987 verdict of a magistrate court holding Ghaziabad resident Vijendra guilty under provisions of Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 and the 6-month jail term with ₹1,000 fine.

Vijendra was out on bail all these years.

It also set aside the Ghaziabad Sessions Court order of 1988 and Allahabad High Court order of December 9, 2014 upholding his conviction and sentence.

# Wanted man arrested after gunfight in Noida

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NOIDA

A man wanted in connection with half-a-dozen criminal cases was held here on Wednesday following a gunfight with the police.

This is the third such encounter in as many days in Gautam Buddha Nagar.

Accused Anil alias Padaka was arrested on the FNG-Pusta Road. "Anil was carrying a reward of ₹25,000 on his arrest. He suffered a bullet injury during the encounter with the police and was taken to a hospital for treatment and then taken into custody," Senior Superintendent of Police Vaibhav

Krishna said.

"He had six cases of loot, robbery and murder registered against him at Gautam Buddha Nagar and Bulandshahr," he said. His aide managed to escape.

On Tuesday, a gangster carrying a reward of ₹25,000 and wanted in nearly a dozen cases of loot and illicit liquor trade was held after a gunfight with the police in Greater Noida.

On Monday, the Noida Police had nabbed Sachin Thakur, mastermind of a robbery at the corporate office of Mahagun Group, after a gunfight. He was carrying a bounty of ₹1 lakh

# Man kills self; harassment by wife, in-laws alleged

'His wife's parents were threatening to implicate him if he did not pay ₹15 lakh'

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

A 24-year-old man died allegedly after consuming poison in Dwarka, the police said on Wednesday. The man took the extreme step allegedly because he was being harassed by his wife and her parents, the police said.

He died in a hospital here on July 26. A senior police officer said that the deceased hailed from Haryana and lived in Dwarka North. His father alleged that the deceased's wife and her parents had been threatening to implicate his son on charges of harassment and under SC/ST Act if he did not give them

₹15 lakh as settlement. His in-laws had also allegedly said that they would slap dowry charge against him in case of non-payment.

The police have registered a case under Section 306 (abetment to suicide) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code and begun probe.

**'Against their marriage'**

The deceased's father, in his complaint to the police, said that his son had met his daughter-in-law in 2016 and the two fell in love. The woman's parents were allegedly against the relationship and did not want them to get

married, but the couple tied the knot in 2018 in a temple.

"Her [deceased's wife] parents did not stop interfering in the couple's life and submitted several complaints in Bindapur and Mohan Garden police stations against my son [deceased]. Tired of the situation, even my daughter-in-law submitted a complaint with the police in 2018. But she gradually sided with her parents and went to stay with them," the father told the police.

On July 25, the father added, the 24-year-old called a friend and lent his bike. In the evening, he called the friend again and told him

that he had consumed poison and asked him to come and collect his bike from a certain location in Dwarka.

"The friend then took him to a hospital from where he was referred to another. He, however, died during treatment," a police officer said.

The police said that a case was registered on Tuesday and the claims made by the deceased's father are being probed. Nobody has been arrested in the case so far, they said.

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

# Forum orders firm to pay ₹42,000 for arbitrarily repudiating mediclaim

Panel says company is guilty of deficiency in services

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A district consumer disputes redressal forum here has directed an insurance firm to compensate a complainant ₹42,000 for repudiating a mediclaim on arbitrary grounds.

Directing National Insurance to pay the compensation, the panel said: "The company has every right to investigate any claim and ask the hospital to furnish the required documents but instead of discharging its duty,

it wrongfully refused and arbitrarily rejected her [complainant] claim, which is unjustified, amounting to deficiency in services."

The directions came on a complaint moved by a Noida resident who alleged that despite furnishing relevant documents, the insurance company repudiated the mediclaim raised by her.

"After being discharged from the hospital, the complainant lodged her claim with the company for reimbursement along with all the

original bills or copies and discharge certificate," the panel observed.

The insurance firm had, however, contended that the complaint was filed on the "basis of false and concocted story". Dismissing the contentions put forth by the firm, the consumer panel stated: "Perusal of the file shows that the complainant had supplied all the relevant medical records as and when demanded even submitted fitness certificate issued by the doctor."

## Oh deer!



A herd of deer seen at the Delhi Zoo on Wednesday afternoon. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

# 'Delhi must make laws to regulate gambling'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court was informed by the Centre on Wednesday that gambling was a State subject and the city government has to make laws to regulate such activities in the Capital.

The Centre's submission came during the hearing of a plea seeking an end to operation of websites, which allow people to gamble, bet and play games of chance, like poker, online. It urged the High Court to make the Delhi government a party to the case.

The court has asked it to first file its response to the plea by Avinash Mehrotra, who has alleged that online gaming websites are illegal.

The petition contends that gaming and gambling websites are encouraging people to spend their hard-earned money on games of chance, like poker and blackjack. It said success in these games was based solely on the turn of cards and no skill was involved.

# Ten foreign nationals arrested for duping people online

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Ten foreign nationals were arrested for allegedly cheating people by befriending them online, the police said on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Anto Alphonse said that the accused have been identified as Philip (27), Augustine (26), Franklin (26), Simon Chukwumekema (28), Simon (26), Chino (26), Denial

(28), Emmanuel (26), Fidelis and Nnekwe, all from different countries in Africa. They were found to be living illegally in India.

**Chatting apps**

The police said that the accused targeted people aged between 30 and 50 through online chatting apps and were running a call centre in Mohan Garden. They would befriend people by sharing fake photos of a good-look-

ing person.

The accused chatted with them and after a while asked them to send money as custom charge on the pretext of sending "precious gifts", the police said.

In another modus operandi which led the police to the accused, a sales executive of a tour and travel company said he received messages from a foreign number regarding some query and the sender introduced her-

self as Anita Owen. She sought details of travelling in India and told that she would further contact him after getting her tickets, Mr. Alphonse said.

On April 2, he again received a message from the woman who said she had reached Mumbai and would be taking a flight to Delhi. After an hour, he received a call from an Indian mobile number. The caller informed him that his guest

Anita Owen had foreign currency above the authorised limit, the officer said. The executive was asked to pay as the woman did not have Indian currency and told that the woman would not be allowed to board the Delhi flight. He transferred ₹45,500 in the account provided to him. Thereafter, he was unable to contact the woman as well as the caller from the airport, the police said.

# ED traces witness in money laundering case

Probe agency likely to record his statement; nephew of M.P. CM is an accused

NIRNIMESH KUMAR  
NEW DELHI

In a volte-face, the Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday submitted before a Delhi court that they were able to trace the whereabouts of a witness who had gone missing in a money laundering case related to the ₹3,600 AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal.

Ratul Puri, the nephew of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, is an accused in the case.

Counsel for the probe agency, Special Public Prosecutor D.P. Singh and N.K. Matta, informed the court that the witness, K.K. Khosla, had surfaced and it was very likely that the probe agency would record his statement in connection with the case in the days to come.

Rebutting the claim by counsel for the accused that about 80 employees of his client had joined the investigation, the prosecutors on Tuesday submitted before

Special Judge Arvind Kumar that only four of his employees had come forward to cooperate, and one of them had since disappeared.

They also submitted that they were not in the know of his whereabouts and had apprehensions about his life.

They also alleged that the accused had suddenly disappeared midway through his interrogation on July 26 and the very next day applied for anticipatory bail. It showed that his conduct was not bo-

na fide so far the investigation was concerned, they submitted.

The court has been hearing arguments on the anticipatory bail application. Concluding their argument, the investigating agency submitted that if the accused was granted bail, they would lose an important tool of interrogating him, if required, in the custody. On Thursday, the accused's counsel will rebut ED's submission in opposition to the bail plea.

# 34th edition of symposium held in Capital on Premchand Jayanti

Event titled 'An Enigma called Nation & the Question of Identity'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Every year on the occasion of Premchand Jayanti, the Hindi literary magazine, Hans, holds its annual symposium. This year it was titled 'An Enigma called Nation & the Question of Identity'.

The event was held at Awan-e-Ghalib Auditorium at Mata Sundari Road. Makarand Paranjape, Purushot-

am Agarwal, Ananya Vajpaye, Faizan Mustafa, Hartosh Singh Bal were the guests of the 34th edition of the symposium.

People who came to attend the event included students, senior citizens, teachers, professors and admirers of Premchand's works.

"When we talk about Premchand, the very first thing I think of is 'Godan'. Through 'Godan' he depicts

the life of a farmer and that is relevant even today. Premchand was the voice of the common man", said Devina Kandwal, an MA student at DU.

Akhil Singhal, a student of BA (Journalism), said he came to know the difference between national and nationalism after attending the event, adding that he also gained knowledge about "identity".



**DELHI** ☀️ **Timings**

THURSDAY, AUG. 01		
☀️ RISE	05:43	🌇 SET 19:13
🌙 RISE	05:37	🌇 SET 19:33
FRIDAY, AUG. 02		
☀️ RISE	05:43	🌇 SET 19:12
🌙 RISE	06:45	🌇 SET 20:26
SATURDAY, AUG. 03		
☀️ RISE	05:44	🌇 SET 19:11
🌙 RISE	07:55	🌇 SET 21:11

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	34	28
Safdarjang	34	28
Palam	34	27

**Delhi Palam Today**  
34°C Warm and humid day with moderate winds. Rain and thundershower may occur with gusty wind towards evening.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
31°C Few spells of rain and thundershower associated with gusty strong wind will occur over Delhi and NCR. A mainly overcast sky.

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**THE HINDU**  
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# Bargari case: Punjab govt. seeks withdrawal of CBI closure report

Agency overlooked crucial aspects in sacrilege case probe, says Amarinder

**VIKAS VASUDEVA**  
CHANDIGARH  
Days after the Central Bureau of Investigation filed a closure report giving a clean chit to the accused in the 2015 Bargari sacrilege case, the Punjab government on Wednesday said the report should be immediately withdrawn to ensure further detailed investigations in the matter.

Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said the CBI had not only overlooked certain crucial aspects of the investigation but had also failed in its duty to identify the culprits and bring them to book, as was expected of the premier agency.

Demanding reopening of the case for further investigations by the country's top investigative agency, Capt. Amarinder said: "For rea-



CM Amarinder Singh

sions best known to them", the CBI had unexpectedly closed the case in an unusually hurried manner, which raised several questions on its handling of the matter.

"Many aspects of the case, including financial transactions and linkages with foreign-based entities, had been conveniently ig-

nored in the CBI probe," said the Chief Minister in a statement here, seeking a review of the closure decision.

"The CBI had also not identified and examined certain key witnesses, suspects whose examination could have shed light on the cases," he added.

**Three cases**

The previous Punjab government had, in November 2015, handed over to the CBI investigation of three sacrilege cases – theft of a 'bir' of Guru Granth Sahib from Burj Jawahar Singh Gurdwara on June 1, 2015; putting up of hand-written sacrilegious posters in Bargari and Burj Jawahar Singh Wala on September 25; and torn pages of the holy book being found at Bargari on October 12, 2015.

The CBI, it may be recalled, had filed its closure report on July 4, giving a clean chit to the accused in the 2015 Bargari sacrilege case. The agency had rejected the findings of the Punjab Police SIT in the case.

The Chief Minister pointed out that the CBI was controlled by the Central government, led by the BJP which was an ally of the ruling Shiromani Akali Dal at the time of the sacrilege incident.

**'Highly questionable'**

"The needle of suspicion in the Bargari case had been pointed at SAD by the Justice Ranjit Singh (ret'd) Commission," he observed, adding that, given this context, the CBI decision to file closure report was highly questionable.

# Don't forget Pragma's ordeal in jail, says senior RSS leader

'Congress conspired against her, did her injustice'

**SIDHARTH YADAV**  
BHOPAL

Defending Bhopal MP Pragma Thakur for her remarks on slain Mumbai Anti-Terrorist Squad chief Hemant Karkare ahead of the Lok Sabha election, senior RSS leader Indresh Kumar on Wednesday said one should not forget her ordeal in custody at the hands of the Congress government at the Centre then.

"No one denies that Mr. Karkare is a martyr," said Mr. Kumar, national executive member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. "But, don't forget the injustice perpetrated on Ms. Thakur by the Congress as part of a larger conspiracy."

Malegaon blast accused Ms. Thakur in April had said the death of Mr. Karkare in the 26/11 Mumbai attacks was a result of her curse after being treated "very badly" by him while in custody in the 2008 case.

"Hemant Karkare falsely implicated me. He died of his karma. I told him, he will



BJP MP Pragma Thakur

be destroyed. I told him his entire dynasty will be erased," she had said.

Speaking at a meeting of the RSS-backed Forum for Awareness of National Security in Bhopal, he said: "Don't stoke sentiments of those who revere cows. Remember, what led to the mutiny of 1857 and eventually galvanised into the freedom movement. Playing with the sentiments of people could take the form of mass movements."

Stating that attacks on those indulging in cow slaughter were being singled out as lynchings when there

more adverse forms of lynchings, he said: "Don't forget the massacre in Jammu and Kashmir that led to the exodus of hundreds of people from there and the political mob lynchings of opposition workers by the Trinamool, the Congress and the Left in West Bengal and Kerala. Moreover, don't forget those who raised slogans at universities to divide the country. Even the Supreme Court is delaying the Ram Mandir issue. Isn't that lynching of democracy?"

Mr. Kumar, however, added that those involved in any kind of lynching should be punished.

**'Scrap Article 35A'**

Demanding that Article 35A of the Constitution be scrapped, he said that especially after the strikes following Pulwama and Uri attacks, at least 70% of the people believed that like the rest of the country was open to people from Jammu and Kashmir, even its door should open to them.

# Child-lifting rumours keep students away

Attendance in M.P. schools drops 15%

**SIDHARTH YADAV**  
BHOPAL

One night, a woman visited Sawani's village and stopped by her father's shop to ask for water. Getting a whiff that she was out to kidnap children, the villagers shoed her away into the forest.

In Sumit's village, for three days after being thrashed with sticks by the villagers, eight-ten child-lifters kept skulking behind a bush, waiting for an opportunity to strike.

At Mohammed's house, two strangers who had slept on the rooftop knocked on the door the next morning. The were beaten up and handed over to the police.

While, Sawani heard the tale from her aunt, Sumit and Mohammed said their uncles narrated the incidents to them.

Neither had seen a child-lifter being beaten up or were accosted by one, but were sure the lifters wore military uniforms while on the prowl.

Now, each of the Class VI students and their classmates at the Government Secondary School at Sukhi Sewaniya village in Bhopal district stick to a set of precautions, especially meant for girl students: never walk to school alone, never go to

a toilet on the premises alone and don't talk to strangers.

Rumors of child-lifters on the prowl, being spread with a sinister swiftness on social media in the State notably after the charred body of a three-year-old kidnapped boy was found near his house in Bhopal, have instilled fear among school-children and thereby slumped their attendance by 15% in schools, according to the Education Department.

**'Miss my friends'**

Class VI student Hira Lal, at a school in Chopra Kalan village, said though he was scared to walk alone to school, he'll continue attending it and "deal with child-lifters on his own" if ever confronted. "But I badly miss my friends Vivek, Ritish and Neha. Their parents have asked them to stay home from some time," he says.

Kailash Makwana, Additional Director General of Police, Intelligence Wing, issued an advisory to district authorities on Sunday asking them to devise a plan to check the spread of rumours and involve local journalists in quelling the fear of suspected child-lifters among parents.

## Action time



Police use water cannon to disperse protesters who were demanding release of pending wages and regular work under MGNREGA, in Patna on Wednesday. ■RANJEET KUMAR

# Man arrested for allegedly running pro-Pakistan group on WhatsApp

Police act on complaints by locals in Bettiah, Bihar

**AMARNATH TEWARY**  
PATNA

A man was arrested in Bettiah town of West Champaran district in Bihar on Tuesday for allegedly running a pro-Pakistan group on social media and disturbing communal harmony.

Police said Saddam Quraishi, 22, was arrested from Nazni chowk in Bettiah for running a WhatsApp group

called 'Pakistan Zindabad'. The police also seized the mobile phone he allegedly used to administer the group. Mr. Quraishi is a resident of the Sant Ghat area of the town.

"Saddam Quraishi was arrested on the charge of disturbing communal harmony and conspiring to disturb the unity and integrity of the country," said Shri Ram

Singh, the SHO. West Champaran Superintendent of Police Jayant Kant confirmed the arrest, saying some local people had complained against Mr. Quraishi and the WhatsApp group he was running. "Following the complaint police conducted an inquiry and found it to be true. Quraishi was arrested and sent to jail under relevant sections," Mr. Kant said.

# Madrasa para-teachers withdraw stir

Minister assures them of looking into their demands

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
JAIPUR

Madrasa para-teachers in Rajasthan, who were staging protests for the last 10 days demanding an increase in remuneration and regularisation of posts, withdrew their agitation on Wednesday following an assurance by Energy Minister B.D. Kalla to look into the matter. However, the State government has refused to absorb them in regular service.

The ruling Congress had promised to regularise the services of para-teachers and increase their salaries in its 2018 Assembly election manifesto. About 6,500 para-teachers working in 3,500 registered madrasas across the State get a remuneration of ₹7,000 to ₹9,000 a month for teaching school subjects other than the religious text in seminaries.

Since July 21, most of the madrasas have been closed and para-teachers have held demonstrations, begged on the roads and swept the streets with brooms as protest at the district headquarters. Earlier this week, the para-teachers laid siege to the Madrasa Board's office here in an attempt to exert pressure on the State government to accede to their



Madrasa para-teachers holding a demonstration in Jaipur. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

demands.

Madrasa Para-teachers' Association president Masood Akhtar told *The Hindu* that the para-teachers were working for remunerations which were almost equivalent to the minimum wages for unskilled labourers, while Shiksha Karmis of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and other contractual employees were being paid much higher salaries.

**'A qualified lot'**

"Para-teachers were a qualified lot with degrees in the education stream and some of them had a research experience as well," he said.

"Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who announced a hike in the remuneration of Anganwadi workers from

₹6,000 to ₹7,000 in his Budget speech, did not pay attention to the plight of para-teachers who are struggling to survive," Mr. Akhtar said. Despite its promise in the election manifesto, the Congress government had no plans to form a cadre of para-teachers with the benefits of leave, provident fund and medical insurance.

The Association agreed to withdraw the agitation after some ruling party MLAs intervened and took a delegation to Mr. Kalla, who assured the para-teachers of looking into their demands after some time. Mr. Kalla heads a committee appointed for considering regularisation of contractual employees working in different government departments.





MNS chief Raj Thackeray with West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee at a joint presser in Howrah on Wednesday. •PTI

## MNS chief asks Mamata to back anti-EVM movement

Campaign to be launched on August 21

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
KOLKATA

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray met West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday and urged her to join his party's campaign to shun electronic voting machines (EVMs) and return to ballot papers.

The campaign will be launched on August 21.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting at the Secretariat in Kolkata, Mr. Thackeray claimed that there were reports of glitches in the EVMs in 370 constituencies across the country in the recent Lok Sabha election.

**Morcha in Maharashtra**  
"I came to meet Mamataji for discussing the developments regarding EVMs and VVPATs. We will take out a *Morcha* in Maharashtra regarding this," he said.

Mr. Thackeray said his party was launching an anti-EVM movement. "It is not anti-Modi [PM Narendra Modi]. But if being anti-EVM means being anti-Modi, we are okay with it," he said.

Ms. Banerjee too joined Mr. Thackeray in demanding that EVMs should be done away with. "If someone can say exactly how many seats his party will get even before the election is held, how will the people keep faith [on EVMs]. EVMs are not used in developed countries like Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States," she argued.

She said before the Lok Sabha poll, 23 opposition parties had approached the Election Commission and moved the Supreme Court on the EVM issue but the case was set aside. "This is not an old issue. This has been going on since 1995," she said.

# Cong. questions BJD's support to Bills passed in Parliament

Party says it exposes Naveen's equidistant policy, shows his 'double standards'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha's ruling Biju Janata Dal's stand that it will remain equidistant from both the BJP and the Congress was questioned by the Congress in the Assembly on Wednesday.

Seeking a clarification from Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik on his party's support to the Triple Talaq Bill in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, Congress MLA from Jeypore Taraprasad Bahinipati said it showed the ruling party's "double standards".

Mr. Bahinipati, who raised the issue during the Zero



Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik

Hour, alleged that Mr. Patnaik's party has been supporting the BJP on all the Bills and issues. "Why do you claim to be maintaining equal distance from both the BJP

and the Congress," he asked.

The State government's chief whip and senior BJD MLA Pramila Mallick defended her party's stand on the Triple Talaq Bill. The BJD supported the Bill since it pertained to the security and dignity of Muslim women, she said.

Defending her party's "equidistant policy", Ms. Mallick further sought to know from Mr. Bahinipati about the transfer of Congress votes to the BJP in the recently held elections in Odisha. The same thing happened in the election in the Patkura Assembly constituency too, she added.

**'Open support'**  
The senior Congress MLA also pointed out that the BJD had supported the NDA government in the RTI (Amendment) Bill a few days ago and had also extended open support to a BJP candidate in the recently concluded Rajya Sabha election in the State.

"You are criticising the BJP during elections and fighting it in Odisha. At the same time, you have been supporting the NDA government on different Bills. Is this not double standard," asked Mr. Bahinipati.

## Workers' arrest triggers protest in Ganjam

Tata Steel ferrochrome plant workers allegedly created ruckus, attacked policemen

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BERHAMPUR

Protesting against the arrest of 78 workers of Tata Steel ferrochrome plant in Odisha's Ganjam district, their family members and villagers launched an indefinite strike in front of the plant at Gopalpur Industrial Park on Wednesday.

The workers were arrested on Tuesday night for allegedly vandalising the infrastructure of the ferrochrome plant, attacking fellow work-

ers and assaulting police personnel who tried to convince them to end the stir, said police sources.

Sub-Divisional Police Officer, Chhatrapur, Utkal Keshari Dash said the workers had staged a demonstration in front of the plant and were preventing other workers from entering the premises.

Adequate police arrangement has been made in the area to prevent escalation of tension. While four cases have been lodged against the

arrested workers, the agitators have also filed a case against a few policemen for harassment.

**Permanent job demand**

The arrested workers are from villages where land was acquired by Tata Steel for the project. The legal adviser of the arrested workers, Mr. T.K. Reddy, said for the last three years they have been demanding permanent employment in the company or its subsidiary, as they were pro-

mised during displacement. "Till afternoon neither the administration nor the company authorities came over to hold discussion with them [agitating family members]. The protesters have decided to continue the strike till some conclusion is reached," he added.

According to Tata Steel sources, production has stopped at its ferrochrome plant due to "large-scale damage to the infrastructure" by agitating workers on June 27.

## BJP wins 95% seats in Tripura panchayat polls

**SYED SAJJAD ALI**  
AGARTALA

The ruling BJP has registered victory in 9% of 14% seats in panchayat bodies in Tripura that went to polls on July 27. The party had earlier won 86% seats uncontested.

The counting of votes in the three-tier panchayat polls was marred by clashes between the Congress and BJP supporters in Kailashahar, headquarters of Unako-

ti district in north Tripura. Security forces resorted to baton charge to disperse the mobs. At least four persons suffered minor injuries. In other areas, counting was peaceful amid presence of police and paramilitary troops.

The BJP has thanked people for making it win in 95% seats across gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zila parishads.

## Farmers seek 'fair price'

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BERHAMPUR

On its second day of national general council meet in Berhampur on Wednesday, the All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha demanded the government to ensure that the procurement price of all agricultural produce is one and a half times the total production cost. Leaders of the organisation alleged the present fixation of procurement price is too arbitrary.



## 'New, young faces will get a chance'

Right time to bring forward those awaiting opportunity for long, says Ashok Chavan

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

Undeterred by the ongoing exodus from its ranks, the Congress has decided to field new and young faces from those Assembly constituencies where senior leaders have quit to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or Shiv Sena.

Former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan said on Wednesday that he has sent a proposal to the Maharashtra unit Congress committee president Balasaheb Thorat to form a team of experienced leaders to visit the



Ashok Chavan

constituencies where there has been a defection.

"We have a number of second rung leaders who have been winning the local body polls. There are corporators

who have won three to four times or a zilla parishad member who has been winning consistently. We must now ensure that they get due opportunity," Mr. Chavan told *The Hindu*, on a day when one Congress and three Nationalist Congress Party MLAs joined the BJP, in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

He said the new faces can also be from the different sections of the society having a rapport with the voters.

Mr. Chavan said the team of senior leaders could visit such areas and scrutinise the

possible new faces to lead the party in the future. "We need people who will not go on the defensive under pressure from the dirty tricks used by the BJP-led government. This is the right time to bring forward the leadership which did not get an opportunity for the longest of time," he said, adding that the youth will get total support from the party.

The Maharashtra unit of the Youth Congress has already been given the responsibility of 75 Assembly segments for which a war room has been set up in Pune.

## In season of yatras, NCP's to roll out on August 6

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

After Shiv Sena's Jan Ashirwad Yatra and Bharatiya Janata Party's Maha Janadesh Yatra, opposition Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) is set to hit the streets with its Shiv Swarajya Yatra from August 6.

The yatra, which will travel primarily through Assembly constituencies targeted by the NCP for the Assembly polls, will be organised around the theme of bringing real *swarajya* (self-governance) as by Chhatra-

pati Shivaji Maharaj.

Interestingly, the reel life Chhatrapati Shivaji and NCP MP from Shirur, Amol Kolhe will lead the yatra with Udayanraje Bhosale, a descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji and party MP from Satara, being the star campaigner. The yatra also aims to instil confidence among party workers, and will kick start the NCP's election campaign.

"The yatra is aimed at exposing the State government's failures to fulfil the promises made five years

ago. Be it farmers or workers or youth or women, it has failed everyone on every count. Instead of working to fulfil the aspirations of the people, the ruling coalition parties have already gone on the campaign mode and are busy organising yatras," said NCP youth wing's executive president Ravikant Varpe.

In the first phase, the yatra will start from Fort Shivneri, the birthplace of Chhatrapati Shivaji. The second phase will begin from Tuljapur on August 16. "The possible party candidates from

the respective constituencies will be the taking the lead to organise the yatra," said Mr. Varpe.

The second phase of Yuva Sena chief Aaditya Thackeray's Jan Ashirwad Yatra began on Wednesday from Solapur, while Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' Maha Janadesh Yatra will start from Thursday.

On Wednesday, the youth wing of the NCP held a demonstration at the gates of Mantralaya to protest the government's failure to create two crore jobs every year.

## Heavy rains in western Maharashtra fill up dams, boost water stocks

Deficit in Vidarbha down to 19% from 29%; will persist in Marathwada

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

Heavy rains continued to pummel western Maharashtra through the day on Wednesday, affecting traffic in Kolhapur, Sangli and parts of Pune city.

Incessant rain in the past 72 hours have resulted in the four major dams in Pune district - Khadakwasla, Panshet, Varasgaon and Temghar - filling up to 75% of their storage capacity.

The dams collectively have a storage capacity of 29.15 TMC. The total storage till Tuesday morning was 22.59 TMC and continued to increase due to rainfall in the catchment areas.

Discharge of excess water from the Khadakwasla dam resulted in the submergence of the Bhide bridge on Tuesday, leading to traffic snarls on several arterial roads.

It continued to rain steadily over the city on Wednesday as well, though with less intensity.

Pune has already received surplus rainfall barely two months into the monsoon, recording 561.8 mm till Tuesday morning and exceeding the normal rainfall figure of 545.7 mm for this period,



A motorcyclist negotiates a flooded road near Alka Talkies in Pune on Wednesday. ■ MANDAR TANNU

said Dr. Anupam Kashyapi, Head, Weather & Air Pollution Monitoring Unit, India Meteorological Department.

"The city is expected to receive moderate rainfall on Thursday while the showers are expected to reduce partially by the end of the week. However, heavy rains are expected to resume in the State from August 3 and is likely to prevail till August 6," Dr. Kashyapi told *The Hindu*.

He further said that Maharashtra had already received a surplus rainfall of 7% despite the deficiency in the arid Marathwada region.

"The Konkan region and Goa have recorded an excess

of 26%, while central Maharashtra has recorded an excess of 28% rainfall. Steady rains in Gadchiroli and Nagpur over the past 24 hours and other parts of the usually parched Vidarbha region have brought the deficit down to 19% from 29% [for Vidarbha]," said Dr. Kashyapi.

However, despite these positives, Marathwada continues to be problematic with the rainfall deficit figure down to 27% from 30%.

"While Beed, Nanded, Hingoli and some other parts in Marathwada have been receiving steady rain, we fear that the deficit will persist

for a while. However, there are signs that the rainfall will pick up after August 8," he said.

Meanwhile, with districts in the verdant Konkan belt being relentlessly buffeted by showers, dams in Ratnagiri district have filled up to 99% of their total capacity.

Heavy showers continued to lash Sangli and Kolhapur in the western part of the State, with several parts of Shirol tehsil in the latter district, notably Nrusinhawadi, submerged by water.

The relentless rain prompted the opening of three sluice gates of the Radhanagari dam in Kolhapur, long filled to its capacity of 8.36 TMC (thousand million cubic feet), leading to the Panchganaga river crossing the danger mark. The rain completely disrupted traffic between tehsils and villages along the Kolhapur-Panhala route. High alert has been sounded by district authorities to vulnerable villages in the Kolhapur, Sangli and Satara districts along the banks of the Krishna.

Heavy rains in Satara and Sangli districts have ensured a healthy water stock in dams in these areas.

### Good tidings



Labourers replant paddy saplings in a field near Sarkhej village on the outskirts of Ahmedabad on Wednesday following bountiful rains in Gujarat. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

## Goa planning to reserve 80% jobs in factories for locals

Labour, employment policies to be drafted in six months: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PANAJI

Taking a leaf from the Andhra Pradesh Assembly, Goa is now planning to reserve 80% jobs in industrial units receiving State government subsidies for people of Goan origin, the Legislative Assembly was told on Wednesday.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant also said that "60% to 80% jobs" would be on a permanent basis.

While the labour and employment policies will be drafted in the next six months, all industries in the State have been directed to register with the government and submit details about the workers and the sectors they are currently employed in, he said.

Mr. Sawant said the BJP-led government will draft the labour and employment policies in the next six months in which it might



Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant in the Assembly. ■ ATISH POMBURRFEKAR

consider reserving "80% jobs for Goans in the private sector, especially in the industrial units that get various subsidies from the State government, out of which 60% jobs should be on a permanent basis".

Responding to a question by Congress MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco, Mr. Sawant said the upcoming policies might make it

mandatory for the industrial units to hire 80% Goans in jobs. The Chief Minister also said a task force has been set up to ensure that industries adhere to the Minimum Wages Guarantee Act.

Mr. Sawant said since the private sector, especially industrial units, enjoys various subsidies from the State government, they are expected to reserve 80% of the total jobs to the people with the Goan origin. "But there is no regulatory authority to keep a tab. Once the policy is in place, we will come to know whether they are adhering to the requirement or not," he said.

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly had last week passed the AP Employment of Local Candidates in Industries and Factories Bill, 2019, that mandates employment of at least 75% State candidates in the respective units.

## Over 28,000 Gujarat medicos join strike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
AHMEDABAD

More than 28,000 doctors in Gujarat on Wednesday joined the 24-hour nationwide strike against the passage of the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill 2019 in Lok Sabha, which seeks to replace the graft-tainted Medical Council of India (MCI).

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) had given a call for a 24-hour withdrawal of non-essential services

across the country against the Bill, dubbing it as "anti-poor, anti-student and anti-democratic".

"We believe that more than 28,000 doctors in Gujarat have joined the strike on Wednesday beginning 6 a.m.," said Dr. Kamlesh Saini, secretary, Gujarat Chapter, IMA.

"This is not a full-fledged strike. Doctors in Gujarat have expressed solidarity with agitating doctors across the country," Dr. Saini said.

However, officials at Ahmedabad civil hospital, the largest facility in the State, said the strike did not have any major impact on services.

"Civil hospital is functioning as usual. Our doctors have not joined the strike. It is up to the doctors to join the strike or not. Doctors associated with the government-run hospitals have not joined the strike," said civil hospital superintendent M.M. Prabhakar.



## IN BRIEF



## A.P. CM Jagan allowed to visit Jerusalem

HYDERABAD  
A special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court here on Tuesday granted permission to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to visit Jerusalem and the U.S. between August 1 and 25. The court also permitted Rajya Sabha member and national general secretary of YSR Congress V. Vijaysai Reddy to tour Malaysia, Singapore, Europe, America and Australia between August 1 and September 30.

## Loan moratorium: Kerala yet to get reply from RBI

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
The Kerala government is yet to receive a reply from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on its request that the moratorium on farmers' loans be extended till December 31, Agriculture Minister V.S. Sunil Kumar has said. The moratorium, declared in the aftermath of the August 2018 floods, ended on Wednesday (July 31). The Minister told reporters here on Wednesday that he would discuss the matter with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to decide the future course of action.

## Hashish oil worth ₹22 cr. seized in Palakkad

PALAKKAD  
In one of the major drug hauls in recent times in Kerala, the Excise Enforcement Squad seized 23 kg of hashish oil from a car coming from Tamil Nadu at Nombikkode, near Elappully, on Wednesday. The drug is worth more than ₹22 crore in the international market. Acting on a tip-off, the squad intercepted the car on the Palakkad-Pollachi Highway and found the huge quantity of the hashish oil hidden in the car's door panels. Anoop George, 35, of Idukki was arrested.

# After verification, police may treat Siddhartha's letter as dying declaration

Clerk's statement to be recorded and corroborated with call records

STAFF REPORTER  
BENGALURU

With the body of V.G. Siddhartha, founder of Cafe Coffee Day (CCD), being recovered from the Netravati on Wednesday morning, the letter he purportedly wrote — in which he blamed his financial troubles and “harassment” by the Income Tax Department for “succumbing to the situation” — has gained legal significance. It will now have to be treated as a dying declaration, after checking the veracity of the letter, say legal experts and senior police officials.

“We recovered the letter from his family members. We will take necessary action,” said Kamal Pant, Additional Director-General of Police (Law and Order), Karnataka. A senior police offi-



Former Karnataka Chief Minister S.M. Krishna paying last respects to the mortal remains of his son-in-law and Cafe Coffee Day founder V.G. Siddhartha on Wednesday. •PTI

cial overseeing the case, however, told *The Hindu* that given the circumstances of his death and how the letter has surfaced, it could be considered a dying declaration.

Sources said a clerk in Siddhartha's office handed over the letter to his immediate family, hours after he went missing near Mangaluru on Monday night. The clerk has told the family and

the police that Siddhartha had dictated the letter to her a few weeks ago and he called her on Monday evening, hours before he went missing, asking her to release it to over 200 people, including CCD employees, investors, and the media on Tuesday morning. The police will record the clerk's statement and would then corroborate it with Siddhar-

tha's call records. “Even if the letter was written a few weeks ago, his call to the clerk asking her to release it as his statement the next day clearly indicates it was his dying declaration,” said criminal lawyer C.H. Hanumantharaya.

(Those in distress or having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph: 104 for help.)

## Fishermen helped trace body in river

STAFF REPORTER  
MANGALURU

Attikatta Jagannath and Shivanna, close associates of V.G. Siddhartha for years, were outside the mortuary of Wenlock Hospital here, holding the hands of Rithesh D'Souza, 40, and Pranesh, 35, as they struggled with their emotions. The two were among the local fishermen who traced the body in the Netravati on Wednesday.

Yatish Baikampady, leader of the local fishermen, said the fishermen, based on the current factor in the river and at its mouth had guessed — going by the location where Siddhartha was last seen — that the body would be pushed to the banks on the Hoige Bazaar area.

## IS suspect from Kerala dies in U.S. drone strike

He had joined the group one year ago

STAFF REPORTER  
PALAKKAD

A young engineering undergraduate from Edappal in Malappuram district, who reportedly joined the terror group Islamic State (IS) more than a year ago, was suspected to have been killed in an American drone attack in Afghanistan.

The police confirmed that the family of Mohammed Muhsin, 22, at Edappal got a message in Malayalam a couple of days ago saying that he was martyred in God's path as per his wish. A top police officer, without going on record, said Muhsin had been killed in the drone attack along with an IS leader in Afghanistan more than 10 days ago.

Muhsin's family had registered a complaint at the Changaramkulam police station in Malappuram district in October 2017 stating that he was missing. A final-

year mechanical engineering student at a college in Thrissur, Muhsin had quit his studies and left for Bengaluru after having been influenced by the IS ideology.

From Bengaluru, he went to Dubai. Family sources said he was missing from Dubai. The police said he reached Afghanistan as part of an IS assignment after undergoing training in the use of arms. Police sources said a few other Keralites too had joined the IS along with Muhsin.

Rumours are being spread about Keralites reaching the IS camps even when their families are being warned by some sources against disclosing any details about them.

“Distance between God and IS is minimal. This is the gist of what they indoctrinate to get mercenaries for their acts of terror,” said a senior police officer.

## Maoist 'commander' shot dead in Telangana

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BHADRADRI-KOTHAGUDEM

The CPI (ML-New Democracy) district secretary, P. Linganna, 42, was killed in an alleged encounter with the police early on Wednesday. The incident occurred in a forested area near Rollagadavada village in Gundala mandal of Telangana's tribal dominated Bhadradi-Kothagudem district.

Police sources said the face-off took place between a group of armed underground cadres of the Naxal faction and a police squad during combing operations.

The police recovered the body of a slain cadre along with a self-loading rifle after

the exchange of fire. A few other armed cadres managed to escape, the police said. The slain person was later identified as Linganna.

### Fighting for rights

As the news of the “encounter” spread, agitated Adivasis from nearby villages rushed to the “encounter” site. They raised slogans against the police accusing them of killing Linganna, an Adivasi leader fighting for the rights of “Podu cultivators”.

The villagers allegedly threw stones at the police squad prompting the latter to “open fire” in the air to control the situation.

## Opposition leaders slam Central probe agencies

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and former Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah hit out at their role



Siddaramaiah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

The death of Cafe Coffee Day founder V.G. Siddhartha in Mangaluru triggered attacks by several political personalities in the Opposition who questioned the role of investigating agencies.

“A letter, supposedly written by Siddhartha a few days before his death, discusses tax terrorism, which is an ugly face of politically motivated institutions. What signals are we sending to budding

entrepreneurs? Our party and I shall always stand with Shri. S.M. Krishna in his fight for justice,” former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Twitter. In another tweet, he said the government was favouring “a few crony capitalists”.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee tweeted: “From what he has expressed, it appears that he was greatly depressed due to harassment and pressure from agencies, for which he

could not run his business in a peaceful manner.”

Karti Chidambaram, the son of former Union Minister P. Chidambaram and who is facing charges from the Enforcement Directorate, tweeted on Wednesday: “Forget about dealing with markets/suppliers/customers/investors/employees/stakeholders. Managing the systematic harassment by the State n it's pliant agencies is the biggest challenge. IT, ED, CBI, ROC etc. are the biggest

impediments for ease of business.”

Fugitive business tycoon Vijay Mallya, who is in the U.K., also took to Twitter against government agencies. “I am indirectly related to Siddhartha. Excellent human and brilliant entrepreneur. I am devastated with the contents of his letter. The Govt Agencies and Banks can drive anyone to despair. See what they are doing to me despite offer of full repayment.”

## Cong. worker hacked to death in Thrissur

14-member gang was involved

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THRISSUR

A Congress activist who was hacked by a gang at Punna, near Chavakkad, succumbed to his injuries at a private hospital here on Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Puthuveetil Noushad, 44, a Congress booth president.

An unidentified gang of 14 people, who came on seven motorbikes with their faces covered, hacked Mr. Noushad, who was chatting with three of his friends at Punna Centre on Tuesday evening. The three friends who tried to protect Noushad also suffered injuries.

Mr. Noushad, who was critically injured, died at the hospital on Wednesday. Others are undergoing treatment. The Congress alleged that it was a pre-planned

murder and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) was behind the attack. The police identified four SDPI workers in the gang. But they are absconding.

### KPCC demand

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Mulla Ramachandran, Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala, and T.N. Prathapan, MP, have demanded a detailed investigation into the attack.

“The government should take action to control the violence unleashed by the SDPI in the State,” said K. Sudhakaran MP.

Meanwhile, a special team has been formed to investigate the murder. Mr. Noushad's body was handed over to his relatives.

## ED seizes Q City Tech Park in Hyderabad

Company remitted funds outside India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized the Hyderabad-based Q City Tech Park of Mack Soft Tech Private Limited (MSTPL), worth over ₹86 crore, in lieu of assets held abroad in alleged contravention of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

The agency initiated the probe on the basis of information that MSTPL had allegedly remitted huge funds outside India in violation of the Act.

### Non-existent licence

It found that \$1.25 crore (equivalent to ₹62.08 crore) was transferred to Orient Guide Investments Limited (Hong Kong) on the pretext of purchasing a “non-existent” software licence.

From November 2011 to December 2016, MSTPL allegedly transferred another sum of \$39.80 lakh (equivalent to ₹24.30 Crore) to the United Arab Emirates-based Senat Legal Consultancy FZ LLC and Cresco Legal Consultancy FZ LLC, ostensibly for legal services.

“It was revealed that this was a sham transaction,” said the agency.

The ED alleges that these remittances were made overseas to siphon off funds from India and park them abroad.

“Illegal holding of foreign assets outside the country is a contravention of Section 4 of the Act and, accordingly, ED initiated action to seize equivalent assets in India in the form of physical assets of Q City Tech Park,” the agency added.

## Dip for the departed



River ritual: A man performing 'vavu bali' ritual in Periyar river at Aluva in Kerala on Wednesday. People pay obeisance to their ancestors during the new moon day in the Malayalam month of Karkidakam. •H. VIBHU

## When helpline staff find themselves helpless

181, Tamil Nadu's emergency contact number for women in distress, has received 45,000 prank calls

VIVEK NARAYANAN  
CHENNAI

Listening to songs often serves as a stress buster at work, especially for those handling distress calls and offering counselling to harassed women. But it is certainly no music to one's ears when a stranger calls up and belts out a filmi number with lewd lyrics. For counsellors handling the 181 helpline, Tamil Nadu's exclusive emergency contact number for women in distress, though handling such perverts and pranksters has become a routine.

Since its launch in December 2018 by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, the helpline has received close to 45,000

prank calls by men who insist that the counsellors sing for them or listen to them singing. Some of them turn abusive and at times speak in a child's tone to engage the counsellors.

### Works 24 hours

The round-the-clock helpline, run by the Department of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme, operates from the Amma Call Centre at Ambattur.

Till now, the five staffers, handling 11 connections, have answered over one lakh calls.

Of them, over 7,520 calls pertained to domestic

violence, alcoholism, extramarital affairs, cybercrime and sexual harassment. Many callers also sought



ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

details of various government schemes. But a majority of the calls were by pranksters.

### Abusive callers

“On an average, we get 60 prank calls a day. Sometimes the callers are very abusive. We pick every call thinking it is a genuine caller and disconnect it once we realise it is a prank call. The same miscreant calls from another number and troubles the staff. They mimic children and even ask us to sing songs,” said an employee. Officials of the Social

Welfare Department have now consolidated all the phone numbers from which they received such calls and handed it over to the city police for action.

“There should be strict action against such miscreants as they are preventing a genuine caller from accessing the helpline. These men will not have the courage to call the police control room and abuse the staff,” said a senior official of the Social Welfare Department.

The helpline has sought more staff members to handle the calls. “It is essential considering the number of calls we are getting,” said V. Amuthavalli, Director, Social Welfare Department.

## Charminar loses out to Salar Jung

Museum has more footfall than the crowded square

SERISH NANISETTI  
HYDERABAD

The Salar Jung Museum has become a bigger grosser than the iconic Charminar, which is considered the top draw among visitors and tourists to Hyderabad. According to figures available with the Archaeological Survey of India and Salar Jung Museum, the ticket collections from Charminar were ₹ 2,27,10,455 while those at SJM were ₹ 2,30,39,920 for 2017-18. The Golconda Fort raked in ₹ 2,85,77,180 over the same period.

While both Charminar and SJM are a few kilometres apart and visitors should ideally visit both the places, many tourists give a miss to Charminar. The Salar Jung Museum is an orderly choreographed experience of different galleries with the



The Salar Jung Museum. •

hush of whirring air-conditioners occasionally broken by noisy tourists. The Charminar on the other hand is a densely crowded square that has been taken over by vendors. Some of the vendors and hawkers accost visitors and tourists selling everything from pani puri to fake pearls and cheap sunglasses. “We want the SJM and Charminar to be experienced by the tourists on

the same day. The State government had a plan to launch battery-powered taxis between the museum and Charminar. We have created space for the parking bay but the project has not taken off,” says A. Nagender Reddy, Director of Salar Jung Museum.

The Telangana Tourism Department's plan was to turn the SJM into a hub with a feeder service to take the visitors to other nearby sites.

Transport to Charminar remains a big issue with visitors and tourists left to their own devices. A 100-metre space on all four sides of Charminar has been turned into a pedestrian zone. But most of the walking spaces leading up to this zone have been occupied permanently by shopkeepers.



IN BRIEF



**Stolen books found at Azam Khan's university**

**LUCKNOW**  
SP leader Azam Khan's MLA son was detained on Wednesday for allegedly obstructing officials during a raid at Mohammad Ali Jauhar University in Rampur, triggering a protest by party workers. Till now, 2,500 rare, stolen books have been recovered from the university, founded by Azam Khan, in the raid which began on Tuesday, police said. SP MLA from Suar Assembly seat Abdullah Azam has been detained for obstructing the raids and creating hurdles in government work, Rampur SP Ajaypal Sharma said. PTI

**CJI permits CBI to file case against HC judge**

**NEW DELHI**  
Cracking the whip on corruption in the higher judiciary, Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi has allowed CBI to lodge a regular case against serving Allahabad High Court judge Justice S.N. Shukla on allegations of graft for favours to a private medical college for MBBS admission. The permission to the CBI came after the agency wrote a letter to the CJI stating that a preliminary inquiry was registered by it against the judge and others on the advise of the previous CJI Dipak Misra, when the matter regarding the alleged misconduct by the judge was brought to his knowledge. PTI

**New high for Assam tea at ₹70,501 per kg**

**GUWAHATI**  
A kilogram of seasonal orthodox gold tea fetched ₹70,501 in an auction on Wednesday, breaking the record of ₹50,000 per kilo for Assam tea in 24 hours. The Assam Company India Limited (ACIL) sold a kilogram of gold tea from their Majjan plantation in eastern Assam's Dibrugarh district for the record price to Guwahati-based Mundhra Tea Company traders.

# 2,461 students dropped out of IITs in last two years, says Ministry

All is not well

IIT-Delhi (in photo) recorded the highest dropouts in the last two years followed by IIT-Kharagpur



Institute	2017-19	Dropout rate (%)
Delhi	782	4.55
Kharagpur	622	2.59
Kanpur	190	1.45
Madras	128	0.64
Patna	92	3.07
Hyderabad	85	1.71
Roorkee	57	0.37
Indore	50	1.77
Bhubaneswar	39	1.21
Mandi	34	1.46
Guwahati	12	0.1

1 No dropouts were registered in Goa, Dharwad, Palakkad and Gandhinagar saw less than five dropouts  
2 (0.06%), Guwahati (0.1%) and Roorkee (0.37%) had the lowest dropout rates

More than half of them are from the reserved category; experts seek assessment surveys

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH**  
**KOLKATA**

More than 2,400 students have dropped out of the most sought after IITs in the past two years, reveals data provided by the Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) to the Rajya Sabha. Of the 2,461 dropouts recorded from the 23 IITs, about 57% were from the IIT-Delhi and the IIT-Kharagpur, the data tabled on July 25 points out.

The IIT-Delhi recorded 782 dropouts and Kharagpur 622. The number in the other IITs like Kanpur, Bombay and Madras was far less. While 263 students dropped

out of IIT-Bombay, 190 dropped out of IIT-Kanpur and only 128 from IIT-Madras.

Another interesting aspect which emerges from the data is that 1,171 of the dropouts, which is 47.5%, are from the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Class category.

In its response to the question asked by Rajya Sabha MP from Andhra Pradesh V. Vijayasai Reddy, the MHRD said the reasons could be attributed to "shifting to the other colleges/ institutions, personal reasons, medical reasons, placement during PG courses and pursuing

higher education abroad".

"The dropout in the undergraduate programmes is attributed to withdrawal due to wrong choices filled, poor academic performance, personal and medical reasons," the MHRD said, adding that the institutes were taking correctional measures to "de-stress students".

Asked why students from the reserved category are dropping out in such a high number, Somesh Kumar, Dean of Students Affairs at IIT-Kharagpur, said the figures were not alarming. "The intake of students from the weaker sections in the IITs is almost 50% and if simi-

lar number of students drop out there is nothing unusual in it," he said. Referring to the reservation in the IITs, he said 15% seats were reserved for the SC category, 7.5% for the STs and 27% for the OBC category, which makes it 49.5%.

According to the Dean, IIT-Kharagpur has set up a counselling centre and a welfare group that helps students cope up with stress.

For instance, a student gets a chance to pursue B. Tech in Agriculture and Food Technology but drops out if he/she gets other streams like Computer Science in other institutes, the profes-

sor said. While Prof. Kumar said there was nothing unusual in the dropout figures, there were other who want the matter to be investigated further.

"The usually high dropouts from the two IITs reflect that there could be some institutional factors. They should undertake a social climate assessment survey," Harsh Agarwal, co-founder of CURE, who has been working on preventing ragging in educational institutions for the past two decades, said.

Mr. Agarwal said factors like ragging cannot be completely ruled out.

## 10% quota case for statute Bench?

Three-judge SC Bench reserves orders

**KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL**  
**NEW DELHI**

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Justice S.A. Bobde on Wednesday reserved its orders on the question of referring a batch of petitions challenging the validity of a constitutional amendment providing 10% economic quota in government jobs and educational institutions to a Constitution Bench.

The Bench, however, refrained from staying the 103rd Constitutional Amendment of 2019 providing 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the "economically backward" in the unreserved category.

At the end of a day-long hearing, Justice Bobde clarified that the Bench would first pass orders on whether or not to refer the challenge to a Constitution Bench. Once that order is pronounced, the court would specifically hear arguments on the question of stay of



the quota law. Earlier, senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan made a strong pitch for referring the issue to a Constitution Bench. Mr. Dhavan argued that economic reservation violates the 50% reservation ceiling limit fixed by a nine-judge Bench in the Indra Sawhney case. Further, the 1992 judgment had barred reservation solely on economic criterion.

Responding for the government, Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal submitted that the amendments were in tune with past decisions of the Supreme Court.

## Good July rain brings monsoon deficit to 9%

Looming fear of an El Niño has now largely receded

**JACOB KOSHY**  
**NEW DELHI**

India's monsoon deficit percentage has for the first time this year narrowed down to single digits thanks to better-than-expected July rainfall.

As of July 31, data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) says that the country got 28.5 cm of rainfall in July, about 4% more than what's normal for the month. This has reduced the seasonal deficit (calculated from June 1 to Wednesday) from 32.8% as on June 30 to 9%, as Wednesday's numbers suggest.

July rainfall exceeds the prediction by the weather agencies in May. The IMD, for instance, had forecast July rainfall to be 5% less than normal, and private weather agency Skymet had said the deficit would be 9%.

The improvement in rainfall was distributed in all regions except the southern peninsula, which got 10%



IMD said the improvement in rainfall was distributed in all regions, except the southern peninsula. ■ VIJAY SENEJI

less rain than what's normal for July

Currently, the monsoon is in an active phase and, because of the likelihood of a rain-bearing low pressure system in the northern part of the Bay of Bengal, steady rain is likely over Central India as well as India's western coast until the first week of August.

**El Niño effects**

The pessimism by forecasters in May was due to the

looming fear of an El Niño, a climate phenomenon known to dry up monsoon rainfall. The threat of an El Niño has now largely receded. "Currently, weak El Niño conditions are prevailing over equatorial Pacific Ocean and forecasts indicate that transition of El Niño conditions to El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral conditions is likely during the end of the monsoon season," the IMD's latest outlook indicates.

## Cabinet approval for revised Chit Funds Bill

Bill had lapsed last March

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2019, in Parliament, to reduce the compliance burden of the registered chit funds in the country while also protecting the interest of the subscribers, Minister of Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar said on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters after announcing the decisions of the Union Cabinet, Mr. Javadekar said the Bill follows the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2018, which was introduced in Parliament last March, but then lapsed. The government has not released any details about the 2019 Bill as it is yet to be introduced

in Parliament. However, it is likely to be along the lines of the 2018 Bill, while also incorporating some of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee.

The 2018 Bill incorporated several provisions to improve the regulation of chit funds as set out in the original

Chit Funds Act, 1982. Among the provisions was that a chit fund could be created only with the sanction of the relevant State government. The 2018 Bill also specifies that a chit will be drawn in the presence of at least two subscribers, who can even join via video-conferencing. It also sought to increase the maximum commission of the chit fund manager to 7% from 5%.

## More subsidy for sulphur fertilizers

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

The Centre has hiked the subsidy for sulphur-based fertilizers, while keeping unchanged the subsidy rates for nitrogen, phosphorus and potash-based fertilisers in a bid to correct imbalances and ensure better soil health.

The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday. The expected expenditure for nutrient-based subsidies (that is, non-urea subsidies) in 2019-20 is expected to be ₹22,875.50 crore, said an official statement.

## OBC panel gets extension for 6 months

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

A commission appointed in 2017 to examine the sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) within 12 weeks was on Wednesday given an extension of six months by the Union Cabinet headed by the PM.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said the decision to extend the commission's term till January 31, 2020 was to enable it complete its work with the States "where there are some anomalies".

**WEATHER WATCH**  
RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Thursday:** Heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Konkan & Goa and heavy rainfall at isolated places over J&K, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi, West U.P., Rajasthan, Assam & Meghalaya, M.P., Gujarat, West Bengal, Sikkim and Maharashtra.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	21.5	30.6	25.6	Kozhikode	1.3	34.0	25.3
Ahmedabad	19.4	28.6	24.7	Kurnool	2.6	35.0	24.0
Aizawl	5.0	27.3	20.7	Lucknow	0.0	34.1	26.4
Allahabad	0.0	33.5	27.0	Madurai	0.0	39.8	26.2
Bengaluru	0.0	29.9	19.8	Mangaluru	1.6	30.6	23.6
Bhopal	66.9	25.3	22.8	Mumbai	65.1	28.5	23.4
Bhubaneswar	23.8	32.5	25.6	Mysuru	0.0	30.9	20.1
Chandigarh	13.7	29.0	24.2	New Delhi	0.0	34.2	27.1
Chennai	0.0	37.2	27.2	Patna	0.0	34.8	27.0
Coimbatore	0.0	33.4	23.4	Port Blair	0.0	30.5	25.7
Dehradun	0.0	32.7	24.6	Puducherry	0.0	36.2	24.0
Gangtok	2.5	23.2	17.4	Pune	13.0	26.0	21.9
Goa	11.0	31.1	25.5	Raipur	0.0	25.5	22.8
Guwahati	0.0	33.0	27.4	Ranchi	0.0	25.8	21.6
Hubballi	0.0	26.0	22.0	Shillong	1.5	24.1	13.9
Hyderabad	1.0	30.8	23.0	Shimla	39.4	19.1	15.5
Imphal	4.8	28.3	21.7	Srinagar	0.0	30.8	21.6
Jaipur	0.0	33.2	26.2	Thiruvananthapuram	0.0	32.5	25.2
Kochi	1.8	31.4	25.4	Tiruchi	0.0	39.2	27.8
Kohima	8.8	26.6	16.0	Vijayawada	0.0	35.3	25.5
Kolkata	0.2	33.0	27.0	Visakhapatnam	0.0	30.5	27.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**  
**Yesterday**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	63	63	41	106	106	...
Bengaluru	7	18	38	106	106	...
Chennai	05	37	39	156	156	...
Delhi	20	33	49	54	109	...
Hyderabad	02	15	22	08	19	...
Kolkata	02	48	12	60	79	...
Lucknow	09	08	134	37	37	...
Mumbai	12	18	104	14	44	...
Pune	74	08	67	23	23	...
Visakhapatnam	15	54	54	50	105	...

High levels of particulate matter pollution recorded in most cities across the country. Going by Central Pollution Control Board data, Bengaluru the worst with PM2.5 pollution levels touching a dangerous 428. Chennai was a close second with PM2.5 readings of 318.

**Air Quality Code:** ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.  
**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.  
**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness and 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.

## 'Minister has allayed dairy farmers' fears'

Unions had submitted memorandum against opening up dairy market

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

Agriculture and dairy must be kept out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, currently being negotiated by the Indian government with 15 other countries, Indian farmers' unions said in a memorandum submitted to the Minister of State of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Sanjeev Kumar Balyan on Wednesday.

"Dr. Balyan assured us that milk imports would not be allowed and that all ef-

orts would be made to put dairy on the negative list of the RCEP," Kannaiyan Subramaniam, southern secretary of the Indian Coordination Committee of Farmers Movements (ICCFM) told *The Hindu* after the meeting. Representatives of ICCFM, which includes 12 major farmers' movements including the Bharatiya Kisan Union, Shetkari Sangathan and Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangam, also plan to submit the memorandum to Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday. *The Hindu* was

unable to independently confirm the details of this meeting or the assurance from the Minister.

The memorandum warns that 15 crore Indian livestock farmers who depend on dairy for their livelihood would be left devastated if the dairy market is opened up. RCEP member-countries New Zealand and Australia are aggressively seeking "to access India's massive dairy market to dump their products," said the farmers' unions.

New Zealand produces 22 million tonnes of milk pro-

ducts and exports 19 million tonnes. However, there are only 12,000 dairy farmers in the country; in fact, there are more dairy cows than people in New Zealand. India, on the other hand, has 15 crore dairy farmers who produce 156 million tonnes, most of it consumed domestically. R.S. Sodhi, managing director of major milk cooperative Amul, also made a presentation to Mr. Goyal last week, urging the Centre to leave the dairy sector out of RCEP, a senior Amul official told *The Hindu*.

## Food doesn't have religion. It is a religion, tweets Zomato

It recharts customer's demand for non-Muslim delivery man

**SIDHARTH YADAV**  
**BHOPAL**

A man from Jabalpur on Tuesday night took to Twitter to state that he had cancelled an order on food aggregator Zomato as he was assigned a non-Hindu delivery executive.

Using the handle @NaMo\_SARKAAR, the man, with the user name Pandit Amit Shukla, at 8.26 p.m. wrote: "Just cancelled an order on Zomato they allocated a non hindu rider for my food they said they can't change rider and can't refund on cancellation I said you can't force me to take a delivery I don't want don't refund just cancel."

Stating that he would take up the issue with his lawyer, he shared screenshots of his chat with Zomato. He complained that he didn't want his order to be delivered by "a Muslim man."



**Food for thought:** Zomato's message on Wednesday became an instant hit on the social media.

Zomato's handle responded: "Food doesn't have a religion. It is a religion."

Zomato founder Deepinder Goyal seconded the response and tweeted with a Tricolour emoji at the end of the message: "We are proud of the idea of India - and the diversity of our esteemed customers and partners. We aren't sorry to lose any business that comes in the way of our values."

Retweeting Mr. Goyal's message, former Election Commissioner of India S.Y. Quraishi said, "Salute Deepinder Goyal! You are the real face of India! Proud of you."

Former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah retweeted the message, saying, "Respect. I love your app. Thank you for giving me a reason to admire the company behind it."

## Centre told to hear plea on safety in cabs

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

The government should decide a plea made by a PIL petitioner seeking to implement strict regulations for app-based cab services such as Ola and Uber among others, to ensure the safety of women commuters, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday.

A Bench led by Justice S.A. Bobde asked petitioner Nipun Saxena, a law student, to make his representation before the Union Ministry of Transport. The court asked the government to hear him out in the interest of security of women.

When counsel for the Centre said that it would require an amendment to law, the court said, "you have to do it". The plea was filed by Mr. Saxena and advocate Ankit Chaudhary expressing concern over increasing number of sexual assaults against women.

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**Tender No. TPCL/O&M/2019/03**  
**TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF WATER FROM PRIVATE SOURCE**  
TPCL invites sealed Tender from contractors to supply Water to IT Park (Three Lakh Litres per day of Potable Quality) for One year from private sources. Tender Document can be purchased by paying ₹ 1,180/- (Rupees One Thousand One Hundred and Eighty Only) by Demand Draft. The sealed Tender should reach the undersigned on or before 3.00 p.m. on 21-08-2019. TPCL reserves right to accept / reject any one / all Tenders without assigning any reason therefor.

MANAGING DIRECTOR

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Ref : BDL/CC/OT/GT/014/2019-20 DT : 01.08.2019  
**e-PROCUREMENT ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE**  
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Sl.No.	Tender ID	Description	Estimated Amount ₹
1	61336	Project Management Consultancy Services at BDL-VU	55.67 Lakhs
2	61378	Design Consultancy for Civil and Allied Works at BDL -VU	32.16 Lakhs

Please visit website <https://bdltenders.abprocure.com> for further details. Bids should be submitted online only.  
"Corrigendum if any shall be issued through our e-portal only and not in Newspapers".  
Dy. General Manager (Corp. Comm.)





## Beyond talaq

India needs a non-sectarian, gender-neutral law that addresses desertion of spouses

Both Houses of Parliament have passed a Bill making instant triple talaq a criminal offence, amidst persistent doubts whether it ought to be treated as a crime or just a civil case. It is true that the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019, is a diluted version of the Bill as it was originally conceived. Earlier, it did not specify who could set the law in motion. Now the offence is cognisable only if the affected wife, or one related to her by blood or marriage, files a police complaint. A man arrested under this law may get bail, after the Magistrate grants a hearing to the wife. Thirdly, the offence is compoundable, that is, the parties may arrive at a compromise. The government says its main objective is to give effect to the Supreme Court's 2017 verdict declaring instant triple talaq illegal. It claims that despite the court ruling, several instances have been reported. Making it an offence, the government says, will deter further resort to triple talaq, and provide redress for women in the form of a subsistence allowance and custody of children, besides getting the erring husband arrested. However, the core question regarding the necessity to criminalise the practice of *talaq-e-biddat* has not been convincingly answered.

In the light of the Supreme Court ruling on its validity, there is really no need to declare instant triple talaq a criminal offence. The practice has no approval in Islamic tenets, and is indeed considered abhorrent. Secondly, once it has been declared illegal, pronouncing talaq obviously does not have the effect of "instantaneous and irrevocable divorce" as this Bill claims in its definition of 'talaq'. The provisions that allow a woman to claim a subsistence allowance from the man and seek custody of her children can be implemented in the event of the husband abandoning her, even without the man's arrest. If triple talaq, in any form, is void, how the questions of children's custody and subsistence allowance arise while the marriage subsists, is not clear. And then, there is the practical question of how a man can provide a subsistence allowance while he is imprisoned. It has been argued by the Bill's proponents that dowry harassment and cruelty towards wives are treated as criminal offences even while the marriage subsists. It is a patently wrong comparison, as those acts involve violence and cruelty and are rightly treated as criminal offences. The same cannot be said of a man invoking a prohibited form of divorce. The BJP projects the passage of the Bill as a historic milestone in the quest for gender justice. Such a claim will be valid only if there is a non-sectarian law that addresses abandonment and desertion of spouses as a common problem instead of focusing on a practice, which is no more legally valid, among Muslims.

## Logged out

Brazil must recognise that the Amazon rainforest is a universal treasure

It is a matter of global concern that deforestation in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil is increasing rapidly since January, when Jair Bolsonaro took office as President. Satellite images show that about 4,200 sq km of forests have been destroyed up to July 24 under the new government. While most nations tend to view their land and forests through the narrow prism of short-term economic gain, climate science data show that they play a larger environmental role. The Amazon basin, spread across millions of hectares in multiple countries, hosts massive sinks of sequestered carbon, and the forests are a key factor in regulating monsoon systems. The rainforests harbour rich biodiversity and about 400 known indigenous groups whose presence has prevented commercial interests from overrunning the lands. Much of the Amazon has survived, despite relentless pressure to convert forests into farmlands, pastures and gold mines, and to build roads. That fragile legacy is now imperilled, as Mr. Bolsonaro has spoken in favour of "reasonable" exploitation of these lands. Although the forest code has not been changed, his comments have emboldened illegal expansion into forests. Armed gold-hunting gangs have reached tribal areas and the leader of one tribe has been murdered in Amapa in an incursion. These are depressing developments, and the Brazilian leader's criticism of satellite data and denial of the violence are not convincing at all.

As the custodian of forests in about 5 million sq km of Amazon land, Brazil has everything to gain by engaging with the international community on meeting the opportunity cost of leaving the Amazon undisturbed. Mr. Bolsonaro lost a valuable opportunity to seek higher funding for forest protection by refusing to host the annual convention of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change this year, but he has been wise not to exit the Paris Agreement. Abandoning that pact would jeopardise Brazil's access to the important European Union market. Globally, there is tremendous momentum to save the Amazon forests. Brazil must welcome initiatives such as the billion-dollar Amazon Fund backed by Norway and Germany, which has been operating for over a decade, instead of trying to shut them down. Remedial funding, accounting for the value of environmental services, is the most productive approach, because forest removal has not helped agriculture everywhere due to soil and other factors. One estimate by the World Bank some years ago noted that 15 million hectares had been abandoned due to degradation. Brazil's President must recognise that rainforests are universal treasures, and the rights of indigenous communities to their lands are inalienable. The international community must use diplomacy to convince Mr. Bolsonaro that no other formulation is acceptable.

# In hate crime fight, a voice still feeble

Taking the cue from the U.S., the Indian Parliament needs to recognise hate killings as an act of terror



HARSH MANDER

At a time when India is reeling under hate lynching, it is sobering to remember that it took the United States Senate 100 years to approve a bill to make lynching a federal crime. Over 200 anti-lynching bills were introduced in the U.S. Congress since 1918, but all were voted down until the Justice for Victims of Lynching Act of 2018 introduced by three Senators of African-American descent including Kamala Harris was approved unanimously in the winter of 2018.

The U.S. bill describes lynching as "the ultimate expression of racism in the United States". Senator Cory Booker said the bill recognised lynching for what it is: "a bias-motivated act of terror". When will Parliament here recognise, similarly, that lynching is "a bias-motivated act of terror" and "the ultimate expression of communal hatred in India"?

### Tool of fear

Some may dispute this description, citing the relatively small numbers of such mob crimes. They miss the point that hate lynching is designed as an act to terrorise an entire community. The number of lynch murders in the U.S. mentioned in the bill averages around 55 annually, but despite these small numbers, these performative acts of violence succeeded in instilling intense fear among all African-Americans for decades.

The same purpose is being served by lynching in India; again performative acts of hate violence, but now using modern technology, video-graphing of mob lynching, widely circulating these images through social media, and

celebrating these as acts of nationalist valour. These have similarly instilled a pervasive sense of everyday normalised fear in the hearts of every Indian from the targeted minority community. It is this which indeed makes lynching an ultimate act of terror.

The Supreme Court of India recently asked the Union government and all the major States to explain what action has been taken to prevent these growing incidents of lynching, including passing a special law to instil a sense of fear for law amongst vigilantes and mobsters. Kunwar Danish Ali, a first term Bahujan Samaj Party MP from Amroha, raised the same question in Parliament, describing mob lynching as "an assault on democracy". His inquiry was met with noisy disruptions, but he got no answer.

### Significant statutes

The Uttar Pradesh Law Commission (UPLC) earlier last month took the initiative, unprompted by the Uttar Pradesh government, to recommend a draft anti-lynching law. It commends a law which closely follows in almost every major detail the first law against lynching passed in this country, a remarkable ordinance introduced by the Manipur government late last year, indeed the most significant statute against religious hate crimes in the country.

A noteworthy observation in the text of the United States bill is that it records that at least 4,742 people were lynched in the U.S. between 1882 and 1968, but 99% of all perpetrators remain unpunished. It is significant to remember that the first anti-lynching legislation proposed as far back as in 1918 in the U.S. targeted state officials for failing to provide equal protection under the laws to anyone victimised by a mob. Impunity characterises lynching in India as well. Addressing this squarely, both the Manipur statute and the UPLC draft create a new crime of dereliction of duty by police offi-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

cial, holding a police officer guilty of this crime if he or she "omits to exercise lawful authority vested in them under law, without reasonable cause, and thereby fails to prevent lynching". Dereliction also includes the failure to provide protection to a victim of lynching; failure to act upon apprehended lynching; and refusing to record any information relating to the commission of lynching. This crime carries the penalty of one to three years and a fine. The UPLC goes further to include also a new crime of dereliction of duty by District Magistrates.

The creation of this new crime was also the key recommendation of the Prevention of Communal & Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill, proposed by the National Advisory Council of the erstwhile United Progressive Alliance government (full disclosure: Farah Naqvi and I were co-convenors of the working group which drafted this proposed bill, which however was never even introduced in Parliament). We were convinced that it is only the creation of such a crime that will compel public officials to perform their duty with fairness, in conformity with their constitutional and legal duties, to ensure equal protection to all persons, regardless of their faith and caste.

### Some recommendations

Both the Manipur law and UPLC recommendations also lay down elaborate duties of police officials in the event of lynching. These include taking all reasonable steps to prevent any act of lynching including its incitement and commis-

sion; to that end making all possible efforts to identify instances of dissemination of offensive material or any other means employed in order to incite or promote lynching of a particular person or group of persons; and making all possible efforts to prevent the creation of a hostile environment against a person or group of persons.

Both sensitively and expansively lay down official duties to protect victims and witnesses. They state that a victim shall have the right to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any court proceeding and shall be entitled to be heard at any proceeding in respect of bail, discharge, release, parole, conviction or sentence of an accused, and to file written submissions on conviction, acquittal or sentencing. They also explicitly require the Superintendent of Police to inform the victim in writing of the progress in the investigation. The victim shall have the right to receive a copy of any statement of the witness recorded during investigation or inquiry and a copy of all statements and documents.

Where the UPLC goes further than the Manipur statute is in laying down the right to compensation. It places the duty squarely on the Chief Secretary to provide compensation to victims of lynching within 30 days of the incident. It states that while computing compensation, the State government must give due regard to bodily, psychological and material injuries and loss of earnings, including loss of opportunity of employment and education, expenses incurred on account of legal and medical assistance. It also lays down a floor of ₹25 lakh in case lynching causes death.

The Congress government of Madhya Pradesh has announced its resolve to pass legal provisions against lynching. It chooses curiously to not do this by an anti-lynching law, but instead by amendments to the Madhya Pradesh Cow Progeny Slaughter Pre-

vention Act 2004 (which would effectively limit its scope only to cow-related lynching, and not lynching triggered by other charges).

Its proposed amendments do not include any provisions to punish dereliction of duty, protect victim rights or secure compensation. All that it proposes is punishment for any act by a mob which indulges in violence in the name of cow vigilantism from six months to three years of imprisonment and a fine. It is unclear what deterrence such amendments would instil, since existing laws contain much greater punishments for murder and aggravated attacks. In its present form, it appears a weak, half-hearted and poorly thought-out measure. The Ashok Gehlot-led government in Rajasthan has also tabled an anti-lynching bill. This prescribes higher punishments, investigation by senior police officers, and mandatory compensation but not the critical elements of dereliction of duty or victim rights. Without these, they will make little difference on the ground.

Home Minister Amit Shah now heads a committee to propose action against lynching. The question remains: do we expect Mr. Shah, or indeed Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to propose a law against lynching which punishes public officials who fail in their duties, protects victims and witnesses, and ensures comprehensive reparation, as proposed by the UPLC and provided in the Manipur statute?

"Someone is finally recognising our pain," said the great-granddaughter of Anthony Crawford, an African American, who was lynched in 1916. I wonder how long survivors of lynching who lost their loved ones to merciless mob hate in India will have to wait for a government which will recognise their pain.

Harsh Mander is a human rights worker, writer and teacher

# Fortifying the Africa outreach

There is a disconnect between India's developmental assistance to and economic engagement with the continent



MAHESH SACHDEV

This week two important Indian dignitaries began their respective visits to Africa. President Ram Nath Kovind commenced his seven-day state visit to Benin, Gambia and Guinea-Conakry (July 28 to August 3) and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh arrived in Maputo on a three-day visit (July 28 to July 30) to Mozambique. The simultaneity of the two visits may be a coincidence, but it also indicates enhanced priority to Africa. This should be welcomed.

### Economic links

During the past five years, Indian leaders have paid 29 visits to African countries. Forty-one African leaders participated in the last India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015, where India agreed to provide concessional credit worth \$10 billion during the next five years. By 2017, India had cumulatively extended 152 Lines of Credit worth \$8 billion to 44 African countries. India has also unilaterally provided free access to its market for the exports of 33 least developed African countries. These sizeable ef-

forts are also noteworthy for being countercyclical: India escalated its commitments to Africa in an era of low-commodity prices when most other partners, including China, have scaled back theirs.

India has substantive economic engagement with Africa. Its trade with Africa totalled \$63.3 billion in 2018-19. India was ranked the third largest trading partner of Africa having edged past the United States during the year. The figures for Indians' investments (estimated at \$50 billion) and Indian diaspora (approximately three million) are a bit imprecise but are also substantive when put in the continental perspective. Although these statistics are impressive, they are well below the potential for India-African economic synergy and are often dwarfed by the corresponding Chinese data.

There seems to be a conspicuous disconnect between Indian developmental assistance to and India's economic engagement with Africa. The time has now come to integrate these two axes for a more comprehensive and sustainable engagement. It would also facilitate aided pilot projects being scaled up seamlessly into commercially viable joint ventures.

Any objective cost-benefit analysis of India's development assistance to Africa is unlikely to impress. From the demand to



PTI

remove the statues of Mahatma Gandhi in Ghana to the travails of Indian investors in Africa, from occasional demonisation of the long-standing Indian community to the non-recognition of Indian academic degrees, India's large developmental footprint in Africa does not produce commensurate empathy. India's aid being unconditional, the recipients often take it as an entitlement.

But India is neither a rich country nor has its hands been tainted by a history of slavery, colonisation and the exploitation of Africa. In fact, it is a developing country with similar domestic challenges of poverty, infrastructure deficit and underdevelopment. India's funds committed and seats in our prestigious academic institutions offered to Africa are at the expense of the tax-paying Indians. India's aid to Africa should be reciprocated by acknowledgement and quid pro quo in terms of goodwill (beyond the easy-flowing official rhetoric), and institutional preference. India cannot simply be a

cash cow for Africa, particularly when its own economy is slowing down.

### Steps forward

We need to ask ourselves these: for all the development billions spent, how many mega-projects did Indian companies get and how many natural resources does India have access to in Africa? We should reorient our developmental profile to be more economically productive.

To this end, a number of steps can be considered: First, we need to take direct control of our development programme instead of handing our funds to intermediaries such as the African Union, the African Development Bank Group and the Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement (TEAM 9), whose priorities are often different from India's. To make an impact, our aid should be disbursed bilaterally and aligned with national priorities of the recipient state, which should be a substantial stakeholder and co-investor in schemes and projects from initiation to operation.

Second, India's development assistance should prefer the countries with its substantial interests, both existing and potential. For instance, Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Ghana, Angola and Algeria are India's top six trading partners in Africa, accounting for nearly

two-thirds of its trade and half its exports to the continent; yet, they do not figure commensurately in India's developmental pecking order. India's own needs for raw materials, commodities and markets should be factored in its aid calculus. Third, we ought to prefer aiding countries which are willing to help us — from access to their natural resources to using our generics. Fourth, the aided project selected should be compatible with local requirements. They should be cost-effective, scalable, future ready and commercially replicable. Fifth, for greater transparency, India should prefer its public sector to implement the aid projects. Sixth, the Indian Head of Mission in the recipient African state must be an integral part of the aid stream including project selection, co-ordination and implementation. Apart from empowering our diplomacy, this would ensure better harmonisation between our aid and economic objectives.

Finally, the aforementioned should not distract us from our duty to provide the needed humanitarian assistance to Africa: to be rendered promptly and with sensitivity, but without noise.

Mahesh Sachdev was the Indian High Commissioner to Nigeria and the Ambassador to Algeria. He is the author of 'Nigeria: A Business Manual'

## 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.

### An entrepreneur dies

V.G. Siddhartha's journey, from being a management trainee at a firm to owning India's largest retail coffee chain, was phenomenal (Front page, "Coffee Day's Siddhartha goes missing," July 31). People of Karnataka's Malnad region fondly remember him as he expanded the market for the coffee grown there. Further, he provided employment to thousands of youngsters. His entrepreneurial flair, vision and humility would inspire budding entrepreneurs.

MITHUN H.N.,  
Chikkamangalur

■ I fully agree with the story, "It is not easy to do business in India" (Business page, July 31). For a General

Practitioner like me, running a clinic in an urban area requires several regulatory permissions. To begin with, we need to obtain a Corporation Trade Licence, then get a private medical establishment licence, then a clearance from the Pollution Control Board for waste disposal, then get commercial electricity and water connections and so on. We also have to bribe the local officials. Governments have failed to make transparent the process to start an enterprise.

Dr. MOHAN,  
Bengaluru

### Call for justice

While the entire nation is praying for a speedy recovery of the Unnao rape survivor, we are also

outraged at the manner in which the case, where a ruling party MLA is an accused, has been handled by the Yogi Adityanath government. Questions have been raised about whether the truck-car collision was an accident or a conspiracy to eliminate the survivor and others. Factors like the smudging of the truck's registration plate have only strengthened such suspicions. What is even more disturbing is that her family members were pressurised to withdraw the case. That the Bharatiya Janata Party has not expelled the legislator, Kuldeep Sengar, speaks volumes about the clout he still enjoys. This is a fit case for a Supreme Court-monitored investigation ("Protest over

Unnao accident rocks LS," July 31).

S.K. CHOUDHURY,  
Bengaluru

### Remembering icons

The Yediyurappa government's first 'momentous' decision has been to cancel Tipu Jayanti. While there is a case for cancellation of the many 'jayantis' celebrated with a holiday, which cause an enormous loss of productive work hours, it looks blatantly unfair and communal to single out Tipu, who heroically fought against the British rule ("Yediyurappa govt. scraps Tipu Jayanti," July 31). Nonetheless, holidays associated with many of these jayantis, whose sole aim seems to be to appease

certain sections, can be cancelled. There can be a token one-hour event to remember the great men and then we can return to the more important nation-building activities.

K.M. SRINIVASA GOWD,  
Bengaluru

### Triple Talaq Bill

With the Triple Talaq Bill clearing the final hurdle, the Narendra Modi government can heave a sigh of relief. It has finally managed to criminalise instant divorce — a practice prevalent mostly among the poorer sections of the Muslim society ("Triple

Talaq Bill sails through Rajya Sabha," July 31). However, to vindicate its stand that it is really a well-wisher of the minority community, the government should enact with equal alacrity, laws to deal with mob lynchings. Further, the need of the hour is also to take stock of the stark educational and economic backwardness among the minorities and their dismal representation in government and private services.

MOHAMMAD ABDUL HAKEEM,  
Hyderabad

### MORE LETTERS ONLINE:

www.hindu.com/opinion/letters/

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

UPI stands for Unified Payment Interface — not United Payment Interface as the front-page story on Truecaller bot (July 31, 2019, some editions) said.

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# The perils of being a woman and a Muslim

Problematic narratives about Muslims make the present moment in Sri Lankan politics dangerous



NIYANTHINI KADIRGAMAR

As Sri Lanka struggles to bring itself together three months after the deadly Easter Sunday attacks, the country's Muslims continue to face constant scrutiny, with the security apparatus and reactionary forces turning their violent gaze on them.

The enhanced surveillance across the country since the bombings has disrupted the educational and economic life of Muslims. Chauvinist groups have repeatedly called for boycott of Muslim businesses and trade, even though Muslim communities have unequivocally condemned the Easter blasts attributed to a local hard-line Islamist group.

Sri Lanka's Muslim minority, constituting about 10% of the island's population, has faced several bouts of violence in the past. The LTTE evicted the Muslims en masse from the north in 1990 and carried out massacres against them in the east. In the years following the civil war, hate and violence have largely originated from Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinists, often led by influential saffron-robed monks. Over the last decade, Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism has primarily targeted Muslims, whereas previously Tamils earned their ire.

## Targeting Muslim women

In this context, there is an urgent need to resist efforts to alienate the Muslim community. Of greater concern is the systematic targeting of Muslim women through attempts to regulate their attire and mobility, in the name of security, as was seen in a circular of the Ministry of Public Administration. Discrimination began to manifest in every corner of the island following the blasts, as accounts by Muslim women at a recent forum on coexistence, in Jaffna, showed. They spoke of harassment in markets, government offices and hospitals, and their insights challenged reductive, patronising readings of "the plight of Muslim women".

These women pointed to a larger and deeper ideological attack unleashed on them. The onslaught had originated from different sources:



the global Islamophobic narrative, Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarian assertions, glaring economic rivalry and control of women's bodies.

The dialogue in Jaffna, which included religious leaders and progressive activists from across the country, helped identify the central challenge of confronting the powerful ideological attack on Muslims and the need to bust the many Islamophobic and misogynistic myths that would heighten discrimination.

While there appears to be a gradual softening of security measures, the myths built around "dangerous" Muslims continue to circulate. Almost no conversation is had without the mention of the "burqa", a term that is unfamiliar even among Muslims in Sri Lanka. Apart from claiming the attire to be a security threat, the attire is dissected for its suitability in terms of colour, material and shape, with men asking whether it was imposed or worn out of free will.

It is the construction of the Muslim woman as the subject of a supposed 'security concern' after the Easter attacks that is giving explicit, racialised speech a new level of permissibility. Engaging only with the objects of attack, like the burqa, or the halal certification trade, or Muslim personal law will not suffice in confronting the centres of power deploying this ideological assault.

The prevailing discourse about Muslims, who are widely perceived as prosperous and upwardly mobile, is related to Sri Lankan politics drifting towards right-wing xenophobia, exploiting the growing discontent among people due to the government's failure to revive the economy to benefit the majority and establish

democratic governance. The starkest manifestation of this is seen in the resurgent campaigns of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinist forces that enjoyed tacit support by the previous Rajapaksa regime. They have again gained ground, with an obvious agenda of constructing Muslims as the new enemy for the 'Sinhala nation'. Again, they turn to Sinhala women implanting fears about threats to their reproductive ability, and thereby to the Sinhala race.

Spreading fabricated stories of forced sterilisation, making contorted claims about a declining Sinhala population and flagging unsubstantiated statistics on religious conversions – all unfailingly use a gendered discourse, focusing on Sinhala women's bodies. Such an attempt at consolidating a pure Sinhala Buddhist identity will repress not only Muslims and other minorities, but also those seen as dissidents within the Sinhala majority community.

With presidential elections expected this year, it is the contest for state power and those political forces seeking to gain electorally by riding on the anti-Muslim rhetoric that will likely intensify the attacks in the months to come. In this interregnum of forming new alliances, regressive Tamil and Hindu nationalist forces too will likely fuel protests against Muslims to gain political points.

## Complicity of liberals, the Left

It is not just the supporters of the Rajapaksa camp who are being swept by the troubling anti-Muslim sentiments. The complicity of liberal and Left groups in abetting the discourse makes an alternative politics a challenging task. Influenced by the global

discourse on Islamophobia and 'burka' bans in the West, these groups support similar reactions at home.

Invariably, Muslim women are made the pretext for any urgent calls for liberal reform of Muslim religious practices, laws, attire, educational institutions and curriculum in the post-Easter attacks scenario. There is little reflection on the discursive constructions of saving the 'oppressed Muslim woman' and how it might lead to more repression.

The underlying focus on women enables the ideological attack on Muslims to permeate via misogynistic forces deep into society. Even the male Muslim leadership prohibited women from attending Tarawih prayers in mosques this year, and responded mutely to face veil bans.

If chauvinist forces are attempting to demonise the entire Muslim community, Left and liberal actors are engaged in inculcating the Muslim citizen worthy of acceptance by Sri Lankan society. Liberals adopt a language of tolerance, where differences are permissible, only as long as they are acceptable to the mainstream and adhere to majoritarian governance. Their preferred image of a 'good' Muslim is one that is synonymous with elite middle-class Muslims, favouring a return to a romanticised past before the influence of 'Arabisation'. The liberals claim Muslim religion and lifestyle were Sri Lankan before working-class migrants returned from the Gulf. The classist liberal discourse attempts to alienate some Muslims while embracing others as Sri Lankans.

Convergence of different problematic narratives about Muslims is what makes the present moment in Sri Lankan politics dangerous and slippery. Muslim women are resisting these attacks by defying the restrictions placed on their mobility and confronting the myths being spread about their community. However, Muslims alone cannot take on the ideological onslaught. Only a collective struggle by progressive sections of society confronting the Sinhala Buddhist chauvinist, global Islamophobic and misogynistic narratives building against Muslims can prevent the country from heading in the direction of a disastrous, possibly fascist, path.

Niyanthini Kadirgamar is a researcher and a member of the Jaffna People's Forum for Coexistence

# Transforming livelihoods through farm ponds

Ponds can be an effective tool for rainwater harvesting



NIRMALYA CHOUDHURY & SACHIN TIWALE

With an increased variability of monsoons and rapidly depleting groundwater tables, large parts of India are reeling under water stress. A number of peninsular regions like Bundelkhand, Vidarbha and Marathwada have been facing recurring drought-like situations. Given the enormity of the crisis, at a recent NITI Aayog meeting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi explicated the need to implement innovative water management measures, stressing particularly the importance of rainwater harvesting both at the household and community levels. Here, one intervention that has been tried out in various States, and perhaps needs to be taken up on a bigger scale, is the construction of farm ponds.

Farm ponds can be cost-effective structures that transform rural livelihoods. They can help enhance water control, contribute to agriculture intensification and boost farm incomes. However, this is possible only if they act as rainwater harvesting structures and not as intermediate storage points for an increased extraction of groundwater or diversion of canal water. The latter will cause greater groundwater depletion and inequitable water distribution.

In a recent study on farm ponds in Jharkhand and West Bengal, we found that they aided in superior water control through the harvesting not just of rainfall but also of surface run-off and subsurface flows. Some of them functioned exclusively as recharge points, contributing to groundwater replenishment. They also helped in providing supplemental irrigation in the kharif season and an enhanced irrigation coverage in rabi. The yield of paddy, the most important crop in kharif, stabilised, thus contributing to greater food security.

## Retention of water

Farm ponds retained water for 8-10 months of the year; thus farmers could enhance cropping intensity and crop diversification within and across seasons. The area used to cultivate vegetables and other commercial crops also increased. Further, figures indicated that the ponds were also a financially viable proposition, with a fairly high Internal Rate of Return, of about 19%, over 15 years.

However, in parts of peninsular India, the idea of a farm pond as an *in-situ* rainwater harvesting structure has taken a complete U-turn. Here, some of them are benefiting farmers at an individual level, but not contributing to water conservation and recharge. They are being used as intermediate storage points, accelerating groundwater depletion and increasing evaporation losses as the groundwater is brought to the surface and stored in relatively shallow structures.

## Need for inlet, outlet provisions

In Maharashtra, the State government is promoting farm ponds under a flagship programme that aims to dig over one lakh structures by offering a subsidy of up to ₹50,000 per farmer. However, most of them are being constructed without inlet and outlet provisions and their walls are raised above the ground level by only a few feet. They cannot arrest the excess run-off as there is no inlet, and therefore they cannot be used effectively for rainwater harvesting. Further, farmers line them at the bottom with plastic, restricting seepage and converting the ponds into intermediate storage points.

Such farm ponds have an adverse impact on the water tables and accelerate water loss. The usual practice here is to lift water from a dug well and/or a borewell, store it in the pond and then draw it once again to irrigate the fields, often using micro-irrigation. While offering secure irrigation facility, this intensifies competition for extraction of groundwater from the aquifer, which is a common pool resource.

In such cases, in the command area of the irrigation project, farmers fill up their farm ponds first when the canal is in rotation and then take it from the pond to the field. This can impede circulation of water.

During canal rotation, the aquifer will get recharged because of the return flow of water coming from the irrigated fields. This return flow benefits all, as most of the farmers access water through wells in this command. But if canals fill up the farm ponds first, it restricts their benefits only to the pond owners and, in the long term, reduces the overall return flow at the system level.

Overall, farm ponds can act as effective harvesting structures and also yield healthy financial returns. But if they are promoted merely for on-farm storage of groundwater and canal water, they could accelerate, rather than reduce, the water crisis in the countryside.

Nirmalya Choudhury works with VikasAnvesh Foundation. Sachin Tiwale teaches at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

# Cauldron of sexual misconduct

So often do Indians encounter the horrific act in their consciousness that it has escaped their conscience

MADHURIKA SANKAR

As India boldly leaps into space and proudly increases its tiger population, feats deserving praise, foreign investors leave this increasingly disturbing landscape of cultural hegemony and faux-nationalistic fervour. I am drawn to understanding the connection, if it exists, between the current economic and sociopolitical landscape in India and the violence against women. Naysayers will argue that the sharp rise in statistics of violence against children in the last decade. As a young woman, she is in the most unsafe country in the world, according to a recent Thomson Reuters Foundation survey, which recorded around 40,000 rapes a year. She is subject to the routine threats of honour killing and trafficking. As a widow or single mother, she is ostracised in a patriarchal society. Indian women do the most unpaid domestic work of any country globally, next to Kazakhstan. The insensitivity, reluctance, and hostility of the police, legal and medical fraternity, coupled with the fact that most assaulters are known to the victim, creates an increasingly intimidating environment in which to move forward with justice. Courts in the country are severely backlogged.



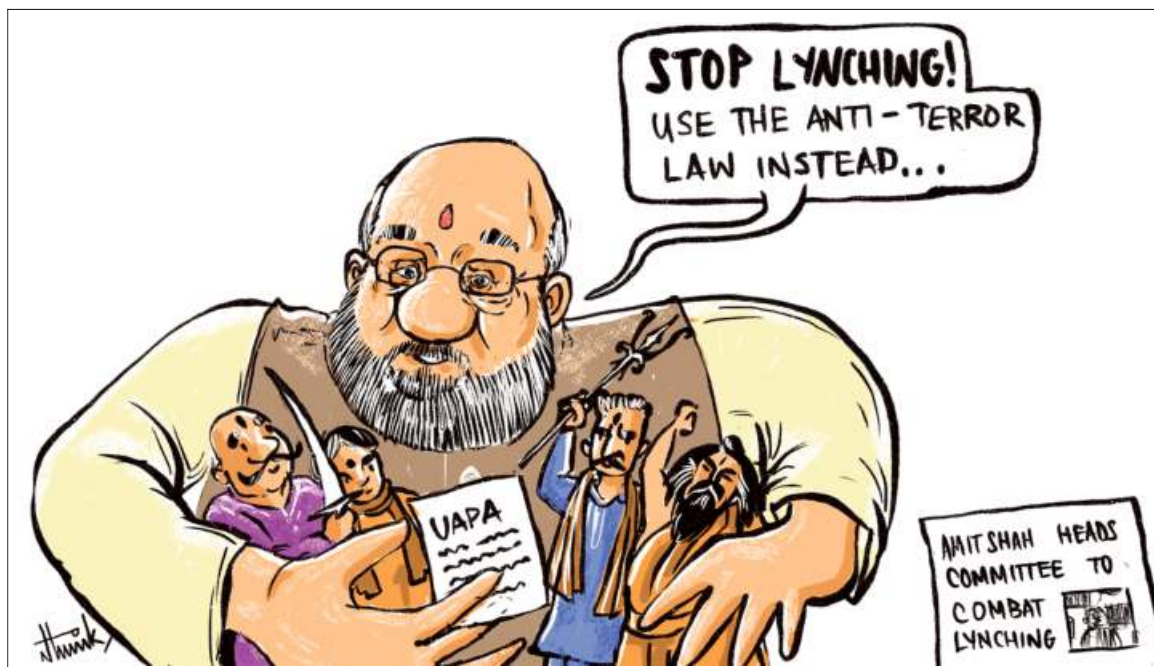
ical environment, one that pivots itself on the narratives of India's ancient texts and scriptures to exorcise women, that brings about their subjugation, for selfish gain.

## Cycle of violence

There is violence even before birth of a girl child. India has one of the highest incidences of female foeticide. Then, as a young child, a girl is part of an incontrovertible landscape where there has been a 336% rise in sexual crimes against children in the last decade. As a young woman, she is in the most unsafe country in the world, according to a recent Thomson Reuters Foundation survey, which recorded around 40,000 rapes a year. She is subject to the routine threats of honour killing and trafficking. As a widow or single mother, she is ostracised in a patriarchal society. Indian women do the most unpaid domestic work of any country globally, next to Kazakhstan. The insensitivity, reluctance, and hostility of the police, legal and medical fraternity, coupled with the fact that most assaulters are known to the victim, creates an increasingly intimidating environment in which to move forward with justice. Courts in the country are severely backlogged.

The worst narrative is perhaps what psychologists refer to as a kind of 'emotional contagion' for the rapist, where he sees others committing the crime and has become injured to it, thus, taking the leap towards crime. Similarly, we as a nation, have perhaps become injured by contagion, to sexual crimes against women. So often do we encounter the horrific act in our consciousness that it has escaped our conscience. Imparting healthy sex education in schools, providing means by which socially and emotionally marginalised men are given the opportunity to be identified and rehabilitate themselves, is paramount, before it leads to further tragedy.

Madhurika Sankar is a writer based in Chennai



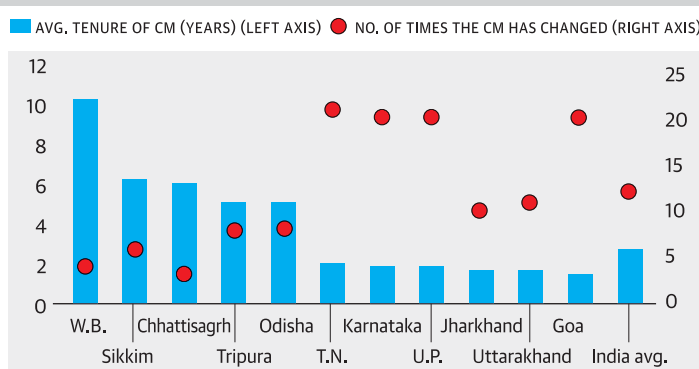
## DATA POINT

### Power equations

The BJP's B.S. Yediyurappa recently passed a floor test to become Chief Minister of Karnataka. The southern State has a relatively low average tenure for CMs (close to two years), as several of them didn't complete their terms. **Sumant Sen & Varun B. Krishnan** take a look at State-wise CM tenures since 1977

#### Stability factor

The average tenure for a Chief Minister in West Bengal is over 10 years, the highest among all States. Goa had the lowest average tenure of 1.5 years for a CM. The graph shows the tenure data for only outlier States



**Tamil Nadu:** CMs have changed in T.N. the highest no. of times due to imposition of President's rule in multiple instances, frequent shifts of power due to high anti-incumbency and a stand-in CM being sworn in because of legal troubles of the incumbent

**Karnataka:** CMs have changed 20 times in the period

**West Bengal:** The CPI(M) ruled West Bengal for over 30 years with just two CMs

#### Longest reigns

With five full terms in power, Pawan Kumar Chamling, former Sikkim CM, has been the longest-serving Chief Minister of a State since Independence. Jyoti Basu of West Bengal held the Chief Minister's post for 23 years

Chief Minister	State	Party	Cumulative years as CM
Pawan Kumar Chamling	Sikkim	SDF	24
Jyoti Basu	West Bengal	CPI(M)	23
Gegong Apang <sup>*</sup>	Arunachal	Congress	23
Lal Thanhawla	Mizoram	Congress	22
Manik Sarkar	Tripura	CPI(M)	20
Naveen Patnaik	Odisha	BJD	19
Okram Ibobi Singh	Manipur	Congress	15
Raman Singh	Chhattisgarh	BJP	15
Sheila Dikshit	Delhi	Congress	15
Tarun Gogoi	Assam	Congress	15

SDF: Sikkim Democratic Front, CPI(M): Communist Party of India (Marxist), BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party <sup>\*</sup>Apang served as CM of Arunachal Pradesh for 19 years as part of the Congress and four more years as leader of the Arunachal Congress, a party he formed

#### No CM at the helm

Jammu and Kashmir has recorded the highest cumulative period of President's rule or Governor's rule since 1977. The table lists the top five States with the most months without elected governments

State	Cumulative months of President's rule/Governor's rule
J&K	109
Punjab	83
Assam	35
Uttar Pradesh	33
Manipur	28

## The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 1, 1969

### Bengal policemen storm Assembly

Three thousand angry policemen in uniform, carrying the body of a constable who had been killed while on duty in a clash at Basanti in 24-Parganas, to-day [July 31] stormed the West Bengal Assembly which was in session, smashed furniture and beat up the members. They also gheraoed Mr. Jyoti Basu, Deputy Chief Minister who is in charge of Police portfolio, for over an hour demanding justice in the case of their colleague who, they said, had died at the hands of political elements. Mr. Basu expressed concern at the death of their colleague, but rebuked them for their disorderly behaviour. He took them around the Assembly premises and showed them the vandalism committed by them in their moment of anger. Mr. Basu succeeded in pacifying the demonstrators and their leader shook hands with him. The policemen later left the Assembly premises with the body of their colleague to the burning ghat. The policeman had been reportedly killed on Tuesday in a clash with the workers of the Socialist Unity Centre.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 1, 1919.

### On Communal Representation.

In to-day's sitting of the Joint Committee [in London on July 28] Lord Southborough replying to Mr. Bennett said, he was of opinion that Bombay was probably ahead of other Provinces with regard to the franchise of women. Evidence was divided with regard to whether elections in Madras were entirely governed by caste considerations. He concluded that one of the reasons of the trouble in Madras was that a considerable body of intelligent political thought which was springing up found itself bumping up against Brahmins. Replying to Lord Sydenham, Lord Southborough said that, if they were to provide a constitution with an absolutely free hand, he would scout the principle of communal representation. He agreed that the non-Brahmins were not a homogenous community. Indian Christians were given three seats because they had no chance of election. There was a great deal to be said for Indian Christians, because they were more likely to break down caste restrictions than any other body. The Franchise Committee thought the proper way to deal with Indian Christians was to give them some representation so that they could make their views known.



FROM PAGE ONE

## Siddhartha cremated in family estate

While the I-T department has expressed doubts about the veracity of the letter, the police say that it would be treated as a dying declaration, after checking its authenticity.

Kamal Pant, Additional Director-General of Police (Law and Order), Karnataka, confirmed to *The Hindu*, "We have recovered the letter from his family members. We will take necessary action." In a statement, Mangaluru Police Commissioner Sandeep Patil said the city police team in Bengaluru was continuing with its inquiry. They were waiting for the autopsy report.

The board of Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd. (CDEL), that met on Wednesday, is also considering getting an independent forensic study of the letter. They need not wait for the police investigation to take up an independent inquiry, said a source.

The day saw many politicians in the Opposition camp, including former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, saying that "harassment" by Central agencies had pushed the entrepreneur to the brink.

(Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph: 104 for help.)

## Siddhartha's wife may take over Coffee Day

The board has also appointed Nitin Bagmane as an interim Chief Operating Officer.

"The board met today [Wednesday] to take stock of the situation and also to put a working structure in place. It will meet again on August 8," the source added.

The board constituted an executive committee comprising Mr. Ranganath, Mr. Bagmane and R. Ram Mohan (CFO) to exercise the powers previously vested with the Chief Executive Officer of the company and the administrative committee constituted by the board in 2015.

In a stock exchange filing, the company said the board took note of a message from Mrs. Malvika Hegde who was also on the board expressing support and trust in the management team.

It further said the authen-

ticity of the letter purported to have been written by Siddhartha cannot be verified as of now.

"While the authenticity of the letter is unverified and it is unclear whether these statements pertain to the company or the personal holdings of VG Siddhartha, the board took serious note of the same and resolved to thoroughly investigate this matter," the company said in the filing.

The board took cognisance of statements in the purported letter from Siddhartha relating to financial transactions outside the knowledge of the senior management, the auditors and the board.

The board will, in due course, prepare a detailed charter of authorities vested in the executive committee and approve the same, it said.

## SC takes note of rape survivor family's plea

The letter, signed by the girl, her mother and aunt, stated that on July 7, Naveen Singh, son of an accused in the rape case; Shashi Singh, Manoj Singh, brother of another accused Kuldeep Singh; and one Kunnu Mishra visited their house and threatened them. The next day, another person came to their house. The girl and the family said that along with

their letter they were also annexing the video of the car in which these persons came to their house.

An FIR, lodged a day after the road accident, names the BJP legislator, his brother Manoj Singh Sengar, Vinod Mishra, Haripal Singh, Naveen Singh, Komal Singh, Arun Singh, Gyandendra Singh, Rinku Singh and Awadhesh Singh as accused.

## Officials keep vigil as Godavari rises

The level at Bhadrachalam is likely to remain steady for the next 12 hours, officials said.

As a precautionary measure, the district authorities have appointed sectoral officers for seven mandals along the Godavari in the district as per the flood contingency plan.

A comprehensive action plan including flood preparedness, and response

measures has been readied, said Bhadrachalam sub-collector Bhavesh Mishra. Pre-monsoon maintenance works including repairs to sluice gates of the flood bank along the Godavari have been completed and two launches have been deployed in the temple town as part of the flood preparedness and emergency response measures.

## Cabinet nod for more Supreme Court judges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Acting at the request of the Chief Justice of India, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided to increase the number of Supreme Court judges from 31 to 34.

The move comes against the backdrop of the rising number of cases in the top court, which stands at nearly 60,000.

At present, the sanctioned strength of the court is 30, excluding the Chief Justice of India.

Once the Bill gets parliamentary approval, the number of judges will go up to 33, excluding the CJI, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters after the Cab-

net meeting.

According to a written reply by the Law Ministry to a Rajya Sabha question on July 11, 59,331 cases are pending in the top court.

Due to paucity of judges, the required number of Constitution Benches to decide important cases were not being formed, the CJI wrote. "You would recall that way back in 1988, about three decades ago, the judge strength of the SC was increased from 18 to 26, and then again after two decades in 2009, it was increased to 31, including the CJI, to expedite disposal of cases to keep pace with the rate of institution," he wrote.

# Rebels join BJP in Maharashtra

Party denies dissidence within saffron ranks over exodus from Opposition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

A day after resigning from their parties, four Opposition legislators in Maharashtra joined the BJP on Wednesday.

BJP State chief Chandrakant Patil inducted three MLAs from the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and one from the Congress, in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. He put at rest rumours of a rebellion brewing within the saffron ranks as another 50 legislators are speculated to join the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance in the run-up to the Assembly election in October.

At the induction ceremony, senior BJP leaders criticised NCP supremo Sharad



Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis with former NCP leaders who joined the BJP in Mumbai on Wednesday. •PTI

Pawar for alleging that the ruling party is using pressure tactics, including searches by the Enforcement Directorate and the Income Tax Department, to coax MLAs into leaving his party.

"These people are leaving only because their consti-

tencies did not develop during the Congress and the NCP rule. Road works, projects related to the monsoon, nothing progressed," Mr. Patil said, adding that thousands of other Opposition party workers were ready to join the BJP.

Shivendraraje Bhosale

from Satara, Sandeep Naik from Airoli and Vaibhav Pichad from Akole in Ahmednagar district, all of the NCP, and Kalidas Kolambkar from Wadala (Congress) in Mumbai were the four MLAs who joined the BJP. Mr. Naik is the son of Navi Mumbai strongman Ganesh Naik, while Mr. Kolambkar is a seven-time MLA, and was originally in the Shiv Sena before joining the Congress. Mr. Bhosale is a descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

The BJP has been facing stiff resistance within its fold with several local leaders opposing the entry of both Mr. Naik and Mr. Kolambkar.

Senior BJP leaders said doors were open to those who wanted to work for the party.

## Govt. promised scrutiny of triple talaq Bill: Azad

'We were in the dark and hence could not inform our MPs'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

After failing to drum up support against the triple talaq Bill in the Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad of the Congress accused the government of keeping the Opposition in the dark and resorting to unfair means to pass the controversial Bill.

Mr. Azad alleged on Wednesday that the government introduced the legislation in the Rajya Sabha after assuring the Opposition that it would be sent to the select committee first for scrutiny.

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights of Marriage) Bill, 2019 that criminalises instant divorce by Muslim men was passed in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, paving the way for it to become law.



Ghulam Nabi Azad speaking in the Rajya Sabha. •PTI

Mr. Azad said the Parliamentary Affairs Minister approached the Opposition and gave a list of 23 Bills. "We wanted at least half of them to be sent to select committees, but they said, make it as few as you can. So, we, collectively, all the Opposition, not me alone or

my party, identified six Bills as 'A' category and two Bills under 'B' category," he said.

The Leader of the Opposition said the talaq Bill was number one in the 'A' category. "Since we were in the dark, we could not inform our Members of Parliament... So, my submission to the government is, on one side, you are seeking a list from the Opposition of the Bills to be sent to select committees. But you don't come back. You bring it for passage and get it passed. You tell your members to be present and we remain under the illusion that this Bill is going to a select committee... This is not fair," he said.

Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu said he would discuss the matter with the government.

## NC, PDP stoking fear in Kashmir: Ram Madhav

BJP leader says stage is set for Assembly polls

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Any decision taken by the Central government or court on Article 35 A would be for the betterment of Jammu and Kashmir and "the issue is currently raked up with selfish motives", BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav said in Srinagar on Wednesday.

The National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) "are creating hysteria in Kashmir at a time when the stage is set for the Assembly polls," he said.

"She [PDP president Mehbooba Mufti] is using such language like 'barood seay



Bolstering base: BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav at an event in Srinagar on Wednesday. •NISSAR AHMAD

kehlan [playing with explosives] to keep herself politically relevant. To protect their slipping political base, fear is being created among people. We have to take forward the work going on in J&K, Assembly polls have to be conducted," the BJP leader said.

On the ongoing enhancement of the security grid, he said these extra forces were deployed during the Amarnath Yatra.

"Selfish motive" "We also have to conduct block-level elections. But linking this to something else

## Poll in-charge appointed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

BJP president Amit Shah on Wednesday appointed party vice-president Avinash Rai Khanna as in-charge of the party's poll preparations in J&K, a day after the core group from the State unit was told to start work for the Assembly elections.

is only due to selfish motives. They are doing drama to protect themselves, now when action against corruption is being taken. Security forces being deployed or taken back from J&K, especially Kashmir, is a continuous process," he said.

The BJP planned to con-

Announcing this in New Delhi, general secretary Arun Singh said directions for ramping up booth-level preparations, specifically in the Valley, had also been given to the leaders. The Lok Sabha had, in this Parliament session, voted to extend the President's Rule in the State by six months.

test every seat in the State. "We would also like to see various other parties which have a clean past and present to fight elections so that the two parties, which have ruined the State by resorting to rampant corruption, are kept out of power," Mr. Mahav said.

## Plan for single water disputes tribunal

New Bill stipulates two-year deadline

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed a Bill that promises faster redress of water disputes between the States by putting in place a new architecture for tribunals that handle inter-State water disputes.

Moving the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019, for passage in the Lok Sabha, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said the existing tribunals constituted to resolve river water disputes had failed and in some cases, even after 33 years, the tribunals were yet to give an award.

The Minister said though the original Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, enacted in 1956, was amended 17 years ago to make five years the maximum period within which river water disputes need to be resolved, the reality had been different.

The new Bill proposes that the final award will be delivered in two years and whenever it gives the order, the verdict will be notified automatically.

'Rise above regions'

Mr. Shekhawat also said that any law passed now should factor in the water scenario that may arise in a few decades.

"When we think of the water issue, we have to do so keeping in mind the situation of 30 years from now. Water is a resource that we have to conserve and use judiciously; otherwise there will come a time when laws alone will not work. We have to rise above regions and States and rivers and see this resource and problem in its totality," the Minister said.

"Disputes have to be resolved and they have to be done in a time-bound manner. Today, climate change



Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. •PTI

and water scarcity are issues that need our immediate attention," he added.

Giving a background of the history of tribunals, the Minister said only four of the nine water tribunals could submit their report. And these two came after a seven- to 28-year delay.

Irregular sittings

Mr. Shekhawat said irregular sittings were one of the reasons for delayed orders.

The new Bill provides for the constitution of a single tribunal with different Benches, and the setting of strict timelines for adjudication. A retired Supreme Court judge will head the tribunal and Benches will be formed as and when required. The States can approach the tribunal for resolution of their disputes and once resolved, the Bench would wind up.

Congress member Manish Tewari opposed the Bill, and said it did not have any provision for consultation with the States.

Dayanidhi Maran of the DMK said tribunals had been "toothless" as their awards were not respected by the States, and suggested that all rivers be nationalised.

He alleged that Karnataka did not abide by the Cauvery river water tribunal award and is in "contempt of court".

## ED quizzes Farooq Abdullah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday questioned former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah in connection with a money laundering case involving State cricket association funds of more than ₹43 crore.

Dr. Abdullah's statement was recorded at the ED's Chandigarh office, according to the ED. The case is based on an FIR registered by the CBI in September 2015.

The CBI took over the case from the State police following a directive from the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

## Thailand in talks with India to buy BrahMos cruise missiles

Agreement most likely to be reached in 2020

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

In possibly the first sale of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to another country, Thailand is in talks with India for their purchase, official sources said. A few other countries have also expressed interest in BrahMos but nothing has fructified yet.

"Negotiations are on. It may not happen this year, but most likely next year," diplomatic sources said. While Thailand expressed interest in the missiles some time ago, discussions picked pace after the visit of Royal Thai Navy Chief Admiral Ruddleit to India in December last year.

As part of the expanding defence cooperation between the two countries,



The BrahMos missile system. •FILE PHOTO

Thailand has made a request for repair and refurbishing their Dornier maritime patrol aircraft. "A joint team of the Indian Navy, Bharat Electronics Ltd. and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. visited

Thailand in mid-June to discuss the issue," a defence source said.

In addition, the Thailand Navy is looking to increase its capabilities and planning to induct more ships, defence sources said.

Ship design

In line with that, the Indian Navy is exploring opportunities wherein India could help in ship design and has even "offered ship construction at the various defence public sector undertaking shipyards."

"The Indian Navy's foreign cooperation initiatives include highlighting the capability of various defence public sector undertakings and Indian defence industry to friendly foreign navies," the defence source stated.



## CBI forms team to probe accident case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The CBI has taken over the investigation into a truck-ramp collision in which the Unnao rape survivor was seriously injured along with her lawyer in Rae Bareilly on Sunday. A team has been constituted to pursue the case.

The CBI has named jailed BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, his brother Manoj and eight others in the FIR, which was registered by the police on Monday. Murder charge has also been invoked as the victim's two aunts were killed after the speeding truck rammed against the car.

The family members were on their way to a Rae Bareilly jail, where the victim's uncle is lodged in a separate case, when the incident took place.

The CBI officials have collected the necessary documents and plan to visit the crime scene for examination.

The complainant alleged that the truck driver was linked to the MLA and the accident was orchestrated with the intention to kill the victim and her relatives.

He had also requested for a probe by the CBI, which is already pursuing the gang rape case and custodial death of the victim's father.

The local police arrested the truck driver and owner. Following an outrage by the victim's family members and protests by the Opposition, the State government recommended a CBI investigation.

The victim and her lawyer are currently undergoing treatment in a Lucknow hospital.

# U.P. Minister's son-in-law named in FIR on rape survivors' accident

He is among the 10 accused of plotting the vehicle collision in Rae Bareilly

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

An Uttar Pradesh Minister's son-in-law is one of the 10 persons accused of plotting the Rae Bareilly vehicle collision in which the survivor of the alleged Unnao gang rape was critically injured.

Arun Singh, the Nawabganj block pramukh and son-in-law of Ranendra Pratap Singh, alias Dhunni, a Minister of State holding the Agriculture, Agriculture Education and Agriculture Research portfolios, is listed as accused no. 7 in the FIR lodged by the uncle of the survivor of the alleged rape.

She is battling for her life in a hospital in Lucknow with multiple fractures, head and chest injuries.

Mr. Arun Singh confirmed to *The Hindu* that he was in fact the same person named in the FIR.

The FIR lists him as one of the persons accused of inti-



Call for action: Congress MP Savitribai Phule staging a protest in Lucknow for justice to the Unnao rape survivor. •PTI

midating the family of the rape survivor. The complainant, her uncle, said he and his family had faced repeated threats from Kuldeep Singh Sengar, MLA, and his men and were being intimidated to change their statements in court or compromise with the MLA or face dire consequences.

Along with the rest, Mr. Arun Singh faces charges of

murder, attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy and criminal intimidation.

### 'Falsely implicated'

Asserting that he was being falsely implicated due to "personal and political rivalry" with a former block pramukh in Nawabganj, Awadesh Singh, he alleged that his rival shared a link with the jailed uncle of the victim.

Mr. Arun Singh had defeated Maya Singh, Mr. Awadesh Singh's wife, to win the post.

Mr. Arun Singh said he was a litigant in the 2006 murder case of a Dalit block pramukh, Ram Naresh Nirmal, in which Mr. Awadesh Singh is an accused.

"Awadesh Singh is a history-sheeter with over 40 criminal cases and my political opponent," he said. "He is using the uncle as a shield... he feels if he falsely implicates me or sends me to jail, then he will be able to manage his case," Mr. Arun Singh said.

In the FIR relating to the collision, the uncle mentions Mr. Awadesh Singh as being among the people who would come to visit him in jail.

The police have so far traced the owner of the truck to Fatehpur, which shares boundaries with Unnao and Rae Bareilly.

# Congress stages walkout in Lok Sabha

Government does not respond to the Opposition's demand for a reply

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Rae Bareilly accident case involving the Unnao rape survivor caused a walkout on Wednesday by Opposition parties in the Lok Sabha as the government did not respond to their demand for a reply from it on the alleged threats to her life and her family.

Congress leader in the House Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, raising the issue, said Home Minister Amit Shah



Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

did not respond at all to the issue despite the Opposition taking up the matter repeatedly.

Though the CBI had taken over the case, the rape survivor's family members had claimed a threat to their lives. In the absence of a government response, members of the Congress, including Sonia Gandhi, as well as members of the DMK, the NCP, the RSP and the IUML walked out of the House.

After returning, Mr. Chowdhury tried raising the issue again but Speaker Om Birla pointed that he had staged a walkout and had

mentioned the issue.

Mr. Birla said members had decided that issues related to the States would not be raised in the Lok Sabha. "I don't have any problem if members want to raise issues related to the States," he said. Trinamool leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay pointed out how questions about the law and order situation in West Bengal were being asked multiple times despite agreeing not to raise State subjects.

# Siddhartha's death raised in Lok Sabha

MPs want harassment charge probed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The death of Cafe Coffee Day founder V.G. Siddhartha and alleged harassment of him by the Income Tax Department were among a host of issues raised during Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

When Congress member Manish Tewari, who had given an adjournment notice on the issue, raised the matter, Speaker Om Birla said he should not refer to a letter circulating in the public domain, as its authenticity was yet to be verified.

However, Mr. Tewari then urged the government to look at allegations of harassment without mentioning the details.

### 'Review NMC'

The doctors' strike over the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, recently passed in the Lok Sabha, was also raised. Trinamool MP Saugato Roy asked the government not to hurry the Bill through and instead urged a re-look at the issues



V.G. Siddhartha

raised by the doctors.

A day after Parliament passed the triple talaq Bill, BJP member Nishikant Dubey said the country should now adopt a Uniform Civil Code as mentioned in the Directive Principles of the Constitution.

"If there is an Indian Penal Code, then why can't there be a Uniform Civil Code," he asked.

Congress member K. Suresh requested the government to extend an invitation to Pope Francis as the last Papal visit to India was in 1999.

Mr. Suresh said the Pope had recently visited Myanmar and was eager to visit India.

# Quota for economically weaker sections in J&K

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet on Wednesday approved a Bill to provide up to 10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker sections in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019, an official statement said.

The approval "would pave the way for extending the benefit of reservation of up to 10% for Economically

Weaker Sections (EWS) in educational institutions and public employment alongside existing reservations," it said.

The Bill is expected to be tabled in Parliament soon as the proposed legislation could not be brought before the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, which has been dissolved.

The State is under President's Rule.

The 10% quota Bill for economically weaker sections was introduced in the country through the 103rd Constitution Amendment in January.

**CSIR-INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY**  
(Council of Scientific & Industrial Research)  
Uppal Road, Tarnaka, Hyderabad - 500 007, Telangana, India.

**ADDENDUM**

Please refer to CSIR-IICT Advt. No. 03/2019 published on 30-06-2019. It is hereby notified that the last date for receipt of Online Applications is extended upto 14.08.2019 and the last date for receipt of Hard Copy of Applications is 30.08.2019. All other terms & conditions shall remain unaltered.  
Please visit our website <https://www.iictindia.org> for complete details  
Sd/-  
Controller of Administration

**TELANGANA STATE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES LTD.,**  
HACA Bhavan, Hyderabad - 500063, Telangana

Tender No. - TSTS/CS/PR&RD- MGNREGS/2019 Dt.01.08.2019  
TSTS on behalf of the Commissioner, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Department, Telangana issues tender call notice inviting bids for Identification of Service Provider for Operations & Maintenance of MGNREGS Application, HRMS and Other Applications.

Pre-bid meeting: 07.08.2019@ 11:30 AM, O/o Commissioner - PR&RD, DWCR Bhavan, Lower Tank bund, Opp. Goshala, Hyderabad.  
For details please visit [www.tsts.telangana.gov.in](http://www.tsts.telangana.gov.in).  
<https://tender.telangana.gov.in> Sd/- Managing Director

**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE**  
Office of the Executive Engineer, Road Infrastructure - Mahadevapura Division,  
N.R. Square, Bengaluru - 560 002.

No. : BBMP/EE/RI-MPURA/TEND/06/2019-20 Date : 31-07-2019

**INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (IFT)**  
(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, Road Infrastructure - Mahadevapura Division invites tenders on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP, Bengaluru from eligible tenderers for the Construction of works detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work & Package	Approx Amount put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (Rs. in Lakhs)
1.	Improvement to Road, Drain and Asphaltting to 04-Selected Arterial, Sub Arterial Roads and Other Connecting Roads in Mahadevapura Zone. GOK-2018-19-N-RI-KRP Package - 01.	1703.00	17.03
2.	Improvement to Road, Drain and Asphaltting to 04-Selected Arterial, Sub Arterial Roads and Other Connecting Roads in Mahadevapura Zone. GOK-2018-19-N-RI-KRP Package - 02.	1434.70	14.35
3.	Improvement to Road, Drain and Asphaltting to 03-Selected Arterial, Sub Arterial Roads and Other Connecting Roads in Mahadevapura Zone. GOK-2018-19-N-RI-KRP Package - 03.	1397.30	13.98
4.	Improvement to Road, Drain and Asphaltting to 03-Selected Arterial, Sub Arterial Roads and Other Connecting Roads in Mahadevapura Zone. GOK-2018-19-N-RI-KRP Package - 04.	1659.30	16.60
5.	Improvement to Road, Drain and Asphaltting to 02-Selected Arterial, Sub Arterial Roads and Other Connecting Roads in Mahadevapura Zone. GOK-2018-19-N-RI-KRP Package - 05.	1091.70	10.92
6.	Improvement to Road, Drain and Asphaltting to 04-Selected Arterial, Sub Arterial Roads and Other Connecting Roads in Mahadevapura Zone. GOK-2018-19-N-RI-KRP Package - 06.	1266.30	12.67

(1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the e-Procurement portal of the Government of Karnataka from 03-08-2019. (2) Pre Bid Meeting will be held on 19-08-2019 at 16.00 hours in the Office of the Chief Engineer, (Road Infrastructure) (3) Tenders must be submitted online through e-Procurement portal on or before 16.00 hours on 28-08-2019 and the Opening of tenders will be as per the e-Procurement portal guidelines. (4) Technical Bids will be opened on the Website : <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Mahadevapura Division on 30-08-2019 at 11.00 hours.  
The Details regarding participation for this tender can be obtained by logging on to : <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. Sd/- The Executive Engineer, Road Infrastructure - Mahadevapura.  
Pay Development Charges, Help to Develop Bengaluru

**Expression of Interest for project management consultancy for revamping of Fisheries Aquarium-cum-Museum**

Expression of Interest (EOI) is invited for providing Project Management Consulting Services for revamping of Fisheries Aquarium-cum-Museum in Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India. The EOI document along with terms & conditions can be downloaded from the website: [www.and.nic.in](http://www.and.nic.in) & <https://eproc.andaman.gov.in>

A pre bid conference will be held at 3.00 p.m. on 13-08-2019 at conference hall, Vikas Bhawan, Port Blair and the last date for submission of EOI is 30-08-2019.

Managing Director, ANIDCO  
anidco@gmail.com

**भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA**  
e-Tender Notice

Airports Authority of India IT Division, Chennai Airport, invites E-tenders for the work of "SITC of Server/Storage, Provision of Wireless LAN Connectivity and CCTV Surveillance at Operational office, Chennai Airport". Estimated cost Rs.4,56,57,000/- excluding GST, Period 05 years. Sale and submission of tender is up to 1800 hrs. on 16.08.2019. For detailed information log on to [www.etenders.gov.in](http://www.etenders.gov.in) or [www.aai.aero](http://www.aai.aero). Further clarifications / corrigendum, in this regard, if any, shall be put up only on AAI website.

**HIMACHAL PRADESH POWER CORPORATION LTD.**  
(A State Government Undertaking)  
Ravi & Chenab Projects, HPPCL, Sundla, Dist. Chamba-176312 (HP)  
CIN : U40101HP2006SGC030591

**CORRIGENDUM-II**

Sealed Expression of Interest (EOI) for carrying out "Consultancy Services for preparation of detail project report for construction of 3 nos. passenger ropeways for Deothal - Chanju & Chanju-III HEPs" invited vide this office letter No. HPPCL/GM/RCP/G-6/2019-392-98 Dated :- 04.06.2019 & published on 06.06.2019 is further EXTENDED upto 21.08.2019 & shall be received in this office on or before 21.08.2019 upto 3.00 PM and same shall be opened at 3.30 PM on the same day with all other terms and conditions unchanged. Intending company/firms may visit HPPCL website [www.hppcl.gov.in](http://www.hppcl.gov.in) for further detail. General Manager

**Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation**  
NATIONAL WIDE COMPETITIVE BIDDING

NIT No.	NAME OF THE WORK	Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids	Name & Address of the Officer Call No.
Quotation Notice No. 03/EE/PPD WZ-4/GHMC/2019-20/ Dt. 31-07-2019	Sealed Quotations for "Erection of Stainless Steel Ornamental Railing for the work of Construction of Cable Stayed Bridge across Durgam Cheruvu Lake, Madhapur Hyderabad".	Last Date for obtaining specification: 07-08-2019 03.00 PM Last date of receipt of sealed Quotations: 08-08-2019 03.00 PM	O/o Executive Engineer, Project Division-West Zone-I, GHMC, Cell No.9898930405

Note: Conditions for Submission of Quotations can be downloaded from the website [www.ghmc.gov.in](http://www.ghmc.gov.in) and sealed quotations to be submitted in the office of the Executive Engineer, Projects Division-West Zone-I, GHMC, 6th floor, CC Complex, Tank Bund road, Hyderabad.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PPD-WZ-I GHMC.  
R.O.NO.108/CPRO/GHMC/2019-20 CALL: 040-21111111 FOR 24X7 GHMC SERVICES

**भारत सरकार/GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
अंतरिक्ष विभाग/DEPARTMENT OF SPACE  
विक्रम साराभाई अंतरिक्ष केंद्र/VIKRAM SARABHAI SPACE CENTRE  
निर्माण व अनुसंधान युग्म/CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP  
तिरुवनंतपुरम/THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 22  
(फोन नं./Ph. No.0471 - 2564568 / 2564537)

**ई-निविदा सूचना सं. वीएसएससी/सीएमसी/सिविल/04/2019-20 दिनांक 30.07.2019**  
E-Tender Notice No. VSSC/CMG/CIVIL/04/2019-20 Dt. 30.07.2019

**ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करते हुए संक्षिप्त सूचना / BRIEF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**

1. भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से निम्नलिखित कार्य के लिए ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा ऑनलाइन मद-दर निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। On behalf of the President of India, online item-rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for the following work.

क्र.सं. Sl.No.	विवरण/Description	ब्यरि/Details
1	कार्य का शीर्षक / Title of work	वट्टियूरकावु में सीएमएसई कैंटीन का विस्तार (सिविल तथा पीएच कार्य)/Extension to CMSE Canteen at Vattiyoor kavu (Civil & PH works)
2	निविदा में दी गई अनुमानित लागत / Estimate cost put to tender	₹./Rs. 130.65 लाख/Lakhs
3	कार्य पूरा होने की तिथि / Period of completion	10 (दस/Ten) महीने/Months
4	बयाना जमा राशि (ईएमडी) / Earnest money deposit (EMD)	₹./Rs. 2,61,300/-
5	अवधि जिसके दौरान निविदा दस्तावेज को डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है / Period during which the tender document can be downloaded.	से/From 01.08.2019, 10.00 बजे/Hrs तक/to 16.08.2019, 23.00 बजे/Hrs
6	बोली स्पष्टीकरण / Bid clarifications	से/From 01.08.2019, 10.00 बजे/Hrs तक/to 19.08.2019, 16.00 बजे/Hrs
7	निविदा पाने की अंतिम तिथि व समय / Last date and time for receipt of tenders	को तक/Up to 20.08.2019, 14.30 बजे/Hrs
8	निविदा खोलने की अंतिम तिथि व समय / Due date and time of opening of tenders	को/On 21.08.2019, 15.00 बजे/Hrs

2. योग्यता मानदंड तथा अन्य ब्यरों को पाने के लिए इच्छुक निविदाकार ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करते हुए विस्तृत सूचना (ई-एनआइटी) का अवलोकन करें, जिसे [www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO](http://www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO) से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। Interested tenderers may please refer detailed Notice Inviting E-Tender (E-NIT) for eligibility criteria and other details, which can be down loaded from website [www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO](http://www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO).

प्रधान, सीएमसी (सिविल) वीएसएससी  
(Sd/-) HEAD, CMD (CIVIL), VSSC



# Bernie, Warren clash with rest in debate

Healthcare and immigration policies highlight the divisions between the two Democratic camps

REUTERS  
DETROIT

Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders offered an unabashed defence of their progressive policies during a Democratic presidential debate on Tuesday, as their more moderate rivals criticised their proposals as unrealistic and politically untenable.

The debate frequently pitted the two U.S. senators against the other eight candidates on stage, with healthcare and immigration policy highlighting the divisions between the two camps.

On the first night of back-to-back debates, Democrats were united in stressing the urgency of defeating Republican President Donald Trump in the November 2020 election. But they delivered bruising critiques of their party rivals' positions as detailed policy disagreements dominated the nearly three-hour event.

The moderate wing, led at



**Crucial debate:** Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren at the 2020 presidential debate in Detroit. •REUTERS

times by Montana Governor Steve Bullock, argued Democrats risk losing voters after moving too far to the left in the opening debate last month in Miami.

### Big ideas

In contrast, progressives argued their policies would excite voters and allow them to draw a distinct contrast to Mr. Trump.

sals could not be realistically achieved, saying: "I get a little bit tired of Democrats afraid of big ideas."

As the front-runners in polls among the candidates debating on Tuesday, Mr. Sanders and Ms. Warren vowed not to attack each other, but needed to distinguish themselves in their bid to gain ground on the leader in the race, former Vice-President Joe Biden. Instead, they often found themselves teaming up to defend policy positions they share instead of drawing contrasts.

### Healthcare system

The first section of the debate centred on a dispute about the future of the U.S. healthcare system, and whether Democrats should embrace Medicare for All proposals that would have the government take over the health insurance industry.

Mr. Delaney attacked the Medicare for All proposal

that has been put forward by Ms. Warren and Mr. Sanders, arguing Americans who like private insurance should be able to keep it.

"Why do we have to be the party of taking something away from people?" said Mr. Delaney. He pointed to Ms. Warren and Mr. Sanders: "They are running on telling half the country that your health insurance is illegal."

Ms. Warren interjected to defend a government takeover of health insurance. "We're not trying to take healthcare away from anyone. That's what Republicans are trying to do," she said. Mr. Sanders, who has introduced a Medicare for All bill in the U.S. Senate, said: "Healthcare is a human right, not a privilege. I believe that, I will fight for that."

The candidates also differed on immigration policy - disagreeing on whether illegal border crossings should be decriminalised.

# Afghan highway blast kills at least 35 on bus, wounds 27

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack

REUTERS  
HERAT

A roadside bomb in Afghanistan on Wednesday killed at least 35 people travelling on a bus, including children, and injured 27, officials said.

Security has been deteriorating across Afghanistan this year, with the Taliban and the Islamic State fighters mounting attacks on Afghan forces, government employees and civilians.

The blast on the main road linking the provincial capitals of Herat and Kandahar occurred in the Ab Khorama area of Farah province, said police spokesman Mohibullah Mohib.

"The bomb was freshly



**Fight for survival:** Afghan men being treated at a hospital after their bus was hit by a bomb in Farah province. •REUTERS

planted by the Taliban insurgents to target Afghan and foreign security forces," he said, adding most of the dead or injured were women and children.

No militant group claimed responsibility. A Taliban offi-

cial said the group was not responsible for planting landmines in the area. "The blast has not been conducted by the Taliban, we are investigating the incident," said spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

# U.S. envoy Khalilzad set to resume talks with Taliban

He says a deal will be concluded 'if the Taliban do their part'

REUTERS  
KABUL

The U.S. special representative for peace in Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, will resume peace talks with the Taliban soon.

Mr. Khalilzad, who has held eight rounds of talks with the Taliban to end the 18-year war in Afghanistan, is scheduled to travel to Qatar's capital of Doha from Kabul, via Pakistan.

"I'm off to Doha, with a stop in Islamabad. In Doha, if the Taliban do their part, we will do ours, and conclude the agreement we have been working on," Mr. Khalilzad said on Twitter.



Zalmay Khalilzad

held meetings with President Ashraf Ghani, top security officials and senior opposition leaders.

### Security guarantee

"Wrapping up my most productive visit to Afghanistan since I took this job as Special Rep. The U.S. and Afghanistan have agreed on next steps," he said on Twitter, adding that a negotiating team and technical support group were being finalised.

Sources with knowledge of the talks said they could conclude with a deal on the withdrawal of foreign forces in exchange for security guarantees by the Taliban.

# China bans individual permits to visit Taiwan

'Travellers could consider group travel'

REUTERS  
BEIJING

China will stop issuing individual travel permits for Taiwan to people in 47 mainland cities from August 1, its Culture and Tourism Ministry said on Wednesday, citing the state of ties with the self-ruled island, but gave no details.

People from the mainland need permission to travel to what Beijing regards as a renegade province.

Only travellers from 47 ci-

ties, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Xiamen, were allowed to visit Taiwan independently.

Travellers who had booked individual trips but had yet to obtain permits could consider group travel, travel agency Ctrip said.

China's military held exercises this week in waters near Taiwan, following a warning last week that it was ready for war if there was any move towards independence by the island.

# Trump denies racist strategy

Lawmaker heckles him, holds up sign reading 'Deport hate'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
JAMESTOWN

President Donald Trump on Tuesday denied any racist "strategy" behind a string of verbal attacks on African-Americans, but found himself being accused of hate by a heckler at a high-profile speech.

"I have no strategy. I have zero strategy," Mr. Trump told reporters at the White House, when asked about his recent tirades against black and other non-white opponents, as well as the



Donald Trump

majority black city of Baltimore. "I'm not angry at anybody," he said.

Earlier, Mr. Trump denounced the "horrors" of slavery in a speech in James-

town, celebrating the founding of the first local legislature there by English colonists 400 years ago.

"We remember every sacred soul who suffered the horrors of slavery," Mr. Trump said.

But black Virginia State lawmakers boycotted the event, saying it had been "tarnished" by Mr. Trump.

A Virginia state lawmaker heckled Mr. Trump and held up a sign reading "Deport hate" and "Go back to your corrupted home."

## ELSEWHERE



### 'Not kept in the loop on Easter attack warnings'

COLOMBO Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena claimed that he was not aware of the warnings by the Indian intelligence agencies about the Easter Sunday attacks, saying it could have been prevented had he been kept in the loop by the concerned officers. PTI

### Pak. evacuates 50 Chinese nationals in PoK

ISLAMABAD Over 50 Chinese nationals working on a hydroelectric project in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir were evacuated after skirmishes along the Line of Control with India, Pakistani authorities said on Wednesday. PTI

# Johnson visits N. Ireland, heart of Brexit battle

He holds talks with allies on way forward

REUTERS  
BELFAST

Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson held talks with allies in Northern Ireland on Wednesday in a bid to solve the Irish border conundrum that has scuppered all efforts to secure an orderly withdrawal from the European Union.

Mr. Johnson held talks with the Democratic Unionist Party, the pro-Brexit party whose 10 lawmakers prop up his government. The party's leader said she believed a compromise could be reached.

"There are ways to deal with this issue if there is a willingness on both sides," Arlene Foster said.

While she agreed the Withdrawal Agreement and



Boris Johnson

the backstop were effectively dead, she said a "sensible way forward" was possible if the Irish government agreed to engage. The backstop would force Britain to obey some EU rules if no other way could be found to keep the land border open between British-ruled Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland. Dublin says this is crucial to maintaining peace on the island.

# U.S., China to hold further talks after 'constructive' meeting

Both sides to hold next consultations in the U.S. in September

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SHANGHAI

U.S. and Chinese negotiators agreed to meet again in the United States in September after holding "frank" and "constructive" talks in Shanghai on Wednesday, State media said following meetings overshadowed by a Twitter tirade from President Donald Trump.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer met with Vice Premier Liu He in the Chinese financial hub for the first face-to-face negotiations since a trade war truce was declared last month.

"The two sides conducted frank, highly efficient and



U.S. representative Robert Lighthizer with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He. •REUTERS

constructive in-depth exchanges on major issues of common interest in the economic and trade field," according to the official Xinhua news agency.

Washington and Beijing have so far hit each other

with punitive tariffs covering more than \$360 billion in two-way trade in a row centred on demands for China to curb the alleged theft of American technology and provide a level playing field to U.S. companies.

### Farm purchases

Xinhua said that the negotiators discussed "the issue of China increasing its purchases of U.S. agricultural products according to its domestic needs" and the U.S. creating "favourable conditions for these purchases".

"The two sides will hold the next economic and trade consultations in the United States in September," the news agency added.

# U.S. Fed cuts interest rate for first time since 2008

It is now 2-2.25%, 25 basis points lower

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. Federal Reserve cut the benchmark lending rate on Wednesday for the first time since the 2008 recession, moving to stimulate the economy after a year of sustained pressure from President Donald Trump.

The target for the federal funds rate is now in the range of 2% to 2.25%, 25 basis points lower, and the central bank vowed to "act as appropriate to sustain the expansion."

However, two officials on the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee opposed the move to provide more stimulus to the economy and dissented in the vote.

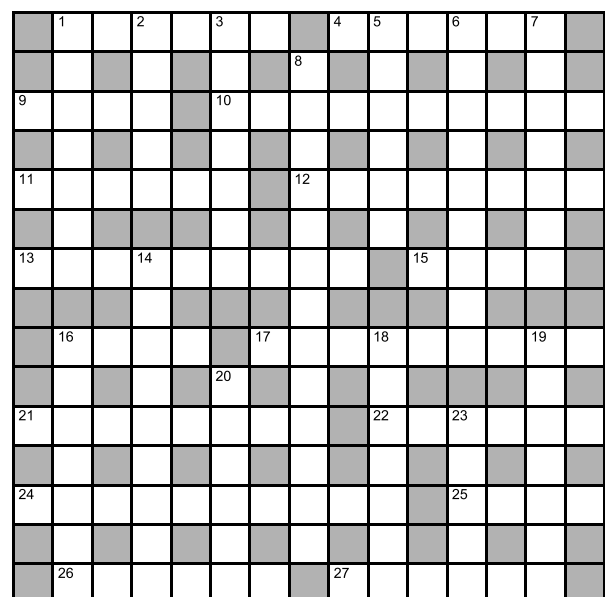
The Fed also gave Mr.

Trump something else he has demanded in his unrelenting attacks: an early end to a policy known as "quantitative tightening" or QT.

Beginning August 1, that means the Fed will stop reducing the huge amount of securities it built up during the global financial crisis. "In light of the implications of global developments for the economic outlook as well as muted inflation pressures, the committee decided to lower the target range for the federal funds rate to 2 to 2-1/4%," the FOMC said.

While the panel continues to expect sustained economic expansion and gradually rising inflation to the Fed's 2% target, "uncertainties about this outlook remain."

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12693



### ACROSS

- 1 Blinking light's best, when dancing around room oddly (6)
- 4 In good condition, wish for loads of money? (6)
- 9 At entrance of Zoo, several gave a little monkey nuts (4)
- 10 According to Spooner, additionally, the chamber had a block (3,3,4)

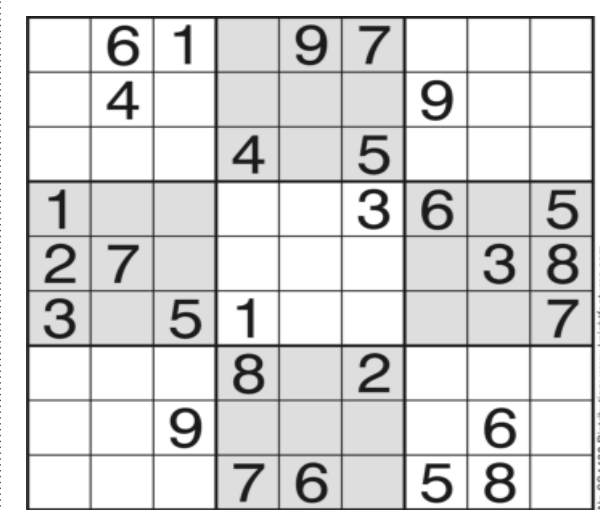
- 11 Fight with knight at North American capital (6)
- 12 Once again, request to feature Chennai's first chronicler (8)
- 13 Gutless Rakshasa sacrificed until Brahma created miniature (9)
- 15 Abandon daughter, serving time in pound (4)
- 16 Fail to expel student in panic (4)
- 17 Chew algae with old rum for piles (1,4,4)
- 21 MP, for one is a jerk, involved in horseplay? (8)
- 22 Defer to the woman, not only admire (6)
- 24 Major transformation has each angel's crowdsourcing (1,3,6)
- 25 Couple kiss and hug outside but curse (4)
- 26 Being different, I typically hid (6)
- 27 Alas, broke-up and left separately, struggling to express once more (6)

(set by Hypatia)

### DOWN

- 1 Submissive, like an East European? (7)
- 2 Perhaps Satyajit's working material (5)
- 3 Mind embracing a hot country (7)
- 5 As moral principles these possibly chastise (6)
- 6 Maybe, Marsh owl (3,6)
- 7 Old weapon keeping pack of animals outside a pound (7)
- 8 P Base? (8-5)
- 14 Beggar isn't able to follow, mind added with drug (9)
- 16 An indication of interest in a stock index, say (7)
- 18 Indecent alumnus is recognized on the telephone (7)
- 19 Move forward supply (7)
- 20 Clothing in which a soldier keeps ahead? (3,3)
- 23 Starting to explore new joints, obviously you have fun (5)

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

### Solution to puzzle 12692

I	V	P	R	A	G	T	A							
N	E	E	D	L	E	A	N	O	T	H	R	E	A	D
C	I	A	N	H	A	R	Z							
A	N	N	O	E	D	I	T	E	R	I	A	L		
D	I	S	M	A	N	T	L	E	L	I	K	E	D	
R	O	T	N	A	A	U								
A	B	U	S	E	R	S	T	I	T	A	N	I	C	
F	I	S	T	T	W	J	A							
T	U	B	E	S	E	D	I	T	R	I	A	L		
R	E	N	E	W	A	L	R	O	I	S	T	E	R	
O	U	O	H	E	U	E	H	E						
O	U	T	O	F	T	H	E	P	I	C	T	U	R	E
K	S	F	Y	T	E	G	D							

### Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	2	1	5	7	8	6	3	4
6	4	3	9	1	2	7	8	5
5	7	8	3	4	6	9	2	1
1	5	2	6	8	7	4	9	3
8	3	4	1	2	9	5	6	7
7	6	9	4	5	3	8	1	2
3	1	7	8	6	4	2	5	9
2	9	6	7	3	5	1	4	8
4	8	5	2	9	1	3	7	6

## FAITH

### Seek liberation

Thirukkural talks about birth and death, comparing them to sleep and waking. Death is akin to sleep, while waking up is like birth, according to Thiruvalluvar. There are many similarities between death and sleep, said Malayaman in a discourse. When we are in deep sleep, we do not see what is going on around us. And often we do not even hear the noises around us, and continue to sleep undisturbed by them. When we die, all our sense organs stop functioning. Death may come to an old man or to a young woman, or a child. There is no telling when and whom it will take away. Likewise, sleep too is common to all. We can never anticipate when we are going to die. Nor can we predict when we will fall asleep. On some days, we may toss and turn in our beds and be unable to sleep. On other days, we may go to sleep the minute we lie down. When we sleep, we forget our worries, only to start worrying again when we wake up. While sleep gives us temporary relief from anxieties, death relieves us of worries permanently.

The comparison of sleep to death and birth to waking is seen in other Tamil works too. Tamil poet Seethalai Chathanar, author of Manimekalai, said that the death of those who are born in this world, and the birth of those who have departed from this world, is like sleep and waking. He repeats the idea in another verse, where he says that those born in this world die and those who are dead take birth again in this world. Kovil Nanmani malai says that death and birth can happen in just a second. Kamban says that the rising of the Sun in the East and its setting in the West are like the birth and death of man. Given the uncertainty of life, and the impermanence of life, it is best to seek liberation from births and deaths.



MARKET WATCH

	31-07-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	37,481	0.22
US Dollar	68.79	0.08
Gold	35,780	-0.27
Brent oil	65.11	1.51

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	377.55	4.10
Asian Paints	1521.10	-12.35
Axis Bank	674.10	-33.50
Bajaj Auto	2516.50	-52.65
Bajaj Finserv	7097.85	19.80
Bajaj Finance	3252.05	2.10
Bharti Airtel	337.60	-8.15
BPCIL	345.50	10.00
Britannia Ind	2605.00	-12.05
Cipla	521.10	1.10
Coal India	204.45	4.90
Dr Reddys Lab	2574.60	14.60
Eicher Motors	16348.05	184.50
GAIL (India)	128.85	-0.30
Grasim Ind	788.35	25.80
HCL Tech	1034.55	10.95
HDFC	2121.80	-5.45
HDFC Bank	2251.65	-0.60
Hero MotoCorp	2356.10	97.30
Hindalco	190.55	0.45
Hind Unilever	1726.65	6.75
Indiabulls HFL	535.60	11.70
ICICI Bank	424.60	-0.75
IndusInd Bank	1412.85	75.55
Bharti Infratel	245.75	-3.80
Infosys	793.65	0.95
Indian Oil Corp	139.30	5.80
ITC	270.20	1.30
JSW Steel	237.45	7.20
Kotak Bank	1519.55	20.85
L&T	1387.30	10.95
M&M	550.00	1.25
Maruti Suzuki	5469.70	-37.45
NTPC	126.55	-0.65
ONGC	138.85	0.10
PowerGrid Corp	210.80	2.55
Reliance Ind	1166.25	-14.65
State Bank	332.20	4.65
Sun Pharma	426.75	16.40
Tata Motors	135.60	2.15
Tata Steel	432.05	17.00
TCS	2205.70	26.55
Tech Mahindra	636.25	-4.00
Titan	1056.35	-22.85
UltraTech Cement	4346.90	29.35
UPL	595.25	21.55
Vedanta	154.10	3.50
Wipro	265.30	3.00
YES Bank	91.20	5.15
Zee Entertainment	361.60	-19.50

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on July 31

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	68.59	68.91
Euro	76.49	76.85
British Pound	83.59	83.98
Japanese Yen (100)	63.17	63.47
Chinese Yuan	9.96	10.01
Swiss Franc	69.32	69.65
Singapore Dollar	50.12	50.36
Canadian Dollar	52.25	52.49
Malaysian Ringgit	16.61	16.71

Source: Indian Bank

ICRA puts Coffee Day ratings under watch

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Rating agency ICRA has placed term loan rating of Coffee Day Enterprises Limited (CDEL) under rating watch with negative implications after the group's promoter V.G. Siddhartha went missing and was found dead on Wednesday morning.

"The ratings have been put on watch with negative implication as the development may have a negative impact on the operations of CDEL, the extent of which cannot be ascertained as yet, given the nascent stage of developments," the rating agency said. ICRA also said as the development may have a critical bearing on the group's operations and credit profile, the rating agency would continue to monitor further developments and finalise the rating action once more clarity emerged on the same.

Oppenheimer buys 11% stake in ZEEL

The ₹4,224-crore deal will help Essel Group to partially meet debt obligations of about ₹12,000 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Media baron Subhash Chandra's Essel Group has sealed a deal with private equity fund Invesco Oppenheimer Developing Markets Fund, which will pick up 11% stake in Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. (ZEEL) for ₹4,224 crore. The proceeds will help the group, which was scouting for an investor for months, to partially meet its debt obligations.

Oppenheimer, which already has 7.74% stake in ZEEL, will buy 11% from the promoter group. By inference, this works out to ₹400 per share, a 10.6% premium to Wednesday's closing price. The promoters of ZEEL currently hold 35.79%. Still, the group has a long way to go to bring down



ZEEL MD & CEO Punit Goenka said Oppenheimer, as a financial investor, has further reposed its faith in his firm. • PAUL NORONHA

debt, which will stand at around ₹8,000 crore post the deal.

"Strong step" "The announcement of 11% stake sale of ZEEL to the fund is a strong step in the overall divestment process, giving the promoters the required

financial fillip to initiate the repayment process," the company said in a statement. "The deal is ideal for Essel promoters as they will continue to run the company and provide continuity for business, a critical thing for media businesses," said Abneesh Roy of Edelweiss

Securities. The group was open to selling stake to a global player in the media entertainment business, which would have helped them to expand footprint overseas, but was not averse to any financial investor.

"I'm extremely glad to share that the Fund [Oppenheimer] as a financial investor has further reposed its faith in ZEEL," said Punit Goenka, managing director and CEO, ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd.

Along with ZEEL, Essel Group is also in the process of divesting some of its non-media assets like solar and road projects to raise funds. "Essel Group is confident of completing the overall process of repayment, well within the agreed timeline," the statement said.

The group had earlier said that it had entered into an agreement with lenders who had taken pledged shares of the group flagship and listed entities - Zee Entertainment Enterprises and Dish TV India - to not declare the group as a defaulter till September end despite a fall in share price.

"Essel Group had initiated the process of divesting its key assets, with an aim to repay all the lenders by September 2019," the statement said. "During this divestment process, the group has received positive response from multiple partners expressing interest to buy the stake in ZEEL and the other key non-media assets," it added. ZEEL stocks ended 5.18% lower than its previous close, at ₹361.45 a share.

Core sector growth slows to 0.2% in June

Oil, cement contribute to slowdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Growth of eight core industries dropped to 0.2% in June mainly due to a contraction in oil-related sectors as well as in cement production, according to official data.

The eight core sector industries viz. coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilizer, steel, cement and electricity had expanded by 7.8% in June last year.

According to the data released by the government, crude oil output contracted by 6.8% while the refinery segment de-grew by 9.3%.

Cement output declined by 1.5%. Fertiliser production was also in the negative



Steel production increased by 6.9% in June.

zone. Steel and electricity production, however, increased by 6.9% and 7.3%, respectively, during the month under review.

During April-June, the eight sectors grew by 3.5% compared with 5.5% in the same period last year.

'India and U.S. very close to resolving all trade issues'

'Market access, the bone of contention, close to settlement'

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN NEW DELHI

India and the U.S. are "very close" to resolving all their trade-related differences, with Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal planning to meet the U.S. Trade Representative in the coming month, a senior Commerce Ministry official told *The Hindu*.

"All the issues that have happened, on aluminium, steel, retaliatory tariffs by us, are all done now," the official said on the condition of anonymity. "The focus now is to look ahead and to calm the heightened tempers on both sides. The officials from our side and their side have been meeting regularly, and



Piyush Goyal

we are very close to seeing an agreement coming into place."

The key bone of contention between India and the U.S. is market access, the official explained, adding that this was at the bottom of most of the tensions bet-

ween the two countries over the last year or so.

"The market access issue will also be resolved soon, when the [Commerce] Minister meets the U.S. Trade Representative either late next month [August] or early the month after that," the official said. The Indian government is demanding greater market access in the U.S. for dairy products, medical devices, and information and communication technology (ICT) services, he added.

The U.S. government, on the other hand, is demanding increased market access on a wider range of products.

Tributes pour in as coffee king bids adieu

Bad news for sector that is roiling in a concoction of labour, price, output issues

MINI TEJASWI BENGALURU

Tributes poured in for coffee baron V.G. Siddhartha, whose demise has come at a time when the sector has been beset by falling prices, soaring production cost and a host of labour issues.

Coffee farmers from Chikkamagaluru, Hassan and Kodagu districts are mourning the death of an icon who has been instrumental in increasing the domestic consumption of coffee while building significant international brand equity for the commodity.

Anil Kumar Bhandari, president, India Coffee Trust, said, "He was very focussed right from his young age. Whatever he did, he did it so diligently with complete sincerity. Indian coffee has lost its pillar and there is no replacement.

"He left at a time when we



V.G. Siddhartha

were preparing for the World Coffee Conference scheduled to take place in Bengaluru in December," he said.

Upasi Coffee Committee chairman Jeffrey Rebello said Mr. Siddhartha exited the scene at a time when the morale of the sector was at its lowest, ever.

"It is not easy to find a businessman who is not selfish and who has worked for a belief

ryone around him. He was so compassionate and greeted everyone with a smile," remembered Mr. Rebello.

According to Ramesh Rajah, president, Coffee Exporters' Association, the industry has no one else who can fill the vacuum.

"He was truly a people's person. He touched the lives of some 50,000 coffee farmers in the Malnad region.

"He always looked for a social angle in everything that he did. He was in the process of setting up a 500-bed cashless super specialty hospital in Chikkamagaluru," said Dr. Amshumanth, a coffee grower and a social worker based in Chikkamagaluru.

Rohith Halase Rajagopal, a coffee farmer from Mudigere, Mr. Siddhartha's home town, fondly calls the coffee icon *anna* (elder brother). "Anna left with a belief

that he was a failure; but, for the coffee world, he is an ace. He's an achiever, a dreamer, a pioneer and a man of substance."

Mr. Siddhartha would always be remembered as a great contributor towards making coffee a pan-India beverage, said M.B. Ganapathy, chairman, Karnataka Planters' Association.

Jairam Ramesh, MP and a friend of Mr. Siddhartha said, "I had known Siddhartha for some 20 years. He was really an icon for Indian entrepreneurs. He was a very genial and self-effacing human being whose modesty was natural in spite of what he had achieved.

"The news of his passing away is truly shocking and shattering. He was a businessman with a deep social conscience and he was able to touch the lives of a large number of people."

Coffee Day shares tank 20% more

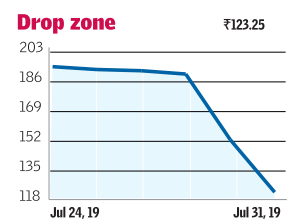
DSP Mutual Fund marks down NCD exposure by 50%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Shares of Coffee Day Enterprises were locked at their lower circuit of 20% for the second successive day even as the board of directors of the company tried to assuage investor concerns by appointing an interim chairman and chief operating officer.

The board also said the company had decided to investigate the financial transactions that found a mention in the letter purportedly written by the company's late founder V. G. Siddhartha.

"The board took cognizance of statements in the purported letter from Mr. V. G. Siddhartha relating to financial transactions outside the knowledge of the senior management, auditors and the board," said the company in a statement to the stock



a new low for the company. Meanwhile, DSP Mutual Fund that has an exposure to the troubled entity by way of non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of Coffee Day Natural Resources Private Limited (CDNRPL) has marked down the investment by 50%.

"The scheme (DSP Credit Risk Fund) has an exposure to secured NCD issued by CDNRPL of the face value of ₹69 crore as on July 29, 2019. CDNRPL is one of the companies owned by the promoter of Coffee Day Enterprises Limited (CDEL). The exposure is secured by a pledge of listed shares of CDEL and a land parcel," wrote the fund house in a note. The NCDs constitute 2.6% of the scheme's total assets, as per the note, which added that "CDNRPL has asked for two weeks to come back with a concrete plan regarding the recovery."

exchanges. "While the authenticity of the letter is unverified and it is unclear whether these statements pertain to the company or the personal holdings of Mr. V. G. Siddhartha, the board took serious note of the same and resolved to thoroughly investigate this matter," the company said in the statement.

Law firm to advise The board has also roped in noted law firm Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas to advise the company on this matter. On the BSE, the company's shares dropped 20%, or ₹30.80, to close at ₹123.25

Start-ups write to govt. on equalisation levy

Tax adding to cost burden, they say

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN NEW DELHI

Domestic SMEs and start-ups have written to Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey complaining about the equalisation levy they have to pay to foreign companies doing business in India, resulting in increased costs as well as lost revenue for the government.

The start-up sector, represented by LocalCircles, held a meeting with Mr. Pandey on July 16 and discussed several aspects of direct and indirect taxation affecting the sector.

Among the issues discussed was the equalisation levy that SMEs and startups have to pay to foreign companies sending invoices from abroad for services rendered within India. "Many foreign companies

operating in India despite having sizeable sales and marketing activities and revenues in India, continue to invoice Indian start-ups and SMEs from their overseas office," the letter submitted to Mr. Pandey, following the meeting, said.

"As a result, Indian start-ups and SMEs are required to deposit 6% equalisation levy on behalf of these foreign companies which leads to additional compliance and cost burden on the start-ups and SMEs," they said in the letter.

The equalisation levy, introduced in 2016, is a direct tax on payments made by residents to non-resident companies for online advertisement, provision of digital and advertising space or any other facility or service for online advertisement.

Fiscal deficit touches 61.4% of estimate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The government's fiscal deficit touched ₹4.32 lakh crore for the June quarter, which is 61.4% of the Budget Estimate for 2019-20 fiscal.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit, or the gap between expenditure and revenue, was ₹4.32 lakh crore at June-end, as per the data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

The fiscal deficit was 68.7% of the 2018-19 Budget Estimate in the year earlier period. The government estimates the fiscal deficit to be at ₹7.03 lakh crore during 2019-20.

The government aims to restrict the fiscal deficit to 3.4% of the GDP in the current fiscal, the same as last financial year.

A fiscal hawk and a skilful chef

As RBI Deputy Governor, Gokarn regularly urged government to cut fiscal deficit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Former Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor Subir Gokarn, who passed away in Washington DC on July 30, is best known among his peers and friends - apart from being an outspoken economist - for his wry sense of humour and also his skill as a chef. Having battled a brief illness, Mr. Gokarn was only 59 when he passed away.

News of Mr. Gokarn's passing drew condolences from around the world, including from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), where he was an executive director, with colleagues and friends lamenting India's loss of an astute economist.

"I am deeply saddened by the death of Subir Gokarn, who represented India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan at the IMF Executive Board," David Lipton, Acting



Subir Gokarn

(1959-2019)

MD of the IMF, said.

At the RBI, where he served as the youngest-ever Deputy Governor, Mr. Gokarn was in charge of the monetary policy department from November 2009 till January 2013. From all accounts, Mr. Gokarn was a fiscal hawk, regularly calling for the government to cut the fiscal deficit. The argument he made time and again was

that the government's failure to keep the fiscal deficit in check was making it difficult for the RBI to control inflation. He was also a vocal proponent of the central bank's autonomy, a fact that drew the ire of the government at the time, leading to his term as Deputy Governor not being extended.

"Saddened by the passing of Subir Gokarn. He was RBI Deputy Governor when I was Central Board Director & he helped India recover from the 2008 global financial crisis," Rajeev Gowda, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha from Karnataka, tweeted.

"The Union Finance Minister, while paying her last respects, recalled his [Mr. Gokarn's] intellect and articulation of India's concerns at the IMF," the Ministry of Finance said in a statement.

Mr. Gokarn completed his B.A. in Economics (Hons.)

from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, and his Masters' in Economics (Hons.) from the Delhi School of Economics. He was awarded a Ph.D in Economics from Case Western Reserve University of Cleveland, Ohio.

Prior to his duties at the RBI and IMF, Mr. Gokarn was Associate Professor at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research and subsequently was appointed Chief Economist at the National Council of Applied Economic Research. He then moved to CRISIL, where he was executive director, following which he took over as chief economist at Standard and Poor's Asia Pacific till his appointment to the RBI in 2009.

What is less known about Mr. Gokarn is he was a movie buff and a very skilled cook, especially when it came to dishes from Dharwad.

IOC Q1 net slumps 47% on fall in refinery margins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) on Wednesday reported a 47% drop in its first quarter net profit due to a fall in refinery margins and inventory gains. IOC reported a consolidated net profit of ₹3,737.50 crore compared with ₹7,092.42 crore in the year-earlier period, the company said in a statement.

"The variation is mainly on account of lower inventory gain during the quarter," it said. IOC recorded an inventory gain of ₹2,362 crore as opposed to ₹7,065 crore gain in the April-June 2018 period. Revenue was almost flat at ₹1.53 lakh crore in the first quarter of 2019-20.

'AI divestment may see global participation'

Jet's exit may raise chance of success

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

A second attempt at divestment of Air India is likely to see strong interest from private players, including participation from leading global airlines such as those from the Gulf, according to aviation consulting firm CAPA.

There is a likelihood of international entities seeking to form joint ventures with Indian companies to bid for Air India to comply with norms that cap foreign direct investment into the national carrier at 49%.

Increased valuation The Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) has recommended that the government allow FDI for a higher number of bidders and increased valuation for Air India.

This will be necessary as major Indian corporations from outside aviation may not have the appetite to invest in a complex project without an experienced strategic partner, it noted.

The exit of Jet Airways, Air India's biggest full-service competitor, from the market has further enhanced the chances of a successful divestment this



CAPA's idea for successful privatisation of AI includes easing the requirement of the buyer to keep the brand intact. • PPTI

time. "CAPA has long maintained that the Indian market can only sustain two full-service carriers, and that the operation of three such airlines - Air India, Jet Airways and Vistara - was not sustainable."

However, the remote chances of a revival of Jet Airways, along with the "current global and national economic environment and geopolitical instability" may dampen investor sentiment, CAPA warned.

The aviation consultancy reiterated what it considered were key factors to ensure a successful attempt at privatisation of the national carrier. These include: the government exiting completely from the airline, allowing the new owner flexibility in dealing with Air India's employees and easing the requirement of the 'Air India' brand being kept intact by its buyer.

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri told Parliament that the government may launch its second attempt to privatise the national carrier before the end of August.

An earlier attempt last year failed to yield any interest, with no entity coming forward to bid for Air India.



## IN BRIEF

**Eicher Motors net falls 21.5% on weak demand**

**CHENNAI**  
Eicher Motors Ltd., the firm that makes Royal Enfield motorbikes, reported a 21.53% drop in its standalone net profit to ₹452 crore for the first quarter ended June 2019 compared with the corresponding year-earlier period, on weak consumer demand. During this period, Royal Enfield sold 1.82 lakh motorcycles, marking a 19% decline. Revenue from operations dropped 7% to ₹2,382 crore.

**Wipro announces buyback dates**

**BENGALURU**  
Tech major Wipro on Wednesday said that its more than ₹10,000-crore buyback offer will open on August 14, while the date of closing of the offer will be August 28. The last date for settlement of bids on the stock exchange has been scheduled for September 9. Shareholders whose names appear on the record date of June 21 will be eligible to participate in the buyback, the company said in a filing.

**CUMI first quarter profit increases by 15%**

**CHENNAI**  
Carborundum Universal Ltd. (CUMI) has reported a standalone net profit of ₹45.08 crore for the first quarter ended June 2019, marking a 15% increase over the corresponding period last year. Total income for the period rose to ₹448.65 crore from ₹425 crore. On a consolidated basis, sales grew 6% to ₹664 crore, driven by growth in electro minerals and ceramics' segments. At a consolidated level, CUMI spent ₹38 crore on capital expenditure.

# SEBI mulls weather, freight derivatives

Regulator also looking at ETFs on metals to make commodity segment more efficient

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR  
MUMBAI

For the first time ever, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is actively examining the feasibility of allowing derivatives contracts based on intangibles such as weather or freight in the Indian commodity segment.

As part of its attempts to make the commodity segment more efficient and investor friendly, the regulator is also looking at exchange-traded funds (ETFs) on metals, better designed options contracts and ways to increase participation of hedgers and encourage delivery-based settlement.

According to two persons familiar with the matter, the capital markets regulator has formed around five working groups, with each group



**Task at hand:** SEBI has formed 5 working groups, each looking at an issue related to the commodities segment. •REUTERS

tasked with a specific issue related to the commodities segment.

The working groups have been told to submit their report to the Commodity Derivatives Market Regulation Department (CDMRD) by end of August. Thereafter, the regulator may forward

select proposals to the Commodity Derivatives Advisory Committee (CDAC) for further deliberation before a formal submission could be made to the SEBI board.

"A brainstorming session was held recently wherein SEBI officials and exchange representatives were pre-

sent. It was suggested that exchanges can form working groups to examine specific issues and give suggestions to SEBI," said a person familiar with the development.

Incidentally, a vision document prepared by CDAC in 2016 touched upon the issue of derivative contracts based on intangibles like freight and rainfall but it was never taken up for active deliberation.

**Hedging against risk**

Globally, energy companies and even those dealing with agricultural products use weather derivatives extensively to hedge against adverse or unexpected weather behaviour. Freight derivatives available on the Baltic Exchange are quite popular and are used by ship

owners for protection against freight rate fluctuations. "One of the working groups has been tasked to look at new products and it is looking at the feasibility of launching derivatives on freight and rainfall, ETFs on silver and base metals along with options based on spot prices of commodities," added another person, wishing not to be named.

An email query sent to SEBI on Monday remained unanswered till the time of going to press.

The other working groups are looking at different issues like allowing delivery from a seller's warehouse in addition to the current practice of delivery only from warehouses accredited by the Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority.

# Ashok Leyland Q1 profit skids on weak volumes

Company improves LCV market share

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Ashok Leyland Ltd., the flagship of the Hinduja Group, reported a drop of 45.49% in its standalone net profit for the first quarter ended June 2019 to ₹230 crore on weak volumes.

During the period under review, the firm's revenue declined 9% to ₹5,684 crore.

"While the industry has witnessed a decline in volume of 17%, Ashok Leyland's market share has grown by 4%.

"Despite a drop in total industry volume by 5%, our light commercial vehicle (LCV) business continues to do very well and posted a growth of 12%. Our earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation

**With signs of slowing demand, we are closely watching the developments**

GOPAL MAHADEVAN  
CFO, Ashok Leyland

at 9.4%, despite a decline in revenues, signifies efficient cost management," said Dheeraj G. Hinduja, chairman, Ashok Leyland.

Earlier, addressing shareholders, he had said that the firm was well on course to introduce BS-VI vehicles.

"With signs of slower demand, we are closely watching the developments in the industry. We continue to take cost out and drive productivity and growth initiatives," said Gopal Mahadevan, CFO, Ashok Leyland.

# Apollo Tyres to double radial truck tyre output

Firm to invest ₹3,800 crore in A.P. unit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Apollo Tyres Ltd. remained bullish on its growth prospects despite uncertain times ahead, said its chairman Onkar S. Kanwar in his address to shareholders.

He said the company had invested close to ₹4,000 crore in a greenfield facility in Hungary and earmarked ₹3,800 crore for a new project in Andhra Pradesh.

**Upgrading plant**

It was also committed to upgrading its existing manufacturing plant in Chennai, and double its radial truck tyre production to 12,000 units a day, he said. "While in India, we are achieving a leadership position in multi-

ple segments, we are confident of gaining traction in Europe in the coming years as we start catering to the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) from the Hungary plant," he said.

Pointing out that Apollo Tyres was the only Indian company to supply tyres to various OEMs in Europe, such as Volkswagen, Ford and Audi, he said: "The strategy of replicating our success with OEMs in India will go hand-in-hand with increasing our market share in the replacement markets."

Standalone net profit for the first quarter ended June 2019 dipped 30% to ₹149.86 crore. Sales rose to ₹3,044.42 crore from ₹3,021.14 crore.

# HDFC cuts home loan rates by 10 bps

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Mortgage lender HDFC has reduced the home loan rates by 10 basis points (bps) with effect from Thursday. The reduction will benefit the existing and new customers. The revised rate for loans of up to ₹30 lakh will be 8.6%, while for loans between ₹30 lakh and ₹75 lakh, it will be 8.85%. For loans above ₹75 lakh, the rate will be 8.9%. Women borrowers will be charged 5 bps lower than the above rates.

Union Bank of India has reduced the one-year marginal cost of fund-based lending rate (MCLR) by 5 bps to 8.5% with effect from August 1.

# Tea Board accepts IIM recommendations on recasting e-auction system across India

New system aims at enhancing quality of tea on offer at auctions, among others

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

The Tea Board has, in-principle, accepted the recommendations submitted by a team of IIM Bangalore professors to recast the present pan India e-auction system.

"We will implement this in a phased manner with an eye on improving the ease of business," Tea Board Deputy Chairman Arun Kumar Roy said.

The new system aims at improving price discovery, simplifying the process elevating industry standards, and enhancing the quality of tea on offer at the auctions.

"Tea prices have remained flat at around ₹140 per kg for nearly four years



**Many a slip:** The system rolled out in 2016 had neither improved tea price discovery nor boosted volumes. •AFP

since 2014," Professor B. Mahadevan of IIM Bangalore said at a stakeholders' meet here on Wednesday.

Mr. Roy said that nearly 75% of these recommendations had already made their

way into the alternative auction platform to be rolled out by mjunction. The SAIL-Tata Steel joint venture has won a tender for putting up an innovative platform based at Assam's Jorhat, where many

of these features had been incorporated. "These include designing a comprehensive e-catalogue, fixed reserve price and logistic support for buyers," a press note from the Tea Board said.

The deficiencies of the present pan Indian e-auction system rolled out in 2016 were many. The system had neither improved price discovery nor boosted volumes. The modified system aims at addressing these issues while creating equal opportunities for all.

Among the stakeholders present at the meeting, producer associations such as the Tea Association of India welcomed the initiative.



# On set with the *Sacred Games* cast

A day on the show's shoot promised a more thrilling and complicated Singh-Gaitonde universe with several new faces

ANAHITA PANICKER

Straining their eyes at a tiny monitor in a dark studio in Mumbai, a group of journalists take the first look at a short scene from the second season of *Sacred Games*. With his hand bandaged, Inspector Sartaj Singh (Saif Ali Khan) slowly approaches a seated Batya Abelman (Kalki Koechlin) who dons mustard robes with a brown shawl draped across her shoulders. Singh sits opposite her on the floor, an ornate mandala on the wall behind them centres the framing, and she places a bowl in front of him as the camera gradually dollies towards them. "This is a turning point in the episode," whispered showrunner Vikramaditya Motwane, carefully tiptoeing around spoilers. All he offered was that the scene is integral to Singh's investigation of Guruji (Pankaj Tripathi) — a cult-leader and the man who mobster Ganesh Gaitonde (Nawazuddin Siddiqui) regards as his "third father". All this transpired on an afternoon in late January when the shooting for Netflix's first Indian original series' upcoming second season was well underway.

About six months later, on August 15, the stories of Gaitonde and Singh will be back on Netflix in eight episodes directed by Anurag Kashyap and Neeraj Ghaywan.

## Existential questions

*Sacred Games*, based on Vikram Chandra's over-900-page long 2006 novel, unpacks the foaming nexus between Mumbai's police, politicians, gangsters and the film industry through the separate yet overlapping narratives of Singh and Gaitonde. Spanning four decades of Mumbai's — and even the country's, history — the show features the honest but unassuming cop Singh who is warned by Gaitonde (before the gangster kills himself) that the city will be razed in 25 days.

It is suggested that the disaster will be the result of a nuclear attack. "It has become more of a thriller," said Saif Ali Khan whose Singh has less than half the time at hand this season, "There's a ticking bomb and higher stakes. Where it used to be sleeping pills, now it's grade A drugs." Singh's moral conflicts, the actor explained, builds into larger complicated questions: "Is the world a good place, and should it be saved at all?"



**Thrill to the bone** Stills from the upcoming season of *Sacred Games*.  
\*ISHIKA MOHAN MOTWANE/  
NETFLIX



**Is the world a good place, and should it be saved at all**  
SAIF ALI KHAN ABOUT HIS CHARACTER SARTAJ SINGH

that having cinematographer Swapnil Sonawane (*Newton*, *Zubaan*, *Angry Indian Goddesses*) brought a consistency to the visual vocabulary, lifting the huge burden that weighed heavy on him as the director.

Vikramaditya admitted to being less nervous about passing the baton on to Neeraj. "He was the only director in my head who I could trust to have his own vision," he said, adding that Neeraj was meant to be a co-director in the first season as well — when the plan was to have more than two directors handle the show's spliced stories. But about the other director, Vikramaditya said jokingly, "Anurag is my worst enemy. We are best friends, and we drink a lot together, but we will not go on each other's sets." It was apt then, that Gaitonde's narrative was being shot in Goregaon's Film City the same day. In a

Dealing with these questions, with half of the show through Singh's narrative, director Neeraj has taken the mantle over from Vikramaditya who was juggling the responsibilities of both showrunner and director for the first season. "This is my second day on set in our entire schedule! I completely trust him," Vikramaditya laughed as he grinned at Neeraj, remarking that nearly 40 days of Sartaj Singh's shoot had already been completed.

**At the helm** The soft-spoken Neeraj's debut feature *Masaan* (a 2015 film of which Motwane was one of the producers of) bagged two awards at Cannes 2015. Neeraj had previously assisted Kashyap (who directs Gaitonde's narrative) on *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012) and *Ugly* (2013). Yet it felt slightly daunting for him to helm the project alongside his mentors who had made the show successful. However, Neeraj added

dark studio, Ranvir Shorey (Shahid Khan, a new addition to this season) was pointing at a laptop screen while Luke Kenny (as the assassin Malcolm Mourad) and a bearded Siddiqui, looked on. On approaching the group to field questions, Anurag chuckled and refused to explain what the three were conniving at in the scene.

## Contemporary vision

While Gaitonde's story continues to be told via flashbacks this season, Singh's countdown happens in present-day Mumbai, and Anurag said that Chandra was kept in the loop on the decisions to turn his 2006 novel into a contemporary show. Behind this process is Varun Grover as the lead writer and writers Dhruv Narang, Pooja Varma and Nihit Bhawe.

About the backdrop for Gaitonde's track, Anurag said it was now unwraps beyond the country's borders — "Kenya, Croatia, South Africa, and we also 'cheated' some locations." Siddiqui, donning a goatee and moustache when he met us later, had just come from finishing another Gaitonde scene. The actor spoke about shooting abroad and how he couldn't help missing Kubbra Sait's character, Cuckoo the cabaret dancer. He recounted a coincidence: "We were shooting in a bar in Nairobi. I left the bar, turned and saw [the name] 'Cuckoo Bar'."

The show's success was evident while filming abroad. The first season packed together the multilingual experience of Mumbai and sprinkled in frequent references to characters' conflicts, and the country's political and religious climate, through metaphors from Hindu mythology. But the specifics didn't appear to have deterred international audiences, as reportedly two of every three viewers of the first season were outside India. Whether from the Indian diaspora, or not, however, is another question. For now what remains to be seen is if the new season — with additions to the cast like Tripathi (with an extended role as Guruji), Kalki, Shorey and Surveen Chawla (the new mother will return to portray Jojo Mascarenas) — will be able to entice more viewers.

*Sacred Games* season two will premiere on August 15 on Netflix

## PEOPLE

### Being Bassi

Anubhav Singh Bassi, the 28-year-old internet comedy sensation is back for another show



He made a few jokes about someone drinking from a Rs.110 water bottle and the audience couldn't stop laughing. The 28-year-old comedian and recent Youtube sensation Anubhav Singh Bassi was in full form during one of his current shows, which he is doing as part of his ongoing 'Bas Kar Bassi' tour. The constant themes in this set have centred around his career — he went from being a lawyer, to a UPSC aspirant, opening a food business with friends, ending up now, as a stand-up comedian.

"It was a coincidence," recalls Bassi. In 2017, he'd tried his luck at an open mic at the Canvas Laugh Club, of which he was always a fan. The audience and organisers loved his set and contacted him to do another at a following open mic event. Since then, there has been no looking back. On the sidelines of a show, Bassi spoke about his journey in comedy, how he's been a performer since childhood, and why he prefers live shows to internet videos.

### What was your reaction when your first Youtube video went viral?

Actually that wasn't my first video. The first was a recording of a set on lawyers, which I uploaded to Facebook. It didn't get a really good response. I've worked really hard on the "Cheating" set [the first video on Youtube, which went viral]. Before posting it, I thought, 'If this video hits 5 million views, I would feel like I've achieved something for my hard work'. The video started gaining views by a million a day. I stopped looking when it reached 4 million.

### Who do you look up to in stand-up comedy?

I would be really satisfied if I could write a joke like Sumit Anand. As far as content is concerned, my biggest inspiration is Zakir Khan. But I look up to everyone, even those people who aren't doing well, but are really funny.

### What was your family's reaction, when you told them you were going to be a stand-up comedian?

They were a little sceptical in the beginning, but as I started progressing in the field and making some money, they started to [accept it].

### Were you always this funny?

I don't think that all the stand-up comedians are funny in real life; some of them are really serious. Even I am not funny all the time. I am funniest when I am with my friends, but I also believe that all my friends are funnier than I am. It is all about who has the power to perform while being audacious.

At *The Piano Man*, Gurugram; 3rd August, 3:00 p.m. For tickets, Bookmyshow.com

RAHAT HUSSAIN

## PLACES

### Unlocking the mystery

Sanjali Nirwani, an Ahmedabad-based entrepreneur, took the real-life game-playing experiences we've witnessed for a few years with places like Mystery Rooms, Codebreak 60, and Ctrl. Shift. Esc, and paired it with a multi-cuisine restaurant. She started, Unlocked: Bar, Kitchen and Escape Room, a physical space where people can solve mysteries, and eventually find their way out, by looking for clues and working out puzzles. The venture is now in the NCR. Played by 2-8 people, it is suitable for family, friends, and colleagues. Lights play up the unique geometric shapes in the interiors, using shadow to give the restaurant a feeling of mystery.



Unlocked - Bar, Kitchen & Escape Room; Ground Floor Unit 3, 32nd Avenue, NH 8, Sector - 15, Gurugram

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

## IN OUR BACKYARD

# A WEB-BUILDER

ABHISHEK GULSHAN

X marks the spot. Only in this case, the treasure is a brightly-coloured spider. The Signature Spider gets its name from the four unique zig-zag patterns it weaves in the centre of its web. The decoration resembles letters, usually the letter 'X'. These patterns are named Stabilimentum, and are believed to serve the purposes, of attracting insects and warning larger creatures of the presence of the web.

These spiders build their webs quite close to the ground so as to catch low-flying insects such as bees, wasps, and butterflies.

The friendly, neighbourhood Signature Spider builds zig-zag letter-like patterns into its web

Though they typically prey on small insects, they are capable of killing something twice their own size. Signature Spiders also stay stationary at the centre of the web, usually holding their legs together in pairs. This creates the illusion that they are four-legged creatures to potential prey.



When the web is complete, they line up their legs with the white strips of the 'X' pattern and rest at the web's hollow centre. The hair on their intertwined legs

sact as a sun reflector, along with the white X in its web, giving the appearance of a brightly-coloured flower to attract insects. More often than not, insects fall for this

colourful deception. Like most spider species, females Signature Spiders are considerably larger than the males. The males usually build a web alongside the fe-

### Spinning a home

The Signature Spider on its web

\*ABHISHEK GULSHAN

male's, and this web is called a companion web. The eggs are laid on this web and are wrapped in a sac.

A spider is not an insect. It belongs to an invertebrate class of animals known as Arachnids. A quick test to confirm if something is an insect is to look at its legs: six make it an insect. Spiders play a vital role in maintaining the health of an ecosystem. They are natural biological pest controllers. Clear spider webs at home, but let them spin a web of intrigue in your backyard.

The writer is the founder of NINOX - Owl About Nature, a nature-awareness initiative. He is the Delhi-NCR reviewer for Ebird, a Cornell University initiative, monitoring rare sightings of birds. He formerly led a programme at WWF India.

## 5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



### LECTURE

**Academic** Acclaimed biologist Dr. Gagandeep Kang will deliver the inaugural lecture in a new series titled *Friends, Heroes, Scientists, Women*. This year-long series of lectures hopes to inspire budding women scientists, doctors, and engineers, and also to discuss key issues relating to the inclusion of women in these fields.  
**VENUE:** C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, IIC  
**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.



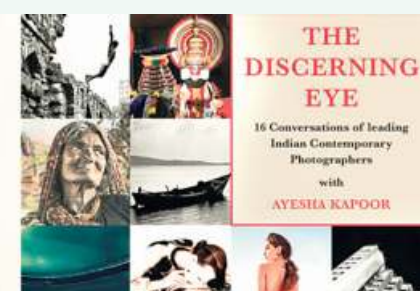
### DANCE

**Bharatanatyam** Dance exponents Ramya Kapadia and Seema Viswanath will perform *Vande Mataram: This Land, Our Home*, a thematic Bharatanatyam presentation this evening. Conceptualised and choreographed by Ramya Kapadia, the production seeks to drive home the idea that home is truly where the heart is.  
**VENUE:** Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre  
**TIME:** 7 p.m.



### FOOD

**Malabar special** Indus Express, otherwise a North Indian and Mughlai restaurant has organised a two-week long Malabar food festival. The dishes on the festival menu are made with coastal Malabar flavours and rich spices. The main course include Meen Mulagittathu, Chemmeen Porichathu, Mutton Pepper Fry, and more.  
**VENUE:** Vivanta New Delhi, Dwarka  
**TIME:** 7:30 p.m. - 11:45 p.m.



### BOOK LAUNCH

**The Discerning Eye** A class XII student of Modern School, Ayesha Kapoor will release her debut book, *The Discerning Eye*, which is a compilation of conversations by 16 leading Indian contemporary photographers, and highlights their special photographic moments. Ayesha will release the book in the presence of her parents.  
**VENUE:** Casurina Hall, India Habitat Centre  
**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.



### MUSIC

**Album release** Singer, songwriter and poet, Hanita Bhambri is all set to release her EP, *Nothing of Our Own*, at Akshara Theatre this evening. Hanita's music is influenced by Damien Rice and Ben Howard, her songs are often soul-searching reflections about love and loneliness, revolving around her personal experiences.  
**VENUE:** Akshara Theatre, Baba Khark Singh Marg  
**TIME:** 7:30 p.m.



BASAV BIRADAR

The visit to Sanchi World Heritage Site was exhilarating but exhausting. The assumption that late October would be suitably cooler was not true. In addition, my inherent need to understand each of the stories in the carved panels on the gateways took a toll. As my wife and I sat in our taxi, breathing a sigh of relief upon the AC being switched on, there was a knock on our driver's window.

A smiling man introduced himself as a guide who wanted to hitch a ride till the ASI museum. With an urge to be kind in the holy land of Buddhism, we agreed. Hearing us discuss Mahayana and Hinayana, he insisted that we visit the museum. We responded with silence. After the three-minute descent from the Sanchi hill, he got off, and said, "Trust me, you will love the museum." We obliged.

**Treasures at the museum**

Unlike at the Great Stupa, there was no one in the museum except for two attendants, who promptly switched on the air-conditioning for us. The museum, set up in 1919, has a collection of historically important artefacts, most of which were found during the excavations on the Sanchi hill.

We stood in silence as we gawked at the magnificent Lion Capital in the centre of the main hall. Although we had seen the remains of the Ashokan pillar near the stupa, we had not imagined the capital to be so beautiful. Incredibly, even though the pillar is dated to the 3rd Century BC, the lustre of the stone is intact. The four lion faces adorn the capital on the top of an abacus, with intricate duck carvings, mounted on an inverted lotus.

Among the many sculptures displayed in the hall, Buddha in meditation, carved in sandstone, is a stand-out because of the beautifully-lined cheever (drape). It gives us a glimpse of the imagination of the artist, and also of the 5th-Century Gupta period, which encouraged such high art. A lesser replica of the Ashoka pillar from the Gupta period is also on display in the mu-



**Place for mindfulness** (Clockwise from left) The Great Stupa, Sir John Marshall, the house where he lived and a close-up of the carving on an archway  
• GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK AND BASAV BIRADAR



# A PRAYER IN STONE

Sanchi's draw lies both in it being a centre of Buddhist heritage and a lesson in passionate archaeology



seum, in addition to many Bodhisattvas, Nagas, Yakshas and Yakshis.

**Rediscovery of Sanchi**

The most fascinating part of the museum is a gallery dedicated to the story of the rediscovery and the conservation efforts at Sanchi. Once Buddhism declined in central India by the 13th Century, the monuments in Sanchi were abandoned till they were rediscovered by General Taylor in 1818. Not surprisingly, this led to suspicions of hidden treasure in the Great Stupa, and soon, the site became a hunting ground for

treasure seekers. One infographic elaborated on how the Great Stupa was opened top to bottom in 1822, leaving a vast breach, by Captain Johnson. Another one said that the destruction was continued by Alexander Cunningham and Captain Maisey in 1851.

Although in 1881, Major Cole, the then curator of ancient monuments, conducted cleaning of the site, re-erection of fallen gateways and re-filling of the great breach in the Great Stupa, it was only in 1912 that conservation operations were carried out by Sir John Marshall, which lasted till 1919. The name reminded me of the time I had seen his picture in the Archaeological Survey of India regional office in Bengaluru. Marshall was responsible for the Indus Valley excavations at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. But I was not aware of his work in Sanchi.

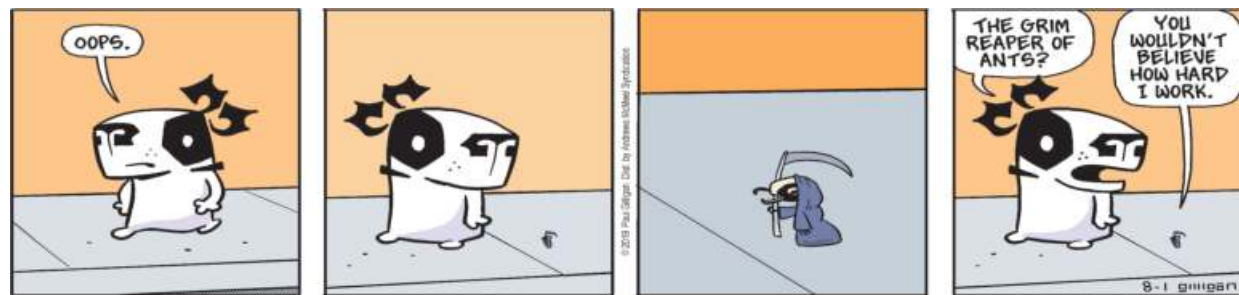
It was now past 2 pm and our stomachs were growling with hunger, but again, as we were exiting the museum, the enthusiastic attendant suggested that we see Marshall's house. Fascinated by the conservation story, we

walked the few paces to the lovely little bungalow. As we wandered through the rooms of the double-storeyed Gothic-style

building, marvelling at the study table and resting chair, we imagined Marshall burning the midnight oil trying to document every finding. We admired the three massive volumes of *The Monuments of Sanchi* – his seminal work on Sanchi. Aply, they are placed in protective glass casing. It is admirable that he and his team lived in Sanchi for seven years, enduring the long miserable summers, helping us learn about our heritage.

**TEMPLE RUN**  
Borobudur, a 9th-Century Mahayana Buddhist monument in Indonesia, is the world's largest Buddhist temple.

**POOCH CAFE**



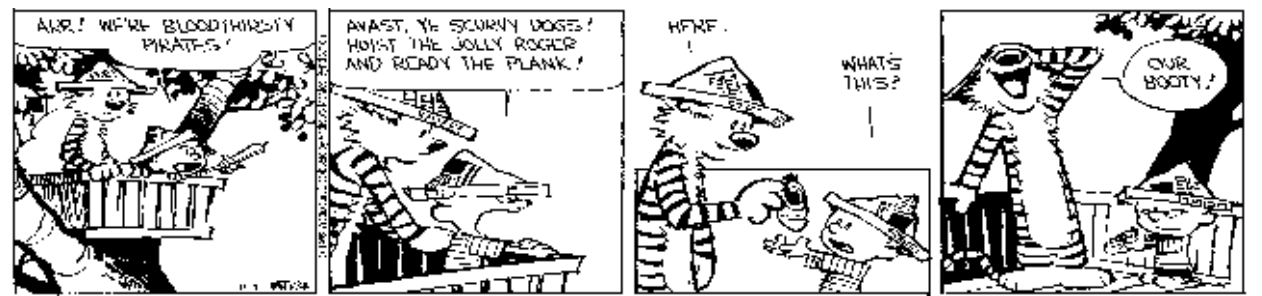
**PEANUTS**



**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE**



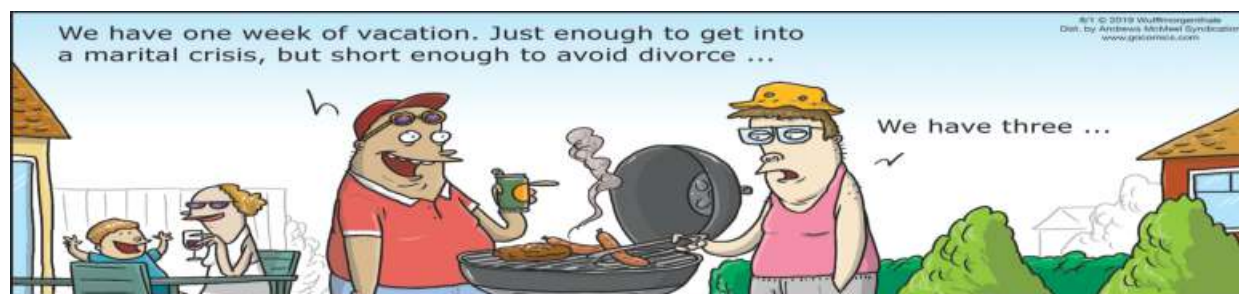
**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



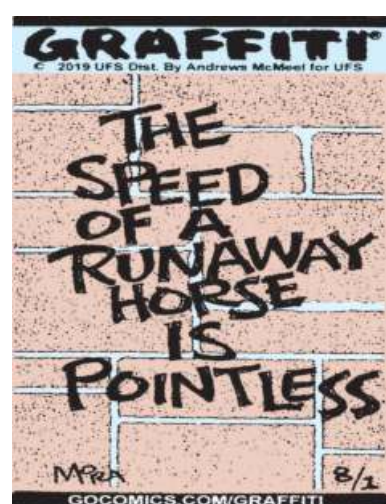
**TIGER**



**WUMO**



**PEARLS BEFORE SWINE**



**HEALTH CAPSULES**  
by Bron Smith  
WHAT ARE THE BEST SOURCES OF VITAMIN D?  
VITAMIN D IS ALSO FOUND IN CHITRILLE, MUSHROOMS, FORTIFIED ORANGE JUICE & SOY YOGURT.  
ALTHOUGH VITAMIN D IS ADDED TO COW'S MILK, OTHER DAIRY FOODS AND CEREALS, IT IS NOT A NATURAL PART OF THESE FOODS. THE BEST NATURAL SOURCES OF VITAMIN D ARE FISH AND OTHER SEA-FOOD. ONE STUDY REVEALED THAT FRYING SALMON IN VEGETABLE OIL ELIMINATED HALF OF ITS VITAMIN D CONTENT.  
Health Capsules is an intended to be a therapeutic medicine.

**THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13137**

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

- 4 Author of Pilgrim's Progress, d.1688 (6)
- 5 Remove fleece (5)
- 6 Far-reaching (9)
- 7 Coronary (5,6)
- 8 All the time (11)
- 12 Make a rapid escape (3,3,3)
- 16 Ecstasy (7)
- 17 Take into custody (6)
- 19 Public swimming pool (5)
- 23 Distant (3)

- Across
- 1 Film or book making huge profits (11)
- 9 Staying power (9)
- 10 Yellowish-brown (3)
- 11 See how the land lies (informal) (5)
- 13 Put in order – organise (7)
- 14 The man (anag) – uplifting song (6)
- 15 Intellectual capacity (6)
- 18 Can be upheld (7)
- 20 Groom (oneself) with evident vanity (5)
- 21 Mongrel (3)
- 22 Volume of liquid used in cooking (9)
- 24 Has an unhappy outcome (4,2,5)
- Down
- 2 Boy (3)
- 3 Funeral procession (7)

**Solution No. 13136**

C	C	C	L	O	P	S	T	A	U
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Solution will appear in The Hindu dated August 2, 2019.



# England sets sights on a historic double

Australia seeks to end an 18-year Ashes drought in Edgbaston as well as Old Blighty



**THE DATES**  
August 1 to 5, EDGBASTON (Birmingham)  
August 14 to 18, LORD'S  
August 22 to 26, LEEDS (Headingley)  
September 4 to 8, OLD TRAFFORD (Manchester)  
September 12 to 16, THE OVAL

## The battle begins

As yet another chapter of the Ashes unfolds at Edgbaston on Thursday, a look at how the previous ones have panned out

OVERALL	IN ENGLAND	EDGBASTON
Australia: <b>144</b>	Australia: <b>49</b>	Australia: <b>3</b>
England: <b>108</b>	England: <b>51</b>	England: <b>6</b>
Drawn: <b>94</b>	Drawn: <b>66</b>	Drawn: <b>5</b>

### TOP BATTERS

	I	Runs	HS	Avg	100s/50s
Don Bradman (Aus)	63	5,028	334	89.78	19/12
Jack Hobbs (Eng)	71	3,636	187	54.26	12/15
Allan Border (Aus)	82	3,548	200*	56.81	8/21

### TOP BOWLERS

	I	W	BBI	Avg	5W/10WM
Shane Warne (Aus)	72	195	8/71	23.25	11/4
Dennis Lillee (Aus)	57	167	7/89	21.00	11/4
Glenn McGrath (Aus)	60	157	8/38	20.92	10/0

### THE SQUADS (with shirt numbers):



ENGLAND

Joe Root (66), Moeen Ali (18), James Anderson (9), Jofra Archer (22), Jonny Bairstow (51), Stuart Broad (8), Rory Burns (27), Jos Buttler (63), Sam Curran (58), Joe Denly (24), Jason Roy (20), Ben Stokes (55), Olly Stone (26) and Chris Woakes (19)



AUSTRALIA

Tim Paine (7), Cameron Bancroft (43), Pat Cummins (30), Marcus Harris (14), Josh Hazlewood (38), Travis Head (62), Usman Khawaja (1), Marnus Labuschagne (33), Mitchell Marsh (8), Nathan Lyon (67), Michael Neser (18), James Pattinson (19), Peter Siddle (10), Steve Smith (49), Mitchell Starc (56), Matthew Wade (13) and David Warner (31)

### AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BIRMINGHAM

England returns to 'Fortress Edgbaston' for the first Test against Australia on Thursday looking to round off an already memorable season by completing a World Cup and Ashes double.

There's arguably more at stake for both sides than the series result.

For England, a home season billed as the most important in a generation started brilliantly with its impressive run to a first men's World Cup title.

For Australia, an Ashes series win under the dignified leadership of Tim Paine would help draw a line under the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa that led to long bans for former captain Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft.

All three batsmen are likely to feature at Edgbaston, with Bancroft set to hear the same booing that greeted Smith and Warner during the World Cup. Australia has not won an Ashes in England for 18 years, with its batsmen struggling against the heavily stitched Dukes ball on pitches that offer seam movement.

Yet the first Test will be Australia's opening First Class match of the tour, although the likes of Bancroft,

who has been captaining English county side Durham, has recent experience of local conditions.

The way an England side featuring several World Cup stars was dismissed for just 85 by Ireland at Lord's last week before winning the first Test between the countries tells its own story of ongoing top-order woes.

England captain Joe Root plans to move back to No. 3 to help shore up a top-order featuring novice Surrey opener Rory Burns and Jason Roy.

### Archer dropped

James Anderson, England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker, returns to the side following a calf injury and will team up again with regular new-ball partner Stuart Broad. Jofra Archer, who has been struggling with a side injury, however, will have to wait for his Ashes debut.

Australia, meanwhile, is poised to put its faith in a rapid four-man attack featuring James Pattinson and Pat Cummins.

Australia has not won at Edgbaston in any format since 2001, a run that includes its recent World Cup semifinal loss to England.

England, by contrast, has won its last 11 internationals at the raucous ground.

## Laker's feat is 63 years old

On July 31, 1956, he became the first bowler to take 10 wickets in an innings



**Dream spell:** Jim Laker is presented with the two balls with which he took nine and 10 wickets in a Test against Australia at Old Trafford. ■ DENNIS OULDS/GETTY IMAGES

### ANI NEW DELHI

It has been 63 years since Jim Laker's feat of becoming the first bowler to take all 10 wickets in a single Test innings against Australia.

"#OnThisDay in 1956, Jim Laker became the first bowler to pick 10 wickets in a Test innings. He picked up a total of 19 wickets in that Test against Australia. Do you remember which other bowler has picked up 10 wickets in an innings?" ICC tweeted on Wednesday.

In 1956, Laker returned figures of 10 for 53 in the second innings of the Ashes Test against Australia. In the

first inning of the same match, he bagged nine wickets giving away just 37 runs.

Due to his remarkable performance, England defeated Australia in the match by an innings and 170 runs.

In his 46 Tests, Laker claimed 193 wickets at 21.24 with a best of 10 for 53.

Laker also featured in 450 First Class matches and took 1,944 wickets.

In the history of Test cricket, Indian leg-spinner Anil Kumble is the second bowler to take all 10 wickets in a Test inning - 10 for 74.

Kumble completed his feat against Pakistan here in 1999.

## Sri Lanka makes it 3-0

### AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE COLOMBO

Sri Lanka defeated Bangladesh by 122 runs in the third and final ODI to win the three-match series 3-0 at the R. Premadasa Stadium on Wednesday.

**The scores:** Sri Lanka 294 for eight in 50 overs (Dimuth Karunaratne 46, Kusal Perera 42, Kusal Mendis 54, Angelo Mathews 87) bt Bangladesh 172 in 36 overs (Soumya Sarkar 69, Taijul Islam 39 n.o.).

## West Indies-A begins well

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA PORT OF SPAIN

West Indies-A made a promising start against India-A in the second unofficial Test with openers Kraigg Brathwaite and Montcin Hodge taking their team to 71 for no loss at lunch on Wednesday.

Brathwaite was batting on 29 off 95 balls and Hodge on 38 off 91 in the morning session which comprised 31 overs.

## Malcolm Nash passes away

Became famous after Sobers hit him for six sixes in an over

### AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON

Malcolm Nash, the Glamorgan bowler who entered cricket folklore when Garfield Sobers struck him for six sixes in an over, has died at the age of 74.

Nash's name was forever linked with that of Sobers after the West Indies star went on the attack during a County Championship match between Glamorgan and Nottinghamshire at Swansea in 1968.

It was the first time any batsman had hit six sixes in an over in first-class cricket. The first five balls were dispatched cleanly by the West Indian and the sixth was carried over the ropes by a fielder.

Nash, a left-arter, took 993 first-class wickets in a 17-year career between 1966 and 1983, while also scoring 7,129 runs and holding 148 catches.

Nash died in hospital in



Malcolm Nash.

■ COURTESY: GLAMORGAN CC

London after being taken ill at a function at Lord's Cricket Ground on Tuesday.

## Shaw suspension should ring an alarm bell

The punishment meted out to Prithvi is harsh, says Vengsarkar

### S. DINAKAR CHENNAI

Prithvi Shaw's suspension for consuming a substance banned by WADA should serve as a warning for other emerging cricketers.

The youngster with loads of talent committed several breaches while drinking what he claims to be a cough syrup, one that contained Terbutaline.

Now Terbutaline, prohibited in and out of competition, is known to increase muscle strength and enhance endurance.

Cricketers, particularly those who have been at the NCA or with the India under-19, 'A' and the senior team, have attended classes and sessions that specifically deal with the dangers of using banned substances. Shaw has been a part of all three sides.

### Clear protocol

And there is a clear protocol to be followed. When cricketers, especially those who have represented India recently, take a new medicine,



Prithvi Shaw. ■ GETTY IMAGES



Dilip Vengsarkar. ■ PTI

they are supposed to get the approval of Dr. Abhijit Salve of the BCCI or physio Patrick Farhat, or NCA physio Aashish Kaushik.

These men, who have a complete understanding of the subject, can guide the cricketers. Shaw did not consult them, nor, at the very

least, the Mumbai Ranji team doctor.

But then, Shaw is a 19-year-old top-order batsman with enormous potential and made such a dazzling start to his international career against the West Indies last year.

Then fitness concerns

**From now on he [Prithvi Shaw] will be very careful, even when he orders a bowl of soup**

### DILIP VENGSARKAR Former Indian captain

proved a roadblock and now comes the latest setback. Things are going wrong for this prodigy from Mumbai.

When *The Hindu* asked Indian batting great Dilip Vengsarkar for his opinion, he said, "You know, he comes from a very humble background. Prithvi lost his mother and his father used to lead a hand-to-mouth existence."

### Limited knowledge

Vengsarkar added, "Prithvi's knowledge about things other than cricket is limited. He wouldn't have thought of a banned substance when he purchased the cough syrup at night from the pharmacy. From now on he will be very careful, even when he orders a bowl of soup!"

Vengsarkar observed, "I think the punishment meted

out to Prithvi is harsh. The suspension should have been for a lesser period because I genuinely believe it was an innocent mistake. And he is a player with so much potential."

The former Indian captain said, "He cannot play cricket before mid-November and faces a tough period ahead."

### Need for a mentor

What Shaw needs now is a mentor, someone who can guide him through the difficult phase and Vengsarkar would only be too happy to take up the responsibility.

Shaw needs to stay strong and focused, banish the demon of self-doubts. Ability, he has in plenty.

His suspension ends on November 15 but Shaw is unlikely to be drafted into the Indian team immediately since he would have to prove his form and match fitness in domestic cricket.

But then, light often emerges from darkness. Shaw could come out of the ordeal stronger and wiser. He has to keep the faith.

## Vintage Sharath helps Lions pip Goa

Madhurika clinches the decisive game for the Chennai side

### UTT

### RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI

Just when it mattered, Sharath Kamal shifted gears to produce some vintage stuff in singles and mixed doubles. Claiming the 'golden point' that decided both these rubbers, Sharath contributed four points in Chennai Lions' thrilling 8-7 triumph over Goa Challengers in the Ultimate Table Tennis league here on Wednesday.

The battle between these teams, expected to go deep into the 18-day competition, was decided in the final game. Madhurika lost the first two games of the final singles to Archana Kamath and that left the score locked at 7-7. The Thane girl eventually clinched the final game and proved the tie-winner for her team.

"We, at Chennai Lions, believe that Goa is one of the most complete teams in the fray. So it feels great to take eight points off them," said Sharath after leading the way for Chennai.

### Going by rankings

The strategy of the teams to field their overseas players in



**Swinging it:** Sharath's wins in singles and mixed doubles tilted the scales in Chennai Lions' favour. ■ COURTESY UTT

search of early leads did not quite work this day. It pretty much went as per the world rankings in the first two singles and the score was 3-3.

World No. 8 Cheng I-Ching put Goa ahead by beating the 26th-ranked Petrisa Solja 2-1, a score that Chennai's Taigo Apolonia, ranked 52, needed to stop Alvaro Robles. Both these matches produced some thrills, but the higher-ranked player eventually prevailed.

The mixed doubles saw Amalraj and I-Ching take the

lead, but Sharath and Petrisa were not to be denied. They clinched the next two games, the decider on golden point to put Lions ahead for the first time.

Amalraj raced away with the first game against Sharath before the latter regained his touch in the second in a contest marked by long rallies and deft touches from both players. It was Sharath who had the last laugh after tossing away four match-points from 6-10.

Archana almost altered

the script, winning two games and making it 7-7. But Madhurika held her nerve as the Lions had the last roar.

**The results:** Chennai Lions bt Goa Challengers 8-7 (Petrisa Solja lost to Cheng I-Ching 10-11, 2-11, 11-6; Tiago Apolonia bt Alvaro Robles 11-5, 2-11, 11-7; Sharath Kamal & Petrisa bt A. Amalraj & Ching I-Ching 9-11, 11-6, 11-10; Sharath bt Amalraj 2-11, 11-9, 11-10; Madhurika Patkar lost to Archana Kamath 9-11, 10-11, 11-8).

**Thursday's fixture:** RP-SG Mavericks (Kolkata) v U Mumba (7 p.m.).

### PKL

### NANDAKUMAR MARAR MUMBAI

Ajinkya Pawar's stretch, turn, leap away to safety, touching two rivals in his range were on view for Jaipur Pink Panthers in the seventh Pro Kabaddi League tie against Haryana Steelers.

Teammate and ace raider Deepak Hooda (14 points from 23 raids) had laid the stage for a commanding 37-21 victory over Haryana Steelers. Defenders Sandeep Dhull (six tackle points), Vishal Mane (four tackle points) played their roles to perfection.

### Early action

Panthers' defence got into action early into the match, left-corner Sandeep Dhull quelled Naveen, with teammates quickly rushing across the mat to keep the raider from escaping.

Steelers' right-corner defender Sunil displayed sharp instincts while facing Deepak Hooda, keeping away from his range and dipping under to grab the reputed raider's ankle.

Raiders opted for caution, seeing the catchers' early form. Hooda got a toe touch down the middle for Panth-



**All-out aggression:** Haryana Steelers' defence faced constant pressure from Jaipur Pink Panthers raiders. ■ COURTESY PKL

ers, though big-made Naveen could not escape from an ankle-hold by Dhull on a do-or-die raid and found himself shoved out of the arena. Sachin Narwal's acrobatic leap over catchers did not work on another raid.

### Double strike

Steelers' attempt to pull level fell away after Hooda sent out rival captain Dharmaraj Cheralathan and Vikas Kale in one stroke.

The Panthers ace appeared to have been trapped near the centreline, but review supported the umpire's decision about the raider touching the line before getting pulled back into the Steelers' half.

The five-point lead at the break earned by Panthers got boosted by an all-out on Steelers, taking the lead to 17-8. Down to four players at one stage, Sunil displayed the grit to force out raider Sa-

chin Narwal on the sidelines on his own.

Naveen did his bit, a flying kick connecting with Dhull at left-corner, but the match was firmly in Panthers' grasp.

**The results:** Jaipur Pink Panthers 37 (Deepak Hooda 14, Sandeep Dhull 6) bt Haryana Steelers 21 (Vinay 6, Sunil 6).

UP Yodha 27 (Monu Goyat 6, Sumit 6) bt U Mumba 23 (Rohit Baliani 6, Surinder Singh 4). **Thursday's match:** Gujarat Fortunegiants v Dabang Delhi.





Partners in pursuit: Archana Kamath playing well helps in bringing out the best in him, says G. Sathiyam. • FILE PHOTO: BISWARANJAN ROUT

## Sathiyam-Archana duo eyes Olympic berth

‘Though it is not easy to make the grade for Tokyo, we will give it a shot’

### TABLE TENNIS

RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI

Things are looking bright for G. Sathiyam. Moving with the current, this hardworking engineer from Chennai is keen to build on the reputation of being the first Indian to breach the top-25 rankings bracket.

With precisely 51 weeks left for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, the 24th-ranked is not only looking to grab a place in the singles draw of 64, but also ready to make a serious bid, with Archana Kamath, for a slot in the 16-pair draw in mixed doubles.

Since there is a cap of one pair per country, Sathiyam and Archana will be competing with the reigning Asian

Games bronze medallists Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra.

“Right now, Archana and I are ranked 31 (as per Olympic rankings for July) whereas Sharath and Manika are 19th. Should we break into the top-20 of the World rankings before the qualification cycle ends (in April next year), we have a great chance,” said Sathiyam, who along with Archana, recently claimed the Commonwealth gold mixed doubles.

“Archana is playing unbelievably well in mixed doubles. That also helps in bringing out the best in me. Though it is not easy to make the grade for Tokyo, we will give it a shot in the right earnest,” assures the ONGC employee.

So far, only Germany has booked its berth in the mixed doubles after gaining the lone spot on offer in the European Games in June. Japan, as a host is assured of an entry. Other 14 places will be accounted as follows: Four from the 2019 World Tour Grand Finals, two each from 2020 World Tour German Open and 2020 World Tour Qatar Open, and one each from the qualification events of North America, Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania and the 2020 Japan Open.

Going forward, Sathiyam said, “In the upcoming World Tour events, we plan to take our rankings higher. We need to train harder and look to work on areas that need attention.”

Looking back at his recent four-medal haul, comprising two gold and two silver medals, from the Commonwealth championship in Cuttack, Sathiyam said, “I am pleased with the overall performance but it could have been better. Playing so many back-to-back matches in one week probably took its toll towards the business end (in singles and doubles).

### Pat for Harmeet

Sathiyam, while regretting the loss of the singles title to Harmeet Desai by letting go of a 6-3 lead in the decider, hailed the eventual champion. “He played as though he had nothing to lose. I panicked and paid the price. But credit to Harmeet for dealing so well with the pressure.”

## Harmanpreet up for the challenge

Captaincy came as surprise, says the drag-flicker

### HOCKEY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BENGALURU

The captaincy announcement came as a surprise to him but India drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh said on Wednesday he is up for the challenge in the upcoming Olympic Test event.

In the absence of regular skipper Manpreet Singh, who has been rested along with a few senior players, Harmanpreet will wear the captain's armband in the Test event involving India, Malaysia, New Zealand and hosts Japan.

The tournament starts on August 17.

“When I was told that I would be leading the team, it was a pleasant surprise. It is an honour and big responsibility. I am excited and looking forward to the challenge,” said Harmanpreet, who was part of India's Junior World Cup winning side in 2016.

Harmanpreet was one of the youngest in the Indian team that played at the 2016 Rio Olympics, a place he secured after a memorable



Harmanpreet Singh. • FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

outing in the FIH Champions Trophy in London only months before the sporting extravaganza.

### Rising star

India won a historic silver medal at the 2016 FIH Champions Trophy, and Harmanpreet was adjudged the Rising Player of the Tournament.

“When I look back, I feel fortunate to have come into

the Indian team at a time when there were stalwarts from whom I could learn a lot.

“Players like Sardar Singh and V.R. Raghunath had a positive impact during my nascent days in the senior team and their guidance helped me soak up the pressure of international hockey,” he said.

Talking about the upcoming tournament, Harmanpreet said he is eyeing nothing less than the top spot in his maiden assignment as skipper.

“Malaysia, Japan and New Zealand are good teams to play against and see where we stand as a unit ahead of the Olympic Qualifiers. Malaysia recently beat Germany in a match and Japan too are doing well while New Zealand is coming into the event with good exposure from the FIH Pro League,” he said.

“In the absence of senior players who are rested, it is important we step up our game. We are well-prepared. We will be playing every match with the intent to win.”

## Shooting team for Rio WC named

No place for Heena Sidhu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Olympian Annu Raj Singh and the Asian Games medalist Shweta Singh have fought their way into the women's air pistol team for the last World Cup of the season scheduled to be held in Rio from August 26.

Heena Sidhu who had competed in the last two Olympics and won the World Cup Final gold with a World record, loses her place.

While Manu Bhaker, who won the Olympic quota in the last World Cup in Munich, would shoot the MQS section, Yashaswini Singh Deswal has managed to re-

tain her spot.

The 14-year-old Esha Singh, who has been making impressive strides in the Junior World Cup, after having swept all the three gold medals in the women's, junior and youth sections in the last Nationals, will also shoot the MQS section.

In the men's section, Kiran Jadhav enters the air rifle team, in place of Ravi Kumar. Yash Vardhan has also made the cut while Asian Games silver medallist Deepak Kumar retains his place. Divyansh Singh Panwar who won the Olympic quota in air rifle, will shoot in the MQS section, along with Sandeep Singh.

It will be the last World Cup offering Olympic quota places.

### The team:

**Men:** Anish Bhanwala, Kiran Ankush Jadhav, Anhad Jawanda, Deepak Kumar, Parul Kumar, Swapnil Kusale, Sanjeev Rajput, Gaurav Rana, Saurabh Chaudhary, Adarsh Singh, Chain Singh, Ravinder Singh, Sandeep Singh, Sarabjot Singh, Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar, Yash Vardhan, Abhishek Verma. **Women:** Manu Bhaker, Apurvi Chandela, Sunidhi Chauhan, Yashaswini Singh Deswal, Mehuli Ghosh, Anjum Moudgil, Gaayathri Nithyanandam, Abhidnya Ashok Patil, Kajal Saini, Rahi Sarnobat, Tejaswini Sawant, Annu Raj Singh, Esha Singh, Shweta Singh, Elavenil Valarivan, Chinki Yadav.

## Rajput applies for head coach's job

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Former manager Lalchand Rajput has thrown his hat in the ring for the job of the Indian cricket team's head coach.

Rajput is currently the coach of Zimbabwe team but has shown his interest in the India job after the ICC has suspended Zimbabwe Cricket for government interference.

It has been learnt that Rajput, who was manager of the Indian team that lifted the inaugural T20 World Cup in South Africa in 2007, has sent his application to the BCCI before the stipulated deadline from Dubai airport,



Lalchand Rajput. • FILE PHOTO: K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

while he was on his way to Canada.

The BCCI had invited applications for positions of head coach, batting coach, bowling coach and fielding

coach and had set July 30 as the deadline.

The former Mumbai opener, who also played for India, has also coached Afghanistan and domestic side Assam apart from a team in the T20 Mumbai League for two years.

A source close to Rajput said if he is not considered for the head coach's position, Rajput has requested the BCCI to consider him for the batting coach.

Current coach Ravi Shastri has already got a 45-day extension along with other members of the support staff till India's upcoming tour of the West Indies.

## Will go with an open mind: Gaekwad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOLKATA

The Kapil Dev-led Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) tasked to appoint new head coach will not be prejudiced, former India coach and member of the panel Aunshuman Gaekwad said on Wednesday.

“There's no question of what Kohli says or anybody says,” Gaekwad told PTI.

He said the three committee members are awaiting the BCCI guidelines as they are yet to discuss the matter among themselves.

## ‘BCCI has done a fantastic work on anti-doping’

Players should take blame, says former BCCI official Shetty

G. VISWANATH  
MUMBAI

Ratnakar Shetty, former BCCI General Manager, Game Development, waxed eloquently about the efficient way the BCCI has been planning and implementing its anti-doping programmes.

Surprised by the young and promising cricketer Prithvi Shaw caught in the doping net, Shetty said: “The BCCI is doing fantastic work in so far as putting in place anti-doping programmes are concerned. If there is one thing that the BCCI has done correctly, it's on the anti-doping aspect.

“The BCCI can be proud of this fact, thanks to Dr. Vece Paes. He was very particular on this serious issue. I am very firm and clear that no cricketer who plays for India, India-A, Under -19, women's teams and in the domestic tournaments can claim excuse, other than his own mistake.”

### Pocket diary

It's been ten years since the ICC started the anti-doping activities and the BCCI too

has followed suit, positioning educational programs for the teams that play in domestic tournaments.

“A pocket diary is given to each and every player who plays in the BCCI tournaments, seniors, juniors and women and the girls.

The WADA announces a fresh list of prohibited substances every January.

It keeps on changing. Once the WADA publishes the list, the anti-doping department of the BCCI brings out a pocket diary and it is sent to all the associations for distribution to its players and physios.”

According to Shetty, the pocket diary gives all information on anti-doping.

“The diary has the prohibited list. The BCCI has also set up a 24x7 hotline. There is also an educational programme conducted for every team of every State. It's compulsory.

“The BCCI has all also put the anti-doping information on its website. If people feel that there is lack of education, I disagree with that. The BCCI has been proactive



Ratnakar Shetty. • PTI

on anti-doping for seven, eight years,” revealed Shetty.

**Pleased with outcome** Shetty is pleased with the outcome of dope tests done on Indian players since 2010.

“I will say that no current Indian player since 2010, when the ICC started dope tests, has ever been charged. There was an occasion when the WADA believed that certain substances dissolve in

water and hence certain things did not appear in urine samples.

“So in 2017 the ICC introduced blood tests. But no Indian cricketer has given adverse results which actually reflects on the BCCI's educational programmes and mechanisms.

“The Indian team physio has also taken lot of effort. And there is a reporting system. The Indian players will always ask the physio about a particular drug.”

Referring to the cough syrup that Shaw consumed which had Terbutaline, Shetty explained: “There are two types of cough syrups. One contains the banned substance which is not supposed to be consumed and the other doesn't. It's the player's responsibility to ensure that he is consuming the right syrup. The player knows everything. Today every State team has a qualified physio; he's part of the educational programme and he is trained. And all the States cooperate with anti-doping programmes.”

## SPSN's Olympics bonanza

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Sony Pictures Sports Network (SPSN), the official broadcaster of Olympic Games 2020, will start an on-air campaign, *Hum Honge Kamyab*.

It includes India-centric content featuring Indian athletes and Olympic disciplines. The film showcases aspiring athletes in training, inspired by their real-life heroes and past Olympians.

With less than a year to go for the multi-games global event in Tokyo, a specially customised line-up of programmes will also be aired on Sony Ten 1 channels every Friday night at 8 p.m., including India-specific series under ‘*Hum Honge Kamyab*’ and non-India content under ‘The Olympic Dream’, according to a media release.

The on-air campaign will have a section ‘Land of Legends’, highlighting stories of India's medal-winning hockey teams. Another episode ‘Can't Stay Down’ focuses on India's wrestling akharas, ‘Foul Play: Dutee’ features the story of Dutee Chand's trials with gender-testing policies.

‘Shakti: India's Super Women’ focuses on female sportspersons Dipa Karmakar, Deepika Kumari, Sakshi Malik and Sandhya Shetty who have overcome obstacles to achieve their sporting dreams.

The non-Indian content includes sections like ‘Unforgettable Olympic Moments’, ‘Olympics on the Record’, Olympic documentaries from Five Rings Films.

The network will also launch an Olympic Channel section on its app, featuring 50+ original series and more than 10 films, themed on the Olympic Games performers and achievements.



TV PICKS

**The Ashes:** 1st Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.  
**UTT:** Star Sports 1 & Star Sports Select 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**PKL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**TNPL:** Star Sports 3 (SD & HD), 7.15 p.m.

IN BRIEF



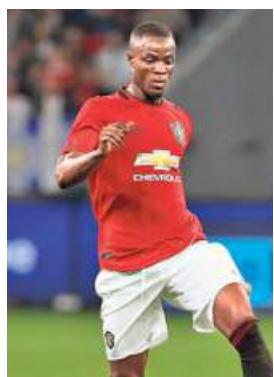
World Cup winning coach Jill Ellis to step down

WASHINGTON  
Jill Ellis, who coached the United States to a second consecutive Women's World Cup title earlier this month, will step down after her team's US Victory Tour in early October, US Soccer announced on Tuesday. Ellis, who was appointed to the job in May 2014 after Tom Sermanni was removed a month earlier, has compiled an overall record of 102-7 with 18 drawn ahead of her farewell tour with the US squad. AFP



Janette Brittin gets honour at The Oval

OVAL  
The Oval cricket ground on Wednesday named a room in the member's pavilion after Janette Brittin, a woman cricketer from England. It is the first time an English ground has named a facility after a woman cricketer to honour her contribution to both Surrey and England cricket. A veteran of 27 Tests and 63 ODIs, Brittin is Surrey's all-time leading female batsman and played a vital role in developing women's cricket in the country. ANI



Bailly set for long lay-off after knee surgery

LONDON  
Manchester United defender Eric Bailly will be out until the end of the year after suffering a knee injury, manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said on Tuesday. Bailly, 25, hurt his knee in last Thursday's 2-1 win against Tottenham Hotspur in the International Champions Cup (ICC) and had successful surgery on Tuesday. REUTERS

CAB gives voting rights to internationals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) has agreed in principle to give voting rights to former internationals.

Following a Special General Meeting (SGM) of the CAB here on Wednesday, CAB president Sourav Ganguly said, "We will give them voting rights if the court does not change the verdict. After this we will be fully Lodha (Committee recommendation) compliant."

At present, CAB has 121 members with voting rights. At least 15 cricketers from the State have played at the international level.

The CAB will wait for the Supreme Court hearing on August 8 before changing its constitution to incorporate the new provision, as per the decision taken at the SGM.

"After the amendment we will appoint an electoral officer. We will proceed with the AGM after August 8," Ganguly said.

# Satwiksairaj and Ashwini cause a flutter

The duo stuns Olympic silver medallists Soon and Ying; Saina returns in style; Srikanth made to sweat

THAILAND OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BANGKOK  
India's mixed doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa on Wednesday recorded one of the biggest wins of their career, stunning Olympic silver medallists Chan Peng Soon and Goh Liu Ying in the first round of Thailand Open.

The unseeded Indian pair battled for one hour and two minutes to get past the fifth seeded Malaysian pair of Soon and Ying 21-18, 18-21, 21-17.

In women's singles, star shuttler Saina Nehwal returned to the court in style, registering a 21-17, 21-19 win over local hope Phittayaporn Chaiwan.

**Five Indian men through**  
It was good news for Indians in the men's singles event too as K. Srikanth, H.S. Prannoy, P. Kashyap, B. Sai Praneeth and Shubhanker Dey progressed to the next round.

Fifth seed Srikanth was made to toil hard for one hour and seven minutes by Chinese qualifier Ren Peng Bo before winning 21-13, 17-21, 21-19.

Prannoy defeated Hong Kong's Wong Wing Ki Vincent of 21-16, 22-20, while Kashyap came from a game down to beat Israel's Misha Zilberman 18-21, 21-8, 21-14.



Smashing away: Ashwini Ponnappa and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy recorded one of the biggest wins of their career. ■ FILE PHOTO

Lady luck smiled on Subhankar Dey as he was handed a walkover by top seed and World No. 1 Kento Momota of Japan.

In the second round, Subhankar faces compatriot Sai Praneeth who rallied from a game down to beat Kantaphon Wangcharoen of Thailand 17-21, 21-17, 21-15.

However, it was curtains for the Verma brothers, Sourabh and Sameer. Sourabh fought hard for 64 minutes against seventh seed Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan before going down 21-23 21-19 5-21 in his opening match.

Sameer squandered a first game advantage to lose 23-21, 11-21, 5-21 to Lee Zii Jia of

Malaysia.

The results (first round):

**Men:** K. Srikanth bt Ren Peng Bo (Chn) 21-13, 17-21, 21-19; H.S. Prannoy bt Wong Wing Ki Vincent (Hkg) 21-16, 22-20; P. Kashyap bt Misha Zilberman 18-21, 21-8, 21-14; Sai Praneeth bt Kantaphon Wangcharoen (Tha) 17-21, 21-17, 21-15; Kanta Tsuneyama (Jpn) bt Sourabh Verma 23-21, 19-21, 21-5; Zii Jia (Mas)

bt Sameer Verma 21-23, 21-11, 21-5; Subhankar Dey w.o. Kento Momota.

**Women:** Saina Nehwal bt Phittayaporn Chaiwan (Tha) 21-17, 21-19; Chen Xiao Xin (Chn) bt Sai Uttejitha Rao Chukka 21-17, 21-7.

**Mixed doubles:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Ashwini Ponnappa bt Chan Peng Soon & Goh Liu Ying (Mas) 21-18, 18-21, 21-17.

## It's Lady Legend vs. Accolade

BENGALURU: Stalemates Lady Legend and Accolade may fight out the finish of the Bangalore City Sprint Championship Gold Cup (1,200m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Thursday (Aug 1).

False rails (width about 8.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

**1. AUGUST PLATE (1,100m),** maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2-30 p.m.: 1. Altair (4) Irvan 56, 2. Caesars Palace (8) Mark 56, 3. Country's Jewel (3) R. Shelar 56, 4. Knotty Oak (5) Antony 56, 5. Siroco (2) Dhebe 56, 6. Donna Bella (1) Suraj 54.5, 7. Sandarina (7) Arshad 54.5 and 8. Will To Win (6) Zervan 54.5.

**1. KNOTTY OAK,** 2. WILL TO WIN, 3. DONNA BELLA

**2. COMMANCHE PLATE (DIV. II),** (1,400m), rated 00 to 20, 5-y-o & over, 3-00: 1. Barog (6) Irvan 60, 2. Noble Splendor (1) Nazerul 59.5, 3. All Said And Done (9) Adarsh 56.5, 4. Winx (4) T.S. Jodha 56.5, 5. Purity (10) Antony 56, 6. String Of Pearls (5) Rayan 54.5, 7. Aafrikaan (8) Kiran Rai 53.5, 8. Racy Princess (7) A. Merchant 53, 9. Zedclass (3) Jagadeesh 52.5 and 10. Proudwith (2) Indrajit Singh 52.

**1. BAROG,** 2. PURITY, 3. WINX

**3. LT. COL. GAUNT MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,600m),** rated 45 to 65, 5-y-o & over, 3-30: 1. Dr Logan

(6) Srinath 60, 2. Star Cracker (3) T.S. Jodha 59, 3. Gypsy (5) Suraj 57.5, 4. Striking Grey (8) Darshan 56.5, 5. Good Time Indeed (4) Trevor 56, 6. Super Smart (1) Chetan G 55.5, 7. Standout (12) Antony 54.5, 8. Starry Wind (9) Irvan 54, 9. Aaron The Baron (7) Sandesh 53, 10. Masada (11) Arshad 53, 11. Torsoro (2) R. Manish 53 and 12. Wild Wild Angels (10) Dhebe 53.

**1. STRIKING GREY,** 2. STAR CRACKER, 3. DR LOGAN

**4. BANGALORE CITY SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIP GOLD CUP (1,200m),** 3-y-o & over, (Terms), 4-00: 1. Accolade (4) Suraj 60, 2. Dream Catcher (1) John 60, 3. Smile Stone (3) Arshad 60, 4. Southpaw (2) Srinath 60, 5. Star Baron (5) A. Imran 60, 6. Subah Ka Tara (7) Zervan 60 and 7. Lady Legend (6) Trevor 58.5.

**1. LADY LEGEND,** 2. ACCOLADE, 3. DREAM CATCHER

**5. KARNATAKA SUB-AREA CUP (1,400m),** rated 60 & above, 4-30: 1. Merlot (5) John 60, 2. Buscardo (6) Vinod Shinde 57.5, 3. Haedi's Folly (8) Irvan 57.5, 4. Into The Groove (3) Suraj 57.5, 5. Shesmyscript (10) Trevor 57.5, 6. Castaway (2) Zervan 56.5, 7. Rum Runner (4) B. Harish 56, 8. Regal Music (1) Vaibhav 55.5, 9. Fire Glow (7) T.S. Jodha 55, 10. Snowdon (11) Sandesh 55 and 11. Spiritous (9) Antony 54.5.

**1. SNOWDON,** 2. SPIRITOUS, 3. SHESMYSRIPT

**6. KUNIGAL STUD PLATE (1,400m),** rated 30 to 50, 4-y-o & over, 5-00: 1. Star Man (9) Trevor 60, 2. Colonel Harty (4) Rajesh K 58, 3. Kerazano (1) Sandesh 58, 4. Venus Bay (3) Antony 58, 5. Game Changer (5) Chetan G 57.5, 6. Bold Move (7) S. Shareef 57, 7. Amazing Skill (6) Mark 56.5, 8. Black Whizz (8) T.S. Jodha 56, 9. Bernardini (2) Suraj 53.5, 10. Incitatus (11) Kiran Rai 53.5 and 11. Scarlet Princess (10) M. Kumar 53.5.

**1. KERAZANO,** 2. BERNARDINI, 3. COLONEL HARTY

**7. COMMANCHE PLATE (DIV. I),** (1,400m), rated 00 to 20, 5-y-o & over, 5-30: 1. Only Prince (6) R. Ravi 60, 2. First Step (9) John 59.5, 3. Indian Brahms (2) T.S. Jodha 59.5, 4. Above The Rest (4) Chetan G 59, 5. All By Myself (1) M. Naveen 58.5, 6. Bravado (5) A. Merchant 58.5, 7. Savisa (8) Vinod Shinde 58, 8. Able Master (7) Darshan 57, 9. Good Word (10) S. Shareef 55.5 and 10. Seaborn (3) Rayan 55.

**1. ABOVE THE REST,** 2. ALL BY MYSELF, 3. FIRST STEP

Day's best: **SNOWDON** Double: **LADY LEGEND - KERAZANO** Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Tr (0): 2, 3 and 4; (ii): 5, 6 and 7.

## Gujrathi wins Biel tourney

P.K. AJITH KUMAR KOZHIKODE

It is not every day that you would find an Indian player other than Viswanathan Anand making a final, winning move in a prestigious chess tournament. So what Vedit Gujrathi has achieved in the Swiss tour of Biel on Tuesday is creditable.

Even more creditable is the way the 24-year-old from Nashik won the Biel International Chess Festival. Not merely did he clinch the title with a round to spare, but he finished with a 3-0 demolition of Iran's promising teenager Parham Maghsoodloo in the final round — when he could have opted to play it easy.

And Gujrathi won the tournament in a demanding format that combined all the three formats of chess — classical, rapid and blitz.

"This could be a turning point for him," Grandmas-



Vedit Gujrathi ■ SIMON BOHNENBLUST / BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

ter Abhijit Kunte, who has worked with him on several occasions, told *The Hindu* over phone from Pune. "The way he played at Biel was remarkable. I have always believed that he had the potential to reach the World's Top 10."

"Vedit has age on his side, though to score Elo points after crossing 2700 is never easy," said Kunte.

## The red and gold brigade's remarkable journey

Kapil to be honoured with Bharat Gaurav

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA KOLKATA

In a city used to political rallies and processions, a sea of humanity descended on Kumartuli Park in north Kolkata last Sunday to celebrate something the metropolis is equally passionate about — football.

It was at this park that East Bengal, the iconic football club, began its journey, playing its first match soon after its formation in 1920. The venue was awash in red and gold as thousands of East Bengal fans (approximately 60,000, according to the club), across generations, came together to witness the beginning of their club's centenary celebrations.

The occasion marked a spectacular prelude to East Bengal's efforts to immortalise its entry into the select club of centuries which includes celebrated rivals Mohun Bagan and Mohammedan Sporting.

The list

East Bengal will officially kick off the centenary celebrations on its Foundation Day on Thursday with a glittering ceremony at the Netaji Indoor Stadium.

At the function, the club will award India's first World Cup-winning captain Kapil Dev with its highest honour, Bharat Gaurav. Kapil is no stranger to football as he had donned the club's colours in an exhibition match against Mohun Bagan in 1992.

Stalwarts like Manoranjan Bhattacharya and Bhaskar Ganguly will be honoured with lifetime achievement awards.

There will also be special awards for two iconic names — Bhaichung Bhutia and P.K. Banerjee — who contributed to the club's growth as player and coach respectively.

The function will also felicitate the family members of three founder-members — Suresh Chowdhury, Sailesh Bose and Ramesh Chandra (Nasha) Sen.

Three former secretaries — Jyotish Chandra Guha, Nripen Das and Dipak (Pal-tu) Das — will also be ho-



Kapil. ■ FILE PHOTO

noured posthumously.

The decision of Qess Corp, the club's present investor, to delink itself after the current season cast a shadow over the celebrations as many of the current players and coach, Alejandro Menendez, were absent.

This, however, did not dampen the atmosphere as a large number of legendary names from the past joined the multitude of supporters in a colourful procession that concluded at the club's present address opposite the Eden Gardens after covering a six-km distance.

There was a carnival atmosphere as supporters waved the club flag, marching alongside tableaux depicting its history.

Bhowmick's wish

"Let us hope that East Bengal wins the I-League this time and make the centenary celebrations more memorable," said Subhash Bhowmick, the man who, as coach, helped the club win the ASEAN Club Championship in 2003.

Bhutia, named the "biggest find of the century" by the club, and legendary forward Sukumar Samajpati wished the club a great future.

"East Bengal has remained one of the biggest names in Indian football ever since its inception.

"That it is now completing a century with the same intensity makes its achievement unique," Samajpati said.

## 'Never asked umpire to cancel four off overthrow'

I went straight to Tom Latham and said 'Mate, I am so sorry': Ben Stokes



Ben Stokes. ■ AFP

CRICKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LONDON

With his "hand on heart", England's World Cup hero Ben Stokes says he never asked the umpires to cancel the four runs off an overthrow during the epic final against New Zealand.

One of the biggest turning points of the July 14 final was the overthrow on the fourth ball of the final over bowled by Trent Boult.

In a bid to complete his second run, a diving

Stokes, his bat outstretched, accidentally deflected the ball coming from the deep mid-wicket region to the third man boundary.

"I saw all of that. I was thinking to myself, did I say that? But hand on heart, I did not go up to the umpires and say something like that to the umpires," Stokes said in the latest episode of BBC podcast *Tuffers and Vaughan*.

Apologies

Stokes, who remained not out on 84 at the end of reg-

ulation play before swinging his bat again in the Super Over, said he apologised to New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson and wicketkeeper Tom Latham as the ball rolled past the boundary.

"I went straight to Tom Latham and said 'Mate, I am so sorry', looked over to Kane (Williamson) and said 'I'm sorry'," he said.

Stokes' England teammate James Anderson had earlier claimed that the all-rounder had asked for the four overthrow runs to be cancelled.

SHOOTING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

It was like old times for Elizabeth Susan Koshy. The 25-year-old Kerala girl gained plenty of confidence by winning the women's rifle 3-position gold, in a top class field, in the 12th Sardar Sajjan Singh Sethi Masters shooting championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, on Wednesday.

With the final staged at the final hall, instead of the 50-metre range, the atmosphere added to the aspirations of Elizabeth who remembered that she had won the gold in 2017.

"Honestly I was not thinking about winning. In the last year and a half I have been struggling with my shooting. Coach Stanislav Lapidus was the backbone to my shooting. After he left Indian shooting, I lacked the guidance.

"Of course, I have worked with many other coaches. I was not getting the feel in my shooting. However, I told myself that it would not be an excuse," said Elizabeth, after receiving a congratulatory hug and peck from her mother Sosa.

After qualifying in the sixth place, with a modest score of 1161, Elizabeth was in a different zone in the final. She was in the third



Crack shots: The rifle 3-position gold champion Elizabeth Susan Koshy, centre, along with Tejaswini Sawant, left, and K.C. Hema. ■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

place after 15 shots in kneeling with 152.1, on par with Anjali Bhagwat, and 1.6 point behind leader Lajja Gauswami.

After 15 more shots in prone, Elizabeth was firmly in the lead ahead of Tejaswini Sawant, Anjum Moudgil and Lajja. Elizabeth enhanced the lead in the standing position to triumph with a 4.5 point margin over Tejaswini, while K.C. Hema sneaked to the bronze, after having qualified in the eighth place. "Hard work has paid. I guess, I still have the national record in final. Today, I did not have the feel, but forgot about everything else and focused on my technique. The shots went very well. I think, God was pulling the trigger," said Elizabeth with a smile.

**The results: Men: 25m standard pistol:** 1. Gurpreet Singh 577, 2. Vijayveer Sidhu 576, 3. Adarsh Singh 574. **Juniors:** 1. Vijayveer 576, 2. Adarsh 574, 3. Anish Bhanwala 573. **50m rifle prone:** 1. Tarun Yadav 622.6, 2. Sanjeev Rajput 619.6, 3. Sateyendra Singh 618.2. **Juniors:** 1. Abid Ali Khan 620.5, 2. Gohil Harsharjinhji 617.4, 3. Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar 614.7. **Women: 50m rifle 3-position:** 1. Elizabeth Susan Koshy 460.1 (1161), 2. Tejaswini Sawant 455.6 (1161), 3. K.C. Hema 444.5 (1158). **Juniors:** 1. Ayushi Podder 444.9 (1147), 2. Prashidhi 444.4 (1148), 3. Shirin Godara 432.3 (1135). **Mixed air pistol:** 1. Air India (Annu Raj Singh, Deepak Sharma) 17 (385, 572), 2. ONGC (Shweta Singh, Amanpreet Singh) 5 (386, 580), 3. Railways (Ruchita Vinerkar, Hemendra Singh) 17 (384, 568).

## Real's pre-season woes continue

Goes down to Tottenham, which plays Bayern in final

FOOTBALL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MUNICH

Real Madrid's disastrous pre-season continued as it lost 1-0 to Tottenham in Munich.

"Our defeat was well deserved," Real midfielder Tony Kroos told *German TV* after the match on Tuesday.

In the second match of the evening, Bayern Munich thrashed Fenerbahce 6-1.

Champions League runner-up Tottenham will play Bayern in Wednesday's final. Real will have a chance to find winning form run

against a Turkish side that finished its game against the host in disarray.

For Spurs, Harry Kane scored the only goal of the game with a deft finish after pouncing on a disastrous pass by Marcello, who was trying to prevent a throw in, after 22 minutes.

In the late game, Bayern scored five in the first half with two goals from Thomas Muller and one each from Renato Sanches, Leon Goretzka and Kingsley Coman.

Fenerbahce's German international attacker Max Kruse scored a late consolation goal.



The star: Thomas Muller fired in two goals for Bayern Munich against Fenerbahce. ■ REUTERS



## IN BRIEF


**Meghan launching clothing line in U.K.**

LONDON  
The Duchess of Sussex is launching a clothing line to support a charity that helps unemployed women find work. Meghan has teamed up with designer Misha Nonoo and British retailers Marks & Spencer, John Lewis & Partners and Jigsaw to create a workwear collection to help the charity Smart Works. AP


**U.S. restores grizzlies to protected species list**

WASHINGTON  
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has restored federal protections to grizzly bears in and around Yellowstone National Park, abiding by a court ruling last year that removal of the bears' threatened status violated the Endangered Species Act. The reinstatement came after several years of legal wrangling. REUTERS


**Netflix debuts Scorsese's Irishman trailer**

NEW YORK  
Netflix on Wednesday unveiled the trailer for Martin Scorsese's long-awaited film, *The Irishman* — a major project for the streaming giant featuring Oscar winners Robert de Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci, all digitally enhanced to look younger. The film is based on the book *I Heard You Paint Houses*. AFP

## Adventurers to test theory of ancient route from Egypt to Black Sea

A team of two dozen researchers and volunteers from eight countries are preparing to sail on a reed boat for 1,300 km

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BELOSLAV  
Were the ancient Egyptians able to use reed boats to travel as far as the Black Sea thousands of years ago?

A group of adventurers believe so, and will try to prove their theory by embarking on a similar journey in reverse.

In mid-August, the team of two dozen researchers and volunteers from eight countries will set off from the Bulgarian port of Varna, hoping their *Abora IV* reed boat will take them the 700 nautical miles through the Bosphorus, the Aegean and as far as the island of Crete.

The team is specifically seeking to prove a hypothesis lent credence by ancient Greek historian Herodotus, said the expedition's German leader, Dominique Goerlitz.

Herodotus wrote: "Egyptians sailed through the Black Sea to get materials

that they could not have from the east Mediterranean."

Mr. Goerlitz, 53, and his team say they drew inspiration for the design of the 14-metre boat from ancient rock drawings from upper Egypt and the Caucasus.

The construction was carried out with the help of volunteers and two members of the Aymara indigenous community from Bolivia's Lake Titicaca, Fermin Lima-chi and his son Yuri.

It is no accident that the *Abora IV* bears a striking resemblance to the famous *Ra II* reed boat that Norwegian adventurer Thor Heyerdahl used in his 1970 attempt to cross the Atlantic; Mr. Lima-chi's father helped build that vessel.

Large bundles of totora reed were lashed together with ropes to form the main body of the vessel before it was equipped with a wooden



Ahoy there: Members of the crew assembling the reed boat *Abora IV* in Beloslav, Bulgaria. AFP

mast and two reed compartments for sleeping.

In all, 12 tonnes of totora reed and 2 km of rope went into making the boat, which

will have two sails — measuring 62 sq.m. and 40 sq.m., Fermin Lima-chi said.

"The main question of all is whether this boat... is able

to cross the difficult island shelves of the Aegean Sea," Mr. Goerlitz said.

Reaching the Cyclades islands and then Crete will be

crucial for proving his initial hypothesis, he added, as the Minoan civilisation which flourished there from 2700 B.C. to 1200 B.C. was long proven to have traded with Egypt.

**Soaking water**

Once hoisted into the water on Thursday, the boat will need two and a half weeks to soak, taking in between five and 10 tonnes of water.

Thanks to the billions of air chambers inside its porous construction material, the boat cannot crack or sink, according to Mr. Goerlitz.

During his last such expedition, on the *Abora III* in 2007, he set out from New York bound for southern Spain in a bid to prove that Stone Age man made similar trans-Atlantic journeys.

Mr. Goerlitz's team sailed for 56 days before a storm ripped apart his boat 900 km

short of Portugal's Azores Islands.

"I am 100% sure that this ship will never sink. And as long as the ship is floating we have a safety raft here," said volunteer Mark Pales, a 42-year-old electrician from the Netherlands.

Another volunteer, Heike Vogel, a parcel company employee from Germany, was looking forward to her first time sailing, after helping on two previous expeditions without venturing on board.

"It will be a new situation for me," said Ms. Vogel, 35.

In order to communicate with large cargo vessels on their way — a major danger on the high seas — Mr. Goerlitz's crew will have modern satellite and radio communication equipment on board.

"Of course, it would be totally arrogant and stupid (not to use modern equipment). It is an experiment of science and not of risk," he said.

## Study tests diet link to cancer treatment

Tumour growth slowed in mice when an amino acid, found in red meat and eggs, was restricted

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TOKYO

Diet is already a key part of managing diseases like diabetes and hypertension, but new research adds to a growing body of evidence that it could help cancer treatment too.

The study, published on Thursday in the journal *Nature*, found restricting intake of an amino acid found in red meat and eggs significantly enhanced cancer treatment in mice, slowing tumour growth.

"These are very strong effects, and they are effects that are as strong as we would see with drugs that work," said lead researcher

Jason Locasale, an associate professor at Duke University's School of Medicine.

"What this study is showing is that there are many situations where a drug by itself doesn't work, but if you combine the drug with the diet, it works, or the radiation therapy doesn't work well, but if you combine... with the diet, it works well," he said.

The study focused on restricting intake of the amino acid methionine which is key to a process called one-carbon metabolism that helps cancer cells grow.

The researchers first tested methionine restriction in healthy mice to confirm it

### You're starving the cancer cells of certain nutrients, at a very basic level

JASON LOCASALE  
Associate professor at Duke University

was having the desired effects on metabolism and then moved to testing it in mice with colorectal cancer and soft tissue sarcomas.

They found that a low dose of chemotherapy, which on its own had no effect on colorectal cancer, led to "marked inhibition of tumour growth" when combined with methionine restriction.

Similarly, combining methionine restriction with

radiation therapy in the case of the soft tissue sarcoma reduced tumour growth.

"You're starving the cancer cells of certain nutrients, at a very basic level," explained Mr. Locasale.

He cautioned that the results should not be extrapolated beyond the cancers tested so far, and that the research was far from being tested in humans.

"What it's showing is that there are very interesting interactions between the food we eat, how it changes metabolism... and then how those changes in cellular metabolism might have an effect on tumour growth."

"Before drawing any con-

clusions about the potential for dietary restriction as an approach to treating cancer, human studies are needed," said Paul Pharoah, a professor of cancer epidemiology at the University of Cambridge.

Mr. Locasale and his colleagues extended the research by testing a methionine restricted diet in six healthy humans, and found that the effect on human metabolism appeared similar to that seen in mice.

That suggests that the diet could have a similar effect on certain tumours in humans, though Mr. Locasale warned it was far too early to draw any definitive conclusions.

## Robots trained to make independent choices

They will be used in industries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MOSCOW

Scientists have developed a software that allows artificial intelligence (AI) robots with technical vision to set out and adjust the movement trajectories of their tools without reducing given precision levels.

The team from Far Eastern Federal University (FE-FU) in Russia developed and implemented a new principle for smart industrial robot control. Robots are able to set and adjust the trajectories of tools movement on their own while processing details under uncertain conditions and in a changing



working environment. The new software allowed the team to get around 0.5 mm precision in the operation of robotic tools, including the actions that require additional force application.

Using a technical vision system, a machine forms a virtual image of its workspace, recognises each piece, and determines its exact position.

## Indonesian villagers resist relocation plan from Komodo

'Closing the island is a risk to homes and livelihoods'

REUTERS  
BANGKOK

Thousands of residents of an island in eastern Indonesia are resisting a government plan to relocate them and close the island next year in a bid to conserve rare Komodo dragons.

Last week, Indonesian authorities said the island of Komodo would be closed next year to allow for the recovery of the reptiles and the Komodo National Park, the only habitat for the world's largest lizard species.

About 2,000 people would also be moved off the island, and risk losing their homes and livelihoods, said Gregorius Afoma, director of human rights group Sun-spirit for Justice and Peace.

"These are people who had already lost their land to



A Komodo dragon

the park, and suffered as authorities prioritised tourism. Now they will lose again," he said.

"They have not benefited much from the tourism boom, and with the relocation they will be isolated even more, despite evidence that local people help conservation efforts."

Poorer countries in Southeast Asia are particularly ill-equipped to limit the "invisible burden" of over-

tourism, according to a report earlier this year from The Travel Foundation charity in Britain.

Growing tourist numbers forced authorities in Thailand last year to close a beach made famous by the Leonardo DiCaprio film *The Beach* to give its ecosystem time to recover.

But shutting down destinations is not the right approach unless it is an ecological emergency, said Megan Epler Wood, director of the International Sustainable Tourism Initiative at Harvard University.

"Relocation of villagers is a drastic act," she said.

Instead, the system should be revamped to "build local communities into the revenue generation process, and manage tourism flows," she said.

## Ocean drama



Jaw-dropping sight: A sea lion got caught accidentally in the mouth of a humpback whale in Monterey Bay, California. The whale did not close its jaws on the sea lion, which was probably shaken by the experience but managed to swim away. Humpback whales and sea lions usually manage to stay out of each other's way while feeding on small fish. CHASE DEKKER/AFP

## Short story by Steinbeck is out in English

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
NEW YORK

In the mid-1950s, writer John Steinbeck wrote a series of columns for the French newspaper *Le Figaro* titled "One American in Paris". One of those pieces, widely believed to have never come out in English, appears this week in the summer issue of *The Strand Magazine*, a literary quarterly which has published rare works by Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and many others.

"Steinbeck is seen as a uniquely American writer, who wrote about American themes... but this story casts light on Steinbeck the international traveller," says *Strand* managing editor Andrew Gulli, who found the Paris story in the online Steinbeck archive at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

## Archaeological excavation cut short in U.S. site

Water table made digging unsafe

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BOSTON

An archaeological dig in Boston's historic Chinatown has been cut short after it turned up a 1980s music cassette, a toy dinosaur and other bric-a-brac.

The city's Archaeology Program said that it was wrapping up its three-week excavation because researchers reached the water table, and it was unsafe to dig further.

In recent days, researchers have been humorously tweeting some of their "finds", including a cassette by Boston R&B group New Edition, a dinosaur toy, linoleum flooring and other items from the 1970s and 1980s.

Researchers had hoped to turn up artefacts shedding new light on Boston's immigrants not only those from China but also Syria, Ireland and England who sought new lives in Chinatown from 1840 to 1980.

**Deeper down**

City archaeologist Joe Bagley said the dig was the first in Chinatown, and his team will "now have a better understanding of how complex and deeply buried backyards may be" there.

"We were tantalising close to the older deposits," Mr. Bagley said. "It was frustrating to see the water on the site after weeks of work trying to get down to deeper/older deposits."

## Homegrown fashion emerges in troubled Somalia

Designers are challenging the idea that imported garments are for the well-to-do while locally made clothes are for the rest

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MOGADISHU

Every time young fashion designer Hawa Adan Hassan makes a new gown for a paying customer, she also makes her dreams come true.

"My whole life, fashion design was a dream," says the 23-year-old university student, who last year began running a cottage business out of her family's home in Hamarweyne, the historic heart of Somalia's coastal capital Mogadishu.

For Ms. Hassan, it began with art, when she found herself drawn to sketching clothes rather than the animals and landscapes preferred by her peers.

Then she set to work on tailoring to turn her images into reality.



Sleek lines: Muna Mohamed Abdullahi at work. AFP

"I realised this could be my field of expertise," she says.

For decades, war and upheaval left ordinary Somalis focussed on the daily matters of life, death and survival.

Bombings by Al-Shabaab

jihadists still trouble Mogadishu today.

But a creeping cosmopolitanism is challenging entrenched conservative attitudes and many Somalis are undaunted by wanting a look that stands out.

Somalia's clothing stores

traditionally adhere to a simple formula: imported garments for the well-to-do, locally-made clothes for the rest.

But Ms. Hassan and others are starting to alter that picture with locally-designed, handmade attire for the high end of the market.

In such a nascent industry, Ms. Hassan is, by necessity, self-taught. "I used to watch fashion design shows on TV, and every time I watched one, I tried to grasp the ideas by drawing what I saw," she says.

Her favourite was "Project Runway", a U.S.-made reality programme fronted by German model Heidi Klum.

"When I started I had no one as a role model. It is just something I dreamed up,"

she says, adding that she now finds inspiration in the likes of Lebanese fashion designer Elie Saab.

In her home studio, Ms. Hassan sketches and inks new designs of abaya gowns and hijab headscarves, in a variety of black or bright colours, tight and loose fittings, with plain or embroidered finishes.

Fashion has also become a family affair, with Ms. Hassan's father — a tailor by trade — and older sister helping cut and sew the clothes.

Muna Mohamed Abdullahi, another start-up fashion designer, is on a mission to encourage local people to take pride in products made in Somalia.

"Some people come to my shop and, when they realise

that these clothes are designed and made locally, they run away because they have a negative impression about locally-made clothes," says the 24-year-old.

Like Ms. Hassan, Ms. Abdullahi is self-taught.

"A designer creates clothes with a story, but a tailor makes it without thinking, they just duplicate," Ms. Abdullahi says.

The designers' customers are mostly young, like them, and affluent. "I like clothes designed by Somalis because they fit and make you look attractive," says 22-year-old student Farhiyo Hassan Abdi. "Imported costumes are mostly out of shape and don't look good on you."

"I don't go for imported clothes anymore," she adds.