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**NEARBY**

**4 employees of IT firm killed in accident**  
 NOIDA (U.P.)  
 Four employees of an IT company were killed after their SUV skidded off the Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida and fell into a 30-foot ditch on Sunday.  
**CITY** ▶ PAGE 3

**Now and Then**  
 Our earnings were cups and trophies, former table tennis star Manjit Dua tells *The Hindu*. His only regret is not getting the Padma Shri. ▶ PAGE 5

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EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ 4 PAGES

## Curbs on movement back in Kashmir following clashes

Internet, mobile access suspended in Jammu

**REUTERS SRINAGAR**  
 Authorities reimposed restrictions on movement in major parts of Srinagar on Sunday after violent overnight clashes between residents and the police left dozens injured, two senior officials and eyewitnesses said.

The decision to allow Internet and mobile phone use in parts of the Jammu region was also reversed, said one official, amid concerns about the spread of rumours. In the past 24 hours,



Stones thrown by protesters lying scattered on a road at Habba Kadal. • GETTY IMAGES

there has been a series of protests against the abrogation of Article 370 following the easing of restrictions on movement and phone use on Saturday morning.

The State government

## 4,000 detained in Kashmir

At least 4,000 people have been detained in Kashmir over fears of unrest since New Delhi divested the region of its autonomy, sources told AFP. They were held under the Public Safety Act, under which a person can be jailed for two years without trial. ▶ PAGE 13

said it has not imposed a curfew in the past two weeks, but on Sunday people were being turned back at multiple roadblocks in the city.

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## 'Any talks with Pak. only on PoK'

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh says no other issue remains for dialogue

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said any future talks with Pakistan would focus only on the status of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Mr. Singh, who was addressing the BJP's 'Jan Aashirwad Yatra' in Haryana's Kalka, said Pakistan wanted to destabilise India through terrorism, and there would be no talks with the country unless it acted against terrorists and stopped supporting terror activities.

"...People from Pakistan say there should be talks between India and Pakistan. About what should we talk? What's the issue on which



**Unyielding stand:** Rajnath Singh flagging off a rally from Kalka to Rohtak in Haryana on Sunday. • PTI

there should be talks? Why should there be talks? If there are to be any talks with Pakistan, they will happen only when Pakistan stops supporting terror from its

soil. Until then, there's no reason for any talks," he said.

"Also, in future, if talks are held with Pakistan, they will be on the issue of Pakistan-

occupied Kashmir and no other issue," Mr. Singh said.

Prime Minister Imran Khan had recently acknowledged the killing of terrorists in the IAF's Balakot air strike after denying it earlier, Mr. Singh said. "Pakistan's Prime Minister a few days ago said in PoK that India is planning an air strike even bigger than the Balakot one. This means that Pakistan's Prime Minister has accepted the fact India conducted an air strike in Balakot and a large number of terrorists were killed in it," he said.

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 DAY BEFORE SCHOOLS REOPEN, PARENTS WARY ▶ PAGE 13  
 UNCLEAR DOCTRINE ▶ EDITORIAL

## 'India, Bhutan are natural partners'

They understand each other well, says PM Modi

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA THIMPHU**

No two countries in the world understand each other so well or share so much as India and Bhutan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday, as he emphasised that New Delhi and Thimphu are such "natural partners" in bringing prosperity to their peoples.

Addressing students of



PM Modi with King Jigme Khesar Wangchuck, left, and former King Jigme Singye Wangchuck on Sunday. • ANI

the prestigious Royal University of Bhutan here, Mr. Modi said it is natural that the people of Bhutan and India experience great attachment

to each other.

"India is fortunate to be the land where Prince Siddhartha became Gautam Buddha. And from where the light of his spiritual message, the light of Buddhism, spread all over the world. Generations of monks, spiritual leaders, scholars and seekers have burnt that flame bright in Bhutan," the Prime Minister said in the Buddhist majority country.

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 PM STRIKES A CHORD WITH STUDENTS ▶ PAGE 12

## 63 killed in blast at Kabul wedding; IS claims responsibility



**Grief-stricken:** Men mourning at the funeral of their relatives killed in the blast in Kabul on Sunday. • REUTERS

Many women and children were among victims, 180 injured

**REUTERS KABUL**

The Islamic State (IS) on Sunday claimed responsibility for the suicide blast at a wedding reception in Afghanistan that killed 63 people late on Saturday.

The late night attack came as the Taliban and the U.S. negotiate an agreement on the withdrawal of U.S. forces in exchange for a Taliban commitment on security and peace talks with Afghanistan's U.S.-backed govern-

ment. IS fighters, who first appeared in Afghanistan in 2014, are not involved in the talks. The group has attacked Afghan government and U.S.-led international forces as well as the Taliban.

In a statement on the messaging website Telegram, the IS claimed responsibility for the attack at a west Kabul wedding hall, in a minority Shia neighbourhood, saying its bomber had infiltrated the reception and detonated his explosives in the crowd

of "infidels".

The Taliban had earlier denied responsibility for the attack and condemned it.

More than 180 people were wounded, with many women and children among the casualties, Interior Ministry spokesperson Nasrat Rahimi said on Sunday, as families thronged to Kabul's crowded cemeteries.

JOY TURNS INTO MOURNING FOR GROOM ▶ PAGE 14  
 FEARS OVER BAD DEAL ▶ PAGE 14

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# Woman set on fire by in-laws

Victim's parents say accused wanted her to leave home after husband's death

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old woman was set ablaze allegedly by her late husband's family in south-east Delhi's Nizamuddin, the police said on Sunday.

**Over 80% burns**  
Yasmin Alavi suffered over 80% burns and is undergoing treatment at Safdarjung Hospital, they said.

No arrests have been made so far in the case.

The incident happened on Friday evening when the victim's three brothers-in-law and their wives set her on fire. The parents of the victim alleged that the accused wanted her to leave the house and not ask for any share in the property.

Ms. Alavi's nine-year-old

**I came home from tuition class and heard my mother screaming. I rushed inside and saw her on fire. I immediately poured water on her and then called the police**

VICTIM'S NINE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER

daughter said she was at her tuition class along with her two sisters at the time.

"I came home at 6.30 p.m. and heard my mother screaming. I rushed inside and saw my mother on fire. I immediately poured water on her. Then I called the police and my maternal grandparents," she said in her police complaint. She said her mother informed

her that the uncles and aunts had poured kerosene on her.

"My daughter got married to Amir about 10 years ago and he passed away five years back," said the victim's mother, Munazri.

**Property share**

Ever since then, Amir's family has been asking my daughter to leave the house with her daughters, she said, adding: "She had been telling them that she cannot leave as she has to raise her daughters. She told them to give her daughters' share in the family property but they objected to it."

The victim's mother further claimed that the accused used to thrash her daughter.

"Two years ago, we had

submitted a written complaint at Nizamuddin police station regarding the matter but no action was taken," the mother alleged.

The accused also threatened Alavi a week ago, the mother further claimed.

"About a week ago, Alavi's youngest daughter was unwell and I had gone to see her. Her brother-in-law threatened me and asked me to make Alavi understand that she needs to leave the house and that she must stop asking for a share in the property. He also warned of dire consequences if this was not done," Ms. Munazri alleged.

A case has been registered under Section 307 (attempt to murder) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code.

# Man beaten to death; 4 arrested

'Victim was in relationship with married woman'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Four men have been arrested for allegedly killing a 21-year-old man in outer Delhi's Ranhola, the police said on Sunday.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Rajendra Singh Sagar said Netram, from Rajasthan's Alwar and a resident of Ranhola, was killed on Friday for allegedly having a relationship with the sister of one of the accused.

After a tip-off, the police nabbed Ambika Prasad (38), his brother Ranjit and their associates Anil and Deshraj from Vasant Vihar on Sunday early morning.

**Three on the run**

The police said a manhunt has been launched to nab three others, who were involved in the crime.

Ambika has over 20 cases registered against him under the Excise and Arms Act and runs a liquor trade, they added.

Netram used to work under him.

"The accused thrashed Netram and one of them brought him to a hospital and then fled from the spot. They informed his father in Alwar that it was an accident," he said. While the accused tried to stage it as an accident, an inquiry revealed that Netram had been killed. The police then zeroed in on the accused.

During interrogation, Ambika said his married sister, who used to live in Ambedkar Nagar, went missing about 10 months ago and that they had reported that as well.

Recently, they got to know that she was living in a rented accommodation in Alwar with Netram. The accused brought her back to Delhi a few days ago.

"The accused was informed by a close relative that the sister was in a relationship with Netram. They were angry at him for not informing them while still working for them," Mr. Sagar said.

The police added that a murder case has been registered.

# Four dead, five hurt after car skids off Yamuna e-way

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NOIDA

Four employees of an IT company died on Sunday after their SUV skidded off the Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida and fell into a 30-foot ditch, the police said.

The incident took place at 10 a.m. near Zero Point in Greater Noida. "The speeding car was taking a U-turn near Pari Chowk when the accident took place," Circle Officer, Greater Noida-1, Tanu Upadhyay said.

There were nine people in the car. "Three people died on the spot and six others were rushed to a hospital. One of them later succumbed to injuries," she said.

A survivor told the police that the group had gone out to celebrate in the "new car" purchased by one of the seniors.

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# Leaks in govt's water supply pledge?

Spot checks at two unauthorised colonies — Gautampuri and Sanjay Colony — reveal that the promise made by CM Arvind Kejriwal has not been completely fulfilled



NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

Squatting on the floor of her one-room house in Gautampuri, Majjo, 50, was washing kitchen utensils with water stored in a small white bucket.

To her left, a yellow plastic pipe jutting out of the wall was blocked at the mouth with a crumpled piece of paper.

"We haven't received a single drop of water yet. If there was water, we would have put a tap instead of the paper," said Majjo, who had taken the water connection a week ago.

Interestingly, on June 19, a Delhi government official statement claimed that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had "fulfilled his promise" by "supplying Ganga water" to households in "Badarpur Assembly constituency", the area where Majjo lives.

It's not just her who is waiting for the pipe to bring home some good news but several others in Gautampuri who have taken the connection in the hope of piped water supply.

A spot check at Gautampuri and Sanjay Colony, both unauthorised colonies, where the government said it had started supplying water to houses via pipelines, showed that the assertion was far from accurate.

While the residents of Gau-



Majjo cleans utensils next to a yellow plastic pipe, which has paper blocking its mouth. "We haven't received a single drop of water yet. If there was water, we would have put a tap instead of the paper," she says.

• SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

tampuri were yet to receive water supply, at Sanjay Colony, people were dependent on tankers for drinking water as the Delhi Jal Board water supply barely lasted 15 minutes a day, that too in "community taps".

Mr. Kejriwal, during a visit to Tughlakabad on June 2, had promised that "residents of the area will start getting drinking water

in their taps in a week". Sanjay Colony is a part of Tughlakabad. When contacted, DJB vice-chairman Dinesh Mohaniya did not comment on the matter.

## Poll promise

Reducing water bills was one of the planks on which the Aam Aadmi Party fought and won the Delhi Assembly elections in 2013. It had announced 20 kilolitres of free water to all households every month.

According to the DJB, headed by Mr. Kejriwal, the daily water production in the city since 2015 has increased from 835 million gallons per day (MGD) to 935

MGD. "In just four and a half years, the number of colonies with piped water supply has increased from 58% to 88%," Mr. Kejriwal had said while addressing a gathering in June.

But a senior DJB official said that the number of hours for which the colonies get water supply varies. "The colonies which are at the tail end of the supply line get less water," the official added.

The DJB said water supply network has been extended to 372 unauthorised colonies in the last four years and most of them are now getting piped drinking water. People living in unauthor-

We took the connection in a hurry hoping to get water supply at home... As we did not have the money, my neighbour paid the ₹1,700 application fees for the connection. Sometimes, I hear a sound in the pipe, like when you are smoking a hukka, but there is no water

MAJJO, A resident of Gautampuri

ised colonies are the voter base of the AAP.

## Health issues

"My daughter-in-law is pregnant. When I am at hospital with her, how will my daughter [Nargis, a Class X student] manage to fetch water on her own? We took the connection in a hurry hoping to get water supply at home," said Majjo.

"As we did not have the money, my neighbour paid the ₹1,700 application fees for the connection. Sometimes, I hear a sound in the pipe, like when you are smoking a hukka, but there is no water," she said, adding that they spent around ₹6,500 to get the connection.

The mother of four said that they get water from a nearby borewell thrice a day, but it causes health problems. "The borewell water is hard and unfit for consumption. I was diagnosed with kidney stones twice, but I did not undergo a surgery. I was saved by the *desi dawai* [local medicine]," she said with a smile.

## Dry pipelines

Outside Mukheem Khan's house in another part of Gautampuri, a worker was drilling a hole into a pipeline meant to supply DJB water to the area. He marked a spot with a driller and then with a chisel and hammer made a

## 'Community taps'



• NIKHIL M BABU

Some houses in Sanjay Colony have drilled holes into the Delhi Jal Board pipeline to get access to water. When there is no supply, the hole is covered up with plastic or stones. Once the supply begins, the residents shove a hose inside the pipe and are able to extract the water into buckets — if there is sufficient water pressure. When there is no pressure at all, some residents attach a motor to the hose to get the water out of the pipe.

hole into the large pipe to fix a smaller pipe connected to Mr. Khan's house.

"The pipeline is dry. There is no water," the worker said.

"Water has not been released to the area. It will be done only after a considerable number of people take the connection," said a contractor who was overseeing the work. "Why should we take the connection then?" Khan's wife, Parveen, 40, asked the contractor.

At Sanjay Colony, where the CM had promised water supply within a week, the rush to get tanker water is still on.

Around 9 a.m., Krishan Kumar, 13, pulled a yellow hose out of a blue DJB tanker and climbed down the vehicle as it started to move. Many children and women were seen waiting in queues to collect water from

tankers. Many of them sought solace in the fact that the number of tankers had "increased under the AAP government".

"We get borewell water [supplied by the DJB] for about an hour a day, but we can't drink it. Around 7.30 p.m., potable water comes only for about 15 minutes a day, that too at very low pressure," said Pooja Mehta, 24, a resident of C Block, Sanjay Colony.

The supply of borewell water by the DJB was started after Mr. Kejriwal's visit in June, said the residents.

People have drilled holes into the main DJB pipeline passing through the lane in the hope of bringing the supply closer home. Water cans lining the narrow lanes of the unauthorised colony is proof that the residents are waiting for the CM's promise to come true.

We get borewell water [supplied by the DJB] for about an hour a day, but we can't drink it. Around 7.30 p.m., potable water comes only for about 15 minutes a day, that too at very low pressure

POOJA MEHTA, A resident of C Block, Sanjay Colony

## A day after massive fire, normalcy returns to AIIMS

Hospital says evacuated patients shifted back to wards, emergency dept. and labs fully functional

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

It was business as usual at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on Sunday, a day after a major fire broke out in the teaching block of the hospital.

"Today [Sunday], our emergency department, laboratories are fully functional and the patients who were evacuated as a precautionary measure were shifted back to their respective wards," said a doctor.

A release issued by AIIMS on Sunday stated that all out-patient departments and emergency services continued to run normally and all scheduled surgeries were performed.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan reviewed the situation along with senior AIIMS officials and faculty members.

## Inquiry initiated

Thirty-four fire tenders were pressed into service to contain the blaze suspected to have started in the microbiology laboratory on the se-



A day after a fire broke out at the teaching block of AIIMS on Saturday. • V. V. KRISHNAN

cond floor on Saturday. No casualties were reported.

"The AIIMS administration has initiated an internal inquiry to look into the cause of the fire. The hospital area has not been affected by the fire," read the release.

It added that the hospital has a fire-prevention system in place. "There are fire personnel deployed round-the-clock with firefighting safety systems being regularly test-

ed, including clearance of fire exits and corridors. Awareness of fire fighting systems among staff is conducted regularly," the statement added.

Meanwhile, AIIMS officials also held a meeting with all heads of departments and administrative staff to assess the situation for full restoration of lab services as soon as possible so that patient care does not suffer. "Despite be-

ing a holiday, several doctors and other medical staff opted to work on Sunday to ensure that patients were not inconvenienced and normalcy is restored as soon as possible. On Saturday too, our medical staff worked with the rescue staff to ensure that there was no break in healthcare services," said an AIIMS Resident Doctors' Association member.

Chief Minister Arvind Ke-

## FIR lodged, police to probe cause of fire

NEW DELHI Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Parvinder Singh said that a case under Sections 285 (negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible matter), 336 (act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 436 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house) of the IPC has been lodged and a probe into the cause of the fire has been initiated. A senior officer said that a forensic team visited the site for inspection on Sunday.

riwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also visited AIIMS.

## Counselling dates

AIIMS has rescheduled the counselling dates for MBBS programme from August 20-21 to August 26-27.

Online registrations for counselling started on Sunday and can be done till 5 p.m. on August 21, a notice issued by the hospital read.

## HC seeks reply from ex-auditor of Daewoo Motors on SFIO petition

Investigating agency and MCA want quashing of CIC order

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has sought response from former auditor of Daewoo Motor on Serious Fraud Investigation Office's (SFIO) plea to set aside an order of Central Information Commission (CIC) directing it to make public details of criminal proceedings against the now defunct automobile company.

Justice V.K. Rao issued notice to the auditor, Vipin Malik, and sought his response on the petition by SFIO which functions under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). The High Court listed the matter for further hearing on December 3.

The SFIO and the MCA

have sought quashing of the CIC's November 8, 2018 order which came on Mr. Malik's application seeking information about proceedings against the company in 2000-2001, when he was the statutory auditor of Daewoo Motors.

The SFIO and the Ministry have contended in their plea that the details sought under the Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2005 pertains to years when the offences alleged against the company were committed and for which the trial was going on.

## Minister sub judice

The petition said the CIC did not appreciate the matter was sub judice before a trial

court here and the information pertained to evidence in several cases against the company.

According to the petition, the Ministry of Finance on October 14, 2003, had ordered an investigation into the affairs of Daewoo Motors India Ltd. by the SFIO which had given a detailed investigation report on February 16, 2014, stating that charges for various offences under the Companies Act, 1956, and the Indian Penal Code, 1860, were made out.

Subsequently, the MCA by a letter dated July 21, 2015, had directed the SFIO to file complaint and initiate prosecution against the offenders, the petition said.

## AAP urges Centre to rebuild Ravidas temple

Party holds march to BJP headquarters

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday organised a protest march to the BJP headquarters demanding that the demolished Guru Ravidas temple be re-established in the same location.

The AAP alleged that the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which directly reports to the Central government, demolished the temple on August 10 triggering protests in the country and abroad.

## Letter to PM Modi

Delhi Social Welfare Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam said, "The temple of Guru Ravidas must be re-established at the same place. The BJP has deliberately demolished the symbol of faith of over 40 crore Dalits. The community will never forgive the BJP."

He said that the party had

written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and demanded that the temple be reinstated. However, there was no response from the PM.

"This reflects the anti-Dalit mindset of the BJP. The DDA works under the direct control of Union Minister Hardeep Puri. The temple of Sant Ravidasji was demolished with the consent and permission of Mr. Puri," the Minister alleged.

Workers from the SC/ST wing of the party said that the BJP has appointed Mr. Puri as the election in-charge for Delhi. "The Dalit community will give a befitting reply to the BJP," they said.

EDMC councillor and president of the AAP SC-ST wing Kuldeep Kumar said, "If the site for Ram Mandir is not being changed, then why should the site for Ravidas Mandir be changed?"

## Man held for providing fake visas to people

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old man was arrested for allegedly cheating people on the pretext of providing them work visas, the police said on Sunday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI Airport) Sanjay Bhatia said that the accused, identified as Santosh Bhagwan Behera, was apprehended by immigration staff of Mumbai airport on August 2. He managed to escape from custody but was finally arrested on Friday, Mr. Bhatia said.

The police said that a passenger Shamu was arrested in January for travelling on a fake visa to Poland. During interrogation, he allegedly told the police that he was provided with the visa by the accused and two of his accomplices. Shamu said that the accused took a total of ₹10 lakh from his group of six.

## IN BRIEF

### Man stabbed to death in Rajouri Garden

NEW DELHI A 26-year-old man was stabbed to death by unidentified men in west Delhi's Rajouri Garden on Friday night, the police said on Sunday. The police suspect personal enmity to be the motive behind the killing. The victim, identified as Ujale, used to work in a restaurant at Punjabi Bagh.

### Biker killed in collision with car in Noida

NOIDA A 50-year-old man died after his bike collided with a car driven by a 20-year-old student here on Sunday, the police said. The deceased, identified as Raunaq Ali, was from Amroha district in western U.P. The driver has been arrested and a case has been registered. PTI

## City breathes cleanest air of the year so far

Delhi records AQI of 47; several spells of heavy rain help bring down temperature

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Delhiites on Sunday breathed the cleanest air of the year so far.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board, the Air Quality Index was recorded at 47, which falls in the 'good' category.

## Rain received

The Capital received several spells of rainfall over the weekend with the Safdarjung Observatory recording 45.7 mm of rain in a 24-hour period ending at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday; and then receiving 2 mm of rain during the day. The rain helped bring down the maximum temperature to 29.7 degrees Celsius,

four degrees below the average for this time of the year.

The minimum temperature was 24.8 degrees Celsius, two degrees below the season's average. Weather stations at Palam, Lodhi Road, Ridge and Ayanagar received 11.4 mm, 49.9 mm, 65.8 mm and 20.8 mm respectively over a 24-hour period ending at 8.30 a.m.

## Light rain expected

The weatherman has forecast a generally cloudy sky with chance of very light rain or thundershowers on Monday. The maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 32 degrees Celsius and 26 degrees Celsius, said the Met Department.

## Yamuna may cross danger mark today, warns govt.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

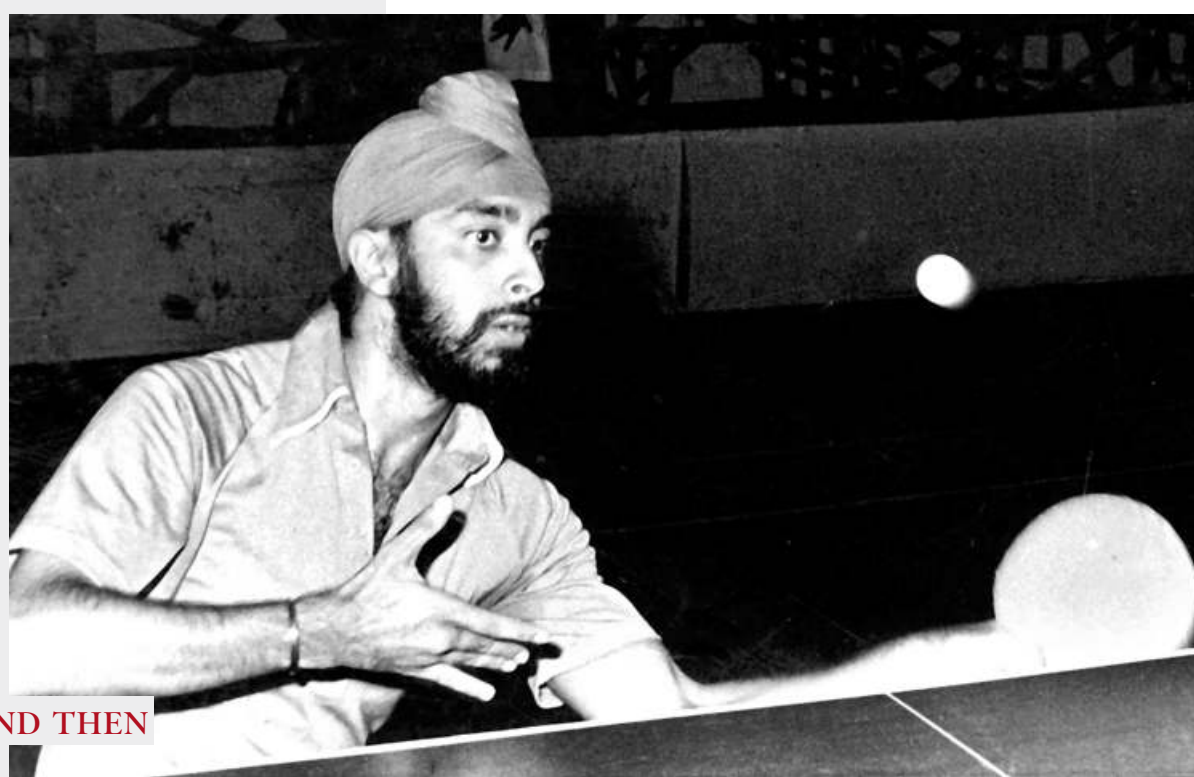
The Delhi government on Sunday sounded a flood alert for the city and asked people living in low-lying areas to move to safer places as the water level in the Yamuna river is expected to cross the danger mark.

The Yamuna was flowing at 203.37 metres on Sunday evening and its water level is expected to rise to 207 metres on Monday as 8.28 lakh cusecs of water was released from Haryana's Hath-

ini Kund barrage at 6 p.m., an official said. The danger mark is 205.33 metres.

"Water level is rising due to heavy rain as well as release of water from Hathini Kund barrage. Water level may rise up to 207 metres by 10 a.m. on Monday, putting at risk to public life and property," East Delhi district said in its order.

All Sub-Divisional Magistrates have been directed to evacuate people from low-lying areas by 9 a.m. on Monday.



NOW AND THEN

RAKESH RAO

He worked at the State Bank of India and played at the Reserve Bank of India. For Manjit Dua, former table tennis player, a peep into the past is a pleasant journey into time when his world revolved around table tennis and nothing else.

"After the RBI office was shut to the public at 5 p.m., we would bring out the tables and play table tennis. The RBI would host its 'A' division matches at the majestic building. That kind of access is unthinkable today," Dua says.

He knows, because he continues his 52-year association with the game, as the National coach and also the secretary general of the Delhi Table Tennis Association.

**Coaching camp**

"After retirement (from SBI), I have had a lot of time," he says, adding that he takes care of his wife, Harvinder (Pompy to him), a sketch artist, who is often unwell. But he does have many things to do as a coach. He is a scout and coach for Khelo India and says, "For a player, getting the right guidance at the right time is the key. Unlike in the past, the players of today are fortunate to train and compete with quality infrastructure, play with world-class equipment and travel abroad for tournaments without any hurdles."

He remembers his days, when they'd play tournaments (six to eight in a year) in cramped spaces with no fans, often small halls in schools. "Our 'earnings' were cups and trophies. A couple of prize money

tournaments used to be great attractions. I feel happy today when Manika (Batra, Commonwealth Games champion) gets endorsements."

Dua, the first Indian to play as a professional in Germany, in the Bundesliga, in 1980, says one of the reasons for India's improved results is the introduction of Ultimate Table Tennis, the professional league.

**Man hours**

Dua's first job was at Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (he joined in 1977). "BHEL had formed a table tennis team. Two years later, I got the offer to join SBI. Mr. Ajit Wadekar (former India cricket captain) saw me playing and asked if I was interested in shifting to SBI. I grabbed the chance (in 1981). I have worked in various departments of the bank, from handling cash to clearing cheques."

Table tennis players in the '70s and '80s had limited international exposure and correspondingly meagre success abroad. It was less about glory and more about the joy of the game and "having fun", during an era when hockey players - not cricketers - enjoyed iconic status.

There were other concerns: "Most Asians were playing with the pen-hold grip. So we had diffe-

# 'Our earnings were cups and trophies'

The unassuming table tennis player Manjit Dua, on picking and coaching talent, a successful personal and professional journey, and how his only regret is not getting the Padma Shri

rent training methods. We had to practise differently when preparing for the Asian championships as compared to, say when competing in European tournaments. Dealing with players using different grips was not always easy. But we still got some results."

Die-hard sports lovers from that era

will remember this left-hander from Delhi who came into the limelight after he helped India beat Japan in Kathmandu during an invitation series, in 1974. That year, at the Triple 'A' tournament involving 70 nations from the Asian, African and Australian continents, Dua played a stellar role in taking India to the fifth spot at Beijing.

Until the early 1970s, the country had seen champions only from western and southern India. Dua became a household name, featuring on the cover of *Illustrated Weekly* and in a *Sportstar* poster.

**Turn table**

Table tennis was not the first choice for this soft-spoken man. "I pursued competitive badminton for six months before following in the footsteps of my elder brother (Rajinder)." He remem-



(Clockwise from above) Manjit Dua with his family; in action in Bengaluru in 1985; at the UTT league in New Delhi; a picture of concentration

•SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, THE HINDU ARCHIVES, SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

bers buying his first racket from Jain Sports, in Karol Bagh, at ₹15, expensive then.

"It was called Sunder racket. Just wood and no rubber on it. It would create a sweet sound when it came in contact with the ball. During long rallies, it was music literally - tik-tok, tik-tok. I still have that racket somewhere," smiles the man who says he has never lost his temper on or off court.

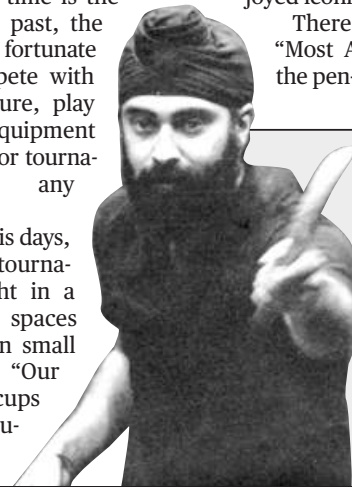
He's lived all his life in Delhi, in Karol Bagh, and remembers zipping off on his Yezdi to Hindu College. "The place has such a buzz. If you get bored at home, a walk in the market is a great timepass. Till today we eat *kulche-chhole* at Standard and ice cream and *kulfi* at Roshan Di Kulfi. Life was beautiful." But he'll still do the drive to Pandara Road for family dinners.

He's happy with his journey, both

personal and professional. Dua's daughter Nishita works in the aviation sector in Gurugram and son Tejan is in Chandigarh working for Infosys. He now advises young players to give it all, with support from all quarters. "These days, results are getting noticed and rewards follow."

Dua concedes, "During our time, our approach was not professional. We thought differently compared to the current lot of players. I feel that the difference between the top Indian players and the best in the world could have been narrower only if we were guided properly."

His only regret: not being considered for Padma Shri. "I deserved it all along. I find it strange to apply for awards because I grew up believing that awards are something you are given, not something you apply for."



**MANJIT DUA, 64, TABLE TENNIS PLAYER**

**CAREER SPAN:** 1967 to 1992

**HONOURS:** Arjuna Awardee (1980)

**KNOWN FOR:** Being the first national champion from north India

**FOR THE RECORD:** At 18, he was the youngest national champion. He won three national singles titles and till date, remains the only male player to win four titles in a single edition of the national championship: men's singles, doubles, mixed doubles and team. Dua won (with Vilas Menon as partner) a rare men's doubles bronze at the 1976 Asian Championship in Pyongyang

## Heavy rain batters Haryana, Punjab

Three killed in Uttarakhand, Char Dham Yatra route blocked by landslides

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Heavy rain remained unabated in Haryana and Punjab on Sunday causing floods in some parts, while authorities sounded high alert in the two States.

In the Yamuna river, water level rose dangerously at the Hathni Kund barrage in Yamuna Nagar.

In view of heavy water discharge in the rivers in Haryana, the State government has requested the Army to be on the standby.

Following heavy rains in Aol village of Punjab, three members of a family were killed when the roof of their house collapsed.

Eleven people, including four women, have been rescued after they got stuck when the overflowing water of the Beas flooded their village in Punjab's Gurdaspur district.

In Uttarakhand, three peo-



SDRF men help a pilgrim cross a damaged path on the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra route in Pithoragarh on Sunday. •PTI

ple were killed and around 22 went missing as heavy rain lashed the State on Sunday, razing houses to ground and uprooting trees, State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) said.

Cloudbursts in Mori block of Uttarkashi district wreaked havoc in several villages, damaging several houses in Arakot, Makuri and Tikochi villages. A wo-

man was also washed away in Dehradun district when her car fell into a seasonal river, they said.

Uttarkashi District Magistrate Ashish Chauhan is monitoring the situation while senior administrative and police officers have left for the rain-hit villages.

Char Dham Yatra routes are also blocked by debris of landslides at various points

affecting the yatra partially, the SEOC said.

The Rishikesh-Badrinath National Highway was blocked at Lambagad and Tangri, the Kedarnath highway at Banswada and Jamu Nursery, Gangotri National Highway at Harshil, Badeti and Helgugad and Yamunotri Highway at Dabarkot, they said.

Landslide on the Kailash-Mansarovar route has also affected the pilgrimage with devotees being moved to safer places, the SEOC said.

**Water receding**

In Rajasthan, water has started receding and there was no flood-like situation anywhere in the State.

State government official said forty-nine people have died in rain-related incidents in the State since June 15 and 500 people have been evacuated from the rain-affected areas.

## ADG-led cell to monitor heinous crimes in Rajasthan, says Gehlot

'Appeal will be filed in High Court in Pehlu Khan case'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday said a cell will be set up for the monitoring of heinous crimes such as lynchings in the State.

The cell would be led by the Additional Director General of Police (Crime) and include an IGP-rank officer, a DIG and two SPs besides two legal officers, Mr. Gehlot told reporters at a press conference here.

"The cell will monitor the case even when it is in the court. Investigation of heinous crimes like the lynching of Pehlu Khan will now be done at the State-level as well as the range-level. A law officer will monitor the case after the challan is presented



CM Ashok Gehlot

in the court," he said.

Responding to a question on lapses in the Pehlu Khan case investigation, Mr. Gehlot said action would be taken against guilty officers on the basis of the report of the SIT set up to investigate all aspects of the case.

He said the State government had now constituted

an SIT in the matter and an appeal would be filed against the acquittal of the accused in the High Court.

**'Don't provoke people'**

On the BJP's allegation of adopting a different criteria in the case of the alleged suicide of Rati Ram Jatav, whose son Harish Jatav had died during treatment after being thrashed by a group of people in Alwar district, Mr. Gehlot said he would be happy if anyone raised issues concerning the public but it was not good to provoke people and give a political angle to any issue.

He said, "For us, whether it is Hindu, Muslim or any other religion, the law should be the same for everyone."

## Speeding car hits pilgrims, three killed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JAIPUR

A speeding car ran over seven pilgrims en route to the Ramdevra Temple in Rajasthan's Pali district, killing three women on the spot, police said on Sunday. The devotees were walking on the Beawar-Ahmedabad national highway on Saturday when the accident occurred, SHO Sendra police station Premaram said.

The victims were identified as Sugri Mehrat (40), Puja Rawat (18) and Patashi Mehrat (58).

**Driver arrested**

The bodies were handed over to their family members after post-mortem, the SHO said. Car driver Dev Karan has been arrested, he said.

## 'No request for reshuffle'

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LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Raj Bhavan on Sunday night clarified that "no request" has been received from the State government for the reshuffling of Yogi Adityanath's Cabinet.

"No request has been received from the U.P. government for expansion of the Cabinet," Anjum Naqvi, Assistant Director Information at Raj Bhavan, said.

## RPF jawan kills three of a family

Opens fire at them near a railway station in Jharkhand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
RAMGARH

Three members of a family were shot dead and two injured when a Railway Protection Force jawan allegedly opened fire at them in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district, police said on Sunday.

Ramgarh Superintendent of Police Prabhat Kumar said RPF jawan Pawan Kumar Singh on Saturday night allegedly opened fire from his

9mm pistol on railway porter Ashok Ram and his family at their house near Barkakana railway junction.

Ashok Ram (55), his wife Lilawati Devi (52) and pregnant daughter Meena Devi (27), died on the spot while another daughter Suman Devi (25) and son Chintu Ram (20) were injured, the SP said.

The family of Ram lives at the railway barrack quarters

in Barkakana police station area while the jawan is posted at Barkakana junction of the East Central Railway, Mr. Kumar said.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (North Chhotanagpur Division) Pankaj Kamboj, along with other senior police officers, visited the spot. The RPF jawan, a resident of Karath village in Bihar's Bhojpur district, is absconding, police said.

## Photojournalist, brother shot dead in U.P.

SP, Congress slam the Yogi Adityanath govt. over law and order situation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LUCKNOW

A photojournalist with a prominent Hindi daily and his brother were shot dead in Saharanpur district on Sunday morning following an altercation over disposal of cow dung, the police said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh each for the kin of the deceased. However, the Samajwadi Party and the Congress slammed the ruling BJP over the alleged collapse of law and order and failure

to provide adequate compensation.

Ashish (23), a photographer with *Dainik Jagran* newspaper, and his brother Ashutosh (19) were killed by their neighbour Mahipal Saini and his sons, Senior Superintendent of Police (Saharanpur) Dinesh Kumar P. said.

"In the midst of an argument, Mahipal and his sons entered the house of Ashish and Ashutosh and shot them. Locals rushed the duo to a nearby hospital, where the

doctors declared them brought dead," the SSP said.

Three teams have been formed to nab the culprits who are absconding, he added.

"The Chief Minister has taken cognisance of the Saharanpur incident wherein the journalist of *Dainik Jagran* and his brother were shot dead by the assailants," a statement issued here by a senior Uttar Pradesh government official said.

"SSP Saharanpur has been directed to initiate the stron-

gest action. The State government stands by the bereaved family," the statement added.

Reacting to the incident, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav expressed grief over the deaths. "During the regime of the SP government, the kin of the deceased used to get ₹20 lakh as immediate financial assistance. The BJP government should do at least this much," he said.

Ajay Kumar, Leader of the Congress in the U.P. Assembly, demanded the CM's resignation.

12-day police remand for restaurateur's son

His luxury car rammed another one which hit a police kiosk and killed 2 persons

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KOLKATA A city court on Sunday sent Arsalan Parwez, the son of a restaurant chain owner, to 12 days' police remand in connection with a car crash that led to the death of two Bangladeshi nationals.

Rejecting his bail plea, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (in-charge) Alakananda Roy remanded the 21-year-old in police custody till August 29. A luxury car, allegedly being driven by Parwez, had on Saturday rammed another luxury car, which then hurtled towards a police kiosk and dashed into it, killing two bystanders and injuring

one, all three Bangladeshi nationals. Seeking his police remand, the prosecution claimed that Parwez, who was driving at a high speed in inclement weather, had jumped the red signal at the Loudon Street-Shakespeare Sarani intersection in south Kolkata. The public prosecu-

tors said the investigation was at a very early stage and Parwez's custodial interrogation was necessary to establish the chain of events. He has been charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder, attempt to commit culpable homicide, rash driving, mischief and damage to public property.

Case registered against SP for assaulting pregnant woman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ROURKELA

A case has been registered against the Superintendent of Police of Odisha's Sundergarh district for allegedly assaulting a pregnant woman last month which led to her miscarriage, a police officer said on Sunday.

The case was registered on August 14 as per the Sundergarh Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate order, he added. The directive came following a complaint by Priya Dey of Kanika village on August 5 this year. The woman claimed that she had a miscarriage following the police action last month. Efforts to contact the SP for comments failed.

Odisha to conserve two of its largest lakes

The plan for Chilika, Ansupa will cost ₹180 cr.

STAFF REPORTER BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Wetland Authority has approved implementation of an integrated management plan for Chilika, country's largest brackish water lagoon, and Ansupa, State's largest freshwater lake, at an estimated investment of ₹180 crore.

The five-year management of lakes is intended at strengthening livelihood of thousands of fishermen relying on the two water-bodies. Besides, tourism promotion and conservation of ecology will be taken up.

Promoting tourism During past two years, the Chilika Development Authority has managed to make 172 sq km free from encroachment which resulted in increase in fish catch by 20%.

Chilika is spread over 1,100 sq km. Lakhs of tourists visit the lake to watch endangered Irrawaddy dolphins and migratory birds during winter. About 151 villages carry out fishing, the principal livelihood for two lakh traditional fishermen. The government would spend ₹158 crore for the lake's development.

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LEGAL NOTICE SRI A. ABDUL HAMEED B.A.B.L., ADVOCATE, NO. 11 KAMARAJI COMPLEX, DINDIGUL ROAD, PALANI-624601, DINDIGUL DISTRICT, TAMILNADU STATE.

EXECUTION NOTICE TO THE JUDGMENT DEBTOR TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COURT FOR THE EXECUTION OF DECREE OXXI R 22 Before the Hon'ble Munsiff's Court, Pathanamthitta O.S. 462/2001 in EP.No. 17/2014 Decree Holders: 1. Varughese Koshy (died) Edyillemuriyil House, Konni Thazham P.O., Iravon Village, Konni Taluk, Pathanamthitta District, 2. Marthakutty, -do, -do, 3. A.K. Shaji -do, -do, 4. Shibu -do, -do, 6th Respondent: Shibu George, Kathavana House, Konni Thazham P.O., Iravon Village, Konni Taluk, Pathanamthitta District. Whereas the decree holder in the above case has applied to this court for the execution of decree in which you are the judgment debtor and the same has been posted for your appearance and calling objections. Hence you or your entrusted agents are directed to appear before this court on 23.08.2019 at 11 a.m. and file your objections before the court otherwise the application / petition will be disposed off in your absence without further notice. By order Dn: 20.08.19 Max Puthambath Junior Suptt./Central Nazar Adv. K. Jayakumar

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LEGAL NOTICE Public is hereby informed that Sh. Ravinder s/o Sh. Rajbir Singh has agreed to sell the Third floor Flat No. 8 - built up property bearing Plot no. B-165/A, area measuring 40 Sq.yds., khassa nos. 15/22(1-8), 23(3-4), 24(2-4) & 26, situated at B. Block, Durga Vihar Village Devli, Tehsil Saket, New Delhi to Sh. Shailesh Chand s/o Sh. Shankar Thakur and now Sh. Shailesh Chand s/o Sh. Shankar Thakur want to purchase above said property and has approached the DMI Housing Finance Ltd for loan against mortgage of above said property. If any person has any right, claim, title or interest in any manner over the said property then intimate within 15 days to Vikas Shokeen, Advocate, AB-18, Mianwali Nagar, PO Sunder Vihar, Delhi-110027. Thereafter any kind of claim will not be accepted.

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Before the IV Judge, Small Causes Court at Chennai O.P.NO.3622 of 2017 Mr.S.Chinnasamy - Petitioner Versus Mr.Jaivir Lakhmi Ram & another - Respondents To: Mr.Jaivir Lakhmi Ram H.No.202, Vill-Atela Kalan The-CH-Dadri-127030, Bhiwani, Haryana Please take note that the above claim petition stands posted before IV Judge, Small Causes Court, at Chennai on 17.09.2019 at 10.30A.M. for your appearance. If you fail to appear before the said Court on 17.09.2019 at 10.30 A.M., please take note that you will be set ex parte and the matter will be decided in your absence. Sd/- Mr.V.Mohan Choudary, Counsel for petitioner.

Before the IV Judge, Small Causes Court at Chennai O.P.NO.3621 of 2017 Mrs.A.Thilagavathy - Petitioner Versus Mr.Jaivir Lakhmi Ram & another - Respondents To: Mr.Jaivir Lakhmi Ram H.No.202, Vill-Atela Kalan The-CH-Dadri-127030, Bhiwani, Haryana Please take note that the above claim petition stands posted before IV Judge, Small Causes Court, at Chennai on 17.09.2019 at 10.30A.M. for your appearance. If you fail to appear before the said Court on 17.09.2019 at 10.30 A.M., please take note that you will be set ex parte and the matter will be decided in your absence. Sd/- Mr.V.Mohan Choudary, Counsel for petitioner.

Before the IV Judge, Small Causes Court at Chennai O.P.NO.3621 of 2017 Mrs.A.Thilagavathy - Petitioner Versus Mr.Jaivir Lakhmi Ram & another - Respondents To: Mr.Jaivir Lakhmi Ram H.No.202, Vill-Atela Kalan The-CH-Dadri-127030, Bhiwani, Haryana Please take note that the above claim petition stands posted before IV Judge, Small Causes Court, at Chennai on 17.09.2019 at 10.30A.M. for your appearance. If you fail to appear before the said Court on 17.09.2019 at 10.30 A.M., please take note that you will be set ex parte and the matter will be decided in your absence. Sd/- Mr.V.Mohan Choudary, Counsel for petitioner.

**DELHI Timings**

**MONDAY, AUG. 19**  
RISE 05:53 SET 18:57  
RISE 21:22 SET 08:54

**TUESDAY, AUG. 20**  
RISE 05:53 SET 18:56  
RISE 21:53 SET 09:46

**WEDNESDAY, AUG. 21**  
RISE 05:54 SET 18:55  
RISE 22:25 SET 10:38

**Delhi Weather** max min  
Delhi City 30 25  
Safdarjang 30 25  
Palam 30 24

**Delhi Palam Today**  
31°C Rains will now decrease. Day will be warm and humid. Short spell of light rain are likely.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
34°C Significant rise in temperatures is likely. Dry and warm weather will prevail.

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## VBA to hold interviews for ticket aspirants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

With the State Assembly polls nearing, the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) will conduct interviews of aspiring candidates next week, the party said in a statement on Saturday.

The interviews will be held between August 19 and 21 for aspirants from Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts. The VBA's parliamentary committee members Annarao Patil, Ashok Sonone, Rekha Thakur and Kisan Chavan will interview the aspirants, the statement said.

Polls to the 288-member Assembly are due soon. Aspirants from Mumbai will be interviewed on August 19, followed by those from Thane on August 20, and the rest on August 21 in Dardar's Ambedkar Bhavan.

# In a first, Pune Metro to get aluminium-bodied coaches

They are lighter, energy efficient and have better aesthetics than steel coaches

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

In what is touted as a game changer for Indian Metro rail projects, the Pune Metro is set to get ultra-modern, state-of-the-art aluminium-bodied coaches.

Thus far, Metros in the country have used stainless steel-bodied coaches.

A consortium formed by Kolkata-based wagon manufacturer Titagarh Wagons with its wholly-owned subsidiary Titagarh Firema SPA recently won the international bid to supply 102 aluminium coaches to the Pune Metro project. The Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (Maha Metro) had issued a tender for "design, manufacture, supply, testing, commissioning of passenger rolling stock (electrical multiple units) and training of personnel".

This will be the first time that aluminium-bodied coaches, which are said to be lighter in weight, more energy efficient and have better aesthetics, will be manufactured in India. Dr. Brijesh Dixit, managing director of Maha Metro, said.

"The company will manufacture 25% of the coaches at their plant in Italy and 75% will be produced and commissioned at the Maha Metro coach manufacturing plant in Nagpur," Dr. Dixit said. He said the Pune Metro project had crossed "another important milestone" with this order for coach procurement.

Officials from the Pune Metro project said that initially, the trains will consist of three coaches, which will subsequently be converted into six as per requirement.



**State-of-the-art:** The coaches will be fully air-conditioned with humidity control, and have digital route and station display and international standard interiors. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



They said these coaches would be fully air-conditioned with humidity control, provided with digital route and station display and international standard interiors.

"The coaches will have 100% CCTV camera coverage. [Passengers with disabilities] will be able to travel seamlessly to/from the station with specially earmarked places for wheelchairs. Mobile and laptop charging facility will

also be provided on board," a spokesperson with the project said.

The coaches are to be ergonomically and aerodynamically designed, with the coach exterior reflecting the history and cultural heritage of Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad. They will have a maximum speed of 95 kmph and the capacity to accommodate more than 925 passengers.

"They are energy efficient and will be equipped with a

regenerative braking system. They will also be capable of operating in driverless mode," Dr. Dixit said.

Pune Metro will begin operating with coaches being used by Maha Metro in Nagpur, and will be augmented as and when the new coaches join the fleet.

The ₹11,420 crore Pune Metro rail system has been projected by Centre and the State government as a panacea to Pune's traffic woes. In December 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone for the project, just ahead of the elections to the Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad municipal corporations.

An especially vital section in the project – comprising three lines with a total length of 54.58 km – is the elevated 23.3-km Line 3, which will bridge the city's bustling Information Technology quarter in Hinjewadi with Shivajinagar.

## Doctors' federation pushes to check hysterectomy rates

To sensitise members to treatments other than surgery

JYOTI SHELAR  
MUMBAI

The high rate of hysterectomies in Beed district has put the medical fraternity in a spot for carrying out unwanted procedures. The Federation of Obstetric & Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI), a body of over 40,000 doctors from across the country, has now decided to sensitise its members and reach out to the community and the government.

Through its 'save the uterus' campaign, FOGSI is reaching out to all members and talking about how a hysterectomy can be avoided. "There are so many new medical treatments and other surgeries that can be opted for instead of a hysterectomy. We are reaching out to the doctors and sensitising them about these procedures and treatments," Dr. Kalyan Barmade, head of FOGSI's public awareness committee, said.

"Problems like abnormal

**We have also extended our campaign to other parts like Haryana, Rajasthan, U.P. and Gujarat**

DR. KALYAN BARMAD  
Head of FOGSI's public awareness committee

bleeding are extremely common and there are many ways to treat it. We are simply spreading awareness about what alternate treatments can be offered," he said.

The Beed district in drought-stricken Maharashtra came into focus in May after media reports highlighted that a large number of women, especially those who migrated for sugarcane-cutting work, have had their uterus removed. Data collected by the government showed that 4,605 hysterectomies were carried out in Beed in a span of three years in 99 private hospitals.

Activists have alleged that

the rate of hysterectomies in Beed is 14 times higher than other parts of the State or the country.

A seven-member committee appointed by the government is currently investigating the matter and will submit a report this month. Of the 99 hospitals, 11 hospitals have carried out most of the procedures.

According to Dr. Barmade, more than six seminars have been conducted in Beed, Osmanabad, Latur, Ambejogal and other areas over the last few months. "We have also extended our campaign to other parts of the country like Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat where the rate of hysterectomies are said to be high," he said.

The first step is to sensitise the doctors and then reach out to the community members, he said. "Lastly, we will submit a memorandum to the government because it plays a key role as well."

## Sena leader booked for abetting Dalit woman's rape by his brothers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
AHMEDNAGAR

Shiv Sena leader and former Ahmednagar mayor Bhagvan Phulsundar has been booked for allegedly abetting the rape of a Dalit woman by two of his brothers over a land dispute, the police said on Sunday.

While Mr. Phulsundar (55) and his brother Arun allegedly abetted the crime, their brothers Ganesh (30) and Mahesh (34) allegedly committed the act, inspector Vi-

kas Wagh, Kotwali police station in charge, said.

No arrest has been made so far. An FIR was registered against the four on Saturday night on a complaint lodged by the woman, who belongs to a Scheduled Caste community, he said. According to the complainant, the brothers had accused her of encroaching on their land.

"She said she was raped by Ganesh and Mahesh Phulsundar on August 12, while Bhagvan and Arun helped

them," Mr. Wagh said.

The alleged incident occurred at the Phulsundars' farm on Burudgao Road. A case has been registered under sections of the Indian Penal Code and under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Local NCP MLA Sangram Jagtap has written to district police superintendent demanding verification of facts in the allegations, suspecting "political vendetta".

## BJP poaching leaders groomed by us: Patil

State NCP chief questions ruling party's credibility as it inducts leaders from Cong.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

State Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Jayant Patil on Sunday hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for poaching leaders groomed by his party and the Congress, likening it to buying ready-made clothes.

He was speaking on the sidelines of a State-level NCP meeting attended by several senior leaders, amid speculation that some of those absent may be on their way to the BJP or Shiv Sena. "Leaders groomed by us are now picked up by the BJP ahead of the Assembly elections. It is the Congressification of the BJP," Mr. Patil said.

He said the BJP should give a chance to its party workers rather than inducting workers from his party, and asked if the BJP had lost credibility and was thus inducting leaders from the Congress and NCP. "It is more important to have people who can stitch than ones



Jayant Patil

who simply buy ready-made clothes. The leaders have switched loyalties, but what about their followers and party workers?" he asked.

Barshi MLA Dileep Sopal, who was among those who skipped Sunday's meeting, instead organised a meet for party workers in his constituency, with posters on the stage having no images of NCP leaders. "My meeting is about planning for Assembly polls and has nothing to do with switching over to any other party," he said.

## State Council chairman on way to BJP?

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and chairman of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, Ramraje Nimbalkar, may follow in the footsteps of his erstwhile counterpart in the Assembly, Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil of Congress, in joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ahead of the Assembly polls.

A close aide said on Sunday that Mr. Nimbalkar's feud with Satara NCP MP and Maratha royal Udayanraje Bhosale could be the trigger if he were to jump ship. Mr. Nimbalkar comes from a

royal family in Phaltan taluka in Satara, while Mr. Bhosale is a descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

It is expected that Mr. Nimbalkar might continue to serve as the chairman of the Council.

Mr. Bhosale's younger brother, Shivendraraje, has already joined the BJP and speculation is that he might get a ticket to contest from Jawli Assembly constituency in western Maharashtra.

Despite NCP chief Sharad Pawar's attempts to broker peace, Mr. Nimbalkar and Mr. Bhosale have been criticising each other on public forums.

## On dry land



**Salvage efforts:** Villagers dry their belongings – clothes, electronics and food items – which were drenched in the floodwater, at Holondi village in Kolhapur on Sunday. ■ABHIJEET GURJAR

## World-class zoo to come up near Statue of Unity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
VADODARA

A world-class zoo will come up near the Statue of Unity in Narmada district of Gujarat before the end of October next year, a senior official said on Sunday.

Rajiv Gupta, additional chief secretary and managing director of the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited, said the zoo as well as river rafting facilities are part of a plan to make Kevadiya, where the statue is situated, a major tourist attraction.

"Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani inaugurated a river rafting sport facility at Khalvani near the Statue of Unity on Saturday," Mr. Gupta said.

The zoo will be developed across 1,300 acres over seven levels and will have lions, tigers, leopards, 12 types of deer and antelopes, giraffes, zebras, rhinos, bisons, and other exotic animals. "Setting up the Sardar Patel Zoological Park is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's wish to develop this region as a major tourism hub. He had expressed this while inaugurating the Statue of Unity last year," Mr. Gupta said.

The official said the Central Zoo Authority had given in-principle approval to the plan. He said 19 lakh tourists have visited the statue since it was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi on October 31 last year.

## State's plantation drive mere eyewash: actor

An active participant in the campaign, Sayaji Shinde says sapling survival a worry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Veteran actor and environmental enthusiast Sayaji Shinde on Sunday said the Maharashtra government's drive to plant 33 crore saplings was merely an "eyewash".

He said despite carrying out large-scale plantation and spending crores of rupees on the drive, the government is not taking enough steps to ensure survival of the saplings planted earlier.

Mr. Shinde had been an active participant in the plantation drive since the beginning of the project, launched under the leadership of State Forests Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar. "I have



Sayaji Shinde

serious doubts about the actual results of this drive going on every year even as the number of saplings (being planted) is swelling. I had warned Mr. Mungantiwar in the very first year that his ambitious project should not

end up with plantation of new saplings in the same ditch every year," he said.

"There might have been large-scale plantation, but the survival rate must have been minimal... The drive is an eyewash," he said.

Mr. Shinde, who began his career as a Marathi actor and went on to act in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada films as well, hails from Man tehsil in Satara district. He has been planting saplings in government-recognised areas. "I have even appointed people and paid them to take care of the saplings. I am not sure the government has taken so much effort," he said.

He said there should be a proper audit of this project

as the government is spending crores on it without any substantial outcome. "Government employees undertake plantation as a duty and not as a mission. I found that none of them were ever interested in protecting and growing the plants. They simply planted it because the government ordered them to do so," the actor said.

The saplings supplied by the Social Forestry Department are also not in a good condition, he alleged.

"Most of the saplings are just three to six months old. They should be at least nine months old, which will increase the chances of their survival in the new environment once they are planted," Mr. Shinde said.

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## IN BRIEF



## Airlines have hiked fares by 300% to 500% from the four international airports in Kerala to almost all destinations in West Asia to cash in on the demand from the non-resident Keralites returning after summer vacation of educational institutions in the Gulf. The fares are usually in the range of ₹4,500 to ₹13,000 in the West Asia-Kerala sector. At present, the lowest fare is ₹19,025 in the Thiruvananthapuram-Sharjah sector.

**Don't split Waltair railway division: MP**  
VISAKHAPATNAM  
YSRCP Rajya Sabha member V. Vijaya Sai Reddy, in a letter to Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, sought continuation of the Waltair railway division with its headquarters in Visakhapatnam. The Centre's proposal is to split the division and merge one part with the Rayagada division in Odisha. The other part will be with the Vijayawada division in A.P. "This will cause administrative problems," general secretary of National Federation of Indian Railwaymen M. Raghavaiah said.

## Fire accident victim shifted to Mumbai

**Fire accident victim shifted to Mumbai**  
VISAKHAPATNAM  
Following instructions from Visakhapatnam District Collector V. Vinay Chand, 24-year-old Jivang Joshi, one of victims of a fire accident on the offshore supply vessel Coastal Jaguar on August 12, was airlifted to Mumbai for treatment on Saturday. It may be recalled that 27 crew members were rescued by personnel of the Coast Guard and the Visakhapatnam Port Trust after they jumped into the sea from the burning vessel. One crew member was killed and one is still missing.

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## CBI will probe phone-tapping charges, says Karnataka CM

JD(S)-Congress regime was accused of tapping phones of all rebel MLAs

STAFF REPORTER  
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Sunday announced that the probe into allegations of phone-tapping during the Janata Dal (S)-Congress government would be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The decision on the probe by the Central agency, which is often accused by the Opposition of being misused by the BJP, into a politically sensitive case seems to have set the cat among the pigeons. This is because the JD (S) and the Congress have expressed concerns over "political vendetta" though they have welcomed such an investigation.

## Discussions in Delhi

Sources said the issue figured during the Chief Minister's talks with the party leadership in New Delhi over the past two days.

"Congress leader Siddaramaiah and several other



B.S. Yediyurappa



H.D. Kumaraswamy

leaders have sought a high-level probe into the scandal. So, I have ordered a CBI probe into it," Mr. Yediyurappa said here on Sunday.

However, the terms of reference that the State government will give the CBI will be critical, according to sources. While a preliminary probe by the Bengaluru police confined itself to just one call intercept, widespread allegations of tapping phones of several politicians and their associates during the political crisis in June-July

that eventually triggered the collapse of the JD(S)-Congress coalition government have surfaced. Alok Kumar, the then Bengaluru Police Commissioner, who was said to be close to the then Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, is at the centre of these allegations.

An audio recording of a telephonic conversation between one Faraz Ahmed and Bengaluru Police Commissioner Bhaskar Rao, where the latter was heard lobbying for the Commissioner's post,

was leaked to the media days after Mr. Rao took charge earlier this month.

Sandeep Patil, Joint Commissioner (Crime - Bengaluru), submitted an interim report on the issue wherein he recommended a high-level probe into the issue. While the State police chief recommended an inquiry by the Criminal Investigation Department, the Chief Minister chose a CBI probe.

The issue soon took a political turn when former Minister and JD(S) leader A.H. Vishwanath alleged that the phones of all rebel MLAs, including himself, were tapped and that Mr. Kumaraswamy had "blackmailed" them with the release of audio tapes if they did not withdraw their resignations.

Mr. Kumaraswamy said the move for a CBI probe was a conspiracy against him. "How much ever they may try, they cannot point the finger at me as I have done no wrong," he said.

## 5 electrocuted in Karnataka hostel

Flagpole touches power line in Koppal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOPPAL

In a heart-wrenching incident, five high school students of a government-run hostel here in Karnataka were electrocuted when they came into contact with a power line while removing a flagpole from the terrace of their hostel building on Sunday morning.

The flagpole had been put up at the government-run Devaraj Urs Backward Classes Hostel for the Independence Day celebrations.

Two of the students first came into contact with the 11 KV overhead live wire as they were removing the flagpole and got electrocuted. The other three died when they rushed to help their friends. The victims are Mallikarjun Obalabandi, 16, Basavaraj Jelli, 16, Devaraj Hadapad, 14, Ganesh Kuri, 14, and Kumar Lamani, 14.

## Warden arrested

Later in the day, a case was registered against hostel warden Basavaraj Belawat,



Deputy Commissioner P. Sunil Kumar inspecting the site of the tragedy.  
\*SPECIALARRANGEMENT

building owner Basanagouda Herevankanagouda and the Gulbarga Electricity Supply Company (Gescom) under Section 304 (a) of the IPC (causing death by negligence). Mr. Belawat was subsequently suspended pending inquiry and arrested by the police. Gescom section officer Nagaratna was also arrested.

Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said the government would give a compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the families of the deceased.

## IAS officer case: police shift blame for delayed tests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala police on Saturday defended the delay in putting IAS officer Sriram Venkitaraman through a blood alcohol concentration test after the vehicle he drove was involved in an accident that claimed the life of journalist K.M. Basheer of *Siraj* newspaper early on August 3.

In a court filing, the police said the "reluctance" of the de-facto complainant, Saifudeen Haji, unit chief of *Siraj*, to file a first information statement had slowed the process.

Mr. Saifudeen has slammed the report filed by Dy.SP Sheen Tharayil and termed it part of a conspiracy to protect the local police.

His counsel S. Chandrasekharan Nair told *The Hindu* that the police were obliged to register a case on their own in the event of a fatal accident. Ideally, the police should have ensured that the medical officer who examined Mr. Venkitaraman initially at the General Hospital took a sample to gauge the suspect's level of inebriation. Instead, the police had taken his blood sample nine hours after the accident. The High Court has condemned the "lack of professionalism."

Mr. Nair said his client doubted the integrity of the blood sample sent to the Chief Chemical Examiner for analysis. Mr. Saifudeen had moved the court seeking the prosecution of the IAS officer on the charges of having conspired with the police to dodge the test and destroy evidence that would have rendered him vulnerable to prosecution for culpable homicide.

## Radar fails in search attempt at landslide site in Kerala

By digging out six more bodies in Kavalappara, firemen make some headway

ABDUL LATHEEF NAHA  
MALAPPURAM

Human experience and dedication won where the machine failed. The men of the Kerala Fire and Rescue Services retrieved six more bodies from the landslide-ravaged Kavalappara, near Nilambur in Malappuram, on Sunday.

The ground penetrating radar (GPR) equipment brought by a team from the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI), Hyderabad, failed to detect any

bodies buried under the massive debris.

## 13 more missing

Personnel of the State's Fire and Rescue Services, who continued operations with 13 heavy-duty excavators, concrete cutters and saws, have so far unearthed 46 bodies from Kavalappara, which saw one of the most disastrous landslides ever in the State on August 8.

According to official figures, 13 people are still missing.

The six-member team from NGRI led by Anand Kumar Pandey could not make any headway with the GPR machine as the signals proved ineffective in the mud. A team member said

GPR, which uses radar signals to image the subsurface area of the earth, would be effective in solid earth. However, the situation at Kavalappara was different with mud and slime having covered a vast area measuring over 20 hectares. Water was widely present in the lower

area of the site through which a stream was flowing. It also rained heavily at Kavalappara and neighbouring areas on Sunday afternoon.

Dr. Pandey's team will leave for Wayanad on Monday. The mudslide site in Wayanad has dried up, and the team is hopeful of using GPR technology to trace missing persons there.

District authorities on Sunday confirmed 58 deaths, including 46 at Kavalappara, in the recent rains in Malappuram.



A team scouring the landslide site at Kavalappara in Malappuram with a ground penetrating radar. \*SAKEER HUSSAIN

## A.P. police bust human trafficking racket

Victims were promised jobs in Gulf

RAJULAPUDI SRINIVAS  
KALIDINDI

Busting an inter-country human trafficking racket, the Andhra Pradesh Crime Investigation Department (CID), in association with the district police, has rescued women who had been sent to Dubai with job promises by agents in West Godavari, Kurnool and Krishna districts but were forced into the flesh trade.

The police responded to video clips posted by some of the victims, seeking help from Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy and the police.

## Embassy help

"We registered four cases in three districts and located a few women trapped in Dubai. Police contacted the In-

dian Embassy in UAE and brought back a few women and the remaining were kept under the safe custody of the Embassy," said Director General of Police (DGP) D. Gautam Sawang.

Based on a complaint lodged by the victims, the police in West Godavari, Kurnool and Krishna district registered cases against the fake agents. The kingpin of the racket A. Jyothi, of Palakol in West Godavari, is operating from Dubai, Mr. Sawang said. West Godavari district SP Navdeep Singh Grewal said an agent, B. Venkata Subbarao, alias Chinna Babu who had sent a woman to Dubai had been arrested on Sunday.

The DGP said police would issue a Red notice to get Jyothi deported.

## Frenzied pace



Hoof power: A cattle race in progress on a paddy field at Kanjikode in Palakkad district of Kerala on Saturday. \*K. K. MUSTAFAH

## Guinness honour for Chrysostom film

Thiruvalla to host event in celebration

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATHANAMTHITTA

A function will be held here on Monday to celebrate the Guinness Book of World Records entry of 100 Years of *Chrysostom*, a biographical documentary on Metropolitan Emeritus of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, Philipose Mar Chrysostom.

The documentary on the 102-year-old Metropolitan was scripted and directed by filmmaker Blessy. Actor Mohanlal who has done the voice-over for the documentary will be the guest of honour. The head of Mar Thoma Church, Joseph Mar Thoma, will deliver the benedictory speech.

The work has entered the Guinness Book as the longest documentary. Mr. Bles-



Philipose Mar Chrysostom

sy said the 48-hour and 8 minutes documentary has broken the record of the 21-hour Saudi Arabian documentary *World of Snakes*.

M. Jayachandran who scored the music of the documentary; K.S. Chitra, singer; Benyamin, novelist; K.R. Meera, writer; Stephen Devassy, musician; will address the event at 5.30 p.m. at SC Seminary School grounds in Thiruvalla.

## A.P. villagers turn wildlife-friendly

Man-animal conflict has ended in Satyavedu range in Chittoor, says forest officer

K. UMASHANKER  
CHITTOOR

Hopes for the survival of deer, bears and monitor lizards in the sparse jungles of the Satyavedu range in Chittoor on the Andhra Pradesh-Tamil Nadu border have risen. with the growth of a wildlife-friendly ambience in the villages fringing the forest.

The hillocks from Narayanavanam to Satyavedu hold considerable vegetation to support spotted deer. However their presence is limited to a few pockets close to the Telugu Ganga canal on the eastern side from Srikalahasti to Varadaiahpalem, and in Kambakam forest, and in the small patches of forests surrounding the Sri City zone at the intersection of the two States.

In the last couple of years,



A man holding a fawn after rescuing it from stray dogs at Santhavelur hamlet in Chittoor district.

villagers of KVB Puram, BN Kandriga, Pichatur, Nagalapuram and Satyavedu mandals have come across deer sprinting close to their habi-

tations, only to be attacked by stray dogs. With timely intervention of the villagers, mostly youths, several deer have escaped death and sprinted back to their habitats.

Whenever the villagers are woken up late in the night on the barking of dogs, they rush to the trouble spots, and shoo away the dogs, allowing the beleaguered deer to escape. So much so, that in some hamlets, the dogs are no more hostile to their prey.

On August 15, villagers of Santhavelur village in BN Kandriga mandal rescued a fawn from dogs in a three-hour operation. After it was fed with milk and grass, it was handed over to forest officials, who later released it into the thickets.

Forest Range Officer (Sa-

tyavedu) J. Prasada Rao told *The Hindu* that the department's efforts to create wildlife awareness had yielded results in the last two years.

"Incidence of villagers killing pythons and several reptile species has almost ended in our area. Several youths, who used to venture into the reserve forests in search of monitor lizards (known as udumu), have now stopped such activity. By staying away from the reserve forest zones and limiting cattle grazing to the fringe areas, the villagers have provided a safer environment for forest animals like bears. This has also averted man-animal conflict," he said. Also, the Sri City industrial zone has sought permission to catch snakes on its premises and release them into the forests.

## Flood in Krishna river recedes

Inflows gradually fall at all reservoirs but several residential areas waterlogged

THARUN BODA  
VIJAYAWADA

The flood in the Krishna River has been coming down gradually with inflows to Almati in Karnataka and other reservoirs downstream registering a downward trend.

As of Sunday evening, Almati was discharging only two lakh cusecs and Srisailem in Andhra Pradesh was handling an inflow and outflow of 5.69 lakh cusecs. As per flood forecast, the inflows were gradually falling at all the reservoirs.

## Nagarjuna Sagar

The Nagarjuna Sagar Project too was handling 4.22 lakh cusecs of inflow and outflow. The inflow at the Pulichintala project was 5.16 lakh cusecs. Over 5.50 lakh cusecs was being released while maintaining a flood cushion



Glad tidings: The inflow into the Srisailem dam in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, has come down considerably. \*U. SUBRAMANYAM

of 9.31 tmcft. As a result, the inflows to Prakasam Barrage also came down to 5.48 lakh cusecs from 6.43 lakh cusecs on Saturday evening.

The outflow from the barrage was 6.23 lakh cusecs. However, several residential areas in Vijayawada and oth-

er mandals, agriculture fields in Krishna and Guntur districts were still under a sheet of water.

Water Resources department officials estimate that it would take a day for the inflow and outflow to come down by one lakh cusecs.

Home Minister M. Sucharita, who inspected a relief camp in Guntur district, said the government was able to avoid loss of life with effective flood relief management. Two persons died in Guntur and Krishna districts. She promised all help to farmers and people until normalcy returns.

## Crops damaged

She said 34 villages of 18 mandals in Krishna and 53 villages of 14 mandals in Guntur were affected and thousands of acres of crops were damaged.

As per the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority's preliminary report, 4,235 houses in Krishna and 537 houses in Guntur were submerged and over 20,000 people were lodged in relief camps.







## Unclear doctrine

No-first-use is integral to India's nuclear doctrine and leaves no space for ambiguity

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has been somewhat careful in speaking of envisioning a change in India's nuclear deterrence posture. In place for 16 years, since January 4, 2003, when the doctrine was adopted formally, New Delhi has said consistently that India's nuclear weapons were based on staggering and punitive retaliation, in case deterrence failed. The retaliation to a nuclear strike, any nuclear strike, whether by tactical or theatre weapons or something bigger, would be crushing enough to deter the possible use of nuclear weapons by an adversary. So the theory goes. On the first death anniversary of former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, and in the nuclear proving ground in Pokhran, the Minister said two things: that the no-first-use has served India well so far, and that what happens in future depends on circumstances. There ought to be no scope for confusion here. Security is, after all, a dynamic concept. It was the security environment in the neighbourhood coupled with the pressure brought by the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty that forced India out of the nuclear closet and, at the same time, to adopt the no-first-use posture. The structures associated with the doctrine, the command and control that can survive a nuclear strike, the redundancies that are in-built, the secure communications, have all been developed keeping in view the posture perspective.

But there is a danger that the minister's remark could spark off a nuclear arms race, given the strategic paranoias that have been at work in this part of the world for over half a century. In the elections of 2014, the BJP's manifesto had references to an intention to update and revise the nuclear doctrine, but that went nowhere. It is conceivable that nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of non-state actors in Pakistan, but even in such scenarios that warrant pre-emptive action, a nuclear strike cannot be a viable option. It would have been much better if Mr. Singh had elaborated on his thoughts so that a debate could have taken place, and not kept his remarks enigmatic. In a nuclear circumstance it is much better to convey the overwhelming nature of the deterrence than to keep the potential adversary guessing. In this respect it is a good idea for the government to make public any periodic review in its strategic posture. The no-first-use policy comes with being a confident nuclear power. For him to state the future is open is to say nothing and at once imply everything. In matters of nuclear doctrine, it is important to be clear above all else. Nothing must be left to interpretation.

## Taking on TB

Keeping the prices of the new drug low is essential for increased treatment uptake

The anti-tuberculosis drug pretomanid recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will be a game changer for treating people with extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) and those who do not tolerate or respond to now available multi-drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) drugs. That pretomanid is only the third drug in the last 40 years to get FDA approval highlights the scarcity of new drugs to treat TB bacteria that are rapidly developing resistance against most available drugs. The all-oral, three-drug regimen of bedaquiline, pretomanid, and linezolid (BPaL) had a 90% cure rate in a phase III trial in South Africa involving 109 participants. In contrast, the current treatment success rate for XDR-TB and MDR-TB is about 34% and 55%, respectively. Importantly, the regimen was found to be safe and effective in curing TB in people living with HIV. The safety and efficacy were tested in 1,168 patients in 19 clinical trials in 14 countries. Unlike 18-24 months needed to treat highly-resistant TB using nearly 20 drugs, the BPaL regimen took just six months, was better tolerated and more potent in clearing the bacteria. The shorter duration is more likely to increase adherence to therapy and improve treatment outcomes. According to the World Health Organisation, in 2017, there were an estimated 4.5 lakh people across the world with MDR-TB, of which India accounted for 24%, and about 37,500 with XDR-TB. With only a low percentage of MDR-TB cases being treated, the actual number of people who do not tolerate or respond to available MDR-TB drugs and so will be eligible to receive the BPaL regimen is unknown. Though the total number of people who will require the new drug may not be high, these are people who have very little alternative treatment options that are safe and efficacious. Also, the number of those who would need a pretomanid-based regimen is increasing due to rising drug resistance.

While the availability of a potent drug is welcome news, it remains to be seen if it would be made affordable, particularly in the developing countries where the burden of XDR-TB and MDR-TB is the highest. TB Alliance, a New York-based international NGO, which developed and tested the drug, has already signed an exclusive licensing agreement with a generic-drug manufacturer for high-income markets. Unlike in the case of bedaquiline, where its prohibitive cost has severely restricted access especially in the developing countries, pretomanid might become affordable. In line with the TB Alliance's commitment to affordability and sustainable access, the drug will be licensed to multiple manufacturers in about 140 low- and middle-income countries, including India. Making the drug affordable to those with extreme form of drug resistance will be highly commendable and a desperately needed model to be followed. After all, there is a compulsion to keep the prices low and increase treatment uptake to stop the spread of highly drug-resistant TB bacteria. Studies have shown an increase in the number of new patients who are directly infected with drug-resistant bacteria.

# 'The Idea of India' is failing

The middle class that led India's nation-building project has now embraced a nationalism that has no place for diversity



C. RAMMANOHAR REDDY

The "Idea of India" has always been grander in promise than in fulfilment. At Independence, the dream was that the people of a country of so much diversity – in language, religion, and tradition – would enjoy constitutionally guaranteed rights and through democratic means, build a just society. A cornerstone of this dream was respect for diversity that was written into the Constitution. It has been a mixed record, with as many failures as achievements. The events of the past two weeks, however, signal to us that the "Idea of India" is in danger of collapsing. We may soon have to accept the "New India" which places no value on pluralism, fraternity and autonomy.

Everything about why and how the constitutional arrangements of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) have been so radically changed violates the "Idea of India".

### A worrisome move

The processes used to modify the "Holy Book" that is the Constitution are as important as the content of the amendments. Yet, as many lawyers and constitutional experts have already pointed out, the manner in which the Narendra Modi government has withdrawn the rights J&K enjoyed under Article 370 can only be described as abusing the spirit of the Constitution. Now that the Government has tasted success, it should be fastidious about using the same kind of skulduggery to aggressive-

ly alter the Constitution to further its agenda. Only the courts stand in the way and there the Government of India must be feeling that its own actions will pass muster.

We also have the disappearance of J&K as a State. It is hard to think of anything more insulting to a people than to inform them one morning that their State has been turned into two Union Territories, effectively ruled from New Delhi. This is real "tukde tukde" work.

Since the early 1950s, States have been periodically divided and new ones created. Consultation of some form or the other has always been an integral part of the process. Nothing like the sudden disappearance of the State of J&K has happened before. In a supposedly federal system, the Centre has been able to ram through the necessary legislative changes while keeping 8 million people cut off from the rest of the world and without allowing them to express their views. In the past five years, we have undoubtedly had the most centralised government since the time of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Should we or shouldn't we be worried about what more is in store for us? Was it short-sightedness or fear that made all the regional parties – the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam being the only major exception – endorse the break up of J&K into two Union Territories?

### Spirit behind special rights

There are legitimate reasons why in our diverse society, the Constitution has ordained special rights, for instance, for Dalits and Adivasis; for Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim (under Article 371); and so too for J&K until now under Article 370. A uniformity of rights across the nation and all classes does not necessarily make



NISSAR AHMAD

for a cohesive society. In fact, the opposite is the case in a country of vast diversity. Special rights for specific communities and regions enable them to feel a "oneness" in a large country that has so many kinds of differences. Here, the guarantees promised to J&K were especially important because of the circumstances surrounding the State's accession to India.

The autonomy offered by Article 370 has been contentious for two reasons. One, it was enjoyed by a State that remained divided between India and Pakistan. Two, the constitutional provision applied to India's only Muslim majority State. These two features should have made it all the more important to preserve the guarantees contained in Article 370. However, for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Jan Sangh/Bharatiya Janata Party, for whom uniformity has always come first, abolition of Article 370 has been a core demand.

Contentious Article 370 always was, but it was never adhered to in any measure. In this, there have been no saints in either New Delhi or Srinagar. If one systematically emptied the promise of autonomy right from the 1950s onwards with a series of presidential notifica-

# An intervention that leads to more questions

Revoking NFU does not necessarily mean giving up restraint, but it leaves India's nuclear doctrine more ambiguous



PRIYANJALI MALIK

Policymaking by tweet may have arrived in India, for the Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh, appears to have altered a key pillar of India's nuclear doctrine when he tweeted that India's 'future' commitment to a posture of No First Use of nuclear weapons 'depends on the circumstances'. Using the commemoration of the first death anniversary of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee as the setting for this declaration, Mr. Singh's announcement marks a significant revision of India's nuclear stance, seemingly without any prior structured deliberation or consultation. Of course nuclear doctrine, like any directive guiding national security, needs to be a dynamic concept that responds to changing circumstances. However, this raises the question of what has changed in India's strategic outlook that requires a revision of one of the two foundational pillars of its nuclear doctrine.

India is one of two countries – China being the other – that adheres to a doctrine of No First Use (NFU). Our knowledge of India's nuclear doctrine is based largely on a statement circulated on January 4, 2003 by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), which said that it had 'reviewed progress in operationalising India's nuclear

doctrine', and was making public the relevant details as appropriate (summarised in seven points). The first said that India would maintain 'a credible minimum deterrent' and the second point avowed '[a] posture of "No First Use": nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation...'. The remaining five points flow mainly from these two points mentioned. India has maintained that it will not strike first with nuclear weapons but reserves the right to retaliate to any nuclear first strike against it (or any 'major' use of weapons of mass destruction against Indian forces anywhere) with a nuclear strike 'that will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage'. This is not a statement by the faint-hearted – with two nuclear neighbours, the NFU simply raises the nuclear threshold in order to bring stability into a volatile environment.

### A rewind

It is almost exactly 20 years to the day since since any of this was first mentioned officially. On August 17, 1999, the then caretaker Bharatiya Janata Party government released a draft Nuclear Doctrine in order to generate discussion and debate on India's nuclear posture. There was much discussion and criticism of the doctrine, as indeed of the timing of the release of the draft, coming as it did just weeks before a national election. It was known that the first National Security Advisory Board, a group of 27 individuals convened by K. Subrahmanyam, and comprising strategic analysts, academics, and retired



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

military and civil servants, had completed their draft some months earlier; however, their report was only released a couple of weeks before polling began on September 5, 1999.

It has ever been thus. Following criticism of the draft doctrine, the government appeared to move away from it. It was never discussed in Parliament and its status remained unclear for three and a half years until it was abruptly adopted by the CCS with minor modifications in 2003. The draft's emphasis on NFU, however, remained unchanged. The adoption of the nuclear doctrine came soon after Operation Parakram (2001-02), when the threat of a nuclear exchange on the subcontinent had figured prominently in international capitals, if not in New Delhi and Islamabad. The public adoption of the doctrine was in part an attempt by New Delhi to restate its commitment to restraint and to being a responsible nuclear power.

### Restraint as a pivotal point

Restraint has served India well. India used the strategic space offered by its repeated proclamations of restraint to repulse the

intruders in Kargil 20 years ago and regain occupied land despite the nuclear shadow created by India and Pakistan's nuclear tests of 1998. Raising the nuclear threshold gave India the space for conventional operations and gained it sympathy in foreign capitals despite the fears of nuclear miscalculation that were widespread from Washington DC to London to Tokyo. India's self-proclaimed restraint has formed the basis for its claims to belong to the nuclear mainstream – from the initial application for the waiver in 2008 from the Nuclear Suppliers Group in order to carry out nuclear commerce with the grouping, to its membership of the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group and its ongoing attempts to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

While revoking the commitment to NFU does not necessarily equate with abandoning restraint, it does leave India's doctrine more ambiguous. Ambiguity, in turn, can lead to miscalculations, as India found out with Kargil (1999), where it would appear that Rawalpindi misread India's resolve to carve out space for conventional military operations despite the new nuclear overhang. Neither does adhering to the NFU symbolise weakness, for India is committed to a devastating response to nuclear first use – a stance which underscores India's understanding of nuclear weapons as meant primarily to deter.

Of course, NFU has had its critics among those who advocate a

more muscular nuclear policy for India. Indeed, Bharat Karnad, a member of the first National Security Advisory Board that drafted the basis of this current nuclear doctrine, made it known at the time that he considered NFU 'a fraud' which would be 'the first casualty' if war were to break out. However, consensus among the remaining members of the board clearly coalesced around an understanding of nuclear weapons not as war-fighting armaments but as weapons of last resort, meant to deter the threat and use of nuclear weapons. It was this understanding that was then used to bring India into the nuclear mainstream. It is also this understanding that has formed the basis of India's nuclear posture, from force structure to numbers to its overall nuclear diplomacy.

All of these points are up for revision with the announcement at Pokhran, which is where the BJP chose to remember Atal Behari Vajpayee on his first death anniversary. At a time when there are multiple queries regarding the state of India's economy, the road map to normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir, the strength of India's federalism, to name a few, we can now add questions about what has changed in India's security environment to warrant a review of its nuclear doctrine. India's neighbours will be as interested in the answers as this country's citizens.

Priyanjali Malik is an independent researcher and the author of 'India's Nuclear Debate: Exceptionalism and the Bomb'

There have been three days in the Republic's history on which "The Idea of India" has been shaken to its roots. The first was June 25, 1975 when an Emergency was declared and many of our Fundamental Rights were suspended. The people's vote rescued India at the time. The next was December 6, 1992 when the Babri Masjid was destroyed. We managed to limp away, though with neither atonement nor punishment. Now we have August 5, 2019, when the Constitution was subverted in spirit if not in letter, when federalism was shoved aside and the rights of the people of a member of the Union were stamped on.

It is difficult to see "The Idea of India" recovering from this latest body blow.

C. Rammanohar Reddy is Editor of 'The India Forum'

## 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.

### Kashmir's special status

The honourable Vice President of India begins his article (Editorial page, "A considered step that opens up new vistas", August 17) with the words, "The general perception is that a vast majority of people in the country feel that the abrogation is a welcome step" and sums it with the line, "In conclusion, it should be noted that the abrogation of Article 370 is a national issue involving our country's safety, security, unity and equitable prosperity. It is a step in the right direction that the Indian Parliament has taken with an overwhelming majority." Nowhere in the article have I come across a single line

about the wishes, the ascertainment of those wishes, or even the need for considering the wishes of the people directly and most affected by the action – I mean the people of the Kashmir Valley. Am I missing something?

SUSHIL PRASAD,  
Hyderabad

■ The Constitution that India adopted in 1950 was a statement on how we will do things in the future. It is, above all, an ethical document that defines our values and guiding principles. We adopted democracy, a system where everyone's voice is heard and decisions are made by consensus. But the recent chain of events in Jammu and Kashmir have gone

against this basic principle. Democracy has been redefined as the rule of the majority, where even direct stakeholders have been sidelined. The principle that ends justify means can be found in many philosophical writings but it finds no place in the Constitution or Constitutional values. Any community is bound to be hurt by such humiliation and forced suppression. It seems the recent decisions have the potential to stoke the flames of instability in Jammu and Kashmir.

PRAKASH MATTHEW,  
Thiruvananthapuram

■ The Vice President is right in pointing out that Article 370 was only a temporary, transitional arrangement. In the same vein, the provision

of reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was also meant to be a temporary measure. But even after more than 70 years of Independence, reservations continue with evidence of misuse. Will the Vice President use his good offices and see that the government addresses this issue also?

R. JAGADEESWARA RAO,  
Visakhapatnam

### A note on CSR

In mandating a corporate social responsibility spend under the Companies Act, we in India have followed a widely accepted global trend. But a prescriptive approach does not gel with a progressive nation. By its very concept, the CSR stands placed above mundane

finance; treating it as a tax is to degrade it. The annual CSR awards for companies should promote inclination and incentive to improving the social milieu. Instead of pedantic clauses, riders and ham-handed penalties, the government ought to facilitate and mould the groundswell. Contributions to the Prime Minister's relief fund are the most unimaginative route to CSR. Originality counts most as CSR is but a part of the tapestry of social empowerment

R. NARAYANAN,  
Navi Mumbai

### Special bond

Two reports from Kerala, "Pet dogs save goat herd amid Kerala floods" (August 18) and "Lone sentinel of

Kavalappara rescued" (August 17), once again prove that among the kinds of friendships in this world, some of the best happen to be those between people and animals. We are all creatures of this world and in heart-wrenching moments, animals end up showing us that love – especially unconditional love – really knows no bounds. Sometimes we even find more comfort in animals than we do with fellow humans because animals never seem to disappoint. This has been proven in various stories one reads about all creatures great and small.

SARADA NAIR,  
Kochi

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# A lose-lose scenario

The Centre's actions and plans for Jammu and Kashmir suffer from inherent infirmities



V. SUDARSHAN

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar tweeted on August 2 that he had conveyed "in clear terms" to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that "any discussion on Kashmir, if at all warranted, will only be with Pakistan and only bilaterally." Kashmir has been bilaterally enshrined as a legitimate topic of discussion between India and Pakistan and to that extent it is certainly warranted. There is nothing iffy about it. Pakistan has worked in many ways to obtain a better grip on Kashmir, including by getting nuclear bombs. Now that India has given Pakistan a fait accompli, will Pakistan roll over and play dead? And how does New Delhi hope to pull it off?

## The road ahead

There is a haphazard shape to the beast, sensing its hour coming around, that slouches its way towards Kashmir to be born. The rough contours: The government will later rather than sooner have to pull additional troops out to give the situation in Jammu and Kashmir a gloss of normalcy. There is no saying how many troops are out there in Jammu and Kashmir. It could be surmised that there are about 80,000 deployed in the northern part of Kashmir, along the Line of Control. This is not counting those in counter-insurgency operations in the southern parts of the erstwhile State. This is not counting local police, the BSF and the CRPF. Obviously the additional troops numbering some 40,000 have been brought in to manage the new situation. There could be more.

The trick is how, with little or no bloodshed, this massive deployment, unparalleled in any democracy, will squelch what waits to emerge out of the Pandora's Box without a lose-lose scenario dominating the national consciousness. It is a tough call.

Moves are afoot to hold an election, probably in March or April. The new political leadership, carefully nurtured, will no doubt be from



"The trick is how, with little or no bloodshed, this massive deployment of troops will squelch what waits to emerge out of the Pandora's Box without a lose-lose scenario dominating the national consciousness." Security personnel stand guard at a check point in Srinagar on August 18. ■ PTI

among the throw-ups in the panchayat elections. It is a good time to wager if former Chief Ministers Omar Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti can ever contest another election. It is a foregone conclusion that these leaders of regional mainstream political parties, which the government says is a discredited lot, will have to be suitably disincentivised from contesting the polls, and this means having them under some form of detention for the foreseeable future. From the new perspective, they have identified themselves too much with separatist impulses. Certainly, third-rung or fourth-rung leaders from these parties may already have been identified and may be being primed to give solidity to the new deal that awaits the Kashmiris. Together they are the new quislings of Kashmir's perennial uprising.

In order to present that green shoots of industry and economy are going to grow out of Kashmir's hitherto separatist soil, the CII has already planned a summit in October, and big money is being readied to throw at the region, as has been done before. Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance, Mukesh Ambani, who has signed on to the government's vision, soon promises to unveil plans for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The government may

not risk a repeat of bringing heavy industries to Kashmir now but it will certainly press ahead with the smaller initiatives pertaining to local handicrafts and the like. It will try to set an example by proving that removal of Article 35A, which has prevented people from the rest of the country from buying property in Jammu and Kashmir, will have a real impact. Just like the elections, this will be a managed outcome. It is a challenge: Even though people from Jammu could always have bought land in Kashmir, they never dared. In May 2008, land was allocated to the Amarnath shrine to set up temporary shelters for the pilgrims leading to sustained and massive protests and a reversal of the government stance months later.

Yet this could be an extremely optimistic picture. Having removed the separatists of various hues from the equation on the ground and supplanted them with Delhi-controlled ventriloquism, the Centre cannot hold. It will be laying itself directly open to blame on a variety of counts. With the police, paramilitary and administrative machinery totally under New Delhi's control, the Centre cannot possibly have either the same level of engagement or the same level of deniability of the mess that mis-handling of the situation could create, not least the human rights

abuses accusations that are bound to pile up once the troops cede the ground to grimmer realities that have lurked for seven decades. At the end of it, diplomat Paul Bremer, whom the Americans sent to Baghdad to clean up after Saddam Hussein, could begin to look like Florence Nightingale.

Meanwhile, Pakistan is hardly likely to launch a charm offensive. Prime Minister Imran Khan has already predicted the possibility of lone-wolf disruptions of the dreaded Pulwama type. The spiral upward that could follow will end more messily than we have hitherto known. So far, Muslims in the rest of the country have not been drawn into the Kashmir quagmire. There have been some instances but not enough to cause serious alarm. Seeds are perhaps being sown for that to change now. Kashmir's theatre of war is readying to spill outwards. As pressures pile up, communalisation could result. Jammu, after all, is one-third Muslim. Will the presumed positives of abrogation of Article 370 and an old development card that has been repeatedly and tiredly played with less than encouraging results far outweigh the inherent infirmities of the move?

## Statecraft then and now

The question finally arises: could statecraft have been handled differently? Painstaking back-channel work had narrowed the outstanding differences between India and Pakistan during the time of Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, and the congruence on critical issues had survived changes in Pakistan involving President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Mumbai attacks. There had been agreement on, among other things, a freeze on the Line of Control as the border in exchange of end to violence and terrorism, leading to thinning of troops on either side and blossoming of local bilateral trade as critical steps towards normalisation. The presumption was that once the momentum was there the rest would follow. It could have been taken forward. Time alone will tell if that was the less risky, more gentle, more inclusive way forward, or this, which right now appears to be a comedy of terrors.

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## FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

# Journalism counters manufactured ignorance

Speaking truth to power is a valuable democratic duty



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

The disinformation industry is growing at an alarming speed and undermining democracy in an incremental manner. As part of this endeavour, there is a conscious attempt to remove the lustre from some defining terms. For instance, words such as pluralism, inclusiveness, fraternity, equality, and affirmative action are seen as terms defining the politics of a bygone era. The echo chamber of social media further distorts the truth.

Sometimes, readers send me WhatsApp forwards asking why the newspaper did not carry a particular story. They use social media trivia to prove a point that journalism is inherently against the ruling elites. In the present climate where conspiracy theories abound and forced false equivalences reign, readers must know that a news ombudsman has a framework to evaluate complaints and compliments. As the Readers' Editor, I am committed to rectify any journalistic flaws through a process called "visible mending". I evaluate news and investigative reports based on facts but rarely entertain complaints based on perceptions.

## Commitment to inform

Readers must realise that the cyberspace consists of both knowledge and ignorance. However, today its commitment to inform is nearly outweighed by the voices of the apologists for the regime. Credible and trustworthy journalism is often pitted against blatant propagandist drivel. What is happening now is a clash of ideas between one set of professionals committed to knowledge production for public good and another set of partisan groups involved in ignorance production for political longevity. And this is the difference between sensitive journalism and the puffery of propaganda.

Philosophically, the idea of knowledge production has been explored in a systematic manner and the discipline is called epistemology. It would be helpful for the readers to know about a nascent discipline that is gaining ground among academia. It is called 'agnology', which means the study of ignorance. Two professors of history of science at Stanford University, Robert N. Proctor and Londa Schiebinger, edited an anthology of

essays titled *Agnology: The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance*, which looked at the theme of what keeps ignorance alive and what allows it to be used as a political instrument. Scholars of the essays explained how ignorance is produced or maintained in diverse settings, through mechanisms such as deliberate or inadvertent neglect; secrecy and suppression; document destruction; unquestioned tradition; and myriad forms of inherent or avoidable cultural-political selectivity. Agnology is "the study of ignorance making, the lost and forgotten".

In his introductory chapter, 'A missing term to describe the cultural production of ignorance and its study', Mr. Proctor argued: "Ignorance has many interesting surrogates and overlaps in myriad ways with — as it is generated by — secrecy, stupidity, apathy, censorship, disinformation, faith, and forgetfulness, all of which are science-twisted. Ignorance hides in the shadows of philosophy and is frowned upon in sociology, but it also pops up in a great deal of popular rhetoric: it's no excuse, it's what can't hurt you, it's bliss." In a forceful manner, he explained how technologies cause the proliferation of ignorance: "The public seems to be awakening to the fact that in the midst of the 'information' explosion, there has been an 'ignorance' explosion as well."

In 1984, Thomas Pynchon, in his introduction to his collection of novellas *Slow Learner*, wrote: "Ignorance is not just a blank space on a person's mental map. It has contours and coherence, and for all I know, rules of operation as well." We need to know the contours of the ignorance that flows from prime-time noise. The ignorance-generating mechanism has a sense of coherence, creates its own set of tortured data, politically vacuous vocabulary, and eliminates the distinction between justice and revenge. It stands testimony to George Orwell's observation: "The nationalist not only does not disapprove of atrocities committed by his own side, but he has a remarkable capacity for not even hearing about them."

A cursory reading of the responses to critical voices in the comment section of this newspaper proves that there is an explosion of ignorance. In the short-term, journalists who retain their analytical and interrogative spirit may pay a price for speaking truth to power. But they are performing an irreducible and inalienable democratic duty: confronting a system that produces ignorance.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

# A law for those who testify

The Centre is yet to act on a Supreme Court directive to legislate on witness protection

M.P. NATHANAEL

The recent accident in Rae Bareilly in which a rape survivor's two aunts died, and which left her and her lawyer in a critical condition, has drawn much media attention. The rape accused, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, was arrested in April last year after the survivor attempted to immolate herself in front of the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's residence while demanding justice. Consequent to the death of the two individuals, one of whom was also a witness in the case, charges pertaining to attempt to murder were added to those already present against Sengar.

On June 2 this year, Assistant Sub Inspector Suresh Pal, assigned to protect murder witness Rambir, was accidentally killed when the assailants missed their aim while attempting to kill the witness. In 2017, in the Asaram Bapu case concerning the rape of some women devotees, three witnesses were killed and as many as 10 attacked in an attempt to weaken the case. In fact, it was the killing of the three, followed by a Public Interest Litigation, which prompted the apex court to issue directions to the Centre and the States to frame laws for protection of witnesses.



## Maharashtra's law

Following this, Maharashtra came out with the Maharashtra Witness and Protection and Security Act 2017, which was notified in January 2018. However, the Centre, and most other States, are yet to act on the directive.

Meanwhile, the apex court gave its assent last year to the Witness Protection Scheme, which was drafted by the Centre in consultation with the Bureau of Police Research and Development and the National Legal Services Authority. The Centre was to implement the scheme after circulating it among all States and Union Territories and obtaining their comments. However, the scheme was meant to be a measure in force only till the government brought out its

own law on the issue. Though the Centre is scheduled to bring an Act on the subject by the end of this year, it has not made much progress.

## Lax implementation

As regards the existing measure, though its objective is to ensure the safety of witnesses, so that they are able to give a true account of the crime without any fear of violence or criminal recrimination, its implementation on the ground leaves much to be desired. The Unnao matter would have been hushed up but for the fact that the survivor attempted to immolate herself in front of the Chief Minister's residence.

Further, though the scheme provides for police personnel to be deployed to protect the witness on the basis of threat perception, it is silent on the punishment to be given to those policemen who, while being charged with providing security, themselves threaten the witnesses. Why were the policemen tasked with protecting the Unnao survivor not with her when she travelled to Rae Bareilly? Were they aware that a sinister plan had probably been hatched to eliminate her relatives?

Above all, what emboldens the criminals the most is the support they get from the police. The shadowy politician-police nexus is so strong that no policeman, at the mercy of political leaders for his career progression, dares take any action against his "master". As long as this nexus continues, the delivery of criminal justice in India will remain a casualty.

The Witness Protection Scheme calls for more elaborate and stricter laws to be incorporated so that criminals find no loopholes that can be exploited to their advantage. The sooner the Centre comes up with a legislation codifying the protection to be given to witnesses, the better it is for India's criminal justice system.

M.P. Nathanael is a retired Inspector General of Police, CRPF



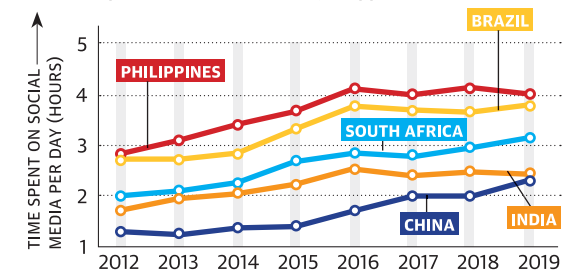
## DATA POINT

# Socially networked

Globally, digital consumers spent nearly 2.5 hours every day on social networks and messaging in 2019. In India, rising usage can largely be attributed to the falling cost of data usage. About three out of five Indian social media users felt that the usage of social media has made it easier to manipulate people with fake news. By Varun B. Krishnan

## High time

The graph looks at how select countries have been spending time on social media. While usage has increased rapidly in the Philippines and Brazil, growth has been relatively sluggish in India and China



## Likes and dislikes

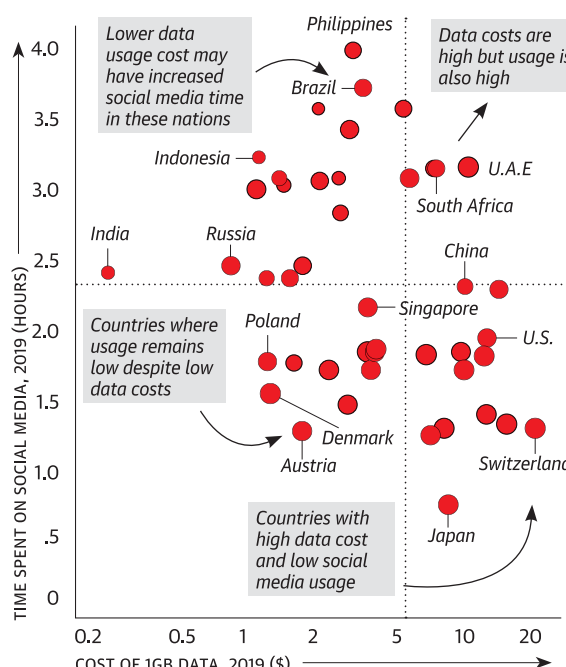
In 2018, 65% of Indian consumers thought that social media kept people informed on current events, while nearly half thought it made people more divided in their political opinions

Access to phones, internet & social media has made people... (answered in 2018)	%
More informed on current events	65
Easier to manipulate with false information & rumours	60
More divided in their political opinions	46
More willing to engage in political debates	46
More accepting of people with different views	38

Source: Global Web Index report (2.78 lakh respondents, 15K from India); Pew Research Centre, Cable.co.uk

## Cost vs usage

The graph plots the average time spent on social media per day in 2019 against the average cost of 1 GB data in US\$ across select countries. Size of the dot represents internet penetration



## The Hindu

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 19, 1969

## 'Congress has split beyond repair'

Mr. S.K. Patil, Member of Parliament and Treasurer of the All India Congress Committee, said in a statement here [Bombay] today [August 18] that whatever might be the result of the Presidential election, there was no denying the fact that the Indian National Congress had split, perhaps "beyond repair." "Nobody likes to say these things, but the logic of events is inexorable," he said and added, "for the last few days, many Congressmen were literally praying that something would happen even on the eve of the election to avert the dreadful consequences of an open split. That did not happen." As regards the demand for a free vote, Mr. Patil said the free vote was nothing but a vote for Mr. Giri who was basically a Communist candidate and perhaps for that reason a favourite candidate of the Prime Minister. "It would be less than honest for the Prime Minister to deny that she had in ever so many ways encouraged the candidature of Mr. Giri. On a closer examination a free vote becomes a ludicrous farce when every other political party had issued a whip for its candidate."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 19, 1919.

## Indian Labour in Ceylon.

(From an Editorial)

The part played by the Government of Madras in the negotiations that took place early last month in respect of the question of Indian labour in Ceylon has not yet transpired despite the public protest made against the secrecy of the transaction. The report of the Committee appointed by the Ceylon Government has now been issued and the text of the draft ordinance which it has recommended should be published elsewhere. We are absolutely in the dark as to the extent to which the local Government have approved of the proposals made in the report and it is very regrettable that, at a time when His Excellency was publicly expressing his desire to establish an agency for interpreting the actions of Government to the people, the details of the important question should have been debated upon, and perhaps decided in secret conclave. The Ceylon Committee have proposed a few remedial measures of first rate importance; but all of them have proceeded from the point of the view of one who is anxious to be no more bothered by the difficulty of labour scarcity which would spell ruin to Ceylon agriculture.

FROM PAGE ONE

## 'Any talks with Pak. only on PoK'

Mr. Singh said Articles 370 and 35A have been revoked from Jammu and Kashmir, which would remove all obstacles in the path of holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

"On the Kashmir issue, Pakistan has been knocking on the doors of various countries but it has been asked to convene talks with India," he said.

**Assembly elections**  
With an eye on the upcoming Assembly polls in Haryana,

due later this year, the ruling BJP has raised the pitch of its campaign as it flagged off the 'Jan Aashirwad Yatra', which will be carried out in all the 90 Assembly constituencies of the State.

The 'yatra' will conclude in Rohtak on September 8.

Mr. Singh urged people to re-elect the BJP as the party under the leadership of Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had successfully given a transparent government in the past five years.

## Curbs on movement back in Kashmir

Security forces at some roadblocks have told residents there is a curfew.

Two senior government officials told Reuters that at least two dozen people were admitted to hospitals with pellet injuries after violent clashes broke out in the old city on Saturday night.

Representatives in the Jammu and Kashmir government in Srinagar and New Delhi did not immediately return calls asking about the latest clampdown or seeking an assessment of the number of injuries and clashes.

One of the official sources said people threw stones at security forces in around two dozen places across Srinagar. He said the intensity

of the stone throwing protests has increased over past few days.

The heavy overnight clashes took place mostly in Rainawari, Nowhetta and Gojwara areas of the old city where security forces fired tear gas, chilly grenades and pellets to disperse protesters, eyewitnesses and officials said.

Chilly grenades contain very spicy chili pepper, and produce a major eye and skin irritant, as well as a pungent smell, when they are unleashed.

The officials, who declined to be identified, said clashes also took place in other parts of the city.

Internet and cell phones remain blocked in Kashmir.

## 'India, Bhutan are natural partners'

"As a result, our shared values have shaped a common world-view," Mr. Modi said, in the presence of Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering.

"And as people, we are fortunate to be the living vehicle of this great legacy," he said.

Anyone visiting Bhutan is struck as much by its natural beauty as by the warmth, compassion and simplicity of its people, the Prime Minister said.

"During this visit, I have had the opportunity to interact closely with the present leadership of Bhutan. I once again received their guidance for the India-Bhutan relationship, which has always benefited from their close and personal attention," said Mr. Modi.

The two countries inked 10 MoUs in the fields of space research, aviation, IT, power and education to infuse new energy in their ties.

## 'No change in Jaitley's condition'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

"The team of doctors looking after Arun Jaitley is doing the best they can. He is under round-the-clock observation, and as of now, there is no major change in his health condition," a senior official of the Health Ministry said on Sunday.

Mr. Jaitley, 66, was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on August 9 after he complained of breathlessness and uneasiness.

Doctors said the condition of Mr. Jaitley, who has been on life support system, had neither improved significantly nor deteriorated.

**Leaders visit hospital**  
On Sunday, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Union Ministers Smriti Irani and Ram Vilas Paswan and former Samajwadi Party leader Amar Singh visited the AIIMS to inquire about the health of the BJP leader.

Speaking to reporters later, Mr. Kejriwal said: "I met Mr. Jaitley's family members and I pray to God for his good health and fast recovery."

Mr. Jaitley underwent a renal transplant on May 14 last year at the AIIMS. In January 2019, he was diagnosed with a rare form of soft-tissue sarcoma and underwent treatment in New York.

## PSBs told to align with national priorities

Centre asks them to prepare roadmap

MANOJIT SAHA  
MUMBAI

A recent communication from the Finance Ministry will make public sector banks (PSB) burn the midnight oil over this weekend and the next as well.

The Finance Ministry's note has asked banks to align themselves with the national priorities, seek feedback on several issues such as the rise in bad loans and slow credit growth in the past five years, and prepare a roadmap for the coming years. They have been asked to involve all their approximately one lakh branches in the exercise.

"This is part of an initiative taken by the government to find out ways in which we can align ourselves with its national objectives," Arijit Basu, Managing Director, State Bank of India, said in an interaction with the media.

"It's even more relevant today in the context of the relative slowdown in the economy that we have seen in the past few months," he said.

**Various sectors**  
Some of the national priorities to which banks need to align include doubling farm income, Jal Shakti Mission, housing for all, education loans, ease of living, corporate social responsibility and financial inclusion.

While feedback has been sought this weekend from

# PM strikes a chord with Bhutan students

Modi tells them that India was keen on cooperating on new frontiers from schools to space

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
THIMPHU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday gave a pep talk to students in Bhutan, saying they had the power and potential to do extraordinary things, which will influence future generations.

Addressing the students of the Royal University of Bhutan here, Mr. Modi encouraged the "brightest" Bhutanese youth to work hard and take the Himalayan nation to great heights.

Noting that there are several challenges ahead, the Prime Minister said, "For every challenge, we have young minds to find innovative solutions to overcome them. Let no limitation constrain you."

"I want to tell you all — there is no better time to be young than now. The world today offers more opportunities than ever before. You have the power and potential to do extraordinary things, which will impact generations to come. Find your real calling and pursue



**Warm welcome:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received at the Royal University of Bhutan in Thimphu on Sunday. •PTI

it with full passion," Mr. Modi told the students in the presence of Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering.

"As Bhutan soars high in its endeavours, your 1.3 billion Indian friends will not

just look on and cheer you with pride and happiness. They will partner you, share with you and learn from you," Mr. Modi said.

Mr. Modi said India was keen on cooperating exten-

sively on new frontiers, from schools to space, digital payments to disaster management. "Our cooperation in all these sectors will have a direct impact on young friends like you," he said, cit-

ing cooperation between India's National Knowledge Network and Bhutan's DrukREN as an example.

"It will provide secure and fast connectivity between our universities, research institutions, libraries, health-care and agricultural institutions. I urge you all to make full use of this facility," he said.

Referring to India's space programmes and the Chandrayaan-2 mission, Mr. Modi said Bhutan is also on its way to having its own satellite.

"It is even a matter of great happiness that young Bhutanese scientists will travel to India to work on designing and launching Bhutan's own small satellite. I hope that someday soon, many of you will be scientists, engineers and innovators," he told the students.

He said India-Bhutan cooperation in hydro-power and energy is exemplary. "But the real source of power and energy of this relationship are our people," the Prime Minister said.

## Modi heads home after Bhutan trip

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
THIMPHU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday left for home after concluding his two-day State visit to Bhutan, during which he held talks with the country's leaders to further deepen bilateral ties.

"Thank you Bhutan! It was a memorable visit. The affection I have received from the people of this wonderful nation can never be forgotten. There were many programmes which I had the honour of taking part in. The outcomes of the visit will enhance bilateral ties," Mr. Modi said just before his departure from Bhutan.

Mr. Modi arrived in Bhutan on Saturday. This was his second visit to the country and the first since his re-election in May this year.

During his stay in Thimphu, Mr. Modi held wide-ranging talks with his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering on Saturday.

## Congress remains silent on Hooda's statement

Rift over stand on Article 370

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress, at an official press conference on Sunday, refused to directly respond to former Haryana Chief Minister and party strongman Bhopinder Singh Hooda's statement that he will soon decide his future course of action and his backing of the Centre's decision on Article 370.

"I am not commenting on his [Mr. Hooda's] comment but I can speak in terms of our general approach and principle. I don't think a true Congress soldier will step out of line on this [on Congress position on Article 370] but there can be a difference on an individual level in terms of emphasis," said party spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi.

Other senior leaders told *The Hindu* that interim Congress president Sonia Gandhi should immediately intervene and make Mr. Hooda

the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee (HPCC) president to prevent him from leaving the party.

### Serious differences

The former two-term Haryana Chief Minister has had serious differences with incumbent Haryana Congress chief Ashok Tanwar, a Dalit leader, who was earlier appointed by Rahul Gandhi, and wanted him replaced. Senior leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, who is the party in-charge for Haryana, has been in touch with Mr. Hooda but there is no word yet on Mr. Tanwar's replacement.

With the BJP focussing on non-Jat voters, the Congress seems to be hesitant about asking Mr. Hooda, a powerful Jat leader, to head the party. "If Mr. Hooda leaves then it could set off a chain reaction among other regional leaders," said a senior leader.

# Hooda keeps everyone guessing

The former Chief Minister announces panel to decide future course

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
ROHTAK

Amid speculation that former Chief Minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda could part ways with the Congress over the State leadership issue at a rally in Rohtak on Sunday, he announced the formation of a 25-member committee to decide on the issue ahead of the Assembly election in Haryana due later this year.

Keeping his fellow party leaders and supporters guessing, Mr. Hooda, addressing the Parivartan Mahal at the Mela Ground here, said it was an important decision and he did not want to decide in haste.

"It's not just me, but the future of my supporters is also linked with it. I, therefore, will form a committee of 25 members, including the 13 MLAs supporting me, to deliberate on it. I would go by their advice," Mr. Hooda announced amid loud cheers.

He, however, said the Congress was not the same



**Game of thrones:** Bhopinder Singh Hooda addressing his supporters at Rohtak in Haryana on Sunday. •AKHILESH KUMAR

party as it was earlier and had lost its way.

### Last opportunity

Earlier, Palwal MLA Karan Dalal had suggested that Mr. Hooda give one last opportunity to the high command to decide on his long-pending demand for a change in State leadership before quitting the party.

Both Mr. Hooda and his son Deepender Singh, former Rohtak Lok Sabha member, reiterated their stand

supporting the abrogation of Article 370 on the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Our soldiers from Haryana lay their lives in Jammu and Kashmir, so I supported the scrapping of Article 370, though many friends in Congress opposed it. There can be no compromise on national interest and self-respect," said Mr. Hooda. He added that BJP could not hide behind Article 370 and the party would have to give its report card for the past five

years. In the run-up to the rally, Congress leaders belonging to the Hooda camp had been speaking to the media hinting that the former Chief Minister could quit the party to float his own outfit or join other political parties in the State.

Following the rally, sources in the party said Mr. Hooda felt that he was best placed to fight the BJP while being in the Congress and was unlikely to quit. He, however, has kept his options open by announcing to form a committee on the issue.

If voted to power, Mr. Hooda promised to increase the old-age pension to ₹5,000 per month, implement the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations, allow free rides for women on Haryana roadways, give free power to farmers with up to two-acre land holdings and pay government employees at par with their Punjab counterparts.

# Controversy in West Bengal over PIB report on Netaji

Political parties refuse to accept his 'death' in a plane crash

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

A controversy broke out on Sunday in connection with statements related to the "disappearance" of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as on August 18, 1945, when a plane, with Bose allegedly on board, crashed near Taihoku (now in Taiwan).

West Bengal's political parties, unanimously, refuse to accept Bose's death on this day, and condemned a social media statement by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) indicating that he died on this day.

Many BJP and Congress

leaders at the national level also indicated that Bose died on this day fuelling the controversy.

First to react was Chief Minister and Trinamool chief Mamata Banerjee. "On this day, in 1945, Netaji went on a flight from Taihoku Airport in Taiwan, only to disappear forever. We still do not know what happened to him. People have a right to know about the great son of the soil," tweeted Ms. Banerjee.

Bengal BJP leader and one of the grand nephews of Netaji, Chandra Kumar Bose, tweeted in line with what

the Trinamool chief said.

"18 August-on this day in 1945 #Netaji disappeared from Taihoku. Official version of the Govt [Government]-Netaji perished in an air crash. However many inconsistencies were found. It [is] imperative for the Govt. to disclose the truth to stop spreading untruth," noted Mr. Bose. The All India Forward Bloc (AIFB), founded by Bose, issued a statement seeking an apology from PIB. AIFB general secretary Debabarata Biswas called it "a covert" attempt to establish Netaji's death on this day.

# In open letter, NCP MLA tells Rahul Gandhi to 'hold the fort'

Humility is appreciated but so is a fighting spirit, he says

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar's trusted aide and party MLA Jitendra Awhad on Sunday created flutter with an open letter addressing former Congress President Rahul Gandhi requesting him to not call it quits and lead the party from the front.

The letter comes at a time when the NCP itself is facing a serious crisis with many

leaders quitting the party to join the saffron parties in Maharashtra. A month ago, the political circles were abuzz with the possibility of the merger of the Congress and the NCP before the upcoming Assembly polls.

"You need to hold the fort in such a difficult time and pass the real test of leadership. Yes, morality, modesty and humility are appreciated, but so does the fighting spirit! In fact, it is revered,"

said the letter.

Dr. Awhad's emphasis on the ideological battle against the ruling party have also indicated that the letter is aimed at several bigwigs within his own party who have quit the NCP to join hands with the BJP.

"Please lead the party from the front because Mahatma Gandhi's India has never forgotten the people who fought out adversity," he said.

# 'Financial crisis-like situation in country'

Govt. diverting attention: Congress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday accused the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government of using "virtual issues" to divert attention from real issues and compared the economic situation in the country to a "financial emergency".

Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi listed out 10 broad areas — from the serious crisis in the automobile industry to the Indian rupee being considered the weakest currency — where the economy was facing turbulence.

"You can call it financial emergency and, as somebody said, an inefficient government will replace issues with virtual ones. To divert attention from its failures, the BJP has created a barrage of virtual issues," Mr. Singhvi said.

Other issues raised by the Congress include the revised higher fiscal deficit as examined by the Comptroll-



Abhishek Singhvi

er and Auditor General (CAG), lower GDP estimates, the shrinking labour force, recession in the real estate sector, the continuous depreciation of the rupee and falling foreign direct investments.

He also raised the issue of the stock markets crashing and alleged that over ₹13 lakh crore of the investors' wealth had been wiped out.

"By suppressing data, taking resignations of officials or hiding growth and unemployment figures, can you erase the reality?" Mr. Singhvi asked.

**APEAL**

I, Vasuki aged 7 years need your support to bring a new hope to my life. I suffer from B Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and require Rs. 6,00,000/- towards Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. Donations sent by Ch / D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch / D.D. / NEFT Transfer (Syndicate account) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT. (Please do not mention patient name on the cheque).

All Correspondence is done through **WWS**, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordel Apartments, O.No. 43, N.No. 29, Pyrefests Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-2137401 / 28235324. E-mail ID: [womenswelfare.org@gmail.com](mailto:womenswelfare.org@gmail.com) Website: [www.womenswelfare.org](http://www.womenswelfare.org)

Vasuki

## UAE to give Modi highest civilian award

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit the UAE on August 23 and 24 where he will receive the Order of Zayed, the highest civilian award of the country. An External Affairs Ministry statement on Sunday said Mr. Modi would pay a state visit to Bahrain on August 24 and 25 where he would launch the renovation of a temple of Shreeathaji.

"The order in the name of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founding father of the UAE, acquires special significance as it is awarded to Prime Minister Modi in the year of the birth centenary of Sheikh Zayed," the statement said.

The visit acquires importance as it would be the first by Mr. Modi to a leading member of the Organisation of Islamic Countries after India had changed the status of Kashmir.

## Shah flays appeasement politics

Minister says Congress allowed triple talaq because of its hunger for power

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday blamed the "politics of appeasement" for the "evil practice" of triple talaq till this year.

He was speaking at a public lecture on "Abolition of triple talaq: correcting a historic wrong" at an event organised by the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation in New Delhi.

Mr. Shah defended the law criminalising triple talaq, saying it was going to benefit Muslims, and not other communities.

The Home Minister said it took several decades to end this practice because of the Congress.

Referring to the Rajiv Gandhi government's decision to bring a law to overturn the Supreme Court judgment in the Shah Bano case, he said it would be considered a "black day" in the history of Parliament.



**Making a point:** Home Minister Amit Shah speaking on the triple talaq Bill in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

"When some people are hungry for power, they resort to the politics of appeasement. They are not concerned about Muslim women but concerned only about vote-bank," he said.

"The election of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister in 2014 was the beginning of the end of the politics of appeasement and the 2019 mandate is to end it forever," Mr. Shah said.

"This evil practice of triple talaq was going on for long and the Modi government has abolished it forever and given the Muslim women the right to live in dignity and equality," he said.

Mr. Shah also addressed the issue of penal provisions in a civil matter.

"In case of child marriage, there is a provision for two years' jail. Similarly, dowry is a civil matter. In a dowry

case, if just a demand is made, there is a provision for two years' imprisonment," he said.

Triple talaq has been criminalised, he said, to create fear among some people that "if you do this, you will be punished".

"Earlier, the triple talaq law had no provision for maintenance for women. Now, we have made provision for maintenance," he said.

The Home Minister said he wanted forgiveness from Muslim women as they had to suffer for long. "I wish you a bright future ahead and want to assure you that I would leave no stone unturned to ensure your social security," he said.

The triple talaq Act makes declaration of talaq-e-biddat or pronouncing talaq three times in spoken, written or through SMS or WhatsApp or any other electronic chat in one sitting illegal.

## Army looking to tweak disability pension criteria

Services putting together suggestions for Defence Ministry

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

The three services are putting together recommendations on the issue of taxing disability pension to be submitted to the Defence Ministry very soon.

The Army is mulling over several options to streamline the existing system for grant of disability pension and the manner of calculation, defence sources said.

The Army has written to the other two Services and put forward some suggestions which were discussed by the Chiefs of Staff Committee comprising the three Chiefs on July 31.

"The Army has put forward several points for discussion. These include disability pension to be calculated on the pension element and not on the last



**We will make sure this facility is not misused**

BIPIN RAWAT  
Army Chief

pay drawn which will reduce the disability pension by 50% and percentage of disability to be increased from 20% to 30% to be eligible for disability pension," a defence source told *The Hindu* on condition of anonymity.

Further the Army has suggested that no income tax benefit be given on service pension to disability pen-

sioners and also that there should be no rounding off or broad banding of the disability element.

However, it has been learnt that the Navy and Air Force Chiefs were not in full agreement with the Army.

Last week, Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat said that Services were looking into the whole issue and would give their recommendations to the Defence Ministry very soon on how it should go.

In a notification dated June 24, the Central Board of Direct Taxes said "such tax exemption will be available only to armed forces personnel who have been invalidated from service on account of bodily disability attributable to or aggravated by such service and not to personnel retired on superannuation or otherwise."

## 4,000 held in Kashmir over fear of unrest

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SRINAGAR

Thousands of people have been detained in Kashmir over fears of unrest since New Delhi stripped the region of its autonomy two weeks ago, government sources told AFP.

A magistrate said on condition of anonymity that at least 4,000 people were arrested and held under the Public Safety Act (PSA), a law that allows authorities to imprison someone for up to two years without charge or trial.

"Most of them were flown out of Kashmir because prisons here have run out of capacity," the magistrate said, adding that he had used a satellite phone allocated to him to collate the figures from colleagues across the territory amid a communications blackout imposed by authorities.

## Day before schools reopen, parents wary

J&K Governor's adviser, however, says the demand was made by the people themselves

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Parents of Musaiqa Qadri, 10, a Class 5 student of Srinagar's Presentation Convent, are worried about sending her to school, like many others, on Monday, as the Jammu and Kashmir administration plans a phased reopening of schools after a 14-day lockdown.

A resident of Khanyar in the old city, Ms. Qadri's father S.M. Qadri, a government employee, said he was "unwilling to send her anytime soon".

The Khanyar area falls in the jurisdiction of one of the



**Charting the course:** Government spokesperson Rohit Kansal at a press conference in Srinagar on Sunday. ■ PTI

six volatile police stations in the old city where restrictions on the movement of vehicles and its residents remain since August 5.

"I have decided against taking any risk to send my daughter immediately," Mr. Qadri said. At least 190 schools, out of around 900, in Srinagar are to be opened in the first phase.

Many government schools fall in peripheries like Theed and Dhara near Srinagar's Harwar area, where very few incidents of street protests were reported in the past two weeks, besides it hosts a mixed population of Kashmiri and Gojri-speaking.

"We look forward with optimism and hope towards the coming week, as schools start functioning again," said Jammu and Kashmir government spokesman Rohit Kansal.

However, several government teachers said they were clueless how to reach

these schools in the absence of any public transport in the State.

K. Vijay Kumar, adviser to the Governor, said the administrators were concerned about the safety of students. "It was not that we wanted to open the schools. The demand came from the ground, spontaneously from the parents," he told a television channel.

"Two persons were injured [in street protests] and both are stable. Against 35 police stations where restrictions were eased on Saturday, it was expanded to 50 on Sunday," Mr. Kansal said.

## Jaishankar to visit Dhaka today

He will firm up Hasina's visit to Delhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The entire gamut of bilateral ties between India and Bangladesh will be discussed when External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visits Dhaka between August 19 and 21, a diplomatic source said on Sunday.

"This is the first visit by the senior Minister, so the expectation on both sides is that he will review the status of all the issues and projects between two sides," said a source familiar with the plans. The visit was announced by Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen in July.

It was learnt that the External Affairs Minister is expected to firm up the schedule of the October visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Delhi.

Dr. Jaishankar's visit will be the second high ministerial interaction between the two sides in less than a month. During his August

7-8 visit, Asaduzzaman Khan, Dhaka's Minister of Interior, met Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi. The meeting, however, did not yield a joint statement, triggering speculation of differences.

**NRC in Assam**

The meetings between the senior Ministers are being viewed as important due to the upcoming publication of the National Register of Citizens in Assam. Diplomatic sources, however, said Bangladesh considers NRC to be an internal issue of India and therefore it is unlikely to raise the issue with Dr. Jaishankar.

Ms. Hasina is expected to take up the Rohingya issue that she discussed with Beijing during her July visit to China. Dhaka wants India to exert more pressure on the Government of Myanmar which is an emerging strategic partner of India in the Southeast Asian region.

## Pandits meet on Article 370 in Houston

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
HOUSTON

Celebrating the abrogation of Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, the Global Kashmiri Pandit Diaspora organised a meeting of the community members in Houston with the head of the BJP's foreign affairs department, Vijay Chauthaiwale.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Chauthaiwale said he could feel the joy, positive vibrations and excitement in the community following the recent transformational changes.

## Life goes on



**Fresh picks:** People buying vegetables on the banks of the Dal Lake as curbs were eased in Srinagar on Sunday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

## IL&FS arm routed loans through third parties: ED ₹2,270 cr. given to 14 entities unpaid

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has identified 14 entities to which the IL&FS Financial Services (IFIN) had extended loans of ₹2,270 crore that remained unpaid.

The funds were allegedly routed to the IL&FS Transportation Networks Ltd. (ITNL) and its subsidiaries as loans at higher interest rates.

Based on the documents seized, the agency believes these entities, called third parties, were told to transfer the loans either to the ITNL or its Special Purpose Vehicles.

"By this *modus operandi*, ITNL and its SPVs received huge loans and ₹2,270 crore (as per Grand and Thorton

Report) remained outstanding against those parties to IFIN who in turn funded to ITNL or its SPVs," says the chargesheet filed by the ED.

The ED also alleged that the IFIN had sanctioned loans to these third parties or contractors without proper collateral securities, following which they had entered into agreements with the ITNL or its SPVs.

"The rate of lending was 1.5% to 2% higher than the rate of borrowing and thus, there was a profit to those third parties/contractors and being non-NBFC, they were not entitled for the same. Investigations also indicate that the illegal profit thus earned probably was shared with the ITNL officials and arrangers."

## CBI searches premises of MBIL directors in fraud case

FIR registered for allegedly cheating banks of ₹354.51 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The CBI on Sunday searched the premises of Moser Baer India Ltd. (MBIL) and its former and present directors in connection with an alleged bank loan fraud case involving ₹354.51 crore.

The searches were carried out after registering an FIR against MBIL, its managing director Deepak Puri, whole-time director Nita Puri, the then executive director and their son Ratul Puri, other two directors Sanjay Jain and Vineet Sharma, besides unknown public servants.

The Puris are relatives of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath.



Ratul Puri

As alleged by the CBI, those named in the case cheated the Central Bank of India of ₹354.51 crore.

MBIL had approached the bank in June 2009 seeking credit facilities.

Accordingly, a medium-term loan of ₹100 crore and a letter of comfort for about

₹49 crore was granted.

On the company's request, in September 2010, the bank cleared working capital limit of ₹50 crore and non-fund based limit of ₹50 crore. Then, a short-term loan of ₹100 crore was also given.

In March 2012, the bank sanctioned letter of credit for ₹50 crore on the undertaking that MBIL would repay the earlier short-term loan of ₹40 crore and also pay off overdue interests on other loans.

The bank, in its complaint, said the company had availed itself of credit facilities under multiple-institution arrangement from 14 public sector banks.

## NPP seeks domicile law for J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JAMMU

The National Panthers Party (NPP) on Sunday sought the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the enactment of a domicile law for Jammu and Kashmir to protect the interests of poor farmers and landowners, besides the educated unemployed youth. The demand was made in a memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister and submitted by NPP chairman and former Minister Harsh Dev Singh at his Lok Kalyan Marg residence in Delhi, a party release said here.

"A domicile law needs to be enacted so that outsiders could be barred from participating in selections for government jobs and from buying land and other properties of poor through distress sales," the NPP said.

## RSS chief calls for dialogue on quota

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

There should be conversation in a harmonious atmosphere between those in favour of reservation and those against it, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Sunday.

He was speaking at the concluding session of Gyan Utsav, a programme on competitive exams.

He said those who favoured reservation should speak keeping in mind the interests of those who were against it, and similarly those who opposed it should do the vice versa.

Earlier, he had advocated a review of the reservation policy, drawing sharp reactions from many parties.

INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY						
TENDER NOTICE						
For and on behalf of The President of India, The Principal Chief Engineer/ICF Chennai-600038, invites e-tender for the following works as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal <a href="http://www.irps.gov.in">www.irps.gov.in</a> . The Tenderers / Contractors intending to apply for the Tender needs to get enrolled in the portal <a href="http://www.irps.gov.in">www.irps.gov.in</a> and only online Tenders will be accepted. The cost of the Tender form and the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) should be made through online payment gateway available in the website by the way of Multiple Banks, Net-Banking, Debit Card and Credit Card.						
Sl. No.	Name of Works & Location					Tender No
1	Architectural consultancy for 1. Provision of four guest rooms in First floor at Thiruvalluvar Marriage Hall 2. Providing front elevation facade at Kambhar, Thokkappiar Marriage halls and Dr. Abdul Kalam Institute 3. Construction of sixteen Guest rooms (G+2) floors with eight rooms in each floor with still parking and lift facility for Kambhar and Thokkappiar Marriage Halls.					EW/1031
Sl. No.	Tender Value	EMD	Cost of Tender schedule	Period of Completion	Date and Time of closing: 14:30hrs and opening of tender at 15:00 hrs on:	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	
1	3,13,450/-	6,300/-	1,000/-	30 days	09.09.19	
GREEN ICF   CLEAN ICF						

Notice Inviting Tender	
Punjab State Grains Procurement Corporation Limited (PUNGRAIN)	
Anaa Bhawan Building, Sector-39-C, Chandigarh-160036	
Online bids under two bid system i.e. Technical Bid and Financial Bid, are invited from interested eligible bidders for cluster-wise engagement of service provider(s) for carrying out the operations of Preservation, Maintenance and Security (PMS) of food grains stored in Private Entrepreneur Guarantee (PEG) Godowns in the State of Punjab as specified in Annexure-I of the tender document, as per schedule given below:-	
Submission of online bids	19-08-2019 at 11:00AM to 05-09-2019 at 05:00PM
Opening of technical bids	06-09-2019 at 10:00AM
The technical bids will be opened in the Committee Room, Anaa Bhawan, Sector 39- C, Chandigarh in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, who may wish to be present. The date and time of opening of financial bids will be notified online to technically eligible bidders.	
The tender form along with detailed notice inviting tender (NIT) and terms & conditions can be downloaded from e-tendering portal of Government of Punjab i.e. <a href="https://eproc.punjab.gov.in">https://eproc.punjab.gov.in</a> . The bids can be submitted on payment of non-refundable tender fee of Rs. 25,000/- (Twenty Five Thousand only) per tender form.	
PUNGRAIN reserves the right to reject or modify the tender enquiry at any stage without assigning any reason and also reserves the right to reject any or all the bids in whole or part, prior to signing of the contract, without assigning any reasons. PUNGRAIN will not be liable for any costs and consequences incurred by such intending entrepreneur.	
<b>Note:</b> The tenders will be accepted through e-tendering website only. Any further communication will be done through e-tendering website in the form of addendum/corrigendum only.	
Managing Director PUNGRAIN	

### Saturday night terror

A suicide bomber killed more than 60 people in an attack on a packed wedding reception in the Afghan capital, the deadliest incident there in recent months. Graphic lists some major attacks in Kabul in the recent past

**December 6, 2011** An attack in Kabul targeting the Shia minority on the holy day of Ashura kills 80 people. Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claims responsibility

**July 23, 2016** Twin explosions rip through crowds of Shia Hazaras in Kabul, killing at least 84 people. It marks the first major IS assault on the capital

**March 8, 2017** In an attack claimed by IS, gunmen disguised as doctors storm Afghanistan's largest military hospital in a six-hour attack. More than 100 are feared to have died

**May 31, 2017** More than 150 are killed and 400 wounded when a massive truck bomb rips through Kabul's diplomatic quarter

**October 20** A suicide attack during Friday evening prayers at a Kabul Shia

mosque sees 56 people killed. The IS claims responsibility

**April 22, 2018** An IS bomber kills 57 people, all civilians, outside a voter registration centre amid preparations for legislative elections

**Nov. 20, 2018** A suicide bomber blows himself up among religious scholars inside a Kabul wedding hall, killing at least 55 people

#### Taliban vis-a-vis IS

The two are sharply divided over ideology and tactics, with the Taliban largely confining itself to attacks on government targets and Afghan and international security forces

The two have fought each other on a number of occasions

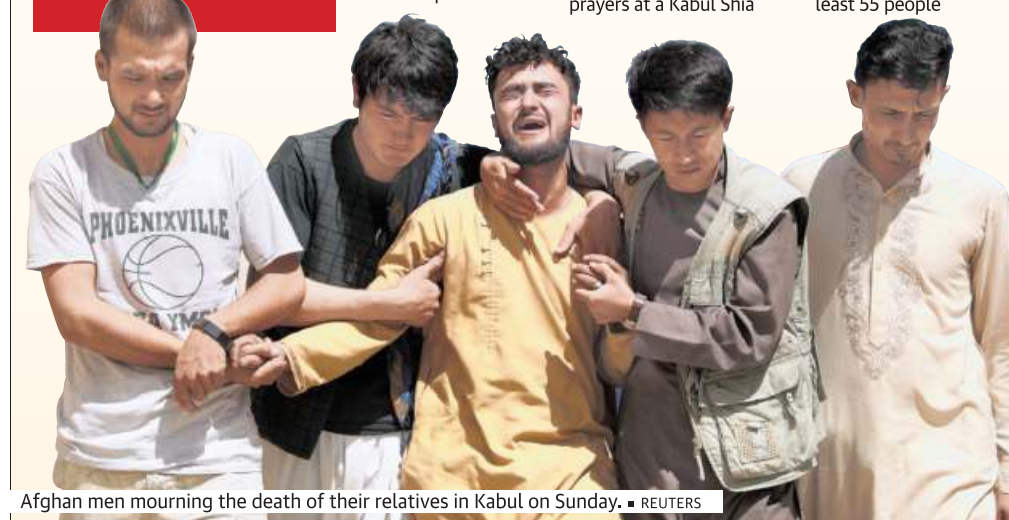
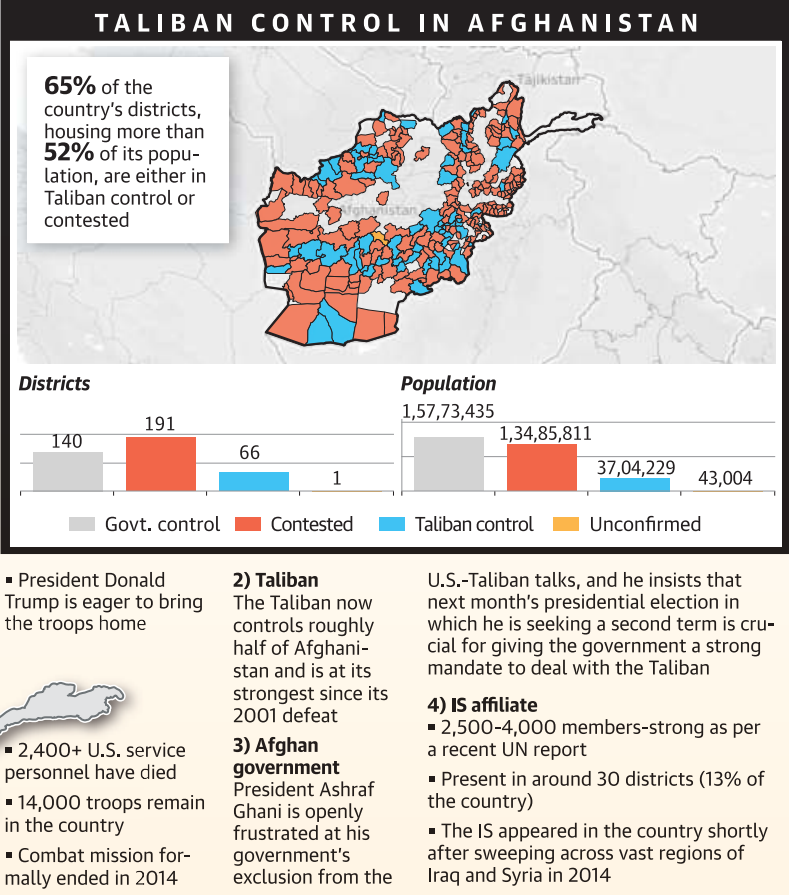
#### The players in the Afghan game

While the U.S. and the Taliban say they are nearing a deal to end the conflict following talks that have excluded the Afghan government, the growing prominence of a local IS affiliate is complicating efforts at peace

#### Presence of Islamic state

30 districts

- 2,400+ U.S. service personnel have died
- 14,000 troops remain in the country
- Combat mission formally ended in 2014



Afghan men mourning the death of their relatives in Kabul on Sunday. ■ REUTERS

## Joy turns into mourning for groom who lost kin, friends

Sunni extremist bomber targeted Shia wedding when the bride and groom were exchanging vows

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KABUL  
Joy and celebration turned into horror and carnage when an Islamic State suicide bomber targeted a packed Afghan wedding hall, killing at least 63 people in the deadliest attack to rock Kabul in months.

The massive blast, which took place late Saturday in west Kabul, came as Washington and the Taliban try to negotiate a deal to reduce the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan and hopefully build a roadmap to a ceasefire.

The groom recalled greeting smiling guests in the afternoon, before seeing their



Scene of carnage: Workers looking at the damage caused by the explosion at a wedding hall in Kabul on Sunday. ■ REUTERS

bodies being carried out hours later.

The attack "changed my happiness to sorrow", the young man, who gave his name as Mirwais, told local TV station Tolo News.

"My family, my bride are

in shock, they cannot even speak. My bride keeps fainting... I lost my brother, friends, relatives. I will never see happiness in my life again," he said.

Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said a suicide bomber carried out the attack, with at least 63 people killed and 182 injured. "Among the wounded are women and children," Mr. Rahimi said.

"The wedding guests were dancing and celebrating the party when the blast happened," recounted Munir Ahmad, 23, who was seriously injured and whose cousin was among the dead.

"Following the explosion,

there was total chaos. Everyone was screaming and crying for their loved ones," he said from his bed in a hospital, where he was being treated for shrapnel wounds.

The wedding was largely a gathering of Shia Muslims, who are frequently targeted in Sunni-majority Afghanistan, particularly by IS.

The Sunni extremist group's Afghan affiliate claimed responsibility for the blast, saying the bomber targeted the wedding because it was Shia.

Wedding guest Hameed Quresh said the young bride and groom were exchanging vows when the bomb went off.

## Fears in U.S. of bad peace deal with the Taliban

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON  
An Afghanistan peace agreement that the U.S. sees close to reaching with the Taliban has prompted worries that President Donald Trump's desire to quickly withdraw U.S. troops could further plunge the country into civil war.

Mr. Trump said on Friday he was pleased with talks on ending the 18-year-long war.

The U.S. negotiator, Zalmay Khalilzad, will return to the region soon to further talks with the rebel force.

"Under no circumstances should the Trump administration repeat the mistake its predecessor [under Barack Obama] made in Iraq and agree to a total withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan," retired general David Petraeus warned in a piece for *The Wall Street Journal*.

A lot "will depend on the details," said Laurel Miller, former senior U.S. State Department official. For instance, it seems the Taliban are prepared to call a ceasefire with U.S. troops but not with the Afghan army.

## Thousands march in Hong Kong

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE HONG KONG  
A sea of democracy activists flooded the streets of Hong Kong on Sunday in a show of defiance to the city's leaders that their movement still pulls wide public support, despite mounting violence and increasingly stark warnings from Beijing.

Hundreds of thousands of protesters carrying umbrellas poured across the heart of Hong Kong island, defying torrential rain and a police order not to march from a park where they had gathered earlier for a rally.

The political crisis was triggered by an Extradition Bill that allowed extraditions of criminal suspects in Hong Kong to the Chinese mainland.

Weeks of demonstrations have plunged the financial hub into crisis, with images of masked black-clad protesters engulfed by tear gas during street battles against riot police stunning a city once renowned for its stability.

Sunday's action, which organises the Civil Human Rights Front said drew more than 1.7 million in the largest rally in weeks, was billed as a return to the "peaceful" origins of the leaderless protest movement.

"It's been a long day and we're very tired, but to see so many people out in the rain marching for Hong Kong gives strength to everyone," said Danny Tam, 28, a graphic designer.

Late in the evening, hundreds of masked protesters milled outside the government headquarters shouting "Reclaim Hong Kong, revolution of our times."

### ELSEWHERE



#### 10,000 homeless after fire razes Dhaka slum

DHAKA  
At least 10,000 people were left homeless after a massive fire swept through a crowded slum in Bangladesh's capital and destroyed thousands of shanties. The fire broke out at Dhaka's Mirpur neighbourhood late on Friday and razed around 2,000 houses. AFP

#### U.K. strips 'Jihadi Jack' of British citizenship: report

LONDON  
A former Islamic State recruit, referred to as Jihadi Jack, has been stripped of his U.K. nationality, U.K. media reported. Jack Letts, 24, travelled to Syria in 2014 and fought with the IS before leaving the group later. PTI

## Gibraltar rejects request to seize Iranian tanker

Iran renames ship, raises its flag

REUTERS GIBRALTAR  
Gibraltar refused on Sunday a U.S. request to seize the Iranian tanker caught in a stand-off between Tehran and the West, as the stationary vessel raised an Iranian flag ahead of its expected departure from the British territory.

British Royal Marines seized the tanker in Gibraltar in July on suspicion that it was carrying oil to Syria, a close ally of Iran, in violation of European Union sanctions. That triggered a series of events that have heightened tensions on shipping routes via the Gulf.

"The vessel is expected to leave tonight," Iran's Ambassador to the U.K. Hamid Baedinejad said on Twitter, adding that two engineering teams had been flown to Gibraltar.

The Grace 1's detention ended last week, but on Friday a federal court in Washington issued a warrant for the seizure of the tanker, the oil it carries and nearly \$1 million.

Gibraltar said on Sunday it could not comply with that request because it was bound by EU law. "The EU sanctions regime against Iran which is applicable in Gibraltar - is much narrower than that applicable in the US," the government said in a statement.

Tehran said it was ready to dispatch its naval fleet to escort the tanker - now renamed the 'Adrian Darya-1' - if required.

## JVP announces Dissanayake as presidential candidate

The leftist party offers a third alternative to Sri Lankan voters

MEERA SRINIVASAN COLOMBO  
Sri Lanka's leftist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) or the People's Liberation Front on Sunday said it would field party leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake as presidential candidate, effectively offering a third option to Sri Lankan voters in the polls scheduled later this year.

The announcement comes a week after the Rajapaksa camp named former defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa its candidate contesting from the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Front). Amid much tension among different factions within, the in-



Anura Kumara Dissanayake

While the JVP has not electorally threatened mainstream parties - the UNP, Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and SLPP - in recent national or local elections, it has remained a significant voice of dissent in the legislature, frequently taking on the big parties on allegations of corruption and nepotism.

During the nearly two-month political crisis last year, the six JVP MPs proved a crucial block in the Parliament. Along with the Tamil National Alliance legislators, they resisted the illegal power grab by the Rajapaksa. Mr. Dissanayake's speeches, hailed by many as powerful and persuasive, drew wide attention at that time.

## Memos warn of food shortages in Brexit chaos

Grim outlook if U.K. leaves EU sans deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS LONDON  
Secret British government documents have warned of serious disruptions across the country in the event that the U.K. leaves the European Union without a trade deal on October 31, according to a report.

The *Sunday Times* newspaper published what it said was what the British government expects in the case of a sudden, "no-deal" Brexit. Among the most serious are disruptions to the supply of drugs and medicine, fresh food. Water shortages can be expected due to interruptions of imported water treatment chemicals.

Although the grim scenarios reportedly outlined in the government documents

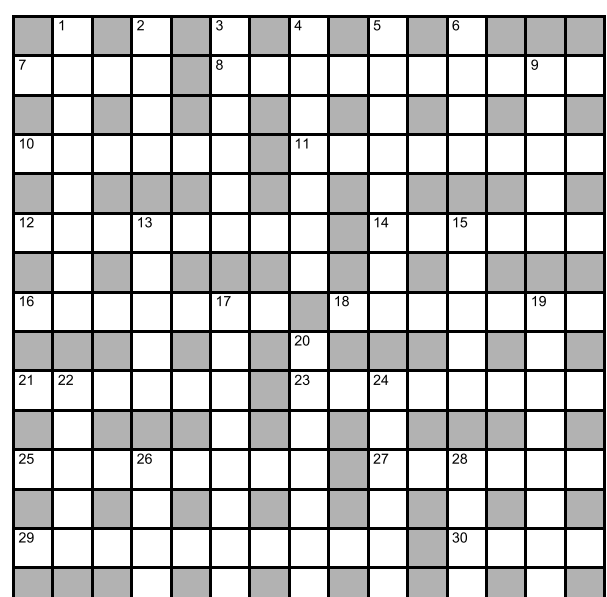


Boris Johnson

have long been floated by academics and economists, they've been repeatedly dismissed as scaremongering by Brexit proponents.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said he is ready to leave the EU regardless of whether he is able to renegotiate the Brexit deal struck with Brussels by his predecessor, Theresa May.

### THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12708



- (set by Incognito)
- 16 Engineers' cryptic clues for hermit (7)
  - 18 Stains flower parts (7)
  - 21 Young lady's assorted medals (6)
  - 23 Cynthia's at sea with girl, doing this (8)
  - 25 Tell fib, "German loses right to vassal" (8)
  - 27 Admits: "Snowstorm's increasing" (4,2)
  - 29 Naval officer's additional spouse (6,4)
  - 30 Oregon's tailless feline is a large animal (4)
  - 5 Trader's sea song (8)
  - 6 Northern European's stick (4)
  - 9 Follow nurse and take to court (5)
  - 13 Disposes of small lengths (5)
  - 15 Sunny is not heavy (5)
  - 17 Fed meals prepared and achieved success by own efforts (4-4)
  - 19 State publicly: "A wild cat's going around centre of Munnar" (8)
  - 20 Many violently spoil Burma (7)
  - 22 Starting to ail by 54, European's not yet dead (5)
  - 24 Near model storage facility (6)
  - 26 Where returning convict may consume egg (4)
  - 28 It's middle of the day, anyway (4)

- ACROSS
- 7 Feel absence of young lady (4)
- 8 Crossed old port (6,4)
- 10 Composing, O great poet? (6)
- 11 Grow where batsmen stand? (8)
- 12 Succeed endlessly at court, giving hope (8)
- 14 Snake curled around general is dozing (6)
- DOWN
- 1 Composed sea dirge? Don't think so (8)
- 2 Capital invested in Waldo's lodge (4)
- 3 Ball's special at this place (6)
- 4 Helps Charlie sit awkwardly at beginning of show (7)

### SUDOKU

		6		1			7	8
7				7	4		6	
				2			5	3
				1		5	3	9
	1							5
	9	4	3		6			
7		5			2			
	2		4		1			
4	3			5		2		

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12707

M	A	S	T	I	F	F	S	T	S	W	A	N	A
O	H	G	O	A	O	L	N						
T	R	O	L	L	R	E	D	C	A	R	P	E	T
I	R	O	K	M	P	H	A						
F	A	T	H	O	M	D	I	N	G	S	A	U	R
S	P	A	S	M	P	R	A	V	E	R	M	A	T
I	L	L	E	T	I	B	E	R	A	T	I		
G	O	L	D	M	E	D	A	L	A	Z	T	I	C
H	E	L	S	E	E	A	T	I	C				
T	H	E	S	A	U	R	I	C	I	P	H	E	R
S	N	H	M	K	M	L	U						
E	X	T	R	I	C	A	T	E	P	O	E	M	S
R	A	R	E	S	T	H	I	T	L	I	S	T	S

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

6	2	4	9	7	5	3	1	8
8	9	1	3	6	2	4	5	7
5	7	3	8	4	1	9	2	6
4	8	6	1	3	7	5	9	2
2	5	9	4	8	6	7	3	1
3	1	7	2	5	9	6	8	4
7	3	2	5	1	4	8	6	9
9	6	5	7	2	8	1	4	3
1	4	8	6	9	3	2	7	5



ABHIJIT DUTTA

For years, as a regular visitor to Myanmar, I had resisted going to Bagan. It had seemed too touristy. When I began writing my book, *Myanmar in the World: Journeys through a Changing Burma*, I had to finally brace myself for a visit. Bamar rose as a fortified city after the Nanzhao raids of the ninth century, which established Burmese speakers as the dominant population in the Irrawaddy River Valley, and expanded for 200 years. To it goes the credit of creating a centre around which kingdoms and governorships around the country could arrange themselves; it is the basis of Myanmar as we know it today. It is to Myanmar what Angkor Wat is to Cambodia, Borobudur to Indonesia, and Ayutthaya to Thailand. As an archaeological site, it is among the richest in the world.

When I finally arrive in Bagan, by road, from Mandalay, it is too hot to do anything. From about 5.30 am to about 8 am, it is pleasant to sit by the river, drink my coffee and read the *Glass Palace Chronicle*, the legends and stories of kings, among them those that built Bagan up to the greatest capital of the Burmese people. Two days later, a cyclonic storm moving from the eastern coast of India, across the Bay of Bengal, cools things down. I venture into the Bagan Archaeological Zone.

### Justifiably proud

Hopping from one temple to the next *stupa* to the other monastery, this one the tallest, that one the grandest, listening to the fabulous stories of how each came to be, full of intricate detail and liquid mythologies, the

# Pride and pagodas

One hopes the UNESCO World Heritage recognition of Myanmar's temple city will also ensure its preservation

sense one is left with is of pride.

I am from Kolkata, so I am no stranger to people living in the past. Yet, perhaps because Myanmar is what it is today, the pride you encounter – on the fresh faces of the young men and women who have found employment as tour guides, although they studied for a degree in law or geology; in the expectant staff at the hotel who take your arrival as endorsement not only of their TripAdvisor ranking but of their history; and among the general populace who look at you looking at their temples and think that

their country is contemporary again – feels fragile.

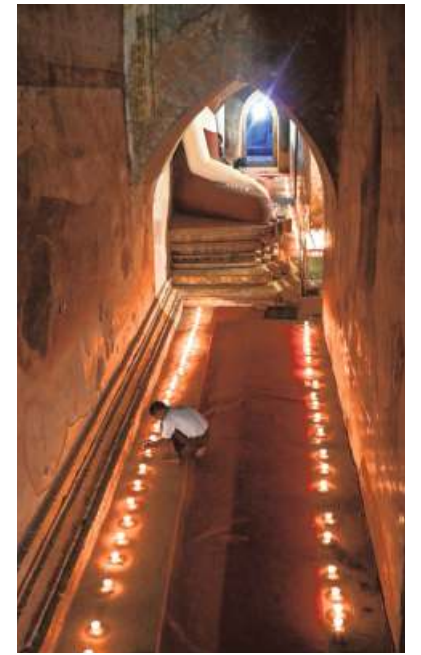
Among Bagan's 3,800-odd structures that remain are works that are simply marvelous. The murals inside the early 12th century Gubyaukgyi temple, and at the more famous Ananda Pahto, under restoration by the Archaeological Survey of India, are exquisite, reminiscent of the wondrous Mogao caves in Dunhuang, China. The stone carving at the diminutive Nan Phaya, King Manuha's prison-home, is effortlessly graceful, as are the carvings in stucco at the Htilominlo. There are countless examples, and everyone who visits has their own list of Bagan's best.

### Much-needed acceptance

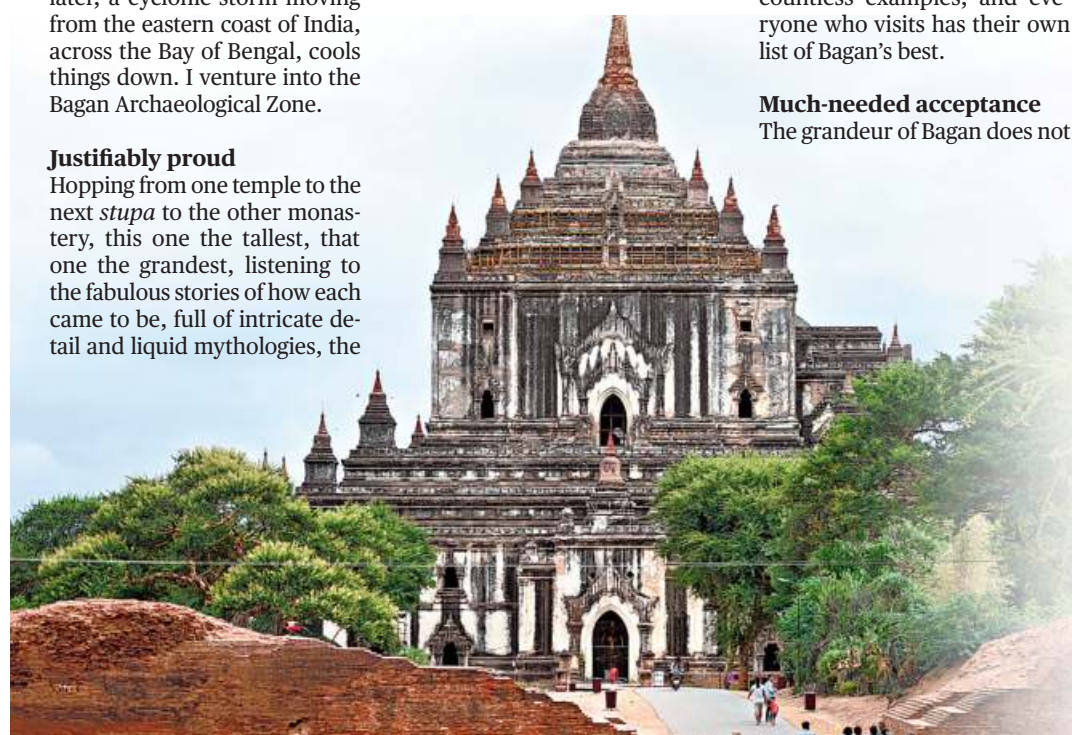
The grandeur of Bagan does not

### Also on the list...

Twenty eight other sites were added to the World Heritage List at the annual meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan, this year, bringing the total up to 1,121 culturally significant sites. England's Jodrell Bank Observatory, which houses some of the world's leading radio astronomy telescopes, is an exciting addition. Other interesting landmarks include natural sites such as Iceland's Vatnajökull National Park, cultural sites like the historic city of Sheki in Azerbaijan, and the archaeological ruins of Liangzhu City in southeast China. The list has only one mixed site (cultural and biodiversity hotspot): the Paraty and Ilha Grande in Brazil. Our pink city, Jaipur, has also made it to the list.



Some of the temples at Bagan; (above) devotees lighting candles at the Sulamani Temple; and (below) the Thatbyinnyu temple • GETTY IMAGES



lie inside a single monument – it is the whole of it, so iconised in the panorama shots of flat plains strewn with the silhouette of *stupas* rising darkly, like long gone creatures. It is when looking out on to this view, from atop Shwesandaw or Shwegugyi, at sunrise or sunset, that one can fully grasp the significance of Bagan, and its hold on the psyche of the Burmese people. It is the idea of continuity, of a landscape, of societal values, of the Buddha's place in the world, and of the bloodlines of rulers.

Bagan had many rulers, but Anawrahta is the most famous. He was the first to unify central Burma with the Mon territories in the South and bring back an 'original copy' of the *Tipit aka* the Buddhist canon, to his capital, along with the Mon king, Manuha, as his prisoner. An early 11th century temple dedicated to Manuha, where he is said to have been placed under house arrest, is among the highlights of Bagan's temple tour.

He was the one who esta-

lished Buddhism as a state religion, institutionalising the monastic order and initiating the system of monk-monarch patronage. His successors would build on these foundations to simultaneously expand and control territory, while creating a larger co-dependency with the monkhood, the 'Sangha'. Understanding that relationship is fundamental to understanding the meaning of Bagan.

### Faith's living monuments

The outside world, specifically that which sits in judgement and decides what is heritage and what is not, has never fully accepted this aspect of Bagan. Until this July, when, finally, after decades of giving it the cold shoulder, UNESCO inscribed it on its World Heritage List, placing it among sites such as Babylon, Rome, and Jaipur.

In 1996, UNESCO had turned away Bagan's bid to qualify on the grounds that the then military government had used controversial methods of conservation: steel-tied bars to reinforce

centuries-old columns, white-wash on antique murals, new finials on top of pagodas.

Conservation and what it constitutes has been a constant source of tension between Burmese and international experts. The popular perspective in Myanmar is that pagodas are living monuments meant for daily worship, which means people must be allowed to repair them, renovate them, re-gild them, not leaving it to be as it was previously, an ossified temple unconnected from the belief system which gives it life. UNESCO officials themselves have acknowledged that, to Burmese Buddhists, 'restoring a temple doesn't mean so much restoring it to how it originally looked as enabling it to become a place of worship again'.

Despite these philosophical divergences, what has never been in dispute is Bagan's universal value as a cultural site. It was, and remains, a place where significant chunks of Southeast Asian history proceeded and can still be ob-

served. The UNESCO's decision to recognise it now also signals the present government's willingness for more traditional conservation practices, including taking a harder stance on the reckless commercialisation that has marked the site. It should pave the way for more international collaborations, greater support for improving institutional capacity, and better funding.

I am certain that the next time I visit Bagan, the pride would have grown more confident. I only hope that it will be a pride that is rooted not only in history but also in the role the current generation of Myanmar citizens will play in preserving this precious history.

The writer is the author of *Myanmar in the World: Journeys through a Changing Burma* (₹799, Aleph Book Company, 2018)

### DOWN MEMORY LANE

# The charm of oral history

The Old Delhi of the past, where history and storytelling are intertwined



A feel of the bazar A scene at Old Delhi • SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

Hazrat Kalimullah Sahib's dargah until late at night, barrister Nuruddin Ahmed, thrice Mayor of Delhi, would offer *fateha* (memorial prayers) at his wife's grave. In Urdu Bazar, Mir Mushtaq Ahmed (first Chief Executive Councillor of Delhi) usually stood in his balcony waiting for a masseur to massage him down at night.

### Meeting-greeting

At Haji Hotel a group of old men would sit, discussing the events of the 1857 Revolt as though it happened just yesterday. Among them was a plain speaking Master Sahib, ex-wrestler; Ustad Zahoor Qazi Sahib, who had the facial features of Aurangzeb; and Mushtaq Bhai, the jarrar or herbal doctor much in demand for circumcisions.

In old Delhi, I sometimes met the eunuchs Sona and Chandi who ruled over the hearts of young men in the Turkman Gate area. At the house of Hajian Bua in Chitli Qabar there were fanciful tales, about the two sons of Emperor Akbar, Hassan and Hussain, who died because of the evil influence of Jinns. The comet (Jharoodar Tara) that appeared over Delhi during the time of First War of Independence, and the sheet of blood seen in the sky at Agra before the Ghaddar (mutiny) was also part of the narrative.

Accho Bi was the raconteur of Gali Kababiya. Haji Zahooruddin and the shoe merchant, Mohammed Mian Akbar, used to talk of the shoe-sellers' riot during Mohammed Shah's reign in 1729, when the emperor's favourite concubine, Nur Bai, lost a tooth. They were chroniclers of tales not found in books.

The writer is a veteran chronicler of Delhi



R.V. SMITH

The State Government's Oral History Programme of Delhi Archives, launched in collaboration with Ambedkar University, is a laudable venture, because far away from the learned tomes of historians, there is a charm in what's often dismissed as gossip.

### Old Delhi tales

I realized this during the years I spent living in the Walled City (where one of my sons was born) between 1962 and 1971. I spent some time at Azad Hind Hotel, once known as Urdu Manzil, where the marble tiles were inscribed with the words, "Ghar, Ghar Urdu". It was there that a few Urdu poets would gather sometimes to hold impromptu mushairas.

The assembly at the hotel would discuss the mystery of the locked house in Matia Mahal where a bride was found murdered in bed on her wed-

ding night. Also, the sensational pre-Partition yarn of the kebab seller. This man's kebabs had cured a patient who had been told by a hakim that he had no hope of a recovery unless he ate human flesh. When the hakim was informed by the patient of his recovery, the Unani doctor asked the police to keep a watch on the kebab seller. One evening, when a labourer was carrying his heavy utensils, someone cut off his head with a sword. Believe it or not, it was the labourer's flesh that would have gone into the making of the next day's kebabs. The murderer and the kababiya were arrested and sentenced to death.

### Folklore fellas

There were characters those days, like Karim Panwallah, at whose shop was displayed the engraved couplet, "Paan kehta hai ke sukhar mar jaunga mein/ Ai labh yaar gar mooh na lagaya tu ne" (the paan says I will dry up and die, if my friend, you do not put me in between your lips).

While sitting at Bhure Mian's shrine, near the Red Fort, munching Karim's paan, I often conversed with the ca-

retaker, Pir Yasin Beg. He used to distribute *tabiz* (amulets) to a crowd of burqa-clad women with children in their arms. A man not entirely devoid of rational thinking, he would sometimes advise an old woman that her daughter-in-law was not possessed by Jinns but had symptoms of TB which could only be cured by medical treatment. To another he would say, "Nobody is drinking your Bahu's blood, she is anaemic and needs a doctor's care and good nourishment".

When he was free, he would talk to me and relate the story of Bhure Mian, who was a 'fiery' (jalali) saint. Even if a bird flew over his Takia (saintly abode) it would get burnt. Once Aurangzeb tried to test him by sending korma made of dog's meat, garnished with dry fruits through his spiritual adviser, Mullah Jeevan, who asked what he thought of it. Bhure Mian replied, "Haram ha ya halal, tu jane, kuttey ka hai ya bakre ka tu jane" (Whether it is forbidden or permitted meat you know best, or whether it is made of dog's flesh or goat's you know best). He did not eat the stuff. Listening to qawwalis at



## Space stations

Sachin Bahmba, the person behind Astroports and Astro-tourism, talks about his journey

RHEA MEHROTRA AND SAKSHAM BAKSHI

Sachin Bahmba, the founder of Science Popularisation Association of Communicators & Educators (SPACE) Foundation, wants nothing more than to see people take astronomy and space science seriously. He's the person behind the science clubs in about 250 schools across the country. "When I was in school I asked questions about everything. We were taught about microscopes and telescopes in the same class and it struck me that hands-on experience was only given only on microscopes and not telescopes." His teacher told him that the school was not equipped with one. So he made his own.

In Delhi University, from 1991 to 1996, he had a similar experience, when he was studying physics and astrophysics, with the observatory not equipped. Here, he talks about what his journey.

### Who inspired you to initiate the SPACE group?

After my M.Sc., I worked under the late Dr. Nirupma Raghavan (Director of Nehru Planetarium), who is my mentor and inspiration. She made learning easy, both science and maths. My friend and I, started

working under her, which really built our confidence. We also went to various places with her to gain some practical knowledge. One such place was Bhind, Madhya Pradesh, where we went to see the solar eclipse. To explain and to see the 52-second eclipse, Dr. Raghavan put me in-charge of showing it to the local people. They were so curious, and I realised how badly we need exposure to space sciences. This is when I thought of starting an NGO (in 2001), SPACE.

### What is astro tourism and how do you promote it?

Skies put up wonderful shows for us. Some of these can be watched from anywhere in the world and for others you have to travel. We need to travel because of light pollution. So we go to locations where we can see the night sky clearly. We coined the word with the term Astroports, because a port transports you to another

place. Astro-tourism has great potential to provide jobs to lakhs of people. Currently, there are six Astroports in India: Sariska, Ranthambore, Jaipur, in Rajasthan; Kanha in Madhya Pradesh, Sagar (near Jog Falls) in Karnataka; and Corbett, Uttarakhand. My primary mission is launching a number of Astro-tourism concepts in our country. We provide NASA trips to our school and college students.

### What is the best time to visit an astroport?

This depends on what you want to see. If you want to see deep-sky objects, come at a time when the moon is not overly bright (avoid three days before and after the full moon). Between September and March is an overall good time.

### What do you plan to do over the next couple of years?

The primary mission and vision of our company is to build 30 Astroports across the country away from urban cities and pollution. Through in-house training, we aim to generate more and more employment opportunities in the niche sector of astro-tourism.



Scientific temper (right) Sachin Bahmba; a view of the night sky • M. SATHYAMOORTHY

### Programmes offered

- An educational programme that targets school and college students, turning textbook knowledge into practical observation.
- Corporate sector programmes, to enhance problem-solving abilities and leadership skills through the various activities.
- Parent collaborative learning, for families, where children and parents experience new concepts together.





# 'Fitness is my lifestyle decision'

Mandira Bedi's #100daychallenge on Instagram is garnering thousands of views

SOMA BASU

Through an Instagram post on August 11, Mandira Bedi called out everybody to a #100daychallenge. Those who opted in were to do 45 minutes of daily exercise or take at least 10,000 steps. She uploads sequences of her daily workouts with information on getting and staying fit. It's not surprising that many of her 937K followers have come on board spontaneously, considering that at 47, Mandira looks the way she does (she's 50 kilograms), and that Reebok has promised hampers to a few who post pictures and hashtag appropriately.

While Mandira has always been running and gym-ing (she was out on the road within two months after her son's birth, running in the rain), she says she is not out to become an influencer: "I have adopted the health regimen for my own benefit. I do not know to what extent I can influence

others. If it encourages people to join in, I am more than happy to spread the feel-good and body positivity." She says the idea is to keep people motivated. "When you put it up there in public, it keeps you honest. It's a big commitment," she says, over a phone conversation from Mumbai.

Barely two months ago, she worked hard on her #40daychallenge and earned social-media praise for a toned body, a sharper jaw line and sculpted muscles. So why another one so soon? "May-June was one of my busiest periods with a film each in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu on the floor, besides other engagements. Yet I managed to lend myself to an effective exercise programme. So on a beautiful Sunday, I randomly thought of raising the bar. After all, it feels good to feel good after exercise."

This time around, Mandira is focusing on mindful eating as well. "I will soon be uploading pages from my recently-started food diary and it will include stories about

my cheat days too," she says, and goes on to share how three days ago she celebrated her husband's birthday binging. "There is nothing wrong in having a day of bad eating, but it's more important to rein yourself in. When you put it in writing, it clearly reminds you where you are going," says the actor and TV host, who gained 22 kilograms after pregnancy and a C-section.

She says there is perhaps no diet that she has not tried, from low to no carbs, and keto, but did not find them sustainable. "I missed the basic usual healthy stuff we grew up eating at home, and as a rou-

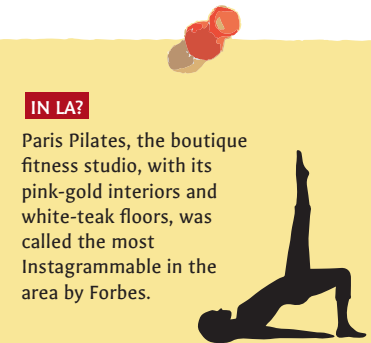
**When you put it up there in public, it keeps you honest. It's a big commitment**

tine have now returned to my mornings with fruits; lunch with *dal*, *roti*, and *subzi*; and dinner with salads."

One of the benefits of being a parent who cares about fitness is that her child ends up participating too. Mandira and her eight-year-old son run the 2km Durathon in Mumbai and Delhi every year. "When I was his age, I could hardly run this distance."

With time, the cardio and weight training has become a stress-buster. "That is the time I say my prayers. It clears my mind and puts me at peace and in the happiest space," she says, also emphasising that workouts should be pain-free.

A lot of all this will be in her book *Happy For No Reason* to be published by Penguin India in 2020. "It will be a cross between a memoir and non-fiction, where I will put out an attitude and an intent. It will be about abundance and letting go, life under public scrutiny and reinvention, workouts and diets," says Mandira. "I have never been goal-oriented but have lived life with flow and always dream of being happy from within. Today I am overcome by gratitude," she adds.



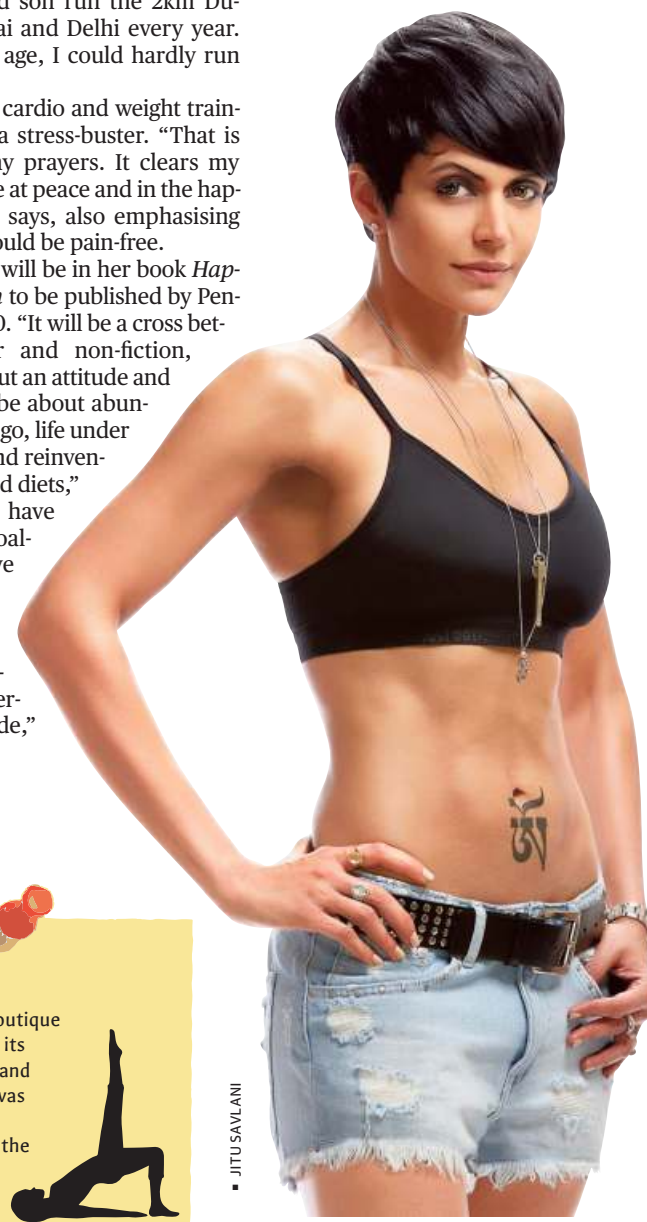
**IN LA?**

Paris Pilates, the boutique fitness studio, with its pink-gold interiors and white-teak floors, was called the most Instagrammable in the area by Forbes.

**WORKING OUT WITH MANDIRA**

- Day 4**
- 15 reps cable fly
  - 15 reps (each side) side bends with kettle bell
  - 15 reps sit-ups with weighted ball
  - 15 reps (each side) curtsy lunges
  - 150 jumping jacks
- Day 5**
- 30 minutes cross trainer
  - Five minutes step squats left side
  - Five mins step squats right side
  - Five mins calf raises
  - Ten mins cross trainer
  - Five mins ab crunches

Source: @mandirabedi on Instagram



**Q&A**

**I am approaching 50. How best can I monitor my eye health?**



Many age-related diseases like cataract, glaucoma, age-related retinal degeneration and diabetic retinopathy are often asymptomatic in the early stages and are common in the sixth and seventh decades of our life. If you have a family history of glaucoma, diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol or blindness, you may go for annual eye evaluation preferably by an eye specialist. If there are no such risk factors, you can have an eye examination done once in two years. A diet rich in antioxidants and lifestyle modifications such as regular aerobic exercises often significantly reduce the risk of blindness from most eye diseases.

**I use the non-prescribed reading glasses available at optical shops. Are they good for the eyes in the long run?**

Most such reading glasses are recommended based on one's age and the related reduction in the reserve of accommodative capability of the eye, which gradually reduces after the age of 40. Although non-prescribed reading glasses do no harm, they may not accurately compensate for the refractive power of the eye, which may have individual variations. Inappropriate correction occasionally causes fatigue and suboptimal vision. Your optometrist can accurately determine the glass correction you require, and customise it based on your work and other visual needs.

**My nine-year-old daughter has droopy eyelids. Can it be corrected now?**

Most droopy eyelids, except in exceptional cases, can be corrected by a simple surgery. One, however, needs to exclude neural causes of droopy lids, especially if the droopy eyelids are showing any diurnal variations. A simple evaluation by a paediatric ophthalmology-trained eye doctor can provide you appropriate suggestions and treatment.

Dr R Krishnadas has been with the Aravind Eye Hospitals in various capacities for the past 25 years. Currently, he is serving as Senior Medical Consultant in Glaucoma Services at the Aravind Eye Care System in Madurai

Nothing in this column is intended to be, and is not, a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Please seek independent advice from a licensed practitioner if you have any questions regarding a medical condition. Email us your questions at mp\_health@thehindu.co.in

**POOCH CAFE**



**PEANUTS**



**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE**



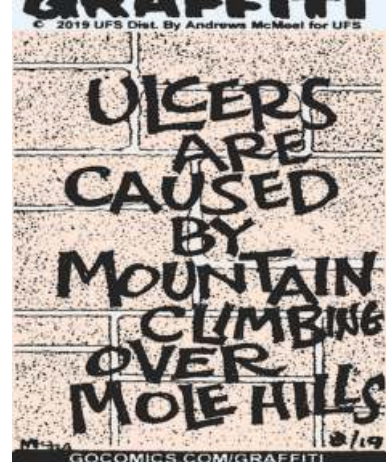
**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



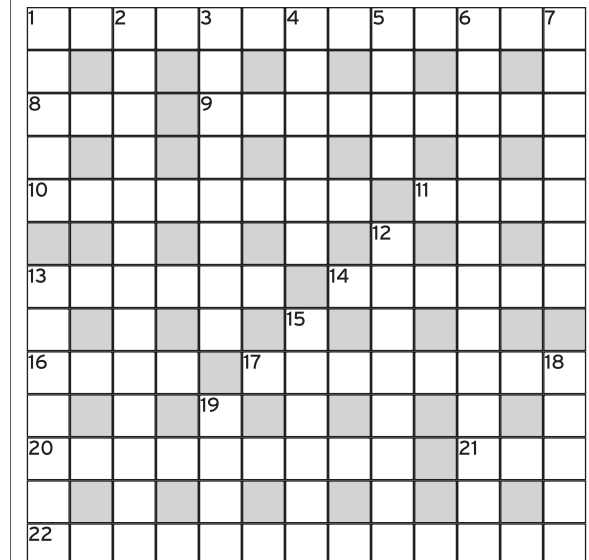
**TIGER**



**GRAFFITI**



**THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13152**



- sexual urges - Rio's a handicap (anag) (13)
- Lived in (8)
- Glad rags (6)
- Visit various websites (4)
- Fairground ride (6,7)
- Legendary bird - Arizona city (7)
- Mexican pancake (8)
- Informal restaurants (7)
- Discoverer's triumphant cry (6)
- Oxygen's atomic number (5)
- Greek cheese (4)

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

Solution No. 13151



**WUMO**



**HEALTH CAPSULES**

WHAT IS "BRAIN ON FIRE"?  
"BRAIN ON FIRE" IS THE POPULAR NAME OF A RARE NEUROLOGICAL CONDITION AND AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE KNOWN AS "ANTI-NMDA RECEPTOR ENCEPHALITIS". THE CONDITION IS CAUSED BY THE IMMUNE SYSTEM CREATING ANTIBODIES THAT ATTACK BRAIN CELLS, PRODUCING SYMPTOMS SUCH AS ANXIETY, CATATONIA, PSYCHOSIS, EXHAUSTION AND SLUGGISHNESS.

**PEARLS BEFORE SWINE**







Indian shooters continue to struggle

SPORTS BUREAU  
LAHTI (FINLAND)

The fortunes of the Indian shooters did not change in the mixed trap event in the Shotgun World Cup on Sunday.

The team of Seema Tomar (58) and Prithviraj Tondaiman (64), with 122 out of 150, finished 27th.

The other Indian duo of Shagun Chowdhary (50) and Kynan Chenai (67) was 33rd with a total of 117.

Just three medals for India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
TALLINN (ESTONIA)

In a below par show, the Indian wrestling contingent will return with just three medals from the Junior World Wrestling Championships following Sachin Rana's defeat in the repechage round in Greco Roman competition, here on Sunday.

Rana needed to beat Georgia's Diego Chkhvadze in the 60kg repechage but ended up losing 5-1 despite getting a chance to score from choice of position following a penalty.

Only Sajjan Bhanwal managed to win a bronze from among Greco Roman grapplers.

Sajjan won his third medal in a row at junior Worlds when he beat Turkey's Abdurrahman Kalkan by technical superiority in the 77kg bout on Saturday.

Deepak had earlier won a gold in 86kg and Viky a bronze in the 92kg in the men's freestyle competition while the Indian women drew a blank for the first time in three years.

Target-throwing machines are different here: Mansher



Rajeshwari Kumari's performance has come in for praise from Mansher. \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Explains reasons behind Indians' poor show in Lahti so far

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

It has been a different challenge for the shooters as they have had to grapple with a distinctly different throw by the machines in the ongoing Shotgun World Cup here.

The coach of the Indian trap team, Mansher Singh, a very experienced shooter who has competed in four Olympics, 10 World Championships and six Asian Games, was able to pin the reason for the overall low scores, even by the best in the world.

In qualification, 117 out of

125 was the best score for men, and in women, the 114 by Rajeshwari Kumari in the MQS section was the best. The regular shooters in the women's event could muster only a maximum of 112.

"The target-throwing machines here are a little different in nature as they throw with less spin.

"Thus, the targets are being pushed out, causing a very fast presentation effect," said Mansher when contacted in Lahti.

Areas of concern

"The weather and light conditions are varying throughout the day. The targets are

also hard in nature and some do not break at impact with the pellets," Mansher elaborated.

The Indian trap shooters have been left with only one final chance in the Asian Championship in Doha in November in their pursuit for Olympic berths. The skeet shooters are yet to compete in Lahti.

"It will be tough at the Asian Championship. The last time around, we won one quota at the Delhi event. It is well within our reach," said Mansher.

Even though only one trap quota was won for Rio in 2016, the National federation

exchanged a rifle quota place for a shotgun quota, helping Kynan Chenai and Manavjit Singh Sandhu to compete there.

Skeet shooter Mairaj Ahmad Khan, who had earned the quota in style, had fared remarkably well to shoot 121 out of 125 at Rio, but finished ninth after missing a berth in the final in a shoot-off.

Up and down

"I think the conditions were very tough and the score could go up and down very easily. Kynan's performance was also up and down but he had a bad start and a good finish.

"There was bad luck with Manav breaking his gun. Prithviraj also struggled to adjust to the throw of the targets and so did the women's team," pointed out Mansher.

Adapting well

He praised Rajeshwari, daughter of Randhir Singh, six-time Olympian and Asian Games gold medallist and the former secretary-general of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), for handling the situation well.

"Rajeshwari was able to adapt very well. This should help her in the coming months. We will be ready to win in Qatar," said Mansher.

Double delight for Mahak Jain

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU  
NAIROBI

Two-time National champion Mahak Jain defeated Sada Nahimana of Burundi 6-1, 6-1 victory in the final of the \$15,000 ITF women's tournament.

It was the second successive singles title for the 18-year-old Mahak who had won the tournament last week at the same venue.

Mahak had more reasons to be happy as she won the doubles title with Sathwika Sama.

After a not so impressive season, it was a smart return to winning ways for Mahak, who had made the semifinals of the \$25,000 tournament in Navi Mumbai in December last year.

Meanwhile, in the doubles final of the Challenger in Meerbusch, Germany, Sriram Balaji and Vishnu Vardhan were beaten 10-3 in the super tie-break by



Mahak Jain. \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Andre Begemann of Germany and Florin Mergea of Romania, after two intense sets that went into the tie-break.

**The results: €46,600 Challenger, Meerbusch, Germany: Doubles (final):** Andre Begemann (Ger) & Florin Mergea (Rou) bt Sriram Balaji & Vishnu Vardhan 7-6(1), 6-7(4), [10-3].

**\$15,000 ITF women, Nairobi: Final:** Mahak Jain bt Sada Nahimana (Bdi) 6-1, 6-1.

Kapur finishes as top Indian

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KUCHING (MALAYSIA)

Shiv Kapur had a fine day on the greens as he converted the chances that came his way to close the week with a superb eight-under 64 and finish T-21 at the Sarawak Championships here on Sunday.

On Sunday, Kapur needed 25 putts, as against 27, 31 and 32 on first three days. Kapur finished at 15-under for the week as Andrew Dodt (64) edged out Richard Lee (66) on a play-off after both were tied at 24-under.

Kapur was the best Indian at T-21, while S Chikkarangappa (68) was T-24 at 14-under and Aman Raj (70) at 12-under was T-31.

Among other Indians, Khalin Joshi (71) was T-44, Akshay Sharma (69) was T-51, Udayan Mane (74) and Aadil Bedi (72) were T-54. Rashid Khan (73) was T-59, while Ajeetesh Sandhu (72) was T-61.

A big relief for Tokyo Summer Games' organisers

France wins mixed triathlon relay; temperature, water quality cause no concern

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TOKYO

France won a thrilling mixed triathlon test event for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics on Sunday, which passed off as planned in a welcome boost for organisers after difficulties with high temperatures and water pollution.

The swimming leg of the paratriathlon on Saturday was scrapped after water tests showed levels of e-coli bacteria more than double the acceptable standard and the running section of a women's test event on Thursday was curtailed in blistering temperatures, with French athlete Cassandre Beaugrand treated for heatstroke.

But on Sunday in the Japanese capital with the temperature a slightly cooler 30 Celsius, the levels of bacteria reduced to within permitted levels.

The mixed relay, a new event for Tokyo 2020 involving two men and two wo-



..and there they go! Athletes start the swimming competition in mixed triathlon test event for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics on Sunday. \*AFP

men, was won by France in a photo finish from Great Britain after a nail-biting final sprint.

Dorian Connix chased down Alex Yee on the final straight despite being behind for most of the race and breasted the tape fractionally ahead of his British competitor. A powerful United States team came third.

The format is much shorter than the individual race

with each athlete completing a 300 metre swim, a 7.4 kilometre cycle and a 2km run before handing off to a teammate, making it less demanding in hot weather.

Realistic measures

Battling the heat of the sweltering summer has become the main challenge for Tokyo 2020 organisers, who have otherwise won widespread praise, including from the

International Olympic Committee, for their preparations.

Yasuo Mori, deputy executive director of the Tokyo 2020 Games Operations Bureau, said athletes needed to have greater access to water during the race.

"That alone would lower the risk of athletes getting heatstroke. That may be one of the realistic measures," he told reporters.

The International Triathlon Union would examine increasing the number of water supply points and was deploying medical staff every 500 metres along the course in case of an emergency, Mori added.

Aside from the problems at the triathlon, about a dozen people, including a spectator, were taken ill at a rowing test event last week with suspected heatstroke. A construction worker also died on an Olympic site as Tokyo sweats through a prolonged and deadly heatwave.

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