Count me out for top post, says Priyanka

NEW DELH Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is believed to have told a meeting of party general secretaries on Thursday that she shouldn't be considered as a replacement for her brother and outgoing party chief Rahul Gandhi. Ms. Vadra's remarks are important in the backdrop of a growing chorus among a section of the senior leaders like Captain Amarinder Singh and Shashi Tharoor asking her to take over the reins.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 12



FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ 8 PAGES

SC transfers Unnao cases to Delhi court

Court also orders ₹25 lakh interim compensation and CRPF protection to the rape survivor

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday transferred five cases of crimes committed against the Unnao rape survivor and her family from a CBI court in Lucknow to its counterpart in Delhi and ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to pay her ₹25 lakh in interim compensation.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi, ordered that the trial in the Unnao cases be held on a day-to-day basis and completed within 45 days.

Judge named

The court went the extra mile to zero in on District Judge Dinesh Sharma as the trial judge.

Four of these cases are the rape of the minor in 2017; a false case foisted on her father under the Arms Act by conniving police officers; the custodial death of the survivor's father after he was arrested in the Arms case; and a second instance of gang

Case history

A summary of five cases of crimes, allegedly committed against the Unnao rape survivor and her family, which were transferred to a Delhi court

CASE 1 The rape of a 17-year-old, allegedly by BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar (in pic), on June 4, 2017, in

CASE 2 The alleged false case foisted against the father of the victim. Police officers responsible for framing the case are the accused. The

chargesheets in the four cas-

es, the Lucknow court is yet

to frame charges against the

The fifth case concerns the

'accident' on July 28 when a

truck rammed into a car car-

rying the now 19-year-old

Days before the accident,

accused persons.

rape survivor.

Probe into 'accident'



victim's father was booked under the Arms Act on April 3, 2018 CASE 3 The case of custodial death of the father. He was beaten up

allegedly by those conniving with Sengar, the main accused. The father died on April 9, 2018 CASE 4 The gangrape of the victim within a

week after she named Senga CASE 5 The case of conspiracy and murder, after a speeding truck rammed the car in which the victim, her lawyer and two of her aunts were

travelling, on July 28, 2019. The two aunts were

rape of the survivor. July 30 - well after the 'accishe had reached out to the Though the CBI has filed CJI in a letter. But her cry for dent' on Sunday.

help largely remained unnot-

iced in the court's Registry

had spelt out threats to her

life and her family from the

accused persons, including

Kuldeep Singh Sengar, four-

time BJP MLA from Banger-

mau. The letter landed at the

Registry on July 17, but did

not reach the CJI's table till

Her letter, dated July 12,

for almost a fortnight.

Cheque handed over

In compliance with the court order, Lucknow District Magistrate K.R. Sharma and SSP K. Naithani later in the day handed over a cheque for ₹25 lakh to the survivor's family, PTI reports.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12 **GENDER JUSTICE** ▶ EDITORIAL

Three guards suspended

Three police guards deployed for the protection of the Unnao rape survivor were suspended on Thursday for negligence. DGP O.P Singh said the three guards were not travelling with the family on the day their car collided with a truck. ▶ PAGE 13

Sengar expelled from BJP

Faced with the anger against Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who is in jail on the charge of raping the Unnao woman, the BJP expelled the fourtime MLA. BJP Uttar Pradesh president Swatantra Dev Singh said Sengar, also accused of being allegedly behind a collision with the survivor's car, was expelled by the central leadership.

25,000 more troops being deployed in J&K

Amarnath Yatra suspended

PEERZADA ASHIQ

An additional 25,000 security personnel were ordered to be moved to Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, days after Governor Satya Pal Malik said "all was normal", fuelling a fresh wave of speculation in the State.

According to police sources, a fresh order was directed to security personnel to "work on a build-up at the district levels across the State." Sources said 25,000 personnel, in addition to the 10,000 troops, were being inducted and split between the Jammu and Kashmir regions.

Taken off yatra duty

"Yes, we have received additional troops. Many personnel were relieved from the Amarnath Yatra duty to augment security in towns in south Kashmir," a senior officer told *The Hindu*.

Sources said there was also a direction to wind up



split between the Jammu and Kashmir regions. • AP

the Amarnath Yatra for the time being. Even many langars (community kitchens) operating in south Kashmir were vacated on Thursday.

Over 40 companies were deployed for the Yatra. A general high alert has been sounded in the State.

There is speculation around the Centre's move to take "significant measures" ahead of the Assembly election and fear of immediate repercussions in the Muslim pockets across

(With PTI inputs) **CONTINUED ON▶** PAGE 12

Free electricity for Delhiites using up to 200 units

Move will encourage power saving, says Kejriwal; BJP, Cong. call announcement 'election gimmick'

STAFF REPORTER

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday announced free electricity for people consuming up to 200 units under a domestic connection. The decision, which came into effect from August 1, has been taken barely six months before Delhi Assembly elections due in Fe-

bruary 2020. "In Delhi, people who consume up to 200 units will not have to pay electricity bills. Their bills [will be] waived," Mr. Kejriwal said while addressing a press con-

ference. Those consuming 201-400 units of electricity will get about 50% subsidy, he added.

"Now people using 210 or 300 units will think that if they use under 200 units, their bill will be zero. We believe this will encourage them to save electricity," the Chief Minister said. Attacking the move, both

the BIP and the Congress termed it an "election gimmick". Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said the Delhi government has "looted" ₹8,500 crore from the people as fixed charge and load charge



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal at a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

and demanded that Mr. Kej-

riwal refund it or else his party will "initiate a movement" against it.

The Chief Minister said

around 35% of the total consumers use less than 200 units during summer and in winter, the percentage goes up to around 70. Terming the move "historic", he claimed Delhi has the cheapest electricity rate in the

The Delhi Congress, however, claimed that the Aam Aadmi Party government was misleading the people on power tariff. "It is a lie that Delhi has the cheapest rates of electricity and I challenge Arvind Kejriwal and other AAP leaders who are misguiding people. When

Congress was in power, even then power tariff in Delhi was lowest in the country," senior Congress leader Haroon Yusuf said.

Asked about the timing of the move, Mr. Kejriwal said: "When we took over, the power sector was in a bad state. We worked and slowly improved it. Since then, the DERC has been reducing rates... It was not possible earlier, as power companies' financial state was bad. At that point, there was no question of making it free."

(With PTI inputs) SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 3

India evaluating Pak. proposal for consular access to Jadhav

Response will be sent through diplomatic channels: MEA

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE NEW DELHI

India is examining Pakistan's proposal to grant consular access to Kulbhushan Iadhav, a former Navy officer, who was sentenced to death by a Pakistan military court on espionage and terrorism charges in 2017.

Raveesh Kumar, spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, said the established channels were being used to convey India's response. "We have received a proposal from Pakistan. We



are evaluating the proposal in the light of the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ)," he said, without spelling out the modali-

'Indian spy'

military police arrested Raju spy", in Dera Ghazi Khan in Wednesday. ▶ PAGE 13

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Vadodara flooded



Crippled by torrents: Four persons were killed and 5,000 evacuated from Vadodara in Gujarat, which was battered by nearly 500 mm of rain in 24 hours till Thursday morning. The Vishwamitri river burst its banks and entered several areas. • PTI (PAGE 9)

U.S. imposes sanctions on Iran Minister

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON

The U.S. on Wednesday imposed sanctions on Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, effectively slamming the door on the country's top diplomat.

The sanctions freeze any of Mr. Zarif's assets in the U.S. or that are controlled by U.S. entities, the government said, saying it would also curtail his international

ment.

"Zarif implements the reckless agenda of Iran's Supreme Leader, and is the regime's primary spokesperson around the world. The U.S. is sending a clear message to the Iranian regime that its recent behaviour is completely unacceptable," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a state-

Mr. Zarif has been at the

heart of the complex talks with foreign capitals over Iran's nuclear power industry, which Tehran says is peaceful, but Washington and regional allies, including Israel, insist is a cover for secret weapons

programme. President Hassan Rouhani said the measure showed Washington was "afraid" of Mr. Zarif.

PATH TO TALKS ▶ PAGE 14

Fleeing Maldives leader held off Tamil Nadu

Ahmed Adeeb was on a tugboat

HARIPRASAD RADHAKRISHNAN THOOTHUKUDI

Former Vice President of Maldives Ahmed Adeeb Abdul Ghafoor, who secretly fled the Maldives on a boat to India, was held by Indian authorities near the coast of Thoothukudi in southern Tamil Nadu on Thursday.

Mr. Adeeb was convicted by a Maldivian court in a plot to assassinate former President Abdulla Yameen, but the country's Supreme Court had quashed the sentence and ordered a fresh trial.

The police said he was on board a Mongolian-flagged tugboat, Virgo-9, that set sail from the Maldives on July 27 on its way back to Thoothukudi after delivering bulk cargo. Besides Mr. Adeeb, the boat had nine workers eight Indonesian nationals man Thoothukudi.

While Coast Guard sources in Thoothukudi told *The* Hindu that the boat was intercepted in the sea near Manappad, the Coast Guard IG (Eastern Region), Paramesh, denied that the agency had any role in the detention of

Mr. Adeeb. Tamil Nadu Director General of Police J.K. Tripathy



Ahmed Adeeb Abdul Ghafoor in a boat in Thoothukudi on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

said the issue was being dealt with by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and other central agencies.

MEA official spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, "There are designated entry points through which foreigners are allowed entry into India. The entry is facilitated on the basis of appropriate valid travel documents. In the instant case, since he was not entering through a designated entry point and did not possess the valid document, he has not been permitted entry."

Delhi and Chennai) **CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 12

(With inputs from

Pakistan arrests

Pakistan has said its border Lakshman, 30, an "Indian Punjab province on

ties. Nor did he say whether conditions were attached to the proposal.

IN BRIEF

AUD conducts orientation programme

NEW DELHI Ambedkar University Delhi conducted an orientation programme for freshers to all undergraduate programmes on Thursday. V-C Anu Singh Lather told students that the university strongly believes that no knowledge becomes socially productive unless it spreads across society, transcending barriers of caste, creed and class.

Delhi	89	of Delhi-NC	
Ghaziabad	87	Faridabad 5	7
Noida	82	Greater Noida 11	0
Good 0-50	Sati 51-	sfactory Modera 100 101-20	
Poor 201-300		y poor ■ Severe -400 >401	

DELHI TODAY

Dance: "Bhajgovindam", a Odissi recital by Monalisa Ghosh and her senior disciples, Arunima Ghosh Raju Mishra and Tanusree Mullic at The Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Exhibition: Image-In-Side-Out, an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Sayam Bharat and Yamini Mohan it Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Gangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m.

Exhibition: "Liminal spaces", a solo art show by Kanwal Singh at Open Palm Court Gallery, IHC, 11 a.m. - 7

Exhibition: "Zenith" a solo painting exhibition by Bhavana Sanon at Experimental Art Gallery, IHC, 11 a.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at

RTI activists detained on way to deliver petition to President

Protesters launch mass RTI campaign, raise questions on controversial issues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Right to Information activists attempting to deliver a petition against the RTI Amendments Bill to the President via his Secretariat were detained outside Rashtrapati Bhavan on Thursday.

Later, they launched a new campaign to bombard the government with a mass RTI campaign raising queries on prickly issues of public interest, from the Unnao rape case and the Rafale defence deal to alleged discrepancies in tax revenue data and the impact of Aadhaar.

No permission

The city police said a total of 59 persons were detained, including 45 women and 14 men. "The group did not have any permission. They were detained at Mandir Marg police station for an hour and then were released," a police spokesperson said.

According to the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI), the police detained 66 activists gathered outside Gate No. 38



Police detain RTI activists at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Thursday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

of Rashtrapati Bhavan which has a facility for accepting memorandums from the public. Three of them were later allowed to submit their plea, urging President Ram Nath Kovind not to sign the Bill passed by Parliament last

'Attack on rights'

"This is an absolute attack on our democratic rights to free speech and expression," said Anjali Bhardwaj, NCPRI co-convener who

"The Centre has not allowed this legislation to be publicly discussed anywhere. It was not sent to the parliamentary standing committee or any select committee, there was no information about the Bill on the website, no pre-legislative consultation, or public stakeholders consultation," noted NCPRI founder Nikhil "We believe this is be-

cause they have information to hide...Maybe they can steamroll Parliament, but they cannot steamroll the people."

In conjunction with social movements across the country, NCPRI activists have drafted and filed 100 RTI queries on high-profile issues of public interest as part of a new campaign called "Use RTI to Save RTI".

On top of the list is an RTI request about the Unnao rape case, asking for details and copies of the FIRs and chargesheets against the accused BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, and also seeking details of the police protection given to the victim.

Plea in HC challenges triple talaq Bill

Huge possibility of it being misused, says petitioner

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

Within a day of President Ram Nath Kovind giving accent to the Triple Talaq Bill, a petition was filed in the Delhi High Court challenging provisions in the new law that made giving instant oral triple talaq a criminal offence punishable with jail term of up to three years.

Social activist and advocate Shahid Ali, in his public interest litigation petition, has claimed that the Muslim Women (protection of rights on marriage) Act, 2019 was against both men and women and "amounts to institutionalised discrimination against the largest minority of India."

Shayara Bano case

Mr. Ali said there is "huge possibility of it being misused, whenever, there is minor matrimonial discourse or claim for maintenance."

The petition pointed out that the Supreme Court in the Shayara Bano case had already declared the pronouncement of triple talag invalid unconstitutional.

"Once it is declared that the marriage shall not be dissolved by pronouncement of triple talaq, no offence is



made out at all," the petition argued.

"However, the government went many steps further... [and] has made the same a criminal offence, however, without making any arrangement in the said Act for reconciliation between the Muslim husband pronouncing the triple talaq and his wife," the petition

Order violated

The mere fact of not providing any measure for reconciliation between the Muslim husband pronouncing talaq and his wife is against the government's own statement of objects and reasons attached to the Act, and also violative of the order of Supreme Court in Shayara Bano case, the plea said.

Mr. Ali also argued that

The government went many steps

further... [and] has made it a criminal offence, however, without making any arrangement in the said Act for reconciliation between the Muslim husband pronouncing the triple talaq and his

there are "high chances" of misuse of some Sections of the Act, since, nothing had been provided in the Act to ascertain the truthfulness of the allegations of pronouncement of triple talaq.

False complaint

"In the absence of any safeguards even if there is a minor discord in the marital affairs, the wife may file a false complaint that the husband has pronounced Triple Talag upon her by oral pronunciation," the plea said.

This, Mr. Ali, said would result in increasing number of desertions instead of dissolution of marriage in the matter of those who are forced to live under unhappy marriages.

'Illegal constructions in Haridwar forest division to be removed

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

platform.

Illegal constructions in the Haridwar forest division will be removed within three months, an oversight committee constituted by the National Green Tribunal informed the green panel. This came following a plea alleg-

among those detained by the

police. "There were no slo-

gans, no banners, no pos-

ters. It was simply a group of

citizens who brought their

own signed petitions to the

President of the country. If

we cannot even do that, it is

a joke to call this a democra-

dent had almost two lakh sig-

natures, including 1.27 lakh

people who joined an online

campaign on the Change.org

The petition to the Presi-

ing violation of forest laws in Haridwar.

The committee, in its report, informed a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice A.K. Goel that the delay in proceedings pertaining to the eviction of encroachers was due to the model code of conduct that

came into force due to the general election held earlier this year.

Eviction proceedings

"No new encroachment has now taken place and some encroachments have been removed. In some cases, orders of eviction have been

passed or other proceedings were pending. The remaining eviction proceedings are to be completed within three months," the committee headed by former judge Justice U.C. Dhyani told the Bench. The green panel directed the committee to furnish a final report on the sta-

tus of action taken and recommendations made, by November 30. The directions came when the NGT was hearing a plea moved by environmental activist Gauri Maulekhi who sought action against illegal constructions in the Shyampur range of Haridwar's forest division.

JNUTA against collecting biometrics for smart card

'Violation of constitutional rights'

STAFF REPORTER

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association (JNUTA) on Thursday opposed the introduction of smart cards for marking attendance, calling the administration move a "draconian measure to coerce employees, faculty and students to give their biometric data in violation of their fundamental right to privacy".

Calling it a clear violation of constitutional rights, the teachers alleged that there had been no deliberation about the necessity for the introduction of All-in-One smart ID cards.

"The notification issued by the administration in this regard states that the biometric card is an "All-in-One" card. It does not specify precisely for what all purposes would the card be used. This is vague and open ended, and includes the possibility of biometric data being used for any unstated purposes without the

consent of the person. This is a gross violation of the right to privacy," the teachers said.

'Coercively imposed'

The JNUTA said that the biometric system was currently being coercively imposed in the first phase of implementation on the most vulnerable employees of the univeroutsourced, temporary and contractual - who face the risk of losing their livelihood if they were to refuse to give their biometric data or raise con-

cerns of privacy. The teachers' body said that the matter is sub judice in the High Court of Delhi and that the court has also issued a stay on collection of biometric data for the purpose of attendance.

"The JNUTA demands that the process of coercing its employees to give information as a condition of employment must immediately be stopped," the statement

e-bike-sharing services launched in Gurugram

It will provide last-mile connectivity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

To provide last-mile connectivity to commuters in the Millennium City, Gurugram Metropolitan City Bus Limited (GMCBL) in collaboration with Mobycy launched ebike-sharing services on Thursday. The GMCBL joint chief executive officer Ashok Bansal inaugurated the facility at a function at HUDA City Centre metro station.

The Mobycy will make its electric scooters and e-bikes available across key Gurugram bus stops, including HUDA City Centre metro station, IFFCO Chowk, Sohna Road, Golf Course Road, for one year under the arrangement. It will allow bus commuters to opt for an environment-friendly mode last-mile commute.

Daily commuters are ex-

pected to be the prime beneficiaries from this development. Mobycy already has a pilot programme across various stations of Rapid Metro, including Sector 53-54 and Sector 55-56 stations, DLF Cybercity, and Sector 44.

The users can rent the ebike it by unlocking the lock by scanning a digital QR code via the Mobycy app. Upon completion, the ebikes can be parked in Mobycy designated parking points shown on app. Currently, Mobycy provides over 2,000 rides every day in four cities, with a fleet of over 2,000 bikes.

The commuter will have to pay ₹2 per minute ride or can avail a day plan at ₹149. The monthly subscription plan will cost ₹499 for two half hours rides a day.

Chief Minister summoned in defamation case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A court here on Thursday summoned Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a criminal complaint filed by a BJP activist for allegedly defaming him by posting "objectionable" tweets.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal directed Mr. Kejriwal to appear before the court on August 7 on the complaint by Rajesh Kumar. He has sought Mr. Kejriwal's prosecution under Sections 499 and 500 (related to defamation) and 153 (provocation with intent to cause riot) of the



Light rain likely today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

It was a hot and humid day in the Capital with the mercury settling at 36.9 degrees Celsius, three notches above the normal, said a meteorological (Met) department official said.

The minimum temperature settled at 27.8 degrees Celsius, a notch above normal. The weatherman predicted cloudy sky for Friday with the possibility of light rain and thundershowers. The maximum temperature is expected to be around 34 degrees Celsius, he said.

No 'major increase' in cost to exchequer expected: Kejriwal

BJP counters govt.'s claim, says free power up to 200 units will cost exchequer ₹600 crore more

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELH

Announcing free electricity up to 200 units for domestic users, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the move is not "expected" to cause any "major increase" in cost to the government.

"Subsidy bill for electricity is between ₹1,800 and ₹2,000 crore every year. No major increase is expected. We have restructured the same subsidy," he said while addressing a press conference.

The government has been paying the said subsidy to the power distribution companies even before Thursday's announcement so as to provide electricity at lesser rates to peo-

BJP MLA and Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta said it will cost the exchequer ₹600 crore. "The decision will put an additional burden of ₹600 crore on the exchequer. How will Mr. Kejriwal manage payment of this amount? He will certainly utilise the money of the taxpayers for his political gain," Mr. Gupta

'Reduced the subsidy'

A government spokesperson said the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) had reduced the fixed charges on Wednesday. "It also reduced the subsidy which the government had to pay to the Discoms. Due to this, the increase in cost

My electricity consumption

is between 70-75 units per

month. I feel very

fortunate that AAP

has done such

a thing. I have

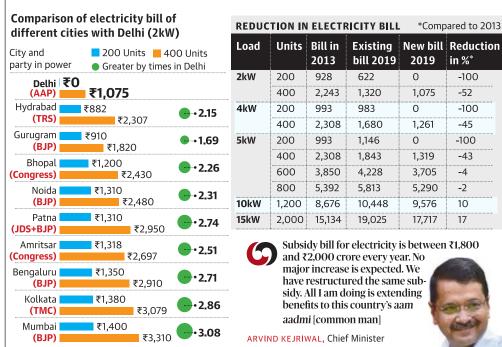
tinue to do so

MANOJ TIWARI, Tea stall owner

always voted for

AAP and will con-

All for power, power for all



after Thursday's announcement will not be much," he added.

OURCE: DELHI GOVERNMEN

Stating that poor people also need water and electricity, the Chief Minister, said, "If any person is poor, then he won't drink water? He won't use electricity? Basic line commitment like we did in water is what we are doing in the electricity sector."

"I know the television debates will criticize us for giving 'freebies'. The country's politicians, ministers, MPs, MLAs,

the senior officers are all enjoying free electricity. But no one calls those freebies. All I am doing is extending those benefits to this country's aam aadmi [common man], who work all day long, run their households honestly, raise their children. I am trying to give them the same facilities that we provide for this country's politicians and bureaucrats. What is wrong if I am giving aam aadmis the status of a khaas aadmi?" he asked.

He said the BIP should say

"In Mumbai, 200 units cost ₹1400, Delhi will pay zero. Mumbai pays ₹3,310 for 400 units, Delhi pays ₹1,075. For 400 units, Bangalore pays ₹2,910 and Delhi only ₹1,075 only," he

My electricity consumption is around

80 units. I have to check my last

month and this month's bill

to make a comparison

always drawn towards

the government which

works for the welfare

of the people

GYAN SINGH

Autorickshaw driver

on the difference. One is

whether bills should be zero for those consuming up to 200 units or not in Delhi. "It should then ask its own State governments to bring tariff to Delhi's levels and then talk.'

Government announcing freebies is an election stunt, alleges BJP

Cong. accuses CM of looting citizens on fixed charges

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The State units of the Bharatiya Janata Party as well as the Congress Thursday hit out at the Aam Aadmi Party government saying it was announcing freebies keeping in mind the Assembly elections due next year.

Delhi BJP President Manoj Tiwari said, "The declaration by the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for making electric consumption up to 200 units free misleading and an election stunt. Mr. Kejriwal will have to refund ₹8,500 crore recovered as fixed charge and load charge to the consumers of Delhi

Accusing the government of misleading the people once more by making a false announcement, he said, "If the government does not refund the money looted from the consumers then BJP will initiate a movement against it," Mr. Tiwari said.

The Congress said Mr. Kejriwal's announcement that those who consume electricity up to 200 units will not be charged any tariff was totally inadequate as the discoms had looted the citizens of Delhi for the past one and a half years on the fixed charges and pension fund heads.

The Congress called it another election gimmick by the Kejriwal govern-

"Before coming to power, Mr. Kejriwal used to say that the private power companies are earning profit and the Comptroller and Auditor General of India should audit their accounts. Now, he saying that the power companies are incurring losses. Mr. Kejriwal must clarify what is the truth," Mr. Tiwari

Responding to Mr. Tiwari, AAP leader Atishi said, "Why does Tiwari not want the people of Delhi to get 200 units of electricity free? What are his and the BJP's objection if an ordinary family living in Delhi that needs a basic light, fan, mobile charger, fridge to live a dignified life, is being provided 200 units of power free? As many as 60% of Delhi's households consume less than 200 units of electricity per month."

She added, "As an MP, Tiwari gets free electricity. If he disapproves of free electricity for the rest of the people, why doesn't he give up the perks on electricity, housing, vehicle, and other facilities that he is getting at the cost of taxpayers?"

"If we look at the BJP-ruled states, the electricity that costs ₹1,075 for 400 units in Delhi but costs ₹1,820 in Gurugram. In Noida, 200 units cost ₹1,310, and 400 costs ₹1,480. We demand an immediate CBI enquiry into the power scams across the country that are keeping tariffs so high," Ms. Atishi said.

L-G's private secretary ⁺ duped of ₹1.3 lakh

3 illegal transactions made from his card

STAFF REPORTER

Private secretary of Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal was allegedly duped of ₹1.3 lakh after three authorised transactions were made from his bank account, the police said on Thursday.

OTP requested

Anoop Thakur in his complaint to police said he got to know about the fraud when he received a text message on Tuesday requesting a 'One Time Password' for a transaction of ₹1,31,935.20 on his State Bank of India credit card.

He was at work in Raj Niwas at 6.30 p.m. when he received the message. Mr. Thakur said he imme-

diately called the customer care service and complained about the matter after which his card was blocked. However, he was informed by the executive that three transactions have already been made for the amount ₹48,000, ₹40,944 and ₹42,951.20.

Mr. Thakur then approached Civil Lines police station on Wednesday and submitted his complaint.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Nupur Prasad said a case under Section 420 (Cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property) of the IPC has been registered.

The case has been transferred to district cyber cell,

Fake currency with face value of ₹4 lakh seized, two arrested

My electricity bill usually comes

around ₹400-₹500 per month.

But now onwards,

I will be exempted

very happy. At least

someone is listening

from it and I am

to us. I will vote

for him

'Notes pumped in from Bangladesh'

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Two persons have been arrested for allegedly carrying fake Indian currency notes of face value ₹4 lakh, police Thursday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said Shiksha (32) from Haryana's Panipat, and Gautam Mandal (25) from West Bengal's Malda were arrested following a tip-off.

The police claimed to have received information on Wednesday that Mandal would come near Haiderpur Badli metro station to deliver a consignment to Shiksha after which a trap was laid.

"While counterfeit notes worth ₹2.5 lakh were

seized from Shiksha, those having a total face value of ₹1.5 lakh were seized from Mandal," Mr.Yadav said.

Since 2018

During interrogation, Mandal allegedly told the police he has been involved in the circulation since 2018 and the fake notes are being pumped into India through Bangladesh.

The supply is brought to Malda's Kaliachak area and from there it is circulated to different parts of the

The police said he has already delivered four-five consignments in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. Shiksha has been circulating the currency for the last three years, they ad-

Fact-finding committee recommends legal proceedings against BJP MP

Panel says Verma made false claims about mosques on govt. land

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A committee appointed by the Delhi Minorities Commission (DMC) has recommended to "initiate legal proceedings" against BJP MP Parvesh Verma for his "false" allegations on 54 mosques in government land here.

'Communal harmony'

The committee said the allegations targeted a particular community and tried to "disturb the communal harmony". The committee also urged the DMC to lodge a complaint against the BJP MP with the Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha as it is "clearly found that he has violated his

Last month, BJP MP Parvesh Verma had submitted a list of 54 mosques and gravevards, which allegedly existed in an unauthorised manner on government land across his constituency of We understand it [the statement] was on communal lines. Election is coming and they want to talk these

things so that there is polarisation and increase in their vote bank ZAFARUL ISLAM KHAN

West Delhi to Lieutenant-Go-

vernor Anil Baijal. He had raised the issue earlier also and on June 24, the DMC set up a five-member fact-finding committee headed by social activist Ovais Sultan Khan. Presenting the report on

Thursday at a press conference, Mr. Khan said the BJP MP was selective in his outburst. He also said they did not find any of the 54 mosques or graveyards on government land. DMC chairman Zafarul Islam Khan, said, "We understand it [the statement] was on communal lines. The election is coming and they want to talk about these things so that there is polarisation and increase in their vote bank." Mr. Ovais said they found a temple which was on government land and the BJP MP's posters were on it. He added that there were a lot of temples on government land and asked why the selective outrage.

The committee visited all the sites that the BJP MP had listed. Mr. Ovais said the list was compiled in such a hurry that there was one name which was repeated and in eight locations, they could not locate any mosque.

"In view of the upcoming Assembly elections in Delhi, there should be zero tolerance against those spreading hate and incitement to violence against particular communities," another recommendation of the committee read.

HC lawyer death: 4 held, 1 absconding

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Four persons have been nabbed on Thursday for allegedly killing lawyer Kulieet Kaur in Noida on July 2, the police said.

A domestic help of the 60-year-old High Court lawyer, who was found dead inside her Sector 31 house, was among those arrested, they said.

The police have also apprehended a juvenile girl for her alleged involvement in the conspiracy.

Her house was found ransacked and the domestic helps - Sanju and Maneesha – were missing since the incident, a senior officer said. While Sanju has been arrested, Maneesha is still at large, said SSP (Gautam Buddh Nagar) Vaibhav Krishna. The other arrested have been identified as Reeta and her husband Lalit.

The accused have been booked under relevant Indian Penal Code sections.



Woman held with pistol at metro station

A woman was apprehended by the CISF at a metro station here on Thursday around 9 a.m. for allegedly carrying a pistol and a bullet round in her bag, a senior officer said. Poonam Yadav (27), a resident of Delhi, was intercepted at Shiv Vihar station. A countrymade pistol and a live bullet round was recovered from her hand baggage. She was handed over to the police for further investigation, he said. PTI

Shivaji Stadium metro station renamed

NEW DELH With LIC providing semibranding, Shivaji Stadium metro station on the Airport Express Line is now called LIC Shivaii Stadium Station. Anoop Kumar, Zonal Manager Northern Zone of LIC India, inaugurated the semibranding of the station on July 8. "This station is one of the highly prominent stations at which the Airport Express line operates, covering the distance between New Delhi railway station to Dwarka Sector 21," the company said in a statement.

Medical college planned at Dayanand Hospital

Standing Committee of the East Delhi Municipal Corporation on Thursday passed a resolution to set up a medical college at Swami Davanand Hospital, The hospital gets the most number of daily patients in East Delhi and is planned to be expanded to a 500-bed hospital, the resolution stated. Hospitals with more than 400 beds are suitable for setting up medical colleges and since the hospital meets all other criteria, the move is being undertaken to help train skilled doctors and deliver affordable health care, it said.

Solar panels to come up at municipal schools

A proposal to set up solar panels on the rooftops of up to 200 municipal schools was passed by the standing committee of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation on Thursday. Panels with a capacity of 5 kW each will be set up at a total cost of ₹7 crore. Each unit is being set up at a cost of ₹3.50 lakh.

Doctor alleges extortion by 2 advocates

STAFF REPORTER

A doctor at a private hospital in east Delhi's Preet Vihar has alleged that the two advocates of a city court extracted money from him on the pretext of a legal notice, the police said on Thursday.

The victim, also an owner of the private hospital, was sent a legal notice pertaining to the hospital land by two advocates in a bid to extort money from him, they said

The advocates claimed that they could settle the legal dispute within a meeting, the police said.

Accordingly, a meeting was arranged at Connaught Place where the doctor paid them ₹1 lakh.

Later, when the accused forced him to pay more money, the victim lodged a complaint at Preet Vihar police station, a senior police officer said.

A case was registered and an investigation was

initiated, he said. During investigation, a woman who helped the advocates in the extortion, was held and questioned, the officer also said.

The two advocates involved in the alleged extortion are absconding, the police said, adding that efforts are to nab the culprits

Recovery of 'secret' papers: trial against Reliance, officers quashed

One can't be put on trial merely because a document is marked as secret, says HC

STAFF REPORTER

The Delhi High Court on Thursday put an end to the trial under the Official Secrets Act against Reliance Industries Ltd. and three of its then senior executives for recovery of alleged secret documents from them in 1998.

Justice Sunil Gaur remarked that the documents recovered from them were already in public domain, and "therefore, they lose their confidentiality".

1998 search operation

The case stems from a search operation conducted on October 28, 1998 on the office premises of V. Balasubramanian, Group President, RIL, at Meridien Commercial Tower, Janpath in New Delhi by the Delhi police.



In the course of search, photocopies of the four "secret" documents of the Government of India, comprising 37 pages, recovered from the drawer of Mr. Balasubramanian's office table.

The prosecution alleged that these documents were "secret" ones.

A trial court here had in March 2012 ordered framing The documents recovered from the accused were already in public domain, and therefore, they lose

confidentiality

SUNIL GAUR High Court Justice

of charges against RIL and three of its senior executives. This order was challenged before the High Court by them.

They argued that the documents in question are not prejudicial to the security of the State. They said merely marking them "secret". does not bring the documents in question within the ambit of The Official Se-

They also pointed out that the documents were very much in public domain and the information contained in these documents were already published by the newspaper.

Nature of information

Taking note of the argument, Justice Gaur said, "A person cannot be put on trial merely because a document has been marked as 'secret', as it is necessary to see the nature of information contained in it, to find out if any offence under The Official Secrets Act, 1923 is made out or not."

"This court is of the considered view that trial court has gravely erred in ignoring the newspaper reports on record on technical plea of want of proof, as it is a settled legal position that on technicalities, substantial iustice cannot be sacrificed," the judge said while quashing the trial against RIL and its executives.

Pahari village clash: police register FIR against villagers

They had thrashed a man after he fired at a villager

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

After a villager and an alleged cow smuggler were injured in a clash in Alwar's Pahari village two days ago, Rajasthan Police have registered a cross-FIR against the villagers on charges of causing hurt, wrongful confinement and unlawful assembly for allegedly beating up the

accused. Salim and his accomplices Jakam and Sahoon were walking a herd of over a dozen cows towards the fields on the outskirts of Pahari village under the jurisdiction of Kathumar police station, when a gang of young men, including Ramjeet, accosted them.

At this, the accused hurriedly ran towards the fields with the herd. When the voung men chased the accused on a motorcycle, Salim allegedly opened fire injuring It is suspected that the accused were taking cows for slaughtering

PARIS DESHMUKH
Superintendent of Police (Alwar)

Ramjeet. Though Salim was caught by the young men accompanying Ramjeet, his accomplices managed escape.

Salim was allegedly badly beaten up by the villagers who then informed the police. A countrymade pistol and eight cartridges were seized from Salim, said the

Both Ramjeet and Salim were taken to Community Health Centre and later shifted to Civil Hospital in Alwar for treatment.

A case was registered against Salim and his accomplices on charges of attempt to murder, wrongful restraint and causing hurt under the Indian Penal Code and under different sections of the Rajasthan Bovine Animal Act and the Arms Act

The police recorded Salim's statement on July 31 after the doctors declared hi m fit to do so. A case was registered against the villagers. However, no one has been named in the FIR against the villagers.

A team led by Assistant Superintendent of Police (Rural) has detained Jakam and Sahoon as well and the two were being brought to Alwar. All the three accused belong to Bharatpur in Rajasthan.

Superintendent of Police (Alwar) Paris Deshmukh told The Hindu that based on preliminary investigation and the past record of the three it was suspected that they were taking the cows for slaughter-

He added that the matter was under investigation.

Two men arrested for smuggling sandalwood

Police seize logs weighing over 1,300 kg

STAFF REPORTER

Two men have been arrested for allegedly smuggling sandalwood in north-east Delhi's Welcome, the police said on Thursday.

The accused have been identified as Nadeem Zafar (35) and Mohammad Basil (28) and 1,340 kg of sandalwood was recovered from their possession, they said.

During a tenant verification drive near Samudayik Bhawan, the police spotted the two men standing behind trucks with logs wrapped with plastic. After seeing the police, the accused tried to flee, officers said.

policemen unwrapped the packaging and found sandalwood inside.

They were carrying the sandalwood to Zafar's house

and were waiting for a vehicle for the transportation.

Smuggled from Chennai "The accused transported the sandalwood, weighing 1,340 kgs, from Chennai to Delhi and were planning to sell it in Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh. Forest Department officers said that the recovered sandalwood cannot be carried from one State to another without getting a transit permit from the de-

sioner of Police (North-East). Basil, who hails from Chennai, brought the logs in a tempo to the national capital, the police also said. They were on the way to Zafar's house, who lives in Jan-

ta Colony in Welcome, they

partment," said Atul Kumar

Thakur, Deputy Commis-

Man held for posing as IAS officer, duping policemen

He promised victims desired postings in return for money

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A man has been arrested for posing as a senior bureaucrat in the Prime Minister's Office and duping Uttar Pradesh policemen by promising them desired postings in lieu of money, officers said on Thursday.

Gaurav Mishra (30) would either pose as a senior IAS officer posted in the PMO or an IPS officer of the West Bengal cadre, they said, adding that his brother-in-law Ashutosh Rathi (34) was arrested as well.

A police officer said Rathi, who identified himself as a BJP leader, would assure the victims of exerting pressure on government officials to get their transfers or postings done quickly.

The accused has made ₹8 lakh to ₹10 lakh in the last few months by conning people

VAIBHAV KRISHNA SSP (Gautam Buddh Nagar)

"Mishra and Rathi would use fake identities to lure lower-rank policemen by offering them postings and transfers of their choice in return for money. Mishra has been doing this for nearly a decade and was jailed in 2012," SSP (Gautam Buddh Nagar) Vaibhav Krishna said.

Mishra, who hails from Allahabad, and lives in Ghaziabad, along with Rathi, would call up the policemen in various districts of the State and offer them to get

their work done in lieu of money. "The matter came to light during investigation in a case lodged at Sector 20 police station on July 26," he

"When Rathi's phone number was tracked, it led the police team to a car parked in Sector 18 and both the accused were found inside. On questioning, Mishra introduced himself as an IPS officer and tried to influence the local police," Mr. Krishna said. The police team further questioned the them and after going through their mobile phone records, apprehended

Mishra has made ₹8 lakh to ₹10 lakh in the last three to four months by duping their targets, the SSP said.

Money laundering: remand of businessman extended

ED says probe requires further custody

NIRNIMESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday extended till August 9 the police remand of Hyderabad-based businessman Sana Satish Babu in a money laundering case in which meat exporter Moin Qureshi is also an accused.

Special Judge Anuradh Shukla Bhardwaj extended his remand to the Enforcement Directorate when counsel for the probe agency, D.P. Singh and N.K. Matta, submitted that the investigation required his further custody to confront him with certain individuals and documents to find out the money trail.

The Enforcement Directorate had arrested him on July 26 under the Prevention of Money Laundering

Act when he started deviating from earlier statement as a witness and failed to explain payment of ₹2.5 crore to the meat exporter in three instalments of 1.5 crore, ₹50 lakh and ₹25

The next day the court had remanded him to Directorate's custody Thursday.

The Central Bureau of Investigation has charged the meat exporter with collecting money from private persons to get favour for them from public servants and sending the proceeds of crime abroad through hawala.

Following the filing of an FIR against him, the directorate filed a complaint against Qureshi for money

Loads of work



Women workers building a footpath along the Barapullah road in the Capital. • v.v. krishnan

Consumer forum asks builder to pay homebuyer ₹2.75 lakh

Developer raised demands for project that did not take off

STAFF REPORTER

A district consumer disputes redressal forum here has directed a private developer to compensate a complainant by paying over ₹2.75 lakh for raising demands for a housing project that did not take off

Holding the company deficient in services, the consumer panel said, "We find the developer guilty of deficiency of service and unfair trade practice in having unlawfully and unjustifiably raising demands for a project which never took off, failing to enter into any written agreement with the complainant, keeping him in the dark with respect to the progress of the project with no allotment letter and arbitrarily cancelling the investment and forfeiting the deposited amount of ₹2.30

directions came

The complainant was told that the project was approved for financing by banks but when he applied for loan, he

was told that the

said project was

not sanctioned

DISTRICT CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL FORUM

when Faridabad resident Dinesh Kumar Singhal alleged that despite having paid the booking amount for a flat in a housing project that was to come up in Bhiwadi, the Delhi-based developer, Piyush Colonisers, failed to provide details of the project.

"The complainant, lured by representation, brochures and propaganda made [by the developer] with respect to the said project, booked a flat in May

2006. The complainant was assured that the project was duly approved for financing by banks for loan purposes but when he applied for loan, he was apprised that the said project was not sanctioned. No reply came forth [from the developer] showing their dishonest intent," the consumer panel observed.

Dismissing contentions put forth by the developer, the consumer panel also said, "...No man of reasonable prudence would mindlessly pay huge amounts of to the builder without getting any iota of knowledge about the status of the project he has invested in."

Apart from refund of the booking amount paid by the complainant, the consumer panel directed an additional compensation of ₹25,000 for harassment and mental agony caused to the complainant.

Annual health check-up must for govt. staff

"With the introduction of

Lieutenant-Governor accords in-principle approval

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal on Thursday accorded in-principle approval to the mandatory annual health check-up scheme for all Delhi government employees aged 40 years and

The mandatory health check-up shall be made part of their annual performance assessment report to ensure its implementation in letter and spirit.

this scheme, all employees of Delhi government will be eligible for annual health check-up scheme with the introduction of this scheme. The scheme shall benefit approximately 1.5 lakh employees currently working in Delhi government. Such facilities were so far available to IAS officers and Group A Civil Services Officers only," read the statement from

the L-G's office. It added that the introduction of the scheme will prove to be a milestone in ensuring good health for all the employees under Government of NCT Delhi and would go a long way in improving the overall productivity and efficiency of the administration. The employee concerned

will be able to visit any of the authorized/empanelled hospitals for annual health check-up and will be eligible for reimbursement for the

after gunfight in Noida

2 contract killers held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Two alleged contract killers involved in a shootout at a property dealer's office here have been nabbed on Thursday morning following a gunfight, the police said.

The accused were going to mount another attack on the property dealer but the police foiled their plan after receiving a tip-off. They were nabbed around 5 a.m. in Phase-II area after they sustained injuries in an exchange of fire with the police, a senior officer said.

"Accused Aakash Singh hails from Baghpat and Ravi Singh belongs to Delhi. They are sharpshooters engaged by Billu Dujana gang. On July 24, they had barged into the office and opened fire in which the dealer's employee was injured," SP (Noida) Vineet Jaiswal said.

Two pistols were seized from them and they have been hospitalised for treatment, he also said.

Noida gets its first 'pink toilet', 10 more to come up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida on Thursday got its first 'pink toilet' dedicated to women with facilities for sanitary napkins and baby

The toilet, located in the Sector 50 market, was inaugurated by Noida Authority Chairman Alok Tandon and CEO Ritu Maheshwari.

"This 'pink toilet' has essentially been made keeping in mind the needs of women and girls. It will remain open

from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and can be used absolutely free of cost," Ms. Maheshwari

"There is a vending machine for sanitary napkins in the toilet and it also has a proper disposal system. More such toilets will come up in the city soon and their location is being surveyed. Ten more are expected to come up within the next two months," she added. Ms. Maheshwari had ordered the construction of such toilets.

THE HINDU DELHI FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 2019

DELHI CTimings

FRIDAY, AUG. 02 RISE 05:43 SET 19:12 RISE 06:45 SET 20:26 SATURDAY, AUG. 03

RISE 05:44 SET 19:11 RISE 07:55 SET 21:11

SUNDAY, AUG. 04 RISE 05:44 SET 19:10 RISE 09:02 SET 21:52

Delhi Weather Delhi City

Delhi Palam Todav 32°C Marginally day temperature will decrease. Humid conditions will increase

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 30°C A comfortable and humid weather will continue. Few spells of rain or thundershower

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THEMOHINDU

Samajwadi Party workers take to the streets in Rampur

Show of solidarity with party leader Azam Khan after an appeal by Akhilesh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

In a show of solidarity for embattled senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan, hundreds of party members took to the streets in Rampur on Thursday. They were responding to a call given by party president Akhilesh Yadav. He had appealed to the party cadre to support Mr. Khan and his MLA son Abdullah Azam in what he described as a "witch-hunt" by Adityanath Yogi government.

District borders sealed

The district administration responded by sealing the borders of the district. Mr. Abdullah and around 200 supporters were detained the second time in two days for the legislator - for obstructing the work of officials on duty. "Section 144 was in place because of Kanwar Yatra and the upcoming Bakri Id. Those who tried to break the law were arrested," said A.K. Singh, District Magistrate, Rampur,

While Mr. Yadav termed the police action as "unde-



Police detain SP leader Dharmendra Yadav and his supporters after they tried to enter Rampur on Thursday. •PTI

mocratic", Mr. Abdullah criticised the district administration for being selective in using Section 144. "When the BJP people burnt the effigy of my father, the administration didn't take any action," he said.

On the charge of the administration targeting the Rampur MP because of political reasons, Mr. Singh said he was being investigated because of the cases filed against him. "Action will be taken only on the basis of

Twenty eight FIRs have been filed against Mr. Khan with charges of grabbing the land of farmers and madrasas for Mohammad Ali Jauhar University. The police have also charged him for stealing books and rare manuscripts from Aaliya Madra-

Leaders detained

The SP top brass is seeing the action as politically motivated. On Thursday, Dr S.T. Hasan, party MP from the neighbouring Moradabad

place because of Kanwar Yatra and the upcoming Id. Those who tried to break the law were arrested

A.K. SINGH District Magistrate Rampur

and senior leader Dharmendra Yadav also tried to enter Rampur but were detained by the police. Masood Hasan, student leader and the Moradabad MP's son who was leading a bunch of protesters, described the police action as "unconstitutional". "Peaceful protest is our democratic right. The BJP government is trying to divert attention from Unnao case where its own partyman is involved in a heinous crime. The land issue is already in court and will be resolved in due course. As for books, our sources say the police had planted them in the university," he alleged.

By evening, the police allowed the leaders to go home and the protesters were waiting for further orders from the leadership.

CBI closure report 'bad in law': Punjab AG

'State had withdrawn cases from it'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH Terming the Central Bureau of Investigation's closure report in the 2015 Bargari sacrilege case "bad in law", Punjab Advocate General Atul Nanda on Thursday said the national agency had no jurisdiction in the matter after the State government withdrew the cases from it last year.

"The CBI lost all authority and jurisdiction to continue with any investigation in the cases, much less to file a closure report, after the State government issued a formal notification to withdraw the cases from the agency in September 2018," said Mr. Nanda. He said that instead of filing the closure report, the correct legal course for the CBI would have been to inform the court that it was no longer charged with the investiga-

The CBI had on July 4 filed a closure report in the three Bargari sacrilege cases of 2015 in the special CBI

court in Mohali. Mr. Nanda also expressed surprise at the CBI's stand that the State of Punjab was

a stranger to the events, and

Instead of filing the closure report, the **CBI should have** informed the court that it was no longer charged with the probe

Punjab Advocate General

thus not entitled to a copy of the closure report. "This stand was absurd, considering that the agency itself had, in its closure report, cited the 'reports' and 'inputs' of the Punjab police," he added.

'Dubious role'

Meanwhile, Punjab Ekta Party president Sukhpal Singh Khaira accused the Chief Minister of playing a "dubious role" in the cases of sacrilege and asking the CBI to reopen the cases.

"The Chief Minister failed to implement the resolution passed by the Vidhan Sabha to take back the cases from the CBI. On one hand, he advocated that the cases be probed by the SIT of Punjab police, while on the other he is asking the CBI to reopen the cases. This raises serious questions about his intentions," said Mr. Khaira.

Refrain from offering namaz on roads, says Aligarh mufti

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ALIGARH (U.P.)

The chief mufti of Aligarh urged Muslims on Thursday to refrain from offering namaz on the streets, making a bid to defuse the controversy over the district administration's recent ban on religious ceremonies on roads.

Mohammad Khalid Hameed said the place for performing Friday prayers was inside a mosque.

"If there is a spill over, the devout should not perform namaz on the streets and cause inconvenience to others," he told reporters. "Instead, they could offer their prayers on rooftops of neighbouring buildings wherever convenient."

The Aligarh administration had imposed a blanket ban on holding any religious function on the roads in the U.P. district without prior permission.

The authorities has taken the step as a precautionary measure to prevent any disturbance after some Hindutva groups had last week planned the recital of 'Hanuman Chalisa' every Tuesday.

Day of deluge



Vehicles wade through a flooded Lal Chowk after heavy rain in Srinagar on Thursday. • NISSAR AHMAD

BJP MLAs walk out of Commonwealth meet

Professor's remarks during valedictory session upset Opposition lawmakers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Angered by the analysis of

position Gulab Chand Kataria and other BJP legislators took exception to the remarks of former professor of Political Science at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Zoya Hasan, during the seminar's valedictory session. BJP MLA Rajendra Rathore disrupted Prof. Hasan's address and accused her of making an "ideological attack" on the ruling party at the Centre.

The seminar, co-organised by CPA and Lokniti-CSDS, was devoted to the theme "Changing nature of parliamentary democracy in India". Prof. Hasan, invited as a keynote speaker, said the campaign for the Lok Sabha election had witnessed the "spread of disinformation" on social media and promotion of a "personality cult" assiduously built over the last five years.

'One-sided remarks'

When Prof. Hasan ascribed the BIP's landslide victory to the creation of a majority vote bank and Hindu nationalism that could not be successfully challenged by the Opposition parties, the BJP MLAs got agitated and stood up, accusing the noted political scientist of making onesided remarks.

Assembly Speaker C.P. Joshi defended Prof. Hasan's right to address the gathering. When the BJP legislators did not relent, Mr. Joshi said those who were not willing to listen were free to leave the House.

The BJP MLAs boycotted the seminar and staged a walkout.

Triple talaq: FIR against husband

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA HAZARIBAGH (JHARKHAND)

Buoyed by passing of the triple talaq Bill by Parliament, a Muslim woman on Thursday filed an FIR against her husband, who divorced her by saying talaq thrice in Hazaribagh district last month.

Inspector-cum-officerin-charge of Bishnugarh police station Ganesh Kumar Singh said that Subeda Khatoon, mother of three children, filed an FIR against her husband Dildaraj Ansari of Nawada locality accusing him of giving her talaq in July last by recklessly uttering the

She complained that he allegedly threw her out of the house after four years of marriage and regularly assaulted her.

She also charged her husband with beating her regularly for dowry.

The woman told the police that she gathered courage after the triple talaq Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on July 30 and approached them.

the 2019 Lok Sabha election results as the victory of communal and majoritarian politics, BJP MLAs staged a walkout from a seminar of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in the Raiasthan Assembly here on Thursday. Former President Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the seminar earlier in

CPA-Rajasthan vice-president and Leader of the Op-

MP Pragya Thakur

Petition challenges her election

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA JABALPUR (M.P.)

Court on Thursday issued a notice to BJP Bhopal MP Pragya Singh Thakur on a petition challenging her election to the Lok Sabha, the petitioner's lawyer said.

The petition seeks to set aside her election on the grounds that she allegedly adopted "corrupt practices" and whipped up communal passions during the campaign. Rakesh Dixit, a journalist, has filed the petition in his capacity as a voter registered in Bhopal.

Advocate Arvind Shrivastava, his lawyer, said Justice

Vishal Dhagat served the notice to Ms. Thakur on Thursday and sought response within four weeks. During the Lok Sabha

'False statements'

She also made false statements against her rival and Congress candidate Digvijaya Singh which violated Section 123 (4) (making false and defamatory statements about another candidate) of

The Madhya Pradesh High

poll campaign, Ms. Thakur violated Section 123 (3) (seeking votes on the basis of religion) of the Representation of the People Act, the petition claimed.

the Act, the lawyer added.

AIKMS plans protest from August 9

STAFF REPORTER

The All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha has planned a two-week-long nationwide protest on August 9 against the alleged drive of the ruling class to evict the poor from their livelihood and habitat.

BJP leader's remark on triple talaq victims sparks row in Odisha House

What is wrong in quoting survey reports in Assembly, asks Bishnu Charan Sethi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Assembly witnessed pandemonium on Thursday after Bishnu Charan Sethi, deputy leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, stoked a controversy when he said that triple talaq victims were being forced into prostitution.

The BJP MLA was replying to the Congress members who had on Wednesday criticised the BJP-led government at the Centre for pushing through the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill in Parliament.

Mr. Sethi claimed that some political parties had been opposing the Bill with an eye on minority votes. Those opposing it should keep in mind that the legislation was passed to protect Bill has nothing to do with religion and is aimed at eradicating a social

BISHNII CHARAN SETH Deputy leader of the BJP

the interests of women, he said, while adding that he had only quoted findings of some survey reports.

"What is wrong in quoting survey reports in the House? I have not made any adverse remark against any community, but quoted survey reports that say Muslim women dominate the red light areas in Mumbai and Kolkata," Mr. Sethi said

The practice of "triple talaq" was abolished in 38 countries including Pakistan and Bangladesh, the BJP leader maintained.

"The Bill has nothing to do with religion and is aimed at eradicating a social evil. Now, one cannot divorce his wife just by uttering 'talaq-talaqtalaq' in an inebriated state or via a mobile phone message," he added

BJD protests

Mr. Sethi's statement soon evoked strong opposition from members of both opposition Congress and ruling BJD members. The Congress MLAs rushed to the well of the House to disrupt the proceedings, while some BJD members protested by standing on their seats.

Senior Congress MLA Narasingha Mishra countered Mr. Sethi by saying that the BJP leader should not make statements against a particular community that would incite communal tension.

Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro had to adjourn the proceedings after he failed to restore normalcy in the House. Similar scenes were created by Congress MLAs in the post-lunch session, forcing adjournments.

The Speaker had to adjourn the House five times and finally for the day after transacting some normal business amid uproarious scenes.

Meanwhile, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjan Patnaik demanded that Mr. Sethi apologise for making derogatory statements about Muslim women. The party will protest if Mr. Sethi did not apologise, Mr. Patnaik said at a press conference.

(With PTI inputs)

Kaziranga tigers: spotlight on official-poacher nexus

Report suggests some staff may be 'involved in poaching'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT **GUWAHATI**

An evaluation report on India's tiger reserves has put the spotlight on an alleged nexus between some officials of Kaziranga National Park and poachers.

Kaziranga, a World Heritage Site designated by UNES-CO, is more popular as the world's best address for the one-horned rhino. It is also been a major tiger reserve covering an area of 1,080 sq km.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier this week released the management effectiveness evaluation reports for tiger reserves across the country, including Kaziranga.

The report says that some staff of Kaziranga Tiger Reserve may sometimes get involved in poaching by helping the poachers. To drive home the point, the report cites the poaching of three rhinos in as many days in November 2017 close to the Tunikati anti-poaching camp under the Burapahar Range.

Anti-poaching camps

'When there are 178 antipoaching camps in a 911-sqkm area, each camp has to protect 5 sq km. Given the resources at the command of the personnel, it should not be difficult to guard the area effectively. Such poaching close to the camps leads to the suspicion of the involvement of officials," it says.

The report also notes Kaziranga's management weakness in coordinating with forest officials of Karbi Anglong, which runs along the southern boundary of the tiger reserve. This is because the forest officials of Karbi Anglong, an autonomous tribal council, are not answerable to the heads of Assam's Forest Department.

The hills of Karbi Anglong not only provide shelter to the animals of Kaziranga during high floods but also cover for poachers, the report said.

Railway line

Assam Forest Minister Parimal Suklabaidya had informed the 126-member State Assembly that an expert committee had been formed to study the proposal for laying a second track through Deepor Beel, a wetland on the western edge of Guwahati that was listed in 2002 as a Ramsar Site.

"The panel will submit its report to the National Green Tribunal, which will decide on whether or not to go ahead with the project," Mr. Suklabaidya said.

Delhi HC grants protection to Mukul Roy

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday granted protection to BJP leader Mukul Roy from coercive action for 10 days to enable him to move a trial court in Kolkata for anticipatory bail in connection with a cash recovery case

Justice A.K. Chawla also

asked Mr. Roy to join the investigation and to be available for questioning on Friday.

The BIP leader had challenged the notices issued to him by the Kolkata police to appear before it for questioning in the case. Mr. Roy had claimed that the notices were issued to him on a West Bengal address when he was

actually residing in Delhi. The claim was opposed by the police.

The case pertains to the recovery of ₹19 lakh from a person in Burrabazar area of Kolkata on July 31, 2018, leading to his arrest along with a few others. Mr. Roy's phone number allegedly figured in one of the arrested persons' call list.

Man arrested for Cuttack killings

CORRESPONDENT CUTTACK

The Cuttack city police on Thursday arrested Narayan Sahu, a 35-year-old mentally disturbed youth of Nayagarh district, implicating him in two of the three murder cases that were reported here within 24 hours last week.

DCP Akhileshvar Singh said Sahu, who was picked up from his Nayagarh house on Monday, has confessed to his involvement in the killing of two homeless persons at Cuttack's OMP square on July 22 and July 23.

"The police will take him in remand for further questioning and establish his involvement in the third murder in which another homeless person was killed,"

Mr. Singh said.

Refuting the claims made by his family and acquaintancesthat Sahu was in Nayagarh from July 22 evening till the time he was picked up by the Cuttack city police on July 29 morning, the DCP said the arrest was made on the basis of confession statements made by the accused and circumstantial evidence.

'BJP leaders in touch with Congress'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Vijay Wadettiwar claimed on Thursday that some disgruntled senior leaders of the ruling BJP are in touch with the Congress. Four MLAs - three from the NCP and one from the Congress – joined the BJP on Wednesday.

"The BJP has started hunting and trapping senior opposition leaders. But many BJP and Shiv Sena leaders are unhappy. The BJP had once called the NCP a party of "Alibaba and 40 thieves", but now the BJP is welcoming senior NCP leaders into its fold," he told reporters. He said, "A section of unhappy BJP leaders is waiting for a chance and is in touch with the Congress.."

Car falls into river in Pune: 1 safe, 2 missing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Two people were feared drowned in the swollen Indrayani river after the car they were travelling in fell into the river from a bridge near near Takave village, 50 km from here, around 1 p.m. on Thursday, the police said. The third person in the car, Akshay Dhage,

managed to swim to safety. An official from the Wadgaon Maval police said the NDRF, police and a local group are searching for the other two, Sanket Aswale and Akshay Jagtap.

'Fadnavis is our CM candidate'

Rajnath Singh flags off Mahajanadesh Yatra; says BJP-Sena will win 250 seats

SHARAD VYAS AMRAVATI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) began its campaign for the coming Assembly elections with the Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh declaring on Thursday that Devendra Fadnavis was the chief ministerial candidate for the polls to be contested iointly with Shiv Sena.

Mr. Singh was flagging of the first phase of the onemonth-long Mahajanadesh Yatra at Mozari in Amarvati. Mr. Fadnavis will travel approximately 4,384 km covering 32 districts in the two phases of the yatra. Mr. Singh declared that the BJP-Sena alliance would win 250 seats under the leadership of Mr. Fadnavis.

"Somebody was telling me that our target for Maharastra is 220. But we believe if both parties come together we can win at least 250 seats. The workers should go from doorto-door to tell voters that Devendra Fadnavis will be chief ministerial candidate," Mr. Singh said while listing out the achievements by the government in the last five The yatra will cover 668

km in Konkan, 812 km in western Maharashtra, 1,232 km in Vidarbha, and 633 km and 1,069 km in north Maharastra and Marathwada respectively. Addressing party workers and the people, who had to wait for over four hours for the leaders to arrive, Mr. Singh fully endorsed the leadership of Mr. Fadnavis, and said, "If someone asks me how has Maharashtra Chief Minister performed past five years, I would say Devendra Fadnavis has done wonders for the State. Ear-



Yatra time: Union Defence Minister Rainath Singh and Chief Minister Devendra Fadanyis at the flagging off of the Mahajanadesh Yatra in Amarvati on Thursday. •s Sudershan



Rajnath Singh with Devendra Fadnavis paying tributes to Rashtra Sant Tukdoji Maharaj before launching the Mahajanadesh Yatra. • PTI

lier, many people had doubts if he would be a responsible administrator at a young age but Mr. Fadnavis has shown in five years has won the trust of every person."

He said steps taken by the State have reduced drought and farm suicides. "I do not want to claim that farmers' suicide is fully eliminated, but the work by the government in the next five years, if voted back to power, will

bring these numbers to zero in this State. Farm income too will double by 2022," the Union minister said.

Earlier, listing out the achievements of his government, Mr. Fadnavis asked people to vote him and his back to power, with a majority. "My government has made fighting drought a priority. If you want me to continue this battle and make the State free of drought and water scarcity

through programmes such as Jal Yukta Shivar, do vote me back to power. Give me a thumping mandate," he said.

Mr Fadnavis said their work has proved to be a magnet for others to join, even thoughthe party is not trying to woo anyone. "The BJP has never chased anyone. We will take in those leaders who are capable and put a 'housful' board for the rest," he said while referring to exodus of Opposition MLAs to the BJP ranks over the past few weeks.

The Chief Minister said he was launching the yatra to connect with the people and let them know of his government's achievements. "We have done in three years what the previous governments could not do in 15 years. Several projects which were stuck were cleared, and I challenge anyone for an open debate on the pace of the works done by us," he

Youth Congress starts campaign to 'wake up Maharashtra'

Will engage with five crore youngsters for a youth manifesto

The State unit of the Youth Congress on Thursday launched its 'Wake-Up Maharashtra: Today for Tomorrow' campaign in Mumbai.

"The Maharashtra Youth Congress has decided to come out with a manifesto especially aimed at the youth by engaging with them and listening to their concerns and inputs through this campaign. We will be engaging with four to five crore youngsters in the 18 to 25 years age group from across all tehsils and dissaid Satyajeet Tambe-Patil, president of the Maharashtra Youth



Satyajeet Tambe-Patil, president of Maharashtra Youth Congress.

He said the youth would be involved in discussions, meetings, seminars, live dialogues, and other programs, in both online and offline formats so that their views could be heard and included in the Congress manifesto to

be released ahead of the Assembly elections.

The Youth Congress campaign is likely to add to the charged political scene in the State with almost all leading parties – Shiv Sena, Bharatiya Janata Party and Nationalist Congress Party launching their peoples contact programmes.

"India is a country of youth and the government had promised to provide 2 crore jobs every year. This did not happen even as the unemployment rate has reached a peak. We need to tell the youngsters that it is only the Congress which can deliver on jobs and attain economic growth," said Mr.

Maratha Kranti Morcha warns of State-wide protest on Aug. 9

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Maratha Kranti Morcha (MKM) has warned of a State-wide protest on August 9 if the government failed to fulfil the community's various demands.

A delegation of the MKM submitted a memorandum to the divisional commissioner here on Wednesday evening, drawing the government's attention to their demands.

The MKM said the government should pay ₹10 lakh compensation to family members of "42 people, who laid down their lives" during the protests seeking reservation for Marathas. It demanded a govern-

ment job to one family member of each of the 42 deceased. It also said that although

the government had decided to withdraw cases lodged against 13,700 Maratha protesters, the decision is yet to be implemented. In the memorandum, the

MKM also complained that nationalised banks were not cooperating in disbursal of loans to the community.

The organisation said that although the State government had promised to make hostels available for the Maratha community students in every district, it was yet to act on it.

"If the government does not take a decision on these demands by August 8, then members of the community will hold an agitation on August 9," Rajendra Datey Patil of the MKM said.

Marathas, a politically influential community that constitutes around 30% of population, had launched protests to seek 16% reservation.

The community had earlier taken out silent marches across the State to highlight their demands, prominent among them being that of reservation.

Gadkari suffers another bout of dizziness at Solapur function

Had to sit down during national anthem

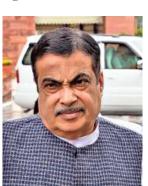
SHOUMOIIT BANERIEE

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways and senior BJP leader Nitin Gadkari on Thursday suffered yet another bout of dizziness at a public function in Solapur district.

Mr. Gadkari was the guest of honour on the occasion of the foundation day of the Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Solapur University.

The Minister, who is a diabetic frequently prone to such spells, experienced dizziness towards the end of the hour-long programme as he stood up to sing the national anthem along with others on the dais, which included Maharashtra Cooperation Minister Subhash Deshmukh.

Gadkari, Mr. who slumped in his chair, attempted to stand up again till the completion of the anthem. Following its conclusion, he remained seated in



Nitin Gadkari suffers from Type-2 diabetes.

his chair for some time, being tended with medicines and observed by an anxious Mr. Deshmukh as well as Dr. Mrunalini Fadnavis, Vice-Chancellor of Solapur University, along with doctors and members of the Minister's security detail.

According to reports, the Minister experienced the fainting spell following a sudden dip in his sugar level. His condition is stable now.

However, he was com-

pelled to cancel further engagements for the day following the advice of his

Mr. Deshmukh said that Mr. Gadkari had headed back to Nagpur after resting or a while in Solapur city.

In December last, Mr. Gadkari experienced a similar bout of dizziness at a function in Rahuri, Ahmednagar district. He fainted and remained slumped on his chair towards the end of the convocation ceremony of the Rahuri Krishi Vidhyapeeth following a sudden

dip in his sugar level. Mr. Gadkari, who suffers from diabetic nephropathy, was forced to undergo a gastric bypass surgery in Mumbai in 2011 to combat his weight problem.

The BJP leader suffers from Type-2 diabetes, which makes an individual highly susceptible to heart diseases and nerve and kidney dam-

Using EVMs plank, Raj Thackeray aims to unite regional players

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray's meeting with the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee seeking her participation in the opposition march against Electronic Voting Machines on August 9, is also seen as an attempt to check whether a front of regional leaders could be set up to take on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), according to senior MNS leader.

Mr. Thackeray was in Kolkata for two days and invited Ms. Banerjee to the anti-EVM protest. He has already raised a demand with the Chief Election Commissioner of India to conduct the Assembly polls in the State on ballot paper.

Mr. Thackeray's visit to Kolkata, at a time when he is struggling to make space for himself at the State level is also seen as an attempt to unite



Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata. • PTI

all regional leaders apprehending being bulldozed by the BJP, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

"This meeting was not about setting up a front of regional leaders but solely about the issue of EVMs and how these machines are turning out to be a threat to the democratic process," said Anil Shidore, party leader who accompanied Mr. Thack-

eray to Kolkata. Mr. Shidore however accepted that the question of setting up a front of regional leaders was posed by reporters to the MNS chief during his visit to which he replied that he wanted to concentrate on one issue at a time. "He did not deny anything. But it must be taken into account that no alliance or a front formed for the sake of elections or votes survives for long, " he said.



of entities of IMA Group

The High Court of Karnataka on Thursday ordered that the proposed forensic audit of I Monetary Advisory (IMA) Pvt. Ltd. should also include the entities connected to it, and their partners. This will help the competent authority in an efficient and transparent discharge of the obligations mandated under the Karnataka Protection of Interest of Depositors (KPID) in Financial Establishments (KIPD) Act, 2004.

Godavari inflow crosses 7 lakh cusecs

The inflow in the Godavari river between Polavaram and Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dowleswaram crossed the 7 lakh lakh cusec mark early on Thursday. Over the day, the inflows falling to 7.5 lakh cusecs at noon and further to 7.38 lakh cusecs by evening. As many as 19 habitations in Polavaram mandal and three in Yelarupadu mandal have been identified for evacuation.

'Order on power-water connections withdrawn'

The Kerala government on Thursday informed the Kerala High Court that it has already withdrawn its earlier order directing to provide electricity and water connections to new commercial and residential buildings in Munnar without insisting on no objection certificate from Revenue authorities. The submission was made when a contempt petition filed by Paristhiti Samrakshana Samithi of Thodupuzha against the government for issuing an order in violation of the High Court's earlier directive came

up for hearing.

Green patch



Respite, at last: An aerial view of the agricultural fields at Araku in Andhra Pradesh. The monsoon has eluded the Visakhapatnam district delaying agriculture activity. Finally, the region has been getting some rainfall. • K.R. DEEPAK

A.P. govt. asks Navayuga to exit Polavaram project

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Andhra Pradesh Water Resources Department on Thursday served termination notice for pre-closure of head works of the Polavaram Project worth ₹2,914.66 crore, which was being implemented by M/s. Navayuga Engineering Company Limited (NECL). The project was awarded to Navayuga by the Telugu Desam Party government.

Irrigation experts say that this would lead to time and cost overruns. NECL had agreed to undertake the work at the same price level, that is 14% less, as the origi-



A view of the Polavaram project site in A.P. • FILE РНОТО

nal EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) contractor M/s Transstroy had expressed inability to continue at the old price level, towards the end of 2017. Polavaram Project Chief

Engineer B. Sudhakara Babu said the decision was taken based on the findings of the State-appointed Subbaraya Sarma Expert Committee to look into irregularities in the execution of the project.

Siddhartha's death: police to quiz CFO

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Mangaluru police would question the Chief Finance Officer of Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd. (CDEL) and a few other financial advisers to know the monetary health of the company and the other aspects related to the unnatural death of the compafounder Siddhartha, said Police Commissioner Sandeep Patil here on Thursday.

Notices have been issued to the Chief Finance Officer and other advisers, who were abroad, to appear before the investigating officer.

Karnataka Cabinet likely after August 6

Yediyurappa is yet to visit Delhi to consult party leaders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Induction of Ministers into Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa's Cabinet is likely to take place only after Au-

While it was speculated that Mr. Yediyurappa would induct Ministers this week after consulting the BJP central leadership, he is yet to travel to Delhi. Mr. Yediyurappa, who took oath as Chief Minister on July 26, has completed a week, running the government as a one-man Ministry. While there is no clarity among State leaders on the Ministerial induction, sources close to Mr. Yediyurappa say it will take some shape next week.

He is likely to induct Ministers in phases. Karnataka can have a maximum Ministerial size of 34 including the Chief Minister.

A section of the party leaders feel that the delay could also be due to the Supreme Court looking into the petitions by rebel MLAs from the Congress and the Janata Dal (S), who have challenged their disqualification.

The party is said to be waiting for the Supreme Court ruling, before deciding on accommodating them or their family members.

Sources close to Mr. Yediyurappa said the party will not wait indefinitely and he would go ahead with inclusion of at least its own members by next week.

Meanwhile, the BJP central leadership, which has sent a strong signal that it would not allow unilateral decisions by rejecting the candidature of Mr. Yediyurappa's confidant K.G. Bopaiah for the Speaker's post, appears to have made the Chief Minister more cautious.



Since July 26, when B.S. Yediyurappa took the oath of office, it has been a one-man Ministry in Karnataka. • FILE РНОТО

More disqualified MLAs move Supreme Court

They seek to quash Speaker's order

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

Several more disqualified legislators Karnataka moved the Supreme Court on Thursday against their ouster from the House under the anti-defection law.

The MLAs, including Pratapgouda Patil and A.H. Vishwanath, have approached the Supreme Court jointly and separately within a few days of Ramesh Jarkhiholi and Mahesh Kumathalli did so.

Their separate petitions have arraigned the Speaker, the State of Karnataka, Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah and State Congress president Dinesh Gundurao, former Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy as respondents. The petitions urged the court to set aside the Speaker's decision to disqualify them from the Karnataka Legislative As-

fundamental right under

Article 19 to carry on any trade, business and profession. Their right to resign from the post of MLA and carry on any vocation of their choice including public service cannot be denied by the Respondent Speaker by a completely illegal and unconstitutional

The action of the Speaker is thus in violation of the fundamental rights of the Petitioners guaranteed under Articles 19 and 21," they argued. They have also challenged the Speaker's conclusion that their resignations were neither voluntary nor genuine. The legislators asked the court to call for records of proceedings pertaining to their resignation and disqualification.

They argued that the disqualification order under the Tenth Schedule was not in consonance with the Rules 6 and 7 of "The petitioners have a the Karnataka Rules of

⁺ HC seeks report on AIDS 'outbreak' in Rajahmundry jail

Matter comes to light as prisoner seeks bail for treatment

VIJAYAWADA

A prisoner's petition in the Andhra Pradesh High Court seeking bail for AIDS treatment has led to a shocking revelation that 27 inmates of Rajamahendravaram Central Prison were afflicted with the condition.

The HC heard the case on Wednesday and reacted sharply demanding that jail authorities furnish a detailed report on the total number of AIDS patients in the jail and the medical treatment being given to them.

The prisoner, Challa Yedukondalu, a native of Guntur district, was convicted in a life term from February 2

Speaking to The Hindu, jail superintendent S. Rajarao said 19 of the 27 prisoners identified as AIDS patients were already infected by the virus when they came to serve their terms.

Pre-existing condition

Mr. Rajarao said the remaining eight of them were referred to the local Government General Hospital for medical check-ups after they showed signs of weakness. A series of tests confirmed they were suffering from

He said the eight of them report on Friday.

Thiruvananthapuram, said

Thangal was an enthusiast

of the timepieces that he

of the winding clocks in his

collection were more than

"It was a wonderful

hobby that he cherished

privately," said Mr.

80 years old.

a murder case and is serving had admitted that their sexual behaviour was responsible for their condition. "The prison records show that Yedukondalu was hit by the AIDS-causing virus in 2006,"

> he added. Mr. Rajarao ruled out the possibility of AIDS affliction through blood transfusion or homosexual acts in the

> "We take all precautions," he said, adding that the affected patients were given a doctor-prescribed diet of 100 gm mutton, 250 ml milk, a boiled egg and multi-vitamin tablets daily.

The jail officials have been asked to submit a detailed

more autopsy of Linganna

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

State government to conamination of P. Linganna, who died in an alleged exchange of fire with the pol-Bhadadri-Kothagudem district on Wednesday.

man filed a public interest petition seeking a direction to the government to conduct autopsy again and charged it was a 'fake encounter'.

the court by Monday.

Bandipur adds value worth ₹6,405 cr. ⁺

For every rupee spent on the reserve in Karnataka, the rate of return is 700%

MOHIT M. RAO

If monetary values could be assigned to tiger reserves, then the Bandipur Tiger Reserve would record a staggering ₹6,405.7 crore annually, says an economic evaluation of tiger reserves released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority. For every rupee spent on the reserve, the rate of return through various tangible and non-tangible benefits is an incredible 700%.

The study, authored by the Centre for Ecological Services Management at the Indian Institute of Forest Management, estimates the economic valuation of Bandipur and nine other tiger reserves in the country. The objective, states the report, is to enhance tiger conservation by highlighting the holistic economic benefits of protected areas.

Researchers used an array of methods to determine the economic, scientific, educational, cultural and recreational services of tiger parks. For Bandipur, the report notes that every rupee spent on the management of the reserve sees the area generate intangible and tangible benefits amounting to nearly ₹716.3 crore.

The park, it says, generates "flow" benefits of ₹6,405.7 crore annually translating to around ₹4.41 lakh worth of services per hectare protected. For instance, the cost saved by the State for conservation, protection and provisioning of water was pegged at ₹2,066.95 crore per year, climate regulation at ₹1,443.21 crore, and genepool protection of ₹1,263.74 crore annually.

Other benefits include prevention of soil loss, biological control of disease, encouragement to pollination and others.

of timber, sequestered carbon and genepool protecMEE gradings for tiger reserves over the years

Reserve	2006	2010	2014	2018
Bandipur	68.11	75	78.23	87.50
Kali	-	76.67	70.16	84.38
Nagarahole	-	63.33	79.09	81.25
BRT	-	-	70.97	74.22
Bhadra	63.24	75	66.13	75
Overall Karnataka		72.50	72.90	80.47

Tiger reserves in Karnataka have overall rating of 80.47%

Report shows a 10% increase from the 2014 evaluation

R. KRISHNA KUMAR MOHIT M. RAO MYSURU/BENGALURU

Karnataka's increase in tiger numbers comes on the back of the increase in protection and conservation of its five tiger reserves. The Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) report by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), which ranks tiger reserves on numerous parameters, shows that the five tiger reserves in Karnataka have an overall score of 80.47, which is a 10% increase from the MEE evaluation in 2014, and reflects "better protection

improvements are in Kali and Bhadra tiger reserves, which have effectively reversed the declining grades shown in the 2014

status" of the reserves.

mentions concerns that need to be addressed. For instance, in Bandipur, the NTCA has called for immediate revival of the **Eco-Development** Committees (EDC) so as to increase local community participation in

MEE, when compared with

the 2010 report. For Kali, it

vehicular movement during

notes the restrictions in

night time as one of the

However, the report

reasons for the

improvement.

Of the 112 villages around the reserve, just 22 EDCs are functioning. This has led to poor local participation in conservation.

conservation efforts.

Local authorities have presented a few "immediate actionable points", which include reviving and constituting EDCs and

provision of ₹50,000 as seed money from the Bandipur Tiger Foundation to make them functional and effective.

Locals bear the brunt of human-wildlife conflict and the Forest Department was heavily dependent on their cooperation in conservation.

"The EDCs also help in preventing people from entering the forests, and this reduces humaninducted pressure and disturbance to wildlife habitat," said D. Rajkumar of Wildlife Conservation

Foundation. For instance, the presence of an EDC at Mangala village, which encompasses five smaller villages, has helped in maintaining cordial relations with the staff, he

said. would have cost ₹82.59 crore

tion of species is worth a staggering ₹31,476.15 crore annually in the 1,469.69 sq. km. core and buffer areas of the reserve.

The report estimates that 3.06% of the flow benefits are accrued at the local level,

tional level. In addition, the park con-

tributes nearly 1,121 billion litres of water to the Cauvery worth ₹2,067 crore per year; while the forests prevent soil loss and nutrient loss that

while 16.01% are at the na-

to rectify. At the global level, the reserve's forests store 1.2 crore

tonnes of carbon (worth ₹8,6958 crore), apart from sequestering 3.45 lakh tonnes of carbon annually.



flood receded marginally with

HC orders one

The Telangana High Court on Thursday directed the duct a re-postmortem exice near Nandi hillockin

CLC president G. Lax-

After hearing the arguments, the Bench asked the Gandhi Hospital to carry out the autopsy again and present the report to

Reliving Shihab Thangal's grand passion

The late IUML president had a treasured collection of vintage clocks and watches

ABDUL LATHEEF NAHA MALAPPURAM

Former Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) State president Syed Mohammedali Shihab Thangal had once described himself as a horophile. But before he could show this reporter his collection as a testimony of his passion for clocks and watches, he fell ill and passed away on August 1, 2009.

10th anniversary

On Thursday, the 10th anniversary of Thangal's death, the watchmaker who used to support Thangal's personal hobby by repairing some of his complicated clocks, reached the Kodappanakkal house at Panakkad and overhauled dozens of timepieces that the Muslim leader had treasured.

K. Nasaruddin, the



K. Nasaruddin clean the timepieces. • SAKEER HUSSAIN watchmaker from Nasaruddin.

Thangal's widow Shareefa Aysha Beevi told *The Hindu* that he was an aficionado of collected passionately. Some clocks, watches and pens. "During our travels abroad, he used to buy some curious clocks and pens. At home, he used to look at them closely for a long time,

enjoying their intricacies

Once with his gaze fixed at the needle of a curious chronograph, Thangal told this reporter: "It reminds me of human lives. Whatever we do and however hard we try, our lives move in accordance with God's design.' Ms. Beevi said that Thangal used to give pens

and beauty," she said.

and watches from his collections to people who value them. But, knowing his taste and passion, people used to gift him with more such curios that he treasured. His family continues to treasure the clocks that he cherished. "There's a sentimental value to these

collections," said his little

Mohammedali Shihab and

Shareefa Nargees, who

helped Mr. Nasaruddin

grandchildren

clean them up.

Apart from this, the stock



marriage hall in T.N.

Citing violation of the model code of conduct, election officials sealed a marriage hall where DMK president M.K. Stalin held a meeting with leaders of the Muslim community. The model code is in force as the constituency will go to polls on August 5.

Rakesh Asthana takes charge as NCB DG

IPS officer Rakesh Asthana Thursday took charge as the chief of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), officials said. The 1984-batch Gujarat cadre officer is already serving as the DG of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, PTI

Man beaten to death by villagers in Jharkhand

A man was beaten to death by villagers when he along with three others was allegedly trying to escape after stealing goods and valuables from a house at Chihudia in Dumka district. Bhola Hazra, who died on the spot, was a history sheeter. PTI

ED attaches REI Agro's assets worth ₹481 crore

The ED on Thursday attached assets worth ₹481.04 crore of REI Agro Limited in a bank fraud case. It is alleged that REI Agro and its directors, availed of credit facilities to the tune of ₹3,871.71 crore from 14 banks under a consortium arrangement and diverted funds.

Premises of Malvinder, **Shivinder Singh raided**

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday conducted searches on the premises linked to former Religare promoters, Malvinder Singh and Shivinder Singh, and others in connection with an FIR registered by the Delhi police's EOW. The police case alleges misappropriation of ₹740 crore.

4 persons die in wall collapse, life hit in flooded Vadodara

Nearly 5,000 people were shifted by NDRF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AHMEDABAD

Incessant rainfall has caused the death of four people in a wall collapse in Vadodara, besides causing floods and affecting life in the city.

Nearly 5,000 people from over two dozen low-lying areas were shifted by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). Most of the were completely roads inundated.

The government has deployed nine teams of the NDRF, besides the Army and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) to evacuate people from areas along the Vishwamitri river that is flowing to the danger level

According to the State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC), a total of five



Helping hand: Personnel of the National Disaster Response Force rescuing an elderly man in Vadodara on Thursday. Large parts of Gujarat have been flooded due to incessant rain. • PTI

NDRF and four SDRF teams operations in addition to two columns of the Army and as many companies of the State Reserve Police (SRP).

Additionally, district pol-

mm on Wednesday.

The district authorities ordered the closure of all schools and colleges on Friday. The operations at the city airport were shut on

ice and teams of fire brigade have been involved in rescue of Vadodara and Surat Municipal Corporations have

been deployed for a major

rescue operation in the city

which had seen an extreme-

ly heavy downpour of 499

Normal rains likely in August, September

IMD expects 100% of LPA rainfall across the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The monsoon is expected to be normal in August and September, the India Meteorological Department said on Thursday in its forecast for the second half of the four-month rainfall season.

Quantitatively, the rainfall across the country as a whole during the two-month period is likely to be 100% of the Long Period Average (LPA) with a model error of plus or minus 8%, the IMD

The rainfall in August is

Status **check** Eleven States had a deficient rainfall this monsoon till Thursday. Map rainfall from Long Period Average in DEFICIENT Sikkim was the

only State which

recorded 'excess'

rainfall in the period

while Manipur was

the only State which

likely to be 99% of the LPA with an error margin of plus or minus 9%, it said.

The LPA of the rainfall over the country as a whole for the second half of the mon-

LARGE EXCESS

soon season (August to September) based on the 1961-2010 period is 42.83 cm.

"The probabilistic forecast suggests that the rainfall across the country during the second half of the Southwest Monsoon season is most likely to be normal (94-106% of LPA) with a probability of 45%," the IMD said.

In April, the IMD had made the forecast of a normal monsoon.

Mritunjay Mohapatra, Director General of IMD, said the next two weeks are expected to bring good rainfall due to formation of a low pressure area in the north Bay of Bengal.

The official rainfall season in India starts from June to September.

Culture Ministry comes up with a 100-day agenda

Big screens for *aarti* at 24 spots, 25 science museum vans

DAMINI NATH

Installing big screens and audio systems at two dozen spots where a large number of devotees gather for prayers or aarti, rolling out 25 science museums on wheels to reach out to rural students, and digging rainwater harvesting pits at over 100 major monuments across the country are all on the Union Culture Ministry's 100-day agenda.

As a part of the Narendra Modi government's plan for its first 100 days after returning to power in May, Union Culture and Tourism Minister of State (Independent Charge) Prahlad Singh Patel told The Hindu that the Ministry would be focusing on constructing three pits each at 123 sites, including the 100 monuments covered under the Adarsh Smarak scheme. He added that greening would also be carried out at these sites, with a focus on planting trees that have long lives and won't have to be shifted for any fu-



Devotees at Har ki Pauri on the Ganga in Haridwar.

ture works. Also on the 100day plan was the development of places for aarti in order to facilitate the large number of people who visit daily, Mr. Patel said.

"Right now, there are many places where aarti takes place and a large number of people participate, but it is unplanned. We are in the process of providing some screens, audio systems and software," he said.

A total of 24 spots, including Har ki Pauri in Haridwar and sites in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat among others, would

have large screens and audio systems.

Expanding reach

In order to expand the reach of its science centres, Mr. Patel said the Ministry would deploy 25 mobile vans that will house science museums. So far, the Ministry operates 23 such vans, but they tend to visit State capitals and metropolitan areas only, a Ministry official said.

The 25 new vans would be deployed in the 115 "aspirational districts", as identified by the Centre, the offi-

UGC panel urges review of process to appoint V-Cs

It says quality of research is linked to academic leadership

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

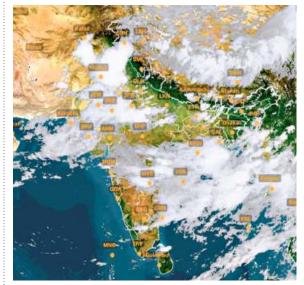
A panel set up by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to promote and improve the quality of research in Indian universities, has called for a review of the way Vice-Chancellors (V-Cs) are appointed. The panel emphasised that the quality of research culture depended good academic

In the last three years, several appointments have come under fire, with some V-Cs being removed because of financial irregularities and lack of qualifications.

"The UGC /MHRD as well as State governments must seriously review the mechanism by which Vice-Chancellors are appointed. Good academic leadership is essential for improving the research culture, including the quality of Ph.D./M.Phil. Degrees," says the report of the committee headed by former Indian Institute of Science director P. Balaram. The report was made public on Wednesday.

The report underlines that "It is also extremely important to ensure that Governing Bodies of the universities [syndicate/executive council etc.] have eminent academics as members."

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS) Forecast for Friday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely over east Raiasthan, west Madhya Pradesh, Guiarat, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, western Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, central Maharashtra and coastal Karnataka

RAIN MAX MIN CITY

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Allahabad	34.7	27.6	Madurai	–	.40.4	26
Bengaluru	30.4	20.5	Mangaluru	–	.31.2	24
Bhopal	21.227.3	23.3	Mumbai	. 13.0	.31.1	25
Bhubaneswar	31.7	26.6	Mysuru	–	.31.7	19
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Chennai	34.2	28.1	Patna	–	34.8	27
Coimbatore	34.5	23.6	Port Blair	. 26.6	27.3	22
Dehradun	33.0	25.2	Puducherry	–	34.7	25
	5.422.2		Pune	6.3	27.5	22
Goa	6.730.8	26.1	Raipur	–	27.2	23
Guwahati	80.633.0	24.4	Ranchi	–	26.4	21
Hubballi	26.0	21.0	Shillong	0.4	24.1	18
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mphal	28.3	22.4	Srinagar	1.0	.23.8	17
Jaipur	33.2	27.2	Thiruvananthapuram	–	.31.5	25
Kochi	3.231.2	25.4	Tiruchi	–	.40.0	28
Kohima	14.626.6	16.4	Vijayawada	7.6	30.6	25
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(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)							
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Pune	. 74	8	.67	25	25		
Visakhapatnam	11	.47	.53	50	.101		

Yesterday

In observation made at 6.00 p.m., Manesar, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 194 indicating an of 194 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution In contrast, Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 15

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI) SO2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues

NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters. CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause

dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death. PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

In West Bengal, a peaceful election is conducted — by sex workers

The polls were held for 45 branch committees spread across the State in a process which began in June



180 elected representatives gathered at a community hall to elect the office-bearers.

Man faces action for

STAFF REPORTER

Two days after a man in Ja-

balpur cancelled an order

on food aggregator Zomato

for being assigned a non-

Hindu delivery executive,

the local police on Thursday

decided to make him sign a

bond stating he would not

post incendiary messages

on social media that were

against secularism and

viding Twitter users on reli-

"His tweets ended up di-

could disturb harmony.

Advt. No. 14-A/IMSc/2019

website: (www.nbhm.dae.gov.in)

cancelling food order

gious lines and could stoke

Therefore, we are taking

preventive measures and

taking him to the SDM court

where he will be asked to

sign a bond and a notice

would be served on him,"

said Amit Singh, Jabalpur

The police had warned

him that if he made such

statements again, he would

be charged under Section

122 and sent to jail for the re-

Date: 26-7-19

maining bond period.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY NATIONAL BOARD FOR HIGHER MATHEMATICS MUMBAI-400001

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PURSUING POST GRADUATE STUDIES

(M.A. / M.Sc. / Integrated Masters)

IN MATHEMATICS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-20

The National Board for Higher Mathematics (NBHM), DAE, invites online

applications upto 25-8-2019 for the grant of scholarships to students pursuing studies leading to Masters Degree in Mathematics.

For full details regarding eligibility criteria, online fee payment,

scholarship amount and selection procedure, please see the NBHM

Written test is scheduled to be held on October 19, 2019 (Saturday).

Superintendent of Police.

disharmony.

communal

Elections in West Bengal are invariably a violent affair. But in this election, the eight contestants sat in a row holding the symbols allotted to them, laughing and joking with each other.

This unique election, held last Wednesday in the city's Salt Lake area, was restricted to the community of sex workers who elected the office-bearers of Durbar Mahila Samanaway Committee (DMSC), the largest sex workers' collective in the country Smarajit Jana, an advisor

of the DMSC who oversaw the elections, said the process started in June this year with elections to its 45 branch committees spread across West Bengal. On Wednesday, as many as 180 elected representatives from the 45 branch committees gathered at a community hall in Salt Lake to elect the officebearers. There were a strict set of guidelines for holding the polls and observers were appointed to ensure that the process was free and fair. On-

selves as "sex workers" could contest and vote.

"We have not been allowed to access our mobile phones. We cannot talk to any of the voters, not even wave or smile to them," said Bishakha Laskar, contesting for the post of the president of DMSC. Three set of ballot papers were printed for the voters to decide the top three office-bearers of the DMSC.

Mamata Mukherjee, an office-bearer at the Chetla branch of DMSC, said she was a first-time voter. "There

with 50,000 members ly those who declared them is not much difference between voting in this election and in the general election. The only difference is that there is no violence or fear here," she said.

Others involved in the process said the elections had been free and fair. Banshi Badan Chattopadhyay, a retired school teacher, functioned as one of three observers in the poll process. "We are checking for false voters and ensuring that everything goes on as per rules," Mr. Chattopadhyay said even as the polling was on.

PUNJAB INSTITUE OF SPORTS (A REGISTERED SOCIETY) **DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS** GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAR

SCO.116-117, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH

(Email-directorsportspunjab2018@gmail.com phone No.+91-172-2606400)

APPOINTMENT AS DIRECTOR (ADMIN)

of sports and in an apex institute is to groom and develop world class sports persons from amongst youths and players from Puniab detail can be seen a www.pispunjab.org. PIS is training around 1600 sports persons at 15 differen locations in Punjab in 13 fields of Sports.

asis, initially for a period of three years as per details given below:

Academic qualification	Graduate
Professional Qualification	Retired IAS or PCS officer or Retd. Senior officer of Govt. not below the rank of a Director in Govt. of Punjab or equivalent having at least 15 years of administrative experience, must be a graduate from any recognized University.
Experience	5 Years experience in Administration, Experience in sports administration will be preferred.
Age	Should not be more than 65 years of age as on date of application. Relaxable upto 5 years in case of deserving candidates.
Salary	Rs. 1.25 lacs per months with increase of 7% per year in deserving case can be negotiated.
Nationality	Indian

and Secy.yh@punjab.gov.in and send hard copies with relevant documents duly attested by an Executive Magistrate to Director Sports Punjab, SCO No. 116-17, sector-34-A, Chandigarh, Sample performa may be downloaded from

For more details on Punjab State Institute of Sports, Please visit www.

DPR PB 5928-D

Punjab state Sports Institute (PIS) is registered society under the Departmen Application are invited for appointment as Director (Admin) in Punjab State

Institute of Sports Head Quarters at Mohali District SAS Nagar on Contractua

Academic qualification	Graduate						
Professional Qualification	Retired IAS or PCS officer or Retd. Senior officer of Govt. not below the rank of a Director in Govt. of Punja or equivalent having at least 15 years of administrative experience, must be a graduate from any recognized University.						
Experience	5 Years experience in Administration, Experience in sports administration will be preferred.						
Age	Should not be more than 65 years of age as on date of application. Relaxable upto 5 years in case of deserving candidates.						
Salary	Rs. 1.25 lacs per months with increase of 7% per year deserving case can be negotiated.						
Nationality	Indian						

our web site www.pbsports.gov.in)

For more details office of PIS can be contacted 0172-2233482

Director Sports Punjab-cum



Gender justice

Poor women are even more disadvantaged as supplicants before powerful men

Tearly seven years after the Nirbhaya tragedy shocked India and the world at large, a 19-yearold, who was allegedly raped in 2017 by a local MLA in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district, is battling for her life. Hooked to a ventilator, the girl's latest trauma began on Sunday. She was travelling by car with two aunts and a lawyer from Unnao to Rae Bareli when a truck with a "blackened number plate" rammed into the vehicle. Whether it is an accident or not is now a subject matter of official investigation, but India has had a history of rogue trucks silencing those questioning the system. Since 2017, it's been a long, difficult road to justice for the family. Two years ago, the girl had gone to Kuldeep Singh Sengar, a four-time BJP legislator from Bangermau, for a job. The teenager accused him of sexually assaulting her, but the family's cry for help went unheard till April 2018, when Sengar was arrested, days after the girl threatened to immolate herself outside Uttar Pradesh (U.P.)Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's residence in Lucknow. In the meantime, her father was arrested in an arms case and died in police custody. Helpless in the face of such brazen show of power, the family wrote to the Chief Justice of India on July 12, alleging grave danger from the accused. Ranjan Gogoi got to know of the letter only on July 30 and expressed displeasure about the delay.

The family did not get any relief from State government agencies, which appear to have been complicit in the cover-up, with the MLA belonging to the ruling party. The BJP has come under pressure from the Opposition to expel Sengar. In the Unnao case, muscle, money power and the right political alignment weighed heavily against the girl. As for crimes against women, U.P. has a high rate, not least because many are reported, unlike in some other States. According to National Crime Records Bureau figures, released in 2016 - the last time data were uploaded - of the 38,947 cases of rape reported, the second highest was from U.P. (4,816). As for all crimes against women, Uttar Pradesh reported 14.5% (49,262 out of 3,38,954 cases) of the total. The Supreme Court has ruled that five cases relating to the issue will be transferred from U.P. to Delhi, and ordered the State government to pay a ₹25 lakh compensation to the family. This may bring some relief, even though justice has been inordinately delayed. Despite the increased focus on women's rights, nothing changes on the ground. Till such crimes continue with impunity and patriarchal mindsets don't change, as a diverse and plural society, India would have failed the girl, and every woman.

Fed's insurance policy

The rate cut is aimed at insuring against global risks to favourable U.S. economic outlook

he U.S. Federal Reserve on Wednesday announced its first reduction in the funds rate since 1 2008, a move that was widely expected. Elaborating on the Federal Open Market Committee's rationale in deciding policy action, Chairman Jerome Powell was emphatic that the aim was to provide a measure of insurance, especially given that the outlook for the U.S. economy remains favourable. The quarter percentage point interest rate cut, he said, was designed to support economic growth by ensuring that confidence was kept intact and "intended to insure against downside risks from weak global growth and trade policy uncertainty." In the space of less than three quarters, the Fed has pivoted from talking of further rate increases, to being on hold, to finally cutting interest rates as a global economic slowdown is exacerbated by trade tensions unleashed by U.S. President Donald Trump's aggressively insular approach to trade ties. The U.S. economy, which expanded by 2.9% in 2018 and posted a 3.1% expansion in the first quarter, slowed to a 2.1% pace in the second quarter, with the ongoing trade war with China blamed for a manufacturing slowdown as well as a decline in business investment. Just last week, the IMF pared its forecast for global growth in 2019 by 0.1 percentage point to 3.2%, warning that "risks to the forecast are mainly to the downside". The IMF cautioned that further trade tensions could dent sentiment and slow investment, a theme that Mr. Powell too referred to, when he said the rate cut was intended "to help offset the effects these factors are currently having on the economy."

The Fed Chairman, however, finds himself in an unenviable situation with the rate reduction satisfying neither the sharply critical President who appointed him in 2018, nor the markets where investors fretted that Mr. Powell had failed to signal the start of a protracted easing cycle. A fair part of the problem appears to be of his own making as the central bank chief muddled his messaging, speaking at one point during the post policy press conference of a "somewhat more accommodative stance", and at another emphasising that the move was not the start of a long series of rate cuts. Central bankers at the best of times have a delicate balancing act to perform to ensure that policies to support growth do not lead to a dilution of focus on price stability. In the Fed's case, Chairman Powell is clearly concerned that with inflation in the U.S. stubbornly refusing to move toward the central bank's 2% objective, there is a risk that persistent global disinflationary pressures could at some point feed into the domestic economy, undermining its efforts to spur wage and price gains. For the RBI, the Fed's move signals that, for now at least, it can stay on its accommodative path in the confidence that U.S. investors seeking rate arbitrage may hit the pause button on plans to head home.

Marking Tipu's legacy to foster historical temper

Developing an understanding of our conflictual pasts, and not retribution, is the way to deal with 'historical wounds'



JANAKI NAIR

n a recent visit to the University of Leicester, I had the opportunity of visiting the newly established memorial to Britain's controversial King Richard III, the last of the Plantagenet Kings, and also the last British King to die in battle in the War of Roses against the Tudors. Richard III (r. 1483-1485) also has the distinction of being the only British King whose remains, found under a parking lot in Leicester close to the Cathedral, were identified by mitochondrial DNA in 2012.

In 2015, he was reburied in the Leicester Cathedral, under a simple yet beautiful gravestone, unadorned except for a coat of arms in pietra dura. The 'rediscovery' of his remains became the basis of a controversy that was finally settled in court, and the city of Leicester has been the beneficiary, raking in money from tourists who wish to discover for themselves the legacy of this controversial King.

Shakespeare's portrait

Why controversial? Richard III's ascent to the throne, after his brother's children were declared illegitimate, has been under a cloud: did he 'disappear' his brother's son? Shakespeare, loyal to his Tudor masters (the victors of the Battle of Bosworth) fostered the portrait of Richard III as a malevolent ruler in his celebrated play of the same name, from the very first scene.

Shakespeare's Richard III is wracked by self-hate and doubt, ("I am determined to prove a villain") and invites the harshest words from others: like "foul defacer of God's handiwork"; "hell's black intelligencer"; "carnal cur"; "bloody dog"; and "bloody wretch". Richard III was not spared the ignominy of being described as a hideously deformed,

"foul bunch-back'd toad" though we now know he only had a 'crooked' spine. But it is what the Leicester Cathedral has done to this legacy that has interested me the most: the display called for a contemporary reconciliation with the conflicting aspects of the memory of this King, emphasising the necessity of commemorating a brave and remarkable soldier, despite many popular memories to the contrary. Richard III is no unblemished hero, and there is no attempt to varnish that legacy.

The previous Karnataka government had introduced a 'Tipu Jayanti', which was scrapped by the recently sworn-in Yediyurappa regime in one of its first actions in power. I wish the previous regime had installed a 'Museum to Our Conflictual Pasts', which would allow all visitors to come to terms with the most controversial figure of Mysore history, Tipu Sultan. Such a museum would have allowed both those who malign his memory and those who celebrate it to learn how to come to terms with historical controversies – and the Indian past is replete with many such examples. Tipu Sultan for long emblematised the valiant struggle of Mysore against the British and, like Richard III, was the only one to die on the battlefield (all others were defeated by, collaborated or made their peace with, the emerging British power).

Over the last few decades in Karnataka, there has been a steady inflation of shrill debates about Tipu's legacy. There are of course those who focus on his undoubted virtues, as the first early modern ruler to put in place a form of etatisme in the absence of a social class which could undertake radical economic change; whose lust for knowledge bequeathed to us a marvellous library of books; whose spectacular military successes stunned the British, and whose technological inventions – particularly the rocket – were pillaged by the West; whose penchant for restless innovation made him try his hand at transformations that would only much later sent day; or to ask why the early



bear fruit (for instance his experiments with silk production and his interest in large scale irrigation). The list is endless

There is equally the memory, particularly in South Canara, Kodagu and Malabar, of Tipu's real and imagined excesses: his zeal for conversion; his massacre of populations he considered hostile; and his introduction of Persian as the state language at the expense of Kannada.

Reading multiple sources

Our 'Museum of Conflictual Pasts' would not stage Tipu's brief and embattled rule (17 years) as something requiring condemnation or celebration, but present it as an opportunity to develop a historical temper, a new sense of the past. It would urge the visitor, and especially the young visitor, to think historically: to read a variety of conflicting sources – including the words of the man himself – from the vantage point of his times. The museum would make the visitor ask why colonial accounts of this indefatigable foe, which necessarily cast him as a tyrant and a villain, enjoy such an enduring influence up to the pre19th century Jain historian, Devachandra, saw Tipu and Haider Ali (his father) as just one moment in a long Mysore past peppered with desecrations, thefts, and destructions - particularly of Jain temples. Visitors could come to understand why Tipu supported some non-Muslim religious people and institutions and not others and why one temple was attacked but another, located 700 metres away, was left alone, as in Kodungallur Kerala. They could equally ask why he commandeered some Muslim communities and not others - the Navayat traders of Bhatkal recalled, in the richly textured kaifiyats collected by Colin Mackenzie and magnificently annotated by M.M. Kalburgi, that they were made to perform Tipu's government work under duress.

Visitors to the museum could ask why the Dewan of Mysore, Purnaiah, when asked by the British in June 1799 about who they should install after Tipu's defeat, replied that the memory of the Wodeyars had all but been forgotten, and then went on to serve the British faithfully as a placeholder for Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. What does the rich symbolism of Tipu's court - his obsessive use of the tiger stripe for instance – and indeed his adoption of Persian as the official language tell us about the quest for legitimacy? Moreover, was the religious zeal of Tipu, the son of a usurper, politically pioneering since his kingship had to be seen as deriving directly from god (hence Khodadadi - or god-given - sarkar)?

Why is it that indisputable facts - such as Tipu's protection of Sringeri Math following the Maratha attack in 1791, and his continued donations to the place - equally serve as testimony to his 'secularism' and as an example of his political chicanery?

Coming to terms with the past

Tipu Sultan, in short, provides us with mind-boggling opportunities to fulfil one of the most urgent tasks of our times: to help people, and young people in particular, to come to terms with India's many conflictual pasts, to teach people that understanding and appreciation, rather than revenge or retribution, are the ways in which we may deal with real and perceived 'historical wounds'.

Karnataka's pasts offer limitless ossibilities for such instruction, and for refashioning the relationship between history and memory. Such a 'Museum of Our Conflictual Pasts' will help us to deal with the inconveniences of the past, and perhaps heal and reconcile, instead of staging afresh the battles of history.

In a gigantic edifice dedicated to the memory of the 'Battle of the Nations', the city of Leipzig commemorates the successful battle involving 6,00,000 people in 1813 against Napoleonic forces. The adjoining museum, however, acknowledges the many achievements of Napoleon, and is free of the vituperative celebrations of victors. We too must find the resources to develop a historical temper that acknowledges the inconvenient truths of our past.

Janaki Nair is Professor, Centre for Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Finding the data on missing girls

The figure quoted by the government fails to completely take into consideration deliveries in private hospitals



SABU M. GEORGE

Temale foeticide continues to increase at an alarming rate, as per the Sample Registration System (SRS) data released in July for the period 2015-2017. The sex ratio at birth (SRB) has been dropping continuously since Census 2011, coming down from 909 girls per thousand boys in 2013 to 896 girls in 2017, to quote the yearly Statistical Reports. In the 2014-2016 period, of the 21 large States, only two - Kerala and Chhattisgarh – had an SRB of above 950 girls per 1000 boys. Thus at present, at least 5% of girls are 'eliminated' before they are born, despite the promises of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme.

Taking into consideration the SRS estimates, the Niti Aayog acknowledged the seriousness of the problem in its latest report. However, despite all the officially acknowledged facts. Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani claimed in the Lok Sabha that SRB has improved from 923 to 931 girls. She was quoting data

from the Health Management Information System (HMIS), a fundamentally flawed source that largely considers home deliveries and births in government institutions. Data from the HMIS are incomplete and not representative of the country as a whole as births happening in private institutions are under-reported. The HMIS report itself acknowledges that based on the estimated number of births, the number of reported births is much less in both the years considered - 2015-16 and 2018-19.

Points of delivery

The differences among the three points of delivery become evident when SRB is calculated using data from National Family Health Survev-4 (NFHS-4). Of the 2.5 lakh reported births in the 2010-2014 period, the distribution of births at home, government hospitals and private hospitals was 21%, 52% and 27% respectively and the corresponding SRB figures were 969, 930 and 851.

Thus, private hospitals had a disproportionate excess of male children births, which the HMIS sample excludes. It is to be noted here that sources in the Niti Aavog confirmed that they did consider HMIS data but found after statistical examination that it was unre-



liable and therefore used SRS. Further, even when we only

consider institutional deliveries in government hospitals, the SRB is falling. The worst regional SRB for government sector was for Northern India (885 girls per thousand boys). The picture was somewhat better for Central India (926) and Southern India (940) while the performance of Eastern India (965) and Western India (959) was even better.

In the Northeast, where the government is the dominant healthcare provider, the government sector SRB rivaled that of the private sector (both are 900).

For too long, institutional births have been the goal of the government. That data for the private sector are more skewed has not been articulated in the NFHS re-

ports or adequately dealt with by the Health Ministry. For two deularly private, too often we observed more male children even when the total number of births were small in number. So, we used NFHS 4 data to quantify this bias. It is criminal to use public funds to privilege boy births and facilitate discrimination against girls right from birth. However, for years, in the special neonatal care units (SNCU) set up by the government, there was an excess of about 8% male children in several States.

Regrettably, the government has prioritised an expansion of SNCUs rather than deal with the issue of the 'missing girls'. Protecting the integrity of birth statistics will help the people, governments and health professionals to focus on ameliorating the known gender gaps at birth rather than be complacent with dubious claims.

Bias over first-born child

An analysis of the NFHS-4 data also revealed a bias when it comes to the first-born child – the SRB among first-born children was 927, meaning that 2.5% of first-born girls are eliminated before birth.

This was not the case historically. Our field visits to various parts of India in the past five years, par-

ticularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where one in every three Incades, in visits to hospitals, partic-dians is born, revealed a massive expansion of ultrasound clinics even in remote corners. And in the absence of a stringent implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition Of Sex Selection) Act (PCPNDT Act), practically anyone who wants to determine the sex of the foetus was able to get it done illegally. We are disappointed that the Central Supervisory Board established under the PCPNDT Act has not met for over one-and-ahalf years. It should have ideally met at least thrice during this period. We hope the new Health Minister restores the regularity of the

The Supreme Court has been continuously reminding medical associations since 2002 of their obligation to follow the law, its latest reminder being the formidable 92-page judgment against the Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecological Societies of India (FOGSI) earlier this year. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has to ensure that private hospitals don't profit from discrimination against girls before birth.

Sabu M. George has been a researcher on girl children for 34 years

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.

A wake-up call? The death of billionaire entrepreneur and the founder of Café Coffee Day, V.G. Siddhartha, is extremely saddening. The market capitalisation of the company has taken a nosedive in the last few days, which would force the creditors to take a serious haircut. Had he been part of the U.S. system, there is a very high chance that he would have found a way to deal with the creditors and, most importantly, he would have been alive. His death just shows how nascent the corporate debt markets are in India, and how private equity firms operate in the country. Access to capital

markets is key for entrepreneurship and for businesses to thrive and grow. Hence, this should be a wake-up call for the government to see that capital is made available to the firms with good growth prospects, if it is serious about making India's GDP reach \$5 trillion and beyond (Front page, "Siddhartha cremated in family estate," August 1). VARAD SESHADRI, nyvale, California, U.S.

Criminalising talaq Marriage is a civil contract and criminalising what is obviously a civil issue is a step in the wrong direction. The Centre's logic that the

deterrent to the abhorrent practice of instant talag is hard to digest. However, the fact that Muslims take recourse to this detested form of divorce, even after the 2017 Supreme Court verdict, is a worrying development and one cannot but share the government's concerns over this. Religion should not be a factor when it comes to the irresponsible desertion of spouses and children. Herein lies the need for a common divorce law, which the Bill fails to address (Editorial, "Beyond talaq," August 1). ABDUL ASSIS P.A., Thrissur, Kerala

Triple Talaq Bill will act as

■ Rather than addressing a social issue, the passage of the Triple Talaq Bill through both the Houses of Parliament gives rise to questions. The government's reasoning that it was giving effect to the Supreme Court verdict declaring it unconstitutional is absurd, considering that the Bharatiya Janata Party was opposed to the same court's verdict when it came to allowing entry to women in the Sabarimala shrine. The Centre's claim that it is a step towards gender justice also sounds false. The Act may not be of much benefit as it expects the victim or someone from her family, in

most cases women who

come from the poorest sections of the society, to take up the issue against her husband with the concerned authority. A.G. RAJMOHAN,

Anantapur

Unnao case The Unnao case appears to be a tragedy from the medieval ages – a poor girl is raped by the local strongman, the state machinery doesn't help and even the judiciary fails to protect her family. (Front page, "SC takes note of complaint by rape survivor's family," August 1). Instead, her alleged tormentors keep openly threatening her and

get her family members and

witnesses in the case eliminated. This is a fit occasion for the Supreme Court to step in. A thorough inquiry must be held under its aegis, all culprits arrested immediately and the trial conducted on a day-to-day basis. The victim and her family must be provided strong security. Let people like her tormentors know that rule of law does prevail. In this regard, the fact that the CBI has taken over investigation in the case surely comes as a welcome development. HARJAS BAINS,

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:

Is banning cryptocurrencies the solution?

A blanket ban will push the currency into the black market and stifle innovation

Recently, a government panel headed by senior bureaucrat Subhash Chandra Garg placed in the public domain a draft bill calling for a complete ban on private cryptocurrencies in India. The panel recommended a fine of up to ₹25 crore and a jail term of up to 10 years for anyone found to be owning or handling private cryptocurrencies. As an alternative to private cryptocurrencies, the panel recommended the introduction of a single cryptocurrency for the whole country that is backed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Parag Waknis and Anil Antony examine the soundness of the panel's recommendations in a conversation moderated by Prashant **Perumal**. Edited excerpts:

What do you think about the Garg panel's overall guidelines? The volatility of private cryptocurrencies is one of the reasons being given to ban

Parag Waknis: Volatility doesn't sound like a good rationale to ban cryptocurrencies because if cryptocurrencies are volatile, so are many other asset classes. We do not ban investments in any other asset class just because it is volatile. The decision of whether to invest in an asset or not should be left to the investor. The risk return calculation should be done by the investor, not the government.

Also, banning the consumption of a good or service doesn't really mean that people will stop consuming it. The market for the good or service simply goes underground and becomes hard to track. The market continues to exist, but the government cannot track it or tax it to gain revenue. This applies to cryptocurrencies as well.

It is true that the price of cryptocurrencies, especially bitcoin, has been volatile. And that's primarily because of their design. Bitcoin, for example, is designed in such a way that its supply rises rapidly first, but later very slowly, before stopping at a certain point.

You said that banning a currency would push it into the black market. That would also

make it much harder for the government to regulate it,

PW: Yes, exactly. In most cases, if the government feels that there is enough rationale to regulate the consumption of a commodity or a service or investments in a crypto asset, the best way forward is to come up with a regulatory framework that has incentives set right for the users. Maybe you can have a tax on capital gains from investing in crypto assets, just like you have taxes on investments in other assets.

The Garg panel, while being opposed to the idea of private cryptocurrencies, still seems to be a fan of the blockchain technology. It has called for a national cryptocurrency backed by the RBI, which would probably be based on the blockchain.

Anil Antony: The Garg panel opposing cryptocurrencies seems like yet another case of a group of people not really understanding a concept and hence trying to ban it. Most people equate cryptocurrencies with blockchain, but there is a huge difference between them. The cryptocurrency is just one application of the underlying blockchain technology. The blockchain technology has a lot more potential beyond cryptocurrencies.

An issue raised against cryptocurrencies is that they aren't really backed by an underlying commodity or a sovereign government. But do you think it's absolutely essential that a currency needs to be backed by a commodity or an institution for it to be widely accepted in the market?

PW: No. The way we define money is that it is a generally accepted medium of exchange. So, it's just trust that basically drives the value of money. There is nothing to back it, except trust. When two strangers have no other way of transacting with each other, when there's no way they can verify the creditworthiness of each other, money helps. That's all that we basically need. We need trust for that.



Now, what does a crypto asset or a cryptocurrency offer? It is right that it is not backed by anything. But it doesn't really require any backing in the sense that, as long as people hold the expectation that a particular asset will have value, it is sufficient.

So is it the value that people think the currency will possess in the future that really drives its value?

PW: Exactly. Yes. Cryptocurrencies allow people to conduct anonymous transactions. The price of bitcoin, for example, is driven by the access to the anonymity that it offers its users. People may also want to keep their wealth in some asset that gains in value over a period of time. So that is the worth or the "right" that people are paying for when they're buying cryptocurrencies.

There are also cases where fiat money has retained value even when the bank has ceased to exist. For example, in Somalia, the central bank and all the concerned institutions had ceased to work at some point. But people still continued to value the Somalian currency. So there was no backing at all for the currency, but people still believed that it had value and they continued to use the currency in transactions. So the strength of a particular asset boils down to what people think

When talking about anonymity, the common objection to cryptocurrencies is that they

A digital currency issued by

the RBI that gets misused

by criminals can affect trust

in the existing fiat currency

can be used to finance various criminal activities. So, do we require government regulations to prevent their misuse, or are there other market mechanisms to deal with the problem?

protocol.

PW: I have done some research linked to this using money search models, where there is a set of competing monies, which could also be cryptocurrencies, and I basically show that there is a certain equilibrium where competing suppliers of cryptocurrencies would behave in a disciplined way. Theoretically, cryptocurrency providers could issue an unlimited amount of their money. But they're competing against each other, so the competition forces them to restrict their supply to a minimal amount that would help maintain the value of their currency. Thus the discipline imposed by market competition can prevent cryptocurrency providers from overissuing their currencies. We can also think about discipline in terms of reputation effects. For example, if there is a paper currency, and it turns out that it can be used to finance, let's say, crime, terrorism, or anything similar, there is the reputation of the supplier at

So there are some ways by which

the market can discipline cryptocurrencies. But I think regulation, in terms of having the right rewards and punishments in place, would help. Not actions like banning stuff.

AA: Just to add to this... right now, one of the most comprehensive sets of regulations surrounding this debate on cryptocurrencies being used for various nefarious activities is being discussed across the world. It is one of the biggest concerns everywhere. One of the most comprehensive sets of regulations for cryptocurrencies is being brought in by the European Union. The EU is putting in a bunch of regulations to tackle money laundering, and it is called the AMLD-5. It is a bunch of norms to make crypto transactions more secure. It has a lot of very stringent KYC regulations and selfdeclaration laws which every holder of a crypto wallet or user needs to adhere to. Crypto exchanges are all expected to maintain a database that is transparently shared between countries. It is not foolproof, but the EU has started creating a bunch of regulations that could become stronger over time. This could be the best way to go forward rather than putting a blanket ban on cryptocurrencies, because the presence of cryptocurrencies is very important for the further development of the blockchain.

When you impose a blanket ban on private currencies, thus effectively nationalising the market for cryptocurrencies, what exactly are the implications for innovation?

AA: In 2018, in the Silicon Valley alone, almost \$2.9 billion worth of private venture funds have gone into blockchain start-ups. In tech hubs across the world, we are seeing billions pumped into the blockchain technology. In this scenario, if we decide to put a blanket ban on all cryptocurrencies, then our technology entrepreneurs will suddenly lose the incentive to work in the sector. You simply can't just build blockchain applications out of thin air. Right now, currencies are the only viable practical application of the blockchain technology even though it can be extrapolated to a lot of other sectors. So, for the sake of innovation. I think even if the government is bringing in a statebacked currency, it will be better if the other currencies are also allowed to operate with sufficient regulations.

Also, when we are speaking about a country like India, in terms of size, cryptocurrencies constitute a very, very minor share of the total amount of money that is already being used to carry out various activities in the black economy. But the potential rewards that could come out of the blockchain technology

If cryptocurrencies form such a minuscule part of the black economy, why are policymakers so concerned about cryptocurrencies being used to finance criminal activities?

AA: I would say nobody really expected cryptocurrencies to become such a big factor in such a short period of time. Right now, the global market capitalisation of cryptocurrencies is almost \$120 billion. And that's just the tip of the iceberg, it could get way bigger over time.

What impact will cryptocurrencies have on the central bank's control over monetary policy? Is there a good case for a national cryptocurrency issued by the central bank, as proposed by the Garg Panel?

PW: People will move to alternative assets and seek more anonymity only if they lose trust in government institutions. So, as long as the trust is maintained, monetary policy doesn't face any particular threat from cryptocurrencies.

When it comes to a central bankissued digital currency, there is a loose consensus, especially among monetary economists from the New Monetary School, that there is no case for governments issuing cryptocurrencies because it would create a lot of problems in the form of contradictions in existing regulations and the government will have to deal with severe mismatches in regulations. Secondly, there are reputation effects. A digital currency issued by the RBI that gets misused by criminals can affect trust in the existing fiat currency protocol. I don't think a central bank would want to take that risk.



The Congress cannot wish for democratisation of the party while continuing to rely on the Gandhis

MOHAMMED AYOOB

teaches monetary

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Anil Antony

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the digital media

cell of the Kerala

wing of the Indian

National Congress

Scan the QR code to

listen to the full

interview online

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor is an eloquent and articulate member of the Lok Sabha. He is one of the few independent-minded parliamentarians of the Congress. He might have been the obvious choice for the position of the leader of the party in the Lok Sabha but was denied the position because the "conscience-keepers" (his term) of the Congress were afraid that he would outshine them and exhibit their mediocrity.

Change in election process

His recent interview published in The Hindu demonstrated his independent streak. In it, he argued that the Congress could not afford to drift aimlessly without a functioning president, adding, "There is a difference between a nominal leadership...and an active leadership. An active leadership would be far more engaged, far more outspoken and far more visible than Rahul Gandhi has chosen himself to be.'

More important, Mr. Tharoor contended that the process of electing the president of the Congress should not be left to the Congress Working Committee (CWC), itself a coterie of appointed members most of whom are unelected and unelectable. Instead, he said, it should be an open process with party workers and functionaries from across the country voting for a new leader to replace Mr. Gandhi as well as the CWC.

This, Mr. Tharoor argued, will provide the president and the party greater legitimacy and, therefore, greater credibility with the voters both in the forthcoming Assembly elections and in the 2024 general election. Mr. Tharoor's stance has found great resonance among party members across the board but has rattled the senior leaders and members of the CWC who continue to hang on to their positions despite the party's abysmal performance in the Lok Sabha election.

It was a surprise, therefore, that in the same interview Mr. Tharoor referred to the Gandhi family as the "conscience-keepers" of the Congress and went on to say, "Whoever takes the position, he or she has to have the cooperation of the Gandhi

parivar because the DNA of the party is inextricably tied up to them." He believes that if a Congress president was ever to take a position that was inimical to the party's ethos, the conscience-keepers will speak out.

This position stands in stark contrast to the rest of the views that Mr. Tharoor expressed about reforming the party and holding open, democratic elections for the president and the CWC. He appeared to underscore this contrast when he said that the current scenario resembled the "old days, before Independence," when, if the Congress president did something and Mahatma Gandhi conveyed disapproval, that would have been enough for the president to understand and presumably apply corrective action.

A contradiction There are two major concerns re-

garding this formulation. First, comparing the Gandhi parivar, which thrives on sycophancy and trades on its increasingly remote ideological and even biological relationship with Jawaharlal Nehru, to the Mahatma is a brazen insult to the tallest leader of the freedom movement. Second, the notion that during the struggle for independence the Congress needed a "conscience keeper," even one of the stature of Mahatma Gandhi, is questionable. Conscience keepers detract immeasurably from the democratic spirit of movements and parties. The Mahatma's machinations as the super boss of the party that led to the forced resignation of the democratically elected president of the Congress, Subhas Chandra Bose, in 1939, are a testimony to this fact. Bose's alienation had major implications for the freedom movement that have not been adequately analysed so far.

I would contend that Mr. Tharoor should seriously think through the contradiction in his reasoning on the issue of "conscience keepers". It is quite inconsistent with the rest of his sensible argument regarding the need to democratise the Congress in order to rejuvenate it.

Mohammed Ayoob is Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Center for Global Policy, Washington, DC, and University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Relations, Michigan State University



NOTEBOOK

The village advantage over a Michelin starred restaurant

Respecting water, soil and forests is the only way to get wholesome food

SHONALI MUTHALALY

I'm powered by curiosity, fried grasshoppers and a wizened old lady. The route to Pryda village, set deep within the West Khasi hills of Meghalaya, involves a gruelling one hour trek. Fortunately Spermon Kharnaior has volunteered to guide me. The sprightly village matriarch, probably in her late 70s, skips from rock to shaky rock as we climb uphill, with an impressively firm grip on my wrist to haul me past the more challenging portions.

A few hours ago we were at a dramatic meeting of the tribes in Shillong helmed by the International eco-gastronomic movement Slow Food. The meeting brought together about 600 delegates representing 140 tribes from over 58 countries. Spending three days among pastoralists, honey gatherers, yak herders, reindeer breeders, fishermen and farmers

made me develop a new

respect for ingredients and the people who bring them to our dining tables.

As a food writer, I spend time learning from chefs and mixologists, who use complicated, impressive techniques to tease and primp ingredients into flamboyant menus and sophisticated cocktails. It is humbling to be reminded that ultimately everything depends on ingredients. And the only way to get quality ingredients is by respecting water, soil and forests, just like the indigenous people do.

Admittedly, it is easier said than done in a world that bristles with processed food, and in which taste buds have been trained to crave the addictive alchemy of fat, salt and sugar that comes in every bagged snack. I try. I gingerly sample crunchy Eri silk worms, reputed to taste like crisps. (They don't!) Eat lunch with a surprisingly tasty and tangy ant chutney. And

snack on salted deep-fried



Then, I head to Pryda for lunch. A pig has been killed, and every part of it has been sensibly used, so

nothing goes to waste. A sturdy table in the village schoolhouse is laden with food, much of it unfamiliar. There are bowls filled with fresh green herbs and a hefty pot fragrant with sautéed mustard leaves. At the centre of the banquet is the pork curry - rich, spicy and delicious.

There isn't a sauce bottle or plastic packet in sight: none of these flavours have come out of a factory. There are no chefs in the kitchen; the community has cooked together, between cups of tea and gossip. The vegetables were

harvested in the morning from a garden behind the school. The flavours are uncomplicated and alluring in a way no Michelin starred restaurant can compete

As the sun dims, I jump up realising I must leave immediately if I am to reach the main road before the path is plunged into darkness. Spermon presses a cool package into my hands as she hugs me goodbye. It's sohplang, a local tuber, deftly wrapped in banana leaves. I snack on it thoughtfully as I walk back: it is crisp, juicy and refresh-

Environmentalists warn us incessantly that we are marching towards a precipice, propelled by competitive consumerism. Can looking towards the villages save us? It may sound naïve but it is a seductive idea. And I would rather learn lessons from Spermon and her ilk than be disappointed, again, by yet another Facebook warrior.

The Man Frindu. FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 2, 1969

P.M. and Nixon's discussion

In her final round of talks with President Nixon to-day [August 1, New Delhi], the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, got the distinct impression that in its new thinking of Asia, the United States was attaching great importance to better Indo-American relations in the larger interests of peace and stability in the region. The two Heads of Government, who met for over three hours yesterday and to-day [August 1] and discussed almost all aspects of the Asian situation, agreed in principle to explore the possibilities of a new pattern of Asian security to ensure respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and neutrality of the smaller countries of South-East Asia which were vulnerable to both internal subversion and external threats. Mrs. Gandhi is reported to have pointed out that the Indian proposal for a Regional Security Convention did not envisage any military guarantees but only political assurances by the Big Powers and the major countries of Asia, which were prepared to subscribe to the Geneva principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of these small nations. India was not thinking in terms of any political or military condominium in Asia, under the auspices of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, to protest the Asian countries from possible dangers of Chinese

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 2, 1919.

Race Riots in America.

A further recrudescence of racial rioting last night [July 28 in Chicago], resulted in five Negroes and two white men being killed, and forty persons wounded. Racial rioting was renewed this morning. One Negro was killed and two others wounded. It is now known that there were at least ten fatalities last night. It is estimated that up to the present twenty-five have been killed and five hundred injured, and many of the latter are not expected to recover. The authorities have stopped tramcar and elevated railway traffic in the disturbed area owing to the rioters wrecking tramcars. Troops are in readiness. The riots to-day [July 29], assumed the character of a veritable battle. A hundred thousand Negroes and an equal number of whites, participated in the fighting in the streets with knives, razors and revolvers. A semblance of order was restored by the Mounted Police riding over the dead and wounded, and scattering the combatants, but sniping, knifing and incendiarism continued in outlying streets.

Bill against

triple talaq

NEW DELHI

three years.

becomes law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

President Ram Nath Ko-

vind has given his assent to

the triple talaq Bill that makes giving instant oral

triple talaq or talalq-e-bid-

dat a criminal offence with

provisions of jail term up to

the Muslim Women (Pro-

tection of Rights On Mar-

riage) Act, 2019, has come

into effect retrospectively from September 19, 2018.

and Justice Ministry noti-

fied the Bill as law in the

Gazette after receiving as-

sent from President Kovind

who is on a tour of West

On Wednesday, the Law

The triple talaq law or

FROM PAGE ONE

SC transfers Unnao cases to Delhi court

Sunday's 'accident' killed two of her aunts accompanying her in the car and left her and her lawyer critically injured. The victim is on ventilator support at King George's Medical College and Hospital in Lucknow. The CBI is investigating suspicions of foul play.

The court ordered the CBI to complete its probe into the 'accident' case in the next seven days. As an exception, it said, the CBI could take another week. But under no circumstance should the probe extend beyond a fortnight.

The agency, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, initially sought a month's time to complete the probe. "A month? You have seven days... you do what you have to do within that time," CJI Gogoi said.

The court also ordered protection for the girl and her family by personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force at the urging of its amicus curiae V. Giri.

Mr. Giri said the girl was in the hospital with just her mother to attend to her. The family was not financially well off. The State should pay her an "exemplary" compensation, he said.

But the Uttar Pradesh government protested that it would pay a compensation only "as per statute".

"What is happening in this country? You want the Supreme Court to follow statutes to order compensa-

The court finally fixed ₹25 lakh as the interim compensation and ordered the U.P. government to pay amount on August 2.

The court insisted on getting a complete low-down on the Unnao cases and the status of the CBI probe.

Further, the court directed Mr. Mehta to have a team of doctors check the medical condition of the victim and her lawyer to see if they could be airlifted to Delhi for advanced treatment.

At 2 p.m., Mr. Mehta informed the court that both were medically fit to be shifted. The court said it would pass the necessary orders whenever their families gave their consent to shifting both to Delhi.

In a separate order, the CJI Bench directed Sanjeev Sudhakar Kalgaonkar, Secretary General of the court, to conduct an enquiry within seven days into whether any lapse or negligence on the part of Registry officials caused the Unnao victim's letter to reach the CJI late.

Thursday's first hearing began with the CJI asking Mr. Mehta to have a responsible officer of the CBI present in the court by noon with the entire case detail. The CII was not swayed when Mr. Mehta asked the court to reschedule the case for Friday. "Tomorrow is another day, Mr. Solicitor. We want this to happen today," he responded.

Fleeing Maldives leader held off T.N. coast

The boat was anchored about 50 metres from the old harbour since noon and was yet to be docked at the time of filing of this report on Thursday evening.

Immigration Department officials were awaiting instructions from the government regarding the future course of action. There has not been any official information about whether Mr. Adeeb was trying to seek asylum in India or had other motives for fleeing Maldives.

India evaluating Pak. plan for consular access

will convey to Dakistan Indian diplomat to meet Mr the response through diplomatic channels," he said.

Sources said the proposal was received earlier this week. Media reports in Pakistan indicated that Pakistan had agreed to allow an Jadhav at 3 p.m. on Friday. However, the Ministry of External Affairs refused to confirm the reports. On July 17, the ICJ asked Pakistan to grant "without delay" consular access to Mr. Jadhav.

25,000 more troops being deployed in J&K

Meanwhile, National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah, in a late evening tweet, said he received a

number of requests, especially from Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti for a meeting.

Medical panel Bill crosses Rajya Sabha

Opposition amendment for more State representatives included in Bill that will replace MCI

NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Thursday cleared the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill with a crucial amendment brought in by the government to increase representation of the States in the new body, as demanded by the Opposition.

The Bill was passed by a voice vote. The Lok Sabha cleared the proposed law on July 29. The NMC will replace the Medical Council of India

In his reply to the debate. Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said the State Medical Council representation was being increased from five members to nine and State University representation from six to 10.

Seeking to alleviate concerns on NEET, Mr. Vardhan said it was already an institutionalised mechanism for



protesting against the NMC Bill in New Delhi on Thursday. • R.V. MOORTHY

the successful conduct of tests in 13 languages. Its syllabus was decided by considering the curricula of the State Boards and it was being improved continuously, he

The new body, after the

law is implemented, will be constituted in nine months and in the next three years, it will set up the mechanism for conducting the common final year examination, or National Exit Test (NEXT), for all MBBS students. Based on the results, the students will get their degrees and licence to practise (after an internship). Performance in the theory paper will decide eligibility for admission to postgraduate

On the issue of NMC deciding fee/other charges of 50% seats in private institutions, the Minister clarified that the body would make rules to cap the fees for other seats. The State would enter into memoranda of understanding with private colleges to regulate fee structure for the other 50% seats, he

Clarifying the doubts on proposed issuance of limited licences to Community Health providers to practise medicine, Mr. Vardhan said the concept had already been implemented in many countries, including developed nations. Stringent measures had been introduced to punish quacks.

Mr. Vardhan recognised the reforms introduced by Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad, during his tenure as the Health Mi-

Rajya Sabha nod

Africa.

On Tuesday, the Bill cleared the Rajya Sabha hurdle when the government managed 99 votes in favour against 84 Opposi-

The Opposition parties argued that the proposed law could be misused to harass Muslims and wanted it reviewed by a parliamentary panel.

The law now gives a police officer the power to arrest the offender without requiring a warrant, alleged the Opposition.

To check misuse, the government said, the police takes cognisance only if the complaint is filed by the aggrieved woman or any of her relation by blood or marriage.

The Bill also provides for bail by a magistrate but only after hearing the aggrieved woman. She is entitled to demanding a maintenance for her and her dependent children

Opposition questions intent behind UAPA Bill

Courts will strike it down, says Sibal seeking scrutiny

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) Amendment Bill, 2019, which enables the government to designate individuals as terrorists, was tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Several Opposition parties, including the Congress, Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress and the MDMK opposed the Bill. Expressing concerns about its "draconian" provisions, the Oppo-

Sitharaman's

as LS passes

assurance comes

Bankruptcy Bill

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Lok Sabha on Thursday

assed amendments to the

Insolvency and Bankruptcy

Code, with Union Finance

Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

stating that the intention of

the Bill was to help strug-

gling business survive and

is not to allow companies to

die. Liquidation of a compa-

ny is not the sole agenda of

the Insolvency and Bank-

Bill, as many as seven sec-

tions of the Code stand

amended. Under the Code, a

financial creditor may file an

With the passing of the

ruptcy Code," she said.

'The spirit behind the law

grow stronger.

sition MPs said these would be used against anyone who opposed the government.

Noting that the government would be able to pass the Bill through "brute majority" in the Lok Sabha and by a "manufactured majority" in the Rajya Sabha, Kapil Sibal of the Congress said it would be struck down by the courts. "It's better you send it to a select committee."

"The UAPA, 1967, has provisions; after 2014, have you declared people who committed communal activities as terrorists? You will designate only those who are against you as terrorists, students in JNU, Dalits," Mr. Si-

Sukhendu Sekhar Ray of the Trinamool said: "UAPA has become redundant; in 75% cases, people have been either acquitted or released. Last week, Abdul Ghani Goni [a Kashmiri trader] was acquitted after 23 years."

The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on July 24.

Lok Sabha passes Bill for death for rape of minors

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Lok Sabha on Thursday unanimously passed the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which seeks death penalty for aggravated sexual assault on children.

Responding to the debate on the Bill, Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani said the Bill aimed to make offences against children gender-neutral.

"This Bill is not related with vote-bank politics but

bate, Pinaki Misra of the BJD

said there were 14 Benches

of the NCLT in India, out of

which one was yet to be

after some companies and

then anybody and everybo-

dy is allowed to be chargesh-

gress said the performance

of the Insolvency Bankrupt-

cy Code had been a mixed

bag. "Liquidation of compa-

of doing business there is a

fear psychosis in the minds

of businesses, which has to

be addressed."

Gaurav Gogoi of the Con-

"Government agencies go

functional.

eeted," he said.

to ensure that justice is delivered to every child in the country," the Minister said. The Bill, already pproved

The government's priority is

in the Rajya Sabha, defines child pornography makes it punishable.

Ms. Irani said over 1,000 fast-track courts would work for the speedy disposal of pending cases. The Bill provides that those who use a child for pornographic purposes should be punished with imprisonment up to five years and a fine, and for a subsequent conviction, it would be up to seven years and fine.

Siddhartha's death raised in Rajya Sabha

Win back investors' confidence: MP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The death of Cafe Coffee Day founder V.G.Siddhartha was raised in the Raiya Sabha on Thursday, with a Trinamool Congress MP urging the government to introspect and take steps to win back the confidence of investors and entrepreneurs.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray said the government should remove misgivings and the sense of despair in the industry. He mentioned a purported letter written by Mr. Siddhartha, from which it appeared that he was under tremendous pressure from other stakeholders as well as an official of the Income Tax



Sukhendu Shekhar Roy

"The matter is very serious," Mr. Ray said. "While the government has taken several steps for ease of doing business, about 5,000 billionaires have left the country last year itself according to reports. If we fail to regenerate the confidence of industrialists and investors, growth rate will decrease alarmingly and unemployment will increase."

Don't take us for granted, Opposition tells Centre

Mulayam sees conspiracy in extending Parliament session

SANDEEP PHUKAN

Opposition leaders asserted themselves in the Lok Sabha on Thursday when Samaiwa di Party (SP) veteran Mulayam Singh alleged a "conspiracy" on the part of the government in extending the Parliament session, while Congress leader of the House Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury told the government "not to take them for grant-

The session, which began on June 17, was scheduled to end on July 26 but the government decided to extend it by another 12 days and it is expected to end on August 7.

Senior leaders accused the government of making last-minute changes to the agenda of the House without consulting the Opposition.

When the Lok Sabha was debating amendments to the insolvency law, Mr. Yadav got up from his seat and



Mulayam Singh in the Lok Sabha on Thursday. • PTI

ment was pushing through important legislation even when the seats are empty. "The Lok Sabha used to

pointed to how the govern-

be a model for State Assemblies. But look, so many seats are empty ... members have to attend marriages ... There is a conspiracy on the part of the government in running the House. People's money is being wasted," he

Amid reports that the go-

vernment was considering extending the session by another two days and conclude only by August 9, Trinamool's Saugata Roy said: "Mulayamji is a senior member. But we disagree. There are important legislation which will benefit the people...The Opposition has always maintained that the House should sit for at least 100 days (per year)."

Opposition charged the government with extending the session to avoid scrutiny of Bills by parliamentary committees.

DMK's Kanimozhi said it had become a new practice to come out with a revised agenda late in the night. "We are all here to work together. You cannot take us for granted," she said.

Speaker Om Birla then intervened and said his office would ensure that members know about Bills, at least a day in advance.

not be looked down on' SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT failures should not be

'Business failures should

Code will help weak firms: Minister

Responding to the debate Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in the Lok Sabha, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Thursday: "Business

tabooed, or looked down. On the contrary, we should give an honourable exit or resolution to the problem in letter and spirit of the IBC." She was referring to the death of Café Coffee Day founder V.G. Siddhartha.

application before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for initiating the insolvency resolution process. The NCLT must find the existence of default within 14 days. Thereafter, a Committee of Creditors (CoC), consisting of financial creditors, will be constituted for taking decisions regarding insolvency resolution.

Count me out for top

CWC to take the call at next meeting

post, says Priyanka

SANDEEP PHUKAN

Congress general secretary

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is

believed to have told a meet-

ing of Congress general se-

cretaries on Thursday that

she shouldn't be considered

as a replacement for her

brother and outgoing party

Ms. Vadra's remarks are

important in the backdrop

of a growing chorus among

a section of the senior lead-

ers like Captain Amarinder

Singh and Shashi Tharoor

asking her to take over the

Committee (CWC), the high-

est decision-making body of

the party, will now be delib-

erating on the next presi-

dent soon after the ongoing

session of Parliament ses-

Though no date has been

fixed, the CWC could meet

between August 8 and Au-

gust 10 if there are no furth-

er extensions to the Parlia-

sion ends next week.

The Congress Working

chief Rahul Gandhi.

The CoC may either decide to restructure the debtor's debt by preparing a resolution plan or liquidate the debtor's assets. "Once the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process begins, it has to be completed in 330 days, including litigation stages and judicial process," said

Ms. Sitharaman.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

New Delhi on Thursday. • PTI

ment session that is

scheduled to end on August

ing the meeting as he is a

part of the CWC, said chief

The meeting of general

secretaries was called to fi-

nalise plans to commemo-

rate the 75th birth anniver-

sary of former Prime

Minister Rajiv Gandhi. But

party leaders also discussed

the leadership vacuum.

spokesperson

Surjewala.

Randeep

Mr. Gandhi will be attend-

nies, especially the ones in the real estate sector, also puts home buyers' life savings at risk," he said. Referring to the death of Cafe Coffee Day founder V.G. Siddhartha, M. Srinivasulu Reddy of the YSR Congress said: "While the government is working towards the ease

Participating in the de-

Congress raises award of six airports to Adani group

department.

NITI Aayog, DEA guidelines flouted, says Adhir Chowdhury

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The successful airport privatisation bids by Adani Enterprises and the push for Parliament going paperless were among a host of issues raised in the Lok Sabha on Thursday during the first half of the day.

Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, during the Zero Hour, questioned the government on how the Adani group could win privatisation bids for five profit-making airports of under the Airport Authority of India (AAI).

Mr. Chowdhury's Zero Hour mention follows a report by The Hindu detailing how the Adani group won bids for six airports even though the NITI Aayog and the Department of Economic Affairs had flagged several

Lok Sabha Speaker Om

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury in the Lok Sabha. ■PTI

Birla, however, informed the Congress leader that the Civil Aviation Minister had explained the details in the House earlier.

LS to go paperless

Mr Birla informed the House that efforts will be made to make it paperless, a step which will help save crores of rupees spent on printing and help save trees.

Members would have the option of choosing to have their documents in digital

form or paper, he said. Congress member Manish Tewari raised the issue of a report prepared by the Office of the United Nations

man Rights that charged India of violating human rights in Jammu and Kashmir. "We may not give much importance to the report but a lot of countries do," said Mr. Tewari and urged the Indian government to present

India's viewpoint to counter

High Commissioner for Hu-

Pakistan's propaganda. Trinamool's Mohua Moitra asked the government to transparently declare the law firms that are assisting the government in drafting the data protection bill that is to be passed in

Parliament. "These law firms may have also other clients who have may interest in data." said Ms Moitra and added that those 'interests' could be reflected in the Bill.

IN BRIEF

Bypolls to two Rajya Sabha seats on Aug. 26

Bypolls to two Rajya Sabha seats, one each in Raiasthan and Uttar Pradesh, will be held on August 26, the **Election Commission of India** announced on Thursday. The Raiasthan seat fell vacant when Madanlal Saini passed away on June 24. The U.P. seat fell vacant when Samajwadi Party MP Neeraj Shekhar resigned on July 15.

ED files case against SP leader Azam Khan

NEW DELHI The Enforcement Directorate has registered a moneylaundering case in connection with the land-grab charges against Samaiwadi Party MP Azam Khan and others in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur. The U.P. police have registered over a dozen cases allegedly involving the then circle official and Mr. Khan, based on the complaints lodged by 26 villagers.

SC to consider report in Ayodhya land dispute

NEW DELHI The Supreme Court is likely to consider on Friday the "outcome" of mediation proceedings conducted by a panel set up to amicably resolve the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute in Ayodhya and may decide whether to hear the matter or continue with the mediation. A five-judge Constitution Bench on July 18 had asked the panel to inform the court by August 1. PTI

Sengar expelled, guards suspended

A probe by the district police chief had charged the police personnel with negligence

OMAR RASHID LUCKNOW

Three police security guards deployed for the protection of the Unnao rape survivor were suspended from service on Thursday for negli-

BJP Uttar Pradesh president Swatantra Dev Singh said Kuldeep Singh Sengar, MLA, accused of rape and allegedly behind plotting a collision with the survivor's car, was expelled by the central leadership of the party after he was suspended by the State unit.

"This is in the domain of the central leadership. When I gave my statement in Kanpur, this was not in my knowledge. As of today, Kuldeep Sengar is expelled from the party," Mr. Swatantra Dev said, clarifying his earlier comment.

The survivor and her lawver continued to be critical



Security ring: The police stand guard at the cremation of the aunt of the rape survivor, near Lucknow on Thursday. • REUTERS

but stable, said King George's Medical University, Lucknow, where they were receiving treatment. Both were still on ventilator support with multiple injuries.

While the lawver was shifted out of the ventilator for a while on a trial basis. the survivor has been constantly on ventilator, Sandeep Tiwari, spokesperson, KGMU, said in a statement.

Director-General of Police O.P. Singh said the three police personnel deployed for the protection of the survivor were were not travelling with the family on the day their car collided with a truck while they were on their way to a Rae Bareli jail.

The women constables, Ruby Patel and Sunita Debi and gunner Sudesh Kumar were penalised after an investigation by the district police chief of Unnao charged them with negligence. The police had earlier said that the three did not travel with the family on their request, as there was apparently not enough space in the car. The survivor was travelling with her lawyer and two aunts.

According to U.P. police, the family was allotted nine security personnel, including three personal guards for the survivor.

The uncle of the survivor alleged in a complaint that the police detail accorded to his family kept Mr. Sengar's men informed about their plans to shift their legal documents to Rae Bareli and did not travel with the survivor on the day of the accident.

The rape survivor's aunt, who was killed in the Rae Bareli accident, was cremated in her village, 70 km from here, on Thursday.

India unhappy with U.S. aid to Pakistan

Matter taken up with the Ambassador

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

India on Thursday expressed "grave concern" over the recent U.S. military assistance to Pakistan, and stated that it had conveyed its concerns to Washington.

"We have taken up the matter with the U.S. Ambassador in Delhi, as well as with the U.S. government in Washington through our Ambassador. We have expressed grave concern over U.S. military assistance to Pakistan. The U.S. side has told us that the proposed sale does not indicate any change in the U.S. policy of maintaining a freeze in military assistance to Pakistan," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said at the weekly press conference.

The U.S. had publicly stated that the proposed sale was intended to enable it to continue technical and logistics support services to assist in the oversight of the operations of F-16 fighter aircraft in Pakistan's inventory, he said.

However, official sources emphasised that the concern expressed was not just for the supply of F-16 parts, but for the "signs of growing military cooperation and resumption of military supplies" by the U.S. to Pakistan.

Last week, days after Pa-



The U.S. side has said the sale does not indicate change in the freeze in military assistance

RAVEESH KUMAF Spokesperson External Affairs Ministry

the State Department approved a military assistance package for "continued supprogramme.

"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to Pakistan for Technical Security Team (TST) in continued support of the F-16 programme for an estimated cost of \$125 million," the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a statement after delivering the required certification notifying Congress of the possible sale on July 26. Pakistan, which has long operated the F-16s, redeployed them cently against India during the aerial engagement on February 27, a day after the Bala-

NC team meets PM for early election in J&K

BJP too is readying for Assembly polls in the State amid speculation on abrogation of Article 35A

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A National Conference (NC) delegation, led by Srinagar MP Farooq Abdullah, and including his son and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday to press for Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir by the year-end. The meeting comes amid speculation that the Centre may be planning precipitate action on abrogation of Article 35A.

Mr. Omar Abdullah said it had been "one and a half years since a popularly elected government ruled the State and the NC wanted elections held before the year ended. "People should be given a chance to make a

decision. We [NC] will accept the mandate, whatever it may be," he added.

The State is under President's rule after the BJP pulled out of the coalition with the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Mr. Omar Abdullah told media after the meeting that they sought time with the Prime Minister to apprise

him of the situation in the

"We had sought time from Prime Minister Modi to tell him about the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. There had been tensions in the Valley in the last few days, and we wanted to tell him about that. We requested him that no step which affects the environment there should be

taken," Mr. Omar Abdullah

The NC's demand for early polls is significant in that the BJP recently held a meeting of its core group on Jammu and Kashmir in New Del-

At the meeting, BJP working president J.P. Nadda asked the State unit to be

With district-wise data, Assam govt. pushes for NRC

Heated debate in Assembly as data suggest many in districts dominated by indigenous people have been left out

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT **GUWAHATI**

The Assam government on Thursday pushed for re-verification of the applications for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) after districtwise data presented in the Assembly suggested most people in areas bordering Bangladesh have been included in the citizenship list, while many in districts dominated by the indigenous people have been left out.

This triggered a heated debate between the legislators of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led ruling coalition and the Opposition led by the Congress, which was against re-verification.

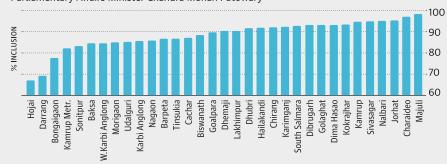
'Threat to integrity'

The debate began after BJP legislator Debananda Hazarika doubted the fairness of the NRC scheduled to be published on August 31.

"A fair NRC will be like the Magna Carta but a flawed

Inclusion rates

Graph shows the proportion of names included in the National Register of Citizens (NRC) across various districts of Assam. While Muslim dominated districts had high inclusion rate. the tribal-dominated ones had a relatively low rate. The data was supplied by Assam's Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary



one would threaten the integrity and sovereignty of the country," he said.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary provided data that said more than 90% of the names in four districts bordering Bangladesh had been included, while many have been excluded in districts dominated by indigenous people. The data said 91.78%, 92.33%, 91.96% and 92.78% people in Muslim-dominated Dhubri, Karimganj, Hailakandi and South Salmara districts have been included in

the NRC. Barring Hailakandi, the others border Bangladesh. In Barpeta and Nagaon, two

Batambis-Sapi; and Sapi to

'The cross-Himalayan

trek crosses through high

passes and amidst scenic

splendors, wild fauna and

India are inclined more

activities, these cross-

Himalayan treks could

destinations," a tourism

Rauf Tramboo, an

become sought after

official said.

towards adventure

flora. Now that youth across

Rangdum via Rusila.

other Muslim-dominated districts, names of 86.6% and 85.8% people have been included.

"In the indigenous and tribal-dominated districts such as Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong, Baksa and Sonitpur, 14-15% people have been excluded. Likewise, 22% people in Bongaigaon and 18%

in Guwahati have been excluded," Mr. Patowary said. The districts where the least number of people have been included in the NRC are

Darrang (69%) and Hojai (67%).

Not error-free

To drive home the point that the NRC was not error-free, Mr. Patowary cited the example of South Salmara.

Several people in Salmara traced their roots to a single legacy person to get fraudulently into the NRC.

Other BJP legislators said suspected citizens have been engaged in the NRC upgrading work and a few have already been arrested.

Mr. Patowary said that the State government would appeal to the Supreme Court again for the extension of the NRC exercise to facilitate "much needed" re-verifica-

The apex court had last month rejected the State and

Central government's plea for 20% sample re-verification in border districts and 10% in other areas.

It was to be done in order to ensure an error-free NRC.

SC's rejection

The Supreme Court's rejection of the plea followed NRC State Coordinator Prateek Hajela's submission that 27% re-verification had already been done.

'His claim is irrelevant as he had not taken the people of Assam into confidence while carrying out the 27% re-verification as claimed," Mr. Patowary said.

The Minister slammed Mr. Hajela for keeping the the State and Central governments in the dark despite using 55,000 State government employees for the updating exercise and spending ₹1,200 crore of the government's money to prepare a list that "leaves room for doubt".

kistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Washington, kot air strike by India. Indian 'spy' arrested in

Punjab, say Pak police

Raju Lakshman held in Dera Ghazi Khan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Police in Pakistan's Punjab province claimed to have arrested an "Indian spy", identified as Raju Lakshman, in the town of Dera Ghazi Khan on Wednesday.

He has been handed over him to a premier intelligence agency for further investigation.

The police official concerned Liaquat Leghari told reporters that a team of the border military police had arrested 30-year-old Lakshman during patrolling.

"Raju Lakshman is an Indian national. The security agencies are interrogating him to know whether he crossed over here inadvertently or for spying purpose," he said.

Banned entry

Dera Ghazi Khan, about 400 km from Lahore, reportedly houses 'sensitive installations' and the Islamabad has banned the entry of any foreign national in this dis-

You don't need a uniform to climb Tiger Hill

Once popular Himalayan trekking routes close to the LoC are to be opened again

Calling adventure buffs: Areas near Kargil offer views

PEERZADA ASHIQ

Etched in popular memory as sites of hard-fought conflict and martyrdom, Kargil's Batalik and Tiger Hill are now open to tourists - among 17 trekking routes, including seven areas hosting meadows and ridges along the Line of Control (LoC), thrown open by the J&K government.

The State Administrative Council (SAC), chaired by Governor Satya Pal Malik, on Wednesday decided to open up the 17 routes without insisting on permits to enter the Ladakh region. A Raj Bhawan spokesman said Mr. Malik was in touch with the Union Home Ministry to give final shape to the scheme.

The trekking routes proposed to be opened along the LoC in Kargil district will include Kargil-Lalung-Shahshi Lake-Darchiks-Garkone Brog; Kargil-Hunderman Brok Ridge; Batalik Junction to Gargardo, an apricot village; that few have seen. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT Drass-Sumda-Marpola in Tiger Hill Base; and National Highway to Budgam-Majdass Village.

Ten traditional routes, which attracted hundreds of European and Australian climbers in the premilitancy phase in the 1980s, will also be thrown

open again. These include Faroona-Jasgund via Lasar La; Akshow in Zanskar-Gulab Garh Kishtwar; Kanore-

who owns Highland Journeys, which offers

trekking from three days to offer unseen beauty. It will trekking as a sport in Kashmir," Mr. Tramboo told The Hindu.

The opening of these

adventure sports-based tours in Srinagar, described the decision as opening up a treasure trove for tourists. Game-changer "These routes will offer several weeks. The areas close to the LoC in Kargil be a game-changer for

adventure sports expert

trekking routes will also provide gainful employment to the local people particularly in the Kargil region, say officials. "Prior to 1990s,

European tourists, especially Germans and French, topped the trekkers visiting Kashmir followed by Australians and Britons. The step will see a new beginning for tourism in Kargil and attract high end tourists again," he said.

Rivals clash with front runner Biden

Sharp exchanges centred around his campaign issue of health care, climate change and past record

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Democratic front runner Joe Biden went on the offensive on Wednesday against his main 2020 opponents, but was rapidly assailed on the debate stage over key issues such as health care, race and immigration.

Tensions rose between the former Vice-President and Senator Kamala Harris. the most prominent African American in the field, as the two reprised their clash from a month earlier at the debut debate. But while Mr. Biden aimed aggressive attacks at Ms. Harris and her health care plan, other rivals in the second night of the twonight, 20-candidate debate sought to undercut him on a host of issues.

Mr. Biden is leading polls for the nod to take on President Donald Trump in 2020, and nearly all of the other nine Democrats on stage attacked him at some point.

He found himself in a series of sharp exchanges on the central campaign issue of health care along with his stance on climate change



Hard talk: (From left) Senator Cory Booker, former Vice-President Joe Biden and Senator Kamala Harris during the Democratic Presidential Debate in Detroit. ■ NYT

and his past legislative record, in particular his failure to take decisive action against illegal immigration.

When Mr. Biden jousted with Ms. Harris about her "double talk" on her own modified Medicare for All plan, which he noted would take 10 years to kick in, Ms. Harris shot back: "You're simply inaccurate in what you're describing."

She said Mr. Biden's profor governmentbacked health insurance for those who want it "leaves out almost 10 million Americans" from coverage.

Mr. Biden's advisers had urged him to be more aggressive after his lackluster first debate performance, but the 76-year-old struck a curious opening note on Wednesday.

As the debate began, Mr. Biden greeted Harris, a 54year-old former California attorney general, by shaking her hand and saying, "Go easy on me, kid."

She did not. Ms. Harris renewed the criticism that gave her a viral moment in the first debate by accusing Mr. Biden of making light of his work with segregationists in

"The Vice-President has still failed to acknowledge that it was wrong to take the position that he took at that time," Ms. Harris said.

the Senate in the 1970s.

Rare unity

The squabbling came after deep fault lines between the party's centrist and progressive wings were exposed on the first debate night, which featured leading liberals Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

In one of the few moments of broad unity onstage, several candidates joined Mr. Biden in condemning Mr. Trump.

Tulsi Congresswoman Gabbard said the President "is not behaving like a patriot," while Julian Castro, the only Latino in the field, branded Mr. Trump an outright "racist." But much of the night was consumed with clashes between candidates. "Middle ground approaches are not enough," said Washington Governor Jay Inslee, who has released a plan to tackle climate change. "We must confront the fossil fuel industry."

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said he was fully prepared to "restructure" the U.S. economy and society.

"We will tax the hell out of the wealthy," he boomed.

Low-polling candidates like Mr. de Blasio, Mr. Inslee, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and entrepreneur Andrew Yang were desperate for standout moments to justify staying in the race.

muddies a path to talks It's unclear whether he will be barred from visiting UN DAVID E. SANGER MICHAEL CROWLEY

Punishing Zarif, Trump

The Trump administration took the unusual step on Wednesday of placing sanctions on Iran's Foreign Minister, essentially cutting off the clearest avenue for talks with Iran by punishing the man who negotiated the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Senior administration officials described the Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif - an American-educated diplomat who is well connected throughout the U.S. - as the "propaganda arm" of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

In withdrawing last year from the nuclear accord, the administration argued that the move was intended to open negotiations. But with Mr. Zarif sidelined, it was unclear who else might serve as an experienced intermediary for Tehran in any potential talks. The administration has already imposed sanctions on the country's remaining power centres, Mr. Khamenei and the elite military organisation, the Revolutionary Guard.

Mr. Zarif welcomed the news in his signature combative form on Twitter. "The US' reason for designating me is that I am Iran's 'primary spokesperson around the world. Is the truth really that painful? It has no effect on me or my family, as I have no property or interests outside of Iran. Thank you for considering me such a huge threat to your agenda."

Trump administration officials did not indicate whether they would seek to bar Mr. Zarif from visiting



A file photo of Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. • AP

EU to work with Iran despite U.S. sanctions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BRUSSELS

The European Union said on Thursday it regrets the U.S. decision to impose sanctions against Iran's Foreign Minister

Mohammad Javad Zarif and vowed to continue working with him.

The decision was the latest blow by President Donald Trump to the 2015 deal to curb Iran's nuclear programme, which Brussels has been trying to salvage. "We regret this decision," said Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela, a spokesman for EU diplomatic chief.

the UN, although they appeared to favour doing so. During meetings there two weeks ago, he gave interviews to television networks and met with reporters.

'Visa abused'

Those interviews angered Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and other officials, who argued that he was abusing his visa, which limits him to meetings associated with the UN and restricts his movements to three buildings.

The defiant action is the latest in a series of mixed signals the Trump administration has sent to Tehran. In mid-June, Mr. Trump approved - then pulled back -

targeted strikes against Iran to retaliate for its downing of a U.S. drone. Mr. Trump offered a muted response to Iran's seizure of a Britishflagged oil tanker in the Gulf. When Iran tested a mediumrange ballistic missile last week, Trump officials played down the episode.

And even as administration officials imposed sanctions on Mr. Zarif, they extended waivers on separate sanctions, related to Iran's nuclear programme.

Appearing on Fox Business Network on Wednesday, National Security Adviser John Bolton said a waiver would be extended for 90 days. NY TIMES

51 killed in multiple attacks in Yemen

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rebels in Yemen fired a ballistic missile on Thursday at a military parade in the southern port city of Aden and coordinated suicide bombings targeted a police station in another part of the city. The attacks killed at least 51 people and wounded dozens, officials said.

The missile hit a military

parade of forces loyal to the UAE, a member of the Saudi-led coalition that has been fighting the Iranbacked Houthi rebels since 2015 in support of Yemen's government. The missile attack killed at least 40, a health official said.

Earlier, 11 people were killed and at least 29 wounded in multiple blasts in the

TTP diktat on polio drops, music

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Pakistani Taliban has warned people in the tribal district of North Waziristan not to play loud music and administer polio vaccination to their children, according to a media report on Thursday.

The one-page message on a pamphlet in Urdu issued by banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Miramshah, the headquarters of Pakistan's North Waziristan

district, on Wednesday also directed women not to venture out without a male company, the Dawn newspaper reported.

"We remind you [residents] that similar statements issued by the Taliban several times in the past had fallen on deaf ears, but this time we are going to take to task those who violate the order," it stated.

There will be no use of DJs either inside the house or in open fields and those ignoring the warning will face consequences, the message said. The pamphlet prohibited the people from playing loud music on computer and other shops with a warning that any place from where songs were heard could be blown up any time, the report said.

Polio workers have been asked to do finger-marking of children during the vaccination campaign but without administering polio drops to them.

ELSEWHERE



on Chinese goods: Trump

President Donald Trump says the U.S. will apply a new tariff of 10% on about \$300 billion worth of products from China on September 1. Mr. Trump tweeted on Thursday amid slow-moving talks with China that negotiations will continue. AP

'No-deal Brexit to slow U.K. growth, hit pound'

The Bank of England on Thursday warned that a no-deal Brexit would slow Britain's economic growth, increase inflation and probably further drag down the pound against the dollar, as it announced it was holding interest rates at 0.75%. AFP

Dutch ban on burgas in public places takes effect

The law was passed in June 2018

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The Netherlands banned the wearing of a face-covering veil, such as a burga or nigab, in public buildings and on transport from Thursday as a contentious law on the garment worn by some Muslim women came into force.

Between 200 and 400 women are estimated to wear a burqa or niqab in the country of 17 million people.

legislation was passed in June 2018 after a decade of political debate on the subject. The far-right politician Geert Wilders had proposed the veil ban back in 2005. "From now on the wearing of clothing which covers the face is banned in educational facilities, public



Between 200 to 400 women wear a burga or a nigab in the country. • AP

institutions and buildings, as well as hospitals and public transport," the Dutch Interior Ministry said.

The law also bans face-covering helmet or hood. A person could be fined €150 (\$165). However, the public transport sector said it would not stop to make a woman in a burqa get off as it would cause delays.

'Bin Laden's son Hamza killed'

U.S. media report says he was killed 'during the last two years'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON

Osama bin Laden's son Hamza, chosen heir to the leadership of al-Qaeda, has been killed, U.S. media reported on Wednesday citing Ameri can officials.

NBC News said three U.S. officials had confirmed they had information of Hamza bin Laden's death, but gave no details of the place or

The New York Times subsequently cited two U.S. officials as saying they had confirmation that he was killed during the last two years in an operation that involved the U.S.

Questioned by reporters in the Oval Office, President Donald Trump did not confirm or deny the NBC report. "I don't want to comment on



it," he said

Both reports suggested that Hamza may have been killed well before the State Department announced a \$1 million bounty on his head in February 2019.

The 15th of Osama bin Laden's 20 children and a son of his third wife, Hamza, thought to be about 30 years old, was "emerging as a leader in the al-Qaeda franchise," the State Department said in announcing the reward.

'Crown prince'

Sometimes dubbed the crown prince of jihad", he had put out audio and video messages calling for attacks on the U.S. and other countries, especially to avenge his father's killing by U.S. forces in Pakistan in May 2011, the department said.

Documents seized in the raid on his father's house in Abbottabad suggested Hamza was being groomed as heir to the al-Qaeda leadership.

U.S. forces also found a video of the wedding of Hamza to the daughter of another senior al-Qaeda official that is believed to have taken place in Iran.

Bin Laden family's aide arrested in Philippines

Abdeljalil was living with a fake identity

DANIEL VICTOR

A Jordanian man once considered a financier for al-Qaida and a "henchman" of Osama bin Laden's brotherin-law was arrested in the Philippines in July, officials said on Thursday, reinforcing concerns that Islamic militants are making a base in the country.

Mahmoud Afif Abdelialil. 51, was arrested on July 4 in Zamboanga, a coastal city at the southwestern tip of Mindanao, the nation's secondlargest island. Abdeljalil had false documents under an assumed name, Jaime Morente, the chief of the Bureau of Immigration, said in a statement

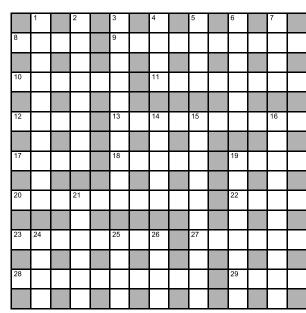
Abdelialil, whom the authorities called "a former henchman" connected to

the bin Laden family, has been in government custody since the arrest. "We are going to deport him for being an illegal entrant as he has no record of arrival, at ter he was arrested and deported in 2003 for being an undesirable alien," Mr. Morente said.

In 2003, the authorities said that Abdeljalil was a close associate of Mohammed Khalifa, bin Laden's brother-in-law, and that the two were involved in financing the Qaida network through charity organisations.

Officials said they began monitoring Abdeljalil after he and an Algerian companion were flagged at a military checkpoint in Zamboanga last year. NY TIMES

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12694



CM YK

ACROSS

8 Fall: a story (4) 9 Engagement of son in the

middle of probation - that's outrageous! (10) 10 Oppose what's bloody right (6)

11 Cooking aid say to take grime off around bottom of skillet

12 Skill to flip end of gravy on dish (4)

13 Termination of prices to enter drinking establishment (6,4)

17 A feeling of remorse, having stolen University's gold (4)

18 Region surrounding new sports stadium... (5)

mountains (4)

19 ... has planes circling over

20 Lapse in street security? (4,6)

22 Dam' topless bird (4) 23 Cruel abuse led a fat husband

to leave (8)

27 Menace of crowd, perhaps shortly approaching a joint (6)

28 Plan B is to get cooked okra and a little radish wrapped

29 Another enlistee oddly

DOWN

1 Paternal and prosperous... girl's preference (10) 2 Chemical agent obtained from

household pet's salty when analysed (8)

(set by Bruno)

3 City has a canal with rats scurrying (5,5)

4 That is describing Sri Lanka?

5 Shoot school-going snob (4)

6 Code of conduct of nameless native society (6)

regularly come up to the surface (4)

7 Not all of Bruno's sobs

14 Abnormal force – dark & recurrent (5) 15 Accuracy of old law - it's due

to be revised (10) 16 Expression of support and love at work (e.g. hugging) -

said to be criminal? (4-1-5)

19 Boy, after back-condition, was not the same (8)

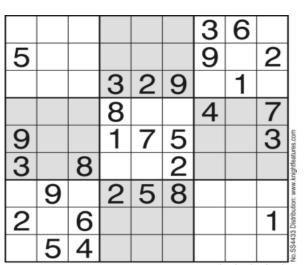
21 Criticize beer brewed around

Britain (6) 24 Call aunty on vacation middle-school's boring! (4)

25 Uncommon ultrarealistic heart

26 Partners leaving the French uprising (4)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★公公

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FAITH

Bound to samsara

Of the three gunas, sattva is free from impurities. So, it helps to acquire knowledge. The other two qualities, rajas and tamas, lead to delusional knowledge and wrong understanding. But sattva leads to proper understanding. And yet, sattva too is a hindrance to liberation, because it makes us seek happiness and knowledge, said Valayapet Ramachariar in a discourse. How can love for knowledge keep us from liberation? The example of sage Bharadwaja shows what love for knowledge can lead to.

Bharadwaja wanted to imbibe the essence and import of the Vedas totally. But he found that despite diligent study, he was not making much progress. So he prayed for another hundred years of life in order to study the Vedas. But at the end of the extended period of life, he had still not completed his study and asked for a further extension. So, in his case, it was a thirst for knowledge that kept him in this world, instead of seeking moksha. Anagha is the term the Lord uses to address Arjuna. Agha means impurity or sin. Arjuna was anagha - the one without impurity, because he sought nothing and was unattached to anything. So, attachment to knowledge is also a stumbling block to liberation.

Rajas is characterised by raga, trishna and sanga. Raga is the mutual attraction between man and woman. Trishna is the thirst for sense objects. Sanga is the desire to be in the company of one's wife, children and relatives. To get what he wants, the person with rajas indulges in acts that result in repeated births and deaths. So, he too remains caught in samsara like the one with sattva guna. Lust, greed, ambition for one's children can all lead to wrongful acts, and such acts are committed by the one with rajas. A man with rajas acts as he pleases, with no thought of the consequences.

Q1 has begun with a healthy and equitable growth

across all our lines of businesses. Headline

pricing remained stable, albeit at low levels

97

MARKET WATCH

	01-08-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	37,018	-1.23
US Dollar	69.06	-0.39
Gold	35,795	0.04
D		

NIFTY 50		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	371.10	-6.45
Asian Paints	1504.70.	16.40
Axis Bank	669.30	-4.80
Bajaj Auto	2537.65	21.15
Bajaj Finserv	7082.00	-15.85
Bajaj Finance	3222.10	-29.95
Bharti Airtel	323.90	13.70
BPCL	343.65	-1.85
Britannia Ind	2600.90	-4.10
Cipla	512.45	-8.65
Coal India	202.45	-2.00
Dr Reddys Lab	2533.75	-40.85
Eicher Motors	16562.80	214.75
GAIL (India)	128.60	-0.25
Grasim Ind		
HCL Tech		
HDFC	2086.80	-35.00
HDFC Bank		
Hero MotoCorp		
Hindalco		
Hind Unilever		
Indiabulls HFL		
ICICI Bank		
IndusInd Bank		
Bharti Infratel		
Infosys		
Indian OilCorp		
ITC		
JSW Steel		
Kotak Bank		
L&T		
M&M		
Maruti Suzuki		
NTPC		
ONGC		
PowerGrid Corp		
Reliance Ind		
State Bank		
Sun Pharma		
Tata Motors		
Tata Steel		
TCS		
Tech Mahindra		
Titan		
UltraTech Cement		
UPL		
Vedanta		
Wipro		
YES Bank		
Zee Entertainment.		

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit 68.86.....69.1876.3683.82 **British Pound** Japanese Yen (100) ... 63.22 ...63.52 ..10.0269.53 69.20. Singapore Dollar .52.32 Malaysian Ringitt

+ 'Siddhartha tried to

Mounting liquidity crisis forced

coffee entrepreneur V.G. Sidd-

hartha to reach out to at least

three companies - including

two builders and a foreign real-

ty advisory firm – to sell some

of his personal real estate as-

sets in Bengaluru and Mysuru.

Mindtree shares, he started ex-

ploring liquidity for some of his

realty assets. However, he was

very upset with the prices he

was offered by them. The offer

prices were too low as the po-

tential buvers were well aware

that he was on a distress sale

mode," said a person who was

on a time bomb in the last few

years, said a planter who was

also a friend of the entrepre-

"Most of his personal shares,

shares of his wife Malavika and

stake in some of his compa-

nies, including Coffee Day En-

terprises Day were pledged.

Debt was mounting on a daily

Mr. Siddhartha was sitting

close to Mr. Siddhartha.

"Soon after the sale of his

sell real estate assets'

'However, prices offered were too low'

Nifty below 11,000 first time since Mar.

Maximum losses in auto, banking, metal and technology stocks; Sensex crashes 463 points

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A day after the U.S. Federal Reserve reduced interest rate for the first time since 2008, global equity markets, including India, lost heavy ground as the U.S. central bank did not take a dovish stance as was widely expected by markets across the globe.

The Indian benchmarks lost more than 1% on Wednesday, with the 50-share Nifty falling below the psychological 11,000-mark for the first time since March.

While investors sold shares across sectors, the maximum losses were in auto, banking, metal and technology stocks.

The 30-share Sensex, which fell 787 points during intra-day trades to touch a



Fed factor: Markets were expecting a more dovish stance by the U.S. central bank. • PAUL NORONHA

low of 36,694.18, managed to recoup some of the losses to close at 37,018.32, down 462.80 points, or 1.23%.

As many as 23 of the Sensex constituents ended in the red with Infosys, HDFC Bank, HDFC, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, TCS and Bajaj Auto contributing the

maximum to the day's

The broader Nifty closed at 10,980, shedding 105.40 points, or 1.24%. This was the lowest close for the index since March 1. Meanwhile, the India VIX index shot up 7% on Wednesday, pegging its total surge to nearly 20%

in the last three trading sessions.

Vivek Ranjan Misra, Head - Fundamental Research, Karvy Stock Broking, attributed the fall to the 'mid-cycle adjustment' by the U.S. Federal Reserve as markets were expecting a more dovish stance by the U.S. central

"For Indian equities, this is on top of the headwinds it has faced recently, like FII selling on account of tax proposals. There are other reasons as well, firstly the weakness in economy has not abated, as evident by the core sector data and auto sales. Secondly while some companies have reported good numbers, the vast number have been disappointing and commentary has not been encouraging," Mr. Misra said. While the U.S. Fed announced a 25 basis points cut in interest rate, it also hinted that it was not the first of more cuts to come.

The statement led to equity markets tumbling globally with the benchmarks of Hong Kong, South Korea, Indonesia and Taiwan all ending in the red. Some of the European markets were also in the red on Wednesday.

Back in India, nearly 1,700 stocks lost ground on BSE, as against 778 gainers. Foreign investors were net sellers at more than ₹1,000 crore on Wednesday, having sold shares worth nearly ₹12,500 crore in July.

The weakness in equity markets spilled over to the currency markets with rupee weakening 27 paisa against

Similarly, Toyota Kirloskar

Motor (TKM) said its domes-

tic sales declined 24% to

In the two-wheeler space,

Bajaj Auto saw its domestic

sales dip 13% per cent last

TVS Motor Company re-

ported a 12.98% dip in its July

2019 sales to 2.79 lakh unit

In the domestic market,

two-wheeler sales dropped

to 2.08 lakh units from 2.47

Truck major Ashok Ley-

land reported a 39% contrac-

tion in the sales of its medi-

um and heavy commercial

vehicles (M&HCV) in the

and

Truck sales dipped 48%

(With inputs by N. Anand)

for July 2019 to 4,858 units.

month to 2,05,470 units.

on weaker volumes.

lakh units.

domestic

markets.

10,423 unit.

quarterly loss in 14 years

01 FY20

20,738

(2,866)

Telco posts ₹2,866 crore loss in Q1

Bharti Airtel logs first

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Call drop

Metrics

Revenue from

operations (₹cr.)

Net profit (₹cr.)

Bharti Airtel on Thursday posted a staggering ₹2,866 crore loss for the June quarter, its first consolidated loss in 14 years, as the telco lost ground to rival Reliance Jio and took a hit from exceptional items such as charges towards accelerated depreciation of 3G network gear.

The revenue rose 4.7% to ₹20,738 crore during the first quarter ended June

"After accounting for hit of ₹14,454 million (₹1,445.4 crore) towards exceptional items (net of tax), the resultant net loss for the quarter ended June 30, 2019 came in at ₹28,660 million (₹2,866 crore), compared to profit of ₹973 million (₹97.3 crore) in the corresponding quarter last year and ₹1,072 million (₹107.2 crore) in the previous quarter," the company said in its quarterly report.

'Exceptional hit' The "exceptional hit" for the quarter included amongst other heads a charge towards accelerated depreciation of 3G network equipment and operating costs on network re-farming and up-gradation programme as well as incremental provision for derivative liabilities pertaining to customary indemnities provided to a clutch of investors of Airtel Africa and expenses relating to its recent listing, the company ex-

Airtel's revenue from India mobile services increased 4.1% year-on-year to ₹10.724 crore.

In revenue terms, Reliance Jio is now comfortably placed on top of the telco stack given that its topline stood at ₹11,679 crore in June quarter (just three years into its commercial operations) against ₹11,269.9 crore of Vodafone

Airtel, though, registered an improvement in many of the operational parameters. For instance, for the June quarter, Airtel's India Average Revenue Per User stood at ₹129 against ₹123 in the March quarter. Also, mobile data traffic on its network grew 94% year on year.

Commenting on the earnings, Gopal Vittal, MD and CEO (India and South Asia), Bharti Airtel, said the first quarter of the year has begun with a "healthy and equitable growth across all our lines of businesses. Headline pricing remained stable, albeit at low levels," he

Auto firms hit by double-digit slump in July

Sector impacted by subdued consumer sentiment and overall economic slowdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Continuing to face rough weather, Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai and three other auto majors reported a double-digit decline in sales in July as consumer sentiment remained subdued.

Market leader Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its domestic sales were down 36.3% to 98,210 units last month compared with 1,54,150 units in July last year. It was in June 2017 that the company's sales had last fallen below 1 lakh units mark in a month. Mini segment, comprising

Alto and old WagonR, saw a massive slide of 69.3% to 11,577 units as against 37,710 units in the year-ago month.

Rival Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) reported 10% dip in domestic sales to 39,010

basis with interest rising con-

debt of at least ₹1,000 crore. As

per documents from Corporate

Affairs Ministry, he raised

funds through Coffee Day Con-

solidations, Devadarshini Info

Technologies and Gonibedu

his company own thousands of

hectares of coffee plantations.

But plantations, as such, have

no value now-a-days with fall-

ing coffee prices. The land pric-

es have also been too low in the

last many years. Also, you

don't find any buyers for them

unless you want to sell them

dirt cheap," said a professional

attached to a global realty advi-

sory firm. One acre plantation

is available from ₹6 lakh to ₹25

lakh depending on various fac-

of Mr. Siddhartha's lenders had

questioned his ability to repay

while casting doubts on the va-

lue of his assets, including the

plantations.

As per media reports, some

tors, market sources said.

"It is true that his family and

Many say he had a personal

tinuously," said the planter.



Applying brakes: The automotive industry continues to face headwinds as sales continue to contract. • REUTERS

units last month.

Mahindra & Mahindra reported a 16% decline in domestic market to 37,474 units.

The company's passenger vehicle segment reported a sales of 16,831 vehicles last month as against 19,781 units in the same period of 2018.

> **HC restrains** sale of Titan

fakes via e-tailer

Titan Company Limited (Ti-

tan) has received an ad-inte-

rim relief from the Delhi High

Court against sale of counter-

feit Titan and Fasttrack

watches on e-tailing platform

parte ad-interim injunction

order dated July 29, res-

trained certain sellers from

selling, marketing or other-

wise dealing in goods bearing

the marks TITAN and FAS-

Further, Snapdeal was di-

rected to take down within 24

hours of service of the said or-

der, the URLs over which

complaint had already been

lodged by Titan with Snap-

S. Ravi Kant, CEO- Watches

& Accessories division, Titan

Company Limited said, "In

the recent past, numerous

cases of rampant trademark

infringement and counterfeit-

ing have come to light and we

believe this can only be coun-

tered through strong legal

The court, through an ex-

Snapdeal.

TRACK of Titan.

deal.

measures.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

"The headwinds faced by the automotive industry continue as a result of subdued consumer sentiment, triggered by various factors," M&M chief of sales and mar-

keting, automotive division, Veejay Ram Nakra said. The industry needs stimuli to help revive consumer demand and conversions, he added. Honda Cars India Ltd. (HCIL) reported 48.67% decline in domestic sales to 10,250 units in July.

Delaying purchase

"The de-growth in the automobile industry further intensified last month amidst weak buying sentiment and overall slowdown. We are also witnessing a lot of postponement of purchases," Ra-Goel, senior vice-president and director (sales and marketing) at HCIL, said.

He further said,"it is extremely worrisome since July 2019 decline is much severe than Q1 decline and that too when the industry had de-grown in July last year as

GST revenue touches ₹1.02 lakh crore in July

Collections stood at ₹99.939 crore in June

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GST revenue crossed the onelakh crore mark once again in July, coming in at ₹1,02,083 crore, the government announced on Thursday.

"The total gross GST revenue collected in the month of July 2019 is ₹1,02,083 crore, of which CGST is ₹17,912 crore, SGST is ₹25,008 crore, IGST is ₹50,612 crore and cess is ₹8,551 crore," the government said in a release. "The total number of GSTR 3B Returns filed for the month of June up to July 31, 2019 is 75.79 lakh." This is the third month out of four in this financial year in which collections have crossed ₹1 lakh crore. Collections stood at ₹99,939

crore in June. The average collection this year so far is ₹1,04,044 crore, compared with the average of ₹98,114 crore for the full year 2018-19. "The revenue in July 2018 was ₹96,483 crore and the revenue during July 2019 is a growth of 5.8% over the revenue in the same month last year," the release added.

Silver lining Average collection in FY20 so far has been ₹1,04,044 cr., compared with ₹98,114 cr. for FY19



"During April-July 2019 vis-àvis 2018, the domestic component has grown by 9.2%, while the GST on imports has come down by 0.2% and the total collection has grown by 6.83%."

"The GST collections for the month, despite being in excess of ₹1 trillion, would be matter of concern as this is lower than the Budget numbers. The collections need to be correlated with the economic situation as well," said M.S. Mani, partner, Deloitte India

Crisil cuts FY20 GDP growth forecast to 6.9% from 7.1%

Firm cites weak monsoon, slow global growth

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Ratings agency Crisil has cut its forecast for GDP growth in 2019-20 to 6.9% from its earlier forecast of 7.1%, citing weak monsoon, slow global growth and poor high-frequency data for the first quarter of the financial

"Crisil has sliced its estimate of India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 20 basis points to 6.9% for this fiscal, following a triangulation of downside risks: weak monsoon, slowing global growth, and sluggish high-frequency data for the first quarter," the agency said in a report.

It added that the slowdown would be more pronounced in the April-June period while the second half of the year would be bolstered by the expected monetary easing, consumption, and a statistical low-base effect.

"Given the crosswinds, the sops announced so far might not be enough to pitchfork growth in this fiscal to, or above, the past 14-year average of 7% per annum," Ashu Suyash, Managing Director & CEO of Crisil said. "Policy action looks more attuned to consumption than investment demand, which means con-

sumption will be the first to ascend as the tide turns."

Crisil also expects corporate sector growth to slow to 8% in 2019-20. lower than the double-digit growth trend of the last two financial years.

"Most consumption segments will pull India Inc.'s revenue growth to single digits," the report said. "And weak prices of commodities such as steel would exacerbate the pain."

"Sales volume in the automobiles sector will be impacted by a trifecta of a spurt in costs due to changes in regulation, tightening liquidity and moderating income growth," Prasad Koparkar, senior director at Crisil Research said. "Sombre farm incomes will also weigh on rural-led segments

such as FMCG. The report said that banking sectorNPAs are expected to come down to about 8% by the end of financial vear 2019-20, based on lower additional NPAs and increased recoveries. Credit growth is expected to recover to 14%, the highest in five years.

"The crucial question is whether a trough is in sight," Dharmakirti Joshi, chief economist at Crisil said, "Given the fiscal constraints, public spending is unlikely to have the heft to pull growth above 7%," he said.

INTERVIEW | DHARMAKIRTI JOSHI

'Rains, global growth risks behind downward tilt'

A poor August monsoon, oil price rise and financial sector troubles may pull down growth further: CRISIL

MANOJIT SAHA

Dharmakirti Joshi, Chief Economist, CRISIL, reveals the factors behind the downward revision in growth forecast and how weak business sentiments are hurting investments.

What has changed in the last three months for growth projections to be revised downward by 20 bps to 6.9%?

■ Firstly, the weather gods have not been very favourable. July and August are the two critical months and July was not a great month. Our base forecast assumed monsoon will be normal and well-distributed as projected by the IMD, which is not the case as it turned out to be. So we have given it a downward tilt. Second is the global environment. The way global central banks are cutting rates indicates there is a downside risk to global growth. The recent IMF forecast also spills over to us.

downside risks to the

■ Well, upside does not seem to be visible right now. Downside is clearly August

What are the upside and growth forecast of 6.9%?

monsoon

does not play out well, that is going to pull down growth further. Or, if oil prices start rising. Because global growth is weak and geo-politics has a role to play. What happens to

> ture of downward drift from weakening growth but possibly an upward drift from geo-political issues that are playing out currently. So, oil is a risk. Finally, the financial sector is also not

> > fully

capable

of sup-

oil prices will be a mix-

porting growth. So, that also remains a risk which needs to be carefully monitored. The shortterm indicators in the first quarter are weaker than what we expected, which will pull overall growth down for the financial

You have mentioned sluggish high frequency indicators as a factor for growth revision. Can you throw some light?

■ You look at the PMIs, IIP

growth, export growth – these are numbers that come out on a monthly basis and on top of that core inflation has come out quite weak. That is a reflection of weakness in demand.

Do you think only monetary stimulus is sufficient for reviving growth? Or, is fiscal stimulus need of the hour?

■ Fiscal room is very limited. We have breached the FRBM target in the last two years. So, to spend your way of the current downturn is difficult.

That is why you are leaning more on the monetary policy. But monetary policy cannot in itself revive investment de-

Since consumption demand is slowing down, capacity utilisation which was improving, will now be stable or may decline, depending on how deep the slowdown goes.

IN BRIEF



RBI invites applications for Dy. Governor's post

The Centre has invited applications for RBI Deputy Governor's post that fell vacant after Viral Acharya resigned. Candidates with at least 25 years of work experience, including experience at the level of Secretary or equivalent in the Government of India or candidates having at least 25 years of work experience in an Indian or international public financial institution can apply.

Chola Financial profit rises to ₹2.56 crore

Cholamandalam Financial Holdings Ltd.'s standalone net profit for the first quarter ended June 2019 rose to ₹2.56 crore against ₹2.43 crore in the year-earlier period. Total income rose to ₹4.06 crore against ₹3.89 crore. Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Co. Ltd., in which the firm has 46.5% stake, disbursed ₹8,572 crore against ₹7,014 crore. It's standalone profit rose 10% to ₹314 crore on a consolidated basis.

Colgate-Palmolive (India) has new MD

Oral care major Colgate-Palmolive (India) Ltd. on Thursday said Ram Raghavan has been appointed as its managing director. Mr. Raghavan replaces Issam Bachaalani, who will move to another role within the company, the firm said in a statement. "Prior to this role, Mr. Raghavan served as vice-president, marketing Asia-Pacific division of Colgate-Palmolive," the company said. PTI

Global gold demand touches 3-year high

Continued central bank buying, sustained growth in gold-backed ETFs were the key drivers: WGC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Global gold demand in the first half of 2019 jumped to a three-year high on the back of robust demand by central banks and gold-backed exchange-traded funds (ETFs).

Gold demand was pegged at 2,181.7 tonnes in the first six months of the current calendar year, reflecting an 8% rise compared with the first half of 2018, as per the latest report by the World Gold Council (WGC).

"Continued central bank buying and sustained growth in gold-backed exchangetraded funds [ETFs] were the key drivers of this increase," the report stated.

"Central banks bought 224.4 tonnes of gold in Q2 2019. This took H1 [first six months] buying to 374.1



Metal craze: A strong recovery in India's jewellery market pushed overall demand in Q2 by 12% to 168.8 tonnes. • v .RAJU

tonnes, the largest net H1 increase in global gold reserves in our data series. In a continuation of recent trends, buying was spread across a diverse range of largely emerging market countries," it added.

Meanwhile, holdings of gold-backed ETFs grew 67.2 tonnes in the second quarter to a six-year high of 2,548 tonnes. As per the global body, continued geopolitical instability, dovish commentary on monetary policy

from central banks and the rallying gold price in June were the main factors driving inflows into the sector.

Incidentally, a strong recovery in India's jewellery market pushed the overall jewellery demand in the second quarter by 12% to 168.8 tonnes. A busy wedding season and healthy festival sales boosted demand, before the Iune price rise brought it to a virtual standstill, the report stated.

Bar and coin

Bar and coin investment in the second quarter dipped 12% to 218.6 tonnes and combined with the soft first quarter number, took the first half total to a six-year low of 476.9 tonnes. A 29% year-onyear drop in China accounted for much of the global second quarter decline, according to WGC.

On the other hand, gold supply grew 6% in the second quarter to 1,186.7 tonnes. A record Q2 gold mine production and a 9% jump in recycling, boosted by the sharp June gold price rally, led the growth in supply. On an overall half yearly basis, the supply touched 2,323.9 tonnes, the highest level since 2016.

In terms of price, the yellow metal touched multiyear highs, breaching \$1,400/oz for the first time since 2013.

Among the factors driving this rally were expectations of lower interest rates, political uncertainty, with further support coming from strong central bank buying, the report said.

Manufacturing expands faster on fresh orders

Consumer goods lead upturn

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Manufacturing activity expanded at a quicker rate in July due to an increase in new orders and the resultant scaling up of production by companies, according to a private sector

The Nikkei India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index came in at 52.5 in July, up from the 52.1 in June. A reading over 50 indicates an expansion while one below 50 denotes a contraction.

"Economic growth in India's manufacturing industry was sustained in July," the report said.

"Companies scaled up production in response to a quicker upturn in factory or-

ders. This, coupled with optimistic growth projections, underpinned job creation and an uptick in input purchasing."

"Rising from 52.1 in June to 52.5 in July, the IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index was consistent with a further strengthening in the health of the sector," the report added. "The latest reading was slightly higher than the average for calendar year 2018 (52.3), but below its long-run trend (53.9).

The report said consumer goods producers led the upturn in July, adding that even the intermediate goods makers saw a stronger improvement in business conditions in July.

Ashok Leyland to save up to ₹500 cr. via cost reduction measures

Firm to incur ₹1,700 to ₹2,000 cr. capex for BS-VI vehicles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Ashok Leyland Ltd., the flagship company of the Hinduia Group, is expecting to save about ₹400-500 crore during the current fiscal through cost reduction measures, said a top official.

"We want to take ₹400-500 crore of operating costs out of the system," said Gopal Mahadevan, whole-time director and chief financial officer, Ashok Leyland Ltd.

According to him, this would be done by having a relook at expenditure under heads such as administration, sales and manufacturing, distribution and productivity costs and analysing how the cost-cutting could be done in the most effective



Gopal Mahadevan

manner.

While classifying the costs as vital, essential and desirable, he said: "Costs that are vital and essential will be incurred and those under the desirable head will be spent on need basis.

To a question, Mr. Mahadevan said that the reduction in administrative overheads would not amount to a reduction in head count. On the other hand, the firm would focus on increasing the productivity of each employee.

During the current fiscal, Ashok Leyland would invest about ₹1,700 crore to ₹2,000 crore in capital expenditure for making BS-VI vehicles, on modular vehicle platform and on Project Phoenix.

Talking about production cuts at Pantnagar unit, he said it was done during June and July 2019 to produce vehicles based on demand projections and reduce inventories. On electric-powered buses, he said the firm was in discussions with State governments and private bus operators.

McLeod Russel to sell more estates by Sept.

INDRANI DUTTA

McLeod Russel India Ltd. is planning to sell at least three more tea estates in West Bengal's Dooars and in Assam by September

In a bid to pare its debt, the company has been on a selling spree since mid-2018, months after it set up a committee in May to identify the assets which could be put on the block.

"We may sell a garden in Dooars and at least two in Assam," a source said on condition anonymity.

The company's debt stood at around ₹1,000 crore at end June 2019 and has also suffered rating downgrades.

Sharp decline in cotton yarn exports worries industry

'Shipments to main market China have almost halved'

M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA

India's cotton yarn exports between April and June this year was 33% lower compared to the same period last year, leading to concern among textile mills.

The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (Texprocil) has pointed out that cotton yarn exports from April to June 2019 was 226 million kg as against 338 million kg during the same period last year. In June, the exports were just 59 million kg, which is 50.74% less compared to June 2018.

China is the main market for Indian cotton yarn exports. But, exports to China have dropped nearly 50%. Besides, exports to Bangla-



desh, Vietnam, and Columbia have also declined, Siddhartha Rajagopal, Executive Director of Texprocil, said.

India used to export 32% of its cotton yarn production three years ago. This has fallen to 27% now.

"Considering the largescale investment in the spinning sector and sluggish demand in the domestic market, exports are the only avenue to ensure uninterrupted production and capacity utilisation," K.V. Srinivasan, chairman of the council, said in a press re-

Since 2014, all benefits extended for yarn exports were withdrawn.

Cotton yarn from Pakistan and Vietnam get duty free access to China. If the domestic textile mills are supported through interest subvention or refund of State taxes and levies, there will be some relief and the industry will become price competitive to explore new markets, Mr. Rajagopal ad-

Around the world in a flurry of flavour

One of the youngest chefs to earn a Michelin for her restaurant in Germany, Julia Komp is now blazing a trail across India with meticulously plated food and carrot sharks

SHONALI MUTHALALY

Julia Komp has no time to waste on niceties.

One of the world's youngest chefs to earn a Michelin for her restaurant, Schloss Loersfeld (Germany), in 2016 she's been on a mission all year. Quitting her high profile job, she has spent the last seven months travelling through 19 coun-

Julia is cooking intricate multicourse meals in most of these countries. She signed up for her first internship at the age of 14, then worked her way through a set of high-pressure kitchens, till she snagged the Michelin and a flurry of press in 2016, when she was 27 years old.

"In China, when I arrived they threw me a banquet," she says, shaking her head. She's sitting in Ottimo - the Italian restaurant at the ITC Grand Chola in Chennai, where she'd cooked a multi-course dinner for 50 guests. "I kept saying I have to start work, because I was cooking dinner for their guests the next day. They kept telling me to relax. Finally, by midnight, I could not bear it any more. I stood up and said, 'Enough!'" She went to the kitchen and cooked till 4 am. "Even then, I just managed to serve din-

Her discipline and attention to detail was evident through the six course dinner: from cheeky little sharks cut out of thin carrot slices swimming in the soup to the careful uniformity of every plate. Flavours were bright, light and refreshing, with the chef relying more on quality ingredients and skill, than butter and bombastic technique. One course, for example, featured just tomatoes:

RAHUL VERMA

I have come to the conclu-

sion that there is something

about ground and steamed

lentil cakes that truly ap-

peals to my palate. I first dis-

covered this when I had

some Gattey Ki Sabzi - a Ra-

jasthani preparation of lentil strips in a curry - many years

ago. Then, years later, when I tasted the Bengali Dhokar

Dalna, I knew I was a card-

carrying member of the steamed-lentil lovers' club.

That is why, when folks at home want to order some

Bengali food, I never demur.

Because, along with the fish

curry, there is always some

Dhokar Dalna coming in. I

eat it with rice, and, if there

is any left, I have it the next

morning for breakfast with a

I just had some a few days

ago. I was looking for Bengali

delivery outlets in my neigh-

bourhood and came across a

place called Probashi in Gha-

soft roti. Bliss.



Behind the scenes Julia Komp plating one of the first few courses of her multi-course meal at Ottimo, ITC Grand Chola

R RAVINDRAN AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

three varieties, with a quenelle of minty-fresh ice cream, crunchy dehydrated vegetable and quivering puddles of spherified green tomato. Every spoonful tasted different, yet the flavours united seamlessly. Julia's technique has evidently been honed by multiple kitchens: she uses many of the skills of molecular gastronomy, in addition to weaving in unexpected flavours from her journey.

The hotel's senior executive chef Ajit Bangera smiles as he says, "The deal is she cooks, and we teach her about Indian food in return." Julia nods seriously, explaining that she will be learning about regional food in each city she is travelling to, for this festival: Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, and Delhi. "I already have three books filled with notes," she

Growing up, Julia says wanted to be a "policewoman". However, her internship at a countryside hotel changed things. "I chose it because all the good looking boys would go to the gym there. The service was rubbish though, with chefs fighting all day." During the weekends, she ran a catering service, with her grandmother's help. . "We made finger food... stuffed tomatoes, pork fillet with Gorgonzola cream... I feel ashamed of that food now," she states with a gentle shudder. "I

will not cook any of it again." Her grandmother has a house in Tunisia, which is how Julia developed a fascination for Arabic flavours. "People there are friendly, and often when we returned from the beach there would be a plate of cous cous or shorba placed in front of our door." Living and cooking in Tunisia taught her that it was important to travel. "It doesn't matter

how focussed I am with chicken

curry: it will taste better if I come to

India and learn how it is cooked." Julia studied the Arabic kitchen by travelling through Dubai and Abu Dhabi, then went on to work in Bangkok, before moving to Indone-

"I take notes everywhere, even if I know I will not be able to replicate the recipe later. With traditional Indonesian food, for example, it is hard to find all the ingredients. It is also very rich and heavy." Then came Vietnam, the Philippines, Japan and Korea. "The food is just totally different in each region," she says, adding, "People should not say something is 'Asian'. It is so wrong. There are so many different kinds of food in Asia."

Cooking multi-course dinners in many of these countries quickly taught her to be self-sufficient. "My food is light and fruity. So when a recipe uses lemon, I use passion fruit. When it calls for cream, I use coconut milk... Ingredients are rarely a problem. You get everything everywhere now. I cooked in Ethiopia, and I found everything I needed. If I have micro leeks, coriander cress or edible flowers, I will use them. But when I don't have them, I will not die," she says wryly, shaking her head.

By the end of the year, Julia plans to take everything she has learnt and start her own restaurant in Cologne. "My food will have Indian and Arabic flavours," she says, adding that she plans to distil everything she has learnt from her travels into the menu. "I'm gunning for two Michelin stars," she smiles, her eyes lighting up.

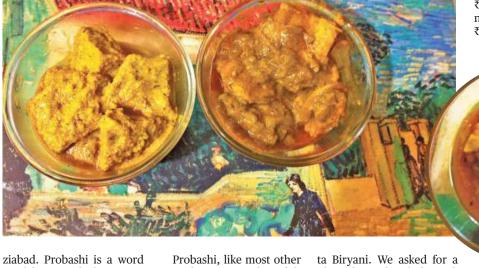
As for her biggest learning from cooking her way through multiple food cultures? She leans forward, dead serious, and says, "Always use enough salt."

Julia Komp was also at ITC Maratha, Mumbai. She will be cooking at ITC Royal Bengal, Kolkata, August 3: ITC Gardenia. Bengaluru, August 7; and ITC Maurya, New Delhi on August 10



Let's hear it for STEAMED LENTILS

Every culture has a variety, but there's nothing quite like the Bengali version



used for Bengalis living outside Bengal, though I suppose it refers to the diaspora

Bengali eateries, has fish fries, curries, veggies, the typical Bengali dals and dishes like Mutton Curry, Kolka-

plate of, yes, the Dhokar Dalna, Fish Lalia, Lau Chingri and Kosha Chicken. Kalia is a curry of onions and garlic,

and the fish was a plump piece of rohu. Lau Chingri is chopped bottle gourd cooked with small shrimps, and Kosha Chicken is a variation of Kosha Mangsho, a rich dish of meat cooked with either tomatoes or curd and tempered with spices.

I ordered the food through Swiggy. The rates were reasonable: the fish was priced at ₹135 for one large piece, the chicken at ₹315 a plate, the Dhokar Dalna at ₹205 and Lau Chingri at

I didn't have the fish but I



Bengali fare Dishes on offer at Probashi. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

was told it was rather good. The curry was rich, the piece was large and had been fried well and then cooked in the gravy. I enjoyed the Kosha Chicken - it didn't have much of a gravy, and it's not meant to, but it had absorbed the flavour of the spices. The Lau Chingri was a bit of surprise, for it wasn't the way we cook it at home. Our Lau Chingri is dark green, as the gourd is merely tempered with cumin seeds, green chillies and just a pinch of turmeric. This was dark brown, and was a bit runny. But it had quite a few shrimps in it, and overall the gourd dish had an interesting

I liked the food, especially the dhokar. I had thought the family would focus on the other dishes, and there would be some of it left for my breakfast. Sadly, they all enjoyed it as much as I did, and I had to make do with poha the next morning.

Note to self: Next time, order two plates. Or, better still, hide some of the dhokar dalna in the fridge when no one is looking.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

ART

A moment with trees

A month-long show, urges us to dwell on the beauty of trees, and think about the many lives that they nurture



The big banyan tree at the Ojas Art @1AQ in Mehrauli is a big part of the gallery's life. They host Under The Banyan Tree, a music series here; and director Anubhav Nath can swear that there's a great, positive energy around that tree.

It is in keeping with the gallery's larger spirit then, that they're bringing together close to 50 works of art, by six artists, in an exhibit called A Message from the Trees.

"Also because it's monsoon and with the levels of concrete on our roads, so many trees get uprooted after even one heavy rain," says Nath, who's also the show's curator, adding that this made him want to think of an "artistic way to do something about this".

Five Gond artists are participating in this show - and it isn't new that a city gallery would bring together this school of work for an exhibit about trees. The "folk" form has only been gaining popularity in art circles and beyond, given its simple, yet colourful appeal - each work also brims with powerful stories of the Gond community's age-old social practices, which are intrinsically tied in with the flora and fauna around them.

The one exception, Abhishek Singh, is a graphic artist whose 2018 work, Vrikshadootam, inspired Nath to put together A Message from the Trees - the title too, a translation of the title.

Singh's work, an arresting visual of ink on canvas, is 144" by 72" inches. The forest-like scene has various creatures whose horns and antlers grow into long tree-branch-like lines, a style that's popular in Gond art. It's almost a small endearing moment of commonality, especially given the masculine monochrome of Singh's work, in stark contrast to the colourful liveliness of the Gond works. "Also, as a gallery, it's an objective for us to bridge these gaps between tribal and urban contemporary art," says Nath.

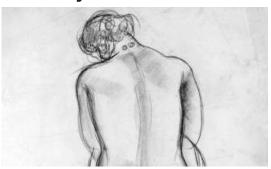
The show brings together some of the biggest, most recognisable names in Gond practice today, including Bhajju Shyam, Durga Bai, and Ram Singh Urveti.

The youngest Gond artist of this lot, 32-year-old artist Mayank Shyam's work is interesting — there's a distinct presence of buses and plumes of pollution, which are otherwise minimal presences in the canvases of older Gond artists. Mayank is also the son of the famous Gond painter Jangarh Singh Shyam, who died in 2001.

A Message from the Trees, August 2 - September 1; Ojas Art@1AQ, Near Qutab Minar, Mehrauli

PREVIEW

DAG x Taj Palace



After its first edition in Mumbai, the 115 Years Charity Gala of the Taj hotels is announcing its second edition, in Delhi, with a gala tonight. On preview are 25 works from DAG's twentieth-century collection, including those by Amrita Sher-Gil, S.H. Raza, Jamini Roy, and F.N. Souza. A part of the proceeds from the auction will go the Taj Public Service

Preview on till August 8; for reservations at the Gala, contact +91-9999620193; at the Taj Palace, 2, Sardar Patel Marg

For a listing or to be featured here, email us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



Wedding couture

Fashion designer Kiran Sharma is hosting her annual wedding and lifestyle exhibition titled The Bride & Groom, which will showcase wedding couture. This three-day event will feature previews by designers and jewellers like Kiara, Renu Kakar, Chhabra Sarees, Glitterati Jewels, Ritu Kumar, Anju Modi, and more.

VENUE: The Ashoka Hotel, Chanakyapuri TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



On societal behaviour

Tomorrow Belongs to Me, a solo show of paintings by 29-year-old artist Pallav Chander. Through this show, the artist focuses on contemporary societal psychology and behaviour, and paints it as abstract expression. The works also sees the artist accepting his dyslexia, and dealing with personal loss. **VENUE:** Alliance Française de Delhi, Lodhi Road TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



Malhar festival

Pracheen Kala Kendra is presenting its annual dance event, the Malhar Festival, a celebration of rain. The event will feature a Hindustani classical vocal recital by Aditya Sharma, accompanied by Kharak Singh on tabla, and Chetan Nigam on harmonium. Later, a vocal recital by Jui Dhaigude Pande will be held. **VENUE:** Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House TIME: 6:30 p.m. onwards



Street food festival

Food Exchange is hosting a 10-day long Mohammed Ali Street Food Festival. The dishes on the special menu are made with the recipes from street kitchens on Mohammed Ali Road in Mumbai. The menu offers Lamb Galouti, Nalli Nihari, Raan Changezi, Mutton Awadhi Biryani, and more.

VENUE: Food Exchange, Novotel Aerocity **TIME:** 7 p.m. - 11 p.m.



Tamil documentary

IIC will screen Koothu, a Tamil documentary film, directed by Sandhya Kumar. Koothu is a living theatre tradition of Tamil Nadu, performed as an all-night play. The film take a close look at Koothu, by recording performances and conducting extensive interviews with its practitioners.

VENUE: C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, IIC TIME: 6:30 p.m.

TABLE SIDE STORIES

Meals with narratives are a new platform for chefs to showcase their creativity and a great way for diners to connect with their food

RUTH DSOUZA PRABHU

I sat down at a table that had 23 other guests for a curated dinner titled Circle of Life by Lore, at The Courtyard in Bengaluru. I knew no one there and came in as ignorant of what to expect, as a baby. Which was befitting, considering the meal was inspired by our life cycle, from infancy to adulthood.

There was muted conversation among those who knew each other, but it was only when the first course was served that across-the-table banter erupted. Indicative of babyhood, we were served umami milk in a feeding bottle. Farex biscuits and a trio of mashed vegetables. This course had strangers break the ice to discuss childhood memories. From eating baby cereal straight from the box even as adults, to abhorring certain vegetables; and secretly still loving plain milk, old memories found kindred spirits across the table. Each of the next six courses triggered several such memories and had us trying to guess how the next plate would be presented from the picture cards we were given.

Creating narratives

Such meals with a narrative are increasingly giving chefs a platform to be uninhibitedly creative and a way for diners to experience and connect with their food.

"Creating a narrative for a meal helps people make a connection with their food," believes chef and consultant Anumitra, who has worked in Japan; and with brands like Diva in Delhi. Social media today dictates the good and the bad, and eating

choices are determined by the market. "Why are people interested in food facts they see online?" she asks. "Because it is intriguing, but often you don't know the context. I usually take five to six months to

work on the concept, read up on the history and then come up with dishes based on ingredients and their availability."

Anumitra has showcased in Delhi. Another showcase in Bengaluru, was of the seven Northeastern states - not by specific dishes, but by blending together key ingredients and flavours, making the discovery of the region's cuisine all the more intriguing.

All about the discovery

"The prospect of discovery, is the oldest way to grab attention," says Kanishka Sharma, founder, The Tenth Muse and Supper Club in Bengaluru. And many a stimulating conversation has come off her tables with themes like Japanese bodega-style dining and a nose-to-tail pork dinner.

"Food that has meaning, where the flavours stimulate your imagination and provide information, is what keeps Supper Club alive."

Speaking of imagination, Ujwala Bhat, owner of The Latin Mess, in Mumbai, has been a regular at The Literary Table, which has had meals centred on Harry Potter, Haruki Murakami, and more recently, Game of Thrones. "As a diner, if I like a theme and follow it closely, then it makes sense to relive the memories through food. At A Feast For The Throne, based

dessert that was set afire at the table. It was inspired by the sequence where Drogon burns down King's Landing and the Iron Throne. To see all those dishes you read about or associate with stories, be translated into a plate of food, is a wonderful way to relive the magic and the entire experience," says Putting that imagination on a plate

on the *GoT* series and books, we had a

is what works for co-founders of The Literary Table, Chef Shriya Shetty and travel and food writer, Shirin Mehrotra. With these tables, Shriya found the creative freedom to cook what she loved, without sticking to the theme of a restaurant. For Shirin, working on every aspect of the pop-up, from finalising a theme, finding the right venue, to the DIY menus and setting up the table, satisfied her creative urge.

Bhavisha Dave, co-founder, Capsul Collective, says, "After attending my first table, I realised that I couldn't remember the last time I had a meal that lasted three hours, filled with stimulating conversation, during which I barely touched my

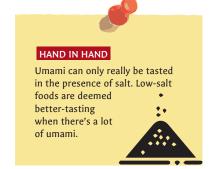


phone! And that's when I decided to eep attending them."

Priya Bala, food writer and author, who has created tables around Sri Lankan conflict regions and its regional cuisine, says, "A drink and a meal is the usual, but if someone wants to come to grips with a cuisine, a story helps. The experience is soulful from interacting with the chef, to how and where the food presented is rooted. As a chef, to do it in a small format is hugely gratifying."

Memories of flavour

"Food can transport a person, especially through memories. We have



It's all in the theme Snapshots from The Literary Table and Navu Supper Club • VARUN SHETTY AND NISHANT RATNAKAR





seen guests react to these stories," says Johnson Ebenezer, chef patron of

"My biggest interest is meeting new people, and that's been my takeaway from all the previous tables I have attended. Apart from food enthusiasts, I've met such an interesting group of new people which has been tremendously enriching," says Dhruv Mullick, partner, zlait Sports.

"Curating an experience from start to finish is at the core of it all," says Kanishka.

"The planning that goes into every meal, begins weeks - sometimes months - in advance, because that's what it takes for each one to be unique. There is a thrill that comes with the pressure, and satisfaction that comes with the sheer amount of work. The story, the chefs, the serve-ware, the libations, decor, table, menu design - all weave themselves around the food. The relationship between all these aspects of the meal is evident to the perceptive diner, and I believe that is what keeps them coming back."

POOCH CAFE











PEANUTS









HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

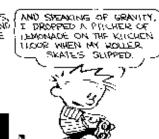




CALVIN AND HOBBES



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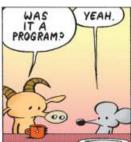


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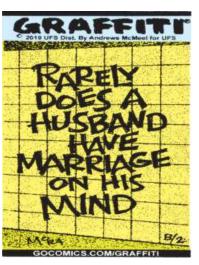
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE











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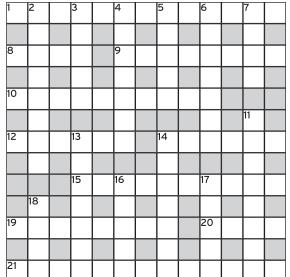
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Solution will appear in The Hindu dated August 3, 2019. Solution No. 13137

BLOCKBUSTER

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Smith scripts Australia's sensational fightback on absorbing day

Broad and Woakes rip through the visitors' top-order; Anderson suffers calf injury

THE ASHES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Steve Smith marked his first Test since completing a 12month ban for his role in a ball-tampering scandal with a superb century to rescue Australia on the opening day of the Ashes series on Thursday.

Australia was in dire straits against England in Birmingham at 122 for eight but its last two wickets more than doubled the score and Smith was last man out for 144 in a total of 284.

Rory Burns and Jason Roy then survived two overs as the hosts ended the day on 10 for no loss.

Repeated jeers

Former captain Smith, who returned to international cricket during the recent

World Cup that England won, was subjected to repeated jeers by a partisan

But he answered the boos in style with his 24th Test century and ninth against England.

"It hasn't really sunk in vet." Smith told BBC Radio. "Obviously been a while since I've been able to put on the whites and the baggy green (cap). I'm really proud of the way I was able to stand up today. We were in a bit of trouble there and we had to dig deep on a wicket that wasn't easy.'

Paine wins toss

Australia had slumped to 17 for two when Smith came in to bat after current skipper Tim Paine had won the toss.

Wickets fell steadily but Smith found the ally he needed in Peter Siddle, who made a valuable 44 – the second-best score of the innings – in a ninth-wicket partnership of 88.

Up until that point it seemed England would not suffer from the absence of James Anderson, England's all-time leading Test wickettaker, who had only bowled four overs before suffering a right calf injury.

Longtime new-ball partn-

er Stuart Broad took five for 86 in 22.4 overs and fellowpaceman Chris Woakes chipped in with three for 58 on his Warwickshire home ground.

But Australia's total may yet be enough to embarrass England which collapsed to 85 all out before beating Ireland at Lord's last week.

SCOREBOARD AUSTRALIA VS ENGLAND, 1ST TEST, 1ST DAY

Australia 1st innings: Cameron Bancroft c Root b Broad 8, David Warner lbw b Broad 2, Usman Khawaja c Bairstow b Woakes 13, Steve Smith b Broad 144, Travis Head lbw b Woakes 35. Mathew Wade lbw b Woakes 1, Tim Paine c Burns b Broad 5, James Pattinson lbw b Broad O, Pat Cummins lbw b Stokes 5, Peter Siddle c Buttler b Moeen 44, Nathan Lyon (not out) 12; Extras (lb-13, w-2): 15;

Total (in 80.4 overs): 284. Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-17, 3-35, 4-99, 5-105, 6-112, 7-112, 8-122,

England bowling: Anderson 4-3-1-0, Broad 22.4-4-86-5, Woakes 21-2-58-3, Stokes 18-1-77-1, Moeen 13-3-42-1, Denly

England - 1st innings: Rory Burns (batting) 4, Jason Roy (batting) 6: Total (for no loss in 2 overs): 10.

Australia bowling: Cummins 1-0-3-0. Pattinson 1-0-7-0. Toss: Australia.



What a turnaround! Steve Smith, returning to Test duty, pulled Australia out of the woods with a splendid 144. 🛛 REUTERS

Reifer promises tough fight

Building a solid team culture going forward, says the coach

INDIA IN WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

West Indies coach Floyd Reifer is confident that T20 megastars like Kieron Pollard and Sunil Narine, alongwith some talented youngsters, will provide the fireworks against India when a sell-out weekend crowd shows up for the two T20 Internationals starting here on Saturday.

The West Indies T20 squad camped in Florida to acclimatise with the sultry conditions and Reifer's team, which he calls a fine blend of youth and experience, will turn the heat on Virat Kohli-led Team India.

Good mix

"The team is young, and we like to mix the experienced players with the youth. We have a very good blend. We are looking forward to the matches here in Florida. It should be a very exciting weekend, we will bring lots of entertainment for the fans," Reifer told the Cricket

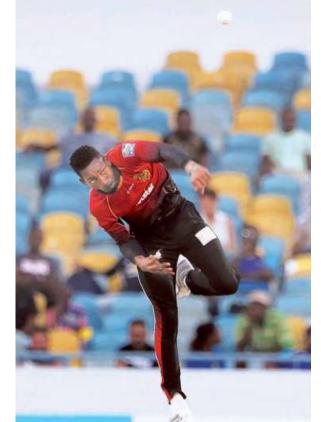
"We have players like (Kieron) Pollard and (Sunil) Narine making a return to the team as well as the captain Carlos Brathwaite and they have a lot of experience at this level and in this format," he said.

West Indies official website.

Among the junior players, Reifer singled out 27-yearold left-arm spinner Khary Pierre and reserve wicketkeeper Anthony Bramble, 28, for special mention.

Pierre made his T20 International debut against India last year in Kolkata.

"We have young Khary Pierre, a very good spinner, he played in India last year and he bowled quite well. He



Future calling: Khary Pierre is one of the juniors who has caught the West Indies coach's attention. • GETTY IMAGES

is also a good fielder," Reifer

"Bramble has around First Class cricket for a while, and he has played some very good innings for Guyana. He toured with West Indies-B to Canada and did a great job as captain. You can see how eager he is to get out there and perform at this level."

Reifer, who played six Tests and eight ODIs, is happy with the camp here.

"The camp has been going really great so far. We have had some intense training sessions and we are acclimatised. It's hot here, very hot and hotter than what we are accustomed to in the Caribbean and we are preparing the players to perform at the highest international

High energy levels

The energy level of the youngsters has impressed

"I like what I'm seeing here. Everybody is very enthusiastic the energy levels are high and the players are pushing one another. We are working hard and these are the kinds of things we want to get into the team every time we come to training as we build a solid culture going forward," he added.

Kohli-Rohit look fine on the field: Kapil

Says they can have differences off it

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA

The talk about differences between India skipper Virat Kohli and deputy Rohit Sharma may have been overblown by the media as the two look perfect companions when they are playing for the country, felt former India captain Kapil Dev.

The legend, who was in the city to participate in East Bengal Club's centenary celebrations, said the players may have differences of opinion "off the field," but that does not mean they are trying to pull each other down. Replying to a question,

Kapil cautioned against "rumours" which have been fanned by the media. "The media seems to have



Rift? What rift? Kapil Dev feels that Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have pulled together for Team India. • AFP

played a part in creating the rumour. There are no rumours about them (Kohli and Rohit) when they are on

the ground and when they are batting," said Kapil. "Off the field, your thinking and approach can be different but when you are playing, there is one aim, which is to win the match. That is important. The difference of opinion does not mean you are pulling someone down."

Explore all angles

Kapil, head of the threemember Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) of the BCCI, said his committee will "do its job to the best of its ability," exploring all angles in selecting a new coach for the National team.

Kapil said he has heard about Kohli's support for the incumbent coach Ravi Shastri, terming it a "personal opinion." "That is his (Kohli's) opinion and we should respect everybody's opinion," said Kapil.

India-A totters at 69 for five

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA PORT OF SPAIN

India-A was in a spot of bother at 69 for five at tea on the second day of the second unofficial 'Test' against the West Indies-A here on Thursday.

Priyank Panchal (31 batting) and Shivam Dube (22 batting) staged a recovery of sorts after the visitors lost half their side for 20 runs. Earlier, West Indies-A scored 318 in its first in-

The scores: West Indies-A 318 in 113 overs (Montcin Hodge 65. Rahkeem Cornall 56 n.o.. Mayank Markande three for 79, Mohd. Siraj three for 63) vs India-A 69 for five in 25 overs (Priyank Panchal 31 batting, Chemar Holder four for

Our panel has inducted deserving players: Prasad

Honesty, commitment, integrity and confidentiality are the qualities of a good selector

EXCLUSIVE

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

healthy state. So says Na-Ltional selection committee chairman M.S.K. Prasad in this interview with The Hindu. Excerpts:

The highlights of your panel

I can proudly tell you that this selection committee has travelled extensively across the country in quest of identifying fresh talent from domestic cricket and groom the selected bunch through a systematic process and induct the deserving players into India-A and further into the senior Indian team. I feel our committee has done a wonderful job in discharging our responsibilities. The

stats are there to prove my point. Our team has won 9 out of 11 Test series and we are ranked No. 1 Test team

What was your panel's vision over the last two years?

In the longer format, we had three away Test series. Though we could win only one of these series in Australia (which happened after 71 years) but the way we fought in South Africa and England is a testimony to the hard work and commitment of this team. We could have won both these series had we clinched those important moments in Capetown, Edgbaston and Southampton. Lot of credit should be given to our fast bowlers for this wonderful overseas perfor-

mances. Credit should also be gi-



M.S.K. Prasad. ■ FILE PHOTO: VIVEK BENDRE

ven to our training systems developed by (Shanker) Basu and Patrick (Farhart) and also the workload management programme we have followed.

The most heartening selections in the recent

It was tough to bring in Kuldeep (Yadav) and (Yuzvendra) Chahal when we already had established spinners in the opportunities both of them grabbed them and delivered consistently. This committee groomed

(Jasprit) Bumrah and Hardik (Pandya) for all formats of the game. Originally it was thought that these players were meant for white ball cricket only but we ensured that both have not only lived up to the expectations but also exceeded.

Also if you take the case of Rishabh (Pant), nobody ever thought he would get into the Test side so early. But we always believed in his abilities. Though he hasn't done well in 2017-18 Ranji Trophy we still backed him. You see

how he has evolved as a Test cricketer in such a short span of time.

What is the most important quality to become a National selector?

I personally feel that apart from the specified number of games one must have played, honesty, commitment, integrity and confidentiality are the four fundamentals factors needed for a good selector. Above all, one has to acknowledge that selection committee's job is a thankless one. No matter how many new players you bring into the system, a minor omission here and there can be subjected to so much of criticism. Having said that, as long as one is honest and sincere in his efforts and deeds, he can walk with his head held high.

Fortunegiants halt Dabang's run

PKL

NANDAKUMAR MARAR

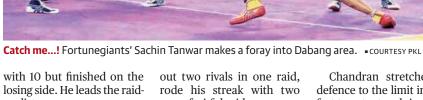
Gujarat Fortunegiants ended Dabang Delhi's run of three wins on the trot with a 31-26 victory in the seventh ProKabaddi League here on Thursday.

Rohit Gulia inspired the fightback from 17-18 down with a classy raid, solid defence and punch in the offence at the NSCI indoor stadium on the penultimate day of the second leg.

Delhi fought every step, Chandran Ranjit's Super Tackle on Sachin Tanwar resulting in the blues drawing level at 20-20.

Fortunegiants, now unbeaten in three games, were well served by G.B. More (nine tackle points) marshalling the defence and allrounder Gulia (eight points, including four touch points, two bonus points, one tackle point).

Naveen Kumar top-scored



Delhi pushed itself into a corner early on with empty raids, forcing Naveen into a do-or-die raid that resulted in his capture by the Gujarat defence led by Joginder

The Delhi defensive combination hit back by trapping Tanwar and Gulia as a gripping contest played out.

Naveen sparked a turnaround for Delhi by touching out two rivals in one raid, rode his streak with two more fruitful raids.

Chandran played a good supporting role as the league number two side converted a 5-9 deficit into 12-10 after an all-out, and swelled it to 14-11 at the break

Led by Narwal, the blues were getting effective.

Fortunegiants, clad in blazing orange and yellow, cashed in on a bit of overconfidence by the rival raiders to close the gap.

Chandran stretched the defence to the limit in an effort to get a touch in the left corner, only to run into a Gulia then put his team

ahead with a couple of fine

The result: Gujarat Fortunegiants 31 (G.B. More 9, Rohit Gulia 8, Sachin 4) bt Dabang Delhi 26 (Naveen Kumar 10, Chandran Ranjit 5). Friday's games: Telugu Titans v

UP Yoddha; U Mumba v Gujarat

Fortunegiants.

Manay steps in for U Mumba **UTT**

Manav Thakkar proved a game-changer before Sutirtha Mukherjee took U Mum-

ba to a 9-6 triumph against

RP-SG Mavericks (Kolkata). The battle involving the two bottom-placed sides in the six-team Ultimate Table Tennis league ended with Mavericks staring at elimination.

Losing again

RAKESH RAO

The match also saw Manika Batra crash to her second loss in three outings. After Goa Challengers' Archana Kamath whipped Manika 3-0, it was Sutirtha Mukherjee's turn to cruise to a 2-0 lead before dropping the

Though Sutirtha exposed the chinks in Manika's armoury, it was Manay who hurt Mavericks the most.

By the time Manav stepped into the arena, to



In roaring form: Manav Thakkar swung it U Mumba's way with a splendid show. • COURTESY UTT

play mixed doubles with clinched the 'golden point'. Doo Hoi Kem, his team had Mavericks never recolost two singles and trailed vered from losing the game 2-4. Soon, Manay and Doo after being 7-0 up. Thakkar were 0-7 down against southand Doo piled on the agony paws Sanil Shetty and Matilby completing a 3-0 win. da Ekhom, and Mavericks This result put Mumbai was right on top.

Thakkar and Doo who

5-4 ahead but Thakkar was From this point, Manav not done with it. He domibegan the resurrection. With nated the first two games Doo playing the support against Shetty but could not role, Thakkar's aggression complete a rout after losing paid off and the pressure the 'golden point'. slowly shifted to the Mavericks pair. Eventually, it was

With the score reading 7-5, Sutirtha was expected to take at least one game off

by claiming two games, al-Manika consolation. The results: U Mumba bt RP-SG Mavericks

Manika. She did way better

9-6 (Doo Hoi Kem lost to Matil-

da Ekhom 5-11, 11-3, 8-11; Kirill Gerssimenko lost to Benedikt Duda 10-11, 11-10, 7-11; Manav Thakkar & Doo Hoi Kem bt Sanil Shetty & Matilda 11-10, 11-6, 11-7; Thakkar bt Shetty 11-8, 11-9, 10-11; Sutirtha Mukherjee bt Manika Batra 11-7, 11-7, 1-11). Friday's fixture: Dabang Delhi v Goa Challengers (7 p.m.).

Benzema treble lifts Real's gloom

FRIENDLIES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

French striker Karim Benzema scored a hat-trick as Real Madrid defeated Fenerbahce 5-3 in a pre-season friendly on Wednesday which temporarily lifted the summer gloom which has engulfed the Spanish giant and coach Zinedine

However, problems remain for Real as it has now conceded 16 goals in just five friendly matches.

"We are going to find the solutions, we are going to work.

" I stand by my players and I know that we are going to make progress and that we will have a very good season," said Zidane.

His team had been left bruised by a humiliating 7-3 defeat by city rivals Atletico Madrid in a friendly in the United States last

Spurs triumph

In the final of the tournament, Tottenham claimed the trophy 3-2 in a penalty shoot-out win over Bayern after the game had ended

Eric Lamela and Christian Eriksen had put Spurs 2-0 up ahead before 19year-old Jann-Fiete Arp, pulled the German giant lewith second-half

So near yet so far for Padma Devaram

Hammer-thrower-turned shooter, with an unorthodox style, hopes to make it to the Indian team



Tough luck: Padma Devaram, left, was leading in the women's air pistol final ahead of some of the best names, but failed to take advantage. • PHOTO KAMESH SRINIVASAN

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN NEW DELHI

She was a hammer thrower, winning 12 national-level medals including two gold. She has shared room with the country's best athlete P.T.

A Chief Ticket Inspector in Railways and hailing from Chennai, the 45-year-old Padma Devaram was leading in the women's air pistol final ahead of some of the best shooters in the country including the eventual champion, 14-year-old Esha Singh, in the Sardar Sajjan Singh Sethi Masters championship on Thursday.

Till she landed a 7.9 on the 19th shot, Padma, who has an unorthodox shooting style, had the rest of the field on tenterhooks.

"I don't know what happened. I train on my own. The coaches tell me that I have a natural style and that could get affected if I am trained by them. So, I myself have to find the answers for my problems," said Padma,

> $Coaches \ tell \ me \ that$ I have a natural style and that could get affected if I am trained by them. So, I myself have to find the answers for my problems.

■ Padma feels the anguish about not getting any financial support, even in terms of travel and daily allowance

who had taken a loan from her Provident Fund account to buy a pistol worth ₹1.6 lakh.

"I am ranked fifth in the country and could have gone to the Rio World Cup as an MQS shooter. But that would have cost a lot of money as government supports only the shooters in the main team. I will definitely improve my scores and get into the team," said Padma, who was still unable to digest her qualification score of 565.

One bad shot

"The qualification score played in my mind before the final. I was doing very well before the bad shot in the final. It is yet another lesson for me," Padma, who had helped Railways to some good performances in recent times, said.

Grateful to Railways for granting her permission and leave to compete in events across the country apart from the national selection trials, Padma does feel the anguish about not getting any financial support, even in terms of travel and daily

For someone who took to shooting only in the last two She may not know the intricacies of shooting, but she consistently gets good scores. She has

her own style.

– VED PRAKASH PILANIYA

years, it was commendable that Padma missed a medal by 0.1 point as she was overtaken by fellow Railway shooter Ruchita Vinerkar, who went on to bag the

National coach Ved Prakash Pilaniya was all praise for Padma even before the start of the final

"She may not know the intricacies of shooting, but she consistently gets good scores. She has her own style," said Ved Prakash, who himself was a very good shooter and has groomed a number of them over the vears.

Best weapon

A knee injury had stopped Padma's hammer carrer. She had tried the rifle for some time before being told that the pistol would be her best weapon.

"Right from getting into a shooting club, it has always been a struggle for me. But that has only strengthened my will to achieve something in this sport. There are two more trials coming up and I will work on these lessons and return better," she proNRAI drops para events from its schedule

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) decided, at its Annual General Body meeting held on Wednesday, to drop the para shooting events in all its competitions, including the National championships.

"There is a separate organisation which controls shooting activities, including selection of teams for para World Cups, para World Championship and para Olympics," said the NRAI, explaining the reason for the decision.

The mixed skeet event will be part of the schedule for the National championship, and events will be conducted for the juniors as well. The NRAI has decided not to pursue the processing of import permit for a shooter, if all the required formalities and documents are not furnished within 90 days from the date of email from the National body to the shooter concerned.

"No reminder will be sent in this regard," it stressed. The shooters need not submit a copy of the arm licence at the time of application. However, the shooter will have to submit the copy to the NRAI for verification of weapons in his/her possession which were imported or other-

Need pros in player management: Dua

Onus on managers to look beyond just monetary benefits



Call of the wild: The Prithvi Shaw issue has turned the spotlight onto the dangers of youngsters being thrust into the limelight without proper guidance. • GETTY IMAGES

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

Former CEO of the erstwhile Delhi Daredevils Hemant Dua believes it's high time player management is given

priority in the country. Presently a sports consultant, Dua feels the high financial and social profile of young sportsmen makes them vulnerable.

"The problem is not earning money. It's more about how they are able to handle it responsibly. You can't expect that from 18, 19-year-olds.

Prioritising

"Athletes need good mentors and managers to guide them. It's the people around parents/siblings and managers – who need to ensure their feet remain on ground and that the focus is sports," Dua told The Hindu.

He added there was an urgent need to sensitise players and the onus was on managers to look at holistic guidance instead of just trying to maximise monetary benefits.

"Are the managers qualified enough to sensitise

them? I am not sure. It is important to choose the right manager and mentor to help you guide through situations like the one Prithvi Shaw is facing," Dua said.

Shaw, who was recently handed an eight-month ban for failing a dope test, was held up as an example of the need for professional management in Indian sports.

"He claims it was a cough syrup he took. For me, the core of the problem is our young athletes like Shaw, who come from humble backgrounds, are getting lost in the limelight. They are left on their own, the mangers or agencies who sign them are busy selling them as brands," he said.

Dua compared the system here with the professional set-up in the US.

"In India, agents don't have any qualifications. It's friends and families and mom-and-pop shops that have mushroomed because of their proximity to the

"In the US, player agents are regulated principally by the players' unions, which possess legal authority, in-

centives and resources to develop regulatory competence," he said.

Asked to elaborate on the role of agents, Dua listed out several.

"An agent can act as a mentor. He should be experienced in handling contract negotiations.

"He can play a key role in crisis management, manage social media and get a team of professional advisers. There is a lot more to it than simply getting brand endorsements," he explained.

Federations' role

Dua felt national federations had a big role to play in ensuring youngsters do not get lost in the razzmatazz of instant fame.

"The federations do conduct anti-doping sessions. But are the athletes being educated regularly and managers guarding their backs? It's not all about fame and success - sports also brings responsibility. Sooner the athletes and their mangers realise this the better it's for the industry.'

Jones applies for Team India job

WRIDDHAAYAN

After training superstars such as Stuart Broad to England's World Cup hero Jofra Archer, UK-based fast bowling coach Steffan Jones now wants to work with Indian bowlers. The Welshman has thrown his hat in the Team India support staff recruitment ring

Jones did not play international cricket but his county career spanned two decades, first as a player and then as player-coach. He had stints with Somerset. Derbyshire and Northamptonshire. The coaching assignments in Big Bash League (Hobart Hurricanes) and the Indian Premier League (Rajasthan Royals) further strengthens the 45year-old's candidature.

"There are four aspects to coaching - technical, tactical, physical and mental. What I can do is cover four of them. The problem with modern-day cricket is that most coaches are only able to fall back on playing experience and that's just a small part of it.

"The body doesn't work in isolation. It is a complex system, so you can't have knowledge on one or two as-

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

welterweight World boxing

champion Carlos Baldomir

was sentenced to 18 years in

prison on Wednesday for the

The 48-year-old, who was

repeated sexual abuse of a

child, a court announced.

champion for 10 months in

2006, was arrested in 2016

following allegations that he

had abused the girl over two

years, starting when she was

He was unanimously

sexual abuse" of a minor.

highlight came in January

2006 when he shocked the

Baldomir's greatest career

convicted of "repeated

just seven in 2012.

BUENOS AIRES

Argentine former

Boxer Baldomir

sentenced to prison



Steffan Jones. • GETTY IMAGES

pects," Jone, who carries an ECB Level-3 certification, Sportstar Wednesday.

Known for his expertise in data and sports science, Jones feels he also fits the 'strength and conditioning coach' requirement.

Among other star names, former India pacer Venkatesh Prasad – who has worked as a bowling coach in the past - has also applied for the role.

The support staff will be finalised by the selection committee led by M.S.K. Prasad. The Cricket Advisory Committee comprising former players Kapil Dev. Anshuman Gaekwad and Shantha Rangaswamy will conduct interviews for the head coach position on August 13 and 14.

Baldomir. • FILE PHOTO: AFP

champion Zab Judah. He

16 defeats and six draws.

retired in 2014 with a record

of 49 wins, 15 by knock-out,

unified welterweight

Prajnesh fails to solve Fritz puzzle

Ankita in last eight at Woking; Rutuja progresses at Nonthaburi

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU LOS CABOS (MEXICO)

Prajnesh Gunneswaran went down to fifth seed Taylor Fritz of the United States 6-4, 3-6, 2-6 in the pre-quarterfinals of the \$858,565 ATP

tournament on Wednesday. Prajnesh collected 20 ATP points and \$12,825 for his

Mixed day for Myneni

In the \$135,400 Challenger in Chendu, China, Saketh Myneni went down fighting to Zhang Zhizhen of China in the pre-quarterfinals, but beat the top-seeded Chinese in the doubles quarterfinals in the company of Arjun

In the ITF women's event in Woking (England), Ankita Raina made the quarterfinals in both singles and doubles. In a similar event in Thailand, Rutuja Bhosale stunned the second seed to

reach the quarterfinals, and also stormed into the doubles semifinals with Mana

The results:

\$858, 565 ATP, Los Cabos, Mexico: Singles (pre-quarterfinals): Taylor Fritz (US) bt Prajnesh Gunneswaran 4-6, 6-3,

\$135,400 Challenger, Chengdu, China: Singles (pre-quarterfinals): Zhang Zhizhen (Chn) bt Saketh Myneni 6-7(4), 7-5,

Doubles (quarterfinals): Arjun Kadhe & Saketh Myneni bt Mao-Xin Gong & Ze Zhang (Chn) 7-6(4), 6-1.

\$25 000 ITF men Nonthaburi Thailand: Singles (pre-quarterfinals): Renta Tokuda (Jpn) bt Siddharth Vishwakarma 6-4, 6-4; Rio Noguchi (Jpn) bt Kunal

Anand 6-1, 6-0. Doubles (quarterfinals): Yu Hsiou Hsu (Tpe) & Yuta Shimizu (Jpn) bt Niki Poonacha & Abhinav Sanjeev Shanmugam 6-1,

\$15,000 ITF men, Xativa, Spain: Singles (first round): Arvan Goveas bt Anton Desvat\$15,000 ITF men, Tabarka, Tunisia: Singles (first round): Pedro Iamachkine (Per) bt Anirudh Chandrasekar 6-3, 6-7(5),

\$25,000 ITF women, Chinese Taipei: Doubles (quarterfinals): Ramu Ueda (Jpn) & Riya Bhatia bt Kwan Yau Ng (Hkg) & Valeria Savinykh (Rus) 6-2, 6-7

\$25,000 ITF women, Woking, England: Singles (pre-quarterfinals): Ankita Raina bt Oinwen

Zheng (Chn) 4-6, 6-1, 6-2. Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Naiktha Bains (GBR) & Ankita Raina bt Holly Hutchinson

(GBR) & Yunko Lily Miyazaki (Jpn) 7-5, 6-4. \$25,000 ITF women, Nonthaburi, Thailand: Singles (prequarterfinals): Rutuja Bhosale

bt Jia-Jing Lu (Chn) 6-4, 7-5. Doubles (quarterfinals): Mana Ayukawa (Jpn) & Rutuja Bhosale bt Lou Brouleau (Fra) & Punnin Kovapitukted (Tha) 5-7, 6-2, [10-6].

\$15,000 ITF women, Tabarka, Tunisia: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Sowjanya Bavisetti & Sravya Shivani Chilakalapudi bt Olympe Lancelot (Fra) & Deniz Paykoc (Tur) 6-1, 6-1.

Nothing to prove, says Sania

nik (Rus) 2-6, 6-4, 7-5,

Makes it clear that she is back for the love of the sport

TENNIS

Kadhe.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

India tennis star Sania Mirza says she has achieved everything in her path-breaking career and has "nothing to prove" in her second innings, which is likely to begin by January, 2020.

In her quest to make a comeback to competitive tennis after more than two years after becoming a mother, the 32-year-old Sania is training vigorously for about four hours a day and has shed 26kg in the process.

Sania won six doubles Grand Slam titles -including three mixed -achieved the number one rank, won medals at multi-disciplinary events apart from laying hands on a year-end WTA Finale title with Swiss great Martina Hingis.

A bonus

"In my career, I have achieved everything which I could have dreamt of. And whatever happens next will be a bonus for me.

"I thought I will be able to comeback by August but probably by January, it looks



In ship-shape: The 32-year-old Sania Mirza is training vigorously for about four hours a day and has shed 26kg in the process. • FILE PHOTO: V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

like a possibility," Sania told in an interview.

"Having (son) Izhan is the biggest blessing I could have. If I am able to come back, it will be amazing. He's (son) my inspiration to get back to being fit. If I do comeback, it will not be to prove anything. The only reason to comeback would be that I love playing and competing."

"There is enough self-motivation to come back, but it's nice to see people like Serena competing at Grand Slams after having a baby. It's obviously very inspiring," Sania said. Elaborating on the time she has taken for planning her comeback, Sania said a past knee issue is still bothering her and she needs more time to compete in the physically demanding pro circuit. "There is no goal. Whatev-

er happens in life hereon, re-

grading tennis, it will be just

a plus. Once I make that comeback, I will see where I stand as an athlete. "Expectations are high

but I have not played tennis in the last two years. If I can make a comeback, Tokyo (Olympics) is something I am looking at."

Battle for points resumes Honda, TVS, Yamaha and

MOTORSPORTS

SPORTS REPORTER

India's leading two-wheeler manufacturers will yet again go head-to-head in a thrilling battle for points as the third round of the MRF-MMSC FMSCI Indian National motorcycle racing championship gets underway at the MMRT here on Friday.

KTM have a strong presence in the 16-race card that will also showcase India's top bike racers, including girls, representing a clutch of teams, some privately funded and others supported by the manufacturers in various forms.

Plenty of action This weekend promises

plenty of action with riders

jockeying for positions in their respective championship leaderboards with an eve on the points that are critical for National titles in various categories. The premier Pro-Stock

classes of 301-400cc, 201-

300cc and the 165cc, all run on MRF slick tyres, have dished out edge-of-the-seat thrillers in the previous rounds with little separating the front-runners.

Known for his expertise in sports science

CRICKET

TV PICKS

Badminton: Thailand Open, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 11.30 a.m. **The Ashes**: 1st Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.

TNPL: Star Sports 3, 7.15 p.m.

UTT: Star Sports 1 & Star Sports Select 1 (SD & HD),

PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD),

Global T20: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 10 p.m.

IN BRIEF



women WC from 2023

The Women's World Cup will be expanded from 24 to 32 teams at the 2023 edition in an effort to "foster the growth of women's football". FIFA said on Wednesday. FIFA president Gianni Infantino had already said he was determined to push ahead with plans to expand the World Cup in time for the next tournament after hailing France 2019 as "the best ever". On Wednesday, the FIFA Council unanimously agreed to a proposal to expand the number of teams.



Bayern Munich coach Nico Kovac (in pic) admitted on Wednesday he had telephoned Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola to apologise over his public pursuit of the English club's German striker Leroy Sane. "I phoned Pep Guardiola and I apologised to him because I was too offensive, I will refrain in the future." he said. after Bayern had lost to Tottenham on penalties in the final of a pre-season tournament. AFP

Guwahati, Kolkata to host WC qualifiers

SHYAM VASUDEVAN

All India Football Federation (AIFF) general secretary Kushal Das confirmed to Sportstar on Thursday that Guwahati's Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium and Kolkata's Salt Lake Stadium will host the Indian football team's opening two World Cup Qualifiers home matches.

The Indian football team has been drawn alongside 2022 FIFA World Cup host Qatar, Oman, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh in Group E, and will begin its hunt for a FIFA World Cup berth when it hosts Oman in the second round of Asian Qualifiers on September 5.

"The first match against Oman will be hosted in Guwahati and the second game (vs Bangladesh) will be held in Kolkata," Das said. "These are worldclass stadiums and are approved by AFC," he added.

For their second match, Igor Stimac's men will travel to Qatar on September 10, before hosting Bangladesh on October 15. This will be followed by away games against Afghanistan on November 14 and Oman on November 19.

World Cup host Qatar on March 26, followed by a trip to Bangladesh on June 4. The Blue Tigers will finish their campaign on June when they host Afghanistan.

Full schedule of India's vs Oman

15: India vs Bangladesh November 14: Afghanistan vs

India November 19: Oman vs India March 26: India vs Qatar June 4: Bangladesh vs India

Kapil honoured with Bharat Gaurav

The red and gold brigade begins its centenary celebrations in style

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA

East Bengal's centenary celebrations began in style at a glittering function that brought together a galaxy of stars from different disciplines at the Netaji Indoor Stadium on Thursday.

India's first World Cupwinning captain Kapil Dev was among the prominent names who were felicitated by the club on its 99th Foundation Day.

Kapil received the highest honour - Bharat Gaurav and came as an acknowledgement of his long association with the club. He turned out both for its cricket and football teams prior to his retirement in the early 90s.

"My teammates feared I may get injured when I decided to turn up for East Bengal. I said 'it does not matter.' I was not a footballer but came here to promote the sport," said Kapil about the Calcutta Football League 'derby' match in 1992 when he briefly turned out in red and gold colours against ar-



Legends' assembly: Kapil Dev, Sourav Ganguly and Sunil Chhetri graced the glittering function. •PTI

chrival Mohun Bagan.

Former India football captain Bhaichung Bhutia was another big attraction as the club honoured him with the "biggest find of the century"

"I attribute all that I have achieved in football to East Bengal. This is the club that recognised my ability as a 16year-old, brought me over from Sikkim and introduced me to top-level football," Bhutia said.

The current India captain

Sunil Chhetri, who played a season in East Bengal colours in 2008, was also felicitated.

Biggest congregation

The biggest congregation of legends happened after this as Shyam Thapa, Surajit Sengupta, Mohammad Habib and Subhash Bhowmick joined on the podium to honour P.K. Banerjee, who was named the coach of the century.

The next to be honoured

were the two stalwarts -Manoranjan Bhattacharya and Bhaskar Ganguly - who were given the lifetime achievement award. The club also felicitated one of the most-celebrated actors of Bengal, Soumitra Chatterjee, an avid East Bengal fan.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Baneriee, who attended the celebrations, announced that the State government will be organising a special function for East Bengal's century.

Mohun Bagan and Sporting to kick-start Durand Cup

Revived after a two-year gap, it will run parallel to CFL

Y.B. SARANGI KOLKATA

Even as I-League and Indian Super League (ISL) are locked in a battle of supremacy, teams participating in both the leagues have got together to play the Durand Cup football tournament which has been revived after a two-year gap to provide more competitive exposure to the players.

In build-up phase

Notwithstanding the presence of 10 I-League and ISL teams, one cannot undermine that many of the sides are still in the build-up phase for the season and may give chance to the younger lot which plays in the second division.

Two well-known citybased clubs - Mohun Bagan and Mohammedan Sporting - will lock horns in the opening tie of the event. which will run parallel to Calcutta Football League (CFL).

Sporting is bubbling with confidence and fancies its chances against a stronger Bagan, studded with four Spaniards and coached by Spanish coach Kibu Vicuna, at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Friday.

Sporting captain Kamran Farooque said the side prepared well under the watchful eyes of Subrata Bhattacharya.

"We have prepared well in the last two months. It does not matter whether we are playing a big team or a small team," said Kamran in the pre-match press conference on Thursday.

Good mix

Kamran said his side, comprising a good mix of youth and experience including four African players, had little knowledge about Bagan's game.

"We don't know anything about the opposition.

Even they don't know anything about our game as no match has been played this season. We are ready for any combination or any challenge."

No complacency

Vicuna had some basic idea about Sporting. "We are not taking them lightly. I know they have an experienced coach."

The Spaniard said his squad was on the path of improvement.

"We have been training for the last one month. It's a new team having a lot of new players.

"This process takes time and in two months time we will be better."

According to Vicuna, Bagan will try to play attacking and pro-active football. "We will try to create chances and score as soon

Tomar comes up with an assertive display

Esha overcomes ill-health to win the women's & junior gold

SHOOTING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Junior World Cup gold medallist Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar continued to assert his dominance among the men as he clinched the gold in the 50-metre rifle 3position event, by beating Olympian Sanjeev Rajput by 4.4 points in the 12th Sardar Sajjan Singh Sethi Masters shooting championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, on Thursday.

Parul Kumar who also forms the national squad in the event along with Sanjeev and Olympian Chain Singh, was pushed to the bronze medal

World Cup gold-medallist Akhil Sheoran, who topped qualification with 1170, Satyendra Singh, Ravi Kumar and Deepak Kumar placed fourth to seventh in that

Tough exercise

it was a tough exercise, and it was no surprise that Tomar was beaten to the gold by 1.2 point by Niraj Kumarof Navy in the junior final.

In the women's air pistol, national champion Esha Singh overcame ill-health to win the women's and junior gold, apart from topping qualification with an impressive score of 580.

In the men's air pistol, Tinjit Dhanota overcame a strong field that included



Top trio: Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar, gold medallist in the 50-metre rifle 3-position, flanked by Sanjeev Rajput and Parul Kumar. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Asian Games bronze medallist Abhishek Verma, who had won the Olympic quota, Ravinder Singh, Omprakash Mitharval, Arjun Singh Cheema and Udhayveer Sidhu.

Gold for Dhanota

Dhanota beat national team member Ravinder by 0.5 point for the gold, after scoring 581 in qualification, the second best score.

The Sidhu twins Vijayveer and Udhayveer, won the gold and silver in the junior air pistol. Udhavveer had also won the men's bronze.

In the women's rifle prone even Anjum Moudgil topped the list with 621.3 points. Kaial Saini and Meena Kumari beat former World Champion in the event, Tejaswini Sawant to the medals.

The results:

Men: 10m air pistol: 1. Tinjit Dhanota 240.8 (581); 2. Ravinder Singh 240.3 (577); 3. Udhayveer Sidhu 218.2 (579). Juniors: 1. Vijayveer Sidhu 242.9 (568); 2. Udhayveer Sidhu 239.3 (579); 3. Arjun Singh Cheema 218.2 (581). Youth: 1. Sharvan Kumar 239.5

(580); 2. Arpit Tomar 237.8 (574); 3. Sarabjot Singh 217.2

50m rifle 3-position: 1. Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar 459.9 (1166); 2. Sanjeev Rajput 455.5 (1160); 3. Parul Kumar 444.2 (1165). Juniors: 1. Niraj Kumar 450.0 (1159); 2. Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar 448.8 (1166); 3. Gohil Harshrajsinhji 438.5 (1146).

Women: 10m air pistol: 1. Esha Singh 239.5 (580); 2. Ruchita Vinerkar 238.6 (568); 3. P. Shri Nivetha 217.6 (563).

Juniors: 1. Esha Singh 239.7 (580): 2. Priva Raghay 237.5 (572): 3. Khushseerat Kaur Sandhu 217.5 (563).

Youth: 1. Yuvika Tomar 236.0 (566); 2. Khushseerat Kaur Sandhu 234.1 (563); 3. Aarju Vaishnav 211.4 (562)

50m rifle prone: 1. Anjum Moudgil 621.3; 2. Kajal Saini 616.7; 3. Meena Kumari 616.2. Juniors: 1. Bhakti Bhaskar Khamkar 617.9; 2. Nischal 616.6; 3. Ayushi Podder 612.1.

Ronaldo, Messi nominated for Best Footballer

Guardiola and Klopp in line for Best Coach award

FIFA AWARDS

Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi have been nominated in the FIFA Best Men's Footballer of the Year category, as the apex footballing authority released the nominations on Wednesday.

Ronaldo has won the FI-FA Best Men's Player award two times and Portugal's striker will be looking to reclaim the award from the last time winner Croatia's Luka Modric.



Cristiano Ronaldo. • AP

FIFA released the nominations for four of the best categories and the winner



Lionel Messi. • GETTY IMAGES

will be decided through the voting done by the fans. In the Women's Best

Player category, USA's Alex Morgan and Megan Rapinoe received nominations as they were instrumental in taking the team to their second successive World Cup triumph earlier this year.

England's Lucy Bronze have also gotten nominated for the award. In the Men's Best Coach

Australia's Sam Kerr and

category, Jurgen Klopp, Pep Guardiola have been nomi-

Both Klopp and Guardiola enjoyed huge success in the 2018/19.

Chotrani

moves up

SQUASH

SPORTS BUREAU

Sai Praneeth storms into quarterfinals

Saina, Srikanth and Kashyap crash out

THAILAND OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saina Nehwal and K. Srikanth crashed out of the Thailand Open after unexpected defeats but B. Sai Praneeth sailed into the quarterfinals here on Thursday.

Sai Praneeth stormed into the last eight with a comfortable 21-18, 21-19 win over compatriot Shubhankar

The results (second round): Women: Sayaka Takahashi bt Saina Nehwal 16-21, 21-11, 21-14. Men: Khosit Phetpradab bt K. Srikanth 21-11, 16-21, 12-21; Chou Tien Chen bt P. Kashvap



Marching on: B. Sai Praneeth brought some cheer to the Indian camp on an otherwise disappointing day. • AFP

21-9, 21-14; B. Sai Praneeth bt Shubhankar Dey 21-18, 21-19.

Doubles: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty bt Fajar Alfian & Muhammad Rian Ardian-

to 21-17, 21-19. Mixed doubles: Tang Chun Man & Tse Ying Suet bt Pranaav Jerry Chopra & N. Sikki Reddy 21-

dual junior squash championship here Thursday. "It is a remarkable performance by Veer," said Cy-

Veer Chotrani proved the

exciting exception by

storming into the quarterfi-

nals of the World indivi-

rus Poncha, SRFI Secretary-General, wishing him the best for the quarterfinal. The results:

Men, pre-quarterfinals: Veer Chotrani bt Yannick Wilhelmi (Sui) 10-12, 11-6, 11-8, 11-3; Round-of-32: Yash Fadte lost to Wilhelmi 15-13, 5-11, 11-7, 11-13, 6-11: Chotrani bt Darosham Khan (Can) 11-2, 11-3, 4-11, 11-8; Rahul Baitha lost to El Torkey (Egy) 11-9, 11-21,

Women (round of 32): Yoshna Singh lost to Chan Sin Yuk (Hkg) 11-3, 11-4, 11-4; Sanya Vats lost to Aifa Azman 7-11, 7-11, 12-10, 6-11; Aishwarya Khubchandani lost to Georgia Adderley (Sco) 11-8, 8-11, 6-



Psychic Force may score an encore

BENGALURU: Psychic Force, who is in fine fettle, may score an encore in the Karnataka Mile Championship Cup (1,600m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Friday (Aug 2). False rails (width about 8.5m from 1,600m to the winning post)

TRACK LIGHTNING STAKES I (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2-30 p.m.: 1. Desert Combat (5) M. Naveen 56, 2. Flamboyant (1) Mark 56, 3. Jan Zizka (3) Sandesh 56, 4. Sun Splash (6) Vinod Shinde 56, 5. Bostonia (4) Trevor 54.5, 6. Palm Reader (7) Suraj 54.5, 7. Silver Swift (8) Zervan 54.5 and 8. Sky Moon (2) Jagadeesh 54.5.

1. JAN ZIZKA, 2. PALM READER, 3. SILVER SWIFT

will be in position.

GESTURE (1,100m), rated 00 to 20, 3-00: 1. Himachali (8) Trevor 60, 2. Admirable (1) Irvan 59.5, 3. Firing Line (7) M. Naveen 59.5, 4. Aerospeed (2) Md. Akram 57.5, 5. Hunters Moon (3) Sai Vamshi 57, 6. Kruger Park (6) S. Shareef 55.5, Odyssey (5) M. Kumar 55.5 and 8. Shining Star (4) R. Anand 53.5.

2. ADMIRABLE, 3. AEROSPEED

3 TREASURE GIRL PLATE (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 4-y-o & over, 3-30: 1. Touch Your Destiny (7) Chetan G 60, 2. Charmaine (2) Trevor 59, 3. Hidden Soldier (4) K. Raghu 58.5, 4. Stars In His Eyes (11) R. Manjunath 58, 5. Fictioneer (1) Antony 56.5, 6. Flicka (12) Ashok Kumar 56.5, 7. Simply Magical (9) Suraj 56.5, 8. Grecian Light (5) S. Shareef 54, 9. Turf Spirit (6) A. Merchant 53.5, 10. Tiger Returns (10) R. Manish 53, 11. Naayaab (8) T.S. Jodha 52.5 and 12. Prime Star (3) Dhebe 50.

1. TIGER RETURNS, 2. SIMPLY MA-GICAL, 3. CHARMAINE

KARNATAKA MILE CHAMPION-4 SHIP CUP (1,600m), 4-y-o & over, (Terms), 4-00: 1. Psychic Force (4) Zervan 60, 2. Automatic (2) Suraj 54.5, 3. Big Sur (3) Sandesh 54.5 and 4. Sakura (1) 1. PSYCHIC FORCE, 2. BIG SUR

TIAYANT SHAH MEMORIAL

3. Cosmos (2) Zervan 57, 4. Play

TROPHY (1,800m), rated 45 to 4-30: 1. Angelino (1) Trevor 60, 2. Lycurgus (3) S. Shareef 58,

Safe (5) Darshan 56, 5. Here And Now (6) Arshad 55 and 6. Kirkwood (4) Dhebe 52.5. 1. HERE AND NOW, 2. ANGELINO SOUTHERN REGENT PLATE 6 (1,400m), rated 30 to 50, 5-00: 1. Akita Pro (3) S. Shareef 60, 2. Orenda (1) Chetan G 59, 3. Winall (8) Antony 57.5, 4. Renegade (5) Zervan 57, 5. Cuban (7) Trevor 56, 6. Exclusive Mandate (2) A. Imran 56, 7. Reference (4) Arshad

54 and 8. Shivalik Kiss (6) Vinod 1. RENEGADE, 2. EXCLUSIVE MAN-DATE, 3. WINALL

7 EPSOM PLATE (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 5-30: 1. No Opinion (6) K. Raghu 60, 2. Kudla Punch (1) Sai Vamshi 59, 3, Silent Guardian (2) Chetan G 59, 4. Papadokia (4) Sai Kiran 58.5, 5. Slovenia (8) Dhebe 56, 6. Sir Piggot (3) Zervan 54.5, 7. Eco Friendly (7) Irvan 53.5 and 8. Red Indian (5) Nazerul 52.5.

NIA, 3. NO OPINION Day's best: PSYCHIC FORCE Double: JAN ZIZKA-HERE AND

1. SILENT GUARDIAN, 2. SLOVE-

Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Tr (i): 2, 3 and 4; (ii): 5, 6 and 7.

Star Baron clinches feature event

BENGALURU: Star Baron (A. Imran up), won the Bangalore City Sprint Championship Gold Cup, the chief event of the races held here on Thursday (Aug. 1). The winner is owned by Mr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust and trained by B. Suresh.

AUGUST PLATE (1,100m) Maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms) DONNA BELLA (Suraj) 1, Sandarina (Arshad) 2, Knotty Oak (Antony) 3 and Caesars Palace (Mark) 4. 1-3/4, 3/4 and 1-1/2. 1m 07.09s. ₹19 (w), 10, 32 and 13 (p), SHP: 120, THP: 32, FP: 355, Q: 371, Trinella: 1,156 and 271, Exacta: 29,986 and 17,135. Favourite: Donna Bella. Owners: Mrs. Mahima Shailesh, Dr. P. Day-ananda Pai, Dr. Thomas A. Chandy and Mr. K. Ravi. Trainer: Irfan

COMMANCHE PLATE (Div. II)

(1,400m), rated 00 to 20, 5-y-o & over: WINX (T.S. Jodha) 1, Proud-

wish (Indrajeet Singh) 2, Purity

(Antony) 3 and Noble Splendor (R.

Manish) 4. Not run: Barog and String Of Pearls. Nk, Shd and 2-1/2. 1m 27.64s. ₹39 (w), 12, 38 and 10), SHP: 153, THP: 60, FP: 2,282 O: 1,052, Trinella: 1,867 and 324, Exacta: 4,827 and 2,660. Favourite: Purity. Owners: Mr. Gautam Makhija & Mrs. Sangita Vashisth. Trainer: Imtiaz Khan.

3 LT. COL. GAUNT MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,600m), rated 45 to 65, 5-y-o & over: STRIKING GREY (Darshan) 1, Super Smart (Chetha G) 2, Dr Logan (Srinath) 3 and Aaron The Baron (Sandesh) 4. 3/4, 1/2 and 3/4. 1m 37.54s, ₹32 (w), 14. 38 and 21 (p), SHP: 134, THP: 59, FP: 297, Q: 642, Trinella: 1,616 and 628, Exacta: 39,983 and 17,135. Favourite: Striking Grey. Owner: Mr. H.K. Lakshman Gowda. Trainer: V.

4 BANGALORE CITY SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIP GOLD CUP (1,200m), 3-y-o & over, (Terms): STAR BARON (A. Imran) 1, Lady Legend (Trevor) 2, Accolade (Suraj) 3

Lokanath.

and Dream Catcher (John) 4. 2-3/4, 1-1/4 and 1. 1m 10.80s. ₹258 (w), 58 and 16 (p), SHP: 32, THP: 50, FP: 967, Q: 198, Trinella: 1,681 and 491, Exacta: 4,499 and 2,314. Favourite: Accolade. Owner: Mr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust. Trainer: B.

5 KARNATAKA SUB-AREA CUP (1,400m), rated 60 & above: SHESMYSCRIPT (Trevor) 1, Into The Groove (Suraj) 2, Merlot The Groove (Suraj) 2, Merlot (John) 3 and Fire Glow (T.S. Jodha) 4. Not run: Haedi's Folly. 3-1/4, 1-1/4 and 1-1/2. 1m 23.89s. Rs. 24 (w), 12, 17 and 18 (p), SHP: 49, THP: 50, FP: 124, Q: 135, Trinella: 1,013 and 342, Exacta: 11,287 and 6,772. Favourite: Snowdon. Owners: Mr. R. Shiva Shankar & Mr. G. Surendranath. Trainer: Irfan

Venus Bay (Antony) 2, Star Man (Trevor) 3 and Colonel Harty (Rajesh K.) 4. Not run: Bernardini. 2-1/2, 1-1/4 and 4-3/4. 1m 25.19s. ₹13 (w), 10, 30 and 15 (p), SHP: 109, THP: 33, FP: 175, Q: 198, Trinella: 709 and 170, Exacta: 1,222 and 541. Favourite: Kerazano. Owners: Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta, Mr. Shomenath Roy Chowdhury, Mr. Sanjay Datta Gupta and Mr. Kersi H. Vachha. Trainer: S. Padmanabhan.

COMMANCHE PLATE (Div. I), (1,400m), rated 00 to 20, 5-y-o &over: GOOD WORD (S. Shareef) 1, Savisa (Vinod Shinde) 2, First Step (John) 3 and Indian Brahmos (T.S. Jodha) 4. 3/4, 1-3/4 and Hd. 1m 28.36s. ₹135 (w), 32, 27 and 12 (p), SHP: 90, THP: 39, FP: 1,622, Q: 704, Trinella: 3,107 and 2,058, Exacta: 59,025 and 50,592. Favour ite: Above The Rest. Owner and trainer: Mr. Warren Singh. Jackpot: ₹93,472 (six tkts).; Runner-up: 1,669 (144 tkts.); Treble (i): 1,773 (10 tkts); (ii): 1,347 (25 tkts).

Veer Chotrani. • FILE PHOTO

Women pugilists enter semifinals

Ashish, Gaurav, Govind and Sanjeet reach the last-eight stage

ing Tournament in Kaspiysk,

BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Asian gold-medallist Pooja Rani (75kg) and world bronze-winner Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), along with two others Indians, entered the semifinals of the Magomed Salam Umakhanov Memorial International Box-

Russia. India Open gold medallist Neeraj (57kg) and former world youth bronzemedallist Jony (60kg) were the other two to make the semifinals on Wednesday night. A bronze-medallist from

the Strandja Memorial Cup earlier this year, Lovlina defeated Russia's Anastasiya Si-

medal. She will next take on Belarus' Alina Veber for a place in the final. Pooja rebounded from a

gaeva 5-0 to be assured of a

shock loss at the India Open in May with a 4-1 victory over Russia's Mamedkulova.

Neeraj also secured a 4-1 win over Russian Sayana Sagataeva.

Belarus' Anastasiya Obushenkova. Former Commonwealth

Jony clinched a 5-0 win ov-

Games bronze-medallist Pinki Jangra (51kg) was the only one among the Indian women to bow out in the quarterfinal stage. The 2018 India Open champion suffered a 0-5 loss to Belarus' Yuliya Apanasovich.

Insha (52kg) beat Azerbaijan's Salman Alizade 4-1 to enter the quarterfinals. He joined 2018 Common-

Among the men, Ashish

wealth Games gold medallist Gaurav Solanki (56kg), Gee-Bee Boxing silver-medallist Govind Sahani (49kg) and 2018 India Open gold medallist Sanjeet (91kg) in the lasteight stage.

India will then host 2022

matches: September 5: India September 10: Qatar vs India October

June 9: India vs Afghanistan.





Sahitya Akademi invites entries for Yuva Puraskar

The Sahitya Akademi has invited entries for the Yuva Puraskar 2020 award from publishers and young Indian authors in 24 languages. The award comprises a prize of ₹50,000, a plaque and a citation. The last date to

apply is August 30. IANS



Google announces doodle contest

Students can sketch or paint or use graphic art to create unique entries for Google's Children's Day contest. The winner gets a scholarship worth ₹5 lakh. This year's theme is 'When I grow up, I



A\$AP Rocky says he tried to avoid fight

STOCKHOLM American rapper A\$AP Rockv testified on Thursday at his assault trial in Sweden that he did everything possible to avoid a confrontation with two men he said were persistently following his entourage in Stockholm, but one of those men picked a fight with one of his bodyquards. AP



Thailand set to deliver medical mariiuana

Thailand plans to distribute about 10,000 bottles of cannabis oil next week for hospital patients, a government official said on Thursday, the first official use of medical marijuana since a law legalising it came into

effect this year. REUTERS

Indus Valley seals carried meaning like modern coins do, shows study

So far, inscriptions from the ancient civilisation have remained an enigma

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

A majority of the Indus Valley inscriptions were written logographically (by using word signs) and not by using phonograms (speech sounds units), claims a recent research paper published in Palgrave Communications, a Nature group journal.

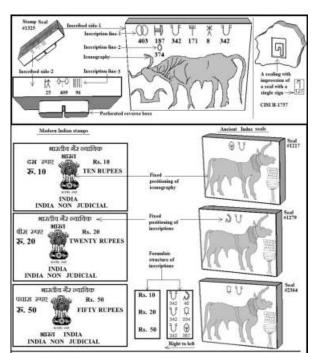
The paper, titled Interrogating Indus inscription to unravel their mechanism of meaning conveyance, points out that the inscriptions can be compared to the structured messages found on stamps, coupons, tokens and currency coins of mod-

Epigraphic analysis

Discovered from nearly 4,000 ancient inscribed objects, including seals, tablets, ivory rods, pottery shards, etc., the Indus inscriptions are one of the most enigmatic legacies of the Indus Valley civilisation which have not been deciphered due to the absence of bilingual texts, extreme brevity of the inscriptions, and ignorance about the language(s) encoded by the Indus script.

"This article mainly focusses on understanding how Indus inscriptions conveyed meanings, rather than on deciphering what they conveyed," Bahata Ansumali Mukhopadhyay, the author of the paper, told *The Hindu*.

For the study, Ms. Mukhopadhyay has used the digitised corpus of Indus inscriptions compiled by well-known epigraphist and Indus scholar Iravatham Mahadevan. She studied it using computational analyses



Practical use: Structural similarities between some Indus artefacts and modern coins and stamps. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and various interdisciplinary measures.

Analysing the brevity of the inscriptions, the rigid positional preferences maintained by the signs of the inscriptions, and the co-occurrence of restriction patterns demonstrated by certain classes of Indus signs, she infers that such patterns can never be phonological co-occurrence restrictions. Phonological co-occurrence restrictions refers to two or more sound units that cannot be pronounced together. "A very compelling, nearly unassailable proof of the logographic nature of Indus inscriptions comes from the co-occurrence restriction patterns maintained within them," the paper states.

Ancient tokens

In the publication that runs into 37 pages, Ms. Mukhopadhyay classifies the signs into nine functional classes. Based on archaeological evidence, she says, "The inscribed seals and tablets were used in some administrative operation that controlled the commercial transactions prevalent in the trade-savvy settlements of the ancient Indus Valley civilisation. These inscriptions can be compared to the messages found on stamps, coupons, tokens and currency coins of modern times. where we expect formulaic texts that encode certain type of information in some pre-defined ways, rather than freely composed narrative."

A common perception among some scholars is that the Indus script is logo-syllabic, where one symbol can be used as a word sign at one time and as a syllable sign at another. This method, where a word symbol also gets sometimes used only for its sound value, is called the rebus principle. For example, you can combine the pictures of a honey bee and a leaf to signify the word "belief" (bee+leaf). According to Ms. Mukhopadhyay, though many ancient scripts use rebus methods to generate new words, the inscriptions found on the Indus seals and tablets have not used rebus as the mechanism to convey meaning.

The researcher said that the popular hypothesis that the seals were inscribed with Proto-Dravidian or Proto-Indo-European names of the seal-owners does not hold water. It is not that no other Indus scholar has proposed the logographic theory before. Mr. Mahadevan himself tried to read these inscriptions logographically for decades, just that the logographic theory was not articulated well enough. Ms. Mukhopadhyay said her current work could serve as a basis in future for the deciphering of the script.

Edward Snowden's memoir to reveal whistleblower's secrets

Permanent Record will go on sale on September 17

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON

Edward Snowden, the former National Security Agency contractor who fled to Russia after leaking information about the U.S. government's mass surveillance program, is publishing a memoir.

The book, Permanent Record, will go on sale on September 17. It is being published globally Macmillan Publishers.

Mr. Snowden, who once worked for the CIA in addition to the NSA, has been living in Russia since leaking thousands of classified documents to the press in 2013 which revealed the scope of U.S. government surveillance after 9/11.

Praised as a whistleblower and a privacy advocate by



Edward Snowden

his defenders, the U.S. accuses Snowden of endangering national security.

Espionage charges

He is facing espionage charges in the United States that could send him to prison for decades.

"Edward Snowden decided at the age of 29 to give up his entire future for the good of his country," John Sargent, the CEO of Macmillan Publishers USA, said in a statement.

"He displayed enormous courage in doing so, and like him or not, his is an incredible American story," Mr. Sargent said. "There is no doubt that the world is a better and more private place for his actions."

On his Twitter account, Mr. Snowden announced "I wrote a book", and included a link to a video of himself.

"Everything that we do now lasts forever, not because we want to remember but because we're no longer allowed to forget," he says in the video. "Helping to create that system is my greatest

In EU, Google

to pause audio

A German data protection

official says Google has gi-

ven reassurances that it

will not make transcripts of

speech data picked up by

its artificial intelligence sys-

tem in the European Union

for at least the next three

Johannes Caspar, who as

Hamburg's Commissioner

for Data Protection acts as

Germany's lead regulator

of Google on privacy is-

sues, said on Thursday that

he received the assurance

transcription

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YouTube star killed in paragliding accident

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LOS ANGELES

YouTube star Grant Thompson, who rose to fame as host of the popular channel "The King of Random", has died in a paragliding accident, his family announced.

Authorities said the 38year-old, who had 11 million subscribers on his channel and billions of views, was reported missing after he didn't return on Monday from a paragliding trip in Utah.

A GPS device that he had on him was used to locate his body late on Tuesday.

The Washington County Sheriff's office said in a Facebook post that rescuers



Grant Thompson

had recovered paragliding equipment as well as a video recording device that may help shed some light on the crash.

Thompson's family informed fans of his death on his social media pages. "Grant's legacy will live on in the channel and the global community he created," the family wrote.

after opening proceedings against Google. He said EU data protection law allows national authorities to take action for a maximum of three months. Google acknowledged last month its contractors are able to listen to recordings of what people tell Google Assistant after some Dutch-language re-

Mr. Caspar urged other authorities to consider action against artificial intelligence systems from rival companies such as Apple and Amazon that

cordings were leaked.

Japan approves growing human organs in animals for the first time

Modified embryos are implanted with human cells

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Scientists in Japan will begin trying to grow human organs in animals after receiving government permission for the

North Korean champions find

first study of its kind in the country.

The cutting-edge – but controversial - research involves implanting modified animal embryos with human "induced pluripotent stem" (iPS) cells that can be coaxed into forming the building blocks of any part of the

It is the first step in what researchers caution is a very long path towards a future where human organs for transplant could be grown inside animals.

The research led by Hiromitsu Nakauchi, a professor of genetics at Stanford University, is the first of its kind to receive government approval after Japan changed its rules on implanting human cells into animals.

Japan had previously required researchers to terminate animal embryos implanted with human cells after 14 days and prevented the embryos from being placed into animal wombs to

But in March those restrictions were dropped, allowing researchers to seek individual permits for research projects. "It took nearly 10 years, but we are now able to start the experiment," Mr. Nakauchi said.

The research involves generating animal embryos mice, rats or pigs – that lack a particular organ such as a pancreas. The modified embryos are

then implanted with human iPS cells that can grow into the missing pancreas. The embryos would be transplanted into wombs where they could theoretically be carried to term with a functioning human pancreas.

make smart devices. Singapore mansion sets

record with \$167 mn sale

A Singapore mansion sitting on a sprawling plot of land has been sold for a record \$167 million, the latest in a string of eye-catching property deals in the wealthy city-state.

The home was sold by Winright Investment, whose listed shareholders are tycoon Cheng Wai Keung – chairman of developer Wing Tai Holdings, and his wife, according to business and property records. The 85,000 sq.ft. plot

- rare in land-starved Singapore – is near the glitzy Orchard Road shopping belt and the UNESCO-listed Botanic Gardens.

The sale has set a record for a Singapore home in terms of the total transacted price, said Christine Li, head of Singapore and Southeast Asia research at property services firm Cushman and Wakefield.

The deal comes close on the heels of British inventor James Dyson's recent purchase of Singapore's priciest penthouse.

memory games full of fun Techniques are taught right from middle school AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE In silence, Pang Un Sim stares down at the jumbled-

up playing cards for one mislowly through them. Putting the pile aside, she takes a second pack and arranges them in order. One

by one, the two sets are

turned over. They match perfectly. Behind her stand four trophies and a collection of medals, the North Korean haul from the World Memory Championships in December – the first time the coun-

try had entered. Despite fielding a team of just three contestants, led by Ms. Pang, they collected seven gold medals, seven sil-

vers and five bronze. "When you are having fun memorising, it is not as hard as people think," 22-year-old

Ms. Pang said. At the championships, Ms. Pang came second overall, her feats including memorising 5,187 binary numbers in order and 1,772 cards in an hour, while her fastest time memorising a pack of playing cards was 17.67 seconds.

Her teammate Ri Song Mi - who came 7th overall – set a world record by recalling 302 words in 15 minutes.

And in the hour numbers event, when competitors have 60 minutes to memorise as many digits as possible, all three North Koreans



came in the top five. Two of them beat the previous world record, with Ms. Pang scoring 3,240.

Organisers had no idea until the last minute that a North Korean team was entering the contest in Hong

"They arrived and registered just before registration closed," said the championships' founder Tony Buzan.

"It was like a battering ram of surprises because every one of the ten events featured a North Korean in the top three," Mr. Buzan, who has since died, wrote in the magazine of his Brain Trust charity earlier this year.

"Out of nowhere came this meteorite and shooting star and it was shocking in the most delightful sense."

Every January, North Koreans are required to study leader Kim Jong Un's annual New Year speech extensively, and the team's coach Cha Yong Ho said that memorisation techniques are taught as standard during middle

Mr. Cha heads the speed reading research department at the Kim Hyong Jik university of education in Pyongyang, where all three teammates were students and Pang, whose subject was mathematics, has now joined the faculty.

Many memory competitors use a technique known as the Dominic System that replaces numbers with letters and represents them as images and actions that they connect by making up a story. By re-telling the story to themselves, they decipher the items to be recalled.

"For example, this is an ox and the next one is a bed," Ms. Pang said. "The ox is sleeping on the bed and the bed is wobbly and because an ox is sleeping in the bed instead of a person, the bed breaks in the end. That's the scene I see... I use my imagination."

But the North Koreans have broadened the standard method to bring in other variables, enabling them to memorise faster and remember more, said Mr. Cha.

"We use all the senses for association," he explained. "Feeling, taste, movement, imagination, rhyme and everything you could do in your brain."

Be my friend



Say cheese: Yi Yi, a 19-month-old panda cub during her naming ceremony at the National Zoo in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday. 'Yi Yi' means friendship in Chinese. • AP

Big Bang: Kolhapur-born scientist wins global honour

Atish Dabholkar to lead the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Italy

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI Atish Dabholkar, a theoretical physicist from India, has been appointed as the new director of Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy.

He is currently the head of ICTP's high energy, cosmology and astroparticle physics section. He joined the centre in 2014 on secondment from Sorbonne Université and the National Centre for Scientific Research, where he has been a research director.

Mr. Dabholkar will take

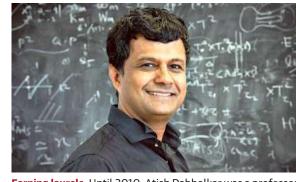
Assistant Director General of

up his duties as ICTP

director with the rank of

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and **Cultural Organization** (UNESCO). He will succeed Fernando Quevedo, who has led the centre since 2009. "It's an honour and a great responsibility to be

chosen as ICTP's next director. ICTP is a one-of-akind institution with a very high level of research and a unique global mission for international cooperation through science. It was envisioned as an international hub for excellence in science and as an anchor to build scientific capacity and a culture of science around the globe. This vision remains valid today even after five



Earning laurels: Until 2010, Atish Dabholkar was a professor at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai.

decades, but needs to be implemented keeping in mind changing realities and priorities," he said in a statement.

Born in 1963, Mr. Dabholkar completed his

Kanpur. He earned a Ph.D in theoretical physics from

school education at Gargoti

in Kolhapur district. He is a

graduate of the Indian

Institute of Technology

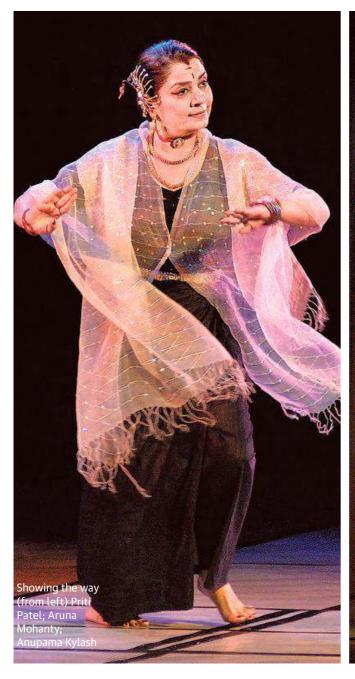
followed by postdoctoral and research positions at Rutgers University, Harvard University and California Institute of Technology. Until 2010, he was a professor of theoretical physics at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai, and has been a visiting professor at Stanford University and a visiting scientist at CERN. Mr. Dabholkar is well-

Princeton University,

known for his research on string theory and quantum black holes. "Research at these new frontiers is an ongoing quest for a more complete and unified formulation of the laws of nature," he said.

FRIDAYREVIEW

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Art of a Soloist

Will the solo dancer survive the onslaught of light and sound show of group choreography?

Pages 4 & 5

INSIDE



Crowning glory

Mohiniyattam expone

Mohiniyattam exponent Gopika Varma describes the SNA Award as the ultimate endorsement of her art



All puzzles are resolved here

Abhinavagupta puts liberation as nothing but the awareness of one's true naturepuzzles are resolved here **P6**



A time to sing, a time to ponder

As they prepare to perform at Khusrau-Kabir festival this Saturday, young artists speak on the theme's relevance P7 2 REVIEW FRIDAYREVIEW FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 2019



Striking a chord A scene from the play ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Chairs as characters

Marked by elements of absurd theatre, Vinay Sharma's "Ho Sakta Hai Do Aadmi Do Kursiyaan" is a thought provoking piece

DIWAN SINGH BAJELI

n a bare stage there are two performers and two chairs. The performers keep on stepping out of one character to act another and the chairs are shifted to different spaces on the stage. In this process the chairs are transformed into characters acquiring the form of metaphors. The narrative is not unified, various fragments from life acted out alternatively in solo form. This is how the director has conceptualised his production of "Ho Sakta Hai Do Aadmi Do Kursiyaan" which was jointly presented by Padatik, Kolkataunder the auspices of Atelier at Akshara Theatre recently

Written and directed by Vinay Sharma, the opening fragmented sequence depicts two performers sitting on chairs. One performer creates loud chewing sound which irritates the other character who protests. Both indulge in squabbles, there is no resolution. The image provides the audience lively moments. In a subtle way this image sets the tone of the anguished humanity living in a grotesque world. The subsequent scenes are enacted as solo pieces, each unconnected with piece another.

In one sequence, the solo performer narrates his life, his father and son to a man waiting outside a railway station. The listener remains invisible who asks him to sit on the chair, he insists he has always been sitting on the ground. His family makes a living by carrying the passengers to their destinations. He keeps the stranger engaged and tells him that he loved his father and one day he disappeared and never came back. A sense of mystery surrounds the scene.

There is a scene where a young man visits one of his relatives who occupy a big room and there is a chair for him. The young man aspires to occupy this chair one day and will work hard to achieve his ambition. A kind of grim atmosphere prevails in the scene.

There is another image where chair is indirectly referred. The man tells his imaginary listener that time has changed and in the process, the fate of men also changed. He says he was once a miserable vendor, sitting on the pavements and now he has a better place to carry on his business. There is no mystery about this piece. It is enacted effortlessly, exuding humour. In one of the scenes a grotesque imagery is created when a man drops dead on a fat woman and her fat son remains a spectator. Possibly, the man dropped dead because of the bomb blast. A voice says death could become a source of entertainment if you are not the victim.

In fact, the central idea is conveyed by two scenes which have comparatively elaborate narrative patterns. In one such scene, we watch the enactment of the imagery of a home revealing the anguish of a husband who suspects the fidelity of his wife. Here two empty chairs are placed in the room which are objects of husband's sexual jealousy. The reference to three duplicate keys magnifies husband's suspicion. The wife is a working woman who insisted to work and now she is too busy in the office to talk to her husband on phone. Alone in the room, the miserable husband has just returned from his office and looks again and again at the chairs. For him, the chairs become symbol of infidelity.

Continued on Page 7

Thumri tales

Aahang Festival offered not just thumri recitals by some of the best voices of different gharanas but also initiated the audience into understanding the origin and intricacies of the art form

MANJARI SINHA

alcutta Performing Arts Foundation, Kolkata and Kaladharmi BAAG (Begum Akhtar Academy of Ghazal), Delhi jointly organised 'Aahang' Thumri Festival at the Chaudhury House, Kolkata recently. The festival, curated by Prof. Rita Ganguli, was organised as a tribute to Bade Ramdas ji, the reputed vocalist, composer and doyen of Gharana: Banaras through the thumri performances by the torchbearers of different gharanas, including his own.



Introducing the festival on the first day, Ganguli, herself directly trained under three great thumri singers of vesteryears, Pt. Shambhu Maharaj, Siddheshwari Devi and Begum Akhtar, explained that the purpose of this festival was basically to tell people that thumri is thousands of years old style of Indian classical music which unfortunately got associated with the wrong notion of 'thumak' or thumakana.

This 'thumak' style associated with dance was never the original thumri. 'Aahang', she continued, literally means modulation of sound, melody, and words; emphasising the importance of correct pronunciation of lyrics in this genre which gives utmost importance to sahitya, the text. The aim of the festival, she continued, was also to show the thumri singers, the correct path in order to take it intact further.

Aniruddha Chaudhury, the founder of Calcutta





Raising the bar Pt. Rajeshwar Prasad Mishra in performance; (below) Rita Ganguli

Performing Arts Foundation, added, "The festival is also associated with the kind of spiritual aura this Foundation has maintained by presenting the classical Dhrupad sangeet by the topmost stalwarts of classical music here at Chaudhury House to date. Thumri also leads to the spiritual path that leads us to be one with the almighty. He invited the esteemed guest Swami Suparnanand from Ramakrishna Mission, to further elaborate on the 'spiritual element of music'

Ganguli explained that thumri is not confined just to Banaras gharana. Stalwarts of all the gharanas excelled in thumri singing. Who can forget 'Jamuna ke teer...' or "Piya ke milan ki aas..." sung by Ud. Abdul Karim Khan of Kirana Gharana, "Na manungi..." and "Banao batiyan..." sung by Ud. Faiyaaz Khan of Agra gharana, "Aaye na Balam, ka karun Sajni..." sung by Ud. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan of Kasur Patiala Gharana and so on? The festival therefore, was conceived in a manner where a short video film on a particular gharana was screened before the torch bearers of that particular gharana ignited the lamp of his or her gharana and rendered thumris in immaculately perfect diction of words they chose to interpret with total restraint, devoid of jugglery, underlining the special features of thumri

singing in their own gharana.

Authentic flavour

The two-day Festival celebrating Bade Ramdas Ji, presented Pt. Rajeshwar Prasad Mishra, the grandson and a direct disciple of Bade Ramdas JI, to showcase the most authentic flavour of Banaras gharana opening with thumri Des "Thhaadhi Gori chitwat badra ki ore...".

His thumris in Bihag and Khamaj were also equally impressive with the emotive Bol-Banaav of Banaras Ang evoking the rasa-bhava, musically translating the true meaning of 'Aahang'. Ably accompanied by his well-groomed disciple Aasheesh Mishra, Rajeshwar Prasad also assured about carrying forward the tradition with due earnest-

Earlier the festival had opened with the present generation torchbearer of Banaras gharana, Shoma Ghosh, who is the disciple of Bageshree Devi in turn trained under Pt. Ganesh Prasad, another direct disciple of Bade Ramdas Ji.

Ustad Raja Mian created the authentic ambiance of Agra gharana with his very first sur-lagav, when he presented a couple of bandishi thumris in Khamaj adorned with the playful rhythmic Bol-Baant, his gharana is known for, before concluding his nostalgic performance with the fa-

mous Bhairavi "Banao batiyan chalo kahe ko jhoothi..." immortalised by the Aftab-e-Mausiqi Ud. Faiyaz Khan.

Madhura V. Sohani, the young torchbearer of Jaipur Atrauli Gharana and Nabhodeep Chakraborty representing the Kasur Patiala gharana were the two youngsters who vouched for their proper training under Vidushi Shobha Gurtu and Uds. Mazhar-Javed, the grandsons of Ud. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, respectively. Rageshshri Das representing Banaras gharana also seems to be a promising talent with potential.

All-encompassing

Accompanying artists like Ghulam Ali and Allarakha Kalawant on sarangi, Hiranyamoy Mitra, Jyotirmoy Bannerjee and Ratan Bhattacharya on harmonium, Soumen Sarkar and Biplav Bhattacharya on tabla enhanced the musicality of the performance.

The festival was remarkable in the sense that it offered not just the thumri recitals by some of the best voices of different gharanas but also initiated the audience into understanding the origin, history and intricacies of thumri with Prof.

Rita Ganguli intervening to explain them all to facilitate their Rasaswadan or relishing of the artform; at times at the cost of intruding the Thumri recitals.

Mohiniyattam exponent Gopika Varma describes the SNA Award as the ultimate endorsement of her art

RANEE KUMAR

anseuse Gopika Varma is all smiles as you compliment her on bagging the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award Mohiniyattam dance form. Settling down for a candid conversation, she confides, "It's taken a decade of diligence and dedication to arrive here. The bulk of my work stands as a testimonial. Not just on the performance front, but on the creative side as well as imparting the art to the younger generation, she has been working with missionary zeal. "No, not with an eye to any award or recognition," she is quick to clarify. "My passion for art is my driving force that made for my single-minded pursuit of Mohiniyattam against all odds, possible. Without that zeal, I don't think any achievement is possible in any field of work." Very true of a committed artiste who has no other privileges whatsoever. But in the case of Gopika Varma, well, she is the daughter-inlaw of the prestigious Kerala royal family and that makes a world of difference.

Patrons of art

"The difference was more in my personal life," she says wistfully. "I had this penchant for dancing right from childhood. All I wanted to do was to dance; nothing else interested me so much. My mother was also adept in Mohiniyattam. The household into which I married were patrons of art and so I was proclaimed to be very fortunate to be making a home in the royal household which produced great artiste kings like Swati Tirunal. I am fortunate to be blessed with a mother-in-law and other elders in the family who love music and dance and encouraged me in my pursuit. The women of the royal household were all highly erudite and well-versed in music and dance, though they restricted themselves from public performances as it was not the done thing. I should admit that royal households have their own code of conduct that restricts certain freedoms that seem so natural to people outside. I had to toe that line," she says.

If she was free to perform then, what was the hassle? "I



Passionate about dance Gopika Varma ; Pasumarthi Ramalinga Sastry

took a sabbatical for a decade due to my own health issues which were medically mismanaged. It was only after my son was born that I decided to gather the threads of my jettisoned life of art and make a comeback. It wasn't an easy drive. With a fairly long period of absence, you tend to lose confidence. It was an arduous journey which I undertook with grit, faith and blessings of elders. In the process, I took care not to hurt any established norm and not to let my faith in God get shaken. Human effort is limited but divine will is unlimited," she explains.

Gopika began her dancing lessons at the age of three with her mother as her first guru. She had a great inclination towards Bharatanatyam and learnt the dance form under the tutelage of Vazhoor Ramaiah Pillai's son Samraj master for 18 years. But she couldn't resume it after a mishap that took a toll on her health.

So, she decided to go back to Mohiniyattam after the sabbatical and there was no looking back from then. It was not a rocket soar but a steady climb. She began culling out innovative content for Mohiniyattam by working on the ancient Tamil Sangham literature-Purananuru and Akananuru, Kulashekar Azhwar's divine poetry, Adi Sankaracharya's divine verses, Jayadeva's Ashtapadi, rarest of rare kritis of Swati Tirunal, Balarama Bharatam, Harshawardhana, Kavalam Narayana Pannickar, G. Sankara Kurup, Sugata Kumari's compositions and Sopana Sangeetam, a very popular temple music in Kerala.

Continued on page 7

Place of eminence

It is heartening to note awards being bestowed on classical dancers who are active in the field. Like Gopika Varma, Pasumarthi Ramalinga Sastry (Kuchipudi) is at the peak of his career in dance.

(Kuchipudi) is at the peak of his career in dance.

Pasumarthi is a multi-faceted scholar-artiste in both Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi. "I'm indeed elated by this recognition of my contribution to Kuchipudi. I have fulfilled my mentor, Vempati Chinna Satyam's desire that I should place Kuchipudi dance on a pedestal of eminence with new choreographies culled out of our ancient tradition."

But he is also an expert in Bharatanatyam which he teaches at Hyderabad Central University. "Kuchipudi is my ancestral legacy, while Bharatanatyam, which I imbibed for a decade in Kalashetra, Chennai under Rukmini Devi, is my hard-earned property. The twain can never seep into each other, as many fear, at least not in my case. Since my entire village that goes by the dance form's name comprises families of dancers, it was very natural for me to begin dancing from the age of three."

At the age of ten, he was a steady performer but had a desire to go toKalakshetra. "I learnt mridangam and Carnatic music along with dance at Kalakshetra which had a telling effect on my choreographies later. The sense of rhythm and knowledge of music is pivotal to dance. I finished my diploma at Kalakshetra and returned to my native state. I never lost touch with Kuchipudi dance form as I used to practice during summer vacations at home."

Pasumarthi is known for his unique, highly-researched, classical yet topical choreographies. "This art form was essentially dance-drama format. It was never a solo though later masters had imbibed solo format into the system to give it a holistic appeal. I revisited and revived the abandoned mythological 'Shashirekha Parinayam' (an episode from Mahabharat) with the help of its music which is present in the All-India Radio archives thankfully. I brought in innovative stage techniques and a cluster of the melodic raga."

Similarly, he adds, his ancestors were staging Uttara Ramayanam which is full of pathos and somehow they felt the pathos visited their homes too and so gave up this beautiful epic. "There is no Kuchipudi without Ramayana. I revoked it as 'Ramakatha saram' (the essence of Rama's story), wherein I introduced lord Rama's manifestation through the process of evolution in the universe. It is here that I interlaced the Dasavatar until the advent of Rama and went on to build the main episodes to complete the epic story."

His 'Tripati Ganga' on the sacred river was another milestone production wherein he juxtaposed the eras (Krita, Treta, Dwapara, and Kali yuga) with the maiden Ganga as 'piya, parakeeya and samana' nayika and linked the river's equanimity to present day. "I wanted to bring in a story element to the auspicious start of any dance form – a song in praise of Ganesh. I delved into the mythological significance of lord Ganesh as the eradicator of evil/obstacles and choreographed the ballet, 'Ga-

jananeeyam' (origin of Gajanan). 'Avasyam Swaccha palanam' (Urgent need for clean good governance) was a very contextual dance drama with a reference to mythology. It was a veiled satire on the present-day political scenario."

The element of universality is what makes his choreographies valuable pieces of art. Not just the story part, his rhythmic patterns in introducing each and every character make for an amazing dance element whose aesthetics cannot be missed.



Blissful state Madhavi Mudgal

A lyrical homage

At the 6th Natnaagar Festival, Odissi stalwart Madhavi Mudgal executed a khayal piece in Odissi style

MADHUR GUPTA

midst the recent Guru Purnima messages and photos flooding the arena of social media, one felt much was lost in the din and glitter of what otherwise is a very personal and private occasion.

Abhyas - an association of arts and culture provided rasikas with the much needed respite by organising the 6th Natnaagar Festival in remembrance of their Guru, the grand man of Kathak late Pt. Shambhu Maharaj. With the chief guests including Padma Vibhushan awardee Guru Saroja Vaidyanathan and ace critic Sunil Kothari remembering with much fondness their gurus and lives as disciples, the festival featured Odissi by Guru Madhavi Mudgal, Kathak by Daniel Freddy and Rahul Pawar (students of Guru Vaswati Sen), and Bharatanatyam by Vidushi Rama Vaidyanathan.

One was able to witness the Odissi recital in its full glory. Madhavi Mudgal began her recital with a mangalacharan dedicated to Lord Shiva. *Sambhav Lalat...* extracted from the 13th century text "Sangeet Ratnakar", delved into the duality- non duality concept of Shiva and Shakti. One had heard this composition in shuddh Hindustani style by the renowned vocalist Jitendra Abhisheki which the dancer had modulated in her personal lyrical manner.

Next in line was Jhinjhoti Pallavi, a composition by Pt. Madhup Mudgal. Intertwined with sculptural freezes of the alasya kanyas, Madhavi Mudgal, belying her age, beautifully executed the entire pallavi. The pallavi itself quite complex musically had various jati patterns interwoven with the Jhinjhoti raga executed by the orchestra with much finesse.

Recalling how Shambhu Maharaj had seen Mudgal dance as a kid, promising to give her a 'gold medal', the dancer chose to render a dadra by Begum Akhtar as a tribute to both the legends who were doyens of the Lucknawi style of performing arts. Treading the much charted waters of the nayika requesting the koyaliya to go to her lord with her message and bring him soon, the Odissi stalwart found herself at ease executing the khayal piece in Odissi style, owing to her years of training and performance career as a Kathak artiste.

The danseuse aptly chose to draw curtains on her poetically executed evening on Guru Purnima by rendering the much loved ashtapadi of her Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra in raga Bhairavi: "Yahi Madhava Yahi Keshava" echoing through the hall, leaving the rasikas unquenched in their thirst for

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 2019

Saving the lone dancer in the pool of light

Eminent gurus, who have nurtured solo artistes, give us an insight into the state of the anchoring feature of most Indian classical dances

he raised curtain reveals an individual body of a dancer standing in a pool of light. There are no fancy lights or stage sets. The musicians play and sing the opening sounds, gradually the flowering of the dance allows the audience to travel a journey. The solo dancer is like a magician weaving multiple dimensions of the art of dance into a long scarf with varied threads of movement, rhythm, and most of all bhava and rasa. The woven scarf swirls enjoining the earth with space, igniting the flight of imagination. Claps intersperse as the audience recognise the creative inputs. It is the dancer's victory and the audience's resurrection. Both know they travel to know who they are.

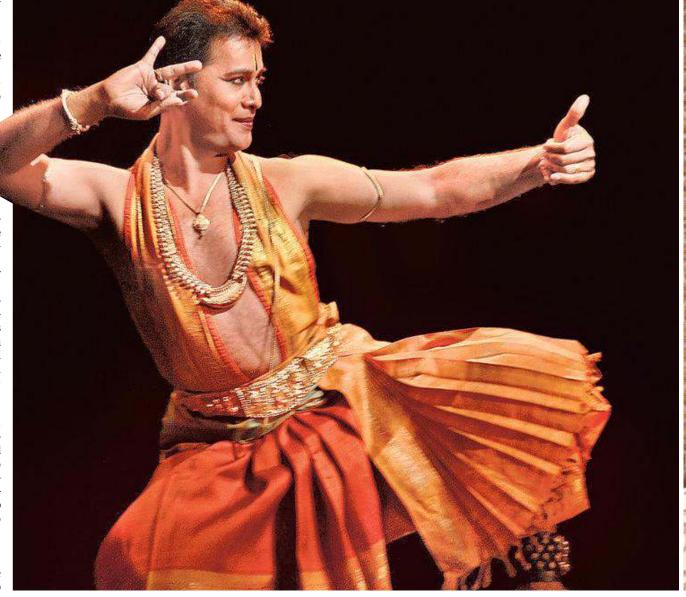
The anchoring feature of most In dian classical dances is the solo dan cer. In Kuchipudi and Manipuri, it is gradually evolving. The visibility of a large number of dance festivals and the presence of the Indian classical dance on social media make it appear that the traditions are healthy. Additionally, there are scattered community and individual efforts and belief that the solo dance will remain. However, the lack of qualified cultural administrators have led to the pressure of succumbing to popu lar forces of group performances, re corded music and a malady of pay to perform. The solo has to survive to conserve the Indian classical dance.

Responding to the emerging threat, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan observes, "The Indian classical dance form is largely an Ekal Nritya (a solo dance form). It is in sync with our philosophy that we come alone, and die alone. Even the theatrical and



By not investing in the creation of solo dancers, the very foundation of the tradition of Indian classical dance is rattled. Whatever the challenges, this central character of the solo dance needs to

Kapila Vatsyayan



tronage systems, and attitude of students, gurus and transmission methods. Responses to a series of questions by committed, successful middle generation gurus, who have nurtured already established soloists or have students who are strong potentials, provide hope that the solo

Pay to perform

group synergy is about the indivi-

dual journey: its tradition is like a ho-

nevcomb. Each bee works indepen-

dently and yet together the bees are

perceived as a community, a unit. By

not investing in the creation of solo

dancers, the very foundation of the

tradition of Indian classical dance is

rattled. Whatever the challenges,

this central character of the solo

dance needs to nurtured, protected

Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, re-

nowned scholar-dancer, says,

"Dance like Hindu practice is indivi-

dualistic and not collective devotion.

It is a one to one journey of realisa-

tion. In the Natya Shastra, solo is one

form among the ten categories of

drama. The emphasis in the Indian

dance is on nurturing individual

creativity and not factory produc-

tions, or cloning as evident in the

process of group productions. The

objective is *bhava* and *rasa* (intrinsic

The question to save the solo

dance form has multiple aspects -

cultural economics, policies, and

politics of performance displays, pa-

essence, sublime emotion)."

and promoted.'

Apart from the vibrant month-long 'Dance Season' in Chennai, continu ous efforts by Spic-Macav and a few emerging initiatives such as the Raindrop Festival in Mumbai, there are few platforms for solo dancers. It is rampant that solo performers are made to pay organisers to perform. "It is a disease that needs to be eradicated," says Manipuri exponent Priti

It does not matter how long and how good a performer is, ironical as it may seem, the legitimacy of dancers in the market is accepted by the hierarchical grading empanelment by Government agencies such as ICCR, and the Doordarshan (Nation-

the Government continues to be the driving patron and manager of Indian dance and other performing

The establishment of the Bismillah Khan Yuva Puruskar by the Sangeet Natak Akademi was a welcome step in ratifying the importance of individual talent. Hence, when the Ministry of Culture, for instance, impanels dancers under solo categories, but demands from them group productions for the Festivals of India it undercuts the idea of the solo and inspires private organisations too to support large group

Cultural economics

Live music, diminished by the complexities of cultural economics, is essential to solo dancing to bring out the signature identity and individual creativity in movement, rhythm, abhinava, and other levels of dance deliberations. Good musicians are few and their cost is perceived as high. However, the prevailing 'market' trend is about creating dance perforal Television). Keeping this in mind, mance spectacles; the spectacles

aim to replace solo with groups and live music with glamorous packaging comprising most times of recorded music, designer lighting, costumes, sound, and multimedia

Such trendy, re-positioned displays of classical Indian dance are products of the capitalist marketmaking dance performances more expensive and quite often camouflaging mediocre dancing. Those students who do invest in solos need to self-motivate themselves.

Kuchipudi expert Anupama Kvlash wonders that if a Kathakali dancer is still able to hypnotically hold a large crowd for several evenings by performing in open space between oil-lit torches, why can't a proscenium solo performer not assert his/her high-level content/talent in a simple performative setting?

Of course there is a reality - both "Students, after initial years of esthe publicity and the technical wisential training, require personal atzardry are essential to draw in the tention to recognise and foster their contemporary audiences, but a baforte. For example, my student Pujilance needs to be struck such that ta Krishna is an accomplished Enneither the content nor the space for glish writer and speaker, while Usha Kiran is proficient in Telugu. The improvisation (live music) so essengrooming for Pujita incorporates her tial for the solo performance is com-

promised.

Making of solo dancers

Solo dancing involves the initiative of

students within the larger dynamics of long, sustained personalised teaching. This is in contrast to the growing phenomenon of virtual teaching through videos, internet, and television and workshop modules. It is about carving individual styles. "Transmission of Indian dance like other subjects is a journey into the universe of the knowledge system and beyond craft, technique, and items. For instance, the 11th Century philosopher Ramanujacharya came to learn the Ramayana from his Guru but was told to first memorise the text. The former returned five years later and was then taught the text from 18 perspectives.

example. Anukriti Vishvakarma's talent in nritt where one can observe her creativity in clear, sharp movements. Ridhima Bagga, who also trained with Malti Shyam and Deepak Maharai, brings to her performance her engagement as a theatre

The group performance too is useful as part of training and motivation. Padma Subrahmanyam is of the

writing/speaking power in her per-

formance: while with Usha, Lencour-

age engagement with Telugu litera-

ers, "The student comes first with a

dream that she/he wants to dance.

They later realise that they need to

do the penance. It's about learning,

committing, developing internal fo-

cused energy, discipline, and open-

ing to receive knowledge. I too com-

pletely involve myself while teaching

them to comprehend, for example.

the way dance syllables are struc-

tured, woven as compositions and

Jaikishan has to his credit trained

several other potential soloists. For

movements to create rasa."

Kathak guru Jaikishan Maharai av-

ture for abhinava," says Kyalash,

The training of solo dance brings with it the responsibility of nurturing a new generation who will ensure the flow of the dance parampara. Students may grow to contribute in various roles as performers, teachers, scholars or even administrators Concerning both Kuchipudi and Manipuri, an interesting point was the fact that these are primarily group performative traditions.

Priti Patel and Anupama Kylash admit that the format of the solo is still evolving in both traditions. Kylash says that initially, the solo identity was defined in the female Dasi traditions. "Kuchipudi was an all-male theatrical format. The dramatic lucid aspects of the dance compositions were imbibed by Bharatanatyam performers like Yamini Krishnamurti and Swapnasundari (who also brought into limelight Vilasini Natyam). I have for example tried to create a formal format keeping in mind that the theatrical aspect of the form is retained."

In Manipuri, the building of the solo format started with Guru Amobi Singh and Bipin Singh, Karuna Devi spoke about Priti Patel's contribution in bringing in the Tandaya aspect into the solo repertoire that has contributed to a more compelling perform

Jaikishan Maharaj says that even as Kathak is equated with speed and overuse of pirouettes (chakkars), he is working to blend stillness, sustaining circularity of movements and grace in his style of teaching. He observed that several percussion instruments, for instance, have a specific repertoire marked only for the left hand. A different world of sound effects and patterns are produced. "Inspired, I realised perhaps as a left-handed person, I can work to contribute to an aesthetics that revolves on the left section of the body adding to the Kathak tradition."

A. Lakshman has built on the aesthetics of several teachers. For example, inspired by Muthuswami Pillai's aesthetics of using eight directions for adavus (to integrate cadences of movement into dance patterns), he internalised a variety of ways to mediate space and gravity while exploring vertical planes. "My teaching explores holding a stance. It also probes the idea of grounding and simultaneous searching to

Odissi exponent Kavita Dwibedi speaks of Aruna Mohanty's manner of executing movement extensions, and amplifying aesthetics and beauty of performing with the back stance is exciting as much as her courage to engage with contemporary themes

Leading from the front Guru A.

Lakshman, Jai Kishan Maharaj

■ R. SHIVAJI RAO

view that "when teaching a large number of students, group performances allows an opportunity of performance for all and thus becomes motivational to align with dance." While Jaikishan Maharaj says that the group allows students to learn and experience performance space, lights, and costumes. The training to be a complete dancer requires after-all several skills such as music, percussion, performance space management and costuming. Odissi exponent Aruna Mohanty asserts that since financial sustenance as a solo dancer is difficult, "I suggest to my students not to negate participating in groups. That too is an opportunity. Sometimes, a special taent can be spotted in a group and can be part of public memory."

Spreading wings

It is important to critique the clichéd celebration of the perfection of the Guru-shishya parampara in the present environment. Students cannot be expected to invest full time only in dance/music education. Mainstream education is the requirement that allows dancers to think, question, critique "and for supplementing incomes," observes Aruna Mohanty. Gurus feel that the limited time to teach, and the student's lack of time, do not permit the immersion to happen. "But, it is the talent of a guru to motivate students in such a way that they continue to gradually commit to dance, and keep returning to pursue training," says Kylash.

Priti Patel admits that she has categorically chosen to perform and choreograph over teaching, "since nonestly, both teaching and performing are extremely demanding and justice is rarely done when doing both." Nonetheless, her student

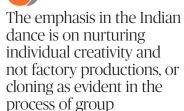
and express it in the Odissi dance language

Karuna Devi who came to her for higher training believes that Patel has contributed much in making her a soloist through her experience as a creative soloist and choreographer.

Jaikishan Maharaj has committed nimself completely to teaching, composing music and even writing. 'Teaching requires deep contemplation on different levels: imparting the basic technique of one's style. constantly creating new dimensions that adds to the tradition and finally thinking of individual students, their talent, and potential."

In this discourse, locating Bharatanatyam expert A. Lakshman is fascinating. He is not only a talented performer but an extremely successful Guru as well. He has chiselled the likes of Priyadarshini Govind who he taught for around three years, Priya Venkatraman, Urmila Satvanarayan, Ivotsana Iagannathan among others. Lakshman says, "Understanding the





productions

Padma Subrahmanyam

freedom for creativity within tradition on my own body has helped me to mould individual students. I am extremely selective in the choice of

Priya Venkatraman observes, "Lakshman Sir is unique. He is self less, generous and believes in qualitative teaching. He invests, nurtures on a one to one relationship." Such is his motivation and commitment that Kalaisan Kalaichelvan from Canada comes to learn annually for several vears." Aruna Mohanty expresses that the dancer as a performer and a teacher needs to consciously develop not to compete with the student and remain large-hearted. Bijan Kumar Palai, a student of Mohanty, started as a Gotipua dancer and is one to watch out for as a strong emerging male soloist.

Positive churn

The solo is the 'centre' of the Indian classical dance. It has to sustain. Spic Macay's Nav Pallava is a recently launched counter-movement against pay to perform and to reinstate the solo form. Ashok Jain, who is spearheading the initiative, says, "Like any cycle, the solo has to reemerge." The platform brings prominent Gurus and senior dancers to collaborate in different regional cities and present promising solo performers. Audiences are encouraged to donate at the entrance which goes to pay the performer. The movement is gradually taking shape and is becoming popular." Youngsters without any connection, money backing or lineage are still courageously investing in the solo. Of them, some are Janhabi Behera, Lipsa Sathpathy in Odissi, Arunima Sengupta, San geeta Chatteriee (Kathak). Himanshu Srivastava, Arupa Lahiry (Bharatana tyam), Ayana Mukherjee (Kuchipudi)

Secondly, the Government needs to play its role well. Eminent poet, cultural administrator, and patron of arts Ashok Vajpeyi says, "While there is the popular pressure/demand for the group, it is in the solo artist that the individual genius is seen, and the traditions of dance secured. The Government has to rigo rously promote the solo artist in dance. That said, there is an urgent need for the Government to bring management and subject knowledge experts into the government cultural

The story of the making of a solo dancer is a commitment to travel to the deepest level to develop creative signatures. That individual character of the solo dance is a process which is as much a surprise to the performer as it is to the viewer. In the sojourn, there is a realisation of knowing the 'beauty' and experiencing insight that goes into the performance. It comes from the training of the guru and not through a well-designed course.

The intense examination reveals that the tradition of the solo is too integral to the Indian classical dance for it to disappear. "The dance is not about performance, it is about becoming. And being so intrinsic to the Indian tradition - yes, the solo will reign!" sums up Guru Kamalini Dutt



6 VOICEOVER

Mind Your Yoga

Know your Breath

It tells a lot about your physical and mental well-being

A.G. MOHAN AND DR. GANESH MOHAN





The first step is to cultivate the skill of comprehensively observing your breath. You can begin doing this right away, whatever position you are in. Take a pause as you read this list and observe each of these parameters. Notice that just observing the breath often changes it. The breath is sensitive. Then make it a point to bring awareness to your breath parameters during your asana practice and at different times during the day. Do not judge your breath as being good or bad. Just cultivate the practice of learning to sense the breath easily.

For this exercise, you need to have a useful list of breath parameters that you can observe. Here it is:

Pattern of breathing:

- Are you breathing through the nose or your mouth?
- Where you are breathing physically - mainly watch the upper chest, lower ribs, abdomen, lower abdomen and back of the body.

Quality of breathing:

- Rate: how fast or how many times a minute.
- Depth:how full is the inhalation and how deep is the exhalation?
- Rhythm:how does the breath vary over several repetitions, say over some minutes.
- Smoothness: is the flow of the breath even and steady or is it jerky?
- **Sound:**is there any sound from the throat or nostrils when breathing?

The components of the breathing cycle:

• Inhale, exhale, pauses. Each part has its own effect. Watch the quality, length, smoothness, and effort of each of these components.

Stress

- Holding patterns and tension in the breath and tension in the body (face, neck, jaw, shoulders, chest, abdomen, legs, fingers).
- Restlessness or inability to remain still.

 Other signs of psychological distress

Effort and ease:

- The more effortful the breath, the less likely it is that your body and mind are well. Even when you are exercising, it is wise to breath as easily as possible.
- Watching over your breath comprehensively by going through these parameters is one of the most important skills you can cultivate for your yoga practice and for your well-being. As you continue to master more techniques of breathing, try to always come back to breath awareness and observe these parameters repeatedly. You don't have to observe all of them at once. Just notice one or two parameters at a time.

The Starting Point:

Natural Breath

The breath is not a blank slate upon which we write patterns. It is an involuntary function. The breath is happening whether we are aware of it or not. So, we are always creating a breathing pattern on top of an existing breathing pattern.

What is that existing breathing pattern? That pattern is your natural or involuntary breath.

When you are resting, your natural breath is usually easy and shallow, with your abdomen moving, mainly. This breath is quite short, maybe around ten breaths a minute. The rhythm of your natural breath changes; it is somewhat unpredictable, with some deeper breaths and chest breaths happening every now and then.

Make it a point to notice your natural breath whenever you can. It changes depending on your posture, stress levels and tension, diet, sleep quality and more. Therefore, it can tell you a lot about the state of your body and mind!



Metaphysics in Natya

All puzzles are resolved here

Abhinavagupta puts Moksha or liberation as nothing but the awareness of one's true nature



PADMAJA SURESH



In the process of meditation, AUM expands in stages of Akara, Ukara, Makara and then Nada, Bindu, Kala, Shanta and Ati Shanta. If Vedic

Brahman is Shantam or peace, Tantric Brahman is Shantam or peace, Tantric Brahman is Aanandam or Bliss. The human psychological I-consciousness is 'relative' in the sense; self-consciousness is in contrast with the not-self but the pure I-consciousness is 'absolute' awareness. It is immediate – like a flash of lightning. When one has this consciousness, one can be aware of the real nature of the Self and non-Self.

Vijnana Bhairava's text of Tantric Trika Shaivism of Kashmir, refers to meditation (dharani) on the sound of stringed instruments. The iconic commentator Abhinavagupta was himself known to play the veena. He would have appreciated the vibrant temple culture in which stringed instruments and the drum interwove melody and rhythm and inspired the ritual dances. Abhinavagupta says that the mind naturally tends towards plain sound. A swara or a musical note has the power to superimpose on the mind evolving beyond mere sound, thus making it responsive through emotion. On Taala or rhythm and Kaala or time fractions and Layaa or rest, Abhinavagupta offers a multi-dimensional eulogy to his deity Siva One who in essence is illusory, yet in whom is perfect equilibrium of every act of the world by means of time divisions. One who is in perfect tempo, based on the substratum of 'rest,' says he. Sound develops into forms in space perceived by us through

light. Sound alone consents to move – to word to sentence, poem, song, dance, painting, sculpture and so on as. The phoneme syllables A to Ksa, bring about will, knowledge and action, appearing in the temporal and spatial as forms, ingeniously varied and distinct.

There are three aspects in Tantra practices – Kula follows Vama/left handed techniques with substance uses, ritualised sex, etc, Mishra both external and internal rites and the purest and highest path of Samaya. The purest Devi Upasana comes under this.

Contemplative devotion

The worship here follows the knowledge of Sri Yantra with meditation. Every experience is in the subtlest state alone with contemplative devotion. In the South, the Tirumantiram (Srimantra in Sanskrit) of Tirumoolar, refers to Bhuvanapati/Shiva chakra. This, many understand to be the Sammelana chakra of Srividya. It is the representation through diagram of this Yantra and the worship with the 15-letter mantra, which one needs to correlate as the Tamil equivalent to the Sanskrit syllables. The vowels and consonants of Sanskrit are inscribed in the vertices of the Sri

The practice of a Sastra by a Sadhaka becomes a dedication to the supreme only if based on three axioms – Asti (Existence in consciousness), Bhati (splendour of the ONE truth) and Priyam

The 36 chapters of Natya Sastra are significant when expanded as thousands of these bio-plasmic energy fields. (Blissful awareness). This triad splits into four quarters in learning - Acharyat Paadam or a quarter from the preceptor or Guru, Swayam Adhyaya or by the sishya himself with own intelligence, Brahmachaaribhyo or through other students and peers and lastly Kaalakramena or over a period of time. This is how Bharatamuni also advises practitioners while he refers occasionally, that as time moves on, deterioration in values, skills, strength and learning is bound to happen. Dance, however, seems to solve all puzzles inherent in philosophical discourses by leading to their true meaning. The 72,000 nerve currents that are divided as 36,000 for each side - Siva and Sakti merge in the central channel. The 36 chapters of Natya Sastra are significant when expanded as thousands of these bio-plasmic energy fields. In one Nritta Karana called 'Leenam,' one is doing full prostrations, standing for the body-mind in contemplation. The other Karanas total to 107, energising the secret Marmas or vital points in us.

Siva in his form as Rudra, cries aloud to announce the birth of the worlds, just as a new born would do. He is Tamobhimani – rules darkness or Tamo Guna without which light can never be

Worshipping Sakti or energy, dancing as 'light and sound' is itself, the eternal realisation of ONE Consciousness or Siva. Abhinavagupta puts Moksha or liberation as nothing else but the awareness of one's true nature. The highest attainment is that of Siva-consciousness in which the entire universe appears as I or Siva and this comes by Saktipata — the descent of Sakti or Anugraha (grace).

A time to sing, a time to ponder

As they prepare to perform at the Khusrau-Kabir festival this Saturday, young artists speak of the relevance of the theme

ANJANA RAJAN

t was in the 15th Century that Kabir, the weaver who wove magic with his words and spared none, reminded us that religious bigotry was mere hypocrisy, that human beings were created the same before being labelled by caste or community, and that deeds, not clothes or rank or empty rituals, proved a person's worth. And before him, Amir Khusrau was writing mystic Sufi poetry about the Divine Beloved, making an indelible contribution to Indian classical and Bhakti music, as well as leaving a literary and cultural legacy for the common listener that endures to this day. They each lived in an era peppered with worldly struggles and historic upheavals, yet they rose above the strife and came to symbolise the highest in creative and spiritual attainment in the Indian subcontinent.

The words of these centuriesold mystics are going to be recalled and regaled this weekend in New Delhi, when Banyan Tree presents its annual Khusrau-Kabir festival at Kamani auditorium. The event, now a decade old, features five artists — Archana Bhattacharya, Gayatri Asokan, Vidya Shah (all of whom are billed for contemporary presentations), Prahald Singh Tippania (Kabirpanthi songs) and the Chisti Brothers (Qawwali).

Message for humanity

In today's India, where words like faith and love, rather than exuding comfort and the spirit of oneness, are frequently distorted by intolerance, hatred and violence, we often wonder what the world is coming to. But then, history tells us, the world has an annoying habit of coming to these junctures over and over again. Humanity constantly needs to be reminded of its own mortality, and seers down the ages, Kabir and Khusrau among them, have fulfilled that need.

"Kabir was a visionary who





Music for the soul (Clockwise from top) Gayatri Asokan, Vidya Shah, Archita Bhattacharya

grew beyond rituals, any religious dogma or preconditioning for that matter," says Gayatri Asokan. "He spoke about the ephemeral nature of human life and how important it is broaden your vision, not identify with the small ego."

As India goes through one of the most critical tests of its civilisational strength, now if ever is the time to dip again into its stash of literary wisdom and remember this strength is based on an amalgamation of cultures, a broad and openended worldview.

'The words of Amir Khusrau and Kabir Das continue to be very relevant in the current times," says noted Khayal, Thumri and Dadra exponent Vidya Shah. "These are basically ideas of love, peace, equality that the entire Sufi and Bhakti movements and the poets therein have held forth. So I think in today's time these are probably more relevant than ever, because I think we live in a time when people need to respect each other, to believe in peace, to understand that violence is not the way to go, is not the way to be, and being together is more important rather than

Besides, adds Asokan, "Khusrau spoke about the misogyny in the society which favours the male child and sidelines the dreams of the girl child in his songs, which is totally relevant in the present times too."

Khusrau and Kabir are icons of India's Ganga Jamuni tehzeeb, which has been battered in the political and social atmosphere prevailing in many parts of the country. In this context, Asokan feels the festival "definitely promotes the true idea of India," defining it as, "grow beyond your



small identities and embrace a common big vision for the betterment of the society."

Archita Bhattacharya is hopeful that "bringing these two legendary poets/saints together and sharing their thoughts will surely bring a change in our current situation and bring peace and harmony."

Moment of peace

Music is an important vehicle to transmit such messages, points out Shah. "Very often people are so caught up in their everyday lives that to actually sit back to reflect and even to introspect, I think music and this kind of lyric provides a peaceful atmosphere to be able to do that." She feels festivals such as this "provide people that moment of peace and quietude."

As for how artists can contribute to shaping public perception, Bhattacharya notes, "It's very important to think of such concepts not only from music point of view but also being a responsible musician, to bring forward our rich culture that also shows a path for a peaceful society through music."

In times of trouble arts are

usually the first to be neglected, the notion being, 'who can be bothered about such refinement when stark realities of survival are at stake?' But it is precisely the removal from the mundane that helps one to see things in perspective, says Asokan. "Art and artists have always made people fall in love with the abstract, find beauty and joy in life and spread this thing called pure joy. We have made life so complex and stressful. Truth is that life is perishable, look beyond petty differences and grow in wisdom. Art is the greatest unifier in this context.

Artists, says Shah, "are really the via media for people to experience values, to understand the joys that music can bring, or any form of art for that matter whether performing or visual."

Enumerating the mind-expanding advantages of the arts, she says, "It allows you to think, it allows you to question, it kindles your curiosity, and therefore it sets you thinking in directions which you may not be able to otherwise. So both art and the manner in which the artist expresses art are very important ways for society to evolve, to adapt and to grow, in organic ways."

It is well known that "soulful, meaningful music and poetry connects with people more easily than words," says Bhattacharya, and thus "can play a vital role in bringing harmony and peace to the society." In the current scenario of divisive politics, she states, it's "high time" artists and established organisations "take moral responsibility of spreading love and peace."

At the performance, while Asokan plans to present a work of Kabir and two Khusrau songs, Shah says her concert will include "some very core ideas that both these saint-poet-seekers expressed through their poetry." There will be "some popular ideas as well," she says, mentioning the widely sung Khusrau lyric, "Mohe apne hi rang mein rang de rangile".

Among other compositions, Bhattacharya plans to sing Kabir's "Koi jape Rahim Rahim, Koi jape hai Ram/Das Kabir hai prem pujari, dono ko parnaam."

In today's India, with religion serving as an incendiary pastime and politicians in the garb of renunciates, many could do with some reminding of this quintessentially Indian idea.

("Khusrau - Kabir: across centuries...", Kamani auditorium, August 3, 6.30 p.m. onwards)

...Chairs as characters

Continued from page 2

Upstage right, wind chimers are placed on a stand which chimes at the end of each scene, symbolising peace with a view to calm down the inner turmoil of the protagonist - this is done in a subtle way.

The script is innovative. Scenes are independent without any link to another. The chairs are centre of the focus. In fact, we have seen Ionesco's "Chairs" which focuses on the absurdist view of man and society. The production under review claims "exposition of emotion in various shades". The protagonists who suffer from mental anguish have no escape and are unable to face forces that oppress them.

The dialogues such as "Your face is not your own" make the production complex and you need complete concentration to comprehend the shadowy world it projects with elements of absurd theatre. The strong point of the production is the excellent performances by two seasoned actors. Vinay Sharma,

in one of the scenes where he reacts in rage against municipal employees, who have destroyed chairs, transforms himself into a schizophrenic out to kill the destroyers of two chairs. Ashok Singh as the husband suspecting the fidelity of his wife gives a highly convincing performance.

...Crowning glory

Continued from page 3

She calls herself 'hardcore' performer from the year 2002 onwards, a period which saw her give thematic performances amounting to nearly 60 every year, both in India and abroad, especially in the Gulf region. "I'm an avowed soloist and my dance is mostly abhinaya-oriented, though I do group choreographies now and then," she states. She opened her dance institute 'Dasyam' in Chennai where she has settled down and also in Bangalore where nearly 250 pupils are into learning Mohiniyattam.

Awards are not new to Gopika. She bagged Kerala's first 'Pushparani' award at the tender age of three from then Tamil film hero Gemini Ganesan! followed by many State honours. I received my Kalaimamani from the hands of the then Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa," she says with a sense of pride! However, she goes on to add, "The SNA is the ultimate recognition an artiste is bestowed with as it is decided and awarded by a committee full of artistes. It is the ultimate endorsement of my art. I couldn't have asked for more."

Music on the move

Groove Gully, a travelling museum of music for children, combines history, geography and music into experiential learning sessions

SHRINKHLA SAHAI

n a regular school trip to the museum, students observe exhibits from a distance, take a long-winded tour that they often find tedious and return with fragments of information that they may find difficult to assimilate into their lives. Here is a museum with a difference that travels to the students, inviting them to explore and experience music in a unique way. The Groove Gully travelling museum of music houses a collection of musical instruments from all over the world. Visiting different schools in Delhi-NCR, the curators ask the children to pick up the instruments, play them under the guidance of musicians and learn about the music that the instruments make. A storyteller weaves a musical tale around the instruments, sharing their cultural significance, the materials and workmanship that make each one unique. They often wrap up the sessions with a music quiz. This turns the 'museum visit' into a 'visiting museum' with engaging ways of combining history, geography and music into experiential learning sessions.

Family bonding

For Jay Chauhan and Bobby Chauhan, founders of Groove Gully, this is a passion project. "Groove Gully is a family bonding platform that weaves music back into family lives." At one of their music festivals, they created a 'percussion zone' where children could touch the musical instruments and try playing them. It generated a great amount of curiosity, wonder and excitement in the children, giving the duo the idea to extend it into a travelling museum. With a collection of about 80 instruments presently, the museum has travelled to schools across the Capital, educating and inspiring over 1500 children per school over three days. Vocalist Shubha Mudgal is part of the advisory board, while Nandini Chatterjee, UNESCO, brings her expertise on Neuroscience and Socio-Emotional Learning that has been integrated into the museum approach. Meanwhile, core team members Vrishali Puranik and Deepak Joshi quit their cushy jobs to be part of the music mission.

"We wanted to question and break the 'don't touch' approach of museums. By allowing and encouraging students to pick up and play instruments, we want them to experience these instruments and take the music



At one of the experiential sessions of Groove Gully

back into their lives," says Jay. "There is always a risk of the instruments getting damaged," he points out, "but we are ready for that, it is still worth it."

The museum recently travelled to a school in Gurugram, featuring a wide assortment like Daman drums from Ladakh, a Chenda from Kerala, Maracas from Peru, Temir Komuz from Kyrgyzstan, Thavil and Kanjiras from Tamil Nadu, Pakhawaj, Tablas, Chimta and Dhol from North India, Bom, Ksing and Padiah from Meghalaya besides Rainsticks, Ocean Drums, Boomwhackers, Ghatam, Manjeera and

Professional musicians performed in every morning assembly using instruments from the museum so students could experience a concert setting. The first day featured a Chendamelam performance using Chendas from Kerala. This was followed by a sharing session where musicians interacted with the students, talking to them about the wood used, ceremonies they were played in as well as their role as accompanying rhythm givers in Kathakali. Students were given blocks of wood and initiated the way Chenda is taught to beginners.

Another day had a percussionist from Panama , Fidel Dely Murillo, playing the rhythms of Latin America with a map of all the South American countries as a background. Through a musical narrative he made his way from Argentina, Peru to Brazil, Panama, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico and finally the US. This was a geography primer woven into the music for all the students gathered.

"We want to change the way children experience music today," emphasises Jay, recalling that there were hardly any such opportunities to learn about instruments from around the world when he was a child. Bringing in an approach of tactile exploration, wonder, storytelling and experiential education, this unique museum of music promises to transform the idea of music-making, museum-visits and learning.

Pushing the limits

Amit Sadh on "Barot House" and his progress in the film industry

ATIF KHAN

e might not be able to carry a film on his shoulders, but Amit Sadh is one of those actors who provide the right texture to the script. Right from "Kai Po Che", Amit emerged as a selfless performer who believes in taking the vision of the director forward. Perhaps, that's why he is cast in star vehicles such as "Sultan" and "Gold". He could have been easily slotted in the comedy zone, but Amit steered clear of the trap after experiments like "Guddu Rangeela" and "Running Shaadi" failed to take off. He will soon be seen in mini-series "India Strikes" and "Breathe 2" but before that there is "Barot House" which is a Zee5 original.

Excerpts: "Barot House" seems intriguing...

It is a very special film for me as I am playing the man of the house, Amit Barot. A suspense drama, it is the story of a family which goes through a set of incidents that take place in the house. It is an intense and brooding role which demands of you to be in a certain zone. A lot goes into preparing for such a role as you have to come out of your comfort zone. For such characters, finding the right beat is very important.

I think I have given everything to this role and after 'Kai Po Che', it is one role that has pushed me. I had to go back to the drawing board and rely on the method that I learned as an artist during the 'Kai Po Che' days. In fact, I called Gattu (Abhishek Kapoor) to tell him that after 'Kai Po Che', it was something special.

How do you see yourself in the industry?

I was never too ambitious. I didn't come here to make a career, it was just to fulfil my desire to perform. People might have a different perception of me, but I am really happy and grateful that good filmmakers have shown faith in me and have invested in my talent. I hope that I keep getting challenging roles which keep pushing me.

It seems casting process is redefining the look of Bollywood films? "Kai Po



Plateful! Amit Sadh ■ THE HINDU

Che" was one such case

Indeed. It was because of the change in casting process that I got the chance to show my calibre to the world. I am a product of this new found process of casting where only your look and acting talent get you the role. If that didn't happen, I don't know what would have been my destiny. I am an outsider. I am not complaining about it but 10 years back it was very difficult to get a break for an outsider.

I feel half the battle is won if you cast right. For this very reason, directors have started paying emphasis on the process of casting and having good casting directors on board.

You have been equally very well received in bigbudget films where you had limited screen time as a character artist.

I do not understand the concept of bracketing actors as character artists. I think the term is used in India only. My logic is very simple. I play parts. In some films that may be of more than 100 minutes and in some films like the recently released 'Super 30', I had a part of 10 minutes. Till



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the time I keep getting these parts and continue to entertain, affect and indulge the audience, I think my job as an artist is fulfilled.

Does working with senior stars such as Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar

I do not pick films because of that but I am very lucky that I have worked with senior actors like Salman sir and my life did change after 'Sultan'. After losing direction, my career was back on track. In 'Gold', I was one of the main protagonists. I learnt hockey for six months. I auditioned for the role. Big names add to the reach of the film but one doesn't sign a film because of that. I see it as a learning process like in 'Breathe', I am one of the leads but it also gave me an opportunity to work with Madhavan. I learnt so much from him. So, working with seniors is a blessing in dis-

How do you remember your early days from television and reality shows?

I remember the television days for the upbringing that they gave me as an actor. Television prepared me to dream big. I was 23-24 at that time. Today, I don't have the time to watch television. Life has changed. Having said that, mediums don't matter because one film or series will work, another will not. What is in your hand is you. Till the time you are evolving and are working hard, you are in the best phase of your life.