

What we owe to the Mahatma

In Gandhi's view, the state should be secular to promote sociability and fraternity among communities



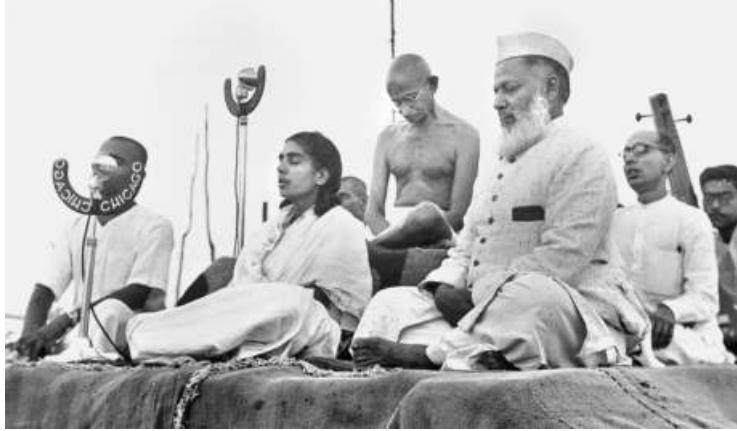
Where does multiple, forceful Hindu assertions of the past few years leave Indian secularism? Some say that secularism lies in tatters. But can it also be claimed that it is needed more than ever before?

Two related but equally distinctive conceptions of secularism developed in India: one constitutional, the principled distance model; the other, the communal harmony model, attributed to the Mahatma. I believe this second Gandhian conception, equally distinctive, is in need of desperate revival. What makes it distinctive and why is it needed? To answer this, a comparison with European conceptions of secularism would help.

Secularism in India and Europe

The background of the emergence of political secularism in Europe is profound religious homogenisation – dissenters, and adherents of non-dominant religions, were expelled or exterminated during and after the wars of religion. Rulers publicly confessed allegiance to one of the many churches in these predominantly single-religion societies, thereby consolidating a strong alliance between state and the dominant church. Trouble began, however, when this church became increasingly politically meddlesome and socially oppressive. The key issue then was how to tame the power of this church. The state's disentanglement from the dominant church (church-state separation) was necessary to realise a number of goals, including the enhancement of individual liberty and equality. But for this secularism, tackling religious diversity was simply not an issue, because it had already been liquidated in all kinds of ethically undesirable ways.

By contrast, in India, deep religious diversity was not an optional extra but part of its social, cultural and historical landscape. Gandhi understood this and never tired of stating it: India is “perhaps one nation in the ancient world which had recognised cultural democracy, whereby it is held that the roads to one and the



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same God are many, but the goal was one, because God was one and the same. In fact, the roads are as many as there are individuals in the world... The various religions were as so many leaves of a tree; they might seem different but at the trunk they are one”. Gandhi dismissed the idea that there could ever be one religion in the world, a uniform religious code, as it were, for all human kind.

Deep sociability

What is needed then is due recognition of different religious communities and to ensure comfort and trust among their members. This was viable because for Gandhi, all humans had a fundamental desire for what might be called deep sociability. They value human relations as an end in itself. They desire a constructive relationship with others. Why else would they be motivated to seek agreement, even when it was not really necessary? Why, upon realising that they can't resolve disagreement on one issue, would they seek agreement on something else? Why are they motivated to renew conversation after it has been violently disrupted? Why, after a period of mutual recrimination, breakdown and silence, do people still begin talking to one another? Humans simply can't do without one another, and no matter how much they like to be with people of their own ilk, they invariably also need to live with those with who they differ, to reach out to people with whom they disagree.

The world's religious diversity, the impossibility of there ever being one religion for humankind, makes mutual respect, equal regard and communal harmony a necessity. Gandhi believed that this can become a reality by virtue of the human quality of

deep sociability.

Humans occasionally wish to live independently of their communities, but as participants of historically embedded cultural and religious traditions, they also meet each other as members of religio-cultural communities. They must actively shape these encounters, ensure that they do not become bitter or turn sour but be good, decent, friendly and respectful. Humans can't really be good to each other unless they are respectful to each other's religious and philosophical traditions.

Gandhian secularism

Gandhi felt that a large part of the responsibility for maintaining communal harmony lies with communities themselves. But there are times when this communally sustained harmony is disturbed, even breaks down. When this happens, the state has to step in. And for this to be possible, it cannot already be aligned to any one religion but must be distant from all. Secularism then marks a certain comportment of the state whereby it distances itself from all religio-philosophical perspectives in order to promote a certain quality of sociability and fraternity between communities. This makes Gandhian secularism distinctive. Unlike modern Western secularisms that separate church and state for the sake of individual freedom and equality and have place for neither community nor fraternity, the Gandhian conception demands that the state be secular for the sake of better relations between members of all religious communities, especially if they are mutually estranged. The Gandhian conception is indispensable in times of religious disharmony.

This Gandhian view did not stem

from strategic considerations, but was grounded in deep conviction. It is sometimes said that Gandhi's views were influenced by Jaina teachings. “All religions are true and all have error,” he said, implying that all religions are inevitably partial, incomplete, fragmentary, so that different traditions need to complement and enrich one another rather than behave as mutually exclusive rivals. Without denying this philosophical lineage, I would claim that Gandhi's views were shaped even more by the wisdom-traditions of the ancient world, in which gods and goddesses of each cultural region are different, yet part of the same semantic universe and therefore mutually related and translatable. As a result, no culture denied the reality of the gods of another culture but always found ways to accommodate them. For instance, the god of another culture could become a member of the family, say, some other god's son (Ganesh, the son of Shiva and Parvati). A new god could be created by merging half of one god and half of another (Hari-Hara). Most of all, a relation of equivalence or identity could be established between them (Rudra is Shiva), making it possible to claim that the gods of different cultures were the same, only called by different names. Gandhi was inspired by these traditions, particularly by the habit of establishing equivalence, and extended this insight to the new world religions. Thus he claimed that Ram, Allah, ‘Satya’ (Truth) refer to the same entity. If this is so, every attack on someone else's god was a denial of one's own god; every claim that one's own god is better than the other's was tantamount to the humiliation of one's own god.

Yet, the realisability of Gandhian secularism depends on faith in popular wisdom traditions which in turn is sustained by a certain idea of popular moral agency. When good, god-loving, ordinary men and women free from the trappings of power, wealth and fame – precisely what makes them ordinary and good – get together, they release non-violent creative energies that morally sustain and improve our world. Alas, it seems that such men and women have gone missing in our times. Gandhian secularism is badly needed, but who will ride it out?

Rajeev Bhargava is Professor, CSDS, Delhi

A Bolivian crisis

The U.S. played a key role in the ouster of Evo Morales



On November 10, Bolivia's President Evo Morales Ayma, who had been re-elected on October 23, resigned from office. On November 9, rumours suggested that the police would open a corridor for right-wing militias to enter the presidential palace and kill Mr. Morales. Tension gripped the country. Mr. Morales called for fresh elections, but the political parties of the oligarchy, led by Carlos Mesa, rejected the offer. Mr. Mesa had called for “permanent protests” after he had lost the election. These protests escalated into a rebellion, with the police joining the ranks of an insurgency of the oligarchs. Mr. Morales might have remained in power had the military stayed neutral. But General Williams Kaliman demanded that Mr. Morales step down, leaving him with no choice.

Indigenous and socialist agenda

When he came to power in 2006, Mr. Morales was the first indigenous President of Bolivia. Two-thirds of Bolivia's population come from various indigenous communities who have lived in poverty and suffered humiliation from those who claim descent from the Spaniards. Mr. Morales had won a landslide in 2005, which enabled his Movement for Socialism (MAS) to push for dignity for the indigenous communities. In the new Constitution of 2009, the flag of the indigenous communities, the Wiphala, became equivalent to the old flag of Bolivia. It was sown onto the uniforms of the military and flown on government buildings. Bolivia, a plurinational state, was no longer going to denigrate its indigenous heritage.

Mr. Morales also put forth a socialist agenda. MAS was formed by a range of social and political movements, which included organisations of the indigenous communities and trade unions. His predecessor, Mr. Mesa, was hit hard by protests against gas and water privatisation and against the destruction of coca crop. Mr. Morales, a leader of the coca growers, was rooted in these movements.

At the United Nations this year, Mr. Morales said Bolivia has put poverty drastically, increased its life expectancy rate, become 100% literate, developed a universal health-care system, and ensured that over a million women received land tenure. Its Parliament is dominated by women. “We nationalised our natural resources and our strategic companies,” he explained.

Mr. Morales won his first election to the

presidency when the ‘pink tide’ had been established from Venezuela to Argentina. When commodity prices fell, many of these Left-leaning governments lost power, but Mr. Morales remained popular and won election after election. But he faced opposition from Bolivia's oligarchy and from the U.S., which had long wanted him removed from office.

Plans to destabilise the government

When he assumed power, the U.S. embassy in La Paz called Mr. Morales an “illegal coca agitator”. Plans to destabilise the government began immediately. The U.S. said it would delay all loans and discussions on debt relief until Mr. Morales displayed “good behaviour”. If he tried to nationalise any of the key sectors, or if he rolled back the anti-coca policies, he would be penalised. Mr. Morales showed no such fealty to the U.S.

Bolivia has seen many coups. The armed forces, influenced by the U.S., were always on standby for a scenario when they could eject Mr. Morales. But the popularity of the President and the MAS prevented any such armed action. Mr. Morales's socialist agenda improved the everyday lives of the people, even as commodity prices declined. The ‘coup’ had to be delayed given his appeal.

The lead-up to the election of October 20 was fraught with tension. Mr. Morales had sought a fourth term, for which he got judicial sanction. He beat Mr. Mesa by over 10 percentage points, but Mr. Mesa refused to accept the result. The Organization of American States (OAS), which is influenced by the U.S., found irregularities in the counting of votes. It said it was surprised by the “drastic and hard-to-explain change in the trend of the preliminary results”, but offered no evidence for this claim. The Centre for Economic and Policy Research found no irregularities. Nonetheless, key U.S. officials and the Bolivian oligarchy tried to nullify the results. Based on this, the right-wing called upon its supporters to flood the streets, and the police forces decided to mutiny. The U.S. and the OAS played a key role in the ‘coup’.

Mr. Morales has been granted asylum in Mexico. Meanwhile, in Bolivia, armed men have begun to arrest cadre from MAS and indigenous organisations. The Wiphala is being removed from government buildings and from the uniforms of the armed forces; it is being burnt on the streets to chants of “Bolivia belongs to Christ”. This is a direct attack on the indigenous majority. Mr. Morales is aware of this terrible situation. He resigned to prevent this violence; it did not help. “We will come back,” he wrote. And then he quoted the Andean leader, Tupac Amaru II: “When we come back, we will be millions”.

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The politics of sequestration

It causes disillusionment with not only elected representatives but with the political system itself

MOHAMMED AYOOB

The Shiv Sena's decision to sequester a majority of its newly elected MLAs along with eight independent supporters in a hotel in Madh Island in northern Mumbai to “protect” them from being poached, presumably by its erstwhile ally, the BJP, is the latest example of the politics of sequestration. The Congress has done the same by shifting its legislators to a resort in Jaipur. This became imperative as several Congress MLAs are keen to join a Shiv Sena-led government in Maharashtra despite the party high command's reservations.

This trend can be traced to the ‘Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram’ phenomenon following the hung elections of 1967 in Haryana. Elected legislators changed their political affiliations with abandon in search of political perks and financial benefits. A law was passed to curb this behaviour but has been largely ineffective. Sequestration has become the current instrument to forcibly prevent such party hopping. In recent years Karnataka has become the prime example of such practice. After the 2018 Assembly elections, all three parties – BJP, Congress and JD(S) – engaged in desperate attempts at political sequestration to keep their respective flocks from going astray. Unfortunately for the Congress-JD(S) coalition, this attempt failed to prevent the government it had cobbled together from eventual collapse.

Power for its own sake

The politics of sequestration symbolises the rot that has come to bedevil the Indian political system. People in all countries enter politics in pursuit of power. However, in mature democracies most politicians do so to attain certain cherished social and political goals. In India most politicians pursue power for its own sake and for the financial and political perks that come with it. Politics has become big business with most politicians spending lavishly, far beyond what electoral laws permit, in order to win elections. They do so to attain social status and gain financial rewards that far exceed the large amounts they spend on campaigns.

Being on the winning side, therefore, becomes the most important goal. Ideology and social objectives are either considered secondary or irrelevant to the pursuit of power. Changing parties in order to further personal gain becomes the rule rather than the exception. This is particularly true of those elected members who are aspirants for ministerial berths but are denied them. Opposing parties are usually willing to entice them with the prospect of ministerial positions if, by changing their party affiliation, they help them to come to power. Therefore, confining MLAs in hotels and resorts, which party “bouncers” prevent them from leaving, is seen as the sole way of enforcing party discipline.

Discipline by coercion may help a party to stay in power or attain office but such victories are often short-lived because of the lack of commitment to party or ideology on the part of the legislators concerned. Similarly, attaining power by enticing political opponents with the offer of offices and perks normally turns out to be a pyrrhic victory. This is the case because today's ‘Aaya Ram’ can as easily turn into tomorrow's ‘Gaya Ram’.

Political immorality

Both imposing discipline by coercion and enticement by offering personal gain are recipes for political instability. Furthermore, they inculcate a strong sense of political immorality that is harmful to society in the long run. Above all, they detract from the very basis of democracy by inculcating lack of accountability to the electorate. This is bound to lead to a high degree of voter disillusionment not only with elected representatives but with a political system that peddles itself as democratic. This disillusionment is very dangerous because it inevitably leads to the search for the ‘man on horseback’ who can stem the political rot attributed to democracy. The political class in India must learn this lesson before it is too late.

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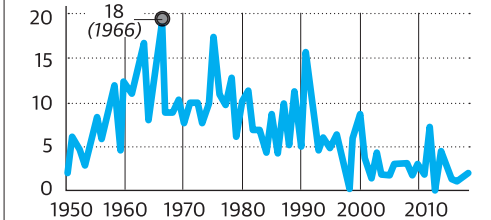


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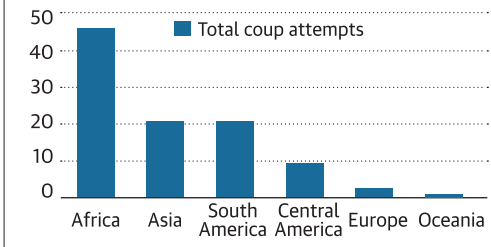
Shunted out

After ruling for nearly 14 years, Bolivian President Evo Morales resigned on Sunday alleging a coup. According to a data set, ‘Coups in the World’, the country has witnessed 23 coup attempts between 1950 and 2019, the highest in the world. A coup is defined as an “illegal and overt attempt by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive”. By **Sumant Sen**

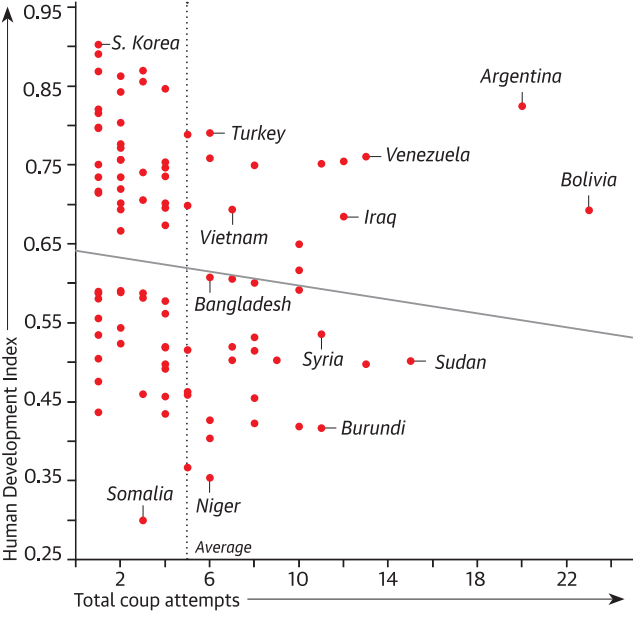
Fewer in recent times | Globally, there were 476 coup attempts between 1950 and 2019. 224 coups were attempted between 1960 and 1979. The number has come down to 52 in the last 19 years



Across the globe | African countries saw the highest % of global coup attempts followed by Asian nations. Sudan witnessed the highest coups (15) in Africa and Iraq saw the highest in Asia (12)



Better development, fewer coups | Countries with a low Human Development Index (HDI, 2018) tend to have more coup attempts, as shown by the trend line. Argentina is an exception. Coup attempts are likely to increase with a decrease in HDI



Story post-Cold War

Coup attempts have significantly fallen after the Cold War. In the 39 years between 1950 and 1989, the world saw over 350 coup attempts, while in the 29 years post 1990, 113 coups have been recorded

Source: ‘Coups in the World’ by Jonathan Powell and Clayton Thyne, UN

The Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 13, 1969

PM expelled from Congress

The Congress was irrevocably split into two bitterly hostile camps – each thirsting for the blood of the other – when the Working Committee presided over by Mr. Nijalingappa to-day [November 12, New Delhi] finally expelled the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi from the Congress and directed the Congress Party in Parliament to elect a new leader in her place. The fateful decision was taken unanimously by the C.W.C. at a three-hour meeting attended by 11 out of the 21 members, after the Congress President and his associates had rejected a compromise formula evolved by the Chief Ministers following a seven-hour discussion last night. The Working Committee resolution expelling Mrs. Gandhi from the Congress, accused her of acts of gross indiscipline and outright defiance in setting up a rival working committee and sponsoring a parallel AICC session. The resolution also charged her with inspiring and organising the recent signature campaign directed against the Congress President and attempting to capture the Party machine by pressurising the rank and file and subjecting them to false and misleading propaganda to make them toe her line.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 13, 1919.

The Role of the Indian Woman.

The day has surely dawned, when the women of India are going to play an important and interesting role in the country of their birth. Like the caterpillar that gathers and stores up its precious material to encase itself in the shape of the chrysalis which after a few hours rest, bursts its fetter to become one of the most beautiful insects God has created, the Indian woman has passed through all those early stages of training, moulding and transformation to utilise all her talents for the good of her creator, crown and country.

Hitherto the Indian woman has contented herself with the atmosphere of her family duties but she has at last realized that her service covers a wider range...

India needs her women for countless actions that can raise her from one of lethargy to that of glorious action, man cannot perform the several tasks that his country requires for its general welfare alone, he needs the gentle, subtle, patient and skillful hand of the women around him, and the dawn of that day for India has become perceptible to the Indian woman.

Maharashtra placed under President's Rule

Sena moves SC against denial of more time

Rajoana gets reprieve from death penalty

India's cancer care 'highly inadequate'

Two-thirds of India's cancer patients were treated in the private sector and this forced 6 crore Indians below the poverty line because of "catastrophic healthcare related expenditure on cancer". The Committee submitted its report in 45 days. It is the first such report this year. It recommended a 'Hub and Spoke Model' proposed by the TMC to better reach out to cancer patients nationally.

SC to rule today on bringing the Chief Justice under RTI Act

Venkaiah convenes all-party meet

conven

Centre wants States to ditch APMC for e-NAM

Nuclear plant is safe, India tells Russia

Ayodhya land exempted in Act: SC

'Drop cases against kar sevaks'

ber 6, 1992. In a letter to PM Narendra Modi, ABHM chief Swami Chakrapani also demanded “martyr” status for all Ram devotees killed in 1992 or earlier during the Ayodhya movement and “dharmik senani” title to other participants.

BRICS Bond Fund likely on agenda

The member countries will hold the plenary session of the BRICS on Thursday after which a BRICS MoU between trade and investment promotion agencies will be signed.

The judgment had explained that in a multi-party political system, chances are high that the political parties in the Centre and the State concerned may not be the same. Article 356 cannot be used for the purpose of political one-upmanship by the Centre.



Section 5 uniquely exempts the "Ram Janma Bhumi-Babri Masjid" from the ambit of the 1991 Act.

The court highlighted that the express prohibition on conversion in the Places of Worship Act “speaks to the future by mandating that the character of a place of public worship shall not be altered”.

‘Positive obligation’

“Secondly, the law seeks to impose a positive obligation to maintain the religious character of every place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947, when India achieved independence from colonial rule,” the judgment interpreted.

The expression “place of worship” in Section 2(c) of the Act includes “a temple, mosque, gurudwara,

church, monastery or any other place of public religious worship of any religious denomination or any section thereof, by whatever name called”.

Anyone found guilty of violating the bar would face a jail term of up to three years.



man to come to the conclusion in question. The expression used in the Article is "if the President is satisfied", the court had observed in the order.

In other words, the President has to be convinced of or should have sufficient proof of information with regard to or has to be free from doubt or uncertainty about the state of things indicating

BJP decides to keep doors open for Sena

Fadnavis hopes State will get a stable government very soon

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Following Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari's recommendation to impose President's Rule in Maharashtra, the BJP's core committee held an urgent meeting on Tuesday afternoon to discuss the way forward.

While the party's head offices at Nariman Point wore a deserted look, a senior BJP leader said the party was keeping open the option of talks with the Shiv Sena in case the latter wanted to continue with the grand alliance.

"The doors for talks between the BJP and the Shiv Sena are never closed, though one of their Ministers have resigned at the Centre. As far we are concerned, the door for talks are open," a senior BJP Minister said.

Former Chief Minister and BJP's legislature party



Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray at a press conference with his son Aditya Thackeray on Tuesday. ■ VIJAY BATE

head in the State Devendra Fadnavis said it was unfortunate that despite a clear mandate for the alliance, a government could not be formed in the State. "It is unfortunate that the Governor had to impose President's Rule. We hope the State gets a stable government very soon," he said.

Senior BJP leader Ashish Shelar later visited Sena leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut at Lila-

vati Hospital where he is recovering from a surgery. However, BJP leaders denied speculation that the visit had anything to do with government formation. "The BJP leaders were visiting Raut to only check on his health. We all know him (Raut) on a personal level and so were wishing him speedy recovery," said a senior BJP leader.

BJP leader Narayan Rane said the party was hopeful of forming a government.

Paradigm shift in Maharashtra politics

Mixed feelings in BJP on break-up of the alliance; Sena may now foreground language issues

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

With President Ram Nath Kovind's acceptance on Tuesday of the resignation of Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant from the Council of Ministers, the *Mahayuthi*, or the decades-long alliance of the BJP and the Sena, has ended.

And the implications of this for Maharashtra politics are immense and complicated.

While the BJP and the Sena have had relationship issues from the time when Balasaheb Thackeray and L.K. Advani hammered out an alliance, it has become worse after the former's death and the latter's political decline.

The new BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah never had much time or deference to spare for Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, with the Sena responding with cutting editorials in its mouthpiece, *Saamana*, and at least once, walking out of the alliance just before the 2014 Assembly election.

Under Central rule

The State had two stints without an elected government in the past:



Sharad Pawar



Prithviraj Chavan

February 17 to June 8, 1980

Recommended by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi after she dismissed all State governments run by Opposition parties. Sharad Pawar, who was then leading the Progressive Democratic Alliance (PDA) government, was the Chief Minister and had to give up power. After President's Rule was lifted, Congress

leader A.R. Antulay became the Chief Minister.

September 28 to October 30, 2014

President's Rule was imposed after the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) withdrew support from the State government led by Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan and the government fell. After the election, Devendra Fadnavis became the Chief Minister

There are too many anecdotes that delineate this fraught relationship full of hurt feelings, but the more interesting question today is what could be the political arc of these erstwhile allies going their separate ways for the foreseeable future?

There were mixed feelings

in the BJP on the break-up of the alliance with the Sena, disbelief that a pre-poll alliance that won a majority could not end up forming a government. Also, in a spirit of making a virtue out of necessity, many leaders believe the BJP had got rid of a pesky partner.

During the polls, many BJP workers and even the national leadership were not happy with the alliance, and that was demonstrated by a large number of rebels (more than 30) that the two parties put up against each other.

Going it alone, said BJP leaders, was the biggest advantage now, but the jury is out on that.

Sole custodian

The BJP is also excited about taking over the sole mantle of Hindutva, as the Sena left the alliance two days after the Ayodhya verdict to ally with the Congress and the NCP, parties that blocked the Ramjanmabhoomi movement in the past.

The implication closest to home for the BJP, however, would be the future marginalisation of former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. It could also mean that the alienation of the Maratha community would be sought to be assuaged by pushing forward leaders like Chan-

drakant Patil and Sudhir Mungantiwar, a Maratha and an OBC, respectively.

The Sena's journey has been long and interesting, with the main constant being the sons of the soil or Marathi *Manoos* plank.

According to Dhaval Kulkarni, author of the book *The Cousins Thackeray*, the breach with the BJP and the nature of the Sena's current alliance will most likely result in the Hindutva plank being put in the background.

"The Shiv Sena had over the years seen that the Hindutva plank had hobbled it with regard to linguistic politics. Its main base is the Thane-Konkan belt, where linguistic issues, more than Hindutva, have been important. Due to the Hindutva agenda, the Sena also alienated large swathes of Dalit Buddhists and other communities," he said.

What has occurred in Maharashtra is a paradigm shift in State politics, and the above are just some strands of what might result from it.

Travesty of norms: Congress

Party targets Governor over impasse in govt. formation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday alleged that Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari had made a "mockery" of the constitutional process and a "travesty of democratic norms" by recommending President's Rule.

The party's chief spokesperson, Randeep Surjewala, questioned the Governor's "arbitrary allotment of time" to the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), the Shiv Sena and the BJP.

"Governor Koshiyari has committed a grave travesty of democracy and made a mockery of the constitutional process in recommending President's Rule," he said.

He said the Supreme Court guidelines in the S.R. Bommai judgment were not followed and four violations of the constitutional scheme stood out.

"In the absence of any sin-



Randeep Surjewala

gle party having majority in Maharashtra, Governor should have called: 1. Single largest pre-poll alliance i.e BJP-Shiv Sena together; Then 2. second largest post poll alliance i.e Congress-NCP;" he said.

"In case Governor called individual parties, why did he not call INC? And above all why the completely arbitrary allotment of time? 48 hours to BJP, 24 hours to Sena and not even 24 hours to NCP, before the President's Rule?" he said.

"This is unashamedly dishonest and politically motivated," he said.

The Congress's aggressive posturing comes after the party dithered all of Monday over the question of supporting a Shiv Sena-led coalition.

"People blaming the 4th largest party for being unable to aid the #MaharashtraGovtFormation are just unbelievable and unfathomable," said party spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi in a tweet.

In another tweet, he said, "it was not President's rule but the malicious BJP's political rule."

Former Home Minister Shivraj Patil, however, took a somewhat different view. "I don't know why it has been done. Maybe there are certain reasons which we don't know... It is very difficult to comment without knowing the reasons."

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Tuesday morning sought an extension of the 24-hour deadline set by Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari to present proof of its ability to form the next government in the State. Mr. Koshiyari had invited the party late on Monday.

However, the NCP's letter seeking a 48-hour extension led to the Governor's Office recommending President's Rule in the State, which was subsequently accepted by the Union Cabinet late in the afternoon.

The NCP's ally, the Congress, and the Shiv Sena, which has sought support from the party to form the government, were kept in

the dark about the letter submitted to the Governor.

Addressing a joint press conference with Congress leaders Ahmed Patel, Mallikarjun Kharge and K.C. Venugopal, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said there was no reason to inform the Congress and the Shiv Sena about the request for extra time.

"We fought the election with the Congress. The Go-

vernor had asked the NCP to show our willingness and ability to form the government. I do not think it was necessary to inform others about asking for more time," he said.

On the formation of a government with the Shiv Sena, Mr. Pawar said the two parties will discuss and evolve a consensus on what should be the policies and

programmes if the Sena was to be supported.

Congress leader Ahmed Patel insisted that no final decision could be taken without the formulation of a common minimum programme by the three parties.

He also condemned the imposition of President's Rule, and said the Congress was not given an opportunity to form the government.

Tatas-helmed trust is top BJP donor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Tatas-controlled Progressive Electoral Trust contributed ₹356 crore to the BJP in the financial year leading up to the 2019 Lok Sabha election, making it the top donor to the party in 2018-19. The BJP's contribution report, submitted on October 31 and made public by the ECI on Monday, shows the ruling party received a cheque for ₹356,53,55,172 from the Mumbai-based trust.

Prudent Electoral Trust, which includes contributions from DLF Ltd., Bharti Airtel, GMR Airports, DCM Shriram Ltd. and Jubilant Foodworks Ltd., gave the BJP a total of ₹54.25 crore in nine cheques over the financial year.

The BJP's donors' list ranged from big corporate houses – with ITC Ltd. giving ₹10.57 crore, Hero Cycles contributing ₹12 crore and Mankind Pharma donating ₹1 crore – to businesses across the country including sweet shops, stone crushing units and jewellers. Names of politicians also figured on the list, with Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu and Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein also contributing. This disclosure does not include the funding received through electoral bonds. According to the Association for Democratic Reforms, electoral bonds worth ₹6,128 crore have been sold since the scheme was introduced in 2018 till October.

ELSEWHERE



Lebanese banks, schools shut as protests push on

BEIRUT
Lebanon's banks and schools were shut on Tuesday as politicians struggled to agree on a new government. President Michel Aoun said consultations with MPs to nominate a new Prime Minister and form the cabinet would be held soon. **REUTERS**

Britain's Labour Party comes under cyberattack

LONDON
Britain's opposition Labour Party said on Tuesday it was subject to a large-scale cyberattack on its digital platforms just weeks before a national election but it was confident no data breach occurred. **REUTERS**

3 dead in Thai courtroom as dispute turns violent

BANGKOK
Three people were killed in a shootout at a Thai courtroom on Tuesday during a hearing into an inheritance dispute, according to police, who said two of the victims were lawyers. The gunman was also killed. **AFP**

Israel kills Islamic Jihad commander in Gaza

Palestinian rocket salvos reach Tel Aviv



REUTERS
GAZA/JERUSALEM
Israel killed a top commander from the Iranian-backed Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad in a rare targeted strike in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, drawing retaliatory rocket salvos that reached as far as Tel Aviv.

In the most serious escalation in months, an Israeli missile attack also hit the home of an Islamic Jihad official in Damascus, Syrian state media said. The strike killed two people including one of the official's sons, the group and Syrian state media said. Israel refused to comment.

As the sound of Palestinian rockets and Israeli air strikes echoed throughout Gaza and Israeli border areas, Islamic Jihad leader Khaled Al-Batsh spoke at the midday Gaza funeral of his slain fellow militant, Baha Abu Al-Atta.

"Israel executed two

coordinated attacks, in Syria and in Gaza, in a declaration of war," he said. Mourners fired guns into the air, chanting "revenge!"

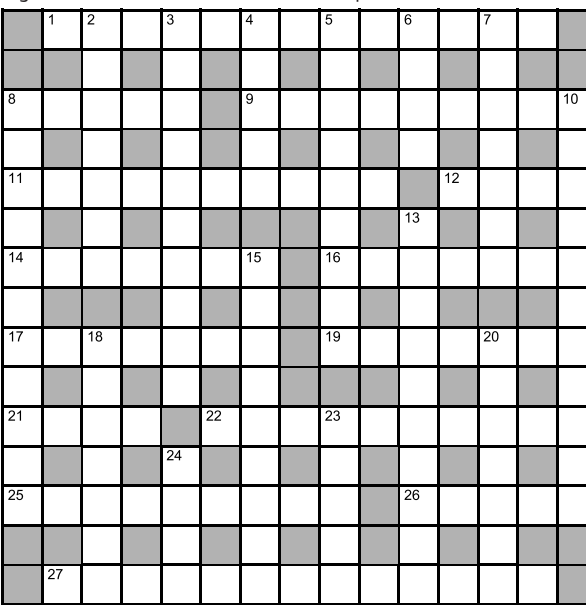
Both sides expected further escalation after the funeral, but the extent of it appeared to hinge on whether the much larger Islamist group Hamas would join Islamic Jihad in the exchange of fire that sent civilians on both sides huddling for shelter and forced businesses and schools to close.

'Ticking bomb'
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described Al-Atta as a "ticking bomb", who was responsible for a string of recent cross-border rocket, drone and sniper attacks and was suspected of planning more very soon.

"Israel is not interested in escalation, but we will do everything required to protect ourselves," said Mr. Netanyahu.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12779

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



■ ACROSS

1 Conforming by queuing up (7,2,4)

8 Attack degenerates going round maiden (5)


9 Earned nothing? Sell out and retire (2,2,5)

11 Disaffection resulting from a deception by state (10)


■ DOWN

2 Abrogate article and Kashmir essentially boils after getting carved up (7)

3 Scandalous e-mails ruin big names (10)



To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code



Bolivia seeks new leader as crisis deepens

Evo Morales arrives in Mexico as security forces seek to quell violence over his resignation back home



On the boil: Security forces firing tear gas shells at supporters of former President Evo Morales in Cochabamba; and Mr. Morales, right, upon landing in Mexico City on Tuesday. **REUTERS**



tal La Paz, roadblocks were still in place after soldiers and police patrolled late into the night to deter fighting between rival political groups and looting that erupted after Mr. Morales' resignation.

Residents said they hoped politicians would succeed in finally restoring order.

"Democracy has been at risk and hopefully it will be resolved today," said resi-

dent Isabel Nadia.

The charismatic 60-year-old former coca-leaf farmer was beloved by the poor when he won power in 2006, but alienated Bolivians by insisting on seeking a fourth term, in defiance of term limits and a 2016 referendum in which Bolivians voted against him being allowed to do so.

Paraguayan President Mario Abdo said on Tuesday his

country had been willing to grant asylum to Mr. Morales, though he rejected suggestions of a coup. He added several leaders in the region had discussed how to help bring peace back to Bolivia.

'Not a coup'
"If he resigned, it is not a coup. He resigned," he said.

Lawmakers were expected to meet on Tuesday to formally accept Mr. Morales' re-

signation and begin deciding on an interim leader prior to a new election.

The government collapsed on Sunday after the Organization of American States (OAS) delivered a damning report on irregularities during the October vote, prompting ruling party allies to quit and the Army to urge Mr. Morales' departure.

With Mr. Morales' deputy and many allies in government and Parliament also gone, opposition politician and Senate second Vice-President, Jeanine Anez, was theoretically in line to take the top job temporarily and said she would accept.

However, in a sign of stark divisions and the complex path ahead, Ms. Anez tweeted a memo from Mr. Morales' Movement for Socialism (MAS) party, which said she was also part of a coup and that Adriana Salvatierra, the Senate leader who resigned on television on Sunday should, instead, lead the transition. "Don't they know that the ex-President of the Senate publicly resigned?" she wrote.

Trump says new IS chief in the crosshairs of U.S.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK
U.S. President Donald Trump placed the Islamic State group's new chief in the crosshairs on Monday as he marked Veterans' Day by celebrating the killing of the jihadists' former leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

While U.S. Presidents traditionally mark the day by laying a wreath at a military cemetery in Arlington, Mr. Trump travelled to New York, where he made an ad-

dress ahead of veterans parade.

Mr. Trump used his speech to claim that the IS leadership was running scared in the wake of Baghdadi's death. "Just a few weeks ago, our forces raided the ISIS compound and brought the world's number one terrorist leader to justice... Thanks to American warriors, al-Baghdadi is dead, his second in charge is dead, we have our eyes on number three," he said.

Hong Kong protests hit universities

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG
Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters fought intense battles with riot police on university campuses and paralysed the city's upmarket business district on Tuesday.

The city's universities emerged as a new flashpoint throughout Tuesday with sustained clashes at major campuses for the first time.

Riyadh labels feminism, atheism, homosexuality as extremist ideas

REUTERS
DUBAI
A promotional video published by Saudi Arabia's state security agency categorises feminism, homosexuality and atheism as extremist ideas, even as the conservative Muslim kingdom seeks to promote tolerance and attract foreigners.

The clip posted on Twitter at the weekend said "all forms of extremism and perversion are unacceptable".

In bid to free 2 teachers, Kabul releases 3 Taliban

The foreigners were abducted in 2016

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KABUL
Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday announced that his government has released three prominent Taliban figures in an effort to get the insurgents to free an American and an Australian professor they abducted in 2016 and have held captive for over three years.

At a press briefing, Mr. Ghani told the nation that the "conditional release" was a very hard decision he felt he had to make in the interest of the Afghan people.

The announcement comes at a sensitive time for Mr. Ghani as President Donald Trump halted talks between the U.S. and the Taliban in September. Also, the future of Mr. Ghani's government is in doubt as the results from the September 28 presidential elections have not been released yet. Preliminary results are expected on November 14.

The three members of the Taliban-linked Haqqani network being released in-



Kevin King and Timothy Weekes. **AP/FILE**

clude Anas Haqqani, Haji Mali Khan and Hafiz Rashid. Mr. Ghani added that they are being released "conditionally in exchange" for the two professors.

An American identified as Kevin King and an Australian identified as Timothy Weekes were abducted in 2016 outside the American University in Kabul, where they both worked as teachers. The following year, the Taliban released two videos showing the captives.

Mr. Ghani said the release of the teachers was "part of our main demands during the indirect talks with the Taliban." He did not specify the fate of the hostages and it was not clear when they would be released.

Catalan MPs rebuked over new resolution

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BARCELONA
Catalonia's separatist-dominated Parliament drew a fresh rebuke from Spain on Tuesday after approving a text in favour of self-determination, despite it being suspended just minutes earlier by the Constitutional Court.

Although such resolutions are purely symbolic – the Parliament not having the authority to make such decisions – they have been routinely overruled by the Spanish courts. But the move could have legal consequences for regional Parliament speaker Roger Torrent, who has received legal warnings not to allow such initiatives.

Trump slams India and China, says Paris pact is unfair to the U.S.

President says the agreement shields 'foreign polluters'

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC
In a speech that railed against his friends and foes, U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday said the Paris Agreement would require the U.S. to 'pay countries' such as India (for technology and support to fight climate change), justifying his withdrawal from the climate treaty.

Speaking at the Economic Club of New York, a think-tank in the city, Mr Trump said the Agreement was "economically unfair", killing American jobs and shielding "foreign polluters".

"It is so unfair. It doesn't



Donald Trump

kick in for China until 2030. Russia goes back into the 1990s, where the base-year was the dirtiest year ever in the world," Mr. Trump claimed.

"India...we are supposed to pay them money because they're a developing na-

tion," Mr. Trump said, his arms outstretched. "I said, 'We're a developing nation too,'" he added, to laughter from the audience.

India featured again during the question-and-answer session that followed the President's speech.

"We have a relatively small piece of land, the United States," Mr. Trump said. "And you compare that to some of the other countries like China, like India, like Russia... that are doing absolutely nothing to clean up their smoke stacks and ...all of their plants and all of their garbage that they're dropping in the sea and that floats into Los Angeles..."

Train crash kills 16 people in Bangladesh



Fatal impact: People gathering at the spot in Brahmanbaria district where two trains collided head-on on Tuesday. **AFP**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DHAKA
At least 16 people were killed and 60 others injured in a head-on collision between two trains in Brahmanbaria district in central Bangladesh on Tuesday.

A railway spokesman said the the accident appeared to have occurred when Chit-

tagong-bound Udayan Express was changing tracks at Mondobhag railway station in the district and the Dhaka-bound Turna Nishita coming from the opposite direction collided with it.

According to police, 12 passengers died on the spot, while the rest succumbed to injuries later.

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12778

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Spiritual journey

Scriptures have analysed the human mind, its remarkable functions, and its significant potential. It is shown to be the cause of bondage and capable of leading one to moksha. It is called the "antakarana," the inner organ that performs complex functions in association with the sense organs, intellect or buddhi, chitta or memory and ahankara, the sense of ego. When the mind easily gets drawn to the worldly attractions that tempt the senses, it becomes the cause of bondage; but when it understands the purpose of human birth is not getting involved in this world but that it is a chance in a million to get liberated from the repeated cycle of birth, it becomes the cause for salvation.

In a discourse, Swami Mukundananda drew attention to the purana story of two brothers to illustrate the role of the mind in the quest for salvation. Two brothers who wish to listen to an exposition of the Bhagavata Purana set out to a temple. On the way, they are caught in a heavy downpour and they take shelter in a house which happens to be the house of a prostitute. The elder brother decides to leave the place immediately, but the younger one wishes to remain there. Braving the rains the elder brother goes to the temple, but his mind keeps thinking of how his younger brother would be spending his time. In the case of the younger brother, he is ashamed of his decision to stay back and thinks of the elder brother in the temple and of the benefits of listening to the Bhagavata stories. When the two brothers meet, they are struck dead by lightning. The elder brother is taken to Yama loka and the younger one goes to swarga.

Spiritual journey is nothing but fine-tuning the mind to consciously avoid sinful thoughts and to always aim to seek oneness with God.

Formulations sales boost Aurobindo Q2 revenue, net

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Drugmaker Aurobindo Pharma has posted a consolidated net profit of ₹639.53 crore for the quarter ended September, a 4.59% increase from the corresponding period in the previous fiscal.

Total revenue from operations increased 17.86% to ₹5,600.47 crore. Boosting the performance was a robust growth in the formulations revenue in the U.S. and Europe, the two key markets for the Hyderabad-headquartered drugmaker.

U.S. formulations revenue at ₹2,835.5 crore was a 27.3% increase from the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

The formulations revenue from Europe was 21.2% higher at ₹1,401.3 crore.

While the growth was 3.8% in the Growth Markets, the ARV (antiretroviral) formulations revenue declined 2.5% to ₹237.9 crore (₹244 crore)

Total formulations sale, which accounted for nearly 85.6% of the total revenue, increased 21.8% to ₹4,793.8 crore. Total API (active pharmaceutical ingredient) declined 1.3% to ₹805.8 crore.

‘Good show continues’ “We had another quarter of healthy performance where we continued to grow in the U.S. and Europe, which are our focussed geographies,” managing director N.Govindarajan said.

In a statement, he said the research and development (R&D) initiatives have been progressing well across the products basket and clinical trials for the company’s first biosimilar product began in the current quarter (Q3FY20).

“We reiterate that we are committed to quality adherence and are in the process of resolving all pending regulatory issues,” Mr. Govindarajan said.

The company has declared an interim dividend of 125% or ₹1.25 per equity share of Re.1 each.

On Monday, shares of the company closed 0.31% lower at ₹437.60.

SBI cuts FY20 GDP growth projection to 5%

Larger rate cuts by the RBI may not lead to material revival, the bank’s research report says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

GDP growth in the current financial year could be just 5% according to a research report by State Bank of India (SBI).

This is a sharp cut from the earlier projection of 6.1% for fiscal 2019-20. The second quarter GDP number, scheduled to be announced at the end of this month, could fall to 4.2%, according to the report.

‘IIP number alarming’ Commenting that IIP growth of -4.3% for September was ‘alarming’, the report said, “Our acceleration rate for 33 leading indicators at 85% in October 2018 is down to just 17% in September 2019, with such decline gaining traction from March 2019.”

The report, authored by Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group



Growth rate is likely to pick up pace in FY21, says Soumya Kanti Ghosh, group chief economic adviser, SBI. **■ REUTERS**

Chief Economic Adviser, SBI, said the growth rate in FY20 should be looked through the prism of synchronised global slowdown, with countries witnessing 22-716 basis point decline between June 2018 and June 2019. India is not isolated.

“We expect growth rate to pick up pace in FY21 to 6.2%,” Mr. Ghosh said.

Rate cut expectation The further lowering on GDP growth has raised expectation of larger rate cuts by Reserve Bank of India in the De-

cember meeting of the monetary policy committee.

RBI reduced the repo rate by 135 bps between February and October to support growth. The central bank also reduced its growth forecast for FY20 to 6.1% in the October policy from 6.9% projected in the August policy.

While commenting that larger rate cuts are expected from the RBI, the report also said such rate cuts were not likely to result in any meaningful revival of growth.

“We now expect larger rate cuts from RBI in the December policy.”

“However, such a rate cut is unlikely to lead to any immediate material revival, rather it might result in potential financial instability as debt financed consumption against an increasing household leverage had not

worked in countries, and India cannot be an exception,” the report said.

Mr. Ghosh said the reluctance to use fiscal policy among policymakers appeared to stem from the thinking that monetary policy space was still adequate.

“This, we believe, could be counterproductive. In essence, markets are not unduly worried about fiscal deficit and await clarity from the government on the extent of fiscal slippage in current fiscal. Such an announcement could in fact be good for the markets,” the report added.

Referring to the recent cut in ratings outlook by Moody’s the report said it will not have any significant impact as rating actions are always a laggard indicator and the markets this time have categorically given a thumbs down to such a move.

Sanaka Capital to invest ₹525 crore in Edelweiss

Talks on for ₹217 cr. more investment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Private equity entity Sanaka Capital will invest ₹525 crore (\$75 million) in Edelweiss Global Investment Advisors (EGIA), the group’s investment advisory business, which includes wealth & capital markets, asset management and asset reconstruction.

According to a release by the financial services company, Sanaka Growth SPV I Ltd. has committed to invest approximately \$44 million (₹308 crore) in EGIA, while talks are on for a further investment of approximately \$31 million (₹217 crore) in the business.

Incidentally, the proposed investments by Sanaka Capital follows that of the U.S.-based Kora Management and furthers the third

and final process for the investment advisory business.

The partnerships are in line with the overall strategic growth plan initiated in 2017 by Edelweiss Group, to separate its three businesses – Credit, Investment Advisory and Insurance – into distinct entities, based on synergistic business needs, aligned consumer segments and complementary platforms, stated the release.

Further, each business will have its own set of investors, a ring-fenced capital base, and an independent board. The Credit and Life Insurance businesses have already established long-term partnerships, with a strategic investment of \$250 million by Caisse de depot et placement du Quebec in the former and Tokio Marine’s 49% holding in the latter.

Vodafone says its future in India could be in doubt

Govt. needs to ease off on payment demands: Nick Read

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

British telecom giant Vodafone on Tuesday said its future in India could be in doubt if it was forced to pay thousands of crores in statutory dues following the Supreme Court ruling.

Having made no provision for dues that have been locked up in legal dispute for more than a decade, Vodafone chief executive Nick Read said the government needed to ease off on payment demands to ensure a future for the group’s India joint venture, Vodafone-Idea Ltd.

“Financially there’s been a heavy burden through unresponsive regulation, excessive taxes and on top of that we got the negative Supreme Court decision,” he said on a call with reporters after the first-half results.

India, he said, had been “a very challenging situation for a long time.”

“It’s a very critical situation,” he said, when asked if it made sense for Vodafone to remain in India without any relief package. “The government has stated its de-



Unsupportive regulation, excessive taxes and the SC’s decision are a heavy burden, the Vodafone CEO said. **■ REUTERS**

sire not to end up with a monopoly.” Vodafone’s operating loss from India business jumped to €692 million in April-September from €133 million in the same period last year.

Vodafone wrote off the carrying value of its share in the loss-making joint venture. In the earnings statement, the group made no further commitment to equity in India business, which it said contributed zero value.

“In October, the Supreme Court in India ruled against the industry in a dispute over the calculation of licence

and other regulatory fees, and Vodafone Idea is now liable for very substantial demands made by the Department of Telecommunications in relation to these fees,” the company said in its earnings statement. “We are actively engaging with the government to seek financial relief for Vodafone Idea.”

The liability in telecom licence fee and spectrum usage charge, together with penalty and interest for late payment, may run up to ₹1.4 lakh crore for the industry. Vodafone-Idea may have to pay a third of it.

Natco Q2 net falls 35% to ₹117.7 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Natco Pharma has reported a 35.18% decline in its consolidated net profit to ₹117.7 crore for the quarter ended September.

The drugmaker attributed the decline from the year earlier period’s ₹181.6 crore, as well as a fall in the consolidated total revenue to the anticipated drop in oseltamivir (generic Tamiflu) product sales in the U.S. and Hep C sales in India.

The consolidated total revenue was ₹518.9 crore, 11.07% lower compared to the ₹583.50 crore of the corresponding period of previous fiscal. On the segmental revenue split, the company said formulations accounted for ₹347 crore, which included exports of ₹225 crore.

Share of active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) in the revenue was ₹68 crore.

The company said the board of directors on Tuesday declared a second interim dividend of ₹1 per equity share of ₹2 each. Shares of the company closed 0.48% higher at ₹580.45 apiece.

Adani begins due diligence of Krishnapatnam Port

Promoter CVR Group’s financial troubles cause uncertainty

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

Adani Group has commenced due diligence of the Krishnapatnam Port in Nellore district.

“At present, the port is in a mess. This will continue till the new management takes over,” said a top KPCL official on condition of anonymity.

Hyderabad-based engineering major CVR Group owns a majority stake in Krishnapatnam Port Company Ltd. (KPCL).

Till recently, things were smooth for the CVR Group, which got into a deep financial trouble when the Andhra Pradesh Government cancelled the ₹3,200-crore Polavaram Hydel power project awarded to Navayuga Engineering, the flagship company of the group.

Cancellation of the Polavaram project and the economic slowdown have hit operations of the group and KPCL. Since then, the promoters were looking for a suitor to bail it out.

Incidentally, Adani Group had expressed interest in the port as part of its plan to ex-



In choppy waters: Visitors barred as the port does not have an authority to allow large groups to enter for now. **■ FILE PHOTO**

pand its reach in the east coast. In 2016, Adani Group acquired the L&T Kattupalli Port, about 30 kms from Chennai Port, adjoining the Ennore Port. Besides, it also constructed a container terminal in Ennore Port.

A ‘competitor’ port Krishnapatnam Port is located about 180 km from Chennai, in Nellore District. It is a deep draft port with modern facilities and had an edge over the century-old Chennai Port and Ennore Port by attracting dusty cargo such as coal and iron ore.

Last year, the port had handled over 54 million tonnes of cargo.

“Normalcy will return to the port once the due diligence is over. Until then, we are asking our customers and visitors to postpone their trip. Moreover, the port does not have a competent authority at the top to grant permission for large groups to enter the port at this point of time,” said another official.

Despite all these developments, export and import activities are on at the berths as usual.

INTERVIEW | NEELESH SURANA

‘Attractive opportunities in large, mid-caps’

‘Investment should largely be skewed more towards blue chips, though mid-caps too offer them’

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR

Markets are likely to remain volatile but there will be a gradual recovery over the next few quarters, says Neelesh Surana, Chief Investment Officer, Mirae Asset Global Investments (India). Excerpts:

Equity market is witnessing a lot of volatility. What is your near term outlook for stocks?

■ Global growth indicators are mixed with some stabilisation in PMI breadth. An important aspect is that all large central banks are now expanding their balance sheets. Current global environment has twin positives for India – low commodity prices particularly oil, and benign interest rates. India’s growth has slowed over the past year and markets have witnessed volatility on account of same. While it’s difficult to time the reversal in the market, we believe that it could be a gradual recovery over the next few quarters driven by four factors namely favourable base across many businesses, directed measure by the government for sector-specific challenges, likelihood of decent rural demand with reasonable monsoons, and most importantly full impact of low interest rates. Interest rate reduction is the most important lever supportive for market as lower interest rate improves demand, improves profitability, and re-rates the P/E multiple. We expect interest

rates to remain benign owing to negative output gap and benign inflation.

As per AMFI data, fresh flows in equity schemes have been largely subdued in the last few months. How do you see such fresh flows in the coming months? Given the volatility do you think retail investors should relook at their existing SIPs or wait before starting new ones?

■ SIP inflows have increased significantly from about ₹3,600 crore every month to more than ₹8,100 crore per month, an increase of 120% in brief span of three years. An important aspect of SIP flow is these are sticky and long-term. If we look at the trend, the reversal in domestic flow started in FY15 – over the last five years, domestic MF has witnessed inflows in excess of ₹3,20,000 crore. We believe that the current levels of SIP inflows should continue.



Large caps provide safer risk-adjusted returns with low drawdown

The long term potential for SIP bucket to increase materially is there as investor experience of return expectation (say double digit) is met.

Retail investors often look at mid-caps and small-caps for investment opportunities. Do you think this is a good time to look at that universe?

■ We have always believed that investment should be in ratio, say 70:30 skewed more towards large caps/blue chips. There are multiple reasons for high core allocation to large caps – (a) large caps are not mature given In-

dia is growing economy (b) many large companies have better operating matrix (c) they provide safer risk-adjusted returns with low drawdown. Midcaps do offer interesting and deep in value opportunities, which investors should take advantage of. However, this should be not at the expense of large cap. An important aspect in current market is the polarisation in valuation, across market capitalisation. We are witnessing significant divergence in valuation between ‘richly valued quality business with predictable earnings’ versus ‘deep in value businesses where the earnings visibility is patchy’. We believe current polarisation in markets offers attractive opportunities across both large and mid-caps.

Debt has seen a lot of turbulence in the recent past due to defaults and downgrades. Would you recommend investors to stay away from debt and allocate more towards equity?

■ Equity is long-term asset class and cannot be compared with debt which has more linear returns. Within debt, the recommendation would vary depending on risk profile of investors. For conservative investors, we would rather recom-

mend accrual products. However, for sophisticated investors, credit return fund at this point is also recommended given the opportunity to take advantage of high credit spread.

Domestic institutional investors have been a big support in the current calendar year when FPIs have been mostly net sellers. Do you think the trend will continue?

■ From near term viewpoint, given stabilisation of global factors and low yields globally and risk-on, we can see inflows in emerging markets including India. FIIs recorded net inflows in both equities and debt market at \$1.8 billion and \$564 million, respectively in October. In the current calendar year, FIIs have invested over \$10 billion, which is sharp reversal to selling of \$4.5 billion in CY18. From long-term trend viewpoint, domestic investors have exhibited high maturity by committing investment for long term through the SIP route. Mutual fund inflows have been strong over last five years, and are likely to continue as return expectations are met. As a result, DII ownership of Indian equities has increased from 10.5% in March 2014 to 13.3% in September 2019, while FII ownership has inched down from 21.8% to 21.3% in the same period.

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath has released a book on the Splendours of Ganjifa Art to document the fading form

RANJANI GOVIND

Ganjifa, an ancient card game, is believed to have been brought to India during the Mughal period. The Persian word, *Ganjifeh*, means playing cards. Beautifully painted, these mainly circular cards (there were some square decks too) were used by kings and noblemen across the country. The colours and iconography differed across regions.

While the game faded into oblivion, the hand-painted cards with intricate detailing fired the imagination of many an artist and organisation, and resulted in a revival of the art form. Bengaluru's Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (CKP) recently released the book, *Splendours of Ganjifa Art*, containing 12 chapters by well-known Ganjifa artists, scholars and historians.

"Last year, CKP had a workshop and exhibition on Ganjifa art," says M. J. Kamalakshi, General Secretary, CKP. "We had brought artists from Mysore, Sawantwadi, West Bengal and Orissa. We used the workshop as the starting point to collect data on the artists and their work and compiled it as a book to put everything about Ganjifa on record. This book is considered the first comprehensive and detailed documentation of the art form with contributions from practising artists and art scholars such as Ranisaheb Subhadadevi Bhonsle."

The Parishath's earlier publications include *Karnataka Leather Puppetry* and *Traditional Mysore Paintings of Karnataka*. "We had indirectly been on the job as art critic B. V. K. Shastry advised us to collect the cards six decades ago," says Kamalakshi. In 1977, during the Folk and Tribal Art expo, Rajasaheb Parashuram Shivram Bhonsle and Rajmata Satyash-eeladevi Bhonsle conducted workshops, demonstrations and sold boxes of Ganjifa cards at the Parishath.

In the 1980s, Raghupathi Bhat began working with the forms of Ganjifa and took the initiative to popularise this form. By then, Sudha Venkatesh, a

A book is on the cards



well-known Ganjifa artist from Karnataka, was experimenting on the forms, genres and styles. In 1995, the Crafts Council of Karnataka held a seminar on the dying art forms of Karnataka in which collector Kishor Gordhandas made observations and interventions for the revival of Ganjifa.

In Mysore

The Maharaja of Mysore, Mummudi Krishnaraja Wadiyar III (1794-1868) created a niche for the game and the art of Ganjifa. "Kouthuka Nidhi", the last chapter of *Sritatva-nidhi*, the monumental work of the Maharaja, has details of the card game of Mysore, known as the Mysore Chada Ganjifa. It mentions the names of the card games devised by the Maharaja, number of cards used in each game, details of ico-



nography, colour combinations and the corresponding shlokas," says Kamalakshi. "Thin, fine line miniature paintings with decorations were mounted on cardboard. Later, some artists were also inspired by the Vijayanagar style. Ganjifa cards were known as *kreedapa-tras* and were made on sandalwood and ivory, etched with silver and gold. The complexity of the game and the dominance of Western-printed 52-leaf playing cards later silenced the art, craft and the game," says Kamalakshi.

There was the Sawantwadi Ganjifa from



Maharashtra, Navadurga Ganjifa from Orissa, Rajasthan and Gujarat, and that from Kashmir, Nepal and Mysuru. "While we have several artists in Mysore, in Raghunathapur near Puri in Orissa every house has a Ganjifa miniature artist," says Kamalakshi. Art historian R. H. Kulkarni, who heads the Research Centre at College of Fine Arts, CKP, says, "The origin of Ganjifa cards are traced to Persia and China. In India, they arrived through Sufi saints during the Mughal period. The Mughal cards had paintings of wrestlers, acrobats, swordsmen, soldiers, hunters, musicians, animals and birds."

Reviving these treasures

Raghupathi Bhat was inspired by the 200-year-old Ganjifa originals in Mysore and began working on them in the early 1980s developing his own style. Raghupathi, who hails from Udipi and is settled in Mysore, says today they are sold as craft objects although, "there is less scope for innovation." Sudha Venkatesh, a senior artist in Mysore exposed to Mysore traditional painting and Ganjifa through her father Ramnarasaiah, an artist and curator at the Mysore Palace, diligently follows the traditional method of drawing. "Although my father felt Ganjifa was a dying art from, he sent me to learn from Kishor Gordhandas when he came to Mysore."

Available on order from Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath at 080-22261816

PEOPLE

Those magnificent, elusive cats

Conservationist Charudutt Mishra says protection of snow leopards involves various stakeholders



At a talk delivered at The Bangalore International Centre last week, Charudutt Mishra, Science and Conservation Director, The Snow Leopard Trust, reminisced about his days as a young researcher in Kibber, a village in Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh.

"I went to Kibber as a PhD student 23 years ago. There, my assumptions of a harmonious co-existence came into question. I heard of a snow leopard entering the village and killing some livestock. Before it could escape, the villagers killed it. People beat the carcass and cursed it for killing their livestock."

This incident led Charudutt to question: "Who was the perpetrator? Was it the snow leopard? Or the people who killed this beautiful and endangered species so brutally? Similarly, who was the victim? Was it the snow leopard that was hungry or the people whose livelihood was threatened?" Thus began Charudutt's more than two-decade long career of conserving snow leopards. "We started with conservation initiatives, and some of the successful ones have been taken to other parts of the country, such as Ladakh as well as to countries like China, US and Mongolia."

Charudutt said "Snow leopards are endangered and are found in the high mountains of 12 countries. Although they are solitary, we have found evidence that they sometimes move together."

According to Charudutt, snow leopards are found in the high mountains of 12 countries, such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, among others. The conservation of snow leopards, Charudutt says, is complex and involves various stakeholders such as governments, tourism departments and local communities.

During the course of his research, Charudutt's ideas of harmonious co-existence came into question even more. "One of the things we found was that livestock in these areas was overstocked. As livestock population increased, the population of wild herbivores, such as blue sheep, started to decline." So, the leopards, in search of food, would hunt the livestock.

To address this problem, Charudutt negotiated with the villagers to set aside a part of their grazing land for recovery of wild herbivores. "The recovery we saw was quite astonishing. The blue sheep population increased. And the use of this area by snow leopards started increasing, which we had not expected." However, 13 years after Charudutt's first findings in Kibber, his student, Kulbhushansingh Suryawanshi came up with new findings. "It showed that livestock predation by snow leopard intensifies, whether the population of blue sheep increases or decreases."

Over the years, despite several challenges, Charudutt said the attitude to conservation has more or less changed. He concluded the talk with the story of how, in 2017, an aged snow leopard had entered Kibber. "The locals had detected his presence, but did not attack it. After a few days, the animal died. But instead of beating the carcass, the village gathered around the animal and mourned its passing."

SRAVASTI DATTA

FOOD REVIEW

Dining with Virat Kohli

We can't, so we have the next best thing — One8 Commune that brings us his favourites from India and the world

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

If at first you're wondering what 'One8' in One8 Commune is, it's a fun way to say '18', which is the Indian men's cricket team captain Virat Kohli's jersey number. It's also the name of his lifestyle brand.

One8 Commune, the brand's latest opening, has the right mix of healthy-yet-delicious plus delicately indulgent food, and is a great translation of the image Kohli has garnered over the years: a once boisterous Delhi boy, who's made it big, and is slowly steering himself with some flamboyance into being a responsible grown-up, buffing his rough edges till they gleam.

One8 Commune's location at Aerocity is also symbolic of the people of a new New Delhi. Like Virat, they are ready to fly in and out of the country frequently, becoming newly aware of a throbbing global food culture. The menu is an unconfused, well-curated mix of Mediterranean, Continental, and Asian, with a section of (North) Indian Plates.

The vibe: There is the unmistakable Virat Kohli wall with just his signature transposed onto a neon



lightbulb. The decor is showy Delhi, without being loud. A Virat jersey is on another wall, lit up. Upstairs is a big multi-game scoreboard, where tennis, hockey, cricket, and a few more are included. There are no TVs showing sport re-runs here; the focus is on the food. It's fresh without being another hipster place with light-toned

wood and indoor planters. The outdoor balcony seating is wonderful and easy — there are plants here, offset by the corporate world of glass outside.

Do try: All of the dishes on the Virat's Favourite section of the menu. The crunch in the Superfood Salad comes from amaranth pops, not from leaves that make for an



Virat at the heart The interiors and food at the One8 Commune
*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

awkward first-date experience. The Mushroom Googly, a mushroom and truffle oil dimsum is light on your stomach, yet the distinct smell of the dash of truffle oil leaves your tongue feeling like you ate something much richer.

The Continental section of the menu has a Sriracha Chicken Taco, which chef Pawan has got just right — the soft shell taco holds just enough chicken sour cream, guac, salsa and arugula with none of it spilling over your clothes or leaking onto your chin.

This is in a way a metaphor for all of the dishes here — indulgent without leaving you stained with post-meal guilt.

The Black Chicken is quite the star — your standard coal-grilled chicken, but one that's soaked in

black sesame marinade. The flavour is nutty but with the texture of wet tandoori chicken — Delhi should be mighty pleased.

The dessert menu too caters to the Delhi identity: We are a city that holds onto our hot chocolate fudge with emotional intensity. The Five Rivers Mud Cake is a treat: one layer of white, another of dark, and a third of mixed mousse, with a berry compote on the side. The Chocolate Fondant is a classic crowd pleaser executed with finesse.

Skip: Nothing. Go in with as empty a stomach as you can. Definitely try as much as you can. The cocktail menu is well segregated too, according to 'history': Prohibition Era, Disco Age, and Millennial, which is an interesting re-look at the evolution of drinks.

The Barry Manilow #Copacabana (Disco Age) with a bit of their housemade Maraschino liqueur puts you in a beach-mood immediately without the usual coconutty pina colada having to do so. The showman wouldn't disappoint.

The Danced in the Nile (Millennial) is a fresh (and not pink) vodka mix despite the canned litchi in it.
Go with: Friends, family, or alone in the afternoons when it's quieter. This is a place for all seasons and most occasions.

Space bar: 120 covers, over 6,000 sq ft, child-friendly, no pets
How much? ₹2,500 for two (sans alcohol)

Reach: Worldmark II, 8 Aerocity. Best accessed by cab. And if you do justice to this menu, you will struggle to drive after.

PRODUCTS

Silk route



Ekaya Banaras has launched a collection called The Crossing — 'Natives of Nowhere', inspired by nomad communities of ancient Persian and Indian civilizations. There are calligraphy and craft details featuring flora-fauna motifs in Banarasi kadwa (no loose threads behind the sari) and fekua (cutwork) techniques. Expect nature-inspired patterns from Mughal

miniatures, such as bird motifs, gul-andar-gul (flower inside flower), gul-e-vilaya, and gul-hazara (thousand-petalled flower). The collection comprises about 45 pieces, in deep pink, purple, maroon, indigo, grey, mustard, rust, and green. There are lehengas, saris and ready-to-wear garments, in silk and mashru (a cotton-silk mix in the satin weave).

At D 7 Defence Colony and Ekaya.in; upwards of ₹35,000

Contact us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



LECTURE

On Tagore

India International Centre is holding a Tribute to Tagore through an illustrated lecture by Valerie Doulton, founder and Artistic Director of The Live Literature Company, U.K. Doulton will speak on Tagore's importance today, and about staging William Radice's English translation of Tagore's short play, *The Post Office*.

VENUE: Conference Room I, IIC
TIME: 6:30 p.m.



FOOD

Punjabi delights

Punjab Grill, a restaurant that specialises in food from the north-west frontier, has introduced a menu that comprises classic Punjabi dishes. The Maharaja Thali has Tandoori Guchchi, Salmon Tikka, Chaap Tajdar, Haleem, Saffron Pulao and Ras Malai. The Shikhar menu offers different meat every day with special Gobindo Bhog rice.

VENUE: Punjab Grill, Khan Market
TIME: 12 noon - 11 p.m.



PERFORMANCE

Kathak recital

Asavari presents Samyog-Viyog, an evening of music and dance that celebrates different dimensions of Shringar Ras, a concept in Indian culture. The event will feature a Kathak recital by renowned danseuse Shovana Narayan with vocals by Vidushi Sunanda Sharma. Dr. Lavlin Thadani will be the Sutradhar.

VENUE: Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre
TIME: 7 p.m.



RETAIL

Kashmiri shawls

The Splendor of Kashmir will showcase its new collection of Pashmina shawls in a two-day show, which begins today. There will be a wide range of shawls, some that are hand-embroidered with hand-woven Kalamkari on both the border and palla. The show is aimed at promoting Kashmir's cultural heritage of the art of shawl-making.

VENUE: The Palms Club, Shushant Lok, Gurugram
TIME: 10:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.



AWARENESS

Environment

IHW Council has organised the Good Air Summit 2019. This is a people-led movement for better quality of air. The event, which aims to unearth preventive solutions to control air pollution and the challenges it poses, will feature participation by eminent personalities from various fields, as well as school children.

VENUE: Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium
TIME: 10 a.m. onwards

Suzuki V-Strom 1050

Garnering maximum attention at the Suzuki stand at EICMA 2019 were the all-new V-Strom 1050 and V-Strom 1050 XT. The V-Strom 1050 replaces the ageing V-Strom 1000 as Suzuki's flagship adventure motorcycle, bringing styling inspired by Suzuki ADVs from the past. Nestled within its twin-spar aluminium frame is a BS-VI-compliant, 1,037cc, liquid-cooled engine that produces 107hp and 100Nm of torque. Suzuki has also equipped the V-Strom with a new IMU-assisted electronic suite called the Suzuki Intelligent Ride System (SIRS). Expect the Suzuki V-Strom 1050's India launch to take place sometime in 2020.

Hero Xtreme 1.R concept

The Hero Xtreme 1.R concept previews the design direction that future Xtreme series bikes will head into. The Xtreme 1.R is refreshingly different from Hero's present-day offerings. With its distinctive (and highly detailed) LED headlight, floating seat, covered rear wheel and a super-aggressive tail section, the Xtreme 1.R is a concept that compels you to take a closer look at it. And while not all of those elements will make it to a production bike, the 1.R does preview a new, sportier Xtreme that's set to be launched towards the end of 2020.



The stars of EICMA 2019

Bikes that shone the brightest under the recent Milan show's floor lights

AMAAH AHMED

As is the case every year, the EICMA motorcycle show is the biggest platform for manufacturers to showcase their new and upcoming two-wheelers. The 2019 edition at Rho Fiera, Milan, from November 5 to 10, saw some of the biggest names unveil some exciting motorcycles and intriguing concepts. While you would probably need more than two hands to count all the unveils on your fingertips, we have rounded up the bikes that shone brightest under the EICMA 2019 motorcycle show's floor lights.



KTM 390 Adventure

The motorcycle that seemingly everyone has been waiting for. The KTM 390 Adventure finally made its world premiere at EICMA 2019, and by the looks of it, promises to offer everything that an entry-level ADV buyer looks for. The 390 Adventure is essentially a more off-road-oriented version of the 390 Duke and uses the same 373.2cc single-cylinder engine, making 44hp and 37Nm, while also packing in a switchable traction control system and adjustable suspension. Expect the KTM 390 Adventure's price to be around the ₹3 lakh mark when it is launched at India Bike Week in December 2019.



Honda CBR1000RR-R Fireblade

The all-new Honda CBR1000RR-R Fireblade promises to be a real weapon. Not only does it look different, but with new LED lights flanking the central air duct, it also brings winglets to the table. These are said to add the same amount of downforce as those on Honda's RC213V MotoGP race bike. Not that the outgoing 'Blade was slow by any means, but the new-gen Fireblade is set to take things to the next level, with its all-new, 999.9cc, in-line four-cylinder engine making a seriously impressive 214hp at 14,500rpm and 113Nm of torque at 12,500rpm. Expect it to be launched in India sometime in 2020.

Benelli Leoncino 800

Benelli unveiled the biggest offering in its Leoncino line-up – the Leoncino 800. Visually, the Leoncino stays true to the design language of the smaller bikes – it follows a minimalist, retro theme, with sharp, sculpted lines. Powering the Leoncino 800 is a 754cc, parallel twin-cylinder engine that puts out 81.6hp and 67Nm of torque. If it chooses to launch the Leoncino 800 in India, Benelli could well take the fight to the Ducati Scrambler at a much lower price.



Updated Kawasaki Z900

For 2020, the Kawasaki Z900 has received only an update, but it's a more significant one than you'd expect. Not only does it look sharper and angrier than before – thanks to the new LED headlamp with the Kawasaki H2-inspired LED 'fangs' – but it also gets electronic rider aids, which it dearly missed, up until now. The 2020 Z900 packs in the three-level Kawasaki Traction Control (KTRC) system and two power modes – Low and Full. Additionally, it also gets four ride modes – Sport, Road, Rain and Rider. The addition of the electronic rider aids is key, as the Z900's competitors already feature them. Expected to go on sale in India next year, the updated Kawasaki Z900's price will go up by a fair bit on account of the additions.



POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



WUMO



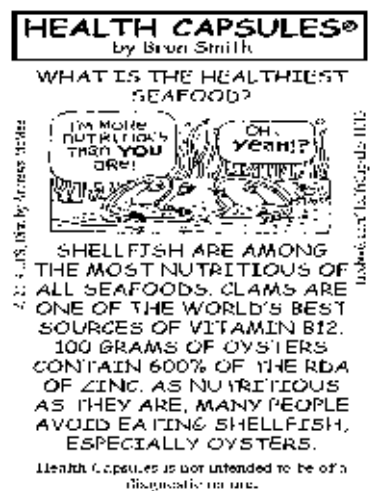
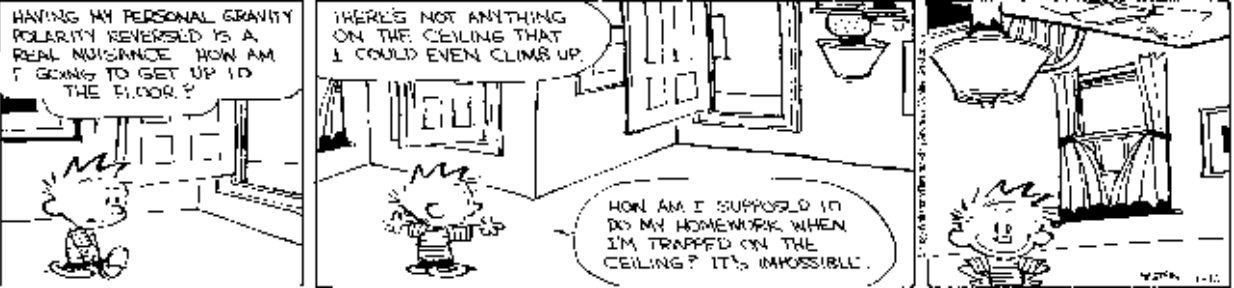
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



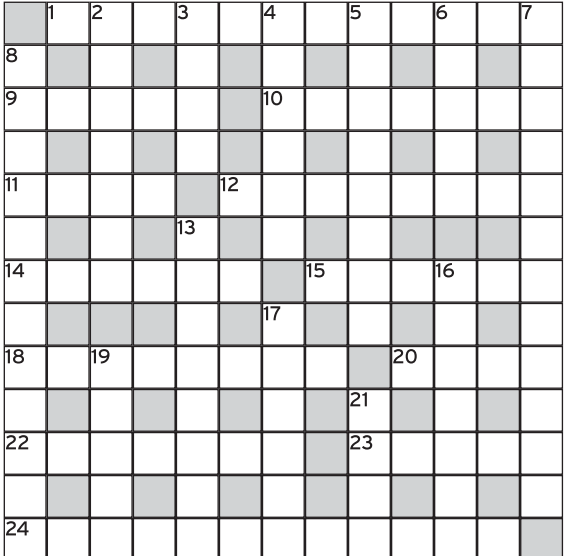
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13223



- Across
- 1 Fail badly (4,1,7)
 - 9 German state, capital Wiesbaden (5)
 - 10 Boon (7)
 - 11 Injure seriously – heavy hammer (4)
 - 12 Feel resentment and envy (8)
 - 14 Lovely sight (6)
 - 15 Nuclear (6)
 - 18 Impelling force (8)
 - 20 Weapons – limbs (4)
 - 22 From Belgrade? (7)
 - 23 Entertain (5)
 - 24 Intense anxiety (12)
- Down
- 2 Little known (7)
 - 3 Jug (4)
 - 4 Baby swan (6)
 - 5 Inflexible (8)
 - 6 Beg (5)
 - 7 Cheese – secret lieder (anag) (3,9)

- 8 Compositions to be played by a small group (7,5)
- 13 Amount (8)
- 16 Large tent (7)
- 17 Semi-autonomous body implementing government policy (6)
- 19 Underlying significance of a story or event (5)
- 21 Aggressive remark directed at a person (4)

Solution will appear in The Hindu dated November 14, 2019.
Solution No. 13222

B	U	R	S	A	R	F	L	A	B	B	Y
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It will be a different ball game: Rahane

Batsmen's mindset and ability to tweak technique will be key, says vice-captain on tackling the pink ball

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE

It's going to be a very "different ball game", India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane asserted on Tuesday, saying the pink ball's extra lateral movement compared to the red cherry would force batsmen to play late and closer to the body.

Rahane, along with Test specialists Cheteshwar Pujara, Mayank Agarwal, Mohammed Shami and Ravindra Jadeja, had a couple of practice sessions with the pink ball under the watchful eyes of National Cricket Academy director Rahul Dravid in Bengaluru, building up to the historic day-night Test beginning on November 22.

Exciting
"We had two good practice sessions. Actually four, but two with pink balls – one during the day and one under lights. It was actually exciting," Rahane said ahead of the first Test against Bangladesh starting here on Thursday.

"It was my first time with the pink ball and definitely it's a different ball game as compared to the red ball. Our focus was to look into the swing and seam movement and also play close to the body," said Rahane.

The batsmen would have to tweak their technique, he opined.

"What we found out after the practice session was that the (new) pink ball does a lot more than the red ball. You have to play slightly late and close to your body. We had a word with Rahul *bhai* as he was also there."

During the couple of Duleep Trophy seasons with the



Kabaddi, kabaddi...! India skipper Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane prepare to come to grips with Bangladesh. •R.V. MOORTHY

pink ball, there were complaints about spinners going out of the equation.

"I think they played with the Kookaburra ball in the Duleep Trophy, that's a different thing. With the SG ball, I am not so sure. We played against spinners in Bengaluru and they were getting good revs (revolutions) on the ball. Yes, the shine is completely different to the red ball, but it's very hard to compare the SG and Kookaburra," he explained.

"I've never played with the pink ball. And what I've heard from others is that the Kookaburra is actually easy for the batsmen. What we saw in Bengaluru was that

the SG ball was doing a bit for the fast bowlers. For spinners, it is difficult."

He feels the primary objective would be to adjust to the pink ball "mentally" and hope for things to fall in place after that.

"I'm sure we'll get two good practice sessions in Kolkata. I'm sure everyone will adjust very quickly."

The schedule

- The first Test will be held in Indore from Nov. 14 to 18
- Kolkata will host the second Test (day-night) from Nov. 22 to 26

Kohli & Co. face the pink ball

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE

Skipper Virat Kohli had his first experience of negotiating a pink ball as the Indian players took turns to get used to the new colour during the net session ahead of the first Test against Bangladesh starting on Thursday.

The Indian team did not train under lights and the throwdowns with the SG pink ball was part of the traditional red-ball practice session.

It was skipper Kohli who first faced the pink ball. Though throwdown specialists Raghavendra and Sri Lankan Nuwan Senaviratne hurled the pink ball at express pace, the skipper looked comfortable. He fo-



At full tilt: The Indian players are leaving nothing to chance for the Test series against Bangladesh. •R.V. MOORTHY

cused more on playing defensive shots.

Meanwhile, seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar, recovering from a hamstring injury and side strain, participated in a skill session. "Bhuvi is here for a skill session with the

team. The team management just wants him to get into the groove," said a team source.

He had a catching session with fielding coach R. Sridhar and participated briefly in the net session.

Bangladesh wary of spin twins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE

It's India's fast bowling unit which is now feared in Tests but the Bangladesh batsmen

are more concerned about handling spin twins, R. Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, during the two-match series, said Mohammed Mithun on

Tuesday. Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma are expected to be more than a handful for Bangladesh during the series, but Mithun seemed more wary about the Ashwin-Jadeja threat.

"We all know the strength of their bowling. We are working on how to tackle their spinners as it is batting-friendly for the first two days but afterwards their spinners come into play and will try to attack the opposition," he said.

Technical aspect

"We are working on some technical aspects, keeping our focus on how to handle them," Mithun said. The Bangladesh players look to batting coach Neil McKenzie to help them decode the Indian spinners. "Let the technical things remain inside the dressing room," he said.



Hot seat: Skipper Mominul will hope to deliver. •R.V. MOORTHY

I kept believing in myself, says Chahar

'Worked hard for 15 years to come so far and won't let it go easily'



On the prowl: Deepak Chahar has made his presence felt with incisive spells. •AFP

SHAYAN ACHARYA
MUMBAI

The last few days have been like a fairytale for Deepak Chahar. On Sunday, he claimed a hat-trick and a record-breaking six-wicket haul in the third T20I against Bangladesh to help India to a series win in Nagpur. On Tuesday, he finished with a four-wicket haul for Rajasthan against Vidarbha in the Syed Mush-taq Ali Trophy.

It was nine years ago that Chahar exploded on the scene, his eight-wicket burst helping Rajasthan skittle out Hyderabad for 21 in the Ranji Trophy. It has taken him a while to break into the Indian team, with injuries playing their part, but the 27-year-old has shown he belongs on the big stage. The pacer spoke to *Sportstar* on Tuesday.

Excerpts:
About the last few days: I am really happy. I have worked hard day in and day out and with god's blessings, I have been able to come so far. There have been times when I was not getting results despite the hard work, but I kept believing in myself.

The Nagpur game: Yes, I took six wickets in that match, but for me the best thing happened before the

match. I went to meet captain Rohit Sharma to discuss a few things. He told me, "You are not going to bowl with the new ball today. I will use you as (Jasprit) Bumrah." For me, those words were really motivating. For a young bowler like me, who has played only six international games, it is a matter of pride that your captain has so much trust in you. I am happy that I could justify his faith.

On the competition for spots: India now has the best fast-bowling attack and getting a place in the team is difficult. You have to perform in every game and you cannot afford to take any match lightly. Since I treat every game as my last one, that helps me stay focused and motivated. I have worked hard for 15 years to come so far, and I won't let it go easily.

The IPL experience: That was the best thing to have happened to me. We had to play seven matches in Chennai, and it was obvious that I had to bowl a lot of slower balls. So, I adjusted accordingly.

Before that, I had learnt the art of delivering knuckle balls. I also practised my yorkers a lot in the CSK nets. It has helped me immensely.

End of reform in sport: a 'no-change' ruling could salvage hope

N. Srinivasan well qualified to attend the ICC meeting



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

Did former President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India N. Srinivasan say "We are back" after the BCCI elections? Even if the words sound too cute, the concept is probably right. It means the hope of reform has ended, with the general body meeting on December 1 ready to roll back significant rulings by the Supreme Court.

Old-timers whose actions caused the Supreme Court to focus its attention on cricket administration are getting set to celebrate and to return the cricket board to the days when it was a feudal set-up ruled by a small coterie. This was what the court was trying to change, and what it still can if it puts its foot down.

From the start, the Supreme Court diluted many of its intentions, forgave BCCI its transgressions, and

allowed it to interpret the Lodha Committee reforms as it wished, or ignore them altogether.

The BCCI might effectively end reform in sports in general in India – the Indian Olympic Association and national sports federations will be emboldened to take a stronger stand against the sports code. This code was intended to set sports bodies on the path to better governance using terms foreign to them like "transparency" and "accountability."

The hope

The hope was that if the BCCI, the richest, most powerful and best-run sports body could be made to follow the new code, then it would be easier to get the others, most of whom depend on government handouts, have little say internationally and are often both corrupt and inefficient, to follow suit.

The objections have been basically personal, limited to looking after the office-bearers rather than the sportspeople or the sport itself, and arise out of a fear of long-serving officials being rendered irrelevant. Power, as Henry Kissinger said, is an

aphrodisiac, whether political or sporting, and in the case of the BCCI it usually means both.

Still, it is different with cricket because it generates its own funds, has a successful graduation system – from the junior levels to the international – and is more powerful than even the International Cricket Council.

The December 1 meeting will vote on making changes in the cooling off period of the office-bearers, an offshoot of which will see full terms for president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Sharma who otherwise have to quit office in ten months' time. It also envisages giving the secretary greater, possibly unprecedented powers, and ignoring the court if the constitution is changed.

Back to BCCI normal

In other words, things go back to BCCI normal (which is not the same as normal normal). Thus enormous amounts of money, time and effort would have been wasted in the last half decade on bringing some order to and modernising a sports body that desperately needed to be

brought into the 21st century.

The BCCI, now strengthened by the addition of the Home Minister's son and the brother of the Minister of state for Finance, has traditionally united all political parties. For decades, the ruling party and the opposition have stood shoulder-to-shoulder to oppose any reform, to fight any bill in Parliament that envisaged a reduction in their powers.

The BCCI argues that the Supreme Court has done its job and should now keep out, but that would be assuming that its rulings are followed in letter and spirit. Changes to the constitution that go against the rulings are obviously violations, and need to be seen as defying the edicts laid down by the highest court in the land.

This does not mean, however, that the Supreme Court needs to get into administration at the granular level – a mistake its Committee of Administrators made consistently.

But if the BCCI is intent on ensuring, for example, that the money it loses out owing to the ICC's new and ridiculous plan of having more annual multi-nation tournaments,

then it needs to send a person to such meetings who has both the background and the authority to deal with it.

Here is where Srinivasan would make a difference. He is above 70, it is true, but that does not concern the ICC, and there is something to be said for continuity at the international level. The Supreme Court should temper justice with common sense.

If the BCCI has its way on December 1 – and it could be a unanimous endorsement of its proposals, not just the three-fourths needed – then it would be tantamount to ridiculing the Supreme Court, in the words of the secretary of the Lodha Committee which drafted the reforms later endorsed by the court.

What cannot be denied is that systems have to be put in place. Perhaps the Supreme Court could rule that no changes be made to the constitution for, say, two years. Then a review may be taken on how things have worked out before taking a call on the changes.

This will maintain the sanctity of the Supreme Court's rulings and be a practical guide on how to proceed.

Gritty Federer lives to fight another day



Pulling through: Roger Federer packed enough power to subdue Matteo Berrettini in his crucial group match on Tuesday. •AP

Zverev finally solves the Nadal puzzle

ATP FINALS

REUTERS
LONDON

Roger Federer got back on track at the ATP Finals with a 7-6(2), 6-3 defeat of Italian Matteo Berrettini on Tuesday.

Defeat by Dominic Thiem in his opening round-robin match on Sunday had left the six-time champion facing an early exit.

Berrettini was also coming off a heavy defeat by Novak Djokovic in his first appearance at the event, and the 23-year-old showed why he has made such an impact this year as he pushed Federer hard in the opening set.

He saved a set point at 5-6 but Federer squeezed the accelerator to win 10 of 11 points as he cruised through the tiebreak and broke to love at the start of the second.

Berrettini, the first Italian to qualify for the tournament

since 1978, had three break points in the eighth game but Federer served his way out of trouble.

Meanwhile on Monday, Rafael Nadal made a disappointing start as he suffered a first career loss to reigning champion Alexander Zverev, going down 6-2, 6-4.

Zverev broke serve in the fifth game and again two games later when Nadal blazed a wild forehand wide. Nadal dropped his serve again at the start of the second set and Zverev's rock solid delivery never allowed the Spaniard a glimpse of an opportunity.

The statistics told the story of the match with Zverev striking 26 winners to Nadal's 13 and winning 30 of 34 points behind his first serve.

The results: Group Bjorn Borg: Roger Federer bt Matteo Berrettini 7-6(2), 6-3.

Group Andre Agassi: Alexander Zverev bt Rafael Nadal 6-2, 6-4.

TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 a.m.
ATP Finals: Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Thursday).

IN BRIEF



Smith gears up for Pakistan Tests

SYDNEY Days after smashing an unbeaten 51-ball 80 in the T20Is against Pakistan, Australia batsman Steve Smith changed gears to rack up his slowest-ever First Class century in the Marsh Sheffield Shield on Tuesday. Smith faced nearly six times as many deliveries as he did for that T20I knock, to notch up his 42nd First Class century across the first two days of New South Wales' match against Western Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground. **IANS**



Watson appointed ACA president

SYDNEY Former all-rounder Shane Watson has been appointed president of the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA), a position, he says, will help him "give back to the game". The appointment was made at the ACA's Annual General Meeting here on Monday. **PTI**



Harden, Westbrook power Rockets to victory

NEW ORLEANS James Harden scored 39 points and Russell Westbrook added 26 as the visiting Houston Rockets won a fourth consecutive game, beating the injury-depleted New Orleans Pelicans 122-116 on Monday. **The results:** Minnesota Timberwolves 120 bt Detroit Pistons 114; Boston Celtics 116 bt Dallas Mavericks 106; Memphis Grizzlies 113 bt San Antonio Spurs 109; Houston Rockets 122 bt New Orleans Pelicans 116; Utah Jazz 122 bt Golden State Warriors 108; LA Clippers 98 bt Toronto Raptors 88. **REUTERS**

Brazil and France enter U-17 WC semifinals

GOIANIA (BRAZIL) Host Brazil and France completed the semifinal lie-up in the FIFA Under-17 World Cup here on Monday. While the former beat Italy 2-0, the latter steamrollered Spain 6-1 to set up a last-four meeting on Friday. **The results:** Brazil 2 (Patryck, Peglow) bt Italy 0; France 6 (Kouassi, Mbuku, Lihadji, Pembele, Rutter, Aouchiche) bt Spain 1 (Valera).

Prarthana-Issabella duo advances

SPORTS BUREAU
TAIPEI

Prarthana Thombare and Issabella Shinikova of Bulgaria defeated Jasmin Jebawy of Germany and Alexandra Riley of the US 7-5, 6-3 in the pre-quarterfinals of the \$125,000 WTA tournament on Tuesday. **The results:** **\$125,000 WTA, Taipei: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Issabella Shinikova (Bul) & Prarthana Thombare bt Jasmin Jebawy (Ger) & Alexandra Riley (US) 7-5, 6-3. **\$15,000 ITF men, Meshref, Kuwait: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Ishaque Eqbal & Anurag Nenwani bt Hassan Al Mousa & Abdulrahman Alawadhi (Kuwait) 6-3, 6-7(14), [10-7].

Real concerns for Real Kashmir

It is bracing for possible hurdles in hosting its first home game

I-LEAGUE

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

The AIFF is yet to officially announce the fixtures for the 2019-20 I-League, but Real Kashmir FC, the only professional football club from the region, is bracing for not just an away start to the season but also possible hurdles in hosting its first home game, tentatively scheduled next month.

Provisional list

The clubs have been provided a provisional list of games, likely to be confirmed after a meeting between I-League club officials and the AIFF on Thursday, with RKFC travelling to East Bengal on December 3 before hosting Gokulam Kerala on 12th, Churchill Brothers on 15th and defending champions Chennai City on the 26th next month.

"The divisional commissioner has written to us that the administration will take care of everything. That includes security for teams even though there is no such specific mention in the letter," club sources said.

The communication lockdown in the valley for more than three months now has



The big reveal: Real Kashmir, with its kit sponsor adidas, unveiled its home jersey for the coming season. **■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

meant planning things in advance to avoid logistical issues, but sources admit it won't be easy.

"The good thing is that the government is on board. We have confirmation from Gokulam and Churchill so far, they have also made their bookings. But until Gokulam actually arrives in Srinagar on the 9th, we will keep our fingers crossed," they admitted.

The situation on the ground, they say, is calm. But the underlying tension is evident and there is a lot of frustration among the people. "Our mobile phones are

simply an extension of our landlines with a different number. Even SMSs cannot be sent. People have nowhere to go. In such a scenario, hosting matches may not be easy," they said.

What has added to the team's concerns is the unpredictability of the situation. "When the government says there will be security, we believe it. But we cannot predict how it will unfold. How will it be managed? Will people be allowed to move freely for at least those 2-3 hours and reach the stadium? If it is so tight that people cannot come, then the

whole purpose of playing at home will be lost.

"The freedom can be cathartic for youngsters to finally be out in the open, in a strong crowd of 15,000 and scream and cheer the side without any restrictions.

"It can as easily go the other way, though we are really hopeful it won't. RKFC's home games would be a chance to showcase that the people are not looking for a chance to cause trouble," club sources declared, adding that playing outside Srinagar was not something that had been discussed so far.

Sathwika advances

Mihika goes down to Freya

TENNIS

SPORTS BUREAU
GWALIOR

Wild card entrant Sathwika Sama beat compatriot Vanshita Pathania 6-3, 6-4 to move into the second round of the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis on Tuesday.

Former Asian junior champion Mihika Yadav went down in three sets to Freya Christie of Britain in another first round encounter, while wild card Shreya Tatavarthy fought hard before being subdued in the third set by Russian qualifier Evgeniya Burdina.

In doubles pre-quarterfinals, National champion Sowjanya Bavisetti and Dan Ni Wang of China missed three matchpoints in the super tie-break to lose 2-6, 6-4, [19-17] against Cabaj Awad of Sweden and Melanie Klaffner of Austria. **The results: Singles (first**

round): Evgeniya Burdina (Rus) bt Shreya Tatavarthy 6-3, 6-7 (4), 6-2; Freya Christie (GBR) bt Mihika Yadav 6-2, 2-6, 6-2; Sathwika Sama bt Vanshita Pathania 6-3, 6-4.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Berfu Cengiz (Tur) & Freya Christie (GBR) bt Mahak Jain & Sathwika Sama 6-0, 6-1; Mana Kawamura & Funa Kozaki (Jpn) bt Arthi Muniyan & Sara Yadav 6-4, 6-0; Karin Kennel (Sil) & Silvia Njiric (Cro) bt Zeynep Sonmez (Tur) & Saumya Vig 7-6(4), 6-4; Sravya Shivani Chila-kalapudi & Snehal Mane bt Deeksha Manju Prasad & Avika Sagwal 6-1, 6-4; Petia Arshinkova & Gergana Topalova (Bul) bt Jennifer Luikham & Mihika Yadav 6-4, 6-2; Jacqueline Cabaj Awad (Swe) & Melanie Klaffner (Aut) bt Dan Ni Wang (Chn) & Sowjanya Bavisetti 2-6, 6-4, [19-17]; Evgeniya Burdina (Rus) & Ashmitha Easwarumurthy bt Dakshata Patel & Vanshita Pathania 6-2, 6-0; Diana Marcinkevica (Lat) & Valeriya Strakhova (Ukr) bt Prathiba Narayan Prasad & Soha Sadiq 6-2, 6-1.

Manish stuns Noguchi, enters last 16

SPORTS BUREAU
PUNE

Manish Sureshkumar ousted 16th seed Rio Noguchi of Japan to enter the singles pre-quarterfinals of the KPT-MSLTA Challenger on Tuesday. The 20-year-old from Chennai, ranked 748 in the world, sent the World No. 408 Noguchi packing 6-3, 7-6(4) in 96 minutes.

The results: Singles: Second round: Jay Clarke (GBR) bt Calvin Hemery (Fra) 6-4, 6-4;

Manish Sureshkumar bt Rio Noguchi (Jpn) 6-3, 7-6(4); Shuichi Sekiguchi (Jpn) bt Roman Blokhin (Rus) 6-3, 6-0.

First round: Dhruv Sunish bt Sumizawa Daisuke (Jpn) 7-6 (3), 6-2; Markos Kalovelonis (Gre) bt N. Vijay Sundar Prashanth 6-2, 6-4; Dalwinde Singh bt Kunal Anand 6-3, 6-4.

Ergi Kirkin (Tur) bt David Pichler (Aut) 1-6, 7-5, 6-2; Kaza Vinayak Sharma bt Tejas Chaukulkar 7-6(1), 6-7(5), 6-4; Aziz Dougash (Tun) bt Adil Kalyanpur 6-3, 7-6(3).

Indian Oil claims title

BEIGHTON CUP

KOLKATA: Indian Oil rode on two third-quarter goals to beat Punjab National Bank 2-0 in the final and lift the title in the 123rd Beighton Cup hockey tournament at the SAI Complex here on Tuesday.

Karajwinder Singh put Indian Oil ahead by scoring a field goal in the 41st minute before Gurjinder Singh converted a penalty corner at the stroke of the third quarter to complete the tally.

The result: Final: Indian Oil 2 (Karajwinder Singh 41, Gurjinder Singh 45) bt Punjab National Bank 0.

PANASONIC GOLF

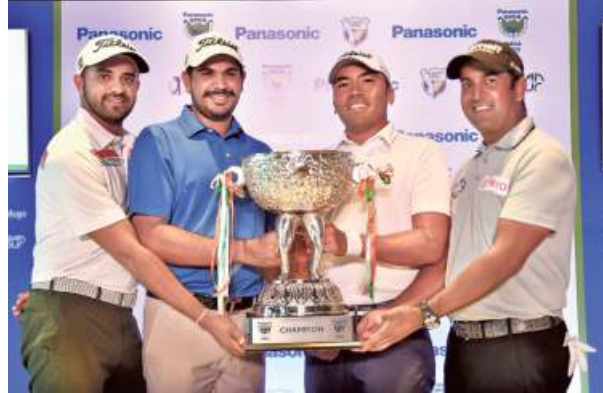
RAKESH RAO
GURUGRAM

Khalin Joshi is back to defend the Panasonic Open title, but poor form and a new course can combine to make his job difficult.

When the \$400,000 Asian Tour event opens here on Thursday, Shiv Kapur is expected to be a better bet for the host since he finished tied second in last week's Thailand Open after making the play-off.

Joshi, last year's surprise winner at the Delhi Golf Club course, candidly admitted his poor form leading into this event.

"I haven't had the best of years so far. But finally, I'm finding some form. I haven't capitalised on all the opportunities this season. But, the



Whose cup is it! Khalin Joshi, Gaganjeet Bhullar, Rory Hie and Shiv Kapur at the Classic Golf and Country Club on Tuesday. **■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

game is good, so looking forward to having a good week and finishing the year on a high," Joshi said.

On the Classic Golf and Country Club course, Joshi said, "I have played well on this course throughout my career, so I have good memo-

I think it's the most tight-knit squad I have been involved in'

Higginbotham is RKFC's new foreign recruit this year

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

With a decade-long career in the Scottish league spread across all divisions – including the top flight – Kallum Higginbotham's signing up with Real Kashmir FC (RKFC) as its lone new foreign recruit this year was more about the experience of moving out of Britain than anything else.

A different world

The 30-year old, though, has been learning the ropes of living in a world starkly different from his own for the past couple of months.

"It's not difficult, I think it's taking you out of the comfort zone.

"Growing up where it's been so easy contacting people with touch of a finger, it's probably brought me down a bit and made me realise how much I depend on my iPhone or my iPad," Higginbotham told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of an event here on Tuesday.

Having joined the side at what is perhaps the most testing time for anyone in Kashmir – with communica-

There is a stereotypical view of Kashmir and I myself had them. Since I have come, I can safely say that it is completely different

tion lines down, complete absence of internet in the valley and a throwback to the early 1990s – Higginbotham is coming to terms with actually talking to people at all times instead of searching stuff online all the time.

"I think it's the most tight-knit squad I have been involved in and I think that's because I have no phone to go and search the web whenever I want.

"It's just that in this modern age we do not communicate any more," he explained.

Realisation

That interaction has also led to a better realisation of Indian football and players and Higginbotham admitted his preconceived notions have been shattered since his arrival here.

"There is a stereotypical view of Kashmir and I myself had them, especially after watching the documentary (by BBC, which recently won a BAFTA award). Since I have come, I can safely say that it is completely different.

"I didn't really know much about Indian football and I probably had the wrong perception of Indian talent, to be honest.

"I didn't feel they would be very good and I was surprised at how developed a lot of Indian players are, how good technically with the ball and how hardworking," he admitted.

'Power to change'

Kit sponsor adidas India senior marketing director Manish Sapra said, "Our partnership with Real Kashmir is an essential part of the brand living its core beliefs that through sports we have the power to change lives."

Co-owner Sandeep Chattoo said, "This power has inspired the youth and put football at the centre of conversations on Kashmir."

Ankit and Aman in quarterfinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ULAANBAATAR

Ankit Anwaral (60kg) and Aman (+91kg) advanced to the quarterfinals of the Asian youth boxing championships here on Tuesday.

While Aman defeated Uzbekistan's Makhmudov Mimukhsin 5-0, Ankit prevailed 3-2 over Mongolia's Tulga Oyunbaatar.

However, Mohit (75kg) lost 3-2 to Kazakhstan's Bektas and bowed out in the opening round.

India was assured of two medals in the event after Komalpreet Kaur (+81kg) and Sushma (81kg) got a direct entry into the semifinals owing to the small size of their respective draws in the women's competition.

India picks silver in mixed skeet

SPORTS BUREAU
DOHA

Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Ganemat Sekhon shot well but lost the gold to the Chinese pair in the mixed team skeet competition in the 14th Asian shooting championship here on Tuesday. After having topped qualification with 146 with equal contributions, the Indian pair was beaten 36-33 by Wei Meng and Jin Di.

There was gold in junior men's air rifle as Dhanush Srikanth beat Jiang Xuanie of China by 2.5 points, while qualification topper Shahu Tushar Mane had to settle for the bronze. In junior women's air rifle, Shreya Agrawal and Khushi Saini won the individual silver and bronze respectively, and the team silver along with Aakriti Dahiya.

The results: Mixed team skeet: 1. China (Wei Meng, Jin Di) 36 (145); 2. India (Ganemat Sekhon, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa) 33 (146); 3. Japan 35 (144); 11. India-A (Saniya Sheikh, Smit Singh) 136. **Men: 50m free pistol:** 1. Park Daehun (Kor) 567; 2. Gaurav Rana 562; 3. Arjun

Singh Cheema 560; 23. Monu Tomar 531. **Team:** 1. Korea 1672; 2. China 1659; 3. India 1653. **Junior men: 10m air rifle:** 1. Dhanush Srikanth 248.2 (625.3); 2. Jiang Xuanie (Chn) 245.7 (626.1); 3. Shahu Tushar Mane 226.4 (629.3); 7. Hriday Hazarika 143.0 (622.5). **Team:** 1. India 1877.1; 2. China 1876.4; 3. Korea 1860.2.

50m free pistol: 1. Sung Yunho (Kor) 556; 2. Wang Zhehao (Chn) 546; 3. Peechnat Khlaisuban (Tha) 540; 6. Surinder Singh 538; 8. Vikash Kumar 532; 14. Sachin Bhati 489. **Team:** 1. Korea 1632; 2. China 1597; 3. Thailand 1577; 4. India 1559. **Junior women: 10m air rifle:** 1. Yan Jinjing (Chn) 251.8 (623.8); 2. Shreya Agrawal 250.6 (632.1); 3. Khushi Saini 228.8 (628.3); 20. Aakriti Dahiya 616.7. **MQS:** Manini Kaushik 619.9. **Team:** 1. China 1882.4 (WRJ); 2. India 1877.1; 3. Iran 1876.7.

25m sports pistol: 1. Zhou Hu (Chn) 35 (575); 2. Chen Jing (Chn) 32 (578); 3. Feng Sixuan (Chn) 27 (583); 6. Niveditha Nair 14 (567); 8. Abhidnya Patil 5 (569); 10. Sneha Bharadwaj 567. **Team:** 1. China 1736 (WRJ); 2. Korea 1717; 3. India 1703.

pol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai.

The results: Mixed doubles: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Ashwini Ponnappa bt Nipitphon Phuangphua-pet & Savitree Amitrapai (Tha) 16-21, 21-19, 21-17; Dechapol Puavaranukroh & Sapsiree Taerattanachai (Tha) bt Pranaav Jerry Chopra & N. Sikki Reddy 21-10, 21-18.

21-19, 21-19 in the final qualifying round. In mixed doubles, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa beat Thailand's Nipitphon Phuangphua-pet and Savitree Amitrapai 16-21, 21-19, 21-17 and made the second round while Pranaav Jerry Chopra and N. Sikki Reddy lost 21-10, 21-18 to third seeds Decha-

now face either Sourabh or Frenchman Brice Leverdez, who will clash in the second round on Wednesday, to reach the quarterfinal.

Sourabh, seeded fourth in the qualifiers, first defeated Thailand's Tanongsak Saensomboonsuk 21-15, 21-19 before getting the better of Lucas Claerhout of France

draw of the Hong Kong Open after clinching straight-game wins in his two qualifying clashes here on Tuesday.

Srikanth was to play Momota in the first round on Wednesday but the Japanese World No.1 pulled out on Tuesday. The reasons for his withdrawal were not known. World No. 13 Srikanth will

Momota gives Srikanth a walkover; Sourabh enters main draw

HONG KONG OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HONG KONG

K. Srikanth advanced to the men's singles second round without playing a shot after his opponent Kento Momota pulled out while Sourabh Verma entered the main

By championing multilateralism, Beijing answers call of changing world

The world is undergoing challenges rarely seen in a century and multilateralism is increasingly under stress. To counter this volatile landscape, much of the international community has fortunately reaffirmed its support for a more open world economy.

ACTING ALONE

Over a decade after a global financial crash stemming from Wall Street sent panic across the world, global economic recovery remains fragile. It now faces a surge of unilateralism and protectionist measures that threaten global economic and security interests.

This instability further "creates incentives for some countries to try to break the rules," said Mauricio Santoro, a professor of international relations at the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"In the short term, some countries can gain a certain advantage, but in the medium or long term, we all lose," said Santoro.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the second China International Import Expo in Shanghai, China, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Roberto Azevedo, among other trade officials, called for the re-embracing of multilateralism.

"Global output growth is slowing down," the WTO official warned. "The optimal way forward is for countries to work together."



Dancers of China National Opera and Dance Drama Theater performs at a folk dance event during the BRICS cultural festival in Xiamen City, southeast China's Fujian Province, Sept. 18, 2017. (Xinhua/Lin Shanchuan)

Acknowledging that multilateralism today faces difficulties, former French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin told Xinhua that it is "absurd and more so dangerous" in period of tensions to desert and abandon cooperation and channels of dialogue.

"Nations today are so interdependent ... that cooperation is a daily obligation," he said.

Unilateralism is not confined to economics. Natural disasters -- partly caused by rising temperatures and sea levels -- terrorism, and the risk of nuclear proliferation are increasing at unprecedented levels.

Fiji has been consistently ranked high in climate change vulnerability, among other countries in the South Pacific region.

Speaking at a workshop on climate change this month, Fiji's Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Mahendra Reddy said it is evident that climate change is one of



Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a speech titled "Turn Our Vision into a Reality" at the Plenary Session of the 10th BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, July 26, 2018. (Xinhua/Li Xueren)

the greatest challenges humanity has ever faced.

"Our reliance on climatic sensitive sectors means it is vital that we enhance the climate resilience of Fiji's economy," he said.

Global solutions through multilateralism is needed to address climate

change due to its nature as a global problem, the minister said.

Although Washington has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal -- two landmark global accords to tackle climate change and nuclear proliferation -- the highly unpopular moves have stimulated more governments and international institutions to speak against acting alone.

"These challenges call for immediate and collective action and can be tackled only if we all put our shoulders to the wheel," wrote Ulrika Modeer, the United Nations Development Programme assistant secretary-general. "This is where multilateralism plays a critical role, now, more than ever."

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

In the face of rising unilateralism and trade protectionism, China has showcased its strong commitment to safeguarding multilateralism, upholding international governance

with the UN at its core, and supporting international law.

"Chinese diplomacy appears to me as inspired by a conviction deeply rooted in Chinese culture: co-operation is worth more than ten-

sion," said Raffarin, adding that the Belt and Road Initiative was born from such conviction.

According to Robert Lawrence Kuhn, chairman of the Kuhn Foundation, China's strong commitment to multilateralism is vital to the stability, security and healthy development of the entire world.

"I am struck by the breadth and scope of China's engagement with the world," said Kuhn, adding that the importance of the BRI "is hard to overstate."

"It is crucial for the developing world's economy, and thus it is vital for the peace and prosperity of the entire world," he said, explaining that the BRI expands links between Asia, Africa and Europe and thus reduces development imbalances while promoting economic growth.

China's expertise and experience in infrastructure construction is what the developing world needs to kick-start their economies, he added.

Recently, China has unveiled plans to implement a slew of new opening-up measures, including further lowering tariffs and transaction costs, and importing more high-quality goods and services from around the world.

At a time when some major powers are "looking inward" or advocating protectionism, China has become a cheerleader for international solidarity in tackling global



Photo was taken at the site of the expansion of the TCP terminal yard in Paranagua port, Brazil, on August 27, 2018. (Xinhua/Peng Ye)

global challenges, said Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Mukhisa Kituyi.

"It's a vote of confidence in multilateralism and international cooperation, and I think the world needs that significantly at this moment," Kituyi told Xinhua.

During their interviews with Xinhua, officials and experts acknowledged China's role as a responsible player in promoting world prosperity and security.

"There is no multilateralism to be possible if China doesn't play an active role in that process, not only in its construction but also in its reform," said Arancha Gonzalez, executive director of the International Trade Center.

"China is an essential factor in commercial multiculturalism, in countering climate change and in any dimension of multilateralism," Gonzalez said.



A staff member shows specialty food at the India pavilion during the second China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, east China, Nov. 5, 2019. (Xinhua/Chen Fei)