

Betrayed by a bank

The virtual collapse of Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank following grave financial irregularities has left thousands of depositors in distress. **Gautam S. Mengle** reports on the crisis and the ongoing fight for justice

It was late September when Andrew Lobo, 71, was brought home from a hospital in Mumbai after undergoing treatment for lung infection. Andrew had no reason to be relieved, however. He had come home to the devastating news that Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank, where he had an account, had been placed under ‘directions’ of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for six months, after irregularities had been found in lending. This meant that the RBI was practically taking over the bank’s operations. Crucially, it meant that customers like Andrew could withdraw only up to ₹1,000 of the total balance in any account they had in the bank.

The infection had already weakened Andrew’s lungs; he needed oxygen machines to breathe. While his family had managed to pay for his treatment, they had been relying on four fixed deposits in PMC Bank to buy the oxygen machines needed to pull him through. Each of the machines cost ₹49,000. With no access to the fixed deposits, Andrew could not recuperate. On October 31, he became the seventh account holder of PMC Bank to lose his life.

“He had no children of his own. All of us – the children and grandchildren of his siblings – were his family,” said Chris Lobo, Andrew’s nephew. “It was hard to see him suffer. He was a strong and independent person. Just as we were talking about withdrawing the fixed deposits he had in PMC Bank, we saw the news that restrictions had been placed on the bank’s transactions. We had no other money to pay for the oxygen machines, because not just Andrew uncle, but even my father and all of our close friends had accounts in PMC,” he said.

The family said stress had caused Andrew’s health to deteriorate further. He couldn’t believe that he had no access to his own money. He refused to eat. Andrew’s family could only watch helplessly as he began wasting away in front of their eyes. “On October 31, all of a sudden, he started breathing heavily. Within five minutes he was gone. He had suffered a cardiac arrest,” Chris said.

Andrew was among the hundreds of depositors with PMC Bank who suddenly found themselves financially crippled, for no fault of theirs. Ironically, the same bank that customers had trusted to safeguard their money had become responsible for their misery.

Questionable dealings

PMC Bank is a multi-State scheduled urban cooperative bank with operations in Maharashtra, Delhi, Karnataka, Goa, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh. Started in 1984 as a single branch bank, it now has 137 branches. It is alleged that PMC Bank had been hiding bad loans for a long time. Addressing a press conference soon after the RBI barred the bank from carrying out its routine transactions, the suspended Managing Director of PMC Bank, Joy Thomas, admitted that ₹2,500 crore of exposure to the Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL) group had been left unnoticed in the annual audit of RBI. Thomas was arrested days after the press conference.

But how did the fraud come to the surface? The RBI said a complaint had been filed by PMC Bank against its officials and borrowers associated with the financial irregularities in the bank and manipulation of its books of accounts. Based on this, the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Mumbai Police registered an FIR against officials of the bank as well as the HDIL group. Shortly thereafter, the Enforcement Directorate, too, registered a separate offence under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

The directions imposed by the RBI in September, under sub-section (1) of Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act of 1949, also barred the bank from extending any new loans or making any investments, except in government securities. The bank was allowed to pay salaries to the staff and also rent, as well as renew term deposits of customers on maturity.

The restrictions triggered a huge public outcry as customers were unable to withdraw their savings. This prompted the RBI to gradually increase the withdrawal limits. On September 26, the deposit withdrawal limit was increased to ₹10,000, and on October 3, to ₹25,000. On October 14, the limit was raised to ₹40,000, and on November 5, further to ₹50,000. With withdrawal limits raised to ₹50,000, 78% of the depositors of the bank can now withdraw their entire account balance.

The move by RBI came as a surprise at first because PMC Bank’s financials were not in a bad shape. The bank has made a net profit of ₹99.69 crore in 2018-19 as compared to ₹100.90 crore in the previous year. The net non-performing asset ratio of the bank was 2.19% as of end-March 2019, which is much lower than many public sector banks. The deposit base of the bank was ₹11,617 crore



A protest outside a court in Mumbai on October 16 over the Reserve Bank of India’s withdrawal limit for depositors of PMC Bank. (Below) Protesters outside the RBI building in the Bandra Kurla Complex in Mumbai



as of end-March 2019, a growth of 17% a year, while advances growth was 13% to ₹8,383 crore. The police, too, has confirmed that the bank’s finances were not in troubled waters.

“Inquiries have revealed that there was a systematic effort to hide the loans advanced to HDIL in the bank’s annual audit. Crucial information about the borrowings of HDIL was kept suppressed, and falsified records were furnished to the RBI, with the Chairman, MD, and members of the loan committee all being involved. More people opened accounts with the bank as a rosy picture was projected. According to our investigations, HDIL’s accounts should have been declared as non-performing assets in 2013 itself,” an EOW officer, who is part of the investigation, said.

According to the EOW’s estimate based on the documents examined so far, the outstanding debt of HDIL stands at ₹4,635.62 crore as of August 2019.

Seizing assets

The EOW found 21,049 accounts that were in the name of fictitious parties, which had been used to replace the 44 actual accounts of the HDIL group in the bank’s records. The amount advanced to the HDIL group was spread out evenly in the fictitious accounts. This was why the outstanding balance on paper was significantly lower than the actual balance.

As with any economic offence where a large number of people have lost – or stand to lose – their money, one of the top priorities of the police was to try and ensure that the depositors were compensated.

From September 30, when the FIR was filed, to date, the EOW and the Enforcement Directorate have collectively attached assets belonging to Rakesh Kumar Wadhawan and his son Sarang Wadhawan, promoters of the HDIL group, worth ₹3,800 crore. The EOW has also filed an application in the court, seeking permission to release the assets, so that they can be auctioned off and the depositors compensated. The assets include large tracts of land in Thane district, high-end cars, speed boats, and a private aircraft. The auction is supposed to begin within 14 days of the assets being released, with the RBI overseeing the process of using the

proceeds of the auction to reimburse the depositors.

The RBI has appointed an administrator along with the three-member advisory committee for speedier resolution. It was on the administrator’s recommendation that the plea seeking discharge of the assets was filed. The Wadhawans, through their lawyer, have already conveyed to the Enforcement Directorate, the EOW and the RBI that they have no objections to their assets being sold off to compensate the customers. “We urge the Enforcement Directorate and the EOW to take timely action by disposing of the assets to get the fair market value for the same. We further give our unconditional consent for the appropriation of the money received from the sale of these assets to be adjusted and appropriated towards the principal loan amount procured by us,” a letter signed by them on October 16, 2019, stated.

The customers, however, are not convinced. “What is the guarantee that someone will even buy the tainted assets?” Kishore Modsingh, a customer who banked with the PMC’s Santacruz branch, said. Modsingh is a cancer survivor who has been unemployed for the last two years due to his illness and was completely dependant on the money he had saved. His wife is a home-maker and his daughter, a student.

“All I had was the money I had deposited in PMC Bank. All my treatment was being funded by it, and my household expenses taken care of. Then, suddenly, the RBI placed restrictions on it and I am left with nothing. Every day is a struggle. Those responsible for our condition are getting home-cooked food with the court’s permission while in jail, and we are fighting for two square meals,” Modsingh said.

Eleven account holders with various branches of the bank have lost their lives due to various medical problems since the crisis broke. Apart from paci-

fying the depositors, whose anger mounted with every life lost, the police also had its hands full trying to dispel the rumours surrounding the issue.

One such instance was on October 11, when Nivedita Bijlani, who had over ₹1 crore in the bank, committed suicide in her Andheri residence. Thanks to WhatsApp, the news of her death went viral within an hour. The police found themselves besieged with phone calls, and senior police officers quickly passed down orders instructing the Versova police to get to the bottom of the matter. By evening, the police found that while she was indeed a PMC bank account holder, there was no evidence of her death being linked to the ongoing crisis.

“The deceased had been suffering from depression and was under treatment for the same. She had had two failed marriages and had recently moved back from the U.S. to stay with her father in Andheri after her second marriage,” Additional Commissioner of Police (West region) Manoj Kumar Sharma said.

Meanwhile, the EOW arrested Sarang and Rakesh Wadhawan; former chairman of PMC Bank, Waryam Singh; former PMC Bank Managing Director, Joy Thomas; and Director Surjit Singh Arora in connection with the case. All of them are in judicial custody and are lodged in the Arthur Road central jail.

With the process of compensating the depositors under way and some of the key accused under arrest, the next task for the EOW was to pinpoint culpability on the part of all the parties involved, including the auditors who conducted the audits.

Auditors face the music

The EOW identified two auditors, Jayesh Sanghani of Ashok Jayesh and Associates, and Ketan Lakdawala of Lakdawala and Co. Both were brought in for questioning on November 11 and grilled for hours. They were confronted with

the financial records of the bank. The results of the sustained questioning yielded evidence of not only wilful negligence but also signs of a larger conspiracy.

The EOW first asked both of them to explain how the gross irregularities in HDIL’s loans alone had managed to slip through their scrutiny year after year. When they could not provide satisfactory explanations, they were placed under arrest.

“We also found that the two auditors had been appointed by Thomas and Singh on specific instructions from the Wadhawans. This is not only a contravention of the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, but also indicates that the whole fraud was planned well in advance by the Wadhawans and the PMC Bank officials. Both of them have been functioning as auditors of the bank for more than two decades,” the EOW officer said.

The EOW’s application seeking custody of Sanghani and Lakdawala also mentions that the agency has received information about both the auditors having had other business dealings with the Wadhawans in the past. The EOW is now trying to find evidence, either in the form of documents or testimony, to establish this beyond doubt. Both the auditors are also facing a separate inquiry by the Institute of Chartered Accountants. A third auditor, Anita Kirdat, was arrested on November 13. She was a concurrent auditor and used to conduct monthly audits.

Meanwhile, the other directors have all gone underground. An EOW team is at present in Punjab, working on a tip-off that two of the directors, Daljit Singh Bal and Gurnam Singh Hothi, might be hiding there. Bal, like Arora, was a director of the bank and on the loans committee till the time its affairs were taken over by the RBI.

Two other directors, Parmeet Sodhi and Surjit Singh Narang, filed anticipatory bail applications, which were rejected by the Sessions Court on November 11.

Protests across the city

The PMC Bank crisis has sparked off protests across Mumbai. On November 6, a group of protesters stood outside the RBI building in the Bandra Kurla Complex for hours till an official came out to talk to them.

“All that we were told was that everything is being done to ensure justice. But no one is telling us exactly how that justice is going to come. The Finance Minister has already passed the buck, saying that the matter comes under the RBI’s purview, while the RBI won’t even entertain us,” Modsingh said.

The depositors have also been staging protests outside the court every time an accused is produced for remand or other purposes. Around 150 deposi-

tors have now hired their own lawyers to oppose any applications for bail that the accused file.

“The crisis is a case of gross negligence not just by the bank but by the RBI. Those concerned should also be booked and arrested. The Indian banking system will not improve unless such strict steps are taken, and account holders will continue to suffer. What happened amounts to criminal negligence,” advocate Nitin Satpute, who is representing the depositors, said. Satpute filed independent applications on November 6 opposing the anticipatory bail pleas submitted by Sodhi and Narang.

Earlier, on September 30, another group of depositors, filed petitions before the Bombay High Court seeking withdrawal of the restrictions on the bank’s transactions. The court has sought a formal reply from the RBI regarding the steps taken so far to protect the interests of the depositors.

“You are the banker’s bank. We are not inclined to interfere or dilute your authority. We just want to know what you are doing,” Justice S. Dharmadhikari, who was hearing the petition along with Justice Riyaz Chagla, told the RBI’s lawyer at a hearing on November 4.

The grievance against the RBI has also been voiced repeatedly by depositors in several meetings that Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Barve had with them at the Mumbai Police headquarters in Crawford Market. The meetings were held to apprise the depositors of the progress in the case and more than one of them lamented that there has been no coherent response from the RBI so far.

Barve, who also has a banking background, confirmed that the whole crisis arose from a criminal breach of trust on part of the bank, an institution that is supposed to safeguard the interests of the depositors but did exactly the opposite.

Not all the depositors, however, have much faith in protests.

“I attended a protest a month ago but only saw political leaders taking the opportunity to further their own agendas. I have seen enough protests happening over the issue to know that they are bringing no results. The system will take its own time and maybe, someday, we can have full access to our own money again,” Chris Lobo said.

Chris and his friends, who had accounts in the PMC, have now taken it upon themselves to keep the issue alive and ensure that no development goes unnoticed. All the account holders in Thane and nearby towns are now connected via WhatsApp groups where all updates are regularly shared. With the establishment showing scant regard for their problems, all they can do is to stand with each other.

With inputs from Manojit Saha

FROM PAGE ONE

ArcelorMittal's takeover of Essar cleared by SC

Operational creditors, on the other hand, were beneficiaries of amounts lent by financial creditors.

"If an 'equality-for-all' approach, recognising the rights of different classes of creditors as part of an insolvency resolution process is adopted, secured financial creditors will, in many cases, be incentivised to vote for liquidation rather than resolution... This would defeat the entire objective of the IBC," Justice Nariman observed.

The NCLAT tried to substi-

tute its wisdom for the commercial wisdom of the CoC, he said. "Corporate resolution is ultimately in the hands of the majority vote of the CoC," the court clarified.

It increased the mandated 330-day time limit for the corporate resolution process.

Tribunals have no "residual equity jurisdiction" to interfere in the merits of a business decision taken by the requisite majority of the CoC in conformity with the law, it held.

Govt. will be formed, no mid-term polls: Pawar

President's Rule was imposed in Maharashtra on Tuesday after Governor Bha-

gat Singh Koshyari recommended it to the Union Cabinet. None of the four major parties in the State have secured a majority of 145 in the 288-member Assembly.

The BJP emerged as the single largest party with 105 seats while the Sena, the NCP and the Congress won 56, 54 and 44 seats respectively. After the BJP's refusal to share the CM post for 2.5 years with its oldest ally the Sena, the latter resigned from the Union government and has sought support from the other two parties to form the government.

Mr. Pawar is likely to meet Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Sunday in Delhi. In a joint press conference, senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel and Mr. Pawar had clarified that they will first reach a consensus between themselves and only then will announce the decision on alliance with the Sena.

Earlier, Mr. Pawar had said that talks on power sharing are yet to take place and he is not in a position to confirm who will get the Chief Minister's post. However in Mumbai, Mumbai NCP president and chief

spokesperson Nawab Malik repeated that the Sena will have the CM post for five years.

Asked whether the Congress and NCP can get along with the Sena which promotes Hindutva ideology, Mr. Pawar said, "We are not against Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism. But we are the people who insist on secularism when it comes to running a government. I don't know what discussions took place on this issue in the meeting of the three parties as I was not there."

Some precedents

Sena Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut said, "There have been instances earlier where parties of different ideologies have come together. Vajpayee ji (BJP leader and ex-PM late Atal Bihari Vajpayee) headed an alliance of parties who came together on a common minimum programme. In Maharashtra, Sharad Pawar had led a Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) government (1978-80) of which the Jan Sangh, the BJP's earlier avatar, was a part."

Mr. Raut said Maharashtra's next government will be led by his party and the CMP will in the State's interest.

MHA officials quizzed on J&K situation

As many as 23 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) were taken on a two-day visit to Srinagar to assess the ground situation last month.

The officials gave a detailed presentation on the current situation in J&K and also presented photographs of busy roads and traffic movement.

"We told them you are showing us pictures of places where vehicles are plying; why don't you show us pictures of places that are dark and shut," said another MP, also at the meeting.

The MPs also raised the Internet blockade in the Valley. The officials replied that restrictions were imposed as the Internet could be used by terrorists and also to spread rumours.

Meanwhile the Congress party asked whether sitting Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar Farooq Abdullah would be allowed to attend the winter session of Parliament from Monday. "Kashmir has been in a lockdown situation for the last 103 days. The Prime Minister is going around the world saying *sab chhanga si* (all is well)," party spokes-

person Pawan Khera said.

"Is it not that Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti take their oaths under the Constitution of India? Omar Abdullah has held several positions in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Cabinet. You [the BJP] have been in a government with Mehbooba Mufti, and today you have put them in the same category as separatists," Mr. Khera said. "When Farooq Abdullah sings Ram Bhajan or says Bharat Mata ki Jai, he does not think what the response of separatist forces will be," he added. The party also questioned the government for allowing a delegation of European Union (EU) lawmakers to visit Srinagar but not Indian MPs.

The Congress is expected to raise the issue of the EU delegation's visit and the detention of the Kashmiri leaders during the winter session of Parliament.

"How come foreign countries can gather courage to ask questions on our internal issues," Mr. Khera asked and added, "We would like to make it clear... Kashmir was, is and will always be an integral part of India."

IIT-M student's father demands a fair probe

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Abdul Latheef, father of Fathima Latheef, the first-year student who was found dead last Saturday on the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) campus, raised suspicions over her death and demanded a probe to bring out the truth.

Mr. Latheef, accompanied by a few others, met Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami at his residence and appealed to him for a fair probe into his daughter's death. The Chief Minister reportedly assured him that a probe would be conducted and the guilty brought to book.

INTERVIEW | HEMANT SOREN

Ours is a formidable alliance, says JMM chief

He says local issues such as the Jharkhand government's bid to amend Acts on land acquisition are set to dominate the polls

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha chief Hemant Soren talks about the coming polls in Jharkhand, his alliance with the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal and why he thinks local issues will dominate.

You have managed to sew up an alliance, and a seat sharing agreement with the Congress and the RJD. Is there any rethink with regard to Babulal Marandi's Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM)?

We have managed to get together a formidable alliance and a peaceful seat sharing arrangement with all parties fully on board. I explained all our issues to Tejaswi Yadav of the RJD who understood the logic behind the arrangement. As for the JVM, that

chapter is closed. They are not part of our alliance.

What are the campaign issues that you will flag during the polls?

There are many local issues that are important including this government's attempts to amend the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908 and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act, 1876 which pertain to land acquisition. These Acts protect people's rights over land and the Raghubar Das government had been trying

to encroach on those rights. Other than that attempts at diluting the Forest Rights Act and rampant unemployment are issues that we will highlight during the campaign.

The BJP campaigned heavily on issues like the National Register of Citizens and abrogation of Article 370 in the Assembly polls in Maharashtra and Haryana with mixed results. How do you view that strategy and how will you combat it?

The results in Maharashtra and Haryana have made it very clear that national issues find resonance during Lok Sabha polls. Those polls are done, and the people have elected who they want in New Delhi. These are elec-



Attempts at diluting the Forest Rights Act and rampant unemployment are issues that we will highlight

tions for Jharkhand, just as we can't talk of the Tenancy Acts in Jammu and Kashmir and hope to find resonance, the abrogation of Article 370 cannot be an issue in Jharkhand in the local polls.



Govt. has to hide its own reports: Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress leaders on Friday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over a report that claimed that consumer expenditure by households has fallen for the first time in 40 years, prompting the government to withhold the report of its own agency.

"Modinomics stinks so bad, the Govt has to hide its own reports," former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi tweeted, tagging the news report.

In a series of tweets, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accused the government of pushing people into poverty.

"This govt is making history by driving people into poverty: while rural India faces the dire consequences of their policies, the BJP ensures that their corporate friends become richer by the day. Usually governments work towards eradicating poverty, not towards eliminating data," tweeted Ms. Vadra.

"For the first time in 40 years, consumer spending in rural areas has decreased by 8.8%. Grain consumption down by 20.4%, pulse consumption down by 15.4%, edible oil consumption lower by 14.6% and the financial situation of the common man is bad. So, is this the dream of BJP's New India?" asked Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala in a separate tweet.

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The beginning of Kashmir's harsh winter has forced authorities to shift around 35 political detainees, including former Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti, to "warmer locations" in Srinagar.

Senior officials told *The Hindu* that Ms. Mufti will be shifted to government accommodation, house number 6, located at Transport Lane on the Maulana Azad Road in Srinagar from the hut-turned sub-jail at Chashma Shahi.

The hut was located on the slope of Zabarwan hills and the place would get colder than the lower areas in winter. "The Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, had received a formal request from Ms. Mufti and her family about the discomfort being faced by her due to power cuts and growing cold waves in the wake of the recent snowfall," the officials said.

Ms. Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti too had approached the administration formally and cited a medical report to "have her unwell mother shifted to a location with better heating facility."

Heavy snowfall on November 7 has set off a cold wave in Kashmir and even struck a major blow to electricity supply, affecting the detention centres too.

Sources said the sub-jail of Hari Niwas Palace, also located at the foothills of Zabarwan, where former Chief Minister and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah is detained, also faced major power cuts between November 7 and 10. Sources said a visibly angry Mr. Abdullah offered to pay for the fuel to run the generator sets to the security per-



Every bit helps: As winter intensifies, people collect firewood in foggy conditions on the outskirts of Srinagar on Friday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Panel to divide assets of J&K, Ladakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Centre has constituted a three-member committee for division of assets and liabilities of Jammu and Kashmir between two successor Union Territories, which came into existence on October 31.

This was conveyed to members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on

Home Affairs by senior officials, led by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla.

An advisory committee has been constituted under Section 84 of the J-K Reorganisation Act for apportionment of assets, rights and liabilities between UT of J-K and Ladakh, the officials told the House committee headed by Congress leader Anand Sharma.

sonnel guarding the sub-jail, "which was turned down."

The authorities are also considering to shift 34 political detainees, including former minister and PDP leader Naeem Akhtar, People's Conference chief and former minister Sajjad Lone, J&K Peoples Movement chief and IAS topper Shah Faesal and Srinagar Municipal Corporation deputy major Sheikh Imran. They are held at the Centaur Hotel located on the premises of the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), housed on the banks of the Dal Lake.

"We have decided to shift them to a multi-storey building of MLAs Hostel on M.A. Road," said an official. The Centaur Hotel which may have a better heating system, has billed the government over ₹2.6 crore as rent to keep the prisoners since August 5.

The MLAs Hostel, at the peak of the militancy, was made a secure zone to house mainstream political lead-

ers, most of whom faced threats from the militants.

'Detention for peace' Meanwhile, Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Friday told officers that if they believed that the detention of three Kashmiri leaders had helped in maintaining peace in the Kashmir Valley, then the trio should "remain inside."

He was addressing officers here after inaugurating a two-day regional conference on governance.

The State will see polls in 5 phases. What is your view?

Very immediately, it gives lie to the Raghubar Das and Central government's claims that they have managed to get a grip on law and order and Left Wing Extremism. If the Election Commission is unable to complete the polls in Jharkhand in one phase, it shows that claim up.

Secondly, there are some districts in Maharashtra too which are Left Wing Extremism affected, so how come they had a single phase poll there that too alongside Haryana.

Finally, it also proves that the BJP's own reading of their political situation going into the polls is not very positive, hence the feedback of

stressed LWE districts to concentrate security personnel. The stretching out of the polls in this manner indicates a desire to tire out the process, and we all know that resource wise the BJP is better off than all others, a multiple phase poll also has financial implications apart from fatigue.

Has the issue of chief ministerial candidate been settled within your alliance, in case you win?

I wouldn't like to comment on it myself, but Congress' Jharkhand in-charge R.P.N. Singh had already announced that the leadership issue was clear and that the JMM would be leading the alliance.

CBI searches Amnesty premises

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

The CBI on Friday searched the premises of the Amnesty International India Private Limited (AIPL) and Indians for Amnesty International Trust (IAIT) in Bengaluru and Delhi, in connection with alleged violation of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

"The searches at three locations in Bengaluru and one in Delhi were carried out on the basis of an FIR registered on November 5, following a complaint from the Union Home Ministry alleging FCRA violation involving Rs.36 crore," said a CBI official.

Among those named are the AIPL, the IAIT, the Amnesty International India Foundation Trust (AIIFT), and the Amnesty International South Asia Foundation. As alleged, the entities violated FCRA rules and the Indian Penal Code in receiving funds from Amnesty International-UK through AIPL, even though the prior registration or permissions were denied to AIIFT and other Trusts.

Amnesty responds

In a statement, the Amnesty International India said: "Over the past year, a pattern of harassment has emerged every time Amnesty India stands up and speaks out against human rights violations in India."

Amnesty India said it stood in full compliance with the Indian and international laws.

"Our work in India, as elsewhere, is to uphold and fight for universal human rights. These are the same values that are enshrined in the Indian Constitution and flow from a long and rich Indian tradition of pluralism, tolerance, and dissent," it said.

Delhi HC dismisses Chidambaram's bail plea

Judge cites charges in INX Media case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday dismissed the regular bail plea of former Union Minister P. Chidambaram in connection with the INX Media money laundering case.

A Bench of Justice Suresh Kumar Kait was of the opinion that the *prima facie* allegations against Mr. Chidambaram are serious in nature and that he played a "key and active role" in the case. While declining the bail plea of the senior Congress leader, who has been in jail since his arrest by the CBI on August 21 from his residence in Delhi in the INX Media corruption case, the judge said granting relief to such offenders would send a wrong message.



P. Chidambaram

Mr. Chidambaram, 74, had moved the High Court seeking regular bail in the money laundering case, after he was granted bail by the Supreme Court in the INX Media corruption case.

Mr. Chidambaram's plea said he had deep roots in society and it was "preposterous to even allege that the petitioner can evade the further process of law".



Making a point: Prashant Bhushan, left, and Arun Shourie at a press conference on Friday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

prior permission from the competent authority under Section 17-A of the Prevention of Corruption Act and registering an FIR on their pending complaint.

Quoting the separate opinion of Justice K.M. Joseph, one of the three judges of the Bench, Mr. Bhushan said the judgment did not stand in the way of the CBI in taking

action as per law. He said the CBI was bound by a Constitution Bench's decision in the Lalita Kumari case that registration of FIR was mandatory if the information disclosed commission of a cognisable offence.

Stating that he would ask from the CBI about the status of the complaint, Mr. Bhushan said: "We had in fact, in

our complaint of October 4, 2018, asked the CBI to seek necessary approval... It has been more than a year since the complaint was submitted to the then Director of CBI, Alok Verma."

"Accordingly, we expect Rishi Kumar Shukla, his successor, to seek the necessary approval...to begin the necessary inquiry into the complaint in earnest, in conformity with the judgment," he said. Mr. Bhushan and Mr. Shourie said the court had misconstrued their plea, which was to assess if a *prima facie* case was made out for investigation.

"The same mistake had been made by the original judgment dated December 14, 2018, in the writ petition which became the ground for seeking review," said a statement released by them.

IN BRIEF



Go after urban Naxals, Amit Shah tells CRPF

NEW DELHI Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday visited the CRPF headquarters and told the brass that “action needs to be taken against urban Naxals and their facilitators”. He was given a detailed presentation by Director General R.R. Bhatnagar on various aspects of the force.

Choubey loses cool, pushes social activists

PATNA Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwani Kumar Choubey lost his cool on Friday and allegedly pushed social activists, some of them differently-abled, who were protesting against the lack of health facilities in the district hospital of Buxar. Mr. Choubey is a second-time BJP MP from the district.

Rajnath lauds Indian and Chinese armies

NEW DELHI The armies of India and China have been “sensible enough” to reduce tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) despite differences over the boundary issue, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday. He is on a two-day visit to Arunachal Pradesh.

Centre drops plan to bring in changes to Forest Act of 1927

The draft had mooted giving a wide range of powers to forest officers

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The Union Environment Ministry on Friday withdrew a draft amendment that proposed updates to the Indian Forest Act, 1927. Activist groups and some State governments had protested against this proposed law after it was mooted in March. Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar told a press conference that the draft was withdrawn. “Let me clarify that this wasn’t a government draft as such. We had just consolidated views from various States with a significant forest cover. Over a few months, we’ve learnt that this has led to wrong interpretations. So we are withdrawing the zero draft.”

Munda hails decision Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda, who was present at the press conference, “welcomed” the withdrawal. Mr. Munda is a former Chief Minister of Jharkhand, which has a significant tribal population and which will go to the polls next month. The Indian Forest Act, 2019, was envisaged as an

Green concern

Some of the contentious suggestions in the ‘zero draft’ of the proposed Indian Forest Act, 2019

- Forest officers can issue search warrants, enter and investigate land within their jurisdictions
- Forest officers will get indemnity for using arms to prevent forest-related offences
- Forest officials will get powers to remove tribals from areas earmarked for conservation
- It will allow government to open any patch of forest it deems fit for commercial plantations

Let me clarify that this wasn't a government draft, as such. We had just consolidated views from various States with significant forest cover. Over a few months, we've learnt that this has led to wrong interpretations. So we are withdrawing the zero draft

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR, ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

amendment to the Indian Forest Act, 1927, and an attempt to address contemporary challenges to the country’s forests. The draft law had been sent to key forest officers in the States for comments and objections. It drew flak from activists as well as tribal welfare organisations. Last month, the Mizoram government rejected the

draft. “The proposal to amend the Indian Forest Act was rejected after a consultative meeting of all stakeholders, including representatives of political parties, civil society organisations and officials,” Mizoram’s Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change T.J. Lalnuntluanga had said. “Forest-officer not below the rank of a Ranger shall have power to hold an inqui-

ry into forest offences...and shall have the powers to search or issue a search warrant under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973....,” said a copy of the document. *The Hindu* had reported on this draft in March. Siddhantha Das, Director General, Forestry, told *The Hindu* that an amendment to the Forest Act was due. “We will revise it and look at it with fresh eyes. But we will definitely have an amended Act and have wider discussions.” The legislation also proposed a forest development cess of up to 10% of the assessed value of mining products removed from forests, and water used for irrigation or in industries. This amount would be deposited in a special fund and used “exclusively for reforestation; forest protection; and other ancillary purposes connected with tree planting, forest development and conservation,” the draft document noted. “We welcome this withdrawal,” said a statement by Campaign for Survival and Dignity, an activist collective.

Women free extremist leader in Manipur

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A group of some 500 women in Manipur have managed to “rescue” a top extremist leader from a paramilitary force that had caught him for illegal possession of arms and ammunition. The incident happened in Ukhrul district on Thursday night soon after Assam Rifles personnel caught “Brigadier” Thotmathing of the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM) and two others, including the driver of the SUV he was travelling in. As the news of the detention in Hoomi village spread, at least 500 women blocked the road that the convoy of eight Assam Rifles vehicles were travelling on. They pulled the trio out and “set them free.” The Tangkhul Shinao Long (TSL), a tribal women’s organisation, justified the action of its members.

CJI rues ‘indifference to decorum’

‘Hooliganism is the order of the day in some pockets of court system’

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Friday addressed, through video-conference, judges across the country about the “increasing indifference to the decorum and discipline” within and outside courts. Chief Justice Gogoi retires on November 17. He will leave behind the legacy of the judgments in the Ayodhya, Rafale and Sabarimala cases. He delivered the lead opinion for the Constitution Bench which allows the construction of a temple in the Ayodhya land and referred the question of the role courts should take in religious cases in the Sabarimala review. The court under him dismissed a review in the government’s purchase of Rafale jets. On Friday, his last working day, he spent a few minutes in court, admitting all 10 cases listed before his Bench.



Change of guard: The outgoing Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi with CJI-designate Sharad Arvind Bobde, left, in New Delhi on Friday. •PTI

In his speech, the Chief Justice said the “indifference” is seen among those who are stakeholders in the justice delivery infrastructure but are apathetic to its health and progress. “The indifference of such stakeholders to the dignity of our institution has reached new lows in the recent past, as rank hooligan-

ism and intimidatory behaviour has become the order of the day in some pockets of our court system...,” he stated. He said that as judges it was not their business to suffer such belligerency from a handful who masquerade as stakeholders and browbeat the seekers of truth and justice.

Prasar Bharati working to get fresh content under new policy

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

As part of the first step towards overhauling the dated content on many Doordarshan channels, the Prasar Bharati Board on Friday approved a new content acquisition policy. The move will allow the public broadcaster to acquire the rights of series such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* that it telecast in the past but of which the government has no ownership. “The current policy was outdated and restrictive. With the new policy, we have tried to break the bureaucratic red tape to make the process simpler, and it offers us many more options to purchase new content,” Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati told *The Hindu*. Under the old policy, the maximum price that the broadcaster could offer to acquire an episode was ₹50,000. Now it has been increased to ₹1 lakh-₹5 lakh. And if the cost of a particular programme is higher or the rules need to be relaxed to acquire a piece of exclusive programming then, as per the new policy, an empowered committee can decide on the viability. “For the last two years, we have just been recycling the old content. On any given day, none of the channels offers more than one or two hours of fresh content,” a senior official said.

U.S. trade negotiators to visit Delhi for more talks

Move comes after Goyal’s visit for limited trade package

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON, DC

Trade negotiators from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) are expected to visit New Delhi next week, or at the latest, the week after next, to continue discussions with Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and his team, at least three independent sources, from the Indian and U.S. sides, told *The Hindu*. This follows Mr. Goyal’s visit to Washington, DC, on Wednesday for discussions with USTR Robert Lighthizer and his team to progress a limited trade package between the two countries.

The visit by Mr. Lighthizer’s deputies to New Delhi was discussed on a telephone call between Mr. Goyal and Mr. Lighthizer on Thursday, when Mr. Goyal was back in New York City for industry interactions.

Key differences

On Wednesday, Mr. Goyal was accompanied to the trade talks by officials from the Agriculture and Health Ministries as well as members of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Price caps or ‘trade margin rationalisation’ for knee implants and cardiac stents have been one of the key differences between the two sides. Also under discussion for months has been the Generalised System of Preferences – a preferential market access programme the U.S. offers developing country partners.

‘Unfair treatment’

India’s GSP benefits were revoked in June on the grounds that India had not assured the U.S. that it would provide “equitable and reasonable” access to its markets, as per U.S. President Donald Trump’s proclamation on the issue. Mr. Trump believes the world trading system, and more broadly, the multilateral system, treats America unfairly. India has wanted its GSP benefits restored but it is unclear whether any limited



U.S. President Donald Trump with Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, left. India’s trade benefits were revoked in June.

trade agreement reached between the sides will result in a full or partial restoration of GSP benefits to India. The extent of GSP restoration has been one of the discussion points between the two sides. India also has wanted a roll-back of tariffs on steel and aluminium imports into the U.S. that Mr. Trump had imposed in 2018 across countries, ostensibly on national security grounds.

Greater access

Both India and the U.S. have wanted greater access for agricultural commodities in each other’s markets. The U.S. has wanted lower Indian tariffs on apples, almonds, and walnuts, *Business Line* had reported earlier this week. The U.S. has also wanted tariff concessions on Harley Davidson motorbikes (of symbolic value to Mr. Trump), dairy products and Information Communication and Technology products. India has been reluctant to move on ICT products, concerned that it would open Indian markets up to a flood of Chinese goods.

Wednesday’s discussion between Mr. Goyal and Mr. Lighthizer (*The Hindu* has not confirmed who else participated at the meeting) began at 10.30 a.m. and was

meant to go on till noon but continued till at least past 2 p.m., *The Hindu* learned from a reliable source.

Progress made

Sources close to both sides expressed optimism that progress had been made and a limited trade package was being finalised. This optimism, that a limited deal can be reached, appears to be higher than it was at the end of September when Mr. Goyal and Mr. Lighthizer met in New York City hoping to stitch together a limited deal prior to the September 24 bilateral between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mr. Trump. *The Hindu* had then reported that a deal was out of reach at the time.

‘Symbolic win’

“I am increasingly optimistic that a deal can be struck. It won’t be very big value wise, but after roughly 18 months of negotiating and almost six months since GSP was suspended, it would be a symbolic win for both sides,” former USTR official Mark Linscott, who is currently a fellow at The Atlantic Council, told *The Hindu*. “Hopefully no intervening developments derail an agreement before it can be concluded or is fully implemented,” Mr. Linscott said.

Sri Lanka will decide its President today

Gotabaya, Premadasa to square off in an election fought on national security and economic concerns

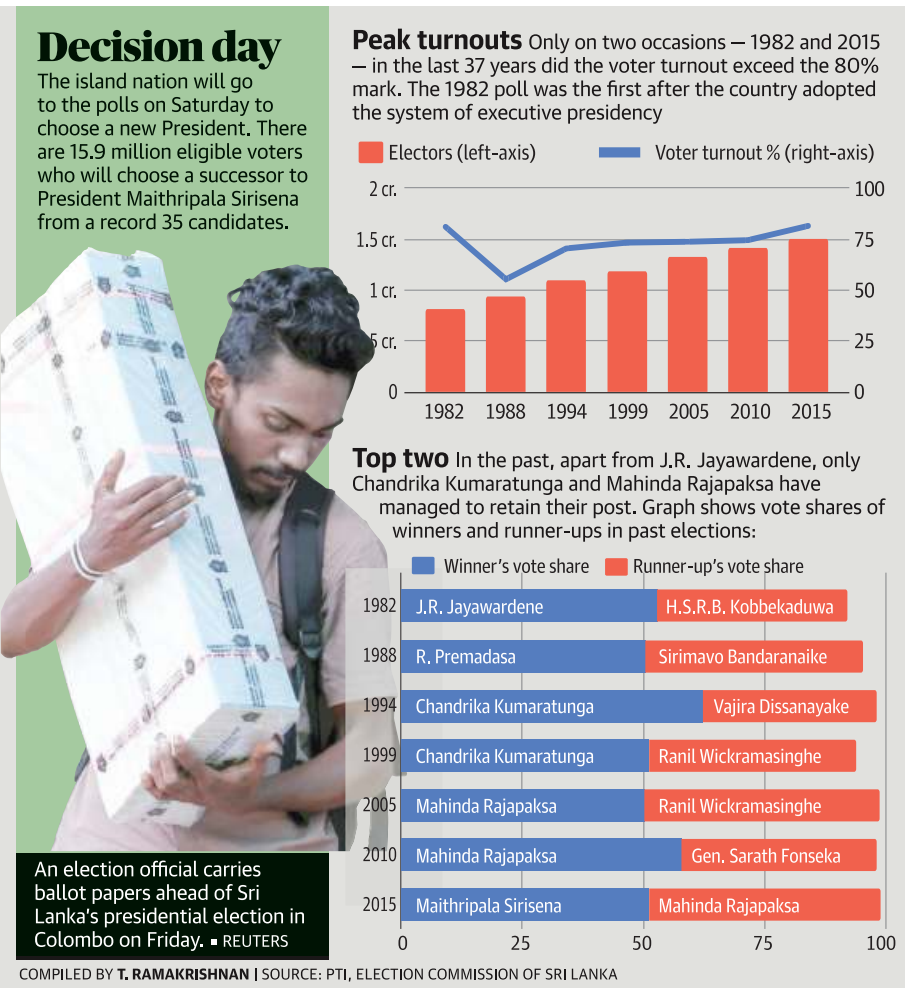
MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Nearly 16 million voters will have a say in Sri Lanka's biggest election on Saturday, that is being closely fought by presidential hopefuls Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Sajith Premadasa, though a total of 35 candidates are in the race.

National security and economic concerns dominate this presidential poll, coming seven months after the deadly Easter Day suicide bombings that killed over 250 people. Apart from gripping the country in fear – after a decade's relative peace since the civil war ended – the terror attacks delivered a huge blow to Sri Lanka's tourism sector and economy that heavily relies on it.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa, candidate of the opposition Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Party), was a powerful war-time defence secretary, who has now made an entry into politics. The younger brother of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Mr. Gotabaya, 70, is pitching himself as a “strong leader”, promising a safe country in the wake of prevalent anxiety over national security since the terror attacks. He has promised technocratic fixes to the economy that, he has said, will be knowledge-based under his possible leadership.

On the other hand, Sajith Premadasa, 52, of the ruling United National Party (UNP) was named candidate after an insurgent campaign within. Drawing huge support from grassroot organisers, he has since been trying to



rejuvenate the party's diminishing rural vote base, much like his late father President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who was known for his rural connect. His campaign has been broadly on a plank of welfare, including shelter for all and universal education and health.

High stakes
For many Sri Lankans, this presidential poll is one of

high stakes and difficult choices. Many among the island's Sinhala-Buddhist majority associate the Rajapaksa clan with “ending the war [against LTTE] and restoring peace”. They underscore the Mahinda Rajapaksa administration's contribution to upgrading basic infrastructure across the country. Mr. Gotabaya draws huge support from this base, while other

voters are averse to the “family rule” – four brothers and at least two of their sons are at the forefront – and “large-scale corruption” associated with their past administration. Further, critics and dissidents are wary of a reversal to the Rajapaksa era that brings back memories of an authoritarian tilt and state repression, more severely felt in the war-hit north and

east inhabited by Tamils. Mr. Gotabaya also faces accusations of rights abuse – he has denied them – and has been linked to hard-line groups notorious for inciting anti-Muslim violence.

But that does not make Mr. Premadasa an easy choice because his candidacy comes with the baggage of incumbency of a government whose stocks plummeted in the last five years. Those who backed the ruling coalition in 2015 are frustrated, after a major corruption scandal at the Central Bank, the constitutional crisis last October and the lapses in security and intelligence-sharing ahead of the ghastly serial blasts in April.

All the same, Mr. Premadasa himself comes with a relatively untainted political record and appears to speak to the concerns of the poor. Further, he has drawn the main parties representing Tamil (in the north-east, and hill country) and Muslim minorities this election and is seen to be projecting a more inclusive approach to national politics, which has reassured his supporters.

Counting of the votes will begin on Saturday, soon after polling ends. Early trends are expected on Sunday, though the Election Commission will declare the final, official results on Monday. Sri Lanka follows a preferential voting system where voters can mark up to three preferences on the ballot. Preference votes will come into play if neither of the top two candidates secures over 50%.

Trump attacks diplomat as she testifies in impeachment probe

Schiff says ‘witness intimidation is taken very, very seriously’

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

As the second day of public hearings in the U.S. House of Representatives impeachment inquiry unfolded, U.S. President Donald Trump took to Twitter, attacking former Ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, as she sat in the witness chair.

As a hearing that brought to light threats and disparagement Ms Yovanovitch had faced, was underway, Mr. Trump tweeted, “Everywhere Marie Yovanovitch went turned bad. She started off in Somalia, how did that go? Then fast forward to Ukraine, where the new Ukrainian President spoke unfavourably about her in my second phone call with him...”

“It's very intimidating,” Ms. Yovanovitch said, when asked how Mr. Trump's tweets would impact those who were coming forward to testify. “I can't speak to what the President is trying to do, but I think the effect is to be intimidated.”



Marie Yovanovitch

“I want you to know that some of us here take witness intimidation very, very seriously,” Intelligence panel chairman Adam Schiff said.

Smear campaign
Ms Yovanovitch, who was abruptly removed from her post as Ambassador to Ukraine in May, testified that a smear campaign was run by the U.S. President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, and his son, Donald Trump Jr., and other Trump allies that led to her removal. She also denied giving former Ukrainian prosecutor Sergiy Lutsenko a “Do Not Prosecute” list, to protect Americans. Ms. Yovanovitch said she

was “absolutely shocked” and “devastated” when she learned of Mr. Trump's comments about her during his July 25 call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. “A person who saw me actually reading the transcript said that the colour drained from my face,” Ms. Yovanovitch said.

Mr. Trump had described the Ambassador as “bad news” on the July 25 call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky that is at the centre of the whistleblower complaint. “She's going to go through some things,” Mr. Trump had said on the call.

During Friday's hearing, Ms Yovanovitch said the State Department was being “hollowed out” from within and that Foreign Service professionals were being “denigrated and undermined” and the institution as being “degraded”. She said she was disappointed Department “leadership” did not call out attacks against her and others.

Roger Stone guilty on all charges

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

A jury convicted U.S. President Donald Trump's long-time adviser Roger Stone on Friday on all charges, finding the Republican operative and self-proclaimed “dirty trickster” guilty on seven criminal counts of lying to

Congress, obstruction and witness tampering.

The verdict, in a trial arising from former Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation that detailed Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election, is not only a blow to Mr. Stone but renews scrutiny on Mr.

Trump's actions as a candidate at a time when he faces an impeachment inquiry that could derail his presidency. Mr. Trump denounced the verdict.

Mr. Stone, 67, was one of several former Trump aides to have been charged in Mueller's investigation.

ELSEWHERE



Venice hit by another ferocious high tide

Venice was inundated by exceptionally high water levels on Friday, just days after the lagoon city suffered the worst flood in more than 50 years. The central St. Mark's Square was submerged and closed to tourists, while shops and hotels were invaded by rising waters. REUTERS

Chile to hold referendum on new Constitution

SANTIAGO
Chile announced on Friday it will stage a referendum to replace the country's Constitution. The current charter, in force since 1980 and enacted by the military dictatorship, does not establish the State's responsibility to provide education and healthcare – two demands made by millions of Chileans who have taken to the streets. AFP

Lithuania and Norway swap spies with Russia

Two Russians were sentenced in 2017

ASSOCIATED PRESS
COPENHAGEN

Two Lithuanians and a Norwegian convicted of espionage in Russia were freed on Friday in exchange for two Russians who had been in prison in Lithuania.

Yevgeny Mataitis and Aristidas Tamosaitis, who were convicted in 2016, have been reunited with their families, Lithuanian spy chief Darius Jauniskis said.

Frode Berg, a Norwegian sentenced in Russia to 14 years in prison for espionage, was handed over to Norway's embassy in Vilnius after he crossed into Lithuania.

Earlier in the day, Russians Nikolai Filipchenko and Sergey Moiseyenko were pardoned by Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda.

The Baltic News Service said the spy swap took place at noon at a border check-

point with the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. No further details were available.

We are happy that Frode Berg is now coming home to Norway as a free man, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg said.

We would like to thank the Lithuanian authorities for their cooperation and for their efforts to free Mr. Berg, Ms Solberg said. Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soeride said Norway had worked systematically to get Mr. Berg, a retired border inspector, freed since his arrest in Moscow in December 2017 on espionage charges for collecting information about Russian nuclear submarines.

Prosecutors asserted that he was caught with documents he had received from an employee of a military facility who was shadowed by Russian intelligence.

Hong Kong protesters defy Xi with pro-democracy rallies

Justice Secretary confronted by protesters in London

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters defied a warning by China's President Xi Jinping and again took to the city's streets on Friday, as the political turmoil seeped out to London where a Minister from the Southern Chinese city was confronted by masked demonstrators.

Hong Kong has seen relentless protests since June as many in the city of 7.5 million people have vented fury at eroding freedoms under Chinese rule.

Violence has escalated, and tensions have spilt out overseas, sparking friction between China and Britain, which governed Hong Kong until 1997.

On Thursday night, Hong Kong Justice Secretary Teresa Cheng fell in London after being surrounded by pro-democracy protesters, in the



Firemen putting out a fire in a van, part of a barricade, after it was set alight near the Chinese University of Hong Kong. ■ AFP

most physical confrontation involving a member of cabinet since the unrest began.

‘Appalling attack’

Earlier on Friday, thousands of mainly office workers took to the Chinese territory's streets, many chanting “Stand with Hong Kong” and raising an open hand with the five fingers splayed.

“Every person in Hong

Kong has a role to play,” James, a 33-year-old banking employee told AFP, adding “sacrifice” was necessary to keep the wind behind the protest movement.

Their actions were in defiance of a warning by Chinese President Xi, who on Thursday backed Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam and the police force, while warning the protesters.

Israel to probe injuries to civilians in Gaza strike

Five children were among eight killed

REUTERS
GAZA

Israel's military said on Friday it was investigating “harm caused to civilians” from an air strike it carried out in Gaza that Palestinian medics said killed eight members of one family, including five children.

It was the single deadliest incident in two days of hostilities between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip this week during which 34 Palestinians were killed, almost half of them civilians, according to Palestinian officials.

Islamic Jihad and Israel declared a halt to fighting across Gaza on Thursday but a lasting ceasefire appeared tenuous as they differed on terms.

Israel triggered the exchange of fire by killing the Iranian-backed Islamic Jihad's top Gaza commander in an air strike, deeming

him an imminent threat. Militants responded with a barrage of hundreds of rockets into Israel, forcing entire communities to take shelter. Dozens of Israelis were injured but there were no reports of fatalities.

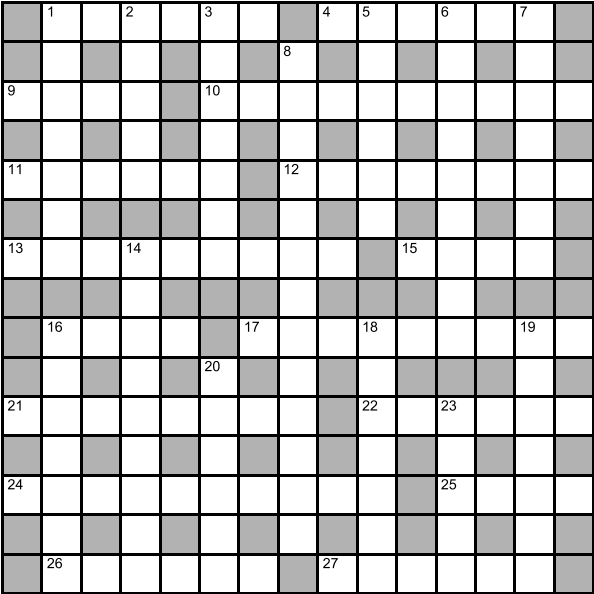
On Thursday, residents and medical workers said an Israeli missile struck and destroyed a house in Dir al-Balah, killing eight of the family members inside.

An Israeli military spokeswoman said on Friday that Israeli forces had hit what she described as an “Islamic Jihad military infrastructure” in the central Gaza town on Thursday morning. “According to the information available to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] at the time of the strike, no civilians were expected to be harmed as a result of the strike,” she said.

She added: “The IDF is investigating the harm caused to civilians by the strike.”

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12782

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- 1 Parts of flower given to friends avoiding stranger (6)
- 4 Overdue in payments? Disheartened with signs (6)
- 9 Family procured large oven (4)
- 10 Anne has one spy agency; time to broadcast (10)
- 11 1 or 4 folds, anyway are folds (6)

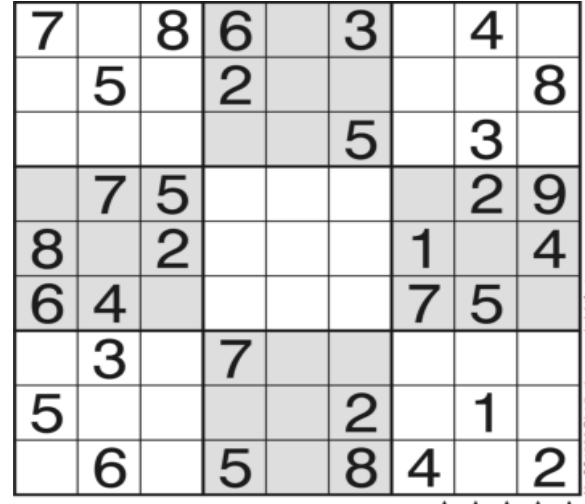
(set by Afterdark)

- 12 One can imagine closing early at noon to be free (8)
- 13 Crush Ann has on freshman, nearly is obsessive at the end (9)
- 15 In front of counter, never-ending queue at closing (4)
- 16 Big fight at temples (4)
- 17 Being hot and cold on a man? Use something to soothe (4,5)
- 21 Dirty or pure, somehow to accommodate reading one takes no time (8)
- 22 Lightest, original pilsner, beer's spritz, tasty for starters (6)
- 24 Keep Going. Have fresh tea after each exercise, situps essentially (10)
- 25 Russian author wastes cocktail – one part of Bloody Mary (4)
- 26 Main road at Andhra Pradesh has bottleneck in the middle (6)
- 27 Sketch is completed, to collect some money overcoming middlemen (6)
- 2 Country dance in which one's swapping out (5)
- 3 Working together to essentially solve a first-class issue (7)
- 5 Attractive new replacement for Victor is reclusive (6)
- 6 Ancient art's revolutionary, nearly high class writing in Indian standard perhaps (9)
- 7 Expressing defiance, drunkard's in this place (2,5)
- 8 Replacement in a moment? One's a learner, it's tenuous (13)
- 14 Hesitatingly approach youth leader to give religious books (9)
- 16 Perhaps an English MP hiding in Hamburg/Essen (7)
- 18 Look through Times on order of insects (7)
- 19 Segment of holocaust rally is coming from the South (7)
- 20 Placed Pakistani leader in a jail finally; relating to partition perhaps (6)
- 23 Brilliance of leader vanishes on touch down (5)

DOWN

- 1 Very little money to get large yard of a textile pattern (7)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12781

C	B	H		A	L	A		
A	N	H	O		O	B	E	Y
M	R	L	S	U	M	O		
H	E	R	E	W	I	T	H	S
T	H	E	R	E		S		
R	E	A	D		O	E	H	E
R	E	A	D					
U	D		T	U	L			
T	E	A	R	O	N	E	S	E
E	E	H		N	R			
M	E	N	O	A	R			
E	A	C		I	A			
T	R	I	L	L	O			
I	I	M		T	N	A	G	
T	I	N	K	E	R			
S	E	R			A	E	D	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Prahlada's world view

The Bhagavata Purana captures all the nuances of Prahlada's exemplary devotion through the words of Narada, who is himself a great devotee and is also the child's preceptor. An equally moving account of this story has been sung by the poet Kamban in the Ramayana through the words of Vibhishana when he tries to offer Hitopadesa to Ravana on the eve of war, pointed out Kalyanapuram Sri Aravamudha-chariar in a discourse.

It is held that when Prahlada is in his mother's womb, he gets the chance to listen to the spiritual discourses that Narada gives to his mother. So devotion to the Lord becomes deep-seated in his nature and it only gets strengthened as he grows up in an atmosphere that is strongly antagonistic to his belief since the inborn tendency in his father Hiranyakasipu is enmity to Vishnu. Naturally tensions arise when all the autocratic methods of indoctrination spearheaded by Hiranyakasipu to bring a change in his son fall flat.

The child would fearlessly utter the Narayana Nama that the Vedas hail as the only force that can protect him, his father and the entire world as well. Seen from the asura perspective, the Bhagavata says that Prahlada is a sinner who utters Narayana Nama and is a thorny tree in the sandal wood forest of the asura race. But Prahlada is unfazed and would explain the greatness of Hari to the asura children. He is grateful to Sage Narada for instilling devotion in him. His words of advice would point to the fleeting nature of human existence and hence the need to make the best use of human birth to seek salvation. The Lord is the eternal ruler over the entire creation from Brahma to the lowest and immobile aspects in the world. Bhakti alone is sure to relieve people from samsara.

MARKET WATCH		
	15-11-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	40,357	0.17
US Dollar	71.78	0.25
Gold	38,875	-0.38
Brent oil	62.74	-0.44

NIFTY 50		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	366.30	-2.80
Asian Paints	1760.70	-11.15
Axis Bank	716.90	1.00
Bajaj Auto	3215.35	-17.95
Bajaj Finserv	9057.85	-4.00
Bajaj Finance	4187.60	-22.95
Bharti Airtel	393.05	30.55
BPCIL	506.55	-8.10
Britannia Ind	3195.55	-35.25
Cipla	463.25	11.85
Coal India	201.15	-1.20
Dr Reddys Lab	2730.80	-3.25
Eicher Motors	21324.05	-234.10
GAIL (India)	124.30	2.50
Grasim Ind	755.15	21.20
HCL Tech	1142.30	-5.50
HDFC	2224.05	-2.75
HDFC Bank	1277.90	4.00
Hero MotoCorp	2543.20	-48.45
Hindalco	187.75	-0.75
Hind Unilever	2057.70	-11.35
ICI Bank	499.55	1.20
IndusInd Bank	1359.00	-16.10
Bharti Infratel	227.15	18.50
Infosys	703.90	-1.40
Indian Oil Corp	131.70	-5.15
ITC	250.65	-3.25
JSW Steel	244.75	-1.00
Kotak Bank	1622.75	25.15
L&T	1377.65	-2.80
M&M	583.05	4.60
Maruti Suzuki	7147.20	-99.95
Nestle India Ltd.	14295.55	64.20
NTPC	117.35	-1.20
ONGC	135.55	-0.65
PowerGrid Corp	187.65	-0.35
Reliance Ind	1470.85	8.10
State Bank of India	321.90	15.90
Sun Pharma	415.05	4.85
Tata Motors	168.55	1.50
Tata Steel	394.50	2.55
TCS	2174.45	-22.35
Tech Mahindra	751.95	-6.40
Titan	1158.45	-10.65
UltraTech Cement	4077.40	74.00
UPL	530.30	-5.25
Vedanta	142.10	-1.90
Wipro	252.55	-0.20
YES Bank	68.70	-0.05
Zee Entertainment	287.90	5.90

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on November 15		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	71.58	71.90
Euro	78.96	79.32
British Pound	92.20	92.62
Japanese Yen (100)	65.88	66.18
Chinese Yuan	10.21	10.25
Swiss Franc	72.34	72.66
Singapore Dollar	52.57	52.81
Canadian Dollar	54.04	54.29
Malaysian Ringgit	17.24	17.32

Source:Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI		
November 15 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses		
Retail Silver (1g)	47.7	(48.4)
22 ct gold (1 g)	3638	(3663)

Exports decline 1.11% in October

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The country's exports dipped by 1.11% to \$26.38 billion in October on account of contraction in sectors such as petroleum and leather.

In September also, exports had contracted by 6.57% to \$26 billion.

Imports too declined by 16.31% to \$37.39 billion, narrowing trade deficit to \$11 billion in October, according to official data released on Friday. Trade deficit in October last year stood at \$18 billion.

Oil imports, in October 2019, fell 31.74% to \$9.63 billion as compared to the same month last year.

Exports during April-October this fiscal dipped by 2.21% to \$185.95 billion. Imports were down by 8.37% to \$280.67 billion.

'Regulation on cooperative banks soon'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The government will, in the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament, seek to make amendments in certain laws so as to bring the banking activities carried out by cooperative societies under the purview of the Banking Regulation Act, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday.

The Minister added that the government might also look into increasing the amount of deposits in banks that are insured, from the current ₹1 lakh.

Regarding the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank issue, Ms. Sitharaman said that the government was considering attaching the assets of the promoters to pay back depositors.

Essar verdict: banks to see profitable Q3

Lenders expect payment to be in by December 31; recovery to directly go into profit and loss account

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Profitability of banks is set to get a major boost in the current quarter, with the Supreme Court on Friday paving the way for the acquisition of Essar Steel by ArcelorMittal. Banks have an exposure of about ₹50,000 crore to Essar Steel.

Some of the bankers said, according to the original resolution plan, ArcelorMittal will have five days to pay the creditors. "In any case, the payment will definitely come by December 31. So, this will boost the profitability of the banks for the Oct.-Dec. period," said a senior official of a public sector bank. Banks have already provided 100% for the loans given to the steelmaker. As a result, the recovery from this account will directly go into the profit and loss account, which will improve the profit.

State Bank of India will be one of the biggest beneficiaries which will get around ₹12,000 crore. "This much-awaited judgment also settles to rest numerous points of law under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code which were tested in various courts. This should significantly reduce the scope for long drawn litigations under IBC and would eventually lead to faster resolutions of stressed assets," SBI Chair-

Steely resolve

Banks have an exposure of about ₹50,000 crore to Essar Steel; lenders have already provided 100% for the loans given to the firm

State Bank of India will be one of the biggest beneficiaries and will get around ₹12,000 crore. Bankers felt their dues will be paid at least by December 31

Bank	Admitted claim (₹ cr.)	CoC approved distribution (₹ cr.)
SBI	13,226	12,161
Edelweiss ARC	8,266	7,636
Canara Bank	3,798	3,493
Standard Chartered	3,557	60.71
PNB	2,936	2,701
Deutsche Bank AG	2,829	2,603
IDBI Bank	2,481	2,282
ICICI Bank	2,294	2,110
Union Bank	2,122	1,952
Bank of India	1,985	1,826
Corporation Bank	1,566	1,441

In February 2017, the RBI directed banks to refer 12 large NPA cases to the National Company Law Tribunal. The resolution process for 7 accounts - indicated below - has been concluded

No.	Name	Admitted	Realised	%	Successful applicant
1	Bhushan Steel	56,022	35,751	63.50	Tata Steel
2	Bhushan Power & Steel	47,158	19,350	41.03	JSW Steel
3	Alok Industries	29,523	5,052	17.11	RIL, JM Financial ARC
4	Electrosteel	13,175	5,320	40.38	Vedanta Limited
5	Monnet Ispat	11,015	2,892	26.26	JSW & Aion Investments
6	Jyoti Structures	7,365	3,691	50.12	Group of HNIs
7	Essar Steel	49,473	42,000	84.89	ArcelorMittal

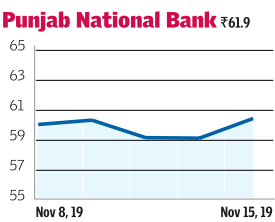
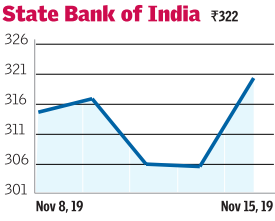
Figures in ₹ cr. | Compiled by Piyush Pandey, Manojit Saha

man Rajnish Kumar said.

"The Supreme Court has upheld that the ultimate discretion on distribution of funds is with the Committee of Creditors. It has held that

the secured and unsecured financial creditors are differentiated when it comes to amounts to be paid under a resolution plan, together with what dissenting secured

or unsecured financial creditors are to be paid. It has been held that the CoC can distribute among the secured financial creditors as per their commercial wis-



dom as CoC is not restricted from classifying creditors as financial, operational, secured or unsecured," he said.

Edelweiss ARC, which has the second-highest exposure to the steel company, said the CoC's power to decide the resolution cannot be taken away. "Everyone was very clear that this was required," R.K. Bansal, CEO, Edelweiss ARC, said. "Basically, CoC has the decision-making power - how the resolution plan and how the distribution will happen. CoC's power to decide the resolution cannot be taken away," he said. Bank stocks reacted positively, with SBI's share price rising 5.2%, PNB's 2.65%, IDBI Bank's 3.3%, while Canara Bank's share closed 2.5% higher.

Approval ups investor confidence in IBC process

IBC's aim is time-bound resolution: RP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Supreme Court's decision in the Essar Steel case sets a precedent for other cases under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

While striking down the NCLAT order, the court approved ArcelorMittal's resolution plan submitted on October 23, 2018, and upheld the overriding status of financial creditors vis-a-vis the operational creditors.

"Challenges faced during the resolution process included managing various stakeholder, improving operations and litigations in different forums," Satish Ku-

mar Gupta, the resolution professional for Essar Steel, told *The Hindu*. "Essar Steel achieved its highest ever production and EBITDA during the CIRP. Approval of plan enhances confidence of stakeholders and investors in the IBC process."

Mrutyunjay Mahapatra, MD & CEO of Syndicate Bank, said "The decision will help in time-bound resolution of other NCLT cases, which is the aim of the IBC. Financial creditors were awaiting the judgment; now, the rules are clear. Operational creditors can claim rights in case of liquidation."

After 2 years' battle, ArcelorMittal enters India

Debt recovery in Essar Steel touches 85%, versus average of 53% in other cases

PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI

Steel baron Lakshmi Niwas Mittal led ArcelorMittal is set to enter India this month or early next month, after a prolonged legal tussle in various courts for over two years in the Essar Steel case under the IBC.

An ArcelorMittal spokesperson said, "We are very pleased with the judgement that our resolution plan has been approved. We look forward to the closing of the acquisition soon."

Essar Steel's promoters - who made an unsuccessful, last-minute offer of a one-shot settlement with a ₹54,389 crore cash deal to settle dues of all creditors - welcomed ArcelorMittal to



After completion of the deal, ArcelorMittal will jointly own and operate ESIL in partnership with Nippon Steel. ■AFP

India. "We wish ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel the very best on their entry into the Indian market. They are acquiring a world-class facility in a market that has a long runway for growth," said an Essar spokesperson.

For lenders, Essar Steel

will bring the largest recovery among the dozen firms, flagged by RBI for the resolution process, as banks will recover ₹42,000 crore against admitted debts of ₹49,473 crore - a recovery of about 85% compared to the average recovery of 53% in other

looking to bring out a set of rules exclusively for financial companies as well. "We want to bring in an IBC equivalent for financial companies."

The Minister added that it was up to the Reserve Bank of India to now decide which financial companies would be taken up under these rules. However, she did add that the government was

resolution cases. Mehul Bheda, partner, Dhruva Advisors said, "The ruling will give a fillip to other resolutions as the primacy of financial creditors [is] established."

"Banks have made an unprecedented recovery of almost 90% in the resolution of Essar Steel. This is more than double the recovery made by them in other IBC cases. The Essar Steel resolution marks the highest point in the realisation of assets admitted in the first list under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code," a resolution professional told *The Hindu*.

After completion of the deal, ArcelorMittal will jointly own and operate ESIL in partnership with Nippon Steel.

Rules notified to bring financial firms under IBC

RBI will decide which companies will be taken up under these rules, says FM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday issued rules that provide a framework for bringing 'systemically important financial service providers' under the purview of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). "Section 227 of the [Insolvency and Bankruptcy] Code enables the Central government to notify, in consultation with the financial sector regulators, financial service providers (FSPs) or categories of FSPs for the purpose of insolvency and liquidation proceedings, in

such manner as may be prescribed," it said in a release. "Accordingly, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has notified the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Insolvency and Liquidation Proceedings of Financial Service Providers and Application to Adjudicating Authority) Rules, 2019 today to provide a generic framework for insolvency and liquidation proceedings of systemically important FSPs other than banks."

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the notification was necessitated because there was no system

looking to bring out a set of rules exclusively for financial companies as well. "We want to bring in an IBC equivalent for financial companies."

"The introduction of an interim framework for resolution of financial service providers under the IBC is a timely and important step for resolution of financial service providers permitting an interplay between regulators, creditors and the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) for appropriate actions," L. Viswanathan, partner, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas said.



Prior to the ruling, creditors' faith in resolution via IBC was on the verge of being lost, says Mehul Bheda. ■S. SUBRAMANIAM

CoC getting final say, a big plus, opine lawyers

'Less challenge to NCLT orders likely'

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

The Supreme Court's ruling on the Essar Steel insolvency case will have far-fetched implications on the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) process and will quicken resolution, lawyers said.

"The judgment is significant in many ways. It will make the process more expedient and efficient," Ajay Bhargava, Partner, Khaitan & Co, said.

He said, now that the Committee of Creditors (CoC) has the final say, it will lead to more certainty when a plan is accepted and there will be less challenge to the orders of NCLTs.

Mehul Bheda, partner, Dhruva Advisors said, "Prior to the SC ruling, banks and financial creditors' faith in the resolution through IBC mechanism was on the verge of being lost because of fear that the adjudicating authority may alter the distribution of resolution proceeds at its own discretion."

"[With] this judgment, the SC has restored the overarching object of IBC by upholding that it is the commercial wisdom of CoC which will determine the distribution of resolution proceeds. This will also facilitate speedier resolution of other IBC cases, since any litigation around treatment of operational creditors in the resolution plan should now be put to rest," he said.

Vaibhav Bhure, advocate, Bombay High Court, said, "The recognition of superior right of the financial creditors in proportion to their security interest in an insolvency resolution process would show a positive

attitude of such class of financial creditors in taking the insolvency resolution process to its logical end."

He said the 'equality for all' approach would prompt secured financial creditors to vote for liquidation rather than for the resolution process, which would defeat the very object of the insolvency Code.

Makarand Joshi, partner, MMJC and Associates, said operational creditors will now have to find ways and means to secure their payments against supplies made to companies, as post this judgment; they will not be considered on par with financial creditors like banks.

Paradigm shift

"This landmark judgment, which in a way has given its approval to amendment made to IBC, will bring a paradigm shift in the way operational creditors now deal with companies for their supplies in the eventuality of default to secure their interest," he said.

Since the SC has struck down the 'mandatory' time-limit of 330 days for completion of the resolution process, the decision will facilitate resolution, especially in cases where delays are caused due to capacity constraints of NCLT.

Anupam Dighe, partner at India Law Alliance said, "The rigidity of timelines which was faced in the closing process is also now interpreted to be more flexible so that the objectives of the code are achieved in true spirit."

In all, the decision will help achieve the object of the code in true spirit, he added.



SUNALINI MATHEW

A website tells me Adil Hussain's biceps measure 12 inches. It's down as one of my questions (How did they know? Is it true?), but though we're in the relaxed atmosphere of the Dharamshala International Film Festival (DIFF) that Hussain calls his "most favourite in the country because films are the stars and not the individuals", I can't ask it. We're surrounded by mountains that have seen their first snowfall, in a city that holds the Tibetan government in exile, and it seems appropriate to talk only of the larger things in life.

Adil doesn't disappoint – you'd expect nothing less from a man who lived on a river-island in Karnataka for three-and-a-half years, experimenting with one emotion a week (amongst other things), to find answers to life and the craft he practises. "The artistic version of a tree is a bonsai," and life when represented in cinema is like that – "it's condensed, concentrated," he says at one point, telling the story of how he ran from the National School of Drama reception to his then girlfriend (in 1992) to tell her he'd found the difference between art and real life.

In the past, the 53-year-old who still lives in Delhi, has been a part of movies like *What Will People Say*, Norway's entry to the Oscars last year; *English Vinglish*, *Life of Pi*, and *Ishqiya*, among several others.

But first, *Star Trek*
There's a lot of speculation about Hussain's appearance in *Star*



The stillness of Adil Hussain

The actor talks about starring in the upcoming *Star Trek: Discovery*, and how the lack of feudal residue makes shooting in Hollywood great

Trek: Discovery, CBS's third season that'll screen in spring 2020. All he can say is, "My character description was 'human, South-Asian'. My scenes are very intense, very emotional," and the fact that he's not just "another Indian guy" in the series.

He does speak however, of the difference between a movie on a Bollywood and Hollywood set. "On the shoot's first day, I entered and saw these people standing in a circle. The director says, 'Here's Adil; welcome to the *Star Trek* family.'" Everyone looked at Hussain, expecting him to say something.

"I wanted it to be short, so I said, 'I was born in a town (Goalpara, Assam) where newspapers used to come three days after it was published, and here I am today, in *Star Trek*, trying to cross the galaxies. It's been quite a journey."

What happened after, he says, would never happen in India: The lead actor, Sonequa Martin-Green, came to the centre of the circle and asked if she could hug

him, a relatively unknown actor in the States. Embracing him, she whispered into his ear that she was looking forward to working with him.

"The boundary broke and we were just two creative people on equal terms. I had one of the best shooting experiences of my film career. There is no feudal residue, no ego."

Up on screen
Hussain is looking forward to people watching a few other movies he's in too: *Lorni*, in Khasi, a low-budget film shot in Shillong about the loss of identity, that will be screened at Estonia's ongoing avant-garde Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival. "My vehicle to go from the hotel to the shoot was a scooter," he laughs.

There's Prakash Jha's *Pariksha*, to premiere on November 22 at the International Film Festival of India, in Goa – "the story of a rickshaw puller who wants to educate his son in a good school, which he can't afford." *Nirvana*

Inn is a "paranormal thriller" that premiered at the recently-concluded Busan International Film Festival and Goutam Ghose's *Raahgir*, about three people who cross paths and develop a relationship, which will be released at the end of the year.

Peeling away the layers
The last day of DIFF, on a terrace at the Tibetan Children's Village School, with a gathering of about 140 people, Hussain answers questions from a diverse audience. The battle, he says, is to be constantly vigilant against arrogance. "It's like cancer." He adds later that being guarded against patriarchy is another "conscious

What they said

About 18 years ago, I was asked by Roysten Abel the theatre director from Delhi who was making his first film, *In Othello*, to be his associate director, because he had never worked on a film. I agreed – I don't normally work on anyone else's project – and Adil was the lead. Barry John, Dilip Shankar, Vivek Mansukhani, Sheeba Chaddha were in it together. What I find about Adil is he's truly passionate about independent cinema.

Ritu Sarin, film-maker and festival director, DIFF



There is a full heart beating inside Adil. A heart that loves food, loves the people who cook the food, and loves the people who grow the food. I find his curiosity for the inter-connectedness of things very precious and endearing. I remember seeing him on stage the first time in *Othello* many years ago and feeling pure awe. I was extremely nervous to work with him the very first time. But the child in him was so much bigger than the actor that I immediately felt safe. He has really done time, as an actor. There is something about time and him, dancing, they are dancing to a groovy tune. I respect that and it makes me wish him well.

Tillotama Shome, co-actor



practice". He and his wife, Kirsten Jain, named their now 10-year-old son Kabir Om Angan, for instance.

Hussain (the name ironically means 'the best') downplays his fame: He says he's been asked, "aap K K Menon?" He won't call himself an actor – "That's a bit arrogant, I love acting and I practise the craft". He tells us of his failings. Like the time he was so involved he began to dissect his 87-

acting, makes you act better. I said, why can't I ask these in my life? Then I'll act better in life." That was 20 years ago and since, this grandson of a mystic and son of a teacher, says he has found some "light".

He doesn't seem to withhold information or be guarded like many actors, and there's a sense that he gives of himself even in an interview, but he does seem to draw from a script (perhaps like a



Honing his craft (clockwise from top left) The poster of *Nirvana Inn*; stills from *Star Trek: Discovery* and *Raahgir*; and Hussain ■ BY ARRANGEMENT AND SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

year-old father's tears in his head to hone his craft – "I wondered if I was deteriorating as a human being to be a better actor." When he takes the stage though, he owns the space and the audience, and his straight-backed body language is of someone used to throwing their voice.

"An actor," he says, answering a question about how he preps for a role, "means the one who does the action; nothing more than that." He prefers the word *patra*, or vessel, used best as a receptacle for water. He says actors must have the three qualities of water: transparency, fluidity, and the ability to quench thirst. Hussain comes across as someone who has read widely (he talks about everything from quantum mechanics to spirituality), thought deeply about using words wisely, and delivers much like someone used to taking a class. In fact he does take classes at NSD.

Reading about the lives of great actors, who were miserable in life, Hussain took the journey to be a good actor and a decent human being. "The quest, when you look for answers of the five basic Ws, which we were taught by Stanislavski, the father of modern

good actor he has prepared for this role too), answering different interviews in a similar vein. His performances though, are always contained, bringing together experiences of a lifetime to the here and now.

"Life is really short. I would love to sing. I'd like to learn dancing. I love painting and I have done a few which turned out to be good. I enjoy it, but I have to learn the craft. I would like to learn about herbal medicines." He is a part of The Green Hub, a video documentation centre to record the biodiversity of the North-East.

As for the size of the bicep – his Hollywood costume designers will know. After all they took eight days to do the perfect fit. Hussain jokes that in India, we're okay with mediocrity because "*Agle life mein dekh lenge*." The upside is that "It's not the end of the world, it's just a film."

At the end of the day, success for him is about how fast he can fall asleep at night: "I sleep in 15 minutes, no matter when I get to bed."

The writer was in Dharamshala at the invitation of DIFF, held from November 7-10

A quiet passion

A little-known independent-artist-run school and gallery from Tripura is marking its sixth year at the ongoing India Art Festival

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

At the ongoing India Art Festival, a two-part stall near the back rows is occupied by a gallery called Kala Bhawan in Tripura. A far cry from the 30-odd galleries from the metro cities, Kala Bhawan is an independent school and gallery run by Delhi-based Nitai Das, who works with Doordarshan (DD).

His mother Shanti, a musician, had started the school in 1966, a year before he was born. "It was a very small school at the time and she used to charge only ₹5 a month for music and art classes. But I loved everything about them," he recalls. It was when Nitai returned after he'd graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from Santiniketan in West Bengal that he

began to get involved, first by teaching art, and slowly taking over the operation, later building a third floor space for the gallery.

Over the course of his 26-year-employment with DD, Nitai has also been growing his own art practice, having had solo shows at the likes of the Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai (2009), the Academy of Fine Arts in Kolkata (2010), and the Lalit Kala Akademi in Delhi (2011).

This is his sixth time participating in the festival, representing both himself as well as the various folk and tribal artists he brings under the Kala Bhawan banner. Sitting in his booth amidst his acrylic-on-canvas, Nitai talks about his future plans for this school, located in Ranirbazar, about half an hour away



Nitai Das Surrounded by his paintings at his booth at the India Art Festival ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

from Agartala. Edited excerpts from a conversation.

Why did you start working with DD?
Around 1991 I was taking care of the school full time, when Doordarshan was opening its operations in the state. They needed someone who could read and write Hindi. I applied, got it, and have been working with them since 1993.

My first thought when I got the job was that, 'Okay, great I'll have enough money to run Kala Bhawan well.'

Who has been looking after the school since you moved out?
I've put my younger brother, Gour Das in charge. He's a singer too. He's now also introduced mainstream education. Our parent organisation is called Pragma Shanti, with Kala Bhawan as the arts wing. There are now 450 students.

What art have you brought with you to the India Art Festival?
I have brought in a total of 43 artists, focusing on tribal art forms. This includes pe-

ople from various states. There are tribal artists from Tripura like Swapan Deb Barman, and from Assam like Nilakshi Bezbaruah. I have some more from Bhopal too. I've made a little gallery with the works of all these artists. If I can manage to sell, then I give them the money.

How often do you go back to the school?
I go back home twice a year. Every January, from whatever is left of our income – usually this is about ₹20-25,000, not more – we give an award to honour practising artists, who are 80 years and over. We haven't been able to do this over the last three years because we are doing construction and repairs at the school. But we are re-starting the awards in January 2020. I'm also currently making sculptures to install at the school's premises – artists, authors, freedom fighters – we will put up their busts along the school's compound walls.

India Art Festival, on till 17 November, Thyagaraj Stadium, near INA Market

A big picnic in the park

Nehru Park comes alive for the sixth year with the Palate Fest

SUNALINI MATHEW

Aditi Kapoor and Ruchi Sibal were looking for a safe space where their kids and extended family could meet, eat, drink, and make merry. Not finding anything like the food fests abroad, they decided to start their own.

"Palate was born out of passion. We met at our daughter's school and the aim was to get the whole city together. There was a lack of safe places where families could come to enjoy themselves," says Aditi.

This year, as the Palate Fest enters its sixth year, the duo says there's lots of offer, including spaces for kids and teens.

Today, there's a beer contest (2-3 p.m.), a master class with chef Tarun Sibal (3-3:45 p.m) and chef Nishant Chauhey (5:15p p.m) with music



A previous edition of the Palate Fest ■ BY ARRANGEMENT

through the day (Kanika Kapoor will perform twice). Tomorrow, Aditi Govitrikar will take a master class (4 to 5 p.m.) and Jacqueline Fernandez will chat about what she eats and how she keeps as fit as she does. There will be more music and chef Saby too.

Besides being a B2C event, catering to regular pe-

ople who just want to have a good time, it's also become a B2B event, where companies can look at say suppliers for their canteens. With 70 stalls, master classes, games, contests, even art installations, this free-entry event is supported by the NDMC.

At Nehru Park, Chanakyapuri; November 15-17; 12 p.m. - 11p.m.

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



CARNIVAL

Letter writing
Batees, an NGO which promotes the art of letter writing, has organised , a letter writing carnival called Darkroom this Sunday. The event will feature writing competitions, workshops on writing and the postal system, stamp collections, a postal quiz, and campaigns to promote letter-writing among students.

VENUE: Birs Munda Manch, Raj Ghat
TIME: 10 a.m. onwards



RETAIL

Festive collection
Design house Raw Mango, has organised a mela in collaboration with a line of other independent brands like Itoh and Pahadi Local. The two-day mela which begins today will include saris from their Angoori collection, ready-to-wear pieces for men and women, handcrafted jewels, fragrances, and oils.

VENUE: Raw Mango, 31, Lodhi Colony Market
TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



FOOD

Sunday brunch
Glasshouse, an all-day eatery at Hilton Garden Inn has introduced a Sunday brunch menu. Curated by chef Manoj Rawat, the menu offers dishes like Thukpa, Khao Suey, Lamb Kibbeh, Soya Satay, Korkore Paneer, Roasted Chicken with Rosemary Jus, Paneer ka Soweta, Thai Mee Goreng, Vegetable Moussaka, and more.

VENUE: Glass House, Baani Square, Gurugram
TIME: 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.



CONCERT

Guitar and tabla
Pinecone Records is bringing together Guy Buttery and Amjad Khan live on Sunday evening. Buttery is a South African musician known for his guitar work. He will collaborate with Indian tabla artist Amjad Khan to present a blend of Indian rhythms with South Africa's Mbira, Gospel, and Zulu folk music.

VENUE: OddBird Theatre, Chhattarpur
TIME: 7 p.m.



AWARENESS

Health
BeardoThon, a run to raise awareness for men's health and fitness, is back with its third edition this Sunday. The run is organised to educate people about prostate cancer and the importance of early detection and treatment modalities. With no age barrier, the run will have three categories: 3 km, 5 km, and 10 km.

VENUE: DLF Cyberhub, Gurugram
TIME: 5:30 a.m. onwards

FILM REVIEWS

Unapologetic feminism, trite action

The good intentions of the latest *Charlie's Angels* is wasted in an absolute dud of a thriller

KENNITH ROSARIO

As an answer to decades of being sidelined in mainstream Hollywood classics, women, both on and off camera, are demanding control of their narratives. Reboots with an all-female cast appear to be the answer for many.

Films like *Oceans 8* (2018) and *Ghostbusters* (2016) swapped the gender of its leads, but contained all their messaging to 'if men can do it so can women'.

Charlie's Angels is an anomaly in this trend. The franchise always had women at the fore, yet the gaze was questionable.

The unapologetically feminist 2019 reboot, helmed by Elizabeth Banks in the director's seat, is an explicit (often self-proclaimed), and in some instances metaphorical (not that subtle) way of saying, 'Time's up' to the men (older white especially) who have enjoyed the position of power.

From opening the film with dialogues like, "Do you know it takes men additional seven seconds to perceive women as a threat?", the use of pop music by female artists, a montage of women in various avatars supplementing the title appearance, to showcasing sisterhood in-between fights – the film demands to be 'feminine'. The women are neither the centre of desire nor are they 'macho-fied' to make them palatable to a male audience.

As an aside, the film is also conscious of race and sexuality-inclusion (although the latter with Kristen Stewart's character is speculative). All the right intentions and details are there in abundance, but if you take them all out,



Not enough Kristen Stewart (L) plays Sabina Wilson in the film •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Charlie's Angels
DIRECTOR: Elizabeth Banks
CAST: Kristen Stewart, Naomi Scott, Ella Balinska, Elizabeth Banks, Dijimon Hounsou, Sam Claflin, Noah Centineo, Patrick Stewart
STORY LINE: After a whistle blower's exposé, Charlie's Angels have to protect the world from a dangerous technology
RUN TIME: 118 minutes

the film is an absolute dud of an action thriller.

The film is one chase/fight scene after another, with an inability to build up to a gripping finale. The climax, which is supposed to be the most engrossing part of an action thriller, is its weakest section with a setup that is least imaginative – a party. The conflict wants to be as contemporary as it can with the plot revolving around a whistleblower in a potentially destructive tech company. But the narrative devices and storytelling are done and dusted – betrayal, big reveals, et al.

The space which the characters inhabit is an integral part of action sequences. The first big showdown happens in a Hamburg cafe, which is a luke-warm start, with characters flipping tables and kicking guns. Then

a long sequence is shot in Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, pretending it to be a swanky and well-guarded research centre for the evil company. More than the use of space, it's the getup of the Angels (bowl hair wigs) that's amusing in this scenario. The only setting that stands out is a factory with giant conveyor belts and concrete mixers, where the space interacts with the characters in a manner that generates some amount of thrill. Rest, be it a derby in Istanbul or the criminally-banal party in the climax, *Charlie's Angels* is unable to be imaginative.

The only takeaway then circles back to its messaging. There are ample instances where men are egging the Angels on with misogynistic, patriarchal, and patronising comments like, "It can be manufactured in pastel colours for ladies" or "If women can, that does not mean they should".

The women's response, both verbally and physically, counter these agitations. The climax, without saying too much, is also symbolic of 'we no longer will take it lying down'.

But what's the point of the feminist overtones when the film itself is unremarkable and highly likely to be consigned to oblivion?

NAMRATA JOSHI

Marjaavaan is an oddly structured film. From the beginning till the interval there is a "movement" which makes the first half a complete film in itself. In fact, that's where director Milap Zaveri should have shouted "cut" and wrapped it up.

The second half is utterly pointless, inane, and unbearable and therefore eminently avoidable. Not that it makes the first half seem like *Citizen Kane* in comparison. Far from it.

A deliberate throwback to the '80s masala genre, the film is eventually nothing more than a random stringing together of scattered scenes. Verbal confrontations alternate with elaborately staged fight sequences. Every conversation is bombastic, the wordplay irritating with characters throwing dialogue at each other.

Sample: "Todunga bhi aur tod phod ke jodunga bhi", "Maarunga kanpati pe, dard hoga Ganapati pe". Rain and slo-motion shots are used to give the impression of slickness to the action scenes, where actually there is none. Zaveri uses every available trope of '80s Hindi cinema right down to women being confined to the margins and the evocation of communal harmony with token Muslim figures, swing-

Death by masala film

Marjaavan tries a tribute to the '80s brand of Hindi mainstream cinema, and fails



Eminently avoidable Actors Riteish Deshmukh and Siddharth Malhotra with the director Milap Zaveri •AFP

ing between being loyal friends or betrayers who are given the chance to return to the fold by the large-hearted hero. Why, there's even a character called Mazhar who harks back to Mazhar Khan in *Shaan*.

There is some chatter about Hindu-Muslim unity and the fights play out to Hanuman Chalisa alternating with Muslim prayers. All of it staged and orchestrated, rather than organic, while the world remains lar-

gely majoritarian. Violence is all pervasive, law and order and the cops are pushed to the corner. In the midst of this, Zaveri tries to contemporise things just a wee bit with a reference to Kashmir.

In a nutshell, the film is about a henchman (Siddharth Malhotra) caught between his love for an innocent, young girl (Tara Sutaria), his loyalty for the local mafia don (Nassar) and his rivalry with the

Marjaavaan

DIRECTOR: Milap Zaveri
CAST: Riteish Deshmukh, Siddharth Malhotra, Tara Sutaria, Rakul Preet Singh, Nassar
STORYLINE: A henchman is caught between his love for an innocent, young girl, his loyalty for the local mafia don and his rivalry with the don's son
RUN TIME: 135 minutes

don's vertically challenged son (Riteish Deshmukh). Zaveri sticks to rendering characters into "types" than personalities throbbing with any complexities.

Nassar tries hard to give gravitas to the proceedings, Sutaria is sweet and listless and keeps smiling and weeping alternately.

Malhotra is a terrible fit for the action role. It's hard to let go of disbelief seeing him wrench a pipe out of the ground. This is the kind of stuff better left to Sunny Deol. The matchstick in the mouth is supposedly Rajinikanth. What was the point in dwarfing Deshmukh other than have him mouth some infantile lines that play on "height"?

Marjaavan is loud, overcooked and overdone. Turgid and tedious it just passes you by, without you caring for anyone or anything on the big screen.

Pedal to the metal

Plenty of adrenaline-fuelled racing sequences keeps the torque on high in *Ford v Ferrari*



Ford v Ferrari

DIRECTOR: James Mangold
CAST: Christian Bale, Matt Damon, Caitriona Balfe, Jon Bernthal, Tracy Letts, Josh Lucas, Noah Jupe, Remo Girone, Ray McKinnon
RUN TIME: 152 minutes
STORYLINE: When Ford builds a car to compete with a Ferrari at Le Mans, the only thing standing in the way is the company itself.

the true story of how Ford Motor Company tried to defeat multiple-race-winning Ferrari at the '1966 24 Hours of Le Mans' in France. Vice president at Ford, Lee Iacocca (Jon Bernthal) proposes a merger with Ferrari. Insults end with chaos instead of collaboration.

Henry Ford II (Tracy Letts) decides in retaliation to build a car that will defeat the Italian spots auto manufacturer partnering with the only American to ever win Le Mans, Carroll Shelby (Matt Damon) owner of Shelby Automobiles. The man Shelby chooses to build and eventually race this Ford car is the

A fun ride Christian Bale and Matt Damon in a scene •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



WUMO



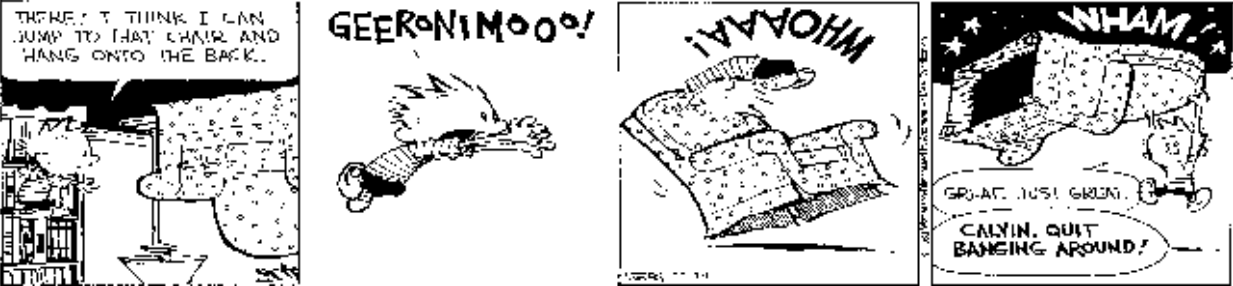
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13226

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- Across
1 One-wheeled compartment attached to a motorcycle (7)
8 Chicken house (3,4)
9 Period (1811-20) covering The Madness of King George III (7)
10 Adolescent (7)
11 Open space in wood (5)
13 Old flag signalling system (9)
15 Expensive leather from reptiles (9)
18 Panic (5)
21 Break (7)
22 Seclusion (7)
23 Large South Pacific region (7)
24 Sideboard with shelves on top (7)
■ Down
1 Tiny branch (5)
2 Non-evidence based opinion (5)
3 Snooty (13)

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X	W	T	E	D	D	Y	B	E	A	R

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Solution No. 13225



STU FORSTER/GETTY IMAGES

The game-changer

Harmanpreet Kaur’s power-hitting and athletic fielding have been at the forefront of revolutionising women’s cricket in India

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Growing up in Moga, Punjab, all Harmanpreet Kaur wanted in life was to be a cricketer. Since hardly anyone in her hometown – or most of the country, for that matter – followed women’s cricket at that time, she used to get teased.

“What will you do – open with Sehwa?” her younger brother would ask her.

She may not have walked out to bat with her idol, but

changed women’s cricket in India forever.

Not since Kapil Dev’s unbeaten 175 against Zimbabwe in Tunbridge Wells at the 1983 World Cup has an innings made such an impact. Two years after her epic 171 not out off 115 balls, Harmanpreet remembers every shot, every moment.

“I am grateful to god that I could play that innings,” she told *The Hindu* in Surat on the day she became the first Indian cricketer to play 100 T20Is.

“Earlier, I used to have talks with senior players like Jhulan Goswami about the lack of interest in women’s cricket. We used to wonder when people would start coming to watch us play. I am glad that I could play a role in making that happen before I retired.”

The innings may never have happened – she had feared that her World Cup was over when she injured her left ring finger earlier in the tournament. But for team physio Tracy Fernandes, she may have been sent home.

Biju George, India’s fielding coach at the time, says it was a privilege watching Harmanpreet’s innings at close quarters. “It is the best innings – by a man or a woman – I have ever seen in 50-over cricket,” he says. “All of us in the dressing room knew that we were watching something special.”

Snehal Pradhan, who played alongside Harmanpreet for India before becoming a journalist, says the feeling inside the press box was similar.

“That was the time when no Indian media house sent reporters for women’s matches, but there were several from England and Australia, and we were discussing whether this was the greatest innings in ODIs,” she says.

“It was after that match that I started getting calls from people wanting to know about women’s cricket.”

Snehal first saw Harmanpreet during the 2008 Challenger Trophy at Ahmedabad. “She was my India-B teammate and was included as a medium-pacer,” Snehal says. “But even in that match, she showed her ability as a hard-hitter though she had come in at No. 9.”

Harmanpreet was trained to strike the ball hard. Her first coach, Yadwinder Singh, would make her hit 100 to 150 sixes per day. This regimen enhanced her wily strength and innate timing.

Biju says her high back-lift and smooth swing add distance to her hits. It’s no surprise then that at just 19, in her first year of international cricket in 2009, she was turning heads with the might of her ball-striking.

“I have never seen any

woman hitting a cricket ball with as much power,” says R.P. Singh, a Chandigarh-based coach who has worked with Harmanpreet. “I had only to suggest some slight changes to her technique and help her become mentally strong.”

The combination of skill and will has contributed towards making her one of the biggest names in the game. She remains among the fittest in the squad – her yo-yo test scores are consistently high. With 2,372 runs from 99 ODIs and 2,032 runs from 103 T20Is, she is much sought-after in T20 leagues overseas.

Harmanpreet believes it is time India had a league of its own. “I think we are ready,” says India’s T20I captain. “Look at the way crowds responded to the Women’s T20 Challenge at Jaipur a few months ago; there were full houses.”

She says there is enough talent in India to have four or five teams in an IPL-like league. “There is already a group of 40 talented players in the domestic pool,” she says. “Look at the case of Shafali Verma.”

Shafali was discovered at that four-match series in Jaipur. Last weekend, during the first T20I against West Indies in St. Lucia, the 15-year-old became the youngest Indian to score an international fifty, breaking her idol Sachin Tendulkar’s record.

“We will get more stars like Shafali if we have a women’s IPL,” says Harmanpreet. “Such a league will reduce the gap between domestic and international cricket for our players.”

The very fact that the BCCI has started to think about the possibilities of a women’s league shows how much ground the sport has covered in the country. “Now people are coming out to watch women’s matches and we are covered extensively by the media,” she says. “The quality of our cricket has also improved drastically.

We will get more stars like Shafali [Verma] if we have a women’s IPL. Such a league will reduce the gap between domestic and international cricket for our players

ly, the fielding in particular.”

Harmanpreet herself is a prime example of the fast rising standard of India’s fielding. At the beginning of this month, she took an absolute blinder to send back West Indies’ Stafanie Taylor in the first ODI at Antigua. She leapt high into the air and held a one-handed catch at long-on.

It was one of the finest catches you will ever see. Clearly, Harmanpreet knows how to change the game and entertain all at once, even without bat in hand.

Round 20: Brazilian GP

AUTODROMO JOSE CARLOS

PACE

SPEED KMH

BRKING

130

3

GEAR

3

SECTOR TIME

T3

16.3

1:08.3

TIMING SECTOR

T1

17.3

SECTOR 1

SECTOR 2

SECTOR 3

DRS ACTIVATION

DRS DETECTION

MARSHAL POSTS

LIGHT PANELS

FIA MEDICAL & SAFETY CARS

SPEEDS AND GEARS BASED ON 2017 AND 2018 DATA | SOURCE: FIA

NUMBER OF LAPS

71

CIRCUIT LENGTH

4.309KM

RACE DISTANCE

305.909KM

RACE NOTES

■ Interlagos is one of the sport's iconic circuits: drivers love the compact, 15-corner anticlockwise layout and the party vibe during the race weekend

■ It's an old-school track without much run-off; mistakes during overtaking can prove costly

■ The unpredictable weather – the race has experienced some of the hottest track temperatures of the season and torrential rain – adds to the mix

■ Pirelli has chosen its hardest possible combination of compounds, with an aim to limit tyre degradation and help drivers push during each stint

■ Lewis Hamilton's one-stopper was the winning strategy last year, but the race saw a range of approaches

For Formula One, the future is now

With little competitive interest remaining this season, teams are planning for the shake-up in 2021

There's a distinct end-of-term feel about the penultimate race of the season – and it isn't just because of Brazil's traditional carnival atmosphere.

With the drivers' and constructors' titles decided, there isn't much competitive interest this weekend. The thoughts of those associated with the sport have turned to the future, which looks both uncertain and exciting.

Next season is the last before a financial, technical and sporting shake-up, and teams are still negotiating a new agreement with commercial rights holders Liberty Media to replace the one that expires at the end of 2020. Mercedes, which won both the constructors' and drivers' championships for an unprecedented sixth year in a row, said earlier this week that its continuance in Formula One wasn't a given.

The new regulations, which will bring wholesale changes in 2021, has the industry talking. The aim of the shakeup is to dismantle the development arms race that benefits richer teams. Team budgets will be capped at \$175 million per year, with

The battle for third		
3. Leclerc	249 pts	(2 wins)
4. Verstappen	235 pts	(2 wins)
5. Vettel	230 pts	(1 win)

design specifications framed to promote closer racing. It's a massive undertaking, and it's no surprise that teams have already begun preparing for changes that will kick in more than a year later.

Among those who still have skin in the game this season are Charles Leclerc and Max Verstappen, separated by 14 points in the battle for third. Leclerc's chances will be affected by a grid penalty this weekend – Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto said the driver's power unit was damaged and needed replacing – and Red Bull's Verstappen could close the gap.

This battle between the 22-year-olds could be a fore-runner of things to come: they're seen as the future and the biggest threats to six-time champion Lewis Hamilton, who will turn 35 before the next season starts.

SPORTS BUREAU, REUTERS & AFP



We used to wonder when people would start coming to watch us play. I am glad that I could play a role in making that happen before I retired

the dashing former India opener once tweeted: “An innings of a lifetime, Harmanpreet Kaur...Fan!”

Sehwa was referring to the innings widely regarded as the greatest ever in the women's game and among the finest overall. That knock, against Australia in the semifinal of the 2017 World Cup at Derby,

GAME THEORY

New world order

Madrid will host the first edition of the revamped Davis Cup Finals from Monday. The format of tennis' premier men's team event has changed dramatically. Here's everything you need to know:

■ The World Group, renamed the Davis Cup Finals, will be played over a single week in a World Cup-style event with a league and knockout

■ The 18 teams are divided into six round-robin groups of three teams each, with the group winners and the two best second-placed teams advancing to the quarterfinals

■ The teams will each play two singles matches and one doubles match, instead of the previous best-of-5 series. The matches themselves will drop from best of five sets to best of three

GROUP STAGE: November 18-21

The league phase will span four days, each team playing the others in its group once. This will be followed by three knockout rounds over three days

GROUP A

- France
- Serbia
- Japan

GROUP B

- Croatia
- Spain
- Russia

GROUP C

- Argentina
- Germany
- Chile

GROUP D

- Belgium
- Australia
- Colombia

GROUP E

- Great Britain
- Kazakhstan
- Netherlands

GROUP F

- USA
- Italy
- Canada

Quarterfinals Nov 22

1 A1 TBC*

Nov 21

2 D1 F1

Knockout Stages

Semifinal Nov 23

Winner 1 Winner 2

Nov 22

Final: Nov 24 Estadio Manolo Santana

Quarterfinals Nov 22

E1 C1

Nov 22

TBC* B1

*One of two second-placed teams

Source: Graphic News

8

Australia's Roy Emerson holds the record for the most titles as a player

43

India's Leander Paes has won the most doubles matches

120

Italy's Nicola Pietrangeli has won the most matches overall, including a record 78 singles rubbers

32

The USA has won the most titles, four more than Australia's 28

23 Australia has the record for the most consecutive appearances in finals, having made the title round uninterrupted between 1946 and 1968

1900 The year the event was first played, at the Longwood Cricket Club in Boston, Massachusetts, as a challenge between Great Britain and the USA (which won the contest 3-0)

STACKING UP



ATP Men's Top 15

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Rafael Nadal	33	9,585	16
2	Novak Djokovic	32	8,945	16
3	Roger Federer	38	6,190	16
4	Daniil Medvedev	23	5,705	23
5	Dominic Thiem	26	5,025	21
6	Stefanos Tsitsipas	21	4,000	26
7	Alexander Zverev	22	2,945	23
8	Matteo Berrettini	23	2,670	25
9	Roberto Bautista Agut	31	2,540	23
10	Gael Monfils	33	2,530	21
11	David Goffin	28	2,335	27
12	Fabio Fognini	32	2,290	24
13	Kei Nishikori	29	2,180	16
14	Diego Schwartzman	27	2,125	25
15	Denis Shapovalov	20	2,050	26

Top Indians

Prajesh Gunneswaran Rank 95 ▼ 1 spot	Sumit Nagal Rank 127 ▲ 2 spots



WTA Women's Top 15

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Ashleigh Barty	23	7,851	15
2	Karolina Pliskova	27	5,940	19
3	Naomi Osaka	22	5,496	17
4	Simona Halep	28	5,462	17
5	Bianca Andreescu	19	5,192	15
6	Elina Svitolina	25	5,075	22
7	Petra Kvitova	29	4,776	17
8	Belinda Bencic	22	4,685	24
9	Kiki Bertens	27	4,245	27
10	Serena Williams	38	3,935	10
11	Aryna Sabalenka	21	3,120	24
12	Johanna Konta	28	2,879	17
13	Madison Keys	24	2,767	15
14	Sofia Kenin	20	2,740	24
15	Petra Martic	28	2,617	18

Top Indians

Ankita Raina Rank 185 ▼ 1 spot	Riya Bhatia Rank 381 ▲ 2 spots



English Premier League Standings

#	TEAM	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Liverpool	12	11	1	0	28	10	18	34
2	Leicester	12	8	2	2	29	8	21	26
3	Chelsea	12	8	2	2	27	17	10	26
4	Man. City	12	8	1	3	35	13	22	25
5	Sheffield	12	4	5	3	13	9	4	17
6	Arsenal	12	4	5	3	16	17	-1	17
7	Man. United	12	4	4	4	16	12	4	16
8	Wolves	12	3	7	2	16	15	1	16
9	Bournemouth	12	4	4	4	15	15	0	16
10	Burnley	12	4	3	5	17	18	-1	15
11	Brighton	12	4	3	5	15	17	-2	15
12	Crystal Palace	12	4	3	5	10	16	-6	15
13	Newcastle	12	4	3	5	11	18	-7	15
14	Tottenham	12	3	5	4	18	17	1	14
15	Everton	12	4	2	6	13	18	-5	14
16	West Ham	12	3	4	5	14	20	-6	13
17	Aston Villa	12	3	2	7	17	20	-3	11
18	Watford	12	1	5	6	8	23	-15	8
19	Southampton	12	2	2	8	11	29	-18	8
20	Norwich City	12	2	1	9	11	28	-17	7



Italian Serie A Standings

#	TEAM	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Juventus	12	10	2	0	20	9	11	32
2	Inter Milan	12	10	1	1	26	12	14	31
3	Lazio	12	7	3	2	28	13	15	24
4	Cagliari	12	7	3	2	23	12	11	24
5	Atalanta	12	6	4	2	30	18	12	22
6	Roma	12	6	4	2	20	14	6	22
7	Napoli	12	5	4	3	21	15	6	19
8	Parma	12	5	2	5	18	15	3	17
9	Fiorentina	12	4	4	4	18	19	-1	16
10	Verona	12	4	3	5	10	11	-1	15
11	Torino	12	4	2	6	15	17	-2	14
12	Udinese	12	4	2	6	8	18	-10	14
13	Sassuolo	11	4	1	6	21	21	0	13
14	AC Milan	12	4	1	7	11	16	-5	13
15	Bologna	12	3	3	6	16	20	-4	12
16	Lecce	12	2	4	6	15	25	-10	10
17	Genoa	12	2	3	7	14	26	-12	9
18	Sampdoria	12	2	3	7	7	19	-12	9
19	Spal	12	2	2	8	7	18	-11	8
20	Brescia	11	2	1	8	10	20	-10	7



Spanish La Liga Standings

#	TEAM	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Barcelona	12	8	1	3	33	15	18	25
2	Real Madrid	12	7	4	1	25	9	16	25
3	Atletico Madrid	13	6	6	1	15	8	7	24
4	Sevilla	13	7	3	3	17	14	3	24
5	Real Sociedad	13	7	2	4	21	14	7	23
6	Athletic Bilbao	13	5	5	3	13	8	5	20
7	Getafe	13	5	5	3	18	15	3	20
8	Granada	13	6	2	5	19	17	2	20
9	Valencia	13	5	5	3	19	18	1	20
10	Osasuna	13	4	7	2	16	13	3	19
11	Villarreal	13	5	3	5	26	19	7	18
12	Levante	13	5	2	6	16	16	0	17
13	Real Valladolid	13	4	5	4	14	17	-3	17
14	Alaves	13	4	3	6	14	18	-4	15
15	Eibar	13	4	3	6	14	21	-7	15
16	Real Mallorca	13	4	2	7	12	19	-7	14
17	Real Betis	13	3	4	6	15	23	-8	13
18	Celta Vigo	13	2	3	8	7	19	-12	9
19	Espanyol	13	2	2	9	7	23	-16	8
20	Leganes	13	1	3	9	7	22	-15	7

Mayank toys with a hapless Bangladesh attack

Rahane and Jadeja chip in as the hosts take a massive lead against the visitors



There she goes... Mayank Agarwal, who scored a brilliant double century, was particularly severe on the spinners. ■R.V. MOORTHY

AMOL KARHADKAR
INDORE
When he blasted Tajjul Islam through square-leg for a four, raised his arms and turned towards the dressing room, Mayank Agarwal saw captain Virat Kohli signalling to him to concentrate and convert his 150 into a double hundred.

Objective achieved
A little over an hour later, the in-form opener charged down the wicket and heaved Mehidy Hasan into the stands, again turned around to the dressing room and raised two fingers to indicate to his captain that the objective had been achieved.
Mayank's second double-hundred in as many series ensured that India was on track to take a lead in the two-Test series against Bangladesh.
Thanks to Mayank, the protagonist, ably supported by Ajinkya Rahane and Ravindra Jadeja, India conti-

nued to toy with a hapless Bangladesh. Despite Mayank's marathon knock coming to an end towards the fog end of the second day's play, India finished with 493 for six – with a lead of 343.
Delight for the crowd
Barring the first half an hour, when Cheteshwar Pujara (caught in the cordon just after crossing his fifty) and captain Virat Kohli (missed one that shaped back in for a rare duck) perished to an impressive Abu Jayed, the rest of the day's proceedings were a delight for the 13,500-strong turnout at the Holkar Stadium.
Mayank continued his prolific run in Tests this season by making a mockery of the Bangladesh bowlers. He first rescued the team from a spot of bother after Kohli's dismissal with a 190-run association with Rahane.
By the time Rahane played an uppish cut to deep point

and lost out on a deserved hundred, Mayank had already switched gears.
Ravindra Jadeja joined Mayank and the duo ensured that India finished the day with a bang.
Going berserk
India pounded 407 runs off 88 overs to put the Indore fans in danger of being deprived of enjoying cricket on Sunday. A whopping 190 of those were scored off the 30 overs in the last session, with Mayank going berserk.
The stylish opener tonked all the Bangladesh bowlers as he added 87 off 79 balls. He was especially harsh on the spinners Tajjul and Mehidy, the two giving away 212 runs off the 48 overs they bowled on the second day.
While Mayank showcased his trademark drives through covers and straight punches to the seamers, his prowess against the spinners came to the fore time and again. His nimble footwork

and astonishing timing were reflected in the distance his sixes travelled – all eight, including the one that took him to his double hundred, sailed well over the fence.
With Mayank on song, Rahane, after starting the innings with a couple of confident boundaries, switched to a supporting role in the afternoon session. Still, the Mumbai batsman's crafty innings was yet another example of his ability to bail the team out.
In the second over after tea, with the second new ball still being hard, Rahane was dismissed against the run of play and gave Jayed his fourth wicket.
Jadeja, after a cautious start, cut loose to put India in a position to declare overnight. It will be interesting to see if Kohli lets Jadeja go for his hundred on Saturday morning or unleashes his bowlers on the Bangladesh batsmen straight away on day three.

STAT SPHERE

- 2 Mayank becomes the second Indian batsman after Sehwag to score 200 runs in a day in Tests
- 2 Mayank is also the second Indian to reach a Test double hundred with a six. Rohit Sharma was the first, accomplishing the feat in the third Test against South Africa last month
- 3 Rahane's 86 is his third consecutive 50-plus score in Tests, and the sixth in his last nine visits to the crease
- 5 Mayank's 243 is the fifth highest Test score by an Indian opener. The top four belong to Sehwag (319, 309, 293, 254)
- 6 Number of Test centuries by India's openers in the 2019-20 home season (3 by Rohit and 3 by Mayank).

- This is the joint-highest alongside Sehwag and Gambhir, four and two respectively, in 2009-10
- This is Mayank's sixth 50-plus score (76, 77, 5, 55, 215, 108, 10, 243) in the first innings of a Test in his eight-match Test career
- Sixes hit by Mayank, the joint-highest by an Indian in a Test innings alongside Navjot Singh Sidhu (against Sri Lanka in Lucknow, 1994)
- 10 Test ducks for Kohli. Four of them have been golden ducks
- 12 Innings taken by Mayank to reach two Test double centuries, the second fastest, after Vinod Kambli (5 innings). Sir Donald Bradman is third, reaching the mark in 13 innings
- 204 Mayank's average against spinners in the first innings in Tests. He averages 73.6 against pacers



SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH – 1ST INNINGS
150.
INDIA – 1ST INNINGS
Mayank Agarwal c Jayed b Mehidy 243 (330b, 28x4, 8x6), Rohit Sharma c Liton b Jayed 6 (14b, 1x4), Cheteshwar Pujara c sub (Saif) b Jayed 54 (72b, 9x4), Virat Kohli lbw b Jayed 0 (2b), Ajinkya Rahane c Tajjul b Jayed 86 (172b, 9x4), Ravindra Jadeja (batting) 60 (76b, 6x4, 2x6), Wriddhiman Saha b Ebadot 12 (11b, 2x4), Umesh Yadav (bat-

ting) 25 (10b, 1x4, 3x6); Extras (lb-1, nb-3, w-3): 7; Total (for six wkts. in 114 overs): 493.
FALL OF WICKETS
1-14 (Rohit, 7.2 overs), 2-105 (Pujara, 29.5), 3-119 (Kohli, 31.5), 4-309 (Rahane, 85.4), 5-432 (Mayank, 107.3), 6-454 (Saha, 110.5).
BANGLADESH BOWLING
Ebadot 31-5-115-1, Jayed 25-3-108-4, Tajjul 28-4-120-0, Mehidy 27-0-125-1, Mahmudullah 3-0-24-0.

'I make sure I make it big'

AMOL KARHADKAR
INDORE

While a few of his teammates were having a net session under lights with the pink ball after stumps on the second day, Mayank Agarwal addressed the media with a content look.
The opening batsman showed no signs of fatigue, even after batting for almost four sessions while plundering 243. *Excerpts:*
On whether he thanked Imrul Kayes for dropping him on the first evening
That's not in my control but I was thinking that if I have got a chance, I have got to make them pay.
When you get a let-off, you make sure that you make them pay.
On his mindset to play long innings
I think it goes down to understanding that there had been times when I have not got runs, so I must respect that I am batting well.
When I am doing that I have to make sure that I make it big and put the team in the driver's seat or in

such a position that they cannot lose from there.
On his thoughts when he was given lbw paddle-sweeping before it was overturned through DRS
Initially when I was hit on the pads, I thought I wasn't out. But then when I was given out, I had a quick flashback. I got out the same way to Roston Chase in the West Indies, so I said I can't make that mistake again.
I am glad and happy that (replays showed) it was missing (the stumps). At some point I thought, may be it will be umpires' call and I will be doomed.
On reaching the double with a six
I was not thinking of that. I was thinking to give 4-5 overs and go 1, 1, 1, 1 unless something was in my half.
Because I was batting on 196, I was confident. I got one in my slot and I hit it for six.
On how he unwinds in the evenings after a superb knock
I play PUBG (a video game).

There's no doubt that the structure of the team needs change, otherwise the results are going to be the same. I need to sit with the selectors to plan the way forward.

Full credit to India. They have absolutely dominated us. We need somebody to make that big 100, 150, 200 like Mayank did today

DOMINGO, Bangladesh coach



Ideal foil: Ajinkya Rahane played the support role in the partnership with Mayank Agarwal. ■R.V. MOORTHY

Spinners and Jemimah seal series win

INDIA IN WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)
The fast-rising Jemimah Rodrigues started with the bat after India's spinners wreaked havoc to set up a series-clinching seven-wicket win over the West Indies in a low-scoring third women's T20 International here on Thursday.
The spinners restricted West Indies to a paltry 59 for nine in the stipulated 20 overs before Jemimah played an unbeaten innings of 40 (51 balls) to take India home with 20 balls to spare and for the loss of just three wickets.
The triumph sealed India's second consecutive T20 series win. India had beaten South Africa at home last month.
The next match of the five-game series will be held here on Sunday.
The scores: West Indies 59/9 in



Jemimah Rodrigues. ■FILE PHOTO

20 overs (Radha Yadav 2/6, Deepti Sharma 2/12) lost to India 60 for three in 16.4 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 40 n.o.; Hayley Matthews 2/7). **Toss:** West Indies. **Player-of-the-Match:** Jemimah.

IPL 2020 auction guide

How the teams stack up before the hammer goes down in Kolkata on December 19

Franchise	No. of players	Salary cap available	Available slots	Overseas slots
CSK	20	14.60 cr	5	2
DC	14	27.85 cr	11	5
KXIP	16	42.70 cr	9	4
KKR	14	35.65 cr	11	4
MI	18	13.05 cr	7	2
RR	14	28.90 cr	11	4
RCB	13	27.90 cr	12	6
SRH	18	17.00 cr	7	2
Total	127	207.65 cr	73	29

Players released

CSK: Chaitanya Bishnoi, David Willey, Dhruv Shorey, Mohit Sharma, Sam Billings, Scott Kuggeleijn
DC: Ankush Bains, B. Ayyappa, Chris Morris, Colin Ingram, Colin Munro, Hanuma Vihari, Lalaj Saxena, Manjot Kalra, Nathu Singh
KXIP: Agnivesh Ayachi, Andrew Tye, David Miller, Moises Henriques, Prabhsimran Singh, Sam Curran, Varun Chakaravarthy
KKR: Anrich Nortje, Carlos Brathwaite, Chris Lynn, Joe

Denly, K.C. Cariappa, Matt Kelly, Nikhil Naik, Piyush Chawla, Prithvi Raj Yarra, Robin Uthappa, Shrikant Mundhe
MI: Adam Milne, Alzarri Joseph, Barinder Sran, Ben Cutting, Beuran Hendricks, Evin Lewis, Jason Behrendorff, Pankaj Jaswal, Rasikh Raj, Yuvraj Singh
RR: Aryanman Birla, Ashton Turner, Ish Sodhi, Jaydev Unadkat, Liam Livingstone, Oshane Thomas, Prashant Chopra, Rahul Tripathi, Shubham Ranjane, Stuart Binny, Sudhesan Midhun

RCB: Akshdeep Nath, Colin de Grandhomme, Dale Steyn, Heinrich Klassen, Himmat Singh, Kulwant Khejroliya, Marcus Stoinis, Milind Kumar, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Prayas Ray Barman, Shimron Hetmyer, Tim Southee
SRH: Deepak Hooda, Martin Guptill, Ricky Bhui, Shakib Al Hasan, Yusuf Pathan

Significant trades

R. Ashwin: KXIP to DC
Ajinkya Rahane: RR to DC
Sherfane Rutherford: DC to MI
K. Gowtham: RR to KXIP
Trent Boult: DC to MI
Dhawal Kularni: RR to Mumbai Indians
Ankit Rajpoot: Kings XI Punjab to Rajasthan Royals
Rahul Tewatia: Delhi Capitals to Rajasthan Royals
Mayank Markande: Mumbai Indians to Delhi Capitals to Rajasthan Royals

SOURCE: BCCI & ESPNCRICINFO

Ramkumar has the final say

Beats Nagal in two tight sets, meets Duckworth

CHALLENGER

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
PUNE
Ramkumar Ramanathan overcame Sumit Nagal's challenge, winning their quarter-final 6-4, 7-6(5), in the KPIT MSLTA Challenger at the MSLTA School of Tennis courts, Balewadi sports complex, on Friday. Ramkumar, who won on the strength of his serves and sharp play in the tie-breaker, booked a semifinal against Australia's James Duckworth.
Ramkumar gained a crucial break in the 10th game to win the first set when Nagal committed a few forehand errors and dropped serve. The latter, however, tightened his game till 3-3 in the second before going off-target with his serve in the seventh. Though Nagal broke back in the next game to pull level, he was wayward in the ninth game and dropped serve again.



Ramkumar. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The sixth-seeded Ramkumar, riding on his serve-and-volley game, relished the faster hardcourts here. He entered the doubles semifinal too, partnering Purav Raja. The two eased past the Tunisian-French combine of Aziz Dougaz and Calvin Hemery 6-3, 6-4.
Ramkumar's last-four op-

ponent, Duckworth, got past a spirited Sasi Kumar Mukund, seeded eighth, in three tight sets.
Olmado vs Clark
Spain's Roberto Ortego Olmado will face England's Jay Clark in the other semifinal. While Olmado won the first set against Dutchman Tim van Rijthoven when the latter retired, Clark was taken the distance by Canada's Steven Diaz before winning the decider in the tie-breaker.
The results (quarterfinals): Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Sumit Nagal 6-4, 7-6(5); James Duckworth (Aus) bt Sasi Kumar Mukund 7-5, 4-6, 7-5; Roberto Ortego Olmado (Esp) bt Tim van Rijthoven (Ned) 7-6(7), ret.; Jay Clark (Eng) bt Steven Diaz (Can) 6-4, 3-6, 7-6(3).
Doubles: Purav Raja & Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Aziz Dougaz (Tun) & Calvin Hemery (Fra) 6-3, 6-4; Brydan Klein (GBR) & Vijay Sundar Prashanth bt Niki Poonacha & Anirudh Chandrasekar 6-2, 6-3.

QUICK SINGLES



Shaw set for return

MUMBAI
Prithvi Shaw will be seen in action for Mumbai against Assam in the last Group D league match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy tournament on Sunday. Shaw was banned for eight months by the BCCI for failing a dope test.

Brazil vs Mexico in U-17 FIFA final

BRASILIA
Two ex-champions, Brazil and Mexico, will face off in the final of the FIFA U-17 World Cup. In Thursday's semifinals here, host Brazil got the better of France 3-2, while Mexico's clash against the Netherlands was decided via penalties 4-3 after a 1-1 stalemate in regular playing time. Goalkeeper Eduardo Garcia was *El Tri's* hero with three stops in the shoot-out.
The results: Semifinals: France 2 (Kalimuendo 7, Mbuku 13) lost to Brazil 3 (Kaio Jorge 62, Veron 76, Lazaro 89); Mexico 1 (E. Alvarez 79) drew with the Netherlands 1 (Regeer 74) *Mexico won 4-3 via penalties.* AGENCIES

Morris stars as Knicks pip Mavericks

NEW YORK
Marcus Morris sank a clutch three-pointer with 13 seconds left to lift the New York Knicks to a 106-103 win over Kristaps Porzingis and Dallas Mavericks on Thursday.
The results: Miami Heat 108 bt Cleveland Cavaliers 97; New York Knicks 106 bt Dallas Mavericks 103; Milwaukee Bucks 124 bt Chicago Bulls 115; New Orleans Pelicans 132 bt Los Angeles Clippers 127; Phoenix Suns 128 bt Atlanta Hawks 112; Denver Nuggets 101 bt Brooklyn Nets 93. AGENCIES



Tony Mann passes away

PERTH
Former Australia leg-spinner Tony Mann, who played four Tests between 1977 and 1978, died aged 74 after a long battle with cancer. He was the second nightwatchman to make a Test century (after Pakistan's Nasim-ul-Ghani) when he scored 105 in the Perth Test against India in 1977-78. Mann served his domestic side Western Australia with distinction for two decades, playing 80 First Class games and 13 domestic limited-overs games. He picked up 200 First Class wickets and was part of several Sheffield Shield title wins.

ATP FINALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON
Roger Federer produced a near-flawless performance as he avenged his Wimbledon defeat by Novak Djokovic and qualified for the last four of the ATP Finals with a 6-4, 6-3 victory on Thursday.
Federer started the tournament with a chastening straight-sets defeat to Dominic Thiem, but found his best form when it mattered.
Defeat for the second seed spells the end of his bid to overtake Rafael Nadal and finish as year-end No. 1.

Nadal beats Tsitsipas
Nadal, meanwhile, recovered from a set down to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-7 (4), 6-4, 7-5.
Nadal has never won the end-of-season tournament and had a miserable start at the O2 Arena, being out-



Classic: Roger Federer found his best form when it mattered, as he breezed past Novak Djokovic in straight sets. ■REUTERS

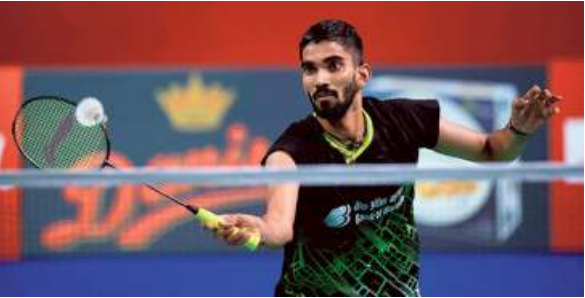
played by Germany's Zverev. But the 19-time Grand Slam champion produced an astonishing comeback to defeat Medvedev, the Russian fourth seed, on Wednesday and give himself a chance of qualifying from the round-robin phase.

Tsitsipas, 21, had already qualified for the semifinals before Friday's match.
The results: Group Bjorn Borg: Roger Federer bt Novak Djokovic 6-4, 6-3.
Group Andre Agassi: Rafael Nadal bt Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-7 (4), 6-4, 7-5.

Srikanth in semifinals

HONG KONG OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HONG KONG
Indian ace K. Srikanth entered the semifinals of the \$400,000 Hong Kong Open after Olympic champion Chen Long of China decided to quit the contest owing to injury, here on Friday.
Srikanth was a game up when Chen decided to concede the match.
Srikanth will next face local favourite Lee Cheuk Yiu



Short and sweet: K. Srikanth had won the first game when Long called it quits. ■FILE PHOTO

TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.
India vs Bangladesh: First Test, day three, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.
Hong Kong Open badminton: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Star Sports 3, 9.30 a.m.
T10 League: Sony Six & Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 5 p.m., 7.30 p.m. & 9.30 p.m.
Afghanistan vs West Indies: Second T20I, Star Sports Select 1 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
ATP Finals: Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)
Euro 2020 Qualifiers: Sony Ten 1, Sony Ten 2, Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m.; Sony Six (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)

IN BRIEF

Gulati wins Delhi 6 red snooker
NEW DELHI
Sandeep Gulati beat Hanish Sharma 6-1 in a one-sided final to win the Delhi State 6 Red Snooker Tarun Chandra Memorial Tournament. Hanish started well and won the first frame easily before Gulati fought back in the second, winning 30-22 and surviving a green ball snooker. It was Gulati all the way after that, with the final coreline being 15-44, 30-22, 54-0, 48-0, 45-6, 53-1, 49-1. Both would now represent the state in the National 6 Red Snooker in 2020.

Yashasvi ton does the trick
HYDERABAD
Yashasvi Jaiswal's century (108, 100b) helped India-A score a seven-wicket win over India-C in the BCCI Challenger Trophy (u-19) one-day cricket tournament. **The scores:** Nepal 210 in 49.5 overs (Rit Gautam 84, Divyansh Joshi 3/54) lost to India-B 211/8 in 46.3 overs (Kruthik Krishna 39, Divyansh Joshi 54, Akash Chand 4/41). India-C 250/7 in 50 overs (Divyansh Saxena 89, K. Kumar 40, D. Saurav 51 n.o.) lost to India-A 256/3 in 43 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 108, S. Sai Bharadwaj 60, Jay Gohil 43, Sameer Rizwi 38 n.o.).

Five more Indians open with 67

Event curtailed to 54 holes; cut to be applied on Saturday

PANASONIC OPEN

RAKESH RAO
GURUGRAM
The smog refused to give way to a brighter day. As a result, the scores on the second day of the Panasonic Open followed an expected pattern.
The weather-hit event finally saw the completion of the first round, with no change on top of the leaderboard on Friday.
Itthipat Buranatanyarat's overnight two-stroke lead, at eight-under 64, remained unchallenged while Australia's Terry Pilkadaris and Myanmar's Ye Htet Aung joined Indonesia's Danny Masrin in the second place, at 66.
Among the Indians, Karandeep Kochhar, Kshitij Naveed Kaul, Vikrant Chopra, defending champion Khalin Joshi and Rashid Khan joined Shiv Kapur, Arjun Prasad, M. Dharma and Shankar Das at five-under 67 at the tied fifth spot. In fact,



In full flow: Kshitij Naveed Kaul shot a bogey-free 67 to be joint fifth after the first round on Friday. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

nine out of 11 professionals at five-under are Indians.
Kaul, 18, playing his rookie season as a pro, fired a bogey-free round. Rashid, Chopra and Kochhar sank six birdies against a lone bogey while Joshi did it by finding seven birdies to offset two bogeys.
Kaul, fourth on this season's PGTI Order of Merit, was pleased with his hitting and putting, in spite of mis-

reading a few putts. Interestingly, he made his pro debut in this event last year and finished sixth.

Summing it up
Rashid summed it up well. "I played solid and missed just one green today. I was four-under through nine holes and had a good chance of going low. But on the Hole No. 2, I misjudged the wind and landed my tee-shot in the

bunker."
As anticipated, the \$400,000 event stood reduced to a 54-hole event, with those making the 'cut' after Saturday's second round, getting to play just one round to decide the winner.
The Asian Tour confirmed this change and stated that the second round, to be played in two sessions on Saturday, will see a four-tee start – from the first, sixth, 10th and 15th holes.

First-round scores: 64 - Itthipat Buranatanyarat (Tha); 66 - Danny Masrin (Ina), Terry Pilkadaris (Aus), Ye Htet Aung (Mya); 67 - Karandeep Kochhar, Arjun Prasad, Shiv Kapur, M. Dharma, Hung Chien-Yao (Tpe), Shankar Das, Vikrant Chopra, Khalin Joshi and Rashid Khan.
Other leading Indians: 68 - Sanjay Kumar, Aman Raj; 69 - Veer Ahlawat, Kapil Kumar, Viraj Madappa, Aadil Bedi, Arjun Atwal, Pravin Pathare; 70 - Sudhir Sharma, Shamim Khan, Om Prakash Chouhan, Honey Baisoya, Gaurav Pratap Singh and Jeev Milkha Singh.

Portugal and England on goal-scoring spree

EURO QUALIFIERS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
FARO (PORTUGAL)
Cristiano Ronaldo scored his ninth international hat-trick as Portugal moved to the brink of qualifying for Euro 2020 with a 6-0 thrashing of Lithuania on Thursday.
It was made to wait for qualification as Serbia battled to a 3-2 win over Luxembourg in the other game in Group B. Portugal sits second behind Ukraine, which has already qualified, and one point clear of Serbia, but can secure its spot with victory in Luxembourg on Sunday.
Ronaldo has now scored 98 international goals and will be hoping to become the



Too good: Lithuania tried every trick in the book but failed to stop Cristiano Ronaldo. ■REUTERS

second-ever player to reach 100 this weekend. Iranian great Ali Daei holds the all-

time record with 109 international strikes. Meanwhile in London,

Harry Kane's first-half hat-trick secured England's qualification for Euro 2020 in style with a 7-0 thrashing of Montenegro in its 1,000th match.

The results:
Group A: Czech Republic 2 (Krai 71, Celustka 79) bt Kosovo 1 (Nuhui 50); England 7 (Oxlade-Chamberlain 11, Kane 19, 24 37, Rashford 30, Sofranac 66-og, Abraham 84) bt Montenegro 0.
Group B: Portugal 6 (Ronaldo 7-pen, 22, 65, Pizzi 52, Paciencia 56, Bernardo Silva 63) bt Lithuania 0; Serbia 3 (Mitrovic 11, 43, Radonjic 70) bt Luxembourg 2 (Rodrigues 54, Turpel 75).
Group H: Albania 2 (Balaj 6, Manaj 55) drew with Andorra 2 (Martinez 18, 48); France 2 (Varane 35, Giroud 79-pen) bt Moldova 1 (Rata 9); Turkey 0 drew with Iceland 0.

Sowjanya in semifinals

ITF WOMEN

SPORTS BUREAU
GWALIOR

Qualifier Sowjanya Bavisetti sustained her good run to five matches in-a-row as she beat Maria Timofeeva of Russia 6-3, 2-6, 6-4 in the quarterfinals of the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the City Centre Tennis Complex here on Friday.
On a day when Karman Kaur Thandi missed a set point in the second set at 5-4 and was beaten 6-4, 7-5 by Berfu Cengiz of Turkey, the reigning national champion Sowjanya emerged the sole surviving Indian in the tournament.

The 26-year-old left-hander stepped it up at 3-3 in the third set and dropped just two points in winning the next two games, to gain a stranglehold over the proceedings.

She served out the match in the 10th game, after missing three matchpoints from 40-0.

In the semifinals, Sowjanya, who had earlier knocked out second seed Diana Marcinkevica of Latvia in straight sets, will play seventh seed Sofia Shapatava of Georgia.

The results:

Quarterfinals: Jia-Jing Lu (Chn) bt Funa Kozaki (Jpn) 6-2, 6-2; Berfu Cengiz (Tur) bt Karman Kaur Thandi 6-4, 7-5; Sofia Shapatava (Geo) bt Freya Christie (GBR) 6-1, 6-2; Sowjanya Bavisetti bt Maria Timofeeva (Rus) 6-3, 2-6, 6-4.
Doubles: Semifinals: Mana Kawamura & Funa Kozaki (Jpn) bt Karin Kennel (Sui) & Silvia Njiric (Cro) 3-6, 6-3, [10-2]; Petia Arshnikova & Gergana Topalova (Bul) bt Evgeniya Burdina (Rus) & Ashmitha Easwaramurthi 6-1, 6-3.

Star turn by Mazzini

SPORTS BUREAU
NEW DELHI

Gerardo Mazzini smashed eight goals as Sona Polo edged past Jindal Panther 10-9 in the semifinals of the Indian Masters 14-goal polo championship at the Jaipur Polo ground on Friday.
In the other semifinal, Chris Mackenzie and Satinder Garcha scored four goals each in guiding Rajnigandha Achievers to a 10 goals to 5 1/2 victory over

Cavalry-Krishna Polo.
The final will be played at 3 p.m. on Sunday at the Jaipur Polo ground.
The results (Semifinals): Sona Polo 10 (Gerardo Mazzini 8, Abhimanyu Pathak, Padmanabh Singh) bt Jindal Panther 9 (Daniel Otamendi 5, Simran Singh Shergill 4); Rajnigandha Achievers 10 (Chris Mackenzie 4, Satinder Garcha 4, Dhananjay Singh, Siddhant Sharma) bt Cavalry-Krishna Polo 5 1/2 (Ravi Rathore, Angad Kalaan, handicap 3 1/2).

Prarthana loses

SPORTS BUREAU
TAIPEI

Prarthana Thombare in partnership with Isabella Shinikova of Bulgaria was beaten 6-3, 6-4 by the Chinese Taipei team of I-Hsuan Cho and Yi-Tsen Cho in the doubles quarterfinals of the \$125,000 WTA tennis tournament here.
The results: \$125,000 WTA,

Chinese Taipei: Doubles: Quarterfinals: I-Hsuan Cho & Yi-Tsen Cho (Tpe) bt Isabella Shinikova (Bul) & Prarthana Thombare 6-3, 6-4.
\$15,000 ITF men, Maputo, Mozambique: Quarterfinals: Benjamin Lock (Zim) bt Rishab Agarwal 6-3, 6-3.
Doubles: Quarterfinals: Vasilios Caripi & Vaughn Hunter (RSA) bt David Perez Sanz (Esp) & Jatin Dahiya 1-0 (retired).

Friday races cancelled

BENGALURU: An unfortunate incident in the first race caused the fall of three jockeys – Suraj (Will To Win), Srinath (Aceros) and Kiran Rai (Sir Piggot) – in which Aceros and Will To Win were the first and second favourites. Due to the incident, the punters went berserk and vandalised the club property.

The Stewards of BTC then decided to cancel the remaining races of the day due to administrative reasons. The Rajyotsava Trophy has been postponed, and the date for the same will be announced later.

1. NOVEMBER PLATE (1,200m), rated 15 to 35: **NAAYAAAB** (Arshad) 1, Sea Of Cortez (Chetan G) 2, Glorious Days (Irvan) 3 and Areca Angel (Rajesh K) 4. Not run: Tonys Pet. 1-1/4, 3-3/4 and 3-1/2. 1m 14.60s. ₹734 (w), 106, 12 and 73 (p), SHP: 33, THP: 131, FP: 4,544, Q: 1,470, Trinella: 68,884, Exacta: 93,442 (carried over). Favourite: Aceros. Owner: Mr. Gautam Makhija. Trainer: Imtiaz Khan.

Monday races cancelled

HYDERABAD: The Stewards of the Hyderabad Race Club have resolved to cancel the races to be held on November 18 (Monday) due to paucity of acceptors.

Saturday races cancelled

BENGALURU: The Stewards of the BTC have decided to cancel the Saturday (Nov 16) races due to administrative reasons, except for the Royal Calcutta Turf Club Cup, which has been postponed to Friday (Nov 22).
There will be an inspection on Saturday by the jockeys, trainers and the Steward s.