

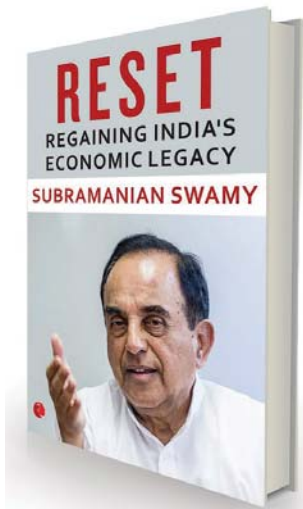


South African-born Nobel laureate J.M. Coetzee published three novels about a writer named John Coetzee at the turn of this century. These ‘autofictions’ are named *Boyhood*, *Youth* and *Summertime*.

Sharp economics offers glimpse of Swamy we never had



Mohan Guruswamy review



RESET: REGAINING INDIA'S ECONOMIC LEGACY by Subramaniam Swamy Rupa, ₹499

Subramanian Swamy is a brilliant man. His educational lineage says it all. He was educated at Delhi's Hindu College, Indian Institute of Statistics, Calcutta and Harvard University where he obtained a PhD in Economics at the age of twenty-six in 1965, where his guide was the Nobel Laureate Simon Kuznets. Soon after he joined the faculty as an assistant professor. While at Harvard he was also a resident tutor at Lowell House, an interesting position since it also entitles the appointee a set of rooms in the hall of residence with a wood fireplace. When I took this position in 1982, I got the same set of rooms. The coincidences didn't end there. When I was given a room at the now Harvard Institute of International Development (now Center for International Development) on 1737 Cambridge Street, I was allotted the room he once used. But coincidences happily stop there. I wouldn't claim anything close to Swamy's academic accomplishments and brilliance. When he was teaching economics at Harvard, Swamy caught the attention of a RSS ideologue, Madhavrao Mulay, who invited him back to India. In 1974 Swamy was found a place in the Rajya Sabha as a Jan Sangh member from UP. His tenure in the upper house ended when the Congress party had him expelled from Parliament for his now famous Scarlet Pimpernel act during the Emergency. Swamy didn't just invite Indira Gandhi's baleful attention. He also invited Atal Behari Vajpayee's baleful attentions. For some reason

Reset is a well-crafted study. It racily traces the history of India's economy, from the colonial exploitation to the lost opportunities due to the mindless Central Planning bureaucratic web, the missed industrialisation and the missed opportunities of UPA 1 and 2.

Vajpayee felt threatened by Swamy and his overt ambitions. Swamy made few bones that he saw himself as a future Prime Minister. He could have been, if his temperament and overweening ambition didn't overtake him. But Vajpayee and Advani saw to it that Swamy left the BJP. Incidentally, such was Swamy's standing as an economist, the World Bank relied on a study by Harvard Professor Dwight Perkins and him to downgrade China's per capita GDP to entitle it for the concessional IDA credit. This also ensured that India's share of low cost IDA credit was almost halved. It is little wonder then that Chairman Deng Xiaoping received both of them in the Great Hall in Beijing. Swamy, like Perkins is a Mandarin speaker, and is also reputed as an expert on the Chinese economy. The government of India could have benefited much by listening to him on this experience, but Arun Jaitley saw to it that he didn't get Modi's ear. If he did perhaps the Indian economy wouldn't be in the mess it is in now. In *Reset: Regaining India's Economic*

Legacy, Swamy quite articulately and even brilliantly explains the reasons for India's present predicament. He confirms what most economists of any standing have been saying. The economy is tanking. He writes that the "decline in GDP growth will continue into this financial year; dropping to below even the 5.8 percent annual equivalent Q1 rate". Indeed it is. The true GDP growth many suspect is even lower than that. To buttress that Swamy quotes another Subramaniam (Arvind) who has discovered post exit perspicacity to opine that growth may actually be about 2.5 percent less than officially claimed. To be sure Swamy doesn't see any optimism in the immediate horizon. To buttress this feeling, he helpfully quotes Dr Rathin Roy, till recently a member of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, that the novice Finance Minister has fudged the budget figures and that for the "Budget Estimates (BE) to be credible, revenue receipts will need to rise by a whopping 1.1 percent of the GDP, while the Union Budget just allows for 0.12 percent increase!" *Reset* is a well-crafted and articulated study of what ails the India economy. It racily traces the history of India's economy, from the colonial exploitation to the lost opportunities due to the mindless Central Planning bureaucratic web, the missed industrialisation and the missed opportunities of UPA 1 and 2. It has none of the "I think and I believe" stuff Indian thinkers and leaders are prone to. It is replete with data to support every conclusion and doesn't mince

words. This is the Swamy we never had. However, the useful part of the book effectively ends at page 171. Then there is a sixteen-page appendix; I suspect an afterthought, "Towards A New Ideology of Integral Humanism" which is a restatement of accumulated RSS gibberish and some notions propounded by its leading thinkers like Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. It concludes "Now in 2019, India's GDP is the third largest in the world after USA and China. India has the potential to move ahead of China in the next ten years and then challenge the USA because of Indian demonstrated capacity to innovate new technologies for faster growth". The last great RSS innovation of new technologies was when the "nuclear physicist" Dr Murli Manohar Joshi in 1996 discovered Ramar Pillai Ramar from a Tamil Nadu village who claimed to be able to transmute water to gasoline by a herbal formula that he claimed was the result of a miraculous bush *Boswellia ovalifoliolata*. Thanks to Joshi, Pillai obtained 20 acres of land to cultivate his bush. But in fact it turned out that he was using sleight of hand to substitute kerosene for the liquid he claimed to have derived from the bush. In October 2016 Pillai and an associate were convicted of fraud and sentenced to three years RI. *The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.*

The power and pathos of Sonagachi's mysterious world

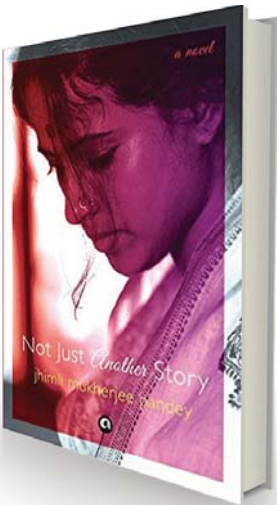


Devi Kar review

There is something acutely poignant about the image of an ambitious mother grooming her daughter for her first night which she hopes will be the beginning of a successful career in sex. It is through such images that the reader learns the story of three generations of sex workers. The first, Saraju, was abducted from a refugee camp as a child and forced into the sex trade that flourishes in Sonagachi — the mysterious red-light district of Kolkata. The author of *Not Just Another Story*, Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey, is a journalist by profession and journalists are forever looking for "stories" — practically on a daily basis. But, as the title of the novel proclaims, this is not just another story. It all began when the author set out deter-

mined on her quest to get a new angle on the children who featured in the award-winning documentary film, *Born into Brothels*. Her 500-word article was duly carried by her paper but the seeds of this novel were sown then. The multiple trips that she made to Sonagachi threw up fresh experiences every single time and these were woven into the fabric of the novel. Perhaps it needed a woman — an intrepid but also a curious and sensitive one — to write this story with the empathy that it deserves. Even the lanes and bylanes of Sonagachi have intricate divisions of class and hierarchy of relationships. The residents of this area go through the usual ups and downs of life and the emotions that are demonstrated by "regular" family members also bubble up in the Sonagachi "families". Anger, jealousy, fear, stoicism, kindness, generosity, petulance, despair, ambition and more — the full range of emotions is displayed adroitly in the stories of the three women and their associates. Society in Sonagachi comprises females of various ages. There is the child

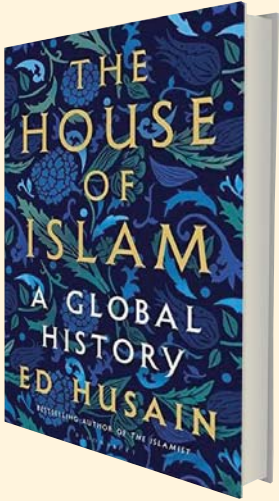
who is to be broken in, the novice who is in the process of learning the skills of her trade, the sought-after expert who is at the peak of her career, the veteran who mentors and then there is the spent senior who leads a



NOT JUST ANOTHER STORY by Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey Aleph, ₹399

retired life. It is a woman-centric book filled with power and pathos but the irony is that the world of Sonagachi has been built around the lust of men. Golapi's husband and in-laws sold her off to an agent so that he could marry a woman who would bring in a hefty dowry. When Golapi sobbed and wept at this betrayal she was told that she should be thankful that she had escaped death by "accident" (many women die this way) and now she should shed her inhibitions and learn to enjoy her new life. Saraju had tried to educate her daughter Malati and protect her from her own plight. But Malati was lured by the promise of a more comfortable and even glamorous world and little did she realise that she would be set up with three starving men and that her first earning would be from a gang rape. Unlike her mother Saraju, Malati didn't want her daughter Lakshmi to be "saved" by education even when she was offered the chance. "You will never understand our life, our reality," she told the potential "saviours". She doggedly maintained that no one could escape from this life and earn

elsewhere. It was therefore best to accept this truth and make the most of it. The author begins the novel with her discovery of the child Lakshmi of the famed documentary in one of the affluent neighbourhoods of Kolkata. Malati's daughter was now a respectable, self-possessed adult whom everyone knew as Anjali. Her story never made it to the newspaper — Jhimli the writer kept her word. The author learned that it was Malati's daughter Lakshmi alias Anjali, who had painstakingly learned to see "the truth of a man" and scaled great heights in the lucrative and relatively genteel profession of a sophisticated man were happy to shell out generously to enjoy her company. Read this book if you wish to explore the little understood world of the sex workers of Sonagachi. In the process you will see a different side of the culturally acclaimed city of Kolkata and you will also learn that "rich or poor, men are men". *The writer is a veteran school educator based in Kolkata*



THE HOUSE OF ISLAM: A GLOBAL HISTORY by Ed Husain Bloomsbury, ₹2,304

Guide to Islam doesn't answer some questions

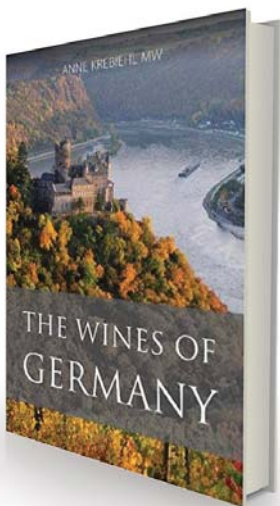
Mohammed Anas

review

What is the Muslim belief? What is Islam? How have Muslims lived over the years? When did the phenomenon of Islamism enter the Muslim world? How did it find acceptance and resistance within the community? How did organisations like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) come into being and how were they accepted or rejected by them? How do and how should the non-Islamic (outside) world and the West look at Islam and Muslims? Ed Husain, Britain-based radical-turned-scholar, ventures to answer all these questions and helps readers understand the *House of Islam* (the Islamic way of life and its worldview) in his book of the same name. Husain, whose earlier work, *The Islamist*, was a best-seller, has been associated with Quilliam, a British think tank dedicated to promote dialogue among religions and champion moderate interpretations of them. In *House of Islam*, Husain applies the curiosity of a layman rather than the convictions of a theologian to understand Islam, its history and its followers. He heralds his approach with a quote of Averroes, the apostle of reasoning among Islamic philosophers, who comforted his weeping disciples that even if people burn books, ideas transcend aeons to reach the minds of thinking people. It is these ideas with which Husain tries to convey and bust many a myth about the birth and travel of Islam from Mecca to the rest of the world. For Husain, Islam is essentially a religion of philanthropes, even though conflicts of myriad hues inflicted the world of Islam from the very beginning of the post-Prophetic period. He quotes the Prophet, "Islam began as a stranger. One day, it will again return to being a stranger." The Prophet's prediction finds echoes in tomes of literature and journalistic endeavours produced to subtly call for the reinterpretation of Islam and sternly demonise Islam and its followers because of the birth of extremist organisations in West Asia, Africa and Asia. Husain sees rise of such organisations as direct result of the West-incited conflicts in the Muslims world and the literalist explanation of the religious texts by orthodox *ulema* (clerics). "Saudi influence... or Wahhabism (a subset of Sunni Muslims based on teaching of 18th-century Saudi scholar Abdul Wahab)... led to such interpretations," diagnoses Husain. Before Wahhabism devoured them, Muslims, Husain writes, lived a life that was rich, diversified and cosmopolitan during the period of the Ottomans. He quotes Oxford historian John Darwin to illustrate this glimpse of the past. "The cultural life of Islam (in the Ottoman Empire and beyond) was strikingly cosmopolitan. An educated man might seek his fortune anywhere between the Balkans and Bengal." The onslaught of Wahhabism, combined with the Ottomans' own decay because of orthodox clergy, squeezed this cosmopolitan spirit out of Islam. Many years later, after the fall of Muslim empires in all continents of the world, Islam, as the Prophet predicted, stares at being a stranger. In addition, it's viewed through the prism of ideologies of outfits like Al Qaeda and ISIS by outsiders. Lawrence of Arabia (the British archaeologist, Army officer, military theorist, diplomat, and writer, who coaxed various Arab tribes to revolt against the Ottoman Turks) promised the same Arab kingdom to all these tribal leaders. "We (the West) actively buttressed Wahhabism in the last century against Sufism (did we even know the difference?), and now we tear our hair in despair as Wahhabist intolerance spreads across the globe. More fighters are joining the jihadist conflicts and targeting even Muslims living in the West," rues Husain. For Husain, the Ottoman Empire was epitome of moderate Islam as it was based on teachings of most famous mystic of Muslim world, Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, whose teachings are an anathema to radicalism and make Islam attractive to non-followers of the faith. "The Ottomans' fall gave birth to Islamism as the fall of the German-Austrian Empire led to the rise of Nazism, and the fall of the Russian Empire resulted in the birth of Communism," notes Husain. To Husain, the remedy to problems of the Muslim world lies in shunning the literalist path of extremists (read Wahhabism) and following the ways of mystics like Rumi. "We have to douse the flames of fire burning the Middle East... it's the battle of ideas that we have to win before it's too late," he warns. Right from the page 1 of the book, it's clear that Husain is trying to introduce Islam primarily to the West and then to non-Muslims across the globe. But, as Husain finds fault in the West's understanding of others, his own understanding of Islam and solutions to problems in the Muslim world is wrought with flaws too. He blames the Lawrence of Arabia for bringing the fall of his favourite Ottoman Empire. He is perhaps correct, but what he forgets to note is that Lawrence was a scholar and perhaps must have read Rumi too. He purposely sided with the marauding Arab tribes who were mostly followers of Wahhabism. Besides, as was then and as is today, it is among the policies of the West to sow seeds of conflicts by cashing in on schisms and factionalisms in the Muslim world, especially in the Middle East. So, what incentive does the West have to mend its ways? Husain went on even to propose a united Middle East, with Israel a part of it. Those who daily follow news from the Middle East and sees Israeli policies towards fellow Arabs, Palestinians in particular, may chuckle about it, if not simply jeer at this idea. *The House of Islam* is a must-read book for those who want an easy understanding of Islam, but for those who are already inside the house will have second thoughts before letting it enter their shelves.

Vermouth is back! Tips for Christmas tipples

Henry Jeffreys essay



THE WINES OF GERMANY by Anne Krebiehl Classic Wine Library, £30

It's telling that perhaps the best wine book of last year, *Amber Revolution* by Simon Woolf, was self-published, though you'd never guess from the quality of the design, photography or editing. Wine books are a tough slog for publishers unless they're written by one of the big four: Clarke, Johnson, Robinson and Spurrier (sounds like a firm of provincial solicitors). Hugh Johnson wrote the first *World Atlas of Wine* in 1971. Since the 1998 edition he has been, in his words, "progressively passing the baton" to Jancis Robinson. It's astonishing how much has changed; early editions were little more than France, Germany, Italy, sherry and port. Now this eighth edition (Mitchell Beazley, £50) contains maps of Croatia, Lebanon, Virginia and — a contender for the birthplace of wine — Georgia (the country, that is). It's a beautiful object that no serious wine-lover will want to be without. A little more specialist is *Italy's Native Wine Grape Terroirs* by Ian d'Agata (University of California Press, £40), an in-depth look at how the country's myriad indigenous grape varieties fit into its varied landscape. I enjoyed it for the writer's gloriously circumloquacious style

and occasional swipes at fellow wine writers, including Jancis Robinson: It has been written that Erbamata is identical to the Verdealba cultivar [Robinson, Harding and Vouillamoz, 2012], but no doubt through a failing of mine, I have found no mention in any peer-reviewed scientific paper — the minimal acceptable standard in any serious scientific community. It's like the letters page of the TLS, Meow! The Infinite Ideas series publishes the sort of books that Faber would have done under the editorship of Julian Jeffs. My pick of this year's catalogue is Anne Krebiehl's *The Wines of Germany* (Classic Wine Library, £30), a timely guide to a country whose wines, including its reds, just seem to get better and better. For many beer fans, particularly in Britain, lager is that nasty fizzy stuff, sold through amusing adverts featuring laconic Australians, dancing bears or cheeky cockneys. But it has just as interesting a story as more celebrated beers such as IPA, as Mark Dredge explains in *A Brief History of Lager* (Kyle Books, £14.99). The first two thirds, featuring figures such as Jacob Christian Jacobsen of Carlsberg fame, are riveting; but inevitably

the story slows with the mergers and acquisitions that have seen the rise of Big Beer. Dredge, however, is no snob and recognises lagers such as Heineken for what they are: tasty, reliable, well-balanced miracles of brewing. Next up is *Just the Tonic: A Natural History of Tonic Water* by Kim Walker and Mark Nesbitt (Kew Publishing, £18). Well-researched and lavishly produced, it looks at how a malaria cure from South America ended up becoming an ingredient in Britain's favourite mixed drink, the gin and tonic. Amusing fact: Oliver Cromwell died of malaria, which could have been prevented if he hadn't refused quinine as a "Popish powder". *A Spirited Guide to Vermouth* by Jack Adair Bevan (Headline, £6.99) was recommended to me

by no less a figure than Nigella Lawson. Like Howkins with sherry, Bevan is on a mission to revitalise the reputation of his drink. He's a knowledgeable guide to the worldwide vermouth renaissance, mixing history, tips for how to make your own, and cocktail recipes. One question, though: is it pronounced in English vermouth or vermouth? Readers, let me know how you say it. Another drink that's had a hell of a time recently is cider, from a favourite of the aristocracy in the 17th century to that of teenagers in bus shelters when I was growing up. Happily the high quality end has exploded in recent years. The young cider merchant Felix Nash has become an evangelist for a drink that should have more in common with wine than beer. Spend some time with him and you can't help but be swept up in his enthusiasm. His book, *Fine Cider* (Dog & Bone, £16.99), is the next best thing. And finally, in his thorough and lucid *Whisky Dictionary* (Mitchell Beazley, £15), Ian Wisniewski has done the hard work for 100 lazier drinks writers, Thanks Ian, we owe you one! *By arrangement with the Spectator*

The set of all proteins created and used by an organism

A college dormitory organised around a particular ethnic, cultural or political theme

SUNDAY INTERVIEW

‘I was very upset, felt cheated,’ says NCP MLA Rajendra Shingne

NCP MLA RAJENDRA SHINGNE was one of the few legislators who were present during the dramatic swearing-in ceremony of BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis and NCP leader Ajit Pawar at Raj Bhavan. Speaking with **BHAGWAN PARAB**, Mr Shingne, who is a former Cabinet minister in the state, expressed his shock and horror at the turn of events this morning. Edited excerpts:

Did you have any idea that things would take such a drastic turn?

I had absolutely no inkling of what was in store for me on Saturday. In my long political life, I never thought I would be treated in such a misleading manner.

Could you explain the chain of events that unfolded?

It all started when I received a call from Ajit at midnight. He asked me to reach Dhananjay Munde’s bunga-

low on Saturday morning. He said he wanted to discuss something important with us. As it was the directive of a top party leader, I reached Mr Munde’s B4 bungalow by 7 am. Some MLAs were already waiting there. Within 15 minutes, some more MLAs reached there. At 7.45 am, we were told that a meeting had been fixed at some place and we were asked to reach there. We had no idea where they were taking us. But as soon as we reached the Raj Bhavan, we felt that something is amiss. From there on, we started getting restless.

What exactly happened at Raj Bhavan?

We were asked to sit in the hall at Raj Bhavan. Within five minutes, Devendra Fadnavis reached, along with Chandrakant Patil and Girish Mahajan. Ajit was also present. After some time, the governor arrived and immediately administered the oath of office of the chief minister to Mr Fadnavis. It was fol-

After the swearing-in ceremony, I immediately left the Raj Bhavan and headed for Sharad Pawar’s residence. I apprised Pawar about the events at the Raj Bhavan. I also explained to him my stand.

lowed by the swearing-in of Ajit Pawar as the deputy chief minister. The oath ceremony ended in a flash.

How many MLAs were present at the Raj Bhavan?

We were about 10 or 11 of us. I had a brief talk with some of them, but even they didn’t have any idea of what was happening.

Was Dhananjay Munde also with you? Did you have a talk with him?

When we had gone to Mr



Munde’s bungalow in the ceremony, attended by BJP NCP MLA Rajendra Shingne

morning, he was not present. Even when we reached Raj Bhavan, we did not see him.

Who all were there at the swearing-in ceremony?

It was a very small and brief

leaders, NCP MLAs and the governor. Mr Fadnavis was present, along with his mother and wife, Ajit was accompanied by his wife and son Parth.

So what was your initial reaction when you realised

that it was the swearing-in ceremony?

I was very upset. I was simmering with anger. We felt cheated. I never thought that I would have to face such an act of betrayal.

After the ceremony, what was the scene like?

I did not wait there for long. After the swearing-in ceremony, I immediately left the Raj Bhavan and headed for Sharad Pawar’s residence. I apprised Mr Pawar about the events at the Raj Bhavan. I also explained to him my stand.

Now that it is clear that the NCP is heading for a split. What will be your next move?

There is no question of quitting the party. I hope others will also come back to the party soon. I will always stand by Mr Pawar. We will abide by whatever decision he takes.

Bring seniors back into policy discourse



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

In the public discourse of India there is an invisible — the elderly and the infirm. In the youth-focussed policy drive that obsesses us as a nation we tend to forget our senior citizens. To reap the benefit of our demographic dividend the concentration is mainly on the young and the fulfillment of their elementary requirements to enhance national productivity. However, here are some numbers that provide a reality check. As per the Population Census of 2011 there are nearly 10.4 crore elderly persons (aged 60 years or above) in India; 5.3 crore females and 5.1 crore males. According to a report released by the United Nations Population Fund and Help Age India, the number of elderly persons is projected to grow to 17.3 crores by 2026. To put these statistics into perspective, the total population of France is 6.7 crores, Britain another 6.7 crores, Sweden is one crore and four lakhs and Bangladesh is 16.3 crores.

As many as 71 per cent of India’s senior citizens reside in rural areas while 29 per cent live in urban areas almost mirroring the rural urban mix of our population. The old-age dependency ratio rose from

10.9 per cent in 1961 to 14.2 per cent in 2011 for the whole of India. The most conjoint disability among the aged persons is locomotor and visual disability. The state-wise break up of our elderly population reveals that Kerala has the maximum proportion of elderly people at 12.6 per cent of its population followed by Goa at 11.2 per cent and Tamil Nadu at 10.4 per cent. All these figures would have significantly grown since the Census of 2011.

Once upon a time, not too long ago, the stretched family structure ensured that seniors resided not only with their families but even brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts in neighbouring homes. Everyone was close at hand for any predicaments such as health issues or even foreseen or unforeseen bereavements. The societal fabric was suitably knitted and proper regard was given to elders. This arrangement facilitated elders to lead realistically content lives with barely any anxiety as they had the conviction that somebody would look after them as and when required. Whenever there were some health problems for a senior, the entire extended family would run around

to attend to all their necessities, rendering medical to personal assistance. With perfect understanding on caring and sharing the duties, the elders did not feel let down or lonely.

With the fragmentation of the joint family organisation and the rise in the number of nuclear families, elders in India often find themselves left alone, neglected and depressed even if they are residing with either their children or even grandchildren. The strain and stresses of the contemporary realm keep family members preoccupied with their own drudgery and education with hardly any time, and occasionally, even proclivity to spend time with the older members of their families.

For elderly people whose offspring have emigrated abroad, the situation is worse. Bereft of the presence of any other person in the household, they try to while away their time with a few errands and lonely walks until such time that their failing health permits. With rising age comes reduced movement and bad health confines them indoors with only the idiot box for solace.

The conventional Indian ethos and the longstanding joint family arrangement had for centuries played a cardinal role in preserving the socio-economic well-being of our greying and greyed venerables. However, with swift transformation in the societal milieu and the institutionalisation of the nuclear family frameworks in the past couple of decades, now elderly people have increasingly

become vulnerable to emotional physical and financial insecurities. With the bulk of our populace being less than 30 years of age, the trials and tribulations of our senior citizens have not been given thoughtful deliberation.

Living solitary is more often than not cited as the rationale for loneliness. Census 2011 delineates that almost 15 million of our ageing citizens live all alone and about to three-fourths of them are women. One out of every seven of our old folks live in a home where there is not one person below the age of 60 years.

Loneliness does not, however, and necessarily, stem from being unaccompanied or living solitary. Even people living alone can be wholly content if they are organised and have a routine of activities that keep them occupied. Conversely, you may be living with family or in the middle of people and still feel lonesome. This lonesomeness stems from feeling that no one cares for you and you have no one to shower your affection on. A person begins to acquire negative energy when there is no one to converse with.

Academic studies reveal that over 65 per cent of old people are poor with no sources of known income. A total of 35 per cent still have wealth, assets, reserves, investments, bequests and, above all, empathetic kids. However, juxtaposed against the fact that India has a population of 100 million old people and that the number will touch 324 million by 2050 — equivalent to the

population of many nations, the lack of a social security architecture becomes galling.

What is most unfortunate is that notwithstanding their financial status, most elderly people face maltreatment in one form or the other, according to a study released to mark the United Nations’ World Elder Abuse Awareness Day observed on the 15th of June each year.

The study reveals that due to lack of knowledge about their entitlements in old age, countless persons are obliged to live in callous conditions. With a momentous surge in the population of the elderly, bone-chilling horror stories of elder abuse bound. The tragic thing is that a majority of older people are acquiescent to their fates.

With the average age of the NDA/BJP government being 60 years, it is necessary that a holistic policy for the continuing physical and mental well being of our senior citizens backed by significant resources should be put in place. The National Policy of Senior Citizens, 2011, a laudable initiative that unfortunately has remained on paper, requires an update and proper implementation. Most of all, it just takes giving some respect and care to the elderly to make their day. We owe it to them.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal.

Twitter handle @manishtewari



Dilip Cherian

Dilli Ka Babu

BABUS AS MENTORS FOR POOR KIDS

From now on, civil service trainees will have an additional role under the Modi sarkar’s “Nurture the Future” programme, which was started recently. Under the programme, civil service probationers of the 2019 batch will have to adopt adolescents and mentor them throughout their educational and professional lives.

The government has reportedly identified 425 children from 11 villages in Gujarat and associated them with the 425 officer trainees from 20 civil services, including IAS, IPS, IFS and others. The mentors and the mentees have been linked through their Aadhaar numbers to enable them to stay connected. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who launched the initiative, believes that providing mentorship to underprivileged children studying in class 10 or above will instil a sense of social responsibility in the babus.

Sources say that this “pilot” project will be expanded to other parts of the country and other government training academies to adopt. It’s hard to say whether this initiative will flourish or fade away, but it is a step in the right direction. Kudos to the sarkar on attempting this.

THE PRICE OF DISSENT

Kannan Gopinathan, who quit the IAS to protest the lockdown in Jammu and Kashmir, has reportedly been served with a chargesheet by the ministry of home affairs. He had quit in August citing “the denial of freedom of expression to the people of Jammu and Kashmir”, a move that had stirred up a storm on social media platforms.

According to sources, Mr Gopinathan, who was the collector of Dadra and Nagar Haveli when he resigned, has been accused of insubordination. Interestingly, since Mr Gopinathan did not own a home and lived in a rented place, the chargesheet was emailed to him. The charges against him relate to his stint in Dadar and Nagar Haveli and include “failure to put up the file in time, not completing underground cabling project on time, not submitting tour report for relief work in Kerala, not applying for PM excellence award, and submitting the file directly to administrator.” He has also been accused of creating an adverse image of the government through his interactions with the media. Clearly, leaving the IAS can be as difficult for some people as joining it!

Love them, hate them ignore them at national level, is the babu guarantee and Dilip’s belief. Share significant babu escapades dilipcherian@hotmail.com

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle Indianisation of Muslims opposed

NEW DELHI, NOV. 23. Home Minister Y.B. Chavan today decided in the Rajya Sabha the bogie of “Indianisation” of Muslims and maintained that the best way to avoid communal riots in the country “is to prevent them.”

Intervening in the sever-hour debate and Ahmedabad riots, Mr. Chavan said the talk of Indianisation was the “worst crime that can be committed in this country. And the worst that can happen.”

While agreeing that there could be a few unpatriotic elements both in Hindu and Muslim communities, these exceptions could not be taken to brand the entire community as unpatriotic, he said. During the debate several members accused the Gujarat Government of negligence and complacency and demanded resignation of the Chief Minister.

Mr. Chavan made it clear at the outset that he was not holding brief either for or against the Gujarat Government in the riots.

Modi should reinstate SPG cover to Gandhis

Aakar Patel



Security in our part of the world is a prestige issue. Our politicians, judges, governors and generals take pride in having an escort dedicated to protecting them. And the bigger and flashier and more ostentatious this escort the better and more prestigious.

For a few individuals, however the security threat is real and it is constant. Indira Gandhi was murdered 35 years ago, on October 31, 1984. Her 25-year-old bodyguard Beant Singh shot her three times with his 0.38 service revolver. After the Prime Minister fell to the ground, the other bodyguard, 22-year-old Satwant Singh, shot the defenceless 67-year-old grandmother 30 times with his Sten machine gun. Seven bullets hit her abdomen, three her chest and one her heart.

Sonia Gandhi was home and according to press reports, on hearing the gunshots Sonia ran down the stairs screaming “Mummy! Oh my god, mummy!”

After this murder, the government formed the Special Protection Group for Rajiv Gandhi. This was modelled on the US Secret Service, which was set up in 1865, the year that President Abraham Lincoln, a very divisive figure at the time, was murdered. The US Secret Service protects the current President and Vice President and their families, and former Presidents and their families, but also major figures from Opposition parties.

In 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was murdered by a 17-year-old girl at a rally in Tamil Nadu. She was wearing a bomb with the explosive RDX and her detonation killed over a dozen people. I do not know what the SPG was doing at the time but if my memory serves me right, the responsibility was put on the martyred leader, saying he was fine with allowing people come close to him. If there is a vulnerable family anywhere in the world, it is the Gandhis.

In India there is apparently no specific list of people the SPG protects unlike the US Secret Service and it is up to the current government to decide who gets what level of protection. Now the Narendra Modi government has decided to take away the SPG protection from the Gandhi family. After a Congress request that this be reconsidered the government said there was “no going back on the decision, the Congress can keep asking”.

The government has said in Parliament that security to the Gandhis has “not been withdrawn”. But that is a meaningless defence because total removal of security is not the accusation standing against the government. The accusation is that the Indian government is deliberately endangering the lives of the members of a vulnerable family by downgrading their security. This accusation should have been met with reassurances from the Prime Minister providing a guarantee of safety. This he chose not to do.

The second thing the government claimed in Parliament is that the downgrading of security was not the result of a political decision. This will be believed only by those people who know nothing about how government in India works. The third claim by the government is that the downgrading was done because of a reduction in threat perception. In this case it was obligatory on the government to put out the material which proved that this was so. This again it did not do.

This downgrading will have the effect of endangering the people being protected because even SPG cover is not all that we think it is. I met Sonia Gandhi at 10, Janpath a few months ago. I had to give the number of the taxi I was in and it was allowed inside the compound (I don’t remember the car itself being checked). Other than leaving my phone behind at the reception I do not remember any specific security measure or check that was more thorough than what we go through at the airport. It did not seem to me that even SPG cover was particularly strict.

The times when I met Narendra Modi, he was not in the SPG category, and this is a few years ago, but I am certain he was given Z+ cover. Again, this was not particularly different from what we are used to and there were vulnerabilities. The fact is that in India systems are weak and frail and can be exploited. I went to meet Omar Abdullah in Srinagar a couple of

years ago. He was not yet in and I was briefly checked and sent into his office. It turned out he did not want to meet me but as I was leaving the office and turning around a corner, I literally ran into him in the corridor.

At a meeting of the Editors Guild that I was present in around 20 years ago, L.K. Advani, who was an invitee to our group, walked in after we had all entered and were sitting around a table. Mr Advani and Arun Jaitley joined us but none of us had been checked before going in and here was an individual protected at Z+ category level who was totally vulnerable.

I visited the White House more than 30 years ago (when Ronald Reagan was President). The President was in the building but other than providing proof of identity and a basic scan there was no other screening. Something similar was the case when I met Israeli President Shimon Peres in Tel Aviv. It is hard to imagine that such levels of protection keep the most vulnerable permanently secure.

As I said, security cover is a prestige issue. Removing it from someone is an act of showing them their place. But this is a dangerous game that the Narendra Modi government is playing. It should quietly reinstate the SPG cover to the Gandhis.

Aakar Patel is a writer, columnist and executive director of Amnesty International (India)



‘Selene’, Kate Beckinsale’s name in *Underworld* (2003), is the moon in Greek mythology

OUR CRITIC'S RATING ▶ Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

Funny, exciting, sad, romantic & silly

Frozen II
(U) 103 min
CAST: Kristen Bell, Idina Menzel, Josh Gad
DIRECTORS: Chris Buck, Jennifer Lee
RATING: ★★★

NELL MINOV



Frozen II has an autumnal palette, with russet and gold setting the stage for an unexpectedly elegiac tone in the follow-up to one of Disney’s most beloved animated features. Even the irrepressibly cheerful snowman Olaf (Josh Gad), now permafrosted so even the warmest hugs don’t melt him, is worried about change as the leaves turn orange and float down from tree branches. He is confident, though, that as soon as he gets older he will understand everything. After all, that’s what he expects from Elsa (Idina Menzel), Anna (Kristen Bell), and Kristoff (Jonathan Groff). Anna reassures him (in song, of course) that yes, some things change, but some things are forever. She tells him that even when you don’t know the answers you can always just do the next right thing, and that will help.

Frozen II is funny, exciting, sad, romantic and silly. It has great songs and a hilarious recap of the first movie, and then it is all of that all over again. Plus an extra scene “all” the way at the end of the credits. This sequel can seem overstuffed at times, and tries a bit too hard to replicate the magic of the first film, but it is impressively willing to engage with some complicated issues in a frank manner that is

accessible to children and insightful even for adults. It throws a lot at us, like rock monsters, a cute fire lizard, and a magnificent water horse (the latter two likely to appear on holiday gift wish lists). The settings are gorgeously imagined and wonderfully inviting. Anna has a sensational new wardrobe. We learn family secrets, some comforting, some painful. Characters confront some of the most daunt-

ing human questions about loss, change, trust and how we can best heal the wounds of the past. In a charming flashback, we see the princesses as little girls, playing together happily and being put to bed by loving parents. The king tells them a bedtime story from his own childhood about visiting an enchanted forest with his father to celebrate the completion of a dam the Arendellians built to help the indigenous people. But the gathering turned into an attack. The king was killed, and only the young prince survived, rescued by a mysterious character. Ever since, the enchanted forest has been barricaded by a powerful mist. The girls learn from their mother’s lullaby that the river may hold some answers about what happened. “Dive down deep into her sound, but not too deep or you’ll be drowned,” the Queen sings. “When all is lost, then all is found.” It’s surprising how dark lullabies can get, a character points out. In the present day, the sisters live happily in the castle, enjoying family time (Olaf is the Charades MVP) and caring for their community. But Elsa hears voices calling to her from the enchanted forest. She is afraid, but also thrilled. It is an invitation she struggles to admit that she wants to accept, leading to this film’s belter ballad, “Into the Unknown.” “I’ve had my adven-

ture/I don’t need something new ... don’t you know there’s part of me that loves to go into the unknown-ow-own.” And so, after a warning from Kristoff’s “love expert” friend Pabbie (Ciaran Hinds) and Olaf’s not-always-helpful fun facts commentary along the way, they reach the enchanted forest. There, they meet new characters, sing some more songs, sort out some misunderstandings and try to protect each other. They confront the consequences of bad, even tragic choices made by their family. Parents often ask me why children, especially preschoolers and middle-schoolers, like to watch the same movies over and over. I tell them that when everything around you seems to be drastically changing on a daily basis and you barely know yourself anymore, it can be a great comfort to have a movie friend that’s the same every time. Frozen II is destined to be one of those movies children will want to see dozens of times. It will reward repeat viewings with both its reassuring messages about responding to change with courage and curiosity, and its challenge to understand the mistakes of the past so we can begin to work on “the next right thing” together.

By arrangement with Asia Features

A notch above pedestrian!

Pagalpanti
(U/A) 149 min
CAST: Anil Kapoor, John Abraham, Arshad Warsi, Saurabh Shukla, Ileana D’Cruz, Kriti Kharbanda, Urvashi Rautela
DIRECTOR: Anees Bazmee
RATING: ★

ARNAB

BANERJEE

It must be quite a task for anyone to kickstart a film project with mega stars in attendance and not know how to go about making an entertainer. But then, if the producer is more than willing and the cast is all agog to be part of such a show, who wouldn’t risk it? In other words, it’s quite understandable that director Anees Bazmee would be clueless about parading dumbness with such zip and helm in a film like *Pagalpanti* without a script, and pass it off for a clever marketing gimmick. Perhaps the title seems quite apt to suggest a comedy that is more pedestrian than one that has any semblance of an entertaining masala film, since Bazmee’s 149-minute movie dives into nothingness right from the word go. The story (if there is a need to name a series of impromptu gags as a proper tale) isn’t as flimsy

as it sounds, right from the get-go. A comedy where there are three men, considered as losers in their lives by everyone, and who are planning to get rich along with their girlfriends by fooling two gangsters and robbing their money, could well have been a fun ride if there was some proper writing moving ahead with bumbling characters and their misdeeds. One could still have put up with poor writing if the actors delivering them had some persuasive skills to make silliness look credible. What is even more painful is to see the nearly 50-year-old male actors (both John Abraham and Arshad Warsi) trying too hard to add zing to not-so-funny interchanges between them. There isn’t much to talk about over a storyline here, but just to give you the basic premise — Rajkishore (John Abraham) lives in London, and suffers from *saade saati* (the astrological

seven-and-a-half year long period of Saturn that gives a troublesome time to the individual who is going through it). He and his friends Chandu (Arshad Warsi) and Chunky (Pulkit Samrat) are unemployed vagabonds and end up getting into trouble wherever they seem to go. Rajkishore’s ill luck follows whosoever he comes in contact with. Chandu and Chunky join hands in the firecracker business but it goes bust and in flames. Literally. The three friends then decide to be together and recover their losses. Soon, when another of their major goof ups cost gangster Raja (Saurabh Shukla) a huge loss, he and his brother-in-law Wifi (Anil Kapoor) employ the trio to regain the damage caused. From there on, the plot starts wearing even thinner, alternat-

ing between a slapstick mode and jumping to songs and nonsensical elements (a ghost, a haunted villa, men getting stuck to glue, and so on) and never quite salvaging itself. The only time you cheer is when sexy Urvashi Rautela appears out of the blue in a sexy item song (“*Bimaar mera dil...*” a remix of a hit song from the 1980s) and lights up the screen. But it’s only a fleeting moment that is too short lived to register. It’s rather scary when you realise that an actor of Anil Kapoor’s calibre is trying to play a flashy second fiddle to some lesser-in-age (and otherwise in talent too) actors. But notwithstanding his loud mannerisms, the ageing actor is a spot-on depiction of a certain type of oddity who revels in adding his two-bit to any and every situation he finds himself in. He is the

only one besides Shukla who appears to be enjoying himself thoroughly. The film trusts its audience to infer its emptiness and no-brainer attitude. And so, a filthy rich Gujarati *bhagoda* (absconder) Neeraj Modi (you guessed it right — it is the renegade Indian Modi who flew out of the country) unexpectedly shows up as Mr Moneybags. The only difference is, unlike the Modi in real life, this one doesn’t have his way, and gets hoodwinked to the extent that he screams, “*Itna toh maine India ka bhi haal nahin kiya tha*” (Even I didn’t con India to such a degree the way I have been conned). There is no twist in the tale here; just a wee bit of patriotism thrown in to save the film from being completely derailed. And that’s not all. Even a man from Interpol too emerges to make the three unrefined idiots in the lead look like some sort of saviours — just to make us believe that beneath all those layers of uncouth behaviour resides a do-gooder soul not keen to settle scores, but resolve, reconcile and make peace. There’s no redemption, but does it matter when there’s no sign of anything worth redeeming in the first place? By this time, anyway, one has had enough of soporific scenes with dollops of childish ridiculousness, and one wants to rush out of the theatre.

A plateful of succulent taboos

Aamis (The Ravening)
(U/A) 108 min
CAST: Lima Das, Arghadeep Baruah, Neetali Das, Sagar Saurabh, Dilip Manash Das
DIRECTOR: Bhaskar Hazarika
RATING: ★★★

SUPARNA SHARMA

Bhaskar Hazarika, a National award-winning writer-director, doesn’t like to just challenge stereotypes, long-held beliefs and conventions, he relishes anatomising them to explore the deviant nestled within. That he does this in a seemingly humdrum, commonplace setting is what makes his bodacious cinematic adventures riveting and unforgettable. Certain scenes from his 2015 *Kothanadi* (The River of Fables), which won the National Award for best feature film in Assamese, still stalk me — scenes that don’t just illustrate his genius as a filmmaker, but also seethe with his politics. *Aamis*, Hazarika’s second feature film, is a much more audacious and difficult film to pull off. It’s a love story with a kick — one that gives “take a piece of me” stunning new meaning. It is bold in its concept and story and

very clever in its execution. Hazarika places his story and its main characters in a middle class setting where the ordinariness of life, the daily, repetitive, numbing routine seeks thrills. The film slowly seduces us with a cute and honourable love affair conducted around sumptuous meals and then, gently, serves a shocking plateful of taboos to chomp on. *Aamis*’ story and screenplay walk a very fine line, between revolting deviant behaviour and laughable absurdity, between farce and perversion to give us a tale of love that pulsates with the zeitgeist of our times. The story of *Aamis* is seemingly sweet and simple. In Guwahati, Dr Nirmali Saikia (Lima Das), a paediatrician, lives with her son, Piku, and husband Dr Dilip Saikia (Manash Das), who is mostly away, travelling around the state to save mankind, one epidemic at a time. On a lazy, relaxed Sunday, a college student from the neighbourhood, Sumon (Arghadeep Baruah), knocks on her door to help his senior who is writhing in pain, while vomiting and shitting. Sumon, a student of anthropology, is working on his PhD — meat-eating habits and traditions in the Northeast. They get talking, Sumon mostly, about his college’s Meat Club whose members reject all

processed meats and travel to great lengths in search of fresh meat of all kinds. “We buy, slaughter, cook and then enjoy it,” he says. There is a primal quality to their search, hunt, consumption, and Nirmali, the upright wife, mother and doctor, who has a mental block about eating with her hands, listens wide-eyed, intrigued by this strange adventure. She’ll try it, she says, as long as she can use a fork and a spoon. The soft meat of wild rabbit arrives first. And as she digs in, Sumon talks about Gandhipuk — the bug that stinks and whose piss is said to have hallucinogenic effects. While feeding her, observing her enthusiasm, beauty, the honesty of her reaction and her willingness to surrender to his offerings, to be his companion, muse, co-explorer, Sumon starts falling in love with Nirmali. They text each other, travel around sampling exotic meats, and it’s during these moments of banter and intimacy that a conversation about Sumon eating his pet rooster sets the tone for future adventures. Their connection, love is expressed and experienced through meat, and Nirmali soon begins to loathe vegetarian food. *Aamis* has two minor tangential strands — one of Nirmali’s friends, Jumi (Neetali Das), who is having an illicit affair, and the other of Sumon’s veterinarian

friend, Dr Elias (Sagar Saurabh), who keeps reminding him of what’s forbidden. Both try to create a moral fence for Sumon and Nirmali. But as Sumon says, there is no universal definition of what’s “normal”, what’s acceptable. And his list of stuff to try out is long — deer, elephant, monkey, dog, cat, lizards, worms, snakes, dragonflies... and the most tabooed of it all — bat meat. It ignites passions, leaving a heaviness between them, of having sinned together. And then Sumon decides to breach the last frontier in a shocking scene that is so intelligently written and calmly shot — given what transpires, it should have made me retch, but I laughed out loud and long. As a yellow casserole tiffin box travels back and forth, exchanging hands, an obsession begins to form... for a particular meat that is forbidden and orgasmic. In Assamese, *Aamis* means meat. And here meat is meat, of course, but it’s also a non-veg metaphor. It’s a substitute for sex, love-making. It stands for the forbidden — she’s forbidden for him, and he’s forbidden for her, sexually, and so they find a way to connect, touch, share a piece of each other. The film’s focus is a lot on Nirmali, and Lima Das, with her controlled, measured performance, marked by the slightest inflictions, reactions, sets the

mood and tone of scenes, the moment, the film. Arghadeep Baruah’s Sumon, with his boyish affection and obsession, frames her in a pool of glowing love. The film devotes a lot of time to cooking, eating, chatting, texting, and the screenplay, full of dialogue and detailed cooking and eating scenes, delivers it all with a beaming smile and a powerful comment on the politics of food. This is what gives Hazarika’s film heft and power. Meat is political, *Aamis* says. And then asks, why. It’s interesting to observe how Indian cinema is reacting to the violent churn of its spirit, humanity and enshrined values it’s being subjected to. Anand Patwardhan’s *Reason* (Vivek), to Lijo Jose Pellissery’s *Jallikattu*, from Nandita Das’ *Manto* to Chandraprakash Dwivedi’s *Mohalla Assi*, from Vishal Bhardwaj’s *Haider* to Meghna Gulzar’s *Raazi*, even Anubhav Sinha’s *Mulk* are among the few films that are challenging the mainstream narrative and arguing for equality, equanimity, individual freedoms, choices, and basic human rights. When the history of our current times is written, directors and writers like Bhaskar Hazarika can stand tall. Over what they will stand tall is the question their outlier films are asking.



A missed opportunity

SURESH KAVIRAYANI

In recent times, no other film got as much pre-release buzz as *George Reddy*. The film has no stars, no popular names, but still was hyped because of the name George Reddy. Reddy was a radical student leader in Osmania University. Director Jeevan Reddy brings back the 50-year-old story of George Reddy, who was killed by his opponents at the age of 25.

George Reddy

(U/A) 118 min
CAST: Sandeep Madhav, Muskan, Satya Dev, Abhay Bethiganti, Shatru, Manoj Nandam, Mahati and others
DIRECTOR: Jeevan Reddy
RATING: ★★★

The story unfolds in the early 1970s. George Reddy (Sandeep Madhav) after spending his childhood in Kerala, enters Osmania University, Hyderabad, to do his research in Science. The university is full of student politics, in which caste and religion play important roles. George Reddy is a brilliant student, but against the caste and feudal politics. He creates his own set of people and starts a fight with other student leaders dominant in the university. Within a short span of time, Reddy became popular not only in the university but also in society. Some of the leaders couldn’t digest the rise of George Reddy and they planned to stop him. Who planned and killed George Reddy and how students play a bigger role in society is the crux of the story. Director Jeevan Reddy earlier made *Dalam*, a realistic film for which he was appreciated. George Reddy, based on the life of a real character, nevertheless begins with a disclaimer that it is ‘inspired’ by George Reddy but has used some fiction for cinematic purposes. The film is also topical because George Reddy was the founder of the Progressive and Democratic Students Union (PDSU), currently under fire from the state, branded as Naxal. Reddy was a brilliant student, a gold medallist and also a boxer. There are a few films already made inspired by George Reddy that include Mani Ratnam’s *Yuva* where the character played by Suriya is inspired by him. Thammareddy Bharadwaj made a film *Alajadi* in 1989 loosely based on George Reddy’s life. He didn’t mention his real name in the film. The director’s attempt to show the student leader’s life is appreciated, but the narrative mode is not interesting. Though he did research, it’s not enough to project a young leader who rose like a star within a span of just six years. If the director had approached people like Thammareddy Bharadwaj, a senior filmmaker, who was also very close to George Reddy, to get more information about George, it might have helped. The film has some good moments here and there, but the director should have concentrated more on George and how he rose to the top. But he concentrates more on students fighting each other on some issues over and over again. He also didn’t touch upon Reddy’s Telugu connection, his Telugu father. There are more fictional rather than factual elements in the film. It is quite clear that the director wanted to cash in on George Reddy’s name, rather than coming up with a good, interesting and accurate narrative. The first half of the film is a bit interesting establishing George Reddy as a leader, but the second half is not up to the mark. Why the director goes on about the student elections throughout the second half is inexplicable. The climax scene is also not impressive. The director narrated the story through a girl called Muskan who wants to make a documentary on George and when she meets people, they speak about him. When it comes to the performances, Sandeep Madhav perfectly fits into the George Reddy’s role. One can understand that he has done lot of homework and also hard work to get into this role and it pays for him. He has proved that he is a bundle of talent with a bright future. Satya Dev, Shatru, Manoj Nandan, Chaitanya Krishna all act well. Shatru is good in a negative role. Many are new faces, but they all supported well. The highlight of the film is the background music by Suresh Bobbili. He elevated some scenes with his music. The second is the excellent cinematography by Sudhakar Yakkanti. Art director Gandhi should be appreciated for his perfect art work as he recreated the Osmania University of the late 60s and early 70s. The dialogues are good in parts and the popular line from George Reddy, ‘Jeena hain toh marna seekho, kadam kadam par ladna seekho’ comes in many times in the film. Jeevan Reddy succeeds in bring back old memories to the present generation, but he should have focused the narration on the leader’s life. While interesting in parts, as a whole, the makers rely more on the name of the slain student leader rather than the content of his life.



Spreading peace

Pope Francis arrived in Japan, bringing an anti-nuclear message to Nagasaki and Hiroshima. He will meet survivors of atomic bombing



I am more willing to fight for this country than in any other moment

— Lula da Silva
Former Brazil President



IN BRIEF

23 dead as unrest in Chile continues

Santiago: The death toll from violent unrest in Chile rose to 23 as the country entered its fifth week of social unrest. Looting and demonstrations took place in cities across the South American nation, and an agreement on a political roadmap that will see Chile draft a new constitution has halted neither the anger, nor the bloodshed. Furious Chileans have been protesting social and economic inequality, and against an entrenched political elite that comes from a small number of the wealthiest families in the country, among other issues. The crisis is the worst in three decades.

Japan, S. Korea agree to summit

Nagoya: Japan and South Korea agreed on Saturday to hold formal talks next month, taking a step towards improving relations strained by decades of acrimony over their wartime past and exacerbated by a simmering trade dispute. The decision to return to the table was announced at a Group of 20 (G20) meeting and came a day after Seoul made a last-minute decision to stick to a critical intelligence-sharing deal with Japan. The dramatic reversal — after months of worsening relations — was later hailed as a 'breakthrough' by South Korea. The dispute has its roots in a decades-old disagreement over compensation for South Korean labourers forced to work at Japanese firms during World War Two. It has deepened this year.

US loses military drone over Libya

Washington: US forces have lost an unarmed drone aircraft over Libya, where well-armed rebels are battling for power with a UN-recognised government, the Pentagon announced. "An unarmed US Africa Command remotely piloted aircraft was lost over Tripoli, Libya," the command said. No reason was given for the loss, and the Africa Command said it was under investigation. The command conducts drone operations in Libya "to assess the ongoing security situation and monitor violent extremist activity," it said. "These operations are critical to counter terror activity in Libya and are fully coordinated with appropriate government officials." The US drone loss came a day after forces loyal to Libya's rebel strongman Khalifa Haftar said they shot down an Italian drone in western Libya, flying in a zone under their control. US activities in the country have both monitored the conflict between the government and Haftar's forces, and the growing power of an Islamic State-allied jihadist cell in the southwest.



Anti-government protesters march in Bogota, Colombia. Colombia's main union groups and student activists called for a strike to protest the economic policies of Colombian President Ivan Duque government and a long list of grievances.

Duque vows social reforms after 3 cops die in Colombia

Bogotá placed under curfew as fresh demonstrations turn violent

Bogota, Nov. 23: Protesters picketed the home of Colombian President Ivan Duque, defying a curfew and the leader's promises of a 'national conversation' on social policies following massive anti-government demonstrations that have left three dead and dozens wounded.

Three police officers were killed and seven other people injured after an attack on a police station in southwestern Colombia. But city secretary Jaime Asprilla attributed the attack to armed groups in the area, and not to the protests against Duque.

"Starting next week, I will launch a national conversation to strengthen the current social policy agenda, working in a unit-

ed way with medium and long-term vision, which will allow us to close the social gaps," Duque said in a televised speech.

"This conversation will take place regionally with all the social and political sectors. I will use electronic media and participatory mechanisms so that we can all build a meaningful path of reform." The popularity of Duque's right-wing government — a key ally of the United States — has been on the wane since his election 18 months ago, as it deals with hosting 1.4 million refugees from neighboring Venezuela's economic meltdown as well as the complex fallout of a 2016 peace deal with FARC rebels and rampant drug trafficking.

There were arrests and clashes as trade unions, students, opposition parties and the South American country's indigenous organisations vent-



Ivan Duque

Hundreds of thousands of Colombians took to the streets in Bogota and other cities to protest Duque's economic, social and security policies, as part of a nationwide general strike.

There were arrests and clashes as trade unions, students, opposition parties and the South American country's indigenous organisations vent-

ed their anger. The protests come amid social upheaval across South America, as a wave of unrest over the past two months has battered governments in Chile, Bolivia and Ecuador.

Duque's statement came shortly after Bogota mayor Enrique Penalosa declared a nighttime curfew in the capital, following clashes between protesters and police in the southern part of the city of seven million earlier in the day. The president said he was stepping up the police presence and ordering the "deployment of joint patrols of police and army in the most critical places." But that didn't stop hundreds of people from showing up outside the president's house in

Bogota, singing the national anthem while banging pots and pans in a form of protest that is common in parts of Latin America, though not in Colombia.

The protesters dispersed peacefully about one hour after the 9:00 pm curfew began. Hundreds of demonstrators protested in cities across the country earlier in the day, following protests in the western Valle del Cauca department that defense minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo said had left three dead. Some 76 bus stations were attacked during the violence in Bogota, some of which were totally destroyed, and 79 buses were vandalised. Some 230 people were arrested.

— AFP

Hong Kong gears up for local polls

Hong Kong, Nov. 23: A Hong Kong university campus under siege for more than a week was a deserted wasteland on Saturday, with a handful of protesters holed up in hidden refuges across the trashed grounds, as the city's focus turned to local elections.

The siege neared its end as some protesters at Polytechnic University on the Kowloon peninsula desperately sought a way out and others vowed not to surrender, days after some of the worst violence since anti-government demonstrations escalated in June.

"If they storm in, there are a lot of places for us to hide," said Sam, a student, who was plotting his escape. Another protester, Ah Chung, clad in a face mask and a red Polytechnic University track suit, said he was prepared to stay for the duration. "I'll continue to stay here, but hopefully not forever," he said with a touch of humour.

The handful of protesters still visible on the campus were outnumbered by people seeking to provide assistance.

A social worker who would only give his name as Sendon said he had crossed paths with four protesters on Saturday and was concerned about their mental state.

"They've been in this highly stressful environment for so long, over 120 hours, and they have no easy way to release this stress," he said. "We're trying to urge them to come out in a gentle manner." Many of the remaining protesters were in hiding, fearful of possible arrest and wary of those

TRUMP TO VETO HONG KONG DEMOCRACY ACT

Washington, Nov. 23: US President Donald Trump on Friday indicated that he might veto the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act that was passed by both chambers of the Congress the House of Representatives and the Senate with near-unanimous support.

The US Congress on Wednesday had passed the legislation that would force the Trump administration to assess whether political unrest in the vital global financial hub justify changing its unique treatment under the US law. The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 that was passed would also require the secretary of state to certify at least once a year that Hong Kong still retains enough autonomy to warrant the special US trading consideration that bolsters its status as a world financial center.

The US treats semi-autonomous Hong Kong, which has its own legal and political systems, differently from the Chinese mainland when it comes to trade and export controls. The bill, if it becomes law, will demand greater scrutiny of its special status.

— PTI

urgency surrender, said Woo Kwok Wang, acting president of the university's student union.

— Reuters



A graffiti is seen on a wall on the campus of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University where dozens of pro-democracy protesters remain holed up.

— AFP

AMAZON SUES PENTAGON OVER MS DEAL

Washington, Nov. 23: Amazon is suing the Pentagon over a \$10 billion cloud-computing contract awarded to Microsoft.

Amazon said it filed a legal complaint with the US Court of Federal Claims seeking to challenge the decision. The complaint is sealed, but the company said earlier this month there was "unmistakable bias" on the government's part.

Amazon's competitive bid for the 'war cloud' project drew criticism from President Donald Trump, who said that he wanted the Pentagon to take a closer look. The Pentagon awarded the contract to Microsoft in October.

— AP

Impeachment witness is lying, says Donald Trump

Washington, Nov. 23: President Donald Trump accused a witness in the Democratic-led impeachment inquiry of lying and offered an explanation for his controversial use of his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani on Ukraine policy, saying Giuliani's crime-fighting abilities were needed to deal with a corrupt country.

Trump made his remarks the day after the fifth and final scheduled day of public hearings in the US House of Representatives inquiry, which threatens his presidency even as he seeks reelection in November 2020. The Republican president found fault with testimony by David Holmes,



Donald Trump

a US embassy official in Ukraine. Holmes said under oath that at a Kiev restaurant he overheard a July 26 cellphone conversation in which Trump loudly pressed Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the European Union, for details on whether Ukraine would

carry out politically motivated investigations the president was seeking. "I guarantee you that never took place. That was a total phony deal," he said.

Trump appointed Sondland to the envoy post after the wealthy Oregon hotelier donated \$1 million to his inaugural committee. While Sondland in testimony described an easygoing relationship between the two, Trump said he had spoken with him "a few times," adding, "I hardly know him, OK?"

Trump's former national security adviser John Bolton said Twitter had returned control to him of his personal account. He accused the White House of blocking it.

— Reuters

MAKING HISTORY

Juffali 1st woman to compete in male-dominated motorsport

First Saudi woman driver to race car

Diriyah, Nov. 23: Sliding behind the wheel of a sleek electric SUV, Reema Juffali is set to blaze a trail in male-dominated motor sports as the first Saudi woman to race in the kingdom.

Such adrenaline rushes were unimaginable for women in the ultra-conservative Islamic kingdom until June last year, when it overturned the world's only ban on female motorists as part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's wide-ranging liberalisation drive.

Juffali, a 27-year-old who made her motoring debut just months after the decades-old ban ended, will compete in the Jaguar I-PACE eTROPHY, an all-electric race in Diriyah, close to



Reema al-Juffali adjusts her helmet in front of her car in Riyadh.

— AFP

the capital Riyadh. "The ban was lifted last year and I never expected to race professionally," said Juffali, sitting

in her black-and-green Jaguar I-Pace, an electric sports utility vehicle. "The fact that I am doing

it... is amazing," Juffali, clad in a racing suit, at the racing circuit in Diriyah.

Juffali, who hails from Jeddah and was educated in the US, will participate as what organisers call a 'VIP' guest driver, becoming the first Saudi woman to race on home soil. Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia's sports authority chief, has touted it as a 'watershed' moment for the kingdom. "Reema will have thousands cheering her on, as a professional racing driver," the prince said.

Juffali, who made one of her first appearances in competitive racing at the F4 British Championship at Brands Hatch in April, has only about a year of profes-

sional racing experience under her belt.

But she has had a passion for fast cars since her teenage years and grew up watching Formula One.

She is now one of only a handful of Saudi women to have obtained a "racing licence" in her home country, a mandatory requirement to race professionally.

Even outside the Kingdom, only a few Saudi women have raced professionally. "For a lot of women who haven't had the opportunity to learn how to drive, to get behind the wheel is scary," explained Juffali.

Saudi women are now embracing what was previously deemed a male entitlement, fast cars.

— AFP

SU+DO+KU

		7	4	8		
			7	5		
8	3			6		5
	6	5	9		4	
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	9	1	8		3	
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WHAT TO DO

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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

SU+DO+KU 2

			5	4				
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Did you think the

SU+DO+KU

on the left was easy? Try this. Check the solution tomorrow. Tips available at www.sudoku-xyz.com DC-AE-SU-DO-KU FORUM: Discuss the SU-DO-KU puzzles printed and contribute mind teasers of your own at www.sudoxel.com/forum

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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



Kim in lead

Kim Sei-young maintains her two-shot lead at the halfway stage of the LPGA Tour Championship in Florida

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HYDERABAD | CRICKET

Riled-up Rayudu kicks up dust

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 23



Ambati Rayudu

The over-a-decade old fight and subsequent rivalry between Hyderabad cricketers Ambati Rayudu and Arjun Yadav is back in the open once again with the former accusing the latter of incompetence ahead of the Ranji Trophy season beginning next month.

Rayudu, who is the Hyderabad captain, has pulled out of the domestic competition and has flung a few brickbats at coach Arjun, who he says has got the position because of his father and former Hyderabad Cricket Association secretary N. Shival Yadav's influence.

It was the same line of fire that had led to an ugly fight on field between Rayudu and Arjun back in 2006 during a Ranji Trophy game in Anantapur. Rayudu was playing for Andhra then, against Hyderabad which had Arjun in the ranks. Their heated exchange while Arjun was batting and a reportedly provocative Rayudu fielding close to him had led to Arjun chasing Rayudu around the ground wielding a stump that soiled the image of cricket being a gentleman's game.

However, they made up much later and joined forces to steer the Hyderabad senior cricket team... only just.

On Saturday morning, Rayudu directed a tweet at Telangana IT Minister and the Chief Minister's son K. T. Rama Rao, asking him to look into rampant corruption in the HCA, of which former India captain Mohammad Azharuddin is the president. "Hello sir @KTRTRS, I request u to plz look into and address the rampant corruption prevailing in HCA. Hw can Hyderabad be great when it's cricket team is influenced by money and corrupt ppl who have numerous acs cases against them which are being swept under the carpet," Rayudu tweeted.

One wonders why he

chose to write to KTR and not the Chief Minister himself? Was this lending credence to talk that KTR pulled strings to make Azhar the HCA president at the September 27 polls? Or was it because Azhar's panel members who swept all the six posts on the Apex Council went and met KTR at his office a day after the elections? KTR has not responded to Rayudu's tweet so far.

HCA secretary R. Vijayanand said there was no official communique with regard to Rayudu pulling out of the Ranji Trophy season and so he could not comment. Azhar too has been incommunicado.

Among Rayudu's grievances are not being given a free hand when it comes to selection of the playing XI, which led him to point a finger at Arjun saying he became coach after a pre-election compromise and not on merit.

Often dubbed the angry young man of Hyderabad cricket, 34-year-old Rayudu had announced his retirement from international cricket after being left out of the World Cup squad earlier this year before retracting. He had taken a potshot at selection committee chairman MSK Prasad with a sly tweet that mocked his assessment of 'rival' Vijay Shankar as a three-dimensional player. "Just Ordered a new set of 3d glasses to watch the world cup," Rayudu wrote on his twitter handle.

This time around, his tweet is multi-dimensional.

Harsha, Aditya, Hima impress

Kritik, Vishal, Zubair, Nikhil top shows in league cricket

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 22

A. Vaishnav Reddy had put out a good show and was 5 runs shy of a century in the Cooch Behar Trophy matches played in Bihar.

Meanwhile, Harshavardhan Reddy hit a blistering double century while K. Kritik Reddy, K. Hima Teja and Aditya Jawaji hit centuries while Vishal Singh, S. Aditya Varma, and Md Zubair were bowlers who came up with brilliant performances at Hyderabad Cricket Association's two day league played on Friday.

Hyderabad posted 272 for 7 in 91 overs as Vaishnav hit 95 against Karnataka. Harshavardhan, Kritik, and Hima put up an exceptional performance for team speed as they posted 459 for 2 in 80 overs. Harshavardhan hit an unbeaten 203 off 257 balls with 26 boundaries to his credit as teammate Kritik hit 133 off 148 balls with 18 boundaries and one six to his credit, while Hima made 104 with 14 boundaries to lead their side to victory against Deccan Wanderers who were all out at 160 in just 39 overs.

In another match, Aditya Jawaji of HUCC hit 110 with four boundaries to his credit as his side posted 239 in 61.4 overs against Green Turf CC for whom Vishal took five wickets while giving away 103 runs.

Nikhil of Concorde CC took five Mahmood CC's wickets restricting them to just 50 runs. Aditya of Mahmood CC performed well to take five wickets. In reply to Concorde's 366 Mahmood were all out for 157.

Zubair of Charminar CC

Nadal takes Spain into semifinals

Madrid, Nov. 23: Rafael Nadal won back-to-back matches to propel Spain to a 2-1 victory over Argentina and a place in the semifinals of the new-look Davis Cup on Friday.

World No.1 Nadal thrashed Diego Schwartzman 6-1, 6-2 to pull Spain level after Guido Pella put the Argentines ahead with a 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4), 6-1 win over Pablo Carreno.

Nadal then teamed with Marcel Granollers to beat Maximo Gonzalez and Leonardo Mayer 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 in a must-win doubles match to see Spain into a final-four clash with Great Britain.

Britain meanwhile eased into the semis with an efficient 2-0 effort over Germany.

Earlier Russia beat Novak Djokovic's Serbia to reach the semifinals following a cliff-hanger match that went all the way to a deciding tie-breaker.

— AFP

● With back-to-back wins, World No.1 Rafael Nadal propelled Spain to a 2-1 win over Argentina in the quarterfinal of the Davis Cup.

● The other teams to have made the last-four of the tournament are England, Russia and Canada.

Utah tame Warriors

Mitchell, Conley help Jazz go past Golden State

Salt Lake City, Nov. 23: Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points and Mike Conley had 27 to help Utah beat undermanned Golden State.

About 15 minutes after the game ended, the arena was evacuated because of a suspicious package. Most fans had already left the building when players, coaches and reporters were instructed to leave immediately.

Jazz players quickly headed for their cars in the parking lot — center Rudy Gobert was still in uniform as he left. Warriors players boarded their team bus.

Salt Lake City police Lt. Carlos Valencia said the suspicious package was a shoebox discovered under a table at a restaurant in the northeast corner of the arena. He said the call came in from a uniformed officer working part-time at the game, and the sell-out crowd was already starting to leave when the evacuation began.

Arena bomb dogs went near the package and got a hit on it, Valencia said.

Bojan Bogdanovic added 17 points for the Jazz, and Gobert had 19 rebounds and seven blocks. Alec Burks scored 20 points for the Warriors.

Meanwhile, Kawhi Leonard nailed the second basket with just 15 seconds remaining to lift the Los Angeles Clippers to an entertaining 122-119 win over the Houston Rockets.

Leonard finished with 24 points and six rebounds, while Paul George had 19 points and eight rebounds for the Clippers, who won their fourth consecutive game.

Lou Williams of Clippers scored all 26 of his points in the second half in front of a crowd of 19,000 at Staples Centre.

James Harden had 37 points, 12 assists and eight rebounds for the Rockets, who have lost their last two games after going on an eight-game winning streak.

Williams gave the Clippers a 118-117 lead with 30 seconds remaining by draining a three point shot. Harden then made two free throws to restore Houston's lead, 119-118, with 22 seconds to go.

After Leonard's bucket, Williams gave the Clippers a 118-117 lead with 30 seconds remaining by draining a three point shot.

Harden then made two free throws to restore Houston's lead, 119-118, with 22 seconds to go.

After Leonard's bucket,



Utah Jazz's Rudy Gobert (centre) scores against the Golden State Warriors during their NBA game in Salt Lake City on Friday. Utah won 113-109.

— AP

We find a way to win no matter what the game is. This is a very good team at home. They've struggled on the road a little bit, but we knew they were going to give it their best punch.

— LeBRON JAMES
Los Angeles Lakers player after the win



George helped clinch it by making two free throws with one second on the clock.

It was the first meeting between Houston's Russell Westbrook and George.

They played two seasons together with the Oklahoma City Thunder before George left to join the Clippers.

The Thunder dealt Westbrook to the Rockets

a short time later.

Westbrook scored 22 points but he missed a three point attempt late in the game which would have given the Rockets a shot at victory.

JAMES SHINES AS LA LAKERS TRIUMPH

Elsewhere, LeBron James had 23 points and Anthony Davis made four clutch free throws in the final ten seconds as the Los Angeles Lakers pulled out a 130-127 win over the Oklahoma City on Friday.

Davis finished with a team-high 33 points and 11 rebounds, but it was his free throw shooting that

helped the Lakers seal the victory over the struggling Thunder.

Chris Paul made a layup with 11 seconds remaining to get the Thunder to within 126-125 before Davis made a pair of free throws to put the Lakers up by three with eight seconds left.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored with four seconds to go before two more free throws from Davis gave the Lakers another three-point cushion. The Thunder made a final long desperation inbounds pass, but James stole the ball from Steven Adams to end the game. — Agencies

Icardi, Angel net for PSG

Paris, Nov. 23: Neymar made his latest comeback from injury for Paris Saint-Germain on Friday as first-half goals by Mauro Icardi and Angel Di Maria saw the Ligue 1 leaders ease to a 2-0 win over Lille at the Parc des Princes.

The in-form Icardi opened the scoring from close range in the 17th minute with his 10th goal in PSG's last nine games, and Di Maria doubled their lead just after the half-hour mark.

Despite not being near their best, Thomas Tuchel's side were too strong for the team who finished runners-up behind them last season.

After just 14 games, PSG are 11 points clear of second-placed Marseille, who play on Sunday.

Neymar had not played for his club since October 5, having suffered a hamstring injury playing for Brazil against Nigeria a week later.

It was just the latest spell on the sidelines for the world's most expensive player, who has featured in barely half of PSG's matches.

On just his sixth appearance of the campaign, Neymar lasted 65 minutes before being replaced by Kylian Mbappe.

"I didn't expect too much from him because he has been out for six weeks," said Tuchel of Neymar.

The Brazilian only produced brief glimpses of his class and headed straight to the dressing room after being taken off, with some supporters jeering the 27-year-old as he departed.

— AFP



Paris Saint-Germain's midfielder Julian Draxler (right) kicks the ball past Lille's defender Jose Fonte during their French league match at the Parc des Princes in Paris on Friday. PSG won 2-0.

— AFP

Reus saves Dortmund the blues in Germany

Berlin, Nov. 23: Borussia Dortmund captain Marco Reus equalised in added time to salvage a 3-3 draw at home to Bundesliga bottom side Paderborn as Friday's shock result left Dortmund coach Lucien Favre under pressure.

Dortmund, who face Barcelona away on Wednesday in the Champions League, were 3-0 down at half-time at Signal Iduna Park and out-played before launching a second-half fight back.

Paderborn striker Strela Mamba ran riot in the first-half with two goals before left wing Gerrit Holtmann grabbed the visitor's third just before the break.

It was a different story in the second-half as England winger Jadon Sancho gave Dortmund hope before Axel Witsel, then Reus both headed late goals to poach a point.

The draw leaves Dortmund fifth in the table, but they could finish

the weekend eight points behind leaders Borussia Moenchengladbach, who are at mid-table FC Union Berlin on Saturday.

Hosts Dortmund were behind with just five minutes gone when Paderborn winger Kai Proeger out-sprinted, then rode the tackle of Germany international Nico Schulz on the right flank. With the defence beaten, Proeger passed inside for Mamba to tap home.

— AFP



I didn't expect too much from him because he has been out for six weeks.

— Thomas Tuchel, PSG coach on Neymar

SHORT TAKES

Duncan in lead at RSM Classic

Washington: Tyler Duncan holed out from the fairway for an eagle on the way to a nine-under-par 61 on Friday and two-shot second-round lead in the US PGA Tour RSM Classic in Sea Island, Georgia.

Duncan's career-best round featured seven birdies, including four in the space of five holes from the second through the sixth on the par-70 Seaside Course, in use this week along with the par-72 Plantation Course.

But the highlight of his day came at the par-four eighth, where his tee shot left in the fairway 106 yards from the hole and his high-arching second shot found the cup.

Duncan's 14-under par total of 128 put him two strokes ahead of Colombian Sebastian Munoz, Australian Rhein Gibson and American D.J. Trahan.

"I made a lot of putts, a lot of straight-ish putts, which I struggled with a little bit and we've been working on that a ton. I don't think I've ever had back-to-back rounds with no bogeys, so I'm happy to have that, for sure," Duncan said. — AFP

Ashwini eyes Tokyo berth

Mumbai: Eyeing an Olympic berth at the 2020 Tokyo Games, India's doubles specialist Ashwini Ponappa on Saturday said she is working on her fitness and strength to be in good shape for the upcoming season.

The Olympic qualification period in badminton is between April 29, 2019 and April 26, 2020 with the ranking list published on April 30 to be used to decide the spots.

Ashwini, a 'Red Bull' athlete, is aware that the road to Olympic qualification will be a tough one as she and her women's doubles partner N. Sikki Reddy will have to rack up ranking points ahead of the April 30 deadline.

"Focus would be on getting my body strong and fit and working more on basic drills and getting that strong. Since we have just a few months left we will also be playing more tournaments and being fit and ready would be important,"

Ashwini said. Ashwini and Sikki, ranked 24th in the world, had a dismal run this season. — PTI

FITNESS IS KEY FOR 2020, SAYS COACH

Bengaluru: Fitness will be key as the Indian women's hockey team eye consistency in the run-up to next year's Tokyo Olympics, chief coach Sjoerd Marijne said on Saturday.

Having qualified for the 2020 Olympics earlier this month, the Indian women's team is now gearing up for the upcoming tournaments, starting with a tour of New Zealand in January next year.

"We have chartered out our plans for the next seven months and we have a clear vision of what we need to improve on and the level we seek to achieve ahead of the Olympics,"

Marijne said. "While we play some very good teams in the lead up to the Olympics where we look forward to achieving consistent performance."

"We have decided to be based out of SAI, Bengaluru all along because this feels like home for us and every minute aspect such as the environment we train in, and support system we have here plays a major factor in our preparations," he added.

Back in the Sports Authority of India, Bengaluru for National Coaching Camp, it is business as usual for the Indian Women's Hockey Team albeit with greater focus now on a podium finish at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Talking about the review meeting that happened earlier this week, Marijne said: "The review meeting was not all about 'well done, congratulations'" — PTI



Optimistic

Australian spin legend Shane Warne is hoping Virat Kohli and his men will agree to play with the pink ball when they tour Australia next year

Cricket

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I love scoring hundreds for New Zealand and I really enjoyed that one.

— BJ Watling after scoring a hundred to put New Zealand ahead of England in their first Test

TEST CORNER

AUSTRALIA DOMINATE PAKISTAN

Brisbane: Australia look certain to take a 1-0 lead in their series against Pakistan after dominating with both bat and ball on day three of the first Test in Brisbane on Saturday. Big centuries for Marnus Labuschagne (185) and David Warner (154) helped Australia to a first innings total of 580 in reply to Pakistan's 240. At stumps Pakistan were in big trouble on 64 for three, still needing 276 runs to make Australia bat again. Shan Masood was not out 27 and Babar Azam was 20 at the close. Pakistan bowling coach Waqar Younis said later that with such an inexperienced attack at their disposal, it was only natural that there would be tough times.

"Naseem (Shah) is only 16 remember and even Shaheen (Afriidi) is only 19, so of course they are going to learn a lot from this tour," he said. "We've got to give them time and hope they learn, and in a year or so they'll be a force." Mitchell Starc did the early damage when Pakistan began their second innings, trapping captain Azhar Ali leg before for five. He then enticed Haris Sohail to waff at a ball well outside off stump, only to get a thick edge to Australian wicket-keeper Tim Paine. Asad Shafiq was next to fall, edging Pat Cummins to second slip where Steve Smith took a comfortable catch. Labuschagne had earlier scored a magnificent maiden Test century in front of his home crowd at the Gabba. — AFP

Brief scores: Pakistan 240 & 64/3 in 17 overs (Shan Masood (batting) 27, Babar Azam (batting) 20; Mitchell Starc 2/25) vs Australia 580 (David Warner 154, M. Labuschagne 185; Yasir Shah 4/205).

WATLING'S CENTURY PUTS KIWIS AHEAD

Mount Maunganui: A gritty BJ Watling, New Zealand's go-to man when the chips are down, produced an unbeaten 119 to put the Black Caps ahead of England in the first innings of the opening Test on Saturday. At stumps on day three in Mount Maunganui, New Zealand were 394 for six to lead England by 41. The 34-year-old Watling, with a reputation for producing his best when the going is tough, has toiled under a blazing sun for almost seven hours to rescue New Zealand from a precarious situation and notch his eighth Test century. Much of it was in partnership with Colin de Grandhomme in a 119-run stand for the sixth wicket and followed by an unbroken 78 with Mitchell Santner, who was 31 not out at stumps. When de Grandhomme joined Watling New Zealand were 197 for five, with all their recognised batsmen gone and England's 353 looking a long way off. The dismissal of Henry Nicholls for 41 before lunch had the tourists feeling they were heading for a comfortable first innings lead, but Watling patiently chipped away at the deficit. De Grandhomme, meanwhile, characteristically punished anything loose with a six and seven fours as he raced to 65. Stokes was surprisingly kept out of the attack through the onslaught until the first ball after tea, when he had instant success. De Grandhomme slashed at a wide delivery which Dom Sibley grasped one-handed in the gully and the New Zealand all-rounder, having just returned to the crease, immediately went back to the dressing room. Watling levelled the scores turning Sam Curran to the fine-leg boundary and then put Kiwis ahead with a single through square leg. — AFP

Brief scores: England 353 vs New Zealand 394/6 in 141 overs (BJ Watling (batting) 119, C. de Grandhomme 65; Ben Stokes 2/37, Sam Curran 2/74)

SUBLIME KOHLI HITS 27th TEST CENTURY AS INDIA INCH CLOSER TO BIG WIN



Virat Kohli celebrates his century against Bangladesh on Day Two at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Saturday. — AFP

PINK PANTHER

Kolkata, Nov. 23: Virat Kohli conjured up a classic hundred in his first tryst with the pink ball while a lethal Ishant Sharma tormented Bangladesh batsmen yet again to push India towards victory in their maiden day/night Test, here on Saturday. Mostly offering a straight bat to dispatch the swinging pink cherry in the 'V' region, Kohli became the first Indian to score a hundred in a day/night Test, treating the fans with a 136-run knock after starting the day at overnight 59.

Ajinkya Rahane (51) too looked in good touch, striking his fourth successive half-century as India declared their first innings at 347 for nine for a massive 241-run lead. Bangladesh, who were shot out for 106 in their first essay, were reduced to 13 for four at one stage but the visitors ended the second day at 152 for six, courtesy a combative half-century from Mushfiqur Rahim (59 batting) and Mahmudullah, who retired hurt after scoring 39. Mushfiqur smashed 10 fours in his counter-attacking knock as the visitors looked relieved when the Indian pacers struggled to handle heavy dew towards the end.

SCORECARD

Bangladesh (1st Innings): 106
India (1st Innings): M. Agarwal c Mehidy b Al-Amin 14, R. Sharma lbw b Ebadat 21, C. Pujara b Ebadat 55, V. Kohli c Taijul b Ebadat 136, A. Rahane c Ebadat b Taijul 51, R. Jadeja b Abu 12, W. Saha (not out) 17, R. Ashwin lbw b Al-Amin 9, U. Yadav c Shadman b Abu 0, I. Sharma lbw b Al-Amin 0, M. Shami (not out) 10. **Extras (b-12, lb-2, w-8) 22. Total (for nine wickets decl. in 89.4 overs) 347.**
FoW: 1-26, 2-43, 3-137, 4-236, 5-289, 6-308, 7-329, 8-330, 9-331.
Bowling: Al-Amin 22.4-3-85-3, Abu 21-6-77-2, Ebadat 21-3-91-3, Taijul 25-2-80-1.
Bangladesh (2nd Innings): Shadman Islam lbw b Ishant 0, Imrul Kayes c Kohli b Ishant 5, Mominul Haque c Saha b Ishant 0, Mohammad Mithun c Shami b Umesh 6, Mushfiqur Rahim (batting) 59, Mahmudullah (retired hurt) 39, Mehidy Hasan c Kohli b Ishant 15, Taijul Islam c Rahane b Umesh 11. **Extras (b-8, lb-4, w-5) 17. Total (for six wickets in 32.3 overs) 152.**
FoW: 1-0, 2-2, 9-3, 13-4, 133-5, 152-6.
Bowling: Ishant 9-1-39-4, Umesh 10-3-0-40-2, M. Shami 8-0-42-0, R. Ashwin 5-0-19-0.

They still trail by 89 runs and need a miracle to save the match. On 59, Mushfiqur successfully reviewed an lbw decision given by Marais Erasmus as the ball deflected from his glove before hitting the pad in the bag end of the day.

Mahmudullah matched the senior pro but had to walk off due to a hamstringing issue after they added 69 runs for the fourth wicket.

Paceman Ishant, who took a five-for in the first innings, blew away the top-order with a three-wicket burst and later added wicket of Mehidy Hasan to be one wicket away from his second 10-wicket haul in a Test match. Umesh Yadav dismissed Taijul Islam (11) with a short ball in the

last over of the day.

Ashwin was introduced for the first time in the match and he almost gave a breakthrough in his fourth ball but Rahane dropped Mehidy Hasan at the slip. Mohammed Mithun became the third Bangladeshi player to be hit on his head when he failed to duck an Ishant bouncer.

Already two of their batsmen (Liton Das and Nayeem Hasan) were hit by Mohammed Shami bouncers in the first innings and were replaced according to the concussion protocol. India started off the second innings with an intimidating slip cordon in four slips and a gully.

Ishant gave the breakthrough in the fifth ball, trapping Shadman Islam

before Bangladesh could open their account. The gangly paceman returned and sent by rival skipper Mominul Haque, who edged one behind without bothering the scorer.

Earlier, resuming at 59, skipper Kohli looked at his sublime best as he brought up his 27th Test century. He pushed Taijul Islam for a double in the square leg region to bring up his hundred.

Rahane was done in by some extra bounce as he top-edged a Taijul delivery to be holed out at point. But Kohli, who had become the first Indian skipper to go past the 5000-run mark in the longest format, grew from strength to strength en route to his 70th International hundred. Kohli hit top gear after his hundred, smashing Bangladeshi pacer Abu Jayed for four successive boundaries.

His knock, which had 18 boundaries, ended when Taijul threw himself to his right to pluck a catch out of thin air. With this century, Kohli equalled Ricky Ponting's record of most hundreds — 41 — as captain in International cricket (Tests/ODI/T20I).

The India skipper took exactly half the innings (188) than the Aussie great for the world record. — PTI

MOST TONS as captain

FASTEST TO 27 HUNDREDS IN TESTS

Batsman	Innings
Don Bradman (Aus)	79
Virat Kohli (Ind)	141
S. Tendulkar (Ind)	141
Sunil Gavaskar (Ind)	154
M. Hayden (Aus)	157

With the century, Kohli's 20th as India captain in Tests, the talismanic batsman also surpassed Ponting's tally of 19 Test tons as skipper.

Only former South Africa skipper **GRAEME SMITH** has more centuries than Kohli with 25 tons to his name as captain.

MOST HUNDREDS IN INTERNATIONAL CRICKET			
Batsman	M	Runs	100s
Sachin Tendulkar (India)	664	34,357	100
Ricky Ponting (Aus)	560	27,483	71
Virat Kohli (India)	395	21,172	70
Kumar Sangakkara (SL)	594	28,016	63
Jacques Kallis (SA)	519	25,534	62

STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISER

Virat is the best: Vaughan

Former England skipper Michael Vaughan on Saturday picked Virat Kohli as the best batsman across all formats in this era. "Red Ball ... White Ball ... Now Pink Ball ... @imVkohli is the best Batsman across all formats in this era ...," Vaughan tweeted.

Rahane says swing makes it challenging

Kolkata, Nov. 23: Senior India player Ajinkya Rahane on Saturday said that batting under lights in the ongoing Day/Night Test against Bangladesh here was a challenging task as the pink ball swings late under such conditions.

Rahane, who scored 51 in India's first innings total of 347 for 9 declared, said a batsman will have to deploy different strategy in the final session.

"It's a historic Test match and am really glad to be part of this. As a batsman I thought the first and the second session were easy to bat on. But under lights, with the late swing, it is challenging for batsmen. Twilight period is always challenging," Rahane said after the second day's play.

"In the first session, the ball comes on nicely with no lateral movement. Later with the dew coming in, the strategy should be different. You need to play positive cricket in the first session and capitalise on that," he added.

Rahane also said that by watching the Indian fast bowlers Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami from the gully could make out how hard they were working.

— PTI



PINK BALL IS EASIER TO SIGHT THAN RED: DADA

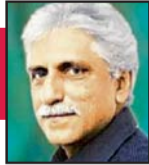
Kolkata, Nov. 23: Visibility may have been one of the talking points in the run-up to the first Day/Night Test in India but BCCI president Sourav Ganguly feels sighting the pink ball is "easier" than the red cherry.

Asked about visibility, the former India captain said: "It's actually easier than the red ball."

Ganguly remained non-committal on whether India will play a pink ball Test in Australia next year.

Ganguly, who was the man behind India hosting its maiden Day/Night Test after initial resistance, was delighted with the big turnout at the Eden Gardens. "So many watched the match that is most important. I was not under any tension but I was busy." — PTI

D/N Test cannot be long-term panacea



Ayaz Memon Over The Top

Saturday's diabolical political developments took attention away from the first-ever day-night Test match at Kolkata where, unless there something as sensationally topsy-turvy as in Maharashtra happens, India should register a comfortable victory.

Yet, there is a worry. The utterly inept performance by Bangladesh (so far) raises the question whether just having day-night matches can help restore the pre-eminence of Test cricket. I fear not.

Day night cricket, played with a pink ball, is essentially a ruse to seduce fans — old and specially new — to savour the magic of the five-day format. It cannot retain its appeal as just a visual spectacle. That will fade quickly, unless the cricket played is interesting.

Fans in Kolkata were lured to the first-ever day-

night Test by the uniqueness of the occasion. They thronged the Eden Gardens also to honour son-of-the-soil Sourav Ganguly, who has made this possible in such a short time.

The fact that there were powerful delegates attending the match, drawn from politics, business, entertainment and sport as well as the who's who of Indian cricket — past and present — being featured in a parade made it an event nobody would have wanted to miss. However, if these same things were to be repeated, it will not hold similar value.

Spectatorship in Test cricket had eroded from the 1950s and 60s because of two reasons: paucity of time because of work pressure, aggravated by the fact that drawn matches had proliferated to a very high degree.

While complete diehards



Current world chess champion Magnus Carlsen (left) and five-time world chess champion Viswanathan Anand ring the bell on Day Two at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Saturday. — BCCI

could endure the ennui of drawn matches, countless fans started getting switched off because not enough attempt was made by players and teams to achieve a result. They migrated to other sports or other forms of entertainment.

In this millennium the palate and preferences of spectators has changed from 60 years back. While

results in Tests matches have happily become frequent, and more teams now play cricket (even the five-day format) which shows the growth of the sport, spectators want to see at least a decent contest between teams.

If the contest is terribly lop-sided, it does not sustain fan interest. This is the big threat to Test cricket, not just from other

sports, but from within too, which explains the phenomenal success of ODIs in the past 50 years and in the last decade, from the even bigger success of T20 cricket.

To get all teams in a sport to be of equal talent and strength is obviously impossible. But for a sport to be relevant in the modern world, and therefore give spectatorship a con-

tinuous upward thrust, the teams that play it must be competitive.

True, all teams have periods of ups and downs. The highs and lows can sometimes last years. There are any number of factors that go in the making of a strong team: from culture, resources, talent supply, efficient administration etc.

But for a sport to thrive,

the bulk of teams that play it must be of near equal strength to fuel spectator (and sponsor, broadcaster et al) interest. Teams must tend towards this otherwise there is the danger of being usurped by some other sport.

This has been a persistent danger to cricket, particularly Test cricket. For most of its history, the top 2-3 teams would be way ahead of the others. Since less than 10 countries played the longest format for over a century, the difference seemed even stark-er.

Even now, too few teams play the sport to paper over the threat. The chasm between the top 4 teams and the others remains wide. The problem now, of course, is that fans have countless other options, on how to spend their time.

There is obviously no magic formula to bring parity between the teams in the eco-system. But this should concern the ICC and member boards for mutual survival. The day-night Test can catalyse interest, but is not long-term panacea. That can only be provided by the quality of cricket played.



Ugly

Mario Balotelli dropped for Sunday's Serie A trip to AS Roma after a training ground bust-up with new Brescia coach Fabio Grosso

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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We have to carry on momentum and keep winning. There is still a lot to work on and we need to improve from now on.

— Dele Alli, Spurs midfielder after their EPL win over West Ham

SHORT TAKES

Trap mixed title for Manavadiitya

New Delhi: Rajasthan's Manavadiitya Singh Rathore won his third gold in two days at the ongoing Shotgun Nationals, partnering Anushka Singh Bhati to claim win the mixed team trap title here on Saturday.

Anushka and Manavadiitya, who had won the individual junior men's trap and team titles on Friday, got the better of Madhya Pradesh's Priyanshu Pandey and Manisha Keer 3-2 in a shoot-off after both pairs were locked at 37 after the regulation 50 shots. Haryana won the junior mixed team trap competition when Bhowneesh Mendiratta and Kiran out-gunned Delhi's Kabir Sharma and Kirti Gupta 47-40 in the gold medal match. — PTI

Injured Sasi out of Pakistan tie

New Delhi: Young Sasi Kumar Mukund on Saturday pulled out of the upcoming Davis Cup tie against Pakistan due to a foot injury, making it a six-member Indian squad that will travel to Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. Mukund, who was named as a reserve member, suffered the injury while playing a tournament in Portugal.

"Unfortunately Sasi will not travel with us. He has informed that he sustained the injury while playing the doubles with compatriot Purav Raja," India's Davis Cup coach Zeeshan Ali said. — PTI

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SPECIAL WIN FOR 'SPECIAL ONE'

Tottenham give Mourinho winning start

London, Nov. 23: Jose Mourinho delivered Tottenham's first away win in the Premier League since January in his first game in charge with a 3-2 win at West Ham to catapult Spurs up to sixth.

Son Heung-min, Lucas Moura and Harry Kane got the goals as Mourinho made an instant impact after replacing the sacked Mauricio Pochettino on Wednesday.

A much-needed three points will help to endear Mourinho to a skeptical Spurs support who were sad to see Pochettino's five-and-a-half year spell in charge of the club end just six months after leading the club to a first ever Champions League final.

There was no love lost between Mourinho's Chelsea sides and Tottenham in the past, but his arrival had the desired impact for Spurs chairman Daniel Levy, even if a West Ham team devoid of confidence made for perfect opponents.

Mourinho followed Pochettino's example in leaving out Christian Eriksen with the Dane one of a number of Spurs players into the final months of his contract and showing no signs of agreeing a new deal.

"We have to make the right decision for the club," Mourinho said on Eriksen's future before kick-off, but his decision to field a front four of Dele Alli with Son, Moura and Kane worked. Kane had smashed the ball past beleaguered West Ham goalkeeper Roberto after just three minutes from Alli's pass but was denied by the off-



Tottenham's Lucas Moura (left) celebrates with teammate Harry Kane after scoring against West Ham in their English Premier League match at the London Stadium on Saturday.

— AP

side flag.

An injury to first-choice stopper Lukasz Fabianski has coincided with a run of eight games without a win for West Ham with a string of errors from Roberto spreading a lack of confidence throughout the team.

The Spaniard could have done better when Tottenham did open the scoring nine minutes

before half-time when another through ball from Alli found Son, whose shot had too much power for the hapless 'keeper.

However, Roberto was blameless for Spurs' second seven minutes later when a lovely flick from Alli sent Son racing down the left and his inch-perfect cross was met by Moura at the back post. Tottenham's cele-

brations were only put on hold for another two minutes as Serge Aurier's cross picked out Kane to head home and become the third highest goalscorer in Spurs' history with 175.

— AFP



We are lucky. I have so many years in the Premier League so I told the players at half-time 'even if we are 3-0 in the 85th minute the game will still be open'. But there were also many factors. The emotions of losing the previous manager, people coming back from national teams and fatigue in the last 20 minutes.

— JOSE MOURINHO, Spurs manager

Barca edge past Leganes

Madrid, Nov. 23: Barcelona needed a late winner from Arturo Vidal to beat bottom-club Leganes 2-1 on Saturday and dig out a much-needed victory ahead of what could prove a crucial month in their season.

Vidal poked in a fortuitous goal in the 79th minute at Butarque after Luis Suarez headed home a Lionel Messi free-kick to cancel out a brilliant opener from Leganes forward Youssef En-Nesyri.

Barcelona stay top of the

table, three points above Real Madrid, who play later on Saturday at home to La Liga's surprise high-fliers Real Sociedad.

A gritty win will also come as a relief to under-pressure coach Ernesto Valverde, whose team now turn their attention to Wednesday's crunch Champions League group game against Borussia Dortmund at Camp Nou.

A goalless draw against Slavia Prague earlier this month means Barca's qualification from Group F is no

longer guaranteed.

After Dortmund, they then play away at Atletico Madrid in La Liga to start a month that will include trips to Inter Milan in the Champions League and Real Sociedad in La Liga before the season's first Clasico at home to Real Madrid. It was important therefore to avoid a slip against Leganes, playing their first game in front of their own fans since appointing Javier Aguirre as coach.

— AFP

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