



Healing touch

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan meets Priyanka's family, says daily hearings can bring them justice

Women's body raps police on Priyanka case

Inquiry committee of the National Commission for Women visit Priyanka's parents, take an account

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Police wasted 30 minutes in discussing about jurisdiction when the family of Dr P. Priyanka Reddy went to lodge a missing complaint. The CCTV cameras at the place where the victim was abducted were not working properly and did not film the truck in which she was taken away. The police failed in their patrolling work, stated the National Commission for Women (NCW).

NCW member Shyamala S. Kunder, along with advocate Deepika Reddy of the Legal Service Authority went to the spot and met with the police officials before coming to this conclusion.

Ms Kunder is the chairperson of the inquiry committee appointed by the NCW into the Priyanka Reddy case. She said, "Did the police not notice the truck which was lying there for two days? Did they even inquire? How come the CCTV did not capture the puncturing of the scooter's tyre? These are questions which are not answered. The toll plaza does not have a compound wall. Anyone can come inside the toll plaza and they indulge in anti-social activities and there is no accountability. A few kilometres away, it is deserted which gives scope to anti-social elements."

The NCW member asked the police where their patrol van was during that time. The police stated that the patrol van was at another spot. But the exact location has not been shared by them.

The team also found that the cameras are not working properly at the toll plaza. There is no footage of the bike being punctured. The department people also work there and it also puts



Large number of students protest at Indira Park demanding death penalty to the accused who raped and murdered veterinary doctor Priyanka Reddy.

their lives at risk, they observed. She said, "What is the point of CCTV when it is not working? Blacklist the vendor. Action must also be taken against the officers who were on patrolling duty as they have failed to trace the young girl." The members went to meet the parents of Dr Priyanka Reddy. The police officers were asked to leave and only a counsellor was there with them when they spoke to the family. The parents were in a state of shock and were worried about the phone being switched off. They said that the police wasted 30 minutes talking and deciding on the jurisdiction. Ms Kunder said, "They have wasted precious time. The parents went to the airport at 11 pm and did not find the bike or Dr Reddy. The police has to be humane in their work. They must not give suggestions but act."

THREE COPS OF SHAMSHABAD PS SUSPENDED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Three policemen have been placed under suspension for not registering the complaint of Dr P. Priyanka Reddy's family, and making the family run around between police stations.

Shamshabad inspector M. Ravi Kumar, RGLA head constables P. Venu Gopal Reddy and A. Sathanarayana Goud have been suspended.

All officers of the Cyberabad police were instructed to register the cases irrespective of jurisdiction whenever a complaint related to cognisable offence is received.

Hope 4 get death penalty, says Kishan

From Page 1

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy said, "The Police Research and Development Organisation had prepared the draft after collecting feedback from all states and consulting experts. Now, feedback is being collected from the people."

Stating that home minister Amit Shah was concerned about the delay in rendering justice in cases of atrocities on women, Mr Kishan Reddy said, "After the trial court pronounces its verdict, the convicts are appealing in the High Courts and obtaining a stay. After many years in

the High Courts, the verdicts are being appealed again in the Supreme Court. Many years are lost in the process."

"As the cases are anyway going to the apex court, we thought the role of the High Courts can be dispensed with," the minister said. He expressed the hope that the accused in the Priyanka Reddy case will get the death penalty.

He said that the Centre had asked Telangana state to adopt the emergency response number '112' to help women to alert different police agencies and their family members.

He said the service had been launched in Delhi.

ANJANI KUMAR DELETES TWEET AFTER BACKLASH

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar on Saturday afternoon took to twitter for informing the world that the incident involving Priyanka Reddy took place in Cyberabad, which is in Ranga Reddy district, and not in Hyderabad. His tweet received a major backlash, which made him delete his tweet in an hour's time.

Anjani Kumar was upset that everyone in the main stream media was stating that the incident occurred in Hyderabad. He just wanted to clarify that the incident had not taken place in his jurisdiction but in the Cyberabad commissionerate.

His tweet said: "The rape and murder case reported is from Ranga Reddy district of Cyberabad Police Commissionerate. It is not Hyderabad, as has been wrongly reported by one channel."

The people tweeted back asking the Hyderabad commissioner, "What is the point in this technicality?" "Does this really make a difference?" "What is the reason for putting this information now?"

The Hyderabad Utopian Global Citizens handle said, "For the world, it is Hyderabad. There may be three commissionerates but does that matter. It is a shocking and tragic incident."

Another tweet said, "When Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is tweeted as Hyderabad, there is no objection. Why now? For everyone, the whole area is Hyderabad."

Docs had to scale police station walls

From Page 1

The police periodically tried to disperse the crowd, which only moved a few paces but continued its protest. Commercial establishments located close to the police station were open in the morning but were ordered shut by the police as the crowd grew in size. People climbed the nearby buildings to see the drama.

A team of doctors later visited the police station and completed the medical tests on the accused. However, the doctors had to scale the wall to get inside the police station. Shadnagar Mandal Executive Magistrate Pandu Naik was accompanied to the police station by the police and taken inside through the rear gate, where he remanded them.

The accused were taken out of the police station in mini-buses to be shifted to the Cherlapalli jail. The public tried to stop them and came in front of the vehicles. The police managed to clear a path for the vehicles with a lathicharge. The angry mob ran behind the buses and hurled footwear and stones at them. Under a tight police escort, the accused were taken to the Cherlapalli Central Prison in Hyderabad.

Many people even gathered at the prison and demanded immediate hanging of the accused and justice to the family. When contacted about the locking of the police station, Shamshabad DCP N. Prakash Reddy said, "The public was trying to barge into the police station. As a lock was not available immediately, handcuffs were used. However, they were removed immediately."

LOCAL TOLD COPS OF PARKED LORRY

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. I DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

The first lead to nab the accused in the P. Priyanka Reddy case came from a villager who told the police about a truck that was parked near the Todupally toll plaza for a long time.

Sources said a villager told the police that he saw the lorry parked there from about 9 am on Thursday. He said that it only left at night. Some people had consumed liquor inside the vehicle, he said. Police on searching the area found

liquor bottles at the spot. Police then accessed CCTV footage and identified the lorry that led to the arrest of the vehicle driver and prime accused Mohammed alias Areef.

"We checked the footage of the cameras installed before Thondupally and found the lorry number. After the owner was identified, we nabbed Areef and his aides J. Shiva, J. Naveen, and C. Chennakeshavulu," said an official.

The official said that only Chennakeshavulu carried a mobile phone.



मध्यप्रदेश शासन

Tiger State Madhya Pradesh



"The great dedication of forest workers, sacrifice of forest dwellers, better forest management and efforts taken for tiger conservation along with state's biodiversity have resulted in Madhya Pradesh becoming the tiger state once again. Madhya Pradesh has the highest tiger population of 526 in the country."

Kamal Nath
Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh

Let's come together to conserve the king of the jungle - the Tiger.



DECCAN Chronicle

1 DECEMBER 2019



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

As Pak flounders, try a measure of grace

The English language borrowed one of its most frightening words from German. The word is *schadenfreude*, and it means "joy in the suffering of someone else", and the feeling is increasingly common amongst India's ultra-nationalists.

You might ask why it's frightening. Here's why: people – and countries – in deep trouble tend to lash out indiscriminately, endangering everyone in the neighbourhood. So, for example, when the Pakistanis find themselves in a hole, it's not seemly for India's leaders to gloat, or to threaten.

And the Pakistanis are in a very deep hole. Their government is broke, and finds it difficult to borrow money from anyone except the Chinese, who do only for the CPEC project. The country's civilian government, which follows its army's orders rather than vice versa, is under threat from the fragmented opposition that has begun to show signs of unity. The leaders of two of its most important political parties are in custody and seriously ill, and the death of either of them would bring on wave of unrest that is likely at least to end Imran Khan's naive, amateurish, and emotional reign. Then there's the shadow of terrorism, most of it homegrown.

But that's not all. The headlines here, dominated by Maharashtra and its government, spoke largely of the controversy surrounding the extension of General Bajwa's term by three years, and very little of the tensions underlying this seemingly innocuous order.

Well, it's not innocuous by any means. In the first place, the order itself, a one-paragraph document signed by none other than Imran Khan himself, is seriously out of order. Pakistan's army chief reports to his President, not the Prime Minister, and the order is, well, amateurish, reinforcing the appropriateness of Imran Khan's nickname from his Oxford days, *im Dim*.

Second, it meant that over a dozen lieutenant generals – 17, according to an informed observer – in the Pakistani army were denied a shot at running the army and the country. Third, it got the Supreme Court of Pakistan involved, which matters because Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa has a substantial spine. Back in 2007, he was suspended from the Lahore High Court for refusing to take a fresh oath of office under General Musharraf's Provisional Constitutional Order, and restored to office the next year after a lawyers' movement to restore "deposed judges" to their respective offices.

Justice Khosa's order of November 28 gives Imran Khan's government six months to develop credible legislative and procedural means to take care of the extension of their army chief's tenure, which is essential breathing space.

This breathing space is essential because there's another cloud on the Pakistani horizon. The special court that tried ex-President Musharraf was due to announce its verdict about the same time, but the Supreme Court held it back. The Pakistani army will not, under any circumstances, countenance one of its most aggressive former leaders being locked up for treason. It would much rather have him die without controversy in exile, as other leaders have done.

The army is also seething because, for the first time in Pakistani history, soldiers haven't got their annual raise. With inflation draining their funds, and more action due in future because of Operation Radd-ul-fasaad, meaning, roughly, "elimination of discord", which aims to finish the residual threat of terrorism in the country. Never mind that the operation's predecessor, Zarb-e-Azb, also aimed at wiping out terrorism, failed dismally. Never mind that the army has never learnt that dividing terrorists into good and bad doesn't work. The soldiers shoulder most of the risk, and nary a pay rise in sight.

Finally, the Pakistani response to India's Kashmir move sparked off a series of separatist threats. The Balochis, the Pashtuns, the Sindhis, the Mohajirs, and some Kashmiris in PoK all want to be rid of the Pakistanis. Indian hawks have predicted or threatened that India will take back PoK in the next few years, that Pakistan will break up into anything from three to six different pieces, and so on. Perhaps the most entertaining of these predictions come from astrologers. Pakistani astrologers predict the break-up of India in the next decade, and Indian astrologers predict the break-up of Pakistan in the next few years.

If you ask me, none of this talk of the break-up of Pakistan makes sense. The Chinese aren't going to let their huge investment in developing a warm-water port in Gwadar go down the tubes. Besides, a Pakistan in pieces, with nuclear arms scattered over three or four different countries, home to at least a dozen powerful terrorist organisations, is everybody's nightmare. We've got the examples of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria to learn from, and none of those has nuclear arms.

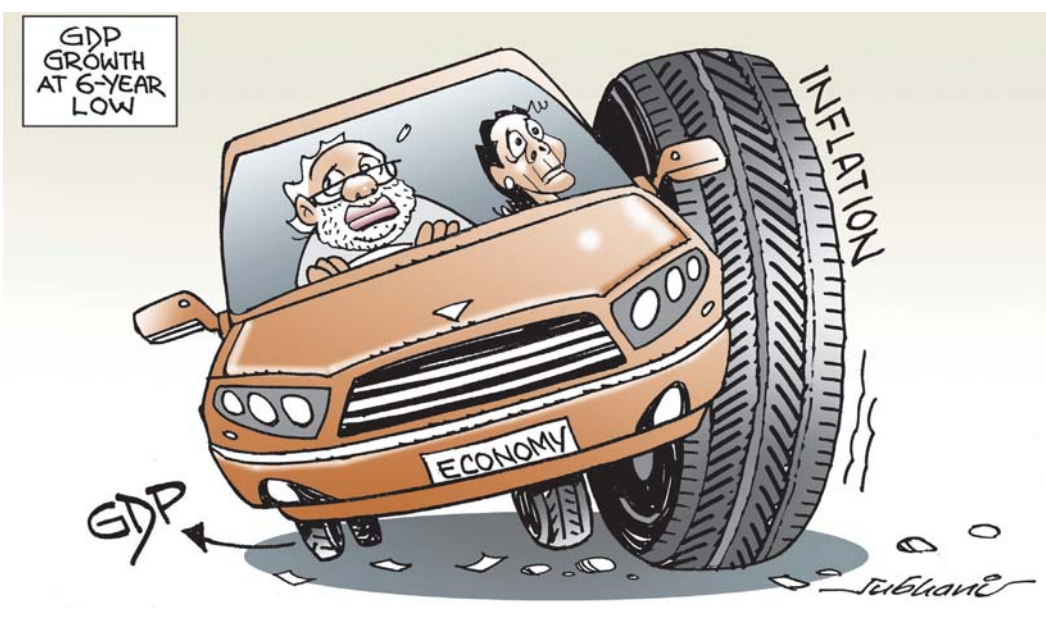
Pakistani complaints of oppression of Muslims in Kashmir are purely for home consumption, and don't make sense. India's human rights record in Kashmir is well short of stellar, but contains nothing like what the Chinese are doing to Uighurs, or, for that matter, nothing like the kind of thing the Pakistanis do routinely to Balochis and Pashtuns and Ahmadiyas...

So what does make sense? In a word, water. Whoever controls the bits of Kashmir that India now controls also controls the Indus river system. The Indus Waters Treaty gives Pakistan the right to waters from the "western" rivers, and India the right to waters from the "eastern" rivers. These rivers feed Indian and Pakistani Punjab. If Kashmir ever secedes, Indian Punjab's waters – or Punjab itself – will be lost.

So we do whatever we must to keep Kashmir. That's a given. But threatening the Pakistanis openly, publicly, with cutting off their water will only harden their resolve to take Kashmir. Don't rub their noses in it. Forget *schadenfreude*. Try a little kindness instead.

Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.

Subhani



Make an example of Pragya to battle hate



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

On January 30, 1948, a little over 5 pm, in New Delhi, Nathuram Godse pumped three bullets into the fragile body of Mahatma Gandhi. Within seconds, one of the greatest messiahs of peace the world has seen was lying lifeless. It was a crime that shocked the conscience of the world. A nation was left bereft, a world orphaned. But, today we have Pragya Singh Thakur, the BJP MP elected from Bhopal, referring to Godse as a *deshbhakt*, a patriot. She has said this not once, but twice, the second time from the floor of the Lok Sabha. What she said is on record. The Speaker may have expunged her remarks, but the House heard what she said. Her lame excuse that she has been misquoted, convinces no one, not even the members of her own party. Rajnath Singh, the Raksha Mantri, and J.P. Nadda, the working president of the BJP, condemned her remarks. She was withdrawn from the membership of the consultative committee of the defence ministry. It is said that the party is planning to take further disciplinary action against her.

What Pragya Thakur said is important not because she – an accused in a terror case – said it. It is dangerous because of the ideology it represents. What kind of convoluted, bigoted, hateful, communal and vicious thought process must be responsible for a person to refer to Godse as a *deshbhakt*? This is a question the BJP must squarely confront. This is all the more so, because it seems quite clear that the ideology that Thakur represents has many supporting voices in the party. Even after she made her condemnable comment from the floor of the House, some BJP MPs sought to justify it. One luminary of the BJP said that while Godse may have been misled, it is undoubted that he was motivated by patriotism. On earlier occasions too we have had people like Sakshi Maharaj make statements in support of Godse.

The time has, therefore, come for the BJP to come clean on this issue. If it believes that what Thakur said is wrong, it should take exemplary and definitive action against her. A half-hearted apology by her will not work. Nor will cosmetic disciplinary action. Her matter must be referred to the Ethics Committee of the House, and she should, on its recommendations, which must be unequivocal, disqualified from the membership of the Lok Sabha. In addition, the BJP must forthwith expel her from the party. Only then will the message go loud and clear to all those within the party, or in organisations affiliated to the party in any way, that this kind of hateful ideology will not be tolerated.

For too long now, proponents of violent, divisive, and abusive language, have been given a soft landing by the BJP. Some time back, another so-called Sadhvi, Niranjan Jyoti, in a public speech spoke

about "Ramzadas and haramzadas". On that occasion too an anodyne apology was considered sufficient to exonerate her. None of these apologies confront the real issue about the need to confront communal venom in certain sections of society.

When, on the first occasion, Thakur referred to Godse as a patriot, PM Narendra Modi expressed deep regret. He said: "The remarks made about Gandhiji or about Nathuram Godse are very bad and very wrong for society. She has sought an apology but I would never be able to forgive her fully." Quite clearly then, the PM has not been able to condone what she said on the first occasion. Now that she has repeated her offence, and that too from the august floor of Parliament, what should his reaction be? Since he reacted in no uncertain terms to her first statement, and she has – notwithstanding his anguish – repeated her condemnable views, should not the PM, as per his own public averment, ensure that she receives exemplary retribution?

This is particularly relevant since this is the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The government is celebrating this event with great fanfare. Gandhiji's legacy, and his continued relevance, is being projected as a matter of belief and of commitment. The PM is at the forefront of these efforts. From countless forums he has spoken

The truth is that there is an ugly underbelly in the ultra-right that pays lip service to the Mahatma but actually valorises the likes of Nathuram Godse. Pragya Thakur represents that underbelly.

about the greatness of the Mahatma, and many flagship programmes of the government – such as Swachh Bharat – are being specifically carried out in the name of Gandhiji. With this as a backdrop, when a MP of his own party refers to the man who assassinated the Mahatma as a patriot – and says so for the second time – it is only to be expected that the PM will personally intervene in the matter to ensure that she is suitably chastised.

The truth is that there is an ugly underbelly in the ultra-right that pays lip service to the Mahatma but actually valorises the likes of Nathuram Godse. Pragya Thakur represents that underbelly. It is for people to estimate whether those who secretly support the view of Thakur are a fringe or the mainstream. Either way, the BJP, as the ruling party in the country, and the largest party, must publicly correct the justifiable impression that some within it are closet or public admirers of the man who murdered the Mahatma.

India as a nation will survive only when it resolutely confronts the hatred, violence, and narrow-mindedness that still lurks somewhere in the darker recesses of its societal fabric. The lack of strong and exemplary action against Thakur will strengthen the forces of hatred and violence. The worst that can happen is for only a half-hearted and ambivalent message going out to the purveyors of hate and divisiveness after the outrage of Thakur. The PM must back his stated revulsion by action. Otherwise the impression will gain ground that what he cannot forgive he is willing to condone.

The writer, an author and former diplomat, is a member of the JD(U). The views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

WRONG CALL

It is unfortunate that home minister Mahmood Ali chose to blame the victim, and the police blamed Priyanka's parents (*Home minister blames Priyanka*, Nov. 30). What does the minister have to say on the credibility of police who had doubted the girl's credentials when her parents reached out to file a case? How will anyone feel secure using Dial 100.

Sapelly Sreedhar
Secunderabad

What was the highway patrol doing when the incident occurred? Rather than blaming it on the innocent girl for not dialling 100, Mr Mahmood Ali should have reviewed the shortcomings in the police department. Had the patrols performed their duty, the girl would have been saved.

Syed Zakir Hussain
Hyderabad

LENIENT LAWS

Lenient laws are making it difficult to contain or curtail crimes. Although Hyderabad is known to be a safe place to live for women, having stringent laws and a death penalty policy for rapists is the only solution. We have to make policies in line with the Islamic law, where rapists are either stoned to death or hanged.

Rasheed
Hyderabad

WRONG OPTIONS

It is disturbing to read that the police was engaged in 'discussing options' regarding the accused in the Priyanka Reddy case (*Cops discuss 'options other than arrest'*, Nov. 30). 'Discussing options,' it appears, means that the police was considering eliminating the suspects. The crime is heinous and the culprits deserve the severest punishment. Keeping in mind the public outrage, speedy action is the need of the hour. But it still doesn't mean the police can take law into their own hands.

S. Anoop Kumar
Secunderabad

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹300. Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Jagjivan Ram to be new Congress Chief

NEW DELHI, Nov. 30.

The Union Food Minister Mr. Jagjivan Ram will be unanimously elected President of the ruling Indian National Congress. Mr. Jagjivan Ram's was the only nomination filed by 5 p.m. today, the deadline fixed for the filing of nominations.

Free nomination papers will be scrutinised tomorrow. The last date for withdrawal is December 9. This is only a formality.

The choice of Mr. Jagjivan Ram was preceded by consultations by the Prime Minister with her senior Cabinet colleagues including Mr. Chavan, Mr. Swaran Singh and Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Mrs. Gandhi was also in touch with Mr. D. Sanjivayya and Mr. D.P. Mishra.

No 'marshal law', after all

The Rajya Sabha secretariat is said to have been reprimanded of sorts by the top echelons of power over its decision to change the uniform of marshals in the house. The military-style uniform outraged veterans and parliamentarians alike. It is learnt that a trusted lieutenant of Union home minister and BJP chief Amit Shah called on top Rajya Sabha bosses to convey that the uniform controversy was an entirely needless one. That explains why now the marshals are back in their old uniforms sans the headgear.

A truce of compulsion

The two Chavans are a bit cut up in Maharashtra having missed the chance to be either deputy chief minister or Speaker of the state Assembly. Ashok and Prithviraj Chavan are both former Congress chief ministers of the state and are said to have played a big role in the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance and the preparation of a common minimum programme for the Uddhav Thackeray ministry. But 'Delhi' is said to

have opposed their induction in the Thackeray ministry pointing at their "ex-CM" tags. Last heard, Ashok and Prithvi, known to have crossed swords, have worked out a temporary truce of sorts to prevail upon party president Sonia Gandhi to let one of them become either a cabinet minister or Speaker. The other hopes to join Team Sonia in Delhi as an AICC general secretary. Now, that amounts to being ambitious as 10, Janpath, is known to have antipathy towards cutting private deals and lobbying.

Paswan's dream

The Maharashtra fiasco has left many red faces in the BJP. While a section of the party seems bent on targeting Bhupendra Yadav's "gullibility" in trusting Ajit Pawar's acumen, some NDA allies are emphasising the need for an "NDA convenor" on the lines of the role that George Fernandes played during the Atal Bihari

We are marshal, Indian-style!



By WAQYANAWIS

Vajpayee era. Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader and Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan reportedly fancies himself in a modern-day George Fernandes role. However, a little birdie at Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, where the BJP headquarters is, claims that the leadership has utter

disdain for the convener proposal.

Scindia sidelined?

All is not well in the Madhya Pradesh Congress. Jyotiraditya Scindia was quick to deny any political message in the change of his Twitter profile where his affiliation with the Congress did not find mention but sources close to him point at his growing differences with chief minister Kamal Nath. Mr Nath is said to have instructed all police and district officials not to entertain transfer posting requests from senior Congress leaders unless they are routed through the "proper channel" (read the chief minister's office). In other words, it means that each time a favour is sought in the Gwalior-Chambal region, Mr Scindia has to approach Mr Nath.

Incidentally, Mr Nath was present at Uddhav Thackeray's swearing-in, accepting congratulations on his office he convinced a somewhat reluctant Sonia to go ahead with

an alliance with Sena. Mr Nath's ties with Thackerays reportedly date back to Sanjay Gandhi era when Balasaheb was an ardent supporter of emergency and Sanjay's 'nasbandi' to curb population.

Oh, for a free ride on Tejas

Union railways minister Piyush Goyal is under pressure to extend the free travel facility to Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs on the country's private railway train, Tejas. Tejas is a roaring success both in terms of commerce and comfort. But the elected representatives' complimentary railway passes are not valid on the Tejas Express. Operated by Indian Railways subsidiary IRCTC, its tourism and catering arm, Tejas Express runs between Lucknow and New Delhi. According to a Niti Aayog report, the Narendra Modi government is in the process of forming a task force to draw a blueprint for handing over operations of 150 trains and 50 railway stations across the country to private operators in a "time-bound manner". Clearly, the MPs are feeling left out.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power



Short story writer Kenzaburo Oe was the third son of seven children. When his father died in the Pacific War, his mother became his primary educator. When Oe won the Nobel in 1994, she famously remarked, 'You promised it would be in physics!' He had done so as a child.

At last, it's time to unpack the difficult mother



Devapriya Roy
review

In my middle-school years, I found a book called *Tamarind Mem* in our school library, which I soon got quite obsessed with. The writer, Anita Rau Badami, was unfamiliar to me at the time, and so was the icy Calgary from where her protagonist Kamini remembered — misremembered, really, if we are to be accurate about the slippery slopes of memory — her growing-up years with Saroja, her "sour-tongued mother", in railway towns across India, where her father was posted. (There might have been a sibling — but I am forgetting the details.) Saroja had been given the name "Tamarind Mem" by a mysterious man who entered their lives in one of the railway towns, and who, Kamini later understands, had become Saroja's lover.

This novel unleashed in me a fascination for a specific kind of mother-daughter novel, one that inverted the heretofore familiar formula of the wild/difficult daughter locked in a complex relationship with her mother, in her attempt to live a life beyond the familiar frames of reference, the kind of daughter who exerts as much of a compelling centrifugal force in the family as in the narrative. Up until then, in the books I had read, the daughter was the doer, the mother, the witness. But *Tamarind Mem*, deliberately overturning this, was fresh, different, almost scary. For so long I had identified with the difficult daughter myself, transposing the contents to my own Calcutta childhood and youth,

If you are partial to the pleasures of the literary novel, then, without a doubt, Avni Doshi's debut, with its exquisite prose and formal brilliance — the ending was one of the finest I have encountered in a long time — is for you. It will dazzle you with its many quiet bounties...

yearning constantly to break out of their mould and outgrow my own mother — and, therefore, *Tamarind Mem*, where it is the mother who wants to break the mould, cast a curious if baffling charm upon me.

I was reminded of all this — the genre, the obsession, the need to recast memory and even scores with our mothers — when I read Avni Doshi's powerful novel, *Girl in White Cotton*, published earlier this year. (It is interesting that the inverted mother-daughter/doer-witness relationship is also explored in another book that is the toast of literary circles now, Madhuri Vijay's *The Far Field*.) Written in the voice of the grown-up daughter, the artist Antara, *Girl in White Cotton* employs spare, elegant prose to not only detail the present but also conjure up the complicated and acute terrain of the past, to contain its treacherous stories, stories that are as difficult to recollect as they are to forget. (Except, Tara is forgetting.)

I would be lying if I said my mother's misery has never given me pleasure. I suffered at her hands as a child, and any pain she subsequently endured appeared to me to be a kind of redemption — a rebalancing of the universe, where the rational order of cause and effect aligned. But now, I can't even tally between us. The reason is simple: my mother is forgetting, and there is nothing I can do about it. There is no way to make her remember the things she has done in the past, no way to baste her in guilt. I used to bring up instances of cruelty, casually, over tea, and watch her face curve into a frown. Now, she mostly can't recall what I'm talking about; her eyes are distant with perpetual cheer. Anyone witnessing this will touch my hand and whisper: Enough now. She doesn't remember, poor thing. The sympathy she elicits in others gives rise to something acrid in me.

In the past, Tara had walked out of her marriage (to an unexciting man with an overbearing mother) and joined a cult, daughter in tow. While she became the cult leader's favourite, beginning to live with him as his partner, Antara grew up in the ashram, cared for by the eccentric ashramites, chief among them the American hippie Kali Mata, who had moved to India many years ago, in the groupthink days of free love and spirituality.

Afterwards, when a new favourite replaces her, Tara leaves the cult, and her attempt to return

to her previous life, to her original family — Antara's Nana, Nani and the estranged father — leaves a visceral impact on the child. Eventually, Tara moves out again, and mother and daughter cobble a life together, built on the agonizing highs and lows of their acute bond. Into that tinderbox arrives another man, a photographer.

Structured so deftly that the movements from the present to the past are seamless and controlled with quiet precision, *Girl in White Cotton*, however, is its most sophisticated in its forays into the present — Antara's life, with her husband and his overbearing NRI mother, her fraught relationship with Tara — who is now showing the early signs of dementia — and to her artistic life.

If you are partial to the pleasures of the literary novel, then, without a doubt, Avni Doshi's debut, with its exquisite prose and formal brilliance — the ending was one of the finest I have encountered in a long time — is for you. It will dazzle you with its many quiet bounties, each sentence as polished as it is tight, its bleakness deeply evocative of the daily lives of artists, whether or not they have the complex maternal ties of Antara, its exploration of the silences, the cruelties and the tendernesses that mark our most intimate relationships, sustained, and its familiar darkness, borrowed from the deepest reserves of our own truths.

Devapriya Roy is the author of five books, most recently *Friends from College*



GIRL IN WHITE COTTON
By Avni Doshi
Fourth Estate India, ₹599

Are cats Lib Dem or would they turn out to be shy Tories?

Ian Garrick Mason

review

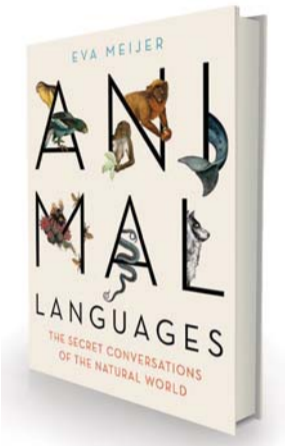
The reality of animal communication (or, more precisely, our belief in that reality) is a fact underwritten not by science but by direct experience. A dog owner knows that his dog communicates with him. This belief, it should go without saying, is one held by virtually everyone who has owned a pet, worked with an animal or even observed the social behaviour of higher mammals in zoos. Animals do communicate. But do they have languages? This fascinating and, it should be admitted, fiendishly difficult question is the target of Eva Meijer's *Animal Languages: The Secret Conversations of the Living World*. The confident tone of its title — no caveats or conditionals here — gives her conclusion away, and its use of the plural 'conversations' hints at her plan for persuasive victory: an assault en masse with every study and anecdote and news item she can find, across virtually the whole sweep of the animal kingdom, to prove that animals could, probably — no, in fact, do — have languages.

To be sure, her barrage of stories is fascinating and there is much to learn from them. I was pleased to discover that albatrosses extend their intricate mating dances over several years and several partners until they find their permanent mates; to read that prairie dogs are able to give alarm calls that differentiate not only hawk from human, but indicate the colour of that human's shirt; to know that adult cats meow only at people — apparently it's an inter-species signal — and not to each other.

Deploying case after case, Meijer proves that many animals are sophisticated, more intelligent than we may have assumed and often surprising (*Animals Do the Darndest Things* could have been a workable alternative title). Yet proving that all of this communicative activity amounts to one or more 'languages' is a challenge she should have approached with more seriousness.

Language, after all, is traditionally a human-centric concept, focused as it is on the myriad spoken tongues that our species has used and continues to use among its members — though we've expanded the definition over time to include physical actions, as in sign language, and later added to the concept the highly structured 'languages' we use to instruct computers. Given that she never misses an opportunity to present whatever evidence bolsters her case that a particular animal's communication system is based on a 'grammar', Meijer acknowledges that 'language' does in fact lie at the most complex and subtle end of the communication spectrum. The actual evidence for grammar use by animals, however, is thin and often conjectural. Meijer makes much of the complex and recursive patterns found in the songs of birds and whales — going so far as to use the language-assuming term 'dialects' to describe differences in songs observed in geographically dispersed animal populations (the more scientifically cautious term 'variations' would have been better). But in doing so she draws many unsupported conclusions. The questions she leaves unasked are fundamental. What role does brain size play in potential intelligence and thus in the likelihood of language use — and can organisms as different as bees and dolphins even be compared as cognitive agents? What is there to lead us to believe that the untranslatable complexity of whale song implies a conversation — 'How's the krill in your neck of the ocean?' — rather than, much more simply, a tune used to keep in touch over long distances? How are we to guess at the signal-to-noise ratio in the massive data sets of recorded notes and trills from starlings? Why does she assume it's mostly all signal — that complexity of sound must imply complexity of messaging? Evolution has a playful sense of the baroque about it and often uses sophisticated looking means to accomplish fairly banal things.

Politics is downstream of culture, and, obviously, of language as well. If you were curious about what might follow the current push to give 16-year-old humans the vote, you now have your answer. But Meijer and her fellow advocates, if successful, will not be able to dodge the larger question to come: are individualistic seeming cats really going to vote Lib Dem, or will they reveal themselves as shy Tories? What an ironic twist in the story of progress that would be.



ANIMAL LANGUAGES: THE SECRET CONVERSATIONS OF THE LIVING WORLD
By Eva Meijer
John Murray, £14.99

By arrangement with the Spectator

Spooky 'killer' nanny thriller with a surprise ending



Rupa Gulab
review

"Please help me. I didn't kill anyone." With an opening as compelling as this, it's impossible to stop turning the pages of *The Turn of the Key* in a frenzied manner.

Rowan, a 27-year-old nanny, has been arrested for murdering one of the children in her charge. The case is splashed all over the media, and she is painted as an incarnation of evil. In desperation, she writes to Mr. Wrexham, a brilliant advocate she has heard about from fellow prisoners, and appeals to him to help her.

A major part of the book is a series of letters to Mr. Wrexham, in which Rowan tells her side of the story starting with the fact that she wasn't even looking for a new job when she stumbled upon the ad, and reveals damning things about herself too. She is

not goody goody like Mary Poppins, nor is she remotely as efficient. She swears, smokes on the sly and occasionally enjoys a drink or two. She even bashfully admits to occasional urges to slap recalcitrant children in her charge, urges that she claims she has never carried out.

Rowan acts the part of Perfect Nanny rather well, though: "Almost exactly one week after I had opened the email from Sandra Elincourt, I was on my way to Scotland, doing my very best impression of Rowan the Perfect Nanny. My normally bushy hair was brushed to a shine and tamed into a neat, jaunty ponytail, my nails were buffed and my make-up unobtrusively on point, and I was wearing my best 'approachable yet responsible, fun yet hard-working, professional yet not too proud to get down on my knees and clear up sick' outfit—a neat tweed skirt and a white cotton fitted shirt with a cashmere cardigan over the top."

The job is no cake walk either: the parents dash off on a long work trip a day after she arrives for one of their 'architectural projects,

and she's left in a remote part of Scotland with hostile children, a book of detailed instructions, and strong rumours that the house is haunted: "I didn't believe in the supernatural — I should say that up front, Mr Wrexham. And so the legends of the house didn't bother me at all, in fact the whole idea of nannies and servants driven out by mysterious spooky happenings seemed more than a little ridiculous — almost Victorian. But the fact was that four women had left the Elincourts' employment in the last year. Having the bad luck to engage one nervous, superstitious employee seemed quite likely. Getting four in a row seemed... less so." One of the children had warned her off, telling her not to take the job on the day of her interview itself: "The ghosts, she had sobbed. The ghosts wouldn't like it."

The ghost factor is as unsettling as the fact that the entire house is wired and monitored. Her employer, Sandra, tells her with a touch of pride that this old Victorian lodge has been converted into a

'smart' house because her husband is a tech freak, and besides, "Architects must try cool gadgets." There are no regular door-

bells, switches, taps, etc, and it can be challenging. The entire family is signed on to the "Happy" app, which takes care of everything, including reading bedtime stories to the children. Rowan's bedroom too isn't spared and she flings a sock at what could well be a surveillance camera on the ceiling: "It couldn't be a camera...could it? But no. That would be more than creepy. That would be illegal surveillance. I was an employee—and I had a reasonable expectation of privacy, or whatever the legal terminology was." You may well find yourself falling out of love with Siri, Alexa and all the other lovely AI ladies and gents as you read on.

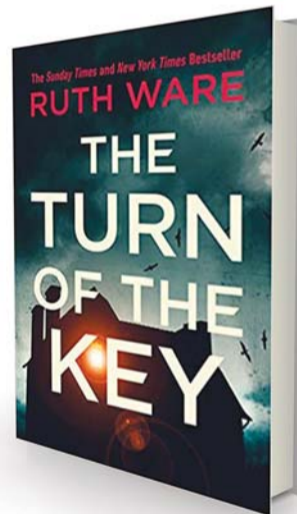
Rowan's nights are disturbed by mysterious creaks and footsteps, and sudden, loud bursts of music. She spends them frozen in fear. Her sleep-deprived days are fraught with confusion, as strange things happen and objects mysteriously vanish or appear. But while she knows that she really should leave this house "of hidden eyes

and ears and speakers," something unexplained yet powerful holds her back: "Remember why you're here, I thought grimly." This is the key to *The Turn of the Key*.

Almost everyone is a suspect in this chilling Gothic yet modern story. While the beginning has a brisk pace, the middle lags with those repetitive ghostly creaky episodes, but not enough to make you yawn. Fortunately, Rowan is such an interesting character, she lifts all the boring bits. We learn more about her as the story unfolds, her past included and the unhappy relationship with her hard-to-please mother. She's not made of cardboard—she's real, warts and all.

Friendly advice: keep beverages and snacks close at hand for the last few chapters, because you may find it impossible to tear yourself away from the book—that's when the story hurries at breakneck speed to a conclusion that will make you go "Gosh."

Rupa Gulab is a freelance writer and the author of *Girl Alone*, *Chip of the Old Blockhead* and *The Great Depression of the 40s*

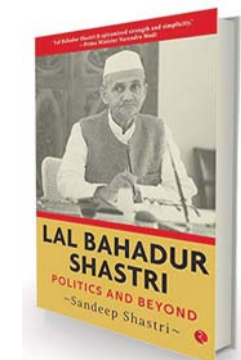


THE TURN OF THE KEY
By Ruth Ware
Harvill Secker, ₹599

Diminutive Gandhian won a war, but was denied his place in the sun



Prakash Patra
review



LAL BHADUR SHASTRI: POLITICS AND BEYOND
by Sandeep Shastri
Rupa, ₹495

The public memory of Lal Bahadur Shastri, India's Prime Minister after the death of Jawarhalal Nehru, is almost anecdotal. The stories that stick are about how he resigned as railway minister in 1956 taking moral responsibility for a railway accident; the slogan "*Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*"; his leadership in the 1965 war with Pakistan; and the mystery that surrounds his death in Tashkent after the war. Not much has been written, at least in popular literature, about the man himself.

Shastri, whose 19-month prime ministership was hemmed between Nehru and Indira Gandhi, has, without doubt, not got the space he deserved in public memory. After the emergence of the BJP and its desperate efforts to appropriate the legacies of "neglected national icons"

(mostly Congress leaders), there is a sudden interest, in politics and in other circles, about the lives and contributions of such leaders to the making of modern India, be it Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose or Lal Bahadur Shastri.

The book — *Lal Bahadur Shastri: Politics and Beyond* — by Sandeep Shastri is a serious study of the life and legacy of the man best known for restoring India's pride and self-confidence by winning a war against Pakistan in 1965, three years after a humiliating defeat by China, and also for his initiating the process to make India self-reliant in food production. The narrative fits the muscular nationalism of the current establishment, but on the other hand, his *Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan* slogan remains relevant, more so in these times of acute farming crisis.

The diminutive Gandhian had stepped into the large shoes of Nehru and successfully faced many challenges putting to rest doubts about his ability to keep the country together. Shastri's humble background endowed him with a keen practical sense and he was grounded in local reality. He rose from the grassroots and worked at different levels in various capacities before assuming the reins of government. Although mentored by J.B. Kriplani, G.B. Pant and Nehru at different times, he had walked out of their shadows and certainly left his imprint.

Was he Nehru's natural successor? The book leaves no one in doubt that Shastri was almost groomed by Nehru as his successor. He was the man in charge of the party's electioneering in the 1952, 1957 and 1962 general elections. He was a permanent feature in Nehru's cabinet

There are anecdotes reflecting Shastri's personality and values. A telling instance: He rebuked his underage son for managing to procure a driving licence and recommended action against the official who issued the licence.

between 1951 and 1964. In 1961, Nehru had entrusted him with the home portfolio after the death of G.B. Pant, virtually ignoring the claims of Morarjibhai Desai (who, after Nehru's death, was to become a prime ministerial aspirant). That Nehru favoured Shastri as his successor became more evident when he recalled him to his Cabinet as a minister without portfolio a few months after his exit from the government under the

Kamaraj Plan. It was but natural that the powerful syndicate headed by K. Kamaraj had to select him, ignoring Morarji's claims for the prime ministership. Shastri and Nehru had enjoyed a good relationship, with the former backing him strongly during hours of crises. The transition was smooth, thanks also to Shastri's affable and non-confrontational approach, which had endeared him to his colleagues both in the party and the government. This is notwithstanding the buzz (which has endured to this day) that Nehru and the syndicate wanted Shastri as a "stop-gap arrangement" to keep the seat warm for Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi. The book refers to Kuldip Nayar's memoirs, *Beyond the Lines* and other sources that allude to Shastri's acknowledgement of the fact that Nehru wanted Indira Gandhi to be his

successor, but avoids any comment on whether he at all resented this.

The book dwells on the deft manner in which Shastri handled the anti-Hindi agitation, highlighting his adherence to the principles of democracy. True democrat that he was, he acceded to the demands of the non-Hindi speakers despite, perhaps, his heart being with the votaries of Hindi becoming India's sole official language. Not relenting under the pressure from the Hindi speaking majority in the party and the government, he went beyond Nehru's commitment and clearly delineated the Centre's language policy, which remains the cornerstone of India's pluralistic democracy (occasional noises notwithstanding).

One chapter is devoted to the leadership displayed during the 1965 war and describes Shastri's decision to move the Army into

Pakistani territory as the "first surgical strike". There are anecdotes reflecting Shastri's personality and values. A telling instance: He rebuked his underage son for managing to procure a driving licence and recommended action against the official who issued the licence. That sums up Shastri as a man who stood for integrity, humility and simplicity, in personal and public life.

The book quotes Shastri's cabinet colleague T.T. Krishnamachari as saying that Shastri could well have been a "parenthesis in history". His relatively short tenure as Prime Minister and the Congress Party's exclusive focus on the Nehru-Gandhi family are the reasons given for why Shastri has been denied his place in the spotlight.

The writer is an independent journalist based in New Delhi



Denzel Washington has frequently said that detective Alonzo Harris in *Training Day* (2001) is the favorite character that he's played

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

One of the most entertaining films in years

Knives Out (U/A) 130 min
CAST: Daniel Craig, Chris Evans, Ana de Armas
DIRECTOR: Rian Johnson
RATING: ★★★★★

BRIAN TALLERICO

Rian Johnson's *Knives Out* is one of the most purely entertaining films in years. It is the work of a cinematic magician, one who keeps you so focused on what the left hand is doing that you miss the right. And, in this case, it's not just a wildly fun mystery to unravel but a scathing bit of social commentary about where America is in 2019. Great mystery writers throughout history have dissected class in ways that were palatable to audiences looking for escapism, and Johnson is clearly doing that here too, using a wonderfully entertaining mystery structure that would make Agatha Christie smile. Directing a wildly charismatic cast who are all-in on what he's doing, Johnson confidently stays a step or two ahead of his audience, leaving them breathless but satisfied at the end.

(Christopher Plummer) is a wildly successful mystery writer and he's dead. His housekeeper Fran (Edi Patterson) finds him with a slit throat and the knife still in his hand. It looks like suicide, but there are some questions. After all, who really slits their own throat? A couple of cops (the wonderful pair of Lakeith Stanfield and Noah Segan) come to the Thrombey estate do a small investigation, just to make sure they're not missing anything, and the film opens with their conversations with each of the Thrombey family members. Daughter Linda (Jamie Lee Curtis) is a successful businesswoman with a shit husband named Richard (Don Johnson) and an awful son named Ransom (Chris Evans). Son Walt (Michael Shannon) runs the publishing side, but he's been fighting a lot with dear old dad. Daughter-in-law Joni (Toni Collette) is deep into self-help but has been helping herself by ripping off the old man. Finally, there's Marta Cabrera (Ana de Armas), the real heroine of *Knives Out* and Harlan's most trusted confidante. Can she help solve the case? The case may have just been closed if not for the arrival of the famous detective Benoit Blanc, played by Daniel Craig, who spins a southern drawl and oversized ego into something



instantly memorable. Blanc was delivered a news story about the suicide and envelope of money. So someone thinks this is fishy. Why? And who? The question of who brought in Blanc drives the narrative as much as who killed Harlan. Johnson is constantly presenting viewers with the familiar, especially fans of the mystery movie — the single palatial setting, the family of monsters, the exaggerated detective — but then he subverts them ever so slightly, and it feels fresh. So while Blanc feels like a Poirot riff, Johnson and Craig avoid turning it into a caricature of something we've seen before. Craig is delightful — I love the excitement in his voice when he figures things out late in the film — but some of the cast gets lost. It's inevitable with one this big, but if you're going to *Knives Out* for a specific actor or actress, be aware that it's a large ensemble piece and your fave may get short shrift. Unless your favourite is Ana de Armas, who is really the heart of the movie, allowing Johnson to imbue *Knives Out* with some wonderful political commentary. The Thrombeys claim to love

ally, although regular collaborator Steve Yedlin never allows his cinematography to get too showy to distract from the mystery or ensemble. It's a film that works because of Johnson's palpable love for the genre, but never becomes too meta or referential. A lot of talented directors have returned to genre movies after making a fortune and brought too much self-awareness with them, but that's not the case here. Ultimately, as in the films and books that inspired this one, it's all about the whodunit, which is revealed in such unexpected ways that just when you think you have it all figured out, you realise something doesn't add up. When it's actually over (and my God does Johnson stick the landing with one of the best final shots of the year) you'll unpack its ingenuity like a detective yourself, marvelling at not just how the details of what happened that night revealed themselves, but the social message embedded in all of it. It's tempting to say that it's a mystery that Harlan Thrombey himself would have loved, but he probably never wrote one this good.

This review was filed from the Toronto International Film Festival. By arrangement with Asia Features



Cinematic pop patriotism fails to impress!

ARNAB BANERJEE

Viduyt Jammwal is one actor who is best suited to fight, kick, slide, whirl, chase, fly in the air, and do staggeringly splendid stunts few among Bollywood stars can match. Filmmakers too love to cash in on his sculpted body and make him the hero in films that deal with a semi-realistic storyline. And so, as a single man army in nearly all his films, his individual efforts as the good guy are enough to chase and catch criminals who pose a threat to his homeland. As the commando Karanveer Singh Dogra in the action thriller *Commando 3*, he adds yet another one of his capabilities as the unstoppable patriot to pump up action to the maximum, and wrestles with *pehelwaans* who trouble young schoolgirls. His acting proficiencies are well defined in the primary manoeuvring technique he invariably applies in a solid punch of his fist to the right guy (the bad guy in the film, of course!). But make no mistake: he is always on the right side of the law; never ever morally wrong, though he sure is someone who takes ample liberties by being unlawful himself. In short, he is a giant among mere mortals, not just physically, but figuratively too. As expected, in this Aditya Datt (who is remembered for the Emraan Hashmi-Tanushree Dutta starrer *Aashiq Banaya Aapne*) directed movie, it is merely his blows and combative attacks at the enemies that take precedence over elements like characterisation or complex plotting. Understandably, other than his charismatic and prefect body, there's not much to go gaga over his talent accessories. Probably tired and having exhausted all themes that this genre could have, Datt plays it safe here: He constructs the present-day Islamophobia spread across worldwide as the central premise to camouflage his unskillfulness to script a believable plot, and manages to give us a 133-minute film that focuses more on Jammwal's muscles than his acting potential. The cool guy Commando Karanvir Singh Dogra (Jammwal) is called by the Indian handler (Taialang), who has a direct telephonic link with India's defence minister (no less!), to go on a secret encounter mission to London with two accompanying encounter specialists, the British Intelligence agents — Bhavana Reddy (Sharma) and Mallika Sood (Dhar) by his side for support. He is a man in a hurry: The indoctrinated Indians (all Muslims), are on a mission to destroy peace in India as they plot much worse than 9/11 terror attacks in as many as eight Indian cities. Religious fundamentalist Buraq Ansari (Devaiah) masterminds, and is determined to take on any wrong against his religion but lives in a posh apartment in the UK. Needless to mention, Dogra is much smarter than anyone one could imagine, and could easily give his British counterparts a harrowing time locating him, let alone outmanoeuvring him. As he, along with Reddy, Sood and another BI agent Arhaan (Sumeet Thakur), locate Buraq, a cat and mouse chase begins in the bylanes of London over rooftop buildings and hideouts. That Karan can overcome any challenge that may pose a threat to him is a foregone conclusion as his posse fearlessly treads territories to locate Buraq, who, by the way, is quite easy to trace. His divorced wife Zahira (Feryna Wazheir) and son Abir (Atharva Vishwakarma) lead normal lives but live in mortal fear of him. The success of the first two in the *Commando* series must have prompted producer Vipul Amrutlal Shah to go for the third franchise, and instead of risking a new venture, he must have thought of reaping the benefits to exploit the pretty muscular Jammwal to carry on with a tried and tested formula in the fast-changing tastes of the masses. Datt's action hero may have few universally definable traits, but that he must always be ripped, and be easy on the eyes and be ready to smugly spit out a semi-comical one-liner if need be, are safe bets for two-hours-long of entertainment. In a film that has the action/fight choreographers and coordinators more to do than the director, Jammwal as Commando Karan relies on his single trait: he says everything not by articulating anything but by doing (read: fixing, resolving) plentiful. And though, in the midst of countless gunshots, cars getting smashed and gory cold-blooded killings, not much drama emerges as an edge-of-the-seat thriller. I don't think any other Bollywood hero who at any time wants to have a go at being an action hero would want to compete with Jammwal. With his ensemble of fast-punching combinations and spinning heel kicks, he embodies the ethos of individualism and self-determination so extremely that the two women (both Sharma and Agira) despite displaying their agility and great fighting skills, get reduced to vying for his attention. *Commando* doesn't even look at the two sexy girls romantically — for him, his mission is everything, though assuming that he would marry both, one even asks the other, "Which side of the bed would you sleep?" Jammwal, with his effortless cool and nimbleness does a routine job by now, but if there's one actor who seems to be enjoying playing the wicked, ruthless bad guy, it is Gulshan Devaiah as Buraq Ansari who scores over everyone else. To be fair though, the director uses Jammwal's character to oppose, contest and fight in ways that relate directly to the main driving force of the story — he only uses his muscle power. Even in the modern age of action movies where we have a host of CGI driven sequences, we don't have a star actor who could stand out as a replacement for the cool dude Jammwal. So what if he isn't a great actor, he is definitely a superstar in his own right without whom this particular genre would feel empty. And since as a protagonist he is expected to make use of his primarily fighting skills to achieve his goals in a story, he knows nothing better than beating up guys. He also doesn't have the patience or skills for any other method, and is running short of time. That's *Commando* for you, who already must be planning his next move, er... next film!

Commando 3 (U/A) 133 min
CAST: Viduyt Jammwal, Adah Sharma
DIRECTOR: Aditya Datt
RATING: ★

By arrangement with Asia Features

Anthony Maras' searing, confident debut

Hotel Mumbai (U/A) 128 min
CAST: Dev Patel, Armie Hammer, Nazanin Boniadi
DIRECTOR: Anthony Maras
RATING: ★★★★★

TOMRIS LAFFLY

How do we establish a proper ethics code around a narrative film that dramatically recreates an act of real-life terrorism? How much time do we need to allow between the tragedy's actual occurrence and its Hollywood-ised on-screen reflection, with which people would eventually fill their entertainment-hungry eyeballs while munching on their popcorn? I bring up these questions because they kept crawling in my mind as I watched and wrestled with Anthony Maras' searing, startlingly confident debut *Hotel Mumbai*, where every fatal bullet fired out of the ruthless terrorists' semi-automatic weapons hit me at my core. I must admit: this skilled, historical action film was one of the toughest, most disquieting sits I can remember in a while. A small amount of relief: In *Hotel Mumbai*, the writing duo persistently emphasises the com-



plex humanity of the characters. In that, we are not just watching a jingoistic, thinly sketched battle between the good and the bad. There are shades of nuance in the good here and an abusive hierarchy within the evil, delicately portrayed not to make the audience feel for the terrorists but to help them understand the chilling indestructibility of terror networks and the terrorist mindset. The ones that murder dozens at random in the hotel are a group of merciless yet disposable men; brainwashed by religious lies, radicalised and sent to carry out massacres by the powerful, those who coldly give commands at the other end of a phone line. Before we reach the glorious hotel, Maras swiftly familiarises us with the players, starting with the Lashkar-e-Taiba jihadists, who approach the city by boats and begin their fatal attacks

across the bustling metropolis, including a major transportation hub and a restaurant. We then meet the happily married father Arjun (an astonishingly brave Dev Patel, carrying most of the narrative), an employee and waiter at the Taj, who is about to lose a lucrative shift of large tips after misplacing his shoes. His (soon-to-be-a-hero) boss Hemant Oberoi (the legendary Anupam Kher of *The Big Sick*) surely won't let him run his errands in sandals at such a highbrow first-class establishment that takes pride in treating the guests as God. Borrowing a pair too small for his feet at the last minute (a tiny but rich detail you will hold on to while following him), Arjun earns his spot back in the service roster. The evening would be populated by a number of VIP guests, including an arrogant, womanising Russian businessman (Jason Isaacs with a curious accent) and a well-off family consisting of the architect David (Armie Hammer, excellent with little to do), his wife Zahra (Nazanin Boniadi, who steals the film), their newborn baby (his cries while in-hiding are a recurring source of suspense) and a heroic babysitter (Tilda Cobham-Hervey). The characters (apart from Oberoi) are fictional for the most part and come with plenty of dramatic embellishments that supplement the basic story. Along the way, phones run out of battery (among the most Hollywood

By arrangement with Asia Features

A good remake!

Arjun Suravaram
CAST: Nikhil Siddharth, Lavanya Tripathi, Vennela Kishore, Posani, Raja Ravindra, Tarun Arora
DIRECTOR: T. Santosh
RATING: ★★★★★

SURESH KAVIRAYANI | DC

After a long delay, Tamil film director T.N. Santosh brings Arjun Suravaram, a remake of his *Kanithan*, to the theatres. Santosh deals with the issue of fake certificates in this film starring Nikhil Siddharth and Lavanya Tripathi in the lead roles. Arjun Lenin Suravaram (Nikhil Siddharth) is a TV reporter specialising in sting operations. During a background check, Arjun is found to have submitted fake educational certificates and he is arrested. When he is released, he finds there is a major fake certificate racket operating in the Telugu states. He along with lawyer friend (Vennela Kishore), cameraman (Satya), police constable (Posani) and girlfriend (Lavanya Tripathi) work to bring the culprit to book. Thura Sarkar (Tarun Arora), the kingpin, joins hands with corrupt police officers and pins down Arjun. Santosh follows the screenplay and narration of the Tamil *Kanithan* for the Telugu film, making only minor changes. The film starts with the introduction of the protagonist and his investigative journalism but

things pick up pace when Arjun is arrested. Santosh keeps up the tempo as Arjun sets about to find out the villain, but the pace eases once he is identified. The climax is made in a bit of hurry. The director should be appreciated taking up a topical issue, that of fake certificates. He could have made a thriller of *Arjun Suravaram* if he had concentrated a little more on the story. Nikhil Siddharth as the investigative reporter puts in a sincere performance and he is convincing. Vennela Kishore justifies his meaty role as a lawyer. Lavanya Tripathi plays the love interest of Nikhil and she does well. Satya and Vidyu provide a few laughs. Posani as a constable, Nagineedu as Nikhil's father and Tarun Arora as villain support the lead cast. Raja Ravindra plays a bad cop. Cinematography by Surya is good but the background score is not effective. The action scenes are choreographed nicely. *Arjun Suravaram* is a film with a contemporary subject and director T.N. Santosh has done a honest remake of his Tamil offering. Though there are some cinematic liberties and a few loopholes in the story, film is interesting as a one-time watch.





Adverse effects

Salman Khurshid says the abrogation of Article 370, which hasn't been thought out through will have adverse impact

Jharkhand polls: 64% vote amidst violence

Cong candidate seen flashing a revolver outside booth

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, NOV. 30

Two major incidents of violence were reported during the first phase of the polling in Jharkhand on Saturday, which witnessed around 64 per cent of voting.

Congress candidate Krishna Nand Tripathi was seen flashing a gun outside a booth during the first phase of the polling. The incident occurred after clashes broke out between the Congress and the BJP supporters in Kosiya village in Daltonganj Assembly constituency. Tripathi, who was detained for questioning, was later released.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has asked the district administration to submit a report regarding the incident.

Talking to reporters outside the Deputy Commissioner's office after questioning, K.N. Tripathi said that "the situation went out of hand after I was attacked by the supporters of the BJP nominee who were trying to disrupt the electoral process outside the polling station. I also requested the administration and police to provide me security when the BJP workers created a ruckus outside the polling station and stopped me".

According to sources from Ranchi, his weapon was seized and a probe has been launched by the police to find reasons behind the incident. In another incident, Naxals tried to create disturbances in Gumla by blowing up a bridge in Bishunpur area immediately after the voting began on Saturday.

According to district administration, "no casualty was reported and the voting process was also not disrupted due to the Naxal violence".

POLLING ON SATURDAY was held in Chatra, Gumla, Bishunpur, Lohardaga, Manika, Latehar, Panki, Daltonganj, Bishampur, Chhatrapur, Hussainabad, Garhwa and Bhawanathpur constituencies.

THE NEXT four phases of polling for the 81-member assembly will be held on December 7, 12, 16 and 20. Counting is on December 23.

Chndravashi from Bishampur seat and Congress state president Rameshwar Oraon from Lohardaga.

As many as 189 candidates were in the fray in the first phase. The ruling BJP, which is trying to return to power is contesting 12 seats and supporting an independent from Hussainabad.

The opposition Congress fielded candidates on six seats, the JMM four and the RJD three seats. The All Jharkhand Students Union which had contested in alliance with BJP in 2014 is contesting alone on three seats.

The Bhawanathpur constituency has the maximum of 28 contestants, while Chatra has the lowest with nine.

The next four phases of polling for the 81-member assembly will be held on December 7, 12, 16 and 20. Counting is scheduled on December 23.



Congress candidate from Daltonganj K.N. Tripathi brandishes a revolver during the first phase of Jharkhand Assembly elections, in Palamu district on Saturday. — PTI



The BJP has ruined India and its economy with its failures

— Priyanka Gandhi Vadra
Congress leader

SHORT TAKES

NANDANKANAN LOSES SECOND ANACONDA

AKSHAY KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 30

An anaconda at the Nandankanan Zoological Park here died on Saturday. This is the second anaconda death in the past three days.

Earlier on Thursday, one out of the eight anacondas brought from the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust died. Apart from the eight anacondas, the park welcomed three Nile crocodiles in October from the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust.

Nandankanan deputy director Jayant Kumar Das said, "We are suspecting that the anaconda might have died due to protozoan or some bacterial infection."

"Anti-protozoan medicines are being provided to the reptiles as two to three anacondas are also sick," he said.

"We are waiting for the reports to ascertain the exact cause of death," he added.

An expert team from Chennai will reportedly visit the zoo on Monday to review the situation. Earlier, death of few elephants in quick succession triggered concerns among wildlife lovers in the state.

BID TO CURB CONFLICTS WITH TUSKER

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, NOV. 30

Alarmed over growing incidents of man-elephant conflicts, Assam forest department has decided to form a team of Rapid Action Force (RAF) in each forest division.

Pointing out that 359 people died in the man-elephant conflicts in the past four years, Assam forest minister Parimal Suklabaidya said that during the same period, around 1,169 incidents of man-elephant conflicts were reported.

Informing that the RAF teams will be equipped with arms and other equipment to tackle the situation, the forest minister said, "Man-animal conflict is now becoming a common phenomenon in Assam and the north-eastern region." Suklabaidya said, "In Assam, 91 people died due to man-elephant conflict in 2016, 83 died in 2017, 98 in 2018 and 87 died this year so far."

He said, "The entire process will be completed within a week. We will try to deploy at least one Rapid Action Force team in each place."

AIIMS COMPLAINS OF FRAUD

New Delhi, Nov. 30: Delhi police has received a complaint in connection with the banking fraud of over ₹12 crore at AIIMS, officials said on Saturday.

The money has been siphoned off from the bank accounts the All India Institute of Medical Sciences has with the State Bank of India from its non-home branches in other cities.

The AIIMS administration has approached the Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police seeking an investigation into the scam.

Police said they have received a complaint and they are looking into the matter, a senior police officer said.

Over ₹7 crore was fraudulently withdrawn from the institute's main account with the SBI which is operated by the AIIMS director.

An amount of ₹5 crore was taken out from another account held by the Dean, Research of AIIMS. Even after the fraud came to light, attempts were made to illegally withdraw over ₹29 crore.

Patole likely to be Speaker

Voting for Maha Speaker to be held through a secret ballot

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 30

Senior Congress MLA Nana Patole on Saturday filed his nomination for the Speaker's post as the joint candidate of Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA). He will take on Bharatiya Janata Party's Kisan Kathore in Sunday's election.

Considering that the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government won the vote of confidence by securing 169 votes, the election is likely to be a cakewalk for Patole.

However, unlike the floor test, which was held by open ballot, the voting for the Speaker's election will be held through a secret ballot.

As many as 169 MLAs in the 288-member Assembly voted in favour of the MVA government, while the BJP's 105 MLAs staged a walkout.

Earlier, there were reports that the Congress did not want the post and instead insisted on the post of deputy chief minister's position. However, all speculations were laid to rest after the party on Saturday announced Patole as the candidate for the election of Speaker.

"Nana Patole will be our candidate for the Speaker's election," said senior Congress leader Manikrao Thakre.

Meanwhile, state BJP chief Chandrakant Patil announced Kathore, who represents Murbad seat in Thane district, as the Opposition's candidate for Sunday's election. Both Patole and Kathore are in their fourth term as MLAs.

Patole hoped he would be elected unopposed.

"The BJP has the right to field a candidate. But it has been a tradition in Maharashtra that the Speaker is elected unopposed. We hope that it continues," he said.

Maha Vikas Aghadi wins floor test with 169 votes

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 30

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government of the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress alliance on Saturday sailed through the floor test in the Maharashtra Assembly with a comfortable margin.

The MVA, led by Uddhav Thackeray, won the vote of confidence as 169 MLAs voted in favour of the motion of confidence. The BJP, meanwhile, staged a walkout while the headcount was underway.

The alliance received 169 votes, including that of Hitendra Thakur-led Bahujan Vikas Aghadi, Bacchu Kadu-led Prahar Janshakti Party,

Samajwadi Party Peasants and Workers Party of India, other smaller parties and independent MLAs. Four MLAs, two from the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), one each from MNS and CPM, abstained during the vote.

Samajwadi Party Peasants and Workers Party of India, other smaller parties and independent MLAs. Four MLAs, two from the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), one each from MNS and CPM, abstained during the vote.

Thackeray, wearing a saffron turban, thanked the House members and people of the state after the pro term Speaker

declared that his government had won the floor test. "I thank all the members for trusting me. I also thank the people of the state. It is not possible to work without their blessings," he said.

"There was some pressure before coming to the House as I did not have the experience of working in the House. But after what I witnessed today, I can say that battles on the ground are better," Thackeray added.

Though it was an easy triumph for Thackeray, he witnessed the rigours of the legislative proceedings on his first day in the House. The BJP MLAs created a ruckus by questioning validity of the session.



Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray pays tributes to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the state Assembly premises in Mumbai on Saturday. — PTI

Shah meets N-E CMs over CAB

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI NOV. 30

Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday held discussions with leaders of political parties, students bodies and civil society groups of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya on the contours of the proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB).

According to sources, Chief Ministers of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya, Union minister Kiren Rijiju, and several MPs attended the meetings. Most regional parties and civil society groups raised the issue of how CAB could affect the tribals.

Sources said the home minister has indicated to the lawmakers that the CAB may not affect the tribal areas protected by the Inner Line Permit (ILP) regime and those governed under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

These areas may be exempted from the ambit

of the proposed Bill. Shah is believed to have conveyed to the delegations.

Later, Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reportedly said even though most of the civil society groups have opposed the earlier Bill, the new redrafted bill will ensure that the interests of the ILP-regime areas and the Sixth Schedule areas are protected. Sarma also said separate legislation may be brought on the recommendations of a committee set up by the home ministry to look into the options of providing constitutional safeguards to the indigenous people of Assam.

The Assam-based political party AIUDEF, headed by Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, has opposed the Bill, which aims to give citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from three neighbouring countries.

The home minister is holding meetings in the wake of strong protests in the Northeast against the Citizenship Amendment Bill.

India, Japan tell Pak to curb terror

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

India and Japan on Saturday evening held their first-ever 2+2 dialogue at the foreign and defence ministerial level in New Delhi, after which the two countries asked Pakistan to act firmly against terrorism.

In a joint statement, the two countries noted "the threat posed to regional security by terrorist networks operating out of Pakistan and called upon

(Pakistan) to take resolute and irreversible action against them and fully comply with international commitments including to the (global anti-terror watchdog) Financial Action Task Force".

Obviously with an eye on China, both India and Japan also "reaffirmed the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce and peaceful resolution of disputes" in the South China Sea.

AVALANCHE KILLS TWO IN SIACHEN

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

In a second unfortunate incident within 15 days, two Indian Army personnel were killed on Saturday after an avalanche hit their patrol at an altitude of about 18,000 feet in Southern Siachen Glacier.

"An Army patrol operating at an altitude of approximately 18,000 feet in Southern Siachen Glacier was hit by an avalanche during the early hours of November 30," said a statement by the Indian Army. It said that an Avalanche Rescue Team following the patrol, immediately rushed and managed to locate and pull out all members of the patrol.

Simultaneously, Army helicopters were pressed into service to evacuate the avalanche victims.

"However, despite best efforts by the medical teams, two Army personnel succumbed in the avalanche," it said.

Earlier on November 18, four Indian Army personnel and two civilian porters were killed in an avalanche in the northern part of the Siachen Glacier.

The Siachen Glacier in the Karakoram range is known as the highest militarised zone in the world, where the soldiers have to battle frostbite and high winds.

Avalanches and landslides are common at the glacier during the winter and temperatures can drop to as low as minus 60 degrees Celsius.

THE SIACHEN GLACIER in the Karakoram range is known as the highest militarised zone in the world, where the soldiers have to battle frostbite and high winds.

ASSAM RECORDS 6,500 RAPE CASES IN 3 YRS

Guwahati, Nov. 30: Over 6,500 rape cases were registered in Assam during the last three and a half years, the state Assembly was informed on Saturday.

Parliamentary affairs minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said in a written reply to a query by AGP MLA Ramendra Narayan Kalita that 6,528 rape cases have been registered between April 2016 and October 2019 across the state.

In Guwahati 248 cases were registered, the minister said on behalf of Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, who holds the home portfolio.

— PTI

HYD | RIPPLES

Anu Dubey, protesting Priyanka's murder, says three women cops sat on her

Protesting woman alleges harassment

New Delhi, Nov. 30: A woman sat on a solitary protest near the Parliament Street police station who forcefully removed her from the site and detained her.

According to the police, some of its personnel asked the woman to go to Jantar Mantar to continue her protest, but when she refused they took her to the Parliament Street police station in a police vehicle, a senior officer said. At that time the woman was sobbing, he said, adding that after some officers heard her grievances she was released from the police station. Dubey, however, has alleged that Head Constables Kuldeep and

beat her. She also had scratch marks on her body and blood was also coming out from her wounds, DCW said in the notice.

Manju and one more officer misbehaved with her, hit her and threatened her. At the police station, she was allegedly thrown on a bed where three women police officers sat over her



A woman in police detention after she reportedly staged a protest in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

and beat her. She also had scratch marks on her body and blood was also coming out from her wounds, DCW said in the notice.

MINOR GIRL OUT TO CELEBRATE BIRTHDAY RAPED, 4 ARRESTED

Coimbatore, Nov. 30: A minor girl out to celebrate her birthday, in a park, was allegedly raped by six men, four of whom have been arrested, police said on Saturday.

The 11th standard student had gone to a park with her male friend on November 26, and was returning home at around 9 pm when the gang assaulted the man, dragged the girl to a secluded place, raped her, and videographed the incident, police said.

The girl narrated the incident to her mother

the next day, following which a complaint was lodged in an All Women police station.

Four of the six men were booked under various sections of the PoCSO Act, 354 (assault on woman to outrage her modesty) and 506 (ii) (criminal intimidation) of IPC.

They were produced before a Mahila Court, which remanded them to custody and lodged in the central jail here.

Police further said that a search is on for other two. — PTI



Endless woes

Bolivia's interim government will file a case in The Hague against former president Evo Morales for crimes against humanity



This DiCaprio is a cool guy, right? Giving money to torch the Amazon

— Jair Bolsonaro
Brazilian President

IN BRIEF

Roadside blast kills Sr Army Cdr

Kabul: An Afghan official says a roadside bomb in the southern Helmand province has killed two security personnel, including a senior border commander. Omar Zwak, spokesman for the provincial governor, said on Saturday that the blast in the Marjah district wounded two other security officials and a local TV reporter when it struck a passing convoy. The spokesman said the attack likely targeted Gen. Zahir Gul Muqbil, the army border unit commander who was killed in the explosion. He added that a reporter with the *Shamshad TV network*, Sardar Mohammad Sarwary, was among the wounded.

Peru Oppn leader Fujimori freed

Lima: Peruvian opposition leader Keiko Fujimori walked free from prison after being jailed for more than a year pending a trial over allegations she accepted illegal campaign contributions from Brazilian construction firm Odebrecht. Fujimori left prison in the Chorrillos district of capital city Lima, according to a witness at the scene where hundreds of supporters gathered outside in anticipation of her release. Fujimori was met by her husband outside the prison with flowers and balloons. Other supporters carried the orange banners of her political party. The constitutional tribunal, ordered her release after she was handed an 18-month pre-trial sentence in October last year.

Pak court to indict Hafiz Saeed

Lahore: Mumbai terror attack mastermind and chief of the banned JuD Hafiz Saeed will be prosecuted for terror financing charges by an anti-terrorism court in Lahore next month, an official said on Saturday. An anti-terrorism court in Lahore held a hearing against Saeed and his accomplices on terror financing on Saturday and fixed December 7 as the date for indictment of the Jamat-ud-Dawa chief. "ATC judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta fixed December 7 for indictment of Saeed and others after hearing the arguments of prosecution and defence lawyers," a court official said after the hearing. He said prosecutor Abdur Rauf Bhatti requested the court to hold day to day hearing to conclude the trial at the earliest, which was opposed by Saeed's counsel. Saeed was brought to the court amid tight security.

PAK GOVT TO CONSULT OPPN ON BAJWA

SHAFQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, NOV. 30

Pakistan government will consult the opposition on the legislation to determine army chief's tenure and service, special assistant to the Prime Minister on information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said on Saturday.

She said elections will be held in the country after the completion of five-year constitutional period of the incumbent government.

She pointed out that the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazal) chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman also used to stress that the parliament should complete its constitutional tenure. Ms Awan reminded that the son of Maulana and his other party members were also sitting in this parliament.

Regarding the foreign funding case of the PML (N), she said the party had furnished only a single page reply before the Election Commission.

3 minors stabbed in shopping area

Dutch cops reject terrorism angle in attack

Amsterdam, Nov. 30: Three youths were wounded in a stabbing on a shopping street in The Hague early Friday evening, Dutch police said, adding that they were seeking a suspect.

National broadcaster NOS said the attack could not immediately be attributed to terrorism.

Police launched a manhunt after the attack, which took place on a busy shopping street near the city's historic centre. The area was cordoned off and dozens of police and ambulances were on the scene. All the victims were minors and were treated in hospital before being discharged, police said in a statement.

"We are at this moment searching for a suspect, no one has been arrested yet," police spokeswoman Marije Kuiper said.

National broadcaster NOS, quoting 'varied sources', said: "At this moment there is no indication of a terrorist motive." Kuiper said



IMAGES AND VIDEOS posted on social media showed crowds of shoppers running away after the incident and others being led out of the stores

police did not yet have a description of the suspect, but she said an initial police statement that he was a man in his 40s of North African descent had been wrong.

"At this moment all scenarios are still open," she said. Meanwhile, the Dutch police hunted on Saturday for an unidentified suspect who stabbed three youths on a street in the centre of The Hague on Friday during one of the busiest shopping evenings of the year.

National broadcaster NOS quoted two eyewitnesses as saying two of the victims, both girls,

had run screaming from the street into a nearby store. One said an "athletic" man fled the scene, jumping easily over obstacles.

The area was cordoned off for hours as first aid workers helped victims and police combed the area for clues.

Images and videos posted on social media showed crowds of shoppers running away after the incident and others being led out of the stores by first responders. Authorities repeatedly asked witnesses to come forward. They said the situation is 'complex'. — Agencies

London terrorist had Pak links

London, Nov. 30: A convicted Islamist terrorist, who spent part of his teens in Pakistan and released last year from a UK prison, is suspected to be the man who stabbed two people to death in a terror attack on London Bridge, police said on Saturday.

Police have identified the suspect as 28-year-old Usman Khan, inspired by the ideology of al-Qaeda terror group, was previously sentenced to 16 years in prison term for his role in the London Stock Exchange bombing in 1990.

At the time of his sentencing in 2012, the judge warned that he was a 'serious jihadist' who should not be released while he remained a threat to the public.

Khan left school with no qualifications after spending part of his late teens in Pakistan, where he lived with his mother when she became ill, it said.

The BBC reported that Khan was out on licence from prison when he killed two people and injured three others in the stabbing attack on Friday, before he was shot dead by the Scotland Yard.

Khan was living in Stafford since being



(Left), A man is surrounded by armed police after he stabbed two people to death on London Bridge, in London. (Right), picture of Usman Khan. — AFP

released from prison on December last, it said. In February 2012, Khan was sentenced to eight years in prison. In 2013, the Court of Appeal sentenced him to a 16-year jail term.

Two people were killed and several others injured in the London Bridge attack on Friday. The Scotland Yard confirmed that a male suspect, later identified as Khan, wearing a hoax bomb vest was shot dead at the scene.

Scotland Yard's head of counter terrorism policing, assistant commissioner Neil Basu, said in a statement at New Scotland Yard headquarters in London that a "number" of people had been injured, some of whom are said to be critical.

The senior Indian-origin top police officer said Khan had attended an event on Friday afternoon at the Fishmonger's Hall, a historic building near the London Bridge.

London Bridge was one of the areas targeted by an ISIS-claimed terrorist attack in June 2017, when 11 people died as terrorists went on a stabbing spree after ramming a van into pedestrians. The UK had just earlier this month downgraded its terror threat level from "severe" to "substantial", which means a terrorist threat is likely rather than highly likely in the country. The attack raises difficult questions for Britain's government and security services. Prime Minister

Boris Johnson said he had 'long argued' that it was a 'mistake to allow serious and violent criminals to come out of prison early'. "It is very important that we get out of that habit and that we enforce the appropriate sentences for dangerous criminals, especially for terrorists, that I think the public will want to see," he said.

Johnson, who chaired a meeting of the government's Cobra emergency committee said more police would be patrolling the streets in the coming days "for reassurance purposes." Police said they were treating the stabbings as a terrorist attack and were not looking for other suspects. — Agencies

HK seniors join street protests

Hong Kong, Nov. 30: Secondary-school students and retirees joined forces to protest in Hong Kong on Saturday, the first of several weekend rallies planned across the city, as pro-democracy activists vowed to battle what they say are police brutality and unlawful arrests.

A top Hong Kong official said the government was looking into setting up an independent committee to review the handling of the crisis, which has seen increasingly violent demonstrations since starting more than five months ago.

Hong Kong has seen relative calm since local elections last week delivered an overwhelming victory to pro-democracy candidates. Still, activists appear keen to maintain the momentum of their movement.

"I came out for the peaceful protest in June when there was more than one million people, but the government did not listen to our demands," said a 71-year-old woman in Hong Kong's Central district, who only gave her name as Ponn.

She brought her own plastic stool to join a cross-generational protest of a few hundred people at the city's Chater Garden. Elderly Hong Kongers, some with visors and canes, stood not far from young, black-clad protesters. All listened to pro-democracy speakers in a gathering marked by a festive mood.

"I have seen so much police brutality and unlawful arrests. This is not the Hong Kong I know. I came today because I want the government to know that we are not happy with what they have done to our generation," said Ponn, who

HONG KONG seniors rally to back students as activists decry police actions

Students and retirees joined forces to protest in Hong Kong, the first of several weekend rallies planned across the city, as pro-democracy activists vowed to battle what they say are police brutality and unlawful arrests

attended with her daughter and son-in-law. Demonstrators are angered by what they see as Chinese interference in freedoms promised when Britain returned Hong Kong to Beijing in 1997.

But China denies interfering, and says it is committed to the "one country, two systems" formula put in place at that time. It has blamed foreign forces for fomenting unrest.

The Communist party newspaper of the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou said police had arrested a Belizean citizen for allegedly colluding with people in the United States to meddle in Hong Kong affairs.

It also said a Taiwanese man, Lee Meng-Chu, was arrested by police in near-by Shenzhen on Oct. 31, for allegedly stealing state secrets for foreign forces after he made a trip to Hong Kong in August to support "anti-China" activities.

In Hong Kong, the city government is looking into setting up an independent committee to review the handling of the crisis. — Reuters

Lurking danger



An Iraqi man drives through burning tires in the Shiite Muslim shrine city of Karbala, south of Iraq's capital Baghdad. Protesters burned tyres and surrounded a police station in the southern Iraqi city of Nassiriya, pressing their demands for sweeping reform despite the prime minister promising to quit. — AFP

Climate activists across world rally ahead of meet

Berlin, Nov. 30: Tens of thousands of protesters, primarily in Europe and Asia, hit the streets to make a fresh call for action against global warming, hoping to raise pressure on world leaders days before a UN climate summit.

Carrying signs that read 'One planet, one fight' and 'The sea is rising, so must we', thousands flocked to

Berlin's Brandenburg Gate for the latest 'Fridays for Future' protest inspired by 16-year-old activist Greta Thunberg. In total, about 6,30,000 people demonstrated across more than 500 cities in Germany, the Fridays for Future movement said.

In Hamburg alone, some 30,000 mainly young people gathered and another

17,000 congregated in Munich to voice alarm at rising temperatures.

Approximately 1,700 turned out in Madrid, the host city of next week's 12-day COP25 conference, which aims to encourage governments to increase their commitments to cut emissions and combat climate change. Thunberg, was on a boat sailing across the Atlantic. — AFP

GLOBAL WARMING Rising sea levels could make Sitio Pariahan unlivable

Sinking Philippines village will vanish

Philippines, Nov. 30: Danica Martinez, 16, grew up in a house that grows taller every few years. Her father raises the stilts of their bamboo hut so water from the sea doesn't reach the floor. They live in Sitio Pariahan, a coastal village in the Philippines that was once an island, and is now without land.

Sitio Pariahan, about 17 km north of Manila, is sinking about 4 cm every year, owing largely to land subsidence from the population's overuse of ground-water.

Now, rising sea levels caused by global warming could soon make this village unlivable, a problem

faced by other countries in Asia, where the poorest communities are hardest hit. A deep well is the only source of water, and residents use it to bathe, clean, cook and, sometimes, even to drink.

Solar panels are installed on many rooftops for electricity, mostly to watch television that's shared between neighbours. On days that power is low, residents pass the time by gambling.

Martinez remembers that their village wasn't always like this. She recalls basketball tournaments and grand feasts that their community once held, so popular that visi-

SITIO Pariahan, near Manila, is sinking about 4 cm every year, owing largely to land subsidence from the population's overuse of ground-water

tors from nearby towns would flock to watch performances, and celebrate mass at the church.

The court is now fully submerged, and the church that was once filled with devotees is stained with moss. Much of the destruction hap-

pened when Typhoon Nesat struck in 2011, bringing waves Martinez said were as big as houses.

She saw how the huts were pulled into the sea, one by one, as she and her siblings held onto bamboo poles. Their school was also destroyed, and left only with walls. More than 50 families left and never returned. Now, Martinez and her siblings take a 30-minute boat ride to school, sometimes with uniforms drenched by big waves.

"It seems scary to look at, but you get used to living like this," she said. "It's difficult, but also fun." Her parents rely on their boat to make a living.

"Without a boat, you are paralysed," said her mother Mary Jane Martinez, who sells crabs her husband catches to the town's market. She said life in the village was getting harder day by day, but she still preferred it to the city.

"If you work hard here, you will survive. You only have to jump on the sea to catch food. In land, you can work hard and still not have enough," she said.

"What is being projected 50 years from now or 100 years from now for many parts of the globe is actually happening right now at even faster rates," a climate change expert said. — Reuters

SU+DO+KU

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

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

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

SU+DO+KU 2

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

Did you think the SU+DO+KU on the left was easy? Try this. Check the solution tomorrow.

Tips available at www.sudoku-ks.com

DC-AGE SU DO KU FORUM: Discuss the SU DO KU puzzles printed and contribute mind teasers of your own at www.sudexel.com/forum

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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



Blow

Aaron Finch suffered a blow to his head during a Sheffield Shield encounter on Saturday and was substituted by Travis Dean after he experienced concussion symptoms

Kohli breaks silence

Captain hits out at critics for targeting wife Anushka

New Delhi, Nov. 30: Indian captain Virat Kohli on Saturday said his actress wife Anushka Sharma is a "soft target", breaking his silence on former player Farokh Engineer's claim that she was served tea by one of the selectors during the World Cup.



Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri in this file photo.

She (Anushka) came for one World Cup game against Sri Lanka and the family box and the selector box was different, and there was no selector in that box. She came with two friends. As I said, she is known, she's been successful at a very high level so when people take her name, it gets noticed.

—VIRAT KOHLI

She's a soft target. We both had been ignoring it for a while," Kohli said.

CAPTAINS BATS FOR COACH

Kohli on termed the relentless trolling of Ravi Shastri as "agenda driven", saying the India coach is least affected by perception that he is the captain's yes man. Get up, face the fast bowlers with "courage" and "without helmet", average 41 as an opener — Kohli mentioned all that Shastri did as a player in his scathing riposte to the current coach's critics. "I think most of these things are agenda driven and I don't know whose,

why, what for, but to accept lies in that manner, it couldn't be anything but agenda driven," Kohli told *India Today* in its special show "Inspiration". "... In Ravi bhai's case, luckily, he is a person that doesn't care at all." Starting out as a slow left-arm spinner, Shastri went on to open the innings for India and also won the famous 'Champion of the Champions' Award in the 1985 World Series Cricket, and Kohli touched upon all that while offering his unequivocal support to the head coach. "(Promoted from) number 10 to opener and got an average of 41 as an opener,

he is not going to be bothered about someone sitting at home and trolling him, because if you want to troll a guy who has done that, then get up, face those bowlers, do what he has done, have the clarity to do it, have the courage to do it, then have a debate with that guy," Kohli said. "He is absolutely chilled out, he says our only focus is how we can be the best team of all time. I think these petty things on the outside, they don't matter at all to him." After the rout of Bangladesh in the Test series recently, Kohli called his fast bowling arsenal as a "dream combination" that can tor-

ment any opposition on any kind of surface. This was done without Jasprit Bumrah.

The skipper said there is always bonhomie among his fast bowlers, not an iota of insecurity despite all the successes and the intense competition. "There is no jealousy at all and that is their biggest strength, they don't care whether Shami is at 7 now or Jassi is at whatever ranking he is or Ishant," Kohli said.

"I think full credit has to go to them to these guys that they have been able to create this aura around them because of that friendship that belief and the intent being in the right place."

While Sachin Tendulkar is the one he looks up to among cricketers, Kohli's favourite in sporting world is ace footballer Cristiano Ronaldo. "I think Cristiano Ronaldo because I like the fact that he is targeted on a daily basis but he has the mental strength, the will to work hard and the desire to keep coming back.

"For me those things matter more than someone having absolute unreal natural ability, which is (Lionel) Messi, so I am in awe of Ronaldo."

Kohli has made a habit of creating records, something that has often drawn comparisons with his idol, the legendary Sachin Tendulkar. "Well I don't know how to explain it I mean I just hate losing. Basically I hate losing in anything, that is how a sportsman is made up, that is the makeup of any sportsman competing at the highest level," he said. "I don't want any maybe, I don't want any ifs, when I walk out to that field it is an honour for me, and when I walk out I want to have zero energy left.

"I'm actually always trying to avoid that feeling and that's why I go along about my work in a crazy manner. I just have to put all my effort into every ball that I play, field or I am a part of." —PTI



Sourav Ganguly and Jay Shah in this file photo.

BCCI AGM set to dilute reforms

Mumbai, Nov. 30: The BCCI will on Sunday hold its first Annual General Meeting with enigmatic former captain Sourav Ganguly at the helm, seeking to dilute some key reforms mandated by the Supreme Court, constitute cricket committees like the CAC and appoint the Board's representative at the ICC.

The Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (COA) was in control of the cricket body for 33 months before the new office-bearers, led by Ganguly, took charge last month. Ganguly's current nine-month stint will get an extension if the BCCI dilutes the specific reform on tenure-cap as mandated by the SC-appointed Lodha Committee.

In the agenda released for the AGM, the BCCI has proposed significant changes to the existing constitution. As per the current constitution, which is approved by the Supreme Court, an office-bearer who has served two three-year terms, either at the BCCI or at the state association, goes into a compulsory three-year cooling-off period.

The current dispensation wants that period to kick in only after the individual has finished two terms (six years), at the board and state association separately. If passed with a three-fourth majority, it will effectively extend the tenure of Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah

respectively. BCCI treasurer Arun Dhumal said that all the proposed amendments are aimed at strengthening the board's structure and will only be incorporated once approved by the Supreme Court. "We are not touching the 70-year age cap clause. With regards to the cooling off, our point of view is if somebody has gained experience by running the state association, why give him a cooling-off. That experience should be utilised in the best interest of the game. If he can contribute in the BCCI, why not?" said Dhumal.

"We will take it (all passed amendments at the AGM) to the Supreme Court. We will put across our point of view. What are the practical difficulties we are facing with regards to a few things. In case the court agrees with our idea, then we will have those amendments," he added.

However, going forward, it has been proposed that a three-fourth majority at the AGM should be able to ratify any amendment to the constitution as it is not "practical" to take the Supreme Court's approval, which is required in the existing constitution. With the BCCI's clout significantly reduced at the ICC due to the administrative crisis over the past three years, the board has proposed that experienced hands must represent India in the world body and the 70-year age cap clause should not apply to them. —PTI



By the end of the Test championship, I don't see it being impossible for us to be fourth or fifth in the world.

— Jason Holder, West Indies captain

SHORT TAKES

Afghanistan U-19 team stun India

Lucknow: Afghanistan's U-19 team produced a disciplined effort to script a stunning two-wicket victory over fancied India in a low-scoring fifth Youth ODI here on Saturday. The five-match series, though, ended 3-2 in favour of hosts India. Batting first after winning the toss, India were bowled out for 157 in 49.3 overs at the Ekana Cricket Stadium B ground. Vikrant Bhadoriya made 29 and Kumar Kushagra scored 24 for the home team. Noor Ahmad was the most successful bowler for the visitors, picking 3/39, while there were two wickets apiece for Abid Mohammadi and Shafiqullah Ghafari. In reply, Afghanistan managed to reach the target of 158 in 47.3 overs, with Asif Musazai top-scoring with 42 off 77 balls. For India U-19, Manav Suthar picked up 3/32 in 7.2 overs. —PTI

England hope to fightback Kiwis

Hamilton: England rejected talk their New Zealand series was over when they ended day two on Sunday at 39 for two, but accepted it would need a special performance to turn their fortunes around in Hamilton. New Zealand, meanwhile, ruled out thoughts of playing for a draw as they targeted a clean sweep in the two Test series after a comprehensive innings victory in the first match. With BJ Watling, the architect of the first Test win, again holding the innings together New Zealand recovered from 191 for five to reach 375 in their first innings in Hamilton with Watling and debutant Daryl Mitchell featuring in a 124-run stand for the sixth wicket. England, in 18 overs before stumps, lost Dom Sibley and Joe Denly cheaply while Rory Burns was dropped twice to be not out 24 with Joe Root on six. —AFP

BRIEF SCORES: New Zealand 375 in 129.1 over (T. Latham 105, D. Mitchell 73; Broad 4/73, Woakes 3/83) vs England 39/2 in 18 overs (R. Burns (batting) 24, J. Root (batting) 6; Southey 1/24, Henry 1/10).

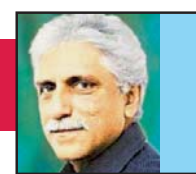
Akram slams Pakistan's fielding

Adelaide, Nov. 30: Pakistan fast bowling legend Wasim Akram blasted the team's efforts on the field during Day 2 of their second Test against Australia at the Adelaide Oval on Saturday. Akram's comments came after a misfield from Shaheen Afridi led to

Pakistan conceding a four on a day when David Warner sent the records tumbling with a triple century. "Shaheen Shah was in la la land at fine leg," Akram said. "Yasir Shah and Shan Masood were probably yawning. That's the problem with Pakistan cricket. They

should be on the ball. "Nobody was backing up and you as a fielder, it doesn't matter how inexperienced you are, you set yourself, new batsman in, they just came out, I'll probably start five-ten yards inside the boundary line not on the boundary." —Agencies

Paine's declaration is an intriguing decision



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

Instead, Taylor called off his innings, saying he couldn't imagine getting ahead of Sir Don Bradman 334, which was the highest score by an Australian till then. Similarly, Michael Clarke declared the innings against India at Sydney in 2012 when he was on 329.

Clarke could have aimed for Lara's record of 400 which had been established by then but, like Taylor, chose to remain behind Bradman's 334. This showed the reverence in which Bradman is still held in Australia in the cricketing fraternity.

However, there has been the exception too. In 2003 at Perth, against a hapless Zimbabwe side, opener Matthew Hayden didn't stop at Bradman's milestone, plundering 380 runs and going past Lara's then record of 375. But the captain of the Aussie team then was Steve Waugh.

(For the record, Hayden's record was short-lived, with Lara making 400 a few months later at the same ground, St John's, where he had scored 375 against the same opponent, England, ten years earlier.)

This suggests there is no clear template in making such decisions. It depends on how the captain sees the relative strengths of the two teams, how he has read the conditions and assessed match situations as they unfold. But perhaps the most important consideration in such a complex decision is how the captain understands the sentiments within his own dressing room, and the implications it could carry.

Paine's declaration is debatable. But if his dressing room, and particularly Warner, can appreciate his logic, the debate is mitigated and the decision gets vindication.

Warner hits 335, Smith shatters record



Adelaide, Nov. 30: An irrepressible David Warner smashed an unbeaten 335 on Saturday while Steve Smith became the fastest man to 7,000 Test runs as

Australia took control of the day-night second Test against Pakistan. Skipper Tim Paine waved his players back into the pavilion at 589 for three ahead of the second day's dinner break with Warner on the 10th highest Test score ever, also a personal best.

The decision to declare deprived him of a crack at Brian Lara's all-time high 400 not out, but it proved to be the right one with the Australian bowlers quickly tearing through Pakistan's hapless top order under the Adelaide Oval lights.

They finished in deep trouble at 96 for six with Mitchell Starc grabbing four of them. Babar Azam was not out 43 and Yasir Shah was on four.

"It's just sunk in to me that it is very rare that you get these opportunities... I'll cherish this moment for the rest of my life, definitely," said Warner on making such a big score. "More importantly, the partnerships we put on. It just showed how much pride we have as a batting unit running between the wickets. "If I'm doing my job well and putting the team in the best position, we're going to win a lot of games," he

SCORECARD

Australia (1st innings): J. Burns c Rizwan b Afridi 4, D. Warner (not out) 335, M. Labuschagne b Afridi 162, S. Smith c Rizwan b Afridi 36, M. Wade (not out) 38. Extras (lb-6, nb-7, w-1) 14. Total (for three wickets in 127 overs) 589 decl.

FoW: 1-8, 2-369, 3-490. **Bowling:** Abbas 29-7-100-0, Afridi 30-5-88-3, Musa 20-1-114-0, Yasir 32-1-197-0, Ahmed 15-0-75-0, Azhar 1-0-9-0.

Pakistan (1st innings): S. Masood c Paine b Hazlewood 19, Imam-ul-Haq c Warner b Starc 2, A. Ali c Smith b Cummins 9, A. Shafiq c Paine b Starc 9, B. Azam (batting) 43, I. Ahmed c Paine b Starc 10, M. Rizwan c Paine b Starc 0, Y. Shah (batting) 4. Total (for six wickets in 35 overs) 96.

FoW: 1-3, 2-22, 3-38, 4-69, 5-89, 6-89. **Bowling:** Starc 13-5-22-4, Hazlewood 8-2-29-1, Cummins 14-1-45-1.

FASTEST TO 7000 RUNS IN TESTS

Batsman	M	I	Time
Steven Smith (Aus)	70	126	9 yrs & 140 days
Wally Hammond (Eng)	80	131	18 yrs & 238 days
V. Sehwag (Ind)	79	134	8 yrs & 278 days
Sachin Tendulkar (Ind)	85	136	11 yrs & 353 days
Garry Sobers (WI)	79	138	16 yrs & 359 days
Kumar Sangakkara (SL)	83	138	9 yrs & 3 days
Virat Kohli (India)	81	138	8 yrs & 113 days

STATS: — S. Pervez Qaiser

added. The visitors, who have lost 13 consecutive Tests in Australia, enjoyed little success in a long day in the field as they look to avoid a 2-0 series defeat.

But they did remove Marnus Labuschagne for 162 in the opening session and also bagged Smith, caught behind by Mohammad Rizwan off Shaheen Afridi for 36. In making his runs, Smith

shattered a record that had stood since 1946.

He took a single off Muhammad Musa to reach 7,000 runs in his 126th innings, taking possession of a mark held for 73 years by English great Wally Hammond who reached the milestone in his 131st innings. Smith also moved past legendary countryman Donald Bradman's 6,996 Test runs to become Australia's 11th highest scorer.

The home team resumed the day at 302 for one with Warner on 166 and Labuschagne 126, with the pair putting on another 67 runs before Pakistan finally got a breakthrough.

Skipper Azhar Ali took the new ball and Afridi clean-bowled Labuschagne as he attempted a drive, just as he and Warner appeared set for another long day at the crease. The 25-year-old trudged off to a standing ovation after a classy 162, his second century in a row. Their marathon 361-run partnership was a record second-wicket stand for Australia against Pakistan and the highest ever in a pink-ball Test.

Minutes later, Warner completed only the second Test double century of his career. Playing in his 81st Test, he reached 200 with a single from Afridi, having clattered 23 fours. Pakistan thought they finally had him out on 226 when he was caught in the gully off debutant Musa, only for their heads to drop when it was called a no-ball. —AFP



Flag bearer

Shot putter Tejinder Pal Singh Toor will be India's flag-bearer at the South Asian Games opening ceremony in Nepal

PREMIER LEAGUE

Shelvey's late goal shelves City rush

Newcastle, Nov. 30: Manchester City's Premier League title hopes faltered once more as the champions twice blew a lead to draw 2-2 at Newcastle on Saturday.

Pep Guardiola's men were frustrated for long spells after Jetro Willems quickly cancelled out Raheem Sterling's first half opener, but seemed to have found the moment of magic they needed thanks to Kevin De Bruyne's sensational strike eight minutes from time.

However, City's defensive flaws were soon exposed once more as Jonjo Shelvey swept home a well-worked free-kick six minutes later.

City have now dropped points in five of their 14 league games this season and could end the day 11 points behind leaders Liverpool.

Guardiola was without Sergio Agüero who has been ruled out for a couple of weeks by a high muscle injury and City missed his predatory instincts as they failed to make nearly 80 percent possession count.

Sterling has usurped Agüero so far this season as City's major source of goals and was clinical 22 minutes in after a lovely backheel from David Silva set the England international up for his 15th goal of the season.

However, the lead lasted just three minutes as the normally goal-shy Magpies produced their own moment of quality when Miguel Almiron teed up

Live on TV

PREMIER LEAGUE

- Norwich vs Arsenal** from 7.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD
- Man City vs Aston Villa** from 10 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD
- Leicester vs Everton** from 10 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

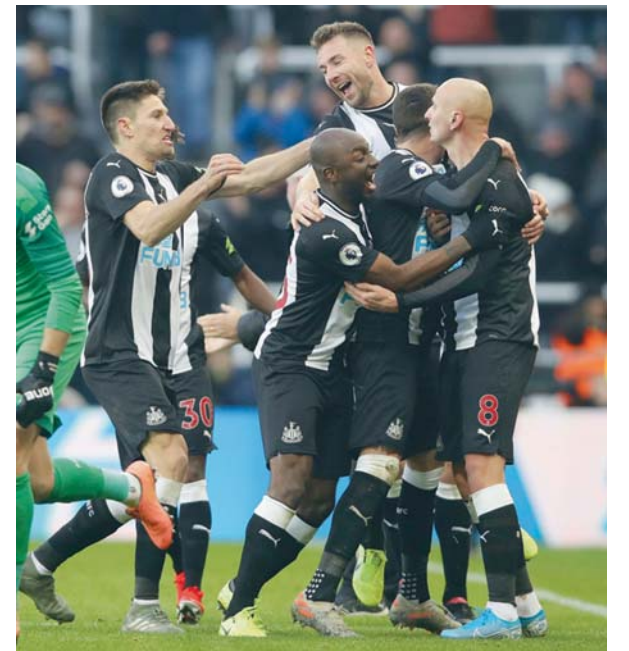
Willems to slot past Ederson into the far corner.

When City lost on their last visit to St James' Park back in January the title seemed lost, only for a 14-game winning streak to end the campaign to pip Liverpool to the post.

The Reds' relentless form at the top of the table meant City started the day nine points behind and with precious little margin for error even before November is out.

But the sharpness and accuracy of passing that has characterised City's two title triumphs under Guardiola was lacking as the visitors' struggled to unlock the mass ranks of the Newcastle defence.

City finally began to work Martin Dubravka in the Newcastle goal in the final quarter as De Bruyne's shot from a narrow angle was turned away before Gabriel Jesus had a huge chance to make his mark in Agüero's absence.



Newcastle United's Jonjo Shelvey (right) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Man City in their English Premier League match in Newcastle on Saturday. — AP

India outPaes Pak

Paes extends Davis Cup record, India earn qualifiers spot

Nur-Sultan, Nov. 30: Veteran Leander Paes bettered his own Davis Cup record by winning his 44th doubles match, this time partnering debutant Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan, as India blanked Pakistan 4-0 on Saturday to earn a spot in the 2020 Qualifiers.

Pakistani teenagers Mohammed Shoaib and Hufaiza Abdul Rehman were no match for the Indian combination of the battle-hardened Paes and Jeevan, who needed just 53 minutes to win 6-1, 6-3.

Last year, Paes became the most successful doubles player in the history of Davis Cup when he won his 43rd match, surpassing Italian great Nicola Pietrangeli during the tie against China.

The 46-year-old had taken 56 ties for his 43rd win while Pietrangeli competed in 66 ties for his 42 victories.

"This was my 44th win but it felt like my first. All my wins are special. Engraving India's name to record books is some-

thing special for me and I am passionate about it. Jeevan was playing his first match and I took the weight of that pressure on my shoulders being the responsible senior partner," Paes said.

"It was about staying solid today. Jeevan has a big heart, he loves to play for flag. I am proud to share the court with him. These guys keep me young, fresh and vibrant. They bring out the best in me. We have got a great mix of different generations and different age groups. It's lot of fun to be back to playing for India again," added the winner of 18 Grand Slam titles.

His record of 44 wins in 57 ties is unlikely to be broken anytime soon as except him, none of the active doubles players feature in the top-10 list. Belarusian Max Mirnyi, at number three, has 36 wins but has not played on Tour since 2018.

While Paes is at top of the

● Paes' record of 44 wins in 57 ties is unlikely to be broken anytime soon as except him, none of the active doubles players feature in the top-10 list.

● Saturday's result means India have won all the matches in a tie for the first time since February 2014 when they had blanked Chinese Taipei 5-0 in Indore.

who has 92-28 win-loss record.

In the reverse singles, Sumit Nagal trounced Yousaf Khalil 6-1 6-0 for his second straight win. Both the sides opted not to play the dead fifth rubber. The fourth rubber is played even if the outcome of the tie is decided after the first three matches but the rules permit teams to skip playing the dead fifth rubber.

Saturday's result means India have won all the matches in a tie for the first time since February 2014 when they had blanked Chinese Taipei 5-0 in Indore.

India will now face world number two Croatia for the Qualifiers in an away tie, to be held on March 6-7.

Twenty-four nations will go head-to-head in a bid to win one of 12 qualifying spots for the Davis Cup Finals. The 12 losing nations will compete in World Group I ties in September 2020.

—PTI



Leander Paes (right) and Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan celebrate their Davis Cup doubles rubber in Nur-Sultan on Saturday. — TWITTER

SHORT TAKES

Prajakta slams BAI on selection

New Delhi: Doubles player Prajakta Sawant on Saturday slammed the selection of the Indian badminton team for the South Asian Games (SAG) in Nepal, saying players who don't even feature in the domestic tournaments have been picked for the regional multi-sporting event.

The Badminton Association of India (BAI), however, denied any allegations of favouritism, saying the players were picked on the basis of a set of selection criteria. In a series of tweets, Sawant questioned the selection of the team and urged BAI president Himanta Biswa

Sarma to look into the matter. "SAF (sic SAG) Games team for Badminton is already decided unofficially. Players are putting stories on Instagram and Facebook of arriving at Nepal. On what basis the selection has been done?? @himantabiswa @BAI_Media," Sawant wrote on her Twitter handle.

"Players from Gopichand academy are only supposed to play for Indian team? who doesn't even participate in All India tournaments and are selected directly to the Indian team? @BAI_Media @himantabiswa. Please answer." — PTI

16-member squad for Vijay Merchant

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

The Hyderabad Cricket Association have announced a 16-member squad to represent the HCA at the under-16 Vijay Merchant Trophy quarterfinal match against Madhya Pradesh. The match will be played from December 2 to 5 in the city.

THE SQUAD: Aman Rao P., Mayank Gupta, Avani Rao, Abhishek Murgan, S. Dheeraj Goud, N. Rishith Reddy, Ashwad Rajiv, Pranav Varma, Nitin Sai Yadav, Arnab Kothapally, Yash Dubey, Pattapu Raghava, S. Rohit Reddy, Arbaz Baig, Kush Agarwal, A. Vignesh Reddy
Coach: S. Kiran Kumar
Assistant coach: R.K. Vamsee, **Fielding coach:** Harinath, **Trainer:** Madhu Goud, **Physio:** Chanakya

LEWIS GRABS POLE IN ABU DHABI

Abu Dhabi: Lewis Hamilton claimed his first pole position in four months with a scorching record lap at the Yas Marina circuit on Saturday for the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix ahead of his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas.

The recently-crowned champion delivered a late lap in one minute and 34.779 seconds to outpace Bottas, who will start from the back of the grid after collecting penalties for taking new engines.

It was a stunning way for Hamilton to finish the 'qualifying season' and improved his career record total to 88 poles, five of them in Abu Dhabi, the 21st and final race of the year.

It was his first pole since the German Grand Prix in July and his fifth of the year. He is more than 30 clear of his nearest rival Sebastian Vettel on 57. Max Verstappen was third for Red Bull ahead of the two Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Sebastian Vettel with Alex Albon taking sixth in the second Red Bull. — AFP

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Madrid go top with gutsy win

Madrid, Nov. 30: Sergio Ramos scored a goal and conceded a penalty as Real Madrid battled past Alaves on Saturday to go top of La Liga before Sunday's game between Barcelona and Atletico Madrid.

Barca and Atletico face off at the Wanda Metropolitan and Madrid did all they could to take advantage, with Dani Carvajal the unlikely matchwinner in a gritty 2-1 victory over Alaves.

Ramos had headed Madrid in front shortly after half-time only to concede a needless penalty for throwing his arm across Joselu, which Lucas Perez converted before Carvajal poked in.

Madrid pull three points clear of Barcelona and six ahead of Atletico, who have played a game more than the top two. Sevilla, in third, host Leganes on Sunday. Alaves stay 13th.

A 1-0 defeat at Mendizorrotza 13 months ago came three weeks before Julen Lopetegui was sacked as coach but this time Madrid showed the kind of steel that was so painfully lacking last season.

On a wet and windy afternoon in the Basque country, Zinedine Zidane's side never showed the verve and creativity that was so impressive in the draw against Paris Saint-Germain on Wednesday.

But this was a gutsy performance that means they have now won six and drawn two of their last eight matches in all



Real Madrid's Dani Carvajal (right) celebrates scoring against Alaves in their Spanish League match at Mendizorrotza Stadium in Vitoria on Saturday. — AP

competitions, with the Clasico against Barcelona next month fast approaching. Gareth Bale made his first Madrid start since October 5 after recovering from a calf injury and his first too since his controversial celebration with Wales earlier this month, which sparked anger among his club's supporters.

Bale hit the post in the first half but faded and was replaced by Rodrygo after Alaves' equaliser. With Eden Hazard out injured, Isco also kept his place while Alphonse Areola was given a rare outing in goal ahead of the rested Thibaut Courtois.

Madrid were lucky not to concede another penalty early on as Alex Vidal slalomed inside Ramos and then Eder Militao, whose dangling leg caught Vidal's foot. Referee Guillermo Cuadra felt the fall was

exaggerated. At the other end, Bale hit the post with a header and Karim Benzema latched onto a quick throw but instead of shooting, hooked the ball back for Isco whose effort was saved.

Alaves grew in confidence as the rain grew heavier yet Madrid regrouped at half-time and took the lead soon after as Ramos was given a free header to glance in. Toni Kroos' crossed free-kick. — AFP

GRITTY VERMA KEEPS INDIAN HOPES ALIVE

Lucknow, Nov. 30: A gritty Sourabh Verma entered the men's singles final after a hard-fought three-game win over Korea's Heo Kwang Hee in the semifinals of the Syed Modi International here on Saturday.

The 26-year-old Indian, who won two BWF Super 100 titles in Hyderabad and Vietnam this year, displayed a never-say-die attitude during his thrilling 21-17, 16-21, 21-18 win over Heo, ranked 44th in the world.

Sourabh thus set up a final clash with eighth seeded Taiwanese Wang Tzu Wei, who thrashed former world number 1 Korean Son Wan Ho 21-9, 21-7 in the other semifinal of the Super 300 event.

Earlier, former national champion Rituparna Das played her heart out before going down to Thailand's Phittayaporn Chaiwan to bow out of the women's singles competition.

The 23-year-old Indian went down fighting 22-24, 15-21 in Chaiwan in a 39-minute women's singles semifinal match.

World No. 36 Sourabh made a good start to the semifinal, opening up a 6-2 lead before grabbing a 11-7 advantage at the break.

The Madhya Pradesh shuttler kept moving ahead despite a spirited fight from Heo and eventually pocketed the opening game. —PTI

SENIOR WRESTLING NATIONALS

Gold for Vinesh, Sakshi on Day 2

Jalandhar, Nov. 30: Star grapplers Vinesh Phogat (55kg) and Sakshi Malik (62kg) dished out convincing wins in the finals to claim gold medals on day two of the Tata Motors Senior Wrestling National Championships here on Saturday.

However, the highlight of the day was Haryana wrestler Anita Sheoran's stunning win over Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Divya Krakran of Railways in the 68kg final.

The 35-year-old Anita, who had won the 65kg gold medal last year, is on a comeback mode and she surprised everyone with her gold-winning performance in the final.

Joining Anita was Punjab's Gursharan Kaur, who is making a comeback after six years.

Gursharan defeated Pooja of Haryana 4-2 in the 76 Kg category to win the gold medal.

Representing Railways, Vinesh and Sakshi registered convincing wins in their respective final bouts.

While Vinesh beat 20-year-old Haryana's Anju 7-3 in the 55kg category to clinch her second consecutive gold at Nationals, Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi overcame some gutsy moves by her opponent Radhika of Haryana and registered 4-2 win in



Shakshi Malik poses with her gold medal at the senior wrestling nationals in Jalandhar on Saturday.

the final of the 62kg category.

Chandigarh wrestler Neetu, however, had to settle for silver after losing to seasoned campaigner Sarita Mor in the 57kg category.

In the 65kg final, Haryana's Nisha defeated Navjot of Railways with a margin of 4-1 as she pulled off a confident victory by fall and denied the Railways' grappler more than a point in the final showdown.

Haryana's women wrestlers dominated the medals tally with total of 215 points. —PTI