

# Small parties could be kingmakers in U.K.

Lib Dems, DUP, SNP or Brexit Party could play a decisive role if leading parties fail to win majority

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

If British Prime Minister Boris Johnson fails to win an absolute majority in Parliament on Thursday, smaller parties may find themselves holding the trump cards in negotiations to form an alliance. Some opinion polls suggested that Mr. Johnson's Conservative Party would fail to gain majority as most polls showed the gap between the Conservatives and Labour narrowing on the eve of the election.

Here are the parties who could hold the keys to power.

## The 'Remainers'

Under Jo Swinson, 39, the Liberal Democrats hope to capture the votes of "Remainers" with a clear message to cancel Brexit, pitching themselves as the pro-EU party, as opposed to the pro-Brexit Conservatives and undecided Labour.

The Lib Dems, who came second in EU elections in May, have seen their ranks swell after defections by dissident pro-EU Conservative MPs. But polls suggest they could lose some of their 21



Final countdown: Leader of Liberal Democrats Jo Swinson taking a selfie in Sheffield. • REUTERS/FILE

seats. The promise to cancel Brexit has proven unpopular among even europhiles.

The party's role in a coalition government in the early 2010s, a period marked by severe austerity, has also turned off voters on the Left.

Their failure "to capitalise on their distinctive position on Brexit" was "perhaps the biggest surprise of the election campaign," pollster John Curtice said.

**Northern Ireland's DUP**  
With no absolute majority in 2017, the Conservatives were

forced to join forces with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party to govern.

But the immovable stance of the ultra-conservative party's 10 MPs on Brexit was the decisive factor in the failure of Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson to get the divorce deal he had reached with the EU through Parliament.

The party also opposed an agreement negotiated between Brussels and Mr. Johnson's predecessor Theresa May, contributing to her

downfall. They believe Mr. Johnson's deal will lead to a border between Northern Ireland and mainland Britain, which they fear could stoke growing momentum for a united Ireland. The DUP is the main party in Northern Ireland and is led by 49-year-old Arlene Foster.

## Scottish party

The Scottish National Party (SNP), which wants Scotland to split from the rest of Britain, has capitalised on the 2016 Brexit referendum – in which more than six out of

10 Scots voted to stay in the EU – to breathe life into its campaign.

Led by energetic First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, 49, the party has campaigned under the slogan "Stop Brexit", believing the vote to leave has exposed a permanent ideological rift between Scotland and the rest of Britain. The party's progressive ideology means it could theoretically join forces with the Labour Party.

But its demands to hold a second independence referendum in 2020 and its opposition to Britain's Trident nuclear programme could complicate negotiations.

## The Brexit Party

The new party is the latest vehicle of chief eurosceptic Nigel Farage.

His party won the European elections in May, weeks after its official launch, leading to Theresa May's departure and a pro-Brexit shift within Tory party. Despite an intervention by his friend Donald Trump, Mr. Farage has struggled to compete against Mr. Johnson, who warned against splitting the Leave vote.

# Gotabaya promises media freedom under his govt.

Uphold country's reputation, President tells media houses

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Thursday assured that media freedom will not be hindered in any form during his tenure, according to a statement from his office.

Addressing heads of local media institutions, he said that while there was an opportunity for "reasonable criticism", he expected every media institution to fulfil its obligation towards the country, by "engaging in favourable media reporting" to uphold the country's reputation.

The statement quoted him as saying: "People of this country elected me to the office of the President with great expectations. Enhancing the efficiency of politicians and public officials, elimination of corruption and the economic development are some of the priorities among them. As such I expect the fullest support and cooperation of media towards achieving these objectives."



Gotabaya Rajapaksa

His assurance comes amid concerns among sections over media freedom in Sri Lanka after the November presidential election. Several journalists and dissidents in Sri Lanka have been targeted in the past.

According to international press freedom advocate Reporters Without Borders (RSF), at least 14 journalists were murdered during the 2005-15, when Mahinda Rajapaksa was President.

In 2017, when the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) told a magistrate court in Colombo about "top-secret death squads" reportedly linked to the de-

fence establishment, Mr. Gotabaya, a former Defence Secretary, squarely denied the charges. The CID's submission pertained to the assassination of well-known newspaper editor Lasantha Wickrematunga, in January 2009. In the last month, at least one news website was raided, while two other online journalists were "questioned". An editor of a Vavuniya-based Tamil newspaper was also questioned in November allegedly over publication of "LTTE-related" photographs, local media reported.

"No doubt that there is a big fear factor now," said senior journalist and commentator Victor Ivan, a former editor of Sinhala weekly newspaper *Rawaya*. "A lot of journalists who merely covered and followed issues as part of their job now feel threatened under the new government," he told *The Hindu*, adding that the previous government, "although foolish", was "relatively much better" for media freedom.

## ELSEWHERE



## Suu Kyi's defence of Army puzzles many

THE HAGUE  
The Gambia condemned Aung San Suu Kyi's "silence" over the plight of Rohingya on Thursday after the Nobel Peace Prize laureate defended Myanmar against genocide charges at the ICJ. Lawyers said that she ignored allegations of mass murder, rape and forced deportation in her arguments while defending the Army. APF

## Russia expels two German diplomats

MOSCOW  
Russia expelled two German diplomats on Thursday in retaliation for Berlin's ousting of two employees of the Russian Embassy last week over a brazen killing last summer in the German capital. Russia said it was making the move "due to the reciprocity principle" and ordered them to leave the country in seven days. AP

## Trump says Greta should 'chill,' go to movies

WASHINGTON  
U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday slammed *Time* magazine's naming of Greta Thunberg as 2019 Person of the Year. "So ridiculous. Greta must work on her Anger Management problem, then go to a good old fashioned movie with a friend! Chill Greta, Chill!", Mr. Trump said in a tweet.

# 16 killed in Ukraine college fire

Firefighters pull out two more bodies after eight-day search

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KIEV

Firefighters have pulled two more bodies from a college building in Ukraine's southern port of Odessa that burned in a spectacular fire last week, authorities said on Thursday, bringing the number of dead to 16.

Prosecutors have arrested the director of the college on

charges of professional negligence and placed her under house arrest.

The bodies of the last two people missing following the fire were found late on Wednesday, the emergency services said in a statement.

## 30 injured

Firefighters spent eight days combing through the debris

of the six-storey building, which caught fire last Wednesday. Another 30 people were injured in the blaze, with eight still in hospital as of Thursday.

The College of Economics, Law, and the Hotel and Restaurant Business is in central Odessa and gets around 400 graduates per year.

# 50 lawyers arrested after attack on Lahore hospital

Five patients died as doctors, staff fled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LAHORE

Pakistan police on Thursday arrested 50 lawyers for attacking a cardiac hospital, which led to a melee, in which five patients died as they were left unattended.

A large number of lawyers, including women, forced their entry into the Lahore's Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) to avenge what they said was an assault by doctors on a fellow advocate weeks ago.

As the lawyers forced their entry into the hospital, the doctors and paramedical staff ran for their lives, leaving the patients unattended.

Punjab Health Minister Yashmeen Rashid later told the media that the casual-

ties took place after doctors were unable to provide the patients timely treatment during their bid to avert the assault, Geo News reported.

"We have arrested 50 lawyers and registered an FIR against a total 250 lawyers under terrorism charges, Lahore police chief Zulfiqar Hameed told reporters here on Thursday.

Interestingly, Prime Minister Imran Khan's nephew Barrister Hassan Khan Niazi was also among the attackers.

Police, however, did not lay a hand on him.

"PM's nephew Hassan Khan was caught on camera in PIC attack but the police have been stopped from arresting him, PML-N lawmaker Azma Bokhari said.

# Trump signs order targeting anti-Semitism at universities

Colleges that allow such activity will be denied funds

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Wednesday to prohibit federal funding for colleges and universities that allow anti-Semitism, but the move drew some criticism for potentially limiting free speech.

The order would extend protections against discrimination under the 1964 Civil Rights Act to people subjected to anti-Semitism on college campuses.

"This is our message to universities: If you want to accept the tremendous amount of federal dollars that you get every year, you must reject anti-Semitism.

# 13 killed in Bangladesh plastic factory blaze

The fire broke out in a room where 8 cylinders were kept, according to a survivor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DHAKA

At least 13 people were killed and 21 others critically injured in a devastating fire that ripped through an illegal plastic factory in Bangladesh, police said on Thursday.

The fire swept through the Prime Patent Plastic Limited on Wednesday after-

noon at Keraniganj, on the outskirts of Dhaka, police was quoted as saying by the bdnews24.com.

At least 13 workers died and 21 others were being treated at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Thursday, the report said.

The Fire Service and Civil Defence brought the blaze at the factory under control

around 5:45 p.m. after it started at around 4:30 p.m., said Sazzad Haustoria, the agency's Director General.

The cause of the fire could not be immediately determined by the authorities.

The factory had also caught fire earlier in February, the *Dhaka Tribune* reported.

However, one of the in-

jured workers, said the fire broke out at a room where eight cylinders were kept. He added that there was a leak in the lines, the *Daily Star* reported.

Around 300 people worked in two shifts at the factory. Around 150 people, including many women, were working when the fire started, the worker said.

# Fire on Russia's only aircraft carrier kills one

It was under repair at Arctic shipyard

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MOSCOW

Russia's only aircraft carrier suffered a massive fire on Thursday that killed one crew member, injured 11 people and significantly damaged the ship.

The fire on the *Admiral Kuznetsov* broke out during welding work at a shipyard in the Arctic port of Murmansk and spread quickly through the carrier's internal compartments. The ship's crew and emergency teams spent the day battling the blaze.

The military said one crew member died while battling the fire, and another one is missing.

The Investigative Committee, the nation's top state investigative agency, has



The fire reportedly broke out during welding operations. • AP/FILE

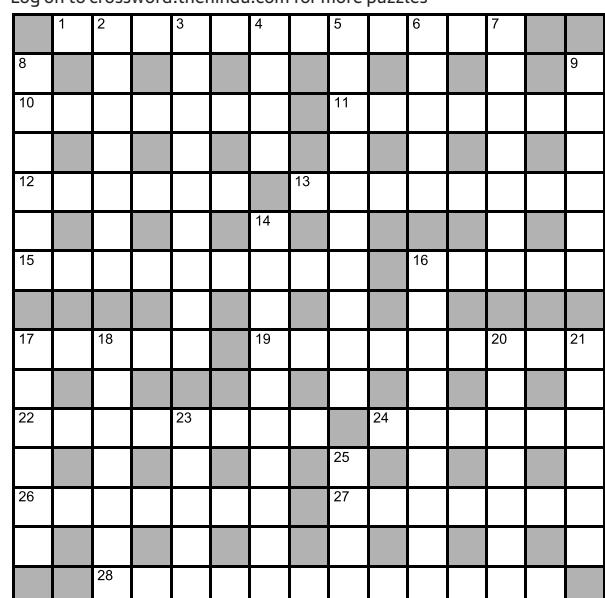
opened a probe into a possible violation of safety rules.

The *Admiral Kuznetsov* has been plagued by breakdowns and setbacks since its launch in 1985. The massive blaze follows a 70-tonne crane crashing onto the *Admiral Kuznetsov's* deck in October 2018.

Thursday's fire will further push back the work to fit the ship with modern control systems and weapons.

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12805

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



### ACROSS

- 1 Athlete presently in a broadcast (6,6)
- 10 Gifted? In conclusion had to pay up (7)
- 11 Steady measure mostly consisting of two parts (7)
- 12 For the most part, stop sign gives relief (6)

(set by Vulcan)

- 13 A descendant kept apart by one in French city (8)
- 15 Spider natural at spinning (9)
- 16 Part of a group, an election committee (5)
- 17 She's in a big town right in California (5)
- 19 Another set to wear in a car? (3-6)
- 22 Outcast, disheartened, volunteered outside a country (8)
- 24 Very hard to keep away from this kind of tea – unwritten (6)
- 26 A science place followed by a scholar in one of the states (7)
- 27 National Bank's counter closing early primarily (7)
- 28 Neon light working on display eventually (2,3,4,3)

### DOWN

- 2 What is consumer ensured to get! (3,4)
- 3 Island is staggering – in genuine awe without end (3,6)
- 4 Irrelevant feature (4)
- 5 Senator/member is subsequently overheard (10)
- 6 Desire of every earner (5)
- 7 Ruin one critical meeting (7)
- 8 European, one in dry city (6)
- 9 No sex involved – no call made (6)
- 14 What's fair to take during trial as a precaution (4,2,4)
- 16 Power diminishing as aforementioned (9)
- 17 Animal crossing road with caution (6)
- 18 A lie without basis, basically about a country detailed in language (7)
- 20 Vivid description of a piece of furniture with gold at the bottom (7)
- 21 Change one's mind about fasting time (6)
- 23 Band's first and final hit (5)
- 25 Repetition of same chords (4)

## SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12804

S	L	A	V	E	R	F	I	L
E	N	R	F	S	L	A		
B	R	I	D	G	E	R	E	C
M	I	A	A	A	H	U	C	
C	O	I	N	L	A	G	N	I
N	G	M	E	T				
C	O	U	N	T	E	R	F	E
P	A	L	F	T	R	U	T	H
R	E	C	A	U	I	N		
B	E	L	A	B	O	U	R	P
N	L	T	Y	I	M	E		
T	I	T	B	I	T	A	N	G
Y	C							

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

## FAITH

# Embodiment of vairagya

A life of absolute renunciation is the only way to realise the eternal and superior bliss of the Infinite. This is the final word in the Upanishads. Very rarely are some souls inspired by vairagya, the strong impulse to turn away with determination from the world and its myriad attractions, to seek salvation with single mindedness. Parikshit meets his moment of realisation when he unwittingly commits a wrong against a sadhu, and soon repents for it with utmost sincerity, pointed out Sri Krishnamurthy Sastrigal in a discourse.

Parikshit is at the height of his successful reign and as the heir of the Pandava clan, he has established high standards of righteousness in his kingdom. His domestic life too is impeccable, having fulfilled all his duties towards family and kingdom. He even confronts Kali Purusha who tries to invade his kingdom. He subdues him and, in response to his pleas, grants him five places to stay in his kingdom – gambling, drinking, immoral living, slaughtering of cows and gold – which are the sources of evil. But during one of his hunting trips when he is thirsty, he hurls a dead serpent on a rishi in meditation, an act alien to his own rightful nature.

He is filled with remorse at his own unpardonable deed, and as atonement for it, decides to renounce all his possessions, kingdom, riches, family, etc, even as he is informed of the curse of the rishi's son condemning him to die of snake bite in seven days. He undertakes a vow of fast unto death and goes to the banks of the Ganga to spend the time on hand in meditation that might free him of sinful tendencies. It is the Lord's Sankalpa that Suka, the sage always established in Brahma Nishta, arrives in their midst and seeing Parikshit as the very embodiment of vairagya, decides to narrate the Bhagavata Purana to him.



MARKET WATCH

	12-12-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	40,582	0.42
US Dollar	70.83	-0.03
Gold	38,564	0.18
Brent oil	64.60	0.94

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	372.50	2.80
Asian Paints	1750.65	12.45
Axis Bank	722.10	5.55
Bajaj Auto	3261.45	-7.20
Bajaj Finserv	9169.25	90.15
Bajaj Finance	4057.15	20.35
Bharti Airtel	438.65	-4.10
BPCL	491.75	9.10
Britannia Ind	3073.55	32.55
Cipla	461.05	11.10
Coal India	190.15	3.00
Dr Reddys Lab	2905.65	17.85
Eicher Motors	21953.55	411.75
GAIL (India)	118.95	1.65
Gasfin Ind	774.30	6.80
HCL Tech	536.35	-7.45
HDFC	2318.45	-3.20
HDFC Bank	1263.60	14.85
Hero MotoCorp	2334.05	37.75
Hindalco	201.45	4.85
Hind Unilever	2007.35	-3.10
ICI Bank	535.35	1.80
Indusind Bank	1444.15	23.50
Bharti Infratel	252.20	-2.40
Infosys	702.10	-18.95
Indian Oil Corp	128.10	2.55
ITC	238.55	0.95
JSW Steel	255.60	5.65
Kotak Bank	1715.60	29.05
L&T	1279.70	15.40
M&M	511.90	4.15
Maruti Suzuki	6999.80	6.60
Nestle India Ltd.	14154.95	88.95
NTPC	114.45	1.45
ONGC	125.90	-2.10
PowerGrid Corp	184.75	3.00
Reliance Ind	1568.20	5.80
State Bank	321.85	9.05
Sun Pharma	434.15	4.35
Tata Motors	173.35	11.55
Tata Steel	418.70	13.15
TCS	2020.90	-21.00
Tech Mahindra	756.45	-1.50
Titan	1188.00	8.45
UltraTech Cement	3992.10	-9.05
UPL	569.95	8.90
Vedanta	144.00	5.50
Wipro	239.45	-0.60
YES Bank	45.35	2.55
Zee Entertainment	284.30	0.85

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on December 12

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.63	70.95
Euro	78.64	78.99
British Pound	92.99	93.41
Japanese Yen (100)	65.00	65.29
Chinese Yuan	10.04	10.08
Swiss Franc	71.85	72.21
Singapore Dollar	52.05	52.29
Canadian Dollar	53.63	53.87
Malaysian Ringgit	16.97	17.05

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

December 12 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	46.9	(46.6)
22 ct gold (1g)	3602	(3597)

# Domestic air passenger traffic grows 11% in November

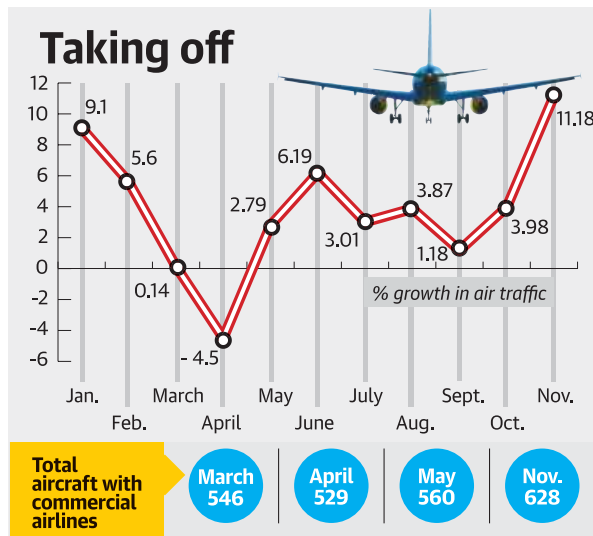
Void left by Jet's closure filled by induction of aircraft by other airlines

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Growth in domestic air passenger traffic returned to double-digit figures for the first time this year in November, as Indian carriers altogether saw an 11% growth in passenger demand last month compared with the same month last year, as per DGCA's monthly data.

Airlines ferried 129.47 lakh passengers last month compared with 116.45 lakh passengers in November 2018.

November also saw the largest number of passengers compared with all other months. The trend is an indicator of how the airline sector has been able to make up for the reduction in capacity after Jet Airways' exit, by in-



ducting new aircraft. There are now 628 aircraft among different carriers compared

with 529 in April when Jet Airways shut its operations, leading to the grounding of

its nearly 120 planes and the sector recording a negative growth of 4.5% for the first time in recent history.

**Enough capacity**  
"With 628 aircraft we have sufficient capacity to shoulder this kind of growth," a senior official of the DGCA said about the passenger data.

SpiceJet continued to lead in passenger load factor with 92.8% of its seats across flights sold, followed by GoAir (92.7%) and IndiGo (91.4%). In market share, IndiGo cornered 47.5%, followed by SpiceJet with 16.1% and Air India with 12.1%.

GoAir was the most punctual with 67.6% of its flights on time, followed by Vistara (67.4%) and Air Asia (66.7%).

## Bharat Bond ETF opens for subscription

Anchor book subscription at ₹2,980 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The public issue of Bharat Bond ETF, the country's first corporate bond exchange-traded fund aimed at retail investors, opened on Thursday.

The ETF will invest only in AAA-rated bonds of public sector companies.

The ETF, which is an initiative of the Government of India through the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), will be managed by Edelweiss Asset Management Company.

"The NFO of Bharat Bond ETF, the first corporate bond ETF of the country,

was launched today. "The anchor book was oversubscribed by 1.7 times at ₹2,980 crore. The offer will remain open for all investors from December 13 to December 20," the DIPAM Secretary said in a tweet.

**Green shoe option**

Through the ETF, Edelweiss Mutual Fund proposes to raise an initial amount of ₹3,000 crore with a green shoe option of ₹2,000 crore in the 3-year maturity period (2023) and ₹4,000 crore with a green shoe option of ₹6,000 crore in the 10-year maturity bucket (2030), the fund house said in a release.

## Class action suit in U.S. accuses Infosys of false statements

CEO Parekh avoided standard reviews of mega deals, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

The Schall Law Firm, a national shareholder rights litigation firm based in California, has filed a class action lawsuit against digital transformation major Infosys for "making false and misleading statements to the market."

The lawsuit filed accused Infosys CEO Salil Parekh of avoiding standard reviews of mega deals to get rid of scrutiny. It also alleged that the Bengaluru-based tech firm used improper recognition of revenue to boost short-term profits.

"In fact, the company's fi-



Salil Parekh

ments were false and materially misleading throughout the class period and when the market learned the truth about Infosys, investors suffered damages, it said.

"The lawsuit goes on to call these allegations as 'facts' even as an independent investigation by law firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas is ongoing," said a market analyst.

The Schall Law Firm has invited investors who purchased the company's securities between July 7, 2018 and October 20, 2019, and incurred losses of over \$100,000 to contact the firm before December 23, 2019.

finance team was pressured to hide details of these deals and other accounting matters from auditors and the company's board of directors," it said in its plaint. Based on these facts, the company's public state-

## Vipin Sondhi named Ashok Leyland CEO

Mandate is to drive growth, strategy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Commercial vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) has appointed Vipin Sondhi as the CEO and MD for five years from December 12.

Mr. Sondhi would drive technology transition, growth and future strategy for the flagship company of the Hinduja Group as well as the group's global automotive portfolio. He had been inducted recently as a director on the board, said the company in a filing.

Mr. Sondhi succeeds Vinod Dasari, who stepped down on March 31, 2019 citing personal reasons.



Vipin Sondhi

Mr. Sondhi has more than three decades of experience in manufacturing and engineering sectors.

He was earlier MD and CEO of JCB India and member of JCB's global executive team.

## Will pay GST compensation to States: FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

With States not being paid compensation for loss of revenue due to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) implementation since August, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said that the Centre would honour its commitment and no one should doubt [this].

Replying to the debate on supplementary demands for grants in the Rajya Sabha, she said the central government has released ₹9,783 crore in excess of collections made from GST cess.

She, however, did not reply to questions as to by when the Centre would clear the dues of States.

## ECB's Lagarde sees slowdown bottoming out

Bank leaves key rates unchanged

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
FRANKFURT

The head of the European Central Bank (ECB) said on Thursday that the economic slowdown in the countries that use the euro shows signs of bottoming out.

Christine Lagarde told reporters after the bank kept its monetary policies on hold that recent economic indicators are "weak overall" but "point to some stabilising in the slowdown of economic growth."

The central bank on Thursday left its key interest rate benchmarks and stimulus programmes unchanged. It was the bank's first policy meeting under newly appointed Ms. Lagarde. The bank left its de-



Christine Lagarde

posit rate at minus 0.5% and its main refinancing rate at zero. Doubts have grown about how much good additional central bank action can do to support developed economies; the U.S. Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged and signaled it would leave them alone through 2020.

## Fed keeps rates on hold

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. Federal Reserve on Wednesday held interest rates steady and signalled borrowing costs will not change anytime soon, with moderate economic growth and historically low unemployment expected to persist through the 2020 presidential election.

In its final policy meeting of a tumultuous year, when it was spurred to cut interest rates 3 times to forestall a slowdown fuelled largely by President Trump's trade war, the U.S. central bank struck a sanguine tone, confident the actions it had taken so far are working. "Our economic outlook remains a favourable one, despite global developments and ongoing risks," Fed Chair Jerome Powell said.

## IRDAI forms group to study loss prevention

It will also mull ways to minimise loss

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

A ten-member working group has been constituted by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) to suggest segment-wise ways and means to improve loss prevention and loss minimisation in the general insurance industry.

The move is aimed at all stakeholders working together towards a common end on a common platform. Though a crucial aspect for the insurance industry, loss prevention and loss minimisation measures have remained very company-specific, sources among insurers said.

There may be considerable overlap in the way companies approach the issue, yet there is little in terms of knowledge-sharing, something that the working group sought to formalise.

**Loss prevention and minimisation steps help mitigate economic losses in a larger context**

IRDAI Executive Director (General) M. Pulla Rao, in the order constituting the working group on Thursday, said steps for loss prevention and loss mitigation not only helped the insured and the insurer but also help mitigate economic losses in a larger context.

The working group is also expected to evaluate current practices followed by the insurance industry in the area of loss prevention and loss minimisation.

The group, given three months to submit its report, will also give recommendations for promoting research, education and services in the area. IRDAI Member (Non-Life) T. L. Alamelu will chair the group.

## Wabtec opens its largest design centre in India

Firm to deliver 1,000 rail locos by 2025

MINI TEJASWI  
BENGALURU

Pittsburgh-based Wabtec Corporation, a recently merged entity between GE Transportation and Faiveley Transport, which manufactures locomotives, freight cars and passenger transit vehicles for governments and enterprises across 50 geographies, has opened its largest ever engineering and digital electronics design and development centre in Bengaluru.

The centre, set up at an investment of over \$5 million, will host engineering teams spanning across the company's digital electronics portfolio. The centre comes with validation labs for distributed power, positive train control, trip optimiser electronic air brake, signalling systems and advanced train automation solutions. Wabtec Corporation's global technology

officer and senior V-P, Engineering, Dominique Malenfant, said, "Our technology team in India will be crucial to bring breakthrough technologies to the industries we serve. Our new design and development centre will facilitate collaboration between our development hubs across the U.S. and Europe to further our innovation." Wabtec has over 27,000 employees, of whom over 5,000 are technologists. The company employs over 3,000 people in India. The new centre has over 600 engineers and the strength will be scaled up to over 1,000 in a year.

The company has a mandate to deliver 1,000 diesel-electric locomotives to the Indian Railways (IR) by 2025. It may be recalled that General Electric had earlier signed a \$2.6 billion contract with IR to deliver these locomotives.

## IOC, OIL in race for Bharat Petroleum's Numaligarh unit

Oil India already holds 26% stake in the refinery

PIYUSH PANDEY  
MUMBAI

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL) and Oil India Limited (OIL) are in the race to buy Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited's (BPCL's) 61.65% stake in Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL), according to sources in the know of the development.

The strategic sale of the government's 53.39% stake in BPCL would be done without NRL, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said last month. Hence, the government has to first demerger NRL from BPCL.

NRL owns and operates a 3-million-tonne per annum (MTPA) refinery in Numaligarh in Golaghat district of Assam and has plans for a threefold growth in its refin-



THE HINDU ARCHIVES

ing. BPCL holds 61.65% stake in the NRL while OIL and Assam Government hold 26% and 12.35%, respectively.

**Eyeing synergies**

For upstream OIL, NRL will be an opportunity to become an integrated energy company. Acquiring BPCL's 61.65% stake will increase OIL's stake in NRL to 87.25%.

A senior OIL official told *The Hindu*, "Given an opportunity, we would like to buy BPCL's stake in NRL as we already have 26% stake there. We both have a lot of synergies." NRL recently acquired a participating interest in two oil blocks in Assam from OIL, marking NRL's presence across all sectors - upstream, mid-stream and downstream.

ing capacity to 9 MTPA at an investment of ₹22,500 crore to meet the rising fuel demand in the North East.

According to Moody's Investors Service, the sale will reduce BPCL's capital spending as it is one of the largest projects that the firm is working on.

"We will definitely look at (NRL)," an IOCL board member said, without elaborat-



**Public performance**  
(clockwise from right) A DCM Football match in Ambedkar Stadium in 1983; Nehru Hockey Championship at Shivaji Stadium held the same year; Iranian women supporters at a DCM match in 1995; Prithvi Nath Sharma Memorial Basketball Tournament at Ajmal Khan Park in 2005

• THE HINDU ARCHIVES



# Delhi's vanishing sports tournaments

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

Winter in Delhi used to bring people out of their houses to enjoy peanuts, sport, and a spot of afternoon sunshine. In some cases, when the sun set on the grounds of the Roshanara Club, and the cricket continued, hip flasks would emerge, and a pushcart man would supply local *chakna* from across the wall.

Ferozeshah Kotla, Ambedkar Stadium, Shivaji Stadium, Ajmal Khan Park, Lodhi Colony's central park were some of the popular spots that attracted sport-lovers. Cricket, hockey, and football were played during the day; volleyball and basketball late in the evening, under lights. Table tennis and badminton went into indoor spaces like St Columba's School and the RBI hall, where business was conducted during the day and matches in the evening.

Sadly, this sporting activity has declined in Delhi, and while there are many reasons – the emergence of other entertainment options, the fascination with big-ticket events, and stadia restricting entry – one of them is the death of major city competitions like the DCM

The culture of catching a match of a winter evening, just for fun, no longer exists in Delhi



Cup (football), Nehru Hockey (that now has a shifting location) and the Master Prithvi Nath Sharma basketball tournaments.

Sport-enthusiasts in Delhi used to have a rich choice to plan their day. "We would soak in the sun at the Ferozeshah Kotla during Ranji Trophy matches, watching some of the big stars of the game. Next door was football at the Ambedkar Stadium," recalls S. Ganesh, a sports-marketing consultant who now lives in New York, but craves a day of sport-watching in the Capital. There is little for him to enjoy.

The DCM Cup held its final edition in 1998 when Mohun Bagan won the title. "It was the first tournament to bring foreign clubs to Delhi. We saw some World Cup players in action at the Ambedkar Stadium. The stands would be packed and spectators got to see some memorable matches with clubs from Korea, Germany, and Iran," remembers veteran sports scribe Jaydeep Basu.

Trips to Ambedkar Stadium and

Ferozeshah Kotla would include a welcome dash to Old Delhi where kebabs, kormas and chaat would go with goals and runs. Since football matches had a paid entry, spectators would enter Kotla for free and from its upper galleries, watch the action at Ambedkar Stadium. At times, the players on the field at Kotla would be pleasantly 'disturbed' by the thunderous roar from the Ambedkar Stadium at a goal scored or one saved.

Shivaji Stadium was the destination for hockey lovers. Some of the finest players would produce electrifying action, keeping spectators entranced during the Nehru Cup and Sanjay Gandhi tournaments, always in winter. These brought great business to the samosa sellers. There was always a queue here, and it was a tough decision whether to miss the action before or after half-time.

It was common for people to watch a game at Ambedkar and then rush to Shivaji Stadium, depending on the stars engaged in the matches. S. P. Singh, a businessman who never missed a game in the capital, would be 'consulted' by scribes who popped out for sa-

mosas, and missed some part of the action. He was an authority on sports in the capital.

There were some who would squeeze in a visit to the Ajmal Khan Park to enjoy the Prithvi Nath basketball tournament (which ended a decade ago). The cold of winter was forgotten once the warmth from the courts spread to the temporary stands. Hundreds from nearby residential areas would flock to watch the basketball contests, and to consume some of the best bread pakoras and hot milk.

The central park, adjacent to the bus stop in Lodhi Colony, would stage volleyball matches in the evening where office-goers would break journey to enjoy tea and the game. Similarly, tourists, waiting for a delayed train at New Delhi, would spend time at the Karnail Singh stadium to catch some cricket and *chole-kulche* from the Sita Ram Diwan Chand outlet in nearby Paharganj.

Table tennis tournaments such as Manav Sthali and Surjeet Kaur, have vanished from Delhi's calendar. So has the city's local winter-sporting culture where even inter-colony matches were well-attended, and the warm *chai* flowed into foggy nights.

## FOOD SPOT



RAHUL VERMA

History is in the news – or at least it is on celluloid. I was reading about *Panipat*, and how it had angered some sections of the people when I heard about another spot of history – Haldighati. The reference, however, was not to the battle, but to food, a subject that never fails to excite my close circle of friends. It turned out that Haldighati was the name of a chicken dish that two of my friends had ordered – and enjoyed. The dish (better than Panipat Pulao, I am sure) had come from a restaurant called Haldi in Noida.

It sounded promising, so I looked up Haldi on the Net. But it was not my day, for I learnt that the restaurant didn't deliver to my neighbourhood. But I was sold on the idea of eating something out of

# Fare for the crisp air

Kadak Singh da Dhaba has food that takes you back to the cold hills with its hot rotis and simple curries

the ordinary. So I surfed some more, and found out that there was a restaurant called Kadak Singh da Dhaba from where I could order food using one of the delivery apps.



I looked at the menu and liked the sound of the Chicken Dhaba-Adhrakh (₹350). So we asked for that, as well as a plate of Mutton Curry (₹350) and Palak Kofta (₹240).

The eatery is in G-4 Parmesh Tower, Karkardooma Community Centre (Phone numbers: 9582305565 and 9811436635). I placed my order on Zomato, and the food arrived just in time for dinner. The containers came with a sticker of Kadak Singh da Dhaba – of a Sardarji on a motorcycle, apron in place, and holding what promised to be a nice chicken dish. The food wasn't bad at all.



**Spinach's the trick**  
Palak Kofta; Chicken Dhaba Adhrakh  
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

seeds and ginger.

The menu is limited, but there are some interesting dishes on it.

For vegetarians, they have Malai Chaap, Pudina Chaap, Paneer Korma, Dal Punjabi, Dal Makhni and Dal Hand, among other dishes.

I was contemplating ordering their Rogan Josh before settling for the mutton curry. The menu included Tandoori Chicken, Afghani Chicken, Mutton Seekh Kabab, Chilli Chicken, Mutton Masala, Mutton Tawa, Mutton Kabab Masala. On social media, the eatery says that its butter chicken is among its most popular dishes. But I had just ordered the dish two nights earlier from Roomaligarh, another eatery that I had discovered last year, so decided to give it a miss.

My encounter with Mr Kadak Singh left nothing to complain about. After all, it ended up reminding me of the hills.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

## 5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



EXHIBITION

**Canvas**

Dharana, an ongoing solo show of paintings on canvas by artist Sujata Agrawal, represents mediation and yoga mudras. The colours used in the works of this collection are inspired by nature and spirituality, with each piece depicting the different sentiments of human beings and the power of yoga.

**VENUE:** Lalit Kala Akademi, Mandi House  
**TIME:** 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.



PERFORMANCE

**Kathak recital**

India Habitat Centre is hosting a solo Kathak recital by Shivani Varma, a disciple of renowned danseuse Guru Shovana Narayan, this evening. The event will be followed by a Sufi dance presentation by Kathak exponents Vidha Lal and Abhimanyu Lal. The duo will be accompanied by noted Sufi singers Roothani Sisters.

**VENUE:** The Stein Auditorium, IHC  
**TIME:** 7 p.m.



FOOD

**New menu**

Masala Gully, a restaurant which specialises in North Indian cuisine, has introduced a new menu for the onset of winter. The main course includes dishes like Kathal ke Kofte, Mathaniya Mirch Paneer, Ustadji ka Chicken Masala, Ande Keema Kofta Curry, Champaran Meat, Rajasthani Laal Maas, and more.

**VENUE:** Sector 53, Gurugram  
**TIME:** 11 a.m. - 11 p.m.



DANCE

**Indian classical**

Navaneetham Cultural Trust presents Nrityathi 2019, a festival showcasing young, upcoming artists in classical dance. This two-day festival, which begins today, will feature a Bharatanatyam dance by Kapil Sharma, a Mohiniyattam by Kalamandalam Sheena Sunil, and a Kuchipudi recital by Ayana Mukherjee.

**VENUE:** Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House  
**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.



GIG

**Bollywood hits**

Imperfecto Shor Club is hosting Papon, live tonight. Angaraag Mahanta, better known by his stage name Papon, is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, producer and singer from the Assam. He will be playing some of his Bollywood hits like Bano, Kyun (from *Barfi!*), Humnava (from *Hamari Aadhuri Kahani*), and more.

**VENUE:** Hotel Pride Plaza, Aerocity  
**TIME:** 10 p.m. onwards

## PEOPLE

### Sugar rush

Rachel Goenka, in her first cookbook, *Adventures with Mithai*, gives traditional sweets a contemporary makeover



The foundation of Rachel Goenka's first cookbook, *Adventures with Mithai*, was laid seven years ago when she started the European restaurant The Sassy Spoon in Mumbai. The Le Cordon Bleu-trained chef, says, "Every Diwali, I would come up with a specific festive menu. The desserts would be predominantly Indian with a contemporary flair to them, similar to the recipes you see in the book. But the recipes I had at The Sassy Spoon were plated desserts and you can't expect a home-baker to do that. It was a challenging yet rewarding process, adapting Indian ingredients, especially sweets, to a Western palate and balancing those flavours."

Comprising 50 recipes, the book is sorted into desserts, cheesecakes and cakes, truffles, macarons, ice creams, *kulfis* and sorbets. There's a lot to satiate the adventurous pastry enthusiast: from the lemongrass panna cotta with vermicelli *kheer*, and Mysore pak and tender coconut domes to the *ras kadam* cheesecake, *kaju katli* truffles and *rasmalai* ice cream.

On how she decided on which *mithai* would find a place in her book, Rachel says, "The book actually had to be a representation of India. It couldn't just be sweets that were predominantly, say from Kolkata or

Gujarat. I purposely didn't use something like a *jalebi* because it's overdone. But I tried to cover as much of India as possible. Obviously, there was so much more I could do, but [the question was also] could those sweets actually translate into a contemporary dessert. There was a lot of trial and error. I also looked at which *mithai* was easily available to people."

This means that not only is there an *rasmalai* and *elaneer* (coconut) pudding from the South, there is also a bitter chocolate *nap naang* (a black rice pudding from Nagaland).

On whether one needs to have some level of skill to follow the recipes in her book, Rachel clarifies, "Not really. Someone who has baked a cake two or three times can easily execute any of these recipes. Keeping in mind that the book is for a home baker who is interested in playing around with *mithai* and doing something with it."

But is the book only for those who like their sweets... well, sweet? Or can calorie watchers also enjoy them? Says Rachel, "I have a recipe for a granola bar. The *nap naang* is extremely healthy too with black rice and dark chocolate."

While Rachel states that Mysore pak is her favourite, there is also an ode to childhood in the form of the Jim Jam macaron. She laughs, "People love the Jim Jam macaron. But my favourite is the Kashmiri Kahwa tea macaron because it actually tastes like a cup of Kahwa tea."

Available online and at bookstores; from Harper Collins, ₹899

APARNA NARRAIN

## PRODUCTS

### Man in the mirror



Ermenegildo Zegna, an Italian luxury fashion house that makes men's clothing, and textile and leather accessories, has refurbished its boutique in Delhi. The brand will showcase collections of both formal and leisure wear, from Ermenegildo Zegna XXX that offers tailored streetwear to Z Zegna's casual wear, across 1,500 square feet of retail space. They also offer customisation.

At DLF Emporio, ground floor, Vasant Kunj; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; open all seven days; ₹20,000 upward

Contact us at [delhimetro@thehindu.co.in](mailto:delhimetro@thehindu.co.in)





**Need for speed**  
Spectators watch racers gear up for the race at MMRT, Irungattukottai (bottom) Aditya Patel and Armaan Ebrahim

# Blazing a new trail

With their XI Racing league, Indian racers Armaan Ebrahim and Aditya Patel want to make motorsports accessible to a mass audience

ic franchisees makes it easier to attract followers because, as Aditya adds, "there is a city affinity" that is absent in manufacturer-based race events.

The teams in XI Racing were a mix of Indian and international drivers, including female racers, and the league also had its own quirky rule interpretations – like driver changes, which is very uncommon in races involving open-wheel cars. "You had men against women, men teaming up with women, Indians versus international drivers..." says Armaan. "Change of drivers added an element of surprise, and for the audience to see this action happening in front of them, it was exciting," recalls Aditya.

The league was not without its issues, from criticism over the use of older cars to those automobiles breaking down on the track multiple times and causing racers to drop out.

Gaurav Gill, the rally champion, who raced for the Delhi team, describes it as a "chicken-and-egg situation."

"It is where you need the money first to make a good league but the sponsors need to see a good

product first before investing. I think there was a fallout with a race car manufacturer at the last moment. So, they had to resort to other options they could find. It was bad luck... something they could not foresee," he comments.

While Armaan says it is anyway not a standard practice to build a new race car every year, Aditya explains that keeping costs down to a minimum was a big factor in opting for an older car. "Also, a lot of the youngsters were not able to handle the more advanced cars. They would have gotten completely overshadowed by the international drivers. We wanted to bring a level playing field where the young racers would have been able to showcase the talents," he says.

When it returns next year, XI Racing will, in all certainty, have a different set of cars. "You learn and you move forward, right? A change in car will eradicate most of the issues we faced this season," says Armaan.

Since it looks like the duo is in it for the long run, what about expansion plans? India only has

three FIA grade race tracks (the Buddh International Circuit in Delhi, MMRT in Irungattukottai and Kari Speedway in Coimbatore).

Last year, the Government of Andhra Pradesh announced that a new FIA grade race track will come up in Ananthapuram district. "There are ongoing talks for newer tracks in Maharashtra and in Karnataka," says Aditya.

In fact, there were discussions to open up a street circuit in Navi Mumbai area but cost became the villain, again. "It is ridiculously expensive, and India is too young in motorsports. For now, XI gives the owners a chance to dip their fingers in at a low cost. It is the cheapest league that someone can buy into (₹2.5 crore per year). They are only paying for operational costs. Once we start to expand, maybe, we can incorporate street circuits," hopes Armaan.

For now, the focus is on building interest in the league by holding eSport events in Indian cities, which will offer a simulated experience of real time racing. The duo believes that interest in eSport can translate into passion for motorsports, and, when it does, they will be there to lend a helping hand for ambitious talents to make the step up to domestic circuits from the virtual world.

And with people like Narain Karthikeyan and Gaurav Gill throwing their weight behind XI racing, the possibilities are huge.

(with inputs from Praveen Sudevan)

**OWNERSHIP**

TEAM CHENNAI - Narain Karthikeyan

TEAM DELHI - Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Tahnoon bin Saeed bin Nahyan

TEAM HYDERABAD - Akhilesh Reddy

TEAM AHMEDABAD - Dhaval Gada

TEAM MUMBAI - Ameet Ghadoke

TEAM BANGALORE - Naina Parekh

The races were held on November 30 and December 1 at the Buddh International Circuit in Delhi, and on December 7-8 at the MMRT in Chennai.

According to Patel, there were "a few thousand spectators" at both the venues.

Tickets for the event can be booked online on platforms like bookmyshow.



**RACING DNA**

Six teams took part in the inaugural season of XI Racing.

1. TEAM BENGALURU - Bangalore Racing Stars

2. TEAM CHENNAI - NK Racing

3. TEAM HYDERABAD - Blackbirds Hyderabad

4. TEAM MUMBAI - Mumbai Falcons

5. TEAM DELHI - AD Racing Delhi

6. TEAM AHMEDABAD - DG Racing

Bangalore Racing Stars were crowned champions of the inaugural season.

**PRADEEP KUMAR**

The inception of Indian Premier League in 2008, let in bucket loads of entertainment to go with the on field action and broadcasters and governing agencies of various sports since then have tested their luck with the league format. There has been since then a league for football, hockey, badminton and kabaddi dominating prime time space on television.

This is one of the reasons that pushed Armaan Ebrahim and Aditya Patel to conceptualise a franchise ownership model-based league for motorsports, the first of its kind anywhere in the world.

Motorsports is very niche as far as India is concerned. Ebrahim

and Patel, both racing professionals, admit that in the over 15 years spent racing the circuits they have only come across the "same set of people" – the ones whose families have a history with motorsports.

Yet, the duo says, of the six franchisees who bought into their brainchild, XI Racing league, five had no background in motorsports. "Except for Narain Karthikeyan," says Patel, who is one of the biggest name in Indian racing and owns the league's Chennai team, NK Racing.

**Breaking new ground**  
Armaan and Aditya want to break the notion of motorsports being non-accessible for the masses.

A league format with city-specific

**For now, XI gives the owners a chance to dip their fingers in at a low cost. It is the cheapest league that someone can buy into**

**POOCH CAFE**



**PEANUTS**



**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE**



**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



**TIGER**



**GRAFFITI**  
© 2019 OFS OFS. BY ANTHONY MERRILL FOR LIFE.

**PROCRASTINATOR'S MEETING TODAY AT 3 PM CALLED OFF INDEFINITELY**

**HEALTH CAPSULES**  
by Ben Smith  
CAN TAKING GRAPE SEED EXTRACT LOWER MY BLOOD PRESSURE?  
12 POINTS? THEIR BETTER THAN ANY BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICATION!  
36 YES! SUBJECTS TOOK 150 MG OF GRAPE SEED EXTRACT TWICE DAILY. AFTER 6 WEEKS, THEIR SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE HAD DROPPED BY 3.6 POINTS, THEIR DIASTOLIC BY 4.7 POINTS. 80% OF PEOPLE WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE CAN LOWER THEIR BLOOD PRESSURE BY NATURAL MEANS.  
Health Capsules is not intended to be a diagnostic device.

**WUMO**



**PEARLS BEFORE SWINE**



**THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13249**

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**Across**

- 1 Art of good eating (10)
- 7 Expressing poetic sorrow for something past (7)
- 8 American stock farm (5)
- 10 Form on which a shoe is made (4)
- 11 Even more snobby (8)
- 13 Canopy over a four-poster bed (6)
- 15 Woman's dress in

**Down**

- 17 Postscript to a literary work (8)
- 18 In excited eagerness (4)
- 21 Hindu male religious teacher (5)
- 22 Traders – leaders (anag) (7)
- 23 Titular university head (10)
- 1 Speculation (5)

**Solution No. 13248**

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Solution will appear in The Hindu dated December 14, 2019.

Solution No. 13248



# Both camps will have plenty of positives to take

India shed its confusing approach while batting first; Windies' build-up for the T20 World Cup on the right track

## WI IN INDIA

**AMOL KARHADKAR**  
MUMBAI  
India may have run away with the series by raising its standard when it mattered most, but the manner in which the T20I series versus West Indies panned out over the last week, both camps will have plenty of positives to take from three games.

Despite losing the series, West Indies will be a happy bunch going into the ODI series, which starts at Chepauk on Sunday.

Captain Kieron Pollard admitted that some of the individuals – especially the likes of Kesrick Williams, Hayden Walsh, Shimron Hetmyer, Lendl Simmons, besides himself – have ensured that the Windies build-up for the T20 World Cup in Australia next October is on the right track.

India, on the other hand, should treat the series win as yet another mixed bag. The biggest gain was the manner in which India shed its confusing approach while batting first in the decider at Wankhede Stadium.

All through 2019, as captain Virat Kohli described it, India has been “too tight and hesitant” while batting first. It resulted in the batting unit falling short of par score – as was the case in the second match in Thiruvananthapuram.

It was incredible to witness the manner in which Rohit Sharma, K.L. Rahul and Virat Kohli unleashed themselves from the word go. They may not get such batting-friendly conditions over the next year, but if the troika

can sustain the confidence it earned from the blitzkrieg, it will definitely augur well for India going into the global extravaganza.

It was heartening to see Rahul coming good and making the most of his opportunity to open the innings in the absence of an injured Shikhar Dhawan. His performances will give the selectors a problem of plenty when they sit down to finalise the combination for the forthcoming contests.

While Rishabh Pant's inability to transcend ability into success will continue to be a concern for now, the Indian camp must have been delighted to see Shivam Dube deliver under pressure. The all-rounder – being tried out as a back-up option for the injured Hardik Pandya – scored a classy fifty in Thiruvananthapuram after being promoted to No. 3. Dube, though, has to work harder on his bowling.

**Bowling far from stable**  
The bowling unit, meanwhile, continues to be far from stable.

With Jasprit Bumrah's continuing to be sidelined due to a stress fracture in lower back, the selectors and the team management have been trying out multiple options. Deepak Chahar has been impressive, not just with the new ball but even at the death as he showed in the series. It was heartening to see a fully fit Bhuvneshwar Kumar back in the blues but he was obviously rusty. It would be unfair to judge Mohammed Shami based on one outing.



Looking good: Shivam Dube, being tried out as a back-up option for the injured Hardik Pandya, delivered under pressure. \*R. RAGU

Even in spin department, India tried out all the four options at its disposal. But it seems the team management is still trying out options before settling on what would potentially be a winning combination in Australia next October.

Fielding, especially catching, emerged as the biggest concern for the team as Indian fielders dropped almost a dozen catches in three matches.

The butter finger syndrome trickled down to ground fielding as well, with even the likes of Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja misfielding.

## India-West Indies T20I Series Top Four

BATTING	Name	Innings	Runs	Highest	Avg.	S/R	50/100s
	Virat Kohli	3	183	94*	183.00	190.62	2/0
	K.L. Rahul	3	164	91	54.66	153.27	2/0
	Shimron Hetmyer	3	120	56	40.00	151.89	1/0
	Kieron Pollard	2	105	68	52.50	181.03	1/0

BOWLING	Name	Matches	Wickets	BBI	Avg.	Econ.	4/5W
	Khary Pierre	3	3	2/44	30.00	11.25	0/0
	Sheldon Cottrell	3	3	1/24	30.33	7.58	0/0
	Deepak Chahar	3	3	2/20	37.00	9.65	0/0
	Kesrick Williams	3	3	2/30	42.33	10.88	0/0

# Rahul – high on entertainment quotient

G. VISWANATH  
MUMBAI

The packed house at the Wankhede on Wednesday must have wondered why K.L. Rahul is in and out of Team India.

Someone who cut his teeth in international cricket five years ago with a 110 against Australia in his second Test in Sydney, ought to have established permanency in the national team.

## Terrific outing

Rahul plays a brand of cricket that's highly entertaining and excites everyone – in the stands as well as living rooms. On Wednesday, he was terrific, thundering his way to a 56-ball 91 with nine 4s and four 6s.

He has not played enough matches to be anywhere near the boundary aggregate of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, but is only second behind Kohli in the entertainment quotient index.

The Karnataka right-hander, who has the knack of scoring off any ball, seems to have a special liking for the Wankhede surface; last April he made an unbeaten 100

for Kings XI Punjab in the IPL.

When asked whether the Wankhede wicket was better than Hyderabad and Thiruvananthapuram, he said: “I love playing here; any wicket that has pace and bounce is what all batsmen like.”

“Wankhede is one such ground where we get to play our shots freely. And the crowd is amazing, electrifying. You just want to be out there in the middle and entertain them, so we love coming to the Wankhede.”

Rahul is back in the thick of things and must be a front-runner for the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia. The team has a success rate of 67.65% when he plays (23/34) and 57.89% in the 19 he has not played.

The team management has backed him and he has come back strongly in the three-match series against the West Indies.

When he gets going, Rahul looks to score runs that's par for the course and on many occasions he surpasses it. So far he has scored 1,138 runs off 777 balls at 8.79 an over. Incredible!



In his element: K.L. Rahul showed why many think he should be a permanent fixture in the Indian team. \*VIVEK BENDRE

## Touchdown



The next leg: Virat Kohli & Co. arrived in Chennai on Thursday ahead of the ODI series set to begin on Sunday. \*B. VELANKANNI RAJ

# Bad weather hits match

Sri Lanka progresses to 263 for six

## SL IN PAKISTAN

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
RAWALPINDI  
Heavy rain and bad light hit the second day of the historic Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka here on Thursday, Pakistan's first home Test since a deadly attack in 2009.

Sri Lanka, resuming at 202 for five, had progressed to 225 for five when heavy rain in the morning forced the teams to have early lunch.

## SCOREBOARD

**Sri Lanka – 1st innings:** Dimuth Karunaratne lbw b Afridi 59, Oshada Fernando c Sohail b Naseem 40, Kusal Mendis c Rizwan b Shinwari 10, Angelo Mathews c Shafiq b Naseem 31, Dinesh Chandimal b Abbas 2, Dhananjaya de Silva (batting) 72, Niroshan Dickwella c Babar b Afridi 33, Dilruwan Perera

Play was stopped for two hours and 43 minutes but when it resumed, only 10 overs were possible with Sri Lanka losing Niroshan Dickwella for 33 before bad light, accompanied by rain, forced an early call-off at 3.30 p.m.

At close, Sri Lanka was 263 for six with Dhananjaya de Silva unbeaten on 72 and Dilruwan Perera batting on two.

The stop-start play left both teams frustrated as well as 2,000 fans.

(batting) 2; Extras (b-5, lb-6, nb-3); 14; Total (for six wkts. in 86.3 overs): 263.  
**Fall of wickets:** 1-96, 2-109, 3-120, 4-127, 5-189, 6-256.  
**Pakistan bowling:** Abbas 24-9-56-1, Afridi 19-3-7-47-2, Shinwari 15-4-54-1, Naseem 22-4-75-2, Sohail 3-0-12-0, Masood 1-1-0-0, Shafiq 2-0-8-0.

# Labuschagne notches up third ton on the trot

Kiwis toil in the heat, but hit back under the lights

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PERTH

Emerging Australian batsman Marnus Labuschagne on Thursday posted his third successive Test century to frustrate a resilient New Zealand attack on the opening day of the first Test here.

After Australia won a potentially pivotal toss in scorching heat and elected to bat in the first ever day-night Test in Perth, the home team was 248 for four at stumps after facing some challenging bowling from the disciplined Kiwis.

## The rock

Having toiled without much success in 40°C heat, the Kiwis fought back late in the day by removing Steve Smith (43) and Matthew Wade (12).

However, Labuschagne was the rock and was unbeaten on 110, with Travis Head



Solid: Marnus Labuschagne's chanceless effort on Thursday saw him crossing the 1000-run mark in Tests. \*AP

## SCOREBOARD

**Australia – 1st innings:** D. Warner c & b Wagner 43, J. Burns lbw b de Grandhomme 9, M. Labuschagne (batting) 110, S. Smith c Southee b Wagner 43, M. Wade b Southee 12, T. Head (batting) 20; Extras (b-2, nb-2, w-7); 11. Total (for 4 wkts. in 90 overs): 248.  
**Fall of wickets:** 1-40, 2-75, 3-207, 4-225.  
**New Zealand bowling:** Southee 20-4-53-1, Ferguson 11-1-47-0, Wagner 22-4-52-2, de Grandhomme 16-6-24-1, Santner 20-3-65-0, Raval 1-0-5-0.  
**Toss:** Australia.

on 20. The leading run-scorer in Test cricket this year, the 25-year-old passed the 1,000-run mark in the five-day format.

Called up for the Ashes in England after Smith was injured, Labuschagne had posted his first two Test cen-

turies in his previous two outings against Pakistan.

He reached this hundred against New Zealand in style, lofting spinner Mitchell Santner down the ground for six to move from 95 to 101. It was just the second six of his Test career and he reached

the milestone off 166 balls.

By contrast, star batsman Smith really struggled, taking 164 balls to make 43 before falling to a leg side trap by Neil Wagner.

Smith and Labuschagne put on 132 for the third wicket.

# Atletico, Atalanta make last-16

Bayern, Real, Juventus and PSG finish with impressive wins

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS

Atletico Madrid claimed the final spot in the Champions League pre-quarterfinals with a 2-0 win over Lokomotiv Moscow, after Atalanta completed an impressive comeback in Group C to qualify.

Bayern Munich sealed consecutive victories over Tottenham with a 3-1 success at the Allianz Arena, while Real Madrid, Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus also finished their group campaigns on winning notes.

Diego Simeone's Atletico went into its game knowing defeat, coupled with a Bayer Leverkusen win against Juve, would see it dumped out.

Kieran Trippier had a second-minute penalty brilliantly saved by Lokomotiv goalkeeper Anton Kochenkov at the Wanda Metropolitan, but Joao Felix made no mistake from the spot a quarter of an hour later.

Atletico wasted a string of chances and Alvaro Morata had a goal ruled out by VAR



On top: Joao Felix, up, celebrates with his Atletico teammates after defender Felipe scored the second goal against Lokomotiv Moscow. \*AFP

for offside. But its place in the knockout rounds was secured when centre-back Felipe volleyed home Koke's cross after a short corner routine.

Champions League debutant Atalanta claimed a famous 3-0 triumph at Shakhtar Donetsk to qualify with Manchester City despite having lost its first three games.

**The results: Group A:** Club Brugge 1 (Vanaken 55) lost to Real Madrid 3 (Rodrygo 53, Vini Junior 64, Modric 90+1); Paris Saint-Germain 5 (Icardi 32, Sarabia 35, Neymar 47,

Mbappe 63, Cavani 84-pen) bt Galatasaray 0.

**Group B:** Bayern Munich 3 (Coman 14, Muller 45, Coutinho 64) bt Tottenham Hotspur 1 (Sessegnon 20); Olympiakos 1 (El Arabi 87-pen) bt Red Star Belgrade 0.

**Group C:** Dinamo Zagreb 1 (Olmo 10) lost to Manchester City 4 (Jesus 34, 50, 54, Foden 84); Shakhtar Donetsk 0 lost to Atalanta 3 (Castagne 66, Pasalic 80, Gosens 90+4).

**Group D:** Atletico Madrid 2 (Joao Felix 17-pen, Felipe 54) bt Lokomotiv Moscow 0; Bayer Leverkusen 0 lost to Juventus 2 (Ronaldo 75, Higuain 90+2).

# Second loss virtually ends Sindhu's chances

Goes down to Chen Yufei

## BWF TOUR FINAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GUANGZHOU

Defending champion P.V. Sindhu's campaign in the year-ending BWF World Tour Final was all but over after the Indian lost to China's Chen Yufei 22-20, 16-21, 12-21 here on Thursday.

Just like in her campaign opener against Japan's Akane Yamaguchi on Wednesday, Sindhu squandered a game advantage to lose yet again in 72 minutes, virtually bowing out of contention for the knockouts.

Trailing 17-20, Sindhu staged a dramatic turnaround to score five straight points and claim the first game. However, the Chinese rallied to win the second game after a strong start.

## Too good in decider

Chen, who has been in rampaging form this season having won all six of her finals, including the All England Championships, carried the momentum into the decider and left Sindhu stunned

with her wide repertoire of shots.

Coming into the match with a strong 6-3 head-to-head record, Sindhu struggled to match Chen initially, as the Chinese used her smashes to good effect and grabbed an 8-4 lead and then extended it to 16-12.

But the reigning World champion turned it around superbly and clinched the opening game in 24 minutes.

The second game started on an even keel but from 7-7, Chen went ahead before leading 19-12 in favour of the Chinese. With a drop shot, the World No. 2 claimed the second game and restored parity. The second game also lasted 24 minutes.

A confident Chen was in her element in the decider and rarely gave the World No. 6 an opportunity to come back into the Group A match.

Sindhu will play He Bingjiao on Friday but that could well be a dead rubber as far as her chances of progressing further are concerned.

# 2020 Sportstar ACES Awards

Readers will have a chance to pick their favourites for the 10 Popular Choice Awards. The top two contenders from each category, based on popular vote, will be sent to a jury, which will decide the winner

## THE NOMINEES

### SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR (TRACK AND FIELD)



#### TAJINDERPAL SINGH TOOR

The shot-putter was the only Indian male athlete to win an Asian Championships gold in 2019. Though he did not qualify for the final at the World Championships in Doha, the 25-year-old was consistent this season. He went past the 20m mark quite a few times, hitting a high at the end of the season and breaking his own National record at the National open in Ranchi with an effort of 20.92m



#### AVINASH SABLE

The 3000m steeplechaser, Asian silver medalist in Doha in April, was in tremendous form this year. Two years ago, he had a personal best of 8:39.81s, but went on a National record-breaking spree after that. He improved to 8:29.80s last year and rewrote the mark thrice this year, twice at the World Championships. The Doha performance - he made the final and finished 13th with a new National record of 8:21.37s - helped the 25-year-old qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics



#### JINSON JOHNSON

A calf injury in the 1,500m final ended his chances in the Asian Championships this year, but Jinson Johnson came up with a stunning run of 3:35.24s in Berlin in September, bettering his National mark by two seconds and earning him a berth at the Doha World Championships. After the high last year, when he won the Asian Games gold, 2019 was a quiet one when it came to major meets. However, Johnson's improvement in quality stood out

To vote, log on to <https://sportstar.thehindu.com/aces-awards>



TV PICKS

**BWF World Tour Finals:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 a.m.  
**NBA:** Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.  
**Pakistan vs Sri Lanka:** 1st Test, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 10.30 a.m.  
**Australia vs New Zealand:** 1st Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 10.30 a.m.  
**Big Bout League:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.  
**ISL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**Europa League:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 12 a.m. (Saturday)

IN BRIEF



Leonard stars in emotional return

LOS ANGELES  
Kawhi Leonard finished with a team-high 23 points in an emotional return to Toronto as Los Angeles Clippers defeated reigning champion Raptors 112-92 on Wednesday.  
**The results:** Houston 116 bt Cleveland 110; Indiana 122 bt Boston 117; LA Lakers 96 bt Orlando 87; LA Clippers 112 bt Toronto 92; Charlotte 113 bt Brooklyn 108; Chicago 136 bt Atlanta 102; Utah 127 bt Minnesota 116; Memphis 115 bt Phoenix 108; Milwaukee 127 bt New Orleans 112; Sacramento 94 bt Oklahoma City 93; New York 124 bt Golden State 122 (OT).  
AGENCIES

Formidables lifts title

KOLKATA  
Former champion Formidables outplayed city-based Maharaja 115-58 in the final to lift the team title and claim the Ruia Gold Cup in the Winter National bridge championships at the Netaji Indoor Stadium here on Thursday. Rampage beat Railways-A 79-55 to take the third place.



Ferguson stays Everton caretaker manager

LONDON  
Duncan Ferguson is to stay on as caretaker manager of Everton for its Premier League match away to Manchester United this weekend, the club announced on Wednesday. Former Scotland forward Ferguson enjoyed two spells as a player with Everton, amounting to 10 years in total. AFP

Bengal Ranji squad announced

KOLKATA: The Cricket Association of Bengal on Thursday announced a 15-member squad for Bengal's opening Ranji Trophy match against Kerala to be played at Thiruvananthapuram from December 17 to 20.  
**The team:** Abhimanyu Easwaran (captain), Sudip Chatterjee (vice-captain), Manoj Tiwary, Anustup Majumder, Shreevats Goswami (wk), Abhishek Raman, Arnab Nandi, Ashoke Dinda, Ritwik Roy Chowdhury, Ishan Porel, Pradipta Pramanik, Shahbaz Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Koushik Ghosh and B. Amit.

Snowdon primed to deliver in feature

BENGALURU: Snowdon, who has been well tuned, is expected to score in the Vidhana Soudha Trophy (1,400m), the main event of the races to be held here on Friday (Dec 13). False rails (width about 3m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.  
**1 BELGAUM STAKES (1,400m),** rated 00 to 20, 2-15 p.m.: 1. Barog (3) M. Kumar 60, 2. Custom Cut (8) Trevor 60, 3. Desert Gilt (10) K. Raghu 60, 4. She's Stylish (9) Vinod Shinde 60, 5. Brightside Of Life (7) Arvind Kumar 59, 6. Bazinga (6) Rajesh K 57.5, 7. Emerald Green (4) S. Shareef 55, 8. Phoenix Reached (5) T.S. Jodha 53.5, 9. Apathmitra (2) Vivek 53 and 10. Turf Prospector (1) J.H. Arul 52.5.  
**1. CUSTOM CUT, 2. PHOENIX REACHED, 3. TURF PROSPECTOR**  
**2 BRAHMAGIRI STAKES (DIV. II),** (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 2-45: 1. Desert Combat (3) Antony 60, 2. Super Gladiator (4) Raja Rao 60, 3. Augustina (7) S. John 59.5, 4. Capella (11) B. Nayak 59.5, 5. She's Innocent (6) Chetan K 59.5, 6.

Fighting Delhi thwarts Kerala's plans

Visitors prevent the hosts from pulling off an outright win

A. VINOD  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
Delhi's tremendous fight back stopped Kerala from completing an outright win in the Ranji Trophy Elite Group match here on Thursday.

Brilliant centuries

The side staged a comeback with magnificent centuries from Kunal Chandela and Nitish Rana, following the cue set by Anuj Rawat on Wednesday. The side was asked to follow-on after finishing 383 runs in the arrears in its first innings.

Realising that the batsmen had been done in by their own tentativeness on a pitch that turned a bit more on the first two days, the Delhi wicketkeeper-batsman proved that offence is the best form of defence as he took on the Kerala bowlers with gusto.

Chandela and Rana followed suit received with some help from Kerala skipper Sachin Baby. In a situation where the rival batsmen were going for runs, Baby persisted with an attacking field rather than trying to keep the run flow in check.

True, the home side had a massive lead, but banking on that did not help Kerala's cause, as its bowlers, Jalaj Saxena included, failed to bowl the expected line and

length. And when wisdom finally dawned to make changes in the field placements, the game was out of Kerala's hands.

Chandela's 125 came off 219 deliveries and was studied with 11 fours and a six, while Rana's 114 came off 164 balls with 11 boundaries and four sixes. The two added 118-runs for the third wicket.

Delhi wiped off the deficit soon after tea and not much later, the match was halted by consensus prior to the start of the 15 mandatory overs with Delhi on 395 for four.

Kerala gained three points from the drawn encounter, while Delhi bagged one.

**The scores:**  
**Kerala — 1st innings:** 525 for nine decl.  
**Delhi — 1st innings:** 142.

**Delhi — 2nd innings:** Anuj Rawat c Rahul b Baby 87, Kunal Chandela c Azharuddeen b Warrior 125, Dhruv Shorey c Nizar b Saxena 20, Nitish Rana b Saxena 114, Jonty Sidhu (not out) 30, Lalit Yadav (not out) 13; Extras (b-1, lb-2, nb-2, w-1): 6; Total (for four wkts. in 112 overs): 395.  
**Fall of wickets:** 1-130, 2-185, 3-303, 4-363.

**Kerala bowling:** Warrior 13-4-27-1, Asif 6-0-27-0, Saxena 41-2-119-2, Monish 23-0-106-0, Uthappa 2-0-10-0, Joseph 16-1-68-0, Baby 9-0-33-1, Vinod 2-0-2-0.



The heroes: Delhi's Nitish Rana and Kunal Chandela scored centuries to keep Kerala at bay. \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

RANJI TROPHY SCORES, ROUND 1, DAY 4

**GROUP A**  
Andhra 211 & 314/3 in 103.4 overs (C.R. Gnaneshwar 61, Ricky Bhui 100 n.o., K.S. Bharat 102 n.o.) drew with Vidarbha 441. Points: **Vidarbha 3, Andhra 1.**  
Hyderabad 233 & 266 in 90.1 overs (Tanmay Agarwal 96, Akshath Reddy 45, B. Sandeep 41, Roosh Kalaria 5/45) lost to Gujarat 313 & 187/2 in 36.4 overs (Priyank Panchal 90, Bhargav Merai 69 n.o.). **Gujarat 6, Hyderabad 0.**  
Kerala 525/9 decl. drew with Delhi 142 & 395/4 in 112 overs (Anuj Rawat 87, Kunal Chandela 125, Nitish Rana 114). **Kerala 3, Delhi 1.**  
Rajasthan 257 & 168 in 74.5

overs (Mahipal Lomror 43) lost to Punjab 358 & 68/0 in 11.4 overs. **Punjab 7, Rajasthan 0.**  
**GROUP B**  
Mumbai 431 & 409/4 decl. bt Baroda 307 & 224 in 52.4 overs (Viraj Bhosale 41, Abhimanyusingh Rajput 53, Deepak Hooda 61, Shams Mulani 4/72). **Mumbai 6, Baroda 0.**  
Karnataka 336 & 151 in 65.4 overs (R. Ashwin 4/46) bt Tamil Nadu 307 & 154 in 63.3 overs (Abhinav Mukund 42, K. Gowtham 8/60). **Karnataka 6, TN 0.**  
Railways 253 & 270 drew with Uttar Pradesh 175 & 62/2 in 21 overs. **Railways 3, UP 1.**

**GROUP C**  
Services 124 & 279 drew with Assam 162 & 74/5 in 31 overs. **Assam 3, Services 1.**  
Haryana 401 bt Maharashtra 247 & 86 in 29 overs (Harshal Patel 5/22, Ashish Hooda 4/31). **Haryana 7, Maharashtra 0.**  
Tripura 289 & 211 in 64.4 overs (Manisankar Muresingh 103, Ashish Kumar 5/67) lost to Jharkhand 136 & 418/8 decl. in 108 overs (Nazim Siddiqui 40, Saurabh Tiwary 122 n.o., Ishank Jaggi 107 n.o.). **Jharkhand 6, Tripura 0.**  
**PLATE**  
Sikkim 136 & 374 in 111.3 overs (Yashpal Singh 84, Iqbal Abdulla 135) lost to Goa 436/6 decl. & 75/1 in 18.2 overs (Suyash Prabhudessai 49 n.o.). **Goa 6, Sikkim 0.**

Kerala Blasters keen to end winless streak

Team has been hit by injuries and poor form

ISL

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI**  
Back-bencher Kerala Blasters faces a tough test against Jamshedpur FC at home on Friday to resurrect its stuttering campaign in the Hero ISL.

Injury woes

Winless after the season opener against ATK at the Jawaharlal Nehru stadium, Eelco Schattorie's men have been hit by injuries and poor form to key players.

The weakness which bothered the team last season has come back to haunt it in this season as well.

Kerala Blasters has not

been able to preserve its leads and worryingly has been conceding late goals to its opponent. This streak has extended far too long for the liking of its fans and supporters.

"That (conceding late goals) has to do with the quality that you have in the team. Last week we had some mismatch during set-pieces. You have to find a solution, in this case, I tell my players to be a bit smarter, a bit meaner, to be street-smart," added Schattorie.

Arques boost

Kerala Blasters will be boosted by the return of midfielder Mario Arques from injury but it remains to be seen if Schattorie will risk

playing him in the eleven.

Slight blip

Jamshedpur, placed fourth in the table, has been hit by a slight blip in form which saw the side draw its last two games.

Coach Antonio Iriondo said his team will look for three points against the tentative opponent. However, the absence of star striker Sergio Castel and midfielder Piti will effect the team's plans.

Kerala Blasters will enter the pitch in a special green and white jersey – discarding the traditional yellow and blue outfit to commemorate Kerala Football Day – and hope for a turnaround in fortunes.

Viscaal, Schumacher set the early pace

MOTORSPORTS

**SPORTS BUREAU SAKHIR (BAHRAIN)**

Debutants Bent Viscaal and David Schumacher set the early pace in free practice session as the second round of the MRF Challenge, organised by the Madras Motor Sports Club and a support-event for FIA World Endurance Championship, got underway at the Bahrain International Circuit here on Thursday.

Viscaal, the 20-year-old from the Netherlands, fresh from his debut season in the Formula 3 championship, was the quickest in the first free practice session, clocking a best of two minutes, 01.191 seconds.

Germany's 18-year-old Schumacher, son of former Formula 1 driver Ralf, was second best in 02:01.256, ahead of Denmark's 16-year-old Valdemar Eriksen (02:01.850).

In fact, the top five in the session, including fourth-placed Aussie Dylan Young (02:01.901) and championship leader Michelangelo Amendola from Belgium (02:01.915), winner of three races in the first round at Dubai last month, were covered by less than one second.

Viscaal was quite pleased

with his pace, though he refrained from any predictions on his performance over the next two days when the qualifying and four races would be run.

"It went very well for me today. First time in MRF Challenge, first time in this car and learning the track.

"It's been nearly two months since I drove a racing car. So, MRF Challenge will provide me with some winter mileage.

Happy with the pace

"The car is good and so also the tyres, I am really enjoying it here. I was quite happy with the pace, though you never know with quali (qualifying session) and races still to be run," said Viscaal.

Schumacher said he enjoyed the outing. "New car, new tyres and it was quite fun to drive. It was one of the best cars I have driven in practice session. I was missing half-a-tenths in the quickest laps.

"The track is really difficult and the temperatures were quite high. This car is pretty easy to drive compared to others.

"I chose the MRF Challenge to learn the track for next season. This week, I want to win all the races of course!"

Nagal to meet Ramkumar for the title

TENNIS

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**

Top seed Sumit Nagal and second seed Ramkumar Ramanathan set up a title clash in the men's event of the 39th Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) inter-unit tennis tournament on Thursday.

The two top players of the

country, who had battled together in the Davis Cup tie against Pakistan at Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan, recently, have also been fighting together for their employer Indian Oil.

It was all Indian Oil in the men's doubles final in which Asian Games gold medalists Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan prevailed over Ramkumar and Sumit.

In the women's final, Mahak Jain, who also represents Indian Oil, defended her crown won last year in Hyderabad, by beating four-time National champion Prerna Bhambri.

**The results:**  
**Men, semifinals:** Sumit Nagal bt V.M. Ranjeet 8-6; Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Vishnu Vardhan 8-6; **Quarterfinals:** Nagal bt Vijay Kannan 8-4; Ranjeet bt Divij Sharan 8-4; Vishnu bt Girish

Naik 8-2; Ramkumar bt Sudarshan 8-0.  
**Doubles, final:** Divij & Rohan Bopanna bt Ramkumar & Nagal 9-7; **Semifinals:** Divij & Bopanna bt Raunaq Barkahati & Siddharth Barali 8-2; Ramkumar & Nagal bt Vijay Kannan & Ranjeet 8-6.  
**Women, final:** Mahak Jain bt Prerna Bhambri 6-3, 6-3.  
**Veterans, semifinals:** Bhushan Akut bt Devojyoti Borpuzari 8-4; Hakim Ali bt Subhash Rajra 8-4



# Anand looks back on a satisfying journey

Almost everything I want to do, I've done, says the Grandmaster

## CHESS

RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI

It seems like yesterday that India was warming up to this exciting chess talent.

This was bound to happen when, in the span of five months – between August 2 and December 30, 1987 – a teenager named V. Anand moved from being the country's first World junior champion to the first Grandmaster!

Almost 32 years later, at 50, Viswanathan Anand has delivered far more than he once promised. In the pro-

cess, Vishy, as he is known in the chess world, revolutionised the sport in India.

### Bringing joy

True to his name, Anand brought joyous times for a nation starved of world beaters. Five world titles across three formats, two World Cups and triumphs spread over tournaments, worth winning.

In an illustrious career spanning over three decades, and counting, the former World No. 1 was ranked in the top-10 list for nearly 25 years!

"Like all life stories, when it started I had no idea of the

destination," said Anand. "As they say, it's been glorious. Almost everything I want to do, I've done. I can look back with a lot of pleasure. But I think you really only look back when you do it for others."

Anand said he had learnt most of life's lessons through chess and that whenever he looked back on events he did so in the context of what it meant in chess terms.

On his book, *Mind Masters*, to be released on Friday, Anand said: "For a lot of people, this will be the closest they come to the mind of a chess player.

"I think there are far more

Indians who follow my results than those who follow the moves.

"So I hope that they will become acquainted with my chess journey and also my life lessons. And get a deeper understanding of me as a person, as well. So in that sense, it's meant for the non-chess audience and for people who are curious in some way."

Asked whether he felt age impacted his recent performances, Anand was candid.

"I've noticed I've become much more unstable, I've become much more inconsistent. And before I had a sense of control or feeling a

sense of control. I realised now looking back and forgetting the little details. I think the past looks much better now, than when it was present," he said.

### Extra time

Returning to the present, Anand said, "I'm proud of the last few years, that I'm able to fight, in what is becoming a very young sport very fast.

"Now, it feels like the whistle has been blown, but the referee has given a bit of extra-time, like in football. And it feels like, I know, this is just fun. And of course, you still have to challenge yourself."



Master of the game: Vishy, as Anand is known in the chess world, revolutionised the sport in India. •RAJEEV BHATT

## Dhruv Sunish goes down fighting

### INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU  
CAIRO

Dhruv Sunish fought hard but was beaten 6-1, 6-7(7), 6-1 by Facundo Juarez of Argentina in the first round of the \$15,000 ITF men's Futures tennis tournament in Cairo, Egypt.

#### The results:

**\$15,000 ITF men, Cairo, Egypt: Singles (first round):** Facundo Juarez (Arg) bt Dhruv Sunish 6-1, 6-7(7), 6-1.

Omar El-Moslemany (Egy) bt Atharva Sharma 6-2, 6-2; Giulio Colacioppo (Ita) bt PC Vignesh 6-4, 6-0.

**\$15,000 ITF men, Doha, Qatar: Singles (first round):** Simon Freund (Swe) bt Haadin Bava 6-2, 6-1.

**\$15,000 ITF women, Cairo, Egypt: Singles (first round):** Nada Fouad (Egy) bt Aaliya Ebrahim 6-4, 6-2.

**Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Emma Belluomini (Ita) & Malvika Shukla bt Julia Klimovicz (Bra) & Katarina Sopkova (Aut) 6-3, 6-3.

## Internationals dominate opening day

Woods-Thomas' win brings the lone cheer for USA

### PRESIDENTS CUP

REUTERS  
MELBOURNE

A Presidents Cup rivalry all but buried by decades of American dominance flickered back to life at Royal Melbourne on Thursday, as the unfancied International team stormed to a 4-1 lead by routing Tiger Woods' USA in the fourballs matches.

Ernie Els' rookie-laden outfit played fearlessly on a gusty day at the sandbelt course as the Internationals secured a day one lead for the first time at the biennial tournament since 2003.

Woods, only the second playing-captain in the 25-year history of the tournament, upheld his end of the bargain, as he anchored a comprehensive 4&3 win with Justin Thomas over Australian Marc Leishman and Chilean debutant Joaquin Niemann.

But that was as good as it got for the U.S. which was



Stunning win: Ancer combined well with Oosthuizen to get the better of the fancied Johnson and Woodland. •GETTY IMAGES

consistently bamboozled by Royal Melbourne's undulating greens.

#### Dream team flops

Dustin Johnson and Gary Woodland had been branded a dream team by U.S. media after their pairing was announced on tournament eve. But they walked off 4&3 losers after a thrashing by South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen and Mexican debutant

Abraham Ancer.

**The results: International leads USA 4-1** [Marc Leishman & Joaquin Niemann lost to Tiger Woods & Justin Thomas 4 & 3; Adam Hadwin & Im Sung-jae bt Xander Schauffele & Patrick Cantlay 1 up; Adam Scott & An Byeong-hun bt Bryson DeChambeau & Tony Finau 2 & 1; Hideki Matsuyama & C.T. Pan bt Webb Simpson & Patrick Reed 1 up; Abraham Ancer & Louis Oosthuizen bt Dustin Johnson & Gary Woodland 4 & 3].

## The Korean and Dutch way of sports excellence

The former was able to develop into a force in football

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Nation building, best done with sports, was emphasised fluently with the Korean example by the Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs of the Embassy of Korea, Yoo Chang-Ho, during one of the sessions of the Global Sports Summit organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) on Wednesday.

Making comparisons with India in terms of being suppressed under the colonial rule, apart from the country being devastated by the Korean war in 1950, Yoo Chang-Ho, explained how sports had played a big part in restructuring the nation, not only as one of the sports power, but also as the 11th largest economy in the world.

The Korean expert revealed that traditional Korean sports were used as the roots to lay a strong foundation for Korean sports.



Yoo Chang-Ho. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The country was able to develop into a football force, reaching the fourth place in the World Cup when it co-hosted the mega event, in 2002.

"Korea has participated in all the World Cups since 1966," the Korean said, pointing out the fact that Korea has won 121 Olympic gold medals, including 31 in winter Olympics.

Korea had placed fourth in the medals table when it hosted the Olympics in 1988 in Seoul.

"Our national growth is 2.5%, but our sports growth is 7%.

"Every time we host a major international competition, it mobilises and unites the whole country. There is also demand for sports facilities," he said.

Countering a question about big sports facilities in huge buildings of Korea as an "exaggeration", the Korean said that it was a fact that big buildings would often ensure the availability of a swimming pool or tennis courts, or other facilities.

"Sports facilities are readily available for everyone," said Yoo Chang-Ho, as he gave a glimpse into the growth of Korea.

#### A ground every 7km

Dutch football coach Johan van Geijn, head of International Cooperation of KNVB, said that a football ground was available every seven kilometres and there were 75 grounds.

"Anyone who is registered with KNVB, is assured of 22 league matches in a year, in the age group of 7 years to 50 years. We have a small country. You can travel from the north tip to the south in about four hours. You have to drive just about seven kilometres to find an opponent. We keep the cost low. There are about 3000 clubs. Most of the time, it is not about winning," said the Dutch specialist, as he emphasised the need to enjoy sports in all age groups.

He also pointed out that about 5000 coaches at all levels were constantly educated so that they could provide good basics to everyone.

"There is high quality control, and we make sure that coaches are dealing with the children in the best way," he said.

Even as it aspires to become a sports power, India has a lot to learn, in terms of ensuring basic sporting facilities, at least for everyone aspiring to play.



## FRIDAY REVIEW

Arts | Dance | Music | Movies

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## SOUND OF CHANGE

MEENA BANERJEE

The India International Guitar Festival 2019 arrived with a punch-line: 'Launch of Pushpa Veena'. One wondered why another veena (string instrument) when this category of Indian instruments already offers numerous varieties since ancient era. The inventor is a celebrated Indian slide guitar maestro Debashish Bhattacharya who is known for his inventive streak - having modified three different Indian versions of the traditional Hawaiian guitar, fuelled by his close association and musical collaborations with internationally acclaimed artistes, instrument makers and his own drawing skills. What drove him to another 'invention'? But the glittering presence of star musicians on stage and on the giant screen - discussing merits of Pushpa Veena, followed by a brief recital by Bhattacharya on his latest creation, made its official launch at Kolkata's Birla Sabhagar rather thought provoking.

## Indian tradition

The eternal quest for going beyond the specified boundaries has spurred many to reinvent art and its expression. Indian mythology and philosophy prove that going solo according to one's own beliefs, imagination and needs is the only way to salvation and it leads to 'change' which is constant. Even the Indian concept of 'dharma' is not beyond this natural phenomenon of 'change' and reforms itself afresh in every era. The whole concept of Indian music is born out of devotion, inspired by Nature, and is hailed as the 'highest art' and 'highest worship' in which daivi (divine) Gaatra-veena (human body) plays the most important role because it represents the macro-cosmic music of the universe at the micro-cosmic level. A variety of Maanushi Veena (man-made instruments) strives, down the ages, to imbibe its features.

Scriptures defined that 'Geetam Vaadyam cha Nrittam trayam Sangeetem uchhyate' (vocal, instrumental and dance, this trio is called music). Among them 'Geet' was numero uno, followed by vaadya (instruments) and nritta (pure dance sans abhinaya) - all of which were the main components of Natya (drama) which aimed at invoking blessings of the deities along with educating and transforming the common people. While geet relied heavily on the linguistic expressions of lyrics and nritta on expressions of face and body, vaadya - a derivative of the root 'vada' (to speak), was also meant to speak in its own language, albeit all Indian instruments were made to accompany vocals.

This melodic philosophy became the foundation of Bharat Muni's Natyashas-

As Pandit Debashish Bhattacharya introduces his Pushpa Veena to the world, a look at how an instrument takes shape



tra (200 BCE) which recognised four categories of instruments: stringed (Tata-Vitata), brass or wood (Ghana), wind (Sushir) and skin (Aanaddha).

Albeit the chronological order of the origin of all these instruments is not known, the resonator of every veena, including that of tambura is called tumba even now. It is made out of the gourd shell in North India. Carnatic musicians use wood-carved tambura. This instrument came to be known as tanpura later, simply because this is capable of giving rise to a pure, rich series of harmonics for a longer period than any other string instrument. This act of stretching (taan) became its identity and also of music; because the lingering, sustained notes - a la vocal - evoke peace and spirituality - the core of Indian classicism.

Instrumental music constantly strived to achieve this sustenance through additions/modifications on different instruments. Skin, essentially used on ancient percussion, treated with layers of chemicals (as seen on the pakhawaj and tabla) produced impressive resonance. Flute (wind instrument) went through a sea change when Pt. Pannalal Ghosh introduced the long bamboo flute with additional holes that facilitated his meditative music to delve deep in the depths of lower octave.

All the ancient stringed instruments

**What's in a name?**  
Some stringed instruments' names reveal how many strings are attached to it. Ekatantri (one string), Shatatantri (hundred string), some names go by their shape such as Kachhapi (for its tortoise-like shape), some names are associated with gods and goddesses like Rudra (Shiva), Vipanchi (Brahma) or Saraswati while some names reveal the respective instrument's intrinsic beauty. For example, enchanted by Radhika Mohan Maitra's invention, it was Thakur Jaidev Singh, legendary musicologist, who christened it using the inventor's middle name and Mohan Veena was born; but his dilbahar got its name due to its heart-warming deep tone. The name Pushpa Veena represents the flower-like simple natural beauty (read tonality) and light weight, according to Bhattacharya.

including tata (plucked or struck) and vitata (bowed) were known as different varieties of veena. Many, such as vipanchi, kachhapi, kinnari belonging to the lost tradition display their past glory in temple sculptures only. Mattakokila has won the recognition of Myanmar, once a part of greater India. Ekatantri or one-string Veena, relegated to the Oran folk traditions only, is breathing somehow. However, the tradition of Rudra-veena, Shatatantri-veena (a kind of santoor), Saraswati-veena, Vichitra-veena is still in practice; but all of these are con-

tinuously evolving with the needs of changing times.

According to Ustad Bahauddin Dagar, "Rudra-Veena is a highly demanding instrument and guides me to reinvent its features. It travelled down from the meditative ambiance of temples to regal courts and later to concert stage to face masses. Under the circumstances experiments with its features are natural to give voice to my cherished musicality which still eludes me." Though it is hard to believe that this torch-bearer of one of the oldest Indian musical lineage is constantly modifying his revered instrument, his latest Kolkata concert proved that he is trying to incorporate modern sensibilities by adding double-note harmony in raga renditions.

## New dimensions

"Keeping the tradition intact, one keeps looking for new dimensions," reasons out the young Santoor maestro Abhay Sopori who displayed amazing note-sustenance recently. "When Papa (Pandit Bhajan Sopori) started playing, he was given a small 25-bridge santoor, each bridge having four strings that covered one-and-a-half octaves only. Initially, he modified it into three-octaves. Later, when his concept of meend crystallised, two and a half octaves more were added along with a sarod-like metal tumba which helped balance the

**Striking a chord** (Clockwise from left) Pandit Debashish Bhattacharya with Pushpa Veena; Niladri Sen; Abhay Rustum Sopori; Ustad Bahauddin Dagar



middle octave," explains Abhay. The senior Sopori also changed the string set up of every bridge; added chikari and tarab strings. The latter enhanced the beauty of meends.

"For vocalised tarana we incorporated bols which were not used in the Sufiana tradition. Till my arrival on the scene, santoor used to have its own bridge. I replaced them with the ones used for tanpura to increase its note-sustenance and changed the structure according to my requirements by clubbing different instruments' techniques. Now I can sustain any note to my heart's content; of course microphone plays a very important role in this," adds Abhay

## Adaptations

In the medieval era, several West Asian instruments arrived in India when invaders and traders began to settle down along with their culture. Their sehtaar, rabab, and taus looked similar to fretted veenas, unfretted Kachhapi veena and bowed ravanhattha respectively; and later emerged as sitar, sarod and sarangi - in that order and became an integral part of Indian music. Pandit Radhika Mohan Maitra's inventive genius inspired him to merge the melodic features of sitar and sarod and create new instruments which would give him the sweet tone of sitar and meend, gamak of sarod.

Niladri Sen, a learned musician, says, "Radhubabu had shaped a deep-toned dilbahar with sarod's skin-clad tabli (drum) and sitar's long fretted neck while his Mohan-veena has sitar's wooden drum and sarod's metal-plated neck that sings out in the mellow tone of a sitar."

Sitar legend Ustad Vilayat Khan, who was a fantastic vocalist and whose musical vision was immensely inspired by khayal, changed his sitar's physical dimensions. As usual, he too wished to sing his chosen genre through his sitar. But while doing so he realised that on a plucked instrument one has to keep striking the string to sustain the sound which was too distracting for him. To eradicate this barrier, he increased the thickness of the tabli (on which the bridge rests holding the strings), narrowed the width of the daand (stem), reduced the number of strings and changed the string-arrangements from the traditional shadaj-pancham to gandhar-pancham. These modifications enabled him to play meends covering five notes without plucking. This changed the entire panorama of instrumental

## Decoding Pushpa Veena

The constant exploration for the divine acoustics with a universal appeal and blend of modernity led Bhattacharya towards a copyright-protected new invention which, according to him, "may significantly change over the next few years". As of now, going by the impressions of stalwarts, such as Pandits Hari-prasad Chaurasia, Swapan Chaudhuri, L Subramaniam, John McLaughlin and other dignitaries, this is different from all other Indian veenas or slide instruments due to its hide top (skin covered table/drum), that too with a hole which results in sweet simplicity despite its deep majestic tone a la rabab or sarod.

"As a composite world music instrument, without using any pick-up, it can also blend the shades of banjo, guitar, oud, sarangi, Japanese shamisen (sangen), Chinese harp (with nylon string) along with percussive thrill. As such, it can imbibe the ancient art of classical and folk music of the entire world and can help understand the real classical, spiritual and folk music that is losing its identity due to mechanical or digitised sound and mixing," avers Bhattacharya. The sound and energy generated by this veena, he says, is inspired by the spirit of Vedic, Buddhist, and other older schools of art. "Moreover, this easy to carry instrument facilitates comfortable sitting posture for hours of practice, accompaniment and performance," he adds.

## First show

Bhattacharya, very humbly, dedicated his new creation to his gurus, vocalist Ajoy Chakrabarty and the late slide-guitar maestro Brij Bhushan Kabra and settled down to give a brief recital on this versatile instrument. Supported by Pandit Anindo Chatterjee's equally versatile tabla, he played a finely nuanced melody from West Asia, followed by a passage showcasing western chromatic notes replete with mandolin like effects. Next, the pure vocalism of a thumri-dhun enchanted the listeners who demanded encores. Happily, he gave samples of tantrakari with powerful bolkari in teental, his forte; and proved that the instrument can adapt the changed soundscapes of globalized music without compromising their acoustical purity. These features and versatility are bound to attract the gen-next.

music in which microphones played a vital role.

During the British rule, Army bands arrived with a clutch of Western instruments along with the violin and mandolin. Guitar caught the fancy of Bengalis when young Hawaiian musician Tau Moe landed in Calcutta in 1931 with his troupe. Ironically, Moe is considered as the father of Indian slide guitar, which is very different from the original one which introduced the technique of slide. A plethora of newly invented versions of slide guitar arrived, led by Hansveena (by Pandit Ravi Shankar) and a trio by Bhattacharya.

"I tried to get four different hues from my first invention Chaturagui, replete with tarab and chikari strings, which are not a part of Hawaiian guitar. It is capable now of imbibing the entire gamut of 'Chaumukha' Indian vocalism. My Anandi is a chirpy version of guitar more akin to mandolin. My Gandharvi is uniquely designed without the tarab strings while several pairs of strings of the same gauge, length and pitch offer amazing ethereal effect," says Bhattacharya, before explaining the nuances of his latest invention (see box).

## In search of the Mishing

Bobby Sarma Baruah explores a popular tribal belief in her National Award winning feature film

PARTHAJIT BARUAH

When the self-taught filmmaker Bobby Sarma Baruah made her latest film "Mishing" (The Apparition) on a popular belief of the Sherdukpen tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, she knew that it would be a challenging task. The challenge lied in the language of the film - Sherdukpen. Being an Assamese filmmaker, to make a film in Sherdukpen was a difficult task, but she did it convincingly. Sherdukpen dialect is spoken by almost 4,000 people in Arunachal Pradesh and is now on the verge of extinction. Among the community of Sherdukpen, there is a popular belief that people before their death communicate in the form of spirits with their loved ones.

"My intention is to showcase the culture of the Sherdukpen tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. I talk about the urgent need to preserve languages, songs and local customs through the powerful medi-



Truth of the matter A still from "Mishing"; (left) director Bobby Sarma Baruah ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

um of film. I believe, my film will help people experience the Sherdukpen community's belief in wandering souls and spirits," says Bobby. The title of the film is "Mishing", a Sherdukpen word that means the appearance of the soul before one's actual death. Based on the Sahitya Akademi award-winning writer Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi's novel of the same title, the film won the Rajat Kamal at the 66th National Film Awards.

Bobby's prowess lies in the subjects she chooses for her films. She debuted with "Adomy" (2014) that tells the story of a woman - Juri, who after getting married to a young engineer, is infected with the HIV. She comes back to her village where she gives birth to a baby girl named Jonak. It shows the position of women in a patriarchal society and how often they have to fight against the social taboos and prejudices. Baruah's second feature film "Sonar Baran Pakhi" (2016) was a biopic based on the life of Pratima Barua Pandey who is best known for her contribution to Assamese music. "Mishing", her third film, is structured in a non-linear narrative. It is set in the '90s in one Sherdukpen village in Arunachal Pradesh. The film has two narratives in two different time frames - one narrative is about Radha Binode Singh and his boss Togbe Mahajan, and second narrative is about Radha Binode Singh and Togbe's son Abu. Two narratives



in two different time frames make the story extremely intricate. However, time and place in both the narratives have been defined in such a way that it keeps the audience focused.

## Complex narrative

Baruah says, "The complex narrative pattern is deliberately used to deal with the intricacies of human mind and life. The popular folk belief is serving as a trope for articulating the community's perspective and philoso-

phy towards the familiar and the unknown world around them."

The film begins with a silhouette shot of a character showing his profile, and also a Jeep that comes in the frame.

With a time lapse shot, the filmmaker shows the character going near the Jeep that met an accident. Inside the vehicle, he sees something and is shocked. It cuts to a varied sequence of shots - lambs, flowing water of a stream, an unidentified character approaching towards the camera in his slow gait, a herd of rattling cattle, prayers by a group of village women in a monastery, an extreme close up shot of that character, and then title card of the film "Mishing" flashes in the

frame.

One day, Radha Binode Singh, a Manipuri driver (played by Rajib Kro) visits Abu, his former employer Togbe Mahajan's son to tell the reason of his sudden disappearance. Once Abu recognises Singh driver, he becomes exasperated and says why he ran away from their home. The driver tells Abu, "I came looking for you, Abu. I came all this way to explain. Before I die, I want you to know everything. I could not tell your father. Please hear me out. I first met your father some 30 years ago...", then the filmmaker takes the story to the past. The shift demands the audience's unwavering concentration.

The narrative of Radha Binode

Singh and his boss Togbe Mahajan reveals that Radha Binode Singh is a Manipuri army-deserter who later becomes the personal driver of Togbe Mahajan, an influential member of the Sherdukpen community. When Singh driver gains Mahajan's trust, he is allowed to stay at their home.

## Valuable item

One day, Singh driver has an encounter with Mishing, and he sees himself dead at the wheels of his own car, and being terrified, he runs away from there. He disappears from there. But 30 years later, Mahajan's son Abu meets a middle-aged visitor who reveals that he is Radha Binode Singh, the Singh driver. He asks Abu to visit Guwahati to collect his father's (Mahajan) valuable item from him. He then disappears without a trace. Accordingly, Abu goes to Guwahati to meet Singh driver. But Singh driver's son reveals that his father Radha Binode Singh has been in the hospital of Vellore for quite a few months. He then hands over his father's precious article to Abu. Abu is baffled thinking who was the middle aged man who visited him and asked to come to Guwahati?

The film is extremely philosophical that tells us about time, fate, human life, and the mysterious world around us. Bobby coalesces the past and the present captivating in the story, and maintains the common thread - the apparition - that enhances the beauty of the film.

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# Kuchipudi connections

Bhavana Reddy on playing the 'wise woman' in a new interpretation of Igor Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring' in Los Angeles, this weekend

SHRINKHLA SAHAJ

Since its debut in 1913, Igor Stravinsky's ballet, 'The Rite of Spring', has been hailed as a haunting classic that shifted the framework of composition and choreography amid scandal and acclaim in the last century. Poised to present a new interpretation of the iconic work, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra's production features Indian classical dancer Bhavana Reddy among the lead performers. Alongside modern dance choreography, Kuchipudi would be staged as one of the dance forms within this uniquely blended production at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles this Saturday.

"The production offers a unique cultural mix," says Reddy, who has worked with classical orchestral music for the first time on the project. "It has been an interesting experience because of the music cues are different, and unlike our classical dance structures, modern dance is a free-spirited form," she says.

## Experimenting across genres

Musically and thematically, Stravinsky's piece balances the primitive and modern, exploring the plot of an ancient rite of passage. Hailed as a revolutionary work, the first choreography of the work by Vaslav Nijinsky flouted traditional ballet norms by presenting knock-kneed and dissonant movements. The musical score itself was shocking for its times with an emphasis on interruptive rhythms rather than flowing melodies. Consequently, 'The Rite of Spring' has resurfaced across time as a malleable composition for choreographic explorations.

For choreographer and artistic director, Kitty McNamee, the language of modern dance and Kuchipudi presented a vibrant balance. Reflecting on the process, Reddy says, "While working on this choreography, I realised that Kuchipudi is a very flexible dance form." Recalling one of the early sessions, she shares, while it was a challenge to work with modern dance professionals, it was also exciting to have them try out the Indian classical idiom. "The choreographer asked the other dancers to follow me and try out some Kuchipudi steps. It was extremely challenging for them since it is a vastly different language. Even the way the dancers respond to the music is very different. They go more with the ebb and flow and peaks in the music, while we are so grounded in the rhythmic cycles."

Reddy recounts a rehearsal session where McNamee wanted her to try out a lift. "In our classical dances we do not have much physical contact between dancers. To be lifted in the air, be elevated and learn the technique of holding up my weight in the contemporary dance style was strange, unique and fun!" On the other hand, it was awe-inspiring for the other dancers to see Reddy dance long sequences with intense rhythmic footwork in the fundamen-



Reaching out Bhavana Reddy in performance  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tal Kuchipudi position. "They asked me how I could squat for so long and dance like that! In turn, I asked them how they managed a split!" Breaking into a chuckle at the memory, Reddy points out that the primary importance given to body training by the modern dancers was an insight for her. "It was interesting to learn that they spend a lot of time at the gym. In our dance training, we focus more on inherent structures for warm-ups and other exercises geared towards building stamina for our particular dance style."

## Dramatic elements

For Reddy, working on the character presents the most exciting and challenging aspect of creating production. "Kuchipudi is essentially a



Kuchipudi is essentially a dance-drama, not just dance

dance-drama, not just dance," she points out emphatically.

"The dramatic element of Kuchipudi calls out to me the most!" In this production, she plays the 'wise woman' who educates the village folk about the cycle of nature and offers them nuggets from traditional wisdom. "To get into this role I explored my motherly instincts more deeply. Instead of acting my actual age, I tried to pace down my movements. The sage is also a very strong and influential personality in the tribe, helping the community understand customs and values, being authoritative yet respectful at the same time."

As a performer, Reddy enjoys character study and delving deeper into the dramatic aspect of Kuchipudi. "There are many unconventional and life-like movements in Kuchipudi. Theatrical nuances are ingrained in the form. For me, painting the picture of a character is a remarkable process. You can transform into another person on stage, I really en-

joy that." The production is rooted in research and resonates across cultures and conventions.

"The concept of the rite of passage is common across cultures. It is about moving to the next stage of life, respecting nature and ancestors," Reddy shares that these connecting points made it smooth for her to relate to the theme and interpret it in her own way. "While the work that we do as choreographers and dancers may be entirely different, the creative process is the same," she adds.

Looking ahead, the young dancer-choreographer dreams of bringing a similar blend of cultures and choreographies to India. "I hope I can present something similar in India." As she sums up the experience, it is striking that working across cultures has brought her closer to her roots in a way, "I am a strong believer in our Indian culture, you can keep growing and never get bored, one will always return."



Muted tones Divya Singh's "Four"; (below) Arpana Caur's "Day and Night"

## Confluence of ideas

"Art Now" sees the contemporary world through the eyes of 28 artists

ANURADHA VELLAT

The fourth edition of Art Alive Gallery's "Art Now" is currently one of the finest spaces representing contemporary artworks. As the title suggests, the concept is about here and now, dealing with myriad elements like memory, time, space, love, forms, and texture to name only a few. Showcasing 28 artists, the line-up is a meeting point for both veterans as well as upcoming artists. Says Sunaina Anand, "Art Now" curator and the Director of Art Alive Gallery, "We wanted to capture the current trends as well as the artist's individuality and we were able to capture that with most works." The exhibition showcases profound works by Sakti Burman, Jayasri Burman, Krishen Khanna, Anjolie Ela Menon, Arpana Caur, and Paresh Maity. Then there are young, promising artists like Divya Singh, Kulu Ojha, Purvai Rai, and many others.

"The idea was to bring newer ways of working and looking at art. For instance, with Krishen Khanna, the cultural quality has come in and with Jayasri, the colour palettes are changing. She has gotten more monochromatic with hues of blues; it has become less formative and more lyrical," adds Anand.

Working with hyperrealism is artist G Anjaneyulu, whose fascinating work "Guns, Slugs and Cordite" - an arresting oil on canvas - is a multidimensional painting of a gun. Playing with elements of memory and time is Divya Singh's "Four", from her series called "Notes for Tomorrow". It uses extraordinarily soft hues to re-

present the haziness of memory itself. Says Singh, "Notes for Tomorrow" is about memories, documenting parts of my house because I am trying to locate time and how it has been moving. I am interested in the changes that are happening, I am trying to hold on to things that I might have taken for granted, the things that seem to have no relevance at all on an ordinary day."

"Four" is an oil on canvas which with very dusky tones to it; a cross between blue, green and grey. The painting is not definite, exactly how its creator had intended. "Four" is a stable place in my memory. My house was a balance between my parents' energies, When you grow up, and you look at mortality and you begin to look at your parents as people. This painting reminded me of my mother. It is a sweet, soft memory. I want it to resemble the memory as much as possible, as far away from fact as possible. It is not a defined concrete image because that is not the nature of memory. It is fleeting and it erodes over time. Some people might have photographic memory, I don't. I try to stay true to that," adds Singh.

Jagannath Panda's work invokes a confluence of art and ecology. "Wings of Accord" is colourful birds of fabric flying against the cityscape, with a hazy blue sky and network towers in the background.

Arpana Caur's "Day and Night", an oil on canvas, has been a work in progress for 20 years, something she has been delighted to be continuously pursuing. She uses yellow to symbolise day against grey-black night. She is not shy of the dualities. "I like dualities in work. I do not like harmony that much. This particular piece for me represents life and death, happiness and sorrow, creation and destruction. In this, I used the tilted figure like the hands of a clock, which is time, because, well, art is also trying to capture eternity," says Caur. Her other work, Yogi, is a yogi suspended between a brush and a gun; the artists, therefore, is the yogi that tries to subdue violence.

Says Anand, "I don't give them a concept because instead of giving them instructions, it is nicer to see what they are doing. It is a very humble attempt to show what is happening in our spaces."

("Art Now" will continue at Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi, until 30th December, 2019.)



# From form to formless: the journey within

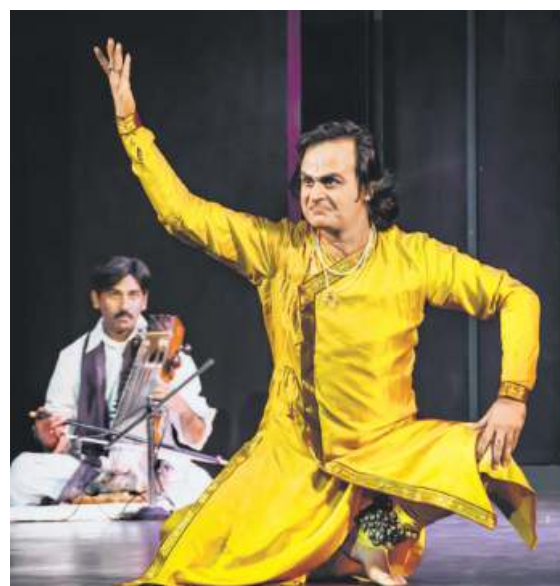
In "Antar Rang", Kathak exponent Hemant Kalita and his disciples articulated the movement of the soul through dance and mime

RANEE KUMAR

Nrityangan's Kathak presentation aptly titled "Antar Rang" was played out as a traditional repertoire with a difference and that is what spurred the audience to watch it with animated joy. Each piece unfolded itself in a petal format where the outer layers opened up leading us to the core (antar).

Showing the way Hemant Kalita with his disciples  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Guru-performer Hemant Kumar Kalita and his three disciples made for a pleasant evening of the artistes'



journey from the form to the formless. India Habitat Centre

Beginning with Krsna aradhana (invocation), the group dynamics proved to be one of perfection to rhythm, synchronisation and formation of patterns with discerning clarity. The interchanging of positions and place by the dancers, as they moved in tandem, is worth a mention.

The gradual rise to the tempo was also well-executed. Hemant's solo

footwork delineations with his disciples were agile as were his varied stances as lord Shiva to varied taal (beat). The jugalbandi was a serve and volley between the percussionist and the dancer.

The outer layer got unveiled with storytelling, the original crux of Kathak. Shreeya and Radhika Gosain enacted the gopis who deck up to carry water from the Yamuna with one hand on the pot and the other carefully holding their ghunghat (up-

per part of saree that covers the head) - a very sensitive portrayal done to sheer music.

## Emulating the peacock

Radhika came out as a lithe dancer with inborn talent. The tarana established the formless exploring abstract through footwork to mnemonics.

The four-fold nayaka abhinaya by Hemant where he emulates the peacock and its gait was impressive. The

plight of Draupadi as she dodges the predator who has come to drag her to the royal playhouse was depicted with artistic sensitivity by the artiste who actually goes ahead to picture the nayaka - here the incensed husband of Draupadi.

Hemant's abhinaya aspect was amazing as he journeyed inwards through his dance. The pensive, expectant Radha in Gopika virah geet ('yehi murare, kunjia viharey') came alive in the dancer's excellently di-

verse portrayal of Radha's emotional levels - now hope, now despair, now pining, now total surrender to her situation and the fact that Krsna will never return.

The finale underlined the philosophy of life on earth, the culmination of all art from finite to infinite. The props on the stage were a marvelous piece of artistry.

The journey of the soul, a very abstruse element in the nature of things, was brought out by Hemant in a most articulate manner through dance and mime. The Adi Sankara's Nirvana Shatkam was the right choice to underline the completion of human life through realisation of its (atma) true form. A very difficult task successfully accomplished by the artiste.

Having worked with a thematic title, it would have been even more profound if the choreographer stuck to the storytelling to illustrate the outer/physical aspect and move on to the inner through abhinaya as he did here, rather than having too many pieces in the customary Kathak style. An attempt to think out of the box is appreciated provided it is not burdened with the customary repertoire. It can mar the focus of the issue to be presented.

A live orchestra with Goutam Biswas on the tabla and Akram Hussain on the sarangi proved to be an asset.



# Banding together for Kabir

Classical, pop and folk artistes explored the mystic poet's verses at the fourth edition of the Mahindra Kabira festival held recently in Benaras

CHITRA SWAMINATHAN

**K**ahat Kabir Suno Bhai Sadho. And those at the Mahindra Kabira Festival in Benaras were all ears. But 500 years ago when the mystic poet spoke, his liberating verses hardly found any takers. He roamed on the ghats by the Ganga talking of true love.

It was surreal to be seated on Guleria ghat. Not far away from it is the Panchganga Ghat, where Kabir met his guru Swami Ramanand – it proved to be a turning point in his spiritual quest.

The festival couldn't have had a better setting to bring alive the essence of Kabir's unpretentious philosophy. Even as musicians rendered his couplets, life by the river went about at its usual pace – boats silently plying people, the rising and setting sun spreading its glow, flocks of pigeons flying overhead, sounds of bells from nearby temple echoing in the air and pilgrims busily performing rituals.

Over the course of two days, the festival took Kabir's life lessons to the new age audience through varied musical genres, apart from showcasing the beauty of the Benaras gharana, whose celebrated musicians have contributed hugely to the city's heritage and history.

Such festivals are a wonderful way to explore not just the ethos and identity of a place, but also unique spaces for performing arts. "That was the aim when we conceived the festival four years ago with the support of the Mahindra group. And with each edition, we have realised that those coming to the event from across the country and abroad are doing so more to experience music in such an ambience. And they enjoy the music and literature sessions as much as the heritage walks. Many of them have fallen in love with this ancient city even while rediscovering Kabir at the festival," said Sanjoy K Roy, the curator and MD of Teamwork Arts.

So if in 'Yeh to ghar hai prem ka', Shabnam Virmani's unfettered voice and the five-stringed tambura and khartal urged you to kill your ego for the gates of love to open, vocalists Rahul and Rohit Mishra, sitarist Neeraj Mishra and flautist Ajay Prasanna

Such festivals are a wonderful way to explore not just the ethos and identity of a place, but also unique spaces for performing arts



Meeting of genres (Clockwise from above) Moorallala Marwada, Neeraj Mishra and Shabnam Virmani at the festival in Benaras ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

raj Mishra and flautist Ajay Prasanna traversed the raag-taal route to convey Kabir's thoughts.

"Classical, folk or fusion...his simple yet thought-provoking messages lend themselves amazingly to any form of music. And this is what has inspired musicians at the festival to get experimental with their expression," said Neeraj Mishra.

## Deep engagement

Shabnam has been travelling around the country, after launching the Kabir Project in 2002, talking passionately about Kabir's relevance today more than ever. Her deep engagement with his philosophy has resulted in documentaries, performances, translations and curation. At Benaras, alongwith Swagath Sivakumar, she sang, *Piya chahai prem ras, rakha chahai man*

*Doye khadag ek myan me, dekha suna na kan.*

"There is only room for one, either your ego or the experience of love. Kabir asks, 'you came into this world and you didn't taste love. Like a guest who came into an empty home. You just came and left. Is this what your life is all about?'"

Like Shabnam, Purushottam Agrawal is always eager to share with people his study and understanding of the saint-poet's works, which also resulted in his much-acclaimed book, *Akath Kahani Prem Ki*.

At the festival's afternoon literature session, he pointed out that more than a social reformer or religious guru, Kabir is essentially a poet. "And not just a poet of love and

consolation, but a poet of anger and interrogation. He is known to ask disturbing questions," said Agrawal.

There seems to be no aspect of life that Kabir has not touched, including classical music. According to music researcher and educationist Sadhana Rao, the connect between verse and song comes through in one of his couplets that refers to 'chattis raag' (36 raags). Interestingly, Sadhana pointed out, "the Siva Matha system does the classification of music according to 36 raags!"

"Wah wah...kya baat hai, kya baat hai," is how Sufi folk singer Moorallala Marwada of Kutch in Gujarat describes the timelessness of Kabir's *dohas*. "Usme hamare mitti ki kushboo and vichar hai (it has the aroma and thoughts of our land)," he said before his performance at the festival.

## Simple folk tunes

He has been conveying the lofty thoughts of various saint poets through simple folk tunes. "Once you begin to understand these verses, you will see a transformation in yourself. You will be happier. Didn't you feel it in my performance?" he asked with a smile, his swirling moustache reaching his ears.

"Kabir belongs to every era. We can find him in our everyday struggle, our existence and in our cityscape," said Raman Iyer of Kabir Café that performed to a huge crowd at the Shivala Ghat. One of the top indie music bands today in the country, it is led by Neeraj Arya, and plays the poetry of the 15<sup>th</sup> century mystic

through a mix of folk, reggae, pop, rock and classical. "We think Kabir is the biggest rockstar because it requires immense courage to speak the truth," said Raman.

Then, amidst loud cheers, the band sang its all-time favourite, 'Chadariya jheeni re jheeni...' Seeing the audience sway and sing along, you realised Kabir truly rocks.



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## Going Native

# Measuring memories

In his latest collection of poetry, Shariq Kaifi turns the spotlight on the shadowy and shady manoeuvrings that are the tangible signs of the post-truth era

**S**ensitive poetry turns attention to the hidden dangers of common sense and the legitimacy of contradictions and dichotomies inherent in the drudgery of mundane life. Active involvement in a collective activity usually absolves one of responsibility. Still, for the poet, it is an act that imposes unbearable accountability. This is astutely articulated by a celebrated Urdu poet Shariq Kaifi, who says, "Sab Ke Saath Nahi Rota Mein/ Zimmedari Badh Jati hai (I don't burst into tears with all/it enhances the responsibility)."

## Creative masterstrokes

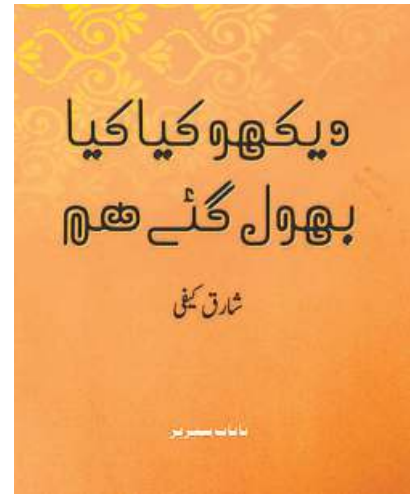
Similarly, a trivial mistake readily fetches pardon but for the narrator it calls for punishment. "Maafi Aur Itni Si Khata Par / Saza se Kaam Chal Jata Hamara (Pardon for such a trivial mistake/punishment would have been more convenient for me). Frankness eludes love and promiscuity denotes much more profound sense of trustworthiness, "Wo Kharapan Mohabbaton Mein Kahan/Bewafai Mein jo Sadaqat hai (Love lacks such uprightness/ that one finds in the promiscuity). These are creative masterstrokes that embody the fourth collection of the poet "Dekho Kya Kya Bhool Gai Ham" (See how much we have forgotten) that appeared recently.

Nothing could be more painful than the wilful heedlessness at the time of final departing, and a nagging sense of anguish may resuscitate a dead. It is sensitively portrayed by Sharif in an evocative poem, "Akhrī Hatak" (the Last Humiliation): Namaz Khtam Hogai/Kisi Ne Zor Se Kaha /Chehra Dekh Lijaiye/ Koyi Qadam Nahi Badha/ Kafan Ka Band Khol Kar / Phir Se Kas Diya Gaya/ Koyi Qadam Nahi Badha / Khuda Hi Jaane Sach Tha ya Mujhe Laga/ Ki Is Hatak Per/Uska Zard Chera / Thora Aur Zard Pad Gaya (The last prayer is over / Someone loudly said/Come on see the face/ no one moved ahead/ The knot of the coffin loosened and fastened / Nobody came forward/ Not sure it was true, or I felt / this humiliation/ turned his yellow face / a bit more pale).

The book published by My Book Select Publishing under its series 'Nayab Book series' carries more than one hundred ghazals and a dozen poems. Shariq's creative outpourings exude a strange mixture of the serious and hilarious, the fierce and the diffusive. The metaphor of death surfaces time and again but the poet quite consciously guards against the ego-centric obsession with self. Self-pity in soft-centred diction hardly lay the foundations of his poetry.

Not overlaid with expressive idioms and emotional extravagance and exaggeration, Shariq turns the spotlight on the shadowy and shady manoeuvrings that are the tangible signs of the post-truth era.

He has a rare sense of the comic and



Making sense of the world Poet Shariq Kaifi guards against the ego-centric obsession with self

playfulness in times of tumult and turmoil. With an even-handed sympathy for the naive and the eccentric, the narrator never shies away from poking fun at himself, and a strong sense of derision coupled with nipping satire enlivens the narrated experience. He does touch the oft-repeated theme of love, but he tellingly depicts the inevitable loss of love.

For him, emotional affinity is an ethical value of human sensitivity and, most of the people are afflicted with blindness as they reuse to see beyond the mundane life.

## Sense of irreverence

Shariq's poetry narrates human follies and shortcomings in a language that betrays a strong sense of irreverence. His astutely rendered short poems are essentially fuelled by the ultimate human concerns, and they also try to stitch up the growing ideological hiatus that promotes the certainty of paranoia. Through the frequent use of death as a primary poetic motif, his poetry invariably reflects rebellion against the contemporary market economy. Some of his ghazals echo and re-echo wistful experiences in a beautiful pattern. According to the poet, his latest collection, his most recent collection owes its existence to a mixed feeling of achieving and losing simultaneously - this is a mysterious world that surfaces frequently.

Shariq's collection portrays man caught in the pitfalls of life and his stifling surroundings. The poet no longer believes in medieval optimism, and his understanding of human suffering looks infallible. He deserves a compliment for bringing together the voices of oration, mourning, arguing and lence.

SHAFEY KIDWAI is a senior literary critic



# Out of the box

DIWAN SINGH BAJELI

**B**lending fantasy and realism with audience joining performers on stage, "Mister Jeejeebhoy and the Birds" captured the imagination of young audience at the Children's Theatre Festival organised by Pitara International TYA at National Bal Bhawan in Delhi.

Adapted by Shaili Sathya from the story of the same title by Anitha Balachandran, it moves around two siblings and their aunt. A large number of colourful birds embellish the production, presented by Gillo Repertory Theatre, Mumbai. Through the movements of siblings, we watch the flow of life in the town. Some of the interesting sequences include a small shop with commodities, children love to buy. The siblings frequently visit this shop and the shopkeeper attends them in a playful manner. In fact, such shops are found in colonies that attract children.

Exuding joy, the audience, mainly consisting of children, related to the scene. The performers formed a stage composition to create the form of the bus plying at a slow pace. Members of the audience were invited to ride the bus. Some children from audience joined the hide and seek sequence. This device enabled the children to feel that they were not a mere audience but participants in the action, establishing a lively rapport with the performers. Directed by Shaili Sathya, the production ingeniously brought alive vividly the world of children without being preachy.

Theatre 1-Entertainment Trust presented "Three Oriental Tales" in an innovative way to convey a message. The show began with the tale of the crane and a poor woodcutter. Once the woodcutter



Pitara Festival brought the vibrant world of children's theatre to Delhi

discovers a wounded crane in the forest. He brings it home and nurses with care and compassion. When it is fully recovered, he allows it to fly high in the sky. One night, the poor and lonely woodcutter gives shelter to a beautiful young woman who expresses her wish to become his wife and brings happiness and prosperity to him but because of his impatience, the beautiful woman takes the form of a crane and flies away never to return.

## Lively rapport

The second story narrates the lives of two brothers. The older brother is selfish and grabs the property of his younger brother who lives in utter penury. With the blessings of a bird, the younger brother becomes rich. In contrast, the older brother becomes poor because of his malicious motive. Out of love, the younger brother helps his malevolent brother. The message of the story is loud and clear.

The third tale is about Chinese New Year celebrations and the stories behind the naming of Chinese months after animals.

The narrators used a variety of theatrical devices such as masks, music, facial expressions and movements, establishing a lively rapport with the audience while narrating these oriental tales which are not dramatised but communicated in the original format. The show was directed by Imran Khan, one of the pioneers of children's theatre.

Puppetshala presented "Part 1, The Voyage to Lilliput by Gulliver". Written by



Drama for little ones Scenes from "Oriental tales"; "Mister Jeejeebhoy and the Birds" ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Jonathan Swift, it is a great story of adventure, courage and man's eternal quest to know the unknown that has inspired generations.

Using puppets of varying sizes, applying various techniques of puppetry including shadow puppetry, the play projected a huge puppet showing Gulliver in an unconscious state who is brought by tiny soldiers before their king.

Directed by Mohd Shameem, the production was imaginatively designed. The scene of fire using the device of shadow puppetry was effectively enacted. The soldiers of Lilliput use a huge ladder to reach to Gulliver which evoked a sense of awe and laughter.

The Lilliputians were wonderstruck to see the huge size of Gulliver. They consider him dangerous for the kingdom. Once he protects the kingdom from invaders, the king is pleased with him and he becomes a favourite of the king and his courtiers. The prime minister becomes jealous of him, creating a situation in which he is charged with treason and arrested. However, with the help of a well-wisher, he is freed and continues his travels to another unknown land.

Emboldened with the overwhelming response of schools, the organisers are hopeful of elevating the event to a major international children's theatre festival.

## IN SHORTS

# In full glory

**T**he Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts has been curating 'Diksha: Guru Shishya Parampara', where maestros like Amjad Ali Khan and Hari Prasad Chaurasia have presented their able students. This year it was Padma Vibhushan Pt. Birju Maharaj with his bouquet of students, both young and mature, who intricately wove the *chikankari* of Luckhnavi style Kathak. The evening was opened by Pt. Deepak Maharaj, the younger son of the doyen. With Tirbhuvan Maharaj, his nephew, on padhant, Deepak Maharaj warmed up the stage with an invocatory piece to Krishna, "Yashoda Nandanam". With the sahitya describing how Krishna is the ultimate way to attaining moksha or the final liberation, he swiftly moved on to the *Upaj ang*. Variations in Teentala resounded through crisp *tatkar* moving on to *uthan*. Presenting Birju Maharaj's favourite *tawa thunga*, which has syllables inspired from the sound of nature mixed with instruments like *damru*, was delectable. Staying true to his forte, Deepak Maharaj ended his recital with an impromptu *jugalbandi* and a *Khade Pair Ki* presentation. Next in the line was the seasoned Kathak exponent Rani Khanum, clad in a flowy white *anarkali*. With Birju Maharaj ji in attendance, Rani Khanum too put her best foot forward with a description of Vasant Vihar in poetry by Amir Khusrau set to Teentala. Interspersed with technical pieces like *tora*, *tukra*, *gat nikas*, the piece was drenched in *Shringara* rasa and the *nyak-nayika bhav* was much dealt with throughout. Again, the clarity of footwork and lyrical *hastaks* left no doubt about the Guru and shishya's commitment to the art.

Thumri Raag Mala which followed was the most memorable presentation of the evening. It was surprising to see the older batch of Maharaj ji's students gear up with such finesse and the age old thumris (mostly written by Bindadin Maharaja) were a sheer *rasapan* for the audience. Vijayshree Chaudhary, Purnima Khadga, Neelima Azim, Preeti Agrawal, Renu Sharma, Navina Jafa, and Kiran Bhargava presented thumris like: "Jage Ho Kahi Rain", "Kaise Kahu Shyam Radhe Sandeswa", "Dagar Chalal Dekho Shyam", etc which were just honey to the ears. And what was truly inspiring was none of the dancers had lost the *anga* which Maharaj ji had given to them. Special mention must be given to Anirban Bhattacharyya whose vocal rendition proved that dance is, in most rudimentary sense, a physical depiction of that which is sung!

The evening ended with the maestro himself playing *naal*, a feminine percussion instrument for an unusual *taal vadya kacheri* with various other percussion instruments evoking the scene of a courtroom. This light hearted rendition demonstrated a full spectrum of Maharaj ji's prowess of treating both *margi* and *lokdharmi* art with similar finesse and beauty. Shivani Verma who depicted the plaintiff stood out in the beautiful rendition of *naal* and Vidushi Saswati Sen must be congratulated to curate a festival of such depth, nuance, and even light hearted thumris.

Madhur Gupta



## BLAST FROM THE PAST

## The king of lyrics

Raja Mehdi Ali Khan turned his personal pain into poignant poetry that continues to define human emotions

DEEPAK MAHAAN

Strange but true that some of our best love songs have been penned by poets who suffered pain and impoverishment in the communal violence of the Partition. Despite catastrophic losses of home, hearth and wealth as well as deep emotional scars, these sensitive poets retained faith in human goodness and wrote inspiring songs for posterity. One such word weaver from this great lineage was Raja Mehdi Ali Khan. One can decipher how gems like "Jo Hamne Dastan Apni Sunaayee, Aap Kyun Roye" ("Woh Kaun Thi") and "Hai Isi Mein Pyar Ki Aabroo, Wo Jafa Karein, Main Wafa Karun" ("Anpadh") flowed on paper from his pen.

As per film actress Tabassum, Raja Mehdi Ali Khan was born in

While his friend Manto migrated to the new Islamic state of Pakistan, Raja and his wife Tahira opted to stay in India and his patriotic zeal burst through the immortal "Watan Ki Raah Main Watan Ke Naujawan Shaheed Hon"



Illustration by Satheesh Vellinezhi

1928 in Bahawalpur (now Pakistan) and acquired poetic sensibilities from his widowed mother Hebab Saheba, who was lauded by none other than Dr. Allama Iqbal for her poetic treatise "Nawa-i-Haram". Though unable to complete graduation due to poverty, Raja's mastery over Urdu earned him a place on the editorial board of the then notable magazines "Phool" and "Tehzeeb-i-Niswaan" of Lahore.

Later, he joined All India Radio-Delhi but quit the same soon after to join Hindi films at the

beckoning of his friend Saadat Hasan Manto. Though he started as a dialogue writer in Bombay, Raja blazed a lilted trail with his first film "Do Bhai" and like his chartbusting debut songs "Mera Sunder Sapna" and "Yaad Karoge", his later songs continued to dazzle listeners with haunting passages of profound phrases.

Surprisingly, while his friend Manto migrated to the new Islamic state of Pakistan, Raja and his wife Tahira opted to stay in India and his patriotic zeal burst through the immortal "Watan Ki

Raah Main Watan Ke Naujawan Shaheed Hon" ("Shaheed"). With a penchant for comfort, the gregarious Raja was generous with his money, appreciation and wit. Working with young and old alike, he gave memorable hits with everyone from Sardar Malik ("Aandhi Mein Gunahon Ka Diya"), Babul ("Jab Chhaye Kabhi Saavan Ki Ghata"), S. Mohinder ("Karte Ho Mujhe Kitni Muhabbat"), Rono Mukherjee ("Jidhar Bhi Main Dekhoon Udhar Tuhi Tu Hai"), Robin Banerji ("Hamein Un Ra-

hon Par Chalna Hai"), Laxmikant Pyarelal ("Akela Hun Main Humsafar Dhoondta Hun") to O.P. Nayyar ("Main Pyar Ka Rahi Hoon"). But it was with Madan Mohan that he formed a magical team to create unforgettable songs of great meaning and pleasing melody.

"Aankhen" started the partnership but it was Talat Mahmood's "Meri Yaad Mein Na Tum Aansoo Bahaana" from "Madhosh" that brought them both fame and kudos. The duo thereafter made a habit of churning out chart busters that pleased masses as well as classes through simple words that came forth as easily on the tongue as on the ears! Since ages, music lovers have swooned to the charm of "Aap Ki Nazron Ne Samjha Pyar Ke Kabil Mujhe" ("Anpadh"), "Lag Ja Gale Ke Phir Ye Haseen Raat Ho Na Ho" (Who Kaun Thi?), "Ek Haseen Sham Ko" ("Dulhan Ek Raat Ki"), "Poochho Na Humein Hum Unke Liye" ("Mitti Mein Sona"), "Agar Mujhse Mohabbat Hai" and "Main Nigaahen Tere Chehre Se Hataon Kaisa" (both from "Aap Ki Parchhaiyan") since the lyrics bristle with our poignant feelings.

He was a truly a "king of lyrics" who provided sublime beauty to film poetry and even if all his songs were not hits, his poetry always shone like gold at all times. He left this world early but his wealthy legacy is still prized by all who value culture of ethics. And that's why just as his songs are heard with immense delight, his poetic collections like "Andaz-E-Bayaan Aur" and "Mizraab" are also read with great relish. Old timers say he laughed a lot and had a great sense of humour till his last moment and though childless, he treated every neighbourhood kid as his own. No wonder, just as death too could not take away his smile, it has not been able to take away the glory or sheen of his beloved film songs.

## Epic turn

Merging Bharatanatyam with Balinese dance, "Pralaya" seeks to explore questions of morality, virtue and nobility



Beyond borders Sandhya Raman ■ THE HINDU

On the centenary celebration of its founder, Jaya Appasamy, Rasaja Foundation has brought together a production called "Pralaya", the merging of Bharatanatyam with Balinese dance. The production brings together Sampadaya Dance Creations' artistic director Lata Panda with distinguished Balinese choreographer Wayan Dibia, master of Balinese dance and Topeng mask dance - to mine the depth of their respective dance forms' narrative traditions to create an opulent new work based on the Mahabharat, re-imagined through dance, puppetry, masks and projection.

Says Sandhya Raman, Secretary, Rasaja Foundation, "We were initially looking at where dance is going, our understanding of corners, and borders, how we view things and coexist with them. So, I came up with this concept of merging borders, which is actually collaborating with people from different genres, art forms."

To merge borders is not simply a coming together of ideas but cultures, patterns, practices and the expression of these things. Pralaya, then, is the coming together of cultures to see a much more nuanced version of those cultures. Meaning destruction and dissolution in literal terms, Pralaya is a contemplation of humanity's propensity to push the world to the brink of destruction in a cyclical way. "The premise lies in the Mahabharata, a tale of dy-

nastic conflict, of earth-shattering chaos and finally an abiding calm, simmering with the potential of being shattered again," explains Sandhya. Entwined in a game of dice, are questions of morality, virtue and nobility.

Performed by a cast of 10, including Wayan Dibia and Lata Pada, to a recorded score composed by Bengaluru's Praveen D Rao, featuring musicians from Bali and India, it is a retelling of the Mahabharata in many ways with many contemporary interpretations, vividly brought to the stage in exquisite costumes by Sandhya Raman herself. This dance theatre production will be on stages across seven cities across India after having just completed a three-city tour of Indonesia.

"Classical dances, especially the solo format is losing its sheen increasingly, because the youngsters do not want to connect with it, often think it is passé. Culture is something you have to keep updating. It is not that it comes in a box and is put somewhere else. It is the everyday life," adds Sandhya. At heart of the concept is the willingness to not be limited by traditions, but rather to embrace it and mould it into the new art.

"Pralaya" will be held on 13th December at 7 p.m. at Kamani Auditorium.

Anuradha Vellat

## QUICK FIVE

## 'I am still trying to get a hold of Guneet Sikka'

MURTAZA ALI KHAN

Even since she first started playing the part of Prerna in "Kasautii Zindagi Kay", Shweta Tiwari has remained one of the most popular faces on Indian television. She is back from a three year long hiatus with Sony TV's 'Mere Dad Ki Dulhan' that revolves around a single father and a daughter with a strong bond and a 40 year old single lady Guneet Sikka who is in search of a rented accommodation. The show, produced by DJ's Creative Unit, also stars Varun Badola and Anjali Tatrari in pivotal roles. "The show's producer Deeya Singh is a good friend. Whenever she calls me, I know that it's going to be something very interesting. The moment she told me about 'Mere Dad Ki Dulhan', I immediately said 'yes'," gushes Shweta. Edited excerpts:

How did you prepare for the part of Guneet Sikka?

Well, I am still trying to get a hold of the character. You see it's a very complex character. Playing a larger than life character is far simpler because it's something that you very rarely see around. So you have the liberty to play the way it pleases you and the audiences easily accept it. But, Guneet Sikka is a real character that you may easily come across on the roads of Delhi

NCR. So that's why it becomes a challenge to get it spot on. There is a certain way she walks. Now, I have observed women in their 40s walking like that and so I have tried to add certain nuances to the character to make it realistic. Another challenge is getting the accent right which I am still working on.

What is it like to shed the 'bahu' image and explore new dimensions as an actor?

It has been very challenging. People love you for the character you play and they mistake that love for the character as love for the actor playing that character. So as soon as the actor stops playing that character they find it very hard to accept. They loved me as Prerna but what they didn't understand was that I couldn't be playing Prerna for all my life. The reason I have become an actor is I can essay a whole range of different characters. Also, not everyone is interested in watching a character like Prerna all the time. At the end of the day, I work for my creative satisfaction.

There must have been

Back with a bang Shweta Tiwari ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



challenges when you started...

I remember when I had first entered the industry people in my family strongly objected to it. But I succeeded in breaking the shackles. Today, the same people look up to me. Same way, I will try to keep on reinventing myself with each new character that I play. People may object to it at first but they will eventually accept it.

How important is it for an actor to take a break from work?

Except for the three years from 2016-2019, I have never really taken a break from acting. I shot practically every day before that. When I had my second child I had already made up my mind that I would take some time out as I couldn't devote much time when I had my first child. I feel as an actor it is important to have patience. Also, one mustn't have a fear regarding work. I was certain that the day I decide to come back, I will start getting offers.

How do you think Indian television has changed over the last couple of decades?

I feel that television hasn't changed much. Every production house has its own style with regards to content.

As an actor I don't like repeating myself and so I do see difference in my work but other than that I try to adapt to the working style of a production house I am working for at a given point in time.

## TELLING VOICES

## Learning new things

Micael Puett, professor of Chinese philosophy at Harvard, says learning the language is a life-long process of trying to understand the texts

SUDHAMAHU REGUNATHAN

The more common lament is that philosophy is dying. Not for Professor Micael Puett who teaches Chinese philosophy in Harvard. With his best selling book "The Path" promising to change one's life, Puett makes that claim for his course too.

Puett tells us why, "Most people tend to assume that Chinese philosophy is really about being trained to accept the world as it is. Most secondary literature presents it that way. It corresponds to our stereotypes of so-called traditional societies...the texts are actually arguing something very, very different. For example, people often say Confucius is simply teaching rituals to be a good father and how to properly play our roles. Then, you actually look at these texts and in terms of ritual, their whole point is no, no, no, ritual is to break us from these standard things we're doing in our lives. And when you enter a ritual, you, for that brief moment, become a different person. You act as if you are a different person relating to those around you in a different way."



Puett illustrates with an example, "...a father/son relationship can be very troubled. So in this ritual, the father and the son would have to enter a ritual space and do a role reversal so each would have to play the role of the other and the idea is it forces each to see the world from the other's perspective. So what I will do is say, think about even little customs and conventions we do throughout the day and if you think of these as rituals, what you're doing is you're really trying to, for that brief moment, become a different type of person and develop different emotional responses to those around you. And it's those little breaks throughout the day that really can transform how we live in the world."

Puett says the trick is to concentrate on the small day to day things in our life...how do we lead our daily life. Let the large questions like where we came from or what lies beyond human life take care of themselves. If we live each day well, we are progressing, "...when you read Chinese philosophy you realize some variations of these ideas do in fact appear in Greece and Rome as well. And what's particularly intriguing about the Chinese tradition is a lot of these ideas about how to use rituals and how to do these practices to develop the self became such a focus of philosophical interest over the course of 2,000 years. And so, you're getting an incredibly developed, refined version of things..."

Puett finds, "Chinese material was incredibly powerful, dealing with issues and developing them in ways that I found very, very exciting...you're not on a clear path, you're sort of working with things endlessly. And in terms of these texts, I think it's a life-long process of trying to understand these texts, teach these texts. I learn new things about them every time I read them."

## CATCH UP

## Annual art show



The All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society has recently unveiled its 92nd Annual All India Art Exhibition at its premises. On till 25th December, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., AIFACS, Galleries of the Society, 1 Rafi Marg, this year's show comprises selected 111 works in painting section, 39 works in sculpture section, 42 works in drawing section and 63 works in graphics section.

## Mirza Ghalib in Kolkata

Pierrot's Troupe is all set to perform 499th show of its popular comedy Ghalib in New Delhi at ABC Hall, Indian Museum Campus, Kolkata on 15th December. The 500th show will be staged at New Delhi on 28th December. Directed by Dr. M Sayeed Alam, this Hindi play tells the funny account of the re-visit of the renowned 19th century poet Mirza Ghalib in 21st century New Delhi - beginning with his second birth at the Bus Adda of Delhi.



## Music in moon night

Under the Banyan Tree on a Full Moon Night returns with its final edition of 2019 to celebrate the world of music with 'Musical Mélange'. The event will feature performances of Barmer Boys, a global ambassador of Rajasthan folk a Sufi music and The Anirudh Varma Collective, a contemporary Indian Classical Ensemble. It will be held this Sunday, 7 p.m. at 1AQ, Near Qutub Minar Roundabout.



## Matinee special



The guitarist and pianist duo Lautaro and Shonai will perform this Sunday 1 p.m. at The Piano Man, Gurugram. Lautaro Tissera, an Argentinian guitarist, who performs on stage as soloist, is a member of the quartet El Mondongo de Palermo bands for which he does composition work. Kolkata-born Shonai has joined All India Radio as a junior artist in 1997, where he later became a graded artist.

## Baithak

Music and dance lovers of Delhi-NCR can now look forward to the 14th edition of Quarterly Baithaks held at Triveni Kala Sangam in Delhi on December 22. This edition will feature a plethora of fantastic artists. Vocalist Anisha Ray will be performing with noted famous accompanists Durjay Bhaumik (tabla) and Paromita Mukherjee (harmonium) at the festival organised by Pracheen Kala Kendra. This edition will feature Odissi dance recital by emerging dancer Madhur Gupta.



## Group show



India International Centre, in collaboration with Khoj International Artists' Association presents thirteen curated exhibitions titled 'The Earth is still going around the Sun'. Starting 15th December at Kamaladevi Complex, these exhibitions are the culmination of the Curatorial Intensive South Asia 2019 Program which brought together artists from Iran, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.