



### Payback time

#### A Sudanese court convicted former president Omar al-Bashir on corruption charges and sentenced him to two years of detention

**3** I have named my successors and then they took over and did different things  
— Mahatir Mohamad  
Malaysian PM

### BRIEF

#### Lam in China as pressure mounts

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam visited Beijing for her first trip to the Chinese capital since her government was handed a crushing defeat in local elections last month, prompting speculation about changes to her leadership team. During a four-day visit, Lam is due to discuss political and economic situation in China-ruled Hong Kong with Chinese officials. She will meet Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday. Hong Kong has been convulsed by violent protests for the last six months as demonstrations against a now-withdrawn extradition bill broadened into demands for greater democratic freedom.

#### N. Korea conducts another test

**Seoul:** North Korea said on Saturday that it successfully performed another "crucial test" at its long-range rocket launch site that will further strengthen its nuclear deterrent. The test possibly involved technologies to improve intercontinental ballistic missiles that could potentially reach the continental United States. The announcement comes as North Korea continues to pressure the Trump administration for major concessions as it approaches a year-end deadline set by leader Kim Jong Un to salvage faltering nuclear negotiations. The announcement comes as North Korea's Academy of Defense Science did not specify what was tested on Friday. Last day of the test, North said it conducted a "very important test".

#### FB staff payroll data stolen

**San Francisco:** Facebook on Friday alerted employees that hard drives rich with information about the social network's payroll were stolen from a car last month. "We have seen no evidence of abuse and believe this was a smash and grab crime rather than an attempt to steal employee information," Facebook said. "This theft impacts current and former Facebook employees only and no Facebook user data was involved." The drives contained names, bank account numbers and other personal data of some 29,000 people who were on Facebook's payroll in the US last year, according to the California-based internet giant, which confirmed a Bloomberg report. The car was being used by a member of the payroll department, and the hard drives were not supposed to have left the Facebook campus.

#### NZ DIVERS TRY TO RECOVER LAST 2 VICTIMS

**Whakatane, Dec. 14:** Police divers working in near zero visibility in contaminated waters around New Zealand's volcanic White Island tried to find the remaining two victims of an eruption that left at least 16 dead and dozens severely burned. Ash and other fallout from Monday's eruption has made the sea near the island toxic and divers have to be washed clean after every completed dive. Police deputy commissioner John Teneale said the search conditions "unique and challenging". "Divers have reported seeing a number of dead fish and eels washed ashore and floating in the water. Conditions in the water are not uniform with between zero and 2 meters visibility depending on location," he said. Navy divers are expected to join the police search effort later. Military specialists on Friday recovered six bodies from the island in a carefully planned but risky operation.



A woman looks at a globe at the COP25 climate talks congress in Madrid, Spain.

# UN climate talks in limbo as rifts among nations remain

## Countries remain deadlocked in talks over combating climate change

**Madrid, Dec. 14:** Countries remained deadlocked on Saturday in talks over combating climate change as UN talks dragged on beyond the official deadline with no end in sight. Chile's environment minister, Carolina Schmidt, who is chairing the two-week talks in Madrid, urged officials from almost 200 countries to recognise the "overall balance" of the latest draft agreements "hammered overnight." "We must show the outside world that we deliver," she said. Environmental activists staged protests inside and around the venue during the talks, as they have around the world in the past year, to demand leaders take bolder action against global warming. Many nations and observers said the latest draft agreements risked backtracking on existing commitments made in the 2015 Paris climate accord and didn't reflect the urgent warnings from scientists that greenhouse gas emissions need to fall sharply, and soon. "If this text is accepted, the low ambition coalition will have won the day," said David Washow of the World Resources Institute, a Washington-based environmental think tank. Among the issues at stake are aid for poor countries suffering the impacts of climate change and efforts to agree rules for international markets to trade carbon emissions and efforts to provide "a sensible, workable solution" on carbon markets. — AP

## Paris deal still the way ahead

**Kuala Lumpur, Dec. 14:** Former US President Barack Obama said the Paris Agreement on climate change may fall short of expectations but is still the way forward to achieve progress and encourage businesses to invest in clean energy. Nearly 200 nations pledged to cut greenhouse emissions and help poor countries cope with the worst effects of an already warming planet under the accord signed in 2016 that was a cornerstone of Obama's environmental legacy. But his successor abandoned that legacy when his administration notified the UN last month that the US would pull out of the accord. Trump has said the agreement could impede growth and impinge on US sovereignty. Obama said he knew the standards set by that country were insufficient but that the accord was practical and meant for the long haul. Obama didn't mention US withdrawal from the accord. He said there is no "silver bullet" to solve climate change but he remains optimistic that global warming can be slowed down. "It's too late for us not to have some impacts. And so there's gonna have to be some adaptation that's going to take place. The oceans will be rising and that is going to displace people. And so we're going to anticipate and care for some of the consequences of that, including large-scale migration and disruptions that are going to be very costly. But there is a big difference between the ocean rising three feet and rising six feet," he said. — AP



Barack Obama, former US president

**3** I took satisfaction knowing that just by setting up the mechanism, we had created the ability to over time, turn up the standards, turn up the demands. Send a signal to businesses so that they started investing in more clean energy.

BARACK OBAMA  
Former US president

## Sally Field held for protest with Jane

**Los Angeles, Dec. 14:** Hollywood veteran Sally Field joined fellow Oscar winner Jane Fonda at a climate change protest and got arrested in her own couches, and wonder, "What can we do?" We can do something in the rain, whatever it takes. I've been learning. I have been trying to learn. Like every one else, feel this is such a big problem. How can we ever accomplish anything? But we can," she continued. A few minutes later, the actress was caught on video leaving the scene with an officer and throwing her bound hands in the air. — PTI

## I need a break: Greta Thunberg

**Turin, Dec. 14:** Tireless teenage activist Greta Thunberg has been crisscrossing the globe by cat train and boat — but not plane — to demand action on climate change. But now even she needs a rest. Fresh from being named *Time* magazine's Person of the Year, the 16-year-old Swede joined thousands of students in the north Italian city of Turin on Friday for a protest to pressure the government to take more action to curb carbon emissions. Thunberg, who refuses to fly, travelled to Turin by train and car from Madrid after attending a UN climate summit in the Spanish capital. She arrived in Europe only a few days earlier aboard a catamaran after spending months campaigning in the United States. Now she needs a little downtime. "I will be home for Christmas and then I will take a holiday break because you need to take rest," she told reporters in Turin. "Otherwise you cannot do this all the time." — Reuters



Greta Thunberg looks on as she takes part in the Friday for Future strike on climate emergency, in Turin.

### THUNBERG JIBE

# Melania backs Trump's views

**Washington, Dec. 14:** Melania Trump appeared to condone her husband's criticism of 16-year-old Greta Thunberg, saying through a spokeswoman that her 13-year-old son, Barron, is in a different category than the teenage climate activist "who travels the globe giving speeches". "He is a 13-year-old who wants and deserves privacy," spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham said in an emailed statement the day after President Donald Trump lashed out at Thunberg because *Time* magazine had named her Person of the Year. The First Lady's apparent acceptance of her husband's actions stood in contrast to the work she's doing through her "Be Best" initiative to combat online bullying and teach children to be kind. The president tweeted on Thursday that "Greta must work on her anger management problem, then go to a good old fashioned movie with a friend". Trump mocked the teenage activist, who has tweeted that just by setting up the mechanism, we had created the ability to over time, turn up the standards, turn up the demands. Send a signal to businesses so that they started investing in more clean energy.

**THE FIRST LADY'S** apparent acceptance of her husband's actions stood in contrast to the work she's doing through her "Be Best" initiative to combat online bullying and teach children to be kind.

**The President had** tweeted that Greta must work on her anger management problem, then go to a good old fashioned movie with a friend.

At one point during her testimony, Karlan said that while Trump can "name his son Barron, he can't make him a baron." Karlan was trying to make a point that Trump is a president and not a king. At the end of the hearing, Karlan apologised for the comment. Grisham said the first lady will continue to use "Be Best" to help children. "It is no secret that the president and first lady often communicate differently — as most married couples do," Grisham said.

In response, climate activist Greta Thunberg changed her Twitter bio to mock US President Donald Trump's outrage at her winning *Time* magazine's Person of the Year 2019. She then adapted her Twitter bio to say she was "a teenager working on her anger management problem. Currently chilling and watching a good old fashioned movie with a friend".

Earlier, Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro too had called Greta a "brat in Portuguese." — Agencies



US President Donald Trump and the US First Lady Melania Trump at the Congressional Ball.

## STAYING ON GUARD Workers ordered to clean out sensitive data on their computers, cloud storage, phones

# China tightens up on info after Xinjiang leaks

**Xinjiang, Dec. 14:** The Xinjiang regional government in China's far west is deleting data, destroying documents, tightening controls on information and has held high-level meetings in response to leaks of classified papers on its mass detention camps for Uighurs and other minorities, according to four people in contact with government employees. Top officials deliberated how to respond to the leaks in meetings at the Chinese Communist Party's regional headquarters in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, some of the people said. The meetings began days after *The New York Times* published last month a cache of internal speeches on Xinjiang by top leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping. They continued after the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists worked with news organisations around the world to publish secret guidelines for operating detention centers and instructions on how to use technology to target people.



The Chinese government has long struggled with its 11-million-strong Uighur population, an ethnic Turkic minority native to Xinjiang, and in recent years has detained 1 million or more Uighurs and other minorities in the camps.

Xinjiang officials and the Chinese foreign ministry have not directly denied the authenticity of the documents, though Urumqi Communist Party chief Xu Haifeng called reports on the leaks "malicious smears and distortions." The Xinjiang government did not respond to a fax for comment on the arrests, the tightened restrictions on information and other measures responding to the leaks. The Chinese foreign ministry did not have an immediate comment. Xinjiang's government had already mandated stricter controls on information in October, before the news reports, according to three of the people, all Uighurs outside Xinjiang. They include orders for community-level officials to burn paper forms containing sensitive personal details on residents in their area such as their detention status, and for various state offices to throw away computers, tighten management of classified information, and ensure all information related to the camps is now stored on databases disconnected from the internet in special, restricted-access rooms to bar hackers, the Uighurs said. Publication of the classified documents prompted the central government in Beijing to put more pressure on Xinjiang officials, several of the Uighurs said. Some university teachers and district-level workers in Urumqi have been ordered to clean out sensitive data on their computers, phones and cloud storage, and to delete work-related social media groups, according to one Uighur. — AP





A memoir that includes recipes or that is focused on food, meals or cooking, particularly an environmental issue

DECCAN CHRONICLE SUNDAY | 15 DECEMBER 2019 | HYDERABAD

# The danger is unilateralism of the BJP



Pavan K. Varma  
Chanakya's View

**W**hen political parties achieved electoral victories, they often become delusional about their powers. Something of this nature seems to have happened to the BJP after its success in the 2019 parliamentary elections. It has come to believe that it alone has the right to decide on what is good for the country, and nobody else has the right to question it. In its partisan interests of the party has become one with the good of the country, and the party's manifesto has become more important than the Constitution of India.

**The founding principle of our Constitution is respect for all faiths, equality for all our citizens, and a resounding no to the politics of dividing people on the basis of religion. That is why India has flourished, and is not Pakistan.**

This becomes evident if one examines the BJP's agenda since its victory in the 2019 general elections. What is good for the country, items on its party manifesto are being ticked off for implementation. Article 370 was abrogated without even a proper discussion on the move, without the consent of the people. The consequences of the action, and in a deliberate subversion of the express provisions of the

already existing citizenship Act could have been tweaked or modified. But the real purpose of the bill was different. It was to grant citizenship to non-Muslim minorities on the exclusionary basis of religion by singling out for inclusion only three countries: Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh — while leaving out others such as Sri Lanka, Nepal or Myanmar.

This totally unacceptable and flawed piece of legislation directly militates against the expression provision of Article 14 which says that "the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them". To justify the CAB, home minister Amit Shah lured back to the unfulfilled agenda of Partition. His logic was that Pakistan was created on the basis of an Islamic state. Therefore, India should also discriminate between those seeking its citizenship on similar grounds of religion.

The people of India — including Hindus — do not want this constant state of turmoil, this perpetual discord and acrimony, this unending drumbeat of insta-

*The writer, an author and former diplomat, is a member of the JDU. The views expressed are personal.*



Dilip Cherian  
Dilip Ka Babu

**J&K BABUS IN A SPOT**

In the Narendra Modi era, babus seem to be increasingly reluctant to serve in New Delhi. In fact, the government has admitted that the number of IAS officers appointed on central deputation is the lowest in five years, as reported in this column (Nov. 12). To reverse the trend, the department of personnel and training (DoPT) has said that it will stop empanelment and promotion of IAS officers who fail to file mandatory annual income tax returns and do not opt for mandatory five-year Central deputation after completing the initial service of 10 years.

## KHEMKHA MOVED OUT AGAIN

Haryana IAS officer and whistleblower Ashok Khemka is the quietest outsider in badudom. He has just been transferred to the 53rd time in a career spanning 28 years. This is surely a record that will last for a long time. By now, it has become a cliché: he is not thrown off by his abrupt displacements, except twitting his displeasure. Over the course of his career in civil service, the 1991-batch officer has held myriad positions in several departments and as far as land administration, housing, AIDS control, finance, rural development, planning, fisheries, supplies and disposal, social justice and empowerment, among others. His latest transfer sees him move from the science and technology department to the archives department.

Mr Khemka's peripatetic career came to an end in August when in 2012, as head of the land consolidation department, he cancelled a land deal involving Congress MP Anil Kumar Sonni and his son-in-law Robert Vadra. He lasted three months in the post before he was shunted out. Clearly, the government is running the government in the state, Mr Khemka continues to face the ire of politicians.

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



## Love scenes: Natural presentation favoured

**NEW DELHI, Dec. 14.** Should love scenes be presented in films in a natural manner, or should they be over the top through suggestive actions, verbal and visual, with the actors in people cover and avoiding physical proximity? While the adults of Delhi are evenly divided on this issue, young voters overwhelmingly favour the natural and direct manner, according to a sample study conducted by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

## SUNDAY INTERVIEW

# 'What did BJP's Raghubar Das do for his state in the last 5 years?'

**Jharkhand's first Chief Minister and Jharkhand JMM(P) chief BABULAL MARANDI is confident that the ongoing Assembly polls will not result in a hung Assembly and that the people of Jharkhand will "bless" his party this time. A former Union minister who quit the BJP in 2006, Mr Marandi tells YOJNA GUSAI that the reason why people will support the Raghubar Das-led government in the state is that the ruling BJP "cheated" the state that has witnessed no development and only joblessness in the past five years under BJP rule.**

JMM(P) is the only party which is contesting all 81 Assembly seats in Jharkhand. How is your party different from other parties?

We are getting massive support from people who for *gaon, garib, kisan, naujawan* and tribals. There is no tamasha in our campaigning, no big promises, just simple things that the people of this state need. If you go through our manifesto, you will find promises that will be fulfilled. We are not promising bullet trains or smart cities or setting up big industries. We have promised schools, a better student-teacher ratio, doctors in hospitals, health officers till the panchayat level, free technical education, small industries who employ

more people from this state rather than depend massively on technology. We have promised the development of the state. We have promised irrigation facilities for the farmers. We want tribal areas to develop but without compromising on nature. We want to promote organic farming, which is a growing market. We want to implement measures to stop the exodus of our youth to other states to seek jobs.

**Do you think the Supreme Court's verdict in the Ram Mandir issue or the NRC or abrogation of Article 370 will have any impact on these elections, which will be raised by BJP leaders during campaigning?**

Kashmir is thousands of kilometers away from Jharkhand and if abrogation of Article 370 was to have any impact on the BJP's (well, prospects), then it would have definitely impacted on the recently concluded Assembly polls in Haryana and Maharashtra (Assembly polls where the BJP remained short of a simple majority). Our Constitution has clearly mentioned who are Indian citizens and who are not. The BJP was in power for the past five years as well. How many illegal immigrants has it sent back? Does it have any numbers? You see, this is the habit of the BJP: to raise such issues and I know it very well because I too was a member of it. The NRC is nothing but

**People are feeling cheated by the BJP government. What did the chief minister (Raghubar Das) do for the state in the last five years except signing MoUs and visiting foreign countries in the name of seeking investment?**

part of its vote-bank politics. And how can the BJP take credit for the Ram Mandir issue? If as a political party, the BJP is taking credit, then the Congress should also be given credit for it as it was during its tenure (at the Centre) that the mandir was locked and later unlocked. Everyone knows that it was after a long judicial hearing that this verdict was given by the Supreme Court and everyone accepted it. These issues have no impact here.

**Are you saying that Jharkhand will vote out the BJP this time?**

People are feeling cheated by this government. What did the chief minister (Raghubar Das) do for the state in the last five years except signing MoUs and visiting foreign countries in the name of seeking investment? He (chief minister Raghubar Das) visited so many foreign countries and so many big cities within the country. But the government can't give this government

any figure as to how much investment was done in the last five years, also how many people got jobs. Leave alone getting jobs, people lost jobs in the last five years. No new industry has set up here in the last five years. Irrigation is one of the biggest problems faced by farmers here and not even a single measure was taken in this regard. This is the state where two dozen people died because the government rejected 11.5 lakh ration cards

and discontinued widow pension and disability pension. And why? Because people did not link their ration cards with their Aadhaar cards. You are talking about people who are living in villages, who have not linked their ration cards to Aadhaar or where to go for it.

**JMM(P) chief Babulal Marandi**

give us any figure as to how much investment was done in the last five years, also how many people got jobs. Leave alone getting jobs, people lost jobs in the last five years. No new industry has set up here in the last five years. Irrigation is one of the biggest problems faced by farmers here and not even a single measure was taken in this regard. This is the state where two dozen people died because the government rejected 11.5 lakh ration cards

and discontinued widow pension and disability pension. And why? Because people did not link their ration cards with their Aadhaar cards. You are talking about people who are living in villages, who have not linked their ration cards to Aadhaar or where to go for it. Instead of government officials helping them, the government rejected their ration cards. So many government posts are lying vacant because you cannot do the state public service commission exams. Also, what will people do with Ayushman Bharat (the central government) cards if there are no hospitals and no doctors? If this government thinks that only campaign rallies and speeches by its big leaders will get them votes, then let's wait for December 23 (when the result of five-

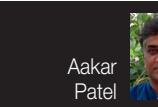
phase polling will be declared).

**Your party is contesting alone but there is speculation that the BJP's top brass is in touch with you. Also, there is an Opposition alliance of JMM-Congress-RJD, which is also contesting.**

I am confident that people will vote for a JMM(P) government and as far as the speculation goes, I also keep reading about this in newspapers. This state has seen people who feel that how one it made Madhu Koda the chief minister, then Shibu Soren and then Hemant Soren. People are aware of how their only aim was to be at power at any cost and how the state saw no development during their regimes. There was so much corruption at that time. No one wants a repeat of that.

**The JMM is currently the main Opposition party but some people feel that its campaign against the BJP is not as aggressive as it should be. How do you feel its leaders are not highlighting the issue of corruption.**

You see, both the BJP and the JMM were in alliance till a few years back and had formed a government as well. Both parties know each other's weaknesses and maybe that's the reason why the JMM is not highlighting the issue.



Aakar Patel

## Immigration policy of BJP has unwanted side-effects

Immigration policy of BJP has unwanted side-effects

**A**n old and proud country votes to choose a policy which is against immigration. The majority of the country in the heartland is firmly behind the party that is campaigning against immigrants and using strong language against them. But there is trouble in the smaller states where they disagree with this policy strongly. So strongly in fact that the election produces a division in the state. This is of course the story of the Brexit election whose results were out this week. The United Kingdom is so-called the union of four nations: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The first three of these nations are on one island, called Great Britain. The last is part of another island, and joined physically to the Republic of Ireland.

Northern Ireland for the first time in its history has given more seats to the party that is secessionist, the Sinn Fein, than the loyalists, Sinn Fein wants Northern Ireland to have closer relations with, and if possible, unite with the Republic of Ireland, which is of course part of the European Union. The idea of Brexit is the possibility that a radical change of policy with regard to Europe would bring other problems to the surface. But the majoritarianism of the English and the immigration rhetoric of their policies were too strong and overwhelmed the rest of the election's issues. For the moment, the English will feel the satisfaction of victory. Now let us try and look at our own predicament in India in the name of implementing an anti-immigration policy whose subtleties are not properly debated and therefore not

fully understood by the majority of Indians and I would argue the majority of parliamentarians as well. The issue is being cast in different ways by different actors. The ruling party says it is to give shelter to non-Muslims from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, but only those who came over before 2015. The Muslims who cannot prove their citizenship on the other hand will be jailed in detention centres. They can be sent to some of the Central jails in Bangladesh or Pakistan if they do not have documents proving their citizenship of those countries. They will have to be permanently locked up in India, as is happening in Assam.

The way that the BJP government has projected the Citizenship Amendment Bill is as a measure to protect certain foreign communities because of external persecution. But the Indian states in which this issue is the most relevant, the states of the Northeast, have a problem not just with immigrants of any particular religion, but with immigration, including that by Hindus. This is why they have been protesting the passage of the CAB. This is not fully understood by the rest of the country, which thinks this is a communal problem. It is not at root, but is being made to be the communal problem. The National Register of Citizens, which finished its work a few weeks ago because of a push by the

Assam BJP, is now being rejected by the same Assam BJP. They say that the 19 lakh people who have been excluded from the list must be given another chance to prove their citizenship. Why? Because the majority of those who have been excluded, to the surprise of the BJP, are actually Hindus who do not have the documentation that is being demanded.

*Aakar Patel is a writer and columnist*







New managers at Nasa are shown the movie *Armageddon* to spot as many errors as possible. At least 168 have been found.

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

# Powerful performances that dip into our rage

**Mardaani 2 (106 min)**  
**CAST:** Rani Mukherji, Vishal Jethwa  
**DIRECTOR:** Gopi Puthran  
**RATING:** ★★★★★

SUPARNA SHARMA

Commercial cinema, by its very definition, cashes in on emotion. And the more contemporary, more current these emotions, the more currency it rakes in. *Mardaani 2*, starring Rani Mukherji as IPS officer Shivani Shivaji Rao, whom we first met in 2014, dips into the impotent rage we often wake up to in our Bharat desh where 93 women are raped every day.

Read that line again, please. Ninety-three women. Every day. We repeatedly read of these crimes, and though we often remain numb to the violence of it, sometimes the savagery of these acts, especially ones that seem close to us, awaken the dead within and we try to at least articulate our shock, register our anger.

*Mardaani 2*, written and directed by Gopi Puthran, hits the ground running and takes hold of us, physically and emotionally, from getting with a kind of creepy, stalking fear that we are unable to shake off till the end.

This is a feat of the film's writing and acting. What lifts *Mardaani 2* above the usual rape-revenge films is its sharp politics, and the way it shows misogyny as the guiding principle underpinning not just violent crimes against women, but also, often, rather regular male-female interactions.

And then, in the film's last scene, it again dips into that rage in a way that is so overwhelming in its catharsis, that though it seemed primitive, it felt so right that I could not stop my tears.

Sometimes, good commercial

films know what we need more that we do. Or, perhaps, they show us what we rightfully deserve. *Mardaani 2*'s last scene, powered by Rani Mukherji's superb acting, as she channels her character's raw rage, is iconic. It's a scene that, even when watched in isolation, will make you cry.

*Mardaani 2* is set in Kota, around the time of Dusshera and Diwali. We are at a *mela* where a young man, Sunny (Vishal Jethwa), is limping in on a rickshaw directed to us, completely ignoring the fourth wall, as if it never existed.

He's looking at Lafika, a young girl we barely know. But the moment we see her, we feel as if we know her. He leans at her and tells us, with a terrifying smile, what he's going to do, why and how.

He talks to us as if it's nothing, as if what he's planning is not a big deal. We get the sense that she is just another girl for him. Irrelevant. Whereas his guile, his skill, this chase, this kill is what's important, it's what keeps him entertained.

This does two things — at one level Sunny tries to recruit us as his accomplice, co-conspirator in a crime that is almost entirely unconvincing because the victim is wholly innocent. And at the same time it dips into our very real helplessness that we often experience — most recently on reading about a girl who was set on fire on her way to the court to testify against her rapists. And the woman studying to be a veterinarian who was gangraped, and later dosed with diesel and petrol and set on fire.

We sit frozen, but also riveted, fearing that yet another girl will be raped, and we won't be able to do anything.

Enter our saviour — the newly appointed SP of Kota, Shivani Shivaji Rao (Rani Mukherji).

But just then, the

film dips. Shivani has barely arrived and is already on top of things — so much so that in a few seconds she decides that the rapist-killer was left-handed, that he took out his anger on the victim, and that he used a belt to kill her.

As she does so, another cop, Brij Shekhawat, who is senior to her in years but junior in designation, talks of "aazi chorizan" (girls like her), irritating Shivani with his anger on the victim, and that he used a belt to kill her.

Like Sunny talks of how he hates women's *chul* (swag), Shekhawat repeatedly talks of the need for women to stay in their *aukat*, of not acting too smart, of behaving in a certain way. He resents Shivani and Shekhawat is a parallel thread that runs in the film, all the time mirroring the rapist, his attitude towards his victims, and the way he violates them.

And then the film's plot, which seemed like it was going to be a straight act and mouse chase, coils and tightens its grip around us and Shivani as Sunny, taking a sickening interest in her.

He begins stalking her, finding ways to be around her, watch her even as he carries out a murder for cash. This scene too is a surprise because of the cold-hearted manner but shocking finesse with which Sunny conducts it.

All the while Sunny follows her, watching every step, destroying clues that may lead to him. Though he keeps playing her, as another rape is committed, Shivani seems to get him. There is some psychobabble that is a bit annoying and presumptuous, as if she is a psychic and not a cop.

As the deadline for Shivani's departure from Kota comes, the game begins, where he seems one step ahead, continually challenging her. But then another — hasn't everyone? — and this is exactly where your mind may be reeled.

It again dips into our frustration, but not in a way that us exhale, finally.

tries to bring back balance in his world in the only way he can. This casual, common, almost regular misogyny which at one level tries to drag down women who men feel challenged and dwarfed, by not by any action of theirs, but just by being competent and superior in education and class, but more than that because these women don't pander to fragile male egos, don't have time to worship *mardangi*, ties in seamlessly with Sunny's uncontrollable urge to "fix" such women.

This mirror is done very cleverly, and the film keeps this two-pack misogyny intact throughout, showing us how it seeks to damage and undermine women — at times through micro-aggressions, at times through malevolent, violent crimes.

And then the film's plot, which seemed like it was going to be a straight act and mouse chase, coils and tightens its grip around us and Shivani as Sunny, taking a sickening interest in her.

He begins stalking her, finding ways to be around her, watch her even as he carries out a murder for cash. This scene too is a surprise because of the cold-hearted manner but shocking finesse with which Sunny conducts it.

All the while Sunny follows her, watching every step, destroying clues that may lead to him. Though he keeps playing her, as another rape is committed, Shivani seems to get him. There is some psychobabble that is a bit annoying and presumptuous, as if she is a psychic and not a cop.

As the deadline for Shivani's departure from Kota comes, the game begins, where he seems one step ahead, continually challenging her. But then another — hasn't everyone? — and this is exactly where your mind may be reeled.

It again dips into our frustration, but not in a way that us exhale, finally.

At many levels, *Mardaani 2*'s screenplay, its writing is very clever. Especially in the way characters develop and the plot unfolds.

The way in which Sunny's character has been etched, through scenes and dialogue — a rather regular looking guy who is deviant, just plain evil — is very powerful.

But at another, especially the film's dialogues, and specifically those assigned to Shivani, are terrible.

Her lines are often expository, and have her stating the obvious, or communicate what's being shown.

Thankfully, Rani Mukherji lifts these dull scenes with her acting chops.

Though Vishal Jethwa, as the audacious, light-eyed young criminal is brilliant, Ms Mukherji in several scenes shows the powerful performer she is.

Vishal Jethwa, as the stalking psychopath who has no feelings or emotions for anyone, who seeks gratification through violence, who can feel alive only when he is subjugating a woman, gets under our skin.

And Rani Mukherji's Shivani is the right counter to him — not just in her intelligence, but also bold and brazen herself. Rani Mukherji can do big emotions, but she doesn't do them in an overtly dramatic way. She creates interiority and works subtly, with nuance. Above all, she knows when to stop.



# Venkatesh steals the show

SURESH KAVIRAYANI | DC

**Venky Mama (UA) 2 hrs 29 min**  
**CAST:** Venkatesh, Naga Chaitanya, Payal Rajput, Raashi Khanna, Nasser, Rao Ramesh, Prakash Raj  
**DIRECTOR:** Bobby (K.S. Ravindra)  
**RATING:** ★★

*Venky Mama* generates the good buzz that results whenever real-life star relatives come together on screen. This Venkatesh-Naga Chaitanya starrer is one of the big budget films hitting the screens after a long run of small budget films.

Rama Narayana (Nasser) is a strong believer in astrology and warns his daughter against marrying her.

She goes ahead, and the couple is killed in an accident. Narayana's son Venkatesh (Venkatesh) brings up her son Karthik, though Narayana says the child could be a threat. All of a sudden Karthik disappears from his village and returns in the Army in Kashmir.

The rest of the film deals with why he did this. Director Bobby writes the story around the chemistry that Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya share. It is not great but not bad too.

The director follows the typical formula with all the commercial elements. The first half is entertaining, especially in the scenes between Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya.

The director depends on Venkatesh for the humour, and the actor delivers. The track where Chaitanya tries to make his uncle fall in love with a teacher and Venkatesh wants to bring his nephew and Raashi Khanna together create some entertain-

ment. The sudden insertion of the military backdrop adds a little spice, and the couple is killed in an accident. Narayana's son Venkatesh (Venkatesh) brings up her son Karthik, though Narayana says the child could be a threat. All of a sudden Karthik disappears from his village and returns in the Army in Kashmir.

The rest of the film deals with why he did this. Director Bobby writes the story around the chemistry that Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya share. It is not great but not bad too.

The director follows the typical formula with all the commercial elements. The first half is entertaining, especially in the scenes between Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya.

The director depends on Venkatesh for the humour, and the actor delivers. The track where Chaitanya tries to make his uncle fall in love with a teacher and Venkatesh wants to bring his nephew and Raashi Khanna together create some entertain-

ment. The sudden insertion of the military backdrop adds a little spice, and the couple is killed in an accident. Narayana's son Venkatesh (Venkatesh) brings up her son Karthik, though Narayana says the child could be a threat. All of a sudden Karthik disappears from his village and returns in the Army in Kashmir.

The rest of the film deals with why he did this. Director Bobby writes the story around the chemistry that Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya share. It is not great but not bad too.

The director follows the typical formula with all the commercial elements. The first half is entertaining, especially in the scenes between Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya.

# Not just a cancer story, but a love story

**Ordinary Love (UA) 92 min**  
**CAST:** Lesley Manville, Liam Neeson  
**DIRECTOR:** Lisa Barros D'Sa  
**RATING:** ★★★★★

DEBORAH ROSS

*Ordinary Love* stars Lesley Manville and Liam Neeson as a long-married couple whose lives are disrupted when she is diagnosed with breast cancer. Not very Christmassy, but it's not a "cancer story," as has been said in some quarters, but a love story, told profoundly and beautifully and honestly rather than cloyingly or sentimentally.

The screenplay is by the Northern Irish playwright

Owen McCafferty whose wife Peggy underwent breast cancer treatment and the film is directed by Lisa Barros D'Sa and Glenn Leyburn. Set in Belfast, it takes us from one Christmas to the next, with Manville playing Joan and Neeson playing Tom — the first things first: how often do you see middle-aged love stories on screen? Almost never, so in its way it's quite radical. What's more, Joan and Tom are still loving and have sex and everything (imagine) and although they've experienced a great sadness (as we later discover) in the event, now each other and they are content with that.

They have their routines, like going for a walk, and they still make each other laugh as when they're in the supermarket and she teases him about his tomato-juice habit. "Can't you just eat more

tomatoes?" Their lives are not exciting. The addition of Worcester sauce to their dinner is a small event. But all this lived-in comfort and ease is shattered when she is in the shower and discovers a lump in her breast. Joan undergoes a year of treatment. Surgery, chemo, the works. The cancer nurses and technicians are all real cancer nurses and technicians that all feel true,

as does so much else. When Joan's diagnosis has yet to be properly made and the doctor says that on a scale of one to five, the chances of it being cancer is three, they bicker about what this means. Tom says three is closer to one, which means she's in the clear. She says no, it's closer to five, which means she has it for sure. And you just know it's what you would think, if it were

you, and what you would say if it weren't. Heck, I have been there, one way or another — hasn't everyone? — and this is exactly where your mind may be reeled.

Their love isn't tested, as it's plainly here to stay. Instead, this is about the coping and the pain and the fear and the shoring up, and being side-by-side but also alone. At one point they lose their tempers with each other. "We are both going through this," she shouts. "We are not. I am going through this," she rages. They are both right, of course. Other moments are pure gold. "I never liked your hair anyway," he jokes, when she loses it all. There's also a sex scene where Tom says "I've never had my breasts, in effect. This is raw and devastating, but also, it's closer to five, which means she has it for sure. And you just know it's what you would think, if it were

The film is directed sensitively, so it never feels exploitative, and the lighting is beautiful, with the warm brown glow of their home contrasting sharply with the cold blues and whites of the hospital. And the performances are powerhouse. Manville's especially. How she can convey deep, complex emotions with just a twitch of a lip. I don't know. It's miraculous.

Neeson has the lesser role and towers above her physically but his Tom can be small and vulnerable and frightened. I'd forgotten, actually, how excellent Neeson can be when he isn't otherwise occupied with killing bad guys or fighting them. (The actor here doesn't amount to more than Tom driving his old VW very slowly, and negotiating about hospital parking fees.) The pair have terrific chemistry.

# Brilliant, funny, wildly entertaining

**The Two Popes (UA) 125 min**  
**CAST:** Anthony Hopkins, Jonathan Pryce  
**DIRECTOR:** Fernando Meirelles  
**RATING:** ★★★★★

DEBORAH ROSS

*The Two Popes* stars Anthony Hopkins and Jonathan Pryce — that's two reasons to buy a ticket, right there — as Pope Benedict XVI and his successor Pope Francis I, and it is wildly entertaining, so now you have a third reason too. True, it does, as others have noted, shy away from directly tackling the most difficult questions currently facing the church. But it is that really the film you want to see? Rather than this affectionate and literate bromance that does, in fact, nudge us towards the bigger

picture, but slyly? Also, it is brilliantly comic. Pope Benedict is, for instance, a nag, get jokes but does try to tell one, which one he gets. "It's a German joke, so it doesn't have to be funny," he then explains, laughed my head off. Unquestionably, it is the most papal fun I've had in years.

*The Two Popes* is directed by Fernando Meirelles (*The Constant Gardener, City of God*) and written by Anthony McCarten (*Darkest Hour, Bohemian Rhapsody, The Theory of Everything*), based on his own stage play of 2017. It is "inspired by true events" and explores the resignation of Pope Benedict, formerly Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and his replacement by Argentinian Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, the current Pope Francis. My word, that sounds dreary, but I promise you it isn't.

The conceit, which may or may not be preposterous, imagines meetings between the two when Bergoglio has arrived at the Pope's summer palace, in



in fact, no thought of being elevated to the papacy as he wishes to resign. Benedict is fiercely conservative and does not hold with moving with the times. "Marry the spirit of the age and you become a widow in the next," he

says. Bergoglio is much more progressive and is unhappy with the way the church has dealt with the child abuse scandals. "I am a salesman for a product I cannot endorse," is how he puts it. Bergoglio loves Abba and football and tango

but, just as Benedict doesn't get jokes, he doesn't get popular culture either, yet he has been equipped with a Fitbit. "Don't stop now, keep moving," it is always clamouring, so we know what side the film is on. It is visually sumptuous. The

opening, set during the conclave of 2005, and featuring all stop now, keep moving," it is always clamouring, so we know what side the film is on. It is visually sumptuous. The

opening, set during the conclave of 2005, and featuring all stop now, keep moving," it is always clamouring, so we know what side the film is on. It is visually sumptuous. The

opening, set during the conclave of 2005, and featuring all stop now, keep moving," it is always clamouring, so we know what side the film is on. It is visually sumptuous. The

opening, set during the conclave of 2005, and featuring all stop now, keep moving," it is always clamouring, so we know what side the film is on. It is visually sumptuous. The

opening, set during the conclave of 2005, and featuring all stop now, keep moving," it is always clamouring, so we know what side the film is on. It is visually sumptuous. The

opening, set during the conclave of 2005, and featuring all stop now, keep moving," it is always clamouring, so we know what side the film is on. It is visually sumptuous. The

opening, set during the conclave of 2005, and featuring all stop now, keep moving," it is always clamouring, so we know what side the film is on. It is visually sumptuous. The





Till he turned 22, Nobel winner Orhan Pamuk (Silent House, My Name Is Red, The Museum of Innocence) dreamed of being an artist and devoted himself to painting.

# Deft and stylish debut exposes the 'Mad as Hell' American

## Autobiography of a journalist provokes, informs, entertains

Mohammed Anas

review



Palash K. Mehrotra review



THE JUVENILE IMMIGRANT: INDIAN STORIES FROM AMERICA

By Namrata Verghese Speaking Tiger, ₹399

It's been a terrific year for the Indian short story in English. Unni R took us on a slow hop through Kerala in *My Father's Disease*. Aruni Kashyap gave us Assam uncut, while simultaneously exploring the Assamese-American experience in *The Juvenile Immigrant*, her debut collection, explores identity, race and gender in the Malayali-American context. These are sparkling stories, freshly minted, that tackle love and inferiority with a deceptively light touch. There were times I was reminded of Farrukh Dhondy's *Trip Trap* and *Come to Mecca*, ostensibly written for 'young adults', and classics of the immigrant story genre.

A Hindu teenager eats a Big Mac to beat peer pressure from her American friends. "She found the burger delicious, but forced herself to throw it within minutes. It hadn't polluted her for too long." In *'Monsoon'*, the protagonist discovers a master-key vocabulary on entering college. "I learn the words. I wield them proudly and desperately, this long-awaited lexicon that promises to explain, to help. To heal. Microaggression. Hegemony. Discrimination. Gaslighting. Trauma."

In *'Monsoon'*, the protagonist discovers a master-key vocabulary on entering college: 'I learn the words. I wield them proudly and desperately, this long-awaited lexicon that promises to explain, to help. To heal. Microaggression. Hegemony. Discrimination. Gaslighting. Trauma.'

An Indian boy, adopted by a gay couple, grows up happy with his two American dads, but as an adult at American airports is often "mildly surprised" when he's pulled aside for random pat-downs. "Sometimes, he forgets his insides don't match his outsides." Verghese is good at pinning dialogue. A typical Indian body-auntie makes small talk with her friend about which high school the latter's daughter should join. "It all starts here, you know." On learning of her friend's newfound interest in gardening, Anu Auntie says, "Oh! I'm so glad you are keeping busy." A boy recognizes his newly-born sister in a hospital

ward, "the only brown baby in the room of red and pink babies." Arranged marriage plays an oversized role in immigrant writing, and there is plenty of it here, though Verghese manages to imbue it with some newness, especially in *'Family Secrets'* which manifests itself as a situational comedy set in a matrimonial society. In *'Neurons and Hormones'*, the protagonist, Thomas, finds himself rejected by the bride's side for being "too poor, too dark, and most damningly, too Mar Toma (the wrong type of Christian)."

Occasionally, Verghese lapses into cliché, the writing can come across as uneven and hurried. For instance, this ready-made image that seems to be drawn from innumerable films, starting with *'Bobby'*: "A woman opens the door, stringy hair falling out of a haphazard bun. She sees cooking, she explains." Or sentences like this one: "The heat has nothing to push against, nothing to beat." When writing prose, argued Martin Amis, avoid using words that rhyme in the same sentence. But then the author redeems herself in passages of great lyrical beauty (and terror). Here is Mary giving birth: "...crouched

on all fours amid straw and dung, her cervix dilating like everyone else's, her baby god pink and slimy. Her body ordinary and girlish, bent in pain—human pain, the pain of everyday miracles." The lines are from *'Butter Chicken'*, perhaps the most pitch-perfect story in the book. "Even as a child, Beena has studied Mary's serene statue and wondered how, just hours earlier, she could have been crying out on the floor of the barn, a small god pressing on her uterus, damp with the same womanly wetness that Beena felt then."

The writer's Eunuch Park was a finalist for the Hindu Prize for Fiction

Verghese is good at pinning dialogue. A typical Indian busybody auntie makes small talk with her friend about which high school the latter's daughter should join. 'It all starts there, you know.' On learning of her friend's newfound interest in gardening, Anu Auntie says, 'Oh! I'm so glad you are keeping busy.'

It is the people's outspoken self-confession, whose redeeming power is well known. It is a spiritual mirror, in which a people discovers itself," wrote young-and-then-idealistic Karli Marj of the press. Ramsharan Joshi, his dutiful follower, tried to live up to the dictum. But his growth remained as much as that of a bonsai plant. Reached a certain height of ideals and then stagnated. Nevertheless, his life, like those of all penmen of substance, is a repository of tales about low India and its classes—bourgeoisie and proletariat—evolved over the last 50 independent years. Joshi proved Marx prophetic in one department—his writings remained outspoken and explosively self-confessing. Even though, they created stories in Hindi journalistic and literary circles on several occasions.

Like a hero from the early 50s movies, Joshi started as a newspaper hawkler in Jaipur to defeat his poverty and pull the cart of his family of a widowed mother and physically-challenged brother. Carrying newspapers and magazines baptised him into the world of written word and its charm.

He had an early taste of the dirty dungeon—the behind-the-scenes lives of politicians. While dropping papers at hotels and guest-houses, he came across many a Rajasthani leader. Some wanted homosexual favours, some wanted him to arrange his girlfriends for them. "Even in the Nehru era, there seemed a grotesque nexus of sloppy politicians and the press... socialists were sexual predators. It was my first glimpse into this filth," writes Joshi of his infancy days as a journalist. Besides such bitter experiences, there were also moments which enriched Joshi.

He preserved memories of his life as a "bal shirmik (child labourer)" to serve as the guiding light of his future profession.

In fact, a plethora of journalists (both English and Hindi) of yore and present in India have lived life by Marxist convictions. Whether inspired by life or simply by youthful activism on college campuses. In the 1960s, 70s and 80s, years before Dr Manmohan Singh's economic liberalisation, a majority of journalists used to proudly flaunt their Marxist, Communist or Leftist credentials.

Calcutta (now Kolkata) was once a nursery of Marxist, Leninist and Socialist journalists, writers, artists and budding politicians. Joshi too took off from Calcutta. "It was the Kaaba and Kashi (Mecca and Varanasi) of my career," he says of the city where he started as TP-operator-cum-Hindi-typist in then multi-lingual news agency *Hindustan Samachar*, and soon was tutored in bitter reportage of political conflicts and communal riots. These two areas are the elixir of any reporter's life and serve as a route to understanding India.

He learnt his lessons and ended up in Bhopal with *Nai Duniya* daily then one of the most prestigious and powerful dailies of India, most specifically of the power-belt, north and central India. It was with this daily that Joshi met the *gudi duniya* (the real world). The shenanigans in power corridors, the power of the press, the behind-the-scenes theatre of the political and social life of the elites. "It was routine for journalists to play broker among politicians. They used to get such benefits from the government as rationed sugar to keep them in good humour," he writes. He learns of another malaise that afflicted Indian media—the dominance of upper castes like Brahmin, Rajput and Kayasthas in almost all newsrooms.

The fruit of his sojourn was the cultivation of his relations with Arjun Singh, then emerging Congress politician from Madhya Pradesh and later Union HRD minister in the PV. Narasimha Rao Cabinet and UPA 1. His friendship with Singh lasted till Singh took his last breath. Singh made him his official biographer for the *Arjun Singh: EK Sanyatri Itihaas Ka (Arjun Singh: A Fellow Traveller of History)*.

Joshi describes Singh as a people-friendly, popular, tough, bitterness-absorbing, desecrating, and a true leader of Congress. "Like Narasimha Rao, Singh too was not in favour of action against kar sevaks who demolished Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992. He feared Hindu backlash," he writes of Singh. On another occasion, he notes the outbursts of Rani Saroj Singh, wife of Singh, against Sonia Gandhi, UPA chairperson, over ignoring Singh for presidency and another term in the HRD. Both these exposes reverberated as bombshells within the Congress. And Singh finally retired into obscurity before his death in 2011.

Besides his hobnobbing with players of power, Joshi's travels to document Indian poverty in its starkest forms—in Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Northeast, and so on—make for compelling reading. It bares the truth about several customs prevailing in the rural heartlands. In Dantewada, which became a laboratory of armed tribal struggle and continues to burn even today, Joshi finds families who willingly sold their girls to flesh trade. "It was both a profession and tradition for them," he writes, detailing the experience of a night he spent in the residence of such a girl.

His memoirs of Dantewada, when published, stirred curiosity in English press and then even in *India Today*, Prabhu Chawla, borrowed them from Joshi to write his report.

One more interesting anecdote that Joshi shares is of legendary filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak. He writes, "Ghatak called Mahatma Gandhi *'surrai bachcha'* (son of a pig)—interestingly some years later, he was awarded Padmasri by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi."

Inspired by Marx (Pablo Neruda and other revolutionary figures and coaxed by famous Hindi editor-writer Rajendra Yadav, Joshi agreed to write confessions (stories of betrayals) about his life and people who played a part in it. He wrote few pieces for Yadav's acclaimed journal *Hans* around 2005 onwards. His essays, which are at the end of his autobiography stirred a hornets' nest in Hindi circles. These no-holds-barred confessions, based on all stereotypes attached to Hindi writings. They are bold, discuss sex, expose people and the ideologies they follow and demolish reputation.

On a personal note, Joshi shares the story of his romance who she eventually research scholar. The daughter of a senior IAS officer, she was a free spirit and a woman of many men. Joshi fell in love with her. Veered from his revolutionary path and forgot to change the world. But he could not convince the girl to marry her and married a "single girl" instead. He took to the life of a working pressman and then the academic to run his household.

Overall, *Main Bansi*, his last month bagged the Valley of Words award, is a masterfully written autobiography that informs, provokes, educates, disappoints and delights readers in abundance.

MEIN BONSAI APNE SAMAY KA (HINDI) By Ramsharan Joshi Rajkamal Prakashan, ₹399

# 'Don't believe in death penalty, even for Nirbhaya rapists'

Sucheta Dasgupta

He has been described as a jailer with a soul, and a law degree. After retiring from service in 2016 as legal advisor, *Tihar Jail*, SUNIL GUPTA now fights for the rights of the underdog in the Delhi High Court. A witness of eight hangings—including those of Ranga, Billa and the Indira Gandhi killers—the self-offending 63-year-old says he does not believe in the death penalty, even for the 'Nirbhaya' rapists.

Below are excerpts from a conversation with Mr Gupta and journalist SUNETRA CHOUDHURY who, along with him, has penned *Black Warrant: Confessions of a Tihar Jailer* (Roli, pp. 208, ₹385), the go-to book for a glimpse inside India's largest jail.

Q. Sunetra, you have been a prison reporter and have also written *Behind Bars*, a prison diary of VIP prisoners. What is it that excites you about prison reporting?

Sunetra: It's the stranger than fiction aspect of such stories and the fact that most people don't know what happens behind those high, guarded walls. For a reporter, nothing gives more pleasure. And jails seem to be an endless source of the unknown.

Q. You draw a parallel between Maqbool Bhat and Afzal Guru's hangings in terms of Mr Gupta's reactions to them. Why? Mr Gupta, please also elaborate.

Sunetra: Both were convicted of being religious separatists. Both were bookish, intellectual, and unlike others who spew venom against the Indian state. Maqbool, who predated TV media, spent his time reading religious texts and actually fought and won the right for inmates to keep stationery in jail. Most importantly, both were hanged due to a twist of fate. The diplomat, Ravindra Mishra's death had nothing to do with and JKLF. Finally, both were buried in Tihar, quietly and after having been deprived of a last meeting with their families.

Sunil Gupta: Maqbool was a jihadi. Afzal, on the other hand, told me before his hanging that the whole affair was a mistake. He had no fight. That his hanging does not end up causing more bloodshed was his last wish.

Q. Is it true that as per Indian law, a person can-

not be hanged twice? What is the procedure to be followed if a person does not die by hanging? Sunil Gupta: There is a procedure laid down in the jail manual. The immediate back before the superintendent of the jail is to extinguish the convict's life so that the court order is complied with. If someone is heavily built, he will die the moment he is hanged. Not so with people of a lighter build. In Ranga's case, someone had to go in the pit and pull his legs until he died. In Bhat's case, he was drawn out of his body.

Q. Of all the hangings that took place in your tenure, Mr Gupta, which one was the most avoidable? Which one was inevitable? Best deserved? Do you believe in the death penalty to both the authors?

Sunetra: I don't believe in the death penalty because it is a deterrent. It is shown it to be completely ineffective as a deterrent. In most cases, it even encourages the attacker to kill their victim.

Sunil Gupta: I fully agree with Sunetra's statement. The death penalty has no place in a civilised society. A civilised society does not exact revenge on a convict. For instance, the media regularly says, what she gave her testimony she would go, "think hai na? Think hai na?" (Laughs). That made for a bad show. On the day of the pronouncement of judgment, R.S. Sodhi, the lawyer of Satwant Singh, was stopped outside the court. He was not allowed inside until the judgment was pronounced.

Q. When you think back on your career, are there any personalities that you think of fondly?

Sunil Gupta: That would be Anna Hazare. He was a pure soul. But he was manipulated by other people.

Q. Mr Gupta informs the reader about the extraordinary meeting between Matron Raju Mukherjee with a rape convict. As a woman, my question to Sunetra would be: How subversive do you think Ms Mukherjee's marriage would have been



convictions of Kehar and Satwant, why do you write that there were aspects that were "deeply flawed"? What were these flaws? Sunil Gupta: The foremost of these flaws was that the trial was conducted inside the prison. The main witness in the trial was Bimla Khalsa, widow of Beant Singh. Every time she gave her testimony, she would go, "think hai na? Think hai na?" (Laughs). That made for a bad show. On the day of the pronouncement of judgment, R.S. Sodhi, the lawyer of Satwant Singh, was stopped outside the court. He was not allowed inside until the judgment was pronounced.

Q. Today we are (hopefully) exercised about the lack of awareness regarding the law on disclosing the rape victim's identity. It is pertinent to note that India's bravery awards for children, given out on Republic Day, are instituted in the name of Geeta and Sarwan Chopra. What was the procedure followed by the media in reporting this case at that time? This question goes to both the authors.

Sunetra: I think in terms of coverage it was similar to what the 'Nirbhaya' case got. The incident really shocked the nation. It became a major talking point in Parliament and led to the Prime Minister visiting the victims' homes.

Sunil Gupta: As you are already aware, the law to disclose the name of the woman was not there in 1978 when the incident took place. It was only introduced in 1983. Everybody, including police, would take the victims' names. And it was the home minister, Charan Singh, who came out with the idea of the award in order to encourage bravery among children. Morarji Desai was the prime minister at that time. Both the kids had fought their attackers tooth and nail. From the very next year that they died this award



killed another in the heat of the moment. Both are going great now. The husband is a very successful businessman, with his own breweries, and their daughter is a student in the United States.

Q. Mr Gupta tell us more about the phenomenon of women trying to get arrested so that they could birth a 'Krishna'. You have not narrated what they did to accomplish this?

Sunil Gupta: They would be arrested in Excise Act cases, for carrying more than the legally permissible quantity of liquor. Most were pregnant women. They would deliberately break the law so that the pre-natal care is taken by the government. (Laughs). (Is it also true that the population of Tihar rises every year during the winter season?) There are isolated cases (of petty crime). The average population increases by about 100 during this time.

Q. My last question again goes out to the both of you. Mr Gupta mentions that during his time in Tihar badminton used to be one of his favourite sports and he plays with such well-known partners as Charles Sobhraj and Manu Sharma. Mr Gupta, what are your favourite activities post-retirement?

Sunetra: Do you believe work can go together? Remember, many people feel that you have to play hard to work hard. Sunil Gupta: I am a regular jogger and once did yoga daily. I also like to play badminton.

## Q&A Sunetra Choudhury, Sunil Gupta

The death penalty has no place in a civilised society. A civilised society does not exact revenge on a convict. — Sunil Gupta







Snell no more

New Zealand running great Peter Snell (in pic), a triple Olympic gold medalist, has died at the age of 80, sports historian Ron Palenski



I could not be more proud and happy for those guys in that cabin tonight. —Emie Els, Internationals team captain at the Presidents Cup, on his team's goals

SHORT TAKES Shuttler Tasnim, Tara make final

Surabaya, Indonesia: Indian shuttlers Tasnim Mirza and Tara Shah made their way into the final of the Asian U-17 & U-15 Junior Badminton Championships in Surabaya, Indonesia, on Saturday following their dominating victories in the U-15 women's singles semifinals. Tasnim will take on Tara for gold medal in the all-Indian final on Sunday. While, top-seeded Tasnim thrashed Japan's Sora Ishioka 21-16, 21-11, Tara also beat her Japanese opponent Kazune Iwata 21-18, 21-14 in straight sets. Earlier in the quarterfinals, both Tasnim and Tara claimed easy wins against Japan's Maya Taguchi and Mei Sudo respectively. Gujarat girl Tasnim won the match 21-11, 21-13 while Pune's Tara registered 21-11, 21-17.

Momota closes on 11th title this year

Shanghai: Kento Momota will play Indonesia's Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in Sunday's final of the season's BWF World Tour Finals as the Japanese closes on an 11th title of the season on Dec 20. World No.1 Momota has reigned over badminton this year and defeated Taiwan's Wang Tzuwei 21-17, 21-12 in the quarterfinal on Saturday in Guangzhou. He is enjoying a spectacular season, with the World Championships and prestigious All England Open among his haul of tournament victories. Momota will be hot favourite in southern China against Ginting having defeated the Indonesian 10 times in their 14 meetings. The world number eight Ginting sealed his place in the championship match with a 21-15, 21-15 victory over China's reigning Olympic champion Chen Long. In the women's final, China's world number two Tai Tzu-ying faces Taiwan's top-ranked Tai Tzu-ying. Chen defeated Akane Yamaguchi 21-18, 21-9 in the semi-final while Tai beat another Japanese, Nozomi Okuhara, 21-15, 21-18. — AFP

EAST BENGAL BEAT TRAU IN I-LEAGUE

Kalyani: Guess East Bengal FC registered a narrow 2-1 victory over Hero I-League newcomers TRAU FC at the Kalyani Municipality Stadium on Saturday. Marcos Jimenez Espada gave the hosts the lead in the 17th minute, before Deepak Devrani equalised in first half stoppage time. Harli Crespi scored a dramatic 89th minute winner to seal the three points for the Red and Golds. Guess East Bengal made just one change to their line-up, with Alejandro Mendez selecting Ronaldo Augusto Oliveira to replace the suspended Jaime Santos Colado. TRAU FC, on the contrary, made several changes from the side that lost 0-4 to Bengaluru. Ugandan defender Isidine Issac was benched, with Deepak Devrani getting the nod. Nigerian forward Princewell Emeka started up front alongside Khundombam Singh, in what seemed like a 3-5-2 formation. With the Kalyani faithful firmly behind them, East Bengal seemed to be in the driving seat in the initial minutes of the game. Their persistence to overtake and make breaks in the final third via crosses and lobbed deliveries almost paid dividends, when in the 14th minute, TRAU goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh came off his line to clear one such delivery by Juan Mera. — Agencies

Lakers down Heat Davis, James lead Los Angeles' victory over Miami

Los Angeles, Dec. 14: Anthony Davis scored a game-high 33 points and delivered a pep talk to LeBron James as the Los Angeles Lakers handed the Miami Heat their first loss at home with a 113-110 victory on Friday. James scored 28 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds and leading scorer Davis also had 10 rebounds for the Lakers, who extended their winning streak to six games. The matchup between two of the top teams in the league resulted in a play-off type feel as the Heat suffered their first loss at home after going 11-0 to start the season. "It was like a heavy-weight bout," said James, who led Miami to two NBA titles in 2012 and 2013. "It was like the old days, (George) Foreman and (Muhammad) Ali-type atmosphere. These are two teams that play physical and are both playing extremely well this season," he added. Davis said he had to reprimand James, who finished with eight turnovers, because he could see the future of the Heat was struggling in the first half. "I had to get on him tonight, he was thinking too much. He was playing a little timid for me," Davis said of James. "I told him, 'We are going to ride with you whether you go two-for-two or four-for-25, I don't care. I want to make an impact on the game'. We have great chemistry. Us two are the leaders of this team, we are the head of the snake," Davis added. James agreed with that critique and said he needed a wake-up call. "We were down today because of me. I was reckless. I stepped in on the quarterback and got on me," said James. "I want to be myself. Get my head out of my ass and just play basketball."



Miami Heat forward Derrick Jones Jr. (from left) dunks over Kentavious Caldwell-Pope and Dwight Howard of the Los Angeles Lakers during their NBA basketball game in Miami on Friday. Lakers won 113-110.

● Anthony Davis scored a game-high 33 points and 10 rebounds while LeBron James delivered 28 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers handed the Miami Heat their first loss at home with a 113-110 victory.

● Giannis Antetokounmpo returned to post 37 points and 11 rebounds as Milwaukee Bucks came from behind to beat Memphis Grizzlies 127-114.

● NBA's MVP for a reason. We talked about in pregame that he'll take shots, and we'll just live with the results," said Evan Fournier. Harden scored 50 or more for the fifth time this season and the fourth time in his past seven games. The rest of the NBA has combined for only five 50-plus games this season.

Orlando from the outside and under the basket by scoring 54 points and seven assists. Orlando chose not to double-team Harden in the first half and then half heartedly attempted to do it in the second, but it was too late. "I feel like we lost against just him tonight."

Harden's 54-point night gave him the franchise record 10 three-pointers against the Magic. He finished 10-for-15 from behind the arc against Orlando. Evan Fournier led Orlando with 27 points for the Magic, who have lost three straight after winning four in a row. Giannis Antetokounmpo returned from a one-game absence to post 37 points and 11 rebounds, and the visiting Milwaukee Bucks came from behind to post their 17th straight win with a 127-114 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies. — AFP

International eye big win

Melbourne, Dec. 14: A gutsy comeback from Marc Leishman and Abraham Ancer gave Ernie Els International team a massive confidence boost at the Presidents Cup Saturday at the Tiger. The Americans stormed into contention. The pair were five down against Justin Thomas and Rickie Fowler after 10 holes in the afternoon foursomes, or alternate shot format, but fought back to halve the tie at the 18th in a demoralising blow for the US. Woods' team won the foursomes 3-1 after losing the morning fourball matches 2.5-1.5 to leave the biennial showdown on a knife-edge ahead of Sunday's 12 singles.



International Team player Adam Scott of Australia hits to the green during the third day of the Presidents Cup golf tournament in Melbourne on Saturday.

turnaround. That gets momentum," said Els. "I mean, we had a lead. It looked like we were going to be wiped away, and the guys absolutely played with their guts and I could not be more proud and more happy for those guys in that cabin tonight," Els added. "World No.4 Thomas had been in a rich vein of form around the challenging Royal Melbourne sandbelt course, first alongside Woods and then with Fowler before he ran out of steam. Earlier in the week, the chair of the British Olympic Association called for "the fullest possible sanctions to be taken against Russia at Tokyo 2020."

It was the same stance that a majority of the WADA athlete committee took last weekend, before WADA executives met to rubber-stamp the recommendation that would allow Russians to compete as neutrals. The decision led Aggar release a statement saying, "WADA's actions have fundamentally shaken my belief in an organisation that I felt initially served a great purpose in protecting the integrity of sports."

The US Olympic and Paralympic Committee and British Paralympian Victoria Aggar each expressed their disagreement with WADA's decision not to issue a blanket ban on the Russians.

ABRAHAM FACES TIGER IN SINGLES CHALLENGE

Melbourne, Dec. 14: Mexico's Abraham Ancer was handed the task of facing Tiger Woods in the singles at the Presidents Cup on Sunday with the shortest odds to be a favourite. Woods won't play in the match on Saturday. Ancer is a 43-year-old who will be back to try and inspire the US to overturn a 10-8 deficit and inflict another demoralising defeat on the Internationals. The Internationals have only ever won the match play event once, in 1998, also at Royal Melbourne when both Woods and Ernie Els were playing. Woods will be first out followed by the composed Japanese. Matsuyama and Tony Finau, who has one PGA Tour victory to his name. — AFP

Heat on WADA for Russian sanctions

Lausanne, Dec. 14: Criticism of the World Anti-Doping Agency's sanctions against Russia mushroomed with a rebuke from the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee coming on the heels of the outraged resignation of a member of the WADA athlete committee. The USOPC and British Paralympian Victoria Aggar said they expressed their disagreement with WADA's decision not to issue a blanket ban on the Russians in wake of evidence that government officials doctored data that was supposed to be used to prosecute cases stemming from the country's doping scandal.

Aggar, a Paralympic rower, announced her resignation from WADA's athlete committee, saying "I simply can no longer be part of an organisation that places politics over principle." Hours later at its quarterly meeting, the USOPC board debated the wisdom of sanctions that called for innocent athletes to be able to compete as neutrals at next year's Olympics, even though determining who really is innocent has been made more difficult because of the data manipulation. "It's very difficult for us to see how justice can be served and how there will be a true deterrent if any future corruption is found."

WADA's actions have fundamentally shaken my belief in an organisation that I felt initially served a great purpose in protecting the integrity of sports. The USOPC's Athletes Advisory Council was among those supporting WADA's decision to ignore the majority of its own Athlete Committee is out of touch and current sanctions will not be enough to cause significant change in Russia," the AAC said in a statement. WADA compliance chairman Jonathan Taylor said disallowing the Russian flag and its Olympic officials from the Tokyo Games, but not barring all its athletes, "was the appropriate line to draw."



Action from the quarterfinal match between Telangana State (left) and Andhra Pradesh at the 23rd Junior National Sepaktakraw Championship at the Victory Play Ground Indoor Stadium in Hyderabad on Saturday. Andhra Pradesh won 21-17, 21-17.

Andhra bags Sepaktakraw bronze

Andhra Pradesh pipped Bihar in their third place play-off while Telangana State went down fighting to immediate neighbours Andhra in the quarterfinals of the 23rd Junior National Sepaktakraw Championships, at Victory Play Ground (VPG) in Hyderabad. Andhra defeated the boys from Bihar 21-16, 21-4 in a top-sided encounter for the bronze. Earlier in the semifinals, Manipur prevailed over Andhra Pradesh 21-13, 21-11 and Delhi defeated Bihar 21-16, 21-4. In the quarterfinals, Telangana lost 17-21, 17-21 to Andhra Pradesh. Meanwhile, Nagaland will take on a resurgent Manipur in the girls final on Sunday. Nagaland defeated Goa 21-17, 21-17 and Manipur got the better of Odisha 22-20, 21-12.

THE RESULTS (REGU, BOYS) SEMIFINALS: Delhi bt Bihar 21-16, 21-4; Manipur bt Andhra Pradesh 21-13, 21-11. THIRD PLACE: Andhra Pradesh bt Bihar 21-16, 21-4. QUARTERFINALS: Andhra Pradesh bt Telangana 21-17, 21-7; Delhi bt Uttar Pradesh 21-7, 21-14; Bihar bt Karnataka 21-9, 23-24; Manipur bt Odisha 21-19, 21-12. REGU, GIRLS SEMIFINALS: Nagaland bt Goa 21-17, 21-17; Manipur bt Odisha 22-20, 21-2. QUARTERFINAL: Goa bt Haryana 8-21, 25-23; Manipur bt Assam 21-15, 21-15; Nagaland bt Rajasthan 21-17, 21-7; Odisha bt Uttar Pradesh 21-14, 22-20.

Karnataka trounce Hyderabad

Hyderabad lost to Karnataka by an innings and 66 runs in their Col. C.K. Nayudu under-23 match at Shimoga on Saturday. Needing 206 to avoid an innings defeat, Hyderabad folded up at a paltry 142 in 63.1 overs. Ajay Dev Goud top scored with an unbeaten 44. Earlier, S.S. Satori slammed 172 from 390 balls for Karnataka. His innings was laced with 16 hits to his feet a heave over the ropes. BRIEF SCORES (Day-2): Hyderabad 202 in 83.4 overs & 142 in 63.1 overs (Ajay Dev Goud 44 n.o., Abhishek Shetty 2/21, Santosh 5/23, Abhishek Ahluwalia 3/26) lost to Karnataka 410 in 151.4 overs (S.S. Satori 172 — 390b, 16x4, 1x6, Pranav Bhatia 51, Karthikeya Kak 2/80, Ajay Dev Goud 3/73, Anmaar Ayub 3/76).

Veer shines for Maharashtra

S.A. Veer emerged the pick of the batsmen for Maharashtra in their under-19 Cooch Behar Trophy match against host Hyderabad. Veer hit 52 while Shivroya Walekar chipped in with 38 to add to the team's tally. For Hyderabad, V. Chaitanya, G. Aniketh Reddy and Md. Saqlain picked two wickets each. BRIEF SCORES (Day-2): Elected to bat Hyderabad 265 in 79.4 overs (M. Pratyush 79, Tushar Tripathi 54, Prateek Reddy 35, R. S. Hangargkar 2/52, S. A. Veer 3/58, Omkar 2/57) vs Maharashtra 237/7 in 99 overs (Shreyas Walekar 39, S.A. Veer 52, V. Chaitanya 2/54, G. Aniketh Reddy 2/92, Md. Saqlain 2/45).



K.S. Rama Rao and Bangaru Raju cut the ribbon to kick start the proceedings at the Telangana State Snooker and Billiard Ranking tournament in Hyderabad on Sunday.

Telangana State cue event underway

The Telangana State Snooker and Billiards ranking tournament in which 110 players are waiting to corner glory began in Hyderabad. Bangaru Raju, Chairman Sports (FNCC) and K.S. Rama Rao, Secretary (FNCC) inaugurated the proceedings with a cue shot.

TS chess tourney on December 22

The Telangana State Chess Association will organise its 20th Telangana State ranking tournament at Laxmibabur Shastra Stadium's yoga hall in Hyderabad on December 22. Competitions are being held in various age-group categories for boys and girls, including under-7, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17-year-olds. Kids born on or after 1-1-2002 are eligible to participate, although there will be no spot entries. The first round of the tournament will start around 10 a.m. Registrations close on December 20. Further details can be had from Organising Secretary on Tel No: 78375-78899/78373-92999 or by visiting www.chesstelangana.com.





### Boucher at helm

Former Test wicketkeeper Mark Boucher was on Saturday named South Africa's head coach until 2023

3

It's easy to switch formats if your game-plan is clear and your understanding of the game is clear. —Mayank Agarwal, India batsman

### TEST TAKES Aussies take huge lead against Kiwis

Perth: Australia was in a commanding position despite a late batting collapse on the third day of the first Test against New Zealand at Perth Stadium on Saturday. Having led by 250 runs on the first innings, the home side were 157 for six at stumps, with Matthew Head on eight and Pat Cummins on one — an overall lead of 417. Cruising at 131 for one — 479 Marnus Labuschagne (50) and Joe Burns (53) were at the crease, the Australians claiming 29 under lights later in the day against some spirited short-pitched bowling from the Kiwis, with Tim Southee claiming 4-63. Burns said the Australians were not too concerned by losing the late wickets. "Really happy with where we are at, although it was disappointing to lose a few wickets tonight," he said. "In the grand scheme of the game we're in a good position and in control of the game." New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor said the fightback late in the day could prove important, regardless of the result of this match. "There is still a fair way to go in this Test match," he said. "But the fight we showed today well for the rest of the series." **Brief scores:** Australia 416 & 167/6 (Burns 53, Labuschagne 50, Southee 4/63) vs New Zealand 166 (K. Williamson 34, Taylor 80, Starc 5/52).

### Rain continues to mar Pakistan Test

Rawalpindi: Overnight rain and poor light continued to mar Pakistan's first home Test in a decade on Saturday, with officials calling the fourth day off before play had begun. Groundsmen wiped rain from the pitch covers and rolled out a super sopper, but overcast conditions and poor light forced umpires Richard Kettleborough and Michael Gough to call off play at 12:00 local time (07:00 GMT). Both the Pakistan and Sri Lanka teams remained in their hotel in Islamabad. Sri Lanka had won the toss and opted to bat on the first day, but play was called off after 68.1 overs due to bad light. Only 18.2 overs were possible on the first and 5.2 on the third. Sri Lanka were 282-6 with Dhananjaya de Silva unbeaten on 87 and Dilruwan Perera not out on 22. The second Test is in Karachi from December 19. The Test is the first in Pakistan since a militant attack on the Sri Lankan team bus killed eight people in March 2009, leading to the suspension of international cricket in the country as foreign teams refused to visit over security fears. —AFP

# It's Indian spice vs Caribbean flavour as three-match one-day series begins in Chennai today

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR CHENNAI, DEC. 14

**LIVE on TV** India vs West Indies 1st ODI on STAR Sports 1, HD @ 1:30 PM

For someone who doesn't believe in taking the aerial route to entertain the crowd, Virat Kohli, wittily or unwittingly, turns on the beast mode whenever he faces bowlers from the West Indies. Animated and charged-up, the Indian skipper's brutal bottom-hand power was on full display during the recent T20 series against Kieron Pollard & Co. Having guided India to a 2-1 series win in the slam-bang version, Kohli is expected to continue his stranglehold in a format in which he is the undisputed king.

will lead the pace attack. Given the slowness of the Cheppauk surface, the spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal fancy their chances of playing together in the XI. The pitch has been under the covers since Friday morning and India had to cancel their training session on Saturday due to heavy showers. There is no rain



**HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS** India 418-5 in 50 overs at Indore in 2011 at **STAR Sports 1, HD** @ 1:30 PM

**WEST INDIES-INDIA IN ONE-DAYERS**

**LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS** India 100 in 28.3 overs at Ahmedabad in 1993

**HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES** India 219 Virender Sehwag at Indore in 2011

**BEST BOWLING FIGURES** India 6-12 Anil Kumble at Kolkata in 1993

Venue	Played	WI won	Ind won	Tied	I/R
In India	55	27	27	1	-
Total	130	62	62	2	4

## Chase is an asset for West Indies: Pollard

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 14 West Indies captain Kieron Pollard heaped praise on Roston Chase. Pollard said Chase is an asset for the team and he has the potential to be the number one all-rounder in the world. "I think he brings a good balance to our team. He is someone who bats in the middle-order in Tests and has scored centuries too. He can play any role. Given that he can bowl as well gives us an opportunity to play an extra bowler; an extra all-rounder and an extra batsman," he said. Pollard said the West Indies are trying to make full use of Chase's talent. "He can be up there in terms of being the number one all-rounder in the world. He has come in as left-field selection, but that's something that has worked for us. He has been very valuable for us. He will play a key part going forward," he added. "The 32-year-old wants his young players to focus on what they want to achieve. Pollard believes in them and wants them to be patient. "For the younger guys in the team, it's about changing your training habits and locking and focusing at what you want to achieve. The results will show, but we must have patience," he said.



## Batting coach Rathour says Pant can be India's X-factor

NEHA SURANA | DC CHENNAI, DEC. 14

Team India are known for their chasing prowess, but they have faltered in defending totals a few times in the recent past. India failed to defend a target of 171 in the second T20 recently. Batting coach Vikram Rathour, however, believes that India have addressed the issue, especially after their performance in the T20 series finale. "We are the number one team in the world while we are chasing targets and that was one box we ticked off. Batting first you need a different kind of fearlessness. While chasing you know our targets and plan our game plan better," Rathour said. "Batting first that is the one area that we need to look into. But the way we bat in the last game (T201 in Mumbai) was one big tick in the box. So looking forward to maintaining that and whenever the opportunity comes we will be looking to bat first and of course put scores on the board," he added. "Talking about the top order doing the job and

worked really well. He has always been a good player," Rathour said. When asked if Rahul as a wicketkeeper was an option, Rathour said, "That is something the team management will have to see, of course, that's an option." Rishabh Pant who has been under scanner for the past few months, found a defender in Rathour who believes the keeper-batsmen can be an X-factor for the Indian team when the right time comes. "I think, the reason why we keep discussing is that he has got an immense ability. Everybody believes that he can be an X-factor. He has been backed by the selectors and the team management. All of us believe he is a good player who can come good. He is working hard on his game and fitness. We are hoping that he comes good. All of us believe that once he gets into good form, he can be a matchwinner for the team. He has been given many opportunities because he has done well in past in this format. Once he starts getting runs I am sure he can be a massive player for India," Rathour said.



## KL a serious keeping option: Shastri

New Delhi, Dec. 14:

Only Mahendra Singh Dhoni knows whether his body will be able to cope up with rigours of international cricket after a break. KL Rahul could be a "serious keeping option" for next year's T20 World Cup and Rishabh Pant needs to "calm down," feels India head coach Ravi Shastri. With Pant not doing well and mystery surrounding Dhoni's

international future, Shastri didn't rule out the possibility of Rahul doing multi-tasking during the marquee tournament "Down Under". "It's sensible (the break by Dhoni), I like the time (around IPL) when he will be starting to play again. I don't think he is too keen on the one-day stuff. He is finished with Test cricket. T20 is an option. It's a format that is tailor-made for

him. But will his body be able to cope with the demands, only he will answer," Shastri said. "The rest would have done him a world of good, mentally. That mental fatigue would have gone away by now. If he decides to play, which he will because he will play the IPL, then he will start training with a very fresh mind. Then you have got to see form," said Shastri. —PTI

## Sachin searches for hotel waiter!

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 14

Sachin Tendulkar has sought the help of netizens in tracking down a Chennai hotel waiter who once helped him redesign his arm-guard. Tendulkar on Saturday recalled an incident at one of Chennai's hotel where a waiter, who had come to his room to serve coffee, and asked whether he could discuss cricket. When Tendulkar asked him to go ahead, the waiter told him about a particular change in his bat swing while he had his elbow guard on. "He said 'Sir, I have noticed whenever you wear an arm guard your bat swing changes.' I don't think I had spoken about this to anyone in the world. He said I was a huge fan and rewind 5-7 times and watch every ball. I said, 'yes! You are the only person in the world who figured that out. So you figured



An overview of the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium. The pitch has been under the covers since Friday morning and India had to cancel their training session on Saturday due to heavy showers. — E.K. SANJAY

believe that I actually came back to my room from the ground and carried my elbow guard and redesigned my elbow guard; the correct size, the right amount of padding and where the straps should be and all that. And then I played, but he was the only one who noticed that." Tendulkar took to Twitter, posted a tweet in Tamil and also shared the video. "A chance encounter can be memorable! I wonder where he is now & wish to catch up with him. Hey netizens, can you help me find him?" tweeted Tendulkar.

Advertisement for Maruti Suzuki Arena featuring the Grand December Carnival. Includes details about car models like Miazpur Road, Dammaiguda, Kothapet, Manikonda, and various offers and prices. Also mentions Maruti Suzuki Arena and Wesley College.





Well done!

Former French Open champion Francesca Schiavone said on Friday that she has won the battle against cancer



It was not the prettiest game. At this stage you have to show resilience and I believe we did that today.

— Jurgen Klopp, Liverpool manager, after their 2-0 win over Watford in English Premier League

### SHORT TAKES

#### FC Goa rally past ATK, top table

**Goa:** FC Goa emerged 2-1 winners against ATK following a Hero Indian Super League game here on Saturday. After a first-half laden with inaction, the game saw three goals in six minutes after the break which ultimately settled the fixture in favour of the hosts. Mourtada Fall (60') headed in the opener for Goa but ATK equalised through Joby Justin (64'). Ferran Corominas (66') made an impact at the other end two minutes later to restore his side's advantage.

#### Bengaluru eye Mumbai scalp

**Bengaluru:** Bengaluru FC will aim to go top of the table when they take on a struggling Mumbai City FC in the Indian Super League at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium on Sunday. The Blues currently, sit second on the table (13 pts) after seven games with four wins and three draws and remain the only unbeaten side in the league while the visitors have won only a game and sit eighth in the table. Although the goals have not been flowing constantly, Bengaluru have been able to come up with the goods at the right time.

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20  
Printed and Published by T. Venkateswarlu on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Anekal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-53. RNI Registration No. 398/11/87. Editor: Aditya Sinha

# Salah, two good!

## Mo hits brace as Liverpool punish Watford

**Liverpool, Dec. 14:** Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp hailed his side's resilience to keep winning during a draining December schedule as Mohamed Salah's double beat bottom-of-the-table Watford 2-0 at Anfield to open up an 11-point lead at the top of the Premier League. The Hornets remain six points adrift of safety but will wonder how they headed home empty handed after enjoying the vast majority of the chances against the European champions. Salah produced the two moments of real quality from Klopp's men by finishing off a rapid counter-attack from a Watford corner to open the scoring before flicking home a second a minute from time. Liverpool are now seven games into a run of 15 matches in 50 days across five competitions and the strain on Klopp's squad was obvious in a

# City's woes continue

**London, Dec. 14:** Manchester City's Premier League title defence appears over before Christmas, with Pep Guardiola's men travelling to Arsenal on Sunday already 14 points adrift of runaway leaders Liverpool. City have made the extraordinary routine, winning five of the past six major domestic trophies in England but have dropped as many points in 16 league games this season as in the whole of last season. So what has gone wrong for a hugely talented and expensive squad under the tutelage of one of football's greatest coaches?

**INJURIES**  
Even a squad as rich in resources as City's is not immune to injuries. Leroy Sane and Aymeric Laporte suffered long-term knee injuries in the first few weeks of the season, with Laporte's absence leaving a gaping hole at the heart of City's defence. Ferdinandinho has had to deputise out of position at centre-back, meaning the Brazilian's influence at the base of City's midfield has also been missed. Benjamin Mendy's lack

### Live on TV

**PREMIER LEAGUE**  
**Man United vs Everton** from 7.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 1 HD  
**Wolves vs Tottenham** from 7.30 pm on Star Sports Select 2, 1 HD  
**Arsenal vs Man City** from 10 pm on Star Sports Select 1, 1 HD

of fitness and an injury to Oleksandr Zinchenko has also led to a rotating cast at left-back, with none of the options available to Laporte inspiring much confidence.

### BAD PLANNING

Even before Laporte's injury, City appeared short at centre-back following the loss of captain Vincent Kompany, who left at the end of last season to take charge of Anderlecht. Kompany's final years at the club were ravaged by injury, but he played a vital role late last season as City won their final 14 league games to pip Liverpool to the title by one point. The Belgian was an inspirational leader and his departure left City without a figurehead when things get tough. — AFP



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah (third from left) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Watford in the EPL match at Anfield on Saturday. — AP

## Top guns set to play at Australian Open

**Melbourne, Dec. 14:** All the world's top-50 men and women players, bar Victoria Azarenka, have confirmed they will start the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam of the season, at Melbourne Park in January, organisers said on Saturday.

Top-ranked Rafael Nadal and Ashleigh Barty lead the field at the 115th edition of the tournament from January 20 to February 7, which will mark the return to action of former World No.3 Juan Martin del Potro. The Argentinian has a protected ranking of 22 as he makes a comeback from a six-month injury break. Seven-time winner Serena Williams will play as she targets an elusive 24th Grand Slam title to match the all-time haul of Margaret Court. — AFP

**IN CINEMAS 20th FRIDAY**

**SKF**

**"Swagat toh karo hamara"**

**DABANGG 3**

DIRECTED BY PRABHUDEVA

20th Dec. 2019

**QAMB | AMB CINEMAS-GACHIBOWLI**

**MJR SQUARE-NARAPALLY**

**PRASADS MULTIPLEX | TIVOLI CINEMAS**

**FORUM MALL | CENTRAL MALL | RKPLEX**

**RK PLEX | INORBIT MALL | IRRUMMANZIL GALLERIA | ICON CITY | MUSARAMBAGH**

**MANTRA | MANJEERA | SUDHA CCPL | DSL MALL**

**LAXMIKALA CINEPRIDE-MOOSAPET**

**CINESQUARE | MCUBE | RADHIKA RADHIKA | GPR MALL | SIVAGANGA**

**AMEERPET SHAMEERPET | INOX | GVK | GSM MP MALL**

**CINE PLANET | NAMA TALKIES**

**GLOBAL CINEMAS RELEASE**

# a biker's delight -

# MRF NYLOGRIP EZEERIDE

## Make Every Ride An Ezeeride



**WIDER CENTRE BLOCKS** | **SUPERIOR GROOVE DESIGN** | **UNIQUE TREAD PATTERN** | **SUPERIOR COMPOUND**

EASY ON STRAIGHT RIDES | EASY ON WET RIDES | EASY ON ZIG-ZAG RIDES | FOR LONGER LIFE

# MRF NYLOGRIP EZEERIDE

Available for the following popular bikes- **Hero:** Splendor Plus/Pro, Super Splendor, Splendor iSmart, HF Deluxe, Passion Plus/Pro, Glamour, CD 100. **Honda:** Shine SP/125, Dream Yuga, Dream Neo, Livo, CD 110. **Bajaj:** Discover, Platina, CT 100, Boxer. **TVS:** Star City, Victor/125. **Yamaha:** Saluto, YBR/125. **Suzuki:** Hayate (Old). **Royal Enfield:** Bullet Standard, Electra. **Harley Davidson:** Street 750.



Available at all MRF T&S Outlets | **MRF FRANCHISEE** | MRF Tire Tok Outlets | **MRF Exclusive** | MRF Exclusive and MRF Authorised Dealerships | **MRF**

Toll free: 1800 419 4888 | www.mrf tyres.com | f/mrfcorporate | /MRFWorldwide | For further assistance, email us at: write2us@mrfmail.com