

FROM PAGE ONE

Students erupt in nationwide protests

"Whoever gave the permission for the police to enter the Jamia campus should be brought to book and punished," he said.

He said it was not a Hindu-Muslim issue and could not be linked to religion, and asked the people not to fall prey to rumours as the Act was an affront to the Constitution."

It is the ruling party and the Government of India which are behind the violence. Had the government not brought in this law, there would not have been such violence. The Prime Minister, Home Minister and the Cabinet are responsible for this violence," Mr. Yechury alleged.

Monday also saw leaders of the All Assam Students'

Union and scores of others court arrest during a mass satyagraha against the CAA in Guwahati.

Sarma backs law

However, Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma claimed a maximum of 5.42 lakh people will benefit from the citizenship law in the State. Mr. Sarma said rumours were being spread by a certain section of people who claimed that over a crore of people will gain by the Act.

Meanwhile, over 600 students and faculty members from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, took out a rally expressing solidarity with Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University students.

Don't let 'vested interests' divide society, says PM

He termed All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi as the new "Jinnah" (Pakistan founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah) and Aam Aadmi Party MLA Amanatullah Khan as the "Delhi version of Jinnah".

"The Citizenship Amendment Act has nothing to do with people who are Indian citizens already, but political parties are shooting from the shoulders of students as they could not pre-

vent the passage of the Bill in Parliament," he said.

"The CAA is to give citizenship to religiously persecuted refugees, it is not to take away the citizenship of any Indian. Some parties are spreading rumours and inciting violence for their political interest. I request students to go through the CAA once and not fall into their trap," Union Home Minister Amit Shah said at an election rally in Jharkhand on Monday.

Govt. releases ₹35,298 cr. in GST compensation

Earlier this month, the Centre had written to States voicing concern that due to lower GST collections, the compensation cess might not be enough to pay for the losses arising out of the adoption of the tax system.

"The Central government has released GST compensation of ₹35,298 crore to States and Union Territories today [Monday]," the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs said in a tweet. The GST Council is set to hold its next meeting on December 18. States have expressed apprehensions about not getting their compensation on time or at all,

with some alleging that they had to incur debts to meet the expenses predicated on GST compensation monies. While the Congress government in Punjab had threatened to take the Centre to court, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel had asked the Centre to consider extending the cut-off date for compensation, according to sources.

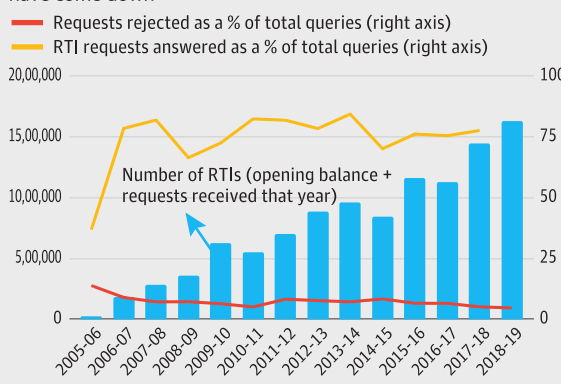
While the government had budgeted for ₹6,63,343 crore in GST collections for the current fiscal, 2019-20, it had garnered only about 50% of its budget estimate in the first eight months.

(With inputs from PTI)

RTI 'abuse' led to 'fear' among officials: CJI

Rising requests

The number of RTI requests and the backlog of unprocessed queries have been rising in the recent years. However, the share of queries answered has remained stable while rejection rates have come down



Guidelines should be laid down to check the locus of the RTI applicant and put a "filter" on the kind of requests made under the 2005 Act, the Chief Justice said.

He said the court was not against the exercise of the right to information.

"But it cannot be an unrivalled right. There is the serious problem of people filing RTI requests with mala fide intentions, people set up by rivals," he said. The RTI Act had become a source of criminal intimidation by people with an axe to grind. "Criminal intimidation is a nice word for 'blackmail'," Chief Justice Bobde said.

People who call themselves "RTI activists" and were in no way concerned

with the issues on which they file RTI requests had impeded government functioning, the CJI observed.

"When I was in Mumbai, a government official said the Mantralaya is almost paralysed because of the kind of RTI requests made... Have you seen the kind of people seeking information. Anybody can ask. People describe themselves as RTI activists. Is that an occupation?" he asked.

Justice B.R. Gavai, on the Bench, remarked that "people write 'RTI Consultant' on their letterheads."

Chief Justice Bobde said the court was willing to hear arguments on the locus of people who filed RTIs and also about setting up a "filter" which can be rightfully employed."

Citizenship Act rules get ready

Ministry says no automatic grant of rights, migrants must apply online

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Monday said no migrant from the six non-Muslim communities from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh "will become an Indian citizen automatically".

A migrant should apply online and the competent authority would see whether he or she fulfilled all the qualifications for registration or naturalisation as an Indian citizen, a senior Ministry official said.

The Citizenship Amendment Act, passed by Parliament last week, proposes to grant citizenship to "persecuted" minorities from any of the three countries who entered India on or before December 31, 2014. The Centre will soon frame rules to operationalise the provisions of the Act.

Advisory to States

The Ministry on Monday issued an advisory to the States and Union Territories asking them to take all possible steps to check violence and ensure the safety of life and property.

It requested them to take action against circulation of fake news and rumours on social media having the po-

Act explained

Select provisions of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act:

- It inserts December 31, 2014 as the cut off date for non-Muslim communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh to be eligible for the Indian citizenship
- It reduces the mandatory requirement of 12 years stay in India to five years to be eligible for citizenship
- All cases against illegal non-Muslim migrants, before any authority shall stand abated

The Act shall not apply to tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland



tential to incite violence.

There are apprehensions that the Act, followed by a country-wide National Register of Citizens, will benefit non-Muslims, while excluded Muslims will have to prove their citizenship.

"The CAA does not target any religious community from abroad. It only provides a mechanism for some migrants who may otherwise have been called 'illegal' depriving them of opportunity to apply for Indian citizenship provided they meet certain conditions," the official said.

The official explained that the Citizenship Act, 1955,

which was amended last week, provides that Indian citizenship could be acquired by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation or by incorporation of territory.

"Any foreigner on becoming eligible can acquire citizenship by registration or by naturalisation irrespective of his country or his community. The CAA enables migrants/foreigners of six minority communities from three specified countries who have come to India because of persecution on grounds of their religion to apply for Indian citizenship. It does not amend any existing legal provision which en-

ables any foreigner of any class, creed, religion, category etc to apply for Indian citizenship through registration or naturalisation modes. Such a foreigner has to become eligible to apply for citizenship after fulfilling the minimum legal requirements," the official said.

"The CAA does not apply to Indian citizens and they are completely unaffected by it," the official said. In the past six years, 2,830 Pakistani citizens, 912 Afghan citizens and 172 Bangladeshi citizens were given Indian citizenship and "hundreds of them are from the majority community of these three countries".

"Such migrants continue to get Indian citizenship and shall also continue to get it if they fulfil the eligibility conditions already provided in the law for registration or naturalisation," the official said.

Citizenship to Tamils

The official said that 4.61 lakh Tamils of Indian origin were given Indian citizenship from 1964 to 2008 after the signing of bilateral agreements in 1964 and 1974. Nearly 95,000 Sri Lankan refugees are living in Tamil Nadu.

Jamiat moves SC against citizenship law

'It will lead to religious discrimination'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind on Monday moved the Supreme Court against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, saying the new law classifies immigrants without any "intelligible differentiation" and ignores several religiously persecuted minorities such as the Ahmadiyya, Zikri, Baha'i, Kalasha and Shia sects of Pakistan.

The organisation, through its general secretary, Syed Maulana Mahmood Madani, said the new law would lead to devastating religious discrimination in Assam, where several lakh Hindus and Muslims have been excluded from the final list published on August 31.

"The consequence of the Amendment Act, 2019 would be that the Hindu migrants excluded from the final list of NRC for the residents in Assam published on August 31, 2019, would be entitled to get benefit of naturalisation under Section 6B of the Citizenship Act. However, the Muslim migrants on equal footing with the Hindu migrants, are denied the same, which

Kamal Haasan's MNM moves SC against CAA

NEW DELHI
Actor Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) on Monday moved the Supreme Court against the Citizenship Amendment Act, even as a three-judge Bench led by CJI Sharad A. Bobde agreed to list on Wednesday the petitions challenging the Act on the basis of an oral mentioning made by senior advocates Kapil Sibal and A.M. Singhvi, representing Congress MP Jairam Ramesh for urgent hearing.

is highly arbitrary and discriminatory," a release issued by the organisation on the contents of its petition, represented by advocate Shakil Ahmad Syed, said. It said this would be an outcome of the new law in Assam where lakhs of people have already been excluded from the NRC final list because of their illiteracy, improper leading of evidence i.e. filing photocopy of necessary and relevant documents, non-examination of witnesses, minor discrepancies in their age and spelling of name in different documents.

Bengal stops NPR work, civil rights activists welcome move

Activities on upgrade of register stayed, says govt. order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

In a major boost to the civil rights movement in West Bengal, the State government withdrew activities related to the National Population Register (NPR) on Monday. The notice issued by the Census Cell of the Home and Hill Affairs Department automatically revokes an earlier order when the government departments were instructed to list the names of junior officials to compile the NPR.

Civil rights activists welcomed the government's decision, underscoring that the NPR has "nothing to do" with the usual Census process in 2021.

Monday's order, with a subject line "Stay on NPR process", noted that "all activities regarding the preparation and upgrade of the NPR was "stayed" in the State. "No activity regarding NPR may be taken up without prior clearance" from the government, the order noted.

The Association For Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR), which with other organisations carried on an anti-NPR campaign in the State against the government, welcomed the order.

APDR member Ranjit Sur

described the NPR as the "first step to initiate the National Register of Citizens [NRC]" in the State.

"In the NPR it was stated that doubtful citizens will be identified but it was never indicated what makes a person a doubtful citizen, which was our first objection," Mr. Sur said.

BJP criticises decision
BJP's State president Dilip Ghosh questioned the State government's move.

"The fact that she [Mamata Banerjee] is trying to prevent it means how important the exercise was for West Bengal," he said.

Centre renegeing on Article 371 promise, say Jammu leaders

'No proposal under consideration for the Union Territory'

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The separate statements of the Union Home Ministry and the J&K administration on not extending Article 371 to the Jammu region have come in for criticism.

"The Jammu region overwhelmingly supported the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A and was being assured by the BJP leaders that a 'domicile law' was in the offing to protect their lands, properties and jobs in the form of Article 371," said J&K National Panthers Party (NPP) chairman Harsh Dev Singh. "But the same has been denied now. The



No special status: Jammu has supported the removal of Article 370.

treacherous conduct of the BJP leaders has once again come to fore as a rude shocker for the people of J&K," he said.

A spokesman of the J&K

government, in a statement on Sunday, said there was "no proposal under consideration regarding extension of Article 371 to the Union Territory of J&K," echoing a statement by the Ministry.

Sources said the BJP leaders had been directed to restrict their rhetoric to restoration of statehood to J&K and avoid statements on reallocating any special status.

Congress State president G.A. Mir said the Centre should first reveal the names of those who had demanded extension of Article 371. "It seems [to be] a demand which was by the BJP, of the BJP and for the BJP," he said.

Sky-high Ram temple in 4 months: Shah

Congress, AAP, and Trinamool misleading youth on CAA, he says in Jharkhand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PAKUR/POREYAHAT (JHARKHAND)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said a sky-high Ram temple would come up in Ayodhya within four months, adding that Indians all over the world had been demanding it for 100 years.

Making a blistering attack on the Congress, Mr. Shah asked its leader Kapil Sibal why he had sought to drag the Ramjanmabhoomi case in the Supreme Court.

"Congress leader and advocate Kapil Sibal *sahab* said, 'Take up the case later.' Why do you have a stomach ache following the case," Mr. Shah asked Mr. Sibal at an election rally in Pakur.

Addressing another meet-



Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressing a rally at Pakur in Jharkhand on Monday. •PTI

ing at Poreyahat in Godda district, Mr. Shah said a "sky-touching temple" would come up in Ayodhya within four months.

"I want to tell you that the Supreme Court verdict has come, a grand Ram temple touching the sky is going to

be built in Ayodhya within four months," he said.

The Home Minister criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for opposing the abrogation of Article 370. "We will not tolerate anybody meddling with the country," Mr. Shah said.

Earlier, at the Pakur rally, the BJP president asked the people to be on guard against "traitors" like Mir Jafar, alleging the Congress could neither develop the country and secure its borders nor honour the sentiments of the people.

Saluting the tribal freedom fighters who had launched a *Santhal Hul* (revolution) against the British, Mr. Shah told the poll rally it was traitors like Mir Jafar who had allowed the British to establish their "raj".

"It was the Congress, RJD and Lalu Prasad who forced the youth of Jharkhand to martyrdom while the BJP-led Atal Bihari Vajpayee government had created Jharkhand," he added.

Saluting the tribal freedom fighters who had launched a *Santhal Hul* (revolution) against the British, Mr. Shah told the poll rally it was traitors like Mir Jafar who had allowed the British to establish their "raj".

"It was the Congress, RJD and Lalu Prasad who forced the youth of Jharkhand to martyrdom while the BJP-led Atal Bihari Vajpayee government had created Jharkhand," he added.

Saluting the tribal freedom fighters who had launched a *Santhal Hul* (revolution) against the British, Mr. Shah told the poll rally it was traitors like Mir Jafar who had allowed the British to establish their "raj".

Congress MP for privilege proceedings against Smriti

'She misled House on Rahul's remarks'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress member of the Lok Sabha Manickam Tagore has given a notice of privilege against Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani for allegedly misleading the House on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks about rape.

Mr. Tagore met the Lok Sabha Secretary General on Monday, seeking privilege proceedings against Ms. Irani. "The Minister had claimed that the Shri. Rahul Gandhi had given a clarification call to rape women in India in his speech during an election rally on December 12th. The Minister has intention-



Smriti Irani

ally misled the Parliament by falsely attributing a statement to Mr. Gandhi," he said in the notice. "The Minister's assertions on the floor of this House are absolutely false. The member has willfully misled not only members of the House, but also the entire nation," he said.

Soldier killed in Gurez as Pak. Army opens fire

Ceasefire violated at Krishna Ghati too

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

One soldier was killed in firing by the Pakistan Army on the Line of Control (LoC) in the Gurez Sector of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

An Army spokesman said Pakistan resorted to an unprovoked ceasefire violation in the afternoon. "[The Indian] Army retaliated strongly. One soldier was martyred." The Army identified him as Havildar Chougule Jotiba Ganpati.

The spokesman said Pa-

kistan troops also fired with small arms and mortars in the Krishna Ghati Sector in Poonch around 9.45 a.m. The two Armies exchanged "heavy fire" at Sunderbani in Rajouri. Lt. Gen. K.J.S. Dhillon, Commander of the Chinari Corps, presided over an event in Srinagar to mark the 48th anniversary of India's victory in the 1971 war with Pakistan. "A victory of such a magnitude would not have been possible without the tremendous sacrifice of soldiers," he said.

'Extent of India's slowdown surprised many'

IMF chief economist calls for structural reforms, bank clean-up, labour reforms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

With economic growth slowing to a six-year low, IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath says the government should undertake structural reforms such as a bank clean-up and labour reforms to address the slowdown in domestic demand.

She said that the extent of the slowdown of the Indian economy has surprised many, "including us here at the IMF".

Ms. Gopinath rooted for government policies focusing on managing a slowdown



Gita Gopinath

in domestic demand, and on boosting productivity growth and supporting employment creation in the medium term.

"Given the cyclical posi-

tion and the structural challenges of the Indian economy at this point, we recommend that policies focus on managing the slowdown in domestic demand, and on boosting productivity growth and supporting employment creation in the medium term," she said.

Recommending a series of key policy priorities for the government, she said, "Politically, the time - early in the government's second term - is right for a structural reform push." GDP growth slowed for the sixth consecutive quarter in the July-Sep-

tember quarter to 4.5% as manufacturing slumped on low domestic consumption.

Ms. Gopinath said the policy priorities of the government should also include a credible fiscal consolidation path that is more ambitious than currently envisaged by the government.

"This is needed to reduce the high level of debt and reduce crowding out which would free up financial resources for private investment. This should be driven by subsidy-spending rationalisation and tax-base enhancing measures," she said.

Congress, AAP and the Trinamool Congress are playing vote bank politics over CAA, and are misguiding the students and creating an environment of violence in the country

AMIT SHAH
Union Minister for Home Affairs

I am very worried about the deteriorating law and order in Delhi. Peace should be restored immediately in Delhi — for this, I have asked Home Minister for an appointment

ARVIND KEJRIWAL
Delhi Chief Minister

I appeal to all students to stay away from violence and maintain peace on campuses. We should not indulge in activity which is not in the interests of the nation

RAMESH POKHRIYAL NISHANK
Union Minister for HRD

I appeal to the protesters that such protests should not be done. I also appeal to the police that they should show some restraint and control the situation calmly

SYED GHAYORUL HASAN RIZVI
National Commission for Minorities Chairman

This has gone too far... can't stay silent any longer. This government is clearly fascist... and it makes me angry to see voices that can actually make a difference stay quiet...

ANURAG KASHYAP
Film director

Wonder if this is a start or the end. Whatever it is, this is writing new rules of the land and those who don't fit in can very well see the consequences

TAAPSEE PANNU
Actor



Won't implement CAA, NRC in Jharkhand: Soren

DUMKA

Hemant Soren, the chief ministerial face of the grand alliance in Jharkhand, said if voted to power, his government would review the CAA and the National Register of Citizens and not implement them if they had the potential for violence.



Mayawati seeks judicial probe into violence

LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati on Monday asked the Central and the Uttar Pradesh governments to call for a "high-level judicial" probe into the violence that took over the student protests in universities in Delhi and Aligarh.



BJP preparing ground for 'Hindu Rashtra': Gehlot

JAIPUR

Demanding an immediate repeal of the Citizenship Amendment Act, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday accused the BJP-led government at the Centre of preparing the ground for making India a "Hindu Rashtra".

Attack on soul of the nation, says Priyanka

She sits on dharna in solidarity with Jamia varsity students

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said here on Monday that "an attack on students is an attack on the soul of the nation." She was speaking after sitting on a two-hour symbolic dharna in solidarity with the students of Jamia Millia Islamia and others protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

In a separate statement, Congress president Sonia Gandhi accused the government of "declaring a war against its own people", and alleged that the writers of the "script of polarisation were Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah".

"The government has attacked the Constitution and the students have been attacked. And they are our future. This is an attack on the soul of the nation," Ms. Vadra said after her protest at the India Gate.

Right to protest

"The youth are the soul of India. They have a right to protest. They have a right to raise their voice and this right has been given by the Constitution. When the government barges into the university... I am a mother and these students would be of my children's age, it hurts the entire country. We are a democracy and not a dictatorship."

"We will fight for the Con-



On the front line: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra leaving after a protest at the India Gate on Monday. ■AP

stitution, we will fight against dictatorship and we stand with the students," she said. "He [Prime Minister Narendra Modi] should speak about the economy and the atrocities that women face every day and what happened to the students."

Every Congress worker will fight to protect the Constitution, Ms. Vadra said while describing the CAA as "anti-Constitutional".

Senior Congress leaders, including Ahmed Patel, A.K. Antony, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Randeep Singh Surjewala and Ambika Soni, were among the leaders who reached the protest venue.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi tweeted: "The CAB & NRC are weapons of mass polarisation unleashed by fascists on In-

dia. The best defence against these dirty weapons is peaceful, non-violent Satyagraha. I stand in solidarity with all those protesting peacefully against the CAB & NRC."

'Creator of violence'

Coinciding with the party's offensive on CAA, Ms. Gandhi accused the Modi government of being the "creator of violence and divisiveness".

"A government's job is to maintain peace and harmony, deliver governance and protect the Constitution. But the BJP government has declared a war on its own people. It has become the creator of violence and divisiveness. The government has pushed the country into an abyss of hatred and made the future of youth uncertain," she said.

SC to hear pleas for judicial probe today

'Protests can go on, but there should be no riots, violence or arson on the streets'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to *suo motu* hear on Tuesday pleas for a judicial inquiry into the police action against students of Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University, saying protests could go on but there should be no riots, violence or arson on the streets.

"First, we want to be assured, there would be peace. If you want to take to the streets, don't come to us... We want rioting to stop. We

First, we want to be assured that there would be peace. We want rioting to stop. We are not saying students are responsible or police are innocent

S.A. BOBDE, Chief Justice of India



are not saying students are responsible or police are innocent...What is this? Public properties are being destroyed. We will decide it in cool frame of mind," Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde told lawyers during an oral

mentioning. In an urgent plea by senior lawyers Prashant Bhusan, Indra Jaising and Colin Gonsalves to the court to intervene and make the police accountable, Justice Bobde said the court wanted peace and could not

hear the issue hastily when tempers were high.

Ms. Jaising said 52 persons had been detained in the violence. There were news videos and pictures of burning buses, helmeted policemen lashing out with lathis, vandalised library of the university and young people paraded with both their hands held high on a cold Sunday night. Justice Bobde said the protesters could not take matters into their hands though they may be students.

Centre to blame for fallout: Azad

Opposition leaders demand judicial inquiry into police action on students

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union government is responsible for the fallout of bringing in the Citizenship Amendment Act, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said on Monday in response to statements by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the Congress and its allies were behind the violence in the garb of protests against the Act.

Mr. Azad and other Opposition leaders were addressing a press conference to condemn the Delhi Police action against Jamia Millia Islamia students on Sunday.

Mr. Azad said, "We are against any type of violence. The Prime Minister is right in saying that there are vested interests, they brought



United stand: Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad, centre, and Kapil Sibal, with CPI(M) general secretary Sitarum Yechury, left, at a press meet in New Delhi on Monday. ■PTI

about the Bill due to vested interests." He said the Opposition was united in condemning the police action. "Since the V-C has said that no approval has been given, how did the police, which is under the control of the BJP-ruled Centre, enter Jamia,"

he asked. He demanded a judicial inquiry.

Congress leader Kapil Sibal said riots happened due to communal tensions or local issues, but when riots and violence occurred due to the government's decision, it was very dangerous.

"It means the country is against the government."

Reacting to Mr. Modi's tweets, CPI(M) general secretary Sitarum Yechury said, "It does not behave someone like the Prime Minister to hurl such charges". What happened in Jamia was unacceptable in a democracy. "Whose orders were it on the basis of which Delhi Police entered the university. The Home Minister is directly in charge. Where is he? We haven't seen him in the past two days."

CPI leader D. Raja said, "There is a civil war-like situation in the country".

Manoj Kumar Jha of the Rashtriya Janata Dal condemned the "dog whistle message of the Prime Minister that [protesters] could be recognised by their clothes".

Mamata marches on Kolkata streets

West Bengal Chief Minister administers pledge to shun violence

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Amid reports of road and railway blockades in south Bengal districts on the fourth consecutive day, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday took to the streets here in protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act.

Appealing to people from every section of society to join the rally from the statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar on Red Road to Jorasanko Thakur Bari, Ms. Banerjee said that they should "join this people's movement in a peaceful manner within the ambit of law".

At the beginning of the rally, the Chief Minister administered a pledge to her supporters asking them to maintain peace. "We are all citizens. Harmony of all reli-



Walk the talk: Mamata Banerjee leading a rally against the citizenship law. ■RAJEEV BHATT

gions is our principle in life. We will not allow NRC and CAA in Bengal," she said. Before starting her march on foot on the 3.5-km stretch in the heart of the city, Ms. Banerjee also condemned the

violence during the protest by the students of Jamia Millia Islamia. She reminded the protesters in Bengal that her government would take strong action against those who indulged in violence.

Protesters disrupted suburban railway services in the Sealdah Namkhana and Sealdah Diamond Harbour sections by blocking the railway tracks and putting banana leaves on overhead lines.

Governor, CM spar in West Bengal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The relations between West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee touched a new low on Monday when both in their official capacity sent strongly worded letters to each other. In her letter, Ms. Banerjee accused the Governor of "aggravating the situation" through provocation. Mr. Dhankhar responded saying he had been "heaped indignities" by Ministers "being on the rampage with most vituperative language".

Earlier in the day, the Governor summoned the Chief Minister after senior officials of the government failed to turn up to brief him on the situation in the State.

Ready for dialogue, says Himanta

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Assam Finance & Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday that the government would soon talk to those protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act. There would be no action against protests by student and civil society organisations as long as they were democratic, he said.

"We have filed 136 cases against people involved in violence and arson and arrested 190. From the video footage, it was evident that most members of the violent mobs in Guwahati were from certain districts," he said.

College students stage protests across T.N.

Agitators express solidarity with students who were attacked by the police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

College students from across the State participated in protests and organised rallies on their campuses to express solidarity with the students of Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University, who were attacked by the police while protesting against the Citizenship Act.

Authorities of the Central University of Tamil Nadu, Tiruvarur, declared holiday till mid-January, even as a section of students launched a stir against the attack on student protesters. A section of CUTN students staged a demonstration on the campus. They took out a procession with effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Un-



Up in arms: Members of the Students' Federation of India staging a protest in front of the railway station in Madurai. ■S. JAMES

ion Home Minister Amit Shah, which were set afire.

The registrar, meanwhile, posted a circular on the university's website, stating that the "university was closed from today (December 16) for winter holidays".

All hostellers were asked to vacate the hostel within 24 hours.

At the IIT, Madras, over 100 students gathered at the Gajendra Circle around noon and shouted slogans condemning "police brutali-

ty". Later, they took out a rally on the campus. They said their protest against the government did not mean they were anti-national. A similar protest was held at Mohammed Sathak College in Sholinganallur.

At Loyola College, over 50 students skipped classes and squatted near the main gate, demanding justice for those who were attacked. Students belonging to the Periyar Ambedkar Study Circle demonstrated at the University of Madras' Chepauk campus.

In Puducherry, members of the Students' Council of Pondicherry University gathered in front of Gate II of the campus, demanding the immediate release of the detained students.

Xi vows support for Lam despite setbacks

'Govt. fully recognises courage & assumption of responsibility you displayed in these exceptional times'

REUTERS
HONG KONG

Chinese President Xi Jinping offered his support for Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam on Monday, praising her courage in governing the Chinese-ruled hub in these "most difficult times" after months of often violent anti-government protests.

His comments came after Hong Kong police fired tear gas in late night street clashes with anti-government protesters as the former British colony's worst political crisis in decades shows no sign of resolution.

"The situation in Hong Kong in 2019 was the most complex and difficult since its return to the motherland," Mr. Xi told local media in brief comments before a closed-door meeting with Ms. Lam in Beijing.

"The central government fully recognises the courage and assumption of responsi-



Full support: Carrie Lam says she feels encouraged by Xi Jinping's recognition of her efforts. ■ REUTERS

bility you have displayed in these exceptional times in Hong Kong."

Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with the promise of wide-ranging autonomy under a "one country, two systems" formula, including a free press and independent judiciary, which the protesters say is being eroded by Communist Party

rulers in Beijing. China denies the charge.

Hong Kong media has speculated that Ms. Lam's talks with Mr. Xi could yield fresh directives on the crisis, including a possible Cabinet reshuffle.

'Uphold the law'

Mr. Xi did not go into specifics, but reiterated his sup-

port for Ms. Lam despite some previous media reports suggesting she might be replaced.

He added Beijing was "unwavering in supporting Hong Kong police in firmly upholding the law" and said Ms. Lam had continued to uphold the "one country, two systems" principle.

Mr. Xi said last month that China was "unwavering" in defending national security and sovereignty, implementing the "one country, two systems" policy and opposing foreign forces interfering in Hong Kong.

He stated on Monday that these were Beijing's basic positions on Hong Kong affairs.

Ms. Lam earlier met Premier Li Keqiang, who said Hong Kong was not yet out of the "dilemma" facing the city's ailing economy after months of sometimes violent protests.

Late on Sunday, groups of

masked youths blocked roads around the densely populated Mong Kok district of Kowloon, over the harbour from Hong Kong island, prompting police to fire multiple rounds of tear gas and baton charge crowds.

Ms. Lam said she was encouraged by Mr. Xi's recognition of her efforts.

Curbs on media

"This year is of course a rather special one because in the last six months Hong Kong has been haunted by social unrest, disturbances and violence acts," she said.

"So I spent a bit more time to give them an account of where things stand."

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said in a report on Monday that press freedom in Hong Kong has come under an accelerating squeeze despite China's pledges to maintain an open society.

Johnson set to welcome lawmakers, get Brexit rolling

Govt. plans to introduce the EU withdrawal Bill on Friday

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is ready to give a pep talk on Monday to a new group of Conservative Party lawmakers as he begins his push to secure parliamentary approval for his Brexit deal.

Mr. Johnson will welcome 109 newly elected colleagues, many of them coming from parts of the country that were once strongholds of the opposition Labour Party.

Buoyed by the Conservatives' win in last week's election, Mr. Johnson will move fast to deliver on his campaign mantra to "get Brexit done." That means ensuring a Brexit withdrawal agreement Bill is passed in time for the U.K. to complete its historic departure from the



Boris Johnson

European Union by the current deadline of January 31.

Mr. Johnson's spokesman James Slack said the government will introduce the EU withdrawal Bill on Friday. It will be up to the Speaker of the House of Commons to determine if Parliament will hold its first major vote on the Bill that same day or will wait until January after the Christmas recess.

The Brexit divorce Bill is

expected to receive strong support in Parliament, where Mr. Johnson's Conservatives hold a strong majority. The party won 365 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons in Thursday's landslide election.

If the Bill passes and Britain leaves the EU on time, the country will enter a transition period when EU rules and regulations would still apply in the country and people and goods would still be able to pass freely between the U.K. and the remaining EU members.

Negotiators for the government and the EU would start trade talks with an eye toward a post-Brexit agreement. Queen Elizabeth II will formally open Parliament on Thursday with a speech outlining legislative programme.

ELSEWHERE



U.S. says N. Korea-set deadline not acceptable

SEUL
A senior U.S. diplomat said on Monday that Washington won't accept a year-end deadline set by North Korea to make concessions in stalled nuclear talks. The U.S. special representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun urged Pyongyang to return to a negotiating table immediately. ■ AP

N. Ireland parties revive power-sharing talks

BELFAST
Northern Ireland's squabbling parties met on Monday in the hope of reviving their power-sharing regional government after three years. The power-sharing executive between the conservative DUP and left-wing Sinn Fein crumbled in a breakdown of trust following a misspending scandal. ■ AP

Turkey deploys drone in northern Cyprus

ANKARA
Turkey has dispatched a surveillance drone to the northern Cyprus amid tensions over offshore oil and gas exploration. Kudret Ozersay, Foreign Minister of the self-declared Turkish Cypriot state, said it was an "unarmed drone". ■ AP

Jewellery worth \$64 mn stolen from British celeb

LONDON
Tamara Ecclestone, the daughter of former Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone, has had an estimated 50 million pounds (\$64 million)-worth of jewellery stolen from her home on a London street known as Billionaire Row. ■ REUTERS

Colombo-based Swiss Embassy staffer arrested

Sri Lanka's reputation as a constitutional state at stake: Bern

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka police on Monday arrested a local employee of the Swiss Embassy in Colombo, who has been at the centre of a diplomatic controversy, for allegedly making a false accusation that she was detained and threatened.

The Sri Lankan national, working at the visa section of the Embassy, was reportedly abducted and sexually harassed on November 25, a day after a top Sri Lankan police officer, who had been probing cases involving the Rajapaksa family, sought asylum in Switzerland.

On Monday, she was arrested following Attorney-

General Dappula de Livera's advice to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to name her as a suspect, "for exciting disaffection against the government and fabricating false evidence", the public prosecutor's coordinating officer Nishara Jayaratne told *The Hindu*.

The tension between Bern and Colombo — over contradicting claims over the incident — could further escalate with the staffer's arrest, with Switzerland criticising the "lack of due process".

"Sri Lanka's reputation as a constitutional State is at stake in this exemplary case," Switzerland said in a statement issued Monday night. The Federal Depart-



Swiss embassy staffer, in pink shawl, being escorted to a court in Colombo. ■ AP

ment of Foreign Affairs in Bern said it was "concerned" about the arrest and that it "expects" the Sri Lankan judiciary to comply with its "own legal requirements, international standards" and to protect personal rights "better than before".

'Abduction fabricated'

Meanwhile, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa told local media heads on Monday that

available evidence showed the "abduction" of the staffer was "fabricated", his office said in a media release. "The Embassy official must have been compelled by some interested parties to bring myself and my government into disrepute," he was quoted as saying.

In a separate statement, the President's media division said Hanspeter Mock, Ambassador of Switzerland in Sri Lanka, called on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Monday morning and "assured continuous support" to Sri Lanka. President Rajapaksa "requested the Ambassador to cooperate with the government to conduct the investigation", the statement added.

In an apparently different reading of the meeting, the FDFA said it "repeatedly

told" Sri Lankan authorities that it is looking for a "common and constructive way" to resolve the "security incident". "The Swiss Ambassador to Colombo underlined this in a direct conversation with Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa," the statement from Bern said.

'Testified to CID'

Though the Swiss authorities had maintained that the Embassy staffer was unable to testify in person due to "deteriorating health", following a Colombo court's order last week, the employee has been testifying to the CID for several hours, in addition to presenting herself for medical examination.

The Swiss FDFA "criticised" the 30-hour interrogation of its employee over three days "despite poor

health" and the public statements by senior Sri Lankan officials questioning her account before the investigation is completed.

Over the last fortnight, Bern and Colombo put out contradictory claims over the alleged abduction, making their disagreement clear.

While the Swiss Foreign Ministry said the employee had been "detained against her will on the street and threatened at length" by unidentified men, who "forced her to disclose Embassy-related information", Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry sought to question the account, citing "evidence" that contradicted the staffer's claims.

The Secretary to Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defence called it a "big-time drama". Bern has stood by its initial statement.

U.K. PM clears report on Russian role

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has cleared for publication a parliamentary report into alleged Russian interference in British politics, his spokesman said on Monday, but no date has been set for its release.

The 50-page report into Russian activity in the U.K., including possible meddling in the 2016 Brexit vote, was written by Parliament's intelligence and security committee earlier this year.

It also referenced the poisoning of former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in Salisbury, which London has blamed on Moscow.

Qatar hopeful of ending rift with Saudi Arabia

Riyadh sought shutting of Al Jazeera

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DOHA

Qatar's Foreign Minister has voiced optimism over ending a bitter rift with Riyadh, saying early talks broke a "stalemate" but stressed Doha's unwillingness to downgrade ties with Turkey as a pre-condition.

Saudi Arabia along with its allies the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt cut all diplomatic and transport ties with Qatar in June 2017.

The four nations accused Doha of backing radical Islamists, including the Muslim Brotherhood, and seeking closer ties with Saudi arch-

rival Tehran — allegations Qatar vehemently denies.

"There (is) some progress... We have broken the stalemate of non-communication to starting communication with the Saudis," Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said.

The Saudi-led bloc made 13 key demands, including shutting down broadcaster Al Jazeera, downgrading ties with Iran and closing a Turkish military base on its territory, to resolve the dispute. But the UAE has sought to downplay the reconciliation effort.

Democrats bolster case against Trump, say he betrayed nation

Report spelling out rationale behind impeachment released

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

Bolstering its case for impeaching President Donald Trump, a House panel released a report on Monday detailing its rationale for the charges and accusing Mr. Trump of betraying the nation for his own political gain.

Mr. Trump faces two articles of impeachment by House Democrats — abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. They point to Mr. Trump pressuring Ukraine to investigate his political



Donald Trump

rival Joe Biden while withholding as leverage military aid the country relies to counter Russia as well as his efforts to block the House investigation.

The House will vote on Wednesday on the impeachment articles approved last week by the House Judiciary panel. The vote is all but certain to result in Mr. Trump's impeachment, though he's expected to be acquitted in a Senate trial.

Detailing its case against the 45th President, the Judiciary panel released a report after midnight. It said Mr. Trump "betrayed the nation by abusing his high office to enlist a foreign power in corrupting democratic elections."

Won't let militants take country hostage: Imran

Pak. mourns victims of Peshawar attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PESHAWAR/ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's top leadership on Monday pledged to not allow militants with "bigoted vision" to take the country hostage as the nation mourned the 5th anniversary of massacre of 149 people, including 132 students, at a School in Peshawar.

In one of the most gruesome attacks on children anywhere in the world, suicide attackers wearing paramilitary Frontier Corps uniforms on December 16, 2014 entered Peshawar's Army Public School and went from classroom-to-class-

room shooting indiscriminately, killing 149 people including 132 students.

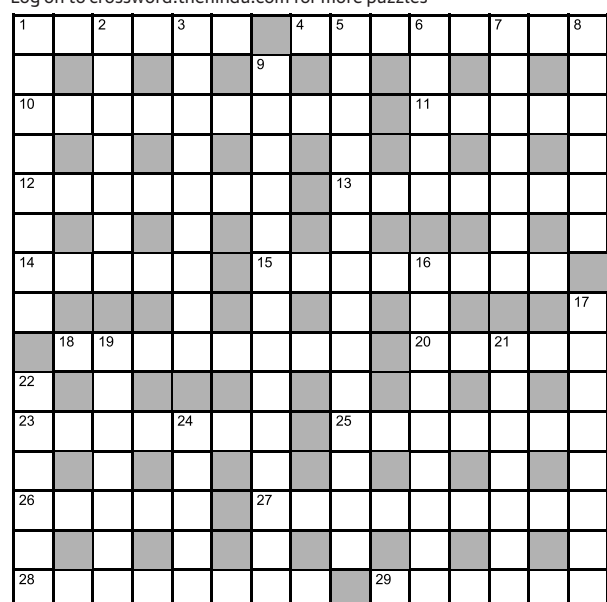
Following the incident, Pakistan has hanged four men linked to the massacre, the BBC reported.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said that the militant mindset would not be allowed to take over the country. "We pledge on this day that the militants will not be allowed to make the nation hostage to its bigoted vision," he said.

Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa said that the carnage will never be forgotten.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12808

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- 1 Preserve jam (6)
- 4 Married criminal reaches jail with everyone evacuated (8)
- 10 Left that old, boring, extremely tiresome game (6-3)
- 11 Jack escaped from work using influence (5)

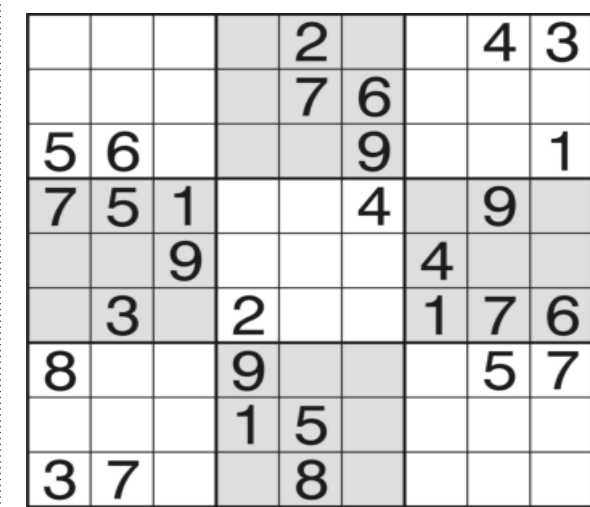
- 12 War cries from rebellious Nazi base, mostly (7)
- 13 Support provided by fine dog (7)
- 14 English ruler struggling to make supplies last (5)
- 15 The Don is temporarily protecting a pleasure-seeker (8)
- 18 Paul came around offering an apology (3,5)
- 20 Study short, lively dance (5)
- 23 Many English men put out (7)
- 25 Working in public transport systems yields extra benefits (7)
- 26 Planet very close to earth, orbiting sun (5)
- 27 At the banks of Danube, settler participated in match and had a fun time (4,5)
- 28 Precipitation — a drop of rain — remains on head (8)
- 29 Groom stole away to get married, essentially (6)

DOWN

- 1 After work is over, proposes drinks (8)

(set by KrisKross)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12807

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

MARKET WATCH

	16-12-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	40,939	-0.17
US Dollar	71	-0.24
Gold	38,698	0.13
Brent oil	65.56	0.29

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	368.35	-8.60
Asian Paints	1731.45	-12.50
Axis Bank	747.25	-4.75
Bajaj Auto	3220.40	-12.50
Bajaj Finserv	9288.10	77.80
Bajaj Finance	4039.45	-32.50
Bharti Airtel	421.85	-5.95
BPCl	492.00	-4.75
Britannia Ind	3050.90	-3.50
Cipla	458.25	-3.00
Coal India	192.60	-3.65
Dr Reddys Lab	2816.35	-5.15
Eicher Motors	21651.00	-383.75
GAIL (India)	121.20	1.40
Grasim Ind	763.10	-19.20
HCL Tech	552.20	9.05
HDFC	2375.25	20.75
HDFC Bank	1257.35	-6.50
Hero MotoCorp	2308.45	-29.70
Hindalco	206.65	-1.60
Hind Unilever	1974.75	-31.45
ICICI Bank	539.25	2.20
IndusInd Bank	1493.40	8.00
Bharti Infratel	248.25	-4.15
Infosys	714.00	2.70
Indian Oil Corp	126.15	-2.10
ITC	236.90	-4.70
JSW Steel	253.10	-4.50
Kotak Bank	1703.95	11.20
L&T	1303.00	-2.30
M&M	508.85	-7.35
Maruti Suzuki	7140.05	-74.90
Nestle India Ltd.	14151.65	-149.95
NTPC	114.95	-0.70
ONGC	125.60	-0.90
PowerGrid Corp	186.95	1.25
Reliance Ind	1566.60	-16.30
State Bank	331.85	-0.70
Sun Pharma	435.15	-4.10
Tata Motors	174.95	-1.75
Tata Steel	421.00	-7.40
TCS	2126.75	55.50
Tech Mahindra	773.30	11.45
Titan	1165.65	-20.50
UltraTech Cement	4061.25	-21.35
UPL	563.70	-1.30
Vedanta	147.15	-2.25
Wipro	243.15	-0.70
YES Bank	46.80	0.15
Zee Entertainment	278.25	-1.45

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on December 16

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.79	71.11
Euro	78.85	79.24
British Pound	94.60	95.03
Japanese Yen (100)	64.69	64.98
Chinese Yuan	10.11	10.16
Swiss Franc	71.98	72.32
Singapore Dollar	52.25	52.49
Canadian Dollar	53.91	54.16
Malaysian Ringgit	17.08	17.17

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

December 16 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	47.5	(47.3)
22 ct gold (1 g)	3622	(3600)

'Future revenues critical for finance panel'

States are lulled into complacency by the assured compensation cess, says N.K. Singh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Future revenues are the most critical issue for the 15th Finance Commission, chairperson N.K. Singh said on Monday, adding that revenues from the Goods and Services Tax are the 'elephant in the room'. He also hinted at the need to consider an incentive structure for States in order to encourage increased tax collections.

Mr. Singh was speaking to journalists after the fifth meeting of the Economic Advisory Council of the Commission. The Commission has submitted its recommendation report for 2020-21 to the Finance Minister and is now working on a 'comprehensive' report for the five year period of 2021-26, he said.

On Jammu and Kashmir, he clarified that the erst-



The GST structure should be made more revenue-friendly and stakeholder-friendly, said N.K. Singh. ■R.V. MOORTHY

while State was being treated like any other Union Territory (UT) in the 20-21 report, and would receive grants directly from the Home Ministry, along with the other newly created UT of Ladakh.

The Council discussed macro assumptions for the Commission's award period

relating to real growth, the structural shift in inflation, and tax revenues and expenditure patterns at both the central and State levels.

The most critical issue was that of future revenues, especially GST revenues, said Mr. Singh, calling it the 'elephant in the room'. The

GST structure should be made more revenue-friendly and stakeholder-friendly, he said, adding that tax changes need predictability and certainty.

He suggested that while the 14% rate of GST compensation to States was mandatory under law for the initial five-year transition period, he would not recommend 'a mechanical replication' in subsequent years.

'Race to the bottom'

Mr. Singh noted that while States have complained that GST revenues have been lower than expected, none of their Finance Ministers has raised protests, individually or collectively, in the GST Council of which they are a part. He said States had a collective tendency for a 'race to the bottom', accusing them of being 'lulled into a

state of complacency' due to the assured 14% compensation cess. In the pre-GST era, State revenue officials would have worked harder to ensure that their tax collections met revenue targets, said Mr. Singh, suggesting that there may be a need for an incentive structure to encourage the State machinery to improve collections and tax compliance.

His comments come two days before the GST Council meeting slated for December 18, where States are expected to push the Centre on delayed payments from GST compensation cess. There has been a shortfall of GST collections so far this year.

While the government had budgeted for ₹6,63,343 crore in GST collections for 2019-20, only about 50% of the target has been collected in the first eight months.

Growth slowdown not entirely due to global factors, says Shaktikanta Das

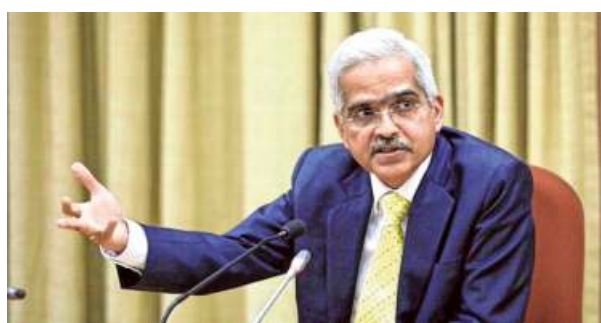
'RBI saw a momentum for slowdown building up, and started cutting rates'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has called for greater coordination among all countries to revive growth, while observing that the growth slowdown in India was not entirely due to global factors.

"What is important is coordinated action by all advanced and emerging economies to revive growth. I am not implying that the slowdown in India is entirely due to global factors. But it does impact the growth prospects of India," he said at an event.

GDP growth slowed down to a 26-quarter low at 4.5% in the second quarter of the



Das capital: The RBI Governor called for coordinated action by advanced and emerging economies to revive growth. ■REUTERS

current fiscal. In its monetary policy meeting held earlier this month, RBI cut growth projections to 5% from 6.1% projected in October. "For emerging market countries like India, it is im-

portant that there is quick revival of growth. Therefore, there is a need for timely and coordinated action by all countries," Mr. Das said.

Despite a forecast for lower growth, RBI held interest

rates in December due to concerns on rising prices. The CPI inflation projection was revised upwards to 5.1-4.7% for the second half of 2019-20 and 4.0-3.8% for the first half of 2020-21.

"The relative emphasis between growth and inflation will depend on prevailing macroeconomic scenario, inflation and growth outlook and signals emerging from incoming data," Mr. Das said. "We acted a little bit ahead of time in terms of reducing our policy rates. As early as February this year, the RBI saw that a momentum for slowdown was building up, so started cutting rates this year," he added.

ArcelorMittal forms JV with Nippon Steel

60:40 venture to operate Essar Steel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

ArcelorMittal, the world's largest steel maker, on Monday, completed the acquisition of Essar Steel India Ltd. Simultaneously, the firm established a joint venture with Nippon Steel Corporation (Nippon Steel) - ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Limited (AMNS India) - to own and operate ESIL. "ArcelorMittal holds 60% of AMNS India, with Nippon Steel holding the balance," the company said in a statement, adding that Aditya Mittal, president and CFO of ArcelorMittal, had been appointed chairman of AMNS India, and Dilip Oommen as the CEO. Lakshmi Mittal,

chairman and CEO of ArcelorMittal, said: "The acquisition of Essar Steel is an important strategic step for ArcelorMittal. We have been looking at suitable opportunities to build a meaningful production presence in the country for over a decade."

AMNS India's current level of annualised crude steel production is 7.5 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). The JV aims to increase the shipments to 8.5 mtpa in the medium term and to increase the finished steel shipments to between 12-15 million tonnes through the addition of new iron and steel-making assets in the long term.

Costlier food items spur WPI to 0.58%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The wholesale price-based inflation quickened to 0.58% in November 2019 against 0.16% in October. However, year-on-year, slowed compared to 4.47% in November 2018.

A Commerce Ministry statement said the index for food articles rose 1.4% due to higher prices of urad, fish-marine, moong, rajma, jowar, egg, condiments and spices, fruits and vegetables and poultry chicken. Prices of maize, tea and ragi declined.

The index for non-food articles rose by 0.6% higher prices of items such as in floriculture, raw rubber, raw jute and fodder.

Legacy arms help AI in cruising through steep financial headwinds

Airline able to meet operational expenses

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

At a time when Air India (AI) is striving to keep the operations going despite serious financial crunch, several of its arms are helping it stay afloat.

These institutions, namely its engineering division, now called Air India Engineering Services Ltd., that runs MRO services, its security department with 3,600 personnel as well as its Aviation Security Training Institute, in-house crew training institute and simulator facility are helping it to manage operations in a cost-effective manner.

In the recent past, the government has cut the financial lifeline to the loss-making national carrier which is being sold or dis-invested through a listing.

Currently, the airline, which operates flights to 42 international and 75 domestic destinations, has been left to fend for itself and is on a hand-to-mouth existence. It is paying cash to lift fuel on a daily basis.

The MRO arm, apart from catering to the airline's requirement, earned ₹100 crore from other airlines.

The security department earned ₹23 crore from foreign and domestic airlines and even its headquarters at Nariman Point, with its unique fire department, is earning an annual rental income of over ₹100 crore.

All these may be small compared to the Maharaja's daily losses, but they are helping in some way, officials said.

"Inherently, there are a lot of strengths in the company. The MRO and the security and crew training departments are unique to AI. Very few airlines in the world have such facilities. Since the expertise is available with AI, we are doing



much of the work internally. It is a huge cost saving," said Ravi Bodade, regional director (Western Region), Air India.

"AI is operationally profitable. We are meeting our operational expenses and to a certain extent, we are managing this because of the in-house organisations. When you cook at home, you save a lot on food. We are maintaining our aircraft on our own, we have our own security set up, our own ground handling department. If we were to avail all these from outside, our expenses could have been much higher," he said.

Officials said despite all odds, the airline started nine new international flights in the last six months, besides several new domestic flights. "Don't evaluate AI on the [basis of] balance sheet only. There is lot of legacy. There is lot of inherent power in the company, in its employees. One has to look at the airline holistically," said its spokesperson.

Officials said the mandate for the management is to operate the airline till it is disinvested and they were focussed on doing that. "Air India is a strong going concern," Mr. Bodade said.

(The writer visited several facilities of Air India in Mumbai at the invitation of the Ministry of Civil Aviation)

Equitas Small Finance Bank files for IPO

REUTERS
BENGALURU

Equitas Small Finance Bank filed for an initial public offering (IPO) on Monday, days after the listing of a fellow small-finance lender drew strong interest from investors. The bank said it would offer a fresh issue to raise up to ₹5.5 billion, while its parent Equitas Holdings Ltd. would offer to sell up to 80 million shares in the lender.

Shares in Ujivan Small Finance Bank, one of India's largest such lenders, were subscribed over 165 times on the final day of its IPO this month, indicating strong investor interest.

"The size of the India market in terms of financially-excluded households offers scope for sustainable credit to the poor at affordable rates to drive growth for SFBs in India," Equitas said in its IPO paperwork.

U.K. HC rejects plea against Anil Ambani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The U.K. High Court has dismissed summary judgement application of a \$680 million claim raised by Chinese banks against industrialist Anil Ambani.

"Mr. Ambani's position that the claim made by Chinese Banks in relation to his alleged guarantee for corporate loans availed by Reliance Communications could not be granted by it way of a summary judgement has been duly upheld by the U.K. High Court," said a spokesperson for Anil Ambani.

However, the court has asked his lawyers to present evidence during the course of the trial to establish that the claims raised by the Chinese banks are without any merit.

RBI kept out Muslim long-term visa holders from property-buying right

2018 circular extended benefits to minorities from countries mentioned in CAA

MANOJIT SAHA
MUMBAI

With the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) coming into force, the spotlight is now on a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) circular issued back in March 2018 that allowed the new beneficiaries of the Act to buy immovable property.

The RBI notification, under the Foreign Exchange Management (Acquisition and Transfer of Immovable Property in India) Regulations, 2018, issued on March 26, 2018, said, "A person being a citizen of Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, belonging to minority communities in those countries, namely, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, who is residing in India and has been granted a Long Term Visa (LTV) by the



Central government may purchase only one residential immovable property in India as dwelling unit for self-occupation and only one immovable property for carrying out self-employment."

The CAA talks about granting citizenship to persecuted minorities, the same minorities that the RBI guidelines talked about, and from the same countries -

Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Since these guidelines were issued, under the foreign exchange management regulations, these were issued after consultation with the government.

Central banking sources said when the circular was issued by the RBI, the NRC or CAB (Citizenship Amendment Bill) were "nowhere on the horizon."

"The government had asked what it should do with those who had been residing in the country for a long time. So, it was agreed to allow them to buy property for residing and land for making a living," said a source. The source added the RBI was not aware of the government's intention, if any, nor was it discussed or asked. "The issue of citizenship

comes under the domain of the Home Ministry and these issues are not discussed with the central bank," the source said.

An email sent to the RBI for its comment on the issue remained unanswered till the time of going to the press.

In November 2018, the RBI allowed citizens of Bangladesh or Pakistan, belonging to the same set of minority communities in those countries, who were residing in India and had applied for a LTV to open one NRO Account.

"[NRO Account] will be opened for a period of six months and may be renewed at six-monthly intervals subject to the condition that the individual holds a valid visa and valid residential permit," the RBI norms said.

RBI asks banks to waive NEFT charges

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India has asked all the banks to waive charges levied for National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) for online transactions, with a view to boost digital payments.

"To give further impetus to digital retail payments, it has now been decided that member banks shall not levy any charges from their savings bank account holders for funds transfers done through NEFT system which are initiated online (viz. Internet banking and/or mobile apps of the banks)," RBI said. The rules are effective January 1, 2020. Banks used to charge about ₹5 for NEFT transactions between ₹10,000 and ₹1 lakh, ₹15 for transactions between ₹1 lakh up to ₹2 lakh and ₹25 for the ₹2 lakh-₹5 lakh range.

BYD plans to make India a hub for S. Asia business

Chinese firm plans to treble lithium-ion battery capacity, deepen presence in electric mobility in India

RAGHUVIR SRINIVASAN
CHENNAI

Shenzhen-based BYD Co. Ltd., which counts Warren Buffett among its investors, is charting out major plans to electrify its presence in India, which it sees as a "global powerbank", and make the country a hub for its South Asia business.

The \$20-billion company already produces electric buses and batteries in India and recently did a soft launch of its electric van. It plans to treble its lithium-ion battery capacity in the country apart from further deepening its presence in the electric mobility space.

"We're taking the market very seriously and all the information that we've been collecting from the government and other sources give us the confidence to invest in India," Zhang Jie, Executive



BYD's recently launched electric van T3 MPV, flanked by its Tang electric and hybrid cars. ■RAGHUVIR SRINIVASAN

Director, BYD India Pvt. Ltd., told a group of Indian journalists who visited the company's headquarters in Shenzhen last week.

Listed in the Hong Kong and Shenzhen stock exchanges, BYD, which controls about 7% of the world's

lithium mines is the only company in the world that is linked from mines to batteries and further to electric vehicles.

The company, which has a capacity of 65 giga watts (GW) to produce lithium ion batteries in China, currently

owns a IGW plant near Chennai. It wants to position itself for the upcoming electric vehicle revolution in India by trebling its battery capacity but it's not clear if the expansion will be in Chennai or through a new plant elsewhere.

Pointing to the need for a clear roadmap from the government for the shift to electric vehicles, Mr. Zhang said that the company would come in fully with vendors and a sizeable capacity for producing electric vehicles once the roadmap was clear.

There are 214 electric buses produced by BYD that are now running in India, a majority of them in Hyderabad. It now plans to expand into inter-city transport where it is already testing its vehicles. It aims to sell about 2,000 units of electric buses in 2020 in India.

The electric van, T3 MPV, will be sold through B2B channels for now. At some stage in the near future, BYD electric cars will be launched in India and the company is careful to preserve its brand image.

Electric forklifts are another key focus area where BYD aims to carve out a 15% share of the market in the next three years.

The Chinese major also plans to assemble mobile phones in the country. The company signed an MoU with the Tamil Nadu government two weeks ago to invest ₹2,800 crore in a phone assembly unit near Chennai that will employ 11,500 people. Mr Zhang did not confirm though if this will be to assemble the I-Phone.

(The correspondent was in Shenzhen recently at the invitation of BYD)

SRAVASTI DATTA

Bengaluru-based Priya Kuriyan is one of India's noted illustrators. When we meet her in Bengaluru, where she lives, Priya is quick to dismiss any claims to greatness: "I haven't counted the number of books I have illustrated," adding: "I don't approach projects thinking they are going to be a magnum opus and that is what I teach my students too. I try to push myself to be better with every project."

However, Priya's works have consistently been of high quality, bearing a distinctive, signature style. She is a book artist, comic book illustrator and animator, and has collaborated with well-known names in the publishing industry, including Tulika Books, and authors such as Manu S Pillai.

Excerpts from an interview, in which the graduate of The National Institute of Design, talks about winning the Big Little Book Award 2019 for the best children's illustrator, instituted by Parag, which she received during the Tata Literature Live! The Mumbai Litfest 2019, and her career so far.

The jurors comments at the Big Little Book Awards were 'Priya Kuriyan has the rare ability to get inside a child's mind with her illustrations... the story emerges through her lines, textures, colours that harmonize to allow the illustrations not only to speak with the text but also read the subtext'. How did this style evolve?

● When I began illustrating children's books, I didn't consciously think about these things. Over a period of time, with experience, I felt subtext was important in terms of creating atmosphere, even making a book being politically conscious. These came out of experience.

You worked as an animator in a production house in Mumbai that made commercials and later for the Sesame Street show (Galli Galli Sim Sim) in Delhi. How did you journey into illustrating children's books?

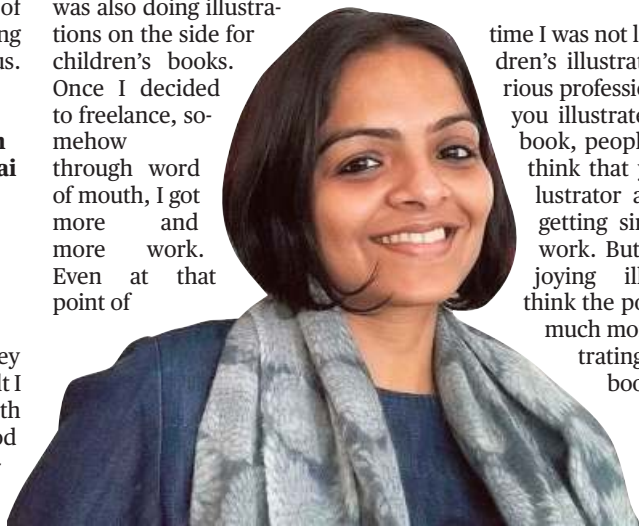
● At the production house, they made ad films. At some point, I felt I should be doing better things with my life. The workplace was good and I had a good boss, who mentored me well. When you are working in a production house,



Wielding her illustrative PEN

there are tight deadlines, so you have to finish something well, yet on time, so those are good lessons to learn from your first job. But at the end of the day, you have to push different products and I got a bit tired of that. There was this production house in Delhi that produced the *Sesame Street* show. That is when I started working on children's content specifically. The show however didn't get good TRPs, so it wrapped up. I was also doing illustrations on the side for children's books.

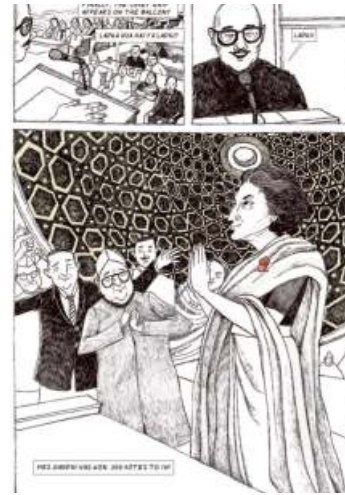
Once I decided to freelance, somehow through word of mouth, I got more and more work. Even at that point of



Priya Kuriyan says what we spend on celebrity authors should be spent on children's writing as they are our future readers and need to be nurtured

time I was not looking at children's illustrations as a serious profession. Also, once you illustrate a children's book, people continue to think that you are an illustrator and you start getting similar kind of work. But I started enjoying illustrating. I think the possibilities are much more, while illustrating children's books.

How does the creative process



work between the author and illustrator?

● In some cases the publisher acts as a mediator between the author and the illustrator. Sometimes the author and illustrator don't talk, but that has become less of the case now. I prefer, especially if it is a picture book, to speak to the author from time to time. When it comes to picture books it is a collaboration, where half the work is the illustrator's and half the work is the author's. I read the script entirely to get a sense of what the story is about and send rough sketches, which the publisher and author see and get back to you.

Ammachi's Glasses is your own wordless picture book, based on your paternal grandmother?

● When I was in Delhi, I wanted to write a children's book. I was illustrating other people's stories and I thought it was time to write my own. The story was about my grandmother. I had gone to the workshop in Delhi in 2014, conducted by Anushka Ravishankar

Telling tales Priya says the idea for *Ammachi's Glasses* was always there at the back of her mind

and Anusuya Basu. I had developed a story there, done sketches and written the text. When I sent it to the publishers, Tulika, they suggested I remove the text, as the book works well with just illustrations.

Was the idea for *Ammachi's Glasses* always with you or did it suddenly spring up?

● The idea was always there, not the losing the glasses part, but maybe having my paternal grandmother as a character. I lived with her in Kochi for two years. She also had a cat at home. She hated the cat and thought cats should not be domesticated. Somewhere all that kind of came together.

Tell us about your collaboration with writer Devapriya Roy on *Indira*, the graphic biography of Indira Gandhi.

● *Indira* involved a lot of research. Devapriya and I travelled together to Allahabad. I would also keep visiting Delhi because I felt it was important to visit the places where certain parts of the book were set. I had visited Parliament before, but I revisited certain spaces within Parliament, where some parts of the book are located.

Devapriya started work on the project much earlier. She spent a lot of time in libraries. I went through visual archives and talked to people. It took us six months to put the book together. The book is a way to introduce Indira Gandhi to the millennial.

Since 2003, when you began illustrating for children's books, have you seen a change in the industry?

● It is definitely better than when I started out. At the time there were very few publishing houses and the established publishers weren't really bringing out picture books. But things have changed drastically over the years. Yet, I think it is not enough. Children's literature needs much more attention. I still feel it gets a bit of a stepchild treatment. I find it strange because these are your future readers, you need to nurture them. What we spend on celebrity authors should be spent on children.

#DELHIMOVES

Dwarka's 'nutrition juice' makers

They collect leaves and stems from parks to offer morning exercisers some green goodness

BHUMIKA SARASWATI

If you decide to go for an early morning walk in Dwarka there are chances you'll stumble upon Vishal, offering you a juice he likes to call a "green glass ocean of nutrition."

With still-sleepy eyes, in his morning track pants, with hands folded under his arms, as if protecting himself from the chilly wind, the 24-year-old Vishal Rathi can be found from 6.30 a.m. near Sector 9, DDA Park Dwarka. He says he's been here five months now.

He stands next to his little table, on which rests his mixer-juicer and multiple green ingredients: wheatgrass, Giloy stem, raw turmeric, aloe vera, neem leaves, tulsi, bitter melon, Arjun Ke Chhaal and amla. He uses all of these to make his 'nutrition juice' which he sells at ₹30 a for small and ₹50 for a large glass.

He sources the wheatgrass from a supplier friend in Sonipat, Haryana; raw turmeric from Azadpur Mandi; and aloe vera from a Rajasthan supplier. The rest, he says, point-



ing to the park, is from the plants and trees there. "I wake up at four in the morning and go to spots I've identified in the park to gather the ingredients," says Vishal.

"These things are right here; we just don't



For health seekers (Far left) Groceries that go into the juice; Vishal Rathi

■ BHUMIKA SARASWATI

asserts that people in the city are always on the run and often fail to take in the right nutrients.

Both Vishal and his brother Pradeep Rathi, who sells a similar juice outside Sector 10 DDA Park Dwarka (near Golak Dham Temple), intend to register their juice bars with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the process of which, they claim, has already begun.

Meanwhile, his friends-cum-associates Dev Sachdeva and Sagar Jha can be spotted selling their juices near Sector 2, DDA Dwarka Park (near Baskaracharya College of Applied Science) and, near DDA Park, Old Bus Stand, Bindapur, West Delhi at a similar price from 6.30 to 11.30 am.

After their service morning exercisers at the parks, Vishal, along with his brother and friends, return to Ramphal Chowk, Sector 7 Dwarka where they manage their health centre.

From the daily hustle, if there's anything Vishal cannot miss, it's his regular keep-fit session. Having been trained as an athlete for four years with the Army Sports Institute, Pune, it has become a part of his regular schedule to work out for a minimum of two hours a day at the same park he services. Here, he does an endurance run and flexibility exercises. Sometimes, the juice maker will guide young students with their exercise in the park.

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



PERFORMANCE

Sitar recital

India Habitat Centre, in collaboration with Bhartiya Jnanpith, is hosting a sitar recital by Gaurav Majumdar, a disciple of Pandit Ravi Shankar, this evening. Allahabad-born Mazumdar, who moved to Delhi in pursuit of music, is a Hindustani classical musician. His style of playing belongs to the Maihar-Senia tradition.

VENUE: Amalats Hall, IHC
TIME: 7 p.m.



FILM

Asian delight

The Kimono Club, a modern Asian bar and restaurant has introduced a new menu with a live dimsum station, which serves Japanese and Chinese delicacies. The new menu includes signature dishes like, Wagarashi Prawns Almond Wasabi, Duck Carpaccio, Lobster and Truffle Dumpling, Ganmo Steak Teriyaki, and more.

VENUE: The Chanakya, Chanakyaपुरी
TIME: 12 noon - 12:45 a.m.



EXHIBITION

Oil paintings

The ongoing painting show titled *Pinnacle* is a journey of stroke by noted artist Ramesh Anand. Dewas-born Ramesh, generally uses oil paints but his colour selection gives a new sense to his paintings. After a long journey with figures, this collection of his works depicts monuments, structures and mountains in vibrant colours.

VENUE: Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House
TIME: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.



FOOD

Special menu

The Wine Company, a modern Indian and European cuisine at Gurugram, offers a special winter menu. Curated by its in-house chef Mrigank, the menu has Chicken Liver Pate with Pink Peppercorn Bruschettas, Fried Fish Soft Tacos, Twice Baked Crab Souffle, Jackfruit Tacos, all served with the Barley and Quinoa Salad.

VENUE: Cyber Hub, DLF Cyber City
TIME: 12:30-4 p.m. and 5 p.m.-1 a.m.



RETAIL

Winter mela

Dastkar, the society for crafts and artisans, has organised its annual winter mela. On till 23rd December, the mela offers some of the warmest and vibrant of Indian crafts such as, Tussar silk, Mashru weaves, Kullu and Kinnar shawls, Ikat weaves, Jamdani and Banarasi brocades, quilts, knitted sweaters, capes, jackets and carpets.

VENUE: Nature Bazaar, Antheria Modh
TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

PRODUCTS

**Tik tok**

Hermle Clocks, the 96-year-old German family-owned clock-maker, has launched a range of its hand-crafted clocks in India. The manufacturer still makes mechanical clocks, from the classical grandfather and mantle to table and wall clocks. Their Tellurium reproduces the earth's annual orbit around the sun as well the 29.5-day moon cycle.

At Hermleclocks.in, upward of ₹20,000

Contact us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in



DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

This year showed various tech ecosystems pushing themselves beyond typical barriers. Call it marketing to keep users dazzled in the long run. Apps, in particular, have made indelible marks on our quotidian routines. That said, on December 2, Apple held an experiential Best Of 2019 conference, where the top apps for the year across their devices – iPhone, Mac, iPad, Apple TV – and trends, were all under the same roof in a chilly neighbourhood in Manhattan. The event aimed at letting developers rub shoulders with other developers.

The young and the restless
With mobile photography taken to a whole new level, it seemed as though DSLRs and other pricey hardware became a thing of the past this year. One of the champions of aggrandised mobile experiences is Lux Optics' Spectre Camera, which was awarded iPhone App Of The Year. This AI-fuelled app at just under 16 megabytes lets users take long-exposure photos, which means you can make crowds or traffic disappear, create light painting effects and eerie waterfalls. Expect features such as auto-stabilisation (sorry, tripod fanatics), scene detection and intelligent exposure. The app is just ₹249 with no further in-app purchases.

Co-founder Sebastiaan de With wrote in a Medium blog post on December 4, "Spectre is young – we launched the app in February, and were overwhelmed with the positive response. It was the top paid app in the United States for almost a full week... We are not done with Spectre. We think there is a lot of exciting opportunities for computational photography left for us to explore. We have huge plans in 2020, and

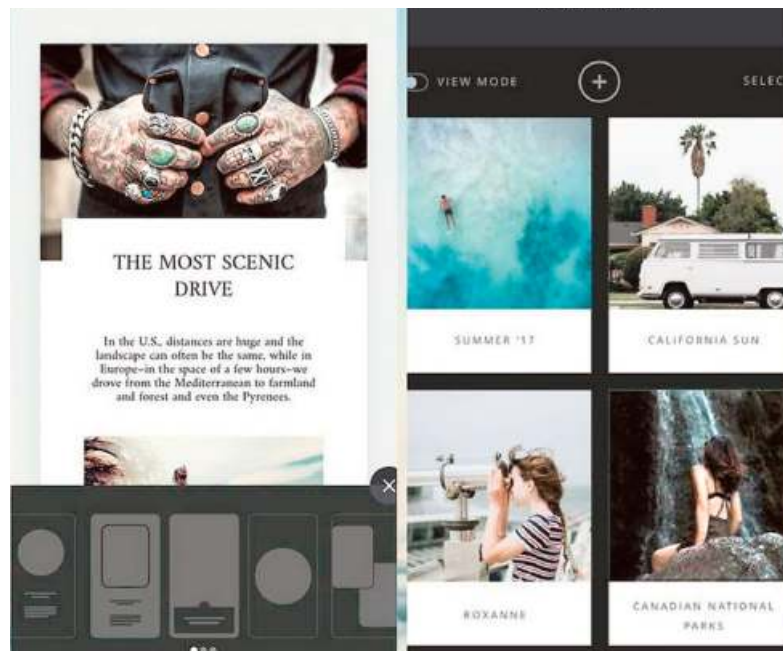
can't wait to show you what we have been working on."

Graphic designers had much to play with this year, too. iPad App Of 2019 is Flow By Moleskine, a digital notebook allowing users to create their hearts' content using calligraphy pens, graphite pencils and chisel-tipped markers, mimicking the real thing. These tips have been calibrated to the millimetre too. To add to the experience, one can re-mark over previous lines to intensify colours.

Mac App Of The Year, Affinity Publisher, is a pro-level design suite – yes, suite – by Serif, a tech company founded in 1987. With Affinity Publisher (₹3999), users need not switch between programmes for different tasks within a single project. With its elegant user experience and reasonable price point, Affinity Publisher makes pro-level design accessible to everyone, whether you are creating a photo-rich coffee table book or a flyer for your child's play. Managing director of Serif, Ashley Hewson, believes Affinity Publisher, which launched in June, is Serif's biggest project by far. The suite is rich in features: one being its StudioLink technology,

All about the VISUAL

Apple's Best Of 2019 event in New York City was an opportunity to talk shop with the developers of some of the year's eye-catching apps



What's trending (Clockwise from far left) Affinity Publisher, screenshots from 'Storytelling Simplified' app, Unfold, Sayonara Wild Hearts, Flow by Moleskine, Spectre Camera
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Dragon's Trap by DotEmu won Apple TV Game of 2019. Noticeably, these games have a similar aesthetics of minimalism, while still supplying immersive storylines.

It seemed as though Apple's subscription gaming service Arcade had barely got its feet wet – given it only launched in September – but Simogo stole hearts (pun intended) with Sayonara Wild Hearts. The game, published by Annapurna Interactive, features two-dimensional animation – the kind that gets your adrenaline pumping and makes your spirit soar. It has got an otherworldly premise too: the heart of a young woman breaks and the balance of the universe is disturbed... naturally. Suddenly, a diamond butterfly appears in her dreams and leads her through a highway in the sky, where she finds her alter-ego: the masked biker called The Fool. The game has you racing motorcycles, wielding swords and breaking hearts at 200 miles an hour. For Indian gamers, the music of the game was the show-stealer, as it was catchy and synthetic, complementing the snazzy visuals. Sayonara Wild Hearts by Daniel Olsén, Jonathan Eng and Linnea Olsson is available in its full album form on Spotify and Apple Music. In this subculture, it would have been interesting to see AI-powered games, given that has been a major emerging tech for the past couple of years.

With UX design being a point of contention for many developers and designers this year, clearly Apple's mind was largely on 'the pretty', proving 2019 has been the year of vanity with borderline-unhealthy doses of pop culture.

The writer was at Apple's Best Of 2019 Special Event in New York at the invitation of Apple Inc.



which allows owners of vector design app Affinity Designer and image editor Affinity Photo to use them right there in an Affinity Publisher layout, simply by clicking the relevant product icon.

Traveller fanatics are gleeful that The Explorers takes home Apple TV App Of 2019, for its support of the community of explorers, scientists and artists, working to create a comprehensive "visual inventory" of the natural world through photo and video. Headed by Olivier Chiabodo and Jean-Pierre Morel, the team features PhD scientists, aerial chief operators and video engineers. The Explorers is free to install but there is premium paid content within the app itself.

Gaming taken higher

Games this year focussed on two things: visuals and plots. Sky: Children of the Light by thatgamecompany won iPhone Game Of 2019, Hyper Light Drifter by Abylight SL won iPad Game Of 2019, GRIS by Devolver / Nomada Studio won Mac Game Of 2019 and Wonder Boy: The

STANDOUT TRENDS

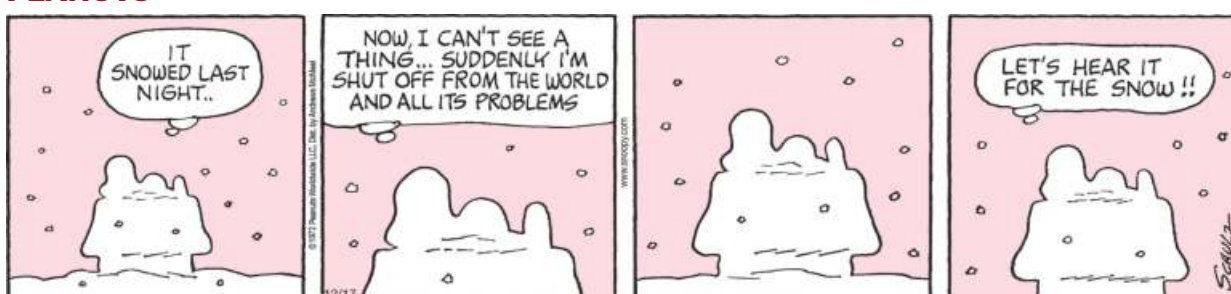
In the name of storytelling, a groundswell of apps culminated in App Trend of 2019 'STORYTELLING SIMPLIFIED.' At the event, reps from Anchor (Anchor FM), Unfold by Unfold Creative, Steller by Expedition Travel Advisor, Over by Over, Inc and Wattpad by Wattpad Corp were present too.

But when it comes to Game Trend of 2019, 'BLOCKBUSTERS REIMAGINED' saw enhanced revivals of Mario Kart Tour by Nintendo, Minecraft Earth by Mojang, Pokémon Masters by DeNA Co, Call of Duty: Mobile by Activision Publishing, Assassin's Creed Rebellion by Ubisoft among others.

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



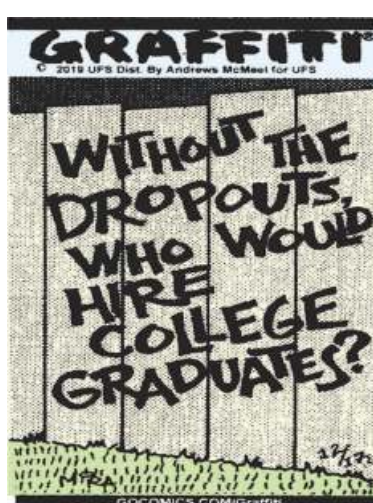
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



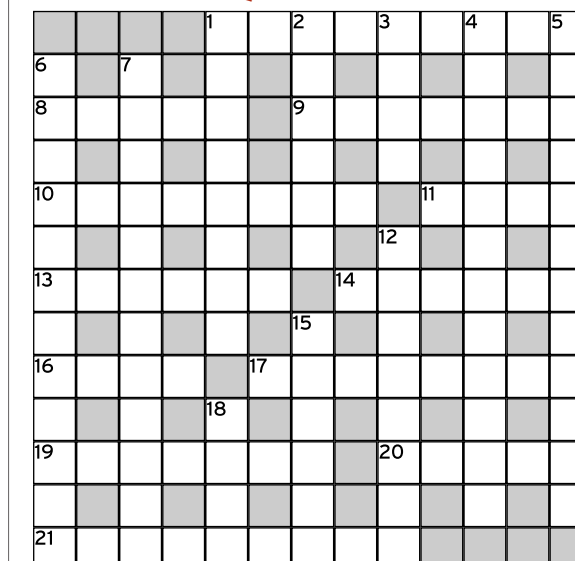
CALVIN AND HOBBS



TIGER



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13252

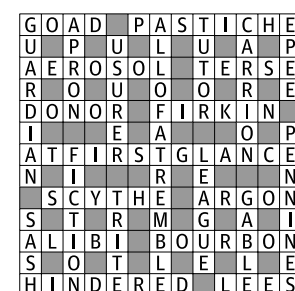


- 2 Snuggle (6)
- 3 Send a written message by phone (4)
- 4 Taking place without being made public (12)
- 5 Acts on what is being implied (5,3,4)
- 6 Avoiding close contact (2,4,6)
- 7 Map-maker (12)
- 12 Trained (8)
- 15 Moral standards (6)
- 18 Name unknown (abbr) (4)

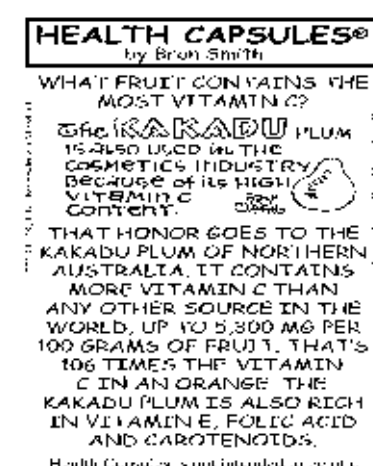
Solution will appear in The Hindu dated December 18, 2019.

Solution No. 13251

- 1 Build (9)
- 8 Drink to the health of (5)
- 9 Well-defined abdominal muscles (3-4)
- 10 Woman's small handbag in the form of a pouch (8)
- 11 American composer of Three Places in New England, d. 1954 (4)
- 13 Endorsed (6)
- 14 Burn slightly (6)
- 16 Test (abbr) (4)
- 17 Reprimand firmly (8)
- 19 Judaism's Hell (7)
- 20 Sleep on (3,2)
- 21 Tough and uncompromising (4-5)



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Hetmyer's knock perfectly timed

With the IPL auction on Thursday, there will be a clamour for his signature

WI IN INDIA

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

Shimron Hetmyer showed glimpses of his talent during the five-match ODI series against India last October, making a hundred and a 94, though not in winning causes.

On Sunday, he changed all that with a career-best 139 that helped West Indies win at a canter and take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

The 22-year-old Guyanese batsman couldn't have timed his knock better as the IPL auction is scheduled to be held on December 19.

Last month, Royal Challengers Bangalore, led by Virat Kohli, released him after a poor run in the 2019 IPL season where he scored just 90 from five matches, 75 of those coming in his final innings. Hetmyer couldn't have chosen a better opponent than India to click again.

When asked if he wanted to prove a point, Hetmyer played it down. "To me, it's about enjoying my batting, it's cricket – sometimes you score runs and sometimes you don't. I didn't have the best IPL. But it is a nice experience, it always helps you to come back much stronger from there. I just try as much as possible to put that behind me."

In good form

The youngster came into the series on the back of some solid scores in T20Is and,



Firing on all cylinders: Shimron Hetmyer, who was promoted to the No. 3 slot during the Afghanistan series last month, played with freedom and confidence on Sunday. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

To me, it's about enjoying my batting, it's cricket – sometimes you can score runs and sometimes you don't

SHIMRON HETMYER

along with Nicholas Pooran and Shai Hope, is seen as a vital member of the West Indies batting line-up.

Hetmyer has utilised the opportunity to bat at No. 3 – he earned promotion during the Afghanistan series last month – and at the MAC Sta-

dium on Sunday, played with freedom and confidence. This allowed Shai Hope to play second fiddle without taking any risks.

It was a crucial victory for the West Indies as it seeks to regain some momentum in the ODIs after not winning a bilateral series in five years until last month's triumph against Afghanistan.

Even after Hetmyer was dismissed, Hope and Pooran showed a calm head, not trying to hit the bowlers out of the park, seeing off Kuldeep

Yadav and targeting Mohammed Shami and debutant Shivam Dube.

For India, a huge positive was the fact that the middle-order batsmen – Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant and Kedar Jadhav – put their hands up after the top-three had a rare off-day. The trio bailed the team out from a precarious 80 for three and took it to 287.

The context of the match and the conditions – a sluggish wicket – meant that the knocks will carry more

weight and give them extra confidence. However, in Hardik Pandya's absence, the team's balance is not ideal, especially with Jadhav and Dube – the latter being new to international cricket – having to share 10 overs between them.

A wake-up call

Sunday's defeat will give India a wake-up call. But the team has shown in recent times that it has the ability to bounce back. Pollard's men need to be on their toes.

Has Pant turned a corner?

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

No current Indian cricketer has been under such immense scrutiny as Rishabh Pant.

The 22-year-old wicket-keeper-batsman's poor run with the bat has seen him being dropped from the Test side.

And at various venues across the country Pant has received a hostile reaction from fans who chant 'Dhoni Dhoni' whenever he messes up a DRS or drops a catch.

Coming into the first ODI here on Sunday, there were even suggestions from the team management that the option of K.L. Rahul donning the gloves could be considered at some point in case

Pant's form did not improve.

But the stylish batsman silenced a lot of his critics with a mature display on a difficult Chepauk wicket which was slow and where the ball was not coming on to the bat.

When Pant walked in at No. 5, India was in a spot of bother at 80 for three in the 19th over.

Usually aggressive right from the word go, he took his time to settle down before playing some of his trademark shots during his 69-ball 71.

The left-hander took six balls to get off the mark and had only eight off the first 17 balls he faced before hitting his first boundary, a flick through midwicket off Alzar-

ri Joseph. He went after off-spinner Roston Chase, pulling him through midwicket and going down on his knees to swat the bowler over midwicket for a six.

Classic shot

He then turned his attention to Holder. The first boundary came off a classic Pant shot – moving across the off-stump, crouching and shovelling it over square leg. The next was hit straight past the bowler.

As a pleasant surprise, the crowd in Dhoni's adopted home – Chennai – rooted for the youngster with chants of 'Rishabh Pant Rishabh Pant'.

The Delhi youngster may have just turned the corner with this knock.

Pollard – a guide for young guns

"Talent needs time and patience to be nurtured"

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
VISAKHAPATNAM

For someone who missed out three to four years of international cricket, the big-hitting all-rounder, Kieron Pollard, was the most unlikely cricketer to lead West Indies as it prepares to defend the T20 World Cup next year in Australia.

And, if his body-language is any hint, Pollard seems to be enjoying the role of a leader, giving a new direction to the team which is admired by many across the world.

Apparently, Cricket West Indies had few options than to look beyond Pollard as captain for the recent limited-overs series against Afghanistan and India.

Significantly it has helped young talents like Evin Lewis, Simron Hetmyer and Shai Hope to express themselves freely against India, with the last two slamming centuries to guide the team to a terrific win in the first ODI in Chennai.

The team arrived here on Monday for the second match scheduled on December 18.

The 32-year-old Pollard had missed out the 2019 World Cup when he was a reserve, has already hinted at bringing back the special-



Guiding force: West Indies captain Pollard and coach Phil Simmons have hinted at bringing back the specialists playing at their best positions. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

The most important thing for the management is to have patience even while being honest with yourself

Full backing

What will delight the young guns in this West Indies outfit is they have the unstinted

backing of a captain whose philosophy is simple – need to give people time in everything we do.

POLLARD

backing of a captain whose philosophy is simple – need to give people time in everything we do.

"The young talent need experience and we as the management want to back these guys and see how far we can go because we have seen their talent and attitude and that's some of the things we look at. So, exciting times for these youngsters," he had said in Hyderabad before the start of the T20 series.

"It's just a matter of trying to reach them and ease them into the world of international cricket, which we know is a very, very tough place. Again, the most important thing for the management is to have patience even while being honest with yourself," Pollard explained.

"Sometimes, you need to have that umbrella over them and try and protect them from the vultures that're out to take down their careers pretty quickly," Pollard said.

Will Pollard see a turnaround in the fortunes of the West Indies as it embarks on the journey to defend the T20 World Cup in Australia next year? Only time will tell.



The skipper is here: Virat Kohli on arrival at the Visakhapatnam airport on Monday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

Back in business

Rishabh Pant notched up his first ODI half-century on Sunday. His previous highest score of 48 came against Bangladesh in the 2019 World Cup

LAST 10 ODIs

Runs	Average	Highest	SR
277	28.78	71	92.33



LAST 10 INNINGS

Format	Opponent	Runs	Balls faced
Test	West Indies	31	57
Test	West Indies	27	65
T20I	South Africa	4	5
T20I	South Africa	19	20
T20I	Bangladesh	27	26
T20I	Bangladesh	6	9
T20I	West Indies	18	9
T20I	West Indies	33	22
T20I	West Indies	0	2
ODI	West Indies	71	69

IPL auction to go ahead as scheduled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The protests over the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act notwithstanding, the players' auction for the IPL will go ahead in Kolkata as scheduled on Thursday.

There have been reports of violence in West Bengal but Kolkata hasn't exactly been affected.

It is reliably learnt that the Delhi Capitals' team management, that will be representing the franchise at the auction, will reach Kolkata on Tuesday to start the final preparation.

"As of Monday evening, IPL auctions are on. Franchises will start arriving by tomorrow evening and Wednesday morning," a senior BCCI official said.

As many as 332 cricketers will go under the hammer on December 19 with Glenn Maxwell and Dale Steyn among those opting for the highest base price of ₹2 crore.

In this year's auction, 73 slots are there to be filled in eight franchises and only 29 of them can be foreign buys.

Benzema salvages draw at Valencia

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Real Madrid missed the chance to replace Barcelona at the top of La Liga ahead of Wednesday's Clasico but salvaged a 1-1 draw against Valencia as Karim Benzema scored a dramatic injury-time equaliser.

Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois ventured up for a final corner at Mestalla and it was his header that caused panic in the Valencia box, before the ball fell perfectly for Benzema to strike in the 95th minute.

"Opponents can get a little nervous if I go up," said

Courtois. "Toni (Kroos) hit the corner to the near post and I just saw the ball was at my height and I caught it well."

Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said: "He decided to go up and that shows we want more, than we never give up. The draw is a reward for the effort we made, which was a lot. This is Real Madrid, a team that never gives up."

Valencia looked set for an impressive victory after Carlos Soler had put it ahead in the second half but both sides had to settle for a point at the end of a compelling contest between two of the league's form teams.

In Serie A, Dusan Vlahovic snatched a point for Fio-

rentina two minutes into injury time to frustrate Inter Milan which had led following Borja Valero's opener after eight minutes in Tuscany on Sunday.

The results:

La Liga: Espanyol 2 (Darder 19, Bernardo 41) drew with Real Betis 2 (Iglesias 4, Bartra 67); Sevilla 1 (Munir 61) lost to Villarreal 2 (Albiol 13, Toko Ekambi 74); Valencia 1 (Soler 78) drew with Real Madrid 1 (Benzema 90+5).

Serie A: Roma 3 (Pellegrini 53, Perotti 66-pen, Mkhitarjan 83) bt SPAL 1 (Petagna 44-pen); Fiorentina 1 (Vlahovic 90+2) drew with Inter Milan 1 (Borja Valero 8).

Bundesliga: Schalke 04 1 (Raman 53) bt Eintracht Frankfurt 0.



The saviour: Karim Benzema's injury time strike saves Real Madrid's blushes. ■ GETTY IMAGES

SA names six uncapped players

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JOHANNESBURG

South Africa on Monday named six uncapped players in a 17-man squad for the first two Tests against England, starting at Centurion on Dec. 26.

Five players who played in a recent 3-0 series defeat in India were dropped, while fast bowler Lungi Ngidi was not considered because of a hamstring injury.

The squad will assemble for a camp on Wednesday, with three to be released to play for South Africa A in a three-day match against England, starting Friday.

The uncapped players are opener Pieter Malan, who may get a chance if Aiden Markram has not fully recovered from injury, top-order bat Rassie van der Dussen, all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius, fast bowlers Dane Paterson and Beuran Hendricks and wicketkeeper-batsman Rudi Second.

Keshav Maharaj is the only spinner in the squad. **The squad:** Faf du Plessis (captain), Temba Bavuma, Quinton de Kock, Dean Elgar, Zubayr Hamza, Beuran Hendricks, Keshav Maharaj, Pieter Malan, Aiden Markram, Anrich Nortje, Dane Paterson, Andile Phehlukwayo, Vernon Philander, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Rudi Second, and Rassie van der Dussen.

2020 Sportstar ACES Awards

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

THE NOMINEES

SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR (TEAM SPORTS)



GURPREET SINGH SANDHU (FOOTBALL)

In 2019, Gurpreet showed why he is regarded as one of the top goalkeepers in Asian football. He kept seven clean-sheets for Bengaluru FC, most crucially in the final of the 2018-19 Indian Super League, where his team prevailed 1-0 to claim its maiden title. At the World Cup qualifier away to Qatar, Gurpreet made 11 saves against the Asian champion to help India earn a commendable point. He continued his excellent form in the 2019-20 ISL season, having conceded just once in four matches at the start of Bengaluru's title defence



MANDEEP SINGH (HOCKEY)

Since making his senior debut at the age of 17 in 2011, Mandeep has established himself as an indispensable part of the Indian forwardline. The Jalandhar player's contribution of 19 goals in 24 matches were vital to the National hockey team as it reached three multi-national tournament finals in 2019 and secured a spot at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. With his fine dribbling skills, striking ability and blistering pace, Mandeep is an important asset for Graham Reid's team, which begins its preparations for the Olympics with the FIH Pro League in January



PAWAN KUMAR SEHRAWAT (KABADDI)

After leading Bengaluru Bulls to its first ProKabaddi League title last season and bagging the Most Valuable Player award, Pawan Kumar Sehrawat continued his exploits in 2019 to finish as the league's highest scorer. With a massive 360 points against his name and a record 39 in a single game, Pawan was named the league's best raider. His spirited performances on the mat are expected to fetch him a spot in the National team for the 2020 World Cup

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

TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Six (SD & HD), 7.30 a.m.
Ranji Trophy: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.
Vijay Merchant Trophy: Star Sports 3, 9.15 a.m.
Big Bash League: Sony Six (SD & HD), 1.40 p.m.
Big Bout League: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
Bundesliga: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 11 p.m. onwards & SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 1 a.m. (Wed)

IN BRIEF



Seventh straight win for LA Lakers

LOS ANGELES
LeBron James scored 32 points as the Los Angeles Lakers won its seventh straight game with a 101-96 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Sunday. James made 12 of 21 from the field, and added 13 rebounds, seven assists and three blocks to help the Lakers extend their road winning streak to 14 games. The Lakers also got 27 points and 13 rebounds from Anthony Davis, who picked up his 12th double-double.
The results: Pelicans 119 lost to Magic 130, Pacers 107 bt Hornets 85, Hawks 96 lost to Lakers 101, Nets 109 bt 76ers 89, Nuggets 111 bt Knicks 105, Warriors 79 lost to Kings 100. AFP



Stokes is BBC Sports Personality of the Year

LONDON All-rounder Ben Stokes has been named BBC Sports Personality of the Year. Stokes became the first cricketer since Andrew Flintoff in 2005 to win the prize. Stokes was presented with his award by the Princess Royal and former Manchester United and Scotland footballer Denis Law. In a public vote, Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton finished second while sprinter Dina Asher-Smith was third. IANS

DDCA appoints three-member CAC

NEW DELHI
The Delhi & Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) on Monday appointed Robin Singh Jr, Parwinder Awana and Sumil Narwal in a new Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) for the 2019-20 season.
"We are happy to announce the constitution of the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) for the domestic season 2019-20," the DDCA said in a statement.
The committee will be responsible for picking various selection panels as well as the coaching staff of the State teams.

BFC-NEUFC match to be played behind closed doors

ISL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

Wednesday's ISL clash between Bengaluru FC and Northeast United in Guwahati will be played behind closed doors, the league has announced. The decision comes after days of protests and unrest in the region.
"The decision has been taken by Football Sports Development Limited after due consultation and guidance from the city authorities," an ISL statement read. "The League holds safety of fans, players and staff of paramount importance."

Kerala aims for a win against Bengal

The host will once again rely on spin-friendly conditions

M.R. PRAVEEN CHANDRAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

After failing to seize full points against Delhi in the season opener, host Kerala will be looking to maximize the home advantage when it meets Bengal in the Elite Group A & B match at the KCA-St.Xavier's College ground on Tuesday.

Taming Bengal in its own den at Eden Gardens last year was the high point of Kerala's campaign last season. If it was pace which brought the downfall of Bengal last year, this match could turn out to be a different challenge for the visiting batsmen with Kerala opting for red soil wickets for all its home matches. However, the host failed to bowl out Delhi twice on a slow turning track last week.

Kerala will not change its gameplan too much against



Big boost: The return of Sanju Samson will bolster the Kerala team. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bengal and will rely on its spinners again to deliver the goods. The host will be bolstered by the return of Sanju Samson and it will present some headache for captain Sachin Baby to pick up the final eleven.
Sachin Baby kept the

cards close to his chest and said the final call would be made in the morning. However, Sanju's return may mean either Mohammed Azharuddeen or Vishnu Vinod will face the axe. Spinners Jajaj Saxena, K. Monish and Sijom Joseph will shoulder

the responsibility in the spin bowling department.

Baby happy
Sachin Baby was happy with the way he batted against Delhi and backed his side to pull off a win against Bengal. "We played well against Del-

hi. We are happy with three points against a good side. Bengal has always been a good team. They will be here in full strength and it will be a tough match for us. We will play to our strength and I expect my spinners to win the match for us," said Sachin Baby.

Bengal under Abhimanyu Easwaran will be keen to start its campaign on a positive note after an indifferent show last season. The side has the wherewithal to face the challenge posed by Kerala spinners. Captain Abhimanyu Easwaran, Wriddhiman Saha, Abhishek Raman and Manoj Tiwary will be the key players in the batting line-up.

Ashoke Dinda and Ishan Porel may not find the pitch to their liking but spinners Shahbaz Ahmed and Sudip Chatterjee will have to play a pro-active role in the match.

SECOND ROUND SCHEDULE

Group A
Andhra v Delhi (Ongole), Kerala v Bengal (Thiruvananthapuram), Punjab v Hyderabad (Patiala), Vidarbha v Rajasthan (Nagpur).

Group B
Karnataka v Uttar Pradesh (Hubballi), Madhya Pradesh v Baroda (Indore), Railways v Saurashtra (Visakhapatnam), Tamil Nadu v Himachal (Natham).

Group C
Assam v Jharkhand (Ranchi), Chhattisgarh v Uttarakhand (Raipur), Haryana v Tripura (Lahli), Maharashtra v Jammu & Kashmir (Pune), Odisha v Services (Cuttack).

Plate
Arunachal Pradesh v Mizoram (Puducherry), Chandigarh v Bihar (Chandigarh), Goa v Meghalaya (Porvorim), Manipur v Nagaland (Kolkata), Pondicherry v Sikkim (Puducherry).

Karnataka, Delhi and Maharashtra post wins

SPORTS BUREAU
NEW DELHI

Delhi registered a nine-wicket victory over West Bengal in the opening match of the Samarthanam women's National T20 tournament for the blind on Monday.

Karnataka, too, opened its campaign in style, recording a seven-wicket win over Jharkhand.

In the other match of the day, Maharashtra defeated Kerala by eight wickets.

The scores:
West Bengal 32 in 10.5 overs (Namita 2/3, Raksha 2/8) lost to Delhi 34/1 in 5.2 overs; Kerala 92/7 in 20 overs lost to Maharashtra 93/2 in 10.4 overs; Jharkhand 156/6 in 20 overs (Geeta Mahto 50) lost to Karnataka 157/3 in 16.4 overs (Varsha 32 n.o.).

It's Liverpool vs Atletico

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NYON

Holder Liverpool will return to the scene of last season's Champions League triumph after it was drawn against Atletico Madrid in the last 16 of the competition on Monday.

Jürgen Klopp's side will travel to the Wanda Metropolitan, where Liverpool lifted the trophy in June, for the first leg of its tie against three-time runner-up Atletico.

"The task is going to be difficult because we have an opponent that are the reigning

champions," said Atletico director Clemente Villaverde.

"They are the champions, they have all the assets to be called the best team in Europe.

"We will have to use all our hard work and our experience. We know they are not going to make it easy."

Pep Guardiola's Manchester City, which is trying to win a first Champions League crown, will meet record 13-time European champion Real Madrid for a place in the quarterfinals.

MOCA retains 4x4 Fury crown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DAMBUR (ARUNACHAL PRADESH)

Manabhum Off-Roaders Club of Arunachal (MOCA) showed great tactical acumen and driving skills to successfully defend its JK Tyre Orange 4x4 Fury title here on Sunday.

Kerala's 4x4 Beats and Delhi's NIOC finished second and third while favourite Bengaluru's BODA took the fourth spot.

The MOCA team, which was led by drivers Aditya Mei and Chow Vijay Namshum, and guided by co-drivers Chow Sujeewan Choutang and Chow Ingpeng Mein, finished with a total time of 6h 47m 50s to win for the second time on home turf.

The 4x4 Beats, powered by Athul Thomas (co-driver Siraj) and Muhammed Shefin (Kalam Kutty), also came out all guns blazing, but eventually had to settle for the runner-up spot in 7:30.12.

The NIOC 1 team of Pradeep Kumar and Harinder Singh, co-driven by Gajender Singh and Harmanpreet Singh Gill, battled their way to the third position in a time of 8:25.26.

Gonzalez's brace seals it for Mohun Bagan

I-LEAGUE

Y.B. SARANGI
KALYANI

Fran Gonzalez's second consecutive brace propelled Mohun Bagan to a 2-1 win over Gokulam Kerala FC in a closely-fought I-League match at the Kalyani Stadium here on Monday.

Bagan's second successive victory, the first ever over the Kerala side, took it from fifth to second place.

In the eventful match – which recorded plenty of bookings including home captain Gurjinder Singh's red card in closing moments because of two yellows – Bagan showed better coordination to sustain pressure early on the visiting defenders.

Gokulam goalkeeper Ubaid C.K. stayed busy and his team was lucky not to concede a penalty in the 21st minute when V.P. Suhair was felled inside the box.

However, Ubaid's foul on Ashutosh Mehta in the next minute fetched Bagan a pe-



Hero: Fran Gonzalez's second consecutive brace propelled Mohun Bagan to a win over Gokulam Kerala. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

nalty. Gonzalez converted it to put the host ahead.

As Gokulam intensified attack, the match saw tussles between players of both sides. Naocha Singh earned a yellow card following his duel with defender Ashutosh yards away from the Bagan post. Another tussle saw Ashutosh receiving a yellow at the opposite end.

Gokulam unleashed some aerial balls to penetrate the Bagan defence. The visitors'

persistence paid off when Julien Collinas tripped left winger Malemnganba Meitei inside the area and Marcus Joseph rolled it in off the penalty at the stroke of half-time.

Bagan regained lead soon after resumption. Gonzalez's electric header off Joseba Beitia's corner kick spread cheers among 14,000-odd fans.

In the hotly-contested second half, which witnessed a

few instances of scuffle, Gokulam pressed hard to create a few fine chances but could not find the much-needed equalizer. The best of them came from Marcus, whose kick was brilliantly palmed away by a jumping Sankar Roy. Luckily, the ball didn't enter the Bagan post.

The results: Mohun Bagan 2 (Gonzalez 22, 48) bt Gokulam Kerala 1 (Marcus 45+3). **At Ludhiana:** Punjab FC 1 (Dipand Dicka, 80) bt Indian Arrows 0.

Champions League Round of 16 draw

1st leg: Feb 18/19, 25/26	Head-to-head	2nd leg: Mar 10/11, 17/18
Dortmund GER Last 16 Winner 1997	W0-D2-L0 Last season Best finish*	Paris St-Germain FRA Last 16 Semi-final 1995
Real Madrid ESP Last 16 13-time winner	W2-D2-L0	Manchester City ENG Quarter-final Semi-final 2016
Atalanta ITA Did not play Debut	First meeting	Valencia ESP Group stage Winner 2000, 2001
Atletico Madrid ESP Last 16 Final 1974, 2014, 2016	W1-D2-L1	Liverpool ENG Winner 6-time winner
Chelsea ENG Did not play Winner 2012	W1-D2-L1	Bayern Munich GER Last 16 5-time winner
Olympique Lyon FRA Last 16 Semi-final 2010	W0-D1-L3	Juventus ITA Quarter-final Winner 1985, 1996
Tottenham ENG Final Final 2019	First meeting	Leipzig GER Did not play Group stage 2017
Napoli ITA Group stage Last 16, 2012, 2017	First meeting	Barcelona ESP Semi-final 5-time winner

QUARTER-FINALS: Apr 7/8, 14/15 SEMI-FINALS: Apr 28/29, May 5/6 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL: May 30, Istanbul, Turkey
Source: UEFA, Gracenote *Prior to 2019/20 season © GRAPHIC NEWS

Vijays Singham pulls off spectacular win

HYDERABAD: Laxman Singh trained-Vijays Singham (Srinath astride) won the Golconda 2000 Guineas, the second Classic of the season held here on Monday (Dec. 16). The winner is owned by M/s. Vijay Rac. & Farms P. L. rep. by M/s. Vijay Kumar Gupta & Sushel Kumar Gupta & M/s Poonawalla Rac. Brdg. P. Ltd. rep. by Mr. Z.S. Poonawalla & Mrs. Behroze Z. Poonawalla.

The son of Leitir Mor-Zarandja, who was racing last till the final turn, improved gradually and came with a terrific turn of foot and collared his rival Consigliori in the last 30m to register his first Classic win.

1 PALAMPET PLATE (1,400m), maiden 2-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms): COASTAL CRUISE (Dashrath Singh) 1, Lightning Power (Akshay Kumar) 2, Mark My Day (Nakhat Singh) 3 and Just Incredible (B.R. Kumar) 4. 1-1/2, 1/2 and 3-3/4. Im, 28.54s. ₹8 (w), 5, 5 and 19 (p), SHP: 10, FP: 14, Q: 9, Tla: 9s. Favourite: Coastal Cruise. Owners: M/s. P. Ranga Raju, Eswarachandra Raja Gopal Tripuraneni & G. Raghunandan Chary. Trainer: D. Netto.

2 R.W.L.T.C. PLATE (1,400m), 3-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); CITY OF BLOSSOM (Rohit Kumar) 1, Red Snapper (Jitendra Singh) 2, Green Turf (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Jo Malone (Abhay Singh) 4. 3-3/4, 1 and 6-1/2. Im, 26s. ₹9 (w), 6, 9 and 6 (p), SHP: 29, FP: 51, Q: 37, Tla: 106. Favourite: City of Blossom. Owners: M/s. K. Thirubhuvan Reddy & K. Vivek Reddy. Trainer: Satyanarayana.

3 SILKY BABY PLATE (DIV. I), (1,100m), 3-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); INCREDULOUS (Akshay Kumar) 1, Troubadour (Dashrath Singh) 2, Bedazzled (Kuldeep Singh) 3 and Monte Rei (A. Imran) 4. 2-1/2, 3-1/4 and 3/4. Im, 6.49s. ₹10 (w), 6, 8 and 17 (p), SHP: 18, FP: 39, Q: 31, Tla: 616. Favourite: Incredible. Owners: M/s. C. Nanda Kumar, Rahul Raachappal, Madharapu Sudhir & Raouf Ali Khan. Trainer: D. Netto.

4 POCHARAM PLATE (1,200m), 4-5-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); GOLDEN HOPE (Akshay Kumar) 1, Human Touch (Srinath) 2, Patron Saint (Jitendra Singh) 3 and Tammana (Dashrath Singh) 4. 1-1/4, nk and 1-1/2. Im, 13.76s. ₹27 (w), 12, 10 and 12 (p), SHP: 20, FP: 91, Q: 40, Tla: 468. Favourite: Human Touch. Owners: M/s. Mo-



Rewarding success: HRC chairman R. Surender Reddy, left, with Mukesh Pitti of Vijay Racing & Farms Private Limited, trainer Laxman Singh and jockey Y.S. Srinath after awarding the prizes for the Golconda 2000 Guineas won by Vijays Singham. *K.V.S. GIRI

ammed Rasheed Ali Khan, Aziz Ahmed Khan, K. Mallikarjuna Rao & Mirza Ayub Baig. Trainer: Faisal Hassan.

5 TARAMATI CUP (1,600m), 4-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II); EGYPTIAN PRINCE (Ajeeth Kumar) 1, Guiding Force (Akshay Kumar) 2, Lockhart (Ashhad Asbar) 3 and N R I Heights (Abhay Singh) 4. 3, hd and 6-1/2. Im, 38.61s. ₹28 (w), 8, 8 and 15 (p), SHP: 19, FP: 119, Q: 58, Tla: 832. Favourite: Destined Dynamite. Owner: Mr. Ahmed Alam Khan. Trainer: Deshmukh.

6 BAKRANANGAL PLATE (1,600m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); STORMY (Afroz Khan) 1, Vashishtha (B.R. Kumar) 2, Solo Winner (Nakhat Singh) 3 and Tiger Of The Sea (Surya Prakash) 4. Hd, 3/4 and 3/4. Im, 40.50s. ₹163 (w), 28, 21 and 11 (p), SHP: 48, FP: 2,643, Q: 1,390, Tla: 46,427. Favourite: Tiger Of The Sea. Owner: Col. S.B. Nair. Trainer: M.F. Ali Khan.

7 GOLCONDA 2000 GUINEAS (1,600m), 3-y-o ONLY (TERMS): VIJAYS SINGHAM (LEITIR MOR-ZARANDJA) SRINATH 1, CONSIGLIORI (AIR Support-Caprese) DAVID ALLAN 2, VICTORY PARADE (TOP Class-Harmonica) A. Imran 3 and MAJESTIC WARRIOR (LEITIR MOR-One Magic Moment) DASHRATH SINGH 4. Nk, 3-1/4 and 1. Im, 37.54s. ₹38 (w), 14 and 6 (p), SHP: 13, FP: 110, Q: 53, Tla: 639.

8 TELANGANA AND ANDHRA SUB AREA CUP (1,100m), 3-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II); HER LEGACY (David Allan) 1, Aristocrats Charm (Surya Prakash) 2, Bar Et Law (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Strategist (Akshay Kumar) 4. Nk, 1 and 3/4. Im, 5.44s. ₹10 (w), 6, 9 and 17 (p), SHP: 26, FP: 41, Q: 29, Tla: 452. Favourite: Her Legacy. Owners: M/s. Sanjay R. Goyani & S. Prasad Raju. Trainer: Prasad Raju.

9 SILKY BABY PLATE (DIV. II), (1,100m), 3-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); MYSTERY (David Allan) 1, Aristocrats Charm (Surya Prakash) 2, Bar Et Law (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Sea Castle (Aneel) 4. 2-3/4, nk and 3/4. Im, 5.85s. ₹10 (w), 6, 10 and 8 (p), SHP: 26, FP: 47, Q: 36, Tla: 103. Favourite: Mystery. Owners: M/s. Niraj Tyagi & Vikas Sachdeva. Trainer: Prasad Raju.

Double for Himanshu and Lalita

BADMINTON

SPORTS BUREAU
NEW DELHI

Himanshu Saroha (Delhi Audit) and Lalita Dahiya (Ministry of Finance) won a double each in the inter-Ministry badminton tournament, organised by the Central Civil Services Cultural and Sports Board, at the AIIMS Gymkhana. The two were also adjudged the best players of the tournament.

The results: Men: Final: Himanshu Saroha bt Sachin Rawat 21-18, ret'd.; **Third place:** Amit Sharma bt Keshav Sharma 21-18, 21-15. **Doubles: Final:** Himanshu & Tushar Sharma bt

Amit Sharma & Siddarth Nandal 18-21, 21-16, 21-19; **Third place:** Keshav Sharma & Amarjeet bt HM Ningappa & Arvind Rawat 21-15, 21-15.

Women: Final: Lalita Dahiya bt Seshadri Sanyal 21-16, 21-19; **Third place:** Swati Sharma bt Sheetal Kargeti 21-19, 20-22, 21-18. **Doubles: Final:** Lalita & Seshadri bt Sheetal Kargeti & Swati Sharma 14-21, 21-14, 21-14; **Third place:** Ruchika Patwal & Madhu Gyanchandani bt Pratibha & Versha Kohli 21-15, 21-18.

Mixed doubles: Final: Tushar Sharma & Sheetal Kargeti bt Amit Sharma & Swati Sharma 18-21, 21-16, 22-20; **Third place:** Keshav Sharma & Seshadri Sanyal bt Siddarth Nandal &

Lalita Dahiya 21-18, 21-19.

Veterans doubles: Final: Rajeesh Sharma & Pankaj Pandey bt Amarjeet & S.C. Tewari 21-12, 21-15; **Third place:** Ravi Kumar & P. Subramanian w.o. A.K. Jain & Dr. N.K. Gupta.

Veteran women: Final: Madhu Gyanchandani w.o. Priya Nalgundwar; **Third place:** Pratibha Shukla w.o. Sarita Kumari. **Doubles: Final:** Priya & Madhu bt Pratibha & Versha 21-18, 21-19; **Third place:** Meenakshi Dutt & Neeraj w.o. Sarita Kumari & Renuka. **Mixed veteran doubles: Final:** Gulshan Sharma & Madhu Gyanchandani bt Ravi Kumar & Meenakshi Dutt 21-18, 21-16; **Third place:** Amarjeet & Versha Kohli bt Rupinder Kumar & Renuka 21-18, 21-14.

PSV dismisses van Bommel

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
THE HAGUE

PSV Eindhoven axed former Dutch international Mark van Bommel as manager on Monday following a string of disappointing results.

The move comes after the southern Dutch club won just two of its last 12 games and with PSV 10 points adrift of Ajax and AZ Alkmaar in the Eredivisie title race.

"PSV's board decided this morning to end its cooperation with chief coach Mark van Bommel," the club said.

Rohana keen to defend crown

Veer Ahlawat could be among the leading contenders

BENGALURU OPEN GOLF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Anura Rohana has a special place in his heart for the Karnataka Golf Association course. The Sri Lankan has won two titles here, and returns to the venue this week hoping for an upturn in fortunes as the Bengaluru Open golf championship, the penultimate event of the 2019 PGTI season, gets under way here on Tuesday.

"My friends M. Dharama and C. Muniyappa (both players' home course is the KGA) were joking that I was coming back to my home course. I like it here. I made seven birdies in my practice round today. I hope I can do well this week," he said here on Monday.

Difficult season

Rohana has endured a difficult season, failing to make the top 10 in any of his 13 tournaments, and missing



Who'll take it? Rahil Gangjee, left, and Anura Rohana pose with the winner's trophy ahead of the Bengaluru Open golf championship. *SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA

the cut on five occasions. A return to the Bengaluru Open, where he is the defending champion, could spark a turnaround. "I'm getting old now," he laughed. "Compatriot Mithun Per-

era won last week (at the RCGC Open in Kolkata). I want to try and win this week."

With Rashid Khan and S. Chikkarangappa, one and two on the PGTI Order of

Merit, away on the Asian Tour, there seem to be no overwhelming favourites for the title. Veer Ahlawat, who won the Indian Oil Servo Masters in Digboi last month, could be among the leading contenders, as could Mukesh Kumar and hometown hopeful Dharm.

Tricky lines

Rahil Gangjee, who also calls this city home now, felt reading the greens would not be easy this week. "You've got to figure out your lines. You think it's easy but it's not. The lines are tricky. They've cut the greens and so the lines have changed. The home advantage has been reduced a little," he said.

Rohana agreed with that assessment. "The ball is rolling nicely on the greens but it's very difficult to find the right line," he said. The 46-year-old will hope he can adapt quickly when he comes off on Tuesday.