MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2019, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 22 PAGES

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE SINCE 1932

₹6.00 (₹8 PATNA & RAIPUR, ₹12 SRINAGAR) WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Call, data rates

from tomorrow

industry stressed due to competition

Expected hike

was 10-20%

THE HIKES in tariffs

would enable the tele-

com companies enough

elbow room to get out of

the financial mess that

higher than the 10-20%

expected by the market,

they are currently in.

While the hikes are

these could help

Vodafone Idea and

Bharti Airtel signifi-

cantly improve their

bottomlines. Pre-paid

packages of the two tel-

cos cover almost 95% of

growth in digital adoption" and

plans. For example its bundled

pre-paid plans offering unlim-

ited calling and data, that were

earlier priced at Rs 249 (28 days

validity) and Rs 448 (82 days va-

lidity), will now cost Rs 298 and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Airtel raised prices across its

their customers and

around 75% of their

revenues.

sustains investments.

Seen as the return of 'sensibility' in

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

SETTING THE stage for a shake-

up in the telecom sector, the

country's three top service

providers Sunday announced

tariff hikes for the first time in around five years. While Bharti

Airtel and Vodafone Idea Limited

Reliance Jio said it is introducing

"all-in-one" or AIO plans, which

will see tariffs marked up to 40

per cent higher than previous

plans and will be effective from

over 900 million customers

served by the three carriers, ana-

lysts hailed the move and termed

it as "the return of pragmatism

and sensibility" within the indus-

try. Competition within the sec-

tor had forced the carriers to op-

erate on low tariffs that were

putting their bottomlines under

stress and had rendered the busi-

more details about its new plans,

it claimed that it was "deter-

mined to strengthen the telecom

sector" and that it will take

measures, including "appropri-

ate increase" in tariffs, in a man-

ner "that does not adversely im-

pact data consumption or

Though Jio did not provide

ness model unsustainable.

While the move may impact

December 6.

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

FIRST HIKE IN 5 YEARS



Day after Bajaj spoke up, BJP and ministers hit back



'Bajaj remarks, response by Shah show democracy alive'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

THE DAY after Bajaj Group chairman Rahul Bajaj expressed concern over the lack of confidence among corporates to criticise the central government, several BJP ministers scrambled to respond to what one of them claimed were attempts to "weave fake narratives" over the remarks.

While Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that seeking an answer was better than "spreading one's own impressions", Urban Affairs and Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said that the fact that Bajaj could "express himself & instigate others to join" was

"what democracy is all about". Commerce and Rail Minister Piyush Goyal referred to Home Minister Amit Shah's response to Bajaj's remarks, that there was

no need for any fear. Bajaj's remarks came Saturday in the presence of Shah, Sitharaman and Goyal at an event organised by *The Economic* Times in Mumbai, where the industrialist also expressed concern over the absence of effective action against lynchings, and the remark of Bhopal MP Pragya Singh Thakur

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THOSE WHO QUESTION

Will government listen to Manmohan-Bajaj message, or read a conspiracy, create a spectre? PAGE 10

WORLD



ISIS CLAIMS LONDON **KNIFE ATTACK PAGE 16**

His govt lays out agenda, Uddhav says 'still with Hindutva, can't be separated from me'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI. DECEMBER 1

ADDRESSING A special session of the Maharashtra Assembly Sunday, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said he would never abandon the ideology of Hindutva, and that Hindutva could not be separated from him. Days after the Shiv Sena, NCP

and Congress thrashed out a Minimum Programme (CMP) with a "preamble" mentioning "secular", Thackeray said, "I am still with the ideology of Hindutva which cannot be separated from me...

Our Hindutva was there vester day, it is still with us today and it will remain tomorrow as well. But my Hindutva includes keeping my word. My Hindutva is not of saying Jai Shri Ram and not keeping my word."

The Sena has accused former ally BIP of not keeping its "promise" of sharing the CM post between them, reportedly made before the elections. Addressing the session in

Marathi, Maharashtra Governor B S Koshyari said the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government was concerned about unemployment and would enact a law soon to ensure 80 per cent



CM Uddhav Thackeray, Speaker Nana Patole and Governor Koshyari at the Vidhan Bhavan in Mumbai Sunday. Express

to be dearer by reservation in private sector jobs for "sons of the soil". The government would also come out with a white paper on the up to 40 pc financial status of the state, as well as provide compensation to farmers.

The Governor's speech, to the joint sitting of the state legislature, indicated that the broad agenda of the Sena-NCP-Congress government would be in line with the CMP finalised by the three parties.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

AAREY CASES TO BE DROPPED PAGE 12

Editor of MP paper that carried reports on honey trap case raided

MILIND GHATWAI BHOPAL, DECEMBER 1

DAYS AFTER Sanjha Lokswami, Jitendra Soni.

After publishing stories on a former BJP minister and a powerful bureaucrat in the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government, the eveninger had in the past three days carried reports on the honey trap case complainant, Harbhajan Singh, and announced that more articles would follow, suggesting it was in possession of other videos of politicians and bureaucrats.

Singh's complaint, the Indore police had arrested five women and a driver in what came to be known as the honey trap case.

announced rate hikes on prepaid packages by up to 42 per cent beginning December 3,

an Indore-based eveninger, carried reports and photographs regarding the 'honey trap' case and uploaded at least one video and transcripts of audio conversations on its website, police raided its office and other establishments owned by its editor

The raids, including on Soni's home, a hotel, a restaurant and a night club, started late on Friday and continued for hours. While Soni is missing, his son Amit, also an accused, has been detained.

In September, based on **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

INSIDE

LEAST POLLUTED NOV SINCE 2015 IN DELHI, **BUT AVG AIR QUALITY** STILL VERY POOR P8

IMPORT OF 11,000 TONS OF ONIONS CLEARED: **BJP FEARS STING IN**

JHARKHAND POLLS P9

Tremors within Chhattisgarh govt over encounter probe report: 'Cabinet misled'

DIPANKAR GHOSE RAIPUR, DECEMBER 1

THE REPORT of the Justice V K Agarwal enquiry commission, which found no evidence to support claims by security forces that 17 people killed in an alleged encounter in Bijapur in 2012 were Maoists, will be tabled in the Chhattisgarh Assembly Monday — a day after its key findings were first published in The Sunday Express.

Sources told The Indian Express that the state government decided to table the report after a hurried Cabinet meeting

THE GOVERNANCE PAGE

LIGHTER SCHOOL BAGS

IN RAJASTHAN

PAGE 15



Key findings published in *The Sunday Express*

late Saturday. During the meeting, sources said, at least two ministers claimed the Cabinet had been "misled" earlier about

DEVENDRA PANDEY

MUMBAI, DECEMBER 1

Sourav Ganguly.

AT LEAST one player involved in

the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy

was approached by bookies dur-

ing the latest edition of the pre-

mier national T20 tournament,

according to BCCI president

also said that two teams of the

Tamil Nadu Premier League

(TNPL) have been suspended

The former Indian captain

the contents of the report.

Contrary to claims made by security forces about the alleged encounter in Sarkeguda in June

Ganguly says player approached

by bookies in top T20 tournament and the Karnataka Premier League (KPL) is on hold. Ganguly was speaking on the sidelines of the BCCI's AGM about the steps being taken to curb alleged spot-

2012, the one-member judicial

commission found that there was

no firing by the villagers; the vil-

lagers were assaulted and killed

from close quarters; security

forces may have fired "in panic";

and one of the victims was shot

in the morning, several hours af-

which came to power in the state

late last year, said the report was

first raised Saturday during a

meeting of ministers and MLAs

to discuss the urban body polls

such a damning report has come,

"It was pointed out that since

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

scheduled in December.

Sources in the Congress,

ter the encounter at night.

fixing in cricket tournaments. The Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy final between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu was held on Sunday and some of India's top cricketers, including R Ashwin, Shikhar Dhawan, K L Rahul and Manish Pandey, are among those who participated in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

States with poor health systems show lowest average PMJAY claims

ABANTIKA GHOSH NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

AN ANALYSIS of utilisation patterns of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana — the NDA government's flagship health programme — shows wide variation in average claims of states. States with already functioning secondary/tertiary care programmes, such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, show 2-2.5 times the average spend per patient compared to traditional health laggards like Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand.

PMJAY data till July 9 shows that of the total Rs 3,482.9 crore given out to settle claims so far,

TOP STATES BY PMJAY **CLAIM AMOUNT**

State	Average claim size
Andhra Pradesh	₹28,709
Maharashtra	₹25,333
Tamil Nadu	₹21,141
Gujarat	₹17,090
Madhya Pradesh	₹13,355
*Till July 9, 2019	

the highest share was of Gujarat, with Rs 748.1 crore, for 4,37,774 hospitalisations. Chhattisgarh came second with Rs 449 crore of claims and 5,69,456 hospital-

isations, and Tamil Nadu third CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Tiger's 1,300-km walk over six months strains population theory

VIVEK DESHPANDE NAGPUR, DECEMBER 1

BCCI met Sunday. PTI

MORE REPORTS, PAGE 21

IN WHAT may be the longest trek by a tiger in India, a subadult of the species reached Dnyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary in Buldhana district of Maharashtra on Sunday, walking 1,300 km over six months, from Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary in Yavatmal district.

What intrigues conservationists is that T1C1 appears to not have stopped anywhere for more than four-five days, and that too only when he made a kill, mostly of cattle. Maharashtra Chief Wildlife Warden Nitin Kakodkar said the tiger didn't travel in a linear fashion



T1C1 travelled between two Maharashtra sanctuaries. File

but moved back and fourth several times, overfarmlands, water bodies and highways, thus adding hundreds of kilometres to its journey. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

Jailed for sedition after Pulwama, PM scholarship student struggles to put his life back together

Out on bail after 7 months, he is trying to get college suspension lifted, scholarship back

PAGE 1

RITIKA CHOPRA

BENGALURU, DECEMBER 1 FEBRUARY 14, 2019, is an impor-

In the nine months since that day, Manzoor has become a changed man. He is religious and prays five times a day. He rarely steps out of his home. And, un-

usually for a 20-year-old, he's no

tant marker in Haris Manzoor's

longer on any social networking

"My faith has taught me the patience to cope with what happened," says Manzoor, a Kashmiri nursing student in Bengaluru from Dahama village in Kupwara district and a recipient of the Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme.

On February 16, two days after the terror attack in Pulwama, Manzoor was arrested on charges of sedition along with two of his friends, Gowhar Mushtag and Zakir Magbool, for an argument on Facebook with



Haris Manzoor's college in Bengaluru. Abhishek N Chinnappa

a classmate over the incident. After spending seven months in Bengaluru's Central Jail,

Manzoor was released on bail on September 20, and is struggling to get his life back.

He remains suspended from Spurthy College of Nursing, and his PM's scholarship has stopped. And, in between writing to the government to restore his scholarship and pleading with the college to revoke his suspension and marking attendance at a police station, Manzoor attends court hearings to prove he isn't guilty of sedition.

"When we filed a complaint with the police, we didn't know this would become a case of sedition," says Babu Dharmaraja, principal of Spurthy College of Nursing. Manzoor was studying in the second year of the BSc (Nursing) programme, and Mushtaq (22) was pursuing a CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

INDIAN AD-AGE: HOW A JINGLE MADE NIRMA SABKI PASAND!

In the 1970s, the Indian washing powder market was dominated by HLL and its Surf was pretty much THE detergent powder to use. That changed with the emergence of a washing power called Nirma. The ad for Nirma washing powder played a key role in one of the biggest underdog stories in Indian corporate history

VIDEO OF THE DAY



'ODE TO UNITY': MUSICAL TRIBUTE

Symphony Orchestra of India pay tribute to 150 years of Gandhi

MAHARASHTRA GOVT FORMATION

Won't abandon Hindutva, Uddhav tells Fadnavis

EXPRESS What can save the **Indian economy?**

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Breaking down how government spendings are propping up our economy, why boosting demand, not supply, is the need of the hour and how that goal can be achieved

walked over 500 km from

Chandrapur Super Thermal

Power Station in Maharashtra,

on whose premises it grew up,

to Sarni Power Station in

Madhya Pradesh, killing two

persons along the way and sur-

viving mostly on cattle, like

T1C1. "The dispersal of tigers

across landscapes indicates that

tigers need more space and may

have to cover longer distances

and cross human-dominated

non-forested landscapes in pur-

suit of new territories and mate

much beyond our traditional

understanding," said Govekar.

praising Nathuram Godse in

ist friends will speak, I will say

openly... An environment wil

have to be created... When UPA II

was in power, we could criticise

anyone... You (the government) are doing good work, but despite

that we don't have the confidence

that you will appreciate if we crit-

that if he was saying there is a cer-

tain kind of atmosphere, then "we

will have to make an effort to im-

Sitharaman posted on Twitter:

"Home Minister @AmitShah an

swers on how issues raised by

Shri. Rahul Bajaj were addressed

Questions/ criticisms are heard

and answered/addressed. Always

a better way to seek an answer

than spreading one's own im-

pressions which, on gaining trac-

tion, can hurt national interest."

ter a series of posts by Puri on

Twitter where he suggested that

Bajaj's remarks and Shah's re-

sponse indicate that "democratic

Sitharaman's tweet came af-

prove the atmosphere".

Responding to Bajaj, Shah said

On Sunday evening,

icise you openly," Bajaj said.

"Nobody from our industrial

Parliament last week.

Bajaj

FROM PAGE ONE

Chhattisgarh

it must be officially put up before the Cabinet and then on the floor of the House. Since Monday or Tuesday is the last day of the Vidhan Sabha, the Cabinet needed to be called quickly and was held around 10 pm," a senior Congress leader said.

Sources said that while the contents of the report were discussed threadbare, there was discomfiture among some members of the Cabinet. "The report has been with the government for over a month and the Vidhan Sabha session is on. So why the delay in the Cabinet officially taking it up? Any government needs time to peruse a report, especially one as important as this, but it could have been worse if the Cabinet was misled," a Cabinet member said.

Sources said the report was previously mentioned in the Cabinet on November 15. "But at the time, the Cabinet was told by officials that the report held nobody to account, and was of little purpose or value. At this point, ministers like Kawasi Lakhma, who is from Bastar, said he is from the area and what happened was wrong. Health Minister T S Singhdeo said that it was the Congress, under the late Nand Kumar Patel who had raised the issue of the tribals being innocent, and had demanded a judicial enquiry. But this was all on the premise that the report held nobody to account," sources said.

On Saturday, some Ministers chastised officials for "misleading" them about the report. "At least two ministers spoke about this. One Minister had read the report and kept referring to paragraphs from it. He said that it was not acceptable that the Cabinet may have been given incorrect information about the report," a senior leader said.

BJP leader Raman Singh, who was Chief Minister in 2012 when the incident took place, said the report should have been placed in the Vidhan Sabha first. "I had ordered the commission of enquiry. There was a UPA government in the Centre at that time. For over a month now, the state government had the report but did not place it before the House. We will raise this issue in the Vidhan Sabha," Singh said.

Shalini Gera, who is one of the advocates for the victims said it is "clear that the incident was a fake encounter".

Honey trap case

Singh had alleged that the women were blackmailing him, threatening to circulate videos

showing him in a compromising position if he did not pay up Rs 3

One of the reports published by Sanjha Lokswami had photographs of Singh with two of the women. It alleged that Singh was himself involved in the scam but was forced to file a complaint to allow police to raid the premises owned by the women and take possession of electronic and other evidence and data from them to save the reputation of people who had been blackmailed in the past.

A case was registered at the MIG Police Station against Soni under Sections 67 and 67A of the Information Technology Act on Friday, based on Singh's complaint. A senior officer said the eveninger had committed an offence under the IT Act by publishing photographs and details of intimate conversations between two people.

Indore SSP Ruchi Vardhan Mishra said Singh had not only complained about the photographs but also spoken about other irregularities in the business establishments of Soni. She said the police teams were accompanied by officials of the Excise, Revenue, Narcotics departments Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC).

Mishra said the directors of My Home, the restaurant-cumbar run by Soni, had been booked under the Human Trafficking Act as they had found women from West Bengal and the Northeast living on its premises in abject conditions. She said the women could not give a satisfactory answer as to what they were doing there, and alleged that they were forced to dance, with tips given by patrons their only source of in-

Police have also lodged a case under the Arms Act as it found cartridges, including used, that didn't match a licensed pistol. Police claim to have seized electronic and other evidence from Soni's office that could be related to the honey trap case.

PM scholarship

general degree in nursing at the time of the arrest. Maqbool (24) was a student of the Chinai College of Nursing.

"Their (Manzoor and Mushtaq)academic performance was fine, and so was their behaviour. There was no disciplinary action against them till that day of the incident," says the principal.

The incident that Dharmaraja refers to took place on the evening of February 14, shortly after the news of the Pulwama terror attack broke. A third-year student of the college posted a few mes-

CLARIFICATIONS & CORRECTIONS

01.12.19, PAGE 1

THE COVER price for The Sunday Express was wrongly printed as Rs 5. It should have been Rs 6. The error is regretted.

sages on Facebook seeking revenge for the attack that led to an argument with Manzoor, Magbool and Mushtag.

The next day a scuffle broke out between the students in the college mess. On February 16, the three students and Debnath were summoned to the principal's office. Within a few hours, the principal filed a complaint with the police requesting "appropriate legal action" against Manzoor and his friends Mushtag and Magbool for "sending messages abusing our Indian army and disrupting national integration".

Justifying the administration's decision to call the police, Dharmaraja says "people were protesting outside our college".

Speaking to The Indian Express at his lawyer's office in Bengaluru, Manzoor says he still remembers "the moment when the police officers were taking my mug shots while I held up a slate with my details". "I had only seen that in the movies. I couldn't believe what was happening to me," he says.

Since he was arrested during college hours, Manzoor was still in his uniform when he was brought to Bengaluru's Central Jail, he recalls. "Who expects such a thing to happen to them. We spent the first few days crying inconsolably in prison" he says.

"The enormity of the problem sank in once we found out what we were accused of. We found out about the sedition charges only a week later when my brother visited us in prison," says Manzoor. His brother Mudassir had to abandon his studies midway in Pune to spend seven months in Bengaluru to help his brother get out of prison.

According to Manzoor, it was then that the three men turned to their faith for help. "The prison authorities were nice to us. The felread. We read the Quran and Sahih al-Bukhari. We started helped us gain patience and re-

While their first application was rejected in March, the court accepted their plea on September 20. Bail was granted on the condition that each would furnish a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh each and cash surety of Rs 25,000 each. Besides, they cannot leave the jurisdiction of the court; have to compulsorily mark attendance at a police station every month; and should attend all court hearings.

Since he cannot go back to Kashmir till his case is disposed, Manzoor's father, a government school teacher in Kupwara, has been bearing his living expenses. Along with Magbool and Mushtaq, he spends most of his time in their apartment in Bengaluru.

Manzoor has approached his college four times since his release to request revocation of his suspension. "I am ashamed of my unintentionally mischievous activity... The incident has caused havoc to my family and I request you to consider my repentance as a positive step towards my career by helping me resume my studies further," reads an email he wrote to the college's Registrar on November 7. "We have forwarded their request to Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Services (the affiliating university)," says Dharmaraja. The college currently has 19 Kashmiri students — no new Kashmiri student has taken admission in the current academic year.

Asked about Manzoor's scholarship, AICTE chairman Anil Sahasrabuddhe says, "I will get this checked and find out and inform. But if the sedition charges were not proved and if this college is cancelling the admission, we will take this up with the college and try to help the student. Either there or elsewhere."

Call, data rates dearer by up to 40%

FULL COVERAGE

Rs 598 (84 days validity) respectively. The telco has also increased minimum recharge from Rs 35 to Rs 49 for a month.

Vodafone Idea — the first off the block on Sunday — announced hikes in mobile calls and data charges from December 3, coming in the backdrop of its highest quarterly loss of Rs 50,922 crore amid an adverse Supreme Court ruling on adjusted gross revenue (AGR). The company has announced new plans for pre-paid products and services with validity of two days, 28 days, 84 days and 365 days.

Bharti Airtel's new plans will

cost up to 42 per cent more compared to the price that Airtel pre-paid customers pay at present for plans in the "unlimited" category. "Airtel's new plans represent tariff increases in the range of a mere 50 paise per day to Rs 2.85 per day and offer generous data and calling benefits," a statement by the company said. Vodafone Idea said that local, STD and national roaming voice calls from Vodafone to Vodafone and Vodafone to Idea subscribers and vice-versa will be considered on-net, while rest calls would be off-net. An analyst with a leading

brokerage firm said the move

levels," he said. The tariffs raised for pre-paid packages by Bharti Airtel and Vodafone would cover almost 95 per cent of their customers, contributing to around 75 per cent of their revenues. "Since the average tariff hike by these two players will come to around 25

should significantly improve the

bottomlines of companies and

is a big positive. "The fact that the

three leading players have de-

cided to go in for a hike will en-

sure that the tariffs remain on

the higher side from existing

per cent, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone should see a rise in their revenues by around Rs over 20 per cent or around Rs 5,500 crore, for Vodafone it will almost double by around Rs 5,000 crore," the analyst said. On November 18, Vodafone

7,000 crore and Rs 6,000 crore

respectively. For Bharti Airtel,

while the Ebitda (earnings be-

fore interest, tax depreciation

and amortisation) will rise by

and Bharti Airtel had announced that they would increase tariffs from December 1. The two had reported a combined loss of Rs 74,000 crore for the second quarter ended September 2019 on account of statutory dues arising from the Supreme Court order on AGR.

Uddhav says 'still with Hindutva' Koshyari's other announcefinancial stress due to recurring have been reverse had the BIP my friends... I have learnt many kept its "promise". He also things from Fadnavis. I have

ments too, including Rs 10 meals for common citizens and a super-speciality hospital in every district, were a part of the CMP along with 80 per cent quota in jobs for locals. The government will soon come out with a detailed report on financial allocations and expenditures projectwise, complete with current status and shortcomings, he said.

Speaking to the media later, Thackeray said, "We will first ascertain how the money was allocated project-wise. There is a and financial allocations."

drought over the past four years. The total debt of the state stands at Rs 4.50 lakh crore. The Governor said the gov-

ernment would also address

"the pending issues of OBCs and other communities". A ban on plastic, which the Shiv Sena has been asking for,

found a mention, as did Re 1 clinics at the taluka level.

Koshyari said the government would try to offer education to women free of cost and build hostels for working women. "A progressive society offers opportunity for people," he said. In his address, Thackeray took frequent potshots at former CM Devendra Fadnavis, underlining that their positions would vowed, "I can assure this House and people of Maharashtra that I will not do anything at midnight." At the same time, Thackeray added, his friendship with

Fadnavis would remain intact. Congratulating him for being named Leader of the Opposition, the CM said he would rather call Fadnavis "responsible leader". "We have been together for 25 years but I didn't expect this day to come. In a way, I am the most lucky CM so far. Those who were my opposition for the last 25 years are my friends today and those with whom I was friends are in opposition today. I honestly feel there

will remain like that," said Thackeray, while seeking Fadnavis's cooperation for government functioning. Fadnavis said the BJP had been denied power as "political

never hidden my friendship. It

arithmetic prevailed over merit". To Thackeray's dig at him over his 'I will come back' poll campaign tagline, Fadnavis said

he had not given a time frame as to when he would be back and that no one should rule it out. Earlier, Congress MLA Nana

Patole was unanimously elected Maharashtra Assembly Speaker after the BJP candidate withdrew his name.

> values" are "alive & flourishing". "There are societies in the world which are governed by fear, but a society where citizens car weave fake narratives & hurl in-

vectives at the govt cannot be classified as one governed by fear, it is a society characterized by fair dose of indiscipline," Puri posted "That Mr Rahul Bajaj could stand up to Sh @AmitShah Ji's

face, express himself freely & instigate others to join him clearly indicate that freedom of expression & democratic values are alive & flourishing in India. This is exactly what democracy is all about," he posted.

Later, Goyal posted on his Twitter account: "See Home Minister @amitshah respond to Rahul Bajaj's claim that people are afraid to express themselves. 'After hearing your question I doubt anybody believes this claim that people are afraid'."

While the Sunday posts by the Union ministers appeared to be an attempt by the ruling establishment to douse the fire after Bajaj's remarks went viral on social media, the BIP IT cell sought to link Bajaj to the previous Congress-led UPA regime on

BJP IT-cell in-charge Amit Malviya tweeted a couple of news videos that show him purportedly praising Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for interacting with industry bodies when the UPA

Saturday itself.

was in power. Tagging one video, Malviya posted: "It is difficult for me to praise anyone', said Rahul Bajaj except of course if it is Rahul Gandhi. Wear your political affil iation on your sleeve and don't hide behind inanities like there is

atmosphere of fear and all that...'

Tagging another video, Malviya posted: "If one had such fawning view of Rahul Gandhi when he is an unmitigated disaster, then it is only natural to spin imaginary yarn and assume the worst for the current regime. Truth be told - industrialists who flourished in the license raj will always be beholden to the

Congress." **FULL REPORT ON**

From there, T1C1 went to

Earlier a sub-adult tiger had

possibility that some issues may have been skipped and may require greater urgency. We may have to prioritise our projects Maharashtra is under severe

low prisoners gave us books to praying five times a day. That main hopeful of getting bail," he

The next hearing is on Monday.

Asked about how the events of February 14 had changed him,

Manzoor says, "I try to not think of what happened to me. But yes, Ithink I have changed. I used to be arrogant, but I now believe in a higher power and feel closer to the Almighty. I feel like I have grown up suddenly... My main focus now is to finish my graduation and prepare for civil services

Ganguly

tournament. The tournament is also seen as an audition for youngsters with the IPL auction to be held in Kolkata on

December 19. "...in Syed Mushtaq Ali, I was told, one player was approached. At present, in two (state) associations where betting and fixing happened, one is on hold, the KPL, and Chennai (Tamil Nadu Cricket Association) has suspended two

of the franchises," Ganguly said. The TNPL suspending two teams is a new development as an internal inquiry conducted by a committee set up by TNCA concluded in October that there was "no actionable incidents".

The anti-corruption unit of the BCCI will have to be strengthened if corruption across leagues continues, Ganguly said, adding that the current set-up will be evaluated next year.

"We are dealing with it, we are getting the anti-corruption system right. We have to get the best anti-corruption people and make it stronger. We will assess it, next yearifit(corruption)doesn't stop, then we will think of something else," Ganguly said.

The Bengaluru crime branch has made a number of arrests related to alleged corruption and spot-fixing in the KPL, with the most high-profile arrest being that of former Karnataka captain C M Gautam. The owner of Belagavi Panthers, Asfak Ali Thara, was also arrested as were bookies, other players and support staff members as part of an ongoing investigation.

PMJAY claims with Rs 439.5 crore in claims and

2,07,906 hospitalisations. However, a look at the average claim size shows that Andhra Pradesh tops the list at Rs 28,709, followed by Maharashtra at Rs 25,333, Karnataka at Rs 25,075 and Tamil Nadu at Rs 21,141. On the other hand, the average claim size in Uttar Pradesh, with a total of Rs 145.7 crore claimed so far for 1,19,512 procedures, is just Rs

Launched on September 23 last year, the PMJAY is the secondary/tertiary care arm of Ayushman Bharat. The programme, devised to prevent impoverishment because of catastrophic health expenses, aims to provide annual health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family to 10.74 families listed as per "deprivation" in the

socio-economic caste census. As and when states signed a memorandum of understanding with the Centre, their existing schemes — such as Arogyashri in case of Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme in Tamil Nadu, and the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana in Maharashtra — were subsumed into the central programme.

Two states that are yet to adopt the PMJAY are Odisha and Telangana. West Bengal became a part of the scheme but walked out midway – having claimed Rs 14.1 crore for 14,777 hospitalisations in the brief period that it was a part of the scheme.

A senior officer of the National Health Authority said that the large divergence in the average claim size essentially reflects the robustness of the health system in states. "States like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu which have a robust public health system seem to be spending more on tertiary care. Same is the case for Maharashtra, where three-quarters of the hospitals empanelled are in the private sector. However in states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, more money is being spent on secondary care procedures. This is a symptom essentially of the lack of capacity, infrastructure. The government needs to spend more in these states on infrastruc-

ture, we also need the private sec-

tor to invest in these states," the

officer, who did not want to be named, said. In other words, in states which

will be no opposition as they are

have capacity, the PMJAY seems to be moving towards subsidising catastrophic health spends, as it was intended to, while in the less well-endowed states, it is ending up meeting more basic health needs. For example, cataract surgeries had for months topped the list of PMJAY procedures despite the fact that there is an existing national programme for the purpose. It was essentially symptomatic of gaps in the public health system. That is why in August this year, the NHA decided to take cataract out of the list of approved

procedures. The exception to the health system robustness equalling average larger claim size is Kerala. The state which is known for its public health system claimed Rs 186 crore for 3,18,604 hospitalisations, with an average claim size of just Rs 5,851. This, the official said, is because of a large number of RSBY (Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Yojana) beneficiaries in the state who are a part of the programme now. The ceiling for **RSBY** payouts Rs 30,000, so Kerala has ended up

funding far more secondary care procedures. "It is a legacy issue," the official said.

Tiger

While experts think the pattern shows search for a mate, they believe it also indicates that the tiger protection policy needs to be recalibrated.

Wildlife scientists and managers generally follow the popular "source and sink" population theory of a decade ago — it was believed that beyond the protected core tiger areas or source populations, a dispersing tiger population was bound to be a "sink" population, or not guaranteed to survive.

However, T1C1's journey, as well as growing tiger numbers in non-protected forests like Brahmapuri in Chandrapur district, shows a rethink may be needed. Bilal Habib, senior biologist with the Wildlife Institute

tiger is known to have walked anywhere in India. "We know this because T1C1 is radio-collared," Habib pointed out, adding, "It's clear that with shrinking space, we need to redraft policy to ensure safety of tigers like T1C1." T1C1 is Dnyanganga's first

of India, said this is the longest a

It was born to a resident tigress in Tipeshwar Sanctuary in late 2016, one of two male siblings. It was radio-collared in February under a project called 'Studying Dispersal Pattern of Tigers in the Eastern Vidarbha Landscape of Maharashtra', headed by Habib. T1C1 left the sanctuary in June.

Habib said the fact that T1C1 had made its way to a protected area made his future secure. "A tiger needs three things to become stable at any place – space, food and mate. Dnyanganga has space and enough preybase, though if T1C1 doesn't find a mate, it might keep walking further."

Melghat Tiger Reserve Field Director Srinivas Reddy confirmed, "T1C1 is the first tiger to arrive in Dnyanganga. So he has enough space and preybase." Moving out of Tipeshwar in

June, T1C1 entered Adilabad in

Telangana via Pandharkawda. spent a considerable time across inter-state forests between Adilabad and Nanded divisions during August and September, and then walked into the Painganga Sanctuary. In October, it went to Isapur Sanctuary, also in Yavatmal, before entering Hingoli district of Marathwada, which recorded its first tiger sighting in 40 years. "There, it was involved in a

attacked a group of men, injuring one. That was the only instance of conflict in his journey," said Pench Tiger Reserve Field Director Ravikiran Govekar, who supervises Tipeshwar.

conflict with humans, when he

Washim, Akola and finally Buldhana.

www.indianexpress.com

DWARKA-SECTOR 8

DDA to enlist agencies for geo-tagging houses

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI. DECEMBER 1

THE DELHI Development Authority (DDA) will empanel agencies for fixing geo-coordinates of houses — a necessary step for residents of unauthorised colonies to seek ownership rights of their properties.

Additionally, residents will also have to upload detailed illustrations of architectural components in homes and ownership documents.

The DDA will launch a portal on December 16 to start the process of PM-UDAY (Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi Awas Adhikar Yojana) to confer ownership rights on residents of over 1,700 unauthorised colonies.

DDA officials said the agency will arrange help desks at various places — details of which shall be displayed on the portal and at the Suvidha Kendra – where an applicant can produce original documents for verifica-

The agency has finished demarcating boundaries of 625 colonies and maps of over 200 such settlements are already up on its web portal for RWAs to file their objections and sugges-

A senior DDA official said that the DDA will create another web portal and empanel agencies for fixing geo-coordinates of plots. The agency plans to hand over ownership certificates to 100-150 people in December.



The agency has finished demarcating boundaries of **625 colonies.** *Archive*

Flung off scooter, three teenagers crash into pole near Delhi Gate, die of injuries

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

THREE TEENAGERS who were riding a scooter allegedly without helmets died after the twowheeler rammed the pavement and they crashed into a pole near Delhi Gate, suffering severe head injuries. Police said the incident took place around 11.30 pm Saturday, when they were returning from a wedding near Turkman Gate.

The victims were identified as a 15-year-old, his 14-year-old cousin and their 17-year-old friend. Police recovered the damaged scooter from the spot and suspect it was being driven by the 15-year-old, whose grandfather owned it.

According to his family, it was purchased in July.

Police believe the boys may have been speeding and lost control of the vehicle, causing it to skid and hit the footpath. The impact was such that they were thrown off the vehicle and hit a pole with a hoarding.

The scooter was found around 10 feet away from the bodies, said police.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central district) Mandeep



(Above) The spot near Delhi Gate where the accident took place; (right) the scooter rammed the pavement and the victims were thrown off the vehicle. Prem Nath Pandey

Singh Randhawa said a bystander informed them about the incident around 11.34 pm.

"A PCR van reached the spot within four minutes. By then, the boys had been taken to Lok Nayak Hospital by bystanders... they were declared dead by doctors. We called a district team to conduct an investigation and a team from the Forensic Science Lab in Rohini to collect blood samples from the pole and road. We believe the boys were speeding."

On Sunday, families of the victims sat outside the mortuary at Lok Nayak Hospital waiting for

the post-mortem examination. The 15-year-old's father, said,

"We were at the wedding when he told us he wanted to go out with his friends. He left around 10.45 pm and said he would be back within half an hour. When I called him at 11.30, he didn't pick up. I got scared and called his cousin, whose phone was also switched off. Later, around midnight, I received a call about the incident. I rushed to the hospital and saw the boys, bleeding from the head and nose. He was our only child."

The families claimed the



boys were chased by a police van because they didn't have helmets or a licence. "They would be speeding only if the police were chasing them. Some vehicle must have hit their scooter. causing the accident," alleged the 14-year-old's mother.

Police said they have checked CCTV footage from the area and didn't find any police vehicle. The FSL team also said the scooter wasn't hit by any other

The cousins studied in a private school in Nizamuddin and lived in Turkman Gate. Their friend was studying at a madrasa near Delhi Gate. "He wanted to become a maulana and was learning the Quran Sharif," said his mother.

A case has been registered

against unknown persons under IPC section 279 and 304A at IP Estate police station, police said.

The file will now be placed before L-G Anil Baijal and, thereafter, be sent to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER

THE DELHI government Sunday recommended rejecting the mercy petition of Vinay Sharma (25), one of the four death row convicts in the December 16, 2012, gangrape case, saying there was no room for any review in light of the "extreme brutality" involved.

On October 29, Tihar Jail authorities had given seven days to the four convicts to file mercy petitions, if they desire. Out of the four, only Sharma filed a petition, which was forwarded to the Delhi government before President Ram Nath Kovind.

As per internal file notings, Delhi Home Minister Satvendar Jain wrote, "This is the most heinous crime of extreme brutality committed by the appellant. This is the case where exemplary punishment should be given to deter others from committing such atrocious crimes. There is no merit in mercy petition, strongly recommended for rejection."

President.

Earlier, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Satya Gopal had also turned down the plea, terming the 2012 incident as the "fittest case to reject mercy petition".



The convict and three others were sentenced to death in the December 16, 2012, **gangrape case.** *Archive*

On December 16, 2012, a 23year-old woman was gangraped and assaulted on a moving bus in South Delhi by six persons. She was airlifted to a Singapore hospital, where she died on December 29, 2012. Accused Ram Singh hanged

venile, was convicted of rape and murder and given the maximum sentence of three years' imprisonment in a reform facility. The rest are lodged in Tihar. Last week, the victim's

himself in jail while another, a ju-

mother had asked a Delhi court to execute the death sentence awarded to the four convicts.

4,500 ad-hoc teachers left in lurch as DU principals' body defers their appointment, DUTA to protest Shraddhanand College issued an against new vacancies arising... in terim measure, as well as that of

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

THE DELHI University Principals Association's (DUPA) decision to put joining of ad-hoc teachers on hold has left 4,500 teachers in the lurch. The DU Teachers' Association (DUTA) has called for an indefinite strike over the issue, including boycotting evaluation and invigilation of exams, from December 4.

The decision comes in the backdrop of an August 28 letter

by DU's Assistant Registrar (Colleges). It said, "DU has adopted the 'UGC Regulations on Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and Other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education, 2018', with the approval of Academic Council and Executive Council... Colleges are advised to fill up permanent vacancies at the earliest; till permanent appointments are made, colleges may appoint guest faculty, if required,

academic session 2019-20."

On Saturday, Moti Lal Nehru College asked ad-hoc teachers to sign an undertaking which said, "I am well aware of the varsity instructions on contractual appointments in place of ad-hoc teachers. In case of any action of recovery of previous salary or non-release of further salary considering ad-hoc appointment, I will abide by the same. I shall not hold any college authority responsible for such action."

On November 19, Swami

office memorandum, which "put on hold" the appointments of two assistant professors done in October-November. Their appointment and joining letters "stood withdrawn with retro-

spective effect". Current and former EC members Sunday wrote to Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Tyagi pointing out ramifications of the decision, where one professor who was Dean of Faculty of Applied Sciences was also appointed as Director, South Campus, as an inDean of College and Pro Vice-Chancellor.

"This is nothing but adhocism... How can one person justify all these positions?," wrote EC members V S Negi and Rajesh Gogna, and former ECmember A K Bhagi.

DUTA president Rajib Ray had said, "We are anguished to see the August 28 letter is being interpreted by the DUPA to deny livelihood to 4,500 ad-hoc teachers who are already in service." Tyagi did not respond to calls and texts.

Flying as passenger, pilot takes charge of flight to deal with fog

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE PUNE, DECEMBER 1

ON SATURDAY morning, a pilot travelling on a Pune-Delhi flight as a passenger stepped in to operate an IndiGo flight after the airline received a message that there was dense fog at the Delhi Airport. In such situations, only pilots with CAT IIIB qualifications are allowed to land. As the pilot assigned for the flight didn't have the requisite qualification, the airline approached the

passenger. The flight departed for Delhi at 9.10 am — a delay of about 100 minutes — and landed safely at

IGI Airport. "This morning, Delhi Airport had implemented low visibility procedure. All incoming aircraft

Guard poses

as IPS officer

women, held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

A 38-YEAR-OLD security guard

was arrested for allegedly posing

as an IPS officer, offering women

government jobs and harassing

them by sending obscene con-

Shankar, was caught after a

woman filed a complaint against

him in South Delhi. He was

booked for sexual harassment

work in a mobile shop in UP and retrieved data of several women

customers. After he met with an

accident, he moved to Delhi to

Thakur said, "The woman

claimed Shankar had been send-

ing her offensive content, includ-

DCP (South) Atul Kumar

work as a security guard.

month."

Police said Shankar used to

and arrested from Gurgaon.

Police said the accused, Gauri

to harass

PUNE, DECEMBER 1

tent on their phones.

were expected to have Cat IIIB crew. On flight 6E- 6571(PNQ-DEL), the assigned Captain was not Cat 3B cleared.

"Rather than delay the flight so weather at Delhi could improve, another IndiGo Captain who was Cat 3B cleared was requested to operate this flight to avoid delay and inconvenience to passengers. All necessary approvals were taken before changing the flight crew," said IndiGo in a press statement released late Saturday.

According to sources at the Pune airport, the captain, who was returning to Delhi after flying a flight to Pune, went through the Breath Analyser Test and other set procedures. He also flew the plane minus the uni-

Sources said the airline took

the step to avoid delay in departure of the flight and possible cancellations. The Captain on board was also provided an op-

As per news agency ANI, India's aviation watchdog, Directorate General of Civil Aviation, issued a statement saying it is aware of the matter and will look into it.

tion to wait for one-two hours till another qualified pilot could be summoned.

Airports located in the northern part of the country suffer from low visibility during winter and Indian airlines deploy CAT-IIIB trained pilots to operate flights during this time. CAT-IIIB refers to Category III B approach and landing, with no decision height lower than 50 feet (15m) and a runway visual range (RVR) less than 700.

Centre has stopped supply of onions: Sisodia

supply onion trucks to Delhi after November 24, Deputy CM Manish Sisodia said Sunday, de-10 trucks to the capital everyday.

of the city.

Consumer Affairs Department told the Delhi government it has a stock of 56,000 metric tonnes of onions, which can be retailed by the state through mobile vends or fair price shops.

When prices stabilised, the mobile vans were discontinued. Later, prices soared again, and on November 22, the state de-

ing texts and videos, for the last ceived three to four trucks on av-



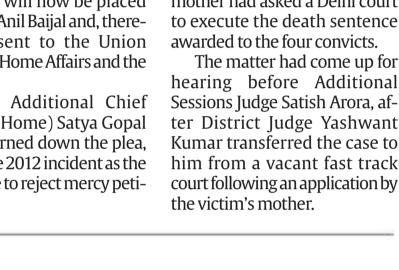
Sisodia demanded a supply of 10 trucks of onions to the **capital every day.** Archive

ties in every constituency to Unfortunately, the Centre shows it is trying to create an try, probably for the benefit of

"We have teams and facili-

sell onions at lower price. stopped provision of onions... It onion scarcity across the counhoarders and other vested groups," he added.

The Union Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ministry did not respond to the allegations till late night. **ENS**



New Delhi: The Centre did not manding a guaranteed supply of

Sisodia alleged the Union government was "consciously creating a scarcity of onions" in the city. Retail price of onion has crossed Rs 100 in some pockets On September 5, the Union

The Delhi government placed a requisition, and onions were sold through mobile vends.

manded the resumption of 10 trucks from the Centre's buffer. "We asked for provision of onions on a daily basis till December 9, 2019. But we re-

erage per day instead. The Delhi government has been prepared to sell 10 trucks of onions per day...," Sisodia said.

HARDLOOK



Admission process to entry-level seats in private schools started last week, with thousands of parents vying for spots in the capital's most reputed institutions. Amid fierce competition and with each school tailoring its own criteria, new start-ups are trying to lend a hand to anxious parents. SUKRITA BARUAH reports

EVERY YEAR, starting late November and lasting over three months, the national capital begins buzzing with anxiety around the futures of lakhs of three-year-olds. In a city with well over 4,000 private, government and municipal corporation schools, the race to get a seat in nursery for a child in a reputed private school is competitive, frenetic and an altogether serious business.

And as is the case in metropolitan cities, where there's a problem, there are those offering a solution — in the form of start-ups. Over the last few years, a small economy has started to emerge around the process of getting children into school, with third parties seeing an opportunity in the trials of flustered parents.

Sanghamitra Pattanayak, a resident of South Delhi, recalled the long fretful process of trying to get her child admitted into nursery a few years ago. It involved her applying to 29 different schools; her child eventually got a seat in two.

"It took us a lot of time to understand the process and identify which schools to apply to. It involved sorting through so many, finding out about their fees, how far they are from home. My husband and I were both working at the time, and it was very difficult for us to get leaves to carry out the work. I took several half-day leaves over a period of 20 days just to complete the application process," she said.

Over the last few years, the application process has increasingly moved online, which can save parents a few trips to the schools. But many of the core problems remain.

There are 1,400-odd private schools in the city which are recognised by the Delhi government. In these, 25% of the entry-level seats are reserved for children from the economically weaker sections, disadvantaged groups and children with special needs.

Admission to these is a centralised, completely online process governed by the Delhi government, through a common form in which applicants list their school preferences. Selection of candidates to these seats is conducted through a centralised draw of lots process conducted by the education department.

Unlike this, admission to general seats in these schools is a completely decentralised process, conducted at the individual school level. Each school has its own admission form. To ensure the process is fair and objective, a 'points system' is followed. In this, schools are free to select a set of criteria — such as distance, applicant having a sibling in the school, or the applicant having a parent who is an alumni of the school among others — against which applicants will be allocated points.

Parents find themselves having to apply to multiple schools because of the fear that their child will not get a seat in a single school, because, as Pattanayak's experience illustrates, the odds can be stacked against them.

However, this is not because of a dearth in the number of seats up for grabs. It is because parents are primarily interested in getting their children admitted to the more limited number of top- to mid-range schools in the city, and everyone finds themselves competing for seats in those.

For instance, a well-reputed school like Springdales School in Dhaula Kuan has 67 seats at the entry-level available for open admissions. Principal Jyoti Bose estimates that the school gets over 3,000 applications against these seats — which gives a ratio of around 45 applicants against every seat.

"As multiple applicants get allotted the same number of points, we have to have at least one round of draw-of-lots every year and we have a long waiting list. It's a real pity for the parents. It's no wonder that they apply to so many schools even though there's only a handful of schools that they would ideally like to send their children to," she said. The number is far less in a moderately

ess.com

W. DIEKKUTA' FEN DETHI IN ME



placed school like Lovely Public Senior Secondary School, Priyadarshini Vihar, which receives around three-four applicants

The massive number of applications filled on behalf of each child, and the limited number of schools that are sought out, is what makes the admission process in Delhi an annual mega-event.

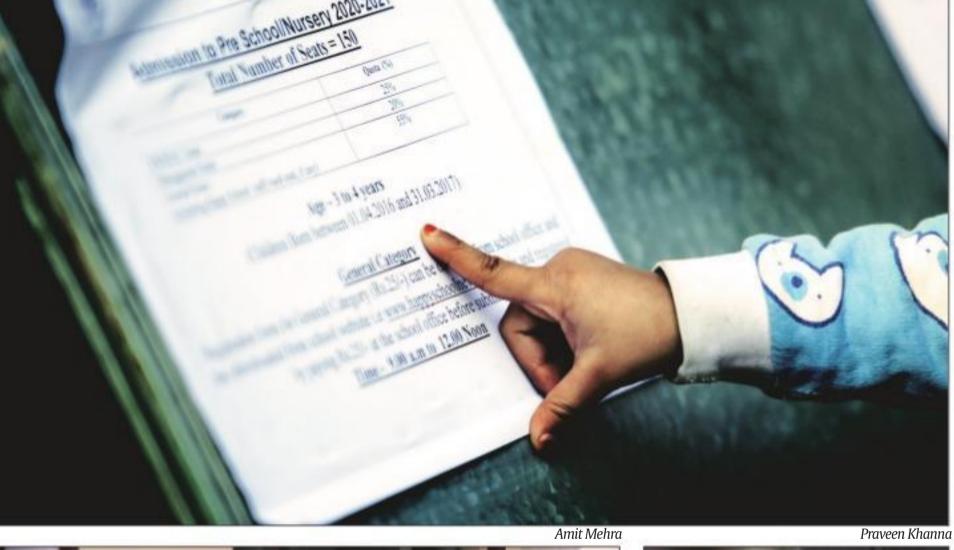
per seat. Other smaller schools struggle to

When Anupama Kapoor, a resident of Gurgaon, had a hard time trying to get her daughter admitted to a school in 2018, she began talking to her friends and found that they too found the process tedious and difficult. An IT professional, she began thinking of a way to make the process easier for other parents in the future, and set up Schoolato, a start-up that will begin its operations this admission season.

The model that Kapoor and her team around 15 members, most of whom are mothers who have gone through the admission process themselves — is that of doing the running around for parents.

The process involves parents filling out a form created by the organisation with various details required by different schools; submitting documents like copies of Aadhaar card, birth certificates, medical certificates and photographs; and selecting which schools they would like to apply to.

"We do everything manually. We collect individual forms from the schools and fill them for parents, using the information that they provide to us in our common form. We





There are 1,400-odd private schools in the city which are recognised by the Delhi government. Each school has its

KEY DATES NOV 29: Admission process begins

DEC 27: Last date for submission of forms JAN 24: First list out

FEB 12: Second list out

said Kapoor.

MAR 6: Subsequent list (if any) MAR 16: Admission process closes

upload scanned copies for them to verify, submit the forms manually in the schools, and upload the receipt for the parents to see. We are basically trying to help them save time,"

The cost of buying application forms from the schools is Rs 25, set by the Delhi government. In addition to that, Schoolato charges a fee of Rs 499 for every school that the parents apply to through them. Kapoor said that most parents who have reached out to them apply to at least 20.

One of the earlier players to enter this area was Ezyschooling, which began in the 2017 admission season. This was started by a student of Delhi Technological University (DTU), Mayank Jain, when he saw his brother trying to get his son admitted to school. His brother had applied to 20 schools, and his nephew eventually got a seat in just one.

Unlike Schoolato, Jain has developed a completely automated application process. The company developed a common online admission form and tied up with schools which agreed to accept that form for admis-

own admission form

sion to their school. So far, they have tied up with 125 schools in different parts of East, North and West Delhi, Noida and Faridabad. Their website lists out the partner schools

like a catalogue — with photos, satellite locations, the board it is affiliated to, languages taught, and sports and lab facilities available.

"The first step is for parents to create an account and select schools, which they add to their cart. The second step is to fill our common form, which includes information required for all our partner schools' processes. After that, they make the combined payment for the schools' admission forms. Since the process is completely automated, the information is fed to the schools as per the requirements in their admission processes, and the number of points accruing to the child is calculated based on the school's individual cri-

teria and point system," said Jain. However, Jain does not charge parents for the service; the company only charges Rs 25 if parents want updates on the status of their applications. Instead, Jain is relying on the nursery admission to gather footfall to his website, and is looking to monetise through other means such as embedded advertising and other parenting services his company provides. Last admission season, they worked with 3,000 parents and had tied up with 35 schools.

Pattanayak, after her difficult admission experience, also began a start-up with a similar system in 2016. But she did not continue beyond one admission season and diversified to other services because she found working

as a third party too fraught with challenges. The first very obvious shortcoming in the model that she identified was reluctance in parents to choose this route. "Nursery admissions are seen as crucially important and a once-in-a-lifetime thing. I completely understand that parents might not want to entrust

this to a third party and do it manually for

every school to make sure that no stone is left

The second challenge was getting schools on board for the online process. "We had tied

unturned," she said.

Praveen Khanna

up with around 25 schools that year. We found them not supportive of moving to a common process. If there are only a handful of schools that come on board, it can't be useful to parents. Then they can apply to just a couple of schools through the portal's com-

mon process, and will anyway have to apply to another 10 or so schools through the individual processes," she said.

Admission season is stressful not just for

parents, but also for schools. With the scramble largely focused around the more established and well-known schools, there are many that don't get enough applications to

fill all nursery seats. Here, too, start-ups have found room to work with. Ria Gupta, a student of Sanskriti School, began her start-up, Staria, last year to offer admission across different grades, including nursery. Her start-up claims to 'guarantee' admission to anyone who reaches out,

schools they have tied up with. "We help parents identify the optimum school depending on fee and criteria which will determine their likelihood of getting a seat, such as distance. We identify schools which have not been able to fill as many seats as they'd like to and refer children to those," she said.

and instead of charging parents, they charge

For instance, Kataria International School, located in Bhim Enclave in West Delhi's Vikas Nagar, finds itself struggling

with applications. "Our school is located in a very low-income area where families are not even able to pay Rs 200 per month as school fee, so they don't apply because we need to charge a monthly fee of around Rs 3,000 to pay our teachers. As we don't have a website for our school, parents in better off areas such as Vikaspuri and Janakpuri — which is where we need to attract applications from — perhaps are not aware of our school," said school chairperson R C Kataria.

That the needs of certain schools to seek these kinds of tie-ups can be contingent to how well they are able to fill their seats is reflected in the observations of the team at Ezyschooling, which said they do not yet have any tie-ups with schools in Central Delhi and

very few in South. "Most popular schools in Delhi will see long waiting lists but the most serious competition is limited only to a fraction of the total private schools. There are others which struggle to find applicants and students," Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister Manish Sisodia had told The Indian Express last week.

Over the past 15 years, the city has tried several formulae for nursery admissions including a government-mandated points system where distance was to be given the highest weightage.

After a prolonged legal battle which reached the Supreme Court, private schools were given a free hand in deciding the points system, provided they do not flout the Right to Education Act and do not test kids or their parents before admissions.

"Across the world, distance is accepted as the main criteria to decide where a child studies. But since our public schooling system has largely failed to keep the middle class engaged, private schools have a free hand. The only solution to the nursery admission mess and anxiety is to improve the level of public schooling so that the middle class has viable options," said a senior Delhi government official, who did not want to be named.

POINT SYSTEM

DPS RK PURAM	
CRITERIA	POINTS
NEIGHBOURHOOD	
0-6 km	50
6.1-8 km	40
8.1-15 km	30
15.1-20 km	20
Sibling	25
Parent alumni	10 for each
Girl child	5
VASANT VALLEY SCHO	OL
CRITERIA	POINTS
NEIGHBOURHOOD	

Staff child **ACHIEVEMENT IN SPORTS** (of parents) State level National level International level **OTHER CRITERIA** include contribution in

the area of social service, recognition in the area of arts; Original research/publication;

5 each

POINTS

20

0-10 km Above 10 km

Parent alumni

CRITERIA

Sibling

THE MOTHER'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

awards received (of parents)

NEIGHBOURHOOD	
For areas specified in the website	40
Girl child	7(
Sibling	30
Alumni	2
SPRINDALES SCHOOL	
CRITERIA POI	NT:

NEIGHBOURHOOD Living in areas specified in registration form 39 Not living in areas specified in the registration form 29 35 Sibling

ALUMNI Former students who have been in the school for 14 years (Nursery - Class XII) 26 Former students who have been in the school for 12 years 16 (Nursery to Class X) Students who joined in

Class XI–XII (2 years) and have

become members of the Old

Springdalians Association 11 **AHLCON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CRITERIA POINTS NEIGHBOURHOOD** 0-3 km 3-6 km 35 Over 6 km 25

25 Sibling Staff ward 15 Single parent 10 Parent alumni/first child/girl child

SARDAR PATEL VIDYALAYA	
CRITERIA	POINTS
NEIGHBOURHOOD	
0-8 km	40
8-10 km	38
10-12 km	30
12-14 km	25
14-15 km	20
Over 15 km	C
First-born child	10

GYAN BHARTI SCHOOL CRITERIA POINTS NEIGHBOURHOOD 0-10 km Above 10 km 0 30 Parent alumni

10 each

15

20

15

Parent alumni

Sibling

Sibling

SANSKRITI SCHOOL (FOR THOSE IN NON-GOVT CATEGORY) **CRITERIA POINTS**

NEIGHBOURHOOD 0-8 km 8-10 km 20 10-12 km 10 Above 12 km 25 Sibling 25 Parent alumni

AIR FORCE BAL BHARTI SCHOOL **CRITERIA POINTS NEIGHBOURHOOD**

Upto 5 km 25 20 5-10 km 10-15 km 15 Sibling 20 10 Parent alumni 10 Single parent Single girl child 10 Children of ex-Air warriors, NC(E)s Children of deceased air 25 warriors/NC(E)s Children of ex-Army/ ex-Navy personnel 15 Children of Ex-Air Force civilians 15

Ex-Navy personnel 15 Children of deceased AF civilian employee 15 **BLUEBELLS SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL**

Children of IAF NPF employees

Children of deceased Ex-Army/

CRITERIA POINTS NEIGHBOURHOOD Areas in bus route 50 20 Parent alumni Staff ward 10

Sibling

BRIEFLY

Man stabbed outside shop, 3 arrested

New Delhi: A 19-year-old man was stabbed in front of his 13-year-old nephew, allegedly by three men and a minor, outside his shop in South Delhi's Ambedkar Nagar Saturday night. The victim, Chirag Bansiwal, was closing his shop when the accused allegedly thrashed him and later stabbed him in his shoulder and abdomen. Police said they arrested the three men and apprehended the juvenile. According to police, Bansiwal had slapped two of the accused during a fight a month ago. The accused had allegedly threatened to kill him.

Afghan man held with gold at IGI airport

New Delhi: An Afghan national was arrested by customs officials at the IGI airport for allegedly smuggling gold by hiding it in his shoes Friday. The accused came to Delhi from Mazar-e-Sharif. Custom officials caught him after the security check and recovered 997 gm gold. The accused had earlier allegedly smuggled 400 gm gold from Afghanistan.

Man held for robbing train passengers

New Delhi: Police have arrested a man who allegedly robbed people in trains in the capital, and recovered Rs 8.5 lakh from him Saturday. The accused, Sagar, was caught while the police began probing a complaint from a passenger at New Delhi railway station, who was allegedly robbed of Rs 3.5 lakh cash and gold on November 20. Police conducted raids near the trains and arrested the man Saturday.

Police chief attends school annual day

New Delhi: Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik attended the 27th Annual Day of the Delhi Police Public School, and motivated students. He was accompanied by Suchna Patnaik, president of Police Families Welfare Society, and other highranking officials from the Delhi Police. The event was held at Safdarjung Enclave, where the school also inaugurated 25 solar panels that will be used to produce electricity in the school.

Painting house, man electrocuted

New Delhi: A 29-year-old worker was electrocuted in a house he was painting in South Delhi's Neb Sarai, police said Sunday. **ENS**

'BETTER POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES, FAVOURABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS HELPED'

Least polluted November since 2015, but average air quality still 'very poor'

SHIVAM PATEL NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

THOUGH THE average air quality index (AQI) for the month stood at 312, in the 'very poor' category, the national capital just witnessed its least polluted November in the last five years, data analysed by The Indian

AQI is used by agencies to measure how polluted the air is. Every day, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) releases the 24-hour average AQI of around 100 cities and towns, including Delhi and NCR areas. The daily AQI reports started to be made public in May 2015.

Express shows.

The Indian Express analysed AQI figures released by the CPCB of five Novembers since 2015, and found that the 30-day average was the lowest this year. The highest average AQI, 374, was witnessed in November 2016.

While the method of calculating AQI has been the same since 2015, the number of monitoring stations has gone up from seven then to 37 now — which gives a more comprehensive picture.

A senior CPCB official explained, "Even though the average AQI is much above the desired standard, it has been improving every month in the past three years. A major factor behind the change witnessed this November is favourable meteorological conditions, but there are also more efforts on the ground by all agencies involved in pollution control."

Delhi's air quality usually starts to dip by the end of October and bad air days continue till the end of January. The onset of bad air days is a result of changing wind speed and direction, lower temperatures and a range of re**AVERAGE AQI 312 LAST MONTH, WORST WAS IN 2016**



Delhi's air quality usually starts to dip by the end of October and bad air days continue till the end of January. Express

2019

Nov 3

2018

Nov 5

2017

Nov 9

2016

Nov 6

2015

Nov 7

PEAK AQI IN NOV

AVERAGE AQI IN NOV		'SEVERE' AQI DAYS IN NOV	
2019	312.23	2019	7
2018	334.96	2018	5
2017	360.93	2017	7
2016	374.06	2016	10
2015*	358.03	2015	7
*data available for 2: AQI source: CPCB; Te		MD	

gional and external emissions, including emissions from crop residue burning in farms in north-2018, onwards. west Indian states, and crackers A similar trend was noticed

CPCB data shows that pollution levels usually spike in the national capital in the days around the festival. On November 7, 2018, Diwali day, the air quality was in the 'poor' range, but fell to 'very poor' the following day and worsened to 'severe' or near 'severe' for

burst on Diwali.

the next five days. Improvement was noticed only November 14,

this year and in 2016, in which the air quality plummeted to the 'severe' category in the days after the

at the India Meteorological Department (IMD), said the period around Diwali usually sees lower wind speed and no rainfall:

Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist

other sources."

CPCB data revealed that November 2019 saw seven 'severe' air quality days, when AQI was above 400. Last November had seen five such days.

The highest AQI in the last five Novembers, 497, was witnessed on November 6, 2016. The second highest, 494, was seen on November 3 this year. The city saw three 'moderate' air quality days this year, when AOI is between 100 to 200, as compared to one last year and none in the three Novembers before that. This year, the city also witnessed its first 'satisfactory' air quality day in November in five years, when

AVG MIN TEMP IN NOV (IN °C)

Normal minimum temperature

13.4

12.8

12.8

14.9

AAP MLAS AT TAIMOOR NAGAR EVENT

2019

2018

2017

2016

2015

is 12.9

494 Severe

426 Severe

486 Severe

497 Severe

435 Severe

"All the factors leading to accu-

mulation of pollutants become

active at the same time in this pe-

riod. You have low wind speed,

emissions from firecrackers, stub-

ble burning, vehicular traffic in

the city due to festivities, and

AOI is below 100.

The difference this year, Srivastava added, has been more days with stronger winds that peaked at around 35km/hour and helped disperse pollutants, along with scattered rainfall towards the end of the month and higher minimum temperature.

On colder days with calm wind speed, pollutants remain suspended in the air closer to the surface whereas on warmer days with sunlight and wind they move further up and disperse.

This November had the highest average minimum temperature, 15 degrees Celsius, in the last nine years, as per data from the IMD. The normal value is 12.9 degrees Celsius. The city, however, received lower than normal rain fall this time, 1.1 mm, as opposed to a normal of 5.6 mm.

In 2016, during the 'Great Smog of Delhi', when the most number of severely polluted days were recorded in November, meteorology had again played an important part. The senior CPCB official said intrusion of dust particles from the Arabian peninsula were recorded over the city and parts of NCR around that

The CPCB official said the improvement noticed in the average AQI of this past month was "statistically significant" if compared with AQIs of the previous four Novembers.

He said measures such as closure of the Badarpur Thermal Power Station in October 2018 and opening of a peripheral expressway around Delhi the same year have proven effective. It also includes heavy fines imposed on vehicles violating pollution under check (PUC) norms under the revised Motor Vehicles (Amended) Act, enforced in September.

'Need support of Gujjars...

Mercury dips below 10°C for first time

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

THE MINIMUM temperature in Delhi dipped to 9.4 degrees Celsius Sunday, a degree below normal, and is expected to dip further during the week.

The city recorded the highest average minimum temperature in November in nine years at 15 degrees Celsius, as opposed to a normal of 12.9 degrees Celsius. Officials said frequent west-

ern disturbances and cloud cover was the main reason for this. On Sunday, the maximum

temperature was 23.4 degrees Celsius, two degrees below nor-According to officials at the

Meteorological Department, the temperature is expected to be within the range of 24 degrees Celsius and 8 degrees Celsius for the coming week and moderate winds are expected Monday and Tuesday.

Temperatures have been dipping in the hills north of Delhi and IMD officials said its impact will be felt in Delhi in the form of cold winds.

"The impact of the sudden dip in temperatures and snow in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand will be felt in Delhi in the form of cold winds during the week. Fog is expected to return on Wednesday. The city is not expected to see any rain for at least a week," an IMD official said.

The air quality on Sunday, meanwhile, dipped from 'moderate' on Saturday to 'poor'.

"The main factor was the dip in wind speed, which was recorded between 4 kmph and 10 kmph. A slight increase in expected in the coming two days with speed forecast to be between 5kmph and 18kmph," an IMD official said.

Sirsa defaces Aurangzeb Lane board: 'No reason for such a road'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

RAJOURI GARDEN MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa defaced an 'Aurangzeb Lane' signboard in Central Delhi Sunday and demanded the removal of the Mughal emperor's name from road signages and school textbooks.

The Shiromani Akali Dal MLA, who is also the president of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DS-GMC), was accompanied by a few other members of the com-

In a video posted by him on his Twitter account, Sirsa and DSGMC leaders Harmeet Singh Kalka, Kulwant Singh Baath and Vicky Mann can be seen spray-painting the board with black paint. When contacted, Sirsa told

The Indian Express: "At a time when we are observing the martyrdom of Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji, who sacrificed his life to save Hindus and Sikhs from forceful conversion to Islam and was killed by Aurangzeb, how can we have a road in his name? I believe that there is no reason that there should be a road, or anything else, in his name."

While the paint was cleaned during the course of the day, a New Delhi Municipal Council spokesperson claimed they





were not aware of the defacement. "We don't know of any such incident. We usually register a complaint of defacement

in such cases," the spokesperson

Police said they are yet to receive a complaint. A senior police officer said, "We haven't received a complaint vet but are conducting an enquiry in the matter. We will take action ourselves if we don't receive a complaint soon."

In 2015, the name of

Aurangzeb Road was changed to Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Road after the then BJP MP from East Delhi Maheish Girri proposed the move to "correct the mistakes made in our history". The move was criticised by several historians. At the time, Aurangzeb Lane was spared a similar fate.

The signboard was cleaned

leader Sirsa. *Prem Nath Pandey*

up later; (left) BJP-SAD

This is not the first time that signboards in the areas have been defaced. In 2016, 2017 and 2018, signages on Akbar Road has been vandalised and defaced, with the Delhi Police filing FIRs in all three cases.

In all three instances, posters saying 'Maharana Pratap Road' were pasted on the signboards in place of Akbar Road. In one case, the Hindu Sena claimed responsibility for the action.

Two shot dead during wedding in Ghaziabad

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NOIDA, DECEMBER 1

TWO MEN were shot dead allegedly by a friend outside a banquet hall in Ghaziabad's Indirapuram Saturday. Police said the victims have been identified as Anand and Vikram,

According to police, they were at a friend's wedding along with three others when they got into an argument. The argument escalated and the accused allegedly fired multiple rounds at the two outside the venue. The two men were rushed to a nearby hospital where they were declared dead on arrival.

Police said the five friends entered Ambrosia Palace in Vaishali Saturday evening. CCTV footage shows them eating and even dancing together. The argument broke out a few hours later.

Police said the three men fled from the venue as police and hospital authorities were alerted.

"Prima facie, it appears the accused and the victims had an older rivalry, which escalated. An FIR has been filed against the three, all of whom had accompanied the victims, and are absconding," said an officer.

While Anand hailed from Delhi, Vikram lived in Greater Noida's Dharampura.

will address all your needs'

SOURAV ROY BARMAN

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

THREE AAP MLAs, in the presence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, made a direct pitch to the Gujjar community to support it in the upcoming Assembly polls during an event Sunday, where the widow of Rupesh Basoya, who was killed by drug peddlers last year, was handed over a job contract.

Addressing the largely Gujjar gathering in the densely populated Taimoor Nagar, Okhla MLA Amanatullah Khan said the AAP's support base among the community is a little weak, and the party was ready to do whatever it takes to win their support. Kasturba Nagar MLA Madan Lal and Tughlakabad MLA Sahi Ram seconded Khan.

"We are working for every community, we are not spreading hatred. I want the Gujjar community to support us like every other community. We will address all your needs, like we addressed the sewer issue in the area through a Rs 107-crore project... We will form the government again but that will be incomplete without your support," he said.

Basova, a Gujjar, was vocal against the drug menace in the area. He was killed by miscreants,



CM Arvind Kejriwal at the event Sunday. Gajendra Yadav

who had allegedly come to buy drugs, outside his residence when he was playing with his two children in September last year. Police made four arrests in the case.

Basoya's wife Mona has been given a job in the Waqf board, of which Khan is the chairman. The government also helped his two children get admission in Kendriya Vidyalaya, apart from providing assistance of Rs 5 lakh.

Many community elders shared the dais with Kejriwal, who called himself their "elder son, elder brother". He urged people to come up and share their grievances with the government without any hesitation.

"A few days ago, a few mem-

bers of the community came to thank me. I told them they don't need to thank me but themselves for voting a honest party to power five years ago. Till a few years ago, I used to live like you which has not changed. I had a small flat in Kaushambi. I know the amount of effort that goes into paying power, water bills,

funding education, health care.

"I consider the entire Delhi to be my family and I'm the elder brother of this family. It's usually the elder brother's responsibility to pay bills and meet other expenses. Today, about 60-70% Delhi is getting zero electricity bills. We have made treatment in mohalla clinics free...," said the CM.

IN A FIRST

AI tool to help govt crack down on traders evading tax

SOURAV ROY BARMAN NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

IN A first, the Delhi government is all set to use a machine-learning tool, developed by two USbased Indian researchers, to identify bogus firms propped up by traders in the city to evade taxes. Initial estimates suggest that the public exchequer stands to gain up to Rs 300 crore annu-

ally upon plugging the leaks. University of California, Berkeley, Associate Professor Dr Aprajit Mahajan and postdoctoral scholar Dr Shekhar Mittal are developing the tool based on scrutiny of a vast dataset of VAT (Value Added Tax) returns regis-

tered in Delhi between 2012-17. The researchers and the Delhi government, which commissioned the study, have concluded that since traders use similar means even to evade GST (Goods and Services Tax), which has replaced VAT, the "future iterations of machine learning will build on GST data," Jasmine Shah, vicechairman of Delhi Dialogue and Development Commission

(DDC), told *The Indian Express*. The researchers are likely to officially submit their first set of findings to the government this month. In a paper, 'Who is Bogus? Using One-Sided Labels to Identify Fraudulent Firms from Tax Returns', the researchers contended that their



How the tool will help identify tax evasions

TAX VIOLATIONS are mostly in the form of traders generating bills of illegal transactions with firms that exist only on paper to decrease tax liability. DDC chairperson Jasmine Shah said the study's objective was to develop a tool which would obviate the need for random tax raids, as the application, over time, will throw up a shortlist of potential evaders based on a scrutiny of their tax filing records over a long period.

"Merely getting shortlisted won't cast a shadow on a firm; final action will be taken based on subsequent ground work... It may also turn out that a shortlisted firm was actually not evading taxes. That data will be fed into the tool, which will help increase its accuracy," Shah said.

work is the first-ever systematic study of tax evasion in an economy with weak compliance.

"Our results indicate that by using our tool, the tax administration can prevent fraud up to \$15-45 million. Given that such data exists in many tax jurisdictions and that anecdotal evidence suggests that such false paper trails are a common problem, our work should have high policy relevance both within India and elsewhere," says the paper.

The tax department used to carry out surprise inspections and raids to catch defaulters or traders resorting to unfair means to avoid paying taxes. However, in September 2018, the Delhi government disbanded a 25member team of tax inspectors citing rampant corruption in the entire recovery process and ha-

rassment meted out to traders. "A tax authority usually determines the existence of bogus firms by first filtering down based on a few preliminary indicators, and then undertaking physical inspections that verify if a firm is bogus or legitimate. Given the authority's limited resources, these inspections are done sporadically. While the true revenue implication of bogus firms is unknown. our conversations with tax officials in Delhi suggest that it might be considerable (\$300 million in Delhi alone is a commonly mentioned figure)," the researchers

observed in the paper.

staged attack, say cops complaint, he was returning **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

Gurgaon assault: Man

GURGAON, DECEMBER 1

OVER THREE months after a resident of Gurgaon's Sector 40 was beaten up and stabbed while travelling home with his children, police said the attack was allegedly planned by the complainant in order to frame another person against whom he

held a grudge. The revelations came about Friday after police arrested three people, including a Delhi Police head constable, who told them that the complainant, Narendra Pratap Singh, planned the attack. While the constable, Khem Singh Negi, was suspended, Singh is yet to be arrested.

According to Singh's initial

home with his two children on August 23 when his car was allegedly stopped in Sector 40 by two men, who beat him up and also stabbed him. They fled after he cried for help. In his complaint, Singh had also alleged that a day prior to the attack, he had received a threat call. "All three accused have been

produced in court and remanded to judicial custody. The phone they used to make the threat call has been recovered Search is on for the fourth accused," said Gurgaon Police PRO Subhash Boken. DCP (Special Cell) Pramod Kushwah said "The head constable was arrested Friday. He was posted with the Special Cell. We have suspended him from duty."

GOVT & POLITICS



CATCHING UP

VISITING SRI Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa used the opportunity to bond with his old classmates in India. Rajapaksa, who had trained at the prestigious Defence Services Staff College in India, connected with General (retd) V K Singh, Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, and several retired officers of the Indian Army. The Sri Lankan President, who had served as Defence Secretary during his brother and Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's presidency between 2005 and 2015, said that they reminisced their days together. The Indian government had put MoS V K Singh as his minister-in-waiting.

Wait For Drop

WHILE THERE are two separate pools of cars to pick and drop MPs from Lok Sabha and Raiva Sabha, the separation had never been rigidly implemented. Of late, however, MPs have been left waiting for vehicles on the ground that cars for that particular pool are not immediately available. The office asks which House the MP belongs to and informs the staff about the inability to provide a car till one from the appropriate fleet returns. Needless today, MPs are miffed by the sudden change.

No Press Meet

FOR THE first time in recent history, the Border Security Force (BSF) has done away with its annual ritual of a press conference before celebrating its Raising Day. All paramilitary forces hold an annual press conference ahead of their Raising Day celebrations where they field questions about the force's activities from the press. The only instance of a force cancelling the annual event earlier has been recorded by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) in 2013 ahead of then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's impending China visit. Sources said in the BSF's case, the development is in keeping with "no media interaction" regime ushered in by new DG V K Johri.

Cong accuses govt of promoting private telcos at the cost of PSUs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

THE CONGRESS on Sunday accused the BJP-led government of giving "special treatment" to private companies in the telecom sector at the cost of public sector entities and asked the Prime Minister if the ruling party received benefits in terms of electoral bonds from them.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera alleged public sector companies like BSNL and MTNL, which were profitable under the previous UPA governments, were now running in loss while the government was promoting and giving relief to private sector companies.

"Why are you meting out step-motherly treatment to public sector companies and this special treatment to private sector undertakings. I want to ask Modi ji if his party received benefits in terms of electoral bonds

from the latter," Khera said. His remarks come in the backdrop of telecom companies

Vodafone-Idea and Bharti Airtel

announcing on Sunday increases in rates of their mobile phone network services.

Khera claimed that BSNL and MTNL were making profits of over Rs 7,000 crore under UPA I and II but were running losses of over Rs 11,000 crore for the past five years. "You (govt) deliberately allowed them (public sector companies) to bleed to death," Khera alleged.

"Look at the efforts to sell BPCL, Container Corporation of India, Shipping Corporation of India. They also took money from the capital reserves of the RBI and they are out to sell Maharatna companies of India. So the strategy towards public sector of this government is that if there is a profit-making company, try and reduce its profit, if you fail, in that case sell it," he alleged.

He said, "There has to be a quid pro quo. Why would a government go out of its way to destroy the profit-making public sector companies and try maximising the profits of private sectors companies? At the end of the day we end up paying for

Amid economic woes, ally-less BJP fears onion sting in polls

ONION PRICE PER KG

LIZ MATHEW & HARIKISHAN SHARMA NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

GOING into the Jharkhand Assembly elections trailed by the bleak economy figures and the Maharashtra political embarrassment, the BJP fears that its prospects may take a hit due to the steep onion prices.

Onions have been retailing at higher rates than in other parts of the country in the Jharkhand capital of Ranchi, seeing a more than 400 per cent rise since the beginning of the financial year. While the supply has improved in the past few days, there has been no significant impact on the prices.

The BJP is up against a formidable opposition alliance in the five-phase Jharkhand Assembly elections, which kicked off on Saturday. It is banking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image and welfare measures initiated by the Raghubar Das government to see it through.

Data available on the portal of the National Horticulture Board (NHB) shows that the average price of onions in Ranchi in November was Rs 5,533 per quintal, more than three times the going rate of Rs 1,610 per quintal in the same period last year. The retail price is almost as high as well, Rs 6,967 per quintal

RISE NOV₁ **NOV 29** ₹13 ₹70 438.46% Ranchi ₹16.2 366.21% All-India avg ₹75.62 TOTAL ARRIVAL OF ONIONS IN RANCHI **IN NOVEMBER IN JANUARY** metric tonnes* metric tonnes *lowest this year

compared to Rs 2,335 per quintal in November 2018.

A BJP leader who is part of the Jharkhand poll preparations said, "After what happened in Maharashtra, the party is in desperate need of an impressive victory to regain its image. Workers across the country, especially those gearing up for the elections in Delhi and Bihar, want a morale boost. However, the bad news on the economic front falling GDP, dwindling job prospects and general gloom has hit them already. If onion prices remain high, it will certainly dent us in the elections."

The Maharashtra developments are also being closely watched in Jharkhand as the BJP has lost allies here too, like the Shiv Sena in Mumbai. The All Jharkhand Students' Union

(AJSU), which was in the ruling coalition with the BJP, and other allies like the JD(U) and Lok Janshakti Party, are contesting separately. The Opposition Congress, JMM and RJD, on the other hand, have formed a prepoll alliance.

A marginal player in Jharkhand till 2014, the BJP had won most seats in the last Assembly elections in the state with a margin of less than 10,000 votes, including 19 with a difference of below 5,000. Points out a BJP MP, "With the Opposition together, the fight would be closer, even small issues could swing the voters. So, the spike in onion prices could influence votes."

Onion prices have seen a sharp rise across the country on account of a dip in supply. NHB



data shows that the total arrival of onions in Jharkhand declined to 6,870 metric tonnes in November from 9,710 metric tonnes during the same month last year. Onion prices have been rising in Jharkhand since the beginning of the current financial vear, as per the Department of Consumer Affairs website. On April 1, the vegetable was selling at Rs 13 per kg in Ranchi, going up to Rs 70 per kg by November 29 — an increase of 438.46 per cent. In the corresponding period, all-India average onion retail price increased from Rs 16.2 per kg to 75.62 per kg, or a 366.21 per cent surge.

Since November 1, when the Assembly elections were announced in Jharkhand, onion prices in Ranchi have gone up by 40 per cent, from Rs 50 per kg.

In 1998, the BJP's loss in the Delhi Assembly elections was attributed to skyrocketing prices of onion, going up to a then record Rs 60 per kg. The government's attempts to augment supply through imports had failed to stop the Congress win.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

Prices high, govt to

buy 11,000 tons of

onion from Turkey

AMID SKYROCKETING prices of onions, the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution asked staterun MMTC to place an order for the import of 11,000 metric tons (MT) of onions from Turkey. According to sources, the

Department of Consumer Affairs has given direction to MMTC in this regard, and the imported onions will begin arriving from late December or early January. Sources further said that the

fresh direction for import of 11,000 MT of onions was in addition to the 6,090 MT of onions which will start arriving from Egypt mid-December. Earlier too the government,

on November 9, directed MMTC to import up to 1 lakh MT of onions from surplus countries. In fact, department roped in Indian embassies in major onion-exporting countries - Iran, Afghanistan and Egypt - to facilitate the imports of onion.

Last month, the Union cabinet approved importing 120,000 tonnes of onions to improve the domestic supply and control prices that have skyrocketed to Rs 75-120 per kg across major cities after shortfall in production owing to adverse weather conditions and seasonality. The Centre has directed NAFED to procure surplus onions from Rajasthan and Maharashtra for distribution in deficit states.

"Untimely prolonged rains in the major growing states of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh during the harperiod, vesting September/October, caused damage to the standing crops in these regions... This led to limited availability of Kharif onion in the market and has put pressure on its prices," Union Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Minister Ram Vilas Paswan had informed Lok Sabha on November 19.

He had further said, "During the current year, the production of Kharif and late Kharif (onions) is estimated to be 52.06 lakh MT which is about 26 per cent lower than previous year's production of Kharif and late Kharif production of 69.91 lakh MT."

Last week, Paswan told Lok Sabha that during the current year, total buffer stock of 57,372.90 MT onions was created under Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF). From this buffer, 26,735 MT was distributed to various state governments, other agencies and also sold in various mandis through open auction.

"The remaining stock is accounted by disposal of 11,408 MT of low-quality onion in the local market and losses due to prolonged storage, driage, spoilage etc., due to limited shelf-life," he added.

The Centre has already banned the export of onions and has imposed a stockholding limit on wholesalers and retailers for an indefinite period.

Development, Pathalgadi movement to be deciding factors in BJP's bastion

ABHISHEK ANGAD KHUNTI, DECEMBER 1

IT IS brother versus brother at the Khunti Assembly seat.

BJP's Kariya Munda, a former parliamentarian from the seat, has two sons - Jagarnath and Amarnath. While Jagarnath, the elder brother, has continued with his father's party and is canvassing for BJP candidate Nilkanth Singh Munda, younger brother Amarnath has switched lovalties and has been campaigning for JMM's Sushil Pahan.

Khunti is scheduled to go to polls in Phase II of Jharkhand's Assembly elections on December 7.

A BIP's bastion in the Assembly polls, Nilkanth Munda, the incumbent, is seeking a fourth term as an MLA from Khunti. At an rally at Sasodih village, Jagarnath says, "The BJP has worked for the people and the party will win."

At nearby Anigara village, around 2 km from Khunti town, Amarnath stands amidst a gathering propagating the "misgovernance of (Chief Minister) Raghubar Das". "Look at what has happened during the BJP government. There are problems of electricity, water, ration. People want change, but the voices fade," Amarnath says. With a IMM flag on his vehicle, he rushed to a different village.

Villagers of the area have dubbed the election a contest of bada bhai and chhota bhai (elder brother and younger brother), and claim they have not made up their minds about who to



Kariya Munda's elder son Jagarnath campiagns for BJP candidate Nilkanth Singh Munda on Sunday; (below) Kariya's younger son Amarnath. Abhishek Angad

SEAT WATCH

the gram sabha."

KHUNTI

Also in the fray is tribal journalist and activist Dayamani Barla on a JVM-P ticket. In several villages, this has divided the anti-BJP votes. In Ghahgra village, a villagers who wished anonymity said: "We will vote this time and we will decide in

In Khunti town, sentiments are ripe in favour of BJP. At a tea stall, a local trader says that the people would vote in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "There are lot of problems: there no local industries or railway stations, or a good hospital. For every essential service, we have to rush to Ranchi. We will vote for Modi ji and hope for

some development," he says.

However, the Pathalgadi movement also looms large over the area. It began in 2017-18, when giant stone plaques had come up outside villages in the district, declaring the gram sabha as the only sovereign authority. The plaques had inscriptions from the Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled areas) Act or PESA, which the tribals quoted to claim their independence from the state and assert their rights and culture.

While the movement has petered out, villagers have not forgotten what they call "police brutality" and "state's repres-



sion". A total of 19 cases of sedition have been invoked against 172 people.

Around 100 villages with a combined population of around 20,000 had pledged to boycott the general elections in May. And the result was palpable: Arjun Munda, who would go on to become the Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, won by a thin margin of just 1,445 votes.

However, in the Assembly elections, residents say the anti-BJP sentiment in the Pathalgadi areas may make a difference for the winning candidate.

Japan: Hope for peaceful resolution in Kashmir "But at the same time, I can

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

JAPAN ON Sunday said it had looked at the situation in Kashmir "very carefully" and hoped that a peaceful resolution to the issue will be found through dialogue.

The comments by a spokesperson for the Japanese Foreign Ministry came a day after India and Japan held their first foreign and defence ministerial dialogue under a new framework to further broadbase strategic ties. "I do not remember the min-

isters going into the detailed discussion on the specific issue," Deputy Press Secretary in Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Atsushi Kaifu told reporters when asked whether the Kashmir issue figured in the talks.

say we looked at the situation there very carefully. We are aware of the long-standing differences of views with regard to Kashmir. We hope a peaceful resolution will be found through dialogue," he said.

Asked about uncertainty over the Japan-backed bullet train project from Mumbai to Ahmedabad after a new government came to power in Maharashtra, the spokesperson said officials of both the countries are working on it and that challenges occur in large projects.

To a question on China's growing assertiveness in the disputed South China Sea, Kaifu said freedom of navigation and overflight must be ensured in the region, asserting that Japan does not compromise on security and maritime issues.

Govt makes Haj application process fully digital

New Delhi: India has made the process of applying for the Haj pilgrimage in 2020 process entirely digital. This includes the application, the e-Visa, the 'E-MASIHA' health facility and 'e-luggage pretagging", among others.

Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Sunday signed the bilateral annual Haj 2020 agreement between India and Saudi Arabia with Saudi Haj & Umrah Minister

Mohammad Saleh bin Taher

Benten in Makkah.

For the first time, facilities will be provided for digital pre-tagging of the baggage of pilgrims.

that pilgrims get real-time information. Also, this year, an information helpline has been established at Haj House in Mumbai for providing information regarding the entire process. **ENS**

A Haj mobile app will ensure

KARNATAKA BYPOLLS ON DECEMBER 5

IMA scam in background as Shivajinagar seat goes to polls

JOHNSONTA BENGALURU, DECEMBER 1

A FEW days ago, Roshan Baig made a brief appearance at the opening of a BJP campaign office at the Shivajinagar Assembly constituency in Bengaluru. There, he made a call to Muslims to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the interest of development.

This is the only appearance that the seven-time MLA has made in the run-up to the

December 5 bypoll to the seat. Baig, 68, was among 17 Congress and JD(S) MLAs who rebelled against their parties and associated with the BIP in July to topple the Congress-JD(S) coalition government. All the rebel MLAs were disqualified as legis-

lators under the anti-defection law, forcing the bypolls.

While 16 of the 17 disqualified MLAs were inducted into the BJP a day after the Supreme Court cleared them to contest the December 5 bypolls, Baig, who is under investigation by the CBI in the multi-crore IMA ponzi scheme scam, was not inducted into the saffron party.

He was initially expected to enter the electoral fray as an Independent candidate, but was prevailed upon by the BJP to support a candidate of his choice with the promise of being accommodated in the government after the bypolls. He has reportedly also been advised by the saffron party to lie low and work behind the scenes — and to avoid public remarks.



Roshan Baig

"The IMA issue lurks in the background of the bypolls in Shivajinagar. The effort is to ensure that it does not become an election issue," said sources in the BIP

Baig's son Ruman tweeted a few weeks ago that his father would be joining the BJP. The move is yet to be made official.

However, Baig is clear where his loyalties lie. "Shivajinagar is a mini

Hindustan with Muslims, Hindus, Jains, Christians and Sikhs all living together. If we want to live together in this country, then we need to join hands with Modi ji and take the country forward. Even Muslim brethren must step forward to take the country forward. A message should not go out that Muslims do not want development," the veteran politician said at the ceremony at the BIP campaign office.

BIP's candidate for the region, M Sharavana, also made clear that he is standing on the shoulders of the former Congressman. "I have a few leaders on my side. Roshan Baig is a veteran leader and he has won(the constituency) on seven occasions... If he had contested as a BIP candidate he would have won by a big margin too...," he said while filing his nomination as the BIP candidate. The Congress, meanwhile,

has fielded Rizwan Arshad in an attempt to capitalise on the Muslim vote base and the IMA scam anger lurking below the surface. The absence of any major Muslim leader of the Congress like former ministers Zameer Ahmed Khan — also singed by the IMA scam — and C M Ibrahim, who himself wanted to contest the bypolls, has been seen as a setback for Arshad's

The BJP and Sharavana campaign has also tried to paint to Arshad as an outsider on account of his Mysuru origins.

campaign.



BJP keeps veteran at arm's length

ROSHAN BAIG, a seven-time MLA from Shivajinagar, has been denied a BJP ticket for the bypolls to the seat due to his association with the IMA scam — the constituency is predominantly Muslim, and thousands of people, especially Muslims, were cheated after ponzi schemes were disguised as sharia investments.

Needing to win at least eight of the 15 Assembly seats set for bypolls on December 5, the BIP is trying to capitalise on Baig's consistent hold on more than 50 percent of the voting population in the constituency while, at the same time, trying to ensure that the IMA taint does not spread to its candidate, city councilor M Sharavana, who is a longtime associate of Baig.

82% people with HIV receiving free therapy: Harsh Vadhan

New Delhi: In 2018-19, around 79% people living in India with HIV knew the status of their condition, 82% diagnosed with HIV are receiving free Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) and 79% are virally suppressed, Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said at an event on Sunday on the occasion of World AIDS Day.

"Let us shun any kind of discrimination in our thoughts, actions and behaviour in our interaction with those who have HIV and AIDS. Let us do away with nomenclatures such as 'AIDS/HIV communities'. Let us not bracket people who suffer from and have survived various diseases," he added. He said lingering pockets of stigma and discrimination need to be addressed to make India free of HIV-AIDS by 2030. ENS

WORDLY WISE

PEOPLE SEEM TO THINK THAT IF A MAN IS A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT HE MAY DO WHAT HE PLEASES. — ANTHONY TROLLOPE

The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THOSE WHO QUESTION

Will government listen to Manmohan-Bajaj message, or read a conspiracy, create a spectre? Much depends on its response

n Saturday, one of India's most respected industrialists spoke about fear to power. Rahul Bajaj, at an awards function organised by The Economic Times in Mumbai, with ministers Amit Shah, Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal on stage, spoke of corporates afraid to criticise government, of an environment of impunity for phenomena like lynchings, of terror-accused Pragya Thakur's political journey to Parliament with the BJP's full backing and support. A day earlier, from another public stage, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had talked about how the precarious state of the economy is linked to the state of the society in which it operates, how a "toxic combination of deep distrust, pervasive fear" is "stifling economic activity and hence economic growth". Also on Friday, came news of the GDP growth rate for the second quarter of this financial year hitting a 26-quarter low. It is up to the Narendra Modi government now to join the dots — not to see another conspiracy in the three events, or to create another spectre to deflect and divert attention from them, but to acknowledge and respect their sobering message.

Even as they were strikingly similar in their burden, the difference of tone in the interventions of Bajaj and Singh was telling. Bajaj spoke with the self-conscious hesitancy and bravado of one breaking a taboo and a silence, rushing in where so many others visibly fear to tread. "Nobody from our industrialist friends will speak... I will say openly... we don't have the confidence that you will appreciate if we criticise you openly..." The fact is that in the hall full of distinguished industrialists in which he spoke, Bajaj stood up alone. The fact also is that if his peers and other prominent industrialists had echoed Bajaj's apprehensions in the last few years, articulated them publicly and to government, if they had, for instance, received news of the plunging GDP growth figures with a concern as audible as were their cheers for the government's corporate tax cut, his intervention on Saturday would not seem quite so extraordinary, or as courageous. Former PM Singh, on the other hand, spelt out the current predicament with an understated authority. His message was devoid of drama, but his warning was grave. He spoke of economic development stalling because of the "profound fear and distrust among our various economic participants", eroding public trust in independent institutions and of the "root cause of this" — "the government's policy doctrine that seems to suspect every industrialist, banker, policymaker, regulator, entrepreneur and citizen... The Modi government seems to view everything and everyone through a tainted prism of suspicion... and it has positioned itself as some saviour, resorting to foolhardy moral policing..." The way out of the economic slump, the former PM cautioned, does not lie in more enlightened economic policy-making alone. It will need, also, the restoring of confidence and exuberance.

The government may, of course, dismiss Singh's words as the lament of the loser. But the extent of the economic downturn has already indicated that the strategy of delinking the political-electoral from the economic could be reaching its limits. Another message is now writ on the wall: To revive the economy, the BJP will have to review its social and political ethos and philosophy. It may well be that nothing less will do.

A TIME TO REBUILD

As Delhi and Colombo renew ties, they must proceed with wisdom, resist being pushed back to square one

T THE end of his talks with the visiting Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Narendra Modi affirmed that "the security and development of our two countries are inseparable. Therefore, it is natural Lacktriangleright Land Sensibilities." This propothat we should be aware of each other's safety and sensibilities." This proposition appears self-evident. Yet the reality of recent decades has been the intense discord between Delhi and Colombo, triggered by India's involvement in the prolonged civil war in Sri Lanka. India's support for Tamil insurgent groups in the early 1980s followed by a military intervention during 1987-90 and political pressure on the rights of the Tamil minority had convinced the Sinhala majority that Delhi was hostile to the island nation. India had grievances of its own — due to Colombo's steady strategic drift towards Beijing and its lack of progress on political reconciliation with the Tamil population after a decisive victory against the insurgency a decade ago.

Efforts in the last few years to resolve these contentions went nowhere, thanks to internecine battles in Colombo between the president and prime minister. The decisive mandate for Gotabaya in the recent elections has opened up space for a renewed effort at rebuilding bilateral relations. In Delhi, Gotabaya affirmed that Sri Lanka will do nothing to undermine India's security interests and promised that his government's engagement with China will be strictly commercial. India, in turn, has extended strong support to Gotabaya's plans to counter the resurgence of terrorism in Lanka and to the new president's ambitious economic goals.

But the Tamil question remains a ticking time bomb that could once again wreck bilateral relations. Modi said Gotabaya briefed him on his plans to address the concerns of the Tamil minority and expressed hope that the Lanka president will meet their aspirations. Gotabaya argues that talk of devolution has delivered little to the Tamils, but only angered the Sinhala majority. He says he would like to transcend Lanka's identity politics by producing meaningful change in the economic conditions of the Tamil population. For many in Chennai, this approach will be unacceptable. But Delhi surely knows that it cannot impose external solutions to Sri Lankan problems. Colombo knows that doing nothing for the Tamils will inevitably escalate Chennai's pressure on Delhi to intervene in Lanka's internal politics and push the two nations back to square one. There is only one way to manage this complex political interdependence — for Colombo to make visible progress on the Tamil condition and for Delhi to support indigenous solutions for Sri Lanka's political reconciliation.

Freeze Frame

EPUNNY



Business case for governance



A balance can be found — between demands of shareholders and interests of society

GOOD GOVERNANCE IS a chant heard in every boardroom and management discussion. The phrase has not been precisely defined. It is varyingly interpreted but common to all interpretations is the understanding that it means transparent, fair and ethical corporate behaviour, the full and accurate disclosure of financial and operational information and the adherence to the letter and spirit of the law. People start arguing when the somewhat nebulous concept of "social responsibility" is added to the chant. It then falls upon corporate management to define this phrase and to find a pathway that balances the demands of the shareholders for maximum dividends and capital appreciation with the pressures to contribute to societal welfare. The search for this pathway is what has prompted this article.

The benefits of "good governance", however imprecisely defined, has been quantifiably established. The "Reputation Institute", an NGO, estimates that intangibles like reputation make up approximately 81 per cent of a company's value and a "strong reputation yields 2.5 times better stock market performance" compared to the overall market. One could debate the methodologies behind these calculations but the central message is indubitable. Well-governed companies have easier access to capital, they pay lower interest rates, secure better credit terms and attract the best and brightest of talent. Good governance is good business.

The message is further reinforced by the anecdotal evidence of the prohibitive costs of "poor governance". The whistleblower allegation of a breach in the disclosure of financial data by the management of Infosys is a case in point. The market cap of the company dropped by about Rs 50,000 crore in one trading session. The twists and turns of the IPO of the Saudi government-owned oil and gas company Aramco is another example. The Saudis had valued their company at around \$2 trillion. Their financial advisers, however, came back after testing the market with a valuation of \$1-1.2 trillion. They told the Saudis that the discount was, inter alia, because of perceptions of opacity in the The chant of 'good governance' is fundamentally hypocritical, it is suggested. And will remain so until a process is engendered to create a balanced incentive structure that motivates the

generation of financial

returns through societal

welfare than the current

a trade off for the other.

structure that regards one as

Saudi governance structure. The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia was not pleased and decided to pull back the IPO from the European and US markets.

Few question the business case for good governance. But many wonder how exactly it can be delivered. How, it is asked, can management be motivated to balance the interests of the shareholder with that of society when the incentive structure is skewed disproportionately in favour of short-term financial performance? The chant of "good governance" is fundamentally hypocritical, it is suggested. And will remain so until a process is engendered to create a balanced incentive structure that motivates the generation of financial returns through societal welfare than the current structure that regards one as a trade off for the other.

There is no one size fits all response to this conundrum but a tale from 6,000 years ago may offer guideposts for stakeholders of governance to initiate such a process. Gilgamesh was the king of the Sumerian town of Uruk in 4,200 BC. He was a courageous leader and a builder. He had created, by all accounts, a remarkable city with wide boulevards, open spaces and excellent public facilities. He was, however, an unabashed tyrant. No one was safe from his roving eyes. He treated the citizens of Uruk as his personal chattel and trampled on their rights like a wild bull. In despair, the people appealed to Anu, the principal deity of the Sumerian pantheon. The goddess responded by creating an exact double of Gilgamesh. His name was Enkidu. He was Gilgamesh's equal in every respect - strength, vision and character. They fought and whilst Gilgamesh did eventually prevail it was not before Enkidu had checked his worst excesses and secured his agreement to work together to restore peace and harmony to Uruk. Thereafter, the two cooperated and collaborated as partners.

In the context of corporate governance, this epic contains two messages. One, to get otherwise competing forces to work together, all parties must converge on the same page and have comparable powers and authority to check and balance each other into collaboration and cooperation. And two, a new world ("peace in Uruk" or "balanced incentive" structures) cannot be created as an event. It is a process. All stakeholders must appreciate they are on a journey and they will reach their destination only if they learn to work together despite their differences.

These two messages should be internalised by the four divergent and often competing stakeholders that bear on corporate India. One, the management, which is the custodian of operational performance. It is driven, understandably, by the objectives of short-term financial metrics. Two, the independent directors (ID) who have a fiduciary obligation towards the minority shareholder as well as a strategic responsibility to facilitate long-term growth and profitability. Three, the regulator whose role is to prescribe the rules and procedures of governance and to enforce them through broadbased juridical authority. And finally, the government, which is the law maker and, more pertinently in the context of governance, the agency for bringing corporates

into the developmental net. Currently, each of these stakeholders chant the same mantra of "good governance" but they operate autonomously within their own spheres. There is no formal forum that brings them together. The management and the IDs do, of course, face each other at the quarterly board meetings, but the interface is constrained by the board agenda and time. The Gilgamesh solution would recommend that these spheres be perforated. It would posit that, squeezed between the demands of the shareholder, on one side, and the expectations of society on the other, there is a passageway that balances the interests of the shareholder and society. And that the four stakeholders should find this space and move into it as coequal and collaborative partners. They will not find it easy given their differences but if they did so, they could eventually flip the current zero-sum dilemma of governance into a positive sum outcome of balanced incentives.

The writer is chairman and senior fellow, **Brookings India**

THE FIGHT FOR DIGNITY

Transgender Persons Bill has let down the community's long struggle for self respect

AJITA BANERJIE

THE PASSAGE OF the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, has caused great disapointment to the transgender community in India that had urged the Rajya Sabha to refer the Bill to a select committee.

The Bill failed to incorporate crucial recommendations of the Parliament Standing Committee and several depositions by the transgender and intersex community. According to the Bill, a transgender person "may make an application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of identity indicating the gender as 'transgender'" and a revised certificate may be obtained "if a transgender person undergoes surgery to change gender either as a male or female". This is in direct violation of NALSA v Union of India that had affirmed the right to self-determination of gender as male, female or transgender without the mandate of any medical certificate or sex-reassignment surgery (SRS).

Also, despite including identities such as "gender queer" and "persons with intersex variations" in the definition of "transgender", the Bill has failed to incorporate the rights of such persons, putting them in danger of being excluded by a system which certifies people based on medical examination.

While the Bill seeks to prohibit discrimination, it does not explicitly define what constitutes as discrimination. It also fails to extend protection to transgender persons who might face sexual abuse as the Indian Penal Code recognises rape in strict terms of men and women as perpetrator and victim, re-

The Bill also raises concerns around the government's motive behind 'the rescue, protection and rehabilitation of transgender persons', which could potentially give rise to police crackdown against transgender persons, especially sex workers. This clause might also grant impunity to the police to

arbitrarily arrest transgender persons under the pretext of

'rescuing' them.

spectively. While the Bill makes "sexual abuse" punishable, it does not define the acts that constitute sexual offences, making it complicated for transgender persons to report such crimes.

The Bill also raises concerns around the government's motive behind "the rescue, protection and rehabilitation of transgender persons", which could potentially give rise to police crackdowns against transgender persons, especially sex workers. This clause might also grant impunity to the police to arbitrarily arrest transgender persons under the pretext of "rescuing" them, and, use provisions of anti-beggary laws whose vagueness allows for disproportionate violence against the most marginalised communities.

On the rights of transgender children, the Bill fails to include "gender non-conforming" children and "children with intersex variations". It falls short of addressing and penalising surgeries on infants born with intersex variations with the intention of "correcting" their bodies to fit the binary gender: Many parents subject their children to medical "conversion" therapies or "correction" procedures, including shock therapy, to make them "normal". Further, the Bill states, "no child shall be separated from parents or immediate family on the ground of being a transgender, except on an order of a competent court." This poses a potential threat to the safety and well being of the child as it could give the family the leeway to harass the child and exclude them from their property. It also makes the courts the moral guardians for deciding the fate of the transgender persons by sending them to rehabilitation homes where they could face abuse at the hands of their peers or the staff. The Bill puts the young person in a conundrum — of choosing between the violence of the family and that of state rehabilitation centres.

Another major flaw of the Bill is that it does not provide for reservation in education and employment for transgender persons, going against the mandate in NALSA, which had clearly stated that the state must take measures "to treat them as socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and extend all kinds of reservation in cases of admission in educational institutions and for public appointments". The Bill does not tackle the question of realisation of civil rights — such as marriage, civil partnership, adoption and property rights, thereby continuing to deprive transgender persons of their fundamental rights and the constitutional guarantee provided by the Supreme Court in NALSA.

The Bill has made a mockery of transgender persons' lives and by passing it Parliament has let down the community that fought for their rights for decades. But the transgender community is resolute in their will to continue the fight against this injustice that's been done to them.

The writer is a human rights activist and researcher based in New Delhi

DECEMBER 2, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



Congress-I Manifesto THE CONGRESS-I ELECTION manifesto, which was released by Indira Gandhi in New Delhi, can be summed up in a single sentence that occurs in the manifesto: "The Indian National Congress-I is the only party and Mrs Cndira Gandhi is the only leader who can save the country, after its recent traumatic experience." To back up this thesis, the manifesto asserts that the experience of the last two-and-a-half years has clearly shown that only a stable and progressive government can fulfil the expectations of the masses and lift the country out of the chaos created by the Janata and the Lok Dal governments. The stable government envisaged in the mani-

festo would have a majority in Parliament. And it would have a "leadership that has been tested in times of internal and external upheavals and pressures".

ALLIANCE DISRUPTION THE LOK DAL-CONGRESS electoral alliance seemed on the brink of disruption with Lok Dal General Secretary Narendra Singh admitting that both parties will contest against each other in a number of seats. Singh said his party was trying to reach an accord on as many seats as possible but if differences persist, there would have to be "some friendly contests". Though he would not admit it, it

was also learnt that the Lok Dal's differences

with the Congress were not confined to seat distribution alone. A reliable Lok Dal source admitted that there was disagreement over the manifesto also.

Koya Quits

KERALA CHIEF MINISTER Mohammed Koya called on Governor Jyothi Vencatachellum and tendered the resignation of his 51-dayold ministry. The governor accepted the resignation and requested Koya to continue in office till alternative arrangements were made. Koya, after submitting the resignation, said that the parties presently with him would jointly fight the Lok Sabha poll and state assembly elections likely to be held soon. THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2019

THE IDEAS PAGE

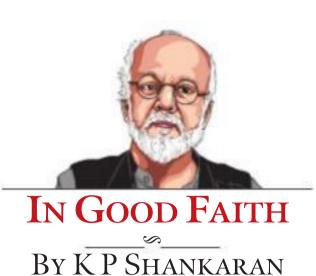
WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"In recent years, China's economic might has silenced many critics and muted others... the new US law and renewed protests over the treatment of Muslim minorities in the wake of the leaked files suggest things may be evolving."

— THE GUARDIAN

Power from nothingness

Gandhi, like the Buddha, found that concern for the well-being of all was an antidote to fear, angst about death



WHILE RECENTLY REREADING Erik Erikson's 1969 psychoanalytical political biography of Gandhi, Gandhi's Truth, I was particularly struck by the following statement: "Freud, in one of his 'economic' moods might well have said that, psychologically speaking, such men (people like Gandhi) save others not so much from their sin but from the fantastic effort not to see the most obvious of all facts: That life is bounded by not-life." Gandhi, according to Erikson, allows us to face the fact that we are "bounded by not-life" and tempts us to draw power from such efforts as exemplified in Gandhi's life struggle.

Our fascination for men like Gandhi, the Buddha or Socrates "rests on the need of all men to find the few who plausibly take it upon themselves to reveal — and give meaning to — what others must deny at all times but cannot really forget for a moment" death/nothingness. Those of us who are familiar with Gandhi's philosophical, political and intellectual struggles know that he, perhaps more than the Buddha or Socrates, tried his level best to reduce himself to "zero", as he announced in the last paragraphs of his autobiography. Erikson believes that Gandhi almost succeeded in this endeavour and because of this singular achievement, Erikson presents Gandhi as a heroic figure who drew power from "nothingness". Lesser mortals if they ever had the courage to attempt anything similar, Erikson cautions us, would have most likely ended up being crushed between megalomania and self-destruction.

A reading of Gandhi, from a purely philosophical point of view, would tempt one to see him as someone who — like the Buddha was asking us to replace our unselfconsciously and uncritically held metaphysical beliefs through a series of "experiments with truth". We know that the Buddha did say this in the "Kalama Sutra" and many other sutras. Gandhi's life was a work in progress till it was terminated by his assassin Nathuram Vinayak Godse's bullet.

In the rest of this article, I make an attempt to bring out the significance of Gandhi's desire to reduce himself to "zero" by using some subcontinental philosophical

concepts. Individually speaking, one's own birth is not an enigma. Life as such, although we don't have any clear cut explanations about it, is not an enigma for many since we can marshal some semi-intelligible explanations. But what about death? A person can only infer, like in the case of her own birth, that she will cease to exist just by inductive reasoning. Everything ultimately loses its integrity in the familiar world of ours. The same thing happens to one's own current biophysical integrity. It happens to all inanimate as well as all animate beings. From the point of view of the physical and the biological, there is no enigma here. But from an agent's point of view, she could anticipate a "world lost" that is not enigmatic but could be traumatic psychologically. The natural disintegration "deprives" one of the familiar world of meaningful scenarios in which one is constantly engaged in. This anticipated deprivation of the "world" is what is disturbing emotionally. The "world" is an enigma because it is not explainable biophysically. It is, therefore,



C R Sasikumar

not "natural" but "conventional" — we can at the same time be both, entities capable of a biophysical explanation as well as agents functioning against a background of standards of correctness. The "world" is related to the latter.

That is why the "world" is termed by Nagarjuna as "vyavaharika". It is akin to the other subcontinental idea of "leela". It is correctly described by some of the subcontinental philosophers as "anirvachniya" — inexplicable because it is neither real nor unreal. Indeed, it is like any other game we are familiar with (nether real or unreal) but it is conceptually/historically prior to them all and all of them supervene on it. That is why (we) take it as more fundamental (conventionally) than the ordinary scenarios we call "games". We also acknowledge (under metaphysical compulsion) that the "world" itself supervenes on an "X", which is taken as the "real"

— Matter, God, Brahman, Nothingness... The conventionality of the world can be gauged from the presence of binary oppositions which we deal with regularly. These oppositions are indicators of standards of correctness. The standards are what makes conventional, conventional. Nevertheless, we cannot break out of the conventional/ vyavharika, we can only have useful/useless

interpretations of it from within. The Buddha thought that the fear of death and all other unsatisfactoriness emerge from our metaphysical affectedness. Because we are socialised to treat the "world" as supervening on a "ground everlasting" we habituThe Buddha's solution for this predica-

repeating tirelessly.

The writer taught philosophy at St Stephen's College, Delhi University

ally presuppose and look for something permanent, if it is not visible in the world, but within us. Because of this, the anticipated loss of the "world" which is undeniable threatens us as inexplicably meaningless and hence makes us angst ridden.

ment is to learn to live without metaphysical props like Matter (White or Dark), the Unified Theory of Physics, God and all its versions, Brahman and all its versions, nirvana included. The Buddha himself thought that some ad hoc versions of metaphysics were initially needed to replace the one that we have been socialised into. He suggested for his disciples a "Right View" — an ad hoc metaphysics for temporary use, till they get rid of selfishness significantly enough to make all metaphysical props totally unnecessary. He, like his contemporaries Socrates, Vardhamana Mahavira, and 20th CE admirer Gandhi, prescribed a series of ethical practices for us to cultivate virtues in order to significantly reduce the play of selfishness in our lives. As selfishness reduces (Gandhi's "zero") significantly through ethical practices, all fears, including the fear of death, which are due to the immoderate selfishness in us, disappear. This automatic disappearance of all fears, in other words, is because of the cultivation of all-inclusive "sarvodya" (concern for the well-being of all) a term Gandhi like the Buddha kept on

Grass for lions

Restoring Saurashtra's grasslands is key for the big cats to thrive in their natural habitat



Dheeraj Mittal

RECENTLY, A VIDEO showing an Asiatic lion eating grass went viral on social media in Gujarat. Many wondered if lions indeed eat grass! As a matter of fact, wild carnivores often eat grass when they have a stomach upset so as to vomit undigested food, and in some cases, to encapsulate shards in bony

Though lions are carnivores, there is an umbilical link between grass and the big cats. Grass is the starting point of all major food chains. Wild ungulates like spotted deer, blue bulls (nilgai), sambar, wild boars etc, which form the main prey-base of Asiatic lions, dependent on good grass. Their habitat comprises grasslands and open patches.

The Saurashtra region is interspersed with 106 reserved *vidis* (grasslands) maintained by the forest department and 434 non-reserved *vidi*s controlled by other agencies. They are spread over 1,810 sq km, making up 20 per cent of total grassland cover in Gujarat. Private vidis, gauchars (community grasing-lands controlled by village panchayats) and government wastelands supplement these *vidis*. Most of these vidis are part of the 22,000-sq km Greater Gir landscape, the last abode of Asiatic lions.

A good lion habitat must have a good prey-base. For a healthy prey-base, grasslands are the key. Lion conservation efforts are focused on habitat improvement and. by extension, on improvement of grasslands. Dispersal of lions from the core Gir forest was possible due to a matrix of grasslands and open patches in the Greater Gir area. It is imperative, therefore, to initiate landscape-level interventions to ensure that the lion population keeps thriving. Since these big cats coexist with local agropastoralists, minimising competition for natural resources between wildlife and local communities is crucial. Productive grasslands can help achieve this. They can make a very good habitat for lions while also meeting requirements of the locals.

Lions have been dispersing out of the core Gir forest for the past 15 years. According to the 2015 census, out of total 523 Asiatic lions, 167 were living outside protected forests. That is one-third of their population. The lions living outside protected forests have made these grasslands in revenue areas their home. Hence, these grasslands will be critical to lions' further dispersal and sustaining their robust population growth seen over the past couple of decades.

Over a period of time, however, these grasslands have degraded owing to invasion of woody and shrubby species and have turned into somewhat unproductive woodlots. Hardly any grass grows in them now. Instead, growth of species like lantana, prosopis, van tulsi and cassia defines their vegetation. This vegetation is unpalatable for wild ungulates and domestic animals.

The progressive degradation of grass-

lands has exacerbated some of the present problems like shortage of fodder, lack of good grazing grounds for maldharis (a semi-nomadic pastoralist community), increase in crop depredation by wild herbivores etc. Eventually, it can prove detrimental to animal husbandry, which, after agriculture, is the other major occupation in Saurashtra. As grasslands on forest fringes become unsuitable for wildlife and local livestock, the fringe further shifts towards agricultural fields and human settlements. This, in turn, is aggravating human-wildlife conflict. In the long run, such a scenario may sour the unique sentiment and goodwill the local communities have for wildlife in general and lions in particular. This gradual, unattended shift has af-

fected both ecology and economics of the region. Village panchayats are unable to maintain their gauchars for lack of resources. Nor do they consider managing their gauchars and wastelands a priority. The continued apathy is resulting in largescale encroachment on such swathes and soil mining from such patches. There aren't many management interventions by the forest department either in the non-reserved vidis. The net result is that the landscape is suffering the tragedy of commons and a vicious self-perpetuating circle of unproductiveness.

For long-term ecological and economic security, all stakeholders need to make a collective effort. The forest and revenue departments and panchayats need to take up a joint mission to restore these grasslands. Good productive grasslands are extremely important for fodder security. For instance, the more than 1.6 crore kg of grass collected by the forest department from reserve vidis in 2018-19 will be available for distribution in the event of a drought. Grasslands are important for water security too as they serve as great watersheds. The conflict due to crop depredation and lions venturing into human habitations can also be mitigated if grasslands are maintained and managed properly. Wild herbivores naturally prefer open and productive patches and thereby keep carnivores interested in such areas. Grassland restoration will also help in the conservation of bustards, floricans wolves, blackbucks and many other wild species that share a similar habitat.

Wildlife conservation and sustainable utilisation of grasslands are not mutually exclusive pursuits. Grassland restoration will not only have positive ecological effects on long-term lion conservation, it will also yield significant socioeconomic benefits to the locals. Just like with lion conservation, grassland restoration can also be done with the participation of local communities. They can help in tending grasslands and clearing any woodlots, if required. Part of the proceeds from wood clearing can be shared with the panchayats.

The recent UN-led conference to combat desertification committed to achieving land degradation neutrality by 2030. At this conference, India committed to restoring at least 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030. Gujarat can begin with restoration of the grasslands in Saurashtra.

The writer, an IFS officer, presently serves as deputy conservator of forest, Gir West Forest Division in Junagadh. Views are personal

VIEW FROM THE Neighbourhood



A weekly look at the public conversations shaping ideas beyond borders — in the Subcontinent. Curated by Aakash Joshi

A reading of Gandhi, from a

purely philosophical point of

view, would tempt one to see

him as someone who like the

replace our unselfconsciously

metaphysical beliefs through

a series of 'experiments with

truth'. We know that the

Buddha did say this in the

'Kalama Sutra' and many

other sutras. Gandhi's life

was terminated by his

Godse's bullet.

was a work in progress till it

assassin Nathuram Vinayak

Buddha was asking us to

and uncritically held

A NEW ACCORD

AS THE newly-elected Sri Lankan president, Gotabaya Rajapaksa was on a visit to India, the Sri Lankan press, like its Indian counterpart, assessed the bilateral relationship. The November 29 editorial in The Daily Mirror seems to place great stock in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Rajapaksa's personalities, and their effect on bilateral ties. This framework of analysis, increasingly common in India as well, seems to set great store by a leader's charisma, ideology and worldview, rather than political-economy and historical and geostrategic factors.

The editorial, for example, says that "Gotabaya Rajapaksa would no doubt touch on issues that are of concern to both nations" and "Prime Minister Modi is a man of conviction and courage". There also appears to be a subtext in the editorial which seems to imply that the Modi government may be more "understanding" of the Rajapaksa brand of politics — presumably, its attitude towards minorities and a federal devolution of power: "He (Modi) has the backing of his people. He does what he believes is best for India. whether or not the world understands or appreciates. He would not hesitate to advocate such thinking for friends in his neigh-

bourhood. This should not be lost on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa."

The thrust of the editorial is against the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka accord, which called for disarmament during the civil war and greater rights for Tamils, including in a federal structure: "Prime Minister Modi is not Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa is not President Maithripala Sirisena. There's reason to hope that a 'Modi-Gota' agreement would make 'Indo-Lanka' something that will not feel, smell and taste bad."

LAW FOR THE CHIEF

PAKISTAN'S SUPREME Court, according to the November 29 editorial in *Dawn* "has helped the government come out of the corner it has painted itself into". The governments move, via a notification, to increase the term of army chief General Qamar Bajwa was challenged in the country's apex court and threatened an impasse between the three organs of the state — the government, army and judiciary. The court, however, rescued the government by allowing an extension of six months for Bajwa. In that time, it has enjoined the legislature to come up with a suitable legislation "to determine the length of the army chief's

tenure — and the question of its extension" and rid the current legal framework of any ambiguity in this matter.

By all accounts, it appears that the government's notion was bad in law, and framed poorly. Yet, according to the editorial, Prime Minister Imran Khan is shirking responsibility: "It is therefore disappointing to note the prime minister's tweets blaming foreign enemies and domestic 'mafia' whereas the real culprit is the government's own legal team that was unable to write a notification that could withstand judicial scrutiny."

The editorial also argues that "given the central role played by army chiefs in Pakistan", it is important that the law regarding the office is framed carefully, after due deliberation and with the Opposition participating. Interestingly, the editorial ends by talking of the role of institutions, which some may construe as a moral plea to General Bajwa: "This paper believes in the strength of institutions. Although the court may have felt it necessary to prevent a sudden vacuum in the army leadership, General Bajwa has been given a face-saving opportunity to decide on a course of action that will serve the interests of his institution and the system as a whole — and not that of a single individual.'

CRICKET ANALOGY

MAZHER MIR, an advisor to the ASEAN council and columnist, makes an interesting — if slightly over-stretched — analogy between cricket and the state of an economy. The recent loss in the pink-ball Test form the core of his argument in The Dhaka Tribune: "The majority of Bangladeshi people do not hesitate to express their gratitude in India's contributions to their motherland's independence. Still, India's disregard for the environmental impacts and creating a water crisis in Bangladesh due to building water dams have created bitter feelings against India among Bangladeshi people. This sentiment is now

leaking into sports matches." Mir then goes on to argue that "cricket has become an indicator of how well Bangladesh has been shining for the last two decades. There are indeed many positive economic markers, but a large part of the population is dealing with chronic poverty." India, he argues, has become a cricketing powerhouse because of private sector involvement. He argues that Bangladesh's economy — and its cricket — needs training, education in technology to compete on the global stage. This must be taken forward, according to the article, by the private sector.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EQUALITY FIRST

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'On a new footing' (IE, November 29). Like any bilateral relationship, India and Sri Lanka have their fair share of convergence and disruptions. With the Rajapaksas back in office, it would now be sensible to expect coherence in Sri Lankan policies unlike the past five years. While India is apprehensive of Sri Lanka's strategic links with China, the island nation may get anxious if India meddles in its domestic affairs.

Anirudh Parashar, Solan

BJP, LIKE CONGRESS

THIS REFERS TO the article. 'New look BJP, old Congress' (IE, November 28). The BJP's poor performance in the Maharashtra and Haryana Assembly elections must serve as a wake up call for the party's brass. It is common knowledge that far from being a party with a difference, the BJP has been following in the footsteps of the Congress. Throwing open doors to rebels of other political parties and rewarding them with tickets during election times is a trait of the Congress.

Ravi Mathur, Ghaziabad

WRONG POTION

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'No cheers for Jagan' (IE, November 26). Prohibition does not address the real problem of addiction. Besides, it also leads to significant revenue losses. It is unfortunate that a serious matter has been reduced to a farce. At times, a political leader of

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to

editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

a state wins an election by campaigning for prohibition. And when this leader loses at the hustings, his successor often reverses the policy citing revenue losses.

Dilip Kumar Datta, *Midnapore*

RJD'S NEW LEADER

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A new cast' (IE, November 29). The elevation of Jagdanand Singh, a Rajput, as Bihar unit president of RJD is a departure for a party which has never made bones of championing the cause of Yadavs and Muslims. The BJP's high pitched nationalism has upset the caste-driven politics of Bihar as seen in the RJD's drubbing in the general elections. This has forced the party to course correct.

Kamna Chhabra, Gurugram

mess.com

NCRB silence on farmer suicides: Reason given by govt fails against earlier data

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

THE UNION Ministry of Home Affairs told Parliament last week that the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) had done away with diversified data on farmer suicides in its latest report as many states reported the figure to be "nil", and hence recording reasons for the suicides was "untenable".

However, an analysis of previous NCRB data shows that states such as Bihar and West Bengal have never sent any data on farmer suicides. Still, the agency published the data with reasons for suicides.

The Indian Express had reported on November 9 that the latest NCRB report does not enlist reasons for farmer suicides. In its previous reports, the agency had listed reasons under categories such as farm distress, crop failure, loans, family problems, illness, etc.

Former NCRB officials have questioned the reason cited by the government not to classify farmer suicides data, as resulting from agrarian crisis or debt or personal reasons. "In the 2015 and 2016 reports too many states reported 'nil' farmer suicides. That does not mean the available data must not be categorised according to causes of suicides. If this arguement was valid, farmer sucide

data itself should not be published," an ex-NCRB officer said.

The latest NCRB report, which compiles 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides' in 2016, shows that as may as nine states reported "nil" suicides by farmers — including Bihar, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Goa and Himachal Pradesh.

Of these, Bihar, West Bengal and Uttarakhand have consistently sent "zero" as the figure for "farmer/cultivator" suicides (including in 2014 and 2015). Doubts have been raised about this decision by the states earlier as well, with a large section of the population in Bihar and West Bengal engaged in agriculture.

In previous reports, even

where loans were cited as reason for farmer suicide, these were sub-categorised as per the source of the money, such as banks, moneylenders and micro-finance institutions. The reports also recorded socio-economic status and landholding of

This too was done away with this time.

each suicide victim.

On November 27, to a question by Rajya Sabha Congress MP Husain Dalwai on why such data had been withheld, MoS Home G Kishan Reddy had said in a written reply, "As informed by NCRB, many States/ Union Territories reported 'Nil' data on suicides by Farmers/ Cultivators and Agricultural laborers after

several validations, even while reporting suicides in other professions. Due to this limitation, national data on causes of suicide in farming sector is untenable and not published separately."

The government has refused to answer other questions too in Parliament recently on farmer suicides, with the Ministry of Agriculture saying only data till 2016 as published by the NCRB was available.

In contrast, in July 2018, in response to a question by an MP on "rising" farmer suicides, then agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh had released "provisional data" for 2016, more than a year before the data was actually published by NCRB.

'KARTARPUR CORRIDOR GEN BAJWA'S BRAINCHILD'

Claim has exposed Pakistan's nefarious intent: Amarinder

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 1

PUNJAB CHIEF Minister Amarinder Singh on Sunday said Pakistan Railway Minister Sheikh Rashid's claim that the Kartarpur Corridor was the brainchild of their Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, had "exposed Islamabad's nefarious intent behind the initiative".

minister's words had validated his (Amarinder's) stand on the issue, the CM said Rashid had laid bare the "wicked design of Pakistan behind the corridor", which India had hoped would be a bridge of peace between the countries.

Amarinder also took strong exception to Rashid's remarks that "the corridor would hurt India, which would forever remember the wound inflicted on it by Gen Bajwa with the Kartarpur Corridor." Calling it an "open and blatant threat" against



Amarinder Singh

Asserting that the Pakistani India's security and integrity, Amarinder warned Pakistan not to attempt to indulge in any misadventure against its neighbour.

> "Don't make the mistake of reading weakness in our gratitude for the opening the corridor," he warned, asserting that India would give a befitting response to any bid by Pakistan to attack its borders or its people.

> Amarinder recalled that he had all along maintained that while he was extremely happy, as a Sikh, about the opening of the corridor which has given

Indian devotees access to the historic Kartarpur Gurdwara, the threat it posed to India could not be ignored. He said he repeatedly warned that Pakistan was "trying to win the sympathies of Sikhs" by opening the corridor "to further the ISI-backed Referendum 2020 agenda".

"This had been quite evident from various facts, most notably that Bajwa had disclosed the Pakistani decision to build the corridor to then Punjab Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu at the time of Imran Khan's swearing-in ceremony," Amarinder said. "Imran had not even taken over then, yet their Army Chief had spoken about this to Sidhu. How was it possible unless Bajwa was the one behind the corridor decision."

Amarinder also urged Sidhu to be more cautious in his dealings with the Imran Khan government and not allow his personal friendship with the Pakistan PM cloud his judgement in any way.

AAREY PROTESTS

Uddhav issues orders to withdraw cases

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, DECEMBER 1

CLOSE ON the heels of the announcement by Shiv Sena chief and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray that "not a leaf will be cut in Aarey", the CM on Sunday said that he had ordered withdrawing the cases against green activists who had protested against the tree-cutting.

"Two days back, I ordered a halt on the Metro car shed in Aarey Colony. Some people had come there to protest against the tree-cutting and cases were filed against them. I have given orders to withdraw all the cases. So, there will be no cases against them," said Uddhav.

Earlier on Sunday, NCP leader Jitendra Awhad had tweeted that the government should drop the FIR against the activists who had taken part in the Aarey protests. The case was registered by the Mumbai Police that comes under the state Home department. The NCP is touted to get the Home portfolio in the state Cabinet.

After the Bombay High Court ruled in its favour on October 25, Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL) the same night began chopping trees at Aarey to make way for a Metro car-shed. Several activists gathered at the spot and started protesting.

These activists were then detained by the police and an FIR registered against 29 people. No chargesheet has been filed in the case yet. While the earlier BJP govern-

ment had said that it made more financial sense to have the depot at Aarey, all three parties that make up the Maha Vikas Aghadi Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress had protested the chopping of trees.



Speaker Nana Patole and NCP leader Ramraje Naik Nimbalkar receive Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari at Vidhan Bhavan on Sunday. Express

Cong's Nana Patole elected Speaker unopposed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, DECEMBER 1

CONGRESS'S NANA Patole was elected unopposed as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on Sunday after the BJP withdrew its candidate.

BJP's Kisan Kathore had filed nomination but it was withdrawn following a request to the BJP from ruling parties.

After his election, Patole said that he needs cooperation from both sides to run the House proceedings.

"The four Ds - 'Discuss, Debate, Dialogue and Do not disturb' — are important in democracy to run the House and I need cooperation from both sides to run the House proceedings. I have always given preference to farmers' issues. My aim will be to give justice to the issues of farmers and deprived sections of

society," said Patole, responding to the congratulation motion after his appointment.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that he was happy a farmer's son had become the Speaker. "You (Patole) are known as a rebel who will not tolerate injustice. The ruling and opposition parties are in the House. So I expect that there should not be any injustice on anyone while running the proceedings of the House," said Uddhav. He further said that equal attention should be given to both sides? ruling and opposition.

Former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that he expects the Speaker's cooperation when "we raise the issues of people". "His experience will help in running the House proceedings. I hope he will maintain the decorum of the post," he added.



(From left) Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Swami Gyananand, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and Ram temple activist Sadhvi Rithambra at the Geeta Prerna Festival at Red Fort in New Delhi on Sunday. Prem Nath Pandey

Men need to be educated on how to treat women: Bhagwat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

IN THE backdrop of outrage over the rape and murder of a Hyderabad veterinarian, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said that men need to be educated on how to treat women.

Addressing the Gita Mahotsav Programme at the Red Fort, Bhagwat said, "Jo apraadh karne wale hain, unki bhi mata-behenen hain, isiliye to unka astitv hai, unko yeh kisi ne sikhaaya nahin. Apne ghar se praarambh karna hai, purushon ki matrshakti ki or, mahilaon ki or dekhane ki drshti shuddh honi chaahiye, yehi in sab baaton

ko band karega (Those who commit crimes, they also have mother and sisters, so they exist, no one has taught them. You have to start from your home, men's glance at the mothers, towards women, should be pure, this will stop all these things)."

He added, "The government has made the law, the law is not being followed properly. The administration's laxity can no longer go on. But leaving everything on government and administration will not work."

Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani, Ram temple activist Sadhvi Rithambra and spiritual leaders were also present on the dais.

Irani too stressed on the importance of conduct to arrest the issues of atrocities/violence against women. She said that sants have an important role to play in getting society to reflect on why crimes against women take place.

She also raised the issue of under-nutrition among women and children.

Interestingly, senior Congress leader and former Rajya Sabha MP Janardan Dwivedi too shared the dais with Bhagwat.

Later, Dwivedi clarified that he came to the event in "individual capacity" and not as a Congress leader, and that he was invited.

India Pavilion at Mexico book fair **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

MoS Dhotre

inaugurates

INDIA AND Mexico represent old civilizations and both undertook a sustained struggle to get independence from colonial rule, Minister of State for Human Resource Development Sanjay Dhotre said while inaugurating the India Pavilion at the International Book Fair at Guadaljara, Mexico.

India is the guest of honour at the book fair, and is the first Asian country to have received this honour.

Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy 'Let Our Lives Be Open Books' is the theme of the India pavilion at the fair.

Dhotre, while speaking at the inaugural ceremony, highlighted the deep literary connection between India and Mexico.

He also said that India and Mexico are in opposite directions on the world map and are thousands of kilometres apart, but both the countries have great similarities in terms of their people, bio-diversity, family and cultural values, and even climatic conditions.

The Guadaljara International Book Fair will continue till December 8.

Lucknow govt school principal booked for 'beating up' Dalit students, probe on

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 1

LUCKNOW Police has booked a principal of a government-run middle school for allegedly targeting the students from the Dalit community.

Police said Pradeep Kumar Mishra, principal of the school in Ahmamau area, has denied the allegation, even as the parents have accused him of beating up their children as they "belong to the Dalit community".

The parents and children held a protest on Sultanpur road on Saturday, demanding action against Mishra, following which the police lodged an FIR under IPC Sections 506 (criminal intimidation), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 323 (voluntarily The parents who made the police complaint have alleged their wards are regularly harassed and locked inside the school toilet

causing hurt) and under relevant sections of the SC/ST Act.

"We have lodged the FIR after we received a written complaint from five parents whose children study in the school," said Raj Kumar Shukla, Circle Officer (CO) of Mohanlalganj, who is also the investigating of-

ficer in the case. One of the parents said the principal beat up her two children (daughter in Class VI and son in Class VII) and some others

on Saturday. "He (Mishra) told us that he beat them up because they were absent from school for two days. My girl has received injuries on her head and one hand. He beat up only Dalit students. He also abused them using casteist slurs," the mother said.

The complaint stated that five students were beaten up by the principal because they belong to the Dalit community. "They are regularly harassed and locked inside the toilet of the school by the principal," it was alleged in the complaint.

CO Shukla said police are investigating the matter. "The principal has denied the allegations and claimed that the complaint has been lodged due to some internal politics in the school. We will question all the employees and other students of the school," said Shukla.

190 teachers dismissed in UP over 'fake marksheets'

Lucknow: The services of 190 teachers of primary and upper primary government schools have been dismissed in Uttar Pradesh's Etah and Mainpuri districts following an inquiry, which found that they had secured jobs after allegedly providing fake and tampered B.Ed marksheets and certificates.

Criminal cases are being file against them and the state has also decided to issue notices to them to recover salaries they had received during their service.

The dismissal orders were passed on the basis of the inquiry report submitted by a UP Police SIT probing irregularities linked to the issuance of fake B.Ed degrees by the Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar University in 2004-2005. ENS

Rajasthan: 6-yr-old

raped, killed while

13 EXPRESS NETWORK



NORTH

Militant hideout busted in Sopore: J&K Police

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Sunday said a militant hideout was busted in North Kashmir's Baramulla district. A police spokesperson said that based on a credible input, the police in Sopore of Baramulla district along with security forces "busted a terrorist hideout in Rafiabad area of Sopore". "Police recovered

cluding a huge cache of arms and ammunition..." he said. "Incriminating materials... have been seized by the police and taken into records for investigation," he said. The recovery included two rifles, 2,000 bullets, three RPG rounds, two wireless sets and a satellite phone. **ENS&PTI**

incriminating materials in-



Police personnel during rehearsal ahead of Himachal Police Raising day, in Shimla on Sunday. Pradeep Kumar

WEST

Nithyananda case: CBSE pulls affiliation of DPS branch

Ahmedabad: The CBSE on Sunday withdrew its affiliato DPS, East Ahmedabad, which is at the centre of Nithyananda ashram controversy, with immediate effect. In the order, CBSE said, "...the registered students of class X and XII for the academic session 2019-20 are allowed to appear in the Board examina-

tion to be conducted in the year 2020. While the registered students of class IX and XI shall be shifted to nearby affiliated school(s)..." Finding gross violations and suspecting criminal misrepresentation and forgery after an inquiry, the Gujarat education department had requested the CBSE to cancel the school's affiliation.

EAST

Odisha lecturer who accused relative of rape found dead

Baripada (Odisha): The body of a lecturer, who had levelled rape charges against a relative, was found hanging inside a college hostel, police said on Sunday. When the 23-yearold did not turn up for a meal and repeated knocks by the inmates did not yield any response, the police was informed. The police found her hanging from the ceiling fan.

The deceased had lodged an FIR on October 30, alleging she had been raped by a relative on October 27, police said. Following her death, the accused was arrested from Cuttack on Sunday. Mayurbhani SP also suspended a sub-inspector and transferred the inspector-incharge of the police station where the FIR was filed. PTI

SOUTH

Kerala cops crack down on pillion riders without helmets

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala police, along with the Motor Vehicle Department of the state, on Sunday intensified vehicle-checking and also wearing of helmets by pillion riders. "Today, we are just warning the pillion riders without helmets. From Monday or perhaps during the week, we will start imposing fine on them," a motor ve-

hicle inspector said. As per the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, it is mandatory for every person above four years of age to don a helmet. All pillion riders who violate the rule would be fined Rs 500. The Kerala High Court had recently asked the state government to make it mandatory for the pillion riders also to wear helmets. PTI

On way to meet girl, youth beaten to death in UP village

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 1

A MUSLIM youth was beaten to death in Maraucha village of Uttar Pradesh's Ambedkarnagar district late on Friday night, reportedly over his relationship with a Hindu girl.

Abdul Baari, 26, was beaten with sticks and his motorcycle was set on fire. He was taken to a local hospital but succumbed to his injuries. Three people were arrested

Sunday, while five others named

in the FIR are on the run. Baari's uncle Israr Ahmad. who lodged the complaint, however, told *The Indian Express* the murder had "no Hindu-Muslim

angle" and that Baari was not on his way to meet the Dalit girl when killed, as registered in the FIR. He blamed the murder on personal enmity.

District SP Virendra Kumar Mishra said it was "not a case of lynching", or "a case of Hindu-Muslim enmity", "but of murder in a love-related matter". "The youth was in relationship with a girl and had gone to meet her around 11 pm in Maraucha. The locals saw him and attacked him, following an argument. A police team reached the spot soon after. The body was sent for postmortem. An FIR has been registered against eight accused and all would be arrested soon," he said, adding that there were no law and order problems and the

The FIR says Baari, who belonged to Hathinaraj village, had gone to neighbouring Maraucha late on Friday night on his motorcycle, along with his help

situation was peaceful.

Abhishek. When the attack happened, Abhishek managed to escape and told the family what had happened. Additional SP Avanish Mishra said Ahmad rushed to the spot and took Baari to a hospital, where he died a few hours later. The post-mortem re-

port confirmed injuries as the

cause of death.

Abhishek has reportedly identified the eight accused as Manoj, Pawan, Shivratan, Budhram, Raghuveer, Jawahir, Sher Bahadur and Ram Kewal, all residents of Maraucha village. Budhram, Raghveer and Ram Kewal have been arrested. The FIR in the case has been registered under Sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon) and 302 (murder).

Ahmad told *The Indian* Express that the murder was the

result of personal enmity. Asked why he had said in the FIR that his nephew was killed when on way to meet a girl, he said the report was registered based on what Abhishek had told them.

why Abhishek had given a "different angle", Ahmad said, "Talking to several persons I got to know that accused Sher Bahadur has enmity with one Thakur Sahab in his village and Abdul used to talk to Thakur Sahab. On some occasions he even helped him. I have also been told that Abdul had some argument with Sher Bahadur recently."

Baari's family, including his parents and three sisters, are settled in Mumbai. Ahmad said Baari stayed in the village to take care of the family's fishing business.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE JAIPUR. DECEMBER 1 THE BODY of a 6-year-old girl who was allegedly raped and murdered was found on Sunday

Claiming he did not know morning in Tonk district of Rajasthan. According to police, the body of the girl was found half a kilometre from the government school she studied in, and from where she went missing on Saturday afternoon.

The victim was in her school uniform and had her belt wrapped around her neck, suggesting she was strangulated, said officials.

"The girl had left school after 2:30pm on Saturday. Preliminary investigation suggests that following that, she was kidnapped by some unknown person who took her to a deserted area where she was raped and later murdered," said Vipin

returning from school Sharma, additional superinten-

dent of police, Tonk HQ. Sharma added that the police were informed that the girl's body was found around half a kilometre from her school.

"The place where her body was found is a secluded spot in the village and is covered with bushes. She was in her school uniform and the belt was wrapped around her neck, suggesting that she was strangulated. The postmortem has been done and more details will emerge from the medical report," said the SHO of the police station in Tonk, under whose jurisdiction the victim's village falls.

Sharma added that an FIR under sections including 302 (murder), 376 (rape) of the IPC along with relevant sections of the POCSO Act is being lodged in the case.

"A search for the accused is on and we are interrogating several suspects," said Sharma.

Once a stray, Thenga set to sniff out Telangana rape-murder: criminals for Uttarakhand Police

LALMANI VERMA DEHRADUN, DECEMBER 1

THIS STRAY dog has kept up with the best of pedigrees during its training to join an elite canine squad of the Uttarakhand Police at the Reserve Police Lines campus.

Uttarakhand Police officials say this is the first time that a stray is being trained to track criminals during investigations of murder, loot and theft-related cases. As a sniffer dog, Thenga will also assist the police during rescue operations.

Thenga will formally join the police squad after completing a three-month training programme, and will have to travel Dehradun and Uttarkashi districts to assist the police in search and rescue operations.

His performance at the recent state foundation celebrations has made him so popular that senior police officials are receiving phone calls from their counterparts in other states about the possibility of replicating the experiment of training a stray dog for their own respective canine squads.

Born about eight months ago on the streets of the Jogiwala area, on the outskirts of Dehradun, Thenga's life changed for the better after he was picked by daughter of Kamlesh Pant, the inspector in-charge of the



Thenga will formally join the police squad after completing **a three-month training programme.** *Virender Singh Negi*

Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) and dog squad. Pant adopted the dog, observed that he was very active and its immunity was very good.

"During a meeting regarding procurement of dogs for the squad, we discussed the possibility of training stray dogs. Pant told us about this dog (Thenga). I gave the approval. All the documentation formalities were done for this experiment, and it is quite successful. Thenga is taking training and performing very well and will join the squad very soon," said Sanjay Gunjyal, Inspector General (police modernisation), Uttarakhand police.

Officials say he has been named Thenga because he broke a tradition of inducting of only pedigree dogs in the canine squad, and even performed bet-

ter than popular breeds.

During a recent meeting in Delhi of police officials from across the country, other states also expressed an interest in carrying out a similar experiment.

Gunjyal said that top police officials of Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar have shown interest in knowing more about the 'Thenga experiment'.

Officials said that each dog of

foreign breed – German Shepherds, Labradors and Golden Retrievers — cost a minimum Rs 40.000-50.000.

During procurement of these dogs, their pedigree is checked. But Thenga is first in the squad without a pedigree history. He now lives in a kennel with three other dogs, around 500 metres from the police lines ground. His handlers — Prem Vallabh and Ram Dutt Pandey — take him to the ground every morning and evening for a two-hour training session. Earlier this month, Thenga

and 24 other sniffer dogs were introduced to the public during the state foundation function in the presence of Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat.

"While the other 24 dogs in the squad jumped across obstacles of almost three feet, a special obstacle of four feet was prepared for Thenga because during training sessions, he had displayed a capability to jump across higher obstacles. Also, in a mock drill performed there, Thenga helped the police in nabbing a thief," Pant said.

"Training Thenga was more difficult compared to dogs of foreign breeds. He was more aggressive and it took time. But now, he has mixed with other dogs and they all saluted the dignitaries at the state foundation day event. Now, Thenga is familiar with others," Pant said.

CM orders fast track court Hyderabad: Breaking his silence In other developments, three police personnel have been sus-

over the rape and murder of a woman veterinarian, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday announced setting up of a fast track court for an expeditious trial and assured all help to her family as protests against the heinous crime continued.

Rao also described the rape and murder of the 25-year old woman by four men as 'ghastly' and expressed his deep anguish.

istering an FIR on a missing complaint by the family of the woman while police said they would seek custody of the four accused, remanded in judicial custody on Saturday. State IT Minister K T Rama Rao on Sunday urged the Prime

pended for alleged delay in reg-

Minister to amend IPC and CrPC for capital punishment to perpetrators of such crimes.

BENGALURU

Bodies of Kerala couple missing since Oct 14 found

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU, DECEMBER 1

THE BODIES of a young, unmarried couple from Kerala, working in an IT major in Bengaluru and reported missing since October 14, were discovered in a forested region in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The bodies of Abhijith Mohan, 25, and Sreelakshmi, 21, were found with a wire around their necks. On the basis of preliminary investigation, police are considering the deaths to be suicides. The identities were ascer-

tained by documents and mobile phones found on the bodies.

"It seems to be a case related

to family opposition to their relationship," said a deputy SP in the Bengaluru Rural region. Both the victims were of different castes.

"The bodies were discovered in in the Chintan Madiwala area which is a few kilometres away from Electronic City, where they

worked..." said police sources. Police are pursuing the suicide angle on the basis of a phone call made by Srilakshmi to her uncle. She reportedly said that she was

going away with Abhijith. After the couple went missing

on October 11, a cousin of Srilakshmi who is a police officer in Kerala, filed a complaint on October 14 stating that she had been abducted by Abhijith.

2019 saw wettest November in J&K, shows IMD data

ANJALI MARAR

PUNE, DECEMBER 1

NOVEMBER 2019 was the wettest November ever recorded in Jammu and Kashmir, the weather data maintained by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has shown.

High amounts of both solid and liquid precipitation — snowfall and rainfall — were recorded in this past month. As per snowfall records maintained by IMD, available only for the last four decades.

the UT received an excess precipitation of 313 per cent in November.

According to Met officials, almost every passing western disturbance caused precipitation over I&K during this period. Meteorologists said jet streams are presently blowing along at much lower latitudes than normal, which is one of the reasons behind consistent precipitation over extreme parts of the country.

"While the Siberian High gets established by this time of the year, the cold winds from the ex-



November, according to the IMD. Express archives

I&K has received excess precipitation of 313 per cent in

tra-tropics (polar regions) were found to have penetrated to much southern latitudes than normal. As a result, there is early snowfall over northern regions and every passing western disturbance caused snow or rainfall," said AK Srivastava, head, climate research division at IMD, Pune.

Two spells of snowfall in the last month remained the highest 24-hour snowfall ever recorded in the month of November — Gulmarg recorded 4 feet of snow between November 6 and 7, even as the entire UT received 96mm equivalent snow during these two days. The districts of Srinagar, Baramulla, Shopian, Anantnag and Pulwama reported 1-2 feet of snow on November 26.

In the Kashmir division Srinagar and Pulwana remained the wettest districts, and the rainfall recorded was 685 per cent and 618 per cent above normal, respectively.

In the Jammu region, Rajouri was the wettest district, with an excess of 409 per cent rainfall. The only rain-deficit district in November was Poonch.

'WOMEN ARE HAPPY BECAUSE MEN NOT DRUNK EVERY EVENING'

Liquor consumption down nearly 48 pc as Andhra moves towards prohibition

SREENIVAS JANYALA HYDERABAD, DECEMBER 1

ANDHRA PRADESH is making it expensive to consume liquor while it works towards implementing prohibition, and women, especially those from rural areas who led the campaign to restrict the sale of liquor, are relieved the men are sober and not squandering their

On May 30, Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy took oath as Chief Minister and announced his decision to implement prohibition in the state — a poll promise. Since then, the government has taken over the management of liquor shops and cancelled the

licences of bars while making it expensive to renew them. Liquor consumption came

down by 47.87 per cent between May and October in the state after the closure of more than 40,000 illegal liquor outlets, 880 licensed liquor shops, and the government taking over the remaining 3,500 licensed shops and restricting sales.

The liquor revenue fell from Rs 1,701.24 crore in October 2018 to Rs 1,038.89 crore in October this year.

"After the closure of illegal liquor shops in June and of permit rooms attached to licensed shops to consume liquor, the number of alcoholics in public has come down. Governmentrun liquor shops close at 8 pm EXPLAINED

An earlier experiment

DURING THE 1994 elections, a movement for prohibition led by Vardhineni Rosamma — an illiterate woman from Nellore's Dubbgunta village — became a major poll issue with TDP founder-president NT Rama Rao promising total prohibition if voted to power. After taking oath as CM in January 1995, NTR imposed prohibition for the first time in the state. However, when N Chandrababu Naidu became the CM in 1997, he revoked prohibition citing loss of revenue, crossborder liquor sales and brewing of illicit liquor.

which is a big relief because the men go home early... Women are happy because men are not drunk every evening," said G Indira, a health worker and activist from Srikakulam.

The state is levying Additional Retail Excise Tax and last week, it cancelled the existing policy for bars — bringing

per cent through the new policy. "While we have doubled the license fee we also intend to

down the number of bars by 40

make it very expensive to drink in bars. All these measures are pushing down the sales and consumption and we will continue to tighten it regularly," said Deputy CM K Narayana Swamy, who is also the Excise Minister.

It began with women in many villages across Andhra Pradesh attacking "belt shops" — illegal liquor outlets — and arrack breweries in June 2017. It gradually became a movement in 13 districts with rural women venting their ire against liquor shops. On November 6, women of Rallagadda village of Visakhapatnam attacked an il-

legal brewery in their village and sent a video to officials even as Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy was discussing how to bring down the number of bars. The movement, which was similar to another one started in 1992 by women, coincided with Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy's 3,648-km padyatra on November 6, 2017.

"As he walked through the villages and mandals, women in large numbers would surround him and tell him how alcohol addiction was ruining families. Almost everywhere, women told Jagan that they would vote for him if he promised to enforce prohibition," YSRCP MLA Ambati Rambabu said.

According to Shiran

Rahman, head of Chaitanva Sravanti, a Visakhapatnambased NGO which is campaigning for prohibition and has conducted two separate studies on how alcoholism is causing economic ruin in rural households and its social and health effects in rural areas, "men spent their entire earnings of the day on liquor, leaving families in penury". "This causes marital discord

leading to domestic violence. Children drop out of school with girl children becoming the first victims... In last couple of years, women have joined self-help groups or started working and earning more than their husbands. They are now taking care of the kids, paying fees and

women are now in a good position to demand prohibition or restricted sale of alcohol, Rahman said. Writer and activist Kancha

sending them to school. These

Ilaiah, who wrote on the movement led by women in 1992-93, said, "This effort to implement prohibition in AP has the support of all women. In rural areas, women suffer the most. They are victims of domestic abuse and the family ends up in poverty. However, we have to see if total prohibition is possible or not because in 1992-93 it gave way to rampant illicit liquor brewing and cross-border liquor sales. It defeated the purpose of prohibition, Ilaiah said.

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

TELLING NUMBERS

1,275 Gangetic dolphins in UP, another 962 in Assam rivers

AT LAST count, the rivers of Assam and Uttar Pradesh respectively had 962 and 1,275 Gangetic dolphins, India's national aquatic dolphin. These numbers were tabled in Parliament recently by Minister of State for Environment and Forest Babul Supriyo. BJP member Rajiv Pratap Rudy had asked whether the government has carried out an assessment of the population and habitation areas of the Gangetic dolphin in the country; Supriyo replied that such assessments are done by respective state Forest Departments and the data are not collated in the Union ministry. He tabled the figures for Assam and UP based on information received from the two state governments.

The population assessment in Assam was done between January and March 2018, while the UP count of 1,272 is for 2015, up from 671 in 2012. In Assam, the assessment was carried out in three rivers, with the Brahmaputra accounting for 877 of the 962 dolphins. In addition to the species being India's national aquatic animal, the Gangetic dolphin has been notified by the Assam government as the state aquatic animal, too. Silting and sand lifting from rivers in Assam has been stopped to maintain its population.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature has listed the Gangetic dolphin as an endangered species in India. According to the and depletion of their prey-base.



Gangetic dolphin, or Platanista **gangetica.** Wikpedia

GANGETIC DOLPHINS IN ASSAM RIVERS, 2018...

Brahmaputra river	877
Subansiri river	48
Kulsi river	37
Total	962

.. AND IN UP, 2012 & 2015

2012	671
2015	1,272

WWF, the main threat to the Gangetic dolphin is the creation of dams and irrigation projects. The ministry reply said the Conservation Action Plan for the Gangetic Dolphin, 2010-2020, identified threats to these dolphins that include the impact of river traffic, construction of irrigation canals

TIP FOR READING LIST

IS THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM FLAWED?

DENNIN DE FINE

THE GREAT

PRETENDER

IN A controversial experiment in 1973, Stanford University psychologist David Rosenhan recruited seven healthy volunteers and made them feign symptoms of mental illness to get admitted to hospitals. This undercover mission was to test the legitimacy of some psychiatric la-

bels. The results left a lasting influence on the field, with some psychiatric hospitals shutting down and psychiatry trying to reinvent itself thereafter. The experiment is the subject of the second book from award-winning author Susannah Cahalan, who ends up questioning the legitimacy of the pathbreaking study itself.

The Great Pretender has Cahalan, an investigative journalist, tracking down the volunteers, about whom nothing was known so far other than their pseudonyms. In the process, she gives the reader a glimpse into the workings of the mental health industry, refers to its diagnostic system as "flawed and arbitrary", notes contradictions in Rosenhan's work, and questions the extent to which the world understands madness and mental illness. Cahalan's interest in the theme of

madness is drawn from her own experience with several mis-diagnosis of auto-immune disorder and her journey through the recovery phase. "Despite all of our medical progress — of which I am a direct recipient — the sickest among us are getting sicker," Cahalan writes. Referring to the author's realisation about the contradictions in Rosenhan's work, the promotional note on

Amazon says, "It may also serve as a reminder that it's not always good for us to meet our heroes."

Cahalan's first book was The New York Times bestseller Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness, a memoir that dealt with her struggle with a rare auto-immune disorder of the brain.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

What Fundamental Duties mean

Over last few days, the Prime Minister, President, Vice President and Law Minister have been stressing Fundamental Duties. A look at what these duties are, and how they were included in the Constitution

ABANTIKA GHOSH

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

OVER THE last one week, the government has been making a pitch for fundamental duties. In his Constitution Day address to a Joint Session of Parliament last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed the importance of constitutional duties, while making a distinction between seva (service) and these duties. On the same occasion, President Ram Nath stressed the difference between rights and duties, while Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu called for fundamental duties to be included in the school curriculum and the list of the duties to be displayed at educational institutions and at other public places. Also on Constitution Day, Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, writing in *The* Indian Express, called for citizens to remember their fundamental duties as they remember their fundamental rights.

Fundamental Duties are described in the Constitution — an Emergency-era provision that was introduced by the Indira Gandhi government. Days before the pitches made on Constitution Day, The Indian Express had reported how the government has been dusting off this provision and asking ministries to spread awareness about Fundamental Duties.

How were Fundamental Duties incorporated in the Constitution?

The Fundamental Duties were incorporated in Part IV-A of the Constitution by the Constitution 42nd Amendment Act, 1976, during Emergency under Indira Gandhi's government. Today, there are 11 Fundamental Duties described under Article 51-A, of which 10 were introduced by the 42nd Amendment and the 11th was added by the 86th Amendment in 2002, during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government.

These are statutory duties, not enforceable by law, but a court may take them into account while adjudicating on a matter. The idea behind their incorporation was to emphasise the obligation of the citizen in exchange for the Fundamental Rights that he or she enjoys. The concept of Fundamental Duties is taken from the Constitution of Russia.

What are the Fundamental Duties?

- The 11 Fundamental Duties are: ■ To abide by the constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag
- and the National Anthem ■ To cherish and follow the noble ideals which
- inspired our national struggle for freedom ■ To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India — it is one of the preeminent national obligations of all the cit-
- izens of India. ■ To defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so
- ■To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women ■ To value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture — our cultural her-
- also part of the heritage of the Earth ■ To protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life and to have compassion for living

creatures

itage is one of the noblest and richest, it is



Then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with commemoration volumes of the 25th anniversary of the Constitution. It was her government that introduced **Fundamental Duties in 1976.** *R K Sharma/Express Archive*

- To develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform
- To safeguard public property and to abjure violence
- To strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement
- ■Who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

It is the one on children's education that was added in 2002 by the 86th Amendment that provided for the Right to Free and Compulsory Education for children in the age group 6-14, with the insertion of Article 21A. It also cast an obligation on parents to provide such opportunities under Article 51A(K).

Under what circumstances was the 42nd Amendment passed?

The amendment came at a time when elections stood suspended and civil liberties curbed. The government arrested thousands under MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) and carried out anti-poverty programmes, slum demolition drives, and a forced sterilisation campaign. "With the opposition MPs locked away, a series of Constitutional amendments were passed to prolong Mrs Gandhi's rule," writes historian Ramachandra Guha in *India after Gandhi*.

Apart from adding the Fundamental Duties, the 42nd Amendment also changed the Preamble to the Constitution to include the words 'Socialist and Secular' to describe India, in addition to its being 'Sovereign

Democratic Republic'.

New 'Directive Principles' were added and given precedence over Fundamental Rights. Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and High Courts to review constitutionality of the laws was curtailed. High Courts were prohibited from deciding on the constitutional validity of central laws. A new Article 144A was inserted, prescribing a minimum of seven judges for a Constitution Bench, besides stipulating a special majority of twothirds of a Bench for invalidating central laws.

How many of the changes made under the 42nd Amendment are still in effect?

In the 1977 elections, the manifesto of the Janata Party promised to restore the Constitution to its pre-Emergency form. However, after being voted to power, the Morarji Desai government did not have the numbers for a complete reversal. Reversal happened only in bits and pieces.

In 1977, the 43rd Amendment restored the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and High Courts to review the constitutional validity of laws. The following year, the 44th Amendment changed the grounds for declaring Emergency under Article 325, substituting "internal disturbance" with "armed rebellion", besides requiring of the President that he shall not do so unless the decision of the Union Cabinet is communicated in writing to him.

Right to Liberty was strengthened by stipulating that detention under the Preventive Detention Act shall not be for more than two months. Right to Property was converted from a Fundamental Right to a legal right, by amending Article 19 and deleting Article 31.

OTHER KEY AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

FIRST AMENDMENT, 1951

Article 15 was amended by inserting Clause 4, empowering the state to make any special provision for the advancement of any socially and economically backward classes or categories of SCs and STs notwithstanding anything in this Article or in Clause 2 of Article 29. Article 19 was amended to secure constitutional validity of zamindari abolition laws and to provide for new grounds of restrictions to the Right of Freedom of Speech and Expression and the right to practice any profession or to carry on any trade or business. Articles 31A and 31B, and the Ninth Schedule were inserted to give protection to land reform laws from being questioned on the ground that they are not consistent with Fundamental Rights.

24TH AMENDMENT, 1971

Articles 13 and 368 amended to remove doubts about Parliament's power to amend the Constitution including Fundamental Rights further to the judgment of the Supreme Court in the Golaknath case. The President was obligated to give assent to any Constitution Amendment Bill presented to him.

26TH AMENDMENT, 1971 It repealed Articles 291 and 362 deal-

ing with privy purses, sums of rulers and rights and privileges of rulers of former Indian states.

52ND AMENDMENT, 1985

Anti-Defection law was provided for in the Tenth Schedule by providing for disqualification of legislators, vacation of seats and splits and mergers.

64TH AMENDMENT, 1989

Minimum voting age reduced from 21 years to 18, by amending Article 326.

77TH AMENDMENT, 1995

Provided for reservation in promotion in services under the state for SCs and STs by inserting clause (4A) in Article 16.

91ST AMENDMENT, 2003

Put a ceiling on number of ministers at the Centre and in states as 15% of the strength of Lok Sabha or the Assembly, and not less than 12 in the states.

99TH AMENDMENT, 2014

Provided for National Judicial Commission to broad-base method of appointment of judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts. This amendment was however, declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2015.

101ST AMENDMENT, 2016

It facilitated the introduction of GST with concurrent taxing powers to the Union and the States and Union Territories with legislatures to make laws for levying GST on every transaction of goods and services.

Understanding Pak SC ruling on Army chief, and why it matters for India

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

LAST WEEK, a three-member Bench of the Pakistan Supreme Court, headed by the country's Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, made a carefully calibrated move to question the Imran Khan-led government, seeking that it explain and justify the extension of the tenure of Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa by three years. It is being seen as a challenge to the Army chief's position, which is rare in a country that has been ruled by the Army for more than half of its seven decades, and where the saying goes that that it's not a country with an Army but an Army with a country.

The move & the challenge

On November 26, the Pakistan Supreme Court Bench took up a petition challenging the extension. It was filed by lawyer Riaz Rahi, known in Pakistan's court circles as a "serial petitioner" who has moved court against former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, former President General Pervez Musharraf, and former Supreme Court judges, without much success. Although Rahi tried to withdraw this petition, Chief Justice Khosa did not allow him to do so.

Over the next three days until November 28 — the date of Army Chief Bajwa's scheduled retirement — the Bench questioned the government on the manner

in which it had granted the extension. Prime Minister Imran Khan had announced the extension in August, just two weeks after India had revoked Article 370 concerning Jammu & Kashmir, and had cited the "regional security situation" as the reason behind Bajwa's extension by three years.

The arguments & the verdict

The chief law officer of the state could not give definitive answers when the Bench asked for specific laws that permitted extension or reappointment of the Army chief. The Bench found that Imran Khan had issued the notification on August 19, only to be told later that, under the Constitution, only Pakistan's President could issue a notification of the Army chief's extension. To rectify the error, the Prime Minister's Office moved a fresh summary — a note. This was quickly approved by the President, but it emerged later that the Prime Minister could not send the summary to the President without his Cabinet's approval. The summary was then circulated among Cabinet members, but no fresh notification was issued.

When the court found that the government had not even followed the proper legal procedure, the government issued notifications but got caught in jargon — whether

it was an "extension" or a "re-appointment". The Pakistan government's legal team argued that the extension was done under Article 243 (Command of Armed Forces) of the Constitution. But a simple reading of



Pakistan SC has reduced Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa's tenure **extension to six months.** AP File Photo

Article 243, the Bench said, showed it did not deal with extension. Article 243(4)(b), which deals with appointment of the Army chief, says: "The President shall, on advice of the Prime Minister, appoint..."

Finally, the Bench ordered — just hours before Bajwa's midnight retirement — that the extension be granted, for another six months, and that the government bring out legislation to regularise such an extension (which has been happening without any legal backing for seven decades in Pakistan).

The Army's influence So powerful is the Army chief that

Pakistan Law Minister Farogh Naseem, also one of the country's top lawyers, resigned to represent Bajwa in the Supreme Court. After the verdict, Naseem was sworn in again as Law Minister. Another pointer to the Army chief's influence was that on the evening before the final order, Prime Minister Khan held a meeting of top legal minds which was attended by Bajwa himself. In the last two decades, only General

Raheel Shareef retired on time, while General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and Musharraf stayed on beyond their prescribed tenures. Kayani's extension too was challenged in the Islamabad High Court in 2012; the court dismissed the petition.

Army and judiciary

The current situation reminded many of a face-off in 2007 between Musharraf and the judiciary under then Pakistan Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, who had been removed by the military ruler. Eventually, this contributed to the downfall of the Musharraf regime.

During the hearings in the latest case, the Chief Justice observed: "We were labelled as agents of India and the CIA when we examined the Army Act." Yet he also said that "it is our right to ask questions."

Some believe that this could be an outcome of rivalry between the Chief Justice of Pakistan and the Prime Minister. Recently,

Justice Khosa had made it clear that the ju"sincere and old friend" of the Chinese govdiciary had nothing to do with the removal of former Prime Minister Sharif's name from Exit Control List. Again, after Prime Minister Khan had requested Justice Khosa to restore public trust in the judiciary and see why two systems existed in the country — one for the rich and the other for the poor — Justice Khosa took exception to the "taunt" and said the courts of the country had convicted a Prime Minister and disqualified another.

The general's legacy

Under Bajwa, the Pakistan Army in February 2017 launched Operation Raddul-Fasaad (RuF), in the aftermath of a resurgence of terror attacks. Pakistan Army media wing ISPR said RuF was aimed at indiscriminately eliminating the "residual/latent threat of terrorism", consolidating the gains made in other military operations, and ensuring Pakistan's border security. One of the major successes under the RuF has been fencing along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

But, with India, relations nosedived, with the Pulwama terror attack and then the revocation of Article 370 that prompted Bajwa's extension. However, Bajwa re-kindled the Kartarpur corridor proposal with his hug and conversation with Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu.

With China, Bajwa has cultivated a relationship. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson had said Gen Bajwa was a

ernment. In September 2018, Gen Bajwa, on special invitation, called on Chinese President Xi Jinping to discuss the region's security challenges, and has committed to the security of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. He accompanied PM Khan on the state visit, which is unusual for a Pakistan Army chief.

Takeaways for India

India has been trying to corner Pakistan at multilateral fora on the issue of terrorism, and the Financial Action Task Force will in February once again take up the issue of Pakistan's blacklisting. The current crisis in Pakistan may give some leverage to Pakistan's civilian government and political class to push the Pakistan Army to take action against the terrorist groups operating out of the territory under their control. This has been one of India's major demands and, if it happens, could unlock the bilateral space between the two countries.

On the other hand, India would be wary about whether this episode could lead to the Pakistan Army becoming more adventurous in Jammu and Kashmir, in a bid to regain its legitimacy and bolster the "regional security" argument.

Whatever be Bajwa's eventual fate, a powerful Army chief in Pakistan has consequences far beyond the territory under the Army's control. New Delhi will be watching the space very closely.

15 THE GOVERNANCE PAGE

MAKING SCHOOLING EASIER

In Rajasthan, integrated books make school bags lighter, students happier

Baste ka Bojh Kam project, being piloted in one govt school of each district, has reduced weights to a third

HAMZAKHAN

JAIPUR. DECEMBER 1

"BILKUL KUM ho gaya hai (yes, the weight has reduced drastically)," says Naina, a Class 3 student at the Government Senior Secondary School Vatika of Jaipur as she talks about her school bag.

"I walk to school, which is about 25 minutes from home. Earlier, I carried four books, but now I carry just one," she says. She is not the only one enjoying the relief. Her classmate Neeraj says, "Earlier we used to carry Hindi, English, Mathematics and Environment textbooks, now we carry just one. Dev, who is in Class 2, says his home is about 20 minutes walk away and his three books have now been replaced by just one.

The weight of Dev's textbooks has reduced from 0.95 kg to 0.30 kg. For Naina and Neeraj, it has decreased from 1.35 kg to 0.5 kg. The changes are across the board (*see box*)

Naina, Neeraj, Dev and 60 other students between Classes 1 and 3 at this government school on the outskirts of Jaipur are part of a state-wide pilot project in Rajasthan — one school in each of the state's 33 districts where the government has implemented Baste Ka Bojh Kam (BKBK) project to make the school bags weigh less. "The psychological pressure has reduced since they have to face just one book now, and the new books are more colourful and interactive too," says Dr Bhawna Nehla, the Principal.

It was from this school that Rajasthan's Minister of State for Primary and Secondary Education (Independent Charge), Govind Singh Dotasra, had launched the project in September. While it was initially announced for Classes 1 to 5, the pilot project was eventually restricted to Classes 1 to 3.

"It is a pilot project, the outcomes can be gauged from studying Classes 1 to 3 as well," says Pradeep Kumar Borar, Commissioner, Rajasthan School Shiksha Parishad.

Srivashist Sekar, Program Manager, Piramal Foundation for Education Leadership, says that "All books reached the target schools by the first week of November. Next, we will scale up the project to include Classes 4 and 5".

The books these children hold now were rebid trimester-wise, instead of being subjectwise. For example, a Class 1 student will carry 1 book in a trimester, and this book has all the topics to be covered from Hindi, English, Maths for that trimester, instead of 3 books one each per subject. Thus, rather than taking 3-4 books of the individual subject, the students are taking just one book to school.

The project comes in the backdrop of the



Students enjoying their new interactive books at a govt school in Jaipur. Express

SOLUTION AVAILABLE LIKELY COST

directions, the Rajasthan government part-

nered with Piramal Foundation and started

the BKBK project to implement a pilot project

thought of by Commissioner Borar.

In 2003-04, as director of Lok

Jumbish Parishad, a primary education proj-

ect, he had prepared drafts of such textbooks.

The books also drew inspiration from comics

and converted chapters with conversations

into comic strips. The idea, however, was re-

jected. "They found small mistakes and mag-

nified them," says Borar. Back then, he had

Very high

Tablets

of textbooks.

No books at all

Reduce Curriculum

EXPLAINED

How lighter school bags help

WHEN RAJASTHAN did a study, 73% of the students asked, said they were bothered by the weight of their school bags. About 42%, in fact, saw the weight saw it as a hindrance to schoolgoing. About 40% of the parents agreed. When integrated books — one book for muliple subjects — were introduced, teachers overwhelming approved of them.

WHY INTEGRATED BOOKS WERE THE BEST OPTION TO LIGHTEN SCHOOL BAGS **MUCH LIGHTER NOW**

Class 1	0.90 kg to 0.40 kg
Class 2	0.95 kg to 0.30 kg
Class 3	1.35 kg to 0.50 kg
Class 4	1.45 kg to 0.50 kg
Class 5	1.25 kg to 0.50 kg.

Quality cost Teach 1-2 subjects/day Avg cost training teachers High 1-2 years to train all **INTEGRATED BOOKS VERY HIGH ZERO** Ministry of Human Resource Development called those books "Aao Khelein (Let's play)". asking all states and Union Territories last year Fifteen years on, the new textbooks are also to fix the weight of school bags. Following the called "Aao Khelein".

Commissioner and then the Commissioner. and study the scalability of the concept. While it was ensured that the existing syl-Following several meetings with experts, the available solutions (see box) labus remains untouched, the exwere studied and the government THE perts proposed and incorporated zeroed in on term-wise rebidding the concept of "divider pages" these are pages between individual **S**TORY The idea of such books was first subjects within a book. During their

> that students were playing certain games on their own. Hence, subject-specific and age-appropriate games were designed to enhance and create "joyful" learning.

field visits, experts had observed

The new books were drafted and went

through a three-stage review process, starting

from Deputy Director to Deputy

SCALABILITY TIME REQUIRED

appx 5 years

Training teachers

Govt-level decision

Low

High

N/A

Class 2 textbook, for example, has a simple "join the dots and colour" for a camel and a cartoon as well a "identify objects and match them with their names" exercise, among others.

As part of the study, feedback was sought from as many as 531 students, 172 parents, 92 teachers, 18 principals and 12 officials. A total of 72.9% students said that they were bothered about heavy bags, and a good 42 per cent said that heavy bag acts as a hindrance for them from going to school. Among parents, too, 40.70 per cent felt that the heavy weight of bags was one of the reasons for their child's unwillingness to go to school. However, after the distribution of the new book, 69 per cent students said that they feel "lighter," both physically and mentally.

Every single teacher who was interviewed said that the initiative was able to bring a "huge difference" in students, with the weight of the new books being just one of the reasons. As many as 91.3% teachers also said that the project should be implemented in the entire state.

"We are the first state ... I appeal to other states and private schools to adopt this initiative," Education Minister Dotasra said.

'India to achieve its emissions and renewable energy targets before time'

THE 25th annual climate change meeting is opening in the Spanish capital of Madrid today. India, being the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, is crucial to the global plans to fight climate change. Ahead of the meeting, Environment Secretary CK Mishra spoke to AMITABH SINHA on the actions that India had taken to combat climate change.

Somehow there is an expectation from the global community that India needs to do more on the climate front

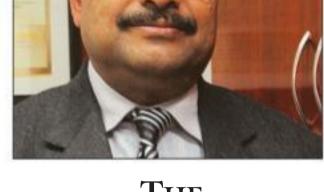
We are already doing much more than what we should be doing if we look at the historical responsibilities of countries in creating this problem. We are definitely doing better than most of the other countries. There have been some recent assessments from independent international organisations which show that India is among a handful of countries, barely four or five, whose actions are compliant to the target of keeping the global rise in temperatures below 2 degree Celsius. India is the only large country in that list, the only one among the top emitters.

By 2030, India has promised to reduce its emissions intensity (emissions per unit of Gross Domestic Product) by 33 to 35 per cent over 2005 levels, to ensure at least 40 per cent mix of non-fossil fuel sources in power generation by 2030. and to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes. Where are we on our specific targets?

There is absolutely no doubt that we will not just achieve these targets but will overachieve them. On emission intensity target we had been hoping to reach 25 per cent reduction by 2020 and 33 per cent by 2030. Our latest estimate is that by next year, we would touch 30 per cent reduction. On the second target, about the renewable mix in electricity generation, we will achieve 37 per cent by next year. The 40 per cent target will be achieved in another couple of years. So we will actually be ahead of our schedule. The only doubt that has been expressed is about the forestry target, the creation of carbon sink, but that also will be achieved.

But why is there a question mark on the forestry target?

There isn't a question mark. There is a point of view that only the activities that happen inside a notified forest area should be counted towards this target. But there are lots of trees and plantations outside the forest areas, which also add to the carbon sink. And



C K MISHRA

Environment Secretary, Government of India

other countries account for that.

Additionally, there is a huge contribution from the agriculture sector which we are not factoring in. At some places, change in agricultural practices have led to the creation of additional carbon sink. Degraded forest land when used for agriculture also create new carbon sink. Then there is a question of baseline. All our other targets are benchmarked to the 2005 baseline. Somehow, the forestry target was assumed by some to have a 2015 baseline when we submitted our targets. If we take the 2005 baseline, we would have already achieved the targets. But we want to do more.

The results of the latest forest survey will be known by December. Initial indications are that our carbon sink has been growing at the rate of about 75 to 80 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year.

What about our adaptation efforts? We do not even have a very credible threat assessment for the country.

You are right. A comprehensive threat assessment for the country has not been done yet. Many sectoral assessments have been made and are ongoing as well. But we do need a composite and comprehensive threat assessment because the impacts of climate change are already visible. And we need to take pre-emptive adaptation measures. Some of it is happening. For a country like India, adaptation is extremely important That is why we keep stressing on that even at international negotiations.

Full interview on indian express.com

From States **REFORMS TRACKER**

TAMIL NADU Blockchain, AI to help governance

The state government is working on a policy that will enable the government to make use of two emerging technology streams - Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain – towards improving the governance in Tamil Nadu and the broader public policy. To be sure, there will be two separate policies — one each for AI and Blockchain — clarified Santosh Misra, the Chief Executive Officer of the Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency or TNEGA.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Aiming to become an education hub

The state chief minister, Jai Ram Thakur, has announced that his government is working on unveiling a new education policy that will make Himachal Pradesh an education hub in the country. He said that the state government is committed to providing quality education and to this end the government will strengthen the existing infrastructure. The state's education minister, Suresh Bhardwaj, has highlighted that the budget for the HP University has been increased to Rs 130 crore. He said that the new education policy which is in the works at present will benefit not just the state but also help India regain its old glory as a "Vishwa" (Global) guru.

KERALA

Towards 100% internet connectivity

The Left Democratic Front government in the state has sets itself the task of ensuring that each household in the state has internet connectivity by December 2020. The state finance minister, Thomas Isaac, has announced that having an internet connection will be a basic citizen right in the state.

With electric buses, West Bengal makes an ambitious push for curbing city pollution

SWEETY KUMARI AND ATRI MITRA KOLKATA, DECEMBER 1

AIMING TO bring down the air pollution caused by buses operated in the city, the West Bengal government has introduced around 80 electric buses; in the next 10 years, it plans to introduce more than five thousand such buses. As a result, the state government has already bagged the C40 Cities Bloomberg Philanthropies Award in the "Green Mobility" category.

"In the next few months, nearly 150 electric buses will be in use. While 80 buses are being used in and around Kolkata, the remaining 70 buses will be distributed in Haldia, Asansol and Siliguri," a senior transport official told *The Indian Express*.

The government also plans to increase the number of charging stations in and around the city. If things go as per plan, the transport department would convert its entire bus fleet to electric models in a few years from now.



Electric buses have been introduced in Kolkata. Partha Paul

"Electric buses have many advantages." Their running costs are 60 per cent lower than the diesel buses," said Narayan Swarup Nigam, Transport Secretary, Government of West Bengal. Moreover, according to an official of the state pollution control board, "an analysis of different sources of air pollution in Kolkata has revealed that motor

vehicles are the leading contributor to air pollution nearly 51.4 per cent, which is followed by industry at 24.5 per cent and dust particles at 21.1 per cent". Transport department officials claim that switching to cleaner fuel would reduce emission burden of the city drastically.

As per officials, the state's transport department is purchasing these buses with the help of the central government. Officials said the central government would shoulder half the expense. The state has already disbursed Rs 60 crore for electric buses and these buses are already plying in areas like New Town,

Kamalgazi, Airport, Belghoria, Joka etc. There have been other steps to control emissions from automobile exhausts. The state has Auto Emission Testing Centres (AETCs). The AETCs have upgraded their testing facilities with opacity meter (for smoke density testing of diesel-driven vehicles), gas analysers (for testing of exhaust emission of petrol-driven vehicles), web camera and compatible software.

In Numbers STATES ARE LEADING THE CENTRE IN MAKING CAPITAL **EXPENDITURE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE** 8 Expenditure (in ₹ lakh FY11 FY12 FY13 FY14 FY15 FY16 FY17 FY18 FY19 FY20 (RE) **CLASSIFICATION WITHIN STATES** FRONTRUNNERS MIDDLE-OF-THE-PACK Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Benga Kerala, Punjab, Telangana Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu

Source: CRISIL Infrastructure Yearbook 2019

CHHATTISGARH/ HEALTHCARE DELIVERY

A single healthcare scheme to raise efficacy, accountability

DIPANKAR GHOSE RAIPUR, DECEMBER 1

THE CHHATTISGARH government recently announced that it was shifting from an "insurance model" to a "trust model" in the field of healthcare and that as many as six insurance schemes run by the state government and the centre would now be subsumed in a single new healthcare scheme, which would be run by the state government. The idea, the state government said, was to fix accountability on the state health infrastructure itself, and to lessen the amount of public money that was going to the private sector under the

insurance model. On November 15, after a meeting of the state cabinet, a press statement stated that the state was entering a "new phase of healthcare". Accordingly, a new scheme — Dr Khubchand Baghel Swasth Sahayata Yojana will provide coverage up to of Rs 5,00,000 per

year to not only Pradhanmantri Jan Arogya Yojana families but also to Pradhmikta & Antoyaday Ration cardholders. The new scheme will increase the beneficiary family count from 42 lakhs to 56 lakhs families. "The scheme will be implemented in Trust mode (assurance)," the cabinet release said.

Health Minister TS Singhdeo told *The Indian* Express that the primary aim is to fix accountability on the healthcare system itself and to increase the financial efficacy of the department. "The job of the minister must be to increase delivery through the pyramid structure which has mitanins (who are the ground-level health workers) at the base and medical college doctors at the top... We took this up as a challenge on several fronts. One could be the financial aspect. Second is the better use of public funds. And the third is (the) deliverables," he said. Singhdeo explained that the state had as many as six overlapping schemes where the services were being delivered. "What was being provided by one scheme was also being



A health camp in Surguja, Chhattisgarh. Express

provided by two-three schemes, "he said claiming that this has been streamlined.

The minister also said that under the existing "insurance model" there were suspicions of misuse of funds. "In our system, we are fixing accountability on ourselves," he

On the financial benefits the new scheme

will accrue, Singhdeo said, "We have not asked for a paisa more than the Rs 845 crore that is the budget for the insurance schemes as well as Rs 277 crore from the Centre. This amount of money, where is it going? As we saw it, straight away 15 per cent of public money was going into the administrative expenses of the insurance company. This was around Rs 100 crore. We want to minimise that. So within the same budget, we make a saving. Take on the responsibility to deliver and have the funds for strengthening your public infrastructure. Part of the 15 per cent will go to the government's administrative costs but it will not be more than half, so half you will be saving."

16 THE WORLD



MEANWHILE

Relic 'From Jesus' Manger' In Bethlehem

A tiny wooden relic that some Christians believe to be part of Jesus' manger arrived at its permanent home in the city of Bethlehem, 1,400 years after it was sent to Rome as a gift to the pope. Crowds greeted the relic before it entered the Franciscan Church of St. Catherine next to the Church of the Nativity, the West Bank site where tradition says Jesus was born.

TOPOFTHE WORLD



UN Secretary-General

UNITED NATIONS Guterres warns

of 'point of no return'on climate change

Madrid: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Sunday that the world's efforts to stop climate change have been "utterly inadequate" so far and there is a danger global warming could pass the "point of no return". Speaking before the start Monday of a two-week international climate conference in Madrid, the UN chief said the impact of rising temperatures is already being felt around the world, with dramatic consequences for humans and other species. He noted that the world has the scientific knowledge and the technical means to limit global warming, but "what is lacking is political will".

RUSSIA

19 killed as bus plunges onto frozen river in Siberia

Moscow: A passenger bus plunged off a bridge onto a frozen river in Siberia on Sunday, killing 19 of the more than 40 people on board, authorities said. A tyre on the bus burst as it was crossing the bridge over the Kuenga river in eastern Siberia's Zabaikalsky region. The vehicle, which was travelling from Sretensk to Chita and carried 40 passengers, skidded off the road and onto the ice. "Nineteen people died and 21 received various injuries," the office of the governor of the Zabaikalsky region said

in a statement.

Chicago cop suspended for slamming man to ground

A CHICAGO police officer was suspended this week after video recorded by a bystander showed him hurling a man forcefully onto the sidewalk during an arrest, in footage described by Mayor Lori Lightfoot as "highly disturbing." The incident took place on Thursday, the US Thanksgiving holiday, when police approached a 29-year-old man drinking alcohol in the afternoon at a bus stop on Chicago's South Side, CBS News reported.

Forensic personnel conduct a fingertip search at the cordoned off area on London Bridge on Sunday. AP

ISIS claims London attack

Stabbings carried out 'in response to calls to target citizens of coalition countries'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LONDON, DECEMBER 1

THE ISLAMIC State terror group has claimed responsibility for the knife attack in central London where a convicted terrorist killed two people before being shot dead by police.

The group via its propaganda Amaq news agency said on Saturday that the attack was carried out by "a fighter from the Islamic State", according to the Site Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadist activities. "The person who carried out

the London attack... was a fighter from the Islamic State, and did so in response to calls to target citizens of coalition countries," the IS statement read. However, it did not provide any evidence to support its claim.

The suspected attacker, identified as Usman Khan, was a convicted terrorist who was jailed seven years ago over a plot to bomb the London Stock Exchange and build a terrorist training camp on land owned by his family in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Khan had also discussed staging a Mumbai-style attack on the UK Parliament and de-

THE VICTIMS: CAMBRIDGE GRADUATES WHO SET OUT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The two who died in the attack were identified as Saskia Jones, 23, and Jack Merritt, 25. Both were involved in a programme to help prison inmates.



Saskia Jones, a graduate of Cambridge University, was described by her family as having "a great passion for providing invaluable support to victims of criminal injustice, which led her to the point of recently applying for the police graduate

scribed by the judge who sentenced him for terrorism offences in 2012 as an ongoing risk to the public with a "serious, long term venture in terrorism".

recruitment programme".

He went on a rampage on Friday and killed one man and a



The family of Jack Merritt, also a Cambridge University graduate and coordinator of the Learning Together programme, said he "lived his principles" and

"believed in redemption and rehabilitation, not revenge, and he always took the side of the underdog".

woman and injured three others before being shot by police. "This individual was known to authorities, having been convicted in 2012 for terrorism offences. He was released from prison in December 2018 on licence and

the G20 presidency as it seeks to

bounce back onto the world

stage following global uproar

promoted a liberalisation drive,

including granting greater rights

to women, but faced strong crit-

The oil-rich kingdom has

over its human rights record.

clearly, a key line of enquiry now is to establish how he came to carry out this attack," Scotland Yard's Head of Counter Terrorism Policing Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu said Saturday.

The profile of Khan dating back to his conviction in 2012 reveals his links with terror groups. He had been secretly recorded talking about plans to recruit UK radicals to train at a camp in PoK, the region his family comes from.

He and two other co-conspirators had conducted a surveillance trip around central London as they talked about launching a Mumbai-style attack on UK Parliament. The then 20-year-old pleaded guilty to engaging in conduct for the preparation of terrorism, which included travelling to and attending operational meetings, fundraising for terrorist training, preparing to travel abroad and assisting others in travelling abroad. Khan had originally received an indeterminate sentence to be kept behind bars for public protection but this was quashed by the UK Court of Appeal in April 2013, after which he was given a determinate 16-year jail term and ordered to serve at least eight years in prison before being considered for parole.

After polls, new wave of protests in Hong Kong

Thousands take to streets after brief pause, police fire teargas

EILEEN NG HONG KONG, DECEMBER 1

THOUSANDS TOOK to Hong Kong's streets Sunday in a new wave of pro-democracy protests, but police fired teargas after some demonstrators hurled bricks and smokes bombs, breaking a rare pause in violence that has persisted during the sixmonth-long movement.

In the largest of three rallies, a key thoroughfare along the waterfront on the Kowloon side of Victoria Harbour was packed with demonstrators, from hardened masked protesters in all-black outfits to families and the elderly. They chanted "Five demands, not one less" and "Disband the police force" as they marched.

The rally followed two other marches earlier Sunday as protesters sought to keep the pressure on city leader Carrie Lam after the recent win by the pro-democracy camp in district council elections. The Kowloon rally was cut

short after riot police fired teargas and arrested a few people. A police statement said minimum force was deployed after "hundreds of rioters hurled smoke bombs" and bricks to cause chaos.

Marchers berated police as they scrambled to flee the tear gas, shouting "Dirty cops" and "Are you trying to kill us?" Hong Kong's protests have

Pro-democracy protesters flood a street during a rally in **Hong Kong on Sunday.** AP

A good week for the protesters, but not much has changed

THE PREVIOUS week began with a sweeping victory for prodemocracy candidates in district elections. Days later, US President Donald Trump signed into law a Bill aimed at putting pressure on China to maintain Hong Kong's autonomy. These have been celebrated by anti-government protesters as big wins. However, the demonstrators were out in full force again this Sunday, with placards reminding themselves to not forget what they were protesting for. Of their five major demands, only one has been fulfilled the scrapping of a Bill that would have allowed those facing trial to be deported to mainland China. Other demands, such as universal suffrage and an investigation into the conduct of police, seem as far away as ever from being realised. So, despite having had a good week, not much has changed for the protesters.

been relatively peaceful during the two weeks around the Nov 24 elections, but Sunday's disruption

indicated there may be more violence if Lam fails to yield to protesters' demands. AP

11 injured in New

Orleans shooting

Washington: Eleven people were

wounded in a shooting on

Sunday in New Orleans' French

about 3 am on a crowded com-

mercial street. No fatalities had

The shooting took place at

Quarter, US police said.

21 killed in Mexico shootout between cartel gunmen, police

ASSOCIATED PRESS MEXICO CITY, DECEMBER 1

MEXICAN SECURITY forces on Sunday killed seven more members of a presumed cartel assault force that rolled into a town near the Texas border and staged an hour-long attack, officials said, bringing the death toll to 21.

The Coahuila state government said lawmen were still chasing remnants of the force that arrived in a convoy of trucks and attacked the city hall of Villa Union on Saturday.

Riquelme said at least 14 people had died by that afternoon, four of them police officers. He also said then that several municipal workers were missing. It wasn't clear if they had since been located. The new statement did not

Governor Miguel Angel

give a new death total, but said seven more attackers were killed on Sunday in addition to 10 who reportedly died the day before. The governor said the armed

group stormed the town in a convoy of trucks, attacking government offices and prompting state and federal forces to intervene. ongoing. PTI

been reported. The New Orleans Police Department said via its Twitter feed that no arrests had been made and investigations were

Starbucks worker fired after cops gets cup with 'pig'

written on label

MARIEL PADILLA

DECEMBER 1

Plane crash kills 9, injures 3 in S Dakota amid winter storm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 1

A PLANE crash in the US state of South Dakota killed nine people, including two children, and injured three others while a winter storm warning was in place, officials said.

The Pilatus PC-12, a singleengine turboprop plane, crashed shortly after take-off approximately a mile from the Chamberlain airport on Saturday, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said.

Among the dead was the plane's pilot, Brule County state's attorney Theresa Maule Rossow said, adding that a total of 12 people had been on board.

The three survivors had been taken to the hospital in Sioux Falls, she told US media.

The flight left the airport just before noon local time, with a destination of Idaho Falls Regional Airport in the western state of Idaho.

The FAA said investigators were en route to the crash site and that the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) would be in charge of the investigation. The NTSB tweeted that it

was "investigating today's crash of Pilatus PC-12 near Chamberlain, SD."

South Dakota is located in the Northern Plains, a region facing blizzard conditions as a storm blows eastward across the US.

A winter storm warning remains in effect in Brule County until midday Sunday, the National Weather Service said, potentially including blowing snow that "could significantly reduce visibility."

Saudi Arabia takes over G20 presidency **PRESSTRUST OF INDIA** RIYADH, DECEMBER 1 SAUDI ARABIA became the first Arab nation Sunday to take over

The Saudi Crown Prince

icism over a crackdown on dissent and the murder last year of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The G20 presidency, which Saudi Arabia takes over from Japan, will see it host world leaders for a global summit in its capital next November 21-22.

"The kingdom of Saudi Arabia assumes the G20 presidency today, leading up to the summit in Riyadh" in 2020, the official Saudi Press Agency said.

"The Saudi G20 presidency is committed to continuing the work from Osaka and promoting multilateral consensus." Crown hailed it as a "unique opportunity" to shape international consensus, SPA added. Saudi Arabia will host more than 100 events and conferences in the run-up to the summit, including ministerial meetings, the agency said. Rights groups have urged G20

Prince Mohammed bin Salman,

the kingdom's de facto ruler,

member states to exert pressure on the kingdom over its intensifying crackdown on dissent, which has seen several critics jailed.

AN OKLAHOMA police officer working on Thanksgiving made a Starbucks run for emergency dispatchers to thank them for working during the holiday. When he got his order, he said

> he saw the word "PIG" printed on a cup's label. The officer, a member of the Kiefer, Oklahoma, police department, took the order to the dispatchers and contacted the police chief, Johnny O'Mara, who was on vacation at the time, ac-

cording to Jory Mendes, a Starbucks spokesman. The word "PIG" was printed on all five cups, KTUL-TV reported. When O'Mara called the Starbucks, in Glenpool Oklahoma, the manager offered to reprint the cups, which the chief said was an insufficient

apology, the station reported. The officer told the station that the barista contacted him, apologised and said it was meant as a joke.

O'Mara posted about the episode on Facebook, including an image of one of the cups, prompting Starbucks to investigate. He did not immediately respond to requests for comment Saturday.

"What irks me is the absolute and total disrespect for a police officer who, instead of being home with his family and enjoying a meal and a football game, is patrolling his little town," he said in the post, which was widely circulated and has since been deleted

media that the officer was responsible for the word on the label, a Starbucks statement expressly said that the barista "wrote this offensive word," used "poor judgement" and was ultimately fired for

Despite speculation on social

Parliament approves Iraqi PM's resignation

Protests continue in Baghdad, other southern regions; another protester killed

REUTERS BAGHDAD, DECEMBER 1

IRAQ'S PARLIAMENT voted on Sunday to accept the resignation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, following weeks of violent anti-government protests that have rocked the country.

Abdul Mahdi's decision to quit a caretaker capacity following population in poverty, without top Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani for Parliament to consider withdrawing its support for Abdul Mahdi's government to stem the violence.

Lawmakers said Abdul Mahdi's government, including the PM himself, would stay on in

on Friday came after a call by Irag's Sunday's vote until a new government was chosen. Abdul Mahdi's resignation,

though welcomed by protesters, is not expected to end the demonstrations, which have called for an overhaul of a political system accused of being corrupt and keeping most of the

Demonstrations are continuing in Baghdad and other southern regions and security forces killed one protester and wounded nine others near a key bridge in the capital on Sunday, police and a medical source said.

TIMOTHY WEEKS AND KEVIN KING WERE RELEASED LAST MONTH IN A PRISONER SWAP

Freed hostage on Taliban: Some of them were compassionate, lovely

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SYDNEY, DECEMBER 1 AN AUSTRALIAN teacher held captive with an American colleague by the Taliban for more than three years believes US Navy SEALs tried and failed six

times to free them. Timothy Weeks was released last month in a prisoner swap along with Kevin King, ending an ordeal that began with their abduction in 2016 outside the American University in Kabul, where they worked.

ference on Sunday he believed SEAL teams tried repeatedly to rescue them, sometimes missing them only by "hours" after the two hostages were moved to other locations by their captors.

"I believe, and I hope this is correct, that they came in six times to try to get us, and that a number of times they missed us only by hours," Weeks said.

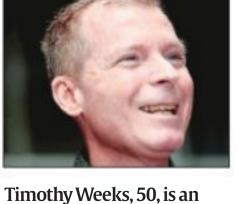
One attempt came in April this year. Weeks said he was woken at 2 am by his guards, who told him they were under attack from Islamic State fighters, and moved him into a tunnel beneath where

they were being held.

"I believe now that it was the Navy SEALs coming in to get us." Weeks said.

"I believe they were right outside our door. The moment that we got into the tunnels, we were 1 or 2 metres underground and there was a huge bang at the front door. And our guards went up and there was a lot of machine-gun fire. They pushed me over the top into the tunnels and I fell backwards and rolled and knocked myself unconscious."

Weeks said he and King were shifted through various remote locations in Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan throughout



Australian teacher

their captivity, and were often kept in tiny, windowless cells. While their lives were often at risk, he said he never gave up

"I never, ever gave up hope, and I think in that sort of situation, that if you give up hope, there is very little left for you," said Weeks, flanked by his sisters Alyssa and Jo Carter.

hope of being rescued.

"I knew that I would leave that place eventually. It just took a little longer than I expected."

While expressing thanks to President Donald Trump and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison for the work that led to their release, Weeks said some Taliban guards he had encountered were "lovely people". "I don't hate them at all," he

said. "And some of them, I have great respect for, and great love for, almost. Some of them were so compassionate and such lovely, lovely people. And it really led me to think about ... how did they end up like this?" He added: "I know a lot of people don't admit this, but for me, they were soldiers. And soldiers obey the commands of their commanders.

(They) don't get a choice." Weeks said he had hugged some of his Taliban guards when they parted company on the day of his and King's release.

Still, the sight of the two US Black Hawk helicopters arriving

enormous relief. "From the moment I sighted both Black Hawk helicopters and

to take them away had been an

was placed in the hands of special forces, I knew my long and tortuous ordeal had come to an end," he said. "Out of a big dust cloud came six special forces and they walked towards us and one of them stepped towards me and he just put his arm around me and he held me and he said, 'Are you OK?' And then he walked me back to the Black Hawk."

Weeks said his ordeal had had "a profound and unimaginable effect on me".



ess.com

Weeks, 50, told a news con-

EXPLAINED

Baghdad: The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allied oil producers will consider deepening their existing oil output cuts by about 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 1.6 million bpd, Iraq's oil minister Thamer Ghadhban said on Sunday. REUTERS

CENTRAL BANK HAS CUT RATES BY 135 BPS IN 2019 SO FAR

RBI likely to cut rates by 25 bps as growth, credit offtake decline

GEORGE MATHEW MUMBAI, DECEMBER 1

THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) is expected to cut rates further by 25 basis points, after the 135basis-point cut in its policy rate, at this week's monetary policy review in the backdrop of the deepening slowdown and projections of a sub-5 per cent growth this fiscal year.

The central bank, which cut the real GDP growth for 2019-20 to 6.1 per cent in October from 6.9 per cent in forecast in August, reflecting the ongoing slowdown in the economy, is set to slash the growth estimate further. The sharp fall in GDP growth to 4.5 per cent in the September quarter from 5 per cent previously provides enough reason for the RBI to cut the rate, analysts said.

Though the RBI has cut rates by 135 bps in 2019, banks have passed on only 29 per cent to customers and growth in credit offtake has declined, indicating that the RBI's strategy to push up demand has not worked so far.

THE SCENARIO SO FAR

■Though the RBI has cut rates by 135 bps in 2019, banks have passed on only 29 per cent to customers and growth in credit offtake has also declined

■ The central bank cut the real GDP growth forecast for 2019-20 to 6.1 per cent in October from 6.9 per cent in August

meagre 0.8 per cent (Rs 75,794 crore) in January-November 8 of FY20, compared to 5.6 per cent (Rs 4.86 lakh crore) in the same period of last year. In the current fiscal year so far, credit growth continued to decline to 8.1 per cent as compared to last year growth of 14.9 per cent, on high base effect, said Soumya Kanti Ghosh, group chief economic adviser, SBI.

"A deeper analysis of the data indicates that though till the end of August 2019, credit growth was declining, the trend has re-Credit offtake increased by a versed since September and 85 percent of the bank credit de-

■ With the liquidity crunch and defaults in the financial sector. NBFC sanctions fell 34 per cent to Rs 1,95,205 crore in the September quarter from Rs 2,93,957 crore in the year-ago period

■ Banks have turned very choosy about credit sanctioning and disbursals, fearing fresh loan slippages

credit growth has jumped by Rs 1.67 lakh crore," he said.

With the liquidity crunch and defaults rocking the financial sector, NBFC sanctions fell 34 per cent to Rs 1,95,205 crore in the September quarter from Rs 2,93,957 crore in the same period of last year, according to Finance **Industry Development Council** (FIDC). Banks, on the other hand, have turned very choosy about credit sanctioning and disbursals, fearing fresh loan slippages.

The sectoral data for October 2019, which accounts for about

ployed by 39 banks, indicates that credit to industry and services has declined incrementally by Rs 1.62 lakh crore, while credit to agri and allied and personal loans increased by Rs 1.92 lakh crore, Ghosh said. Within industry, credit to paper and paper products, all engineering and infrastructure has increased in October 2019 and credit to all other sectors has declined.

Sreejith Balasubramanian, economist-fund management, IDFC AMC, said, "manufacturing growth contracted, while both private consumption and investment stayed weak. Given this, and with the just-released index of eight core industries falling 5.8 per cent in October, bottomingout of growth could be further down the road and recovery is unlikely to be V-shaped as consumer demand, credit supply and risk appetite remains lacklustre."

"This and the falling core-CPI (consumer price inflation) should allow the RBI focus more on growth," he said.

All the indicators ranging from IIP (index for industrial production), electricity consumption to core inflation rate were

pointing towards the fact that the economy has not entered the revival path. "The slowdown in consumption is indeed worrying, as its revival is important for investment to pick up. The Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) declined to 5 per cent compared to 9.7 per cent. With growth slipping to 4.5 per cent, it is expected that RBI will go for the next round of rate cut in December," said Deepthi Mary Mathew, economist at Geojit Financial Services.

PFCE is defined as the expenditure incurred on final consumption of goods and services by the resident households and non-profit institutions serving households.

According to Arun Kumar, of research at FundsIndia.com, the tepid domestic growth has been led by weak investment activity, moderate consumption growth and slow global growth environment. "While further policy support can be expected from both the government and the RBI, we expect the recovery to be more gradual than a V shaped sharp

GST collection hits ₹IL cr-mark after three months on festive demand, better compliance

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

AFTER CONTRACTING for two months, the Goods and Services Tax(GST)collection in November (for October) rose by 6 per cent to Rs 1,03,492 crore from Rs 97,637 crore in the same month a year ago, marking the fourth instance of a level above Rs 1 lakh crore this fiscal year.

Most experts ascribed the rise in GST revenues to festive demand, with Diwali being celebrated in October and some improvement in compliance due to anti-evasion measures, but refrained from terming it as a reversal of slowing revenue trend.

The uptick in GST revenues was primarily driven from domestic sales, as GST collection on imports continued to stay in the negative territory — contracting by 13 per cent as against contraction of 20 per cent last month, a Finance Ministry release showed. The total number of GSTR 3B returns (summary returns) filed by GST taxpayers for October (up to November 30) showed improvement in compliance rate, rising to 77.83 lakh from 73.83 lakh in the previous month.

Indirect tax collections have been slowing over the past three months, reflecting the continued weakness in consumption demand. Along with the corporate tax rate cut announced by the government and flagging direct tax revenues, the Centre could face a steep challenge in meeting its fiscal deficit target for this fiGST COLLECTION has been slowing since the past three months and after contracting for previous two months, they recorded an increase of 6 per cent, rising above the Rs 1 lakh crore-mark in November (for sales in October). Though the uptick is a positive, its sustainability over the

next few months, along with the flagging direct tax revenue trend, would be crucial in determining whether or not the government will be able to meet its Budget targets for this fiscal year amid an overall slowdown in the economy.

Good news, but

sustainability

remains key

nancial year, if this uptick in GST collections does not sustain in the coming months.

"The gross GST revenue collected in November, 2019 is Rs 1,03,492 crore of which CGST is Rs 19,592 crore, SGST is Rs 27,144 crore, IGST is Rs 49,028 crore (including Rs 20,948 crore collected on imports) and Cess is Rs 7,727 crore (including Rs 869 crore collected on imports)," the Finance Ministry statement said.

Tax experts said while the pickup in GST revenues in November is encouraging, but not much can be read into it and the trend will have to sustain to help in meeting the government's Budget targets.

Pratik Jain, partner & leader, indirect tax, PwC said, "While increase in collection is encouraging, it's difficult to read too much into the collection for one month, particularly because October was

also a month of festivals. We need to see what's the trend. The Centre has taken steps in the right direction by simplifying the compliances, going after tax evaders by more efficient use of technology/data analytics and not falling for the temptation of increasing the rates. These efforts, coupled with the introduction of e-invoicing from next year, should lead to a gradual increase in GST collections as well, though it would also

depend upon overall economy." Ramaratnam Muralidharan senior director, Deloitte India, said, "It is too early to draw any conclusion whether the collections are on a growth path. The increase to some extent may be due to the additional spending in October due to Diwali ... We need to wait and see for the next 2-3 months if the impact of better tax compliance is able to result in consistent higher collections."

BRIEFLY

Govt appoints Soma Roy **Burman CGA**

New Delhi: The government on Sunday said it has appointed Soma Rov Burman, a 1986-batch Indian Civil Accounts Service Officer, the new Controller General of Accounts (CGA). Burman is the 24th CGA and is the seventh woman to hold this position.

Plea against **BMW** India dismissed

New Delhi: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has dismissed a petition against BMW India, filed by one of its former dealers, alleging abuse of dominant position.

Debt MFs see ₹5k-croutflow in Sept qtr

New Delhi: Mutual funds focussed on investing in fixedincome securities saw an outflow of over Rs 5,000 crore in July-September this year, after registering an infusion of Rs 19,700 crore in the preceding quarter, mainly on account of a massive pullout from liquid and credit risk categories. **PTI**

FPIs net buyers for 3rd month; invest ₹22,872 cr in Nov

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) remained net buyers in the capital market for the third straight month in November, putting in Rs 22,872 crore on net basis during the month, according to depositories data

FACTORS: Analysts said expectations of a trade deal between the US and China. and more relief measures as well as disinvestment drive by the government among other factors helped keep FPIs stuck on the capital markets

TOTAL INVESTMENT: A net sum of Rs 25,230 crore was flowed into equities by FPIs in November, the data showed. However, they pulled out Rs 2,358.2 crore from the debt segment, translating into a total net investment of Rs 22,871.8

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BIOCON CHAIRPERSON and

Managing Director Kiran

Mazumdar-Shaw on Sunday

said the government did not

want to hear any criticism on

the economy while expressing

hope that it reaches out to the

India Inc to work out solutions

after veteran industrialist Rahul

Bajaj said the people were afraid

to criticise the government.

Shaw's remarks came a day

"Hope the govt reaches out

to revive growth.

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

any criticism of economy'



crore by FPIs in November

PAST RECORD: FPIs invested a net sum of Rs

16,037.6 crore in October and Rs 6,557.8 crore in

to India Inc for working out solu-

tions to revive consumption n

growth. So far we are all pariahs

n govt does not want to hear any

criticism of our economy," Shaw

on Saturday in Mumbai, said

there was an "atmosphere of

fear" and people were afraid to

criticise the government and do

not have the confidence that the

Bajaj, at an award function

said in a tweet.

criticism.

September **CONSISTENT NET BUYERS:**

FPIs have been consistent net buyers in November mainly due to expectations

of a trade deal between US-China, relief measures along with disinvestment drive by the government, hopes for a scrappage policy and a few others, said Umesh Mehta, head of research at Samco **Securities**

IMPROVING RURAL

consumption numbers along with expectations of better results by companies is aiding this inflow. The mid-cap space has a lot of attractive valuations at the moment, said an expert Source: PTI

'Govt does not want to hear Efforts on to address India's concerns over RCEP: Japan

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

JAPAN ON Sunday gave clear indications that efforts were on to make India join the ambitious Comprehensive Regional Economic Partnership (RCEP), saying all member countries of the grouping were committed to address New Delhi's concerns.

government will appreciate any After years of negotiations, India last month pulled out of the proposed RCEP over unresolved The audience included "core concerns" at a summit Home Minister Amit Shah and Finance Minister Nirmala meeting of the participating coun-Sitharaman, among others. tries, saying the proposed pact in

its current form would have adverse impact on lives and livelihood of all Indians.

A spokesperson of the Japanese government said Prime Minister Narendra Modi explained India's position on RCEP during a meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Defence Minister Taro

Kono on Saturday. The Japanese ministers explained Tokyo's views on the matter, Deputy Press Secretary in Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Atsushi Kaifu said while referring to a statement issued by RCEP nations in Bangkok on November 4.

'China wants US tariffs rolled back in phase one trade deal'

REUTERS BEIJING, DECEMBER 1

BEIJING'S PRIORITY in any phase one trade deal with the US is the removal of existing tariffs on Chinese goods, China's *Global* Times said Sunday, amid continued uncertainty on whether the sides can strike a deal.

"Sources with direct knowledge of the trade talks told the Global Times on Saturday that the US must remove existing tariffs, not planned tariffs, as part of the deal," said the report.

Global Times, published by the official People's Daily newspaper of China's ruling Communist Party, also cited another unidentified source close to the talks as saying US officials had been resisting such a demand because the tariffs were their only weapon in the trade war and giving up that

weapon meant "surrender." On Tuesday, US President Donald Trump said Washington was in the "final throes" of a deal aimed at defusing a 16-month trade war with China, a few days after Chinese President Xi Jinping had expressed his desire for a trade agreement.

No respite for carmakers, passenger vehicle sales decline in Nov again

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 1

AFTER A modest improvement in October, passenger vehicle sales fell by an estimated 4 per cent year-on-year(y-o-y)in November as the festive season got over and many manufacturers pulled out part of the discounts from the market. The fall in despatches in November also stems from the fact that this year the Diwali season, when about 40 per cent of the festive sales happen, fell in October. In 2018, Diwali was celebrated in November. The decline in volumes in November, however, was still less pronounced compared to the last 11 months when the sales witnessed a fall of

over 20 per cent y-o-y. Maruti Suzuki reported a 3.2 per cent y-o-y decline in volumes at 141,400 units in November, again falling into the negative territory. In October 2019, the country's largest car maker had posted a 2.5 per cent y-o-y increase in despatches to dealers, after 11 months of continued decline in volumes. Chairman RC Bhargava said usually the festive season sees highest monthly sales during the

The decline in volume in November. however, was still less pronounced compared to the last 11 months when the sales witnessed a fall of over 20 per cent y-o-y

year and thereafter demand slows down. "During December, it is expected sales may improve as manufacturers offer year-end discounts to clear the old stock, Bhargava said.

While volumes of Hyundai grew by a marginal 2 per cent yo-y at 44,600 units on account of sustained demand for new launches including compact SUV Venue and hatchback Grand i10, Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors reported 10 per cent y-oy and 39 per cent y-o-y dip in wholesales, respectively.

Vikas Jain, national sales head, Hyundai Motor India, said despite the market challenges, there was a demand for cars, including Venue, Creta and Grand i 10. **FE**

WITH TOKYO OLYMPICS SEVEN MONTHS AWAY, THE MOVE IS CHALLENGING AS THE COUNTRY IS RAPIDLY AGEING WITH A POPULATION OF 126 MILLION

As Japan pushes cashless agenda, Paytm app cashes in

ANILSASI TOKYO, DECEMBER 1

IN JAPAN, where four out of every five purchases are still made with cash, PayPay — a barcode-based smartphone payment app — is cashing in on some unexpected success. Despite the general reluctance among the country's fastageing population to give up using wads of currency notes to make purchases, PayPay, launched by Noida-based One97 Communications and backed by SoftBank and Yahoo Japan, has managed to sign up 15 million customers within 10 months of its launch, a credible success story in a rapidly-ageing country with a population of 126 million.

With the Tokyo Olympics just over seven months away, a government-backed push to wean people away from cash by way of a point-based tax rebate system for customers using digital payments options could help PayPay build on its initial success in Japan and other similar app. These in-

ess.com

clude LINE Pay, a digital payments arm of messaging app giant LINE (which has 79 million users in Japan), Rakuten Pay — the payment app of Japan's largest ecommerce platform — and others such as Origami Pay, D-barai, as well as Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, a big proponent of the cashless push in Japan's capital, said the city's metropolitan government is focused on improving the supporting infrastructure for enabling cashless transactions. This includes making available 8,297 buildings and 4,502 land lots for installing base stations for 5G high-speed wireless communication networks.

"In order to enhance cashless transactions, the TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government) is building these 5G (base) stations ... We aim for Tokyo's sustainable growth as a city with the world's most advanced internet infrastructure and promote Tokyo as a global financial city," Koike told visiting mediapersons.

Paytm, the flagship brand of

One97, partnered SoftBank and Yahoo Japan in October last year. PayPay's claimed user base of nearly 15 million users till October 2019, includes consumers of an existing wallet inherited by the Paytm app on launch.

At the time of the launch of the collaboration, Yahoo Japan had suspended its own wallet, giving PayPay direct access to all its wallet consumers. Chinese e-commerce major Alibaba-backed Paytm has a significant investment exposure from Softbank, which, in 2017, had made its biggest bet in the Indian startup ecosystem by investing \$1.4 billion in the online firm.

In Japan, where a nationwide consumption tax was hiked to 10 per cent from 8 per cent this October, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government is pushing a digital rebate program to offset the impact of the levy and promote cashless payments at the same time.

The 280 billion yen government plan (\$2.6 billion), which incentivises people who make pur-



Tokyo's Harajuku and Ueno shopping districts

chases at small stores by way of a 2-5 per cent rebate for credit card, debit card or smartphone payments, is being widely advertised at shopfronts across the country's 'shotengai' (the traditional shopping streets) such as the Togoshi-Ginza Shopping Street in Shinagawa Ward, the Ueno Ameyoko Shotengai and

Harajuku, where most shops display the PayPay code and those of the other apps at the counters. PayPay's initial success is being attributed to the high brand awareness following a reward promotion campaign it conducted in December 2018, two months after launch.

In downtown Tokyo though,

the reason behind the cash spending spree is evident almost everywhere. ATMs, alongside vending machines hawking everything from drinks to hot meals, are ubiguitous and given the low crime rate, carrying wads of cash is not seen as a problem. The ageing population is averse to adopting new digital technology, another major impediment.

Japan is estimated to have more than 2,00,000 ATMs and most small shops and kiosks will only accept cash, citing high transaction costs charged by credit card companies and payment services firms. Another disincentive is the memory of a much-publicised hacking at retail giant Seven & I Holdings Co, which was hacked shortly after it launched its QR code-based payment system.

The government's cashless push comes amid a realisation that Japan is falling further behind its neighbours in adopting mobile app payments and electronic money, given that Tokyo wants to double the ratio of cashless settlements to 40 per cent by 2025.

In comparison to Japan's 20 per cent, an overwhelming 96 per cent of transactions in South Korea and 65 per cent in China are cashless, according to data by industry lobby Payments Japan Association.

For a society with nearly 30 per cent of people aged 65 or over, the digital push, unlike in countries such as India, is proving to be the biggest hurdle. In India, about 72 per cent of consumer transactions take place in cash, a better cash transaction rate than Japan's 80 per cent, according to a March 2019 estimates issued by Credit Suisse Group AG.

"Cashless solutions is a big area for us, and we are trying to overcome the hurdles to this in Japan," Yoshinao Ogawa of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government said. According to Yano Research Institute's estimates, the mobile payment market size in Japan is expected to increase from \$8 million in 2017 to \$48 million by

2023.

solutions

The slow adoption of cashless notwithstanding,

Japanese technology has had a big impact for enabling digital adoption globally.

Hiroshi Nakaso of Fincity Tokyo, a fintech promotion body, said that while the cashless transformation in Nordic countries was inspiration, much of basic technologies that catalysed this transformation came from the island nation.

Japanese firm Denso Wave, in the 1990s, developed the first OR code, a key enabler in cashless payments in countries such as India. Sony microchip designed for commuters to use on public transport and commuter cards were issued in Tokyo and other cities for people to make purchases at vending machines and 'combinis' (or convenience stores) in the late nineties, while the first mobile wallet in history was launched in Japan by DOCOMO in 1999. NFC — near field communication — was launched by Sony and NXP Semiconductors in 2002

The writer is in Tokyo on a trip organised by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government

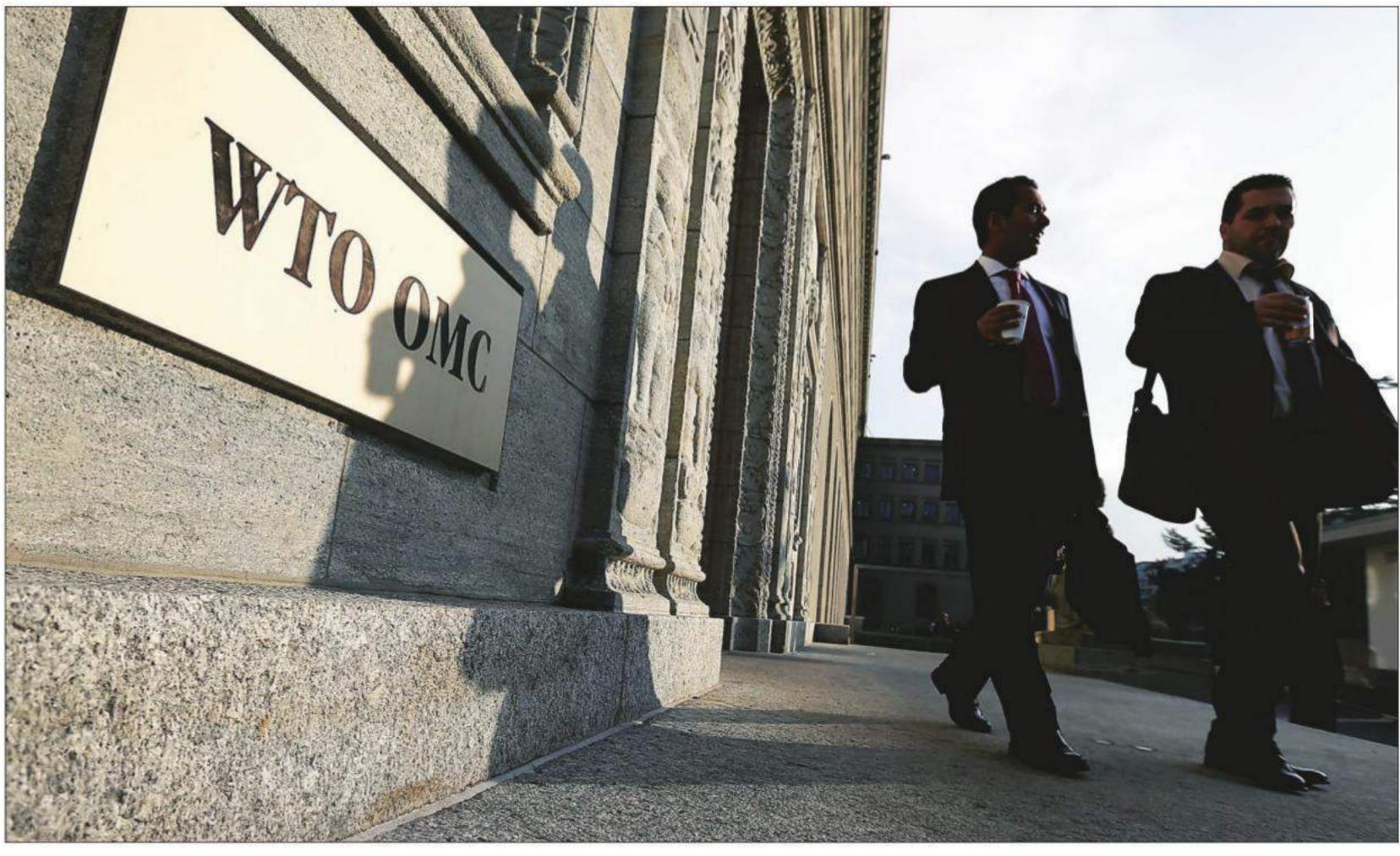
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM



GLOBAL TRADE

It's the end of the World...

And America feels fine



Delegates outside the World Trade Organisation headquarters in Geneva. The WTO underpins 96% of global trade. Reuters

"WINTER IS coming," warned a Norwegian representative on November 22nd, at a meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The multilateral trading system that the WTO has overseen since 1995 is about to freeze up. On December 10th two of the judges on its appellate body, which hears appeals in trade disputes and authorises sanctions against rulebreakers, will retire—and an American block on new appointments means they will not be replaced. With just one judge remaining, it will no longer be able to hear new cases.

The WTO underpins 96% of global trade. By one recent estimate, membership of the WTO or General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), its predecessor, has boosted trade among members by 171%. When iPhones move from China to America, or bottles of Scotch whisky from the European Union to India, it is the WTO's rules that keep tariff and non-tariff barriers low and give companies the certainty they need to plan and invest.

The system is supposed to be self-reinforcing. Mostly, countries follow the wto's rules. But if one feels another has transgressed, then instead of starting a one-on-one trade spat it can file a formal dispute. If the WTO's ruling displeases either party, it can appeal. The appellate body's judgments pack a punch. If the loser fails to bring its trade rules into compliance, the winner can impose tariffs up to the amount the judges think the rule-breaking cost it. It is that punishment that deters rule breaking in the first place.

It is no surprise that President Donald Trump has axed these foreign arbiters, given his general distaste for internationally agreed rules. On November 12th he declared himself "very tentative" on the WTO. But the problems run far deeper than dislike of multilateral institutions. They stem from a breakdown in trust over the way international law should work, and the more general failure of the wto's negotiating arm. Had the Americans felt that they could negotiate away their grievances, resentment towards the appellate body might not have built up. But with so many members reluctant to liberalise, including smaller countries fearful of opening up to China, that has been impossible.

America has had some wins at the WTO: against the European Union for subsidies to Airbus, an aircraft-maker; and against China for its domestic subsidies; theft of intellectual property; controls on the export of rare earths, which are used to make mobile phones; and even its tariffs on American chicken feet. But it has also been dragged before the appellate body repeatedly, in particular by countries objecting to its heavy-handed use of "trade remedies": tariffs supposed to defend its producers from unfair imports. Time after time, it has lost. In such cases, it has generally sought to become compliant with the rules rather than buy the complainant off.

Though previous administrations had grumbled, and occasionally intervened in judges' appointments, the Trump administration went further. Its officials complained that disputes often dragged on much longer than the supposed maximum of 90 days, and more seriously—that the appellate body made rulings that went beyond what WTO members had signed up to. They made it clear that unless such concerns were dealt with, no new judges would be confirmed.

Judicial overreach is in the eye of the beholder. Losers will always feel hard done by, and America has been quick to celebrate the WTO's rulings when it wins. But plenty of others think that the appellate body had overstepped its remit. A recent survey of individuals engaged with the WTO, including national representatives, found that 58% agreed with that verdict.

Getting so many countries to sign up to the WTO was a remarkable achievement. One way negotiators managed this was by leaving the rules vague, and papering over their differences with ambiguous language. Take "zeroing", for example: using dubious mathematics to calculate defensive tariffs on unfairly traded imports. The Americans claim that the rules do not say they cannot do it. But others counter that the rules do not say they can. It is such long-running differences that have set the scene for the latest showdown.

Offer me solutions

The American trade lawyers happy to kill the appellate body see a fundamental difference between their attitude to international law, and that of Europeans. Their position is that only clear contractual terms can be enforced, and they see Europeans as more comfortable with resolving ambiguities by going beyond what is written. Essentially, they regard the appellate body as too European. Moreover, in its eagerness to rule where terms are unclear, and in the American government's willingness to change its laws in response,

they feel an affront to America's sovereignty.

Under the GATT, which lacked a proper enforcement system, ambiguities were hashed out in smoke-filled rooms. But the WTO was supposed to make naked power politics over trade obsolete. Had it worked as intended, there would have been a balance between settling disputes and writing new rules. Policy is best made with a vibrant judiciary interpreting the law, and a functioning legislative arm to fix any mistakes. Whenever the appellate body made decisions that annoyed members, they could have resolved their differences at the negotiating table. Perhaps America could have got others to agree to higher tariffs on imported steel, or been granted some flexibil-

ity in its defensive duties. But the WTO's negotiating arm has been broken for years. With the current count of members at 164, it has become more inclusive, but is unable to get much agreed. Each member has a veto over any further multilateral trade liberalisation. And without new negotiations, resentment towards the appellate body has built up.

Had the multilateral system been more effective at dealing with the rise of China, perhaps the single biggest issue of its times, then calls to save it might be louder in Washington. Although various American administrations pursued and won several cases, the process was slow and occasionally frustrating. America can justly claim that, when it tried to hold China to account for its breaches of trade rules, it got little support. America has been responsible for more than half of all complaints against China. And other WTO members' complaints were generally copycat, filed in America's wake.

Now that the Trump administration has bypassed the WTO and taken the fight straight to China, there is nothing remaining that it particularly wants from the WTO. And so the chances that it will relent and allow nominations to the appellate body by December 10th are slim to none. In response to proposals from other members to change the body's rules, an American representative said that they were not persuaded that the rules would be stuck to.

On November 26th the Trump administration suggested slashing the pay of members of the appellate body. In October Chuck Grassley and Ron Wyden, the top Republican and Democrat politicians on the Senate Finance Committee, published an editorial saying that while they saw the value of an appellate body, it "needs to operate as the members agreed".

Of the WTO's 163 other members, 117 have signed a joint letter calling upon America to end the impasse. Although America has been the heaviest user of the dispute-settlement system, others will miss it too (see chart). Some have already begun preparing, for example by agreeing at the start of any disputes to forgo the right to appeal. The EU, Canada and Norway have agreed on an interim arbitration mechanism that will use retired members of the appellate body as judges. And the EU is considering beefing up its own enforcement mechanism to fill the hole left by the appellate body, though it would probably cleave more closely to the outcomes of first-stage rulings in WTO disputes.

But some members are likely to shun such alternatives—especially those that expect to be sued a lot. And it is unclear how robust they will be if disputes turn nasty. Some WTO members may try to choose their disputesettlement mechanism case by case. An organisation as ambitious as the WTO, for all its faults, will be easier to break than replace.

All this means that global trade is about to become a lot less predictable and a lot more contentious. Without the appellate body to act as honest broker, disputes between the biggest members may escalate. Under the GATT America acted as global trade sheriff, launching investigations at will and bullying disputatious countries into submission. It is not impossible that it will resume this role. On November 27th the Trump administration announced that it had nearly finished an investigation into a French tax on digital services, which America reckons discriminates against its tech giants. That could lead to tariffs.

You'll miss it when it's gone

In the 1980s American unilateralism was no fun for countries on the receiving end. But at least back then Uncle Sam could point to the lack of any other power even theoretically capable of doing the job. Now the absence of independent referees is America's own doing. And of all Mr Trump's trade policies, it may prove the hardest to reverse and have the longest-lasting effects.

©The Economist Newspaper Limited 2019

DEMOCRACY

A clarion call

Hong Kong's elections were a rebuke to its government

DISTRICT ELECTIONS in Hong Kong are normally about rat control and bus routes. The polls on November 24th were a vote on Hong Kong's future as a liberal Chinese enclave. The question, in effect, was whether ordinary people support the government and its backers in Beijing in their illiberal methods. The answer was a resounding no. The turnout, of over 70%, was higher than any recorded in any kind of election in Hong Kong in which the public has a say. Pro-democracy politicians almost swept the board.

For Hong Kong's leaders and China's Communist Party, this is a rebuke—compounded three days later when President Donald Trump signed into law a bill that supports Hong Kong's democracy. Irked by months of protests, but unwilling to use troops to crush the demonstrators, they had hoped ordinary Hong Kongers would turn against the black-clad pro-democracy protesters. The election result destroys that dream. The "silent majority" turns out to back the protesters' cause, despite the violent tactics of some.

In a true democracy a vote in which opposition candidates took control of 17 out of 18 councils, having previously held none, would end political careers. But Carrie Lam, Hong Kong's hugely unpopular chief executive, shows no inclination to give in to the protesters by stepping down. That is a pity. Even though Mrs Lam's successor would be chosen in effect by the Communist Party, a change of leader would allow both sides to draw a deep breath. Concessions are easier to make when they do not involve a climbdown by the person offering them. Mrs Lam

has too much at stake. Whoever leads Hong Kong has to seek the Communist Party's approval when making important decisions. So it is in Beijing that the next crucial steps for Hong Kong will be worked out. An obvious one would be to launch an independent inquiry into police conduct since the unrest began in June. This has long been one of the protesters' main demands—they allege that the police have

been brutal, just as the police accuse the protesters of dangerous aggression. Mrs Lam has approved an investigation, but only by a body that tends to side with the government. She would not have to shift much to win a cheer from the streets.

The next, harder, step should be to restart a public debate about political reform. This was suspended in 2015 after prodemocracy legislators rejected a partybacked proposal that would have let the chief executive be chosen for the first time by popular vote, but from candidates picked by a committee stacked with the party's supporters. Were the offer revived, the democrats should consider it favourably. Such an arrangement, though far from ideal, would encourage chief-executive candidates to appeal to ordinary Hong Kongers. Sunday's elections show that voters would spurn a party yes-man.

Sadly, there is no sign that leaders in Beijing are contemplating any concessions. The Communist Party's media have depicted

Pro-democracy supporters celebrate after pro-Beijing politician Junius Ho lost his seat in Hong Kong last week. AP the district elections as unfair. They say proestablishment politicians were intimidated by the "black terror" unleashed by protesters whom officials accuse of being trained and paid for by America and Britain. They

point to the roughly 40% of voters who went

for pro-government candidates, and say this

suggests that many people are repulsed by the protest movement. Some Hong Kongers are indeed sickened

by the violence and fed up with the loss of business that the protests have caused. But disaster will follow if the party concludes that Hong Kong welcomes its relentless encroachment, or that it should never be trusted with democracy because votes can produce embarrassing results. The vote halted the unrest. China's leaders should seize the moment, not assume that the lull will last.

©The Economist Newspaper Limited 2019



19 IAIK ART, MUSIC, STYLE, FOOD



Words Have Power

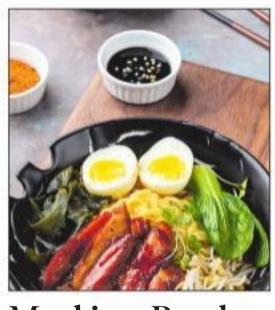
British independent publisher Waterstones has chosen two titles for its annual awards. Charlie Mackesy's *The* Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse is the Book of the Year, and Greta Thunberg, who wrote No One Is Too *Small to Make a Difference*, is the Author of the Year.

WEEK AHEAD



Jazzy Nights

THE GIANTS of Jazz music festival is bringing together the best Indian andinternational artistes such as Simon Thacker from Scotland (pictured), The Shuffle Demons from Canada, and Ivan Santos Trio from Brazil, to trace the evolution of the music form in the last century. Till December 8 at The PianoMan in Gurgaon and Delhi. Tickets available at bookmyshow.in.



Meal in a Bowl

AT THE Ramen festival at YOUMEE, on till December 8, enjoy Vegan Dreams, a meal bowl with tofu, broccoli, pok choy, mushroom, lettuce in miso broth or Teriyaki Chicken Ramen, a Chef's special teriyaki glazed chicken ramen with a healthy miso broth, wakame and nori. There are desserts to satisfy sweet cravings too. At M-27, Ground Floor, GK 2, 11 am to 11.30 pm.



A Crafty Affair

CRAFTSMEN AND artisans from around the country will get together at the India Craft Week to hold workshops on forms like phulkari, wood carving and pottery. There will be talks, installations and films on rare crafts of India. From December 4 to 8. at GMR Aerocity. Tickets on insider.in.

In Tune

BOOK YOUR tickets now as Ustad Chand Nizami, Shadab Faridi and Sohrab Faridi Nizami — the Nizami Bandhu — perform on December 22. They are known for their gawwalis by Amir Khusro, and songs in *Rockstar* and Bajrangi Bhaijaan. At Kamani Auditorium. Tickets on Bookmyshow.

'I have always believed in playing my age'

Actor Purab Kohli on his new webseries Out of Love, the Channel V days and riding the digital wave



EKTAA MALIK

ACTOR PURAB KOHLI believes in playing his age, which doesn't go very well with the management. In the last year itself, we have seen him play a single father twice, and his latest offering, Out Of Love, a web mini-series, we see him playing a 40-year-old married man with a school-going child. "I have always believed in playing my age and playing characters who are closer to who I am. Even when I started, as an 18-year-old, with the TV show Hip Hip Hurray, I was playing a high school kid. My management kept bringing me roles of men in their twenties, and I just couldn't relate to them. I was quite happy with It's Not That Simple (Season 2), where I had a teenaged daughter, and even in *Typewriter*; I was a single father," says Kohli, over the phone from London.

In Hotstar's Out Of Love, Kohli plays Akarsh Kapoor, a real-estate developer. The show is a faithful remake of BBC's Dr Foster and has been directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia and Aijaz Khan. "I had seen the show. Akarsh's character is such a contrast to who I am. He is 40, immature, and just wants to have fun. He just thinks this support from his wife is an interim thing, and he will eventually make it on his own. He doesn't realise that it's her who keeps his whole world together. He is living in this bubble. I am sure that there are people like this, but I found it very hard to relate to him," says Kohli.

The show, which has been received quite well, focuses on the themes of adultery, infidelity and betrayal. Set in the serene hills of Coonoor, the narrative unfolds through the perfect marriage of the lead couple — Kohli and Rasika Dugal. "Earlier, adultery, cheating and infidelity were taboo topics. We as a society didn't believe that these things existed, or even if they did, they existed in a far-off distant place. These issues are so common now, that it's stupid to not talk about them. For how long can we talk in black and white tones? The world is grey and the digital space is doing a great job of telling these stories. We are moving away from the moralistic view of things," says Kohli, who divides his time between London and Mumbai.

Having traversed diverse media — TV, films, VJing — and now riding the digital wave, Kohli has seen it all. "TV had to cater to five-six people, sitting together and consuming that story. At times you go back to a story even after 10 episodes and you can pick up right where you left off. A film meant you had to drag people out of their



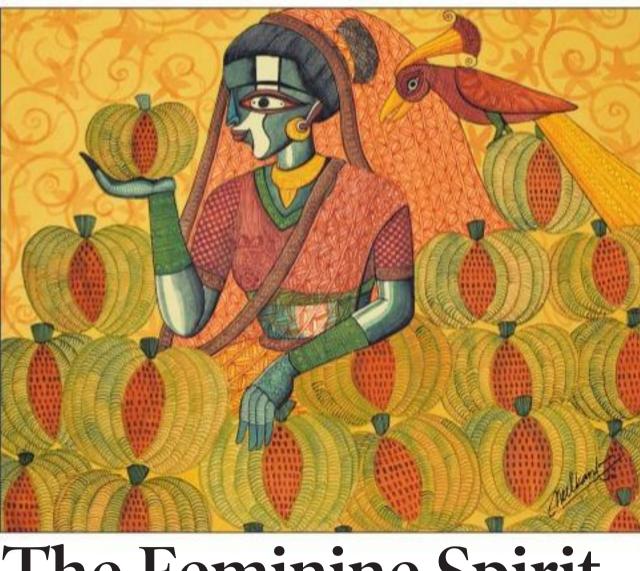
The world is grey and the digital space is telling these stories. We are moving away from the moralistic way of looking at things

PURAB KOHLI

homes, and make a blockbuster that will blow them away. The digital space is a new beast and caters to those who are left out and are underrepresented in TV and films. It's an interesting time, but yes, there are trappings, since there is so much content being made. As I am based in London now, I have to really pick and choose my projects. If I were in Mumbai, I would perhaps take up all the work that is being offered to

me," says the former Channel V veejay. Kohli, who became a household name, courtesy his VJing stint with Channel V, gets nostalgic about those days. "People often ask me, 'what happened to Channel V', and I answer 'it became Instagram or TikTok'. We really thought we were cool. I had a cool life, and by the time I was 25, I had travelled a big chunk of the country, because of my travel show Gone India. It was a heady time. But we were really people who played music."

Talking about how music was integral to the plan, he says, "We had a mad energy, and we could do anything. It was an absolute party. We did live concerts with Sukhbir, Lucky Ali, and Kailash Kher, and we even got Elton John. We all saw the rise of the Indian independent music scene. We still have a WhatsApp group, where all of us from that time — Gaurav, Yudi and me, and even creatives from the channel, and other VJs from rival channels whom we were not supposed to hang out with — are still in touch," says Kohli.



The Feminine Spirit

Madhubani artist Neelkant Choudhary renders a modern interpretation to the art form

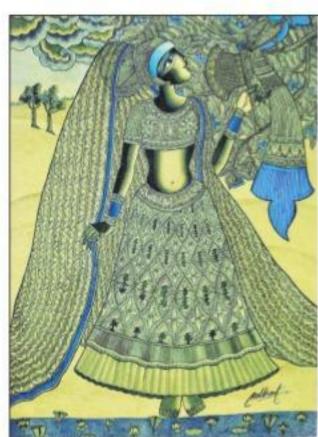
PALLAVICHATTOPADHYAY

NEELKANT CHOUDHARY grew up seeing his mother envelop the walls of the house with Madhubani paintings. As a self-taught artist, he too would be invited to paint for weddings and other auspicious occasions. Often the motifs of the paintings were handpicked from Hindu mythology; there would be gods and goddesses such as Durga, Parvati, Laxmi or Vishnu. Over the years, Choudhary developed a contemporary language for the artform. In his latest solo "Feminine Divine" at Gallerie Ganesha, Delhi, he paints fruit sellers, opera dancers, and sweepers through the ancient art form, adorning them in bright colourful dresses. There are women cleaners, who maintain the interiors of a Jaipur palace, standing with brooms like film stars in his frame titled *Char Women*. There's a pumpkin seller in the company of myriad pumpkins.

Leaning in closely towards his 25 Madhubani paintings on display and carefully introspecting his subjects, Choudhary reveals that divinity does not merely lie in goddesses, and rather pinpoints to how a woman is divine in all the characters she inhabits, be it as a housewife, a worker or a daughter. It is no surprise then that he finds the living goddesses of Nepal an inspiration for one of his frames. "These girls, aged between 6 to 13, sit in the temple like goddesses, and people worship them there," he says.

The 56-year-old, Vadodara-based artist is quick to highlight the art form's long history, which finds a mention in the pages of The Ramayana. King Janaka orders the creation of the paintings during his daughter Sita's wedding to Rama. Choudhary has come a long way, following an initial push by well-known Madhubani painter Chandrakala Devi to continue with his craft after initial rejections from art galleries.

His work Peacock Woman is a result of watching a stranger in his neighbourhood in Jaipur, in the late '90s. He was amused by the peacocks that flocked around her as she fed them. He decided to paint her in the form of the peacock. Another painting features men wearing the pink paag, a headdress integral to the Mithila region and culture, surrounding his young relative's wedding celebrations. In Solidarity, he shows women decked in gold jewellery attending a marriage, and engrossed



Choudhary merges the traditional and the modern, with motifs derived from the streets of Delhi and traditional Madhubani templates

in conversation, bearing a resemblance to noted artist Thota Vaikuntam's creations. He says, "To me, women are beautiful. I see a woman as a creative being that god has made.'

Choudhary has continued to paint the various manifestations of Durga and Parvati in his other frames, some replete with a contemporary idiom. Goddess in the Making serves as a reminder of Durga Puja, where a lady in a purple sari-like attire gives finishing touches to idols. "I cannot paint gods and goddesses all the time. As an artist, it suffocates me. If one is a writer and has to write only one kind of story, he or she will get bored soon. We need different engagements to keep us motivated, he says.

He says his canvases merge the traditional and the modern, with motifs deriving as much from the streets of New Delhi as the traditional Madhubani templates. "My medium varies from vegetable dyes to watercolour, oils and inks. If Madhubani has to survive, it has to adapt to the times without necessarily deserting its traditional essentials."

The exhibition is at Gallerie Ganesha, Greater Kailash II, Delhi, till December 3

SONAL GUPTA

THE QUIET art gallery of the India International Centre, Delhi, perhaps replicates the hush of reverence one usually finds in the inner sanctum of a temple. Yet, with Siddhartha Das Studio's exhibition, "Interpreting Temples", on the Jagannath and Lingaraj temples of Odisha, the hall was bustling with Hindu myths and legends. Over a hundred craftspeople have come together to form replicas of the temple and retell stories behind the sculptures through pattachitra paintings and hand-drawings. It took 14 months, eight researchers, two servitors, many filmmakers and photographers for the project to become a reality.

The government of Odisha had commissioned this project to establish museums and interpretation centres on the temples there. The large 18 ft replicas made from the same stone as the temples would be housed in the museums that will come up in Bhubaneswar, in March, and a year later, in Puri. "In these divisive times, I wondered how I'd tell the story of a place of worship, of an elevation of spirit, of how faith makes people do such amazing things. It can be beautiful and even scary," says Das. The Delhi-based multidisciplinary designer has been involved in over 200 cultural and heritage projects at various places such as the Museum Rietberg, Zurich and Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

The teak wood models of the temple on display reflect the iconography of the Kalinga architecture and the narratives behind it. For instance, the *gajakranta* where the lion stands atop the elephant marks its superiority as king. Visual depictions of the stories from Shiva, Skanda and Brahma puranas on tussar retain the traditional style of Odisha.

The journey wasn't easy, remarks Das, recounting the numerous trips to the site and copious measuring of buildings. At the exhibition, short films document the people behind the project. "We made sure that all the What Faith Can Do

An exhibition on the temples of Odisha honours the spirit of worship and the magnificence of art





people were local, to retain the original flavour. We had stalwarts like Prabhakar Maharana, who has earned a Padma Shri for sculpture, on board. The entire garb is contemporary but the work is of legacy-bearers of tradition," says Das.

The exhibition also explores the gamut of living traditions and rituals to understand "why people congregate the way they do". A film on the annual rath yatra captures the eight lakh people thronging the three km of the danda path outside the Jagannath tem-

(Above) The model of Jagannath temple; an idol of Subhadra being painted

ple. "If you're one of the people there, it's incredible but horrifyingly frightening. There are people wanting to just touch the rath. They don't care if they faint or get trampled upon. You'd wish you could have that kind of faith, in anything," says Das.

The research behind the project included historians, archaeologists and even the King of Puri, Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, who's the protector of the temple. The team referenced books and material at the British Library, National Museum, and state and national archives. "We needed original pictures from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), since some parts of the sculptures are now broken," says Das.

The exhibition is at the India International Centre, Delhi, till December 6

ON THE LOOSE

Cast Away

When the comedian turns into a pathetic joke



LEHER KALA

IN A series of tweets last week, disgraced comedian Utsav Chakraborty feebly attempted to clear his name of allegations of sexual misconduct, the fallout of which caused the dynamic All India Bakchod (AIB) to crash overnight, during 2018's #MeToo movement. For the uninitiated, AIB ran a hugely popular YouTube channel and created hilarious spoofs like Royal Turds about Bollywood award shows. Ironically, one of their most successful sketches was It's Your *Fault*, a satirical take on patriarchy and victim blaming in India. Which is why it was so shocking that a promising collective run entirely by millennials creating very edgy content, would count among them two founders caught in two separate cases of sexual harassment. While a third, comedian Tanmay Bhat, was outed as the unscrupulous opportunist who wilfully ignored repeated complaints. Needless to say Chakraborty has been untouchable ever since and the rest of the defunct AIB team still struggling with the question, what next?

On a rambling Twitter thread, Chakraborty claims he has been wrongly

maligned by false evidence — altered screen shots of sexts he had with accusers that he insists were consensual. Excruciating details of Chakraborty's allegedly predatory conduct are in the public domain; anyone reading the vile descriptions by so many women will find it hard to believe they're all acting out of sheer malice. However, a phone conversation between Chakraborty and one of his alleged victim's lawyers put out by the online magazine Mashable *India* revealed his desperate anguish. In a choked voice, Chakraborty mentioned how his closest friends have stopped talking to him and the consequences of his irreparable loss of reputation: decades stretching ahead for which he has no employment options, whatsoever.

When someone behaves like a jerk they lose the right to an unbiased, fair, hearing process because people view justice from their own perspectives. Chakraborty's crimes may be much less than a murderer's but by instinctual perception, for a lot of people, they're far worse.

A rising star in comedy, unexpectedly shattered by his own cringe-y lewdness, it's not surprising that Chakraborty sounds almost suicidal. I'm not sure though, despicable though his attitude may have been, if the solution is to ostracise alleged predators to such an extent, they think their lives are not worth living.

Forgiveness is a personal matter and of course, the lives of artistes are not more important than their accusers. Sow as you reap, indeed. But till a decade ago, a life sen-

tence for murder in India was 14 years after which a criminal was free to live his life. Right now there doesn't seem to be a way for a sexual predator to seek redemption after serving metaphorical time; it appears he is doomed to exist in no man's land, shoved to the margins of polite society, forever, unforgiven. In July this year, when Bhat revealed he was suffering from clinical depression, senior female comics berated him for using a mental health issue to

gain sympathy. "Depression is only newsworthy when someone who had a corporate throwing money at him, stopped having money thrown at him," said comic Aditi Mittal in a scathing tweet. Surely, it is well within the scope of possibility that Bhat is genuinely depressed. The crucial question again, is how long does our righteous rage last before atonement (by the perpetrator) can begin? There are parables in the Bible and Buddhist scriptures that repeatedly remind us that those who have grievously hurt others can redeem themselves through giving. For public figures capable of raising money and working, condemning them to a time out for the rest of their lives doesn't make any sense. What if there was a system of community service, where for the next 10 years, 20 per cent of their show fees would go towards organisations that empower women? Perhaps, just the thought of parting with funds at being caught for inappropriate behaviour will keep people on the straight and narrow. For those too cynical to believe that engaging in an act of selflessness may trigger some introspection, there is Oscar Wilde's observation to contemplate: Every saint has a past and a sinner,

hutkayfilms@gmail.com

On Tv Today

Aus vs Pak: 2nd Test

Day Four live from Adelaide on Sont Six: 9 am onwards

Pakistan show some spine (tailbone)

Tailender Yasir Shah hits a memorable hundred after Babar Azam falls 3 short as the visiting team recover from 89/6 to post 302

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE ADELAIDE, DECEMBER 1

PAKISTAN WAS battling to stave off defeat in the day-night second Test against Australia on Sunday after being forced to follow on, with Tim Paine's men needing seven wickets to clinch the series 2-0.

The visitors, who have lost 13 consecutive Tests in Australia, were in big trouble at 39 for three when rain forced an early end, 248 runs behind with two days left and their top order decimated.

They had resumed on an overcast and cold afternoon teetering at 96 for six in their first innings, in reply to Australia's 589 for three declared, built on the back of David Warner's monumental 335 not out.

Yasir Shah smacked a dogged maiden

Test century and Babar Azam hit 97 but they were all out for 302 and still 287 runs adrift, with Mitchell Starc the hero, taking 6 for 66. Australian skipper Tim Paine enforced

the follow on and it started badly for Pakistan, whose first task was to survive intact for 15 minutes before the dinner break.

They failed with opener Imam-ul-Haq - recalled after being overlooked for the

innings and five runs -- out lbw for a duck to Josh Hazlewood. It was quickly 11 for two with Starc tempting skipper Azhar Ali into a thick outside edge and Steve Smith taking a quality

catch just seconds before a shower forced

first Test in Brisbane, which they lost by an

them off.

The rain had been threatening all day and when they returned after 30 minutes Hazlewood bagged the key wicket of dangerman Azam for two, caught behind by

captain Paine.

But more rain soon blew in, to Australia's frustration, and the umpires called it a day.

Earlier, Yasir and Azam had kept Pakistan's slim hopes alive with disciplined first innings batting.

Better known as a spin bowler, Yasir had never gone better than 42 in his previous 36 Tests, making his 113 against one of the world's most fearsome pace attacks even more remarkable.

Gloomy conditions

In a scintillating spell under lights on Sunday night, left-armer Starc snapped up four quick wickets and the omens for Pakistan did not look good.

But the gloomy conditions at Adelaide Oval offered little for the bowlers during daylight hours on Sunday and Azam and Yasir took advantage.

They put on a 105-run stand and Azam looked destined for a third Test century until Starc pounced again, with the 25-year-old edging an attempted drive to Paine behind the stumps on 97.

Azam -- who scored a century in the first Test at Brisbane and is rapidly emerging as his country's top batsman -- left the field dejected but to a standing ovation.

The very next ball Starc grabbed his sixth, with Shaheen Afridi plumb lbw before Mohammad Abbas fended off the hattrick ball.

Abbas made a gutsy 29 before he was undone by a Pat Cummins bouncer, caught at gully by Warner.

At the other end, Yasir showed compo-

sure to compile his first-ever ton, bringing up the milestone off 192 balls, clattering 12 fours and kissing the turf in celebration. He had a near-miss off the bowling of

Marnus Labuschagne on 33. Steve Smith believed he caught him at slip and made a big appeal, but replays showed the ball fell just short of his fingertips.

Yasir was then dropped by Labuschagne off his own bowling on 43. He was finally out hooking a Cummins delivery to Nathan Lyon

BRIEF SCORES (DAY 3): Pakistan 302 all out (Shah 113, Azam 93; STarc 6/66) and 39 for three (Hazlewood 2/15) trail Australia 589/3d by 248 runs.



Yasir Shah celebrates after reaching the three-figure mark on Day Three of the second Test in Adelaide on Sunday. PTI

Sehwag foretold David Warner's Test exploits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ADELAIDE, DECEMBER 1

AUSTRALIA OPENER David Warner believes India's Rohit Sharma has the firepower to surpass West Indies great Brian Lara's record 400 not out in a Test match. Warner, who scored his maiden triple ton (335) during the ongoing second Test against Pakistan, was just 65 runs shy of breaking Lara's record when skipper Tim Paine decided to declare the innings at 589/3.

"Yeah, look, I think it's about the person himself. We've got long boundaries, it is quite difficult at times. When fatigue sets in, it's very hard to try hard and throw your hands at it," Warner told 'Fox Sports'. "At the end, I tried to run twos to lift the ante because I couldn't actually think like I could clear the ropes. I think, one day, if I've to name a player, I reckon it could be Rohit Sharma. Definitely."

Warner also revealed that he had doubts about his Test career and a conversation with former India opener Virender Sehwag helped. "When I met Virender Sehwag while playing for Delhi in the IPL, he sat down to me and said I will be a better Test player than a Twenty 20 player. I said 'you're out of your mind, I've not played many first-class games'," Warner told reporters.

"He always said 'they will have slips and gully, covers open, midwicket stay there. mid-off and midon will be up, you can get off to a flier and sit there all day and you'll be picking them all off'. That's always stuck in my mind, it sounded very easy when we were discussing then," Warner said.

Root stems the rot with century before NZ strike back

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE HAMILTON, DECEMBER 1

DESPITE CENTURIES to Joe Root and Rory Burns England expressed disappointment at stumps on day three of the second Test against New Zealand after losing late wickets in Hamilton on Sunday. England captain Root ended his run drought with an unbeaten 114 while Burns rode his luck to post 101. But after they took England to 201 for two, the tourists were 269 for five at stumps and still trailing New Zealand by 106.

"I enjoyed the fact I got it (hundred) but at the same time disappointed me and Rooty couldn't stretch our partnership and get us deeper into the game," Burn said. "We're disappointed to lose a couple of wickets at the back end as well."

With only five wickets remaining and 16 overs washed out by rain in the final session, England's vision of building a healthy lead was rapidly fading. The tempo swung away from England when Burns was run out and New Zealand followed up with the quick wickets of Ben Stokes and Zak Crawley.

"The run out got us going," said Tim Southee who accounted for Stokes, adding that New Zealand never gave up hope despite the 63 overs it took to break the Root-Burns partnership.

"We hung in there for long enough and we were able to get those rewards late in the day for all the toil we put in. If things aren't happening you keep on trying."

With Root and Burns putting on 177 for the third wicket, England found the "batlong" partnership they had been searching for in their attempt to follow the same recipe New Zealand used to win the first Test. But following the dismissal of Burns, Ben Stokes was gone for 26 while Zak Crawley made one on debut.



Joe Root (114*) and Rory Burns (101) added 177 runs for the third wicket.

Root was under added pressure to not only guide England to a position of strength but also to end his own run dearth amid suggestions the pressure of captaincy was affecting his form. To that end, he was in no mood to take risks as he faced 258 deliveries in six hours to reach 99, before his century came on a surprise mistiming that saw an inside edge fly past the wicketkeeper to

the boundary.

His 17th Test hundred was his first in 15 innings since the West Indies in February.
Burns lead a charmed life on the way to his second century when he was dropped on 10 and 19 and on 87 survived a run-out opportunity when New Zealand botched the return throw.

But two balls after reaching three fig-

ures he ambled through the first single when Root called for two and although he accelerated on the return leg he was a centimetre short when BJ Watling broke the stumps. Stokes strayed from the "bat-long" script when he replaced Burns and compiled a brisk 26 before Southee extracted slight movement off the wicket and found an edge for Ross Taylor to hold.

Crawley's maiden Test innings only lasted six balls when he was caught behind to give Neil Wagner his first wicket. For New Zealand, Southee has taken two for 63 while Wagner and Matt Henry have a wicket each.

BRIEF SCORES (DAY 3): England 269 for five (Root 114 batting, Burns 101; Southee 2/63) trail New Zealand 375 by 106 runs.

How Joe constructed the captaincy-saving knock

SANDIPG

RESISTING SHOTS through his favourite area, the covers, and shelving his pet stroke, the cover drive, Joe Root snapped his 14-innings century drought with a patient and potentially match and captaincy-saving hundred against New Zealand. It was the slowest and the least sparkling of his 17 centuries, but one where his fortitude shone the most.

OFF-SIDE DISCIPLINE: Root likes to punch the ball through cover as well point. But of late, it's been his nemesis, especially whenever he has looked to drive on the up. In general, his once compact off-side game and outside-the-off-stump judgment had tapered off. Where once he met the ball with resoluteness, he started nibbling and stabbing tenuously. So, in this innings, he changed tack. Instead of trying to force the drives on the back foot in front of square or through the covers, he began steering it through the gully and third man. Risk still entailed, but he seldom looked to manufacture the stroke but waited for the bowlers to err with their lengths. His first cover-driven boundary arrived off his 174th delivery.

LEG-SIDE MASTERY: Root's off-side game is often raved about. But on Sunday, he calmly waited for bowlers to err down the leg side. The Kiwis seamers frequently dangled off-side baits, even full, drivable

ones, only to be dead-batted with a straight bat and striding front-foot or left alone. Even the middle-stump-bound deliveries were stoically defended. But anything on the leg-stump, full or short, he would ruth-lessly consigned to the fence, garnering as many as 72 runs on the on-side. The flick—his most productive boundary-stroke (4)—stood out, and he did so with the expertise of subcontinental batsmen.

BACK-FOOT BIAS: Root is a predominantly front-foot batsmen, unless he's batting on a bouncy surface. The Hamilton strip was on the slower side, but Root was intent on hanging back, giving himself more time to judge the length of the ball. It was one of the reasons he could place the ball finely behind square leg (26 runs through this space). As a consequence, nine of his 14 fours were off the back-foot.

has not exactly been struggling for runs, but for big, defining scores. Apart from a pair during the Ashes, he looked fairly untroubled, though contriving to get out when he was well set. In fact, four times in his last 14 innings has he absorbed more than 115 deliveries, but seemed cursed to get out softly. So it was more of a lapse in concentration than a serious flaw sneaking into his game. At Seddon Park, he rigorously kept his focus over 278 deliveries — the one loose stroke, an edge that flew over the keeper, ironically, ushered in his most awaited moment of the match.

SYED MUSHTAQ ALI T20 FINAL

Karnataka champions after Gowtham defends five runs off four balls



Krishnappa Gowtham kept his nerves in the tense final over. Screengrab

SURAT, DECEMBER 1

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

BACK IN Bangalore, they call Krishnappa Gowtham 'the finisher', but more for his documented knack of finishing close matches with big shots, the signature slog sweeps and heaves that often nestle outside the stadium. His bowling, though, is more functional than spectacular. He's more of a tie-one-end-up trundler than an offie with a ripping off-break and cryptic variations, one cast purely in the T20 mould, either sharing the new ball or rifling through his deliveries in the middle overs.

But on a nervy Sunday night, Gowtham enhanced his death-over bowling reputation, holding his nerve to fashion a one-run win for Karnataka over Tamil Nadu to clinch the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, making a terrific comeback after being struck for consecutive boundaries off his first two

deliveries. As debates swirled over whether skipper Manish Pandey should have set aside the last over for a spinner or not, Ashwin creamed him for two boundaries, whittling down the ask to an achievable five off four balls, Gowtham seemed the perfect fall guy for an impending defeat. Only that, the 31-year-old hardly flinched.

He took a leaf out of the man he was bowling to, R Ashwin, and slipped in a seam-up delivery that slid away with the angle, squarely beating a perplexed Ashwin. Gowtham let out a wry smile, Ashwin stared quizzically at the spot where the ball had pitched, as if he had spotted some dervish on it. In hindsight, it was the moment the match turned away psychologically from Tamil Nadu, the one moment hope rushed out of their window.

Everything that happened thereafter

seemed like a chain reaction. The followup was a low full toss, an intentional one, which Ashwin could only hammer to longon. He was aghast that he didn't put the ball to the fence and the match to bed while Gowtham sensed that something special was unravelling in front of him.

Panic sets in

But then, Vijay Shankar was back on strike and he was batting as lyrically as he ever had in recent times. But the flawlessly-constructed 47 off 27 balls went unfulfilled — ended by a pinpoint throw from the deep by Pandey, whose 45-ball 60 had been the foundation of Karnataka's 180. More panic set in, and even before the match was completed, it seemed that Tamil Nadu would return teary-eyed from yet another match against their fierce rivals.

It has become passe these days, Tamil Nadu tend to shrink at the mere utterance of Karnataka. Last month, they were soundly beaten in the Vijay Hazare Trophy final. But in passages during Sunday's chase, it seemed Tamil Nadu would reverse the trend, never more than when Washington Sundar and Dinesh Karthik were busy laying the foundation for a successful chase.

But in the space of six balls, both were back in the dugout. First, Jagadeesha Suchith, the under-rated left-arm spinner, deceived a rampaging Dinesh Karthik with a clever change of pace and flight.

Till then, Karnataka's bowlers seemed listless, to put it mildly, feeding Karthik with a flurry of freebies, which he duly punished. At one stage, the Karnataka skipper had his hands on his head, and eyes frantically scanning his bowling options. But whoever he brought in conceded cheap boundaries. Karthik and Sundar needn't have resorted to anything fanciful to keep up with the required run rate.

But a rush-of-blood moment scripted Karthik's end. He had just laced a cut shot through point, but couldn't resist stepping out to the same bowler two balls later. Suchith cleverly took the pace off the ball and floated it up, fooling him in the air to be stumped. Then Gowtham — who else — delivered the big wicket by castling the classy-looking Washington Sundar. Hope flickered again for Tamil Nadu when Shankar joined hands with Baba Aparajith. Together, they not only kept the team in the hunt but also gave a fine exhibition of cover-driving. But yet again, Aparajith departed when victory seemed in their grasp. Shankar flared up hope again, but it was snuffed out by Gowtham, the man they call the finisher. And a man whose stock keeps on rising.

BRIEF SCORES: Karnataka 180 for 5 in 20

overs (Manish Pandey 60 not out off 45 balls, Rohan Kadam 35 off 28 balls, Murugan Ashwin 2-33, Ravi Ashwin 2-34) beat Tamil Nadu 179 for 6 (Vijay Shankar 44 off 27 balls, Baba Aparajith 40 off 25 balls, Ronit More 2-32) by one run. **Toss:** TN chose to bowl.

World XI vs Asia XI on cards as world's largest stadium opens in Ahmedabad in March

DEVENDRA PANDEY MUMBAI, DECEMBER 1

THE WORLD'S largest cricket stadium at Ahmedabad with a capacity to host 1.10 lakh fans is likely to be ready to host its first match next March — an exhibition game between Asia XI and World XI could be the inaugural game if the International Cricket Council (ICC) agrees to Indian cricket board's request. The new Sardar Patel stadium, built at cost of Rs 700 crores after razing down the old structure at Motera, can seat more fans than Australia's Melbourne Cricket Ground, which has capacity of just over a lakh.

Jay Shah, the son of union home minister Amit Shah, and the current secretary of the BCCI has been talking up the stadium as the

brainchild of prime minister Narendra Modi and the PM is expected to be at the inauguration of the new stadium. Since he has now received confirmation from the Gujarat Cricket Association of the stadium's readiness, Sourav Ganguly, BCCI's president, said he will seek ICC's approval for the opening game in March.

"There will be Asia XI vs World XI game but it will be subject to ICC's approval," Ganguly confirmed to The Indian Express after BCCI's annual general body meeting held in Mumbai on Sunday. It is learnt in order to make it grand, the board and GCA wants the world's top stars to come under one roof. The stadium at Motera will more than double the capacity of the old structure that hosted 54,000 spectators. It will be spread over 63 acres, with a clubhouse that will feature at least 50 rooms and an Olympicsize swimming pool and 73 corporate boxes.

It will also have an indoor cricket academy and three practice grounds for the players. The stadium's construction began in January 2017.

The venue is close to the metro station, a distance of just 300 metres. The structure is also reputed be earthquake-proof and will have LED lights instead of normal floodlights as seen in other stadiums. The Sardar Patel Stadium has been the venue of much-cherished Indian records — it was here that Sunil Gavaskar became the first batsman in history to go past 10,000 Test runs and it's also the venue where Kapil Dev overtook Richard Hadlee's wicket tally with his 432nd Test wicket. Modi has been the former president of GCA while Amit Shah was their outgoing president. The high-profile association recently got its biggest representation in the BCCI when Jay was elected as the secretary last month. A former GCA joint-secretary Jay will now be present at the ICC's Chief Executive Committee (CEC) meet. However, it is still not clear, who will be BCCI's nominee to the ICC.

"For CEC, the rule is that the secretary (Jay) will attend. As for ICC representative we will decide in a couple of days," Ganguly stated.

The Sardar Patel stadium has come a long way since 1983 when it hosted its first Test against West Indies. In 1992 when former deputy chief minister of Gujarat Narhari Amin took over as GCA president, the bank balance was only 356 rupees, according to Amin. A few years later to raise funds, the association showed the movie Sarfarosh at a local drive-in theatre, Amin had told the magazine *The Week*. These days, there is no financial crunch at the association with a modern stadium set to be inaugurated in a few months.



The new Sardar Patel stadium has been built at a cost of Rs 700crores. Twitter

Sunil completes hat-trick of Greco-Roman titles

NITIN SHARMA

JALANDHAR. DECEMBER 1

A WEEK before the senior national wrestling championships, 21-year-old Sunil Kumar had just about recovered from dengue and begun training. He had been bed-ridden for more than a month and, at one point, even getting up and walking about was a herculean task.

However, not only did Sunil participate in the nationals, he also won the gold in the 87 kilogram Greco-Roman category on Sunday. After he completed a convincing 5-1 victory over Prabhal Singh, he posed for selfies with his coaches and other wrestlers. It was a moment of pure joy for the youngster who was itching to get back on the mat during his prolonged illness.

"I resumed training just a week back. I focused on my attack techniques and also how to withstand the hold positions. It is wonderful to win my third successive national title. This gold will give me a lot of confidence," the Haryana wrestler, who is from Dabarpur village, Sonepat, said. In the semifinal, Sunil had scored a win by fall over Azamat Kustubayev of Kazakhstan.

Sunil took up the sport after a senior wrestler Hardeep adviced him to do so. He first trained at the RAI Sports School, Nidhani, before joining the Mehar Singh Dhaka Academy in Rohtak. His father, a dairy supplier, wanted him to be a wrestler but did not live to see his son make a mark as he passed away in 2010.

At the 2016 Asian Junior Championship in Chinese Taipei, Sunil won his first bronze at this level before following it up with two more at the editions in Delhi and Bangkok in 2017 and 2018 respectively. 2017 proved to be a breakthrough year for Sunil as he won the senior national title in the 85-kilogram category. Before he was down with dengue, earlier this year Sunil won a silver medal in Asian Senior Wrestling Championships in China.

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)president

Brij Bhushan Saran Singh lamented the ab-

sence of dope testing at the national champi-

onships. The National Anti-Doping Agency

(NADA) did not conduct tests at the event but

its Director General Navin Aggarwal said

wrestlers would be tested at an 'appropriate

time' to retain the element of surprise while

some of those representing India at interna-

and the Greco-Roman events were conducted.

The men's freestyle events were held on Friday,

while the women's freestyle, which saw the

participation of Olympics bronze medallist

Sakshi Malik and world championships bronze

medallist Vinesh Phogat, was held on Saturday.

event. They should have come since this is the

nationals and is being held before the

Olympics. Most of the top wrestlers are here.

"Our task is to inform NADA about the

Sunday was the final day of the nationals

tional events have already been tested.

NITIN SHARMA

JALANDHAR. DECEMBER 1



Sunil got a silver at Asian Championships in China earlier this year.

"My father always wanted to be a wrestler. After his death, our family had to struggle and we had to give the farmland we owned on lease. But my mother Anita Devi supported me and my brothers," Sunil said talking about his early struggles.

The silver at the Asian championships has given him the self-belief that he can win a quota for the Olympics. Though he lost in the first round of the World Championships held in September in Kazakhstan, Sunil believes he is wiser because of the experience.

At the Asian Qualifiers next year, Sunil will have a chance to seal a quota for next year's Tokyo Olympics. National Greco-Roman coach Hargobind Singh believes that Sunil is in with a chance to make the trip to Tokyo. "Sunil's main strength has been his stamina and endurance level apart from the ability to come out of strong holds. As he is a young wrestler, he has to improve his technique and we are working on his gripping techniques. He won the silver medal at the Asian Championships early this year and he has got a good chance to qualify for the Olympics. The top two wrestlers from Asia have qualified from the world championships and he can claim the quota on offer next year in the Asian qualifiers. We will work

on the game plan for him," Hargobind said. No dope testing at nationals

> duct random checks and that should have been the case this time also," Singh said. Earlier this year, wrestler Reena tested positive at the Under-23 Asian Championships and was banned for four years. Before the Rio Olympics, star wrestler Narsingh Yadav also failed a dope test and was banned.

"I came to know about the NADA team not visiting the wrestling nationals today. We have a plan to test the wrestlers at an appropriate time and some of the international Indian wrestlers have been already tested or we will plan testing for them at an appropriate time. We sometimes go to nationals and sometimes we don't' go. Whenever and wherever a NADA team goes, we have to keep the element of surprise so that players don't become aware,"

Normally they come to the nationals to con-

Aggarwal said. WFI secretary Vinod Tomar said the schedule for all competitions had been shared with NADA. "The NADA team did not come to the national junior wrestling championships at Surat earlier this year too. It is up to them to come to test or not," Tomar said.

Over to the courts now

BCCI seeks SC nod for watering down cooling-off, conflict clauses in its constitution

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY

KOLKATA, DECEMBER 1

BCCI HAS put the proposed amendments to its constitution – including the watering down of the clauses about the cooling-off period and conflict of interest - on hold, deciding to seek clarification from the Supreme Court before going ahead. The decision was taken at the cricket board's 88th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Mumbai on Sunday. The next court hearing on BCCI matters is listed for Tuesday.

Keeping in mind the conflict-of-interest issue, the AGM also deferred the formation of the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), authorised to appoint all cricket committees including selection committees. The matter is already before the apex court, as a plea has been made to reconsider the 'rigidity' of the clause. BCCI office-bearers will also seek further clarification from the board's ombudsman-cum-ethics officer Justice (Retd) DK Jain on the issue before forming the CAC. With the existing conflict-of-interest clause, BCCI is finding it difficult to convince former cricketers of highest repute to be part of the CAC.

The AGM notice had incorporated some major amendments to the BCCI constitution, including the watering down of the coolingoff clause, changes in disqualification criteria, and curbing the chief executive's powers. According to an office-bearer of a South Zone state association who attended the meeting, the proposed amendments were discussed and received verbal consent from all 38 members. But as the existing BCCI constitution has the apex court's seal, the house decided to take the matter before the court before putting the changes into effect.

"At the end of the day, the court will decide," BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said at the press conference after the AGM. He added: "The (Lodha reforms) we have adopted, otherwise we wouldn't be compliant. The new elections wouldn't have happened, and the state (association) elections, had the state associations not adopted it."

BCCI treasurer Arun Dhumal spoke about seeking a way forward from the Supreme Court. "It's on hold. We have sought clarification. There were some media reports that we want some sweeping changes. There's some clarification that we have sought that will give us the way forward."

The proposed amendments, if approved, will allow Ganguly to helm the cricket board for six years at a stretch. As per the existing constitution, he will have to go for a mandatory three-year cooling-off period after July next year. The BCCI constitution stipulates that an office-bearer will have to step down after serving for six years either consecutively at the state association or BCCI, or a combination of both. The proposed change has called for separating the cooling-off period for state associations and BCCI. The BCCI constitution allows the provision of amending the Rules and Regulations "by a 3/4th majority of the members present" at the AGM or a Special General Meeting (SGM). But to put them into effect, the Supreme Court's approval is required. "Any such amendment will not be given effect with-



The proposed amendments, if approved, will allow Sourav Ganguly to helm the cricket board for six years at a stretch. PTI

out leave of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.'

For any further changes in the future, the BCCI has sought an amendment to the constitution which, if approved, will not require the court's intervention.

CAC and the conflict roadblock

The CAC needs to have former cricketers of highest repute and ahead of the AGM, the BCCI had held informal discussions with some excricketers. The response was lukewarm, as a cricket board official told this paper: "Whatever informal discussion we have had, nobody is interested for a one-day job by forgoing their livelihood." Today Ganguly said: "We will form the CAC. We met the Hon'ble (Justice) DK Jain yesterday over the conflict-of-interest issue and we will appoint the CAC... We needed to get proper clarity from him (Jain) on what is conflict and what is not conflict. Because we don't want to appoint someone and then he gets cancelled, like it has happened with us the past two times and Kapil Dev and his team."

The existing conflict of interest clause bars CAC members from having multiple cricketing roles. This was the reason why Sachin Tendulkar recused himself from the original CAC, while Ganguly and VVS Laxman were found to be in conflict of interest by the BCCI ethics officer. Even Kapil Dev, Anshuman Gaekwad and Shantha Rangaswamy, who were part of the ad-hoc CAC and appointed head coaches for the Indian women's and men's teams, had to resign when conflict-ofinterest allegations were levelled against them.

Ganguly clarified that CAC members serve the BCCI in a honorary capacity.

Prasad's term ends

The AGM also marked the end of MSK Prasad's stint as chief selector. He, and

Members, staff told to hand over phones

To prevent any information leaks during board meetings, the BCCI's new body, headed by Sourav Ganguly and Jay Shah, asked its members to hand over their phones ahead of the 88th Annual General Body Meeting in Mumbai. "It was the first time we were told to keep the mobile phones aside. We all handed our phones before the AGM. Only after the meeting the phones were given back, probably, they didn't want any information leak while the meeting is on. Even the staff, catering and other people in the room were asked to give away their phones," a member, who attended the meeting, told this newspaper.

Not just the members but also the staff including the catering personnel in the room were asked to walk in without mobile phones.

DEVENDRA PANDEY

Sarandeep Singh have completed four years and will have to quit. "Tenures are finished. You cannot go beyond your tenure and all of them don't finish, so majority of them stay and I think it shouldn't be a problem," Ganguly said. The BCCI president also aimed a thinly-veiled dig at the ICC. "As you must have heard, ICC now wants tournaments every year. (But) that doesn't mean selectors continue forever. We will have a tenure (for the selectors), and we will (stick) to the tenure."

Although the BCCI constitution allows a

five-year term for the selectors, this paper understands that the Board under its present dispensation is mulling on reducing it to four. As for the Prasad-led committee, Ganguly opined that they "have done a good job".

Secy for ICC's CEC

BCCI members unanimously decided that secretary Jay Shah will henceforth represent the cricket board at the ICC's Chief Executives Committee (CEC). For the last three years, BCC chief executive Rahul Johri had been India's representative at the CEC.

"... the rule is (that) the secretary goes. And the ICC (Board) representative we will decide in a couple of days' time," Ganguly said. One of the proposed amendments has asked for allowing persons aged 70 years and above to be eligible to represent the BCCI at the ICC Board

Azhar's dues cleared BCCI also decided to clear Mohammad

Azharuddin's dues, amounting approximately to Rs 2 crore, including the one-time benefit given to former cricketers. The Board had withheld his dues after Azhar was banned for life for his alleged involvement in the match-fixing scandal at the turn of the century. The former India captain and current Hyderabad Cricket Association president has returned to the BCCI fold after the court exonerated him.

IPL staging fee increased

The BCCI also decided to increase the staging fee for IPL matches from Rs 60 lakh to Rs 1 crore. State associations' subsidy has been hiked from Rs 70 crore to Rs 100 crore. With regard to first-class cricket, the members unanimously agreed that state associations should be encouraged to hand contracts to domestic first-class cricketers.

SPORTS BAR



Ronaldo to rescue as Juve stumble to draw

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his first Juventus goal since October to rescue a 2-2 draw against Sassuolo in Turin on Sunday as the Italian champions surrendered first place in Serie A to Inter Milan. Leonardo Bonucci fired Juve into the lead in the first half but an exquisite finish from Sassuolo winger Jeremie Boga levelled the scores three minutes later before Francesco Caputo put the visitors in front after the break following a defensive mix-up and an error by keeper Gianluigi Buffon. Ronaldo netted from the penalty spot in the second half to end his four-match goal drought in all competitions and deny Sassuolo their first ever win in this fixture. The result saw Juventus fall to second place on 36 points after Inter Milan's 2-1 win over SPAL sent them one point clear at the top.

I-League: Chennai beat debutants TRAU FC

Defending champions Chennai City FC began their title defence on a winning note as they defeated debutants TRAU FC of Manipur by a solitary goal here on Sunday. Adolfo Miranda scored the all-important goal of the match at a rain-soaked Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. With 15 minutes to go, TRAU made two changes as they brought on Deepak Devrani and Abinash Ruidas. Pedro Manzi could have closed the game once and for all in the added time, but Gurpreet denied him once again, as he dived low at the near post to tip the ball away.

FC Goa secure a point with injury-time goal

A 10-man FC Goa denied Kerala Blasters their second win of the Indian Super League as an injury-time strike from Lenny Rodrigues ensured a dramatic 2-2 draw at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Sunday. Sergio Cidoncha's (2nd minute) early goal helped the home side set the tempo of the match. Mourtada Fall (41st) pulled FC Goa level before the break but was sent off for a last-man tackle in the second-half. Raphael Messi Bouli (59th) regained the lead for Kerala Blasters. However, a late goal from Lenny (90+3') struck daggers into the hearts of an expectant home crowd. Eelco Schattorie's injury-hit team are eighth in the table with five points. FC Goa are fourth on the table with nine points.



Andy Ruiz and Anthony Joshua will fight in Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

Joshua taking tips from Klitschko for Ruiz rematch

Britain's Anthony Joshua has been taking advice on his training regime and diet from former heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko ahead of his title rematch with Andy Ruiz Jr. in Saudi Arabia on Dec. 7. Mexican-American Ruiz produced one of boxing's biggest upsets when he dethroned the previously undefeated world champion Joshua with a seventh-round stoppage at New York's Madison Square Garden in June. Klitschko was defeated by Joshua in 2017 at Wembley Stadium with a technical knockout and the two boxers have stayed in touch even after the Ukrainian retired later that year at the age of 41. "He said loads of stuff to me, Wlad was definitely ahead of the game. He's more disciplined than me, he's more diplomatic," Joshua told British media. "He was giving me dietary and training advice and that is maybe what people are talking about now when they see a difference in my body. Maybe that's why — because I've adapted some of his teaching — my weight may fluctuate."

Vishnu, Muzammil win at 'Festival of Speed'

Chennai's Vishnu Prasad and Bengaluru's Syed Muzammil Ali stole the show and emerged as champions at the JK Tyre Festival of Speed on Sunday. Vishnu of MSport pipped his friend, team-mate and rival, Raghul Rangaswamy, to win the crown in the coveted Formula LGB-4 category of the JK Tyre FMSCI National Racing Championship. Going into the final day with 73 points apiece, Vishnu and Raghul knew that they just had to finish ahead of the other to claim the championship. Vishnu won a dramatic race, while Raghul finished third to take the second position in the championship. The Suzuki Gixxer Cup too followed the script of the season, with Syed Muzammil Ali and Tanay Gaikwad locked in one last fight.

Johnson out of World Challenge golf

American World number four Dustin Johnson has withdrawn from next week's Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas but says he will be fit for the Presidents Cup the following week. Johnson, who has not played since having left knee surgery in early September, announced the decision on Twitter. "I have informed captain Woods of my decision, which he fully supports and understands, and cannot wait to tee it up with him and my teammates next week in Australia." The Presidents Cup will be played at Royal Melbourne from Dec. 12-15.



Sourabh loses Syed Modi **International final**

Indian shuttler Sourabh Verma's impressive

run at the Syed Modi International tournament came to an end after he lost in straight games to Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei in the men's singles final here on Sunday. The 26-year-old Indian, who won two BWF Super 100 titles in Hyderabad and Vietnam this year, went down 15-21 17-21 to world no 22 Tzu Wei in a 48-minute summit clash to miss out on his maiden Super 300 crown here. Sourabh came into the summit clash with a 1-1 head-to-head record, having lost narrowly to Tzu Wei at the Tong Yun Kai Cup in March this year. The Indian, who was at the court for 75 minutes during his semifinal win over Korea's Heo Kwang Hee on Friday, couldn't produce his best in the final as Tzu Wei claimed his first title in three years.

New manager, same old luck

Arsenal's winless run continues in Freddie Ljungberg's first Premier League game as boss

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

NORWICH, DECEMBER 1

CARETAKER MANAGER Freddie Ljungberg could not end Arsenal's long wait for a win as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's double only salvaged a 2-2 draw at struggling Norwich on Sunday. The Canaries twice led through Teemu Pukki and Todd Cantwell only for Aubameyang to level, first from the penalty spot and then with a clinical finish after the break.

But Arsenal also had goalkeeper Bernd Leno to thank for coming away with a point as the German saved brilliantly from Kenny McLean, Pukki and Emiliano Buendia.

Unai Emery was sacked as Arsenal manager after seven games without a win in all competitions that had seen the Gunners fall well off the pace in the race for a top-four finish. Ljungberg remains a fans' favourite from his title-winning days as an Arsenal player, but he suffered the same problems as his predecessor as the visitors' firepower up front was needed to cover up their defensive problems.

Granit Xhaka returned to the Arsenal side for the first time in the Premier League since an explosive clash with the club's fans as he was substituted against Crystal Palace last month that cost him the captaincy among four changes from Emery's last starting lineup in the league.

Shkodran Mustafi was surprisingly recalled for his first outing in the Premier League this season, but it did not take Ljungberg long to realise the German is not his answer to Arsenal's problems a centre-back.

Ljungberg's side had made a bright start, but fell behind to Norwich's first dangerous attack when McLean's pass played in Pukki, who twisted and turned David Luiz before seeing his shot deflect in off Mustafi for his first goal in nine games.

However, Norwich have also made a habit of giving themselves a mountain to climb this season with defensive errors and gifted Arsenal a route back into the game when captain Cristoph Zimmerman handled a free-kick inside his own box.

Aubameyang saw his first spot-kick saved by Tim Krul, but was given a second chance after a VAR review for encroaching by the Norwich players and fired home the retaken penalty. Just as Arsenal were beginning to get



Freddie Ljungberg could not end Arsenal's long wait for a win, as they laboured to a 2-2 draw against Norwich. Reuters

Watford).

all competitions. They have gone six matches without a win in the Premier League.

winless streak to eight games across

The draw extended Arsenal's

on top, they were again cut open with ease as was denied by a fine Leno save in quick Onel Hernandez's cut-back was passed into succession. the far corner by Cantwell to give Norwich a

Aubameyang has now scored half of his side's 20 Premier League goals this season as the Gunners' new captain led by example to smash home at the back post from a corner just before the hour mark.

half-time lead.

But it was Norwich who will feel they should have taken all three points as three big chances went begging for just their fourth win of the season. McLean's shot was turned onto the post by Leno, Cantwell's strike from the edge of the area flew just wide and Pukki

League (Southampton, Norwich City and

Arsenal have compiled three points

from their matches against the three

bottom-placed teams in the Premier

Leno had one more big stop to make from Buendia in stoppage time, but a point still leaves Arsenal seven points adrift of the top four in eighth. Norwich remain in the bottom three, but inch to within three points of safety.

Doherty secures draw for Wolves

A superb second-half header by Matt Doherty cancelled out an early goal by Lys Mousset as Wolverhampton Wanderers came from behind to draw 1-1 at home to Sheffield United, extending their unbeaten Premier League run to nine games on Sunday.

The crowd at Molineux had barely taken their seats when Mousset struck after 62 seconds, taking a touch to control the ball in the box before slamming it home to put the visitors ahead. Despite creating a number of decent chances, the home team looked all at sea for much of the first hour until Doherty met a Raul Jimenez cross with a powerful header to put them level in the 64th minute.

a deficit at half time since a 5-3 win at

Chelsea in October 2011.

Arsenal have won none of

their last 40 away Premier

League matches when facing

Doherty celebrated the goal with an emotional tribute to the two-year-old daughter of former Wolves striker Benik Afobe who passed away on Friday, removing the black arm-band being worn in her honour and kissing it before holding it up to the sky.

World champions France drawn in 'Group of Death'

ASSOCIATED PRESS BUCHAREST (ROMANIA), DECEMBER 1

AFTER SEEING Germany drawn at Euro 2020 with France and Portugal, Oliver Bierhoff was frustrated and fearful about his country's prospects. "Another nightmare," the Germany team general manager said on Saturday. "It is the worst possibility we could catch."

The memories are still raw of Germany's humiliation at the 2018 World Cup where the title defence ended in the group stage.

Germany open against World Cup holders France on June 16 before taking on European champions Portugal four days later. "I didn't want to pick these teams," said Bierhoff, whose goal clinched the European Championship for Germany at Wembley in 1996. "France is the best team in the world.'

This time, at least, Germany will have home advantage, playing all Group F games in Munich as the 24-team European Championship is spread across the continent for the first time with 12 stadiums in 12 countries being used. Budapest is also being used for a game which will be competed by a playoff winner.

Only the top two teams in each of the six groups are certain to qualify for the round of 16 along with the four top-performing runners-up. The new complicated nature of qualifying means four of the six groups won't have their final teams confirmed until after the playoffs in March.

It might get even tougher for the Group Frunners-up, who could meet England.

That is if Gareth Southgate's side uses the home advantage of playing all three Group D games at Wembley to top the standings.

with Croatia, who won their 2018 World Cup semifinal but lost to the Three Lions later in the year in the Nations League. England also face the Czech Republic, the only team to beat Gareth Southgate's side in Euro 2020 qualifying.

"Our analysts won't have to do too much work; they'll be delighted," Southgate said. "They can put their feet up for Christmas. But yeah, these are teams that we've had really good performances and results against and lost to, so we know there's no room for complacency. And, of

THE DRAW

GROUP A: Turkey, Italy, Wales, Switzerland. **GROUP B:** Denmark, Finland, Belgium, Russia. **GROUP C:** Netherlands, Ukraine, Austria, Georgia/North Macedonia/Kosovo/Belarus. **GROUP D:** England, Croatia, Czech Republic, Scotland/Norway/ Serbia/Israel **GROUP E:** Spain, Sweden, Poland, Bosnia-Herzegovina/Slovakia, Ireland/Northern Ireland. **GROUP F:** Germany, France, Portugal, Iceland/Bulgaria/ Hungary/Romania.

course, we have to see who comes through the playoff."

Glasgow's Hampden Park is paired with the north London stadium in Group D but Scotland has to qualify by beating Israel and either Norway or Serbia.

Wembley is the main venue for Euro 2020, with seven games including the semifinals and final on July 12. The tournament will open with Italy hosting Turkey in Rome on June 12. Group A also features Switzerland and Wales, who have to play its first two games in the Azerbaijan capital Baku before the team led by Gareth Bale finishes in Rome against the hosts.

Belgium were due to host games in Brussels but lost the games to Wembley because a new stadium project could not get approval. Instead, Belgium will have to open against Russia in St. Petersburg and play Denmark in Copenhagen. Roberto Martinez's side rounds off Group B back in England open with a June 14 reunion Russia against Finland, who have qualified for a major tournament for the first time.

"In terms of logistics, it's probably the hardest we could've had," Martinez said. "We need to adjust our preparation and we'll make sure that the logistics are just right."

Spain have all three games at home in Bilbao, and open in Group E against Sweden on June 15, then Poland and a playoff winner. Netherlands are at Amsterdam throughout Group C, opening against Ukraine on June 14 and then Austria and a playoff winner.



Lewis Hamilton celebrates the championship win. Reuters

Hamilton signs off with a dominant pole to flag finish

ASSOCIATED PRESS ABU DHABI, DECEMBER 7

WORLD CHAMPION Lewis Hamilton cruised to victory from pole position at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Sunday, capping another stellar season with an 11th win and 84th overall. The six-time Formula One champion is now only seven wins behind seven-time F1 champion Michael Schumacher's all-time record of 91, which he could realistically overtake next season. After he made a clean start from a record-extending 88th career pole, Hamilton was untroubled as he won on the Yas Marina circuit for the fifth time — four with Mercedes and once when driving for McLaren in 2011.

He finished about 17 seconds ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen in a race bereft of overtaking, except for Verstappen's clean move on Charles Leclerc's Ferrari on Lap 33.

Leclerc was third for a 10th podium in a strong first season with Ferrari, which included an F1-leading seven poles — two more than Hamilton and Bottas — and two wins. However, Leclerc was summoned for a post-race investigation because there was a difference between the amount of fuel in the car as declared by the team and the amount actually inside the car.

Leclerconly just held off Hamilton's teammate Valtteri Bottas, who climbed 16 places to fourth after starting last.

Sebastian Vettel started fourth and finished fifth in a disappointing end to a season where the four-time F1 champion has won only one race. Hamilton made a clean start, but Verstappen was overtaken by Leclerc and held off Vettel behind him on the first lap, which saw Pierre Gasly's Toro Rosso sandwiched between both Racing Point cars and forced to pit for a new front wing.

NUMBER PLATE

Lewis Hamilton's victory was his 11th in the 21 races that have been held this season, and equals his previous best performance, achieved in 2014 and 2018.

The win also moves his , career total to 84 wins, **L** just seven behind the all-time record held by Michael Schumacher.

After just 10 of 55 laps on the desert circuit, Hamilton had pulled five seconds clear of Leclerc. Ferrari pitted both drivers for new tires on the 13th lap, but while Leclerc's tire switch was relatively good, Vettel's took several seconds too long because the mechanics struggled to fit his front left tire on.

It was the latest basic mistake from Ferrari in vet another season marred by errors following similar blunders in the past two seasons. Ferrari replaced Maurizio Arrivabene with Mattia Binotto as team principal, but Binotto has not managed to stem the flow of mistakes.

Hamilton pitted about halfway through the race and such was his on-track advantage that he still came out six seconds clear of Leclerc, while Verstappen was in third place and complaining about engine, braking and throttle issues. Still, the audacious Dutchman then found some extra speed to overtake Leclerc and held the Monegasque driver off as he tried to overtake him back down the right.

Messi, Rapinoe poised to take Ballon d'Or honours

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE PARIS, DECEMBER 1

THE BIGGEST names in world football will descend on Paris on Monday for the 2019 Ballon d'Or ceremony, with Lionel Messi and USA women's World Cup superstar Megan Rapinoe tipped to leave with the honours.

It would be an enormous shock if Rapinoe did not depart the Chatelet Theatre with the women's prize as she returns to the country where she was the driving force on and off the field for the United States as they retained their title.

The suspense surrounds the identity of the men's winner, 12 months after Croatia's Luka Modric claimed the crown thanks to his exploits in dragging his country to the World Cup final and winning the Champions League with Real Madrid.

That ended a decade in which Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo had won the Ballon d'Or five times each, but the smart money now is on the Barcelona man claiming number six.

There are 30 nominees in total for the prize, organised by France Football magazine and voted for by 180 journalists from around the world.

The case for Van Dijk

Among the names is Ronaldo, as well as several of the stars of the Liverpool side who won the Champions League, chief among them Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk.

At one point he looked like the favourite, but Messi already pipped him to FIFA's The Best title in September. The 32-year-old topscored in La Liga last season with 36 goals as Barcelona won the title. He did not have a great Copa America with Argentina, but his genius is undeniable. "If you give the Ballon d'Or to the best player of this generation then you should give it always to Lionel Messi. That's how it is," admitted Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp. "But if you give it to the best player of last season, then it was Virgil van Dijk. I don't know exactly how it will work but that is how I see it."

The value of individual honours in football is debatable, and the timing unsatisfactory, coming midway through the European club season. Yet surely nobody could suggest Rapinoe would not be a deserving winner of just the second women's Ballon d'Or, an award voted for by a panel of 48 journalists.

Norway's Ada Hegerberg won it in 2018 but will not retain her title after missing the World Cup.

Among the stars of that tournament to be nominated are England's Lucy Bronze, Netherlands striker Vivianne Miedema, Australia's Sam Kerr and the USA trio of Alex Morgan, Rose Lavelle and Tobin Heath.