A metro line in search of a car shed

After Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray stayed work on the car shed for Mumbai's Metro Line 3, the search has begun for possible alternatives. **Ajeet Mahale** and **Tanvi Deshpande** report on the 'development versus environment' debate brought to the fore by the 'Save Aarey' protests

n December 1, Vidya Poddar heaved a big sigh of relief when Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray ordered the withdrawal of cases registered against 29 persons, including her son, who had staged a protest at the Aarey Milk Colony in Mumbai in October. This was not the only win for citizens fighting to protect Aarey, known as the "green lungs" of the city, where a metro car shed was proposed to be built in place of several hundred trees. The Chief Minister also announced that he was stopping all work on the metro car shed project. Since then, the State government has set up a four-member committee to look for an alternative site for the car shed. The committee conducted its first site visits on December 17 and is expected to submit its report in 15 days.

But while the activists have some cause to cheer, Uddhav Thackeray's announcement raised concerns about further delay in the project, which will severely inconvenience the city's commuters. Banking on this argument, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been questioning the decision to review the car shed with former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, whose previous government had pushed for the project to be completed, leading the attack. Former BJP MP Kirit Somaiya visited the car shed site on December 5 and said that construction should proceed as no more trees are required to be cut. Subsequently, the Chief Minister clarified that work on Metro Line 3 has not been stopped; that the stay was only for the work on the car shed.

Impact of delay

All the same, the decision to stay the work on the car shed may have an impact on the timeline and cost of the project. According to the implementing agency of Metro Line 3, the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL), a delay of one day increases the cost of the project by ₹4.23 crore. While work on the car shed has been stayed, other works such as tunnelling and station development have been progressing.

MMRCL is also under pressure as the first trains are expected to arrive by November 2020. With no car shed, the trains have no place to be parked. The Metro Line 3 corridor is expected to cost ₹23,136 crore, of which the Japanese International Cooperation Agency will provide ₹13,325 crore as loan.

During the course of the legal battle, a plot in Kanjurmarg was discussed as a feasible option as it would also serve another metro corridor, Metro Line 6. Recently, NCP leader Nawab Malik also suggested a plot in Jogeshwari East, which is with the State Reserve Police Force. However, both plots will involve extending the metro line either to the east or the west and thus escalate the cost and time taken for completion. In an event organised by SNDT University in September, the MD of MMRCL, Ashwini Bhide, had said that it would take roughly two years to develop a car shed after they received the land.

The battle over the car shed site had been a point of friction with the former government, which, through the MMRCL, went on an overdrive to put forth its side of the story. In addition to putting up a section on its website called 'Facts of Aarey', it also published full page ads in September in all the leading newspapers of the city. On its website, MMRCL states that it had considered several alternatives to the plot in Aarey but ruled all of them out on the basis of inadequate land area, technical unsuitability, and environment, legal and regulatory constraints. It stated that it has planted over 20,000 trees in Sanjay Gandhi National Park. MMRCL has also repeatedly said that there is no wildlife at the site of the metro car shed and that Aarey is not a forest.

The beginning of the struggle

The beginning of the struggle
The agitation against the proposed car shed has brought to the fore the long-standing 'development versus environment' debate, capturing the imagination of a city which few other movements have been able to do. Thackeray's announcement is the latest chapter in the five-year-long struggle to

save Aarey.
Vidya Poddar's son Divyang, 27, is pursuing a PhD at Mumbai University. He was among the 29 who had been arrested from the hundreds who had gathered to protest on October 4 against the project. "So many of those arrested were 22-23-year-olds. They are not hardened criminals. Divyang's resolve is equally strong now and we are supportive of him because we don't see anything wrong with what is clearly a noble cause," says Poddar.

The October 4 protest marked the climax of a citizen-led movement to stop the construction of the metro car shed that was planned on a 30-hectare plot in Aarey Milk Colony. Citizens were furious that there were plans to fell more than 2,000 trees in order to construct

e shed. It all began five years ago when the



Citizens gather to protest against tree felling in Aarey Milk Colony, Mumbai, on September 8. (Below): Protesters gather at the site after authorities were given the signal to hack down trees in Aarey in the middle of the night of October 5, just hours after the Bombay High Court on Friday dismissed petitions against the planned metro car shed. • ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY/ VIJAY BATE



MMRCL pasted notices on trees inside Aarey Milk Colony. The notices meant that 2,298 trees were going to be cut and the corporation had invited objections to the same. What followed were a sestrations across the city. A human chain was formed on Marine Drive and several protesters hugged trees at the car shed site, à la Chipko movement. The movement also received the support of Thackeray's son, Aaditya, as well as his political rival and cousin Raj Thackeray's outfit, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, as early as 2015. The central demand of the protesters was to scrap the car shed for the underground metro corridor and relocate it elsewhere.

The Mumbai Tree Authority, the statutory body under the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) responsible for approving removal of trees or branches in the city, did not give its assent in 2015 to the original proposal. At the time, the Tree Authority comprised only corporators. The Shiv Sena had a majority in the committee. In the same year, the State government, led by Fadnavis, appointed a technical committee consisting of the State's senior-most bureaucrats to review the car shed's location. In September of that year, the committee ruled that Aarey was the most suitable location for the car shed.

But by then, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had ordered status quo to be maintained and prohibited any work inside Aarey Milk Colony. The NGT's Pune Bench was hearing a petition, which has since become the cornerstone of the legal challenge to the car shed being planned at Aarey. In May 2015, NGOs Vanashakti and Aarey Conservation Group moved the NGT to declare Aarey colony a forest and an ecosensitive zone. "Our fight was always for Aarey [where other projects have also been proposed]. The car shed issue served as a trigger for the battle because we realised that this was not going to stop. We never wanted to target MMRCL, but ultimately, the government managed to twist the narrative in such a way that it looked like all these petitions were only targeting the metro," Stalin Dayanand of Vanashakti says.

A big blow to the movement

The petition, which was being heard by the Divisional Bench of NGT at Pune, was transferred to the Principal Bench in Delhi in January in 2018. In September 2018, the Principal Bench declared that it did not have the jurisdiction to declare Aarey as a forest and asked the petitioners to withdraw their petition and approach either the High Court or the Supreme Court.

Dayanand says that the judgment was the biggest blow to the movement. "We felt really betrayed. The movement had gone quiet because the NGT was hearing the matter. There were stay orders in force and the petitions were going strong. But with that judgment, all the protection disappeared," he says.

The petitioners approached the Bombay High Court with the same petition. The High Court was simultaneously hearing other petitions to stop construction of the metro car shed which claimed that the location of the shed was problematic as it was the only remaining floodplain of the Mithi river. The Court dismissed all the cases and also vacated the stay on the cutting of trees. The petitioners have appealed against the High Court order in the Supreme Court.

While the High Court's order was yet another blow to the protesters, Dayanand says the movement began to waver after the NGT order. A section of the old guard had got fatigued, he says, and the widespread notion was that there wasn't much to do on the ground since the courts were hearing the matter. "But the movement regained its momentum when the Tree Authority started misbehaving. This time it was driven by the youth of the city," he says.

After the NGT expressed its inability to declare Aarey colony a forest as demanded by activists, in September 2018 the Mumbai Tree Authority issued a notice inviting objections to the removal of 2,702 trees from the site for the car shed. A public hearing saw hundreds of people gathering at the Tree Authority's office, bringing the issue back into the spotlight. In October 2018, environmentalist Zoru Bhathena moved the Bombay High Court challenging the very composition of the Tree Authority as it did not have any experts, which was mandatory. The High Court prohi-

bited the Tree Authority from issuing any permissions until it appointed experts. In April 2019, the Tree Authority finally got four experts on board and later added one more.

Jumping into the fray

On August 29, the Tree Authority passed the proposal amid outrage. The number of trees to be removed was reduced to 2,646 - 2,185 trees were to be cut and 461 transplanted. More politicians jumped into the fray; the protests slowly turned into an election issue. While the BJP and the Nationalist Congress Party supported the proposal, along with two of the three nominated experts present on the occasion, the Congress staged a walkout. The Shiv Seand also moved the court against the decision. The proposal, just ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections in October, brought heavy flak to the Tree Authority, especially because the experts voted in favour of cutting the trees. The two experts eventually resigned, only to withdraw their resignations later. Later, the BJP as well as municipal commissioner Praveen Pardeshi defended the Tree Authority's decision on several public platforms. Shiv Sainiks made allegations of "monetary gains" against the NCP candidate Kaptan Malik as he voted in favour of the proposal; today the two parties are allies. NCP MP Supriya Sule even joined protesters when the trees were cut later, and senior Congress leaders slammed the BJP's decision.

The Shiv Sena also came under fire for not being able to prevent the decision despite being an ally of the BJP in the previous government. In response, Aaditya Thackeray, issued several clarifications about how the Sena still opposed the felling of trees. Uddhav Thackeray also said before the elections that the Sena would deal with the matter strongly once it came to power. He

appears to have kept his word.

The night the trees were cut On October 4, at around 8 p.m., barely

hours after the Bombay High Court had dismissed a petition challenging the Tree Authority's permission, MMRCL began cutting the first lot of trees. "The worst thing they could have done was to cut the trees at night, the moment the High Court dismissed the petitions," Dayanand says. As word of the tree cutting spread thick and fast on social media, hundreds of activists, students and citizens gathered at the site in a lastditch attempt to save Aarey. "I had just returned from work when I found out that trees were being cut," Siddharth Anbhayane, 27, recalls, "I rushed to the site with some of my friends. All we were doing was raising slogans and protesting, which is our right."

The protesters laid siege to the car shed site. They broke through the gates to reach the site of the tree felling. With the situation escalating, a curfew was imposed at Aarey. It lasted for three days. Hundreds of protesters were forcibly evicted and detained. The protest went on until 2.30 a.m. on October 5, when the last batch of protesters were removed. "All of us were very anxious. We could relax only when our children stepped out of custody," Poddar says.

Anbhavane, who spent two nights in custody, says the withdrawal of cases against the protesters only increased his resolve to work for the environment. "We were taken to different police stations and detained there all night. We spent another night in judicial custody. Yes, our families were very worried but everyone who goes to protest knows the consequences of it," he says.

As news of the protests and arrests spread, a law student from Delhi, Rishav Ranjan, wrote a detailed letter to the Chief Justice of India. "My friends in Mumbai told me about the trees being cut and I drafted a letter to the CJI, men-

tioning how there was no time for a formal petition. Thankfully, the Supreme Court gave us a hearing," says Ranjan. Despite it being a Sunday, the Supreme Court heard the matter and ordered a stay. "Even though the trees have been cut now, the letter has been converted into a PIL. We are fighting the matter on a number of other aspects to ensure we set the right precedent," he says.

On October 7, after the curfew was removed, in its first statement after the tree cutting started, the MMRCL announced that 2,141 trees had been cut on site. The figure has been hotly disputed by environmental activists associated with the movement. "In my opinion, not more than 350 trees have been cut; the rest are still standing. We have asked the Supreme Court to give us permission to conduct a site inspection to ascertain how many trees have been cut," Dayanand says.

Environmental concerns

Amrita Bhattacharjee of the Aarey Conservation Group says they wanted the metro car shed to be moved out of Aarey followed by other proposed projects like the zoo and the Metro Bhavan. "Two rivers, Mithi and Oshiwara, flow through Aarey and have a large portion of their catchment area there that prevents flooding. If Aarey is concretised, it will lead to large-scale flooding as our drains and rivers are not equipped to handle this much water," she says.

Petitioners and activists say the car shed site is an integral part of the colony. A study published recently by researchers at the Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies has said that the spate of infrastructure developments planned at Aarey Milk Colony will pose the threat of flooding in downstream areas of the Mithi river. Conducted over six months, the study looked at the geospatial transformations that have taken place since its inception and how the proposed projects and changes in land usage will affect the region and the city. "The consequences of the newly proposed projects on the catchment areas of the Mithi, an area where the streams that feed the river originate, is likely to exacerbate the risk of floods in downstream areas during and after construction of these projects," it states.

Crucially the report also says that under the latest development plan for the city, only 800 hectares of the original 1,300 hectares will remain as a 'Green Zone' and not a No Development Zone. The key difference is that under a Green Zone, construction approved by the State government and the Ministry of Environment may be permitted. "This effectively leaves the door open for other unanticipated projects in the future, which will lead to the further shrinking of Aarey in an ad hoc and unplanned manner," the report states.

"Eventually, we want Aarey to be declared a forest; tribals' rights to be protected; and only the forest to thrive undisturbed," Bhattacharjee says.

There seems to be no end to the people's struggle to find a balance between conservation and development.



FROM PAGE ONE

7 killed as protests in U.P. turn violent

"One man named Noor-e-Alam, who was allegedly hit during protests in Muzaffarnagar died during treatment. Nine persons, including four policemen, are undergoing treatment for gunshot injuries at the hospital," he said.

Across Delhi, several protests were underway at locations including Jama Masjid, Seelampur, Seemapuri, Connaught Place and India Gate. Marchers in many parts of the country waved the national flag, and carried banners that said 'Save Constitution'.

Sporadic violence was reported from Maharashtra,

the Karnataka-Kerala border and Gujarat.

Two allies of the BJP , the JDU and the LJP have expressed reservations about CAA-NRC.

Curbs on Internet

In the wake of violent protests against CAA and NRC in parts of Gujarat, the State government on Friday authorised Additional DGP (Intelligence) to suspend mobile Internet services in case of any exigency from December 20 to 22.

There was one incident of stone throwing on policemen in Vadodara during

Sengar gets life term

ment will pay the rental charges of ₹15,000 a month

the victim and her family members and keep assessing the threat perception every three months.

The victim and the CBI can approach the Member Secretary of the Delhi State Legal Services Authority or the District Witness Protec-

Govt. has

failed to clear

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

In view of the ongoing na-

tionwide protests against

the Citizenship Amend-

ment Act, key BJP ally Lok

Janshakti Party said on Fri-

day that the government

has "failed" to dispel con-

fusion among a significant

section of society. The par-

ty also indicated its opposi-

tion to a countrywide NRC.

a letter by its president Chi-

rag Paswan written to BJP

president Amit Shah, urg-

ing him to call a meeting of

the ruling National Demo

cratic Alliance to hold de-

law continues in the coun-

try despite the Bill's pas-

sage by the Lok Sabha and

the Rajya Sabha. The LJP

had urged the government

for deliberations among al-

lies precisely to ensure that

such a situation does not

the country] has made it

clear that the government

has failed to dispel confu-

sion in a significant section

of people of the country,"

Mr. Paswan tweeted.

"This [protests across

arise," he said.

"Disaffection against the

liberations on the issue.

The party also released

doubts: LJP

NEW DELHI

tion Committee (West) for

The court proceedings started in August. It acquitted co-accused Shashi Singh, giving her the benefit of the doubt. Sengar also faces prosecution for the alleged murder of the victim's father in judicial custody on April 9, 2018. He has been charge-sheeted by the CBI in another case of alleged conspiracy and criminal intimi-

Exit polls predict photo finish

Five-phase election for 81 seats in Jharkhand ends with a voter turnout of 65.23%

SATYASUNDAR BARIK RANCHI

Exit polls predicted a close fight in Jharkhand, where the fifth and final phase of polling in 16 Assembly constituencies passed off peacefully on Friday.

All exit polls predicted that the BJP and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress alliance were locked in a neckto-neck fight while India Today-Axis My India survey gave a clear majority to the JMM-Congress alliance.

The India Today-Axis My India survey, which was close to the final figures in the last few exit polls, said JMM-Congress could return to power by bagging 38-50 seats in the 81-member Jharkhand Assembly, while the BJP's possible tally was put at 22-32.

The IANS-CVoter-ABP Exit poll said the JMM-Congress was marginally ahead of the BJP as the alliance was predicted to get 31-39 seats, while the BJP may get 28 to 36.

As per NEWs 11 survey, the BJP was expected to secure 30-35 seats, while the JMM-Congress alliance could get 26-34. The surprising result in the survey was for AISU, which was flagged as possible kingmaker with 8-12

In the outgoing House, the BJP had 37 seats, JMM (19), JVM (8 - six MLAs later joined the saffron party), Congress (6 and two won in by-elections) and All Jharkhand Stuof view of threat from leftwing extremists.

Making it count: A security person standing guard as voters queue up to exercise their

franchise in Godda district, Jharkhand, on Friday. • PTI

dents' Union five.

- down by nearly 1%. No ma-

jor untoward incident has

been reported in the elec-

tion," said Jharkhand's Chief

Officer

Voting took place in

29,464 polling booths across

the State. Of them, 4,408

booths were identified as hy-

Electoral

Choubey.

The Santhal Pargana, The lowest 49.04% voter where 16 Assembly segturnout was recorded in ments had gone to poll, re-Ranchi constituency, while gistered 71.17% voter turnout the Nala Assembly segment compared to 73.31% in 2014. registered 78.01%. As many as 1,216 candidates including "In all five phases in 2019, 127 women and one third voter turnout is estimated at 65.23% compared to 66.53% gender contested in the

> election. Except for the first phase on November 30, the other phases registered a drop in polling. In the first phase, compared to 63.34% votes polled in 2014, electors came out in large numbers and 64.92% voter turnout was recorded. In the second phase on December 7, about

64.84% was recorded as against 68.39% in the last election. In the subsequent two phases, voter turnout was 62.68% and 56.58% in comparison to 63.96% and 64.63% respectively.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was actively involved in the campaigning. He made six visits to Jharkhand and held nine public meetings, while Home Minister Amit Shah addressed 11 meetings. For the Congress, former party president Rahul Gandhi addressed four election meetings. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addressed one

Jaishankar cancels U.S. meeting on Kashmir

Deeply disturbing, says Pramila Jayapal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

As External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar ended his visit to the United States after participating in the '2+2' dialogue with top U.S. officials, reports suggest that he cancelled a meeting to discuss the situation in the Kashmir Valley with several Congressional leaders, objecting to the presence of Indian origin Democratic Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, who recently sponsored a tough resolution on Kash-

A report in The Washington Post said Indian officials cancelled the meeting that was to include the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Eliot L. Engel, Republican representative Michael McCaul from Texas and others. But it was the presence of Ms. Jayapal that was singled out by the Indian officials as the reason for the cancellation.

Mr. Jaishankar told news agency ANI, "I have no interest in meeting her." A bipartisan resolution that Ms. Jayapal sponsored on December 8 was noted for its criticism of the Government of India's actions in Kashmir and asked New Delhi to lift the communication restrictions there. In response, Chairman Engel declined to



S. Jaishankar

hold the meeting in the absence of Ms. Jayapal.

Responding to the cancellation, Ms. Jayapal said in a social media message, "The cancellation of this meeting was deeply disturbing. It only furthers the idea that the Indian government isn't willing to listen to any dissent at all."

The comment on her personal Twitter handle drew angry response from BJP supporters. Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation's Anirban Ganguly said, "Uninformed, motivated, agenda-driven, laced with fake news, meant to push a false narrative and attempt to destroy the standing of a committed democracy and democratic government – isn't dissent."

Senior scholar and a supporter of India-U.S. relations Ashley Tellis described the situation as "a missed

in Unnao rape case The Uttar Pradesh governany assistance.

till November 2020. The CBI has been directed to ensure the security of

Nitish breaks silence on NRC, assures safety of minorities

His party had supported the CAA in both Houses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday finally broke his silence on the National Register for Citizens (NRC), questioning the need for such an exercise.

On Thursday, while addressing a public meeting at Gandhi Maidan in Gaya in the course of his Jal Jivan Hariyali yatra, he assured all protection to the minorities, saying at no cost would their interests be compromised.

"Kaahe ka NRC? Bilkul laagu nahin hoga (NRC, what for? Will not at all be implemented)," Mr. Kumar quipped. His comment followed queries from journalists when he was emerging after a function of the Indian Road Congress in Patna. He then moved away.

In his recent meetings, Mr. Kumar has been reiterating that the JD-U will "respect all religions".

Some JD(U) leaders like its vice-president Prashant Kishor, Pawan Verma and party MLC Ghulam Rasool Balyavi had ex-



NITISH KUMAR Bihar Chief Minister pressed their serious concern over and opposition to

implemented

the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the NRC. The JD(U) is in the ruling alliance of the BJP in Bihar and Mr. Kumar is perhaps the first Chief Minister of an NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government in the States to have given a hint that the NRC will not be implemented in his State.

The JD(U) had supported the CAB in both the Lok Sab-

Recently, after an hourlong meeting with Mr. Kuformer would explain his position on these issues after the Jan Jivan Hariyali journey over climate change. Mr. Kumar's yatra will end

on January 19.

Draws flak

The Congress took a swipe at Mr. Kumar for his comment on the NRC. "Nitish Kumar has been diabolical in his approach and wants to ride in two boats at the same time-...how can he oppose NRC and support CAA," asked State Congress leader and party spokesperson Rajesh Kumar Rathor.

Former Chief Minister and Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) leader Jitan Ram Manjhi tweeted, "Nitish Kumar who earlier had said he would prefer to die instead of shaking hands with BJP again, is now saying he will not allow implementation NRC in Bihar... how many times will you do a turnaround, sir? You made the law and now say we'll op-

The Left parties observed a Bihar bandh on Thursday.

'Wrong narrative made Assam suffer'

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal promises to protect indigenous interests

RAHUL KARMAKAR GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Friday said a wrong narrative on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) by certain destructive elements made Assam suffer violence and arson that claimed six lives last week.

A propaganda that the CAA would grant citizenship to 1.5 crore Hindus currently residing in Bangladesh, and Indian Muslims would be driven out led to the unrest in the peace-loving Assam, he told newspersons soon after mobile Internet services were restored after nine days of suspension across the

"A section has misguided the people by claiming that the CAA will make 1.5 crore Hindus of Bangladesh eligible for citizenship. Reality is, very few people already living in Assam for decades will get citizenship because of this Act and it will become clear when we publish the list after their applications are processed," Mr. Sonowal said at his official residence

near the Raj Bhavan. Finance



Call for calm: Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, second right, in a rally for peace in Nalbari on Friday. • AP

wa Sarma had claimed the Act would benefit at most 5.2 lakh Hindu Bangladeshis left out of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) that was published on August 31. A majority of the total 19.6 lakh people excluded from the NRC is believed to be Muslims who migrated from present day Bangladesh.

"I assure the people of Assam that our government will not take any step that goes against the indigenous Assamese people. There is no point of being the Chief Minister if I cannot protect the interests of the very people who elected us. Assam

Health Minister Himanta Bis- was, is and will be for the Assamese people and no force can threaten our language, culture and existence," Mr. Sonowal said.

> **Action against arson** The Chief Minister, unusual-

ly aggressive, said the government would take action against all those who instigated violence and arson during the anti-CAA protests. He asked people to desist from threatening and attacking BJP leaders and workers.

"While appreciating the people for democratic, peaceful protests, we want to make it clear that violence

have been destroyed and the houses of our MLAs and workers attacked, damaged or set afire," he said. Action against those who indulged in violence would

in any form would not be tol-

erated. Many establishments

from circle offices to banks

be taken according to the findings of the special investigation team set up to probe the incidents, he added. Mr. Sonowal said his go-

vernment had started the process of inviting leaders of the anti-CAA protests for discussion. "Everything can be sorted out through talks, and I have asked the Chief Secretary to set the stage.'

The Gauhati High Court on Friday rejected the State government's plea for reimposing the temporary ban on mobile Internet services for the sake of security. On Thursday, it ordered the government to restore the services suspended since December 12.

The police subsequently announced a WhatsApp number asking people to post screenshots of provocative or objectionable contents posted on social media

'Why is CAA being linked to NRC, which has not even started?'

Finance Minister says all stakeholders will be consulted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said that stakeholders will be consulted "as and when" the National Register of Citizens (NRC) process will start, and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) had nothing to do with that pro-

She was speaking to the newswire Asian News International (ANI), at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters. She added that she was "surprised" that "responsible political parties" were linking CAA to "something which hadn't start-

'Domestic matter' She also criticised West Ben-

gal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her statement on Thursday asking for a third party or even UN mon-



itored referendum on the NRC. "Our country's policy even in bilateral issues is to sort it out bilaterally without involving the UN or any third party, and here in a completely domestic matter the Chief Minister has asked for the UN. Does she have no faith in the institutions in India, Parliament and the Courts? In fact, in 2005, she had made a very passionate plea on behalf of the refu-

gees from Bangladesh. She even went to the extent of throwing papers at the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha, who was seated in the presiding officer's chair at that time, as she felt injustice had been done to Bengal. Has she changed her position now? It is totally unacceptable for an elected Chief Minister to say that an international organisation like the UN should intervene in our domestic affairs. It is utterly irresponsible of her to say this and I condemn it," she said.

Meanwhile, the BJP's working president J. P. Nadda will be addressing an "abhinandan rally" (felicitation rally) in Kolkata December 23 over the passage of the CAA in Parliament, signalling that neither the party nor the government was back pedalling on the issue despite protests.

Javadekar says NRC will not affect any citizen

'Law is only to help the persecuted'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said that when the NRC is implemented it would be "very smooth" and would not affect any citizen. He was speaking at a press conference on Friday to brief journalists on the United Nations Conference of Parties that recently concluded in Madrid.

Responding to questions on the Citizenship Amendment Act, Mr. Javadekar said that the country was united in its resolve to keep illegal migrants out of the country and only a "section of people" was trying to deceive the country. "We are seeing people being persecuted in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan and this Act is for them. They've been here for 20 years without citizenship. There was a similar law passed in 2003 by Atal Bihari Vajpayee to give shelter to Hindus from Pakistan. All



Prakash Javadekar

subsequent governments have endorsed this. Our law only widens the ambit for the other persecuted (Buddhists, Jain, Parsis and Sikh)." To a question on why

Muslims were excluded he said that Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan were Islamic states and therefore Muslims there "can't be persecuted on religious

At the Conference of Parties, he said India was lauded for its climate action. "We were among the top five countries lauded for our performance on meeting our climate goals," he said.

to prove citizenship: MHA

Common documents enough

'Those without papers may be allowed to produce witnesses'

Assam Accord, 1985, and

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Friday said guidelines for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) were yet to be drafted but Citizenship of India may be proved by giving any document relating to date of birth or place of birth

"Such a list is likely to include a lot of common documents to ensure that no Indian citizen is unduly harassed or put to inconvenience," a Ministry spokesperson said.

Indian citizens do not have to prove any ancestry by presenting documents such as identity card, birth certificate etc of parents/ grandparents dating back to pre-1971 situation. March 24, 1971 was the cut-off date for Assam's NRC conducted under the supervision of the Supreme Court as per the

was not related to countrywide citizens' register. According to the Citizenship Act, anyone born on or after 26 January, 1950, but before 1 July, 1987 was an Indian citizen by birth. "The people born between these years are naturalised citizens by now and would be having some kind of document as a proof of their birth here," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson said, "For illiterate citizens, who may not have any documents, the authorities may allow them to produce witnesses or local proofs supported by members of the community.

A senior Home Ministry official said each application received online under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) would be checked and enquired by officials, as the final decision to grant ci-

tizenship rested with the Centre. There would be no time restriction to apply under the CAA. On being asked as to how

the authorities would prove

that these people fled the

three countries due to religious persecution, the official said, "that is a cause of concern. There is no such proof, we will see." No separate legislation was required to compile the NRC, as the provision existed under the Citizenship Act

when it was amended in December 2004. The NRC's precursor- the National Population Register (NPR) would be compiled next year, he The third phase of the

NPR, a register of usual residents of the country who had been staying at a particular place for the past six months, would be conducted in September 2020.









Protests far and wide: Members of the public turned out in large numbers to protest peacefully against the Citizenship Amendment Act. In Varanasi, though, police carried out a baton charge to disperse violent protesters.



Dual citizenship for Lanka refugees to be examined

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is learnt to have conveyed to Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami that the State government's proposal for providing dual citizenship for refugees from Sri Lanka will be examined. The assurance was given when the latter met Mr. Shah in New Delhi on Thursday night and briefed him of the law and order situation in the State, according to a source in the State government.

'India belongs to both Muslims and Hindus'

Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Friday said India belongs to Muslims as much as it does to Hindus, and asked people protesting against the amended citizenship law if they had ever seen the pain of those displaced. He also said that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is not applicable to citizens of the country. Those who are citizens of India, be it Hindus or Muslims, can live here with honour, he said at a rally in support of the law. PTI

Seven Pak. refugees get citizenship certificates

NEW DELHI Shipping Minister M.L. Mandaviya on Friday said he had handed over citizenship certificates to seven Pakistan refugees in Kutch. He met the Pakistani refugees, who have taken shelter in Morbi and Kutch districts. The Citizenship Amendment Act will extend an opportunity of leading a dignified life in India to the minorities facing

religious persecution in

Pakistan, Bangladesh and

Afghanistan, he said. PTI

CAA: day of competing demonstrations across T.N.

Muslim outfits hit the streets after Friday prayers in several towns; counter protests by BJP State unit draw much smaller crowds

Protests and demonstrations continued in many parts of the State against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) on Friday, predominantly organised by Muslim organisations. In contrast, the coundemonstrations support of the new legislation by the BJP State unit drew much smaller crowds.

Coimbatore city witnessed major demonstrations opposing and supporting the new law on citizenship. Thousands participated in a public meeting organised by Coimbatore District Federation of All Jamath and Islamic Organisations at the Aathupalam Iunction.

Nearly 2,500 police personnel were deployed to



Show of strength: Coimbatore witnessed a massive protest against CAA on Friday. • M. PERIASAMY

monitor the situation. Most of the shops in Ukkadam, Karumbukkadai, Kuniamuthur and Aathupalam in the city remained shut, the police

Black flags were displayed outside the houses and shops in these areas as a sign of protest. No untoward incidents were reported. Life was not hit due to these demonstrations, the police

Nellai Mubarak, State pre-

Party of India (SDPI); Thamimun Ansari, State president of Manithaneya Jananayaga Katchi; and S.M. Backer, State president of India Thowheed Jamaath: participated in the public meeting. Prior to the

meeting, a few thousand par-

ticipants gathered near the South Taluk office for a demonstration.

In Tiruppur, Member of Parliament K. Subbarayan participated in a public meeting organised by the Federation of All Jamath and Islamic Organisations. Huge crowds were seen at a meeting held in Valipalayam, according to the police.

To counter the anti-CAA protests, members of the BIP staged a demonstration in support of the new law at Tatabad in Coimbatore on Friday. The police said that nearly a few hundreds of participants participated in the pro-CAA demonstration.

Senior BJP leader and former MP C.P. Radhakrishnan and BJP State general secretary S. Vanathi Srinivasan

led the demonstration.

In Vellore, the protests and agitations have been increasing to show opposition to the CAA. Students of Islamia College in Vaniyambadi protested on Thursday. Students from the Government Law College staged a demo inside their campus.

In Chennai, Muslims took to the streets in a few parts of city on Friday condemning the CAA. After Friday prayers, hundreds of protesters gathered at the Vaidyanathan bridge and surrounding areas in Tondiarpet and staged a demonstration blocking road. Another such protest was held in Tirumangalam where hundreds formed a human chain.

(With inputs from bureaus)

I did not say referendum, says Mamata

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Clarifying that she had not used the word referendum, West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Baneriee said on Friday that she had used the word "gana-vote" in an anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) rally on Thursday.

Her use of the word created controversy with BJP leaders alleging that she was seeking "foreign intervention."

Ms. Banerjee addressed a press conference in Kolkata following a week-long agitation programme challenging CAA and NRC.

"I said, they must do an opinion poll, in our language "gana-vote", opinion poll, and let us see if people accept it [CAA] or not," Ms. Banerjee said.

In Thursday's rally the Chief Minister had used the word "gana-vote".

The dictionary meaning of 'gana-vote' is plebiscite and neither referendum nor opinion poll.

It creates controversy as there is clear difference between three words- plebiscite and referendum in English. While in case of referendum the government needs to act upon it, in case of plebiscite, the government does not.

What perhaps Ms. Banerjee meant was plebis- cite but said



Gujarat police given nod to block Internet till tomorrow

Preventive step to be taken if situation worsens, says order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Following violent protests against CAA and NRC in parts of Gujarat on Thursday, the State government on Friday authorised Additional DGP (Intelligence) Manoj Shashidhar to suspend mobile-based Internet services from December 20 to

The government's move will be implemented only if deemed necessary should the situation worsen, an order by the Home Department said.

Policemen were attacked with stones in Vadodara during an anti-CAA protest. The situation was brought



Protesters clashing with police personnel during a rally in Vadodara on Friday. • РТІ

under control immediately with additional deployment of police personnel.

In Ahmedabad also police have been deployed in communally sensitive areas where violence occurred on

Thursday. Ahmedabad police lodged an FIR against a mob of 5,000 people that turned violent during the CAA protest in communally sensitive Shah-e-Alam in the

Agitations spread to rural pockets of Maharashtra

Incidents of stray violence in Hingoli, Beed and Parbhani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Protests over the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the proposed implementation of the National Register of Citizens took a violent turn in parts of rural Maharashtra on Friday with reports of stray incidents of vandalism and stone-pelting.

There were reports of Maharashtra State Road Corporation (MSRTC) buses were damaged in Kalamnuri in Hingoli and Ambejogai tehsil in Beed, and a Fire Department vehicle being damaged in stone-pelting in Parbhani district. All three districts

witnessed massive demonstrations against the CAA and NRC.

According to the demonstrators in Beed, the stonepelting was carried out by "anti-social elements" bent upon stirring trouble. While the local police managed to keep the situation under control, an uneasy calm prevailed in these districts. Several shops and establishments downed shutters in

Parbhani. In the communally sensitive Aurangabad, a protest rally was called by AIMIM MP Imtiaz laleel, which saw the participation of several members of various Ambedkarite groups too.

tion of the Modi government is in evidence in the CAA and in their desire to implement the NRC. Instead of trying to reassure the minority community, Union Home Minister Amit Shah seems to have brought this law for the sole purpose of harassing the minority community," he said.

"The anti-Muslim disposi-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mr. Shah behaved as if they were the only two wise people at a time when intellectuals, academics, activists, students, eminent artistes and individuals were protesting against their divisive policies across the length and breadth of the country, he added.

Govt. using force to tame dissent: Sonia

'People can protest wrong policy'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday accused the BJP of "unleashing brute repression against citizens" and said it is the right of every citizen to protest against any wrong policy of the government.

"The BJP government has shown utter disregard for the people's voices and chosen to use brute force to suppress dissent. This is unacceptable in a democracy," she said in a video released by the Congress.

"There have been spontaneous protests at universities, the IITs, the IIMs and other academic institutions throughout the country against the divisive agenda and anti-people policies of the BJP government," she said. "In a democracy, the people have a right to raise their voice against wrong decisions and policies of the government and register their concerns. Equally, it is the duty of the government to listen to the citizens and address their concerns."

The Congress president condemned the government's actions and expressed solidarity with students and citizens in their "just struggle". She also said the party was committed to "defending the fundamental rights of the citizens and upholding the foundational



Sonia Gandhi

values of the Constitution". Citizenship (Amendment) Act [CAA] is discriminatory and the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC) will particularly hurt the poor and vulnerable. As at the time of note-bandi [demonetisation], they will have to stand in queue to prove their and their ancestors' citizenship. The people's apprehensions are real and legitimate," she said.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra joined a group of students at India Gate to express solidarity with their protest against the CAA and the NRC. "The Act and the NRC are against the poor as they will be the most affected," she said, urging that protests be peaceful.

The Congress would also take out 'Save Constitution' marches and appeal for peaceful protests as a few protests had turned violent.

Parliament backs Johnson's Brexit deal

MPs vote by 358 to 234 to pass the second reading of the Bill, setting a speedy timetable for final ratification

Prime Minister Boris Johnson won approval for his Brexit deal in Parliament on Friday, the first step towards fulfilling his election pledge to deliver Britain's departure from the European Union by January 31 after his landslide

Lawmakers voted by 358 to 234 - a majority of 124 to pass the second reading of Withdrawal Agreement Bill, underlining Mr. Johnson's large majority in Parliament that should ensure a smooth ratification of the divorce deal to implement Britain's biggest policy shift in more than 40 years.

More than three years since Britain voted to exit the EU in a 2016 referendum, the deep uncertainty over Brexit has now been replaced by the firm deadline of the end of January. Only after that will the Prime Minister face talks to secure a trade deal with the bloc by the end of next year.

Getting "the Brexit vote



Crucial vote: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaking in the House of Commons in London on Friday. • AFP

wrapped up for Christmas" was the main aim for Mr. Johnson showing that, unlike his predecessor Theresa May, he now had free reign to drive Brexit forward despite continued criticism from opposition lawmakers.

Time to act

"This is the time when we move on and discard the old labels of 'leave' and 'remain'... now is the time to act together as one reinvigorated nation, one United

Kingdom," Mr. Johnson told Parliament before the vote.

"Now is the moment to come together and write a new and exciting chapter in our national story, to forge a new partnership with our European friends, to stand tall in the world, to begin the healing for which the whole people of this country yearn.'

The final stages of ratification will take place after Christmas, with the lower house of Parliament having until January 9 to approve the legislation, giving it just over three weeks to then pass through the upper house and receive Royal

After leaving, Britain will need to secure new trading arrangements with the EU a future friendship, the Prime Minister said, that would see the country agree a trade deal with no alignment with the bloc's rules.

In a few changes to the socalled Withdrawal Agreement Bill, Mr. Johnson seeks to make sure that there can be no legal chance of extending those talks beyond the end of next year. But while Mr. Johnson has

the support of his 365 Conservative lawmakers in the 650-seat Parliament, some opposition lawmakers criticised him for removing the opportunity for Parliament to have oversight over his negotiating priorities in the next phase of talks, and for getting rid of workers' protections.

Opposition Labour leader

Jeremy Corbyn, who is stepping down in the wake of the election defeat, described it as "terrible" and said his party would not be supporting

Opposition cries foul

"This deal does not bring certainty for communities or for business or for the workforce, in fact it does the opposite and hardwires the risk of a no-deal Brexit next year," Mr. Corbyn said.

Just a week after he won the largest Conservative majority since Margaret Thatcher in 1987, Mr. Johnson has set out an ambitious programme, with securing Brexit at the top of his agenda to repay the trust of voters. Hoping to satisfy the de-

mands of voters in northern and central England, who broke their tradition of backing Labour Party to support him, he has also pledged more funding to the state health service, education and policing. "Next year will be a great year for our country," he said before the vote.

Trump seeks immediate trial in Senate after impeachment

Mitch McConnell accuses Democrats of a 'partisan crusade'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump pressed his Republican allies on Thursday to exert rigid control of his Senate trial and ensure a swift exoneration, a day after he was impeached in a historic rebuke by the House of Representatives.

A bitter fight looms over the coming trial, expected to begin as early as the second week of January, with Senate leaders already drawing battle lines over the evidence that will be allowed.

But its fate was left in limbo late on Thursday when the Senate's powerful majority leader, Mitch McConnell signalled the standoff with Democrats over trial particulars would continue into the new year.

"We remain at an impasse on these logistics," Mr. McConnell said on the floor, as he announced the Senate had completed its business

Democratic candidates clash in presidential debate

Donald Trump

until January.

Mr. Trump seized on the uncertainty to attack House Democrats for seeking to demand key witnesses or dictate how Mr. McConnell should run the process.

"I want an immediate trial!" he boomed on Twitter.

Mr. Trump is charged with abuse of office and obstruction of Congress but Democrats, who led the three-month House investigation, are threatening to delay sending the articles of impeachment to the Senate until they are reassured the process will be fair.

Mr. Trump, the third president in U.S. history to be impeached, suggested that the Democrats would "lose by default" if they decided not to show up at a date determined by the Senate.

The House voted along party lines on Wednesday to charge Mr. Trump with abuse of power for pressuring Ukraine's President to investigate his potential White House challenger in 2020, the veteran Democrat Joe Biden.

In a floor speech on Thursday, Mr. McConnell ridiculed the witness demand and the evidence used as the basis for the impeachment articles.

He accused Democrats of a "partisan crusade" and said they had conducted the "most rushed, the least thorough and most unfair impeachment inquiry in mod-

ELSEWHERE

Saeed's trial in terror financing case begins

The much-awaited trial of Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed began here on Friday with a witness testifying against him in the anti-terrorism court, which also indicted the JuD chief in another case of terror financing, amidst international pressure on Pakistan to bring him to iustice. The anti-terrorism court in Lahore had indicted Saeed and three of his top aides on terror financing charges on December 11. PT

Australian PM ends holiday over fire crisis

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison issued a public apology on Friday and ended a Hawaiian vacation in response to public anger after two firefighters were killed battling bushfires sweeping the country's east coast. Some areas of Sydney are set for "catastrophic" conditions on Saturday, and the fires are now spreading to other parts. REUTERS

'More than 80 dead in latest Syria clashes'

Clashes between Syrian regime forces and armed groups in the country's last major opposition bastion have killed more than 80 on both sides in the past 24 hours, despite UN calls for de-escalation, U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. AFP

Afghanistan and Pakistan jolted by strong earthquake

Tremors were felt as far away as Delhi

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A strong earthquake rattled Afghanistan and Pakistan on Friday afternoon, the U.S. Geological Survey said, forcing residents into the streets in Kabul and Islamabad.

The 6.1-magnitude quake hit around 50 km southwest of Jurm in northern Afghanistan and was over 200 km deep, the USGS said.

In both capital cities, residents felt two short tremors in quick succession, howevreports of damage.

The quake could be felt as far away as Delhi, residents there reported, while in Lahore, panicked people came onto the streets and got out of their cars. The quake's epicentre was in a sparsely populated, remote mountain area in Badakhshan province in Afghanistan.

The USGS estimated there would be few economic losses from the quake, with "a low likelihood of casualties and damage."

er there were no immediate

Trump is running the most corrupt administration in the modern history of the U.S., says Sanders

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LOS ANGELES

White House candidates not only attacked President Donald Trump but also clashed sharply with one another during the Democratic debate, where a smaller field allowed lesser-known hopefuls to shine against the frontrunners.

One day after Mr. Trump's ignominious impeachment, seven candidates united on Thursday to declare the President must be defeated at the 2020 ballot box.

"We need to restore the



Joe Biden, left, and Bernie Sanders during the debate. • AFP

integrity of the presidency," said frontrunner Joe Biden, who accused Mr. Trump of "dumbing down" the office "beyond what I even thought

he would do".

Senator Bernie Sanders, who is second in the standings, blasted Mr. Trump as "running the most corrupt administration in the modern history of this country". Fellow Senator Elizabeth

Warren said the President ignores the poor, to do "everything he can for the wealthy and well-connected".

Moral leadership

But after calls for greater moral leadership from the White House and crisp backand-forth about trade policy, health care and how to lift more Americans out of poverty, the debate took a more aggressive tone with a series of heated clashes between candidates. Ms. Warren launched her

sharpest attacks yet on rival Pete Buttigieg, saying the 37year-old Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, has been holding closed-door fundraisers for the wealthy, including at a billionaireowned "wine cave" in California. The final prime-time debate of 2019 featured just seven of the 15 Democrats still in the contest six weeks before the first nomination ballots are cast in Iowa in February.

Central Park case looms over student's murder

A 13-year-old boy is suspected to be involved in incident outside Manhattan's Morningside Park

ASHLEY SOUTHALL JIM DWYER

NEW YORK

Hours after an 18-year-old student at Barnard College was found stabbed and dying just outside Morningside Park in Manhattan, the Police Commissioner and two top chiefs gathered with detectives near the steep flights of stone steps where she had been attacked.

It was already clear that the killing of the student, Tessa Majors, in her first semester of college and new to New York City, was a heinous, high-profile crime that would demand the full resources of the police department.

And it was just as plain to



Probe begins: Policemen at the entrance of Morningside Park, New York, where a student was fatally stabbed on Dec. 11. • NYT

the police officials at the scene that the inquiry would be handled in the shadow of an investigation from a different time: the Central Park Five case, also known as the Central Park jogger case,

from April 1989. Both concerned a young white woman attacked in a park and younger teenage suspects who are black and Latino.

In the Central Park case. five teenagers were wrongly

convicted of rape and attempted murder while the real attacker rampaged for months.

On the night of the killing, police officials took the unusual step of calling in prosecutors almost immediately to minimise any chance that investigators would repeat missteps made in the Central Park case, officials said.

In addition, all the questioning of a 13-year old suspect was recorded on video, police said.

It was later proved that one man, Matias Reves, had raped the Central Park victim – the second woman he had beaten and raped in the park that week. The wrongly convicted teenagers served

seven to 14 years in prison before the truth emerged.

The killing of Majors has shocked the neighbourhood and the Columbia University

The delicate case is also the first big test for the new Police Commissioner Dermot F. Shea as his department faces intense pressure to bring the killers of Majors to justice without arresting the wrong people.

Asked about the influence of the Central Park Five on practices that investigators are using in the Majors case, Mr. Shea declined to directly respond. But he did say it was unusual to have a suspect so young accused of such a grave crime. NY TIMES

Malicious campaign against me, says Pak. CJ PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's outgoing Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa on Friday said he was retiring with a crystal clear conscience, but noted that a "malicious campaign" had been launched against him and the judiciary following the death sentence handed out to Pervez Musharraf in the high treason case against the ex-military ruler.

Justice Khosa, 64, who retires at midnight on Friday, said the judiciary and he were being singled out for criticism.

Gen. Musharraf was given death sentence for abrogating the Constitution in 2007. Law Minister Farogh Naseem said on Thursday that



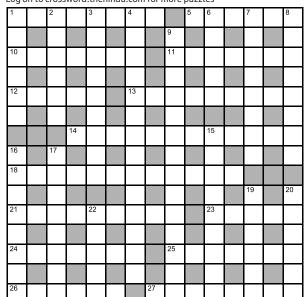
Asif Saeed Khosa

the judge who wrote the judgment was mentally unfit and should be stopped from performing his duties.

"A malicious campaign has been started against the judiciary and myself. The allegations are baseless and incorrect. We know the limits of our powers and we know that the truth shall always prevail," he said.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12812

Log on to crossword, the hindu, com for more puzzles





To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code

ACROSS

1 One understanding about modern art very quickly (2,1,5)5 Low-budget inferior film

beginning to bore one in travel (1,5) 10 Gaining power, allocate new file (7)

11 Italian film director collapsed on island (7)

12 Comical figure embracing queen (5) 13 Right information in notes

about units of ionising radiation (9) 14 Woman desiring hot love affair wants a man - it's midnight

18 Hippies beginning to face menace quietly elope abroad

21 Forgive and forget or start to eventually cheat around in

23 Which orb holds the blood of the Gods? (5) 24 Kind to shelter one pagan (7)

25 Slips away when date's about to consume drinks (7)

26 Watch determined person

giving up cigarettes at last (6) 27 Ditch partner after starting to brawl in a vicious manner (8)

DOWN

1 Abandoning female, fiend is breaking heart (6) 2 Strong aggressive woman in a

menagerie abruptly cuts staff

(set by Dr. X)

3 Pure evil spreading around society is sickening (9)

4 They are meant to forestall issues? (14)

collecting fine (5) 7 One making speech is evil. suppressing primarily

obnoxious case (5,3)

6 Pull up agent clumsily

8 Disregarding wife, sap embraces damsel in liaison

meet ENT specialist? (1,4,2,4,3)15 Ex-convict going round drunk

steals vehicle to gad about

9 A stinging rebuff is a reason to

16 Couple of females in a real panic (8)

17 Very old container in spot,

20 Dicey to go after fellow in

is elegant (6)

high spirits (6)

most likely to explode violently (8) 19 Carpenter's tool in workbench

22 Talk with snitch to trap leader of insurgents (5)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12811 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

| | Т | U | R | Ν | Т | Η | Е | Т | Α | В | L | Ε | S | | | 9 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|---|-----------|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---------------|---|---|---|--------------|---|---------------|
| | | Ρ | | Ε | | 0 | | П | | Ε | | М | | | ŀ | _ | • | _ | _ | - | | - | _ | _ |
| Ρ | 0 | S | Е | R | | Т | Α | М | Ρ | Е | R | | Z | G | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| Α | | U | | ٧ | | Ε | | Ε | | R | | G | | 0 | ı | 4 | ^ | 0 | Ē | | 0 | 4 | ^ | $\overline{}$ |
| S | J | R | R | Е | Α | L | Т | S | Т | | В | R | ī | О | L | 1 | ь | 3 | 5 | / | 8 | 4 | 2 | 9 |
| S | | G | | ш | | | | Т | | В | | Е | | Ν | ſ | 6 | 5 | 7 | a | 4 | 1 | 3 | Я | 2 |
| Т | S | Ε | ш | - | 0 | Т | | Α | R | Α | ш | S | Е | Α | Į. | U | J | - | 0 | 7 | | J | O | _ |
| Н | | | | В | | R | | Μ | | - | | | | В | ı | 4 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 5 |
| Е | М | Р | 0 | R | - | Α | | Ρ | Ш | L | - | S | S | Е | H | ~ | ~ | $\overline{}$ | = | _ | ~ | $\dot{\sim}$ | - | |
| В | | Α | | Ε | | D | | | | ī | | Т | | Ν | | 8 | 3 | 9 | / | 5 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| U | Ν | D | 0 | | в | ш | Α | R | - | z | М | - | z | D | Γ | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 | a | 5 | Я | 6 | 3 |
| С | | R | | G | | V | | \supset | | G | | H | | Е | ı, | - | _ | 7 | | 0 | J | U | U | 0 |
| Κ | Ν | 0 | 8 | - | Н | Α | ш | ш | | 0 | z | Α | | R | | 5 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| | | Ν | | R | | R | | Е | | \subset | | О | | | ŀ | 0 | ^ | ^ | 4 | ^ | _ | ~ | _ | 4 |
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FAITH

Embodiment of Jnana

When a cow sees or hears its calf, it ejects milk from its udder. In the same manner, God's mercy flows towards his devotees, said R. Narayanan in a discourse. But instead of seeking the feet of the Lord, we run after riches that are like bubbles of water. Wealth is like lightning, and can be easily lost. Soorapadman wielded great power and had many boons, none of which helped him when Lord Shanmukha attacked him. Wealth or power will not save us when Yama knocks on the door. They will not rid us of the fear of death. But if we reform and turn towards God, then we will attain liberation.

Saint Arunagirinatha, in his Kandar Alankaram, addresses Muruga as the nephew of the Lord who crushed the ego of Kaliya, the snake, who lived in the Yamuna, and struck terror in the hearts of those who lived in Vrindavan. There are many leelas of Krishna, but Arunagirinatha refers specifically to this leela. The reason, perhaps, was that Lord Krishna spared the life of the snake. It is to show that Muruga is just as merciful as Krishna, if one gives up one's ego and pride. Once one has placed one's trust in Muruga, one need not fear anything. If one reads Arunagirinatha's Tiruppugazh, one need not fear Yama.

When a divine fruit was promised to the one who first went round the world, Vinayaka went round His parents -Siva and Parvati. But Muruga went round the world. Vinayaka got the fruit because circumambulating the Divine Couple was equal to going round the world. But Muruga's act was also significant, for it showed us that the Divine Couple are all pervasive. An angry Muruga was pacified by Siva, who said to Him, "Pazham nee - you are a divine fruit" meaning Muruga was Himself the embodiment of jnana.

MARKET WATCH

| | 20-12-2019 | % CHANGE |
|-----------|------------|----------|
| Sensex | 41,682 | 0.02 |
| US Dollar | 71.12 | -0.13 |
| Gold | 38,894 | 0.28 |
| | | |

| NIFTY 50 | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|
| | | CHANG |
| Adani Ports | | |
| Asian Paints | | |
| Axis Bank | | |
| Bajaj Auto | | |
| Bajaj Finserv | | |
| Bajaj Finance | | |
| Bharti Airtel | 453.80 | 4.3! |
| BPCL | | |
| Britannia Ind | 3122.25 | 9.50 |
| Cipla | 465.75 | 1.8 |
| Coal India | 200.80 | 3.9 |
| Dr Reddys Lab | 2863.35 | 6.20 |
| Eicher Motors | 22221.15 | -206.00 |
| GAIL (India) | 119.55 | 1.8 |
| Grasim Ind | 745.60. | 2.6 |
| HCL Tech | | |
| HDFC | 2404.10 | -7.8 |
| HDFC Bank | | |
| Hero MotoCorp | | |
| Hindalco | | |
| Hind Unilever | | |
| ICICI Bank | | |
| IndusInd Bank | | |
| Bharti Infratel | | |
| Infosys | | |
| Indian OilCorp | | |
| ITC | | |
| JSW Steel | | |
| Kotak Bank | | |
| L&T | | |
| M&M | | |
| Maruti Suzuki | | |
| Nestle India Ltd. | | |
| NTPC | | |
| ONGC | | |
| PowerGrid Corp | | |
| Reliance Ind | | |
| State Bank | | |
| | | |
| Sun Pharma | | |
| Tata Motors | | |
| Tata Steel | | |
| TCS | | |
| Tech Mahindra | | |
| Titan | | |
| UltraTech Cement. | | |
| UPL | | |
| Vedanta | | |
| Wipro | 251.80 | 2.6 |
| | | |

| Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on December 20 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CURRENCY | TT BUY | TT SELL | | | | | | | |
| US Dollar | 70.92 | 71.24 | | | | | | | |
| Euro | 78.68 | 79.04 | | | | | | | |
| British Pound | 92.40 | 92.82 | | | | | | | |
| Japanese Yen (100) | 64.85 | 65.15 | | | | | | | |
| Chinese Yuan | 10.12 | 10.17 | | | | | | | |
| Swice Franc | 72 29 | 72.62 | | | | | | | |

. 51.40..

Panel okays spectrum auction plan

Over 8,300 MHz, including for 5G services, will be put up in 2020; reserve price fixed at ₹5.22 lakh crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Digital Communications Commission (DCC) on Friday approved plans to auction over 8,300 MHz of spectrum, including airwaves to be used for offering 5G services, with a reserve price of ₹5.22 lakh crore.

However, in a setback to the telecom service providers (TSPs), there has been no reduction in the reserve price, as demanded by them, for the airwaves that will be put to bid in March/April 2020.

"The DCC has today approved the recommendation of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). We are hopeful that auction should be conducted sometime in March-April," Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash said.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

bonds dropped sharply on

Friday after the Reserve

Bank of India (RBI) an-

long-term securities and

selling of short tenure ones

On Friday, the yield on

10-year government bench-

mark bond dropped 15 bps

on Friday to close at 6.60%

- the biggest fall since Oc-

tober 9, thus narrowing the

gap with the repo rate. The

yield on 2020 paper jumped

In fact, the intention be-

hind this exercise – termed

Operation Twist - is to man-

age the yields. This will ad-

dress the issue of liquidity.

open market operations.

nounced

simultaneously

purchasing of

through

After Operation Twist,

vields on govt. bonds drop

Trend to aid monetary transmission



Dissenting note: High reserve prices may make it difficult for telcos to bid, says COAI's Rajan Mathews. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The Secretary said that the entire available spectrum – a little over 8,300 MHz across 22 telecom circles with a reserve price of ₹5,22,850 crore – will be put up for bidding. Out of the

Liquidity was abundant at

the shorter end but not so

much at the longer end. But

by making liquidity availa-

ble at the long end, the

move will help in monetary

transmission, bankers said.

turned the market senti-

ment dramatically. RBI's ac-

tion led to easing of rates of

long term 10-year bond

yield by 2%," Shrikant Chou-

han, senior vice-president,

equity technical research,

yields also aid rate-sensitive

sectors like auto and real es-

tate, which ended in posi-

tive territory," he added.

Operation Twist was under-

taken by the U.S. Federal Re-

serve in 2011-12 to make long

term borrowing cheaper.

"Falling long-term bond

Kotak Securities.

"Today, Operation Twist

8,300 MHZ of airwaves, 6,050 MHZ are allocated for

Mr. Prakash added that an 'important change' in the payment process for the

made. In the auctions, the telcos will need to pay lower upfront amount in case the spectrum won by them is not be available with the DoT in the next 30-day period.

Upfront payment As per the earlier rules, successful bidders had to pay upfront 25% of the charges for sub-1 Ghz band and 50% of charges for higher frequency bands. Now, "in case the spectrum won is available later... say after six months, after eight months, the upfront payment will be 10% for sub-1 Ghz and 20% for higher frequency bands. This is so that we know that the bidder is a serious player," he said.

The spectrum which is being put on auction includes ed up to December 2021. The proposal will now be sent to the Cabinet for approval. "The DCC's decision to proceed with spectrum auctions in the near future may be fraught with challenges. With spectrum reserve prices 4 to 6 times higher than that of similar spectrum sold recently in several countries, high levels of debt and prevailing financial stress in the sector, telecom service providers will find it very difficult to raise funds to partici-

pate in the auctions," Rajan

S. Mathews, DG at operators'

body COAI said.

He added that the quantum of spectrum in the 5G band being put up for auction will be only 175 MHz, 'woefully inadequate' for operators to roll out robust 5G networks and services.

bought spectrum has been airwaves that may get vacat-Anand Mahindra to step down

Anish Shah to join board, take over as MD & CEO in 2021

as M&M executive chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Automotive major Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. (M&M) has announced major changes in key leadership roles effective April 1, 2020, as a number of its top executives are retiring over the next fifteen months

Mahindra Group president (Strategy) Anish Shah, who joined the group nearly five years ago from GE Capital, gets the pivotal role to pilot the auto major in future.

Chairman Anand Mahindra will transition to the role of non-executive chairman of the board of M&M with effect from April 1, 2020.

As non-executive chairman, Mr. Mahindra will serve as a mentor and



Anand Mahindra

sounding board for the MD on issues to be presented to the board, especially in the areas of strategic planning, risk mitigation and external interface. He will also provide feedback and counsel to the MD on key issues fac-

Dr. Pawan Goenka, the current MD, will be re-designated as MD and CEO effective April 1, 2020.

There will be no change in any reporting relationships as a result of this redesignation. He will retire on April 1, 2021 and continue to retain direct responsibility of SsangYong Motor as chairman of its board till his retirement

Dr. Shah will transition to becoming MD and CEO in 2021, and with full oversight of all group businesses, in two phases

On April 1, 2020, he will join the M&M board as deputy MD and group CFO, with responsibility for the Group Corporate Office and oversight of all of the group's businesses other than auto and farm sectors.

corporate decisions, PM assures industry

'India will recover from slowdown'

No action on genuine

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Stating that he was aware of the current discussions around the state of the country's economy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that India had seen such ups and downs in the past as well and had the ability to emerge stronger from the current state of affairs. "Such up and downs have come in the country's economy before as well. But the country has the ability that every time it has come out of such a situation and come out stronger than before. Therefore, India will definitely come out from the present situation," Prime Minister said.

Speaking at an Assocham event, Mr. Modi said, "I am well aware of the discussions that are taking place today about the economy, but in the midst of those discussions, we must also remember that during the earlier government, the GDP growth rate had touched 3.5% in a quarter."

He added that under the previous government, headline CPI was hovering at 9.4%, core inflation at 7.3%, and wholesale inflation at 5.2%, while the fiscal deficit had widened to 5.6% of the GDP. "I don't want to get into why some people were silent at that time," he said. Under the NDA government, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the July-September quarter hit a 25-quarter low of 4.5%.

Mr. Modi said in the past five years, the country had made itself so strong that it could not only set for itself a target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy, but also make efforts in that direction.



"Five years before, the economy was heading for disaster. Our government not only stopped this, but also brought in a discipline in the economy. We brought in fundamental changes in India's economy so that it could run with set rules in a disciplined manner. We have met with the decades' old demands of the industrial sector and have built a strong foundation for a \$5 trillion economy," he said. Mr. Modi highlighted his

government's decisions such as decriminalisation of corporate offences, and promised that "no inappropriate action will be taken on genuine corporate decisions." He said ₹100 lakh crore would be spent in the coming years on building infrastructure and another ₹25 lakh crore on the rural economy and this, in turn, would help nearly double the size of the Indian economy to \$5 trillion by 2024.

Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma took exception to Mr. Modi's comments, saying, "We know five years ago, the economy was strong when you look at the rate of investment, industrial output or capital formation or job creation. But now [we] are staring at a deepening economic crisis, not just slowdown."

+ RIL, Shell to hand over oil fields to ONGC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) and BGEPIL, part of Royal Dutch Shell Group, will transfer their stakes in the Panna-Mukta oil and gas fields to ONGC, the Government of India's (GoI) nominee, on December 21,

ONGC, RIL and BG Exploration & Production India Ltd. (BGEPIL) each hold 40%, 30% and 30% participating interest, respectively.

The production sharing contracts for the Panna-Mukta and Tapti fields, executed by the PMT IV with the government in 1994, will expire on December 21. The Tapti field had ceased production in 2016.

The Panna-Mukta fields had produced 211 million barrels of oil and 1.25 TCF (trillion cubic feet) of natural gas since December

Import cover

months: RBI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

With foreign exchange re-

serves rising to \$429.84 bil-

lion as at end June 2019

from \$412.47 billion as at

end March 2019, the im-

port cover rose to 10

months compared with 9.6

months, the Reserve Bank

of India (RBI) said in a

tonnes of gold with 325.87

tonnes being held in safe

custody of Bank of England

and the Bank for Interna-

tional Settlements. The ba-

lance is held domestically.

report.

rises to 10

Bharat Bond ETF subscribed 1.7 times

Fund garners about ₹12,000 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Bharat Bond Exchange Traded Fund (ETF), the country's first corporate bond exchange-traded fund aimed at retail investors, saw a strong response, with the issue getting subscribed around 1.7 times.

"India's first corporate

bond ETF, Bharat Bond ETF, has received a great response from investors across different segments. The issue was oversubscribed approximately 1.7 times, collecting about ₹12000 crore. Information is subject to further updates," stated a tweet by Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management

(DIPAM). The ETF offer, which closed on Friday, had a base

issue size of ₹7,000 crore. According to Edelweiss Asset Management Company, which is managing the The ETF offer, which closed on

Friday, had a base

issue size of

₹7.000 crore

ETF, the issue saw wide participation across categories including individuals, nonresident Indians, high networth individuals, top tier corporates and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs).

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

house had said in a release. The exchange traded fund will invest only in AAArated bonds of public sector companies.

buys balance stake in TCSAP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Tata Chemicals, through its wholly owned subsidiary Valley Holdings Inc., has acquired the remaining 25% partnership interest in Tata Chemicals Soda Ash Partners Holdings (TCSAP) from The Andover Group, Inc., a subsidiary of Owens-Illinois Inc., for \$195 million, or ₹1,386 crore.

With this acquisition, Tata Chemicals has increased its ownership in Tata Chemicals (Soda Ash) Partners to 100%.

R. Mukundan, Tata Chemicals Ltd.'s MD and CEO, said, "The acquisition is expected to be EPS accretive. We will continue to invest in our Green River facility to meet market demand."

March 2019, TCSAP had a turnover of \$465.5 million and an EBITDA of \$100.7

Tata Chem.

For the year ended

Accenture reaches global headcount landmark of 5 lakh

Tech major's India operations employ 150,000 people

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

based digital technology and consulting major, seems to have emerged as the single largest tech employer in the world. In its first quarter earnings call, the company said

Accenture Plc, the Dublin-

According to latest data, its employee strength had India's foreign reserves surpassed 500,000, a signifstood at \$554 billion as on icant people milestone, as on November 30, 2019. December 13. As at end-September, TCS is the second largest 2019, the RBI held 618.17

tech employer with 450,738 people, followed by IBM at Cognizant 256,000, Infosys 228,123 and Wipro at 171,425.

Julie Sweet, CEO, said the company has a chunky lea-



Julie Sweet

dership team, comprising more than 8,000 MDs across the globe. "Earlier in December, we promoted 787 new Managing Directors and Senior Managing Directors, including a record 260 new women Managing Directors, accounting for 36% of the

promotions to this level," she said in the earnings call. India is the single largest geography for Accenture in terms of people, with a headcount of 150,000. The firm employs over 50,000 in the Philippines and about 17,000 in China.

Digital, cloud, and security projects were core for Accenture, accounting for 65% of total revenue. KC McClure, CFO, said, the company had invested \$110 million in acquisitions in Q1 to bolster capabilities in high growth areas.

"We expect to invest up to \$1.6 billion in acquisitions this fiscal year (September-August)," she said.



Lilly Singh, the first Indian origin, bisexual late-night talk show host, speaks about keeping it real with her guests and building her entertainment empire from the ground up

Lilly Singh:

She's got

DEBORAH CORNELIOUS

Snoop Dogg cried while watching Frozen. The completely unexpected revelation from one of the coolest rappers in the business came out during a conversation on A Little Late with Lilly, the latest entrant in the talk show world. "I kind of fangirled, I've always been a huge fan," says the show's 31year-old host, Lilly Singh, who admits the rapper has been her favourite guest so far. "He was super laidback, nice to everybody, and also just very vulnerable in a wonderful way." This might have had

something to do with Snoop Dogg getting her staff to dabble in the 'green'. "It was really nice to see that the person who made all the dope music I grew up with was also down to earth," she adds.

On air since September this year, A Little Late was envisioned to shake up staid late-night programming and, of course, improve NBC's digital foothold. What better way than to have an openly bisexual YouTube superstar of colour? But Singh is quick to acknowledge the women who prepped the way for her and others like her. "Cynthia Garrett, Wanda Sykes, Joan Rivers, Mo'Nique, Busy Phillips...

> and Samantha Bee's show is currently on TV," she lists, accepting that she's aware of

how her show fits into the perception of progress when it comes to representation.

Her vision board, however, always featured her in the guest seat, never as host. "I never thought it would happen. I hope it means that more people of [colour], women and individuals in the LGBTQ community will be given opportunities," she says. "The content we watch should look like the world we live in."

True to herself

On December 14, Singh finished taping all 96 episodes of A Little Late, shooting two episodes a day for three long, continuous months. The schedule, she ad-



mits, left her tired, stressed and sad on occasion.

But she'd vowed to wake up every morning with renewed gratitude and faith. "I have to give a lot of credit to the team," she reveals. "[Writers], producers, crew and EPs. They helped me keep going. It takes a village!" The shoot, a deliberate move to accommodate other projects, is unlike its counterparts - from taking the usual skyline trope up a notch, with a bright burst of neon colours, to highlighting her two great loves, her pet dog Scarbro and a picture of French fries.

Singh says the intimate set allows her to be herself, which almost always includes wearing sneakers (and pant suits in bold hues), and ensures hilarious chats with people who "I think are cool, interesting, and are down to have a conversation with me".

Her first episode featured an opening video that she wrote and directed. Set in a boardroom, an all-male exec team suggests navy suits and opening monologues covering the news of the week. So, in all Lilly Singh swagger, she raps: Iknow you're used to only Jimmys in your spotlight, but Imma throw some melanin up in your late night/ It's time to switch it up in here, cos now a lady runs the show. "That was really close to my



Making the shift

A Little Late is finding its footing, but has cemented Singh's seamless transcendence of mediums. The chasm between digital content and traditional television has never been thinner than now, she says. "Audiences should be able to consume content how they like." In the past, YouTube stars have made it big. There's Colleen Ballinger, aka Miranda Sings, who got her own scripted gig on Netflix, Haters Back Off. And Billy Eichner's Billy on the Street, which went to truTv. The comedian also got a stint on Amy Poehler's Parks and Recreation. But no one has infiltrated pop culture like Singh has.

Up close Lilly Singh with Malala Yousafzai on the sets of her show

heart," says Singh, who prefers a no-politics zone for her show (or as she rapped it, I ain't talking about Donald unless his last name Glover). "I was also really nervous because it was the first thing that anyone saw related to my show. So that was really special."

Finding her footing

So far, her guests have included Alisters like Natalie Portman, Mindy Kaling, and Ewan McGregor, activist and Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai, pop culture favourite Antoni Porowski (Netflix's Queer Eye) and indie darlings Tegan & Sara. Even fellow comedians have been on the hot seat: The Office's Rainn Wilson (Dwight Schrute), Tig Notaro and Jim Gaffigan.

A Little Late has an IMDB rating of 2.0 on 10, though Rotten Tomatoes gives her 100%. The divisive reviews are understandable: Singh's sketches tend to be an extension of her perennially-flavoured YouTube content. While they lure an established fan base, the more mature audience tuning into the post-1 am slot might feel alienated. Especially with its myopic focus on millennial topics. The first episode had Kaling guess the meaning of popular slang. Spoiler alert, the 40-year-old didn't succeed much. "Because we are taped, our show can be a bit more experimental," insists Singh. "We tend to look at current events and culture through a different lens compared to other late-night shows because our show isn't responding to the same day's news. In general, I want my show to offer an escape for people."

Half way through season one, A Little Late hasn't quite carved a space for itself.

There's clearly pressure on Singh to reinvent the late-night talk show wheel, especially since no woman has ever made it past a single season of hosting a network late-night show. But if anyone can wrestle a space for themselves while sporting a contagious smile, it is Singh, who is clearly out for world domination.

Seed hunter: In the artist's studio

Re-used Burma teak, bark powder and foraged seeds are just a few of the materials Benitha is found in public spaces such as The Centre Pompidou, Paris, and The Sculpture Park at Nahar- is found in public spaces such as The Centre Pompidou, Paris, and The Sculpture Park at Nahar- is found in public spaces such as The Centre Pompidou, Paris, and The Sculpture Park at Nahar- is found in public spaces such as The Centre Pompidou, Paris, and The Sculpture Park at Nahar- is found in public spaces such as The Centre Pompidou, Paris, and The Sculpture Park at Nahar- is found in public spaces such as The Centre Pompidou, Paris, and The Sculpture Park at Nahar- is found in public spaces such as The Centre Pompidou, Paris, and The Sculpture Park at Nahar- is found in public spaces such as The Centre Pompidou, Paris, and The Centr Perciyal uses in her installations

MALAVIKA BALASUBRAMANIAN

I have to give a lot of credit to

the team. [Writers], producers,

crew and EPs. They helped me

keep going. It takes a village!

In the '90s, a college-going Benitha Perciyal was so taken with the cotton pod that she made it the subject of her work for a long time. To her, the seed was a metaphor for the feminine, with its hard exterior and

wispy white interior. "I later realised that seeds can represent any cyclic life form," says the artist, whose materials of choice include re-used Burma teak, resins, fibres, seeds and frankincense.

As a child, Perciyal was fascinated with nature and this is reflected in her many installations, all of which take the form of a memory. Like Naan Oru Penn, Yen Yennam Aayiram (2016), where the figurines are featured with containers made of bottle gourds. "My mother would store honey in a dried-up sorakkai

[bottle gourd]; that's how I view the vegetable," she says. Her art (can go up to ₹19 lakh)

garh Fort, Jaipur. Perciyal's installations are also part of private collections by art aficionados like Sanjay Tulsyan (Chennai), Tarana Sawhney (New Delhi) and Sangitha Jindal (Mumbai).

Chasing inspiration

In the 20 years since she moved to Chennai from her hometown, Thiruvannamalai, Perciyal, 40, has become well-versed with the city's



eaking to you," she says. Her recent exhibition in Mumbai (in October), Aggregate, used seeds gathered from around Chennai. For instance, the installation We Shall Meet Again is made of Indian Elm

and Tacoma seeds found by the beach. "The brown [elm] seed is as small as the new ₹1 coin, and I've stuck thousands together," she says, adding that the Tacoma seeds were sourced from the Government Music College and the Theosophical Society in Adyar.

The seeds of the African Tulip tree, sourced near her home, have

eft) One of her

installations; The

Three Treasures

crafted using

rice paper and

seeds; Key to

the Garden: a

papier-mâché

bowl featuring

are thin and fine," she says. In You Cannot Be Alone, she's used seeds from the Pink Trumpet, spotted along the lanes of Madras University and Island Grounds.

Back to the dirt

Perciyal is aware that there's a downside to working with seeds criticism that she is hampering the tree's natural life cycle. "I pick and forage my seeds after studying the tree for a long time, and when I am sure that it has no scope to germinate elsewhere," she explains. Moreover, the ultimate aim for her work is for them "to go back to the Earth where they can resurrect".



PLACES

Christmas tree treat



Le Meridien's 20-foot tall Christmas tree is made out of 60,000 glass beads, handcrafted by the artisans of Purdilnagar and Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh. The aim is to showcase a dying craft in order to aid in its revival, and to help sustain the glass-making community in some measure. The shades of Christmas green spread a feeling of prosperity and freshness; the beads evoke intrigue as no two are alike, says the hotel. The tree, a life-size walkthrough installation, has been conceptualised by Nehmat Mongia, a student of the National Institute of Design.

At Le Meridien, Windsor Place

Contact us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in

5 EVENTS WORTH-YOUR-WHILE



Comic relief

Delhi Comic Con, on today and tomorrow, is one of pop culture's biggest shows, featuring meetups with Indian and international guests such as Bill Golliher (of Archie comics fame) and Chad Hardin (Harley Quinn series). Plus, there are gaming tournaments, experiential zones, and an array of comics, merchandise, and toys. **VENUE:** NSIC Exhibition Ground, Okhla Phase III

Witness fierce multi-purpose canines that assist the Indian Army in all their special operations, showing their skills, in the convenience of a mall. This dog show will witness canines showcasing their capabilities of obedience, explosivedetection, tracking, mine-detection guarding, and more.

VENUE: Pacific Mall, Tagore Garden TIME: 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

ANIMAL LOVE

Dog show



Christmas fare

Keeping in mind the winter months, The Irish House has announced a range of dishes, such as Spinach and Feta Tartlets, Wild Mushrooms and Goat Cheese on Brioche Toast, and Christmas Chicken Roast. The season's festive cocktails include Raspberry and Orange Mimosa, Mulled

Wine, Spiced Hot Chocolate, and more. **VENUE:** The Irish House, Nehru Place and Noida TIME: 12 noon - 12 midnight



Carols in the mall

Sing Christmas carols as you shop with choirs, such as Band Brothers 4, The Mizo Band, Echo Acapella, and more, every evening, until December 24th. There's also a Christmas market until the 22nd, featuring food, decor, winter apparel and accessories.

VENUE: The Plaza, Ground Floor, Select Citywalk TIME: 5 p.m. - 8 p.m. (for the choirs); 12 noon -10 p.m. (for the market)



Special menu

Partake of a multi-course Christmas brunch this Sunday, along with live music and a lucky dip for

children. On the menu are Butter Poached Lobster, Duck Breast Teriyaki, Honey-Mustard Glazed Pork Ribs, a Winter Vegetable Medley and more. Desserts include Apple Tart, Plum Cake, and Chocolate Fondant. **VENUE:** Guppy, 28 Main Market, Lodhi Colony

TIME: 12 noon - 3.30 p.m.

TIME: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

FILM REVIEWS

Three times too much

Almost ten years down the line, Dabangg 3 is feeling weak and worn out



Choppy ride Salman Khan as Chulbul Pandey, now a worn-out character *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

NAMRATA JOSHI

Dabangg 3 has a wisp of a story told in a tawdry, slipshod way. It depends entirely on the goodwill and popularity of the original and the star power of Salman Khan to sail through.

The ride, however, remains choppy. The film is set in kitschy North Indian small town Tundla and goes back to crazy cop Chulbul Pandey's (Salman Khan) past, to his romance with young Khushi (Saiee Manjrekar) that comes to a tragic end, all thanks to villain Bali (Kichcha Sudeep). So revenge has to follow. The film tries its best to provide a helping hand in launching young Manjrekar's career but remains focused through and through on Khan.

Dabangg is a milepost of sorts in his career, - it bridged the gap for him between the single screen audiences and those from the multiplexes. Now there is a deliberateness, in trying to woo the audience from the South with the dubbed versions and having Prabhu Deva for director and Sudeep stepping in as villain.

However, almost ten years down the line, the franchisee doesn't have any novelty. Tiredness permeates especially in the Chulbul Pandey persona – be it in the swagger or the swinging of the hips, or the self-parodying. It feels like Khan is trying way too hard. Manjrekar has little to do other than look cov. Sonakshi Sinha does try to add some spunk to the proceedings as spitfire

Forget all else, there are no lines like, "Thappad se darr nahin lagta, pyaar se lagta hai" of the original, to incite the audience to whistle, nor does the new version of the 'Munni Badnaam' item number ignite the screen. There is talk of envi-

Rajjo but hardly has much

screen time.

Dabangg 3

DIRECTOR: Prabhu Deva CAST: Salman Khan, Sonakshi Sinha, Kichcha Sudeep, Saiee Manjrekar, Arbaaz

RUN TIME: 2 hours 20 minutes STORYLINE: The film goes back to crazy cop Chulbul Pandey's (Salman Khan) past, to his romance with young Khushi (Saiee Manjrekar) that comes to a tragic end, all thanks to villain Bali (Kichcha Sudeep). Revenge has to follow.

ronment and Fit India and other such assorted causes, hardly felt, more for the heck of it. The portrayal of old-fashioned masculinity makes way for seeming wokeness when it comes to women's issues but remains nothing more than a discomfiting display of machismo and patriarchy.

What do the random. needless references to rape and women empowerment add up to? I am still scratching my head. And slapping a woman, whatever be the provocation, can't ever rise above being tasteless.

Out of tune space opera

Star Wars: Episode IX – The Rise of Skywalker, the last film of the franchise misses the mark by a mile

DEBORAH CORNELIOUS

Many questioned the need for a Star Wars sequel trilogy. After all, the original trilogy cemented itself into a saga. But no, then came the prequel trilogy in 1999. Now here we are, 42 years and eight films later. To be fair, the sequel trilogy did re-energise the Star Wars spirit. As all good things come to an end, Star Wars: Episode IX - The Rise of Skywalker bids farewell to the beloved space opera.

As is the case with all the three Star Wars trilogies, the second instalment in each always seems to push boundaries and create an anticipation the last film has to live up to. The Empire Strikes Back (1980) and Attack of the Clones (2002) both upped the ante, as did The Last Jedi (2017). Is Rise of Skywalker's adieu worthy of its predecessors?

Unfortunately, not. Episode IX simply tries too hard. Yes, the crux of it all is that the temptation of evil is strong but good should win in the end. Must

Star Wars: Episode IX -The Rise of Skywalker

DIRECTOR: J. J. Abrams. CAST: Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill, Adam Driver, Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Oscar Isaac, Anthony Daniels, Naomi Ackie, Domhnall Gleeson, Richard E. Grant, Lupita Nyong'o, Keri Russell, Joonas Suotamo, Kelly Marie Tran, Ian McDiarmid, Billy Dee Williams.

RUN TIME: 2 hours 20 minutes **STORY LINE:** Palpatine has returned to destroy the galaxy. Rey and the Resistance have to stop evil once again.

we be reminded ever so repetitively? Multiple times, in each film too. In Rise of Skywalker, Palpatine has survived and wants to build a Final Order to control the galaxy with the help of Darth Vader's grandson and commander of the dark side, Kylo Ren (Adam Driver). Rey (Daisy Ridley) is continuing her training in the Force with Leia Organa (a digitally re-created Carrie Carrie Fisher whose

deleted scenes from past



plays Kylo Ren in the film ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

films have been strategically used). Palpatine's Final Order has a new fleet of planet destroying ammunition. The Resistance must save the galaxy. Sounds familiar? It is.

In addition to its contrived plot, Rise of Skywalker relies heavily on nostalgia. Past characters resurface as ghosts and memories. The last two films' gradual introduction to new characters and the steady build-up of anticipation are both completely nullified with Rise of Skywalker's grand reveal.

Even this big twist doesn't quite fit into the scheme of things when director and co-writer J. J. Abrams narrows it all down to a familial microcosm which feeds on itself. While fans might take delight in how typical Episode IX is,

anyone uninformed will be left scratching their heads. Still, Abrams does create a visual spectacle. The new IMAX format does make audiences 'live' the movie. Wild waves have never looked so gorgeous, and a star-speckled sky hasn't been so beautifully twinkling before.

With scores of supporting characters and plenty of action unfurling, there isn't enough screen time for character development. The usual suspects continue to revel in their friendship: Po (Oscar Issac), Finn (John Boyega), Chewy (Joonas Suotamo) and darling droids BB-8 and C-3PO (Anthony Daniels). But it all boils down to Kylo, Rey and their will-they won't-they sexual chemistry. Though Ridley can't quite command the screen as the last Iedi. Driver's ambiguous allegiance (Force or the Dark Side) is captivating. A flick of a smirk and his intentions are conveyed. A sliver of a smile and an emotion is manifested. The solace is in how satisfyingly their narrative plays out.

It's a thrilling ride despite its flaws, but Rise of Skywalker departs well short of a bang that the Star Wars epic deserves.

A staged legacy

Doyen of Marathi theatre, Shriram Lagoo gave life to political plays, worked in women's welfare and left behind a mark few could rival

VIKRAM PHUKAN

Although widely acknowledged as a doyen of the Marathi stage, it was his parts in Hindi cinema that made Dr. Shriram Lagoo, who died on December 17 at 92, a household name across India. Acting was his chosen vocation, even if he never quite discarded his credentials as an ENT surgeon. From 1952 to 1969 he balanced his medical practice with forays into 'progressive' amateur theatre, before debuting in

1969 as a professional actor in Vasan Kanetkar's *Ithe Oshalala Mrityu*, a play on Sambhaji Bhonsle.

One of Lagoo's greatest parts for the Marathi stage was Natsamrat, the play by Kusumāgraj, which was first staged in 1970, and in which he played Appa Belvalkar, a fictional Shakespearean actor in glorious decline, opposite Shanta Jog. Another notable excursion was Kanetkar's Himalayachi Savali (1972), in which he played (once again, opposite Jog) an early 20th-century re-



Leaving a legacy Dr. Shriram Lagoo was an ENT surgeon - SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

former modelled on Dhondo Keshav Karve, who had worked extensively in the field of women's welfare.

Then in G.P. Deshpande's sharply political Uddhwasta Dharamshala, of which he directed the opening run in 1974, he played the Marxist professor Shridhar Vishwanath Kulkarni, called to task by a college tribunal for his political affiliations.

In an article by Vidyadhar Date, Lagoo described the professor as a drummer who marched to his own beat -"He is a dissenter. Such men may fall by the wayside, but the society benefits from their ideals." It's a play that is strikingly relevant in today's anti-intellectual climate.

It must be said that recent commercial revivals of classic Marathi drama, like Kanetkar's, play out more as signifiers of 'Marathi pride' than the political allegories of their time. As a director, Lagoo gave life to political plays like Vijay Tendulkar's Gidhade, and Ugo Betti's Italian play Queen & Rebels, which he adapted into Marathi.

He was awarded the Sangeet Natak

Akademi Award for Acting in 1970and the Akademi Ratna for lifetime contribution in 2010.

In his memoirs, And Then One Day, Naseeruddin Shah writes of how the effortless demeanour and delivery of stage legends like Paul Scofield or Shreeram Lagoo, convinced him that there was "absolutely no difference between good acting" in cinema or theatre. Shah also laments that the tragedy of great thespians like Lagoo and Nilu Phule was that they were known only as "excessive character actors they were compelled to be in popular Hindi cinema."

Of course, within the parameters of mainstream cinema, Lagoo wasn't typecast in the way other 'character actors' like A.K. Hangal or David might have been, playing everything from shipping magnates to lawyers and judges, middle-class patriarchs and cuckmost memorable parts was in the forgotten Hrishikesh Mukherjee film, Jurmana, in which he played an upright professor who was gradually losing his eyesight, grappling with contemporary morality. In his roles in Marathi cinema – in V Shantaram's *Pinjara*,and Jabbar Patel's Mukta, in which he played Abasaheb Kanase-Patil, a veteran of Maharashtra's co-operative movement – he was a perfect foil to towering female protagonists, a role reversal of the position he enjoyed in his plays for the Marathi stage, in which the women were

olded husbands. Perhaps, one of his

Another legacy that Lagoo leaves behind is that of a vociferous advocate of freedom of speech, taking up cudgels for banned plays like Kiran Nagarkar's Bedtime Story, and Pradeep Dalvi's Me Nathuram Godse Boltoy, albeit a play he did not agree with ideologically.

relatively peripheral.

POOCH CAFE









PEANUTS









HAGAR THE HORRIBLE





CALVIN AND HOBBES









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(6.3)

(4-4)

easily (9)

d.1982 (7)

20 Welcome -

precipitation (4) 23 Chopper (3)

7 Member of the British

7th Armoured Division in

10 Able to soak up liquid

12 Determined to achieve something at all costs

15 Female star of the 1942 film Casablanca,

16 Provoke to fury (6)

18 Capital of Belarus (5)

North Africa, 1941-2

TIGER

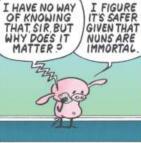




WUMO We've overproduced all of this I've got a perfect solution! I've STD medicine and can't sell it. developed an app called Tinder! What are we gonna do?

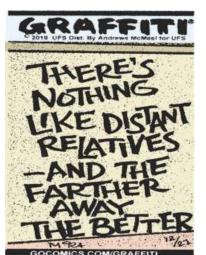
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE











HEALTH CAPSULES®

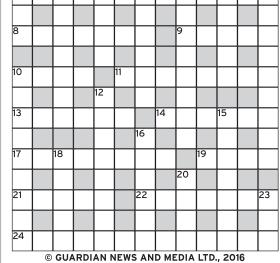
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THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13256



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19 Badly behaved child (4)

21 Machine that produces

1 Cut the grass (3) 2 Irritated (7) 3 Bogus (4) 14 Wood cut and prepared

4 Roman lyric poet, d.8BC - a chore (anag) (6) 5 Inspiring a feeling of delight (8) 6 Limits within which

something can be

Solution will appear in The Hindu dated December 23, 2019. Solution No. 13255



TAKE TWO: FOOTBALL THIS WEEKEND

With Premier League leader Liverpool taking time out from its title surge — it plays the FIFA World Club Cup final in Qatar today — the four teams below it on the table jostle for position

3-Manchester City (35 pts) v 2-Leicester (39 pts) Kick-off: 11 p.m., Saturday

Manchester City can move to within one point of second-placed Leicester if it can end the Foxes' nine-match unbeaten run. Although Leicester's eight-match winning streak in the league ended last week when it drew with Norwich City, Brendan Rodgers side has been in imperious form, especially on the road — it has won its last four away league matches by an aggregate score of 17-1. City will be especially wary of pacy striker Jamie Vardy, an old tormentor who has scored 16 league goals this season, more than any other player in the competition. While the fans at the Etihad will hope their support propels City's bid to reclaim lost ground in the title race, Leicester's followers will be aware that an away win will see their side cut Liverpool's advantage to seven points. There's a lot riding on this one.



5-Tottenham (26 pts) v 4-Chelsea (29 pts) Kick-off: 10 p.m., Sunday

Tottenham will aim to continue its revival under Jose Mourinho against one of the Portuguese manager's former clubs. Having won only three of their opening 12 league games, a run that led to the departure of Mauricio Pochettino, Spurs have won four out of five under Mourinho to climb to fifth. While Tottenham has been buoyant and Mourinho has been all smiles, Frank Lampard is wearing a frown after his young Chelsea team has hit the buffers. After a six-match winning streak in the league, it has lost four of the last five and suddenly its place in the top four is under threat. Worryingly for Chelsea, Mourinho's record at home against sides he has managed is incredible: he has won 12 of 13 of such fixtures, including all three against Chelsea.



SANDEEP SAXENA









The challenges of boxing in Mary Kom's era

A new, talented generation of Indian boxers is having to deal with comparisons with the six-time world champion — while she is still around and seemingly not keen on fighting her younger rivals

STAN RAYAN

The spread is very invit-

Sonia Chahal has a lot to pick from in her hotel room's breadbasket – fruits, dry fruits and sweets, including kaju katli, the cashew-based dessert. But the young boxer isn't nibbling on any of them.

"She keeps everything in the room, but the problem is she only looks at the food; she does not eat it," says her coach Jagdish Singh. "We

Mary [Kom] is a very big name, something like Maradona in football. Talent like that comes only once in about a hundred years. We may not have a girl who could be another Mary, but we have a very talented bunch of young boxers

RAFFAELE BERGAMASCO High Performance Director

> have a little problem with her body weight. If she raises it [from 55kg] to some 57 or big medal at the world level, even the Olympics."

Despite this slight issue with gaining weight, Sonia is one of the country's brightest young talents. The 22-vear-old was a silver medallist at last year's World Championships and a bronze medallist at this year's Asian Championships.

Sonia comes from Haryana's famed Bhiwani Boxing Club, where Jagdish moulded stars such as Vijender Singh, the country's first boxing medallist at the Olympics (2008), and Akhil Kumar, the 2006 Commonwealth Games champion.

India has won only two boxing medals at the Olympics - M.C. Mary Kom brought home the country's second, also a bronze, from London in 2012. But Jagdish has high hopes for Sonia, as well as Sakshi Chaudhary, who he says "is another girl who could win an Olympic medal".

Shift in focus

Strangely for a coach who has produced some of the country's best male boxers, lagdish decided to shift his attention to women after the 2012 Olympics. And the men were a big reason for this.

"I have produced many good male boxers, made them top internationals, but after going to the national camp, they forgot my club and me. Then I thought I should stop this and concentrate on women boxers," explains Jagdish. "Women are more faithful and loyal than

the boys." Jagdish's decision has worked wonders for boxers such as Sonia, Sakshi, who went on to become a triple world champion across the junior and youth categories,



and Kavita Chahal, a twotime World Championships bronze medallist.

Indeed, it was Kavita who

inspired Sonia to take up boxing. "I attended a function in our village, Nimri in Bhiwani, where Kavita was Worlds medal. That motivated me to take up boxing. I was 14 then," says Sonia, a farmer's daughter.

A featherweight rivalry

A strong counter-puncher, Sonia has a formidable challenger in 19-vear-old Sakshi in the featherweight category. In fact, the two contested the final at the recent Elite Women's Nationals in Kannur, with the former winning in a split decision. But Sakshi, who takes more risks than Sonia, could become a big name in the future.

Raffaele Bergamasco, the High Performance Director for women's boxing in India, being feted after winning a feels that the country has abundant talent, but is clear diately expect another Mary Kom to emerge.

> "Mary is a very big name, something like Maradona in football. Talent like that comes only once in about a hundred years. We may not have a girl who could be another Mary, but we have a very talented bunch of young boxers," says the Italian. He

picks out competitors such as Nitu and S. Kalaivani (both 48kg), Nikhat Zareen and Jyoti Gulia (51kg), Manisha and Sakshi (57kg), Worlds bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) and Asian 81kg champion Pooja Rani as the ones to watch.

Tricky spot

Mary, now 36, is a six-time world champion, but her longevity has put many young boxers in her flyweight class (51kg) in a tricky spot. Especially since Mary, a bronze medallist at this October's World Championships, does not appear keen to fight young boxers for the lone berth in next year's Olympic qualifiers in Wuhan (February) and Paris (May). With Mary pulling out

of the showdown with her biggest challenger, former world junior champion Nikhat, in the ongoing Big Bout League, the youngsters are aware that the issue could turn out to be very complicated.

youth champion who idolis es Mary, says, "Yes, the 51kg category is the toughest, not only in India but also in the world."

The 19-year-old Jyoti won the national title comfortably on her senior debut to earn a spot in the New Delhi trials on December 27 and 28 for a berth in the Olympic qualifiers. Mary and Nikhat

are also scheduled to be a part of these trials.

Coach Jagdish feels the weight of Mary's reputation could work in her favour. "Nikhat is very good but Mary is capable of impressing at a higher level. When you are a big name, your name and fame will put pressure on the opponent and officials. This is the reality," he says.

So, who is a better boxer - Nikhat at 23 or Mary at 36? "It is very difficult to give a verdict, but you should give priority to young boxers be-

cause they are the future," says Jagdish. "We should motivate her [Nikhat] every time. She should not be demoralised by the happenings around her, otherwise she could leave the sport. That will be

very harmful for the sport.

So, if a trial is announced, it

Boxing capital

should be conducted."

The year-end trials in Delhi will be followed very close-Jyoti, the 2017 world ly in Bhiwani, which has a and 50 degrees – makes life country's boxing capital.

> "Earlier, we had six-seven academies, now there are 10. And I can say that Bhiwani is the busiest city in the world in boxing, you can find nearly 1,000 boxers in action at the same time there," says Jagdish.

"The tough climate – in summer it's between 47

Nikhat [Zareen] is very good but Mary is capable of impressing at a higher level. When you are a big name, your name and fame will put pressure on the opponent and officials. This is the \pm reality... [Nikhat] should not be demoralised by the happenings around her... If a trial is announced, it should be conducted

JAGDISH SINGH | Coach

tough for the middle class and lower-middle class and those in agriculture. So, naturally, people are physically fit and that is our forte. And sport is one of our main avenues to land a job. That's why boxing is doing well in Bhiwani."

Clearly, when the going gets tough, the tough get

GAME THEORY

A sophomore season for the ages

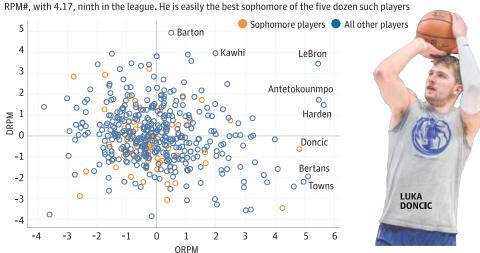
Luka Doncic, the Rookie of the Year in 2018-19, is having one of the best sophomore (second) seasons in NBA history. A 6'7" point forward with top-quality ball-handling, passing and scoring skills, Doncic has helped transform the Dallas Mavericks into contenders for the Western Conference Playoffs

Rubbing shoulders with the greats | Doncic's Player Efficiency Rating (PER*) of 32.0 tops all sophomore seasons ever, ahead of those of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Shaquille O'Neal, Wilt Chamberlain and David Robinson. What's more, the 20-year-old's points, rebounds and assists per game almost puts him in triple-double territory (a double-digit number in three statistical categories)

| Player | Season | Age | Games | Minutes | Rebounds/ game | Assists/ game | Points/ game | PER |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----|-------|---------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|------|
| Luka Doncic (Mavericks) | 2019-20 | 20 | 25 | 804 | 9.6 | 8.9 | 29.3 | 32.0 |
| Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (Bucks) | 1970-71 | 23 | 82 | 3288 | 16 | 3.3 | 31.7 | 29.0 |
| Shaquille O'Neal (Magic) | 1993-94 | 21 | 81 | 3224 | 13.2 | 2.4 | 29.3 | 28.5 |
| Wilt Chamberlain (Warriors) | 1960-61 | 24 | 79 | 3773 | 27.2 | 1.9 | 38.4 | 27.8 |
| David Robinson (Spurs) | 1990-91 | 25 | 82 | 3095 | 13 | 2.5 | 25.6 | 27.4 |

*PER - Player Efficiency Rating - is a per-minute rating that attempts to boil down all of a player's contributions into one number. It is standardised such that the average player's rating is 15.

In the top tier | Doncic is already among the top six offensive players in the current season, as the scatter chart plotting ORPM# and DRPM# shows. While his defence is slightly below average, he rates very high on combined



#RPM - Real Plus Minus - is an estimate that measures the 'real' per-minute impact of each player compared with others in all ball-possessions in the season. ORPM is Offensive Real Plus Minus, DRPM is Defensive Real Plus Minus.

STACKING UP

| | AII | b men 2 tob 12 | | | |
|---|-----|-----------------------|-----|--------|--------|
| Ŕ | # | PLAYER | AGE | POINTS | EVENTS |
| • | 1 | Rafael Nadal | 33 | 9,985 | 17 |
| | 2 | Novak Djokovic | 32 | 9,145 | 17 |
| | 3 | Roger Federer | 38 | 6,590 | 17 |
| | 4 | Dominic Thiem | 26 | 5,825 | 22 |
| | 5 | Daniil Medvedev | 23 | 5,705 | 24 |
| | 6 | Stefanos Tsitsipas | 21 | 5,300 | 27 |
| | 7 | Alexander Zverev | 22 | 3,345 | 24 |
| | 8 | Matteo Berrettini | 23 | 2,870 | 26 |
| | 9 | Roberto Bautista Agut | 31 | 2,540 | 23 |
| | 10 | Gael Monfils | 33 | 2,530 | 21 |
| | 11 | David Goffin | 29 | 2,335 | 27 |
| | 12 | Fabio Fognini | 32 | 2,290 | 24 |
| | 13 | Kei Nishikori | 29 | 2,180 | 16 |
| | 14 | Diego Schwartzman | 27 | 2,125 | 25 |
| | 15 | Denis Shapovalov | 20 | 2,050 | 26 |











| # | PLAYER | AGE | POINTS | EVENT |
|----|-------------------|-----|--------|-------|
| 1 | Ashleigh Barty | 23 | 7,851 | 15 |
| 2 | Karolina Pliskova | 27 | 5,940 | 19 |
| 3 | Naomi Osaka | 22 | 5,496 | 17 |
| 4 | Simona Halep | 28 | 5,462 | 17 |
| 5 | Bianca Andreescu | 19 | 5,133 | 13 |
| 6 | Elina Svitolina | 25 | 5,075 | 22 |
| 7 | Petra Kvitova | 29 | 4,776 | 17 |
| 8 | Belinda Bencic | 22 | 4,685 | 23 |
| 9 | Kiki Bertens | 27 | 4,245 | 27 |
| 10 | Serena Williams | 38 | 3,935 | 10 |
| 11 | Aryna Sabalenka | 21 | 3,120 | 24 |
| 12 | Johanna Konta | 28 | 2,879 | 17 |
| 13 | Madison Keys | 24 | 2,767 | 15 |
| 14 | Sofia Kenin | 21 | 2,740 | 24 |
| 15 | Petra Martic | 28 | 2,617 | 18 |







English Premier League Standings

| ١ | # | TEAM | GP | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | PIS |
|---|----|----------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|------------|-----|
| ' | 1 | Liverpool | 17 | 16 | 1 | 0 | 42 | 14 | 28 | 49 |
| r | 2 | Leicester | 17 | 12 | 3 | 2 | 40 | 11 | 29 | 39 |
| е | 3 | Man. City | 17 | 11 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 19 | 28 | 35 |
| | 4 | Chelsea | 17 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 31 | 25 | 6 | 29 |
| | 5 | Tottenham | 17 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 32 | 24 | 8 | 26 |
| | 6 | Man. United | 17 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 26 | 20 | 6 | 25 |
| | 7 | Sheffield | 17 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 21 | 16 | 5 | 25 |
| | 8 | Wolves | 17 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 24 | 21 | 3 | 24 |
| | 9 | Crystal Palace | 17 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 19 | -4 | 23 |
| | 10 | Arsenal | 17 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 24 | 27 | -3 | 22 |
| | 11 | Newcastle | 17 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 17 | 24 | -7 | 22 |
| | 12 | Burnley | 17 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 22 | 29 | -7 | 21 |
| | 13 | Brighton | 17 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 21 | 25 | -4 | 20 |
| | 14 | Bournemouth | 17 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 19 | 24 | - 5 | 19 |
| | 15 | West Ham | 17 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 19 | 28 | -9 | 19 |
| | 16 | Everton | 17 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 20 | 29 | -9 | 18 |
| | 17 | Aston Villa | 17 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 23 | 30 | -7 | 15 |
| | 18 | Southampton | 17 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 18 | 36 | -18 | 15 |
| | 19 | Norwich City | 17 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 18 | 35 | -17 | 12 |
| | 20 | Watford | 17 | 1 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 32 | -23 | 9 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |



20 Spal

| # | TEAM | GP | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | PTS |
|----|-------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|------------|-----|
| 1 | Juventus | 17 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 31 | 17 | 14 | 42 |
| 2 | Inter Milan | 16 | 12 | 3 | 1 | 32 | 14 | 18 | 39 |
| 3 | Lazio | 16 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 38 | 16 | 22 | 36 |
| 4 | Roma | 16 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 29 | 16 | 13 | 32 |
| 5 | Cagliari | 16 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 32 | 21 | 11 | 29 |
| 6 | Atalanta | 16 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 38 | 25 | 13 | 28 |
| 7 | Parma | 16 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 23 | 19 | 4 | 24 |
| 8 | Napoli | 16 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 25 | 21 | 4 | 2 |
| 9 | Torino | 16 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 21 | 24 | - 3 | 2: |
| 10 | AC Milan | 16 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 16 | 19 | - 3 | 2 |
| 11 | Sassuolo | 16 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 28 | 27 | 1 | 19 |
| 12 | Bologna | 16 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 24 | 27 | - 3 | 19 |
| 13 | Verona | 16 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 17 | 20 | - 3 | 19 |
| 14 | Fiorentina | 16 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 20 | 24 | -4 | 17 |
| 15 | Lecce | 16 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 20 | 32 | -12 | 1 |
| 16 | Udinese | 16 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 11 | 27 | -16 | 1! |
| 17 | Sampdoria | 17 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 14 | 27 | -13 | 15 |
| 18 | Brescia | 16 | 4 | 1 | 11 | 14 | 28 | -14 | 13 |
| 19 | Genoa | 16 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 17 | 31 | -14 | 1: |

Spanish La Liga Standings

LaLia

| • | # | TEAM | GP | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | PTS |
|----|----|-----------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | Barcelona | 17 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 43 | 20 | 23 | 36 |
| ıa | 2 | Real Madrid | 17 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 33 | 12 | 21 | 36 |
| | 3 | Sevilla | 17 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 21 | 17 | 4 | 31 |
| | 4 | Getafe | 17 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 26 | 16 | 10 | 30 |
| | 5 | Atletico Madrid | 17 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 18 | 10 | 8 | 29 |
| | 6 | Real Sociedad | 17 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 28 | 20 | 8 | 28 |
| | 7 | Athletic Bilbao | 17 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 19 | 12 | 7 | 27 |
| | 8 | Valencia | 17 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 27 | 24 | 3 | 27 |
| | 9 | Granada | 17 | 7 | 3 | 7 | 24 | 22 | 2 | 24 |
| | 10 | Osasuna | 17 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 22 | 20 | 2 | 23 |
| | 11 | Levante | 17 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 22 | 26 | -4 | 23 |
| | 12 | Real Betis | 17 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 24 | 29 | -5 | 23 |
| | 13 | Villarreal | 17 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 30 | 25 | 5 | 22 |
| | 14 | Alaves | 17 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 18 | 24 | -6 | 19 |
| | 15 | Real Valladolid | 17 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 14 | 20 | -6 | 19 |
| | 16 | Eibar | 17 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 15 | 28 | -13 | 16 |
| | 17 | Real Mallorca | 17 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 18 | 30 | -12 | 15 |
| | 18 | Celta Vigo | 17 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 14 | 25 | -11 | 14 |
| | 19 | Leganes | 17 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 12 | 28 | -16 | 10 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

17 2 4 11 12 32 -20 10

German Bundesliga Standings

20 Espanyol

| ~' | # | TEAM | GP | W | D | L | GF | GA | GD | PTS |
|------|----|---------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| LIGA | 1 | RB Leipzig | 16 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 45 | 19 | 26 | 34 |
| LIGA | 2 | M'gladbach | 16 | 11 | 1 | 4 | 33 | 18 | 15 | 34 |
| | 3 | Bayern | 16 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 44 | 22 | 22 | 30 |
| | 4 | Dortmund | 16 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 40 | 22 | 18 | 30 |
| | 5 | Schalke | 16 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 27 | 19 | 8 | 29 |
| | 6 | SC Freiburg | 16 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 25 | 21 | 4 | 25 |
| | 7 | Leverkusen | 16 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 22 | 21 | 1 | 25 |
| | 8 | Wolfsburg | 16 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 18 | 16 | 2 | 24 |
| | 9 | Hoffenheim | 16 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 23 | 27 | -4 | 24 |
| | 10 | Augsburg | 16 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 27 | 28 | -1 | 23 |
| | 11 | Union Berlin | 16 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 19 | 22 | -3 | 20 |
| | 12 | Frankfurt | 16 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 26 | 27 | -1 | 18 |
| | 13 | Hertha Berlin | 16 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 22 | 29 | -7 | 18 |
| | 14 | Mainz | 16 | 6 | 0 | 10 | 25 | 38 | -13 | 18 |
| | 15 | Cologne | 16 | 4 | 2 | 10 | 18 | 32 | -14 | 14 |
| | 16 | Werder Bremen | 16 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 23 | 40 | -17 | 14 |
| | 17 | Dusseldorf | 16 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 16 | 35 | -19 | 12 |
| | 18 | Paderborn 07 | 16 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 18 | 35 | -17 | 9 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

16 2 3 11 10 25 -15 9

Picked at 48, the Pravin Tambe saga continues at the IPL

The leggie from Mumbai has had an impact on the Indian cricket fraternity

Kolkata Knight Riders received huge applause twice during the Indian Premier League's 13th Player Auction in Kolkata on Thursday. While the first one - for a whopping ₹15.5 crore to get Pat Cummins – left everyone stunned, the second one, despite being at base price to sign Pravin Tambe – put a wide smile on everyone's face in the enclosure.

That's the impact Tambe has had on the Indian cricket fraternity. Doesn't matter that the leggie from Mumbai was sold at ₹20 lakh. The fact that at 48, he attracted a bid in itself was a major development. Whether he actually gets a game during the IPL's 2020 edition or not, he will definitely be the oldest player to be a part of IPL.

"Nothing changes at all," the down-to-earth leggie tells The Hindu. He is neither excited nor surprised, having received a bid in the auction. "Obviously it feels good but am not so young that I will be thrilled with an IPL contract any longer."

Till 2013, a regular on the maidans of Mumbai and nets of various teams, Tambe's only taste of big-ticket events was during his five-year stint as the liaison officer for IPL games at the Dr. DY Patil Sports Stadium in Navi Mumbai. Once he made a sensational debut for Rajasthan Royals during the 2013 IPL and the Champions Trophy T20, he became the talk of the town

Central point of motivation speakers

A First Class debut for Mumbai also followed, but most importantly, Tambe has emerged as the central point of plenty of motivation speakers, including Rahul Dravid, his Rajasthan Royals captain. "I have been a positive person all my life and



Age and wisdom: Pravin Tambe said 'obviously it feels good, but am not so young that I will be thrilled with an IPL contract any longer.' • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kings XI Punjab, his new IPL team. ■ FILE РНОТО he hit seven boundaries in the last edition.

IPL 2020 roster As the dust settled on the auction, here are the team compositions for the 13th edition:

Smashes 83 off just 39 balls in BBL

and five sixes.

blistering knock.

innings.

The 31-year-old also

equalled his fastest-ever

fifty (23 balls) during the

to hail Maxwell's superb

'BIG SHOW' @Gmaxi_32

led from the front for his

breathtaking 83 off just 39

Maxwell had played for KXIP from 2014 to 2017

side in @BBL scoring a

before being bought by

Delhi Capitals in 2018. He

had opted out of the league

was at his lethal best as he

Kings XI took to twitter

"A BIG SHOW from the

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Australian all-rounder

Glenn Maxwell on Friday

smashed a scintillating 83

off 39 balls for Melbourne

in the Big Bash League, a

day after being picked by

whopping ₹10.75 crore at

Returning to action after

taking a break to focus on his mental health, Maxwell

once again showed just

of the most devastating

why he is considered one

batsmen in T20 cricket as

Kings XI Punjab for a

the IPL auction on

Thursday.

Stars against Brisbane Heat

MELBOURNE



Super Kings (24)

M.S. Dhoni, Imran

Tahir, Lungi Ngidi Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shane Watson. Ambati Ravudu. Harbhajan Singh M. Vijay, Kedar Jadhav, Ravindra Jadeja, Deepak Chahar, Piyush Chawla, N. Jagadeesan, Suresh Raina,

Mitchell Santner, K.M. Asif, Shardul Thakur, R. Sai Kishore, Faf du Plessis, Monu Kumar, Dwayne Bravo, Josh



Delhi Capitals (22)

Shreyas Iyer, Kagiso Rabada, Marcus Stoinis, Sandeep Lamichhane, Ishant Sharma, Ajinkya Rahane, Chris Woakes, R. Ashwin, Shikhar Dhawan, Shimron Hetmyer, Alex Carey, Jason Roy, Mohit Sharma, Prithvi Shaw, Lalit Yadav, Avesh

Axar Patel, Tushar Deshpande, Rishabh Pant, Harshal Patel, Keemo Paul, Amit Mishra



(25)

Kings XI Punjab Riders

K.L. Rahul, Harpreet Brar, Ishan Porel, Mandeep Singh, James Neesham, Tajinder Singh, Chris Jordan, Karun Nair, Deepak Hooda, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh Glenn Maxwell. Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Sarfaraz Khan, Sheldon Cottrell, Mayank Agarwal, Mohammed Shami Darshan Nalkande, Nicholas Pooran, Chris Gayle, M. Ashwin, J. Suchith K. Gowtham, Hardus Viljoen, Simran



(23)Dinesh Karthik, Andre Russell, Harry Gurney, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Lockie Ferguson, Nitish Rana, Prasidh Krishna, Rinku Warrier, Shivam Gill, Siddhesh Eoin Morgan, Pat Tripathi, Varun Chakravarthy, M. Siddharth, Chris Green, Tom Banton Pravin Tambe,



Mumbai Indians (24)

Rohit Sharma, Digvijay Deshmukh, Quinton de Kock, Aditya Tare, Saurabh Tiwary, Jasprit Kulkarni, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Trent Boult, Jayant Yadav, Suryakumar Yadav, Krunal Pandya, Kieron Pollard, Lasith Malinga, Rahul Chahar, Chris Lynn, Hardik Pandya, Sherfane Rutherford, Anmolpreet Singh, Mohsin Khan, Mitchell McClenaghan, Prince Balwant Rai, Anukul Roy, Ishan



Rajasthan Royals

Maxwell celebrates contract, King-style

(25) Ben Stokes, Sanju Samson, Andrew Tye, Kartik Tyagi, Steve Smith, Ankit Rajpoot, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Jaydev Unadkat, Mayank Markande, Mahipal Lomror, Oshane Thomas, Riyan Parag, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Anuj Rawat, Akash Singh, Jofra Archer, David Miller, Jos Buttler, Manan Vohra, Shashank Singh, Varun Aaron Tom Curran, Robin Uthappa, Anirudha



What a player! Maxwell's innings drew appreciation from

Royal **Challengers** Bangalore (21)

Virat Kohli, Mohammed Siraj, Chris Morris, Josh Philippe, Moeen Ali, Aaron Finch, A.B. de Villiers, Shahbaz Ahamed Parthiv Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal Navdeep Saini. Isuru Udana, Dale Stevn, Pawan Negi, Devdutt Padikkal, Shivam Dube, Umesh Yadav, Gurkeerat Mann, Washington Sundar, Pavan



Hyderabad

Many layers to NCA-Bumrah fitness episode

have been serious about

cricket. The biggest sense of

achievement I get is when

many of my contemporaries

and even some of the youn-

ger players who stopped

playing before me call and

say that I have inspired them

to start playing cricket regu-

doesn't matter and the level

doesn't matter. As long as I

can remain fit, I will never

stop playing cricket - be it the

T20 tournament at Shivaji

IPL last time for Sunrisers

Hyderabad in 2016, the clos-

est Tambe has been to top-

flight cricket is the Abu Dha-

bi T10 league for the last two

It is indeed a mystery

about how he was cleared to

play in an off-shore commer-

cial league. But it cannot be

more enigmatic that the tire-

less spinner's rise on a crick-

et field well into his 40s, can

After having played the

Park Gymkhana or the IPL."

"I have never retired. Age

larly again," Tambe says.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Over the last week, speculation has swirled around the Bengaluru-based National Cricket Academy (NCA) and its alleged refusal to conduct a fitness test for Jasprit Bumrah. However, it has come to light that the NCA director, Rahul Dravid, had no qualms about a test being conducted for the speedster but there were other issues.

A source, clued into the academy's process, emphatically said: "At no stage we refused Bumrah at NCA. We only said that 'look if you have been treated by somebody else for the last four months and someone else knows your case, how can we conduct a test and pass you fit?' In fact, Bumrah was offered to use the NCA facilities. He was told to get whoever he wanted and do the test here. Last minute you land up and ask us to conduct a fitness test means (but) how can we? Nobody knows his case. NCA trainers have not trained with him



Jasprit Bumrah. ■ FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

even one day, they have not treated him for four months. How can they be asked to conduct the test?"

According to the source, a proper method had to be followed as it was observed that the NCA often becomes a scapegoat when a player declared fit suffers an injury and then fingers are pointed towards the academy.

"You do whatever you

want, but please don't recruit the NCA staff to give the test and pass you. Because what happens is if something goes wrong, again the NCA will be blamed. No professional will agree to do this," the source said, besides reiterating that Dravid even permitted Bumrah to get the Indian team's physio to test him at the NCA.

The Hardik case

Along with Bumrah, Hardik Pandya is also on a comeback trail from an injury-enforced break and it is understood that even the latter was declared fit following pressure on the NCA's phydepartment, siotherapy prior to the third Test at Melbourne during India's tour of Australia last year.

"He was also being treated by somebody else and later on when he got injured again for the same problem, the blame came on NCA," the source said, adding that Dravid wasn't at the helm during December when it

Barabati all set to host series-decider



Setting it right: The iconic clock tower at the Barabati Stadium was renovated and given a more aesthetic look. • K.R. DEEPAK

The stadium needed lot of attention after being hit by cyclone Fani last May

WI IN INDIA

Y.B. SARANGI

The Barabati Stadium is at its prettiest shape in recent times as it gets ready to host the third and series-deciding one-day international between India and West Indies here on Sunday.

The 61-year-old venue, which bore the brunt of cyclone Fani in May last, demanded a lot of attention after the ODI was allotted to the Odisha Cricket Association (OCA).

It was a tough task for the newly-elected OCA officebearers, who got about two months to put everything in place.

Major issue

"The major issue was the lights, which were installed about 18 years ago. A lot of them were damaged in the cyclone. More than 100 lights were added or changed by Dev Musco Lighting, Kapil Dev's company,

OCA president Mohanty told The Hindu on Friday.

"These lights were not available in the market. They could not replace the old lights with LEDs as they had to keep the load factor (on the towers) in mind. The other challenge was achieving the desired lux."

Clock tower renovation

The renovation of the iconic clock tower, beside which the two dressing rooms are situated, was another major work. The glass cover of the three clocks, which were broken in the cyclone, was replaced and the whole tower was given a more aesthetic look.

"The primary work was related to renovation and maintenance. Besides, we employed professional agencies to do the interiors and decorate the pathways (leading to the main block)," said Mohanty.

The whole renovation job was done at an expense of ₹6

which had installed them," crore. "For the last three vears the OCA did not ge any money from the BCCI.

"The routine expenses, like team travelling, catering etc., were transferred directly to the beneficiaries. Now, BCCI gave us about ₹10 crore which helped us complete this much-needed work."

Barabati last hosted an international match when India played Sri Lanka in a T20 two years ago. The last ODI was staged nearly three years ago.

Spectators excited

The excitement of spectators knew no bounds even though the two teams' practice sessions, scheduled on Friday, was cancelled.

The OCA has been struggling to meet the huge demand for tickets. "We are selling about 38,000 tickets, but are losing 5,200 on Gallery No. 7 as it has been declared unsafe.

"Looking at the demand, it's a significant number,"

Pakistan fights back through Shaheen's heroics

SL IN PAKISTAN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KARACH

Lanky paceman Shaheen Shah Afridi took a maiden five-wicket haul to lead Pakistan's fightback after Sri Lanka gained a crucial lead in the second Test here on Friday.

The 19-year-old paceman took five for 77 and was ably supported by new-ball partner Mohammad Abbas (4 for 55) to keep Sri Lanka down to 271 on a tricky National stadium pitch.

That gave the visitor a lead of 80 runs over Pakistan's first-innings total of 191.

By the close of second day's play Pakistan had wiped off 57 of the deficit for no loss.

But it still trails by 23 runs with all 10 wickets in hand and three days to play.

Opener Abid Ali – who became the first batsman ever to hit a debut hundred in both Test and one-day international in the first match in Rawalpindi – was unbeaten on 32 and Shan Masood on 21

Sri Lanka's fight

Sri Lanka fought through Dinesh Chandimal, who made 74, and Dilruwan Perera, who made a fighting 48 batting at number nine.

With his team wobbling at 80 for five in the morning, Chandimal built partner-



Pivotal: Shaheen Afridi took five for 77 to help restrict Sri Lanka on a tricky pitch. • AP

ships of 67 with Dhananjaya de Silva (32) for the sixth wicket, 37 for the seventh

wicket with Niroshan Dickwella (21) and then another 51 with Perera for the eighth.

SCOREBOARD

Pakistan - 1st innings: 191.

Sri Lanka — 1st innings: Oshada Fernando c Rizwan b Shaheen 4, Dimuth Karunaratne b Abbas 25, Kusal Mendis c Sohail b Abbas 13, Angelo Mathews c Rizwan b Shaheen 13. Lasith Embuldeniva c Shafiq b Abbas 13, Dinesh Chandimal c Masood b Sohail 74, Dhananjaya de Silva c Abbas b Shaheen 32, Niroshan Dickwella b Abbas 21, Dilruwan Perera lbw b Shaheen 48, Vishwa Fernando (not out) 5, Lahiru Kumara b Shaheen O; Extras (b-4, lb-10, nb-3, w-6): 23; Total (in 85.5 overs): 271.

Chandimal was finally dismissed by part-time spinner Haris Sohail, caught at backFall of wickets: 1-28, 2-39, 3-61, 4-78, 5-80, 6-147, 7-184, 8-235, 9-271.

Pakistan bowling: Shaheen 26.5-5-77-5, Abbas 27-9-55-4, Naseem 16-1-71-0, Yasir 13-0-43-0, Sohail 3-0-11-1.

Pakistan - 2nd innings: Shan Masood (batting) 21, Abid Ali (batting) 32; Extras (lb-4): 4; Total (for no loss in 14 overs):

Sri Lanka bowling: Fernando 5-1-14-0, Kumara 3-0-20-0, Embuldeniya 5-0-17-0, Perera

ward point after he mistimed a cut. He hit ten boundaries in his 143-ball knock.

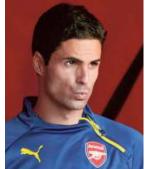
Mikel Arteta appointed Arsenal head coach

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Mikel Arteta has been appointed head coach of English Premier League side Arsenal meaning a return to the club he played more than 100 games for.

The 37-year-old Spaniard, who played for the Gunners from 2011-2016, signed a three-and-a-half year contract and ends a three-year stay as Pep Guardiola's assistant at Manchester City.

He replaces compatriot Unai Emery, who was sacked last month. "We're delighted to announce Mikel Arteta is joining the club as our head coach on Sunday,"



Mikel Arteta. • REUTERS

read an Arsenal statement. "Mikel, a former club

captain, played for us for five seasons from 2011 to 2016 and has signed a threeand-a-half year contract."



TV PICKS

Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 5.45 p.m., 8 15 p.m.& 10.15 p.m. **Bundesliga:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 7.40 p.m. & 10.40

Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. & 10.30 p.m. ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD),

I-League: D Sport, 6.50 p.m. NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 9

Pakistan vs Sri Lanka: 2nd Test, Sony ESPN (SD & HD),

IN BRIEF



Westbrook rally downs

LOS ANGELES Russell Westbrook delivered a 40-point master class as Houston Rockets scored a 122-117 NBA win over Los Angeles Clippers on Thursday. The Clippers looked to be heading for an emphatic victory after a dominant first-half display, opening up a 15-point cushion to lead 69-54 at half-time, but Westbrook raised the tempo in the third quarter and was virtually unstoppable.

The results: Utah Jazz 111 bt Atlanta Hawks 106; Milwaukee Bucks 111 bt LA Lakers 104; San Antonio Spurs 118 bt Brooklyn Nets 105; Houston Rockets 122 bt LA Clippers 117. AFP



Alderweireld extends stay at Spurs to 2023

Belgian international Toby Alderweireld has signed a new contract with Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur which will keep him at the club until 2023. The 30-year-old central defender, capped 98 times and a pivotal figure in Belgium's run to the 2018 World Cup semifinals, has been at Spurs since signing from Atletico Madrid in 2015. Alderweireld agreeing to a new contract is a boost for Spurs manager Jose Mourinho, who was keen to sign him last year when he was in charge of Manchester

Sasikanth and Stephen do it for Andhra

The host registers a convincing nine-wicket win over Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The medium-pace duo of K.V. Sasikanth and C. Stephen returned with fivewicket hauls as Andhra Pradesh notched up a comprehensive nine-wicket win over Delhi in their Group A Ranji Trophy match here on

Sasikanth claimed three wickets during the day to add with his two on Thursday while Stephen, who broke Delhi's back with four wickets a day earlier, picked up another one as the visitors folded up for 169.

Lalit shines

Delhi, resuming at 89 for six, saw Lalit Yadav complete a half-century, but once he was out, the team lost its way. Lalit was the first to go when he was trapped in front by Stephen in the 61st

Simarjeet Singh (10) was caught by K.S. Bharat off Sasikanth as Delhi slipped to 156 for eight. He then removed Navdeep Saini for seven while the other overnight batsman, Vikas Mishra (36), was the last to fall in the

In reply, Andhra opener

C.R. Gnaneshwar (0) retired hurt early and skipper Hanuma Vihari was sent back by Simarjeet Singh. However, Manish scored 15 off seven balls to seal the issue in Andhra's favour.

The scores: Delhi - 1st innings: 215.

Andhra - 1st innings: 368. Delhi - 2nd innings: Kunal Chandela b Stephen 19, Hiten Dalal b Stephen 13, Kunwar Bidhuri b Stephen 2, Nitish Rana c Manish b Sasikanth 8, Jonty Sidhu c Bharat b Stephen 9, Lalit Yadav b Sasikanth 55, Anuj Rawat lbw b Sasikanth O, Vikas Mishra lbw b Stephen 36, Simarjeet Singh c Bharat b Sasikanth 10, Navdeep Saini c Gnaneshwar b Sasikanth 7, Pawan Suyal (not out) 1; Extras (b-4, lb-3, nb-2):

9; Total (in 72.2 overs): 169. Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-29, 3-40, 4-46. 5-58, 6-71, 7-132, 8-156,

Andhra bowling: Vijay Kumar 8-3-14-0, Stephen 25.2-4-91-5, Sasikanth 24-8-41-0, Prashanth 1-1-0-0, Vihari 4-2-9-0.

Andhra - 2nd innings: C.R. Gnaneshwar retd. hurt O, D.B. Prashanth Kumar (not out) 1, Hanuma Vihari c Anuj b Simarjeet 4, Manish Golamaru (not out) 15; Extras (for one wkt. in 2.3 overs): 20.

Fall of wicket: 1-4. Delhi bowling: Simarjeet Singh 1.3-0-12-1, Pawan Suyal 1-0-



On fire: K.V. Sasikanth ripped through the Delhi line-up. • FILE

India primed to nail Olympics spot

Sharath organises 10-day preparatory camp at Chennai

TABLE TENNIS

RAKESH RAO

At present, Indian table tennis presents a study in contrast. On one hand, the men are

doing well. G. Sathiyan is breaking new ground. Sharath Kamal is hungry to prove his best is yet to come.

The presence of Commonwealth champion Harmeet Desai and SAF Games winner A. Amalraj add to the strength of the team eyeing one of the nine spots for the Tokyo Games available at the World Team Qualification in Gondomar, Portugal, from January 22 to 26.

On the other, players are struggling in the absence of not only a foreign coach but also a National coach!

With no time to wait for plans to be made and get go-

Chennaiyin powers past Blasters



Sharath Kamal. • K. PICHUMANI

vernment clearances, Sharath, in consultation with TOP scheme officials, has organised a 10-day preparatory camp at Chennai.

Besides the Indian men's team, Manika Batra, Reeth Rishaya and some local sparring partners will be part of this camp concluding on December 30.

Archana Kamath is away owing to fitness issues.

"When I last spoke to TTFI secretary M.P. Singh, he

asked me whether it was possible to get a good foreign

"I tried but realised it was too late. They already have their contracts and there was very little I could do," said Sharath.

Elaborating on the significance of the event in Gondomar, Sharath said, "India is seeded fourth (behind South Korea, Chinese Taipei and Sweden) and even if we reach the quarterfinals, our berth for Tokyo will be booked.

"A week before that we will head to Germany for a coaching camp."

It may be recalled that after Italian Massimo Costantini chose not to renew his contract with India after the 2018 Asian Games citing personal reasons, the TTFI zeroed in on Dejan Papic, from the contract. M.P. Singh lamented the absence of a foreign coach and said, "The way our negotiations went during the World championship, the TTFI was confident of Papic taking over at the earliest. But the delay on his part really hurt the interest of our players. Almost the

whole of 2019 was lost. "Now, we will look for a coach till the 2024 Olympics from the coaches that we meet at Gondomar. Let me assure you, there will be no delay from TTFI.'

Korean assistance

He also revealed that two Korean coaches and their interpreters would soon arrive in india.

Also, a high-performance National Training Centre was being planned at Gurugram or Sonepat, depending on the availability of land.

CCFC keen on full points

I-LEAGUE

RAYAN ROZARIO

Defending champion Chennai City FC (CCFC) is confident of picking up full points against Neroca FC in the Hero I-League clash at the Nehru Stadium here on Saturday.

results for the team thus far.

"It does not matter. To win every game is my philosophy," said head coach Akbar Nawas.

However, Akbar agreed that the team was not composed enough. "We do good things in small packages. But if we can do that for 30 minutes or more it will be a different story," he said.

He said it was not balanced yet as a team.

RANJI SCORES, ROUND TWO, DAY FOUR

GROUP A

At Ongole: Delhi 215 & 169 in 72.2 overs (Lalit Yadav 55, C.V. Stephen 5/91, K.V. Sasikanth 5/41) lost to Andhra 368 & 20/1 in 2.3 overs. Andhra 6, Delhi O.

Patiala: Hyderabad 242 & 76 in 43.4 overs (Mayank Markande 5/ 19) lost to Punjab 443/6 decl. Punjab 7, Hyderabad O.

Nagpur: Vidarbha 510/8 decl. bt Rajasthan 260 & 190 in 77.5 overs (Ashok Menaria 49, Rajesh Bishnoi 58, Aditya Sarwate 4/35). Vidarbha 7, Rajasthan O.

GROUP B

Hubballi: Uttar Pradesh 281 & 204/3 decl. in 69.1 overs (Almas Shaukat 103 n.o., Madhav Kaushik 45) drew with Karnataka 321. Karnataka 3, UP

Indore: Madhya Pradesh 125 & 270 lost to Baroda 222 & 174/9 in 53.3 overs (Kedar Devdhar 48, Avesh Khan 4/54). Baroda

Visakhapatnam: Railways 248 & 141 in 54.4 overs (Jaydev Unadkat 6/23) lost to Saurashtra 479/9 decl. Saurashtra 7, Railways O.

GROUP C Raipur: Uttarakhand 120 & 335

in 132.4 overs (Tanmay Srivastava 58, Dikshanshu Negi 69,

Saurabh Rawat 61. Ajay Mandal 5/60) lost to Chhattisgarh 520/7 decl. Chhattisgarh 7, Uttarakhand

Pune: Jammu & Kashmir 209 & 263 bt Maharashtra 109 & 309 in 86.1 overs (Ruturaj Gaikwad 71, Murtaza Trunkwala 54, Digvijay Deshmukh 83, Mo-

hammed Mudhasir 4/84, Umar Nazir 4/86). J&K 6, Maharashtra O. Cuttack: Services 271 & 238 in 81.1 overs (Vikas Hathwala 71,

Arun Bamal 40) lost to Odisha 540. Odisha 7, Services 0. PLATE

Puducherry: Arunachal Pradesh 343 & 417/5 in 103.5 overs (Samarth Seth 88, Rahul Dalal 205 n.o., Techi Neri 50 n.o.) drew with Mizoram 620/9 decl Mizoram 3, Arunachal Pradesh

Chandigarh: Chandigarh 420 drew with Bihar 115 & 175/6 in 71 overs (Indrajit Kumar 44, Kumar Nishant 70). Chandigarh 3,

Porvorim: Meghalaya 203 & 252 in 81 overs (P. Bisht 51, Sanjay Yadav 48, Abhay Negi 50. Amit Verma 6/72) lost to Goa 463. Goa 7, Meghalaya 0.

Gold for Chanu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saikhom Mirabai Chanu won the gold in the women's 49kg category to open India's account at the sixth Qatar International Cup weightlifting championships here on Friday. The 25-year-old Chanu

took the top spot with an effort of 194kg in the Olympic qualifying silver-level event, the points from which will come in handy when the final rankings for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics are done.

To qualify for Tokyo, a weightlifter must compete in at least one event in each of the three periods of six months (spread over November 2018 to April 2020), at least six events overall and in at least one gold and another silver-level event.

Chanu's performance on Friday was, however, way below her personal best of 201kg which she lifted during this year's World Cham-



Mirabai Chanu. ■ FILE PHOTO: C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

pionships in Thailand. The Commonwealth Games gold-medallist Indian managed to register only one clean lift in both the snatch and clean and jerk categories

She manged to lift 83kg on her second attempt in snatch but failed to clear 87kg on her final try.

In clean and jerk, Chanu lifted 111kg on her first attempt but was unable to heave 115kg and 116kg in the

I'm not up to match speed vet: Anderson

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

England fast bowler James Anderson admitted on Thursday that he was "not up to match speed yet", just a week away from the first Test against South Africa.

"I'm just looking to force my way into the Test side," he said ahead of a threeday match against South Africa-A, starting at Willowmoore Park on Friday.

"I know I'm not up to match speed yet."

Anderson, 37, said he still had "that hunger and desire to be back".

Shahbaaz advances

рона Shahbaaz Khan and Mousa Shanan Zayed of Qatar made the doubles quarterfinals with a 6-1, 7-5 victory over the Thai pair of Thanapet Chanta and Kasidit Samrej in the \$15,000 ITF men's Futures tennis

The results: pre-quarterfinals: Congsup Congcar & Krittin Koaykul (Tha) bt Niklas Johansson (Swe) & Haadin Bava 6-4, 6-2; Simon Freund & Jonathan Mridha (Swe) bt Tarun Anirudh Chilakalapudi & P.C. Vignesh 6-3, 6-1; Mousa Shanan Zayed (Qat) & Shahbaaz Khan bt Thanapet Chanta & Kasidit Samrej (Tha) 6-1, 7-5.

Double for Lakshmi

снандіванн: Lakshmi Prabha Arunkumar of Tamil Nadu won both the girls' under-18 and 16 titles in the St. Stephen's School AITA Super series junior tennis tournament at the CLTA Complex on Friday.

The results (finals): Bovs: Under-18: Krishan Hooda bt Shashikant Rajput 6-2, 6-1. **Under-16:** Jitin Kumar Chetry bt Sukhpreet Singh Jhoje 6-1,

Girls: Under-18: Lakshmi Prabha bt Ruma Gaikaiwari

Under-16: Lakshmi Prabha bt

Angelino claims Kabini Cup

up) won the Kabini Cup, the main event of the races held here on Friday (Dec 20). The winner is owned by Sarainaga Racing Pvt Ltd and trained by S. Attaollahi. THE RESULTS

BELOVED PRINCE PLATE (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 4-y-o & CANDLELIGHTQUEEN John) 1, Gin Daisy (Rayan) 2, Princeazeem (T.S. Jodha) 3 and Aerospeed (Arvind Kumar) 4. Not run: Regal Force. Lnk, 2 and Nk. 1m 13.49s. ₹41 (w), 14, 31 and 29 (p), SHP: 82, THP: 70, FP: 1,146, Q: 489, Trinella: 8,130 and 3,484, Exacta: 1,03,648. Favourite: Unifier. Owner: Mr. Satish G Kundapur. Trainer: B. Prithviraj

2 (1,400m), rated 15 to 35, 5-y-o & over: PARADISO (Arshad) 1, Amazing Angel (Jagadeesh) 2, Limato (Kiran Rai) 3 and Find (S. John) 4. Lnk, Snk and 2. 1m 27.22s. ₹98 (w), 22, 16 and 15 (p), SHP: 39, THP: 58, FP: 312, Q: 193, Trinella: 1,875 and 774, Exacta: 16,005 and 9,145. Favourite: Limato. Owner: Mrs. Sangita Vashisth. Trainer:

BELLARY PLATE (Div. II).

(1,200m), rated 30 to 50, 4-y-o & over: PANAMA (I. Chisty) 1, Radiant Treasure (S. Hussain) 2, Lucky Isabella (A. Imran) 3 and Benediction (Zervan) 4. 3-1/2, 1-1/4 and Lnk. 1m 13.39s. ₹103 (w), 18, 44 and 14 (p), SHP: 135, THP: 55, FP: 2,236, Q: 2,210, Trinella: 8,737 and 2,808, Exacta: 41,843 and 11,955. Favourite: Varcasva. Owner and trainer: Mr. G. Nityanand.

Note: Originally Armin finished fourth, after the Stewards enquiry Armin was disqualified and Benediction was given the fourth place. The revised order as above.

4 KABINI CUP (1,400m), rated 60 & above: ANGELINO (Trevor) 1, Into The Groove (David Allan) 2, Ashwa Raftar (I. Chisty) 3 and Set To Win (M. Kumar) 4. 1-1/4, 2 and 3/4. 1m 24.96s. ₹21 (w), 10, 14 and 49 (p), SHP: 30, THP: 60, FP: 51, Q: 33, Trinella: 722 and 529, Exacta: 5,204 and 1,952.

Favourite: Angelino. Owner: Sarainaga Racing Pvt Ltd. Trainer:

GARDEN CITY TROPHY
(2,000m), rated 45 to 65:
HERE AND NOW (A. Imran) 1,
Streaming Gold (S. John) 2, Grey
Channel (T.S. Jodha) 3 and Electra (Trevor) 4. Lnk, 1-3/4 and 3/4. 2m 08.20s. ₹25 (w), 15 and 15 (p), SHP: 32, THP: 41, FP: 49, Q: 32, Trinella: 396 and 200, Exacta: 320 and 100. Favourite: Streaming Gold. Owner: Mr. Hemant Dharnidharka. Trainer: Neil Darashah.

6 (1,200m), rated 30 to 50, 4-y-o over: Alberetta (Vaibhav) 1, Birchwood (Kiran Rai) 2, Wings Of Desire (A. Imran) 3 and Optimisticapproach (R. Manish) 4. 1-1/4, 2-3/4 and Nose. 1m 13.03s. ₹83 (w) 22, 22 and 15 (p), SHP: 70, THP: 39, FP: 1,419, Q: 671, Trinella: 16,196 and 2,314, Exacta: 40,633 and 52,243. Favourite: Royal Res Owners: Mr. Gamini Jayaratne &

Mr. Amarjeet Singh Narula. Trainer: Irfan Ghatala. Jackpot: ₹55,983 (nine tkts); Run-

ner-up: 2,226 (97 tkts); Treble (i): 10,721 (carried over); (ii): 1,126 (25

racing past Sankara Aces 31-20, after having led 28-14 be-

Aditya, Rohan help Grip N Rip win a thriller phires proved too strong in

lifter stripped of Olympic gold

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LAUSANNE

Committee announced.

umphed in the 105kg division, was disqualified after a re-analysis of his urine sample revealed a positive test for testosterone.

The 33-year-old, who tri-

At the 2012 event, Iran's Navab Nasirshelal had taken silver with Poland's Bartlomiej Bonk winning bronze.

PRO TENNIS LEAGUE KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Aditya Khanna and Rohan

Srivastava combined brilliantly to pull of a coup in the climax for Grip N Rip against the star-studded Proveri Supersmashers, with a 28-25 victory in the inaugural match of the second edition of Pro Tennis League here on Friday.

In a combination of exprofessional and a junior, Aditya and Rohan won 6-1 against Ashish Khanna and Ashish Sinha after the team was two points behind, before the last rubber.

Memorable win

Supersmashers had won three of the first five matches through Daria Mishina of Russia, Ramkumar Ramanathan and the doubles rubber with Ramkumar and Arjun Kadhe, but Aditva competed fiercely, hitting his

Dazzling duo: Aditya Khanna, left, and Rohan Srivastava clinched the decisive sixth rubber for Grip N Rip against Proveri Supersmashers. • KAMESH SRINIVASAN

top-spin drives with a touch of assurance to inspire a

Vishnu Vardhan and Prerna Bhambri had won the mixed doubles 6-2 against Daria Mishina and Arjun Kadhe, which paved the way for Grip N Rip, which latter fought well through Vishnu

and Ranjeet in the men's doubles.

Setting the tone

National under-16 champion Karan Singh had set the tone by winning the first singles

of the day, Haryana Sap-

The league was inaugurated by the ace gymnast Dipa Karmakar earlier in the afternoon.

The results (league):

fore the last rubber.

Grip N Rip bt Proveri Supersmashers 28-25 (Karan Singh bt Karan Srivastava 6-4; Prerna Bhambri lost to Daria Mishina 3-6; Vishnu Vardhan & Prerna bt Daria & Arjun Kadhe 6-2; V.M. Ranjeet lost to Ramkumar Ramanathan 3-6; Vishnu & Ranjeet lost to Ramkumar & Arjun 4-6; Aditya Khanna & Rohan Srivastav bt Ashish Khanna &

Haryana Sapphires bt Sankara Aces 31-20 (Uddayvir Singh bt Bikramjeet Chawla 6-0; Sowjanya Bavisetti bt Anna Morgina 6-1: Jeevan Nedunchezhivan & Sowjanya bt Morgina & Kunal Anand 6-2; Vijay Sundar Prashanth bt Sriram Balaji 6-5(6); Vijay Sundar & Jeevan lost to Kunal & Sriram 4-6; Arjun Uppal & Garvit Gupta lost to Vivek Shokeen & Vansh Kapoor 3-6).

K. KEERTHIVASAN

There was none of the indecisiveness that was associated with Chennaiyin FC earlier. The midfield and frontline worked seamlessly while the back-four looked rock solid.

Chennaiyin FC, under new coach Owen Coyle and in his first home match, played an attacking game to script a morale-boosting 3-1 win over Kerala Blasters in the Indian Super League here on Friday. All the goals came in the first session.

Chennaiyin had the upperhand in the first 20 minutes, the opener coming in the fourth minute. Rafael Crivellaro dribbled past a defender on the left and sent a cross to Andre Schembri who tapped home.

Tapping home: Chhangte scores CFC's second goal. ■R. RAGU

El Sabia brought down Blasters' skipper Bartholomew Ogbeche, resulting in a free kick. The French player unleashed a blinder from around 20 yards that went past the outstretched hands of CFC 'keeper Vishal Kaith into the back of the net.

Despite the equaliser, the host looked the better team as its forwards Nerijus Valskis and Schembri troubled the visitors' defence no end. Add to that, winger Lallianzuala Chhangte was in his element, threatening to score anytime.

Then the drama happened. A free-kick was awarded to Chennaiyin when it should have been the other way round after Anirudh Thapa brought

Blasters. Even before the visitors could regroup, Chennaiyin picked the ball and scored through Valskis. However, the referee consulted the linesman and overturned the decision. This resulted in a minor altercation between players from the two teams.

down Seityasen Singh of

Chhangte strikes

A few minutes later, Chennaiyin went 2-1 up when Crivellaro passed the ball from the midfield to Valskis who lobbed it to Chhangte just outside the box and the winger did the rest.

Off a counterattack, Chhangte lobbed the ball over an on-rushing 'keeper T.P. Rehenesh and Valskis scored as the ball rebounded after hitting the post.

Canada. But he never signed

It has been a mixed bag of

Ukrainian

Ukrainian weightlifter Oleksiy Torokhtiy was stripped of his 2012 Olympic gold medal on Thursday for doping, the International Olympic

Torokhtiy has been banned for two years with his results between August

4, 2012, and August 3, 2015,

annulled.

memorable win.

for Grip N Rip. In the other league match