

Gene Wolfe (The Book of the New Sun), the 'Proust of Science Fiction', died this year at the age of 87. He was noted for his dense, allusive prose as well as the strong influence of his Catholic faith. He was an engineer.

Slim, fearless novel takes on the

DECCAN CHRONICLE



the startup world

Archak Sengupta

review

ike Google becoming synonymous for searching any topic of interest on the Internet, Indians, for some ime, did use Flipkart as a verb to denote shopping Amazon, which bowed out of China, and Flipkart are seen jostling to become the top dog in India. Other players in the e-commerce sector have either bowed out or have accepted their position as underdogs in this fight.

Yet, had someone told me that Flipkart, one of the few "successful" Indian start-ups, would continue to remain in the fight after their strategic blunder of the mobile-only approach it adopted earlier

in the decade would have been scoffed at even a few years ago.

Thankfully, Tiger Global and others did just about enough to successfully correct the course. Since then, the firm, which has been sold to US-based retail giant, Walmart, has once again gone toe to toe with e-com-merce giant Amazon. While this is common knowledge, the Game of Thrones, as the author, Mibir Dalal describes the

Mihir Dalal, describes the tussle for leadership inside the company — it will even give the TV series a run for its money — isn't really known to all. As for Dalal, not only has he collated information from various sources, but he has also added his own inputs to give the book, *Big Billion* Startup: The Untold Startup: The Untold Flipkart Story, and the com-Untold pany's journey a new shade.

MIHIR DALAL

BIG BILLION STARTUP: THE UNTOLD FLIPKART STORY

By Mihir Dalal Pan Macmillan, ₹699 Over the years, lots of newsprint has been used to report on the company's journey.

Rov review white-hot ovel about to a to a

Devapriya

PRELUDE TO A RIOT

By Annie Zaidi Åleph, ₹499



times, unfurls its tentacles. On the face of things, it is a peaceful town, picturesque even, touristy, surrounded by lush plan-tations where coffee, pepper and cashew grow in abandon, where the homestays are full of cityslickers looking to reconnect with nature while eating organic pork, getting massages and updating Instagram. Underpinning the idyll, however, is a battery of overworked and underpaid contracted labourers, migrants from the east, from across the border likely, who the local landowners exploit and despise in equal measure. The town, the true protagonist

in this novel, has been home to its dramatis personae — who Zaidi lists out before the novel opens much like a play — for hundreds of years. They belong mostly to two local landowning families, one Muslim, one Hindu. There is Dada, whose grandson Abu is a scholar in a university far away, utterly disinterested in the estate, while his granddaughter, the school-going Fareeda, is a sassy

In an age when violence is endemic, how might one frame the chilling story of bigotry, rage and misplaced historical angst so it might cut through the frozen terrain of our inured emotions and reach the marrow in our bones? Well, Prelude to a Riot offers an answer.

anomie of our times

tomboy who hopes to run it someday. And then there is gun-loving, beer-swilling Appa, whose son Vinny is the model offspring in a poisonous and feudal sort of way. always ready to bandy about the views of the "Self-Respect" forum, a toxic organisation that has become far too vocal of late. Vinny's sister, Devaki, arguably the most likeable character in the novel, has been at war with Appa for years, defying him to marry Saju, who doesn't belong to their "martial" caste. Saju, Devaki and Abu were best friends in college, and yet, now, only a few years after her dramatic rebellion, Devaki finds Saju co-opted into the hateful politics of her clan, while Abu, on holiday from university, remains the only one she can truly talk to.

In my head, this town is

Madikeri, located in the lush Kodagu Valley, but the author has deliberately kept it vague, so we know that bar the specific cultural and historical references, this could be any town in India.

One of the standard rules we work with, in criticism, is that a story — any story — can never be divorced from the form that is used to convey it, the impact of the story inseparable from the felicity with which it is told. And it is in this context that Zaidi's narrative experiment is as exciting as it is timely. In an age when violence is so endemic to our life, when every lynching, every riot, every rape provides grist to the outrage industry for a day or so, before the next one takes over, how might one frame the chilling story of bigotry and rage and misplaced historical angst so it might actually cut through the frozen terrain of our inured emotions and reach the marrow in our bones?

Well, Prelude to a Riot offers an answer.

Each character gets a "soliloquy" in their voice, only one. Whether Devaki or Vinny or his wife Bavna, or Abu, Saju or Mommad, the contract worker who often resorts to his favourite actor's filmi lines to say things that are most important to him, each one gets only *one* act to tell their version of things, while

of this revolving door of dramatis personae. Leavening the solil-oquys are clever little instruments: Garuda Sir, an irreverent history teacher who provides the chorus of sanity even though he is aware of his own gradual irrelevance; various newspaper articles; an anonymous poem or two; letters to the editor. Together, the composite tells the story of the town better than a traditional realist epic might have, while simultaneously ren-dering the riot both unnecessary and inevitable to the scheme of things. The Prelude is far more chilling in its familiarity, in its claustrophobic smallness, than the excesses of the riot could have been. While one may argue that perhaps several of the characters are not rounded enough, as they would have been had the writer chosen to stay with them long enough, as in a traditional novel, the self-limiting structure of the novel is precisely what makes it such a fascinating — if dark — reading experience.

also taking the narrative for-

ward. We see the shifts in the city and the shards of the shattered

town that was once whole - if

only for five minutes in the past -

through the shifting perspectives

Devapriya Roy is the author of five books, most recently Friends from College

'Writing is a distillation of my insights, experiences'

SHUMA RAHA'S second book and first novel *The Swap* — has just been published. A journalist who lives and works in Delhi, Shuma, who is an avid trendspotter, whether in politics or culture, has decided to explore modern love in her new book

What set you off writing on the unusual subject of swapping?

I wanted to write a novel about modern relationships, especially the complexities of married relationships, and the way marriages often become stagnant and stultifying, satire thrown in. As for whether sw leading one or both spous



scene not all that active in other cities? I chose to set my story in Delhi because I wanted to portray a section of the city's affluent upper middle class society. So 'The Swap' is also a social novel, a novel of manners. as it were, with a fair bit of



monogamy, which do you think is the most natural form of the human erotic relationship? The pre-eminence of monogamy is a relatively

think being a voyeur is natural to being a journalist? Given that new journalism is all about taking an informed view and side, and not only witnessing but also **inhabiting the story.** I would call my fiction observant, rather than voyeuristic. I think I am a pretty good observer of people and the way they act and react. And whether you're a writer or a journalist, your power of observation is all important. So, yes, being an observer is part and parcel of being a journalist. But in my view, there's no

"old" or "new" journalism.

I think there's only one

that your take on today's journalism?

Not really. The protagonist is a minor cog in the wheel of a big newspaper house. This is her experience. My take on today's journalism would probably be a lengthy rant!

On the plus side, Priya is a wonderfully selfassured, emotionally mature, no-frills if slightly-judgmental, person. Is emotional maturity an important quality that is a must-have for a journalist? Priya is cool, matter-of-fact, and mostly emotionally mature. However, she is not as hard-headed as she would like to believe she is. To come to your question, you need to be emotionally mature to excel in any profession, including journal ism. Of course, if one is reporting disturbing stories and events, emotional

maturity becomes even

though many women are financially independent, they tend to be socially dependent on their male partners. We tend to socialise more with their friends and relatives than with ours. It happens very smoothly and organically, but it happens nonetheless. Patriarchy isn't always on the nose — it also works in insidious ways.

Tell me how and why you enjoy writing. l enjoy writing because it gives me a sense of fulfilment. There's nothing to beat the feeling you get after you've done a piece of writing that is mostly to your satisfaction.

es to stray. Around this time, someone happened to mention that swapping (a practice where couples sleep with each other's partners) was surprisingly common in urban India. I did a bit of digging — my journalistic avatar came into play here — and found that this was true. That's when I thought that maybe I could weave my story about modern love and modern relationships around the subject of swapping.

Q Why did you set your story in Delhi instead of the other Indian metrop-olises? Is the swapping

happens in other cities sure it does. Many couples want a break from the monotony of their marriage. Some may have affairs. Some may swap partners - although, swapping, or swinging, as it is also called, is obviously a bigger taboo and very few people admit to doing it.

When and where did the practice first originate in the modern world? I couldn't say. I haven't found any substantive information on that.

Of polyamory, serial monogamy and

tory of human society. However, primitive humans, too, were known to form long-term bonds with their mates. In my view, no relationship is natural or unnatural. What is natural for one person, may be unnatural for another. I prefer not to judge.

recent construct in the his

Your fiction is both racy and realistic, and just a little bit voveuristic in terms of how you draw this superb portrait of the urban middle class milieu living in its safe, pleasure-seeking, sometimes-cliche-infested, airtight bubble. Do you

kind of journalism — that which is honest and unbiased. Which is why, as a journalist, I try not to "inhabit" the story, because I don't want my persona and my views to intrude into the facts I am reporting. However, as a writer of fiction, I do inhabit my story because what I am writing is a distillation of my imagination and experiences

In the same vein, the journalistic life of your protagonist Priya Bakshi is corporate, echo chamber-ridden and underwhelming. Is

more important. I also noticed as a reader how Priya's social interactions happen in her husband Akash's friends' circle even though she is autonomous and a stronger character than Akash. Is it patriarchy at work? Certainly. I have seen that

What are you working on at the moment? I am working on a couple of ideas for another novel.

The Swap will be turned into a web series. Are you excited or are you apprehensive about the way it might be adapted. Oh, I am tremendously excited. I know writers are often unhappy with the screen adaptations of their books. However, my story has been picked up by a notable Bollywood production house. I'm pretty sure they will make it a riveting watch.

Burnt out at 27: A fresh look at Janis

voice.

Yet, Dalal's attempt to chronicle it is a refreshing read as it not only manages to capture the complexities of entrepreneurship, but also paints a picture of the mercurial founders

and the evolution of the start-up ecosystem in the country.

Moreover, the book, thanks to Dalal's exhaustive research along with his deep access to key players inside the company,

also provides a detailed account of how the blue-eyed boys of

the Indian start-up scene, Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal,

lost control of their own company thanks to their own per-

sonalities. While the book talks about Flipkart's "Godfather"

Lee Fixel, who was blown away by the Bansals, it also revealed the role that Lee and Tiger Global played in the

Sachin Bansal's exit after Flipkart was acquired by Walmart.

journey as a business journalist, managed to keep me

engrossed as I, in my afterhours, tend to focus on football and

technology. Such books are quite popular in the Western

countries as they serve as inspiration to the next generation

of entrepreneurs. Yet, the genre in India has a limited read-

ership as the start-up ecosystem is just starting to take off in

the country. Hopefully, we will get to read more such success

To sum it up, the book, despite my following the company's

Lynn Barber

stories from India in the coming years.

review

anis Joplin hated the word 'star', but she loved the trappings. As soon as she made serious money she bought a Porsche convertible and had it painted with psychedelic images to make it the most recognisable car in San Francisco. She also rejoiced in her lynx fur coat, courtesy of Southern Comfort. She sent them a file of all the numerous press clippings that said Southern Comfort was her favourite tipple and they responded with a cheque. "Oh man, that was the best hustle I ever pulled," she crowed to a reporter. "Can you imagine getting paid for passing out for two years?" If only she'd stuck to Southern Comfort she might still be alive (she was born in 1943) instead of dying at 27 of a

heroin overdose. Her whole career only lasted four years, which is the same amount of time Holly George-Warren spent researching this excellent biogra-phy. She has interviewed hundreds of people who knew Janis, including many from Port Arthur, Texas, where she grew up. Janis always maintained that she was a misfit there because "I read. I painted. I didn't hate Negroes." She read Jack Kerouac and called herself a Beatnik and practised her distinctive cackle till it was "annoying enough". She also collected old Blues records Odetta, Lead Belly and, above all, Bessie Smith. One day when she was hanging out with some boys at the beach, one of them said he wished they had a record player and she said: 'I can sing!' They all laughed, but she sang them an Odetta

time to drinking and sleeping around. She was bisexual, though one of her women lovers complained that she went through men like Kleenex". In 1965 she decided that "Texas wasn't good enough for me" and hitchhiked to San Francisco. She sang in coffee bars, where John Gilmore remembers that she was kind of "country-bumpkin looking" in her baggy jeans, pimples and bare feet, but also "tough as an alligator", a bar-room brawler throwing punches at men who harassed her. But underneath there was "this sad, delicate person, intimate and feather-voiced, neither feminine nor sexy, just vulnerable' She spent six months

knocked out. Everyone was

always knocked out by her

She went to the University

of Texas at Austin to study

art but devoted most of her

building her fan base in San Francisco but also drinking too much and shooting crystal meth. She became "emaciated, almost catatonic" and fled home to Port Arthur and tried to fit in — even took "poise lessons". A friend introduced her to a group, Big Brother and the Holding Company, who had a good following in San Francisco but felt they needed a girl singer. She was perfect for them and they for her. They moved together to a country house in Marin County and she was happier than she'd ever been. They worked hard on their repertoire and in two months record companies were taking an interest.

> By arrangement with the Spectator

JANIS: HER LIFE AND MUSIC

By Holly George-Warren Simon & Schuster, £20

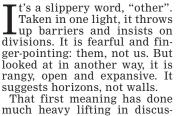
Evaristo shoulders weighty themes lightly

Alex Diggins

review

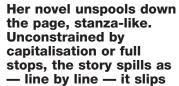


GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER by Bernadine Evaristo Hamish Hamilton, £16.99



sions of Bernardine Evaristo's Booker-winning Girl, Woman, Other. As the first black British woman to be awarded the prize, this was perhaps inevitable. Evaristo cuts an unmistakable dash through the ranks of past winners: they have been, on the whole, more pale and - damningly — a lot more male. The Booker judges hardly steadied the debate with their controversy-courting decision to share the prize between Evaristo's novel and Margaret Atwood's The Testaments against the rules and the wishes of Gaby Wood, the Booker literary director. It was a clumsy move, which encouraged hair-splitting rather than inclusivity.

But this hullabaloo is a dis-traction, as Evaristo's vital, joyous novel is grounded in that second, roomier definition. Told through the voices of 12 — mostly black —women, it daisy chains with warmth, wit



from one voice to another. It is an effective technique, allowing the author to temper the rhythms of her storytelling with taut control.

and genuine depth of feeling across the span of recent black British history. We begin with Amma, an avant-garde theatre director whose play The Last Amazon of Dahomey is premiering at the National. She has spent decades in the theatrical wilderness, "a renegade lobbing hand grenades at the establishment that excluded her". Now, though, tastes have changed and her work is in demand. When she unexpectedly finds herself washed up inside the establishment, she experiences dislocation, muddled with a fierce, furtive pride. From there, Evaristo broadens her canvas. The Last Amazon's first night becomes the pivot around which her

pleasingly elliptical way. Her novel shoulders some weighty themes — racism, immigrant experience, the increasingly fluid borders of gender and sexuality — but it never feels overburdened by them. In fact, her writing is characterised by a dancing lightness through out. It is often very funny, and is particularly good at mapping the contested frontiers between parents and children, one gen-eration and the next. Today's radicals are tomorrow's hasbeens, it reminds us. The sharp edge of fashion swiftly blunts And language lags behind the times: once acceptable terms are now considered offensive, as identity blooms into ever more variegated categories of self-definition — "a gender granary non-binding whatsit". This lightness, this flux, is embedded in the pith of Evaristo's prose. Her novel unspools down the page, stanza-like. Unconstrained by capitalisation or full stops, the story spills as — line by line it slips from one voice to another. It is an effective technique, allowing the author to temper the rhythms of her storytelling with taut control. Again, it calls to mind a dance: there is

other characters orbit - some-

times directly, more often in a

jeopardy and surprise in the way Evaristo propels the reader into empty space, before turning abruptly on the next beat — wrong-footing us into laughter or a catch in the throat

As with all patchwork stories, some elements are stronger than others. I thought the earlier narratives, which deal with her characters' first tentative steps into a mostly hostile Britain, were most compelling; they burn with the acrid tang of injustice and thrum with urgency. By contrast, the woke self-righteousness of present-Yazz, Amma's daughter, day and her multicultural "uni squad, the Unfuckwithables", is a little too authentically trying.

But, like the dust storm of the Booker debate, these gripes fail to cloud the singular achievement of *Girl, Woman, Other.* Through the lives of these 12 women, Evaristo inhabits otherness and makes it sing. She quotes the Guyanese poet Gracie Nichols:

We the women whose praises go unsung whose voices go unheard. Evaristo answers: no longer.

> By arrangement with the **Spectator**







song and they were duly



MIND POWER

ULRIKE MEINHOF BHAGAT SINGH

Protest is when I say I don't like this. Resistance A rebellion is not a revolution. is when I put an end to what I don't like. It may ultimately lead to that end.



The best times I never had

egend has it that as soon as my father was born, he said to the midwife, "You know, in the old days..." Ever since, the one thing he has tried to din into me repeatedly, starting from my juvenile delinquency to my present third midlife crisis, is that there was no time like before.

Every morning, while I have my idli with coconut chutney, without fail, Dad slyly tries to add a dash of nostalgia which he carries with him in one

of those quick-release dispensers wherever he goes. Whatever the topic of conversation, in two ruthless, diabolical steps, my dad will steer the conversation to the old days turning my UHD live-stream world to a grainy sepia one rolled out of a creaky projector. Me: How are you feeling today?

Dad: Okay, just a tiny ache in the index finger of my right hand.

Me: You probably slept on it. Dad: In 1953, I think it was when I was in Vizag with your grandfather, our host Veerasimhula Varada Rao garu, very nice man, used to work with AIR, complained of the exact same thing. Except it was his left hand and it was the little finger.

Me: Oh. Dad: They had to amputate his entire arm fifteen days later. Unfortunately, they removed the right arm. Ironically, his little finger became fine

Me: You think we should go to the doc? Dad: I don't think so. Where is the clinic now, by the way? You said they've moved. Me: Yes. To T.

Nagar.

Dad: T. Nagar. Sigh. You know, in 1941, most of T. Nagar was just fields. Fully green. Just acres and acres of betel. Paddy, too, I think. Not Paddy Briggs, my childhood friend who drowned in the Cooum. Rice paddy.

Me: Do you want to go to the doc? Dad: Not necessary, I think. I'll just ring up my homoeopath, Dr Nahata.

Me: But isn't your guy Dr Chenchulakshmi?

Dad: Nahata is Chenchulakshmi's contact. And just because she has a moustache doesn't mean she is a guy, okay? Nahata has gone to the US to see

Elphinstone, they used to sell a Peach Melba so big you couldn't eat it.

Dad: You were not born then.

Me: Well, you could have bought a few and put them in the fridge for me. You knew I'd come along.

But I did take you to Woodlands Drive-In and get you Peach Melba.

his daughter. They live in Dallas. Dallas is where Suri Babu was from.

Came to visit your Thaatha. He was carrying a brand-new Canon camera... Me: Your finger, Naanna, can we get back to it?

Dad: Of course. What do you think I was getting to? I could click several pictures on the Canon because my finger didn't hurt then.

Me: Naanna, hasn't that camera been defunct for thirty years? Dad: Thirty years, yes. Do you know what happened thirty years ago in Pithanurar

DECCAN CHRONICLE





Exploring the idiom of 'bodily integrity'

oritised over the security of the girl children within families. The same parents may treat sexual harassment of their girls on the streets very seriously because the predator is from out-side the family and caste

erhood in middle class society is another idea that curtails the woman's right to bodily integrity. Women are forced by families and doctors to put their bodies through abuse and violence in order to become mothers. In Indian society, mother-hood is not a choice but inevitability. Therefore, it is not only rape and sexual violence

in public space but also the subtle and insidious ways of everyday violations which are threats to woman's bodily integrity. Another example is that women are demanded to follow a particular dress code and wear particular markers (jewellery) of a married woman such as *mangalsutra* which are acts of violations of her bodily integrity. Bodily integrity is an absolute concept like freedom. Freedom has no limita-

tions or negotiations.

Simil

are suppressed and stigmatised. Ironically, many feminists have not deconstructed the insti-tution of marriage and not subverted the ideology of monogamy. Subversion of family means loss of their own caste privilege for caste Hindu feminists and therefore continued to uphold family and caste identity. A woman's loyalty or commitment to a male partner is only sub-stantiated and maintained by her sexual purity which also again means that she is owned by her partner and she has no autonomy over her body. Women's bod-

ies are used as sites of patriarchal honour of families, caste groups and communities. Therefore, honour crimes and forceful marhonour riages take place in the lives of women. Thus, without deconstructing the institution of heterosexual. endogamous marriage, it is hard to deconstruct caste and therefore difficult for women to have autono-

my. Women from the marginalised communities are sexually violated on an everyday basis as they are seen as only

objects owned by power-

LETTERS

+ **≻ c m** y k

DROP THE CAA

The protests by youths all over the country have strengthened the idea of one nation, one ideology (Protests continue to rock nation, Dec. 20). These are the citizens of India, fighting to protect the Constituton. In a democracy, you cannot suppress the voices of dissent. The government needs to understand that the people want a secular and united India. Shazia Razzaq

Hyderabad

I disagree with the contention expressed in the editorial 'As citizens hold up the mirror, let them do it' (DC, Dec. 21). Largescale violence and arson took place only in the NDA-ruled states could be due to the imposition of Section 144. Arsonists have set fire and destroyed public property. Don't expect the police to keep quiet. V.P. Ramanath

Secunderabad

PHONES DISCONNECT

Cell phones have taken an irreplaceable place in our lives (Relationships change with excessive use of phones, Dec. 21). In congregations, silence prevails as all heads are down and all eyes glued to the screens. The sense of responsibility, belongingness and respect is gradually diminishing.

Tajunnisa Amin Secunderabad

GOOD JOB, KTR

Municipal administration minister K.T. Rama Rao is planning a set of norms for building permissions. It is welcome move. The norms apply to plots up to 600 square yards. Selfdeclaration is respected. The people should be grateful to Mr Rama Rao. P.P.S. Hariprasad Hvderabad

SENGAR'S SENTENCE

Against the opinions expressed by everyone after the Disha tragedy that rape convicts should be hanged, the life imprisonment given to 'suspended' BJP legislator (Sengar gets lifer in Unnao rape case, Dec. 21), is not justifiable as he has caused the death of two of the victim's relatives

N. Ramalakshmi Secunderabad

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹300. Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com,

editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road,

Secunderabad-500 003.



Dad: You know, at Jaffar's near New

Me: How come you didn't buy me any?

Dad: We didn't have a fridge back then.

Me: Who is Suri Babu now? Dad: In '71 ... or was it '72, if you remember, this gentleman Suri Babu

hat is bodicaste groups. For examly integriple, something as simple ty? It is as enforcing a particular interesttype of dress or ornader whether even femiment on woman against her will by any person in the family or outside is also a violation of bodily nists in India under-

No More Mansplaining

Sowjanya

Tamalapakula

stand the concept of "bodily integrity"! It is The idea of bodily integrity has not been extended to deconstruct an extremely significant philosophical and politi-cal concept that should be unravelled at many the hegemony of heterolevels in a complex society like India with varisexual patriarchal caste endogamous marriage. ous intersectional struc-Therefore, marital rape tures of caste, class, community and gender. is not criminalised in Indian law. The tradi-In simple terms, bodily tional concepts of sexual integrity is nothing but purity and fidelity in one's own autonomy marriage, modern conover one's own body. Bodily integrity as a cepts of "commitment" and "loyalty", all aim to control woman's choices term was popularised in the post-Nirbhaya conand violate her integritext. In the context of ty. Women's freedom to communal violence and have sexual relations partition of British India, violence against outside marriage is construed as promiscuity or lack of commitment. It women was horrendous signifies that she is an as well as sexual in

group. Glorification of moth-

an

It's taken me very, very long to find the nostalgicide I've been looking for all these years but I think I've finally found it. It's called Blame. This is

how things proceed these days. Dad: You know, at Jaffar's near New Elphinstone, they used to sell a

Peach Melba so big you couldn't eat it. Me: How come you didn't buy me any?

Dad: You were not born then.

Me: Well, you could have bought a few and put them in the fridge for me. You knew I'd come along. Dad: We didn't have a fridge back then. But I did take you to Woodlands

Drive-In and get you Peach Melba. Me: Yeah, but the portions at Woodlands were small. Little itsy-bitsy

ones that were never enough. They made me feel sad. Dad: Oh.

Me: And why did they shut down Woodlands Drive-In, huh? Why?

Dad: The lease ran out. You know, when Sadashiva Rao and I used to go there

Me: You mean you used to go to Woodlands Drive-In without me? Dad: Er ... yes. You were in Hyderabad then for a month. Don't you

remember, your grandfather had some programme there?

Me: Why did you send me to Hyderabad? Now I know why I suffered from separation anxiety.

Dad: C'mon, your mother was with you. Also, you stayed with Chinna Maamma. She used to make those special rava laddus for you... Me: Wasn't that when I fell violently ill?

Dad: I think I hear the phone ringing.

Krishna Shastri Devulapalli is a humour writer, novelist, columnist and screenwriter

families or communities they belong to. Rape and murder of Muslim women during the 2002 Gujarat violence is construed/perceived as a symbolic emasculation of the Muslim community. Women are not seen independent as or autonomous beings but as objects owned by father/husband, families, caste groups and communities. Therefore, women are subjected to violence to fight the owners of their bodies. However, it is unfortunate that the concept of bodily integrity has been propagated only within the limited paradigm of rape of middle-class women by the man outside the family and caste group. It has not been extended to the everyday violation of bodily autonomy that a

woman faces across

nature. Women are seen

as properties or exten-

sions of their husbands,

In a natriarcha society, man has cultur-al and socially sanctioned space to access women outside marriage and women are expected to only show their loyalty by giving ownership of their bodies to their husbands or intimate partners. This is certainly another form of violation of bodily integrity. Centrality of marriage/family in Indian society is one of the tactical components that obstruct the right to bodily integrity of women. Girl children are silenced by parents when they complain against the inappropriate touch or molestation by uncles or family friends which precisely teaches them that they have no autonomy over their minds and bodies. In such cases, upholding

the familial bonds is pri-

extension of her hus-

band/partner and an object owned by her hus-

integrity is nothing but refusing anything that one's mind refuses to accept onto one's body. Ranging from an unwanted touch to enforcing marriage on a woman against her will amount to violation of bodily integrity.

bodily

It is also important to discuss how one's autonomy is constructed and cultivated. It is true that today many middle-class women assert that their marriage or the traditional dress code they follow is their own public space when in choice. This happens precisely because we actuality women's bodilive a society that condily integrity is violated almost every day whether she belongs to middle class or margintions us much before we ourselves explore our life and world around. The institution of maralised sections. riage is the only viable and available form of Tata Institute of Social conjugality in India. Other forms of intimacy

ss grouns therefore the powerful communities have a right to use and abuse them. If rape is violation of bodily integrity, then such violation takes place almost every day in the lives of the marginalised The bodily women. integrity of a woman has to be respected by the society. A complex society with its structural inequalities cannot ensure such security. However, it is a misconception to believe that one's bodily integrity is violated only by rape in

The writer teaches at

Sciences, Hyderabad

YEARS AGO IN **DECCAN** • **nronic Five-fold rise in** post offices NEW DELHI, Dec. 21.

Post Offices in the country had increased almost five-fold since Independence. Their number stood at 22,116 on August 15, 1947. There were 1,02,863 Post Offices in the country on September 30, 1969. At present the postal branch is incurring a loss of over Rs 97 lakhs annually on running experimental post offices in rural areas. This information was given to the consultative committee of Parliament for the Department of Communication by Mr. Satya Narayan Sinha, Minister for Information and Broadcasting here today.

Politics is redundant

 ${f I}$ n a major departure from tradition, the Lok Sabha is yet to have a deputy Speaker. The new government took charge in May 2019 and two sessions — monsoon and winter — have passed without a deputy Speaker having been elected. Initially, it was thought that NDA ally Shiv Sena with 18 Lok Sabha MPs would have its representative in the office but following the Maharashtra poll results, the Sena parted ways kindling the hopes of JD(U) and other aspirants within the NDA parivar. The current thinking in the BJP is to have its own nominee. As a result several contenders have emerged, forcing a party rethink. Nowadays, a common refrain is that Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla is doing a fine job so a deputy Speaker is not being missed..

Rajnath downgraded?

Was it a slip or a protocol lapse? Defence minister Rajnath Singh is currently in the USA with external affairs minister S. Jaishankar. In an official engagement, the

Is Om not missing a deputy?

external affairs minister was introduced ahead of Rajnath, who is the designated number two in the Narendra Modi government. Sources close to Rajnath wonder if the MEA failed to brief its US counterpart about the hierarchy and political stature of India's defence minister, or was it something innocuous. An informal probe is on.

Jairam's writing career

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh has written seven books since his party lost the 2014 elections. Historian Ramchandra Guha recently commented at an event in Bangalore that Narendra Modi's victory has proved fortuitous for Ramesh Someone quipped that if Rahul Gandhi was to return as AICC chief, Ramesh would soon have to make writing his fulltime career. A more charitable view was that if Rahul employs Ramesh's wordsmith services, the



By WAQYANAWIS

speechwriter would have a difficult time catering to Rahul's whims and frequent trips abroad.

Stirring up the good life

Salman and Louise Khurshid are a power couple in Delhi who love to host parties. It's Christmas and an invite had gone to mediapersons and friends of the Khurshids for pre-Christmas celebrations but these had to be called off due to the CAA-NRC protests in the national capital. Salman Khurshid, whose grandfather Dr Zakir Hussain was a founder of Jamia Millia Islamia nearly a century ago, was at home in Jamia when the spontaneous stir began. Some students approached the politicianlawyer but Salman argued that he would only take up the case in the courts. The Khurshids offered a meal to some protesting students but soon Salman's reluctance to participate in the stir appeared on social media. The politician reached ITO late in the night but he was heckled. Once bitten twice shy, the Khurshids quickly called off their pre-Christmas lunch.

+

When 'Ravan' did a Houdini

The ongoing CAA-NRC stir in the national capital found a new leader, Chandrashekhar "Ravan" Azad of the Bhim Army. Chandrashekhar, facing several police cases, was quick to reach ITO, New Delhi, a few hours after the Jamia stir with his band of supporters. The presence of a large number of dalits in solidarity with Jamia gave others a lot of confidence. On Friday, Chandrashekhar reached Jama Masjid on his own even though Imam Ahmad Bukhari made no attempt to acknowledge his presence. The Delhi police tried to nab him but Chandrashekhar gave them the slip. He and his team tweeted about the protest. Bhim Sena's active involvement has rattled both Ram Vilas Paswan and Mayawati. Mayawati has started opposing CAA -NRC but her cadre is missing from action while Lok Janshakti Party led by Paswan is in major turmoil.

> The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power

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Word | SPY NEUROBABBLE EDUPUNK

Neurological jargon used An education reform movement that eschews traditional inaccurately or simplistically | teaching tools in favor of other high-tech methods



DECCAN CHRONICLE

Track record of NRC doesn't bode well



should

exam-

n why such strong protest s have broken out across India and are being covered across the world. The government says that there is confu sion in the minds of the protestors and a lack of knowl edge about its legislation and proposed actions on citizenship. But the fact is that we are seeing wider and more passionate resistance to the government in public than at any time since 2014. The ques-

tion is why. To my mind, it is incorrect for the government to believe that the protestors do not know what they are protesting about. And it is also incorrect to believe that the protestors should not fear what the government is currently

doing and what it has announced for the future. A little background may be useful here. In 2017, the Assam government submitted an affidavit at Guwahati high court. It concerned the extension of the two-year contracts of those advocates who were in charge of the foreigners' tribunals in that state. The document submitted by the government showed that it was refusing to extend the contract of those members who were not declaring too many people as foreigners. The contract of Kartik C. Ray, who declared 1.32 per cent of the 380 people whose documents he examined as foreigners, "may be terminated", the government of Assam said. In the appraisal, under the heading "general views of the government upon the member", Mr Ray's performance was marked "not satisfactory" and under

the heading "whether may be

In the civilised world, the government has to prove that an individual has committed a crime. In India, the individual must prove that she must not be jailed. So this is what the NRC is about and this is how it is being executed.

considered for further retention or may be terminated" the government said "may be terminated". Similarly the contracts of Dilip Kumar Barman (4.33 per cent of 485 people, not satisfactory, may be terminated), Bhaba Hazarika (2.43 per cent of 494 people, not satisfactory, may be terminated) Duvijen Dutte be terminated), Dwijen Dutta (1.46 per cent out of 548 people, not satisfactory, may be terminated) Kamaluddin terminated) Kamaluddin Ahmed Choudhary (1.06 per cent out of 472, not satisfactory, may be terminated), Nilay Kanti Ghose (0.82 per cent out of 485, not satisfactory, may be terminated), Navanita Mitra (2.23 per cent out of 263, not satisfactory, may be terminated) and Kulendra Talukdar (7.67 per cent out of 326, not satisfactory, may be terminated).

So what is the pattern? To see that, we must examine which individual's contracts were extended. These includ-ed Narayan Kumar Nath (34.57 per cent out of 460 peodeclared foreigners), ple about whom the general view "good" and the general view "good" and the recommenda-tion was that he "may be retained". Then there are Abhijit Das (39.05 per cent out of 443, good, may be retained), Hemanta Mahanta (41.67 per cent out of 574, "need to improve", and "may be retained with warning"), Naba Kr Barua (74.77 per cent out of 321, good, may be retained), Dhiraj Kr Saikia (41.16 per cent out of 345, good, may be retained), Junmoni Borah (15.33 per cent out of 300, good, may be retained), Kalpana Baruah (26.91 per cent out of 249, need to improve, may be retained with warning), Ramakanta Khaklary (15.65 per cent out of 626, good, may be retained), Ajay Phukan (19.38 per cent out of 239, good, may be retained) and Nibedita Tamulinath (58.47 per cent out of 691, good, may be retained).

I do not have to explain the pattern here because it is obvious. What has happened is that in Assam, contract

workers are being encour-aged and rewarded to declare people foreigners. Those contract workers who are not doing what the government wants are being sacked. The people then declared foreigner are jailed. When the National Human Rights Commission sent a team to examine the conditions of these people, they found that families were separated permanently, with women and children living in a different jail from the men. Many had gone mad and they were being housed in the same jails as convicts.

India is doing this to its own people and doing so under a reversal of burden of proof. In the civilised world, the government has to prove that an individual has committed a crime. In India, the individual must prove that she must not be jailed. So this is what the National Register of Citizens, which Amit Shah will implement across the country is chout and this is country, is about and this is how it is being executed.

Now let us turn to the Citizenship Amendment Act. What does it do? It will jail Muslims who are accused of being foreigners and cannot prove that they are Indians to the satisfaction of the BJP government. The people of all

other religions are exempt from proving this because the CAA says that even if they entered India illegally before December 2014, they will be given fast-track citizenship. Only Muslims will have to prove their credentials.

And so, the NRC is aimed at rounding up and permanently jailing Indian Muslims who cannot produce the documents to satisfy a government which punishes those officials who do not declare maximum number of Muslims foreigners. It is for this reason that we see so many Indian Muslims protesting these laws and it is for this reason that so many non-Muslims cannot stand by and watch what is happening in their country. Lastly, it is for this reason

that the foreign minister of India shamefully ran away this week, cancelling his appointment with a US Congressional delegation which was aware of what India is doing to its own people. He knew that he would not be able to defend his actions, and that of our government, because they cannot be defended.

> Aakar Patel is a writer and columnist

CAA, NRC will complete divide & rule agenda



he design and dissemination of H i n d u - M u s l i m antagonism was the supreme accom-plishment of the British imperial policy — "divide et impera" (divide and rule). It fermented religious animosi-ties to assist prolonged British overlordship. It's tragic finale was the Partition of the subcontinent in 1947.

The British were mortified in 1857 to see Hindus and Muslims fighting shoulder to shoulder. They undertook to ensure that this would never be repeated. "Divide et impera", an old Roman dic-British ame official policy. An organised effort was launched for cultivating self-perceptions distinct among the two communities. When limited franchise was diffidently acceded by the British, they deliberately created siloised communal electorates. The kernels of discord were assiduously seeded; its effects soon became visible. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of Aligarh Muslim University's initial conception of India, was plaited with secular instincts. In 1883, at Patna, he stated: "My friends! This India of ours is populated by two famous communities: the Hindus and the Muslims. These two communities stand in the same relation to India in which the head and the heart stand in relation to the human body."

In 1884, in Gurdaspur, he reit-erated: "O Hindus and Muslims! Do you belong to a country other than India? Do not you live on this soil and are not buried under it or cremated on its ghats? If you live and die on this land, then, bear in mind, that... all the Hindus, Muslims and Hindus, Muslims and Christians who live in this country are one nation."

However, by 1888, divide et *impera* seemed to get hold of him. In Meerut, he stated: "The first of all is this: In whose hands shall the administration and the empire of India rest? Now, suppose that all English, and the whole Engli leave India, taking with them all their cannon and their splendid weapons and everything, then who would be rulers of India? Is it possible that under these circumstances, nations two the Mahomedans and the Hindus - could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down. Syed Ahmed Khan was in august company. The concep-tual forerunner of the BJP-Hindu Mahasabha was on the same page. It's leader, Bhai Parmanand, born in Jhelum, now in Pakistan, advocated a communal partition as far back as 1909. He said: "The territory beyond Sind should be united with Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier

The ideological predecessors of the current dispensation wanted that a religious partition go to its logical conclusion. Seventy-two years later, their progeny is trying to fulfil their dream through the CAA and the NRC.

Province into a great Musalman kingdom. The Hindus of the region should come away, while at the same time Musalman in the rest of India should go and settle in this towitown " this territory. His views were endorsed by

the great patriot and the Lion of Punjab Lala Lajpat Rai, again from the Hindu Mahasabha. Writing in the Tribune in 1924, he stated: "Under my scheme, the Muslims will have four Muslim states: (1) The Pathan Province or the West Frontier, Western Punjab, Sindh and Eastern Bengal. If there are compact Muslim communities in any other part of India, sufficiently large to form a province, they should be similarly constituted. But it should be distinctly understood that this is not a united India. It means a clear Muslim India and a non-Muslim India." Allama Iqbal, the author of Sare Jahan Se Accha Hindustan Hamara, in 1904, was also singing a different tune by 1930. In his presiden-tial address to the 25th session of the Muslim League, he declared: "I would like to see the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Baluchistan amalgamate into a single state. Self-govern-ment within the British

Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated northwest Indian Muslim state appears to me the final destiny of the Muslims, at least

of northwestern India." Iqbal was also in august company: Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, addressing the 19th session of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1937 at Ahmedabad, said: "There are two antagonistic nations liv-ing side-by-side in India. Several infantile politicians commit the serious mistake in supposing that India is already welded into a harmo-nious nation, or that it could be welded thus for the mere wish to do so... India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogenous nation. On the contrary, there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Muslims, in India." Savarkar was also in august

erary traditions. They nei-

ther intermarry nor eat

together, and indeed they

belong to two different civili-

sations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas

Savarkar in 1943 endorsed

Jinnah's philosophy: "I have

no quarrel with Jinnah's two-nation theory. We Hindus are a nation by ourselves and it is

a historical fact that Hindus

and Muslims are two

On September 3, 1939, Lord Linlithgow, the then Indian Viceroy declared war against

the Axis powers on behalf of

and conceptions."

nations.'

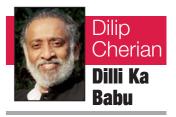
company. Mohammad Ali addressing Jinnah, the sion of the slim ahore League in 1940, stated: "It is a North-West dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philoso-phies, social customs and lit-

India without even a reference to Indian opinion. In protest, the Congress resigned from all the provincial governments that it had won in February 1937. They were replaced by Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha coalition governments. In 1942, in Sindh, Hindu Mahasabha members joined Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah's Muslim government. ecstatically League Savarkar declared: "Witness the fact that only recently in Sind, the Sind Hindu Sabha, on invitation, had taken the responsi-bility of joining hands with the League. The same was repeated in 1943 in Bengal Shyama Prasad when Shyama Prasaa Mookerjee, the founder of the when Jana Sangh, the political pre-decessor of the BJP, became the finance minister in a ministry led by Fazalul Haq, the person personally chosen by Jinnah to present the split Lahore Resolution of 1940. d in the

Province in 1943 when the Hindu Mahasabha leader Mehr Chand Khanna became the finance minister in a Muslim League government headed by Sardar Aurangzeb

Khan. Thus, it is evident that it is not the Congress but the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha and other such elements that were responsible for creating the atmosphere that culminated in the "*ujara*" — devastation — of 1947. The ideological predecessors of the current dispensation wanted that a religious partition go to its logi-cal conclusion. Seventy-two years later, their progeny is trying to fulfil their dream through the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed personal Twitter



PAGE

THE GUJARAT SYNDROME

Jujarat is the go-to state for the Modi sarkar when it needs more trusted hands at the Centre. In the days of Narendra Modi, babus from the state have a disproportionate presence in the capital. Following Mr Modi's long stint in Gujarat as chief minister, many of his favoured babus slowly followed him as he ascended to the PM's kursi.

The trend continues even in Mr Modi's second term. According to sources, Gujarat cadre Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer Niranjan Kumar Singh has been appointed as secretary, oil industry development board at the joint secretary level for a two-year period.

He replaces Diwakar Nath Mishra, who vacated the post following his appointment as joint secretary, department of commerce this year. Mr Singh, a 1987-batch officer, has served both at the Centre and the state in various capacities, including as joint secretary in the

mines ministry. The oil industry development board was established on January 13, 1975 under the Oil Industry (Development) Act 1974 to provide financial assis-tance for the development of the oil industry. It functions under the administrative control of the ministry of petroleum and natural gas.

DOPT WIELDS THE 'DANDA'

he Modi sarkar has been weeding out "deadwood" in the bureaucracy at a fair pace. The stated aim is to dismiss officers who are facing dismiss officers who are facing allegations of corruption or inefficiency. In recent months, tax officers have faced a crackdown. In September, 15 senior officials were compulsorily retired on corruption and other charges. Until June this year, the government has compulsorily retired 49 high-ranking tax retired 49 high-ranking tax officials, including 12 from the central board of direct taxes (CBDT).

Now, sources say, the Modi sarkar is spreading the net wider. The department of personnel and training (DoPT) has asked over 40 ministries to immediately send details of non-performing and officers for similar ejection from the civil service. Apparently, the department had sent a similar communication to the ministries and departments six months ago. Not surprisingly, the ministries were dragging their feet on supplying the information sought by the DoPT. The latest directive, however, makes it clear that any delay in giving the information will not be taken Will the DoPT "*danda*" work this time? Given the prevailing mood, few expect the government to soften its stance on dealing with corruption in the civil services.



'That's our data.'



The designs of **RSS** contradict Shimla Pact

nursed reservations about "Agreement Bilateral Relations Between the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan" signed at Shimla on July 2, 1972, by the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, and the President of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The

erv many in India have

Indian delegation was badly split. Mohammad Yunus, the family retainer, was furious with his friend

P.N. Haksar who had negotiated the

agreement. So was Mrs Gandhi's

principal secretary P.N. Dhar. Little did they know that India's Prime Minister was better aware of the play of politics than any of them. There was an unseen party at Shimla — the Soviet Union. Bhutto's visit to Moscow earlier helped him. The Soviet Union

helped him. The Soviet Union, which had helped India a lot in 1971, was keen on a settlement between India and Pakistan and its

re-emergence now, post-Tashkent,

The agreement suited both sides admirably. It was the product of an understanding between the two

leaders at the pinnacle of power. The diplomats did what they were

told. On Pakistan's side was the

doughty Aziz Ahmed. Sadly, the

last survivor of the parleys at Shimla, Abdul Sattar, breathed his

last recently. This accomplished

as a quiet mediator.

principal secretary P.N. Dhar.

on

diplomat rose to be Pakistan's foreign minister in which capacity he performed brilliantly at the summit at Agra in July 2001 between then President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee whose colleague L.K. Advani ensured that Vajpayee did not win the spurs and the summit failed.

This writer would like to pay a tribute to Sattar Sahib, a valued friend of nearly 40 years.

The Shimla pact has roughly three parts. One was to mop up the debris left by the war of 1971. The second was to ensure that the new Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir was respected by both sides. The third, in para six, envisaged that their countries' "respective heads will meet again at a mutually convenient time in the future". The remit was precisely defined: "a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir'

This implied that a dispute exist-ed which awaited "a final settlement". India's hawks baulked at this, holding that a Pakistan weakened by war should have been coerced to accept the LoC as a final border. Bhutto would have rejected this and the Soviet Union would have been furious at the failure.

However, as Pakistan's foreign minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan admitted in the National Assembly

in June 1986, neither side invoked para six to ask for talks. Later, Îndia refused, citing the violence in Kashmir which had erupted. Its grievance about cross-LoC infiltra-tion might have been seen as a valid concern, but not so its repeated invocation of the Shimla mantra that the two countries would "settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations"

Abdul Sattar sahib revealed to this writer that on Pakistan's insistence the word "exclusively" in India's draft was dropped and these words were inserted: "or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon" by them. There lurks a fatal flaw. India has

insisted on bilateral talks since 1958 when Jawaharlal Nehru finally ruled out mediation. But when the two began to talk, it refused to settle except on its own terms – accept the status quo.

Is the second part of the Shimla pact in peril? The Jan Sangh opposed it in 1972. Its successor the BJP did likewise. A war far more deadly than any of its predecessors would be the only way the BJP could try to wrest away AJK.

There was an interesting rift. The RSS' organ Organiser had an article on December 18, 2019, entitled "If Kartarpur happens, why not Sharda Peeth?" The writers, Ravinder Pandita and Akash

Bhardwaj, asserted that Sharda Peeth is "one of the 18 highly revered Maha Shakti Peeth" for billions of Hindus. It is, however, situated within Azad Kashmir "barely 10 km from the Line of Control". They urge that following the Kartarpur model India and Pakistan should "allow an easy passage for its pilgrims".

Ravindra Pandita wrote to the chief justice of Azad Kashmir in January 2018 to ensure protection of temples and gurdwaras in Azad Kashmir. The court's registrar replied, pointing out two cases in which the court had issued directions to that effect.

Organiser of November 17, 2019, had an article on "the new paradigm shift in the new redrawn map of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh". It omits the LoC altogether; it does not exist. The new map, drawn by the surveyor general of India, was issued by the home ministry last month. The entire Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are shown as

Indian territory. The Shimla Pact says that "nei-ther side shall seek to alter it [the LoC] unilaterally" and to desist from use of force "in violation of the Line [Para 4(ii)]." The wisest course is for both sides to resolve the Kashmir dispute in earnest.

By arrangement with **Dawn**

BABUS' POSTING IN LIMBO

or the past several months, at least 18 young IAS officers of the 2016 and 2017 batches are awaiting field postings as sub-collectors in Telangana. Strangely, the state government is unable to explain the delay in announcing their postings. Even the Telangana IAS officers' association not succeeded in has eliciting a response from the

According to sources, eight IAS officers completed their training in October last year and reported to the general administration department (GAD) for posting. The government posted them as special officers in eight districts and continue to work in the same post. As do the 10 IAS officers of the 2017 batch. Meanwhile, their batchmates in other states have become sub-collectors even as these 18 officers are still awaiting orders to get a field posting. No one knows the reason for the inordinate delay or how long the current situation will continue.

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















Good news

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said that US President Donald Trump told him that his administration will not levy new tariffs on Brazilian steel and aluminium





I ask (protesters) to give us a chance to form an exceptional government

> — Hassan Diab Lebanese PM-designate



Gunmen attack plane in Papua

Jakarta: Indonesia Gunmen opened fire on a small commercial plane as it landed in Indonesia's restive province of Papua carrying nine passengers, one of the plane's pilots said on Saturday. The attack occurred in the hilly district of Puncak, a stronghold of separatists who have battled Indonesian rule in the mineral-rich but impoverished region since the early 1960s. The Indonesian co-pilot, Purwanto Condro Usodo said he and pilot, Michael Cumming, were unaware of the shooting and managed to land the aircraft safely at Beoga airport from the mining town of Timika until passengers told them that they saw gunmen spray the plane with bullets while landing.

Russia, Ukraine deal on gas transit

Minsk: Ukrainian and Russian officials say final details have been worked out for a contract that will continue shipments of Russian gas to European markets. The current contract for gas being sent to Europe through the territory of Ukraine expires at the end of the year and there had been high concern that failing to reach a new agreement would interrupt supplies as winter sets in. The Ukrainian presidential administration says details will be announced on Saturday. Russian deputy prime minister Dmitry Kozak says the deal is expected to be signed by the end of the vear.

Cruise liners collide off Mexico

Mexico City: Two Carnival Corp cruise ships collided on Friday in the port of Mexico's Caribbean resort of the luvury c operator said, crushing the stern of a 952-foot-long vessel and leaving passengers stunned at the loud impact. One person was lightly injured while evacuating a dining room on the massive ship named Carnival Glory, according to Carnival, the world's largest cruise operator. A passenger said the incident occurred during rough sea conditions. "Carnival Glory was maneuvering to dock when it made contact with Carnival Legend which was already alongside," the firm said.

Now, Trump accuses Pelosi of quid pro quo

Why aren't we impeaching the US Speaker, asks US Prez

Washington, Dec. 21: President Donald Trump is in sunny Florida after his historic impeachment, while plans for his speedy trial back in Washington remained clouded. Senate leaders jockeying for leverage have failed to agree on procedures for the trial.

Trump is still expected to be acquitted of both charges in the Senate, where Republicans have the majority, in what will be only the third presidential impeachment trial in US history. Proceedings will begin in January.

But the impasse between Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer over whether there will be new witnesses and testimony — along with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's refusal so far to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate — have left the sitthe

holidays.

A six-term veteran of the

Senate, McConnell is act-

ing very much though he

Hong Kong, Dec. 21: Hong Kong police on Saturday said an armed

suspect fired a live round

at officers as they tried to

arrest him in an opera-tion linked to the months

of pro-democracy prot-ests engulfing the city.

man pulled a semi-auto-matic pistol from his waistband as officers approached him in Tai Po

The shot did not hit any-

A subsequent search of

a nearby flat uncovered

an AR-15 semi-automatic

rifle and more than 250

rounds of ammunition.

one and the man was sub-

district on Friday.

dued.

Polic

attack officers.

Lee Kwai-wah said.

Police said a 19-year-old

"Nancy Pelosi is looking for a Quid Pro Quo with the Senate. Why aren't we Impeaching her?" Trump tweeted, mocking one of the accusations against has the votes to ensure a trial uncluttered by withim before heading out for



Xi Jinping **INTERFERENCE** HARMS CHINESE **INTERESTS: XI**

Dec. Beijing, 21: Chinese President Xi Jinping told his US counterpart Donald counterpart Donald Trump that US comand actions ments regarding Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet are harming ties between the two economic giants.

In a phone conversation Trump, with nt Xi hted the US behaviours have interfered in China's internal affairs and harmed China's interests, which is detrimental to the mutual trust and bilateral cooperation. China hopes Wash-ing-ton will 'seriously implement the important consensus' that the two leaders have reached over various conversations, "pay high attention and attach great importance to China's concerns, and prevent bilateral relations and important agendas from being disturbed," President Xi was reportdisturbed,' ed as saying. Chinese leaders have long been sensitive about their communist country's international image. Now, they are battling back — investing in diplomacy and a cour-tship of hearts and minds, just as the US digs in on the Trump administration' "America First" mindset. A trade war and other frictions between the world's top economic power is on. - *Reuters*



President Donald Trump speaks at the signing ceremony for S.1709, The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 in Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. - AFP (Right), US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Suspect fired

shots: HK cop

a two-week stay at his Mar-a-Lago resort for the nesses — despite the protests of top Democrats nesses Pelosi and Schumer.

McConnell, Trump's mo-"We have this fascinat powerful GOP ally in ing situation where, folthe Senate, welcomed the lowing House Democrats' president's emerging defe-nse team Friday for a walk-through of the Senrush to impeachment, following weeks of pro-nouncements about the ate chamber. White House urgency of this situation, counsel Pat Cipollone and the prosecutors have now developed cold feet," McConnell, R-Ky., said. "We'll continue to see legislative affairs director Eric Ueland came to Cap-itol Hill to assess logistics.

how this develops, and whether the House Democrats ever work up the courage to take their accusations to trial.

Police said they

believed the man

and the newly dis-

covered weapons

allegedly found in

possession of a

pistol and were

officers

plotting to attack

However, Lee said the

suspect was also facing

ongoing firearms charges

from an arrest last year

Riot police had to be

called in to back up the

officers as local residents

before the protests.

were linked to a group who were also



McConnell has all but promised an easy acquittal of the president. He appears to have united Republicans behind an approach that would begin the trial with presentations and arguments, lasting perhaps two weeks, before he tries drawing the proceedings to a close. The Senate will reconvene on Jan. 3. That has sparked a fight with Pelosi and Schumer, who are demanding trial witnesses who refused to appear during House committee hearings. – Reuters

Christmas treat



America will pay dearly for criticism: North Korea

Seoul, Dec. 21: North Korea lashed back at the if the United States dared to take issue with United States for taking issue with its human the North's system of govrights record on Saturday, saying Washington's "malicious words" would only aggravate tensions on the Korean Peninsula, state news agency KCNA reported.

The KCNA statement, attributed to a foreign ministry spokesperson, warned that if the United States dared to take issue with the North's system of government by citing human rights problems, it

would "pay dearly". The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday condemned North Korea's "long-standing and ongoing" violations of human rights in an annual reso-lution sponsored by dozens of countries including the United States, that Pyongyang's

UN envoy rejected. The North Korean for-eign ministry statement is its first since US special envoy for North Korea, Stephen Biegun, publicly urged Pyongyang on Monday to return to talks. There has been no direct response from North Korea to Biegun's entreaty.

ernment by citing human rights problems, it would 'pay dearly' — FOREIGN MINISTRY **SPOKESPERSON** North Korea General Mark Milley

Friday that he remains hopeful the United States can restart diplomacy with North Korea, as the clock ticks down to North Korea's declared year-end deadline for new US concessions in talks over its nuclear arsenal.

North Korea has repeatedly called for the United States to drop its "hostile policy" before more talks. But tension has been rising in recent weeks as Pyongyang has conducted a series of weapons tests and waged a war of words with US President Donald Trump.

Some experts say the reclusive state may be preparing for an intercontinental ballistic missile test that could put it back on a path of confrontation with the United States. Negotiations over North Korea's nuclear Korea's nuclear pro-gramme have been deadocked since a summit in

US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said on ruary.



The Pentagon's top gener-al said the US military is ready for anything from North Korea in the face of Pyongyang's ominous promise of a "Christmas gift" if Washington does not act to ease tensions.

'Korea is one of those places in the world where we've always maintained high levels of readiness," said General Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The US alliance with

South Hanoi collapsed in Feb-- Reuters reporters.

Japan and South Korea is "rock-solid,"he said. "I think it's prepared to defend the interests of the United States, Japan and Korea moment's notice," he told

-AFF

WEAPONS BAN: **NZ OWNERS** HAND IN GUNS

Wellington, Dec. 21: New Zealand authorities said on Saturday their country will be a safer place after owners handed in more than 50,000 guns during a buyback program following a ban on assault weapons. But critics say the process was flawed and many owners have illegally stashed their firearms.

The government banned the most lethal types of semi-automatic weapons less than a month after a lone gunman in March killed 51 worshippers at two Christchurch mosques. The police then launched a six-month program to buy the newly banned weapons from owners.

The buyback ended midnight Friday, with gun collection events staying open late as police reported in a surge in last-minute returns.

Provisional figures indicate 33,000 people handed in 51,000 guns, and another 5,000 guns as part of a parallel amnesty in which owners could hand over any type of firearm without any questions being asked but without getting compensated.

Owners also modified another 2,700 guns to make them legally compliant, while police said they had seized a further 1,800 guns from gangs since March

hegan with at least two tear gas the man and the newly discovered weapons were rounds fired to disperse linked to a group arrested themd. earlier this month who

Semi-autonomous Hong were also allegedly found Kong has been shaken for six months by increasing in possession of a pistol and were plotting to ly violent pro-democracy protests.

They "The firearms we diswere initially covered matched the sparked by a now-abanintelligence we had coldoned attempt to allow lected which indicated extraditions to the auththat some people hoped to oritarian mainland but use firearms in some pubhave since morphed into lic assemblies to wound a popular revolt against some others, including Beijing's rule, with spipolice officers on duty, ralling fears that the city is losing some of its unique liberties. -AFPSenior Superintendent -AFP



Figures named 'Lady Liberty Hong Kong', inspired by the outfit of anti-extradition law protesters with yellow helmets, goggles, gas masks and umbrellas, on display at a studio in Hong Kong.



A worker feeds a crocodile named Lolong 2 at an enclosure during the 'Animal Christmas Party', where children were treated to a tour of the Malabon Zoo, in Manila. – AFP

Twitter, Facebook ban fake users; some had AI-created photographs

New York, Dec. 21: Twitter has identified and removed nearly 6,000 accounts that it said were part of a coordinated effort by Saudi government agencies and indi-viduals to advance the country's geopolitical interests.

Separately, Facebook said it removed hundreds of Facebook accounts, groups and pages linked to inauthentic behaviour from two separate groups, one originating in the country of Georgia and one in Vietnam, which tarstepped up efforts to tackgeted people both in Vietnam and in the U.S.



the accounts used profile tial elections. The efforts photos generated by artififollowed revelations that cial intelligence and mas-Russians bankrolled thouqueraded as Americans. It sands of fake political ads during the 2016 elections is one of the first such to sow dissent among misinformation efforts to use material generated by Americans.

Tech companies have announcements underscore the fact that misinle misinformation on their services ahead of formation concerns aren't limited to the U.S. and Facebook said some of next year's US presiden-Russia.

In a blog post on Friday, Twitter said the removed Saudi accounts were amplifying messages favo urable to Saudi authorities, mainly through "aggressive liking, retweeting and replying." While the majority of the content was in Arabic, Twitter said the tweets also amplified discussions about sanctions in Iran and appearances by Saudi govin Western media.

Twitter's and Facebook's media.

ernment officials The Russian efforts in 2016 showed it was possible to actually change public attitudes through the targeted use of social

Christmas story 'scar of Bethlehem' to make people think how Palestinians live there DARK THEME Mystery artist Banksy unveils dark nativity in Bethlehem

Bethlehem, Dec. 21: A Hotel, where all rooms overlook a concrete secmanger scene juxtaposed against concrete blocks tion of the barrier built by Israel to cut off the occuseemingly pierced by a mortar shell: with Chripied West Bank from Îsraeli territory. stmas looming, the latest "Love" and "peace" are Bethlehem offering by secretive artist Banksy appeared in the Israelirespectively respectively graffiti tagged in English and

occupied West Bank. French on the artistic Dubbed the "Scar of Bethlehem", the baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph are backlit through daminstallation's concrete blocks, while three large wrapped presents are at the forefront of the scene. "It is a nativity," the hotel's manager Wissam aged concrete, chiseled pockmarks exploding out from a gaping hole in four Salsaa said after the piece directions to approximate the Christmas Star. was installed. "Banksy has his own contribution to

The work is installed at Banksy's Walled-Off of Bethlehem, the Christmas story, in a different way - to make people think more of how Palestinians live in

Bethlehem." Salsaa calls the Israeli wall a "scar" that should induce "shame in anyone who supported" its construction.

Israel began building the separation barrier — in parts concrete, with other stretches consisting of fencing - in 2002 during the Palestinian uprising, or intifada.

Built mostly inside the Christmas. It is a great West Bank, Israel says it is way to bring up the story necessary to prevent



A peek into the 'Scar of Bethlehem' artwork by Banksy – AFP displayed in Bethlehem.

attacks, but Palestinians Jerusalem. Traditional label it an apartheid wall, Bethlehem Christmas fesseparating them from tivities will take place next

week at the church built on the spot where Christians believe Jesus was born.

The manger scene and hotel — an establishment opened two years ago -- are far from Banksy's only West Bank imprint.

In 2007, he painted a number of artworks in Bethlehem, including a young girl frisking an Israeli soldier pinned up against a wall.

In 2005, he sprayed nine stencilled images at different locations along the eight-metre-high (27-foot) separation barrier. They included a ladder

on the wall, a little girl carried away by balloons and a window opening onto a peaceful mountain landscape.

Palestinian graffiti artists, too, have made the separation wall a place of political and artistic expression.

become tourist

-AFP

Like elsewhere in the world, Banksy's works in the occupied territory have attractions — in part due to him often ghosting in to

create his works in the dead of night. The identity of the world's best known graffiti artist remains a mystery.







For a cause

Actress Jane Fonda might spend her 82nd birthday In jail after fifth arrest in three months for climate protests



SUNDAY | 22 DECEMBER 2019 | HYDERABAD

Norld



look at what a person will do after taking office — Amy Klobuchar **US Senator**

BRIFF

Muslim nations mull barter system

Kuala Lumpur: Iran, Malaysia, Turkey and Qatar are considering trading among themselves in gold and through a barter system as a hedge against any future economic sanctions on them, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on Saturday. At the end of an Islamic summit in Malaysia, Mahathir praised Iran and Qatar for withstanding economic embargoes and said it was important for the Muslim world to be self-reliant to face future threats. "With the world witnessing nations making unilateral decisions to impose such punitive measures, Malaysia and other nations must always bear in mind that it can be imposed on any of us," Mahathir said.

Europe storm death toll at 7

Madrid: The death toll from a storm that battered Spain, Portugal and France rose to seven on Saturday as the region braced for more vio-lent winds. A 32-year-old South Korean woman died on Saturday, a day after being struck on the head by falling debris from a building in central Madrid. The building had passed an inspection in 2015 "but weather like this, with heavy rain and wind, causes these fateful cases," Enrique Lopez said. Emergency services in the southwestern region of Andalusia said a Dutch man who went missing while windsurfing had drowned.

Six killed as bus slips into icy river

Beijing: Six people were killed when a passenger bus slipped onto an icy river in the industrial city of Tonghua in northeast China's Jilin Province on Saturday. The bus, which was carrying 37 passengers, slipped from an icy slop near 206 Hospital in Dongchang District at around 11 am local time, officials said. All passengers have been rescued and sent to the hospital for treatment. the state-run CGTN television network reported





(From top), Sunbathers are seen on Bondi Beach as temperatures soar in Sydney. The picture above shows firetrucks stationed on a road as a bushfire burns in Bargo, southwest of Sydney. (Right), Firefighters tend to burning property caused by bushfires in

Australia heatwave melts roads as temp crosses 48

Soaring temperatures, heatwave make life hell for Aussie firefighters

Bargo, Dec. 21: Roads are melting in South Australia after record temperatures, with concerns rising mercury could set off a new wave of bush fires. South Australia's heatwave has entered into a fifth day, with even sunset offering little respite. In Adelaide, which endured its hottest night on record, it didn't dip below 92 F on Thursday, Australia's *ABC* News reported.

record-breaking heatwave, AUSTRALIA endures which has moved in from bushfires every year but the west of the country the early and intense exacerbating hundreds of start to this season, devastating fires in its along with the record path. Sydney was shroudtemperatures, has ed in toxic smoke as blazes flared to its north. south fuelled concerns about and west, some just 130 global warming kilometres from Australia's largest city. 'We are expecting very difficult circumstances, situations, in relation to all the fire fronts," New South Wales premier Gladys Berejiklian said. Evacuations were being carried out in Bargo, on the front of a 185,000hectare blaze which tore through the nearby area. Agencies

Firefighters battle



Migrant children play in the snow by a disused ski lodge in Grevena, Thessaloniki. The facility hosts asylum-seekers from Somalia.

Somalia's year of climate misery

Somalia. Dec. 21: As Somalia withered from drought early this year, and her goats dropped dead from thirst, Maka Abdi Ali begged for rain. When the skies finally opened, nature was opened,

unmerciful. Unrelenting downpours in October turned to flash floods, destroying her meagre home and few remaining possessions, and washing away whatever harvest and bony animals farmers managed to save during the months without rain.

In central Somalia, 1,80,000 people fled the fast-rising waters in the country's worst floods in memory. The arid Horn of Africa

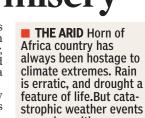
country has always been hostage to climate extremes. Rain is erratic, and drought a feature of life.

But catastrophic weath-er events are occurring in Somalia with ever-greater fury and frequency, trapping millions in a nearconstant cycle of crisis. The town of Beled-weyne was inundated in the flood — the waters are now slowly receding Little by little, the abili-

ty to recover is ground down, say experts. There is no time to rebuild homes and replenish food stocks before another disaster strikes.



region.



PAGE 13

occurring with evergreater fury

Impoverished and weak-ened by decades of war, battling an armed insurgency, Somalia is ill-equipped to cope with the destabilising impact of double-tap environmental crises. Aid budgets are stretched trying to respond to back-to-back emergencies. In May, the UN launched a drought app-eal, warning of looming starvation as Somalia

faced its worst harvest. Six months later, it's again appealing for help, this time for \$72.5 million for half a million victims. There hasn't been a

day this year where we haven't been talking about either drought or floods," Abigail Hartley, deputy head of office for the UN humanitarian agency. Among those fleeing the inundation in Beledweyne, the epicen-tre of this disaster, were Somalis already on the run from other climatestricken parts of the

TIMER ERROR **FOILS BOEING'S ISS MISSION**

Cape Canaveral, Dec. 21: Boeing Co's new astronaut cap sule on Friday failed to reach the orbit of the International Space Station, US space agency Nasa said, cutting short a critical unmanned test mission in the embattled aerospace giant's race to send humans to the station.

The CST-100 Starliner astronaut capsule successfully launched earlier from Cape Canaveral in Florida, but an automated timer error prevented the spacecraft from reaching the orbit that would have put it on track to meet up with the space station. The debut journey to the

space station was a milestone test for Boeing, which is vying with SpaceX to revive Nasa's human spaceflight capabilities. SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule carried out its unmanned test flight to the space station in March.

The thwarted mission took place as Boeing, whose shares dropped about 1% in morning trading, sought an engineer ing and public relations win in a year punctuated by a corporate crisis over a ban on its 737 MAX jetliner following fatal crashes

The plan was now for the capsule to head back to Earth, landing at White Sands, New Mexico on Sunday.

Boeing's new Starliner cap sule ran into trouble and went off course in orbit minutes after blasting off Friday on its first test flight, a crucial dress rehearsal for next year's inaugural launch with astronauts.

A scorching heatwave The state's Bureau of Meteorology noted that the temperature in the town of Nullarbor reached a sweltering 121 F, the ing fourth hottest temperature ever recorded in Australia. This overtook

year ago.

the record set by Eucla in Western Australia just hours earlier.

intensified bushfires ravaging parts of Australia on Saturday, and out-ofcontrol blazes surround-Svdnev worsened under catastrophic conditions. Australia's eastern coast has been hit by a

fatigue, injury & loss

Dargan, Dec. 21: After six exhausting weeks battling massive bushfires that are ripping through rural Australia, volunteer firefighter Andrew Moyle wishes for just two things: rest and rain.

"Rain would be best," said Moyle, who juggles firefighting shifts of up to 18 hours with running his own maintenance business and managing a family cattle station.

The colossal task of fighting unprecedented bushfires falls largely to people — a band of doc-tors, farmers and factory workers who at 70,000strong are the world's largest volunteer fire service. For weeks the crew has toiled in searing temperatures and thick acrid smoke as they try to curb a mega blaze that has turned a swathe of national park to ash. - AFP

Pope Francis bounces a terrestrial sphere covered in children's drawings he received during a ceremony of

Pope, UN vow to fight climate cause

Vatican City, Dec. 21: Pope Francis and the UN chief issued a joint yearend message urging the world to remember children dying of hunger, migrants seeking safety and a planet threatened by nuclear weapons and climate change.

Christmas wishes in the Vatican.

THE TWO leaders denounced the "scandal" of hunger and the plight of migrants forced to flee their homes because of conflicts, global warming or religious persecution

Francis hosted secretary-general António Guterres at an audience and the two issued a joint video message from the pope's private library. The themes touched on a host of issues on which the Vatican and UN have found increasing common ground.

leaders The two denounced the "scandal" of hunger and the plight of migrants forced to flee their homes because of conflicts, global warming or religious persecution. They declared as "immoral" both the use and possession of nuclear weapons and vowed to fight together against the

'plague" of all types of abuses against children. The Vatican has been harshly criticised by a UN human rights committee for the clergy sexual abuse scandal, though this week Francis responded to one of the com-

mittee's main complaints and abolished the rule of pontifical secrecy covering the cases. After decades of sometimes hostile relations over the UN's women's reproductive health policies, the Vatican under Francis has increasingly involved UN officials in policy statements.

-AP

SWITZERLAND **SHUTS DOWN NUKE PLANT**

Stockholm, Dec. 20: After months of criss-cross-Bern, Dec. 21: Switzing the Atlantic to attend erland on Friday shut first the UN climate sumdown one of its oldest mit in New York and then nuclear power plants, part of a plan to end the COP25 talks in Madrid, teenage eco-warrior Greta domestic production of Thunberg was back in Sweden on Friday, taking atomic energy before the middle of the century. part in a rally outside the parliament where her protests first began over a Operator BKW took

the Muehleberg Nuclear Power Plant, located 40 kilometers west of the capital Bern, off the grid shortly after midday in a ceremony broadcast live by Switzerland's main public TV station.

BKW, which is majority owned by the canton (state) of Bern, said it plans to begin dismantling the plant in January, a process that will take until 2034. Decommissioning and deposing of radioactive remains is estimated to

nuclear power.

cost 3 billion Swiss francs (\$3.1 billion). Nnew York, Dec. 21: Scientists have discovered what could be the world's the Muchleberg is the smallest of Switzeoldest forest, potentially rland's four remaining rich in information on the nuclear power plants. It link between forests and climate change, according to a study published in the began operation in 1972. After the 2011 Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster in Japan,

journal Current Biology. The title of world's oldest Switzerland decided to fossil forest had previousgradually phase out ly been given to a site in -APGilboa, in the Catskills



The new site is an old quarry in the same region, just 25 miles further east, near the town of Cairo.

After 10 years of samples and studies, an interna-tional team of 11 scientists concluded the quarry had once housed a forest two to three million years older

region of upstate New York, dating back about 385 million years. and more varied in types of trees.As at Gilboa, sci-entists found traces of the

primitive tree type "Eosp-ermatopteris". Somewhat similar to a palm tree, it has a thick bottom and crown of branches at the top, though no leaves.

But at the new site, they also found trees from the "Archaeopteris" type. The "Archaeopteris" has The title of world's oldest fossil forest had previously been given to a site in Gilboa, in the Catskills region of upstate New York, dating back to 385 million years

"much more modern" characteristics. with leaves and root systems comparable to a spruce or pine, explained William Stein, one of the study

authors and a biology professor at Binghamton University in New York. Those trees could help understand how forests modernized, at a time when carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere were getting lower and temperatures were dropping, Stein said.

By studying the cooling process, it could be possi-ble to better understand the relationship today between climate warming and deforestation, since it may be a similar proces in reverse, he said. -AFP



Greta talks climate emergency

Greta Thunberg attends a climate strike arranged by the organisation Fridays For Future outside the Swedish parliament Riksdagen in Stockholm. -AP

mate activists just outside the parliamentary build- ing. Named 2019 Person of the Year by Time maga-

zine, Thunberg said she hoped the distinction would help put her cause in the spotlight. "I really hope that it raises awareness and moti-

vates others to get involved in the campaign," she told Swedish news agency TT.

Just over a year ago, at the start of the school year, the then-ninth grade student left her books at home and began sitting outside the Swedish parliament to raise aware-

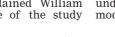
ness about the climate emergency. — AFP

















guards, Thunberg met with a group of young cli-**NEW | DISCOVERY The quarry contains the fossilised woody roots of dozens of ancient trees** Scientists may have found world's oldest forest

Dressed in her trade-

mark yellow sou'wester and woollen hat and

trailed by a pack of body-



Star Wars creator George Lucas based the character of Han Solo on his friend director Francis Ford Coppola

DECCAN CHRONICLE

SUNDAY | 22 DECEMBER 2019 | HYDERABAD

ovies

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

Chulbul Pandey is dead! Long live Chulbul Pandey!

Dabangg 3 (U/A) 143 min AST: Salman Khan, Kichcha udeep, Sonakshi Sinha, Saiee Ianjrekar, Arbaaz Khan, Pramod CTOR: Prabhu Deva

ATING: ★

SUPARNA SHARMA

am bereft, heartbroken and very sorry to inform you that Chulbul Pandey, *sautela* son of Prajapati Pandey, resident of Laalgunj, UP, is no more.

His demise was kept under wraps by Messrs Khan & Khan, *Dabangg*'s producers and profi-teers, expressly for financial concerns, but also to keep Arbaaz

Khan gainfully employed. It appears that sometime after *Dabangg 2* (2012), where Chulbul Pandey seemed a bit listless and limp, he passed on.

Or it could well be that upon hearing writer and director Prabhu Deva narrate the harebrained script of *Dabangg 3*, Chulbul dropped dead out of boredom or depression, or both.

So they had to get hold of another, a look-alike, to play the part. What we have here, in *Dabangg 3*,

is a poser, an impostor pretending to be Chulbul Pandey.

He is not, of course.

What he is, however, is dim. Aur dim se yaad aaya, Mr Dim can barely talk in coherent sentences. So he can only be put in situations that demand some gurgling of him, and some painfully sluggish action. This means that we mostly don't understand what he is saying. And have to suffer watching him deliver kicks and punches in slo-mo, and then watch the recipients of these lethargic kicks and punches slide or fly off in slo-mo.

The fabulous and entreating Chulbul Pandey — to whom we were first introduced in 2010 by writer-director Abhinav Kashyap — was one-part rowdy, one-part Robin Hood, one-part funny guy. But given Mr Dim's con-straints, the character here is whit-tled down to two simple characteristics — cute and good-hearted, but both these traits are underpinned by worrying dimness.

Despite this, the entire *Dabangg* enterprise is devoted to pretending that this indeed is Chulbul Pandey. Here Chulbul is an assistant sub-

inspector, a resident of Tundla. where he lives with his wife Rajjo (Sonakshi Sinha), child Bittu, brother Makkhi (Arbaaz Khan), father Prajapati (played by the late Vinod Khanna's brother, Pramod). To impress upon us that this is indeed Chulbul, he is first made to indeed Chubul, he is first made to tackle a gang of goons. But these goons are certifiably stupid. So much so that while looting a wed-ding party, one of them comes upon a *surahi* and thinks it's *Alladin ka Chirag* and stars rubbing it vigor-ually ously.

It's upon these special imbeciles that the dim Chulbul is unleashed. But so dim is he that at one point he takes off his own belt and then wonders why his trousers have fallen to his ankles.

Poor thing! But irritating other people's crotches gives this dim Chulbul many jollies. And so his special punishment for very bad people is to make one man pull another man's underwear up to his head. This makes him very happy, and when he is very happy, he twitches his bums, one bun at a time.

But somewhere a woman is in distress and for some rea-

son she

runs to

Irritating other people's crotches gives this dim Chulbul many jollies. And so his special punishment for very bad people is to make one man pull another man's underwear up to his head. This makes him very happy, and when he is very happy, he twitches his bums...

Makkhi for help since he too is a cop now. She talks of women being sold into prostitution. This leads to Chulbul arriving to again toss, break, twist idiot goons and launch into a *bhashan* about bad ladies

before delivering two slaps to one particularly bad lady. Apparently, when a lady is bad, she loses the gentle privilege of being treated like a lady.

All this muchaboutery is basically to take us to Bali Singh (Kichcha Sudeep) who looks like a serial killer with a gardening fetish.

Sometime now, I imagine, Prabhu Deva & Co. felt they needed a story, or at least a plot. And so they scratched their heads, smoked something they shouldn't have, and since they were entirely incapable of progressing, they decided to regress and came up with what they thought could be a plausible back-story for Chulbul Pandey. Dabangg 3 harks back

to tell us how and why an unemployed Dhakar Chand became Chulbul Pandey the cop, and who put that sad-sad feeling in his heart where once a sweet-sweet feeling lurked for a young medical student, Khushi (Saiee Manjrekar).

All roads, of course, lead to the killer who is proudly unmarried. The film's climax is made up of two lumbering, middle-aged men trying to pretend they can fight. But so blah is this simulated

action involving two men fast approaching senior citizenship that many bombs need to go off, and the earth needs to burst and rise and men need to fly about for it to even look like it's a fight scene.

he *Dabangg* franchise has been passed on from one great L director to other lesser ones for reasons beyond me. The only plausible explanation I can come up with is that Salman Khan thinks that writers and directors don't matter. All that matters is that he be on the screen for the entirety of the film, doing whatever he feels like. His fans will still love him and bestow box-office bliss upon all his crap.

Or, it could be that writers and directors expect some coherent

dialogue delivery, at least an attempt at acting, and since that is beyond Salman Khan, he prefers homely settings.

Enter writer-director Prabhu Deva whose directing skills are aimed at people with the age and an IQ of 8, and whose great contribution to filmy dialogue is, "Don't

His *Dabangg 3* is a lesson in many things, including how to kill a perfectly brilliant character who had the power and goodwill to spawn a franchise.

In the totally incapable and inept hands of the dancer-turned-direc-tor, *Dabangg* is reduced to infantile nonsense interspersed with either songs or fights, neither of which are entertaining or thrilling.

In almost every scene there is an attempt at comedy everywhere, the kind that irritates. Including making the main character regress to almost a prenatal stage where eating, farting and randomly chuckling seem to be his primary activities. The most entertaining thing about Prabhu Deva's film is that though set in Uttar Pradesh around Pandeys and Singhs, Dabangg 3 has a very strong South Indian accent. Including Kichcha Sudeep, who is very good as Bali the villain who likes to hang and dangle people, and has a particular fondness for rose bushes.

Though he tries to do that thing which is usually not allowed in any of Salman Khan's films — act — the question is, how much *dandiya* can one man play all by himself.

S alman Khan, the infantile grown man, thinks he's still got it.

There is a scene in this film where he actually has a pissing contest with two other men and we are shown that his is longer and shoots farther. That's the trickery of cinema. But the camera, when it's look-

ing straight at him, doesn't lie. In *Dabangg 3*, Salman Khan is present on the screen for almost the entirety of its three hours. And while he can be charming and does

hold audience attention, he falls woefully short of expectations. Salman Khan is physically very stiff or he has a terrible case of piles. He barely moves, and most of the time the camera is focused

either on his face or his torso. He delivers his lines as if he has just learnt to speak, and his action sequences made me feel bad, mostly for you and me. Because they are unbearably boring, yes. But also because they are an affirmation of how cynical our super-stars are, and how little they care



PAGE

Never gets too scary or silly

NELL MINOW

ike its predecessor, this latest Jumanji movie combines fantasy action and adventure with some comedy, a touch of romance, and real-life lessons about courage, friendship, and empathy — all with the help of some low-key race and gender fluidity.

At the end of the last film, the four high school students who got sucked into an old-school video game console and found themselves turned into archetypal adventure heroes (some more heroic than others), were so happy to get home that they smashed the game. But the movie made a lot of money, and so the game is operational again, and this time the now-college-age kids are joined by a couple of old-school characters.

Spencer (Alex Wolff) is now a freshman at NYU. Maintaining his romance with Martha (Morgan Turner) long-distance has been rocky and as he returns home for Christmas break he is not sure whether they are on or off. Spencer's grandfather Eddie (Danny DeVito) is recuperating from hip surgery, so he is in the house, too, along with his stair lift, hospital bed, and CPAP machine. Eddie's estranged former business partner Milo (Danny Glover) comes over to try to repair their relationship, but Eddie is not inter-

ested.

Spencer misses the confidence he had as the video game avatar Dr Śmolder Bravestone (Dwayne Johnson). And so, he goes back inside the game where the life and death chalsomehow lenges seem more familiar and easier to hanJumanji: The Next Level (U/A) <u>122 min</u> CAST: Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Kevin Hart, Danny DeVito Jake Kasdan RATING: ***

dle than real life. When he does not return, Martha, Bethany (Madison Iseman) and Fridge (Ser'Darius Blain) re-enter the game to rescue him. There's a bit of a switch, though. The game is once again up to mischief, and this time, while Martha is again dance-fighting expert Ruby Roundhouse (Karen Gillan), it is Eddie who shows up as Dr Bravestone. Milo is the weapons knapsack-carrying Mouse Finbar (Kevin Hart), while Fridge is the former Bethany avatar, pudgy map-expert Dr Shelly Oberon (Jack Black). No one knows where Bethany is.



Rao Ramesh steals the show!

Prathi Roju Pandage CAST: Sai Tej, Raashi Khanna, Sathya Raj, Vijay Kumar, Rao Ramesh, Hari Teja, labardust Mahesh IRECTOR: Maruthi Dasari ATING: ★★★

SURESH KAVIRAYANI I DC

amily dramas are always a safe bet in Telugu cinema if they narrated well. Director Maruthi walks the beaten path with 'Prathi Roju Pandage', starring Sai Tei and Raashi Khanna.

Raghuramayya (Sathya Raj) is diagnosed with lung cancer, and he is given five weeks. His three sons and a daughter are settled in dif-ferent places and their response to his illness is tepid. His grandson Sai (Sai Tej) rushes to see the old man without informing his family. The rest of the family then rushes to see the Raghuramayya. The main drama starts there.

Director Maruthi taken a simple family drama and narrates in a beautiful way. The story is all too common, of children leaving their parents in their native places and going out in search of better opportunity, Maruthi's forte is comedy, and he resorts to humour and the occasional



emotional scenes to tell the story.

He focuses on the bond between the old man and the grandson. Maruthi also deals with the dilemma of those living outside who calculate their leaves - or are forced to count their leaves — when their father is ill. But for all this, the cli-

max is quite pale. Character actor Rao Ramesh steals the show,

putting on display his versatility and impeccable dia-logue delivery. Character artistes rarely get an opportunity and Rao Ramesh shows character artistes too can be a draw if they get a chance. This role takes him to new heights.

Sathya Raj shows his experience and lives the grandfather's role. Sai Tej is perfect as the grandson. Raashi Khanna nails the role of a girl who obsessed with TikTok videos. Hari Teja gets a good role after a long time. Jaikumar's cine-matography is good and captures Rajahmundry's locales beautifully. Thaman once again is on top with his good music. There are also some catchy songs. The dialogues are entertain, thought provoking and also

colloquial. 'Prathi Roju Pandage' is a regular story but director Maruthi enhances it with his narration. The performances of Rao Ramesh Sathya Raj and Sai Tej are

-+

BRIAN TALLERICO

f this mission fails, it was all for nothing. What we've done. All this time." This may just be another inspirational line of dialogue from Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker, but I couldn't help thinking it defined the production of the film, too. After the divisive response to Star Wars: The Last Jedi and the firing of original director Colin Trevorrow, J.J. Abrams swooped back in to make sure the "mission" of this franchise was for something. And you can feel that weight of history and obligation, especially in the first hour of *Skywalker*, as Abrams delivers a movie that practically lifts off directly from *Star Wars: Episode VII* — *The Force Awakens*, using that film's combination of action and fan service as a storytelling template way more than the previous movie. However, the inherent rush that came in revisiting this world four years ago is naturally lessened, replaced by something

desperation. closer to Whatever one thinks of *The* Last Jedi, if that film was trying to build a new house on familiar land, this one tears it down and goes back to an old blueprint. Some of the action is well-executed, there are strong performances throughout, and one almost has to admire the brazenness of the weaponised nostalgia for the original trilogy, but feelings like joy and wonder are smothered by a movie that

so desperately wants to please a fractured fanbase that it doesn't bother with an identity of its own.

'The dead speak!" This is the opening line of the crawl of the last Star Wars movie in the new trilogy, and such an appropriate overture to a film that relies on your knowledge of dead characters to appreciate it. The "dead" in this case is Emperor Palpatine (Ian McDiarmid), who is revealed in the prologue to still be alive, planning a return of the Sith and the Empire. He's been underground on a distant, untrackable planet, where he reportedly created Snoke, waiting for the heir to his throne to lead the resurrec-tion of the Sith in the form of something new called the Final Order. Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) finds Palpatine, who instructs him to go find Rey (Daisy Ridley). A lot of *Rise of Skywalker* is about finding things or people, espe-cially for the first half.

Rey is with the Resistance, still led by General Leia Organa (Carrie Fisher), and including Poe (Oscar Isaac). Finn (John Boyega), Rose (Kelly Marie Tran), Chewbacca (Joonas Suotamo), C-3PO (Anthony (Joonas Daniels) and more, but their numbers and hopes are dwindling. The news that Palpatine is back and leading a fleet of ships strong enough to destroy planets means that they need to act quickly or risk total annihilation. Rey learns that she must find something called a Sith Wayfinder to get to Palpatine's location, and the

gang sets off on an adventure to find it.

The midsection of the movie is its most effective. After a clunky first act that's filled with way too many scenes of people talking about who they are, where they need to go, and what they need to do when they get there, the film finally settles into a groove with an excellent chase scene that somehow both echoes Return of the Jedi and Mad Max: Fury Road. There is a nice subplot with an old acquaintance of Poe's named Zorii Bliss (Keri Russell), and a fantastic, water-soaked lightsaber battle between Rey and Kylo. These scenes don't have the weight of course correcting that drags the first hour or the desperate need to please of the final half-hour. When *Rise of Skywalker* can just be its own fun, sci-fi adventure. it succeeds.

And, to be fair, the craft of Skywalker is incredibly high. Abrams knows how to design a major blockbuster like this one, and there are some remarkable set-pieces. He also is an underrated director when it comes to performers and gets the best one that Ridley has delivered to date. She's the centre of this film in many ways, and arguably the best thing about it. (Driver is very good too, for the record. Don't @ me, Kylo fans.) There are sequences and character beats in *Rise of Skywalker* that truly work, especially when it doesn't feel like it's trying so hard to complete its "mission". One just wish-

es they were embedded in a better film overall.

Skywalker is how much I would have rather just learned more about Poe's background, or the story behind Zorii, than experience the numbing overkill of the final act of this trilogy. For those who get a chill down their spine at a familiar John Williams composition in just the right place or even locations that this film returns to that you probably never thought you'd see again, Rise of Skywalker offers just enough to make them happy. It's not unlike a rollercoaster ride in that it has just enough thrills to satisfy fans, but you can also see exactly where the ride begins and ends before you strap in. Real movie magic comes with surprises and risk-taking, and those are undeniably absent here — I believe for the reason that people thought there was too much of both in the last film. I wanted more of Zorii because she's one of the few characters or plot threads here that feels like it has potential to surprise. Almost everything else has been workshopped, focusgrouped, and even Twitter hive-minded to a fine paste. It's easy to digest, but not that filling or memorable. Perhaps the best in-movie self-criticism is in the fact

that Kylo Ren rebuilds his destroyed mask. Some fans of the series believe that The Last Jedi destroyed their favourite franchise, and here's J.J. Abrams literally picking up the broken pieces and putting them back together. And yet, as he's told, you can still see the cracks, meant as a criticism of Kylo's uncertainty but reflective of the movie too. Sometimes you can't just put things back together, and revisit history in a way that doesn't feel craven and desperate. People will see the cracks.

> By arrangement with Asia Features

> > _

Once again, each of the avatars has three bars on the wrist, one for each life the game allows. A few of those lives get used up right away as Martha/Ruby tries to explain to the befuddled Eddie and Milo what is going on. Like all good video games, this level is more dif-

ficult than the last. The production design by Bill Brzeski is stunning and thrillingly imaginative, while the stirring music from Henry Jackman suggests not just the best in video games but the most fondly remembered classic adventure films. Following the first movie's jungle adventure, this sequel takes them through the desert and to a castle on an icy mountaintop, with hold-your-breath perilous travels by dune buggy, rope bridge, and zeppelin. There's danger from snakes, ostriches, and boobytraps. There's also a new villain, a mas sive Hun-like conqueror named Jurgan the Brutal (Rory McCann). This level's goal is to capture a jewel that Jurgan stole from gentle indigenous farmers.

Eventually, Bethany and the character they rescued in the first film, Alex (Colin Hanks), show up in the game, too. Alex is back with his previous avatar, Seaplane (Nick Jonas), but Bethany is a whole new character, and so, when they finally find him, is Spencer. I won't give those away; I'll just say that the most fun of this film comes when Johnson, Gillan, Hart, Black, and, a terrific new addition. Awkwafina, get to cycle through different character/players. The script does a good job of keeping the age, race and gender switches low-key. There's some brief schoolyard-style crude humour but thankfully it's never shrill or archly coy.

Johnson was terrific as Spencer in the first film, a humorously exaggerated version of an adolescent discovering the power of adulthood. But as the outer version of Spencer's cranky grandfather, he's clearly having more fun. He barely notices the surreal concept of being trapped inside a video game (he does not appear to be entirely sure what a video game is), and is much too busy swivelling hips that for the first time in years have a full range of motion. Johnson/Bravestone as Spencer was something to aspire to, in a future that still seemed filled with infinite potential, but Johnson/Bravestone as Eddie is filled with the bucket list delight of someone who sees nothing but loss ahead. Hart is especially good at toning down his usual peppery energy as the avatar for the slow-talking Milo, whose avatar's strength is languages but who retains his discursive style. Black and Awkwafina both have a chance to represent more than one of the human characters, making each one distinct and clever.

The fantasy of the avatars, with their assigned strengths and weaknesses, make it possible for the characters to become more honest with themselves and each other. As with the first film, the humour and excitement are nimbly balanced so it never gets too scary or silly, and the focus is more on friendship than romance. This time, there is a light touch of poignancy as well that makes the message about friendship more meaningful. And like all good video games, there's a hint of yet another level at the end for those, like me, who are not yet ready to say Game Over.

By arrangement with Asia Features















High praise

South African pace great Dale Steyn on Saturday rated the current Indian fast bowling unit as the best in world cricket

head into the third and

final ODI against the

West Indies here on

Sunday eyeing a 10th straight bilateral

match

India,

round





under MSD &

to be a great

playing for CSK in IPL

IAKES

Fleming. It's going

opportunity for me

Sam Curran is excited about

to pick their brains.

ahul Dravid's son Samit.

Dravid's son hits

Bengaluru: Former India cap-

tain Rahul Dravid's son Samit

has scored a brilliant double

President's XI skipper scored a

250-ball 201 in the first innings

with 22 boundaries. Samit, who

Karnataka state inter zonal

against Dharwad Zone this

week. His innings was laced

is elder son of batting great

Dravid, put up an impressive

year-old followed his double

all-round performance. The 14-

ton with an unbeaten 94 in the

second innings while also tak-

ing three wickets for 26 runs.

The match ended in a draw. A

right-handed batsman, Samit

has been grabbing eyeballs for

quite some time now in various

competitions in school cricket.

Samit made headlines in 2015 at the U-12 level cricket in

Bengaluru by slamming three

BBL match called

off due to smoke

fires raging across eastern

Melbourne: Smoke from bush-

Australia prompted match offi-

cials to abandon Saturday's Big Bash League cricket match in

Canberra over what they called

162 for victory against Adelaide

"dangerous and unreasonable

playing conditions". Chasing

half-centuries while playing for his school Mallya Aditi International. - PTI

cricket match. The Vice-

century in an Under-14

double century

SHORT

Final Showcown Birla on break from sport due to anxiety

India eye a tenth straight series win against Windies **Cuttack, Dec. 21:** India have everything going their way as they

LIVE on TV

India vs West Indies 3rd ODI on **STAR Sports 1, HD**

straight bilateral series win over the

Barring a rare duck from skipper Virat Kohli, the Indian toporder fired in unison at Visakhapatnam, before hat-trick hero Kuldeep Yadav sliced through the West Indies line-up for a comprehensive 107-run victory. Three days after his blazing 159, Rohit Sharma stood just nine runs short of eclipsing former Sri Lankan captain Sanath Jayasuriya's 22-year-old record of being the

an opener across all the formats. K. L. Rahul also struck a sublime cen-tury in a 220-run opening stand to firmly stake his claim as a long-term opener for India. Opening the innings since the better off in India-Pakistan World this depart-Cup clash in June, Rahul has made steady progress.

Caribbean side. The West Indies took the home side by surprise in the opening ODI in Chennai to go one-up in the threeseries. But riding an alldisplay, came strongly to strongly to restore parity in the second match. Barring

highest run-scorer as

tion. ping said.

@ 1:30 PM In the recent assignments against the West Indies, he has been a revelation, scoring runs at will. Then the duo of Shreyas Iyer

and Rishabh Pant chipped in with brisk knocks, and they would like to end the year on a positive note. In bowling, Navdeep Saini is in line to make

his ODI debut in the absence of the inured Deepak Chahar. The fielding, though, has failed to match the high standards India have set in recent years. While Iyer's effort to dismiss Shimron Hetmyer was eye-catching, Chahar dropped a sitter off Nicholas Pooran and grassed Shai Hope for a duck at the slip cordon, something that attracted Kohli's atten-'We

can't be dropthe catches and we should be better off in ment,"Řohli PTI

I know my game really well now, says Shreyas

Cuttack, Dec. Shreyas Iyer Saturday said he was flamboyant but not responsible in the begin-

conundrum. ually settling into the critical number four

flow.

Masood batted for nearly

five hours for his 135, which

Abid, 32, completed his

century with a sweep off-

Embuldeniya for two to fol-

398-minute batting.

spinner

"Lately, I've realised that once you play at the highest level, you got to take that maturity to another stage. I can even play strokes and I can even nudge the ball and take single, so I know my game

now

ITTE

ODIS AT Cuttack				
Team	Ρ	W	L	
India	16	12	4	
Windies	3	3	0	

HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS

India 381/6 in 50 overs vs England in 2017 Windies 251/9 in 50 overs vs India in 1994

LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS India 178 in 45.5 overs vs SL in 1990 Windies 169 in 48.2

HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES

overs vs India in 2007

India 153* Mohammad Azharuddin vs Zimbabwe in 1998 Windies 89 Brian Lara vs India in 1994

BEST BOWLING PERFORMANCES

India 4/32 R. Jadeja vs Sri Lanka in 2009 Windies 4/27 Daren Powell vs India in 2007 STATS: S. PERVEZ QAISER

Virat Kohli during a training session at Cuttack on Saturday. ΔFP

Birla on break from

New Delhi, Dec. 21: Aryaman Birla, who was part of Rajasthan Royals till the last IPL season, has said that he is taking an indefinite break from cricket owing "to severe anxiety related to the sport".

The 22-year-old, who plays for Madhya Pradesh in the domestic circuit, took to social media to announce his decision on Friday night. "It's been a journey of hard work, perseverance, dedication and immense courage to get to this point in my cricket career. However, I've been coping with severe anxiety related to the sport for a while now," Aryaman wrote in a statement. The opening batsman comes from the illustrious

Birla family and his father, Kumar Mangalam Birla, is one of the major business tycoons of the country. He added that he persevered to keep playing till now but the time has come to put his mental health above everything else.

"I've felt trapped. I've pushed myself through all the distress so far, but now I feel the need to put my mental health and wellbe-ing cheurs all alce." ing above all else.'

"And so, I've decided to take an undefined sabbati-cal from cricket. This lovely sport is an integral part of my life and I hope to be back on the field when the

time is right." Aryaman has played age-group cricket for Madhya Pradesh before making it to the senior Ranji side in 2017. He has played nine first-class games and four List A matches. Last year, he topped the CK Nayudu (Under-23) Trophy run charts with 602 at an average of 75.25, scoring three hundreds in nine innings.



I've been coping with severe anxiety related to the sport for a while now.

-ARYAMAN BIRLA. former Rajasthan **Royals player**

The opening batsman was also a part of the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Rajasthan Royals for two seasons from 2018-2020. However, he didn't get any game time and was released ahead of this year's auction, which took place on Wednesday.

"We all have our own journeys and I want to take this time to understand myself better, open my mind to new and varied perspectives and seek purpose in my findings," he

wrote. Aryaman's sabbatical comes two months after Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell stepped away from cricket citing mental health issues. Since then, many cricketers have opened up about their struggles, taking time away from the game to deal with their issues.

Windies coach wants more

Cuttack. Dec. 21: West Indies head head coach Phil Simmons feels his team's "best show" may not be enough to beat India in the seriesdecider here on Sunday but the outcome of the game won't "influence" won't the direction the Caribbean outfit has taken under his guid-Simmons, a former player, was reappointed as West Indies coach in October. West Indies showed a lot of promise to go one-up in Chennai but the home team bounced back strongly to post a mammoth 387/5 en route to a series-levelling 107-run victory in Visakhapat-nman. "I think all the guys know we want to play our best tomorrow and even though we play our best, we might not win," Simmons said The gulf between the two sides has progressively widened in the last decade or so as the West Indies, barring their 3-0 sweep over Afghanistan last month,



ning of his career, a far 21: cry from the present day on matured man who is dis-playing both in equal measure while solving India's number four

The 25-year-old is gradposition in a team

Strikers. Svdnev Thunder were 40-1 in the fifth over when the contest was halted because of lack of visibility and poor air quality caused by smoke. "After a delay, officials deemed conditions were unsuitable for play to resume ..." BBL said in a statement. Sydney captain Callum Ferguson was upset at being stranded

four balls away from victory with his

side already past the five-over target. Umpire Paul Wilson said there was no way they could have gone ahead with the contest

"I understand that the Thunder have four balls to go. We can't take that into consideration,' Wilson said. - Agencies



well right and I can play accordingly. about Asked his sedate 88-ball One-day 70. which he scored in the series opener on

"I think that a day the topcomes with order failed, he said. "You have maturity to play accorda n d ing to what responsibility. the team d e m a n d s . JITTE was a flam-The team didn't boyant player when Istarted demand me to firstscore b i g class cricket. I never used to shots take responsibiliat that v. I just used to time, we back my instincts just needed a and go with the big partnership." 'Iyer said. -PTI



West Indies players during a training session at Cuttack on Saturday.

have gone without a win in 16 bilateral ODI series since August 2014. "The thing is we are trying to build something and the game tomorrow does not influence the direction in which we are going... But we are trying to build something and will continue to be in direction we are going." However there's a positivity in the camp with their

top-ranked batsman in the ICC ODI rankings, Shai Hope in fine form along with Shimron Hetmver. "The basic they are telling us is 300, 320 (would be a par score here). That's what you have got to look at these days to win these games and especially against India, you are always looking at 320 to either make it or chase it," he said.

The series has witnessed some interesting exchanges between the two teams known who are known to play the sport with good spirit. Kohli had given Kesrick Williams a notebook celebration in Hyderabad T20I, but the West Indies pacer had the last laugh in Thiruvananthapuram as he got rid of the Indian captain. -PTI

-AP

Abid, Masood put Pakistan in front

Shreyas Iyer

Karachi, Dec 21: Abid Ali and Shan Masood became only the third opening pair for Pakistan to hit centuries in the same innings as Pakistan turned the tables on Sri Lanka in the second and final Test in Karachi on Saturday.

Abid, nicknamed "leg-end" in Pakistan's dressing room, hit 174 for his second hundred in as many Tests -the first becoming Pakistani and ninth batsmen overall to score two centuries in his first two Tests.

When the third day's play ended Pakistan were in a strong position with 395-2 having an overall lead of 315 after conceding an 80run lead in the first innings.

Skipper Azhar Ali was unbeaten on 57 — his first fifty in 14 innings - and Babar Azam on 22 not out.

It was a day of batsmen's dominance as Pakistan added 338 runs after resuming at 57-0 on a National stadium pitch which dried up to help batting.

Masood blasted 135 for his



Pakistan's Shan Masood celebrates his century against Sri Lanka during the third day of their second Test at National Stadium in Karachi, Pakistan, on Saturday.

second century in 19th Test as the duo put on 278 for the opening wicket, just 20 included three sixes and short of equalling the highseven fours. Abid struck 21 est opening stand for Pakistan of 298. boundaries and a six in his

Amir Sohail and Ijaz Ahmed had set that record against the West Indies at the same venue in 1997.

low his 109 in the drawn first Test in Rawalpindi his debut.

The Rawalpindi century made Abid the first bats man ever to score hundreds in both Test and one-day debuts.

Abid's successive hundred has put him in an elite company.

Mohammad India's Azharuddin scored three hundreds in his first three Test after making his debut against England at home in December 1984.

William Ponsford, Doug Walters and Greg Blewett of Australia, Souray Ganguly and Rohit Sharma of India, Alvin Kallicharran of the West Indies and Jimmy Neesham of New Zealand are the others who hit two consecutive centuries in their first two Tests.

Before lunch, Abid survived a confident leg-before shout off paceman Kumara on 61.

AFP Brief scores: Pakistan 191 and 395/2 (Abid 174, Masood 135, Azhar 57 n.o. , Kumara 2/88) vs Sri Lanka 271.







Lasith



New job

Former Manchester United and Atletico Madrid striker Diego Forlan named coach of Uruguavan giants Penarol

Carlo

Mikel

DECCAN CHRONICLE

SUNDAY | 22 DECEMBER 2019 | HYDERABAD

Games



There is a clear vision from the owner and the board to deliver success and trophies. – Carlo Ancelotti, Everton's newly-appointed coach



Hyderabad: Roy Krishna scored a brace, including a late equaliser to secure a 2-2 draw for ATK against Hyderabad FC in an Indian Super League match here on Saturday. Krishna (15th, 90th minutes) scored both the goals for ATK, while Bobo (39th, 85th) was on target for Hyderabad as both the teams secured a point each from the match. Phil Brown started with the attacking trio of Nestor Gordillo, Marcelinho and Bobo as they searched for their second win in the ISL. Antonio Habas, on the other hand, chose to drop Michael Soosairaj and Prabir Das and handed a start to Jobby Justin and Sumit Rathi as the two wingbacks. The first chance came in the seventh minute when Bobo found Nestor and the Spaniard's shot from inside the box missed the near post by a few inches. Javier Hernandez's cross from the left was deemed to have been handled by Ashish Rai as the referee pointed to the spot. Krishna struck from the ensuing penalty as the visitors took the lead against the run of play. Hyderabad should have equalised soon after as

Marcelinho's corner-kick only needed a nudge after Arindam Bhattacharya came off his line and missed the flight of the ball. - PTI

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20 Printed and Published by **T. Venkateswarlu** on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957.

Everton hold Gunners to goalless draw

Liverpool, Dec. 21: Gunners have now won Ancelotti and just once in their last 13 Arteta were games in all competishown the huge jobs that tions. Everton move up to lie ahead as managers of

15th, but are only four Everton and Arsenal respectively as they watched their new sides points clear of the relegation zone. Ferguson's role in Everton's impressive victory over Chelsea and Everton's

play out a drab 0-0 draw at Goodison Park on Saturday. Ancelotti was condraw United in their last two firmed as the Toffees league games was enough to ensure the temperamental Scot a new boss on the morning of the match, 24 hours after Arteta took charge of Arsenal. Both new role in Ancelotti's backmanagers were in the room staff. stands with Duncan However, there was a Ferguson and Freddie dramatic dip in his side's energy levels as they looked jaded after a Ljungberg in temporary charge for the final time. League Cup quarter-final defeat on penalties And the lack of confidence of two sides struggling at the wrong end of to Leicester in midweek.

the table was obvious in "The boys were on their last legs to be match completely devoid of quality. honest after working A point edges Arsenal so hard in the last three games," admitninth, but the

Carlo Ancelotti was confirmed as the Toffees new boss on the morning of the match, 24 hours after Mikel Arteta took charge of Arsenal. at Manchester

> ted Ferguson. "We still covered every blade of grass, we just lacked a bit of quality in the final third.

Ljungberg named youthful Arsenal side with 19-year-old Emile Smith Rowe starting for the first time in the Premier League alongside Reiss Nelson and teenagers

Bukayo Saka. Mesut Ozil, Alexandre Lacazette and Nicolas Pepe were among those left out by the Swede, who won just one of his

Gabriel Martinelli and

six matches in caretaker charge. "We had a very young side out there because I wanted energy and I wanted to give them chances," said Ljungberg.

'I thought we could have won the game with the chances we had, but I loved the spirit we saw and that's what you need in the Premier League." Unlike Ferguson, Ljungberg's future under Arteta has not been clarified, but he hopes to remain as part of the coaching staff. "I've been told by the

club they want me to stay but I will have a meeting

with Mikel tomorrow and hopefully it's a good one.

Neither side managed a shot on target before the break, but Arsenal had the better chances in the second half.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was denied by a fine save from Jordan

Pickford as he Callum pounced on Callum Chambers's flick on from a corner before the Gunners' captain fired too close to the England number one with his next effort

Ljungberg's final deci-sion of his caretaker spell was a brave one as replaced Aubameyang 13 minutes from time as Lacazette

was finally called on -AFPfrom the bench.

I am not a clone of Jose, says Lampard

London, Dec. 21: Frank Lampard insists he doesn't want to emulate Jose Mourinho's unique style as the Chelsea manager plots to out-wit his old boss in Sunday's crucial clash at Tottenham. Lampard's first Premier League meetfirst

in the top four.

role in Lampard's

emergence as one of

Chelsea's all-time greats during their

Yet while Mourinho's

self in the coaching

world. The former England

midfielder is in just his

second season as a

manager after leaving

at Chelsea in July.

Lampard

acknowl-

edges

Derby to take charge

Championship

CHARLISO

at

side

time together Stamford Bridge.

Tottenham vs Chelsea from 10 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD ing with Mourinho is

Live on TV

PREMIER LEAGUE

Watford vs Man Utd

from 7.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

PAGE

16

the headline act in a fascinating derby that Mourinho was a big will determine which influence on him as a of the London rivals player but, now he is in spends Christmas Day the dug-out, he will follow his own path rather Spurs manager Mourinho played a key than copy Portuguese coach. the

Asked to name the most important lesson he took from working with Mourinho, Lampard said: "There's not one thing, no; he's obviously a good manager with loads of good

managerial credentials attributes. "But there's not one specific thing I learned are well established after winning a host of trophies during his glittering 19-year career. working under him. Lampard is still carvand I wouldn't strive to be a clone or anything. ing out a name for him-

"I'm happy to go up against Jose; for me to play under him, he was a big influence in my career.

Lampard and Mourinho remain on good terms from their Chelsea days — the Tottenham manager promising a "big hug" when they meet before kick-off and talking of his "love" for the 41-year-old.

But that didn't stop the student admitting beating his old teacher in such an important game would be a memorable moment. -AFP

> Everton's Dominic Calvert-Lewin (centre) heads the ball during the Enalish Premier League match against Arsenal at Goodison Park in Liverpool on - AFP Saturdav.



MRF ZLX-FOR COMFORT AND LONG-LIFE

