



In his films, Amol Palekar was the common man with middle-class aspirations. As he returns to the stage after over two decades, a look at how he carved a niche for himself in an industry in churn

SUNDAY STORY PAGE 11

INTERVIEW: SHARAD PAWAR

'Public expects alternative to Modi... My duty to associate with it (such an effort)'

BIG PICTURE PAGES 12-13

Story of another 'encounter'

In June 2012, 17 were killed in Chhattisgarh in what was then called 'the biggest Maoist encounter'. The memories, and the wounds that refuse to heal



'CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM MUST RECONSIDER ITS POSITION'

Day after Hyderabad, Chief Justice cautions: Justice can't be instant, loses its character as revenge

Women crying for justice, judiciary must rise to occasion: Law Minister

DEEP MUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, DECEMBER 7



President Ram Nath Kovind with CJI S A Bobde in Jodhpur on Saturday. ANI

A DAY after all the four accused in the rape and murder of the 26-year-old veterinarian in Hyderabad were shot dead by Telangana police, Chief Justice of India S A Bobde said on Saturday that justice can never be instant and "loses its character if it becomes revenge".

"Recent events in the country have sparked off the old debate with new vigour. There is no doubt that the criminal justice system must reconsider its position, must reconsider its attitudes towards time, towards laxity and towards the eventual time it takes to dispose of a criminal matter. But I don't think justice can ever be or ought to be instant and justice must never, ever take the form of revenge. I believe justice loses its character of justice if it becomes revenge," he said. The CJ was speaking at the inauguration of the new Rajasthan High Court building in Jodhpur.

Addressing the event, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the women of the country were "crying for justice", and urged the judiciary to "rise to the occasion". He called for a mechanism to monitor the disposal of these cases.

"What is important is that we have to continue to engage the

fine principle of our Constitution, render justice in a timely manner... The women of the country are under deep pain and distress. They are crying for justice, and India's judiciary needs to rise to the occasion," said Prasad.

"We have to restore on a very urgent basis the confidence of the people... (by) fast-tracking of these cases so that India's stature as a proud country governed by rule of law must be restored at the earliest," he said.

Prasad said there are 704 fast-track courts for heinous offences and others and the government is in the process of setting up 1,123 dedicated fast-track courts for POCSO and rape offences.

"In the law relating to women violence we have already laid down capital punishment in case of a victim being 12 years and below, and other

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



The victim's body being taken from Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi, to Unnao, Saturday. Tashi Tobgyal

In Unnao, father of victim seeks justice 'like Hyderabad'

AVANEESH MISHRA
UNNAO, DECEMBER 7

AS OPPOSITION parties targeted the Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday — a day after the death of a 23-year-old woman from Unnao district who was set on fire by five men, including two who were accused of raping her — the victim's father demanded justice "like the Hyderabad encounter".

"My only demand is that my

daughter's killers should be chased and shot dead, like it happened in Hyderabad," he said. "They should not come out of jail. I want them dead... Only then will her soul find peace. They (the accused) are powerful people, we won't be safe if they are out of prison. They killed my daughter, and they can kill us too. I want them killed in an encounter," he said.

"They say they will give me a house, Rs 25 lakh cash... What will I do with that? Even if

you give me a palace, or an entire colony, it is not going to bring back my daughter. She is gone, and is never coming back. They should have shown this concern when we actually needed it," he said.

Following a post-mortem examination, the victim's body was brought from New Delhi to her village in Unnao by road

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64% TURNOUT IN PHASE II REPORT, PAGE 6

BJP battles CM's image, anger over no govt job recruitments

MANOJ CG
RANCHI, DECEMBER 7

THAT JHARKHAND should continue to have a double-engine government — Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi and Chief Minister Raghubar Das in Ranchi — for its growth has been the main narrative of the BJP in this Assembly election. And from Ranchi to Jamshedpur and Hazaribagh to Dhanbad, giant campaign billboards put up by the party have photographs of a smiling Das shaking hands with Modi.

But on the ground, Das's image and his perceived arrogant style of working seem to be dragging his party to the edge and leaving it anxious. With two phases of polling over and three more to go, there is no clear signal still on which way the wind is blowing, but two strands of thought are visible — the yearning for a stable government



JHARKHAND



Chief Minister Raghubar Das in Jamshedpur. PTI

and the desire to see a new chief minister.

The nature of the impulse is perhaps contradictory and can be confusing.

The desire to see a stable government stems from the assumption that a multi-party

EXPLAINED
E. Key test for BJP

THE BJP's below-expectation performance in Maharashtra and Haryana already seems to have weighed down Jharkhand elections, where the party dropped its ally while the Congress joined hands with the JMM. The Assembly results will define whether the new political mood has consolidated or not.

government will be wobbly, given the reputation of the leaders and MLAs in Jharkhand to switch parties like "kurta pyjama". While the BJP is fighting alone, the Opposition JMM has stitched an alliance with the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Reconstruction of crime scene had sanction from top, says Telangana minister

ARUN JANARDHANAN
HYDERABAD, DECEMBER 7



Talasani Srinivas Yadav

IN THE first such official admission of the alleged role of the Telangana government in Friday's encounter, in which four men accused of raping and killing a 26-year-old veterinarian doctor in Hyderabad were killed, a senior minister in the K Chandrashekar Rao-led state government has said the encounter is a "message for the entire country".

Saying that there was "pressure for immediate action" and it's doubtful if justice would have been served through courts since "Indian judicial process will go on

INSIDE

NHRC BEGINS PROBE, TWO PILS IN SUPREME COURT

JWALA RAISES QUESTIONS, DIFFERS FROM SAINA, SINDHU
PAGE 9

forever", he said the "credit goes to the Chief Minister".

Talasani Srinivas Yadav, who holds the Veterinary & Animal Husbandry portfolio that makes him the minister in charge of the veterinary facility where the 26-year-old worked, also told *The Sunday Express* that the "reconstruction of the crime scene" that led to the encounter killing in the wee hours of Friday in Hyderabad "wouldn't have happened without permission from above".

When asked if the encounter could have happened without the knowledge of the top leadership, he said, "Correct. You know, the reconstruction of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

How can I be happy? A lot has to change: Sister of Hyderabad victim

ARUN JANARDHANAN
HYDERABAD, DECEMBER 7

ON DECEMBER 6, soon after news broke of the 'encounter' deaths of the four men accused of raping and killing a 26-year-old veterinarian doctor in Hyderabad, celebrations broke out in a middle-class gated community in the suburbs of Hyderabad. A day later, in one of the flats here, the rape victim's younger sister is still struggling to find closure.

"How can I be happy," she says, referring to the encounter and the celebrations that followed. "A lot has to change, the approach of many of these men towards women, how they

view women and their identity. A lot has to change before anyone can say they are happy," she says as she attends to her shattered mother — combing her hair and giving her medicines.

As the nightmarish spiral of events of November 27 plays on endlessly in her mind — her sister's call for help, the ordeal faced by the family as they tried to lodge a police complaint, and the horrifying realisation that the 26-year-old had been raped and charred to death while they were pleading with the police for help to start a search — the younger of the two siblings says only a swift investigation in the hours after her sister's disappearance could have saved her life.

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INSIDE

PAKISTAN HAS MADE TERROR ITS STATE POLICY: RAJNATH
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WORLD



GUNMEN KILL 25 IN BAGHDAD ATTACK

CLIMATE TALKS: DON'T MEDDLE, DEVELOPING NATIONS TELL U.S.
PAGE 17

Internet down, NEET aspirants in Valley struggle to upload forms

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 7

WITH INTERNET yet to be restored four months into the August 5 lockdown in the Valley, thousands of students hoping to apply for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for entry into medical courses have been facing a tough time.

While the government has set up Internet kiosks — one at each of the 10 district headquarters — to "facilitate" the applications, students say these kiosks are too few in number. Over 20,000 students from Kashmir appeared for the NEET exams last year and sources say the number is likely to increase this year.

Despite several calls by *The Sunday Express*, Srinagar Deputy Commissioner Shahid Iqbal Choudhary could not be contacted.

Early Saturday morning, Shaista Rashid Bhat, 19, left her home at Larkipora village in Anantnag district, hoping to submit her NEET form in Srinagar. But at 4 pm, she was still waiting for her turn at the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) in Srinagar, where the government has set aside a few computers for students to submit their NEET examination forms. After waiting in a queue for 10 hours, Bhat said she was preparing to return home without submitting her form.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Loom at home: A stitch in time to save Kerala's handloom sector

SHAJU PHILIP
KANNUR, DECEMBER 7

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UNTIL TWO years ago, CK Sheena had never seen a handloom. She knows that's odd since her Mangattidam panchayat is part of Kerala's Kannur district that's known for its traditional handloom sector. "I didn't know what a loom looked like. That's because I was never interested. I used to spend my time sitting in front of the TV, watching serials," she chuckles.

In September 2017, at the insistence of a local panchayat member, Sheena applied to train as a weaver under the govern-

ment's 'A Loom at Home' scheme, which aims to revive the handloom industry, besides encouraging women to be self-reliant. When she finally got the loom, she had her doubts: "I thought, will I ever be able to weave? But after two years of doing this, I am quite confident. Last month, I earned Rs 12,000," says Sheena, a 42-

year-old mother of two teenagers whose husband Rajeevan is a construction worker.

The loom scheme was an upshot of another scheme: Last academic year, Kerala introduced free handloom uniforms for students of Classes 1 to 7. To meet the average annual demand of 48 lakh metres of cloth for the uniforms, the government announced the loom scheme — after the launch in Mangattidam panchayat in November 2017, the scheme was rolled out in Kolayad, Payam and Cherupuzha panchayats. Now, 750-odd looms are in operation in the district under the scheme.

The fabric that is woven through the scheme is bought by



Around 750 looms have been distributed in Kannur. Express

the Kerala Handloom Development Corporation (Hanveev), which then supplies it to schools.

While most of the women who applied for the loom were either unemployed or had been working in unorganised sectors, they have now been earning between Rs 12,000 to Rs 25,000 a month. The scheme has attracted women across communities, breaking the caste link that has traditionally tied the Chaliyan community to the profession.

The women who applied for the loom scheme were given a three-month-long training programme with a monthly stipend of Rs 4,000. After training, every

woman was given a loom worth Rs 50,000. Besides getting the yarn free of cost from Hanveev, the women earn Rs 78.65 for every metre of handloom cloth woven. Weavers also get an incentive of Rs 4,000 a month. Each of the four panchayats has a Hanveev collection centre, where women hand over the fabric and take back yarn.

One of the main draws of the scheme was that women could earn without having to leave their homes. Bijina N P, 25, left her tailoring job to become a weaver. "Many women had initially dissuaded us from joining the scheme, fearing the project would end up unsuccessful. Now, they are all eager to do this," she says.

Mangattidam panchayat president K Praseetha says women were initially sceptical. "We did not get enough applicants when we began, but once women got to know of others who were making a decent income, more people signed up," she says.

Hanveev Managing Director K T Jayarajan said the scheme is so successful that several panchayats across Kerala are now seeking to replicate the project. "We are looking forward to aid from the government for the next stage of the project," he said, adding that the corporation supplied 5 lakh metres of uniform fabric last year and hoped to supply 10 lakh metres this year.

'ISSUE FRESH NOTIFICATION ON AMENDED MV ACT'

Dip in cash challans, Traffic Police writes to Chief Secy

MAHENDERSINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

A 75 per cent drop in issuing cash challans since September 1, when the amended Motor Vehicles Act came into force, has prompted the Delhi Traffic Police to send a letter to Chief Secretary Vijay Kumar Dev, asking him to help them issue a fresh notification for "compounding" of challans.

According to seniors officials, before sending the letter to the Chief Secretary in November, the Special CP (Traffic), Taj Hassan, had sent four letters to the Delhi Transport Department on the matter. However, as per officials, the matter is under consideration.

The *Sunday Express* has learnt that in the letter sent by the Special CP to the Chief Secretary, the former stated that before September 1, around 95 per cent of camera-detected violations were paid online or after approaching traffic police personnel. But since the amended MV Act came into force, challans are going to courts.

"The traffic department is now sending notices to violators via post, informing them about



The amended Motor Vehicles Act came into force on September 1. Archive

the court they have to visit to pay the challan. The burden of work has increased on their department as well the courts," a senior police officer said.

Hassan in his letter requested the Chief Secretary to issue new notifications in the regard.

"The Special CP wrote that earlier, they were issuing 20,000 challans every day, out of which only 1,500 challans were sent to court. But now, the situation has changed. While traffic challans wherein documents have been seized are being sent to virtual courts, those in which the vehicle

is impounded along with documents are forwarded to the courts of metropolitan magistrates," an officer said.

At a conference on road safety at FICCI recently, Hassan said, "As per the previous Act, we were authorised to compound challans. We would issue around 20,000 challans every day. Out of that, only a few hundred people used to contest. As per the amended MV Act... we are sending all challans to courts. We don't have the power of compounding offences... we are sending 5,000 challans to the courts... they may

be overloaded. The problem with non-compoundable system is road safety... In the one last year, we have installed red light violation-detecting cameras at 24 junctions. At around 100 places, we have installed speeding and people violation detection cameras. People used to pay on our website and we would send them a photograph of the violation. But now, we don't have the compounding power."

Additional PRO (Delhi Police) Anil Mittal said the Traffic Police has also taken up the matter with the Delhi government at various levels.

"The drop in challans is due to cases being sent to court. The compounding power has not been given to police so far, and magistrates are handling the cases," Mittal had earlier said.

A senior transport department official said there has been no fresh development in this regard. On August 31, hours before implementation of amended MV Act, all traffic police personnel were directed by the DCP (traffic headquarters) not to issue cash challans and issue only court challans till a fresh notification for "compounding" of challans is issued by the Delhi government.

Dec 16 convict to Kovind: Mercy petition sent without my consent

ANAND MOHANJ
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

VINAY SHARMA, one of the convicts in the December 16, 2012 gangrape-murder case, has written to President Ram Nath Kovind saying that his mercy petition was sent "without his authorisation", and has prayed for its withdrawal.

Vinay, through his lawyer AP Singh, wrote to the President saying that this mercy petition was sent by the jail authorities with a "mala fide intention" and "criminal conspiracy with the Delhi government without any grounds, supporting documents, mitigating circumstances and on the basis of concealment of many important fact, that is, without filing curative petition before the Supreme Court".

Vinay also said that there was a case pending before the Delhi High Court on the issue of the juvenility of another convict and

that he has not exhausted other legal remedies available in the Constitution of India. He prayed that in the interim, no decision be taken on the mercy petition.

"It is therefore prayed to your kind honour that until the exhaustion of the judicial remedies, including those yet to be filed and/or pending in the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court by me as well as my co-accused, you may allow me to withdraw this mercy petition which has been filed without my consent and signature," his plea read.

This development came after the parents of the gangrape-murder victim wrote to the President praying for dismissal of Vinay's mercy petition. The mercy petition was first dismissed by the Delhi government and the Lieutenant-Governor's office, following which it was subsequently sent to the MHA, which was eventually forwarded to the President of India.

However, Vinay's counsel, AP

Singh told *The Sunday Express*, "I met Vinay yesterday and he told me that he never signed on any mercy petition. I have asked him to draft the withdrawal letter with his signature, clarifying his stand. I will file the curative petition on the behalf of Vinay and a second convict. Review petition of the third convict, Akshay, will also be filed."

Sandeep Goel, DG, Delhi Prisons, said, "Vinay filed the mercy petition and it has his signature and thumb impression. We forwarded it as per procedure when we received it."

A Delhi court had on November 29 summoned all four convicts in the case before it on December 13, to explain the stages in which their legal remedies were pending. The amicus curiae in the case, Vrinda Grover, had claimed in court on November 29 that Tihar officials were "misleading" the court on the issue of remedy as Vinay wanted to file a curative petition.

BRIEFLY

Woman pours chemical on daughter, held

New Delhi: A woman was arrested for allegedly pouring a suspected inflammable liquid on her minor daughter outside Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital Saturday afternoon. Police said she was protesting demanding justice for the Unnao rape victim.

Two held for 64 burglaries

Gurgaon: Two brothers were arrested from near Karkardooma Court for allegedly burgling houses in Eastern range. A total of 64 cases of burglaries in East Delhi and Shahdara districts have been solved with their arrest, said police. **ENS**

Jewar gets its first women's govt college

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NOIDA, DECEMBER 7

THE FOUNDATION for Jewar's first women's degree college was laid by Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma and Gautam Budh Nagar MP Dr Mahesh Sharma Saturday. The government college had been BJP's poll plank in UP. It had been a long-pending demand of the region, where many girls had to travel all the way to Bulandshahr to attend college. Many girls, as a result, dropped out of school.

"Under the vision of Honourable PM and as per the provision of development schemes, a green signal has been given to Jewar's first degree college for women. Education for women is a priority for the government and the college will bring about benefits to society. With the airport and power plant coming up in the area, Jewar will truly be the future," said Dr Sharma.

The college is expected to be set up by 2021, said an official. Recently, a Swiss company won the bid for the upcoming Jewar Airport, which is expected to become operation in the next four years.

Teen raped by 4 in Palwal village: Police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, DECEMBER 7

A TEENAGED girl was allegedly gangraped by four men from her village in Palwal last week. While the victim's mother claimed that the same men had sexually assaulted the girl four months ago, police claimed their investigation revealed that the previous case was "fake".

"Another FIR has been registered now, and arrests will be made depending on the facts that emerge during the investi-

gation. Nobody has been arrested yet," said Manjeet Kumar, PRO of Palwal Police.

In the latest complaint, the victim's mother said the incident took place around 11 pm on December 4 when the victim was alone at home. The complaint claims the girl had gone outside to relieve herself when the four men, from the same village, forcibly took her to the fields. "The girl's mother alleged the accused raped her. She returned home two hours later and confided in her mother about the incident," said Kumar.

An FIR has been registered regarding the matter at the women's police station in Palwal, under relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The woman alleged that the same men had gangraped her daughter on August 13 as well. "An FIR had been registered against the same people in August, but it was found to be fake and cancelled. That FIR was registered at the Bahin police station," said the PRO.

Meanwhile, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar

condemned the incident and assured police action: "Police is doing its job, and culprits will be brought to justice... We have also spoken about fasttracking the case." Speaking about sexual assaults on women, Khattar said, "Whatever incidents are happening are shameful... To stop these incidents, the society, government, administration, everyone will have to become alert."

"We have taken many steps in Haryana, including opening of women's police stations and launching the Durga app... These incidents should not happen."

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"We have taken many steps in Haryana, including opening of women's police stations and launching the Durga app... These incidents should not happen."

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'WILL REDUCE REQUIREMENT OF LAND FOR DEPOT'

Getting land a problem, Metro to think vertical for Phase IV

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

MARKING A major design shift, the size of the stations coming up under Delhi Metro's Phase IV project will be determined by the expected passenger load, and vertical spaces will be created in existing depots to park trains that will run on the upcoming lines.

So far, the Metro has followed a model wherein average size of the stations would be more or less similar, irrespective of the footfall. However, availability of land becoming a "serious problem" and "exorbitant" cost of acquisition were among the factors that prompted the Metro to rethink its design philosophy, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) managing director Mangu Singh told *The Sunday Express*.

The Delhi Metro started operations in 2002 along a 8.5-km stretch between Shahdara and Tis Hazari stations. Since then,



According to the DMRC chief, size of stations will be determined by passenger load, and more space will be created at depots to park trains. Archive

the DMRC network has expanded to 389 kilometres — with 285 stations across Delhi-NCR — after the completion of three phases of construction at a cost of around Rs 70,400 crore. Under Phase IV, three new lines, which will span 61.68 km and cover 46 stations, have been sanctioned so far.

Singh, who is heading DMRC since 2012, said the Metro had plans to construct new depots when the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of Phase IV was drawn up in 2014. However, according to Singh, "the situation changed drastically" in the intervening years, prompting a rethink in terms of design as well.

He made the remarks while responding to a query on the major challenges that will mark Phase IV construction.

"One major issue is that of availability of land in Delhi. Acquiring big chunks of land for housing a depot has become a problem. Even in Phase III, construction of the Vinod Nagar depot was a problem as it fell in forest land and tree cutting was a problem. So it got delayed. While creating DPR for Phase IV, we had identified land for depot. But things have changed drastically between 2014 and now."

"We then decided that we will reduce the requirement of land for depot. Our experience of building an elevated deck in the Kalindi Kunj depot also came in handy. The cost of private land is so high that it is better to create space in the already acquired land. With these two experiences, we have decided that instead of going for new depots, we will augment the existing ones. If need be, we will create a

second level..." Singh said.

Asked if the Phase IV stations will be as sprawling as the ones built under Phase III, such as Chirag Delhi, Greater Kailash and Punjabi Bagh, Singh said, "Phase I, II and III construction followed a model where average station sizes hardly differed irrespective of footfall. But now we have decided to distinguish based on requirement. The size of a particular station will now depend on the expected passenger load. By now, we have enough experience. There will be no compromise wherever there is a need for a bigger station, but at places where it is not required, we will go for compact stations."

The DMRC recently awarded the first civil contract of Phase IV. The project will start with the construction of a portion of Janakpuri West - RK Ashram Marg Corridor. The other two proposed corridors are Aerocity-Tughlakabad and Maujpur-Majlis Park.

In Gurgaon soon: Online access to many public services

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, DECEMBER 7

GURGAON HAS become the first city in Haryana to get an Integrated Command and Control Centre, in a bid to create a "super smart city" by providing public services via technology. The centre was inaugurated by Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar Saturday. Built for Rs 38 crore, the centre at the IRCTC building in Sector 44 aims to integrate "smart services" in the future.

Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) CEO Umashankar, said, "To integrate smart services in the future, services like water supply, public WiFi facility, smart parking, monitoring and control of the power distribution system, various message signals, and property management will first be added to the control centre so that efforts can be made to provide as many services as possible to the people."

The centre, officials said, will provide online real-time access to these facilities, allow evaluation and reporting of data and help decision-making and paperless work.

Rohini murders: 'Accused planned crime 10 days ago'

New Delhi: A day after a 64-year-old man allegedly stabbed his wife and daughter-in-law to death in Rohini over suspicion of them having affairs, police said he bought the weapon 10 days ago to carry out the crime. DCP (Rohini) S D Mishra said, "It was

planned. Satish Chaudhary bought the kitchen knife after he found his wife and daughter-in-law were planning to move to a new house without him." He allegedly stabbed his wife Snehlata and daughter-in-law Pragya in the early hours of Friday. ENS

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Barricades, water cannons to break protest at Rajghat



At the protest near Rajghat, Saturday. Praveen Khanna

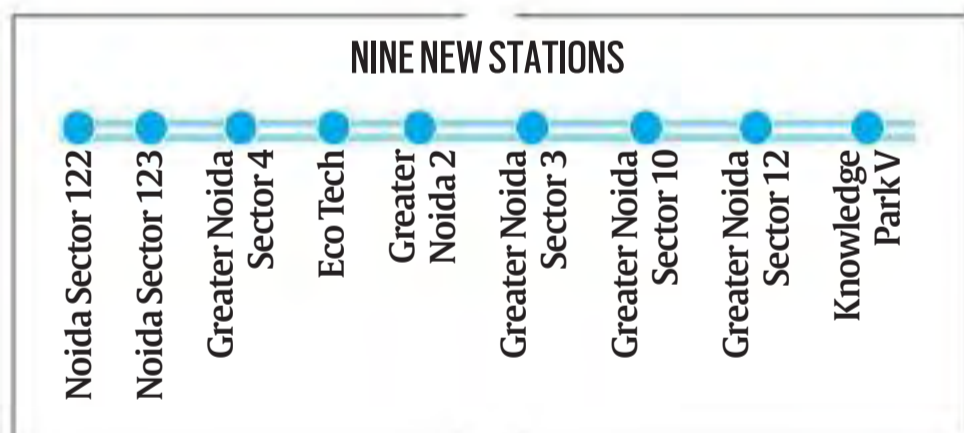
New Delhi: A group of protesters near Rajghat were met with barricades and a water cannon Saturday evening as they attempted to walk towards India Gate. The protest, organised by Delhi Commission for Women (DCW), was about women safety and started from Rajghat where DCW chief Swati Maliwal is currently on hunger strike.

DCW member Promila Gupta said, "We started at 5 pm and in-

formed police about the march. Around 2 km away from Rajghat, we saw many barricades and police. Some tried climbing over those but were stopped and police used water cannon on us."

DCP (Central) Mandeep Singh Randhawa said the protesters didn't have permission and were carrying "mashaal". He said, "Minor use of water cannons was done to control the situation." Maliwal was not a part of the protest. ENS

'Aqua Line extn to benefit many residential colonies'



AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, DECEMBER 7

THE NINE-STATION extension of Noida Metro Rail Corporation's Aqua Line will benefit over 10 lakh commuters, said officials.

The UP government Tuesday approved construction of a 14.9-km extension of the Aqua Line, from Sector 71 till Knowledge Park V. As per officials, the new route was conceptualised keeping in mind several high-rise residential societies in the vicinity.

As per a Detailed Project Report, the first five stations — Noida Sector 122, 123, Greater Noida Sector 4 and Eco Tech and

Greater Noida 2 — will come up in the first phase, while the second phase will see the completion of Greater Noida Sector 3, Greater Noida Sector 10, Greater Noida Sector 12 and Knowledge Park V stations. The first phase will encompass key housing societies.

"If we look at the map, we will see that the Metro route will be close to Shahberi and Crossings Republik which are at the cusp of the Ghaziabad-Noida border. Hence, even residents of Ghaziabad will be able to access it," said NMRC Executive Director Anil Upadhyay. The extension is expected to become operational by 2023.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

6TH DECEMBER 2013



CONSTABLE (GD)
ANIL KUMAR



CONSTABLE (GD)
NAKUL CH. MEDHI

Sashastra Seema Bal fondly remembers and cherishes the valiant contribution of brave hearts Constable (GD) Anil Kumar and Constable (GD) Nakul Ch. Medhi of 54th Bn, SSB, Bijni, Assam who made the supreme sacrifice fighting NDFB(S) militants on this day in the year 2013 at Bongaigaon, Assam. Their gallant action will continue to inspire us all.

We salute the sacrifices of the brave soldiers.

SASHASTRA SEEMA BAL

Ltk Kul Bahadur Rai, Rtn Jai Prasad Limbu and Rtn Chandra Bahadur Limbu of 1/11 Gorkha Rifles (BATALIK) made the supreme sacrifice during 'OP CACTUS LILY' in Erstwhile East Pakistan on 08 Dec 1971 in a true act of valour. The brave soldiers will always be remembered for their raw courage and indomitable spirit. To these bravehearts we pledge that we shall always be guided by their immortal spirit and make their names proud.

1/11 GORKHA RIFLES (BATALIK)



Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

INTERNATIONAL
GITA MAHOTSAV

November 23 - December 10, 2019
Kurukshetra, Haryana

CLOSING CEREMONY

December 8, 2019

Chief Guest
Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

Guests of Honour

Baby Rani Maurya
Governor of Uttarakhand

Nilamber Acharya
Ambassador of Nepal to India



PROGRAMME

9:00 AM Jyotisar - The Birthplace of Gita
11:00 AM Theme Park, Kurukshetra
11:00 AM Purushottampura Baag, Brahma Sarovar
12:00 PM Theme Park, Kurukshetra and Jyotisar Tirth
2:00 PM In front of KDB Office (Departure Venue)
5:00 PM Cultural Pandal, Mela Ground, Brahma Sarovar
5:30 PM Brahma Sarovar
6:00 PM Purushottampura Baag, Brahma Sarovar

Gita Yajna Purnahuti
Recital of Ashtadash Shloki Gita by 18,000 Students
Cultural Programme by North Zone Cultural Centre
Global Gita Chanting
Gita Shobha Yatra
Vrindavan Phoolon ki Holi - Cultural Performance & Performance by Renowned Punjabi Singer Satinder Sartaaj
Water Laser Show
Gita Maha Aarti and Deepdaan



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6 GOVT & POLITICS

Pakistan has made terrorism its state policy: Rajnath

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE DEHRADUN, NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh on Saturday said that though India has defeated Pakistan four times in war, the neighbour still continues with its 'sinister' plans.

Singh was in Dehradun to review the Passing Out Parade in the Indian Military Academy. Addressing the Gentlemen Cadets, Singh said that "Pakistan has made terrorism its state policy", adding that it has "lost four times in direct fights".

"Today, can anyone who is poor or from a deprived section come here with his complaint? This question is of the greatest importance because in the Preamble of the Constitution, we accepted the responsibility of making justice accessible for everyone," Kovind told the audience at the inauguration of the new Rajasthan High Court building in Jodhpur on Saturday.

Impossible for common litigant to approach HC and SC, says President

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE JAIPUR, DECEMBER 7

PRESIDENT RAM Nath Kovind on Saturday said it has become impossible for the common litigant to bear the expenses of the judicial process and the question of access to justice for everyone is of the greatest importance.

"Today, can anyone who is poor or from a deprived section come here with his complaint? This question is of the greatest importance because in the Preamble of the Constitution, we accepted the responsibility of making justice accessible for everyone," Kovind told the audience at the inauguration of the new Rajasthan High Court building in Jodhpur on Saturday.

64% turnout in second phase, one killed in violence at polling booth



ABHISHEK ANGAD RANCHI, DECEMBER 7

THE SECOND phase of the Jharkhand Assembly polls, which spanned seven districts and 20 constituencies, saw an estimated voter turnout of 64.39 per cent as of 6 pm, against the final voter turnout of 68.01 per cent in the last Assembly elections.

Violence was reported at polling booth in Sisai constituency, leading to the death of a villager and a repoll being ordered. Baharagora constituency, which neighbours Odisha, saw maximum turnout at 75.36 per cent. Jamshehpur East and Jamshehpur West saw the least voter turnout at 56.3 and 54.41 per cent, respectively.

The second phase saw a bitter electoral fight in Jamshehpur East constituency between Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das and rebel BJP MLA and former minister Saryu Roy.

In low-connectivity Jharkhand, mixed picture in BJP's membership drive data

KARISHMA MEHROTRA NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

HAVING FOCUSED on three regions of Jharkhand, which account for half of the state's 81 Assembly seats and where the party fared relatively poorly in 2014 Vidhan Sabha elections, the BJP's membership efforts have shown contrasting performance, according to data from membership drive in the run-up to the ongoing elections.

Those involved in social media campaigns in Jharkhand agreed that network connectivity being low, all parties have to recalculate their communication strategy.

While in Maharashtra, every eight in 10 phone calls from the BJP connected, and six of them were answered, not even four in

new Rajasthan High Court building in Jodhpur on Saturday.

The President said that Mahatma Gandhi used to be worried about legal expenses part of the process of justice delivery. "For him, only the welfare of the poor was above all. Following him, all of us should ask this question to ourselves that has justice become accessible for every citizen?" Kovind said.

The President said that he understood that the judicial process has become expensive and gone beyond the reach of the common man because of many reasons. "Especially, reaching the High Court and Supreme Court is impossible for the com-



Voters at a polling station in Khunti on Saturday. PTI

mon litigant. But if we keep in mind Gandhi-ji's famous test and if we remember the face of the poorest and weakest person then we will see the right path," Kovind said.

The President said that he gives immense importance to free legal aid.



President Ram Nath Kovind at the unveiling of a building of Rajasthan HC. Twitter

Man held for security breach

Jaipur: Jodhpur Police arrested a 42-year-old man for allegedly breaching security and trespassing in an attempt to meet President Ram Nath Kovind. The incident took place on Saturday near Jodhpur circuit house, police said. Six constables were suspended for negligence. ENS

Man held for security breach

Kovind said. The President said that he gives immense importance to free legal aid.

Kovind expressed pleasure that the Supreme Court is making certified copies of its judgments in nine languages available on its website following his suggestion.

Earlier, addressing the convocation ceremony of AIIMS-Jodhpur, Kovind said, "At a place like this, two most important areas of development come together. One is health and another is education. Our nation has made great strides in many spheres, including healthcare, but we need to ensure that quality education and healthcare is accessible to all citizens especially those living in the rural areas and remote parts of the country."

Uddhav: Rename Shivaji University to include 'Maharaj'

Mumbai: Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said that Shivaji University in Kolhapur should be renamed Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vidyapeeth. He said all institutions should use the full name of the warrior king to show their highest reverence.

"Shivaji University in Kolhapur should be renamed Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vidyapeeth... We have to show proper respect towards Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who is highly revered and worshipped in Maharashtra... It is improper to address the university by just the first name of Shivaji. We have to give it his full name. Similarly, Mumbai International Airport, named after Chhatrapati Shivaji, should also incorporate the word Maharaj," the CM said. He also said that social reformer Jyotiba Phule should be addressed as Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. ENS

Protest in Delhi against CAB, NRC

ANANYA TIWARI NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

HUNDREDS of people from across Delhi, including students, gathered near Jantar Mantar here on Saturday to oppose the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) and the proposal for nationwide implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

"The CAB represents Muhammad Ali Jinnah's and Savarkar's two-nation theory, and will alter the very character of India," said Yogendra Yadav, president of Swaraj India, during the protest.

Accusing the BJP of playing vote bank politics, Yadav told The Sunday Express, "They are tinkering with the Constitution and the very soul and idea of India. The NRC of Assam excluded both Hindus and Muslims, which goes against the BJP's narrow interest. With the CAB, it assures the Hindus that even if you're caught in the NRC net, don't

worry, as long as you're Hindu, you'll be kept out of it..."

He added, "Implementing NRC is against all marginal sections of society... But the NRC plus CAB — that makes sure that it hits only Muslims."

Congress MP from Kishanganj, Bihar, Mohammad Jawed told The Sunday Express that the move would hurt India internationally. "If it is passed, world over the message will go that a Muslim-hating government is leading this country... The Congress is very clear — we do not appease any religion, and have always been with the weak, poor and the disenfranchised," he said.

On the proposal to implement NRC nationwide, activist Umar Khalid said, "The Assam NRC exercise took Rs 1,300 crore. If implemented across India, it will take lakhs of crores. And the government keeps increasing fees for education, and cutting budgets for education and healthcare."



Protest against the Citizenship Amendment Bill and NRC at Jantar Mantar on Saturday. Tashi Tobgyal

May consider moving govt agency to probe NRC exercise: Himanta

ABHISHEK SAHA GUWAHATI, DECEMBER 7

THE ASSAM government will consider approaching a government investigation agency to probe alleged financial irregularities in the NRC exercise once a final audit of the same by the AG is completed, state Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told reporters on Saturday.

"After receiving these queries in 2017, Hajela (then state NRC coordinator Prateek Hajela) had sent back some replies. But three days ago, the AG's office sent back another letter saying they were not satisfied with the answers and would do further audit of the office of the NRC state coordinator," Sarma said.

He said that after receiving the final audit, the government would assess the importance of the extent of the irregularities and take further action.

The Indian Express reported earlier this week that an inspection report related to a partial audit of the NRC exercise from 2013 to 2017 by the office of the Accountant General (Audit) had raised questions regarding mul-

tiple instances of alleged "financial irregularities and impropriety" in the exercise.

These queries were sent to the office of the NRC state coordinator and a copy was sent to the state finance department. They were sent with a request to Hajela for a reply within a month. A document containing key observations of the inspection report was leaked to the media by government sources on Thursday. "It was an interim audit report," a finance department official told The Indian Express.

However, a source had told this newspaper, "Each objection raised in the inspection was countered (by Hajela's office)... Someone is trying to short-circuit the process by leaking this report and score political points."

On the Citizenship Amendment Bill, Sarma said Home Minister Amit Shah's conversation with civil society groups had a positive effect and the scale of protests were less than expected. Meanwhile, sporadic protests were held across the state against CAB and the North East Students' Organisation, a body of students' groups of the Northeast, called for a shutdown Tuesday.

PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah at the conference in Pune on Saturday. PIB/PTI

PM interacts with top cops, lays stress on internal security

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE PUNE, DECEMBER 7

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Saturday chaired discussions held at the All-India Conference of Director Generals/Inspector Generals of Police in Pune and is learnt to have shared his views on challenges regarding internal security.

The three-day conference began on Friday.

Besides Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Intelligence Bureau chief Arvind Kumar also interacted with the top officers.

The theme of the conference is related to scientific and forensics-based investigation, apart from technology-enabled polic-

ing. Several technical sessions on these subjects and new ways of policing have been held during the conference, it was informed.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Armed Forces Flag Day fund raising programme, organised at the Raj Bhavan by State Sainik Welfare Department. On the occasion, Modi interacted with the wife and daughter of Major Kunal Gosavi, who was killed in the Nagrota terror attack in 2016, according to a statement.

PM Modi urged people to contribute to the Armed Forces Flag Day fund for the welfare of armed forces personnel.

"On Armed Forces Flag Day we salute the indomitable courage of our forces and their families. I also urge you to contribute towards the welfare of our forces," he tweeted.

Trance is music of demons: Goa ex-minister

Panaji: Calling trance the "music of demons", former Goa Water Resources Minister Vinod Paliengar has said that it was first played in the backdrop of the 'samudra manthan' — the mythical tug-of-war between Gods and demons.

"Trance music is the music of daityas (demons). Why do you want to allow music of the demons to be played through the night? The demons won the samudra manthan challenge and defeated the Gods early on because the music which was playing during the contest was trance music," Paliengar said.

"Goa needs the music of the Gods, like Hindustani classical, instead of music of the demons... Trance music programmes... should be stopped," the Goa Forward MLA said when asked about a ban on events such as the Sunburn Klassique EDM festival. ENS

3-MONTH CONTRACT WORTH \$40,000 PER MONTH

India hires US lobbying firm to build image

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

THE INDIAN Embassy in the United States has hired Cornerstone Government Affairs, an American lobbying firm, in an effort to build a positive opinion in Washington DC and beyond.

This comes about a month-and-a-half after a US Congressional hearing on the Kashmir situation, where the government was criticised for its decision to revoke special status for J&K under Article 370.

According to latest Foreign Agents Registration Act filings, the government has hired Cornerstone Government Affairs on a three-month contract to represent it in Washington.

Not the first such hire

This is not the first time that the Indian Embassy in the US has hired services of lobbyists — it had hired lobbyists during the India-US nuclear deal in 2008. The embassy has already hired Haley Barbour's BGR Government Affairs, which has been carrying out lobbying activities in the US.

Cornerstone will provide "strategic counsel, tactical planning and government relations assistance on policy matters before the U.S. Government, the U.S. Congress, and select state governments, as well as academic institutions and think-tanks," according to a copy of the contract filed with the US Justice Department. The contract is worth \$40,000 per month. The contract went into effect December 1 and is up to February 29. While there is no official word on the contract, sources said the lobbying effort is part of India's

strategy to mobilise positive opinion on the Capitol Hill, which has suffered in recent months following the Kashmir decision.

According to sources, Cornerstone has a strong track record of lobbying in the White House, US Congress members and committees and different branches of the US administration, including US Trade Representatives (YSTR) office, Homeland Security, Defence, Treasury and others. At a time when India is facing tough questions from US Congress members on Kashmir, and is negotiating trade deal with the USTR's office and team, and faces scrutiny on H1B visa issues from several US Congress members, services of such lobbying firms may come in handy, a source said.

Located in downtown Washington DC, Cornerstone Global Affairs is a prominent lobbying firm, which was founded in 2002 as a bipartisan public affairs firm.

In the past, the firm has represented several commercial interests — from Boeing to Citigroup, Johnson and Johnson, Pfizer, US Rice Producers Association, among others — and even some universities, such as University of Chicago and University of Maryland.

Cornerstone has emerged as one of the big lobbying firms in the Donald Trump administration, which took in \$9.26 million for its advocacy work throughout the beginning of 2017 — about \$1 million more than the first six months of 2016.

each day, the BJP's five call centres in state capital Ranchi also send four to five targeted IVRS messages to 5-10 lakh people and six to 10 different kinds of SMSes targeting 15-20 lakh people per day. The party is also learnt to have created, and operates, 35,000 WhatsApp groups.

JMM spokesperson Tani Khatri said, "While other mediums such as social media advertising and hoardings are expensive, we can reach people directly through organic social media."

A volunteer from the party said they work with very short videos and data-lite messages.

The Congress held a social media workshop with party workers last month and highlighted that volunteers should not send videos larger than 30 seconds to areas with low connectivity, sources said.

7 EXPRESS NETWORK



NORTH

Man fakes murder for loan waiver, insurance money

Chandigarh: A man whose family operated a wholesale business in Amritsar allegedly faked his own murder after eliminating someone else for loan waiver and insurance money, police said on Saturday. The Tarn Taran police said Anoop Singh did this to have financial gains over Rs 1 crore. He was

charged with murdering a homeless man and destroying evidence, police said, adding that his brother Karandeep Singh and domestic help Karan, alias Kaka, had been arrested for the planning, preparation and execution of the murder plot, a Punjab Police spokesperson said in a release. **PTI**



Fog on Srinagar-Bandipora highway on Saturday. Drass was the coldest place in the region, at minus 25.4°C; Srinagar recorded a low of minus 3.6°C. *Suaib Masoodi*

EAST

Odisha: Tribal girl raped by teacher's husband

Koraput (Odisha): A Class VII student of a state-run residential school in Odisha's Koraput district was allegedly raped for months by the headmistress' husband, who has been arrested after the tribal girl was found to be pregnant, police said on Saturday. The 60-year-old man, who used to stay with his wife at the staff quarters

of the school, was arrested on Friday. He used to call the girl to the staff quarters and sexually exploited her a number of times, police said. He has been booked under relevant sections of the IPC, POCSO, and SC/ST Act, police said. The district child protection officer said the girl will be kept at a child care institution after medical examination. **PTI**

WEST

Man held for raping, blackmailing woman

Rajkot: A man was held from Chotila in Gujarat's Surendranagar district for allegedly raping a woman on the pretext of offering her a job after assuming a fake identity online and blackmailing her, police said on Saturday. Aijaz Gadhwal assumed a fake identity as Ravirajsinh on online classifieds platform OLX and called

the victim to a hotel room in Chotila where he raped her, said a Rajkot police official. "He developed a friendship by claiming he was the son of a policeman. He promised to get her a job in the police using his father's contact," said a police official. "He also took Rs 2 lakh from the victim. Gadhwal has been arrested." **PTI**

SOUTH

Woman sets her children on fire, immolates self

Hyderabad: A woman in Kollapur town in Telangana's Nagarkurnool district set herself on fire after setting ablaze both her children. The incident happened at around 11 am on Saturday. While the woman and her 2-year-old son died at their residence, her 4-year-old daughter succumbed to injuries while being shifted to a nearby hospital. Police said

prima facie it appears to be a case of suicide. The family of the deceased woman have approached the police with a complaint against the husband and in-laws of their daughter, Kollapur police said. "We are still investigating into the allegations against the victim's husband and in-laws," Nagarkurnool SP K Apoorva Rao said. **ENS**

Swami Subodhanand gets minister status in Nath govt

MILIND GHATAI
BHOPAL, DECEMBER 7

The Kamal Nath government on Saturday bestowed Cabinet minister status on Swami Subodhanand, who currently heads the mutt-mandir advisory committee in Madhya Pradesh. Swami Subodhanand is a personal secretary of Shankaracharya Swami Swaroopanand, who counts senior Congress leader and former CM Digvijaya Singh as his disciples.

The previous Shivraj Singh Chouhan government had bestowed minister of state status on five Hindu religious functionaries and spiritual personalities and Cabinet minister status on Swami Akhileshwaranand, who was the executive council chairman

of Madhya Pradesh Cow Protection Board.

Among the five was Namdev Das Tyagi, also known as Computer Baba. Ahead of 2018 Assembly elections, Computer Baba had quit the panel and started campaigning for the Congress. After holding the post for about six months he resigned, accusing the BJP government of doing little to stop sand mining, failing to stop cow slaughter and being irreligious. He even campaigned against Chouhan in his Assembly constituency.

The Kamal Nath government made Computer Baba the head of the Ma Narmada, Ma Kshipra Evam Ma Mandakini Trust in March this year. He had demanded a ministerial status but the government has not granted his wish yet.

Objections from Rajasthan, Punjab to gun law changes

DEEP MUKHERJEE & KANCHAN VASDEV
JAIPUR, CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 7

THE CENTRE'S decision to further tighten the gun law has met with resistance from traditional gun-owning communities in Rajasthan and Punjab.

Members of the Rajput community and Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh have objected to a provision in the Centre's proposed amendments to the 1959 Arms Act that prohibit an Indian citizen from owning more than one gun. The 1959 Arms Act allowed a licence holder to have three firearms.

There are about 5 lakh registered gun licence holders in Punjab and about 8 lakh registered firearms, according to government records. A chunk of them are .12 bore-single and double barrel guns, 303 rifles, and most of the licences were issued during the two decades of militancy in the state.

The state government argues that Punjab has 16 lakh farmers, and they need guns to kill vermin—nilgai and birds. The farmers need three types of weapons— for shooting birds, blue bulls and for their security. Punjab recently classified blue bull as a vermin, allowing it to be culled.

State officials say only 11 per cent of licensed weapons are used in crimes across the state "In 89 per cent of crimes involving weapons, illegal weapons are used. It does not make any sense to deprive people of their weapons on this argument that these were giving rise to crimes," said a government official.

Amarinder, a scion of the erstwhile Patiala Royal Estate, had spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the amendments during the latter's visit to Punjab during the 550th

EXPLAINED
E Discussion coming up in Lok Sabha

A BILL was introduced in Lok Sabha last week seeking to enhance punishment for illegally possessing and making prohibited arms, besides other changes in the six-decade-old Arms Act. The Arms (Amendment) Bill, which also provides for restrictions on the number of firearms a person can have, is listed for discussion in Lok Sabha on Monday.

birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev, and has followed it up with a letter to the PM.

The official said Amarinder has stated that Punjab agrees with most of the proposed amendments but had "strong reservations regarding restricting the number of firearms".

"Punjab being a border state and having gone through a long period of terrorist violence, a large number of people possess more than one firearm and many farmers who reside away from the villages in their agricultural lands/farms, also possess firearms for crop protection. It was also significant to note that only a very small fraction of crime was committed using licensed weapons. These facts could be independently ascertained as they were within the domain of the MHA," the letter says.

However, farmers' organisations in Punjab aren't amused with the government firing from their shoulder. "We represent poor farmers who do not have enough to eat. How can they afford weapons? We have called a

meeting," said Sukhdev Singh Kokri Kalan of Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan). He said guns control law may be hurting big farmers.

Among those worried are also people who treasure weapons handed down as heirloom. The amendment says that "...while granting arms licence on inheritance or heirloom basis, the limit of one firearm shall not be exceeded". Rajput outfits such as Shree Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena (SRRKS) and Rajput Sabha have warned of protests.

"Many Rajput families trace their lineage from the erstwhile jagirdars and royalty, people who have antique guns as family heirlooms. Weapons have immense sentimental value for us. The amendments, if passed, will rob us of these treasured possessions. If the government doesn't listen, we will see what we can do," said Giriraj Singh Lotwara, president, Rajput Sabha.

Rajasthan Additional Director General (crime), B L Soni, said at present 1.72 lakh gun licences have been issued in the state. "Around 10 per cent of these license holders are people with multiple weapons. And many of them are those who either own ancestral weapons, or are in the sport of shooting or are members of the armed forces," Soni told *The Sunday Express*.

The Rajput Sabha president said he had written a letter to the PM. "The Rajput community should be made a stakeholder in the discussion process for the Act," said Lotwara.

"Weapons are reflective of the glorious past of the Rajputs. People from all over the world come to Rajasthan to see these antique weapons, it is a part of our heritage. If the central government doesn't take our feelings into consideration, then we will protest," said Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi, president, SRRKS.

BODY DUMPED IN SEA IN 3 BAGS

Arrested for killing man, 'adopted daughter' says he sexually abused her

MOHAMED THAYER
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 7

FIVE DAYS after a suitcase stuffed with dismembered body parts was found floating in the sea, Mumbai crime branch Saturday identified the deceased as a 59-year-old resident of a Mumbai suburb and arrested his 19-year-old "adopted" daughter and detained her 16-year-old boyfriend in connection with the murder.

Officers said the duo told the police they killed the man, a guitarist, as he did not approve of their relationship, and also sexually abused the woman.

According to police, the two accused had hit the man on the head with a bamboo stick and a guitar at his residence. They reportedly stabbed him with a knife and when "he still did not appear to die, they sprayed an insect repellent on his face".

Deputy Commissioner of Police (crime branch) Shahaji Umap said, "The woman has told us that the deceased, who had 'adopted' her two years ago, had

been sexually exploiting her and was against her relationship with the 16-year-old boy... So far, we have only found a paper at the man's residence addressed to 'whomsoever it may concern' and written by the woman, where she stated that the man had financially helped her and eventually adopted her... While this does not legally qualify as adoption, the man had reportedly told others that the woman was his adopted daughter."

The woman's biological parents, police said, had driven her out of home two years ago as they reportedly did not approve of her lifestyle. The guitarist had then allowed her to stay with him, they added.

According to police, the man reportedly had an argument with the woman and her friend on November 26, following which the two allegedly hit him on the head with a bamboo stick and his guitar. They then stabbed him with a knife, the police said.

"However, when he still did not die, they sprayed HIT [used to kill insects] on his face, follow-

ing which he died," Inspector Yogesh Chavan, crime branch (unit V), said.

The accused initially kept the body at his residence and eventually decided to "chop it into pieces and dispose it of separately", Chavan said.

The first bag was disposed of on November 28. The accused made two more trips over the next two days, police said.

So far, police have recovered only one of the three bags.

Police had also recovered some clothes from the suitcase, including a shirt, with a tag. Police eventually traced the tailor, went through his records and identified the deceased.

"When we (police) went to his house, the woman told us that her father had gone to Canada. However, she gave evasive replies when we questioned her further. There were also some bloodstains in the house that made us suspicious," Umap said.

The woman was arrested Saturday, while the 16-year-old boy will be sent to Dongri Observation Home, police said.

GUJARAT

Shoot-at-sight order for leopard that killed two

Rajkot: The forest department issued shoot-at-sight orders after a leopard claimed two lives in three days in Gujarat's Amreli district, officials said on Saturday.

On Thursday, the leopard killed Vaju Borad in Mota Munjiyasar village in Bagasara taluka of Amreli district. The following day, another man was in-

jured in a leopard attack in the same village. On Saturday, a leopard attacked an agricultural labourer from Rajasthan in Munjiyasar at around 3.15 am. Later, the labourer succumbed to his injuries.

Officials told mediapersons in Amreli that forest department teams from the districts of

Junagadh, Amreli and Gandhinagar will work together to capture the man-eating leopard that has been on the prowl in Amreli. A shoot-at-sight orders has also been issued and a team of sharpshooters have been deployed even as the authorities have set up nearly 30 cages, the officials said. **ENS**

Beaten, forced to shave off moustache: Dalit youth in Gujarat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, DECEMBER 7

A 20-YEAR-OLD Dalit resident of Mehsana alleged that he was forced to shave off his moustache by upper caste youths from his village on Saturday.

Sanjaybhai Ranchhodhbhai Parmar from Mota Kothasana village alleged that the accused gave him death threats, forced him to shave off his moustache, beat him and made him apologise to them. A video of him apologising to the youths has gone viral, Parmar claimed.

Mehsana Superintendent of Police Manish Singh said an FIR has been registered under various IPC sections, section 67 of the Information & Technology Act (Punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form) and several sections of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

"The victim and those he named as accused in the FIR are from the same village. From what we have gathered, it seems the victim was pressured by the accused to shave off his mous-

tache," Singh said. Till late Saturday, no arrests were made.

The FIR states that Parmar got a call at 8.42 am from Sanjaysinh Jethusinh Chauhan, who lives in the same village, asking him to come to Kothasana health sub-centre. On the way, Parmar Sangramsingh Prahladsinh Chauhan and Rajdipsinh Chauhan, residents of Mota Kothasana village.

"I rode pillion with Rajdipsinh, who dropped me at the health sub-centre. Sanjaysinh was not there. Sangramsingh and some others asked me about TikTok videos I had made earlier and hurled casteist slurs at me. They asked me to shave off my moustache and threatened to kill me. I came home and shaved off my moustache. I went back to the health centre where Sangramsingh and others abused me. I was made to apologise. Then Jayendrasinh Velsinh Chauhan, Rajpalsinh Arjunsinh Chauhan, Swarajsinh Jagatsinh Chauhan and an unknown person beat me up. My father Ranchhodhbhai, family members and neighbours came to my rescue," Parmar said in his complaint. Parmar refused to speak to *The Sunday Express*.

100 unemployed women get e-rickshaws in MP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, DECEMBER 7

AS MANY as 100 unemployed women were given e-rickshaws under the Madhya Pradesh government's E-Sawari project, which was launched in Indore by Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Saturday.

Each of the 100 e-rickshaws is equipped with facilities such as Wi-Fi, digital payment and mobile charging points. The 100 women, including a physically challenged beneficiary, were trained for over a month. The approximate cost of each rickshaw is Rs 2 lakh, half of which is subsidised. The state and Central governments provide subsidy in the ratio of 70: 30 and the remaining amount is a loan with interest subsidy borne by the



E-Sawari project was launched by CM in Indore.

state government. The CM said the project aimed to provide employment and empower women.

Urban Development and Housing Minister Jaivardhan Singh told *The Sunday Express* that Madhya Pradesh is the first state to launch such a scheme meant only for women. He said the government estimates that about 5,000 e-rickshaws will be run by women alone in Indore.

The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

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MEANWHILE

Kanpur girl who was 'gangraped' kills self

Kanpur: A 17-year-old girl, who had complained to police last month that she was gangraped by her neighbours, allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling of her cousin's house in Kanpur, police said on Saturday. She was allegedly abducted by two people on November 13, following which her parents complained to police. The girl returned home just a day after the complaint was filed and told her parents that she was raped. Following the girl's statement, police altered the case into that of gangrape and slapped relevant sections of POSCO Act against the accused on Friday and nabbed them. **PTI**

Rape-murder accused beaten

Mhow (MP): A 28-year-old man, accused of raping and killing a four-year-old girl, was thrashed by a group of lawyers on the premises of a court in Indore district on Saturday. Ankit Vijayvargiya, the accused, was brought to the sessions court at Mhow town after his three-day police remand ended. Eyewitnesses said the moment he and the policemen escorting him entered the premises, two unidentified lawyers lunged at him and started beating him. Vijayvargiya did not receive any serious injury in the incident. The police produced him before Additional Sessions Judge Sonali Patel who remanded him in judicial custody. **PTI**

Minor held for raping 6-yr-old

Raigarh: A six-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a minor in Chhattisgarh's Raigarh district, police said on Saturday. The accused, who lives in the girl's neighbourhood, entered her house on Friday evening when she was alone and allegedly raped her, police said. A woman who saw the incident informed the girl's mother, after which the complaint was registered, the officer said. The accused, who is 15 years old, was apprehended and produced before a juvenile justice board Saturday. **PTI**

Acid thrown on rape victim

Muzaffarnagar: A 30-year-old woman was attacked with acid by four men in a village near here for refusing to withdraw her complaint of rape against them from court, police said on Saturday. The woman suffered 30 percent burns and is undergoing treatment at a Meerut hospital, they said. The four men barged into the woman's house on Wednesday night and poured acid on her as she had been refusing to withdraw her complaint, police said. **PTI**

CM: Fast-track court for Unnao case, Rs 25 lakh aid for victim's kin

BJP leaders face protest at victim's house; demands raised for higher compensation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 7

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said the death of the Unnao rape victim was "very unfortunate" and said that the accused would be tried in a fast-track court. The state government also announced aid of Rs 25 lakh to the victim's family.

Meanwhile, state minister Swami Prasad Maurya and Unnao BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj faced protests during their visit to the victim's house.

A statement issued by the government quoting Adityanath said, "The death of the girl is very sad. Condolences to the family. All accused have been arrested. The case will be heard in a fast-track court and severe punishment will be ensured to the accused."

Following directives from Adityanath, Technical Education



UP CM Yogi Adityanath, Unnao MP Sakshi Maharaj



Minister and Minister in Charge for Unnao Kamal Rani Varun and Labour Minister Swami Prasad Maurya visited Unnao and met the family members of the victim.

"In this time of grief, our government is with the [victim's] family. The culprits will be given severe punishment and they have already been arrested. The honourable CM has decided to transfer this case to fast-track court for a speedy trial. The government will do whatever it can to ensure that accused are pun-

ished. There will be no negligence in the case," said Swami Prasad Maurya after the meeting.

Party MP from Unnao Sakshi Maharaj also visited the victim's family members.

However, Maurya and Maharaj faced sloganeering from local residents and members of Opposition parties.

Later in the evening, a bigger protest was witnessed when the district administration along with Maurya handed over the compensation cheque of Rs 25

lakh. Several youths, reportedly members of the Samajwadi Party and Congress, scuffled with the district magistrate and the superintendent of police.

Demands of a higher compensation amount, a house for the family and a government job to one of the family members were raised along with slogans the ruling BJP. Some of the protesters were detained.

Later, DM Devendra Kumar Pandey said that those trying to disturb the law and order situation would face action.

Asked about the demands, he said a compensation of Rs 25 lakh had been provided, and the family's application listed for PM Awasthi. He also said that the family case would be taken further on priority basis.

While speaking with Maurya and Maharaj, the family raised a concern over how locals were "unwelcoming" towards politicians coming to visit them.

Oppn leaders slam UP govt, ask Adityanath, DGP to step down

ASAD REHMAN
LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 7

HOURS AFTER the Unnao rape victim succumbed to burn injuries, sustained on Thursday she was allegedly set on fire by the accused, top leaders of opposition SP, the BSP, and the Congress expressed their anguish against the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh for "failure to control crime against women" in the state.

Both SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, who sat on a dharna outside the Chief Minister's Secretariat at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow, and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi, who visited the victim's family in Unnao, alleged that the accused have a BJP "connection".

BSP chief Mayawati met Governor Anandiben Patel and handed her a memorandum. In it, she stated, "Being a woman, I am very worried and I request you, as the Constitutional head of the state and a woman, to take cognizance of people's grievances and alert the state government, especially on control of crimes and law and order situation..."

Shortly before noon, Akhilesh, accompanied by SP's state unit president Naresh Uttam Patel and national spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary, arrived at the gates of Lok Bhawan and sat on dharna



(Left) BSP chief Mayawati hands a memorandum to UP Governor Anandiben Patel; (right) Akhilesh Yadav at a dharna outside the Chief Minister's Secretariat. Express/Vishal Srivastav

outside the main gates.

With more than a hundred party workers and local leaders soon assembling there, senior police and government officials were seen requesting Akhilesh to leave, as it would lead to chaos.

After about an hour, Akhilesh agreed. On his way out, he told the media that the Unnao victim could not get justice because the accused are "connected" to the BJP. He said: "If anyone is responsible for this, it is the government. The government knew; those accused are connected to the BJP and hence she was not getting justice."

Akhilesh said cases of crimes against women are rising and the government is responsible.

In a statement, the SP said "lawlessness" in the state can be tackled only after the Chief Minister, state DGP and Principal Secretary (Home) resign.

After meeting the victim's family at their home in Unnao, Priyanka Gandhi told the media, "This pradhan, I have been told, is associated with BJP... We have seen in the past that high-profile accused have been protected."

She said, "Family members of the victim have told me that they were being harassed for the last one year. The accused had come inside their home and assaulted her father. There is a little girl who was threatened; they said they will get her name struck off school."

In June, Priyanka alleged, the accused had burnt the family's crop and harassed the family "in so many ways".

State SP chief Naresh Uttam Patel, MLC Sunil Singh Sajjan and other party leaders met the victim's family later in the day.

In Lucknow, State Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu said they want Adityanath to resign for his failures.

In a statement issued in the morning, BSP chief Mayawati said the Centre should bring in a law to check crimes against women in the country. She also urged the Supreme Court to take cognizance of the issue and direct the Centre to take tough steps.

Kolkata Police cracks down on harassment

Kolkata: Kolkata Police stepped up its patrolling services after a woman was raped and murdered in Hyderabad on November 27. The Winner Team and Anti-Roady Squad of the Detective Department jointly conducted a drive at several places in Kolkata on Friday night, with special focus on Netaji Nagar Police Station area, and arrested 74 people for harassing women, trouble mongers, unruly motorcycle riders and miscreants.

"As many as 74 people, including 13 eve-teasers, were arrested. They were handed over to the local police station for prosecution. Nearly 51 motorcycles were also seized," said an officer. **ENS**

Dehradun police to drop women stranded at night

Dehradun: Police in Dehradun have announced that they will drop home women who are stranded at night.

Dehradun SSP Arun Mohan Joshi said, "If a woman is not getting transport and she is feeling unsafe, she can contact emergency helpline number 112 anytime. At night, when public transport will not be available, PCR van will drop the woman... If public transport is not available at her place in daytime too, then a PCR van will pick up and drop her."

The police will record details of the vehicle and its driver, and later contact the woman to ask if she has reached her destination safely. **ENS**

14-year-old raped in UP, four minors held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NOIDA, DECEMBER 7

FOUR MINORS have been held for allegedly raping a 14-year-old in Bulandshahr.

In their complaint to the police on Friday, the family has said the crime took place on Tuesday. Bulandshahr SSP Santosh Kumar Singh said, "The accused were held within hours... The accused are minors and have been sent to juvenile homes, where proceedings will take place accordingly."

Singh said the accused were known to the victim — "most of them either were relatives or

from the same community".

In the wake of the the attack on the rape victim in Unnao, who died at a Delhi hospital on Friday, Bulandshahr police on Saturday began an assistance programme for rape victims in the district.

According to the police, data on rape cases in the last five years is being gathered to take stock of their progress. The victims are being identified and a police team, including a woman constable, will speak with each victim and her family members.

"Speaking with victims, we will take note of any problems being faced by the victim — whether social or financial," SSP Singh said.

HYDERABAD RAPE-MURDER

Autopsy done, NHRC team visits hospital, encounter site

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, DECEMBER 7

ADAY after taking suo motu cognizance of the Hyderabad encounter killings, in which four men accused of rape and murdered a veterinarian were gunned down in an "exchange of fire" by a police team, a team of officials from the investigation division of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Saturday conducted medical examination on all four bodies and interacted with doctors and forensic experts at the hospital.

The team, which is on a three-day visit, comprises two forensic experts. It subsequently visited Chatanpally, near Hyderabad, where the encounter took place Friday.

A team of six NHRC members reached Mahabubnagar district hospital on Saturday afternoon.

The family members of the four accused killed in encounter — Md Arif, Chennakeshavalu, Jollu Shiva and Jollu Naveen — were present at the hospital, and the NHRC team is expected to interact with them on Sunday. The team spent nearly three hours at the hospital before heading to Chatanpally, where it inspected the place where charred body of the veterinarian was found and the site where four accused were gunned down.

They are expected to question the police officers involved in the exchange of fire on Sunday. According to a source, the postmortem examination was conducted on Friday following the Supreme Court's guidelines. The report was not yet prepared as on Saturday evening.

The bodies will not be handed over to families until 8 pm on Monday, it was informed.

A division bench of Telangana High Court had on Friday evening directed the state government to preserve the bodies until Monday evening, and also hand over video recording of postmortem examination to the registrar general of the High Court by Saturday evening. The matter is posted before the bench of the Chief Justice on Monday morning.

The team is also likely to visit the spot near Tonduppally toll plaza near Shamshabad where the victim was raped and murdered.

Through an official release on Friday, NHRC said the incident indicated "the police personnel were not properly alert and prepared for any untoward activity by the accused on the spot, which resulted into death of all four".

Cyberabad Police Commissioner V C Sajjanar had on Friday said that a case would be registered under CrPC Section 176 and IPC 302 against the officers who shot dead the four accused.

55-year-old disabled woman raped, murdered in Maharashtra's Buldana district

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NAGPUR, DECEMBER 7

A 55-YEAR-OLD disabled woman was raped and murdered in Maharashtra's Buldana district on Friday night, police said.

A 28-year-old man, who lives in the same village as the victim, has been arrested in connection with the crime.

"The woman used to live alone in a house that belongs to her cousin, who stayed next door along with his family... The accused apparently entered the house some time in the night and raped the woman under the influence of alcohol. He was carrying a wooden club with the intention of attacking her if she tried to resist. After raping her, he hit her on the head with the club, killing her," Buldana SP Dilip Bhujbal told *The Indian Express*.

The incident came to light on Saturday morning when the victim's sister-in-law came looking for her daughter, who was sleeping in the same house.

"A dog squad led the police to the house of the accused a few metres away. On questioning, he confessed to the crime and was arrested," Bhujbal said. "...The postmortem has been done and rape is most likely to be confirmed in the report."

The SP added, "Earlier in the day, the accused was involved in arguments with two-three people from the same village, and later he also had an argument with his wife at home."

Jwala questions encounter, differs from Saina, Sindhu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 7

SHUTTLERS P V Sindhu, Saina Nehwal and Jwala Gutta took to Twitter to react to the encounter killing of the rape-murder accused by Hyderabad police, with the former lauding the police and Jwala striking a divergent note with some questions.

"Justice has been served!" Sindhu tweeted on Friday. Saina congratulated the police in her tweet: "Great work #Hyderabad-police... we salute u."

On Saturday, Nehwal reacted to the death of the Unnao rape victim, tweeting, "Really disturbed about the #UnnaoHorror case.. RIP #JusticeForUnnaokibeti,"

Jwala had urged for a reasonable approach even before the encounter. She had tweeted on December 3, "In my opinion...the govt should first appoint few psychologists and make them speak to the accused and find out and u stand [understand] what's

Two PILs in SC seek probe into encounter killing of four accused

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

TWO PILs were filed in Supreme Court on Saturday seeking investigation into the encounter deaths of four men accused of raping and killing a veterinarian in Hyderabad.

One of the petitions, filed by Advocate G S Mani and Pradeep Kumar Yadav, termed it a fake encounter.

The other petition, by Advocate M L Sharma, has sought appointment of a special investigation team comprising retired Supreme Court judges to investigate, with the help of CBI, the encounter.

In the first PIL, the petitioners have alleged that the police carried out the encounter "only to divert public reaction over sensational gang rape and murder cases against innocent young girls, and may be to protect the real culprits, which is very serious, painful and not only impermissible under the rule of law but such fake encounter killing amounts to pre-planned murders in the hands of police..."

The plea contended that the crime occurred due to "failure" of the police, and that the incident had sent shock waves among the people.

"The police...themselves executed the death sentence without any due process of law..." said the petitioners.

The petition also stated that there was a "clear chance" of the police officials involved in the encounter trying to destroy evidence and urged the court to restrain the officials concerned from official duties till completion of an independent investigation.

The petition also stated that there was a "clear chance" of the police officials involved in the encounter trying to destroy evidence and urged the court to restrain the officials concerned from official duties till completion of an independent investigation.



'Will this stop future rapists?'

driving them to commit such horrific crimes against women...and then the punishment should follow!!"

After the encounter, she tweeted Friday, "Will this stop the future rapists?? And an important question: Will every rapist be treated the same way...irrespective of their social standing?!"

After receiving some criticism for her views, Jwala tweeted on Saturday: "Yesterday I was so disturbed n disappointed to see the kind of celebrations which took place that I just couldn't sleep. But also relieved to see a lot of people who showed the same concern as me-I just hope we all stand united and not lose trust in our constitution and judiciary."

Five-year-old raped in Darbhanga, one arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, DECEMBER 7

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD girl was allegedly raped by in Darbhanga on Friday evening. She has been admitted to Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) and is said to be critical. The accused was arrested late on Friday.

Darbhanga Police said an autorickshaw driver, identified as

Tetar Sahni, got the girl sit in his autorickshaw, parked it at a deserted place and allegedly raped the child. The girl's parents started the search for her late in evening and saw the autorickshaw and heard the cries of the girl, who was taken to DMCH.

A police official said, "As the autorickshaw had been left at the spot, it was not difficult to trace the accused, who was arrested late on Friday night."

Month after acquittal in rape case, man attacked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DECEMBER 7

A MAN, who was recently acquitted in a sensational case pertaining to the rape of two minor Dalit sisters, who were later found dead, was attacked by a mob in Kerala's Palakkad district on Saturday.

The attack on the youth was prima facie not a retaliation for his acquittal, police said.

The youth was found injured in a village in Walayar police station area and police took him to hospital. His injuries are serious but not life threatening, police said.

Palakkad SP G Siva Vikram ruled out the retaliatory angle.

Rearing cows lessens criminality: Bhagwat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE, DECEMBER 7

RSS CHIEF Mohan Bhagwat said on Saturday that experience has shown that "criminal mindset" of jail inmates decreased when they were given the task of looking after cows.

He was speaking at an award ceremony organised by the Go-Vigyan Sanshodhan Sansstha, an organisation dedicated to 'cow science' research, here.

"Cow is the mother of universe...it nurtures soil, it nurtures animals, birds and it also nurtures humans and protects them from diseases and makes the human heart as tender as flower," he said.



'Cow makes the human heart as tender as flower'

"When jails set up cow sheds and prisoners started rearing cows, the authorities saw that the criminal mindset of these prisoners started diminishing, and I am telling you this from experiences shared by some jail authorities," he said.

Entire society should come together to conserve the cows and the importance of Indian breeds of cows needs to be conveyed to the people in a scientific way, he added.

No punishment can be stricter than death for rapists: Irani

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DECEMBER 7

TARGETING PRIME Minister Narendra Modi, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said "the reason for breakdown of institutional structures is that the man who runs the country believes in violence and indiscriminate power".

Gandhi was addressing a meeting of party workers at Sulthan Bathery on the last day of his three-day visit to his constituency Wayanad. "There is a reason for the breakdown of our institutional structures, a reason that people are taking law into their own hands. It is because the

'Man running country believes in violence, indiscriminate power'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DECEMBER 7

Gandhi was addressing a meeting of party workers at Sulthan Bathery on the last day of his three-day visit to his constituency Wayanad. "There is a reason for the breakdown of our institutional structures, a reason that people are taking law into their own hands. It is because the



Rahul Gandhi in Wayanad PTI

man who is running this country believes in violence and indiscriminate power," he said, referring to the alleged rise in crimes against women.

"You have seen increase in violence across the country... Every day, we read about woman being raped, molested or

thrashed... violence against minority communities and the hatred being spread against them... There is a reason for this dramatic increase in violence. You cannot believe in violence and hatred and then expect that violence and hatred not to spread," Gandhi said.

The Congress leader said the world used to look towards India for direction, and towards Mahatma Gandhi, non-violence, love and affection. "Today the world looks at us and say that India does not know how to treat its women and India does not know how to create jobs for its own people," he said. "The international community today ridicules India. India is known as the rape capital of the world."

ACROSS THE AISLE



P CHIDAMBARAM

The protagonist may be elected as CM and may deliver an impressive account of governing the state. As long as the protagonist manages the best known known — money — all other knowns and unknowns are manageable. It is only when the protagonist has to travel beyond knowns and unknowns that there is trouble. That trouble is the market. And when market is millions of people operating in an environment of fear, the market is big trouble

Economy sans economists

EVERYONE IS an economist — from the homemaker making the household budget to the dairy owner who rears cows to supply milk, from the small business entrepreneur who manufactures parts to the construction major who builds and sells apartments. They must, perforce, abide by the rules of the game embodied in the sector-specific laws and the general laws of contracts and taxes, the conventions of the trade, and the relationship with one's counterpart/customer. These are knowns; actually they are known knowns. The best known known is money. The protagonist in our story will take appropriate decisions mostly on the basis of the known knowns.

The protagonist could turn out to be wrong, because of the unknowns — both the known unknowns and the unknown unknowns. Over a period of time, the protagonist may master the unknowns too.

The protagonist may be elected as the chief minister of a state and may deliver an impressive account of governing the state. As long as the protagonist manages the best known known — money — all other knowns and unknowns are manageable. It is only when the protagonist has to travel beyond the knowns and the unknowns that there is trouble. That trouble is called the market. And when the market is millions of individuals unrelated to each other taking individual

decisions in an environment of fear and uncertainty, and impelled by different motives, the market is not simply trouble, it is big trouble.

The best laid plans of mice and men can often go awry in the market. Size and scale matter. Giving an exam on a balanced budget does not present as many challenges as making the Budget for a government. Running a state does not throw as many challenges as governing a country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat for about 12 years. His Finance Minister, Ms Nirmala Sitharaman, holds an MA degree in economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University. Between them, they thought — and why should they not? — they were competent economists capable of managing the Indian economy.

Alas, they find themselves in the unenviable situation of presiding over the slow decline and imminent collapse of the Indian economy. In the last six quarters for which official figures are available, India's GDP growth was, in per cent, 8.0, 7.0, 6.6, 5.8, 5.0 and 4.5. From all accounts that we hear, the Prime Minister and Finance Minister are worried, but will not show it — at least not yet. There is an apparent division of labour between them: the decisions are taken by the PMO and implemented by the Ministry of Finance. And there is mutual suspicion and a blame game between the man-

darins in the two offices.

Now, the two main protagonists of the story are floundering and struggling to control the price of the humble onion, a staple among the poor and the middle class. Substitute 'onion' by one of a number of things that could go wrong, and what do we have?

	2016	2017	2018	2019
	-17	-18	-19	-20 (Part)
Agriculture growth	6.3	5.0	2.9	2.1
Index of Industrial Production growth	4.6	4.4	3.9	2.4
Core sector growth	4.8	4.3	4.4	0.2
Credit growth to MSME	0.9	-0.4	2.3	2.7
Manufacturing	-1.2	1.7	-1.4	0.7
Private final consumption expenditure	56.1	56.3	56.9	55.7
Unemployment (In per cent)	9.65	4.03	5.14	7.03

Besides, household consumption is down according to the NSSO. Rural wages have declined. Producer prices are down, especially for farmers. Daily wage earners get work for no more than 15 days a month. Demand for MGNREGA is up. Both durable and non-durable consumer goods are selling less. Wholesale price inflation has climbed up to 1.92 per cent and the consumer price inflation stands at 4.62 per cent. The plant load factor of all thermal plants is about 49 per cent, meaning thereby that one-half of all thermal capacity has been shut down be-

cause of lack of demand for electricity.

The government thinks it can wish away the impending disaster. The fault of the government is its stubborn and mulish defence of indefensible decisions taken in the past — demonetisation, a flawed GST, tax terrorism, regulatory overkill, protectionism and centralisation of decision-making in the PMO. Thanks to demonetisation on November 8, 2016, a man-made catastrophe was unfolding. Despite warnings, the government did not pause to take stock or reflect. *The Economist* has called the government an 'incompetent manager' of the economy. With no other option, ministers have resorted to bluff and bluster.

The government has acknowledged that the economy is in a slowdown, but denied that there were 'structural' issues that need to be addressed. The government has described the problems as 'cyclical'. It is a small mercy that they did not identify the causes as 'seasonal'!

India's economy is being run without the aid and advice of competent economists. The last one was Dr Arvind Subramanian. Imagine teaching a doctoral programme without a professor or performing a complicated surgery without a doctor! Running an economy without reputed economists — and through incompetent managers — is the same.

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FIFTH COLUMN



TAVLEEN SINGH

Citizenship legally weaponised

THERE ARE things about the citizenship Bill that are deeply disturbing. Not least is the manner in which Home Minister Amit Shah routinely makes clear that it targets Muslims. He has said so often that he is going to hunt out Muslim "termites" and deport them that he leaves no doubt at all about the real purpose of the Citizenship Amendment Bill that the government hopes next week to make into law. Last week, while campaigning in Jharkhand, he once more made his speech threatening "termites". It made me happy to see that there was no response from the crowd. Not even when he asked why "Rahul baba" was so upset that he was showing undue concern. "Where will they go, what will they eat, how will they live, Rahul baba asks. I ask him, are they your cousins?"

Rahul Gandhi and Mayawati are right to publicly oppose a law that seeks to leave it in the hands of petty officials to determine who has a right to be Indian and who not. Most of the "termites" that Shah so despises are very poor people who usually do not have documents to prove if they are Indian or not. They will now be at the mercy of officials who more often than not will use the law as a new source of inhumane extortion.

Last week, Ram Madhav tried to give the law a 'humanitarian' spin by describing it as an exercise to deal with the "fall-out of Partition". With the deepest respect, Ram Madhavji, I would like to say that this is rubbish and you probably know this.

Partition has nothing to do with this law. As someone who belongs to a family of refugees from Pakistan, may I tell you that the "fallout" of Partition was dealt with long ago. This new law is nothing more than a majoritarian and very ugly exercise to prove to Indian Muslims that in the 'new India', they have a lesser place than Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians and they better get used to this. The Prime Minister continues to remain silent about this law but his closest confidant, the Home Minister, concentrates on reminding us almost daily that Indian citizenship is no longer anyone's birthright. It will in future be treated as a privilege, especially for Muslims. If they cannot prove that they are Indian, then they will end up in detention camps or deported.

What makes this amendment to India's citizenship law totally irrelevant is that there are not exactly millions of "termites" trying to creep across our borders. If we had a situation similar to what exists on the southern border of the United States, or what happened in Europe when the Syrian war caused a mass migration, this amendment may have had some meaning, even in its current discriminatory form. But, this is not the situation we face. There was a time when Bangladeshis flooded across our eastern border in search of jobs and a better life. They no longer do in any significant numbers because the truth is that many social and economic indicators now show that Bangladesh has gone ahead of India in some areas.

From the north we have seen a small trickle of Afghans come to Delhi to escape the war in Afghanistan, and they should be welcomed with open arms because they are fleeing jihadists of the worst kind. If there are Pakistanis coming into India illegally, it is mostly as jihadists and not immigrants. The Hindus and Sikhs who have come across to escape religious persecution are in every case welcomed with open arms. Nobody has ever threatened to send them back, so what really is the purpose of this new amendment?

Could it be that its real purpose is only to further poison the already fearful atmosphere in which Indian Muslims have lived since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister? Modi likes to repeat, every now and then, that he believes in 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' (development for everyone) but has almost never spoken out against the lynchings that cause Muslims to live in terror, and that have scarred India's image as a secular, liberal democracy. Nor has he explained why he considers this amendment to the citizenship law necessary.

There is no doubt at all that his government has the numbers in Parliament to ram the amended law through next week. Rahul Gandhi and Mayawati have spoken out against its discriminatory nature, but neither the Congress nor the Bahujan Samaj Party has the strength in either House of Parliament to make a difference.

What disturbs me most about this law is that it could be a harbinger of very bad times. With the second largest Muslim population in the world, we have contributed the least number of holy warriors to the worldwide jihad. But how long will things stay this way?

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INSIDE TRACK



COOMI KAPOOR

HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS

Thanks to the BJP's hubris, there was no one in the party, except possibly Nitin Gadkari, who could have acted as an intermediary when the Shiv Sena was parting company. In the old days, Pramod Mahajan and L K Advani had developed a personal rapport with the Thackeray family and frequently played the role of peacemakers with their demanding partner. But, the BJP today is extraordinarily cavalier towards allies. Last week, Akali Dal MP Naresh Gujral requested Speaker Om Birla to organise a function in Parliament to mark the birth centenary of his father, the late Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral. He also asked that a postal stamp be issued and the Central government sponsor newspaper advertisements to commemorate the centenary. While Naresh Gujral received no positive response from the Modi government, ironically, the non-NDA state governments of Punjab, Delhi and Maharashtra put out ads to honour Gujral's memory.

LOST IN THE HOUSE

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh was clearly jittery in Parliament when he lost his cellphone, which, presumably, contained a lot of confidential WhatsApp messages to party leaders. After scouring the benches of Central Hall, Ramesh wondered if he could have left his phone, which was in silent mode, in the House. A helpful journalist suggested he approach Parliament's central security office, which keeps videotapes of Rajya Sabha proceedings. A thorough scanning of the tapes revealed that Ramesh was last seen in the House sitting next to Minister of State V Muraleedharan and enquiring about a Bill. Muraleedharan later noticed a mobile phone near his seat and handed it to fellow minister Purushottam Rupala, who in turn passed it on to the Watch and Ward staff. When a frantic Ramesh enquired about his phone, Rupala joked that he had retrieved it, but first taken a peek at all the Maharashtra contacts on his phone.

SUDDEN CANCELLATION

The powerful right-wing think tank India Foundation has been hosting civic receptions in the Capital for visiting heads of neighbouring countries. The foundation was to host a reception for Sri Lankan

OUT OF MY MIND



MEGHNAD DESAI

THE BRITISH elections are just a few days away. As of now, it looks most likely that Boris Johnson and his Conservative Party will be returned with a majority. There are 650 seats, but for a majority, you can discount the Speaker and Deputy Speakers who do not vote, plus the Sinn Fein MPs from Northern Ireland who never take their seats because they do not want to swear

President Gotabaya Rajapaksha last week, which was cancelled at the last moment. The excuse was that there was no security-cleared venue available in Delhi. Some wondered whether the calling-off of the reception was a snub to Ram Madhav, BJP general secretary and director of the foundation. Madhav is considered the pointperson for the government in foreign affairs, but of late, he has been out of favour.

THE RETURN OF AJIT

The Pawar family's much-publicised display of trust and affection for Ajit Pawar, who was said to have stabbed them in the back, has raised eyebrows. It appears that Sharad Pawar, in fact, asked Ajit to explore the possibility of a tie-up with former BJP chief minister Devendra Fadnis. The NCP patriarch was in no hurry to form a government in Maharashtra and was simply testing the waters to find out from which camp the NCP could secure a better deal. Ajit and several other MLAs believed that they had more to gain from allying with the BJP than being part of a shaky three-party coalition. While Pawar waffled and procrastinated, Ajit presented his uncle with a fait accompli. For the NCP, the BJP is not untouchable and, in fact, there were some discussions on this even before the Assembly polls. Ajit had not bargained that Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule and wife Pratibhatai, who were apparently taken aback at the midnight coup, strongly felt that it was morally wrong for the NCP to desert the Congress. Some Congress leaders, such as general secretary K C Venugopal, were equally thunderstruck. A seasoned veteran like Ahmed Patel was shrewder and simply enquired of the NCP, "What is all this drama?"

HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS

Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut, who has emerged as one of the key figures in the new Maharashtra government, knows how to make friends. He started life as a copy boy at *Lokprabha*, a magazine distributed with the Indian Express's Marathi newspaper, *Loksatta*. There, he met Raj Thackeray, Sena supremo Bal Thackeray's nephew who occasionally drew cartoons for the magazine. Raj brought Raut to work at the Sena magazine *Marmik*, where Bal Thackeray was so impressed with Raut that he eventually made him the editor of the party's ideological mouthpiece *Saamna*. When Uddhav and Raj fell out, after Bal Thackeray nominated his son as his successor, Raut remained with Uddhav and became the public voice of Thackeray Senior's shy, soft-spoken son. However, Raut himself remained friends with Raj. Importantly, he is also very close to NCP chief Sharad Pawar. In fact, old-time Sena loyalists refer to him sourly as Pawar's man in the Sena.

HISTORY HEADLINE

4-in-1: The common factor in new UT



K C SETHI

VASCO DA Gama's arrival at Calicut, on May 20, 1498, marked the arrival of Portuguese in India and the end of Arab monopoly over trade in the region. It was 12 years later that the Portuguese captured their first territory in India, Goa, defeating Bijapur King Ismail Adil Shah.

Having made Goa the capital of their eastern empire, the Portuguese gradually turned their attention to Diu, Daman, Dadra and Nagar Haveli — two separate Union Territories which were combined into one with a Bill passed by Parliament last week.

The Diu island, located 1,700 km up from Goa along the western coast, was famous for its riches and varied history. The Portuguese failed twice in Diu — first in 1509, in a battle against the combined forces of the Mamluks, Venetians, Ragusians, Zamorin of Calicut, and Sultan of Gujarat Mahmud Begada; and four years later, in a bid to establish an outpost.

In 1535, the new Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah, afraid of an invasion by Mughal Emperor Humayun, signed an alliance with the Portuguese, allowing them to construct a fort and maintain a garrison at Diu. Even as the alliance unravelled quickly, the Portuguese fought back multiple attempts by the Sultan and his successors to oust them, between 1537 and 1546, before eventually prevailing.

The Portuguese went on to build a huge fort in Diu, strengthening and expanding it over 25 years, and the island emerged as an important port on the flourishing commercial and pilgrimage routes between India and the Middle East. By the mid-1550s, all ships entering and leaving the Gulf of Khambhat were required to pay duties to the Portuguese.

The Daman island was acquired by the Portuguese next. They are said to have discovered the island, 700 km away by land from Diu, and on the opposite coast from it, purely by chance. In 1523, a Portuguese ship sailing towards Hormuz in the Middle East was caught in a huge storm and got stranded off-coast. The commander, Diago de Mello, was enchanted by the grandeur of the port that he saw, and word about it soon reached the king of Portugal. The king ordered that the place be acquired and developed as a commercial port.

The Portuguese went on to battle for 36 years, to eventually capture Daman on



The Portuguese forces surrendering in Goa. KC Sethi

February 2, 1559, with Goa Governor Constantino de Braganza launching an attack with a fleet of more than a hundred vessels. De Braganza then ordered a fort built at the harbour, a stone's throw away from the town market.

Diu and Daman remained in the possession of the Portuguese till way after Independence. On December 19, 1961, Indian soldiers finally ousted them in 'Operation Vijay', that involved land, sea and air strikes for 48 hours.

Daman and Diu were then brought under a Union Territory of Goa, Daman, and Diu — despite the distance that separated the three. After Goa became a state in 1987, Daman & Diu became a UT, with Daman as the capital.

Dadra & Nagar Haveli, located 745 km from Diu and 35 km from Daman, too was once occupied by the Portuguese.

The tribal-dominated territory is wedged between Maharashtra and Gujarat, and is known for its natural beauty, with the Western Ghats rising to its east. It is densely populated and home to around 30 tribal groups.

The Portuguese occupied Nagar Haveli on June 10, 1783, on the basis of a friendship treaty that they had executed three years earlier with the Maratha Navy, which offered the territory as compensation for having struck and damaged a Portuguese frigate. Two years later, the Portuguese purchased Dadra from tribal king Tofozon.

Under the Portuguese, Dadra & Nagar Haveli were part of 'Distrito de Damao (Daman district)'. The two had a single municipality, named 'Nagar Haveli'. The Portuguese rule in Dadra & Nagar Haveli lasted till 1954, when the territory was occupied by supporters of the Indian Union.

Incidentally, in 1961, as India was preparing to free Goa, Daman and Diu from the Portuguese, IAS officer KG Badlani was designated the Prime



Minister of Dadra & Nagar Haveli for one day, so that, as Head of State, he could sign an agreement with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and formally merge the territories with the Republic of India.

The government hopes that by merging Daman, Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli into a single UT, it can provide effective and prompt services to people. Incidentally, even now, the two UTs are under a single administrator, who is headquartered in Daman and visits Silvassa, the capital of Dadra & Nagar Haveli, thrice a week. The two UTs also share departments, though under two different authorities.

Culturally and socially though, the two UTs are far apart, as a majority of the population in Dadra & Nagar Haveli is tribal, while Daman & Diu mostly have fishermen. Geographically, while Daman and Diu are islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli are located in the plains, bordered by the Western Ghats.

Daman & Diu has a BJP MP while Dadra & Nagar Haveli was won by an Independent in the last election.

Daman retains the maximum Portuguese influence among the four areas, including in its cuisine, though multi-storey buildings are fast replacing traditional homes now. Diu, so far, has resisted this onslaught, with laws forbidding both multi-storey buildings and industries here. Here, Portuguese-built monuments remain in good condition, with the town's Municipal Council — the first in Asia — and a police station still functioning from a 16th-century building.

Daman, once known as a haven for smugglers, is now famous for its liquor tourism, drawing huge numbers from the neighbouring dry state of Gujarat.

Sethi and wife Sunita Sethi are co-authors of the coffee table book Daman, Diu, Goa, Dadra, Nagar-Haveli & Portuguese Regime (1510-1961)

Can UK bear more of Brexit debate?

allegiance to the British monarchy.

Thus the effective number is 640 and majority is 320-plus. As of now, the Conservatives do not have a majority. In the last election called by Theresa May in April 2017, they got only 317 seats while the Labour Party got 265. The next largest party is Scottish Nationalist Party which got 39 seats (out of 59 in Scotland). The Liberal Democratic Party, which is against Brexit, has about a dozen seats. The Conservative Party withdrew the Whip from 21 MPs but 10 of them have been readmitted. So there are 306 Conservative MPs.

Through its history, the UK has had two dominant parties. Once they were Liberals/Whigs and Conservatives/Tories.

Then, in the 1920s, the Liberals collapsed and the Labour Party took its place. In the last 40 years, regional parties Scottish Nationalist, Welsh Nationalist (Plaid Cymru) have emerged. In Northern Ireland, there are Nationalists (Catholic), Unionist (Protestant) parties as well as one centrist party. But these account for fewer than a hundred out of 650 seats.

The two likely outcomes are the Conservatives getting an outright majority, say 340-350 seats, or a hung Parliament where once again the Conservatives fall short, say getting only 310. If the Labour repeat their score of 265 then they need partners, Scottish Nationalists for example, who can bring 50 seats. (No MPs will be taken

to four-star hotels and locked up, nor would they defect to whoever offers them better terms. The British have failed to learn from Indians in coalition-making.)

Brexit is the central topic. The Conservative Party has been deeply divided over the question, but right now Johnson is asking for a large vote 'to get Brexit done'. He has negotiated a deal and he needs a comfortable majority to get it through the House of Commons. Johnson's gamble is that after two-and-a-half years of debate, voters are fed up with the Brexit issue and want it settled, whatever the deal. The Liberal Democrats are a Remain Party but they are unlikely to get more than 40 seats. The Labour is divided as it has both Leave

and Remain voting seats. They are seeking to win and, if they do, renegotiate a deal more friendly to the EU and have a second referendum to get it approved. The Labour wants to get the Remain voters as well as the Leave voters. But by the time the Labour has negotiated a new deal, a whole year may have passed. There are so many different ways a deal can be made, that it is not at all certain how the second referendum will go. Can the British bear another year of debate and discussion?

In 2011, the UK passed a Fixed Term Parliament Act for five-year terms. Since 2015, there have been three elections. Johnson is the third Prime Minister in four years. Will he return?

11 SUNDAY STORY

EXPRESS INTERVIEW: SHARAD PAWAR

'Public does expect alternative to Modi. Has anyone provided that? It's Oppn's fault... If there is an effort in that direction, it is my duty to associate with it'

A speech in the rain, a night of long knives, unlikely friends and heartbreak hotels. In every episode of the drama that led up to the Maha Vikas Aghadi government, on every step outmanoeuvring the BJP, behind every stitch sewing up the Sena-NCP-Cong alliance, lay the calm hand and calculating head of Sharad Pawar. NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN interviews the NCP chief on the art of making friends, his role, the Maharashtra alliance and what it means for the country

With coalitions, the question often asked is how long will the arrangement last, especially when the parties have different ideologies. How long will the Maha Vikas Aghadi last?

On many occasions, parties that fought elections against each other, if there is no clarity about the majority after the results, to give stability to the state, they come together. Maybe their ideologies are different, but they can decide on a common minimum programme and, on the basis of that, form the government. Going for polls again is very expensive... Not just in India, in Europe, in Germany, for years together, coalition governments are running. So the idea that different parties cannot work together is not correct.

In 1999, there was no clear-cut majority for any party, but Mr (Atal Bihari) Vajpayee came forward... In his government, there was George Fernandes, Mamata Banerjee, they were all different... He took a decision to keep some of the BJP's views and programmes aside. Ram Janmabhooni, he decided not to touch that subject. Mr Vajpayee successfully ran the administration for five years.

In Maharashtra, the Congress and NCP fought against each other but now they are working together. For 15 years, they have provided stability to the state, they have a common minimum programme.

In the NCP, Shiv Sena, Congress alliance, there was compromise on the word 'secularism' in the common minimum programme. How was the Sena persuaded to accept that word?

When a situation comes when there is no choice but to work together, somebody has to make compromises. Compromise was not from the Sena side only, it was from the NCP and Congress side too. The Congress insisted on secularism and ultimately the Sena accepted it. Why? Because of these four sentences (opening a copy of the Constitution to the Preamble page)... Any government will obviously respect the Constitution. And they said yes, they respect the Constitution, and will form the government on the basis of the Constitution. Other than the Constitution, why ask for something? Why unnecessarily create misunderstandings in their rank and file?

Initially we thought the government should be led by both parties, two-and-a-half years each. But the Sena insisted on five years. So we said alright, you run. The compromise from our side was this.

You saw the Sena during the 1993 Mumbai riots (when its leaders were accused of instigating violence and Pawar was the CM). How difficult was it for you to join hands with it?

When you run a coalition government... one has to forget other things. In fact, when we work together, it is a sort of guarantee to various sections that nothing will happen. When parties with different stands on certain issues come together... and give confidence to the public at large that we are ready to work together in the larger interest of society, that sends a signal to various cross-sections of society — that it is a good thing. It's happened previously also. In 1978, I ran a coalition government — I was a Congressman — there was the Janata Party, it consisted of the Jan Sangh and Samyukta Socialist party, there was support from Leftist parties, Peasants and Workers Party, and Republican Party of India.

Do you see a Hinduisation of India?

No, no, I don't agree we are living in a Hindu Rashtra. We respect each other's religions, it's a personal matter. I have full faith on Hinduism, I do go to the *mandir*. But in public life, I belong to all.

How do you see the Central government's moves such as bringing in the Citizenship Amendment Bill or promising a nationwide National Register of Citizens?

Now that you mention Citizenship Bill, my party is not favourable to the government's decision. Just isolating one section of society is not fair, it is not done, it is not doing justice to all cross-sections of society. We do not support it.

In the days leading up to the alliance, you persuaded Congress president Sonia Gandhi about going with the Sena. What is your sense of where Rahul Gandhi stands on the alliance?

I don't know, I haven't discussed it with him. I have not met him for two-three months.

Do you believe Rahul's views are important for this alliance?

He was not here, he was not available. That's why I don't want to pass any comment.

The alliance discussions were entirely carried out by the seniors — whether it was the Congress's Mallikarjun Kharge or Ahmed Patel, or you for the NCP. Does it mean no next-generation leaders could



Sharad Pawar with his daughter Supriya Sule at Parliament House in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

have seen this alliance through?

What you are saying is partly correct. The seniors discussed the matter. However, the real (push) was by Maharashtra's Congress Legislative Party that is dominated by youngsters, more than 70 per cent. They insisted on this alliance. The feeling that we have to come together was there in the younger leadership of the Congress, NCP, and Sena. They might have discussed with us, the seniors, but this alliance was on their insistence.

As someone who has spent most of his political life in the Congress, and continues to work closely with it, where do you see the party headed?

The Congress has joined (an alliance) here, that is a good sign. It shows the Congress is also taking pragmatic decisions. If the country requires, all like-minded parties can come together, and the Congress is also coming... It is a welcome change.

But what about the Congress's leadership problems?

How can I comment on another political party? I can understand that on certain issues there may be a difference in views. But how to run the party, that is their thing.

There have been suggestions that the NCP should merge with the Congress.

Why should we merge with the Congress? You may think so, but the NCP does not think so. We are a political party with our own programme and we would like to continue with it. And if this is the thinking of the rank-and-file of my party, it is my responsibility to protect their interests.

The BJP says it is here to stay for a hundred years.

In 2004 too they were saying this... that, for 20 years, there will be only BJP, BJP, BJP. But the Manmohan Singh government came and lasted for 10 years.

Is the alliance in Maharashtra a sign of what the Opposition can do to stop it?

Ultimately, the Opposition has to work to-

gether, agree on a programme to provide a viable alternative... In many states, for instance Kerala, different parties have worked together for years. My party is a member (of the ruling coalition) there...

In the Maharashtra elections, the Congress seemed to have thrown in the towel even before the campaign began, while in the NCP, you were the only one leading the fight, with the party demoralised by defections. Given that the two parties performed better than expected, what lessons are to be drawn about campaigning, candidate selection?

Some of my senior colleagues, who had enjoyed power for many years, deserted me. In such a situation, the challenge was to build a new, younger leadership. Thousands and thousands of youngsters were ready to work... the field was (now) open for them. And to prove that they meant business, they worked hard. It was my duty to motivate them, (convince) the public that these youngsters can deliver.

One moment considered a turning point was you addressing an election rally in Satara in pouring rain. Do you agree?

The Satara meeting definitely got people excited... But, even when I started the campaign — my first meetings were in Nashik and Solapur — everywhere I saw, youngsters, men and women... it was giving me confirmation. You talked about that meeting in the rain... three weeks prior to that, a hundred thousand people came to a party procession during a nomination in Satara, at least 70 per cent were youngsters. So the mood of the state was favourable.

Do you think the mood was against the

Devendra Fadnavis government in the state, or the Narendra Modi government at the Centre?

There were two-three things. Unhappiness about the Fadnavis government was there. Simultaneously, there was anger at those who deserted me after sitting with me in various positions for years together.

It was said they were pressured to leave because of the cases against them.

There were cases against some, not everyone. Yes, the ED (Enforcement Directorate) was used, the CBI was used, but (to join the BJP) was a conscious decision by the leaders.

Even during Congress rule, central agencies were used against Opposition politicians.

No. The use of the ED, CBI, we have not seen before in Maharashtra. Might have been in some other states... We are all seeing misuse of authority. One day they may take action against me, whether there is a reason or not... anybody who takes a different view against the establishment... I am not saying something will happen. With P Chidambaram (we saw this), but generally, I cannot say. That is the impression among the Opposition.

Does that create a climate of fear, impede the functioning of the Opposition?

We have decided to work in a particular direction, with a particular ideology, and there is the other side and ideology. If they are not following the democratic way, they are misusing authority, the Opposition has to face it.

The ED called you for questioning too. By landing up at its office, you turned it into a political advantage.

It was a bank case (Maharashtra State

Cooperative Bank), I am not a member of that bank, I am not its director, I do not have any association with it, I have no account there. When I saw I was named, it was my duty to fight. It was not a political move, it was a decision to take a courageous stand against those misusing political authority.

You are seen as a consummate politician, a shrewd tactician. It is said this is your biggest strength, but also your biggest weakness. Through the whole government formation drama, people said you can't be trusted, that you had tied up with the BJP, that the rest was a cover, that you were in the know about Ajit Pawar joining hands with Fadnavis.

There is a certain section, particularly in the media, they enjoy this. If what you say was correct, how did Mr Uddhav Thackeray become the CM? How has my party supported him and joined the government?

In public life, I may belong to an ideologically different party, that does not mean we are each other's enemies. Ideologically, we will fight, in other ways we will fight, but personally, I never misbehave with anyone, whether from the BJP or any other party. On many occasions, during elections 20 years, 40 years ago, my opponent and I would be attacking each other, and at the end of the day, go to each other's house for dinner... Sometimes people are not able to digest this.

One thing that was talked about was your meeting with the PM.

So, what is wrong (in that)?

The meeting came at a delicate time in the negotiations for alliance formation. You must have known it would send out wrong signals.

If anyone thinks (that), let them worry, it is not my headache. My personal equation with the Prime Minister is good. When I was in the Central government, he was the CM (of Gujarat). The Central government was not happy with him at that time too. I was visiting that state as Minister of Agriculture... If you are in charge of the fields, it is my duty to go to you, take your support. From that angle, I visited that state on many occasions, along with Mr Modiji. Not a single Congress minister (approved of) this. In government, you cannot behave like this. Now, when he became the Prime Minister, one morning he said, 'You are doing good work in water conservation and agriculture and I would like to come and see you'. I said, come. He visited my constituency, visited my place, saw the various development activities, and had good words to say. But, at the same time, during the elections, he visited the same place and attacked me. I have no misunderstanding because his job was to attack me. As a party leader, he took this stand. But as a Prime Minister and an administrator, when he sees something good happening, he does not hesitate to say so. We have to differentiate between the two things.

Some said your meeting with the PM was meant to put pressure on the Congress, to accept the alliance with the Sena.

Why?... Prior to my meeting, the Congress Legislative Party had agreed to support the alliance. The Congress was ready.

So there was no agenda behind the meeting?

The agenda was to invite him to an international sugarcane conference. But when political leaders sit, they do discuss other things.

Which is when — according to you — Modi said you should work with the BJP.

I am very unhappy that *The Indian Express* said I 'rejected' (it). That is a very harsh word. In fact, I said that he (Modi) suggested if it was possible to have second thoughts, to rethink. So I said it was a conscious decision of my colleagues and mine (to form the alliance with the Sena and Congress)... 'Rejected' shows arrogance. That is not my habit. Why should I reject the Prime Minister of India? Ultimately, one has to show respect to the institution. The Prime Minister is an institution.

What did he say to you?

His suggestion... was to see if it is possible (for the NCP to work with the BJP). When I said it is not possible, he said it is not possible to give it a second thought? I said my colleagues and I had decided, and we will follow that decision.

Did the PM offer a ministry at the Centre to Supriya Sule?

No, no. He has been saying for the last five

years that she is a good parliamentarian, should not 'waste time with you' — jokingly, not in a harsh way. So that day he said, why is she wasting her time, her services can be utilised at the national level.

It was very unlike you to have made this conversation public.

Why not? We were not discussing any government secrets. It was not a confidential discussion.

You have known Modi for a long time. What do you see as the reason for his continuing appeal, despite mistakes on the economic front, and the BJP's failure to get a majority in Maharashtra, where he campaigned extensively?

He is THE (emphasis Pawar's) top leader of his party. He also heads the government. He has certain views to which we don't subscribe, we criticise him too. But after taking so many unpopular decisions, why don't people take a different stand vis-a-vis him?... So, public does expect an alternative. Has anybody succeeded in providing confidence to the public that he can provide the alternative?

Whose fault is that?

We all in the Opposition, I accept that. Unless and until somebody creates confidence in the minds of the public that 'A' is wrong, that I, 'B', can be the reply to 'A', and can deliver the goods, I am committed to it, and I enjoy mass support... people do think about the nation.

So what should the Opposition be doing?

We have to work together, we have to fight. And if there is an effort in that direction, it is my duty to associate with it.

What is Ajit Pawar's role going to be in the party and the government?

In the government, I can't say. In the party, definitely, we are working together.

Sometime ago, it was taken for granted that he would inherit the leadership of the NCP from you.

Ultimately, it is the party rank-and-file that will decide. By the way, my health is good (laughs).

Now it is believed your daughter Sule is a serious contender for that position.

I don't know about that. You ask her. Her thinking is different — to be a good parliamentarian, work at the national level.

What role do you see for yourself in the alliance? Has the remote control of the Maharashtra government moved from Mumbai to Baramati?

There is nothing like that. The state government is being run under the leadership of Mr Uddhav Thackeray. He has the last word on administrative matters. In fact, I have made it clear that we will not associate with the decision-making process, that is the prerogative of the chief minister and his team. If he asks me for advice, then only will we offer.

Politically, what will be your role?

My role is to travel in my home state, build up my party... Governance is the job of these people. My job is to build a new leadership that can protect the interests of the public for the next 30-40 years.

One of the first decisions of the new government was to review the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project. At a time when the country is seeking investors, is this prudent?

I have read in the papers that the government has decided to go in-depth into that decision, and then take a view. There were write-ups in the media previously that between Ahmedabad and Mumbai, there are so many other means of transport, that this presented huge financial (cost)... Secondly, the priority of the state government today is irrigation, water. In the country as a whole, average agriculture irrigation percentage is around 40 per cent; in Maharashtra, it is 18-19 per cent... The cost-benefit ratio, social impact have to be studied.

Onion prices have shot up. What is the state government doing about this?

Three-four months ago, farmers were dumping onions on the streets. The Centre did not provide a better price then. The next crop, the farmer decided to shift from onion. Now we are importing from Turkey. This was definitely a mistake by the Government of India. I wrote letters three months ago to the government, warning this would happen.



STORY OF ANOTHER 'ENCOUNTER'

On June 28, 2012, 17 people were killed in Chhattisgarh in what was then called "the biggest Maoist encounter". With a judicial commission now punching holes in the official version of the incident, DIPANKAR GHOSE travels to Sarkeguda and finds that while much has changed in these years, some things haven't — the memories of that night, and the wounds that refuse to heal

THOSE WHO remain remember everything, even the sounds of the 'encounter' — of gunfire, constant and terrifying, of muffled screams of family members outside, cries of pain as some were shot at, of feet running as fast as they could. When the firefight ended an hour later, the night turned to day as the security forces threw up a "para bomb" to illuminate the area. Still, they stayed inside their homes, covering in fear. The next morning, the villagers finally emerged from their homes, and walked to Basaguda police station, three kilometres from their village Sarkeguda in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district. There were 16 bodies in all, mangled and still, lying in body bags. One more was killed that morning, the toll now 17.

Seven-and-a-half years after what the then UPA government at the Centre and the Raman Singh-led BJP government in the state called the "biggest Maoist encounter", a one-member judicial commission of retired Madhya Pradesh High Court judge Justice V K Agarwal has submitted a report that's a damning indictment of the security forces.

In its report — the contents of which were reported by *The Indian Express* on December 1 — the commission has said that there was no firing by the villagers; there is no evidence to suggest they were Maoists; the villagers were assaulted and killed from close quarters; security forces may have fired "in panic"; and one of the victims was shot in the morning, several hours after the encounter at night. It went on to say that the primary defence of the security forces, that six of their jawans were also injured in the "gunfight", does not ring true, as records of those injuries are inconsistent and even if true, their na-

ture seems to indicate "friendly fire".

Deep inside Bijapur, a district hit by left-wing extremism, lies Sarkeguda, 53 kilometres from the district headquarters and 469 kilometres from the state capital of Raipur. In the past seven years, much has changed in the village. Back then, the road from Bijapur to Sarkeguda was unpaved, more stones and dust than the black tar that carpets it today. The buses were few and far between then, and there were none of the dish television antennae that now adorn the roofs of almost every home in Awapalli en route. The fields have changed too. Over the years, residents have built culverts to rein in water for paddy. An electricity pole that stands in the middle of the field came up last year.

What has not changed though is the disdain for the police story that went like this: On the night of June 28, 2012, teams of the CRPF, accompanied by the Chhattisgarh Police, received information of a group of armed Maoists camping in Silger in Bijapur district of the state. Acting on this information, three teams of security forces moved towards Silger, one of those from the Basaguda police station, 15 km away. This team was led by CRPF DIG S Elango and — according to their version of events that matches the text of the FIR filed immediately after the incident — somewhere in the forests between Sarkeguda, Kottaguda and Rajpenta, they heard the sounds of "suspicious activity". According to the security forces, as they were passing this forested patch, they heard cries of "police, police", and "fire karo", after which they "came under fire from armed Maoists". In the "retaliatory fire", the CRPF and police officials told investigators, 17 people, sev-



eral of them allegedly Maoists, were killed, and 10 people injured. The villagers of Sarkeguda, Kottaguda and Rajpenta, all falling under the Sarkeguda gram panchayat, however, had a very different story. The meeting that was called that night, they said, was not a Maoist meeting, but a congregation to discuss the modalities of "Beej Pandum", a local tribal festival. They said nobody was armed, and there were no Maoists. Besides the 16 who were killed at the encounter site, one more person was dragged out of his home near the encounter spot the following morning and killed, the villagers said. Kamla Kaka, a resident of Sarkeguda who is among those who led the fight for justice, points all around her and says, "If you stand here and do nothing else, talk to nobody else, you can tell the police were lying. They told the judge this was a forest between two hills. This is a field, and always has been a field. The encounter took place in summer, so even the paddy you see now wasn't there."

The spot — which security forces called a forest — has six trees in an area the size of a hockey field. The Agarwal report, in fact, says that during his cross examination, DIG S Elango, when shown the GPS coordinates of the field, "admitted" that the spot was a "clearing between villages and not a forest". "Their lies begin here," Kaka says. Sarkeguda is a microcosm of Bastar, a place of untamed beauty hit by one calamity after another, none of them natural. In the years after 2005, as the State-backed vigilante force, the Salwa Judum, destroyed villages in Bastar in an ostensible drive against Maoists, several residents of Sarkeguda and its surrounding villages abandoned their homes and left for Telangana.

"From farmers who grew our own crop, we became people who had nothing. We lived in Cherala (Khammam district, Telangana), where we worked as pluckers in chili fields," says Mahesh Ipa, whose cousin Ipa Narayan was among the 16 killed in the encounter. By 2010, organisations such as Himanshu Kumar's Vanvasi Ashram and local politicians had motivated villagers to return to their homes in Bastar. "We had just about come back, built our homes, and started farming again when the encounter happened. After that, for months, the police constantly came to our villages. We couldn't step out for risk of being beaten, and couldn't even go to the forests to graze our cattle," adds Mahesh.

For those in Sarkeguda, the passing of time has done little to heal wounds. Ratna Markam, who is now the village *mitanin* (a community health volunteer), speaks of her brother Ram Vilas Markam and Kamla Kaka's nephew Rahul Kaka — both 15, students of Class 9 at the government school in Basaguda, and "best friends".

"They went together everywhere. They were both excellent students too. Rahul kept saying he wanted to be an engineer. Ram Vilas hadn't decided, but wanted to travel the world. We used to tell them not to dream so big. But somehow, when they spoke, we also dreamed along with them," she says. Next to her, sitting cross-legged and hunched, Ipa Rama reaches into his pocket and draws out a small passport-sized photograph of his daughter. Over the years, those photographs at the ready, Rama speaks Dorli, the language of the dominant Dorla tribe, but knows four words in Hindi: "Woh toh bachchi thi (she was a child)", Saraswati, as they called her, she was 12 — the youngest of the six minors killed in the encounter.

That night of 2012 left behind a trail of dead, it also tore apart the lives of the living. Ipa Arun was 10 years old when the encounter happened, and remembers staying huddled under a charpai with his two brothers, both then under five years old. His home is closest to the field and his memory is vague, but he remembers his father arriving home that night. He remembers falling asleep, when the guns fell silent. And yet, in the morning, he recalls another gunshot. It was his father Ipa Ramesh — the 17th victim, who, as the commission held, was killed the next morning.

Villagers remember Ramesh peeping out to gaze at the field, when he was allegedly dragged out of his compound and shot dead. That incident triggered a series of events that forced Arun to turn provider for his brothers, and lost him his childhood. Unable to provide for three young children and her heart full of melancholy, his mother soon left and remarried in another village. "I studied till Class 7 and then dropped out. There was nothing to eat for me and my brothers. So I started to till the land. Both

my brothers go to school, and I need to work so they can grow. There is no other way," says Arun.

Kaka Chenti was even closer to the gunfire. He was one of those at the meeting, and the security forces surrounded the meeting and began to fire, Chenti ran as fast as he could. But just as he was about to find refuge behind a tree, he felt a searing pain in his left thigh — a bullet had pierced it and exited near his buttock. His memory after that is faint, clouded by physical pain. He remembers an ambulance, and then a helicopter, and being treated in a Raipur hospital for 25 days. On the 26th day, he found himself in jail in Jagdalpur, accused of being one of the 'Maoists' who had allegedly 'opened fire on security forces'. Chenti remained in jail for five years until 2017, when a Jagdalpur court acquitted him of all charges. "I was 20 years old then. I am 28 years old now. I lost five years of my life in jail. Who will return those to me?" Chenti asks.

■ ■ ■

As they recount their stories in a clearing outside Kottaguda, suddenly, the sound of a video rents the air. It is a video that the villagers watch often — one that speaks of the anger that existed in the days after the encounter and the efforts of the state to mollify the villagers.

In the video, taken four days after the encounter, an irate Kamla Kaka stands at the head of a group of men from the village, shouting at administration officials who have arrived to offer ration and supplies.

Kaka is seen screaming at the officials, including a Sub Divisional Magistrate: "You say we are all Naxals. Do you offer ration to Naxals? There was a 12-year-old girl (among those killed). Was she giving a speech that you killed her first? We don't want your help."

With her anger an incessant volley of piercing words, more swarms emerge in the video, pushing their children forward. They ask the officials about their future, say, "kill them too, if that's what you want".

Now, as the video plays on, Kaka laughs and admonishes those playing it. "Why do you keep playing this video? *Bas karo*," she says, before quietly adding, "But it is this anger that has led to what happened this week," the commission's report."

For Kaka, the fight has been long and arduous. Once the judicial commission was constituted, villagers had to travel to Jagdalpur, then Raipur and even Bhopal for hearings. "The first time we all had to go to Jagdalpur, everyone wanted to go. So we had to arrange for food and lodging. Over time, a lot of people could not go because travelling so far means letting go of the day's earnings. So it became me, Ratna Markam and Rita Kaka (another resident of Sarkeguda) who would go for most hearings. Whenever we came back, we told the villagers what happened (at the hearings)," she says.

Then the village *mitanin*, Kaka went on to study a nursing course and is now posted at Geedwada in Dantewada district, 140 km from her village. "It has been difficult, but we have never wavered. Even when I was studying, I would go for the hearings. The commission took care of our travel expenses, but there were other things to take care of. I used to sell bangles at the local market to get by," she says.



Stories of the Dead

But there were other things to take care of. I used to sell bangles at the local market to get by," she says.

Even among our lawyers, people like Shalini Gera and Sudha Bharadwaj did so much," says Kaka.

Shalini Gera, who was one of the lawyers for the villagers, says, "There were logistical challenges, of course, but beyond that, when the security forces brought their witnesses, mostly surrendered Maoists, to these hearings, they would throw around allegations. That is difficult for anyone to face."

Kaka says she vividly remembers those hearings in court. She remembers the anger that bubbled up inside her when she was repeatedly asked if the people who died were Maoists. "It angered me so much, but it made me speak clearly. After that, though nobody threatened me directly, I began getting calls from local people I knew. They told me to leave the village and Chhattisgarh itself, that my life was in danger. My parents kept telling me, what if we lose you too? But we fought, and that is why a judge (Agarwal) has now said that what happened was a fake encounter," she says.

■ ■ ■

If Sarkeguda has been left with a deep sense of tragedy, there is also gratitude for those who fought for them. Villagers speak fondly of politicians such as Manish Kunjam, the multi-term CPI MLA from Konta, and activists and lawyers such as Himanshu Kumar and Yug Chaudhry. But while there are men who have contributed, most battles for justice have been led by women, both from the village and outside.

Even after the judgment, it is the women of the village — Kamla Kaka, Ratna Markam and Rita Kaka — whose words carry the most weight. When they talk, everyone listens, like

(Above) Kamla Kaka, in grey kurta, is nearly always carries a stick in her arms, her practise of checking their limbs for strength and mobility, as she w quietly tells a mother, "his is a strong child. Make are he gets enough milk."

"I'm not sure why it is always women who are fighting for justice. Maybe because we are less afraid to speak, to fight. The pain of our children being killed burns us from inside."

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17 WHO DIED

KOTTAGUDA VILLAGE

1. SARASWATI, 12: youngest victim. No Naxal record. Father Kaka Rama is a marginal farmer, grows mostly rice and tamarind.

2. KAKA SAMAIYYA, 35-40 YEARS: No Naxal record. Survived by four children and wife Kaka Negi. His sister Kaka Sarita was the first girl in the region to be enrolled in a government school in 2007. He had four cases against him — one in January 2007, three in April 2007. All have the same charge — firing at police parties with an intention to kill them.

3. KAKA NAGESH ALIAS RAHUL, 15: Class 10 student at a government residential school in neighbouring Basaguda. In his press conference after the encounter, then home minister P Chidambaram called Rahul an "important Naxal". He faced two cases. One, on October 24, 2009, when he was 12 and, according to the police, fired at security personnel near the Talpuru river. Second, for allegedly firing at a police party in December 2011 near Timapur, a nearby village.

4. MADKAM RAMVILAS, 15: No Naxal record. He was Rahul's classmate. His family said he always got a first division, was good at English.

5. MADKAM DILEEP, 22: Studied up to Class 8. Police said then that Dileep had fired at a police party near the Talpuru river on October 24, 2009.

6. IRPA MUNNA, 23: No Naxal record. His father Ipa Raju said he had climbed up a tree to save himself

during the firing at night. As he came down in the morning, the police fired at him.

7. MADKAM SURESH, 35: He was arrested with his mother Shanta during the days of the Salwa Judum in 2007 when thousands of tribals were sent to jails. Shanta was released later. Suresh managed to escape during the Dantewada prison break of December 2007 with other 298 inmates. He then returned to his village, married and had two children. Besides the jailbreak case, he had four cases against him — one in January 2007, three in April 2007. All have the same charge — firing at police parties with an intention to kill them.

8. MADKAM NAGESH, 32: He played his *dholak* during village festivals. He and Madkam Suresh were brothers. Their wives share the same name — Madkam Shanti. He was booked in a September 2006 case for firing on a police party.

9. IRPA DINESH, 35: Police called him Ipa Somulu, a Naxal, and claimed his identity was dubious. Villagers said there was no Ipa Somulu in any of the villages. He lived with wife Janki and three children. Both the Chhattisgarh Police and the CRPF said he was a prominent Naxal but he did not figure in the list of Naxalites that the Chhattisgarh Police prepared after the encounter.

SARKEGUDA VILLAGE

10. SARKE RAMANNA, 25: No Naxal record. He was a marginal farmer, survived by his wife and a daughter.

11. MAADVI AAYUTU, 33: Survived by his wife Kamli and four children. He was booked for two cases — killing a Special Police Officer in July 2007 and looting villagers in July 2010.

12. KORSÉ BICHHAM, 18: His parents had died years ago and he lived with his brother and sister-in-law. He had two cases against him — from October and December 2011 — for allegedly attacking a police party "with an intention to kill".

13. IRPA NARAYAN, 45-50 YEARS: Survived by his wife Sita and four children. He was booked in a December 2011 case for attacking a police party.

14. KUNJAM MALLA, 17: No Naxal record.

15. APKA MITTHU, 17: A school dropout, he was a marginal farmer.

16. IRPA DHARMAIYYA, 40: No Naxal record.

17. IRPA SURESH, 18: He was among the seven injured the police party took with them for treatment. Suresh was shifted to Bijapur district hospital where he died. No Naxal record.

INCIDENTS IN BASTAR

Tadmata, March 2011: Over 160 homes were burnt by security forces in the villages of Tadmata, Morpalli and Timmapuram, and three women were raped and killed, allegedly by security forces. The Supreme Court handed over the investigation of the case to the CBI, which, in a status report in 2016, contradicted the police version that Maoists had burnt the villages and held security personnel responsible for the incident that saw seven special police officials being charged. A commission of enquiry, headed by retired Justice T P Sharma, was also instituted in May 2011.

Jhiram, May 2013: 27 people, including senior Congress leaders Mahendra Karma, Vidya Charan Shukla and Nand Kumar Patel, were killed in a Maoist attack on a Congress convoy. The NIA was given charge of the investigation, but filed a closure report. A one-member judicial commission headed by Justice Prashant Mishra is still in operation. In December 2018, the new Congress government also announced an SIT into the attack.

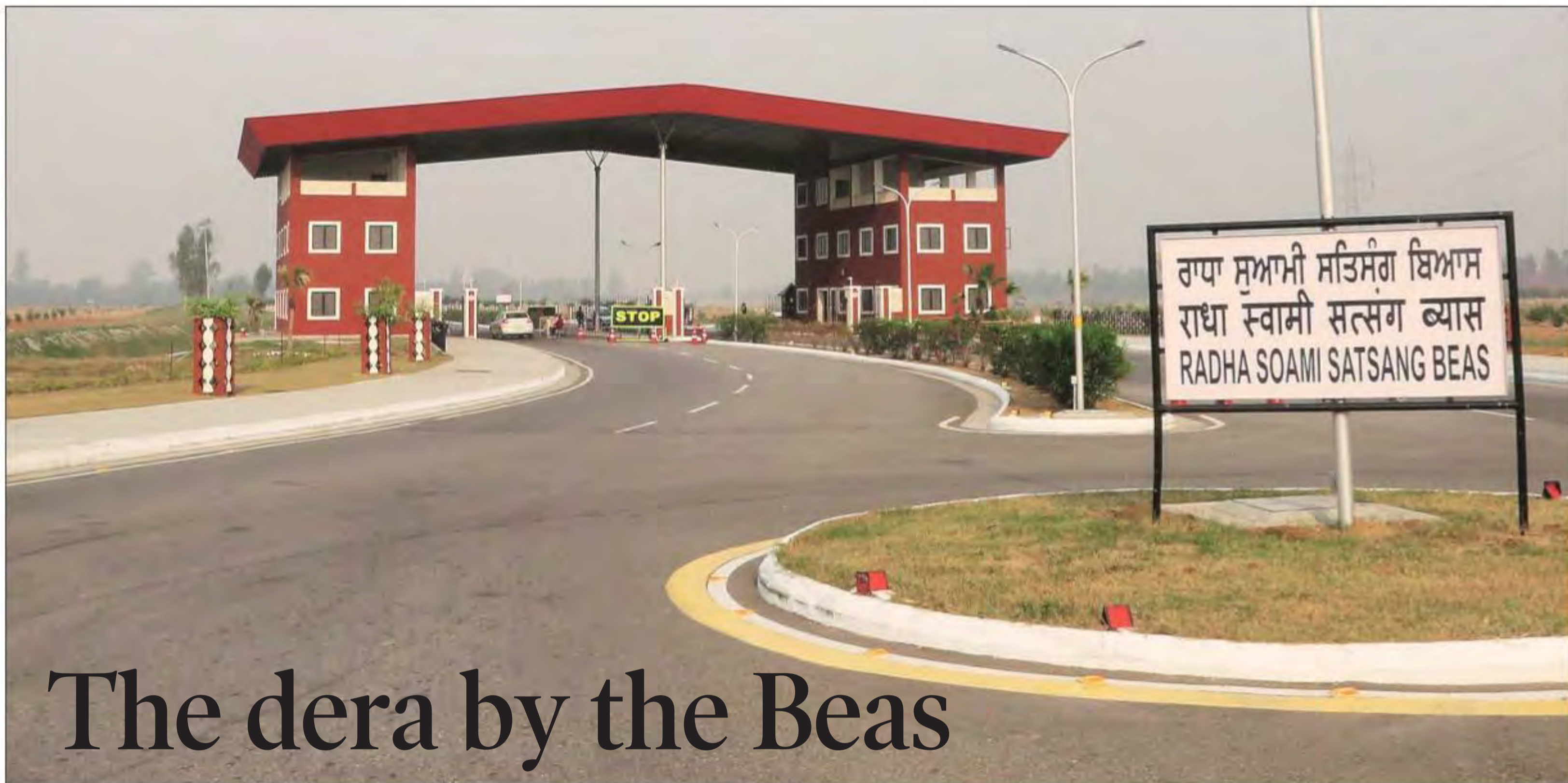
Edesmeta, May 2013: One CRPF personnel and eight alleged Maoists were killed in an alleged encounter. Villagers maintained that there was no exchange of fire. A commission of enquiry under Justice V K Agarwal, who also adjudicated the Sarkeguda case, was instituted, and is still to conclude hearings.

Nulkatong, August 2018: 15 people were killed in an encounter with security forces in a Sukma village. Claiming this was a fake encounter, the Civil Liberties Commission filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court which is still pending.

Pedagellur, October 2015: Over 30 women alleged that they had been sexually assaulted in Pedagellur and Chinnagellur villages in Bijapur district. Taking cognisance of a report in *The Indian Express*, the NHRC took suo motu cognisance and in January 2017 issued an interim report where it said that prima facie it seemed that 15 women had been sexually assaulted, ordering that the records of 20 others be recorded.

EXPLAINED
Hope for justice after 7 yrs

THE JUSTICE Agarwal Commission's report has backed the residents of Sarkeguda, who have been fighting for seven long years to seek justice for the death of their family members in the 2012 encounter by the security forces. It has brought hope in this region that such actions will not go unpunished.



The dera by the Beas

The third figure in the Ranbaxy brothers' corporate battle is Gurinder Singh Dhillon, the head of Radha Soami Satsang Beas — among the largest such communes in the world, with 20 mn followers in 90 countries, yet fiercely secretive. **MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA & PRABHA RAGHAVAN** on the man and his sect

SOMEWHERE between Jalandhar and Amritsar on the Grand Trunk Road, a long, winding path breaks off and stops at an imposing gate, one of half-a-dozen entrances to the headquarters of Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, known more commonly as Radha Soami Satsang Beas, a sprawling commune on the banks of the Beas river. Much like its 65-year-old head Gurinder Singh Dhillon, "Babaji" or "Master" to 20 million followers across 90 countries, the dera is fiercely private. Devotees guarding the gates tell you to deposit bags, mobiles, and cameras before venturing in. The rationale, the volunteers often say, is that "you leave the material world outside as you journey to your inner self".

But, for some time now, the outside world has been threatening to intrude into this closed universe, with Babaji, the presiding deity of the town, and his family thrust into the ugly legal battle between Malvinder Mohan Singh and Shivinder Mohan Singh, former promoters of Ranbaxy. All the dramatic personae in the case are related to the dera — former dera head Charan Singh is the maternal grandfather of the Singh brothers, while Dhillon, whom he eventually chose as his heir, is Charan Singh's sister's son.

It all began with Japanese drug maker Daiichi Sankyo, which had bought the Singh brothers' 34.82% stake in Ranbaxy in 2008 for \$2.4 billion, filing a case in the Delhi High Court in 2018. It alleged that the Singhs had siphoned off over Rs 2,000 crore from their companies through loans to Shimal Healthcare and Prius Real Estate. Dhillon's wife Shabnam was earlier listed as a director with Prius. But Prius told the judge that the firm was neither owned by the Singhs, nor was it a downstream company of theirs.

Nearly four months later, elder Singh brother Malvinder wrote to the Economic Offences Wing, accusing the dera spiritual head of working in "collusion and connivance" with Shivinder to cause "wrongful

loss" to him and the shareholders of RHC Holding Pvt Ltd, a firm he once jointly owned with his younger brother.

Malvinder also alleged that the dera chief was "threatening" him to sign a settlement, freeing the Dhillons of any financial liability. His affidavit in the Supreme Court this year also claims that over Rs 6,000 crore in loans and advances are to be recovered from "various" individuals and companies, including Prius and the dera chief himself.

Dhillon had taken over as the fifth chief of the Beas dera in 1990, after the death of Charan Singh, a lawyer who had headed the dera since 1951. It's said that Dhillon was home from Spain, where he worked, for the birth of his second son when Charan Singh passed away and he learnt of his anointment as dera chief.

The elderly gatekeepers on volunteer duty at the dera's newest three-storey outpost still remember the day Dhillon became dera chief. "Babaji was a young man, all of 36, with a trimmed black beard," recounts Mahender Singh, who owns a cloth shop in Kaithal and joined the dera in 1984.

AR Rajwade, a retired mathematics professor who lives next door to the Dhillon family mansion in Sector 8, Chandigarh, recounts seeing Dhillon as a young man on his bike. "His father Gurmukh Singh, an affluent landlord from Moga, built this house."

Dhillon's mother Mohinder Kaur continues to live in the house after his father passed away in the Nineties. Dhillon's wife Shabnam, 58, who used to divide her time between the dera and the homes of her sons Gurpreet and Gurkeerat Singh, in Singapore and London, respectively, passed away on November 27 following complications after an abdominal surgery in London. She was cremated at the dera.

Dhillon's friends, who call him "Moga", also recall his love for bike drives, and Beatles and Paul Anka. "He studied at Sanawar while I was at Bishop Cotton School in Shimla. We



(From top) One of the many gates leading to the dera; volunteers at the Beas railway station; Dhillon, on the right in the photograph, is the fifth dera chief. Jaipal Singh

became friends when he joined B.Com at Panjab University," says retired Punjab and Haryana High Court Justice SS Saran.

Under Dhillon's 29-year tenure, the dera has grown in strength and now has over 5,167 satsang centres across the country and over 500 abroad. The dera headquarters at Beas in Amritsar district is a self-contained 'city', with an air strip, a CBSE-affiliated school, apartments, an industrial area, a shopping mall, and a network of underpasses for the smooth flow of traffic.

The dera is run by the Radha Soami Satsang Beas (RSSB) Trust, a non-profit society headed by a secretary with the dera chief as its patron.

On any given day, 15,000-20,000 come for daily satsang at the dera, with the number rising to several lakhs when the dera chief is addressing it. This summer, the dera hosted five lakh people for a satsang with Dhillon. Besides 15 sheds that can house 8,000 to 12,000 people each, there are dorms, serais or guest houses and apartments for visitors. The biggest of the satsang halls is spread over 80 acres and can accommodate five lakh people. The parking area within the campus can hold 50,000 vehicles.

The dera also boasts one of the world's largest single rooftop solar facilities. Inside the township is an industrial area where the *sewadars* make everything, from

paver blocks and tiles to furniture and grilles. "There is nothing we get from outside," says JS Sethi, a retired chief engineer and secretary of the Trust since 2005.

Like with deras elsewhere in the state, the Radha Soami sect depends heavily on volunteers or *jathas* to keep the giant dera machinery running. The volunteers are spread across the dera — men and women, who come in as per a pre-determined schedule every day.

The Beas railway station has been taken over this Tuesday evening by dera volunteers who have come to receive a *jatha* from Hoshiarpur. A batch of volunteers sweeps the station while waiting.

Soon, the *jatha* arrives and its members head to the two buses in the parking area. "We come here from Hoshiarpur on the 19th of every month. This month, we have been assigned the dera's sanitation department," says Satnam Singh, a farmer.

With the rapid expansion of the dera have come attendant controversies, the case of alleged fund diversion involving the Singh brothers only the latest.

In 2016, when the Akali-BJP government was in power in the state, former Patiala AAP MP Dharamvir Gandhi took a round of five adjoining villages and claimed that he had come across marginal framers who had been allegedly forced to sell their land to the dera at throwaway rates.

"I got to know that the dera administration is acquiring land through deceit and in connivance of local revenue officials," says Gandhi, who raised the issue in Parliament.

Though a probe was initiated, nothing came of it. Dismissing Gandhi's allegations, Sethi says the dera pays compensation at the rate of Rs 2.5 lakh a marla against the market rate in these parts of Rs 40,000 a marla.

Dhillon himself has rarely commented on any controversy, adding to his reluctant godman image. "He hates being photographed," says a former follower, who claims to have left the dera because he found it "too austere".

This month though, Dhillon finally broke his silence on the Ranbaxy allegations, denying RHC's claims of "huge receivables" from him and his family. Instead, he accused the Singh brothers of owing him over Rs 70 crore that he had loaned to them in 2011.

Mention the case to Sethi of the RSSB Trust and he bristles. "The RSSB has not taken a single *paisa* from the Singh brothers, you can check our records. Neither the dera nor Babaji like giving clarifications. We believe that ultimately the truth will come out."

TAKE 5

FACES ON THE FRINGES OF NEWS

SHAMEEM, 52, AN ONION SELLER IN BALLIA

'Don't know why MP said it... poor are not buying onions at all'

Accusing the Opposition of playing politics over onions, Virendra Singh, the BJP MP from Ballia in Uttar Pradesh, claimed in Parliament that onions were being sold in his constituency at Rs 20-25 a kg, and that he could provide them truckloads of it. Shameem, who has been selling onions in Ballia for 20 years, says he is selling them at around Rs 90-100 now



'Even rich are only taking 250 gm'

1 **What is the price of onions today?**

I bought onions at Rs 85 per kg from the *mandi*. I am selling them at Rs 90 per kg to my customers.

2 **The Ballia MP has claimed that onions are being sold at Rs 25 per kg here...**

Not that I know of. *Par unhone bola hai toh kuch soch samajh ke bola hoga* (But if the MP has said it, he must have said it after giving it some thought).

3 **Why are onions so expensive now?**

Most of the onions are produced in Nashik and because of the floods there, the produce has got spoilt. The supply has stopped and so the prices have increased. I don't think the government can do anything about it. It is not like they can produce onions using a machine.

4 **Are people buying less?**

Very less. Earlier, I used to sell at least five sacks of onions weighing 50-55 kg a day. Now, I barely manage to sell a sack a day.

5 **Do you think people are not eating onions because of the high price?**

Yes, the poor can't afford it, so they are not eating onions at all. How can a daily wagger who makes Rs 200 per day buy onions at Rs 100 per kg? Even the rich are only buying 250 gm at a time. Today, a bank manager came and bought only 250 gm onion from me. He used to buy at least a kilogram earlier. He said that his family is avoiding dishes that require onions.

ASADREHMAN

The fading of last of Chambal's 'bandit queens'

Sadhna Patel, 22, was called 'terror incarnate' when held last month. Her true story might be a lot tamer

MILIND GHATWAI

THE ONLY woman Chambal dacoit in the past decade and a half, Sadhna Patel was arrested by the Madhya Pradesh Police on November 17 amidst a blaze of attention. Descriptions like "Aatank ka paryay" (terror incarnate), "khoonkhar" (ferocious), "dasyu sundari" (bandit queen) were banded about as police paraded the diminutive 22-year-old before cameras.

A fortnight later, police say Patel is one of the quietest inmates in Satna Jail. And contrary to the reputation built around her, she may have never even fired a gun at anyone.

Patel was arrested from the dense Kadiyan jungles in Satna district. Many dacoits are known to operate in the Uttar Pradesh-Madhya Pradesh border area, committing crimes in one state and skipping over to the other to avoid arrest. Police claimed to have recovered a .315 bore rifle and some cartridges from Patel, apart from a sling bag carrying daily essentials.

Chambal last had a woman dacoit more than 15 years ago. Rani, an allegedly "trigger-happy" accomplice of dacoit Santa Khairwar, was killed in an encounter along with him in February 2003.

Sadhna Patel was born in Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh, 50-60 km from Satna. The barely 5-ft girl, the eldest of three siblings, was nicknamed "belani" (rolling pin) due to her short stature.

Police say Patel's aunt had links with the powerful Chunnihal Patel gang, introducing her to the world of dacoits. There are other known dacoits in the area belonging to Patel's Kurmi caste, including Sunder Patel, Thokia Patel and Dadua Patel.

At the age of 17, Patel, who studied up to Class 8, was married off by her family. The relationship though ended in six months when she reportedly started living with another person. Around this time, she started disappearing from home for long intervals. A few years ago, Patel's father was found dead in the jungles.

OP Singh, who is in charge of Majhgawan



Sadhna Patel after her surrender. She faces cases of looting, kidnapping. Express

Police Station, where a case of loot is registered against Patel, says, "After her family refused to take her back, Patel joined the Naval Dhobi gang in 2015. When he surrendered in February 2018, she took over the gang. She would target contractors or people involved in collecting tendu leaves."

Dhobi is believed to have surrendered fearing an encounter by the Uttar Pradesh Police.

In August 2018, Patel came to public attention when her gang was accused of abducting Chhotelal Sen of Paldev under Nayagaon Police Station in Madhya Pradesh.

After his release, the 35-year-old gave a vivid account of his time in captivity, particularly of the "ruthless" Patel, claiming she had chopped off his fingers.

Nayagaon Police Station in-charge Yogendra Singh Jayshour admits some of the stories about Patel may be apocryphal. "Not sure if fingers were chopped off but she definitely used the butt of her rifle to crush Sen's fingers," he says. The abduction itself was an embarrassment for the gang as it had to let go of Sen without ransom after realising his family was broke.

Around a year ago, Patel went underground. Police believe she moved to Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to avoid arrest. Over the next few months, the Madhya Pradesh Police rounded up her gang members one by one, including alleged sharpshooters Rinku Shivhare and Deepak Shivhare.

In mid-September, dacoit Babuli Kol and his accomplice, Lavlesh, were killed in an encounter. Officials believe this might have scared Patel into surrender. One of the largest dacoit gangs operational in the area, Babuli Kol and his men had more than 110 cases, of murder, extortion, kidnapping and loot, registered against them, in Uttar Pradesh and

Madhya Pradesh.

A police officer says Kol also invited Patel to join his gang, but she refused. By the time she surrendered, she was left with one-two accomplices, and officials were surprised at how tamely she gave up.

Patel has half-a-dozen cases registered against her — all in Madhya Pradesh. These include crimes like extortion and kidnapping. Satna Superintendent of Police Riyaz Iqbal says four cases of kidnapping and loot are registered in Satna district.

Additional SP Gautam Solanki says Patel may not have been as dreaded as made out to be earlier, but that she was involved with local gangs.

Majhgawan Police Station's OP Singh says Patel had told them she took to crime to take revenge against her first husband for "abandoning" her and to avenge the "murder" of her father. However, police believe her father's death was most likely a case of electrocution.

The typical dacoit aura of revenge and thwarted love is now being chipped away by tales of Patel's "ordinariness". Superintendent and Jailer of Satna Jail Narendra Pratap Singh and R K Choure, respectively, underline that "she behaves like any other undertrial", "despite what the press may have printed".

Having met Patel in custody, an official says what struck him most was, "Kitni masoom lagti hai" (how innocent she looks!).

15 IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

It's part of birth, the genetics. Usain is tall, why don't you cut off his limbs if his genetics is helping him be that fast? Why do you want them (Caster, Dutee) to take (hormonal injections)... I don't support it"



WHY YOHAN BLAKE

The second-fastest man on the planet, Yohan Blake has run 100 metres in 9.69 seconds and 200 metres in 19.26 seconds. After being overshadowed at the London and Rio Olympics by Usain Bolt, the more famous Jamaican, now, in the post-Bolt era, the 30-year-old Blake will attempt to win gold at the Tokyo Olympics while

fending off American sprinter Christian Coleman. At the 2011 World Championships, Blake, then 21, bagged a gold, becoming the youngest 100 metres world champion ever. A cricket fan, he once held ambitions to play for the West Indies, and holds Indian stars such as V V S Laxman, Virender Sehwag and Rahul Dravid in high regard



"Lara's 400 or Usain's 9.58? I would say we train every day. A cricketer doesn't train half of it... In athletics, I have one shot. I can't be fast every day. I would choose cricket anyday for my son

SHIVANI NAIK: What's your fondest memory of the 2011 World Athletics Championships?

Crossing that line. For me, winning is not everything, but for the world, winning is everything. It's when the world remembers you. They don't remember when you come second, third, fourth... Just like, if India loses, the media says, 'They need to change this bowler, they need to change that batsman'. But when they win, nothing needs to change. When I ran the 200-metre in 19.26 seconds, it was the fastest race of my life. I felt like a plane taking off from the runway... like I couldn't have been stopped, like a man possessed. I remember that race each and every day.

SHIVANI NAIK: You are a sprinter, always wanting to finish races fast. What is the slowest thing you have done in life?

I walk! I walk very, very slowly. Even my girlfriend says every day, why don't you walk up. I walk like 0.1 (kph). You never wake a sleeping giant. I always say that. I walk very slow. And, I drive slow.

SHAHID JUDGE: The Olympics are held once in four years, and the race ends in 10 seconds. What's that emotion like?

Nine seconds. A race ends in nine seconds. When you wait for four years, you don't know if you are going to make it to the trials, if there is going to be an injury, if you are going to win a medal that day... Just imagine if all of those things happen. That's so devastating. When you have that final line, when you hear 'on your mark', literally you hear your heartbeat out there. It gets as nerve-racking as that. You see people do different things (*mimics athletes exhaling*) to get rid of the nervousness. We call it the dopamine of running, trying to calm yourself. You have nine seconds, and in that time you have to keep all your thoughts away.

SRIRAM VEERA: You grew up in a one-room house with broken windows. Your father was a bartender and tailor. Could you talk about those days?

When I watched *Slumdog Millionaire*, that really took me to my past. Growing up was a bit difficult... Everyone would sleep on the same bed, but I liked that. It made me work myself out of that (poverty). I didn't get things on a platter. I have had to work for all of it. It taught me a lot... Even if I fall on my face anytime, I know how to get up.

SRIRAM VEERA: Your mother made you wear red shoes and you would take them off before you reached school?

I was so ashamed. My mum had given me church shoes to go to school. Every time I would walk, you could hear me from a mile (*mimics the sound of the shoe*). I was ashamed. That really pretty girl you liked is there and you going clomp-clomp! Everyone there, rich and pretty... And yeah, I was ashamed of the shoes then. But looking back, I enjoyed it.

SRIRAM VEERA: Later, you developed this 'beast' persona, even wearing fangs from your mouth, and roaring like a beast. Was there a point where you thought it was getting too much?

In 2014, yeah, the 'beast' was taking me far from me. It was transforming me into a beast really; it was all for a bit of fun really and I was enjoying it. Usain (Bolt) gave me that name after seeing how hard I trained. In 2008, when he broke those records, I would train with him and pushed him in training. I was the only one that the coach would tell to sit down, and not run for two weeks, because I was too fit... The beast was just for fun and the fans.

SRIRAM VEERA: Later, you met a pastor and stopped the 'beast' thing. What exactly happened?

He told me, 'Listen Yohan, I think the beast is getting too much'. The hair was long, nails were long, I was putting false teeth, and he said god won't be pleased with all that. From there, I just changed my image. I don't know whether I should have done that. I don't think I thought it through. It was just for the fans and I think it (the fun persona) might come back for the (Tokyo) Olympics.

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN: Where do you stand on the debate over genetics and athletes? Is it part of your genes or can you become the fastest man by sheer training?

I believe people are born different from each other. Some kids do maths really well, some spell brilliantly at age three. But what is happening now in the

'Virat is very powerful. When he speaks up, big guys listen... must use the platform if you reach that stage'

Jamaican sprinter Yohan Blake talks about his tough childhood and equation with Usain Bolt, backs better pay for women athletes, admits pressures of representing a country, talks about his respect for Indian cricketers, and recounts the time he spent under a ban



Sprinter Yohan Blake with Senior Assistant Editor Shivani Naik in *The Indian Express* newsroom in Mumbai. Ganesh Shirsekar

sport... with athletes such as Caster Semenya and the Indian athlete (Dutee Chand), the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) is coming down on them very hard. They (the athletes) don't have control over their birth and what has happened to them. (IAAF chief) Sebastian Coe is killing track and field. He is taking away the excitement and their living, they don't have anything else. It's part of birth, the genetics. Usain is tall, 6-ft-something, why don't you cut off his limbs if his genetics is helping him be that fast? Why do you want someone (such as Caster and Dutee) to take that stuff (hormonal injections)? I don't like it, I don't support it.

SRINATH RAO: How is it training with sprinters in Jamaica, your equation with them on and off the field?

We do talk a lot of crap to each other, and also push each other a lot during training. Being the big guy, being the fast guy, you have to be on top of the game. There is always one guy who thinks he can match you, it's really fun! It's a clean, healthy environment.

SRIRAM VEERA: If you and Usain Bolt weren't friends, would you have competed with him in more races?

That could have happened. That was because of our coach. If you see our careers, we didn't run (together) that much. Only in trials or championships. The coach didn't like us running (together) much and I didn't like that. It's a sensitive topic for me. I think we could have run more. Most of the time, when I was in form, the coach didn't make us run together.

SHAHID JUDGE: Did Usain Bolt's achievements leave upcoming Jamaican sprinters in his shadow?

It's like Sachin Tendulkar with V V S Laxman or Rahul Dravid in their prime. Now Virat Kohli. Most of the other players don't get that attention. If Cheteshwar Pujara makes a hundred, and Kohli makes a 200, he (Kohli) gets the attention. You have to be running extremely well... I have to run better to overshadow him (Bolt) and that's not easy.

SHIVANI NAIK: Many Indians are vegetarians. Does that matter in your sport?

You need energy, you need over 5,000 calories a day for training. You need to eat, sleep, train and repeat. You have to work day and night. You are not going to win a

race eating vegetables. No (*laughs*).

MAYURA JANWALKAR: What's your diet like?

While training, it's 99 per cent about nutrition. I have to maintain 9 per cent body fat. In sprinting, you have to be light. But not vegetables (*laughs*). Being heavy will make you slow, you need food that will make you fast. You need salmon, green vegetables mixed with protein, whole-grain pasta, rice once a week. You have fish. Sometimes I have a sandwich. You put on weight most at nights because that's when respiration takes place. You consume breakfast and lunch and have a very light dinner. This has been my diet from the time I started running. You can't have a normal life. My girlfriend eats ice cream often. I can't. I have to just watch. I did have ice cream two Sundays ago but I had backed off from serious training then. I do have cheat days sometimes when I have ice cream and banana bread.

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN: How important are shoes to running? Recently, Kenyan long-distance runner Eliud Kipchoge ran a marathon under two hours with special shoes, triggering a debate.

I don't think it had anything to do with the shoes. That guy is at another level, his lungs are big... It has nothing to do with shoes or the track. Of course, the spikes help in pushing your foot from the surface on the track. But he is talented and at a different level.

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE: Which sport is more challenging: cricket or track



and field?

I got that on radio earlier: Brian Lara's 400 or Usain's 9.58? I would say that we train every day. A cricketer doesn't train half of what we do. We train, vomit, and go back to training. Track and field is so hard. I can bat for 400 minutes, rest, and come back again. In athletics, I have one shot. The body can't go that fast every day. What I do is very hard. I would choose cricket anyday for my son.

SHAHID JUDGE: In the absence of Bolt, you are the favourite. How does that feel?

I am sitting here in this building and carrying that burden on my shoulder. That's the pressure of an entire nation on my shoulder. But I tell myself, I am not running for that nation, I am doing this for me. Tomorrow, if I fail, they are going to say he isn't good and if I win, they will say, he is the best thing. So I put it into perspective, it's going to be all about me and I want to get the job done for me. Whatever happens on that day, I will have no control.

SRIRAM VEERA: How do you see the state-sponsored doping scandal in Russia which was exposed after the Sochi Winter Olympics and the proposed Olympic ban of the whole country at Tokyo?

For me, personally, I don't think they should have banned the country, they should have banned the athletes. You can't let the good people suffer for the bad. It is their career, what are they supposed to do? I think, those who are clean should be allowed to run.

SHAHID JUDGE: How challenging was

2009, when you went through the three-month doping ban?

I think it's funny. When you just finish high school and you are training with the club, they give you a supplement and you trust your coach. I was like, everything is going according to plan. It was a plant-based supplement that was not on the list. I believe some people were just fighting against us. I was banned and it was devastating for me and my friends. I didn't go out for that whole period. I was like a cave-man. I got over it, and they later apologised to me for ruining my reputation.

DIPTI NAGPAUL: Sports personalities and their nationalities get intertwined at the Olympics. Do you think athletes should be freed from this pressure of representing their nation?

I think you should be free because it is a lot of pressure from the country. Everybody sees you when you are doing well, you are winning. But you commit a mistake and everyone is on you. Sometimes you don't even want to leave the house, as you are afraid what a person might say to you. It damages you emotionally and makes you not want to represent your country anymore... It tears you down.

SHIVANI NAIK: You have spoken about your love for the Indian Premier League. But can you talk about your love for Test cricket?

I think, over the years, watching V V S Laxman, Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, batting... it really intrigued me. The patience that these guys have. I really look up to them. Back in the day, that was ultimate cricket which really tests your character. As for West Indies cricket, in everything that you are doing, you are not going to reign forever. There will be a point when you will decline and then get back up again.

SHERRI MARKER: What made you champion the cause of road safety?

I was hit by a bus one time I was crossing the road. From that day everything changed. I was 13 years old. I want to tell people, don't just drive for yourself, drive for others. Be mindful of people on the road, use the rear-view mirror.

When I was coming from the (Mumbai) airport, it was crazy... I have never seen anything like this anywhere. I saw five babies on a motorcycle with their mother. This is crazy. If I was the govern-

ment, I would put a stop to it. If we could just put more ads out there and tell people to watch for the signs, and if the government can put up more signs on the road, and be more strict with these people, I think there can be a stop to it — but not fully. But we can control some of the death toll. In Jamaica, accidents are increasing... Even in the Christmas season a lot of people get in their cars and crash.

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN: What do you think of women sprinters coming unfairly lower down in the hierarchy of events?

Even though for us men it is a blue-ribbon event, I think that they push the females even more. For women, even on the day (of the race) if they have their period, they have to run... I don't know how it feels but it's very hard to run with such pain. I don't think they get highlighted as much as men and they are starting to feel the pressure. And they are speaking about it... Even to get more money for what they are doing. I think it is wrong that men get more credit for races than women.

SADAF MODAIK: Where do you stand on the segregation of athletes on the basis of their gender, considering what happened with Caster Semenya — she has been allowed to run in restricted events but will need to bring her testosterone levels within prescribed limits to be eligible to run the 800-metres race?

I stand with women like Semenya. You are born a particular way and no one should change you. And I don't think that anyone should force you to do what you don't want to. I will stand with women in their fight for better pay and everything that they are not getting. It is very strenuous for them and I feel their pressure because they go through a lot. Training is not easy.

MAYURA JANWALKAR: We live in politically tumultuous times. Do you think sportspeople can distance themselves from politics or do they need to stand up for issues they feel strongly about?

I believe if you reach a stage in your career and you are wise to speak up and help, I think you should use the platform. Look, Virat Kohli is very powerful in India. If something is wrong, if he speaks up, the big guys listen. If you are that type of person and you reach that stage, you can speak up, and it will help, you should use the platform and speak.

This is being written in another seaside cottage on another coast. Gin and whiskey have bitten rings in the table where I sit.
— *A Vision of the World*, John Cheever, 1962

EXPRESS EDITORS
RECOMMEND

CONTRARY TO popular opinion, from timeless Tests to T20s and decision review system to the pink ball, cricket has not been resistant to change. We look at five books that captured the game and the changes it has absorbed:

THE CRICKET WAR: THE INSIDE STORY OF KERRY PACKER WORLD SERIES (Text Publishing):

The first of eminent Australian cricket writer Gideon Haigh's 24 books, published when he was barely 25. It's his most researched and least literary work, too — he had to assiduously "lipo-suction the prose to the spine" as the publisher wanted a trimmer book, sans his characteristic flourishes, allusions, socio-political undertones and brooding rhetoric. It is a saga of cricket's biggest revolution, which fundamentally changed the way that cricket is played, watched and marketed. He weaves in the voices of 48 prominent cricketers who were involved in the mega event and in Haigh's hands, they become novelistic characters.

THE GREAT TAMASHA: CRICKET, CORRUPTION AND THE TURBULENT RISE OF MODERN INDIA (Bloomsbury):

The book is predominantly about the Indianisation of the game, and is a Western view of the game's exponential leap. But writer James Astill sheds preconceptions of the game

(and the country) towards the end of the book, when he writes about the IPL. The book reaches a masterly pitch. Few books on the league match Astill's

depth and panorama. Through the glamorous league and its mind-boggling rise, the former South Asia bureau chief of *The Economist* engages with issues gripping the country, like caste, culture and economics. It's a social discourse rather than a reflection on cricket. And in IPL's greed and grime, in its vaulting ambition, he foresees dangerously simmering political authoritarianism in India.

CRICKET 2.0: INSIDE THE T20 REVOLUTION (Birlinn General):

Few cricket writers have lived the game as Tim Wigmore. His work, chronicling the format's progress, is a *bildungsroman* towering over the matically-similar books. In this book, co-written by Freddie Wilde, there are stories, interviews, opinion pieces and, most engagingly, predictions. They prophesy 32 scenarios, a blend of fantasy and reality, data and imagination, facts and fiction, anecdotes and deductions. They don't predict doom for other forms of the game, but recognises T20's potential to exist as a separate game, both in structure and soul.

FINDING THE GAPS: TRANSFERABLE SKILLS TO BE THE BEST YOU CAN (Pan Macmillan):

Essentially an autobiography, laced with a dark account of the Lahore terror strikes, Simon

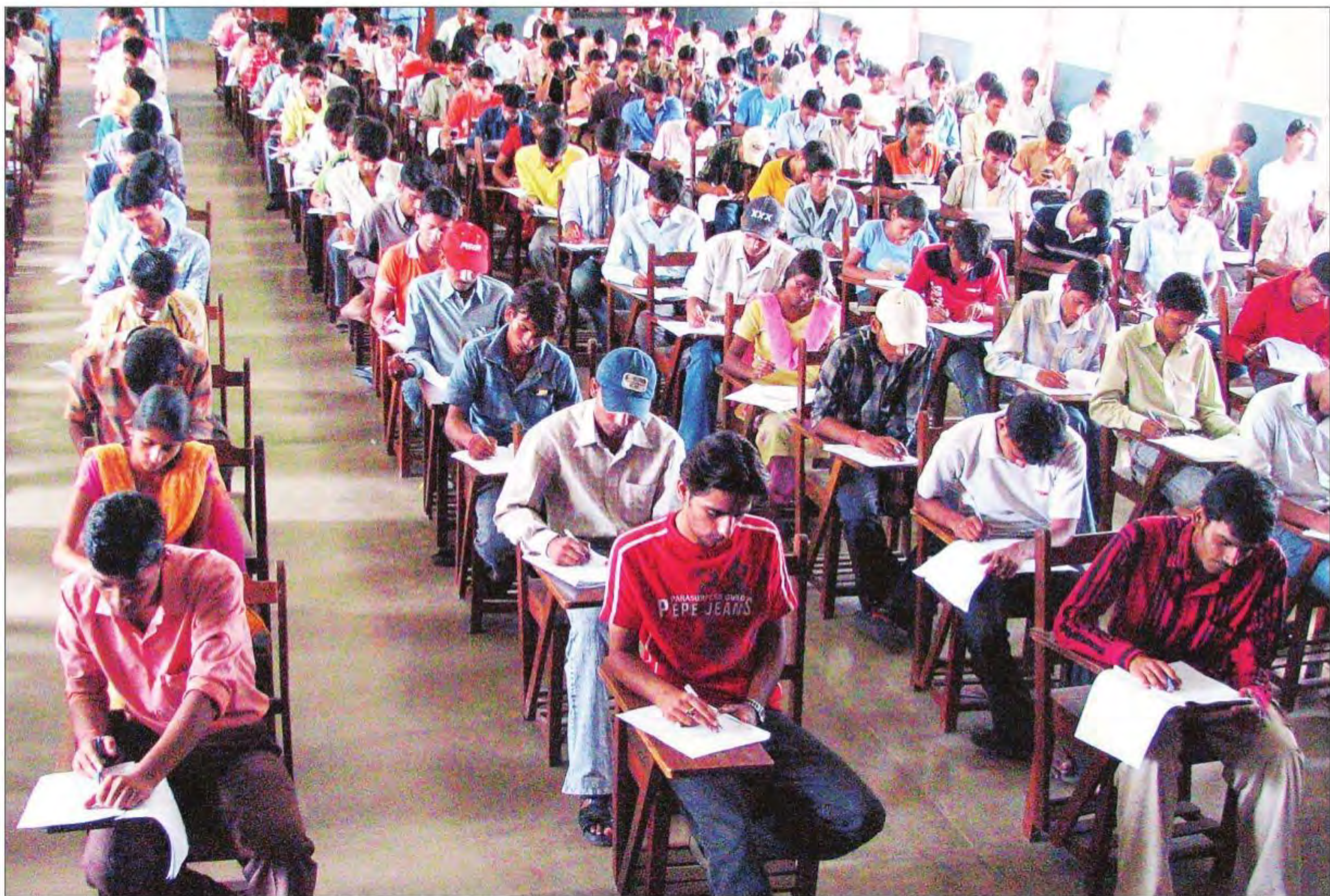
Taufel depicts the influence of technology on umpiring, specifically the Decision Review System (DRS). Taufel, one of the finest umpires ever, began his career in the pre-DRS days and retired nearly a decade after it. There's no better hand to debunk the myth of an umpire's frosty relationship with DRS.

KEEPING UP: SURVIVING AS A SPECIALIST IN A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL WORLD (Independently published):

Sometimes, the biggest sporting innovations comes from within. For instance wicket-keeping — the concept and demands of the art — whose syntax definitively changed after Australian cricketer Adam Gilchrist's whirlwind career. Michael Bates, a stylish wicket-keeper but a modestly gifted batsman, pens an ode to the pre-Gilchristian days (with Tom Huelin) when wicket-keepers were just wicket-keepers and not wicket-keeper batsmen.

The Burden of Meritocracy

A stunning catalogue of the ways in which merit takes on the form of an inheritance



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

MERITOCRACY, THE idea that jobs and rewards should be distributed according to ability and effort, is becoming the hegemonic social form in the modern world. Contrary to general perception, even affirmative action is not, as a principle, a deviation from the logic of meritocracy. Ideally, it is a means of devising a way of identifying talent from a larger social pool. Michael Young coined the term in his brilliantly dystopian portrayal in *The Rise of Meritocracy* (1958). Despite Young's warnings, meritocracy was seen as an emancipatory idea, the very embodiment of equality of opportunity. Careers would be open to talent, not the lottery of birth; the most productive citizens would be rewarded, not aristocratic slackers; what one does would become more important than who one is. Some conception of ability, intelligence plus effort became the new currency of recognition.

But, instead of being an ideology of emancipation, equality, and self-discovery meritocracy reflects a new form of oppression, inequality and alienation. So argues Daniel Markovits, in this brilliant, intelligent and insightful book. Markovits writes with the zeal of a prosecution lawyer, the clarity of a philosopher, and with the astonishing data of a wide-ranging economic sociologist.

According to Markovits, eight out of 10 of the richest Americans today owe their wealth to their talent, not to inheritance or returns on inherited capital. So what is the case for the prosecution? It is exactly this success that marks meritocracy's failures.

Students taking an exam at Super 30, the Patna-based organisation that trains students from disadvantaged backgrounds for the Joint Entrance Examination *Express Archive*



THE MERITOCRACY TRAP: HOW AMERICA'S FOUNDATIONAL MYTH FEEDS INEQUALITY, DISMANTLES MIDDLE CLASS AND DEVOURS THE ELITE

DANIEL MARKOVITS
Penguin Press
448 pages
₹ 2160

On Markovits' telling meritocracy is a self-undermining project. Rewards may be distributed according to talent. But the production of talent itself is a function of resources. Those who succeed in the meritocratic game can ensure that they transmit their meritocratic advantages to their children, by deploying vast resources.

The book is a stunning catalogue of the ways in which those who have succeeded through meritocracy can ensure that what they can transmit to their children is a great advantage in human capital. In short, it has now taken on the form of an inheritance. The seeming openness of the system is undermined by this fact. In the old system, you had to have wealth to produce more wealth; in the new system, your parents have to have succeeded at the human capital game to produce your human capital to be competitive. Markovits is graphic in detailing just how vicious this circle has become. Kids of meritocratically successful parents have an advantage in terms of building skills and accomplishments that will allow them to succeed. But the advantage is not just in terms of economic resources. It turns out that in the United States, marriage is now governed by what is called assortive mating: high human capital individuals marry other high human capital individuals. But, and more surprisingly, marriage at the top-of-income end of the income distribution, is a more stable institution, giving those children a double advantage. The net result is that meritocracy is no longer the means to social mobility: it is acquiring caste-like characteristics, where those who succeed in the meritocratic game are able to transmit their privileges and inhabit different social worlds.

But the more remarkable parts of the book are on the sociology of modern work-life, that arises from meritocracy. The current meritocratic model derives its power from the fact that for the first time in human history, elites have to work at least as hard, if not harder, than everyone else. There has been a stunning growth in the work hours of all elites across almost all professions. Lawyers used to apparently act more like leisurely gentleman in the middle of the 20th century, now work 2,500-3,000 billable hours a year. Markovits argues that we are in a great reversal where being busy is a sign of meritocratic success; and leisure has now become associated with both failure and being relatively poor. But for Markovits, this trend, that now constructs society as a vast machine that produces human capital, and then maximises the return on the capital thus produced by inducing a neurotic busyness, is a self-instrumentalisation of the worst sort. The elites, rather than living lives to their own purposes, are now as much or even more commodified. Meritocratic wealth may give you power. But it does not give you the freedom to live your life to your own purposes.

This is combined with a second trend, partly induced by exogenous technological change. The nature of work in an advanced capitalist society like the US, now inordinately rewards people at the top of the meritocratic hierarchy, but leaves everyone else worse off. So the inequality of compensation within any profession or firm has increased. In a striking formulation, Markovits warns of the danger of the lumpenproletarianisation of the middle class in the United States. Markovits charts this transformation across a range of pro-

fessions and companies, from McDonalds to Silicon Valley. In short, meritocracy is also now aligned with what Robert Frank once called "the winner takes all economy", where the costs of coming even second are inordinately high.

The result is an alarming dystopia: elites plagued by the insecurity and neurosis of maintaining meritocratic privilege and large swathes of the middle class and poor shut out from meritocratic structures of opportunity. Politics gets polarised since the elites think they are entitled to their privilege (and a sense of entitlement based on ability is deeper than one based on inheritance), and the rest are resentful of a closed system they have no ideological means of combatting. The middle and lower classes are more marginalised. But the privileged are, paradoxically, even more instrumentalised, where the purpose of their existence is to serve the meritocratic machine itself, not discover their authentic purposes in life. Inequality makes competition more cutthroat.

Markovits has several suggestions to overcome this dystopia: equalising education so that the advantages of meritocratic privilege are not concentrated in one obvious answer. But a radical reform of wage structures, where the cost of coming even second is not so high, is another more controversial issue. He wants to reform the tax system that favours the displacement of middle-class jobs. But while the recommendations will generate a lot of debate, there is no doubt that *The Meritocracy Trap* is an impressive mirror to the burdens of meritocracy. It is one of the most important books of our time.

Pratap Bhanu Mehta is contributing editor, *The Indian Express*

Breaking the Silence

In his first volume of poetry in English, Odia poet Manu Dash examines daily life set against a larger socio-political canvas

JONAKI RAY

A BRIEF History of Silence is the debut English poetry collection of writer-translator Manu Dash. Dash, who writes both poetry and prose, is well-known in literary circles as the editor of a magazine, the curator of a literary festival and the founder of a publishing house. This experience reflects in this immersive volume of poetry.

One can say that good poetry should not only engage the reader but also raise questions. The Urdu poet Firaq Gorakhpuri (1896-1982) described it thus: "Annihilate the stillness of evening, it's unfathomably dark/ Light the lamp of poetry, it's unfathomably dark..."

This collection, a slim volume with 59

poems, seeks to do precisely that. It annihilates the silence that hangs over our dark times by exploring headlines, both local and global, or by taking a step back and offering a perspective on universal issues. Poem after poem conjures up images made familiar to us by news reports.

Juxtaposed against the facts of daily lives, they bring out the dichotomy between our expectations and reality by skilfully using irony and satire to emphasise the gaps. Take these lines from the poem *Headlines*, for instance: "Killings in a temple in Benaras/ Deaths in the Kashmir valley, The exchange of rhetoric/ In Parliament/ Are all due to the vagaries/ Of the weather./ Says the environmentalist."

Again, consider the poem *Alphabet of Silence*, where during a meeting, "...The

speakers clapped./ The listeners sat/ In stony silence./ ...Near the temple's dark sanctorum/ The priest did not chant his hymns/ That challenged the audacity of the Lord./ A court's verdict/ Went against personal interest."

And look at the satire about present times in the culminating poem, *A Parable on Cyclone 2019*: "Here goes the white-knuckle parable of our time/...The cyclone visited our bucolic region/ It drops in more often than taciturn politicians do/ At their constituencies..."

Although concise, these poems are perfect examples of combining the heaviness of current events with the complexity of seemingly mundane events and tasks. It's difficult to miss the irony in these poems. The poet uses vivid visuals that then move towards unusual endings. The effect makes one pause and question the inertia that is prevalent across our lives. A classic example is the beginning of the poem, *Bus Ride to Puri* —



A BRIEF HISTORY OF SILENCE
MANU DASH
Dhauli Books
96 pages
₹ 295

"Rain-kissed serpentine road, rain-soaked/ Skins of buf-faloes, rain-merged meadows/ Rain-splashed window shields/ Rain-wrapped green leaves, rain-drenched/ Cheerleaders of God..."

For those familiar with the route in Odisha, these lines evoke nostalgic memories of the countryside. But, then, the next lines, "Prayer-flags at odd-even time, Rain-splashed Facebook-lovers" suddenly take the readers to a more urban setting. The ending brings out the paradox of tragedy and melancholia even in what is a typical scene viewed from a seemingly simple bus ride: "There was rain all day/ All night, long march of bough-carriers/ All day, all night/ And God indecisive and unfeeling as ever."

Even when the poems are describing deeply personal experiences, they arc from the aperture of individual viewpoints to a wider, all-encompassing picture. For example, *Paradox* covers a narrative that speaks of the compromises and dishonesty pervad-

ing our lives, and the irony of it all: "...The village where I was born,/ The smell of delicious mangoes/ Sighted in a thick jackfruit jungle/...My soft-spoken professor,/ An ardent Gandhian./ Compromises himself/ All along this planet/ For minuscule comforts/...A suggestion to those/ Who dislike living in irony/ They fail to fathom/ That life is not as white as the January sun."

Finally, a word about the beautiful cover design of the book that has been done by the Delhi-based artist Arpana Caur. It draws inspiration from folk art and temple sculptures. The image manages to put the collection into context in the way it describes strife and violence, and yet, paradoxically, the beauty and strength that flowers amid these.

This is a collection of poems that evoke as many questions about contemporary living as it provides answers. After all, the purpose of poetry, as Nanne Coda (12 CE, translated from Telugu by Velcheru Narayana Rao and David Shulman) says in a poem: "...An arrow shot by an archer/ or a poem made by a poet/ should cut through your heart/ jolting the head/ If it doesn't it's no arrow, / It's no poem."

Jonaki Ray is a writer, poet, and editor in New Delhi



TWITTERATI

ELIZABETH WARREN, @EWARREN

Washington is working great for oil companies and giant polluters—just not for the communities on the front lines suffering from the devastating effects of climate change. If we want to win a #GreenNewDeal and defeat climate change, we need to root out corruption in Washington

TOP OF THE WORLD



Hafiz Saeed

PAKISTAN

Terror financing trial: Saeed gets brief breather

Lahore: Mumbai terror attack mastermind and chief of the JuD Hafiz Saeed could not be indicted by Lahore's anti-terrorism court for terror financing charges as the authorities strangely failed to produce the other co-accused at the high profile hearing on Saturday. The development came a day after India said it was aware that the mastermind of the Mumbai terror attack was "roaming freely" and enjoying "Pakistan's hospitality". The court here has now fixed December 11 as date for framing the charges against LeT founder and co-accused Malik Zafar Iqbal.

SYRIA

Air strikes kill at least 20 people in Idlib

Beirut: Air strikes by Syrian government and Russian forces killed at least 20 people in rebel-held northwestern Syria on Saturday, activists and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The attacks hit five villages in Idlib, part of the last major foothold of the insurgency against President Bashar al-Assad. Russian jets killed at least nine people in an attack that hit a market in the village of Balyoun and another four people in a strike on the village of al-Bara, the Observatory said. Five more people were killed in a barrel bomb attack by Syrian government helicopters on the village of Abdita, it added.

KENYA

Eight killed in bus attack

Nairobi: Several police officers were among at least eight people killed in an attack on a bus in northeast Kenya believed to have been staged by the Somali Islamist Shebaab group, a presidential spokesperson said Saturday. President Uhuru Kenyatta had been briefed on the "brutal" murders of eight people, including police, during the jihadist attack in Wajir county, the spokesperson said in a statement. "We lost seven police officers in the bus attack," a senior police source told AFP. "The total number of the people killed are 10," the source said.

AT LEAST 130 WOUNDED IN NIGHT OF VIOLENCE

Gunmen kill 25 in Baghdad attack, protesters turn out in defiance

AGENCIES

BAGHDAD, DECEMBER 7

GUNMEN IN cars opened fire Friday in Baghdad's Khilani Square, leaving at least 25 people dead and 130 wounded, Iraqi security and medical officials said. At least two of the dead were policemen.

Protesters fearing for their lives ran from the plaza to nearby Tahrir Square and mosques to take cover. It wasn't immediately clear who did the shooting.

"Government forces were one kilometre away and didn't interfere," said a young volunteer medic who had treated wounded people overnight.

The attack came as anti-government demonstrators occupied parts of Jumhuriya, Sinak and Ahar bridges in a standoff with security forces. All the bridges lead to or near the heavily-fortified Green Zone, the seat of Iraq's government.

After the attack, Iraqi protesters defiantly turned out on Saturday across the country's south and in the capital.

The assailants briefly ousted demonstrators from a building they had occupied for weeks in Baghdad, despite the presence of



A protester checks the site of the attack in Baghdad on Saturday. AP

security forces nearby who did not intervene.

The panicked protesters rushed out into the street, sending out calls through social media for people to come to their main gathering place in Tahrir Square. Before dawn on Saturday, hundreds had arrived.

"I came after the incident and there were tons of people in Tahrir and by Al-Sinek," a nearby

bridge, one demonstrator told AFP, adding he was shocked by the lax security measures.

"The police were there but didn't even search me," he said.

The tensions continued into Saturday, when truckloads of armed men briefly blocked a main road near Tahrir, firing their weapons and shouting, witnesses said. Army units then deployed on the street.

Further south in Nasiriyah, the usual rallies swelled with crowds also upset over the previous night's developments, an AFP correspondent said.

"We are coming in solidarity with Baghdad," one said.

In Diwaniyah, another protest hotspot, thousands turned out early on Saturday but security forces, too, deployed in larger numbers.

DRONE HITS IRAQI CLERIC'S HOME AS TENSIONS RISE

AN ARMED drone targeted the home of prominent Iraqi cleric Moqtada Sadr on Saturday, hours after his supporters deployed in Baghdad in response to an attack that left 25 protesters dead

SADR HAS backed the protests, but demonstrators have been wary of his support as they feared it could pave the way for confrontations with pro-government forces

HE HEADS Saraya al-Salam (Peace Brigades), a paramilitary group. They are nicknamed 'blue helmets' for their headgear. A source within Saraya told AFP one of its own members had died in the overnight clash

PRISONER SWAP

Iran frees American held since 2016

MICHAEL CROWLEY

WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 7

IRAN ON Saturday freed an American graduate student who had been imprisoned in Tehran for more than three years on suspicion of being a spy, in an exchange of prisoners at a moment of high tensions with Washington.

The American, Xiyue Wang, was flown in a Swiss government airplane from Tehran to Zurich, where he was met by Brian H Hook, the State Department's special representative for Iran, according to two senior United States officials.

Wang, 38, was a fourth-year Princeton University graduate student conducting research in Iran when he was arrested there in August 2016. He was charged



Xiyue Wang, AP/File

with espionage and sentenced to 10 years in prison. United States officials deny that Wang was a spy.

In exchange for Wang's release, the US freed Masoud Soleimani, an Iranian scientist who was arrested at a Chicago airport last year and was convicted on charges of violating American trade sanctions against Iran.

The White House confirmed the prisoner swap early on Saturday with a statement from President Trump. Iran's foreign minister, Javad Zarif, also confirmed the deal on Twitter. **NYT**

CHILE PROTESTS CROSS 50 DAYS



Demonstrators carry metal barricades as they face-off with a riot police team in Santiago, Chile. Reuters

Protesters clashed with police as thousands took to the streets of Chile's capital for a demonstration that marked 50 days since the outbreak of the country's worst civil unrest in decades

Protesters held up a Chilean flag with a closed eye, a symbol of the people who suffered optical injuries during the violence. Some, armed with stones and Molotov cocktails, clashed with police, who scattered them with tear gas and water cannons

The crisis is the worst in three decades of Chilean democracy and has led to 26 deaths and more than 12,000 injuries, according to the Organisation of American States, with 20,600 people detained **PTI**

'Is his body here?': Pak on London Bridge attacker being buried in PoK

M ZULQERNAIN & SAJJAD HUSSAIN

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD, DEC 7

USMAN KHAN, the convicted terrorist of Pakistani origin who killed two people in the London Bridge attack before being shot dead by the Scotland Yard, has been buried at his ancestral village in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

However, the Foreign Office said it was not aware if Khan's body was in Pakistan.

The body of the 28-year-old London Bridge terrorist, who was a British citizen, was flown to Islamabad from London and

Khan's body was shifted to Islamabad from London aboard a PIA flight PK-792. Later, it was handed over to his family"

— **ABDUL HAFEEZ**
PIA GENERAL MANAGER (PR)

then handed over to his family on Friday.

"Usman's family didn't want to bury him in the UK," one of his relatives said, adding that his funeral prayers were earlier offered in a mosque in UK's Birmingham city.

According to Dawn newspaper, Khan's body was brought by his family from the Islamabad airport to Kijlani village in PoK's Kotli district where the funeral took place on Friday afternoon, following which he was buried in a local graveyard.

His family members refused to speak to the media, saying they had already given their statement through the London police on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office said it was not aware if Khan's body was in Pakistan. "Is his body in Pakistan? I have no confirmation of this," the Dawn quoted the Foreign Office spokesperson as saying. **PTI**

US resumes talks with Taliban in Doha, ceasefire a focus area

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DOHA, DECEMBER 7

WASHINGTON RESUMED talks with the Taliban in Qatar Saturday, both sides said, three months after President Donald Trump abruptly halted diplomatic efforts that could end America's longest war.

In September, the United States and the Taliban had appeared on the verge of signing a deal that would have seen Washington begin withdrawing thousands of troops in return for security guarantees.

It was also expected to pave the way towards direct talks be-



A Taliban delegation during a Doha meeting in May. File

will be reduction of violence that leads to intra-Afghan negotiations and a ceasefire," said the US source briefed on efforts to end almost two decades of war in Afghanistan.

The Taliban spokesman in Qatar, Suhail Shaheen, confirmed the talks on his Twitter account, saying they had resumed "from where they were broken off".

"Talks revolved around the signing of an agreement and related issues," he wrote.

"Negotiations will resume tomorrow." Anas Haqqani, brother to the Taliban's deputy leader, participated in the talks, Shaheen confirmed.

tween the Taliban and the government in Kabul and, ultimately, a possible peace agreement after more than 18 years of war. "The US rejoined talks today in Doha. The focus of discussion

'Leak of papers ahead of UK polls tied to Russian op'

JACK STUBBS
LONDON, DECEMBER 7

THE LEAK and distribution of classified UK-US trade documents online is tied to a previous Russian disinformation campaign, social media site Reddit said on Friday, fuelling fears that Moscow is seeking to interfere in Britain's upcoming election.

Britain's opposition Labour Party seized on the leaked documents on November 27, saying they showed the ruling Conservatives were plotting to offer the state-run National Health Service (NHS) for sale in trade talks with Washington.

But researchers told Reuters on Monday that the way the documents were first shared on Reddit and then promoted online closely resembled a disinformation campaign uncovered earlier this year, known as Secondary Infektion.

"We were recently made aware of a post on Reddit that included leaked documents from the UK," Reddit said in a statement. "We investigated this account and the accounts connected to it, and today we believe this was part of a campaign that has been reported as originating from Russia." The company said it had identified and suspended 61 accounts.

A Labour spokesman de-

EXPLAINED

What is the operation?

OPERATION SECONDARY Infektion is an alleged Russian effort to use fake accounts and false papers to target various interests in Western nations. The methodology, identified by a research lab, involves planting stories in the far reaches of the internet and using accounts on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Medium to amplify them, as per a report. The operation appeared to range from fuelling anti-immigrant sentiment in Germany to stoking tensions between NATO allies.

clined to comment on how the party obtained the leaked documents. "These documents reveal the plot against our NHS. And of course neither the UK nor the US government have denied their authenticity," he said. **REUTERS**

White House: Won't take part in Trump impeachment proceedings

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 7

THE WHITE House on Friday informed the House Democrats that it would not participate in the impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump.

In a letter to House Judiciary Committee chair, Jerrold Nadler, White House Counsel Pat Cipollone said it would be a "reckless abuse of power" for them to adopt the articles of impeachment. This "would constitute the most unjust, highly partisan, and unconstitutional attempt at impeachment in our Nation's history," he wrote.

"As the President has recently stated: 'if you are going to impeach me, do it now, fast, so we can have a fair trial in the Senate,'" he wrote and slammed the ongoing impeachment inquiry as "completely baseless."

Expressing disappointment over the White House response, Nadler said that American people deserve answers. "The House invited, and then subpoenaed, his top advisors. The President ordered them not to show and continues to block key evidence from Congress. We are disappointed that the President has once again failed to provide those answers here," he said.

"If the President has no good response to the allegations, then he would not want to appear before the Committee. Having declined this opportunity, he cannot claim that the process is unfair. The President's failure will not prevent us from carrying out our solemn constitutional duty," Nadler said. **PTI**

Don't meddle after deciding to withdraw, developing countries tell US



EXPRESS IN MADRID

AMITABH SINHA
DECEMBER 7

A NUMBER of developing countries on Saturday took exception to the United States' efforts in trying to steer the negotiations in meeting rooms, saying it no longer had a stake in the effective imple-

mentation of the Paris Agreement, having walked out of it.

The US had announced its decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement within months of Donald Trump becoming president. In the first week of November, the US had formally moved an application for withdrawal. The withdrawal will be effective from November 4 next year.

"The US is sitting in meeting rooms and trying to influence the agenda. This was objected to in several meetings today, by Tuvalu on behalf of small island nations, by some African group countries, and also by India and some other developing coun-



During a demonstration in Madrid. AP

tries," an Indian negotiator said. "They would be out of the Paris Agreement by next year, so

it is not right for them to influence decisions..." he said.

The US remains a party to the

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the mother agreement on climate change. Annual climate change talks, like the one in Madrid, include meetings on issues relating to framework agreement as well as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, the two international climate arrangements that the framework gave birth to. The US is not a party to the Kyoto Protocol either, having never ratified it. From next year, the US will only be able to attend meetings under the framework agreement, and not those under the Paris Agreement. The Kyoto Protocol is expiring next year.

Meanwhile, India on Saturday reiterated its demand that the unfulfilled promises of the developed countries in the pre-2020 period, under the Kyoto Protocol, must not be forgotten now that the Kyoto Protocol was ending.

"None of the developed countries are fulfilling their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, while now everyone is being asked to do more, be more ambitious, under the Paris Agreement. But there should be greater emphasis on delivery of commitments. We had promised a set of actions under the Paris Agreement, and all current analy-

ses by independent international agencies show India is one of the best performers on its climate action plan. Developed countries, however, have failed us consistently," India's Environment Secretary CK Mishra said.

India, along with some other countries, is demanding that the final decisions of these talks should include provisions calling on developed parties to fulfill their Kyoto Protocol targets.

A week into negotiations, the Madrid talks have reported little progress on their main agenda — an agreement over the creation of a new carbon market under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Carbon markets allow countries to trade emissions reductions between themselves. A country which is over-achieving its targets can do more and sell its extra efforts, translated into carbon credits, to a country that is struggling to meet its targets.

India and some other countries have been demanding that their unscold carbon credits from Kyoto Protocol regime should be transitioned to the new market under the Paris Agreement, a demand that is opposed by the developed world, which has been raising questions over the "quality" of the carbon credits under Kyoto Protocol.

CRUDE WATCH
OIL SET FOR BIG WEEKLY GAINS
New York: Oil prices rose 1.4 per cent and were on track for weekly gains as a meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies agreed to deepen output cuts by 500,000 barrels per day in early 2020. **REUTERS**

'IN THE ENTHUSIASM TO REDUCE TAXES ... GST STRUCTURE WAS DISTORTED'

Personal income-tax rate cut being considered among many things: FM

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
 NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

THE GOVERNMENT is working on more measures to improve consumption demand and support economic growth, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday. A cut in personal income-tax rate is among the many things being considered by the government, she said.

On the ongoing issue of delayed compensation payments to states under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, Sitharaman said the cess collected was inadequate to give a compensation of 14 per cent to the states but "will honour GST compensation to states".

"So there are ways for giving stimulus for consumption. We are adopting a direct method and also the method through which we are spending on infrastructure, whose spillover can go to core industries, labour and so on," she said at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit 2019.

When asked if the government is considering personal in-

E Eye on boosting consumption demand

THE GOVERNMENT is considering measures to revive the flagging economic growth. Many options such as personal income-tax cuts and giving stimulus, even if it requires digression from the fiscal glide path, are being discussed by the government.

Boosting consumption demand, either directly or indirectly, would be a crucial factor to arrest the slide in economic growth at a time when the GDP growth slowed to an over six-year low in the second quarter of this fiscal year.

come-tax rate cut for putting more money in the hands of people, the Finance Minister said: "One among the many things that we are thinking of." When asked specifically if there would be some action on this front in the Budget, she said, "you will have to wait for the Budget."

When asked about fiscal discipline, she said it's a law and the government has to obey it but there's also a view of learned

say yes, it will be when and if I say yes it's also going to be back to me saying are you not too close to the budget. So I don't want to say yes although I am wishing I can say. At the same time, I will not say no, because we are working on more."

GDP growth slowed to a 26-quarter low of 4.5 per cent in the second quarter, primarily due to contraction in manufacturing and weak private investment and consumption demand. Following the reduction in corporate tax rate in September, there has been a growing demand for a cut in the personal income-tax rates to give more money in the hands of people and boost consumption demand.

On the low consumer and business confidence in the country, Sitharaman said the intent of the government is to further simplify taxation systems including removal of exemptions. She said the government has already adopted faceless assessment for direct tax, which will soon be applied to more procedures and is being tried for indirect taxes as well.

The Finance Minister said the

GST structure has been distorted due to successive rate cuts. "At the end of the day, the intentions were good... (tax rates) kept reducing, kept reducing. Now reduction per se is not bad... I am not saying that people did it thoughtlessly, but in the enthusiasm to reduce taxes, that framework which was originally agreed at stage one of GST was distorted," she said.

Eventually, the rates have to be rationalised and the entire tax system has to be simplified, she added. "One, the tax per se, is getting complicated because of this unstructured bringing down of rates. Another, it's also getting complicated because you want to be sure that you're doing everything correct, but ending up asking for so much more information in a technology-driven system. People just get fed up of wanting to give so much information. So, we have problems in both hands," she said.

She said the original intent was to have three rates under GST: merit, sin and the standard, but refrained from commenting on rate hike decision, saying the decision lies with the GST Council.

Irdai planning to launch catastrophe insurance on pilot basis in select states

GEORGE MATHEW
 MUMBAI, DECEMBER 7

WITH THE rising incidences of natural disasters in the country, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) is working on a plan to launch government-funded catastrophe (cat) cover for the poor sections of the society.

Irdai has written to the Centre, seeking its approval for the project, a senior Irdai official said.

After getting the government approval, the regulator will launch the cat cover in select states as a pilot project, he said.

In India, uninsured losses from all catastrophes and man-made disasters were 84 per cent of the total losses in recent times.

Though the severe flash floods in Chennai in 2015 were the largest disaster, causing estimated economic losses of \$2.2 billion, insured losses were estimated at around \$755 million — making these floods the second costliest insurance event in India and a large part of the losses originated from commercial lines.

The event highlighted the vulnerability of rapidly growing urban areas to flash floods caused by heavy rain. The crop insurance scheme launched by the government has aided the farmers to a great extent in the past two years.

At present, the central government and the state governments are compensating for the huge losses in natural disasters to the extent they can, creating deep holes in the pockets of public finance.

After being hit by massive floods that led to over Rs 25,000 crore of economic losses, the Kerala government had invited state-owned GIC Re and the second largest global reinsurer Swiss Re to sug-

CUTTING DOWN UNINSURED LOSSES

■ In India, uninsured losses from all catastrophes and man-made disasters were 84 per cent of the total losses in recent times

■ The severe flash floods in Chennai in 2015 were the largest disaster, causing estimated losses of \$2.2 billion, insured losses were estimated at \$755 million

■ At present, the central and state governments are compensating for the losses in natural disasters to the extent they can, creating holes in the pockets of public finance

gest insurance solutions as part of disaster management. However, this initiative did not make any progress, sources said.

Further, instances like high-rise fires in Mumbai and other parts of India serve as grim reminders of potential catastrophic consequences for the government and society. Such disasters have the potential to put enormous stress on the financial resources of state governments that are overburdened.

Insurance experts say most of the losses suffered in natural disasters are not insured, for reasons such as lack of purchasing power, lack of interest in insurance and ignorance of availability of such covers. Some insurance companies including joint ventures with foreign insurers are providing catastrophic covers implying that the commercial and private sector can also play an essential role in disaster mitigation with the right incentives.

The proposal for an insurance catastrophe pool (NICPI), which would have mitigated the sufferings of people, proposed some years ago was stuck with the government with no decision taken about charging of premium and the complex issue of implementing the scheme across the country.

After Cyclone Nilam hit Tamil Nadu in 2012, the insurance indus-

BRIEFLY

Voda Idea, Airtel remove cap on free outgoing calls

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea have removed cap from free outgoing calls on other networks under new plans for pre-paid customers that came into effect from December 3. Both the companies had earlier capped outgoing calls to network of other telecom operators at 1,000 minutes in plan with 28-days validity, 3,000 minutes in 84-days validity and 12,000 in 365 days validity plan.

NTPC signs term loan of ₹5K cr with SBI

New Delhi: Power generation company NTPC on Saturday said it has signed a term loan agreement for Rs 5,000 crore was signed with State Bank of India.

'Startups will be key to becoming \$5 tn economy'

New Delhi: Startups are going to play a major role to make India a \$5 trillion economy, former Union minister and BJP MP Suresh Prabhakar said on Saturday. PTI

US FAA seeks \$3.9-mn fine from Boeing

Washington: The US Federal Aviation Administration said on Friday it seeks to impose a \$3.9 million fine on Boeing Co, alleging it failed to prevent the installation of defective parts on about 130 737 NG airplanes. **REUTERS**

I-T dept conducts search operations on stock brokers, traders across country

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
 NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

IN A search and survey operation spread across 39 locations against stock brokers/traders for generating artificial profits/losses through illiquid stock options in equity and derivatives markets, the Income-tax Department has seized unaccounted cash worth Rs 1.20 crore.

The Department in a statement on Saturday said it estimated the trade in illiquid stock options by such stock brokers/traders to have resulted in artificial losses/profits to the tune of Rs 3,500 crore by executing reversal trades within a very short span of time.

The Income-tax department has also identified at least three penny stocks listed on the BSE, where "the manipulated profits

UNACCOUNTED CASH WORTH ₹1.2 CR SEIZED

- Stock brokers/traders allegedly generated artificial profits/losses through illiquid stock options in equity and derivatives markets
- The Income-tax Department has seized unaccounted cash worth Rs 1.20 crore
- The department has identified at least three penny stocks listed on the BSE where "the manipulated profits utilised by the beneficiaries aggregate to around Rs 2,000 crore"

utilised by the beneficiaries aggregate to around Rs 2,000 crore".

"The number of beneficiaries who have been benefitted by these manipulated transactions could be to the tune of a few thousand scattered across India and efforts are being made to identify them as also the corresponding quantum of income

evaded. Incriminating evidence recovered during the course of actions is also being examined for determination of contravention of the various direct tax laws," the tax department said.

The Income-tax Department has carried out search operations on certain share-brokers and traders for allegedly executing fraudulent trades in illiquid stock

options.

Over 39 locations spread across Mumbai, Kolkata, Kanpur, Delhi, Noida, Gurugram, Hyderabad and Ghaziabad were covered under the operation last week, it said.

The search or survey action has unravelled the entire modus operandi which has been adopted by the share-brokers and traders to trade into the illiquid stock options.

"By this contrived methodology, the unscrupulous entities have secured desired profits/losses, which is estimated to be more than Rs 3,500 crore. The search/survey action has also resulted into identification of the wrongful long-term capital gains taken in at least 3 penny stocks listed on the BSE, where the manipulated profits utilised by the beneficiaries aggregate to around Rs 2,000 crore," it said.

Alphabet's 'Other bets' in focus as Pichai takes helm

Google CEO Sundar Pichai has been named CEO of parent Alphabet. To grow beyond its main search and advertising business, Google restructured in 2015 and established Alphabet as a holding company overseeing various "other bets". Below are some of those projects

WAYMO Begun as Google's self-driving car project, Waymo has become one of the most advanced autonomous vehicle technology firms

LOON aims to bring connectivity to remote parts of the world by floating solar-powered networking gear over areas where cell towers would be too expensive to build

WING AVIATION Wing is Alphabet's delivery service using specialised drones, beginning commercial air delivery services this year in Canberra, Australia, and Helsinki



MAKANI TECHNOLOGIES Makani attempts to harness renewable energy from wind by using propellers on airborne kites to generate electricity

VERILY is Alphabet's life

science tech unit that works on machine learning and wearable devices for healthcare scenarios

SIDEWALK LABS provides sensor-based urban technology to manage

PROJECT 'X'
 X, known as Alphabet's "Moonshot Factory", is a research and development unit that acts as a nursery for the company's many offshoot projects, such as Waymo, Wing, Makani and Loon

crowds and vehicular traffic

CAPITALG CapitalG, formerly Google Capital, is Alphabet's private equity fund primarily focused on backing new tech ventures

Source: Reuters

Ericsson to pay over \$1 billion to resolve US corruption probes

REUTERS
 WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 7

SWEDISH MOBILE telecoms company Ericsson has agreed to pay over \$1 billion to resolve probes into corruption, including the bribing of government officials, the US Department of Justice said on Friday.

The bribery took place over many years in countries including China, Vietnam and Djibouti, the department said. The total charges include a criminal penalty of more than \$520 million, plus \$540 million to be paid to the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in a related matter.

The company admitted it had conspired with others to violate the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) from at least 2000 to 2016 by engaging in a scheme to pay bribes and to falsify books and records and by failing to implement reasonable internal accounting controls, the Justice Department said in a statement.

"Certain employees in some markets, some of whom were executives in those markets, acted in bad faith and knowingly failed to implement sufficient controls," Ericsson CEO Bjørje Ekholm said in a conference call on Saturday.

The total charges include a criminal penalty of more than \$520 million, plus \$540 million to be paid to the US Securities and Exchange Commission in a related matter

"I view what has happened as a completely unacceptable and hugely upsetting chapter of our history."

Ericsson used third parties to pay bribes to government officials to secure and keep business, authorities said. Consultants were retained to create slush funds and transfer money to third parties, according to one of the complaints.

One of the company's subsidiaries, Ericsson Egypt Ltd, pleaded guilty in the Southern District of New York to a charge of conspiracy to violate the anti-bribery provisions of the FCPA.

Pleading guilty can bring additional severe sanctions, including the revoking of licenses, but the company can negotiate waivers to ensure they can continue to operate.

GST Stakeholder Feedback Diwas observed for feedback on new returns system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 7

THE CENTRAL and state authorities on Saturday organised GST Stakeholder Feedback Diwas on the new system for filing returns across 125 cities to get on-the-spot response and suggestion.

The new return form will be made mandatory from April 1, 2020. About 7,500 trade associations/stakeholders participated in the programme, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs said.

"There has been an overwhelming response from GST stakeholders and several useful suggestions have been received. The programme was widely welcomed by GST stakeholders and tax professional/fraternity," it said.

Besides a large number of taxpayers, all prominent chambers of commerce and industry, tax practitioners and compliance managers participated.

The CBIC said the Central Goods and Services Tax officers explained the new system of filing GST returns and encouraged the participants to upload these returns (ANX-1 and 2) and give feedback in regard to the ease of compliance, uploading, deficiencies and improvements.

US PRESIDENT'S STANCE COMES AMID NEGOTIATIONS TO END TRADE WAR

World Bank to cut lending to China after Trump objection

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
 WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 7

THE WORLD Bank said Saturday its lending to China has fallen sharply and will continue to be pared back, after US President Donald Trump demanded it stop altogether.

"Why is the World Bank loaning money to China? Can this be possible? China has plenty of money, and if they don't, they create it. STOP!" Trump wrote on Twitter Friday.

The bank, which is led by former US Treasury official David Malpass, defended its approach in a brief statement.



US President Donald Trump speaks to reporters while participating in a "roundtable on small business and red tape reduction accomplishments" in the White House in Washington on Saturday. **Reuters**

"World Bank lending to China has fallen sharply and will continue to reduce as part of our agreement with all our shareholders including the United States.

"We eliminate lending as countries get richer," it said.

Trump was reiterating a position long held by his administration, including Malpass prior to his election as the current head of the World Bank. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told US lawmakers Thursday that the United States "has objected" to the institution's multi-year program of loans and projects in China.

That program, which includes plans to reduce lending to China, was adopted on Thursday.

The program "reflects the evolution of our relationship with China," Martin Raiser, World Bank Country Director for China, said on Thursday.

"Our engagement will be increasingly selective."

Trump's very public stance comes amid negotiations between Washington and Beijing seeking to end the US president's 18-month-long trade war, which is aimed at forcing China to make concessions on protecting American businesses and reducing its trade surplus.

There is a great deal of uncertainty about the date of a possible partial agreement, which Trump said was imminent in October.

'Will pump more oil when global inventories fall'

Vienna: OPEC and its allies would only ease supply curbs and pump more oil once global crude inventories fall and pricing reflects a tighter market, Saudi Arabia's energy minister told Reuters.

Saudi Arabia spearheaded a deal Friday with Russia and OPEC+ producers to deepen output cuts through the first quarter of 2020.

Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said he expected OPEC+ producers to continue cooperating beyond March.

"The jury is still out where we will be in March," he said regarding the level of supply the market will need then. **REUTERS**

Kerala Bank set up: Amalgamation of state, district co-operatives

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC 7

KERALA BANK has been set up to bring the state's co-operative banking sector under a single roof, as per an official announcement by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The new Kerala Bank will have the state co-operative bank and the district co-operative banks under its structure. The Left government in Kerala decided to form Kerala Bank after the merger of State Bank of Travancore with State Bank of India.

The formation of Kerala Bank

will reduce the three-tier co-operative banking system in the state to a two-tier one.

Earlier, the Reserve Bank of India gave its nod for the formation of Kerala Bank. Of the 14 district co-operative banks, the Congress-led UDF controlled district bank in Malappuram has not so far become part of Kerala Bank.

State Co-operation Minister Kadakampally Surendran said an interim administrative panel was appointed for running Kerala Bank. A new CEO will assume charge next month and deployment of staff of the co-operative banks will be completed by the end of the fiscal, he said.

BRIDGE

This is a very thin 3NT despite the combined 25 HCP between your hand and dummy. You have no useful spot cards and not a five-card suit to be seen. It's good that you like a challenge. You start with six tricks - three in spades, one in hearts, one in diamonds and one in clubs. There are no more tricks available in spades and the chances of developing an extra heart or diamond trick are remote. The only realistic source of extra tricks is the club suit. You need to take a total of four tricks in clubs. If West has the CK, you can finesse against it. What is the best way to do it? Should you lead the CK?
Dr: South
Vul: Neither

NORTH SOUTH (you)
♠ 654 ♠ AKQ
♥ AJ72 ♥ H53
♦ 32 ♦ A954
♣ AJ64 ♣ Q532

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
INT
Pass 2♦ Pass 2♣
Pass 3NT Pass Pass
Pass

West leads the CK. How do you plan to play the hand?
First, win the opening lead with the DA in your hand. You decide not to hold up the DA because a heart switch would not be welcome.

Think about what will happen if you lead the CK. West will cover it with the king. You can take the ace and then the jack will take the next trick but the opponents will be left with the ten which will be high. You will have used two honours to capture one! It is a no-win play.

Your only chance is that West has the doubleton CK. The correct line is to lead a small club from your hand and if West plays low, finesse the jack from dummy. This wins and then you play the CA, filling the king! East follows suit so you now know that the suit is split 3-2. The queen then takes the third round and the opponents have no more, so you take four club tricks.

You were lucky that West had the doubleton king, but that was your only hope. Sometimes dreams come true! In general lead low for a finesse.

THE WEST HAND: ♠972 ♥10964 ♦KQJ10 ♣K8
THE EAST HAND: ♠J1083 ♥KQ8 ♦876 ♣1097

Dr: West
Vul: E/W

NORTH SOUTH (YOU)
♠ A82 ♠ KJ4
♥ AKJ7 ♥ 54
♦ 52 ♦ QJ1096
♣ AK65 ♣ 973

WEST NORTH EAST WEST
Pass 1♦ Pass 1♣ INT
Pass 3NT Pass Pass
Pass

West leads the S3 and you note that East has come in, at adverse vulnerability, on a suit which is, at best, queen high. It is obvious therefore, that the lead is a singleton. How do you plan the play?

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2246

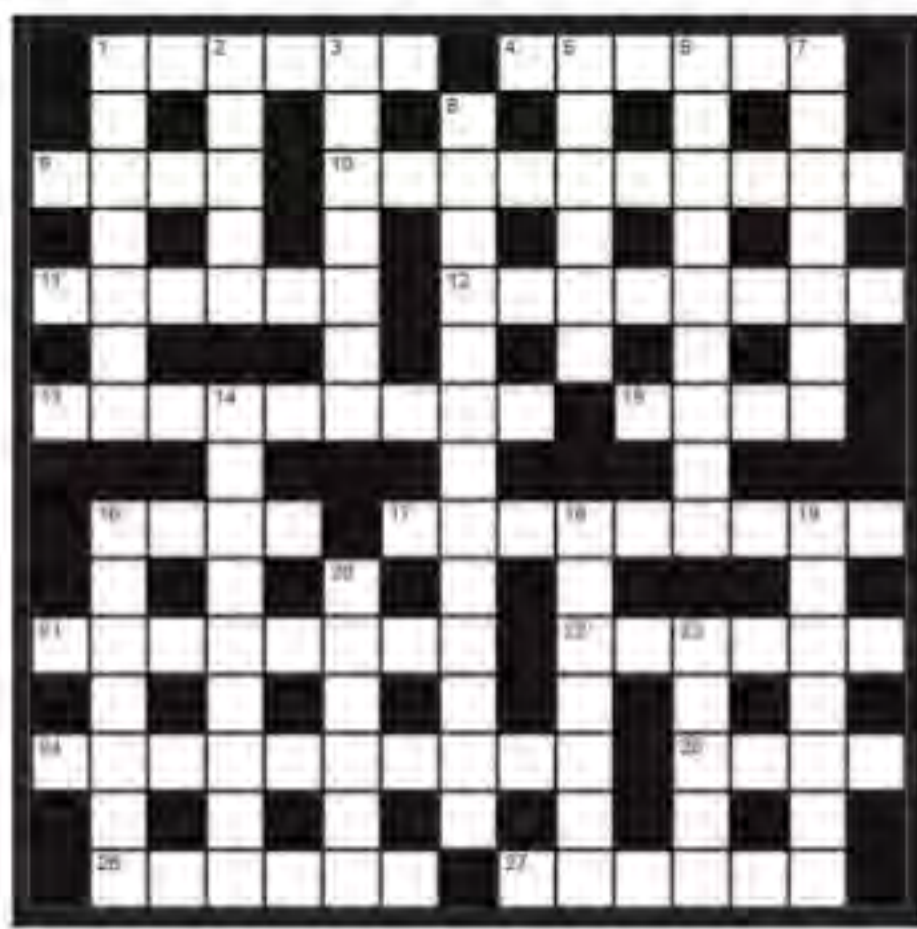
QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- Downy (6)
- it out: endures something unpleasant (7)
- Frozen treats (4)
- Uncertain (10)
- paper: very thin paper used in packing, etc. (7)
- Cheeky (8)
- Verve (9)
- Courageous (4)
- Beach gravel (4)
- Moving upward (9)
- Holy place for majority of Indians (8)
- Entitlements (6)
- Artifice used to evade a rule (10)
- Unruly crowds (4)
- India and Mumbai's ___ Solkar (6)
- Stool pigeon (6)

DOWN

- Made-up story (7)
- Expels or evicts (5)
- Wise (7)
- Vagrants (6)
- One's early years (9)
- Astonished or shocked (7)
- Not completely aware of sensations (13)
- Main island of New York (9)
- Height (7)
- Heartfelt (7)
- Distinguished (7)
- Attic (6)
- A thick soup (5)



- silence (4)
- Something fishy in this surf-riding boat (4)
- Sees lambs going round in flocks together (9)
- Tilt and sway to finance (8)
- Strive to fashion bolts (6)
- Old actor to caress Her Maj with a five dollar bill before church (5,5)
- Foreigner losing his head in the smoke (4)
- Before the end of the day Denis may become a film producer (6)
- Notices about teacher's extras (3-3)

Solutions to 2245

QUICK CLUES Across: 11 Filmy, 4 Bottom, 8 Estival, 9 Affairs, 11 As per usual, 12 Need, 13 Et seq, 14 Superior, 16 Lone wolf, 18 Indus, 20 Loop, 21 Ameliorate, 23 Hit upon, 24 Periapt, 25 Energy, 26 Tensed, 27 Down 1 Fuses, 2 Iconic, 3 Status quo, 5 Offer, 6 Trainer, 7 Marvelous, 10 Runs after, 13 Economise, 15 Privilege, 17 Espouse, 19 Derails, 21 Among, 22 Taped. CRYPTIC CLUES Across: 11 Tramps, 4 Cedric, 8 Bridoon, 9 Rabbits, 11 Hard-liners, 12 Kirk, 13 Leone, 14 Knapsack, 16 Captured, 18 Cocks, 20 Teen, 21 Brain-child, 23 Voyeur, 24 Ricotta, 25 Touchy, 28 Egger, 29 Down 1 Terns, 2 Adolfo, 3 Profitter, 5 Exams, 6 Reboles, 7 Caracats, 10 Peaked cap, 13 Leaves out, 15 Ascending, 17 Tonneau, 19 Cahoots, 21 Birch, 22 Latin.

- DOWN:
- Be involved in slightly different match play (7)
 - Sleeve on a passenger ship (5)
 - Grand country has a row with more breezes (7)
 - Don't go to bed before completion of various exercises (3-3)
 - Grooming tool will spice search (9)
 - Inclined to be a creature of habit? (7)
 - Keeps mum when corpse lets in disarray (7,6)
 - Peak rates for birds (9)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- Evil fellow pocketed 51,000 (6)
- Affirmation of Fraxinus's aptitude with container for hearth droppings (3-3)
- Old bob is able to make an examination (4)
- Sing about turmoil in hot weather. (10)
- NY heir requiring change for a sovereign, but which one? (5,1)
- As, by the sound of it, this will fix you enough to take your breath away (8)
- Supervisor serves tea for one (9)
- Smart of petty officer to call for

If it's your Birthday

Sunday December 8

You'll stick to existing plans and ways of doing things. You're likely to spring a number of surprises on partners over the next few days.

Monday December 9

Think positive. Your emotions are still close to the surface, although there is little harm in this. You may be a little vulnerable early on, but you'll be in an ideal position to offer friends and loved ones the support they now require.

Tuesday December 10

You'll be impatient to make the most of skills and to complete overdue projects. You persist in keeping many of your plans and feelings to yourself, and you can't complain if partners misunderstand you.

Wednesday December 11

You'll probably be planning decorations or repairs at home, or at least a family party. Yet, before you can enjoy yourself, you must clear the air.

Thursday December 12

The coming year finds increasing emotional hopes. The drawback is that you might make demands on partners that they can never fulfil. Your strength is your willingness to back loved ones through thick and thin, no matter what.

Friday December 13

Over the next few weeks you'll be made more aware of the need to take a down-to-earth and practical approach to everything. You'll be contemplating changes in your social circle.

Saturday December 14

There seems to be a strange connection between whatever happened about eight years ago and plans which are coming to fruition around now. You're sowing new seeds for the future.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
There is nothing you can do to escape the fact that your stars are looking busier than even you are used to. You may as well muck in and realise that time off is bound to be a very rare occurrence indeed. A family member will be on hand with an apology very soon.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
Do try to remember that there are times when you should do what other people want, and times when you should follow your own advice. This is one of the latter, so give yourself all the space you need to do what you know is necessary. Also, business associates deserve a little more consideration in future.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Others now need to appreciate that your rights must be taken into account at home. That's not a matter for negotiation. At work, you may like to think twice before taking on any more tricky commitments.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You're growing ever more restless. This is certainly to be a time when harsh words must be spoken. Yet, such is your innate Cancerian compassion, that I am sure you will find the right tone of voice. Old friends may make better companions than recent acquaintances, by the way, and a long-overdue reunion might be a good idea.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
It's time to look at the long-term. In the months and years to come you will be thankful that you took a principled path instead of opting for blatant self-interest. In the long run, you'll be better off because of it. If you're planning on making a quick profit, something to do with style or fashion might be a good option.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
The procession of planets through mysterious realms of your solar chart means that you should no longer feel quite so threatened or all at sea emotionally. Also, you have done very well to organise your family affairs so smoothly, but don't drop your guard.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Make your own decision in line with the facts. You may have to go out of your way to do what others ask at home. If money matters loom large, please do see to it that profits are spread around.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
You are known as the hermit of the zodiac and are often happiest by yourself. You seem to have been bothered by people demanding all sorts of things, but you can so easily turn the tables. Never have friends and partners been so willing to perform favours and offer help. When the chips are down, you will salvage a financial situation.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)
A shake-up of some sort is due at work. Conditions are changing and you are now set on a twelve-month course of worldly success, possibly even a triumph. When considering family arrangements, please give the priority to younger people: they will appreciate your support and repay it handsomely in times to come.

CAPRICORN (Dec 24 - Jan 20)
Your lunar alignments are extraordinarily favourable, although it is up to you to make as big an effort as you can to get far-sighted ventures under way. The end result of recent business negotiations should be pretty profitable, so please don't delay and prevaricate unnecessarily.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Even those of you whose heart has never sung at the sound of a cash register, will soon be dreaming up ways to boost your incomes. Plus, property deals at the moment will speed up, after a brief delay, much to your relief.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
It is all too easy to let the days pass simply not doing very much. Perhaps you need some kind of jolt to bring out the best in you. You only have yourself to blame if you fail to make the most of personal and social opportunities. Financially speaking, you are about to fall on your feet.

JUMBLLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.

___ is the stuff ___ is made of. - Benjamin Franklin (4, 4)

DTUEE **FOSYLT**
JNNII **ALNUFM**

SOLUTION: ETUDE, TIME, INNIE, SOTLY, MANFUL
Answer: Time is the stuff life is made of. - Benjamin Franklin

Difficulty Level 1s Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SUDOKU 4052

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4052

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4052

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

UJVN LIMITED
An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise

"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.: 04-EE-Test-Dkp-2019-20

The Office of Executive Engineer (Test), Dakpathar, Dehradun invites tenders for the following work:

- NIT No. 04/EE/Test/Dkp/2019-20
- Name of work : Supply of miscellaneous items for Test Unit. Dkp.
- Estimated Cost : ₹ 9,25,751.00 + GST Extra
- Tender Fee : ₹ 590.00 (including GST @18%)
- Earnest Money Deposit : ₹ 27,800.00
- Availability of bid in the portal : 07.12.2019 at 18:00 Hrs
- Last Date for online bid submission : 30.12.2019 upto 10:00 Hrs
- Last Date for submission of hard copy : 31.12.2019 at 11:00 Hrs
- Date of opening of bid on the website : 31.12.2019 at 11:30 Hrs

For further details, please visit e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in".
पत्रक सं 705 / दिनांक 07.12.2019

Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Development Project (HPHDP)
(Govt. of Himachal Pradesh)
Dyerton BizHub, Talland Bypass, Shimla, H. P. 171001

Request for Application for Matching Grant Scheme from Eligible Applicants/Entrepreneurs

Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Development Project (GoHP) is inviting Application for Matching Grant Scheme from Eligible Applicants/Entrepreneurs interested to invest in Horticulture Value Chain in Himachal Pradesh.

The Grant (30% of the Eligible Project Cost, max ₹ 60 Lakh) will be provided on competitive basis with mandatory-equity contribution by the Applicant/Entrepreneur. The eligibility conditions, Application Form and other necessary information are given in the Request for Application (RFA). The RFA can be downloaded Online on www.hds.hp.gov.in and can be submitted via E-mail to hdp-pd-hp@gov.in or hdp-abs-hp@gov.in or can be received & submitted at HPHDP Project Office, Shimla (Ph. 8894497175), Office of Deputy Director of Horticulture (DDH), Kangra (Ph. 6283566648) DDH, Mandi (Ph. 7876213152) and DDH-Solan (Ph. 9311018839) during office hours on or before 26.12.2019.

Project Director
Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Development Project (HPHDP)

Lakshmbai National Institute of Physical Education, Gwalior
A++ NAAC Accredited Deemed to be University
Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

No. PC/28/19-20/245 Date: 04.12.2019

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the original equipment manufacturers/distributors/dealers and suppliers for the supply and installation of Biometric Attendance System and CCTV Camera at different places in the Institute.

S.No.	Probable amount (Rs.)	Earnest Money / Bid Security (In Rupees)	Last date & Time of submission of Tender	Tender opening date
1	8,00,000/- (Rs. Eight Lac only)	Rs. 20,000.00 (Rupees Twenty Thousand only)	upto 3.00 PM on 27/12/2019	Bid opening date: 27/12/2019 Time 03.30 PM

The Tender form can be downloaded along with detailed terms and conditions from the Institute's website www.lnipe.edu.in or www.eprocure.gov.in which is required to be dropped in the tender box along with the Demand Draft (earnest money/bid security) of Rs. 20,000/- (Rupees Twenty thousand only) for supply and installation of Biometric Attendance System and CCTV Camera which should be payable to Registrar, Lakshmbai National Institute of Physical Education, Gwalior upto 27/12/2019 at 3:00 PM in front of Room No. 105 of Administrative Building or sealed tenders can be sent by Registered post/Speed post so as to reach to the Institute upto prescribed date and time. No tender will be accepted after due date and time. The Institute will not be responsible for any postal delay. Tenderer may remain present at the time and place of opening of Tender. Hindi version of this notice is available on our website www.lnipe.edu.in or www.eprocure.gov.in.

Col. Janak Singh Shekhawat (Retd.)
Registrar

DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI - 221004

Bid No.: IREPS/GT/2019/2076 Global Tender Notice Date: 04.12.2019

Sealed tender/GT through IREPS tender is invited for & on behalf of the President of India for the supply of following item: - **S.No.1. Tender No. 08191154A Due Date:** 27.12.2019 **Description:** Cylindrical Roller Bearing DE NDE CAT No. R/9/0057 C&D T201008 DRG No. 1209-01.411-020 Alt-1, 1209-01.411-021 Alt-1, CLV/M5/3/032 Alt-3 one set consisting of (a) 6 Nos of Suspension Bearing (Drive End) 1209-01.411.021 Alt-1 (It is safety item) (Part No.29030110) Qty. : 3446 Set. **S.No.2. Tender No.** 08191049B **Due Date:** 20.12.2019 **Description:** Pad ASM Lat Thrust (This is a Safety item), RDSO Spec No.MP.0.49.00.20 (Latest Rev.) Drq No 17022708 Alt.B. Qty. : 202 Nos **NOTE:** For complete details EMD, Tender conditions and downloading of tender documents please visit IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in. **No. GT/T/Notice/IREPS/2019-20/77 Global Tender Notice** Date: 04.12.2019 E-Tenders are invited for and on behalf of the President of India for the supply of following items. **S.No.1. Tender No.:** 10191083A **Due Date:** 06.01.2020 **Items and Part No.:** Repair Kit for injector ASM to PL No.16040247 Qty.: 11205 Sets. **S.No.2. Tender No.:** 10191080A **Due Date:** 07.01.2020 **Items and Part No.:** Ecojet Super Stack injector to PL No. 16241186 Qty.: 2324 Nos **NOTE:** For complete details of tender cost/EMD and downloading of Tender Documents, please visit Website www.ireps.gov.in. **P.R.O./D/W/S-112 Sr. Materials Manager (IMP-1)**

Website - www.dlw.indianrailways.gov.in

CENTRAL LIBRARY GMC, SGR. NOTICE

This College intends to hold an Exhibition of Books on Medical & its allied Subject from 26th December to 28th December, 2019 at Central Library Govt. Medical College, Srinagar. All the interested Book Suppliers/Publishers may confirm their participation latest by 20th December, 2019.

Exhb-19/1154/Lib. Dated: 03.12.2019
Sd/- Principal/Dean
DIPK-NB-1325M

Lakshmbai National Institute of Physical Education, Gwalior
A++ NAAC Accredited Deemed to be University
Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

No.: E/B&R/Hockey Ground /32/2019-20/ 248 Date: 05.12.2019

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed two-bid (technical and Financial) tenders are invited for the following maintenance work from eligible firms/contractors having experience of similar works:-

Name of Work	Estimated cost (approximate, inclusive of all taxes)	EMD (refundable)	Last date & time for submission of tenders	Date & time of opening of tender
Annual Maintenance Contract of Synthetic Hockey Turf installed at LNPE, Gwalior.	Rs.12.50 lakhs	Rs. 37,500/-	Up to 3:00 PM on 30.12.2019	Technical bids: 4:00 PM on 30.12.2019 Commercial bids: To be announced later on (opened only of technically qualified bidders)

The interested firms/contractors, who find themselves eligible as per eligibility conditions of the tender, given in the tender form, may submit their tenders in the prescribed formats along with all required documents, by speed post or registered post or by hand, so as to reach/drop in the tender box at the office of Deputy Registrar (Estate), LNPE, Gwalior by 3:00 PM on 30.12.2019. Tender form is free of cost.

The tender form along with other specifications and terms and conditions etc. is available on the web-site of Institute www.lnipe.edu.in and CPP Portal, which may be downloaded for submission.

Col. Janak Singh Shekhawat (Retd.)
Registrar

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of Engineer in Chief,
9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G.Road, Bengaluru - 560 009.

No.: BWSSB/EI/CIACE(OA)/TAQA/726/2019-20 Dated: 03.12.2019

INVITATION FOR TENDER
(Only Through E-Procurement Portal)

BWSSB invites Tender from eligible tenders for the work of **Providing Security, Lift operators, Housekeeping service, Gardeners, Plumbers, Electricians, Annual maintenance of 250KVA DG Set, Lifts, Centralized Air Condition system in Auditorium, Air Conditioners for a period of two years at Suvarna Bhavana, 18th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru.**

Amount put to tender: Rs. 1.68 Crore. EMD: Rs. 2.53 Lakhs.

Last date and time for receipt of tenders: 08.01.2020 upto 15.00 Hrs. The Technical bids will be opened on 10.01.2020 at 15.00 Hrs. The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement can be obtained by logging on to <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> or from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/-
Engineer in Chief.

Bhopal Municipal Corporation
11nd Floor, Above Passport office, Kushabhau Thakre Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT)
Campus, Ambedkar Marg, Near Chetak Bridge, Bhopal (M.P)

No.: BMC/2019/243 Bhopal, Date: 6/12/19

Tender for online submissions are invited on website www.mptenders.gov.in under "Live Tender" and Department Name "Bhopal Municipal Corporation" for following work. Detailed NIT, Tender Schedule and other information can be seen on the website www.mptenders.gov.in

S. NO.	System NIT no.	Name of Work	Tender cost (In Rs.)
1	2019_UAD_60468_2	Construction of Animal Birth Control (ABC) Center for Dogs at various locations in Bhopal City. (Second Call)	1,76,26,415/-

Corrigendum and Amendment for above NIT shall not be issued separately in newspapers & correction if any would be Published on website only.

Sd/-
City Engineer
Municipal Corporation, Bhopal

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS :: TIRUPATI CHITTOOR DIST. ANDHRA PRADESH
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, TTD, TIRUPATI
"e"-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Adv No 27/03/CE/TTD/2019-20

S. No.	NIT No.	Name of the work	Estimate Amount Rs. in Lakhs & Time for completion	Schedule Downlead start date	Down load and date & time for submission
1	2019-20	Providing Oil pipelines from Thukivakam STP plant to Avisala Cheruvu at Tirupati	800.00 9 Months	07-12-2019 5.00PM	24-12-2019 1.00PM
2	2019-20	Construction of additional floors over existing haveli hostel block and Conversion of rooms in Srikrishna and Gandhi hostels in SPW College campus at Tirupati	1990.00 12Months	09-12-2019 5.00PM	24-12-2019 1.00PM
3	2019-20	Construction of cattle sheds, over Head Tanks, roads and other allied infrastructure to SVIC at palamaneru, Chittoor District	2997.00 18 Months	11-12-2019 5.00PM	27-12-2019 1.00PM
4	2019-20	Construction of 5.6 MLD sewage treatment plant at Pechialva/Gangamma gudi near outer ring road, Tirumala	960.00 24 Months	09-12-2019 5.00PM	24-12-2019 1.00PM
5	2019-20	Development of road from Alipiri to Cherlapalli Junction to four lanes.(Balance work)	1600.00 12 Months	09-12-2019 5.00PM	24-12-2019 1.00PM
6	2019-20	Revamping of existing centralized Air conditioning system provided for operation theatres, recovery rooms. ICUs, Speciality Block, OPD Block etc., in SVIMS Hospital, Tirupati.	Open Tender 5 Months	07-12-2019 5.00PM	23-12-2019 1.00PM

Note: For full details log on to the website <https://tender.aeprocurement.gov.in/> or <http://www.aeprocurement.gov.in/>

Executives Officer

Government of Rajasthan
National Health Mission, Rajasthan
Department of Medical, Health & FW, Swasthya Bhawan, Jaipur.
Tel. No. 0141-2220961, E mail ID: co_mmu.nrhms@yahoo.com

F: 18 NHM/ISC/MMU-MMR/RFP/2019-20/168 Date: 05/12/19

MHS1920A1587
NIB No-02/2019

INVITATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) Through e-tender

E-bids are invited on behalf of the National Health Mission from recognized/reputed bidders upto 6:00 PM of 06.01.2020 for Management & Operations of Mobile Medical Services in State of Rajasthan. Details are available on the State Public Procurement Portal <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> and on department website rajswasthya.nic.in and document will be uploaded on 06.12.2019.

UBN No.- MHS1920SL0502019

Sd/-
Mission Director, NHM

CHITTARANJAN LOCOM

20 SPORTSLINE



Chandigarh, making its Ranji Trophy debut, will play Arunachal Pradesh at the Sector 16 Stadium in Chandigarh. Kamleshwar Singh

Greeting season

Chandigarh, a union territory with a rich heritage of being home to some of the country's greatest cricketers and a hub supplying players to Haryana and Punjab, will make a giant stride when it makes its Ranji Trophy debut this season. Along with the Union Territory Cricket Association, a number of players across teams too will embrace new beginnings.

KAPIL DEV and Yuvraj Singh. Two of India's finest— World Cup winners, thrilling batsmen, terrific fielders, match-winners, one still the most successful Indian fast bowler in Tests, the other who has hefted one of the most formidable modern-day bowlers for six sixes in an over and a canny left-arm spinner himself. Both larger-than-life, explosive characters no less.

Both were born in Chandigarh, yet represented different states. Kapil plied for Haryana, with whom he clinched the most iconic of Ranji finals, a two-run heist over Mumbai. Yuvraj represented Punjab, playing an influential role in their journey to the 2005 final, which though he missed.

Generations apart they might be, but if they were to return to cricket this year, both could have ended up playing for the same state—Chandigarh, braced for their Ranji debut after a 37-year wait. They've already plunged into domestic cricket, having played in the Vijay Hazare Trophy and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. As with all new teams, it has been a fitful (at times fretful) start, but unlike the other freshers last year, they needn't look around for cricketering legacies. They needn't worry about standard infrastructure or functional facilities, or captains or coaches, they needn't trot the country to assemble a rag-tag team of over-the-hill or discarded veterans. And needn't split their hair over where they would fish out home-grown talent.

In isolation, few geographical stretches, barring Mumbai and Delhi, have produced so many towering figures. In a sense, Chandigarh cricket—or as the skipper Manan Vohra puts it Chandigarh-ness—has been ubiquitous in Indian cricket, in the brazenness of Yuvraj, in the joie de vivre of Kapil, in the street smarts of Chetan Sharma. Such a nursery would keep churning out cricketers.

Like for instance Vohra. Once a prodigy, in fact the only player Kings XI Punjab once retained during a clearout, he has fallen down the pecking order even for Punjab, who he had represented since his junior days. He was practising at the Sector 16 Stadium, which would host Chandigarh's first Ranji fixture, against Arunachal Pradesh, when he came to know about Chandigarh's affiliation.

With his domestic career at crossroads, he was understandably ecstatic. "Four months earlier, I was not sure about my chances with the Punjab team. I had not played a first-class game for almost a year and was getting chances only in one-day or T20s. I was a bit scared about what will happen this year. It remains a special day for us. We will always be remembered for this," he says.

It's fitting that their first game would be played at the Sector 16 stadium, where the legendary Kapil learnt the game under Dronacharya award-winning coach DP Azad. So did Chetan Sharma, the first Indian to snaffle a hat-trick, Yograj Singh, Yuvraj's father and himself a reputed coach, VRV Singh, the Chandigarh coach, and Vohra.

Like the city that's heterogeneous—home for migrants from the neighbouring states—the team is a blend of players from Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and even Sikkim. Among them are Uday Kaul, elder brother of Siddharth, Gurinder Singh, who had previously played for Punjab, Meghalaya and Tripura, India outcast Barinder Sran and Jaskaran Singh, who has experienced IPL

with the now-defunct Deccan Chargers and Rising Pune Supergiants.

Vohra, can, thus relate to this diversity. "Chandigarh happens to be a city of settlers from neighboring states and all can be termed as Chandigarhians. Same goes with our team. Many of them like Bipul (Sharma) and Uday bhai have roots in other states, though they were raised here. Dil se hamesha Chandigarh cricketer hi hain, chahe cricket Punjab or Haryana ya Himachal Pradesh se khela ho. At any point of time, at least two players from Chandigarh were playing in Punjab or Haryana or Chhattisgarh," says Vohra.

Their initiation to the domestic fold was relatively smooth—they were in fray for the Hazare knockouts before Puducherry knocked them out. In the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy that followed, they beat the more established Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh. Hence, there's a wind of optimism, amplified by the fact that Chandigarh has a bigger pool of U-19 and U-23 players as compared to many other states. "As a captain, I always want 3-4 youngsters in my team and the fact that our U-19 and U-23 boys are doing well at the national circuit has made my task easier," says Vohra.

Ahead of an emotional season-opener, Vohra gets nostalgic: "When I first came to the Sector 16 Stadium, I was just nine years old and I still remember Yograj sir making me face fast bowlers with a plastic ball on the cement wicket. He took me under his wings and as a young cricketer, we would always think about playing and wearing the Chandigarh jersey in Ranji trophy. Now the dream will be realised, and it will be like a rebirth for all of us." And a legacy awaits them, of two hardcore Chandigarhians who have never played for Chandigarh. A fresh beginning, but an old legacy.

NEW CAPTAIN, FRACTURED DRESSING-ROOM



Bengal have a new captain, and Abhimanyu Easwaran has taken charge of a fractured dressing-room. The problem started after veteran pacer Ashok Dinda was dropped for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. Dinda, subsequently, refused to play for Bengal and didn't turn up for the pre-Ranji training sessions.

With 417 first-class wickets he is a Bengal legend alright, but at 35 Dinda is in the twilight of his career. It is learnt that Bengal were ready to go ahead without Dinda in the Ranji Trophy as well. Especially, as they now have a tearaway quick in Akash Deep. Better sense, however, prevailed for Dinda and he has joined practice. Bengal didn't have good outings in the Vijay Hazare Trophy followed by the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. It's a baptism by fire for Easwaran as far as captaincy is concerned. But the 24-year-old is showing maturity.

"It's probably part and parcel of the job that I have right now. But I would say our dressing-room is happy and we are in good spirits. I don't think such issues will affect our preparation. Nobody is undermining my authority. In fact, the two senior-most guys, Manoj Tiwary and Ashok Dinda, are very helpful," Easwaran told *The Sunday*

SECRETARY LAST SEASON, COACH THIS TERM

17

Number of umpires inducted by the BCCI in its current panel for this domestic season. There are a total of 126 umpires & 71 match referees. In all, 169 games will be played this Ranji Trophy season.



Express. As the new captain put it, for Bengal cricket it's a period of "transition", with young players forming the core. "With experience, we will have better chances of winning trophies," Easwaran said.

TAMIL NADU REINS HANDED OVER TO VIJAY SHANKAR



For the last few seasons Tamil Nadu, a powerhouse in Indian cricket, have underachieved. They addressed the issue this term by adopting split captaincy and appointing Diwakar Vasu, former Tamil Nadu allrounder, as their new head coach in place of Hrishikesh Kanitkar.

Dinesh Karthik led the team in the Vijay Hazare Trophy and the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. They reached the finals in both tournaments, losing to Karnataka on both occasions. Changes are working for Tamil Nadu. The onus is now on Vijay Shankar, the new Ranji team captain.

An injury-stalked World Cup, a heart-breaking run out (backing up too far versus Australia) — it has been an agonising year for Vijay Shankar. It will get more challenging as he would not only bid to reclaim the lost spot in the national side but also lead his domestic side for the first time as a full-time skipper.

The last of Tamil Nadu's two title triumphs came as far back as 1988, though they have lost four finals in the last 18 years. Shankar, previously Tamil Nadu's limited-overs skipper with limited success, was a popular but surprising choice as there was no shortage of choices. There were national discards Murali Vijay and Dinesh Karthik, and they could avail Ravi Ashwin's expertise till the Test series against New Zealand in February.

But the management, perceptibly, wanted a younger alternative, and there was no better choice than Shankar who felt that the extra responsibility was just the

SIKKIM ARE probably the first team in the north-east to introduce the yo-yo test for their Ranji squad. Given the fitness level, the pass mark was initially set at 14.5. "Now a lot of players are scoring over 15," said a former Sikkim Cricket Association office-bearer. Last season, Sikkim had Sanjeev Sharma as their coach. A change of guard has happened, with Sonam Palden replacing Sharma. Palden was the SCA secretary last year. He had to quit after the new constitution was adopted in accordance with the Lodha reforms. So apparently, Palden has been accommodated as the Ranji team coach.

"He is a certified Level 'B' coach. We wanted a local to be given a chance," said the ex-SCA office-bearer, adding that by March next year, the SCA will have their own ground at Rangpo. By the way, remember IQBAL ABDULLAH, the left-arm spinner who was part of India's 2008 Under-19 World Cup winning squad? He will play for Sikkim this season.

NEW TEAM FOR VINAY, NEW HOPE FOR PONDICHERRY



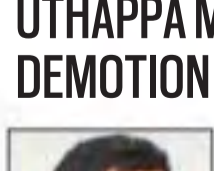
After 14 seasons for Karnataka, R Vinay Kumar has a new team this term. The former Karnataka captain has joined Pondicherry as an outstation professional.

The 35-year-old medium pacer's brief is basically to mother-hen the young pacers. "He is already doing a lot of work, grooming the youngsters, especially the fast bowlers." P Damodaran, former Cricket Association of Pondicherry (CAP) secretary told this paper. Vinay captained Karnataka to back-to-back Ranji Trophy titles in 2013-14 and 2014-15 — domestic trebles in fact, including the Vijay Hazare Trophy and the Irani Cup. J Arun Kumar, who coached that Karnataka side, has taken charge of the Pondicherry team this season.

Under Aavishkar Salvi last term, Pondicherry failed to progress beyond the group state. In Arun Kumar and Vinay, they have proven winners.

"This year we want to win the Ranji Trophy," Damodaran asserted.

UTHAPPA MUST EMBRACE HIS DEMOTION



Soon after Robin Uthappa joined Kerala at the start of the season as the skipper of all formats no less, he was characteristically optimistic: "All Kerala needed is a bit of motivation, and I'm here to provide that." But in less than three months, the optimism has fractionally wavered. Not only has he

been struggling for runs, but the state's weak show in the limited-over tournaments meant that Sachin Baby was reinstated the skipper for the Ranji Trophy.

But stripping captaincy could only unburden Uthappa, whose batting stocks have dramatically plummeted in the last two seasons (35 during his two years with Saurashtra in Ranji Trophy). In the same press conference, he had made another loud statement—that he's not surrendered his dreams for representing India. "An unbelievable season away," he had said. While that sounds over-ambitious, he could value-add to Kerala's dream of jumping one rung higher than where it had finished last season—the semifinal.

CHAND CREATES HIS OWN PATH, DESTINY

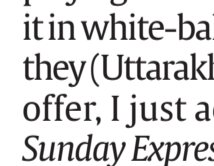


Unmukt Chand did not feature in a single first-class game for Delhi last season. The opener's poor form and the emergence of youngsters were the reasons cited by selectors as to why he didn't make it to the playing XI. At the end of that season, Chand had two options in front of him — either sit at home and hope for another recall or take a NOC (No-Objection Certificate) from DDCA and try his luck with another state. He chose the second option. In September, he announced on Twitter that he would be playing for Uttarakhand. After playing 60 first-class games for Delhi, the last of which came against Karnataka in the 2017-18 season, Chand had decided to move on. "I just could not have afforded to sit on the sidelines for another season. I'm 26 now and need to play as much cricket as I can. I want to be in the playing eleven in all matches this season, be it in white-ball or red-ball cricket. So, when they (Uttarakhand) approached me with an offer, I just accepted it," Chand told *The Sunday Express*.

In the new team, he finally managed to reclaim some of the much-needed form, striking three fifties in six Vijay Hazare Trophy games.

For Chand, the real test will be the Ranji Trophy — playing a full season, away from home, and helping the newbies who topped the second-tier last year, hold their own against some of the heavyweights.

MILIND KUMAR MAKES LITTLE-BIG MOVE



It's amazing what a season comprising 8 first-class games does to a batsman's confidence. For Milind Kumar, it instilled belief beyond doubt after being banished by Delhi selectors two seasons ago. Last year, he plundered 1,331 runs with six centuries for Sikkim, including a humongous 261 against Manipur. He was the highest run-getter for the season but critics continued to take swipes at him, viewing his productivity with a pinch of salt as it came against lower-ranked teams in the Plate Division. Milind didn't pay attention to such talk. He was finally awarded with a Rs 20-lakh IPL contract with the Mumbai Indians earlier this year.

In the upcoming season, when most ex-

pected him to stick around with Sikkim and bolster their batting, Milind decided to shift to Tripura. "The move helps me move to a higher group (Tripura, unlike Sikkim are not in the Plate Division) and they are also giving me the chance to lead the squad. These are the two challenges that pushed me towards accepting this offer. It's not that I was not happy in Sikkim. I will always be indebted to them for giving me the chance when I had the lowest point on the professional front. Right now, I have to seek new challenges and move on."

MUMBAI-UP-MUMBAI: SARFARAZ'S JOURNEY



After serving a cooling-off period for nearly two years, Sarfaraz Khan has been picked for the Mumbai Ranji team, which plays Baroda.

Three seasons ago he had moved to Uttar Pradesh but later returned to Mumbai to resume his cricketering career. The decision to move to UP was taken by his father cum coach Naushad Khan but somewhere down the line, Sarfaraz says he missed Mumbai badly. "I still remember the day when I was packing my bags and removing my Mumbai jersey from my suitcase. It was a very emotional moment for me, Mumbai gave me everything. I am thankful to Mumbai Cricket Association for taking me back and giving me a chance to play again," Khan said.

The last two years haven't been great. When he decided to move back home from UP, he underwent a knee surgery. "I want to start fresh. I'm hopeful things will go smoothly," Sarfaraz said.

DESTINATION UTTARAKHAND FOR SRIVASTAVA



TANMAY Srivastava's claim to fame is that he has captained Virat Kohli during their India under 19 days. The Uttar Pradesh opener didn't scale the same heights as his fellow teammate. By 2016, his state Uttar Pradesh decided to move on and instead give others a chance.

Frustrated Srivastava one day met veteran administrator Rajeev Shukla, who put a word in with another team. "I was frustrated and requested Shukla sir if he can put in a word. One day I got a call from Uttarakhand and I straight away said 'yes'. Nothing like playing competitive cricket, it was good to be on the ground," Srivastava said.

Dehradun in the past has held camps of Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association. Srivastava said, the team is different but the venue is not new to him. He has played cricket in Dehradun before. "When I used to play for UPCA, we played many cricket matches here. So we know the place. Being a professional player is different but I was mentally ready for it. I'm happy with the way things have gone so far and I'm just hoping to continue the same form in longer format too."

NITIN SHARMA, DEVENDRA PANDEY, SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY, VISHAL MENON & SANDIP G.

Signature move

Kohli's payback to Williams in Hyderabad has spiced up the series. What will the pacer do when they face-off in Thiruvananthapuram today?

SRIRAM VEERA
DECEMBER 7

WHEN KESRICK Williams was about 15 and trying to break into age-group tournaments in St Vincent, in the West Indies, he had his first setback at home. For a while, the breakthrough wasn't happening and even his mother, his mentor as she has played cricket for St Vincent, said: "That's it, you aren't going to get money for your cricket now." In his mind, Williams says, he told himself: "One day you are going to be happy, momma."

Williams comes from a small place, 'Spring Village', on the island of St Vincent and had to travel a bit for his cricket training on weekends. His wasn't a rich family and he decided to save up the money he would get to travel to school through the week. "I would starve myself for the week, use that money to travel and play cricket on Saturdays," says Vincent in an interview to a television channel back home. Somehow, despite not getting adequate support in his early years from his cricket association, he preserved to make it on his own.

All through his growing years as a cricketer, he was frequently snubbed by people, who didn't think much of his skills. "I used all that negativity to feed off. More they talked (negative), the more work I had." When he moved to senior circuit, he would leave the training early to catch the van back to the hinterland and that affected his chances. When his father learnt of it, he used his savings to get him a jeep and "people talked negatively, saying, 'look his first purchase after playing for island is a vehicle; he is so full of himself without realising the reason'. All that motivates me".

It would be interesting to see how he now rebounds from the latest episode with Virat Kohli. Already, cricketering forums in the Caribbean have dished him a touch: next time, write a sick note in notebook and such digs.

The world now knows what transpired between Kohli and Williams. In 2017, in a game in Jamaica, Williams had Kohli misreading a catch and he took out his imaginary notebook from the pocket and scribbled away. Two years later, Kohli has not only remembered that 'slight' but decided it was payback time after he played an astonishing drag-scoop-flick, a shot that is worth salivating for ages. Kohli this time did the notebook entry, with a bemused Williams looking on closely.

It's not the first time Williams had been at the receiving end. Last year, his closest friend in cricket, Chadwick Walton, had done exactly what Kohli did on Friday. First, it was Williams who had done that notebook scribble after taking out Walton's wicket in a game in the Caribbean Premier League, right in front of the departing batsman's face. His friend, who had already told Williams that revenge would be served soon, smashed a few boundaries in the next face-off and proceeded to return the favour. In fact, after one of the fours, Walton even suggested that the notebook was full as he kept flipping imaginary pages to end of it, and signed off on the bat. Williams and Walton are friends (once, in nets, Williams hit Walton on the helmet crest with a bouncer and said, "Merry Christmas"); it would be interesting to see how he reacts to Kohli in future games.

Kohli isn't the first big batsman to serve out such paybacks on the field over perceived slights. A similar story stars Don Bradman in an exhibition game in club cricket in Sydney. When he had crossed fifty, the opposing captain from Lithgow Pottery cricket team brought on a spinner, Bill Black. Unsure of what the bowler did, Bradman, playing for Blue Mountains team, enquired from the wicketkeeper, who said, "Don't you remember this bloke? He bowled you in the exhibition match at Lithgow a few weeks ago and has been boasting about it ever since at your expense." In that game, even the umpire had reportedly said, "Bill, you got him", when the stumps were disturbed.

Once he was reminded by the 'keeper, Bradman reportedly shook his head, walked up to his partner Wendell Bill and said, "I think I will have a go". In the next three overs,



Virat Kohli mimicked Kesrick Williams's celebration during the first T20 against the West Indies in Hyderabad on Friday. *PTI*

Last year, Williams's closest friend in cricket, Chadwick Walton, had done exactly what Kohli did. First, it was Williams who had done that notebook scribble after taking out Walton's wicket in a CPL game. His friend smashed Williams for a few boundaries in the next face-off and proceeded to return the favour.

he smashed a hundred runs, crashing 33 runs off Black's first over and 29 off his second. After leaking 62 from 2 overs, Black had to plead his captain to take him off.

Though Bradman would later say that he hadn't planned it and it "just happened purely by accident", his peers that time weren't convinced. His contemporary Australian batsman, who wasn't an admirer of Bradman the man, would even write that. "To suggest — and he [Bradman] missed nothing of such suggestions — that a particular bowler had his measure, was to invite that bowler's annihilation."

It wasn't the only time that Bradman piled on a bowler like that. In 1930, on his first tour of England, Yorkshire's feisty seamer George Macaulay, yielding to rumours that the Australian prodigy would be sorted out on English pitches, demanded loudly of his captain: "Let me have a go at this bugger". Bradman smeared him for five fours in his second over and looted 16 from his third. It led to a memorable sledge from a spectator who yelled, "George, tha' should have kept thi' bloody trap shut!".

Closer home, and more recently, Sachin Tendulkar's payback to Henry Ollanga is well

known. Having been dismissed by Ollanga, Tendulkar smashed him all around the park in the next match. Lesser known is the treatment meted out to Sreesanth.

Sreesanth had taken out Tendulkar in a Challenger tournament and celebrated wildly. The revenge came next year, according to a still awe-struck Sreesanth.

"Paaji is a legend. You know what happened in that Challenger game, I was lucky that he was coming back from an injury and I took my chance. But later on, next year I think, there was a match where I bowled to him. He smashed me for sixes over square-leg and blasted me through the off side. And we both had a laugh about it at the end of the game!" Sreesanth told this newspaper.

Interestingly, Kesrick Williams, known for his dancing celebrations in the CPL and the occasional notebook signages, didn't do any dramatic celebrations after taking his first wicket on his international debut. "But all my team-mates asked me why I wasn't doing them. CPL was like a party, the biggest party in sports. ICC tournaments I had more respect. But everybody said to do it and so I did it (the dance) after my second wicket."

In that television interview, Williams talks about his love for Soca music and how a chat with Andre Russell made him continue his dancing celebrations. "He came and told me that he liked my dance and to run with it. So I put a little more waist in it, fine tuned it and it became a thing. I saw a couple of times even in IPL, cricketers hashtagged me after dancing like me after taking wickets. It was good to see that those players knew me and tried what I am doing."

It would be fascinating to see what happens when he faces off Kohli in the next game and especially if Williams takes Kohli's wicket.

INDIA VS WEST INDIES: 2ND T20 I — LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & 3, 7 PM ONWARDS

'Batters did their job, but bowlers lacked discipline'

Hyderabad: West Indies captain Kieron Pollard lauded his batsmen for putting up a good show but came down hard on the bowlers for failing to defend 200-plus score against India in the first T20 International of the three-match series here. West Indies posted a challenging 207 for 5 but Virat Kohli stamped his authority with a career-best 94 not out as India pulled off their highest successful run chase in a T20 International, overhauling the target in 18.4 overs.

India, thus, took a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

"I think we batted pretty well. We scored above 200 runs which more often than not you take that. But discipline in bowling and execution let us down tonight," Pollard said at the post-match press conference on Friday night.

"We gave 23 extras, 14 or 15 of those wide deliveries, so when you look at that, those were extra balls and extra overs. When you give a class team like India these many extra deliveries, you are destined for trouble."

"No balls are something we stress on in terms of non-negotiable and we bowled a couple of them tonight. It's something we need to look on."

However, instead of dwelling on the negatives, Pollard preferred to look at the positives that came out of the match.

"You can find negatives out of every situation but life is about positivity, life is about going forward and looking to improve. I must commend the batters the way they went out and executed," he said.

"I don't think dew played much of a part. Obviously, it was a good batting track. That's what the fans want to see, they want runs, they want sixes and they got that. It's just a matter of execution. But it's a long series and

it's a matter of looking at the positives and improve our game.

"(Shimron) Hetmyer getting back into runs, Brandon King scoring some runs, so it's exciting times for us. You won't get everything right overnight but it is a work in progress and I am a pretty contended captain."

For the first time, the third umpire has been entrusted with the responsibility of calling front foot no balls by the ICC in the ongoing T20 series and subsequent ODIs between India and the West Indies on a trial basis.

And the third umpire did intervene on three occasions during the first T20 here with all the decisions going against the West Indies.

"It is what it is, some things you can't control. I can't control what they do or what rules they bring into cricket. So to me that's not a bother and I am not going to fuss about fight over that," the West Indies captain said about the ICC's new rule.

"We need to control what's in our hands and that's playing cricket. We need to keep our foot behind the line, if we do that the umpire upstairs won't come into play."

On way to his unbeaten 94, Kohli hit six fours and as many sixes from the 50 balls that he faced. After hitting Kesrick Williams for a six in the 16th over, a fired up Indian captain also used his bat as an imaginary notebook to "tick" the bowler's name off.

Asked about Kohli's gesture, Pollard said: "He is an animated character, a great batsman and he continues to show the world that he is a world class batsman."

"His theatrics or whatever, it comes as part and parcel of the game. Sometimes you have to be like that to pump yourself to score runs and so I am fine with it."

Want to make most of the chance, not worried about WC: KL Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HYDERABAD, DECEMBER 7

HANDED A chance to open the innings for India in the T20I series against the West Indies, KL Rahul said he is looking to make the most of the opportunities but doesn't want to worry about sealing his T20 World Cup berth. The India team is continuing its preparations for next year's T20 World Cup in Australia with the three-match series and many players, whose places are not yet secured, are trying to impress the selectors with their performances against the West Indies.

Rahul, who was promoted as an opener in the absence of injured Shikhar Dhawan, grasped the chance with both hands by scoring a 40-ball 62 on Friday.

"It (the World Cup) is a long way honestly. I have got the opportunity to bat top of the order again after a couple of series, so looking forward to just making the best use of it," Rahul said at the post match press conference.

"Today was a good outing, good hit in the middle, and hopefully I can continue the same thing without worrying about October next year. There are a lot of games before that."

The 27-year-old stylish batsman from Karnataka said despite both the teams scoring 200 plus runs, the wicket on offer at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium here wasn't the easiest wicket to bat.

Talking about his 100-run second wicket partnership with skipper Virat Kohli, Rahul said: "When you are obviously you want to come out hard so sometimes you don't hold your shape. So in the middle 2-3 overs we obviously got it harder to get the boundaries but we knew that once we get a few boundaries it will start, so we just had to stay patient. We just kept the intent going. Our plans were very clear that you have to hit boundaries while chasing 200 runs."

Today was a good outing, good hit in the middle, and hopefully I can continue the same thing without worrying about October next year.'

"It obviously was a bit tricky but the best chance for a batsman to score runs was once you are set. Fortunately Virat carried on and finished the game for us," he added.

'A fairer game'

For the first time, the third umpire has been entrusted with the responsibility of calling front-foot no-balls by the ICC in the ongoing T20 series and subsequent ODI series between India and the West Indies on a trial basis. And the third umpire did intervene on three occasions during the first T20 here with all the decisions going in India's favour.

"It was our first game too so, it was interesting. I didn't know what to expect honestly, none of us knew what to expect but fortunately for us we were on the good side this time," Rahul said.

"We got 2-3 decisions to go in our favour. I think it's good to keep the game fair. As a bowler you make the mistake of overstepping and somebody sitting there to see it makes the game more fair."

India won the game by six wickets but they were far from impressive on the field with Rohit Sharma and Washington Sundar dropping a few catches. Rahul said for a fielder it wasn't easy to pick the ball with low flood lights at the ground here.

"I don't think it's the dimensions of the ground, I think the lights are pretty low and sometimes you lose the ball in that light and that's what happened a couple of times," he said. "We have played here before, we have played here for years so we knew what to expect. As a team we don't complain about things like these, it's not in our control."

Anderson returns for England tour of South Africa

London: James Anderson was recalled by England on Saturday for their upcoming tour of South Africa after recovering from a calf injury, while his fellow bowler Mark Wood and wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow also returned to the squad. The 37-year-old Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket-taker, last played internationally in the first Ashes Test against Australia at Edgbaston in August before pulling up after bowling only four overs. Bairstow, who has played 69 Tests, was left out of the recent Test tour of New Zealand but was named in the 17-man squad. Fast bowler Wood is also back in the fold after sitting out of the 2-2 Ashes draw with a knee injury and side strain suffered during the World Cup.

"It is not predicted that Mark (Wood) will be available for selection for the earliest matches," said England national selector Ed Smith. "However, he will travel with the team and continue his rehab work with the medical staff on tour. There is no exact date given for his return, but the medical team is working towards him becoming fully available for selection during the tour."

The opening match of the four-Test series starts on December 26 at Centurion.

CSA president refuses to step down, says Smith set to become director of cricket

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
JOHANNESBURG, DECEMBER 7

FORMER TEST captain Graeme Smith is set to become Cricket South Africa's director of cricket, according to CSA president Chris Nenzani, but South African cricket's crisis continued, with Nenzani and his remaining board members refusing to heed calls to resign.

Tony Irish, chief executive of the SA Cricketers Association (SACA), which called on Friday for Nenzani and the entire board to resign, said in a tweet: "Appalled that the president and board of CSA have taken no responsibility for cricket's biggest crisis. Now clinging to power."

Asked for clarification, Irish described his tweet as "my initial reaction." He said SACA was likely to make a detailed response on Sunday or Monday.

Nenzani said that he had spoken to Smith on Saturday morning. "I am happy to announce that we have engaged Graeme Smith and I am confirming that by next week Wednesday all of the negotiations around the contract terms that need to take place would have been concluded," said Nenzani, speak-



Former SA captain Graeme Smith.

ing after a special board meeting of CSA, following a week of crisis for the organisation.

If Smith does agree to take the job he will have just over two weeks to put a selection panel and coaching staff in place before the first of four Tests against England, starting in Centurion on December 26.

Despite calls for their resignation, Nenzani said the board had been mandated by the organisation's members' council — made up of presidents of the 14 provincial affiliates — "to continue to guide us through

this period and turn it around".

Saturday's press conference came after a tumultuous week during which five leading journalists had their accreditation withdrawn, a major sponsor announced it would not renew its agreement with CSA and chief executive Thabang Moroe was suspended on charges of misconduct.

Nenzani said a lack of trust in Moroe by Smith was a factor in negotiations which have been conducted sporadically over a period of three months.

Several prominent individuals, as well as the Gauteng cricket board and SACA, called for the board to resign.

However, Nenzani said the issue had not been raised at a meeting of the members' council in a meeting which started on Friday evening and continued until the early hours of Saturday. He brushed off the resignations of three of the board's five independent directors.

"We thank them for their service and will engage in a process to fill the vacancies," he said.

Nenzani said the respected Jacques Faul, the chief executive of the Northern cricket union and a former acting chief executive of CSA, had agreed to again become the acting chief executive with immediate effect.

Team owner wants betting in TNPL probed thoroughly

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 7

A DAY after *The Indian Express* highlighted the extent of betting in domestic T20 cricket leagues in India, with a Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL) game witnessing Rs 225 crore staked on Betfair, a TNPL team wants the Board of Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) to thoroughly investigate the league.

Madurai Panthers, which played the said fixture against Tuti Patriots earlier this year, have said they have complained in writing to the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA), the BCCI and its anti corruption unit (ACU) on "dubious umpiring" in TNPL.

P Damodaran, who owns Panthers, told *The Indian Express*: "Some of the decisions that we saw in our game were dubious — it happened not once but many times. The way umpiring was done made us more suspicious. We felt something was wrong, but nothing came of it."

In a confidential report by the BCCI ACU submitted to the board's top bosses, it was stated how an unusually high amount was wagered on an Indian state league on Betfair, an international betting site, prompting the

platform to stop taking bets on any matches involving Tuti Patriots. The ACU report didn't find anything suspicious about the Madurai team and solely focused on Tuti Patriots.

It's not the first controversy the TNPL and Tuti Patriots have found themselves in. Earlier, the TNCA conducted an inquiry after *The Indian Express* had reported how a number of players, coaches and officials in the team were allegedly involved in match-fixing.

Sources involved in the probe had said that bookies and match-fixers, "after taking control of a franchise through a deal with the team owner, were running the team in such a way that they were making windfall gains in betting". A month later, TNCA expelled two co-owners of Tuti Patriots.

Damodaran further said: "As an owner, we are worried about what all is happening and what we are reading in media reports. The culprits should be banned for life and should be sent to jail. This needs to end somewhere. A full-fledged investigation is the need of the hour, and if needed, the Indian board should take help of the government in this."

The BCCI ACU has suggested the board to consider pulling the plug on such leagues running all across India by various state associations.

BRIEFLY

Odisha secure victory to stay in contention

Commonwealth Games gold-medallist Gaurav Solanki and bronze-medallist Naman Tanwar led from the front as Odisha Warriors defeated Bengaluru Bravlers 6-1 to register their first match win of the Big Bout Boxing League. Solanki defeated Worlds bronze-medallist Gaurav Bidhuri in the 57kg bout while Tanwar beat a spirited Reyal Puri in the 91kg clash. Bengaluru captain and Worlds bronze-medallist Simranjit Kaur was the lone winner for her team. In the day's second tie, Gujarat Giants and NE Rhinos were 1-1 at the time of going to press. Amit Panghal got the 52kg win for Gujarat while Rhinos' Nikhat Zareen won her 51kg contest.

Duati challenges loss at Nationals

India Open silver-medallist and defending champion Vanlal Duati (51kg) on Saturday said she was robbed of a win at the ongoing National Championships here and has challenged her 2-3 semi-final loss to Haryana's Ritu. The Mizo boxer, who is a five-time national medallist, said her loss was nothing short of "cheating". The BFI has assured her of a decision on her appeal by 7am on Sunday. "A judge (Neelam Punia) was replaced by another (DS Raju) just at the end of the first round, all of a sudden, no reason was given. I have never complained about any loss in my career but I feel robbed today," Duati said.

India tops medal count in athletics

India won the most number of medals in athletics in the South Asian Games but finished second behind Lanka in gold count as the track and field competitions ended on Saturday. India won 12 gold, 20 silver and 15 bronze for a total of 47 medals. Sri Lanka bagged 34 medals but won 14 gold, along with 12 silver and 8 bronze. Indian athletes did not win any gold on Saturday while bagging eight medals. That had an impact in the gold medal count as Sri Lanka won five yellow metals on Saturday. **PTI**

The Son Mourinho needs

Scores incredible solo goal in Spurs' 5-0 win vs Burnley as Reds keep surging ahead

REUTERS
LONDON, DECEMBER 7

LIVERPOOL CHALKED up another routine win, 3-0 at Bournemouth, to open a daunting 11-point lead in the Premier League on a day when Everton finally had something to cheer as caretaker manager Duncan Ferguson inspired a 3-1 victory over Chelsea.

The individual honours, however, were taken by Tottenham Hotspur's Son Heung-min who dribbled almost the entire length of the pitch to score in his side's 5-0 rout of Burnley while bottom side Watford and Crystal Palace shared a goalless draw.

With Manchester City not playing until later on Saturday against Manchester United, and second-placed Leicester City in action on Sunday, Liverpool, who are now 1-4 to win the title, took their chance to move further clear. Having won 4-0 on their previous two visits to Bournemouth, manager Jurgen Klopp again shuffled his side, making seven changes from the midweek Merseyside derby.

Two of Liverpool's lesser lights, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain and Naby Keita, responded with goals before Mohamed Salah completed the formalities.

An injury sustained by defender Dejan Lovren was the only blot on Liverpool's day, but Klopp said he was hoping it was just a touch of cramp. At Goodison Park, Everton looked nothing like the side who had subsided so abjectly at Liverpool, obviously re-energised by the fiery presence of Duncan Ferguson in place of Marco Silva in the dressing-room.

The Scot's decision to switch formation was instantly rewarded with a goal for Richarlison before Dominic Calvert-Lewin added a double to send the crowd wild.

Although Ferguson said he thoroughly enjoyed his first game in charge, he will not be asking for the job full-time.

"Honestly, I won't be going asking for the job. I'm just here for Everton. It was an unbelievable experience. One I'll never forget. We want the very best managers in the world at Everton Football Club. It's one game. It's one result." The win moved Everton away from the relegation zone with most of their rivals playing on Sunday. At the Tottenham Hotspur stadium, Spurs delivered exactly the sort of response to their defeat at Manchester United that manager Jose Mourinho would have been looking for. Although Harry Kane scored twice to make it eight goals in nine games against



Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho embraces Son Heung-min after the win. Reuters

THE RESULTS

Everton	3-1	Chelsea
Bournemouth	0-3	Liverpool
Tottenham	5-0	Burnley
Watford	0-0	Crystal Palace

Burnley, Son took the headlines with a superb effort that started just outside his own area and saw the South Korean slalom through half the opposition before slotting home from inside the box. Lucas Moura and Moussa Sissoko completed the scoring against a Burnley side who have conceded nine goals in four days.

"Sonny stole the show today," said Kane, who is not often overshadowed in front of goal.

At the Tottenham Hotspur stadium, Spurs delivered exactly the sort of response to their defeat at Manchester United that manager Jose Mourinho would have been looking for.

"An unbelievable goal, a great counter attack. All he wants to do is work hard and play for the team. He has great quality and works hard for the team." Struggling Watford ended a string of three straight defeats against Crystal Palace in a scrappy game watched by their incoming manager Nigel Pearson, whose first game in charge could not be harder -- a trip to Liverpool next Saturday.

Dope-tainted Satnam insists he is a 'clean competitor'

MIHIR VASAVDA
DECEMBER 7

CAGER SATNAM Singh Bhamara, who is serving a provisional suspension for failing a dope test, has disputed the charges against him and insisted he is a 'clean competitor and has always played basketball fairly.'

The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) collected Bhamara's urine sample during a training camp in Bangalore on August 17. The report received from the anti-doping laboratory in Qatar -- where the sample was analysed -- on October 31 confirmed the presence of Higenamine, a beta-2 agonist, which allows the lungs to take in more oxygen.

Bhamara, 23, claimed he had 'voluntarily' accepted the provisional suspension, instead of NADA imposing it on him, after the notice of the failed test was communicated to him on November 11. The suspension period, according to NADA, began on November 19.

"Mr. Bhamara is disputing the said charge and has requested a hearing before the NADA Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel [ADDP] in order to put forth his case," the player said in a statement released by his management agency.

The 7-foot-2-inch centre was originally a part of the Indian team that is currently in Kathmandu for the South Asian Games, which began on December 1. However, he pulled out at the last minute citing personal reasons. India eventually got its campaign underway without him on Friday. The Basketball Federation of India claimed they were unaware of the failed test.

Higenamine, the substance detected in Bhamara's sample, has been on the World Anti-Doping Agency prohibited substance list since 2017. It is found in a variety of plant sources and, of late, has been used by the supplement industry (mostly pre-workout, energy or weight-loss products) as a substitute for performance enhancing drugs like dimethylamylamine (DMAA) and stimulants such as ephedrine.

However, it falls under the 'specified substance' category of the WADA, which means Bhamara could escape with a lenient sanction and not the four-year ban imposed otherwise. WADA defines prohibited substances as 'specified' and 'non-specified' to 'recognize that it is possible for a substance to enter an athlete's body



Satnam Singh is serving a ban after failing a dope test last month.

inadvertently." "(It)... potentially allows, under defined conditions, for a greater reduction of a sanction when an athlete tests positive for that particular substance," according to WADA.

Bhamara said he was 'hopeful' that NADA's disciplinary panel will dispense the case within the stipulated 90-day period. "Mr. Bhamara has entrusted his legal representatives at Krida Legal, to handle the adjudicatory process before NADA and Mr. Bhamara is hopeful that his case is adjudicated upon and dispensed with by ADPP, within a period of ninety (90) days from the date of conclusion of result management process, as is mandated under the NADA Anti-Doping Rules, 2015," the statement added.

Bhamara has been a trailblazer in Indian basketball after he created history in 2015 when he was picked in the NBA draft by the Dallas Mavericks; the first Indian-born player to achieve that.

He went on to play the next two years in the Development League with Dallas Mavericks' affiliate team Texas Legends. After returning to India for a year to focus on the national team, he once again created history in September 2018 by becoming the first India-born player to compete in the National Basketball League of Canada after signing a deal with St John's Edge.

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