

# The night of the long rods

Protests that began last year over a fee hike in Jawaharlal Nehru University fed on campus rivalry and culminated in politically targeted violence. **Kallol Bhattacharjee** reports on the clash between the Leftist student organisations and the RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad



Heavy police deployment outside JNU on January 6 following the brutal attack on students and faculty by a masked mob on January 5. (Below): JNUSU President Aishe Ghosh addresses the media near Sabarmati hostel on January 6. ■R.V. MOORTHY

He's known as Khaki in Jawaharlal Nehru University's Sabarmati hostel. A Kashmiri student, Khaki likes playing badminton in the open spaces of the university's sprawling campus when he is not studying. He rarely bothered about the ideological differences amongst his friends in JNU's politically charged atmosphere. His friends used to point out to him that he was quite popular on campus with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student organisation affiliated to the Rashtriya Swamyamsevak Sangh, but Khaki would dismiss them. "No, *yaar*," he would say. "I am friendly with all sides. Politics means nothing to me."

But on January 5, Khaki could not afford to be apolitical or ignore what was happening on campus. He was in his hostel when, all of a sudden, a group of people broke into his room with rods, he recounts to a group of psychiatrists assembled in Sabarmati hostel on December 9. They scattered on the floor all the neatly laid books is his room, he says. Despite his cries, they stomped on the blankets and broke the glass panes. Khaki is emotionally bruised and this is why the psychiatrists have come: to help the deeply divided university cope with the latest trauma.

**Fee hike protest**

It all began when protests broke out against the revised fee structure that the JNU administration under Vice Chancellor Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar drew up in 2019. These protests dragged on as neither the university authorities, led by the Vice Chancellor, nor the Human Resources Development Ministry could meet the core demand of the students: to roll-back the steep increase in fees. Towards the end of October, the JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) called for a "complete university strike" against the draft hostel manual which was part of the fee hike project of the university. The campus had been non-functional since the fee was raised.

The reopening of the winter semester was getting delayed as neither the JNU administration nor the JNU Teachers' Association had managed to come up with any solution to the problem. Registration is a JNU-specific issue. Every six months, all the students in the university enrol themselves afresh for the courses that semester. This is also when the faculty give them feedback on their work.

To register or not to register for the winter semester was the main issue on campus. JNUSU opposed the registration process. It believed that simply doing so would mean surrendering to the revised fee structure. "We marched towards Rashtrapati Bhawan in December to register our complaint when we were lathi-charged by the Delhi Police. The whole world watched as this happened," says Sucheta Talukdar, a stu-

dent.

On the other hand, students say, teachers, mainly from the right-leaning JNU Teachers' Federation, had been pushing them to register. Gathering at the State Bank of India to pay the fees, the students consulted one another on the issue. Many were not sure what to do.

The see-saw continued on January 3 and 4 when several rounds of heated discussions and spats took place between the JNUSU and the ABVP, which wanted to roll out the admission procedure. ABVP's posters on campus read: "By preventing and threatening bonafide students willing to register for the winter semester, the JNUSU has lost its legitimacy, morality and cause of its very existence." JNUSU maintained that registering would amount to acceptance of the higher fee structure that it had been protesting over the last five months. JNU has a 'zero semester' system, which means that a student can opt out of a semester citing health or family issues. If all students refused to register, reasoned JNUSU, it would make the semester a 'zero semester' for everyone, a welcome scenario for the protesting students.

On January 4 morning, students say members of the JNUSU, led by JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, marched to the main server of the campus and forcibly disconnected it. This led to a scuffle outside the server room, a sign of things to come. As Ghosh was leaving the server room, she and others were stopped and beaten up by some students, Sucheta says.

However, ABVP activist Shambhavi Jha, a Russian language student from JNU, says WiFi on campus had become nonfunctional even before January 4. "We believe that JNUSU disconnected the servers even before January 4. We were unable to access WiFi needed for admission-related work," she says.

**The final confrontation**

These events snowballed into the final confrontation of January 5. On the afternoon of that cold Sunday, teachers and students gathered together at Sabarmati T-point, ironically for a peace march. "We had been planning to gather at Sabarmati hostel to initiate a dialogue among the students. We gathered at Sabarmati T-point with placards and posters," says Amit Thorat, Assistant Professor at the Center for the Study of Regional Development.

Around the same time, says Chandan (name changed), a student at the School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies, a large group of students had congregated at Mahi-Mandavi hostel and then dispersed at 3 p.m. There was a murmur going around that the long-standing tensions between the ABVP and JNUSU would blow up. Students were apprehensive and nervous: it seemed like something terrible was go-

ing to happen. Chandan took his scooter and rode around campus. He says he did not want to miss out on any of the "action". Chandan was also concerned about the safety of a woman friend; he wanted to ensure that she was safe in case a fracas broke out. He rode around for a while and then went to Periyar hostel near the North Gate, an area known as Dakshinapuram. Even as he was talking to fellow students, Chandan says he saw a teacher belonging to a right-wing political group hand out sticks and rods to some youngsters near the entrance of the hostel. "Some of the rods appeared new and shiny and drew my attention. I was stunned to see this young Assistant Professor distributing these to students," he says. "The teacher kept saying 'jaldi karo (act fast)' while distributing the rods and sticks," he says. The teacher had found himself in the midst of a controversy earlier as his appointment had drawn flak in the academic circles.

A group of students rushed to inform the teachers at Sabarmati T-point that an Assistant Professor was busy arming some students with sticks and rods. By then a mob had quickly arrived, their faces covered with dupattas and masks. They were armed with sticks and began to assault the teachers, multiple students say. Professor Sucharita Sen was hit on her head repeatedly. Thorat says he had reached the backyard of Periyar hostel by then, where he was assaulted by the masked members of the gang for taking their photographs on his phone.

The masked lot then moved to the girls wing of Sabarmati hostel and targeted the rooms of Kashmiri students, like Khaki, and other minority students, says Jyoti Priyadarshni, a student. Three students stood up to the attack. As the gang went from room to room, Monica Bishnoi, Priyadarshni, and Raashi stood outside and confronted the gang members.

**The teacher kept saying 'jaldi karo (act fast)' while distributing rods and sticks to the students.**

CHANDAN Student, School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies, JNU

bers. Alerting the women of the hostel even as they chased away the attackers, these young students emerged as the saviours on the long night of terror in Sabarmati hostel.

**Fear of new trouble**

The night came to an end but fear and trauma have only begun, say students. They are afraid as they continue to share hostel space with those whom they suspect were among the masked men and women. Thorat and others are aware that gang members from outside could not have targeted faculty without help from insiders.

Chandan explains the lingering mental trauma and after-effects of the violence. "A courier delivery man knocked on my door on Tuesday. The knock was loud but I could not bring myself to open the door. My heart was beating fast and I told my roommate that this could be a trick; maybe some people were planning to assault me," he says. The courier man eventually went away. Following the violence, the dhabas and small eateries on campus are slowly returning to normalcy, but assaulted students continue to wear broken spectacles, injuries on their head and face, and anxiously scan their surroundings, anticipating another round of assault. No amount of assurance makes them feel comfortable. "Our outdoor activities have drastically reduced. Many of us are so tired that we sleep for more than 12 hours. We have stopped our morning walks," says Krishan Takhar of the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, indicating that students who usually spend hours at the famous central library of the university are unable to study.

Apart from the presence of some of the key members of the masked gang among the students of the right-wing student bodies, the battered activists also fear the security agency of the campus. The agency, Cyclops Security and Allied Services, took charge a month before the complete university strike was called by the JNUSU students. In a notification issued on September 18, JNU's security department was asked to remain

"extra vigilant". The note said, "They have been instructed to verify the identity of the person entering JNU Campus/building, to their full satisfaction. All residents are requested to carry their ID cards... Together we can make JNU a secure campus."

Once the strike and sit down protest began, the students realised that the guards intended to assault them. "On one occasion we spent a night protesting at the administration block. Some girls were huddled together early in the morning. Suddenly a guard came and snatched away our *razai* (thick blanket)," says Sucheta. She also claims that the guards slapped her and others some time between January 3 and 5.

The security agency boasts of appointing ex-servicemen for security assignments. However, visitors to the campus say they noticed a subtle change in the rules for entering the campus soon after the agency took charge. In the old system, guards gave plastic tokens to outsiders entering the campus. Thorat noticed one day, when he was being driven into the campus by a friend, that the guards were not always asking for the tokens to be returned. But students also add that they are not wary of all the security guards. They are friendly with many of the previous security guards, who even called them after the January 5 incident to enquire about their well being, they say.

**So far, a controversial tenure**

Ever since Kumar took charge in January 2016 from Sudhir Kumar Sopory as Vice Chancellor of JNU, there has been trouble. In March 2018, eight women accused Professor Atul Johri, at the university's School of Life Sciences, of sexual harassment. Subsequently, the Delhi High Court stopped him from accessing his office and the school premises. Despite the restraint order from the court, Johri continued to teach and access his room and laboratory even as students continued to protest against his presence. The breakdown of the Gender Sensitization Committee Against Sexual Harassment, or GSCASH, which used to be at the forefront of protecting students against sexual assault on campus, has also been a major issue during Kumar's tenure. GSCASH was dismantled and replaced with a new outfit called the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), set up by the administration. In 2018, *The Wire* reported how the ICC leaked a complaint from a student to the ABVP. This jeopardised the identity of the complainant. As a result, the ICC could not gain the trust of the students. The JNU administration guided by the Vice Chancellor replaced the more representative GSCASH with the ICC. JNUSU claims that the ICC is staffed by the administration's "loyalists" and lacks the transparency required for deterring sexual harassment on campus. Apart from the complaint against Johri, sever-

**There is no way a student can maintain his academic and personal freedom. We are constantly reminded that to remain safe we must align with one group or the other.**

KRISHAN Student

al cases of sexual harassment that raise disturbing questions about gender fairness on campus remain unaddressed.

**The dream of unity**

The hostels in JNU are named after the rivers of the country to represent the unity of India. However, students and teachers on campus say that the university is deeply splintered today. In such a polarised campus, where a student protest against fee hike has taken the form of an anti-government movement, the biggest victims are the students who want to remain removed from campus politics and intellectually curious. "There is no way a student can maintain his academic and personal freedom. We are constantly reminded that to remain safe we must align with one group or the other," says Krishan, a student. Apart from the students, the teachers are also divided. The JNU Teacher's Association has held many protest rallies against the Vice Chancellor. Its members were brutally assaulted on January 5. The JNU Teacher's Front has accused the JNU Teacher's Association of disrupting academic life on campus. A group called JNU Commons has emerged to safeguard the intellectual autonomy of students and scholars and provide space to those who want to maintain a distance from all these issues and yet show commitment to justice and fairness on the campus.

As the police investigation continues, questions hang in the air about the future of the investigation itself. Students claim that they saw police in civvies inside the campus even as the assault and heavy stone-pelting targeted female students of the Left. It was only several days after the traumatic day, on Thursday night, that the police removed large posters near the university. These had been pasted by a self-proclaimed Hindu Sena leader, Surjeet Yadav, and accused student leaders of being "balaatkaari (rapists)", "pro-Chinese" and "anti-national Leftists".

Meanwhile, the administration is still pushing for students to register. "There were concerns among some of us about whether or not we should register but after the attack of January 5 more students feel that it's better to stay united and avoid registering this semester. January 5 was the last day of registration but only a fraction of students had registered by then. Now the admin has extended the registration process but this option is not yet popular," says Deepak Kumar, senior research scholar at the Centre for Law and Governance.





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# 9 suspects in JNU violence identified, say police

Among those named are JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, ABVP cadre

**STAFF REPORTER**  
**NEW DELHI**  
Five days after masked goons thrashed students and teachers in JNU, the Delhi police claimed at a press conference on Friday that they had identified nine suspects responsible for the attack. Those named are JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, Dolan Samanta, Priya Ranjan, Sucheta Talukdar, Bhaskar Vijay Mech, Chunchun Kumar and Pankaj Mishra. Two other suspects named, Vikas Patel and Yogendra Bhargava, are believed to be members of the RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad.

**No arrests made**  
So far, no arrest has been made by the Delhi police, which has been accused of standing around when the masked goons made good their escape from the campus on Sunday night. Joy Tirkey, DCP (Crime) and the head of the SIT formed to investigate the JNU violence, released the pictures of the “suspects” that they obtained from mobile recordings of the violence. At the briefing, he said the student groups and unions that attacked Periyar Hostel and server room had been identified as also the student groups involved in the attack

on teachers and students inside Sabarmati hostel. All the photos released by the police were taken in daylight while Sabarmati hostel was attacked after sunset. The police did not throw any light on the armed masked miscreants photographed at Sabarmati. “A scuffle on January 5 was triggered when a group of students vandalised the CIS room and damaged the server resulting in delay in the registration process. Another group of students opposed the act, leading to the fight but security guards intervened and they were dispersed,” said Mr. Tirkey. He added that at 3.45 p.m. a group of students attacked selected rooms in Periyar Hostel. After this a WhatsApp group (Unity Against Left) was formed at 5 p.m. A large group of miscreants attacked teachers and students gathered at Sabarmati T-point for a peace meeting. The mob also attacked specific rooms in Sabarmati Hostel. Three Union Ministers – Prakash Javadekar, Piyush Goyal and Smriti Irani – said the “Left design” had been “unmasked.” Left leaders accused the Delhi police of being a “government stooge.”

(With PTI inputs)



**Voicing dissent:** Left students forming a human chain during a silent protest against the recent violence on the JNU Campus in New Delhi on Friday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

## ‘Probe shoddy; sack police chief, JNU VC’

Accusing the Delhi Police of conducting a “shoddy” investigation into the Jawaharlal Nehru University violence case, the Congress on Friday alleged that it was clearly influenced by the government, the Home Minister and the ruling party, and demanded the removal of the city police chief and the university’s vice chancellor. PTI

## Raghuram Rajan condemns attacks on students, teachers

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan has condemned the attacks against students and teachers at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), noting that they lend weight to claims that the Indian government is suppressing its citizens. “While the identities of the attackers remain unclear, what is clear is that many of the attacked were activists, and neither the government-appointed administration nor the police intervened,” he wrote on Thursday, in a post published on LinkedIn.com.

“When even elite universities become literal battlegrounds, accusations that the government is attempting to suppress dissent – even if by apathy rather than design – gain substantial credibility.” “We bear responsibility” Dr. Rajan, who currently teaches at the University of Chicago, also blamed those who voted for the government whether for economic reasons, or out of indifference, prejudice or fear. “...we, the public, also bear a responsibility. After all, it was the citizenry that put our leaders into office

and acquiesced in their divisive manifesto, which they have taken as their marching orders,” he wrote. Dr. Rajan expressed support and admiration for the young people marching on the streets, a seeming reference to the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act. He also singled out for praise those who have stood up for their convictions in the face of great risk including IAS officers and Bollywood actors who resigned because they could not serve in good faith, a Bollywood actress

who stood with JNU victims (a reference to Deepika Padukone), an Election Commissioner who acts with integrity despite the harassment of his family (a reference to former Commissioner Ashok Lavasa), and journalists who stand against government pressure to bring out the truth. “These people show through their actions that they think truth, freedom, and justice are not merely lofty words, but ideals worth sacrificing for,” he wrote, calling on all citizens to rededicate themselves to the spirit of the Indian Constitution.

# Assam-specific CAA rules sought

‘Must prove pre-2014 presence too’

**NISTULA HEBBAR**  
**NEW DELHI**

Amid protests in Assam over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met with Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday, asking for specific additions to the rules being framed for the Act.

According to government sources, the two Assam politicians said the rules for CAA should have a clearly delineated provision for furnishing of documents for proof that applicants have been present in India since before the cut-off date of December 31, 2014 as the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise that had been undertaken in the State had the cut-off date of 1971.

**Exercising caution**  
Mr. Sonowal had, in fact, written to Mr. Shah, to incorporate suggestions for rules being framed for CAA. Significantly, the Union Home Ministry too is said to be treading cautiously on the framing of rules and remains firm on provision of documentary proof of entry into India before the cut-off date of 31st December 31,



Amit Shah and Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal during a meeting in November.

2014. No information is as yet available on just what documents would be acceptable as proof of entry.

**Assam suffering**  
It is also being deliberated whether or not Assam-specific rules can be incorporated. The State has been on the boil since the passage of the CAA, with protesters stating that it reversed all the gains of the Assam Accord of 1985 and the NRC exercise that was conducted under the supervision of the Supreme Court. The two Ministers asked that a short window period be provided for applications under CAA in Assam as the NRC exercise had already been completed there.

## Supreme Court asks Centre to reply to UN official’s plea on Rohingya

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Centre to respond to an application made by a United Nations Special Rapporteur to intervene in a batch of petitions filed by the Rohingya community against the government’s move to conduct their mass deportation from India.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde took note of the plea made by E. Tendayi Achiume, who is a UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of

racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to assist the court on India’s human rights obligations to racial equality and non-discrimination in the light of the international conventions signed and ratified by it. It said the move by the Union Home Ministry would be ‘incompatible’ with India’s human rights obligations.

**‘Obligated by law’**  
“The objective in making this intervention is to assist the court by offering expertise on State parties’

obligations under international law with regard to the prevention of racial discrimination against migrants, racial, ethnic and religious minorities, and populations otherwise perceived as ‘foreign.’ It is also to aid the court in upholding India’s obligations, in the spirit of an amicus curiae,” the application, represented by senior advocate C.U. Singh, explained.

The application has detailed annexures on the UN’s findings on Myanmar’s treatment of the Rohingya.

## Priyanka Gandhi visits BHU, offers support to protesters

Accusing the govt. of trying to ‘break’ the country, she praises those protesting against the CAA



**Taking stock:** Priyanka Gandhi Vadra speaking to the media after interacting with BHU students. • PTI

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**LUCKNOW**

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday accused the BJP government of trying to “break” the country and the constitution and praised those who protested against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Varanasi.

Visiting Varanasi to offer support to BHU students and civil society members who were arrested and jailed for

two weeks for protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Ms. Vadra said she was “proud” of them for their ‘struggle.’ “What the government is doing is against the constitution. They want to break the constitution and the country,” Ms Vadra told reporters. Ms. Vadra also met the family of Sagir, a nine-year-old boy who died in a stampede triggered by a police lathi-

charge during the protests. Over 60 persons, were arrested on December 19 while marching in protest against the CAA and the NRC towards the Beniabagh Maidan in the city. Ms. Vadra said the students and activists were kept in jail for 15 days and serious charges were slapped against them for “holding a peaceful demonstration.” “A lot of injustice has been done,” she said.

## New facility to tackle cybercrimes

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) on Friday.

The I4C is a seven-pronged system, which includes a cybercrime reporting portal, analysis of threats, capacity building, research and innovation, creating an ecosystem for cybercrime management and a joint cybercrime investigation platform for law enforcement agencies. The project was approved in October 2018 at an estimated cost of ₹415.86 crore, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a statement.

**Special focus**  
On August 30, the MHA had unveiled its National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal. Mr. Shah said in a tweet that “citizens can report any kind of cyber crime irrespective of the place where it has occurred” through the website.

The portal enables filing of all cybercrimes with specific focus on crimes against women, children, particularly child pornography, child sex abuse material, online content pertaining to rapes/gang rapes. So far, more than 700 police districts and more than 3,900 police stations have been connected with this portal, the MHA said.



# Iranian missile downed airliner: Trudeau

This may have been unintentional, but Canadians have questions and they deserve answers, says PM

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
OTTAWA

Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Thursday “multiple” intelligence sources indicate that Iran shot down a Ukrainian airliner after it took off from Tehran, killing all 176 on board, including 63 Canadians.

Mr. Trudeau’s comments came as video emerged that appeared to show the moment the airliner was hit.

That and other footage posted on social media increasingly pointed to a catastrophic mistake by Tehran’s air defense batteries in bringing down Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 early on Wednesday.

The video, which *The New York Times* said it verified, shows a fast-moving object rising at an angle into the sky before a bright flash is seen, which dims and then continues moving forward. Several seconds later an explosion is heard.

Citing information from allies as well as Canada’s own intelligence, Mr. Trudeau said the plane appeared to have been hit by an Iranian surface-to-air (SAM) missile.

“We know this may have been unintentional. Canadians have questions, and they deserve answers,” Mr. Trudeau told reporters.

Mr. Trudeau was backed by other Western leaders, including British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who said mounting evidence pointed to a missile strike.

U.S. President Donald Trump indicated that Washington officials believed that the plane was struck by an Iranian missile. “I have my suspicions,” Mr. Trump said, adding that “somebody could have made a mistake.”

The Netherlands said that its military intelligence also had information indicating that an “Iranian anti-aircraft

missile” probably brought down the plane.

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board late on Thursday said it had received formal notification of the crash from Iran and would send a representative to join the crash probe.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry earlier invited the U.S. plane maker Boeing to “participate” in the inquiry.

With tensions high between the U.S. and Iran, the disaster unfolded just hours after Tehran launched ballistic missiles towards bases in Iraq housing U.S. troops.

Ukraine called for United Nations support for a broad investigation, and sent 45 crash investigators to Tehran to take part in the inquiry led by Iranian authorities.

**Tehran rebuffs claims**  
But Iran’s civil aviation chief denied on Friday that a missile downed the Ukrainian airliner. “One thing is for certain, this airplane was not hit by a missile,” Iran’s civil aviation chief Ali Abedzadeh said, adding that “any remarks made before the data is extracted (from the plane’s black box flight recorders) ... is not an expert opinion.”

Mr. Abedzadeh said Tehran had invited “Americans, Canadians, the French, Ukrainians and the Swedish” to be present during the investigations, showing that “we are honest in our procedure”. He said the missile theory could not be “scientifically correct” because it was not possible for an airliner to be hit and “continue flying for 60 to 70 seconds”.

And “the debris collected has been in a very limited area. If there was an explosion in the wings it should have been much more scattered,” he added, noting that analysing the black box data “will take time”.



**Paying tribute:** Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at a candlelight vigil in Ottawa on Thursday for the victims of the plane crash in Tehran. • AP

## U.S. hands over ‘important data’ on crash to Ukraine

Goal is to establish the truth: Zelensky

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KIEV

U.S. officials have given Kiev “important” information about the crash of a Ukrainian airliner in Iran, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday after phone talks with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Mr. Zelensky said on Facebook that the possibility the plane had been shot down by a missile was not ruled out “but it has not yet been confirmed.”

He asked for Ukraine to be given all the information needed to conduct a thorough investigation.

“Our goal is to establish the undeniable truth,” he said. “The value of human life is above all political motives.”

In a phone call with Mr. Pompeo, he thanked Washington for its support.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky

“We are grateful for the valuable support of the United States in investigating the causes of the crash,” Mr. Zelensky told Mr. Pompeo, according to a statement released by his office.

He said he met charge d’affaires Kristina Kvien and received important information which could help in the investigation.” Mr. Zelensky and Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko also met with other U.S. officials including Ms. Kvien, the acting U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine.

## Enough proof missile struck plane: Boris

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Thursday that there was now “a body of information” that the Ukrainian Boeing 747 was brought down by an Iranian missile.

“There is now a body of information that the flight was shot down by an Iranian Surface to Air Missile. This may well have been unintentional,” Mr. Johnson said in a statement on the air disaster in which four British passengers died.

He reiterated the call for “all sides urgently to de-escalate to reduce tensions in the region.” “We are working closely with Canada and our international partners and there now needs to be a full, transparent investigation,” into the plane crash, he added.

# U.S. rejects Iraq request to discuss troop withdrawal

Says it is ready for a conversation, but not about pullout

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The United States on Friday rejected a request by Iraq to start talks on pulling out its 5,200 troops, notching up the discord after Washington killed a top Iranian General in Baghdad.

Angry at an attack seen as violating Iraqi sovereignty and enmeshing the country again in war, Iraq’s caretaker Prime Minister asked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo late on Thursday to send a delegation to begin withdrawal arrangements.

The State Department said it was ready for “a conversation” – but not about removing troops.

“At this time, any delegation sent to Iraq would be dedicated to discussing how to best recommit to our strategic partnership – not to



Iraq’s caretaker premier Adel Abdel Mahdi

discuss troop withdrawal, but our right, appropriate force posture in the Middle East,” State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said in a statement.

### ‘Force for good’

Calling the U.S. “a force for good,” Ms. Ortagus said: “We want to be a friend and partner to a sovereign,

prosperous and stable Iraq.”

President Donald Trump has described the 2003 US invasion of Iraq as a mistake and in the past criticised U.S. troop deployments, in Iraq and elsewhere, as wasteful.

Nonetheless, he has responded angrily to Iraqi efforts to expel U.S. troops, even threatening sanctions on a country promoted as a U.S. partner.

Mr. Pompeo, speaking to reporters, said that the U.S. troops’ mission in Iraq was “very clear” – training local forces and fighting the Islamic State extremist group.

“As times change and we get to a place where we can deliver up on what I believe, and the President believes, is our right structure, with fewer resources dedicated to that mission, we will do so,” he said.

# U.S. sanctions target eight top Iran officials, metals industry

‘It will continue until regime stops funding global terrorism’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The United States on Friday announced fresh sanctions against eight top Iranian officials it accused of working to destabilise the region, as well as against more than a dozen leading producers of metals in the Islamic republic.

“As a result of these actions, we will cut off billions of dollars of support to the Iranian regime,” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told reporters at a White

House briefing. Among the officials targeted in the new measures were Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, the Iranian armed forces Deputy Chief of Staff and Gholamreza Soleimani, the head of the Basij militia, a volunteer force loyal to the regime.

The U.S. Treasury also slapped sanction on 17 Iranian metals producers and mining companies, which, it said, generated billions of

dollars in revenue.

The sanctions also included a network of three entities that are based in China and the Seychelles as well as a vessel “involved in the purchase, sale, and transfer of Iranian metals products,” the Treasury said in a statement.

Mr. Mnuchin said the measures hitting Iran’s economy “will continue until the regime stops the funding of global terrorism and commits to never having nuclear weapons.”

### ELSEWHERE



#### Impeachment articles may reach Senate next week

WASHINGTON  
The Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives is poised to transmit articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump to the Senate next week, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Friday. REUTERS

#### Fiancee plotted murder of Sikh man: Pak. police

PESHAWAR  
The police in Pakistan have termed the death of a 25-year-old Sikh man as a case of “contract killing”. They have arrested Prem Kumari, 18, for plotting the murder of Parvinder Singh, as she did not want to marry him. PTI

## Gotabaya orders probe into anti-graft panels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Friday ordered a presidential probe into the previous government’s anti-corruption panels which investigated the members of the Rajapaksa family, including himself.

Two retired senior judges and a former police chief have been appointed to the panel which has been mandated to come out with a report within six months from January 9, according to a gazette issued by the government.

The work of the Financial Crime Division (FCID) of the police, the Bribery and Corruption Commission and the police’s special investi-



Gotabaya Rajapaksa

gation units would come under the focus of the probe covering the period commencing January 9, 2015 to November 16, 2019, the day of the presidential election when Mr. Rajapaksa was elected President.

The probe would focus on whether any public service personnel had been politically victimised during the previous government through its probe panels.

## Strong winds merge two enormous fires in Australia

Blaze spreads over 6,00,000 hectares in eastern States

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
EDEN

Strong winds in Australia merged two enormous fires into a mega blaze spanning an area four times the size of Greater London on Friday, while tens of thousands rallied to again demand action on climate change.

“The conditions are difficult today,” said Shane Fitzsimmons, rural fire service commissioner for New South Wales State.

“It’s the hot, dry winds that will prove once again to be the real challenge.”

Temperatures soared above 40° Celsius in parts of New South Wales and Victo-



**Making a stand:** Protesters rally in Melbourne, in response to the ongoing bushfire crisis in Australia. • GETTY IMAGES

ria, where attention was focused on the two fires that linked to form yet another monster blaze of more than 6,00,000 hectares.

In Sydney and Mel-

bourne, thousands of people again took to the streets to demand Australia’s conservative government do more to tackle global warming and reduce coal exports.

## 15 killed, 20 injured in blast at Pakistan mosque

Senior police officer among the dead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KARACHI

A powerful blast at a mosque during Friday evening prayers killed at least 15 people, including an Imam and a senior police officer, and left 20 others injured in Pakistan’s restive Balochistan province, three days after a bomb explosion claimed two lives in Quetta.

The nature of the explosion, which occurred inside the mosque during Maghrib prayers in the Ghousabad neighbourhood, was not immediately known, *Dawn* newspaper reported.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Amanullah was among the 15 people killed in the incident, Quet-

ta Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Abdul Razzaq Cheema said.

According to some media reports, the slain police officer was the likely target.

Last month, unidentified gunmen killed the DSP’s son in Quetta, *The Express Tribune* reported.

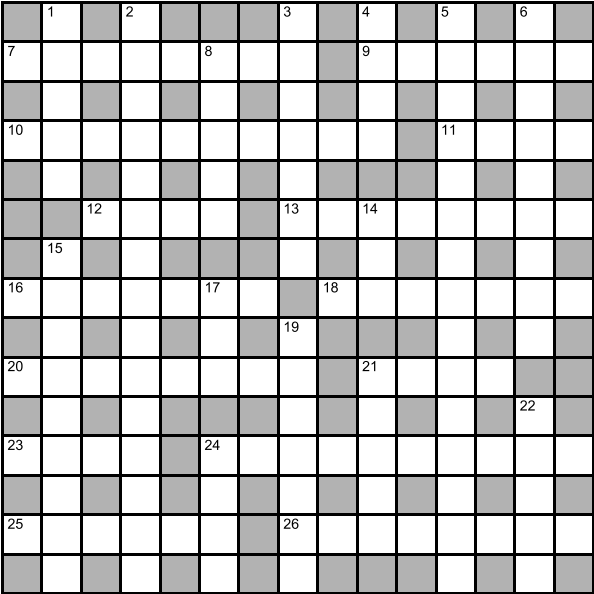
Twenty others were also injured in the blast, the report said.

Law enforcement agencies have cordoned off the area to investigate the incident.

The mosque, which is located in a densely-populated Pashtun-majority area, was being searched by the bomb disposal squad and security personnel.

### THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12830

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



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

#### ACROSS

- 7 Basilica tap ultimately helping to make a siege weapon (8)
- 9 Class cut short to obtain hard cash (6)
- 10 Assent in German by the Frenchmen to break the key to a sailing ship (10)
- 11 Original board of the hedge fund making a choice for the indecisive (4)

- 12 Bird, a string-controlled flier? (4)
- 13 Mercury removed by the irate fishmonger ends up getting a sword-like shape (8)
- 16 Ranch hand finding equipment from the east in a hooded garb (7)
- 18 A checkout for the afterlife? (7)
- 20 Abnormal loss of strength for the model attached to a bird entering the continent (8)
- 21 Cries like a corvine bird after the lawsuit’s announcement (4)
- 23 Grave bishop replacing an Oriental book (4)
- 24 Hidden cut needed patching after Tesla’s entry (10)
- 25 Dismissal mode is reportedly clear (6)
- 26 Lath manufacturing prior to countering the quote showing the nature of a good fielder (8)

#### DOWN

- 1 Horizontal number line? (1-4)
- 2 Hail bland length used to effect a particular mode of dismissal (8,3,4)

(set by Neyartha)

- 3 Dumpster almost destroyed in a dismissal mode (7)
- 4 Celebrity’s son steps down for the old aristocrat (4)
- 5 One might shake or break it in front of a small gate for a particular mode of dismissal (3,6,6)
- 6 Chronicer in Hawaii spoils write-up on the Scot (9)
- 8 Procedure for Rishi to place the uniform on top (5)
- 14 Settled the petty quarrel after the power cut (3)
- 15 Cap boxed by the stooge accidentally becomes ruined (4,2,3)
- 17 Campaign that may be a result of batsmen crossing over (3)
- 19 Talks profusely about going around the gate for a flood-prevention item (7)
- 21 Dismissal mode may cause friction after resistance drops, following the loss of the opener (5)
- 22 Authorized by law, a number of the Spanish return for the princess (5)
- 24 Separate the parts of the playground object (4)

### SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

#### Solution to puzzle 12829

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

#### Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

### FAITH

## Benefits of satsanga

Rishis of yore, endowed with the awareness of the past, present and future, have perceived clearly the changes that are characteristic in each Yuga and the kind of effect it will have on the people. They have always stressed the importance of satsanga, or association with the good, as most essential to all at all times. Such association helps one to develop detachment and cultivate the ability to discriminate between the real and the unreal in this world.

Anticipating the kind of confusion about the values and goals of life that is to prevail in Kali Yuga and the difficulty in aligning with the good, the sages have narrated the stories of great heroes and kings who have faced life stoically, and abided by dharma even in the most trying of circumstances. Such narratives are hence considered to be on a par with satsanga in inspiring and instilling the essential values and dharma for every individual, pointed out Sri B. Damodhara Dikshitar in a discourse. This beneficial effect is seen in the way the Pandavas are able to cope with the mental and physical strain that their exile has brought on them when Sage Brihadhaswa consoles them and narrates the story of Nala to them.

Nala becomes a victim of the influence of the spirit of Kali and loses his sense of judgment. Deceived by Pushkara in a game of dice, he loses his wealth and kingdom and is forced into exile. Nala deserts his wife who has accompanied him. He wanders about and is almost mad in his loneliness before he regains all he has lost and is reinstated as king. At least Yudhishtira’s mind is sound, and he has his brothers and the brahmanas with him in the forest. Trials and tribulations are the lot of man and have to be borne with fortitude is the truth of life.



MARKET WATCH

	10-01-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	41,600	0.36
US Dollar	70.94	0.38
Gold	40,554	-0.20
Brent oil	65.18	-0.01

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	392.05	0.25
Asian Paints	1792.55	20.00
Axis Bank	740.05	-2.80
Bajaj Auto	3101.20	15.50
Bajaj Finserv	9372.25	-23.00
Bajaj Finance	4144.85	20.65
Bharti Airtel	457.00	-3.10
BPCL	470.25	-0.30
Britannia Ind	2989.75	-11.35
Cipla	473.50	3.40
Coal India	205.30	7.30
Dr Reddys Lab	2933.00	12.50
Eicher Motors	20432.75	103.85
GAIL (India)	125.35	1.65
Grasim Ind	756.25	-1.05
HCL Tech	580.35	0.05
HDFC	2457.55	0.15
HDFC Bank	1282.70	11.30
Hero MotoCorp	2363.45	8.90
Hindalco	211.50	0.75
Hind Unilever	1954.00	18.95
ICICI Bank	540.25	-6.05
IndusInd Bank	1491.25	-16.40
Bharti Infratel	249.45	-1.15
Infosys	738.15	10.60
Indian OilCorp	125.45	0.95
ITC	238.00	2.20
JSW Steel	277.90	-0.20
Kotak Bank	1684.70	19.65
L&T	1324.60	8.45
M&M	546.60	5.35
Maruti Suzuki	7330.50	102.60
Nestle India Ltd.	14685.85	42.40
NTPC	120.30	0.95
ONGC	124.15	0.45
PowerGrid Corp	192.15	-0.80
Reliance Ind	1547.65	-0.35
State Bank	332.25	2.05
Sun Pharma	443.60	3.75
Tata Motors	196.35	4.35
Tata Steel	486.20	3.05
TCS	2213.55	-0.80
Tech Mahindra	776.25	2.60
Titan	1154.05	-9.40
UltraTech Cement	4444.60	56.60
UPL	600.30	-4.25
Vedanta	159.95	1.80
Wipro	251.75	-1.90
YES Bank	44.75	-2.55
Zee Entertainment	263.00	-9.05

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on January 10

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.74	71.06
Euro	78.49	78.85
British Pound	92.53	92.95
Japanese Yen (100)	64.52	64.82
Chinese Yuan	10.22	10.26
Swiss Franc	72.54	72.87
Singapore Dollar	52.42	52.66
Canadian Dollar	54.13	54.38
Malaysian Ringitt	17.35	17.44

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

January 10 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	50.1	(50.4)
22 ct gold (1 g)	3800	(3805)

Broadcasters protest new tariff regime

Warn of channel closure, job losses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The latest tariff order on cable TV pricing from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) will trigger a massive disruption for the country's broadcasting industry and lead to job losses as well as closure of smaller, niche channels, the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) said on Friday, questioning the regulator's move.

On January 1 this year, TRAI unveiled a 33% cap on discounts that can be offered to cable subscribers opting for a channel bouquet and a pricing cap of ₹12 per channel to be included in a bouquet, down from ₹19 per channel in the current regime. The changes, that also include a restriction on the number of bouquets that can

Infosys CEO Salil Parekh gets clean chit

No evidence of financial impropriety or executive misconduct, says the firm's audit committee report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

Tech major Infosys on Friday said its Audit Committee found no evidence of financial impropriety or executive misconduct.

The panel had looked into the allegations contained in anonymous whistle-blower complaints, conducted an independent investigation and determined that the allegations were substantially without merit, the company said in a stock market filing.

It may be recalled that in October, the Infosys board received anonymous whistle-blower mails raising a bunch of allegations against managing director and chief executive officer Salil Parekh and CFO Nilanjan Roy.

Following this, the Audit Committee conducted an investigation with the assistance of independent legal counsel Shardul Amarchand

The whistle-blower saga



In October 2019, a group of people wrote to the Infosys board and U.S. SEC claiming that:

- IT firm was taking 'unethical' steps to boost short-term revenue, profit
- CEO Salil Parekh was bypassing reviews/ approvals for large deals
- Mr. Parekh had asked staff to make certain 'assumptions' to show higher margins
- Several multi-billion dollar deals had nil margin
- CFO was also guilty in the issue

Mangaldas & Co. and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Infosys's Audit Committee chairperson D. Sundaram said the committee "determined that there was no evidence of any financial impropriety or executive

misconduct." The findings of the investigation, the report said, were adopted by the company's board and the committee concluded that no restatement of previously announced financial state-

Yes Bank board member quits

Nod for ₹10,000 cr. fund-raising; bank rejects \$1.2 bn offer

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Yes Bank said it was looking into the fit and proper status of Uttam Prakash Agarwal, its independent director who resigned citing governance issues, as directed by the Reserve Bank of India.

Mr. Agarwal was heading the bank's audit committee. Yes Bank said the board was scheduled to discuss the fit and proper status of Mr. Agarwal at Friday's board meeting but he resigned before the meeting started.

"In this respect [Mr. Agarwal's fit and proper status], the bank had obtained legal opinions from eminent jurists. These opinions were to be considered by the nomination and remuneration committee of the board of



the bank in their meetings scheduled for January 10, 2020. However, prior to the commencement of the proceedings of these meetings, the bank received the resignation of Mr. Agarwal," the lender said in a filing to the exchanges.

Mr. Agarwal was appointed as an additional director (independent) on November 14, 2018 for five years. A

chartered accountant, he chaired the audit committee of the board.

Citax offer

Separately, the bank has also informed the exchanges that the board, at its meeting on Friday, decided not to proceed with the \$1.2 billion investment offer of Erwin Singh Braich/SPGP Holdings in the bank. The offer was made in November 2019.

The offer of \$500 million investment from Citax Holdings and Citax Investment Group, scheduled to be discussed at the board meeting, could not be taken up and would be taken up later.

The board also approved raising funds of up to ₹10,000 crore, through debt and equity, the bank said.

CDC invests ₹400 crore in CIFCL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Co. Ltd. (CIFCL), the financial services arm of Murugappa Group, has raised ₹400 crore Tier-II debt from the U.K.-based CDC Group Plc. through the issuance of 10-year rupee denominated masala bonds.

This is CIFCL's maiden masala bond issue, which might be listed on the London Stock Exchange or any other international stock exchange, in future, the company said in a statement. "CDC and CIFCL have joined hands to address the business credit requirements of small and medium road transport operators and MSME customers," said Arun Alagappan, MD, CIFCL.

CAMS files draft papers for initial public offer

Issue size may be about ₹1,500 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Computer Age Management Services (CAMS), one of India's largest registrar and transfer agents (RTAs) for mutual funds (MFs), has filed the draft red herring prospectus (DHRP) for an initial public offer (IPO).

The public issue, which is likely to be worth about ₹1,500 crore, is an offer-for-sale from existing shareholders like National Stock Exchange, HDFC, Acsys Investments, along with the promoter entity Great Terrain Investment, that is managed by Warburg Pincus LLC.

As per the draft document filed by the company, CAMS has an aggregate market share of 69.4% based on mutual funds' average as-

sets or other published financial information was warranted.

Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani said, "I am pleased that after a rigorous investigation, the... committee has found no wrongdoing by the company or its executives. CEO Salil Parekh and CFO Nilanjan Roy are strong custodians of the company's proud heritage."

Additional stress

Addressing the media, he said, "Our financial team was put under additional stress this time as they have [had] to work on this Audit Committee Report and the Q3 financial results at the same time."

The investigation team conducted 128 interviews with 77 persons, including relevant company personnel. Some 46 people were identified to collect relevant

documents, electronic and forensic data required for investigation.

The committee reviewed over 2.1 lakh documents and images, to the tune of 8 terabytes of data, for the nine-month ended September 30, 2019, the statement said.

On the key findings on company matters, the report said the allegations regarding treasury policy were unsubstantiated as the company strictly complied with its treasury policy, without any interference or pressure from either the CEO or CFO.

The allegations regarding visa costs and allegations regarding large-deal approvals were also unsubstantiated, it said.

Regarding personal allegations made against Mr. Parekh, the report said that all allegations regarding personal matters of the CEO proved to be without merit.

Tech major hires 12,000 people in third quarter

'Dependence on H-1B visas reduced'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

Infosys has reported a gross hiring of 12,000 people in third quarter of the fiscal.

Some 7,000 of these came from campus recruitment, while the rest were lateral hires.

Chief Operating Officer Pravin Rao said, "We had a further reduction in attrition, demonstrating the results of our continued efforts towards strengthening employee engagement and value proposition." Infosys saw its attrition declining for the last two consecutive quarters. The most recent quarter saw it coming down to 19.6% against 21.7%, in the quarter ended September

2019. The headcount stood at 2,43,454 at the end of December 2019 with a net addition of 6,968 people.

Offshore employee localisation improved to 72.3% against 71.3% a year ago, and its overall utilisation too moved up to 80.4% from 79.8% a year ago. The firm said it had reduced dependence on H-1B visas by increasing focus on localisation. "There are so many changes taking place in the company and people who are unable to cope with these changes may be allowed to leave," he said.

Earlier, CEO Salil Parekh said the uncertainty for the industry from Brexit would continue.

**Steady innings**

₹738.25

Jul.15, 19 Jan.10, 20

Our deepening engagement with customers has led to double digit growth year-to-date, leading to a rise in revenue guidance along with expanding operating margins

SALIL PAREKH, MD & CEO

Metrics	Q3FY20	Q3FY19	% increase
Revenue from operations*	23,092.00	21,400.0	7.90
Profit*	4,466.00	3,610.00	23.70
EPS (basic ₹)	10.50	8.30	

\*₹ in crore

Infosys net surges 23%, firm raises guidance

Large deal wins worth \$1.8 bn signed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

Infosys said its overall performance for the third quarter, ended December 31, was 'satisfactory' on multiple counts: broad-based growth, steady increase in client metrics and large deal wins worth \$1.8 billion.

The firm has witnessed a 23% year-on-year rise in its net profit for the quarter. Net profit rose to ₹4,466 crore compared with the ₹3,610 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

Total revenue for the third quarter grew by 7.9% to ₹23,092 crore, up from the ₹21,400 crore in the year-earlier period.

Operating profit up

Operating profit stood at ₹5,064 crore during the quarter, an increase of 4.8% year-on-year (YoY). The quarter saw its operating margin improving by 20 basis points to 21.9% compared with the previous quarter.

Infosys CEO and MD Salil Parekh said, "[The] Q3 results further underscore that we remain steadfast in our journey of sustained client relevance and deepening engagement with them, as they partner with us in navigating their next in the digital transformation era. For us, this has translated

into double-digit growth year-to-date, leading to an increase in revenue guidance, accompanied by expanding operating margins."

Infosys posted a cumulative revenue of ₹67,524 crore and an operating profit of ₹14,447 crore, a YoY growth of 10.4% and 1.3% respectively, in the last nine months of the current fiscal. COO U.B. Pravin Rao said, "large deal wins continue to be robust with a growth of 56% so far this year."

Commenting on operating margins, CFO Nilanjan Roy said, "Operating margins improved further during the quarter, driven by relentless cost optimisation and operating leverage. Cash generation was extremely strong with cumulative free cash flow crossing \$1.5 billion.

"Return on equity increased further to 25.9%, driven by margin expansion and increased shareholder payouts." The firm revised its FY20 revenue outlook upwards to 10-10.5% in constant currency. Operating margin guidance was maintained in the 21-23% range.

In Q3, digital revenue accounted for 40.6% of the firm's total revenue, against 38.3% in the previous quarter and 32.5% in the corresponding quarter a year ago.

RBI chalks out financial inclusion strategy for 2024

Aims at universal mobile access to financial services

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has chalked out an ambitious strategy for financial inclusion till 2024, in which it aims to strengthen the ecosystem for various modes of digital financial services in all Tier-II to Tier VI centres to create the necessary infrastructure to move towards a less-cash society by March 2022.

While charting out a National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI) for the period 2019-2024, RBI said, "Financial inclusion is increasingly being recognised as a key driver of economic growth and poverty alleviation the world over."

One of the objectives of the strategy includes in-



Financial inclusion is increasingly being recognised as a key driver of economic growth the world over

creasing outreach of banking outlets of to provide banking access to every village within a 5-km radius or a hamlet of 500 households in hilly areas by March 2020. RBI said that the aim was also to see that every adult had access to a financial service provider through a mobile device by March 2024. With the aim of providing basic of

financial services, a target has been set that every willing and eligible adult, who has been enrolled under the Prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana, be enrolled under an insurance scheme and a pension scheme by March 2020.

The plan is also to make the Public Credit Registry (PCR) fully operational by March 2022 so that authorised financial entities could leverage the same for assessing credit proposals from all citizens.

Gem and jewellery exports dip 2% in Dec.

Industry seeks budgetary sops

LALATENDU MISHRA MUMBAI

With the December 2019 gem and jewellery export and import numbers showing a decline, the industry has asked the government to intervene and has sought budgetary sops.

As per available data, the overall gross exports of gems and jewellery declined 1.89% to \$2,435.93 million during December 2019 as compared to \$2,482.96 million in December 2018.

The overall gross exports of the commodity declined by 5.30% to \$27.69 billion during April to December 2019 as compared to \$29.23 billion during the same period last year. The overall gross import of gems and jewellery in April to December 2019 showed a decline

of 6.52% to \$18.68 billion from \$19.98 billion registered during April to December 2018. The overall gross import of rough diamonds in April to December 2019 showed a decline of 15.86% to \$10.16 billion from \$12.07 billion registered during April to December 2018.

"We hope the government is watching the tumble in our export numbers and would [heed] our long standing requests on duty reduction on gold, platinum and diamonds. Ease of doing business on customs issues, resolution of GST input credit challenge and introduction of a new progressive SEZ policy are some of our suggestions," Colin Shah, vice chairman, Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council, said.

Worst auto sales decline in 2 decades

Prior to 2019, annual sales fell only twice in 22 years — in 2007 and 2008

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

With domestic vehicle sales continuing to decline in December by 13%, the auto industry recorded its worst-ever annual sales fall in two decades in 2019, as consumer sentiment remained subdued amid a slowdown in the economy.

According to data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) on Friday, in December 2019, the total vehicle wholesales stood at over 14.05 lakh units as against over 16.17 lakh units in the year-ago month. For the full year, vehicle manufacturers sold over 2.3 crore units across categories in 2019, a decline of 13.77% from over 2.67 crore vehicles sold in 2018.

Prior to 2019, the industry had witnessed a decline in

SCREECHING HALT				
Vehicle Category	Dec. 2019 (Units)	% change from Dec. 2018	Full year 2019 (Units)	% change from 2018
Cars	1,42,126	-8.40	18,19,948	-18.91
Utility Vehicles	85,252	30.02	9,84,801	4.78
Medium and heavy CVs	21,388	-31.70	2,88,623	-27.10
Light commercial vehicles	45,234	1.26	5,66,136	-7.13
Scooters	3,06,550	-24.52	58,41,259	-16.03
Motorcycles	6,97,819	-12.01	1,20,12,896	-12.92

SOURCE: SIAM

annual sales only twice since SIAM started recording the data in 1997 — in 2007 when overall sales declined by 1.44%, and in 2008 when the sales fell 1.11%.

SIAM president Rajan Wadhwa said that while degrowth had been "lesser" in December, some challenges still remained for the indus-

try. "Festive season positivity has not sustained. While we have seen some improvement, the consumer sentiment continues to remain low," he added. "Economic growth remains an area of concern... the GDP growth forecast does not bear good news for the industry, especially for the commercial

vehicles segment, which is clearly linked to it. If the economy grows at 6-7% in the Q1 of next fiscal, CVs should return to growth levels as seen 3-4 quarters back. Besides, low demand from rural areas continues to be a matter of concern," Mr. Wadhwa said.

In December 2019, passenger vehicle sales declined by 1.24% to over 2.35 lakh units, with car sales falling 8.4% to over 1.42 lakh units and those of vans dipping 53.6% to 8,408 units. However, utility vehicle sales grew 30% to 85,252 units. Mr. Wadhwa said going forward, he expected UVs to continue growing on the back of new model launches, while car sales may "remain flatish".

For the full year, PV sales declined by 12.75%, which too is the steepest decline in over two decades, to over 29.62 lakh units.

Engineering exports to be same as last year

India facing capacity shortage: EEP

M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA COIMBATORE

Engineering exports this financial year are expected to be almost the same as that of last year (2018-2019), according to Ravi Sehgal, chairman of EEP India.

Mr. Sehgal, who was in Coimbatore on Thursday, told *The Hindu* that at the beginning of 2019-2020, the estimate was that engineering exports this fiscal would be about \$85 billion. Between April and November 2019, the exports were down 1% compared to the same period the previous year. "Last financial year, it was \$ 81 billion. This year, it is expected to be almost the same," he said.

The U.S. and the EU are major destinations for engineering exports and China's

supplies have come down drastically due to several reasons such as pollution issues, high labour cost, anti-dumping duties, etc.

European clients had approached Indian companies in the beginning of this financial year as Chinese supplies reduced. But, India did not have adequate capacity.

"We have capacity shortages. We would have reached \$90 billion [engineering exports] if [we had had] capacity," he said.

Now that Indian exporters know that there is potential, they are investing. Most of the foundries are in the MSME sector and so, investments for capacity expansion do take time, he said. "India is still a preferred destination. We will see the effect in 2020."





Mishra is currently creating a wedding dress for one of Qatar's princesses. The dress, made entirely of French-knot embroidery, has taken close to 20,000 man-hours to make.

international spotlight. In 2014, the National Institute of Design graduate was the first Indian designer to win the Woolmark Prize. He has also shown a lot at the Paris Fashion Week, even debuting his couture collection in Fall 2019. The recognition this year seems like the next natural rung in the ladder.

The inspiration for the upcoming collection is twofold: his recent trip to the Maldives and visuals from the film *Madagascar*, which he's watched a number of times because of his daughter.

He shows me an almost-finished blouse. On it, his signature 3D embroidery takes the form of layered flora and fauna – tigers, peacocks, monkeys, leopards and various birds, amid lush greens with a heart of pale blue embroidered water. The garments, despite techniques like *zardozi*, *resham ka kaam*, and *fareesha* embroidery, are machine washable – “it is robust haute couture,” he says – and they're relatively light, at about 800 gm.

**Un-learning sustainability**  
But Mishra is hesitant to answer questions on the materials if they are tied to ideas of sustainability. While he is known for his fidelity to handlooms



Smart collabs

Two Indian jewellers, Mehta & Sons and Anjali Bhimrajka Fine Jewels, are “co-creators” for the show, making complementing jewellery. This is how Mishra says he collaborates to smartly manage the finances of a big-ticket event.

**New inductee** (Clockwise from left) Designs from Mishra's previous shows; the designer; a moodboard and sketch from his upcoming line

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

signers' workshops are. His “decentralisation of production” he says is an important step in sustainability. It reduces the strain on urban centres for starters, a root cause of various kinds of pollution in urban pockets. “It also makes more economic sense for me; there are better workspaces at lesser rent, and the workers are closer to their own homes and families,” he notes.

2020 and beyond

Mishra, who has even sold at the now-shut iconic Parisian boutique, Colette says that the future of retail is “kind of bleak” across the world. It is the era of trunk shows, pop-ups and online retailing, and therefore there is a need for strong branding for young designers like himself.

With this in mind, and an eye on the future, he wants to engage with need-based production (against orders), and not be compelled to become inventory-heavy.

While he sees this as a smart model for couture in India, and for the future of the planet, he also distances himself from commenting for the industry, stating that “the products are all different, and everyone creates their own universe”.

Online retailers, though, get his vote. Farfetch, Yoox and Lyst are some internet-native sites he sells from. He especially likes New York-based Moda Operandi – both Mishra and his NID batch mate, Aneeth Arora (of pero), retail there – which lets customers view a designer's entire runway collection and pre-order directly without relying on a retailer or stockist's curation. This not only democratises the market, but also facilitates production based on real time need.

As far as he is concerned, this might be the most responsible way forward.



• GETTY IMAGES

Art for art's sake

“Investors are going to take the poetry out and put business in,” says Mishra, who isn't ready to partner with anyone yet. “I want to keep pushing poetry as long as possible.” With the PHCW, he is now in a better place to give more space to his artistic sensibility – he even wants to start putting serial numbers to the pieces he makes, much like artists do with their canvas reprints.

MISHRA IS  
officially  
haute

my work through a few more seasons, I can graduate to a foreign member category,” says Mishra.

This is where he brings in Elie Saab. In 2003, when the Lebanese designer was 39 and barely known, he was invited by the Chambre Syndicale to be a guest member. Rahul turned 40 last November, a month before the invitation was made public. If he follows Saab's trajectory, he could be on his way to being inducted as a foreign member by 2023, and will expand into a mega empire, like Saab who now also sells perfumes and has ventured into interior design.

Not the first

This is not Mishra's first brush with an

Letting  
lungs go

In a time of unrest, The Aahvaan Project, a folk music and storytelling collective born in 2015, is coming into its own with performances that comment on society

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

Vedi Sinha, 27, was drifting along for a while trying to find her niche. The singer-storyteller, who grew up in Delhi, finishing school at Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, and later graduating from a film and video course at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, felt uncertain and out of place for a gruelling few months. It was a chance volunteering stint at the week-long travelling folk music festival in Rajasthan, called the Kabir Yatra, that was a point of pivot in her life.

“I went there sometime in



2015 I think. And I went as a volunteer because I had no money at the time,” she recalls. The first few days were busy and a blur. When she finally had the time to attend a performance in full, she was moved. “It was when a singer, Prahlad ji was singing. I felt everything around me fade. For the next two hours, I was so affected,” she says, adding that she “realised how in the garb of spirituality, the idea of humanity gets shoved in the background, and religion takes over.”

She started writing again, weaving her observations and thoughts about the world into stories. “It is a meditative release of emotions of things I'm seeing and feeling around me. I always wanted to understand



and tell stories,” Vedi, who has also been conducting storytelling workshops in government schools, through not-for-profit initiatives like Anjuman, Miracle Foundation, Greenpeace, and Balwadi pre-schools, says. She then bought an *ektara*, a single

stringed instrument that produces a distinct twang, and is often heard accompanying travelling folk singers.

“My sister and I learned classical music for a little while as kids, but I never felt like I was fully able to sing. Folk however,

**A calling** Vedi Sinha (centre) performing with her group

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

allows you to really let your lungs go,” says Vedi.

It felt like a calling – and so, finding collaborators to put the pieces together, she called her effort The Aahvaan Project. The core members today include her twin Pakhi, and long-time collaborators guitarist Ujjwal Raj Sen and percussionist Makrand Sanon.

The group has been performing in intimate gatherings. Their first gig was just a couple months ago at the Indian Women Press Corps, and later at smaller *sabha*-styled spaces. Kintsugi Studios, a Delhi-based recording space for indie artists has already had a Kintsugi Singles video recorded and produced The Aahvaan Project's *Chakka* (up on YouTube).

Tonight, they will perform an hour-long set, called *Kahani Lashon Ke Pul Ki*. The piece is told through the eyes of Vedi's *ektara*, which observes the stories of people and the state of things as it travels through the country along with the artist.

In addition to Vedi's words, the set includes snippets of poetry by Ali Sardar Jafri and Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

7 p.m. onwards; for details on the location and venue, email [theahvaanproject@gmail.com](mailto:theahvaanproject@gmail.com)

Storytellers unite

A themed evening of music and stories blended with ghazals for poetry lovers

SUPRIYA RAMESH

Anhad, a music band of specially-abled people, other music groups like The Midnight Walkers and United Sessions, and poetry reciters like Roopam Sharma, will perform at Tamaashaa, a musical poetry show in Delhi this Sunday. The Modern Poets, who have organised over 50 shows around India, including thirty-five in Delhi, says Tamaashaa is their latest presentation, with the theme of the 2015 film *Tamasha* in mind. The Ranbir Kapoor starrer had the protagonist overcome societal expectations and follow his dream of being a storyteller. Edited excerpts from an interview with Mohit Dwivedi, co-founder of the group.

**Is there any current social issue on which you are focusing?**

Mental illness has become one of the major and most common problems among youngsters, be it students, job-hol-

ders, or artists. Most go through this phase of depression and anxiety at least once in their career. Keeping this in mind we will be performing different acts to create awareness.

**Can you tell us about your earlier shows?**

Shows like *Dhanak* (for specially-abled children), *Sankalp* (an initiative for old age homes and orphanages), *Yes I Stammer* (for the people who stammer) and *The Basics* (where all the art forms like comedy, singing, drama, poetry, came together) were our few major projects. Their sequels are also coming soon.

**What are your upcoming shows?**

An event fully dedicated to transgenders called *The Third*, and *Green Day*, a plantation drive are the two main events on our list for now.

*Tamaashaa, January 12th, 5 p.m. onwards, at La Vie En Rose Fashart Cafe, Saket. For tickets, Insider.in; upwards of Rs.200*



Mohit Dwivedi

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



MUSIC

Folk

Amarrass Records is hosting Amarrass Nights, an evening of music highlighting the Kamaicha, a folk instrument played only by the Manganiyar community. The event will feature the rendition of Sufiyana kalaams by the Ghewar & Firoze Khan brothers, followed by qawwalis of Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan by the Rehmat-e-Nusrat group.

**VENUE:** Sunder Nursery, Nizamuddin  
**TIME:** 7 p.m. - 10 p.m.



ART

Asia-inspired works

Thread through Asia, a solo show by French artist and Zen practitioner Guyseika will be inaugurated today at Galerie Romain Rolland. On view until 16th January, the exhibit is the result of more than 20 years of his exploration of Asian cultures. The show features over 50 contemplative works done in various media.

**VENUE:** Alliance Française de Delhi, Lodhi Estate  
**TIME:** 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



EXPERIENTIAL

Art and food

Imperfecto Shor presents an amalgamation of art and food with artist Mandira Chawla and chef Akanksha Dean. Mandira with her creations, will showcase art inspired from nature and beauty. The event will witness items prepared by Akanksha, which includes creations like The Royal Portal and Smoked Chicken Pizza.

**VENUE:** Imperfecto Shor Cafe, Aerocity  
**TIME:** 12 noon onwards



THEATRE

Comic act

Pacific Mall is hosting a stand-up comic act called Kaafi Wild Hai by Appurv Gupta, this evening. The show will feature Appurv in his signature avatar of Guptaji, who will narrate, in Hinglish, some of his favourite stories, each having a ‘wild’ character, promising an evening of entertainment.

**VENUE:** Pacific Mall, Tagore Garden  
**TIME:** 7:30 p.m. onwards



FILM

American classic

Select Citywalk will screen Hollywood film *Casablanca*, directed by Michael Curtiz. Set in World War II, this 1942 romantic film centres on an American expatriate who must choose whether or not he should help his former lover and her fugitive husband in escaping from Casablanca.

**VENUE:** Saket District Centre, Pushp Vihar  
**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.



FILM REVIEWS

An EMOTIONAL force

Deepika Padukone's performance and Meghna Gulzar's direction ensure that *Chhapaak* is like a splash that leaves you misty with emotions, if not entirely drenched

NAMRATA JOSHI

It's unfair to begin the review of a Meghna Gulzar film with a reference to her father. However, it's also difficult not to, because *Chhapaak*'s title track, written by him, has been playing on loop in my head, even a day after having watched the film. "*Koi chehra mita ke, aur aankh se hata ke; chand chheente uda ke jo gaya: Chhapaak se pehchaan le gaya* (Someone erased one's face and turned one invisible, while leaving behind a splatter in the air; Took away the core of one's being with a mere splash)" – by stringing together a few simple words Gulzar gets to the heart and soul of Laxmi Agarwal's life, its horrors and struggles and those of many other acid attack survivors like her. "*Sab jhulas gaya* (Everything got singed)", is how he ends the song. It is indeed about life turning to ashes for Laxmi (Malti in the film) in the blink of an eyelid, but also about how she rises from it, Phoenix-like; how a bottomless tragedy also sets her ashore, helps her find herself.

Even though she may have changed the names of the dramatis personae and made the narrative go back and forth in time, Meghna is scrupulous in following Laxmi's journey in every possible detail – her own story, the people around her, her relationship with them, the various situations, challenges and dilemmas thrown at her, even the NGO Chhanv Foundation (Chhaya



Real and measured Deepika Padukone plays Malti, an acid attack survivor ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Chhapaak

**DIRECTOR:** Meghna Gulzar  
**CAST:** Deepika Padukone, Vikrant Massey, Madhurjeet Sarghi  
**STORYLINE:** Based on the life of acid attack survivor Laxmi Agarwal and her campaign to stop the sale of acid in India  
**RUN TIME:** 123 minutes

in the film) that she had been a part of, find a place on screen.

Despite the attempt to whip up minor controversies on social media, the perpetrator of the crime – Naem Khan – doesn't quite lose his religion or find himself converted to Hinduism in the film. Only his name changes to Babbu aka Bashir Khan. It's to the credit of the writers – Meghna and Atika Chohan – that religion doesn't become the defining point or the font of Babbu's villainy. Nor does Babbu's religion and community get demonised for his individual wrongdoing. It's a welcome change from the "violent Islamist" trope that recent Bollywood films keep falling into. Save one scene featuring Babbu's rather evil looking mom, religion is treated in a matter of fact way. The transgressions of Babbu are religion-agnostic; they are to do with his own patriarchal mindset, warped psyche, male toxicity and an overtly possessive streak when it comes to Malti.

There are refreshing, radical departures on other fronts too in *Chhapaak*. The obvious one is overturning the notion of vanity associated with stardom. In eschewing a linear telling, the film ends up showing the real radiant face of its lead for the longest time, only towards the end. From the very start, it doesn't fight shy of showing the facial impairment caused by an acid attack, in all its unsightliness, with nary any relief. Yet it's also not exploitative or manipulative. And, it's to Deepika Padukone's credit, who one is not used to "seeing" in this manner, that her Malti grows on you and somewhere down the road you cease to notice the disfigurement, and take her for the person that she is.

The film also has a very real and wonderfully written male character – Amol, the NGO activist and Malti's friend, confidant and more. Vikrant Massey is spot-on in pinning down a modern crusader's sense of despair, frustrations, and cynicism. Only someone as bitter as Amol could very believably spell out the sad hierarchy in the gruesome crimes against women – "*Rape ke aage acid attack ki kya pooch* (What say does an acid attack case have in front of rape?)" His seeming lack of humour is played off well against Malti's surprisingly sharp, though well-concealed wit.

"Acid aap pe nahin, mujh pe phainka hai. Aur mujhe party kar ni hai (Acid was thrown at me, not you. And I want to party)," she takes the mickey out of the killjoy that he is. Or when she says of his stern ways, "*Wo sarkar thodi hain jo unse darein* (He is not the government that we should be running scared of him)". Call it zeitgeist, but the film critics at the preview laughed aloud together at the unintended irony of these lines, given the contemporary political context.

The "silent pyaar" between Amol and Malti casts a mellow

shade. Malti herself comes across as a subdued person, complete with a shy smile and diffident demeanour. She is a woman of few words and it reflects in the spartan dialogue too.

In a way, this is reflective of the film's muted, low-key appeal at large. The cataclysmic incident later, Malti's life ahead is all about the basic and the fundamental – several reconstructive surgeries, ongoing court cases, and petition for ban on acid. There are no major troughs and ridges and the writers desist from injecting any additional drama into things either. The endemic societal patriarchy gets a throwaway, casual reference like the cop balking at the phone numbers of boys stored in Malti's mobile, or in the scepticism about the case ever getting registered.

The script keeps moving, doesn't dwell too long and pointedly at any juncture to stress on any point. Whether it's the brother's friends calling Malti a ghost worthy of being packed off to a circus or her packing away her jewellery because she doesn't have the ears or nose to sport them on, or sharing a candid, fun togetherness with her father who is drinking on the sly. Everything flows on.

It's this sparseness, minimalism, and austerity in the telling, and an essential quietude that lend *Chhapaak* an emotional force of its own; though some may end up finding it measured to a fault.

The only excess the film indulges in, is Fabindia. The wardrobe of almost every character/actor appears to have been sourced from the store. And that makes for quite a visual splash.

Between fervour and fatigue

*Tanhaji—The Unsung Warrior* kicks off well, flounders in the middle, only to revive and serve a few good punches in the climax



Narrative salvaged Ajay Devgn does an efficient job as Tanhaji ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

NAMRATA JOSHI

If there's a condition called period drama/historical fatigue, then I am suffering a wee bit from it. Little then to get excited about yet another Hindi film that aims to make Indians proud of who we are by taking us back to the past, right to the end of the 17th century, when we used to be the "*sone ki chidiya*" (prosperous), till "*baahari taaqar*" (foreign invaders) came and split us apart. "*Hum apni hi dharti par gunehgaar ho gaye* (We turned guilty in our own motherland)," says a voiceover at the very start of the film.

However, the fictionalised account (there are disclaimers aplenty) of the life of Tanaji Malusare, one of Maratha emperor Shivaji's bravest generals, has a swashbuckler touch that manages to work, partially if not entirely.

It's 1670. Tanhaji (Ajay Devgn) is busy preparing for his son Rayba's wedding when he has to leave it all aside to go on a mission for Shivaji (Sharad Kelkar) to recapture Kondhana fort for the Marathas from the Mughals. It's part of Aurangzeb's plan to use the strategic fort as the base for his Mughal expansion into South India, and the fort is in control of

Tanhaji - The Unsung Warrior

**DIRECTOR:** Om Raut  
**CAST:** Ajay Devgn, Kajol, Saif Ali Khan, Sharad Kelkar  
**STORYLINE:** Fictionalised account of the life of Tanaji Malusare, Shivaji's military leader, who recaptured the Kondhana fort for the Marathas from the Mughals  
**RUN TIME:** 131 minutes

his Rajput officer Udaybhan Rathod (Saif Ali Khan).

Things kick off well with Devgn's flying entry. Soon it all becomes about one battle set-piece after another, or song-n-dance extravaganzas, all enhanced by 3D and played to booming, militaristic soundtrack, the particularly rousing '*Ghamand Kar*'. There is much play on the *bhagwa* (ochre/saffron) colour, some scheming dissenters within the Maratha army, and human chess games between Aurangzeb and the Shah of Iran. But the dreaded Islamophobia is contained, though not entirely done away with.

A certain ennui starts to set in, in the middle, despite the grand scale and execution. However, things do come to a head effectively again in the climactic se-

quence. The scaling of the steep hill fort of Kondhana, Tanhaji's kinetic combat with Udaybhan, and that last strike at victory. It does work itself to some kind of collective catharsis and adrenalin rush. The hero and villain sit on convenient extremes. Devgn is suitably efficient as the one who can't do anything wrong. But Udaybhan gets interpreted a la Alaud-din Khilji, perhaps just because of his association with Aurangzeb.

Saif Ali Khan plays the manic, unhinged guy who'd chop off an elephant's trunk without so much as blinking, and eat crocodile's meat. There's a hint of backstory about class politics coming in the way of his love for a girl called Kamal (Neha Sharma) now a widow in his captivity. It may have given a good context to his villainy but the thread is left hanging. Sharad Kelkar makes for a handsome and dignified Shivaji, as we have known him through our dives into history books as well as the Amar Chitra Kathas series.

The women however – Shivaji's mother Rajmata Jijabai (Padmavati Rao) and Tanhaji's wife Savitri (Kajol) – expectedly, have almost no role to play, other than as being the keepers of the male conscience.

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



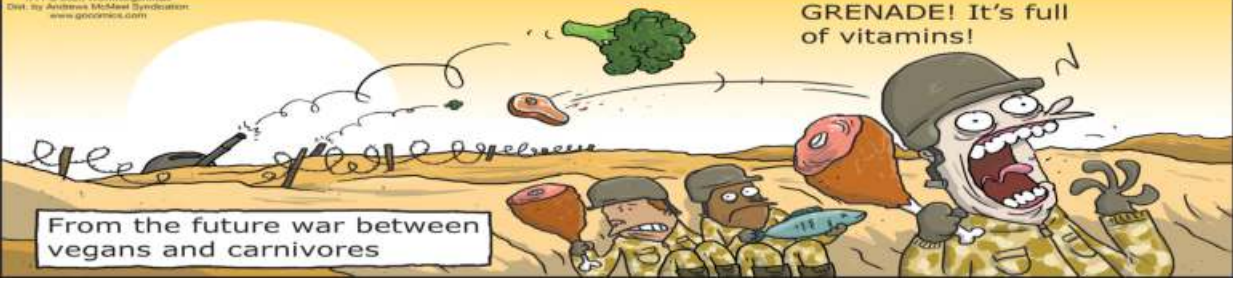
CALVIN AND HOBBS



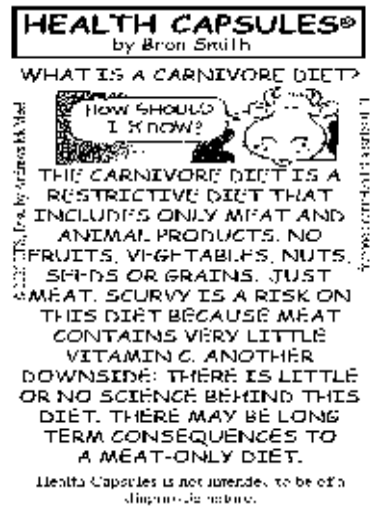
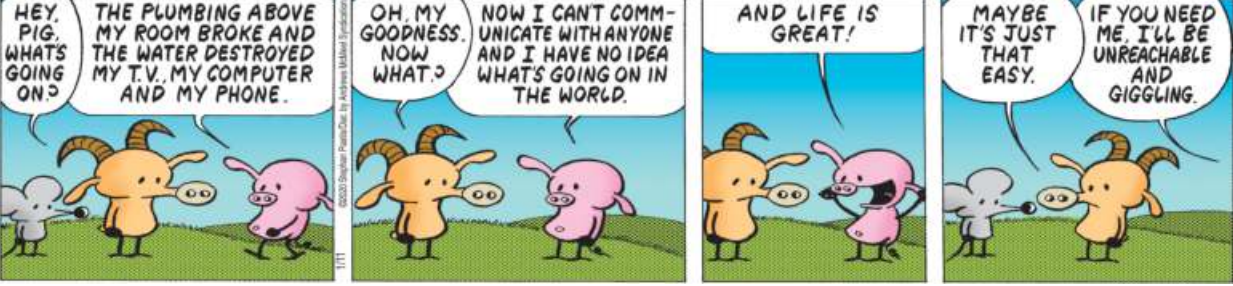
TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13274

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- Across  
1 Policy of strict law enforcement (4,9)  
8 Distressing (7)  
9 Established (3,2)  
10 Cry loudly (4)  
11 Back to front (8)  
13 Sri Lanka, formerly (6)  
14 Means of avoiding something (3-3)  
17 Retract (8)  
19 Defended successfully (4)

- 21 Forbidden (5)  
22 Haven (7)  
24 Norwegian polar explorer d. 1928 (5,8)  
■ Down  
1 Fastener (3)  
2 Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch, for example (7)  
3 Petty quarrel (4)  
4 Soothed (6)  
5 Cockney tea (5,3)  
6 Brief written records (5)



To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

- 7 Speeded up (9)  
10 Isolated spot (9)  
12 West Sussex racecourse (8)  
15 Taxis (7)  
16 Come to understand (6)  
18 Shin bone (5)  
20 Broad smile (4)  
23 Uninterrupted sequence (3)

The solution will appear on January 13, 2020.  
Solution No. 13273

	V	G	T	G	
	P	E	R	I	P
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C	O	B	A	L	T
I	N	N	U	E	N
D	L	D	R	A	B
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# Prodigy, world-beater, queen — Humpy’s career arc is complete

But the serial winner still has ambitions of adding the coveted classical championship to her rapid chess crown

It was the happiest moment of my life, but I wasn't expecting it, as rapid chess hasn't exactly been my cup of tea

HUMPY

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Koneru Humpy first caught the world's attention at Cannes.

The beautiful, serene city on the French Riviera is known for its prestigious film festival, which dates back to 1946. But in 1997, it was also the venue of the World Youth Chess Championship, in which Humpy won the girls' under-10 title.

It was the beginning of one of the most remarkable careers in Indian sport. Since its opening scene was played out in a city that has previewed some of the classics of world cinema, it is perhaps not surprising that the script of Humpy's life has had twists and turns aplenty.

Moscow witnessed the pleasantest of turns two weeks ago, when Humpy surprised many, including herself, by winning

chess competitions are held in three formats — classical, rapid and blitz — played with varying time controls. Wins in classical chess are valued higher, just as a victory in a cricket Test carries more weight than one in a One Day International or Twenty20 International.

Humpy prefers the classical format, which gives a player much more time than the other two, and concedes that the world rapid title came as a surprise.

“The tournament was announced just a fortnight before, so there wasn't much time to prepare or think about it,” says Humpy over the phone from her home in Vijayawada, a few hours after arriving from Moscow. She played solid chess, keeping her nerve during the tense closing moments of the event. “It was the happiest moment of my life, yes, but I wasn't expecting it, as rapid chess hasn't exactly been my cup of tea.”

### Calm under pressure

Praveen Thipsay, India's third Grandmaster, isn't surprised, however, by Humpy's success in the shorter format. “She has this ability to play correctly even when she is under time pressure, and that means she can calculate well in rapid chess,” he says. “This is a fantastic achievement, no doubt. But, even two decades ago, I had felt that she had the potential to become world champion.”

This is not just because Thipsay has lost to her on the chessboard. One of those defeats came during the National 'A' championship at Kozhikode in 2003, when Humpy, the only woman in India's premier domestic tournament, began her campaign in astonishing fashion. Just 16 then, she started by beating just about everybody in sight and led the tournament until the eighth round before finishing sixth.

### THE HUMPY FILE

- Born March 31, 1987 (Gudivada, Andhra Pradesh)
- Began learning chess at age six
- Highest rating: 2623 (2009)
- Current rating: 2580
- Highest ranking: No. 2
- Current ranking: No. 3

### Timeline: early start, consistent success

- 1993:** First tournament (Vijayawada city championship; first in under-8)
- 1995:** Won first State championship (under-8)
- 1996:** Won first National championship (under-10)
- 1997:** Earned FIDE rating (2140) at National 'B' championship | Won first global championship (world

- under-10 title)
- 1999:** Asian under-12 boys' champion
- 2000:** Asian junior champion
- 2001:** World junior (under-20) girls' champion at 14 | First title in men's open events (Hotel Lipa International, Hungary) | Became Woman Grandmaster
- 2002:** Became Grandmaster
- 2003:** Asian champion
- 2006:** Two gold medals at Doha Asian Games
- 2007:** Two gold and two silver at Asian Indoor Games
- 2011:** Challenger for the world title
- 2012:** Bronze at World Rapid Championship
- 2015:** Bronze at World Team Championship
- 2019:** World rapid champion

Before that, she had scored an incredible 16 out of 17 points in the National women's 'A' championship at the same venue. She won 15 games — the first 11 in a row — and drew two. She did that in what was India's strongest women's championship ever. She was also making a point. She hadn't played the three previous editions because she felt it wasn't competitive enough for her. But her critics interpreted the decision as a lack of courage.

Humpy has had more than

her share of critics — and this began before she even turned 15. When she became a Woman Grandmaster, after scoring her final norm from a Hungarian tournament, her credentials were doubted in public.

She answered all her doubters in emphatic fashion. She was just 18 when she first became World No. 2, behind Polgar, and remained there for the next five years. Since October 2002, she has never fallen out of the world's top 10. At 17, she reached the semifinals of the

2004 World Championship (classical). She entered the last four in 2008 and 2010, too. In 2011, she lost the title match to China's Hou Yifan.

“I know I should have won at least one World Championship from all those events,” rues Humpy. “Regardless of all the tournaments and age-group titles you win, what really matters is the world title.”

When it came to age-group events — and there are several in chess — Humpy was a serial winner. After the under-10 world title, she won the under-12 and 14 events. More significantly, she won the World Junior Girls' Championship in 2001. She was 14 then; it was an under-20 event.

Two years earlier, she had caused a sensation by winning the Asian Under-12 Boys' Championship. Clearly, she was following the path laid down by Polgar, who competed with men and rose to World No. 8, with wins over the likes of Garry Kasparov, Viswanathan Anand and Magnus Carlsen.

Much like Polgar, the youngest of three sisters who were taught chess by their father, Humpy's career, too, was shaped by her father. In fact, Laszlo Polgar, an educational psychologist who wanted to prove that

geniuses were made and not born, was an inspiration for Koneru Ashok, a national-level player. He wanted to make his first daughter a champion (her very name was derived from the word). He even quit his job as a college lecturer in order to focus on her chess.

Ashok has been her primary trainer, although Humpy, for the last six years, has virtually been working on her own. “I was following her games in Moscow online,” Ashok says. “When she defeated China's Lei Tingjie in the final, I was ecstatic.”

### Second innings

The world rapid title has come to Humpy in what is her second innings. She had taken a two-year break following childbirth.

The past few months

have seen Humpy steadily get back to her best. The first and second places she earned in the opening legs of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix, which is a part of the cycle for the next classical World Championship, preceded her triumph in Moscow. She is ranked No. 3 now. Her Elo rating of 2580 may be some distance from her peak of 2623 (in 2009), but she has proven that she is a strong challenger for the classical title once again.

“She could win the World Championship in her very next attempt,” says Thipsay. “She is a stronger player than the two women [Ju Wenjun, Aleksandra Goryachkina] competing in the World Championship at the moment.”

You bet Humpy is itching to prove that.

### Guiding light:

Humpy under the watchful eyes of her father and coach Koneru Ashok in Hyderabad in 1997.

THE HINDU ARCHIVES

She could win the [classical-format] World Championship in her very next attempt. She is a stronger player than the two women [Ju Wenjun, Aleksandra Goryachkina] competing in the World Championship at the moment

PRAVEEN THIPSAY | GM

the Women's World Rapid Championship, the biggest achievement to date by a female Indian chess player.

### A long time coming

The 32-year-old would be the first to admit, though, that she should have been world champion at least a decade ago. She was, for a considerable period, the second-strongest woman in chess history, behind only Judit Polgar. And given that Polgar, the highest-rated female player ever, used to compete only with men, it's something of a surprise that Humpy wasn't officially crowned as the queen at that time.

Indeed, by now, she should have won the world title in classical chess, not just in rapid. For the uninitiated,

## GAME THEORY

### Klopp's Reds pursue Wenger's Invincibles

Liverpool hasn't been beaten in the Premier League since January 12, 2019 — a run it will aim to extend today, when it plays Tottenham away. A look at where this streak ranks among the Premier League's best:

#### LONGEST UNBEATEN STREAKS IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE



49 matches

May 7, 2003-Oct. 23, 2004

536 days

Manager: Arsene Wenger

Streak ended by Man. United

- This is the only streak to span three Premier League seasons
- It's also the only streak to contain a complete title run — the 2003-04 Invincibles season
- Arsene Wenger and Arsenal are the only manager and club to have recorded two unbeaten streaks of at least 30 matches



37\* matches

Jan. 12, 2019-present

364 days

Manager: Jurgen Klopp



30 matches

Dec. 23, 2001-Oct. 18, 2002

300 days

Manager: Arsene Wenger

Streak ended by Everton



40 matches

Oct. 23, 2004-Nov. 5, 2005

379 days

Manager: Jose Mourinho

Streak ended by Man. United



30 matches

Apr. 8, 2017-Jan. 13, 2018

281 days

Manager: Pep Guardiola

Streak ended by Liverpool



29 matches

Dec. 26, 1998-Oct. 2, 1999

281 days

Manager: Alex Ferguson

Streak ended by Chelsea



29 matches

Dec. 23, 2007-Oct. 25, 2008

308 days

Manager: Avram Grant/Luiz Felipe Scolari

Streak ended by Liverpool



29 matches

Apr. 11, 2010-Feb. 4, 2011

300 days

Manager: Alex Ferguson


Streak ended by Wolverhampton Wanderers

## STACKING UP



ATP Men's Top 15				
#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Rafael Nadal	33	9,985	17
2	Novak Djokovic	32	9,055	16
3	Roger Federer	38	6,590	17
4	Dominic Thiem	26	5,825	21
5	Daniil Medvedev	23	5,705	23
6	Stefanos Tsitsipas	21	5,300	27
7	Alexander Zverev	22	3,345	24
8	Matteo Berrettini	23	2,870	25
9	Gael Monfils	33	2,530	21
10	Roberto Bautista Agut	31	2,335	22
11	David Goffin	29	2,335	26
12	Fabio Fognini	32	2,290	24
13	Diego Schwartzman	27	2,125	25
14	Denis Shapovalov	20	2,050	26
15	Stan Wawrinka	34	1,955	19

Top Indians ▶

 Prajesh Gunneswaran Rank 122 ▲ 2 spots	 Sumit Nagal Rank 128 ▲ 2 spots
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WTA Women's Top 15				
#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Ashleigh Barty	23	7,851	15
2	Karolina Pliskova	27	5,525	18
3	Simona Halep	28	5,462	17
4	Naomi Osaka	22	5,311	16
5	Elina Svitolina	25	5,075	21
6	Bianca Andreescu	19	4,935	12
7	Petra Kvitova	29	4,721	16
8	Belinda Bencic	22	4,685	23
9	Kiki Bertens	28	4,245	26
10	Serena Williams	38	3,935	10
11	Aryna Sabalenka	21	2,940	23
12	Johanna Konta	28	2,825	16
13	Madison Keys	24	2,767	15
14	Sofia Kenin	21	2,740	23
15	Petra Martic	28	2,617	17

Top Indians ▶

 Ankita Raina Rank 178 ▲ 2 spots	 Riya Bhatia Rank 368 ▲ no change
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English Premier League Standings									
#	TEAM	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Liverpool	20	19	1	0	49	14	35	58
2	Leicester	21	14	3	4	46	19	27	45
3	Man. City	21	14	2	5	56	24	32	44
4	Chelsea	21	11	3	7	36	29	7	36
5	Man. United	21	8	7	6	32	25	7	31
6	Tottenham	21	8	6	7	36	30	6	30
7	Wolves	21	7	9	5	30	27	3	30
8	Sheffield	21	7	8	6	23	21	2	29
9	Crystal Palace	21	7	7	7	19	23	-4	28
10	Arsenal	21	6	9	6	28	30	-2	27
11	Everton	21	7	4	10	24	32	-8	25
12	Southampton	21	7	4	10	25	38	-13	25
13	Newcastle	21	7	4	10	20	33	-13	25
14	Brighton	21	6	6	9	25	29	-4	24
15	Burnley	21	7	3	11	24	34	-10	24
16	West Ham	20	6	4	10	25	32	-7	22
17	Aston Villa	21	6	3	12	27	37	-10	21
18	Bournemouth	21	5	5	11	20	32	-12	20
19	Watford	21	4	7	10	17	34	-17	19
20	Norwich City	21	3	5	13	22	41	-19	14



Italian Serie A Standings									
#	TEAM	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Inter Milan	18	14	3	1	39	15	24	45
2	Juventus	18	14	3	1	35	17	18	45
3	Lazio	17	12	3	2	40	17	23	39
4	Roma	18	10	5	3	33	19	14	35
5	Atalanta	18	10	4	4	48	25	23	34
6	Cagliari	18	8	5	5	33	27	6	29
7	Parma	18	7	4	7	24	25	-1	25
8	Napoli	18	6	6	6	28	25	3	24
9	Torino	18	7	3	8	24	26	-2	24
10	Bologna	18	6	5	7	28	30	-2	23
11	Verona	17	6	4	7	19	20	-1	22
12	AC Milan	18	6	4	8	16	24	-8	22
13	Udinese	18	6	3	9	14	28	-14	21
14	Sassuolo	18	5	4	9	30	31	-1	19
15	Fiorentina	18	4	6	8	22	29	-7	18
16	Sampdoria	18	4	4	10	14	27	-13	16
17	Lecce	18	3	6	9	22	36	-14	15
18	Brescia	18	4	2	12	16	31	-15	14
19	Genoa	18	3	5	10	19	36	-17	14
20	Spal	18	3	3	12	12	28	-16	12



Spanish LaLiga Standings									
#	TEAM	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Barcelona	19	12	4	3	49	23	26	40
2	Real Madrid	19	11	7	1	36	12	24	40
3	Atletico Madrid	19	9	8	2	22	12	10	35
4	Sevilla	19	10	5	4	24	18	6	35
5	Real Sociedad	19	9	4	6	33	25	8	31
6	Valencia	19	8	7	4	29	25	4	31
7	Getafe	19	8	6	5	26	20	6	30
8	Athletic Bilbao	19	7	8	4	20	13	7	29
9	Villarreal	19	8	4	7	33	26	7	28
10	Granada	19	8	3	8	25	25	0	27
11	Levante	19	8	2	9	26	29	-3	26
12	Osasuna	19	5	9	5	26	25	1	24
13	Real Betis	19	6	6	7	26	32	-6	24
14	Real Valladolid	19	4	9	6	17	23	-6	21
15	Alaves	19	5	5	9	20	29	-9	20
16	Eibar	19	5	4	10	18	29	-11	19
17	Celta Vigo	19	3	6	10	16	29	-13	15
18	Real Mallorca	19	4	3	12	18	33	-15	15
19	Leganes	19	3	5	11	16	30	-14	14
20	Espanyol	19	2	5	12	14	36	-22	11



German Bundesliga Standings									
#	TEAM	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	RB Leipzig	17	11	4	2	48	20	28	37
2	M'gladbach	17	11	2	4	33	18	15	35
3	Bayern Munich	17	10	3	4	46	22	24	33
4	Dortmund	17	8	6	3	41	24	17	30
5	Schalke	17	8	6	3	29	21	8	30
6	Leverkusen	17	8	4	5	23	21	2	28
7	Hoffenheim	17	8	3	6	25	28	-3	27
8	SC Freiburg	17	7	5	5	27	23	4	26
9	Wolfsburg	17	6	6	5	18	18	0	24
10	FC Augsburg	17	6	5	6	28	31	-3	23
11	Union Berlin	17	6	2	9	20	24	-4	20
12	Hertha Berlin	17	5	4	8	22	29	-7	19
13	Frankfurt	17	5	3	9	27	29	-2	18
14	Mainz	17	6	0	11	25	39	-14	18
15	Cologne	17	5	2	10	19	32	-13	17
16	Dusseldorf	17	4	3	10	18	36	-18	15
17	Werder Bremen	17	3	5	9	23	41	-18	14
18	Paderborn	17	3	3	11	20	36	-16	12







TV PICKS

**NBA:** Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.  
**Ranji Trophy:** Tamil Nadu vs Mumbai, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.  
**Khelo India Youth Games:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.; Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 4.30 p.m.  
**Big Bash League:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 1 p.m.; Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.  
**Premier League:** SS Select 1 & SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6 p.m., 8.30 p.m. & 11 p.m.  
**ISL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m., 10.30 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)

RANJI SCHEDULE

**Group A:** Andhra v Hyderabad (Ongole); Kerala v Punjab (Thiruvananthapuram); Rajasthan v Gujarat (Jaipur); Vidarbha v Bengal (Nagpur).  
**Group B:** Railways v Madhya Pradesh (New Delhi); Tamil Nadu v Mumbai (Chennai); Uttar Pradesh v Baroda (Kanpur); Saurashtra v Karnataka (Rajkot).  
**Group C:** Assam v Chhattisgarh (Guwahati); Haryana v Odisha (Lahli); Jammu & Kashmir v Services (New Delhi); Tripura v Uttarakhand (Agartala); Maharashtra v Jharkhand (Nagothane).  
**Plate: Jan. 11:** Arunachal Pradesh v Nagaland (Sovima); Chandigarh v Sikkim (Chandigarh); Pondicherry v Goa (Puducherry); Manipur v Bihar (Balurghat); **Jan. 12:** Mizoram v Meghalaya (Kolkata).

IN BRIEF



**Thunder spoils Westbrook's return**  
LOS ANGELES  
Danilo Gallinari scored a team high 23 points and Chris Paul delivered 18 as Oklahoma City Thunder spoiled the return of Russell Westbrook with a 113-92 rout of Houston Rockets on Thursday.  
**The results:** Cleveland Cavaliers 115 bt Detroit Pistons 112 (OT); Philadelphia 76ers 109 bt Boston Celtics 98; Minnesota Timberwolves 116 bt Portland Trail Blazers 102; Oklahoma City Thunder 113 bt Houston Rockets 92. AGENCIES



**Harry Kane out for three months**  
LONDON  
Tottenham Hotspur has been given a severe blow as the side's star forward Harry Kane has been ruled out for three months with a hamstring injury. In the game, Kane limped off the field after suffering an injury to his hamstring. Now the player would be undergoing surgery to repair his ruptured tendon in his left hamstring. "The decision to undergo surgery is not expected to impact the time frame that the England captain will be sidelined, with the expectation that he will return to training in April," Tottenham said. ANI

CBI seeks info from NSFs

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**  
The Central Bureau of Investigation has written to the all the National Sports Federations seeking the information required for its Sports Integrity Unit, which was set up in April 2014.  
The agency has sought the registration numbers, addresses, particulars of office bearers and members of these sports bodies by January 17.  
"The emergence of sports as an industry involving investment of huge sums of money on players, teams has brought with it the ever increasing spectrum of corruption, illegal betting and use of various forms of unfair means in order to influence the result of a game," said the letter.

Karthik stuns Abhijeet

Al Muthaiah gets the better of Pantsulaia

CHESS

**RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI**  
Two-time winner Abhijeet Gupta and defending champion Georgia's Levon Pantsulaia, seeded five and six, crashed to unexpected defeats as several Grandmasters fell short of maintaining a clean slate after three rounds of Delhi International Open Grandmasters chess tournament here on Friday.  
On the first of the two double-round days, Karthik Venkataraman accounted for Abhijeet in the third round after Al Muthaiah stunned Pantsulaia in the second.  
Karthik, the 2018 National junior champion, gained a queenside pawn and went on to capture Abhijeet's knight before weaving a checkmating net in 40 moves.  
Muthaiah, after catching Pantsulaia on the wrong foot, surprised another Grandmaster N. R. Visakh in 61 to be among 11 leaders.  
The day also saw top seed from Tajikistan, Farrukh Amonatov drop half-a-point to Uzbekistan's Abdimalik Abdalimov, third seed M. Kar-



**Big scalp:** Karthik Venkataraman, left, accounted for Abhijeet Gupta in the third round. ■ CHESSBASE INDIA

thikeyan do likewise against Russia's Denis Erashchenkov and Utkal Ranjan Sahoo hold ninth seeded Russian Aleksey Goganov in the second round.  
There were several third round casualties, among Grandmasters. Stanislav Bogdanovich (Ukraine), seeded 12, lost to Bangladesh GM Ziaur Rahman, David Alberto (Italy) surrendered to C. R. G. Krishna, M. R. Lalith Babu succumbed against Egypt's Abdelrahman Hesham and Niranjan Navalgund tamed Sergey Yudin (Russia). Other GMs who lost to higher rated players were Vishnu Prasanna and Columbia's Camilo Rios Cristhian.  
Second seeded Russian Pavel Ponkratov was held in 46 moves by Belarus' GM Kirill Stupak in 46 moves, Saptarshi Roy drew with 11th seeded Russian Ivan Rozum in 49 moves, Sayantan Das proved equal to Belarus' GM Alexei Fedorov and Himel Gusain surprised Iran's upcoming talent Aryan Gholami in a battle of International Masters.  
**Leading results: Third round:** Pavel Ponkratov (Rus, 2.5) drew with Kirill Stupak (Blr, 2.5); Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara (Per, 3) bt Camilo Rios

Cristhian (Col, 2); Karthik Venkataraman (3) bt Abhijeet Gupta (2); Aleksey Aleksandrov (Blr, 3) bt Vishnu Prasanna (2); Saptarshi Roy (2.5) drew with Ivan Rozum (Rus, 2.5); C. R. G. Krishna (3) bt David Alberto (Ita, 2); Alexei Fedorov (Blr, 2.5) drew with Sayantan Das (2.5).

**Second round:** Farrukh Amonatov (Tjk) drew with Abdimalik Abdalimov (Uzb); Murali Karthikeyan (1.5) drew with Denis Erashchenkov (Rus, 1.5); Aleksey Goganov (Rus, 1.5) drew with Utkal Ranjan Sahoo (1.5); M. Praneesh (1.5) drew with Dip-tayan Ghosh (1.5); Adam Tukhaev (Ukr, 1.5) drew with Aaryan Varshney (1.5).

'Archer's injury due to official negligence'

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI**  
Shivangini Gohain, the 12-year-old Assam archer who was impaired by an arrow shot accidentally at the SAI centre in Dibrugarh, was training unsupervised and the mishap was a result of negligence by the local coach and officials, the State's archery association has said. The child was training at the Dakha Devi Rasiwasia College at Chabua when the incident took place on Wednesday.  
Pulin Das, a joint-secretary of Assam Archery Association (AAA) said the injury happened as the trainees were practising without any coach and other officials. "There is a SAI contractual coach Marcy and he has left for the Khelo Games. He didn't instruct the trainees to stop the camp nor did the college principal, who acted as administrator of the extension centre, looked after the practice," Das told PTI over phone on Friday.

Kolkata marathon on February 2

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA**  
More than 9000 runners have registered for the fourth edition of the IDBI Federal Life Insurance Kolkata Marathon to be held on February 2.  
Certified by Association of International Marathons and Distance Races and Athletics Federation of India, the event will have the marathon, half-marathon and timed 10k and 5k races.  
Sachin Tendulkar is expected to flag off the run from the Rangers Ground, Red Road. The marathon will begin at 4:30 a.m., followed by the half-marathon at 6:30 a.m., 10k at 7:45 a.m. and 5k at 8:15 a.m.  
Interested runners can register on <http://www.kolkatafullmarathon.com>. The registration fees are ₹1350 for the full marathon, ₹1110 for half-marathon, ₹850 for 10K and ₹600 for 5k.

Siddhesh for Divyansh

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI**  
Siddhesh Veer of Maharashtra will replace Divyansh Joshi in the World Cup squad.  
**India U-19 squad:** Priyam Garg (Capt.), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Divyaansh Saxena, Dhruv Chand Jurel (Vice-Capt. & wk), Shashwat Rawat, Siddhesh Veer, Shubhang Hegde, Ravi Bishnoi, Akash Singh, Kartik Tyagi, Atharva Ankolekar, Kumar Kushagra (wk), Sushant Mishra and Vidyadhar Patil.

Katz to meet Collignon for title

**SPORTS BUREAU CHANDIGARH**  
It will be an all-Belgian affair as Martin Katz set up a title clash with Raphael Collignon in the boys' section of the ITF grade-3 junior tennis tournament on Friday.  
The girls' final will be between Mika Dagan Fruchtman (Isr) bt Juliette Boyv (Bel) 6-3, 7-6(9); Sabrina Kalandarov (Isr) bt Jiagi Huang (Chn) 6-3, 6-3. **Doubles:** Jasmine Conway (GBR) & Alessandra Simone (Ita) bt Yaroslava Bartashevich (Rus) & Amelia Waligora (Bel) 6-4, 6-4; Jiagi Huang (Chn) & Yu-Yun Li (Tpe) bt Hu Xinyue (Chn) & Kim Yujin (Kor) 6-3, 3-6, [10-7].

Bopanna & Koolhof duo wins title



**Cool customers:** Wesley Koolhof and Rohan Bopanna emerged champions in the ATP Qatar Open doubles category. ■ AFP

INDIANS ABROAD

**SPORTS BUREAU DOHA**  
Rohan Bopanna and Wesley Koolhof of the Netherlands defeated Luke Bambridge and Santiago Gonzalez 3-6, 6-2, [10-6] to win the first doubles title of the season in the \$1,465,260 ATP tennis tournament here on Friday.  
The third-seeded Indo-Dutch pair, which had earlier in the day knocked out the second seeds Henri Kontinen and Franco Skugor 7-5, 6-2, picked up 250 ATP points and \$76,870.  
Meanwhile, Ankita Raina entered the semifinals of the \$25,000 ITF women's event in Bendigo, Australia, with a walkover from third seed Sachia Vickery of the US.  
In the \$15,000 women's event in Monastir, Tunisia, Zeel Desai made the singles semifinals with a straight-set victory over Martyna Kubka of Poland, and the doubles semifinals in with Anastasia Tikhonova.  
**The results:** **\$1,465,260 ATP, Doha: Doubles (final):** Wesley Koolhof (Ned) & Rohan Bopanna bt Luke Bambridge (GBR) & Santiago Gonzalez (Mex) 3-6, 6-2, [10-6]. **Semifinals:** Koolhof & Bopanna bt Henri Kontinen (Fin) & Franko Skugor (Cro) 7-5, 6-2. **\$25,000 ITF women, Bendigo, Australia: Quarterfinals:** Ankita Raina w/o Sachia Vickery (US). **\$15,000 ITF women, Monastir, Tunisia: Quarterfinals:** Zeel Desai bt Martyna Kubka (Pol) 7-5, 6-4. **Doubles:** Anastasia Tikhonova (Rus) & Zeel bt Victoria Muntean (Fra) & Sabina Sharipova (Uzb) 5-7, 6-3, [12-10].

Sindhu and Saina bow out

MALAYSIA MASTERS

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KUALA LUMPUR**  
Olympic medal-winning Indian shuttlers P.V. Sindhu and Saina Nehwal crashed out of the Malaysia Masters outplayed by familiar foes in the quarterfinals, ending the country's campaign here on Friday.  
Reigning World champion Sindhu, who took the court first on Friday, was knocked out of the Super 500 badminton tournament by top seed Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei, while Saina was shown the door by Olympic champion Spaniard Carolina Marin.  
Saina was no match for Marin, who took exactly half-an-hour to dispose of the Indian's challenge 21-8, 21-7.  
Tzu Ying, ranked second in the world, defeated Rio Olympics silver-medallist Sindhu 21-16 21-16 in the quarterfinal, extending her head-to-head record to 12-5.  
This was Sindhu's second consecutive loss to Tzu Ying. She had lost to her in the French Open quarterfinals in October last year.



**Oh no!** Saina Nehwal was no match for Spaniard Carolina Marin, losing in just half-an-hour. ■ AFP

Sindhu was erratic in the start, failing to capitalise on her leads and eventually lost the first game 16-21 to hand a 1-0 advantage to Tzu Ying.  
In the second game, Sindhu could do little as Tzu Ying completely dominated the proceedings from start to finish.  
Trailing 11-20, Sindhu saved six match points but it came too late as Tzu Ying sealed the game 21-16.  
Later in the day, Saina was outplayed by Marin. Saina and Marin were 6-6 in

head-to-head before Friday's match.

London Olympics bronze-medallist, Saina was on the backfoot from the word go as Marin took the lead early in the first game at 10-6 and simply outsmarted the Indian to pocket it.

In the second game, the script turned out to be the same as Saina committed a lot of unforced errors allowing Marin to easily run away with the match and a place in the semifinals.

Ice Floe expected to score

**BENGALURU:** Ice Floe, who has been well tuned, is expected to score in the Bangalore City Police Commissioner Trophy (1,200m), the main event of the races to be held here on Saturday (Jan. 11). False rails (width about 6m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.  
**1. INFANTS PLATE (1,100m),** maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2.15 pm: 1. Handsome Rocky (1) K. Raghu 55, 2. Shanay (3) Irvan 55, 3. Sizzler (4) Chetan G 55, 4. Born Queen (5) Yash 53.5, 5. Capable (2) Darshan 53.5, 6. Flamingo Road (7) Sinath 53.5, 7. Hitomi Sakuma (6) R. Anand 53.5 and 8. Roc Girl (8) Jagadeesh 53.5.  
**1. BORN QUEEN, 2. FLAMINGO ROAD, 3. SHANAY**  
**2. KALHATTI FALLS PLATE (Div. 2),** (1,400m), rated 15 to 35, 2.45: 1. Girl With Pearl (7) T.S. Jodha 60, 2. Asgardia (3) Trevor 57.5, 3. Gazebo Talk (8) Vaibhav 57.5, 4. Azeemki Princess (2) Arvind Kumar 57, 5. Altair (6) Irvan 56.5, 6. Indian Star (4) P. Ramesh 56.5, 7. Southern Power (9) A. Imran 56.5, 8. Cameleons Image (5) Nazerul 56 and 9. Regal Force (1) R. Manish 56.  
**1. ASGARDIA, 2. GIRL WITH PEARL, 3. SOUTHERN POWER**  
**3. SRIRANGAPATNA PLATE (1,100m),** rated 15 to 35, 5-y-o & over, 3.15: 1. Propine (10) S. John 60, 2. Agnar (5) Arvind Kumar 59.5, 3. Songkran (1) Chetan G 58, 4. Red Galileo (8) T.S. Jodha 57.5, 5. Cashmere (3) M. Naveen 57, 6. Arrogance (9) Yash 56.5, 7. Industrialist (6) Naveen Kumar 56, 8. Ramon (4) R. Manish 56, 9. Perfectgoldenera (2) Shreyas Singh 55, 10. Premier Premises (7) Trevor 54.5, 11. Annalease (11) S. Husain 54 and 12. Bazinga (12) Sai Kiran 50.  
**1. PREMIER PREMISES, 2. INDUSTRIALIST, 3. PROPINE**  
**4. SHIVANGA FALLS PLATE (1,100m),** rated 00 to 20, 3.45: 1. Bella Mamma (8) A. Vishwanath 60, 2. Gin Daisy (3) S. John 60, 3. Grecian Light (4) Vaibhav 60, 4. Dontbreaktherules (9) Selvaraj 58.5, 5. Perfect King (5) M. Naveen 58.5, 6. Kruger Park (7) S. Shareef 58, 7. Kanthaka (6) Sai Kiran 56.5, 8. Princess Amu (1) Nazerul 55 and 9. High Hawk (2) Rayan 50.5.  
**1. GIN DAISY, 2. KANTHAKA, 3. PERFECT KING**  
**5. BANGALORE CITY POLICE COMMISSIONER TROPHY (1,200m),** rated 45 to 65, 4.15: 1. Miniver Rose (11) Dharshan Antony 60, 2. Commodus (5) Trevor 59.5, 3. Alpha (9) R. Shelar 59, 4. Spanish Beauty (3) S. John 59, 5. Animal Queen (7) Mark 58.5, 6. Coloney Harry (2) R. Anand 57, 7. Ice Floe (8) David Allan 57, 8. Psychic Warrior (6) Yash 57, 9. Panama (10) Shreyas Singh 56, 10. Kimera (4) Arvind Kumar 55.5, 11. Aachen (12) C. Umesh 54 and 12. Cuban Pet (1) Akshay Kumar 52.5.  
**1. ICE FLOE, 2. AACHEN, 3. COMMODUS**  
**6. MAKARA SANKRANTI TROPHY (1,600m),** rated 30 to 50, 4.45: 1. Foi Et Amour (5) David Allan 60, 2. Cavaliere (6) S. John 57, 3. After

Hours (8) Bhanu Singh 56.5, 4. Alexandre Dumas (9) Akshay Kumar 56.5, 5. Cuban (4) Trevor 56.5, 6. Ideological (3) Antony 56.5, 7. Fotogenic (1) S. Shareef 55.5, 8. Duxton (7) Darshan 54.5 and 9. Smile Of Joy (2) Rayan 53.  
**1. ALEXANDRE DUMAS, 2. FOI ET AMOUR, 3. CAVALIERE**  
**7. KALHATTI FALLS PLATE (Div. 1),** (1,400m), rated 15 to 35, 5.15: 1. High Admiral (7) R. Manjunath 60, 2. Knotty Oak (1) Antony 58.5, 3. Find (8) S. John 57.5, 4. Legendary Princess (3) David Allan 57, 5. Alberto (4) Akshay Kumar 56, 6. King Of The Sand (2) A. Imran 56, 7. Nawabzaadi (6) T.S. Jodha 56, 8. Star Citizen (9) Chetan G 56 and 9. Augustina (5) C. Umesh 54.5.  
**1. KNOTTY OAK, 2. LEGENDARY PRINCESS, 3. ALBERTO**  
Day's best: **ICE FLOE** Double: **BORN QUEEN - GIN DAISY** Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Tr (i): 2, 3 and 4; (ii): 5, 6 and 7.

Allow MAM Ramaswamy Trust horses to participate: Madras HC's directive to MRC

Judge says jockeys of the trust entitled to wear the gold-brown belt jersey

**MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S. CHENNAI**  
The Madras High Court on Friday restrained Madras Race Club (MRC) from directly or indirectly preventing the participation of horses owned by Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust, represented by A.C. Muthiah, in its races.  
The interim orders were passed on a civil suit filed by the Trust to declare as illegal, null and void a decision taken by MRC's Stewards Committee on December 26 to

not allow the horses of the trust to participate in its races.  
**Dispute**  
Tracing the history of the dispute, the judge recalled that industrialist M.A.M. Ramaswamy owned a large number of horses before his death on December 2, 2015.  
Those horses participated in races conducted at MRC and other racing centres in the country. In April 2008, he had executed a power of attorney in favour of trainer Robert Foley with the respect

to the horses.  
Thereafter, disputes arose between him and his adopted son M.A.M.R. Muthiah.  
In February 2015, the industrialist formed two trusts, one a public trust titled Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust and a private trust named Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar Trust.  
The ownership of the horses were reportedly transferred by Mr. Foley to the private trust on November 16, 2015. However, pursuant to the death of the industrial-

ist, all properties, including the horses, owned by the private trust had supposedly got transferred to the public trust.  
Further, the public trust too, on its own, had purchased 62 more horses from various breeders since December 2015 and registered them under the MRC rules of racing.  
The trust now complained that MRC was preventing the 62 horses from participating after M.A.M.R. Muthiah had got elected as the chairman of the club in November 2019.  
**Club's contention**  
Denying the charge, the club informed the court that the decision to prevent the horses of the club was taken by a six-member Stewards Committee comprising of members with a sterling reputation and unimpeachable integrity. It was also pointed out that Mr. Muthiah was consciously not made part of the committee to avoid conflict of interest.  
On the merits of the dispute, the club stated that its rules do not permit registration of a public trust as owners of horses since the owner must be a legal owner and not an equitable owner.  
After hearing both sides, the judge concluded that the public trust had made out a strong *prima facie* case for grant of interim orders since its horses had been participating in the races conducted by MRC for the last four years. He also did not find any prohibition in the rules of club for the participation of horses owned by a public trust.

Chennaiyin thrashes Hyderabad

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD**  
Chennaiyin FC registered a 3-0 win over Hyderabad FC in the Hero ISL match here on Friday.  
The visitors took the lead in the 40th minute, thanks to Rafael Crivellaro who showed fine opportunism to slam home a cross from Nerijus Valskis.  
Three minutes later, Valskis' scorching left-footer beat a diving Kamaljit Singh. In the 65th minute, he scored again from close range.  
Marcelo reduced the margin for Hyderabad in the 88th minute.  
**The result:** Hyderabad FC 1 (Marcelo 88) lost to Chennaiyin FC 3 (Crivellaro 40, Valskis 43 & 65).

Double delight for Armaan

**SPORTS BUREAU RAIPUR**  
Fifth seed Armaan Bhatia defeated top seed Ishaque Eqbal 6-3, 7-6(6) in the final of the Gondwana Cup ₹2.5 lakh AITA men's ranking tennis tournament here on Friday.  
The winner was presented ₹31,250 while the runner-up got ₹21,000.  
It was a double crown for Armaan, as he and Eqbal won the doubles title, beating the Qamar brothers from Jaipur, Faisal and Fardeen, 10-7 in the super tie-break.  
**The results (finals):** Armaan Bhatia bt Ishaque Eqbal 6-3, 7-6(6). **Doubles:** Armaan & Eqbal bt Faisal Qamar & Fardeen Qamar 5-7, 6-3, [10-7].

PBL: last leg moved to Hyderabad

**SPORTS REPORTER BENGALURU**  
The last leg of Premier Badminton League (PBL) season five, which was scheduled to be held at Bengaluru from February 5-9, has been shifted to Hyderabad, the PBL stated in a media release.

Real Kashmir holds Punjab

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SRINAGAR**  
Real Kashmir FC played out a 1-1 draw against former champion Punjab FC in its home I-League match here on Friday.  
The 'Snow Leopards' equalised in the 62nd minute through Gnohere Krizo in front of a partisan crowd of 8,500 after Makan Chothe had given Punjab FC the lead in the 21st minute.  
After Thursday's draw, Punjab FC is placed third on the table with 10 points from seven games. Real Kashmir FC remains at eighth with six points from five matches.  
"We played extremely well. It was a tough game," said Real Kashmir FC co-founder Sandeep Chattoo.  
**The result:** Real Kashmir 1 (Gnohere Krizo 62) drew with Punjab FC (Makan Chothe 21).