

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
CHENNAI | SUNDAY 12 | JANUARY 2020

## WEATHER

**Max:** 30°C  
**Min:** 22°C  
**Rainfall:** 2mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Vikari:** Margazhi 27  
**Tithi:** Thuvithyai  
**Star:** Pusam  
**Rahukalam:**  
4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**Yamagandam:**  
12 noon to 1.30 pm  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.18 am  
**Zohar:** 12.20 pm  
**Asar:** 3.31 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.57 pm  
**Isha:** 7.12 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.00 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.35 AM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 7.41 PM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 8.45 AM**

## DRDO probing sat phone signals traced from TN village

**Coimbatore:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is investigating the reported satellite phone signals traced from a village near Kangeyam in nearby Tirupur district. The signals were picked up from a village near Kunnathur by INS Parundu, an Indian Naval air station located near Uchipuli in Ramanathapuram district, and officials alerted DRDO, police said. A team from DRDO is at Kunnathur to trace those using the satellite phone, police said, adding use of such phones is banned in India.

## Nirbhaya case: SC to hear curative plea on Jan. 14

**New Delhi:** A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court will hear on January 14 curative petitions of two of the four death-row convicts in the Nirbhaya case. A bench of Justices N.V. Ramana, Arun Mishra, R.F. Nariman, R. Banumathi and Ashok Bhushan will hear the curative petitions filed by Vinay Sharma (26) and Mukesh Kumar (32) at 145 pm on Tuesday. Curative petitions are decided in chambers by the judges.

## Six dead in blast at gas manufacturing unit near Vadodara

**Vadodra:** Six workers were killed and several others injured in an explosion at an industrial and medical gas manufacturing factory in Gujarat's Vadodra district on Saturday morning, the police said. The explosion took place around 11 am at Aims Industries near Gavassad village in Padra taluk. The plant is located off Padra-Jambur highway, a senior police official said.

## COUNTER POINT

**Looks like students of Right and Left wings have taken their fight to the skies!**

## RESERVOIR LEVELS

**STORAGE AS ON JAN. 11, 2020 (MCFT)**

1516.90	■ Poondi	262.00
72.00	■ Cholavaram	48.00
2659.00	■ Red Hills	870.00
1660.00	■ Chembarambakkam	81.00

**STORAGE AS ON JAN. 11, 2019 (MCFT)**

**A. ARUL PALANI IDC**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

Breathe easy, Chennaiites: for the last year's nightmare water shortage is unlikely to visit you this time as the four dams that supply drinking water to the metro have nearly five times the water stored in them now compared with last year.

As per the data available with the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, the four dams 'Poondi', Red Hills, Chembarambakkam

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**SUNDAY CHRONICLE**

**AJAY DEVGN TALKS ABOUT BEING A JACK OF ALL FILM TRADES**



**VIJAY'S ₹100 CRORE DEMAND**

**PANDYA FAILS FITNESS TEST**

PAGE 17



**VIJAY'S ₹100 CRORE DEMAND**



**PANDYA FAILS FITNESS TEST**

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## Unintentionally shot down Ukraine plane: Iran

**Tehran, Jan. 11:** Iran on Saturday said it unintentionally shot down the Ukrainian airliner that crashed this week killing 176 people, calling it an "unforgivable mistake".

The Ukraine International Airlines plane came down on Wednesday shortly after Iran launched missiles at bases hosting American forces in Iraq in response to the killing of Qasem Soleimani, one of Iran's top generals, in a US drone strike.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran deeply regrets this



**Hassan Rouhani**  
disastrous mistake," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani tweeted. "Armed Forces' internal investigation has concluded that regrettably missiles fired due to human error caused the

horrible crash of the Ukrainian plane & death of 176 innocent people," he added.

"Investigations continue to identify & prosecute this great tragedy & unforgivable mistake."

Earlier, Iran's official IRNA news agency had published a statement from the military saying the Boeing 737 was mistaken for a "hostile plane" at a time when enemy threats were at the highest level.

The admission came a day after Iran's civil aviation chief denied claims

## Forces owe allegiance to Constitution: Army chief

**PAWAN BALI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

Bringing back the focus to the apolitical nature of the Indian Army, the new Army Chief, Gen. Manoj Mukund Naravane, said on Saturday that the Army and the armed forces owe their allegiance to the Constitution of India and its core values of "justice, liberty, equality and fraternity," as enshrined in the Preamble, should guide the forces in all their actions at all times.

"As the Army, we swear allegiance to the Constitution of India... Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity enshrined in the constitution should guide us," he said in his opening remarks at his first press conference as Army Chief. Gen. Naravane's unequivocal message on the Army being apolitical follows his predecessor General Bipin Rawat's criticism of those leading the protests against the citizenship law some weeks ago.

Gen. Naravane said that



**GEN. M.M. NARAVANE,**  
Chief of Army Staff

the "ABC" of the Indian Army was "allegiance, belief and consolidation," adding, "We swear allegiance to the Constitution of India. Be it officers or jawans, we have taken oath to protect the Constitution and that is what should guide us in all time and all our actions."

"What is translated into is also the core values which are enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution — that is, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity and that is what we are fighting for (when) we are deployed in the border safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity, it is to secure for our people these core values," said the Army Chief.

This is what, the new Army Chief who took charge on December 31 said, needs to be kept in mind at all the times. Gen. Naravane's comments came in the backdrop of allegations by Opposition parties that the armed forces are being politicised. His predecessor and current Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Bipin Rawat was criticised for commenting on political issues, including students' protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

## Indirect polls: AIADMK, allies secure big win

**J.V. SIVA PRASANNA KUMAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 11



**GONE IN SECONDS**  
A view of Holy Faith H20, a water-front complex, being demolished using controlled implosion at Maradu in Kochi, on Saturday. **REPORT ON P7**

The ruling AIADMK which took a huge lead over its rival DMK in the indirect elections to the posts of presidents and vice presidents of district panchayat councils and chairpersons and vice chairpersons of panchayat union councils, surged ahead registering an impressive win in a majority of seats.

The presence of large number of independents in the council tilted the scale in AIADMK's favour, it is said. Of the 27 district panchayat councils, the AIADMK emerged victorious from 13 while its ally PMK won a district panchayat chairman post. The DMK won 12 places and its ally the Congress could not secure any seat due to the raw deal it had received from the DMK during seat sharing negotiations.

In the indirect elections to the Panchayat union chairperson posts, the AIADMK secured 140, out of 287 councils for which election was held, while its allies the BJP and PMK won 3 and 7 places respectively. **P4**

## DSP Venkatesan attacked

**Chennai, Jan. 11:** Saturday poll was also marred by violence in TMC which the Virudhunagar Deputy Superintendent of Police Venkatesan was attacked with a sickle by an armed gang in Narikudi panchayat union office when he attempted to stop the gang.

Visuals showed the men emerging from behind security sandbag bunker and pelting stones as at police and media at the union office. And one man was seen brandishing a sickle. The union office was vandalised and a bike and chairs were also damaged. Two men have been reportedly arrested following the attack.

## Mamata joins dharna after asking PM to repeal CAA

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC**  
KOLKATA, JAN. 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday evening amid massive protests against the new Citizenship (Amendment) Act, National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register (NPR) across Kolkata. At their meeting in Raj Bhavan, Ms. Banerjee raised her fierce opposition to the CAA and NRC and demanded that they be withdrawn.

Just after the meeting, Mamata went straight to TMC students wing sit-in demonstration in the city against CAA, where she reiterated her stand that the new Citizenship law would never be implemented in Bengal.

Due to several large protests across the city, including at the airport and along the route his convoy was to take, Mr. Modi was forced to avoid travel by road at least twice.

Many demonstrators were waving black flags and flying gas-filled balloons though the city as they shouted slogans against the CAA, the NRC and carried banners that said, "Go Back Modi."



**CAA discriminatory and divisive, it must be withdrawn: CWC**  
**SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

**CAA discriminatory and divisive, it must be withdrawn: CWC**

Termining the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as a 'discriminatory and divisive law', the Congress Party on Saturday demanded that the CAA be withdrawn and the process of NPR be stopped. The party also demanded that a high-powered commission be constituted to inquire into incidents connected with the anti-CAA protests. **P7**

**Bangladesh foreign minister cancels Delhi visit**  
**SRIIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

Bangladesh's minister of state for foreign affairs Shahriar Alam has cancelled his proposed visit to New Delhi to attend the Raisina Dialogue conference, triggering speculation that the cancellation may be linked to Bangladesh's reported concerns on the recent Indian Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). **P6**

## No NOC? Close private drinking water suppliers, says Madras HC

**J. STALIN | DC**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The Madras high court has directed the authorities to close the public works department to ensure complete closure of the units manufacturing purified water, who do not hold valid no objection certificate (NOC) or permission from the department concerned either.

Public Works Department

## JNU: Cops identify 37 more accused from WhatsApp

**New Delhi, Jan. 11** A day after the Delhi Police identified nine suspects responsible for Jawaharlal Nehru University violence on January 5, the sources in Delhi Police on Saturday said that the SIT has also identified 37 more suspects from a "WhatsApp group" that was created during the violence at the campus. **DC**



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## No water shortage this summer in city

**A. ARUL PALANI IDC**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

Breathe easy, Chennaiites: for the last year's nightmare water shortage is unlikely to visit you this time as the four dams that supply drinking water to the metro have nearly five times the water stored in them now compared with last year.

As per the data available with the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, the four dams 'Poondi', Red Hills, Chembarambakkam

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1660.00	■ Chembarambakkam	81.00

from Krishna river and Veeranam lake. A senior official of Chennai Metro Water said the utility has adequate water in the reservoirs to meet the requirement of city till next north east monsoon. "People need not worry about facing the com-

## Karnataka releases 85 tmcft of excess Cauvery water to TN

**● Karnataka releases 85 tmcft of excess Cauvery water to TN**

**PAGE 4**

ing summer," he said.

The water level this year has gone up thanks to the two spells of bountiful monsoons, according to the official, though the city had a shortfall of 16 per cent in rainfall during the north-east monsoon, which ended recently. **P2**





## Technology to the aid

Chennai City Police Commissioner A. K. Viswanathan said installation of CCTV cameras has considerably helped curb crimes and chain-snatching incidents



It is essential for school students to learn their lessons in their mother tongue

— M. Venkiah Naidu, Vice-President of India

## SHORT TAKES

### Water seems better this year

FROM PAGE 1

The state faced massive water shortage last year as northeast monsoon failed. Residents, including those who lived in the high-rise apartments, faced the heat while several companies and IT firms were virtually closed unable to meet water requirement. A large number of restaurants in the city were also closed. During peak summer nearly 12,000 water tankers were pressed into the service everyday to supply drinking water to the residents after deep bore wells were sunk in Kanchipuram and Tiruvallur districts. Water was also drawn to the city from Jollipet in Vellore district by trains and a water wagon made 159 trips since its operations in July and transported nearly 420 million litres of water.

The NE monsoon, which began on October 1 gave Tamil Nadu a rainfall of 452 mm against normal of 1,200 mm. Chennai received 1098 mm, representing a 16 per cent shortfall. As a result of good rainfall over the catchment areas of lakes and reservoirs, the water level has increased in many sources.

### MLA charges govt with being steeped in corruption

**Puducherry:** A ruling Congress MLA in Puducherry caused a flutter on Saturday by charging the territorial government with being "steeped in corruption" and warned it would lead to the downfall of the party in the Assembly elections in 2021 if left unchecked. A detailed memorandum would be presented soon to Congress president Sonia Gandhi and senior leader Rahul Gandhi to bring to their notice the rampant corruption indulged in by the V Narayanasamy-led government in the union territory. The Bahour MLA N Dhanavelou told reporters here. —PTI

# The slow surge of protests

■ Anti-CAA agitation at Valluvar Kottam gathers momentum as more people come together and show their disagreement with a law they believe divides the nation

PALLAV MAJUMDAR & SINDHYA SAMUEL IDC CHENNAI, JAN. 11

There are students. There are employees. There are home-makers; there are even children and toddlers coming together in the evening these days at Valluvar Kottam on the Chennai outskirts. They come not to spend the last of winter evenings of the year but to join nationwide protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, a law which they feel will divide the nation. And they exude the confidence that public pressure will work on the government and the law will be allowed to lapse; even though the government has not opened up the process of its implementation in motion.

The gatherings have slowly turned Valluvar Kottam, a monument dedicated to the classical poet philosopher, Valluvar, into a hotpot of activity with people in their hundreds stand shoulder to shoulder and organise various forms of protests.

The protests started with a candle light vigil on January 6 and now people have started holding silent protests against the CAA.

"It is our right to come out in the public, raise our voice and explain how discriminatory CAA is," said a protester.

Rahel Philose, a student of journalism in the city, "Laws are meant to serve the people but that clearly has not been happening in our country at this point of time," she said the government has taken no initiative to take the minorities into confidence and alleviate their fears. "So, we have taken the initiative and are trying to reassert the identity of India as a secular nation," she said.

The protests have witnessed an increasing participation with each passing day. Whereas the number of participants was in double digits in the initial days, it crossed 200 on the fifth day.

"The voice is getting louder and the notion that only the elderly can raise their voice has to die down eventually," said Sharada Narayanan, an active participant in the protest. "More youngsters are coming up and showing solidarity with injustices happening around the world. Youngsters form a significant part of our population. It makes sense for more youngsters to come on the streets and raise their voices. I have been attending the protests almost every day and I have witnessed our numbers," strengthening every day.

Rahel, who has been attending protest programmes for the past three days, believes in the power of the citizen who comes on to the street and demonstrates her disapproval of government actions. "I think that we should keep coming to the streets and hold people in Parliament accountable," she said. "As citizens, it is our duty to show solidarity with the people who are not being served by the government."

"My presence is not just

to show my disagreement with CAA but also to show support for the students of Jawaharlal Nehru University who were attacked by the ABVP; the student wing of the BJP," Rahel said. "We are standing against the violent politics that is preached and practiced by the ABVP."

Sharada said more women coming out on the streets has turned the graph in favour of those who oppose CAA. "I am confident that they can contribute in bringing about significant change in the government's attitude towards the protests," she said.

Regarding her getting support from her family, Rahel said, "my family is entirely in my support. I have my opinions on different matters. I do exercise my rights and my family respects it. I know what I am doing and I want to be on the right side of the history."

Rahel is critical of the way the police handles the protesters. "Around 30 people showed up for the protest on January 9 and the police detained 17 of them," she said. Women claimed that they were manhandled by the police. Rahel alleged that the police on Friday detained women even after 6 p.m., which goes against the guidelines. Police even went to the extent of heckling the women protesters, she said. "A few people showing up is such a threat to those sitting at the top that they had to detain them, then clearly we are doing something

right," Rahel added.

Activist Gayatri Khandhadai who has become a prominent face in the anti-CAA protests held across the city said that representatives of no political party or NGO were present there and it was an initiative by those who oppose fascism. "People are getting information regarding the protest in absolutely informal ways and showing their solidarity to unjust laws," she said. "Every single person's act of dissent is important. We have people gathered over here who are ready to be detained or face any act of repression which sends out a powerful message."



Youth protesting in Valluvar Kottam on Saturday.

—E.K.Sanjay

## Unusual restrictions put on protesters by police

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 11

People who exercise their democratic right to protest against government acts question the presence of the police in huge numbers at Valluvar Kottam.

Several of them claimed the police manhandled them on January 10, a charge the police denied. Parallel to the rise in num-

ber of women protesters, the increase in the presence of female police officials has been also noted.

Curiously, the police has put time limit to hold protests; the protesters have to wind up their programmes in 45 minutes.

One of the protesters claimed that owner of a tea shop, the only one shop nearby has been instructed by the police officials to shut down his shop early.

The instruction came after the police witnessed people hanging around even after the protest was dispersed and discussing matters on the same lines. Along with the protesters, the tea shop owner has also been instructed to live by the terms of those in power and position, the protestor said.



# HC cautions against issuing ID cards to fake journalists

JSTALIN IDC CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The Madras high court has said the credentials of media people have to be verified in detail before issuing identity cards, since many people having criminal background also claim to be presspersons, like criminals who purchase law degrees for shielding their criminal activities.

"Since the image of the press is damaged because of the activities of the people who are claiming to be press reporters, the system has to be cleaned up so that genuine journalists are protected," said a division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and P.Velmurugan while imploring the secretary, information and public relations department, Press Council of India, Madras Union of Journalists (MUJ), the Madras Reporters Guild and Chennai Press Club as respondents in the proceedings.

The petition was filed by S.Sokranarayanan, a director to the Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu, to consider his representation dated September 26, 2019, to form a team and investigate the report conveying falling circulation figures of the newspaper on the basis of information submitted by Special Officer Pon Manickavel, a wing, before the high court.

When the matter was taken up for hearing, government advocate (criminal side) Krithika Kamal filed a

## SIX QUERIES TO JOURNO UNIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 11

In order to weed out fake reporters and protect the interest of genuine reporters, a division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and P.Velmurugan, the Madras Union of Journalists, the Madras Reporters Guild and Chennai Press Club as party respondents in a case and posed six queries to be answered by them by January 21, 2020.

counter affidavit on behalf of the official respondents. The petition was filed by S.Sokranarayanan, a director to the Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu, to consider his representation dated September 26, 2019, to form a team and investigate the report conveying falling circulation figures of the newspaper on the basis of information submitted by Special Officer Pon Manickavel, a wing, before the high court.

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### The queries are...

- 1) How many reporters from newspapers/magazines registered with the Registrar of the Newspapers for India and Audit Bureau of Circulation are enrolled as members of each association viz., Madras Union of Journalists, the Madras Reporters Guild and Chennai Press Club and the newspaper/magazines they belong to?
- 2) Who are all the office-bearers of these associations viz., Madras Union of Journalists, the Madras Reporters Guild and Chennai Press Club and the newspaper/magazines they belong to?
- 3) Who are the members of all the three associations viz., Madras Union of Journalists, the Madras Reporters Guild and Chennai Press Club?
- 4) When was the last membership enrolment conducted for all the three associations?
- 5) When was the last election conducted to all the three associations?
- 6) Have press people and people not connected with the profession entered these associations and dominated genuine press people?

was running a fortnightly magazine called "Maneeda Manam" for the past 10 years. Hence, he was directed to give the circulation and registration details of his magazine, the Bench added.

The Bench said Lita Srinivasan also produced six original identity cards of the petitioner, which were said to have been issued by the information and public relations department. An identity card of Khadar Basha, Deputy Commissioner of Police, District Crime Branch, Thiruvallur, who was sus-

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 11

Coming down heavily on those claiming to be press reporters for indulging in criminal activities, a division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and P.Velmurugan of the Madras high court has posed nine queries to be answered by the authorities concerned by January 21, 2020.

- 8) Why not the state government consider establishing a statutory body like Press Council of India to take action against errant members?
- 9) What is the list of journalist associations registered in Tamil Nadu?

pending from service for his alleged involvement in an idol theft case, was also produced. "This raises suspicion with regard to the bona fides of the petitioner in approaching this court by filing a public interest litigation. Further the court also suspects that the petitioner has filed the present petition claiming himself to be a press reporter at the instance of some third parties to scuttle the idol theft case. It is not known as to

### The queries are:

- 1) How many newspapers or magazines including weekly as well as fortnightly are registered with the Government of Tamil Nadu for past 10 years? (Yearwise details in each category such as magazine or newspaper have to be given).
- 2) How many persons are issued with press identity cards totally by the government?
- 3) Are cases registered against people claiming to be press reporters for indulging in criminal activities? If it is so, how many cases have been filed and the present status of those cases?
- 4) Whether people claiming as press reporters are indulging in blackmailing and conducting katta panchayat?
- 5) Is there any government scheme for the benefit of press people in case of any accidents or ultimately death?
- 6) Who are members of the Accreditation Committee and the media organisation they belong to and the circulation or viewership of the media organisations?
- 7) On what basis the members of the Accreditation Committee are selected?

how the identity card of Khadar Basha landed in the hands of the petitioner. The identity cards are directed to be placed in sealed covers," the Bench added.

The Bench directed the petitioner to file an affidavit under what circumstances the identity card of Khadar Basha came into the hands of the petitioner. "When the credentials of the petitioner as a press reporter are questionable incidentally this court would like to go into

the issue of fake journalists/press reporters," the Bench added.

The Bench said it was evident from media reports that many people were claiming themselves as press reporters and committing crimes and blackmailing business people and government officials. In one such case, based on a complaint filed by "Daily Thanthi" management, a fake press person who collected money from a school

management claiming to be a reporter of "Daily Thanthi" was arrested. "This is only a tip of an iceberg. The Bench ordered notice to Press Council of India, MUJ, the Reporters Guild, Chennai Press Club, after Government Advocate Krithika Kamal, took notice on behalf of the Secretary, Information and Public Relations department.

The Bench posted the case for January 21 for further hearing.





## Reaction

Reacting to the economic slowdown, BJP MP Subramanian Swamy said PM Modi does not know economics. "He should make me the finance minister"



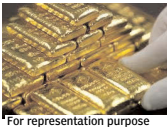
I have never seen innocent people like the Indians

— P. Chidambaram, Former union minister

## IN BRIEF

### Man stabbed to death by friend in drunken brawl

Chennai: A 40-year-old man was stabbed to death by his friend, Siva Kumar, in a drunken brawl at Maraimalai Nagar on Friday night. The deceased Bendu Kumar alias Kumar was a resident of Madhavavil area in Kattangulathur. He was a daily wage worker. Following an argument, Siva Kumar allegedly stabbed Kumar with an empty beer bottle, killing him on the spot, police said, and fled. The Maraimalai Nagar police sent the body to Chengalpatt government hospital for post-mortem. The police has registered a case and launched a search for Siva Kumar.



For representation purpose

### Three cases of gold smuggling at Chennai airport

Chennai: The customs officials at Chennai international airport detected three cases of smuggling of gold on Saturday. Based on a tip-off, Abdul Rahman (40) of Kerala who arrived from Riyadh was intercepted. Two rechargeable emergency lights were found concealed in his luggage. On further examination, a rectangular gold plate was found concealed inside the batteries. Eight plates weighing 593 grams and valued at Rs 24.3 lakhs were recovered. The passenger was arrested. In another two cases, Yaseen (46) of Chennai and Mohammed Paudyal (45) of Pudur who arrived from Dubai were intercepted. Rs 3.7 lakhs worth gold weighing 593 grams were seized.

# Most number of suicides in farming sector ■ Unemployment second reason, says report ranks second in suicides: NCRB

SINDHYA SAMUEL | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 11

With 13,896 deaths, Tamil Nadu ranked 11th with the second highest number of suicides as per latest data issued by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Tamil Nadu also contributed to 10.3 per cent of the total suicides reported in the country in the year 2018.

The country witnessed 1.34 lakh suicides, which included 92,114 males and 42,282 females in 2018, compared to 1.29 lakh in 2017, 1.31 lakh in 2016 and 1.33 lakh in 2015. On an average, 389 people (16 per hour) committed suicide in 2018. Since 2008, 14.53 lakh people have taken their life owing to various reasons, which included family problems, illness, love affairs, career problems, sense of isolation, abuse, violence, mental disorders, addiction to alcohol, financial loss and chronic pain, among a few others.

Tamil Nadu ranked second after Maharashtra which topped the list with 17,527 suicides, followed by Karnataka with 4,586 agricultural workers. The 2018 statistics showed that the number of suicides in the farm sector, had come down marginally from 10,655 suicides in 2017 to 10,555 in 2018. The annual data was released around three months after the government released the NCRB report on Crime in India-2017. The number of suicides in the farming sector in 2018 accounted for 7.7 per cent of the total suicide victims (1,34,516) in the country, the NCRB data said. Suicides in the country in 2018 rose to 1,34,516 from 1,29,887 in 2017.

The rate of suicides was up from 9.9 percent in 2017 to 10.2 percent in 2018. In 2017, a total of 10,655 farming sector suicides were reported. Maharashtra (3,594 in 2018 and 3,701 in 2017) and Karnataka (2,405 and 2,180) topped the list of farmer suicides. Maharashtra recorded 10,556 suicides and Karnataka 6,653 in the farming sector between 2015 and 2018. West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Uttarakhnd, Meghalaya, Goa, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu, Delhi, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry reported 'zero' suicides of farmers or cultivators during 2018, said the report.

Among the victims, 68.5 per cent were male. "Nearly 70.3 per cent of the male victims were married while 65.4 per cent of female victims were married," the report said. On the education front, it said 12.7 per cent of victims were illiterate, 17.1 per cent were educated up to the primary level, 19.5 per cent were educated up to middle level, and 23.6 per cent were educated up to matric-level.

Those below 18 years include 31 males and nine females, while those between 18 and 30 years comprise 1,240 males and 189 females. As many as 888 males and 95 females were aged between 30 and 45 years. A total of 237 males and 21 females were aged between 45 and 60 years, while 2,431 males and 310 females were above 60 years.

The highest number of suicides - 12.3 per cent - committed by unemployed persons were in Kerala (1,585 out of 12,586 suicides), followed by Tamil Nadu (1,579), 9.7 percent in Maharashtra (1,299 suicides), 8.5 percent in Karnataka (1,094 suicides).

NCRB data says that a total of 1,34,516 suicides were reported in the country during 2018, showing an increase of 3.6 percent in comparison to 2017 and the rate of suicide had increased by 0.3 during 2018 compared to 2017.

## Farmers' suicide

(10,349 suicides in the farming sector in 2018: NCRB)

Of the 1.34 lakh suicides in the country in 2018, 10,349 deaths occurred in the farming sector and this includes 5,783 farmers and 4,586 agricultural workers. The 2018 statistics showed that the number of suicides in the farm sector, had come down marginally from 10,655 suicides in 2017 to 10,555 in 2018.

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Among the victims, 68.5 per cent were male. "Nearly 70.3 per cent of the male victims were married while 65.4 per cent of female victims were married," the report said. On the education front, it said 12.7 per cent of victims were illiterate, 17.1 per cent were educated up to the primary level, 19.5 per cent were educated up to middle level, and 23.6 per cent were educated up to matric-level.

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## Close illegal water units, says Madras HC

JUSTALIN | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The Madras high court has directed the authorities of the Public Works Department to ensure complete closure of the units manufacturing purified water, who do not hold valid No Objection Certificate or permission from the department concerned against the installation of the units. The Public Works Department or Chennai Metro Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSB) for such extraction of ground water and submit a compliance report on February 6, 2020.

A division bench comprising Justices Vineet Kumar and R. Suresh Kumar gave the directive while passing interim order on a Public Interest Litigation filed by M.V.Sivamuthu, Tamil Nadu East Region General secretary of NEAT India Association, an NGO, which sought a direction to the authorities to implement the scheme of artificial recharge to preserve and improve the ground water level as per section 14 of Chennai Metropolitan Area Groundwater Regulation Act and consequently direct them to take penal action against the industries including G.D.Aqua Farm in Chennai, M/S. Jaya Package Industry, Thiruvallur, M/S. Aravind Aqua in Redhills and Malika Water Products in Mahavaram, which are extracting the ground water illegally in critical and overexploited areas.

The bench also directed for M/S. Maliga Water Products submitted that in so far as this industry was concerned, the Public Works Department by its letter dated September 11, 2014 had informed that since the plant was situated in the metro area, they should approach the CMWSB. Upon such approach, the said board by its communication dated July 10, 2017 had informed that the unit was located in the Shivaram Block and according to them, the jurisdiction lies with the PWD only and therefore, the said industry shall approach the PWD. This communication was issued to the industry way back on July 10, 2017. But, thereafter, the industry does not seem to have taken any effective steps for obtaining the requisite No Objection Certificate from the PWD, the bench added.

The bench said counsel further submitted that he has other relevant certificates such as BIS certificate and FSSAI certificate to manufacture the purified water out of the water extracted and that the plant was being run only to the extent of maintaining the membranes in the plant and machinery used in the manufacture of the said purified water. "This apparently is without the permission or approval of the PWD. The grievance of the petitioner in this PIL was only about the illegal extraction of ground water by this company and other water manufacturing plants, who are engaged in the manufacture of purified water by extracting the ground water from the respective areas, in which their industries are set up. Such illegal or unauthorized extraction of ground water is causing depletion of water resources illegally and the underground water table has gone down considerably. Therefore, we direct the authorities of the PWD to ensure complete closure of the units manufacturing purified water, who do not hold valid No Objection Certificate or permission from the department concerned either PWD or CMWSB for such extraction of ground water and submit from the next date of hearing", the bench added.

The bench said the officials concerned of the PWD, viz., S. Prabhakaran, Chief Engineer, State Ground and Surface Water Resources Data Centre, Tharamani, Chennai, shall remain present before this court during the next hearing i.e., on February 6, 2020 with the aforesaid compliance report and also provide the data as to how many units were engaged in such purified water manufacturing industry in the state of Tamil Nadu and how many of them hold valid permissions from the authorities concerned. A complete overall view of the said position may be produced before this court during the next date of hearing by collecting requisite information from the officials concerned of the department. The said units, which were closed under this order will not be allowed to re-operate and extract water unless and until they strictly comply with the conditions and obtain due permission to extract underground water. Such information should be supplied to the court in advance and only after the permission of this court, they should be allowed to undertake their manufacturing activity again, the bench added.

## Joblessness cost lives every hour in 2018

In a shocking discovery, one unemployed person committed suicide every hour during 2018. Of the total suicides by unemployed persons, males and females are 2,249. The latest NCRB data reveals that a total of 12,586 suicides committed by unemployed persons were in Kerala (1,585 out of 12,586 suicides), followed by Tamil Nadu (1,579), 9.7 percent in Maharashtra (1,299 suicides), 8.5 percent in Karnataka (1,094 suicides).

NCRB data says that a total of 1,34,516 suicides were reported in the country during 2018, showing an increase of 3.6 percent in comparison to 2017 and the rate of suicide had increased by 0.3 during 2018 compared to 2017.

## Man, son arrested with 55 kg of gutka

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The Chennai police on Saturday recovered 55 kg of banned gutka, and arrested a father-son duo in Pallavaram. The arrested have been identified as Madaswamy (52), a resident of Vempulammam Kovil Street in Pallavaram, and his son, M. Ganapathy (38). Madaswamy owns a grocery shop. The arrests came following a tip-off that the duo were selling gutka. The police conducted a search and seized 55 kilograms of gutka from a godown in the house. Madaswamy and son were arrested and lodged at Puzhal prison. Police said Madaswamy brings gutka from Karnataka and distributes it to the retail shops in city.

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GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT Phase-II PUBLIC NOTICE					Dated:10.01.2020		
Under sub-section (2) of section 15 of the TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS ACT 2001 (TAMILNADU ACT 34 OF 2002) (POWERS DELEGATED TO DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER (LAND ACQUISITION), CHENNAI OUTRIG RING ROAD, CHENNAI, KAYAMABEDU, CHENNAI - 600 107 IN G.O. (MS) NO. 101, HIGHWAYS AND MINOR PORTS (H-2) DEPARTMENT, DATED 26.6.2018)							
Under sub-section (2) of section 15 of Tamil Nadu Highways Act, 2001 (Tamil Nadu Act 34 of 2002) (Powers delegated to the District Revenue Officer (Land Acquisition), Chennai Outrig Ring Road, Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, Koyambedu, Chennai 600 107 (in G.O. (MS) No. 101, Highways and Minor Ports (H-2) 2018), notice is hereby given that, the units specified in the schedule below, and situated in the Village of No. 123, Marambedu in Ponneri Taluk, Tiruvallur District, are required for Highways to be, for providing Junction Improvement and Wayside Amenities to Chennai Outrig Ring Road, Phase-I. All persons interested in the lands are accordingly required to lodge before the District Revenue Officer (Land Acquisition), Chennai Outrig Ring Road, CMDA, Koyambedu, Chennai 600 107 within 30 (Thirty) days from the date of publication of this notice, a statement in writing of their objections, if any, for acquisition of the said lands.							
Any objections / statement which is received after the date or which does not clearly explain the nature of the sender's interest in the land is liable to be summarily rejected.							
Objections received within the stipulated time frame, will be enquired into on 19.02.2020 at 11.00 AM by the District Revenue Officer (Land Acquisition), Chennai Outrig Ring Road, CMDA, at his office at Koyambedu, Chennai 600 107, when the objections will be at liberty to appear in person or by a person or persons authorized by him/her or in their behalf or by a Pleader and to adduce any oral or documentary evidence in support of their objections							
SCHEDULE							
District: TIRUVALLUR   Taluk: PONNERI   Village: No. 123, MARAMBEDU							
Sl. No.	Survey No. / Sub-Division No.	Total Extent (in Hec.)	Cultivable (in Hec.)	Extent proposed for acquisition (in Hec.)	Boundaries	Land Owners / Interested Persons	Structures / Trees
1	92/1A1 Part	0.08	Dry	85	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1B1 Part South S.No. 92/1A1 Part West S.No. 101	57, Namachivayam S/o. Ramo Reddy	Neem Tree - 1
2	92/1B1 Part	0.03	Dry	59	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1B1 Part South S.No. 92/1C1 Part West S.No. 92/1B2	12, Karanahalli Naidu S/o. Raghavanna Naidu	Neem Sapling-1
3	92/1C1 Part	0.03	Dry	119	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1C1 Part South S.No. 92/1C2 Part West S.No. 92/1C1 Part	33, Kallandaraman S/o. Ramadoss Naidu	Neem Sapling-4 Post of Low Tension Wire - 1
4	92/1D1 Part	0.04	Dry	400	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1E1 South S.No. 92/1D2 West S.No. 92/1C1 Part	76, Mani Naidu S/o. Perumal	-
5	92/1E1 Part	0.01	Dry	100	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1E2 South S.No. 92/1D1 West S.No. 92/1D1 Part	235, S/o. S. Narayana, W/o. M. Pradeep Kumar	-
6	92/2E2 Part	0.05	Dry	135	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 93 South S.No. 92/3E2 West S.No. 92/3E1 Part	33, Kallandaraman S/o. Ramadoss Naidu	Low tension wire crossing street Light Post - 1
7	101/1C1 Part	0.50	Dry	235	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92 South S.No. 101/1C1 Part West S.No. 101/1C1 Part	13, Gajendran S/o. Kondayya Naidu	Neem sapling - 1 Low tension wire post - 2
8	113/1B Part	1.41	Manner	5392	North S.No. 113/1B Part East S.No. 113/1B Part South S.No. Kunnur Village West S.No. 112	140 Luthappa	Coconut trees - 11 Teak trees - 10
9	100/2B1 Part	0.48	Dry	758	North S.No. 100/2B1 Part East S.No. 100/2B2 Part South S.No. 103 West S.No. 100/2B1 Part	68, Parthasarathy S/o. Kanniah Naidu	-
10	103/1A Part	0.27	Dry	1028	North S.No. 103 East S.No. 103/1B Part South S.No. 103/1A Part West S.No. 107	226, S. Suresh Chandran Nair S/o. P. Gopinathan	-
TOTAL		8311					
CHENNAI - 600 107 / DATED: 19.01.2020							
DIPR/600/LAND/2020							
DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER (L.A.) CHENNAI OUTRIG RING ROAD, CMDA, KAYAMABEDU, CHENNAI-600 107							

# Welfare schemes: God gives but pujari doesn't!



With educational loans, a roadside fruit vendor in Chennai has managed to make both his daughters and his son graduates. The son is scouting for a job as he prepares for the Civil Services Examination, along with one of his sisters, and can be sometimes seen studying under streetlights, or listening to lectures on his phone at his parents' roadside stall. As wedding bells are to ring next month, the father began the process of applying for the Tamil Nadu government's "Thaaliika Thangam" marriage assistance scheme. The state government website says the objective of the scheme is "to help financially poor parents in getting their daughters married and to promote the educational status of poor girls." It is clear that this welfare scheme is to ensure that parents do not have to choose between education and marriage of their daughters, both of which can otherwise burn a hole in their pockets. While upholding freebies, the Supreme Court in Subramanian Balaji Vs State of Tamil Nadu (2013) had observed that "with the extraordinary

rise in the price of gold, poor families in vulnerable categories find it difficult to buy even a small quantity for the traditional mangal sutra. To be eligible for a cheque of Rs 50,000 and an 8 gram gold coin, the parents' annual income should not exceed Rs 72,000, the bride should have completed 18 years and the bridegroom 21 years and the application should be received within 45 days before marriage, or in "unavoidable circumstances", at least a day prior to the wedding. The fruit vendor believed that he met all the eligibility criteria. But has been knocked down by the very first hurdle - obtaining an income certificate. The local taluk office first argued that as his son has an engineering degree, the daughter is not eligible! Isn't the son's education outrageous? Is it in sync with the eligibility criteria? To link the son's education to the daughter's eligibility goes against gender equality and empowerment.

When the applicant brought it to the attention of a senior official, he was called again by the taluk office. This time, he was informed that an income certificate of Rs 96,000 was issued, making him ineligible for marriage assistance! This figure of Rs 96,000 was fixed randomly, arbitrarily and apparently on a whim, perhaps even vendetta, for daring to escalate the matter! Without an enquiry, it also

under the present circumstances. For daily earners, where there are no invoices or bills or income tax returns and only petty cash sales, how can income be determined by a third party? This is a classic case of officials defeating the purpose of welfare. Many disgruntled applicants have knocked on the doors of the judiciary. The Madras high court in R.Ladha Vs District Collector, Villupuram (2019) noted that "the Legislature passes schemes for the benefit of the citizens. When officials prevent the said schemes from reaching the beneficiaries, we petitioners of this nature are fixed." The court hoped that instead of technicalities a "practical view" should be taken by authorities.

Poor people may not be that net savvy. Government websites are not always user friendly. As applications are online, many encounter difficulties in uploading documents. As a result, applications may be rejected. In such an eventuality, the Madras High Court in S.Selvi Vs District Collector, Madurai (2019) had permitted the applicant to upload the documents again and directed the authorities to process it within 2 weeks. The deadline for applications is another sticky point.



Minister for cooperatives Sellur K. Raju said the DMK was a tiger outside but a cat in the Assembly



OTHER STORIES

## K'taka releases 85 tmcft of excess Cauvery water to TN

SHILPA P. | DC MYSURU, JAN. 11

Neither have we bitterness with the DMK, nor have we parted ways

— K. S. Alagiri, DMK president

As Cauvery catchment areas have received a good rainfall this year, Karnataka has already released 85 tmcft of excess water to Tamil Nadu, said Dr C.S. Srinivasubudha, a Karnataka Disaster Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre.

Cauvery catchment areas received 83 per cent excess north east monsoon showers which was the highest in the state and 16 per cent excess south west monsoon showers. The state was supposed to release 177.25 tmcft of water to Tamil Nadu for the entire water year (from June 2019 to May 2020) and it was supposed to release only 165 tmcft by now. But Karnataka has already released 262 tmcft. The quota of 177.25 tmcft was released by October 6, 2019, Mr Reddy said.

"Other than water for summer crops, 15 tmcft of Cauvery water is needed till May-end (until next south west monsoon showers begin in June) for drinking water for Mysuru, Bengaluru and villages en route. Dams in Cauvery catchment areas, including the Krishna Raja Sagara, Kabini, Harangi and Hemavathi, have 83 tmcft of water in gross and 73 tmcft of live storage," he said.

## CM charge on posting OSD as baseless: Bedi

Puducherry, Jan. 11: Puducherry Lt Governor Kiran Bedi on Saturday said she was not charged with her Official Secretariat (OS) by Minister V Narayanasamy for his charge that she planned to post her Official Secretariat (OS) as a Special Officer (SO) to the Government of Tamil Nadu. Bedi said it was nothing but a 'figment of his imagination'.

Her comments came a day after the Chief Minister alleged at a press meet here that Bedi had a hidden agenda of appointing her OSD, G Theva Neelhi Dhas, a retired IAS officer, as the SEC.

Bedi, in what she described as an 'open letter' to Narayanasamy, said the Chief Minister continued to mislead the people of Puducherry.

"Your allegations are mere figments of your imagination," she said.

Maintaining that the OSD was not separable to take up any other assignment as long as she was Lt Governor, she said Theva Neelhi Dhas was indispensable to her office in view of his long and outstanding public service.

She also stated that Dhas was providing her office 'critical institutional memory', which was so essential for her personally as she was coming from outside the region.

Bedi asked the Chief Minister to stop spreading such falsehood through the media and said her office needed the services of Dhas in view of his integrity, vast experience and capability.

"Theva Neelhi Dhas too is not interested in any such posts (SEC), she said.

## 85% beneficiaries get Pongal freebies

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 11

With just three days to go for the harvest festival of 'Pongal', the Tamil Nadu government's Pongal hamper to rice-card holders under the public distribution system (PDS) has reached 85.26 per cent of the beneficiaries according to the State Food minister K. Kamaraj.

The remaining beneficiaries will also get the Pongal freebies by Saturday night, he said.

The free kit to each beneficiary given by the government includes ₹1,000 cash, one-kg rice, one-kg jaggery,



Women beneficiaries interact with each other after getting Pongal freebies in Chennai on Saturday.

two-ft long sugarcane, cashews and dry fruits including dry grapes and 'elachi'. These ingredients are for the people to be used

each fair price shop is distributing at the rate of 300 families per day covering two streets per ward. This will ensure that the distribution is hassle-free. However, in some places, card holders complained they did not get sugarcane.

The state-wide scheme being executed by Chief Minister, Edappadi K. Palaniswami on January 9 at Kallakurichi. Any eligible family left out can get the gift hampers on January 13, officials added.

This popular Pongal hamper costs the state exchequer ₹2,300 crore.

## 'CM assured full protection to minorities in Assembly' Will quit to protect rights of minorities: Velumani

DC CORRESPONDENT COIMBATORE, JAN. 11

With the anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protests increasing by the day, state municipal administration minister S. P. Velumani assured that the minorities would not be affected by the Act and that he is ready to quit his post to protect the rights of Muslim community, who have always stood by him.

"Nothing will happen to the minorities and if anything happens, (then) I will stand by them. The post is not important to me and I am ready to quit to protect their rights," Velumani said on Saturday.

Speaking at a function to go up to distribute Pongal gifts at Kallakurichi, a Muslim dominated area in the city, Velumani said Chief minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami had made it clear the party's stand with regard to the Citizenship Amendment Act, on the floor of the Assembly. Also, he had taken up the matter at the Central Government, after a delegation from Jamaath met him a few days ago."

met him a few days ago, he said.

Stating that about 3,000 persons belonging to Muslim were staying around his house, the Minister said they were all living like brothers and sisters.

Assuring the party stood against the Triple Talag

bill in Parliament, he added.

Palaniswami had on Thursday told the Assembly that his government will fully protect the interests of minorities and cared upon them not to be swayed by politically motivated rumours on the NRC.

The AIADMK, which supported the CAA in Parliament, recently asserted it would be the first to raise the voice in case even a single person from the minority community was affected and when the National Register of Citizens (NRC) is implemented.

Over 20 Muslim organisations, the Congress on Thursday petitioned the state government to prevent the Centre to withdraw the CAA.



DMK president M.K. Stalin waves to the crowd at a meeting in Port Blair, Andamans late on Friday night.

## CAA: Mamata cold-shouldering Cong is no dampener for DMK

D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 11

With the Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi convening a meeting in Delhi of all its allies on January 13 to discuss further steps to take forward the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), its key ally in Tamil Nadu, the DMK, is getting ready for the next level of agitation.

The DMK, depending on what is decided at the 10-party opposition alliance meeting in the national capital, will consult leaders of its allies in the state after the CAA and putting pressure on the ruling AIADMK not to implement the Act in Tamil Nadu. The Act came into effect from January 10.

DMK president M. K. Stalin had already given notice to the Assembly speaker for taking up a private member resolution to press the Central government not to implement the CAA. But it was not taken up in the House and DMK walked out from the Assembly over the issue during the recent brief session after the Governor's address.

However, the tone and tenor of Stalin's speech in New Delhi, saying the Congress-led government was 'betraying' the meeting, disapproving of the violence unleashed by Congress

Assembly adjourned since die, was enough indication that the party was keeping its powder dry for a bigger agitation against the CAA.

"It is an honour for the DMK that I am being called every time a new non-BJP government is ushered into office, the latest being in Jharkhand," Stalin said at the meeting in Port Blair. This indicates the importance that national opposition parties were giving to the DMK when they organise any agitation or protest against the CAA, which is facing the country today including the CAA/NPR/NRC, he stressed. Mr Stalin also took the occasion to say that DMK was the third largest single party in Parliament now, lending it considerable weight in national issues.

Stalin had also recently wished the Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee on her 65th birthday after the West Bengal Chief Minister had earlier written to the DMK leader on the need to initiate a wider concerted action against the BJP government at the national level on issues such as CAA/NPR/NRC.

However, Mamata Banerjee had two days back declined to attend the Congress-convened meeting of opposition parties in New Delhi, saying she would 'boycott' the meeting, disapproving of the violence unleashed by Congress

and Left parties in Bengal during the one-day strike called by the Central trade unions on January 8.

Mamata, however, had clarified that she was supporting the cause against the CAA and related issues but would not back any 'bandh' call as it would lead to inconvenience among the public. The West Bengal Chief Minister's statement is seen as a conciliatory gesture ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Kolkata on Saturday.

Nonetheless, these developments of Mamata cold-shouldering Congress' latest move does not seem to have deterred the DMK in any way. In fact, Mr Stalin and the DMK, which voted against the Citizenship Amendment Bill in both houses of Parliament, has been resolute to keep the agitation momentum against the CAA going right from start despite several obstacles on its home turf and recent rural local bodies elections. The DMK has even organised a mega opposition rally in Chennai on December 23 against CAA, though the city police had refused permission for it. The DMK had to move the High Court leading to a stand-off with the AIADMK government and the city police.

The DMK has meanwhile convened its executive committee meeting here on January 21.

## Indirect elections to local body heads

## AIADMK nominee wins Ooty poll in draw of lots

BR. VICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, JAN. 11

After a dramatic turn of events, the AIADMK on Saturday won the election to DMK candidate Kama Raj, a DMK councillor at union, the AIADMK alliance won 11, while the AIADMK alliance got 8 and other three went to independents. While one Chitra, an independent, expressed support to elect their chiefs and absence of officers to conduct elections.

The vice chairperson election too could not be held in about 41 panchayats in the nine unions in the district. The DMK managed to win from 125 unions, the Congress from 5, CPI: 3, T. T. V. Dhinakaran's AMMK and independents won in 2 places each. The elections in about 27 panchayat unions could not be held owing to several issues like breakdown of law and order, lack of quorum (of elected representatives to elect their chiefs) and absence of officers to conduct elections.

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## Complain

DMK leader T R Baalu and a few party cadre lodged a complaint with the state election commission that LB polls in several places were deferred for no reason

3

Govt. should take tough action against teachers involved in sex abuse of students

— Dr S Ramadoss, PMK founder

## SHORT TAKES

### Elderly woman arrested for selling ganja

**Chennai:** Police arrested an elderly woman and launched a search for her family members who fled the spot after police caught them selling ganja in Adambakkam. The arrested woman was identified as Bernard (69), resident of Ambekar Nagar in Adambakkam. Police said, based on a tip-off that a family was selling ganja in the area, police landed at the doorstep of one Lourduhswamy on Friday night. On seeing the police, Lourduhswamy, his wife Shanthi, sons Manibala and Joseph fled the spot, but police managed to nab Shanthi's mother Bernard and seized one kilogram of ganja and Rs 1,000 in cash. She was produced before Alaudur court and lodged in Puzhal prison. Adambakkam police has launched a search for her family members.

### DMK takes delta with a shock

**Tiruchy:** The opposition DMK won five district Panchayat president posts, while the ruling AIADMK won three in the indirect elections for those posts held in the delta districts of Tiruchy, Karur, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Thanjavur, Tiruvallur, Tirunelveli and Nagapattinam on Saturday. The DMK won Tiruchy, Perambalur, Pudukkottai, Tiruvallur, Nagapattinam, and Thanjavur district panchayat president posts, while the ruling AIADMK won Karur, Ariyalur, and Pudukkottai districts. However, the indirect elections in Pudukkottai district had a shocker unfolding for the DMK, which despite winning 13 district panchayat wards was edged out by the AIADMK that has captured the district panchayat with 12 votes. This, sources say, was made possible with two Congress ward members and one DMK ward member allegedly backing the AIADMK, which had won nine wards, for the district panchayat president's post, thereby reducing DMK's tally to only 10 votes. Meanwhile in Thanjavur, for the post of Thanjavur district panchayat president, Ms. Usha of DMK was declared elected unopposed as chairperson as DMK and its allies had won 22 of the 28 wards. Since six elected AIADMK ward members did not turn up for the indirect election today held at the Panagal building there, Ms. Usha was elected unopposed.

### 'Name road after freedom fighter Kakaji'

**Mannargudi:** Social service organisations and other like-minded bodies appealed to the Tamil Nadu Government to name an important road after freedom fighter Kakaji D. Ramaswamy at an important road at Mannargudi in Tiruvallur district. A resolution to this effect was adopted at a meeting to commemorate his 25th death anniversary held here on Thursday, organised by 'Nesakaram', the coordinator of the service organisations. A release from 'Nesakaram' said here on Saturday that the meeting also requested the government to install the statue of late freedom fighter near the Haridra river Teppakkulam area here, and to set up a memorial at Mannargudi for freedom fighters in and around Mannargudi.

# Vice-prez inaugurates Thyagaraja Aradhana

GSRINIVASAN | DC

THANJAVUR, JAN. 11

"India, all over the world is known by our culture and civilization" said M.Venkaiah Naidu, Vice-president of India at Thiruvallur near Thanjavur on Saturday. He inaugurated the 173rd aradhana of saint composer Sri Thyagaraja at the saint's Samadhi on the banks of Cauvery at Thiruvallur. He said that ancient civilizations like Rousas of 'Kritia' Babylonian are no more while our culture and civilization is still surviving. Our culture is 'Vasudeva Kudumbakam' (entire world is a family) and 'Saravajana Sukhino Bavanthi', the Vice-president said. Stating that people

should not be discriminated against on the basis of religion, he said that religion is personal, while culture is our way of life. He said, "we should be proud of our history and called for re-orienting our education system." Describing saint-composer Sri Thyagaraja as "three-in-one" he said that he stood for national integration. "A Telugu born at Tiruvallur in Tamil Nadu, lived at Thiruvallur and sang thousands of 'kritis' in praise of Lord Rama who is the best ruler, best son to his father, best husband to Sita etc.," Naidu said. He also said that saint Thyagaraja was, beyond any doubt, a stalwart, one of the tallest figures in the world of music. The

contributions of saint Thyagaraja to the enrichment of our cultural heritage cannot be quantified or estimated. "It is infinite in its resonance" the VP said. "In the turbulent times that we live in, it is comforting and invigorating to pause and reflect on our unique cultural heritage" he added. Music unites people. Art unites hearts, he said. "From first lullaby that is lovingly sung by mother to her child, music penetrates almost every part of our life, our work, our relationships and even the way we worship almighty" Naidu said. He batted for giving importance to mother tongue and studying in Tamil or Telugu as the language may be. Only in

mother tongue one can articulate one's thoughts, he said. Dressed in silk dhoti in panchakacham, a jibba and 'angavastaram', Naidu started his speech in Tamil and continued in English and Telugu. He listened to music programmes after the inauguration and also offered worship to the 'Moolavar' Sri Thyagaraja Swamy. Mr. G.K. Vasan, president of Sri Thyagarabrahma Mahotsava Sabha, Vellamandhi Natarajan, state Tourism minister and Haridwar a m a g a m a l a A.K. Palanivel and Srimushnam Raja Rao, secretaries of the Sabha participated in the function on the banks of the scenic Cauvery river, in Thanjavur district.

## KOLAM FESTIVAL



In all, 125 artistes, including two men, showcased their kolam drawing skills as they lit the entire east end of North Madha Street with traditional white pulli kolam on Saturday evening at Sundaram Finance Mysore festival. The artistes were given 45 minutes to draw their favourite kolam on a four-feet by four-feet space.

— DC

## 'Promotion, basic right of public servant'

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The Madras high court has observed that it is the fundamental right of every public servant to be considered for promotion if he fulfills all the qualifications and desirability the same will be in violation of Articles 16 and 14 of the Constitution of India. Justice N.Anand Venkatesh made the observation while disposing

of a petition from M. Ramasubramanian and two others, working in Fire and Rescue Services. The judge said this court is not inclined to interfere with the impugned order of temporary promotions issued by the DGP/Director, Fire and Rescue Services. However, in view of the fact that the promotions to the post of station officer is governed by the Service Rules and there are candidates who

are eligible to be considered for regular promotion to the said post, certain directions can be issued by this court to complete the process of regular promotions within a stipulated period and till such time, the temporary promotion order passed by the DGP can be in force, the judge added. The judge directed the authorities to prepare a year wise panel for promotion to the post of Station Officer from the

panel years 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 by including all the eligible persons in the panel as per the Special Rules for Tamil Nadu Fire and Subordinate Services, as amended by reckoning the seniority in the feeder service and monetary benefits shall also be granted to the promoted candidates.

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**On-line Application Starts** 07 February, 2020  
**On-line Application Ends** 08 March, 2020  
**ISI ADMISSION TEST** 10 May, 2020  
**Davp:39103/11/0005/1920**

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor Project, Kanchipuram																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										
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DPP/0441/AND/2020

Special District Revenue Officer (LA), Kanchipuram



DECCAN CHRONICLE SUNDAY | 12 JANUARY 2020 | CHENNAI

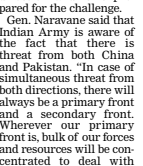


The IIFA awards would be organised in Bhopal and Indore. The event would be telecast in 90 countries and would help in promoting tourism in the state.

The decision to honour Deepika Padukone comes a couple days after Chief Minister Kamal Nath declared *Chhapaak* tax free in the state for sending a positive message to the society.

pied Kashmir is concerned, many years ago there was a parliamentary resolution on it that entire erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir is part of India. If Parliament wants that area should also belong to us and if we get orders to that effect, then definitely we will take action on it," he said.

He said that Army has



Gen. Naravane said that each is "important for" as that is the only area where one army formation is looking after both Western and Northern frontier.

"That is what makes it strategically important. We must not lose sight that is from where

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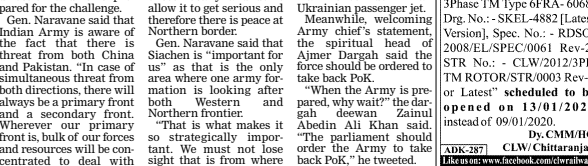
The entire details of Tenders and are available in the Government Website

Tender Documents available place, cost and due date for obtaining Tender
Due date for submission of Tender through online

DIR/ 232 /TENDER/2020

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Phase 1M type of RA-6006  
Org. No.: - SKEL-4882 [Latest  
version], Spec. No.: - RDSG/0008/2008/EL/SPEC/0061 Rev-2  
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The entire details of Tenders and the list of Destination Warehouse are available in the Government Website <https://tenders.gov.in>

Tender Documents available place, cost and due date for obtaining Tender	Available in the website <a href="https://tenders.gov.in">https://tenders.gov.in</a> (Free of cost)
Due date for submission of Tender through online	16-01-2020 to 06-02-2020 06-02-2020 by 03.00 P.M.

**Managing Director (FAC)**  
**Tamil Nadu Warehousing Corporation**  
**Chennai - 600 032.**

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e-Tenders are invited by the Managing Director (FAC), Tamil Nadu Warehousing Corporation, Chennai-22 to supply the 800 SYSTEM for Purchase of 125800 Kgs of **Aluminium Phosphate Tablets**.

The entire details of Tenders and the list of Destination Warehouses are available in the Government Website <https://tenders.gov.in>

Tender Documents available place, cost and due date for obtaining Tender	Available in the website <a href="https://tenders.gov.in">https://tenders.gov.in</a> (Free of cost) 16-02-2020 to 06-02-2020
Due date for submission of Tender through online	06-02-2020 by 03.00 P.M.

**Managing Director (FAC)**  
**Tamil Nadu Warehousing Corporation**  
**Chennai - 600 032.**

DWR/ 232 /Tender/2020





Citizenship on religious basis is antithetical to our Constitution  
— Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM president

**BRIEF**

**Kota tragedy: Maya slams Priyanka**

**Lucknow:** A day after Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra visited Jaipur, BSP president Mayawati slammed her for paying no heed to Kota hospital tragedy. Over 100 infants have died in the government-run hospital in Kota. "The Congress leader frequently comes to Uttar Pradesh to shed crocodile tears. But in Rajasthan, where her private visit yesterday she does not consider it appropriate to give a little time to wipe the tears of children's mothers in Kota even though she is also a mother and this is most unfortunate," the BSP supremo said in a tweet.

**35 students down with food poisoning**

**Aurangabad:** In a suspected case of food poisoning, at least 35 students of a government residential school in Parbhani district of Maharashtra died on Saturday. Of 145 students at the facility, 35 experienced acidity, vomiting and diarrhoea after consuming food at the school on Thursday night, Inspector Subhash Rathod of Purna police station said. The affected children were admitted to a local rural hospital for preliminary treatment, he said, adding that some of them were later shifted to a hospital in Nanded. The children's condition is now stable and they will be discharged soon, he said. The police are probing to ascertain the reason.

**Goa Cong demands inquiry on conman**

**Panel:** Goa Pradesh Mahila Congress Committee on Saturday condemned the state government's failure to keep track of the conman, who posed as a Uttar Pradesh minister and enjoyed status of a state guest for 12 days. GPMCC president Pratima Coutinho said the incident reflects gross negligence on the state government's part, as it left loopholes in the protocol department. "An inquiry should be conducted on how the conman was allowed to enjoy state hospitality at the cost of common man and the money spent on him should be recovered," she said. Earlier this week, the Goa crime branch arrested Sunil Singh and four of his accomplices after he was caught impersonating as a minister in UP government.

**CONG: PM MODI SILENT ON PAK'S BARBARISM**

**New Delhi:** The Congress on Saturday attacked the Modi government over the killing of two Army porters in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district by the Pakistan Army, alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister are "silent". Minister Rajnath Singh are silent on the barbarism of that country. Referring to reports that Pakistan, in a BAT (Border Action Team) attack in Poonch, killed two Army porters and decapitated one, Congress' chief spokesperson Randheer Surjewala asked why is the Modi government "silent" on Pakistan's barbarism. The BAT generally comprises special forces personnel of the Pakistani Army and terrorists. Pakistani soldiers beheaded a porter while the prime minister and the Defence Minister are "silent". Surjewala said also questioning media's silence on the issue. "Is the news of martyrdom run taking into account the government in power?" he said. "When will Pakistan's cowardly acts be given a befitting reply? 10 heads for 1? When? Surjewala said. —PTI

**■ Purpose of law is to divide Indians on religious lines, says Sonia Cong demands withdrawal of CAA, stopping of NPR process**

**SNEERPARNA CHAKRABARTY**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

Terming the CAA as a "discriminatory" and "divisive" law, the Congress Party on Saturday demanded that the Citizenship Amendment Act be withdrawn and the process of NPR be stopped. The party demanded that a comprehensive high-powered Commission should be constituted to enquire into the incidents connected with the anti-CAA protests.

It also threw its weight behind the agitating students of various universities across the country even as interim President Sonia Gandhi decried the "police excesses" in many parts of Uttar Pradesh and JNU, Jamia Millia Islamia and



Congress president Sonia Gandhi with former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during CWC meeting in New Delhi on Saturday.

Aligarh Muslim University. At a special session of the Congress Working Committee — the party's highest decision making body — Mrs Gandhi said, "The sinister purpose of the law is clear to every patriotic, tolerant and secular Indian, it is to divide

the Indian people on religious lines, she said. Mrs Gandhi further said that she was inspired by the struggle of the students who have taken to the streets and saluted their courage even as she decried the use of brute force by the police.

"We are appalled by the police excesses and use of force in many towns of Uttar Pradesh, in Jamia Millia, in the JNU, BHU, Allahabad University, Delhi University, Gujarat University, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. We therefore demand that a comprehensive high-powered Commission should be constituted to enquire into the incidents connected with the anti-CAA protests and justice to the affected persons," she added.

**Panel set up by MHA on Assam to meet Shah today**

**New Delhi, Jan. 11:** A high-level committee, set up by the Home Ministry to look into the Assam Accord's Clause 6, under which the central government had promised to provide constitutional safeguards to the indigenous people.



The committee is said to have completed its deliberations and discussions with various stakeholders in Assam and is expected to submit its report soon, may be within a month, the sources said. The committee was set up as per the Clause 6 of the 1985

Assam Accord. According to its terms and conditions, "The committee will assess the appropriate level of reservation of seats in Assam Legislative Assembly and local bodies for the Assamese people". "The committee will recommend the appropriate level of reservations in employment under the government of Assam for the Assamese people," according to a home ministry notification. "The meeting will be held amidst widespread protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in Assam, —PTI

**Will wait for SC decision on CAA: MP law minister**

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY**  
BHOPLAL, JAN. 11

Madhya Pradesh law minister P.C. Sharma on Saturday said the state government awaited order by the Supreme Court on Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) before taking the decision to implement it in the state.

Mr Sharma said, "Although, the notification seeking to enforce CAA has been issued by the Centre, we are awaiting the order by the SC in the matter. The case is currently pending with the apex court". The notification enforcing CAA was issued on Friday.

The state government has made its stand clear on the issue from day one. Chief minister Kamal Nath has already declared his stand. He has also reiterated his stand on CAA on the sidelines of the march to protest against Citizenship Amendment Act on December 25. Mr Sharma added, "The chief minister had then said his government would follow the directive by Congress on the issue."

**'Should Rohingyas get citizenship & not refugees'**

**Sambalpur (Odisha), Jan. 11:** Union minister Giriraj Singh on Saturday asked the Congress and those opposing the CAA whether Rohingyas and Pakistani infiltrators should get Indian citizenship and not the Hindu and Sikh refugees from the neighbouring country.

Anybody staying in India should chant "Vande Mataram" and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai". Mr Singh said the tukde tukde game is active in the Jawaharal Nehru University, which witnessed violence last week, and Congress leader



Rahul Gandhi is trying to do politics there. "Tukde-Tukde game" is a term often used by right-wing parties to attack the opposition, particularly Left and backed outfits as well as those who support them.

He said Muslims in India need not panic as the CAA will not snatch away anyone's citizenship, but there would not have been any necessity of the CAA, the BJP leader said. "The new law simply aims at according citizenship to religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Some parties like the Congress are trying to spread false information about CAA and create disturbance in the country," Mr Singh said. The minister asserted that anyone staying in India should chant "Vande Mataram" and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai".

Had all the Muslims shifted to Pakistan and Hindus stayed in India during and after partition, there would not have been any necessity of the CAA, the BJP leader said. The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is not being implemented in the country now and so, there is no need for discussion on the NRC at present, Mr Singh said. "The National Population Register (NPR) is linked to the Census process and needs to be updated. However, some people are trying to spread rumours about the NPR," he said. —PTI

**Kalyani Devi crowned first woman Gajapati**

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO**  
PARALAKHEMUNDI, JAN. 11

After the demise of Paralakhemundi Maharaj Gopinath Gajapati Narayan Deo, his only daughter, Kalyani Devi, was crowned as the head of the royal family. With the coronation (Rajabhishek) ceremony, Kalyani has officially become the first woman Gajapati in the history of the dynasty.

Head of the Paralakhemundi royal family as called as Gajapati. Her father, Gopinath Gajapati Narayan Deo had passed away while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar early on Friday morning after nearly three years of struggling with health-related issues. Later in the day, mortal remains of the king were taken in a procession in Paralakhemundi and accorded national honours before being consigned to flames.

As per tradition Kalyani performed the last rites of her father after her formal ascension to the throne at the palace with Vedic rituals. The condition will come into effect from January 15, and where physical copies are supplied, the changes shall be carried out with effect from January 18. "The defendants (film makers) are restrained from releasing the film 'Chhapaak' on any electronic medium/s such as cable television, home viewing, DTH platforms, internet entertainment or streaming services, etc., without acknowledging the name of the Plaintiffs in the opening credits," Justice Prathiba M. Singh

said in the order. The court passed the order on a plea by Fox Star Studio, producer of the movie which was released on Friday challenging a trial court's Thursday order asking them to acknowledge the contribution of the advocates. The high court modified the acknowledgement of the trial court which had directed that the film 'Chhapaak' carry the line "Aparna Bhat continues to fight cases of sexual and physical violence against women during the screening of the film".

**Odisha boy Anshuman Kamila tops IES exam**

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO**  
BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 11

Bringing glory to the state, Odisha's Anshuman Kamila has topped the Indian Economic Service (IES) Examination 2019. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) declared the final results of IES exam on its official website upsc.gov.in on Friday evening.

Anshuman is the son of former chief post master general of Odisha, Santosh Kamila while his mother is a professor in economics department of Utkal University and a renowned singer of the state. As per a notification of the UPSC, a total of 32 candidates have been selected for appointment to the posts to be filled under IES and Anshuman secured the first position among them. Sharing his success mantra, Anshuman said, "I did not study for hours, rather, I studied regularly and every day. I had to failures a couple of times but it did not deter me from pursuing the civil services."

The IES main exam was held from June 28 to June 30, 2019. Regarding the theatrical exhibition, the court said since the film has already been released on January 10, both internationally and in India, to ensure that there is no disruption in the screening, it is directed that the film shall not be exhibited in the theatres with effect from January 15 without adding the credit to the advocate to the digital copies. In the theatres where physical copies of the film are to be supplied by the producer, the changes shall be carried out with effect from January 18, it said. —PTI

**IIT-KGP unveils device that can perform CBC test at ₹10**

**Kolkata, Jan. 11:** Researchers from the IIT Kharagpur have developed a spinning disc-based device that can perform Complete Blood Count (CBC) test with 85 per cent accuracy at only ₹10, the institute said in a statement on Saturday. The average present cost of CBC — a collection of commonly required blood tests routinely suggested by doctors to assess a wide range of diseases — is ₹200. "We have developed a

motor-run spinning disc-based portable device for performing a Complete Blood Count test. The device can perform hematology (packed volume of red blood cells), hemoglobin, red blood cell, white blood cell and platelet count tests with

motor-run spinning disc-based portable device for performing a Complete Blood Count test. The device can perform hematology (packed volume of red blood cells), hemoglobin, red blood cell, white blood cell and platelet count tests with

without giving credit to the lawyer, who represented acid attack survivor Laxmi Agarwal on whose life the movie is based, for the share with them. The court directed film director Meghna Gulzar and producer Fox Star Studios to acknowledge advocate Aparna Bhat in the opening credits in the opening credits. "Inputs by Ms. Aparna Bhat, the lawyer who represented Laxmi Agarwal, are acknowledged." For theatres where digital copies are provided,

the condition will come into effect from January 15, and where physical copies are supplied, the changes shall be carried out with effect from January 18. "The defendants (film makers) are restrained from releasing the film 'Chhapaak' on any electronic medium/s such as cable television, home viewing, DTH platforms, internet entertainment or streaming services, etc., without acknowledging the name of the Plaintiffs in the opening credits," Justice Prathiba M. Singh

said in the order. The court passed the order on a plea by Fox Star Studio, producer of the movie which was released on Friday challenging a trial court's Thursday order asking them to acknowledge the contribution of the advocates. The high court modified the acknowledgement of the trial court which had directed that the film 'Chhapaak' carry the line "Aparna Bhat continues to fight cases of sexual and physical violence against women during the screening of the film".

Regarding the theatrical exhibition, the court said since the film has already been released on January 10, both internationally and in India, to ensure that there is no disruption in the screening, it is directed that the film shall not be exhibited in the theatres with effect from January 15 without adding the credit to the advocate to the digital copies. In the theatres where physical copies of the film are to be supplied by the producer, the changes shall be carried out with effect from January 18, it said. —PTI



Before and after: Two of the flats demolished through controlled implosion in Maradu on Saturday.

**Kochi: 2 high-rises razed for flouting CRZ norms**

*Buildings were constructed close to Vembanad lake*

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN. 11

Two of the flats constructed in violation of CRZ rules were demolished through controlled implosion in Maradu on Saturday. Holy Faith H20 and Alfa Serene Twin towers came crashing within seconds after the controlled blasts were triggered off with precision. The demolitions were carried out in accordance with the Supreme Court directive in May 2019.

The two buildings were demolished within a matter of minutes. Though a portion of Alfa Serene building fell into the lake, authorities said there was no major cause of worry. The debris will be removed within 70 days.

Two other apartments in Maradu were razed at 11 am on January 12 (Sunday) and it will be followed the demolition of 17-floor Golden Keyaram which has 40 flats, at 2 pm. Holy Faith H20 was the first of the apartment complexes to be demolished at 11.18 am. Thousands of people thronged the area to witness the unprecedented sight of the high rise apartment buildings coming crashing within seconds.

Since the district administration had imposed prohibitory orders, the people witnessed the spectacle outside the restricted area of 200 meters. There was a delay of 15 minutes in the demolition owing to last-minute requirements. Earlier people living in and around the apartment structures were evacuated from the area by 9 am. A legal battle was on for years in connection with the construction of the four buildings which violated CRZ rules as these were very close to Vembanad lake. During an inspection by local bodies vigilance wing in 2005, it was found that the Maradu panchayat (now it is a municipality) had given permits to 13 apartments buildings including the four which are now being demolished, for carrying out construction activities in violation of CRZ norms. Though the Supreme Court had ordered the demolition by September 20, because of Kerala Government's slackness it could be executed. The apex court took strong exception to the 'go slow' approach of the government.




Tourists walk on a snow-covered hill in Kullu on Saturday.

Deepika Padukone New Delhi, Jan. 11: The Delhi high court on Saturday restrained the makers of Deepika Padukone-starrer 'Chhapaak' from screening the film

## Off the beaten track

*The writer is a journalist with specialisation in communication studies and nuclear diplomacy. She is the author of four books.*



## WAQYANAWIS

is aggrieved because Kuma, despite orders, visited and during the recent poll. When he was pulled, he simply shrugged and said, "I am young and still have party discipline!"

*The writer teaches at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad*

**Mail your letters to  
editor@deccanmail.com**

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



Dealing with fears by worrying | The process of turning a word about one thing at a time | or phrase into a hashtag

# Honour Gandhi for message, not publicity



Last week, I saw a brilliant and evocative documentary on Mahatma Gandhi, called *Ahimsa*. It has been made by Ramesh Sharma, the award-winning filmmaker. The film brought tears to my eyes. A thought that struck me afterwards is that, while the Central government is commemorating with great fanfare the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi, the BJP is doing everything, directly or indirectly, to demolish the legacy and message of the Mahatma. Consider the following.

The Mahatma laid the greatest stress on inter-faith harmony, and respect for all faiths. He was a pious Hindu, but he was, in thought and action, a man who envisaged an inclusive India, where all Indians, irrespective of their faith, would enjoy equality and be a part of the national mainstream. The BJP's worldview is directly opposed to this vision. Its leaders, spokespersons, and affiliated organisations talk openly and repeatedly about the Hindu rashtira; and, they look upon minorities, especially Muslims, as derivatives on suzerainty in a nation where only Hindus have a monopoly.

**Remembering Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary is something a grateful nation should do. But remembering him through official publicity, while simultaneously demolishing everything he stood for, is a cruel joke.**

*bukam* (For the big hearted, the entire world is our family). Adi Shaktikaracharya audaciously declared that the only reality is the all-pervading cosmic consciousness of Brahman, and all other man-made differentiations have little ontological value. The communal venom that BJP leaders often spout, including the valorisation of Godse, the man who killed the Mahatma, and the brittle and false definition of Hinduism aggressively propagated by their followers, would have been anathema to Gandhi. He would have been appalled at the CAA-NRC scheme, which seeks to institutionalise religious division and target one community in particular, thereby militating directly against the plural, composite and inclusionist vision for which Gandhi lived and died for, and which is enshrined in

our Constitution. Gandhi never reconciled himself to the fact of Partition, but even if he reluctantly accepted it, he was emphatic that India, unlike Pakistan, would not become a bigger religious theocracy, and would embrace all the religions which have over millennium found a home here. Moreover, the NRC will particularly hurt towards the harassment of the marginalised and vulnerable who will have to produce the documentation to prove their citizenship. This would be yet another repudiation of Mahatma, who fought for their rights tirelessly. Secondly, and more non-violence was an article of faith for Gandhi. The abhorrent violence inherent in acts of lynching and hate too in the name of protecting Hinduism — would have deeply pained him. Most recently, he would have been appalled at the statement of UP CM Yogi Adityanath that would take *danda* or revenge against those protesting the CAA. Undoubtedly, violence by the protesters is wrong too. But the disproportionate use of force by the police in UP, and their reportedly communal bias, makes a mockery of the principles of the Mahatma. The police used the same kind of vicious violence in Jamia

Millia Islamia university, where even the library was vandalised and students mercilessly beaten. On January 5, JNU saw the worst example of organised violence by goons against students and faculty members. As the nation — and the world — watched in horror, these goons, armed with stones and lathis and metal clubs, reminiscent of the Klu Klux Klan, went on the rampage inside the precincts of one of India's foremost universities in the capital of the Republic. A police inquiry has been ordered to establish their identity, but there appears to be enough evidence, although I am willing to be corrected by concrete facts to the contrary — that these were right-wing thugs who wanted to teach the "left oriented anti-national" students of JNU a lesson. The police, through its inexcusable inaction, became accessory to this crime, as did the JNU administration and the university's security apparatus. Finally, Gandhi was the quintessential democrat. He believed in and acted upon all part of a democracy, as is the right to protest. He was a firm believer in the efficacy of dialogue, where the disagreement did not entitle you to hate or demean the other side. On the contrary, the BJP believes in

demonising those who oppose it. Its refrain is that anyone who doesn't agree with it is a Paki stooge, or should be banished to Pakistan. All those who differ from the party are ipso facto anti-national. They are peddlers of fake news. Only the BJP has a monopoly on what is good for the nation. Such an attitude has put an end to the possibility of a civilised discourse which is an inalienable adornment of a democracy, and which Gandhi set great store by. Remembering Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary is something a grateful nation should do. But remembering him through official publicity, while simultaneously demolishing everything he believed and stood for, is a cruel joke. Ultimately, Gandhi wanted a united India, where people of all faiths can live with respect and equality, and in which social peace and harmony prevails, for that alone can ensure a happy and prosperous India. That was his Ram Rajya. Until the BJP underlines the basic, unalterable, and non-negotiable aspect of Gandhi, and acts upon it, all its lip service to the Mahatma will remain just that.

*The writer, an author and former diplomat, is a member of the JD(U). The views expressed are personal.*



## IPS WARS IN UP

A rather ugly war has broken out in the higher echelons of the UP police. Senior IPS officer and Noida police chief Vaidh Krishna has alleged murky dealings in the transfer and posting of police officers in the state. In a written complaint to the director-general of police and state home secretary, Mr Krishna claimed that huge sums of money exchanged hands in the transfer and postings of SHO and district police chiefs in the state.

Expectedly, this has set off a furore among the cops. A few months back, the Noida police had arrested three journalists and some others who, it was alleged, used to facilitate transfers and postings in exchange for huge sums of money. It was also alleged that these "journalists" were conduits for senior police officers.

Curiously, Mr Krishna himself has been controversial for some alleged "sex chat" videos that went viral in the state. IPS officers who bore a grudge against him for trying to tarnish his image.

Now the story has gone out that the Yogi Adityanath government should institute a CBI probe into the transfer-posting racket.

# "The attack on JNU was barbaric in the east"



The national capital has been engulfed in protests over the last couple of weeks, and with state Assembly elections round the corner, the political temperature has also risen. Congress leader and former Delhi Lok Sabha MP Sandeep Dikshit spoke with Ashhar Khan on these issues.

The last couple of days have seen protests not only in New Delhi but across the country. In fact you were also a part of one of these protests in New Delhi. Do you think that the government should reach out?

protesters is perhaps the highest in the country. All this has been happening because a discriminatory law was passed and people were apprehensive and wanting the government to reconsider its decision. Instead of listening to the people or the students, it went ahead. So you can see for yourself, college campuses across the country are abuzz. I also joined one such protest but I was also picked up but released subsequently. But what is alarming is that this government has shown no inclination or willingness to reach out or have discussions with protesters. Hence, the protests are going on. Hope this government listens and better sense prevails on it.

The demand of people like us opposing the current CAA is very simple rather than identifying religions of people, which is against the spirit and nature of our Constitution and the values of the freedom movement, the act could have just stated "all people who are religiously persecuted in their nations" would get the benefit of eased norms of citizenship. This would have given benefits to all minorities in neighbouring countries and excluded others.

There has been violence in JNU also. But the Delhi police has named the university's students' union leader too, who was injured. Your comments?

The attack on JNU was barbaric to say the least. I hold the administration of JNU completely responsible for this attack. Also, when the attack was going on, what was Delhi police doing? We had seen Delhi police moving around with alacrity when they were beating up students and protesters earlier. The police conference by Delhi police on Friday evening was even more shocking — their report of investigation into the JNU incident — it is a shoddy investigation to say the least because out of nine people,

two are from the ruling party and it clearly indicates that people who are victims of an incident — they have been named as accused. What we have seen in the police report, that we have seen in the investigation: the police's investigation is clearly influenced by the ruling party, by the government, by the home minister and people around — 40-50 persons — masked people with lathis, rods and weapons, they entered the JNU campus, they beat up the students, they created a mess in JNU and then very easily they are coming out in front of the police, in front of the eyes of Delhi police and the police has so far not been able to identify such masked people. It is a matter of shame — that's the least I can say.

The Supreme Court has said that suspension of Internet is not in the public interest. Jammu and Kashmir cannot be indefinite. How do you see this step, especially with regard to Jammu and Kashmir?

If we go with global indicators, perhaps India is amongst the top countries where Internet shutdowns keep happening all the time. Also, the blatant use of section 144 to keep the protesters away is being used indiscriminately. In UP, where the Internet in several cities as it was shut down by the government. Now the issue here is that they are hoping for essential services are run on the Internet. So you cannot have a perpetual lockdown. Similarly, in Jammu and Kashmir also the shutdown cannot be in perpetuity. The court has also said that any

order suspending the Internet issued under the suspension rules must adhere to the principle of proportionality and must not exceed beyond the necessary duration. The Supreme Court in its order clearly states that freedom of speech and expression and freedom to practice religion, profession or carry on any trade, business or occupation over the medium of the Internet enjoys constitutional protection. Hence, we welcome this order.

**The Delhi Assembly elections are round the corner. How do you see the chances of your party?**

The ruling AAP has thoroughly exposed itself. It is nothing but a big PR exercise going on and on and on. It has not carried out any original developmental work. Instead, it has only inaugurated the projects that were started at the time of the previous government. Just show me one new road, one flyover they have built in the last five years. They talk about Delhi government schools: Schools of the government have always been good — if you just look at the record of the schools, they are good. The policies of the state it will be clear to you. As far as the BJP is concerned, it has got nothing to offer absolutely nothing. There is major infighting amongst the leaders of the Delhi BJP. The only reason they are hoping for is polarisation so that they can go ahead with their divisive politics. So the Congress will send a message to a government. The results will surprise everybody.

**How are you so sure that the Congress will do well? In the next Assembly elections you got zero seats?**

That was a different election and the two elections cannot be compared. This time round people have seen what we have voted for. We have new state unit president, the party is on the move, our cadres at the booth level are energised. There is a huge rush of candidates seeking tickets from the Congress because people know that the party will come to power. We as Congress people are going to people telling them about the false promises that were made to them.

**What has the Congress got to offer to people in this election?**

The number of hospitals, schools, grocers we built far outshine anything the AAP has done. We will ensure that the pollution levels come down, which is one of the most important things affecting the lives of everybody. The people of the city know that the Congress has fulfilled its promises earlier and it can do the same now. All the claims being made by the AAP in the areas of education and health are hugely exaggerated and we will expose them.

**Since you are so confident, does the party have a chief ministerial candidate in mind?**

Well, you know very well that in our party it is the elected MLAs who elect their leader when there is no sitting chief minister seeking possible and perhaps likely that Donald Trump will not win re-election and it will be a Democrat who will win. As per the president's later this year. If you look at the list of their candidates, it is hard to find even one who will be friendly mission of India in New York, that is brutalising its own minorities.

What happens then? At the moment, the government thinks it has control over what is going on. In UP, the police have murdered over a dozen Muslim protesters while the Supreme Court is concerned about damage to public property. From JNU to Kashmir and elsewhere, Mr Modi is insisting on the rights of the government over the rights of Indian citizens. And he is doing so out of a sense of anger and vengeance, which is not only not in keeping with leadership, particularly of a large democracy, but also dangerous.

The good thing is that he has control over what is going on. The government is sending officials to the government to be concerned about. All 300-plus Lok Sabha MPs line up and applaud anything he says and does. The Supreme Court, as we have seen, need not be worried about. It is going to be a rough and ready approach as his government pushes on with its ideological agenda, and the citizens do whatever they can to protect themselves.

*Aakar Patel is a writer and columnist*

## AIR INDIA BLUES

The recent roadshows held in Singapore and London to gauge investor interest in the debt of the national carrier Air India have received a lukewarm response. But it is unlikely to change the government's decision to privatise the airline. Union minister for civil aviation Hardeep Puri remains optimistic about the roadshows efforts in 2018, when the government offered to sell a 76 per cent stake in the airline, met with a similar fate.

In the meantime, Air India chairman and managing director, Ashwini Lohani, surprisingly took to Facebook to remind us that the airline needs to survive until it is sold. Mr Lohani is a trusted public servant who has been working on initiatives to narrow down the carrier's staggering debt. A former railway minister, he is a man and now in his second stint as Air India chief. Mr Lohani has often used social media platforms to connect with employees as well as the public. In the post, Mr Lohani said that expecting a radical turnaround would be impractical. But the message is clear: Selling the carrier is the only way it can survive.

## MEA MOVEMENTS

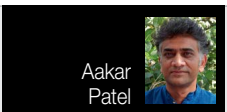
The appointment of Harsh Vardhan Shringla as India's new foreign secretary precedes other changes in the ministry of external affairs (MEA). There are many vacancies in India's foreign missions and some key ones that will be up for grabs in 2020. These appointments were on hold while the government took its time to announce Mr Shringla's name. Now, sources say, the decks have been cleared for other appointments.

As the country's top foreign positions in London, Washington, Kathmandu, Colombo, Ankara and the permanent mission of India in New York will become vacant due to the respective envoys completing their tenures or retiring from service, it is expected that Pakistan and Canada are without envoys; Ajay Bisaria was sent back by Islamabad and Vikas Swarup is back in the MEA.

Interestingly, Mr Shringla carries a sterling career and will be superseding the top foreign service officers: Ruchi Ghanashyam (1982), who is currently the Indian high commissioner to the UK, Rajeev Chander (1983), the Indian envoy to the permanent mission of India to the UN in Geneva (1988), who is India's ambassador to Chile.

Mr Shringla will take over for his fixed two-year tenure next month and has a big job cut out for him.

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



## Modi govt won't back off on CAA, NRC

The Citizenship Amendment Act has been notified and has become effective. The protests against it around the country have made no difference to the strong posture of the government in favour of it. The fact that it may be seen as a law that is internationally indefensible and that India's foreign minister ran away from a meeting with a US Congresswoman who would grill him on it also has made no difference to the government. Yes, the law has been challenged in the Supreme Court but unfortunately the experience of the Emergency, the Ayodhya judgment and the Kashmir issue shows us that it is easy for our judges to be aligned with the government.

In the matter of Jawaharlal Nehru University, what the nation saw was visuals of an assault on young women, particularly the leader of the students association. Justice was being demanded for them. What has happened instead is that the police has named her as a culprit while more or less sending a clean chit to the assailants. The police is theoretically independent of the administration, but this is not true even in theory any longer. The police will do what the government tells them to do and since Delhi police is controlled not by the local government of Arvind Kejriwal but the Union government of Narendra Modi, it is home

minister Amit Shah who has approved this reversal of justice. When Jammu and Kashmir was dismembered and there was (and remains) an even greater presence of India's security forces on the city streets, I had asked a local journalist what the situation was from New Delhi. He said that there did not appear to be anything new, but the instruction for the security forces was to "be strict, be very strict" with local journalists and to "be on the move". The state's leadership is in jail without charge or without a crime, the citizens are pretty sure that the government has no right to peaceful assembly, no access to communications, as has been the case for many decades when the security forces outside their door constantly. All this has not been accompanied by any words or actions that provide any assurance that the future will look any different for Kashmiris.

What we can understand from the above is that there is a pattern to the way in which the issues of greatest concern to Indians and the world are being managed. The way by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. And that pattern is that they will not back down from pushing ahead with their ideology. If we note what has been said by Mr Modi and Mr Shah on the issue of citizenship,

it is quite revealing. When it became clear that the protests were not going away, Mr Modi tried to pause on them by saying that the nationwide NRC had not been discussed. He chose not to say that it would not happen. This did not mean that the government was worried over a nationwide action similar to that of Assam. However, the Prime Minister is not going to let the protests come from an ideological belief and not any sense of political strategy or specific policy. He appears willing to absorb some damage in India's international reputation (I am quite sure that foreign minister Subrahmanyan Jaishankar would not have run away from that meeting without the specific approval of the Prime Minister) in order to further the ideology.

This puts us in dangerous territory for the rest of the year. From the first of April, the Narendra Modi government will send officials to all homes seeking details under the National Population Register, the survey of the National Register of Citizens. When the threat of being robbed of their citizenship and freedom comes to the doors of every Indian, the reaction will be even stronger than the one we are currently seeing on the streets. And as our traditions become sacred and is made visible, which it will, the world will not stand aside. It is

possible and perhaps likely that Donald Trump will not win re-election and it will be a Democrat who will win. As per the president's later this year. If you look at the list of their candidates, it is hard to find even one who will be friendly mission of India in New York, that is brutalising its own minorities.

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**Seeking Justice**  
Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau seeks justice for crash victims' families



It is vital that all leaders now pursue a diplomatic way forward.  
— **BORIS JOHNSON**  
British Prime Minister on the Ukrainian jet crash

## 2 US troops killed in Afghan blast

**Kabul:** Two US service members were killed and two injured when their vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb in southern Afghanistan, the US military said in a statement Saturday.

In keeping with defense department rules, the US military did not identify the service members. The Taliban immediately took responsibility for the attack. Qari Yusuf Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesman, said it occurred in the southern Kandahar province. More than 2,400 US service members have been killed in Afghanistan. Last year was one of the deadliest for the United States, even as Washington engaged in peace talks with the Taliban. The latest attack seemed certain to stall fresh efforts to restart the on-again, off-again peace talks between Washington and the Taliban. US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has been pressing the insurgents to agree to a ceasefire or at least reduce violent attacks. Earlier, both NATO and Afghan officials had confirmed a roadside bomb hit a US army vehicle Saturday, without naming casualties. In a short statement, a NATO spokesman said that officials were still "assessing the situation and will provide more information as it became available." An official said the attack had taken place in Dand district of Kandahar province.



## Ghoshn: Japan seeks Interpol help

**Tokyo:** Japanese authorities have requested the international Criminal Police Organisation for an Interpol wanted notice for the wife of former Nissan Motor boss Carlos Ghosn, local media reported on Saturday. If the notice is issued for his wife, Carole, the couple's travel chances outside of Lebanon may be restricted. Mainichi newspaper said, Interpol has already issued an arrest warrant for Ghosn. The request from Japan was made on Thursday. Mainichi and other Japanese media said, quoting unnamed sources, officials at the Japanese justice ministry weren't immediately available for comment. Japanese prosecutors on Tuesday issued an arrest warrant against Ghosn's wife for alleged perjury, as officials stepped up efforts to bring the fugitive car industry boss back to face trial on financial misconduct charges.

## NORTH KOREA SETS TERMS FOR TALKS

**Seoul, Jan. 11:** North Korea said Saturday it had received Donald Trump's letter wishing a happy birthday to leader Kim Jong Un, but warned it would only return to nuclear talks if Washington fully accepts its demands.

The US president and Kim have held three meetings since June 2018 but negotiations over denuclearisation have been largely deadlocked since the breakup of a summit in Hanoi last February.

Before the collapse of that meeting, Trump had said that he and Kim had an excellent relationship — and had even "fallen in love".

Kim Kye Gwan, North Korea's foreign ministry adviser, said on Saturday that Trump's congratulatory letter to Kim had arrived in the isolated state directly from the United States.

"As acknowledged by the world, it is true that the personal relations between (Kim Jong Un) and President Trump are not bad," he said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency.

However, it would be "absent-minded" to expect Pyongyang to resume dialogue because of that warm personal relationship, the statement continued.

# Ukraine talks tough, wants punishment

Pay compensation for 'disastrous mistake, says Zelensky. Iran should have closed airport, says UIA

**Kiev, Jan. 11:** Ukraine on Saturday demanded that Iran punish those guilty for the downing of a Ukrainian airliner and compensate victims while praising Tehran for cooperating with an "objective" investigation.

"We expect Iran... to bring the guilty to the courts," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on Facebook, calling also for the "payment of compensation" and the return of remains.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said "Tehran deeply regrets this disastrous mistake".

Tehran has invited the United States, Ukraine, Canada and others to join the crash investigation.

Kiev said that Iran had cooperated with its experts and it expects an objective probe.

Tehran has handed Ukrainian experts enough data including "all the photos, videos and other materials" to show the investigation "will be carried out objectively and promptly", Zelensky's office said. "The political part of the work is finished," it added.

It published photos of experts examining the scene and close-ups of holes in the fuselage and shrapnel damage.

Ukraine said Friday its experts dispatched to Iran had been granted access to the flight's black boxes, debris from the plane, the crash site and to recordings of conversations between the pilot and the airport control tower.

Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of Ukraine's national security and defence council which is coordinating the probe, said Kiev did not yet have evidence on where the missile was produced, only that it was "launched from Iranian soil".

Zelensky said earlier that Ukraine hoped the inquiry would be pursued "without deliberate delay and without obstruction".

He urged "total access" for the 45 Ukrainian experts, and in a tweet also sought an "official apology".

UIA vice-president Igor Sosnovsky told a news conference in Kiev on Saturday that Tehran

emphatically advise the general headquarters (of the armed forces) to follow up on shortcomings to ensure this kind of error does not happen again.

— **AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI**  
Iran's supreme leader

Armed Forces' internal investigation has concluded that regretably missiles fired due to human error caused the horrific crash of the Ukrainian plane & death of 176 innocent people. Investigations continue to identify & prosecute this great tragedy & unforgivable mistake.

— **HASSAN ROUHAANI**  
Iran President

German Chancellor Angela Merkel met Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin on Saturday for talks set to focus on flashpoints in the Middle East. Germany and Russia said ahead of the talks that they would cover the confrontation between Washington and Tehran.

should have closed the airport due to the escalation of regional tensions following the US assassination of a top Iranian general. "It's absolutely irresponsible," Sosnovsky said, accusing Iran of failing to protect ordinary citizens while "playing at war". "They were obliged to close the airport. Obligated! Then shoot as much as you like."

Iran said a missile operator shot down the Boeing 737 after mistaking it for a cruise missile at a time when threats were at the highest level.

Many in Kiev have compared the crash to the 2014 downing of Malaysian Airlines MH17 killing 298 people over eastern Ukraine where pro-Russian separatists are fighting government forces.

"Iran has shown itself to be more civilised than Russia," a pro-western Ukraine MP Volodymyr Arieiev wrote on Facebook.

"Tehran has victimised its guilt in three days while Russia continues to try to get out of it," — **AFP**



A woman lays flowers at a memorial of the flight crew members of the Ukrainian 737-800 plane that crashed on the outskirts of Tehran, at Borjil international airport, in Kiev on Saturday. — **AP**

## World demands a full account

**Paris, Jan. 11:** Iran said Saturday it had unintentionally shot down the Ukrainian airliner that crashed this week outside Tehran killing 176 people, calling it an "unforgivable mistake".

The statement sparked some relief that at least the immediate cause of the disaster would not be concealed amid international calls for a full accounting and compensation for the victims.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, with the country mourning the loss of so many citizens, said closure and accountability were needed after Iran's announcement.

He demanded "transparency, and justice for the families and loved ones of the victims".

"This is a national tragedy, and all Canadians are mourning together,"

■ **CONFRONTED BY** persistent questions about his military action in the Middle East, President Donald Trump and his top officials offered a string of fresh explanations, with Trump now contending Iranian militants had planned major attacks on four US embassies. Trump gave a worrisome number but no specifics.

Trudeau's office said in a statement.

Iran must "learn lessons" from the disaster, the chairman of the Russian parliament's foreign affairs committee said.

"If decryption of the black boxes and the work of the investigation do not prove that the Iranian army did this intentionally and there are no logical reasons for this, the incident must be closed."

A European Union statement said the bloc deplored the event, adding: "The EU expects

that Iran will continue to cooperate fully and undertake a comprehensive and transparent investigation, which should abide by international standards, into how this tragedy occurred."

French Defence Minister Florence Parly said it was "important to seize this moment to give space to discussions and negotiations" on the Iran nuclear deal. "The lessons that we should learn from the dramatic sequence of events that we have experienced... is that we must put an end to this escalation."

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said, "It is important that Iran brings clarity to this issue."

"Now Tehran needs to draw the right consequences in the continued appraisal of this dreadful catastrophe, and take measures to ensure that something like this cannot happen again," Maas told Funk media.

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven said the "accident should be condemned and Iran should assume all responsibility, including for the all persons affected". "Iran said the plane was shot down in error. This declaration constitutes the basis for a complete and transparent investigation, which should shed light on all the circumstances." — **AFP**

## U.S. TRIED TO TAKE OUT ANOTHER IRANIAN LEADER

**Washington, Jan. 11:** The US military tried, but failed, to take out another senior Iranian commander on the same day that an American airstrike killed the Revolutionary Guard's top general, US officials said.

The officials said a military airstrike targeted Abdul Reza Shahraki, a high-ranking commander in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps but the mission was not successful. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss a classified mission. Officials said both Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Shahraki were on approved military targeting lists, which indicates a deliberate effort by the US to cripple the leadership of Iran's Quds force. — **AP**

## 'Because of Macron'



Feminist activists perform the 'Because of Macron' choreography as they march during a demonstration in Paris on Saturday, as part of a nationwide multi-sector strike against the French government's pensions overhaul. — **AFP**

## Pelosi ends impeachment standoff

To send articles of impeachment to Senate next week

**Washington, Jan. 11:** Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the House will take steps next week to transmit the articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, ending a three-week standoff but confronting the Senate with only the third trial in US history to remove a chief executive.

In a letter to her Democratic colleagues, Pelosi said on Friday she was proud of their "courage and patriotism" and warned that senators now have a choice as they consider the charges of abuse and obstruction against the president. "In an impeachment trial, the Senate has the ability to render a verdict when it convenes as the Court of Impeachment."

Pelosi was particularly upbeat Friday as she strode through the Capitol, despite the mounting pressure on



Nancy Pelosi

her to quit delaying the trial. Her decision to end the showdown with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell does not fully bring closure to the question of whether the Senate will consider new witnesses, as some want, shifting pressure on senators to decide.

Trump swiftly signalled his intention of blocking any testimony from John Bolton, former national security adviser who could be a wildcard witness in the trial. Bolton has said he would appear before the Senate if he received a subpoena.

At the same time, a key centrist GOP Sen. Susan Collins of Maine announced Friday she was in discussions with other Republicans on a strategy that would allow the Senate to hear new testimony. — **AP**

## TRAVEL BANTRAVEL BDFLKFDJ

**Washington, Jan. 11:** The White House is considering dramatically expanding its much-litigated travel ban to additional countries amid a renewed election-year focus on immigration by President Donald Trump, according to six people familiar with the deliberations.

A document outlining the plans — timed to coincide with the third anniversary of Trump's January 2017 executive order — has been circulating the White House. But the countries that strategy that would allow the Senate to hear new testimony. — **AP**

## DISCREET | MEDIATOR ■ Qaboos' cousin Haitham bin Tariq sworn in as new ruler of the nation

# Sultan who shielded Oman from region's turmoil dead

**Muscat, Jan. 11:** Sultan Qaboos, the longest-reigning leader of the modern Arab world, has died at the age of 79, the royal court said Saturday.

"With great sorrow and deep sadness... the royal court mourns His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, who passed away on Friday," the court said in a statement. Qaboos, who has ruled since 1970 when he deposed his father, a palace coup, had been ill for some time and had been believed to be suffering from colon cancer. He left no apparent heir. He was unmarried and had no

children or brothers.

Sultan Qaboos was laid to rest at the royal cemetery on Saturday after the Omani flag, draped in the Omani flag, was driven through the streets of the capital Muscat. Thousands of people, including members of the royal family, were present for prayers at the main mosque which is named after the sultan.

His cousin Haitham bin Tariq, the culture minister, was sworn in shortly after modern Oman's founding father was laid to rest. "We will follow the path of the late sultan," Haitham, 65, said in his first public



Sultan Qaboos bin Said

speech which was aired live on state television. Qaboos transformed the Arabian Peninsula nation from a backwater into a modern state with a thriving

tourism industry, thanks to the country's crystal waters and scenic mountain ranges. But it was the sultan's policy of neutrality and non-interference that elevated Oman's standing as a "Switzerland of the Middle East" and made him an important go-between. Many experts had expected the throne to go to Asad bin Tariq, Qaboos' son, who was appointed deputy prime minister for international relations and cooperation affairs in 2017 in what was seen as a clear message of support. — **Agencies**



Oman's newly sworn-in Sultan Haitham bin Tariq (right) carries the coffin of the late Sultan Qaboos to the royal family cemetery, in Muscat on Saturday — **AFP**



## MADHUSUDAN SAHOO

■ **Economists suggest:** At the moment, the sensible thing to do is to relax the fiscal deficit target and not worry so much about it. Focus the demand on the lower end of the society, and mostly in rural sectors.

Madan Sabanavis, chief economist, CARE Ratings, seems to have a solution. "The RBI can do a couple of things. First, as an apex bank, it will have to ensure that banks are in a powerful position to lend and increase their long-term lending. Second, it should go for a further round of rate cuts to the tune of 25 basis points. Third, transmission of rate cuts. The government can announce some sops in the form of income tax waivers which will help increase household spending."

Faced with two crucial state elections — those of Delhi and Bihar — this year, the Modi government thought for the first time since it came to power whether to stand firm on these twin issues. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has in a rally in Delhi today urged voters to look out for campaigning for the Delhi Assembly polls at the fag-end of last year, claimed that there is no proposal for a countrywide NRC as of now, Amit Shah — his home minister — and P. J. Naidu — his acting deputy — have

The BJP has on its part decided to launch a countryside outreach campaign on the basis of a spearheaded by none other than Mr Shah.

For a party known to play the Hinduva card to the hilt, this itself is being seen to be a tacit acceptance that it miscalculated the gamble of CAA/NRC after the successful implementation of its key agendas like abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir and the ban on Triple Talaq.

Behind mass student mobilisation and large-scale protests by all sections in the cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru senators have taken the government by surprise, it is felt. The future of the

CAA/NRC debate to sway the electorate of Jharkhand where the BJP lost badly. That has prompted a realisation of the need to slow down in the matter within the party.

Unlike in the past, the Opposition has been quicker to move in this matter in both states. While chief ministers, protagonists of Delhi and Bihar, namely chief ministers Arvind Kejriwal and Nitish Kumar have pertinently remained silent from the debate, Prashant Kishor, whose IPAC is handling the election campaign of both these states has been vociferously opposing the CAA and the proposed amendments to the 1955 Citizenship Act.

posed NRC in all four events, going to the extent of giving interviews and arguing against it.

That he has a hold on the agenda to be set was clear. Mr Kejriwal declared that there would no NRC in their states, after the Nishith Kumar-led (DUD) had supported the CAA in Parliament.

Not only Bihar and Delhi, but state after state, special sessions were called to oppose the NRC and said that they would not implement it in their states. The DMK in Tamil Nadu has gone to the extent of passing a resolution against it, most other ruling parties like the DMK in Tamil Nadu and, and trsters in Telangana have also said they would not implement the NRC if it happens in their states.

Coming together of the Opposition parties con-

The Opposition parties on their part are using the mobilisation to reap benefits at the same time pursuing a policy of keeping issues local during state elections—a strategy which has paid dividends in both Maharashtra and Jharkhand.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has also tried to keep it that way keeping the debate localised on Mohalla clinics, government schools and zero power and water bills.

While it remains to be seen whether Mr Kumar would deploy the same

ly parties like BJP and the V.S.R. Congress which have voted in favour of the CAA in Parliament have said they would not bring in the NRC if and when it is brought in.

This coupled with the open rebellion of states run by Opposition parties in the matter will be a deciding factor in whether the BJP space across the states keeps shrinking despite its mammoth 303-seat majority in last year's general election.

There is no fiscal intervention. The economy may not show a recovery in 2020. At the moment, the fiscal deficit target, not worry about demand on the lower end of the growth spectrum.

The country's economy is in a state of crisis. Banks struggled with a load of non-performing assets in the world. Overextended shadow banks. One of the financial companies, Infra Services Ltd (IL&FS), defaulted on a \$1 billion loan in 2019, setting off a liquidity crisis. The government's intervention is Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (Dewan Housing Finance Corp) is the largest housing finance company in India. "Farmers' distress is where the government's intervention starts from 2014. Then it gets more complex," says Madan Sabanavis, chief economist at the Centre for

orry about the fiscal situation. on unless the demands pick up. a satisfactory sign of recovery sensible thing is to relax the fis- so much about it and focus the the society," Sen said.attered due to several reasons. of bad loans among the biggest traditional lenders gave way to most prominent non-banking structure Leasing & Financial ilted on about ₹1 lakh crore last crisis. The other major default- inance Corp. But Sen adds: "I feel it all begins and it really is worse after demotatisation."conomist, CARE Ratings, seems

- CMs of the two states headed for polls, Nitish Kumar and Arvind Kejriwal have stayed aloof
- Kishor, whose IPAC is handling both campaigns, has opposed CAA

girl's game was a revelation even as it brought about a revolution in badminton with the ultimate Indian triumph in a world championship. Her silver gave way to gold, and she won the silver medal in the Olympics had galvanised a whole nation into following her fortunes with the avidity of Brazilian football fans. There was no more of that phenomenon in 2020.

In another crowded sporting year in the age of pro sport, there should be heaps of laurels for Simone Biles, who is on the threshold of being crowned the greatest female gymnast as she attempts to become the first woman to win a gold medal in the century to win again as Olympic champion. In a difficult time for sport with all the #MeToo floating around male coaches, she has stood up for those wronged by men.





French poet Raymond Queneau was attracted to mathematics as a source of inspiration. Along with François Le Lionnais, a chemical engineer by profession, he founded Oulipo, experiments in constrained writing and a literary movement, in 1960, giving rise to important works.

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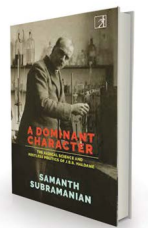
Books

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# Fondly remembering the world's last polymath



Ajith Pillai  
review



**A DOMINANT CHARACTER: THE RADICAL SCIENCE AND RESTLESS POLITICS OF J.B.S. HALDANE**

By Samanth Subramanian  
Simon & Schuster, ₹799

**I**t is surprising that J.B.S. Haldane, a genius in his lifetime, no longer enjoys a place in popular imagination like say a Watson and Crick or a Stephen Hawking. And yet, during his prime (1920-1980) he was a colossus in the scientific world who contributed much to genetic science, physiology and biometrics. Not just that, Haldane was also a communicator par excellence who effectively unravelled the mysteries and complexities of science to lay readers through his newspaper and magazine columns. Celebrated sci-fi writer Arthur C. Clarke described Haldane as "the most brilliant scientific populariser of his generation".

Novelist and physical chemist CP Snow rated him as the "most learned scientist of his time", and philosopher Isaiah Berlin saw him as "one of our major intellectual emancipators". Serious students of genetics and medicine would no doubt still be exposed to Haldane's work. After all, he was the one who provided a mathematical and statistical base for the theory of evolution and modelled the processes of natural selection and estimated rates at which gene mutations develop and spread through a population. His hypothesis on ecogenesis predicted IVF and cloning. Haldane also mapped the genes for haemophilia and colour blindness. The list does not end there...

Yet very few students of science would know that Haldane's 1924 treatise, *Daedalus*, in which he predicted a future when humans controlled their own evolution through in vitro fertilization and

**[J.B.S.] Haldane's illustrious and restless life with all its brilliance, romance, politics, excesses, indulgences and contradictions has been distilled into print in this unputdownable volume that deserves a place on any eclectic bookshelf.**

mutation, provided the inspiration for the Aldous Huxley classic, *Brave New World*. In fact, *Daedalus*, was a much-discussed book in its time. Einstein owned a copy of it and underlined key passages in pencil and Bertrand Russell deemed it fit to write *Icarus* in rebuttal and bring out the horrors that science could unleash through its misuse.

So, who was Haldane? Journalist and writer Samanth Subramanian's biography (*A Dominant Character: The Radical Science and Restless Politics of J.B.S. Haldane*) is an attempt to unravel the life and work of the brilliant scientist who was a man of many parts and contradictions. Thus, though he enjoyed an upper-class upbringing and lifestyle, Haldane was a committed Marxist and atheist who believed science could help fight inequalities in a capitalist world. Throughout his life he had disdain for the bureaucracy and yet worked on various occasions with the British government. As a man devoted to the scientific method, Haldane always swore by proven scientific data but gave the benefit of doubt to the pseudo-scientific genetic theories pro-

pounded by Soviet agronomist Trofim Lysenko. He did so because the Soviet government backed the scientist and it could not be wrong!

All this and more details of Haldane's life comes together in Subramanian's engaging 378-page biography of the man. The book scores on three counts — meticulous research, an energetic style of narration and Subramanian's ability to place the narrative in the tumultuous political and social context of the twentieth century. Haldane's life not only straddled two World Wars but also witnessed dramatic intellectual and ideological churning as well as rapid scientific and technological advancement.

Subramanian, as the biographer, captures it all for the reader through a very objective bifocal. It was a remarkable life that Haldane lived. Being born to a physiologist father with a laboratory at home meant that Haldane was exposed to research at an early age. He assisted his father — often doubling up as a human guinea pig in experiments or recording data and helping with calculations. The boy also travelled extensively through the districts with his adventurous father who did not hesitate to go down a mining shaft to record air quality or his 13-year-old son, the water off the Scottish coast to figure out how the respiratory mechanism could function best under pressure.

With a scientific baptism of this kind Haldane was perhaps destined to be scientist. And yet he never had a degree in science. At Oxford he obtained first class

honours in mathematics and the Greats (classics) but he later went on to write papers in genetics which created a flutter in the scientific world. However, the outbreak of the First World War interrupted his scientific pursuits as he enlisted in the army.

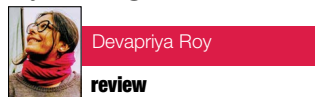
It was in 1917, following an injury in the War, that Haldane was sent off to Pune to recuperate. He would return permanently to India with his second wife Helen Spurway in 1957. The scientist believed post-Independent India under Jawaharlal Nehru's watch would be the ideal social, democratic and secular state to migrate to.

Haldane was 65 by then and had quit his job at University College London and joined the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in Kolkata to head the biometry unit. However, his stay in India proved to be tumultuous too. He first had differences with the head of the ISI and quit. Then an argument with the Congress Scientific and Industrial Research fell through because he could not cope with bureaucratic wrangling. Finally, Haldane took up an offer from then Odisha chief minister Biju Patnaik to work out of Bhubaneswar. It was here that he breathed his last at the age of 72.

Haldane's illustrious and restless life with all its brilliance, romance, politics, excesses and contradictions has been distilled into print in this unputdownable volume that deserves a place on any eclectic bookshelf.

The writer is a senior Delhi-based journalist and author

## A novel-in-stories charts the secret life of a neighbourhood



Devapriya Roy  
review

**B**efore we begin, you must know where you are. Sandwiched between two bustling bazaars in the south of Mumbai is a winding stretch of road, broken on the edges and pockmarked from years of neglect. From dawn to twilight, hurried feet trample over this uneven strip, while handcarts crush and pound it further, making its presence unsightly. At the mouth of the lane, hanging perilously from a wrought iron pole is a plaque the colour of midnight blue. The inconspicuous sans serif font in warning white reads: Dr D'Lima Street, Cavel.

In her charming first novel, *Bombay Balchoo*, journalist Jane Borges brings to life Cavel, a nearly forgotten neighbourhood in Marine Lines, South Bombay. The true natives of this fascinating little pocket were the "East Indians", locals converted to Christianity by Portuguese missionaries who had settled here in the 16th century, making Cavel one of the oldest Latin quarters of the city. Later, to the (mild) chagrin of the East Indians, the place became home to other Indian Catholic communities, mostly the Goans, but also Mangaloreans and others, who brought their unique cultural influences with them when they settled in Cavel, soon going on to outnumber the East Indians. They lived, loved and often waged simmering neighbourhood wars that, in typical Indian fashion, carried on for generations. In Borges's fine and timely Bombay novel, thematically reminiscent of Rohinton Mistry's *Tales From Persepolis Bag*, this quaint way of life unfortunately fades away, now that Gujarati and Marwari traders outnumber the Catholics in Cavel — as well as the life underpinning it, has finally found its due.

Bosco Mansion in Pope's Colony is the beating heart of this uniquely structured novel-in-short-stories, while Michael Coutinho, veteran journalist and long-time resident of Bosco, adds the element of narrative continuity in discrete chapters. Michael, who grew up in the building, is linked to most of the other characters (their tart observations about Michael interrupt his own account of himself, giving us a clever and complex picture). We meet his gardening-obsessed wife Merlyn (when the *chikus* in her garden are messed with she doesn't hesitate to hire a tantric to get to the bottom of it all), his wild sister Annette and the two men she loves and hates in equal measure, Mario, his neighbour and protégée of sorts, whose father David dies in the Bombay Port explosion of 1944 and whose mother then starts a local brewery to make ends meet (though that quickly makes her the local villain), as well as an extended and colourful cast of minor characters.

Where Borges pulls off a masterpiece is that her individual stories, set in the Austen-esque "two inches of ivory" of Cavel, are not arranged chronologically. Instead, we go back and forth in history, seeing Cavel through a new filter every time, witnessing how time reorders old arrangements and decays what was once ripened to perfection. That delicious unpredictability works well, as does Borges's felicitous use of archival research and inclusion of the rich patois spoken by Cavellites in her narrative. Given that one of the macro trends that a fair bit of Bombay-writing falls in is the maximum city extravaganzas, *Bombay Balchoo* situates itself in the quietly resistant strand of the domestic novel that, like Anjali Joseph's *Saraswati Park* or Amrita Mahale's *Milk Fresh*, allows the richly detailed specificity of a particular world to tell eloquently of the inner life of the metropolis just as well if not better than their more OTT versions.

A novel perfectly pickled and presented, to pun on the title, if you savour the quirks of its characters you may even get a secret Balchoo recipe out of it after all!

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

## Friends from Potterverse don't live up to promise



Neha Bhatt

**A**round 1999, when the Harry Potter fandom came to be unofficially labelled Pottermania and members Potterheads, it was not uncommon to imagine the world neatly divided into two kinds of people — those who were devoted to the Potter world and those who weren't. *Accidental Magic* by Keshava Guha locates itself in this time of Potter frenzy with a charming premise, as it explores the meaning of identity and community through the lens of fandom. How do the lives of four very different people with a shared love for J.K. Rowling's books intersect and what does it

mean for and to them? With a silver lightning bolt as the centrepiece of its glossy white cover, *Accidental Magic* begins with great promise.

Set in Boston, with glimpses of Madras and Bangalore, Guha's debut novel has a lightness that is disarming, bringing us a motley cast of four Potterheads — Santhan, Curtis, Rebecca, Malathi. Kanan, the central character, is a programmer living in Boston, a "knock-off version" of his conservative brother Santhanam, an expert at shirking work at the website he is employed at so he can spend his mornings debating furiously on online Potter fan clubs and forums, dedicating his evenings to nights to reading fanfiction.

He bumps into Curtis Grimmert — the host of a weekly radio show and founder of Boston Gobstones, a Potter fan club — while waiting in line to pick up midnight copies of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. It is an odd but satisfying friendship, with moments where "Kanan felt like Harry to Grimmert's Dumbledore".

When the Gobstones meet their first offline meet, in walks Rebecca, a passionate and perceptive Harvard graduate in her early 20s looking to put a friendly face to the online chatter, finding herself drawn to Curtis and Kanan.

To this Boston-based trio, *Accidental Magic* hops between multiple perspectives of the four characters. But just as you begin to settle in, the spell breaks. The characters seem to go off in unconvincing and underwritten tangents. The book's strong sense of place, time and specificity goes missing with humour and affection, the narrative stops short of becoming an immersive experience akin to the Potter realm it hat tips. I wished for a lot more magic.

**Neha Bhatt is an independent journalist and book critic based in Delhi. She tweets @nehabhatt78 and @bookishbadish on insta**



**ACCIDENTAL MAGIC**  
By Keshava Guha  
HarperCollins, ₹799

him to stay focused on achieving good grades and fruitful employment. Kanan doesn't always listen: as he begins to find joy and confidence in charting an identity distinct from his brother, he becomes an expert at shirking work at the website he is employed at so he can spend his mornings debating furiously on online Potter fan clubs and forums, dedicating his evenings to nights to reading fanfiction.

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**Neha Bhatt is an independent journalist and book critic based in Delhi. She tweets @nehabhatt78 and @bookishbadish on insta**

## David Bowie: Just an ordinary boy who kept on keeping on



Christopher Bray  
review



**WHY BOWIE MATTERS**  
by Will Brooker  
William Collins, £12.99

**A** few years ago Will Brooker spent 12 months pretending to be David Bowie. For several weeks he dressed up as Ziggy Stardust (gold lamé, maroon mullet, jumpsuit run up from old curtains), then as Aladdin Sane (blue and red lightning slash daubed across face), then as The Thin White Duke (black waistcoat, black eyeliner, slicked-back hair). And so on, right through every satin-and-tat get-up of Bowie's long career. What larks!

And yet, I don't know whether Brooker had his mother in a whirl, but he certainly had some of us wondering what was going on in the proves of academe. Did I mention that these wardrobe antics were part of a research project? That Brooker is professor of film and cultural studies at Kingston University? That he has also written books on Batman and Blade Runner and Star Wars?

But don't reach for the

black cap just yet. Wide-ranging and closely argued, this book is one of the best Bowie has yet had. Brooker may lard his prose with post-structuralist name-drops — Jameson, Deleuze, Guattari, the gang's all here; so too are Joyce, Yeats and even Philip Larkin (what would he have made of Blackstar's "cobra-coating capophony"? — but not once do they seem pressed into service. To be sure, Brooker occasionally overstates his case. When he remarks of Bowie's death that "he stepped aside so we could take his place and bravely cry", the Biblical parallels are ludicrous. But in the main he has the measure of his man.

He starts, as the young Davy Jones did, in the suburbs. Bowie always called himself a Brixton boy, but though he was born in the inner city his parents were off to leafier Bromley as soon as they could afford it. It is good to

be reminded that a mere ten years before Ziggy shocked your mum and dad by draping a limp wrist on Mick Ronson's shoulder on *Top of the Pops*, Bowie had been just another schoolboy with a "wonky grin and a neat haircut".

Indeed, Brooker argues, there was nothing special about the lad. If he had ambition, so did many of his contemporaries. He added kids he hung around with. If he had talent, he had it. But he was one of those other boys at school who could actually play an instrument. Yet it was Bowie who made it. How come?

Simple, says Brooker. He never gave up. Despite all that setbacks and failures he endured through the 1960s — Bowie's "prentice" years were pretty much a "prentice decade" — he kept on keeping on. He showed us, Brooker says, "what an ordinary person can become with enough tenacity and self-belief".

Well, up to a point. I don't doubt that sense of purpose, but Brooker of all people ought to know that Bowie's face was his fortune. He might have tried his best to dress like Bowie, but he was never going to look like him. Bowie, on the other hand, was a preternaturally beautiful young man —

"The Prettiest Star", as one of his song titles has it. Little wonder another manager after another eagerly took him, ahem, in hand.

And then there was his talent. Untrained he might have been, but Bowie was an eerily wonderful songsmith. True, he could be portentious. But when he relaxed, his lyrics made modernist fracture — "Like to take a cement / And in the death / Time takes a cigarette" — mass-friendly. As with words, so with music. You might have five number ones and another 20 top ten hits without being able to craft a tune.

But what really counts about Bowie is his harmonies. His chord changes were like a secret Bach. Alas, Brooker is so hung up on facelift and glad rags he has precious little to say about the songs. But if an "arpeggiated diminished C passing chord" is your thing, do check out Chris O'Leary's *Ashes to Ashes*, the second and final volume in a daunt-

ingly learned musicological analysis of the Bowie oeuvre.

Talking of learned, the young Davy Jones left school with a single O level (art). Yet a couple of years before he died the man who once quipped he was responsible for starting a whole new school of "pretension" gave us a list of the 100 books he believed had done most to shape his life. It was a mixed bag, with everything from the predictable to the profound. A Clockwork Orange was a big influence on the Ziggy look — to the outre Julian Jaynes's *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicommand Mind*. And on to the absurd. Colin Wilson's *The Outsider*, a book nobody has taken seriously since about three weeks after its publication.

In Bowie's Books, John O'Connell takes us on a tour of this list while fatuously recommending putatively appropriate tracks from the Bowie catalogue.

For myself, I can't see how anyone can read and listen at the same time. Still, I was forced to push my eyes through this book again I think "We are the Dead" might fit the bill.

By arrangement with the Spectator



**BOWIE'S BOOKS: THE HUNDRED LITERARY HEROES WHO CHANGED HIS LIFE**  
by John O'Connell  
Bloomsbury, £16.99





Catch Me If You Can (2002) shows Frank Abagnale, Jr. on the FBI's Most Wanted list. In real life, however, he never made the list.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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

## Brave and significant, but also very filmy

**Chhapaak**  
(U) 123 min  
CAST: Deepika Padukone, Vikrant Massey, Madhurjeet Sarghi  
DIRECTOR: Meghna Gulzar  
RATING: ★★

SUPARNA SHARMA

With a big-ticket commercial star at its centre, Meghna Gulzar's *Chhapaak* carefully walks a razor sharp line to mainstream a brutal crime against women that has been lingering in the margins — not just of the criminal justice system, but also of people's collective rage.

*Chhapaak* tells the real-life story of Laxmi Agarwal — who was attacked with acid at the age of 15, by 32-year-old Naem Khan in 2005 — with palpable sensitivity and clarity of purpose. Along with Laxmi's story, *Chhapaak* chronicles this heinous crime against women that is unique to patriarchal, feudal societies, including India, and is particularly grisly in its intent and impact. Yet, it is not talked about with the seethe and tear that accompanies rape.

One reason for that, of course, is that in the patriarchal priority lists, women's sexual violation is a blot on the *khandan*, acid attack not quite.

But beyond that, perhaps the reason why it's not talked about enough is not because people are insensitive to it, but because the sheer barbarity of the unimaginable pain inflicted makes people freeze with horror. And words — especially of sympathy — feel entirely inadequate, rude even.

*Chhapaak* is extraordinary and significant because it gently, and with dignity, breaks the ice. It makes us see the victims of acid attack, and helps

begin a dialogue.

Meghna's feminism and composure as a director, complemented with Deepika Padukone's warm performance, and Clover Wootton's makeup have forever changed how acid attacks on victims will be viewed and talked about in this country.

Deepika Padukone, a Bollywood A-lister around whose beauty several films have been constructed, deserves a bravery award for taking the risk of playing an acid attack victim.

She brings her heart and infectious charm to her character and, in some moments, when she taps inside herself and into Laxmi's experience, we see both vulnerability and quiet determination. There are also moments when her eyes twinkle as she breaks into a life-embracing smile, giving us a glimpse of the adorable and formidable Laxmi. In those moments, Deepika touches you.

But those moments are few. Mostly she remains Deepika, despite the incredible prosthetics and makeup. That's partly the fault of the director, but mostly of the writing (Meghna Gulzar has co-written the film with Atika Chohan). The writers have not so much cast Deepika as Laxmi, but have cast Laxmi, the girl who wanted to compete in Indian Idol, as a Bollywood heroine.

And therein lies *Chhapaak*'s flaw.

*Chhapaak*, written in Bollywood's fail-safe template, is too filmy. This story deserved its own narrative tone and style.

But *Chhapaak*'s strength is that while it works within that Bollywood song-and-dance template, it is sensitive to what it shows, how it shows it, and why. And this balancing act, between commercial compromises and determination to steer clear of demeaning

melodrama, is there throughout the film.

*Chhapaak* does not solicit our pity. It does not turn acid attack victims into *becharis*. It does not goad us to shed tears.

Every time there is sanctimonious breathing by an activist, or a patronising comment, or a child screams in shock, or a stranger's stare lingers on the face for a second too long, the film flinches with distaste and moves away, never allowing it to turn into self-gratifying pity.

But, it does sell acid attack victims a Bollywood dream. While that is cute, it is also cruel.

*Chhapaak* opens in December 2012 Delhi, in the middle of protests against the Nirbhaya rape, and it immediately broaches the topic of acid attacks — of the crime and its victims being treated as lesser

than rape victims. Amol Drivadi (Vikrant Massey, who runs an NGO that cares for acid attack victims, is at hand to harangue reporters and remind them of Malti).

We meet Malti (Deepika Padukone) and in a quick succession of scenes we see what she is struggling with in her desperate search for a job, some income. Though she's good at her beauty parlour job, she is not a presentable employee.

Malti always looks straight at every one, seeing how she is being seen, and most of the people she approaches for jobs can't get past her face.

Shiraz aunty, at whose house her father works, has taken care of her surgeries and helped her with a lawyer, Archana Bajaj (Madhurjeet Sarghi), who is not just fighting her criminal

case but has also been pursuing Malti's PIL in the Supreme Court to ban acid.

Malti doesn't want to burden Shiraz aunty further and finally lands a job at Amol's NGO.

Alongside more rounds of plastic surgery, her job, Malti is often in court, not just to prove the accused — family friends Bashir Khan and Parveen Sheikh — guilty, but also to fight against IPC's Section 326 where in the maximum jail sentence is just seven years.

Running parallel to Malti's attempts to piece together a life for herself are the lives of the culprits — proceeding unaffected by the crime they have committed.

At the NGO there are often urgent calls to tend to other, new victims of acid attacks, including two sisters who are targeted by upper caste men in their village because they aspired to become software engineers.

Amol is forever miffed with the world for not caring enough, not doing enough for acid attack victims. And he is not wrong. But his relentless harangue comes from an egoistic place, he exudes piousness about "his cause, and that, in the presence of an acid attack victim, feels obscene.

Sometimes Malti tells him, sometimes she sticks out her tongue at him.

It's much later in the film that we see what happened to Malti. In 2005, when she was 19.

The flashback is cleverly placed, towards the end, because the film wants us to first meet and see the acid attack victim, and then

*Chhapaak* in Hindi means "splash" and the film's title seeks to convey how, just one splash of acid changes lives forever. But *Chhapaak*, the post-

ic, onomatopoeic word, is also a euphemism for a brutal crime, and is the case with *asta*, *asta*, *asta*, it seeks to make the unpalatable palatable.

Meghna Gulzar's *Chhapaak* shows us the brutality of the assault, but instead of opting for a voyeuristic, invasive gaze, her film opts for heart-felt humanity that sees in the scars and the self-conscious, diffident demeanour of acid attack victims courage, dignity and a will to live.

*Chhapaak*'s greatest feat is that it puts the crime front and centre, making the "kya?" the why, the peering inquiry into the girl's, the victim's life completely irrelevant.

*Chhapaak* treats acid attacks as violent, criminal acts of men with frail but massive egos, desperate to feel their power by showing a woman her *aukaaf*, by punishing her for having dreams and aspirations of her own. With a bottle of acid that costs ₹30, they try to hold her hostage for life.

The film deliberately doesn't pursue the motive of the woman who is a co-accused in Malti's case, suggesting that it is pointless. The evidence of the crime is there for you to see, and that should be enough.

While this sensitivity and care buries the film, *Chhapaak*'s screenplay is rather sparse and episodic, devoted entirely to Malti's story.

Whenever Malti is on the screen, the film shines and seems to have a purpose. But when she is not, *Chhapaak* seems quite uninterested in itself and drags its feet in a half-hearted manner.

Luckily, *Chhapaak* is short and what stays with you after the film is over is Deepika's brave act, Vikrant Massey's stunning ability to be an amalgamation of many characters and emotions at the same time, and the girls — acid attack victims who struggle, fail, who don't understand why this happened to them, who seek justice but also a sliver of normal life. And that silver sometimes comes with the reconstruction of a melted ear on which an earring can dangle, its happy swing lighting up not just their face, but our

## Thrilling action flick marred by twisted agenda

**Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior 3D**  
(U/A) 135 min  
CAST: Ajay Devgn, Saif Ali Khan, Kajol, Prakash Kapadia, Luke Kenny, Neha Sharma  
DIRECTOR: Om Raut  
RATING: ★★

SUPARNA SHARMA

Spanned by the rightward tilt of our times, as well as the regular meetings the Prime Minister has been having with Bollywood worthies, *Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior* sets out to sing paean to a subedar warrior in Shivaji's army, and give him his due place in Bollywood's new pantheon of *sanskari*, Hindu *desi* *badshahs* who fought the Mughals.

The express purpose is to today to the guidelines wherein heroes are created only when they fight for their Mother Land against a specific kind of enemy — most-eating, lady-keeping, Hindu-hating Muslim.

The hero, of course, has to be a family-loving, pious Hindu who, when called upon, will thump his chest

and sacrifice his all for *desh ki izzat*.

Director Om Raut and writer Prakash Kapadia, who obviously have these guidelines framed and hanging in their offices, have mounted an impressive war film where two groups of men in long, pleated frocks — one, led by Tanhaji Malusare (Ajay Devgn), under the guidance of Saif Ali Khan, and the other under the command of Aurangzeb (Luke Kenny), is led by Udaybhan Rathod (Saif Ali Khan) are at war with each other.

The film opens in the mid-1600s, when India has a sweetly chirping *soni chidya*, and envious, dishonourable foreigners arrived to take over its land and forts.

Delhi was already taken, but that was not enough for the greedy foreigners. They were eyeing the Deccan, where a very young Tanhaji was being taught by his father to make swords and fight with them.

Daddy gets killed in battle with Aurangzeb's men and Tanhaji grows up to be a formidable warrior upon whom Shivaji, who has had to surrender his forts to the Mughals, relies.

So when Aurangzeb sends his loyal guard-turned favourite soldier Udaybhan to take charge of the



Kondhana Fort with the scary Nargis cannon, Shivaji plans to attack and free the fort.

He doesn't ask Tanhaji, because Tanhaji is busy planning a child marriage at home.

But, of course, Tanhaji gets to know and he dupes Shivaji into giving him permission to wage the good fight. His sweet wife Savitri (Kajol) approves.

The broad outlines of the story are true and based on the Battle of Sinhagad that took place on the night of February 4, 1670.

But Mr Raut and Mr Kapadia have, of course, felt free to twist and add whatever they felt like to serve the larger picture — stitch together a mythical Hindustan that was Hindu, happy, humane with no

social evils like caste, sati, child marriage...

So while they leave out Yashwantrao, the trained monitor lizard who scaled the wall, carrying a rope the Marathas had attached to her, and helped win the battle, they have added Nagin, a deadly cannon, as a sort of nod towards the Guns of Navarone, perhaps, or Aurangzeb's favourite cannons — *Fateh Rahbar* (guide to victory) or *Azhdaha* (Paikar (Python Body)) — that were used in the Siege of Golconda in January 1677.

Along with Nagin the cannon, Udaybhan's entourage can has a special soldier called Kamla (Neha Sharma), a widow he "kidnapped" up from atop her Sati pyre.

It is to the film's credit that it manages to turn even this act of saving a widow from burning herself over her husband's pyre into some sort of evil design.

That he loves her and wants to marry her is of no significance. Because Udaybhan, a Hindu in the service of Aurangzeb, has become a non-Hindu by association.

He is also ruthless and eats tandori crocodile. But Udaybhan is also smart and he fools Tanhaji into killing some innocent Marathas. Soon Tanhaji smartens up and lays siege to the fort.

The question is, ultimately, whether *Bombshell* ought to have spun quite so snappy a movie out of such a story. Does cartwheeling to make a vile tale compelling, and it can feel like a parade of starchy impressions rather than something genuine. (Best of the bunch is Alanna Ubach's Jeanine Pirro.) But to quote Ailes in the film, "It's a visual medium."

*Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior*, whose plot is essentially a march towards the end, because the film wants us to first meet and see the acid attack victim, and then

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## It's Rajini all the way, again!



ARNAB BANERJEE

There's nothing new in A.R. Murugadoss' *Darbar*, but despite the fact that Rajini's fan following, even his character's fearlessness coupled with his natural flamboyance allows him to get away with just anything, even extra-judicial killings. The proof: the audience rejoicing with a thunderous applause at every scene he appears in! But is anyone complaining? Or, has any issues? None at all. After all, it's Rajini! *Darbar!*

In *Darbar*, the narrative is set in Mumbai, where its police force is in dire need of a revamp to wipe out the most evil crime ever reported: the drug mafia headed by Hari Chopra (Suniel Shetty) as the mastermind. For Adithya Arunachalam, the Mumbai police commissioner, who is specially deputed to eliminate the drug mafia, the task seems tough.

Is he scared? No. As a rather unscrupulous cop, he could act most brazenly and go to the extent of talking on the might of human rights activists too. When he arrests drug peddler goon Ajay Malhotra (Prateik Babbar) from the streets, he doesn't

know what he is getting into — Ajay happens to be the son of a rich industrialist Vinod Malhotra (Nawab Shah) who is also a drug dealer. His powerful father takes care of just everything.

As the do-gooder cop unceremoniously pulls off the tale with familiar twists and turns with style and verve, all hell breaks loose — the kingpin Hari Chopra (Suniel Shetty) needs to step in and return to India to teach Adithya a lesson for life. Hari is the real father of Ajay.

If you are with Adithya, the violence would look gratuitous, and the revenge would naturally look like aggression and brutality. But since it's our very own Rajini, or Thalaiva (spoken for Rajinikanth with respect), faces punched to pieces look indispensable, imperative and an absolute must.

Rajini gobbles up the entire length of the 159-minute film that has at its heart everything that his films have always been at, at least in the old days. All the traits and attributes are almost branded and are incorporated and used smartly to cater to his fan base. In addition, his character being a tad psychopathic and troubled and messed up may seem difficult when the film grants him enough leeway to get off scot free and escape punishment. But then, as I don't tire of repeating: it's a Rajini film!

## Breezes through a Fox News rebellion

**Bombshell (A) 109 min**  
CAST: Charlize Theron, Nicole Kidman, Margot Robbie  
DIRECTOR: Jay Roach  
RATING: ★★

JAKE COYLE

It's probably a testament to the makeup artists of Jay Roach's Fox News docudrama *Bombshell* that the movie opens with a disclaimer announcing that the people depicted within are played by actors. Films don't ordinarily require a heads up, that that's, you know, Charlize Theron. *Bombshell* depicts the corporate culture of sexual harassment at Fox News through the perspectives of three women: star anchor Megyn Kelly (a husky-voiced Theron, almost unrecognisable), Fox & Friends star Gretchen Carlson (Nicole Kidman) and a fictional composite associate producer named Katya Poposil (Margot Robbie). This is the story behind the toppling of Roger Ailes (played by John Lithgow, in a fat suit), who after events kicked off by Carlson's 2016 sexual harassment lawsuit against him, was eventually ousted from the network he had long ruled as a powerful media figure and, as it turned out, a personal harem.

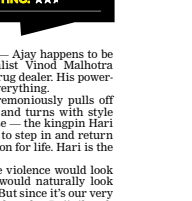
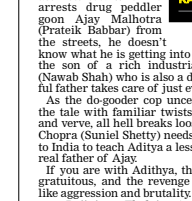
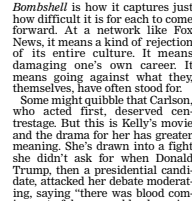
The fallout at Fox News came before Harvey Weinstein's downfall but it also, as a #MeToo drama, had a sensational backdrop. Fox News was never anyone's idea of a natural battleground on women's rights. And *Bombshell* delights in going inside Fox News' Manhattan studios (it opens with a travelogue of the various floors of its Sixth Avenue headquarters) and teasing out how this reckoning reverberated within what many in Hollywood would consider the belly of the beast.

Roach's camera snarls through those offices, capturing how the predatory climate filtered down through the newsroom's power

structure. As a workplace drama, it's quite successful. We get a sense of whispers and rumours and careless misogyny everywhere. Glass tables are hung on sets so that the legs of female correspondents can be seen. Carlson draws Ailes' ire for hosting a show without makeup on National Girls Day. When the hopeful Katya, aspiring to become an on-air talent, goes into Ailes' office to meet

him and is soon told to hike up her dress, we arrive at the ugly source of the toxicity.

Each of the three women bears the burden of abuse in their own ways, largely unaware that others share in their predicament. And they, or at least the veteran TV personalities, are accustomed to being played against each other in competition for time slots and ratings. The best thing about







In race for honour

Batting legend Sachin Tendulkar has been shortlisted as one of the 20 contenders for the greatest Laureus Sporting Moment 2000-2020 Award

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## That's (playing 2023 World Cup) a definite goal. That will come down to form & fitness; the desire won't be any less than it is.

— Aaron Finch, Australia skipper

## SHORT TAKES

### Got no demons in my head: Maxwell

**Melbourne:** Glenn Maxwell says he has got "no demons" in his head now, reaping the rewards of a break he took to deal with mental health issues. Maxwell, who took a short break from the game in October last year, made a roaring return in the ongoing Big Bash League, scoring runs at will while leading Melbourne Stars. He struck an unbeaten 83 off 45 balls on Friday night to guide Stars to a seven-wicket win over Melbourne Renegades. And the 31-year-old on-pitch hero thanked Cricket Australia for supporting him and insisted that he had greatly benefited from the break. "I've had no baggage coming in. I think back to the break I had and I'm so thankful that Cricket Australia and all the powers that be were able to grant me that break to get myself right, because I think I'm starting to see the benefits now," Maxwell was quoted as saying by 'cricket.com.au'. — PTI

### Stop comparing openers: Kohli

**Pune:** India skipper Virat Kohli doesn't endorse the idea of pitting two in-form batsmen against each other contrary to what fans think will happen after Shikhar Dhawan's attacking half-century in the deciding 78-run win against Sri Lanka in the third T20 international. Dhawan was under some pressure before the final game and a smashing half-century will keep him in the mix for the upcoming series where Rohit Sharma will be back from his break. "All three openers are pretty strong players, and it's great to have players playing well in the team. It gives you options. But I think people need to stop pitting players against each other. It's all about a team game. I don't endorse this idea of putting people in the team against each other," Kohli said. Kohli is happy that 2020 has started on a bright note with a convincing series win. "We have started on the right track, setting (in) one game and chasing (in) one game. Two very clinical performances, so I am happy. Just the confidence of getting that 200 mark every now and then will put us in a good stead." — PTI

# Scorching Sunny

## Gavaskar questions Dhoni's long break from game

**New Delhi, Jan. 11:** Sunil Gavaskar on Saturday questioned MS Dhoni's sabbatical from the game since the World Cup semifinal loss in July, asking "does anybody keep himself away from playing for India for that long?" Dhoni's future has been a subject of intense speculation since India's World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand on July 9.

The 38-year-old has not played since that heart-breaking defeat but is likely to make a comeback with the IPL. Asked if Dhoni can make India's T20 World Cup squad, Gavaskar said, "Fitness is something that I can't tell you anything at all. The question that needs to be asked is of MSD himself. He has not made himself available to play for India since 10th of July (8th actually)."

"That is the important question. Does anybody keep himself away from playing for India for that long? That is the question and therein lies the answer," said the former India captain after delivering the 26th Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Lecture.

In a recent interview, head coach Ravi Shastri said Dhoni may soon end his ODI career but could be in contention for a T20 World Cup berth provided he is in good form.

Gavaskar also said that Ranji Trophy will remain a "poor cousin" of the cash-rich IPL until the player's match fee in the country's premier first-class tournament is substantially increased. A player now gets approximately ₹2.5 lakh per match in the Ranji Trophy, a far cry from the ₹10 lakh per match that international players would withdraw not long ago, but still the

amount is no match to the millions the IPL stars earn. "IPL dominates Ranji Trophy. Unless their match fees are increased substantially, it will be considered an orphan and poor cousin of Indian cricket," Gavaskar said. "I think 26 percent of the BCCI revenue goes to the players, out of which 15 percent goes to the international players, 10 percent goes to domestic cricket, 1.5 to junior, 1.5 to women's cricket. That has not really been increased over the past few years barring the Test cricketers," Gavaskar said. There is too much disparity between the earnings of a first-class cricketer and an IPL recruit. "I am hoping new president Sourav Ganguly will look at everybody into this. The disparity that you see between

IPL players, who don't always play first class cricket, and those who play all the domestic games, about 80 days and somebody who plays 14 days of IPL. "There is big disparity I am talking about the uncapped players. Hopefully that will be narrowed down as much as possible." On ICC's proposal to trim Test cricket to four days from five, he added: "What I think doesn't matter is what the current players think that matters. They should be consulted before BCCI takes a call." — PTI

## Gavaskar says country is in turmoil over students' protest

**New Delhi, Jan. 11:** The legendary Sunil Gavaskar on Saturday expressed confidence that India will overcome the current "turmoil" caused by nationwide students' protests, just like it had dealt with several critical situations in the past.

There had been multiple protests at the Jamia Millia University against the CAA and then due to violence by a masked attacker at the Jawahar Nehru University (JNU). "The country is in turmoil. Some of our youngsters are out on the street when they should be in

their classrooms. Some of them are ending up in hospitals for being out on the streets," were Gavaskar's introductory remarks while delivering Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Lecture. The iconic opener Gavaskar believes in the idea of India which will enable the citizens to pull through this hour of crisis. "The majority of them are still in classrooms trying to forge their careers and to build and take India forward. We as a nation can go higher only when we are all together," he said. — PTI



M.S. Dhoni hasn't played a game since India's semifinal defeat in the 2019 World Cup.

## Pandya fails fitness test, return delayed

**Mumbai, Jan. 11:** With all-rounder Hardik Pandya's anticipated return getting delayed after he failed the fitness test, India's limited overs squads are unlikely to be tinkered with much for the upcoming six-week tour of New Zealand.

Starting January 24, India will be playing five T20 Internationals, three ODIs and two Test matches, and squads for the tour will be picked on Sunday. Pandya was expected to make the Indian squad after remaining out of action for four months due to a back injury but the mandatory fitness test, indicating that it will take him more to recover from the surgery he recently had.

India will be playing eight white ball games in New Zealand, and it will be interesting to see if the selectors pick a 16 or 17-member squad. With the India A team's shadow tour coinciding with the seniors' visit, it gives the selectors an option to draft players on SOS basis if the need arises.

The selectors will primarily focus on zeroing in on the core for white ball cricket considering that this is a T20 World Cup year. While the T20 squad that played against Sri Lanka in the just-concluded bilateral series was itself, Pandya was expected to be included once he proved his fitness in the warm-up tour.

However his failure to clear the fitness test is an indication that he is far from ready for interests. It will be interesting to note if the ODI team is an extension of the T20 squad. The weakest link in the ODI team is Kedar Jadhav, who has managed to hold onto his 50 over T20 and T20 pressure to replace him. — PTI



## I didn't step out of the house for 10 days: Hardik

**New Delhi, Jan. 11:** The 2020 has started with love and promise for newly-engaged Hardik Pandya but exactly a year back the flamboyant all-rounder was finding it difficult to even step out of his house following his much-criticised sexist remarks on Twitter that show 'Koffee with Karan'.

Pandya was indefinitely suspended by BCCI for making outrageous remarks on women and subsequently left off with a fine. "I still remember I did not step out of my house. It took me a week or 10 days to just realise that this is not it. You have to step out and face the things that just being in your cocoon."

Pandya told 'India Today'. "I realised that this is kind of an exam that is coming at a difficult phase which you have to get through. I then shifted my focus to my game and forgot what happened." The 26-year-old feels that a lot of people perceive him wrongly and it changes once they meet him. — PTI

## Pujara enters elite list with 50th ton

**Rajkot, Jan. 11:** Cheteshwar Pujara on Saturday joined a select group of cricketing greats by smashing his 50th first-class century during Saurashtra's Ranji Trophy group 'B' match against Karnataka, here.

Pujara warmed up nicely for the upcoming Test series in New Zealand with stylish 162 off 238 balls that had 14 fours and a six. Pujara joined the elite list of nine Indians led by Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid.

The 31-year-old Pujara, who has 18 Test centuries to his credit, is fourth on the list of active players with most first-class centuries behind former England skipper Alastair Cook (65), former South Africa captain Hashim Amla (52) and India's domestic cricket giant Wasim Jaffer (57).

Among current active Test players, nearest contender to Pujara is Australia's Steve Smith, who has 42 first-class centuries while Virat Kohli (34) is far behind. — PTI

## I'm back in picture: Dhawan

**Pune, Jan. 11:** "I am also back in the picture," India opener Shikhar Dhawan said after his fluent fifty in the third T20 international against Sri Lanka and assisted that zeroing in on the second opener is the team management's "headache".

With Dhawan back in form in the shortest format, the Indian team management and captain Virat Kohli will have the headache of picking from three in-form openers — KL

Rahul and Rohit Sharma being the other two. This really augurs well for the team ahead of the T20 World Cup in Australia later this year.

With India vice captain Rohit rested for the Sri Lanka series, Dhawan made optimum use of the two opportunities and made 32 in Indore and followed it up with a 52 in Pune on Friday night.

Asked about the race for the opener's slot, Dhawan said, "All the three players

(Rohit, KL and me) are doing well. Rohit had an excellent 2019. Rahul has been doing well since 1-2 months and he is a good player and 'met bhi picture meri aage ga, maine bhi aaj acha kar diya hai' (And I have also entered the fray and have done well today). "Toh picture achihi ban rahi hai abhi (the picture is looking good), khair yeh surav meri aage hai (but this is not my headache). So I don't think about it," he said. — PTI

## Aussies will pose tougher challenge to India



### Ayaz Memon Over The Top

**H**ow new batting sensation Marcus Labuschagne squares up to the Indian bowling attack, particularly Jasprit Bumrah, is being pitched as the major attraction in the ODI series against Australia that begins next week. For good reason too. Labuschagne's rise in international cricket in the last six months has been meteoric. Part of the Ashes squad, he looked destined to be on the reserves bench for a long while when he got an unexpected lifeline thanks to the newly adopted rule on substitution in Test cricket.

Maestro Steve Smith got hit on the head in the second Ashes match when Labuschagne replaced him to bat in the second innings, made a gritty half-century that saved Australia from defeat, and he's not looked back since. After a second ball duck in his debut Test innings, Labuschagne has scored 1450 runs in just 14 Tests. His form since his recall to the Test side in the Ashes series has been Bradmanesque, to use a cliché. So much so that he's upstaged both Smith and Warner in this period.

But while he's been brilliant in Tests, will Labuschagne be as prolific in ODIs? Particularly on Indian pitches, and more pertinent, will he be as good in the ODI series against Australia that begins next week? The answer to the latter question is a simple match since the World Cup? Bumrah returned to international cricket in the T20 series against Sri Lanka. There were some concerns whether the long lay off would have had any adverse effect on him, but he didn't look any the worse for the injury that kept him out of cricket for six months or so.

Hot pace, daunting line and length, steep slopes and clever variations here, Bangladesh were hit by controversy surrounding major donor Shakil Al Hasan who missed the tour (along with injured Tamim Iqbal), and Sri Lanka, as mentioned, were there in body but not in mind. All three teams were easy meat for Virat Kohli's team, a Australia side brimming with confidence after a fine home season will be a far, far tougher challenge. Given the talent on view, in



Steve Smith (left) and David Warner during a training session in Mumbai.

fact, it should whet the appetite of every cricket lover.

Both teams are star-studded and in terrific form. Think Rohit, Kohli, Rahul, Pant, Shami, Kudekunte/Chahal pitched against Finch, Warner, Smith, Starc, Cummins. No, I haven't overlooked Bumrah, but that only represents the exciting contest ahead. This series, of course, will be played against the backdrop of a meeting (or several of them) between the administrators of BCCI and Cricket Australia. Given the issue uppermost on the

agenda — whether Test cricket should be played over five days or four — is likely to overwhelm the on-field action.

CA chief executive Kevin Roberts is scheduled to discuss with BCCI President Sourav Ganguly the feasibility of reducing Test matches to four days (which has suffered erosion in popularity) even as debate rages all over the cricket world.

This debate is not new. The issue has dogged Test cricket ever since it came into existence. Test matches of different tenures have been played in the long history of the sport as administrators looked to keep fans engaged.

Cricket's longest format has suffered erosion in spectatorship (hence sponsorship and interest of broadcasters) continuously for decades. How to arrest this has been the challenge, which has currently become the talking point all over the world.

There is no easy solution to the ICC's Technical Committee can pick on when it meets to address the issue. What's becoming clear, however, is that some changes — irrespective of the tenure of the match — may be necessary for Test cricket to survive the Tsunami of T20.

## Mulani, Tare help Mumbai recover from shaky start

NBHA SURANA CHENNAI, JAN. 11

Mumbai recovered from an early wobble to make 284 for six on day one of their Group B Ranji match against Tamil Nadu here at the Chidambaram Cricket Stadium on Saturday. A 155-run stand for the sixth wicket between Shams Mulani (87) and Aditya Tare (69 not out) helped Mumbai wriggle out of trouble after being pinned down to 129 for five.

As Vijay Shankar got an India 'A' call-up at the eleventh hour, B. Aparajith walked in for the toss. Opting to bat, Mumbai started on a good note with Jay Bista and debutant Bhupen Lalwani bringing up 50 runs in 12.6 overs before the former was trapped by left-arm spinner Sai Kishore.

The Baba twins — Aparajith and Indrajith — were excellent on the field. Aparajith's one-handed catch sent Siddhesh Lad back to the pavilion for a duck. At lunch, Mumbai were 91 for three in 38 overs.

Hardik Tamore was sent at number three to make his first-class debut but was dismissed for 21 off 30 balls by R. Ashwin. Baba Indrajith pounced a neat



Baba Aparajith completes a catch to dismiss Siddhesh Lad off Sai Kishore.

catch. Sarfaraz Khan looked content during his short stay as he blasted four fours and two sixes. But Ashwin brought his downfall by cleaning him up. Skipper Tare hit nine fours in his unbeaten knock while Mulani smashed 14 fours and a six. The big hit over cover region was majestic.

Mulani said he shares a special bond with Tare that helped him, put on a crucial stand. "I was waiting for the loose balls and that was my plan all along. I had confidence in my defence. Tare and I were roommates for a while and we have that understanding and I think that helped," said Mulani. TN spinner Sai who

bagged three wickets — all in the lunch break — said he could have bowled a lot tighter in the second and third sessions. "I am not minding my bowling by the way I took three wickets or in the second session they were me for two sixes. I am pretty happy with the ball that came out of my hand. I want to do the same thing tomorrow," said Sai.

It was the last ball of the day that turned the tables when Ashwin broke the well-built partnership by removing Mulani. "I think it bounced a bit more than expected," said Mulani.

**Brief scores:** Mumbai 284 for 6 in 89.4 overs (Shams Mulani 87, Aditya Tare 69 batting; Jay Bista 41; R Ashwin 3/58, R Sai Kishore 3/77) vs Tamil Nadu.





No national duty

Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers doesn't expect Jamie Vardy (in pic) to end his England retirement despite his prolific form this season

## Arsenal pegged back

### Crystal Palace hold 10-man Arsenal after Auba red card

London, Jan. 11: Arsenal captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang opened the scoring at Crystal Palace on Saturday but was later sent off as the hosts fought back to draw 1-1 at Selhurst Park. New Gunners boss Mikel Arteta was on course for a third straight win when his skipper made the breakthrough in the first half, but a deflected effort by Jordan Ayew cancelled it out early in the second period.

When Aubameyang received a red card with 23 minutes left, the experienced Roy Hodgson was left with a makeshift defence. Arsenal's difficulties this season were highlighted by the fact this was the first time Palace were facing the Gunners after Christmas in a top-flight match with the Eagles higher in the table.

Hodgson was boosted by the return of Wilfried Zaha after he missed the defeat to Derby with a knock but new loan signing Cenk Tosun was only named on the bench.

Captain Aubameyang was recalled by Arteta after sitting out the FA Cup win over Leeds and opened the scoring at Selhurst Park in the 12th minute.

Mesut Ozil's licence to roam had already caused the hosts problems and he moved inside to combine with Alexandre Lacazette, who played in his forward role to kick the bottom corner for his 18th goal of the season.

It was a breathtaking Arsenal move, which started with a brave through ball between the lines by David Luiz, and Palace struggled to gain possession during the opening 30 minutes.

Zaha cut a frustrated figure and this was highlighted when he shoved Nicolas Pepe into Lucas Torreira, with the visiting pair needing treatment.



Referee Paul Tierney shows Arsenal's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (left) a red card following a VAR review during their English Premier League match against Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park in London on Saturday. — AP

I would never, ever, ever, put myself before the club. This is Manchester United and there is no 1 in Manchester.

— Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Manchester United boss

#### SHORT TAKES

### Racist City fans handed 5-yr ban

London: Two Manchester City supporters have received five-year bans from football matches and lifetime suspensions from the Premier League champions' stadium after being found guilty of racist abuse. Ian Baldry, 58, made a racist comment towards City and England winger Raheem Sterling as he celebrated scoring a goal in a Premier League game against Bournemouth at the Etihad Stadium in December 2018. The defendant from Yorkshire pleaded guilty in September to causing racially aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress. Baldry's friend, James McConnell, from Manchester, was heard making racist remarks about two match stewards at the same game. McConnell was also spotted shouting similar comments at a City player who took a corner at a home game against Newcastle two months earlier, said police. He was also sentenced in Manchester after pleading guilty. — AFP

### Two Indians on top at Delhi Open chess

New Delhi: Five players, including India's Karthik Venkataraman and C.R.G. Krishna, were on top with an all-win record at the end of round four in the 18th Delhi International Open Grand Masters chess tournament, here on Saturday. Grandmaster Venkataraman and International Master Krishna were joined by Jose Eduardo Marengo (Brazil), Alcantara (Peru), Aleksey Aleksandrov (Belarus) and Bangladesh GM Ziaur Rahman at the top. They were preceded by six players, who are joint second. Karthik posted a win over Gurgoan's Ishvi Aggarwal. On the top board, 19-year-old Peruvian GM Alcantara, seeded fourth, posted a 47-move win over international Master Krishna. Gusein while GM Aleksey Aleksandrov, the eighth-seed, had to bring out his best to tame India's Vishal Navalgund in 70 moves. GM Karthikyan Murali, the third seed, was held to a draw by Saptarshi Roy. Second-seed Pavel Ponkratov (Russia) was held to his second draw when Indonesia's Theofanis Tabet Joseph held his own in a long-drawn game. — PTI

### ARROWS TO HOST TRAU IN I-LEAGUE

Vasco: All India Football Federation's developmental side Indian Arrows will host TRAU FC in the I-League here on Sunday. The Arrows, after six games, find themselves rooted to the bottom of the standings. However, the young Arrows have shown signs of resilience, giving every team a run for their money until the final whistle. Despite falling short against Mohun Bagan in their previous game, Shanmugan Venkatesh, head coach, Indian Arrows reflected on the positives. "Mohun Bagan had a difficult time against us and it was not an easy outing at all. Our boys fought neck-to-neck until the final whistle and the experience will surely bear fruits for us in the upcoming matches," he said. Weighing in on their Sunday opponents, he added, "TRAU, in their last match, found the taste of victory and facing them now would be really challenging. "They are improving constantly and we have to be at the top of our game to get some points." TRAU, on the other hand, lifted themselves off the foot of the league standings following their maiden victory over city rivals Neroca. Another star to be taken into account is the Tidid Road outfit have been unbeaten for three games now, with their last defeat dating back to almost a month ago, when they lost to Kolkata giants East Bengal on December 14. — PTI

#### WEST HAM 'LIVID'

West Ham midfielder Declan Rice claimed "nobody wants VAR" in the Premier League after the controversial review system condemned his side to a dramatic 1-0 defeat at Sheffield United on Friday.

Trailing to Oliver McBurnie's second-half strike, David Moyes' men thought they had snatched an equaliser in stoppage-time when Robert Snodgrass fired home from Rice's pass.

But, with West Ham celebrating wildly the goal was checked by VAR in a controversial ruling out for a handball by Rice. — AFP

#### THE RESULTS

Crystal Palace (Arsenal 5-4)	1
Arsenal (Aubameyang 12)	1
Sheffield United (McBurnie 53)	1
West Ham	0

## Stage set for Madrid derby in Jeddah

Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), Jan. 11: Lionel Messi has predictably been the star attraction but there will be no Clasico in Saudi Arabia. When the Spanish Football Federation signed a three-year contract worth 120 million euros (\$13.4 million) to move the tournament to Saudi, a title showdown between Real and Barcelona would very likely have been top of the organisers' wishlist.

The draw kept the clubs apart in the semis and a new four-team format ensured Real and Atletico were able to participate at all, given they would not have qualified for the traditional two-legged showdown between league champions and winners of the Copa del Rey.

Atletico scored two late goals to beat Barca 2-2, with a derby final now to come against Real Madrid.

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#### SPANISH SUPER CUP

● An all-Madrid final in Jeddah offers both Atletico and Real the chance to claim a first trophy of the campaign and perhaps a valuable psychological boost too

Including the two other highest-placed finishers in La Liga all-but ensures entry for future tie-ups, as this competition has shown, there is no guarantee of progress. "The Super Cup will be decided by its guests," read Catalan

sports daily *Mundo Deportivo* on Friday. "Second in the league against semi-finalist in the cup."

An all-Madrid final in Jeddah offers both Atletico and Real the chance to claim a first trophy of the campaign and perhaps a valuable psychological boost too.

Certainly, Barcelona and Valencia will resume in La Liga with their rhythm jolted and confidence knocked. After seven games unbeaten, Valencia were outplayed in their 3-1 semi-final defeat by Real while Barca's late collapse against Atletico brings doubts about the team's form. Ernesto Valverde rushing back to the surface. — AFP

## Odisha enjoy home comfort

Bhubaneswar, Jan. 11: Odisha FC topped Mumbai City FC 2-0 to make it three wins out of three at the Kalinga Stadium here on Saturday.

After a barren first-half, goals from Aridane Santana (48') and Xisco Hernandez (74') were enough for Josep Gombau's men to floor Mumbai City who fell to their second consecutive defeat in the Hero Indian Super League.

The three points have taken Odisha's tally to 18 points from 12 matches. It sees Odisha surge into the top-four at the expense of Mumbai who are two points adrift.

The game got off to a slow and cautious start with both teams gauging each other. The first shot for Sougoon into the four-top at the expense of Mumbai who are two points adrift.

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Odisha FC's Xisco Hernandez (left) vies for the ball with Rowlin Borges of Mumbai City in their ISL match on Saturday.

There were a couple of close calls at both ends as the half wound down, Serge Kevyn's blocked shot fell for Sougoon on the edge of the box. But his snapshot flew just wide in the 44th minute. At the other end, a blocked cross from Xisco fell for Nandhakumar inside the box. He worked some space for himself and pulled the trigger but his shot was straight at Mumbai custodian Amrinder Singh.

Odisha took a deserved lead three minutes into the second half after brilliant work from Xisco.

The Spaniard got past Mato Grigic and found Santana with a cutback from the byline. The striker was left with the simple job of turning it in at the far post. With confidence surging through, Odisha kept troubling the Mumbai defence and Xisco and Santana both saw shots on goal blocked away by desperate Mumbai defenders.

#### ATK FACE BLASTERS

In Kolkata, ATK are set to lock horns with Kerala Blasters in what should be an electric ISL clash at

on Sunday. ATK, two-time champions, and Kerala Blasters, two-time runners-up, have some history between them in the ISL. On both occasions that ATK won the title, it was the side from Kochi that they vanquished in the final.

However, Kerala are unbeaten in the last five matches against ATK and the home team will want to turn the tables this time, especially given that Kerala defeated them 2-1 in the reverse fixture in Kochi in the opening game of the season. — Agencies

### BAGAN SET TO MERGE WITH ATK TO PLAY IN ISL

Kolkata, Jan. 11: Kolkata giants Mohun Bagan are all set to merge with ATK in their bid to play in the country's top tier Indian Super League during the 2020-21 season. While both Mohun Bagan as well as ATK brass remained non-committal, there remains a strong possibility that an announcement might be on cards by the end of this week.

"There is no confirmation as of now but we always have been in talks for future tie-ups. When something concrete develops we will come out with an announcement," Mohun Bagan senior official Debasish Dutta said.

ATK co-owner Utsav Pareek too remained non-committal to the development and said the organisers, Football Sports Development Limited, are looking into this.

"Last we heard East Bengal was joining ATK and now it's Mohun Bagan. Let's wait and watch, FSDL are looking into the matter," Pareek said.

There was no comments from ISL promoters FSDL. As per the Indian football roadmap, the ISL will become the top tier league of the country and there's a key recommendation by the AFC is to open a pathway for two I-League clubs' entry into the ISL by the end of the 2020-21 season, subject to the criteria being fulfilled. — PTI

#### KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES

## Gymnasts continue gold rush on Day 2

Guwahati, Jan. 11: Maharashtra's Asmi Anush Badade and Uttar Pradesh's Jatin Kumar Kanjodia joined Tripura's Priyanka Dasgupta as quadruple gold medal winners at the gymnastics competition of the Khelo India Youth Games 2020, here on Saturday.

As many as seven medals were bettered on the opening day of athletics competition. Madhya Pradesh made a mark, picking up three gold while Gujarat claimed three of the eight gold medals at stake in the judo competition at the Sports Authority of India Centre in Paltan Bazar.

In the battle for supremacy among the 36 States and Union Territories, Maharashtra topped the charts with seven gold and eight silver among the 27 medals in all. With six gold among their 12 medals, Uttar Pradesh occupied the second spot while Delhi were third with a total of 12 medals, including five gold.

Kanjodia won the Parallel Bars and gold after winning the boys under-17 artistic gymnastics and the Floor Exercises and Horizontal Bars titles.

Badade's loss in the Clubs final to Maharashtra teen Anshu Shrestha meant she was denied a sweep of the

five gold medals in the under-17 rhythmic gymnastics competition. Athletics action got underway on Saturday and immediately stole the limelight as four meet records were bettered. Madhya Pradesh's Arjun Waskale won the boys Under-17 3000m race while Vivik Kumar led a medals' sweep in the boys Under-17 javelin throw, to pocket seven of the 18 medals at stake in the morning session. The breath-taking finish of 150 boys Under-17 1500m witnessed a close contest with defending champion Ajeet Kumar winning by second place margin against a determined Sunil Dawar. The photo finish camera had to be consulted before Ajeet Yadav was declared winner by a 100 of a second with Vivik Kumar led a new meet record. Uttarakhnad broke into the medals chart with Anshu Shrestha's Under-21 5000m with a new meet record time of 16:38.75. — PTI

### MAN UTD WON'T MAKE PANIC BUYS, SAYS OLE

Manchester, Jan. 11: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer insists Manchester United will not look for short-term solutions in the January transfer window just to guarantee his job security. Solskjaer will not countenance bringing in players if they do not fit in with United's long-term plan. His squad has been stretched by injuries and a gruelling schedule and they have not won any of their three matches so far in 2020.

Those weaknesses were brutally exposed in the 3-1 defeat to Manchester City in the first leg of the League Cup semi-finals on Tuesday to once again put the spotlight on Solskjaer.

United struggled in the absence of injured mid-fielders Paul Pogba and Scott McTominay.

However, Solskjaer refuses to discuss the idea of any stop-gap signings. "I am not going to protect myself," Solskjaer said ahead of Norwich's visit to Old Trafford on Saturday. "I am here to do what I think is best for the club and what I feel is best." — AFP

### XAVI TO REPLACE BOSS VALVERDE AT BARCELONA?

Doha, Jan. 11: Barcelona have asked former captain Xavi to take over from the under-pressure Ernesto Valverde as head coach, Spanish media reported on Friday.

The club's sporting director Eric Abidal has reportedly spoken to the boss of the former midfielder could return this season if Valverde is sacked.

Soldi's general manager Turki Al-Ahli refused to rule out a move back to Barca for Xavi.

"The issue of Xavi going to Barca is normal and expected because he will be at his club and it's his final home and he must return there in the future, but as of today, Xavi is the coach of Al Sadd," Al-Ahli said in a statement.

"Xavi and his team are focusing on tomorrow's match against Al-Rayyan, and we know that a club with the size and professionalism of Barcelona will not use official channels to speak of such matters," he added. He joined Al Sadd in December 2015 before being appointed coach last July. — AFP