





### 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

# 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

**PALLAVI MAJUMDAR & SINDHYA SAMUEL | DC 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 in 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 yet started the process of its implementation.

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.

to show their disagreement with CAA but also to show support for the students of Jawaharlal Nehru University who were attacked by the BJP; Rabel 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, Rabel 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."



Youth protesting in Valluvar Kottam on Saturday.

—E.K.Sarjany



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 partially 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 Jollarpettai 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 1,098 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 its 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 that 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

## 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, an 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 | DC 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 bench 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 (MIUJ), the Madras Reporters Guild and Chennai Press Club as respondents in the proceedings. The petition was filed by S.Sokaran seeking a direction 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 fallacious investigation data on Idol theft submitted by Special Officer Pon Manickavel, Pon Manickavel's wing, before the high court. When the matter was taken up for hearing, government advocate (opposite side) Kirithika Kamal filed a

## SIX QUERIES TO JOURNO UNIONS

- 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?
- 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?

counter affidavit on behalf of the official respondents. The petition was filed by S.Sokaran, counsel representing Pon Manickavel, also filed a counter affidavit. Arul submitted that the petitioner was a fake press person and his magazine, "Maneeda Manam", was not known to anybody and he has not stated the circulation figures of his magazine. Many persons were claiming to be press persons by registering their magazines/newspapers with the authorities and printing only handful of copies and blackmailing officials and politicians by

## Govt to answer nine questions

- 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?
- 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 how the identity card of Khadar Basha landed in the hands of the petitioner," 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, MIUJ, the Reporters Guild, Chennai Press Club, after Government Advocate Kirithika Kamal, told notice on behalf of the Secretary, Information and Public Relations department. The Bench posted the case for hearing on 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"

# 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 II, with the second highest number of suicides as per latest data issued by the National Crime Record 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.

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.

dying in 15 cases.

### 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.

percent 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.

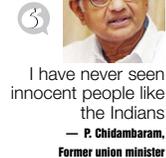
The rate of suicides was up from 9.9 percent in 2017 to 10.2 percent in 2018. In 2017, a total of 10,655 farming sector suicides were reported.

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.

**Joblessness cost lives every hour in 2018**  
In a shocking discovery, one unemployed person committed suicide every hour during 2018.

aged between 45 and 60 years, while 2,431 males and 310 females were above 60 years.

The highest number of suicides - 12.3 percent - was committed by unemployed persons in Kerala (1,585 out of 12,536 suicides), 12.2 percent in Tamil Nadu (1,579), 9.7 percent in Maharashtra (1,299 suicides), 8.5 percent in Karnataka (1,094 suicides).



I have never seen innocent people like the Indians

— P. Chidambaram, Former union minister

### 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 Madhavoli area in Kattangalthur. 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 Chengalpattu 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 Parveen (55), Puducherry who arrived from Dubai were intercepted. Rs. 3.7 lakhs worth gold weighing 593 grams were seized.

### 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.

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 Madhavaram, which are extracting the ground water illegally in critical and overexploited areas.

2014 had informed that since the plant was situated in the metro area, they should approach the CMWSSB. Upon such approach, the said board by its communication dated July 10, 2017 had informed that the unit was located in Sholavaram 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 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 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 CMWSSB or State 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 engaged in the manufacture of 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. 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 this manufacturing activity again, the bench added.

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.S.Vijayathirai, Tamil Nadu East Region General

for M/s Malliga Water Products submitted that in so far as this industry was concerned, the Public Works Department by its letter dated September 11,

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 set up. Such illegal or unauthorized extraction of underground 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 CMWSSB or State 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 engaged in the manufacture of such purified water manufacturing industry

### 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 Vemmalanagar Kovil Street in Pallavaram, and his son, M. Ganapathy (28). Madaswamy owns a grocery shop.

The arrests came following a tip-off that the duo sell 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.

### TRADITIONAL ART FORMS



Artists perform at the 7th Veethi Viruthu Vizha organised by Loyola College, Chennai, in a move to create platform for artists to showcase their traditional art forms. The event will take place for two days.

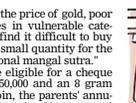


Justice V. Ramaswami

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



With educational loans, a roadside fruit vendor in Chennai has managed to make both his daughter 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.



**JUSTICE FOR ALL**  
goes against the principle of natural justice. It is pertinent to note that while one government website only mentions 'parents' income', another refers to 'family income'. The income certificate issuing authority has columns for income of the members of the family. If the 'family income', as opposed to 'parents income', is the yardstick, and let's assume the bride to be employed, and as a result, falls beyond the eligible income, does that run counter to the intention of the scheme itself? The message would be: remain unemployed and get marriage assistance, for if you, or your siblings work, you will not be eligible!

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.Latha 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, with the aid of technicalities, the spirit of this nature are filed." The court hoped that instead of technicalities a "practical view" would be taken by authorities.

Welfare, the Madras Bench of the Madras High Court (2018) rightly pointed that "in villages marriage are fixed at short duration. Welfare measures are intended to benefit the deserving candidates and rejection of applications on technical grounds should be avoided."

In another instance, an orphan application for the "Anni Therasa Memorial Orphan Girls Marriage Assistance Scheme" was rejected on the ground that the death certificate of her parents was not enclosed. The Madras Bench of the Madras High Court in A.Nirmala Alias Nirmala Mary vs The Secretary, Social Welfare (2019) stated that "the very purpose of the scheme is to help the destitutes at the time of marriage. It is a social welfare measure of the government. The persons without parents and widows, who are members in the family are provided with the assistance. Holding that the rejection was against the spirit of the scheme", it ordered assistance on the basis of court pleadings.

The government proposes but the official disposes, marring many a 'bride' future!

(The writer is an advocate at the Madras High court, a columnist and author and former resident editor of NDTV)

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT**  
**CORR/P/Phase-II PUBLIC NOTICE** Dated: 10.01.2020  
 PUBLIC NOTICE 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 OUTER RING ROAD, CHENNAI, KODAMBUR, CHENNAI - 600 107 IN G.O. (MS) NO. 101, HIGHWAYS AND MINOR PORTS (P-2) DEPARTMENT, DATED 28.09.2019.

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 Outer Ring Road, Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, Korambudur, Chennai 600 107 (in G.O. (MS) No. 101, Highways and Minor Ports (P-2) Department, dated 28.09.2018), notice is hereby given that, the following lands are specified in the schedule below, and situated in the Village of No. 123, Marambedu in Ponner Taluk, Tiruvarur District, are required for Highways to wit, for providing Junction Improvement and Wayside Amenities in Chennai Outer Ring Road, Phase-II. All persons interested in the lands as accordingly required to lodge before the District Revenue Officer (Land Acquisition), Chennai Outer Ring Road, CMA, Korambudur, 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 state the nature of the sender's interest in the land is liable to be summarily rejected.

Objections received within the due date, if any, will be enquired into on 19.02.2020 at 11.00 AM by the District Revenue Officer (Land Acquisition), Chennai Outer Ring Road, CMA, at his office at Korambudur, 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 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	Total Extent (In Hec)	Class/ Nature of Land	Extent proposed for acquisition (In Hec)	Boundaries	Land Owners / Interested Persons	Structures / Trees
1	92/1A1 Part	0.080	Dry	85	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1B1 Part West S.No. 101	57, Namachivayam S/o. Rama Reddy	Neem Tree - 1
2	92/1B1 Part	0.033	Dry	59	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1B1 Part South S.No. 92/1C1 Part S.No. 92/1B2 West S.No. 92/1B1 Part S.No. 92/1A1	12, Karunahasi Naidu, S/o. Raguvaran Naidu.	Neem Sapling-1
3	92/1C1 Part	0.030	Dry	119	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1D1 Part South S.No. 92/1C1 Part S.No. 92/1B1 Part	33, Kallandaraman, S/o. Ramadoss Naidu	Neem Sapling-4 Post of Low Tension Wire - 1
4	92/1D1 Part	0.040	Dry	400	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1E1 West S.No. 92/1D2 West S.No. 92/1C1 Part	76, Mami Naidu S/o. Perumal	
5	92/1E1 Part	0.010	Dry	100	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/1E2 West S.No. 92/1E1 West S.No. 92/1D1	235, Usha Rano, W/o. M. Prasad Kumar	
6	92/2E2 Part	0.050	Dry	135	North S.No. 93 East S.No. 92/2E1 Part South S.No. 92/2E2 Part West S.No. 92/1D1	33, Kallandaraman, S/o. Ramadoss Naidu	Low tension wire crossing street-light Post - 1
7	101/1C1 Part	0.500	Dry	235	North S.No. 92 East S.No. 101/1C1 Part West S.No. 101/1C2 Part	13, Gajendran, S/o. Kondrayya Naidu	Neem sapling - 1 Low tension wire post-2
8	113/1B Part	1.415	Muruvai	532	North S.No. 113/1B Part S.No. 112 East S.No. 113 Part South S.No. Kurnamur Village West S.No. 112	140, Lathappa	Coccol trees - 11 Teak trees - 10
9	100/2B1 Part	0.480	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. Kannasah Naidu	
10	103/1A Part	0.270	Dry	1028	North S.No. 100 East S.No. 103/1B Part South S.No. 103/1A Part West S.No. 107	226, C.S.ash Choudhary Nair, S/o. P. Gopindran	
				TOTAL	8311		

CHENNAI - 600107 | DATED: 10.01.2020  
 DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER (L.A.) CHENNAI OUTER RING ROAD, CMA, KODAMBUR, CHENNAI-600 107

Taking a dig

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... As Cauvery catchment areas have received a good rainfall this year...

Other than water for summer crops, 15 tmcft of Cauvery water is needed till May-end...

CM charge on posting OSD as baseless: Bedi

Puducherry, Jan. 11: Puducherry Lt Governor Kiran Bedi on Saturday said that Minister V Narayanasamy for his charge that she planned to post her Officer on Special Duty as State Election Commissioner...

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 misgovern and misled 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...

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 hampers to rice-card holders under the public distribution system (PDS) has reached 85.26 per cent of the beneficiaries...

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...

'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...



"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"

"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 Karumuri, 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, he said.

Stating that about 3,000 persons belonging to the Muslim were staying around his house, the Minister said they were all living like brothers and sisters. Also, 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 called 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 issue in case even a single person from the minority community was affected if and when the National Register of Citizens (NRC) is implemented.

Over 20 Muslim organisations, the Congress, the DMK and other outfits on Thursday petitioned the state government to prevail upon 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 on taking 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 after the recent BJP session after the Governor's address.

However, the tone and tenor of Stalin's speech in New Delhi, saying he had decided to '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 7.

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 inconsequence 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 from 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 his home turf and recent rural local bodies election. The DMK had 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 leader 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.

and Left parties in Bengal during the one-day strike called by the Central trade unions on January 7.

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 inconsequence 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 from 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 his home turf and recent rural local bodies election. The DMK had 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 leader 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. AVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, JAN. 11

After a dramatic turn of events, the AIADMK on Saturday won the election to DMK candidate Kanna-

Out of the 22 ward councillors to the Ooty panchayat, the DMK 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 panchayat union councils for similar reasons. Of the 273 vice chairperson posts for which the indirect elections were held, the AIADMK won 94, DMK 107, PMK 19, Congress 8, DMK-7, AMMK 5, BJP 4, CPI 3, Social Democratic Party secured a seat while independents won from 25 places.

the expected lines as the post was reserved for ST (General) this time. With the DMK alliance having 5 councilors out of 6 in the district panchayat, he bagged the top post unopposed.

Ponthus said that he would focus more on infrastructure development in tribal villages and construct houses, besides taking care of the all-round development in the village panchayat areas in Nilgiris.

The elevation of Ponthus to the chairmanship of the district panchayat was on

CM WELCOMES VP



Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami welcomes Vice President Venkaiah Naidu at Chennai airport on Saturday. Governor Banwarilal Purohit also seen.

AIADMK wins Kanyakumari dt panchayat

DC CORRESPONDENT KANYAKUMARI, JAN. 11

The AIADMK captured the district panchayat chairman post and three union chairman posts in Kanyakumari district. The DMK managed to win only one seat in the indirect election for the chairman posts in the nine unions in the district.

In the indirect election for the post of Kanyakumari district panchayat chairman, S Merliant Dhas of the AIADMK got the backing of six ward members among 11 and defeated her Congress rival P. Ambili, who got five votes. Similarly, the AIADMK members - S. Azhagan, E. Shanthan and R. Ayyappan were elected chairpersons of the panchayat unions of Agastheeswaram, Thovalai and Rajakkamangalam respectively.

The Congress members won in three other panchayat unions of Thuckkavayal, Killyvoor and Melapuram and BJP contestants were elected chairman of Kurunthancode and Munchirai.

Probe terror outfits' links with DMK, Congress, says Ponnar

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 11

Former Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan has accused the DMK and Congress of 'shielding' terror outfits who claimed proximity to minority community, and urged Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to probe the alleged links "between the Muslim terrorists and the DMK and its ally."

Citing the gunning down of Special Sub-Inspector Wilson in Kanyakumari district and expressed deep pain at the tragic happening to a policeman on duty in a message here, Mr

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The DMK president M K Stalin on Saturday announced a solatium of ₹5 lakh to the family of Wilson, a policeman on duty in a special sub-inspector who was gunned down by suspected terrorists at Kanyakumari check-post in Kanyakumari district and expressed deep pain at the tragic happening to a policeman on duty in a message here, Mr

and take stern action to tackle the terror outfits. "If prompt and appropriate action is not taken now, the situation will arise in Tamil Nadu wherein security would have to be provided to the police force," he said on Saturday.

The killing of Wilson cannot be construed as an incident targeting an individual official but a "full

Stalin said he was deeply pained by the interview given by Wilson's wife, Mrs. Angel Mary that such a fate should befall her husband who "loved DMK" Police department more than our family."

The incident showed that even policemen were not safe under the AIADMK government, Stalin said, adding, the ruling party was only a policeman on duty in a message that Tamil Nadu topped

fledged war against the Tamil Nadu police," he said. "If prompt and appropriate action is not taken now, the situation will arise in Tamil Nadu wherein security would have to be provided to the police force," he said on Saturday.

The killing of Wilson cannot be construed as an incident targeting an individual official but a "full

ment of solatium of Rs. 1 crore for the family of the SSI who was shot at and stabbed by two assassins. The Chief Minister had also announced a job for the job of Wilson. While speaking in the Tamil Nadu Assembly on Thursday, Palaniswami had assured strong action against those responsible for the killing.



Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan has accused the DMK and Congress of 'shielding' terror outfits who claimed proximity to minority community, and urged Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to probe the alleged links "between the Muslim terrorists and the DMK and its ally."

20 aides of accused in Wilson murder quizzed

M. ARULOLI | DC KANYAKUMARI, JAN. 11

More than 20 men are being questioned to find the whereabouts of Thoufeeq and Abdul Shameem, the accused in the murder of special sub-inspector (SSI) Y Wilson at Kallakavilai border check-post three days ago, he said on Saturday.

sources, the Kerala Police picked up Seyyad Ibrahim and Abdullah from Palakkad and Rafiq from Kallakavilai. Thiruvananthapuram. These three were friends of Thoufeeq and Shameem. Seyyad Ibrahim, who runs a shop near Poonthura, government medical college hospital, and Abdullah, a welder

from Coimbatore, were found to have called the two accused over phone twice on the day of murder. Rafiq, arrested in Poonthura, is a native of Tirunelveli. The police have questioned the relatives of the two accused in Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts. The Kanyakumari Police is working in coordination

with their Kerala counterparts to prevent the murder accused, believed to have escaped into Kerala, from fleeing the country by sea. The police are also closely watching the Hindu outfit that spread inflammatory messages on social media, inciting communal hatred in the guise of seeking justice for the murder of the SSI.



**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

# Vice-prez inaugurates Thyagaraja Aradhana

**SRINIVASAN | DC THANJAVUR, JAN. 11**  
"India, all over the world is known by our culture and civilization" said M. Veerappan Naidu, Vice-president of India at Thiruvaiyaru 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 Thiruvaiyaru. He said that ancient civilizations like Rome and Babylonian are no more while our culture and civilization is still surviving. Our culture is "Vasudeva Kutumbakam" (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 Thiruvaiyaru and lived at Thiruvaiyaru and two others, working in praise of Lord Rama who is 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 pankachakam, a jibba and 'angavastram', 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, Vellamandi Natarajan, state tourism minister and Haridwaranagalama A.K. Palaniwal 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 Myslapore festival. The artistes were given 45 minutes to draw their favourite kolam on a four-feet by four-feet space.

**Govt. should take tough action against teachers involved in sex abuse of students**  
— Dr S Ramadoss, PMK leader

### 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 Lourduhsamy on Friday night. On seeing the police, Lourduhsamy, 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 Alandur court and lodged in a Puzhal prison. Adambakkam police launched a search for her family members.

#### DMK takes delta with a shock

**Tiruchir:** 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 Tiruchir, Karur, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Thanjavur, Tiruvavur, 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 Tiruvavur 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 Haridhra river Teppakkulam area here, and to set up a memorial at Mannargudi for freedom fighters in and around Mannargudi.

## '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 depriving 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 one 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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GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor Project, Kanchipuram											
FORM - A Noting under section 15(2) of the Tamil Nadu Highways Act 2001 (Tamil Nadu Act 34 of 2002)											
In order to regularize the increasing volume of Traffic and for setting up businesses and facilitating the efficient movement of goods and people and to maintain the free flow of vehicles, it has been proposed for widening the State Highways Road SH-58-1, Chengalpetta - Kanchipuram-Arakonam Road under the Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor Project. The Government of Tamil Nadu, keeping the above public cause in mind has proposed to acquire the lands in the following villages as mentioned in the schedule under the provisions of Tamil Nadu Highways Act, 2001 (Tamil Nadu Act 34 of 2002) and Tamil Nadu Highways Rules 2003.											
The owners or any other persons having interest in the said property may send their objections in writing to the Special District Revenue Officer (L.A.), Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor Project, Kanchipuram, and show cause as to why their land should not be acquired for the above said public cause within 30 days from the date of publication of the notice.											
SCHEDULE											
Name of the District : Kanchipuram			Name of the Taluk : Watajjabad			Name of the Village: Muthiyalpettai			(SH-58(1) KM 61/750 to KM 62/012)		
Sl.No	Survey/ Sub-Division No.	Extent (In Ha) (0.00.00)	Classification	Acquisition extent out of Column (2) in Sq.mtr	Boundaries for acquisition extent shown in Column (5)				Immovable assets such as Structures, Wells, Trees, etc lying on the acquisition extent shown in Column (5)	Owner's / Interested persons for the acquisition extent shown in Column (5)	
	1	2	3	4	North	East	South	West	10	11	
01.	11	3.57.50	Dry	445	11 Part	11 Part	12 Part	11 Part	Vacant	35. Dhargu Mosque	8
02.	13	0.64.00	Dry	228	12	13 Part	13 Part	13 Part	Vacant	35. Dhargu Mosque Mayyam	9
03.	14/3K	0.01.50	Dry	2	12	14/3L Part	14/3K Part	14/3J	Vacant	50. Puzhuvandi Sri Sivasankara Muthayyar	10
04.	14/3L	0.01.50	Dry	4	12	14/3M Part	14/3L Part	14/3N Part	CC pole with wire fencing	33. Cheran	10
05.	14/3M	0.01.50	Dry	8	12	14/3N Part	14/3M Part	14/3L Part	Vacant	348. Rangasthan Sri Lakshmanan	11
06.	14/3N	0.01.50	Dry	8	12	14/3O Part	14/3N Part	14/3M Part	Vacant	48. Babakannan	11
07.	14/3O	0.01.00	Dry	13	12	14/3P Part	14/3O Part	14/3N Part	AC sheet house, Cement flooring, Septic Tank	70. Veerasanar Devar Sri Thiruvalluvar	11
08.	14/3P	0.00.50	Dry	13	12	15	14/3P Part	14/3O Part	Cement flooring, AC sheet (Part), GI sheet building (G-1) Part	32. Chelamam Wilo Srinivasan	11
Total				721	Sq.m						
Name of the District : Kanchipuram			Name of the Taluk : Kanchipuram			Name of the Village: Nazarethpettai			(KM 62/102 to KM 63/100)		
Sl.No	Survey/ Sub-Division No.	Extent (In Ha) (0.00.00)	Classification	Acquisition extent out of Column (2) in Sq.mtr	Boundaries for acquisition extent shown in Column (5)				Immovable assets such as Structures, Wells, Trees, etc lying on the acquisition extent shown in Column (5)	Owner's / Interested persons for the acquisition extent shown in Column (5)	
	1	2	3	4	North	East	South	West	10	11	
1.	22/3B	0.14.00	Dry	45	22/3B Part	22/3AC Part	38	22/3B Part	Block stone Pillar-3	617. S. Suresh Sri T.	16
2.	22/3C	0.10.50	Dry	40	22/3AC Part	1	39	22/3B Part	Block stone Pillar-9	232. Vijaya (W/o Sankar) D/O Dhanamuthi Muthayyar	17
3.	35/3	0.02.00	Dry	48	38	38/4 Part	35/3 Part	35/3 Part	Compound wall (Part)	1. Anandiga Paravargi Annam Temple	19
4.	35/4	0.04.50	Dry	192	38	35/4 Part	35/4 Part	35/3 Part	1) Cement floor, AC sheet shop (Part)		19
Total				323	Sq.m						
Name of the District : Kanchipuram			Name of the Taluk : Watajjabad			Name of the Village: No.75 Thinnarajampettai			(KM 57/180 to KM 58/090)		
Sl.No	Survey/ Sub-Division No.	Extent (In Ha) (0.00.00)	Classification	Acquisition extent out of Column (2) in Sq.mtr	Boundaries for acquisition extent shown in Column (5)				Immovable assets such as Structures, Wells, Trees, etc lying on the acquisition extent shown in Column (5)	Owner's / Interested persons for the acquisition extent shown in Column (5)	
	1	2	3	4	North	East	South	West	10	11	
1.	15/2	0.05.00	Dry	5	15/2 (part)	7	8	9	Vacant (Road)	24 - Sivakumar Sri Thiruvalluvar Muthayyar/Block Development Officer, Watajjabad	23
2.	15/3A1A	0.14.25	Dry	338	15/3A1A (part)	13	18	15/2 (part)	AC sheet house-3, Trashed house-1, Septic tank-2, AC sheet toilet, Cement tank	24 - Sivakumar Sri Thiruvalluvar Muthayyar	24
Total				1099	Sq.m						

DMP/04/LAND/2020

Special District Revenue Officer (LA), Kanchipuram





**3** 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, 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 took ill, police said 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 Raut 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 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 his Defence Minister are "silent". Surjewala said also questioning media's silence on the issue. "Is the news of martyrdom from 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**

**SNEHARNA 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.



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

It also threw its weight behind the agitating students of various universities across the country even as interim President Sonia Gandhi criticised "police excesses" in many parts of Uttar Pradesh. In Rajasthan, 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.

At a special session of the Congress Working Committee — the party's highest decision making body — Mrs Gandhi said, "As the students protest gains momentum, it is clear that the government is digging in its heels. Not a day passes without the home minister, and on some days the Prime Minister himself, making provocative statements."

The CAA is a discriminatory and divisive law. 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 brute 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 alleged violation of constitutional safeguards to the indigenous people of Assam, will meet Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday. Sources said a four-member delegation of the committee, headed by Justice (Retd) Biplob Kumar Sharma, will meet the home minister and is expected to brief him about the progress of its work.



The meeting will take place three days after Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal met the home minister and discussed with him various aspects of the 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 those opposing the CAA. The committee has 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.

**CAA protest: Health survey workers abused**

**GURURAJ A. PANYADI MANGALURU, JAN. 11**

The ongoing protests against the National Rural Livelihood Mission on Tuesday a group of health care and other surveys conducted at the district level. When Machina Panchayat president Harshahala and three other women went to collect data for the National Rural Livelihood Mission on Tuesday a group of protesters, who were accused and abused them.

The group also destroyed the data collected till then. An FIR has been registered against nine people.

**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 central government awaited order by the Supreme Court on Citizenship Amendment Act before taking the decision to implement it in Madhya Pradesh. 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".

**'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", the minister for animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries said at a meeting to aware people about the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. "I would like to ask the Congress and the tukde tukde gang whether Rohingyas, Pakistani infiltrators should be given citizenship? And should Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan be denied citizenship? If they have courage, they should answer in yes or no," Mr Singh said.



Members of the minority community are being attacked in Pakistan and many temples there have been demolished, he said. Mr Singh said the 'tukde tukde gang' is active in the Jawaharlal Nehru University, which witnessed violence last week, and Congress leader



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 in Kochi on Saturday. Holy Faith H2O and Alfa Serene Twin towers came crashing within seconds after the controlled blasts were triggered off with precision. The demolitions were carried out following the Supreme Court directive in May 2019.

The two buildings were demolished within 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

ment complex which has 17 floors and 122 flats will be razed at 11 am on January 12 (Sunday) and it will be followed by the demolition of 17-floor Golden Keyaloram which has 40 flats, at 2 pm. Holy Faith H2O 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 metres. 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.

**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 is 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 design and fabrication techniques are simple," Prof Suman Chakraborty of IIT-Kharagpur's department of Mechanical Engineering said. Prof Chakraborty, who is leading the team of researchers, said, "The device can perform haematocrit (packed volume of red blood cells), haemoglobin, red blood cell, white blood cell and platelet count tests with



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

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 Plaintiff in the opening credits..." Justice Prathiba M. Singh

**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 was on Saturday coronated as the head of the royal family. With the coronation (Rajyabhishek) Kalyani has officially become the first woman Gajapati in the history of the dynasty. Head of the Parala-khemundi royal family is 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 was taken in a procession in Paralakhemundi and producer Fox Star Studio, before being consigned to flames. As per tradition Kalyani performed the last rites of her father after her formal ascension at the Darbar Hall of the palace with Vedic rituals.

**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. 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 whose 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 already 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 face failures in the IES main exam, but I did not deter me from pursuing the civil services." The IES main exam was held from June 28 to June 30, 2019.

**Credit Laxmi's lawyer in Chhapaak, says HC**

**Deepika Padukone**  
New Delhi, Jan. 11: The Delhi high court on Saturday restrained the makers of Deepika Padukone-starrer 'Chhapaak' from screening the film without giving credit to the lawyer, who represented acid attack survivor Laxmi Agarwal on whose life the movie is based, for inputs she shared 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 film. "Inputs by Ms. Aparna Bhat, the lawyer who represented Laxmi Agarwal, are acknowledged", the court said. "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 Plaintiff in the opening credits..." Justice Prathiba M. Singh

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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 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, the producer, the changes shall be carried out with effect from January 18, it said. —PTI

# DECCAN CHRONICLE

12 JANUARY 2020

Nilofar Suhrawardy  
Off the beaten track

## An Indo-Anglian's document dilemmas

Just as notion of recognising people by their dress has been propagated, it wouldn't be surprising if language is picked up next. Where would those in largely western attire and more comfortable with English than local languages be deported to? And what proof would be provided to other nations of these being their citizens?

Notwithstanding this limitation, as a part of the annual New Year resolutions exercise, I am deliberating on when to procure a birth certificate for officials when and if they do ever turn up demanding them. Parents are no longer around. All this scribe and her sibling are aware of is the hospital, where we began our life. Am 200 per cent certain that hospital's name bears little appeal for present party in power at the Centre and in the state where it is located. It is Kamala Nehru in Allahabad, the city now known as Prayagraj. And this spells another dilemma. Even if we had birth certificates, the officers are least likely to view them as genuine. The name of city, in present circumstances, may be different.

Ok, assuming they have no problems with city's name, how do we convince them about date and place of our birth? Which person can verify his/her own birth and also be sure that it is true? We don't have birth certificates. Whatever the date entered by parents at time of admission to school has to date been considered as proof of our date of birth. A possible option is for governments to ask hospitals across the country to provide them with a record of persons born before 1971. The credible point, perhaps hopefully, would be correct entry of parents' names. This scribe would not have too much problem with this formula for in all probability less than 10 babies born in Kamala Nehru Hospital and/or other hospitals in Prayagraj have this family name.

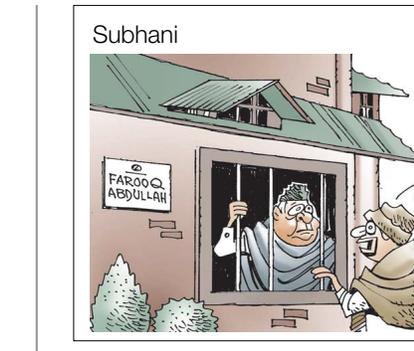
However, those with other surnames may not be so lucky. But let it be the government's headache to ensure whether persons born here before 1971 are Indian citizens or not. With respect to another key issue that of parents' place of birth, what do we do in case of their not being alive? Lively discussions with parents never ever focussed on their birth certificates. We have been aware is that of hailing from Uttar Pradesh. It would be all more troublesome for people of our parents' generation to produce proof of their parents' birth. The older a person is, more problematic would be the exercise of providing proof of his/her parents' birth certificates. Nobody would have been around if their parents weren't there. If only this simple explanation would suffice.

It wouldn't be a bad idea to try and confuse officials asking for parents' birth certificates by politely questioning on how we can provide the same, when we weren't around to get theirs made. Am not aware about how popular surrogacy, etc. was in earlier days. It may have been known by some other traditional term. To date, have not heard of DNA tests being earlier conducted, precisely prior to 1971, to verify parentage. This is just being mentioned lest some new law is introduced about DNA tests being made compulsory. Well, at present, digging out DNA test results certificates seems as impossible as conducting DNA tests of those who are not around.

It may not be a bad idea to suggest the United States' example regarding citizenship. Who knows, the American formula may have some appeal. The paternal grandparents of President Donald Trump were German immigrants. His mother was born in Scotland. Former President Barack Obama was born in Hawaii and his father was Kenyan. In fact, a significant number of Americans trace their origins to the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe. The recent decades have witnessed increase in Chinese and people from other Asian countries, including India and Pakistan seeking American citizenship. Just think, who would be left behind in the USA if birth certificates of parents and grandparents were given importance?

Yes, the question is not of others opting for Indian citizenship but of India granting citizenship to some minority citizens being oppressed in a few neighbouring countries. Perhaps, the government needs to be a little more specific. Through what process the question of which citizens belonging to certain minorities being oppressed in a few countries is going to be proved? If you assume the nature of a sensitive diplomatic issue. The preceding point draws attention to yet another aspect. If something is happening beyond Indian borders, in external territories, should it be considered as an internal issue? If not, should it be the defence ministry or the external affairs ministry? If it concerns illegal immigrants, the defence ministry remains answerable for security lapses allowing their entry. Maybe, the ministers and the officials of the three ministries should deliberate seriously on this. It may not be a bad idea to form another ministry, exclusively devoted to this issue, that of oppression of minorities in a few countries. The new ministry would need to draw lines regarding what is considered as oppression and what is not. Besides, the central government needs to be extremely cautious about the diplomatic missiles it may face regarding oppression of minorities within its own quarters. It may not be a bad idea for the government to ink its New Year resolutions in this direction, unless, of course, it is opposed to these as being non-Indian.

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



## The Manu in us: Kill him to exorcise caste

by caste Hindus. Yet, the ossification of brahminical patriarchy doesn't necessarily mean absence of dalit patriarchy which, in turn, is nothing but an extension of the brahminical patriarchy. The dalit movement's exhortations driven by a position that dalit women face violence from upper castes and not from family are not based on Ambedkar's theorisation of caste. Ambedkar never accepted that there has been a radical alternative thought within or among dalits in traditional society.

Ambedkar proposed inter-caste marriages and inter-caste dining as antidotes to caste. This particular aspect of his theorisation is the most misunderstood and the post-Ambedkarite dalit movement.

Annihilation of caste has not engaged with the question regarding the position of dalit women in inter-caste marriages. Instead, it has constructed dalit women and marry savarna men as betrayers of the dalit movement and engaged in character assassination. Setting the brahminical ideals of glorification of motherhood, brahminical femininity, dress code, moral code (sexual purity) and the norms for dalit women, the dalit movement has been upholding Manu unapologetically. Considering women as a category "internal" to a community is not based on Ambedkar's ideas but on the brahminical framework of Manu. In a brahminical patriarchal family, women are made to sacrifice their rights for the sake of husband and children. The dalit movement demands dalit women sacrifice their rights for the "larger" cause of fighting caste.

It is high time individuals and progressive movements reflect on the World Cup in Australia, then Samson is a man for Mission 2020.

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

## LETTERS CONGRESS VS BJP RULE

Congress had ruled the country for several years. Since it lost power at the Centre in 2014, it is now finding fault with BJP on demonetisation, GST and now CAA. For outsiders like me, I feel Congress failed miserably since anti-capitalist China allowed US companies to set up shops in its soil by which it was able to manufacture and supply A to Z items to the world whereas the Congress government woke up very late when everything was saturated. BJP government had boldly abrogated article 370 and 35A and put an end to J&K row. Instead of creating trouble, it would be better for the Congress to cooperate with the BJP in taking the country forward.

R. Ganesan  
Chennai

## BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

The order of the Supreme Court on curbs in Kashmir with a five-point agenda for immediate compliance implementation should have come as a great shock to the BJP government at the Centre. The unambiguous assertion of the apex court that access to the internet is a fundamental right and indefinite shutdown of the facility is abuse of power and unconstitutional and should be restored immediately for key services has come as a great relief not only to people in Kashmir but also to peace-loving people of the entire country. The top court's take on the repetitive imposition of Section 144 in a bid to curfews of power and its call that right to life should be secured in the best possible manner regarding the time when the entire nation is witnessing agitations by people of almost all walks of life over the unilateral imposition of CAA and the anticipated implementation of the draconian NRC pan India.

Tharcus S. Fernando  
Chennai

## MISSION 2020

Kudos to Kohli and his team for their clinical performances during the T20 series as well as the Test team and will the series 2/0. Of course, this Sri Lankan team is the weakest led by Lasith Malinga an on a transition period. But it will be a real acid test for Kohli and his team to conquer the Australian team, which is on a high after their Test series victories against Pakistan and New Zealand. Our MIB should be on their toes and ensure that no catch is missed. The captain finally gave chance to Sanju Samson and Manish Pandey. The dalit movement demands dalit women sacrifice their rights for the "larger" cause of fighting caste.

It is high time individuals and progressive movements reflect on the World Cup in Australia, then Samson is a man for Mission 2020.

N. Mahadevan  
Chennai

## FM Nirmala's swansong?

Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget speech on February 1 may well be her farewell speech as finance minister. She may have to take the fall for the economy's nosedive. The impression the economists, industrialists and policy planners got in their meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi was that he was now the man in charge. Budget 2020 will bear his touches and can be expected to be pathbreaking. Sources here it the PM is aware this is a make-or-break moment for the economy and can't be left to bureaucrats anymore. It is on the cards that Nirmala will be shunted out after she presents the Budget on February 1.

## Better than 'privacy'

It was most desired and the ultimate status symbol in Lutyn's Delhi — the private mobile number that hidden from all on it. It may no longer. More and more politicians (mostly non-NDA), media moguls, business tycoons and others are surrendering their private

## Brace for a 'pathbreaking' Budget

mobile number. The idea of privacy weighs several notches less than the fear of being snooped upon. While the PM is conducting ministry-wise appraisals of the work done by each ministry. There is near-panic and confusion among ministers who have reportedly been asked to make a brief presentation before the PM. Some senior ministers who are reasonably sure of retaining their portfolios are a task. They are expected to tell the PM how they intend to fulfill promises and generate new ideas.

## 'Undisciplined' Kanhaiya

The Communist Party of India leadership is reportedly disturbed with Kanhaiya Kumar's behaviour. Being a great orator he has infused the party with fresh energy, but at the same time his indiscipline and irreverence towards CPI bigwigs is irking the leadership. Recently, Kanhaiya was reportedly pulled up for not obeying party dikats. Apparently each time the party sends Kumar to a function, he excuses himself saying he has a prior speaking commitment. The



By WAQYANAWIS

party was aggrieved because Kumar did not, despite orders, visit Jharkhand during the recent Assembly poll. When he was pulled up, Kumar simply shrugged off and said, "I am young and still have to learn party discipline".

## Reshuffle time blues

PM Modi is set to reshuffle his cabinet before the Budget Session. The PM is conducting ministry-wise appraisals of the work done by each ministry. There is near-panic and confusion among ministers who have reportedly been asked to make a brief presentation before the PM. Some senior ministers who are reasonably sure of retaining their portfolios are a task. They are expected to tell the PM how they intend to fulfill promises and generate new ideas.

## The PM prefers books

The practice of offering bouquets to officials at meetings and courtship calls is showing no sign of decline even though PM Modi has been advising others to present bouquets instead of flowers. Senior bureaucrats say most ministers find bouquets appropriate in terms of protocol and class. The selection

of books, from language to genre to hardbound/paperback, poses a challenge. Often, a VIP and staff are on the same page a bouquet costing over ₹1,000 settles such dilemmas. Flowers, therefore, continue to soar over books.

## Needed, sarkari rappers

The BJP and the Sangh Parivar is said to be rattled by the anti-CAA-NRC stirs. Its internal feedback is that slogans like *azadi* dalit unemployment, hate and dictatorship are not being received negatively. The successful use of Fazl Ahmed Faiz's poetry and rapping need a counter-narrative. So a search is on for appropriate poetry and rappers to counter the pro-JNU and anti-CAA-NRC narrative. The idea is to use these rappers in metros, trains, university campus and shopping malls to whip up nationalist emotions.

## Start small in Feb

The Congress in Delhi plans to focus on a dozen odd seats to make the best use of its resources and talent. In the grand old party's scheme of things, it has a chance to repeat its 2013 Delhi state assembly performance where it won 11 seats and had joined with the AAP's 28 seats. The party hopes to position itself as a challenger to the BJP on grounds of its direct opposition to the CAA-NRC.

## Judging Padukone

Deepika Padukone's presence at the JNU stir enthused many. In Bollywood, some were not surprised by the actress' posturing and courage of conviction. However, some veterans were not so confident. They claim that there were similar expectations from Deepika when the #MeToo movement had gained momentum. Deepika chose to remain silent.

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



Pavan K. Varma  
Chanakya's View

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 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 Shankaracharya unanimously 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 bigoted religious theocracy, and would embrace all the religions which have over millennium found a home there. Moreover, the NRC will particularly work 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 the Mahatma, who fought for their rights tirelessly. Recently, violence was an article of faith for Gandhi. The abhorrent violence inherent in acts of lynching and that too in the name of protecting Hinduism — would have deeply pained him. Most people who are victims of such violence are appalled at the statement of UP CM Yogi Adityanath that he would like to *badia* or revenge against those protesting the CAA. Undoubtedly, violence by the protesters was wrong but to teach 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 some will 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 failure to act as an accessory to this crime, as did the JNU administration and the university's security apparatus.

Finally, Gandhi was the quintessential democrat. He believed that dissent is a vital part of a democracy, as is the right to protest. He was a firm believer in the efficacy of dialogue and of mere disagreement did not entitle you to hate or demean the other side. On the contrary, the BJP believes in



Dilip Cheria  
Dilli Ka Babu

## IPS WARS IN UP

rather ugly war has broken out in the higher echelons of the UP police. Senior IPS officer and Noida police chief Vashy 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. He also 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 understands this basic, unalterable, and non-negotiable aspect of Gandhi, his 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.*

# "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.

Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit

The demand of people like us opposing the current CAA 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 give him an idea of how the world community 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 that it is not 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 terrorist while more and more are giving a clean chit to the assailants. The police is theoretically independent of the administration, but this watching even the 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

persecuted in their nations" would get the benefit of eased norms of citizenship. This line 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 and the charges on 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 the police has been given an incident — they have been named as accused. What we have seen in the police report, what we have seen in the investigation; the police's investigation is clearly influenced by the ruling party, by the government, by the 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 in 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 the least to be 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. The internet in several cities as it was shut down by the government. Now the issue here is that several of the 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 conform 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 any 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 just inaugurated the projects that were started at the time of the previous government. Just show me one new road or flyover they have built in the last five years. They talk about Delhi government schools. Schools of the government are always been good — if you just look at the record of the government. The government of the state it will be clear to you. As far as the BJP is concerned, it has got nothing to offer. There is major infighting amongst the leaders of the Delhi BJP. The only thing that they are hoping for is polarisation so that they can go ahead with their divisive politics. So the Congress will win. It is a position to take 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 they 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 win. We as a party 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, avenues we built, fact outline 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 changes 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

## 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 raise the airline. Union minister for civil aviation Hardeep Puri remains optimistic over the similar efforts in 2018, when the government offered to sell a 76 per cent stake in the airline, met with similar failure.

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 and has been working on initiatives to narrow down the carrier's staggering debt. A former railway board chairman 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 in the carrier is 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. In the context of the current positions in London, Washington, Kathmandu, Colombo, Ankara and the permanent mission to the UK, Reyes-Chander (1988) will become vacant due to the respective envoys completing their tenures or retiring from service. In Pakistan and Canada are without envoys; Ajay Bisaria was sent back by Islamabad and Vikas Swarup is back in the MEA.

Interestingly, Mr Shringla caps a sterling career and will be superseding the former 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; and Vikas Swarup who is India's ambassador to Chile.

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

*Love them, hate them ignore them at national peril, it is the nation's fate and Dilip's belief. Share significant babu escapades dilipcherial@hotmail.com*



Aakar Patel

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

The Citizenship Amendment Act has been notified and has become effective. The dismembered and 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 give him an idea of how the world community 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 that it is not 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 terrorist while more and more are giving a clean chit to the assailants. The police is theoretically independent of the administration, but this watching even the 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 there remains) an even greater presence of India's security forces on the city streets, I had asked a local journalist what the government from New Delhi was. He said that there did not appear to be anything new, but the instruction for the government was to provide national security. The state's leadership is in jail without charge or without a crime, the citizens are pretty much in a state of emergency, no movement, no right to peaceful assembly, no access to communication, as has been the case for many decades. The government forces outside their door constantly. All this has not been accompanied by any words or actions that provide reassurance 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 government by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. And that pattern is that they will not back down from pushing ahead with their ideology. If we can see 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 put a 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 government come out of ideological belief and not any sense of political strategy or specific policy. It appears willing to absorb some damage in India's international reputation (I am quite sure that foreign minister Subramaniam 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 first step of the National Register of Citizens. When the threat of being robbed of their citizenship and freedom comes to the doors of millions already being managed by individuals, the reaction will be even stronger than the one we are currently seeing on the streets. And go hence it is becoming clear 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 for the presidency later this year. If you look at the list of their candidates, it is hard to find even one who will be friendly to Mr Modi or a candidate 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 his 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 absolutely no control inside his government to be concerned about. All 900-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 brutal 2020 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*



It is vital that all leaders now pursue a diplomatic way forward.

—Boris Johnson  
British Prime Minister on the  
Ukrainian jet crash

**BRIEF**  
**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 Yousof 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. 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.



**Ghosh: 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 without 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 compensating 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 the 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 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".

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



A woman lays flowers at a memorial of the flight crew members of the Ukrainian Boeing 737-800 plane that crashed on the outskirts of Tehran, at Borisip 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,"

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

■ **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.

French Defence Minister Florence Parly said it was "important to seize this moment to give space to discussions and negotiations" on the Iranian 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 Funke media.

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven said the "act 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."

**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 Shahlai, a high-ranking commander in Iran's Islamic Republican 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. Ghassem Soleimani and Shahlai were on approved military targeting lists, which indicates a deliberate effort by the US to cripple the leadership of Iran's Quds force.

**'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.



Nancy Pelosi

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, every Senator takes an oath to do 'impartial justice according to the Constitution and laws'."

Pelosi said the mounting pressure on

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 signed 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 BDFLKFDAJ**

**Washington, Jan. 11:** The White House is considering dramatically expanding its much-litigated travel ban to additional countries and 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 would be affected if it moves forward are blacked out, according to

**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 in 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 his coffin, 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 eulogies 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 regional player. Many experts had expected the throne to go to Asad bin Tariq, Qaboos' youngest 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. — AP

# TESTING TIMES AHEAD FOR INDIA, GOVT



**FACED WITH TWO CRUCIAL STATE ELECTIONS, THE MODI GOVERNMENT IS IN A DILEMMA ON WHETHER OR NOT TO STAND FIRM ON CAA AND NRC**

**SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY**

New Delhi, Jan 11: The political slught and social ramifications of the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Bill and the proposed National Register of Citizens has set the political agenda as far as 2020 is concerned. With the Opposition on a high following the losses suffered by the Modi-Shah juggernaut in Maharashtra and Jharkhand last year, it remains to be seen whether the BJP wants to milk the CAA/NRC issue by creating a polarised electorate or wants to stay clear of it. Faced with two crucial state elections — those of Delhi and Bihar — this year, the Modi government though for the first time seems to be in a dilemma on whether to stand firm on these two issues. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has in a rallying, ostensibly to kick off 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 J.P. Nadda — his acting party president — have

been maintaining that NRC would follow the CAA. The home minister's stand has though been subdued since the PM made his statement. Delhi would go to polls on Feb 8 and the results would be out on Feb 11.

The BJP has on its part decided to launch a country-wide outreach campaign on CAA to be spearheaded by none other than Mr. Shah. For a party known to play the Hindutva card to the hilt, this in itself is being seen to be a tact acceptance that it miscalculated the gambit of CAA/NRC after the success of implementing its other key agendas like abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir and the ban on Triple Talak. Though mass student mobilisation and large-scale protests by all sections in major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru seem to be in a dilemma on whether to stand firm on these two issues. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has in a rallying, ostensibly to kick off 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 J.P. Nadda — his acting party president — have



CAA/NRC debate to sway the electorate of Jharkhand where the BJP lost badly that has possibly led to a realisation of the need to slow down in the matter within the party. Unlike in the past, the Opposition has been quick to move in this time in both states. While chief political protagonists of Delhi and Bihar, namely chief ministers Arvind Kejriwal and Nitish Kumar have pertinently remained aloof 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 NRC in all

for all even going to the extent of giving TV interviews arguing against it. That he has a hold on the agenda to be set was clear when both Mr. Kumar and Mr. Kejriwal declared that there would be no NRC in their states, this after the Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) had supported the CAA in Parliament. Not only Bihar and Delhi, but state after state, specially in the South have opposed the NRC and said that they would not implement it in their states. Though Kerala Assembly has gone to the extent of passing a resolution against it, most other ruling parties like the DMK in Tamil Nadu and TRS in Telangana have also said they would not implement the NRC if it happens in their states. The coming together of the Opposition parties com-

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strategy in Bihar, the one thing which is clear is that CAA/NRC are going to be the main issue for both BJP and Trinamul Congress when West Bengal goes to polls in 2021, the political temperatures for which would start rising by the end of this year. The Bengal elections which many say Mr. Shah has turned into a personal battle will see a highly polarised atmosphere and it remains to be seen whether it will benefit the BJP or not. The other significant political development to watch out for would be the BJP's relationship with its NDA partners. The party has already lost crucial allies Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and ran into trouble with another one the ASJU in Jharkhand both of which cost it state governments in both states. The next flashpoint could be Bihar with JD(U) already flexing muscles and Prashant Kishor having gone to the extent of saying that the JD(U) should fight more seats than BJP. Not only allies, but friendly parties like BJD and the Y.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.

## Lofty promises, but economy in freefall

**MADHUSUDAN SAHOO**

New Delhi, Jan 11: Ahead of the Union Budget 2020 on February 1, wish lists are said to have poured into the North Block from all quarters. Though the Indian economy lost its sheen at 2019, the government is hopeful that there will be an overhaul. With the new geopolitical tensions sparked off by the conflict between Iran and the United States looking all set to impact us, the Narendra Modi government is still confident that India will meet its lofty financial goals and achieve a \$5 trillion economy by 2024. The big question is, will measures taken mid-to-late 2019 reverse the current downturn?

There is absolutely no doubt that the economy is going through a tough phase. The GDP growth rate for July-September quarter came down to 4.5 per cent — the lowest in six years. Growth during 2019-20 is pegged at only five per cent as compared to 6.8 per cent in the year-ago period. Sensing the slowdown last year, the government had taken several measures. They included a merger of major public-sector banks, an affordable housing scheme, an automated electronic refund system and annual mega-shopping festivals. These were expected to boost demand and consumption across sectors.

However, critics have questioned finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's ambitious infra agenda — projects worth ₹102 lakh crore of infra projects to be implemented by 2024-25. It puts central funding at ₹8 lakh crore a year which is a tall order. "The total budgeted capex of Centre in 2019-20 is ₹2.35 lakh crore. Close to a 300 per cent hike in capital expenditure is needed in 2020-21," an expert avers. On financial measures recently taken, former chief statistician and senior economist Pronab Sen said, "These are not addressing the issue directly. For instance, the corporate tax cut does not address demand and consumption at all. It may encourage age India Inc., but the focus should be on consumption, mostly in rural sectors. Economists believe that economy grows mostly on exports, FDI flows and taming the rupee. As far as exports are concerned, the roots of problem lie in the fact the rupee has been allowed to appreciate. It had appreciated strongly over last couple of years. It is time now to arrest the rupee movement," Sen said.

Asked about the government's confidence that the effects of its measures were set to get reflected by the second half of 2020 despite a global slowdown, he said, "This is the government's reading, and that is my worry. As far as recovery is concerned, it may or may not happen in the near future." In what can potentially hurt the math for the ongoing fiscal, strategic divestments of the government is likely to have faced a challenge. "Strategic divestments in Air India, IPCL and Container Corporation among which IPCL alone can fetch the government over ₹60,000 crore if it were to sell its entire 53 per cent stake — are unlikely to be completed in FY20. Similarly on Container Corporation and Air India as well," a senior government official says. The finance ministry has budgeted to garner ₹1.05 lakh crore from divestments this fiscal. It has already breached the budgeted fiscal deficit gap by the end of the gap stands at 115 per cent with four months to go.

"This is not the time to worry about the fiscal situation. There is no fiscal intervention unless the demands pick up. The economy may not show a satisfactory sign of recovery in 2020. At the moment, the sensible thing is to relax the fiscal deficit target, not worry so much about it and focus the demand on the lower end of the society," Sen said. The country's economy shrank in the second quarter. Banks struggled with a load of bad loans among the biggest in the world. Overextended traditional lenders gave way to shadow banks. One of the most prominent non-banking financial companies, IndusInd Finance Co. But Sen adds: "Farmers' distress is where I feel it all begins and it really starts from 2014. Then it gets worse after demonetisation."

Madan Sabhanvaris, chief economist, CARE Ratings, seems to have a solution. "The RBI can cut the repo rate 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."

# Great sporting moments in store this year

**R. MOHAN**

of his natural gifts as a golfer. If there was another suspenseful 2019 tale remotely approaching this, it came in the question-bag triumph of Team England in the final of the 2019 Cricket World Cup. The first came in Tiger Woods winning his fifth US Masters at Augusta, by a single stroke from three star golfers. More than a tale of a great sporting comeback, this was a human saga of redemption even if the champion cannot strictly be considered a better a human being for having won the title. Tiger Woods was no Muhammad Ali who stood up against racial inequality in the USA. He was simply the world's greatest golfer who had lost his moral compass. That he came back to win despite the fallout of his shenanigans and his back and knee surgeries made this a grand tribute to his perseverance as much as it was a proclamation



be in October-November, with the final again at one of world sport's great venues in the Melbourne Cricket Ground. There should be triumphs and heartbreak moments in a sport that prides itself on being a microcosm of life itself. Skipper Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma who had a fantastic 2019 — the former top scoring across three formats and the latter hitting a purple patch in the World Cup (50 overs) with five centuries before rebuilding a Test reputation — will bear the brunt of massive expectations of a billion Indian cricket followers in 2020. With seven years having passed since India won an ICC event, the pressures will be even

more, that too in the game's most unpredictable lottery of a format. The focus of the sporting world will indisputably be the Olympics in Tokyo where clock-like Japanese precision will be on display in the venues and conduct of the Games. The Tokyo challenge will be the toughest for India's singular achiever of 2019 — the lanky P.V. Sindhu whose graceful reach in getting to the shuttle was one of the standout sporting images. With Indian women athletes, right from PT Usha who was famous for having been there but not quite there enough to win a medal in the 1984 Olympics, it was always a case of building up great hope but failing to bring about the fulfilment of a medal. Sindhu broke the stereotype in her stellar demolition of an old nemesis in Nozomi Okuhara. The aggression in the Telangana 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 in the worlds much as her silver medal in the Olympics had galvanised a whole nation into following the Games. The Tokyo challenge will be the toughest for India's singular achiever of 2019 — the lanky P.V. Sindhu whose graceful reach in getting to the shuttle was one of the standout sporting images. With Indian women athletes, right from PT Usha who was famous for having been there but not quite there enough to win a medal in the 1984 Olympics, it was always a case of building up great hope but failing to bring about the fulfilment of a medal. Sindhu broke the stereotype in her stellar demolition of an old nemesis in Nozomi Okuhara. The aggression in the Telangana 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 in the worlds much as her silver medal in the Olympics had galvanised a whole nation into following the Games. 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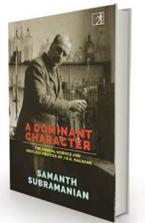
French poet Raymond Queneau was attracted to mathematics as a source of inspiration. Along with François Le Lionnais, a chemical engineer by profession, he founded Oulipo, experiments in constrained writing and a literary movement, in 1960, giving rise to important works.

# Fondly remembering the world's

# last brilliant mathematician



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 (1920-1950) 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 physicist C.P. 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...

**[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.**

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 a life of leisure, he was a committed Marxist and atheist who believed science could help fight capitalism. He was a man of the 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 Lyсенko. 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 376-page biography of the man. The book scores on three counts — intellectual, ideological 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 physicist 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 father, a geologist who did not hesitate to go down a mining shaft to record air quality or send his 13-year-old son to 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 a 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 assignment with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research fell through because he could not cope with bureaucratic wrangling. 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 unobtrusive. 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 Balchao*, 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. In Borges's fine and timely Bombay novel, thematically reminiscent of Rohinton Mistry's *Tales From Pérozesah Baag*, this quaint way of life unfortunately fades away, now that Gujarati and Marwari traders outnumber the Catholics in Cavel — as well as the history 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 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 died 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 woven historical 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 into is the maximum city extravaganza, of crime or politics or the grand drama of poetry and drugs, *Bombay Balchao* situates itself in the quietly resistant strain 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 balchao recipe out of it after all!

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

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



Neha Bhatt

**A**round 1989, when the Harry Potter fandom came to be unofficially labelled Pottermania and its 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 sly, 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 — Samant, Curtis, Rebecca, Malathi. Kanna, 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 watching the British government. As a weekly radio show and forums, dedicating his evenings to nights to reading fanfiction.

him to stay focused on achieving good grades and fruitful employment. Kanna 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 watching the British government. As a weekly radio show and forums, dedicating his evenings to nights to reading fanfiction.

and perceptive Harvard graduate in her early 20s looking to put a friendly face on the online Potter chatter, finding herself drawn to Curtis and Kanna. To this Boston-based trio, the arrival of Malathi, a voracious reader and a literature student back in India, shifts the equilibrium in a strange way, something inexplicable what. Arranged to be married to Kanna after a brief meeting in Bengaluru, the new strangers are comforted, to some degree, by their shared craze for Rowling's books. *Accidental Magic* quickly draws you into its very specific universe, spread over a couple of years. There is a little something for every Potterhead here: this is a novel where fans get to tag together and talk in deep detail about fanfiction and the "xmas controversies surrounding it and retrospect carefully on magical objects in the books, or what it means to be an authentic, Ron and Hermione or Hermione and



**ACCIDENTAL MAGIC**  
By Keshava Guha  
HarperCollins, ₹599

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

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



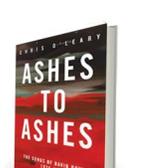
Christopher Bray  
review



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

**A** few years ago Will Brooker spent 12 months pretending to be David Bowie and he had. For several weeks he dressed up as Ziggy Stardust, a name-dropping 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 eye-socks — but not on his hair). And so on, right through every satin-and-gold-slicked-back 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 groves of academe. Did I mention that these wardrobe antics were part of a research project? They are. Brooker is professor of film and cultural studies at Kingston University. That he has 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 (gold name-dropping) Jameson, Deleuze, Guattari, the gang's all here; so too are Joyce, Yeats and even the Larkin (what would he have made of Blackstar's "cobra-coating capocapone" — but not on his hair). 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.



**ASHES TO ASHES: THE SONGS OF DAVID BOWIE**  
by Chris O'Leary  
Repeater, £20

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 "wanky grin and a neat haircut". Indeed, Brooker argues, there was nothing special about the lad. If he had ambition, so did many of the similarly (and fairly) added kids he hung around with. If he had a sense of humour, there were 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 the setbacks and failures he endured through the 1960s — Bowie's "prentice days 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 he has precision, and 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 one manager after another took him, 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 / Like to be in the death" — mass-friendly. As with words, so with music. You don't have five number ones and another 20 top ten hits without being able to craft tune. But what really counts about Bowie is his harmonies. His chord changes were as precise as his lyrics. Alas, Brooker is so hung up on facelift and glad rags he has precious little to say about the songs. But if an "appreciated diminished C9 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." 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 "Time takes a cigarette" — mass-friendly. As with words, so with music. You don't have five number ones and another 20 top ten hits without being able to craft tune. But what really counts about Bowie is his harmonies. His chord changes were as precise as his lyrics. Alas, Brooker is so hung up on facelift and glad rags he has precious little to say about the songs. But if an "appreciated diminished C9 passing chord" is your thing, do check out Chris O'Leary's *Ashes to Ashes*, the second and final volume in a daunt-

**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.

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 carefully walks a razor sharp line 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 list, women's sexual violation is a blot on the *khanda*, 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 filmmaker is complemented with Deepika Padukone's warm performance, and Clover Wootton's makeup have forever changed how acid attacks on victims can 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 Anshu Choksi). 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 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 fail-safe 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 Dwivedi (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) 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 everyone, 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 Bhatia (Madhurjeet Sarghi), who is not just fighting her criminal

case but has also been pursuing Malti's PIL in the Supreme Court to ban the use of acid. Shiraz aunty, 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 offered — court, not just to prove the accused — family friends Basbir Khan and Parveen Shobli — guilty, but also to fight against IPC's Section 328 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 poisonous 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 it.

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 not the presence of an acid attack.

*Chhapaak* in Hindi sometimes she sticks out her tongue at it.

The film's title seeks to convey how, just one splash of acid changes lives forever. But *Chhapaak*, the poet-

ic, onomatopoeic word, is also a euphemism for a brutal crime, and as the esse was casting Deepika, 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 "kyun?", the why, the peering inquiry into the girl's, the victim's life compellingly irrevocable.

*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 its lead star.

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, fall, who don't understand why this happened to them, who seek justice but also a sliver of normal life. And that's what sometimes comes with the reconstruction of a melted ear on which an earring can't dangle, its happy swing lighting up not just their face, but our



Deepika

# Thrilling action flick marred by twisted agenda

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

SUPARNA SHARMA

Spawned 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 *dhruv bhaktas* who fought the Mughals.

The express purpose is to toady to the guidelines wherein buses are created only when they fight for their Mother Land against a specific kind of enemy — meat-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 Shivaji 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 was a sweetly chirping *some ki chidivya*, 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 leading 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 Yashwanti, 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 Nargin, a deadly cannon, as a sort of nod towards the Guns of Navroze, perhaps, or Aurangzeb's favourite canons — *Fateh Khabber* (guide to victory) or *Azhdaha Paikar* (Python Body) — that were used in the Siege of Golconda in January 1658.

Along with Nargin the cannon, Udaybhan's entourage also has a special someone 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 non-Hindu by association. He is also ruthless and eats tandoori 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.

*Tanhaji: The Unsung*, whose plot is essentially a march towards the battle, is not a bad film. It is, in fact, quite entertaining when it is at war.

The film's action sequences, made with editing by Dharmendra Sharma, are lyrical and seductive, including the film's favourite scene, the film also puts 3D to very good use. An arrow and a spear grazes my ear, and several men somersaulted and died in the row in front of my seat.

Saif Ali Khan awakens a special zing and thrill to the lead up to the climatic battle with his dashing evil swag. He is in top form here, and embraces the stereotypical villain wholeheartedly. He is so good that I found myself rooting for him. It helped, of course, that Ajay Devgn was mostly dull and boring.

*Tanhaji: The Unsung* would have been a worthy film if it were not for its twisted agenda that is laid bare when, in a scene where he is goading a group of men to stop being Hindu, he says that under the Mughals "Brahmin puja nahin kar sake", Hindus can't chant *Om* and wear a *tilak* in the very next scene, in Udaybhan's durbar, he sings and dances to *Shankara Shankara*, wearing many shades of saffron.



ARNAB BANERJEE

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

In *Barbar*, the narrative is set in Mumbai, where his 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. He is 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 reports 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 Aditya 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 punishment 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 appealed to: to the young and the old alike. All the traits and attributes are almost brand and are incorporated and used smartly to cater to his fan base. In addition, his character being a tad psychologically 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!

**Barbar**  
(U/A) 159 min  
CAST: Rajinikanth, Suniel Shetty, Prateik Babbar, Nawabshah, Nivetha  
DIRECTOR: A.R. Murugadoss  
RATING: ★★

# 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 produc-

er named Katya Pospisil (Margot Robbie). This is the story behind the toppling of Roger Ailes (played by John Lithgow, in a fat suit, who after evening reverberated by Carlson's 2016 sexual harassment lawsuit against him, was eventually ousted from the network he had long ruled as a powerful media fiefdom and, as it turned out, a personal harem.

The fall of Fox News before Harvey Weinstein's downfall but 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 rearing reverberated within what many in Hollywood would consider the belly of the beast.

Roach's camera snakes 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 used 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 bear the burden of abuse in various 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

*Bombshell* is how it captures just how difficult it is for each to come forward. At a network like Fox News, it means a kind of rejection of its entire culture. It means damaging one's own career. It means going against what they themselves have often stood for. Some might quibble that Carlson, who acted first, deserved centrestage. But this is Kelly's movie and the drama for her has greater meaning. She's drawn into a fight she didn't ask for when Donald Trump, then a presidential candidate, attacked her in a moderate saying "there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever".

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



Bombshell

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



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 season 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 skipper 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 were able to grant me that break to get myself right, because I think I've been able 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 series, 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. Rohit Sharma will be back from his break. "All three openers are pretty strong players, and it's great to have players who play well in the team. It gives you options. But I think people need to stop pitting players against each other and put 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 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 consider an orphan and keep himself away from playing for India for the rest of his life?" 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 an important mode 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 22.5 lakh per match in the Ranji Trophy, a far cry from the meagre salary the 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 keep himself away from playing for India for the rest of his life," Gavaskar said. "I think 26 percent of the BCCI revenue goes to the BCCI 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 into the disparity. The disparity that you see between

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 theCAA and then due to violence by a masked attacker in the Jawaharlal 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 career and to build and take India forward. We as a nation can go higher only when we are all together," he said. — PTI

I'm back in picture: Dhawan

Pune, Jan. 11: "I am also back in the picture," India opener Shikhar Dhawan said after fluent fifty in the third T20 international against Sri Lanka and 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



Shikhar Dhawan and KL Rahul.



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 all-rounder could not clear 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 an ODS 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 series all but picked itself, Pandya was expected to be included once he proved his fitness in the warm-up matches. 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 slot amid 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 social media 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 attempt 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 'A' match against Karnataka, where Pujara warmed up nicely for the upcoming Test series in New Zealand with stylish 162 off 238 balls that had 17 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 cricketers with most first-class centuries behind former Saurashtra skipper Alastair Cook (65), former South Africa captain Hashim Amla (62) and India's domestic cricketer giant Wasim Jaffer (57). Among current active Test players, the nearest contender to Pujara is Australia's Steve Smith, who has 42 first-class centuries while Virat Kohli (34) is far behind. — PTI

Aussies will pose tougher challenge to India



Ayaz Memon Over The Top

How 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 quagmire, he looked destined to be on the reserves bench for a long while when he started an unexpected lifeline thanks to the newly adopted rule on substitution in Test cricket for six months or so. 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 even upstaged both Smith and Warner in this period.



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

But while he's been brilliant in Tests, will Labuschagne be as prolific in ODIs? Particularly on Indian pitches, and more particularly against Jasprit Bumrah who retains his no.1 spot in the ICC rankings in this format despite not having played a single 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 worse for the injury that kept him out of cricket for six months or so. Hot pace, daunting line and length, steep bounce and clever variations, which saw Bumrah become the world's leading fast bowler, made him a must-play, much to the relief of not just fans but also the selectors and team management. However, the stiffer test for Bumrah will come against Australia in Sri Lanka, by body language and performance, were stragglers, almost doomed to defeat. Frankly, without taking away anything from the emphatic victories at 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 would be a significant support) 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 that the ICC's Technical Committee can pick on when it meets to address the issue. The 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 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, Kuldip/Chahal pitched against Finch, Warner, Smith, Starc, Cummins. No, I haven't overlooked Bumrah versus Labuschagne, 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

Mulani, Tare help Mumbai recover from shaky start



Neha Surana CHENNAI, JAN. 11

Mumbai recovered from an early wobble to make 294 for six on day one of their Group B Ranji match against Tamil Nadu here at the Chidambaram 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 50 balls. R. Ashwin, Baba Indrajith pounced a neat



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

— E.K. Sanjay bagged three wickets — all before lunch — which could have bowled a lot tighter in the second and third sessions. "I am not judging my bowling by the way I took three wickets or in the second session they were 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 Kishore. 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 294 for 6 in 89.4 overs (Shams Mulani 87, Aditya Tare 69 not out, Jay Bista 41, R. Ashwin 3/58, R Sai Kishore 3/77) vs Tamil Nadu.

RANJI | TROPHY



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 would have fancied his chances of gaining three points against the youngest manager in the league and but had to settle for a share of the spoils. 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 former corner for his 16th 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.

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, 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 Lopez Mendez Alcantara (Peru), Aleksey Aleksandrov (Belarus) and Bangladesh GM Ziaur Rahman at the top. They were joined by six players, who are joint second. Karthik posted a win over Gurpa's Iqbal Aggarwal. On the top board, 16-year-old Peruvian GM Alcantara, seeded fourth, pushed a 47-move win over international Master Krishna. Gusedin GM Aleksey Aleksandrov, the eighth-seed, had to bring out his best to 'save' India's Grandmaster Navalgund in 70 moves. GM Karthikayen 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 Theodorin Joseph held his own in a long-drawn game. — 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, Rice's men thought they had snatched an equaliser in stoppage-time when Robert Snodgrass fired home from the edge.

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 (Ayew 54)	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 this weekend, as Atletico Madrid's defeat of Barcelona set up a clash with rivals Real Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup final on Sunday.

Messi was cheered by fans at the King Abdullah Sport City Stadium from the moment he jogged out to warm up, yet Atletico were the ones celebrating at the end of Thursday's semi-final in the competition that has been expanded and controversially shipped to a different continent, a country with a long-condemned record on human rights.

Atletico scored two late goals to beat Barca 2-1 with a derby final now to come against Real Madrid.

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.

#### 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 Barcelona and Real Madrid every year but, 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 around the team's form. Ernesto Valverde rushing back to the surface. — AFP

## 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, Shanmugam 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 Sunday's 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 Tididim 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

## 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 (49') and Xisco Hernandez (74') were enough for Josep Comba'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 sets the Odisha side into the top-four at the expense of Mumbai who are two points behind.

The game got off to a slow and cautious start with both teams gauging each other. The first chance of the match fell for the visitors in the 14th minute when Amine Elmritni fed Sougo down the right side of the box. But no sign of danger as Xisco Hernandez's header turned his dangerous ball across the box.

Odisha continued to enjoy possession and threatened from wide areas. A corner in the 19th minute from Xisco sparked pandemonium in the Mumbai box, with Pratik Chaudhuri clearing the danger with a bit of pinball in the box.

Odisha kept peppering the Mumbai box with crosses and cut backs, but apart from several half-chances, they could not force an opening.



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

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 Saturday.

"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 Debashish Dutta said.

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

"Last we heard East Bengal will be joining ATK and now it's Mohun Bagan. Let's wait and watch. FSDI are looking into the matter," he said.

There was no comments from ISL promoters FSDI. 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 Kanojia 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 meet records 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 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.

Kanojia 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 team-mate Shreya Pravin Bhargale meant that she was denied a sweep of the

five gold medals in the under-17 rhythmic gymnastics competition. Athletics action got underway way 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 Shiv 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 the boys' Under-17 5000m witnessed a close contest with defending champion Ajeet Kumar winning by second place while Delhi margin against a determined Sunil Dawar. The photo finish camera was consulted before Ajeet Yadav was declared winner by a 100 of a second with a time of 39:39.95, a new meet record. Uttarakhnad broke into the medals chart with Anshu Kumar leading the girls' 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 midfielders 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 on the eve of his visit to Old Trafford on Saturday. "I am here to do what 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 Qatar side Al Sadd about arriving on a two-year deal, with radio station Cadena Ser claiming that the former midfielder could return this season if Valverde is sacked.

Sadd's general manager Fadi Alserhan 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 home. He will most return there in the future, but as of today, Xavi is the coach of Al Sadd," Al-Ah said.

"Xavi and his team are focusing on tomorrow's match against Al-Raysan, and we know that a club with the size and professionalism of Barcelona will find an official channel to speak of such matters," he added. He joined Al Sadd in 2015 before being appointed coach last July. — AFP