

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 12 JANUARY 2020



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‘Take a peg, sleep well,’ MP minister Govind Singh tells prohibitioners

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Indian companies are making their workplaces friendly to LGBTQ employees

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Kareena Kapoor Khan weds again?



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WINDOWS



Dogs sit near a bonfire on a cold winter morning in Surat, Gujarat, on Saturday. — PTI

Chemical factory blast near Mumbai leaves 8 dead

Mumbai: Eight people have been killed in an explosion at a chemical factory in Maharashtra's Palghar, around 100 kilometres from Mumbai. The police and the fire service officials have reached the spot and have launched a search and rescue operation. "Eight people have died. The fire has been brought under control," a senior police officer said. The under-construction plant that belongs to a company called Ank Pharma is located at Kolwade village of Boisar. — Agencies

8 killed in blast at Guj industrial unit

Vadodara: Eight people were killed and several others injured after an explosion at AIMS Industrial Private Limited, an industrial and medical gas manufacturing company in Gujarat's Vadodara on Saturday. The incident happened in Padra taluka at around 11 am, a police official from Vadu station said. — PTI

SC to hear Nirbhaya rapists' plea Jan. 14

New Delhi: A five judge bench will consider on January 14 curative petition by Delhi gang-rape death row convicts — Vinay Sharma and Mukesh — seeking a re-look at the top court judgment upholding their death sentence along with two other convicts. **Full report on Page 13**

COUNTERPOINT



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

WEATHER

Max: 18°C
Min: 9°C
RH: 64%
Rainfall: 0%
Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Hemalaba: Dakshinayana
Tithi: VPushya Bahula Vidiya till 8.10 pm
Star: Pushyami till 11.47 am
Variyam: 11.35 pm to 1.03 am (Monday)
Durmuhurtam: 4.27 pm to 5.11 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.43 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 7.15 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 8.34 AM
MOONSET TODAY 8.31 PM

Cong, Left supporters stage massive protests

Mamata urges PM Modi to rethink CAA and NRC

RAJIB CHOWDHURI

KOLKATA, JAN. 11

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

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

Mr Modi, who is on a two-day official visit to the state, had to fly in an IAF chopper from the Kolkata airport to the Royal Calcutta Turf Club from where he entered the Raj Bhavan in his convoy.

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

While several protests were organised by Left and Congress supporters, students, youth and various apolitical outfits were also out on the streets venting their anger against CAA and NRC.

After her meeting, Ms Banerjee said that she told the PM that Bengal is against citizenship law, NRC, NPR and that she had asked the PM to withdraw CAA and NRC as no per-



Activists shout slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. (Right) PM Modi and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee meet in Kolkata. — AFP/PTI

I have requested the PM to look into it. I also urged him to reconsider the CAA and NRC. — Mamata Banerjee



son should be thrown out of the country or face any discrimination and torture.

Soon after her meeting she rushed to her party's dharna at Esplanade where she vowed to continue her movement to counter the allegation of the Left and Congress of her support to Mr Modi.

The state Congress has accused Ms Banerjee of having a tacit understanding with Mr Modi. "She boy-

cotted the all-party meeting against citizenship law that Sonia Gandhi convened in Delhi on January 13 but fixed an appointment with Modi on January 11. Her real intentions are out in the open," said Bengal Congress president Somen Mitra.

Mr Modi and Ms Banerjee's one-to-one meeting was earlier likely to be held at 9 pm at Raj Bhavan. But it was brought forward due to a change

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Opp. lies on CAA created anarchy: Shah

Gandhinagar, Jan. 11: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday reiterated that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act was enacted to give citizenship and not take it away, while also urging people to steer clear of Opposition parties who are "spreading lies".

"No citizenship can be taken away by the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. It was only enacted to grant citizenship. The Opposition parties are spreading lies. I only want people of Gujarat to stay away from such people," Mr Shah said, pursuant to inaugurating VISWAS and Cyber Aashvast Project in Gujarat's Gandhinagar.

The newly-enacted law grants citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Buddhists and Christians fleeing religious persecution from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh and who came to India on or before December 31, 2014.

Protests have been happening across the country ever since the law received the presidential assent last month. — ANI



Amit Shah

CWC: CAA is divisive, must be withdrawn

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY

NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

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

The Opposition party also threw its weight behind the agitating students of various universities across the country even as its interim president Sonia Gandhi decried "police excesses" in many parts of UP and varsities like JNU, Jamia Millia Islamia and AMU. At a special session of the Congress Working Committee — the party's highest decision making body — she 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 PM himself, making provocative statements".

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Sonia Gandhi

Forces owe allegiance to Constitution: Army Chief

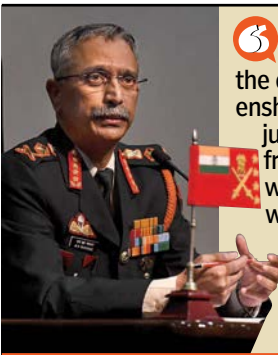
We are an Army of the people, for the people: Gen. Naravane

PAWAN BALI

NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

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

"As the Army, we swear allegiance to the Constitution of India... Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity enshrined in the Constitution should guide us," he said in his opening remarks at his first press conference as Army Chief. Gen. Naravane's



We swear allegiance to the Constitution of India... the core values which are enshrined in the Preamble... justice, liberty, equality and fraternity and that is what we are fighting for (when) we are deployed on the border to safeguard the nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity. — Army Chief

unequivocal message on the Army being apolitical follows his predecessor General Bipin Rawat's criticism of those leading the protests against the citizenship law some weeks ago.

Gen. Naravane said that the "ABC" of the Indian Army was "allegiance, belief and consolidation," adding, "We swear allegiance to the Constitution

of India. Be it officers or jawans, we have taken oath to protect the Constitution and that is what should guide us in all time and all our actions".

"What it translates into is also the core values which are enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution — that is, justice, liberty, equality

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JNU: Police identifies 37 Whatsapp group suspects

AGE CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

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

Meanwhile, on Saturday, the JNU administration has undertaken a security audit of hostels to check stay of outsiders and unauthorised students, following the January 5 violence on the campus, the JNU administration said. The police on January 7 had requested the administration to do

an audit of hostels for outsiders or unauthorised students.

According to a police source, the 37 suspects identified do not belong to any students' party active in JNU. "Those identified are students of JNU who were in favour of the semester registration process and wanted to enroll themselves. The group had 60 members and 37 of them are identified," said a source.

"These identified persons will be called for questioning," said the source.

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► Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan meets JNU leader Aishe Ghosh

Blow to China as Taiwan re-elects Tsai

Taipei, Jan. 11: Tsai Ing-wen was reelected as Taiwan's president by a landslide Saturday in a victory that signaled strong support for her tough stance against China among voters determined to defend their democratic way of life.

Tsai, from the Democratic Progressive Party, soundly defeated Nationalist Party candidate Han Kuo-yu, receiving 57.2% of the vote to Han's 38.6%, with virtually all of the votes counted. She wasted no time in warning communist-ruled China, which views Taiwan as a renegade province, not to try to use threats of force against the self-governed island.

"Today I want to once again remind the Beijing authorities that peace, parity, democracy and dialogue are the keys to stability," Tsai said in her victory



Taiwan's 2020 presidential election candidate, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen celebrates her victory with supporters in Taipei, Taiwan, on Saturday. — AP

speech. "I want the Beijing authorities to know that democratic Taiwan and our democratically elected government

will never concede to threats." "I hope that Beijing will show its goodwill," she said. Taiwan's voters have "shown that

when our sovereignty and democracy are threatened, the Taiwan people will shout our determination even more loudly." — AP

Investment in Assam takes a beating due to anti-CAA stir

New land policy also stifling development

MANOJ ANAND

GUWAHATI, JAN. 11

The ongoing agitation against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) and the state government's announcement to introduce new land policy putting restriction on sale of land to the non-indigenous people have impacted the investment scenario in Assam. The prevailing situation in the state is driving away the prospective investors.

Informing that many companies, who were in process of procuring land to start new ventures in Assam, have put their projects on hold, sources in the industry told this newspaper. They said that the state government's decision to introduce "new land policy" in which the government is contemplating to ban sale of land to non-indigenous people, has created fear among industrialists who had invested huge amount of money in land. Pointing out that dozens of sale and purchase agreements have already been cancelled or put on hold, sources said that fear of crash in land price is also looming large.

Talking about the impact of the anti-CAA protests recently, Assam minister for commerce and industry, transport and parliamentary affairs Chandra Mohan Patowary told reporters, "Many companies are now refusing to come here. Being the industry minister, I am today the most despondent person in Assam. There are companies from countries like Hungary and Norway which were keen to invest in the state. Now, they are calling us

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Digital resolutions time of the New Year kind

R. Mohan

We are into a new decade - the Twenty20s or, perhaps even more appropriately the decade of 'T20s after cricket's popular format that might get even more popular in the years to come. While some including the US Astronomical society have argued that the new decade will begin only in 2021, the fact remains that we have already made some resolutions for the New Year, regardless of whether we intend to keep them in 2020 or not.

The march of technology towards 2020 had already made us addicts of devices, most of all the smartphone. The ubiquitous mobile or hand phone is the first companion everyone seeks when he or she has so much as a minute to spare. It is the first sign a person has nothing to do when he/she opens the smartphone and takes a peep to see if any notifications have arrived in the two minutes since having last opened the instrument.

There is no denying, however, that technology has converted the mobile into a smart controller of cars, homes and even lives. And more is to come in the new decade as 5G networks facilitate newer ways of making lives more comfortable. And where better to put the controls than on apps that come into devices and the smartphone is about the most convenient of them?

While it's easy enough to resolve not to pick up the phone as a reflex action to check for messages at too frequent intervals, the fact remains that smartphones will get only more useful as a means of control. It has been empowered to the extent it is inseparable from the person owning it. In the post-modern age,



to blame the device is a bit like blaming the messenger. We have to accept that we are not capable of reigning in the excesses of addictive technology.

The world wide web (WWW) is one of three major inventions of the last few decades of the 20th century which enabled the digital society. The Internet Protocol (IP) and Google's search algorithms were the others.

It has been just a bit over 30 years since the web was invented and the uses we have designed for it have risen exponentially. Access to the web on the phone is what has led to the smartphone becoming the pre-

mier device. One of the promised troika of deliverance along with globalisation and liberalisation, the smartphone has not lived up to that exalted status, but it is more our fault.

What can make the difference in the new decade is in our smarter use of the smartphone. While resolving not to glance at it every couple of minutes in the mundane task of checking for new messages, what can lead us forward is to any device's multiple options in a constructive way, like reading that long article on a subject that interests us.

It is the knowledge the devices give us access to that make them an overwhelming choice of the go-to instrument that is beginning to define life's first choice of an aid for humans. For instance, don't hesitate to look up the movie you are watching to help recall the names of the stars. Science has established that momentary lapses of memory recall are not signs of any decay in the grey matter. If you wish to know who that so-familiar star is, do Google the movie's name. There's no shame in that.

Some communication apps are more addictive - the Zuckerberg duo of WhatsApp and Facebook and then Instagram. And this is where discretion the part of the user comes in for there is simply no need to glance at WhatsApp every other minute. Nothing in a day is so compulsively attention grabbing. A resolve to pick up the smartphone only twice an hour, just as we have conditioned ourselves to watch only the news on the half hour or hour rather than dwell on television news all the time to cope with the so-called "Breaking news."

There is, however, no contesting the fact that the modern social media has levelled the playing field so much as to allow everyone and

his aunt to express an opinion on all things under the sun. Previously, one could rage in drawing rooms and the club bar on what all has gone wrong with the world, but now you can actually put that opinion up on FB or WA and the like and dangle it in front of groups to respond.

Considering we derived only vicarious pleasure from cursing the TV debates for excessively opinionated people spreading the venom of their thoughts upon an unsuspecting lay public, we now have platforms to do our own shouting from rooftops. Forget for a moment that the good intentions of connecting society were to promote understanding.

While it is true that the social media has been the single biggest disseminator of hate, what we as individuals do not seem to have is the power to let opinion be that of the one who expresses it publicly. Social media divides people only if you allow it to. Should it really matter if divergent opinions from all sides of the political and social spectrum are put in public spaces where everyone can access them?

It is said that an evolved human being alone can process two conflicting streams of thought at the same time. But then the great apes (hominidae) also showed considerable cognitive and empathic abilities. So we homo sapiens are not all that much different.

A good New Year resolution might be to try and put understanding different opinions above hate. An even better one might be to accept that the web is a "completely out-of-control monster" as its creator himself puts it, but only if we seek to see the bad part of a Jekyll & Hyde proposition.

— R. Mohan is the Resident Editor of the Chennai and Tamil Nadu editions of this newspaper

Plans to develop Tamil chair studies in Houston varsity

A ARUL PALANI
CHENNAI

Sam Kannappan, chairman of Houston Tamil Studies Chair, Inc. has ambitious plans to develop the Tamil Chair in the University of Houston, Texas, USA. He proposes to conduct research on 20 important subjects in the Tamil language initially and expand it to more subjects later.

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami had handed over a cheque for ₹1 crore towards Tamil Nadu government's contribution for setting up of the Chair to Sam Kannappan in Chennai recently. Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam also presented a cheque for ₹7 lakh as his personal contribution towards establishing the Chair.

Kannappan, is one among six persons to receive 'Metropolitan Asian Family Services - Gandhi 150 Medallion of Excellence Award' in New Delhi on Monday for rendering meritorious service.

The passionate social worker Kannappan, speaking to Deccan Chronicle, said, "As Tamil-American families assimilate into the fabric of the multi-cultural society, and as our children get educated in American Universities, Houston Tamil Studies Chair, Inc has plans to take this initiative to expand awareness of the rich Tamil culture, language and literature to maximum number of people in US and other countries."

Kannappan, who played an important role when former CM MG Ramachandran had undergone treatment in Brooklyn in US in 1984, said, "Texas is fourth most populous state in US



Sam Kannappan

Sam Kannappan, originally from Natarasankottai in Sivagangai district, completed his BE in Annamalai University and migrated to Texas in 1968 and completed Masters in Systems design there. He constructed Lord Ganesa and Sri Meenakshi Temple in Houston. He raised funds in Houston to construct 250 houses for persons lost their dwellings in the Kutch earthquake in Gujarat in 2001.

and Houston is most populous City in Texas. There is not much awareness about Tamil language in the State, which is located in Southern US".

"A few years ago we decided to popularise the language in the City. And, people especially children were curious to learn the language and initially, we taught Thirukural to the children. There has been good response among the children and parents encourage their kids to learn the language. And the number was increasing every day. Knowing this, several volunteered themselves to teach the language", he said.

Following this, we decided to establish the Tamil chair at the University of Houston to provide a forum for the growing population Tamil-Americans in the United States - approximately 2,50,000 people. Tamil diaspora live in dif-

ferent parts of the world and language has been recognised in many countries. Today, Tamils live in more than 100 countries.

Kannappan, a close friend of several leaders of national and US, had approached the University of Houston for launching the Chair. The University readily agreed to their proposal and commenced work, but seeking a fund of ₹5 crore. Houston Tamil Studies Chair, Inc has raised ₹6 crore so far.

The Tamil seat in Harvard University has been set up to do research on various topics. Initially, 20 subjects have been short-listed. He said research has to be done in several subjects including Tamil culture, history, language, literature, sea trade, music, dance, folk art, martial arts, painting, sculpture, architecture, inscriptions etc.

Last week, Houston Tamil Studies Chair, Inc signed a MoU with Madurai Kamaraj University to assist the Chair and invited suggestions for research proposal from experts across the world. On completing the research the Chair will take steps to popularise them.

Former Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa had introduced a scheme to establish Tamil Chairs in leading universities in the country. As a continuation of this, the current CM had announced that Tamil Chairs would continue to be set up in educational institutions in India and in foreign countries where Tamils live in large numbers. The Houston Tamil Studies Chair, Inc has proposed to raise ₹7 crore in the next few months and commence the research work shortly.



Ahead of Pongal, a woman painting pots near Valluvar Kottam in Chennai. — ASIAN AGE

‘Nava Tirupati’ on the banks of Tamraparni

Rekha Suresh
Kumar

The lush, pristine, tranquil area on the banks of the Tamraparni River, in southern Tamil Nadu is where are located nine historic temples which are collectively known as the 'Nava Tirupati' of the Pandya Nadu. The Nava Tirupati temples, though historically of the Pandian era, seem to have been extensively restored during the Nayak period.

In modern times, these temples are all the more revered as each of them is the sanctified abode or 'Sthalam' of each of the Nava Grahas of Hindu Astrology as per the Sri Vaishnava tradition. The nine temples are all spread around on either bank of the Tamraparni, and the river itself is sacred and finds mention in the Puranas.

Sri Nammalwar, foremost among the 12 Vaishnavite Saints or Alwars, is particularly associated with the Nava Tirupati temples and the 'Garuda Seva' at these temples is performed by dedicating

the Seva to this great Alwar. The festival of Vaikunta Ekadashi is another significant celebration in the entire area, and along with the customary playing of the beloved traditional game known as 'Paramapadam', (which is actually a philosophical and somewhat spiritual variation of 'Snakes and Ladders', good deeds getting to ladders and evil deeds leading to snakes!), another popular practice in the district, and quite common among the local people, is a tradition to visit all of the Nava Tirupati temples during the Vaikunta Ekadashi festival; and this practice, we are told is followed to this day.

It was early morning when we set off to visit the first of these, the Vaikuntanatha Swamy Temple in Sri Vaikuntam, which is the Surya Bhagavan Sthalam and the deity here is Vaikuntanatha Perumal, in a majestic standing posture. Also Adishesha, on whom Perumal usually reposes, can be seen here standing with his hood spread above and over Perumal. The Lord is also known as Kallapiran, and this temple is one of the 108 'Divyadesam' revered in Vaishnava tradition. There are elaborate, exquisite sculptures of the Nayak period on the columns and the Mantapams are extensively

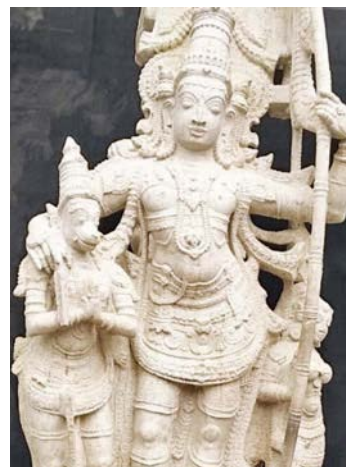


View of gopuram

carved. Art and Iconography aficionados can certainly spend a few enraptured hours in this temple!

Our next stop was the Vijayasana Perumal Temple in Natham, also known as Thiru Varagunamangal Perumal Temple, which is the Chandra Sthalam. The Lord here as the name suggests, can be seen seated in a victorious manner. The annual Garuda Seva at the Vijayasana Perumal Temple is a most awaited event, as is Vaikunta Ekadashi.

We proceed further to Tirupuliangudi, the Budha Sthalam, which is the temple of Sri Kaichinivenda Perumal. The Lord Bhoomipalaka Perumal is imposing and splendid in the 'Shayanam' posture here, with

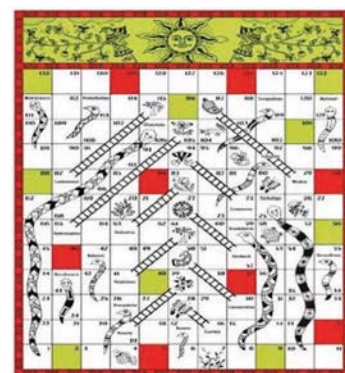


Exquisitely carved column at Sri Vaikuntam Temple

his consorts, Sridevi Thayar and Bhoomidevi Thayar seated at his feet. A spectacular sight, indeed. The Lord's feet can only be seen from a window in the outer passageway. Garuda Seva is a special celebration at this temple.

Just a few kilometres away is Rettai Tirupati, in Tholaivilimangalam, two temples nestled close to each other, which are Rahu and Kethu Sthalam. In the Ketu Sthalam, the deity is Sri Srinivasa Perumal, also known as Devapiran Perumal in a standing posture. Right next door, is the Rahu Sthalam, where the Lord is known as Sri Aravindalochana Perumal and is seen in a seated posture.

The Nava Tirupati Temples close for the afternoon by 12.00



Parama padha sopanam

noon or earlier, and are open for the evening only from 5.00 pm till about 8.00 pm or earlier. It would thus be better to schedule visits from quite early in the morning, say from 7.00 am, so as to complete one's Seva in at least five of the temples before the afternoon break.

Our next stop was at the Srinivasa Perumal Temple in Perangulam, which is Shani Bhagavan Sthalam. Here the Lord, known as Sri Mayakoothan, is in a standing posture, with 'Prayoga Chakra' and 'Shanku' in the upper hands. One unique feature of this temple is that Garuda occupies space on the same pedestal alongside the 'Utsava Moorthy' of the Lord and his Consorts.

Thentirupera, a short drive away, is Sukran Sthalam, which is next on our list. The Lord is Makarakundalathar Perumal, on account of the shape of his ear ornament, said to have been

offered to him by Bhoomidevi Mata. He is in a sitting posture, with folded left leg. There are separate sanctums for the two Consorts.

The Thirukolur temple is the Chevrai Sthalam, and is about a half hour drive away. The Lord is known as Vaithamanidhi Perumal, he is in a 'Shayana' or reclining posture and has a 'Marakkal' or a Measure for a pillow. Vaithamanidhi Perumal is so called as he is said to have recovered Kubera's lost 'Nava Nidhi' for him. Thirukolur is also famous as the birthplace of Madhura Kavi Alwar, another one of the 12 Alwars, who was also a devotee of Sri Nammalwar.

About 4 kms away is Alwar Thirunagari, the temple of Sri Aadhinatha Perumal, which is the Guru Sthalam and the site of the sacred, unique tamarind tree, which housed the great Alwar Saint Nammalwar for the first 16 years of his life. The idol of the Lord Sri Aadhinatha Perumal here, is 'Swayamvyakta', which is how self-manifested Vishnu idols are described. Sri Aadhinatha Perumal temple at Alwar Thirunagari is considered all the more sanctified and significant, it being a 'Swayamvyakta Kshetram'. The fascinating Ariyar Seva and Garuda Seva are important functions at this temple.

Completing a circuit of the Nava Tirupati during Vaikunta Ekadashi, is considered highly auspicious.

— The author is a travel writer



Politics

A new political party has become a necessity in Assam, says senior Congress leader Tarun Gogoi

Nation

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THE ASIAN AGE

SUNDAY | 12 JANUARY 2020 | NEW DELHI



Citizenship on religious basis is antithetical to our Constitution

— Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM president

IN BRIEF

Kota tragedy: Maya criticises Priyanka

Lucknow: A day after Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra visited Jaipur, BSP chief 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 during her 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. — PTI

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 on Saturday. Of 145 students at the facility, 35 experienced acidity, vomiting and headache after consuming food at the school on Thursday night, the inspector 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. — PTI

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

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY
NEW DELHI, JAN 11

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

The Opposition party also threw its weight behind the agitating students of various universities across the country even as its interim president Sonia Gandhi decried "police excesses" in many parts of UP and varities like JNU, Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh



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

Muslim University. 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 condemned the use of brute force by the police. "We are appalled by 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 inquire 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 suggest ways for providing 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's Clause 6, under which the central government had promised to provide constitutional safeguards to the indigenous people.

The committee is said to have completed its deliberations and discussions with various stakeholders in Assam and is expected to submit its report soon, may be within a month, the sources said.

The committee with more than a dozen members was set up as per the Clause 6 of the 1985

Assam Accord.

According to its terms and conditions, "The committee will assess the appropriate level of reservation of seats in Assam Legislative Assembly and local bodies for the Assamese people".

"The committee will recommend the appropriate level of reservations in employment under the government of Assam for the Assamese people," according to a home ministry notification.

The meeting will be held amidst widespread protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in Assam. —PTI

CAA protest: Health survey staffs abused

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MANGALURU, JAN. 11

The ongoing protests against CAA, NRC and NPR across the country have had an effect on healthcare and other surveys conducted at the district level.

When Machina Panchayat president Harshala and three other women went to collect data for the National Rural Livelihood Mission on Tuesday, a group accosted and abused them.

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



The second tower of waterfront residential apartment Alpha Serene is demolished using controlled implosion in Kochi on Saturday.

— AP

Kochi: 2 high-rises razed for flouting CRZ norms

Buildings were constructed close to Vembanad lake

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

Two other apartments Jain Coral Cove apart-

ment complex which has 17 floors and 122 flats will be razed at 11 am on January 12 (Sunday) and it will be followed the demolition of 17-floor Golden Kayalarom 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 meters. There was a delay of 15 minutes in the demolition owing to last-minute requirements.

Earlier people living in and around the apart-

ment 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.



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Walk on Footpath

Cross road through zebra crossing

Cross road at red light

DP/9/199/2020

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DON'T BE A VICTIM TO HOUSING FRAUDS



Some Registered/unregistered societies are known to float cheap and affordable housing schemes in Delhi to cheat public in the garb of approved scheme under Land Pooling Policy of DDA.

BEWARE

- Websites publish list of winners of the draw to induce innocent buyers.
- Low registration amount/initial deposit and assured result in lucky draw is offered.
- Ads are published through internet, emails and SMS promising cheap and affordable houses/flats in L Zone, P Zone etc.

REMEMBER

- The Land Pooling Policy of DDA is at budding stage and no project has been approved by DDA yet.
- Check the status of approved projects at Official website of RERA.
- Offering of flats/houses without registration and approval of RERA by developers is illegal.

Any person aggrieved by such offers may contact/file complaint with EOW Delhi at the following address:
Economic Offences Wing
Police Station Complex, Mandir Marg, New Delhi

The link of DDA website for any information is:
<https://dda.org.in/ddaweb/landpooling.aspx>

E-mail to CP, Delhi at: cp.amulyapatnaik@delhipolice.gov.in | Write to CP, Delhi at P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

DP/9/199/2020



Change needed

Need to reorient educational syllabus, says vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu



Local politicians politicised kids' death in Kota at the behest of PM, home minister

— Ashok Gehlot, Rajasthan chief minister

IN BRIEF

4 of family found dead in Odisha

Sundargarh: Four persons of a family were on Saturday found dead inside their rented house at IT Colony in Rajgangpur area in Odisha's Sundargarh district. The deceased have been identified as Ranjit Prasad, his wife and their son and a daughter. Prasad, a resident of Bihar, was working as a mechanic at Dalmia-OCL plant in Rajgangpur, said reports. As per neighbours, Prasad's house was locked for the last three days. However, after some locals sensed foul smell emanating from his quarters on Saturday morning, they informed the police. Subsequently, the cops along with a forensic team rushed to the spot and recovered the dead bodies after breaking open the door.

Youth makes video before killing self

Bhubaneswar: Frustrated over "betrayal" by his girlfriend, a youth on Saturday afternoon allegedly committed suicide by jumping before a moving train in Cuttack city. The deceased was identified as Manoj Swain of Niali in Cuttack district. His body was recovered from the railway tracks near Matru Bhavan. A video purportedly recorded by Swain just before his death narrating the reasons behind his decision to end his life has surfaced. Sources said Swain was in a relationship with a girl from Jaipur for the last few years.

Minor girl raped by friend in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: A minor girl was allegedly raped by her friend, an auto-rickshaw driver, police said on Saturday. The 19-year-old man took the girl, a tenth standard student, to a house on the pretext of celebrating his birthday on December 29 and allegedly raped her. As the girl did not return home, her father complained to the police the same night. She revealed the alleged incident after returning home. A missing complaint, registered initially, was altered and a case on charges of kidnapping and rape was registered, they said, adding that the man has been arrested. — PTI

PMLA CASE: ED SET TO ATTACH AZAM'S ASSETS

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

Trouble seems to be brewing for senior SP leader and Rampur Lok Sabha MP Azam Khan as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is preparing to initiate proceedings to attach properties belonging to him and his family members as part of its money laundering probe against the MP. According to sources, the ED has prepared a list of assets (belonging to Mr Khan and his family members) that will be provisionally attached under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Several cases related to land grabbing have been registered against Azam Khan by the Uttar Pradesh police and Central probe agency. The ED took cognisance of at least 26 UP police FIRs against Azam Khan to file its Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR). The ECIR is ED's case equivalent of a police FIR. Sections of the PMLA have been pressed against Mr Khan and others who are alleged to have grabbed land by threatening extortion, sources added. "The ED is probing if the proceeds of crime of the alleged land grab and extortion were used by Azam Khan and others to create personal assets.

Will take action if ordered to reclaim PoK: Gen. Naravane

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

Army Chief Gen. M.M. Naravane said on Saturday that if ordered the Indian Army will take appropriate action to reclaim Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). He said that the Army is "re-balancing" its deployment along the western and northern borders to deal with any kind of threat that might emerge from Pakistan or China. Gen. Naravane said that Siachen is the closest point for "collusion" between China and Pakistan and therefore it is important to keep that area in our "possession". The Army Chief said that counter-insurgency is the short term threat but "long term threat will always be conventional war and that is what we are preparing for".



Army Chief Gen. M.M. Naravane during the annual press conference in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

Gen. Naravane said that despite provocation by the Pakistan Army and its Border Action Team at Line of Control (LOC), the Indian Army will never resort to any "barbaric activity" and will uphold international norms. Pakistan's Border Action Team is suspected to have decapitated a porter, who was among two civilians killed along the Line of

Control (LoC) in Poonch district on Friday, and taken away the head. "As far as Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is concerned, many years ago there was a parliamentary resolution on it that entire erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir is part of India. If Parliament wants that the area should also belong to us and if we get orders to that effect, then

definitely we will take action on it," the Army Chief said.

He said that the Army has to balance its deployment to cater to threat both from the west and the north.

"For dealing with the northern frontier we are going in for more capacity building, which include creating road to the forward areas, creating capacity in terms of habitat, storage for ammunition, moving some of our more advanced weapon system towards the eastern side," said Gen. Naravane.

He said that with this the Army will be able to meet threat from any direction and it is prepared for the challenge.

Gen Naravane said that the Indian Army is aware of the fact that there is threat from both China and Pakistan.

Russia likely to consider J&K invite to its envoy

► **The absence of Russia was quite glaring, given that Moscow has continued to strongly back India after New Delhi revoked Art 370 last year**

Therefore, no formal invitation was eventually sent by New Delhi. Sources indicated that since Russia does not consider the Kashmir issue to be part of the Indo-Russia bilateral ties, Moscow apparently felt there was therefore no need for the Russian ambassador to be part of the delegation.

But observers feel this may be only part of the story. Significantly, the United States was represented in the delegation by its ambassador Kenneth Juster. It's no secret that the United

States does not currently enjoy a cordial relation with Russia and the US has been threatening to impose sanctions on countries buying Russian weaponry and armaments. Observers also point out that Russia may be somewhat uneasy over the recent "two plus two" dialogue between India and the US at the foreign and defence ministerial level. Moscow does not want the Indo-US proximity to have any impact on the Indo-Russian bilateral relationship, especially in the defence sector.

When asked specifically why Russia was not part of the foreign envoys' delegation, the MEA had indicated recently that there may be more such visits in the future to J&K in which countries not represented in this delegation may be represented.

Setback to Beijing as Taiwan Prez is re-elected

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

In a major setback to Beijing, Taiwan's "popular and assertive lady President" Tsai Ing-wen from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was re-elected on Saturday for a second four-year term in office. Cross-straits ties, the term used to describe the complex relationship between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan, have been especially rocky in the past four years, with Ms Tsai challenging Beijing by pressing for Taiwan's participation in various world bodies affiliated to the UN. Since 1949, under the "One China Policy", China has always considered Taiwan as a part of its territory and as a renegade province although Beijing has never exercised physical jurisdiction over it since 1949. In order to break out of its perceived international isolation due to the One China Policy followed by most countries, including India, Taiwan, under Ms Tsai's stewardship, had embarked on an ambitious New Southbound Policy since 2016 that focuses on boosting trade ties with 18 nations that include the 10 Asean (Southeast Asian) nations, six south Asian nations, including India, besides Australia and New Zealand.

New J&K party as 'alternative' to PDP, NC soon?

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, JAN. 11

A new political party is likely to be launched soon in Jammu and Kashmir as an "alternative" to conventional regional political organisations such as National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the runup to the elections of the union territory (UT), which the government proposes to hold later this year. The new political party would comprise mainly "disgruntled" members of the PDP, including former ministers and legislators, who have quit the party or were thrown out of it for their alleged anti-party activities recently or earlier.

Sources said that these leaders and activists have held a series of meetings in twin capitals of Srinagar and Jammu during the past couple of weeks to deliberate over the proposed venture. The group is being headed by former minister Syed Altaf Bukhari, who is known to be very close to the corridors of power in Delhi.

He has been in the forefront of supplementing the government's covert effort to "encour-

► **The new political party would comprise mainly 'disgruntled' members of the PDP who have quit the party or were thrown out**

age" mainstream politicians, including former ministers and legislators, to team up and initiate political activities in such fashion that would break the political stalemate which persists in J&K since August 5, 2019, when it was stripped of its special status and split up into two UTs by the Centre.

The proposed enterprise is seen by local watchers also as conscious attempt by those at the helm of power to isolate J&K's impervious mainstream political parties, particularly the NC and PDP, which have, so far, remained steadfast in their political outlook and have ruled out joining any political process unless and until J&K's statehood and special status are restored.

Mr Bukhari, a business tycoon-turned-politician, was a year ago expelled from the PDP for his "anti-party" activities.



Students in traditional attire dance around a bonfire as they celebrate Lohri in Jammu on Saturday. — PTI

Mantri backs liquor policy, says 'take a peg, sleep well'

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JAN. 11

MADHYA PRADESH

MP minister for cooperation Govind Singh on Saturday advised the proponents of prohibition to practice the dictum "take a peg, sleep well" before demanding to ban liquor.

"We do not feel comfortable, until we take a peg. We get restless if we keep ourselves away from drinking in the night," Mr Singh quoted his friend to detail benefits of consuming alcohol.

He was reacting to criticism of liquor policy of the Kamal Nath government by former chief minister and BJP national

vice-president Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

"Take a peg, sleep well in the night and remain active the next day," he quoted his friend as saying while defending his government's decision not to go for prohibition as demanded by the Opposition BJP. The minister said no one can force anyone to shun alcohol.

"It is a democratic country. No one can dictate to others what to drink and eat," he added.

He defended the state government's decision to allow liquor licence holders to open sub-shops, say-

ing that it would not only stop illicit hooch trade, but also generate revenue for the state.

Earlier, Mr Chouhan lambasted the state government for allowing the liquor licence holders to open sub-shops, saying that the Kamal Nath government has turned MP into "Madira Pradesh".

He accused the state government of aiding liquor mafias in the state by allowing them to open sub-shops.

Interestingly, the Congress had promised to impose prohibition in the state if returned to power in MP in the runup to November 2018 Assembly polls in the state.

Bangladesh minister not to attend India summit

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

Bangladesh's minister of state for foreign affairs Shahriar Alam has cancelled his proposed visit to New Delhi to attend the Raisina Dialogue conference, triggering speculation that the cancellation may be linked to Bangladesh's reported concerns on the recent Indian Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). However, diplomatic sources from Bangladesh told this newspaper that Mr Alam had cancelled his visit because he will be accompanying Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on a visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The developments come in the wake of cancellation of Bangladesh foreign minister A.K. Abdul Momen's visit to New Delhi last month.

"Mr Alam had been invited by the (private thinktank) ORF to attend the Raisina Dialogue and he had accepted the invite. But when he realised that he had to accompany the PM (Sheikh Hasina) to the UAE, he wrote to the ORF explaining why he could not attend," diplomatic sources from Bangladesh told this newspaper. The Raisina Dialogue is organised annually by the ORF and the MEA.

Forces owe allegiance to Constitution: Army Chief

► **Continued from Page 1** and fraternity and that is what we are fighting for (when) we are deployed in the border safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity, it is to secure for our people these core values," said the Army Chief.

This is what, the new Army Chief who took charge on December 31 said, needs to be kept in mind at all the times.

Gen. Naravane's comments come in the backdrop of allegations by Opposition parties that the armed forces are

being politicised. His predecessor and current Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Bipin Rawat was criticised for commenting on political issues, including students' protests against the CAA.

"Leaders are not those who lead people in inappropriate directions, as we are witnessing in a large number of university and college students, the way they are leading masses of crowds to carry out arson and violence in our cities and towns. This is not leadership," General Rawat had said last month.

Gen. Naravane said that the Army upholds the Constitution and what it stands for, including the fundamental rights guaranteed to all citizens. "We are an Army of the people and for the people," he said.

On whether he would continue to speak strongly on issues, like his predecessor, Gen. Naravane said the Army is not seeking any publicity for doing what is "our duty".

"We will continue in the same way, serving the country to the best of our ability," he said.

Didi urges PM Modi to rethink CAA and NRC

► **Continued from Page 1** in the PM's itinerary following Mr Modi's wish to stretch his visit to Belur Math, the headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission in Howrah, and spend the night there amidst speculation of his meditation on the occasion of youth icon Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary on Sunday.

When Mr Modi reached Raj Bhavan in the afternoon, Ms Banerjee was already present there to greet him.

The Trinamul chief said, "Since the PM came on a visit to our state, it is my constitutional responsibility and also courtesy to meet him. I have told the PM, since you have come here as my guest, I do not know if I should tell you about it or not. We are against the CAA, NRC and NPR. A movement has been underway against the three across the country. We certainly want no discrimination among the people, no person be dropped out or faces any

► **After the event, Mr Modi sailed in a vessel to Belur Math across the river, avoiding a road journey due to heavy protests against his stand on the CAA and NRC in the city since morning and continued till night**

kind of torture."

She elaborated, "I have requested the PM to look

into it. I also urged him to reconsider the CAA and NRC. We want these be withdrawn."

Ms Banerjee also asked Mr Modi to release around ₹38,000 crore, including ₹7,000 crore for damages due to Cyclone Bulbul, as dues from the Centre to her government. "He told me he would go through the letters regarding the state-matter. If needed, he would talk about it in New Delhi," she added.

Ms Banerjee later shared the dais with the Prime

Minister and West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar at the launch of the interactive light and sound show of Howrah Bridge at the Millenium Park by the Hooghly.

After the event, Mr Modi sailed in a vessel to Belur Math across the river, avoiding a road journey due to the heavy protests against his stand on the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens in the city since morning and continued till night with rallies.

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 slugfest and social ramifications of the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Bill and the proposed National Registrar 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 the mammoth protests by students and civil society. 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 twin issues. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has in a rally, 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 tacit acceptance that it miscalculated the gamble of CAA/NRC after the success of implementing its other key agendas like abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir and the ban on Triple Talaa. Though mass student mobilisation and large-scale protests by all sections in major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru seem to have taken the government by surprise, it is the failure of the



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 campaigns of both these states has been vociferously opposing the CAA and the pro-

posed NRC in all fora 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-

bined with the people protesting on the streets has rattled the ruling party so much that PM Modi has come out and openly blamed the Opposition for fanning the agitation and has gone to the extent of accusing the Opposition of speaking in the language of Pakistan. The Opposition parties on their part are using the mobilisation to reap benefits at the same time pursuing a policy of keeping issues local during state elections—a strategy which has paid dividends in both Maharashtra and Jharkhand. Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has also tried to keep it that way keeping the debate localised on Mohalla clinics, government schools and zero power and water bills. While it remains to be seen whether Mr Kumar would deploy the same

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 would 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 AJSU 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.

- The mass student mobilisation and protests in major cities have taken the government by surprise
- The CAA-NRC issue failed to sway the electorate in Jharkhand
- CMs of the two states headed for polls, Nitish Kumar and Arvind Kejriwal have stayed aloof
- Kishor, whose IPAC is handling both campaigns, has opposed CAA

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 in 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 downtrend? 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 package, 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 averred. 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 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 past 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."

■ **What drives economic growth:** GDP, inflation, rupee movement, exports, imports, industrial production, FDI flow, job creation, fiscal math

■ **What caused the slowdown:** Consumer's confidence in production, consumption, demand as well as other economic parameters that nosedived last year

■ **Measures taken by the government:** Merger of major public-sector banks, affordable housing package, automated electronic refund system, annual mega-shopping festivals

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

Great sporting moments in store this year

R. MOHAN

The gripping suspense of sporting climaxes was accentuated in two great events of 2019. 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

of his natural gifts as a golfer. If there was another suspenseful 2019 tale remotely approaching this, it came in the questionable triumph of Team England in the cricket World Cup. No one could quite make out how England was adjudged the winner, but the fact that Ben Stokes was there at the deep end of a pulsating day's cricket in which the pendulum had swung so crazily it was easy enough to conclude there had never been a game quite like this in 44 years of cricket World Cups. And Stokes was on the list of those who had to make amends too for personal indiscretions. The Leap Year of 2020 lends itself very easily to be the year of T20 cricket and global events will begin with the women's T20 world championship, with the final appropriately scheduled on International Women's Day, March 8. The men's event too will



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 gone by 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 P.T. 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 her fortunes with the avidity of Brazilian football fans. There will be more of that phenomenon in 2020. In another crowded sporting year in the age of pro sport, there should be heaps of laurels for the American gymnast Simone Biles, who is on the threshold of being crowned the greatest female gymnast as she attempts to become the first gymnast in more than half a century to win again as Olympic champion. In a difficult time for sport with all the #MeToo floating around male coaches, she had also stood up for those wronged by men.

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 birth anniversary of Gandhiji, 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 rashtra; and, they look upon minorities, especially Muslims, as derivatives on sufferance in a nation where only Hindus have a monopoly.

This exclusionist view of the BJP militates directly against the most cherished tenets of Hinduism itself. It is important to emphasise this because the Mahatma, while extracting the best from all religions, especially drew inspiration from Hinduism's eclectic foundations. The revered Upanishads state: *Ekam satya, bipraha bahudha vadanthi* (The truth is one, the wise people call it by different names). Our ancient scriptures have emphasised: *Anno bhadrakra kritvo yantu vishwataha* (Let good thoughts come to us from all directions). It was our sages who proclaimed: *Udar charitanam vasudhaiva kutum-*

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 audaciously declared that the only reality is the all-pervading cosmic consciousness of Brahman, and all other man-made differentiations have little ontological value.

The communal venom that BJP leaders often spout, including the valorisation of Godse, the man who killed the Mahatma, and the brittle and false definition of Hinduism aggressively propagated by their followers, would have been anathema to Gandhiji. 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 Gandhiji lived and died for, and which is enshrined in

our Constitution. Gandhiji 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 here. 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.

Secondly, *ahimsa* or non-violence was an article of faith for Gandhiji. The abhorrent violence inherent in acts of lynching — and that too in the name of protecting Hinduism — would have deeply pained him. Most recently, he would have been appalled at the statement of UP CM Yogi Adityanath that he would take *badla* or revenge against those protesting the CAA. Undoubtedly, violence by the protesters was wrong too. But the disproportionate use of force by the police in UP, and their reportedly communal bias, makes a mockery of the principles of the Mahatma. The police used the same kind of vicious violence in Jamia

Millia Islamia university, where even the library was vandalised and students mercilessly beaten.

On January 5, JNU saw the worst example of organised violence by goons against students and faculty members. As the nation — and the world — watched in horror, these goons, armed with stones and lathis and metal clubs, reminiscent of the Klu Klux Klan, went on the rampage inside the precincts of one of India's foremost universities in the capital of the Republic. A police inquiry has been ordered to establish their identity, but there appears to be enough evidence — although I am willing to be corrected by concrete facts to the contrary — that these were right-wing thugs who wanted to teach the "left oriented anti-national" students of JNU a lesson. The police, through its inapplicable inaction, became an accessory to this crime, as did the JNU administration and the university's security apparatus.

Finally, Gandhiji 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, where disagreement did not entitle you to hate or demean the other side. On the contrary, the BJP believes in

demonising those who oppose it. Its refrain is that anyone who doesn't agree with it is a Paki stooge, or should be banished to Pakistan. All those who differ from the party are ipso facto anti-national. They are peddlers of fake news. Only the BJP has a monopoly on what is good for the nation. Such an attitude has put an end to the possibility of a civilised discourse which is an inalienable adornment of a democracy, and which Gandhiji set great store by.

Remembering Gandhiji on his 150th birth anniversary is something a grateful nation should do. But remembering him through official publicity, while simultaneously demolishing everything he believed and stood for, is a cruel joke. Ultimately, Gandhiji 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 Gandhiji, and acts upon it, all its lip service to the Mahatma will remain just that.

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



Dilip Cheria

Dilli Ka Babu

IPS WARS IN UP

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

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

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

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

AIR INDIA BLUES

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

In the meantime, Air India chairman and managing director, Ashwini Lohani, surprisingly, took to Facebook to remind us that the airline needs to survive until it is sold. Mr Lohani is a trusted public servant who has been working on initiatives to narrow down the carrier's staggering debt. A former railway 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 would be impractical. But the message is clear: Selling the carrier is the only way it can survive.

MEA MOVEMENTS

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

In the coming months, top positions in London, Washington, Kathmandu, Colombo, Ankara and the permanent mission of India in New York will become vacant due to the respective envoys completing their tenures or retiring from service. Both 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 three 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 Amita Nair (1983), 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.

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'The attack on JNU was barbaric in the least'

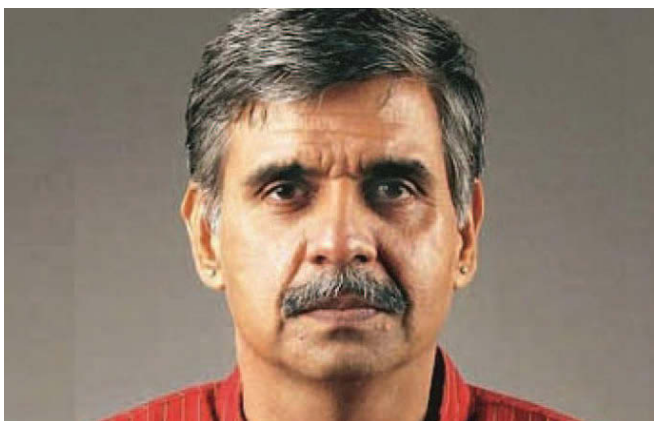
Sandeep Dikshit

Q&A

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?

As is evident, this government does not want to talk to or engage with anybody. We have seen that they brought a law that was unacceptable to many people. When they protested, mainly students, they were brutally lathicharged by the police. The police entered university campuses — in New Delhi they entered and smashed the library of Jamia Millia Islamia. Similarly, in Aligarh also, police excesses are well known and for all for see. The death toll in Uttar Pradesh of



Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit

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

The demand of people like us opposing the current CAA is very simple — rather than identifying religions of people, which is against the spirit and nature of our Constitution and the values of the freedom movement, the act could have just stated "all people who are religiously

persecuted in their nations" would get the benefit of eased norms of citizenship. This 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 press conference by Delhi police on Friday evening was even more shocking — their report of investigation of the June 6 JNU incident — it is a shoddy investigation to say the least because out of nine people,

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

The Supreme Court has said that suspension of Internet services 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 India will 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. In UP there was no Internet in several cities as it was shut down by the government. Now the issue here is that several businesses and essential services are run on the Internet. So you cannot have a perpetual lockdown. Similarly, in Jammu and Kashmir also the shutdown cannot be in perpetuity. The court has also said that any order suspending the

Internet issued under the suspension rules must adhere to the principle of proportionality and must not exceed beyond the necessary duration. The Supreme Court in its order clearly states that freedom of speech and expression and freedom to practice 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 only 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 Delhi government have always been good — if you just look at the record of the previous Congress governments of the state it will be clear to you. As far as the BJP is concerned, it has got nothing to offer — absolutely nothing. There is major infighting amongst the leaders of the Delhi BJP. The only thing they are hoping for is polarisation so that they can go ahead with their divisive politics. So the Congress will surely be in a position to form a government. The results will surprise everybody.

How are you so sure that the

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

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

Well, you know very well that in our party it is the elected MLAs who elect their leader when there is no sitting chief minister seeking re-election.

Aakar Patel



Modi govt won't back off on CAA, NRC

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

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

minister Amit Shah who has approved this reversal of justice.

When Jammu and Kashmir was dismembered and there was (as there remains) an even greater presence of India's security forces on the city streets, I had asked a local journalist what the strategy from New Delhi was. He said that there did not appear to be anything new, but the instruction for the administration from National Security Adviser Ajit Doval was to "be strict, be very strict" with locals. This is indeed what has come to be. The state's leadership is in jail without charge or without a crime, the citizens are pretty much in jail too, with restricted movement, no right to peaceful assembly, no access to communications and, as has been the case for many decades in that state, armed 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 watching India are being managed by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. And that pattern is that they will not back down from pushing ahead with their ideology. If we notice 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 a nationwide NRC had not been discussed. He chose not to say that it would not happen. This did not bring comfort to those who were worried over a nationwide action similar to that of Assam. However, the Prime Minister is not going to let it go because it is coming from an ideological belief and not any sense of political strategy or specific policy. He appears willing to absorb some damage in India's international reputation (I am quite sure that foreign minister Subrahmanyam 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 of already persecuted individuals, the reaction will be even stronger than the one we are currently seeing on the streets. And as their trauma becomes 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 America's 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 an India 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 opposition inside his government to be concerned about. All 300-plus Lok Sabha MPs line up and applaud anything he says and does. The Supreme Court, as we have seen, need not be worried about. It is going to be a rough and brutal 2020 for India as its government pushes on with its ideological agenda, and the citizens do whatever they can to protect themselves.

Aakar Patel is a writer and columnist



Sleep Apnoea

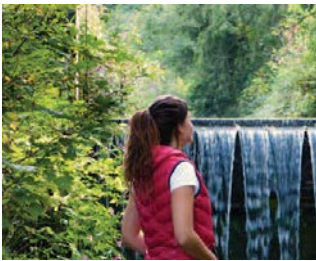
A new research has revealed that a fat tongue could be a major reason for Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA)

IN BRIEF



Indian-American among astronauts to conquer Moon

Houston: Raja Jon Vurputoor Chari, an Indian-American US Air Force colonel, is among 11 new NASA graduates who have successfully completed their over two years' of basic astronaut training and are all set to be a part of the space agency's ambitious future missions to the International Space Station, Moon and Mars. The successful astronauts were selected among 18,000 applicants in 2017 after NASA announced its Artemis programme. Chari, 41, was selected by NASA to join the 2017 Astronaut Candidate Class. He reported for duty in August 2017 and having completed the initial astronaut candidate training is now eligible for a mission assignment. At a ceremony here on Friday, each new astronaut received a silver pin, a tradition dating back to the Mercury 7 astronauts, who were selected in 1959. "2020 will mark the return of launching American astronauts on American rockets from American soil, and will be an important year of progress for our Artemis program and missions to the Moon and beyond," said NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine at the agency's Johnson Space Center in Houston. "These individuals represent the best of America, and what an incredible time for them to join our astronaut corps," he said. The astronauts will receive a gold pin once they complete their first spaceflights. Astronaut candidate training for the new graduates included instruction, practice, and testing in space-walking, robotics, International Space Station systems, T-38 jet proficiency, and Russian language. As astronauts, they will help develop spacecraft. — PTI



High risk diseases can originate during puberty

Washington: A study on Saturday comes up with intricate factors about the link between puberty and several high-risk diseases. The paper was published in the journal *Cell Stem Cell* where the first-ever genome-scale analysis of the puberty process in humans, researchers at Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) at the University of Utah (U of U) outline distinct and critical changes to stem cells in males during adolescence. The scientists further outlined how testosterone, and the cells that produce testosterone, impact stem cells in male reproductive organs. This study is believed to add to a foundation of knowledge that may yield insights into critical areas of human health, including infertility and cellular changes that lead to cancer and other diseases. The study was led by Bradley Cairns, PhD, cancer researcher at HCI and professor and chair of Oncological Sciences at the University of Utah, in collaboration with colleagues Jingtao Guo, PhD, a post-doctoral fellow in the Cairns lab at HCI, James Hotelling, MD, associate professor of surgery at the U of U, and Anne Goriely, PhD, associate professor of human genetics at the University of Oxford. Puberty spurs numerous developmental changes in humans and other mammals. Hallmarks of puberty include physical characteristics visible to the naked eye, like rapid growth. These changes signal the process of a maturing body. — ANI

Engaging with arts helps you live longer

The arts may support longevity by improving mental health, reducing loneliness

London, Jan. 11: Older people who frequent art galleries and museums, attend the theater and concerts may live longer than those who don't, a study in England suggests.

Even after accounting for a wide range of other health and social factors, researchers from University College London found that people over 50 who regularly engaged with arts activities were 31% less likely to die during a 14-year follow-up than peers with no art in their lives.

Those who took part in arts-related activities only once or twice a year still had 14% lower odds of dying during the study. "These findings support previous statistical analyses and anthropological work suggesting there may be benefits of the arts to individuals as they age," said Daisy Fancourt, an associate professor of psychobiology and epidemiology at University College London and co-author of the study.

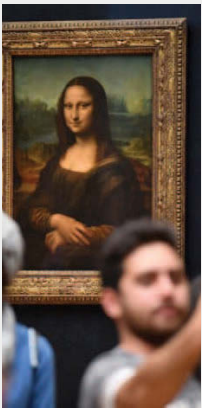
"It remains possible the association presented here could be the result of unidentified confounding

MORTALITY HIGHER AMONG PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS

Overall, men were more likely to die, as were unmarried people, those with less wealth and those not currently working. Mortality was also higher among people with health conditions, including depressive symptoms, cancer, the authors of study note

ARTS MAY IMPROVE QUANTITY AS WELL AS QUALITY OF LIFE

The findings feed into the wider context of research into the health benefits of the arts, particularly in light of how of many countries offer arts 'on prescription' to support physical and mental health. Arts participation may improve quantity — not just quality — of life



who had engaged with the arts more frequently.

The findings feed into the wider context of research into the health benefits of the arts, Fancourt said, particularly in light of how of many countries offer arts "on prescription" to support physical and mental health.

"Engaging with arts can stretch our imaginations, inspire and cultivate creativity, celebrate meaningful stories, provide social connectivity, build social capital, challenge us and provide exposure to new knowledge or ideas," said Jennifer Novak-Leonard of Northwestern University, in Chicago, who researches cultural participation but was not involved in the current study.

The results suggest arts participation may ultimately improve quantity — not just quality — of life, Novak-Leonard said, but the paper provides no insight into how arts attendance might reduce mortality.

"This study is intriguing, given the magnitude of the reported effects on mortality," she said.

— Reuters

Malnutrition may lead to risk of Zika birth defects

London, Jan. 11: Congenital Zika Syndrome (CZS), a collection of developmental malformations in infants associated with Zika virus (ZIKV) infection, is linked to poor diet among the children's mothers, a new study says.

The syndrome causes conditions impacting infants for the rest of their lives, such as smaller (microcephaly) and unfolded (lissencephalic) brains, abnormalities in the retina, enlarged blood vessels in the heart, a lack of connections between the brain's hemispheres, the study published in the journal *Science Advances*, noted.

"We knew that areas of Brazil with the lowest socioeconomic status had the highest level of developmental impairment in babies due to CZS, which



is why we looked at the possible link between ZIKV, and one of the potentially most important co-factors, nutrition," said study co-author Zoltan Molnar of the University of Oxford in the UK.

According to the study, developmental impairment caused by ZIKV congenital infection is worsened by environmental co-factors like diets poor in protein — explaining why the devastating effects of CZS vary across ZIKV endemic regions. — PTI

New cellular protein plays key role in obesity

Washington, Jan. 11: Researchers have found that the depletion of iRhom2 protein in mice contributes to less fat in the body and increases energy consumption in fat depots known as adipose tissue.

Obesity is becoming increasing in the global range, a disease that has been seen to be a serious public health issue. Nearly half of the population in Portugal is overweight and nearly 1 million adults have obesity. Known as a cardiovascular and diabetes risk factor, obesity is associated with chronic fat tissue inflammation.

Colin Adrain who is a principal investigator of the research said, "During the research, they found that "iRhom2 protein is strongly present in metabolic tissues and organs, which made us decide to study the role of iRhom2 in obesity in more detail."

The study published in the *Molecular Metabolism* journal demonstrated how the researchers reached the results, they used an animal model, comparing groups with iRhom2 deletion to controls, and feeding them with a normal diet versus a high-fat diet.

Surprisingly, they found that during obesity, iRhom2 protein levels increase specifically in brown adipose tissue in obese animals compared to controls. — ANI

‘Overeating has direct link to body clock’

Washington, Jan. 11: Pleasing your body through overeating has a direct link to the body clock.

A recent study states that the brain's two areas, one that produces dopamine and the one with the human biological clock system influence each other.

Dopamine is an organic chemical released from the brain to create feelings of joy and happiness.

Thus, junk, street and mostly unhealthy food consisting of higher-calories make one happy and content and can disturb one's regular schedule without even being noticed before it's too late. As a result, overweight

and obesity are a compulsion.

But that is not all that comes with happiness through overeating. One can be prone to diabetes, heart diseases, hypertension and even cancer due to poor eating habits.

According to the study, the eating pattern in the United States has worsened in the past 50 years "with highly processed foods readily and cheaply available at any time of the day or night," Ali Guler, a professor of biology at the University of Virginia, said.

"Many of these foods are high in sugars and calories, which makes for an unhealthy diet," He added. — ANI

Persistent sexual-arousal, a neuro problem

Boston, Jan. 11: A study has revealed that persistent genital arousal disorder (PGAD) can compromise the mental health of an individual and can severely damage relationships with their partners.

PGAD is experienced exclusively by females and is characterised by spontaneous and unwanted sexual arousal which is not related to desire. The study was conducted by researchers of Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and was published in the journal *PAIN Reports*.

The results from the study suggest that PGAD can be caused by alteration of the firing of nerves that are known to carry sensations from

genitalia or by damage caused to the lowest parts of the spinal cord.

The study also indicated that neurological treatments can benefit many patients suffering from these diseases.

"It's important that people know of this medical condition and that it is primarily a neurological problem, not a psychiatric one," said lead researcher Bruce Price.

"Many affected women are silent and undercover. It's in no way a fun condition, and it is difficult for patients to address their symptoms with their doctors, who have typically never heard of PGAD," added Price.

The problem can be troublesome for adolescents

NERVE DAMAGE

Psychiatric and gynecological treatment was ineffective, and the injection of local anesthetics had no lasting benefit. In contrast, neurological treatments like treating nerve damage and cyst removal were effective in patients.

and can cause shame, confusion, and fear.

The study included ten females whose symptoms of PGAD started between the ages of 11 to 70 years.

Spinal nerve-root cysts were detected in four patients and generalised sensory nerve damage in

symptoms of the disorder were not clinically diagnosed or receiving services.

Out of nearly 4,500 children identified with autism, 25 per cent were not diagnosed, the study noted.

Most of these children were either black or Hispanic males with deficits in mental abilities, social skills, and activities of daily living, and were not considered disabled.

"There may be various reasons for the disparity, from communication or cultural barriers between minority parents and physicians to anxiety about the complicated diagnostic process and fear of stigma," said Walter Zahorodny study co-author from Rutgers

University.

"Also, many parents whose children are diagnosed later, often attribute their first concerns to a behavioural or medical issue rather than a developmental problem," Zahorodny said.

According to the researchers, screening all toddlers, preschool, and school-age children for autism may help reduce the disparities in diagnosis. Additionally, the scientists, including those from Rutgers University, said, doctors can overcome communication barriers by using pictures, or by employing patient navigators to help families understand the diagnosis process, test results, and treatment recommendations. — PTI

How hummingbird feathers make rainbow colours

Washington, Jan. 11: The unique soap-bubble like shimmering hues seen on hummingbird, is due to the special shape of their feathers' pigment-containing structures, which enable them to reflect a rainbow of light, a study reveals.

According to the researchers, including those from the Chicago Field Museum in the US, while hummingbird feathers have the same basic makeup as that of other birds, the special shape of their pigment-containing structures, called melanosomes, enables them to reflect a rainbow of light.

As part of the study, published in the journal *Evolution*, the scientists examined the feathers of 35 species of hummingbirds with transmission electron microscopes, and compared them with the feathers of other brightly-coloured birds, like green-headed mallard ducks.

Bird feathers are made of a protein called keratin which is the same material that makes up our hair and nails, the researchers said.

Keratin is structured like tiny trees, with



parts resembling a trunk, branches, and leaves, they explained.

Using the electron microscope, the scientists found that the leaf-like structure in the feathers are made up of cells with pigment-producing organelles called melanosomes.

These are the same cell components that produce the dark melanin pigment which colours our hair and skin.

The shape and arrangement of melanosomes can also influence the way light bounces off them, producing bright colours.

"We call these iridescent colours 'structural colours' as they depend on the structural dimensions," said study co-author Matthew Shawkey. — PTI

Antibiotics help treat common dementia

Washington, Jan. 11: Researchers have found that a class of antibiotics called "aminoglycosides" may be a promising treatment for a form of early onset dementia, an advance that may lead to new clinical strategies against the memory decline syndrome.

According to the study, published in the journal *Human Molecular Genetics*, frontotemporal dementia, the most common type of the syndrome, begins between ages 40 and 65, and affects the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain.

The syndrome leads to behaviour changes, difficulty in speaking, writing, and memory deterioration, the researchers,

including those from the University of Kentucky in the US, said.

Some patients with this form of dementia have a specific genetic mutation which prevents their brain's cells from making a protein called progranulin, the scientists said in a statement.

While the protein is not thoroughly studied, researchers believe that its absence is linked to this form of dementia.

In the current study, scientists discovered that after aminoglycoside antibiotics were added to the nerve cells exhibiting this mutation, the cells started making full-length progranulin protein by skipping the mutation. — PTI

One-fourth of kids with autism ‘undiagnosed’

New York, Jan. 11: One-fourth of children less than eight years old with autism — a developmental disorder that impairs the ability to communicate and interact — are not being diagnosed, a study says.

The study, published in the journal *Autism Research*, revealed that despite growing awareness about autism, it is still under-diagnosed, particularly in black and Hispanic people.

As part of the study, the scientists, including those from Rutgers University in the US, analysed the education and medical records of 2,66,000 children who were eight years old in 2014.

They sought to determine how many of the children who showed

How baby brains ‘sync up’ with those of adults

New York, Jan. 11: Researchers have conducted the first ever study assessing how baby and adult brains interact during play, and found similarities in their neural activity, an advance that may lead to new understanding of development disorders like autism.

In the study by researchers, conducted by Princeton University researchers, baby and adult brain activity rose and fell together as they shared toys and eye contact. — PTI

Stellar heavy metals can trace history of galaxies

Tokyo, Jan. 11: After recent research, astronomers have prepared a catalog of signs of nine heavy metals in the infrared light from supergiant and giant stars which can help them in tracing the history of galaxies.

Every psychiatric and gynecological treatment was ineffective, and the injection of local anesthetics had no lasting benefit. In contrast, neurological treatments like treating nerve damage

Observing the catalog will help researchers in understanding how events like that of binary neutron star mergers affect the chemical composition as well as the evolution of Milky Way Galaxy and other galaxies.

After the big bang, the universe helium and hydrogen and other elements were formed later

through nuclear fusion in stars or binary neutron star mergers or events supernovae.

Although the details of different processes and their contributions are poorly understood, it is necessary to better understand the chemical evolution of galaxies for understanding how the rich element environment of planets like Earth came to be.

Metals that are heavier than nickel can also be used to trace events like that of binary neutron star mergers.

A research team from the University of Tokyo looked for signs of heavy metals, — ANI



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.

THE ASIAN AGE

Books

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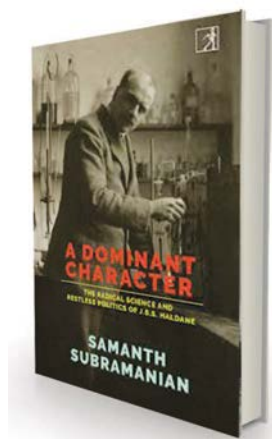
SUNDAY | 12 JANUARY 2020 | NEW DELHI

Fondly remembering the world's last polymath



Ajith Pillai

review



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

By Samantha Subramanian
Simon & Schuster, ₹799

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

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

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

mutation, provided the inspiration for the Aldous Huxley classic, *Brave New World*. In fact, *Daedalus*, was a much-discussed book in its time. Einstein owned a copy of it and underlined key passages in pencil and Bertrand Russell deemed it fit to write *Icarus* in rebuttal and bring out the horrors that science could unleash through its misuse. So, who was Haldane? Journalist and writer Samantha Subramanian’s biography (*A Dominant Character: The Radical Science and Restless Politics of J.B.S. Haldane*) is an attempt to unravel the life and work of the brilliant scientist who was a man of many parts and contradictions. Thus, though he enjoyed an upper-class upbringing and lifestyle, Haldane was a committed Marxist and atheist who believed science could help fight inequities in a capitalist-fascist 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-scientif-

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

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

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

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

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

It was in 1917, following an injury in the War, that Haldane was sent off to Pune to recuperate. He would return permanently to India with his second wife Helen Spurway in 1957. The scientist believed post-Independent India under Jawaharlal Nehru’s watch would be the ideal socialist, 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 of Scientific and Industrial Research fell through because he could not cope with bureaucratic wrangling. Finally, Haldane took up an offer from then Odisha chief minister Biju Patnaik to work out of Bhubaneswar. It was here that he breathed his last at the age of 72.

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

The writer is a senior Delhi-based journalist and author

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



Devapriya Roy

review

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

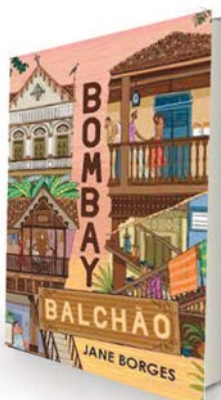
In her charming first novel, *Bombay Balchao*, journalist Jane Borges brings to life Cavel, a nearly forgotten neighbourhood in Marine Lines, South Bombay. The true natives of this fascinating little pocket were the “East Indians”, locals converted to Christianity by Portuguese missionaries who had settled 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 when they settled in Cavel, soon going on to outnumber the East Indians. They lived, loved and often waged simmering neighbourhood wars that, in typical Indian fashion, carried on for generations. In Borges’s fine and timely Bombay novel, thematically reminiscent of Rohinton Mistry’s *Tales from Ferozeshah Baag*, this piquant way of life — unfortunately fading 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 tart observations about Michael interrupt his own account of himself, giving us a clever and complex picture). We meet his gardening-obsessed wife Merlyn (when the *chikus* in her garden are messed with she doesn’t hesitate to hire a tantric to get to the bottom of it all), his wild sister Annette and the two men she loves and hates in equal measure, Mario, his neighbour and protégé of sorts, whose father David dies in the Bombay Port explosion of 1944 and whose mother then starts a local brewery to make ends meet (though that quickly makes her the local villain), as well as an extended and colourful cast of minor characters.

Where Borges pulls off a masterstroke is that her individual stories, set in the Austenesque “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 felicitously 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 Teeth*, 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



BOMBAY BALCHAO

By Jane Borges
Tranquebar, ₹499

Friends from Pottermore don’t live up to promise



Neha Bhatt

Around 1999, 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 silver lightening 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 — Kannan, Curtis, Rebecca, Malathi. Kannan, the central character, is a programmer living in Boston, “a knock-off version” of his conservative brother Santhanam, an engineer in Austin and a somewhat sour presence in Kannan’s life who presses

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

He bumps into Curtis Grimmett — the host of a weekly radio show and founder of Boston Gobstones, a Potter fan club — while waiting in line to pick up midnight copies of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. It is an odd but satisfying friendship with moments where “Kannan felt like Harry to Grimmett’s Dumbledore”. When the Gobstones has their first offline meet, in walks Rebecca, a passionate

and perceptive Harvard graduate in her early 20s looking to put a friendly face to the online Potter chatter, finding herself



ACCIDENTAL MAGIC

By Keshava Guha
HarperCollins, ₹599

drawn to Curtis and Kannan.

To this Boston-based trio, the arrival of Malathi, a voracious reader and a literature student back in India, shifts the equilibrium is a strange and somewhat inexplicable way. Arranged to be married to Kannan after a brief meeting in Bengaluru, the near 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 Potterheads get together and talk in deep detail about fanfiction and the various controversies surrounding it and introspect carefully on magical objects in the books, or whose friendship is more authentic, Ron and Hermione or Hermoine and

Harry?

Working with a sparse plot and plenty of fresh ideas and themes, *Accidental Magic* hops between multiple perspectives of the four characters. But just as you begin to settle in, the spell breaks. The characters seem to go off in unconvincing and underwritten tangents. The book’s strong sense of place, time and specificity which sets it apart begins to feel insular, the protagonists appear trapped and disconnected. Though Guha writes lucidly, with humour and affection, the narrative stops short of becoming an immersive experience akin to the Potter rage it hat tips. I wished for a lot more magic.

Neha Bhatt is an independent journalist and book critic based in Delhi. She tweets @nehabhatt70 and @bookishbadish on insta



Seeking Justice

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

World

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THE ASIAN AGE

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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 Yusuf Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesman, said it occurred in the southern Kandahar province. More than 2,400 US service members have been killed in Afghanistan. Last year was one of the deadliest for the United States, even as Washington engaged in peace talks with the Taliban. The latest attack seemed certain to stall fresh efforts to restart the on-again, off-again peace talks between Washington and the Taliban. US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has been pressing the insurgents to agree to a ceasefire or at least reduce violent attacks. Earlier, both NATO and Afghan officials had confirmed a roadside bomb hit a US army vehicle Saturday, without mentioning 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.



Ghosn case: 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 NEW TALKS

Seoul, Jan. 11: North Korea said on Saturday it had received Donald Trump's letter wishing a happy birthday to leader Kim Jong Un, but warned it would only return to nuclear talks if Washington fully accepts its demands.
The US president and Kim have held three meetings since June 2018 but negotiations over denuclearisation have been largely deadlocked since the breakup of a summit in Hanoi last February.
Before the collapse of that meeting, Trump had said that he and Kim had an excellent relationship — and had even "fallen in love".
Kim Kye Gwan, North Korea's foreign ministry adviser, said on Saturday that Trump's congratulatory letter to Kim had arrived in the isolated state directly from the United States.
"As acknowledged by the world, it is true that the personal relations between (Kim Jong Un) and President Trump are not bad," he said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency.
However, it would be "absent-minded" to expect Pyongyang to resume dialogue because of that warm personal relationship, the statement continued.

Pay compensation for 'disastrous mistake, says Zelensky, Iran should have closed airport, says UIA Ukraine talks tough, wants punishment

Kiev, Jan. 11: Ukraine on Saturday demanded that Iran punish those guilty for the downing of a Ukrainian airliner and compensate victims while praising Tehran for cooperating with an "objective" investigation.
"We expect Iran... to bring the guilty to the courts," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on Facebook, calling also for the "payment of compensation" and the return of remains.
Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said Tehran "deeply regrets this disastrous mistake".
Tehran has invited the United States, Ukraine, Canada and others to join the crash investigation.

Kiev said that Iran had cooperated with its experts and it expects an objective probe.
Tehran has handed Ukrainian experts enough data including "all the photos, videos and other materials" to show the investigation "will be carried out objectively and promptly", Zelensky's office said. "The political part of the work is finished," it added.

It published photos of experts examining the scene and close-ups of holes in the fuselage and shrapnel damage.
Ukraine said Friday its experts dispatched to Iran had been granted access to the flight's black boxes, debris from the plane, the crash site and to recordings of conversations between the pilot and the airport control tower.

Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of Ukraine's national security and defence council which is coordinating the probe, said Kiev did not yet have evidence on where the missile was produced, only that it was "launched from Iranian soil".
Zelensky said earlier that Ukraine hoped the inquiry would be pursued "without deliberate delay and without obstruction".
He urged "total access" for the 45 Ukrainian experts, and in a tweet also sought an "official apology".

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

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

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

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

— **HASSAN ROUHANI**
Iran President

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

World demands a full account

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

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

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

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

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

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

Trudeau's office said in a statement.

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

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

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

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

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

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 Lovfven 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." — **AFP**

U.S. TRIED TO TAKE OUT ANOTHER IRANIAN LEADER

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

The officials said a military airstrike targeted Abdul Reza Shahlaei, 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. Qassem Soleimani and Shahlaei were on approved military targeting lists, which indicates a deliberate effort by the US to cripple the leadership of Iran's Quds force. — **AP**

'Because of Macron'



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

Pelosi ends impeachment standoff To send articles of impeachment to Senate next week

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

In a letter to her Democratic colleagues, Pelosi said on Friday she was proud of their "courage and patriotism" and warned that senators now have a choice as they consider the charges of abuse and obstruction against the president. "In an impeachment trial, every Senator takes an oath to do 'impartial justice according to the Constitution and laws'," Pelosi wrote. "Every Senator now faces a



Nancy Pelosi

choice: to be loyal to the President or the Constitution."

The trial could begin next week. The Constitution gives the House the sole power to impeach a president, but the Senate the ability to render a verdict when it convenes as the Court of Impeachment.

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

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

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

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

U.S. MAY EXTEND TRAVEL BAN TO MORE COUNTRIES

Washington, Jan. 11: The White House is considering dramatically expanding its much-litigated travel ban to additional countries amid a renewed election-year focus on immigration by President 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 sources. — **AP**

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

Sultan who shielded Oman from region's turmoil dead

Muscat, Jan. 11: Sultan Qaboos, the longest-reigning leader of the modern Arab world, has died at the age of 79, the royal court said Saturday.
"With great sorrow and deep sadness... the royal court mourns His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, who passed away on Friday," the court said in a statement. Qaboos, who has ruled since 1970 when he deposed his father 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 prayers at the main mosque which is named after the sultan.

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



Sultan Qaboos bin Said

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

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



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



Helping Hand
Phoebe Waller-Bridge has her Golden Globes outfit on eBay to raise money for the Australian bushfires. The starting bid stands at £40,000



In Croatia we have not only press freedom, we have complete chaos

— Kolinda Kitarovic
Croatian President

IN BRIEF
China's 1st mystery illness death

Beijing: Health authorities in a central Chinese city on Saturday reported the country's first death from a new type of coronavirus, as the government braced for the Lunar New Year travel boom amid concerns over a possible outbreak similar to that of the SARS virus in the early 2000s. The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission said seven other people were in critical condition among a total of 41 who were suffering from pneumonia caused by a "preliminarily determined new type of coronavirus" as of Friday. That was down from the earlier figure of 59. The others were in stable condition and at least two had been released from a hospital. The patient was identified as a 61-year-old man who had been hospitalised after suffering shortness of breath and severe pneumonia. The commission said the man, who died on Thursday, also suffered from abdominal tumors.

12 people dead as migrant boat sinks

Athens: At least 12 people died on Saturday when a boat loaded with asylum-seekers sank in the Ionian Sea, the Greek coastguard said. "So far 12 bodies have been recovered. The search and rescue operation continues," they said in a statement, adding that they had rescued more than 20 survivors. "Three of them are being flown by helicopter to (the nearest hospital) for emergency treatment," the statement added. There were no immediate details on the identity of those on board. The boat, which was carrying around 50 people, took on water near the island of Paxi during an apparent attempt to reach Italy. At this point someone on board issued a distress call, the authorities said. Six coastguard patrol boats and three helicopters were engaged in the rescue effort, authorities said. Four passing cargo ships were also assisting the operation.

7 countries lose vote in UNGA

United Nations: The United Nations says seven countries are so far behind in paying their dues that they are losing their voting privileges in the 193-member General Assembly, including Venezuela and Lebanon. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Friday that three other countries — Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia — are also in arrears by the assembly decided in October that they can retain their vote until September. He said the other countries that are losing their vote are Central African Republic, Gambia, Lesotho, Tonga and Yemen. An estimated 4.5 million people have fled Venezuela since 2015, escaping hyperinflation, failing services, a lack of security and political division in a country that was once among the richest in Latin America.



The sails of the Opera House in Sydney on Saturday are lit with a series of images to show support for the communities affected by the bushfires and to express gratitude to the emergency services and volunteers. Even as colder conditions brought some relief to exhausted firefighters, authorities have warned bushfires in southeastern Australia will take some time to be brought under control.

Severity of the fires is challenging the country's image
Bushfires the 'new normal'

Sydney, Jan. 11: A grim summer of fire and smoke has sullied Australia's outdoorsy and healthy image, and left many fearful for the future.

For the unfortunate few, three long months of bushfires have brought almost unfathomable pain — homes lost, lives destroyed, families ripped apart.

But for many millions more the crisis has also shattered the long sunny days typically filled with beaches, barbecues and backyard cricket.

Sporting events were cancelled, windows shuttered against weeks of menacing toxic haze and barbecues banned to prevent even more fires.

Famed beaches like Bondi were partially blackened, as the tide washed the ash of incinerated eucalypts back to shore.

Holidays were cancelled as entire towns were shut off, highways were bumper-to-bumper with fleeing tourists and petrol stations mobbed as fuel ran out during the largest peacetime evacuations the country has ever seen.

"We've seen the whole Australian way of life over summer across the continent upended," social researcher Rebecca Huntley, who has surveyed Australia's attitudes to the changing climate, told AFP.

"Instead of looking at the end of the year as a time to relax, (Australians) are getting quite anxious." Images of military evacuations and frightened families huddled on beaches under red skies have challenged many people's previously idyllic idea of the continent.

Huntley said the severity of the fires was challenging the perception that living in Australia meant having a high quality of life, with Sydney and Melbourne long-ranked as among the most liveable cities in the world.

Now, residents have become expert at reading wind forecasts and fire maps to predict whether their kids will be able to play outside tomorrow. The Christmas dinner table featured debates about specific anti-pollution masks and air purifiers, topics often associated with daily life in New



A burnt car is seen among the charred trees in Lithgow in Australia's New South Wales on Saturday.

Delhi or Bangkok. Kate Noble-Judge, whose parents were evacuated from their small New South Wales town over New Year, said the festive season turned into days of dread and worry.

"It wears you down because you feel so helpless. You can't visit because the roads might close or the fires might worsen," the Sydney resident told AFP. "You can't even just go for a walk to take your mind off it because the city is always full of smoke and that eerie orange glow. All you can do is stay at home and worry."

All the while, the warnings from scientists have been stark. Australia is warming as a result of climate change, with new record temperatures set almost every year. Catastrophic fire conditions that usually occur once in several decades are becoming the new normal. "Those sort of conditions will become more frequent under the climate change scenario that we are looking at," Richard Thornton, from the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre, told AFP. "So while they used to be spread many years apart, they'll become more regular. There'll be things we'll need to do to live through the frequent arrival some of these sorts of conditions."

Despite the cool change, authorities warned that the bushfire season is not yet over, with hundreds of fires across several states still raging. The head of a firefighting "strike team" in the village of Towamba, Nathan Barnden, told AFP the rainfall was "fantastic" but "not enough at this stage to put these fires out". "We're going to need hundreds of millimetres over a period of time."

University researchers estimate that more than one billion mammals, birds and reptiles have been killed in the blazes.

Despite the cool change, authorities warned that the bushfire season is not yet over, with hundreds of fires across several states still raging. The head of a firefighting "strike team" in the village of Towamba, Nathan Barnden, told AFP the rainfall was "fantastic" but "not enough at this stage to put these fires out". "We're going to need hundreds of millimetres over a period of time."

GRETA CALLS ON SIEMENS TO HALT COAL MINE WORK

Australia, Jan 11: Climate activist Greta Thunberg has called on German engineering group Siemens AG to stop, delay or interrupt the building of a coal mine in Australia.

"On Monday they (Siemens) will announce their decision. Please help pushing them to make the only right decision. #StopAdani," Thunberg tweeted on Saturday.

Engineering giant Siemens will decide by Monday on its involvement in the development of the coal mine being built by India's Adani, its CEO Joe Kaeser said on Friday.

The Australian government last year approved the construction of a new coal mine in Queensland by Adani that is expected to produce 8-10 million tonnes of thermal coal a year. Australia is one of the world's largest carbon emitters per capita because of its reliance on coal-fired power plants.



Greta Thunberg

2020 crucial to global warming

Paris, Jan. 11: 2020 is the most crucial year yet for humanity's plan to dodge the bullet of catastrophic global warming, experts said on Saturday, warning that the narrow path to safety was riddled with pitfalls, from the US election to Brexit.

When nations struck the 2015 Paris agreement, which aims to limit temperature rises under 2 degrees Celsius, they agreed on five-year periods in which climate action could be implemented, assessed and boosted.

2020 is the year the landmark deal goes into effect, yet almost three decades of diplomatic wrangling has fallen far short of what science says is needed to avert disastrous climate change.

A crucial UN summit at which leaders will finalise their action plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is set to open in Glasgow on November 9 — just six days after a US

general election that could see President Donald Trump win a second term. Trump shocked the world in 2017 when he said the United States — history's largest emitter — was withdrawing from the Paris agreement. It is due to leave the deal on November 4. "Another four years of Trump in the White House would mean that the world's key country in terms of providing global leadership will be sitting the problem out," Michael Oppenheimer, professor of Geosciences and International Affairs at Princeton University, told AFP.

"So that's four years of having a millstone around the neck of the world's efforts to deal with climate change."

After a year of climate-related disasters, nations in December failed to make progress during the annual UN Climate Change Conference COP 25.



Thick fog mixed with bushfire smoke near Sydney.

German island, a nursery for seals

Helgoland (Germany), Jan. 11: The birthplace of Germany's national anthem and a practice bombing range for British airmen after World War II, Helgoland island in the North Sea turns cuddly at the turn of the year as grey seals arrive to give birth. The Jordsand society, dedicated to preserving North Sea coastal life, has counted more than 520 births since November.

Dozens of tourists come each day to see the white-furred seal pups hop around the beach during the whelping season that lasts into January.

"They're so close and so lively. I often watch them on TV, but it's much more exciting to come here," said Karin, who had made a long trip to the island, also spelled Heligoland in English, from Essen in western Germany.

But two local rangers and Jordsand volunteers must keep the excited fans at a distance of at least 30 metres (100 feet). Adult seals can grow as large as 300 kilograms (660 pounds) and won't hesitate to bite if they feel threatened.

"Sometimes, the tourists forget the restrictions and get too close. If the seals get too used to people, that has negative consequences in summer," said ranger Ute Pausch.

"They'll want to play in the water and they can injure swimmers." Wooden boardwalks have been set up to corral the tourists during whelping season.

The challenge has become all the greater as seal numbers have grown in response to rising water temperatures. Researchers say climate change is behind waters growing 1.6 degrees Celsius (2.9 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer in the past 45 years.

Now, "the seals are more and more numerous, I think it's because there's more food around," said Elmar Ballstaedt, who works for the Jordsand society. But potential negative effects of global warming could one day outweigh the bonanza for the seal-dwelling mammals, he warned.

"We're at sea level here. If the water rises, we'll certainly have new challenges to overcome," Ballstaedt said. In the nearer term, the seal year is just getting started on Helgoland.

After three weeks nursing with their mothers, the pups are left to fend for themselves in the North Sea. But they return to the island in the spring to moult — and to take another turn in front of crowds of tourists and photographers.

■ The Jordsand society, dedicated to preserving North Sea coastal life, has counted more than 520 seal pup births since November.

■ Adult seals can grow as large as 300 kg and won't hesitate to bite if they feel threatened. Fans must be kept at a distance of at least 30 metres.

LONE WARRIOR **The 100-year-old will soon be returned to his native island of Espanola**

Species-saving tortoise Diego can take rest

Quito, Jan. 11: Job done, prolific Galapagos giant tortoise Diego is being released back into the wild after being credited by authorities with almost single-handedly saving his species from extinction. The 100-year-old tortoise, who was recruited along with 14 other adults for a captive breeding programme, will be returned to his native island of Espanola in March, the Galapagos National Parks service (PNG) said on Friday. "About 1,800 tortoises

have been returned to Espanola and now with natural reproduction we have approximately 2,000 tortoises," Jorge Carrion, the park's director said. "This shows that they are able to grow, they are able to reproduce, they are able to develop," said Carrion. Diego's contribution to the programme on Santa Cruz Island was particularly noteworthy, with park rangers believing him responsible for being the patriarch of at least 40 per cent of the 2,000-tortoise

population. Around 50 years ago, there were only two males and 12 females of Diego's species alive on Espanola, and they were too spread out to reproduce. Diego was brought in from California's San Diego Zoo to join the breeding programme which was set up in the mid-1960s to save his species, Chelonoidis hoodensis. The PNG believes he was taken from the Galapagos in the first half of the 20th century by a scientific expedition.

He's contributed a large percentage to the lineage that we are returning to Espanola. There's a feeling of happiness to have the possibility of returning that tortoise to his natural state.

— JORGE CARRION
Galapagos National Parks service director

Now, Diego is returning to his original home "almost eight decades after being extracted," the park service said, adding that he had

lived at the San Diego Zoo for several decades.

"He's contributed a large percentage to the lineage that we are returning to Espanola," said Carrion. "There's a feeling of happiness to have the possibility of returning that tortoise to his natural state."

Diego weighs about 80 kilograms (175 pounds), is nearly 90 centimeters (35 inches) long and 1.5 meters (five feet) tall, if he really stretches his legs and neck. Before being returned to Espanola, tortoises must go

through a quarantine period to avoid carrying seeds from plants that are not native to the island.

The story of Diego's prowess contrasts sharply with the sad tale of Lonesome George, a different type of Galapagos giant tortoise, who had refused for years to breed in captivity.

Hopes for his species, Chelonoidis abingdoni, faded when Lonesome George passed away in 2012 at more than 100 years old.

4 dead as severe storms lash US

Benton (US), Jan. 11: Authorities say at least four people have died as severe storms sweep across parts of the US South, bringing high winds and unrelenting rain. The Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office in Louisiana said on Facebook that the bodies of an elderly couple

were found Saturday near their demolished trailer by firefighters.

A search for more possible victims was underway.

That brings the storm-related toll in the state to three after a man was killed when a tree fell on his home in Caddo Parish.

— AP

GREATER VISAKHAPATNAM MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Tender Notice No. GVMC/2019-20/PD-I/01/Dt:10.01.2020
Tender Document
"Consultancy Services for preparation of DEPR, Designs Drawings and Cost Estimates for proposed water supply improvement Works"
Tenders (Request For Proposal) are invited from Consultancy agencies for "Consultancy Services for preparation of DEPR, Designs Drawings and Cost Estimates for proposed 3 Nos of water supply improvement Works (GVMC)". The documents for the above job containing terms & conditions may be downloaded from website at www.gvmc.gov.in from 13.01.2020. The last date for submission of bids 29-01-2020 and duly enclosing Rs. 2,000/- towards fee for RFP document (non-refundable). Demand Draft drawn in favour of "The Commissioner, GVMC".
For more details contact :
Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation
E-mail: esp3gvmc2014@gmail.com
Cell Nos: EE-9848308824, S.E. 9848095519
Superintending Engineer
GVMC



Breakup with Brad

I was really skinny: Gwyneth Paltrow recalls repercussions of break up with Brad Pitt



It is just everyone dates everyone. It is so cliché

— Selena Gomez musician

IN BRIEF

Selena Gomez shows off special tattoo

Washington: Singer Selena Gomez gave her fans a sneak peek of a special tattoo inspired from the day when a friend saved her life. According to E! News, in September 2017, the pop singer had undergone a kidney transplant to treat complications from lupus, an autoimmune illness which she is diagnosed with. Gomez told Capital FM radio during an interview in UK that she and her kidney donor friend Francia Raisa, had gotten a tattoo of the date of the surgery. — ANI

Chambers quits Grey's Anatomy

Los Angeles: Actor Justin Chambers is leaving Shonda Rhimes' *Grey's Anatomy* after 15 years. Chambers, who played fan-favourite Alex Karev in the medical drama, will depart the show in the 16th season, reported Deadline. "There's no good time to say goodbye to a show and character that's defined so much of my life for the past 15 years. For some time now, however, I have hoped to diversify my acting roles and career choices. And, as I turn 50 and am blessed with my supportive family, now is that time," the actor said. — PTI



Cynthia Erivo denies Bafta performance

Los Angeles: Cynthia Erivo, who was one of the actors of colour overlooked by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (Bafta) during its nominations, says she has declined the film body's offer to perform at its ceremony. The actor has been receiving critical acclaim for her turn as African-American abolitionist and activist Harriet Tubman in *Harriet* and was expected to receive a nomination. But got snubbed when it announced its nominations, which is once again being led by all-white actors. — PTI

TIMBERLAKE AND BEIL ON DINNER DATE

Washington: Nearly two months after Justin Timberlake was spotted holding hands with his *Palmer* co-star Alisha Wainwright, he was spotted with his wife Jessica Beil on a dinner date in Los Angeles putting the recent drama behind.

According to People magazine, the couple was photographed for the first time together since the singer was seen holding hands and mingling closely with Alisha Wainwright, his co-star on the upcoming film *Palmer*, in New Orleans on November 23. Post the holding hands incident with his co-star, the 38-year-old singer-songwriter also issued a public apology on Instagram, in which he apologised to his wife Biel.

Timberlake got married to Biel in 2012 and the couple share 4-year-old son Silas. Earlier, Wainwright's rep stated that there is "no validity" to the romance rumours, the returned to work on the *Palmer* set alongside Timberlake shortly after the scandal. According to a source close to the sets of the movie, "Nothing has changed or been influenced by the press reports. — ANI

Harry delays plans to join wife

London: Prince Harry has reportedly delayed his plans to fly to Canada this weekend and join wife Meghan and baby Archie as the talks are going on over finalising the couple's future roles after they stepped back from Britain's royal frontline. The UK and Canadian governments are among those being consulted by royal aides to work out a solution after Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, announced their decision to step back as senior royals and assume more financially independent roles. Royal sources have been quoted in the UK media as saying that the talks are "progressing well" and that Harry's grandmother Queen Elizabeth II, father Prince Charles and brother Prince William are all engaged in trying to find a way forward "sooner rather

Meghan Markle signs deal with Disney

London: Meghan Markle, wife of Britain's Prince Harry, has signed a voiceover deal with Disney. The former actor, who quit the profession when she got engaged to Harry in 2017, inked a deal to work with the studio in return for a donation to an elephant charity, according to The Times. The charity is Elephants Without Borders, a conservationist group that focuses on protecting elephants from poachers. Meghan recorded her voiceover in November,

before she and Harry left the UK for a six-week break in Canada with their son Archie. The news comes after she and Harry announced on Wednesday their intention to step back as senior royals. The couple indicated in their statement that they want to be free to work on their own terms while continuing to support the work of Queen Elizabeth II, Harry's grandmother. — PTI



than later". "I don't want to get into the whole thing, I just have such respect for the Queen, it shouldn't be happening to her," said US President Donald Trump in reference

to the royal split which has made worldwide headlines. Some indications that Harry may also be flying to Canada to join Meghan, who flew there on Thursday to be with their

eight-month-old son, seem to have been put on hold as he is scheduled to host the 2021 Rugby League World Cup reception at Buckingham Palace next Thursday. — PTI

Oprah distances from accuser movie

Los Angeles: Media mogul Oprah Winfrey has disassociated herself from upcoming documentary about disgraced American entrepreneur and producer Russell Simmons. The yet-to-be-titled documentary, directed by Amy Ziering and Kirby Dick, is based on the stories of some of the 20 women, who have publicly accused Simmons of sexual harassment and assault. Winfrey had boarded the project in December as an executive producer and it was set to stream on Apple TV+ but that will no longer happen, reported Deadline. "I have decided that I will no longer be executive producer on The Untitled



■ The yet-to-be-titled documentary, directed by Amy Ziering and Kirby Dick, is based on the stories of some of the 20 women, who have publicly accused Simmons of sexual harassment and assault. Winfrey had boarded the project in December as an executive producer.

Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Documentary and it will not air on Apple TV+. First and foremost, I want it to be known that I unequivocally believe and support the women. Their stories deserve to be told and heard," Winfrey said

in a statement. The popular TV personality also said she believes there is still more work need to be done to "illuminate the full scope of what the victims endured and it has become clear that the filmmakers and I

are not aligned in that creative vision". Winfrey added that she took the decision to exit the project as she believes the movie is not yet complete but Ziering and Dick want it to be screened at the Sundance Film Festival. "Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering are talented filmmakers. I have great respect for their mission but given the filmmakers' desire to premiere the film at the Sundance Film Festival before I believe it is complete, I feel it's best to step aside. "I will be working with Time's Up to support the victims and those impacted by abuse and sexual harassment," she added. — PTI

Joaquin gets arrested at climate change protest

Washington: Fresh off his win at the Golden Globes, actor Joaquin Phoenix participated in a climate change protest and was arrested by the police. The *Joker* star took part in the weekly protests against climate change, started by Hollywood veteran Jane Fonda. According to Variety, the 45-year-old actor also addressed the crowd of close to 300 people. In his short speech, he took aim at the meat and dairy industry for being the third leading cause of the climate crisis. "Sometimes we wonder what can we do in this fight against climate change, and there is something that you can do today and tomorrow, by making a choice about what you consume," Phoenix said. "There are things I can't avoid. I flew a plane here today, or last night rather, but one thing I can do is change my eating habits," he added. Besides Phoenix, veteran Hollywood star Martin Sheen also turned up for the protest and got arrested by the police. Actors Maggie Gyllenhaal and Susan Sarandon were also present. Capitol Police said it arrested 147 people, who



Actress and activist Jane Fonda hugs actor Joaquin Phoenix outside the US Capitol during a protest on climate change at Capitol Hill in Washington on Friday. — AP

Martin Sheen recites Tagore's poem during climate protest

Washington: Hollywood veteran Martin Sheen participated in a climate change protest here and recited Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's famous poem *Where the Mind Is Without Fear* while addressing the gathering. Sheen was part of "Fire Drill Fridays" the weekly protests against climate change, started by veteran actor Jane

Fonda. Lauding Fonda for the campaign, Sheen said, "Clearly, the world will be saved by women. Thank God they outnumber us men." In the video of his speech, which is doing the rounds on social media, the *Departed* actor then referred to the verse from Tagore's collection of poems, *Gitanjali*. — PTI

were charged with crowding, obstructing or incommoding. All the protestors were later released. Fonda, who was on stage with Phoenix,

called him "one of the greatest living actors today". She has been protesting weekly as part of her "Fire Drill Fridays" initiative. — PTI



Noble prize winner Abhijit Banerjee delivers a lecture at TISS college in Mumbai on Saturday. — PTI

NEWS NUGGETS

GLOBAL BOX OFFICE SEES BIGGEST YEAR

Los Angeles: If streaming was meant to mark the demise of movie theaters, Disney did not get the memo. Theaters around the world took in an all-time record \$42.5 billion last year, thanks largely to an unprecedented string of international mega-hits from the Mouse House such as *Avengers: Endgame*, *The Lion King* and *Frozen II*. Most of the growth came outside North America, in booming markets such as China, Japan and South Korea, as well as Russia, Brazil, Mexico and western Europe, industry analyst Comscore found in its annual report Friday. But North American theaters still had their second-biggest ever year, taking more than \$11 billion despite a relatively sluggish first six months. *Endgame* became the world's highest-grossing film, taking \$2.79 billion to surpass *Avatar* (2009), although it fell short of the domestic box office record held by 2015's *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. In a sign of its popularity, the movie was still showing in US picture houses four months after its release. Superhero films *Captain Marvel* and *Spider-Man: Far From Home* (co-produced with Sony) rounded out an all-Disney global top five. — AFP

BULLITT'S MUSTANG SOLD FOR \$3.7M

Miami: The 1968 Ford Mustang GT that Steve McQueen drove in the movie *Bullitt* sold Friday for \$3.7 million, the auction house said. The late actor drove the car in several scenes of the film, including an iconic, harrowing 10-minute chase through the streets of San Francisco. The whereabouts of the dark green roadster were unknown for decades but it resurfaced, in good condition and driveable, for 50th anniversary of the movie in 2018. The car had been in the hands of one Sean Kiernan, age 38, whose father had bought it in 1974 for \$3,500. — AFP

STEPHEN KING'S OUTSIDER IN HBO

Washington: Stephen King adaptations have a spotty track record, one that isn't helped by the sheer abundance of them. HBO's *The Outsider* bucks those odds, delivering a taut, noir-ish thriller with echoes of *The Night Of*, perhaps because it features the same writer, Richard Price, according to CNN. It begins with a horrific crime, one involving the murder of a child. Investigated by a local detective, Ralph Anderson (Ben Mendelsohn), the evidence seems clear at first, pointing toward Little League coach Terry Maitland (Jason Bateman), an unlikely perpetrator given his strong ties in the community. — Agencies

Neil Peart, Rush's drummer, dies at 67

California: Neil Peart, drummer and lyricist for Canadian rock band Rush, has died from brain cancer aged 67. The musician, considered one of rock's greatest ever drummers, died on Tuesday in Santa Monica, California, according to BBC.

Rush, the band he played with for 45 years, confirmed his death in a statement posted to Twitter. The statement said Peart, their "soul brother", had been suffering from glioblastoma - a type of brain cancer - for three-and-a-half years. "It is with broken hearts and the deepest sadness that we must share the terrible news that on Tuesday our friend, soul brother and band mate of over 45 years, Neil, has lost his incredibly brave three-and-a-half-year battle with brain cancer," the statement says.

A spokesperson for the Peart family also confirmed the drummer's death to US music magazine, Rolling Stone. Placed at number four in Rolling Stone's list of all-time greatest drummers, Peart was well-known for his technical proficiency and animated live performances. He joined Rush in 1974, drawing influences from hard rock, jazz and heavy metal in a career that spanned four decades. — Agencies



Actors Varun Dhawan, Shradha Kapoor and Nora Fatehi arrive to promote their upcoming movie *Street Dancer 3* in Ahmedabad on Saturday. — AP



Designer Giorgio Armani (centre) accepts applause at the conclusion of his Fall-Winter 2020/21 collection. Models wear the latest creations in the event in Milan, Italy, on Saturday. — AP



Actors Charlie Hunnam and Hugh Grant pose together during photo call for the film *The Gentlemen* at The Whitby Hotel in New York on Saturday. — AP

Netflix 'gay Jesus' film ban overturned

London: Brazil's Supreme Court has overturned a ruling that TV streaming service Netflix must remove a film depicting Jesus as gay, according to BBC. The film, *The First Temptation of Christ*, infuriated fervent Christians in the country. Two million people signed a petition calling for it to be axed, and the production company was attacked with Molotov cocktails last month. A judge temporarily banned the film on Wednesday to appease its critics. But Supreme Court president Dias Toffoli said on



Thursday that Netflix should be allowed to continue streaming the show, stating that freedom of speech was fundamental in a democracy. "One cannot suppose that a humorous satire has the ability to weaken the values of the Christian faith, whose existence is traced back more than two thousand years, and which is the

belief of the majority of Brazilian citizens," the judge said. Why has the film caused uproar? The parody film, which was run as a Christmas special, was created by Brazilian YouTube comedy group Porta dos Fundos. Many of the country's conservative Christians were angered by the portrayal of Jesus bringing home a boyfriend named Orlando to meet his family while Mary and Joseph plan him a surprise 30th birthday party. On Christmas Eve, a group attacked Porta dos Fundos's office in Rio de Janeiro with fire bombs.

Why was it banned in the first place? A judge in Rio de Janeiro ordered Netflix to take the film down on Wednesday. Judge Benedicto Abicair said his temporary decision would appease angry Christians until a final decision was made by a higher court. "Exhibiting the 'artistic production'... may cause graver and more irreparable damage than its suspension," the judge said. Porta dos Fundos said in a statement that it "opposed any act of censorship, violence, illegality, authoritarianism" and would continue to air its work. — Agencies

DELHI SPECIAL

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 12 JANUARY 2020

DELHI AGE

matinee

Alia gets into character

25



SPORT | Cricket

Gavaskar says country is in turmoil over students' protest

14

SPORT | Tennis

Nadal leads team to ATP Cup final, to face Serbia

15



GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check them below.

1 The state of Punjab is known as the land of five rivers. Four of them are Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Beas. What is the fifth?

- Sutlej
- Tapti
- Ganga

2 On April 18, 1930, during what should have been a 6.30pm radio news bulletin on BBC Radio, the presenter simply said, 'There is no news.' What followed?

- The previous day's news
- A royal announcement
- Piano music

3 In the 1980s, drug smuggler Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel spent how much on average per month just to buy rubber bands to keep their money together?

- \$500
- \$1,000
- \$2,500

SHORT TAKE

Man arrested with cocaine worth ₹40L

New Delhi: A 33-year-old Nigerian national was arrested with cocaine worth approximately ₹40 lakhs from Chirag Delhi area, police said on Saturday. The accused has been identified as Locky Ferosin Ovnawa. He was presently staying at Krishna Park, Deoli Road here and hails from Lotey state in Nigeria, they said. Police have recovered 500 grams of cocaine worth approximately ₹40 lakhs from his possession. "We received information on Friday about the movement of a Nigerian national involved in supplying of narcotic drugs. Later, the police team laid a trap near the slip road Masjid Moth at Chirag Delhi flyover and apprehended the suspect," said Atul Kumar Thakur, DCP.

Teen sodomised by bouncer in Gurgaon

Gurgaon: A student of class 8 was allegedly sodomised by a man in his flat in sector 56 here, police said on Saturday. The incident occurred on Friday night when the victim was returning from his evening walk, they said. The young boy was chased by the accused, Amit Kumar, who then dragged him into the lift and took him to his flat where he sodomised him, SHO Sector 56 police station Sumit Kumar said. The victim later escaped and informed his parents about the incident, the officer said, adding that the accused fled from the society in the meantime. — PTI

Police chief reviews R-Day, poll security

New Delhi: With the alarm bell set ringing for the 'Assembly elections' in the city and Republic Day around the corner, Delhi commissioner of police Amulya Patnaik, on Saturday, interacted with sub-divisional police officers (SDPO) and station house officers (SHO) in connection with the arrangements for the upcoming elections and implementation of anti-terrorist measures in their areas. Mr Patnaik complimented the police staff for putting extra hard work in dealing with the situation arising from law and order issues in the last 3-4 weeks and for rising to the occasion. The CP stressed upon strict compliance of model code of conduct and other related instructions. Tenant verification, checking of hotels and guest houses, and security arrangement for market areas were underlined.

THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE

- \$2,500
- Piano music
- Sutlej



Kerela CM Pinarayi Vijayan meets JNU leader Aishe Ghosh at Kerela House in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

Arundhati Roy during a protest against CAA outside the Jamia University. — PTI

ABVP supporters participate in a rally in support of CAA and NRC at Delhi University. — PTI

Protestors during a rally against CAA. — PTI

■ JNU violence: "Suspects didn't belong to any students' party"

Police identifies 37 members of WhatsApp group for attack

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

A day after the Delhi police identified nine suspects responsible for the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) violence on January 5, sources in the Delhi police, on Saturday, said that the SIT has also identified 37 more suspects from a 'WhatsApp' group which was created during the violence at the campus. Meanwhile, on Saturday, the JNU administration undertook a security audit of hostels to check the stay of outsiders and unauthorised students following the January 5 violence in the campus, the JNU administration said. The police, on January 7, had requested the administration to do an audit of hostels for outsiders or unauthorised students. According to a police source, the 37 suspects identified do not belong to any students' party active

■ Sources said that those identified are students of JNU, who were in favour of the semester registration process and wanted to enrol themselves. The group had 60 members and 37 of them have been identified.

■ ABVP's secretary (JNU unit) Manish Jangid, who had earlier alleged that he was attacked by left students, was also part of the 'Unity Against Left' WhatsApp group and some other ABVP members were also in this group

in JNU. "Those identified are students of JNU, who were in favour of the semester registration process and wanted to enrol themselves. The group had 60 members and 37 of them have been identified," said a source. "These identified persons will be called for questioning and after that it will be cleared if they are associated with any of the student outfits," said the source. "ABVP's secretary (JNU

unit) Manish Jangid, who had earlier alleged that he was attacked by left students, was also part of the 'Unity Against Left' WhatsApp group and some other ABVP members were also in this group. Earlier, the police said that a WhatsApp group, 'Unity Against Left,' which is believed to have been formed while the violence escalated, is also under the scanner. "Notices will be served to the suspects and as the investigation progresses, we may come out with more facts," said.

was repaired that I came to know I had been added to that group," Mr Jangid said.

Earlier on Friday, the police had released pictures of nine students, which included former students too, carrying out violence against JNU students and teachers last Sunday. JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) president Aishe Ghosh too has been named in the list of the suspects. Among the nine individuals, seven belong to the Left wing while the remaining two are from the Right wing. However, no one has been detained. Earlier, the police said that a WhatsApp group, 'Unity Against Left,' which is believed to have been formed while the violence escalated, is also under the scanner. "Notices will be served to the suspects and as the investigation progresses, we may come out with more facts," said.

Cops ignored messages about mob's presence, says JNUSU

ABVP takes out march in DU against 'Left violence'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

The JNU Student's Union (JNUSU), on Saturday, raised serious concern over police investigation on violence inside the university campus. Meanwhile, members of RSS-affiliated ABVP organised a major students' march inside the Delhi University (DU), denouncing alleged Left violence and supporting the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The JNUSU alleged that the police was informed about a mob's presence in the campus much before the violence on January 5, but it ignored the messages. "It was informed at 3.00 pm and the messages were read at 3.07 pm, but the messages were ignored," the JNUSU claimed at a press conference. It was also alleged that the RSS-affiliated ABVP was involved in attacking women students and

■ The JNUSU alleged that the police was informed about a mob's presence in the campus much before the violence on January 5, but it ignored the messages

JNUSU office-bearers last week.

The students' Union said, "The ABVP members hit women students even on January 4 and when JNUSU general secretary Satish Chandra Yadav intervened, they attacked him as well." "Attackers targeted specific rooms in Sabarmati Hostel and even threw students from the balcony, but did not touch the room of an ABVP activist," it added. Meanwhile, members of the RSS-affiliated ABVP,

on Saturday, organised a major students' march inside the Delhi University denouncing alleged Left violence and supporting the CAA. The march started around 1.30 pm at DU's Arts Faculty and the students then proceeded to the Campus Law Centre, Ramjas College, Kirori Mal College, Hansraj College, and Daulat Ram College. The march culminated at the Swami Vivekananda statue inside the Arts Faculty. "Today's march is in support of CAA. This march is also against those who are trying to boycott exams and classes to hamper the academic calendar of students. It is against the violence which took place in JNU on January 5," Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) president Akshit Dahiya said. The marchers raised slogans in support of the new citizenship law and against Left parties.

Message asks students to boycott pan vendor

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

A poor pan vendor outside the Jawaharlal Nehru University campus is facing the heat as he is stuck in between the ongoing tussle of Right and Left wing, which is now costing him his livelihood. A WhatsApp forward message, which is purportedly going viral on social media, states "Boycott Sanjay Panshop." Under the "boycott trend," students are asking fellow students to boycott a panwallah near Hilltop. They claimed that he is a Sanghi (Right wing follower) and allegedly helped the masked goons in attacking the JNU students. According to the forwarded message,

Forwarded as received: #boycottsanjaypanshop Dear jnu friends, plz avoid buying anything (cold drinks, chocolate, cigarettes, edibles etc) from Sanjay pan shop, on opposite side of main gate (near Hill Top). Students eye witnessed that Sanjay Chaurasiya helped to identify jnu students to the mob, provoking Sanghi goons standing near north gate to attack students. It is open secret that he is a Sanghi and hard core supporter of abvp. Plz requesting you all to fully boycott Sanjay. He help the attack on the same students bcoz of whom his shop is running. It is time to #boycott Sanghis who took active part in the attack on our campus. 12/25

"Students eye witnessed that Sanjay Chaurasiya helped identify JNU students to the mob, provoking Sanghi goons standing near northgate to attack students. It is an open secret that he is a Sanghi and hardcore supporter of ABVP." Later, a video was also circulated on social sites where a person, who claimed to be Sanjay Chaurasiya, said that all these things were pure lie.

JNUSU prez Aishe meets Kerela CM, gets praised

AGE CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN. 11

Kerala chief minister Mr Pinarayi Vijayan met Jawaharlal Nehru University student's union president Aishe Ghosh at the Kerala House in New Delhi and congratulated her for leading the historic struggle. Mr Vijayan also gifted her a book on Saffar Hashmi 'Halla Bol' written by actor Sudhanva Deshpande. He said that the Sangh Parivar was under the illusion that it can silence the voice of JNU students by unleashing brute violence.

Later in a Facebook post, the chief minister said, "The JNU was leading a historic struggle and putting up strong resistance in the country's capital against the Sangh Parivar and its muscle power. The Sangh Parivar activists had entered the campus gone berserk a few days ago. The Sangh Parivar cannot silence the voice of students."

"JNU campus valiantly fought against the Sangh Parivar. Despite coming under bloody attack from goons and sustaining a grievous head injury, Ms Ghosh's came back to lead from the front," he added. "Her eyes reflect the power of JNU students struggle," the chief minister said while wishing the students all success in their fight for justice.

Nirbhay case: SC to hear curative plea Jan. 14

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court will consider on January 14 curative petition by Delhi gang-rape death row convicts — Vinay Sharma and Mukesh — seeking a relook at the top court judgment upholding their death sentence along with two other convicts Pawan Gupta and Akshay Kumar Singh.

A bench comprising Justice N.V. Ramana,

Justice Arun Mishra, Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman, Justice R. Bhanumathi and Justice Ashok Bhushan would consider the curative petition in their chambers by circulation.

A bench comprising then Justice Dipak Mishra, (who later became CJI and has since retired) Justice R. Bhanumathi and Justice Ashok Bhushan had on May 5, 2017, upheld the death sentence of the four convicts.

The curative petition is

■ The curative petition is considered and decided by a bench comprising the judges who had decided the case and two other judges.

considered and decided by a bench comprising the judges who had decided the case and two other judges. Since Justice

Mishra has retired, Justice Banumathi and Justice Bhushan are the only two judges who were part of the bench that had upheld the death sentence of the four. By a top court's earlier judgment, a case involving appeal against death sentence is heard by a bench of three judges and a curative petition seeking reconsideration of top court's judgment is considered by a five-judge bench. Vinay Sharma had moved the curative petition on January 8, 2020,

two days after a Delhi Court had issued the death warrants for all the four convicts in the 2012 gang-rape and murder case. The four, as per the death warrant, will be hanged on January 22 at 7 am in Delhi's Tihar Jail.

Curative petition by Vinay Kumar Sharma has sought the setting aside of the May 05, 2017, top court judgment upholding the death sentence awarded by the trial court and confirmed by the Delhi High Court.

Gr. Noida SHO suspended for dereliction of duty

AGE CORRESPONDENT NOIDA, JAN. 11

A station house officer (SHO) and three sub-inspectors of a police station in Greater Noida have been suspended for dereliction of duty in connection with a loot-and-murder case, officials said on Saturday.

SHO Manoj Pathak and SIs Veerpal Singh Tomar, Rajendra Kumar, and Maan Singh of Bistrakh police station were suspended on Friday night after a probe by circle officer (Greater Noida 3) Rajeev Kumar Singh into

their lax approach in the case, a police spokesperson said.

Also, a sub-inspector in charge of the Cherry County police post in Greater Noida (West) has been taken off duty and sent to the police lines for "unsatisfactory" work approach, the spokesperson added.

The case pertains to private firm employee Gaurav Chandel.

The case of Chandel's loot and death is now being probed by Phase II police station and officials are yet to make any breakthrough.

Iraqi undergoes surgery for rare tumour

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN 11

A team of doctors at a city hospital performed surgery to cure a 27-year-old Iraqi woman of a rare recurrent tumour 'Ameloblastoma' to help her eat food properly after a gap of more than three years. The tumour sized 3X3 cm was removed from the lower jawbone of the patient.

According to doctors, Rasha Mohammad was initially treated in her home country for the tumour, which was resected and a reconstruction plate placed to bridge the gap in the jawline.

■ A team of doctors at Fortis Hospital, Vasant Kunj, performed surgery to cure her of the rare tumour and help her eat food properly after a gap of more than 3 years

However, as this rare recurrent tumour — ameloblastoma — relapsed, the lower jaw got maligned that proved difficult to bite, chew and eat food properly. The relapsed tumour on the

right side of her lower jawbone also resulted in physical disfigurement. Consequently, the right side of the face was depressed with a deviation of the chin.

A team of doctors at Fortis Hospital, Vasant Kunj, performed surgery to cure her of the rare tumour and help her eat food properly after a gap of more than three years.

"Ms Rasha Mohammad was taken for surgery where the tumour was removed along with the involved jaw, bone and chin with adequate margins making sure nothing is left behind. Bone from the right iliac crest (part

of hip bone) was removed, shaped into Neo jaw and auto transplanted to form the right jaw and chin," said head- Breast, Head and Neck Oncology Surgery, Fortis Hospital Vasant Kunj, Dr Mandeep Malhotra.

"The entire surgery took 7 hours. We have been able to achieve more than expected for the patient. The tumour has been removed, the jaw has been reconstructed and the patient's looks are brought back to normal. She can bite properly and eat normal food. Dental rehabilitation of the newly reconstructed RT jaw is planned," he added.



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

THE ASIAN AGE

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

— Aaron Finch, Australia skipper

SHORT TAKES

Got no demons in my head: Maxwell

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

Stop comparing openers: Kohli

Pune: India skipper Virat Kohli doesn't endorse the idea of pitting two in-form teammates 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 where Rohit Sharma will be back from his break. "All three openers are pretty strong players, and it's great to have players playing well in the team. It gives you options. But I think people need to stop pitting players against each other. It's all about a team game. I don't endorse this idea of putting people in the team against each other," Kohli said. Kohli is happy that 2020 has started on a bright note with a convincing series win. "We have started on the right track, chasing (in) one game and setting one game. Two very clinical performances, so I am happy. Just the confidence of getting that 200 mark every now and then will put us in a good stead." — PTI

Scorching Sunny

Gavaskar questions Dhoni's long break from game

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

The 38-year-old has not played since that heart-breaking defeat but is likely to make a comeback with the IPL. Asked if Dhoni can make India's T20 World Cup squad, Gavaskar said, "Fitness is something that I can't tell you anything at all. The question that needs to be asked is of MSD himself. He has not made himself available to play for India since 10th of July (9th actually).

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

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

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

amount is no match to the millions the IPL stars earn.

"IPL dominates Ranji Trophy. Unless their match fees are increased substantially, it will be considered an orphan and poor cousin of Indian cricket," Gavaskar said.

"I think 26 percent of the BCCI revenue goes to the players, out of which 13 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 this. The disparity that you see between

IPL players, who don't always play first class cricket, and those who play all the domestic games, about 80 days and somebody who plays 14 days of IPL.

"There is big disparity. I am talking about the uncapped players. Hopefully that will be narrowed down as much as possible."

On ICC's proposal to trim Test cricket to four days from five, he added: "What I think doesn't matter. It is what the current players think that matters. They should be consulted before BCCI takes a call."

— PTI

Sunil Gavaskar

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, first at the Jamia Milia University against the CAA and then due to violence by a masked attackers at 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



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

RANJI | TROPHY

Akshay & Aditya bowl Bengal out

Nagpur, Jan. 11: Off-break bowler Akshay Wakhare and slow left-arm orthodox Aditya Sarvate were deadly on a spinner-friendly track as defending champions Vidarbha bowled out Bengal for a paltry 170 here on the first day of a Ranji Trophy group A encounter.

At stumps, Vidarbha were 89 for 3 with skipper Faiz Fazal (51) being dismissed off the final delivery of the day by off-spinner Arnab Nandi. The nature of the pitch is an indicator that the match is likely to end inside three days.

Barring former skipper Manoj Tiwary (48) and the injured Ritwick Roy Chowdhury (27), none of other Bengal players were able to cross 20-run mark. Wakhare (5/56 in 19 overs) and Sarvate (4/53 in 20 overs) made life miserable on a track where there was turn. Such was there dominance that team's biggest star Umesh Yadav (1/19) bowled only six overs in two spells.

Mulani, Tare rescue Mumbai

Shams Mulani (87) and Aditya Tare (69 batting) raised a 155-run partnership with fighting half-centuries to help Mumbai finish the opening day of their Ranji Trophy Group 'B' match against Tamil Nadu at 284 for six in Chennai, on Saturday.

Electing to bat after winning the toss, the visitors were in a spot of bother as lanky left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore (3/77) and ace off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (3/58) struck at regular intervals to leave them five down.

Baba Aparajith-led Tamil Nadu as Vijay Shankar was drafted into the India 'A' team for the New Zealand tour and left to join the squad. Kishore got



Tamil Nadu's Sai Kishore celebrates a Mumbai wicket.

— PTI

into the act first and picked up the first three wickets in the opening session.

— PTI

BRIEF SCORES

■ **At Nagpur:** Bengal 170 in 56 overs (Manoj Tiwary 48, Akshay Wakhare 5/56, Aditya Sarvate 4/53) vs Vidarbha 89/3 in 32 overs (Faiz Fazal 51, Shreyan Chakraborty 1/20, Arnab Nandi 1/19).

■ **At Ongole:** Hyderabad 225 in 77.5 overs (Jaweed Ali 98, KV Sasikanth 5/60, Yarra Prithvi Raj 3/45) vs Andhra 13 for no loss.

■ **At Rajkot:** Saurashtra 296 for 2 in 90 overs (Cheteshwar Pujara 162 batting, Sheldon Jackson 99 batting; J Suchith 2/85) vs Karnataka.

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

Pujara enters elite list with 50th ton

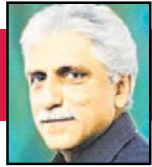
Rajkot, Jan. 11: Cheteshwar Pujara on Saturday joined a select group of cricketing greats by smashing his 50th first-class century during Saurashtra's Ranji Trophy group 'B' match against Karnataka, here.

Pujara warmed up nicely for the upcoming Test series in New Zealand with stylish 162 off 238 balls that had 17 fours and a six. Pujara, joined an elite list of nine Indians led by Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid.

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

Among current active Test players, 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

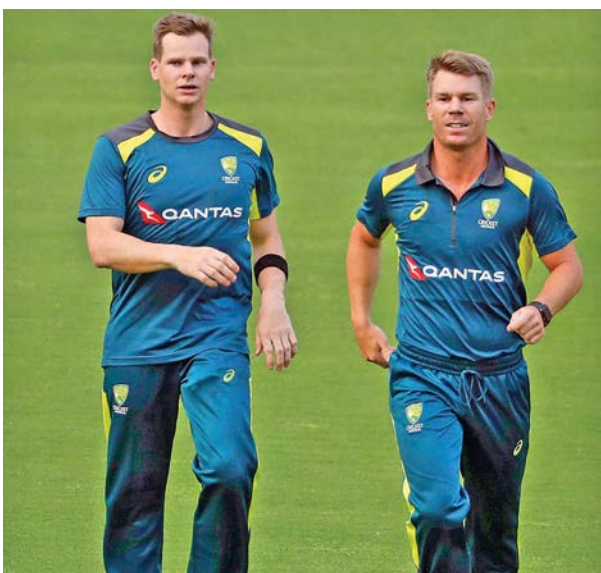


Ayaz Memon Over The Top

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

Maestro Steve Smith got hit on the head in the second Ashes match at Lord's. 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 1459 runs in just 14 Tests. His form since his recall to the Test side in the Ashes series has been Bradmanesque, to use a cliché. So much so that he's upstaged both Smith and Warner in this period.



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

— AP

home this season, India haven't really been stretched.

South Africa are in make-over mode and impoverished of talent when here, Bangladesh were hit by controversy surrounding major domo Shakib Al Hasan who missed the tour (along with injured Tamim Iqbal), and Sri Lanka, as mentioned, were there in body, but not in mind.

All three teams were easy meat for Virat Kohli's team, ravenous for success. An Australia side brimming with confidence after a fine home season will be a far, far tougher challenge. Given the talent on view, in

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, Kuldeep/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

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 Cricket Australia ostensibly supports) 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 as more and more players, especially the big names (current and retired) have also voiced their opinion.

There is no easy solution that the ICC's Technical Committee can pick on when it meets to address the issue.

What's becoming clear, however, is that some changes — irrespective of the tenure of the match — may be necessary for Test cricket to survive the Tsunami of T20.

TEAM SELECTION | FOR NEW ZEALAND TOUR

Pandya fails fitness test, return could be 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, instead of 15. With the India A team's shadow tour coinciding with the seniors' visit, it gives the selectors an option to draft players on SOS basis if the need arises.

The selectors will primarily focus on zeroing in on the core for white ball cricket

considering that this is a T20 World Cup year. While the T20 squad that played against Sri Lanka in the just-concluded series all but picks itself, Pandya was expected to be included once he proved his fitness in the warm-up games. 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. — PTI



Hardik Pandya

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 chat show 'Koffee with Karan'.

Pandya was indefinitely suspended by BCCI for making outrageous remarks on women and subsequently let 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 than just being in your cocoon," Pandya told 'India Today'.

"I realised that this is kind of an exam that is coming at a difficult phase which you have to get through. I then shifted my focus to my game and forgot what happened." — PTI



Title at stake

Karolina Pliskova rallied from a set down to beat Naomi Osaka 6-7, (10-12), 7-6, (7/3), 6-2 in an epic three-set semifinal at Brisbane International

Games

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THE ASIAN AGE

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Rashid continues impressive run

Hong Kong, Jan. 11: Rashid Khan rocketed to the third place with a card of seven under 63 as three Indians were inside top ten at the end of third round of the Hong Kong Open, here on Saturday.

SSP Chawrasia dropped a bogey on the 18th to slip to tied-seventh at eight-under total, carding seven under 63. Shiv Kapur lapsed on the front nine with three bogeys in his 69 and was tied-ninth at seven-under.

Rashid is four shots behind leader, Wade Ormsby (66).

Australia's Ormsby remained as the player to catch after he signed for a four-under-par 66 to head into the final round.

S Chikkarangappa (69) was tied-39th while Rahil Gangjee (69) and Ajeeteesh Sandhu (72) were tied-45th.

Aman Raj (72) was tied-57th and Jyoti Randhawa was disqualified for turning in a wrong scorecard.

Thailand's Gunn Charoenkul (65) was second while Rashid, Terry Pilkadaris (64), Taewoo Kim (66) and Jazz Janewattananond (67) were tied-third.

The man in form and on fire on Saturday was Rashid. He had eight birdies against just one bogey. He birdied third, fifth and sixth and dropped a shot on ninth, but then strung together four birdies in a row from 10th to 13th and added another on 18th.

"I came to this week on Tuesday feeling sick as well. So I wasn't expecting to be in contention. I got better now and I told myself that I have played the course before and I should try my best to play well. Luckily, I did and I'm scoring well," Rashid said.

"It was the same thing for me the first two days too. I was hitting it really well and I hitting it close also but didn't really hole any putts. Today, I hit the ball bad but still got a good result. I made a lot of birdies and I holed some really good putts," Rashid further added.

Chawrasia was finding it difficult to find fairways on Saturday and managed just six of the 14 as compared to 12 and 10 on the first two days. He needed 30 putts and had just three birdies against two bogeys.

Kapur found only six fairways and only 53 per cent greens in regulation but putted decently with just 27 putts for his 69. — PTI



India's Shiv Shankar Prasad Chawrasia tees off during the third round of the Hong Kong Open golf tournament at the Hong Kong Golf Club on Saturday. — AFP

Bach wants no complacency

Lausanne, Jan. 11: IOC president Thomas Bach insisted on Friday any decision to ban Russia from international sporting events as punishment for doping must be "water-proof" and not pave a way for "total confusion".

With less than 200 days to go before the Tokyo Olympics, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has sent its case for the exclusion of Russia to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

CAS, the world's highest sport court, must decide whether to confirm the four-year ban WADA imposed on Russia last month or consider Moscow's case against the epic sanction.

Bach, speaking at the 135th session of the International Olympic Committee, said CAS has to make a clearcut decision over whether Russia is to be banned from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing as well as the 2022 football World Cup.

"What is important for the IOC and the international federations is that we get a decision which does not leave room for any kind of interpretation," Bach told a news conference.

"If there is room for interpretation...This will lead to real, total confusion. This decision must be water-proof. This is the key," he added.

Sources told AFP the CAS decision would not be made before May.

The Tokyo Olympics get under way on July 24. "Unfortunately the speed of the procedure is not in our hands. We hope for a decision as soon as possible, in order to be able to make all the necessary arrangements. This relates to the athletes but also to all other questions," added the IOC chief.

Newly-elected WADA president Witold Banka said he was satisfied that the case is moving forwards.

"We are not yet at the end of this saga," said the former 400-metre runner from Poland. — AFP

Spain pip Australia

Nadal leads team to ATP Cup final, to face Serbia

Sydney, Jan. 11: Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic will face each other in the final of the inaugural ATP Cup after winning epic three-set matches Saturday to steer Spain and Serbia into the decider.

World No.1 Nadal ground down pumped-up Australian Alex de Minaur to guide the Davis Cup champions through their semifinal while Djokovic battled past Russia's Daniil Medvedev.

Under the format of the innovative team event in Sydney, the top-ranked singles players from each country play each other, ensuring the two legends clash for a 55th time since their first showdown in 2006.

World No.2 Djokovic leads the head-to-heads 28-26, including beating his arch-rival in the Australian Open final last year.

Nadal outlasted De Minaur 4-6, 7-5, 6-1 after unflappable teammate Roberto Bautista Agut tamed Nick Kyrgios 6-1, 6-4.

Djokovic had an equally tough time against impressive fifth-ranked Medvedev, coming through a top-draw contest 6-1, 5-7, 6-4 on the back of Dusan Lajovic beating Karen Khachanov 7-5, 7-6 (7/1).

De Minaur had a furious start, breaking Nadal in the opening game of the match and then keeping the pressure on, restricting the Spaniard's trademark forehand to take the first set in 46 minutes.

Full of energy, his serve was on fire and he was winning the baseline rallies, but Nadal weathered the onslaught and finally won a break point, converting to take the second set.

De Minaur was deflated and the fight went out of him as the 19-time Grand Slam showed him who was boss, racing through the deciding set.

Sixteen-time Grand Slam winner and World No.2 Novak Djokovic pulled out on Saturday as he guides Serbia at the ATP Cup in Sydney, where they have made the final. Barty denied beginning the season as the top-ranked player in front of her home fans had put extra pressure on.

"I'm just trying to do the best that I can and obviously... Try and play my best tennis," Barty, who is assured of keeping the top ranking through to the end of the Australian Open, said after her Brisbane exit on Thursday. — AFP



It was an exceptional match. Lots of rallies and very exhausting. Daniil Medvedev is one of the best players in the world and he showed today why.

— **NOVAK DJOKOVIC**
Serbian tennis player, after routing Russia's Daniil Medvedev at ATP Cup



Rafael Nadal of Spain celebrates after winning his men's singles match against Alex de Minaur of Australia at the ATP Cup tennis tournament in Sydney on Saturday. Nadal won 4-6, 7-5, 6-1. — AFP

Serena puts on a masterclass

Auckland, Jan. 11: Serena Williams delivered a masterclass in her semifinal at the WTA Auckland Classic on Saturday, needing only 43 minutes to down rising star Amanda Anisimova and set up a showdown against Jessica Pegula.

The unsung and unseeded Pegula stunned Caroline Wozniacki in a three-set semifinal 3-6, 6-4, 6-0.

Top-seed Williams, at her imperious best, rapidly eliminated third-seed Anisimova 6-1, 6-1.

It highlighted the gulf between the 38-year-old, the women's tennis figurehead for the past two decades, and the next generation of players led by the 18-year-old Anisimova.

The mother of two-year-old Olympia said she had been working hard to juggle tennis and motherhood as she targets a 24th Grand Slam at the Australian Open later in the month.

The former No.1 was all power and precision as she dominated the centre of the court and moved the teenager around, running down Anisimova's drop shots and blunting opportunities for the young player to unleash



Ekaterina Alexandrova poses with the Shenzhen Open trophy after defeating Elena Rybakina 6-2, 6-4 in their women's singles final of Saturday. — AFP

her telling forehand. "I was definitely in the zone today. I knew I was playing a really great player and an even better person and I knew I had to come out serious," Williams said.

At one point Carlisle got into a verbal exchange with James after Carlisle complained to the officials that James was getting off easy compared to his young star.

Carlisle, who was also upset at his players for their poor defence, got thrown out of the game early in the fourth quarter for arguing with the officials. — AFP

BIANCA, POTRO OUT OF FIRST GRAND SLAM

Paris, Jan. 11: US Open champion Bianca Andreescu has withdrawn from the Australian Open due to a knee injury she sustained at the end of last season.

"It was a very tough decision to make as I love to play in Melbourne but I have to respect the recuperation plan for my knee and body," the 19-year-old Canadian tweeted.

Andreescu, the World No.6, injure her knee at the season-ending WTA Finals in Shenzhen, China, ending an amazing year for her.

During a breakout season, which she started ranked 178, Andreescu compiled a remarkable 48-7 record and won her first Grand Slam after defeating Serena Williams in the final at Flushing Meadows. She also won at Indian Wells and Toronto in 2019.

On the other hand, former US Open champion Juan Martin del Potro on Saturday pulled out of the Australian Open as he continues to struggle with his recovery from knee surgery.

Potro, who made the last eight at Melbourne Park in 2009 and 2012, has not played since slipping and hurting his knee on the grass in the Wimbledon tune-up at Queen's in June.

"Our two-time quarter-finalist Juan Martin del Potro has withdrawn from Aus Open 2020 as he continues to recover from a knee injury," the Australian Open tweeted.

The injury-plagued Del Potro reached a career high of third in the world but has slipped down the rankings to 120. — AFP

Former World No.1 Wozniacki, who has announced she will retire after the Australian Open, arrived at her penultimate tournament determined to win in Auckland at her seventh attempt to add to her 30 WTA titles.

Instead, it was the 25-year-old Pegula, the world 82nd-ranked player who won her only WTA title at the Washington Open last year, who came out on top.

The unseeded Pegula was broken twice when losing the first set before adopting an aggressive approach that fifth-seed Wozniacki had no answer for.

She wore the Dane down in the second set and then won every game in the third.

"I knew if I was going to play defensive I was not going to win that battle, she's like the best in the world at that, so I had to step in and take my chances and trust my game," said the unseeded Pegula. — AFP

KANTER TO JOIN POLITICS POST NBA CAREER

Washington, Jan. 11: Turkish NBA star Enes Kanter renewed his criticism of Turkey President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and hinted at a future in politics in two interviews released Friday.

The Swiss-born Boston Celtics ace, who hopes to become a US citizen next year, spoke to The Hill newspaper and CBS News, saying he was sad to see Erdogan meet with US President Donald Trump at the White House last November.

"You're the president meeting with, I will say, dictators like Erdogan, that definitely frustrates me. It makes me really sad," the NBA star Kanter told the Hill. — AFP



I was just trying to be aggressive and trying to set the tone for the offence.

— **LeBron James**, American star basketball player, after defeating Dallas Mavericks 129-114

SHORT TAKES

Rapinoe slams IOC for protest policy

Los Angeles: United States World Cup icon Megan Rapinoe Friday vowed that athletes "will not be silenced" after the International Olympic Committee warned against political protests at the Tokyo Games.

"So much being done about the protests," Rapinoe said in an Instagram post. Rapinoe's comments were accompanied by a graphic showing fists raised through the interlocking rings — under the crossed out words "kneeling, hand gestures, signs."

The post comes after IOC chief Thomas Bach reiterated that athletes, coaches, trainers and officials are banned from political protests on the field of play, at the Olympic Village, during the opening and closing ceremonies and on the medal podium. — AFP

Barty sets sights on Adelaide event

Adelaide, Australia: Ashleigh Barty plans to use next week's ATP-WTA Adelaide International to put the final polish on her Australian Open preparations after a shock defeat in Brisbane.

The World No.1 headlines the new event starting Sunday, part of a revised calendar in the run-up to the opening Grand Slam of the year which begins on January 20.

The Australian star will be desperate for court time after crashing at the first hurdle this week to American qualifier Jennifer Brady at the Brisbane International.

The men's draw in Adelaide is spearheaded by Australian Alex De Minaur after World No.2 Novak Djokovic pulled out on Saturday as he guides Serbia at the ATP Cup in Sydney, where they have made the final.

Barty denied beginning the season as the top-ranked player in front of her home fans had put extra pressure on. "I'm just trying to do the best that I can and obviously... Try and play my best tennis," Barty, who is assured of keeping the top ranking through to the end of the Australian Open, said after her Brisbane exit on Thursday. — AFP

MARSEILLE EDGE PAST RENNES

Rennes, France: Kevin Strootman scored a late winner as Marseille edged out high-flying Rennes 1-0 on Friday to move within four points of Ligue 1 leaders Paris Saint-Germain.

Andre Villas-Boas' men clinched victory in a tight encounter when Dutch midfielder Strootman volleyed into an empty net after Dimitri Payet's 84th-minute free-kick hit the post.

The visitors stretch their unbeaten run to nine games and moved eight points clear of the Bretons with the win. "A draw might have been fairer for a match like that," Villas-Boas said.

Reigning champions PSG have two games in hand on Marseille and face Robert Moreno's Monaco on Sunday and again three days later in a rescheduled match.

Marseille are bidding for a first French title since 2010 and underlined their credentials as PSG's closest challengers by ending third-placed Rennes' five-game winning streak.

Visiting goalkeeper Steve Mandanda only had to make one difficult save to deny Benjamin Bourigeaud just before half-time at Roazhon Park, after Alvaro had struck the woodwork for Marseille.

On Saturday, struggling Lyon visit Bordeaux, while Lille have the chance to leapfrog Rennes and move into the Champions League places when they face Dijon on Sunday. — AFP

James stars as Lakers win

Los Angeles, Jan. 11: LeBron James finished with 35 points and 16 rebounds while battling a virus as the Los Angeles Lakers won their seventh straight game with a 129-114 win over the Dallas Mavericks.

The flu-weakened James was a questionable start against Dallas, but the Lakers couldn't afford to be without him as they were already missing their leading scorer Anthony Davis because of an injury.

"I was just trying to be aggressive and trying to set the tone for the offence and defence," said James, who moved into fourth place ahead of Michael Jordan on the NBA all-time field goal list.

● **LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers garnered 35 points, including 16 rebounds as the hosts beat Dallas Mavericks 129-114.**

● **James now has 12,197 field goals against his name and moves closer to Wilt Chamberlain, who is in third place with 12,681.**

James now has made 12,197 field goals to move closer to Wilt Chamberlain, who is in third place with 12,681.

Davis, who leads the team in scoring with a 27.1 average, took a hard fall against the New York Knicks and suffered a bruised behind.

Both clubs were without key players on Friday. The Mavericks have played their past six

games without 7-foot-3 forward Kristaps Porzingis, who is second on the team in scoring with a 17.3 average.

Leading scorer Luka Doncic finished with 25 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists but once again the Lakers tried to take the young star off his game by bumping him every chance they got. Doncic finished with six turnovers.

Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle complained earlier this week that teams were "beating the crap" out of Doncic this season and he took exception to some of the calls on Friday night. Doncic was knocked in the head a couple of times in the Mavs previous three games with the Lakers this season.

At one point Carlisle got into a verbal exchange with James after Carlisle complained to the officials that James was getting off easy compared to his young star.

Carlisle, who was also upset at his players for their poor defence, got thrown out of the game early in the fourth quarter for arguing with the officials. — AFP



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

Games

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THE ASIAN AGE

SUNDAY | 12 JANUARY 2020 | NEW DELHI



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

— Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Manchester United boss

SHORT TAKES

Racist City fans handed 5-yr ban

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

Two Indians on top at Delhi Open chess

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

ARROWS TO HOST TRAU IN I-LEAGUE

Vasco: All India Football Federation's developmental side Indian Arrows will host TRAU FC in the I-League here on Sunday. The Arrows, after six games, find themselves rooted to the bottom of the standings. However, the young Arrows have shown signs of resilience, giving every team a run for their money until the final whistle. Despite falling short against Mohun Bagan in their previous game, 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 their Sunday opponents, he added, "TRAU, in their last match, found the taste of victory and facing them now would be really challenging. "They are improving constantly and we have to be at the top of our game to get some points." TRAU, on the other hand, lifted themselves off the foot of the league standings following their maiden victory over city rivals Neroca. Another stat to be taken into account is that the Tiddim 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

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 fellow forward to curl into the bottom 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.

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 striker, David Moyes' men thought they had snatched an equaliser in stoppage-time when Robert Snodgrass fired home from Rice's pass.

But, with West Ham celebrating wildly, the goal was checked by VAR and eventually ruled 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



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

— AP

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, to a country with a long-condemned record on human rights.

Atletico scored two late goals to beat Barca 3-2, with a derby final now to come against Real Madrid.

When the Spanish Football Federation signed a three-year contract worth 120 million euros (\$133.4 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 coach Ernesto Valverde rushing back to the surface. — AFP

Odisha enjoy home comfort

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

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

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

The game got off to a slow and cautious start with both teams gauging each other. The first chance of the match fell for the visitors in the 14th minute when Amine Chermiti fed Modou Sougou down the right side of the box. But no Mumbai player could turn 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 ball away after a bit of pinball in the box.

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



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

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

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

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

ATK FACE BLASTERS

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

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

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

BAGAN SET TO MERGE WITH ATK TO PLAY IN ISL

Kolkata, Jan. 11: Kolkata giants Mohun Bagan are all set to merge with ATK in their bid to play in the country's top tier Indian Super League during the 2020-21 season.

While both Mohun Bagan as well as ATK brass remained non-committal, there remains a strong possibility that an announcement might be on cards by the end of this week.

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

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

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

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

KHELO INDIA | YOUTH GAMES

Gymnasts continue gold rush on Day 2

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

As many as seven 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 teammate Shreya Pravin Bhangle meant that she was denied a sweep of the

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 by 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 ahead of Norwich's visit to Old Trafford on Saturday. "I am here to do what I think is best for the club and what I feel is best." — AFP

XAVI TO REPLACE BOSS VALVERDE AT BARCELONA?

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

The club's sporting director Eric Abidal has reportedly spoken to the boss of Qatari side Al Sadd about arriving on a two-year-deal, with radio station Cadena Ser claiming the former midfielder could return this season if Valverde is sacked.

Al Sadd's general manager Turki Al-Ali 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 first home and he must return there in the future, but as of today, Xavi is the coach of Al Sadd," Al-Ali said in a statement.

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

● **As many as seven meet records were bettered on the opening day of athletics competition at the Khelo India Youth Games**

five gold medals in the under-17 rhythmic gymnastics competition.

Athletics action got under 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 and Vivek 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-21 5000m witnessed a close contest with defending champion Ajeet Kumar winning by the slimmest margin against a determined Sunil Dawar.

The photo finish camera had to be consulted before Ajeet Yadav was declared winner by a 100 of a second with a timing of 14:39.99s, a new meet record.

Uttarakhand broke into the medals chart with Ankita's gold in the girls Under-21 5000m with a new meet record time of 16:38.75. — PTI