



NEARBY



BJP to fight Delhi polls on national, local issues

NEW DELHI  
In a major shift in its campaign strategy for the Delhi Assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party will rake up issues such as the new citizenship law and NRC and also focus on local issues plaguing the city.

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AAP's Bhagwant Mann booked for rioting

CHANDIGARH  
AAP's Punjab unit president Bhagwant Mann and some party legislators have been booked on charges of rioting during a protest here against power tariff hike.

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# CAA meant to give citizenship, not take it away, says PM Modi

Those opposing amended law fuelling misconception among the youth, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was aimed at giving citizenship and not taking it away.

Addressing a gathering of youth at Belur Math, the headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission, in West Bengal's Howrah district, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, Mr. Modi accused those opposing the amended law of "playing political games" and "fuelling misconception among the youth".

'A lot of questions'

"What is there in this Act? Why was it needed? There are a lot of questions in the minds of the youth which have been fuelled by various people. Lot of youth have awareness. Yet, there are



Sharing views: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with monks of the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur Math on Sunday. • PTI

some who are victims of misconception, rumours. It is our responsibility to make them understand," he said.

Mr. Modi's remarks on the day, also observed as International Youth Day, assumes significance as there were widespread protests in Kolkata against the CAA during

his two-day visit, particularly by youth and students.

He asked the audience whether people who faced "religious persecution in neighbouring countries should be left to die".

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## None can stop rollout of Act: Amit Shah

STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said no matter how much the Congress opposed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the government would rest only after granting citizenship to members of six minority religions from three neighbouring countries, and no one could stop it.

"They are sons and daughters of the country too. Even they enjoy the same right over the country as you and I," he said at a rally to create awareness about the law in Jabalpur.

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## J&K officer may have been ferrying Hizb ultras to Delhi

Officials suspect they were planning a hit on Republic Day

PEERZADA ASHIQ

SRINAGAR

The Jammu & Kashmir police on Sunday said they are investigating the role of a gallantry award-winning senior police officer, Davinder Singh, who was ferrying two Hizbul Mujahideen militants, including wanted 'commander' Syed Naveed Mushtaq alias Babu, in a civilian car on Saturday.

They are suspected to have been headed to Delhi and may have been targeting the Republic Day function in the national capital.

"Based on an intelligence input provided by the Shopian police, two terrorists and one police officer were held during a search of a civilian car on the Srinagar-Jammu Highway. The police officer will be treated as a terrorist. The ongoing operation started on Saturday. Multiple agencies are questioning them," Inspector



Davinder Singh

General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar, said.

House raided

Top police sources said the house of the Deputy Superintendent of Police in Srinagar's Indira Nagar was also raided and "one AK-47 and two pistols were recovered."

DSP Singh's house shares a boundary wall with the Army's 15 Corps headquarters at Badami Bagh.

Awarded the 'Police Medal for Gallantry' in August 2018, he is at present posted

with the anti-hijacking wing of the police at the Srinagar International Airport. Sources said Mr. Singh was the officer in-charge who provided security and received a 15-member foreign envoys' delegation on January 9 at the airport.

"Mr. Singh has applied for four days' leave," the police officer said. Preliminary reports suggest the officer and the militants were going to New Delhi, just two weeks ahead of the Republic Day.

The police officer, who worked with the special anti-militancy Special Operations Group in 2002, faced a controversy when Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru, in a letter, named him. Guru claimed Mr. Singh had asked him to take another Parliament attacker Mohammad "to Delhi and arrange for him a flat for his stay and also purchase a car for him".

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## JNU attack state-sponsored: Congress panel

'Vice-Chancellor was the mastermind; he should be sacked immediately and put under probe'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The January 5 attack against students and faculty members of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) was "state-sponsored", a Congress fact-finding committee said on Sunday.

The four-member committee accused Vice-Chancellor M. Jagadeesh Kumar of being the "mastermind" of the attack, and demanded his immediate dismissal and a criminal investigation against him, faculty members who conspired with the attackers and the company charged with security on the campus. "This attack was state-sponsored. There is absolutely no doubt about it... The question is what did the administration and the Delhi police do to stop it," Mahila



This attack was state-sponsored. There is absolutely no doubt about it... The question is what did the administration and the Delhi police do to stop it  
SUSHMITA DEV, MAHILA CONGRESS CHIEF

Congress chief Sushmita Dev, a member of the committee, said during the release of the report. She said there was sufficient evidence to prove that the perpetrators were from right-wing factions.

"I have no doubt that what happened on January 5 is pre-planned, pre-mediated and a criminal conspiracy," Ms. Dev said.

She pointed to the disconnection of power supply and

the role of the police during the attack and the aftermath, including the failure to file attempt-to-murder charges against the perpetrators, despite the head injuries to victims.

Noting that there was "overwhelming *prima facie* evidence that [police officers] facilitated the criminal elements on the campus," the report said their negligence and complicity brought the Home Ministry

also under suspicion. "The remarks by the Home Minister on the CAA-NRC agitations and punishing of *tukde tukde* gang also emboldened the perpetrators of violence on the JNU campus," the report said.

'Roll back fee hike'

The committee called for an independent judicial inquiry and an immediate roll-back of the hostel fee increase, the issue that had led to protests by students.

The Vice-Chancellor's role "points to connivance and complicity with the attackers," said the panel, noting that Dr. Kumar did not allow the police to enter the campus until 7.45 p.m. despite calls for help from students.

The report raises the issue of Internet shutdown on the

campus. While the FIR registered by the police says students disconnected the servers on January 3 and 4, the Vice-Chancellor's press statement said the servers were functioning on January 4 and many students registered themselves for the winter semester that day. The failure of the servers on January 5 raised questions about deliberate prevention of CCTV coverage to shield the attackers, it said.

"If you can reinstate the Internet connection and the CIS system on the 4th morning, why did not you reinstate that connection on 5th morning? Did you know there was going to be a violent attack because of which you wanted to ensure no CCTV coverage?" Ms. Dev asked.

STAFF REPORTER

AGARTALA

In a landmark order, the Tripura High Court has ordered the police to refrain from prosecuting a man who was earlier arrested over a social media post. Chief Justice Akil Kureshi also barred the police from making any further arrests in connection with the case.

The Chief Justice passed the order on Friday after lawyers moved the court against the arrest and harassment of Youth Congress activist Arindam Bhattacharjee over his post on a social media platform.

Mr. Bhattacharjee had in his Facebook page criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party's

online campaign in support of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and warned people to not dial a given phone number even by mistake.

"If you call 8866288662, all your data would go to hackers," he had commented in his post, inviting the ire of the BJP's IT Cell, which responded with a police complaint.

Govt. staff included

The Chief Justice in his order remarked that posting on social media was tantamount to a "fundamental right" applicable to all citizens, including government employees.

In compliance with the court's order, the police have

now erased Sections 120(B) and 153(A) of the Indian Penal Code from the First Information Report.

Subal Bhowmik, senior Congress leader, who had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha election from the West Tripura constituency, hailed the order. Mr. Bhowmik had organised protests outside the West Agartala police station after Mr. Bhattacharjee was detained.

"The order has been in line with the very essence of the Constitution. We hope police officers will henceforth adhere to the rule book and not try to act as henchmen of their political bosses," Mr. Bhowmik, himself a lawyer, told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

## Pongal spells peril for Salem's foxes

VIGNESH VIJAYAKUMAR

SALEM

With Kaanum Pongal, the fourth and final day of the harvest festival, less than a week away, Forest Department officials in Salem are gearing up to prevent an unusual *jallikattu* – one that uses foxes instead of bulls.

The *jallikattu*-like event using foxes, or *vanga nari* in Tamil, is usually organised on Kaanum Pongal on the outskirts of the district as villagers believe it will bring bountiful rain and good fortune.

According to Forest officials, villagers, mostly from Ranganoor, Chinnamanaikenpalayam and Vadugathampatti in Vazhapadi taluk, trap the foxes and bring them to the village temple.

Regular feature

The animals are muzzled and their hind legs tied with rope. After special rituals are conducted, the hapless animals are chased through the streets, much like bulls in the more conventional *jallikattu*. After the event, the animals are released into the forest.



A 2018 photo shows a fox trussed up ahead of the race.

Despite a ban, the event has been organised for decades now. District Forest Officer A. Periasamy said, "We have fined the violators earlier for organising the event and trespassing into forest areas and this year too, we will take stern action." Officials said foxes are a protected species under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and hunting or capturing them is prohibited.

V. Gokul, president of the Salem Nature Society, said, "The medium-sized Bengal foxes are generally found near agricultural areas. The animal undergoes cruel treatment in the name of this festival. The animal is gagged and the hind legs are tied. Capturing a wild animal itself is an offence, and this helpless animal is tortured in the name of the festival."



# BJP to fight Delhi polls on national and local issues

With evolving campaign strategy, the party will not only rake up issues such as the citizenship law and NRC but will also focus on pollution and water quality

**JATIN ANAND**  
NEW DELHI

The BJP's bid to instal a "triple engine government [same party at the Centre, State and municipal corporation level]" in the Capital will involve a delicate balance between raising national and local issues, say party insiders.

Addressing a rally at Ramlila Maidan on December 22, 2019, to kick off his party's campaign for the Delhi Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had attacked the Congress and other Opposition parties for spreading "lies and rumours" about the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and detention centres.

He barely touched upon local issues such as ownership rights for residents of illegal colonies or quality of potable water.

The rally was held on the eve of the Jharkhand election results where the BJP had followed its tested poll strategy to raise mainly national issues. The BJP ended up winning only 25 of the 81 Assembly seats in the State.

A fortnight after Mr. Modi's rally, BJP national president Amit Shah addressed booth-level workers in Delhi and said that national issues such as 'surgical strike following Pulwama attack' and the CAA were at the core of the party's electoral campaign.

### Strategy shift

But the Union Home Minister also indicated a shift in the party's campaign strategy.

Mr. Shah also talked about the "negative and obstructionist politics" of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in relation to non-implementation of Central government schemes in Delhi. In a departure from the past, Mr. Shah directly attacked Mr. Kejriwal, indicating the electoral significance of countering "AAP's work".

"Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and Arvind Kejriwal opposed the abolition of Article 370

and 35A, Triple Talaq, decision of Supreme Court on Ram temple, surgical strike and air strike done to avenge the Uri and Pulwama attack," Mr. Shah had said.

"We wanted to send the anti-national elements who raised slogans like "Bharat tere tukde tukde honge" in JNU to jail, but Kejriwal did not grant permission to prosecute them... We want to grant citizenship to Dalits and Sikh refugees but anti-Dalit AAP and Congress opposed it," he had said.

He exhorted party workers to undertake a door-to-door campaign to apprise people of "the achievements of the Modi government and the fraud of the Kejriwal government".

Party insiders said the campaign was supposed to revolve around seamless governance at all three levels of administration in Delhi, resting squarely on the shoulders of PM Modi, as it sought to make the Assembly elections "mostly national".

"This approach will now be tweaked keeping in mind several happenings in a city where governments and issues intersect, they added.

### Party line

Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari took the party's line forward and attacked the Congress and AAP of creating an atmosphere of "confusion and falsehood regarding CAA".

"The frustrated Opposition parties are trying to push the youth into anarchy for its electoral gains by creating an atmosphere in Jamia and JNU, which is very condemnable... Whatever claims Kejriwal will make of having given benefits during the last five years, the BJP will do at least five times more work for the people of Delhi," he said.

BJP Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Goel said both national and local issues were driving the party's campaign in the Capital, which was being carried out "under the leadership of PM Modi". "The party cannot turn away from the



Clockwise from top left: Delhi Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma (centre) hands over an ownership document to a slum dweller on September 15, 1998; Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a rally in Ramlila Maidan in December 2019; Sushma Swaraj being sworn-in as Delhi Chief Minister on December 10, 1998. • THE HINDU ARCHIVES, SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR, PTI



fact that lies are deliberately being spread about CAA. As far as local issues are concerned, the party is not only telling citizens about the work done by the Modi-led Centre but also seeking suggestions that will be part of our vision document," he said.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta said both national and local issues were of "equal importance" and the party was working towards addressing the concerns of citizens on both fronts as part of its campaign.

"The AAP government had deliberately created obstructions in Phase IV of the Delhi Metro project, construction of the Regional Rapid Transit System as well as conferment of ownership rights to residents of unauthorised colonies. These were among the many Central-sponsored schemes aimed at bettering the lives of the people of the Capital, but blocked due to petty politics... we will tell the people about this," he added.

### New approach

After the defeat in Jharkhand, the initial strategy has been "modified" to a large extent, said sources.



**The local BJP leadership has been directed to keep their campaign within the spectrum of local issues... when it comes to CAA, they have been told to mainly take forward the campaign initiated by Amit Shah**

SENIOR BJP LEADER

A cross-section of leaders and sources told *The Hindu* that the party, which has been out of power in Delhi for over two decades, had initially sought to embark upon an aggressive, mainly national, electoral campaign. It will now be "relatively muted" and "more multi-faceted", they said.

The upcoming election has been quickly pegged by the party as a direct battle between PM Modi and CM Kejriwal – by erecting over 21,000 hoardings bearing the PM's face to reinforce his claim of having "removed the

blot of being unauthorised" from the foreheads of the residents of 1,731 colonies.

Party insiders said the move was taken not only due to the loss in Jharkhand but also because of the lesson it learnt by projecting a "CM face" in the last Assembly elections. It had projected Kiran Bedi as the CM face.

Subsequent steps in regard to its "evolving" strategy are in line with ongoing Assembly seat-specific surveys, which have revealed that the average voter is "not as responsive" to criticism of the AAP government's power and water subsidy schemes as expected, said a leader.

But the voters were "very enthused" with criticism of the allegedly obstructionist attitude of the AAP government when it came to the blocking of Central-sponsored schemes such as Ayushman Bharat, the leader said, adding: "They ask what the BJP has to offer over and above AAP's subsidies - mainly freebies - and services which have benefited them since it came to power."

A senior party leader said that while freebies were strictly "out of the question", the BJP was not averse to subsidising power, water and public transport for

"specific categories" of citizens based on socio-economic criteria.

Clarifying "doubts" regarding the CAA, countering the "anti-national" ways of the "tukde-tukde gang" and criticising alleged attempts to "spread violence" by AAP and the Congress, who were "instigating the minority community" in the name of the NRC, will be the main components of the national bit.

Air pollution, quality of potable water and questioning the AAP government's claims on health, public transportation and education will be the local issues that the party will focus on, the leader said.

"When the party president himself hits the ground as part of a public awareness campaign revolving around the CAA, it is evidence enough of how significant an issue it is for the party. However, the local leadership has been directed to keep its own campaign within the spectrum of local issues and when it comes to the CAA, to mainly take forward the campaign initiated by Mr. Shah," a source said.

"It would be wrong to say that the CAA and the NRC will not be electoral factors for the party in

Delhi. But it would also be incorrect to say that these will be the only issues on the basis of which we will seek votes," a senior party leader added.

Another senior leader said that a month was a long time in politics and the party's strategy would continue to evolve due to the "significant decisions" taken by the Modi government over the last six months.

A senior leader said that the conferment of ownership rights to the residents of unauthorised colonies and the in-situ rehabilitation of slum clusters would remain the mainstay of its campaign as they represented "an intersection" of both national and local political issues as well as "evidence" of the BJP "delivering on the promises it makes".

### Subsidy schemes

"As far as the AAP government's subsidy schemes are concerned, the BJP is more likely to modify them in a way that is sustainable as well as ensures that they benefit those depending on socio-economic criteria instead of a free-for-all in lieu of their votes," the leader added.

Academician and political analyst Manisha Priyam said the PM's face was the party's best bet. "The Lok Sabha election saw the BJP sweeping all seven seats in the city in the name of the PM... Given the fact that the Delhi BJP unit does not have a leader who can cater to the average Delhiite, the PM's face is certainly the party's best bet," he said.

Professor Pradip Kumar Datta of the Centre for Comparative Politics & Political Theory, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, said the BJP's dilemma stemmed from the "constituency specific" appeal of its local leaders. "Like the Congress, the BJP, as a large national party, has not allowed any local leader to become popular enough to be its face in Delhi. The BJP's winning card was and remains Mr. Modi. But his magic seems to be waning," he said.

## HC issues guidelines for appointing guardians

'Kerala HC rules can be used as framework for choosing guardian for comatose person'

**SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH**  
NEW DELHI

An individual who seek to be appointed as guardian for a person lying in comatose state will have to first approach the court for thorough verification, the Delhi High Court has said while issuing a slew of guidelines on the issue.

Justice Rajiv Shaktiher, in a significant ruling, said the guidelines framed by the Kerala High Court can be used as a framework for formulating guidelines that need to be applied in Delhi.

The guidelines state that a person who seek to be appointed as guardians shall in his or her petition to the court disclose the details of all tangible and intangible assets of such an individual. The court will then have the person lying in comatose examined by a duly constitut-



ed medical board which would include a neurologist.

The court will also direct the Sub-divisional Magistrate concerned or Tehsildar in whose jurisdiction the person lying in comatose is said to be located to carry out an enquiry to establish the veracity of the assertion. It will also gather material particulars concerning the person who approach the court for being appointed as guardians.

Any conflict of interest concerning the affairs of the

person lying in comatose state will be brought to the fore in the report generated during the course of enquiry, the guideline said.

"Ordinarily only that person will be appointed as guardian who is a spouse or a progeny of the person lying in comatose," the guideline said.

In the event, the person lying in comatose has neither a spouse nor any children or even any legal heirs or if he/she has such persons in his life but stands abandoned by them, subject to the permission of the court his next friend who wishes to be appointed as a guardian can approach the court with such a request.

### Alternative measure

As an alternative measure, the court could also direct the Department of Social

Welfare, Delhi government to appoint a public official such as a Social Welfare Officer or a person holding equivalent rank to act as the guardian of the person lying in comatose state. The person appointed as a guardian will have to submit every six months or within such period as the court may indicate in its order a report with the Registrar General of the High Court.

The report should have details of the transactions undertaken by the guardian in respect of the assets of the person lying in comatose state, the High Court said.

The court order came on a petition by daughters of a woman, who is in comatose state, seeking access to the Public Provident Fund which was opened and maintained by their deceased father.

## Start pension scheme for staff, HC tells Bhartiya Chikitsa Parishad

Decision should be taken within six months, says court

**SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH**  
NEW DELHI

The High Court has ordered the Delhi Bhartiya Chikitsa Parishad, which maintains register of Ayurvedic and Unani practitioners here, to introduce pension system for its employees.

Justice A.K. Chawla said that the decision should be taken within six months considering that it requires due consideration of various financial aspects by the Parishad, Delhi government and the Centre.

Justice Chawla ordered the authorities "to take a decision to introduce Pension Scheme to the employees of the Parishad from a date to be fixed and in doing so, the benefit of pension may be extended to the existing and also the retired/superannuated

employees, as an exception". The High Court's decision came on a plea by a former employee of the Parishad seeking to extend the pension rules as applicable to employees of Delhi government to the Parishad employees.

Previously, the Parishad was known as the Board of Ayurvedic and Unani System of Medicine (AUSM), which was constituted under East Punjab Ayurvedic and Unani Practitioners Act, 1949. Later, with the introduction of the Delhi Bhartiya Chikitsa Parishad Act, 1998, the Parishad substituted AUSM.

The plea claimed that the rules and regulations governing the employees of Delhi government were applicable to Parishad staff in all service matters. It claimed that the

Parishad forms part of the State and hence the conditions of service and the rules and the regulations governing the employees of Delhi government were applicable to the employees of the Parishad.

"When employees of the Parishad are shown to be beneficiaries under the Contributory PF Scheme, why they should not be extended the benefit of pension, does require due consideration," the court said.

"A consideration on the given aspect cannot be denied on the premise that the Parishad, as of now, was a self-sustaining body, without being the beneficiary of grants-in-aid as contended on its behalf. The statutory provisions cannot be ignored on the given premise," the HC noted.

### DELHI TODAY

**Talk:** An illustrated lecture on "Qualitative Aspects for Society of Strong Artificial Intelligence" by Dr. M. Radh Achuthan, Professor of Physics, Long Island University, USA at Conference Room I, India International Centre (IIC), 6.30 p.m.

**Music:** Lohri celebrations will feature a vocal recital by Sunanda Sharma from the Benaras Gharana who will bring alive the traditional folklore and rites of passage of Punjab, followed by a music performance by Punjabi Sufi singer, Rekha Raj at The Hub, Habitat World, India Habitat Centre, 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Portraits of Automobiles", a solo painting exhibition by Murali Sharma at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Thread through Asia" by French artist Guyseika at Galerie Romain Rolland, Alliance Française de Delhi, 72 Lodhi Estate, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at [cityeditor@delhi.thehindu.co.in](mailto:cityeditor@delhi.thehindu.co.in))



Artful protest



Shaheen Bagh protesters on Sunday put up art installations and painted large murals rejecting the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens, on the Noida-Kalindi Kunj Highway, which has been blocked for nearly a month now. Similar murals were also painted on the walls outside Jamia Millia Islamia. People of different faiths also came together to participate in a 'sarva dharma sambhava' ceremony. ■SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA; PTI



Tharoor addresses CAA protesters at Jamia Millia Islamia, calls for unity  
Cong. leader lauds the 'spirit of resistance' of the students

**SIDHARTH RAVI**  
NEW DELHI  
Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Sunday addressed a large group of protesters opposing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act at Jamia Millia Islamia, lauding their “spirit of resistance” and called for unity.



Congress MP Shashi Tharoor outside JMI during anti-CAA protest on Sunday. ■PTI

Chopra [Delhi Congress chief] and I will ever accept. We want an India where everyone is equal, everyone is free...You can be Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Sikh, it does not matter. If you are an Indian, you have the same rights, the same privileges, the same duties,” he added.

**‘A fight for all’**  
He said Jamia has always been one of the greatest universities in the country “but today, the greatest thing about Jamia, is your spirit. Your spirit of resistance. We stand with you, with the courage you have shown. This is a fight for all. Stay together, succeed together, live together, dream the same dream together. Jai Hind,” he said.  
The Congress MP along with Mr. Chopra also visited the protest site at Shaheen Bagh and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

BJP Mahila Morcha marches in favour of CAA

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
BJP’s Mahila Morcha on Sunday marched in support of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act from the party’s State office to Connaught place.

Addressing the gathering, BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi said the youth are being misled. She explained the purposes of the Act to those present, stating that during Partition and formation of Bangladesh, a large number of women were “married by force and pressurised to convert”. She also attacked the Opposition for “hatching conspiracy” by linking the CAA with the NPR, which she said was started by the previous UPA government. Mahila Morcha chief Poonam Parashar Jha said an awareness campaign regarding the Act will be soon launched.

5 detained for protesting

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
Five men associated with Asmita Theatre Group were detained after they allegedly raised slogans against National Register of Citizens (NRC) at Pragati Maidan on Sunday, the police said.  
Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (New

Delhi) Deepak Yadav said information was received at 4 p.m. that some people were shouting anti-NRC slogans near Hall No. 11-12 at Pragati Maidan.  
“Five persons were detained under Section 65 of Delhi Police Act. They were released at 6.20 p.m.,” Mr. Yadav said.

IN BRIEF

**JNU extends winter semester registration**  
NEW DELHI  
The Jawaharlal Nehru University on Sunday extended the date for the winter semester registration till January 15. This is the second time that the registration date has been extended in a week.



Three masked persons inside the JNU campus on January 5. ■PTI

a stick had gone viral. So far, the police have identified 18 persons from videos and 37 from a WhatsApp group – Unity Against Left. While some of them have already been asked to join the probe, others will be told to do the same in the coming days.  
The police have asked a few identified suspects, including JNU Students’ Union President Aishe Ghosh, to join investigation on Monday. “The server room is also functional now. Therefore, a Forensic Science Laboratory team will be visiting on Monday to collect evidence,” the officer added.

‘No gender discrimination during recruitment’

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI  
The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) nurses’ union wrote to the Union Health Ministry demanding equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.  
It has also said no citizen shall on the grounds only of religion, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, etc be ineligible for or discriminated against for an employment/office under the State.  
The Union expressed deep concern at the fourth Central Institute Body (CIB) meeting on the matter pertaining to the recruitment process of Nursing Officers in AIIMS across India. The CIB had said 80% of the posts maybe reserved for women and 20% maybe filled by male nurses. “This unconstitutional decision by AIIMS CIB members simply shows the gender discrimination, which is a blatant violation of Fundamental Rights guaranteed in our Constitution as per Article 16...” the letter noted.

Man arrested at railway station with over 90 kg ganja

Durg was packed inside six iron cylinders, say police

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
A 24-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly carrying ganja packed inside iron cylinders at New Delhi Railway Station, the police said on Sunday.  
Deputy Commissioner of Police (Railways) Harendra Singh said 96.5 kg ganja was recovered from Usman, a resident of Samaipur Badli.  
On Friday at 11 p.m., Head Constable Sandeep Kumar was on patrolling duty at platform number 16 when he saw a man pushing a wooden cart with six iron cylinders on it.  
“A cylinder fell on the

ground and suspicious material came out of it. On checking, the material was found to be ganja,” Mr. Singh said.  
The official then informed other policemen who came to the spot and nabbed Usman. The receipt for delivery of this parcel was issued in the accused’s name, the police said, adding that Usman also got a gate pass issued for transporting the cylinders from the station.  
The ganja was packed inside the cylinders, which were sealed with iron lids. “The cylinders were smeared with grease. The cylinders came from Howrah in Kolka-

ta and Usman was tasked to collect it from the station and further transport it,” the DCP said.  
During interrogation, Usman said he met a man named Krish in Burari about a month ago who lured him to work for him. “He took his ID and also gave him a mobile phone for the purpose. The consignment was booked in the accused’s name by one Firroze in Howrah. The cylinders came to Delhi via the Poorva Express train. After taking the delivery from the parcel office at NDRS, he had to deliver it to Krish,” Mr. Singh added.

Woman strangled during robbery bid

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI  
Four armed dacoits allegedly strangled a 35-year-old woman inside her house in Ghaziabad on Sunday morning, the police said.  
The incident took place between 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. in Behta Hazipur village of Loni Border police station area,

said Ghaziabad SSP Kalanidhi Naithani. The woman lived with her husband Asif, sons Aatif and Taimoor (1), daughter Nameera (7) and brother Zunaid (14) on the first floor of the house.  
On the day of the incident, the victim was sleeping when four robbers barged in and held the fami-

ly hostage at gunpoint. When Samreen resisted, the robbers strangled her. The dacoits decamped with gold ornaments and cash worth ₹1.5 lakh, he said.  
Samreen was rushed to a nearby hospital where the doctors declared her dead, the SSP said, adding that a case has been registered.











# Tripura CM orders probe into 'custodial death'

The victim was arrested in an ATM hacking case

Video vans used to be positioned in panchayats which were selected by the Panchayati Raj Department. Mr. Patnaiak was usually holding interactions with people through videoconferencing at the panchayat level about the development of villages and immediately approving projects.

In October last year, the field level departments were directed to complete all projects by December, but the progress was no way near the target.

The father of the deceased alleged that the police had tortured him to death and hanged the body to stage "suicide drama". Senior police officers visited the police station.

The State Home department in a statement said the Chief Minister had ordered a magisterial inquiry into the death. It said the government had been strict on matters related to law and order.

Angry residents staged a protest in Lankamura locality against the death. They attacked an on-duty special branch police constable who sustained head injuries.

**CCTV footage**  
The hackers were identified from the CCTV footage in the ATM booths.

An officer of the west Agartala police station, who requested anonymity, said Ghosh was found hanging in the toilet attached to the lock-up before dawn on Sunday. He was taken to a hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, he added.

The father of the deceased alleged that the police had tortured him to death and hanged the body to stage "suicide drama". Senior police officers visited the police station.

## Tamang proposes tourist entry permit systems

Chairing a meeting with his Ministerial colleagues and senior officials here on Saturday, Mr. Tamang suggested constituting a committee to resolve the traffic congestion crisis in Gangtok.

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**BHUBANESWAR**  
Noted tribal leader and former Lok Sabha member Maurice Kujur died at a hospital here on Sunday following a prolonged illness. He was 84.  
Kujur was undergoing treatment at a private hospital where he breathed his last, family sources said.  
Born in November 1935 at Belmunda village in Sundargarh district, Kujur won the Sundargarh parliamentary constituency as a Congress candidate in 1984. He also worked as chairperson of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes from 2008 to 2011.  
A host of dignitaries including Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik have consoled his death.

Villagers participating in a community fishing event ahead of Bhogali Bihu celebrations in Tezpur, Assam, on Sunday. ■PTI

A woman passenger claimed she had explosives to blow up the aircraft mid-air

to return to Kolkata, they said.

The incident happened on Saturday night after the Mumbai-bound flight carrying 114 passengers took off at 9.57 p.m. from the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, they said.

**Sends a note**

A few minutes after it took off from the airport, the woman passenger on board allegedly gave a note to one of the cabin crew, asking it to be delivered to the pilot. The note said there were bombs strapped to her

body and she would detonate it any moment, an airport official said.

Following this, the pilot informed the Air Traffic Controller which directed him to return to the city airport, he said.

"The ATC had declared full emergency at that time. As soon as the aircraft landed, it was taken to the isolation bay at 11.46 p.m.," he said.

The passenger was taken into custody by the Central Industrial Security Force.

A thorough search of the passenger and the aircraft was car-

The woman, in her mid-20s, has been identified as Mohini Mondol who is a resident of Salt Lake area, said a senior officer of the Bidhannagar City Police.

Ms. Mondol was arrested and a medical examination suggested that she was in an inebriated state, the police officer said.

"An investigation has been initiated and we are also talking to her family members to find out why she was going to Mumbai," he said.

**STAFF REPORTER**  
**BERHAMPUR**

Twenty-one mugger crocodiles live in ten village ponds adjoining Ghodahada reservoir of Odisha's Ganjam district that houses 44 of these reptiles.

This example of peaceful coexistence of humans and crocodiles in the Digapahandi forest range under Berhampur forest division was revealed during annual crocodile census conducted in the region on Saturday. "As per the census, the number of mature crocodiles in Ghodahada reservoir and its adjoining area has increased from 58 in January 2019 to 65 in 2020. In 2019, there were 43 muggers in the reservoir, while 15 were living in the nearby village ponds," said Berhampur Divisional Forest Officer Amlan Nayak.

The number of mature crocodiles is increasing in the region. In 2018, their number was 45. Digapahandi Forest Range Officer Pramod Kumar Khadagray said that highest number of five crocodiles were in the Ujaleswar temple tank at Khambarigaon village on the banks of the reservoir. The other nine village ponds around



the reservoir housed 10 muggers. As per the locals and forest officials, in the British era, the area zamindar had kept some crocodiles in the Ujaleswar temple tank. The crocodiles of the Ghodahada reservoir and its adjoining village ponds have never harmed any villagers or domestic animals. According to zoologists, muggers are less ferocious than other crocodile breeds and they seem to be satisfied with fish in the reservoir and its adjoining ponds. Villagers are fishermen and involved in pisciculture in the reservoir and conservation of crocodiles.









**IN BRIEF**  
**No going back on Citizenship Act: Naqvi**  
HYDERABAD  
The Citizenship (Amendment) Act is here to stay, Union Minister of Minorities Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said here on Sunday. The Act would not affect the minorities, the Muslims in particular. Mr. Naqvi, who was here to inaugurate the Hunar Haat, said no changes would be made to the Act.

**CMs of Telangana and A.P. to meet today**  
HYDERABAD  
The stage is set for the Chief Ministers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, K. Chandrababhan Naidu and Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, to meet at Pragati Bhavan here on Monday. The two are expected to hold discussions on the issues facing the two States as well as the latest developments at the national level.

**One killed in Jallikattu in Andhra Pradesh**  
CHITTOOR  
A 27-year-old man was killed when a rope tied to a frenzied bull got entwined around his neck at a Jallikattu event near Kuppam in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district on Sunday. In the stampede and chaos that followed the tragedy, 20 others were injured. Though the organisers resumed the event, the police rushed to the spot and stopped it.

**Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel chairman quits**  
TIRUPATI  
Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel (SVBC) chairman Prudhviraj Balireddy on Sunday resigned after an audio clip of his alleged vulgar telephonic talk with a woman employee went viral. Based on a report by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams vigilance wing, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy directed him to step down.

# Two more Maradu towers brought down with precision

Supreme Court's order implemented with all four apartment complexes razed; operation leaves no impact on surrounding buildings

**K.S. SUDHI**  
KOCHI  
Golden Kayaloram, the fourth illegal apartment complex in Maradu that was ordered to be pulled down by the Supreme Court, was razed to the ground on Sunday afternoon.  
It took only a few seconds and 15 kg of explosives to bring down the 17-floor structure without any impact on the nearby structures, including an Anganwadi building located just outside the apartment complex.  
Earlier in the day, similar controlled explosions inside Jain Coral Cove reduced the largest of the four illegal apartment complexes also to rubble. H2O Holy Faith and Alfa Serene, the two other illegal structures, were demolished on Saturday.

All the blasts took place as planned, said R. Venugopal, the Deputy Chief Controller of Explosives, who oversaw the operation.

**Nine-month saga**  
It took around nine months and some tough talking by the Supreme Court for the State government to act against the violations.  
Since its landmark judgement on May 8, 2019, the Supreme Court Bench headed by Arun Mishra had closely monitored the implementation of its decision to demolish the four apartment complexes that were constructed in violation of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) guidelines.  
The State government was forced to file a timeline for demolition after the court ordered the personal appearance of Chief Secretary Tom Jose and warned of serious repercussions.  
It was on an appeal filed by the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority against the High Court order the apex court passed the



**Over in a jiffy:** Golden Kayaloram and Jain Coral Grove apartment complexes at Maradu near Kochi being brought down on Sunday. ■THULASI KAKKAT



judgement.  
After the Maradu demolitions, the State government will have to chart out a plan for removing 54 apartments of the Kapico Kerala Resorts at Nedyathuruthu in Vembanad Lake.  
A three-member Bench of the court on Friday ordered the removal of the resort after it was also found to be built in violation of CRZ rules.  
On Monday, when the Supreme Court takes up the case, counsel for the State government will make an oral submission about the Maradu demolition works.  
There will not be any written submission on the developments as the demolition was completed only by Sunday afternoon, said senior Environment Department officials. The Ernakulam District Collector has been asked to despatch pictures of the demolition, which may be submitted to the court.

## 'Emulsion explosives did it'

**K.S. SUDHI**  
KOCHI  
The use of emulsion explosives and its reduced usage at the blast sites helped in the effective demolition of the concrete buildings while containing its impact, said R. Venugopal, Deputy Chief Controller of Explosives.  
Speaking to *The Hindu*, Dr. Venugopal said the controlled implosions brought down the four high-rises at the exact angle as planned.  
For Holy Faith, 212 kg of explosives were used against the 215 kg ordered, 14.5 kg in Golden Kayaloram against 125 kg, and 343 kg at Alfa Serene against 600 kg. It was only at Jain Coral Cove that the quantity of explosives used exceeded the earlier estimate, with 372 kg used against the initially estimated 312 kg, considering the size of the building, he said.



PESO Deputy Chief Controller of Explosives R. Venugopal and Joe Brinkman of South African firm Jet Demolition in front of the Anganwadi outside Golden Kayaloram.

While reducing the quantity of explosives, the length of detonating fuse was increased, which improved the efficiency of the blasts while reducing its impact, Dr. Venugopal said.  
A. Bhoominathan, head of the Civil Engineering Department of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, who

led a team of experts that assessed the vibrations from the explosions, pointed out that the short duration of vibrations (less than 10 seconds) triggered by the blasts, and the distance between the buildings and the point of origin of the vibrations saved the nearby structures from damage.

## Residents see red over debris storage

**SAM PAUL A.**  
ALAPPUZHA  
The Ezhupunna panchayat has issued a stop memo to a firm which had planned to store debris from the demolished Maradu apartments at a yard in the panchayat in Ernakulam district.  
Panchayat authorities said people living near the yard in St. Raphaels ward were worried that the dumping of huge mounds of debris would cause high levels of dust and air pollution.  
Aluva-based Prompt Enterprises has bagged the tender to remove the debris, weighing around 75,000 tonnes, for ₹35.16 lakh.  
The firm had identified three yards, Ezhupunna and Aroor in Alappuzha, and Kumbalam in Ernakulam, to store the debris till it is used for other purposes.  
However, a few residents filed a complaint with the Ezhupunna panchayat against storing the debris after the firm brought some materials from the apartment complexes to yards last week.  
"The firm has taken a piece of land on lease. They have not yet sought permission from the grama panchayat for storing debris. We have received complaints from residents and the local body issued a stop memo," said M.K. Johnapan, vice president, Ezhupunna grama panchayat.  
Prompt Enterprises meanwhile said they might not use the yard at Ezhupunna any further.

# Two terror suspects arrested at Gundlupet

Police probing nexus among terror outfits

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU/MYSURU  
The arrest of two terror suspects from Gundlupet in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district, as well as the manhunt for Mehboob Pasha for allegedly planning to carry out subversive acts in and around Bengaluru, have led the police to suspect that there is a nexus among terror outfits.  
The Central Crime Branch (CCB) is now probing if modules of the banned terror organisation, Al Ummah, IS, and the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) are working together. This comes in the wake of the Tamil Nadu police, along with

## Techie held for Khalistani links

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU  
The CCB, along with their counterparts from Punjab, arrested one Jarnail Singh Sidhu, an alleged member of the Khalistan movement, on Saturday.  
According to the police, the CCB, recently busting an Al Ummah module in Bengaluru. Three persons were arrested, but the key accused, Pasha, escaped. Pasha worked as a daily wage and allegedly provided logistical support to the three terror suspects – Mohammed Haneef Khan, Imran Khan, and Mohammed Syed.  
Pasha lived in the same area and held several meet-

ings at his residence with another wanted Al Ummah man Khaja Moinuddin.  
Meanwhile, the two terror suspects held in Gundlupet on Saturday, were taken to Bengaluru for further questioning. "They were in touch with terror operatives from outside the State. They were picked up on the basis of their intercepts with them," said a source.

## Break from books



**Village flavour:** Students taking part in the Sankranti celebrations organised on the Laurel High Global School premises in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, on Sunday. ■S. RAMBABU

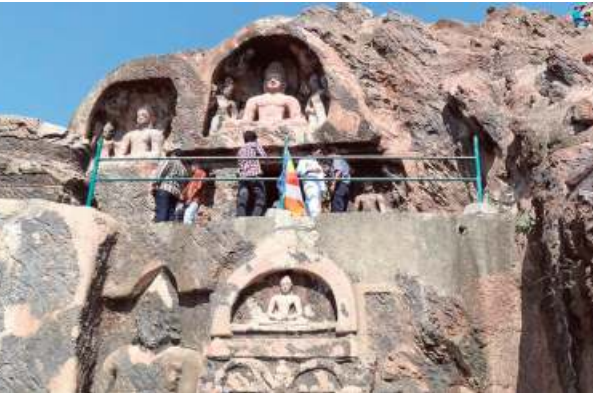
## Karnataka CM yet to get appointment with PM, Shah

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BENGALURU  
Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa is reportedly upset with the BJP high command for not giving him an appointment to hold consultations on Cabinet expansion, resulting in its delay.  
While the Chief Minister has been facing pressure from the newly elected MLAs for an immediate expansion, the party high command has been delaying it, putting him in a spot, his close associates say.  
Mr. Yediyurappa has had to cancel his trip to Delhi, scheduled for Sunday and Monday, as Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not give him an appointment. "I will meet Mr. Shah and discuss Cabinet expansion when he comes to the State on January 18," he told mediapersons on Saturday.  
He recently announced that he was unlikely to go to Davos to attend the annual meeting of World Economic Forum, as scheduled earlier, over the same issue.

# Villagers give up stone-throwing ritual at Buddhist site

INTACH campaign and efforts by officials at Bojjannakonda convince residents to shun practice

**SANTOSH PATNAIK**  
VISAKHAPATNAM  
After a sustained campaign, heritage lovers and officials have been successful in almost stopping the stone-pelting ritual at Bojjannakonda, a famous Buddhist site at Sankaram, 3.5 km from Anakapalle and 41 km from here.  
The villagers, as a part of an ancient ritual, would throw stones at a belly-shaped object at the site, believing it to be a part of a demon.  
Following the intervention of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), the practice carried out on the Kanuma day during Sankranti has almost been done away with. "With the support of the police and



Bojjannakonda, a Buddhist monastery dating back to the 3rd century BC, at Sankaram village in Visakhapatnam, A.P.

the district administration, we have been able to stop it [pelting of stones] for the past few years. This time also, we have sought the support of the district officials," INTACH Visakhapatnam chapter

convener Mayank Kumari Deo told *The Hindu* on Sunday.  
"Bojjannakonda and Lingalamma are twin Buddhist monasteries dating back to the 3rd century BC. These sites have seen three

forms of Buddhism – the Theravada period when Lord Buddha was considered a teacher; the Mahayana, where Buddhism was more devotional; and Vajrayana, where Buddhist tradition was more practised as Tantra and in esoteric form," she said.  
**Tourists' delight**  
The name Sankaram is derived from the term, 'Sangharama'. The site is famous for many votive stupas, rock-cut caves, brick-built edifices, early historic pottery, and Satavahana coins that date back to the 1st century AD.  
The main stupa was carved out of rock and then covered with bricks, and a number of images of the Buddha are seen sculpted

on the rock face all over the hill.  
At the nearby Lingalamma, one can see hundreds of rock-cut monolithic stupas in rows.  
"Vandalism, or defacing of any order, like removing bricks and throwing stones at the heritage site, is highly condemnable. We want the administration to provide enough security on Kanuma day to prevent damage to the archaeologically significant site," INTACH, in a letter, urged District Collector V. Vinay Chand.  
Recalling how the ritual had been stopped to a large extent, P.V. Prasad, a member of INTACH, said he had to stay at the site along with other heritage lovers to sensitise locals not to damage the Buddhist site.

## Chicken bone removed from boy's food pipe

**STAFF REPORTER**  
HYDERABAD  
A 2-cm chicken bone stuck in the food pipe of a 10-year-old boy was removed by doctors at a corporate hospital here in Telangana.  
The boy, who hails from Lingampally, was brought to the hospital a fortnight ago with high temperature, two days after he accidentally swallowed the bone.  
A hole had got formed at the site where the bone was stuck. A team of doctors led by Raghuram Kondala, consultant medical gastroenterologist at Continental Hospitals, first removed the bone from the esophagus and did endoscopic clipping to seal the hole.  
The boy has been discharged.  
Any foreign body in the airway may lead to choking and result in death if not re-



The two-cm chicken bone that was removed from a 10-year-old's food pipe.

moved in time, say doctors. "Such cases must be attended to immediately as delay could increase the risks like food pipe perforation, leading to infection, long-term complications, and in some cases, death. It is important that utmost care is taken while removing the object and stenting to ensure restoration of functionality of the food pipe," Dr. Kondala said.

Meanwhile, the newly elected party-hopper MLAs have met twice and are exerting pressure on the Chief Minister to induct them into the Cabinet immediately, sources said.



IN BRIEF
Palghar chemical factory blast toll goes up to 8
PALGHAR
The death toll in the explosion at a chemical factory in Maharashtra's Palghar district rose to eight on Sunday after the body of a missing girl was recovered from the site, officials said.

Samajwadi Party leader shot dead in U.P.
LUCKNOW
A Samajwadi Party leader, Bijli Yadav, and former village headman in Uttar Pradesh's Mau district was gunned down while he was on his morning walk on Sunday, police said.

T.N. should support caste-based census'
CHENNAI
Welcoming the resolution passed by Maharashtra Assembly that supported caste-based census, Dravidar Kazhagam president K. Veeramani on Sunday urged that the Tamil Nadu government must follow suit.

LCA Tejas takes off from INS Vikramaditya
NEW DELHI
After completing the landing on the "ski-jump" deck of the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya on Saturday, the naval version of the indigenously-built Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA) on Sunday successfully took off from the carrier.

Kaziranga has one of the highest number of wetland birds

Second survey records 19,225 birds belonging to 80 families

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI
Kaziranga recorded 96 species of wetland birds – one of the highest for wildlife reserves in India, according to the second wetland bird count conducted on January 9-10.

The survey registered a total of 19,225 birds belonging to 96 species under 80 families. The first waterfowl census in 2018 had yielded 10,412 birds covering 80 species, belonging to 21 families. "With 6,181 individuals, the bar-headed goose led the species count, followed by the common teal at 1,557 and northern pintail at 1,359. All three belong to the family Anatidae," said an official. The other species which sizeable numbers include gadwall, common coot, lesser whistling duck, Indian spot-billed duck, little cormorant, ferruginous duck,



Growing numbers: The bar-headed goose led the species count with 6,181 individuals. • FILE PHOTO

tufted duck, Eurasian wigeon, Asian openbill, northern lapwing, ruddy shelduck and spot-billed pelican. Mr. Gogoi said the survey covered four ranges of the park – Agoratoli, Bagori, Kohora and Burapahar. More than half the birds (9,924) and 85 of the 96 species were recorded in Agoratoli Range. This was because Sohola, the largest of Kaziranga's 92 perennial wetlands, is in this range. The first wetland bird sur-

vey in Kaziranga, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985, was conducted in 2018. Rabindra Sarma, the park's research officer said avian surveys could have been done in the 115-year-old Kaziranga earlier, but no records were maintained. "Data on avian wealth is important because the wetlands nourish Kaziranga's ecosystem. Increase or decrease in the number of birds is indicative of the park's health," he said.

3 SBI officials booked for kisan card fraud

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has booked three branch managers of the State Bank of India in Lucknow for allegedly siphoning off funds from the exchequer by sanctioning Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loans on forged documents. The FIR named the three officials, Kamal Kumar Srivastava, Ansul Mendiratta and Awadhesh Srivastava, who were managers with its Kakori branch in Lucknow, along with the bank's empanelled advocate Prakash Chandra Vidyarthi and one Gole Dwivedi. An internal inquiry revealed that the officials had disbursed 96 loans under the scheme during 2014-17, totalling ₹6.60 crore. A part of the funds was transferred to the account of Mr. Dwivedi, indicating diversion. The agency has initiated investigations to determine the extent of the scam and to examine the role of other suspects.

India's under-5 girls face high mortality

Unlike global trends, in India they have higher probability of dying than boys, says UN report

Wide gap

Among bigger States in India, the gender gap in the under-five mortality rate was most pronounced in Jharkhand (girls: 38 and boys: 30). Madhya Pradesh had the highest overall under-five mortality (55) while Kerala had the least (12)

Table with 5 columns: State, Under-five mortality rate (girls), Under-five mortality rate (boys), Gap, Under-five mortality rate. Rows include Jharkhand, Assam, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar.

Among the 5.3 million under-five deaths in 2018, 2.9 million were of boys and 2.4 million of girls. On average, 15,000 children died before age 5 every day in 2018 compared to 34,000 in 1990 and 27,000 in 2000



Under-five mortality of girls in Kerala was 11

mortality rate is 23 per 1,000 live births. Further, Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttarakhand showed the largest gender gaps in under-5 mortality. "The burden of child mortality is determined both by the mortality rate (the pro-

portion of children who die) and by the estimated population of any given State (total number of annual births). In this sense, Uttar Pradesh is the State with the highest number of estimated newborn deaths in India, both because of the high neonatal

Two Coast Guard ships commissioned at Kolkata

The modern vessels will be based at Chennai and Haldia

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM

Two Indian Coast Guard Ships (ICGS) – Annie Besant and Amrit Kaur – were commissioned by Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar at Kolkata on Sunday. Director General of Indian Coast Guard K. Natarajan, Additional Director General and Coast Guard Commander (Eastern Seaboard) V.S. Pathania, and other officials were present at the ceremony, according to an official statement by the Coast Guard Eastern Seaboard.



Setting sail: ICGS ships Annie Besant and Amrit Kaur during the commissioning ceremony in Kolkata on Sunday. • PTI

While Annie Besant will be based at Chennai, Amrit Kaur will be based at Haldia. The ships are fitted with state-of-the-art technology, and navigation equipment, along with Bofors 40/60 guns and 12.7 mm Stabilised Remote Controlled Guns for enhanced fighting efficiency.

Plea challenges insolvency ordinance

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea challenging the newly promulgated Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance of 2019, which does not allow homebuyers to individually initiate insolvency proceedings against builders in residential projects. Section 3 of the ordinance prescribes a minimum threshold – 10% or 100 in number, whichever is lesser, of the total allottees/homebuyers from the same real estate project – for initiating insolvency resolution proceedings before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). The petition filed by a homebuyer, Manish Kumar, wants the court to stay the implementation of the ordinance. A Bench led by Justice Rohinton Nariman is scheduled to hear the case.

Private property is a fundamental right, says SC

'Grabbing private land and claiming it as its own makes the State an encroacher'

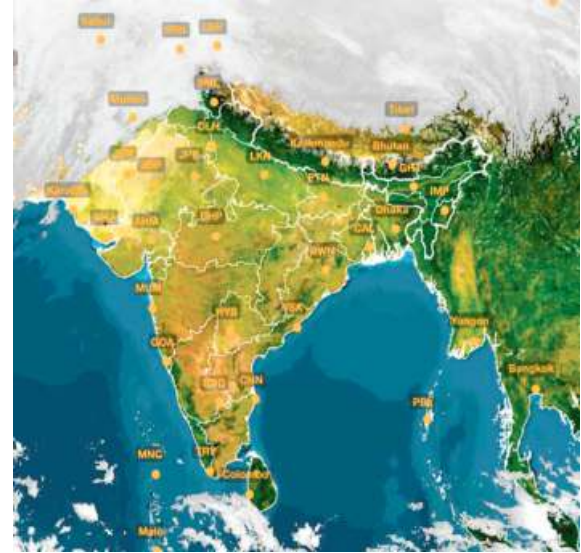
KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

A citizen's right to own private property is a fundamental right. The State cannot take possession of it without following due procedure and authority of law, the Supreme Court held in a judgment on January 8. The State cannot trespass into the private property of a citizen and then claim ownership of the land in the name of 'adverse possession', the court said, adding that grabbing private land and then claiming it as its own makes the State an encroacher. In a welfare state, right to property is a human right, said a Bench of Justices Indu Malhotra and Ajay Rastogi.

"A welfare state cannot be permitted to take the plea of adverse possession, which allows a trespasser i.e. a person guilty of a tort, or even a crime, to gain legal title over such property for over 12 years. The State cannot be permitted to perfect its title over the land by invoking the doctrine of adverse possession to grab the property of its own citizens," said Justice Malhotra. The court was hearing a plea filed by Vidya Devi, a widow, whose four acres of land was taken over by the Himachal Pradesh government in 1967. "The appellant [Ms. Devi] being an illiterate widow, coming from a rural background, was wholly unaware

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy rain/snow likely over Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand; heavy rain very likely at isolated places over Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh and west Uttar Pradesh. Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over east Uttar Pradesh., Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

Table with 3 columns: CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN. Rows include Agartala, Ahmedabad, Aizawl, Allahabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Coimbatore, Dehradun, Gangtok, Goa, Guwahati, Hubballi, Hyderabad, Imphal, Jaipur, Kochi, Kohima, Kolkata, Kozhikode, Kurnool, Lucknow, Madurai, Mangaluru, Mumbai, Mysuru, New Delhi, Patna, Port Blair, Puducherry, Raipur, Ranchi, Shillong, Shimla, Srinagar, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchi, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam.

Table with 3 columns: CITY, NO, CO, PM2.5, PM10, CODE. Rows include Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Pune, Visakhapatnam.

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI) SO2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments. NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters. CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death. PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease





Man-made disaster

Iran should have had safety steps for civilian aircraft while preparing for enemy retaliation

The shooting down of a passenger plane by Iran’s military on Wednesday, a few hours after it launched missile attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq, is the most tragic outcome of the recent spike in U.S.-Iran tensions. The Ukrainian jet with 176 aboard was hit by an Iranian surface-to-air missile shortly after it took off from Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Airport. After initially rejecting western assertion that an Iranian missile brought down the plane, Tehran on Saturday said one of its soldiers fired the missile, mistaking the jet for an enemy aircraft “as it turned to a sensitive area”. This is not the first time U.S.-Iran tensions have led to an aviation disaster. In 1988, in the last stage of the Iran-Iraq war, a U.S. Navy warship shot down an Iran Air flight over the Gulf, killing all 290 passengers. Then the U.S. troops said they mistook the plane for a military aircraft that was going to attack the ship. Iran says the same today. In both incidents, innocents, who did not have anything to do with the conflict, became victims.

This time it was U.S. President Donald Trump’s reckless decision to assassinate Soleimani that pushed both countries to the brink of a war. After launching missiles at U.S. troops in Iraq in retaliation for the General’s killing, Iran’s missile defence systems were on high alert, anticipating retaliatory American air strikes. Iran blames “human error” for the attack on the passenger plane. But whatever the context is, it cannot abdicate responsibility for what happened. Ukraine International Airlines says the flight took off after clearance from the airport. The airline also rejects the Iranian military’s claim that the plane veered off its route. Iran’s admission and apology is a step in the right direction. But it should carry out, along with international investigators, a thorough probe into what led to the “accident”, and punish whoever is responsible for the “human error”. Such mistakes are unacceptable even in war. Iran should have put in place the highest safety measures and followed international protocols while preparing itself for enemy retaliation. Clearly it did not do so. And innocent people paid a price for Iran’s mistake. Both Iran and the U.S. should also ask themselves whether the confrontational path they have chosen since Mr. Trump unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal, in May 2018, was worth the risk. Both countries were on the brink of an all-out war early this week. At least 226 people, mostly Iranians, have already lost their lives in tragedies related to the Soleimani killing (over 50 were killed in a stampede at the funeral). If Iran is sincere in its apology, it should not only unearth what happened and punish the culprits but also take immediate steps to reduce tensions with the U.S.

Matter of interpretation

Overall crime rate in India in 2018 increased marginally since 2016

Only three months after the release of the much delayed “Crime in India report” for 2017, the National Crime Records Bureau’s 2018 report was unveiled last week. While the fact that this document has been made available so soon should be welcomed, this report, as with those for earlier years, carries the caveat that crime records and statistics are only as good as their reporting. Some States are better than others in tracking and registering crimes. This is why Kerala and the National Capital Region having the highest crime rates in the country – 1463.2 per one lakh population and 1342.5, respectively – is also a reflection of the fact that crime reporting, follow-up and subsequent steps in trial and punishment are much better undertaken in these two States/UTs. Yet, what should be worrying for the capital city region is that unlike Kerala, the number of cognisable crimes has steadily increased to 2,62,612 in 2018 from 2,16,920 in 2016. Better reporting could also perhaps explain why there is a 15% increase in the total crimes against women across all States, but the fact that this number went up by 66% in a large State such as Uttar Pradesh must be cause for concern. Conversely, crimes against women fell 20.8% after reaching a peak number of 17,222 in Delhi. It is well understood that the protests against the gangrape in Delhi in 2012 had significantly contributed to greater reporting of crimes against women. The fall in these numbers, corresponding to the general increase in crimes, could reflect the outcomes of better gender sensitisation in the capital region. Unlike crime numbers that are difficult to interpret due to registration and policing issues, the number of murders across States is a stark reflection of violent crime. The finding in the 2017 NCRB report that north-eastern States such as Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya have a relatively higher murder rate compared to most States bears itself out in 2018 as well. Other States which have a worrisome record here include Jharkhand (4.6 murders per one lakh population, the highest in the country) and Haryana (3.9). Among cities, Patna (4.4) has an egregious murder rate.

While protests and violence related to them have occupied the news cycle in the last month or so, data from the report suggest that there has been a marginal decrease in the total cases related to rioting from 2016 (61,974) to 2018 (57,828). Cases related to caste and communal/religious riots, political violence and agrarian conflicts registered a dip while there was an increase in industrial rioting and other personal disputes. Among cases registered as “offences against the State”, there has been an ominous increase under “sedition” with the number of those booked in 2018 double that of 2016, even as most such cases under this section came under the “Prevention of Damage of Public Property Act”; Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh led with nearly half of the overall cases.

The warp and weft of religious liberty

In expounding the scope and extent of freedom of religion, the Supreme Court faces a difficult question of balance



GAUTAM BHATIA & SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

In December 2014, the Supreme Court of India placed a temporary ban on madesnana, a 500-year-old ritual performed at the Kukke Subramanya Temple in Karnataka. The practice involves persons, in particular those from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, rolling over plantain leaves left behind with food half eaten by Brahmins, in the belief that doing so would cleanse their skin of impurities.

Initially, in 2012, at the behest of a group of progressive-minded petitioners, including the seer of the Nidumamidi Math, a division bench of the Karnataka High Court put a halt to the ritual, but allowed it to continue in a modified form. Devotees could now voluntarily choose to roll over leaves containing prasada, that is offering made to the deity, so long as the food was not “tasted or partially eaten by the members of any community”. But this order was lifted two years later by another division bench of the High Court, which found little wrong with madesnana in its supposedly “original” form. The practice, the court said, did not, on its face, violate any law. What is more, in the judges’ belief, a proscription of the ritual until a final ruling was delivered would both hurt the sentiments of devotees and impinge on their constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of religion.

What is at stake

It is cases such as this and many more, including the practice of female genital mutilation and the rights of Parsi women to enter fire

temples, which are at stake when a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court begins hearing arguments on questions concerning the relationship between the right to freedom of religion and the rights of individuals to dignity and equality. The establishment of the Bench emanated out of an order of reference made on review petitions filed against the Sabarimala judgment. But when the Bench assembles today, its remit will involve a rather more abstract exercise: to answer a series of wide-ranging questions and to expound the scope and extent of the Constitution’s religious liberty clauses.

In answering these questions, the Court will be faced with a difficult question of balance. Within the Constitution of India, there are two impulses that may, at times, come into conflict with one another. The first impulse recognises that India is a pluralist and diverse nation, where groups and communities – whether religious or cultural – have always played an important role in society. Following up on this impulse, the Constitution recognises both the freedom of religion as an individual right (Article 25), as well as the right of religious denominations to manage their own affairs in matters of religion (Article 26). The second impulse, on the other hand, recognises that while community can be a source of solidarity at the best of times, it can also be a terrain of oppression and exclusion. The Constitution, therefore, expressly provides for the possibility that there may be times when members of religious and cultural communities may need to be protected from authoritarian and oppressive social practices. Thus, both Articles 25 and 26 are subject to public order, morality, and health; and further, Article 25 is also subject to other fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution, and to the state’s power to bring in social reform laws.



These two impulses, and their expression in various provisions of the Constitution, speak to an observation made by Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer, one of the foremost drafters of the Constitution: that in our country, religion and social life are inextricably linked. As the madesnana example shows us, religious proscriptions often spill over into broader society, and religious and social status often reinforce each other. A classic example, of course, is that of the practice of “untouchability”, which the Constitution explicitly prohibits. Another is the practice of “excommunication”, a practice prevalent among certain communities, where the head of the community has the power to expel recalcitrant members, and exclude them entirely from any form of interaction with their former friends or families.

Finding the middle ground

How then do we strike a balance between respecting the autonomy of cultural and religious communities and also ensuring that individual rights are not entirely sacrificed at the altar of the community? Over the years, the Supreme Court has attempted to do so by carving out a jurisprudence that virtually allows it to sit in theological judgment over different practices. It has done this by recognising that it is only those practices that are “essential” to religion that enjoy constitutional protection. Any other ritual is seen as secular and amen-

able to the state’s interference.

This doctrine of essential practices has invariably seen the Court play the role of a moral arbiter. It invoked it, for example, to rule, in 2004, that the performance of the Tandava dance was not an essential tenet of the religious faith of the Ananda Margis, even though the followers of the religion conscientiously believed it to be so. Similarly, the Court, especially during the tenure of Chief Justice of India P.B. Gajendragadkar, struck down a number of rituals across religions on the grounds that those practices were embodiments of superstition as opposed to faith. But was the Court at all competent to make this distinction? Many scholars have argued that it was not: the idea of a secular Court sits uneasily with investigations into the nature of religious practice. In response, the Court has often stated that the “essential religious practices” test is indeed the only way it can reconcile the two impulses of respecting religious autonomy and enforcing individual rights.

The anti-exclusion principle

For these reasons, one option before the nine-judge Bench would simply be to affirm existing jurisprudence, as it stands, and has been incrementally developed over the years. That would certainly not be an unacceptable position to take.

There are, however, other ways. One way, for example, would be to ask whether the effect of the disputed religious practice is to cause harm to individual rights. Madesnana, for example, is a clear violation of human dignity. A few years ago, the Bombay High Court found (similarly) that the exclusion of women from the inner sanctum of the Haji Ali Dargah was an indefensible violation of equality. The enquiry, thus, is not whether the practice is truly religious, but whether its effect is to subordi-

nate, exclude, or otherwise send a signal that one set of members is entitled to lesser respect and concern than others. Interestingly, in the Sabarimala case – out of which this reference arose – both the concurring opinion of Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and the dissenting opinion of Justice Indu Malhotra agreed that this ought to be the test; their disagreement was limited to whether, in the specific case of the Sabarimala temple, the practice, on its facts, was exclusionary or not.

An articulation of the anti-exclusion principle would also take into account an important truth. In many religious communities, norms and practices are shaped and imposed from above, by community leaders, and then enforced with the force of social sanction. Dissenters are then faced with an impossible choice: either comply with discriminatory practices, or make a painful (and often unsustainable) exit from the community. It is here that the Constitution can help by ensuring that the oppressed and excluded among communities can call upon the Court for aid, and by ensuring that powerful communities are not exempt from guaranteeing the basic norms of fairness, equality, and freedom to all their members.

When the hearings begin today, therefore, the nine-judge Bench will face a difficult and delicate task of constitutional interpretation. Much will ride upon its decision: the rights of women in particular (a group that has long been at the receiving end of discriminatory practices) and of many other vulnerable groups in general but also, the constitutional vision of ensuring a life of dignity and equality to all, both in the public sphere and in the sphere of community.

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In martyrdom moment for Iran, America’s own goal

The U.S.’s hand in the Soleimani assassination may have only aided Iran by stirring up nationalist and religious passions



STANLY JOHNY

The death of Qassem Soleimani, one of the most important military leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who designed and executed the spread of Iranian power across West Asia, is a blow to the regime. His assassination, by a U.S. drone on January 3, did not only point to the Islamic regime’s inability to protect the life of a top General but also left a hole in Iran’s credible deterrence. But a bigger question is this: do these military setbacks weaken the regime? What appears to be happening is just the contrary.

Till a few weeks ago, the regime was fighting to quell widespread dissent and protests. Economic hardships, largely because of crippling American sanctions along with the oppressive policies of the government, had triggered mass rallies in early December, which were put down brutally. The regime was in an embattled state. But a few weeks later, millions thronged the streets in one of the greatest displays of support for the regime. Soleimani united the several political factions in Iran through his martyrdom, which he could not even have dreamt of while alive.

This unprecedented emotional display for a general who U.S. President Donald Trump called a “ter-

rorist” has its roots in Iran’s history and faith. Iran is a civilisation state, not just a nation state. For centuries it has remained a political entity, even before the idea of a modern nation state emerged, defined by Persian civilisation. Since the Safavid dynasty adopted Shia Islam as the official religion of the empire, Iran (Persia) has been majority Shia. And since the 1979 Islamic revolution that overthrew the Pahlavi monarchy, the two key pillars that carried the revolutionary state were political Shiism and nationalism. In Iran, martyrdom is one of the central tenets of both. Shias revere their martyrs, starting from Imam Ali. By making Soleimani, an adherent of the Shia Islamic revolution, a martyr, Mr. Trump, knowingly or unknowingly, has stirred emotions of this collective victimhood of the Shias and the nationalist pride of millions of Iranians.

Politics of martyrdom

After Prophet Mohammed’s death, his followers were divided on who should be his successor as the rightful leader of the ummah (the Muslim community). One faction wanted the successor from Mohammed’s family. They supported Ali, the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law, while the other faction supported Abu Bakr, a companion of the Prophet. Abu Bakr became the first Caliph. Ali eventually became the fourth Caliph. The supporters of Ali became Shias and the followers of the Rashidun Caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali) became Sunnis. Ali’s reign was marked by conflicts within the Is-



lamic community and he was killed amid the Sunni-Shia power struggle, becoming the first martyr of Shia Islam. His son, Hassan, the second Imam of the Shias, assumed the Caliphate but would soon abdicate in the face of growing challenges and threats from the Umayyads. Hussein, Ali’s second son, refused to pledge loyalty to the Umayyads ruler, Yazid. In 680, Hussein and 72 of his followers were killed in Karbala, in today’s Iraq, by the army of Yazid. Hussein, who is the third Shia Imam, was beheaded and his head was brought to Damascus for Caliph Yazid.

The Battle for Karbala holds enormous significance in both Shia faith and political Shiism. For the Shia believers, the Imam who refused to compromise on his beliefs even at the expense of his life, was the epitome of sacrifice. For political Shias, the Imam who challenged the corrupt Yazid caliphate was the epitome of courage. (Shias across the world take out Ashura processions on the 10th of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar, to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein.) During the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini had invoked both sacrifice and courage to mobilise the public against the rule of the

Shah, Reza Pahlavi. The monarch, according to Khomeini, was the new Yazid. He urged Hussein’s followers, the oppressed, to rise. And it worked. Millions, from different streams of politics, joined the uprising against the Shah, forcing him to flee. After the monarchy’s collapse, the Islamists captured the state in 1979, and turned it into an Islamic republic.

After the revolution, it was expected that the Mullahs would not be able to retain power in a country that was modern and secular. Within a year of the revolution, then Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, launched an invasion to precipitate the expected fall of the Ayatollah. It was a time when the Mullahs were finding it difficult to stabilise the country. Leftists, trade unionists, Islamists and liberals had joined the protests against the Shah and the Mullahs’ capturing of the leadership of the revolution had created fissures within this coalition. But when Saddam attacked Iran, it became easy for Khomeini to mobilise people. Saddam was the new Yazid. The Islamic regime carried out a brutal purge against leftists and liberals at home without triggering any regime-threatening public response while the war was under way. In other words, the war Saddam launched with help from the Sunni kingdoms in the region as well as the U.S. helped the Mullahs tighten their grip. During the war, Iranians carried out several suicide attacks against Iraqi troops, because for them “martyrdom” is god’s approval of their path. For most Shia militias in the region,

martyrdom is the bravest path to the “heavenly abode”.

A misreading

What is unfolding now in Iran and Iraq has echoes from the past. In March 2019, while awarding the Order of Zulfagar to Soleimani, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, said, “I hope that Allah the Exalted will reward and bless him (Soleimani) with a blissful life and that He will make his end marked by martyrdom. Of course, not so soon.” In less than a year, Soleimani is a martyr. By making him one, the U.S. has actually played into the political Shia narrative. For a political ideology that thrives in the memory of victimhood, persecution, the martyrdom of Soleimani is as much a blessing as a setback. That is where Mr. Trump has erred.

What is the best outcome the U.S. could expect from this ongoing conflict with Iran? It is a change in the regime with minimum cost. An invasion would be catastrophic and there is no guarantee that the regime would still fall. The other risk-free option, which the U.S. appears to be pursuing, is to squeeze the Iranian economy, and create internal discord that could cumulatively weaken the regime. But then Mr. Trump decides to take out Qassem Soleimani, stirring up nationalist and religious passions, allowing Ayatollah Khamenei to seize the moment. Mr. Trump may not have realised that he has just scored an own goal.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Iran’s mea culpa

By admitting that its own missile shot down the Ukraine International Airlines jet last week, Iran has put an end to a debate on who could have been behind the disaster. The country should now reach out to those nations whose unsuspecting citizens became the victims what it calls an act of “human error” (Front page, “Iran admits its missile shot down Ukraine jet,” Jan. 12). In this context, one is reminded of a similar incident in 1988 when a guided missile cruiser of U.S. Navy shot down Iran Air Flight 655 over Iran’s territorial waters, killing all 290

people on board. It took quite some time for the then-U.S. President Ronald Reagan to express regret while still insisting that the country’s officers acted in self-defence. In contrast, Tehran has been more gracious in acknowledging its mistake. In this regard, the UN must take the initiative and devise a more effective mechanism for averting such tragedies in future.

S.K. CHOUDHURY, Bengaluru

■ It may be possible for Iran to compensate the kin of the victims but it remains to be seen how the country will bring the guilty to book. In

this context, it may be recalled that the U.S. has not only never expressed remorse for shooting down an Iranian passenger plane using a surface-to-air missile in 1988, it has also shown the audacity to maintain that there was no improper use of force. Its payment of compensation later was only a tacit admission of guilt.

C.G. KURIKOSE, Kothamangalam, Kerala

Maradu demolition

The demolition of the illegal Maradu flats is a perfect example of good governance. It points to the fact that if the government shows political will and is backed by competent officers, anything

can be accomplished for the good of the people and the environment. The exemplary coordination among the district administration, the law enforcement officials, the fire-safety services and the private company that was in charge of the demolitions was on display as the flats were razed down. The locals also need to be praised for not creating any impediments in the implementation of the Supreme Court decision. It was a landmark day for Kerala and restored the people’s faith in the government. Hopefully, citizens and officials will henceforth desist from violating environmental

norms (Front page, “Biting the dust,” Jan. 12).

SUJATA NAIR, Thrissur, Kerala

Verdict on shutdown

It is six months since the dilution of Article 370 and the rights of Kashmir Valley residents continue to be violated by the state. Such measures are a rarity even in nations not under democratic governance. The

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the report headlined “Modi-Mamata ties: one meeting, many questions” (Jan. 11, 2020), the reference to Rajya Sabha should be changed to Lok Sabha.

The headline of a report that was “Call for Punjab bandh against CAA, NRA” (Jan. 11, 2020, some editions) should be corrected to say CAA, NRC.

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Supreme Court verdict, while welcome, could have been delivered earlier. The country too much reflect on why it has not raised its voice against the continuing atrocities in Kashmir (Front page, “SC tells govt. to review orders curbing basic rights in J&K,” Jan. 11).

R. NARAYANAN, Navi Mumbai



# Favouring public order over justice

The Supreme Court’s order on the Internet shutdown in J&K was a statist expression of law



APAR GUPTA

Last week, the Supreme Court gave its much-awaited judgment on the legality of the telecommunications and Internet shutdown orders in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), in place for more than 160 days now. Given the centrality of the Internet in our lives and the fact that the preceding weeks had seen such shutdowns in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi, the ruling was eagerly awaited across the country. However, in its language, structure and the relief granted, the verdict came across more as one premised on legal centrism than one advancing fundamental rights.

After acknowledging in the first paragraph that India is a “land of inherent contradictions”, the court immediately assumed the role of an acrobat which had to “strike a balance between the liberty and security concerns” rather than rule in favour of citizens’ rights. That said, it is important to understand that the scope of the constitutional challenge before the court was narrow by design. The petitioners, with considered and strategic thought, did not challenge the underlying power of the Central government to turn off telecommunications and Internet connectivity. The focus of their challenge was not the Telegraph Act and the Internet Suspension Rules that enabled the government to shut down the Internet, but squarely on the orders passed under these laws.

### Reluctance to furnish orders

In this regard, the petitioners faced a challenge that is common in present times. The government had not made the shutdown orders publicly available. Pressed for disclosure, the Centre initially cited national security concerns and, only after persistent arguments over multiple hearings, filed some sample orders. To not even provide the Supreme Court a copy of such orders was an extreme position, but did not come entirely as a surprise. We have in the recent past seen such opacity, especially under



A protest by Kashmiri journalists in November last year demanding restoration of Internet in the Valley. - REUTERS

former Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, clothed in what legal scholar Gautam Bhatia termed “sealed cover jurisprudence”. Ultimately, it came as a relief that, to some extent, ordinary legality and common sense prevailed. The apex court rejected the government’s secrecy claims and directed the publication of orders recognising that, without them, litigants would not be able to seek judicial remedy. However, eventually, it failed to judicially review the orders furnished in court and also permitted claims of privilege to prevent their disclosure.

### Question of fundamental rights

The principal job of the court in such writ challenges is to review the administrative and executive action. In this case, the decision charted the link between fundamental rights and access to the Internet and sought to apply it when it came to prohibition in place in J&K. While doing so, the court rejected the government’s arguments emerging from extreme positions of national security. It applied the proportionality doctrine to reason that “complete blocking/prohibition perpetually cannot be accepted”. And while noting the issues pertaining to the Internet shutdown rules, the order directed the government to change them and placed a time limit of seven working days for periodic review.

These victories were incremental and certainly could not be termed as ‘wins’. They emerged amidst a cynical framing of rules by the executive and extreme, adversarial national se-

curity arguments to impair progressive constitutionalism. The judicial response followed clear precedents and did not fashion anything novel. For instance, on the surface, the directions for the right to access the Internet may seem to be a victory for the litigants. However, this was already a well-established position flowing from various previous verdicts such as the Section 66A decision in the *Shreya Singhal* case and administrative policies and orders such as National Telecom Policy and Net Neutrality Rules.

Even when it comes to the court’s direction to conduct a periodic review of such shutdowns every seven days, it needs to be noted that the review committee will lack independence and real power to overturn the initial Internet shutdown orders. The committee will be principally composed of bureaucrats and no independent members. Further, the findings and recommendations of such committees, as scholar Nakul Nayak has shown, will not be legally binding. As Mr. Nayak has noted, those wanting to be heard by the review committee will face several procedural obstacles. Ultimately, the judgment has left it to the government to decide on such shutdown orders under pre-existing constitutional principles.

The Supreme Court applied a limited rights doctrine and removed the anxiety among a section of the Indian public concerning drastic constitutional regression. Such mixed results can be understood by looking beyond the court to our pre-

sent political environment. The verdict has come at a time when basic rights are being violated with impunity and public expectations for remedy from institutions are extremely low. And though the court may have rejected several contentions by the government, ultimately it seems to have accommodated the arguments of the executive branch on issues of national security.

### An act of judicial centrism

The ruling may be termed as an act of judicial centrism. The court clutched on to the basic constitutional norms to maintain legality, while showing reluctance to expand upon rights. An end product of such a posture is that it may not extend the true spirit of our fundamental rights and would perpetuate a status quo. This was tangibly felt when the judgment shifted the legal review of the J&K shutdown orders – the principal question of determination – back to the government.

The court further avoided any comment on the legality of such orders given in the past, even those furnished by the government before it. Martin Luther King admonished this kind of centrism when he said that it was “more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice; [that] prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice”.

On the whole, the judgment was a statist expression of the law, neither conservative nor radical. For actual relief, petitioners will now need to approach the high courts, which will come at a huge cost to their time and the right to access the Internet. The legal doctrines laid down in this ruling may be beneficial; however, the more difficult task will be to obtain clear-headed pronouncements that actually declare the executive orders, such as those that led to the shutdown of Internet in J&K, to be illegal.

Today, “We the people” is not a mere phrase of our constitutional preamble but a call for action to Indians. They must encourage our institutions to shift from centrism to a progressive assertion of our fundamental rights.

*Apar Gupta is a lawyer and executive director of the Internet Freedom Foundation, which assisted intervenors in this case*

### FROM THE READERS’ EDITOR

## Trust in the age of misinformation

Are the journalistic measures taken to confront the scourge of misinformation enough to stop the erosion of trust?



A.S. PANNEERSELVAM

Every year, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford publishes a report on the media. This year’s study, ‘Journalism, Media, and Technology: Trends and Predictions 2020’, documents the changing contours of the news business and how the industry is coping with the challenges posed by technology. It points out that at a time of economic and political uncertainty, news organisations may have to face more challenges to their sustainability. It says broken business models and platform companies are exacerbating the crisis.

### Factors affecting journalism

The study also records a number of factors that are affecting journalism. It deals extensively with the impact of post-truth politics on journalism and has suggestions for news organisations on how to deal with this new reality. The study focusses mainly on the U.K. elections and the narratives surrounding Brexit. The findings are not encouraging: politicians have played with facts, avoided journalistic scrutiny, and succeeded in denigrating the media. The report cites the U.K.’s independent fact-checking organisation, Full Fact, which says that the six-week campaign saw “inappropriate and misleading campaign tactics that we hadn’t seen before”. The devious methods it saw included “an official Conservative Party Twitter account impersonating a fact-checking organisation and editing footage of a Labour politician to make it look as if he couldn’t answer a question about the party’s Brexit policy.”

The report says the reach of misinformation forced many news organisations to integrate fact-checking into their coverage and scrutinise politicians wherever possible. However, these special programmes did not get many views. The report points out that politicians are increasingly trying to bypass the media and convey messages directly via social media. Leaders across the world have become more belligerent than ever before, says the report, and cites the examples of Boris Johnson refusing to giving an interview to journalist Andrew Neil, the regular threats

given to review the broadcast licenses handed out to media organisations such as Channel 4, and the funding arrangements for public media like the BBC.

### Impact of fact-checking

While 85% of those surveyed said that the media should call out lies and half-truths, readership figures and audience engagement numbers indicate that growing indifference adds a new dilemma to news organisations. What is the impact of fact-checking? There is some indication that rigorous and relentless journalism sometimes leads to disengagement; people simply avoid reading the news. Can journalism effectively engage readers in the light of growing cynicism and negativity? Mary Hockaday, Controller, BBC World Service English, has come up with a possible answer: “We certainly need to offer fact checks and reality checks. But we also need content which explores good faith politics, what might be working, how policy develops and makes a difference. Otherwise we will push our audiences to disengage and distrust politics even more.”

These issues resonate with an Indian news ombudsman because this country is in constant election mode and political leaders here too use digital platforms for propaganda. It is not just Mr. Johnson who has refused to give an interview; Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in his second term and is yet to hold a single press conference. He also reaches his audience through his radio programme ‘Mann Ki Baat’, or Twitter, or soundbites to select news agencies which are not questioned. In a sense, we citizens get a series of monologues from our leaders.

Some of the best fact-check exercises in India happened following the brutal attack on the students of the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. But they did not deter the peddlers of fake news from regurgitating the same old lies. What can a news organisation do in the present environment?

Journalists should bear in mind what Reuters Fellow Richard Fletcher says about the status of trust. He says the trust factor will get worse before it gets better. Explainers, contextual essays, increased space for data journalism, long-form reportage and analysis of difficult policy decisions are some of the journalistic means to confront the scourge of misinformation. Are these measures enough to stop the erosion of trust?

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

## Lessons from Maradu

The demolitions in Maradu will persuade builders against committing future violations

Prakash Nelliyyat

When there is weak enforcement of environmental laws, corruption, and undue political influence, violations become common. Such violations have been questioned, and strict action taken by the authorities concerned, on very few occasions. The four high-rise luxury apartment complexes in Maradu municipality in Kochi, which violated Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notifications, were demolished on January 11 and 12 following a Supreme Court order. This incident points to the need for a paradigm shift in our environmental consciousness.

### Supreme Court order

The apex court stated that these apartments had been built on the shores of Vembanad wetland, renowned for its rich biodiversity. The wetland is a part of the strictly restricted zone for construction under the provisions of the CRZ notifications, which aim to protect the ecology of the coast. Hence, the violations cannot be lightly condoned. The illegal constructions in Maradu might have hindered the natural water flow of Vembanad and resulted in severe natural calamities such as floods, which Kerala witnessed in 2018. Following the court order, residents, about 350 families, started to protest. Despite this, the court gave strict instructions to the State government to speed-up the demolition process.

After the court order, a house owner said, “We are innocent buyers who are frightened about losing our homes for no fault of ours”. The rising demand for waterfront apartments has encouraged many builders to violate norms and construct apartments on the banks of rivers and lakes. It is quite difficult to believe that builders and buyers – the upper class community in Kerala – were unaware of the legal norms they are supposed to obey.

The crime branch found that the builders had constructed the apartments after conspiring with panchayat officials in 2006. This indicates the gravity of institutional and policy failures. According to the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority, constructions had taken place

in critically vulnerable coastal areas which are notified as CRZ-III, where no construction should be permitted except repairs of authorised structures. Builders and local body officials who supported the illegal constructions have been arrested. Builders’ bank accounts have been frozen and their properties confiscated. The court ordered that a compensation amount of ₹25 lakh be paid to each household. The demolition costs should be paid by the builders to the government.

### Cost of violations

The overall cost of violation is immeasurable. The house owners who lost their flats not only suffered financial losses but were also under mental pressure. There were major administrative challenges in demolishing the apartments. Expert consultations had to take place, the public needed to be made aware of what was happening and a safe demolition strategy had to be drawn up. Families in the neighbourhood were anxious about their life and property. The safety of public assets such as roads and bridges was also a concern. Besides, there were environmental costs of the demolition including air and noise pollution, contamination of the lake, and safe disposal of the debris.

If an industry discharges effluents, the enforcement agency can fine or tax them (polluter pays principle) and/or insist that they install pollution control measures or follow safe waste disposal strategies. But if someone violates the law and constructs apartments in an ecologically sensitive zone, the removal of these buildings is the only solution; no heavy fine will fulfil the purpose of complying with the law.

The apex court order to demolish the Kapico Resorts, also located on the banks of the Vembanad Lake in Alappuzha, is another landmark judgment. We don’t know what will happen to other illegal constructions in India. But there is no doubt that the Maradu incident will persuade builders against committing future violations.

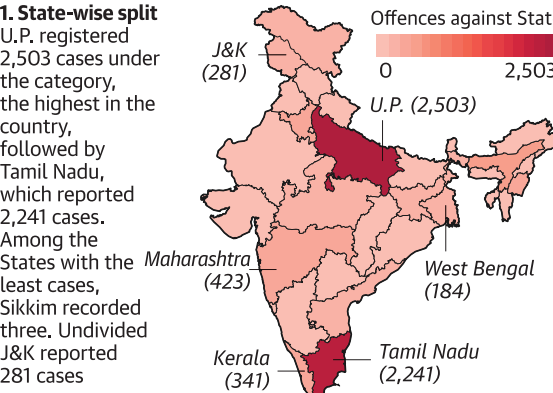
*Prakash Nelliyyat is a Chennai-based researcher working in the areas of environment and sustainable development*



### DATA POINT

## Enemy of the state

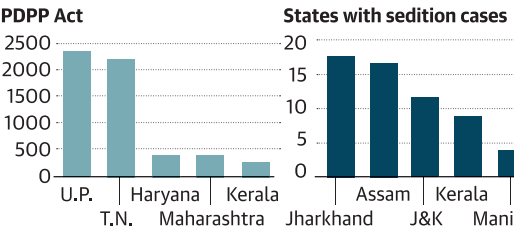
India registered 8,536 crimes under the ‘offences against the state’ category in the National Crime Records Bureau’s 2018 report, a 5% decrease from 2017. Uttar Pradesh accounted for the highest number of crimes under the category, while Sikkim reported the least. Crimes committed by “anti-national elements” also increased in 2018 from 2017. By **The Hindu Data Team**



**2. Cases by crime head** | In 2018, the highest cases were registered under The Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, or PDPP Act (7,127). The number of sedition cases increased in 2018 from 2017

Crime head	2017 cases	2018 cases
Sedition (Sec 124A)	51	70
Others (Sec 121-123)	109	79
Imputation, Assertions Prejudicial to National Integration (Section 153B)	24	38
The Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act	7,910	7,127
The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act	901	1,182
The Official Secrets Act	18	40

**3. Affected States** | U.P. reported the most cases (2,388) under the PDPP Act, while Jharkhand registered the most sedition cases (18)



**4. “Anti-national” activities** | Crimes by “anti-national elements” (introduced in 2017) include those committed by Northeast insurgents, naxalites and terrorists. The tables show the two most affected States in each category

State	Cases	% of total cases
Manipur	289	78
Jammu & Kashmir	66	18

State	Cases	% of total cases
Chhattisgarh	492	55
Assam	188	21

State	Cases	% of total cases
Jammu & Kashmir	243	93
Assam	7	3

Source: NCRB data 2018

### The Hindu

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 13, 1970

### Divided sovereignty

Though there has so far been no strong feeling in favour of secession or independence, there is a school of thought airing views on divided sovereignty. The classical theory of undivided sovereignty has been discarded by political thinkers in the context of an expanding technological age, shrinking distances, and giving rise even in the international field to power clusters in place of sovereign States. The concept of divided sovereignty as applied to Centre-State relations in India would involve acceptance of complete division of powers between the Centre and the States, the Centre being sovereign within its sphere, and the States enjoying unfettered authority within their own sphere. There will then be no question of higher authority and lower authority. The State and the Union are to be on a basis of equality in their respective mutually exclusive spheres. The late Mr. Annadurai was a powerful exponent of this view. The most important impediment to the realisation of this concept is of course finance. Taxation powers have developed all over the world in such a way that the Union has the larger resources; and any scheme for division of pooled revenue cannot avoid dependence on the goodwill of the Central power.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 13, 1920

### Indian situation: An interview

London: Mr. Montagu, interviewed by a Representative of the ‘Pall Mall Gazette’, emphasised the tremendous advance, which India had made internationally and imperially during the last year. Mr. Montagu paid a tribute to the remarkable degree to which Lord Sinha had won success and confidence in the House of Lords. He said that the reception of the Government of India Bill in India had been satisfactory. It was true that an important section of Indian opinion regarded it with misgiving, but from newspapers and from innumerable telegrams from representative bodies and individual leaders and princes he deduced unanimous determination to work the new Scheme for all it was worth and to make the most of the opportunities afforded and thereby earn a further advance. Referring to the carrying out of the recommendations of the Public Services Commission, Mr. Montagu emphasised that the services were vital to progress and good Government in India. He hoped that no more would be heard of the regrettable disposition in some quarters to grudge pay to Service men. This was a record of which England and India might well be proud.



FROM PAGE ONE

## CAA meant to give citizenship, says PM

“We only implemented what the great freedom fighters including Gandhiji had wished to do,” the Prime Minister said.

“A person irrespective of his or her religion, whether he/she believes in God or not but has faith in the Constitution of India can seek citizenship under already laid down procedure,” he said.

The Prime Minister also said the Centre had made provisions that the CAA will not have any “adverse impact” on the Northeastern States.

“As far as the question of Northeastern States go they are our pride. The Centre has made provisions that there will be no adverse effect on the culture and demography of northeast be-

cause of this law,” he added.

Mr. Modi said had the government not brought the amendment to the Citizenship Act, there would have been no debate on it and the world would not have taken note of the atrocities committed by Pakistan on its minorities.

“It is the result of our initiative that Pakistan has to answer how they treated their minorities in the past 70 years,” he added.

Later participating in an event organised by the Kolkata Port Trust (KoPT), the Prime Minister announced that KoPT will be renamed as Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port Trust. He said this was to honour the man who had laid the foundations for the industrialisation of India.

## None can stop CAA rollout: Amit Shah

Attacking the Congress, Mr. Shah said if it didn't retract from its stand, “whatever is left of it will also be wiped out.”

“They need to understand the pulse of the nation, know what people want. Instead, they fear their vote bank,” he added.

The Minister said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, New Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee were misleading people over the law and had even instigated riots.

“We launched an awareness campaign to contain the misinformation being spread,” he added.

Several leaders during Partition, including Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal

Nehru, claimed Mr. Shah, had offered to embrace the minorities from Pakistan and Bangladesh, whenever they wished to cross over to escape human rights violations and atrocities there.

“Yet Rahul Gandhi says them no heed,” he said.

**Door-to-door outreach**

Exhorting party workers to go door-to-door to spread a positive message and seek support on the CAA, and even the Ram temple in Ayodhya, the surgical strikes in Pakistan and the dilution of Article 370 of the Constitution, he said the party planned to conduct 500 meetings, 250 press conferences and reach out to three crore families across Madhya Pradesh.

## J&K police officer, two Hizb militants detained

The militant ‘commander’ travelling with the DSP was behind the killing of 11 truck drivers, non-local labourers and apple traders in south Kashmir.

Meanwhile, three militants were killed in an operation in Pulwama's Tral area on Sunday.

“The militants were hiding in Gulshanpora area. All were locals and associated with the Hizbul Mujahideen,” said the police spokesman.

ject, on charges of criminally intimidating office-bearers of BAPASI on Saturday when the eviction notice was served on him.

A metropolitan magistrate in Saidapet remanded him in judicial custody till January 24. In the eviction notice, BAPASI president R.S. Shanmugam said, “You had agreed to abide by rules of BAPASI while being allotted the stall. Selling a book against the government is a violation of these rules.”

## Publisher evicted from fair for displaying book against govt.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI**

A publisher-cum-author was evicted from his rented stall at the ongoing 43<sup>rd</sup> Chennai Book Fair by The Booksellers' and Publishers' Association of South India for “violating rules and displaying for sale a controversial book against the government”.

On Sunday, the police arrested V. Anbazhagan, who wrote a book on alleged corruption in the Chennai Corporation's Smart City pro-

## New Army chief can tell country from govt.

The oath a jawan or an officer takes is to uphold the core values set in the Preamble, he says

**AMIT BARUAH NEW DELHI**

The new Chief of the Army Staff, General Manoj Naravane, has sent out a clear and direct message to the country and his rank and file that the Army or the armed forces must at all times uphold the Constitution and its Preamble, which contain the core values of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity.

The General's comments, contained in his opening remarks at the Army chief's annual press conference, and not in response to questions, make it clear that the oath a jawan or an officer takes is to the Constitution (and not to the government of the day).

Giving out a “few points” about what the Army was about and sending a message to his men and women, Gen. Naravane said ‘A’ was

for allegiance that meant for him: “As the Army, or the armed forces, we swear allegiance to the Constitution of India. In fact, be it a jawan or an officer, we take an oath...that is what should guide us in all our actions and at all times.”

**Fight for values**

“But what does this really translate into? What this translates into is also the core values which are enshrined into the Preamble to the Constitution – that is justice, liberty, equality and fraternity and that is what we are fighting for when we are deployed on the borders, safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity; it is to secure for our people these core values. We need to keep this in mind at all times,” he added.

The General's remarks assume significance at a time

## Mamata strategy goes against Cong. plan

She becomes notable absentee in party-convened meet; Kejriwal may follow example of Bengal CM

**SANDEEP PHUKAN NEW DELHI**

Congress president Sonia Gandhi has convened a meeting of Opposition parties on Monday to decide on a joint strategy over the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC). With people's protests against the new citizenship law and the NRC continuing for a month now, the Congress wants to rally Opposition parties to devise a common strategy.

The Congress Working Committee has already passed a resolution asking the government to withdraw the CAA and stop work on the National Population Register (NPR). The legislatures

of Congress-ruled States are also likely to follow the Kerala Assembly in bringing resolutions not to implement the CAA.

But more than a common strategy and the parties in attendance, the list of absentees will reflect how united the Opposition is on the issue as pressure of regional elections could determine the outcome.

**Jockeying for leadership**

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool chief Mamata Banerjee has already announced that she would be giving the meeting a miss. And in a clear indication that the Trinamool chief, who had first taken to the streets against the CAA, is not willing to cede leadership space



Sonia Gandhi

to the Congress, her party has decided not to send any representative. With Bengal going to the polls by April-May next year and the Bharatiya Janata Party emerging as her main challenger, Ms. Banerjee can ill-afford to be seen as playing second fiddle to the Congress.

While the Trinamool chief

has taken an aggressive stance against the CAA, the party's leaders have been advised not to indulge in any personal attack on the BJP's top leadership. Ms. Banerjee's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday drew sharp criticism, but also raised eyebrows about her possible poll strategy.

Another Opposition leader who could stay away is Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal. Elections in Delhi are weeks away and the Congress is a key rival.

Though AAP has been protesting against the CAA, Mr. Kejriwal was conspicuous by his absence from protests at the Jawaharlal

Nehru University (JNU) after the January 5 attack on the campus, allegedly by members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad (ABVP), something the AVBP has categorically denied.

Mr. Kejriwal's distance from the JNU protests have been viewed as an attempt to stay away from getting caught in the BJP's narrative of projecting those supporting protesting JNU students as “urban Naxals”.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supreme Mayawati too has avoided such Congress-led meetings, and relations have soured in the recent past.

The Left parties, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, the NCP and the Samajwadi Party will participate.

## National mourning for Oman Sultan

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**

A day of state mourning will be observed across India on Monday in memory of Sultan Qaboos who steered Oman's India-friendly policy for five decades. The Ministry of Home Affairs notified that the tricolour would be flown at half mast as a mark of respect to the departed Sultan.

The monarch who passed away on Saturday was a special personality in the Gulf region which is critical for India from multiple points of view.

He was the most consistent partner from the Gulf for years before the UAE took a similar role in the Modi government.

## Bihar will not have CAA: Kishor

JD(U) vice-president thanked Congress leaders for their rejection of the Act

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PATNA**

Janata Dal(U) vice-president Prashant Kishor on Sunday thanked Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi for their “unequivocal rejection” of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens while offering an assurance that both would not be implemented in Bihar.



**Fighting for their rights:** Women participating in a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register for Citizens in Gaya on Sunday. •PTI

**‘CM to clarify’**

However, when asked for his comment on the National Population Register (NPR) for which the Bihar government issued a notification on December 18, 2019, Mr. Kishor told *The Hindu* that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had to clarify on the issue as Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi had already declared that the process of NPR would be started from May 15, 2020.

“I join my voice with all to

thank #Congress leadership for their formal and unequivocal rejection of #CAA NRC. Both @rahulgandhi & @priyankagandhi deserve special thanks for their efforts on this count.

Also would like to reassure to all - Bihar me CAA-NRC implement nahi hoga [CAA-NRC will not be implemented in Bihar]”, tweeted Mr. Kishor.

His tweet came a day after

Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi said “NPR 2020 is a disguised NRC” and termed the CAA as a “discriminator whose purpose is to divide the country along religious lines.”

## Foreign envoys’ visit to J&K significant, says U.S.

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON**

The U.S. State Department has said the recent visit of the envoys of 15 countries to Jammu and Kashmir is an “important step” but expressed concern over the continued detention of political leaders and restrictions on Internet in the region.

The restrictions were imposed on August 5 last when India revoked the special powers of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the State into two Union Territories.

In the first such trip by foreign diplomats post August 5, the envoys including the U.S., last week visited Jammu and Kashmir where they interacted with select political representatives, civil so-

cety members and military brass, rejecting criticism that it was a guided tour.

**Normalcy imperative**

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells, who will be travelling to South Asia this week, on Saturday expressed hope that the region would return to normalcy.

“Closely following @USAmbIndia and other foreign diplomats’ recent trip to Jammu & Kashmir. Important step. We remain concerned by detention of political leaders and residents, and Internet restrictions. We look forward to a return to normalcy,” she said in a tweet.

## CPI(M) demands lifting of Internet curbs in J&K

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Sunday demanded lifting of curbs in Jammu & Kashmir, asking the government to restore Internet services in keeping with the spirit of the Supreme Court judgment and revoking the detention of political leaders.

“Five months after the abrogation of Article 370 and the dismantling of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, the people of Kashmir continue to be deprived of various rights and liberties. Hundreds of leaders and activists are under detention, right to assemble denied and Internet shut down,” the party said, after a meeting of its Polit Bureau.

The Polit Bureau hailed the countrywide protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). “The CAA undermines the secular concept of citizenship enshrined in the Constitution by introducing a religious criteria,” said the party's statement, adding that the movement against CAA-NPR-NRC consisted of students, youth and ordinary citizens.

Terming it a brutal repression of peaceful protests, the party criticised the recent police action on Jamia Millia and Aligarh Muslim University campuses. It demanded that all “the false cases foisted on people” during the protests be withdrawn and the arrested persons be released.

## Marandi may merge party with BJP

Former CM was earlier with it only

**NISTULA HEBBAR NEW DELHI**

Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das has been asked by senior BJP leaders to come to Delhi this week as talks for a merger of the Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (P), led by another former Chief Minister of the State, Babulal Marandi, with the party gain pace.



Babulal Marandi

Senior BJP sources in Delhi and Ranchi have said that Mr. Marandi has been in talks with the party for the merger, and Mr. Das has been asked to give his input. Mr. Marandi had been in the BJP in the past and broke away after he felt he was being undermined.

“The loss in the Jharkhand polls is being assessed by the BJP and it was felt, especially by the on-ground RSS in the State, that Mr. Marandi, a former BJP leader, should be wooed and brought back into the party to restore some of its support base among tribal communities, which has been badly eroded under Mr. Das,” a senior BJP leader said.

**Multiple reasons**

The BJP feels that if Mr. Marandi had note fielded strong candidates in seven or eight constituencies in the Santhal-Kolhan belts and cut into the grand alliance votes, the party's tally in the Assembly election could have been lower. Mr. Marandi had broken his Lok Sabha election alliance with

the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and the Congress to go it alone in these polls.

“Mr. Marandi too is assessing his political future, with Hemant Soren having pulled off a big victory. He feels he needs a national party to go forward, as his tally came down from eight (in 2014) to three in 2019,” the BJP leader said.

The sabotage that happened within the BJP campaign, specifically in Mr. Das's Jamshepur (East) loss to rebel Saryu Rai, is another reason Mr. Marandi is being brought back.

“There are certain leaders who worked against the interests of the party in these polls, and combined with Raghubar Das's unpopularity, the grand alliance managed a simple majority in the Assembly. We have to acknowledge that too,” a source said.

With the “inauspicious” *khar maas* ending with Makar Sankranti on January 14, a meeting of the party parliamentary board will be called soon after to take forward the merger, BJP leaders say.

## Book comparing Modi to Shivaji irks opposition

Congress leader files complaint

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI**

The release of a book comparing Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj during an event at the Delhi headquarters of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) attracted the ire of the three ruling parties in Maharashtra on Sunday.

The book, titled *Aaj ke Shivaji: Narendra Modi*, was released during a religious-cultural meet organised by the Delhi BJP.

Criticising the author and BJP leader Jay Bhagwan Goyal, Shiv Sena's Member of Parliament Sanjay Raut said Mr. Goyal was in the Sena until a few years ago, but was thrown out after he at-

tacked Maharashtra Sadan.

The warrior king's descendants include former Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP Chhatrapati Udayanraje Bhosle, who joined the BJP but lost the Lok Sabha bypoll, and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Rajee, a Rajya Sabha member from the BJP's quota.

NCP leader and State Social Justice Minister Dhananjay Munde said the action had hurt the feelings of all Marathi-speaking people.

Congress spokesperson Atul Londhe has filed a complaint against Mr. Goyal and the publisher at Nagpur's Nandanvan police station, and has demanded a ban on the book.

## IAF to acquire 200 fighter jets: official

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KOLKATA**

The government is in the process of acquiring around 200 aircraft to replenish the depleting inventories of the Indian Air Force, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar said here on Sunday.

The contract for 83 HAL-manufactured LCA Tejas Mark 1A advanced fighter jets are in the final stages, Mr. Kumar said.

Apart from these, Expression of Interest (EOI) has been floated for another 110 aircraft, based on which Request for Proposal (RFP) will be floated, Mr. Kumar said.

“Roughly (for) 200 aircrafts, the acquisition is in process,” he said.

Mr. Kumar said the contract for the LCAs would be signed “definitely this year”.



I am **Sangavi** aged 11 years suffering from Acute Myeloid Leukemia. Kindly help me to combat this disease as I require **Rs. 10,00,000/-** towards **Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplantation** at **Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai**. Donations sent by Ch / D.D. favouring **Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai** will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch / D.D. / NEFT Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No: 60182010063310, IFSC No: SYNB0006018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT. (Please do not mention patient's name on the cheque).

All Correspondence is done through **WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. QF 1, Cordell Apartments, O.No. 12, N.No. 29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401 / 28235324. E-mail ID: womenswelfare syndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfare syndicate.org**

Sangavi



‘Shenanigans of Left-wing coterie’ worry academics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Over 200 academics wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, blaming a “small coterie of Left-wing activists” for the deteriorating academic environment in the country.

“We observe with dismay that in the name of student politics, a disruptive far-Left agenda is being pursued. The recent turn of events on campuses has raised an alarm about the deteriorating academic environment due to the shenanigans of a small coterie of Left-wing activists,” they said.

The signatories include Hari Singh Gour University Vice-Chancellor R.P. Tiwari, Central University of South Bihar Vice-Chancellor H.C.S. Rathore and Sardar Patel University Vice-Chancellor Shirish Kulkarni, official sources said.

The statement is being seen as part of the government’s efforts to mobilise support in the academia after it faced criticism from a section of the intelligentsia over protests at some universities over a host of issues, including the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and the violence at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The statement said it had become difficult to organise public talks or speak independently owing to the “censorship imposed by the Left-wing politics”. Strikes and dharnas over “maximalist demands” were common in the Left strongholds, and personal targeting and public slandering for not conforming to the Left ideology were on the rise, it said.

PM’s CAA remarks upset Mission members

Political messages from the platform of an ‘apolitical body’ condemned

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission founded in the late 19th century by Swami Vivekananda, and his comments on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) from the Mission’s platform have created a controversy in West Bengal.

A section of the mission members condemned the visit and many wrote to the mission officials questioning why Mr. Modi was allowed to visit the Math. Political parties, too, condemned Mr. Modi’s comments, while the mission distanced itself from his remarks.

Mr. Modi reached the



Controversy over visit: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paying homage to Swami Vivekananda at Belur Math. ■PTI

Math late on Saturday and paid tributes to Sri Ramakrishna, the mystic saint of the 19th century Bengal, and “the room where Swamiji [Vivekananda] meditated.” He himself tweeted the

photos on Sunday. The problem, however, was over Mr. Modi’s extensive remarks on the CAA, indicating that it would not take away citizenship. The comments were considered a “political state-

ment” by a section of the mission officials and devotees. A mission member, who was given *deeksha* (consecration) by late Swami Atmasthananda, who Mr. Modi said was his teacher, said it was “deeply hurtful to see controversial political messages being disseminated from the platform of the mission, which is an apolitical body”.

“Let me make two things clear. One, the mission has an elaborate and official process of consecration. Mr. Modi has not been officially consecrated, and two, he is allowed to come and make statements which are political in nature,” said Gautam Roy, a mission member.

(With PTI inputs)

Quit BJP and form an alternative govt., Cong. tells Sonowal

‘CM fighting against his conscience’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Congress in Assam has offered to help Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal form an alternative “anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act” government, if he quits the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), led by perfume baron Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, has shown interest in being part of such an alternative arrangement.

Leaders of the All Assam Students’ Union and other organisations behind the ongoing protests against the CAA had almost a fortnight ago floated the idea of a “political alternative” to the BJP, its ally Asom Gana Parishad and the Congress.

The idea was to have a party that concentrated on the rights and aspirations of Assam’s indigenous communities.

‘BJP stranglehold’

The Congress, almost immediately, offered to back such an alternative party. But on Saturday, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Debabrata Saikia asked Mr. Sonowal to “come out of the BJP stranglehold” with 30 MLAs.

“The Chief Minister has been fighting against his conscience, while obeying his BJP masters. He should leave the party with 30 MLAs in view of the anger of the people in Assam at the CAA. We will support him in forming an anti-BJP government so that he can conti-



Unusual offer: Sarbananda Sonowal was urged to leave the BJP in view of the people’s anger at the CAA.

nue as the Chief Minister,” Mr. Saikia said.

“We are ready to back any government that is anti-CAA and anti-BJP,” said Mr. Ajmal, the AIUDF’s lone member of the Lok Sabha.

The BJP has 61 legislators in the 126-member Assembly. Its regional allies are the Asom Gana Parishad (14 legislators) and the Bodoland People’s Front (12). The Congress has 25 and the AIUDF 13 lawmakers. The House has a lone Independent member.

Protests continue

Protests, initially violent, leading to the death of six people in police firing and arson, erupted mainly in central and eastern Assam after the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha on December 11.

The voices against the CAA have grown louder since the Union Home Ministry issued a gazette notification that the law would come into force on January 10.

Two more MPs under pressure

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

After K.G. Kenye of Nagaland, two more MPs from the Northeastern States are under pressure for supporting the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Parliament.

The National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), an extremist group, has threatened to take punitive action against Lok Sabha member Rebati Tripura for supporting the CAA. Mr. Tripura is one of the two BJP MPs from the State. He is the sitting Lok Sabha MP for Tripura East, reserved for the tribal people.

A majority of 19 tribes in Tripura fear the CAA will bring more non-tribal people, especially Bengali-speaking Hindus, into the State. The tribal people are in a minority in the State.

“The NLFT has reportedly issued a threat letter. We are looking into the matter, and have ensured adequate security,” a Tripura police spokesperson said on Sunday.

Mizoram’s lone Lok Sabha member C. Lalrosanga has also been facing protests in the State capital Aizawl.

He represents the Mizo National Front, which rules the State and which is a constituent of the BJP-fronted North East Democratic Alliance.

On January 8, the Naga People’s Front suspended Mr. Kenye from the primary membership of the party after he voted for the CAA in the Rajya Sabha. The NPF is in the opposition in the State, where the BJP is in power in partnership with the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party.

INTERVIEW | ANURAG KASHYAP

‘There is nobody to have a dialogue with’

Filmmaker says government borrowing from the Nazis on how to ‘other’ people

NAMRATA JOSHI  
MUMBAI

Filmmaker and writer **Anurag Kashyap** admits to being perpetually angry and ‘super-frustrated’ of late at the indifference of the government to people’s concerns. However, he emphasises that the protests against the CAA and the NRC must continue in a non-violent manner.

So the Home Ministry issued a notification that CAA will come into effect on January 10, 2020...

■ I really don’t understand. For me, in any kind of a civil disobedience movement, people talk, they have a dialogue. Problem is there is nobody to have a dialogue [with]. You are shouting at a wall. The way the Prime Minister has been is exactly replicated by the Vice-Chancellor in JNU. Not meeting people who have demands, not having a dialogue. It’s also because they don’t know what to say and they can’t have a logical argument. They break your patience and you tip over. And when you tip over, they somehow feel they have the right to resort to violence. That has been the pattern in everything they have been doing.

Yesterday the CAA was notified in the gazette though rules have not been formulated for it. How did this happen? This is bullying. Just two days back they said they were doing that and now suddenly it’s out there. So why are you putting it out there?

They are literally borrowing from the book of the fascist Nazis. How to “other” the people. And the followers are buying it. People are deliberately twisting the truth. It’s like they all know what the truth is but need to twist it because the hatred for the “other” is so much.

It’s almost like you are sitting in one of the Roman arenas and all the followers are the audience. There’s this



bloodlust that all of them have and they are just enjoying it. It’s literally like *chalo lado, maro* (Let’s fight and kill).

How do you see the road ahead?  
We are in for a long haul. Only thing we cannot do is become like them.

Then there is the fear that the on-going resistance will die down...

■ They are hoping it will die down. Everybody has a limit, a threshold, work pressures. But the way it’s going on right now, those women at Shaheen Bagh... They are incredible. There are students coming out always, every day. It’s a very bad time for the economy. None of those issues are being addressed... Even if they did good governance there wouldn’t be a problem. But where is the governance? You are constantly focusing on divide and rule, polarisation... They are doing literally what they are accusing others of doing: *tukde tukde*.

Again those electoral bonds have come out because Delhi elections are round the corner. Their whole focus is on the Delhi elections now.

How do you see the Delhi elections play out?

■ They know they are going to lose the elections so they are going to do everything to

They break your patience and you tip over. And when you tip over, they somehow feel they have the right to resort to violence

not lose the elections. Everything can entail anything. I don’t know to which level they will go to. Will they follow the Constitution? They think they *are* the Constitution. They *are* India. That’s the whole problem. They are like these ruthless, cruel oligarchs. What the Supreme Court says doesn’t matter to them. They are openly bullying their way into every institution, be it judiciary, police, CBI, ED, everything.

There is no alternative emerging either...

■ Looking at what Uddhav Thackeray is doing or what Hemant Soren is doing... the whole politics will become regional. No one consolidated central thing. Delhi has become regional with AAP. All States will have their own regional parties and regional heads. If it goes that way with no central binding thing and if every government is a regional government then how do you not foresee a Europe-like situation happening?

You have maintained that you have been protesting all through your life. How is this different?

■ When you raise your voice for your rights, there is always an avenue. There would always be someone who’d sit across and talk to you. Like the censor board during [the trouble over Deepa Mehta’s] *Water*. We travelled to Delhi, went to I&B Ministry, there was Arun Jaitley, there was Seshadri Chari from the RSS who sat across. There was an argument, we read the whole script. There was always somebody to address your concerns. Right now it looks like there’s no system in place. Suddenly nobody is hearing you and that’s why more and more people are coming out. There is problem between the administration and the student’s union [at JNU]. The V-C is not hearing the union.

So does one carry on protesting?

■ Right now one has to keep on at it. I don’t know what happens in the Delhi elections. If they lose, will it affect them or will they become more stubborn?

But they may win Delhi. They won the general elections...

■ No, not unless there is manipulation; not unless there is force. They very clearly see that someone has done something for Delhi. Delhi may not have a political leader but it does have an administrator at the helm whose transition to a politician is something we have been waiting for, for years.

Let’s go back then to your statement about regional parties...

■ We are seeing regional voices emerging. In his one week tenure, [see] what Hemant Soren has done. He has taken calls. The kind of statements Uddhav Thackeray is making, protecting the citizens. You are seeing a transition in Shiv Sena. How did he make that statement of not mixing religion with politics! (For full interview, visit [bit.ly/caakashyap](http://bit.ly/caakashyap))



# Iran agrees de-escalation is only way to solve crisis

Protesters angry over handling of plane crisis want leaders to quit; Trump warns Tehran against killing demonstrators

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
REUTERS  
DUBAI

Iran signalled on Sunday it favours a de-escalation after days of heightened tensions with the U.S. during which both sides fired missiles and Tehran accidentally shot down a passenger aircraft.

U.S. President Donald Trump warned Iran against harming demonstrators and against a repeat of a deadly crackdown against rallies in November sparked by a fuel price hike.

“To the leaders of Iran - DO NOT KILL YOUR PROTESTERS,” Mr. Trump tweeted in his occasional all-caps style.

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper, however, said Mr. Trump was still willing to “sit down and discuss without precondition a new way forward” with Iran, although Tehran has steadfastly refused to hold talks unless U.S. lifts sanctions first.

In a meeting between Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani and the visiting emir of



**Pressure mounts:** Students taking part in a demonstration in Tehran on Saturday after paying tributes to victims of the Ukrainian plane that was “mistakenly shot down” by Iran. **AFP**

Qatar, both sides agreed de-escalation is the “only solution” to the regional crisis, the emirate’s ruler said.

Qatar hosts the largest U.S. military base in the region but also enjoys strong ties with Iran, with which it shares the world’s largest gas field. “We agreed... that the only solution to these crises is de-escalation from eve-

ryone and dialogue.”

For his part, Mr. Rouhani said: “Given the importance of security of the region... we’ve decided to have more consultations and cooperation for the security of the entire region.”

Meanwhile, protests erupted across Iran for a second day on Sunday, piling pressure on the leadership

after the military admitted it had mistakenly shot down a Ukrainian airliner.

Police fired teargas at thousands of protesters in the capital on Saturday, where many had chanted “Death to the dictator”, directing their anger at the Islamic Republic’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

## Rockets hit Iraq base hosting U.S. troops

REUTERS  
TIKRIT

Four Iraqi soldiers were wounded on Sunday in an attack on Balad air base in northern Iraq which houses U.S. personnel.

The Iraqi military said that eight Katyusha rockets had been fired at the base, about 80 km north of Baghdad, and that the four wounded included two officers.

## Olympic medallist flees to Netherlands

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
DUBAI

Iran’s only woman Olympic medallist said she defected from the Islamic Republic and fled to the Netherlands in an online letter that describes herself as “one of the millions of oppressed women in Iran.” Taekwondo athlete Kimia Alizadeh accused Iranian officials of sexism and mistreatment.

# Queen, senior royals set for crisis talks with Harry

Meghan to join via conference call



Queen Elizabeth II leaves after attending a church service at St. Mary Magdalene Church in Sandringham on Sunday. **AP**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

Queen Elizabeth II will host a showdown meeting with Prince Harry on Monday in an attempt to solve the crisis triggered by his bombshell announcement that he and wife Meghan Markle were stepping back from the royal frontline.

Other senior royals, including Prince Harry’s father Prince Charles and brother Prince William, with whom he has strained relations, will join the monarch at her private Sandringham estate in eastern England, according to British media.

Ms. Markle will join the meeting via conference call from Canada as they attempt to work out the “next steps” towards a compromise and nip the growing crisis in the bud.

Issues up for debate include how much money the couple will still receive from Prince Charles’s estate, their royal titles and what commercial deals they can strike, according to the *Sunday Times*.

The newspaper reported that Prince William believes he and Prince Harry are now “separate entities”, breaking the bonds forged following their mother’s tragic death.

“I’ve put my arm around my brother all our lives and

I can’t do that any more; we’re separate entities,” the *Times* reported he told a friend.

The royal couple and their son Archie spent Christmas in Canada, with the American former actress returning there this week.

The Queen on Thursday demanded that staff work with the couple to find urgently a “workable solution” that would take into account their demands for more freedom.

Several Canadian media reported Ms. Markle had returned to Vancouver island off the country’s Pacific coast, where the family spent the year-end holidays and where baby Archie remained with his nanny.

Senior royals were caught off guard by Wednesday’s announcement that the Duke and Duchess of Sussex wanted to seek a “progressive new role” and divide their time between Britain and North America.

The Queen’s office issued a terse statement the same evening, saying there were “complicated issues that will take time to work through”.

Prince Harry and Ms. Markle said they intended to continue to “fully support” the Queen and “collaborate” with senior royals.

# Bangladesh arrests Sufi singer after protests

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
DHAKA

A top Bangladeshi Sufi folk singer was arrested under a controversial internet law that critics say is used to stifle free speech after alleged anti-Islam comments triggered protests, police said Sunday. Shariat Sarker, 40, was detained in Mirzapur on Saturday.

“A cleric filed a case against Mr. Sarker over comments made at a show in December, and he was arrested under the Digital Security Act for hurting the religious sentiment of Mus-

lims,” local police chief Saidu Rahman said.

A video of the show was uploaded to YouTube and more than 1,000 Muslim activists and clerics staged a rally to demand the singer’s arrest. Mr. Sarker could face up to 10 years in prison if found guilty at trial.

Journalists and right activists say the Digital Security Act passed in 2018 is a serious threat to the freedom of expression in the nation of 168 million people.

Odhikar, a rights group, reported at least 29 arrests last year under the law.

# Rival Libya groups agree to ceasefire

It comes months after Haftar’s forces began offensive to seize Tripoli from GNA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TRIPOLI

Both sides in Libya’s conflict agreed to a ceasefire from Sunday to end nine months of fighting following weeks of international diplomacy and calls for a truce by power-brokers Russia and Turkey.

The oil-rich North African country has been wracked by bloody turmoil since a NATO-backed uprising killed long-time dictator Moamer Kadhafi in 2011, with multiple foreign powers now involved.



**Truce at last:** Demonstrators waving flags at a rally against eastern Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar in Tripoli. **AFP/FILE**

Since April last year, the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in

Tripoli has been under attack from forces loyal to eastern-based strongman Khalifa

Haftar, which days ago captured the strategic coastal city of Sirte.

Late on Saturday, Haftar’s forces announced a ceasefire in line with a joint call by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Early on Sunday, the head of the GNA, Fayez al-Sarraj, announced his acceptance of the ceasefire, saying it had taken effect on Sunday.

The UN mission in Libya welcomed the announcements.

## ELSEWHERE



**Malta gets new PM after reporter murder outcry**

VALLETTA

Outsider Robert Abela is set to become Malta’s new premier on Sunday after Prime Minister Joseph Muscat’s downfall over the murder of a journalist. Mr. Abela was elected leader of the Labour Party, meaning he automatically takes the role of PM. In the election run-up, Mr. Abela did not criticise Mr. Muscat, who announced in December he would quit following anger over his perceived efforts to protect friends and allies from a probe into the 2017 slaying of blogger Daphne Caruana Galizia. **AFP**

# Taiwan’s leader meets with U.S. official after election win

China slams various countries for congratulating Tsai

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

Fresh from a landslide reelection victory, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen met on Sunday with the de facto U.S. Ambassador to Taipei, as China warned that countries should stick with recognizing communist-ruled Beijing as the rightful government of “one China,” including Taiwan.

William Brent Christensen, a U.S. diplomat who is director of the American Institute in Taiwan, congratulated Tsai on her victory in Saturday’s election, and she



thanked him for his support.

China slammed officials from the U.S. and other countries for congratulating Ms. Tsai for her landslide victory.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, as well as top diplomats from Britain and

Japan, issued statements congratulating the leader and the island’s elections.

But Beijing, which views Taiwan as part of its territory, denounced their actions as violating the one-China principle.

“The Chinese side expresses strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition to this,” said Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang.

“We oppose any form of official exchange between Taiwan and countries that have established diplomatic relations with China,” he said in a statement.

# Hong Kong bars entry of HRW chief

REUTERS  
HONG KONG

The global head of Human Rights Watch said he was denied entry on Sunday to Hong Kong, where he was scheduled to launch the organisation’s latest world report this week.

Kenneth Roth, the group’s executive director, said he was blocked at Hong Kong airport from entering. “The report describes how the Chinese government is undermining the international human rights system. But the authorities just blocked my entrance to Hong Kong, illustrating the worsening problem,” Mr. Roth said in a tweet.

# U.S. to expel a dozen Saudi trainees after base attack probe

Some of them had links to extremist movements: CNN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. will expel at least a dozen Saudi military students accused of extremist links and child pornography, after an investigation into a shooting rampage by a Saudi officer in Florida, media reported Saturday.

In December, Mohammed Alshamrani, who was in the United States as part of a Saudi military training program, opened fire in a classroom at the Pensacola Naval Air Station, killing three sailors and wounding eight other people before being shot dead by police.

While the dozen or more trainees are not accused of aiding Alshamrani, some were found to have connections to extremist movements or in possession of child pornography, CNN reported.

The probe, which was carried out by the FBI, also found that several had not reported the assailant’s disturbing behaviour before the attack, according to *The Washington Post*.

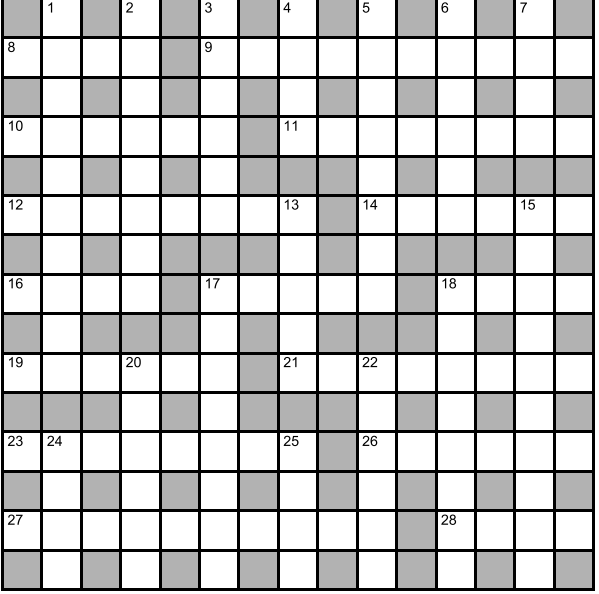
military personnel currently training in the United States and found no “immediate threat scenario.”

Defense Department officials halted operational training for Saudi Arabian military students in the United States following the attack, though classroom instruction continued.

The 21-year-old gunman, a lieutenant in the Saudi Royal Air Force, was armed with a lawfully purchased handgun, and is reported to have posted a manifesto on Twitter before the shooting denouncing America as “a nation of evil.”

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12831

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



### ACROSS

- 8 Fertilizer confiscated by a bureaucrat (4)
- 9 Old boy instructed to drop India created a hindrance (10)
- 10 Missing sailor’s near ward (6)
- 11 Strange that uncle gives up the French mystic chant on Monday (8)

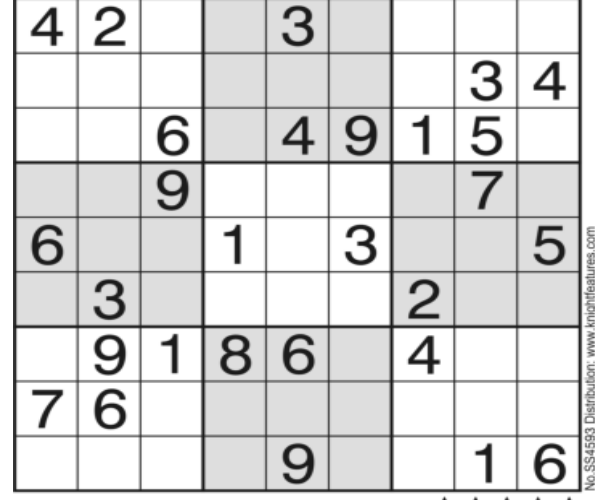
(set by Incognito)

- 12 Waltz, say, after Indian spies retreated with a martial performance (3,5)
- 14 Took care of denim stitched by daughter (6)
- 16 American marine engineer finally becomes a drug addict (4)
- 17 Susceptible and lying (5)
- 18 Gals returned vitrified cinders (4)
- 19 Bruce Wayne, an army assistant (6)
- 21 Baker whipped up a couple of eggs and some yeast for annual (8)
- 23 Size of paper for dunce’s hat (8)
- 26 Catch an errant parent (6)
- 27 Suitably included father or mother giving up Tango, it seems (10)
- 28 Hear flying bird (4)
- 3 Chinese dumpling returned? Not now! (3,3)
- 4 Isaac’s son mentioned in the thesaurus (4)
- 5 Charmed a butcher and got old Greek money (8)
- 6 Soldiers following a copper’s good judgment (6)
- 7 Vote out an objection (4)
- 13 Chemical Poe mixed with unknown ingredients (5)
- 15 Explained at length about electronic laboratory after Ed replaced mad Roy (10)
- 17 Father stole and got worried (8)
- 18 Tory boss rewrote a sad tale (3,5)
- 20 Muslim theologian’s soft muslin cloth is placed on a bench finally (6)
- 22 Double approval for a lemur (3-3)
- 24 Spook comes back after king goes away with an expression of apology (4)
- 25 Step back to reveal domestic animals (4)

### DOWN

- 1 A bare Asian swimming in our western waters (7,3)
- 2 Perhaps banker ate a vegetable at first and got a plant (8)

## SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12830								
X	H	S	T	L	H			
C	A	T	A	P	U	L	T	S
W	I	N	D	J	A	M	M	E
S	L	G	P	E	R	B	O	T
K	I	T	E	N	S	I	F	O
G	N	D	A	O	I			
C	O	W	G	I	R	L	E	T
E	T	H	E	N	E	N	A	L
A	S	T	H	E	N	I	A	C
T	O	M	B	A	T	H	L	E
P	A	N	B	C	K	G		
B	O	W	L	E	D	A	T	H
T	L	O	G					

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

## FAITH

### Strong bond of bhakti

In the Gita, Krishna analyses the various ways in which devotion takes root in people. He knows that many seek favours of Him for various reasons, for wealth, knowledge, relief from distress, and so on. Though He then claims that one who seeks Him for His sake is very dear to Him, His unparalleled magnanimity is seen in His recognition and response to all who seek Him, irrespective of their motive, pointed out Kalyanapuram Sri Aravamudhachariar in a discourse. None knows better than Him that for every jivatma, crossing this life on earth is beset with hurdles and therefore His devotees find great mental strength in seeking His help. It is held that at the end of Krishna avatar, the Lord departs with the feeling that he has not done enough for Draupadi. When she is in distress and on the verge of extreme humiliation, she knows that none but He alone could help.

Though Krishna is in Dwaraka, her loud cry for help in her utter helplessness, bears fruit in a totally unbelievable manner. It proves beyond doubt His omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. But He still has this misgiving that He could not be present in person to alleviate her distress. He says that He is indebted to Draupadi in this account.

He comes to the assistance of Gajendra when the elephant calls out to the one who is the primordial source of all. With extraordinary sincerity He befriends a Guha or a Sugriva; accepts the humble offerings of a Sabhari or a Kuchela and graces them handsomely. When He enters Mathura to meet Kamsa, He goes out of the way to bless Kujba who gains a beautiful form and to shower His grace on the garland vendor. He grants the highest attainment to the unlettered and simple Gopis. It is no wonder that His devotees automatically feel doubly indebted to Him.



ASK US

AARATI KRISHNAN  
**Investment options**  
**Q.** I am 23 years old and started my career in a fintech organisation last year. I earn ₹50,000 per month excluding my PF contribution (₹3,200). My monthly expenditure is about ₹18,000. I want to start my own venture in about 5-8 years' time. I also have retirement savings in mind. Please suggest suitable investment options.

MANISHA JAYSON

**A.** If you have plans to quit employment and start your own venture, apart from investing towards the initial capital contribution to your venture, it would also be important to protect yourself from emergencies and set up a corpus to take care of your living expenses during the break (until your venture turns a profit). This is apart from investing towards goals such as retirement. From your query, it appears that you can save about ₹32,000 every month. As a first step, if you don't have health insurance offered by your employer, we suggest you take one so that medical emergencies don't dent your savings.

A premium of ₹5,000 a year can fetch you a reasonable cover. We also urge you to set up an emergency fund equal to nine months' living expenses, which would be ₹1.62 lakh in your case. This money should be in safe options such as fixed deposits with a leading bank. If you have money idling in your savings account or elsewhere, earmark it towards this emergency fund. If you don't, we suggest that you invest ₹5,000 each month until you get to this number. Thereafter, this money can go into your retirement plan. To get to a sizeable corpus, aggressive hybrid equity funds or multicap equity funds would be your best bet.

An 8-year time frame may be essential to earn a reasonable return from these vehicles. If you are conservative, consider three aggressive hybrid equity funds with a good 10-year record for your SIPs. Assuming you make an 8% compounded return, that will give you a corpus of about ₹33 lakh in 8 years' time. If you have a higher risk appetite, you can invest in three multi-cap equity funds with a good 10-year record. At an assumed 10% return, this will get you to a corpus of about ₹37 lakh at the end of 8 years. How much of this money you would like to invest in the venture and how much you would like to use for your income needs would be up to you. To make a start on your retirement plan, you must open a PPF and NPS account and start contributing whatever savings you have left after the above investments, towards your retirement. Future savings from increases in income and surpluses from your venture must also go into your retirement investments.

For high returns

**Q.** I am 24 and earn ₹10 lakh a year. I invest ₹1.5 lakh in PPF and spend ₹1.5 lakh towards personal expenses. That leaves me with ₹7 lakh per annum to invest. I'm ready to take extreme risks. I'm already investing in stocks and mutual funds. Can you guide me on other investment options which can yield high returns? Or is to okay to park the entire money in stocks and mutual funds?

NAREN BABU

**A.** To start with, do set up an emergency fund made up of about 9 months' living expenses. In your case, that would amount to about ₹1.12 lakh, which you need to hold in fixed deposits at a leading bank. If you have dependants, you should buy a pure term insurance plan to take care of them in your absence. If you are not covered by your employer, it is also essential to get a health insurance plan so that your savings don't take a hit if you have medical emergencies.

After you fund these necessities, you can decide how much of your surpluses you can invest in equity and fixed income. This allocation must be based on your risk appetite as well as financial need. Stocks or equity mutual funds would not be suitable for any financial need which is likely to crop up in less than 5 years' time. If you have such goals, invest in short-duration debt funds towards such goals. For goals that will crop up in 5-7 years, use aggressive hybrid equity funds that invest in a mix of debt and equity. For goals beyond 7 years, you can rely on stocks and pure equity funds. Continue with your PPF investments as a part of your fixed income allocation.

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.



VIDYA BALA

If you think I am going to provide a panacea for equity market volatility, I am afraid I have none.

I think most of you have very little reason to complain. This is because for the vast majority (going by the savings data of the country), equity accounts for 5-10% your overall investments. When I say investments, I include deposits, real estate, insurance (if you are using it as an investment) and gold. And, a majority of this is in deposits, going by RBI's data on the quantum of individual deposits.

So, why, then, would the market volatility cause you so much pain? Simply because that is the only moving part in your portfolio. It swings all the time!

And more importantly, it is so easy for you to track it every hour of the day, every single day!

Take it in your stride

While it is important that your equity performs well over the long term for those kicker returns, it is equally important for you not to miss the forest for the trees. Instead of ruiling over the negative returns in one small-cap fund, you will do well to look at the tiny blip it caused to your overall investments.

If you cannot deal with this volatility, you are better off shifting even the existing 5-10% into your other investments that you either cannot track or which don't swing wildly. It is not worth doing much planning, market timing,

reading, and constantly acting, really! For, there is no way you can eliminate such movements.

In my experience, a small proportion of investors – a growing number, though – build their portfolios primarily using equities (stocks or funds or NPS). They genuinely believe that only equity will help fulfil their long-term aspirations and build wealth.

There are a few things that this class of investors can do to reduce the volatility in their portfolio through the simple strategy of diversification.

**Higher risk, higher swings:** Most equity investors believe that mid- and small-cap stocks or funds are the real wealth builders and often go overboard on these segments; holding over 50% of their portfolio in them. Now the issue is, these wealth builders

can be wealth destroyers too! And even if you held good mid or small-cap funds, if they lose the plot in a fall, it may take a good while to climb up again. Hence, going overboard on the riskiest of the risky asset class is not a good idea for long-term wealth building. Even a 15-25% holding in these segments can boost your portfolio.

The same holds good for sector or thematic investing too. Sectors become conspicuous at their peak. So, often, your entry point goes amiss. While sectors such as banking or consumer goods may not lose their flavour as they are the core of any economy, other cyclical sectors or commodity segments need timing of entry and exit. If you miss the bus, you not only lose an opportunity to build wealth but also suffer from oppor-

tunity loss by holding them.

**Not flashy asset classes but diversifiers:** In the past 3 years, some investors who held gold may have exited it, totally disenchanted with the returns. But gold surprised in 2019 with a more than 20% returns as global turmoil and trade wars meant investors sought refuge in the metal. But the problem, as I have observed, is this: most people invest in gold seeking high returns and exit disappointed. Gold failed to even beat debt for almost three years until 2019. But one fine day, it stood tall, protecting your portfolio from the equity volatility. It may again go back to oblivion after such glory. This is the limited purpose of gold. If that appeals to you, use it to diversify with some 10-15% exposure and not to gain top returns.

**Hedge with global exposure:** Did you know that over the past three years, the U.S. markets outperformed India? But very few among you would hold this class of funds or stocks.

Here again, the problem is that you tend to go overboard with such options when performance is at a peak and ditch them when Indian markets return to firm. That is a flawed approach when you use them as a diversification option. Two things help with this kind of investment: one, you get to invest in a market outside India and hence diversify. Second, if you are spending in dollars for future goals such as children's education, this can provide some natural currency hedge.

**Get a bit passive:** Finally, if everything seems unclear, having some expo-

sure to index, through funds or ETFs, will ensure that you at least stay with the market. This is not an option that agents or relationship managers will suggest. So, seek it yourself for at least 10% of your portfolio.

After all this, there would still be volatility! Deal with it. If I should sound more intellectual, learn to be 'antifragile'. That's the term from Nassim Nicholas Taleb's book "Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder". Taleb says we should be antifragile – let shocks and disruptions make you stronger and help you adapt to newer challenges. And, always, look at your overall portfolio performance when you look to see how your investments are doing. Remember the forest and the trees!

(The author is Co-founder, Primeinvestor.in)

COVER NOTE: WHOLE LIFE POLICY

## When to choose a whole life insurance policy over a term policy

If you wish to support dependants in your super-senior years, this is a good option

K. NITYA KALYANI

A Whole Life policy is just that. It offers life insurance cover throughout the life of the insured.

Earlier we saw how a Term policy works. It covers against the risk of death during a specified term and has no maturity or survival benefit once that term is over. Usually there is an upper limit of 65 or 70 years of age.

A Whole Life policy, on the other hand, covers the life assured through their natural life. Companies do define this variously as up to age 99 or age 100.

Unlike a Term policy which is a highly focussed policy as described above, the Whole Life policy can have various features. Should the life assured die, the payment is made to the nominee and if they survive the policy date, the policy gets converted into an endowment which pays out on their passing away.

The Whole Life policy would cost more than the Term policy, naturally, and you should be able to sustain the premium payment until age 100 or so. Apart from options for regular premiums for the entire term of the policy, limited premium paying terms are available and one can choose from them de-



If you expect your kids to be on their feet by the time you retire, a term policy until age 65 will suffice. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

pending on income flows. Single premium policies are also available.

Choose a Whole Life policy when you have dependants and when your responsibilities towards them will extend to your super senior years. Should you assess that your children, for example, will be standing on their own feet by the time you retire, a term policy until age 60 or 65 would be a better option.

A Whole Life policy can also be a mechanism to fund funeral arrangements. Morbid as it may sound, more people are thinking through such responsibilities rather than leaving it to those left behind to contend with and do

so have riders and some examples are Accidental Death Benefit, Terminal Illness, Critical Illness and Permanent Disability. A rider is an additional cover that can be purchased with the main policy and, only at the time of buying the main policy. That coverage comes at a lower cost than it would otherwise, by virtue of the fact that it is an add-on cover.

Loans possible

Another benefit of Whole Life policy over Term policy is that a policy loan can be taken as there is a surrender value.

A Term policy, on the other hand, serves as a better tool for backing up a housing loan, protecting the family from loan repayment should the bread-winner die.

Some policies also allow the death benefit to be given to the beneficiary as a lump sum or as a periodical payment. The policy pay out is exempt from income tax. Premium payments also attract a tax benefit under Section 80C of the Income-tax Act, 1961.

As with any insurance decision, clarity on why you want the coverage will help you decide the right policy.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

TECH TRAIL: PRECIOUS METALS

## Gold shines brighter

B. KRISHNAKUMAR

After subdued price action in November, the of price of precious metals recovered and closed on a positive note in December 2019.

Comex gold gained about 15% in 2019, which is the biggest annual gain since 2010. The international gold price gained 3.4% in December to close at \$1,523.1 an ounce. Comex silver rose 5.6% to settle at \$17.92 an ounce.

In India, the price of gold futures at MCX gained 2.8% in December to close at ₹39,108 per 10 gm. MCX silver futures too ruled firm and gained 4.9% in December to end at ₹46,711 per kg.

The year 2020 has begun on a positive for precious metals as mounting tensions in West Asia stoked positive sentiment. Gold price jumped to an almost 7-year high a few days ago, before easing off in the last couple of days.

After several weeks of consolidation, the price action in the past few weeks indicates that precious metals have regained their sheen.

The short-term outlook for Comex gold is positive and the price could rise to the immediate resistance of \$1,625-1,630 an ounce.

The recent spike in Comex gold has, however, pushed the price to an overbought zone. This could trigger consolidation or a cool-off before the next leg of the up-trend resumes. A breakout past \$1,575 would indicate that the cool-off phase is over, and the price could then head to the target of \$1,625. The outlook for gold would be positive until the support at \$1,480-1,485 is not breached. The short-term out-



look for silver is bullish too. A breakout past the immediate resistance at \$18.6 would strengthen the positive outlook for silver. Above \$18.6, Comex silver could rise to its short-term target of \$19.4-19.5 an ounce. The short-term positive outlook would warrant reassessment on a close below the support level at \$17.2.

Outlook for MCX gold and silver too appears positive. Gold futures price at MCX is likely to rise to the short-term target of ₹41,600-41,800 per 10 gm. The positive view would be under threat if the price falls below the support zone at ₹38,600-38,800.

Silver price could move to the immediate target in the ₹48,900-49,500 zone. There is strong support for silver at ₹44,500-45,000. A close below ₹44,500 would invalidate the positive outlook and could push MCX silver price to ₹42,500-43,000 per kg.

(The author is a Chennai-based analyst/trader. This is not meant to be trading or investment advice)

LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"Do you have a policy that covers financial headaches?"

PERSONAL LOAN - RATES AND CHARGES

Name of Lender	Interest rate (%)	EMI (Rs) Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	EMI (Rs) Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
State Bank of India	10.50-14.90	10,747-11,869	2,149-2,374	Upto 1%
Citi Bank	10.50-18.99	10,747-12,968	2,149-2,594	Upto 3%
HDFC Bank	10.75- 21.30	10,809-13,611	2,162-2,722	Rs 2999-25,000
Indian Bank	10.35-14.80	10,710-11,843	2,142-2,369	Upto 0.512%(min:Rs 512)
Punjab & Sind Bank	12.45-13.70	11,236-11,557	2,247-2,311	1%
Bank of Baroda	11.40-16.40	10,971-12,266	2,194-2,453	Rs 1,000-Rs 10,000
Axis Bank	12.00-24.00	11,122-14,384	2,224-2,877	Upto 2%
ICICI Bank	11.25-22.00	10,934-13,809	2,187-2,762	Upto 2.25%
Union Bank of India	10.10-14.20	10,648-11,686	2,130-2,337	Upto 0.5%
Canara Bank	11.35-15.05	10,959-11,908	2,192-2,382	Rs 1000-5000
Federal Bank	11.49 onwards	10,994 onwards	2,199 onwards	Upto 3%
Punjab National Bank	10.75-14.50	10,809-11,764	2,162-2,353	Upto 1.8%
UCO Bank	10.95-11.35	10,859-10,959	2,172-2,192	Upto 1%(min: Rs 750)
Bandhan Bank	15.00-16.26	11,895-12,228	2,379-2,446	1%
South Indian Bank	11.15-14.25	10,909-11,699	2,182-2,340	2%

Rates as on January 9, 2020

Source: Paisabazaar.com

NEW CAR LOAN- RATES AND CHARGES

Name of Bank	Interest rate (%)	EMI (Rs) Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure-5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
Oriental Bank of Commerce	7.95-8.50	10,126-10,258	Rs 2,500-7,500
State Bank of India	8.65-12.10*	10,294-11,148	Rs 1000-7500
Axis Bank	9.05-11.30	10,391-10,946	Rs 3,500-5,500
HDFC Bank	8.80-10.00	10,331-10,624	Rs 3,000-10,000
RBL Bank	13.50-14.00	11,505-11,634	Up to 2%
Indian Bank	8.85-9.20	10,343-10,428	upto Rs 10,236
Union Bank of India	8.20-8.70	10,186-10,307	up to 15,000
Punjab National Bank	8.55-9.00	10,270-10,379	up to 1,500
Bank of India	8.60-9.20	10,282-10,428	up to 5,000
South Indian Bank	9.05-9.80	10,391-10,574	Upto Rs 10,000
Canara Bank	8.45-11.05	10,246-10,884	Rs 1,000-5,000
Bank of Baroda	8.65-10.40	10,294-10,722	Rs 2,500-10,000
Indian Overseas Bank	8.70	10,307	Rs 500-10,000
Federal Bank	9.25	10,440	Rs 1,500-2,500
Corporation Bank	8.50-9.00	10,258-10,379	Nil till 31/01/2020
IDBI Bank	8.85-9.45	10,343-10,489	Rs 1000
Allahabad Bank	8.30-9.75	10,210-10,562	Upto Rs 8696
Dhanlaxmi Bank	9.95-10.55	10,611-10,759	1%

\*Additional concession of 0.25% on application via YONO. Further concession of 0.20% on purchase of EV

Rates and charges as on January 9, 2020

Source: Paisabazaar.com



■ SUDHIR VARADARAJAN

India, at present, is ranked 52nd in the Global Innovation Index. Policy-makers would like the country to leapfrog into the top 25 in the next few years. One of the visible signs of the policy initiatives, both in the academia and the industry, is the increased number and scale of innovation contests. Invariably, these contests target the engineering students, guided by an implicit assumption that young minds are better equipped to find creative solutions for the persistent problems faced by the industry and society.

Challenges

While innovation contests are not a bad idea, they have their limitations in producing innovation due to two reasons. First, it is difficult for students to produce radically new and practically feasible solutions without a deep appreciation of the problem's context. In most cases, the solutions tend to be techno-centric in nature like IoT/Blockchain-enabled farming. Second, students whose ideas are not shortlisted, lose interest in the problems and the contests. As a result, the contests may not be the best tools to seed a culture of innovation.

In order to develop a culture of innovation, it is important to pay attention to the key driver of creativity and innovation – curiosity. In the past couple of years, I have been doing a few exercises with students and experienced professionals to understand the relationship between curiosity, creativity and innovation. One of

It is difficult for students to produce radically new and practically feasible solutions without a deep appreciation of the problem's context.

Curiosity

can kill the

CATs

To make a giant leap in the Global Innovation Index, institutions and faculty must do a serious rethink to cultivate curiosity among students

them involves asking the participants to observe things in their context and document on a piece of paper. To my surprise, I did not notice any difference in the way young minds and experienced professionals responded to the exercise.

For most of the participants, the context was either too familiar or did not exist at all and it did not trigger any curiosity. The few participants who did exhibit some curiosity, did not explore it. This behaviour can be traced to the fear of failure that is cultivated through our education, competitive exams, and risk-reward systems. And we seem to have accepted the phrase “curiosity killed the cat” as an axiom. I think it is time we put the negative connotation of curiosity to rest.

Types

Today, there is an improved un-

derstanding of curiosity, its inhibitors and enablers.

Research studies indicate that five types of curiosity are relevant for professional work – specific, diversive, social, perceptual and epistemic.

Engineers typically exhibit **specific curiosity**, i.e., curiosity to engage with specific problems like mathematical equations or puzzles. However, this type of curiosity tends to decline when the problem is either ambiguous or the knowledge gap is high.

**Diversive curiosity** is an interest to know a variety of things (seeking novelty). However, the interest to know a variety of things related to professional work reduces with increased specialisation. One way to overcome this is by deliberately shifting from one topic to another or taking cross functional roles at different times and integrating the di-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

verse experiences. Diversive curiosity helps deal with ambiguity in problem-solving and boosts creativity.

**Social curiosity** is the interest to know about other people. Cultivating social curiosity requires a pluralistic, non-judgmental way of engagement. Engineers can learn from anthropologists. Social curiosity can open possibilities for collaboration which can help address knowledge gaps and lead to new meanings.

The fourth type – **perceptual curiosity** – is very natural to all of us. Anything new in our context easily excites us. However,

perceptual curiosity reduces as familiarity increases. We stop observing or seeing everyday routine things. Lack of perceptual curiosity can affect both diversive and social curiosity. Artists and designers know how to cultivate perceptual curiosity. That is the reason why engineers today are being asked to learn from artists and designers.

Finally, there is **epistemic curiosity** that is critical to developing creative confidence. It is the process of learning to create new knowledge, which can happen only by trying things out or testing the hypothesis, i.e., problem-

based learning.

Academic institutions and faculty must do a serious rethink to cultivate curiosity among students. A good starting point is to revisit Anatole France's observation that “the whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards”. Maybe the character ‘c’ in the word faculty is meant to highlight the central role of curiosity. In other words, what would be a faculty without the ‘c’?

One way to drive home the point is to make curiosity an im-

portant parameter in faculty evaluation and recruitment. If institutions take steps in this direction, then at least in 10 years from now, we can create an environment where increased curiosity among engineering students kills the blind pursuit of CAT, GATE and other competitive exams and enhances the creative confidence to pursue innovation and entrepreneurship. Only this can help the country make a giant leap in the Global Innovation Index.

The writer is Dean (Design, Innovation & Incubation), IITDM Kancheepuram.

STUDY ABROAD

## History, Hebrew and the future

Israel is the new education hotspot for research and more

■ DEEKSHA TERI

Gone are the days when a handful of countries were considered to be desirable study locations for higher education. Now, there are no geographical limits as students are considering countries other than first-world countries. Countries, too, are putting in efforts to make themselves student-friendly. One such upcoming study destination is Israel.

It is globally known as ‘The Start-Up Nation’ and ‘the Land of Innovation’. One of the main reasons for it is Israel's advanced higher education system, highly regarded worldwide, with institutes rated among the top 200 universities today.

“All these universities are armed with the best teaching staff and resources which can help shape the future of their students. For foreign students, Israeli universities, and other higher education institutions offer a wide range of programmes and facilities, in even niche research areas, at a much more affordable cost, relative to equivalent institutions across the globe,” says Yaa-kov Finkelstein, Consul General of Israel.

With 1.4% of its current student population being international, Israel is slowly gaining consideration amongst Indian students who are looking at quality higher education and research.

Weizmann Institute of Science (WIS) is one of the leading institutes in Israel that has been attracting young India researchers. Located in Rehovot, and spread over 200 acres of land, this institute is one of the world's top-ranking multidisciplinary research institutions. It was founded in 1941 by Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the first President of Israel, has around 1,000



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

grants sponsoring the WIS's research activity. At any given moment, approximately 1,200 research projects are carried out by its students and faculty who hail from different parts of the world.

WIS comprises almost 18 departments organised into five faculties: Mathematics and Computer Science, Physics, Chemistry, Biochemistry and Biology. In addition to this, there is the Feinberg Graduate School and the Davidson Institute of Science Education. Among its faculty are one Nobel Prize, seven Wolf Prize, three Turing Award, two Japan Prize and 33 Israel Prize winners.

To assure top-class quality graduates and to make sure that they leave the campus fully equipped with the best theoretical and practical knowledge of their field, the institute provides the best of equipment to its researchers.

Admission

The admission process for the WIS is straightforward. The institute offers master's, doctorate and post-doctorate programmes in science, and the selection process is based on the practical and theoretical knowledge that the applicant possesses (which is tested by the respective faculty members), rather than a conventional merit-based system.

In order to be a part of

the programmes, interested candidates need to draft a pitch of their work and contact the respective faculty. Following this, a video/voice interview along with an academic background check is conducted by the faculty. The selected candidates are automatically awarded a full scholarship.

Diversity

In order to attract international students and maintain diversity in the campus, the Institute's official language is English. This not only helps the international students feel comfortable, but also helps the researchers and the Institute maintain a global image. Interestingly, WIS is one of



All these universities are armed with the best teaching staff and resources which can help shape the future of their students.

the few institutes that has the highest number of Indian students, followed by Chinese and German students.

The few selected courses which are locally-based are taught in Hebrew but are translated aptly and simultaneously in English for non-Hebrew speakers.

The campus also comes together to celebrate festivals from different parts of the world. Be it Holi or Deepavali, the Indian community, with the help of the International Office (IO), hosts celebratory cultural evenings that are open to all.

The IO also helps the new-arrivals with sorting out their bank and accommodation processes to make the shift to a new country smooth. It also arranges Hebrew lessons for interested students which helps them in reading, writing and speaking basic Hebrew, making their stay easier.

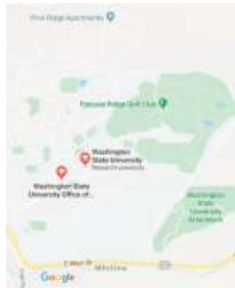
Considering that many PhD and post-doctoral students come with their partners, the IO also extends support to their families, providing them a friendly lounge to meet and greet people from similar cultural backgrounds, and even supporting them during maternity periods for expectant mothers.

The writer was in Israel at the invitation of the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel.

POSTCARD FROM... WASHINGTON

## A slice of freedom

Academic life in the U.S. taught Arun to be independent and responsible



I distinctly remember my orientation day, Mr. Cody, the International Advisor said, “America is all about independence and choice”. As I enter the last semester of my

Master of Electrical Engineering thesis programme, with a specialisation in power systems at Washington State University (WSU), I realise how much the statement has resonated with me and stayed on, over the course of the last 18 months.

Located in the Pacific Northwest region of the U.S. and set in a small town called Pullman, WSU offered me a wonderful opportunity to experience the American slice of life. The city is sparsely populated with just about 30,000 people.

Independence and self-reliance

One major difference I perceived in the academic life in the U.S. is that a student is expected to be independent and responsible for their own course work and performance. Research experiences also vary depending on the faculty background and seniority. The courses are outcome-based and in some of them, there is a flexibility of deciding end-goals



NAME: Arun Abhishek Imayakumar  
COLLEGE: Washington State University  
COURSE: MS in Electrical Engineering

as well. In general, the programme involves a lot of self-reading and is quite intensive.

Following my sterling academic performance in the first semester, I was advised by my faculty to switch to thesis, though research had not been on my radar during the application process. As a thesis student, I got the opportunity to be a part of the department's research work and also received a full tuition waiver and a generous monthly stipend.

Intensive

The power systems courses that I am pursuing involve actual case studies including those which the professors have worked on, guest lectures from industry experts, use of actual industrial software and discussion of recent events within the domain. The programme also sponsored my travel and stay expenses for IEEE Power and Energy general meeting and other power-related conferences.

In addition to the coursework, there are a lot of on-campus resources such as free Professional Development Initiative (PDI) events for communication, leadership skills, a robust career services office, numerous student organisations (close to 300) and recreation centre.

Arun Abhishek Imayakumar is a second year student of MS in Electrical Engineering at Washington State University, Pullman, the U.S.

SCHOLARSHIPS

■ University of Warwick PAIS PhD Studentship

The Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick, has announced this studentship for those who wish to start a PhD programme in PAIS. Selected students will get multiple benefits.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Students who have obtained a master's-level degree in a relevant subject area from a recognised institution of higher education by September 30, and have a strong undergraduate qualification in a relevant

subject area can apply.

**PRIZES AND REWARDS:** Selected scholars will receive payment of full academic fees and maintenance grant in line with the U.K. Research Council standard stipend for up to three-and-a-half years.

**DEADLINE:** January 16

**APPLICATION:** Online  
<http://www.b4s.in/edge/UOPI>

■ CFA Institute Womens Scholarships

CFA Institute, the U.S., has announced this scholarship for girl candidates around the world who are interested in earning the CFA charter.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Women candidates from all over the world, who are interested in earning the

CFA charter.

**PRIZES AND REWARDS:** Those selected will get the deduction in the CFA Program enrolment fee and the exam registration fee is reduced to \$350.

**DEADLINE:** February 01

**APPLICATION:** Online  
<http://www.b4s.in/edge/CFA5>

■ Holland Scholarship

Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, in collaboration with Dutch research universities and universities of applied science, has announced this scholarship for the bachelor's and master's students from outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

**ELIGIBILITY:** Students coming

from non-EEA nations who have applied for a full-time bachelor's or master's programme at one of the participating Dutch higher education institutions and meet the specific requirements of the institution of choice can apply for this scholarship. Applicant must not have a degree from an education institution in the Netherlands.

**PRIZES AND REWARDS:** Those selected scholars will get €5,000 in the first year of their studies.

**DEADLINE:** February 01

**APPLICATION:** Online  
<http://www.b4s.in/edge/HST1>

Courtesy: buddy4study.com



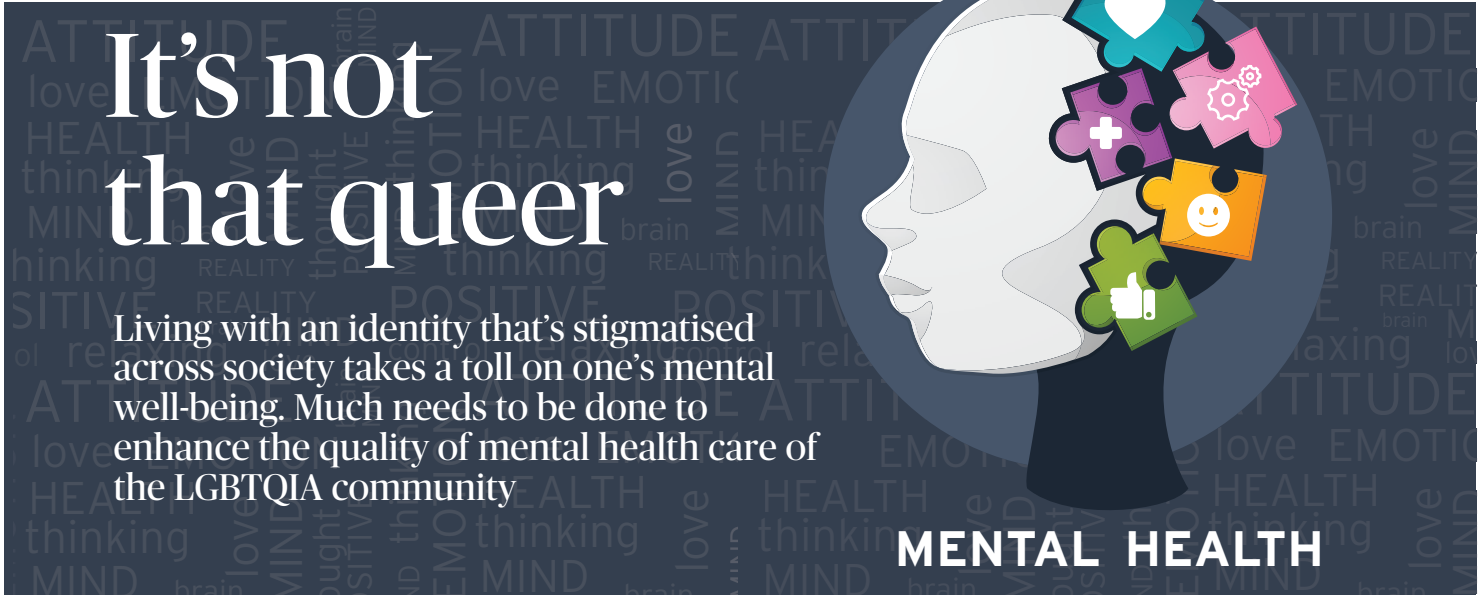


EQ... ENGAGE
KRITHVI SHYAM

Imagine meeting a doctor for a tummy ache, and instead finding yourself at the receiving end of "conversion therapy"! If you are a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, this could be a reality, and seeking professional help for your health can be an uphill task.

"The challenge begins with opening up to a doctor or counselor - you aren't sure if the person is homophobic, neutral or accepting", says Dr. Prasad Raj Dandekar, a radiation oncologist and founder of Health Professionals for Queer Indians (HPQI).

Challenges aplenty
An upcoming conference by HPQI, in February, focusses on mental health issues faced by the community, and with good reason.



It's not that queer

Living with an identity that's stigmatised across society takes a toll on one's mental well-being. Much needs to be done to enhance the quality of mental health care of the LGBTQIA community

mental health initiatives, especially those that grant access to help for marginalised persons and communities. She points to how, for a long time, homosexuality was declared a perversion and gender beyond the binary (i.e., of masculine and feminine) was pathologised.

ed with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) to offer a course on Queer Affirmative Counselling Practice (QACP). This aims to equip mental health practitioners, or MHPs, with a better perspective on the community, the unique life stressors that its members face, and modified approaches to traditional mental health practices.

and learning from queer voices. In fact, the QACP course has been designed by people who are queer and MHPs themselves.

done is changing people's mindset," says Dr. Dandekar. He advocates doing this early. For instance, by training medical college students, "You develop inclusive doctors who are open to learning."

Pore over the document



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH
S. UPENDRAN

What is the difference between 'pour' and 'pore'? (Vinay Kohli, New Delhi)

Both words are pronounced the same way - they rhyme with 'four', 'door' and 'bore'. The word 'pour' is mostly used as a verb to mean 'to flow in a steady stream'.

When do we use 'Yours sincerely' and 'Yours faithfully' in letters? (S Radha, Chennai)

Do people actually write letters, nowadays? Both are used in formal letters and not intimate ones. If you mistakenly use either with your significant other (husband, wife, boyfriend, and so on), you have some serious explaining to do.

What is the meaning of 'run someone off her feet'? (Naresh Kumar, Tiruchi)
When you tell someone that she/he is going to be 'run/rushed off her/his feet', what you are suggesting is that she/he is going to be kept extremely busy for some time.

The writer teaches at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. upendrankye@gmail.com

INNOVATION

Intelligence at play

Roanuz offers students an opportunity to use sports data and build their own web platforms

ARCHANA SUBRAMANIAN

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming various sectors across the world, and how! However, the surprise element is its ability to bring about a volley of changes even in a dynamic sector like sports.

tion program interface (API), giving users access to quality sports data - at affordable cost with no long-term contract - that can be integrated into their own web platforms.

Opportunity
"This platform has created a great opportunity for students to build a cricket, football, kabaddi fantasy app or live sports score website or blog by themselves with the support of our sports data.

Once live, they can then sell to consumers and monetise their app or platform. During a live cricket/ football/ kabaddi match, students can approach cafes, e-commerce websites or any platforms that like to show live scores to their consumers, and pitch their fantasy app or sports website.



AFP PHOTO/JIM WATSON

about sports data and the impact of AI in the sports industry and eventually build their career.

Support
"All they need is minimal knowledge of coding and the Roanuz team will support them with the rest. During the training, which is free, the Roanuz team will support the students until they complete the app and provide data during the live matches.

Variety
"Though cricket has been a dominant force in the sports industry, other sports are also getting enough attention these days with the emergence of Indian Super League (ISL) for football, Kabaddi League, Hockey Indian League (HIL), Premier Badminton League (PBL), Pro Volleyball League and so on.

Students can connect on contact@roanuz.com for more details.

VALUE ADD

NITINA DUA

The age-old Greek saying by philosopher Heraclitus - The only constant in life is change - applies to every aspect of life, including education. It needs to keep pace with the ever-swiftly changing world today.

John Dewey, one of the foremost American educational reformers, laid great emphasis on practical learning for both students and teachers, saying that students should be given something to 'do' and not something to 'learn', and the nature of that 'doing' must entail 'thinking'.

My students have had some great experiences while interning at various organisations across domains, learning some invaluable lessons, which, perhaps could not be taught in a classroom setting.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Internship Beyond classrooms

Corporate internships give students an opportunity to take learning beyond the four walls of their study spaces

Some pointers

Explore, experience: During their formative years, it is always important to let students try things that they may never have tried before. This allows them to determine where their interests and natural skills lie.

Know thyself: SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) analysis for a student is a great idea to strategically review an individual's attributes. While considering the abilities of a student, it is equally important to contemplate a student's weaknesses in order to work on improving these particular aspects.

Prepare for the future: Students must think and plan ahead to be at the head of the queue in today's competitive world, from college admissions to job prospects. The purpose of

internships, at this point, is to help students consider the challenges that may arise as they continue on their path. Arul Kumar, who is passionate about engineering and also wishes to pursue the subject in his undergraduate level, had the opportunity to intern at IndiGo airlines in the engineering department.

Move out of your comfort zone: It is always favourable for a student to be on the driver's seat and internships provide a map to get them started. They are eventually going to find that whether in their careers or in their lives in general, there are going to be some roadblocks; the faster they realise this, the better.

All-round development: Besides, gaining knowledge of how a professional organisation operates, internships help students learn about different career opportunities, develop good work ethics and professional attitude, improve their communication skills and inculcate a sense of responsibility.

The writer is Lead, Career Development Centre at Shiv Nadar School, Noida

KNOWLEDGE

Q1
Google, for the last few years, has worked on a project called Makani. India could be one of the first countries for its commercial launch. It is a project which aims at generating power with minimum pollution.



Q2
Joseph Cyril Bamford Excavators Limited was a major sponsor for the Williams F1 Formula 1 team with its logo prominently displayed on F1 cars for the 2018 season.



Q3
To raise awareness and funds, the World Organisation in association with the United Nations conducts a marathon called 'Urgent Run' in Paris. The theme for the 2018 World Day was 'When Nature Calls'.



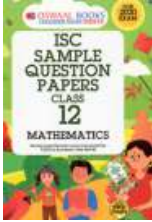
COURTESY: WALNUT KNOWLEDGE SOLUTIONS

ON THE SHELF

NIDHARSHANA RAJU

ISC Sample question papers, Class XII, English paper 1 and 2

Price: ₹199
Publisher: Oswal Books
Preparation is key for all exams and it never sides with being an option. English exams often demand students to travel an extra mile to fare well and divulge their opinions.



ISC Sample question papers, Class XII, Mathematics

Price: ₹299
Publisher: Oswal Books
Students fail at managing their time in Math exams which can be curbed by timing their sample papers. The book consists of solved papers and question papers for self-assessment.

CBSE 2020 Sample question papers, Class XII

Price: ₹149
Publisher: Oswal Books
Before exams begin, it is important for students to solve sample papers and assess the lessons that they are weak in and prepare, to improve their confidence levels.



ETCETERA

Future News Worldwide 2020

Future News Worldwide will take place in July at London. Hundred fully-funded places are available for the students. This opportunity is available to undergraduate and postgraduate students who are between 18-25 years of age.

New Chancellor for QUB

Queen's University, Belfast recently appointed Hillary Rodham Clinton as its new Chancellor. She received an honorary doctorate from Queen's last year and now is the university's 11th and first female Chancellor.

EAR SHOT

ASHOK RAJAGOPALAN





# ‘My choices are on the strength of story, not gender’

Meghna Gulzar on the process of writing and collaboration, the lure of the story and working with Deepika Padukone for *Chhapaak*

NAMRATA JOSHI

Almost five years after *Talvar* (with a *Raazi* in the middle) filmmaker Meghna Gulzar is set to present yet another cinematic take on a real life story, that of the acid attack survivor Laxmi Agarwal. Meghna is parked at the Taj Lands End, Bandra, on a day crammed with interviews for *Chhapaak*. “It’s like that when you are leading up to putting your film out there,” she says in a hushed voice sitting in one corner of a huge hall that’s being set up for TV interactions. With little time on hand for small talk and pleasantries we launch straight into the questions:

**Whose idea was it to make a film on acid attack survivor Laxmi Agarwal?**

It was my idea. I wrote the script in 2016 after *Talvar*. I was looking for [such] subjects because *Talvar* was my first film on [a] true life [incident], *Raazi* was nowhere in the ether at that time. I came across this issue of acid violence. I collaborated with my co-writer Atika Chohan. When you start researching on acid violence, Laxmi Agarwal’s case comes to the fore because it’s a landmark case for many reasons. We put a structure based on the information in public domain, and then we reached out to her to get her agreement on doing this. Once she agreed we spent time with her where we just let her speak and tell her story so that we could then supplement our own structure with her narrative. Then meeting other players in the story—her lawyer, her surgeon, her father’s employer. After *Raazi*, I



Behing the camera: Meghna Gulzar on the sets of *Chhapaak* •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

realised let’s make *Chhapaak* when I had reached out to Deepika [Padukone] last year.

**Why did you have to put it on hold after *Talvar*?**

I didn’t put it on hold. *Raazi* just surfaced. *Talvar* and *Chhapaak* are very similar in terms of the worlds. Both are Delhi-based, both are on an act of violence. I thought it would get kind of monotonous to do this.

*Raazi* just came and took a

life of its own. It came together in a year-and-a half – from scripting to release. You don’t plan these things. Scripts have their own destiny.

**What about real incidents is challenging to you as a filmmaker?**

[A] couple of things actually. One, strong stories which have a purpose. Story can be strong but does it have resonance? Strong characters which could be role models

or could be negative but they need to be strong. Third thing: my own instinctive reaction to the story is actually the moot point.

If I instinctively get grabbed by the story—oh god, this is the story I want to tell—then all other considerations become secondary.

**How easy was it to get Deepika to agree?**

Instant. Most unexpected and a very very beautiful surprise. I am guessing it’s [to do

with] the story and the significance of it. I just met her, the narration I gave her three months later.

**Where do you intervene as a filmmaker when you are dealing with the real world? It couldn’t have been a documentary, right? Where has the fiction come into play?**

I think only in the narrative order, where you play with the screenplay. You try to tell it in a non-linear order, you

try to tell it in an aesthetic way so your cinematography, costume, production design. You play with the tools that you have at your disposal. You use the cinematic tools effectively, but you don’t touch the authenticity of the facts. That’s my principle as a filmmaker.

**Was *Chhapaak* easier than *Talvar* then?**

No, it wasn’t. They are as complex and as challenging in their own right.

**We celebrated *Raazi* as this women-led ₹100 crore film. How easy or difficult has your life become after that tag?**

I think the path got easier after *Talvar*. It was also a commercial success, considering what it was made at and what it earned. It started from there.

Two things play a part here. One is, of course, the success of your previous film. Second, what is the cinematic environment at that time. When studios, actors, producers [believe] in slightly unconventional content or content that is not templated and the audience is also appreciating and accepting it, then it becomes easier to tell an unconventional story. And, of course, [the] success of your previous film works in tangent with that.

**Do women protagonists come subconsciously to you?**

It’s an interpretation of the media. *Filhaal* was not about two women protagonists; it was about surrogacy. Surrogacy cannot happen without a man. *Just Married* was about an arranged marriage which cannot happen without men. *Talvar* was an investigative procedural whose lead was Irrfan Khan. Then there was *Raazi* which was more about human sacrifice. Sehmat could very well have been a 19-year-old boy. It was not as though, it was a boy but I made it a girl because I wanted to tell a female-oriented story. My choices are based on the strength and potency of the story and the characters, and has very little to do with the gender.

**What you have now is**

**contemporary...**

Then I will go back to 1920. [For] the Sam Manekshaw film, Vicky [Kaushal] is playing the part [and] RSVP is producing it. I require nine months to a year of prep. Particularly for the kind of film it is, [and] the kind of detailing and research that is required. We start production in 2021. I do need a break for a couple of months to [work] *Chhapaak* out of my system. I have lived with something for a year-and-a-half. It can’t snap out on the day of release. It takes its own process.

**Are you again collaborating on the Manekshaw film?**

I love collaborating. I love the energy that pours into a script in collaborating. It’s the flow and exchange of ideas. You know the domino effect, how the dominoes start falling. Sitting with my writers is just the opposite. The scenes start standing. They start getting populated. It’s just banter through which it happens. For [the] Manekshaw film I am collaborating with Bhavani Iyer of *Raazi* and Shantanu Srivastava who wrote *Badhaai Ho*.

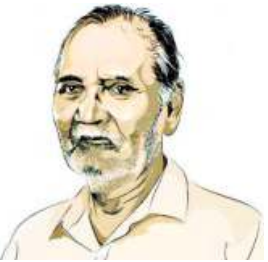
**So you bounce ideas off each other?**

We talk and make notes of what we have agreed on and then one person will structure it and it will come to the next for another layer and then to the third for another layer. Then we put it all together and circulate it. Every sequence is actually going through three passes. Very [rarely do] you have your semi-final draft in your first draft itself.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

## + The memory of the Italian crib

Christians believe that three Wise Men visited Jesus on his birth, the day of the Epiphany



R. V. SMITH

If you went past the Sacred Heart Cathedral any time between Christmas and January 6, known as Epiphany day and celebrated by Shakespeare in his play Twelfth Night, you are sure to have seen the crib depicting the manger in which Christ was born. Along with this would have been small statues of the Magi or three Wise Men from the East who went to worship him. It was a bright star which led them on their journey. The Nativity scene brings to mind a grander crib which was brought from Italy by the Greek merchant John’s family and presented to the Cathedral in Agra before the Cathedral in Delhi was built.

The life-size statues of Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Wise Men, shepherds and their sheep have been maintained with great care for many decades. The cracked arms and crowns of the magi have been taped and so also the horn of the shepherd. Incidentally three men, probably from the Russian Embassy stopped by the church to see the crib which reminded them of their Orthodox Church. For them, Christmas, fell on January 7, and they must have missed the three midwives who, according to their belief came for Jesus’ delivery.



Coming into the world A nativity scene •THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Now there hangs a tale from the Italian crib dating back to 1938 and one is reminded of it year after year on January 6th, as it also marks the birthday of this scribe and is well worth repeating: It was a Thursday with the sweet aroma of joss-sticks lingering in the winter air and the parting kick of Christmas. The church bells had just pealed the Angelus, and the old Archbishop crossed himself thrice while a young woman, who was just 18 years old, tried to control her pangs of labour.

“Thursday’s child is weeping and gnashing”, says the old rhyme and Ruby wanted to prolong her labour so that the birth of her first-born could be delayed until after midnight. Evening marks the end of day and the advent of night. It was the time when the lamplighter came running into the gullies over 80 years ago.

He came again that day, lighting the lamps which had lain barren from cock-crow to twilight. His lamps flickered in the frosty air much like the stars overhead and in the nearby house a young poet echoed the memorable lines: “*Shama jalao bahut udaas hai sham*”, for the evening was indeed sad and needed a lamp to brighten it.

As if infected by the mood, a baker, tired after the day’s work, came and stood at the shrine of the Sayyid

Baba outside Ruby’s house. He had bought joss-sticks, batasas, candles and flowers. It was Thursday and the aroma of this ritual day hung heavy over Azam Khan’s locality. Ruby watched it all from the window upstairs. She wondered what blessings the man sought, perhaps riches, an end to worry, recovery from an illness, or the welfare of his wife and children.

Two streets away evening was being ushered in to the sound of the tabla and the harmonium and the beat of *ghungroos* on tender feet as the courtesans of the city got into stride after sundown. The Lotharios were aware of this as they made their way to them. They had garlands in their hands, *kaajal* in their eyes and the sweet scent of Hina pervaded their person.

Just then Ruby’s husband Tom hurried by on his bicycle. One of the Lotharios recognised him and winked in greeting. He knew this young acquaintance was not one of those who spent their evenings above the marketplace where the courtesans had their quarters. He was a sincere sort of person, wise beyond his years and one who worked hard for a living. He had a big family to support: brothers, an unmarried sister and a paranoid mother. His first wife had died in childbirth two

years ago. He had to marry again because of domestic compulsions. It was his second wife who was now in labour. Tom cycled on. Meanwhile, Ruby clung to her quilt, bit her lip and gripped the hand of the midwife tight while her sister-in-law stroked her curly hair. The door chain clanged, somebody opened it and in walked Tom, tired and breathless. Ruby could hold herself no longer. She delivered there and then on the cot.

Tom tiptoed into the room and peered at his wife. She smiled weakly and pointed towards the little figure beside her: “It’s the feast of the Three Kings”, she said. Tom put his hand on the baby’s brow. “The gift of the Magi”, he replied as he blew a kiss to Ruby and walked out beaming with delight. They are both dead now but the much repaired Italian crib is still there as a reminder.

The writer is a seasoned chronicler of Delhi

**Corrigendum: In the column ‘The Parsi link with Delhi’ by R.V. Smith dated January 6th, 2019, the term Parsi was mistakenly used to refer to the Zoroastrians in Iran. In fact, Parsi is only used to refer to the community after they came to India. The error is regretted.**

## What’s cooking this Sankranti?

Homemakers and chefs from different regions on their harvest season favourites that you can whip up at home

RASHMI GOPAL RAO

Uttarayan in Gujarat, Lohri and Maghi in Punjab, and Pana Sankranti in Odisha are essentially celebrations for the same reason, but each is a different kaleidoscope of rituals, traditions and food.

When it comes to food, ingredients like sesame seeds aka *til*, jaggery, rice, groundnuts, harvest vegetables and sugarcane are quintessential. Here is a look at some regional delicacies prepared on this special day.

### Sesame post-solstice

A highly significant festival that marks the passing of the winter solstice, Maghi in Punjab is celebrated with great fervour. The day before is celebrated with a bonfire as Lohri, and it is customary to consume the produce from the new harvest during this day.

Apart from *sarson da saag* and *gur ki roti*, *til ki barfi* (sesame seed cake) is a signature preparation in this region. It is a crunchy delight made from the goodness of roasted sesame which is ground, jaggery, pure ghee and a hint of cardamom.

“Makar Shankranti is incomplete without *til-gud*. It is a tradition that dates over 100 years and every household makes sweets with these two ingredients. *Til* and *gud* also have medicinal properties, so it is believed to keep the body warm and increase immunity,” says chef Rudra, The Reservoir, Bengaluru.

“Makar Shankranti is incomplete without *til-gud*. It is a tradition that dates over 100 years and every household makes sweets with these two ingredients. *Til* and *gud* also have medicinal properties, so it is believed to keep the body warm and increase immunity,” says chef Rudra, The Reservoir, Bengaluru.

### Undhiyu for Uttarayan

Cultural vibrance, kite flying, peanut *chikkis* and *undhiyu* – arguably Gujarat’s most famous dish – dominate Makar Sankranti in the State. *Undhiyu* literally means ‘upside down’, and is an assortment of freshly grown vegetables like *surti papdi* (hyacinth beans), *kand* (purple yam), sweet potatoes, raw bananas, *tuvar* (pigeon peas), brinjal and potatoes. “The dish, which has several variations, enjoys a cult status in Gujarat,” says Hetal Shah, a homemaker from Surat. The elaborate dish also involves



**Homemade constants** Undhiyu (top) is a vegetarian speciality of Gujarat; Til ki barfi is a seasonal favourite in Punjab •GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

the preparation of *methi muthiyas* (steamed or deep-fried fenugreek leaf dumplings) cooked along with the vegetables in a medley of aromatic, heat-generating spices like ginger, garlic, coconut and green chillies. “*Undhiyu* is originally a regional speciality of Surat. The dish is a seasonal one, comprising of vegetables that are available on the South Gujarat coastline. Since Makar Sankranti is an ode to the harvest season, *undhiyu* is traditionally made using all the crops harvested around this time,” says chef Govind of Masala Mandi, Bengaluru.

### Feast from the far East

Along with holy dips and special prayers, *makara chaula* made from freshly harvested rice is a speciality of Odisha during Sankranti. “This is a traditional recipe made using fragrant ground rice that is fresh from the first harvest. It is added along with milk, cottage cheese, sugarcane, jaggery,

ginger, pepper and cut fruits. A small pinch of cinnamon is our secret ingredient,” says chef Rajani Kanta Raj of The Belgadia Palace located in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.

For an authentic taste, it is garnished with fruits and rose petals soaked overnight in honey for a fragrant aroma and flavour, adds Arunima Das, a homemaker from Puri.

### Til ki barfi

**INGREDIENTS**

- 200 gms grated jaggery
- 200 gms white sesame seeds
- 5-6 tbsp pure ghee

- 1 tsp cardamom powder

**METHOD**

- Roast the sesame seeds for 2-3 minutes in a non-stick pan till it changes its colour to golden brown. Allow to cool. Grind half of the quantity in a mixer and keep it aside. Take a pan, add pure ghee and grated jaggery. Add 2-3 tablespoons of water. Let the jaggery dissolve completely. Add cardamom powder. It will start forming bubbles. Now add the ground sesame seeds and cook for a while. When it gets mixed properly, add the rest of the sesame seeds. Cool it down and set in a tray. After 30 minutes, cut it diagonally and it is ready.





**From the album** As a child, with his wife Ankita; with his mother Usha; and (below) as seen in the 'Made in India' video  
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



# All we can do is keep moving

In his memoir *Made in India*, runner-actor Milind Soman talks about why stress can actually be a good thing, as long as we know how to deal with it. His secret: run!

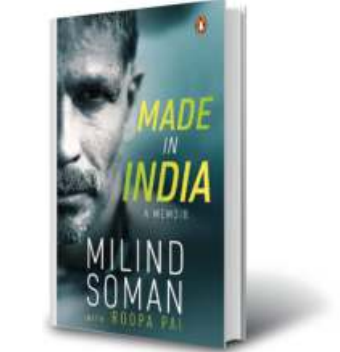
SWETA AKUNDI

Milind Soman is not a fan of revisiting the past, holding the belief that we must all “live in the moment”. And yet, 25 years after the release of ‘Made in India’, the music video that shot him to viral fame, the runner-actor is releasing his memoir, with the very same title.

The book, co-written by author Roopa Pai and published by Penguin Random House, delves into his relationships: with the women in his life, with his business partners and the ever-lasting one – with fitness. He talks about his addiction and subsequent de-addiction to smoking, alcohol and rage.

The latter he gets from his late father, a man with whom he shared a complicated relationship. Admitting that one cannot blame genetics for everything, he advocates mindful anger. “Take a step back, and decide if you need to be angry. If yes, then go ahead and vent it all out.”

In a conversation with us about the memoir, he says, “I actually have a bad memory. But there are



certain things in the past that have not left my mind. Things that I think about a lot without realising it.” One of them is the day his pet rabbit died. It is this memory of when he was five that he chooses to start the book with, and continues right up to his marriage with Ankita Konwar.

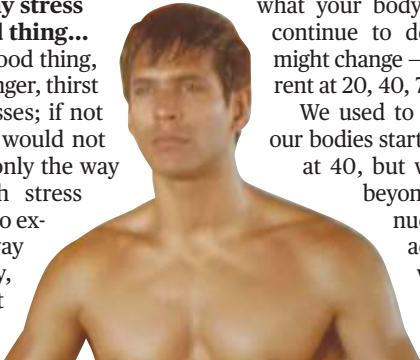
Edited excerpts from the conversation:

**Throughout the book, the anecdote of your first marathon runs as a central thread. What was the idea behind that?**  
● When Roopa suggested to use a

central binding memory, I could have chosen any of the milestones in my life: my first half marathon in 2004, the first Ironman in 2019... But to me, my first marathon (42K) stood out. It was the first time that I faced such a challenge that I thought I might not be able to overcome, that was the only time I had even collapsed. This is the one time that because of my own overconfidence and arrogance, I had a bad time. I learnt a lot from it, so I thought it would be a good backdrop for the story.

**The world today recognises burnouts, but in your book, you say stress being a good thing...**

● Stress is a good thing, of course. Hunger, thirst are both stresses; if not for them, we would not survive. It is only the way we deal with stress that we need to examine. The way we are today, the space that we occupy on earth



has come from dealing with different kinds of stress, trying to surmount them, and making life better for ourselves.

Burnouts happen because people are not able to deal with stress in a positive way. To do that, you should have created and chosen your own challenges. Sports is a great way to train your mind for that. Running a marathon is a stressful event for your body, mind and spirit. But when you put yourself through that willingly, consciously and in a learning atmosphere, you begin to understand how to deal with any stressful situation in a way that does not drain you.

All stress can be used to better yourself, each individual has to understand how to use that particular stress – whether it is in your relationship, personal life, your own thoughts about yourself – to become a better person.

**You say you have an ‘obsessive’ personality. How did that affect your addictions and your ability to quit them?**

● My obsessive nature was what got me into these habits in the first place. But I was also obsessive about feeling physically, mentally and emotionally fit. That is something I could not let go of. As we grow older, we tend to accept that now we can’t do the things we could when we were younger. But because of my nature, I kept needing new challenges to keep myself at the top of the game. So I was able to move in and out of experiences, saving myself from those that could be harmful in the long term.

**As a model and actor, what do you think of the body neutrality movement? What has brought it on?**

● Common sense, I guess! (Laughs) Looks definitely can take you a certain distance, but what is sustainable is performance. It is not just what your body looks like, but what your body can do, and continue to do. Your body might change – you look different at 20, 40, 70.

We used to give up when our bodies started looking old at 40, but we need to go beyond that to continue performing activities that we enjoy, living life in the best way we imagine.



## WRITING FOR MILIND

It was not happenstance that children’s author Roopa Pai ended up writing Milind’s memoir. Milind had specially requested that she be the one penning his voice down. “In 2016, during the Rio Olympics, every day I would write about one Indian sportsperson taking part in the games, and post it on Facebook, asking people to watch their performance.” The series of posts became viral, was republished on various news websites, and garnered many fans for her writing. One of them was Milind Soman. Here, Roopa lists his quirks and her impressions of him, that she developed over the course of the seven months that they interacted.

“I found Milind very affable. Whenever somebody would ask him for a selfie, he would make them do push-ups! Men had to do 20, women had to do 10. He felt as a fitness evangelist, it was his responsibility to spread the message of fitness. So now with a picture of him, they will have that story to tell.”

“He was always late! But when he was there, he was very focussed, no distractions, no celebrity drama, he wouldn’t even check his phone.”

“He is so sorted in his head, seems at peace with himself. Sure, there must be parts of him that he did not tell me about, but in my gut I felt there was a certain honesty about him, and a very large acceptance of who he was; he was very comfortable in his skin.”

## HYPE OR HAPPENING?

# Mediterranean diet

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

The Mediterranean Diet has been declared the best diet for 2020 by U.S. News & World Report. So what is it and how does it work for Indians?

Nuts, cheese, fruit, fish...What we term the Mediterranean Diet today was followed matter-of-factly by the inhabitants of Greece, Italy, Spain and other countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea for years.

There are a number of reasons to assume its effectiveness. The World Health Organization talks of its benefits in *Europe’s new Health Evidence Network Synthesis Report*, saying it protects against cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes. But then it also says the same about The New Nordic diet, and also credited other Mediterranean habits – like shared eating practices, afternoon naps and lengthy mealtimes – for the health of people in the region.

In everyday terms, the appeal of this diet is clear: it relies heavily on local and seasonal. Moreover, unlike some other diets, this one offers its followers plenty of choice.

The main foundation of the Mediterranean diet is a daily consumption of fresh vegetables, fruits, lentils, herbs, nuts and whole, unrefined grains. Besides these, there is also a strong emphasis on fish (had weekly) and other sources of healthy fat like olive oil.

The diet also allows for the consumption of dairy (particularly yoghurt and unprocessed varieties of cheese), poultry, and eggs. Red meat, however, is avoided or had only occasionally, as are foods rich in sugar.

Medical research backs the diet. From 1984 to 2004, a study funded and supported by the US-based National Institutes of Health (NIH) looked at the diet and health of 74,886 women aged between 38 and 63 years.

The researchers were



mainly looking for incidences of fatal and non-fatal stroke, and coronary heart disease (CHD), and computed their Alternate Mediterranean Diet Scores from data submitted by the women themselves. They concluded that “A greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet, as reflected by a higher Alternate Mediterranean Diet Score, was associated with a lower risk of incident CHD and stroke in women.”

Bengaluru-based dietician Sheela Krishnaswamy sees a couple of minor finds in the diet, but thinks it well-balanced on the whole. “It includes a lot of fish and nuts, so if you are allergic to either, you should avoid it. For vegetarians also, it might not work very well,” she says, because of the emphasis on fish as a protein source, but also acknowledges that the diet itself offers a solution of sorts.

“Lentils are a part of the Mediterranean diet, but not recommended on a daily basis. Vegetarians who follow it, however, will need to have lentils daily for the protein intake, along with whole grains, fruit and vegetables,” she explains. Having said that, however, she does laud the diet for covering all the nutrients a human body needs.

“There is also enough fibre in the diet to ensure that one does not overeat,” she adds.

In this column, we decode health trends and decide if it’s all just ‘hype’ or actually ‘happening’

## POOCH CAFE



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## TIGER



## WUMO



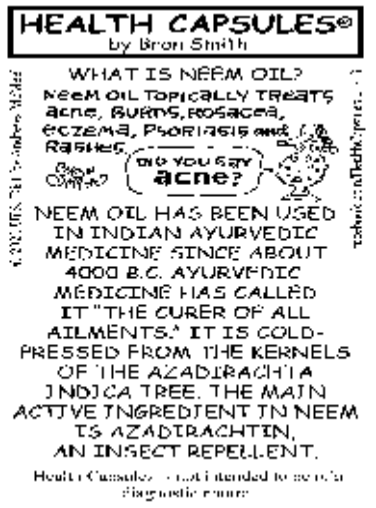
## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



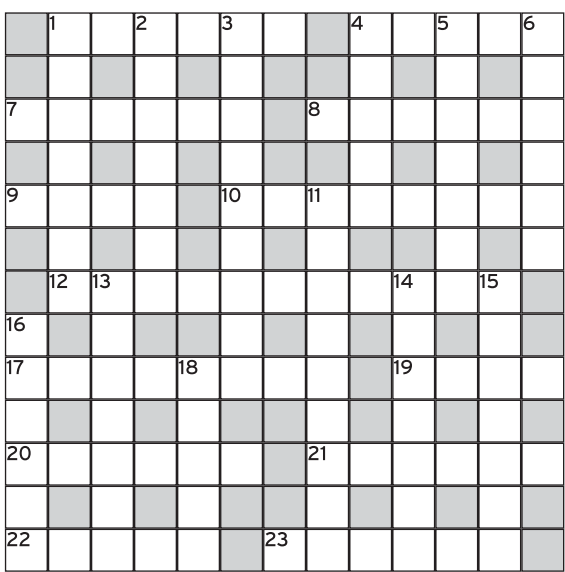
## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS



## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13275



- Across  
1 Appraise (6)  
4 High terrain (5)  
7 Cream cake (6)  
8 Small inexpensive eatery (6)  
9 Bide one’s time (4)  
10 Excessively fond of drink (8)  
12 Hiding (11)  
17 Gemstone (8)  
19 Religious ceremony (4)

- 20 (Of food) necessary and important (6)  
21 Rue (6)  
22 Bad-tempered and unfriendly (5)  
23 With pleasure (6)  
■ Down  
1 Antiquated (7)  
2 Austere – like Lysander? (7)  
3 Area where bushes are planted (9)  
4 Japanese verse

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

The solution will appear on January 14, 2020.

Solution No. 13274

form (5)  
5 Disappointed (3,4)  
6 Liverpudlian (6)  
11 Two-sided (9)  
13 Alfresco (4-3)  
14 Very angry (7)  
15 Unsteady on one’s feet (7)  
16 Gives rise to – crusades (6)  
18 Yuletide greenery (5)



India's T20I  
squad for  
New Zealand  
tour named

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Rohit Sharma returned to the T20 squad while Sanju Samson was dropped for the five-match series in New Zealand, starting on January 24, according to a BCCI release.

The Mumbai opener was rested for the T20I series against Sri Lanka which the hosts won 2-0. There were no major surprises in the squad.

The release added that Vijay Shankar has been included in the India-A squad for the New Zealand tour since Hardik Pandya's rehabilitation process is taking longer than expected.

The selection committee, under outgoing chairman M.S.K. Prasad, did not announce the ODI and Test squads.

**The squad:** Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma (vice-capt.), K.L. Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (wk), Shivam Dube, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Navdeep Saini, Ravindra Jadeja, and Shardul Thakur.

**The schedule:** January 24 and 26: Auckland.

January 29: Hamilton.

January 31: Wellington.

February 2, Tauranga.

(All matches start at 12.30 p.m. IST).

A good dilemma to have, says Rathour

The Rahul-Dhawan tussle for opener's slot continues

AMOL KARHADKAR  
MUMBAI

When Shikhar Dhawan injured his knee during the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, K.L. Rahul got a longer run at the top of the order during India's white-ball matches at home over the last couple of months.

Despite having proved his mettle, come Tuesday, Rahul may still have to be benched for the first of the three ODIs versus Australia.

With Dhawan and Rahul coming good against Sri Lanka in last week's T20 series, it will be a toss-up between the two for the series-opener at the Wankhede Stadium.

**Coach happy**

Batting coach Vikram Rathour was happy for the team management to be facing a "good dilemma" but stressed that only one of them would start the series.

"It's a good dilemma to have. Rohit is an obvious choice, of course. Both of them — Shikhar and Rahul — are playing well. Shikhar has done well in one-dayers, Rahul is in great form, so we'll deal with it when we have to. There are still a couple of days to go.

"The management will sit down and make a choice. I don't see it as an issue, one of them will have to sit out," Rathour said on Sunday.

Over the last year, the team management has tried



**Preparing in earnest:** Despite a fine run in the Lanka series, Rahul's place is not assured as Rohit, right, is back. ■ PRASHANT NAKWE



to accommodate the triumvirate in ODIs. In last year's World Cup in England, Rahul started off at No. 4 with Kohli separating him and the openers before suffering an injury.

However, when Dhawan was sidelined, Rahul grabbed the opportunity to open the innings in ODIs.

Rahul complemented Rohit to perfection, garnering 185 runs at 61.67 and a strike

rate of 89, including a hundred and a fifty in three ODIs against Kieron Pollard's men.

Rathour, however, stressed the team management would avoid experimenting at the start of the ODI series like it did in the recent T20 contests.

"We did that in T20s, because we were willing to give them some game time. But,

against Australia, in the first game, we'll start with our best XI. And I think everyone will bat according to the order that has been tried out. As the series goes on, we'll see if we can experiment," he said.

Interestingly, Rohit and Rahul were among the six Indians to participate in the optional nets at the Wankhede on Sunday.

Rohit even got an injury scare, with a throwdown by Rathour hitting his thumb. But the vice-captain returned for another hit in no time and didn't look in any discomfort.

With the three openers at their best, the team management will surely have its task cut out while finalising the team for the opener on Tuesday.

Sehwag thanks Tiger Pataudi

IANS  
MUMBAI

Former India opener and captain Virender Sehwag revealed on Sunday that former skipper Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi changed the way he approached Test cricket with a piece of advice.

"I did not want to let go of the opportunity to deliver the Tiger Pataudi Memorial Lecture as I have a personal relation with him," said Sehwag in his inimitable style while delivering the seventh Pataudi Lecture at the BCCI awards here on Sunday.

"I had watched his batting videos, but had never spoke to him. I usually do not take anybody's advice. But Tiger Pataudi sir gave me an advice which changed the way I played Test cricket. I am ever so grateful to him for the advice," revealed Sehwag.

"One of my last interactions with him was about Delhi cricket, when Arun Jaitley ji called us to his home to help restructure and revive and streamline



**Holding court:** Virender Sehwag delivering the seventh Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi Lecture. ■ PTI

Delhi cricket," he added.

On BCCI president and former India captain Sourav Ganguly, Sehwag said he is always the "boss".

"Sourav Ganguly is the boss. He was the boss of the Indian cricket team and made me open the batting. And now he is the boss of BCCI," he said.

Sehwag, who wished the Priyam Garg-led India un-

der-19 World Cup team, hoped Virat Kohli would lift the ICC T20 World Cup in Australia in October.

"I hope Virat lifts the T20 World Cup in Australia... but do remember Test cricket in your thoughts as well. It needs your best wishes to remain in the 'pink' of its health," said Sehwag, who played 104 Tests, 251 ODIs and 19 T20Is for India.

BCCI set to appoint  
Madan Lal and Gambhir  
as CAC members

VIJAY LOKAPALLY  
AMOL KARHADKAR  
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has approached World Cup winners Madan Lal and Gautam Gambhir to be a part of the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC).

**Willing**

The former Delhi giants confirmed to *The Hindu* that they are willing to be a part of CAC.

While Madan Lal, the 1983 World Cup winner who also served as India coach in the 1990s, said he is "willing to contribute to Indian cricket in every possible way", Gambhir said he has given his consent to the BCCI.

The CAC's formation has been delayed since the new BCCI dispensation, headed

by Sourav Ganguly, has made a plea to the Supreme Court seeking relaxation in the Conflict of Interest clause.

Considering the apex court may hear the case on January 14, the BCCI has swung into action.

If the Supreme Court gives its nod, the BCCI will reconstitute the CAC at the earliest so that in can set in place the procedure to appoint revised selection committees.

The first CAC, appointed in 2015, included Sachin Tendulkar, V.V.S. Laxman and Ganguly.

After the conflict clause came into place, all the three backed out.

As a result, an interim CAC headed by Kapil Dev was involved while appointing Ravi Shastri as the head coach.

Richa picked for T20 WC

Rewarded for consistent performances at domestic level

SHAYAN ACHARYA  
MUMBAI

Bengal's young batter Richa Ghosh was the only surprise in the 15-member India women's squad for the T20 World Cup in Australia next month.

On Sunday, the five-member National women's selection committee rewarded the 16-year-old from Siliguri for her consistent performances at the domestic level.

The selectors were also impressed by her approach in the recently-concluded Challengers Trophy, where she played two important knocks of 25 and 36 for India-B in crunch situations.

"Earlier the same team used to play, but after the 2017 World Cup several new prospects have emerged and we have nurtured five to six players," selection panel chief Hemalata Kala, said.

Captain Harmanpreet Kaur believes that execution

Sportstar Aces Awards  
to be given away today

The online poll received more than 2,10,000 votes

SPORTS BUREAU  
MUMBAI

The second edition of the *Sportstar* Aces Awards will be held at the Trident Hotel here on Monday, recognising and rewarding not just the athletes, but also the silent forces that work tirelessly — often behind the scenes — to produce champions.

The awards are an effort to highlight the untold stories of struggle, fierce dedication and selfless work behind an athlete's ascension, irrespective of the popularity of the sport. They will also look to create a medium of knowledge and vision exchange as all stakeholders of Indian sports are brought under one roof.

**23 categories**

The Aces are being awarded in 23 categories. Voting was held to gauge the sentiment of the readers for 10 categories — Sportsman and

Sportswoman of the Year for Cricket, Racquet Sports, Track and Field, Other Team Sports and Other Individual Sports.

The online poll received more than 2,10,000 votes.

The winners have been selected by a panel headed by cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar, and included THG Publishing Private Limited chairman N. Ram, former India hockey captain M.M. Somaya, Olympians Anjali Bhagwat, Aparna Popat and chess maestro Viswanathan Anand.



**Who made the grade?** India captain Harmanpreet Kaur and National women's selection committee chairperson Hemalata Kala announce the squad. ■ PRASHANT NAKWE

of plans will be the key.

"That is what we are looking at in the World Cup," she said.

Prior to the World Cup, the team will figure in a tri-series involving England and Australia.

**The squads: T20 World Cup:** Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Deepti Sharma, Veda Krishnamurthy, Richa Ghosh,

Taniya Bhatia, Poonam Yadav, Radha Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Shikha Pandey, Pooja Vastrakar and Arundhati Reddy.

**Tri-series:** Harmanpreet (Capt.), Smriti, Shafali, Jemimah, Harleen, Deepti, Veda, Richa, Taniya, Poonam, Radha, Rajeshwari, Shikha, Pooja, Arundhati and Nuzhat Parveen.

**The itinerary: Tri-series:** Canberra, from Jan. 31. **T20 World Cup:** Feb. 21 to March 8.

IN BRIEF



**Serena ends three-year title drought**

AUCKLAND

Serena Williams ended a three-year title drought and donated her winner's cheque to victims of the Australian bushfires in an emotional WTA Auckland Classic final on Sunday where she beat Jessica Pegula 6-3, 6-4. This was her first title since she won in Melbourne in 2017. In the doubles final, however, Serena and Caroline Wozniacki lost 6-4, 6-4 to Americans Asia Muhammad and Taylor Townsend. AFP

**Momota and Chen win Malaysia Masters**

KUALA LUMPUR

World No. 1 Kento Momota won the Malaysia Masters badminton title, easily defeating Denmark's Viktor Axelsen 24-22, 21-11 on Sunday. The victory lends credence to Momota's drive to win the gold in the Tokyo Olympics. Chen Yu Fei, in pic., took home the women's title ousting Taiwanese top seed Tai Tzu-Ying 21-17, 21-10. AFP

...and the winners are

The annual BCCI awards for the 2018-19 season were given away in Mumbai on Sunday

C.K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award	K. Srikanth
Lifetime Achievement Award for Women	Anjum Chopra
BCCI Special Award	Dilip Doshi
Dilip Sardesai Award - Highest Run-getter in Tests	Cheteshwar Pujara
Sardesai Award - Highest Wickets in Tests	Jasprit Bumrah
Highest Run-getter in ODIs - Women	Smriti Mandhana
Highest Wickets in ODIs - Women	Jhulan Goswami
Polly Umrigar Award Best International Cricketer - Men	Jasprit Bumrah
Best International Cricketer - Women	Poonam Yadav
Best International Debut - Men	Mayank Agarwal
Best International Debut - Women	Shafali Verma
Lala Amarnath Award for Best Allrounder in Ranji Trophy	Shivam Dube (Mumbai)
Amarnath Award for Best Allrounder in Domestic Limited-overs	Nitish Rana (Delhi)
Madhavrao Scindia Award - Highest Run-getter in Ranji Trophy	Milind Kumar (Sikkim)
Scindia Award - Highest Wicket-taker in Ranji Trophy	Ashutosh Aman (Bihar)
M.A. Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Run-getter (U-23)	Manan Hingrajia (Gujarat)
Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Wicket-taker (U-23)	Sidak Singh (Pondicherry)
Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Run-getter (U-19)	Vathsal Govind (Kerala)
Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Wicket-taker (U-19)	Apurva Anand (Bihar)
Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy - Highest Run-getter (U-16)	Aryan Hooda (Jharkhand)
Dalmiya Trophy - Highest Wicket-taker (U-16)	Abhishek Yadav (Jharkhand)
Dalmiya Trophy - Best Woman Cricketer (Sr. Domestic)	Deepti Sharma (Bengal)
Dalmiya Trophy - Best Woman Cricketer (Jr. Domestic)	Shafali Verma (Haryana)
Best Umpire in Domestic cricket	Virender Sharma
Best Performance in Domestic Tournaments	Vidarbha CA



**BCCI President Sourav Ganguly, K. Srikanth, BCCI Secretary Jay Shah, Jasprit Bumrah, Jhulan Goswami, Smriti Mandhana and Poonam Yadav at the awards function on Sunday**

Liverpool motors along

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCIES  
LONDON

Sergio Aguero became the most prolific foreign goalscorer in Premier League history with a hat-trick as Manchester City thrashed Aston Villa 6-1 to reclaim second place on Sunday.

The Argentine striker struck City's third, fifth and sixth goals at Villa Park to take his league tally to 177, two more than Frenchman Thierry Henry managed for Arsenal and fourth on the all-time list alongside Frank Lampard.

City's resounding victory means it moved above Leicester City and trimmed Liverpool's lead to 14 points, although Liverpool has played a game less.

Earlier on Saturday, Liverpool continued its relentless march towards a first Premier League title in 30 years as Roberto Firmino's strike earned a 1-0 win at Tottenham to open up a 16-point lead at the top of the table.

Jurgen Klopp's men have now made the best ever start to an English top flight campaign after 21 games with 61 points from a possible 63.

There is now a 31-point gap between the sides that contested last season's

Champions League final as Spurs remains in eighth, nine points adrift of even the top four.

However, Tottenham had its chances to take at least a point as Son Heung-min and Giovani Lo Celso missed the target with the goal gaping in the final 15 minutes.

Lo Celso's miss left Jose Mourinho on his knees in anguish and the honeymoon period for the Tottenham manager is already over after just two wins in their last eight games in all competitions.

"We played super football in their box, but for 90-95 minutes you have to be ready," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp told Sky Sports.

**The results: Premier League:** Bournemouth 0 lost to Watford 3 (Doucoure 42, Deeney 65, Pereyra 90+2); Aston Villa 1 (El Ghazi 90+1-pen) lost to Manchester City 6 (Mahrez 18, Mahrez 24, Aguero 28, 57, 81, Jesus 45+1).

**Serie A:** Udinese 3 (Okaka 14, Sema 68, De Paul 90+1) bt Sassuolo 0; Torino 1 (Beren-guer 11) bt Bologna 0; Sampdoria 5 (Linetty 34, Jankto 45+3, Quagliarella 69-pen, 90+2, Caprari 77) bt Brescia 1 (Chancellor 12); Fiorentina 1 (Pezzela 82) bt SPAL 0.

**Saturday: EPL:** Tottenham 0 lost to Liverpool 1 (Firmino 37).

Goncalves dies in crash



**Tragic:** Paulo Goncalves, being attended to by medical staff, couldn't be saved. ■ AFP

DAKAR RALLY

SPORTS BUREAU  
RIYADH

Motorbike rider Paulo Goncalves of Portugal died after a crash during the Dakar Rally here on Sunday. He was lying 46th overall going into the seventh stage from Riyadh to Wadi Al Dawasi.

The 40-year-old, representing Hero MotoSports Team Rally, and competing in his 13th Dakar Rally, suffered the fatal fall after 276 km in the seventh stage in the 339-mile route from Riyadh to Wadi Al Dawasi. The organisers informed that he was pronounced dead in hospital after he was found unconscious following a cardiac arrest.

Goncalves was the 2013 FIM Cross Country Rally

World Champion, and was runner-up to Marc Coma in the 2015 Dakar Rally.

In a release, Hero MotoSports Team Rally condoned Goncalves' death. "The organisers released an alert at 10.08 [a.m.], and dispatched a medical helicopter that reached the biker at 10.16 [a.m.] and found him unconscious after going into cardiac arrest. Following resuscitation efforts, the competitor was taken by helicopter to Layla hospital where he was sadly pronounced dead."

Wolfgang Fischer, Head-Hero MotoSports Team Rally, said, "He was a true champion, gentleman, reliable friend to everyone in the racing world and a role model as sportsman and personality."



TV PICKS

**NBA:** Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.  
**Khelo India Games:** Star Sports 1 (SD), 9.30 a.m.; Star Sports 1 (HD), 4.30 p.m.; Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.  
**Ranji Trophy:** Star Sports 1 (HD) & Star Sports 3 (SD), 9.30 a.m.  
**Big Bash League:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 1.40 p.m.

Anand begins with a draw

CHESS

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
WIJK AAN ZEE  
Viswanathan Anand started his campaign in the 82nd Tata Steel Masters chess tournament with a 31-move draw against Russia's Vladislav Artemiev.  
World champion Magnus Carlsen and Anish Giri signed truce in 25 moves in the day's shortest game.  
In the 14-player field, debutant Iranian Alireza Firouzja, playing under the FIDE flag, defeated Belarus' Vladislav Kovalev in 36 moves.  
**The results (first round):** Viswanathan Anand drew with Vladislav Artemiev (Rus); Magnus Carlsen (Nor) drew with Anish Giri (Ned); Fabiano Caruana (USA) drew with Wesley So (USA); Alireza Firouzja (FIDE) bt Vladislav Kovalev (Blr); Jorden van Foreest (Ned) bt Yu Yangyi (Chn); Nikita Vitiugov (Rus) drew with Duda Jan-Krzysztof (Pol); Jeffery Xiong (USA) drew with Daniil Dubov (Rus).

TRAU beats Arrows

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
VASCO  
Manipur's Tiddim Road Athletic Union (TRAU) posted a 2-0 win over bottom-placed Indian Arrows in their I-League match here on Sunday. Naocha Singh (44th minute) and Princewill Emeka (79th) were the scorers.

Djokovic steers Serbia to glory

After mastering Nadal again on hardcourts, plays pivotal role in doubles

ATP CUP

**REUTERS**  
SYDNEY  
Novak Djokovic helped seal victory for Serbia in the inaugural ATP Cup team event after defeating his long-term rival Rafael Nadal in singles on Sunday before going on to play a pivotal role in the deciding doubles match against Spain.  
With the final locked at 1-1 after the singles were shared, Djokovic partnered veteran Victor Troicki to beat Pablo Carreno Busta and Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 6-4 and win the title.  
The 16-time Grand Slam champion proved to be a calming influence throughout, especially after the Serbian pair fell behind early in the match.  
He used his powerful serve and fleet-footed re-



**Mission accomplished:** The Serbian team is all smiles after becoming the inaugural winner of the ATP Cup on Sunday. •REUTERS

turns to haul his country back into the first set and create a momentum shift which Serbia rode all the way to a victory completed in the early hours of Monday morning here.  
Djokovic earlier beat Nadal 6-2, 7-6(4), extending his dominance over the Spaniard on hardcourts, a surface Nadal has not beaten him on since 2013.  
Djokovic has created the blueprint to beat the Spa-

niard on hardcourts, although he is one of the very few players good enough to follow the instructions.

**Holding his line**  
The Serbian held his line, and was rarely pushed back deep into the court by the Spaniard's heavy spin, a position from which Nadal usually dictates terms.  
"There were some incredible exchanges today," said Djokovic. "I started off the match perfectly really, everything worked for me."  
Earlier, Roberto Bautista Agut completed a flawless tournament by defeating Dusan Lajovic 7-5, 6-1.  
**The result: Serbia bt Spain 2-1** [Dusan Lajovic lost to Roberto Bautista Agut 7-5, 6-1; Novak Djokovic bt Rafael Nadal 6-2, 7-6(4); Viktor Troicki & Djokovic bt Feliciano Lopez & Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 6-4].

Ancy and Nuzrat claim the under-21 100m gold medals

Maharashtra, with 34 medals, continues to top the table

KHELO GAMES

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
GUWAHATI  
Kerala's Ancy Sojan gave her best to win the girls' under-21 100m and long jump titles in the Khelo India Youth Games here on Sunday. Ancy timed 12.21 to take the 100m crown and leaped to 6.36m to claim the long jump gold with a new meet record.  
Tamil Nadu's A. Sherin, who set the mark at 6.15m last year, claimed the silver with 6.30m. T.K. Sandra Babu of Kerala was third with 5.99m.  
Nuzrat Ali clocked 10.77 to beat Delhi's Abhinav Panwar (10.82) for the boys' under-21 100m title. Kunal Kaushik's boys' under-17 shot put gold with a throw of 17.68m



**Golden run:** Ancy Sojan of Kerala won the girls' under-21 100m crown. •RITU RAJ KONWAR

helped Haryana snatch another gold.  
Sadanand Kumar of Jharkhand (10.95) and Jeevanji Deepthi (12.26), who created

a new meet record lowering Avantika Narale's 12.36, were the 100m gold medallists in under-17 boys' and girls' sections.

**Waykar, Pooja win in cycling**  
Madhura Waykar and Pooja Danole fetched yellow metals for Maharashtra in cycling. Waykar timed 27.20.81 in girls' under-21 individual

time trial (20km) while Pooja clocked 24:17.778 for the girls' under-17 time trial (15km).  
In under-21 girls' recurve competition, Maharashtra's Tisha Sacheti beat Pramila-ben Barla (Gujarat) 6-4 in the semifinals to set up a title clash with Haryana's Himani, who defeated Sakshi Tote of Maharashtra 5(8)-5(7).  
Maharashtra's Sachin Vedwan recorded a comfortable 6-2 win over statemate Mayur Rokade, while Jagdish Choudhary of Rajasthan beat Sunny Kumar of Haryana 7-3 to reach the boys' under-21 recurve final.  
Maharashtra continued to top the table with 34 medals, including 11 gold, followed by Delhi (18) and Uttar Pradesh (16).

It's Ashwa Bahula vs Shaquille in feature

**HYDERABAD:** Ashwa Bahula and Shaquille may fight out the finish in the Hovercraft Plate (1,600m), the main event of the races to be held here on Monday (Jan. 13).  
**1. TWIN STAR PLATE (DIV. II),** (1,100m), 4-y-o & over (not won since July 1 2019), rated 00 to 25, (Cat. III), 1-10 p.m.: 1. Crackershow (9) Deepak Singh 61.5, 2. Khan Sahib (1) A.A. Vikrant 61.5, 3. Let It Be Me (6) Jitendra Singh 61.5, 4. Secret Command (7) Santosh Raj 61.5, 5. Speed Warrior (2) Nakhat Singh 61.5, 6. Blazing Jupiter (4) Rohit Kumar 60.5, 7. Mr. Bruss (3) Kuldeep Singh 59.5, 8. London Bridge (8) Gopal Singh 59 and 9. Victoria (5) Afroz Khan 53.  
**1. LET IT BE ME,**  
**2. SECRET COMMAND,**  
**3. CRACKERSHOW**  
**2. SECUNDERABAD CLUB PLATE** (DIV. III), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 1-40: 1. Top Saga (8) R. Ajinkya 60, 2. Wah Ms Zara (1) Akshay Kumar 58, 3. California Beauty (4) B.R. Kumar 56, 4. Air Salute (10) Afroz Khan 54.5, 5. Composure (7) Jitendra Singh 53.5, 6. Flying Queen (2) Irvan Singh 53, 7. Bedazzled (5) Kuldeep Singh 52.5, 8. Secretary (3) Ajeeth Kumar 51, 9. Ursula (6) Rafique Sk. 50.5 and 10. Acadian Angel (9) Santosh Raj 50.  
**1. CALIFORNIA BEAUTY,**  
**2. TOP SAGA,**  
**3. WAH MS ZARA**  
**3. TWIN STAR PLATE (DIV. I),** (1,100m), 4-y-o & over (not won a race since July 1 2019), rated 00 to 25, (Cat. III), 2-10: 1. Ashwa Yudh Vijeta (3) N. Rawal 61.5, 2. Dazzling King (8) Jitendra Singh 61.5, 3. Kintsugi (2) Rohit Kumar 61.5, 4. Latest News (4) Kiran Naidu 61.5, 5. My Dream (1) R. Ajinkya 61.5, 6. Whiskery (7) Abhay Singh 61.5, 7. Brave Syera (6) Mukesh Kumar 59.5, 8. Light Music (9) Nakhat Singh 59.5 and 9. Ekam (5) Rafique Sk. 50.  
**1. ASHWA YUDH VIJETA,**  
**2. BRAVE SYERA,**  
**3. WHISKERY**  
**4. SECUNDERABAD CLUB PLATE** (DIV. II), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45, (Cat. III), 2-45: 1. Takisha (7) Afroz Khan 60, 2. Stepper (2) G. Naresh 58.5, 3. Carmella (1) Kuldeep Singh 57.5, 4. Tapatio (4) A.A. Vikrant 55, 5. Time Is Good (9) R. Ajinkya 55, 6. Arcade Fire (10) Koushik 53.5, 7. Windsteps (5) B.R. Kumar 53.5, 8. Sea Wolf (ex: Royal Tiger) (3) Akshay Kumar 53, 9. Blazing Speed (8) Ajeeth Kumar 51 and 10. Dance All Night (6) Gaddam 51.  
**1. TAKISHA,**  
**2. STEPPER,**  
**3. SEA WOLF**  
**5. AUXILIARY PLATE (DIV. I),** (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65, (Cat. II), 3-15: 1. Meritocracy (9) Jitendra Singh 61.5, 2. Shandaar (12) Akshay Kumar 61.5, 3. Trump Girl (4) Koushik 60.5, 5. Arc Of History (10) Surya Prakash 59.5, 6. Dunkirk (7) Mukesh Kumar 56, 7. Top Contender (11) Afroz Khan 56, 8. Vancouver (6) A.A. Vikrant 55, 9. Mr. Shanghai (5) Rohit Kumar 54, 10. Once More (2) Santosh Raj 53.5, 11. Proud Warrior (8) B.R. Kumar 53.5, 12. Gorgeous Lady (3) Rafique Sk. 53 and 13. Sublime (1) Gaddam 52.  
**1. TOP CONTENDER,**  
**2. SHANDAAR,**  
**3. MERITOCRACY**  
**6. HOVERCRAFT PLATE** (1,600m), 5-y-o & over, rated 60 to 85, (Cat. II), 3-45: 1. That's My Class (4) Akshay Kumar 62, 2. Ashwa Bahula (8) Mukesh Kumar 60, 3. Starlight (1) Rohit Kumar 57.5, 4. Magical Skill (6) C.P. Bopanna 56.5, 5. Doroteo (9) Koushik 56, 6. N R I Symbol (11) Afroz Khan 54, 7. Honest Hunter (7) B.R. Kumar 53.5, 8. Shaquille (10) A.A. Vikrant 53.5, 9. Mr. Baahubali (3) Ajeeth Kumar 53, 10. Guiding Force (2) N. Rawal 52.5, 11. Seven Eleven (5) Ashad Asbar 52.5 and 12. Destined Dynamite (12) Irvan Singh 50.  
**1. ASHWA BAHULA,**  
**2. SHAQUILLE,**  
**3. SEVEN ELEVEN**  
**7. AUXILIARY PLATE (DIV. II),** (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65, (Cat. II), 4-15: 1. N R I Power (7) Koushik 61.5, 2. Ashka Ashka Ashka (3) Ajeeth Kumar 59, 3. Crimson Fire (13) Rohit Kumar 58.5, 4. Marian Del Rey (9) T. Ajinkya 58, 5. Lightning Fin (8) Akshay Kumar 57, 6. Locha Stella (12) Nakhat Singh 56, 7. Prince Caspian (4) Jitendra Singh 56, 8. Heaven Can Wait (4) Afroz Khan 53.5, 9. Vallee Bloomer (2) G. Naresh 53.5, 10. Running Fire (11) B.R. Kumar 52.5, 11. Gladstone (6) Irvan Singh 52, 12. New State (5) Mukesh Kumar 52 and 13. Royal Green (10) Rafique Sk. 52.  
**1. CRIMSON FIRE,**  
**2. LIGHTNING FIN,**  
**3. N R I POWER**  
**8. SECUNDERABAD CLUB PLATE** (DIV. I), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45, (Cat. III), 4-45: 1. Green Turf (5) Akshay Kumar 60, 2. Safra (4) N. Rawal 58.5, 3. Southern State (7) Kiran Naidu 57.5, 4. Shakesphere (3) Mukesh Kumar 55.5, 5. Star Racer (11) Rohit Kumar 55, 6. Vallee Ikon (1) Gaddam 53.5, 7. Tough And Go (6) G. Naresh 53, 8. Original Temptress (10) Abhay Singh 52.5, 9. Withrosemakeup (9) B.R. Kumar 51.5, 10. Dillon (2) Ajeeth Kumar 50.5 and 11. Yogya (8) Afroz Khan 50.5.  
**1. TOUGH AND GO,**  
**2. GREEN TURF,**  
**3. STAR RACER**  
Day's best: **ASHWA YUDH VIJETA**  
Double: **TOP CONTENDER – TOUGH AND GO**  
Jkt: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8; Mini Jkt: 5, 6, 7 & 8; Tr (I): 1, 2 & 3; (ii): 3, 4 & 5; (iii): 6, 7 & 8; Tla: all races.





**Big victory:** Aleksej Aleksandrov, right, pulled off a crucial win over Karthik Venkataraman on Sunday. ■CHESSBASE INDIA

# Aleksandrov on top

Gets the better of Karthik; 13 players in second spot

## CHESS

**RAKESH RAO**  
NEW DELHI

Aleksej Aleksandrov escaped from a tight corner in the middle game to nail an in-form Karthik Venkataraman and emerge as a leader, with a perfect score, after six rounds of 18th Delhi International Open Grandmasters chess tournament here on Sunday.

The Grandmaster from Belarus seized the opportunity after Karthik, playing white, erred in judgement and made a knight-move on the 40th turn.

Six moves later, the decision to sacrifice his rook for a bishop backfired and thereon, it was downhill for Karthik who resigned after 68 moves.

With four rounds to go, Aleksandrov enjoyed a one-point lead over 13 players sharing the second spot.

On the second of the dou-

ble-round days, Karthik started by stunning fourth seeded Peruvian Grandmaster Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara to lead with Aleksandrov, who defeated Bangladesh's Ziaur Rahman.

Before Karthik lost his first game, C.R.G. Krishna surrendered to Alcantara on the second board. Top seed Farrukh Amonatov drew for the third time before fifth seed Abhijeet Gupta was held by P. Shyam Nikhil.

**Good day for Pranesh** Surprisingly, it was 'double' delight for little-known M. Pranesh. He scored over two higher-rated rivals to be among those sharing the second spot.

Pranesh, rated 2317, stunned 12th seeded Ukrainian Grandmaster Stanislav Bogdanovich (2562) and then scalped Vietnamese International Master Nguyen Van Huy (2463).

**Important results (Indians un-**

**less stated): Sixth round:** Karthik Venkataraman (5) lost to Aleksej Aleksandrov (Blr, 5); Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara (Per, 5) bt C.R.G. Krishna (4.5); Farrukh Amonatov (Tjk, 4.5) drew with Valeriy Neverov (Ukr, 4.5); Abhijeet Gupta (4.5) drew with P. Shyam Nikhil (4.5); Muhammad Khusenkhojaev (Iri, 4) lost to Diptayan Ghosh (5); Adam Tukhaev (Ukr, 5) bt P. Karthikeyan (4); Sayantan Das (4.5) drew with Aryan Gholami (Iri, 4.5); N. R. Vishakh (5) bt Sammed Shete (4); Kirill Stupak (Blr, 5) bt Al Muthaiah (4).

**Fifth round:** Alcantara (4) lost to Karthik (5); Aleksandrov (5) bt Ziaur Rahman (Ban, 4); Krishna (4.5) drew with Rozum (4); Florian Kaczur (Hun, 4) drew with Farrukh Amonatov (Tjk, 4); Pavel Ponkratov (Rus, 4) drew with Ortik Nigmatov (Uzb, 4); Al Muthaiah (4) bt M. Karthikeyan (3); Neelesh Saha (3.5) drew with Nodirbek Yakubboev (Uzb, 3.5); Manish Anto Cristiano (4) bt Aleksey Goganov (Rus, 3); Stanislav Bogdanovich (Ukr, 3) lost to M. Pranesh (4).

## Aussie cricket legends to raise money

**IAN S**  
SYDNEY

In a bid to raise money for victims of Australia's devastating bushfires, the country's cricket legends Shane Warne and Ricky Ponting will come out of retirement and participate in a star-studded charity game next month.

Cricket Australia (CA) on Sunday announced a range of initiatives to help those impacted by the fires besides holding of the Bushfire Cricket Bash on February 8, where Warne and Ponting will lead the two sides.

Meanwhile, other retired Aussie stars like Adam Gilchrist, Brett Lee, Justin Lan-

ger, Michael Clarke, Shane Watson and Alex Blackwell will also take part in the game.

The money raised will be donated to the Australian Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund. The Bushfire Cricket Bash will act as a curtain-raiser for the BBL Final.

## RANJI TROPHY SCORES, ROUND FIVE, DAY TWO

### Group A

**At Ongole:** Hyderabad 225 vs Andhra 237/1 in 94 overs (C.R. Gnaneshwar 73, D.B. Prashanth Kumar 117 batting, Hanuma Vi-hari 41 batting).

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala 227 & 88/5 in 29 overs (Gur-keerat Mann 4/27) vs Punjab 218 in 65.4 overs (Mandeep Singh 71 n.o., M.D. Nidheesh 7/88).

**Jaipur:** Gujarat 325 in 119.4 overs (Priyank Panchal 48, Samit Gohil 93, Bhargav Merai 54, Manprit Juneja 44, Rituraj Singh 5/74) vs Rajasthan 142/1 in 56 overs (Yash Kothari 45, Manender Singh 61 batting).

**Nagpur:** Bengal 170 & 99 in 26.1 overs (Aditya Sarwate 6/47) lost to Vidarbha 212 in 74 overs (Faiz Fazal 51, Akshay Wadkar 49) & 61/1 in 13.5 overs.

**Points: Vidarbha 6 (17), Bengal 0 (12).**

### Group B

**New Delhi:** Madhya Pradesh 124 & 47/2 in 19 overs vs Railways 244 in 84.5 overs (Mrunal Devdhar 44, Dinesh Mor 45).

**Chennai:** Mumbai 488 in 148.4 overs (Jay Bista 41, Shams Mulani 87, Aditya Tare 154, Shashank Attarde 58, R. Sai Kishore 4/125) vs Tamil Nadu 66/0 in 31 overs (Abhinav Mukund 52 batting).

**Kanpur:** Uttar Pradesh 431 in 124.2 overs (Almas Shaukat 48, Mohammad Saif 123, Rinku Singh 62, Upendra Yadav 100) vs Baroda 82/1 in 25 overs.

**Rajkot:** Saurashtra 581/7 decl. in 166 overs (Cheteshwar Puja-ra 248, Sheldon Jackson 161, Prerak Mankad 86 n.o.) vs Karnataka 13/1 in 8 overs.

### Group C

**Guwahati:** Chhattisgarh 318 in 105.3 overs (Harpreet Singh 50, Amandeep Khare 105, Shashank Singh 71, Ranjeet Mali 4/80) vs Assam 209/3 in 72 overs (Rishav Das 99, Gokul Sharma 50 batting).

**Lahli:** Haryana 90 & 218/5 in 75 overs (Shubham Rohilla 48,

Ankit Kumar 46, Himanshu Rana 40) vs Odisha 160 in 61.1 overs (Biplab Samantray 52, Tinu Kundu 5/25).

**New Delhi:** Jammu & Kashmir

360 in 93.1 overs (Shubham Khajuria 55, Parvez Rasool 182, Diwesh Pathania 4/103) vs Services 238/9 in 76.1 overs (Arjun Sharma 47, Arun Bamal 48, Diwesh Pathania 41).

**Nagothane:** Maharashtra 434 in 172.3 overs (Azim Kazi 140, Vishant More 120, Utkarsh Singh 5/130) vs Jharkhand 2/2 in one over.

**Agartala:** Uttarakhand 90 in 45 overs (Manisankar Murasingh 4/24, Ajoy Sarkar 4/19) vs Tripura 104/2 in 29 overs.

**Toss:** Tripura.

### Plate

**Sovima:** Nagaland 534/7 decl. in 140.2 overs (Shrikant Mundhe 166, Rongsen Jonathan 49, Hokaito Zhimomi 76, Yogesh Takawale 117 n.o., Sedezhalie Rupero 53) vs Arunachal Pradesh 141/4 in 37 overs (Ra-

hul Dalal 64 batting).

**Chandigarh:** Sikkim 264 vs Chandigarh 338/8 in 90 overs (Uday Kaul 44, Raman Bishnoi 51, Bipul Sharma 58, Gurinder Singh 99, Ishwar Chaudhary 4/88).

**Puducherry:** Goa 270 in 87.5 overs (Amit Verma 121, Ashith Rajiv 5/45) & 0/0 in one over vs Pondicherry 260 in 65.4 overs (Paras Dogra 194, Felix Alemao 6/73).

**Balurghat:** Bihar 431 in 130.2 overs (Indrajit Kumar 134, Kumar Mridul 51, Md. Rahmatullah 71, Atulya Priyankar 64) vs Manipur 40/4 in 21 overs.

**Kolkata (first day):** Meghalaya 414/4 in 90 overs (Dippu Sangma 114, Dwaraka Ravi Teja 119 batting, Sanjay Yadav 107 batting) vs Mizoram. **Toss:** Mizoram.

# Halicharan Narzary's strike stuns ATK

The 1-0 win takes Blasters to the sixth spot while the Kolkata side remains third

## ISL

**AMITABHA DAS SHARMA**  
KOLKATA

Halicharan Narzary produced the all-important goal in the second half as Kerala Blasters downed host ATK 1-0 in their ISL contest at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Sunday.

In a match marred by frayed tempers among the support staff and led to the ejection of ATK head coach Antonio Habas, Blasters held its nerve under pressure to collect full points. Having beaten ATK (2-1) in the season-opener, Blasters kept its record against ATK intact with the successful 'away' result.

Blasters started off strongly, making repeated forays into the attacking third, but failed to find the target. The visitors had a ball possession of more than 65% in the first quarter, but could not cash in as the attacking duo of Bartholomew Ogbeche and Raphael Messi Bouli struggled to find a way to score.

Looking to break free



**Going aerial:** Blasters' Messi Bouli, right, and ATK's Armando Sosa Pena, centre, locked in a battle for possession. ■RAJEEV BHATT

from the pressure mounted by Blasters, ATK had its first opportunity in the 11th minute when Roy Krishna

launched a fine counter-attack after intercepting a corner and advanced all the way to the Blasters box.

However, the Kerala side's wing-back Mohammad Rakip did well to catch up with the ATK striker and thwart

the attempt.

Krishna, who had Balwant Singh for company upfront in the absence of injured colleague David Williams, had another chance in the 35th minute when a free-kick taken by Spanish teammate Javier Hernandez reached him.

Having a clear look at the goal, Krishna's half-volley saw Ogbeche make a desperate lunge and effect a vital clearance. The host had another opportunity after the change of ends, but Balwant's header was off-target.

The ATK defence paid for its complacency in the 70th minute as Narzary's rasping drive beat ATK 'keeper Arindam Bhattacharya all ends up. The Kerala team had another chance in the 84th minute, but Messi's header was well saved by Arindam.

The result kept ATK in the third spot with 21 points while Blasters moved to sixth with 14 points. Both have played 12 games.

**The result:** ATK 0 lost to Kerala Blasters 1 (Halicharan Narzary 70).